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# TRAIL BIKE

M A G A Z I N E



Plus  
IS THIS THE  
NEXT GENERATION  
OF KAWASAKI  
THUMPERS?

NORMANDY  
RAID

KTM400EGS

KDX200SR



AND

How We Won The  
CAMBRIAN RALLY



Plus New BMW R80GS 'Light' Revealed

# CONTENTS



## IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE

6 News: New trailies from KTM, BMW and Kawasaki

8 Letters Page: What you've been saying this month

12 The Cambrian Rally: The secret of our success!

16 KTM 400EGS: Tested to the limit in the white heat of the Cambrian Rally

22 Great Scott: Dodgy deals on wheels recounted

28 Raiding Party: We take part in the Normandy Raid - and live to tell the tale

38 Kawasaki KDX200SR: On test on the dirt

44 The KLX-Files: A reader report of Kawasaki's biggest trailie

48 White Peak Trial: Part two of Blezard's blundering

66 Classified Ads: Pages of bikes, parts and gear for sale

72 Trail Tales: 'Just Say No' to drugs.....

If you go down to the woods today  
Normandy Raid begins on page 28



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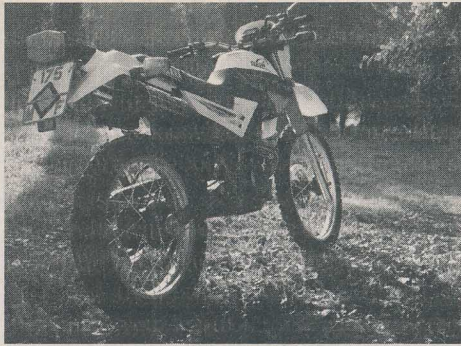
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**I**t's amazing when you think about it. This month TrailBike Magazine has taken part in both the Normandy Raid in France and the Cambrian Rally in Wales. What both these events have in common is that they both cater for trailriders and both were oversubscribed. Okay so the Cambrian is a competitive event attracting hundreds of entries (unlike the Normandy Raid), but both events offered affordable fun with no championship points resting on the results. What seems amazing to me is that there aren't more

fun events like these being organised all year round. There is of course the Hafren Rally later in the year (which runs along the same lines as the Cambrian), and then there's the Bracken Rally and Rally of Discovery in Ireland (which are both slightly different), but as far as I know there are no Raids being organised in the UK. The sheer numbers of riders keen to take part

in fun events such as these (as witnessed by the massive entry for this year's Cambrian) indicates that

there is a need for lots more clubs to become involved with the organising of this type of event. The WTRA should be congratulated for doing a great job with the Cambrian Rally - the only complaint I heard all weekend was that there isn't an event like it run every week!

Si Melber

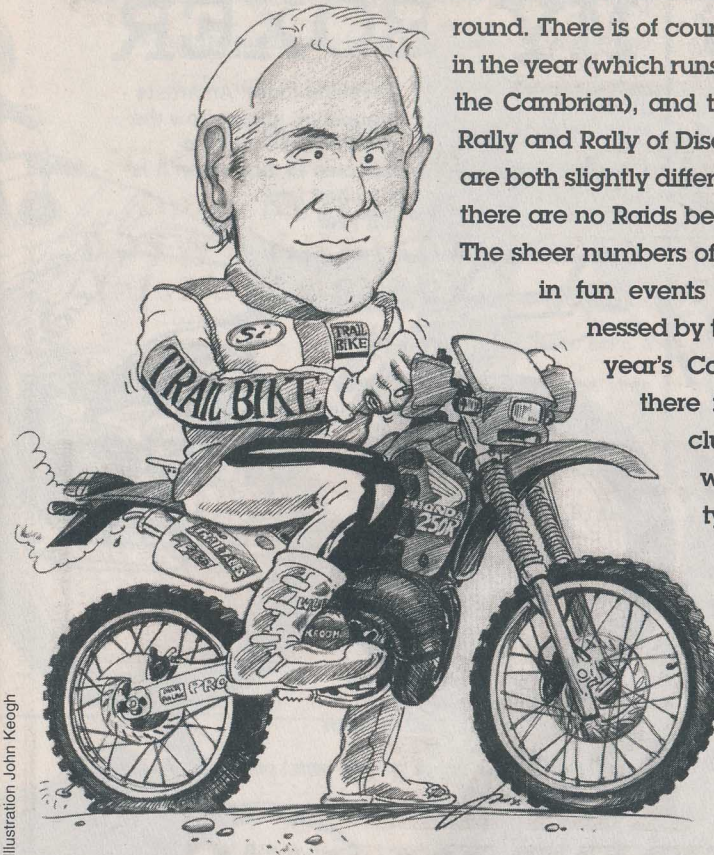


Illustration John Keogh

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BMW TO LAUNCH LIGHTWEIGHT BOXER GS 'ENDURO' MODEL

## HE AIN'T HEAVY, HE'S MY BOXER

BMW is going back to basics with the launch of a new lightweight version of the classic R80GS designed mainly for fun and competition use.

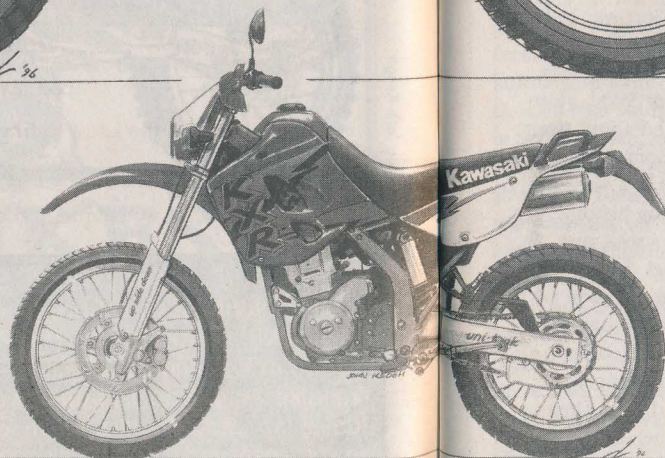
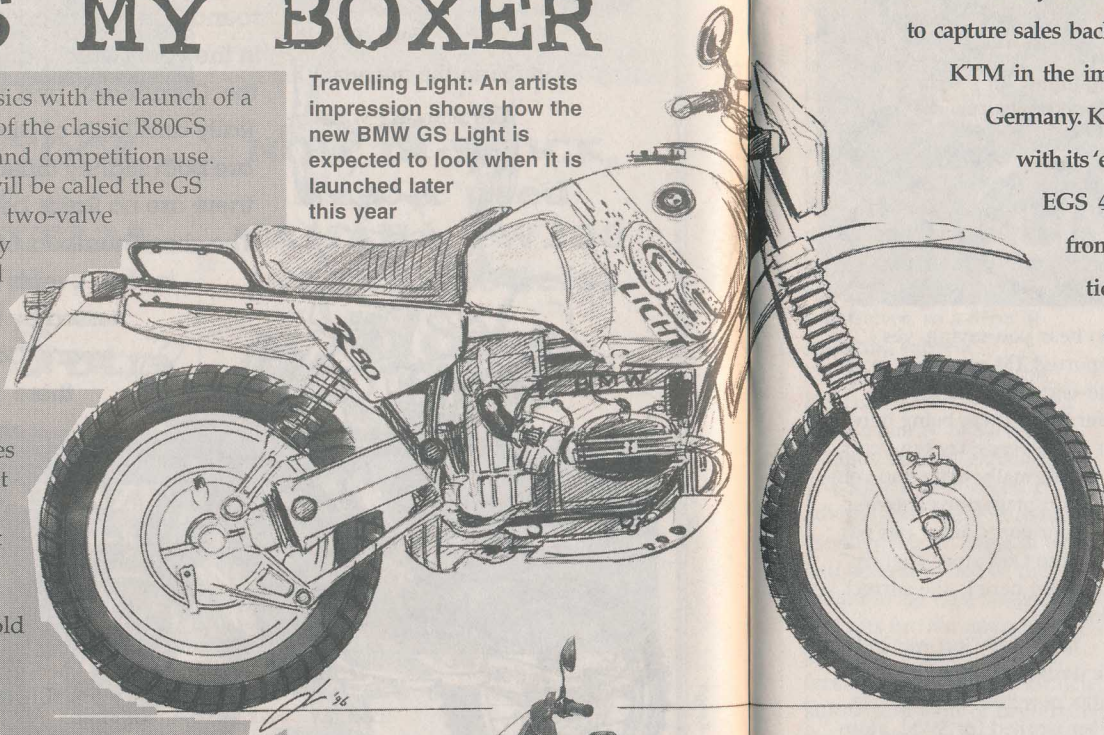
The new bike which will be called the GS Light, will feature the old two-valve boxer engine in a specially lightened chassis and will be devoid of most of the bulky accessories that make the current GS so heavy. Instead the bike will have the barest minimum of roadgoing fixtures necessary to make it street legal.

BMW have set a target weight of 182kg for the new model which will be loosely modelled on the old Paris-Dakar racers of the 1980s, and should help endow the GS Light with a reasonable power to weight ratio.

There is thought to be a huge demand in Europe, especially Germany for a lightweight GS which combines the simple and rugged mechanicals of the old engine in a no-frills package light enough to be used off road easily.

The GS Light underlines BMW's continuing commitment to building dual sport motorcycles following on from the success of the F650, which is likely to be joined by a more road-oriented version using the same 650cc engine at the end of the year.

**Travelling Light:** An artists impression shows how the new BMW GS Light is expected to look when it is launched later this year



**Kawa-Bunga:** The Kawasaki (Germany) designed KXR650 which they hope will win sales back from KTM

## Late Laws

New learner laws which were due to come into force on 1 July this year allowing learners to use bikes of 15hp rather than the current 12hp (and also limiting first time riders to bikes of no more than 33hp for two years) have been put back for six months, until 1 January 1997.

## New KTMs

Austrian Bike manufacturer KTM has announced details of a new 125 model to be launched in the UK this summer. The new LC2 is powered by a 124cc two-stroke Minarelli engine and models itself along the lines of the larger bikes in the LC range. The 15hp machine which complies with the new (more powerful) European learner laws, is expected to cost around £3250 (otr) when it goes on sale in July. Factory sources have also confirmed the existence of a more serious 200cc two stroke trail bike, which is not expected to become available for another 18 months.

## Shopping Trailies

A new one-stop trail shop has opened in Norfolk offering information on trail riding holidays, trailing weekends, and regs for local enduros, as well as selling bikes and riding gear. TRAIL-SPORT UK also has a small fleet of DT125Rs for rent so riders can get a taste of competing or riding on a trail bike. If you want to know more, call them on 01603 504595 or see their ad elsewhere in this issue.

## KAWASAKI CHASE KTM SALES

Kawasaki Germany have requested a new look model to try to capture sales back from best-selling manufacturer KTM in the important big trail bike market in

Germany. KTM has been busy building sales with its 'enduro' range of trailbikes the LC4

EGS 400 and 620, stealing sales away from the Japanese manufacturers particularly Kawasaki, whose KLR and KLX trail bikes have seen a steady decline in the past year.

Kawasaki Germany want their parent company to produce a bike (dubbed the KXR) along the lines of the Austrian manufacturers range which would have proper off road capability as well as good on road manners, and incorporate

the latest styling trends. It's uncertain yet as to whether Kawasaki will respond to the request, though it is thought they intend to update the styling of the current KLX which has remained unchanged since its launch in 1993.

# Dear Trail

## Home Truths

Dear Si

As you can see from the enclosed photograph 'Crasher' Cornish has not always been as cool as he likes everyone to think he is. This photo was taken when he was just 17, had a full head of hair, an attitude and a pair of very tacky mirror shades, not to mention an elasticated cuff leather jacket.

I think the world should know that in order to impress the lovely Julia (now known as Mrs Crasher), he told her that he owned a bike, a car and a boat. Whilst not exactly fibbing, it was more than a Bayeaux Tapestry of the truth (let alone embroidering it a bit). The said bike was a rust brown FS1E that 'mummy and daddy' helped to purchase, the car was a baby blue Ford Anglia left to him by some friends of the family, and the boat was a maggot-infested, bottle green rowing boat belonging to his granddad. All of these *minor details* never crossed

Crasher's mind as he relentlessly pursued the future Mrs Crasher, impressing her with his repertoire of elasticated truths. We are all very lucky he finally won and we now have a terrific sister-in-law, a six year old niece who's inherited Crasher's laid back (read horizontal) attitude to life, and a nephew who's

Hair today, gone tomorrow; Crasher Cornish aged just 17. He still wears those shades!



birth announcement included the immortal words 'a future world champion'.

We are all really proud of Crasher and his work, but try telling that to the lovely Mrs Crasher who has not had a family holiday that doesn't involve bikes since before the future world champion's birth. Hard act to follow? No, we love him really. The world needs its heroes and Crasher is one of them.

Mandy Johnson  
New Eltham, London  
(Crasher's long suffering little sister)

## Correction Factor

Dear Ed,

What a nice surprise to open the April edition of your excellent magazine and find that you have included articles on two of the four marques that I imported. Two? I

can hear you saying, yes I imported TM machines in the mid-eighties. Your article referred to them being here for three years, try ten years. I don't normally write and comment on magazine contents but your contributor has got the Moto Gori story slightly wrong, so here is the correct version.

Giancarlo Gori was in fact the designer behind the tasty Rotax powered Goris but he never worked for SWM. Moto Gori was founded about twenty five years prior to SWM emerging and had a very successful road racing history. They built motocross and enduro machines during the seventies and in common with more than 30 other Italian producers used the Sachs motor. When the supply of these began to dry up they searched for a newer and better engine. At the time there were two alternatives, TAU or HIRO and neither suited their

# Bike...

requirements (readers may recall that Armstrong used Hiro motors for a while). At the time of this search Moto Gori ran into financial difficulties and were taken over by SWM, which solved their engine problems as SWM had access to the Rotax engines. A minor difficulty was that SWM were on the crest of a wave and were always short of engines themselves, so a form of rationing existed.

During a visit to the Florence factory I noticed a large quantity of Sachs engines, frames, exhausts, air boxes etc in the stores. I was advised that these were from an early model, some of which had been supplied to the Italian Army (fast soldiers) and was further advised that they only required wheels, forks and shocks. Quick calculations and a bit of negotiating showed that we had the makings of a cheap, entry level, 'Clubman' enduro bike. It should be remembered that my youngest son Michael, aged 17 at the time, won events on one.

Dave Cornish's assessments are spot-on, the bike had limitations but when viewed with the knowledge that it was a 1972 model it wasn't so bad. As regards the handling and your writer's accident experiences I feel that something should be allowed for the

Got an opinion?

Then write to:

TrailBike Magazine

PO Box 9845

London

W13 9WP



## Gutted

Dear Si

I AM GUTTED!

Some snivelling little thieving pond dweller one night last month relieved me of my green 'J' reg KMX200. I was (and still am) extremely pissed off not only because I'd taxed and MOT'd the thing just two weeks earlier (including fitting new rear wheel bearings and tyres) but also because an expensive drill followed it out of my locked shed as well. My local police were very courteous and understanding over the telephone but were completely disinterested in coming to see the scene of crime or to take fingerprints (of which there were many). I even got a nice headed letter informing me that 'we' (the police) 'were very sorry to hear that I had become a victim of crime' - how reassuring! To add insult to injury, two days after the theft I received my council tax bill for the year (over £600)

'Cornish factor', his reputation precedes him, as in the same issue he manages to have difficulties with a 6bhp Derbi moped - need I say more?

The other two marques that I was involved with were SWM and Puch-Frigo. These were probably two of the most successful off-roaders of the period, SWM won everything in trials and enduro while their motocross effort with Jean Claude Laquaye was credible. Puch had Heinz Kinagadner in the 250 GPs and Eddy Orioli in enduro. In the final analysis, the green (Rotax engine) Gori's were the best bikes and in one Welsh enduro 50 percent of the entry chose them.

Keep up the good work.

Jim Jones  
Clwyd  
(former Moto Gori importer)

Are you implying Dave 'Crasher' Cornish occasionally crashes of his own accord? Surely some mistake?

# Dear Trail Bike...

with an additional £35 going to Avon & Somerset Constabulary to 'pay for extra policing'!!!

