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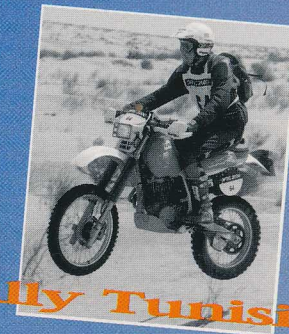
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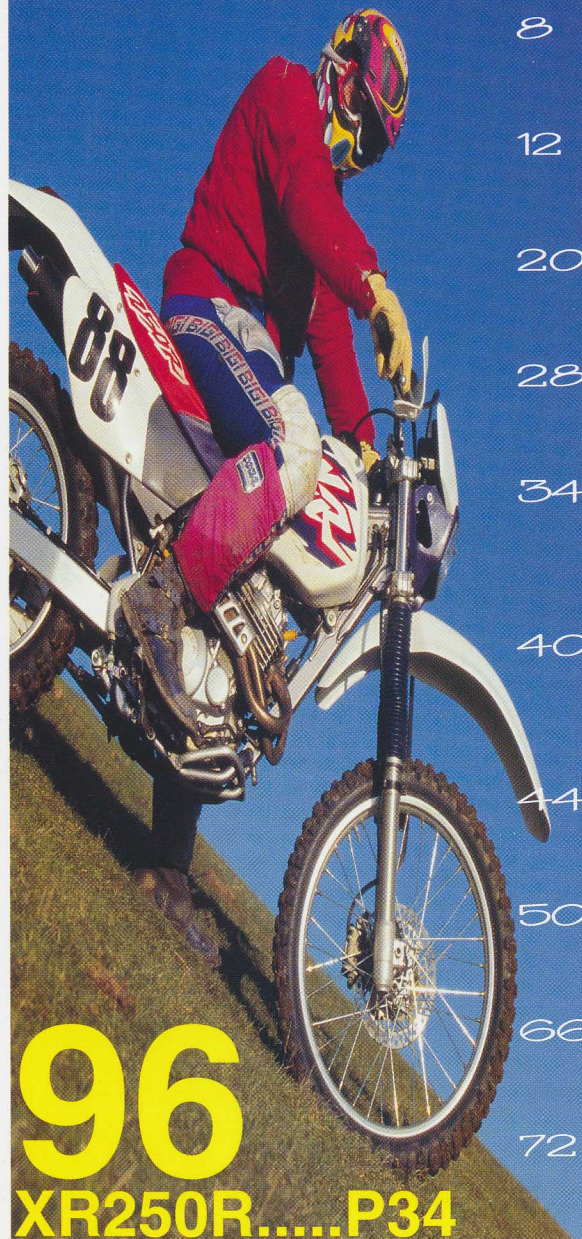
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TrailBike -4- Magazine

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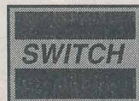
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**A**

FRICA IS A TOUGH COUNTRY - SO PEOPLE KEEP TELLING ME, BUT NOT SO TOUGH THAT YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO GO THERE. ME, I'VE JUST RETURNED FROM TEN DAYS RIDING AROUND THE TRANSVAAL IN SOUTH AFRICA AND CAN ASSURE YOU THAT THERE CAN BE FEW BETTER PLACES TO RIDE A MOTORCYCLE. WITH 30+ DEGREE TEMPERATURES, STUNNING SCENERY, AND A WEALTH OF BOTH SMOOTH TARMAC ROADS AND HARD PACKED DIRT ONES AS WELL AS THE FRIENDLIEST PEOPLE YOU'RE LIKELY TO MEET, YOU OWE IT TO YOURSELF TO GO THERE AT LEAST ONCE IN YOUR LIFETIME.

BUT THAT'S ENOUGH OF THE MUNDANE WORK OF A HUMBLE BIKE HACK, BACK HOME WE HAVE MOVED, SO IF YOU'VE BEEN TRYING TO GET HOLD OF US ON THE OLD SALISBURY NUMBER OR ADDRESS DON'T BOTHER. WE'RE NOW IN LONDON AND OUR FULL EDITORIAL ADDRESS IS TRAILBIKE MAGAZINE, PO BOX 9845, LONDON, W13 9WP. DON'T WORRY IF YOU'VE SENT STUFF TO THE OLD ONE AS ALL MAIL IS BEING FORWARDED FROM THERE TO HERE.

BY THE WAY, IF YOU'VE NEVER TRIED SKYDIVING BEFORE LET ME TELL YOU IT GIVES YOU THE SAME SORT OF ADRENALINE FIX AS THE THROTTLE JAMMING WIDE OPEN ON YOUR CR500, BUT OF COURSE IT'S MARGINALLY SAFER. AWESOME.

Si Melber

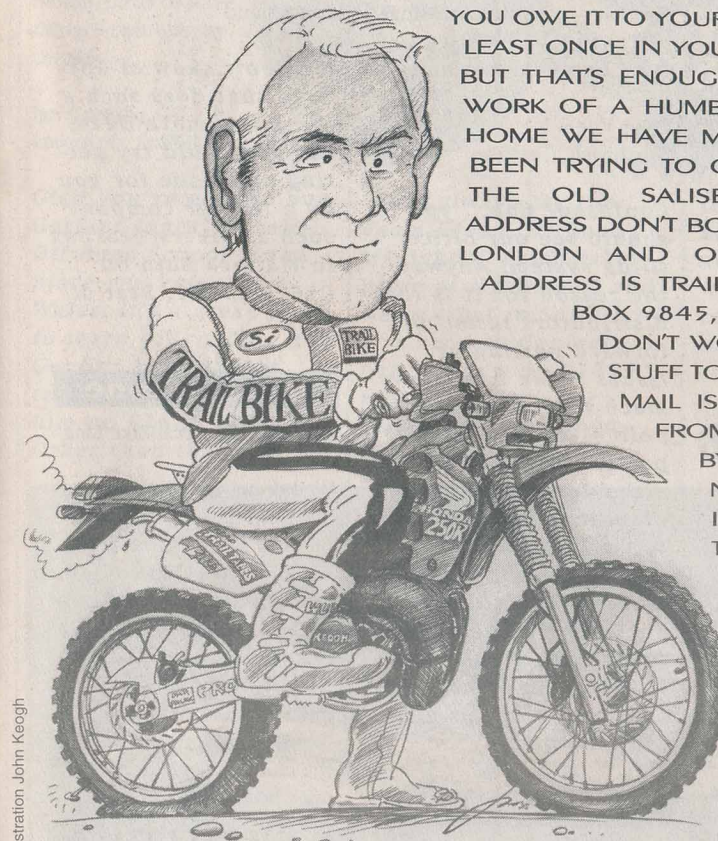


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TrailBike -5- Magazine



# Dear Trail

# Bike...

## Lights Out

Dear TrailBike Magazine

I was interested to read your article 'On the Trail of the Law' in issue 4, but can you answer one question for me? I ride an XR600R and the lights fitted to it only work when the bike's engine is running. Is this legal in the UK?

Gary Quinn  
Ware, Herts

Yes

## Confused?

Dear Si

My compliments on producing a well balanced and very interesting magazine. The overall style is both refreshing and to-the-point, while the A5 size is brilliant - although I'm not sure about black text on heavily toned backgrounds... perhaps not one of your better effects.

The calendar of events in issue 8 was really useful and I'm sure this would be very popular as a regular feature; especially if it showed what's happening in and around the UK a few months ahead. Features on clubs and some personality interviews would also be welcome as would a list of clubs and contacts and perhaps a regular column from the TRF?

'Published on the first day of every month' you may be but finding March's issue on sale at the beginning of February is a little confusing don't you think? Wishing you every success in the future.

Peter Vile  
Northwich, Cheshire

*Confused? Hah... you should see our office filing system. Anyway the reason for it is that distributors insist on forward naming of issues so we don't have much choice. The other points you mke are all pretty valid, but in order for a forward planning event calendar to work we need to receive regs from club secretaries - so how about it. Oh, and as for black text on heavily toned backgrounds it's arty innit? Er,... well,... perhaps not*

## Hide 'n' seek

Dear TrailBike Mag

Really enjoy your fresh approach to off roading. I wonder, can you help me track down a leather tool bag to attach to my Cheney Triumph 500? There used to be adverts for such a thing in the mid 80s but I haven't seen one since. It will need to be bigger than most as I have to

carry both metric and imperial spanners!

Dave Vaughan  
Sunderland

*We don't know of anybody that does such a thing any more Dave, but you could try getting one made for you by a leather company such as Bikers Gearbox in Matlock Bath on 01629 57901. Best of luck*

## Home Alone

Oh Glory Be - TrailBike Mag

Well done, you've convinced me. Yes I'm one of those people who rides a CBR600 (great handling, looks, speed).... then I bought the December issue of TBM.... Oh dear! £2,500 it cost me.... A year old DR350 now sits in my garage. I've been cold, wet, muddy, injured (broken rib), snapped the clutch lever, but never once been bored.

So far I've been out with the local TRF club, and ridden round an MX circuit a couple of times, but, but, but where can I go to learn to ride it properly? I've heard of this Yamaha School in Wales open May to December but what about now? It's ideal weather for trail riding and I'm missing out. Going on my own is dangerous and silly and I daren't do 'exciting things' on my own

in case I come off again.

So suggestions please... schools, clubs, places, other blokes/birds or anything. Great mag by the way.

Ian Greasby  
Lowestoft, Suffolk

Got an opinion?  
Then write to:  
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*Glad you've got the bug. Geraint Jones' Yamaha Off Road School is the place you refer to in Wales. It's a great place to learn off roading and Geraint is an expert teacher, you can call him on 01686 413 324. Other than that you*

*could always try the Team Green Off Road MX School which takes place at Mildenhall and Newmarket in Suffolk - You need to Contact Geoff Mayes on 01449 673140 (or see our report on it soon). As for birds!!!... well*

*there's this chick we know called Melanie and what she can do with a body belt, some cable ties and a squirt of chain lube just has to be seen to be believed. Why don't you give her a call? Her telephone number is 01*

Suzuki's DR350: Better than a CBR600?  
It is if your name happens to be Ian Greasby





**It's late February in Derbyshire and snowing heavily - it must be White Peak Trial time again. Paul Blezard packed his thermal underwear and headed north on the Suzuki DR650 test bike for a cold day's sport**



# WHITE

I first took part in the Sheffield and Hallamshire Motor Club's annual classic White Peak Trial two years ago with Head Honcho Melber when TrailBike magazine was no more than a glint in his IBM. He introduced me to a certain D Cornish esquire on the same occasion in what turned out to be the genesis of the TBM editorial team, although none of us knew it at the time.

I thoroughly enjoyed the '94 event (and the Pegaso 650 I rode it on) despite the freezing conditions, so I was keen for another go in '96. I knew that the new Suzuki DR650 (reviewed last month) was a far better tool for the job than the old faired version that Dave Cornish had struggled with in '94 (After a series of mid-section disasters he said he would rather have used his XTZ750!)

Suzuki were good enough to let us hang on to their DR650SE for a few more days and organiser Brian Woffenden was able to squeeze me in at the last minute, so come the weekend of February 17th-18th I was raring to go, but running far

behind schedule, as usual. In 1994 we'd stayed the Saturday night in the warmth and comfort of a civilised hotel at the expense of a well known northern publishing magnate; whereas this year I was all alone and didn't even leave London till 7am on the Sunday morning of the event!

However, the (t)rusty Ducato got me up to Hope in the heart of the Peak District by 10am, despite gale force winds a torrential downpour and a little stalling tantrum near Eyam. Call me a wimp, but I was damn glad I'd decided not to ride the bike all the way up from London and back.....

By the time I'd signed on and got my numbers and a bit of protective gaffer tape stuck on the Suzuki, it was snowing, I was running half an hour late and at least half the four-wheeled entry were already in front of me.

### Clean in the snow

The first section, Pindale, was only about a quarter of a mile from the start at the Blue Circle factory and I nipped to the front of the queue of waiting cars and was

waved into the section by a marshall as the snow came tumblin' down. Fortunately the ground was still reasonably firm, the standard Bridgestones gripped well, and I achieved a satisfying 'clean' with no great difficulty, but I was damn glad that I'd put some de-mister on my goggles the night before.

By now it was hard to tell when you'd returned to terra tarmac because everything was covered in the white stuff. To my surprise, I soon caught up with some more of the four wheeled competitors

lost the buckle from its waist strap - I was beginning to feel jinxed.....

A bit further on, the car in front drove straight past the turn off for the Limestone Way in another display of incompetent navigation, which at least saved me the trouble of squeezing past him.....I caught up with a jacked up VW Golf on the descent down this far-from-green lane, but then struggled to stay upright as we reached a section of muddy grass with all the adhesive qualities of oil on ice. I could tell that slippery observed sections were

# trial PEAK 96

despite having to read the directions on the move, while they all had the benefit of a dedicated navigator, not to mention a somewhat more stable vehicle. They were pussy-footing along so slowly that I got bored with following and slithered past.....

### Slip slidin' away

A couple of miles of slip-sliding on the snow further on I stopped at a Give Way sign and felt something fall in my lap - my brand new tool bag had completely detached itself, which could have been a real disaster since it contained my van keys, credit card and cash..... Fortunately I also had a rucksack to put it in, although this promptly



DR650 mounted Blez storms up one of the sections in this year's White Peak Trial to record a position of seventh in class - not bad for an old duffer on standard tyres



# WHITE PEAK

CLASSIC TRIAL

## Classic trial? Wossat?

For those who missed the September '95 issue of TBM ('So You Want to compete eh?'), a classic trial usually consists of an 80-100 mile mix of winding tarmac and challenging green lanes on which are interspersed a dozen or so 'observed sections' a few hundred yards long. Apart from accurate navigation, the object of the exercise is to ride through the sections without stopping or putting your feet down. They're nearly all on hills, and the only exception to the 'feet-up, don't stop' rule is when there's a compulsory stop and re-start box half way up just to make things trickier).

You get points every time you stop or 'foot'; the higher your score, the less likely you are to win, so the best possible score is a big fat zero, or to 'keep a clean sheet', hence the expression to 'clean' a section, meaning to ride up without 'footing'. The best known (and longest) classic trials are the Exeter, Land's End and Edinburgh organised by the Motorcycling Club or MCC, but there are many others.

Note that although many competitors choose to use 'classic' bikes (and cars), the 'classic' in classic trials refers to the nature of the competition rather than that of the machines - you can compete on as new a bike as you like, so long as it's fully road legal.

For more information contact the Association of Classic Trials Clubs. Secretary: Richard Dawe, Church Road, Richmond, Surrey, TW10 6LW. 0181 332 7035

going to be really tough on the standard tyres - most competitors use trials or enduro boots of course, but I like a bit of a challenge, and besides, I hate changing tyres!

The Bridgestones were brilliant back on the road though, and as we came off the top of the moor and down into the dales the snow had melted and I was able to streak past more wimpy tin can drivers with almost as much angle of lean as if the roads had been dry.

### Even a saint would struggle on priestcliffe

The second observed section, at Priestcliffe, near Taddington, had to be tackled by all five of the bike classes but only one of the eight car classes, and many of these most heavily modified of the four wheelers still failed to get up. (Four wheel drive is not allowed - the other seven car classes had an alternative section, Carlton Bank). Whilst waiting for one of these failures to reverse back down the section I took the opportunity to let a bit of air out of my tyres - down from 27 to about 20psi front and rear - I didn't dare go too low because neither was fitted with security bolts.

'Priestcliffe' turned out to be one of the toughest sections out of the ten in the trial - only one of the 58 solos managed to clean it (congratulations Philip Gaunt on a TT350). It looked innocent enough, but the twin ruts were really deep and narrow, and the ground between and outside them was incredibly slippery, as I discovered when, while still on a 'clean', I climbed out of the rut about a third of the way up and immediately lost nearly all my forward motion as the rear wheel spun uselessly. I ended up doing a lot of footing, but at least managed a 6 rather

than the maximum 12 for a failure.

At the end of the green lane I met the first bike I'd seen all day - and to my surprise realised it was David Taylor from Derby with his KTM620EGS whom I'd last seen in Ireland on the Rally of Discovery. He'd had some trouble with his carb icing up but had managed to get his big banger going again and we continued together for a while across the snow-covered moorland roads and trails.

### Litton slack bites back

The route took us in a circle south of the A6 then north of Ashford-in-the-Water to the the beautifully picturesque Monsal Head. A little further on was 'Litton Slack', which I first rode back in 1983 on a Suzuki SP370 in the MCC's Edinburgh Trial. The approach to Litton was hairier than the section itself, since we had to squeeze past a long queue of cars with a precipitous drop off on one side and slippery grass underfoot but I'd finally got ahead of most of the cars and caught up with the last of the bikes.

The grassy area around the bottom of the section was so slippery I could hardly stand up on it and unfortunately a rather impatient VW Golf driver had parked himself too close to it; I needed help just to get to the 'Section Begins' sign. When I finally got away, amid mucho wheelspin, I was so wound up that I completely forgot that I was supposed to be doing a stop and re-start half way up, so all my gung-ho feet-up riding was wasted as the marshal gave me a 12 for not getting feet-up soon enough

### Huck me... Hucklow's hard!

It was only four miles to the next observed section at Hucklow Bank, which I recognised from 1994, although this year there was a 'sting in the tail' because we

were directed up a steep left turn half way through, which made it a real challenge. Unfortunately I'd already come to a dead stop within yards of the start on a relatively easy part, so once more, my heroic climb through the tricky stuff counted for nowt as I scored another maximum 12 - curses!

At the top I stopped to take some pictures of Charles King struggling with his stalled CCM/Armstrong 500; the electric start was whirring uselessly and he had to resort to the kickstart to get it going again - he got up eventually but retired shortly afterwards. I also got chatting with XR600-mounted Mike Paige who turned out to be even more of a masochist than me - he'd driven up alone in his van all the way from Devon that morning - and he'd also gone to Hope in Staffordshire by mistake along the way

Mike, who uses a lightweight Yamaha Serow in the tougher classic trials, was suffering from an over-optimistic lack of clothing and his hands were freezing so I lent him my spare gloves. I'd taken no chances on the clobber front myself - I was wearing long johns, thick lined leather trews and lined Rukka overtrousers plus T-shirt, motocross shirt, Guernsey sweater and ProTek winter jacket up top - and I never got overheated!

Mike and I linked up with XR250 rider Dennis Sumner from Wilmslow and the three of us rode together for the rest of the trial - that's one of the great things about these events; by their very nature they encourage camaraderie and even if you start alone, there's a good chance that you'll have found a kindred spirit by the end of the day.

How will Blezard survive the ordeal? Part two next month...



# BIKES Staff

Over the past few months we've been busy changing, modifying and maintaining our own trail bikes for the forthcoming year. Here's what we've been up to...

## The Editor

After four years of faithful service it was time for the XT350 and I to part company. With reliability and ruggedness on its side not to mention incredible fuel economy the XT had earned its stripes, but now it was time for a change. Any bike that spends its time at the TBM office must be multifarious in its versatility. As capable of zipping across town to the Frog and Firkin, as chugging down a boggy green lane. I wanted a bike I could trail ride on, enter some long distance trials, use in an enduro, rally it and finally - and most importantly - a bike I would enjoy riding.

I've always been a fan of four strokes, and in a way it was because of this that I decided to reacquaint myself with the joys (and aromas) of stokers. I decided that the bike I needed should be light and powerful, easy to ride, not too tall, and just plain bonkers when it was wound open. In short I needed a CRM.

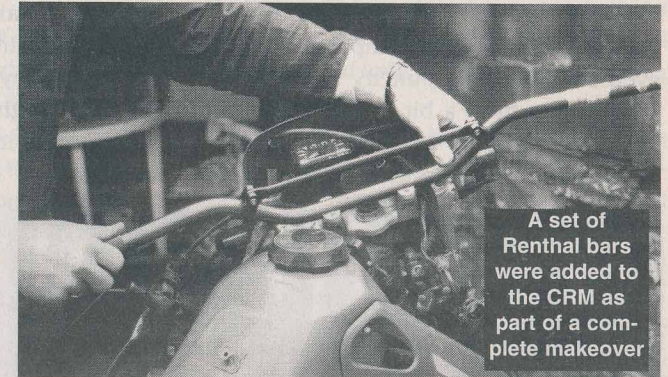
For those of you that don't already know it, Honda's CRM250 is a Japanese trail bike imported to these shores by one of the number of so-called 'grey importers'. Ours came from The Container Company in Norfolk (Tel: 01362 698147) and was a MK1 model (the main difference being (now) trendy conventional forks on the earlier one). The bike itself is based loosely on the CR motocrosser; it uses a CR frame and some of the plastics but that's about as far as the comparison goes. The engine is totally different reflecting the CRM's road-oriented persuasion. Those of you thinking that it's not really a trail bike, but a thinly disguised racer should look again. The CRM comes with a steel tank, full instrumentation and lighting, indicators, auto lubrication and the neatest set of pillion foot-

A Honda CRM250 now resides at the editorial office, having replaced the trusty XT350

pegs I've ever come across. It's also geared for the road with a 43 tooth rear sprocket, and a widely spaced set of ratios - and of course it's quiet too. Best of all it doesn't have a towering seat height which means footing is no problem out on the trail.

Ever since Kawasaki dropped the much-loved KMX200 from its model range there's been a need for a medium capacity two stroke trailbike to fill the vacuum. 125s are alright but they lack a bit of oomph on the road, or else are so highly tuned, the low end response is absent altogether. The CRM on the other hand has buckets of torque available just the second you require it. It also has enough zip on the road to comfortably crack 85mph, and weighs no more (in many cases less) than the current crop of 125s and certainly less than the old KMX200.

