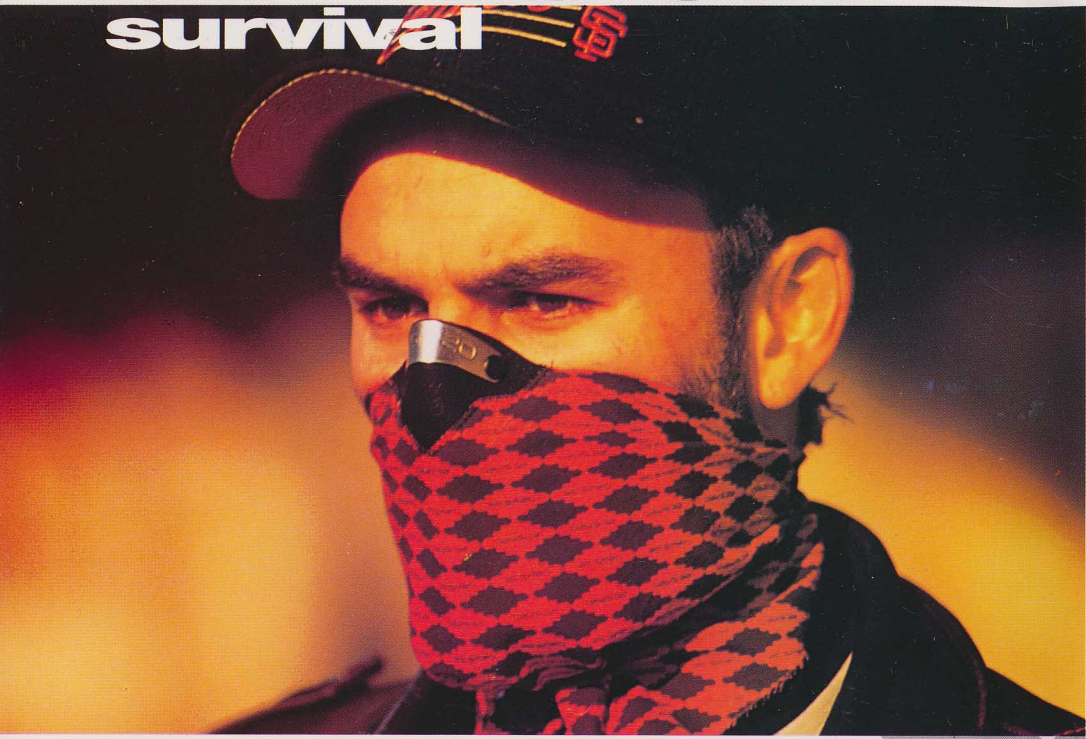


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TRAIL BIKE

M A G A Z I N E

November 1996
issue 16

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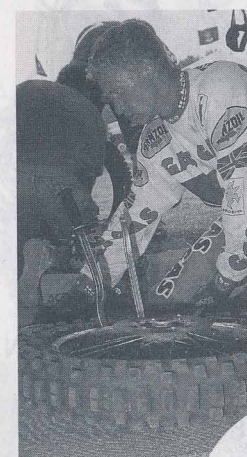
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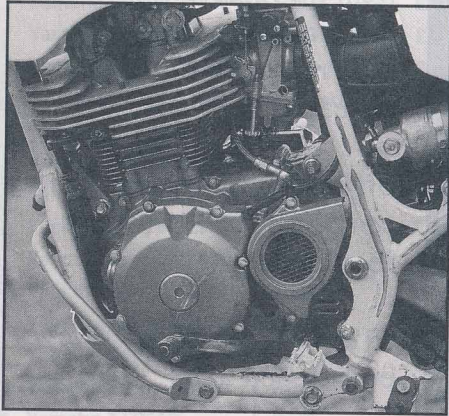


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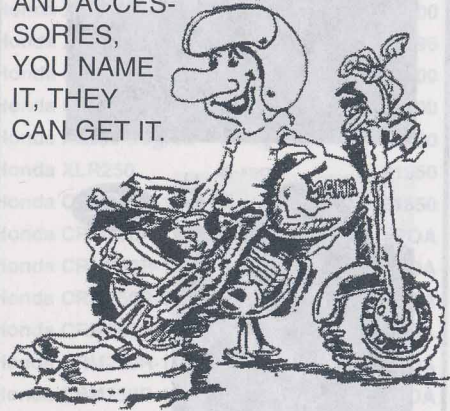
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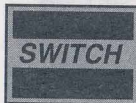
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You may or may not have already noticed that there's a slight change in feel to this month's issue of TrailBike Magazine - the pages are slightly whiter, the photographs a little clearer (or at least they will be over the coming few months), and the magazine feels a bit heavier. That's because we've improved the paper quality to try and give you a better magazine. As part of the ongoing improvements we've also provided a questionnaire in this issue, and ask that you take a few minutes to answer the questions then return the form (or a photocopy) to us. We want to know what you like about TBM and more importantly what you want to see changed, so that we can keep on improving the magazine.

• KTM are acting like a spoilt child by threatening to pull their works team out of the 97 Dakar (see news pages). They're upset that despite an overwhelming entry on their machines last year, they still haven't been able to clinch victory in the most important off road race of all. Many individuals and company's face similar challenges in daily life: to be the best you've got to beat the best, not simply change the rules so it suits you. If KTM can't win with a single cylinder machine (and I personally believe it's only a matter of time before they do), then they should build a twin - if that's what it takes. A few years ago there was a twin cylinder KTM engine doing the rounds at a number of European road races. They have the technology to win, the desire to do so, and in Heinz Kinigadner a rider capable of doing it. All they need is the perseverance and belief in themselves.

And on the subject of KTM, a replica of their Rallye bike for the road market is, I feel, long overdue. Big trailie owners I'm sure would go for a Desert rep with a big tank and taller screen - and if it were a twin, even better. After all, bikes like the Super Tenere, Cagiva Elefant and Africa Twin have been popular (in Europe) for the past decade. A modern KTM version would not only be popular, but firmly focus opinion on their transition from manufacturer of pure off-roaders to dual sport bikes.

• Congratulation to Paul Edmondson at winning the World Enduro Championship. He's easily our most successful enduro rider ever, and a nice guy to boot. Even if you never compete in enduros yourself, you'll know from off-roading what a challenge it can be - now imagine beating the best riders in the world at it. Wonder if he'll get a mention on Sports Personality of the Year? Not. Si Melber

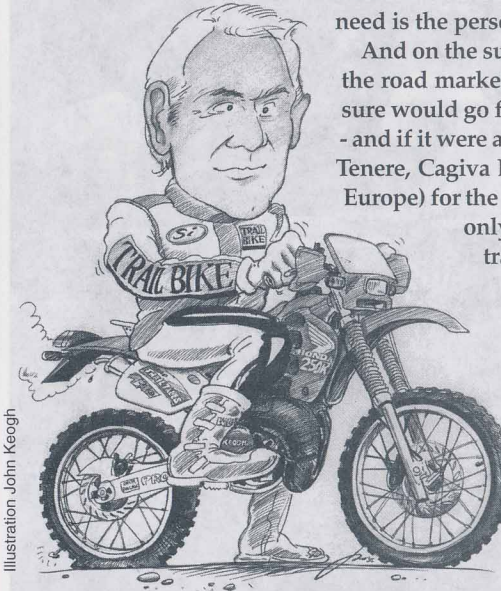


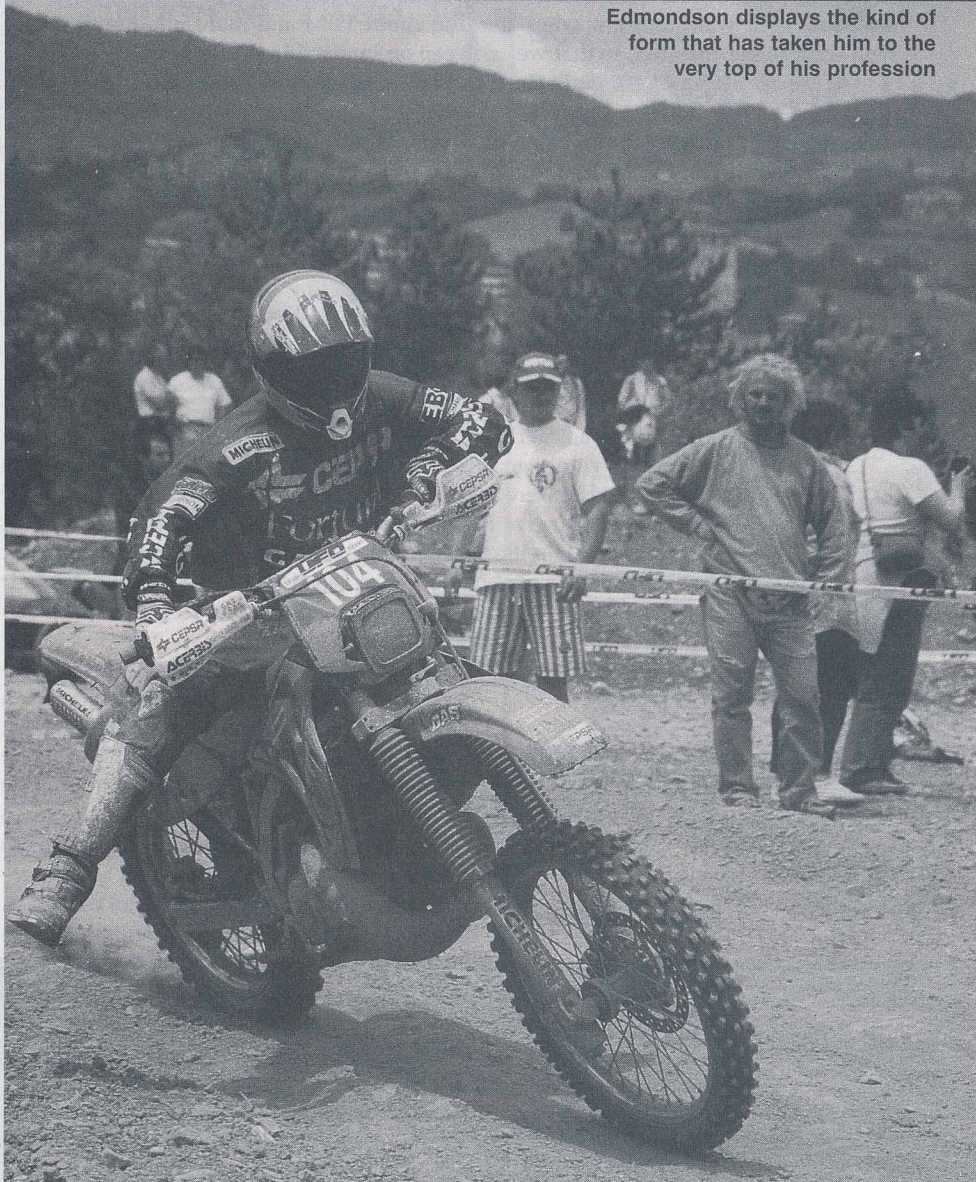
Illustration John Keogh

Edited and produced by Si Melber. Contributors: Paul Blezard, Dave Cornish, John Keogh, Geoff Meyer. Editorial address: PO Box 9845, London W13 9WP. Tel (office hours only) 0181 840 4760. Distributed by SM Magazine Distribution Ltd, 0181 696 5200, Printed in England by YCG.

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BATTLING BRITISH BULLDOG BEATS BIKING'S BEST

Edmondson displays the kind of form that has taken him to the very top of his profession



Eddy notches up third world title

Battling Brit Paul Edmondson finally clinched the World Enduro Championship in the blue riband 250cc class at his second attempt. The championship which went right to the final round in Germany was a three way tussle between Paul Edmondson (Gas Gas), defending champion Giovanni Sala (KTM) and new boy Shane Watts (KTM), and finally finished in that order, with British privateer Rob Sartin in a brilliant fifth place.

Edmondson went to the final round with a lead of eight points after a consistent season of top placings and was 'delighted' with his latest crown saying afterwards: 'I am really pleased for myself and Gas Gas, we've won the World Championship on a new machine which is still to be fully developed.'

After the disappointment of finishing second to Sala at the ISDE recently, Edmondson has proved who's boss in the best way possible, and is now concentrating on the British Championship which he leads ahead of Sartin.

TRF TREASURER FOUND DEAD

Tim Ley, treasurer of the Trail Riders Fellowship has been found dead just a few days after police were called in to investigate the disappearance of nearly £30,000 of TRF funds. He's believed to have committed suicide.

KTM THREATENS DAKAR PULL-OUT

Austrian dirt bike manufacturer KTM has threatened to pull its works machines out of this year's Dakar Rally if the rules aren't changed to suit its single cylinder bikes. KTM who

have won virtually every world rally but never the Dakar, wants to see an end to the domination of the marathon African event by the twin cylinder bikes.

In a move that's bound to be seen by many as unsporting, KTM are trying to exert pressure on rally organiser Hubert Auriol by withdrawing their factory-backed bikes, and instead concentrate on the production class - diminishing the glamour of the event. A statement from the factory declared that: 'KTM is very impressed by the positive changes which have been made by Hubert Auriol in the car section... The same changes in the motorcycle section would be very much appreciated.' **Comment P3.**

Kini Better

Heinz Kinigadner, KTM's Dakar rider is making a good recovery after being badly injured during the recent Australian Safari Rally. The Austrian Ace crashed after riding into a dust cloud following a slower car, breaking among other things his pubic bone - ouch! Kini who vowed never again to ride in a rally where the bikes start after the cars aims to be fit in time for the 97 Dakar.

Test-Match (less

A company in Essex is offering trail riding lessons for riders who want to learn off roading skills in a controlled environment. Matchless rider training who also teach learners how to pass their bike test, are offering a three level course in trail riding. Riders can choose from the *Easy Trail*, *Clubman* or *Trail Master* courses and training costs £100 per day which includes the use of a bike. For more details contact Matchless on 01708 437999.

Raid Dates

John Deacon has lengthened and improved his raid weekend by the addition of new trails, an extra day and even better accommodation. The new raid now costs £199 and runs from the Friday night to the Sunday. Included in the price is a floodlit clay pigeon shoot on the Friday evening. Bikes and equipment can also be hired. Details on 01752 606888.

Honda 180

Honda are thought to be close to launching an all new enduro bike for the clubman rider. It's not certain whether the new machine which is expected to be a 180cc, will replace their current enduro mount, the CRE, which is available in Europe but not imported into the UK.

Dear Trail

Bike...

Young at Heart

Dear TBM

What is it about you guys?

Similar to your correspondent Kevin Needham (Oct issue) I was happily trundling along on the way to retirement quietly saving my pennies when I sensibly bought a Suzuki GN125 last May to go to and from work. Then I discovered your magazine and in a rush of blood to the head exchanged the 125 for an F650 as soon as I passed my test. Solid and sensible it might be (your description), but it and your superb publication should carry a health

warning. I soon discovered that for now I'd taken a step too far! Besides I'd get it dirty off road, so I got myself a KMX200 and enjoyed some dirty local green lanes.

For a whole year and more now I couldn't wait till the first of the month to get my TBM fix, in fact in my haste, I have three times so far this year bought TBM twice in the same month.

So in self defence I have taken out a subscription and if I don't win the Yamaha Off Road School prize I'll just have to pay for one. So be fair, mark my envelope prize-winner or something, and send

me TBM each month for a year.

Thanks you guys, you've taken me back 40 years - even the acne is coming back though the birds are in less danger this time around!

John Fitzpatrick
Osterley

Cheers for the compliments John. TBM might make you feel younger, but putting it together every month has put years on me!

Beginners Luck

Dear Si

I have just begun trail riding and have got into it by reading your magazine. My dad has also taken up the sport and bought us both a bike. I have already got used to my bike (DT125LC), but don't know how to use it on lanes and in the woods. Most of my friends have got motocrossers and have loads of experience, and they leave me

behind. I was wondering if you could do an article on how to tackle corners, climbs and mud etc.

Good work on the magazine, but I wish it came out more often.

J Boil
Fife

Fortunately for you, this month we begin a series of articles on off road riding for beginners. These should help guide you through the basics of off roading, whilst for more experienced riders we will shortly be starting a series of advanced riding tips to help improve your technique

On the Rack

Dear Cy(?)

Nice to talk to you today, I must say it is pleasant to be able to talk to a person who 'is' the magazine instead of being passed around departments. The Jialing JH125L Chinese

Got an opinion?

Then write to:

TrailBike Magazine

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copy of the Honda XL125 would I think be a good subject for a 'TrailBike' test. Ever since the DR125 disappeared there is no cheap, economical, go-anywhere 4-stroke machine on the market for people who hate the noise and pollution of two strokes. I am sure the XT225 Serow is an ideal answer, but not everyone would want to spend that much money on a bike.

Not many people know that you can get the Jialing either with a rack or - wait for it - a single seat and a bigger rack with a removable pillion pad. The Japs couldn't care less about that kind of thing, but if you're going camping it's useful and I think worth writing about. What do you think?