Anyway, this leaves me in a bit of a quandary - what do I get to replace it? My first foray into the off road scene was a Yam XT600 Tenere! I quite enjoyed hanging on to it through (and I mean through) green lanes, however, I did not enjoy having to pull it out of ditches, hedges etc. due to its more than adequate mass. I then followed that with the KMX200, and now of course, I need something else.

I read your Staff Bikes feature in the May 1996 issue (No. 10) which talked about

the CRM250, and am very interested in another light(ish) weight two stroke. Various grey importers have stocks of other 250cc stokers - but which would you recommend as an overall package - on and off road manners, weight, seat height, reliability, spares availability etc. Do any of them have electric radiator fans?

I have got all issues of TBM except for No.1. If anyone out there has a spare/used/unwanted copy, please let me know (via TBM) - we can come to some arrangement.

Graeme Penhorwood  
Bristol

*Sorry to hear about your KMX - dirt bike theft is a serious problem and a topic we will be covering in a future issue of the mag.*

*We rate the Honda CRM as the best of the stoker trailies simply because of its nice spread of torque, but it's closely followed by the TS200R/DT200R, and we've yet to test a KDX250SR (as opposed to the 200), which looks even more purposeful than the CRM. However none of them have (or require) cooling fans on the rads to keep them cool.*

Kawasaki's KDX250SR is only available as a grey import in the UK. Expect a test of one very soon



# WHAT'S New

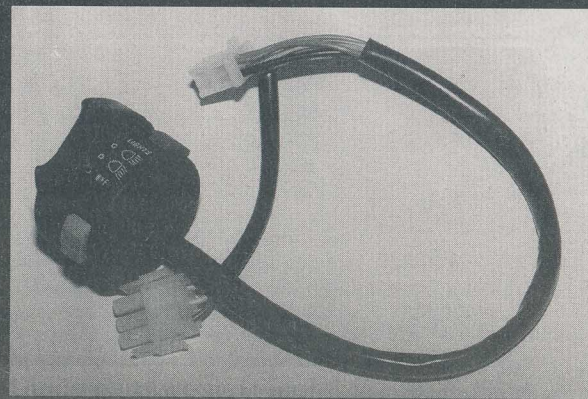
## PACK DRILL

Ventura have extended their range of Bike-Pack luggage systems to include a number of popular trail bikes. The soft luggage which converts into a rucksack when you leave your bike, now fits the Honda XR250/600, Transalp, Dominator and Africa Twin, as well as the KLE/KLR/KLX range of Kawasakis, the XT/XTZ range of Yamahas and all BMW GS models (plus the F650). With capacities ranging from 30 litres to a massive 88 litres the Ventura bike pack system which comes with its own unique mounting rack, is ideal for adventure sport bikes as it is unaffected by high level exhaust systems. For more information call Nuvolari Marketing on 01784 436969



## Lighting up

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## HOW WE WON THE



Above: Team TrailBike line up at the start of this year's event. Main Pic: Dave Johns on his way to scooping third overall on an army Armstrong!



**This easter saw the third running of the annual Cambrian Rally, and we at TrailBike Magazine not only took part, we won it..... well, sort of**

# CAMBRIAN RALLY

Yes, that's right, we won the Cambrian Rally, overcoming the choking, dusty conditions against tough competition to win it fairly and squarely, beating all the other..... er, well.... trade teams actually. Okay so we won the Trade Team Prize but we came close to winning overall... well, close-ish. In fact this year's event was won outright by none other than ex British Four Stroke Enduro Champ John 'Dakar' Deacon riding a KTM620EGS. Second was popular Welsh clubman Yoshi Adams, now in lightweight guise having shed more than three stone just prior to the event. Yoshi blitzed everyone except Deacon and most amazingly was only five seconds slower than him on one of the special stages on his KMX200 - way to go Yoshi. Third rider home was Dave Johns who put in a blistering performance aboard his military issue Armstrong 500 to secure the award for best services rider along the way.

Honourable mentions should go to rally regular Phil Gunn whose bike has never run right since competing in the Dakar last year. It didn't stop 'flying' Phil from romping home in sixth place and claiming best sports bike to boot. Mike Griffith deserves a mention as he was one of two riders to end up in a stream when he overshot a turn, though it didn't stop him coming home 15th overall and best sports bike rider over 40. Mike Jones also deserves a mention, 21st overall on a Yamaha Super Tenere on (very worn) trail tyres, and to complete a family outing, his mum Dot, won best Lady rider in the sports bike class. Gill Myers scooped the best lady rider award (overall) after top female enduroist Katrina Price's Armstrong ran a bearing on the first lap. And finally a mention for Andy Gough who managed to beat me (the editor) by just one second.... despite his er, wooden leg.

### CAMBRIAN RALLY

By now regular readers will know what the Cambrian Rally is all about, but if you don't here's a brief explanation. Run along the lines of a car rally, the Cambrian takes place in a Welsh forest with riders competing on a variety of trail bikes (or fourstroke enduro machines), with classes for different capacity, number of cylin-

TrailBike Magazine riders managed a respectable 14th, 28th, 47th and er,... 116th out of a staggering entry of 180 plus riders. Last home of the TrailBike mob was a 'shagged out' Paul Blezard

# CAMBRIAN RALLY



Team Trailbike generously give ex British Fourstroke Enduro Champion and Dakar racer John Deacon some tips on how to ride the Cambrian. And do you know what, it must have been good advice because he went on to win the event outright!



who completed a unique double having just ridden the Lands End Trial the day (and night) before. Blez, whose Transalp looked in a rather sorry state at the finish still had to face the toughest test of all - explaining to Honda's press department why their bike looked distinctly secondhand after they had made him promise faithfully that he wouldn't take it off road - oops.

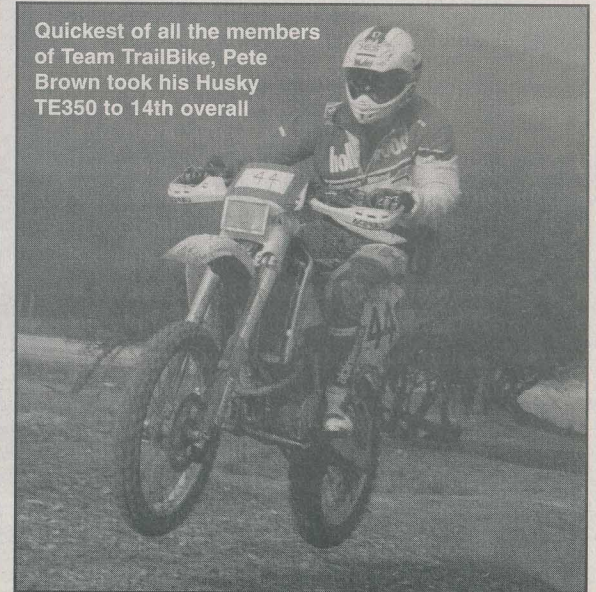
ders, age group, riding standard and sex! Riders follow a clearly marked 45-50 mile lap (almost totally off road) which contains three 'special stages' approximately seven miles long. These 'specials' are timed and establish the rider's overall position (as well as in class placings). In between these stages are liaison sections (again off road) which are not timed and simply link together the specials. All the terrain is reasonably easy (depending on what machine you're riding), and there are a number of miles of fast forestry (gravel) roads to allow riders on bigger bikes to make up time against more nimble machinery. Each rider completes two laps, (the timescale is fairly comfortable allowing plenty of time for a chat, or to stop and have a bite to eat between specials), and at the end of the event there's a buffet reception (included in the price) and a prizegiving ceremony in the bar. The whole weekend is fairly laid back, very friendly and best of all more popular every year. Roll on next Easter!

Pics by Alex P & Mick Murphy

Of course the real winners of the event was everyone who took part, enjoying a fabulous day's sport in the beautiful Welsh forests. The going was fast and furious, the organisation superb and the sun even shone for heaven's sake. Only a handful of riders failed to finish, and everybody had a story to tell, particularly our own Crasher Cornish who having caught up a pair of riders in front of him who were proceeding fairly cautiously because of the dust, blasted through their dust cloud only to find a sharp left turn where the track should have been. The rest of course is history though not surprisingly it involved a certain amount of unassisted flight and a fairly bumpy landing.

If you didn't manage to make it down to the Cambrian or were one of the unlucky 60 or so riders who were excluded because the entry was full then make a note in your diary to get your entry in early for next year's event, or better still make sure you get the regs for the Hafren Rally later this year. You won't regret it. **Si Melber**

Quickest of all the members of Team TrailBike, Pete Brown took his Husky TE350 to 14th overall



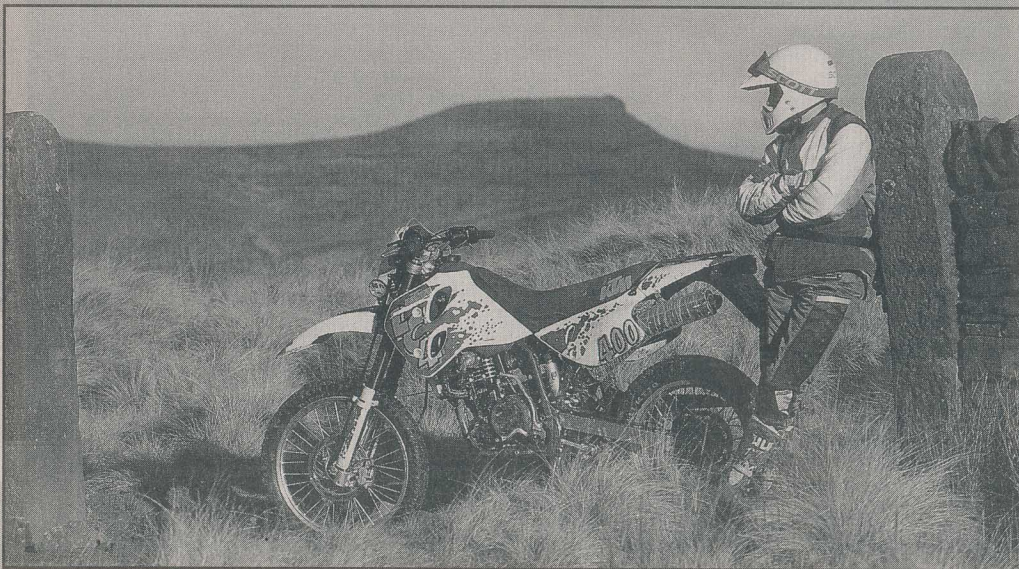


# KTM400EGS

**A trail bike with enduro roots, the KTM400EGS 'Enduro' is a hard edged trailie that finds its own niche in an already niche-oriented market. Dave Cornish entered it in the KTM sponsored Cambrian Rally. This is what he found**

Mention those three letters K - T - M and the average rider conjures up images of fire breathing MX, enduro and rally bikes. The Austrian manufacturer has until recently been synonymous with producing dirt racers that in the right hands are championship winners. However over the last couple of years a change of tack at the

Mattighofen plant has spawned a new concept in trail bikes! Due to persistent pressure (mainly from the huge German Market), KTM now produce the EGS trailie in both 400 and 620cc form, these bikes are claimed to share all of the advantages of a full on enduro mount and yet be perfectly happy to double up as a practical



TrailBike -16- Magazine

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d u a l  
purpose  
machine.  
Could this  
possibly be  
true... well I  
was about to  
find out!

After fighting 200kgs of bulky Cagiva Elephant to a finish in last years Cambrian I was determined to secure a more suitable and competitive mount for this years rally, and since the Cambrian is a Dual Sport sponsored event (they're the KTM importers in case you were wondering) this seemed just the excuse we needed to put one of their trail bikes to the test. A phone calls to Gordon at Dual Sport and we secured a 96 model 400EGS (though the

Pics by Mac McDiarmid, Alex P & Mick Murphy

more eagle-eyed among you will notice that some of the photos are of a slightly earlier model with different graphics).

Reading through the spec sheet instantly dispels the notion that this bike is nothing more than a thinly disguised enduro racer with a set of road lights. The trailie's steel rear sub frame (aluminium on the SC enduro bike) is strong enough to support a passenger on the larger and better upholstered seat. There are removable rubber inserts fitted to the cleated footrests, a tiny engine counter balancer and a rear cush drive to make for a more relaxing tarmac ride. Other road going niceties include a decent halogen headlight, full



TrailBike -17- Magazine

# KTM400EGS

instrumentation, mirrors, indicators, a choice of side or centre stand and a useful rear mudguard mounted rack, as well as a larger (11.3 litre) fuel tank. This little lot adds up to an extra 10kg over the enduro bike, and the 400EGS tips the scales at a reasonably lofty 134kg (295.4lbs). Not particularly light, but the KTM has the feel of a substantial machine that'd last more than just a season or two.

Aside from the balance shaft the motor is all but identical to the competition powerplant. It shares the same 38mm Dell'Orto carb rejetted to suit the quieter alloy silencer but the EGS lump comes with a more efficient oil filtration system together with a larger sump capacity of 2.1 litres as opposed to the SC's 1.6. Obviously the

Austrian manufacturer has done more than simply bolt on a few street legal bits and pieces in their attempt to produce a 'super sport' trail bike.

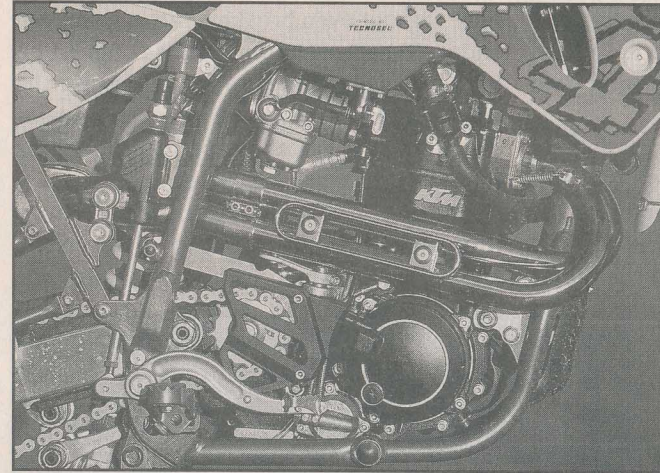
As you would expect the running gear uses similar top drawer components, White Power supply both the 'USD' adjustable fork and the fully adjustable rear unit. DID rims are laced to the hubs by the beefiest set of spokes we've ever come across, in fact John Deacon's Dakar bike used a set of standard wheels where other manufacturers bikes required aftermarket wheels capable of taking the pounding of high speed desert running.

Cosmetically the EGS also owes much to the enduro range, the main difference being white bodywork in place of the

competition machine's (new for 96) mustard yellow colour scheme. Personally I much prefer the traditional KTM white/blue, but the latest bright orange/purple graphics look as if they should last more than a couple of power

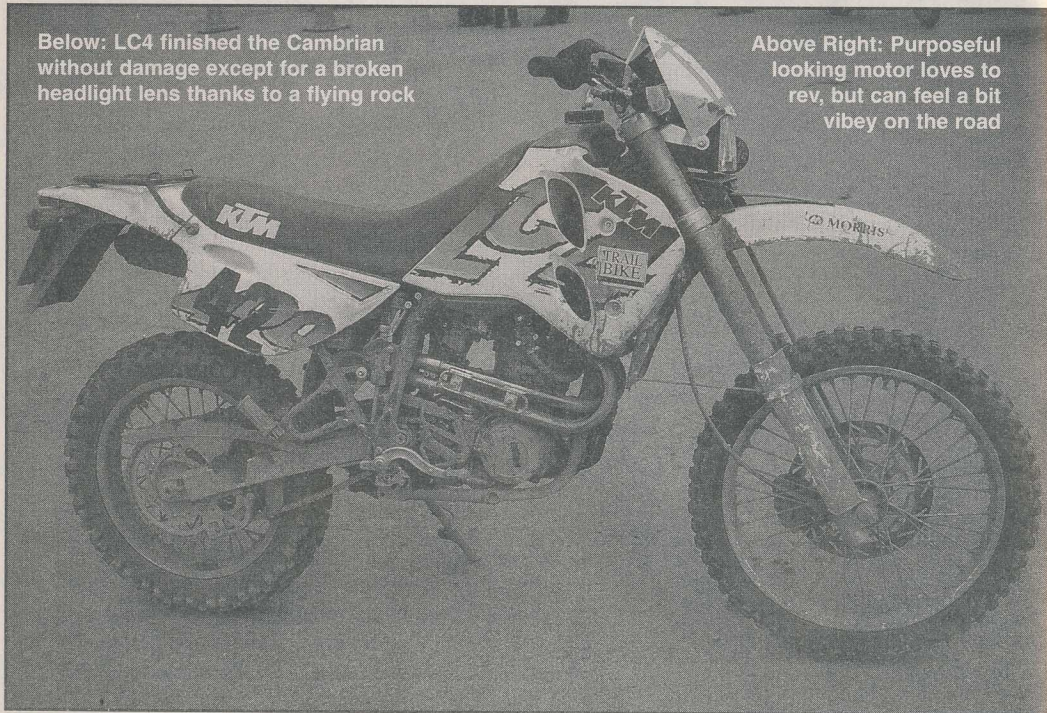
washes and the certainly make the EGS stand out in a crowd.