Until I bought the CRM, I'd forgotten just how much fun a light two stroke trailie could be; on tarmac there's a constant surge of seamless power whenever the throttle is flung open accompanied by a corresponding ringing in your eardrums. Off road they feel somehow lighter than equivalent weight four strokes and there's always



A set of Renthal bars were added to the CRM as part of a complete makeover



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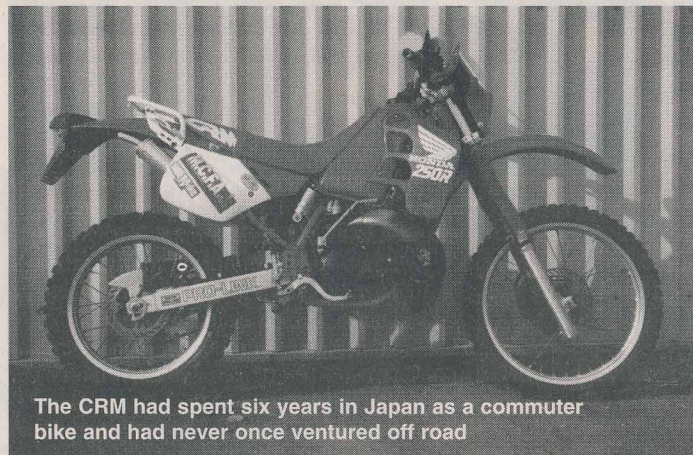




# BIKES Staff



plenty of power available to unstick the rear or hoist the front end. Riding in the company of the new XR250 (see elsewhere in this issue for the full test) the CRM felt potent where the XR could seem breathless. In fact the CRM compares well with even something as punchy as an XR600. Okay it can hunt a bit at low speed, and the fuel economy is the equivalent of lighting your ciggies with rolled up ten-



The CRM had spent six years in Japan as a commuter bike and had never once ventured off road

ners, but frankly these inconveniences disappear the second you turn the twist-grip and the exhaust crackles its intentions.

So the CRM was the first choice of bike though I could've opted for a KDX200SR or a TS200R, but the Honda felt the nicest of the three. Over the winter we took a look at what needed doing to it in order to make it even better. As you know with any bike - particularly ones used off road - there's a certain amount of fettling needed before it feels just right and a certain amount of essential equipment needed to

be added.

A set of Renthal Handlebars were the first addition. Not only are Renthals practically indestructible in normal everyday use, they're also light, affordable and best of all made in Britain. Onto these went a set of Kobby Grip handgrips courtesy of Venhill Engineering (01306 885111). These come in a variety of flashy colours and have a chamfered outer flange to avoid blistered palms. They also come with built in grooves to allow them to be lockwired in place (a good idea if you're planning on going anywhere near water). After I broke a lever falling off while competing in a long distance trial on Exmoor, a set of Acerbis Handguards were grafted on and there's subsequently been no more

lever losing incidents. Both wheels came ready drilled with rimlock holes but none were fitted, so a rear rimlock was added to allow the possibility of lowering tyre pressures in soft going. Finally I binned the old chain and replaced it with a DID X-Ring From Bickers Anglia (01473 745131), which is reckoned to be the last word in reliability when it comes to off roading.

And talking of reliability the CRM's not been completely faultless; recently the water-pump oil seal and bearing needed replacing and the wait for spares was a rather frustrating two and a half weeks.

There's still a few things I want to do to the CRM, the seat could do with being re-covered, the forks want revalving, and I'd like to fit some wider footpegs for more comfort off road, but in the meantime the bike is being fettled for some trail riding in Wales, a rally raid in Normandy, and then the Cambrian Rally at Easter. Can't wait. **Si Melber**

## The Crasher

Eighteen months and 6000 hard miles have passed since my torrid relationship with the big Cagiva began. Ownership has been a mixture of ecstasy and heartbreak, but all in all I can forgive my mistress's tantrums and expensive tastes because when the bike's fuel injected throttles are yanked open the Ducati engine responds with an urgency no other trailbike can match.

The 900 has proved itself to be extremely versatile, it's been used for greenlaning, scratching, touring, rallying and when an urgent appointment at the other end of the country has to be kept the Cagiva is always the first choice of transport.

Bolt-on goodies for the 900 are about as rare as Iraqi protest songs, so David Covell at Norfolk Fabrications (01692 536677) came up with some well made (and good looking) bark busters (lever guards), an extended sumpshield and a luggage rack extension amongst other things and he's now in the process of fabricating a revolving road book holder.

However on the downside the bike's appetite for spares (and

servicing) is quite alarming. The regulator failed (which cooked the battery) at the 7000 mile mark, the oil cooler hose's alloy fittings corroded away to dust necessitating a call to Goodridge UK (01392 369090) who performed miracles with a combination of new hoses and some of the original fittings. When chain and sprockets needed renewing a 15 tooth front was purchased from Chainmail (01342 717182) which replaced the standard 14 tooth item and allowed a more relaxed cruising speed with no noticeable affect on acceleration.

I'd expected the bike's first MOT to be a mere formality but oh no! Despite a regular diet of rear brake pads the disc failed due to being worn past it's serviceable limit and the continental-dip headlamp has only just been replaced after a seven month wait for the factory to manufacture some UK-legal replacements. To be fair the importers (Three Cross) made no charge for the lamp unit but the new one can't be fitted with halogen bulbs and the loom required a certain amount of hacking to accommodate the new fittings.

With the onset of winter I decided to strip the bike down and see just how well it had coped with 12000 miles of varied



Here's Crasher Cornish leading the twin cylinder class with his 900 Elephant at last year's Cambrian Rally. Don't look so surprised, this sort of thing is a daily occurrence in the Crasher household



# BIKES Staff



use. The motor was despatched to my local dealer for valve shim adjustment which turned out to be rather more expensive than I had hoped. Both exhaust valve guides were worn out which explained the puff of blue smoke on start up. To replace the guides with the improved later type and shim up the Desmo valve gear left little change from 300 quid, add to this the service parts, cam belts, fuel, air and oil filters etc and another 100 sovs departed the 'Crasher' bank account. Ducati motors love high grade engine oils and as the temperature inside the oil cooled lump can exceed 110 degrees during the short summer months I've stuck four litres of Denicol's (01327 301322) finest synthetic lube in the sump, after all if it's good enough for the world champion works Husky team it should stand up to my occasional mis-timed gear changes.

Cosmetically the ravages of the British climate haven't been too kind either, so the alloy frame cradle, forks and various bits and pieces were given to The

Corrosion Centre (01493 842605) who did a superb job of blasting them clean using a special alloy shot so the following painting process didn't require an expensive acid based primer. Then an inspection of the swing-arm and linkage revealed a rooted set of needle roller bearings and seals, and called for a trip to the local bearing factor.

As the Cagiva spends much of its life at high speeds on tarmac I decided to let Pro Racing (01327 301322) stiffen up the unadjustable Marzocchi forks to avoid excessive dive when hard on the brakes. The previously soggy front end is now a perfect match for the excellent fully adjustable rear Ohlins unit and should help me to keep up on the Sunday morning scratch.

Talking of which, riding the bike hard for any length of time has the front brake fading, the fluid boiling and the lever trapping your fingers against the bar. Bleeding the system restores the brake pressure but a more suitable remedy was needed. A phone call to Venhill Engineering (01306 885111) had some plastic coated, stainless steel, braided brake hoses arrive on my doorstep, and these combined with the latest pads from Dunlop and silicone fluid had the elephant's single front disc transformed.

One of the benefits of fuel injection is the super-light throttle action, but even this was improved after fitting a

Featherlight cable (again from Venhill), which runs in a Teflon coated tube. In fact the throttle is now so light I thought the end had come adrift - it really does make that much difference.

Of course fuel injection has many advantages over carbs and one avenue we plan to follow is the black art of re-chipping the ECU for more power. This combined with a K&N filter, flowed heads and a decent pipe could release another 15+hp (we hope). The original heavy and restrictive silencer was refitted after an experiment with a Ducati 888 carbon can ended up looking like an exploding cigar. And I also plan to make the 900 a more practical bike by fitting some touring luggage in the form of a Givi rear box (from Bickers Anglia 01473 745131) and a centre stand to make maintenance and wheel changing a lot less traumatic. To really get the best from it though a super moto 17" front wheel may be slotted in allowing the use of some soft compound rubber and possibly a larger disc to enable me to stuff it up the inside of the local hot shot hero at the forthcoming Cadwell Italian Owners Club track day.

Despite all of the hassles and expense I've endured over the last 18 months it only takes a few miles to forgive my hot blooded Latin beauty for all her faults. For me riding the big Cagiva has put the fun back into biking. Okay, I know it's a handful on the dirt but I was leading last year's twin cylinder class at the Cambrian rally by a country mile until the very last special stage when I lived up to my 'Crasher' tag and dumped it in a ditch.

Practicality and brilliant pose value means my love affair with the 900 will continue..... well at least until Cagiva launch the 900 Grand Canyon. Now that really sounds like fun. **Dave 'Crasher' Cornish**

## The Freeloader

My five year old XR has still done less than 10,000 miles from new, but, like the editor, it definitely looks its age. Herr Melber is always telling me to spruce it up and splash out on some new plastics but I can't see the point: I've always been more interested in function rather than form where bikes are concerned. However, the XR was unable to function legally after it ignominiously failed its MoT back in January, so that precipitated some long overdue treatment in the workshop.

The twin causes of MoT failure were a front disc worn as thin as a meat slicer (there's not a lot to them to start with) and rear wheel bearings worn out for the third time - an average of only 3,000 miles a set.

We wondered if the bearing spacer might be slightly too short, so that tight-

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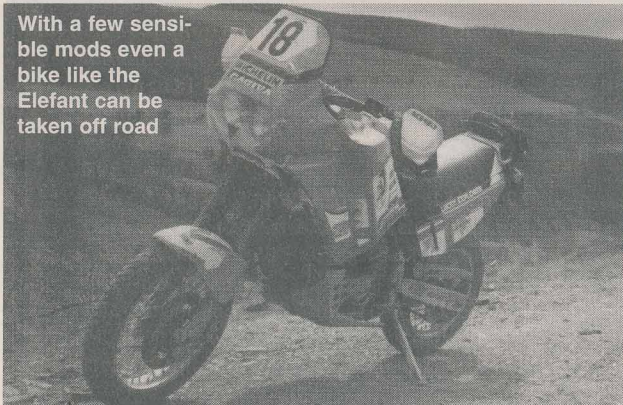
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With a few sensible mods even a bike like the Elefant can be taken off road





# BIKES Staff



ening the rear wheel nut was putting pressure on the bearings, but when my old mate and fellow XR600 owner Bob Farnham measured it up with his micrometer he found it to be spot on. He put my problems down to jet washing, but my bike gets a loss less hosing down than most, and besides the front bearings have never given trouble, so I'm still puzzled. Any ideas?

It was just as well that we'd taken the XR down to Bob's workshop near Hildenborough (Kent) because it was one hell of a job to get the rear axle out - it needed a series of hefty clouts with a heavy duty mallet despite regular use of copperslip - honest. I was also able to make use of a couple of spare spokes which Bob had bought but never needed. There was only one broken spoke but we had to take two out to get the new one in and one of those got quite badly bent in the process, so we renewed both.

I also replaced the trials tyre fitted for the long distance Witley trial with an old enduro item that I had lying about and promptly punctured the inner tube trying to fit it - much to the assembled company's amusement. I tried to blame the editor who'd been 'helping' me but he denied all responsibility so my reputation for spannering remains where it always was - rock bottom.

The next job was to replace the knackered chain and sprockets (complete with two spring links). A previous supplier who shall remain nameless had furnished me with a dodgy rear sprocket which had been the devil's own job to fit because the

mounting holes were drilled too small and not countersunk and the inside hole was much too big - it had actually come loose in use and I only managed to secure it firmly by screwing the bolts so tight that they countersunk themselves into the soft alloy. That was a 41 toother, which is ideal for the road, but was a bit tall for enduros and I'd returned to the standard 48T sprocket for my ill-fated outing in the Talybont enduro last November.

I've now settled on a compromise 44T in steel from B&C which I'm happy to report bolted straight on. It's more unsprung weight but should last a lot longer. (I've stuck with a standard 14T up front). The top of the range 'X' profile 'O'-ring chain they supplied came with a soft link only. Still at the back of the bike, the original Honda tool tray had been torn to pieces so I replaced it with an Acerbis item bought from In Chains, along with a host of other goodies (bark busters, bar pad with clock, wire rear brake protector, tool roll etc.). I use a total loss gel battery in the tool tray to power the rear brake light and horn, but ideally it should go elsewhere - I've had one nicked already. Behind the left sidepanel is the standard modification, but that requires a new part to be made or bought.

As I was re-fitting the rear wheel: disaster. A chunk of the alloy bracket onto which the rear caliper mounts just fell in half. It was the bit which acts as a spacer between the hub and the swinging arm and it broke at the very vulnerable point where there's a steel locating pin shrunk fit into it. This part is one of the most

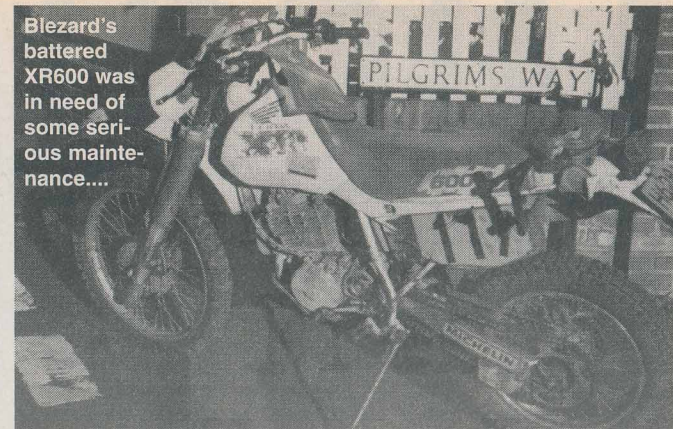
badly designed bits of metal on the whole bike - the other end of it had previously worn out and caused my rear pads to self-eject in Ireland and was only resurrected by the miraculous abilities of Technoweld. I'll be amazed if Technoweld can save the day again - the alternative is to buy a replacement part for £60 which is all too likely to fail again.

I've mended my much-bashed cheapo enduro headlight with a bit of old plastic car bumper that I found lying in the road. I really ought to improve the wiring connections though - they have a nasty habit of refusing to carry current and plunging me into total darkness at the most awkward moments - such as when I'm trying to ride on unlit roads with no brakes in the middle of Ireland.....

Up front I'm planning to replace the worn out disc with a replacement from PFM and I've also splashed out on a set of Renthals to replace the slightly skewed original bars. On removing the tank we discovered why my throttle has been so sloppy recently - the lock nut had come loose and the cable was flopping about all over the place.

The tank needs new decals and the seat could do with re-covering, but hell, that's just cosmetics. More important is a bash plate, although fitting one now is a bit like taking the pill after you're already

Bleazard's battered XR600 was in need of some serious maintenance....



...unfortunately it wasn't going to get any until the hand of God intervened and the bike failed its MoT. Butcher Bleazard set to work and the result is history. Frame rails show the damage inflicted on the sorry XR thanks to a lack of bashplate



pregnant, since my frame tubes have already been bashed nearly flat by rocks. Why don't those cheapskates at Honda fit one as standard, as they always used to for the XL/XR500s?

The heart of the beast is still beating like a lion's - all I ever do is change the oil every couple of thousand miles and fit a new filter every other time. Since last year I've also been using Activ 8 - an expensive but very effective oil additive after seeing a very impressive demonstration of its lubricating qualities at the Ally Pally show. This time I might even treat the XR to a tappet check before I put it back on the road... but then again why break the habits of a lifetime. **Paul Bleazard**



# MISSION

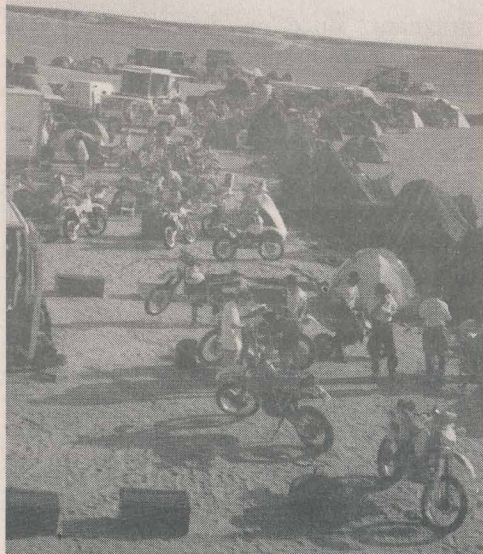
i m p o s s i b l e

This month the Optic 2000 Tunis Rally takes place in North Africa. Last year privateer Charles Thompson thought he'd have a crack at it on his XR600R. Here's what happened...



Tunis Rally day five....

The starter's hand came down in front of my goggles, fingers extended, twice in quick succession. Ten seconds to go. A quick glance at the road book to re-cap, 7.6km bearing 65 degrees and to the left of the flat topped hill visible in the distance beyond the dunettes (only about 3-6 feet high). The hand re-appeared and stayed this time, five fingers, four, three, two, one, GO. I gave the XR600 a handful and dropped the clutch. About ten metres later there was a loud bang and I was free-wheeling to a halt to a round of applause from the rest of the waiting competitors.



Flying high above the Tunisian desert Charles Thompson was about to come down to earth with a bang

The Tunis Rally had until this time turned out to be fun but fairly uneventful, my accomplice Ian and I had breezed through the control technic in Saint Tropez, met up with Daniel Theric of Crocodil Motor who was to cart our bags etc, crossed the Med, ridden to Tozeur, and had completed the first four days of the rally with far fewer problems than I had ever anticipated. I had finished well each day, in the 20s and 30s out of 120, and even leading a well known KTM enduro champ on day one! The only really worrying time for me so far had been the loss of my bike registration document which had to be produced umpteen times

for various over zealous Tunisian officials. Turning my insurance green card into a bogus document had solved that little problem however.

Now, on day five, things were getting more interesting. I had a split link, but no chain breaker, so I had to learn the French word 'derive-chaine' and find one amongst the other competitors. The repair was simple luckily and I set off over the dunettes having lost only about ten or fifteen minutes. The terrain soon changed to mostly rocky tracks and I was able to make good time, just getting back into the swing of things when I hit a rock with the front wheel and suffered a compression



# MISSION

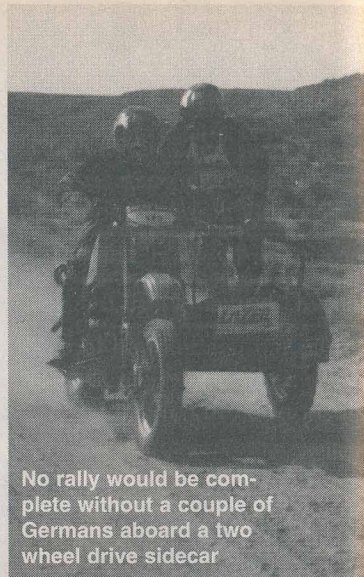
i m p o s s i b l e

“ I heard a call on the radio...  
'rider number 64 has  
crashed, send a helicopter'

puncture. I had forgotten to raise the tyre pressures from the previous day which had been a series of glorious dunes and compass navigation. No big problem, ready for punctures I had a spare tube in my bag which I fitted, again loosing only about fifteen minutes.

I had just come to the conclusion that things were not really going my way that day when I collected another front puncture. After suffering a little on day one I had decided to reduce the weight of my bag by carrying just one spare (front) tube and no patches etc, so a second puncture was a major problem. The only thing to do was to continue gently and try not to damage the

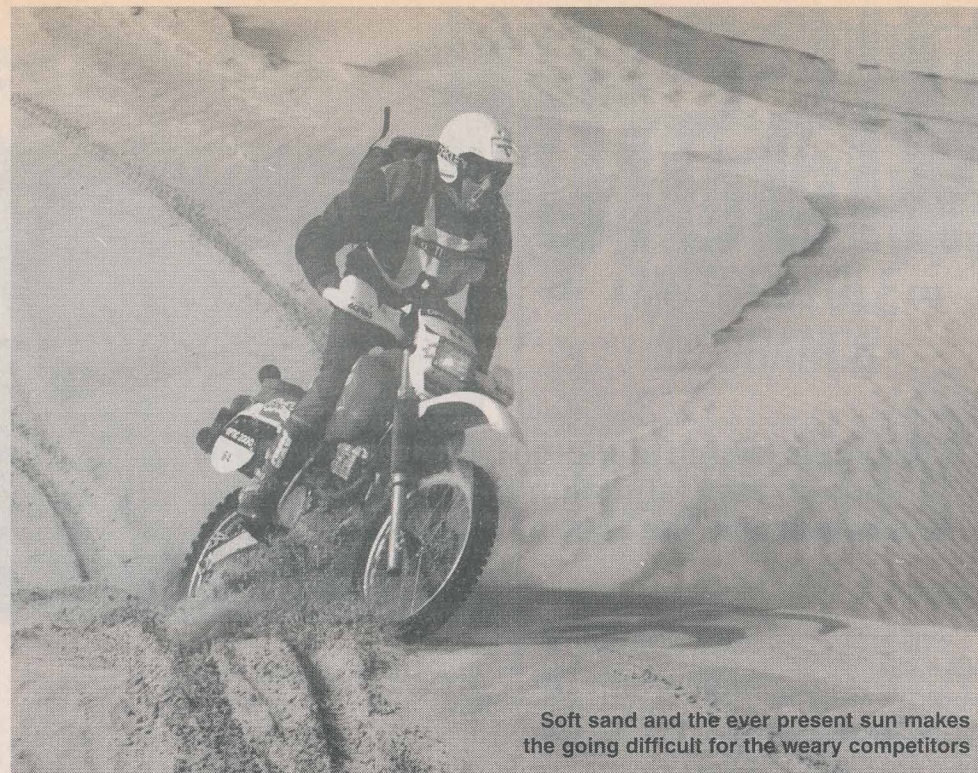
rim in the next 150km of the stage. I carried my holed tube around my neck and waved it at the other bikers as they caught up and passed me, but the response was always the same 'desole mais J'ai des mousses' (sodding Michelin Mousses again!). After 20km or so I was becoming fairly adept at keeping the front wheel out of trouble, and had almost stopped scaring myself by running off on the corners when there was a bang and the rear wheel locked up. I recognised the noise instantly. My chain, new at the start of the rally, had broken in two separate places this time and locked up the back wheel. The situation looked impossible, the



No rally would be complete without a couple of Germans aboard a two wheel drive sidecar

chain had smashed off the schrader valve on the rear shock reservoir before jamming up the gearbox sprocket and cracking the stator casing with the other end wrapped up into the gap between the sprocket and the spokes. I spent some time disassembling the guides and loosening spokes etc to extricate the chain and had nearly finished when Ian turned up. The chain had one break on an outside link, and a separate one on an inside link, I had no more spares and neither did Ian, so we decided that I should take a ride with him to the next check point which we reckoned was 8km away.

