

DAVE THORPE: The World Champ's Column! <sup>WATTS</sup>

# DIRT BIKE RIDER

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**Supercross  
Hits Town!**



**HURRICANE ALERT**  
Hannah Eyes Europe!

**TRIALS TESTS:** Montesa 304, Yamaha 330

Secondhand motocrossers - making the right choice!



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Kickstart trickery

**COVER:** It all happened at Belle Vue Stadium in Manchester; Supercross made its biggest impact in Britain to date

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# EXPERTS ONLY

From the outside it just looks like a typical Yamaha TY mono; but there's nothing run-of-the-mill about Gerald Richardson's John Shirt prepared 330, as Martin Lampkin found out. James Moorhouse took the pictures.



*DBR Trials Test*



I'VE TESTED so many smaller capacity bikes during the past few months — with the exception of the Garelli 323 — that it made a pleasant change to hear a John Shirt Yamaha 330 was next on my schedule.

Most production machines nowadays are below the 250cc mark, which — not being condescending — is more than enough for the majority of riders.

But I feel that a bike with a capacity around 350cc, providing the power is controllable, can be an advantage in the right hands.

My best bike of all time was my 370cc factory Bultaco. A journalist from another off-road publication tested the Bult and labelled it a *one-man machine* — which wasn't a fair assessment. Rob Shepherd or Bernie Schreiber would also have been able to get the best out of the bike, which was built to win championship

events. And the Shirt 330 conversion comes into the same category.

Tony Scarlett took one to a good placing in last year's World Championship but hasn't quite produced the same sort of form on the 250 this year. In fact, he is now back on a 330.

The Yamaha I tested was built for Gerald Richardson who should be able to make full use of this highly competitive machine. He's a very strong lad who is only a whisker off producing a championship win in the right conditions.

I think his results would improve further still if they'd given him a completely new bike rather than a new engine in the existing one which has already had a hard season.

I must point out that the 330 is not just an adaptation of the TY350R which is available in some markets, although not in this country. John Shirt has

built the engine himself with completely different bore and stroke dimensions to any production Yamaha.

I tested the very same bike back in the April issue when it had smaller capacity so I won't go into detail about handling and suspension, instead concentrating on the engine.

Nephew John decided to have a day's practising with us so it was an advantage to be able to compare the Yamaha with John's factory modified Fantic 301.

I rode the 301 in this year's Scottish Six Days Trial and rated it very highly in overall performance. It was hard to detect much difference in the engines right at the bottom end. But the Yamaha is much stronger in the mid-range — and it just keeps on revving.

You've got to be strong to hang on to a bike that pulls like this, but if you can it's a definite advantage to use third or even fourth gear when grip is minimal. Many bikes just die when in the higher gears rather than deliver power when you need it most but the

Shirt Yamaha just keeps on producing the power. Must admit I was having trouble hanging on at times.

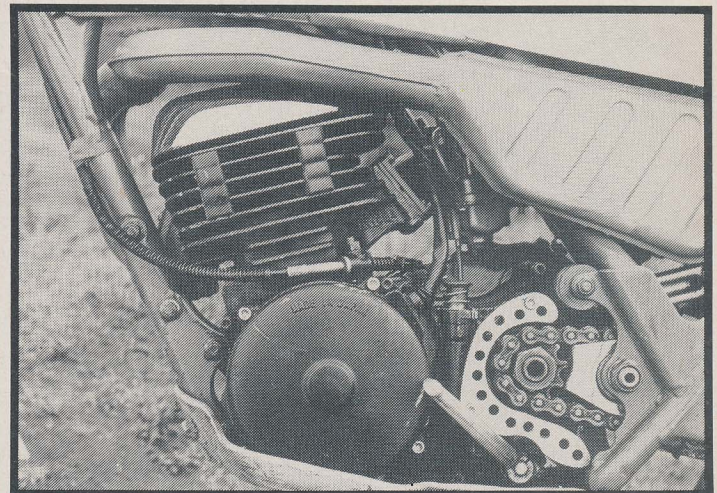
But I don't want to give the impression that its power delivery is vicious; it's not. The 330 is a conversion that offers the already very good rider strong, really usable power of the type necessary to win big events.

It's not a one-man's bike but there are very few riders who could step on it and improve their results. Gerald is one, Tony Scarlett obviously another. Respected Shirt rider Nigel Birkett has tried one but admits it's very good but not for him . . .

Did I find it better overall than the works Fantic? A very difficult question and one I wouldn't attempt to answer after just a morning's riding. It does have different characteristics to the Fantic and runs very well right through the range. But I would only make a decision after putting the bike through a major event.

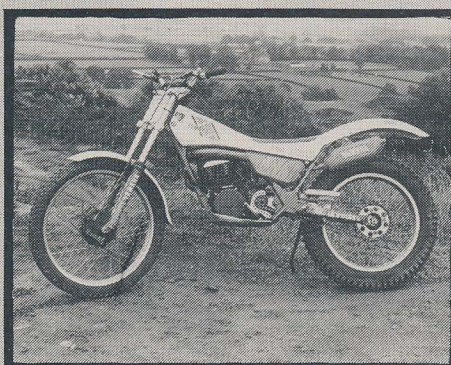


Shirt Yamaha rider Gerald Richardson gives his 330 a workout at the DBR proving ground.



Not much different from the outside, but the much reworked Shirt 330 is like no other Yamaha trials machine you've ever ridden.

## TECHFAX



THERE'S a large heap of scrap Yamaha cylinder barrels in the corner of John Shirt's Buxton, Derbyshire workshop that testify to the amount of development and experimentation that went into producing the 330 engine. John spent over two years experimenting with inlet, transfer and exhaust port changes on the big engine. Some worked, some didn't; hence the scrap pile.

He thinks it's right now; so do Tony Scarlett and Gerald Richardson.

The 330, actual capacity 341.75cc, uses the TY350 (sold in some markets but not here) as a basis. But just about everything has been altered. It's not just a modified 350, the power characteristics are totally different.

There's a completely new crankshaft and the cases are much modded. Bore and stroke

have different dimensions, and both cylinder head and the previously mentioned barrel are totally reworked.

John has built the bike for his riders who can extract the most from it in World Championship type events. He freely admits that it's only suitable for top experts and has already rejected requests to buy one from riders who he thinks wouldn't be able to make full use of the engine's characteristics.

He has, incidentally, built a full blooded 500 for Chris Clarke — who loved it!

So what would a Shirt 330, probably the most powerful of all 'works' trials bikes cost if you could buy one?

"Well, I couldn't hope to recoup all of the hours involved in development," said John Shirt. "But I reckon I could produce one in 'R' spec for about £3600.