

DAVE THORPE CONSIDERS HAWKSTONE AND HERRING!

DIRT BIKE

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**BRITISH 250 GP;
COLOUR
COVERAGE!**

Catching the
Richard Main
Line



TESTS:

**The Practical KTM
350 Enduro**

**The Posing Yamaha
600 Tenere**

slightly/abridged
Mart's / SSDT Diary!



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Slipping yarns from the not so secret diary of Martin Lampkin at the Scottish Six Days Trial.

COVER: Look out world, Jem Whatley's back on form! Jack Burnicle catches the Cagiva man in the act.

Blasting the enduro trail, KTM's 350 arrived quietly but goes quickly.

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MY MAIN intention when I decided upon a Scottish comeback was to have an enjoyable "fun" ride. I did no training or preparation for the event apart from riding in a couple of trials.

I'd spectated for the previous two years and didn't want to do that again. The wife and kids wanted to go up and make it their holiday so I thought "bugger it, I'll ride".

I have to thank our John for loaning me one of his Fantic 301s — and preparing it for me. It was the bike he rode in the Spanish round of the World Championship.

The Fantic is fitted with a useful tool box so the only things I had to carry in my pockets were tyre levers, air bottles for inflating tyres, a puncture repair outfit and a split link. In my days we had to carry everything in our pockets and in bum bags — which was so bloody uncomfortable.

Day One. Monday May 5th

Early start; Roy Cary, the Fantic bossman, shook hands with me — as he does with all Fantic riders — gave me a Mars bar and wished me well.

I cleaned the first section at *Ben Nevis*, which is always a good start, then wobbled through the second. The third was really difficult; Tony Scarlett had dropped five marks there and there had apparently been only two cleans. I got through for a two, which pleased me.

Over at the next group I cleaned the first section quite easily, then lost a soft five at the next and finally struggled like bloody hell up the last.

It was a long, long way up that road to Bradleig thinking about that five all the way. That's one of the things about Scotland; if you've had a good ride in one group you really get to the next section very quickly and in a good frame of mind. Whereas, if you've had a silly five like that it weighs on your mind and that's one of the things a lot of riders can't shake off.

I left *Ben Nevis* feeling quite tired then I got pins and needles in one hand and fell off the bike. That fall probably made me pull myself together. I thought "Bloody hell I've only done 10 miles. I've still got six days to go."

Anyhow, I did feel more relaxed when I arrived at *Bradleig* where I had a good ride. I picked up a rear tyre puncture on the way to the next group at *Blackwater* road but I mended that no problem.

Then I went up to *Blackwater*, which has always been a lucky section for me. I cleaned the first two subs then I was looking at the third — a very long, tough one — when I saw former rider Stan Cordingly and his wife spectating. Just as I passed them I heard her say to Stan "He looks like an old age pensioner among all those young faces."

Anyhow, even though I say it myself I had a brilliant ride up there. Never off line — perfect. So I turned around at the top and had great satisfaction in saying: "Not bad for an old man!" We had a right good giggle about it, and that's one of the things that's lacking nowadays. You've got to have a laugh and joke in Scotland because that's how you can release the tension.

Moving on past *Blackwater* Dam we turned off just before we got down to *Pipeline* to go to *Sron* then *Alt Choire Mhorair*. Going down the path of *Glen Choire* can only be described as sheer bloody hell. It's just like standing on your hands for twenty minutes. It's just straight down with ditches and plenty of rocks to negotiate. When I got down to the pasture where the officials checked my bike over I was absolutely bugged.

Thinking I'd only got to go to *Lagnaha* — or *Kentallen* as we used to call it — I was disappointed to find I'd still to go over yet another moor to do *Cairn*.

At *Lagnaha* I had some good rides, including a one at probably the hardest section of the day. I really did feel confident when I was going in. I went for the one and got

SCOTTISH SWANSONG

DBR's trials tester Martin Lampkin went for a Scottish Six Days 'fun' ride. The three-times winner had his ups and downs . . .



Day one, *Glen Nevis*. A long way to go.

away with it. Only rider to beat that until then was Philippe Berlatier.

I took it steadily on the road back to Fort William and finished with ten minutes to spare. Just enough time to adjust the Fantic's chain.

Day One marks lost: 26. Position 20th.

Day Two, Tuesday May 6th

This was my early day which I wasn't looking forward to. But it was even worse than I expected. At least the weather was better than yesterday; it didn't rain until the afternoon.

