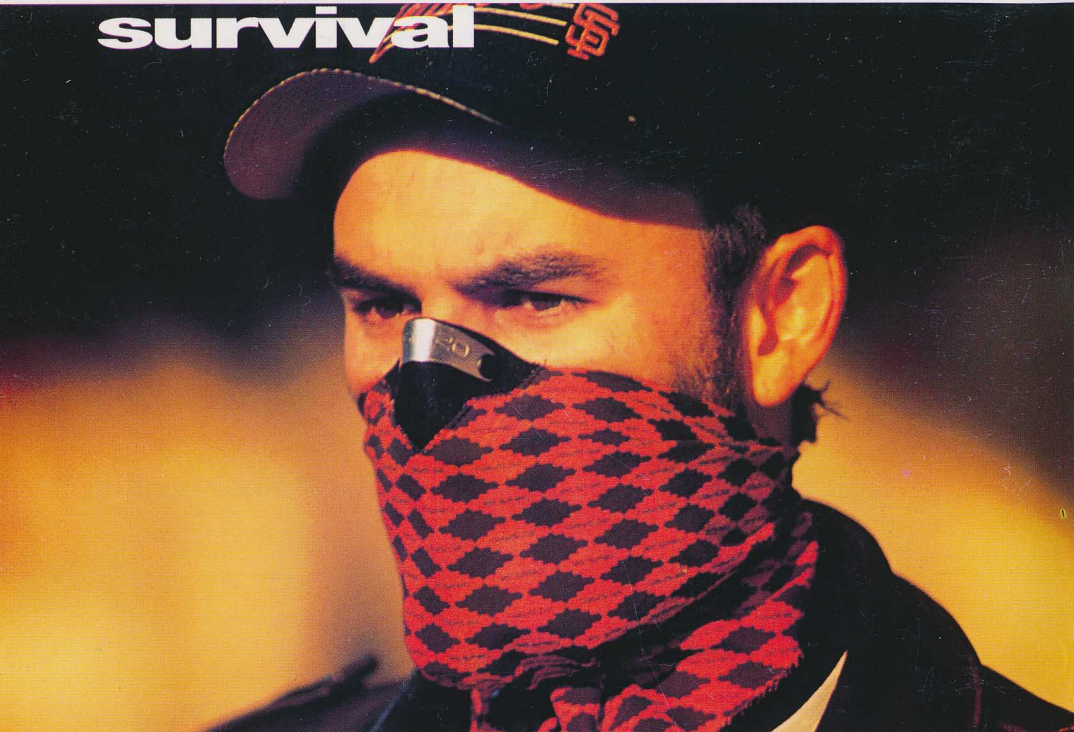


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Plus Paul Edmondson column

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DR350
big-bore shootout
begins on P14



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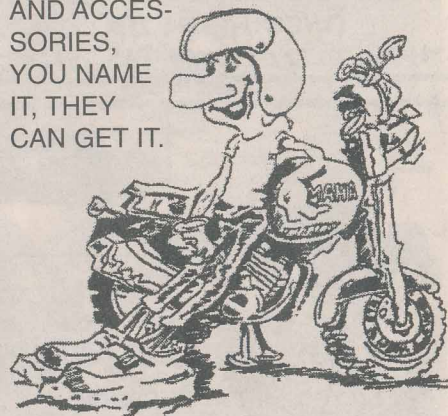
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WELL MATE, I'VE ALWAYS FANCIED USING MY TRAIL BIKE OFF-ROAD, BUT NEVER KNEW HOW TO GO ABOUT IT. THEN I DISCOVERED

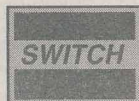
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Last month slipped quietly by without any fanfare, but just in case you didn't notice it, TrailBike Magazine was one year old. That may not sound like any great age to you, but at a time when any number of new magazines never make it past a third issue, we're proud to be going strong more than a year after we set out. At last year's Dirt Bike Show a number of people came up to us and said they really liked the mag but they didn't want to subscribe at the time because they wanted to wait and see if we would still be going in a few months time. Well we've answered their ques-

tions in the best way possible, we're still here and still going strong, and if you were one of those people then now is the time to subscribe because we've got great plans for TBM. I'm not going to tell you exactly what they are just yet but I can assure you that TrailBike is going to get better, and as a subscriber you'll be the first to benefit from that. Besides if you want TrailBike Magazine to grow and prosper - and after all it's the only magazine in the UK that's catering exactly for the trail and clubman enduro rider's needs - then why not give us your support. We know that the trail bike scene deserves its own magazine and with your valuable and continued support, we aim to keep on producing a magazine catering exactly for you - only, getting better as time goes on. It's your choice, it's your dough, but don't just sit around prevaricating for another year eh?

Si Melber

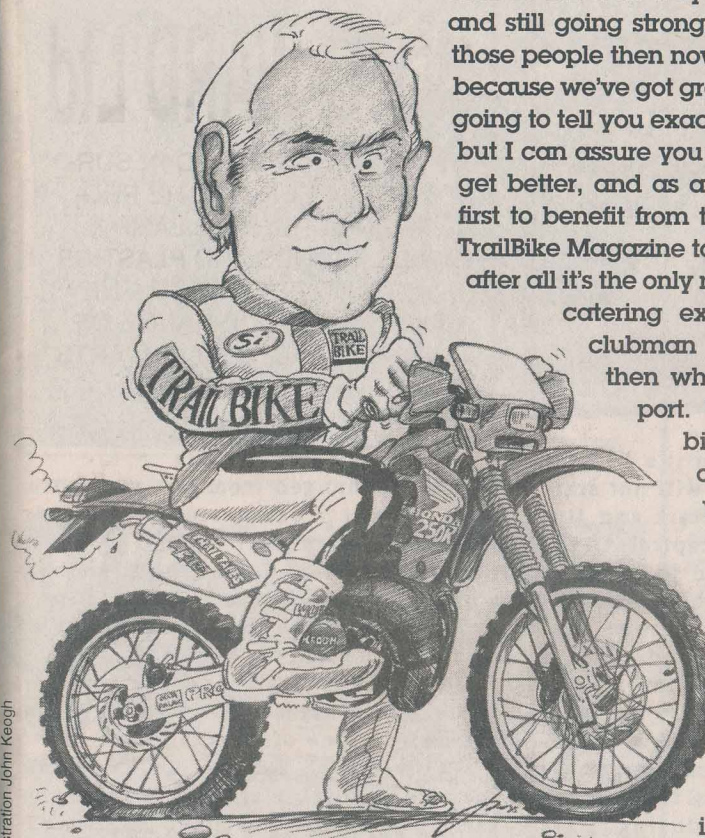
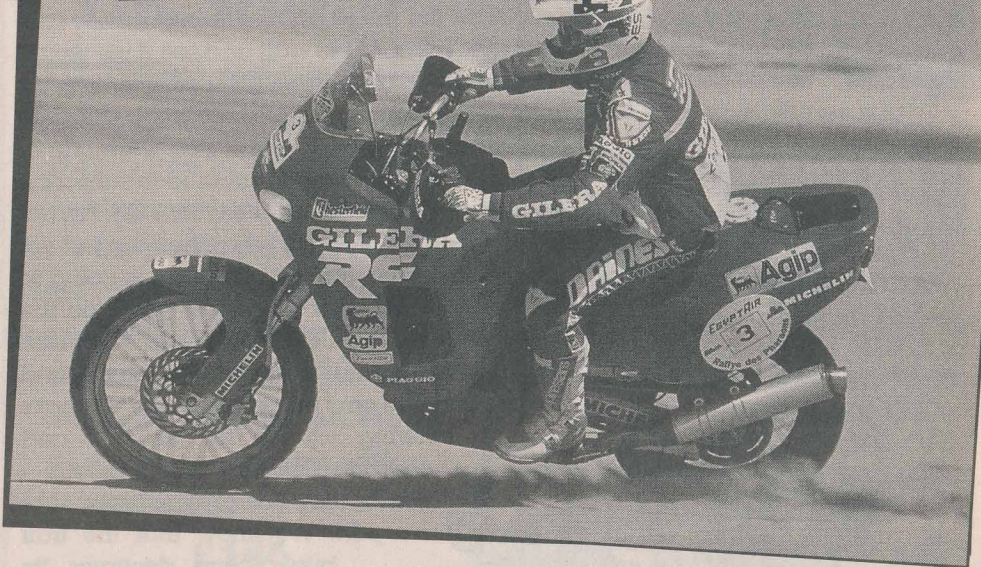


Illustration John Keogh

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..Dakar Update...



For the first time ever in its 19 year history the Dakar Rallye will not start in Europe, but instead start and finish in the Senegalese capital Dakar writes Dave Cornish. Due to unspecified 'security' reasons the event will avoid north Africa altogether and pass through the west and central African countries of Mauritania, Mali and Niger in order to ensure the safety of competitors and officials alike.

With safety very much uppermost on the organisers' minds following a number of fatalities during past events, the TSO has also confirmed the use of a new GPS (Global Positioning System) safety beacon to be carried by all competitors which will not only alert the medical services of any accident but also automatically relay the competitor's exact location back to the rescue helicopters.

The bike section rules remain unchanged from last year with four main categories allowed: Marathon class for lightly modded bikes, Production class (the same but with less restrictions), Super Production for FIM homologated machines (Yamaha YZE850T, Cagiva marathon 900 etc), and finally the Experimental class which caters for the weirdo, one off machines.

With British interest in Le Dakar seemingly running at an all time high, rally organisers TSO have swallowed their Gallic pride and promised all documentation will be produced in both English and French. John Deacon has already confirmed his entry on the KTM he raced this year (with British finisher Nick Morgan as his mechanic) and if the rumours are to be believed, British manufacturers CCM are in the process of building a

rallye raid bike to be ridden in the Dakar by experienced enduroist Nick Craigie! you read it here first.

If you fancy having a go at the world's toughest race then you need to get your entry in sharpish. Early entries cost FF43,000 but this rises to FF63,000 from October onwards. As ever any British riders wishing to take part in the 19th Dakar should contact Fred Gallagher at 12 Danube Street, Edinburgh, EH4 1NT.

If you don't fancy racing but just enjoy the thrill of watching the intrepid Dakar pilots, mark your calendar for the start of the rally on 4 January and follow the race with the daily reports

on Euro Sport or Ceefax. As ever **T r a i l B i k e Magazine** will be bringing you regular updates on any news relating to the Dakar as soon as we get it. Watch this space.

The irrepressible Frank Morgan (MBE?), surely the biking equivalent of commentator Murray Walker has got videos from this year's Cambrian Rally available. The video which is 117 minutes long costs just £15 (inc p&p) and is littered with classic Morganisms. To get your hands on a copy ring Frank on 01597 822642.

BIG Trail Bike Rally

Bristol Big Trailies, a bike club set up to cater for owners of large capacity trail bikes is holding an Adventure Rally Extravaganza on

the weekend of 12-14 July (Friday to Sunday), at Middlemoor Water Park, near Burnham on Sea, close to junction 23 on the M5. The rally which will be open to all owners of four stroke, 500+cc machines will include a session of jet skiing, go-karting and two nights camping - all for just £20. A barbecue, various ride-outs, rally games and an on site bar should ensure a fun and frivolous weekend for all. Details from rally organiser Trevor George on 0117 924 8762.

In Brief

Trail bike Enduros

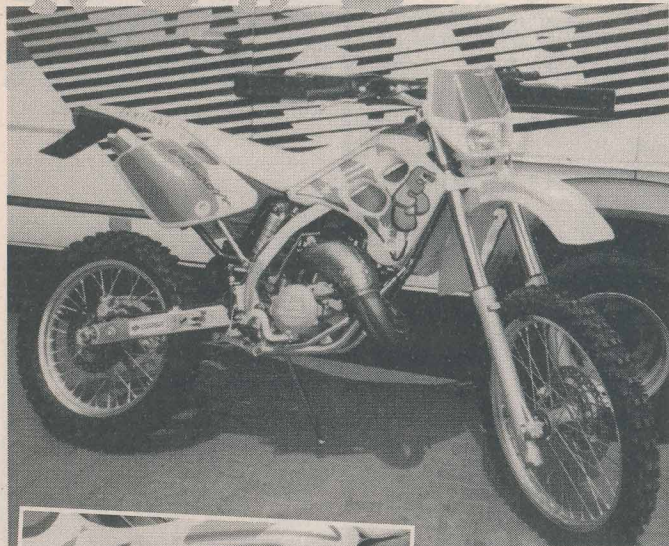
Aimed at first time riders, the Trail Bike Enduro Club have confirmed details of their forthcoming trial/enduro at Greatham Quarry near Stanford, Lincs on 28 July. The event is limited to trail machines only and is designed to introduce first time riders to the fun of tackling off road sections. With an entry fee of just £15 for the day, contact Dawn King on 01933 626009 (eves), or Dick King on 01933 623518 for more details.

Return to Sender

We're sorry we goofed up. We forgot to change our address on the subscription page of the last few issues so if you've sent money off to PO Box 1555 and are still waiting for your subscription to turn up then you need to send us another cheque as your first one will be on its way back to you just as soon as the Post Office get around to opening it up and marking it Return to Sender. Send all your stuff to our new address: PO Box 9845, London W13 9WP. Er... sorry about that.

Legal-Aid

Gas-Gas's 250cc Pampera trail bike now comes fitted with indicators as standard to enable it to comply with traffic regs. The price though remains unchanged at £3450. Details from John Shirt on 01298 72354.



GAS-GAS debut new 125 enduro

Spanish bike manufacturer Gas-Gas has released details of its new 125cc enduro bike. Based on the machine which took Paul Edmondson to the 1994 World 125cc Enduro Championship, the new bike is powered by a similar 123.5cc liquid cooled, single cylinder, Italian-made TM engine housed in their trademark chrome-plated perimeter chassis.

The bike features top quality components including Marzocchi Magnum forks and an Ohlins rear shock as well as Excel rims, Brembo brakes and a Messico pipe. And like the TM enduro bike we tested earlier this year (with which it shares a common powerplant), it features a hydraulically operated clutch, which makes for a super-light action and a constant biting point, allowing finger-tip control.

A lightweight digital speedo and trip-meter are included in the £4250 asking price from joint importers Edmondson Racing on 01543 677088.



There's still just time to get your entries in for the 12th Australian Safari - the sixth round of the World Rally Championships which takes place during 10-18 August.

The event has a reputation for being an extremely friendly rally though a tough one - more 'adventure oriented' than its African equivalents. Competitors start out from the lush green grasslands of the Fleurieu Peninsula in South Australia, travel through the barren desert landscapes of The Red Centre, via the remote Gulf Country in the far north, before finishing in the tropical city of Townsville situated on the Great Barrier Reef coast of Queensland.

The cost at just over £6,000 includes flights, transportation of your bike to Oz plus entry fee, meals, bivouacs and six nights in hotels - in fact just about everything but your petrol.

If you want to have a go at the event or just want more details in time for next year, contact UK agent Chris Evans on 00331 42 09 97 73.

If you don't fancy the Australian Rally, how about taking your chances on the Desert Cannonball Rally. A madcap dash across the Egyptian Sahara which passes numerous historical and archaeological sites en route. Last year the event was banned (at the last minute) by the French motoring authorities so this year in a gesture designed to stick two fingers up at furious French officials the organisers have teamed up with the Egyptian Automobile Federation, to help run it.

The organisers call it a 'race for freedom' and allow in any mechanically driven ground vehicle providing it meets safety standards. They claim their aims are 100% fun for all the competitors without the officiousness of regular organised rallies.

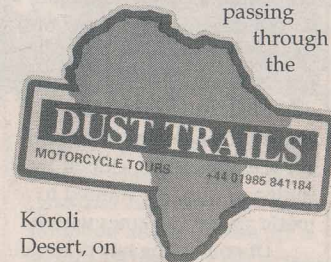
The entry fee is just less than £2,000 per person which includes all flights and accommodation, but not the cost of getting your bike there. There are also a couple of parallel raids, and the whole of the event can probably best be summed up by the phrase 'No Limits.'

A real 'adventure' in the true spirit of the 'The Cannonball Run' film. Details from Les Pharaons on 00331 48 82 29 29.

Safari Tour

Specialist trail bike travel company Dust Trails have announced details of three more tours including a 23 day one to Kenya in East Africa scheduled to take place in February next year. The tour which will cover more than 1500 miles, will cross the famous

Rift Valley before passing through the



Koroli Desert, on past Mount Kenya and finally finishing up at the Indian Ocean. Various optional activities such as game viewing and white water rafting are also planned. The cost of the tour is £1,950 which includes food, accommodation, local guides, support vehicles and bike shipping, but not the cost of your flights. More details on this and their other Moroccan tours from Dust Trails (01985 841184).

Pat Pending

A British company claims to have developed a radical new engine which it believes will revolutionise the design of existing four strokes. Few details of the new engine have been released yet but its makers claim significant power improvements, greater simplicity and less noise than conventional designs. They are looking for help to build a 250cc enduro bike to prove the design. Call 'em on 01296 720734

Dear Trail Bike...

'Cross' Words

Dear Si

I'm one of those who doesn't like to see converted moto-x bikes being used by trail riders (editorial, issue 12). I am a prejudiced, bigoted, son-of-a-bitch, but there you go, it takes all sorts. It's not that I don't like the look of the things, it's just that I've never yet seen one being ridden by someone who just wanted to tootle round the lanes with it.

Of course the law doesn't say we should only tootle, but when we zap round at the wrong times and go upsetting folks, that's when we start to lose lanes. No it ain't fair, but there you go also. And when lanes are threatened with closure, due so often to misuse, who is that spends days at the

County Records Office, the Highways Department and Public Inquiries? The moto-x convert man? There's rarely a stampede.

No, most of the time it's the good old TRF, the same TRF that so many of your correspondents whinge about, we are the ones who keep the lanes open. For everybody.

It's not a matter of you, Si, 'laying down the law', but it wouldn't hurt to let some of your readers know that up to twenty lanes a week are under threat. I know, I used to scan the London Gazette, on behalf of trail riders everywhere, looking for closure notices so that we could react in time to keep some of our lanes.

I don't suggest for one moment that you, or anyone else for that matter, should be telling people how to use their bikes, but you could drop a

few hints about using their brains.

Phil Sadler
Derby

Couldn't agree with you more Phil, but that's exactly the point I made - it's not what you ride but how you ride it that counts - by the way, the guy is a TRF member

Spot On

Dear Sir

Whilst on holiday in the UK for the past few months I bought several copies of Trail Bike Magazine, this is just what I've been looking for, for years without success.

I have been riding off road since I was a teenager - I'm now 68 and ride a Honda XR600. I find other mags carry

far too much about motocross/supercross and too many adverts - especially the American ones. Even the TRF newsletter is getting pretty thin nowadays, and seemingly crying out for members to contribute.

Please let me know the cost of subscribing within Europe. Many thanks in anticipation, and congratulations on such a 'spot on' magazine. Motorcycle Sport is the only one that comes anywhere near.

Harold Reast
Cyprus

Thanks for your compliments Harold, the cost of subscribing within Europe is £29.50 per year. Keep up the good work on your XR

Desert Sled

Dear Mr Melber

I recently took early retirement so have some money and some time. I am a lifelong alpinist, canoeist, skier, backpacker and over the last five years an expedition mountain biker in Greenland, Iceland and Morocco. I would like to ride a motorcycle in such places as the High Atlas and Sahara in Morocco, the lava deserts of interior Iceland etc.

It seems to me that a good

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trail bike is what I need, but friends say it's better to go for a compromise bike because of many miles of road riding to get to the places. So at one end of the scale I have bikes like the Suzuki DR350 and at the other end the big Honda XR750 Africa Twin. In the middle are bikes like the Cagiva Elefant 650, Honda NX650 Dominator, Kawasaki KLX650.

I am not an experienced rider, my youth was filled with glorious days on Tiger Cubs, Speed Twins from Triumph and various Velocettes, but I only recently started riding again after a gap of 30 years. When I get a bike I plan to go to a specialist riding school to brush up on my off road skills.