Mike Goodger
Solihull

Would you really consider going camping on something as small as a 125cc four stroke? Loaded up it's going to struggle to even reach the speed limit. I reckon you're much better off with a bike like the Serow if you want to go touring, a secondhand one shouldn't be all that expensive and even fully loaded it should be able to cruise at a comfortable 65mph without caning it. I reckon you're right about racks though, there's more to trailbikes than just suspension and engines. We haven't forgotten about the Jialing - there will undoubtedly be a test soon

Riding Tips: See P14 for the full story



Dear Trail Bike...

DNF or PNF?

Dear TBM

First of all thanks for a great magazine, I look forward to the first of each month with great anticipation!!!

After an absence from motorcycling of ten years, in September of last year I purchased an ageing Kawasaki KE175 having previously owned various road and trail bikes, another KE being amongst them. What appeals to me about the KE is its lightweight, frugality, simplicity and durability. The bike has served me very

well over the last year and I have had hours of fun on the green lanes of Hampshire and West Sussex (thanks for the article on SE Hants in issue 10). In fact my only complaints regarding the KE are its outdated looks, comfort on the road and lack of power - however for only £500 perhaps I'm being a little harsh.

Now that I am once again hooked on off-roading I think I can warrant investment in a better machine. Bearing in mind that I am an 11 stone weakling and only 5ft 8in my choice of machine is very important as regards weight and seat height. I also need a bike that is comfortable on the road since in my search



for different lanes I now find myself traveling further afield. I am also contemplating a camping trip to Europe next summer so carrying capacity is important.

I have been considering a KMX200 as I like the idea of double the power of the KE with about the same weight. Or possibly a KLR/KLX250 or an XT350 for suitability on the road.

Could you please offer your thoughts on the above bikes, my main concerns with the 4-strokes are their extra weight. Also what tyres would you recommend for trail/road use, are enduro tyres road legal?

Despite the popularity that your magazine attributes to trail riding, since starting green laning again last September and usually spending either every Saturday or Sunday riding lanes, I have yet to come across any other green laner pursuing his or her chosen past-time.

In fact the only other of road vehicle I have come across has been a Land-Rover.

When I started riding again I joined the TRF, however to date I have not attended any meetings. Part of the reason for this is the dull monthly newsletter they produce which leads me to believe (perhaps naively) that they are just as dull. Maybe I am cutting my nose off to

spite my face?

Anyway, not wanting to remain a PNF (Professional No Friends), this leads me to my next question. I would appreciate if you could print my letter and telephone number with an invitation to fellow trailbike owners to join me in organising days out in the West Sussex, Hampshire and Surrey areas. Machines and owners of any age and ability are welcome, I would add that I am very much a novice and as such am more concerned with survival rather than speed at any cost!

Last but not least, keep up the good work.

Simon Gilbert
Bognor Regis
(01243 864717)

The KE175 was a good bike in its day (Kawasaki claimed 16hp @ 7000rpm and 105kg), and is probably still fun to ride but things have certainly moved on a bit since then. The KMX200 (claimed 30hp @ 8500rpm and 100kg) is more modern than the old KE, but any of the bikes you mentioned would make a suitable mount. Undoubtedly

the four strokes are a little heavier and put out less power than their two stroke equivalents, but they're generally more reliable and economical. You could also consider bikes like the DR350, or XT225 Serow (four strokes), or machines like the CRM250R, TS200R or KDX200SR (two strokes). In our opinion the best dual purpose tyres for trail and road use (especially if there's a lot of off roading involved) are Pirelli MT21s. Enduro tyres are certainly road legal, but they tend to wear out a bit too quickly and don't offer that much grip on the road

Down to Earth

Dear TrailBike 'assemblage'

Thanks for supplying an excellent, informative mag. I enjoy the 'down to earth' attitude and the resistance to a commercially pressured format and articles.

Whilst some measure of commercial orientation is understandable, it is sad to see most bike journos following the herd - decked out in all the latest dayglo

apparel, and squirting shiny, new mega-capacity machinery across nearly every glossy page!

Soap box aside, how about an article similar to the one you did on the IT175 in the October issue (good, useful info for all us financially challenged offroaders riding older generation tackle), but this time on the Suzuki TS185ER. There are still quite a few of these bikes around (including my own) though they never get reported on in the bike press these days. Please could you help out? It would be much appreciated by myself and all the other TS owners out there.

Keep on the right track.

Gary Foster
Bradford

Thanks for the compliment Gary. Sadly Dave Crasher Cornish tends to get 'down to earth' rather more frequently than most. As you can see, we do try and test older bikes as well as newer stuff, but it all depends on what's available to us. Hopefully we'll get the chance to try a good condition TS/ER in the not too distant future

What's On in October

4-6 Bracken Rally. Treasure hunt type rally in Wales organised by ex Dakar rider Jon Watson-Miller. Far more sociable than competitive, the rallyists have to devise their own route to a number of checkpoints. Costs approx £115 inc accommodation and meals, but entry is by invitation only so you need to ring Jon on 0171 231 9438 and talk to him nicely. Not a spectator event.

6 Bwlchilian Enduro. A good clubman level event using terrain that was part of the Welsh Two Day Enduro test, around a ten mile lap open to adult enduro and moto-X riders. It's also a fund-raiser for the Welsh ISDE team. Signposted off Beulah - Newbridge on Wye road. Start 10am, plenty of spectator points.

6 Saintoft Enduro. A round of the British Sidecar Championship and all the usual solo classes. A good forest for enduros, and as it is a sidecar course, should be nice and rideable for everyone. At Langdale Forest near Scarborough. Details, 01904 693312.

6 Surrey Police Three Stage Trial. Sort of a trail, trial and enduro event all rolled into one, police organised, but open to members of the public, competitive but not too tough. Contact Dick Coles on 01883 743181.

12-13 Beacons Enduro. Last round of the British Enduro Championship. A toughish 40 mile lap with a moto-X and cross country test, two tight checks and some nice technical bits. Plenty to occupy both rider and spectator. For the more able/mature rider. 11am Sat &

9am Sunday, start Llandoverly Rugby Club, Llandoverly, mid Wales.

12-13 Weston Beach Race. Fast, furious and funny this traditional beach bashing takes place on the dunes at Weston-Super-Mare. Open to any type of off-roader, but MX and enduro bikes most common. Lots of sweaty fun with plenty of crowd support. Good spectating.

20 Exmoor Clouds Trial. Long distance trial (for trail bikes) on picturesque Exmoor. Need a roadbook holder and plenty of balance, otherwise just like green-laning. Not that good for spectators. Contact Richard Dawe, 0181 332 7035.

25-27 Plymouth Raid. Road-book led trails. For spectators. 01752 606888.

Nov 1-3 Normandie Raid. French trails. 00331 4209 9773.

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Visa

Newly crowned World and International Enduro Champion Paul Edmondson writes for TrailBike Magazine

WELL I'VE DONE IT! Finally I've got that 250 crown after all the hard work put in by me and the team. I can tell you that it's still sinking in and I can hardly believe, I'm so chuffed. For me this has to be the best title ever, as I'm now the 250 and overall enduro champion.

But before all that happened there was the ISDE in Finland where I was competing with the rest of the British team. The ISDE is the biggest team competition in the whole year as we have to field a team of six riders. This year I felt that we would have a good chance to show the other teams that we do have good riders in England. Why? Well, I felt that the team was one of the best for a few years, but unfortunately things didn't go to plan. Our run of bad luck in this event continued this year and we finished a disappointing 13th overall. So for the poor team I guess we'll just have to wait for next year.

Anyway less of that, now onto the biggy... the final round of the World Champs in Burg in Germany. This was the one that had kept us waiting since June. I decided to treat this one the same as all the other races in terms of preparation and riding - I reckoned this was the best way to go about the job in hand and try and not think about win-



ning. So onto the race and when the 'Gasser' fired up first kick on Saturday morning, so began the start of the longest two days of my life, I can tell you. Having to ride safe - not to slow yet fast enough - is one big pain in the a**, but of course it's all part of the job.

Well the race was quite easy with two sandy MX tests per lap. After a steady first test I continued

putting it together well and with no crashes, ended the first day in third place just behind Sala. So going into the final day, a seventh place was all that was required to take home the crown. But early on in the second day the bike started to lose a bit of water - not much at first, then more and more. Panic. I didn't dare think about it. Fortunately my team were never more than a couple of minutes away and they made some running repairs. I finally exited the very last test completely ecstatic and punching the air. It was over, the bike had held up and we'd done the business. When I finally arrived at the finish and was greeted by everyone I can honestly say that this was THE BEST MOMENT OF MY LIFE.

Paul

One of the biggest problems faced by riders wanting to learn to ride off road is the psychological one. Their reasoning goes something like this: surfaces such as dirt, gravel, mud or wet leaves are slippery under

Off-road Riding Techniques

S i m e l b e r

foot right? If they're slippery underfoot then it goes without saying that they are slippery underwheel - so I might fall off. If I fall off I could hurt myself and I don't want to fall off at speed, so I'll go slowly and hopefully won't hurt myself as much.

Nice logic. But it doesn't actually work like that. For a start, many off road surfaces have an extraordinary amount of grip, especially when tackled with a good off road tyre. Secondly motorcycles with only two points of contact are inherently unstable at rest. In other words the slower you travel the less stability generated by the bike. I'm not suggesting that you should travel everywhere at warp speed, but

It's amazing how many off road novices run into each other because they're too busy looking down at the ground

that a certain amount of speed can help in tricky situations - try to remember that.

Also remember that falling off on the dirt is not like coming off on the road. Earth is far more forgiving than tarmac and the chances are you'll do yourself no more harm than ache all over from laughing so much. If you've come from a road bike background where all your experience has taught you that once your wheels are skidding then things are looking bleak, it takes a giant leap of faith to get straight on a dirt bike and experience a lack of control over what the wheels are up to. Take it from me this is normal. Once you've experienced your bike moving around underneath you, you'll quickly get used to the experience and in time - I promise you - even come to enjoy it. What will make it feel so much easier are if you concentrate on doing two things:

Firstly, stand up on the pegs as much as possible. The seat is only really there to rest on once you've come to a halt or when you're back on the road. I know it

seems like it's further to fall when you're stood up, but the truth is you're actually far less likely to come off when standing up, and it's easier to recover from a tricky situation. If you're standing up and the bike gets deflected by something like a rock or a tree stump you'll have more time to react and absorb the deflection in your arms and legs. If you're sitting down you'll just end up going where the bike goes.

Secondly, don't look down - look ahead. Depending on how fast you're going and what sort of terrain you're covering you should be looking some five, ten, 15 or even more metres in front of you. Its amazing how much of a stabilizing effect this has, and there's an old adage that says you'll go where you look. If you look down then that's where you'll end up. Try to read the terrain that's coming up and try and judge what might be around

the next corner. Pretty soon you'll work out what to avoid, where you need to use power and when you should brake. It's amazing how many off road novices run into closed gates (or even each other) because they're so busy looking at the ground below their wheels they fail to notice something blocking their path.

Posture is also very important. You should be stood up with your legs straight (but don't lock your knees), and leant forwards with your arms bent and your chest virtually over the handlebars. Try to get your weight as far forwards as possible, don't worry about what the back wheel is up to, instead concentrate on keeping the front well and truly planted, and the back end will follow. Don't grip the tank with your knees as this locks you into the bike, but instead try to keep your legs slightly loose, your body relaxed and allow the bike to pivot underneath you. Keep your toes tucked in, don't grip the bars too tight and remember to enjoy yourself. **Next month cornering techniques**

NEW Stuff

BAG OF TRICKS



Here's the answer to the trail rider's perennial problem of carrying a small amount of tools, as well as a waterproof jacket and a drink without the bulk of wearing a big rucksack or a bulging bumbag. Ultimate Torsopack's X-Spurt is a compact, lightweight rucksack which contains an in-built drinking system, as well as a number of small tool and map pockets, and even has a pouch designed to hold a bike pump.

Not only is it extremely light (it weighs just 21oz), and comfortable to wear thanks to broad harness and shoulder/waist and chest straps, but it's an extremely tough, well made bit of kit finished off in a muted green which should appeal to those that like their accessories subtle. The drink container which is in the form of a bladder system, holds up to two litres of fluid and a tube runs from the container over your shoulder ready to be swung up to your mouth when you need it. Not only is it useful out on the trail, but its a must for enduro riders where loss of body fluid is a serious problem.

At £78 it's not exactly cheap, but then again the X-Spurt packs a lot of features into an incredibly small but useful daypack, and the quality of the finish marks it out as an exceptional product. Replaces your CamelBak, rucksack and bumbag in one handy accessory. **Verdict: Brilliant.** Availability: Desert Fox Sports Accessories, Tel 01985 841184



Now there's an easy way to put your Honda XR on the road

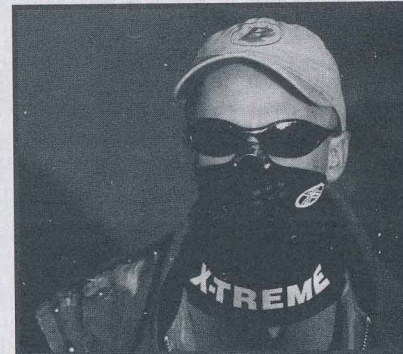
with this XR legaliser kit from Pro-Racing. The full road legal lighting kit consists of everything your XR will need to pass an MoT (with the exception of a number plate). The kit comes with a new plug-in wiring loom with all the correct connectors in place; a superb handlebar switch with Hi/Lo dip beam, horn, kill and lighting on/off switch; a high quality headlight with dip/main beam; a replacement tail light with built in stop light; a neat hydraulic brake light switch, and finally an AC horn. All the items can be purchased individually if required, call Pro-Racing on 01327 301322 for more details.

THE MASK

Ideal for those chilly winter trail

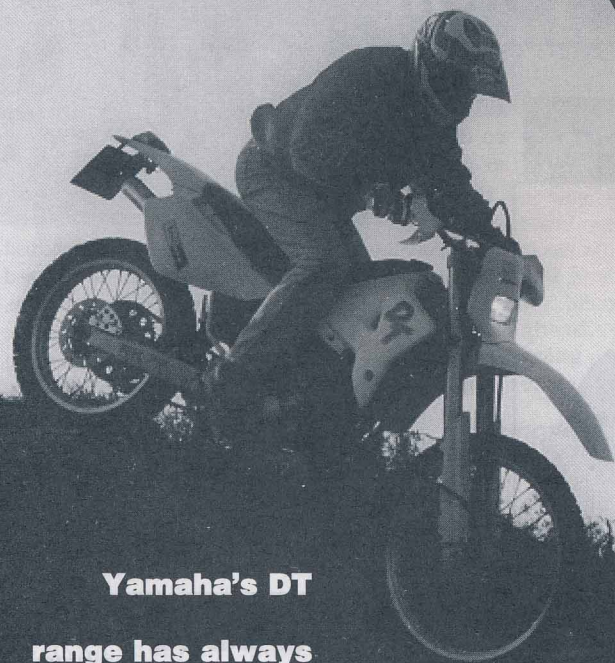
rides or even just on your cold ride to work, the new X-treme mask from Respro is designed to keep you warm and help you breathe easier. Made from sport-grade neoprene, the X-treme mask offers protection for the face and neck and incorporates a replaceable air filtering system designed to remove airborne pollution. Sensibly this mask extends well down the neck and onto the chest to keep the rider nice and warm, and is surprisingly comfortable to wear. Its simple velcro fastening at the rear makes removal easy, and it can be worn with all types of helmet. Cost £24.95,

available from all good bike shops or from Respro on 0171 721 7300.



TRAIL TEST

YAMAHA DT200WR



Yamaha's DT range has always been highly regarded as a capable range of trail bikes. Dave 'Crasher' Cornish took a spin on probably the most desirable DT of all - the Japanese spec DT200WR

Back in the summer of 1991 I was lucky enough to get a brief ride on the first Yamaha WR200 imported into the UK. Mitsui Yamaha had brought the enduro spec 200 in to Britain to evaluate the bike's sales potential. In spite of being allowed only a short time on the new 200 I could tell that it was indeed something special. The WR's super smooth and supple suspension was leagues ahead of that of my own well sorted KDX200, and the Yam also possessed a powerplant that was at once both fast like the KDX, yet smooth and torquey.

Despite its excellent credentials, its forgiving nature, and the fact that the WR was probably one of the best clubman enduro bikes around, last year it was axed from the Yamaha range due to poor sales - (something which can't have been helped by Yamaha's reluctance to advertise their enduro bikes) - though the WR250, an altogether different machine, lives on. So when I was recently offered the 'grey import' trail version to test for a couple

DT200WR looks virtually identical to the WR200 enduro bike, but is slightly better for trail riding



of weeks I couldn't wait to get my paws on it. The trailie version of the WR200 is sold in other markets as a DT200WR and as the DT moniker implies, this bike comes equipped with all the expected road going goodies absent on the full-on enduro machine.

