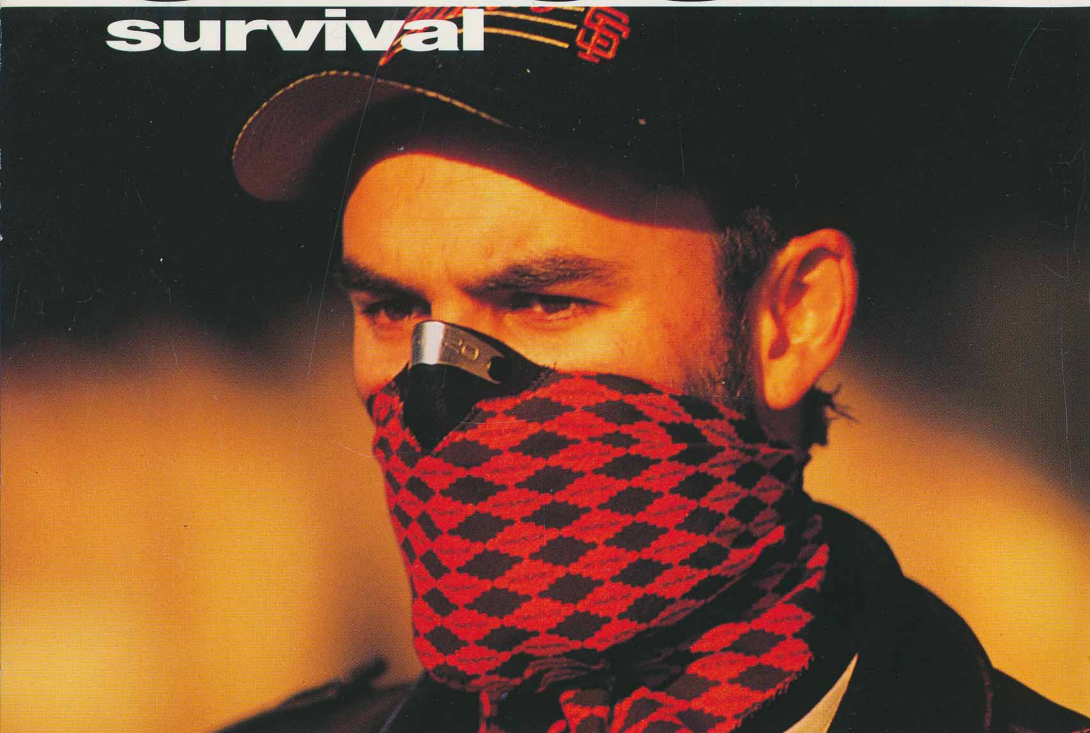


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Great Greeves



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W

ELCOME TO THE first issue of TrailBike Magazine, a magazine that's aimed at owners and riders of trail bikes everywhere. We aim to inform you of all aspects of news that relates to you, update you on new models as they arrive, interest you with touring

stories and features on how and where to ride, and hopefully amuse you with anecdotes and tales that befall our contributors.

Our brief is deliberately wide, if it's to do with trailbikes we'll be covering it. And don't worry if you've never ventured off road, we'll be covering

road riding and supermotard bikes, as well as telling you how to take part in easy off road events. So sit back, put your feet up on the pegs, and enjoy the ride.

Si Melber

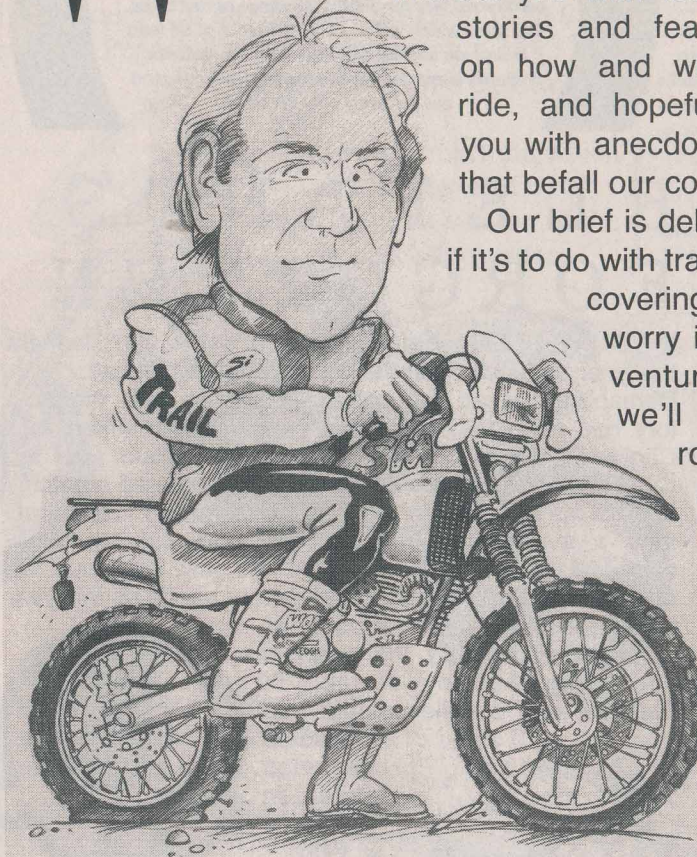


Illustration John Keogh

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BUDGET BUSTER

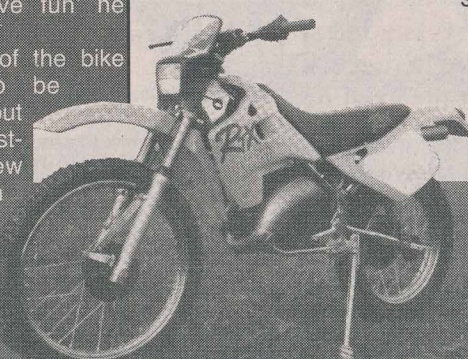
Budget British Bike builders RTX are launching a brand new trailbike that will cost less than £1500 when it goes on sale in the autumn.

The Humberside firm who specialise in building cut-price trials and motocross machines aim to capture a slice of the lucrative trail bike market with the introduction of their new model.

The new bike which will be called the RTX City Enduro will utilise an air-cooled, four-speed, 123cc engine allied to a twin shock chassis to create the cheapest 125cc trailbike currently available.

'This bike is aimed at the 'non-serious' rider' says Managing Director John Mason. 'For every serious rider out there, there are a hundred who just want to have fun' he added.

Full details of the bike are yet to be announced but we will be testing the new machine in TrailBike Magazine as soon as it comes available.



RTX's budget trail bike, which should cost less than £1500 when it goes on sale in the autumn

RUBBER NEWS

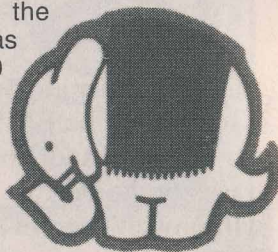
GERMAN TYRE manufacturers Metzeler are set to announce the launch of a new more 'aggressive' on/off road tyre for BMW's GS range of trail bikes. The tyres which will be 60:40 in favour of off road riding are slightly narrower than the Metzeler Enduros currently fitted to the big BeeEmm, and are currently only SR rated.

ELEFANTS FORGOTTEN

IF YOU'VE BEEN trying to get hold of a new 900 Elephant this year but have been unsuccessful blame Ducati. Demand for Ducati road bikes has been so high, the factory has been forced to utilise engines earmarked for Cagiva Elephants to try and keep up with orders.

Cagiva importers Three Cross, originally ordered a batch of 60 of the larger Elephants, but were dismayed to find that their allocation had been cut back to just 14 bikes. Spokeswoman Lisa Davies said 'It's just ridiculous we could sell all the bikes we could get our hands on this year but there just aren't enough at the moment.'

Fortunately the crisis has not affected supply of the 750 Elephants, and supplies of the 900 should be resumed later in the year.

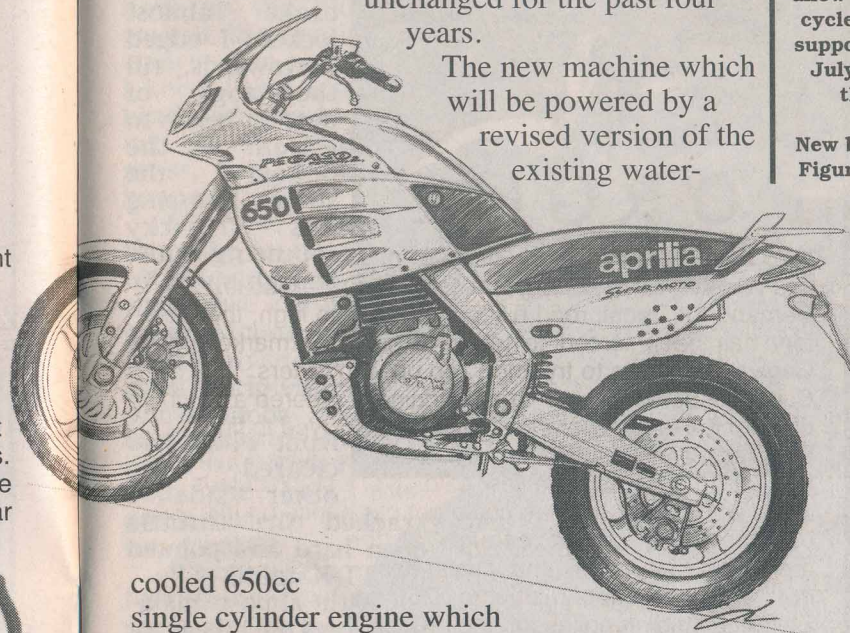


APRILIA SHOCKER

Next Year's Pegaso is going to be radically different from the current model and may not even be a trail bike at all!

A spokesman for Aprilia confirmed that the 1996 model will be radically different from the existing Pegaso that has remained virtually unchanged for the past four years.

