



ADVICE FOR BOZOID GREENHORNS

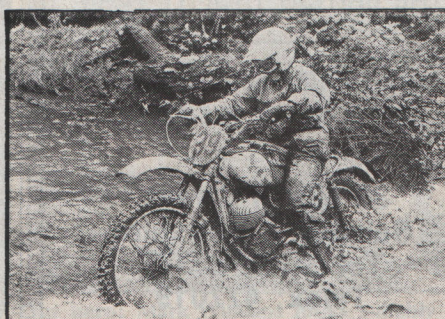
The authenticated how-to guide for enduro virgins, compiled by Mark Williams

THERE'S a lot of rubbish written about enduros in this country, and you're about to read a whole bunch more of it (unless of course you have the good sense to skip a few pages and digest Ogr's latest confrontation with biking kharma). The reason for the former is that most people have been brainwashed by the poetic licence of the Japanese marketing men who tag the word ENDURO on to anything that has knobby tyres and an inadequate fuel capacity. The justification for yet more confusing clap-trap appearing in print is that my own particular bias toward the sport is peculiar, to say the least, and downright perverse if you happened to be a psychiatrist.

I will, however, attempt to start off on the right foot by explaining exactly what an enduro is. Riders depart in pairs, at one minute intervals, and race off across a wide variety of terrain to a time check. Upon arrival, they withdraw a time card from their Barbour jacket pocket upon which is written their check-in time, and they are penalised for the number of minutes they arrive late, or indeed early, at the check. They then belt off to another time-check, and another, etc, etc, each of which is between 15 and 30 miles apart. An optimum average speed which riders should be able to maintain between checks is worked out, usually with tongues firmly in cheeks, by the organisers, hence the need to arrive on time.

These average speeds vary from event to event and according to the skill of the entrants. This year's ISCA Enduro, organised by the Caerleon & District Motor Sport Club, was a prime example of a well run two-day bash, and was divided into Clubmen's and Experts' classes, with speed requirements of 20 and 25 mph respectively. In addition to the

60 points deducted for each minute one arrived late at a checkpoint, the hapless (or devious) competitor was liable to forfeit, for example, 300 points for 'using tools other than those carried on the machine', 50 points for starting his engine before the starting signal had been given, ten points for losing his time card and a massive 15,000 little black



Dirty world of enduros isn't entirely an all-male province. Penny Page can leg her Bul-taco through the mire with the best of 'em.

marks if, as a member of a club or manufacturer's team, he failed to complete one of the two days. Even assuming your behaviour is exemplary and you manage to struggle up to each control at the right moment in time, you still have to compete against the whizz-kid moto crossers in the special tests.

These are timed cross-country sprints which occur without warning at various junctures in the day. Slower riders are penalised on a points basis against the time set by the fastest rider, and in my opinion these full-tilt chases across two or three miles of unfamiliar track are where enduros are

won and lost. Provided he paces himself through the bulk of the event, not getting carried away during the early stages when there's a dreadful temptation to go hell-for-leather at the expense of one's stamina, an experienced scrambler can make mincemeat of us part-timers in the special tests.

Now what you're probably thinking is that an average speed of 20 mph isn't exactly setting the world on fire, and any boring old fart on a Bantam Bushman could waddle round the countryside at such a lame lick. Well in that case you should meet some of the sadists who work out the routes for these enduros, most of them being locals like jovial Bob Perring, who's clerk of the course for the Beacons Enduro. Bob apparently loves to see poor sods like me struggling to propel 200 lb motorcycles through endless stretches of 12-inch deep treacle laughingly referred to as 'bogs'. What these people do is devise cunningly sudden contrasts of steep, slithering hills, twisty boulder-strewn escarpments, moorland tracks liberally endowed with wash-outs (i.e. great chunks eroded out of them by seasonally dormant streams), tractor ruts and deceptively deep pools of liquid mud, tracts of twisty forest where the loose peaty surface and hidden tree stumps play havoc with your sense of direction and, thank god, inconsistently surfaced fire roads and tracks where you can belt along in top gear and slide round the corners speedway style.

Now even the dimmest clod can hopefully appreciate that all of the foregoing are fraught with hazards: engines get waterlogged, bikes get sucked to a standstill in minor-league quicksands, one's trusty steed often decides to follow the course of a rut rather than the path its pilot is frantically

Essential Equipment

FUEL CANS: Old 1-gallon oil tins are OK, but a 2 or 4½-gallon jerry is better. Lost on the way to the studio was a large and ludicrously expensive plastic funnel.