As with other trail bikes (like the Honda CRM and Suzuki TS), an autolube system replaces the need for messy pre mixing, the subframe is beefed up to carry a passenger and the bike comes fitted with speedo, mini indicators, quiet exhaust and an uprated lighting system. Apart from these extras the DT looks almost identical to its racer brother. Chunky Kayaba 'USD' forks hold up the front end, and the slim (aquamarine blue) MX-style seat dominates the bike's profile, this comfortable perch stretches from the profiled rear mudguard all the way up to the locking fuel cap and allows

the rider uninterrupted movement from front to back.

From its neat integrated enduro headlamp to the huge Deltabox alloy swing arm, the DT200WR looks every bit the pukka off roader, but with the convenience of something far more civilised both on and off the road. A conventional chrome moly duplex frame houses the powerful 199cc motor that dominates the DT. The two stroke, YPVS, power valve-equipped single breathes through a 34mm flatslide case reed mounted Mikuni carb and puts out a claimed 35hp at 9000rpm. As you would expect liquid cooling is utilised which incorporates a thermostat for a rapid warm up and twin rads with an expansion tank for keeping it all nice and cool.

Firing up the WR entails rummaging around for the carb mounted choke, switching on the ignition (situated neatly

YAMAHA

DT 200 WR

in the top fork yoke) and stabbing at the tiny right handed kick start lever (I've ridden bikes with more substantially proportioned gearlevers than the 200's tiny kickstarter). The trick is to kick the motor over using just the tip of your toes, not much of a problem when you get used to it but just watch your shin on the heavily serrated footrest. One or two stabs at the lever is all that is normally required and once started the muted burble from the exhaust takes on a hard-edged rasp if you give it some revs. Our test bike came fitted with an after-market RSV tail pipe which may or may not improve the performance but it certainly gave the bike a distinctive 'sporty' tone to the exhaust.

Once fired up the motor warms up quickly and the fun can begin. getting onto the DT's relatively low 895mm seat is easier than it looks since the suspension sags enough to enable the average rider to comfortably touch the ground both sides. The view to the front is familiar Yamaha fare with a small kph speedo sat alongside a small binnacle containing the usual array of idiot lights. Its basic alright, as is the switchgear, but all you really need. Click it into gear, ease out the light clutch the bike responds

instantly, leaping forward and accelerating at a truly amazing rate through all six ratios in its well spaced box. Keep the throttle wound on and your left foot will have a job to shift up quick enough; this motor is seriously *fast*.

Thanks to its adrenaline-pumping powerplant, the DT200WR can turn any normally sane rider into a serious petrol head, the urge to keep the engine on the pipe simply proves to much for even the most level headed of riders. It's not that



Despite unadjustable front suspension, the DT feels comfortable on the rough. But it's that addictive powerplant that truly impresses

the DT lacks mid range torque in fact the 200 stroker makes more torque (and at lower revs) than Yamaha's own TT250R four stroke. But the transition from power-valve half open to fully open has the motor producing an unbelievable addictive surge that few can resist. Ripping around the back lanes of Norfolk, the bike is in it's element. The well damped and compliant suspension soaking up pot holes and badly surfaced tarmac as if they don't exist. In fact on these sort of tight and twisty roads you'd be hard placed to find a better bike than the DT/WR. Fitted with a pair of 17 inch rims and some seriously sticky tyres, I reckon nothing short of a big Husky would touch it.

Given a top speed of around 90-95mph (that's nearly ten mph up on the editorial CRM on standard gearing), I was glad that the twin-pot Nissin caliper biting onto a 219mm front disc did its job well slowing the bike safely to a halt. As well as being supremely powerful the brakes offer plenty of feel both front and rear, and are well matched.

Whilst the long, slim, MX-inspired saddle looks like it might only be comfortable for a short race I spent over an hour just on

TRAILSPORT

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DT200WR

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Thanks to The Container Co for the loan of the DT200WR. 01362 698147

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main trunk roads (including fast dual carriageways), and even at high speeds the DT felt reasonably comfortable. However, as with most lightweight trailies, main roads are not the best way of getting around, stick to B-roads and the DT is much more fun.

Off road the DT didn't disappoint either. Rutted tracks and dusty off camber climbs were shrugged off by the lightweight DT which weighs just 107kg. The smoothly damped and compliant suspensions coped well with most obstacles found on a hot summer's day trailing, and bimbling along at slower speeds is well within the bikes capabilities.

Keeping the front end light is obviously no problem and even deep sand holds no fears for the intrepid DT pilot since that excellent full length seat enables the rider to move around the bike easily - just the ticket for tougher madgery sections. Press on a bit and the slick-shifting transmission can be cogged both up and down the box without the need for

TECH SPEC

Yamaha DT200WR

Price (as tested): £2500

Engine: Liquid cooled 2-stroke single with YPVS

Displacement: 199cc

Power: 35hp @ 9000rpm

Transmission: 6-speed

Frame: Cro-moly duplex frame with alloy Deltabox swing-arm

Forks: Kayaba USD 41mm (non-adjustable)

Shock: Kayaba piggyback

Seat height: 895mm

Fuel capacity: 10L

Weight: 107kg

Max speed: Approx 90-95mph

the clutch, though the gearing is rather more suited to road and trail use than more serious enduro type terrain, and a smaller countershaft sprocket would doubtless offer the rider more appropriate ratios from which to choose.

Fuel consumption is, putting it mildly, not the DT's strong point. Less than 40mpg is the norm and I'm sure it wouldn't take much more off road abuse to drop this figure to nearer 30mpg. Not all that impressive but I suppose fairly predictable given the DT's output from such a small engine. The fuel tank holds just 10 litres of unleaded so you'd better keep a wary eye out for petrol stations if you indulge in plenty of right wrist.

The DT200WR's competition heritage is always apparent, chassis, suspension and motor all compliment each other brilliantly to make the bike a serious but practical trailie for everyday use. Sensible features such as folding tip levers, grease nipples on the shock linkages and even a tiny pair of alloy passenger footrest make the DT as practical a trailie as you're ever likely to get in this arena. In fact, despite its civilised features, the DT has lost very

little in its transition from enduro racer to street legal trail bike. Sure the competition bike is a tad lighter, better suspended and pushes out a few more ponies but for most off road conditions the DT can cope almost as well and it goes without saying that on the road the trailie wins hands down, and is actually a lot faster.

Inevitably the DT200WR's biggest competition will come from similar grey imports such as the Suzuki TS200R, Kawasaki KDX200SR and Honda CRM250R and whilst any of these make good dual purpose machines, the Yammy is just that bit special thanks to its frenetic character and sheer rarity. In fact the main problem with the DT is that it's incredibly rare - even in Japan where bikes like the CRM outsell it five to one. If you see one for sale, snap it up and be prepared to pay somewhere between £2100-£2600 for a whole heap of fun.

THE DIRTY WEEKEND

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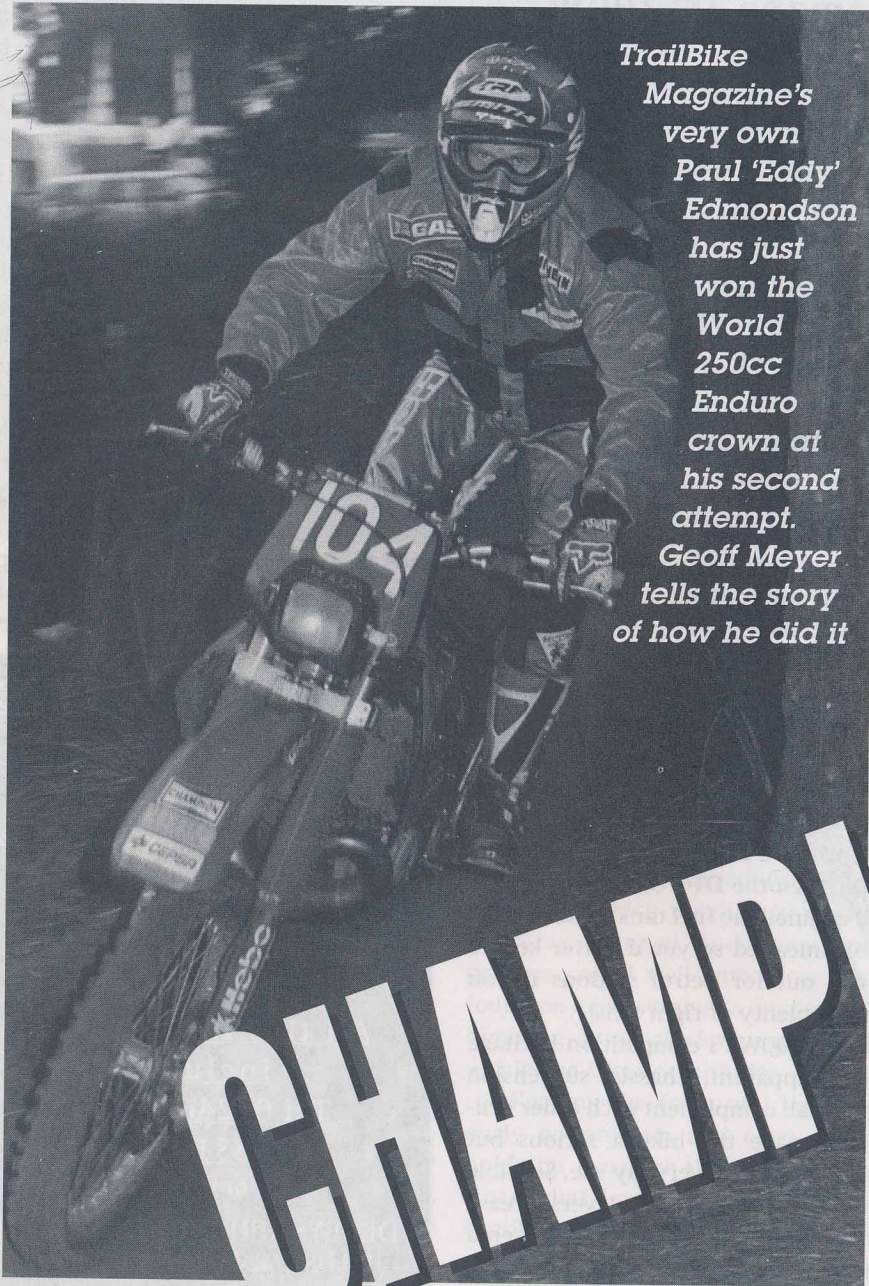
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TrailBike Magazine's very own Paul 'Eddy' Edmondson has just won the World 250cc Enduro crown at his second attempt. Geoff Meyer tells the story of how he did it

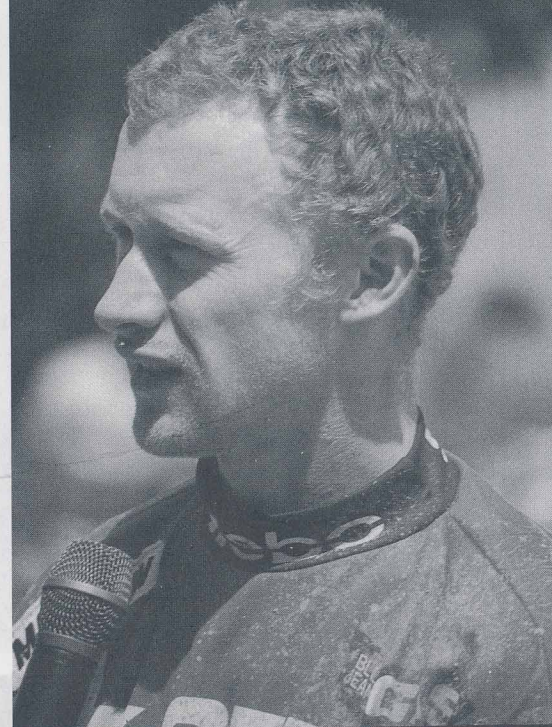
'I'll never forget the time I attended an event for the 1994 World Enduro Champions called the Battle of the Kings. There was Edmondson, Sala, Rinaldi and Fabio Farioli, and they were pitched in battle against each other over a series of special tests to try and sort out who was the best. In one of the tests, Eddy riding the small 125cc machine was

pitted against the fire-breathing 500 of Farioli in a side by side drag race over a set of jumps. The huge 500 blasted out of the start like an exocet missile and it looked a sure fire thing that Farioli would make it to the line first, then in a moment which will stay in my mind for a very long time, came the sight (and sound) of Paul Edmondson coming from behind. With the engine of his Gas Gas machine howling for breath and the throttle pinned wide open, Eddy hung on to the bike like a rag doll being shaken by a pitbull. Sure enough Edmondson beat Farioli that day while Sala and Rinaldi could only look on in sheer amazement. That display alone must've convinced Sala, if he needed convincing, that Paul Edmondson was a very determined young man.

It was back in September of 1995 that jovial Midlander Paul Edmondson smiled for the first time in a long while; the new motor he'd been waiting for from the Gas Gas factory had just arrived, just in time for the International Six Day Enduro. 'Straight out of the box it was great - I was sure we could win a championship with this motor, something I wasn't comfortable with at the start of the 95 season' said Edmondson.

When Eddy moved to the Gas Gas marque in 1993 many considered his days at the top were numbered. The switch to a factory without an enduro championship

'I always felt I was in total control...'



to its name seemed a rash decision for the youngster who'd previously been riding for the impressive Husqvarna team - a team that had taken him to the 1993 world 125 championship. Edmondson of course knew better: 'It was a good decision... when I left Husky, they had so many world class riders in the team that nobody was number one. With Gas Gas it felt like I was the only rider they wanted to win the championship... it gave me a lot of confidence.' However Eddy still had to prove himself on a new machine - the super-fast Husky 125 on which he'd won the championship the year before had been the benchmark of enduro racing for so long, would the Gas Gas be as competitive?

If Eddy had any doubts in his mind about the competitiveness of his new mount, they were soon forgotten when the Englishman cleaned up at the following (1994) 125cc World Championship, leading home Husqvarna's Petteri Silvan (the rider Husky had brought in to replace him). 'To win on a bike that's only in its first year of competition is a real challenge, and that's what drives me... it's great motivation' said a delighted Edmondson after scooping his second world title.

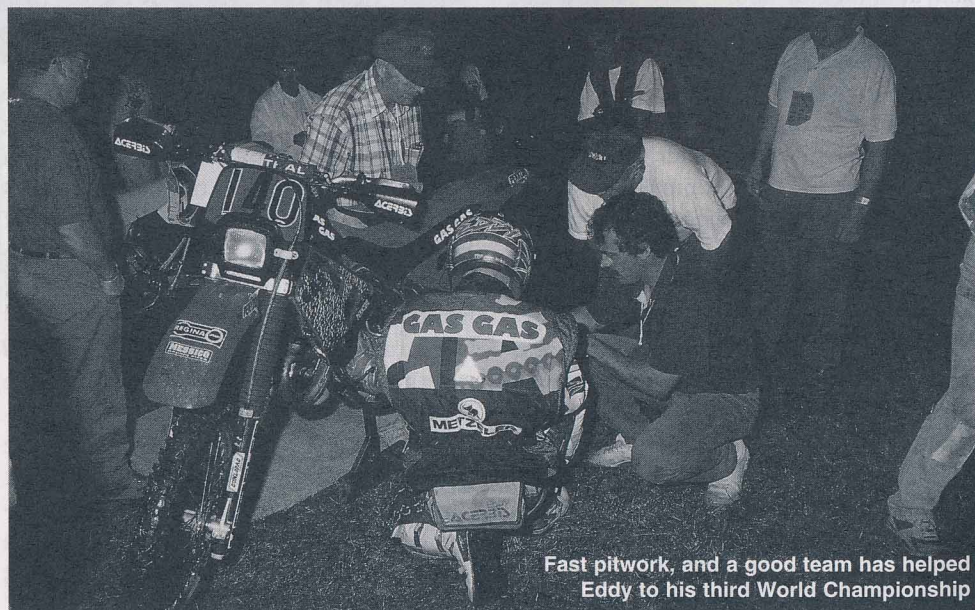
It was another display of brilliance from Edmondson who was growing in stature among his fellow competitors, but for Edmondson it was the stepping stone he needed to make the grade into the most competitive class of all... the 250s.

The 250 class (over 175cc) is regarded by all as the blue riband class, and in moving into it Edmondson would find himself squaring up to legends like five times Dakar winner Stephane Peterhansel, and Giovanni Sala (who'd won the 500cc

World Championship in 1993, and the 350cc Championship in 1994). Going into the new season both Sala and Edmondson were coming from different classes, with Sala the 350 champ and Edmondson the 125 champ. Meantime defending 250 champion Mario Rinaldi, a team-mate to Sala returned to the 350 class where a win was much more of a possibility.

But as early on as the first round of the series in Spain Edmondson knew he had a battle on his hands - though not just from his competitors, but also with his bike. 'I didn't think it would be this difficult' said Edmondson after a disappointing start. 'The bike is not performing as we would've liked and the change in class is also difficult for me... I've ridden 125s for seven years... I need to give it some time... we'll work it out.' For once the Midlander's greatest weapon - his self-confidence - was missing. Without belief in himself or his bike the year ahead would prove to be a long and difficult one.