My requirements are to be able to carry lightweight backpacking expedition gear across dry/sandy/rocky pistes, sometimes mud, to be able to ford rivers in Iceland and Morocco, and cope well with sand-drifted roads in the Sahara.

I know that I must com-

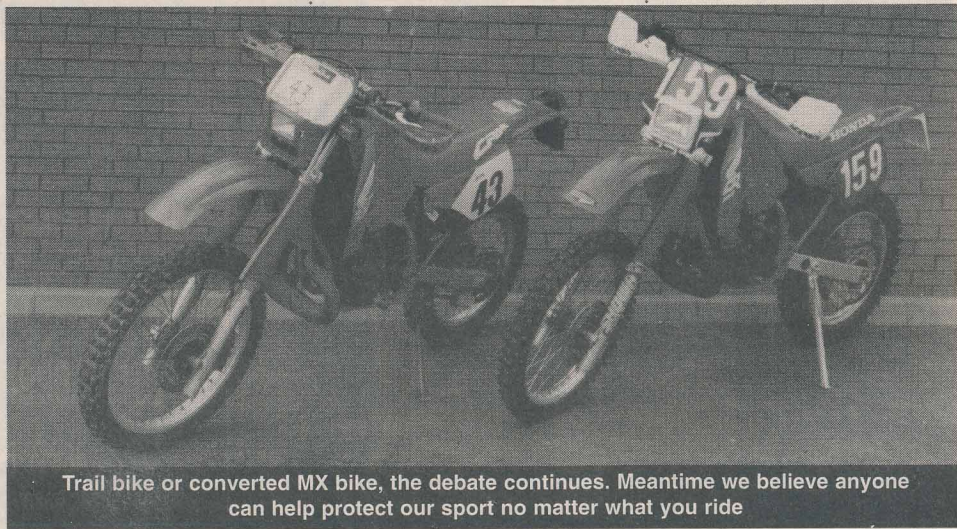
promise, but what would be the best choice of new bike, tyres and capacity? Fuel consumption and big tanks are a serious factor, as is the weight and the ride height (I am only 5'7", with a 30" leg).

Your help is needed.

Tony Shenton (eager expeditioner)
Herts

PS TrailBike Magazine is great but it's too small (content-wise) and doesn't come out often enough!

Phew Tony, this subject could fill a whole issue on its own, but here goes. First of all I would advise you take the biggest bike you're happy riding. You could do this sort of trip on any machine, but the bigger the bike the easier its going to be on both the roads and the fairly easy pistes of the Sahara. Although smaller bikes are much easier to han-



Trail bike or converted MX bike, the debate continues. Meantime we believe anyone can help protect our sport no matter what you ride

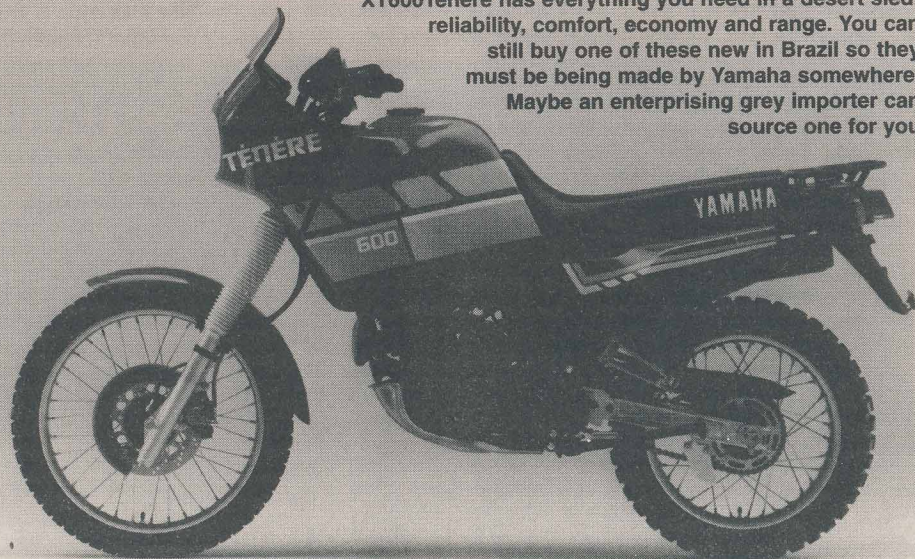
Dear Trail Bike...

dle off road, you'll have to work them fairly hard (especially when loaded up) to keep up any real speed and because of the number of road miles involved you'd want a fairing. Judging by your height I'd recommend you go for something around 600-650cc such as the Honda Dominator or Honda Transalp (both of which have the benefit of good fuel consumption and electric start). You could also consider the Yamaha XTZ660 which comes with a big tank but is a little taller.

The Suzuki DR650 is nice and low but has no fairing and would need a larger tank. Likewise the XR600R is a great overlander with plenty of aftermarket parts available and has the additional attraction of being fairly light and strong though it's kick-start only. I think you might struggle on anything bigger than a 650 especially when it comes to picking it up fully loaded. If you decide to opt for a smaller bike either the DR350 or Yamaha's XT350 would be okay but pretty tiring on the

run down to North Africa. If you're prepared to look at secondhand bikes (or possibly grey importing a bike from somewhere like South America) then there's really no better desert machine than Yamaha's original XT600 Tenere. As for tyres, you can get away with ordinary trail tyres but would be better off with a fairly open tread design like Michelin T63s or similar. Big tanks can be purchased from suppliers like Bert Harkins Racing on 01582 472374. Best of luck

Probably the best desert trail bike ever made. Yamaha's XT600Tenere has everything you need in a desert sled: reliability, comfort, economy and range. You can still buy one of these new in Brazil so they must be being made by Yamaha somewhere. Maybe an enterprising grey importer can source one for you



World and International Enduro Champion Paul Edmondson writes for TrailBike Magazine



Dear readers

Hello and welcome to my new monthly column for TrailBike Magazine. Over the next few months I will be keeping you informed on how my season is going and also giving you a few tips regarding riding and basic preparation of your bike.

Anyway, now that the introduction is over I can run through a few things. Already this year I have competed in four world rounds, three British rounds and all of the Spanish rounds, wrapping up the Spanish championship along the way. And though I still have a few races left to go let me take you back to last month and the third round

of the world championships in France.

For me France is one of the best places to ride as the terrain is very similar to Wales and all the people love enduro. Whenever I race there it gives me a real buzz especially when I see everybody cheering and going mad - it really brings out the best in me.

During this year's event the weather was terrible, and the special test nearly impossible, but of course it still goes on. Finishing third and first was definitely a good result as at the time it meant that I had increased my world championship lead. After the event we stayed on an extra couple of days as we wanted to get everything cleaned up and prepared before we left for the next round in Italy. The worst thing about travelling in France is the price of the tolls for using the motorway, They're just one big rip off.

We arrived in Italy, got set up then spent the rest of the day setting up the bike. It's very important that the bike is set up perfectly because once it's placed in the parc ferme you can't touch it from then on. This year we are finding that now we have to use unleaded fuel the bike is a lot more sensitive to carburation, and we have to re-set the carb every race, this alone can take up a couple of hours.

What about the Italian race? Disaster is the only way to describe it. I rode okay on the first day, although one of my test results was a little bit suspect to say the least, then on the Sunday a bad ride cost me dearly, losing the world championship lead. So as I wrap up this month's report I am now seven points behind with two rounds left - but without a doubt the championship is still on.

Aside from the world championship I have been competing in as many British championship rounds as possible - it's good practise plus it's nice to be racing back home after two years in Spain. At the moment I am leading the British championship, although in the last round just gone I had a problem and a rare DNF.

Time to finish my first column now. Next month I will let you know how the Slovakian world round went, plus the Rhayader enduro in mid Wales.

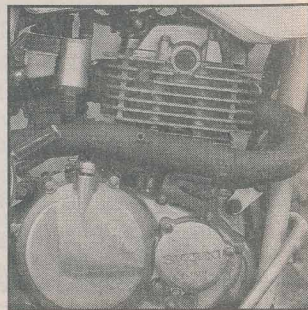
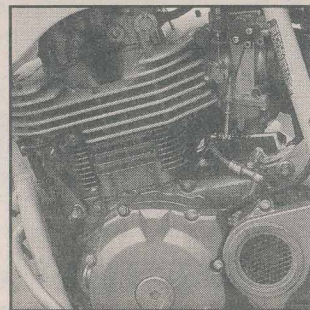
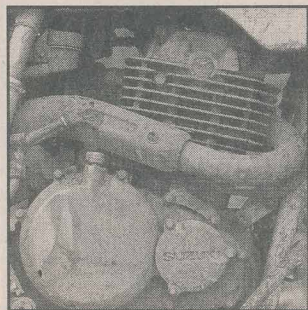
Paul

BORED OUT

of
their
tiny
little
motors

Are big bore kits really worth the bother? Si Melber finds out

DR350
VS DR385 VS DR441
DR385 (SCHWANTZ)



There's no substitute for cubic inches, or so the old adage goes. In other words the bigger your engine's capacity, the more the potential power output. There's a very simple reason behind this that doesn't require the brains of a genius to work out. Put simply, the more explosive charge (in this case a petrol/air mix) you can fit in the cylinder, the greater the amount of energy liberated when it all goes bang. By inference a bigger volume cylinder will accept a larger volume of fuel, so the bigger the cubic capacity you start with, the more power you end up with. It may be a generalisation, but for a given state of tune with all other things being equal, the bigger the motor, the more power you can get out of it.

It stands to reason therefore that the quickest route to serious power improvements over a stock bike's motor is by upping the engine's capacity. In other words fitting a big bore kit. You can faff around all day changing the air filter, gas flowing the cylin-

der head, altering the amount of back pressure in the exhaust and finally re-jetting to suit, but if you want serious horsepower you want cc's. Nothing else comes close. Of course the other big advantage of upsizing your existing machine is that the cost of a big bore kit (and fitting it) is usually less than the cost of selling the bike and replacing it with a more powerful model, and with the power increase doesn't come the incremental weight penalty you get with bigger bikes. There are dozens of trail bikes that have been given this upsizing treatment; Derbi currently make a big bore kit for their 50cc Senda which ups the capacity to 75cc, 125s have been known to become 145s, XR250s taken out to 280cc and even the big XR600 has a kit available to take it up to 630cc.



On the up: The 385 feels nicely powered, but never a handful. Torque increase helps when lifting the front end



DR385

DR385

Neil Hennian has had his DR385 for two years. Apart from an oil weep from the left hand side of the head gasket (they all do that sir), the bike has been almost faultless, though he was surprised to learn that the dyno picked up an ignition glitch that he wasn't aware of. Neil uses his bike just for trail riding and claims the extra power makes all the difference when the going is steep, boggy or just really sticky. As you can see from the photos it gets well used but never, ever cleaned - a true trail bike!

But probably the most popular big bore kit on any trail/enduro bike is for the Suzuki DR350. As a lot of you will already know, there's not a lot wrong with Suzuki's neat little DR either in enduro or trail bike trim (the differences between the two are fairly minimal anyway). It's a great bike with a good chassis, plonkable little motor that'll rev right up at the top end and as an all-rounder it's spot on. But for some people 25hp just isn't enough. Yes that's right, 25hp is all the DR350 (enduro) puts out at the back wheel in stock trim. How do we know? Well we put one on the dyno and found out. Now don't get me wrong the golden rule of tuning and a lot of other things for that matter, is that if it feels right then don't mess with it. There's no point in simply chasing the holy grail of ultimate horsepower if firstly the rest of your bike isn't up to it, and secondly you don't need it anyway.

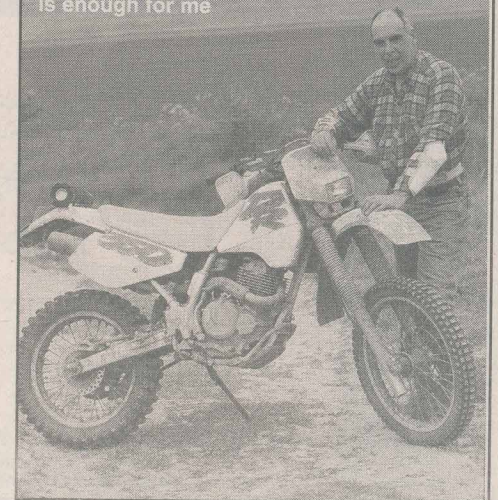
But the Suzuki DR350 is an excellent case in point. The rest of the bike is certainly up to coping with a bit more power, and in stock trim while it's nice and rideable it always feels like it could do with just a little more oomph. Usually I'd be the first to argue that with dirt bikes power isn't everything - dirt being what it is, it's rare that you can actually use all your bike's horsepower anyway. But there are other advantages that come with upping a bike's cubic capacity that don't just begin and end with maximum horsepower. I'm talking torque here.

What is torque, it's a term that gets bandied around a lot but what does it actually mean? Well torque can be expressed (in mathematical terms) as a result of a calculation between RPM and horsepower, but as far as you or I am concerned torque refers to the flexibility of an engine. It's the engine's grunt, the driveability, the middle and low rev power

and the bit of the powerband that you use when powering out of corners, climbing up hills or crossing muddy and boggy terrain. In other words it's essential stuff - especially on a trail or enduro bike.

So before we let ourselves get carried away with the theory let's get back to the test and tell you what we found. We took a stock DR350 enduro and ran it on a dyno to compare it with three big bore versions of the same thing. Two of them are readily available as kits and as such are options for anyone with a small sum of money burning a hole in their pocket. The third oversizer was a one off special built for a certain Kevin Schwantz. If you don't know the name then kick yourself for being so ignorant and let me tell you that 'Revvin' Kevin was Grand Prix road race world champion in 1993. But more importantly Kevin Schwantz like a lot of other famous road racers loved to ride the dirt. It kept him fit, sharpened his reflexes and taught him all about powersliding a bike. You can't buy a copy of his bike but the actual machine is up for sale (see box-out for details) from an enterprising dealer.

Neil Hennian: 385cc is enough for me



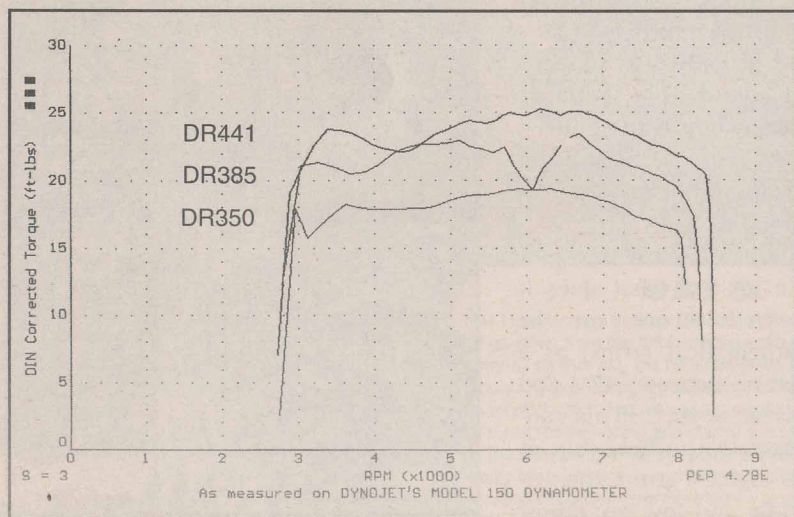
So here we had our test. A stock 350, a big bore 385, the Schwantz bike (another 385) and a 441. First of all they locked horns on the dyno then it was down to Wiltshire for a photo session and a blast around on some of the deserted chalky tracks to see how each bike felt on the rough.

The Dyno

There were nervous smiles all round as we wheeled the bikes up on to the dynamometer for the first of each of their three runs. Would they survive the dyno runs, would it expose any flat spots and most importantly would their bikes make more than the stocker and justify the money their owners had spent on them? All would be revealed. The stock DR350 went first and here there were no surprises. With a standard exhaust (sometimes quite limiting in terms of power output), the stocker produced smooth usable power (24.8hp to be precise, but let's call it 25hp) all the way from 3000-8000rpm, with peak torque of 19.5ft/lbs at 6300rpm. Not bad but nothing to get excited about.

Next came the 385, still with a standard exhaust, carb and cams. It was warmed up then 'given the berries' on the dyno. Wow, what an improvement, peak power was increased to 30hp (that's a 20% improvement), and torque was up to 23.5ft/lbs at 6700rpm. The power improvement lasted the full length of the rev range and the 385 revved to 8200rpm before power started to fall away (200rpm more than the standard bike). But there was a slight glitch. At around 6000rpm the 385 showed a sudden power loss indicative of either a serious flat spot (or much more likely in this case) a slight ignition fault. From the point of view of the dyno chart then you have to imagine that if this was sorted out the dyno line would continue in a straight line between the two points, and in fairness to the bike when we rode it later this ignition fault was not noticeable, even though the dyno had showed it up.

On went the Schwantz bike with its semi-flat slide carb and carbon can, and like the other 385 it produced more power than the stocker all the way through the rev range - interestingly enough produc-



Torque curves show the 441 to be down on power, especially at 4500rpm. The standard bike has the smoothest power curve of the three though

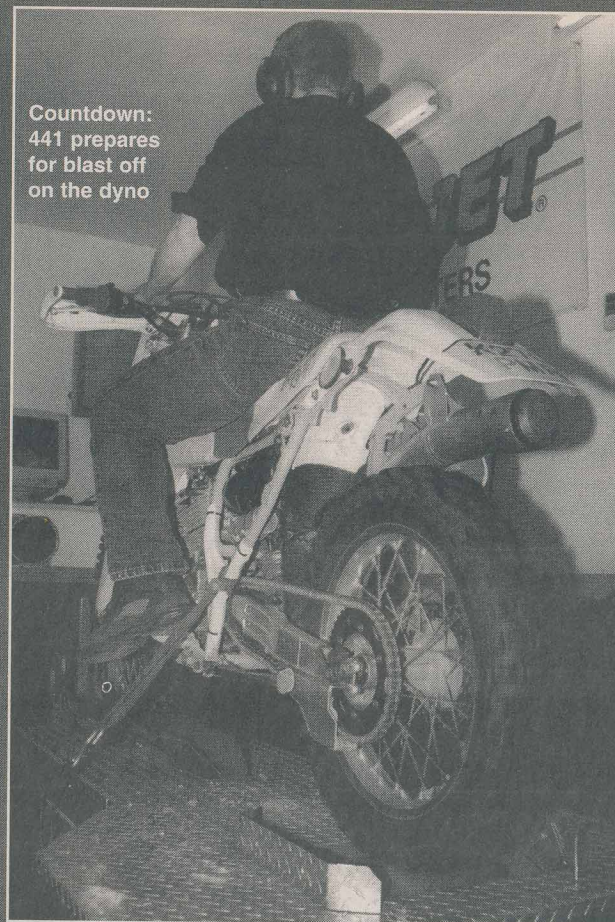
The Dyno

The dyno or dynamometer is a rolling road which can calculate a bike's specific output (at the rear wheel) by means of measuring the rate of acceleration of a fixed roller.

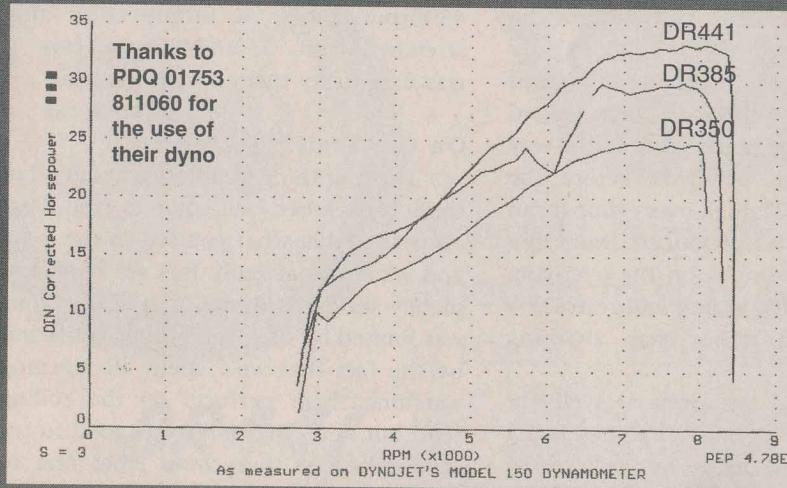
The bike is strapped in position and after being warmed up, various probes are attached to measure CO output, and rpm. The bike is then put into one gear below top before being accelerated from its lowest speed possible, right through the redline until power starts to drop away. Clever computer software analyses the results before working out the power and torque figures then printing them onto a graph.