I was about 15th on the road and the sections were quite bad. The first group *Laggan Locks* was unusually difficult. I was never on line until I got to the fourth sub, and they were four continuous subs of ever rolling rocks so I really did have a fight on my hands there.

On to *Switchback* where there were three subs. And from seeing the second I could tell they weren't thinking about the early numbers at all. I can honestly say it was bloody impossible. Nobody would have got up it clean, it was so slippery — slabs, a tight corner, everything. I managed to lose only two and I was highly delighted.

I went over to *Achlain* and was reasonably happy with my riding. The rear tyre punctured in the final sub which cost me two

marks. But as it was in Scotland it could very easily have been a five!

I mended the puncture and turned the tyre around so I didn't have to do it that night. Time was ridiculously short with only having 6¼ hours. The organisers were just not catering for the club lads at all. They could still have some difficult sections but at least give the club riders time to get around the trial.

Anyway, after mending my puncture I was trying to make up time and consequently giving the Fantic some stick down the road when it started to tighten up.

I eventually got to the next sections and had problems sorting out the tyre pressures. I managed to clean them but the bike rolled so much I thought I'd got another puncture. After a bit of experimentation I decided to up the pressure from what it should be — which seemed better for a bloke my size.

After *Meall Choire Ghlaise* we went across what must have been the hardest section of moor all week. It's on a big camber across the side of a mountain with a lot of drainage ditches going down.

Dropping down to *Cam Bhealach* where there were two dry sections. Whoever had stuck the flags in had just not taken early numbers into consideration at all. If they had just rearranged one or two rocks they would have made it rideable. As it was I ended up



Day two, Achlain. Early number day.

with a three and a two which was amazing in the circumstances.

Then on to *Clunes Forest*, through *Witches Burn* and back to Fort William with 14 minutes to spare.

Day Two marks lost: 27. Cumulative score 53. Position 38th.

Day Three. Wednesday May 7th.

I'd listened to the weather forecast and it said there was going to be rain during the morning but easing off around lunchtime. As I wasn't setting off until 11.40 a.m. I had a good lie in and a decent breakfast then got down to the start about an hour early.

Of course, the rain didn't stop. In fact it teemed down continuously. So I set off wet and stayed that way.

Apart from my usual gear I borrowed a towel from the hotel to stop rain running down my neck. And I attempted to keep my gloves dry by using a pair of overmitts. Unfortunately these can't be used when riding over the rough bits. So by the time I'd reached *Achallader*, the seventh group of subs, both pairs of gloves were soaked and I was reduced to riding in bare hands.

Now I always insist on my kids wearing gloves when riding and I would recommend all competitors do the same. However, there are occasions when even the best gloves can slip — as Philippe Berlatier found at the hardest sub in *Achallader*.

I'd caught him up and really expected him to produce some fireworks throughout the tight, difficult section. It needed two pivot turns, which is unusual for Scotland. The water had risen to between a foot and two feet deep in places. Philippe went through the first part feet up then tried to take a left hand turn with a deep hole in it too aggressively and his hands just slipped off the bars and he struggled out for a three.

Anyway, I'm getting ahead of myself. Away from the start we went along the Mamore Road towards *Callart* and turned down to cross the river which was deeper than I'd ever seen it before.

I rode up and down the bank, couldn't find a place to cross so I rode back to where the flags were. A Japanese photographer was close by so I asked him where was the best place to cross. He waved to where the flags were so I went across there — with the water lapping up around the tank!

How the bike kept going I do not know but it did — with a few coughs and splutters. If the

bloody bike had gone under the photographer would have gone in after it. He was obviously doing it just to get some super snaps of someone falling under.

I went up to *Callart* and had three cleans there; which was a good start to the day. I

then filled with petrol off *Fantic* and went up to *Garbh Bheinn*. It's a nice aggressive second gear section. It didn't look too bad and I saw Chris Clarke have an absolutely superb ride, never spinning a stone. Unfortunately I followed three other riders who struggled up and they shifted everything. It was just like riding on a set of ball bearings. It was a repeat story at *Caolasnacoan*. More marks lost.

I then lost a silly mark at *Pap of Glencoe* before setting off for a 21 mile ride down the road to the next group. On long runs like this I try taking my mind off things by singing to myself. I'm a bloody awful singer but it's something to do.

It was debateable whether the sections at *Achallader* were fit to ride. We rode four and the organisers cut out the last three because the water had risen too much. We were riding blind; there was a foot of water and it was all foaming and frothing and you couldn't see what was underneath.

After lunch we went to *Ba House* where there were very few spectators. By this time I was absolutely soaked to the skin and thinking "What the bloody hell am I doing here?"

