

**SCOTTISH SIX-DAY TRIAL: FULL COLOUR REPORT**

# **DIRT BIKE RIDER**

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**KMX125 RIDE IMPRESSION**

**We ride  
Andy Nicholls'  
YZ250**

**GEORGES JOBE**  
The Counter-attack



**Plus your chance  
to win one!**

Luscombe/Leek  
Fantic Trials  
Outfit Tested

**MAKING  
A KX80  
QUICKER!**

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# FANTIC ANTICS

**Martin Lampkin checks out the Robin Luscombe/Karen Leek British Championship leading Fantic mono outfit. James Moorhouse took the pictures.**

“**W**E’VE GOT a test with a difference,” John Pearson tentatively remarked while asking if I could ride a trials sidecar outfit. The cheek of it!

Must admit it was a while ago since brother Sid and I hit the sidecar scene – him in the chair and me at the controls. We rode in the Northern Experts for three or four years when unfortunately the solo side of the event dwindled. And we fancied the challenge.

It was also a lot of fun with the lads around then – well not so much lads as more mature gentlemen such as Jack Matthews, Walt Bulloch, Barry Watson and, of course, the main opposition brother Arthur.

Like me, they’re all teetotallers so we all got on very well together. There was quite a lot of banter between us and, of course, between drivers and passengers. The driver is obviously never wrong – well I wasn’t anyway – and if the second class citizen argued too much he had to walk back to the start!

Must admit when the day of the test arrived I did wonder how I would perform after a break of almost 10 years. And I learned that my passenger would be Robin Luscombe’s regular crew-person Karen Leek. Being a gentleman I could hardly shout at her the way I used to at Sid. Then I remembered that Robin and Karen were leading the British Championship with two straight wins and thought that maybe she would be shouting at me if things went wrong!

The outfit certainly looks the business; the Fantic not out of place with a chair on the side. It is expertly put together and both rear brake and gear lever are fit-



*MAIN PIC: Karen Leek soon became accustomed to Martin Lampkin's riding style and they were quickly tackling some national class sections on the Fantic 301 mono. INSET PIC: Robin Luscombe and Karen Leek put on the style through our stream section.*





# FANTIC ANTICS

**ABOVE:** An apprehensive Robin Luscombe plays the ballast role while Mart puts the Fantic through one of our tough test sections. Robin soon leaped out and pleaded Karen to get back in the chair.

**LEFT:** Quite a handy passenger that Karen Leek. The Fantic mono made light of this tougher than it looks sidecar-high camber section.

ted on the left hand side. There is also a large tubular guard on the swing arm to prevent the passenger's foot getting in the rear wheel spokes.

I put on my confident look when climbing aboard, hopefully giving Karen the impression that I knew what I was doing. Then James Moorhouse our resident photographer put the fear of death into her by recounting a tale from a Northern Experts in way back when. It was at Yarnbury, Grassington, and Sid and I were attempting to climb a very long, steep hill.

Things started to go wrong and the outfit was about to tip over backwards. So I very bravely jumped off the back and turned it round on the back wheel – only to find that it was going back down the hill a lot faster than my legs could go to keep up with.

I shouted “jump” to Sid as I abandoned ship, but to my horror he remained on board, instead reaching over and steering it – rather precariously – to the bottom.

I eventually got down there to find him still sitting in the chair – trembling. You see, his hand was trapped in the front sidecar strap and he couldn't get out. Did I get a bollocking. . .

Anyway, having filled Karen with confidence I set off down the stream sections, getting to know the bike and, probably more important, allowing rider and passenger to get used to each other. You really do have to work as a team to attempt even slightly daring sections.

I had to stop after about 10 minutes because of the pain between my thumb and forefinger. This was caused by a combina-

tion of using different muscles and screwing the front end from lock to lock. You really have to be forceful and boss the whole outfit. Faint heart never won fair maiden – neither did it win a sidecar trial.