The new machine which will be powered by a revised version of the existing water-



cooled 650cc single cylinder engine which also powers the BMW F650, is thought to feature more sportsbike-type styling but still with traces of the Pegaso's trail bike heritage. This will probably entail swapping the existing Pegaso's spoked wheels for a set of cast alloy 17 inch rims to allow the fitment of wider tubeless tyres.

BMW is thought to be working on a similar project with a sports version of its Funduro, as well as a more touring-oriented model which features a redesigned fairing with a taller screen.

Illustration John Keogh

In Brief

Kawasaki may be set to launch a brand new 400 version of its KLX. The new bike which uses a smaller version of the 650 motor in the 250 chassis should put out about 45BHP.

The Department of Transport has admitted that new EU learner laws that allow learners to ride motorcycles up to 15bhp and are supposed to be in force by 1 July 1996 may not be on the statute in time.

New bike sales are up again. Figures for the year to date (end of April) revealed a two percent rise in the number of new bikes registered, up from last year's figure of 17,363 to 17,704 units.

The F650 remains Britain's top selling trailie with sales of 179 units in the period Jan-April '95.

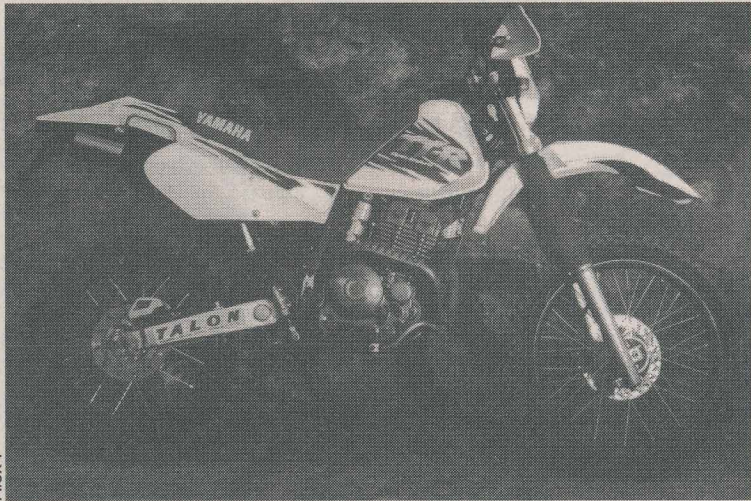
Though this figure is down on last year's, a BMW spokesperson said 'Last years figures were due to pent-up demand after the launch, and we expect to be back on target by the end of the year.'

The top five selling trailbikes in the UK this year are:-

- 1 BMW F650
- 2 Yamaha DT125
- 3 Kawasaki KMX125
- 4 Suzuki TS125
- 5 Kawasaki KLX650

Yamaha

TT-R 250



Alex P

Yamaha's latest trail bike is a hot new 250 designed to meet Honda's XR head on. TrailBike Magazine were invited to try it out first

THE SHEEP TRACK that stretched out ahead of me appeared to drop away off the edge of a precipice and cross a little gully before climbing vertically straight up the hillside opposite. I swallowed hard put the TT-R into first gear and let out the clutch.

The bike edged forward holding its line as we crept down the side of the hill picking our way through the bracken and past the occasional boulder which threatened to knock the bike off its line. With

the rear disc brake almost locked, I edged downwards, till the angle of descent began to lessen. At the bottom the stream crossing was tricky requiring just enough speed to get through without charging over the slippery gravel bed. As soon as the front wheel had cleared the other side I

cracked the throttle open hard and pointed the TT-R uphill.

With almost maximum revs the bike leapt forwards surging up the hill with the rear knob-bly biting hard for grip in the spongy turf. About two thirds of the way up it was obvious the little Yam had this obstacle taped. Then, just as I thought everything was under control, the front wheel hit a rock and reared up. I shut off the throttle instantly but the front end was still climbing, and by the time I

regained control I was no longer pointing up the hill, but rather across it. With no track anymore and the grass still damp from the overnight dew things were definitely not going as planned. I clenched my knees tighter on the tank, pointed the front wheel back up the hill and gave it the gentlest of squirts. The next thing I knew I was tumbling head over heels watching the sky then the grass and finally a bouncing TT-R.

Okay, so I fell off, but when we test a bike we go to great lengths to ensure we do it thoroughly! I mean you need to know not just how good it looks in the showroom but how well it withstands crashes don't you? Well I'll tell you; the bike was great, but my back was crooked.

It's one of the first things that strikes you about the TT-R, just how light that front end is, not just when you're trying to pick it up off the ground. All the time you're riding it it flicks from side to side over the bumps, handles ruts and dips really well, and goes light as soon as you get on the power. If you like a bike that turns really quickly you'll love the TT-R.

'The next thing I knew I was tumbling head over heels watching the sky then the grass and finally a bouncing TT-R'

Mitsui Yamaha, the bike's importers are still not sure what the demand for this machine will be and have committed themselves to bringing in only a handful of bikes this year. However if it is as

it going to appeal to? Put simply the Yamaha TT-R250 Open

Enduro, to give it its full title, is Yamaha's equivalent to the all conquering Honda XR250. Updated certainly, and with a few neat touches and styling designs that will



Agile if not particularly fast, the TT-R is great on the dirt where you can explore its potential

favourable as we think it'll be then they shouldn't have any trouble selling them even at the exorbitant price tag there's talk of it carrying.

So what sort of bike is the TT-R and who is

appeal to enthusiasts, but essentially an XR equivalent in a set of Yamaha togs, but with one important difference. The Yamaha comes fitted with an electric start.

Not since the

Yamaha TT-R 250

demise of the old XT250 has Yamaha had an officially imported quarter litre trail bike, and never one with an electric starter. Though the TT-R is not new - it's been available in Australia, Greece, Brazil* and of course Japan - it's the first time it's been seen within these shores. And though it carries the title Open Enduro in its name, and is ideally suited as a clubman bike in that type of event, in reality it's as much a trail bike as it is an enduro. For a start it comes with a host of roadgoing necessities including of course that electric boot, a set of indicators (with a hazard warning feature), and speedo etc, as well

as a pair of neat alloy pillion pegs that are beautifully crafted, tucking neatly out of the way when not required. But it's primarily thanks to a smooth power delivery that although quite potent at the top end (as I found out to my cost) is nowhere near as peaky as many enduro machines. This means it

Ignition key and barrel are located in the headstock as a means of keeping everything out of harm's way and deterring theft. Looks pretty neat too



with adjustable units front and rear. The front end in particular felt very capable soaking up a mixture of adverse terrain without once giving cause for complaint, yet allowing a good measure of feedback where required - leading axle, air-damped forks fitted with a set of garish pink gaiters, allowing more than ten inches of travel.

The rear end is equally well equipped employing Yamaha's proven rising rate monoshock set-up with a remote reservoir shock that allows adjustment for both compression and rebound damping. With again nearly ten inches of suspension travel there's plenty of damping available to soak up the bumps but with the inevitable consequence of a fairly high seat height, and that's one of the downsides to the TT-R. It's all very well having a bike that's light and manageable enough to be able to negotiate a tricky bit of going, but it's no good if you can't reach the floor when you need to put your foot down. It's no worse than a DR350 but could do with having a slightly cut down saddle to compensate for the tall suspension.

Like most trail bikes these days the TT-R takes its styling cues from the motocross scene with a chunky

can be ridden along quite happily at walking pace, or used to pick its way along a tricky section as well as blasting along on the road or when conditions allow.

In its repertoire it has a well specified suspension set-up,

TrailBike -10- Magazine

looking, steel box-section frame allied to a heavy duty alloy swing-arm and most distinctive of all purple anodised wheel rims which make the bike stand out from the crowd. Neat touches abound, the firm and slim-line seat runs up the rear of the steel petrol tank, in front of which, and built into the chassis headstock is the ignition barrel. And on the swing arm a pair of lugs support the wheel to facilitate easy tyre replacement, helped by handy captive spacers.

Tucked into that chassis is a typically neat, air-cooled, dohc, single cylinder engine, fed by a set of carbs with Yamaha's dual induction system (YDIS). Like most engines these days it features a four valve cylinder head, but unusually for this type of machine, exhaust gases exit via just a single header pipe. It's a compact and tidy looking motor that while thriving on revs has enough bottom end spirited away to thump along at modest revs and still pull cleanly from nothing.

Press the starter

and with a whir of activity the starter motor spins the engine into life, settling down after a moment or two into a rapid 'tonk-tonk' sound. The first of six close(ish) ratio gears gets you underway and the motor rapidly spins through its powerband before levelling off and it's time to select



'It's a compact and tidy looking motor that while thriving on revs has enough bottom end spirited away to thump along at modest speed'

another cog. Though there's no kickstarter to help you out should the battery go flat. (a distinct possibility bearing in mind that on this particular one the lights are wired on full time), you really do get used to the convenience of that electric boot. No

matter how tired you feel, or how deep the water (or in our case, bog), you get stuck in, firing it up is a matter of a simple push of the button.

As this is a Japanese import primarily intended for evaluation purposes, it's possible that the instruments and certain things like the indicators will be changed for the UK market, which is a shame because few trail bikes are as neatly laid out as the TT-R. The instruments feature a rather unusual digital

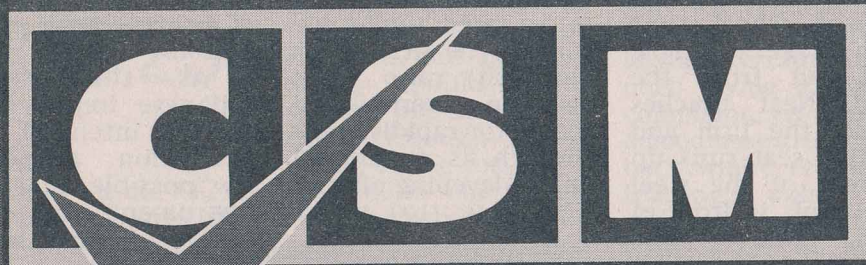
speedo which while perhaps not as easy to read as an analogue one looks very trick and cuts down on weight. Likewise the switchgear and indicators are neat and functional and more important tucked out of harms way. All in all it's a well packaged bike that feels well designed from the moment you climb aboard.