There was a big queue and I didn't fancy handing my card in for delay like most riders. The thing with delay is that riders automatically decide to have or accept it when available. They don't think to use it to their advantage. The sections could be getting better — or worse. If they see someone putting their card in they automatically do the same.

Anyway, I said to the official: "I don't think I'm going to put my card in."

And he replied: "Well it's your prerogative whether you put it in or not."



Day three, Pap of Glencoe. Very wet.

I looked at the section very quickly and it didn't seem too bad — even though there had been only one clean on it all day. Eddy Lejeune had fived it and I watched Michaud have a one. I went through for a two which, looking back, was a good ride. Then I cleaned the next three subs.

At *Chairlift* I don't think I've ever seen so many bikes in one queue. It was a bloody nightmare. So I made the decision again — with the approval of the officials — not to put my card in.

I think I was proved right; I finished tonight at five minutes past six whereas the next number to me came in for his dinner at nine o'clock!

I fitted a new tyre and chain and slotted in some brake pads.

What a day though! I have to say this has been one of the most miserable I've ever spent in Scotland.

Day Three marks lost 29. Cumulative score 82. Position 38th.

Day Four. Thursday May 8th.

Thursday has often been my lucky day and I was determined to go for a single figure score.

Things didn't start too well when I seized the bike on the 27 mile run to *Camp Hill*.

When I arrived there I walked the section then went back to the bike to lower its tyre pressures. I was letting out the pressure when all of a sudden this foreign rider came rushing up to me with his arms in the air shouting: "What are you doing?"

I said: "I'm letting my tyre down, what does it look like?" He pointed to the number plate — it wasn't my bike. I felt a right pratt! Still, we all had a good laugh about it and both the foreign rider and myself cleaned the section.

I ended up on eight marks lost at the lunch stop, which disappointed me. My chance of a single-figure score was looking rather remote.

I set off in the afternoon through a couple of fairly easy groups then on to *Casmasna Croise* — a three sub with a long, loose, steep climb. It's a section where you really never know whether to use second or third gear.

I walked the section and said to Phil Alderson — who I was riding with — "It looks like third gear to me." Phil thought he would use second.

A chap in the crowd with a Brummie accent said "it's definitely a third gear climb."

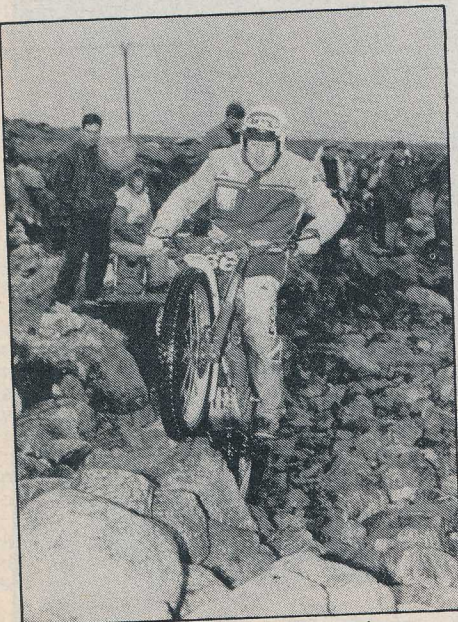
I wasn't so sure, so as there were no other riders coming through the section I just stopped the whole proceedings and said to



Day five, *Fersit*. Very tough.



Day five, still *Fersit*. Still tough.



Day four, *Meall Nam Each*. Proving I can still do it.

the spectators "Right, we're going to have a vote on it." About six or eight people voted for third but when I said "Hands up for second gear" it was an overwhelming victory.

I went back down to my bike where Phil Alderson was waiting. "Third?" he asked. I said: "No change to second Phil." He cleaned it, so did I.

Moving on to the next sections, it's quite pleasant at this point because you do a lot of road work early in the day then you get a number of sections close together at the end, which finishes things off nicely.

I was on 10 marks arriving at the last group, *Rubha Ruadh*, which I cleaned. Many of the top riders lost marks there, so I was pleased with my form.

I crossed the Corran Ferry and was back in Fort William with plenty of time to spare so I changed the rear tyre around.

Anyway, I was just one mark outside my target. I was delighted with my form in the afternoon, losing just two marks, although a little upset with the morning. I could so easily have been in today on three or four marks. I knew I wouldn't be consistent throughout the week but I desperately wanted one good day — which I think I've achieved. At least I've proved to myself that I can still do it.

Day Four marks lost 10. cumulative score 92. Position 32.