Ian had somehow left his bag with all his sup-



Soft sand and the ever present sun makes the going difficult for the weary competitors

plies (radio beacon etc) at the previous check so, thinking that I was out of the running, I gave him mine before he continued on the last 75km of the section to the finish of the day's special stage. The check where he had left me consisted of a Land-Rover parked up in the middle of nowhere manned by two holidaying gendarmes complete with deck chairs, table and umbrella! As the remaining competitors came past they had to stop to have their cards stamped and their times were relayed by satellite to

rally HQ both at the bivouac and in Paris. Taking advantage of the necessity to stop I was able gradually to amass more spares including another 'derive-chaine' and some split links. By about three in the afternoon I had gathered what I hoped were enough supplies and was ready to set off when we heard a call on the radio; 'biker number 64 has crashed badly, his beacon has gone off please send the rescue helicopter'. Unfortunately the check operators noticed I was wearing my number

64 race bib and so I had to spend some time explaining the rucksack muddle and how it must be Ian that was in trouble. Hoping for the best for Ian I set off on foot back along the track to try to repair the bike.

I walked and I walked. I drank a litre of water. My feet started to suffer and I lay down in a little shade by a low wall to recover. As I continued walking I kept convincing myself that the bike was just round the next corner, over the next brow, in the next waddi, all the time hopping off the



# MISSION

i m p o s s i b l e

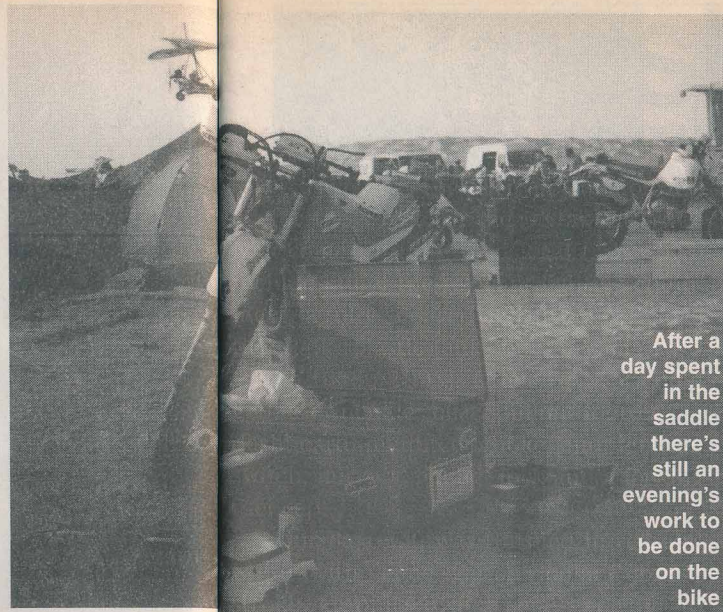
“ When I eventually got to the bike I just lay down beside it and drank the last of my water

track to get out of the way of the tail enders now coming through in the opposite direction. Most realised what I was up to, having seen my bike by the track further back, and asking those that stopped how much further it was proved more confusing than ever when the estimated distances varied such that it appeared I was walking backwards! A medical team came past and told me I was mad, and I kept recalling the story told me the previous evening by an Israeli, Raz Heymann, who had competed in the Pharaohs Rally and run out of fuel whilst lost. He had waited for two days by his bike before realising that his

radio beacon had failed and then walked 30km across the desert following his GPS before finding a road.

The last rally vehicle I saw on my walk was a large black Chevrolet truck with sinister smoked windows which cruised to a halt beside me. The window my side purred down and, together with a blast of cold air and stereo music, a fist came out and opened releasing a quantity of orange peel onto the ground beside my feet. Charming, I thought. But then the hand reappeared presenting me with the orange ready to eat! The middle aged couple inside were just cruising the rally in their truck,

doing their own thing at their own speed and taking advantage of the facilities provided by the organisation. They supplied me with a further three oranges before continuing on their way. When I eventually came up to the bike I lay down beside it and drank the last of my water and ate my last orange. Now I was committed to either getting going again, or waiting for the sweeper truck to pick me up in the early hours of the morning to get into the bivouac at about nine am, out of the competition. The bodged chain repairs (one inside link had snapped on one side) did not take long, but I had nothing to fix the front puncture.



After a day spent in the saddle there's still an evening's work to be done on the bike

I re-set my trip meter before riding back up the track. The two gendarmes greeted me as though I had been gone for a month when I arrived at their check for a second time. We checked my trip meter, 12.5km, if I'd known that I never would have set off on foot. I dismissed their remarks about my front puncture with a brave 'No problem.'

The truth was however, that riding the last 75km with my flat front tyre was not appealing, but I knew that if I stayed on the right route the gendarmes would eventually collect me if I broke down again, anything rather than the ignominy of the sweeper truck. By this time I was really determined to beat this stage so I set off into the dusk. It quite quickly became dark and I was experiencing more and more difficulty navigating using the road book and trip meter that I had mounted on the handlebars. All my supplies including my torch had gone with Ian, and I was at a loss to see anything when I remembered my cigarette lighter

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# MISSION

i m p o s s i b l e



“By now there was a tinkling noise coming from the front wheel as spokes started to depart in all directions

which I had kept in my pocket. With no wind to snuff it out the flame gave just enough light to see by.

Suddenly I caught sight of an XR600 parked up by the track, in the gloom at the edge of my headlight beam I was unable to read the number as I passed but realised that it must be Ian's. Now there was a tinkling noise coming from the front wheel, which when investigated proved to be spokes which had started to depart due to the vibrations incurred whilst running flat. A few of the studs had vanished but I secured some zip ties around the crosses. As I prepared to set off again I noticed some headlights in the far distance behind me appearing and disappearing as a vehicle approached, assuming

it to be my gendarmes, and feeling a little exposed by this time, I waited. When the little Suzuki 4X4 finally drew up, a Tunisian leant out of the window and demanded directions to the nearest road! They had a torch, and I had my road book, so we pooled resources for a while, (when they stopped I borrowed their torch and gave directions before proceeding again), but I soon realised that they were going too slowly for me even with my flat tyre, and I abandoned them. Eventually I arrived at the finish control and bivouac site at around 11pm (on previous days I had been in by two o'clock). Ian was in the hospital tent with a very nasty smashed shoulder but was sedated and I could do no more than

give a little moral support before going to sort myself out. Food and water first, then the bike under the lights of Daniel's wonderful truck, finally pitching my tent and sleep.

The remaining two days of the event passed like the first four, superb riding, great fun, but with the time penalties accrued on day five my finishing position was way down. Although I enjoyed every day of the rally, ultimately it was day five which really made the event an adventure for me and provides the finest memories and stories. The new friends made, experience gained, lessons learned, will all hopefully stand me in good stead for my '96 assault in a couple of weeks time....

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# The rough guide to Britain

OS maps 185,186 & 197

## South East Hampshire has a wealth of green lanes just waiting to be explored by the adventurous trail rider. Dave Tilbury guides you on a tour of some of the best...



Hampshire is, compared to many counties, great for trail riding with around 530km of

RUPPs and byways. There are also about 150km of Unclassified County Roads. A good day out can be had here by riding only the recognised vehicular rights of way. But for those in the know there are probably another 150km of lanes that are recorded at a lower status - or not recorded at all - but which were set out as public carriage roads and have never been stopped up. You know the sort of thing: 12m-wide lanes waymarked 'footpath'.

The county can easily be divided into quarters. The south west has very few 'green lanes' scattered around the edge of the New Forest. Ideal for a two up summer ride, taking in the coast and the forest, with a picnic, on a big trailie. The north west, to include a slice of Wiltshire and Berkshire, has several days worth of easy riding for any size bike - unless wet. The ground is high giving excellent views, but most importantly, the high density of

RUPPs and byways means very few tarmac miles. North east Hampshire has a

few lanes worth riding but with the penalty of considerable road miles in between. I usually include some of these in a West Sussex or Surrey ride as links on the way home.

The area of Hampshire I shall cover here is the South East. It is a densely populated area, having Southampton, Fareham and Portsmouth within its bounds, from whence come the largest number of 'Is there anywhere to ride around here' type inquiries. This area also has some of the most challenging lanes, and if you're prepared to work at it you can get by on virtually anything.

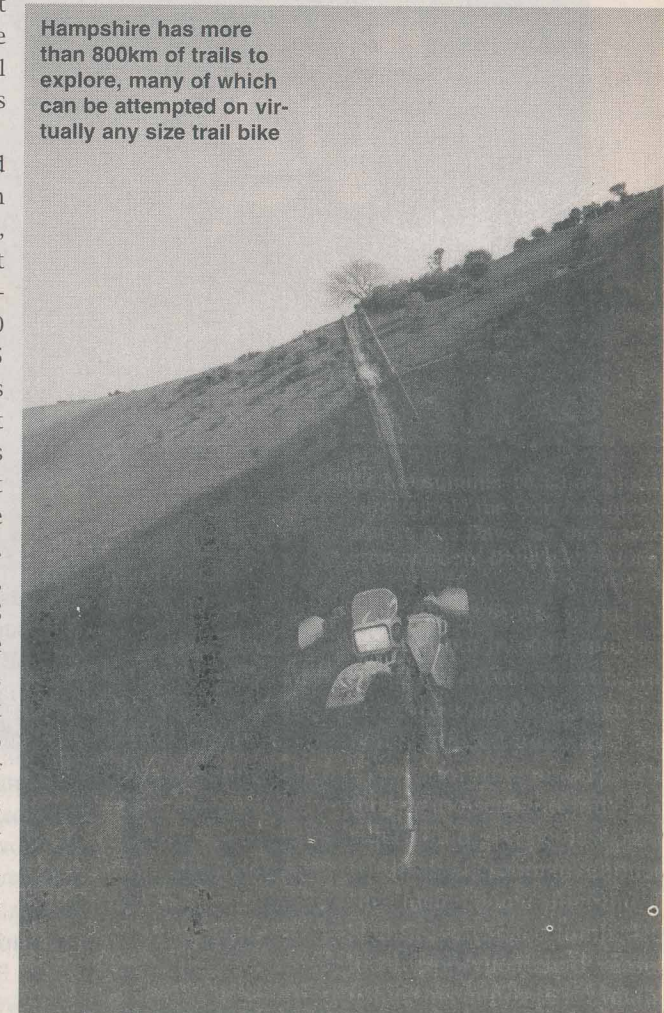
There are about 20km of lanes along the north east edge of Landranger 196 that are well worth riding but for the meantime I have chosen to start from Bishops Waltham as there is fuel and breakfast to be had near the roundabout on the B2177. Set off through the town to

Hoe (567,174) where the first lane begins just below the 'e' - West Hoe Lane. Follow this 'white' through to Upper Swanmore and on towards Soberton. From this second section of UCR there are excellent views across to the Isle of Wight. (Incidentally the black dashes north from Hoe just near the start mark a great little lane down to the Hampshire Bowman, a lovely country pub well used by motorcyclists that has good ale and food).

On rejoining the tarmac head toward Soberton, turning north on the 'yellow' that runs parallel to, and east of, the A32, then first right onto Crockhorn Lane, another 'white'. On reaching the B2150 make your way east for about 3.5 miles to HMS Mercury (which is not at all what it sounds like, but rather a collection of buildings owned by the admiralty) at (675,192), then it's green lane northward all the way to Drayton. Alternatively, for the best views, head east again from HMS Mercury, via the byway along the top of Hyden Hill, to Butser Hill, then take Limekiln Lane (left just before the car park) north to Leythe House (700,215) or, if you're feeling really adventurous take the right fork down the valley towards Ramsdean. Either way you can then take your pick of the lanes east of East Meon. Although the shortest, my favourite is Gravel Lane, north from (686,222).

From Ramsdean (705,225) ride the byway north-east to Stroud. Take a right onto the A272 then left after about 600m and left again at the little chapel to Lythe Farm and the climb to Ridge Top. Follow the byway toward Stoner Hill, keeping right at the end of Ridge Top as if you

Hampshire has more than 800km of trails to explore, many of which can be attempted on virtually any size trail bike





# The Rough Guide to Britain

This is the aptly named water lane, and an R100GS piloted by a certain Mr Blezard wedged fast by its panniers



were going towards the village of Steep. But instead, turn left at the tarmac and back up the hill turning right at the top into Cockshott Lane - if this excellent piece of road has not already persuaded you to return home for the road bike!

Turn left at (741,272) to descend the easy way. If wet chalk can be described as

easy, and at the tarmac go straight on, then left where the road turns right and follow the black dashes to Hawkley. Make your own way north to Selbourne taking in as many of the RUPPs or byways as you feel you have time for. A worthwhile detour would be west of Vann Farm (739,307), Buttons Lane and Holtham Lane, then on to Shotters lane north of (715,324). But it's not ideal for big bikes!

If food and ale are of higher priority than 'serious' riding then the White Horse at Priors Dean could be an interesting diversion (714,290). Set in the middle of nowhere the building has great character. The graffiti on the wall in the gents once made the pages of one of

the better 'male interest' magazines some 20 years ago - so I'm told!

Now, take a right in the middle of Selborne, alongside the inn (741,336), following the narrow tarmac lane down to a car parking area through which you ride on to Priory Farm and Candovers. From West Worldham anyone with any sense

will take the B3004 into Alton for fuel, coffee in the station car park and a look at the steam locos on the Watercress Line. Those with the skill and ability of a trials rider will head north from (740,369) along Water Lane. When the stream is not flowing too deeply the grooves caused by cart wheels are to be seen worn into the bed rock. This deeply sunken lane was mentioned by the naturalist Gilbert White (1720 to 1793) who lived nearby at Selborne, and really is one of the trickiest but best green lanes I've come across - well worth a visit if you're feeling confident.

Okay, you have covered about 55 to 60km (36 miles). The plethora of lanes marked on sheet 185 between here and Bishop's Waltham provide a choice between heading straight back or playing for another couple of days. The following is an almost tarmac free compromise.

Leave Alton on the Medstead Road to (670,375) where you could head north west along Jenny Green Lane right through to Bradley. At (627,420) bear left onto Down Lane (marked Ox Drove Way) and follow this through to (581,384) and on to (592,371). From Bugmore Hill follow the RUPP and UCR to (622,379) just south of Barton Copse. This lane becomes a little indistinct through the trees but if you keep straight on you'll reach the tarmac. From (626,377) head for Old Alresford. This is 25km of almost continuous green lane since leaving Alton.

If you were to leave the route as

described in the last paragraph at Nettlebed Farm and drop down to the village of Bighton there are two delights to be sampled here. One is the ale and food from the Three Horse Shoes, the other, part of the road from Winchester to London that remains as described in Ogleby's 'Britannica' of 1675. From the Cross-roads in Bighton (613,343) head south west along the 'white' for about 1km. The good track swings north west here but you should bear left into the deep grass to the south of the marked

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# The rough guide to Britain

footpath. The lane is not depicted at all on the O/S maps but on the ground it takes on the character of a sunken way.

South of New Alresford you will see a choice of almost parallel routes leading to the A272. From (575,273) bear left off the A272 onto Church Lane. Straight on at the cross-roads and again at the tarmac, making your way to (533,238) and a sharp left into a sunken 'white' lane. Keep straight on to the junction at (539,217) where a left up to Woodcote is required. The second 'white' on the right (both are UCR's) takes you to Big Path Farm and back to Bishop's Waltham. By now you will have covered about 110km (70 miles) if you have followed the full route, or about 85km (55 miles) if you skipped the loop after Alton.

I know that there are some riders who take a lump of cheese, a Spanish onion, and a dry crust to eat in the shade of a hedge, shunning all contact with other Homo Sapiens. I hope they will forgive me listing two more places of refreshment for those who adopt an alternative view to refreshment. The Flower Pots in Cheriton (582,283), a pub that brews its own superb ale and The Ship (511,233) which serves excellent value for money food (which is probably why the Southern group TRF meet there).

A final word of caution. Some of the lanes used in this circular ride can be testing, especially in the wet. I would therefore advise that the usual precaution of riding with a small group is adhered to.

Have fun.

More information on byways and RUPPs can be obtained from Hampshire County Council in Winchester where the Definitive Map can be inspected. It is advisable to make an appointment by calling 01962-846045. An excellent book, 'Rights of Way - a guide to law and practice' is written by Riddle & Trevelyan and published



Just one of any number of hazards you may encounter on a ride in Hampshire

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# HONDA XR250R

Words & Photos Si Melber

Honda have made some sweeping changes to their 1996 XR250R, the first real update it has had in ten years. We took one out trailing over some of our favourite green lanes to discover for ourselves just what the differences have made to their most popular clubman bike



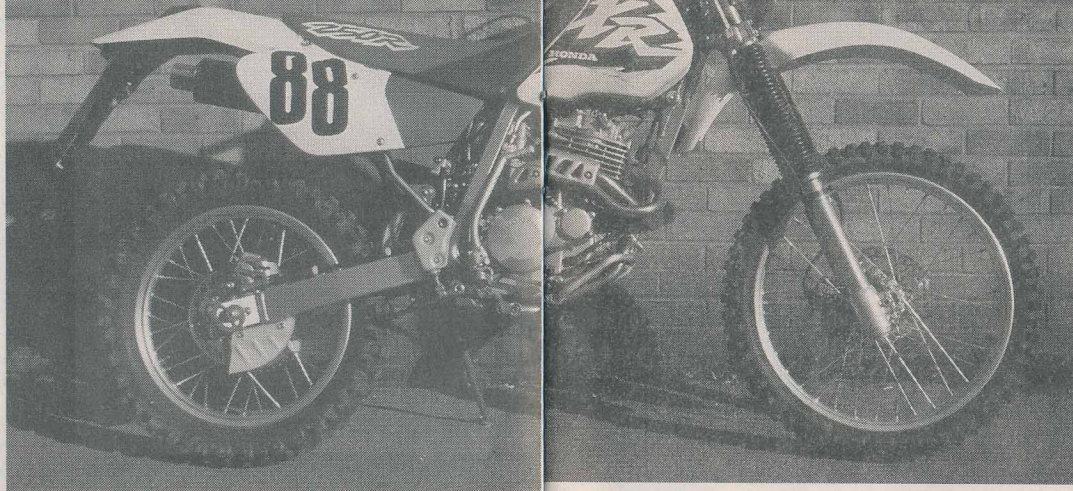
# HONDA XR250R

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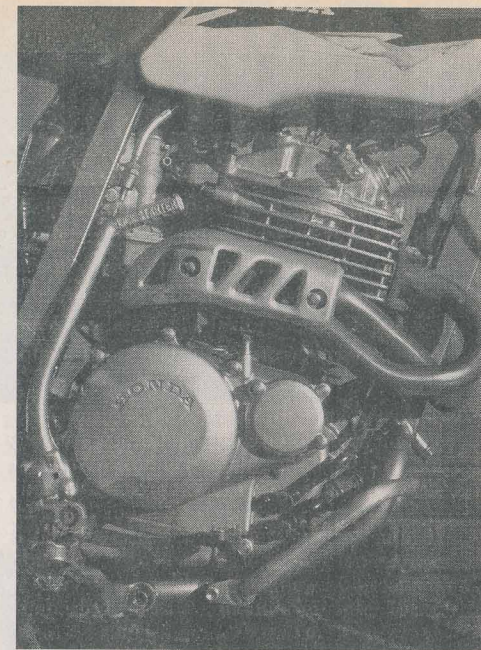
f you had to list the virtues that make up your ideal trail bike, my guess is you'd end up describing something not too dissimilar to Honda's evergreen XR250R. I mean what do you look for in a dual purpose bike? Well I reckon it's got to be slim, light, easy to ride and well suspended if it's going to be useful off road, with some nice usable power, simple mechanicals and a rugged build quality. Well with perhaps one exception (which I'll come to later) the new Honda XR250R fits the description.