If you're more used to the size and weight of a 350 like an XT or DR you'll be surprised at how nimble the TT-R feels, it's a bit narrower and certainly easier to

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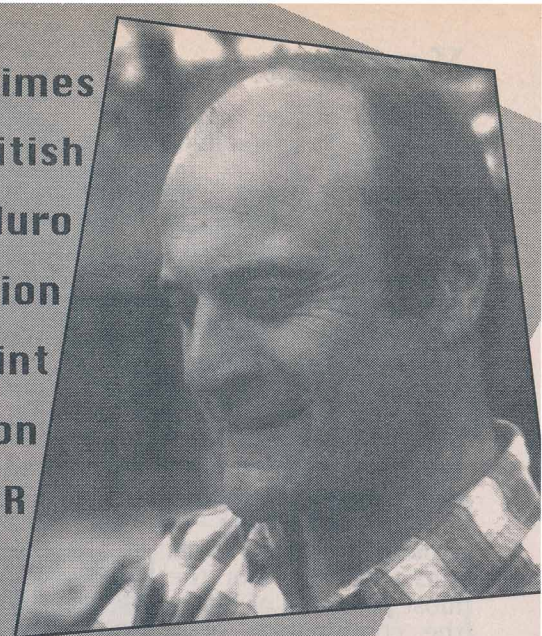
flick from side to side, but of course doesn't have as much grunt at the bottom end to power you out of trouble. Neither is it as fast on the road, as here the weight saving can't make up for the lack of cubes.

That said the TT-R is a genuinely competent trailie from a manufacturer with a reputation for making great dual purpose machines. It will be a pity if it's saddled with a price tag that hikes it beyond what many people would consider paying for a 250.

For your money you'll get a good mixture of technology and ability, and of course the TT-R is capable of running competitively in enduros, to some people that will undoubtedly be worth the extra, but for others that price tag may turn out to be the worst feature of an otherwise excellent trail bike.

Price	£4000+ (approx)
Weight	113kg
Plus	elec start, attention to detail, light.
Minus	probably expensive.

Ten-times British Enduro Champion Geraint Jones on the TT-R



“

It's a super little bike, almost anyone can ride it - the electric start is a boon'

'We've used it now for a number of 'Off Road Experiences' -everybody that's ridden it has praise for it.'

It's not the fastest bike in the world by any means, but it's very manageable and the suspension's good.'

'Unlike a lot of bikes, especially two-strokes, being air-cooled means it doesn't have any radiators to get broken, and it makes the bike feel smaller and easier to ride.'

'I don't think anyone will be disappointed if they're looking for that type of machine, it's an excellent trail bike and a good clubman enduro tool.'

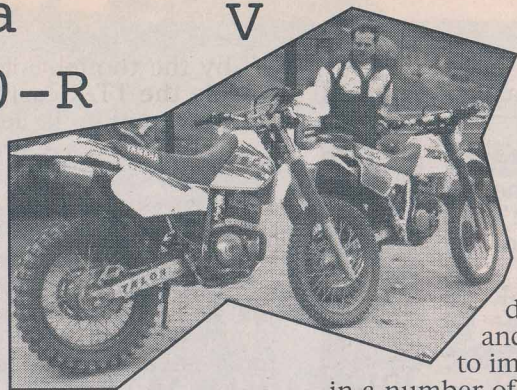
For someone who wants an easy to ride bike - a bike to just trail ride and do some easy enduros on it's great. If they're serious about winning it's not the thing, but I don't think it's meant to be.'

Geraint Jones runs his own Enduro school in Wales as part of the Yamaha Off-Road Experience.

If you want to have a go at enduro riding, and try the TT250-R yourself, the school costs £89 per day and you can write to him at Glynhafren, Old Hall, Llanidloes, Powys, SY18 6PS

Yamaha TT250-R

V



THERE'S NO DOUBTING the bike with which the TT-R is most likely to be compared by riders and prospective buyers, and that's Honda's XR250L.

The venerable XR has been around for some time and while it's not the most powerful of bikes, the combination of a punchy, four-stroke single in a rugged, and lightweight chassis has found favour with a number of trail and enduro riders alike.

We decided the only way to test them properly was in a head to head shootout, so we could swap around and compare notes to see if there was a worthy winner. We chose a US-import XR250L for comparison rather than the UK-spec 'R' version, as it most closely matched the Yamaha's road-equipped specification, and took it to Geraint Jones' Welsh hill farm so we could have a proper face off.

The first thing that strikes you is how similar they appear to be. It's obvious that Yamaha have looked very closely at the XR250 in designing the TT-R, and it's a testament to the 'rightness' of the Honda that their final

Honda XR250L

design has so much in common with the original XR. There are differences of course and Yamaha have looked to improve upon the Honda in a number of areas, not the least of which is the engine.

The TT-R does, it has to be said, feel a whole lot smoother than the XR lump which has been doing the business for off-road Hondas in one guise or another for the best part of ten years, and while it's still a fine performer by today's standards, next to the TT-R it feels coarse and unrefined. Perhaps that goes for the rest of the bike as well, for despite obvious similarities, everywhere you look the Yamaha seems to feature minor improvements over the Honda in both style and technology.

SECOND

'Both these bikes are a joy to ride, light overall weight and thrashable four-stroke single cylinder engines let the good times spin, and you can use either one on road when the dirt settles. So which is the better bike? The TT-R looks like a street-cred trail bike for the 'Nineties - with snazzy anodised coloured wheel-rims, an LCD speedo and trick little features like ally rear footpegs. Front and rear lights are styled-in to match the rest of the bike but the omission of a kickstart is a bit silly.

To ride the front end feels a lot lighter to steer and more sensitive than the XR, but the XR feels the stronger machine and had the edge in acceleration too.

If you're looking for a trail bike, my money would go on the tried and tested XR, it may be older but it's no worse for that and you don't have to live with a bruise coloured seat either. **Orlando Stuart**

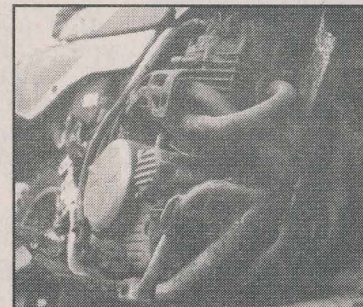
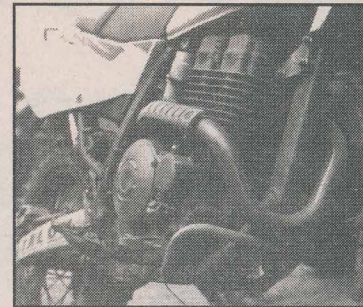
OPINION

Certainly no bike could put clear air between itself and its oppo. Time and again we would step off one of them convinced we had found a winner only to find the other machine felt

almost exactly the same.

In terms of performance there was

Both engines look similar, but the Yamaha revs more freely at the top end while the Honda mill feels more gutsy



little to separate them either. In a series of third and fourth gear roll-ons the XR appeared to have the edge gaining a lead of about half a bike over the Yamaha, but then dropping back a smidge to the faster revving TT-R at the top end.

Off road the differences are a little more marked. The Yamaha feels revvier, steers quicker, and generally feels a little more lively. The Honda on the other hand pulls from slightly lower down, feels more stable, and the brakes are sharper. Perhaps the TT-R's rather 'lively' front end was an improvement over the slightly 'dead' feeling Honda, but it really is a question of what your preferences are. One mans meat etc etc etc.

At the end of the day the biggest difference came down to the TT-R's electric start and more modern overall feel. For sure this is an improvement on the XR, as it allows relative novices and people that might be put

off by the thought of a kick starter to ride the TT-R easily.

The engine is less vibey, the look more cohesive and the package more presentable as a whole. Whether or not this matters to you is down to your own preferences and riding style but one thing's for sure; that the Yamaha has managed merely to update rather than improve upon the Honda's basic formula speaks volumes for the legendary XR.

Si Melber

HOW THEY COMPARE

YAMAHA TT-250-R HONDA XR250R

Air-cooled, 4-str, dohc, 4-valve, single	Air-cooled, 4-str, RFVC, single
249cc	249cc
73x59.6mm	73x59.5mm
10.2:1	10.2:1
29bhp @ 8500rpm	N/A
113kg	116kg

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The rough guide to Britain

(OS map 186, Aldershot & Guildford)

It's possible to trail ride within an hour's easy drive of London. In the first in a series of articles on where to ride in the UK, Paul Blezard tackles a little known part of Hampshire

Between Basingstoke and Alton in Hampshire, barely a mile or so from the M3 motorway, and close enough to London to get there and back in an afternoon, lies a series of excellent trail rides that can be attempted by virtually anyone on practically any trail bike.

These are the trails to which I usually take people who've never been off road before, especially if they've got a big trailie of 600cc or more. As any trail rider will tell you, one of the great things about the sport is the dramatic change in difficulty which a few inches of rain can bring. But even at their wettest, a half-competent rider should be able to ride these on standard tyres. I have ridden most of them on a BMW GS100, Cagiva Elefant 900, Yamaha XTZ 750 Super Tenere and even a TDM 850!

If you head south west out of London on

the M3, after about 30 miles you come to Junction 5, which is the first one after Fleet Services. It's signposted A287, Hook and Farnham, and if you're using a van or trailer there's a handy pub with a huge car park on the north side of the M3 right next to Hook railway station which makes a convenient starting and stopping off point for a drink afterwards. From there, head a couple of hundred yards north to the A30, turn left, past the A287 to the first trail at Heather Row. If you get to the dual carriageway you've gone past it.