Ultimate horsepower readings are rarely as important as torque (though quoted far more often), and the ideal result is a smooth power curve as well as the maximum possible extension of the torque curve - in other words nice usable power throughout the rev range.

In the road (and race) bike world, dynos are used all the time to measure the performance gain after tuning as well as to optimise an engine's carburetion and breathing. They are rarely (if ever) used in the dirt bike arena. We reckoned it was time for a change.



Countdown: 441 prepares for blast off on the dyno



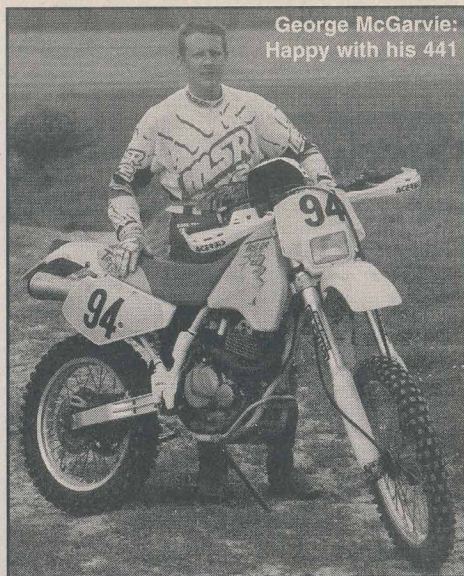
Thanks to PDQ 01753-811060 for the use of their dyno

Dyno read-out shows the power curves for the 350, 385 and 441. The broken line and sharp dip in the middle curve indicates an ignition problem on the 385

ing nearly 22hp at 2700rpm (at which point none of the other's had even got into their stride). But what was most noticeable about the Schwantz bike was the way it produced its power; smoooooth all the way up to 8200rpm when it all tailed off. Peak power was just less than 32hp, and peak torque a smidge under 24ft/lbs at 6500rpm (that's a 28% improvement over stock). Nice one.

Finally it was the turn of the 441 (in fact this bike is actually a 445cc as it's on its maximum rebore after an engine rebuild following the Weston beach race, but as it started out as a 441 and that's the size of the kit you can buy then that's what we'll call it). This also had a semi-flat slide carb fitted and a Supertrapp exhaust, and as expected produced even more power than all the others though not as much as we'd expected - 33.3hp and a peak torque of just over 25ft/lbs at 6200rpm equate to a significant 33% improvement on the standard machine, though Taylor Racing who did the conversion reckoned the bike was under-performing and that we should've got nearer 37hp. It was impressive enough though for its owner to let a wry smile creep onto his face when we'd finished and got the results. Even though the 385 did actually eclipse it on torque and power at around 4500rpm the big bruiser soon gained back its advantage and held it all the way to an impressive 8400rpm before the power tailed off. Though every time it ran on the dyno it produced worrying amounts of blue smoke on the over-run, this was felt to be a jetting and restrictive exhaust problem rather than anything more terminal.

So what had we proved. Well for starters we proved that all things being equal, capacity means power. Each of the bikes had bettered the one before in



George McGarvie:
Happy with his 441

terms of specific output, and all had considerably improved on the stocker. Each machine had scored a win in one way or another. The 385 was certainly the best performer when you take cost into the equation, the Schwantz 385 had that lovely low down hit of power and the smoothest torque curve we've ever seen, and the 441 proved to be the big hitter of the bunch with more power, more revs and excepting the aforementioned dip at 4500rpm a big fat torque curve that stretched from 3500-8400rpm. Now it was time to try them out on the trail.

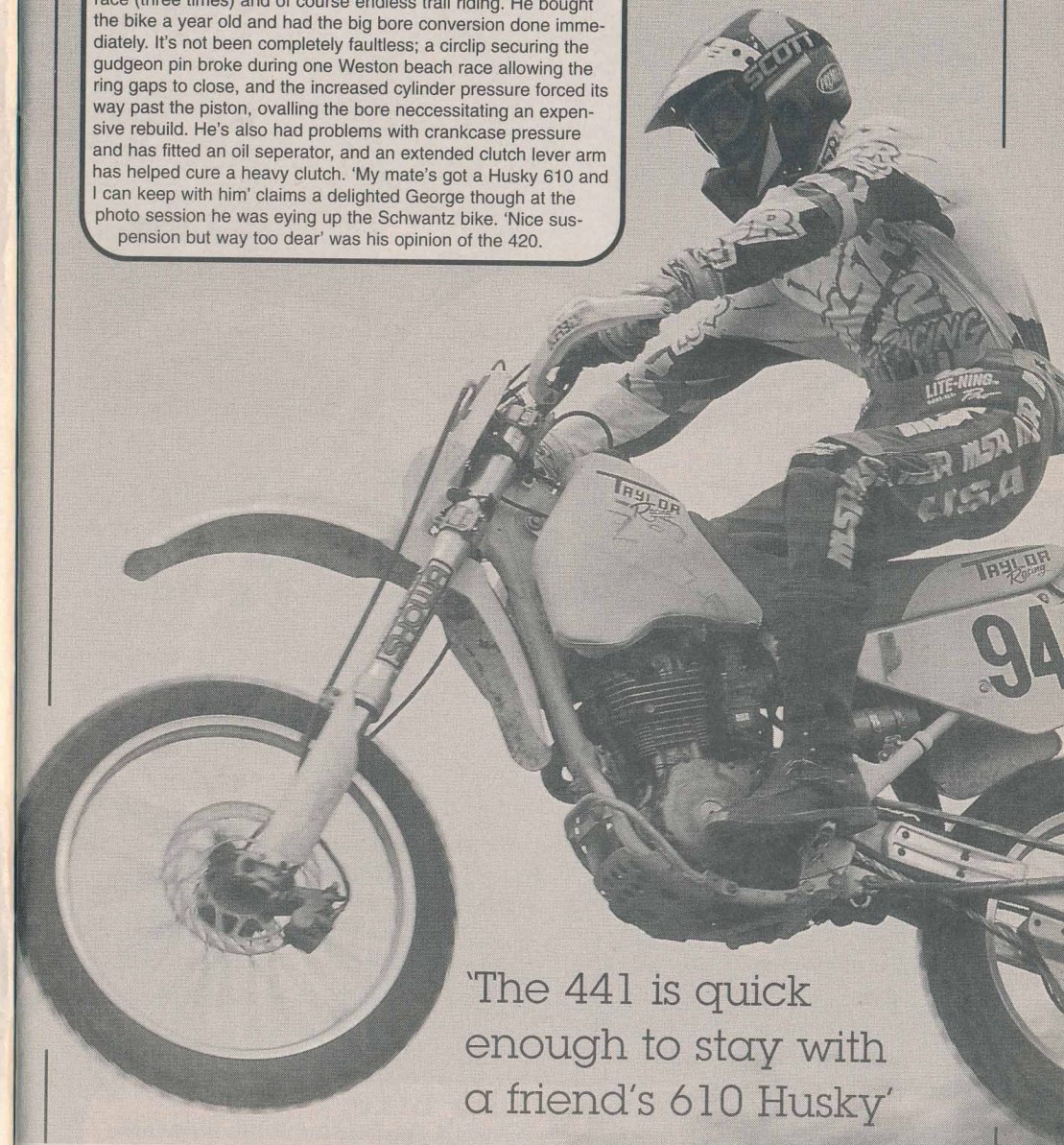
On the Trail

The first thing you notice about all of these bikes when you come to ride them off road is that what you see on the dyno and what you actually feel are two completely different things. Our riding time was limited by the need to do photos and by the fact that we'd spent all morning watching them perform on the rolling road but nevertheless, it was good to try each bike out then swap from one to another and compare the results. I won't

DR441

George McGarvie has owned his DR for the last three years and in that time he's used it for almost every conceivable form of off road sport including enduros, AMCA motocross, Weston beach race (three times) and of course endless trail riding. He bought the bike a year old and had the big bore conversion done immediately. It's not been completely faultless; a circlip securing the gudgeon pin broke during one Weston beach race allowing the ring gaps to close, and the increased cylinder pressure forced its way past the piston, ovalling the bore necessitating an expensive rebuild. He's also had problems with crankcase pressure and has fitted an oil separator, and an extended clutch lever arm has helped cure a heavy clutch. 'My mate's got a Husky 610 and I can keep with him' claims a delighted George though at the photo session he was eying up the Schwantz bike. 'Nice suspension but way too dear' was his opinion of the 420.

Aerial manoeuvres: 441
has power everywhere

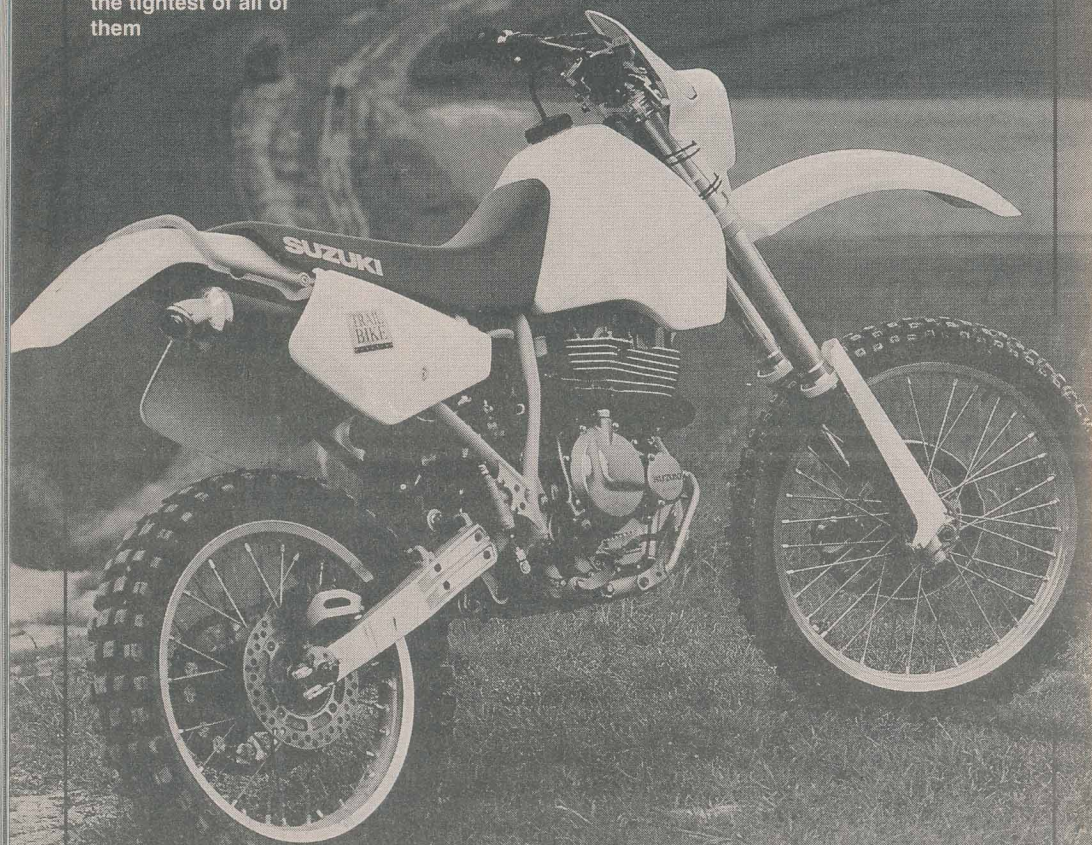


'The 441 is quick enough to stay with a friend's 610 Husky'

DR441

DR385 SCHWANTZ

Tight fit: Schwantz bike may have been the oldest bike here but it felt the tightest of all of them



The Schwantz bike

What we have here is a well built 385 conversion with extra finning hand welded onto the cylinder head to aid the cooling (the quality of welding is superb). Whoever built the bike has done the job properly because the motor carburates beautifully smoothly right off the bottom all the way to the very top (often a problem with a lot of big bore conversions). If you want to own a bike whose engine has been signed by the builder the asking price is a lofty £4,500. Details from Rick Proops at RAP on 0181 452 2672.

go into great detail about the stock bike but take it from me that the standard DR350 is a nice enough bike that's only really hampered by its lack of stomp. On the trail this isn't really a problem it feels smooth and if not particularly powerful then certainly torquey enough for the average trail ride. But because this was the enduro model we'd taken the precaution of entering it in an enduro the week before this test, and though it acquitted itself fairly well we felt that it needed just a bit more power, especially when bombing up hills or digging itself out of the soft, loamy Oxfordshire soils.

The 385 on the other hand is the lazy man's bike, it produces power just where you want it with a good surging mid range and nice top end but not too much that it's ever going to scare you. It feels just like you'd want a good, well sorted 350 to feel. Smooth, tractable and with just the

right amount of power for the suspension and chassis to cope with. Whatever gear you're in if you roll it on the 385 will respond by gathering momentum. No tedious downshifting required, and no awkward surges of power to catch you out. Just progressive acceleration and nice even power. As I mentioned before there was no sign of the ignition glitch which had showed up on the dyno and all I can think of is that when that is sorted out the 385 would feel even better than it already does.

The 441 on the other hand is a real animal - lots of mid range and top end power and the ability to unstick the rear end at will. It vibrated a fair bit more than the 385 and its owner had wisely taken the precaution of uprating the suspension by fitting a set of tweaked USD Showa forks from a CR motocrosser along with a re-valved and re-sprung rear shocker. A

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DR350

Stock Take: Standard DR350 is a great bike, as well as a good starting point for something even better



good idea as big gobfulls of power were never more than a twist of the wrist away and while not exactly frightening to ride, the 441 could occasionally surprise you with its ability to loft the front wheel when you were least expecting it. This bike could certainly get on a bit though the motor felt slightly slower to respond than the Schwantz bike, but that could be down to the amount of regular competitive use it has received at the hands of its owner during the past few years. This is a bike for those people that don't feel the need to compromise.

Despite being the oddball the Schwantz bike really was the star here - beautifully smooth and torquey, it felt tight and well set up. Like the 441, it too had a set of USD forks grafted on though in this case they were Kayaba's from a Suzuki RM. It felt the nicest handling of all three, and had the smoothest engine which though not quite packing the same punch as the big 441 felt a lot more controlled and if anything more responsive. The Schwantz bike was the nicest to ride, its power came in smoothly right off the bottom and the suspension felt well set up for a bike of this weight and ability, but oh what a pig to start. Hot or cold, (but especially hot), the Schwantz bike despite

having the longest kickstart with the most leverage just refused to start unless you got it exactly right. Not only that but as it had by far the most compression of all four bikes you couldn't just take a swing at kickstarting it, you had to put the bike on its sidestand, get up on the pegs wait for the decompressor to click out then give it an almighty kick. Alright when you've got time and energy on your hands but in the heat of an enduro? No thanks. If it were mine I'd seriously look into fitting the starter-motor and battery from a 'leccy start model, if only just to save the sole of my foot from further punishment.

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What does it cost mister?

If you're thinking about having your DR350 kitted then this is what you need to know:-

The big bore kits can be fitted to either of the DR350s (trail bike or enduro version), the 385 is the simplest and cheapest option and should give you an extra 20 percent more power. The piston kit itself is made by Wiseco and costs £76.66, but on top of that you'll need a copper cylinder head gasket at £28.30 as well as getting your barrel rebored (approx £50), and it's wise to modify the air box, fit a better filter and jet up accordingly. Alternatively you can get someone to do the lot for you for about £450.

The 441 is a lot more serious and needless to say a lot pricier. The 89mm Arias piston kit works out at £137.11, but on top of that you'll need your barrel bored out and a new sleeve fitted (£62.77 parts, and £150 labour). Next you'll want some bigger bore header pipes (£51.06), a less restrictive silencer (from £160 upwards) plus a specially pre-jetted White Bros 36mm carb and throttle kit (£271.02). The inlet side of the cylinder heads will need to be gas flowed, and hey, if you're gonna do it properly why not sling in a set of higher lift and longer duration cams? By the time you've bought that lot and had someone fit them all you're not going to get much change from £1500, but then again you will end up with a lot of bike for your money.

Taylor Racing are the people to contact, they've converted loads of DRs. Give them a call on 01249 657575 and don't forget to tell 'em we sent you.

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Conclusion

Big bore DRs are go. Not only are they a whole heap of fun to ride but they don't (necessarily) cost the earth and they make a lot of sense if you've already got a well sorted DR sitting around but you'd prefer something with a little more life in it. If it were my money I'd drop the 385 kit in. It does everything you want at a fraction of the price of the larger one and with almost (but not quite) the same go. Not only that but with a 385 you needn't go the whole hog and uprate your suspension as well (though it helps), whereas with the 441 it's almost a pre-requisite if you want to get away with riding it the way it's capable of performing. The 385 should also be more reliable than the big bruiser; it puts less stress on the bottom-end as well as the rest of the motor and gearbox, and reports of serious 'meltdowns' are far less common than with the 441.

Some people though will always demand that extra bit of power, that extra punch, and for them nothing but the biggest will do. There's no doubt that the 441 packs a bigger punch than most, and its willingness to rev on at the top means that in situations where pure performance is utmost, the 441 wins hands down.

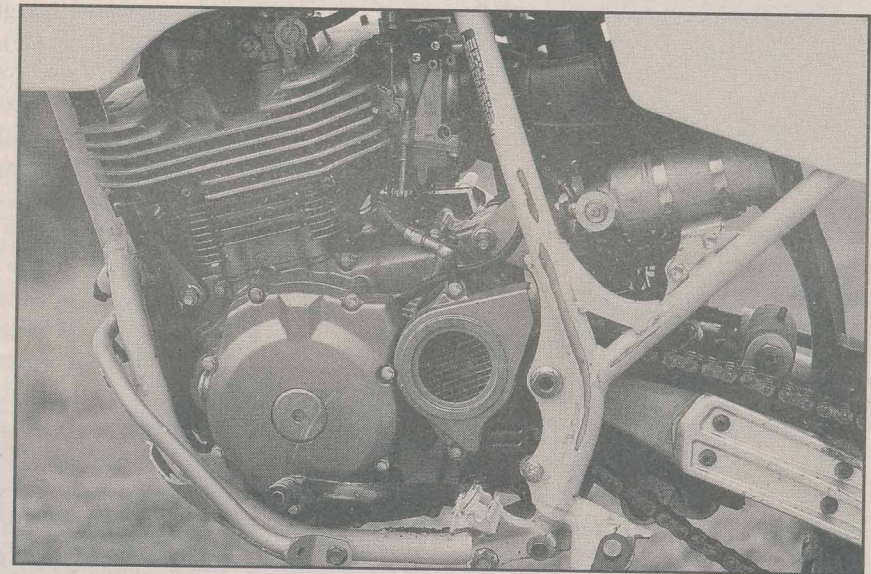
As for the Schwantz bike? Well that's the dream ticket; a one-off machine hand-built for a living legend, which performs every bit as well as it looks. Talk about street cred. The price is a bit of a drag though; at four and a half grand it's nearly £1000 more expensive than a brand new '96 machine, and that for a bike which is at least four years old. That sort of wedge would more than settle the cost of a 385 conversion on top of a brand new bike, and a new set of race kit, and a helmet, and a..... well, I think you get the idea.