Believe it or not the XR250 has been around in one guise or another since 1979 when it was introduced as an upgraded version of Honda's popular dual purpose XL250S. The XR has always been sharper focused than the old XL, and at the time of its launch Honda termed it the new 'Play and Enduro' concept which

With its first redesign in ten years the XR250R has proved Honda know how to make a popular clubman bike. New XR is significantly different to the outgoing model in a number of key areas



Right: New motor retains the 73 x 59.5mm bore and stroke of the old lump but is now dry sumped



is still a pretty good description of the XR range today. Two years after its launch the XR gained the second R at the end of its moniker and adopted the then new Pro-Link suspension system. Three years on from that it was fitted with the RFVC engine (Radial Four Valve Combustion [Chamber]) which positions the cylinder's four valves in a spreading radial configuration to realise optimal combustion efficiency; and two years after that (in 1986) it had its last redesign.

Now ten years later it's had another one, and not before time. It's not that there was anything intrinsically wrong with the old XR250, it's always been an easy to ride usable four stroke 250 in a slim and lightweight chassis endeared with the sort of qualities largely ignored by magazine journalists but much appreciated by owners and riders that finance their own spares. Now a comprehensive redesign should ensure that Honda's most user friendly dirt-digger will see active

service at the front line for a good few years to come.

Let me start by informing you that the new XR250 has one of the best sets of suspension on any trail/enduro bike we've come across; both in the feel of the action and in its abilities to soak up the rough stuff. The front suspension features a new 41mm hybrid cartridge fork with thin wall, high strength, extruded aluminium bottom cases capped at their lower ends by compact cast aluminium axle mounts. This leaves very little underhang and has the benefit of reducing unsprung weight. Its main effect is to leave the rider unruffled by the undulations of the terrain and so concentrate more on where he or she's heading. With so many trail bikes' suspension systems it's a question of looking carefully before placing the front wheel, an ill-timed turn or change of bodyweight can have the suspension hammering into the bumpstops or wallowing about all over the place. Get cross rutted on most

bikes and you'll know about it. Not so with the XR which tracks positively no matter where you aim it; diagonally across ruts, into sharp edged bumps, or over kick-up whoops, the XR takes it all in its stride. The suspension is fully adjustable front and rear with 24-step adjustments, but despite this we found that the standard settings were just about perfect for our testers 12.5 stone. It really is that good.

Perhaps it's because the suspension is so compliant that you end up noticing just how gutless the XR can feel. I know four stroke 250s never feel that powerful, but even so the new XR has to be worked hard to give its best. This despite an engine redesign which leaves the motor dry-sumped, lighter and more torquey than ever before. If you dig deep into the XR's rev range you can usually find enough power to get you through most situations, but it was obvious from riding in the company of our staff CRM250 just how much power (and torque) the four banger gave



# HONDA XR250R

away to the two.

At one stage during the ascent of a particularly boggy and slimy climb the XR got stuck and just didn't have the guts to dig itself free. And while the CRM was also struggling with the conditions, it had the power to be able to pull one gear higher and so keep up momentum. The time that this lack of power is most apparent is on the road where the XR really feels slow. If you're used to riding something like a DR350 you'd really notice the difference on the road where the XR's lower gearing and lack of punch both from a standing start and out of corners has you tap dancing on the gearchange to try to find some usable drive. I don't want to make too much of this attribute because if you mostly use your bike off road or aren't that worried about keeping up a reasonable pace on the blacktop then you won't notice it. But if speed is important to you then choose another dish from the dirt bike menu.

Conversely off road there's no doubt that the softly tuned XR is a delightful machine to ride. It responds instantly to a bit of body English, handles neutrally, and is really easy to ride. Thanks to an all new frame to accommodate the engine's more compact dimensions the XR now turns faster and steers easier than it ever did before. The bar-seat-peg relationship is just about right and although it's fairly tall in the saddle it feels so well balanced that feet up riding is a cinch. On the subject of pegs the new XR now comes with

nice'n'wide (Supercross style) footpegs which give far more comfort and a greater degree of control off road than before.

In fact it's obvious that Honda have paid a lot of attention to detail with numerous aspects of the bike's design. Like the 400 the new 250 shares the hinge-down sidepanel held in place by a pair of Dsuz fasteners allowing quick and convenient access to the air filter. And it's obvious that the design brief has been to make the bike feel as slim and light as possible. Much work has been done to centralise mass, the wheelbase is now 25mm shorter, the swingarm pivots in the rear engine casing, and various components such as exhaust and aircleaner have been positioned as close as possible to the machine's centre of mass. Even the already slimline tank has lost 10mm from its width (without losing any capacity) and what with the redesigned (and frankly more modern) two tone seat helps make the bike look and feel as manoeuvrable as possible.

On the green lanes of Wiltshire the XR really felt at home, tiptoeing up greasy chalky climbs and resolutely refusing to be thrown off line by muddy ruts or cross-route drainage ditches. With plenty of bite available from the hard compound Bridgestone MX tyres there was always a lot of fun to be had from working the XR's engine to extract all its usable power, and neatly balancing the machine feet up on tricky descents.

Like all modern dirt bikes, the brakes work extremely well, responding best to a simple two-fingered pull, and best of all Honda have realised that we don't all have the same sized hands and sensibly equipped the new XR with a span adjustable front brake lever. Top marks for convenience. Not so convenient however is the XR's occasional reluctance to

Despite its enduro roots the XR250R really is a superb green laner - smooth motor and plush suspension make it an easy bike to live with



start from hot. Despite a new automatic decompression system and an increased kickstart throw it still requires a big boot to get the small engine spinning into life.

Once fired up however it will idle happily from cold, though there's a two position choke located on the carb should you need it. There's a satisfying sort of 'Tonk-Tonk' sound that emanates from the new more compact and better looking black shrouded silencer which is now mated to a stainless steel exhaust which should help resist corrosion. Other changes to the XR include a detachable rear aluminium sub-frame which should cut the cost and inconvenience of frame bending getoffs, and a two-part headlight which again should help keep the cost of spares to a sensible minimum.

If you own or regularly ride an XR250 (and a good many of you do) then you will recognise all the best aspects of that machine in the new one. On top of that you will find the added convenience, quality and especially the improved suspension helps take the machine into a new dimension of convenience and competitiveness. The changes wrought to the smallest XR have not only been comprehensive but also timely. With a big bore kit taking capacity up to 280cc the XR would be just about perfect, and my money's on

a complete revamp of the 600 next year to bring it into line with the 250 and 400. If the changes to that machine are as good as those made to the 250 it should be one hell'uva good bike. Watch this space.

Thanks to Paul Branson Motorcycles for the loan of the XR250R if you want to buy this one it's up for sale for £3,295. Call them on 01935 74998

## Honda XR250R

**Price: £3,995**

**Engine: air cooled, four stroke, four valve, RFVC, ohc, 249cc single**

**Bore & stroke: 73x59.5mm**

**Comp ratio: 10.2:1**

**Transmission: 6-Speed**

**Frame: Steel cradle with alloy swingarm**

**Fuel capacity: 9 litres**

**Weight: 111kg**

**Seat Height: 915mm**

- +** Suspension, weight, detail
- Lack of power, hot starting



...and now for something slightly different...

# BAJA BAITING



H o n d a X L R 2 5 0 B a j a

The Baja (say BAA-HAA) 1000 desert race which is held in Mexico every year requires a trick modified open class bike suitably set up for the rigours of high speed desert riding. Since at least part of the race is run at night, the serious Baja

competitor junks the standard enduro lighting and charging system and adopts a huge powerful twin headlamp set up. Back in

**The XLR250 Baja is a civilised trail bike version of Honda's ubiquitous XR250 complete with pseudo desert racer looks. Dave 'Crasher' Cornish took one out for a spin to see how it measured up**

Japan the Baja look is big business, with all four manufacturers turning out trailies fitted with large, powerful lighting. Honda's XLR250 Baja is a typical example of the genre, and apes the styling of the White Brothers XR620 desert

racer.

Those huge twin halogen headlamps dominate the bike's appearance and are protected by a tubular aluminium crash bar. Sat behind the lamps the simple instrumentation consists of a 150kph speedo and warning lights for oil, neutral, indicators and high beam. Similarities

between the XLR and the pre 96 model XR250 are many; the motor, chassis, suspension, wheels and brakes are all visually identical and recognisable to the XR250 owner.

But whereas the XR is not homologated for the street (in the UK at least) the Baja comes in fully road legal trim which includes all of the relevant lighting equipment, a fully silenced exhaust, and a steel fuel tank (plastic tanks only became legal in the UK in 1993). Other road oriented goodies include neat pillion footrest, a dashboard mounted choke and ignition switch, mirrors, helmet lock and a locking fuel cap.

Our Baja 250 was finished in red and white with some garish looking brush stroke graphics which may not be to everyone's taste but combined with the red seat and matching rear mudguard mounted tool bag, the twin headlight bike certainly gets you noticed.

Park your butt on the softly padded seat and the suspension settles a few inches allowing even the most vertically challenged rider to get at least one foot firmly on the ground. With the obvious exception of those dinner plate sized headlamps the impression from the riders point of view is pure XR; softly sprung and well damped suspension together with a slim tank (no bulky rad shrouds) means that the Baja feels very similar to it's competition oriented brother. Starting the air cooled lump is easy enough, flick on the ignition, pull out the conveniently mounted choke and a firm kick has the bike fired up first or second kick.

Once warmed up the motor responds best by revving out through the gears until a cruising speed of 70/75 mph is reached, this speed can be maintained on all but the steepest of inclines (not that there's many of those in Norfolk), and clearly the



Honda XLR250

# BAJA



revving motor will allow, over enthusiastic cornering had the front tyre feeling stressed but to be fair the sorry looking Bridgestone was well past it's best and fresh rubber would doubtless inspire more confidence.

The Baja felt much more stable at higher tarmac speeds than the competition version, again this could be down to tyres as I've only ridden an XR with mx/enduro treads it's difficult to be more objective. However the brakes pull up the heavier street bike with the same urgency and offer heaps of feedback at the lever/pedal. All the other controls, switches etc were light in action and of typical Honda standard, although the clutch was grabby and abrupt in it's take up - just like all Honda four stroke singles built in the last 15 years!

With deserts being few and far between in Norfolk the bike's off road debut was restricted to a few short hours on a private trail course. The Baja's higher gearing and lower power

output (29bhp, 3 down on the XR-R's claimed output) proved to be insignificant in the dry sandy conditions, first gear being low enough to tackle nadgery stuff and only the sixth ratio was redundant on the fast forest tracks.

Badly rutted pot holed trails show the XLR's suspension is not quite in the same league as it's UK stable mate; the front Showa forks combined with a Kayaba shock externally resemble the XR's but the fork action feels harsh compared to suppleness of the enduro bike. That said the suspension is pretty good for a trailie and playing around with settings and oil levels would improve the bike's dirt manners as would a decent set of off road tyres.

Feet up on the pegs at much lower speeds the XLR turns quickly and thanks to near perfect balance allows easy trials type sections to be ridden with confidence. The eager motor also responds well from low down although the higher gearing (and the extra weight of the headlamps) means getting the front end up in the air to clear off road obstacles requires a little more effort and forward planing than usual.

Of course the biggest advantage the Baja enjoys over the XR is that when the sun goes down and those big halogen lamps are switched on the adventurous Baja rider can still ride the trails. The powerful twin beams illuminate the tracks brilliantly, and another clever touch is the matt red painted front fender which doesn't reflect the light back like most high mounted mudguards.

Overall the XLR250 Baja is a good attempt at styling a trailie to resemble a racer. Fitted with suitable tyres it makes a passable off roader and its XR heritage shines through. As a posing tool for around town however, the Baja simply cannot be beaten.

## Honda XLR250 Baja

Engine: 4-valve, sohc, 4-str  
Capacity: 249cc  
Weight: 116kg  
Seat height; 860mm  
power 28bhp @ 8500rpm  
Fuel capacity: 9 litres  
Gearbox: 5 Speed  
Price(as tested): £2100  
Availability; The Container Company, (01362 698147)

- +** Lighting, genuinely dual purpose, good looks
- limited power, grabby clutch

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The Baja is a genuine dual purpose machine with the benefit of proper lighting

Baja's gearing is higher than the XR-R's. Still on tarmac the bike can be hustled along 'B' roads as fast as the smoothly

off road debut was restricted to a few short hours on a private trail course. The Baja's higher gearing and lower power



After a season of spectacular machine failures, numerous mishaps and a spell in hospital, Dave Cornish attempts to brave another year aboard the Moto Gori RGS250 enduro. In part two of his story, Dave tells how after such a calamitous start to his term of ownership things couldn't get any worse..... or could they?

# the GORI DETAILS

## Part II

I'd decided to hold onto the Gori for another year rather than try and sort out another new bike's problems, and spent the winter trail riding to try and get fit in time for the coming enduro season. Returning from a morning's trail riding one fine Sunday in early December I noticed a Suzuki 550 four pulling out of a side road. Flicking the Gori down a few gears and piling on the revs, I shot past the rather confused rider and the race was on. Thrashing the Gori to within an inch of it's life I started to leave the wallowing Suzuki in a cloud of unburnt hydrocar-

bons, then as the road straightened up, slowly but surely he began to haul me in. With the throttle pinned wide open in 7th gear I realised the Gori was revving out and had no more to give, the Suzuki's rider could now taste victory. As he pulled alongside I knew I was beaten, but just as I thought the excitement was over without any warning the motor seized solid. Luckily I was on a straight road, but thanks to the Gori's horrendous clutch drag even with the clutch pulled in the rear wheel was still locked and smoking 50 yards later. Pulling the Gori onto it's

centrestand the victorious Suzuki pilot returned. 'Jeez what on earth is that thing? He blurted out. 'I was showing 110mph when I finally passed you'.

Back home a few hours later with the motor on the bench an engine strip revealed just a scuffed piston and no apparent damage to the plated bore. Within a couple of days a new ring was fitted to the cleaned up piston, and for a total price of less than a tenner I was back on the road. After this latest incident I'd figured that I'd encountered all the problems I was likely to have, but the forthcoming season saw me finish only twice out of nine enduros and one

motocross event. Thanks to a catalogue of mechanical failures my dreams of a place in the enduro hall of fame amounted to nothing more than an empty wallet and several painful knee dislocations.

The start to the championships resulted in a DNF, thanks to a split fuel tank, apparently the expansion chamber had been slowly knawing it's way through the seam on the tank from new! A snapped rear shock forced an early retirement at the following round, and when the replacement Corte Cosso units were being bolted in place I noticed that the top mounting points on the frame measured more than two inches narrower than the



Left: Dave and the Gori scurry through the trees on a cold winters day on the way to securing another DNF

Above: This was the view most riders saw of Dave and the Gori... just before they came round to lap him!



corresponding swing arm mounts, so the shocks never ran parallel - the further they compressed, the further out of true they ran! Bloody marvellous. At the next very wet event the plug repeatedly shorted out due to water being channelled off the front mudguard straight onto the plug cap, the solution, a roll of gaffa tape wrapped around the front frame tubes and joy of joys I managed to finish an event, albeit within a whisker of houring out. With confidence restored the fourth round saw the Gori at last running like a rocket... at least it did until two laps from the finish when the dago electricians called time once more, thanks to a fried CDI unit.

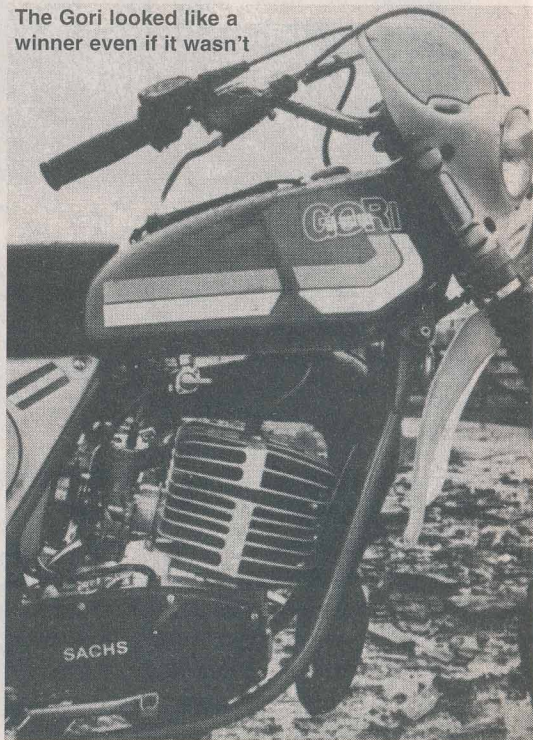
By the time I'd forked out for a new Motoplant CDI two more races had been missed but ever the optimist I tackled the rest of the season under the impression that things couldn't get any worse. Wrong! DNF's due to a snapped gearlever (no folding tip), the kickstart lever making a bid for freedom (ever tried bump starting a high compression engine in deep sand?), running out of fuel on a 15 mile lap of Rendlesham forest (12 mpg for Christ sake), various crashes and subsequent knee injuries. Finally I threw the piece of Florentine scrap into the back of my garage after the crank seized at 80mph on a forest fire road.

My Moto Gori RGS250 had left its mark. My inside left leg would get barbecued every time I rode it thanks to the badly positioned expansion chamber, I now have a right knee that jumps out of joint just by thinking about riding off road, and on top of all that the cost of

competing on the Gori still gives my bank manager sleepless nights. I knew when I was beaten, so the decision was made to buy a house, get married and quit while I could still walk.

Who would be daft enough to take the bike off my hands? After all, both me and the Gori had achieved a certain notoriety (for all the wrong reasons) throughout the small Eastern centre enduro world. So much so that my local club awarded me a trophy for perseverance in the face of overwhelming odds (or something like that). After placing an ad in the local paper, salvation was at hand, I just

The Gori looked like a winner even if it wasn't



couldn't believe my luck when the grinning mechanic from the shop I'd purchased the bike from in the first place came round and made me an offer (700 quid I think). Almost snatching his hand off I forced the log book into his grubby mitt and wished him luck (he certainly needed it). A few weeks later I discovered that on his way home the Gori had spat out the circlip holding in the baffles (loosing them in the process) and then run out of fuel necessitating a two mile push in the pouring rain (tee hee). Not only that, but as the bike was now being used on tarmac only it had seized several times over the following months. Funny thing is the next time I saw the Gori's new owner his grin had totally disappeared, hmmm.... weird that.

I'm not sure if my experiences with the RGS250 were typical of Gori ownership, no doubt in the right hands the Rotax powered machines were capable of winning enduros and the current Austrian built engines have a fine

reputation for reliability. The RGS250 however never really matched the sum of its parts. Thanks to poor design and even poorer quality control at the Florence based Moto Gori plant, for every well made (and well executed) feature there was an equally dire piece of dodgy eyetic engineering. Take the 1.75 gallon fuel

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HONDA CR TO X-COUNTRY KITS

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It's the summer of '83 at a local enduro. Not surprisingly the Gori has given up for the day, and so has Dave. By the way, check out those groovy boots Dave's wife Julia is wearing

tank for instance, it had the excellently thought out integral tool box built in to it, but with a fuel consumption that rivals Concorde surely the space would've been better utilised for extra fuel capacity.

As for the motor, well with such a narrow powerband only the most skilled rider could get the best out of it and to be truthful a clubman enduro bike wasn't the ideal home for the highly strung Sachs seven speed lump. Although I met a local guy who'd had reasonable success using this motor in a Yamaha TZ road rac-

ing chassis, he fitted a Mikuni carb and a hand fabricated expansion chamber to release even more top end horsepower and claimed that no one had ever passed him on the straights!

Not everything was badly designed though, the Gori came with a quick detach rear wheel which could be removed by placing the bike on its centre stand, undoing the spindle and simply lifting it out, leaving the brake, sprocket and cush drive undisturbed, still mounted on the right hand swingarm, the front wheel had a similar dirt friendly facility. It's just a shame that clever design like this was the exception rather than the rule, and had the Gori factory paid more

Another day, another stretcher. Dave got carried off more times than Mike Tysons opponents. He still holds the official St John's Ambulance Brigade UK record for the most mileage travelled in a Bedford ambulance in a year

attention to the basics - like telling the assembly workers which way up the shocks went - they may well have had a brighter future. In the end though the Gori factory went the way of so many bike manufacturers that leave development up to their customers.

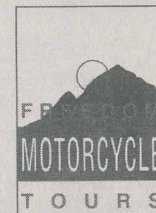
The story doesn't end there though, because recently I went along with a

friend to look at a KTM rolling chassis for his ongoing fourstroke project, and there in the corner of this disused barn sat a long forgotten twin shock enduro bike. Lifting off the pile of potato sacks revealed a Moto Gori RGS250, looking a bit sad and neglected. The registration plate was missing but a closer inspection of various bodes confirmed this as my old bike.

With a tear in my eye the elderly, kind faced farmer listened while I told him of my tempestuous relationship with the Gori, he could tell I was having difficulty dealing with my emotions and after an awkward silence he offered me the seized machine for a miserly 100 pounds. I swallowed hard, looked him in the eye and said 'You must be bloody joking, I used to have a full head of hair and two good knees before I bought that temperamental pile of sh@% - you can keep it. I may be daft' I added, 'but I'm not bloody stupid.' ●



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# The Beginners Guide to trail riding

**The well prepared trail rider never leaves home without one essential piece of equipment - their toolkit. Dave Tilbury tells you what you need to carry**

So. You have the bike; you have the latest in riding apparel; your maps are marked; the sun is out (between downpours and blizzards as usual), and you are ready to ride. Of course it won't happen to you but there is a small, (well tiny really), risk you might just fall off and break something. Okay, not so tiny really. With luck, whatever gets broken will be on the bike and not form part of your own personal structure - so now you'll need to be able to repair it.