This easy trail takes you over the M3 on a narrow bridge, then over the canal, past a few houses and out on to a B road. Turn left (east) towards Greywell. Within a mile you'll see a concrete road on the right, going back towards the west, and a large barn several hundred yards along

it. The next trail starts just past the barn and runs for about a mile to a cross-roads of trails called Five Lanes End which is marked as such on the OS map (686,502). Alternatively, you can miss out the first little trail and head south from Junction 5 on the A287 to Wanborough Green where a quick detour on the old road takes you through a ford and over the canal, after which you can turn right and right again to Greywell, then left towards the same concrete track and barn described above.

From Five Lanes End 'crossroads' you have a choice of ideal beginner's trails, each about a mile long, which you can work round in turn. I usually take the first right past Hungry Lodge (back on tarmac) on to Mapledurwell, go second left, up the hill, left at the T-junction and a few hundred yards on the left is the next trail, which



Oops, Though most of this trail is fairly simple it does get 'slippery when wet'. This is the bit leading to Five Lanes End. No harm done though

The start of the trail towards Weston Common from Weston Corbett. Watch out you don't get cross-rutted



starts by the side of a house and is signposted. This section goes through a wood and is really easy when dry, but is 'slippery when wet' and as such makes a good test for beginners on trail tyres. Watch out for horse riders coming the other way, and beware the little practice jumps they like to build across the trail!

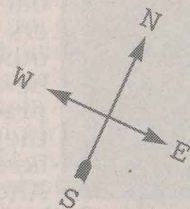
After the wood you'll come out across fields and find yourself back at Five Lanes End. You can carry on heading east for over a mile straight across a tarmac road and beyond, but for the purposes of this run, we'll turn right (south west). This trail runs dead straight alongside fields for nearly two miles to the B-road from Upton Grey to Tunworth (687,487). Turn right (west) onto this road then left at the next cross-roads. This is a very narrow tarmac road which joins another from the right after about a mile and then suddenly turns into another trail, indicated

The rough guide to Britain

with a clear 'Byway' sign - the tarmac road goes 90 degrees left towards Weston Corbett at this point. After half a mile on this trail, turn left onto a tarmac road, then immediately right, going back on yourself back onto the trail at (686,465).

This is a great run of about two and a half miles to Weston Common. About half way along (at 690,449) there's an alternative, easy trail to the west. At the end there's a bit of tarmac access road which is confusingly marked white on the map, and then you come almost immediately to the B-road from Shalden Green to the A339 (691,439). If you're half competent, you can go straight across this road along the side of a green which brings you to a trail T-junction after only a couple of hundred yards. Turn left here and it's about 500

yards back to the same B-road, coming out a bit further east. This little triangle is a bit tricky for beginners though and it's worth avoiding



if you're not too confident, especially if it's wet. If you can find the prescribed route on the opposite side of the B road through the

woods and the two fences (it's all kosher, I promise), there is then

a trail which runs almost straight for three miles past Humbly Grove to join the A32 just south of South Warnborough, and thence back to the M3. The first mile is a bit tricky if wet, the last mile is dead easy.

If you've got lots more time, there's a trail from the A339 to Herriard Common (668,438) which leads to a whole myriad of (mostly easy) trails on OS map 185 (Winchester and Basingstoke) - go out west on the Ox Drove,



Many of Hampshire's Byways are conveniently marked

and come back east from Budmore Hill to Upper Wield and Bentworth via Armsworth Hill.

Alternatively, from Weston Common turn south on the B-road at Shalden Green to Shalden, where there's a great easy trail past Shalden Park Wood to the A32 (708,424).

For bold beginners, a good challenge (especially when wet), is to continue straight across the A32 and up the steep hill to the golf course. To my amazement I got the TDM up here in the dry, but really struggled with the XTZ750 in the wet. Be very careful about crossing the A32 - you'll need a run-up from the far side, and when you get to the golf course don't start riding down the footpath by mistake! The trail turns right downhill then sharp left before the gravel path and takes a rocky climb up to the B road from Golden Pot. Again, be very careful exiting onto the road. (The A32 will take you right back



Bleazard bins it again. This time at the triangle of trails just south of Weston Common, barely five yards short of the tarmac. Typical

to M3 Junction 5 via Warnborough in two shakes of a lamb's tail).

The trail due north east from there (715,423) shouldn't be attempted by beginners. Experienced trail riders will get through okay so long as their bikes are adequately waterproofed - you have been warned!

Again for experienced riders, there's a great trail on the far side of the A31 Alton by-pass (729,384), which you get to by

turning south down a track where the B3004 goes under the A31, and then left over a little stream. This trail is not for the faint-hearted, since it goes up a stream for half its length, and then gets difficult! A couple of years ago I did the whole length of it in the dark on a BMW GS100 with the panniers fitted!

Unfortunately since then the four wheel drive boys have found it, dug it up and made it much trickier.

The basic route outlined above can easily be done on a summer's evening after work so long as you're a competent map-reader. But remember it's deep in the heart of Home Counties NIMBY country and we don't want to upset the locals however objectionable some of them may be - I've enjoyed introducing many new trail riders to our sport on them over the years and I'd like to be able to continue to do so for many years to come! Good Riding!

In the first of a series detailing the trail bikes we own, Dave Cornish explains his love of Elefants

IVORY TRADE



Mick Murphy

C a g i v a E l e f a n t 9 0 0 i e S P

IT WAS BACK in the summer of 1990 that I first clapped eyes on Cagiva's Dakar homologation special 900ie Elephant. The high spec included an Ohlins shock absorber, Weber Marelli electronic fuel injection, Akront alloy rims (with stainless spokes) and Nissin brakes, all topped off with a factory replica Lucky Explorer paint job. It was love at first sight.

I had recently bought a Ducati 900SS (same motor as the elephant) so I knew the Cagiva would have bags of torque throughout the rev range without the usual Ducati carburettor flat spots, but at a 1990 price of £7750 (plus on the road charges), it would have to be bloody good. Cagiva's Paris-Dakar victories have proved beyond reasonable doubt that the basic 900 Elephant is an extremely competent and reliable rally raid bike, and now, thanks to a favourable exchange rate and a lower spec it's a good deal cheaper than it was in 1990!

But the only Elephant I was interested

in was the original SP version, and last winter after searching high and low I finally found what I wanted. After years of anticipation I was concerned that the Cagiva may not live up to my expectations, but ten minutes later blasting around some Yorkshire lanes I knew my wait hadn't been in vain.

First impressions of the bike are that it's tall (900mm seat height) and purposeful, especially when you start the 90 degree vee which entails switching on the ignition, waiting

After years of anticipation I was concerned that the Cagiva may not live up to my expectations.

But ten minutes later after blasting around some Yorkshire lanes, I knew my wait hadn't been in vain

for the fuel system to prime itself with a high pitched squeak, setting the fast idle lever on the left bar and stabbing the starter. The rumble below is familiar Ducati, alongside the rattle from the dry multiplate clutch, but the sound emitted by

the bulky stainless two into one exhaust is a tad disappointing.

First gear is fairly low so you need to short shift if you want to avoid the front wheel coming up in the air. In fact the motor has so much glitch free torque available at any revs that shortshifting in every gear is often the best way to ride it. Thanks to the inherent balance of the vee format there's very little vibration to spoil the ride, though the vibes do make themselves felt above 90mph. But I'm sure a gearing change

would sort this out and be more relaxing without losing any of the instant surge available.

The Elephant's really at home on fast B-roads where the superb Ohlins shock coupled with the firm action of the Marzocchi forks makes for sure-

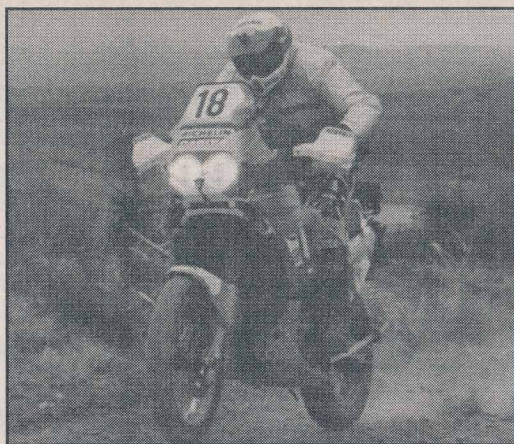
footed handling especially when fitted with a set of Michelin T66 high speed radials, the Nissin brakes may well be a change from the Brembos traditionally fitted to Italian bikes, but while there's only a single disc up front to play with, its perfectly

adequate both on and off road, and the rear doesn't lock up like some big trail bikes I've ridden.

The big question of what it's really like off road was about to be answered when I entered the Elefant in the Cambrian Rally. I had done a bit of modest green laning on it on some of the local trails, and have plenty of off road experience on enduro machinery, but this was going to be something entirely different. Preparations for the event included welding some extensions to the stock sump shield, making up a lexan headlamp guard to protect the light, attaching a plate to the side-stand and tucking the indicators out of harms way as well as taping up the panels to protect the paintwork.

With an all up weight of 188kgs and the road biased T66 tyres looking well past their best I was a bit anxious to say the least, but after six hours of flat out riding around the Crychan forest the big Cagiva came through with flying colours and without damage to man or machine (though I did go off at one stage at nearly 50mph, but that's another story).

In terms of maintenance it's typically Italian requiring plenty of TLC and regular servicing. A good quality oil is a must (I use Mobil 1), with genuine filters, and pay attention to things like the chain and the clutch cover which should periodically be removed and blown out to



After six hours of flat-out riding in the Crychan forest the big Cagiva came through with flying colours

a tatty DT125, and mine's just blown its regulator, an item which costs a cool £147. Other bad points about Elefant ownership include its reluctance to hold onto its paint, with the finish on the hubs, forks and engine being a particular problem.