Easter Sunday morning finally arrived but unfortunately our 400EGS hadn't, well not until a half an hour before our allotted start time when a grinning Gordon appeared pushing the bike through the crowded Llandovery Rugby Club car park. With no time to familiarise myself properly with the bike, Gordon explained the simple starting procedure; fuel on, ignition on, open the handlebar mounted choke and a firm swing on the left sided kickstarter gets the motor burbling into life, ticking over quietly.



Below: LC4 finished the Cambrian without damage except for a broken headlight lens thanks to a flying rock

Above Right: Purposeful looking motor loves to rev, but can feel a bit vibey on the road







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# KTM400EGS

Having owned a whole series of ill mannered, bad starting, four stroke singles I was almost dumstruck at the ease with which the KTM's motor had burst into life. This was gonna' be fun.

The first six miles of the rally follows the fast and twisty tarmac of the A40 before turning off into the woods for the start of the off roading. Revving the 400 through the gears on the road the motor certainly felt strong in the upper mid range although fairly low gearing keeps maximum speed down to around 80-85mph. Ergonomically the bike felt good too, the braceless steel handlebar which had felt a touch too high on the start line combined with the comfortable dual seat and some well positioned footrests to give an excellent riding position with plenty of room to move around. The downside to the KTM is that despite the balance shaft, some vibes do make their way through to the rider at fairly high revs, and though the tiny counter balancer cuts out most of the unwanted vibration you never manage to lose it altogether.

Onto the first special stage of the day and I immediately fluff up the start with a series of mis-timed gear changes. But once into the groove the 400 shows just what it's capable of blasting across the open heath with the throttle pinned wide. Further on, several riders are taking an early bath on the deeply flooded main track so I point the bike to the higher ground on the left, and gassing it in third find myself confronted with a large area of badly rutted peat bog - no problem on the KTM, just tug on the bars, another

handful of throttle and we float over the mire without even breaking into a sweat. On enduro type terrain the KTM's competition heritage really shines through, despite the extra weight of the road gear, the weight distribution is just about perfect for setting the bike up for any obstacle.

Riding full pelt down some dusty fireroads I was also glad to discover the KTM came equipped with a truly awesome set of brakes. The 300mm twin piston Brembo fitted at the sharp end combined with a 220mm single piston rear not only offered brilliant retardation from the high speeds of which the 400 is capable, but also give the rider plenty of feedback at the lever, the rear felt particularly good - powerful but not too fierce the instant a bulky MX boot touches the well tucked in pedal.

As the rally progressed I realised that the 400EGS was giving me a huge advantage over my fellow competitors on lesser machinery. Keeping the throttle screwed wide open the KTM could easily be hustled past slower riders and I was always confident in the bike's abilities to get me out of trouble if need be. Our test bike came fitted with a pair of Pirelli MT21 RallyCross treads, (as opposed to the stock Michelins). These tyres perfectly matched the 400's predictable power delivery, and meant getting the rear end drifting at speed was a cinch.

In the dry and dusty conditions catching slower traffic meant overtaking as soon as possible to avoid problems with vision and breathing in clouds of choking dust. Here the KTM would allow me to blast past with the knowledge that the bike had plenty in reserve. The finely balanced package

of smooth torquey power, competition inspired suspension and superbly powerful brakes meant that the rider can race with his or her mind totally focused on the track and not be concerned about what the bike is doing.

Onto special stage three, this section involved a flat-out uphill fireroad, carrying a high corner speed through a right hander I flicked up into fourth until the motor revved out then a clutchless shift into top and we were flying. This was the only place on the 50 mile lap that the KTM's 398ccs just weren't enough. Tucked well in behind the large enduro style head-

lamp unit the 400 refused all attempts at reaching peak revs in fifth. No doubt the 620 version would have pulled out maybe 50 metres over it's smaller brother on this particular section but unless your name is John Deacon, the larger bike would almost certainly prove to be more of a handful in most off road situations.

Just as I was thinking how well I was doing I came across two slower riders on a section of fireroad. In my haste to get past both of them in one hit, the inevitable disaster happened! Taking the right hand side of the track I rode into the dust cloud and no sooner had I passed them than I



Crasher Cornish lands the KTM on its front wheel on the first stage of this year's Cambrian Rally

# KTM400EGS

realised why they were going so slowly - a 180 degree hairpin. Still in fourth gear I realised that I was heading straight off the track and over a huge drop, so with self preservation paramount I laid the KTM on it's side and shut my eyes! When the dust had settled the two riders who I'd just overtaken enquired about my health (*presumably your mental health Dave - ed*) and to everyone's surprise (especially mine) both bike and rider were totally unscathed!

This was the only time the KTM was reluctant to start first kick and with the Ed's words still ringing in my ears 'take it easy, stay upright - we want that team award' I pushed the bike down hill and still in fourth gear the 400 cleared it's lungs and fired up with the loss of less than a couple of minutes.

Handing in my time card at the end of the day I was (and still am) convinced that for me the KTM400EGS is probably the best 'serious' fourstroke trailbike on the market today. Okay so it's a little heavy, and its lusty motor would probably balk at the thought of chugging slowly up and down a green lane all day, but that isn't really what the KTM is about. This is a bike for rally events like the Cambrian. Fast fire roads, choppy dry whoops and the odd bit of twisting tarmac are where the KTM finds its home. Perhaps its nearest competitor would be something like the XR400R or Husky TE350 though of course both are enduro bikes and nowhere near as practical for everyday use as the EGS.

In their attempt at building a user

friendly version of their enduro bike KTM have barely clipped the EGS's wings; so much so that during most of my time on the 400 I wasn't conscious of the bike being a mere trailie at all. The first class suspension has enough adjustments to find the ideal setting for any rider and those Brembo brakes are the best off road anchors I've come across. These features together with the easy starting, torquey, four stroke motor make the EGS stand out from the usual trail bike crowd.

Two question marks however remain unanswered; is the KTM worth the £4375 that Dual Sport are asking for it, after all in that price bracket there is a reasonable amount of choice for the prospective punter, and secondly despite its balance shaft will the KTM prove to be too tiring on longer stretches of tarmac? In our opinion the answers are *yes* to the first, and *possibly* to the second, though this ultimately comes down to personal preference.

## Conclusion

Overall the EGS is a sophisticated and well built package that has all of the benefits of running an enduro weapon on the road (without the grief) but with much more practicality and rider friendly features. In effect the potential punter will get two bikes for the price of one; a fairly serious off roader and a reasonable short haul roadster, topped off with a 12 month warranty. It really makes you wonder why it is that the other manufacturers haven't cottoned on to this sector of the market.

Only time will tell.

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## KTM 400EGS

**Engine:** Liquid cooled, 4-valve, single cylinder with counter balancer and auto decompression system

**Displacement:** 398cc

**Bore x Stroke:** 95 x 56.2mm

**Frame:** Chrome-moly steel

**Suspension:** (front) WP USD multi adjustable, (rear) WP multi adjustable

**Brakes:** (front) 300mm disc, (rear) 220mm disc

**Fuel capacity:** 11.3 litres

**Seat height:** 910mm, 35.8in

**Weight:** 134kg, 295.4lbs



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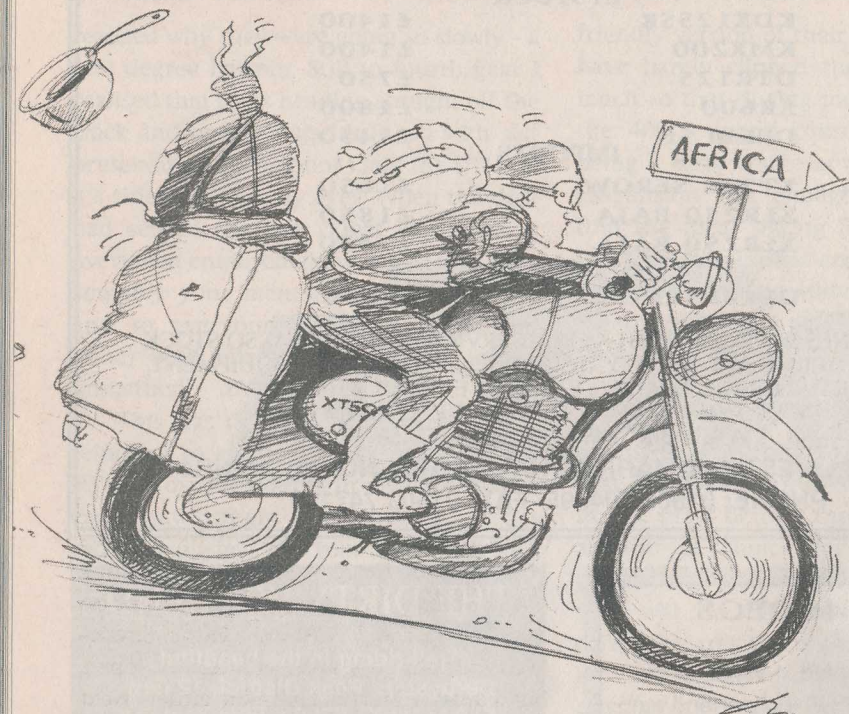
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# GREAT

# SCOTT!!



**Desert adventurer Chris Scott has been riding trail bikes for as long as he dares remember. Here he recounts a few of the highs and most of the lows of a lifetime of trail bike travelling**

The other day I had a rather nostalgic experience; it's one of the nicer aspects of getting old. Getting lost on a drive back from Sussex lead me right past the woods where my trail biking days began in the spring of 1979. At that time the fruits of a winter's despatching saw three grand spent in one week on a couple of new bikes; a

love-hate Ducati 900SS and a Suzuki SP370. The SS soon put my licence (and therefore, my job) in jeopardy, but the good old SP earned its keep by day and initiated me into the thrills and spills of mud-plugging most weekends. With a friend on an XL250S, we'd let our tyres down and lark around the bomb holes of Addington Woods, jumping, sliding and tearing up that steep learning curve until something broke or the sun went down.

By the end of that summer the trusty SP was understandably shagged and was swapped for a '75 TS185 plus a bunch of cash. The ultra basic TS got the same six-

day-a-week beating as the SP, but being cheaper and lighter it undertook bigger jumps and steeper drop-offs. A much needed fork brace and a Michelin Trials tyre were fitted for my first local enduro: that big moment when you stick racing numbers on your bike for real - and don't take them off for a month so everyone gets the message!

Nicked shortly afterwards, it was replaced by the granddaddy of them all, a '76 XT500 which, in those days had the characterful OTT appeal of today's Elefant or Tiger. One of my most memorable biking days ever was spent one Easter, churning up the berms with a couple of mates on Perranporth beach in Cornwall. One of them bought the Yam, both later surviving a 20 foot drop into a mine shaft - fortuitously capped with wooden planks.

Tiring of turning turkeys into do-it-all greyhounds with only duct tape and old inner tubes, I decided I was now ready for the real thing. I talked myself into buying one of the new IT-Gs that US magazine *Dirt Bike* was raving about. Not wanting the peaky 175 or 'awesome' 465 (this was 1981 remember), I sensibly settled for an IT250G, or so I thought. Carefully running in my first 'competition machine', I suddenly discovered the meaning of a gnat's goolies-wide 30hp powerband while overtaking a string of cars on the way to work one morning. With a hideous racket and an expulsion of

oily blue smoke that made Esso shares soar, the IT launched down the length of Clapham High Street on its back wheel.

'You're in early Chris, what's up, seen a ghost?' After a few weeks I had to agree with the ear-shielding grimaces of passers-by; the IT was far too horrible and highly-strung for an over-earning novice like myself. I exchanged it for an XL250S plus cash while its new owner went on to break his leg on the wicked IT.

The XL lacked the agreeable torque of its four-stroke predecessors and led to a brief stint with an over-tired 'Moto Cross Fox' DT175 fitted with a racing plug ('Wow, really?') and then a quick stint on a Miller-framed TL150 on which I discovered that not only was I not Geraint Jones, but I wasn't Martin Lampkin either! Next came an XR500 swapped for my GS750. The comfy XR had



# GREAT SCOTT!!

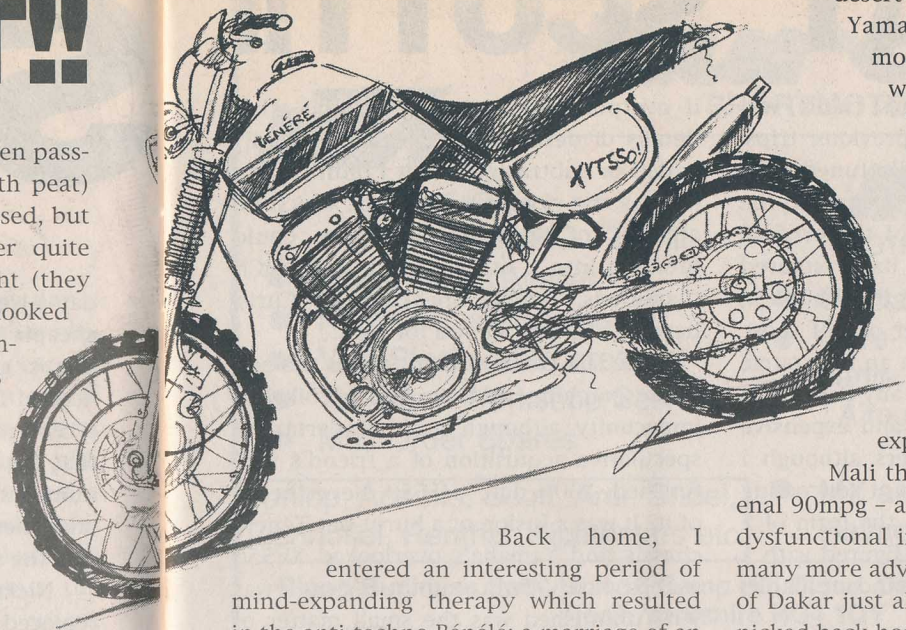
that long-missed stonk and what's this? balancer shafts - we could have gone places, the XR and I. A knobbly-induced slide leaving Membury Services on the way to the Ridgeway is fondly remembered. So is a less wholesome top end meltdown that set in while hitting an indicated ton on a regular City-to-Yamaha run while attempting to crack the office 25-minute record. ('These bloody despatch riders, honestly!').

The semi-seized plonker was flogged to a mate while I got a snazzy KLX250 that I thought would be the ideal match of tractable motor in an MX-ish frame. Wrong again! Following my first Welsh enduro at Cwm Owen (another cathartic experience which I completed just as they

were packing up, after several dozen passing Maicos had splattered me with peat) the wimpy suspension was addressed, but the truly feeble KL motor never quite received the White Bros treatment (they just kept my money). No, the KLX looked good but was sheep in wolf's clothing compared to my riding mate's brilliant little XR200. A sandy Hampshire enduro saw the ageing chain crack the KL's cases, drain the oil and seize the head. 'MCN Classifieds, Debbie speaking, how can I help you?'