The insurance policy to cover the inevitable breakage or mechanical failure is called a tool kit and whilst the detailed content of that kit will vary according to the bike ridden, the basic aims will be the same. Repair and continue, or at least get yourself home.

This tool kit will, of necessity, need to be light. To this end it is worthwhile changing all those soft headed Phillips screws, that are found on the bike for stainless steel alan bolts. An alan key is a lot lighter than an impact driver and lump hammer! As well as light in weight, the tools need to be of good quality. Sixteen quid might seem a lot of dosh for an adjustable spanner in a warm, dry shop but how appealing is three quid's worth of spanner that fails when you are five miles from the nearest village.... in freezing

rain? Never buy cheap tools because they will fail at the time you most need them, or worse cause damage to your bike.

I have found that the following list of tools satisfies most needs: Alan keys, screw driver, tyre levers (x3), adjustable spanner (large enough to tackle the axle nuts), more or vice grips, a plug spanner, and a chain breaking tool. Serious enduro types have been known to take all these tools, cut off the relevant pieces and weld them together into one sort of mega-tool thereby saving weight and space - but you don't really need to go to that trouble as long as you choose your tools carefully.

What can possibly go wrong with your dealer serviced, almost new, carefully ridden pride and joy? Until it has gone wrong you just wouldn't believe the number of silly little things that can bring your recreation to a depressing halt. Retaining clips drop off split links...., barbed wire wraps around chains and sprockets...., something becomes seriously loose. Only experience can give you the true feeling of despair you get when you realise that something is amiss - and the tool kit is on the bench back at home.

The most common interruption to a ride is a puncture. If it is a pleasant day and your companions are on hand to help (help = have a fag/drink/laugh at you), it

PART  
FOUR

is easy enough to do the job properly and apply a repair patch. I also carry an aerosol that will seal and inflate the tyre should the need be more pressing. These are available from virtually all auto accessory shops for about a fiver. It may be that the tube has split and is beyond repair. Carry a spare tube to fit the front wheel as this will also do for the back - but remember to do the job properly before using the bike again!

Brake and clutch levers are another area of concern. To reduce the risk of breakage some riders loosen the clamps enough to let them rotate around the handlebar should either one of them be given a good thump, but not so loose as to move in operation. This will obviate breakage in most minor spills. It is easy enough to carry a pair of complete lever and clamp assemblies, either fixed on the handlebars (facing inward and taped down) or in the enduro bag or rucksack. Or of course you can always fit lever protectors and forget all about it.

So now we can also add to our bag a puncture repair kit or a spare tube, a split link, a rear bulb, insulating tape, a tyre pressure gauge and most importantly some cable ties. A friend of mine once found that the knobbles on his front tyre were ripping off and the rubber coming away from the case. He completed the ride that day by strapping the tyre together with cable ties. Then on top of that lot you should add a bicycle pump or sparklets bulb type tyre inflator, a torch (Mini Maglite types are small and handy), some sort of rag and some bog roll - hey, no point in ruining an otherwise pleasant ride, just because you get caught short. Right?

Now what to put it all in.... an enduro

bag or small rucksack? There are a number of multi-compartment 'fanny packs' or 'bum bags' to suit all personal preferences and which can cost from £5 to £50. Typically you would expect a drink carrier; side pouch and a double main compartment - one of which will have elastic webbing and pockets to hold tools. I carry a small 'day bag' with a waist belt during cooler times as I can fit the tool roll into the lower compartment with a flask of hot drink and sarni's in the top. This has the added advantage of keeping your back warm, but in summer I carry an enduro pack which obviates the sweaty back but requires extra drink stops. Never underestimate the quantity of food or drink you should take on a ride. A cold/hungry/thirsty rider is an unsafe rider - not to mention a grumpy one.

## SPAIN

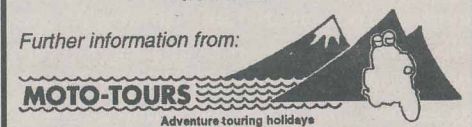
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## The Beginners Guide

I also carry a few bits of aluminium that bolt together to form an extra side stand. It locates under the peg and with this gadget supplementing the bike's own side stand the wheels can be attended to without laying the bike on it's side.

To go out and buy all these tools and spares (assuming that you bike has lost the manufacturers original) will inflict damage to the plastic in excess of 70 quid. You could of course buy some a vehicle recovery policy and a mobile phone but I feel it may prove difficult trying to persuade the person on the other end of the phone that the map reference you have just given them *is* actually on a public highway.

All these suggestions should of course be tailored to suit you, your bike and the type of riding you intend doing. None is vital, but they may just help make the day more enjoyable for you. It's possible to ride on with a problem such as a puncture but it will undoubtedly slow you down and be awkward on the road.

At the end of the day you will, in all probability, go for months and not need to open your tool roll other than for routine maintenance or getting out your sarnies. You can be sure however that the day you forget it is the day something goes wrong. Sooner or later, and I guarantee that it will be sooner, rather than later, either you or one of your buddies will be grateful you carried a decent toolkit.

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## the TRAILBIKE GUIDE

We don't claim this to be the definitive guide to all the trailbikes ever made, merely the sum total of our collective knowledge, trawled from the depths of dim and distant memories and assembled in some sort of order that you may find useful. What we do know is that no-one produces a guide to trail bikes that is as comprehensive as this, and that if you think there are revisions we should make, bikes that need adding to the list or merely things we've got wrong please feel free to write them down on a scrap of paper and stick it up your nose. Thank you.

### APRILIA

Italian concern assembling rather than actually manufacturing bikes. In their short history they've enjoyed much competition success, and the products are generally well made, up to the minute and above all stylish.

**RX125:** w/c, 2-str, single. Superb, modern trailbike in both learner legal and full power form. Peaky and powerful engine with great suspension, and massive amounts of pose. Useful off-road. *Verdict: A modern Italian DT.*

**Tuareg 50/125:** w/c, 2-str, single. Smart little trailbike with Paris-Dakar styling cues designed to encounter nothing more hostile than Rome's potholed streets.

**Tuareg 125 Rally:** w/c, 2-str, single. Outrageously good looking Paris-Dakar styled trailie with a high spec inc USD forks, fully adjustable suspension etc. High seat height more than made up for by poseability.

**Pegaso 125:** 242lbs/110kg, 124cc, w/c, 2-str, single with a claimed 31bhp.

**Tuareg 600/650:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, Rotax-powered single, e/s. Paris-Dakar lookalike with a high specification (USD forks etc), and flashy paintjob. Reasonably light and not overly tall for this type of bike, nice machine if you can find one. *Verdict: Posing tackle that works.*

**Pegaso 650:** 1992-on, 348lbs/157kg, w/c, dohc, 4-str, e/s single, with a claimed 50bhp. Stylish and quick trailie using poky 5-valve Rotax engine, good for about 110mph with cornering to match. Lighter than the BMW F650 and the Pegaso's twin exhaust is much better tucked in, but it has a much higher, less comfortable seat (36 inches) and fewer layers of paint. 19 inch front wheel limits tyre choice, and beware iffy sidestand, cunningly hidden fuel tap and small reserve. Capable big trailie both on and off the road and good value. *Verdict: Flying horse, flies high.*

### ARMSTRONG

Grew out of Jeff Clews' CCM company of Bolton and CanAm/Bombardier bikes for the army. (Bombardier were originally a French Canadian

company that manufactured snowmobile engines - they are now a massive worldwide engineering company that owns Rotax, among others).

**250:** a/c, 2-str, singles (Bombardier engines).

**500:** a/c 4-str, singles (Rotax engines) with left hand kick starts.

**CCM:** A few enduro bikes based on the motocrossers).

**NB:** Armstrong sold out to Harley Davidson who now build 350cc electric start versions of the old 500s for the army.

**ATK:** a/c 4-str, sohc, Rotax-powered singles. US-made, high quality motocrossers with some unusual features such as engine-sprocket mounted rear brake on some models. All have one-sided monoshocks (without linkage). Dual sport bikes now produced by the importer using converted MX bikes, solid, unburstable but pricey. *Verdict: For those who hanker after something different.*

**BARIGO:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, Rotax-powered singles. French-made range of specialist on/off road bikes built by Patrick Barigault. They specialise in supermotard bikes and desert racers, both of which have had some competition success, though they also do a trail/enduro bike. The same basic rotax mill that in MZ guise churns out 32bhp produces a claimed 60bhp when tuned to Barigo's specification... but they say it's reliable. *Verdict: Gallic charm.*

### BMW

Traditional air-cooled, pushrod boxer flat twins. Some rare collectibles: early pre-G/S ISDT boxers which weigh only 320lbs! Genuine Paris-Dakar machines. Specialist builders: Schek and HPN. UK expert: Jon Watson-Miller at Bracken motorcycles in South East London (0171-231-9438).

**R80G/S:** 374lbs, a/c, 4-str, 797cc, twin. One of the first mega-trailies. Launched in 1981, Monolever rear end, kick and optional electric start. Special big-bore versions of which took Hubert Auriol and Gaston Rahier to four Paris-Dakar wins. Original 'Paris-Dakar' version of G/S



## TRAILBIKE GUIDE

was just the standard model with a big tank and bore no relation to the real desert racers, which were built specially by Herbert Schek. The most trailable of all the Beemers distinguishable by its high front mudguard and simple instruments. *Verdict: The one to go for.*

**R100G/S:** 1988-on, 220kg/484lbs, a/c, 4-str, twin, e/s. More powerful 60bhp engine complete with double-jointed drive shaft (Paralever) and much improved suspension front and rear. Colours were white/blue and black/yellow (the wonderful 'bumble-bee') with mini-fairing. One of the most versatile motorcycles on the planet with neat panniers, clock and heated handlebars all available from the BMW catalogue. Superb go-anywhere tourer with surprising off-road-ability but a bit thirsty on the motorway (35mpg). *Verdict: A two-wheeled Land Rover.*

**R100GS:** a/c, 4-str, twin, e/s. Revised in 1991 with proper fairing and more garish paint job. Final revision for UK in 1993 with 'P-D' version when humungous plastic tank (already available on the continent) finally became legal, also sported a set of external fairing crash bars. Single-seat with extra large rack available as option. Last officially imported in 1994. *Verdict: Big and butch.*

**R80GS:** a/c, 4-str, twin, e/s. Small bore version of the above with same dimensions and 50bhp.

**R1100GS:** 1994-on. 209kg/461lbs, o-a/c, 4-str, 8-valve, 1086cc, twin, e/s, 5-speed, 80bhp. Mega-Monster trailie based around the brand new four-valve boxer engine mated to Telelever chassis. Huge stomp plus ABS which can be turned off if desired. Superb road bike but not nearly as off-roadable as the old boxers. Recall in '94 for problems with Telelever ball joints. *Verdict: The first trailie superbike.*

**F650 'Funduro':** w/c, 4-str, dohc, 652cc, single, e/s, 48 bhp (claimed). Aprilia-built, Rotax-engined trail bike launched in 1993 to bring BMWs to the masses. Based on Aprilia's Pegaso, but with four valves instead of five, more expensive, heavier and more 'roadified', with larger tank, stainless exhaust and much lower seat, although still eminently trail-able. Great fun to ride on or off road, and surprisingly quick - these babies will make a genuine 46bhp at the rear wheel. Beware clunky gearboxes, 19in front wheel limits tyre choice. Sold like hot cakes thanks to legendary BMW build quality. *Verdict: Solid and sensible.*

### CAGIVA

Italian manufacturer that now owns Ducati, Husqvarna and Morini.

**W4:** w/c, 2-str, 50/80cc, single, 6-speed gearbox trail moped. Looks like a pukka enduro tool but restricted model wouldn't pull the skin off a rice pudding. 80cc version much better bet.

**Super City:** 125kg/276lbs, w/c, 2-str, 124cc single, e/s, 7-speed, 34bhp. Outrageously styled super-moto available in learner legal and unrestricted flavours. Even the full power model is hard work due to peaky and raucous engine inherited from the Mito sports bike. Fast and handles well with sticky road tyres. Could be fun for humiliating bigger bikes on the road but otherwise pretty pointless. Makes a TDR feel civilised. Off road? Only for super-moto racing, for which it had its own class in France. *Verdict: Teenage kicks.*

**WMX500DE:** 1986-88, w/c, 2-str, single. Strange specialist desert racer with large tank, limited lock and high quality components. Very few around.

**W8:** 264lbs, w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single, 6-speed, 31hp. Excellent trailbike version of above but with a couple of ponies less and no upside down forks. Very few sold in UK.

**T4:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, 450cc, single. A few imported to UK in 1989 by Moto Vecchia. Fore-runner to W12 and W16. Plastic tank holds 4 gals. e/s option as well as kickstarter. Alloy rims and swing arm. Poxxy rose joints on gearchange broke early on.

**W12:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, 350cc, 4-valve, single, e/s 6-speed, 25bhp. Simple, no frills trailbike (as used by Italian army), a bit like an Italian XT350 but not as tough. Very few were sold in UK. *Verdict: Something different.*

**W16:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, 601cc, 4-valve, single, e/s, 34bhp. Tasty looking, but a little underpowered at only 34bhp for new learner laws. Looks similar to Yam XT600E but lighter, lower and more colourful - and less robust off-road.

**Elefant:** mid-eighties. o-a/c, 4str, desmo, V-twin. Engine originally derived from Ducati Pantah. Started as 650cc in mid-eighties, grew to 750cc by 1988, though there was a smaller 350cc version available to suit learner laws in other countries.

**Elefant 350:** o-a/c, 4-str, desmo, V-twin, e/s. Middleweight version of the lovely 750, with much less power but almost the same weight. Not many imported for the simple reason that no-one really wanted one. *Verdict: Curiosity value only.*

**Elefant 750:** 1988-1990. 188kg/414lbs, o-a/c, 4-str, desmo, V-twin, e/s. Distinctive looking big trailie with white/red/blue/blue paintwork, angular styling and gold anodised rims (21 inch F, 17 inch R).

## TRAILBIKE GUIDE

750 motor was nice, but suffered from poor carburetion at bottom end thanks to Bing carbs. Nimble handling and good off road ability.

**Elefant 750/900 (Second generation):** o-a/c, 4-str, desmo, V-twin, e/s, 60bhp/68bhp (claimed). Second generation Elefants from 1991-ish are bigger, and slightly heavier than their predecessors. Lovely torquey engines are based on the Ducati 750 and 900SS. 1991 versions (distinguishable by Lucky Explorer paintscheme), were higher spec than later ones, with Ohlins suspension and electronic fuel injection. Although they have a high CofG the new generation Elefants make a great touring bike for the road, but they're a bit monstrous off-road - more like a Super Tenere than the original Transalp-sized 750s. *Verdict: For those who like to be seen and heard.*

### ENFIELD INDIA

**Bullet trail:** a/c, 4-str, ohv, single. Indian made version of the venerable Royal Hen, now with 12v electrics and sprung saddle option. *Verdict: Strictly for masochists everywhere.*

### GAS-GAS

**Pampera:** 85kg/187lbs, w/c, 2-str, 238cc, single, 6-speed. Brand new hybrid trail bike from top Spanish trials manufacturer using a trials engine and suspension mated to an enduro style chassis. Brilliant performer off road, but trials inspired gearing limits road use. Top-notch components make this a real steal. *Verdict: What are you waiting for?*

### GILERA

Now defunct part of the Piaggio group with legendary road-racing history.

**50/125:** a/c, 2-str, single. Learner bikes - not officially imported.

**RC 600:** w/c, 4str, 558cc, single, e/s. Nice-looking P-D styled trailie with unimpeachable Paris-Dakar winning pedigree. Shares engine with Northwest. Quite a few still for sale brand new from selected Italian specialists. Good value at approx £3500. Watch out for fragile plastic.

**Northwest:** 140kg/308lbs, w/c, 4-str, 558cc, single, e/s. Supermoto version of the RC 600 with 17 inch cast alloy wheels, USD forks, and serious brakes. Superb 'street scrambler' with drop-dead looks, but not as powerful as the Pegaso or F650, and engine can be vibey. Still a few new ones around. *Verdict: Wonderful style.*

**XRT600:** w/c, 4str, 558cc, single, e/s. Clumsily styled, Paris-Dakar influenced big trailie that uses the stock Gilera lump in yet another manifestation. Big, heavyish and extremely rare in the UK. *Verdict: Ugly duckling.*

### HARLEY DAVIDSON

Not the V-twins, but a mish-mash of European-

made stuff with the H-D badge.

**H-D 90:** a/c, 2-str, 90cc, single. Aermacchi-made 1970s mini-trail funbike. Very rare these days. passable off road. CCM sold the rights to the Armstrong army bikes to H-D circa 1992, and H-D duly won the British army contract. Now electric start (after heavy squaddie casualties with the old left-side kick-starts) and reportedly more robust but down-sized from 500 to 350cc.

### HONDA

XL = a/c, 4-str, trail.

XR = a/c, 4-str, enduro.

MTX = a & w/c, 2-str, trail.

Basic beginners' bikes: XL100S, XL125S, XL185S. 1970s-80s. All use basically the same sohc air-cooled engine in twin-shock chassis (but with different gearboxes). Great bread-and-butter trail bikes, but getting a little long in the tooth nowadays. As with all small Hondas, frequent oil changes are the key to a long, trouble-free life.

**Cub 90:** Whacky off-road 'scooter' for whacky off road riders, different, but lacking any lights or credibility! *Verdict: For planet-e.*

**MT50:** a/c, 2-str, single. Many a 16 year-old's first bike. Unburstable moped-legal trail bike. Staple fare for trail parks. *Verdict: Fun in a small package.*

**MTX 125:** 227lb/103kg, w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single. Learner-legal monoshock trail bike with an unfortunate propensity for brewing up in serious off-roadery. No longer imported. Definitely not as robust as the XLs.

**MTX200:** w/c, 2-str, 198cc, single. Bigger brother of 125, but never quite lived up to expectations. Quite rare and prone to boiling up - no cooling fan. Be very careful replacing ceramic seal on the water pump. Questionable reliability especially with old ones. *Verdict: Good for making tea.*

**CRM250R:** 114kg, w/c, 2-str, 249cc, single.





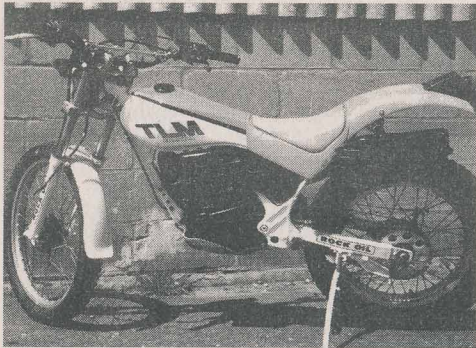
## TRAILBIKE GUIDE

Japanese-spec trail bike roughly based on CR motocrosser but with usual trailie luxuries. Low seat height, reasonable spread of power, superb suspension. Later ones (after 1990) had USD forks. *Verdict: Best of the stroker trail bikes.*

**CL250S:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Bit of an oddity sold to farmers in the early Eighties, for on and off road work. Unusual in that it featured a 5-speed gearbox with a range of both high and low options. More roadified than most trailies with low saddle and front mudguard, and chromed (twin) shocks. boxy styling and front and rear drum brakes makes it rare but not highly desirable. *Verdict: Conversation stopper only.*

**TLR200:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, 199cc, single. Early Eighties trials-styled trailie ideal for really snotty green lanes and long distance trials events, but not as comfy as some trail bikes and not really built for speed. Still available new as personal imports at fairly attractive prices.

**TLM200:** a/c, 2-str, 199cc, single. More modern version of above with 2-stroke engine and monoshock suspension built for Japanese home market. Not much of a seat but you can't have it all. *Verdict: Nothing will stop you.*



**XL100:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, 99cc, single, 6-speed. very basic, cheap to insure learner trailie. Later versions were smaller all round with more basic instruments. *Verdict: Good starter machine.*

**XL125:** 231lbs, a/c, 4-str, sohc, 123cc, single, 6-speed. Basic, twin-shock learner bike used by legions of beginners in the 70s & 80s. Usually badly treated, unusually they still survive.

**XL125R:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, 123cc, single, 6-speed. Monoshock version of above, analogous to 250R and 500R. Later, Italian-built monoshock Dakar version with big tank and electric start can be found as grey import.

**XL185:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, 185cc, single, 5-speed. One of the definitive original green laners. Twin shock version only, but can be upgraded with

later 125R parts, including chassis!

**XL250:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. Started life way back in the 1970s with the Motorsport, a basic twin-shock trail bike not unlike Yam's XT500. *Verdict: Capable plodder.*

**XL250S:** 1978-on, 261lbs, a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, 248cc, single. Which sported a four-valve, twin-port head pumping out all of 26bhp, but still with 6-volt electrics at first; twin shocks and crappy SLS front and rear brakes and an unusual 23 inch front wheel, giving little tyre choice. Later versions adopted the Honda Pro-Link rear end and 12-volt electrics. Good all rounder, but better on the road than off it. Comfy saddle and decent build quality make this a good second-hand buy if you can find one. Because this was the bike from which the legendary RS250 despatcher's tool was derived it means you can bolt the complete 12-volt RS250 flywheel, generator and engine cover straight on to any of the 6-volt XL or XR 250s and 500s. The accelerator-pumped carb of the RS will also give a useful power increase to the 250.