Tyres can be relatively expensive and, frustratingly, limited in choice for the 19 inch front rim (as far as I know an off road biased tyre is not available for a 19 inch front wheel). And if like me you like to bolt on a range of performance goodies, you'll find stuff for the Elefant rarer than a Tory local council. Fortunately David Covell at Norfolk Stainless Fabrications (01692 536677) helped out with the aforementioned sump shield and stand extension as well as making up some stainless lever protectors fitted with Acerbis hand guards, and a really neat rack extension to take my Gearsack luggage. Other mods include Dsuz fasteners on the sidepanels and fairing, a Scottoiler and a carbon fibre Ducati 888 silencer in place of the huge stock item. Future mods include some stainless engine bars, a centre stand, hopefully some off road tyres and maybe even a re-chipped ECU matched to a more suitable exhaust

remove the dust. Unfortunately servicing costs can be high even if you do most of the work yourself. Setting up the Desmo valve gear and injection can cost you the price of



Stripped bare, the Elefant displays its compact packaging. Extended sump shield gives extra protection to exhaust and rear linkage

and K&N filter. Watch this space.

Okay so I'm pretty convinced of the Elefant's merits having forked out for the thing, in fact I'm going to stick my neck out here and say that for me the Elefant is the best big trail bike ever. You can tour, scratch or even compete on it, and it's really in its element on fast B-roads hunting down sports bikes. It's got plenty of pose value too, especially for one young lad who asked me if it

would really do 210? Yes I replied neglecting to mention the speedo's calibrated in kmh not mph.

If you can put up with the niggling faults and high service costs a secondhand Elefant brings with it, then around £4000 will get you a clean, early example, but walk away from anything without a service history and insist on being able to try before you buy. Oh, and watch out for ones that have seen active service in the Cambrian Rally!

Price £4000 (second-hand).

Plus points
Instant throttle response, range, quality components.

Minus points
High service costs, paint finish, limited choice of tyres.

BMW R1100GS

Just how good is the new GS, and can it hack it as a proper trailbike? Si Melber investigates

I'VE JUST STEPPED off the GS after a high speed run back from leafy Wales to the paper-strewn suburbs of west London. My pulse is still racing, I've got a grin that goes right the way around my face and meets at the back, and I just can't wait to get back on the bike and ride it again.

BMW's new R1100GS really is that good. In fact I'd go as far as say-

ing it's probably one of the best all-round touring bikes in the world. Praise indeed, but what, you may ask, makes me make such a sweeping statement? A thousand miles in the saddle for a start. Not for us the usual trip round the block and an hour of photos at the local roundabout like some of the bike mags I could mention, but a serious roadtest, with riding on some of the best roads this country has to offer, (as well as

some of the worst of course). Motorway riding, backroad scratching, A-road blasts and a weekend's off roading thrown in for good measure. All in all, more than 1000 miles in the saddle over a three week period. Now that's what I call a road test.

On the road

The idea seemed simple enough. Get hold of one of BMW's monster GS11s and give the thing a good thrashing. Make it perform, cram it full of luggage and

see how good it really is; then after its seen more action than a Bosnian ceasefire, remove the panniers, tape up the lights and enter it in the Cambrian Rally.

Arriving at BMW's headquarters in Bracknell with the first of the summer sun filtering through the trees and into my bloodshot eyes I knew I was going to enjoy this trip. I quickly familiarised myself with the quirky BeeEmm switchgear,

strapped on my rucksack and off I went in search of some provisions. First stop, the local off licence where I filled the capacious BeeEmm panniers with all the goodies I'd need for a weekend away. In went three bottles of wine, a sixpack of beer and a corkscrew followed by a half a dozen mars bars and a pack of Bombay mix, (well you can't be too careful can you?). Finally I strapped on my rucksack containing my off

roading gear, my sleeping bag, waterproofs and camera and set off in search of the M4.

There are very few bikes as versatile as the GS. Sure an Africa Twin or a Cagiva Elephant would probably just about swallow as much luggage but not in the same polite way as the Beemer gulps it down. The odd-sized panniers (because of the exhaust routing) will hold most bits of kit, but if you still need more room there's



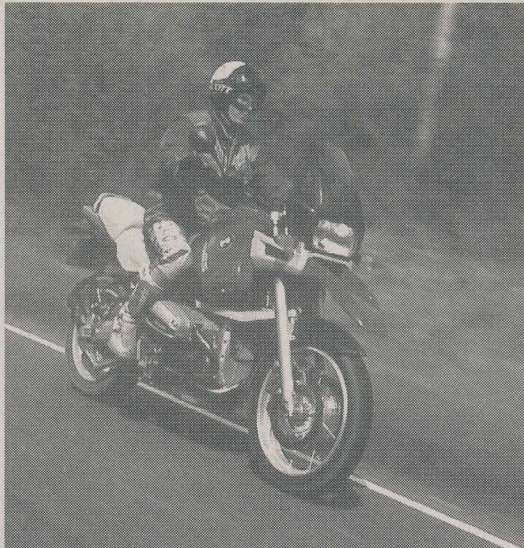
Mick Murphy

plenty of seat space on which to strap a kitbag, and behind there's a small rack that will accommodate a tent or sleeping roll.

In between streams of traffic heading away for the bank holiday

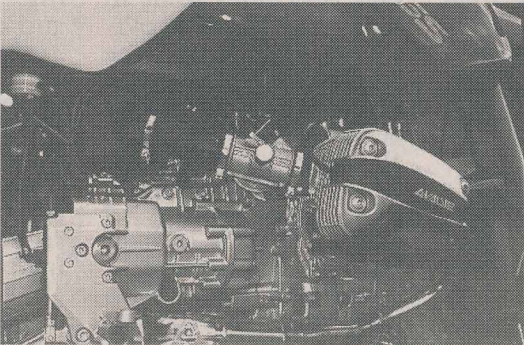
the fully laden GS sped. Though the BeeEmm will top 120mph it's really at sub-100mph speeds that it shines. Open the throttle at 80mph and it gathers pace with vigour. In fact from anywhere above 2500rpm a surge of torque lies waiting ready to shove you in the back harder than a charging prop forward. At moderate speeds the new Boxer engine is creamy smooth with the first tingling signs of vibration arriving at 4500rpm (or 85-90mph in top). Though it's not enough to really bother you it mars an otherwise solid performance from the four valve lump. carry on twisting your right wrist and the GS will continue to make headway at the expense of increased vibration and with a very un-BMW-like harshness.

In fact you quickly discover there's really not much point in caning the GS' powerplant as you get better results by short shifting at four-and-a-half and using the motor's grunt to haul you



R1100GS makes a great tourer, with or without panniers. Brakes are awesome

at 4500rpm (or 85-90mph in top). Though it's not enough to really bother you it mars an otherwise solid performance from the four valve lump. carry on twisting your right wrist and the GS will continue to make headway at the expense of increased vibration and with a very un-BMW-like harshness.



along faster. The long-legged nature of the power delivery means it's always a relaxing ride if you settle back into that custard coloured couch and simply wind it on.

Just as I was beginning to tire of the M4 landscape I spotted the turning for Swindon and the beginning of the route north and west. Here the A419 runs arrow straight for more than 26 miles with just a single kink to break up the journey to Cirencester. It was here the Roman Legion's rested and refuelled before turning their attention to the Celts homeland. I decided to do the same.

So far so good the first half of the journey without a hitch and with the GS sipping fuel at a miserly rate of 47mpg despite frequent trips into ton-up territory watching out for something far more onerous than the legionnaires ever encountered on their journey to Cirencester - cunningly hidden speed cameras.

From here on the roads would get better and I braced myself for a couple of hours heaving the BeeEmm from side to side by scoffing a Mars bar and a pack of KP nuts from one of the panniers. I

needn't have bothered, for a start the traffic on the road to Gloucester was horrendous and it was all I could do to keep up an average speed of about 40mph, and secondly when the going did finally begin to get fast and twisty the Beemer proved to be a revelation.

You wouldn't believe that a bike with an all up weight of kg, (and that's before you add a rider and their liquid luggage), could handle as well as this does. Lean it in to a bend and the GS just encourages you to push harder. If the corner tightens it's no problem to the GS, just crank it over more and around you go. In fact the only limiting factor to the BeeEmm's voracious appetite for curves is how far you're prepared to push the remarkably sticky Metzeler Enduro tyres, and whether in your enthusiasm you may end up touching one of those ginormous pots down.

But it's not the fact that the Beemer handles curves with aplomb that surprises you so much as the way it does it - it's all so simple. Plenty of bikes corner well, but thanks to some well thought out geometry and a low centre of gravity, few are as stable in the turns as the GS. There's no need to hang off just lean the bike further and further over, then when you can see the apex approaching roll on the power and fire it out of the corner. In the dry, traction from the silky twin is never a problem and in the wet the GS inspires new levels of bravado thanks in part to the forgiving nature

of the chassis and of course to the fitment of ABS brakes (more about which later).

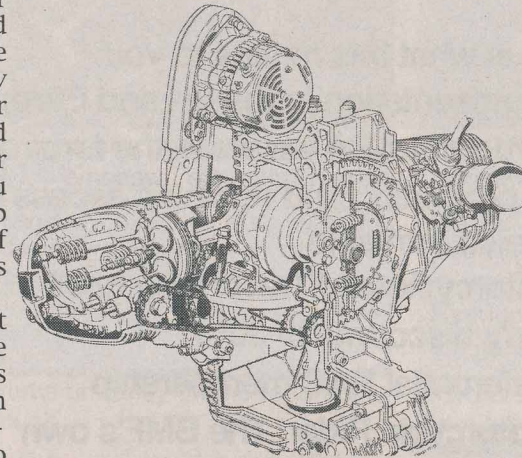
Of course I'm not about to suggest that the GS is going to take apart a well-ridden sportsbike in the twisties but you'd be surprised at just how good it feels given the weight of the beast. By now I was really beginning to enjoy myself, forgetting that I'd been in the saddle for more than two and a half hours and simply looking forward to the next set of approaching bends.