But then again a new one wouldn't come with a picture of 'Revvin' Kevin' sat on it, smiling beguilingly..... Hmm.... I don't know. Great bike - expensive picture. ●

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A Bit on the side

Would you trust your life to this man? We wouldn't even trust him with his own dinner money, let alone a CR500



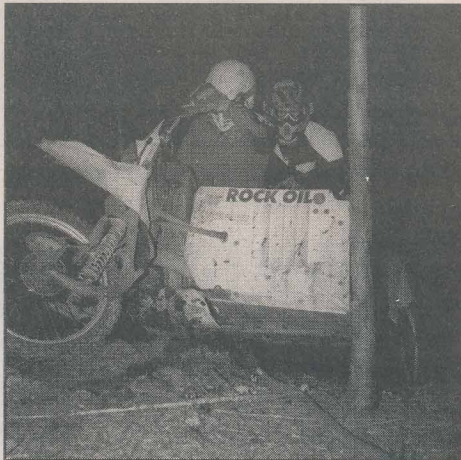
Imagine your darkest nightmare. You're sitting in one of the cars on the steepest, most awesome, white-knuckle rides in the world. Just as you reach the crest of the ride the bolt holding the rollercoaster together breaks loose and you go hurtling down the track completely out of control. Sheer terror grips you. You feel afraid. Very afraid. You can't steer it at all, you're completely at its mercy. you go where it wants to go, clinging on for dear life.... This is not a dream, it's not even a nightmare, this is reality, this is what it feels like to ride an enduro sidecar outfit with Paul Blezard.... Tilt. Game over.

Sidecars are an anachronism. A hangover from the days when everybody owned motorcycles and nobody could afford a car. Need a bit of extra carrying capacity? Hey, no problem. Why not simply bolt a steel frame and an extra wheel to the side of your bike and

voila, a sidecar outfit. Except that it's not actually that simple. I mean yes the mechanicals are more or less that simple but the dynamics are changed out of all recognition.

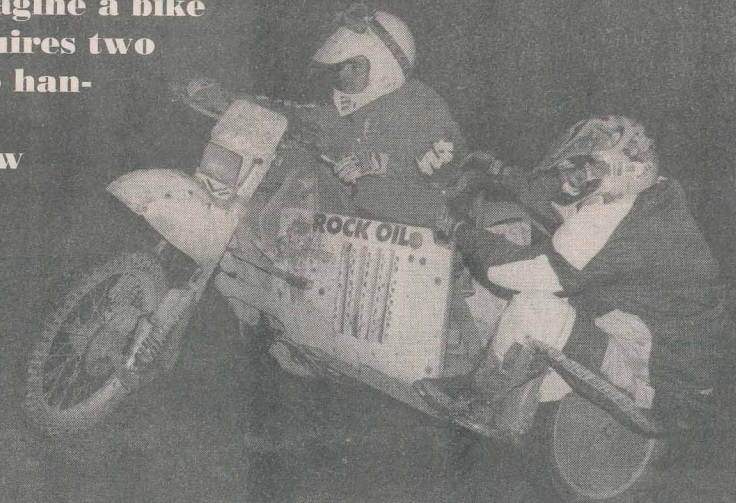
For a start unlike a solo, a sidecar doesn't lean. At least not in the direction you want it to go. Oh no. That would be far too clever. No a sidecar leans in the opposite direction, but just to complicate matters both the rider and the passenger still have to lean as if they were on a conventional solo. And another thing. Open the throttle and the machine turns left, close it again and it turns right. Confused? Not half as much as we were when Paul Blez and I accepted an offer from ex British enduro champion Paul Pelling and regular passenger Sue Kemp to come and try their enduro outfit for size.

So there we were, Blez and I trying to look all knowledgeable while Paul Pelling showed us round his outfit. The bike itself is a fairly stock Honda CR500 motocrosser, enduroised by the addition of lights, silencer, horn and a number plate. There's a wide



the side

Imagine a bike that doesn't lean but instead steers round corners. Imagine a bike that requires two of you to handle it off road. Now imagine you're stuck on that bike powered by a CR500 and Paul Blezard is at the controls. Scary? Terror doesn't come any worse



ratio gearbox in place of the stock close ratio number, and both the plumbing for the water cooling (including the rad itself), and the exhaust pipe and silencer sit in the sidecar as well as a battery to power the lights. Up front a pair of leading link forks with remote reservoir shocks take the place of conventional teles. These are stronger and allow far more rake and trail without modifying the existing headstock. The rear is almost standard except for a couple of extra inches welded into the swingarm and a heavy duty spring on the shock.

Welded to the bike's frame is a lightweight sidecar constructed from mild steel tubing with a drilled alloy floor. There's a fully suspended wheel, a bar to hang onto, and various cross braces on which to clout your shins. First off let's answer all the dumb

questions that we asked Paul and which unless you know anything about sidecars you'll probably want to know too. No, the sidecar wheel isn't driven. Why? Because there's simply no need. Nor does it have any form of brakes for the same reason. There's no knobbly tyre since you're not after grip and lastly it doesn't have a seat in the sidecar or even a suitably placed bit of padding on which to rest your posterior, though Paul was at a loss to explain the reasoning behind this in any way that sounded plausible.

Of course the passenger isn't

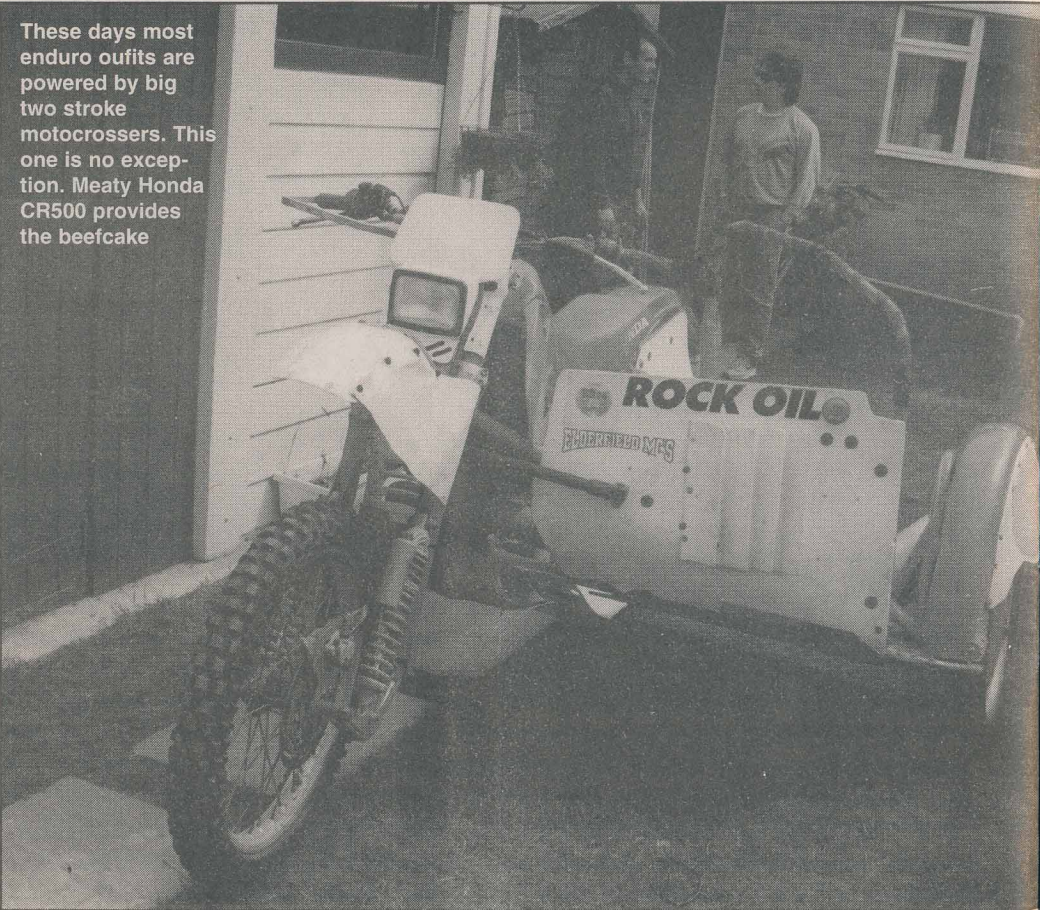
there just to provide ballast, he or she is instrumental in steering the outfit the way you want to go. At least that's the theory. In practise as Blez and I found out there's really not much point in trying to steer the thing as it has a mind of its own. Instead it's better to use all your energy to simply hang on, and keep a watchful eye out for suitable places to jump off if it all starts to go horribly cheesy.

As the passenger it's your job to ensure that the sidecar wheel stays in touch with the ground as much as possible; which means hanging off the side as far as you dare on left handers, or sitting behind the rider (in order to prevent the

outfit from rolling over forwards) when turning right. Sounds simple enough doesn't it? But just to complicate matters, the floor of the outfit is littered with a whole paraphernalia of items designed to make the job of crossing from one side to the other ten times harder. Apart from the obvious passenger bar that's in the way there are numerous bolts, cross braces and smaller bars to contend with, there's the small matter of the battery box, exhaust pipe and silencer, and anything else you happen to be carrying such as a toolkit or spare oil. Effecting a series of left-right-left turns requires the passenger to perform a number of quick-

shoe shuffles in rapid succession to avoid stepping on, tripping over, or as I managed, getting your foot stuck under, the exhaust pipe. By the end of the afternoon I'd acquired the pedular dexterity of Wayne Sleep and could happily have single-handedly performed the whole routine for the cast of Riverdance.

Though it goes without saying that sidecars are much heavier than solos there are times when they can be much faster; mud, ruts or extremely slippery going (or the more usual combination of all three) favour a vehicle in which balance is not a primary concern. And with an engine like the CR500 providing the



These days most enduro outfits are powered by big two stroke motocrossers. This one is no exception. Meaty Honda CR500 provides the beefcake



Clutterbug: Try finding your way around that little lot when you're in a hurry



Above: It's the passenger's job to help make the turn by keeping his weight as close to the inside of the bend as possible
Inset: Leading link front forks handle the bouncy stuff

A Bit On The Side

motive force there's really very little to stop you. Ruts baked hard by the summer sunshine in particular pose little problem to a well ridden outfit, since you needn't worry what the sidecar wheel is up to. Just point it where you want to go and get on the gas. It seems to just plough its way through virtually any hazard.

And it's tiring too. Boy is it tiring. If you can imagine doing continuous power squats with a Russian shot-putter strapped to your back while a giant fan tries to blow you off the back you'll have some idea

of how tiring it is being a sidecar passenger. I thought my legs were gonna explode and that was just when we were practising whilst stationary in Paul's back yard.

After an hour each in the chair while Paul (P) skilfully piloted us around the lanes, and with blisters barely the size of



golf balls on each hand it was time for us (Blez and I) to undertake our maiden voyage together. In a sidecar it's very important to learn the correct procedure for tackling various hazards. For instance ruts are taken flat out, whilst muddy bomb-holes are taken, er... flat out and slippery climbs, jumps and anything else you encounter are taken... well, flat out actually. In fact there's no such thing as a cautious sidecar crew since the faster you go the easier it becomes. Of course you've got to remember to 'power on' round left handers or else as Blez and I found out, left turns quickly become straight-ons... and straight-ons can occasionally become right turns... ahem. With me on the bike and him in the chair it soon became apparent that as a working partnership we were hardly Torville and Dean. Blez has

the natural agility of an elephant seal on morphine, whilst for some reason I could not make the outfit turn left. This was fine as long as the bends kept swinging to the right but of course the very first left-hander we encountered saw us taking to the bush quicker than a startled ferret.

For a big fella', it's amazing how quick Blez can move when he wants to, especially when confronted with a solid object. At the last minute and shortly before the moment of impact he abandoned ship leaving me to stop the outfit using nothing more than just a small pine tree. The other way round (ie with Blez on the bike and me

in the chair) seemed to work out much better so that's the way we stayed. With my natural agility and Blez's natural bulk

we were a perfect combination, now it was time to attack the steep learning curve.

With one novice aboard an outfit the effects are at best interesting and at worst unpredictable, but with two novices the consequences are seriously scary. Not only did neither Blez nor I have the faintest idea of what we were supposed to be doing, but we didn't even have the comfort of being able to rely on each other in an emergency since we were both hopelessly out of our depth. This was going to be fun... or possibly fatal, we weren't sure which.

In the end it turned out to be fun. A whole heap of fun, not just rib-ticklingly funny, but hilariously, uproariously, side-splittingly funny. At modest speeds we weaved our way from side to side along the leafy Sussex lanes, slithered our way down some of the slippery chalky

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descents and even managed to turn the outfit over on its side at barely walking pace when we got cross rutted and both leant the wrong way. By the end of that summer evening's trail ride we were merrily power-sliding on the road, fairly storming on the rough, and confident in our ability to either tackle a hazard or else at least both leap clear prior to impact.

Of all the many things I've done on bikes, few can compare with the thrill, nay, the sheer abject terror of being piloted down a muddy lane in a three wheeler with Blezard at the controls. As a matter of fact, suddenly the prospect of a runaway rollercoaster hardly even seems scary any more.



Paul Pelling: Ex British sidecar enduro champion and certifiable nutter

Our thanks to Paul Pelling for putting up with us and showing us how it should be done

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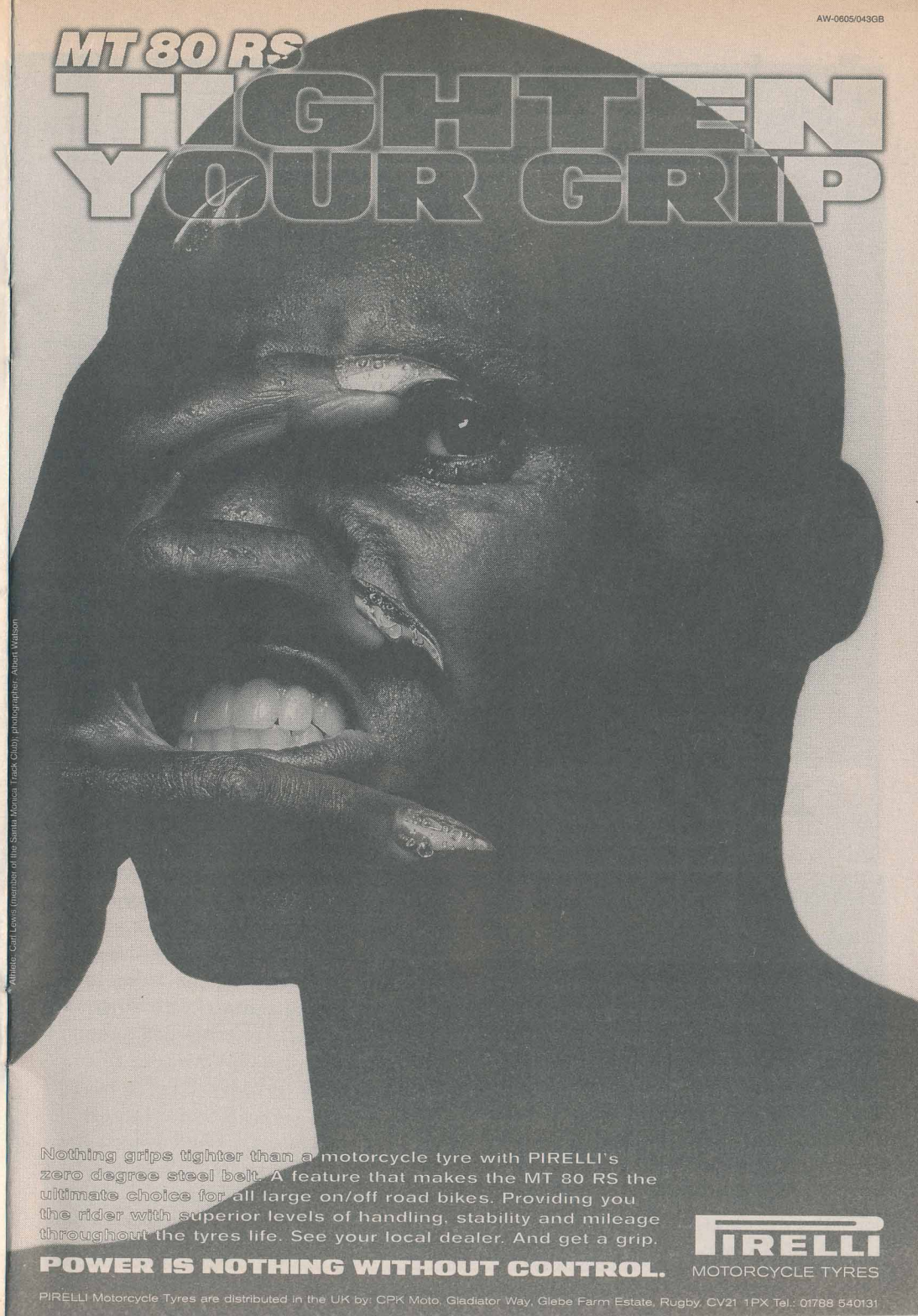
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A touch of the DTs

Used bike test

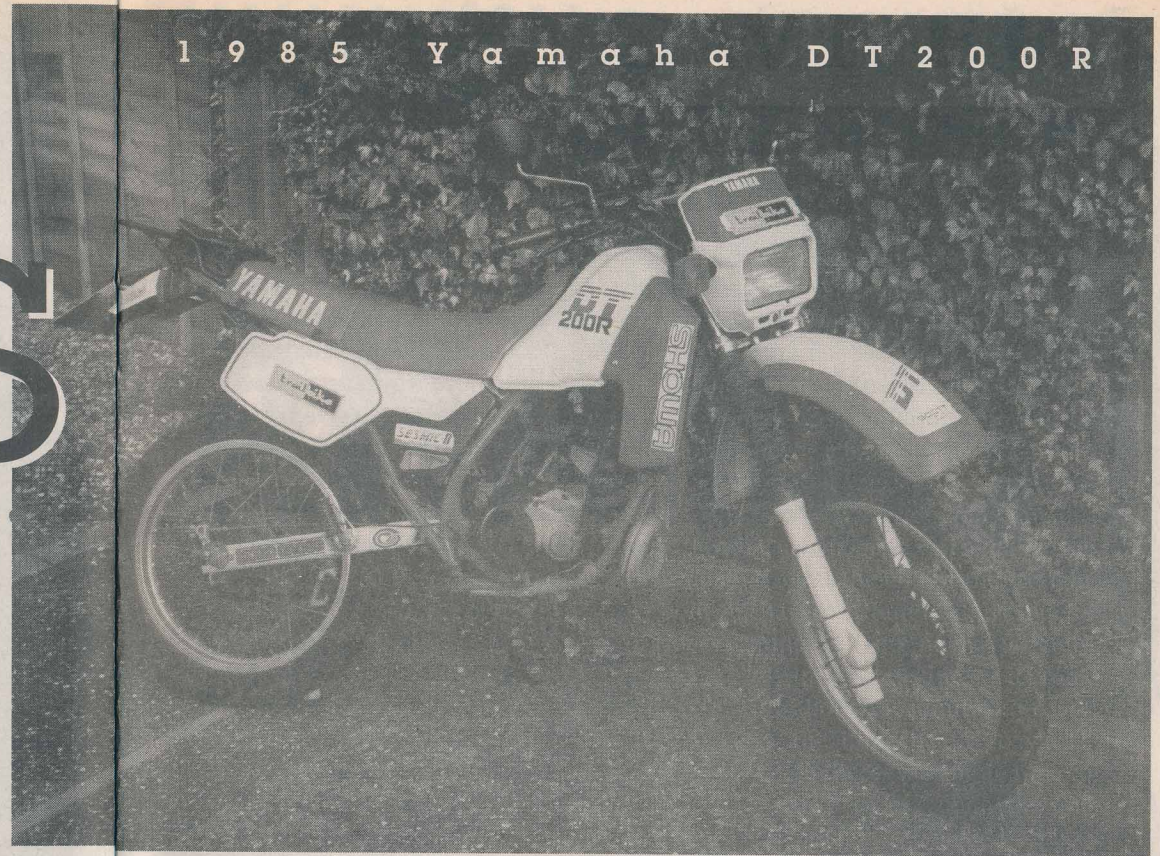
Yamaha's DT range of trail bikes have always made great off roaders. Dave Cornish tracks down an early DT200R and asks why the UK never got this model?