SOCKET SET: Essential for prepping your trusty workhorse and for effecting an illegal engine swap at a remote point on the course where no one will notice you putting a 400cc KTM motor into a 125 frame.

TOOLKIT: Obviously useful is a set of open-ended/ring wrenches that will fit neatly into a tank-top bag. Together with a sturdy adjustable, this collection handled every nut and bolt found on the Beta. Allen keys, spare plugs, electrical tape, Loctite and a plug spanner are some of the visible items likely to be called into service. Less obvious are two hefty tyre levers taped to the side-stand, and pockets

full of spare chain links, Gasket-Goo, more plugs, nuts 'n' bolts, waterproof copies of the Lord's Prayer, etc.

LUBES AND SPRAYS: Finilec, WD40 moisture repellant, and Duckhams chain lube are all important and normally taped on the bike or shoved in pockets. New Bel-Ray chain lube aerosol (not shown) is actually handier than Duckhams, but costs more. And despite what you don't see in the pic, a chain itself also helps! Bel-Ray MC1 Racing 2-Stroke oil referred to in text is superior to conventional oils, same goes for their gearbox and fork lubes — the latter coming in three weights to suit you and your diet.

CLOTHING: I've been wearing this Belstaff Trialmaster suit for three years now and the cotton is about due for re-oiling. Belstaff also have a very efficient repair service should you

bust a zip or graze your bum, and I can recommend their fit and workmanship. Trialmaster price today: £48.13. Boots are Kett Moto-Cross featuring stainless buckles, internal padding and heavily reinforced toe caps. At £40 the Ketts are strong and durable enough. You can spend a fortune on tri-tone, rubber-padded moto cross gloves personally autographed by Roger De Coster, but I've been wearing the same unlined Rivetts trials gloves for two years and they're supple, well stitched, and only £5.75. Protecting the bonce is a Griffin Jetstar open-face helmet which is light and comfortable. It's a glass fibre snip at £23.90. The duckbill peak may look slightly ridiculous, but it keeps the sun and rain out of your eyes and it's ventilated to keep the wind from breaking your neck! This one's a Boeri Sport device costing £1.30. I don't like goggles for this game, they're too bulky. Instead I opt for Stadium Spectacles, which are wrap-around items costing a rather steep £2.

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wrestling to divert it along, you lose control as you inadvertently pull a wheelie over the apex of a rocky ascent, trees suddenly place themselves in front of you . . . need I go on?

The point is that you have to try and make up on the fire roads all the time you lose attempting to start recalcitrant motors, extracting yourself from bogs and trickling your way gingerly down slimy forestry tracks. You soon learn to ride with a modicum of caution and a healthy respect for Mother Nature, 'cause if you don't you end up bending your bike pretty early in the game or collapsing in a rather ungracious heap at the fourth time check.

Which brings us to fitness — that of both man and machine. Now as you will surmise from the bizarre posturing that appears every month in *Running Out Of Road*, I personally enjoy my sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll, to pinch the title from Ian Dury's excellent single. But I somehow manage to effect an abstinence from (some) of these essential pleasures for a few weeks prior to events like the ISCA and the Beacons, which fortunately were run within three weeks of each other this year. The utterly incongruous sight of yrs. trly. puffing along the Embankment in his running shorts can be witnessed by early morning London commuters during these periods, my local off-licence's turnover plummets by several percent and, dare I admit it, I actually prepare myself for kicking sand in the faces of seven stone weaklings with, yes, a Bullworker! And the sum total of all this righteous behaviour is that I actually feel disgustingly fit, which is just as well as even after one lap (approximately 60 miles) of the ISCA course — of which there were two each day — I felt like I'd been wrestling with Mick McManus for a couple of hours. (And if you doubt the need for physical fitness, let me quote the example of the boss of a certain motorcycle importers, who thought enduros were an amusing doddle. However, he was so shaken by one lap of last year's ISCA — during which he'd consumed countless nicotine sticks at each time check — that he promptly parked his breakfast adjacent to the start control).