By now a Kenya-bound chum on a Gold Wing had planted the trans-Saharan idea in my head so I bought another XT500 that took me on my first hopelessly overloaded Sahara trip, where the XT nearly was, and should have been abandoned. All the way across France people mistook me for a slightly tardy entrant for some Rally I'd never heard off, giving me a cheery 'Faire le gas! 'sign as I wobbled by. Later on in Tamanrasset I finally eyed-up a tasty but defunct Paris-Dakar XR600 - as well as an inauspiciously mangled XL500 which I'd spotted a couple of days earlier. I kept my self-control and managed not to buy either.

Downunder a few months later, I made yet another mistake in buying a new DR250. It was light, gutless and agonisingly uncomfortable across Australia's vast distances - and I never even left the East Coast! However, the future looked bright; one day outside a West Sydney bike shop I drooled over the finer details of the first XT600Z Ténéré and thought 'now that would make a fine desert bike'.



Back home, I entered an interesting period of mind-expanding therapy which resulted in the anti-techno Bénélé; a marriage of an archaic AJS Stormer frame to, of all things, a Honda CD200T engine. (My four Benlies have all made cheap and irritatingly reliable work bikes, you see.) A pair of XLS shocks put still more air under the sump, an RD250 tank gave a 400km range, and a pair of VW Beetle tail pipes made sure the valve guides didn't last too long. But not before it took me on a fortnight's hols in the late-summer Sahara, where the little motor coped a lot better with the unbelievable heat than I did. I even got some admiring glances (two, I think, and one was from a squirrel) at the Bol D'Or on the way back. I sold the Bénélé in shame after it failed to win the 'Concours de Grot' at the BMF Rally and bought a nice little Pro-Link XR200R. Unfortunately, closer inspection revealed a canny bit of insulating tape covering a cracked frame in the clearly overstressed shock area: 'MCN Classifieds, Debbie speaking, oh Hi Chris, yes your regular slot's available.'

Enough of that, it was time for the

desert again, only this time on Yamaha's long-desired first model XT600ZE Ténéré. It was 1985, the year the 'Dakar' went too far with founder-organiser Thierry Sabine among the event's many victims. For me it was my best ever desert trip; expensive, eventful and, with a new fatalistic attitude, as successful as you could expect. One weary day in

Mali the XT returned a phenomenal 90mpg - a rate matched only by my dysfunctional innards at that time. After many more adventures it got shipped out of Dakar just ahead of the Rally, but got nicked back home, after I'd shod it with a juicy five inch Trelleborg to go rotavate a Welsh bog or two.

The bargain-priced new XT350 which followed was a disappointing exploration of mid-plonkerdom and was also thankfully stolen (probably by the same mob). A dull round-and-round 'enduro' near Banbury underlined its revvyness and soggy suspension, even if it was a loaded jerrycan lighter than a Ténéré. Then for some reason I bought another IT250, a 'J' model this time, but what a great bike! Gobs of *controllable* power, wheelying on the throttle down the Euston Road with my girlfriend on the tool pouch and getting away with the subsequent pull. After a lot of fun on the 'J' I revised my loathing of competition two-strokes - except for that accursed din.

A year later it was desert time again, a typically over ambitious intention to cross Niger's Ténéré Desert - thankfully diverted when my partner's wheels unspoked themselves in terror. My ZE

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# GREAT SCOTT!!

Ténéré, (at £1750, my priciest trailie) was a distillation of all my previous trips' experience; an ergonomically tuned masterpiece that never quite matched the economy or build-quality of the original model. However it did get itself pictured mid-flight in *DBR* following the inaugural MCA 'fun enduro', another one of those round-and-round affairs on an MX course - give me the Welsh moors any day.

There followed a long and expensive investigation of Land Rovers although I did make one more attempt at concocting the ultimate desert bike in the form of a shin-kicking KTM 600GS. I figured with a good frame and suspension and a reliable,

if overpowering Rotax motor, the other details of desert touring could be easily added or subtracted. What I didn't count on was the close ratio gearbox which no amount of sprocket swappery could broaden into a useful desert sled. 'MCN Classifieds, Debbie speaking. Hi Chris, haven't heard from you for ages!'

The last crash brought about the end of despatching and an era of bikeless impecunity although I did undertake a speculative acquisition of a friend's 99% finished, 100% daft XVT550. Never heard of it? It was a fusion of a burnt-out Ténéré chassis and Yamaha's overlooked XV550 watercooled V-Twin, and the reason it was 99% unfinished was the small matter of the XV shaft/XT chain interface which Alan had rather lamely bodged. Asking just £300, for the 'desert rat', it made an intriguing ad in MCN that fried our phone for a day or two.

With some work in France lined up I finally treated myself to a grand's-worth of BMW R80GS last year. The old dog (with its speedo mounted in a lunchbox for some obscure reason) never ran right and I soon learned many new and interesting French words for ignition parts. When it managed to run on both cylinders, the over-long Showa forks made sure I regularly undertook unexpected diversions into the scented Provençal countryside while windblown fork oil coated my shins. My XVT mate (with a BM in worse nick than mine) finally relieved me of that one and now I find myself married to Debbie (yes, from the MCN classifieds) with two children and looking for another three figure hack for an upcoming desert trip. Wonder what I'll go for this time?



No, we've no idea why he's wearing a wetsuit either

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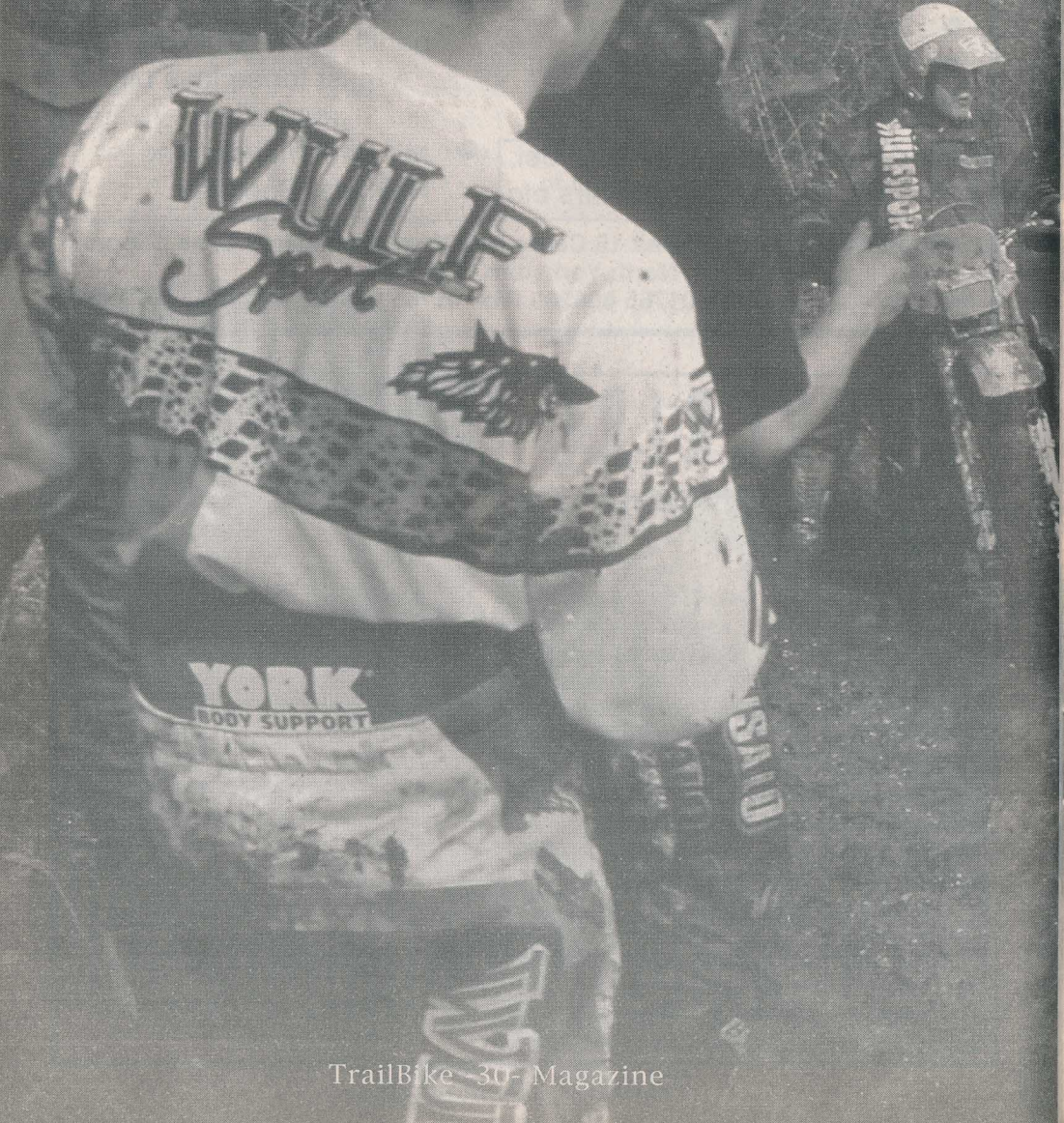
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# RAIDING PARTY

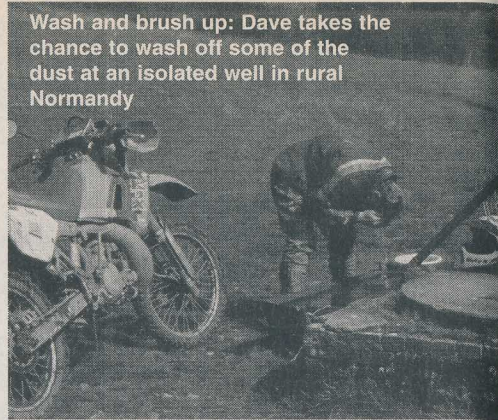
Words & Photos Si Melber



If you've always wondered what it would be like to take part in a Rallye Raid, read on and find out what happened when TrailBike Magazine entered the Normandy Raid



# RAIDING PARTY



Wash and brush up: Dave takes the chance to wash off some of the dust at an isolated well in rural Normandy



The instructions said turn right (off the main road), go along a muddy track for 0.5km and then fork left through a field. Sounds simple enough, so how come we were completely and hopelessly lost? We stopped, took off our helmets and had another long hard look at the roadbook. Then it dawned on me, it was my mistake, all my own fault, I only had myself to blame..... I should never have trusted Dave 'Crasher' Cornish to do the navigating!

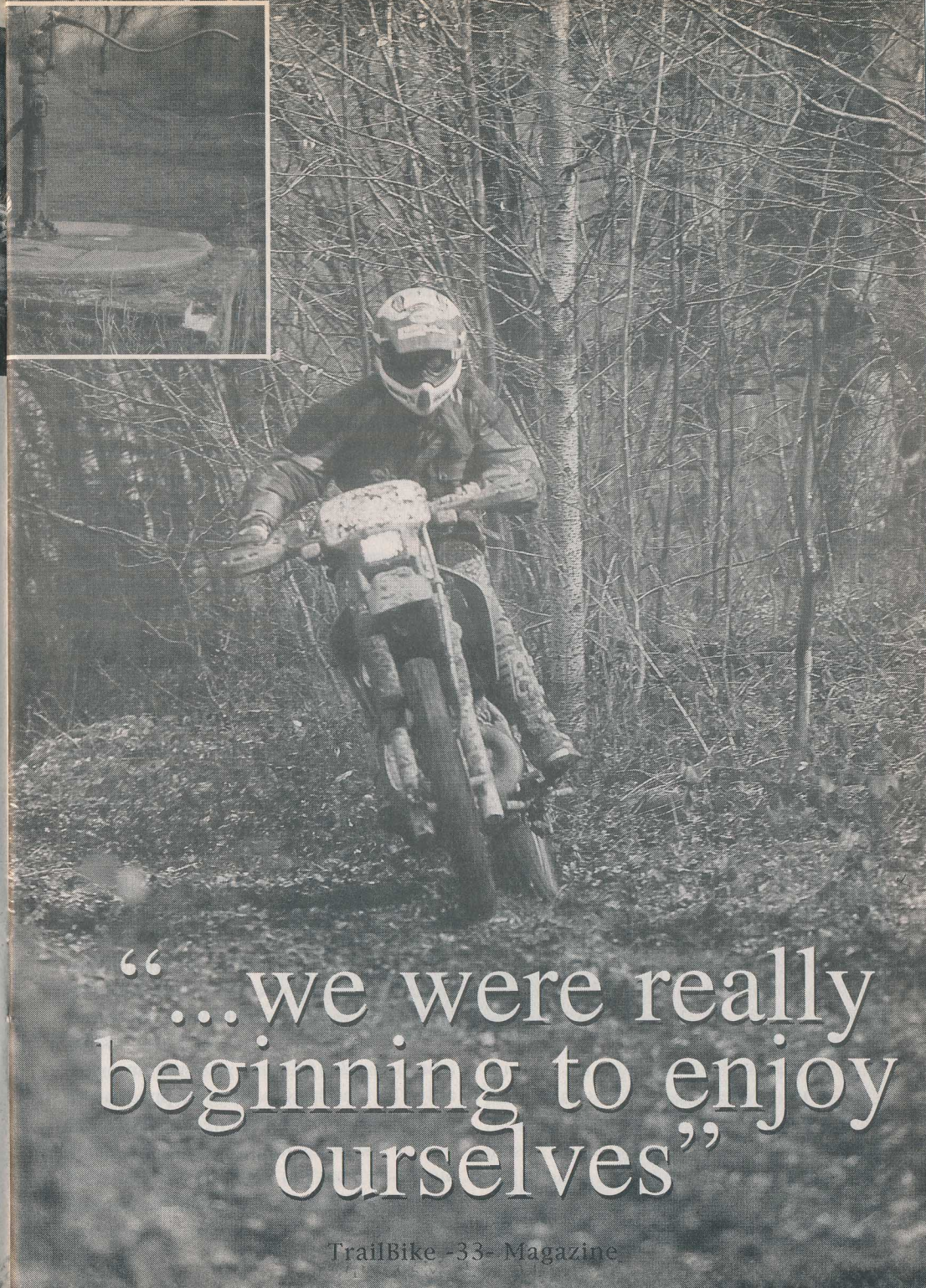
Perhaps the term Rallye/Raid is something you've read about but never really understood what it meant up till now. Well the Rallye bit is simple enough, an organised bike or car event, which crosses challenging terrain with a competitive element, but the raid part? What's that all about? Well put quite simply, a raid is a rally(e) navigated by roadbook, and using essentially the same terrain but without the competitive element. In other words it's not against the clock. Which is just as well really because with Crasher's navigating skills, and my habit of diving into the scenery at every available opportunity we'd certainly have been out of time.

So there we were in northern France taking part in the Sport Adventure Normandy Raid. In this particular instance there was no corresponding rallye, but

nevertheless the Raid was proving to be a considerable challenge to the combined resources of the Melber/Crasher TrailBike Magazine partnership.

The day before had started out easy enough. We'd managed to navigate our way along the A3 to Portsmouth, successfully boarded the ferry bound for Le Havre, organised a route to the duty free shop, and once safely on the Gallic side of La Manche, had rendez-voused with affable organiser Chris Evans. Now came the difficult bit, finding our way around some of the most picturesque and technically challenging scenery to be found anywhere in France. And to think I was relying on a bloke who's been known to get lost on his way to the bar for *his* round.

With coffee and fresh croissants inside us, we set off on the Friday morning from a cafe just outside the harbour town of Le Havre and headed straight for the dirt. If you've never ridden off road in France before you will be amazed at the diversity of the terrain, not to mention the sheer amount of it. Nowhere in the UK can you ride (legally and regularly) along a string of challenging tracks for such a distance without having to do miles of road work inbetween. Sure our wheels touched tarmac from time to time but never for more than a kilometre or two, mostly less.



“...we were really beginning to enjoy ourselves”

# RAIDING PARTY

Through old farmyards, down quiet green lanes, through sylvan woodland where the carpet of leaves swirled along in our wake, up loose rocky climbs and through thick gloopy mud; in fact, similar to the sort of terrain you might find in the UK but concentrated into one small area of Normandy. Despite the steady drizzle coming down, we were really beginning to enjoy ourselves, and though up till now I had been doing the navigating in a second

of foolhardiness (which will take some forgetting), I entrusted it to Crasher Cornish. Within an instant we were off the roadbook, and crashing down some vertical gulley which had been carved by flood waters running off the hillside. To make matters worse not only were we scything through holly and bramble bushes on our way down, but we were being pursued by a

hapless Dutchman who given his lack of command of the English language had mistaken Crasher Cornish as a person of sound mind and ability, and had chosen to follow his navigation too. After five minutes of trailblazing a new section for

the French round of the World Trials Championship, this hapless trio found itself at the bottom of a track unsure as to their position and contemplating the grim task of going back up the way they came down. Typical.