Most riders acknowledge the fact that Yamaha invented the modern trailbike with the DT250 back in 1968, and since then thousands of novice off roaders have been introduced to the sport aboard a variety of DTs which are direct descendants of that original. My first experience of trail bike ownership was on a DT175MX and like all DTs it proved to be a great bike on which to learn the art of off roading. A succession of highly tuned, expensive and temperamental European enduro racers followed but then ten years ago I switched back to

a DT, this time a mkII liquid cooled 125.

This bike gave me more than two years of cheap fun, competing in enduros as well as trail riding most weekends, while serving as day to day transport to get me to work. At that time it wasn't unknown for certain riders in the trail bike class to 'interpret' the rules in a rather unsporting manner, with all types of MX and enduro components finding their way on to TSSs, RMXs etc. In a vain attempt to keep up with the White Power suspended KMXs, the DT was treated to a pipe and a porting job which ruined the mid range and made off roading hard work, what I really wanted was a 200cc motor and fully adjustable suspension. In effect I needed a DT200.



For other lucky markets around the world a DT200 was and still is a reality but sadly so typical of the UK, we were denied this model. Now thanks to grey importers, some 200s are at last finding their way onto these shores and are quickly finding homes with punters who know a good thing when they see one.

More than ten years on and the DT looks decidedly old fashioned parked alongside more modern trail bikes. The styling of course aped the YZ motocrossers of the day which dates the DT's lines, but here at TBM Towers we've always considered function far more important than form, so when we were recently offered the chance to ride an 11 year old example with nearly 20,000 miles on the clock we

jumped at the chance.

Looking virtually identical to the officially imported mkII 125 that sold so well over here the most obvious visual difference between the two are the gold anodised alloy rims fitted to the 200 in place of the steel items on the smaller bike. A nose around also reveals a neat set of air-assisted adjustable forks (the 125 had unadjustable ones), clamped by a pair of alloy yokes, a 235mm hydraulic front disc, an alloy swingarm together with a remote reservoir shock (adjustable for preload and compression damping), and joy of joys a fully functional, servo-operated YPVS power valve system.

The 200's powerplant is a bored and stroked 125 unit which measures in at a

A touch of the DT's

Used bike test

true 195cc. Liquid cooling (incorporating a thermostat) keeps the reed valve two stroke at a steady operating temperature and ensures that the DT can be revved hard for long periods without any appreciable loss in power. As you would expect of a street machine the Yamaha comes equipped with an 'autolube' system (complete with low oil level warning lamp) as well as one of the first powervalve set ups ever to appear on a trailie.

For those of you that don't already know, the YPVS (Yamaha

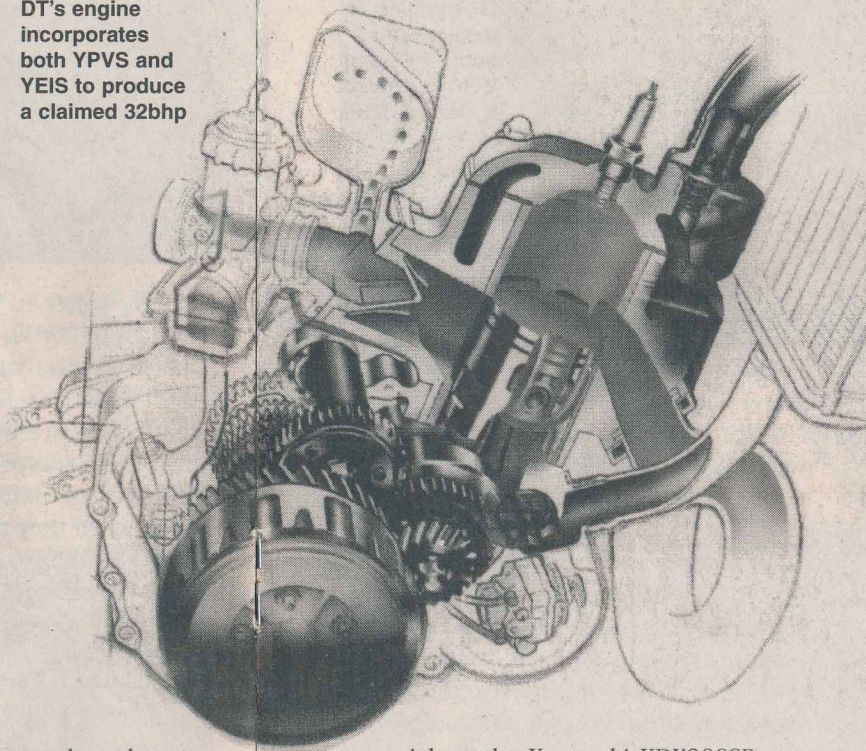
Power Valve System) changes the shape of the exhaust port via an electronically controlled servo motor to alter the engine's 'tuning' depending upon engine load. When the engine is running at low revs the powervalve is closed to give better low end torque, then as the revs rise the servo motor opens up the cylindrical powervalve to allow the engine to produce a good midrange and top end output. This allows the DT to put out a (claimed) 32bhp and still posses a healthy mid range with plenty of torque.

And I was quickly aware of the bikes extra performance advantage over it's smaller brother. Revving through the gears the bike responds with quite alarming acceleration for such an old machine. Gunning away from a standstill you can pick up the front wheel easily and keep it airborne as you shift up into second, in fact it's only when you select third gear that some sort of sanity is restored. Once above 6000rpm you can feel the powervalve start to open, the exhaust emits a raucous snarl and the revs pick up instantly as the needle shoots round to the ten grand redline. In ideal conditions the

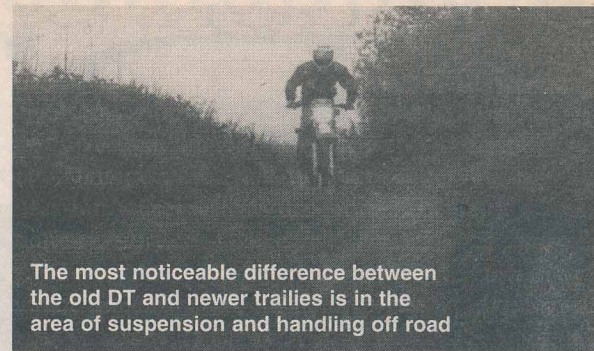
elderly DT will rev out in sixth gear quite easily which equates to a top speed of around 90mph - more than adequate for a 250 let alone a 'mere' 200.

Technology may have come on apace since the DT200 first saw the bright lights of dealers' showrooms but the Yamaha's motor can still cut it against more up to date competition. It feels every bit as

DT's engine incorporates both YPVS and YEIS to produce a claimed 32bhp



quick as the Kawasaki KDX200SR we tested in issue 11, which itself was no slouch. Not only that but the old stager has the green machine beaten hands down



The most noticeable difference between the old DT and newer trailies is in the area of suspension and handling off road

when it comes to midrange, which accounts for a much more relaxing ride, especially off road. Whichever way you look at it the motor is a real gem and shows how right the original unrestricted design was. How much of this is down to devices such as the YEIS (Yamaha Energy Induction System - basically an empty bottle) fitted onto the carb manifold is debatable but there is no reason to question the merits of the electronic powervalve, this certainly helps the motor to produce not only loads of reliable power but it does so without sacrificing any driveability at the lower end of the rev scale.

With that amount of performance available the chassis copes surprisingly well. The handling whilst not as plush and taught as say a TT250R, is capable of matching the motor's impressive power output and speaks volumes for the integrity of the original design. Ultimately more modern tackle will leave the DT behind thanks to better suspension and brakes, but not by as much as you might imagine. Off road the front forks though soft work well, soaking up normal rutted tracks without any protest, and feel well matched to the rear 'MonoCross' set up. Rush too fast into a hazard and the softly sprung DT can start to lose its composure

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A touch of the DT's



Despite its unfashionable looks, the '85 DT200R still makes a great trail bike

- but - and it's a big but - considering our test bike's age and mileage it felt much better than we imagined it might.

Slowing the DT from its healthy top speed also shows up the bike's age. Overall retardation is good from the disc/drum set up, but the initial bite was lacking probably in part due to old brake fluid and a spongy front brake line - less than 20 quid would soon sort that out. Fortunately the single rear drum works well and offers loads of feel at the pedal without being grabby or

overly fierce.

The DT's spec sheet shows that the guys at Yamaha really did design this bike to be used off road. Folding tips on the gear and brake pedals, an alloy sump shield and a rear mudguard mounted tool-bag all hint at the DT's intended use, though you'd probably want to lower the gearing a couple of teeth to allow that impressive motor to be used to the full off road yet still boast 70+mph road performance. Further niceties include snailcam chain adjusters, grease nipples on the shock linkage and an 'O' ring chain proving that with the DT, home maintenance is

less of a chore than with many bikes a quarter of its age.

Compared to the 125cc UK version the import is built to a higher spec and just about the only area in which the smaller bike holds an advantage is when carrying a passenger. The reason? Well nothing worse than a pair of pillion footrest which are inexplicably mounted on the 200's alloy swingarm instead of on the frame like the 125. Whether or not this is an important detail depends on how often you can persuade someone to perch on the DT's rear though it seems strange that they differ.

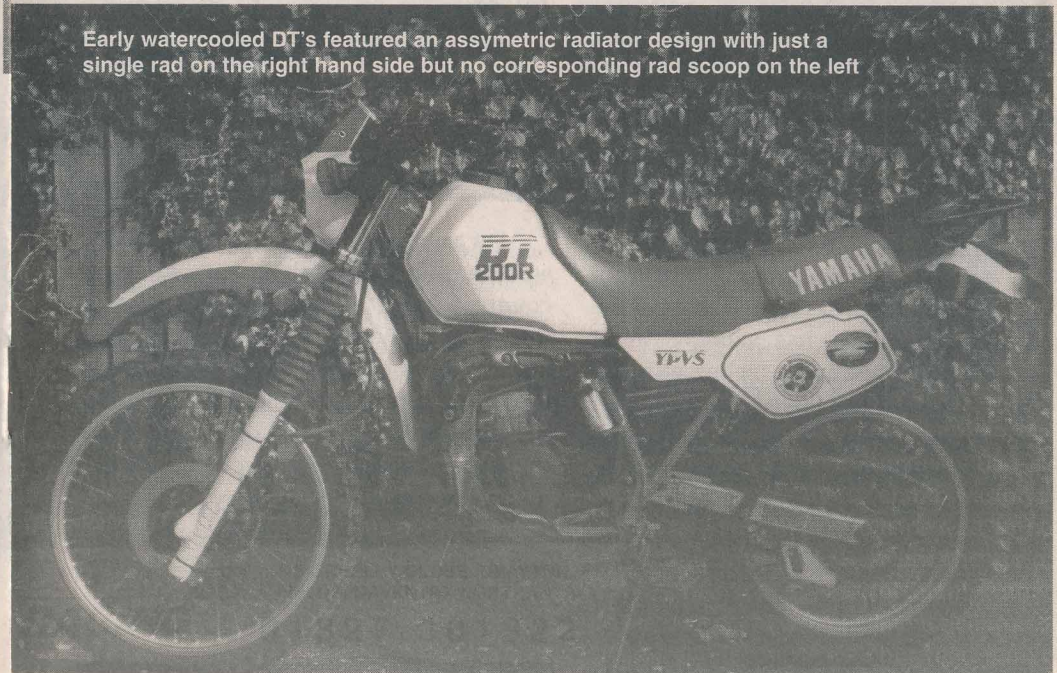
After spending two weeks with what at first appeared to be just a pretty elderly bike I was really sorry to see the 200 go. I've always had a soft spot for DTs and I still rate the 175MX and the 125R as two

of my favourite all-time bikes. Had the 200R been available in the UK ten years ago there's no doubt in my mind that it would have made a serious impression on the clubman trail bike enduro scene at the time. At least if you're prepared to hunt around (or wait for one to be sourced) you can have a bike like this for as little as £900-1200. For a brilliant greenlaner, TBEC enduro tool and general thrash around the good old DT takes some beating. Proof positive that you don't have to spend a fortune to own a great 'fun bike'.

1985 Yamaha DT200R

Price: (as tested) £1200
 From: The Container Co (01362 698147)
 Engine: Liquid cooled, 195cc reed-valved,
 2-stroke single, 32bhp (claimed)
 Weight: 109kg

Early watercooled DT's featured an assymetric radiator design with just a single rad on the right hand side but no corresponding rad scoop on the left



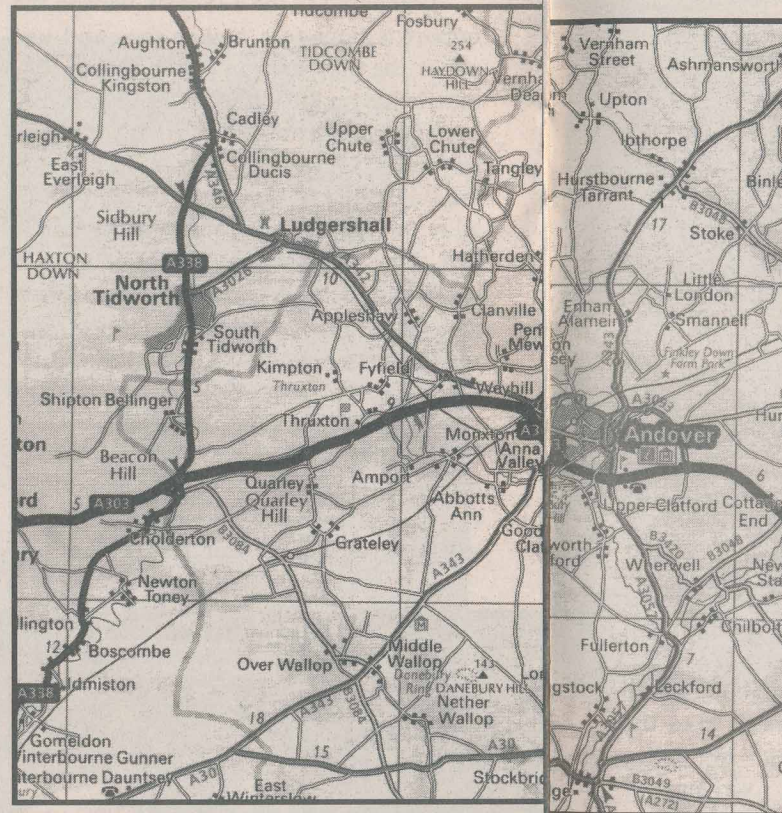
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north west Hampshire

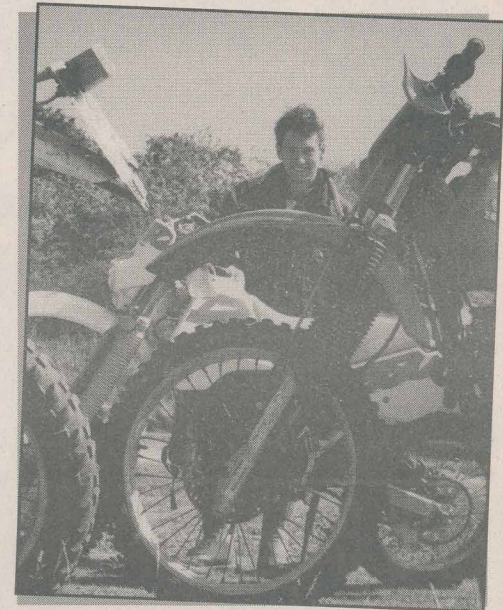
Hampshire may not have the most stunning scenery or the most challenging riding but it is an attractive county, with a fair degree of contrast and over 700km of lanes to ride. The east of the county has more technical lanes and a feeling of history that has developed over centuries of habitation. It is the increased development around these ancient hamlets that spoils the area for me. It has become commuter land. It is also from some of these picture postcard villages that many of the anti motorcycle articles in the national press have emanated.



For summer riding I find the north-west quarter of Hampshire, and adjoining counties, hard to beat. The soil type is mainly chalk which provides a hard surface. With no tractor ruts to worry about the riding is relaxed - ideal for the beginner, the big bike and two up riding. From the higher ground there are some idyllic lunch stops with superb views.

I aim to provide, in the following text, a circular ride of about 70 miles that should be enjoyable to all riders. I would stress, however, that there will be some 'amusing' sections that you may wish to

Dave Tilbury is your guide on a one (or two) day ride round the north west quarter of Hampshire



The prospect of a sunny day's trailing will always prompt a smile

avoid if you are riding a pristine Triumph Tiger with a new potential partner on the back (there are times when political correctness weighs heavily upon me). Clearly your own good sense and judgement will decide whether or not to ride a lane - although I shall endeavour to point out suitable diversions where appropriate. Because there is such a choice of lanes within the area I will add several paragraphs at the end of this piece for those who wish to extend their ride to exceed the 100 mile mark or for those who, having travelled to the area want to

spread the ride over two days. As many lanes in this part of Hampshire have been reclassified some time ago they now appear on the Ordnance Survey Maps as BOATs, making it easier for you to make your own alterations to the route

Ordnance Survey Landranger maps 174, 184 and 185 will be needed. At the risk of being thrown into the deepest dungeon at Maybush (The O/S HQ) I have photocopied the area where the three maps join. You would, of course, be ill advised to do likewise but see what you think when you come to mark the route in that area. Whilst you may start from anywhere I must start from somewhere and that somewhere will be Stockbridge.

Stockbridge is a pleasant little town

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with a good selection of restaurants and pubs with a range of accommodation. As the name suggests Stockbridge was on a well used drovers route and for those with a nose for history there is a cottage, just as you turn into the Houghton road at the western end of the town, that still has Welsh writing on the wall. The garage, halfway along the main street, in white corrugated iron with yellow and red decoration, is also a museum piece and well worth a look.

As you ride westward along the main street you will see the hedge line of your first lane straight ahead. About 200m

after rejoining the A30 turn left up a gravel track and then left again just before you reach the tarmac at the far end. The first 100m of this lane, Broughton Drove, is in very poor condition, due to the County Council's innovative little scheme to prevent travellers camping, but is quite all right after the first bend. Follow this lane on down the hill, taking care where the banks and trees close in as here there is a junction with the sealed road and private drives. Continue straight on, through the ford and on up The Hollow, keeping to the right hand fork.