Muscles and stamina taken care of, you then need the right bike. As I opined in my November column, the days are long gone when you could expect to troll round on a heavy old British twin and stand a good chance of winning a medal. I entered my first event, the 1973 Beacons, on 340 lbs of Cheney-type Triumph which, zealous fool that I was, I actually rode down from London early on the morning of the race! In those days enduros consisted of a fair bit of roadwork during which you could get your wind back after struggling with the elements, but apart from the Welsh Two-Days and the Pathfinders Trial (the former a much longer event anyway), recent enduros tend to be on enclosed 'circuits' — a reflection on land usage restrictions as much as anything else. So what you need is either a pukka enduro machine — a scrambler with lights and altered gearing — from the likes of KTM, Jawa or Bultaco, or a well-modified domestic Japanese trail-bike — which are these days

euphemistically referred to as enduros, as mentioned earlier. The considerations to bear in mind when choosing a machine are thus, roughly in order of importance:

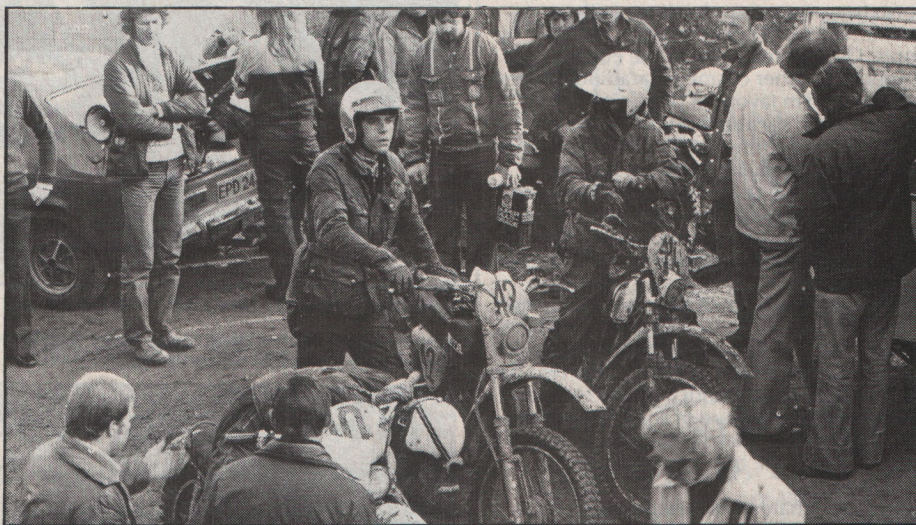
YOUR OWN ABILITY — are you strong and capable enough to ride moto-cross for long periods of time, or do you just want to finish in a respectable time?

PRICE — just how serious are you about this madness anyway? Can you afford the indulgence of a £1,000 machine that's pretty useless for anything but competition, or is a dual-purpose lap bike a satisfactory

compromise? And what about the vagaries of buying second-hand?

CAPACITY AND WEIGHT — up to 175 cc bikes usually benefit from slower speed schedules and compete for their own awards, but they tend to have less torque, narrower power-bands and not a lot less weight to carry around than some of the better 250s and 350s.

After the elephantine Triumph hybrid, I settled for 175 cc machines, mainly Yamaha DT trail bikes suitably modified at a minimum



Our hero: Mark Williams looks suitably cool on the 125 Beta (No. 42) while A. N. Other consumes a leather glove for added stamina over the miles ahead.

Below: Mark Williams surrounded by hundreds of helpers, well-wishers, pressmen and photographers during a fuel stop in the ISCA Enduro.



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of cost. I guess you could say that this reflects my own feelings about enduros in that in no way do I consider myself an expert, but I like to ride on full throttle as much as I can and I ain't got money to burn.

But understand that to get the best from a domestic on- or off-roader, you have to get down to some serious business with your toolkit. The rear shocks must be replaced by Konis, Girlings, etc, a lot of the electrics, tin fenders and other cosmetic taradiddles need to be junked in favour of plastic items or nothing at all, security bolts often have to be fitted into wheelrims, gearing changed, chain tensioners added and moto cross tyres substituted. You're *still* left with a heavyish bike with inadequate steering geometry and often sloppy front suspension, even though for green-laning the original specification was just dandy.