Unaware of our plight, organiser Chris Evans had planned a relatively (and I use the term in the loosest possible sense) easy day for the assembled bikers, most of whom had brought pukka enduro tackle



along for the event. There was a selection of XR600s, DR350 enduros, KDX200s and a Husky TE350 as well as a Husaberg 501, a KTM500MX, a Suzuki RMX250, and a spanking new XR400R. In fact apart from a couple of regular DR350S' ours were the only trail bikes present.

Not that it was to make much difference, as within a few hours we were to lose one of the KDXs

(through rider fatigue), and more remarkably the Husaberg with a snapped set of fork yokes after a coming together with one of the other bikes. Having extricated ourselves from the 'section from Hell' and vowing (in English and Dutch) never to let

Cornish near the road book again we pressed on through the rain to our lunch stop, a small cafe in a sleepy little village deep in the heart of the Normandy countryside.

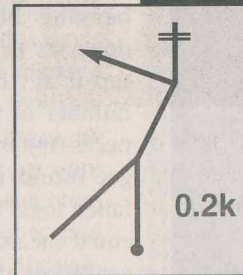
It's one of the best things about riding in France that you can turn up in the middle of nowhere and find a cosy bar willing to serve you. Though the French may be only a few short miles away across the channel, their laissez-faire attitude towards motorcyclists is a million miles away from the uptight British one. No matter what the time of day, drop into a French cafe-bar and there will always be someone willing to make you a 'Sandwich Jambon' and a 'cafe au lait', and talk about bikes.

The afternoon turned out to be similar in difficulty to the morning and with the promise of better weather to come for the weekend it was a welcome relief to arrive at our cosy hotel, take a shower and tuck into a decent meal. The first day had been designed to show us the ropes and get used to reading the roadbook, apart from unscheduled diversions the trails had all been relatively easy but Chris had promised us a few more 'technical' trails the next day... we weren't to be disappointed.

Day two dawned bright and sunny and with the route designed to take us in a huge circular sweep of the town, it meant that despite covering a distance of 130+km (almost totally off road) we were never more than 20km away from our base, should we need fuel or require assistance. The great thing about using a roadbook is that it means you can ride at your own pace. There's no need to ride along in a single line like some organised tours I could mention.

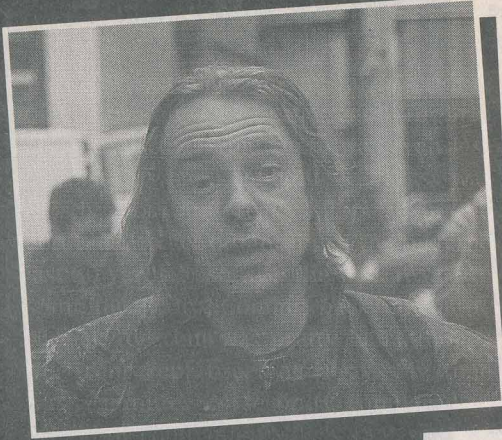
## ROAD BOOKS

*Like most Rallye Raids the Normandy Raid requires the rider to follow a road book to find the route. This is a set of instructions distilled into the simplest form using line diagrams. The rider keeps going straight (or follows the route) until the diagram tells him or her to change direction such as following another track or looking out for certain landmarks. These instructions are drawn on a continuous roll of paper which is fed into your road book holder, and every time you complete one instruction you roll it on to the next one. All major rallies like the Dakar and Paris-Moscow-Beijing use this system of navigation which once you get used to it is fairly straightforward. Problems arise when your road book gets wet, snaps or you simply go wrong. Since the road book contains no information other than the correct route if you get lost you need to back-*



*track until you pick up the route again. Occasionally road books are wrong... when this happens in northern France it's an inconvenience, in the Sahara desert it must be seriously scary.*

## CHRIS EVANS



*Francophile Chris Evans has been involved in Rallye Raids for the past 4 years. Though British he now resides and works in Paris, speaking French with an appalling British accent. For the past few years he's organised the British entry for the Tunisie Rallye as well as the Cannonball Rallye and a host of other French events. He set up Sport Adventure last year with a view to bringing more Brits into the Rallye Raid scene. Though his tours often attract Belgians, Dutch and other Europeans, his raids are tailored towards British riders who prefer them more technical than their French counterparts. So laid back he's horizontal, Chris is renowned as possessing the very worst haircut in France.*

Everybody has a set of directions and providing you can navigate, you're free to ride in whatever size group you want and at whatever pace you feel comfortable with. Chris brings up the rear as a sweeper so that if you do find yourself in difficulty you shouldn't have to wait too long before help arrives.

Sport Adventure had also sensibly equipped itself with a van, which was being piloted by an attractive, young French woman called (strangely) Paul. This provided a back up for serious bike problems as well as carting everyone's baggage about. As it turned out it was just as well, because like the day before, day two was exacting a heavy toll on machinery. Broken drive chains, soaked electrics, worn out brakes, and a bike jammed in second gear were just some of the casualties and it wasn't even midday yet.

The second day's route was turning out to be something of a challenge. Within a kilometer of leaving the hotel we were steaming up a leafy gully, along a muddy track and then beginning one of the most technical of all the tracks. It was uphill for probably the best part of a kilometer, with overhanging brambles and low branches, underneath which you had to pass. As if that wasn't tricky enough, the track was in a sort of steep-sided V-shaped gully with overhanging boulders which came tumbling down as each bike went through. Then to top it all the track had been blocked in a number of places by fallen trees making it necessary to scabble up the steep banks to get round them, or else clamber over the fallen logs. Tricky, tiring and brilliant fun in equal measure, and the day just seemed to get better as it went on.

A river crossing just before lunch was the undoing of a number of bikes - at least

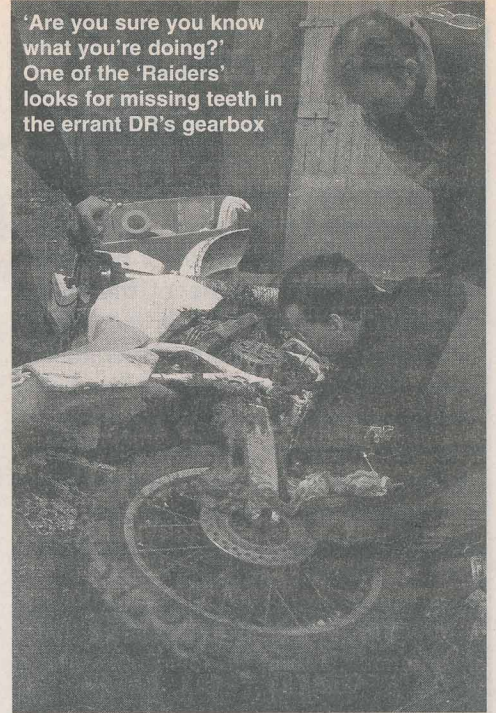
# RAIDING PARTY

temporarily. One of the XR600s filled its airbox (and consequently smoked the piston rings); the RMX lost its chain breaking the casing and drowning the electrics, and various other bikes spluttered to a halt in the deep water. Up till now I had remained firmly planted in the saddle, but a quick swap round of bikes just after the river crossing saw me crash three times in quick succession each time with a more spectacular exit than the last.

A pleasant lunch in a cafe bar and ten minutes soaking up the spring sunshine and we were back on the trail for another round of technical tracks. The challenge of reading both the roadbook as well as the terrain was bringing a whole new dimension to trail riding, and ensured some spectacular get-offs if you chose the wrong moment to check directions. It was 5pm by the time we finished the route and arrived back at the hotel, but with the sun just starting to sink on the horizon we headed off for a second attempt at some of the better lanes....

Sunday was again bright and sunny and a little easier than the previous day's demolition derby. Because I'm blessed with the memory of a goldfish I foolishly once more trusted the navigation to Crasher Cornish, and once more we were rapidly lost though this time in the company of the Suzuki RMX. No sooner had we disappeared out of his sight though, than it decided to run its crankshaft, leaving its rider off the route and having to

'Are you sure you know what you're doing?' One of the 'Raiders' looks for missing teeth in the errant DR's gearbox



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walk to find help.

The slightly easier going didn't stop Crasher Cornish from maintaining his perfect record of crashing on every single day, and true to form, before very long he disappeared into the undergrowth striking a tree a glancing blow on the way down. A few minutes later he was off again before lining up for the big finale; this time barrelling down a rutted, hedge-lined lane at about 60kmh Dave chucked it away big time only inches in front of me. Despite my better judgement, I tried to stop rather than using him for grip and in the ensuing carnage he managed to bring us both down and chuck me into



Strange wheel alignment thanks to a coming together between two of the bikes which snapped the Husaberg's fork yokes - eek, bet that's expensive

the hedge for good measure.

Still thankfully in one piece we carried on to the lunch stop for a Camembert sarnie before beginning the route which was to take us back (via green lanes, tracks and some tarmac road) to the ferry port of Le Havre and a rendez-vous with a huge *steak-frites*.

Battered, bruised but still smiling we had survived three days of challenging off roading with both bikes still running and had enjoyed every minute of it. The going had been tough enough to keep us concentrating, varied enough to keep us interested and long enough to keep us satisfied. Roll on the next one.

## DOING IT

*If you fancy having a go at the Normandy Raid the next one kicks off on 21 June, the price is £240 half board, and all you have to pay for is lunch, fuel and getting there. You'll need a well sorted, single cylinder trail or enduro bike, which must be properly silenced and fitted with hard compound MX or enduro tyres. To survive three days the bike must be in good condition, and you need to carry a minimum of spares such as levers, cables, spark plug, inner-tubes, duct tape and a few tools. You'll also need decent riding gear, a set of waterproofs and to be of at least average ability (they're not really suitable for beginners). For further details speak to Chris Evans on 00 331 42 09 97 73. Bon chance*

# Halfway

**The Kawasaki KDX200SR sits halfway between the KMX trail bike and the KDX enduro machine. Dave Cornish took one along to the Normandy Raid to try it out for himself**

**K**awasaki's KDX range has been the backbone of the clubman enduro scene for the past 15 years. The 200 version in particular is appreciated for its reliable, liquid cooled motor with its broad spread of usable power allied to a light-weight chassis with some decent suspension. Serious trail riders have also cottoned on to the 200's many virtues and taken the bike to their hearts, however as Kawasaki UK sell the KDX as a competition only model, putting a 200 on the road requires the owner to modify the bike to

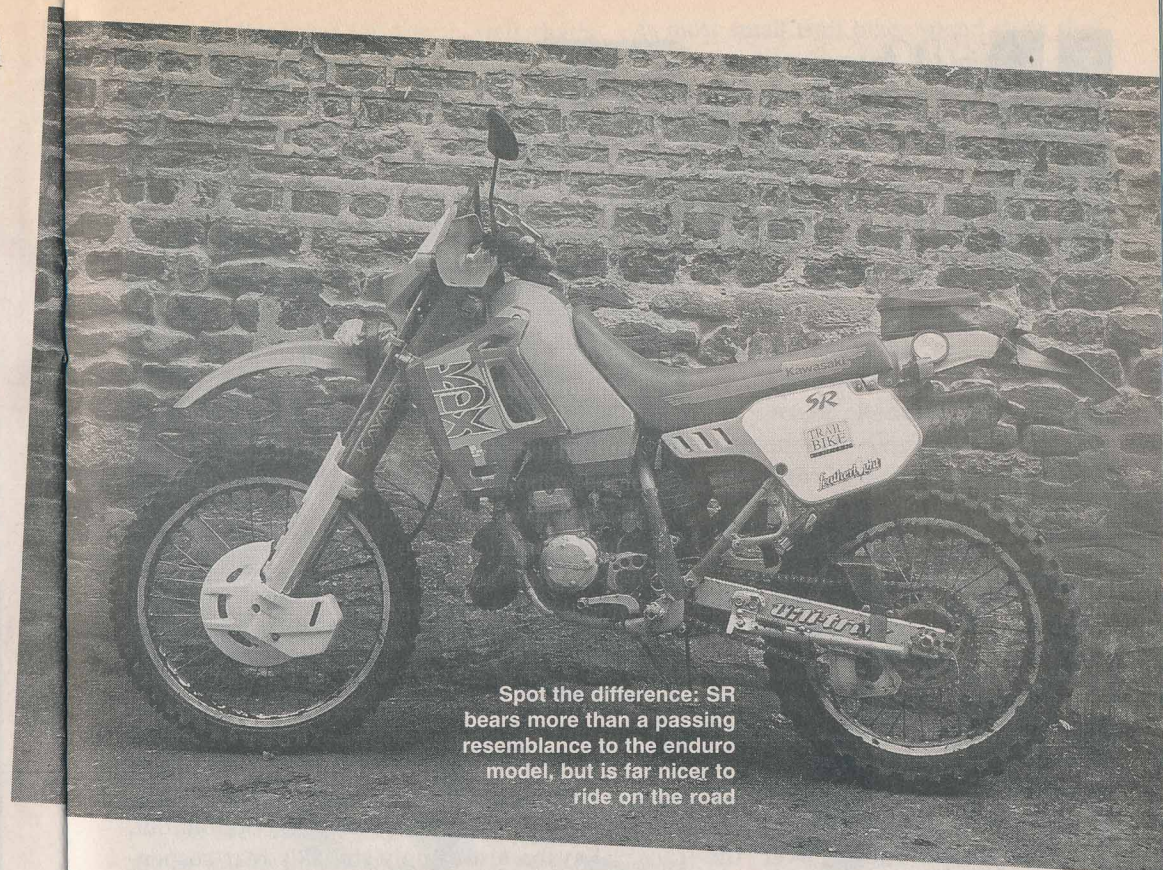
satisfy the man at the ministry. Even then after the hassles (and expense) the KDX is still not a practical trailie, much preferring the dirt to tarmac which is fine if getting muddy is your only requirement but not much fun if you also need to use the bike as everyday transport.

Thankfully help is at hand, since a street legal version of the KDX200 exists primarily for the Japanese market, though some are finding their way into this country through grey importers. The

Kawasaki KDX200SR (the SR designates its street credentials), shares many of its components with the enduro 'race' bike and at first glance the unwitting punter could mistakenly assume he was staring at a normal UK enduro model. Look a bit closer though and the trained eye will notice the well tucked in mini indicators, a large kph speedo (with resettable trip), full switchgear an electric horn, locking fuel cap and for those who like to share a muddy weekend with someone

close, pillion footrests.

Obviously the differences are more than skin deep and in order to make the SR comply with Japanese legislation the trailie version comes with a much quieter (and heavier) expansion chamber and a non repackable alloy muffler assembly, together with a smaller carb and airbox which probably accounts for the loss of five bhp at peak revs (down to a claimed 33bhp). But the upside to this detuning is to make the SR more rider friendly throughout the



Spot the difference: SR bears more than a passing resemblance to the enduro model, but is far nicer to ride on the road

# House

# Halfway House



SR motor lacks the balance shaft of the KMX, or the power of the full-on enduro bike, but like all Kawaskis it loves to rev and rev

whole rev range, and when combined with higher overall gearing ensures the transition from mid to top end is much more progressive than on the race bike.

Another advantage over the race machine is that with the SR, pre-mixing of the fuel and oil is unnecessary thanks to a crankcase mounted 'posi lube' pump driven off the primary gears, though topping up the oil tank itself is a chore which involves removing two retaining bolts, and lifting off the seat in order to gain access to a rather awkward filler cap. At least the SR's thirst for both oil and petrol were well within acceptable limits, and when ridden hard in the company of the editor's CRM250 it always returned significantly more miles to its smaller tank than the much thirstier Honda

With fashion being at least as important as function in Japan it's no surprise to find the KDX200SR wears a pair of trendy (but unadjustable) 43mm USD Kayaba forks unlike the conventional

units fitted to the racer. In this application they work fine under all but the most severe conditions though if you really tank on a bit they can be made to bottom out. Kayaba also supply the SR's rear suspension unit which works through Kawasaki's usual 'Uni track' linkage. The shock itself is adjustable for spring preload and the damping can be adjusted for both compression and rebound. And whilst the frame may look identical to the enduro bike a glance under the rear mudguard reveals a much stronger (bolt on) sub-frame to cope with the SR's ability to transport anyone small enough (or daft enough) to perch on the back of the shortie MX style seat.