Turn right at the tarmac and down to Broughton. Once in the village take the first turning left, opposite the police house, and follow the waymarked Clarendon Way as far as the cross-roads at SU287,323. (If it is wet those with bigger bikes may consider it wise to continue on to the tarmac and rejoin the route north of the A30 as there is a fairly steep descent on bare chalk. For those in need of petrol turn left at the A30 then right at SU264,353 to a garage at the far end of this lane.) Turn right here and follow the ancient lane, known as Wood Way, right up to SU263,401. As you crest the hill take time to check out the original hollow way, down to your right, where the road made the climb up Broughton Down. You will see from the depth of the original route how

Be warned, they hide tanks in some of the puddles so don't go alone

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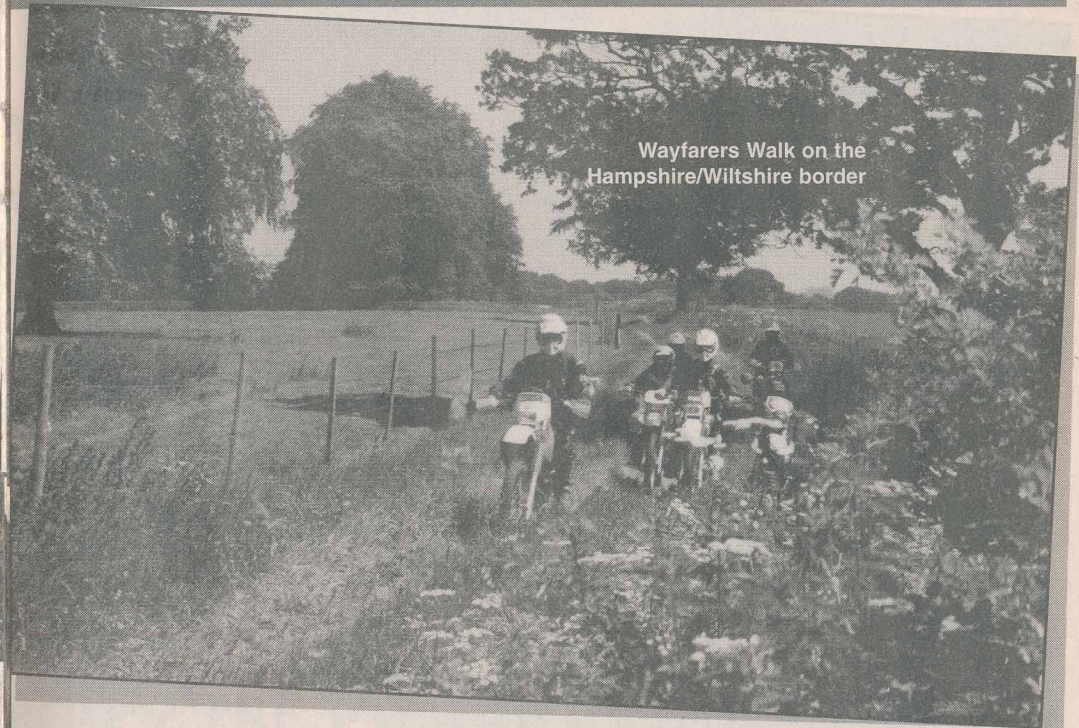
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Wayfarers Walk on the Hampshire/Wiltshire border

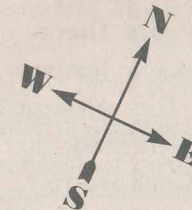
well used it must have been.

From SU263,401 go left, then first right into a short but pleasant green and grassy lane. Continue northward; over the railway; across the B3084 to Quarley; under the A303; left and right; past the entrance to Thruxton and first left (probably obstructed by a steel pole gate). To the tarmac, left and right onto the 'Old Coach Road' to the A338. Turn right and on through Tidworth. Not a pretty pace but there is a petrol station and a chip shop.

Those with a sense of adventure, a compass and good map reading skills,

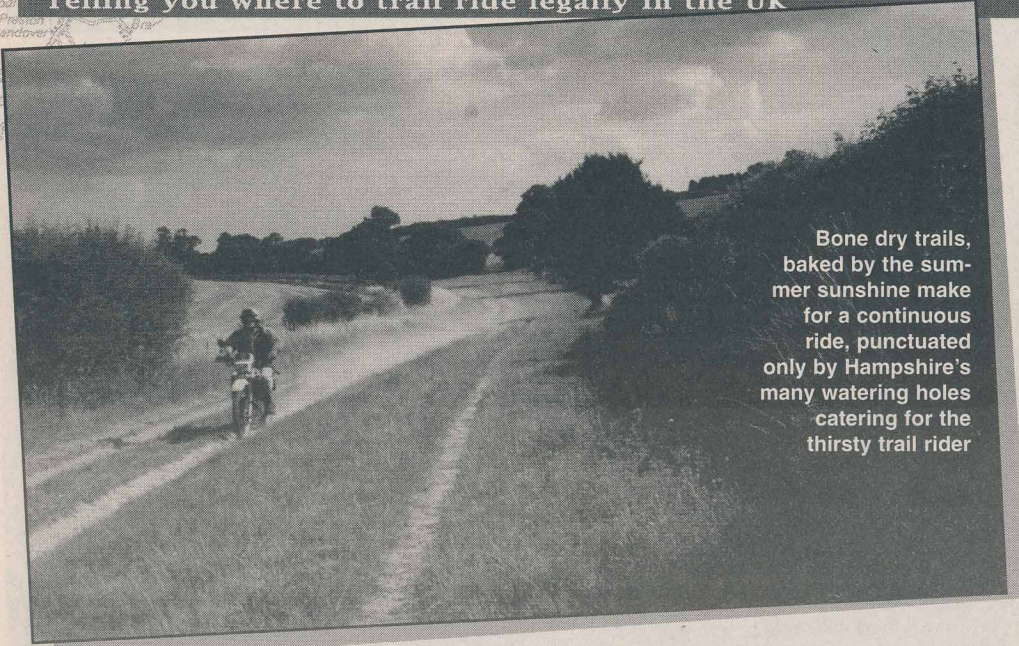
could at this point use this optional route. Extend the line of the 'Old Coach Road' through Shipton Bellinger, swinging northward after about 700m of lane, along the west of The Belt, SU218,462, over Dunch Hill to the Marlborough Road. Using Sidbury Hill as a guide rejoin the route at SU233,510. Be warned, they hide tanks in some of the puddles so don't go alone.

From SU233,510 head almost due east to Blackmore Down then north, through Collingbourne Wood, on to SU285,562. Due to the tractor ruts in the wood it will be advisable for the bigger



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Bone dry trails, baked by the summer sunshine make for a continuous ride, punctuated only by Hampshire's many watering holes catering for the thirsty trail rider

machines to follow the byway across the A342 and the A346 then on tarmac to SU258,546 where you can turn right, through Herridge Farm to rejoin the route.

Turn right at Scotts Poor onto the Chute Causeway (famed for being a bit of bent Roman road) and then right again after about 500m following this lane southward to SU295,522. The true line of this right of way meets the tarmac some 250m further south but is soft with a big S.. From here make your way to lower Chute - a picturesque village with a pond at SU315,534. Just to the north of the pond you will find a sunken lane that leads north-west to Chute Standen. For many years there was an

infamous address in the phone book that related to this hamlet - a property named 'Cockardup'!

From Chute Standen continue due north to the 'T' junction, right, then first left and on up to the tarmac. Now you are back on the Chute Causeway. (The lane in front of you at this point was reclassified as a bridleway under an Act of Parliament that has now been superseded. Put in oversimplified terms we still use it. There is a steep descent into HIPPENSCOMBE and a fair climb out but otherwise a pleasant lane. North of Oxenwood you can join the Wayfarers Walk (an inappropriate name for a series of byways) and follow it all the way to the A34. Where it meets the A34 you will find

For many years there was a house in this village named Cockardup

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a memorial to man's early attempts at flight. Unfortunately there are no useful links from here but it is a lane with some excellent views, so enjoy them from the opposite perspective and ride back up the hill to rejoin the route). Now turn right and take the left hand option at the next three junctions to bring you to SU326,575, where you turn right onto a stony track. Follow this route past Box Farm, keeping left at the fork and on to the cross-roads where you turn left. Follow this lane through to Rockmore Down where you join the byway through Combe Wood to Combe and up a steep climb (on chalk) just beyond Lower Farm to Combe Hill.

Turn right once you reach the tarmac

on Combe Hill and then right again on to a byway that leads toward Linkenholt. At the tarmac turn left to Netherton where you will miss the turning on your right for Upton. No problem. Admire the perfectly trimmed hedges and turn around in the junction of the road to Faccombe and try again. You have to go behind the large house and across an area of well manicured lawn to join the lane that climbs to Rymers Barn.

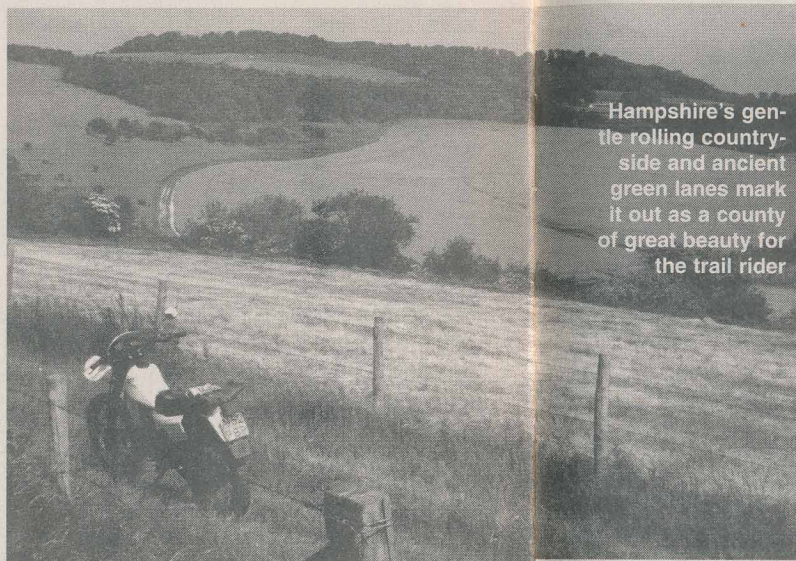
Go left at the T junction and then left again at the cross-roads following the Test Way down to Ibthorpe, taking the right-hand option through the cottages emerging onto the main road at SU376,537. Right and first left is the recommended

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route (the RUPP at the second left can be very snotty). At the top of the hill the majority of traffic makes for Windmills but be sure to follow the right hand lane. At the tarmac turn right and right again at the junction back toward Upton. If in need of petrol there is a service station at SU387,536.

Now you want the RUPP that starts just to the south of Upton and runs up over Rushmore Down. If the weather is good make sure you schedule a break at the top to enjoy the view and watch the buzzards soaring overhead. On reaching the tarmac go left and left again in about 100m. Go right at the tarmac to join the Roman Road which you can follow down



Hampshire's gentle rolling countryside and ancient green lanes mark it out as a county of great beauty for the trail rider

to the A343, Andover and petrol.

Follow the sign posts through the town centre (not the ring road) for the A3057 and Romsey. Just south of the roundabout at SU365,453 turn left in to Old Winton Road - Winton being the old name for Winchester - and follow this under the A303 to the first cross roads. Cut back to the A3057 and down to Goodworth Clatford, passing through the village to SU349,411 and straight on, past the AJS motorcycle works and shop at Flint Farm, to Clatford Oakcuts. If the A343 is of use to you then go straight across the sealed road. Now head south down the tarmac to the junction where you turn left onto Church Lane, a byway to Longstock, and then back to Stockbridge.

I have not made much of the pubs on route as you will pass many very pleasant houses that will most ably replenish your

bodily fluid on a hot day but here are a couple that you will not pass: The Tally Ho, Broughton (SU309,328), serves ales from the Cheriton Brewhouse (SU582,283) and good grub. There is also a very pleasant garden. The John O' Gaunt, at Horsebridge (SU346,304) again has good ale and food but not much 'outside'. Also worth trying: Lower Chute,

Vernhams Dean, The Black Horse at West Tytherley - it's a terrible place to be in charge of a vehicle.

Day Two

For those of you who've decided to make a weekend of it here's a second day's route that's well worth trying.

A couple of years ago one of the more outspoken motorcycling green lane campaigners, Mike Crossman, passed away. In his last year he devised a little map reading exercise for his chums that we have repeated in subsequent years, with several additions to include lanes that he saved from stopping up orders or lanes that he rode in his youth that are incorrectly recorded on the Definitive Map.

Out of four lanes included in this route, that are recorded as bridleway, three are currently in the process of being upgraded to BOAT and the Authority is

aware that an application to upgrade the four is not far off.

So, opposite the Leckford Hut, on the A30 at SU405,367 there's a wide green lane. Point your bike southward at the start of this lane and read the following:-

S = straight on; L = left; R = right; C = crossroad; J = junction; T = T junction; F = fork; No = North, So = South etc = compass bearings; tar = tarmac. It follows that LL = acute left, etc. Any distances are in km.

L@T; 0.6km R@J; S@tar; R@T to A272; S; S@C; R@T; S@tar; L@393319; 2.3kmFR; R@tar; 0.9kmL; (What is the inscription on the memorial in the trees on your right at 377298?) LL@369301; S@C; (care thro farm yard) S@tar; L@C; FL; L behind barn; R@T; 0.9kmFL; No@J (signed as bridleway. Keep yews on left. S into WWood - byway claim - The road from Southampton to Andover (Tithe & Enclosure)); R@417314; FR; R@T; 75mL; S to tar R; L@C; L@A272 - 1stR; R@451334; 100mL (care thro trees); Stay R at New Barn; S@C; R@C; 1st L; FR through gate; L@T (How many attempts were there to stop up this lane?); R@T; LL@J; L@484364; (Where was the Red Lion? - trick question. It is now West Stoke Farm on a 40 feet wide bridleway called Doctor's Way) S to tar; L 100mR; S to A30; R; 2kmL; S to tar +300m; R@T in BS; cross river L@437420; L@end; S@bend; 50mL (Moonlight Drove); RR@end; NW@417406; L414409; R@C; L@C; FR@415390; S@C; RR@435363; S; R@414359; 1.2km stop.

Take Care and have fun.

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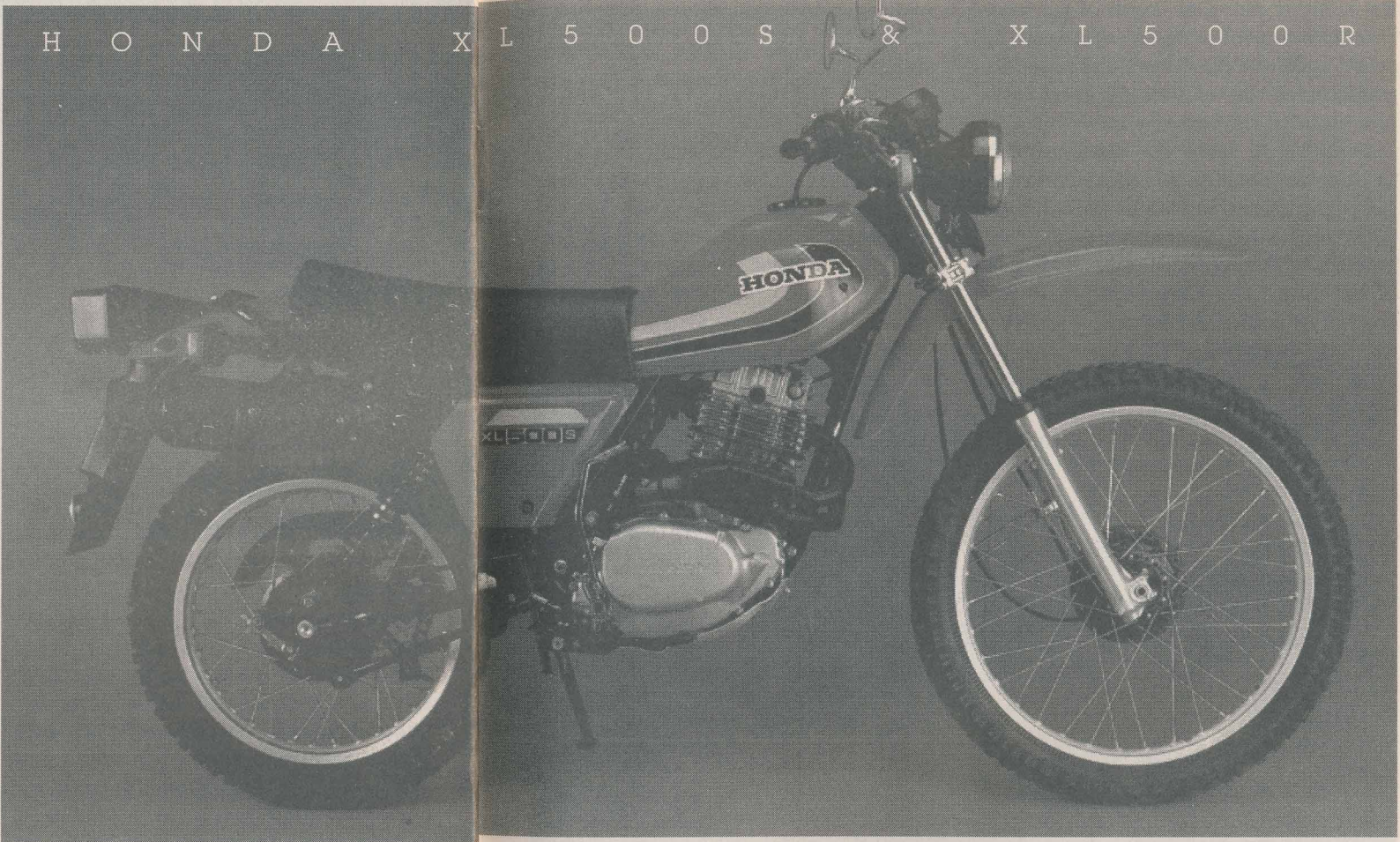
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ONE CARE-LESS OWNER

Last month we left Blez about to do Le Touquet beach race on his Honda XL500S. This is what happened to him, his bike and the subsequent XL500R that followed it

My mad Irish Friend Rod and I arrived at Le Touquet on the Friday before the big event and to our astonishment found a room in a hotel right in the centre of town, although we had to share a double bed! On Saturday Rod went off for a bit of illegal practice while I took my trusty steed down to the town's one and only dealer for some last-minute fettling. Before leaving London I had transformed the health of the XL-S by adjusting the balancer chain, fitting new clutch plates and tightening the engine bolts (half of which had come loose). I'd also changed the engine oil and put some 'Nulon' additive in it to help preserve the much-abused internals. However, I had not actually got around to fitting my new O-ring chain and sprockets or the new Pirelli Laguna-Cross rear tyre, but fortunately the bike shop owner took pity on me and delegated one of his staff to give me a hand, even though the only



thing I'd bought off him was some goggles and a can of Finilec! I would never have got the bike ready in time without his help.

I'd kept the standard 100mph gearing because everyone stressed how fast the three mile thrash down the beach was whereas I should have learnt my lesson from Scheveningen and lowered it for the tricky stuff in the dunes - there was no way that either I or the bike were capable

of doing a ton down the beach, (although the quickest lunatics were clocked at 110!).

In those days the beach race was still officially an enduro and therefore all machines had to be fully road legal, at least on paper. It was an open secret that the majority of the bikes were out-and-out motocrossers with forged paperwork, but for the sake of keeping the French authorities happy everyone had to go through

the motions of showing a log book, driving licence and road insurance and all machines had to be fitted with working lights.

Rod was a bit shocked to discover this since his YZ250 was not road registered whilst I had brilliantly left my totally genuine log book at home. It was clear that forgery was our only option, so I rather cheekily used my press pass to gain access to the press office photocopier down on

ONE CARE-LESS OWNER

the seafront and made copies of the registration document to Rod's Toyota pick-up truck. Then we tipped out all the details, photocopied the photocopy twice over and filled in the relevant information of our respective bikes by hand and hey presto! two registration documents with the right names and numbers on them! Amazingly, this was sufficient to get through scrutineering and some time long after dark the bikes were finally ensconced in the *parc ferme*.

Le Touquet February 1986, and more than 1000 riders try to get through a gap in the dunes about the size of a cat flap. Blez took this photo so needless to say was right at the back. About three minutes later the leaders came through again to lap him and everyone else. Inset: A grinning Blezard a few minutes before the off



There were quite a few Brits taking part that year, including fellow scribes Roger Willis, (at that time editor of Bike magazine), and his notorious columnist and drinking partner Andy 'Animal' Foulkes now in charge of Suzuki's off road press fleet. They introduced me to Graham Noyce, the legendary former world 500cc motocross champion who was still recovering from a near fatal fall from

a balcony which had left him temporarily voice-less and able to talk only in a whisper.

While Rod took to his bed with a mysterious flu-like lurgy and any serious competitors turned in early anyway, I managed to blag my way into the sponsor's pre-race bash in the town centre. I sat down to one of the best meals I have ever eaten, washed down with plenty of top-class gargle while Willis and co were turned away by the discerning door staff.

On race day Rod roused himself from his sick bed while I nursed a hangover and with hearts pounding wildly we set off from the *parc ferme* amidst 1200 riders and total mayhem; getting the kilometre or so through the streets of Le Touquet to the beach without stalling, crashing or suffocating was a major achievement in itself.