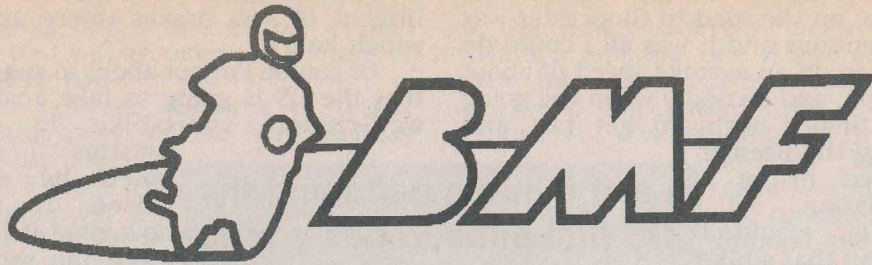
From Gloucester the A40 winds westwards towards Ross-on-Wye before jinking south again. But instead of heading south on the A40 you opt for the A49 towards Hereford then after five miles take a left onto the B4348 the real riding begins. Here the road twists and turns around some of the most beautiful countryside in Worcestershire has to offer. Pressing on through a string of little villages

with names like Much Dewchurch and the inexplicably titled Wormelow Tump you come to the Golden Valley, the road following the path now occupied by the River Dore. Here you can begin to stretch the BeeEmm's legs, punching out of corners and gobbling up the straights.

Despite a road surface that's seen more than its fair share of council diggers, the BeeEmm's feathers remain unruffled. You can feel the suspension working away beneath you; at the front the Telelever gives a

Lean it into a bend and the GS just encourages you to push harder





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firm but stable ride while the rear end responds best to a bit of preload. Most reassuring however is the fact that you can brake the BMW into a bumpy turn without fear of washing out the front through lack of suspension travel. The Telelever set-up which effectively isolates the forces of braking and suspension, brings new confidence to late braking especially when you know its backed up by



Telelever front end works brilliantly on the road but is not so good on the rough

decent bite from the twin Brembos and the safety net of a superb anti-lock system.

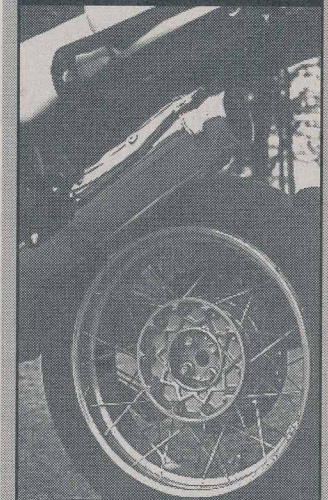
In fact the brakes are one of the GS's greatest assets with a firm (but adjustable) lever and simply massive retardation available should you need it. The rear disc also offers plenty of feel and once again benefits

from the switchable anti-lock brakes. The confidence this allows in the wet has to be experienced to be believed though there's no doubt that the lack of front end dive on Telelever equipped bikes at first takes a bit of getting used to.

All too soon the pretty town of Hay-On-Wye hoves into view and it's time to stop for the night and search out my accommodation. This once sleepy mar-

On The Rough

There was a mixture of loud guffaws and giggles as I taped my numbers in place ready for the start of the Cambrian Rally, the annual day-long, off road event run by the Welsh Trail Riders' Association. In fact it wasn't just the other competitors that were sceptical about entering the big BeeEmm in an event like this, I had my reservations, and knowing that a GS1100



Cross-spoked GS rims run tubeless tyres

had never finished the event didn't help either.

I finished taping up the vulnerable parts and headed for the startline in the pub carpark. At least it was beginning on tarmac! Three, two, one and we're off on the beginning of a hundred miles of off road riding along forestry tracks, dusty

trails and a water splash twice the size of the Dead Sea.

Okay, I admit I was lucky, it hadn't rained for a couple of weeks and the quagmire of a year ago was replaced by dusty tracks. Over the stony roads the Beemer and I hopped skipped and occasionally jumped. It was mostly a question of first or second gear and giving it a handful. Though the BeeEmm had come equipped with a set of tyres that wouldn't have looked out of place in a GP paddock, finding grip on the dusty tracks wasn't a problem; with so much torque available the Beemer simply finds traction where there isn't any, chugging its way up slippery climbs without so much as a hesitation.

Its a big beast though, and not surprisingly ruts, or worse still, wet ruts are the GS' undoing. If the front end starts heading in the wrong direction there's bugga all you can do about changing its mind, there's no way of hoisting the front unless you're built like Charles Atlas and once it starts going wrong your best bet is to avoid any notion of heroics, and simply abandon ship.

On the bumpy forest tracks though the Beemer turned in a creditable perfor-

mance. Sure the suspension bottomed a couple of times (with a loud bang), but on the fast fire roads there was a lot of fun to be had firing the big GS past slower traffic, and they all got out of the way quickly when they saw a wildly out of control BeeEmm fishtailing towards them in their mirrors. Oh, a word of warning though; don't forget to disable the ABS. I didn't, and twice I went straight on at corners when the gravel road fooled the Brakes into thinking it was lock up time and promptly released



Almost anything's possible on the new R1100GS

them. You have been warned.

Despite many of the proper enduro bikes coming to grief in the water splash, the BeeEmm simply refused to be beaten and charged through both times like a migrating water buffalo with a bow wave big enough to wet the feet of a lot of

the spectators. Excellent. Mind you it did cough and splutter a bit for the next few miles as the air intakes are below the level of the water and forward facing!

It was as much a surprise to me as to anybody when the BeeEmm finally rolled into the pub carpark after a gruelling day's ride. It had finished a creditable 109 out of more than 180 starters and had beaten some bikes it really oughtn't. In the bar afterwards I got to thinking well maybe if I put on some decent suspension, fit-

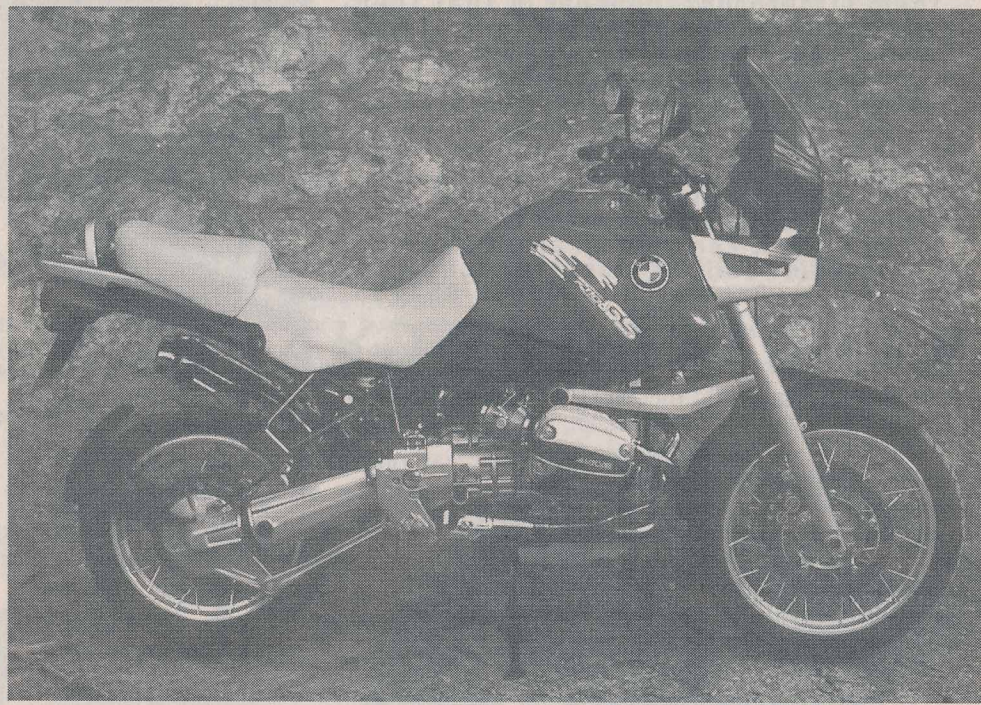
ted some knobbly tyres and removed about 80kg in surplus weight then the GS would make a pretty useful trail tool. In truth you know the GS is not really meant for this sort of thing, but it's a measure of its ability it survived with just a sliced indicator stalk to show for it.

Two up touring

Despite a seat of truly gigantic proportions, its only fair to say that back seat travel is not as comfy on the GS as it might look. The problem is the rear seat sits too high pushing you up into the airstream and this combined with a very

upright riding position can make for a certain amount of discomfort at speed. That said, the Beemer was still more comfy two up than a lot of bikes, and the handling doesn't seem to be affected by the weight of another passenger. A word about the panniers though. On the

one hand these are as good as any I've come across attaching firmly to the bike and holding a reasonable amount of luggage, but one of the locks on ours proved tricky to operate and the elastic strap for securing clothes inside snapped second time out.



Conclusion

On the journey home after a great weekend on and off the roads I couldn't help but think that only a handful of bikes could have managed what the Beemer had. With a price tag of eight and a half grand it may only be affordable to a select few, but when you take into account the BeeEmm's ability as a road bike, its solid build quality and high secondhand residuals it begins to make a little more sense. As a trail bike it may have its limits, but as an all round tourer with genuine go anywhere ability the GS has few peers.