As the season progressed, Sala was

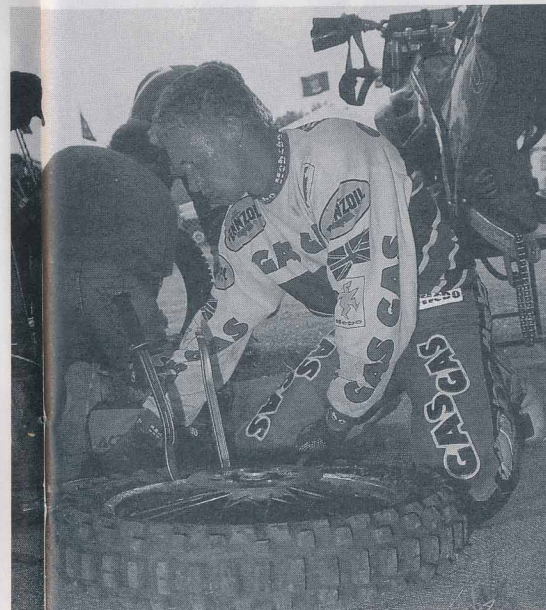


Fast pitwork, and a good team has helped Eddy to his third World Championship

CHAMP!



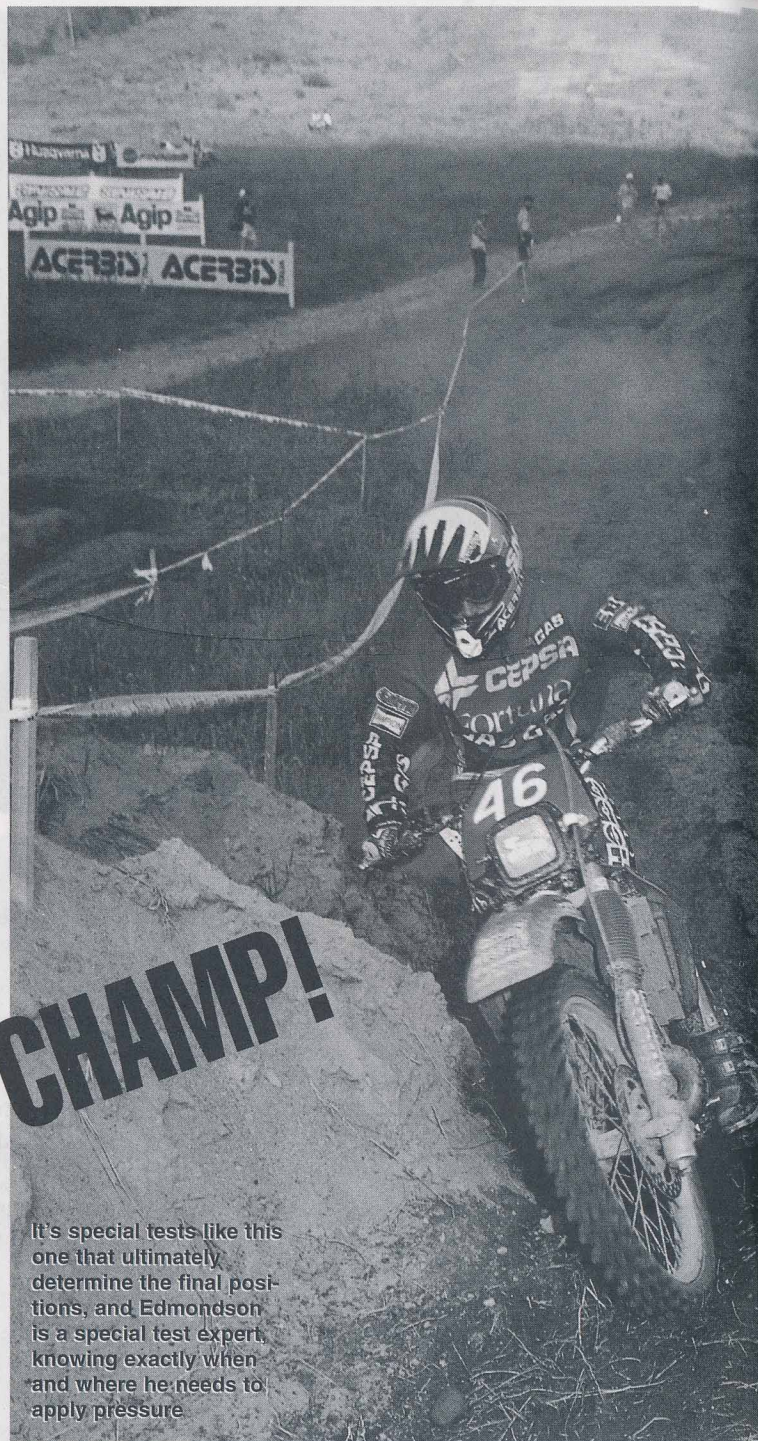
Right: Like all good champions, Eddy's riding is smooth yet exciting to watch. Below: Could you change two tyres with mouses and an air filter in ten minutes?



clocking up win after win, the first four days of the championship in Spain and then Portugal were completely dominated by the Italian. Frenchman Peterhansel claimed the third round in Italy with two wins from two days and Eddy despite riding to a fourth and a fifth over the two days found himself a massive 43 points behind Sala in the championship. It was then that he spilt the beans about his disappointment with the existing 250cc Gas Gas motor (actually a TM engine). 'It's not responding at all' he said disappointedly, 'I throttle it and it just doesn't go... it's very much riding me and I should be riding it.' Down in fourth place in the series and without a round win for the first time in years, Edmondson looked to have conceded before the year was over.

Then came the new motor (designed and manufactured by Gas Gas in house), and with it came renewed hope and confidence. First up Eddy finished the ISDE with his pride intact, posting times much better than he'd so far managed in the championship. Over the winter (last year) the Gas Gas team worked around the clock perfecting the bike in time for this year's assault on the championship. With a new engine, renewed confidence and a season's worth of experience behind him, Edmondson knew that the championship was very much a possibility for '96 - all he had to do was prove it.

Once again the series started in Portugal, and though Sala again dominated, this time he had a determined Paul Edmondson breathing down his neck - posting a close second place, better than anything he'd managed the year before. 'I'll be giving him something to think about this time round' said Eddy cheekily, and a week later in Spain he



It's special tests like this one that ultimately determine the final positions, and Edmondson is a special test expert, knowing exactly when and where he needs to apply pressure

proved himself right with a cool 1-1 result, winning both days outright and taking the championship lead.

Now it was Sala's turn to complain about his bike: 'We tried a new suspension and it did not work' said the Italian dejectedly. The French round a few weeks later once again saw the Englishman dominate, though this time it was stephane Peterhansel who came closest to beating him, missing the win by just a single point. As if to underline Edmondson's accession to the world stage praise came from Peterhansel himself: 'Edmondson did very fast times here, I wanted to win for Yamaha, but I could not match Edmondson... he surprised me a little' Said the Dakar veteran about our boy Eddy.

Next it was onto the controversial Italian round, and with the help of the partisan crowd Sala composed himself and stormed to victory: 'I always go good in Italy' claimed a delighted Sala afterwards, though other competitors later suggested that Sala's advantage lay not just in the support of the home crowd, but in the fact that on certain sections he seemed to know his way around. Edmondson was not the only rider who felt the course had been ridden only days before the event, though only *he* was prepared to speak out about it: 'I feel I've been screwed by them [the Italians]' he claimed afterwards, 'it's going on all the time, I once rode for the [Italian] Farioli team and I remember them sending *me* out to ride a course. I did not want to do it, but it was my job.'

With the disappointment of Italy behind him it was onto Slovakia and another clinical display of excellence from the Brit. Two wins from two

starts put Edmondson back on top of the championship while Sala could only muster a lowly 18pts. Between the Slovakian round and the German-held final was the small matter of the ISDE and though Eddy had to give second best to an on-form Sala it was a wise head that revealed afterwards: 'To be honest I did not go all out to beat Sala, he rode great, but I was not about to go wild and end up hurting myself, it's just not worth it.'

With another gold medal in his pocket (his tenth out of 11 appearances), it was a mature performance from the 27 year old with so much to gain by keeping fit for the final round. Two weeks later Edmondson proved his tactics had been right by clinching the World Championship with a steady ride to third place, lifting the ultimate crown at only his second attempt.

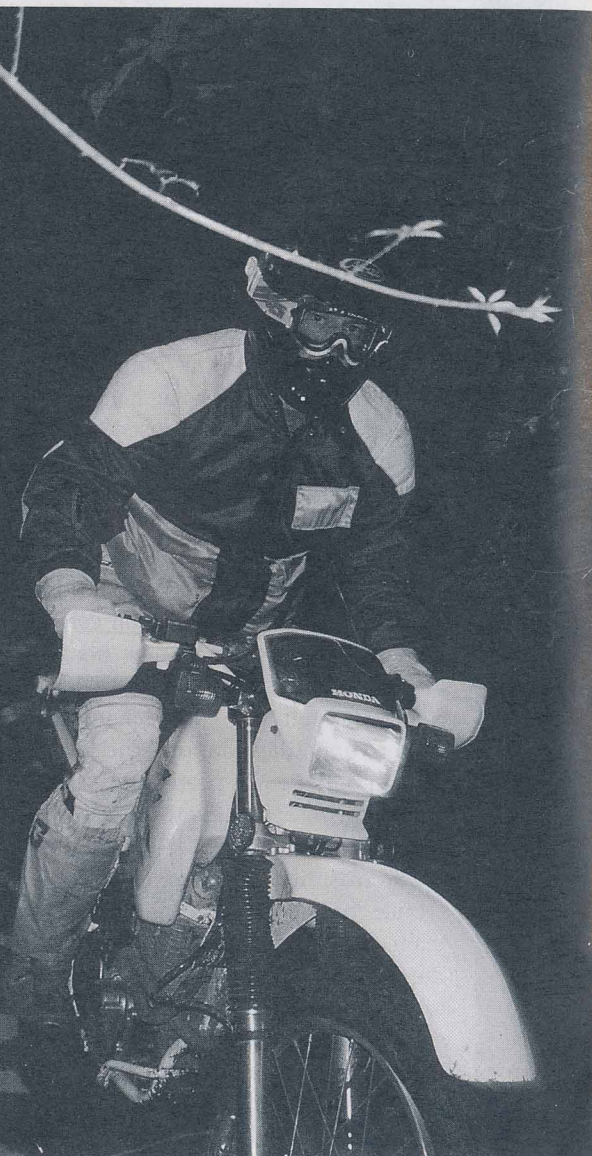
'I did not need to do too much to win the championship' claimed a modest Edmondson afterwards. "I never really rode over the top and felt I was always in total control. For sure I will defend the championship next year... the 175cc class is for me.'

There's no doubt that the combination of a great bike and an enthusiastic and dedicated team have helped take Edmondson to the very top of his chosen sport, but ultimately it is the fighting spirit of the man and his gutsy determination that have inspired the whole team to achieve the results they have. It's the same fighting spirit I witnessed for myself on that memorable day back in 1994 at the Battle of the Kings. I won't forget what I saw in a hurry and neither will, I suspect, recently deposed 250 champion Giovanni Sala!

HIGH & MIGHTY

H O N D A X R 6 5 0 L

Honda claims the XR650L combines the off roadability of their dirt-digging XR600R with the convenience of the electric start Dominator - making it the most versatile dual sport big-bore thumper available. Paul Blezard donned his high heels to test out this hefty hybrid



TrailBike -28- Magazine

No sooner had Honda brought out their 650 Dominator than dirt enthusiasts were salivating at the thought of the new 650 engine slotted into Honda's long-running XR600 enduro chassis to make the definitive user-friendly, crash-capable trailbike.

Such a machine would have the lightness and serious off-road suspension of the XR combined with the civilised electrics, and above all, push-button starting of the Dominator but without the latter's vulnerable fairing and heavy twin exhausts. It shouldn't have been hard to produce such a machine; after all, the two bikes' engines were very similar with a common pedigree; both being descended from the original XR and XL500s and the electric start FT500 and XBR500 road bikes, to become the unburstable air-cooled, RFVC motors we know and love.

In 1992 Honda went and did just that when they launched the XR650L. It was aimed squarely at the American market as a 100 percent street legal trailbike (the Yanks don't get the Dommie, and their version of the XR600R is less street-legal than our own). Originally intended for a 1993 launch, the bike was rushed out early in 1992 following the success of the similar XR250L in the US the year before. Never officially imported into the UK, there has nevertheless been a steady trickle of XR650Ls

Dominator motor shoe-horned into an XR chassis gives the 650 its convenient electric boot.



TrailBike -29- Magazine

Towering seat height makes the XR650L a real handful on narrow lanes for anyone shorter than about 6'2"

Paul Blezard



coming across the pond over the past few years.

I've had several goes on XR650Ls including an interesting winter trail ride on one and another alongside Suzuki's DR650 (TBM9). Even with all the unnecessary road equipment taken off (indicators, pillion footrests, massive rear light etc) and the fitting of lightweight case bolts, the XRL still feels noticeably heavier than any XR600R. Honda claim 312lbs dry for the stock XR650, but it feels nearer 330lbs. TrailBike contributor Simon Fenning who up until recently owned a 1994 example had a couple of inches taken out of the seat foam in a bid to lower the towering seat height but it was still higher than my standard XR600R.

Fortunately for the purposes of this test, another XR650L owner popped up right here in Sunny Barnes. I bumped into Ian Lorimer when I was hosing down my XR600 one day and he recognised my ugly mug from the mag. Turned out he lived only a few streets away. Ian also introduced me to a despatch-riding friend, Philippe from Montenegro, with yet another XR650. Philippe has owned a whole host of big banger trail bikes (Pegasos, XTs, KLRs, KLXs and an XR600 - you name it). Significantly, he says he likes the XR650 best of all, however, Philippe is a tall and lanky lad, for whom the 650's seat height is much less of a

problem than it is for more average-sized humes. Ian had made several modifications to his XR650L including fitting a 4 gallon American ISR tank, a pricy K&N air filter and a dynojet kit. He'd also fitted a Supertrapp exhaust (£160) and sensibly swapped the standard tyres for a pair of Pirelli MT21s.



I agreed to show Ian the local trails in exchange for a prolonged session on his XR650, with brief swaps back to my own XR600 (which he rode) for comparison. We ended up doing nearly 100 miles off road in a session which lasted over nine hours, took in every manner of road and trail and finished in the dark.

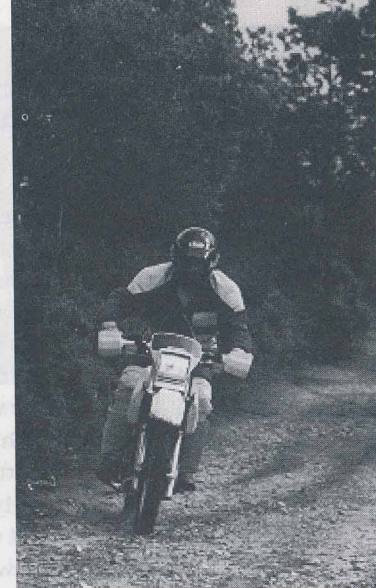
Anyone got a ladder?

I have now ridden XR650s many times, but the initial swing of the leg over the saddle still comes as a shock. I can only liken it to mounting a horse, (or maybe a giraffe!) and it never fails to make me empathise with those who are short in the shanks department; unless you have an inside leg measurement of at least 35 inches you'll instantly feel like a shorty as you struggle to reach ground level with the tips of your toes.

The only other machines of comparable altitude that I have ridden were both veterans of the Paris-Dakar rally fitted with under-seat fuel tanks. If you're blasting across a desert at high speed for hours at a time there's something to be said for a tall seat; it enables you to make the transition from sitting down to standing up more easily and to reduce the amount of standing up you do anyway as you can absorb bumps with your legs while still keeping much of your weight in the saddle. I'm sure the XR650 would be great in the Baja 1000 but its seat height does nothing for your ability to manoeuvre at slow speeds in tight situations, and makes life really difficult if you need to get a foot down. Ironically Honda's US 1992 advertising blurb claimed that 'The XR650L is literally a street-legal version of the XR600R with 53cc more displacement and an electric starter' - if only! Astonishingly, the same brochure also claimed that the 650's seat height was actually half an inch lower than the 600's at 37 inches. This is a complete fabrication, and makes you wonder how much of the information in the brochure ought to be interpreted in the same optimistic Honda manner.

That tall seat doesn't do anything for your aerodynamics or rider comfort at high speed on the road either, especially if, as in the case of the XR650, you haven't the merest vestige of a screen to shelter behind, as I discovered while thrashing Ian's XR650 down the A3 to Guildford. It neither felt nor performed any better than my 600 (although it was a tad more stable) and seemed to run out of steam at about 85mph, just as Simon Fenning's had when I took that out for a blast. On the standard gearing at any rate, 100mph is well out of range.