As I hit the beach for the first time I

was convinced that both tyres had punctured as the steering went completely haywire. Nope, both still fully inflated - I'd simply forgotten what soft sand was like, (gulp!). I'd barely had time to take a couple of pics with my trusty camera when we were off as about 300 riders 'jumped the gun'.

45-50mph was plenty fast enough for me down the beach on the old XL500S, although even that was sufficient to overtake Willis, who was riding a Yamaha XT350 with caution and a worse hangover than mine. I got to the end of the straight without mishap and found a huge queue of riders waiting to go up the narrow gully into the dunes. It took about 15 minutes to cover the hundred or so yards, so there was ample time to take a few photos - one rider even smoked a cigarette! I gradually made my way back through the six miles of dunes, stopping for a breather whenever I felt tired. I was worried that the clutch might burn

out on the steeper climbs, but the old girl just kept chugging away. If you've never ridden a heavy bike in soft sand with limited ability it's hard to describe how knackered it is, and of course, the more you drop it, the more knackered you get.

I remember catching up with Foulkes having a breather astride his XR600 towards the end of my first lap while he was already on his second or third circuit. The race was halfway through its three hour duration by the time I finally got back to the pits for the first time and

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stopped for a good long break with plenty of food and drink before heading out back into the fray. The section on the beach between the pits and the start was actually one of the toughest of the whole lap - man-made whoops and very soft sand, and I never really got the hang of them at all - I wasn't going fast enough to 'cut a swathe', as it were, which made it much more tiring than if I'd been going twice as fast (as I have since discovered).

My first objective had been to complete just one lap (hundreds of riders failed even to do that) so to finish two in the three hours counted as a bonus. My final position was somewhere in the 800s out of the 1200 starters. Rod completed a

heroic four laps on the YZ, despite having to stop several times to throw up, and Andy Foulkes managed an impressive six or seven. Speaking to him about it recently he commented, 'Yeah, well that was about two years before I had my first heart attack - in fact I reckon it was probably a delayed reaction to doing Le Touquet!'

When the results came out that evening I was astonished to see Willis' name slightly ahead of mine in the final reckoning. The mystery was explained when I discovered that his second lap was actually done by another Brit whose bike had seized at the end of the start straight - (Foulkes too had been credited with an extra lap done by a 'phantom rider').

As you might imagine, the XL-S was sounding a little tired by now, but I don't remember actually doing any maintenance after Le Touquet. I remember riding it around London in deep snow a couple of weeks later, with the same Laguna-Cross tyre still fitted, when even the bravest despatch riders were staying at home.

A variety of test bikes, including a KLR600, enabled the XL to have a bit of a breather for a few weeks but it was called back into service for the Le Mans 24 hour race in April. (just to spectate, you understand). I'd swapped back to the original rear wheel with a trail tyre by now (the knobbly was fitted to my spare XL250 rear wheel) and the old banger never missed a beat in France. I met up with several friends on Laverdas and we had a memorable race on ATC hire bikes at the circuit before thrashing up to Paris together.

In May I went up to Scotland (by train) in connection with my work as a

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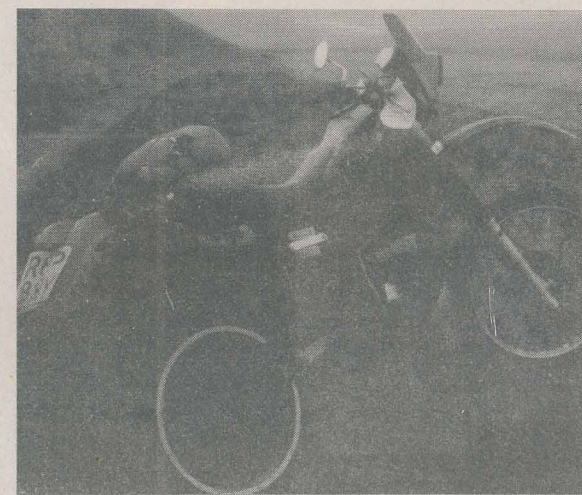
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Above: XL500R was a good looking animal in stock trim. Right: Er... of course in Blezard trim the results were rather less satisfactory. Peeling matt black paint courtesy of the previous owner. Grafted on boggles were all Blez's own work!



trail park consultant but managed to fit in an enjoyable few days riding swapping between an XT600 Tenere and another XL500S. (The Tenere survived a somersault during an abortive and half-baked attempt by me to climb up the side of an old railway embankment.) The Tenere owner, Neil Thomson and I watched a few sections of the Scottish Six Day trial which was in progress at the time and he survived an impromptu leap off the side of a mountain road on the XL500S, following in the tyre

tracks of many of the trials riders who ride like men possessed on the roads between sections. (Would you believe 70mph with 4psi in the rear tyre?).

I rode the XL500 for the cross country

ONE CARE-LESS OWNER

thrash back from Fort William to Pitlochry during which the old XL gave a really good account of itself against the more powerful but higher and heavier XT. Sizewise the XL felt like a 250 by comparison, but it wasn't really any slower.

Riding back to Edinburgh the next day the XT expired with a dead CDi unit and the two of us had to share the XL-S's less than generous seat. Neil is a very big lad and weighed something in excess of 16 stone, and I'm about 14 stone in me riding

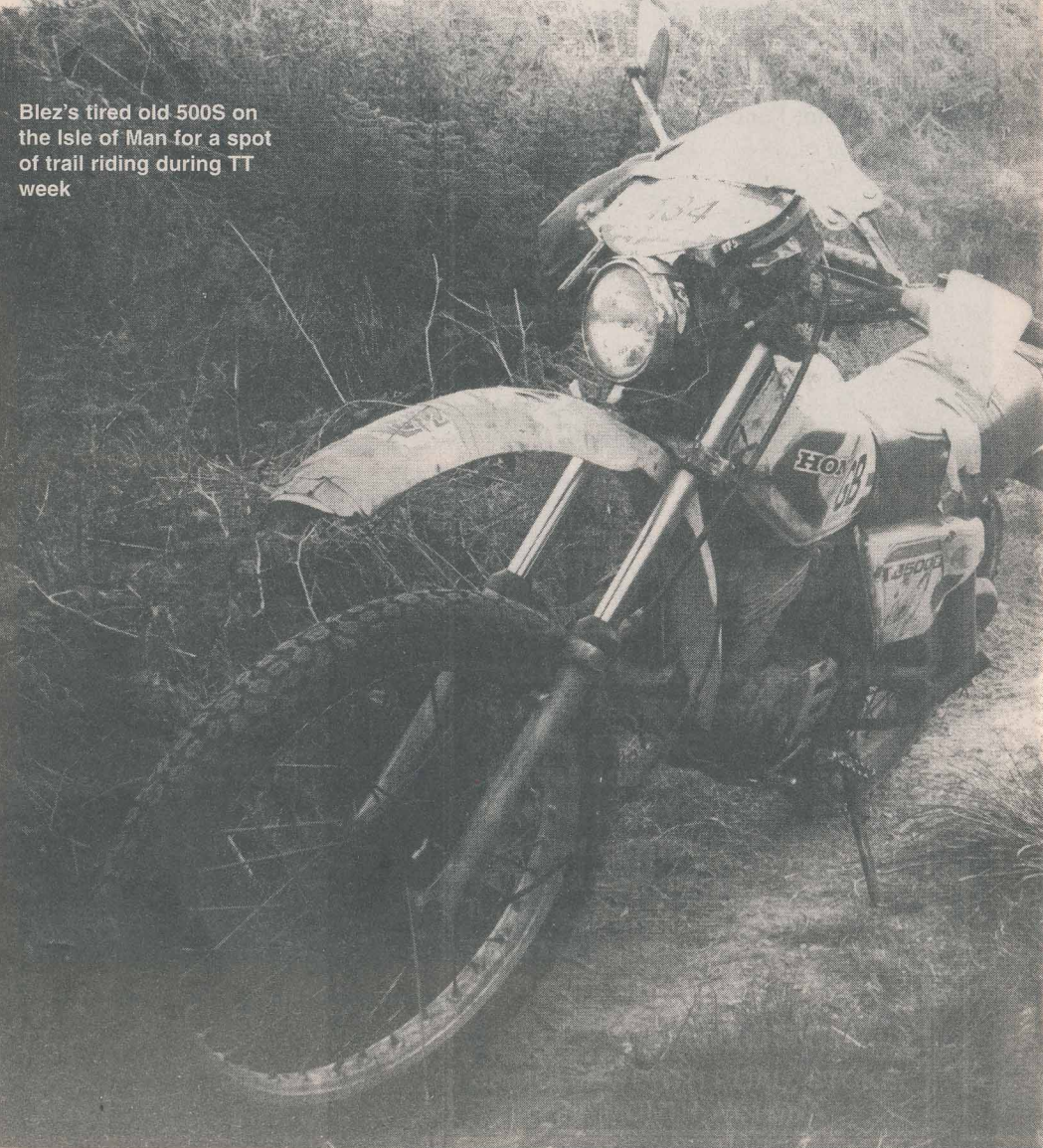
kit, so our all-up weight including the bike and our gear was well over 700lbs - you can imagine the strain on the poor wee beastie's twin shocks - but it got us the 60 odd miles back to our base, a pub in Edinburgh.

For the '86 TT I successfully blagged myself a VF500 test bike, but I lent my XL500 to a deranged Australian by the name of Malcolm Kaub (he was obsessed with the idea of doing the Paris-Dakar rally on a Feet first two wheeler, but that's another story!). Malcolm was late arriving on the Island so I actually took the VF trail riding on one memorable occasion. Crazy Kaub finally turned up on the Thursday of TT week having burnt out one of the XL's valves in Uxbridge (which he got fixed) and lost half the silencer on the M6 and he said it was drinking oil as well, for good measure. I commandeered it off him for a day's trail riding and actually got on much better than I had the previous year, not least because it had a trials tyre rather than a bald Michelin T61 fitted.

The XL-S got Malcolm back to London okay, but it was never quite the same after he'd borrowed it and started to get a bit temperamental. Finally, in November 1986 I had to use it to get to a meeting at a clubhouse in a field near Heathrow Airport and it conked out several times on the way. When the meeting finished it absolutely refused to re-start and I had no option but to leave the bike parked outside the entrance gate, with a U-lock through the forks. Unfortunately I didn't have a van or trailer in those days and before I could get one organised some toerag had it away, lock and all.

I had always hankered after an XL500R - the later Pro-link version of this

four valve big banger - and getting the XL-S nicked meant that I now had an excuse to buy one. Two of my friends already had the later model and their bikes seemed a bit better than the XL-S all around - mono-shock rear suspension, box-section ally swinging arm, meatier forks and half-decent twin-leading shoe front brake with 21 inch wheel as standard. The XL-R also had a couple more horsepower yet actually consumed less fuel. The only minor drawback was a slightly higher seat height but that was a small price to pay for the much improved rear suspension. Anyway, barely three months after my XL500S was stolen I was offered an unusual hybrid for



Blez's tired old 500S on the Isle of Man for a spot of trail riding during TT week

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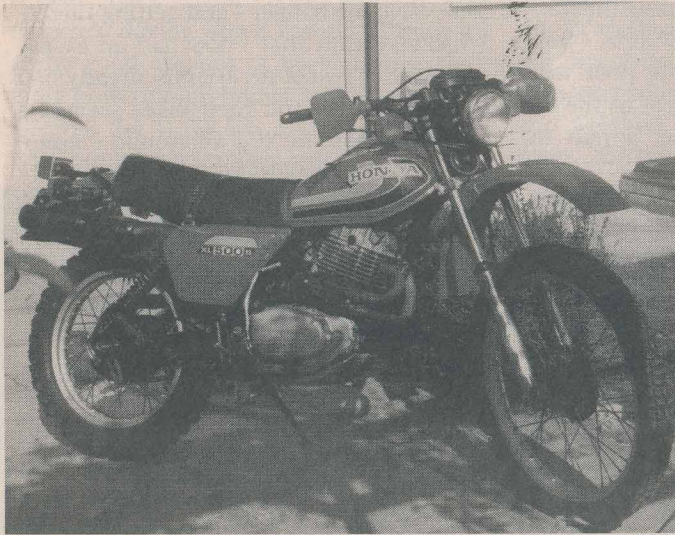
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You can still find good, clean examples of XL500S' even today. This one is in the classifieds section at the back of this month's issue!

which Alan nearly had a nervous breakdown, the problem eventually turned out to be the magnetic pulser thingumijig which sends the signal to

a mere £250 - it had an XL500R engine (distinguishable by the black paint) mounted in the older XL-S twin-shock chassis which I knew so well. It had been subjected to a fair amount of ham-fisted bodgery in the engine department and conked out just after I bought it. But before I'd got around to fixing it, lo and behold, a complete XL500R Pro-link chassis popped up the MCN classifieds for £150, so I snapped it up.

I ended up handing the whole project over to my trail-riding mate Alan Seagrave to sort out, since he owned both a twin shock XL250S (bored out to 300) and one of the aforementioned Pro-link 500s. It was about that time that Alan started getting grey hairs, and I'm sure that fixing my 500 had a lot to do with it. The damn thing gave all the symptoms of being properly timed with a nice fat spark, but when you tried to start it, it just made a few farting noises or back-fired loudly. Anyway, to cut a long story short during

the HT lead to fire the spark had been slipping on the end of the crankshaft. Once Alan had sussed that out, he had it going in no time.

My XL500R was a good all-rounder, but it never seemed as good as the ones that Alan and Rod owned. This was partly because it was a bit of a nail (although it actually went okay) and partly because time had marched on since it first came out and I had been spoilt by my experiences with more modern trail bikes and pukka enduro machines. Nevertheless, I remember one back-roads thrash across the Yorkshire moors chasing a friend who was riding my XL500 while I struggled to keep up on his sportier RS100 BMW.

The end of my affair with XL500R was prompted by a rather unfortunate incident at the Langbaugh motocross track early one evening in the summer of 1991. I had only gone out for a few gentle practice laps, but as I landed from one of the jumps the front wheel stopped dead and

the bike and I came crashing to the ground in a spectacular, jumbled heap. When I'd stopped swearing and the searing pain in my shin had subsided, I worked out what had happened. The front brake cable had snagged on the enduro headlight as the forks compressed on landing and locked the front brake full on, leading to an 'earth-sky-earth-pain' scenario. The headlight was smashed to pieces and the bike looked even more secondhand than it had before.

Fortunately I had been wearing thick leather jeans and motocross boots which I thought had protected me, but when I got home I discovered that the right hand footrest had actually managed to gouge a deep hole just below my knee without actually breaking through the leather jeans. I jogged down to the hospital around the corner from where I lived in Darlington and was promptly put on a stretcher - they thought I'd come in by emergency ambulance!

Anyway, I took that prang as an omen, and when the chance of an XR600 came along a few months later I snapped it up. I Finally ended up selling the XL500 sight unseen for £500 in 1992, though I had actually spent over £750 on it altogether. A genuine bargain guv'nor, never raced or rallied, and of course just one er, careful owner.... ●

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It's Le Touquet again and Blez plans to do the race on the bike that took him there



Tell me, where in the world can you have a day's riding in which you can ride through desert scrubland, over mountain passes, through snow drifts, along green and lush valleys criss-crossing a fast running stream, over 300 foot sand dunes, have a flat out blast on a dried lake bed, and finish the day off by having a beer in a perfectly legal brothel? I know, because I've just come back from there. Nevada.

Okay, so it's not just a short drive in a

Transit van away, but surprisingly it's not as difficult to organise or afford as you may think. Nevada Motorcycle Adventures is a small company operated just outside of Reno by a guy called Matt Ernst. For \$1195 (approx £800) he will supply you, for six days, with an electric start Suzuki DR350 (equipped with MT 21's front and rear, Acerbis large fuel tank and hand guards), fuel, backup truck, overnight accommodation, lunchtime food and drinks, and guide you through some of the 45,000 miles of unmade roads, tracks and breathtaking scenery that are to be found in Nevada.

Words and pictures: Steve Eversfield

Trail riding in Nevada



How do you fancy riding along the course of a dried up river bed? You can in Nevada

Reader's Rides

After a fifteen hour journey to Reno, via San Francisco, Matt was there to meet me and Charlie (my next door neighbour who also fancied the idea) at the airport in

The rattlesnake shook its tail at us menacingly

his rugged and battered looking Chevy pick-up truck. Immediately he took us to one of his favourite bars where, over a few beers, we found out more about what we would be doing during the next week. Our group, which gathered together over the next 24 hours, was to consist of seven others, all Americans, one of whom was female. In skill and experience they ranged from a three times Baja Rally finisher, to a 58 year old pensions manager who had never thrown his leg over a dirt bike until he was 46. Then there was Charlie and me. Charlie had done one Cambrian Rally, I had done all three, broken my collarbone at last year's Hafren Rally, and have an unenviable record of dropping out of most of the enduros I have entered through either equipment failure or being just plain shagged out.

Within ten miles of leaving Reno we were onto the dirt. Matt, as tour guide briefed us on how to get the most distance in without anyone getting lost. At each track junction it was the responsibility of the rider in front to check that the rider behind had acknowledged the change in direction. Matt also arranged for one of the more experienced riders to act as sweep to make sure no one got left behind as buzzard bait.

Pretty soon we were bowling along through beautiful terrain, wild horses eyed us suspiciously from the scrub and a rattlesnake realised pretty sharpish that slithering across a track with 10 sets of tyres coming his way

was not a good move. We all stopped to have a look, safe in the knowledge that our plastic re-enforced boots were a bit too much for even its formidable fangs, as it shook its tail at us menacingly.

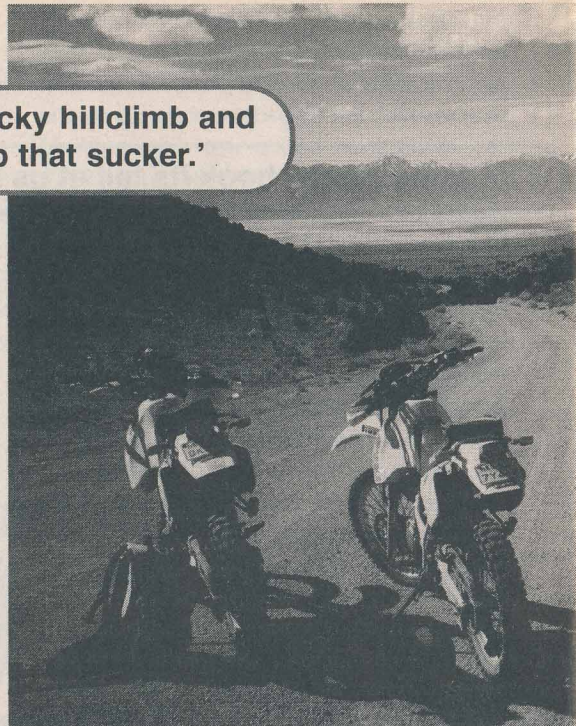
After half a day of fast riding down bumpy trails and scrambling up loose rocky climbs, Charlie and I both arrived in alien territory, sand. With the front wheel acting like someone else was steering it we fumbled our way across a valley floor to find the sanctuary of hard ground, and the opportunity for a breather. Amused at our plight, Matt made the obvious remark, 'you guys haven't ridden sand before have you?' We certainly hadn't. But come the end of the sixth day we were riding 'them dunes like desert veterans'. Get the weight back to lighten the front end, a light touch on the handlebars and gas it for all you're worth.

As part of his standard riding equipment Matt carries a radio-cellular telephone. As well as for emergencies, he uses this to call the support truck to arrange a rendezvous point for lunch. At the appointed place we would find the truck with garden chairs set out alongside it, a cool box full of drinks and the sandwiches that we had ordered earlier in the day. Sitting in the middle of the desert, after a good mornings riding, eating an overstuffed tuna sandwich, with absolutely no one else around made me feel that life could not get much better than this. I forgot about work completely.