Starting to get serious, we marked out a section which twisted in and out of the stream. It felt good, performing well apart from dabbing at one corner when the bike was high. We had another look at the section and following some tuition from Robin we managed several cleans.

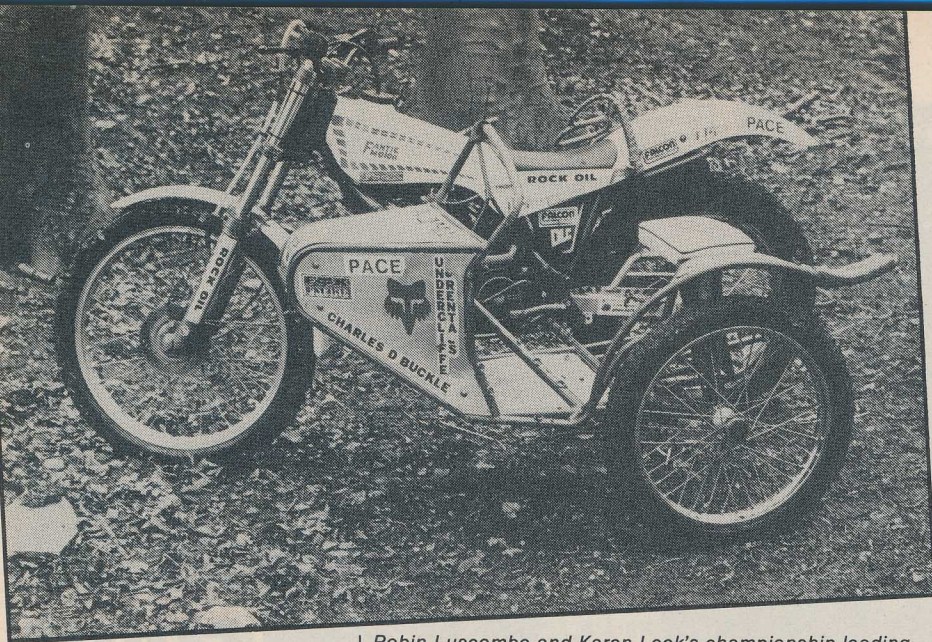
Next we tried a camber. I was beginning to enjoy myself so much I had to be careful not to try anything too adventurous – but still wanted to give it a real test.

The section had three left han-

ders and a bike-high camber – the most difficult for me. Gear choice was initially tricky because being used to riding a Fantic solo I had to remember that the same engine was pulling more than twice the normal weight. I thought it was high geared and Robin confirmed that he uses standard gearing. But it hadn't refused anything put in front of it so far and the Fantic has a strong engine.

I used second gear for the slippery woods. Fantic power, my weight and a standard Michelin made grip no problem across a camber, steep downhill lefthander, a steep climb around a tree followed by a sidecar-high exit.

I lost my bottle the first time



# FANTIC ANTICS

and rested the outfit against the tree. But as I eased it away the bike went down the cambered hill sidecar-high so easily I had to have another go at the section. This time we cleaned it which pleased me quite a lot considering it was a good section worthy of national status.

I let Robin have a go at this section while I got my breath back and was grinning smugly to myself when he got off line and looked as though he wouldn't make it. But the clever bugger put the outfit on two wheels and cleaned the section as if he was riding solo. I hate a smartypants.

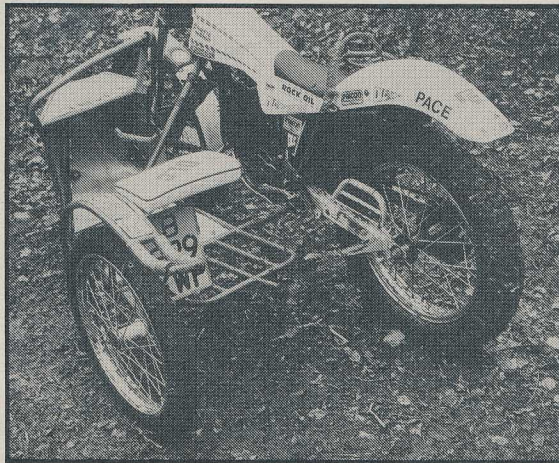
Back on the bike again and I was realising just how good the Fantic is. It really makes the old SMW and Bultaco outfits we used seem totally agricultural. Okay, I haven't tried every outfit around at the moment but this has bags of power, handles well and is light and manoeuvrable.