Whilst I soon felt at home riding the 650 down the first couple of green lanes near the Hogsback, the XRL's biggest disadvantage was shown up as soon as we stopped to take some pictures. Turning the thing



Faster going allows the 650 to make the most of its power, though the extra weight over the 600 is noticeable almost everywhere

around on a narrow, half-pipe shaped lane is a nightmare because when you get the bike at 90 degrees with one wheel on either bank, your legs are left dangling in mid-air. You can only paddle with one leg at a time and if the bike starts to topple the wrong way there's nothing you can do about it.

The bike's biggest advantage of course comes into play when you drop it, or rather, once you've heaved it back upright. You only have to press that magic little button and off she goes! You're away again while your mate with his flooded XR600 kicks and curses and sweats buckets for minutes on end, as I've done myself on many occasions! This exact scenario actually occurred at the end of the day when both bikes fell over while parked on soft ground; the XR650 re-started instantly while the XR600 required the time-honoured petrol off, open throttle, kick kick kick, petrol back on, kick kick kick etc before finally bursting back into life.

I was also impressed with the way the 650 climbed the notorious 'Ridgeway Steps' near Hindhead. It romped up them with no trouble at all and, like the DR650 I rode there last February, could be ridden to a standstill, throttled off with the clutch home, and then ridden up the biggest steps without stalling. I was also very impressed with the grip from the MT21s - seemed as good as my 600's motocross/enduro combination on the dirt with much better high speed stability on tarmac.

Apart from the noisy exhaust, the 650 was great fun to ride and took every obstacle in its stride. It romped up every climb and through every bog, and though I had to foot a few times I managed not to drop it all day long. On the road I particularly appreciated the bike's cush drive which is absent on the 600, making my own bike much harder to drive smoothly in town and knocking hell out of chain and rear tyre alike. On the other hand, although the 650 was smooth at low speeds it did suffer some high speed vibration through the bars which I've never experienced with the XR600.

When it came to filling up the 650 used slightly more juice than my already thirsty 600 (giving about 40-45mpg) when I'd expected it to use slightly less. Higher gearing would improve consumption of course (and top speed) but then you'd struggle more in the tricky stuff off road, more so than with a similarly tall-g geared 600 since it's significantly lighter. Ian admitted that he found my XR600 much more manageable off-road, the 650's standard gearing actually felt about the same as the 14/44 compromise gearing I'm currently running on the 600. If you wanted

XR650L



T E C H S P E C

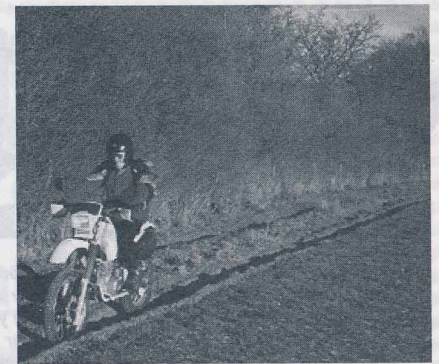
Honda XR650L

- Engine:** 644cc OHC RFVC air-cooled electric start single
- Carburation:** 40mm CV
- Transmission:** 5 speed
- Chassis:** semi-double cradle
- Forks:** 43mm Showas
- Shock:** Showa
- Wheelbase:** 57.3inches
- Brakes:** single disc front & rear
- Dry weight:** (claimed) 312lbs.
- Seat height:** (claimed) 37"
- Fuel capacity:** 2.8 (US) gallons

to give the XR650 the 95-100mph top end of the Dominator and still retain its off-roadability, it really needs a sixth ratio in its five-speed box. For that reason, if no other, the XR650 can never be the ideal compromise that Honda intended.

Conclusion

Despite the obvious advantages of that electric start button, I've yet to be convinced that the XR650L offers anything over Honda's well established 600R. It seems to me that any improvement over the 600 would need to begin with shedding weight rather than acquiring it, and though the 600 is not particularly powerful, the 650 feels little better. Perhaps the only situation where the XRL would be a better bet is if you are considering an overland trip. Designed to take the extra weight of a pillion, the 650's rear subframe is much meatier than the 600's and undoubtedly that electric start button would be an advantage when it comes to firing up a bike fully loaded with all the accoutrements of travelling. If you must have an electric start four stroke the DR350 is a hell of a lot lighter and not that much slower on the road, and of course much easier to ride off road. While bikes like the Aprilia Pegaso or even the Dommie itself are much better street-biased tourers.



Better suited to the dry and dusty trails of hot-ter climates, the big XR would make an ideal overlander





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We know how difficult it is trying to find products tailored to the trail rider's needs, that's why we've done it for you. If you're planning on taking your trail bike off road you'll want to use the gear that works. Everything we sell has been extensively tested by us and we know it'll perform the way you want it to, allowing you to just enjoy the ride.

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| DR350 | (90-95) | (16 litres) | £149.99 |
| XR600R | (88-96) | (18 litres) | £149.99 |
| XR250R | (88-95) | (18 litres) | £149.99 |
| Dominator | (92-95) | (23 litres) | £179.99 |
| KLR250/600 | | (20 litres) | £149.99 |
| KLX250 | (94-95) | (14 litres) | £149.99 |
| KLX650 | (93-95) | (19 litres) | £149.99 |
| XT600E | (90-94) | (20 litres) | £149.99 |
| BMW F650 | (all) | (27 litres) | £189.99 |

Tanks for other machines also available

KTM Rallye Parts

Turn your KTM LC4 trail bike into a Paris-Dakar Rally bike with the official KTM Rally parts. Built to withstand the rigours of the world's toughest race, they work just as well on the street and help make your bike stand out from the crowd.

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|----------------------------------|-------------|-------|
| Rally tank (+ fittings) | (20 litres) | £357 |
| Rear tanks (+fittings +subframe) | | £1024 |
| Rally 'shortie' seat | | £129 |
| Wiring harness | | £224 |
| Fuel pump | | £46 |

X-Spurt Ultimate Torsopac

The ultimate trail/raid/rally/enduro backpack. Comes with a built-in water tank and numerous map/tool pockets. Exceptionally compact and light, with quick release shoulder and waist straps. Colour: green.

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| X-Spurt backpack | £78.00 |
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Rally-Nav Roadbook Holder

Hand made in stainless steel with a perspex lid, these superb quality road book holders bolt to the handlebar cross-brace. Ideal for all events where a roadbook is needed, such as raids, rallies and long distance trials.

| | |
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| Rally-Nav roadbook holder | £79.99 |
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Khyam One-Touch Tent

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| | |
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| Khyam Vector (sleeps 2) | £139.99 |
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| Africa Twin | £85 |
| Super Tenere | £69 |
| XTZ660 Tenere | £69 |

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| Magellan GPS2000 | £175 |
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| Pirelli MT21 rear (120/80-18) | £59.50 |
| Pirelli MT21 rear (140/80-18) | £69.50 |

Michelin Desert Tyres

Especially designed for heavier bikes, these tyres have helped ensure victory in numerous rallies around the world such as the Paris-Dakar, Optic 2000, Pharoos and Paris-Peking. Extremely strong construction means they can withstand the punishment of harsh rocky terrain, and when fitted with heavy duty inner tubes resist punctures superbly. Great on and off the road.

| | |
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| Michelin Desert (90/90-21) | £59.99 |
| Michelin Desert (140/90-17) | £79.99 |
| Michelin Desert (140/90-18) | £79.99 |
| Heavy duty tubes (for the ultimate in puncture resistance) | |
| 21 inch front | £9.50 |
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the great TBM SURVEY...

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Do you live in your own home Rented With Parents Forces Other

Your occupation? Student Manual Technical Professional Other

Your age group? Under 20 21 - 35 36 - 54 55 and over

Tick as many of the following that you own:

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How long have you been trail riding? Just started 1 - 2 years 3 - 5 years More

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Where do you buy it? WH Smiths John Menzies Local newsagent Subscription

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Which ones?

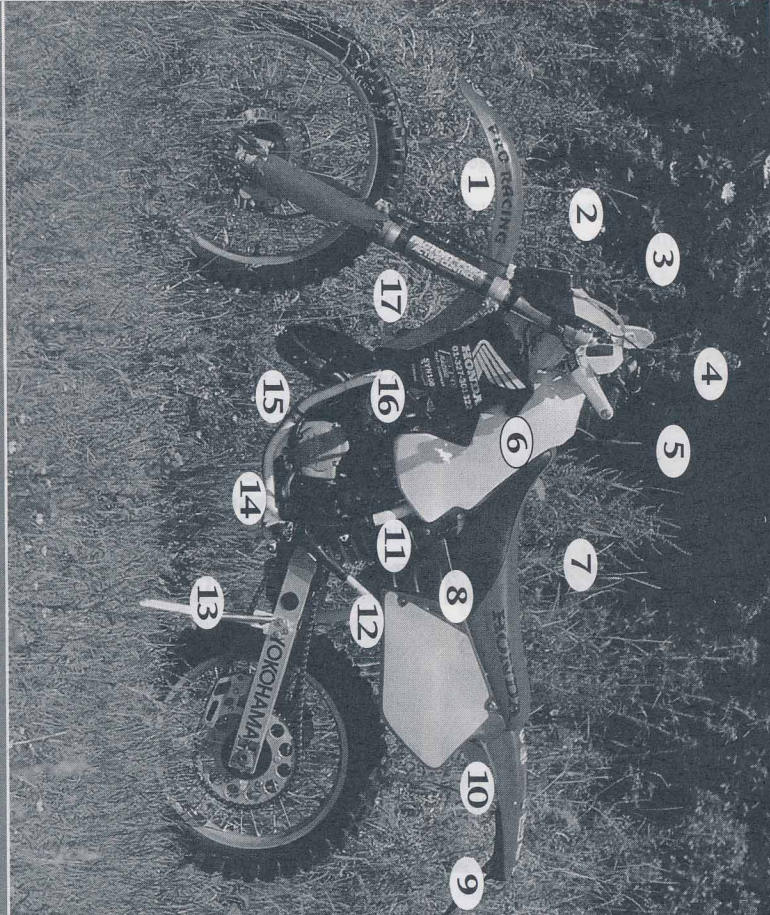
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What don't you like about TrailBike?

Is there anything else we should cover?

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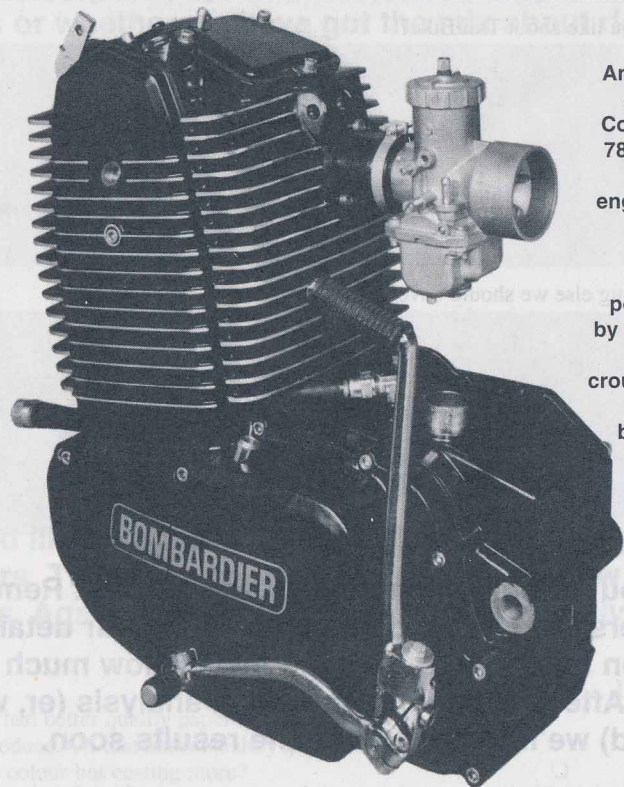
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Remember if you want to help shape the magazine then you need to tell us what you think of us, and don't forget five lucky readers will each win themselves a year's free subscription!

The ROTAX Part I Story

Austrian-built Rotax engines have been influential in more than three decades of dirt bikes.

Mike Jackson takes a closer look at this sleeping giant



Right: The Andover Norton stand at Earls Court in 1977 or 78, showing the first Rotax engined Can-Am the company imported. Cheesecake poses supplied by models, while Barry Sheene crouches and the spotlights bounce off the writer's cranium

Having been involved for more than 20 years with the Andover Norton company - one time importers of Can-Am and long time importers of all things Rotax - it has fallen on me to try and shed some light on the Rotax story and how these Austrian bike engines have come to power all manner of trail and enduro machines. Despite being mechanically 'tone deaf' as it were, and knowing little of what goes on behind the casings of a Rotax engine, it struck me that though the average trail rider may well know more than me about *how* they work, he or she probably



knows very little about Rotax *themselves*. In which case have I got a story for you...?

Before giving you a synopsis of the important events in the Bombardier and Rotax evolutions you will please forgive a spot of corporate name-dropping, that while it affects not one iota the reasoning behind Rotax engines being fitted in certain bikes, provides a feeling of corporate comfort that isn't available from some of the other smaller, albeit very creative, manufacturers. Did you know for instance that the Rotax factory's French-Canadian parent Bombardier also own the aircraft manufacturing concerns of de Havilland (Canada), Learjet (USA) and Shorts in Belfast? Bombardier Inc, the holding company in Quebec are responsible for one of Canada's very largest trading groups, and worldwide employ more than 30,000 people - the vast majority of whom are

employed in 'making things'; a philosophy that since WWII, sadly seems to have gone missing from the psyche of successive *British* captains of, er... industry.

Anyway that is a sufficiency of soap-box statistics, this is TrailBike Magazine and our concern is the Rotax engine from Austria and so our story therefore commences deep in chilly French Canadian territory with the innovative Armand Bombardier (1907-1964) who nursed an ambition to travel about the snowbound landscape during the long winters. He came up with the snowmobile - a strictly functional vehicle designed to carry upwards of half a dozen passengers over the snowy terrain - and put them into volume production during the mid-Thirties using converted automobile engines. With nearly 20,000 snowmobile sales under his belt he next focussed his talents on a much sportier vehicle designed just like a motor-

The ROTAX

Story

cycle, to carry a single operator plus optional companion - this he entitled the Ski-Doo.

I well remember talking to a Norton dealer in Minneapolis some years ago who showed me the global sales totals for snowmobiles at that time. Of around two million machines, nearly half were Ski-Doods produced by Bombardier in Valcourt and by then virtually all were fitted with Rotax engines made in Austria. Nowadays the burgeoning market in personal watercraft (Jet-Skis to you and me but Sea-Doods to Bombardier), alongside the constant

demand for snowmobiles soaks up more than 80 percent of the Rotax factory's output, and goes some of the way to explaining why Rotax themselves take such a low profile on the European motorcycle scene. After all when did you last walk onto a corporate Rotax stand at the Cologne show, or see a full page colour ad in a glossy monthly? Neither will you ever spot a Rotax promotion truck or hospital-ity suite at a Grand Prix, yet their engineers are there at every meeting assisting Aprilia on their winning way.

We'll go now to Gunskirchen in the



Modern day CCM spotted at this year's Welsh Two Day Enduro - still utilises the Rotax lump

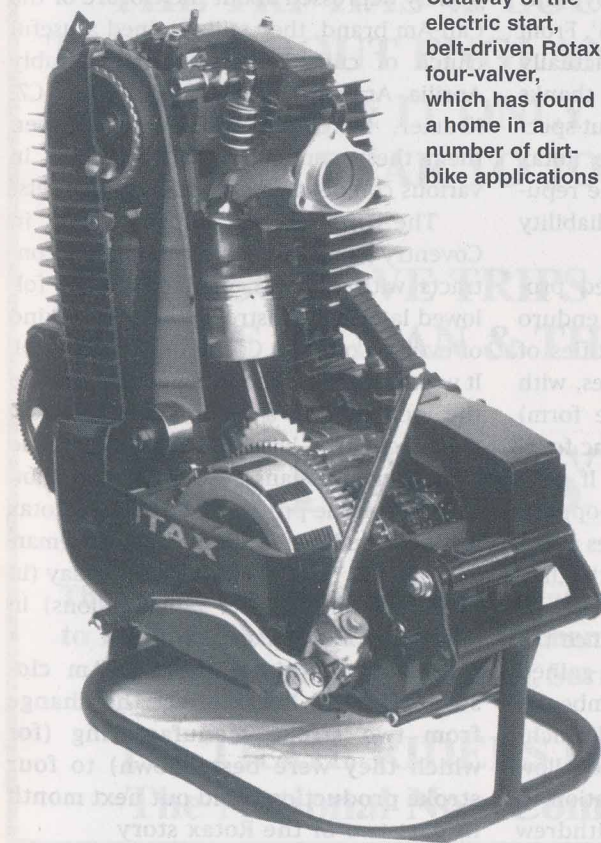
TrailBike -42- Magazine

corn-growing flatlands of Austria where there exists the most capable engine factory imaginable. A comparison with the old Villiers factory at Marston Road in the industrial sprawl that was Wolverhampton would be invidious; the Europeans and in particular the Austrians do it differently. From my own moto-X days in Europe some 35 years ago I had formed an opinion that the average Austrian usually came across as a mellow, jolly and rounded German - and this is always confirmed when spending time with Rotax folk. The Austrians, mind you, can also be very persuasive. In the best ever example of international PR, they managed to persuade the entire world

that a certain Adolf Hitler was a German. Who needs Saatchi & Saatchi?