Hop aboard the SR and you will find a typically firm saddle and a comfortable riding position, that gives a good view of what's ahead of you. In front of the tall bars sits a rather sparse set of instruments consisting of a speedo (with integral temperature warning lamp and the usual

array of idiot lights) and, er..... well, that's it really. The ignition took a bit of finding as it's located down near the left hand side panel - a neat flush fitting key combined with a small guard ensures the motor can't be accidentally switched off by the riders knee, but personally I would prefer the lock in a more conventional location since dirt ingress could easily give rise to problems in the future. The switchgear is of the no-compromise variety, plasticcy and similarly basic in nature to the rest of the machine. I suppose it's in keeping with the bike's intended dual sport purpose, though a push-to-cancel switch on the indicators would be nice. The carb mounted choke knob is a bit awkward to use but at least it can be flicked off almost immediately after the motor has fired up which more often than not is usually on the first kick.

On the road the SR's motor warms up quickly and the widely spaced gear ratios are perfect for fast tarmac use with an easy cruising speed of 70+mph well within the bikes capabilities. Unlike the KMX200 the KDX engine is not fitted with a balance shaft so the rider is always aware of the high frequency vibrations coming through the footrests - and to a lesser extent, the handlebars. On relatively short tarmac trips this isn't any great hardship and

as most small trail bikes spend their time on short urban journeys the majority of SR owners won't find this a problem - but watchout if you intend using the bike for any great distance on the street.

Since we figure the only real way to tell how a trail bike handles is to try it off road we decided to use the KDX200 as one of our bikes for the Normandy Raid. With the prospect of some relatively tough off roading the SR would be thrown in at the deep end, and to prepare it for the trip we fitted a set of Rental bars, some Trelleborg enduro tyres, a DID 'X' ring chain, and as the raid requires the use of a

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# Halfway House

road book, a prototype TBM stainless steel 'RALLY NAV' road book holder bolted neatly in place on the cross-brace.

Setting off on the first day's stage involved a couple of miles of wet roads which had the bike slipping and sliding as the quick revving motor came on the pipe and the rear boot struggled for grip. On long straights the SR would breeze up to an indicated 145kph (90 mph), and stopping from these velocities was as easy as reaching them - the powerful 220mm front disc able to howl the 21 inch Trelleborg without too much effort. Like the front, the rear (190 mm) disc also encouraged braking confidence and offered plenty of feel at the stubby, pedal without being overly fierce.

Onto the first of the off road sections and the rear tyre still refused to hook up, even after lowering the pressures to 12psi. Softening the multi adjustable rear shock improved matters but the SR seemed to struggle to put its power down whenever the going was slippery. On long gnarly climbs revving the motor flat out in first and shifting into second would simply make it bog down, proving that the widely spaced ratios which were great on the street were not so well matched to the motor's relatively peaky output on the dirt.

The lack of rear end grip showed itself time and again especially on badly rutted muddy tracks. Keeping my weight well back and gassing the 200 for all it

was worth seemed to do the trick.... at least until the inevitable painful excursion into a rather vicious bramble bush halted proceedings. Not convinced with my claims of lack of traction Si took over the helm and almost immediately binned it. In less than half an hour at the hands of the erstwhile Ed the poor little Kawasaki finished up tasting French dirt more times than the Scottish rugby team. Inbetween picking large lumps of Normandy's topsoil out of his teeth, Si grudgingly admitted that maybe this time pilot error was not necessarily the main factor in my rather wild and unpredictable riding style!

The next obstacle, a river crossing gave the bike a chance to redeem itself. Keeping the revs up in first gear the SR stormed through the metre-deep water where later several pukka competition bikes came to grief with drowned electrics. And better still, after each day's tough off roading the KDX required nothing more than a good clean, and a squirt of chain lube to keep it running sweetly while several of the more 'serious' bikes needed several hours of fettling. That's one of the advantages of running a trailie rather than a specialised enduro bike; less time spannering equals more time riding. Even after a spate of incompetent crashes at the hands of the Ed the bike only suffered a cracked indicator lens and a lightly damaged headlamp assembly, so clearly the SR can cope well with the occasional off road endo.

Although it shares many of its components with the enduro bikes, don't expect it to perform with the same level of off road competence as it's more competition biased brother. Think of it as a halfway house between a KMX and KDX and you won't be disappointed. The SR manages to fill this gap nicely and is the next logical step up from the KMX without being as

uncompromising as the full on racer. For those new to off roading, the SR's softer power output, lower seat height and higher gearing help make the bike far more suitable for the inexperienced rider.

As a trail bike the KDX200SR is nearly up there with the best of the 'grey' imports, although realistically a change of gearing is a must. Fit a smaller front sprocket and the bike would be a whole lot easier to ride in a sticky situation. Tyre choice is also critical on the SR, the chassis seems to be set up to put more weight onto the front end which makes the bike turn in quickly with the adverse affect of less grip on the rear. Playing around with the multi adjustable rear shock (less spring pre-load to lower the back end) would undoubtedly improve matters, however serious head-bangers looking to replace their trusty KDXs may well find the SR's off road manners a little too tame and should look elsewhere instead.

Thanks to Ciaran at the Container Company for letting us abuse their pristine KDX200SR, if you want to try one out for yourself, give them a call on 01362 698147

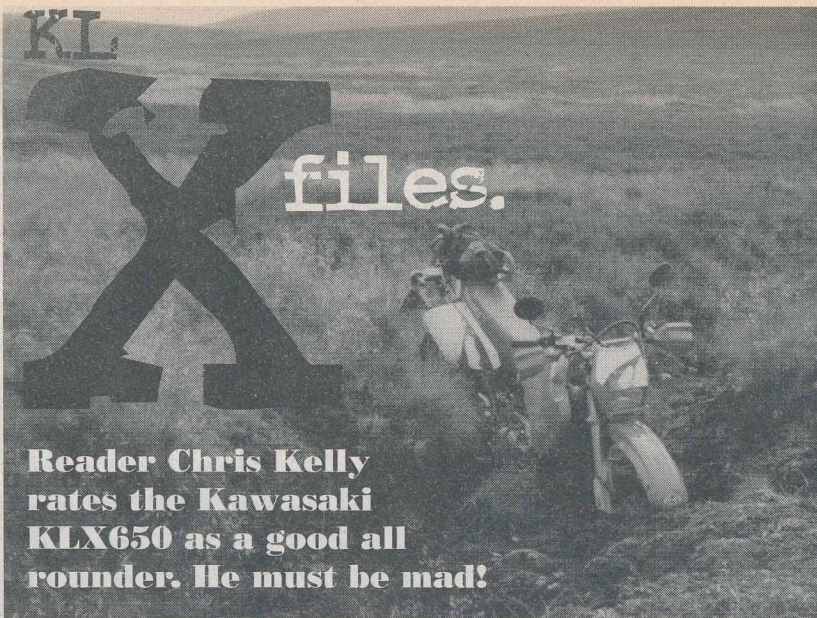
## KDX200SR

Engine: Single cylinder, liquid cooled, 2-stroke, case reed valve, KIPS power-valve, 199cc, 33bhp @ 8000rpm (claimed), 6-speed gearbox.

105kg (dry), seat height (880mm), fuel tank 10L

Max speed: 90mph (appx)

- + Suspension, looks, power, quiet
- Gearing (off road), lack of rear end grip



**Reader Chris Kelly rates the Kawasaki KLX650 as a good all rounder. He must be mad!**

I used to ride a BMW RIOOGS which was my way of escaping from the licence ban that seems inevitable whenever I (Mr no willpower) get on a race replica. But I never took the BMW off road as I didn't want to die a slow and expensive death pinned beneath the GS calculating spares prices. So whilst touring in the Alps, a friend of mine offered a choice of routes, one of which was much shorter and more 'scenic' than the road route -I fell hook, line and panniers and followed. The scenic route was, with hindsight an easy, well graded, rocky/gravelly jeep track which climbed, gently up a large mountain to a tunnel. Now this tunnel was a quarter of a mile long and lined with icy ruts filled to varying depths with water. Even with headlights ablaze my eyes could not adjust to the dark as the end of the tunnel, up ahead was a

searing white light. Emerging into Alpine daylight, my heartbeat dropped back below the redline, and I transmogrified into DIRT-BIKE MAN.

Days later I went to spectate at the 'Montee Impossible', which was a vaguely competitive event which involved trying to get your triple engined KX1500 turbo as far up a cliff as possible, and in the carpark I briefly admired a KLX650. It looked light, purposeful and had yards of suspension and would plainly transform me into the new Gaston Rahier/Steve Colley/Dave Thorpe.

August 1 1993 saw the birth of my bouncing baby, green KLX, which after the BMW felt pretty feeble and moped-like. After 50 miles or so it didn't feel like anything as the seat paralysed me from the waist down. Any perceived lack of power and weight

would disappear as soon as the tyres touched dirt. On the road the KLX handles superbly and must have one of the best suspension packages around, allowing you to harass sportsbikes, at least until the road straightens out. Top speed comes up at an indicated (weave accompanied) 110mph and fuel is glugged at the rate of 40-70mpg depending on head/tail wind and leathers/inflatable waterproofs or any combination of the two.

Early in 94 I booked up with MotoTours and went trail riding in the Picos mountains of Northern Spain. This proved an ideal introduction to matters off road, as the trails were dry, rocky and of a fairly gentle nature, but with the odd tricky bit to push you a tad. I only came a cropper once, performing a twisting back somersault on a tricky climb (the hotel steps after a particularly well lubricated dinner), resulting in the overworking of camera motordrives.

However the trip highlighted a few things that I wanted to improve. Most serious was the absence of a sump guard, which came to light when one of the riders clipped a dinner plate sized rock which knocked the oil level sightglass out of the engine casing. Inventive and resourceful trail veterans repaired this using a bottle top, a strip of innertube, some zip ties and the longest tyre lever in the world - and the repair would last over three weeks! On returning to England I tried an Acerbis Guard but think it was designed for the US spec KLX650R, and finally settled on Kawasaki's own version for £49.95. Initially I thought this expensive but it has paid me back many times over judging by the scrapes and dents it has taken.

Number two problemette was a lack of range. This had me, on one occasion, limping back to the hotel on the last dregs of reserve, although to be fair a Honda

Dominator was in the same situation. Acerbis (via Bert Harkins and Bikesport Newcastle) came up trumps with a 17.5 litre tank that cost about £150, gives a range of at least 150 miles and doesn't upset the handling.

The standard exhaust is heavy, ugly and sounds pathetic. Now I know all about being an ambassador for motorcycling and all that, but sometimes I would try and restart an already running engine as I couldn't hear the dismal 'flapping' sound of the silencer. The replacement came in the form of a matt-black Devil system, which looks (and costs) a 'million bucks', weighs a little less than the stock item and sounds a little more like a motorbike without recreating the sound-track of a nuclear attack. Rumour has it that Euro-spec KLX's have a different exhaust and produce less power than other market bikes, so the new pipe may

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## the KLX files.



well liberate a few extra donkeys. Indeed Devil equipped bikes seem to have slightly stronger top end and mid range than unmodded bikes, which shows up when battering your way into a motorway headwind.

I have also taken the usual steps of removing the pillion rests, helmet lock, sidestand switch, cocktail cabinet, etc. All of which gives a similar performance increase to that of the new pipe or growing a goatee beard!

In April the KLX and I chuffed the 350 miles down to Llandovery for last year's Cambrian Rally. I began to feel a little edgy as I wandered round the 'Parc ferme' (don't you just love this racer jargon?, checking out the Husqvarnas, KTMs, XRs and generally much serious kit than my KLX650 Aspencade. I felt a little better when I saw a Transalp, Super Tenere (complete with inflatable sheep mounted on fairing bars), Africa Twin, Cagiva Elefant and a variety of P-D BMW's. The day-long event was brilliant and educational in that I learnt how to fall off (which I still like to practise in case I forget how) and of the tremendous camaraderie of other riders, who would stop to drag this dirt moron out of a hedge, swamp or ditch ('Oh bl\*\*dy h\*ll' said one saviour 'I thought it was only a 250 not a 650!' Thanks lads. Despite what I've written I have never enjoyed myself so much and can only suggest you give it a go. My 107th overall placing came as a shock to my ego and any thought of a surprise British

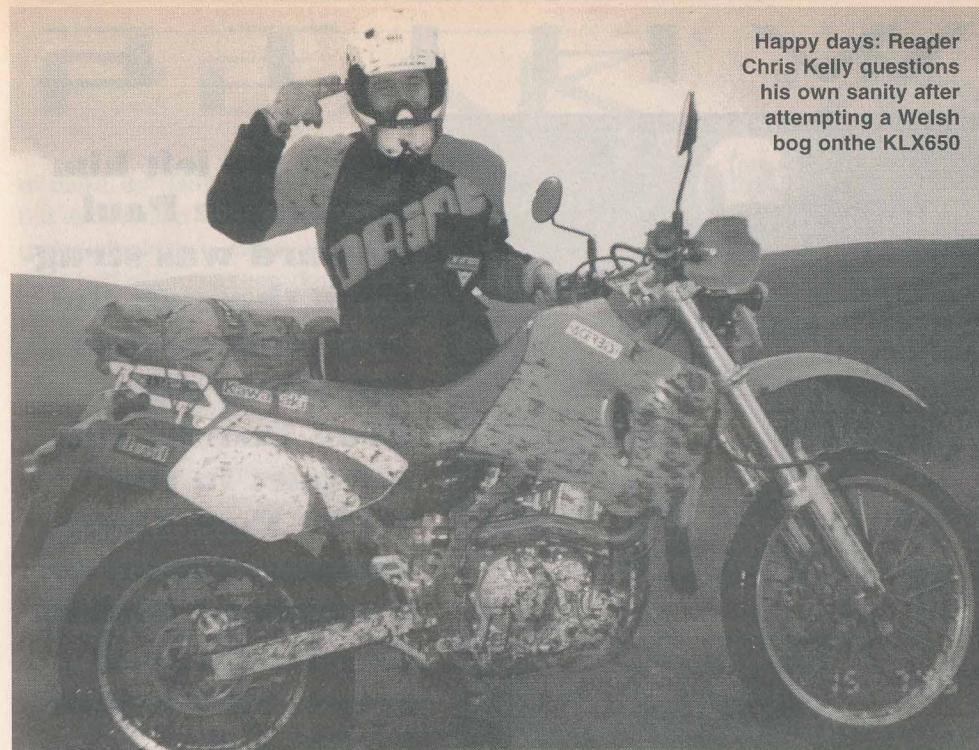
privateer win in Le Dakar evaporated. Ah well, back on the bike for the ride home to sunny Whitley Bay.

Shortly after the Cambrian I was back in the Picos and in the company of a dozen or so like-minded souls, exploring the beautiful tracks and trails around Potes. Numerous spills and acts of stupidity produced no more than a fine collection of deformed levers, some of the most colourful bruises I've ever seen and some interesting photos. As a by-product of this trip, Kawasaki UK are baffled by a spares demand which is at odds with the limited number of KLX's in circulation.

On returning home a wiggly rear sprocket turned out to be a collapsed wheel bearing (probably due to my failure to do anything other than wash the poor beast since being submerged in the 'Sunken Road' liaison section at the Cambrian which was speedily repaired and such was my guilt that a new chain, sprockets and set of cush drive rubbers were also fitted.

Later in the Year on a weekend up in the Cheviots it became apparent that 10,000 mile old Trailmaxes cannot make the grade when the going gets soggy, and I spent 90 percent of my time in a loving embrace with Mother Earth and the other 10 percent hyperventilating. Continental TKC80s transformed off road grip and stability and although they buzz a little on tarmac still offer enough grip to play silly buggers in the twisties. Strangely enough the KLX (or is it me?) seems to struggle for grip where others do not. Following an XT600 Tenere mounted chum up Dere Street the Yam (with almost bald TrailWing tyres) would walk away, whilst the KLX would break traction and slither to a standstill. The only thing I can think is that the torquier and more gentle power delivery of the Yam finds grip where the KLX flounders.