I really enjoyed my day out on the Fantic. Indeed, everyone had a job getting me off the bike long after the official testing had finished.

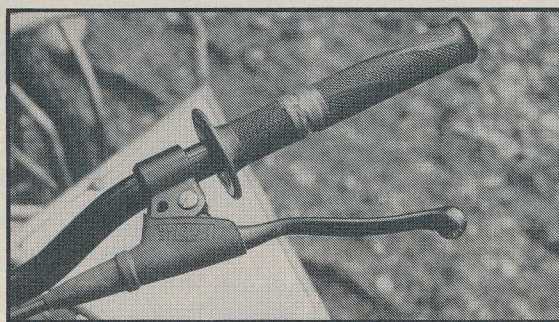
Karen proved to be a great passenger. I put her in some difficult situations by not giving her enough room when the bike was low - I allowed space for the chair to get past a tree but not sufficient for Karen to get out the side. She usually coped though!

I would advise anyone taking up the three-wheeled class to find a good, reliable passenger. No matter how well you can handle the controls you won't get the results without someone working with - rather than

Robin Luscombe and Karen Leek's championship leading Fantic mono trials sidecar outfit. White finish on tank is a neat fitting DLC cover.



Karen Leek's working area. Note leg guard on swing arm.



Right handlebar has been cut back while left (pictured above) has this extended grip and clutch lever moved further inwards.

Right: Rear brake pedal has been moved to left hand side and operated via a cable.

against - you in the chair.

I think it's difficult if not impossible for a solo rider to become a successful passenger; I'm like a sack of potatoes in the chair and when Robin Luscombe rode alongside me he didn't seem particularly at home. Karen, however can't ride the bike so she doesn't try to do anything else except keep her half of the outfit in order.



## TECHFAX

STARTING WITH a straight from the crate Fantic 301, Robin Luscombe's first job was to swap the standard Marzocchi rear suspension unit - which is too soft and has excessive travel for sidecar use - for a specially produced Falcon shock. This has a 560lb spring, 10mm less travel and adjustable damping which allows Robin to dial in optimum settings for all conditions. These are now available over the counter.

Steering head angle has been altered, pushing the forks out to give an inch trail.

Gearing is standard, likewise the swing arm. The latter has, however, been modified by welding on an extra footpeg plus a guard to keep Karen's shapely legs out of the rear wheel. As she explained: "My only worry was that without a twin shock system there's nothing to prevent the passenger getting caught up. But the guard works fine; I've had no problems whatsoever. In fact the Fantic is a lot better overall from the passenger's point of view because the monoshock gives a lot smoother ride. There's no kick from the rear suspension, no jerking up over bumps."

Other more usual sidecar trials mods to the bike include switching the brake pedal from right to left. And the handlebars have been cut back on the right hand side while on the left Robin moved the clutch lever further in and extended the hand grip. This means he can remain in control from wherever he has clambered on the outfit.

Front disc is standard, including the pads, which Robin claims are lasting well - he's only on his second set. He has, however, fitted a Venhill Power Hose which does improve braking.

Bruce Rushden built the sidecar and helped Robin with much of the development and setting up work.

If our report has made you want to go out and buy a Luscombe replica we can tell you that Fantic importer Roy Cary will have some in stock before too long. Currency fluctuations mean that he can't give us an exact price at present, but expect it to be around £2100 plus VAT.