**XL250 Degree:** 119kg, w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, 249cc, 25bhp, single. Nineties style version of the venerable no-frills XL250, now water-cooled and with a four valve head, but still with rear drum brake. *Verdict: Nice little stylish trailie.*



**XL500S:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Practically identical to the XL250 apart from the bigger cylinder and head and a longer frame although it is possible to squeeze the bigger engine into a 250 chassis. Only 32bhp, but loads more stomp and the same crappy front brake - green racing linings help a bit, but beware low-speed lock-ups! Fortunately the 23 inch wheels can be re-laced with 21 inch rims which actually improves the handling and provides a vast increase in tyre choice! Beware starting problems and low revs misfire caused by furring of the alloy earthing plate - solution is to take a

## TRAILBIKE GUIDE

lead direct from engine to coil.

**XL250R/500R:** 1984-on, a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. The cylinder heads were now blessed with Radial Four Valve Combustion (RFVC), vastly superior Pro-Link mono-shock suspension, beefier forks and much better TLS front brake in a 21 inch wheel, and 12-volt electrics - a much better bet all round than the 'S' models if you can afford them. Only snag with the TLS front brake is that it will not stop you from rolling back on a hill! The CR motocrosser front end will fit straight into the XL headstock so long as you use the whole assembly. Beware top end seepage of oil between head and barrel. The XL250R finally lost its metal tank and was developed into the XR version. Early XL500 engines were very popular in single cylinder road racing, so second hand spares are hard to come by. Frequent oil changes are essential to avoid the dreaded knackered head syndrome caused by the camshaft running direct in it although bearing conversions are available. Some 250s suffered from dodgy gearboxes and frequent top end problems. *Verdict: Cheaper than an XR.*

**XL350/400:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Grey import originally built for French and Japanese markets - a big-bore version of the 250 rather than a sleeved down 500. *Verdict: Very rare.*

**XL600R** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Larger version of 500R later swapped its drum front brake for a disc.

**XL600LM:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Paris-Dakar version of above with big tank, flashy twin headlights, red painted engine, tubeless gold spoked rims and glory-be, electric start. Unfortunately it didn't go as well as it looked - one of the magazines put one on a dyno at the time and got only 26bhp at the rear wheel. *Verdict: Nicely individual.*

**Honda XRs:** Most not officially designed for road use (except for the XR-Ls), but virtually all have been registered for the road by owners, with varying degrees of legality.

**XR75/80:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. Small wheel mini-bike with poky engine for teenagers, but we know of at least one street-legalised one used as a fun green-laner after modification with big wheels.

**XR100:** 68kg, a/c, 4-str, sohc, 99cc, single, 6-speed. Mini off roader based on XL100 engine but with 19 inch front and 16 inch rear wheels. Great, fun bike on which to learn basics. World champion road racer Kenny Roberts uses them to teach sliding techniques to GP hopefuls.

**XR200R:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, single, 5-speed. Early

twin shock bikes (originally based on the XL185) made brilliant green laners. Still fairly popular though later monoshock versions are better and more plentiful. Drum bakes let it down though some late Japanese spec models come with discs. Light enough to pick up if need be. *Verdict: Still a great trail bike.*

**XL200:** 112kg, a/c, 4-str, sohc, 18bhp, single. Japanese-spec trailbike version of above with drum rear brake.

**XL250R:** 113kg, a/c, 4-str, sohc, 249cc, 28bhp, single. Japanese-spec trailbike version of above with drum rear brake.

**XL250-Baja:** 116kg, a/c, 4-str, sohc, 249cc, 28bhp, single. Japanese-spec trailbike version of the XR Baja, but with slightly lower spec and a pair of smaller headlights.



**XR250(R):** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Based on both XL250S and 250R with identical frames but more suspension travel, disc front brake and slightly hotter cam giving small power increase. Early monoshock with twin carbs could be a sod to start when hot - go for the later single-carb model. The XR250 makes a very good off-road all-rounder - light weight and adequate power (30bhp claimed) makes it perfect for trail riders and clubman enduro riders alike, and tolerable on the road. All Honda 250s need to be revved hard if you want to get a move on. New ones come with electric start and there's now a Baja version available with huge twin headlamps, among other detail changes. *Verdict: Popular and versatile trailie.*

**XR250L:** 113kg, a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, 249cc, 28bhp, single. Grey import with road-legal lights, speedo and indicators. Slightly heavier than R.

**XR350:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Mid Eighties (monoshock) version, only imported for a very short time and now rare in UK. Much the same as the 250 but with extra poke and unfor-



## TRAILBIKE GUIDE

tunately extra weight.

**XR500:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. bigger version of XR250, as used by Eddie Kidd for wheelies. Early version was developed into the XR550RR on which Cyril Neveu won the 1982 Paris-Dakar rally.

**XR600:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Several versions since 1984, mostly imported from USA until Honda UK started importing in 1994. Early versions easy to tell by drum rear brake and twin carbs. All are great off roaders, with pukka suspension and lightweight chassis. Not much fun on the road because of the vibes, lack of creature comforts, and twitchy handling. And some can be real pigs to start. Often the bike of choice for overlanders but beware, rear sub-frame is not built to take a lot of weight. Honda UK have not homologated the latest continental-spec version even though it comes with proper speedo and head and tail lights (but no indicators) so they're still not officially road legal and sold by Honda dealers 'for off-road use only' - but it's easy to road-register as an individual so can still be ridden away from the shop. Great wheelie-pulling ability, and very light compared to something like an XT600. Has become the privateer's desert rally bike by which all others are judged - light, relatively simple and very robust. The best noise/power compromise is to keep the main body of the original baffle, but take out the inner core - this looks and sounds 'kosher' but liberates most of the power. Official HRC hop-up kits with big bore (630cc) and hot cam are available but not recommended for off-road use or long-distance reliability. Tons of other tuning parts available. *Verdict: Definitive 'pukka' big banger.*

**XR650L:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, 644cc, single, e/s. Grey imported, fully street legal version of the XR600 using electric start Dominator engine and some of the roadgoing niceties. Slight weight penalty, but a real beauty if you can find one. Balancer shaft makes this a much nicer animal on the road, and not much worse off it. *Verdict: Worth searching out.*

**NX125:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, 123cc, single, 6-speed. Mini-mini Dominator for continental learner market, based on the XL125 motor. Popular commuter in France, not seen much over here.

**NX250/350:** w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single, e/s. Mini-Dominator, much smaller and lighter than big brother and surprisingly quick (85mph) thanks to a relatively highly tuned water-cooled engine. Ideal for the vertically challenged and for doubling up as an economical commuter. 350cc (Sahara) version built in Brazil for South American market.

**AX1:** w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single, e/s. Japanese home market version of the NX250, built for the street only, with cast wheels and twin tail lights.

**NX650P Dominator:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, 644cc, single, e/s. The definitive civilised big-single four-stroke trail bike, with genuine off road ability. Torquey 44bhp motor with handy electric start - early versions had kick-start as well. Classy cosmetics make crashing expensive and despite the mini-fairing still much more tiring than something like a Transalp on M-ways. Nevertheless a good touring bike providing you don't want to go too fast. Watch out for rotted wheel rims on early models. Plentiful in UK but high build quality means secondhand prices are quite steep.

**XLV400VP Transalp:** 183kg, w/c, 4-str, 6-valve, sohc, 398cc, 37bhp, V-twin, e/s. Japanese-spec version of below.

**XLV600VP Transalp:** w/c, 4-str, 6-valve, sohc, 583cc, V-twin, e/s. Called the Rally Tourer, its name befits its abilities perfectly. True dual purpose machine, great all-rounder. Engine based on the VT500, and larger versions now power the Bros and Africa Twin. Unburstable and torquey motor churns out a claimed 55bhp but can be tricky to work on unless out of the frame. Expensive cosmetics worth protecting if you're going to venture off road. Early versions easy to spot due to hub rear brake which was prone to going oval. Suffers from rotting wheel rims (like Dominator) in certain cases, and single front discs (identical to CBR600s) can wear fast. Slight facelift in 1993 improved fairing protection slightly. Later versions also come with handy centre stand which was an option on earlier models. Beware handlebar rubber-mountings wearing out giving 'twisted' and remote feel to bars. Sensible secondhand prices. *Verdict: Superb trail bike for touring on.*

**XLV750:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, V-twin. Mid-80s precursor to Transalp but featuring shaft-drive, and distinctive red engine. Never officially imported into UK, but quite common in France.

**XR650 Africa Twin:** w/c, 4-str, 6-valve, sohc, V-twin, e/s. Even closer to HRC P-D specials, mass-produced monster trailie that was extremely popular in Europe in 1989. About 100 were specially built for HRC-supported mass entries to Paris Dakar.

**XR750 Africa Twin:** w/c, 4-str, 6-valve, sohc, 742cc, V-twin, e/s. Bored out from 650cc to 742cc in 1990 to make an impressive but rather top-heavy Paris-Dakar styled megatrailie. Much more expensive than the competition at the time, though they had high build

quality and came with trick on-board computer. Better off road than you'd imagine, especially on fast and dusty trails.

**XR750-S Africa Twin:** w/c, 4-str, 6-valve, sohc, 742cc, V-twin, e/s. Lightened, lowered and improved 1993-on version of its forbear. Superb, top quality all-rounder but still relatively expensive.

### HUSABERG

KTM owned Swedish range of mainly competition four-stroke machines which use what is basically a two-stroke bottom end mated to a four-stroke barrel and head. Light, powerful and can be vibey.

**FE350:** w/c, 4-str, 349cc, single, e/s. Cross between a balls out enduro mount and a trail bike. Beautifully made, fast and light. Left hand kickstart negated by new electric boot. *Verdict: A serious tool.*

**FE501:** w/c, 4-str, 501cc, single, e/s. As above but more so.

**FE600:** w/c, 4-str, 595cc, single, e/s. As above but even more so.

### HUSQVARNA

Previously Swedish, but now Italian-owned company (Cagiva) manufacturing a range of (essentially) competition bikes (Enduro and Motocross), not to mention a rather nice line in lawnmowers. Both two and four stroke machines are renowned for their power to weight ratio and high quality components, though left hand kickstarts can be awkward.

**WRE125:** w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single. Modern, superb, high specification trailie with powerful revvy motor and top-notch suspension. Though classified as a trailbike it makes a better clubman enduro mount than pure green laner thanks to tall seat height, and peaky top-end power delivery.

### JAWA-CZ

**Penta 125:** a/c, 2-str, 123cc, single. 12 bhp learner legal trail bike from the Czech manufacturers - unknown quantity.

### KAWASAKI

KE = a/c, 2-str, trail.

KL = a/c, 4-str, trail.

KLR = w/c, 4-str, trail.

KLX = w/c, 4-str, trail/enduro.

KMX = w/c, 2-str, trail.

KDX = a/c and w/c, 2-str, enduro then trail.

**KE 80/100:** a/c, 2-str, 79/99cc, single. Very basic disc valve learner trailie with drum brakes both ends. Has been around for donkey's years and value will be dropping as new learner laws come in. Ideal second hand bike for the vertically and financially challenged to start trailing with.

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**KE125/175:** a/c, 2-str, single. Early twin shock, disc valve trailie dating from the Seventies. Popular then, but most will have rotted away by now. Easy to learn on many were used as farm bikes. Later versions styled to resemble KDX. Lengthy production run means Kawasaki must have got it right. *Verdict: Long lived.*

**KMX125:** 216lb/98kg, w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single. Very able little trail bike powered by reed valve and KIPS power valve engine, which can easily be de-restricted to double power output to a lively 24bhp.

**KMX200:** 1987-92, 221lb/100kg, w/c, 2-str, 191cc, single, 6-speed. Big-bore version of the 125 with a claimed 30bhp, which makes a much more able all-rounder capable of motorway cruising and a top whack of nearly 90mph. Not as reliable as the 125 and if used 'in extremis' off-road the suspension, and especially the forks are not as good as later generation KDXs. Fuel range to bone dry is only 90 miles with 10 mile reserve, and KIPS valve can give trouble, as can clutch and radiator (no fan fitted!). 200 also lumbered with a 17 inch rear wheel, so it's quite common to fit the 18 inch from the 125 to improve off-road tyre choice. KMX also suffered from indifferent build quality, and could be fragile off road. Pads and discs wore out if you so much as looked at them. But seat height is much more accessible for shorties than KDX. Has not been imported for a few years now, if in good nick, an excellent trail bike for most conditions.

**KDX125SR:** w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single, 124cc. Similar engine to the KMX (with KIPS power valve) but with the stronger competition-derived 'perimeter', square-tube chassis. Later ones had upside-down forks, but were slower than cheaper KMX in restricted form.

**KDX175/200:** a/c, 2-str, single. Originally sold as a competition only machine with no speedo or horn and a plastic tank when they were still illegal on the road. Peaky and raucous, the first models were however lighter, lower and torquier than the later w/c models.

**KDX200:** w/c, 2-str, 199cc, single. Based on KDX125, completely redesigned from a/c version with increased suspension travel, revised Uni-Track rear end, and more top end power. Basically a clubman enduro bike, very few haven't been raced.

**KDX220R/SR:** w/c, 2-str, 220cc, single. As above but updated for '95, and with more power and torque. The SR is the street version. *Verdict: Yummy.*



## TRAILBIKE GUIDE

**KDX250SR:** w/c, 2-str, 249cc, single. Trail bike version of the KDX with heaps of grunt, perimeter frame and huge USD forks. Tallish and very powerful. Japanese spec only. *Verdict:* Wow.

**KL250:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, 246cc, single. Late seventies twin shock trail bike derived from the 200cc road bike commuter. Pretty basic (no balancer shaft), but also pretty reliable, and extremely frugal.

**KLR250:** 1987-on, 260lbs/118kgs, w/c, 4-str, sohc, 249cc, single. Reliable if rather unexciting trail bike with just 23bhp on tap. Despite the complexity of w/c engine they're very robust, and easy to service. More than capable of economical daily commuting, but not very fast on or off the road. Revived as a budget trailie alongside more expensive KLX having been dropped when they first came in. *Verdict:* Excellent starter trailbike with good manners.

**KLX250:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, 246cc, single. Enduro version of the early twin shock KL, with less road manners.

**KLX250:** 1994-on, w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, 249cc, single. The four-stroke equivalent of the KDX, with similar motocross-derived perimeter chassis. Looks the business with handling and suspension to match, but performance of the 25bhp street-legal trail version is a bit flat. The lighter 30bhp enduro version is a lot more satisfying to ride, but early ones had carburetion difficulties, and both need to be revved hard to produce their power. Quite tall in the saddle.

**KLX300:** 1996-on, w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, single. Latest bigger-bore version of above with more power and torque and generally improved all round. *Verdict:* Nice.

**KLE500:** 392lb/178kg, w/c, 4-str, 8-valve, dohc, 498cc, parallel twin. Slightly oddly styled 'town trailie' which shares its engine with the EN500/GPZ500 whose motors were in turn, effectively one half of a GPZ900R. The revvy little KLE makes 50bhp but is far less trail-friendly than the torquey Transalp and more tiring on the road especially with its uncomfortable (pink) seat and minimal fairing. Quite fast for the money and pretty good around town, but definitely not going to suit everyone's taste or backside. *Verdict:* Unique.

**KLR600:** 1984-on, 430lbs, w/c, 4-str, dohc, 564cc, single. Big banger trail bike which started out with a kickstart but became the first big trailie to be fitted with an electric boot. Some had balancer chain problems and early ones overheated due to poor siting of the thermostat, but otherwise a fine handling road machine with

plenty of trail-ability. *Verdict:* Sensible thumper.

**KLR 650:** 1987-on, 286lb, w/c, 4-str, dohc, 651cc, single. Bored out version of the 600. Like the KLR 250, recently re-introduced as a cut-price all-rounder now that insurance rating system no longer unfairly penalises over-600s. *Verdict:* Competent rather than spectacular.

**KLR 650 & (Tengai):** 1989-on, w/c, 4-str, dohc, 651cc, single. Bored out to 651cc in 1987, Kawasaki have never had any success in the African rallies, but the Tengai (launched in 1989) is their be-fairing homage to the genre. Simple KLR may be a bit basic by today's standards but it works well enough, and is tough and practical to boot. Plenty of bottom end grunt. Relunched in '95 after a break of two years.

**KLX 650:** 337lbs/153kg, w/c, 4-str, dohc, 651cc, single. Bigger version of the 250 with the same drop-dead motocross looks, but with USD forks. Early ones were designed without enough clearance between the rear wheel and the mudguard which meant the wheel hammers into the CDI box at max compression with expensive consequences. No bashplate either. Not as torquey as the Dominator or the Pegaso but great for smooth dirt roads or gravel-strewn tarmac. Ideally suited as a supermoto or town bike. Fast and furious, but not much plonkability. Enduro version and later models didn't suffer the same suspension problems. *Verdict:* Good but not good enough.

### KTM

Mainly enduro two and four-strokes of dubious street legality. Older enduro bikes are sometimes trailed, but generally rather fast/peaky/specialised for green lane use.

**400:** w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, single. Trail bike version of an existing enduro bike, but with the added civility of a balancer shaft. Fast and exciting on forest roads, but not much of a chugger. Great on the road though lack of screen may be a problem for some. Tall seat height and left-hand kickstart make it tricky for shorties. Top notch suspension, but not as light as it looks. Also quite pricey. *Verdict:* Specialist tackle.

**620:** w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, single. As above but more so.

**Duke:** w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, single. Strangely-styled but quite unique Supermoto version of KTM's big-banger. Stylish little headlamp fairing contains two small headlights, and of course the bike rides on 17 inch wheels with wide, sticky rubber. Lots of fun, lots of cred, but expensive and rare since they're only imported in strictly limited numbers. *Verdict:* Street rod.

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### LAVERDA

**DR650 Atlas:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, twin. Strange overweight trailie produced from the dying embers of the Italian Laverda concern. Using the Montjuic engine as its source the Atlas' only claim to fame is the inexplicable 'Soft Ramble' sticker that graced the swingarm. *Verdict:* Rare with reason.

### MORINI

**Camel:** a/c, 4-str, ohv, V-twin. Oddball twin shock, V-twin trailie utilising the heron-headed Morini lump. High saddle and limited spares can be a problem, but otherwise quite robust and great fun if you can master the left-handed kickstart. Not very plentiful, but fairly cheap. *Verdict:* Eccentric transport.

**Kanguro:** a/c, 4-str, ohv, 344cc, V-twin. Looks like an accident between an XT350 and a Transalp. Lovely engine is a bit dated really, but the Kanguro (couldn't they spell Kangaroo?) is definitely worth a look if you're after something a bit different and don't mind the left-hand kickstart. Sold very slowly and remained in production for a number of years, so it's possible to still find new ones, and they're very cheap for an Italian bike. *Verdict:* Strangely alluring.

### MOTO GUZZI

**350TT:** a/c, 4-str, ohv, V-twin. Middleweight Guzzoid with all the attraction of chicken pox. *Verdict:* see below.

**V65TT:** a/c, 4-str, ohv, V-twin. Middleweight Guzzi trailie of average ability. Hard work on the dirt... and on the road. Not many around. *Verdict:* Masochists only need apply.

**Quota:** a/c, 4-str, ohv, V-twin. Big Guzzi that like Triumph's Tiger is really just a road bike in trail bike clothing, but without the Triumph's impressive on road performance. A truly monstrous beast with a seat-height that requires a ladder if you're under 6ft. It makes even the Tiger feel small by comparison. Agricultural engine with torque reaction from the shaft and dangerous lack of ground clearance both on and off road. Good fuel consumption thanks to fuel injection and high gearing, are about all it has going for it. Incredibly expensive when it was launched, but prices did come down. Strictly for straight dirt roads and motorways. Should come with a government health warning. *Verdict:* Proves that big is not necessarily beautiful.

### MZ

Ex-East German manufacturer with a reputation of making stodgy but solid bikes. A few a/c, 2-str, 250 ISDT specials around, though most road MZs are robust enough to be 'trailified'. Cheap and cheerful. *Verdict:* Worth a trip around the

Bloc.

**500 Saxon Country:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, Rotax-powered single. Old-fashioned looking trail bike, that's really just a roadster with a set of trail clothes on. Expensive for what it is. *Verdict:* Obsolete.

### ROKON

**340RT:** a/c, 2-str, Sachs-engined, 340cc, single. Obscure US bikes using a snowmobile engine with a pull start and an automatic gearbox. Manufactured during the seventies with a twin shock chassis. *Verdict:* Bizarre but wild.

### SUZUKI

TS = a/c then w/c, 2-str, trail.

PE = a/c, 2-str, enduro.

SP = a/c, 4-str, trail.

DR = o-a/c 4-str, trail.

**RV125:** a/c, 2-str, single. Strange looking fun bike from the seventies with small wheels and balloon tyres designed for riding on sand. Looks a bit like a full size monkey bike. Quite fun, but rare and more than a bit odd.

**TS120 Trailcat:** a/c, 2-str, single. One of the first purpose built trail bikes to come into the UK in the early Seventies, with unusual, Land Rover style high and low ratio 3x2 gearbox. Lightweight and easy handling twin shock chassis. A bit of a collector's item if you like that sort of thing. *Verdict:* For anoraks only.

**TS125/185:** a/c, 2-str, single. Early seventies twin shock trailie with distinctive high level pipe which was unusual at the time. Not many left now.

**TS125/185ER:** a/c, 2-str, single. Peaky learner bike from early Eighties still with 'twin shocks' *Verdict:* Not bad considering.

**TS250:** a/c, 2-str, single. Much the same as the early 125 but with punchier 250cc motor, and low-level chrome front mudguard.

**TS250ER:** a/c, 2-str, single. Early Eighties trail bike that's a bigger version of the 125 with twin shocks and electronic ignition.