During the course of our ride, Matt would stop to point out such things as fos-



sils, petrified wood, geological faults and features, as well as the



Our guide would point to a tricky hillclimb and say 'see if you can ride up that sucker.'

extensive litter of disused gold and silver mines. If you were not interested in such things you could just carry on riding. There was always a tricky hill climb around which Matt would point to and say, 'see if you can ride up that sucker'.

Between six and seven each evening we would head to the nearest town with a motel to stop for the day. Not just any old town, small itty bitty towns in Nowheresville USA where ten

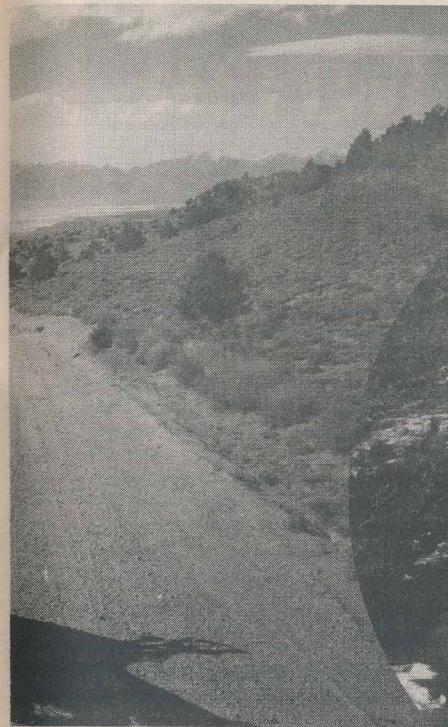
Trail riding in Nevada

Reader's Rides

dust encrusted dirt bikers cruising down main street in pairs looked like the Wild Bunch riding into town. After a shower and a meal we'd all go gratefully to bed, awakening to find Matt and his truck driver repairing any damaged bikes, and oiling and tensioning all the chains, ready for another day's action.

During the course of the six days, in which we all did close on 1000 miles, mainly off road, only one of the bikes had a major fault when it got stuck in first gear. Not that this was a problem, the spare bike was unloaded off the backup truck and we were immediately back to full strength. We had no punctures, a tribute to the durability of MT21s and heavy duty tubes, one bent rim, and three Acerbis rally guards broke during falls.

As you may have gathered by now, I had a hell of a



Below: It's not always hot up in the high country
Left: Trail riding paradise?



good time, and for around £130 a day, it really is not that expensive.

I asked Matt before I left how many rides with him it would take before I'd go on the same route again, '... oh about 15' he said. Hmm, guess I'll be back then.

And if you're wondering about the occupant of that brothel; she was short, had a rather, ahem full chest,

and her name tattooed tastefully on the side of her neck. In the finest tradition of British tabloid journalists, I made my excuses and left. ●

- Tours go out approximately every other week between April and the end of October.
- Full rider equipment (boots armour helmet) is essential.
- You should be at least competent enough to get round a trail bike rally.
- There are no direct flights to Reno, you will have to go via one of the US hub airports. Prices from £350+.
- Further details can be found in the Motorcycle Online Magazine, off road section on the World Wide Web

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the TRAILBIKE GUIDE

We don't claim this to be the definitive guide to all the trailbikes ever made, merely the sum total of our collective knowledge, trawled from the depths of dim and distant memories and assembled in some sort of order that you may find useful. What we do know is that no-one produces a guide to trail bikes that is as comprehensive as this, and that if you think there are revisions we should make, bikes that need adding to the list or merely things we've got wrong please feel free to drop us a line with your suggestions. This month we have again split up the guide to allow more space for features within the magazine. Pages 1&2 this month, other pages to follow.

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 Heribert 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. **Tested TBM No.1; Ridden on BMW off-road training course TBM No.12.**

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. Poxy 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.

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BIKES

Kawasaki KLX650 L-Reg, 18,000 road miles, Supertrapp, Renthals, Datatag, immaculate, oil changed every 2,000 miles, very quick, swap/px Honda XR600R similar age/condition, cash either way. Tel 01268 521129 (Essex)

Yamaha DT125R, G-Reg, restricted, T&T October '96, original bore only 5,400 miles, new chain, sprockets, brake pads, ideal learner and novice trail bike, £1,150 ono. Tel 0181 202 5349 (Eves)

Honda XR650L, Reg 95, 5,500 miles, supertrapp exhaust, K&N air filter, Dynojet kit, Baja plastic fuel tank, very nice bike, £3,600. Tel Ian on 0181 876 8140 (SW London)

Kawasaki KLR650, 1995, M-Reg, dark green, 3,000 miles, still under warranty, Datatagged, £3,195 ono. Phone 03782 282678 (weekends)

Yamaha XT350 1990 G-Reg, white/red, vgc, T&T, 21K, £1,600. Tel 01327 262984/260699 (Northants)

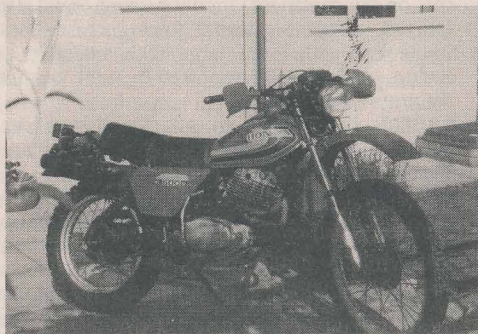


Honda CR250, 91, owned from new, complete with conversion kit, all new from Pro Racing (not yet fitted), must sell due to new bike arriving, £1400 ono. Tel Pete on 01903 740888

Yamaha XT600E 1990, Farnham tuned to 44bhp, 18" front wheel, laser silencer, spare 21" front wheel and exhaust, reliability and XR600 plus performance, T&T, £2,250. Tel 01403 259 805 (Gatwick, Sussex)

KDX125 93 K-Reg, T&T, used for trail bike enduros/trail riding, Stan Stephens tune, pro racing suspension, very quick, DEP, Renthals, etc. Loads of extras/spares, £1,300 ono. Tel 01635 299 572 (Ian)

Honda RS125 1990/91, ready to race, ideal novice bike, some spares, £1500 or



px/swap KMX200, DR/XT 350. Tel 01322 386080 (Dartford)

Kawasaki KLR250 11,000 certified miles, superb condition, T&T, much money spent this year, little use since, £1,100 ono. Tel 01984 640 195 (Eves/weekends)

Honda XL500S T-Reg, 18,000 miles, new exhaust, rear tyre, chain and sprockets, excellent condition, 90% original, £950. Tel 01425 655 979 (Hants)

Yamaha DT125 Enduro, spare engine, radiator, etc, repainted frame and tank, re-bushed suspension, Haynes log book,

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runs well £220 ono. Tel 01905 820 636 (Worcs)

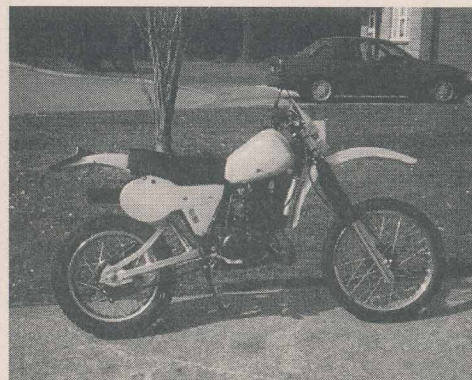
Honda XR250RP 3,500 Km, only used for trail riding, excellent condition, £2,650. Tel 0191 416 6833 (Days) 0191 519 0003 (Eves)

Suzuki DR800 H-Reg, '91, Low mileage, red, vgc, never off roaded, £1,800. Tel 01509 269538

Honda XL600R 1984, 25K, 3 owners, full MOT, full Micron system, Renthals etc, many new parts recently fitted, all receipts, excellent starter and runner, mint condition all round, first to see will buy, no time wasters, £1,495 ono. Tel 0121 6280966

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Hybrid Yam SR500 motor very neatly housed in Husky WR400 Chassis, 1989 white power forks, rear disc oil in frame, very near completion, unregistered, reluctant sale, £795. Tel 01942 866969



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DR250 1988-92 from £1800-2200

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DT200 F-reg £1700

TTR250 1993-95 from £2950-3400

Serow 225 kick start model from £1450

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Serow 225W e/start, disc brakes from £2350

Kawazaki

KDX200SR 1989-93 from £1800-2100

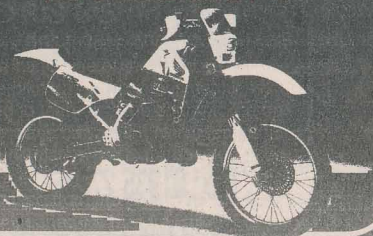
KDX250SR 1989-93 from £1850-2400

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Fully Sorted DT125R, fully uprated front and rear suspension, O ring chain, powder coated frame, Acerbis handguards, new plastics, new wheel bearings, clutch and top end, full DEP exhaust system, alloy rims, MX tyres, Renthals etc, the business, £1500. Tel 01756 752169 (Bob N Yorks)

Harley Davidson SSX250 Street Scrambler, 1978, low mileage, unused for several years, repainted, long travel forks, trials tyres (21", 18"), fully serviced, new battery, £1,400, also many spares. Tel 01268 710946

Honda Africa Twin, 1993 model, black/silver/white mint cond, many extras, centre stand, crash bars, 25K, £4,800 ono. Tel Angel on 0181 889 9436

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Kawasaki KLX250R enduro, Feb 94, L-Reg, T&T till March 97, new tyres, excellent cond, £2,200. Tel 01420 562348 (Alton, Hants)

SPARES

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Answer Moto X jeans and top, worn 3 times only, top - large, jeans 34, cost £100 sell £50, DBR Grand Prix special (issues 4-9) as new £2 each, £10 the lot. Tel 0191 4222324

Helmet, FM Thunder, fibreglass, size 62, white/red/blue, worn 4 times, as new cond, with spare peak and Oakley goggles, cost £95, sell for £45. Tel 01978 860728 (LLangollen)

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WANTED

Wanted for XR200R a piston SH or new STD or OS and any other useful parts also levers for 1919 Scott Watson. Tel 01209 213386

Wanted big tank for KTM600LC4 1990 Tel 0181 202 5349 (Eves)

Wanted spares for Yamaha DTR50MX

79/80 , mainly seat airbox coils but might be willing to sell whole bike or p/x on running MX or Enduro Tel 01373 474043
XR250 Twin carb. top end spares, WHY (RFVC) rockers, head cams, also RH side panel 88 XR250R. Single carb, top end spares considered. Tel 01484 843710 (Liam, Huddersfield)

Wanted Suzuki DR350 must be 1993 onwards and vgc, would consider Enduro model, cash waiting around £2,500, also large (Acerbis) tank, Renthals & brush guards to fit above. Tel 01179 784954

Wanted Supertrapp or similar silencer and manual (can photocopy and return) for 1990 XR250, also size 9 boots, preferably south east area. Tel 01322 614795

(Kent, Answerphone available anytime)
Wanted Workshop manual for XT225 Serow (E-Reg) or any help. Tel (eves) 0181 884 4517

Wanted Luggage racks for either XT250, DT250MX, or XT550. Tel 01904 490764 (York)



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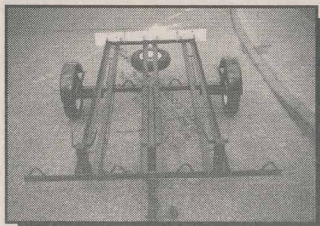
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TRAIL TALES...

PAUL BLEZARD RECOUNTS A SPOOKY GHOST STORY

The worst thing about MCC long distance trials, as any veteran will tell you, is the ride home after a night and a day in the saddle. In 1983 I'd entered my first Land's End Trial completely alone and had neither friend nor spouse to meet me at the end. All I had was the address of an obscure farmhouse in Devon, (of which more later).

The start of the trial was so disastrous that I nearly had to abort the mission before I even got to the first time check. At my first petrol stop I'd managed to slice open the index finger of my right hand while fiddling with the handlebar muff with a knife (don't ask me what I was trying to do, I can't even remember). Fortunately the petrol station attendant produced a first aid kit and bandaged up the copiously bleeding digit, although my glove no longer fitted over it.

Things went much better after this rather inauspicious beginning and while I was in no danger of winning an award I got up all the sections one way or another and apart from the need to take one of my customary roadside kips at 5am, had a most enjoyable ride on my trusty Honda XR500. I felt tired but satisfied by the time the trial ended at Cornwall's westernmost cape on

Easter Saturday afternoon. However, on that weekend in 1983 the weather took a severe turn for the worse. The barometer dropped as an icy blast swept in from Siberia.

Typically, I had been faffing around not paying much attention to the clock but as the temperature continued to plummet and nightfall approached, the idea of riding all the way back to London became increasingly unattractive. The adrenaline charge from doing the event had long since worn off and my wounded finger was now throbbing like a big bass drum.

My only hope of salvation lay in finding the obscure farmhouse mentioned at the beginning where some mates of mine from university were having a weekend away with their girlfriends. Being a gregarious sort of chap I had thought it would be fun to pay them a surprise visit on the way back to London so had managed to obtain their whereabouts from the mother of one of their girlfriends, who had wisely ensured that she knew where her darling daughter was staying.... But she didn't have the phone number. In fact, thinking about it, there wasn't even a phone! It's important for this story to understand that none of the friends in question, or their girlfriends, had the faintest idea that I even knew where they were staying, let alone that I might drop in on them.

The place in question was an old farm worker's building with an address that was something like 'Kit's Cottage, Futtock's

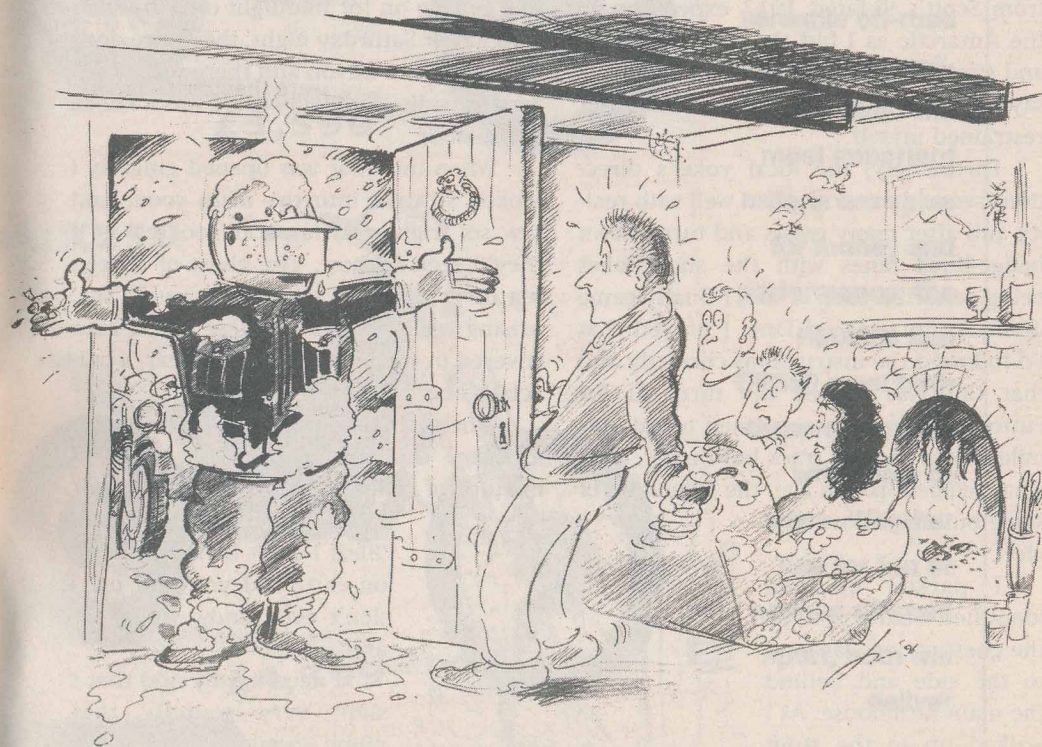
Farm, near Wurzleton, North Devon'. Anyway, by the time the first snow started to fall it had long since become clear to me that far from being an optional stop on the way home, it was essential to find my way to Futtock's Farm if I was going to avoid freezing to death that night.

On the last few miles to Wurzleton the snow was falling in earnest. My headlight, which was crap even in favourable conditions, now did no more than light up the snowflakes as they filled the sky like tracer bullets on a WWII bomber raid. There was a distinct paucity of cars to follow too - I suddenly seemed to be the only vehicle on the road, the snow was settling firmly on the ground and my cruising speed on

the winding, unlit, ill-painted back roads of Devon was soon reduced to that of a biddy on a bicycle.

By the time I stopped at the first pub in Wurzleton it was about half past ten at night and the true obscurity of the farm I was seeking became clear when I discovered that none of the locals ensconced inside had even heard of the place. They suggested that I try the other pub in the village. When I enquired at Pub number two, with my glasses freshly steamed up, the mention of Futtock's Farm seemed to raise a glimmer of recognition in the eye of a gentleman at the bar. He called another local over: 'Ere Bill' he said with an accent so thick you could've cut it with

**ONE OF THEM
HAD BEEN
TELLING THE
SPOOKY TALE
OF A LOCAL
DEEP SEA DIVER
WHO WAS SAID
TO HAUNT THE
AREA....
SUDDENLY THERE
WAS A KNOCK
AT THE DOOR**



TRAIL TALES...

a knife, 'You'm know where Futtock's Farm be wouldn't you?'

'Oo ah', said Bill, (or words to that effect) as he peered with a distant look over the top of his pint of scrumpy, 'Futtock's Farm, that's a tricky one - that be a hard place to find, that be', but he went on to give me detailed directions. (Naturally I didn't have a map). I've always prided myself on my navigation and sense of direction and with the added incentive of terminal hypothermia if I got lost, I carefully committed his directions to memory.

By now it was nearly 11pm on this Easter Saturday, I'd been up for more than 40 hours and my destination was still several miles away. I felt like Captain Oates from Scott's ill-fated 1912 expedition to the Antarctic as I bid the locals goodbye and strode out into the blizzard. I felt like saying 'I may be quite some time', but restrained myself.

Fortunately, the local yokel's directions seemed to correspond well with reality and after many twists and turns down hedge-lined lanes with the snow-flakes being reflected back at me, I finally came upon an untarmaced lane. I prayed that I'd followed the instructions correctly and that this was indeed the turn off for Futtock's Farm. I then seemed to ride for miles down the dirt track but finally, after what seemed like an age, the silhouette of some buildings hove into view.

I parked up and identified what had to be the guest cottage, around to the side and behind the main farmhouse. As I walked up to the stout wooden door I wondered



TrailBike -74- Magazine

what sort of reception I would get from my mates and their companions.....

Meanwhile, inside the old stone cottage, (as I subsequently discovered) my university chums had been having a jolly evening together and were as snug as bugs in rugs in front of the open fire. They'd enjoyed a good meal washed down with plenty of alcohol and had been amusing themselves by telling each other spooky stories with post-prandial booze-fuelled bonhomie. By a strange coincidence, just prior to my arrival, one of them had been telling the tale of a local deep sea diver who had disappeared while on a top secret mission in mysterious circumstances and who was rumoured to haunt the scene of his demise.

They had not heard the gentle put-putting of the XR coming up the lane, it was getting on for midnight on a freezing cold Easter Saturday night, they were deep in the heart of Devon and there was a blizzard outside... Suddenly there was a knock at the door.

When the door was opened gingerly I looked straight into the main room and saw six frightened faces all looking as if they'd seen a ghost. The ghost of a deep sea diver in fact. I suppose it wasn't surprising really - after all, here was a man covered in snow wearing bulky gear, a balaclava and a full-face helmet.

When I finally took off my helmet with a cheery 'God am I glad to see you lot' a mixture of relief and disbelief filled their faces. My friend Iain said, 'Blez! I can't believe it! How on earth did you find us? I don't even know where we are!'

I need hardly add that I slept very soundly that night, though I don't think many of my friends did...

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