October and the Hafren Rally crept up



Happy days: Reader Chris Kelly questions his own sanity after attempting a Welsh bog on the KLX650

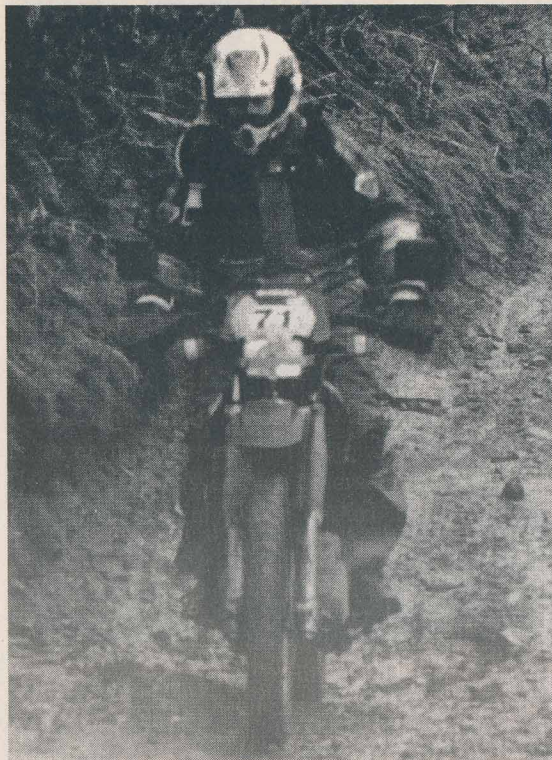
on me and my days of blaming the innocent KLX for my dismal progress on the dirt were over, when Roger Dawson took second place in the 700cc trailie class on his 650, despite going scuba diving with his bike on the last lap. For the record I managed a glorious 17th in the same class despite practising my dismount techniques. I was quite pleased with myself as a handful of riders didn't get past the first of three laps and some retired later.

In November I went to The Bike Show looking for a new steed, but came back having decided to stick with old faithful as I couldn't see anything to match the versatility of the KLX. You can load up with luggage, ride down to sunny Spain and then trailride with much more single purpose machinery (which usually arrives by van or trailer). Maybe I'm warped but I get a bit of a kick out of doing that kind of

thing. Make no mistake the KLX is big and heavy and after dropping it and picking it up a few times I am reduced to a quivering pile of jelly needing to replenish energy levels with one of those Isotonic fermented cereal drinks and some pork scratchings. Okay, so it doesn't outdrag a FireBlade and a CR500 is better off road but a 'Blade won't do the Cambrian and a CR will explode on the motorway, so as I've said the KLX stays. With its MX inspired looks, unfashionable USD forks and revvy, unburstable motor, I just love it.... But wait! What's this new DR650?

**Stop Press... Chris has now sold his KLX and bought himself a new DR650 after reading Paul Blezard's test in a recent issue of TrailBike Magazine. Which just goes to show that Blezard's mum isn't the only person who believes in him.**

# WHITE



**When we left him last month Paul Blezard was struggling through the mud and sleet of the Derbyshire Peak District taking part in the White Peak (long Distance) Trial on a standard DR650 fitted with trail tyres. This is how he got on**

At Abney we were soon slipping and sliding past cars stuck on a deeply rutted green lane across Abney Moor. The route directions off the moor were a bit confusing but we managed to find our way down to Bamford Clough, which is another section used in the 'Edinburgh' Trial by the MCC. We had passed within a couple of miles of the start, but I was blissfully unaware of that fact - if you haven't plotted the route beforehand on the OS map, (as naturally I hadn't), the whole event is like a magical mystery tour.

After my ignominious failure on the previous two sections it was very satisfying to storm up Bamford Clough with no trouble at all - the rocky going meant that the

standard Bridgestone tyres weren't so much of a disadvantage as they'd been on the mud. However the snow was beating down again as we set off in a loop back to Bamford village and on to the start of section seven, Netherhurst. This is a classic example of a tarmac road that is reverting back to a green lane for want of maintenance - bits of smooth tarmac are punctuated by huge potholes and it must have been a bumpy ride for the cars and outfits.

Shortly afterwards the route divided again, with all the bikes going on a fantastic three mile trail up Stanage Edge to the Stanage Pole and on across Hallam Moors to the Redmires Reservoirs, while the cars took a quicker tarmac route to allow them

# PEAK <sup>t r i a l</sup> 96

to make up time. The first mile or so up the escarpment was a real challenge - the rocky climb was more difficult than at least half of the sections that we'd done so far, so I was really chuffed to stay 'feet up' all the way.

After a couple of miles on tarmac we were back on the sandy dirt of the byway across Houndkirk Moor, with great views of Sheffield away to the North and east. The B6521 took us through Grindleford and across the Derwent river to the spot where my van had conked out earlier that morning. And as if in sympathy with my van, and having behaved perfectly all day so far, the Suzuki was suddenly struck by a dose of the petrol starvation symptoms mentioned in the last issue. It actually stopped altogether this time, despite being turned on to reserve. After a couple of minutes though the DR coughed back into life and kept going when I switched back to the main tank, and never gave so

much as a hiccup for the rest of the day.

I recognised the approach to Section eight, Excelsior, from '94 because it's a bit hairy - basically you have to turn right off the fast main road uphill, straight into what looks like thick undergrowth, although there is a well defined, if narrow trail once you get there. (The organising club had wisely positioned a marshal to shepherd competitors into the lane.)

The actual section started about half way up the trail and Mike (one of the people I'd teamed up with) decided to go first. Declining the marshal's suggestion to take a run-up, he just went for it and got absolutely nowhere as his rear wheel spun uselessly. When it came to my go, I did the sensible thing and gave myself a decent run-up but the ground was so slippery that I fell off before I even got to the 'Section Begins' markers! The marshals had a good laugh and at my second attempt I didn't even attempt to ride feet



**Not so much a green lane as a rockroad. Mike Paige climbs Stanage Edge on his 1985 XR600 in this year's White Peak Trial**

# WHITE

up, but just paddled my way off the mark. This was the most slippery section we'd done all day and to make matters worse, there was a stop and re-start half way up!

Having done well even to get that far with my slick tyres, I knew I'd never get going again unassisted once I'd stopped and so it proved - I might just as well have ridden straight through the stop-start box. Anyway, once the box marshal had got me rolling again I managed to paddle to the top without further assistance.

Shortly afterwards we got a bit lost for the first time when, in the famous 'plague' village of Eyam, we foolishly took the wrong turning by blindly following some other competitors who, unbeknown to us, were passing through the village for their second time further on in the trial. With the help of the OS map I finally worked out where we were, and just as important, where we were meant to be, and got us back on track with only a few minutes wasted.

As we came over Longstone Moor, I recognised the approach to the private land where we'd done the special timed tests in '94; the location was the same this year, but the tests slightly different. The place was aptly named: 'Skidmore Hill'. (These tests act as a tie-breaker for any competitors who are equal on marks through the sections - fastest wins). The first test was simply to ride up a grassy bank, through two poles and back down again, but the grass was so slippery that I nearly dropped the DR and had to go in a long loop around the side to find any grip.

The second test was similar, but longer, with a downhill drop from the start followed by a steep climb; I started

well but then made the mistake of riding off the beaten track in the search for grip only to discover that there was even less off piste - what I thought was grass was mostly moss and really slippery! In the end I had to get off and push the bike the last 50 yards or so with the slick rear tyre spinning wildly. Coming back down the slippery descent was pretty hairy too, as the front kept breaking away. My time was 2 minutes 24 seconds, compared to my riding companion Mike's 48.9, so I was amazed to discover that I still managed to beat 9 other solos - they must have done even more pushing than me! By this time the car competitors were so far behind schedule that the organisers ended the trial for them right there and then, but we still had three more sections to go.

I recognised Section nine, 'Gypsy Lane' which was awash with water but reasonably firm underneath. I was still 'clean' half way up when I came across Mike and Dennis blocking my path, so cursed loudly when I failed to get past them, but I needn't have worried because the observed section had been much shortened since '94 and I had already passed the 'Section Ends' flags without realising it. Now the route took us through Baslow and back round to the point where we'd earlier emerged from the special tests before heading north to Stoney Middleton for the penultimate section at Stoney Bank, close to the slippery 'Excelsior'.

We had to wait for some hikers to come down the observed section but once under way I recognised it as one of my favourites from '94 which I'd just managed to 'clean' on the Pegaso. Stoney Bank is a real challenge on a big bike with trail

# PEAK <sup>t r i a l</sup> 96

tyres and you really have to 'go for it' and maximise your momentum to have any chance of a clean, but the DR stormed up without any trouble - very satisfying.

I took another wrong turn on the far side of Grindleford and led our happy trio on a wild goose chase over the top of Sir William Hill, another example of a formerly important tarmac road which is slowly reverting to trail status through lack of maintenance. We eventually got back on track and found our way to the last section of the trial, 'Highcliffe' just north of Eyam.

I waited for the 'all clear' from the marshal before giving it 'the berries'. Highcliffe was one of the most challenging sections on the trial, but it was rocky rather than muddy. I was feeling 'gung ho' after my previous two 'cleans' so I really went balls out, whooping at the top of my lungs as the bike bounced from rock to rock. Imagine my surprise when I came around a bend near the top only to discover Dennis and his enduro-shod XR250 stuck in the middle of the section; I managed to squeeze past him, but wasn't able to stay feet up. I stopped and claimed a baulk from the marshal who said he'd allow it.

The last bit of off-roading in the trial was across Abney Moor and back down to Brough, although I didn't realise that we were re-tracing our steps for some of the way until I looked at the OS map afterwards; as I said before, it was all a bit of a magical mystery tour, and in some ways that makes it more interesting.

Back at the trial HQ in the Blue Circle factory canteen, Mike and I were much restored with some excellent hot food and



sat and chin-wagged for about an hour before heading back in our respective vans for the long drive home - I made it back to London for 11pm. It had been a tiring but thoroughly enjoyable day. My only regret is that I didn't see any of the people that I knew in the trial, even at the end, because they'd all gone home by the time I finished!

When the results came through I was delighted to discover that I'd beaten Mike despite the DR's extra weight and tyre handicap: 29th out of 58 solos. I was 6th in my class (over 450cc solos) for which the regulations inexplicably make no distinction between bikes shod with standard trail tyres and those with pukka trials or enduro rubber - an anomaly which should

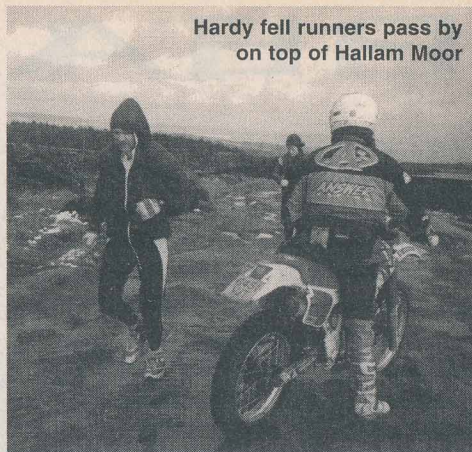
# WHITE PEAK

trial

really be changed. (Congratulations to XR250-mounted overall winner John Boothroyd - he only lost 3 marks all day compared to my 42.

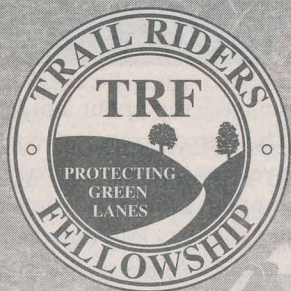
Many thanks to Brian Woffenden and the organising Sheffield and Hallamshire Motor Club and to all the long-suffering marshals who stood for hours in the wind, rain and snow so that we could enjoy ourselves. If you've never done a classic trial, the White Peak is about as good an introduction to the sport as you could get. Just remember to wrap up warm!

(For more information on classic trials contact the Association of



Hardy fell runners pass by on top of Hallam Moor

**Classic Trials Clubs: Secretary Richard Dawe, Church Road, Richmond, Surrey, TW10 6LW, 0181 332 7035 (Richard finished seventh in class (24th overall) on his XR250 but then had his bike stolen by some low-life - commiserations from all at TBM.)**



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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. This month we have split the guide into two parts to allow more space in the magazine for features. Part two will be appearing next month.

### 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).

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 Nordwest. Quite a few still for sale brand new from selected Italian specialists. Good value at approx £3500. Watch out for fragile plastic.

**Nordwest:** 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-

## TRAILBIKE GUIDE

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.*

**XLR200:** 112kg, a/c, 4-str, sohc, 18bhp, single. Japanese-spec trailbike version of above with drum rear brake.

**XLR250R:** 113kg, a/c, 4-str, sohc, 249cc, 28bhp, single. Japanese-spec trailbike version of above with drum rear brake.

**XLR250-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 mega-trailie. 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 hp 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.

## TRAILBIKE GUIDE

**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 incher 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. Fine for enduros but a bit uncivilised 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-fairinged 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. Relaunched 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.

### 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

## TRAILBIKE GUIDE

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.

Trail Bike Guide part two next month



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## BIKES

**Honda** XL500s, 1979, T-reg, big thumper, 10,000m, exc orig cond., £1275. Tel 01525 861770 (Beds)

**Yamaha** XT350 in trail trim, T&T, neat and tidy, 1989, Q-reg, £850 ono or exchange for enduro bike. Tel 01327 702541 (Daventry)

**Honda** XR650L, N-reg, 3300 road miles only, as new, may p/x swap for a suitable 750+ sports bike, £4000 ono. Tel 01326 313011

**Suzuki** TS125R, 1994, 1800 dry road miles, one owner, immaculate cond, £1600. Tel 01483 208646 (Surrey)



**Kawasaki** KLR250, 1990 G-reg, 18000m, new O-ring chain & sprocks, FSH, DEP exhaust, T&T, not off roaded, immac cond, reluctant sale, £1100. Tel 01489 896755 (Southampton)

**Yamaha** XT250, 1982, complete rebuild, needs electrics to finish, may break or WHY, £200, Tel 01983 865136 (IOW)

**Kawasaki** KLX250, X-reg, low mileage, T&T, VGC, reliable cheap trailie, many new parts and some spares, £570 ono or swap XT600, cash adjustment either way. Tel Paul on 01234 841013 (Beds)

**Honda** XR200R, 1982, Y-reg, fitted with XL125 engine (with receipts), some spares included, £250 ono. Tel 01978 860728 (North Wales)

**Honda** Transalp, 1990, G-reg, T&T, 12000m, £1995 ovno. Tel 01759 304906 (York)

**Kawasaki** KDX200 E1, G-reg, T&T, good cond, green lane use, complete with trailer £1050 ono. Tel 01278 452858 (Somerset)

**Maico** 400 Moto-X, 1981, in excellent recon state, twin shock, ready to race for enthusiast, £800 ono. Tel 01705 357570 (Hants)

**Kawasaki** KLX250, 1994, registered, very little green lane use, new tyres fitted, completely as new, first to see will buy, £2200. Tel 01980 843844 (Hants)

**Suzuki** RM250, 1988, T&T, age related plate, lights, speedo indicators etc, MX and road tyres, some spare plastics, manuals, £800 no offers. Tel 01293 888211 (Sussex)

**Kawasaki** KLR250, 1993, dry stored from new, current white/blue colour, £350 miles only, not yet run in, save over £1000 on RRP, only £2395 ono. Tel 01903 525426 (West Sussex)

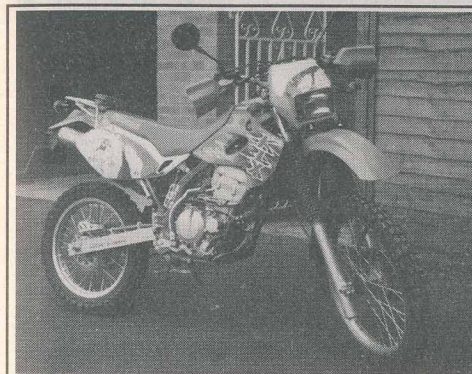
**Honda** XR200, 1984, XR250 chassis, disc front brake fitted, 200cc motor, T&T, new brake, chain & sprocks, tyres, powder coated frame, VGC throughout, £750. Tel 01179 353733 or Mobile 0831 488139 (Bristol)