Day Five. Friday May 9th.

Today was even tighter than ever on time; we had only six and a half hours to do eight

groups of sections and cover 98 miles. And I would say that more than 80 per cent of it was over moorland; a real hell of a day.

I had more trouble getting my tyre pressures right for the first group at *Muirshearlich*. Then we went up through Clunes Forest to five subs at *Glen Cia-aig*. I must say I was very happy to get out of these on just three marks. It was going to get a lot tougher.

Next it was off again over that bloody Clunes Moor to the next group *Meall Choire Ghlais*, about 15 miles away.

It was very wet indeed. I got to one bog where a young Scottish lad had absolutely buried his Fantic. I felt sorry for the poor bugger so I jumped off my bike to help. He was trying to lift it out, which is a complete waste of time; you've got to have the bike going to get all the assistance you can. I jumped on his bike, started it and told him to push as hard as he could when I'd counted to three. I got it into third, shouted three, dropped the clutch and it never moved an inch. And I really did make an effort.

Fortunately Philippe Berlatier, who I had just passed on the moor, also stopped and the three of us just managed to haul it out.

After that group it was a nasty 25 or 30 miles of roadwork — the only roadwork we did all day — to *Fersit*.

This was probably the hardest group we had all week. Apart from the sections at this remote wilderness being very tough the problem was it was even colder and wetter

than Tuesday. It's not easy to motivate yourself when you get to a group of six sections and you're frozen and soaked to the skin. Your body doesn't want to do it; well my body didn't anyway!

I got through the first sub fairly quickly. Then I handed my delay card in at the next. Although I had not done this previously during the week, with the short time schedule today it was obvious that every second you could get in extra would be valuable. This is in effect making the delay work for the rider.

I didn't bother pumping my tyres up after the remaining subs at *Fersit*. The moors were so wet, horrible and difficult in those conditions that it was better to risk a puncture than to pump the tyres up and struggle even more.

The first five miles of moor were very rough indeed; second and even bottom gear stuff with quite a lot of pushing. Then things improved slightly for the next 20 miles.

It was very cold when we arrived at *Mamore*. I had a dab in the first sub then one of the Army lads shifted some bloody great stones right onto the line at the next two. At least I cleaned the top two fairly easily.

Next it was *Caillaich*, then back through *Sleuhaich* to Fort William where we did *Town Hall Brae* for the first time. Now why the organisers decided to include it knowing it was a tight day I do not know. Especially with

the way some riders were blasting through the streets of Fort William. They should hold that part either first thing or not at all. Everyone cleans it anyway.

I had to put two more disc brake pads in the front, which after only two days is a bit disappointing.

But it was tough today. I think when it comes to signing the entry form for next year I'll remember today and talk myself out of it. The course was too severe and time too tight. *Day Five marks lost: 23. Cumulative score: 115. Position: 23.*

Day Six. Saturday May 10th.

I had an extra hour's wait before getting away today. Early riders trying to get to *Callart Falls* found the river too swollen and the sections so dangerous that the organisers cancelled the group. So we went by road about 20 odd miles to *Cameron Hill*. The water there was bad enough.

Then it was up to *Cnoc A Linhe* where there was so much water that large stones were being washed down the section.

I went to *Pipeline* and cleaned the bottom two, cleaned the third then the bike was going well through the next but I just ran out of steam.

Going over a moor I fell in a bloody hole and drowned the Fantic. I had to tip it upside down with the plug out for about ten minutes.

Eventually it restarted then we got to *Ghuanach Gorge* and the sections were cancelled because of the severe conditions.

On through *Bradileig* where we did much the same sections as Monday. Then I passed a few lads who had run out of petrol; couldn't help them unfortunately, because I was short myself.

On down the hill back to *Ben Nevis* where I had a dab in the first section then five the next in exactly the same spot where I stopped and lost the trial in 1979. That's the third time I've five that section; must be something about the place.

Still, after that I pulled my finger out and really went well on the few remaining sections.

Overall I enjoyed the trial — apart from the weather. But I don't think I'll do it again unless they organise, say, an over-35 class to encourage people like Malcolm Rathmell and Vesty to return. I can't compete with the lads that are winning now, but that would give me the motivation to have another go. Who knows though, I may change my mind next year.

Finally, I'd like to thank all the Fantic lads at the refuelling stops. Despite everything they've been really cheery all the time. That does help keep you going.

Day Six marks lost: 35. Cumulative score: 150. Overall position 26.



Young Harry Lampkin (left) keeps an eye on his dad at Achlain.