In the Forties Rotax's prime concern was the production of gearboxes, and it is perhaps no great surprise that, to this day, another Austrian bike manufacturer, KTM, still source transmission parts from Rotax. Meanwhile, back in Canada circa 1950 and the irrepressible Monsieur Bombardier had need of a new type of engine to power his upcoming mKII series snowmobile; an engine unit with maybe only half the power of the incumbent, automobile-adapted four cylinder job, but more importantly with only a tenth of the weight. On his global travels old Bombardier presumably checked out

Cutaway of the electric start, belt-driven Rotax four-valver, which has found a home in a number of dirt-bike applications



Briggs and Stratton (over the border in the USA), and all the Euro engine producers such as Villiers and Sachs before finally opting for the tiny (at the time) Austrian Rotax concern - becoming Rotax's largest customer at a stroke.

Older readers of TBM will recall that in 1968 World scrambles champion Jeff Smith emigrated to Valcourt to assist Bombardier in the production of the low volume but high spec Can-Am motorcycle which was fitted initially with an extraordinarily rapid disc-valve stroker engine of either 125 or 175cc. During the early Seventies, I was working for Norton Villiers Corporation in California, and after a hectic six day week flogging Norton Commandos to unsuspecting US dealers, my favourite form of relaxation was to go desert racing on Sundays in Mojave, usually mounted upon a 250 AJS

TrailBike -43- Magazine

The ROTAX

Story

Stormer. From time to time a heavily disguised Smithy would enter the occasional hare and hounds enduro under a false name, leaving all bar the real aces on their 360 Huskys for dust.

At the time I spoke with one or two gnarled old desert racers who confessed they'd simply been pulverised by 'this stocky kinda guy on a mystery 125'. From memory I don't think Can-Ams actually hit the market until 1973/74, but thanks to Smithy and several 'unofficial' but spectacular outings with the prototype, Rotax were able to build up a formidable reputation in terms of speed and reliability with their stroker dirt bikes.

Thus the bikes duly appeared produced exclusively in either MX or enduro specification and in annual quantities of just a couple of thousand machines, with capacities ranging (in two stroke form) from 125-460cc and later, their ohc four-valvers in either 500 or 560cc. If only they'd had to just contend with opposition provided by European factories at the time (Bultaco, Husky, Maico etc), then chances are they might well have still been active off road today. However, once the onslaught from the Japanese gained momentum their days were numbered. There was no way that the French-Canadian 'suits' were prepared to allow the loss making motorcycle operation to continue, and Can-Am thus withdrew

from the market at the end of 1986. Whilst the marque had made little impact in the majority of European markets, in the US and Canada they enjoyed considerable success winning several national championships.

The resilient folk at Rotax were not unduly depressed about the closure of the Can-Am brand, they still retained a useful clutch of customers in Europe notably Aprilia, Armstrong, BSA, CCM, Cotton, CZ, Kramer, Matchless and SWM. Between them these companies had footholds in various competition and military markets.

The little BSA company then in Coventry gained some useful military contracts with a 250cc engined model followed later by Armstrong whose bike kind of evolved out of a Cotton-flavoured CCM. It was Armstrong who initiated the army to the delights of a dohc, light-flywheel machine with a left-handed kickstart... no wonder the Russians were frightened - not. CCM meantime produced some tasty Rotax engined models for the competition market and still use the Rotax motor today (in both kick and electric start versions) in their latest 1997 bikes. •

Having survived the Can-Am closure, how did Rotax effect the change from two stroke manufacturing (for which they were best known) to four stroke production. Find out next month in part two of the Rotax story



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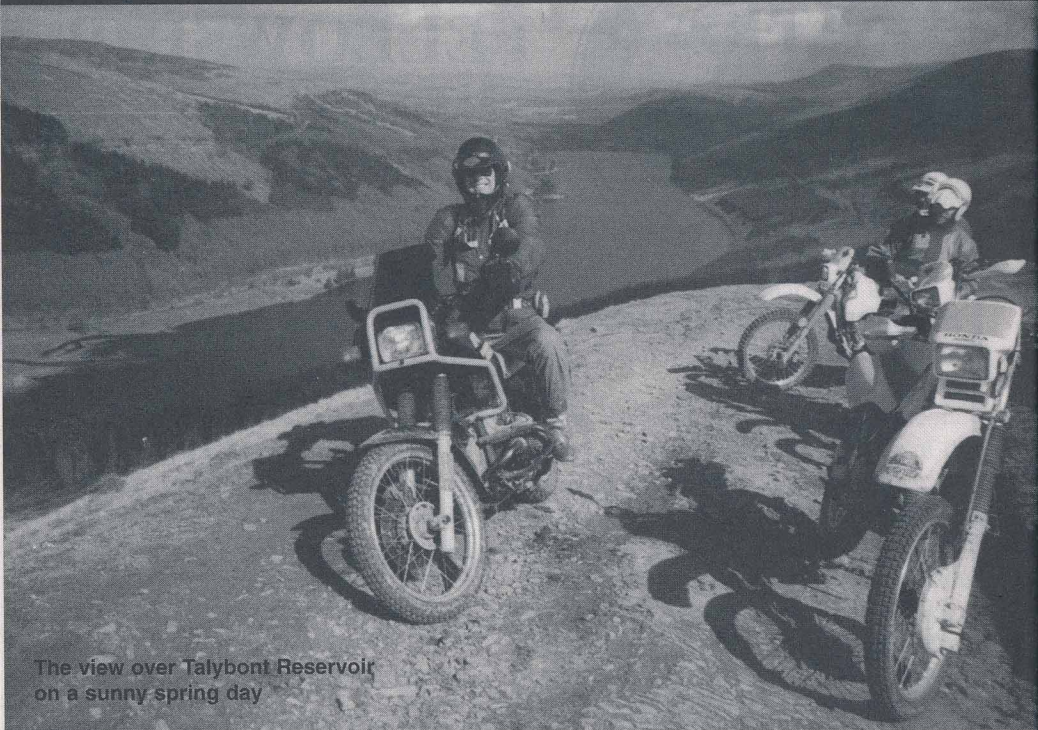
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Telling you where to trail ride legally in the UK



The view over Talybont Reservoir on a sunny spring day

I've always had a soft spot for the Brecon Beacons since first coming here as a boy scout back in the Fifties. Our skipper pre-empted the SAS by marching us to the top of the Black Mountains though thankfully we didn't have to kip the night on top - the SAS have lost men here in winter, so in doubt of the weather which can change rather rapidly at 2000 feet, err on the side of caution and always ride with at least one other rider.

But that said, when or *if* the sun is out, the Beacons have some of the most spectacular and beautiful trails in the whole of Wales, including the Gap Road, Talybont Reservoir, Grwyne Fawr and Sarn Helen.

This last trail is an old Roman road, still rideable from Brecon to Neath on the south coast about 20 miles away. I've not included it on this run as it can take a day in itself, but will cover it in part two.

Of the other tracks, the Gap Road has a TRO (Traffic Regulation Order) on it for most of the year, and can only be ridden in March and September through till the 12 October - if you've got the mag early, you've still got two weekends to ride it this year. The route I've set out uses the Gap Road as the last trail of the day, so can be bypassed at other times of the year. The Talybont trail is probably the most picturesque with a classic photo opportunity at top overlooking the reservoir; whilst

The Brecon Beacons offers some of the wildest yet most enjoyable trail riding in the country. Richard Thompson is your guide to this Welsh wonderland



Grwyne Fawr is the most difficult. Although I have ridden this route on an XT600, I advise most owners of big trailies and novices alike to follow the route in the reverse direction at least once to get an idea of the terrain. Any XR, DR or two stroke rider should be able to get by with care.

You will need Ordnance Survey maps Nos 160 and 161, although for greater detail or until the route is learned, the outdoor leisure maps Nos 11 and 13 at 1:25000 are the business showing field boundaries helping to avoid wrong turnings and minimise disputes over which side of the fence you should be on. Oh, and remember petrol is not available for about 60 miles except by detour to the nearest towns.

The route begins out of Brecon on the B4602 in the direction of Hay-on-Wye, after about two miles bear left onto the

A470 and after another two miles at the charmingly named hamlet of Penishaywain, turn right on the minor road to the farm at Tylecrwn. Your bike should be nicely warmed up by now, ready for the first trail as you turn into the lane at (097,328). This is usually a fairly green lane, with just the odd puddle if the weather's been wet, which makes for a nice easy start to the day. After two miles on this lane, take the first left down an overgrown hollow-way to join the metalled road at (120,338). Turn right and right again, then opposite the church turn left into the next lane at (120,332). This is usually extremely overgrown, but can be followed carefully noting the four 90deg turns on the map. This brings you out on the metalled road at (140,325), turn right and then left over the Glandwr Bridge then right onto the B4562. Take the second left to Heol y Cefn at (150,300), along

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the easy, level track through fields until you reach the metalled road. Now turn right and head due south for one mile then left up the hill to the open moorland.

You are now in the wide open spaces of the Brecon Beacons with a number of high peaks to your left and right. Where the five ways meet opposite a gate, take the right fork off road onto a gently sloping true green lane at (160,284), follow down to the gate at (169,265). The farmer here is quite friendly as long as you haven't chased his sheep, but beware of the beast of the Beacons as the farmer once told us about finding paw prints the size of dinner plates in the snow last winter - which went some way to explain the

death of so many lambs. Turn left here, and follow the road down through the farmyard to the A479. Turn left again and after approximately half a mile turn right at (185,271) into a very small overgrown lane that goes steeply down and across a stream to a T-junction with another lane. This lane is used by many pony trekking stables so go carefully because you will meet horses between here and the start of Grwyne Fawr.

Now turn left and go north for about one and a half miles where you'll join a metalled road. Carry straight on, and then straight on again at the hairpin bend into a continuation of the lane going north. After half a mile there are hitching posts

on your left for horse riders going to the pub. As soon as you can, turn left onto the main A479 and the Castle Inn is on your left at (174,296). This is an ideal lunch stop for those who have made a late start or found the going a bit tough in the winter months.

Return to the track behind the pub and head north, parallel to the A479 until you meet a metalled road. Turn right and follow the road past Dinas Farm until it gradually turns into a rocky track that leads up to a gate on your left. Carry on through the gate going north west until you reach a metalled road at (185,312). Turn left and follow the road for about one mile, turning right at the gliding club

at (174,319). This is a tricky little lane dropping down to a metalled road. Now turn left, and immediately right at (175,324) into a grassy lane that turns very muddy when the cows have been at it, the lane then climbs uphill and gets very rocky until you meet the gate at the farm Berth-Fedw. This is the only gate I have found in 20 years of trail riding, where the bolt has been greased! Follow the tarmac road onto the moorland and turn right towards the mountain. At the T-junction turn right and immediately on the left is the start of the climb to Grwyne Fawr at (187,334).

The TRO signs here only ban four wheel drives and not bikes or sidecars, so carry on along this flat, rutted grassy track as it gradually begins to climb. The ruts get deeper and washed out, but if you're wondering what all the fuss is about, wait until you reach the dreaded hairpin with its rock steps - it's here that the big trailies start to struggle. After the hairpin the going gets even tougher, the small steps get larger until near the top they seem impossible. I should perhaps mention that there is no room for error as the right side of the trail is vertically up, and the left side vertically down... from which there is no return without a winch. Not for nothing is this particular section of trail known as the 'Brown Trousers Track'. Incidentally, National Parks are currently repairing this track to make it easier for walkers, but hopefully the winter rain and frost will return it to its former natural glory.

If you've reached this far, it's nearly all downhill now and you can just follow

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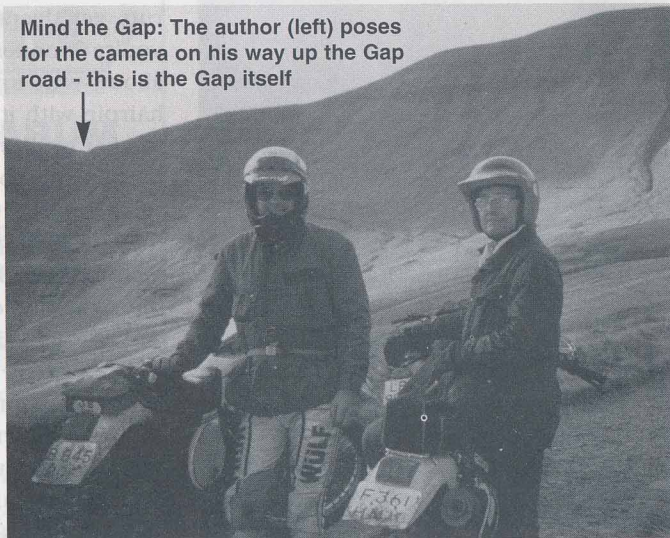
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the track across the open moorland, it gradually becomes more rocky again as it follows the bank of the reservoir to the gate at (248,292). So follow the track to join the metalled road and continue south for about three miles turning right at the telephone box and over the bridge at (273,244). Follow the road past the farm (Coed-Dias) and suddenly you find yourself on a very stony track climbing all the way up to the moorland. Keep to the right here with a stone wall on your left and you'll come to a gate at (282,239), follow the track down through the farmyard at Upper House and on to the metalled road. Now continue on this road to Ty-Mawr and fork left up the hill at (284,233), following this track through one gate and all the bracken until you reach another gate out onto the open moor. If you've got to this point before one o'clock and are in need of refreshment, carry on up the bracken slope until you reach a track crossing, turn right and follow this for about two miles to the pub at the end, but you'll need to backtrack to this point once duly refreshed.

Okay, so turn right to a gate about 100m on your right. If the bracken is down you'll find the track easily, if it's up you'll need to hunt around for it. Follow it down and through Gaer Farm and it gradually turns into tarmac by the

crossroads at (285,211). Go straight across and over the bridge and then turn left (all within 200m). Follow this backroad (watchout for oncoming tractors), until the crossroads at (265,204). Here you need to turn right and follow this lane until reaching the metalled road at (245,202). Go straight across into a continuation of the lane which goes down towards the river. Now go along the bank, turning left over the second bridge and up the hill to emerge by the little church at Llanbedr.

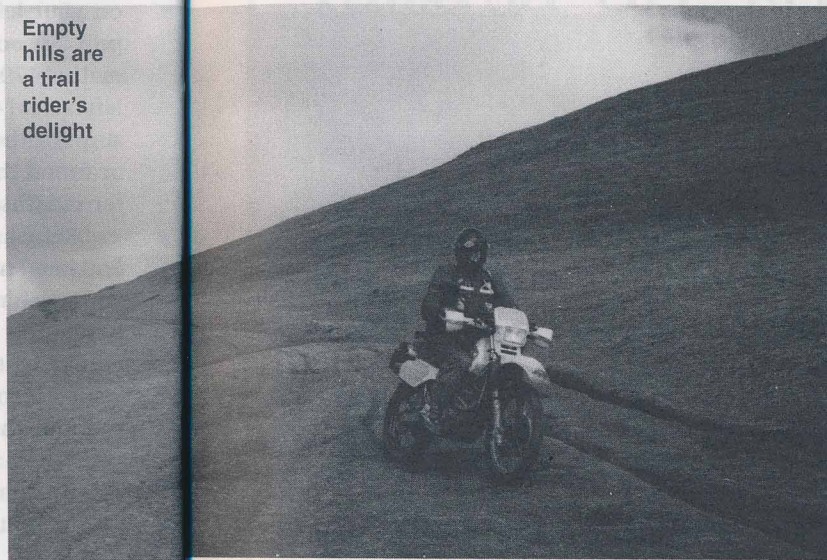
Mind the Gap: The author (left) poses for the camera on his way up the Gap road - this is the Gap itself



Carry on straight across onto the next metalled road and keep going for about three miles into Crickhowell.

Here you will find a petrol stop, and

Empty hills are a trail rider's delight



for those who've had a late start or simply had enough, you can follow the A40 back to Brecon. For the rest of you there are just two more trails, but they run for 40-odd miles and should take you a further couple of hours.