Price £8715

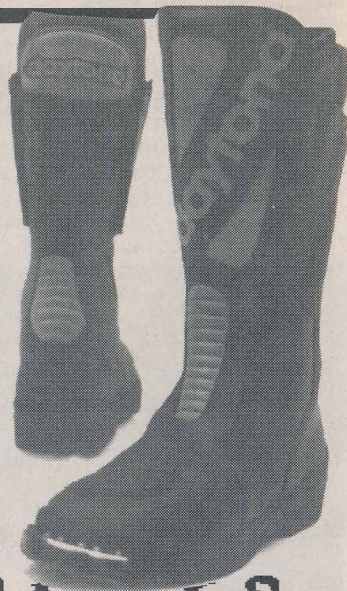
Weight 243kg

Plus Touring ability

Minus Too heavy

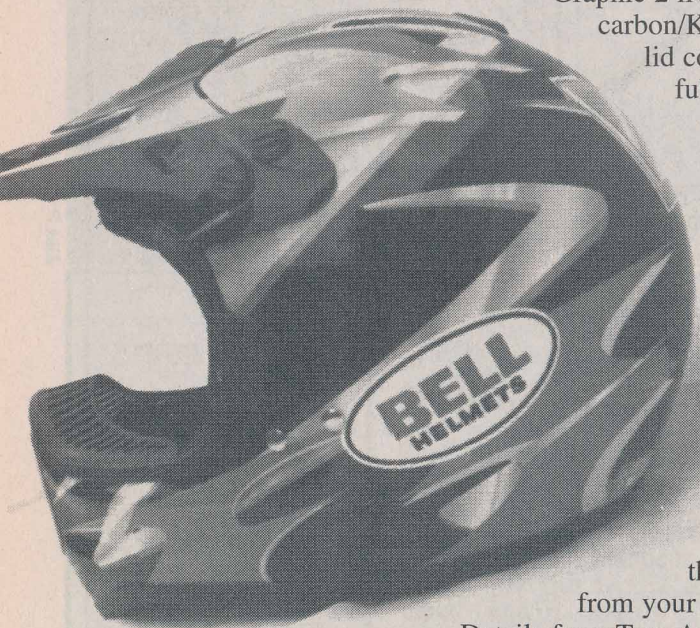
New Products

You know the problem, you need an aggressive looking boot to match your big, butch trailie but you don't actually want the discomfort of a set of motocross boots. Well lucky for you there's now a compromise in the form of these Daytona Trans Open Gore-Tex's, built from full chrome cow hide and featuring a Gore-tex membrane to make them waterproof. Unusual in that they feature a double zip entry (one zip on either side) they are beautifully made boots constructed from high quality materials with ankle and shin protectors, stretch panels, reinforced sole and a metal tip. Of course quality costs so don't expect to get much change out of 215 quid, but look on the bright side they come with a free sachet of polishing cream. For your nearest Daytona stockist call UK importer Tony's of Prestatyn on 01745 853455



RINGING THE CHANGES

Bell Helmets' latest lid the MOTO 6 has arrived in the UK resplendent in its Graphic 2 livery. Made from a carbon/Kevlar mix the lightweight lid comes with a number of useful features such as a removable, washable lining, decent venting in the top and sides, and a goggle grabber to stop your goggles slipping down. It's also fully road legal (BSI-approved) and has an ACU gold label for competition use. Available in a choice of three base colours (Black, white and violet) and in four sizes from small to XL, the Graphic 2 costs £219.95



from your nearest Bell stockist.
Details from Tran Am on 01425 620580.

TrailBike -32- Magazine

BAGS OF STYLE



From Scott Racing comes this handy sized rucksack that's just the thing to carry all the essentials for a day's trailing. Priced at £34.95 the day sack is one of a number of Scott bags that range from holdalls to pocket wallets. All feature the Scott logo and and come in a choice of black, dark green or charcoal colours. Available from your nearest stockist or by phoning Bert Harkins Racing on 01582 472374.

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By far the hippest T-shirt around is the latest 'Dual Sport' from Extreme. American made, and printed on heavyweight white cotton, it costs £17.99 and is available mail order from importers Badlands on 0161 929 5661 or from better bike shops everywhere.

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TrailBike -33- Magazine

Good

SEVENTY



Wheelie King
Dave Taylor
rides a
Triumph
engined
Greeves for
fun. TrailBike
Magazine
caught up
with him and
asked why?

JUST PRIOR TO the TT when my sons and I and a few friends partake of a week of magic trail riding in the Isle of Man, the plea goes out for me not to take my Triumph/Greeves again but to pass it up in favour of my rather more sanitised KMX200. The trails in the Isle of Man are mostly rocky, and for sure the Triumph/Greeves is a bumpy bike to ride, having but a couple of inches of suspension movement. They watch me every year on the rocky climbs, elbows and knees vibrating like a fiddlers elbow, and concerned as they are for my well-being, try to convince that this year should be the last for the Triumph/Greeves.

The Isle of Man during the TT period is, and will always be as long as it lasts, the very heart of the spirit of

Good Greeves



motorcycling and for me my trusty Triumph/Greeves is an asset to that spirit. I have loved that bike for more than 20 years, it's a buddy, it looks, feels and sounds like a real motorcycle, and what's more keeps going over terrain

of this particular ascent that it's impossible to get started again without going back down to the bottom for another go.

Out of a dozen good riders all on modern ace Jap trail and enduro bikes the trusty old Triumph/Greeves and its

Dave's bike uses a 1959 Triumph engine in a 1964 Greeves Scottish frame

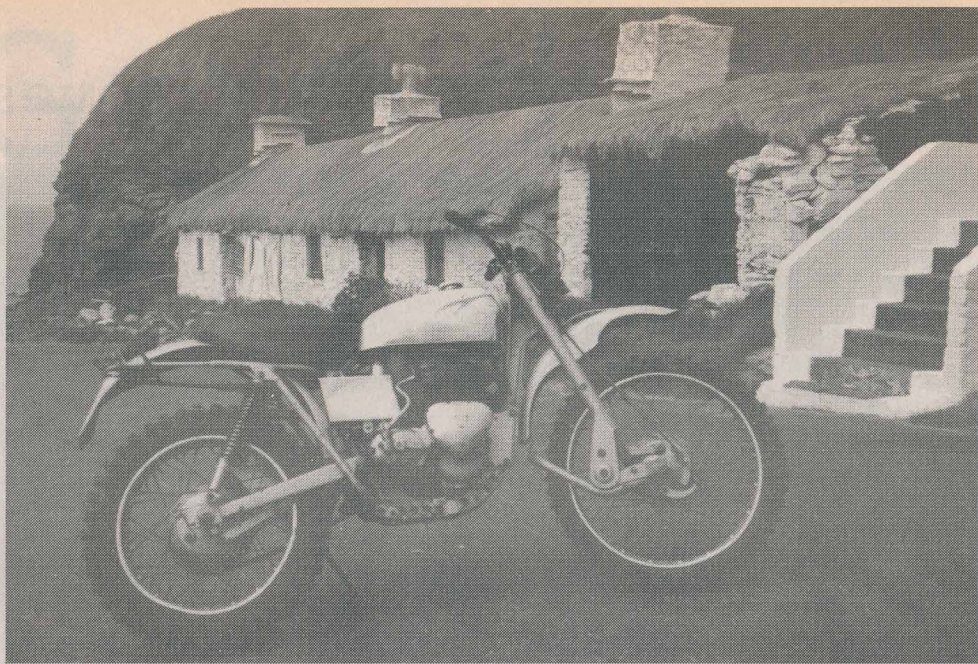
Out of a dozen good riders all on modern Jap trail and enduro bikes the trusty old Triumph/Greeves and its aged rider was the only combination to make it to the top of the hill

where most Jap bikes have long since run out of steam.

In 1994 it demonstrated its hill climbing abilities on what is probably the longest, steepest most difficult hill to climb on The Island. Nicknamed 'Rodney's Hill' 'cos Rod never ever managed to get up it, the hill sits behind Sulby and is a full five minute bottom gear blast. One mistake means a stop or a crash (usually both), and such is the steepness

aged rider was the only combination to make it to the top of the hill at the first attempt. On full song its deep throaty roar is a pleasure to hear compared to buzzy two-strokes and the audience certainly appreciated the performance.

In boggy going its seat is low enough to be able to leap off and run alongside (so as not to break the crust of the bog), before leaping back on easily; and its short wheelbase is



Elby Point,
Isle of Man
and the
Greeves in
its natural
setting

perfect for picking a line when navigating difficult gullies. The downside is that it's a bit heavy and the minimum suspension movement has a habit of rattling your guts when riding at speed over rough terrain, vibrating knees and elbows at an alarming rate when standing up on the pegs. For me, oblivious to its shortcomings, it's a dream machine, and of all the bikes I have ever owned or ridden it's my favourite; even though my friends chuckle and groan in disbelief at its discomfort whenever they ride it.

The bike was built in 1969 by a chap named Rodney Elwood of the Erith and District Trials Club. A magic engineer he slotted the 1959 Triumph 21 350cc engine into a 1964 Greeves Scottish frame. The Triumph 21 engine was one of the first unit construction models in existence. He fitted a capacitor discharge ignition system, and I was told by Gordon Davis who has run the club for the past 30 years, that it was the first bike on the road with such an advanced ignition system.

By far its greatest asset is a manual advance and retard system operated by a lever on the left side of the handlebar. On steep slow climbs one can retard the ignition and with a gentle chuffing like the sound of an approaching steam engine, the bike will climb up the side of a house. On blasting climbs the fully advanced position will guarantee maximum power with the accompaniment of

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Good Greeves

a crisp engine note. Manual advance and retard systems only normally come on machines fitted with a magneto, but the system on this bike operates by means of a little plate fitted inside the distributor. The base-plate where the contact breaker sits, can be rotated by the handlebar mounted cable, thereby giving manual adjustment to a normally bob-weighted automatic ignition system.