**TS50:** a/c, 2-str, single. Undistinguished twin shock trailie.

**TS50ER:** a/c, 2-str, single. As above.

**TS50X:** w/c, 2-str, single. Modest trail moped with a roaring 3bhp on tap, and 'full floater' monoshock suspension. Good for a 50 though.

**TS125X:** w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single. Very competent learner legal trailie. Better than the equivalent DT at the time. *Verdict:* Good secondhand buy.

**TS125R:** w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single. Latest version of above with power valve fitted that just needs connecting up to get full power.

**TS200R:** 112kg, w/c, 2-str, 195cc, 35bhp, single. Grey import with its own French champi-



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onship. Higher spec than UK 125s includes USD forks. Excellent stroker trailie that's not too expensive. Reasonable availability for a grey import. *Verdict: Good value trailie.*



**PE175:** a/c, 2-str, single. Basic twin-shock clubman enduro bike from the seventies, styled on the RM motocrosser. Poky at the time, but not by today's standards. Last ones had 'full floater' suspension. Reasonable number of tatty ones still about that can be had for not much money. **PE250:** a/c, 2-str, single. Similar to 175 but with a better spread of power. Lots of fun, but noisy as hell.

**PE400:** a/c, 2-str, single. As above but with more power than most people could use in this chassis off-road. *Verdict: Wild.*

**SP370:** a/c 4-str, sohc, single. Early eighties twin shock trailie that seemed

to go on and on. Frugal, robust and reasonably reliable despite lack of balancer shaft. Good, cheap hack.

**SP400:** a/c 4-str, sohc, single. As above.

**DR125:** o-a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. Small and not very powerful trailie but with the benefit of being robust, reliable and frugal. *Verdict: Slow but solid.*

**DR125 Raider:** o-a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. As above but with false header pipe and (marginally) bigger P-D style tank.

**DR200:** o-a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. As above but despite bigger motor, still a bit underpowered. Not sold as street legal. Beware rear wheel collapse on early ones.

**DR125/200 Djebel:** o-a/c, 4-str, sohc, sin-



gle, e/s. Japanese home market version of above with more street mods (including electric boot). Later ones had big single headlamp with surrounding protection bar.

**DR250:** o-a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. Grey import baby brother of the 350 we get here in the UK, only with USD forks and a brilliant ride height control making it more accessible to little people. *Verdict: Worth searching out.*

**DR350:** o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Superb little trailie with dry-sump motor, excellent suspension, but tiny petrol tank. A bit cheap in places, but lightweight and fairly robust. Better off road than on it. Front disc brake not very powerful and wears out rapidly. Can look tatty quite quickly. Unfortunately kick-start only (until 95), and high seat height rules it out for sub six footers. Engine feels unburstable and will rev and rev though some have been known to drop valves occasionally. *Verdict: Great trail bike.*

**DR350(E):** o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Enduro version of above which is slightly 'harder' all round. Available in the UK but very few sold, and no 'leccy start available. *Verdict: Rare but good.*

**DR400S:** 287lbs, a/c 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, 396cc, single. Updated SP400 from the mid-Eighties with alloy petrol tank, but still twin shock and 6-volt. Beware camshaft rattles at high mileages. Very economical, but without the benefit of balance shafts. Watchout for things shaking loose like engine bolts or perhaps your leg. *Verdict: Shake, baby shake.*

**DR500S:** o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Foreign market, bigger-bore version of the 400. None known in the UK.

**DR600S:** 136kg/299lbs, o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, 589cc, single. Classic big banger with modern monoshock rear end and balancer shaft motor. One of the best (and most sensible) of the DRs, but a bit overgeared and heavy. Can be a bugger to start when hot till you get the knack. *Verdict: Good secondhand buy.*

**DR650RSE:** o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, 640cc, single, e/s. More road than trail bike, longer, heavier than earlier DRs and with civilised half fairing and twin silencers. Good road bike, but first gear very high for trails and despite half decent suspension, still a bit of a handful on the dirt no thanks to its seat height. Engine sounds like a tractor and vibrates like one. Carbs can give iffy running at low revs. *Verdict: Okay I s'pose.*

**DR650:** o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single, e/s. Latest version of above without the half fairing or twin exhausts. Still overgeared, still rather

tall, but with the best suspension in class. Not very refined and feels a bit cheap, but definitely heading in the right direction.

**DR750:** o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. The original 'Dr Big' - Suzuki's first attempt at a Paris-Dakar style big trailie. No-one has built a bigger single - except Suzuki themselves. *Verdict: Not for the faint hearted.*

**DR800:** o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. The ultimate ultimate. Monstrous single with gargantuan tank, massive seat height and weird styling. Could win awards for ugliness, but pretty good handler and surprisingly nimble. Massive tank gives good range. Dropped from the UK range in about 1993, suffered badly from Norwich Union's capacity-based insurance grading, but should be much cheaper to insure now. Many engines found their way into singles racing. But there's a few around if you really must have one. *Verdict: Why bother?*

### TRIUMPH

**Tiger:** w/c, 4-str, 12-valve, dohc, 885cc, triple. Brilliant but expensive road bike from the new Triumph factory, styled to look like an off roader for the German market. Grunty engine makes it quick on the road but don't bother venturing off road, as suspension leaves a lot to be desired. Rear linkage hangs down below frame rails and catches on practically everything. Tall seat height makes low speed manoeuvring tricky. *Verdict: A trailie in name only.*

### YAMAHA

**DT =** a/c & w/c, 2-str, trail.

**IT =** a/c, 2-str, enduro.

**WR =** w/c, 2-str, enduro.

**XT =** a/c, 4-str, trail.

**TT =** a/c, 4-str, enduro.

**TW =** a/c, 4-str, trail/fun.

**BW =** a/c, 4-str, trail/fun.

**DT125/175:** a/c, 2-str, single. The DTs are the bike that brought trail riding to the masses! Started out as a basic twin shock trail bike back in the late Seventies before adopting cantilever rear ends. They built up a reputation for being an extremely competent trail tool and taking an amazing amount of punishment. The 175s were dropped when the 125 learner laws came along in 1981. *Verdict: Still one of the best trailbikes ever.*

**DT125(LC):** 1987-on, w/c, 2-str, single. The DT came of age with the adoption of watercooling, motocross styling, and most important of all, a power valve. Lost some of its torque but gained a revvier motor and lots more top end

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together with sophisticated suspension front and rear. In 12bhp restricted form they're as flat as a pancake, but unrestricted make a capable 24bhp. Although in the fashion stakes they've been overtaken by trickier looking tackle, they still top the sales chart because of their hard earned reputation. still good at off roading though they're taller and peakier than ever. Stripped down and tuned up they will pass as a good clubman enduro mount. *Verdict: The King lives on.*

**DT200(R):** w/c, 2-str, single. Grey import big bore version of the 125. Extra oomph makes it easier to ride. *Verdict: Competent all rounder.*

**DT200(WR):** w/c, 2-str, single. Japanese-spec trail bike version of the WR enduro bike. Visually almost identical, but with usual trail bike refinements.



**DT250:** a/c, 2-str, single. Both early and late Seventies, twin shock and cantilever shocked version of the smaller bikes, more power but less agility. *Verdict: The first Jap trailie.*

**DT400:** a/c, 2-str, single. Hairy chested version of above, not many left now.

**IT125/175/200:** a/c, 2-str, single. Early eighties enduro tool. Useful off road, but a bit hairy on it no thanks to drum brakes. Use of premix is a bit of a pain, 175 is the better bet if you can find one.

**IT250:** a/c, 2-str, 246cc, single. Less peaky, bigger bore version of above with enough power for any off road activity. At the time it boasted more power and much less weight than the equivalent watercooled RD250LC twin!

**IT425/465/490:** a/c, 2-str, single. Fire-breathing, hard to tame, monster stroker for serious enduro freaks. Only for those with lots of skill or very large gonads. Not the most reliable bike in the world. *Verdict: Melts visors at 50 paces.*



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**WR200:** w/c, 2-str, single. Brilliant clubman enduro bike with lightweight chassis and 'soft-tune' engine, but plenty of power. Rear suspension oversprung, and they need gearing down for low speed trails. Good if you like your bikes tall. Easy to ride with a nice light front end. *Verdict: Modern classic.*

**WR250:** w/c, 2-str, single. As above but with 'hard-tune' engine. Essentially the enduro version of the YZ motocrosser but with wider ratio gearbox and more flywheel. It also came with a lighting coil, but no lights! *Verdict: Peaky and poky.*

**WR500:** a/c, 2-str, single. As above but using air-cooled YZ motor.

**TDR 250:** w/c, 2-str, parallel twin. A TZR250 in trail clothing. Great road bike with demon brakes thanks to dinner-plate sized front disc, and all or nothing powerband. Peaky motor makes it difficult to use off road apart from on fast fire roads, supermotard or competition road rallies for which it is ideal. A thoroughly uncivilised motorcycle - raucous, peaky and excruciatingly uncomfortable with an unquenchable thirst for fuel - and absolutely fabulous. Beware seizures on left hand cylinder, and high speed wobbles on the road. Has a few passionate and delinquent supporters. *Verdict: For petrolheads everywhere.*

**XT125:** a/c, 4-str, single. Learner legal motorcycle

without the need for restriction! *Verdict: Reliable but intensely boring.*

**XT225 Serow:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. Small but perfectly formed grey import trail bike with kick and e/s versions, but sadly not both together, although retro-fit kick is possible. Light, manoeuvrable, and easy to ride. Brilliant attention to detail such as mini indicators and sensibly placed grab handles marks this out as a superb green laner. Small engine needs to be worked hard especially on the road to get decent performance, but its a small price to pay for such a good bike. Reasonable numbers brought in so far. *Verdict: Makes sense.*

**XT250:** 248lbs, a/c, 4-str, 249cc, sohc, single. Early Eighties Cantilever shock trailie of some note. Light and strong with balancer shaft engine, they can still be found for not much money and make an excellent secondhand buy

if in good condition though occasional early ones suffered valve problems. Nice and low though not very fast. *Verdict: Good all-rounder.*

**XT250T(R):** 113kg, a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, 249cc, 27bhp, single. Foreign market mini XT350 with all the benefits but slightly lighter. *Verdict: Rare.*

**TT250-R:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, 249cc, 30bhp, single, e/s. Modern lightweight trailie/enduro that is Yamaha's version of the Honda XR250. Revvy motor and a reasonable spread of power, but rather expensive. Unusual electronic dials, and other neat touches. Now officially imported.

**TT250-R RAID:** 121kg, a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, 249cc, 30bhp, single, e/s. As above but with large, single, (Baja-style) headlamp and protective guard, bigger tank and slightly different styling. *Verdict: Appealing.*



**XT350:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, single. Plain Jane trailie that's better than it looks. Early versions boasted 31bhp, but later ones emasculated to 17bhp due to noise regs. Chassis and suspension a bit limited but nevertheless still pretty competent. Plenty of bottom end, not too tall in the saddle, and excellent economy (80mpg possible if you try hard). Long production run means it must be good, but demand for second-hand ones ensures prices stay fairly high. *Verdict: Carry-on trailing.*

**TT350:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, single. Grey import enduro version of above, with improved suspension, more power, and more basic instrumentation and lighting. Not that scarce considering, they make a nice trailie with similar reliability to the XTs. *Verdict: Nice one.*

**XT500:** 304lbs, a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. The original big banger trailie that started it all.

## TRAILBIKE GUIDE

Produced for years and years, even when superseded by later versions. Twin shock, 6-volt, character building bike that could often get into more trouble than it could get out of. All sorts of special parts were produced for it for the would be overlander over the years. Vibrates like a jack hammer, and very basic by modern standards but the lack of sophistication is part of its charm, and the low seat height makes it much easier to 'paddle' than some of its more monstrous successors. Can be horribly unreliable and a pig to start, but its easy to work on and plenty still around. Classic buffs have inflated the prices, but don't pay over the odds. *Verdict: Your dad would love it.*

**TT500:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. More serious off roader version of the above. Much lighter and with a punchier motor, but still with 6-volt electrics. *Verdict: Rare.*

**XT550:** 1982-on, 292lbs, a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, 558cc, single. Updated version of above with 4-valve engine, twin carbs and cantilever rear end. Smoother than 500 but hard to get excited about, and some had gearbox problems. Not many around now. *Verdict: Not as good as the original.*

**XT600 Tenere:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Superb Paris-Dakar inspired big trailie with unburstable engine, supple suspension, mammoth tank and comfy saddle. Loved by overlanders the world over. Huge touring range, and clever attention to detail (for instance air filter positioned under tank to avoid being clogged by sand and dust). Later versions inherited a full fairing but lost some of the attention to detail. Feels like riding a great big cosy armchair, and regardless of Yamaha's claims to the contrary seems to have more power than later 'cooking' versions. Real off road ability in most hands. *Verdict: Best of the big Yams.*

**XT600E:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. No frills version of the much loved XT. Heavier and more sluggish than the original thanks to steel rims and generally lower spec. Unsophisticated especially in the suspension department, but thoroughly crashable and a respectable plodder. Heaps of grunt. Updated in 95 with more modern looks. *Verdict: Not as good as the original.*

**TT600:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Grey import enduro version of above, with improved suspension, more power, more basic instrumentation and lighting, and plastic tank. A few around, they make a more suitable serious trail bike than an XT. *Verdict: worth looking out for.*

**TT600 (updated):** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Latest version of the above now available

with an electric start. Much more modern styling includes USD forks, still only available as a grey import.

**XTZ660:** w/c, 4-str, 5-valve, dohc, single. Another attempt at making a long-distance overland/road version of the venerable XT. Heavier, with less range and not much more power than the original. Less crashworthy than the first and the taller saddle may put some off. Nevertheless it's had a lot of success in desert racing form and with some mods is eminently trailable. *Verdict: Another good Yam.*

**XTZ750 Super Tenere:** w/c, 4-str, 10-valve, dohc, parallel twin. Yamaha's answer to the Africa Twin. Cheaper build quality makes it a good value, comfortable all-rounder on the road with plenty of touring potential and 200 mile tank range. Engine is strong but lacks a little bit of bottom end, and gearbox is atrocious to use. Genuinely fast and not too bad off road especially in the dry, but the standard exhaust is rather wide (catching on ruts). Decent suspension, but a bit bouncy on the road. *Verdict: A good try.*

**TDM850:** w/c, 4-str, 10-valve, dohc, parallel twin. 'New sports' road bike with trail styling developed from the XTZ750 but with much gruntier 850cc lump. Lower seat height, much torquier engine and better brakes and handling. Early versions had appallingly clunky gearbox and exhaust collector box rules out an aftermarket centre stand. Not really a trail bike unless it's high summer nice and dry and the trail is easy. Soft suspension limits speed off road. *Verdict: Brilliant trail influenced roadie.*

**TW200:** a/c, 4-str, 18bhp, single, e/s. Fattish-wheeled fun bike which makes a brilliant and economical (though odd-looking) trail bike for the short of leg, with both electric start and kick. Surprisingly good on the road, and makes a competent commuter (70+mpg possible), but let down by lousy SLS front drum brake and needs an extra gear. Suspension a bit basic and tyres can be expensive. Gearbox sprocket a special part due to outrigger bearing. Will embarrass pukka trail bikes in the right hands. *Verdict: Strangely attractive.*

**BW200:** a/c, 4-str, single, e/s. True beach balloon-tyred version of above but not street legal. Not recommended for anything other than sand. *Verdict: Sand sled.*

**BW350:** a/c, 4-str, single, e/s. Hairy-arsed version of above. *Verdict: Get out the bull worker.*



# free Classified ads

## BIKES

**Honda** VT500, 1987, immaculate, £1200 or exchange 250ish trail bike, cash adjustment either way. Tel 0181 669 2640

**Yamaha** 175MX, S-reg, mint cond, spent £500 on new wheels, engine, seat, stator, cables, brakes etc, original paint, very little trail use, genuine reason for sale, £650. Tel 0171 226 8032

**Cagiva** Elefant E900, Jul 95, M-reg, mint, fsh, 3800 miles (6000km), Scott-oiler, Taxed, £6000 ono. Tel 01895 621 338 (eves) or 0171 412 5814 (day)

**Honda** XR250R(P), 1993, 3500km, all trail miles, excellent cond, £2650 ono. Tel 0191 416 6833 (day) or 0191 519 0003 (after 6.30pm) and ask for Allistar

**Fantic** Trail 200 twin shock, tank mix, good cond, Renthal bars, £350 ono. Tel 01341 440 223

**Kawasaki** KMX125, March 92, Long tax, MOT, 1000 miles, new battery, chain, sprockets, brake pads, tyres, serviced, vgc, Q-reg, stolen recovered, hence £995 ono. Tel 0161 797 6364 (Lancs)

**KTM** 560 Rotax, 4-stroke MX, registered and all enduro parts, very powerful, reliable, USD forks, disc F&R, excellent cond, many new parts, ring for more details, £1195. Tel Leeds 0113 282 7296

**Kawaski** Z550 sell or p/x for trailbike, 18000km, 1983, T&T, as new cond, £1050 ono, p/x WHY. Tel Rick on 01279 833 104 (Herts) **Want** to be the fastest poseur this summer. Yamaha TDR250, new tyres, recent rebuild, new pistons, three spoke alloys, spare spoked wheels, much time and care taken, £1750 ono. Tel 01379 650 171

**Honda** XRV750S Africa Twin, N-reg, Aug 95, road miles only, tall screen, centre stand, Givi top box, excellent cond, r/w/b, £4950. Tel 0181 567 5629 (West London)

**Maico** 440, new tyre, runner, needs tlc, £100. Tel 01205 290 667 (Boston Lincs)

**KTM** 600 LC4, 91, engine rebuild, lights, T&T, new front tyre, not for faint hearted, reason for

sale... I'm faint hearted, £2000 spent, £1950 ono. Tel 01386 556 312 (day) or 01905 840 973 (eves)

**Suzuki** DR350 (E), 1992, USA import, stored 2 years, only 4000km, new MOT/tax, £1950 ono. Tel 0171 359 5170

**Suzuki** DR350S, N-reg, blue, road use only, change of circumstance forces sale, 3k, £2650. Tel 01332 519 426 (Derby)

**Husqvarna** CR250, 1986 model, vgc, 87 USD forks, inc loads of spares eg exhaust, seat, tank, rads, wheels, rear shock, Motoplat and SEM ignition, £450 the lot. Tel 0151 531 6496

**Yamaha** DT125R in enduro spec, powder coated frame, Renthals, Acerbis Rally Brush Guards, new seat cover, CR125 forks (just rebuilt), revalved rear shock with external reservoir fitted, CR 1994 alloy front wheel and twin pot brake, plenty of go, new piston/clutch/wheelbearings December/Jan, new O-ring chain & sprock's, alloy rear rim with HD spokes, enduro lights, digital speedo/mileage counter and plenty more, maintained regardless of cost, some spares, £1500, not cheap but not rubbish, For sale due to finally passing test. Tel 01756 752 169 to view

**Yamaha** XT600E trail bike, M-reg, excellent cond, less than 2000 miles, 1 years Yamaha warranty, 2 sets tyres, as new, genuine reason for sale, £3350. Tel 01672 840 538

**Yamaha** XT250, X-reg, 1982, year's MOT, 11000 miles, very reliable, vgc, quiet engine, no time wasters please, road use only, gold rims, £525 ono. Tel 0181 599 5739

**Suzuki** DR600, Paris-Dakar, 1987, T&T, blue/white, excellent cond, will swap for KDX250 enduro, TSR or similar, must be in good condition or WHY. Tel 01225 774 925 **MZ** 251, 1991, under 7000 miles, sell or swap trail bike or interesting project. Tel 01597 811 079 (Mid wales)

**Swap** my 1985 Husky 500 twin shock, vgc, for your XR250 registered. Tel 0151 531 6496

**Suzuki** DR600, B-reg, MOT, good cond, £1050

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ono. Tel 01748 832 117 (N Yorks) **BSA** B40 1967, ex WD, immac road spec, tax exempt, exchange for KDX200 w/c, XR250 or DR or WHY, or sell. Tel 01229 718 024 (Cumbria)

**Suzuki** GSX-R750 G-H, vgc, long T&T, black/red, swap for XTZ Super Tenere or Gilera Nordwest or similar. Tel 01332 382 790 (Derby) or 01332 205 120 (after 6pm)

**Yamaha** XTZ750 Super Tenere, J-reg, 91, black, Datatool, new Metzlers, brake pads, 16k only, this bike is in A1 cond, £2900. Tel 01206 826 318 and ask for Steve

**Honda** Dominator, J-reg, 13200 miles, blue, long T&T, new tyres, £2750. Tel 01202 604 024 (Dorset)

**Armstrong** MT500, 1987, 12 months T&T, g/cond, bullet-proof 4-stroke Rotax single, £1050 ono. Tel 0402 106 490

**Honda** XL185S, 1987, g/cond, new MoT, good engine, £425 ono. Tel 01242 224508 (Cheltenham)

**Honda-Montesa** 349 sidecar outfit, green lane use only, road registered, g/cond, no T&T, new bike forces reluctant sale of reliable machine, £350 ono. Tel 01242 241 764 (Cheltenham)

**Yamaha** XT350, 1991, Q-reg, 4 months tax, 9 months MOT, enduro plastics, recent t/end rebuild with receipts, good starter and runner, ideal road/trail, £695. Tel 01604 701 209

**BMW** R1100GS enduro, white, N-reg, 3000 miles, immaculate, complete with handbook, ABS, computer, adjustable ergonomics, suspension, excellent handling bike, save £2000+ on 96 list price, £7495 ono. Tel 01454 311 430 or 0831 101 681 (Bristol)