Cross over the river and turn right onto the B4558 in the direction of Llangynidr. Continue along until Talybont-on-Usk, where you turn left over the canal swingbridge signposted Talybont reservoir. At the reservoir turn right over the dam road, and at the end turn immediately right and follow the road along the side of the reservoir. This metalled road gradually gets more rocky, and after you go under the old railway bridge it turns into a great trail. There are many forestry roads as well as the old railway track here so finding the right route is quite tricky. The route you want is more rocky than the others and climbs all the

way through the forest reaching a gate at (103,179). Continue to the top at Pen Rhiw Calch, and keeping the fence on your left, continue on this track, climbing all the way until you reach the open moorland at (090,161). Turn right here and follow the 4X4 tracks across the moor. Be careful if its wet especially if you're riding alongside the track as there are a few sink holes that are invisible until you actually drop into them. Keep going till you reach a gate, then carry on down through the outdoor centre to the dam at Pontsticill Reservoir.

Turn sharp right going north and then straight on at the next turning (if you are following this route and it's not March or September, remember there is a TRO on this trail banning access, so you need to turn right and follow the road back to Talybont-on-Usk then the B4553/A40 back to Brecon). Otherwise follow the road past a picnic area and the Gap Road starts at (035,173). After half a mile you reach the most difficult part of the trail which is where a bridge was blown up during the war to stop the Germans attacking Brecon from the south. My method is to go down the hill in first gear until almost at the bottom, then change up into second and accelerate through the stream before giving it some stick up the other side.

After this point it is fairly flat and easy until you come to the gap itself which is a 'V'-shaped notch in the mountain between Pen y Fan and Fan y Big (yep,

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that really is its name). Follow this rocky track for a couple of miles to the gate at (037,235) then afterwards as it gradually turns to tarmac, turn left at Croftau and second right after about a mile at (041,265). Follow the road for a further half a mile before turning left at (051,268) into the last lane which leads directly down to



the hospital in Brecon. I usually stay at the east side of town at The Grange B&B (approx £18pn - call Bob Smith on 01874 624038), but accommodation is also available all over Brecon including at The Gremlin (sorry no number), or the Beacons Guest House on the west side of Brecon (01874 623339). Good luck.

Next month we guide you around the Western Brecons including Sarn Helen. (PS 40 minute long on-bike video available for majority of route (£12.50), call Richard on 01734 781850 6-8pm).



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CARRY ON...

Not everyone wants to ride their trailbike to the start of the trails - especially when they are abroad. Bevis Billingham explores the alternatives

So you ride to the start of every trail or off-road event and back home afterwards on the road, regardless of the distance or the condition of your bike. Fair enough that's one of the advantages of owning a trailbike. But sooner or later you will probably come to realise the advantages of being able to drive home warm and dry, without wearing out your mud-caked chain and sprockets, to say nothing of your expensive enduro tyres. There are four usual ways of transporting bikes, namely trailers, car-mounted racks, vans, and pick-ups, and we shall consider each of these in turn.

Trailers

A trailer is the most straightforward way of carrying your bike if you have a car with a tow bar. Purpose-built motorcycle trailers, which come in one-, two- or three-bike form are the most convenient, because they are low and have channels with wheel slots which make loading and tying down very easy. A two-bike trailer should have a central channel for carrying a single bike, otherwise it'll be dangerously unstable with one bike offset from the centre.

If you already have a flat-bed or open box trailer there's no reason why you shouldn't use it, though loading may be not be so easy. It's best to stand the bike upright, but if that's too difficult you can remove the battery and rest it on its side on something soft like old tyres, as long as

you make sure nothing can come adrift. Most people use adjustable tie-down straps with hooks on the end, and if the bike is upright it is important to check that the hook at the trailer end cannot come free if the bike suspension compresses slightly when you hit a bad bump. I have known this to happen on two occasions, and the consequences can be dire. It is easily prevented by fixing the hook in place with a piece of tape or rubber band. It is generally considered that forks should not be left compressed for long periods, ie overnight.

Fully enclosed trailers of the LoadLugger type are excellent, and offer much better security for the bike, but are expensive to buy and a prime target for thieves if left around on car parks or lay-bys while you are riding.

Whatever type of trailer you have, it goes without saying that you

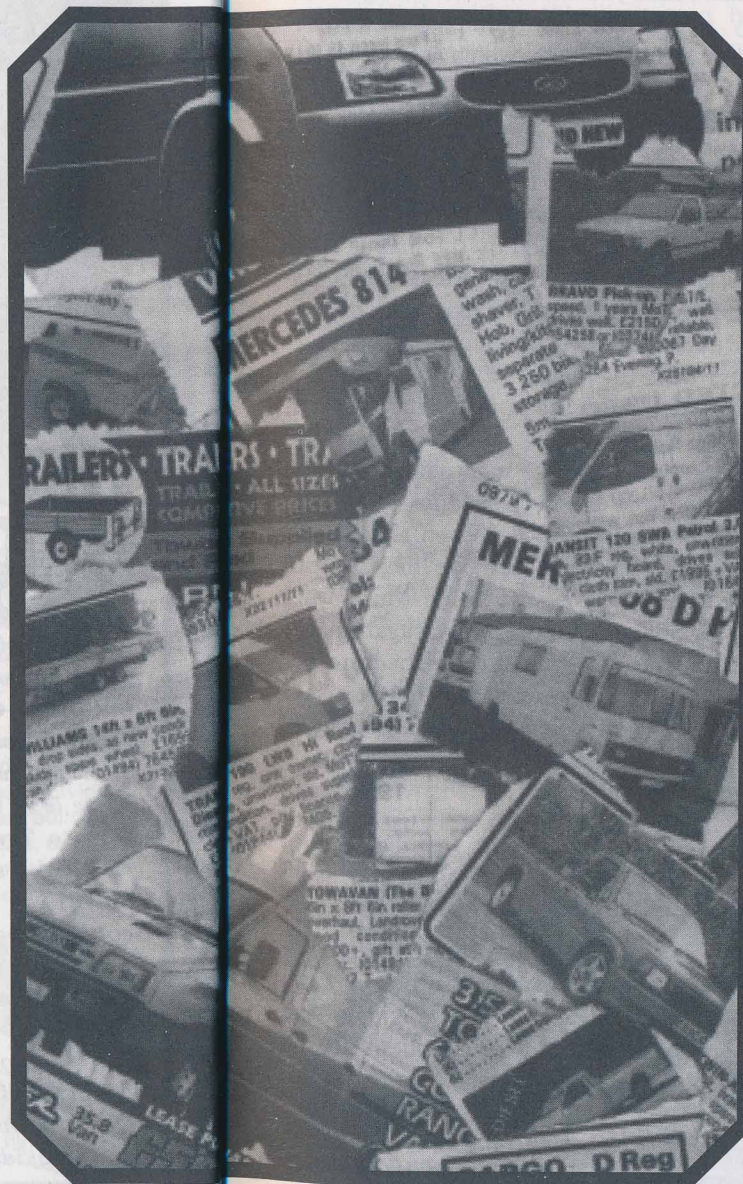
should carry a spare wheel and a suitable jack. Bike trailers often have eight inch wheels which are inclined to give more tyre and bearing problems than car-sized wheels. If you have these small wheels you should ensure that they are fitted with proper high-speed tyres, as there are too many cheap 'agricultural' ones around

which will fit. You won't get far on the M1 at 60mph with wheelbarrow tyres.

The law relating to trailers is too complicated to be stated in detail here, but there are a few salient points to bear in mind. A trailer doesn't have to have brakes if the Maximum Authorised Weight (MAW, the total weight of the trailer with the maximum load it is designed to carry) doesn't exceed 750kg and the actual laden weight is not more than half the kerbside weight of the towing vehicle. The MAW in kilograms must be marked in a conspicuous position on unbraked trailers. It is essential to have a safety chain or cable linking the trailer to the towing vehicle in case the main coupling fails, and braked trailers should have a breakaway cable which applies the brakes on separation: Believe it or not it does occasionally happen: a friend of mine once had his trailer escape and break the drainpipe off the front of a pub. Before driving off you should always check that the hitch is properly connected, the safety cable and electrical wiring are tidily in place, and that the jockey wheel, if there is one, is well clear of the ground.

The trailer must have rear lights and a number plate which are essentially the same as those of the car, and in addition there must be two reflecting triangles and preferably front marker lights. The exact rules are very complicated, but these and other aspects of trailer law are listed in the Indespension Trailer Manual, which is available from Indespension dealers (see Yellow Pages) for £1.25, and is probably the best layman's guide to the subject. The cheap trailer boards sold in car accessory shops are often much too narrow to be legal and proper wide ones can be obtained from agricultural equipment specialists.

Trailers are not allowed on the outside



CARRY ON...

lane of a motorway with more than two lanes, and the speed limit when towing is 50mph on single carriageway roads and 60mph on dual carriageways and motorways unless lower limits are in force. Certain restrictions apply to drivers who've passed the car driving test after July this year, but these and the other more stringent towing regulations should not be a problem unless your car or trailer are disproportionately large or heavy for the purpose of transporting bikes.

Racks

If you have a light bike, a car rack is worth considering. Racks are bolted to the tow-bar in place of the ball hitch, and some are quickly detachable so that they can be put inside the car when not in use. There are two basic types of rack, one having wheel slots at both ends, and the other having a raised platform which supports the bike under the engine, with one slot for the rear wheel.

I've travelled thousands of miles with

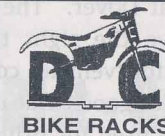
various trail bikes (one at a time!) on the back of my trusty old Citroen with no problems at all, but there are some pitfalls which you should be aware of, namely overloading and dangerous projections. The DT125R, which is one of the lightest trailbikes around, has a kerbside weight with fuel of about 115kg. All modern cars have a maximum trailer noseweight figure (the maximum weight which should be applied downwards on the towbar) specified by the manufacturer, and many of these are listed in the Indespension book. For most cars the figure is in the range of 50 to 75kg, i.e. much less than the weight of a trail bike. The DT125 is about the same weight as a well-built mother-in-law, and most cars are designed to carry 2 such persons on the rear seat, so the suspension will not necessarily be overloaded, even though the bike is behind the rear axle line. You can beef up the rear suspension with spring assisters, as advertised in caravan magazines, but this will not compensate for weakness in the tow bar itself. If you use a rack, you must make sure that the tow bar is properly fitted, with all the mounting points used (sometimes they are not), and provide additional support for the bike if possible. On hatchbacks and estate cars tie-down straps can be run from a roof bar to the ends of the bike and this will make the whole set-up more solid. Obviously if you have a much heavier bike like an XT600, don't even think about it.



The length of a trail bike is considerably greater than the width of most cars, and when the bike is on a rack, even with the front wheel at an angle, it will extend well beyond the sides of the car. The law permits a lateral projection of up to 305mm (12in.) beyond the body of the car on each side, but any sharp object, even if it is within this limit, can be regarded as a dangerous projection. Your bike number plate will probably be deemed to be one if it shaves a cyclist's leg in passing! With the centre platform type of rack the front wheel can be removed, which will reduce the overhang (as well as the weight), although the forks might have to be tied up to keep them clear of the ground. The snag with this type of rack is that the platform may obstruct the rear hatch on some cars. If you're using a rack, a lighting board is required, similar to a trailer one, but without the red triangles, and it should be long enough to mark the width of the load effectively. There are no particular driving restrictions related to the use of racks, but you should be extra careful in view of the weight and overhang.

Vans

A van is probably the best bet if you expect to be carrying your bike around frequently. As well as giving better protection and security for the bike, it will provide you with a changing room and even overnight accommodation at a pinch. After some dismantling you can shoe-horn a trail bike into a small car-based van, but you will soon get fed up with that, and the only real answer is a Transit-sized van. The standard-roof version is actually a bit low (interior height 1328mm, 52.3in) for big trailies, which is why many people pre-



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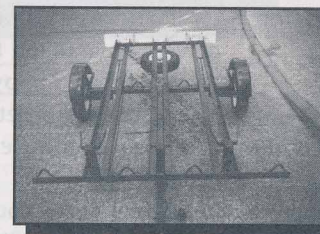
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CARRY ON...

for the Traffic or Ducato-type (front wheel drive) vans which have five or six extra inches of height inside. The speed limits for non car-based vans up to 7.5 tonnes maximum laden weight are 50mph on single carriageway roads, 60mph on dual carriageways and 70mph on motorways, though you might not think so from the way they are usually driven. Vans of this type can use the outside lane of motorways, but technically not the roads through Royal Parks, and even if privately owned most toll roads and bridges like the Severn crossing class them as commercial vehicles and charge accordingly.

Pick-Ups

Fine if you need to transport a giraffe or have some other reason for needing an open platform, but for bikes a van is far more practical, and often faster and better handling when loaded, as well as more secure. A one tonne pick-up can easily accommodate 3 trail bikes, but the bed height might make single-handed loading difficult, (the Toyota Hi-Lux 4x4 has a bed height of 890mm). Speed limits for non car-based pick-ups are the same as for vans above.

Driving Abroad

These days taking bikes to the continent involves very little in the way of red tape, although it's best to have an insurance green card for the bike as well as the car/van, otherwise it may not be covered for theft or anything above the absolute minimum required by law. Trailers are usually carried at greatly reduced rates or even free on some ferry sailings, and the

fares are changing all the time, so check before you go. There are different speed limits for trailers in all European countries, and these are listed in the Indespension book and on signs at ports or border crossings.

For bikes carried in vans ferry operators may require the fuel tank to be drained, and I can assure you that it is easier to do that at home than on the quayside at Dover. The ferry companies also reserve the right to charge commercial fares for 'vehicles constructed for the carriage of goods' but if it is obvious that the van is used for private purposes they will usually take it on a car ticket.

Le Shuttle however do *not* charge commercial rates for vans used for social or personal purposes and don't require the bike fuel tank to be drained, but the toll operator should be informed about the bike on arrival. Likewise there is no problem with racks or trailers on Le Shuttle.

On the subject of racks, if it is legal over here it should be legal on the continent for visitors, but I wouldn't always bet on it. In recent times a number of British drivers have fallen foul of obscure French laws, backed up by massive on-the-spot fines, so if your set-up is at all questionable you would be well-advised to steer clear of France.

There is, of course, one other option for carrying your bike - the roof. I have seen it done (an RM125 on a Citroen GS), but remember the weight of a trail bike is far in excess of the permitted roof loading of *any* car. It may be alright in cartoons, but in real life... forget it.

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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.

XR650L: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, 644cc, single, e/s. Grey imported, fully street legal version of the XR600 using electric start Dominator engine and some of the roadgoing niceties. Slight weight penalty, and definitely not for shorties. Good overland machine. *Verdict:* *Worth searching out.*

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

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

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

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

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

XLV600VP Transalp: w/c, 4-str, 6-valve, sohc, 583cc, V-twin, e/s. Called the Rally Tourer, which fits its abilities perfectly. True dual purpose machine, great all-rounder. Engine based on the VT500, and larger versions now power the Bros and Africa Twin. Unburstable and

torquey motor churns out a claimed 50bhp but can be tricky to work on unless out of the frame. Very expensive and fragile cosmetics worth protecting if you're going to venture off road. Early versions easy to spot due to hub rear brake which was prone to going oval. Some Mk1 versions also suffered from rotting wheel rims (like Dominator), and single front discs (identical to CBR600s) can wear fast. Slight facelift in 1993 widened nose fairing slightly, but if anything more vulnerable in prangs and screen sill too low for comfort. Later model also comes with mounting points for optional centre stand - aftermarket ones available for earlier models. Beware handlebar rubber-mountings wearing out giving 'twisted' and remote feel to bars. Sensible secondhand prices. *Verdict:* *Superb trail bike for touring on. 'One Careful Owner' on 1987 model TBM 4, 1996 model tested TBM 12.*

XLV750: a/c, 4-str, sohc, V-twin. Heavyweight (212kg) Mid-80s precursor to Transalp but featuring shaft-drive, 20 litre tank and distinctive red engine (except for Aussie ones!). Never officially imported into the UK, but quite common in France. *Tested TBM 4.*

XRV650 Africa Twin: w/c, 4-str, 6-valve, sohc, V-twin, e/s. Even closer to HRC P-D specials, mass-produced monster trailie that was extremely popular in Europe in 1989. About 100 were specially built for HRC-supported mass entries to Paris Dakar.

XRV750 Africa Twin: w/c, 4-str, 6-valve, sohc, 742cc, 59bhp V-twin, e/s. Bored out from 650cc to 742cc in 1990 to make an impressive but rather top-heavy Paris-Dakar styled megatrailie. Much more expensive than the competition at the time, though they had high build quality and came with trick on-board computer. Better off road than you'd imagine, especially on fast and dusty trails.

XRV750-S Africa Twin: w/c, 4-str, 6-valve, sohc, 742cc, 62bhp V-twin, e/s. Lightened, lowered and improved 1993-on version of its forbear with extra 3bhp. Superb, top quality all-

rounder but still relatively expensive.

HUSABERG

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

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

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

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

HUSQVARNA

Previously Swedish, but now Italian-owned company (Cagiva) manufacturing a range of (essentially) competition bikes (Enduro and Motocross), not to mention a rather nice line in lawnmowers. Both two and four stroke machines are renowned for their power to weight ratio and high quality components, though left hand kickstarts can be awkward (post-88 two strokes went to r/h kickstart). Four strokes all have two-stroke-style bottom ends devoid of oil pumps and balancer mechanisms.