**Kawasaki** KDX200 enduro, 1987, road registered, MOT, no tax, totally standard, never raced, recreational green lane use by mature owner now feeling his age,

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**Honda** XR500 Desert style, 9 gallon tank, KX forks and disc brake, air shocks, box section swingarm, 12 volt electrics, twin headlamps, £1150 ono, many new parts. Tel Tony on 01277 810614



**Kawasaki** KLX250, M-reg, T&T, Data tagged, excellent cond, £2600 ono. Tel 01527 543603 (Redditch)

**KDX125**, 94, 4000m, trail use only, never evented, new tyres, C&S, Renthal bars, pads etc, full power version, quick and light, good first bike at £1500. Tel Tony on 0161 292 3297

**Honda** XL600, C-reg, 1986, 30,000m, T&T, vgc, £1050 ono. Tel Dave on 01229 820272 after 5pm (Cumbria)

**Husaberg** 501, 1996 enduro, taxed, 4 hours running in only, as new condition, genuine reason for sale, save over £1000 on new price, £4500. Tel 01980 843844 (Hants)

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**Yamaha** IT250, new lights, switches,

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- 92 - Suzuki DR250, low miles, excellent £2295
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- N - Yamaha DT125R, purple, v little use £1995
- 86 - Yamaha BW80, big wheels, excellent £895
- 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
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<u>Yamaha</u>	Serow 225 k/s, Serow e/s, TW200, TT250R, TT250 Raid.
<u>Kawasaki</u>	KDX200SR, KDX250SR, KLX250

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**Husqvarna** WR260 enduro, 1991, J-reg, WP suspension, recent rebuild, new piston etc, 8000km, vgc, T&T, £1200 or p/x 4-stroke enduro/trail. Tel 01288 331741

**Harley Davidson** SSX250 street scrambler, 1978, low mileage, unused for several years, repainted, long travel forks, trials tyres (21", 18"), fully serviced, new battery, £1400, also many spares. Tel 01268 710946

**Honda** XL500R, 82, X-reg, engine rebuild, new clutch, original bike in lovely cond, pulls like a train, not messed around with in any way, £950 no offers. Tel 01296 330389 (Bucks)

**Yamaha** XT500 complete except for tank and front wheel, exchange for DT175/250 or similar, also TT600, sell/exchange for anything interesting off road trials or trail. Tel Ben on 01545 580008 (Mid Wales)

**Kawasaki** KLR250, E-reg, 11000m, one previous owner, tidy cond, Renthal bars, new tyres, light green lane use only, £1150 ono. Tel 01734 591265 (Reading) after 6pm and ask for Adam

**Honda** XR650L, 1995, M-reg, 2400m, Taxed, vgc, one owner. Tel 01425 674489 (New Forest)

**Suzuki** TS250, 1981, 6600m, good original cond, £695 ono. Tel 01636 816283

**Kawasaki** KL250 C, twin shock trail, 1983, low miles, T&T, £575 ono. Tel 01780 740914 (Lincs)

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**Kawasaki** KLX250 Enduro, L-reg, superb cond, trail use only, with low mileage, improvements include key ignition, speedometer, uprated front fork springs plus many more, showroom cond, must be seen, £2450. Tel 0161 928 6754 eves

## **SPARES**

**Acerbis** big plastic tank with fittings to fit XT600, £80. Tel 01287 638002 (Cleveland)

**1980 Wasp** twin shock rolling chassis, ideal for green lane outfit, £250, also XT500 engine, carb, ignition coil, £250. Tel 0191 4772642

**Honda** Transalp XLV600 shock absorber and linkage, good condition, £65. Tel 0191 549573 (Sunderland)

**DT175** rear wheel, re spoked, £35, also headlamp guard, £10. Tel 01502 573347

Due to bike being stolen (a C-reg XR600R eng No PE04E50002447) I have loads of new parts for sale inc O-ring chain & sprocks, bearings, brakes, cables, tyres, filters, tank etc. Tel 01603 260365

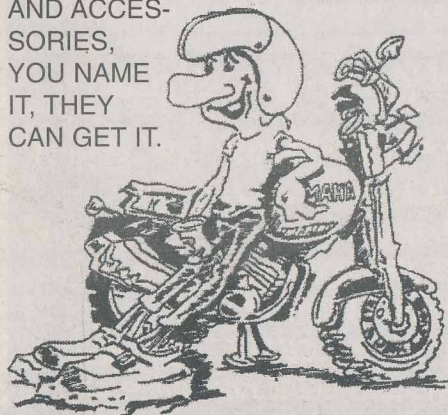
**Yamaha** XT/TT 600 rear shock with remote reservoir, good cond, £50 ono 01326 313011

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**Wanted** Yamaha XT600, preferably J/K/L reg, low miles, one owner, good money witing for good bike. Tel 0151 728 7359 (Liverpool)

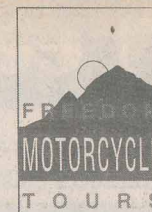
**Wanted** Kawaski cylinder head to fit KLX250 or Z200 air cooled, may take complete engine. Tel 01546 603083 (Scotland)

**Swap** Minolta video camera, spare battery, wide angle and telefoto adaptors, car and mains charger for trail or enduro bike, 250cc or over. Tel 01705 660570 (Portsmouth)

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# free Classified ads

Adrian on 0181 641 5266 (Surrey)  
**Someone** must have a perfect tank for my restored Yamaha DT175MX, would prefer black or red (original paint), please help, there must be one somewhere out there, fair price paid. Tel 01726 822688 (Cornwall)

**Wanted** Honda XL500R or 600R or Yamaha XT550, willing to travel, and must be cheap. Tel 01179 779898 or 0374 219698 (Bristol)

**Wanted** large fuel tank and side stand for 1994 Honda CR250. Contact Paul Ferry, 554 Station Road, Wallsend, Tyne & Wear.

**Swap** Edwards 4" Guillotine, Edwards 3'6" folder, Snap-On MT500 meter, Cebura Plasma cutter, 2 x pillar drills,

## PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW CLASSIFIEDS ADDRESS



any or all for trail or enduro bike 250cc or over. Tel 01705 660570 (Portsmouth)  
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**Wanted** Yamaha DT400MX, various spares needed including CDi unit, coils, barrel. Tel 01256 892047  
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**Wanted** Yamaha IT250L 465/490, 83-84, must be safety seat model, best price paid for original bike. Tel 01296 330389 (Bucks)  
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# TRAIL TALES...

SEX, DRUGS AND OFF ROAD RIDING.  
RICK KEMP TELLS ALL

**H**ereford has two main claims to fame; it's home to the SAS and its principle industry is cider production. Occasionally these two elements combine to produce a deadly cocktail - the drunken psycho-killer. A slightly less well known fact about Hereford is that it was the narcotics capital of the area. I'm not suggesting that there was any direct link but let's just say that the international currency of espionage and subversion is no longer the gold sovereign. All these facts were revealed to me one cold, damp, very dark night over the weekend of an Isca Enduro some years ago.

Before becoming a talented enduro rider I was an even more talented spectator and almost nothing matched the thrill of heading off down the M4 on a Friday afternoon in the pick-up with a bike on the back for a weekend of serious spectating and trail riding. Signing on as a travelling marshal was sometimes possible but could be too much like hard work at times and besides, a chap wouldn't like to let the organising club down by behaving badly, would he?

Serious spectating involved riding bits of the actual course between checks without being spotted which meant that they had to be accessible by road or trail, riding trails which linked parts of the course and also definitely exceeding the

speed limit on the road, in general hooligan behaviour. This task was usually made easier by the generosity of the motorcycle importers who, at the time when off-road sales were much greater than they are now, were only too keen to lend trail bikes or indeed pukka enduro tackle to the gentlemen of the Press.

On this particular occasion I was sporting one of the few Suzuki PE175s then in captivity. It handled better than anything else Japanese and blew a lot of the Euro tackle in to the weeds too. One of the routes taken in at the time was the Devil's Staircase, steep drop and turn single lane tarmac, to this day I don't think I've ever had so much air time on the road and the sensation of setting the bike up in the air for the next turn was absolute magic.

You would usually meet other enthusiastic spectators and at least be on nodding terms with some of them. The event organisers tended to put in a fairly lax time check in the vicinity of a good pub round about halfway through the day, kind of an unofficial lunch break and this would be the big meeting place. I was half-way through my pint, sausage, chips and beans when she walked in.

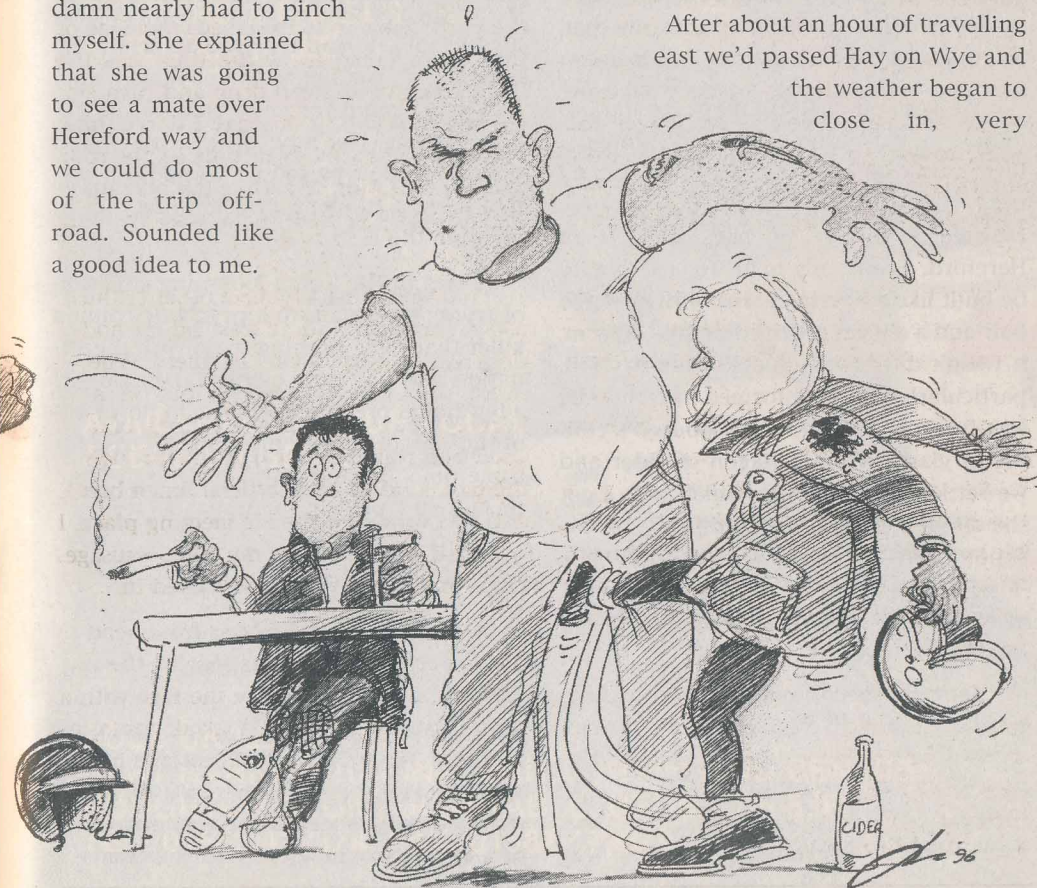
Even covered in Barbour from head to toe you could tell she was special, the way she looked you straight in the face with a slight arrogance. I was hooked, fantasies began to run wild - a little cottage in the hills, perhaps I could start up a business reconditioning sheep troughs or whatever people did around here and together we

could ride the green lanes of love, I knew she was local by the dragon patch on her jacket. Still lost in my reverie, I caught a voice 'Is this seat free?' I turned, and it was her, 'What this one?' I replied. She rolled her eyes and sat down anyway, putting her pint on the table. 'You're not from round here are you?' I couldn't believe it, she was chatting me up, I was beginning to feel light headed and I hadn't even sunk my first pint. When she offered to show me some trails that afternoon I damn nearly had to pinch myself. She explained that she was going to see a mate over Hereford way and we could do most of the trip off-road. Sounded like a good idea to me.

**I WAS IN THE BOWEL-LOOSENING SITUATION OF TRYING TO EXPLAIN TO A PSYCHOTIC, TRAINED KILLER THAT I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE CURRENT SITUATION**

Outside the pub, she was well impressed with the PE then she showed me her bike which she informed me proudly was home built. This turned out to be an old Maico 250 crosser chassis with a Honda CB200 motor bolted in and the weirdest exhaust and bashplate arrangement you'd ever seen. She seemed very proud of this machine, so I enthused over the novel design and the quality of craftsmanship involved thinking that flattery might be the fastest route to heaven - somehow I didn't think she was convinced.

After about an hour of travelling east we'd passed Hay on Wye and the weather began to close in, very



## TRAIL TALES...

d a m p  
drizzle and  
d e c i d e d l y  
colder, the type of  
weather that forces you to press on a bit  
in order to keep warm. She, Bronwen as it  
turned out, which she informed me meant  
white breast (the thought of which weak-  
ened my knees considerably) was no  
slouch, and when she suggested we swap  
bikes I had to admit that I was somewhat  
curious to investigate her hybrid. It  
turned out to be something of a surprise,  
the engine was well back in the chassis  
leaving the front end light enough and the  
soft power delivery of the four-stroke twin  
gave the rear tyre a considerable amount  
of grip. It had the feel of a bike which  
despite its quirky concept was well sorted

We kept off-road till it got too dark to  
be safe at which point we dived through a  
farm yard and made our way to the main  
road. It was fully dark by the time we  
reached a cottage on the outskirts of  
Hereford. Bronwen's mate turned out to  
be built like a Sherman tank with cropped  
hair and a dagger tattooed on his forearm,  
it wasn't difficult to guess at his day job,  
particularly as he informed me that he  
was currently 'on leave'. He poured a cou-  
ple of glasses from a flagon of cider and  
we settled down to some small talk. I got  
the distinct impression from their conver-  
sation that Bronwen didn't know this  
'Mac' character all that well. And when,  
after another glass of cider he proceeded  
to 'put one together'  
from a lump of dope  
about the size of a  
house brick, I began  
to feel distinctly  
uneasy. When it  
came round to me, I  
declined on the



grounds of unfamiliar surroundings and  
having some miles yet to cover that night.  
This seemed to antagonise our host who  
assured me that this was the best stuff to  
be found this side of Beirut. So to oblige, I  
took a couple of puffs and passed it on, It  
suddenly dawned on me that this was not  
entirely a social visit. My fears were con-  
firmed when shortly after he asked Bron  
if she'd brought the money, she nodded and  
they left the room with the house brick.

I was just helping myself to another  
glass when Bron burst back into the room  
shouting run! She grabbed her lid and was  
out of the door, I heard the PE fire up as  
Mac entered the room clutching his groin.  
In my slightly altered state I assumed that  
he'd tried it on and received a knee in the  
nuts for his trouble as she obviously only  
had me in mind for any amorous activity  
that evening. Not a bit of it, it transpired  
that she hadn't parted with any dosh and  
had done a runner with the dope, not to  
mention the PE.

I was in the bowel-loosening situation  
of trying to explain to a psychotic trained  
killer that I had nothing to do with the sit-  
uation and had only met the damned girl  
a few hours previously (love had flown out  
of the window). After pleading my case for  
some time, parting with all the cash I had  
on me and pointing out that at least he  
still had hold of a very sort after Honcho  
motorcycle I was allowed to leave.  
I made a note of the bike's registration  
number and managed to hitch a lift into  
the town centre and the police station  
where I reported the PE stolen. I proudly  
informed the duty sergeant that I at least  
had the number of the thief's vehicle,  
After checking it out he informed me that  
the number belonged to Fordson tractor. I  
vowed never to talk to strange women in  
pubs ever again.

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