**Honda** XL250, in Cagiva Moto-X chassis, T&T, rebored, new bearings, rear tyre, plastics, seat cover, RS carb, spare engine, £600. Tel 01299 270 493 (Clebury, Mortimer)

**Classic** trail bike, Honda XL250 MotorSport, 1974, almost original, runs but needs restoration, £650. Tel 01352 758 385

**Yamaha** XTZ750, G-reg, T&T, vgc, 25300

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K - Honda NX650 Dominator, red 6.5k mint £3595

K - Kawasaki KLR250, very tidy example £1995

H - Yamaha XT600E v.tidy, 14k £2295

F - Yamaha XT350 full power 10k, v tidy £1595

H - Suzuki DR800 10k miles, excellent £2595

J - Suzuki DR650 15k miles, excellent £2495

K - Kawasaki KLE500 9k miles, mint £2895

Yamaha TY250 trials X2, both tidy £795 & £895

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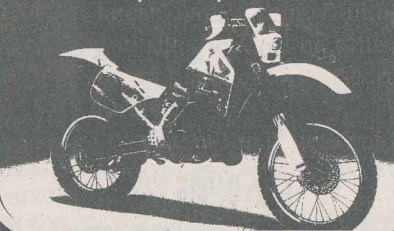
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**Suzuki** PE175, un reg, 1981, twin shock, unused for last 12 years, just rebuilt, excellent cond, O-ring chain, £650. Tel 01604 404 694 (Northampton)  
**Yamaha** IT200 enduro, 1985, road legal, 8000 miles, condition immaculate, as new, rebuilt, new paint, rebuild cost £1500 and included rebore, new bearings, many spares, Renthal bars, new tyres, battery etc, £1400 ono. Tel 0181 398 1194  
**Kawasaki** KLR600, C-reg, T&T, g/cond, White Power shock, £700. Tel 01584 811149  
**Honda** Africa Twin, 1995, as new cond, 14 months manuf warranty remaining, £5500. Tel 0831 107302 (N Yorks)  
**Honda** XL500 green lane outfit, purpose built in 1988, trials chair, full working lights, T&T, recent engine overhaul, £1250. Tel 01225 760 415 (Wilts)  
**Honda** XR600RM, J-reg, 600kms, Mikuni f/s carb, Scotts steering damper, White Bros rear spring (84kg), Moose racing enduro computer, K&N airfilter, Supertrapp exhaust, bark-busters, spares and extras, £2600. Tel 01825 791186 or e-mail jclaver@mistral.co.uk

### SPARES

**Honda** XR600R Cobra exhaust to fit all rear disc models, as new £100, no offers, can deliver. Tel Kenny on 09731 46339 (west Dulwich) anytime  
**Kawasaki** KMX125 replated barrel and new piston, £100 also calipers, rear sprocket plus gear and brake levers (offers). Tel 01354 660 708 (Cams)  
**Tyres**, Metzeler Multi Cross, 5.10x17, Pirelli Gara enduro 120/90 17, £25 each, Yokohama tubeless 3.00x21 £15 all vgc. Tel Nick on 0181 501 0320 (eves)  
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Pirelli MT21, 90/90-21 & 110/80-18, under 500 miles, used twice on green lanes, £65 the pair. Tel 01903 830541 (Sussex)  
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**KTM** USD Ace bits top fork shields, white, £10, also RM250 bolt on sidestand £10. Tel 01494 474 807  
**KLR600** seat, brand new, blue with white lettering, also Micron trail silencer. Tel 01223 251 416 (day) or 01223 263 424 (eves)  
**Haynes** Workshop Manual for Honda XL/XR 250/500. As new, £4 plus postage. Tel 01274 541 384 (after 6pm)  
**KTM** 250 Enduro, FMF silencer, rear sprocket and handguards, as new, £70 the lot. Tel 01787 237 773  
**DT175MX** clutch plates (new), front wheel, hubs. Tel 01604 701 209 (Northants)  
**Trail** Sidecar designed for long distance trials, £100, Yamaha DT175MX head, barrel, standard, needs rebore, £30, Yamaha DT125 head, barrel, £30. Tel 0121 430 6406 (Birmingham)  
**XL250S** 23" f/wheel new tyre £18, forks £15, yokes £5, £30 the lot, also KMX200 CDi £20. Tel Keith on 0181 207 0692  
**Suzuki** DR350S rear end complete, vgc, £125, also Fantic trials Marzocchi forks/yokes, vgc, £60, also plastic fuel tank, never used, £10, Suzuki ER125 monoshock rear forks, tank, plastics, electrics, etc, £40 the lot. Tel 01708 670 360  
**Suzuki** DR400 rolling chassis with V5, £150. Tel 01969 622 055 after 5pm, (N Yorks)  
**Yamaha** XTZ SuperTenere genuine workshop manual, £25. Tel 01638 720 521, after 6pm (Newmarket)  
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£20, also new Hepolite pistons, c/w pin & rings, DT125, DT50, XL185, and TS100. Tel 01734 872 709 (answerphone - will return call)

### WANTED

**Wanted** 1 or 2 bike trailer, must be in good cond, urgent. Tel 01604 720 695 (Northampton) after 4.30pm  
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**Wanted** MX/trail boots, size 8, must be in good cond, with full grip soles, also MX pants size M, all for green lane trailing. Tel 01298 812 926 (buxton/Manchester area), TRF member  
**Wanted** Yamaha DT250, 1975 twin shock frame, must have V5, also good seat, exhaust system. Tel 01239 851 316 and leave number with daughter, will phone back, or write to Tymaris, Llandyfriog, Adpar, Dyfed, SA38 9HB  
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**Wanted** Husqvarna CR500 complete or incomplete bike, plus any parts WHY, also SWM enduro GS250 parts wanted, Can-Am engine or bottom end, also MX/enduro boots size 12-13, ring with details. Tel 0114 286 3211  
**Wanted** alloy tailpipe for Suzuki PE175 for road use so must be quiet, also engine spares and side panels. Tel Tony on 0121 558 6691  
**Wanted** XT350 rear wheel, must be good cond, prefer with brake plate. Tel 01892 526 024 (Kent)  
**Wanted** Honda TLM or TLR200 or similar, must be vgc and original, can travel. Tel 01373 463 253 (Somerset)  
**Wanted** XT350 H/light, clocks mounting frame, F m/guard and F brake lever. P Coyle, 11 Arundel Road, High Wycombe, Bucks  
**Wanted** for DR350 plastic fuel tank, Supertrapp pipe or similar, and any other bits?



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**Wanted** large tank and CDI for XT600E, and engine for Suzuki RLK250. Tel 01690 720 382 (North Wales)  
**Wanted** DT125MX engine or air-cooled YZ/IT, must be cheap, also sidepanels for YZ125F. Tel 01524 34062  
**Wanted** Yamaha XT600 rear wheel (1985) or just the hub, (Xt550 rear will also fit), also Wanted XT600 head rockers and cam in good cond. Tel 0151 678 3468  
**Wanted** XT550 stainless exhaust manifold, and luggage rack, do early XT600 parts fit? Tel 01608 684 762 (Banbury, Oxon)  
**Wanted** Workshop manual for Yamaha XT600 Tenere, good price paid. Tel Dave on 01234 219 454 eves

**Wanted** Supertrap Silencer to fit KLR600. Tel 01223 251 416 days, or 01223 263 424 eves  
**Wanted** Barbour Belstaff waxed jacket, 42-44". Tel 0121 430 6406  
**Wanted** Suzuki DR350 front and rear wheels, will collect. Tel 0181 590 8476 after 6pm  
**Wanted** Honda XR250 road legal, for green laning. Tel 0181 669 2640  
**Wanted** Suzuki DR400S, must be in excellent looked after cond, good price paid for right bike, will collect, will also consider Honda XL500S in exc cond, also wanted, luggage rack for 1981 Yamaha XT500 together with a genuine workshop manual for 81/82 model. Tel 01904 490 764  
**Wanted** riding companion for overland trip, England to India, must have fully sorted bike, leaving Oct/Nov 96. Tel 01603 260 365  
**Wanted** Suzuki DR400 parts: exhaust, electrical parts, wheels, kickstart, also any info on adapting other parts to fit, may consider complete bike. Tel 01257 254 670  
**Wanted** XT350 rev counter and front engine mounting plate. Tel 01494 474807  
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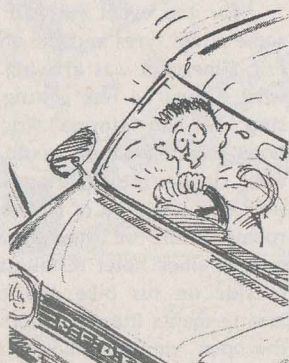
# TRAIL TALES...

relieved one of the sleeping elderly residents of her nights rest.

Despite my best efforts, all our riders had finished the first day and after analysing the results it looked as though we might be in with a chance of a trade team prize if they kept on the pace for day two. With our main sponsor joining the support team we had another driver which meant that we should have all the checks covered to keep our boys going to the finish barring any major mechanical mishaps. Everything went to plan during the morning we even managed to watch the first special test. Lunch provided an opportunity to ensure that the sponsor didn't under-spend on his promotions budget.

It turned out that Eric was a keen rally driver and knew his way round an OS map so as we contemplated the afternoon's activity it seemed from the map that if we took the CF van on a bit of an off-road short cut we could miss out a lengthy road loop and see a bit more of the event. After receiving some local knowledge in the public bar the essence of which was 'if your tyres are okay you shouldn't have any trouble as there's been no rain for a couple of weeks.' Some of you may well be familiar with the trail from Strata Florida to the Claerwen reservoir bridge. We set off with me leading on the XL, occasionally we had to stop and remove or place rocks to get the van through but generally we had no problems. Once you get to the reservoir, the road round it is pretty good as it's used by the local water authority vehicles so we figured the worst was over.

But the CF had other ideas, it lurched to a halt with that terminal feeling and further inspection revealed a broken camshaft belt. For the second time in two



days the XL had to be pressed into emergency service covering more checks than I'd originally planned as the pick-up was at the start/finish with the rest of the crew to welcome our noble turf toreadors who'd had the comparatively simple task of finishing the Welsh Two-Day.

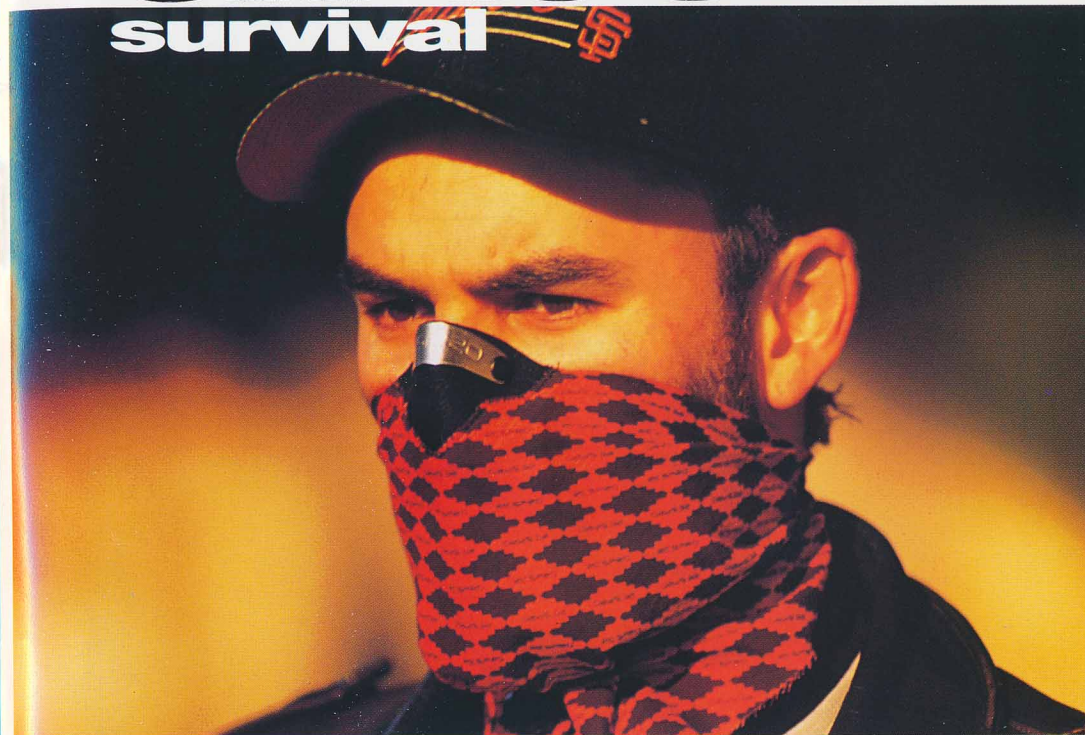
You can imagine the enthusiasm which met the news of the defunct CF, four very tired and dirty people who only wanted to get home and have a bath now had to get involved in collecting and towing the van back to London. It was too much for one poor soul who commandeered the XL and headed straight for the M4. Not a bad decision as things turned out.

Eventually the sad convoy left Claerwen, a pick-up with three bikes on the back towing the van with the fourth bike inside. I elected to pilot the van. The two tie-down straps acting as a tow-rope parted company at the first hill, but fortunately we found a garage nearby and a proper rope. All went well for several miles, we got through Builth on the A470 okay but it was on the large roundabout just past Llyswen where it all went horribly wrong. I thought that the Mazda had passed our turning and in trying to get the horn to work I turned the ignition off. This action engaged the steering lock and like a water skier in a turn, the Bedford adopted a tangential trajectory which put the Mazda into a severe oversteer situation. I was fighting with the steering wheel and the ignition key and after what seemed like an age, managed to disengage the steering lock by which time the Mazda's tailgate had already disappeared passed the vans driver's window. I turned the wheel full lock to the right and hit the brakes. Unfortunately without the engine running there is no servo assistance to the pedal - I caught the pick-up on its nearside rear quarter, instantly followed by an incredible noise and some disorientation. The CF had flipped onto its side.

As we waited for a crane to arrive, the nice man from Powys Traffic Division said how clever it was of us to block the main route to the Brecon Beacons at the start of a weekend.

For their part the rest of the team remained resolutely cheerful, but made me promise never to help them out again - a promise I have so far managed to keep.

# urban survival



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# TRAIL TALES...

WINNING ENDUROS IS SIMPLY A MATTER OF GOOD TEAMWORK AS RICK KEMP WISTFULLY REMEMBERS

When it comes to two-day enduros, some say, you're only as good as your crew, or in the bad old days when cheating was an art form, your similarly attired and mounted outriders. I well remember being overtaken on a forestry road by an outrider from an Eastern European team, complete with MIG welder and generator strapped to his back - what a man.

In those cold war days Ivan was a formidable opponent and prided himself on his ability to 'interpret' the regulations when not confined to his converted CZ coach lest he be tempted to seek political asylum. There had been a precedent set by one of the Polish

team at an ISDE in Spain who kept going at the finish of the event all the way to the nearest Embassy.

Being part of a team's support crew is perhaps the best way to learn about enduros.

Planning for the refuelling of several bikes and riders all on different time schedules is a not inconsiderable feat of logistical organisation. Perhaps this is why enduro competition was virtually compulsory in some divisions of HM Armed Forces during the 70s when you'd get half a dozen army teams entering the major events. This was usually quite handy for riders and crew alike as if you had cocked-up royally you could usually rely on a 4-ton truck full of squaddies with fuel and spare parts to elevate you from the excreta.

The Welsh Two-Day was always the flagship British event being an International and attracting 200+ riders including crazy cloggies on outfits and the German

**ALL WENT WELL UNTIL I ACCIDENTLY TURNED OFF THE IGNITION THEREBY ENGAGING THE STEERING LOCK**

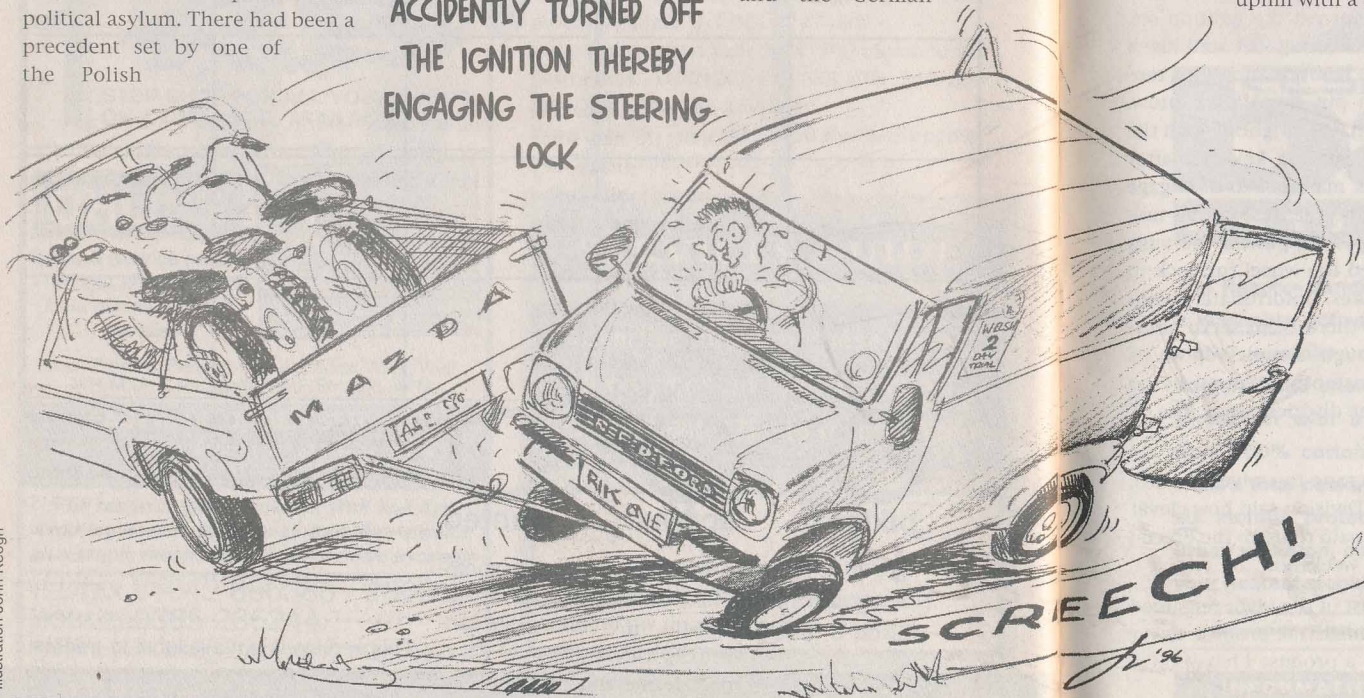


Illustration John Keogh

who's name I forget, who was always the sole entrant and winner of the 80cc class on his Hercules. It was at one of these events that I foolishly elected to be team leader.

The Welsh takes place during the week with the first afternoon given over to scrutineering. This is where you have to make sure that all your riders have their bikes up to scratch with correct paperwork and that they pass the noise test, if not, there's 'the glass fibre wadding up the tail pipe' ritual to observe. Ordnance Survey maps have to be route marked and all the rider's check times have to be worked out and double checked. That done, the refuelling logistics need to be sorted, who's going to be at what check and how many checks can each person manage comparing stage times with time on the road etc etc. After this the keen boys walk the special tests before retiring to bed with their specially formulated nutrasnooze drink, normal people go on the piss with old mates and make new ones.

Believe me, there were some notorious characters about. Big Frank comes to mind, he rode for one of the army teams and could run uphill with a PE175 tucked under his arm and change a 4.50 x 17 with his bare hands without so much as breaking a nail. He had some pretty unsavoury eating habits as I recall, one night after someone had woofed their cookies all over the floor, Big Frank said, 'well if you don't want it, I'll have it' and popped a regurgitated chunk in his gob. Nice.

On this particular occasion, day one dawned with its promise of a full-blown hangover, not assisting my task to get our riders to the parc ferme and pro-

vide any covert assistance they might need in the work area before the start. We had three support vehicles, a Mazda pick-up, a Bedford CF van and an XL250. As our rider's start numbers were fairly close together I was going to see them off and then take the pick-up to the first refuelling stop where I would then do some out-riding on the XL with a gallon can strapped on in case anyone needed a top up.

The first fuel check went smoothly unlike my hangover. After about 20 minutes on the XL I had to stop for a swift half of medicine, it was then that things started to go wrong, instead of loose change, I pulled the Mazda keys out of my pocket. This meant that I had to steam back to the previous check.

We'd filled the van, the pick-up and all the cans with petrol but we'd forgotten about the XL which I discovered was already on reserve when it ran out. No problem I thought, just chuck in some 50:1 mix from the spare can, for some reason the Honda objected to this and I was in need of a petrol station pronto. You can always tell when you're in injun country, the petrol stations have names like Anglo and the only vehicles on the road are pick-ups with dogs in the back.

Tanked up with Anglo I went in search of the stranded Mazda and its expectedly irate occupant. To my surprise it wasn't there. By this time I had blown any hope of a track-side rendezvous with the riders. The missing Mazda mystery was solved at the next fuel check, some enterprising person had managed to hotwire it, however I was not flavour of the moment.

For the event we had managed to blag some Pirelli tyres and the obliging person, one Eric Silberman was arriving that night to see what return he was getting for his 'sponsorship'. We had informed Eric that the five-star hotel accommodation would have to be somewhat clandestine, ie bring a sleeping bag and we'll find you a bit of floor space in one of the rooms. While we were having dinner in the ground floor hotel restaurant, Eric pulled up outside on his bike and taking our covert arrangements literally, threw his bag through the open window, followed it in and casually