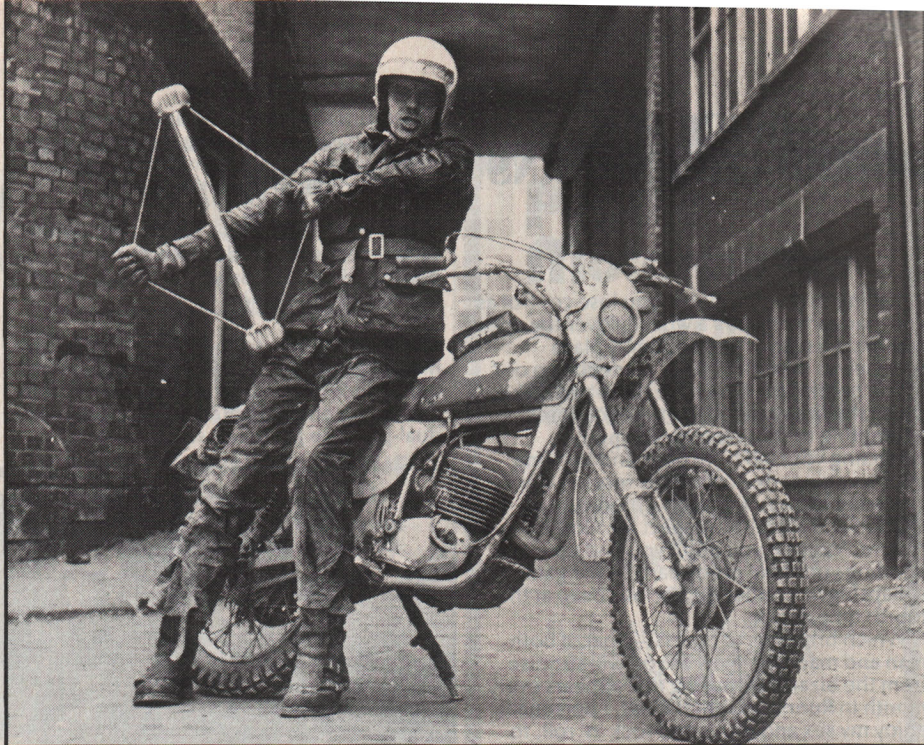
This year I saw a lot of boys on brand new KTM's and Suzuki PEs (this season's hot bike, for sure) who were putting their bikes back on the trailer after the first day of the two-day events. They had too much power for their own good if the retinue of snapped chains and bent wheels was anything to go by, but if you can afford the best I guess it's worth thinking about.

Anyway, whatever machine you go for, you've still got to prepare it right. That means routing spare cables alongside the operating ones, sorting out a toolkit that'll cover any possible running repair, stretching your chain and working out how often it'll need lubrication (which, together with refuelling, is best carried out at time checks), carrying spare inner tube(s) and/or Finilec tyre sealer (expensive but worth it) and having aboard a full complement of spare plugs, contact breakers (if your bike uses them), solderless nipples, a spare control lever (already fixed to the 'bars), a chain link and the all-important can of WD40 moisture repellent.

Then you've got to organise long suffering friends, wives or lovers to be ready at the required timecheck to refuel you, help tighten your chain and boost your faltering ego as regards how you're going to make up the fifteen minutes you spent trudging along a riverbed looking for your missing link. This year's ISCA saw my pal Pete Furlong and I mounted on a USA-spec Yamaha IT175 and a Beta ES125 respectively, and we managed to organise our 'crews' so that we slunk in for resuscitation at the same places — even though we were numbers 42 and 160 and therefore quite far apart.

'Course I got lost a couple of times, even though the route marking was pretty good, and managed to snap my chain and smash the magneto cover in the process, and I felt the whole caboodle was about as well organised as a bunch of happy amateurs are capable of. And that's the secret attraction of it to me. Even though you know Dave Jeremiah or Bonkey Bowers is going to wipe out the opposition simply because they're so damn good, the rest of us can still get a kick out of riding against them on an ACU National Trials Licence that any Joe Soap and his brother can get, and it ain't going to cost us an arm and a leg to do so.

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City boy keeps fit: rare shot of Williams not indulging in sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll.

Below: One of the UK greats, Mick Bowers on his Bultaco. Brilliant style is enough to turn casual enduro riders onto croquet.



Sure it's pretty humiliating when the fast boys steam past you on their Jawas and you're struggling with a Honda XL125 that's better suited to carrying someone's mum from Greenford to Ealing every day, but at least you can keep your aspirations on a realistic level. Nice if you could afford a set of personal leathers and a TZ Yammie to threaten the opposition with at Brands and Mallory, but why not keep your ego healthy without having to kow-tow to sponsors and the St. John's Ambulance?

If you're at all interested in those relatively few enduros that take place in these crowded

islands each year, check out the Regulations Available columns in the weeklies and post off your applications early. Enduros are getting popular, I suspect for precisely the reasons I've mentioned, and numbers are limited to 200 or so per event. Even as a complete bozoid greenhorn, you can have a fair few laughs the first time around, there's lots of macho biking talk in the nearby pubs and hotels the nights before (if that sort of thing gets you off) and the satisfaction of doing something, however insane, that relatively few Toms, Dicks or Harrys do, is not to be sneezed at. *Atishoo!*