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

TE350: w/c, 4-str, 349cc, single. Serious lightweight (116kg) enduro tool for riders who appreciate European function and efficiency over Japanese styling and reliability! Great Brembo brakes, revvy top end power - stable handling. Conventional Marzocchi forks from '95. Regular maintenance recommended. *Tested in TBM 5.*

TE410: w/c, 4-str, 399cc, single. Big bore version of above, started life as a 415cc but reduced to 399cc for '96 to qualify for 400 class.

TE510: w/c, 4-str, 503cc single. Slow-steering but still lightweight thumper with enough stomp to tow a truck. Slightly outmoded but good clubman tool with enough power for anyone. Not recommended for motorways - or any kind of prolonged road use.

WR400/430: w/c, 2-str, single. Headbanger enduro bike - not for the fainthearted.

JAWA-CZ

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

KAWASAKI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

KMX200: 1987-92, 221lb/100kg, w/c, 2-str, 191cc, single, 6-speed. Big-bore version of the 125 with a claimed 30bhp, which makes a much more able all-rounder capable of motorway cruising and a top whack of nearly 90mph. Not as reliable as the 125 and if used 'in extremis' off-road the suspension, and especially the forks are not as good as later generation KDXs. Fuel range to bone dry is only 90 miles with 10 mile reserve, and KIPS valve can give trouble, as can clutch and radiator (no fan fitted!). 200 also lumbered with a 17 inch rear wheel, so it's quite common to fit the 18 inch from the 125 to improve off-road tyre choice. KMX also suffered from indifferent build quality, and could be fragile off road. Pads and discs wore out if you so much as looked at them. But seat height is much more accessible for shorties than KDX. Has not been imported for a few years now, if in good nick, an excellent trail bike for most conditions. **One Careful KMX 125/200 owner TBM No.1**

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

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than cheaper KMX in restricted form.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

KLE500: 392lb/178kg, w/c, 4-str, 8-valve,

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

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

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

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

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

KTM

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

400: w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, single. Trail bike

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

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

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

LAVERDA

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

MORINI

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

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

MOTO GUZZI

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

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

Quota: a/c, 4-str, ohv, V-twin. Big Guzzi that like Triumph's Tiger is really just a road bike in trail bike clothing, but without the Triumph's impressive on road performance. A truly monstrous beast with a seat-height that requires a

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ladder if you're under 6ft. It makes even the Tiger feel small by comparison. Agricultural engine with torque reaction from the shaft and dangerous lack of ground clearance both on and off road. Good fuel consumption thanks to fuel injection and high gearing, are about all it has going for it. Incredibly expensive when it was launched, but prices did come down. Strictly for straight dirt roads and motorways. Should come with a government health warning. *Verdict: Proves that big is not necessarily beautiful.*

MZ

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

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

ROKON

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

SUZUKI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TS200R: 112kg, w/c, 2-str, 195cc, 35bhp, single. Grey import with its own French championship. Higher spec than UK 125s includes USD forks. Excellent stroker trailie that's not too expensive. Reasonable availability for a grey import. *Verdict: Good value trailie.*

PE175: a/c, 2-str, single. Basic twin-shock clubman enduro bike from the seventies, styled on the RM motocrosser. Poky at the time, but not by today's standards. Last ones had 'full floater' suspension. Reasonable number of tatty ones still about that can be had for not much money.

PE250: a/c, 2-str, single. Similar to 175 but with a better spread of power. Lots of fun, but noisy as hell.

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

RMX 250: w/c, 2-str, 249cc single. Developed from the RM crosser, but a pukka enduro tool launched in 1990. Superb suspension with conventional forks the size of scaffold tubes. Excellent brakes and handling and more than enough power for anyone (and a bit too much for some!) Very reliable if properly looked after. Could win any enduro in the right hands. *Verdict: The definitive enduro tool by which all others must be judged. Tested TBM 12.*

SP370: a/c 4-str, sohc, single. Early eighties twin shock trailie that seemed to go on and on. Frugal, robust and reasonably reliable despite lack of balancer shaft. Good, cheap hack.

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

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

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

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

DR125/200 Djebel: o-a/c, 4-str, sohc, single, e/s. Japanese home market version of above with more street mods (including electric boot). Later ones had big single headlamp with surrounding protection bar.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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give iffy running at low revs. *Verdict: Okay I s'pose.*

DR650: o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single, e/s. Latest version of above without the half fairing or twin exhausts. Still overgeared, still rather tall, but with the best suspension in class. Not very refined and feels a bit cheap, but definitely heading in the right direction.

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

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

TRIUMPH

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

YAMAHA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DT125(LC): 1987-on, w/c, 2-str, single. The DT came of age with the adoption of watercooling, motocross styling, and most important of

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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BIKES

Yamaha XT600Z Tenere, 1986, C-reg, T&T, electric and kick start, Acerbis plastics, recent full service, vgc, £1800 ono. Tel Tim on 01737 843321 (Kent)

Suzuki TS250RH import (TS250X), D-reg, 1987, only 4500km, T&T, very reliable, rides like new, some extras, white and blue, £1175 ono. Tel Nick on 01279 414114 (Essex)

Honda XR250 Baja trail bike, G-reg, long MoT, 13,000m, Renthal bars, large tank, twin headlights, new tyres, Nissin calipers, DID rims, Showa shock, £1995 ono. Tel 01282 436186 (Lancs)

Kawasaki KMX200, 1990, H-reg, excellent cond, 9000 miles, well looked after bike, £1350 ono. Tel 01257 401726 after 5.30pm (Lancs)

Yamaha TTR250, latest model, 8,500 road miles only, as new cond, £2850. Tel 01325 313763 (Newton Aycliffe, Co Durham)

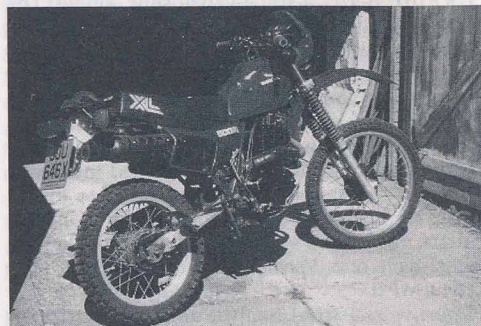


Suzuki TS125X, 1984, T&T, excellent throughout, tall & fast trail, £850. Tel 01908 281625

Kawasaki KLX250 G1, P-reg, 1996, very low miles, Datatagged, alarmed, long range tank, cost £4450, will sell £3750 or

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Honda XL500R, 1982, excellent original cond, pulls like a train, new back tyre, long MoT, must be seen, £950 ono. Tel Martin on 01582 873436 (Dunstable)



Honda XL350, 1984, T&T, vgc, £1400 ono. Tel 0181 449 3149, eves (N London)

Husqvarna WR250 enduro, 94, L-reg, MXA graphics, lime yellow, Acerbis brush guards, very quick with excellent low/mid range torque, recently serviced, £2300 ono. Tel 01684 575830 (Malvern)

Yamaha TT600, mint cond, new MoT, not for girl's blouses, and please no tyre kickers, £2200 ovno. Tel 0117 977 9898 or mobile 0374 219698 (Bristol)

Suzuki TS250X, 1986, T&T, needs rebore otherwise vgc, £850. Tel 0181 501 0320 (Essex)

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TRAIL TALES...

DAVE 'CRASHER' CORNISH EXPLAINS HOW HE CAME BY HIS NICKNAME

You know the feeling, you've got it all horribly wrong... it's only a matter of seconds before the unavoidable impact between bike, Scots pine, vicious bramble bush etc and your fragile defenceless body, all of which come together in one painful union.

It may or may not come as a surprise to you to learn that my crashing days started as soon as I took up the dubious pleasure of off roading. In my testosterone-filled youth, keeping the throttle wide open and hanging on for dear life meant I quickly ended up on first name terms with the local X-ray unit, who used to keep a bed ready for me each weekend, 'just in case...'

My introduction into the world of the *really big* get off started whilst at an MX practice track trying to race my recently acquired DT175MX against some serious motocrossers. After less than two laps I launched the mint condition DT off the largest jump full bore in third gear, and sailed gracefully over the heads of the CR and YZ mounted opposition with a huge grin on my face, only to clear the landing slope and land nose down on the take off ramp of the following jump. The result of this error of judgement was a couple of broken ribs and a badly smashed bike (including a bent swinging arm).

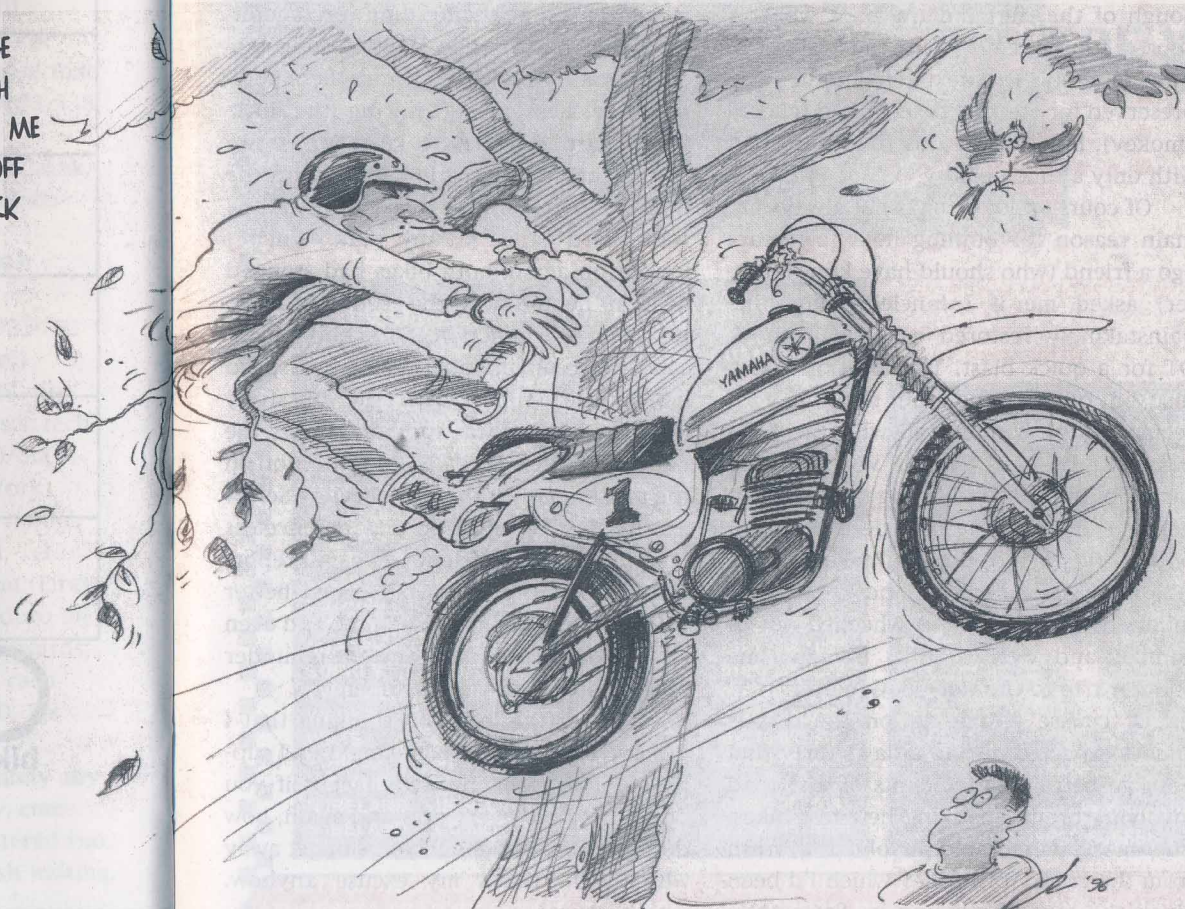
The next big crash involved a beast of

a YZ (a 465 I think), leant to me at a local piece of waste ground. The main feature of this makeshift track was the huge 25 foot deep crater, dubbed 'The Bomb Hole'. This simple hole in the ground had a fairly steep drop in and a fast but shallow exit surrounded by trees. With the throttle pinned wide open my trusty DT (still with its bent swinging arm) would leap impressively into the air and land approximately 15 to 20 feet away.

However with hindsight, my tactics on the big YZ ought to have been a little different. With me at the helm the big-bore bruiser took off out of the crater like a surface to air missile gaining altitude as it went, until a huge branch from one of the surrounding trees knocked me clean off the back and dumped me on the ground some 15 feet below. While the unmanned YZ went on to make an expensive crash landing just in front of its shocked owner.

All of this was only the start of what's become (according to the ed) a bit of an occupational hazard. For instance at a multi lap enduro around a sandy Chippenham track, I was becoming increasingly impatient with the similarly mounted KDX rider in front. On the straights his bike

**A HUGE
BRANCH
KNOCKED ME
CLEAN OFF
THE BACK**



just had enough to keep in front of me, but on the jumps and into the corners he was frustratingly slow. Following this guy into a fast left hander before a large jump I decided to overtake him by not backing off the gas and simply out-jump him. The first part of the plan worked perfectly, exit speed from the corner was high and so was my take off velocity.

As I launched into the air I peered down and saw my rival way below, then just as I thought I'd pulled off the overtake of the afternoon, he veered over into my landing area. Apart from sound my horn, there wasn't much I could do but

land on the guy, my KDX coming down straight onto the other bike's seat. The rest as they say is history, but needless to say I fell off big time, several following riders slammed into my bike ripping the exhaust clean out of the barrel and totalling most of the plastics. Funny thing was, my fellow Kawasaki rider wobbled off for another lap and didn't even stop. He only realised how lucky he was a bit later, when he found the knobbly tyre print on the back of his race shirt.

Another incident this time Husky 510 mounted, saw me chasing three other bikes around the tight and twisty confines

of the Blaxhall enduro circuit. With the slow steering Husky cranked over on it's right hand side I was totally committed to my line when unexpectedly the rider in front stalled. With little time to act, I tried to turn the big four stroke to avoid tailgating the guy, but the Husky had other ideas - climbing the small berm and simply going ballistic. I was now heading straight for the largest tree at Blaxhall, and with the bike almost vertical, there was no way I could shut off. To cut a long story short the Husky came to a halt with the front wheel stuck in the bough of the tree and the back wheel a good four feet off the ground. Unfortunately, the next ten minutes are preserved for eternity on celluloid (cheers Smokey), but at least this time I escaped with only a time penalty.

Of course pilot error is not always my main reason for binning it. A few years ago a friend (who should have known better) asked me if I fancied taking his painstakingly restored early twin shock DT for a quick blast. The location was a disused quarry and the pristine Yam seemed to be coping well with the hard stony track... or at least it was until the carb top came loose allowing the needle to pop out and jam the throttle wide open. With little or no time to take evasive action, my friend's pride and joy (closely followed by yours truly) wheeled out of control and over a cliff, booking me another trip to the Norfolk General.

Of course falling off on the dirt is almost expected during a day's dirty fun, but I've had a few incidents on the road involving brand spanking new test bikes. The most memorable involved a fresh from the crate Aprilia 125 which I'd been given the task of running in. Sat astride

the bike in the workshops I snicked it into gear and eased out of the doorway before leaning over and feeding in the power. The Aprilia's snappy response and brand new tyres saw the back end step out, grip and then chuck me straight over the high side. Red-faced I picked up the bike and rode straight back into the workshops with the bodywork all smashed on one side. The trip meter showing just less than one tenth of a kilometre. Oh dear.

But the crash that sticks in my mind as being a particularly big one involved the whole TrailBike team: Blez on his XR600, the ed on his recently acquired CRM and the brand new Serow that I was riding. This time the location was a country back road on the Whitley long distance trial. Following Si and the XR600 mounted Blez meant juicing the little Serow hard in order to keep up. As we approached a side road I kept the throttle wound on but sneaked a glance at the route card taped to my tank. When I looked up again, both bikes had stopped dead in the middle of the road in order to turn into the junction. I somehow managed to scrub off about half my speed before the impact with the blissfully unaware ed who was torpedoed over the handlebars into Blez knocking him off in the process, whilst the cartwheeling Serow exacted its revenge on my defenceless body. A post incident damage report showed that the bikes had coped better with the huge impact than I had, and even now my left elbow is a constant reminder of that fateful day last October.

If all of this has you thinking that I deserve my 'Crasher' name tag then I suppose you're right, but let's face it if you don't 'try a bit' every now and again, how do you know how much you can get away with? Well, that's my excuse anyhow, what's yours?

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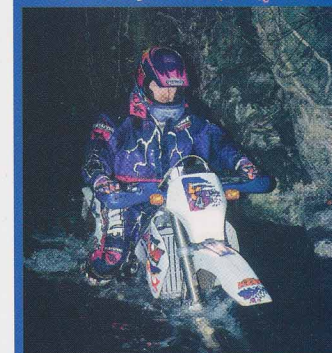
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