The Siamesed exhaust headers converge into a tailpipe from a VW Beetle; quite unimpressed the bike is surprisingly quiet at low speed but is a joy to behold on full song especially when blasting out of a boggy area with the intent of plastering all following riders with a wall of mud. The front suspension is the leading link rubber in agony variety, with a rigid feel to the steering, but limited suspension movement, the rear end uses standard twin shock Girling units.

The bike's builder rode it in trials in the South Eastern Centre for a couple of years then sold it to a friend who stripped it with a rebuild in mind. His marital problems cancelled the rebuild and the bike sat in boxes 'till 1973 when I bought it for the princely sum of £25 with a view to competing in pre-65 trials. I did so with a measure of good success but figured it need a little more power as

Despite the engine's vibratory character it can occasionally be a relaxing ride on the trusty Triumph/Greeves. Especially when the sun is shining



I tended to use it for trail riding more than trials riding. And so in 1977 I had the engine totally rebuilt and modified to a full 500cc. It became a whiz for trailing, but for trials the soft 350cc engine was better for slow going, even though the compression ratio in 500cc form was still only 6:1! In fact it's still not as soft as the original Triumph 21 engine which found great success in the road machine as a smooth but rather under-powered bike.

As for the frame, the original Greeves Scottish was fitted with a Villiers engine and was a top trials bike in the Fifties and Sixties, but then Sammy Miller developed the Spanish Bultaco, and Don Smith the Spanish Montesa and such was the trials success of these two marques that the Greeves Scottish disappeared from the scene. the Triumph

engine which was designed by Edward Turner, the greatest boffin English motorcycling has ever known, is a lovely engine, road, race or trail, and can be tuned to perform its task well.

The marriage of these two provide me with a machine that gives me the greatest pleasure in the scene of motorcycling. We will get old together, achieve more together and I'm sure, struggle more together. I consider myself very lucky to have a bike that is such an attachment. Does it have a price? I'll sell my legs first!

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TrailBike -38- Magazine

the TRAILBIKE GUIDE

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

Aprilia

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

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

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

Tuareg 125 Rally: w/c, 2-str, single. Outrageously good looking Paris-Dakar styled trailie with a high spec inc USD forks, fully adjustable suspension etc. High seat



height more than made up for by poseability.

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

Tuareg 600/650: a/c, 4-str, sohc,

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

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

Armstrong

Grew out of Jeff Clews' CCM company of Bolton and CanAm/Bombardier bikes for the army. (Bombardier were originally a French Canadian company that manufactured snowmobile engines - they are now a massive worldwide engineering company that owns Rotax, among others).

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

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

CCM: A few enduro bikes based on

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the moto-crossers).

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

ATK: a/c 4-str, sohc, Rotax-powered singles. US-made, high quality motocrossers with unique engine-sprocket mounted rear brake on some models. Any genuine trailies?

BARIGO: a/c, 4-str, sohc, Rotax-powered singles. French-made range of specialist on/off road bikes built

by Patrick Barigault. They specialise in supermotard bikes and desert racers, both of which have had some competition success, though they also do a trail/enduro bike. The same basic rotax mill that in MZ guise churns out 32bhp produces a claimed 60bhp when tuned to Barigo's specification... but they say it's reliable. *Verdict: Gallic charm.*

BMW

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

R80G/S: 374lbs, a/c, 4-str, 797cc, twin. One of the first mega-trailies. Launched in 1981, Monolever rear end, kick and optional electric start. Special big-bore versions of which took Hubert Auriol and Gaston Rahier to four Paris-Dakar wins. Original 'Paris-Dakar' version of G/S was just the standard model with a big tank and bore no relation to the real desert racers, which were built specially by Herbert Schek. The most

trailable of all the Beemers distinguishable by its high front mudguard and simple instruments. *Verdict: The one to go for.*

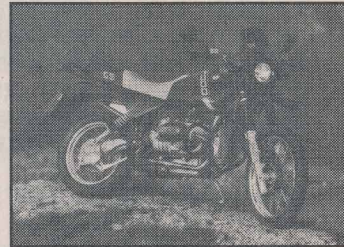
R100G/S: 1988-on, 220kg/484lbs, a/c, 4-str, twin, e/s. More powerful 60bhp engine complete with double-jointed drive shaft (Paralever) and much improved suspension front and rear. Colours were white/blue and black/yellow (the wonderful 'bumble-bee') with mini-fairing. One of the most versatile motorcycles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

R100GS: a/c, 4-str, twin, e/s. Revised in 1991 with proper fairing and more garish paint job. Final revision for UK in 1993 with 'P-D' version when

humungous plastic tank (already available on the continent) finally became legal, also sported a set of external fairing crash bars. Single-seat with extra large rack available as option. Last officially imported in 1994. *Verdict: Big and butch.*

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

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



The first trailie superbike.

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

Italian manufacturer that now owns Ducati, Husqvarna and Morini.

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

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

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

W8: 264lbs, w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single, 6-speed, 31hp. Excellent trail-bike version of above but with a cou-

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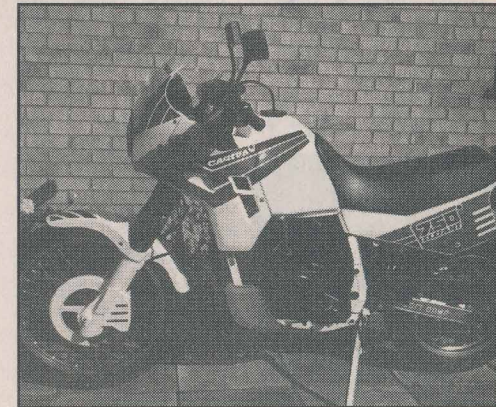
ple of ponies less and no upside down forks. very few sold in UK.

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

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

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

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



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

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Curiosity value only.

Elefant 750: 1988-1990. 188kg/414lbs, o-a/c, 4-str, desmo, V-twin, e/s.

Distinctive looking big trailie with white/red/blue/blue paintwork and angular styling with gold anodised rims (21 inch F, 17 inch R). 750 motor was nice, but suffered from poor carburetion at bottom end thanks to fitment of Bing carbs. Nimble handling and good off road ability.

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

Enfield India

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

Gilera

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

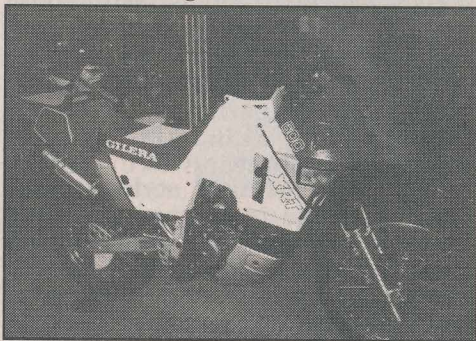
50/125: a/c, 2-

str, single. Learner bikes - not officially imported.

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

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

XRT600: w/c, 4str, 558cc, single, e/s. Clumsily styled, Paris-Dakar influenced big trailie that uses the



stock Gilera lump in yet another manifestation. Big, heavyish and extremely rare in the UK. *Verdict: Ugly duckling.*

Harley Davidson

Not the V-twins, but a mish-mash of European-made stuff with the H-D badge.

H-D 90: a/c, 2-str, 90cc, single. Aermacchi-made 1970s mini-trail funbike. Very rare these days. passable off road. CCM sold the rights to the Armstrong army bikes to H-D circa 1992, and H-D duly won the British army contract. Now electric start (after heavy squaddie casual-

ties with the old left-side kick-starts) and reportedly more robust but down-sized from 500 to 350cc.

Honda

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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able. *Verdict: Conversation stopper only.*

TLR200: a/c, 4-str, sohc, 199cc, single. Pukka outdated trials machine with road legal ability. Ideal for really snotty green lanes and long distance trials events, but not as comfy as some trail bikes and not really built for speed. Still available new as personal imports at fairly attractive prices.

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

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

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

XL185: a/c, 4-str, sohc, 185cc, single, 5-speed. One of the definitive original green laners. Twin shock version only, but can be upgraded with later 125R parts, including chassis!

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

XL250S: 1978-on, 261lbs, a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, 248cc, single. Which sported a four-valve, twin-port head pumping out all of 26bhp, but still with 6-volt electrics at first; twin shocks and crappy SLS front and rear brakes and an unusual 23 inch front wheel, giving little tyre choice. Later versions adopted the Honda Pro-Link rear end and 12-volt electrics. Good all rounder, but

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better on the road than off it. Comfy saddle and decent build quality make this a good secondhand buy if you can find one. Because this was the bike from which the legendary RS250 despatcher's tool was derived it means you can bolt the complete 12-volt RS250 flywheel, generator and engine cover straight on to any of the 6-volt XL or XR 250s and 500s. The accelerator-pumped carb of the RS will also give a useful power increase to the 250.

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

XL250R/500R: 1984-on, a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. The cylinder heads were now blessed with Radial Four Valve Combustion (RFVC), vastly superior Pro-Link mono-shock suspension, beefier forks and much better TLS front brake in a 21 inch wheel, and 12-volt electrics - a much better bet all round than the 'S' models if you can afford them. Only snag with the TLS front brake is that it will not stop you from rolling back on a hill! The CR motocrosser front end will fit straight into the XL headstock so long as you use the whole assembly. Beware top end seepage of oil between head and barrel. The XL250R finally lost its metal tank and was developed into the XR version. Early XL500 engines were very popular in single cylinder road

racing, so second hand spares are hard to come by. Frequent oil changes are essential to avoid the dreaded knackered head syndrome caused by the camshaft running direct in it although bearing conversions are available. Some 250s suffered from dodgy gearboxes and frequent top end problems. *Verdict: Cheaper than an XR.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

XR200: a/c, 4-str, sohc, single, 5-speed. Early twin shock bikes (originally based on the XL185) made

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

XR250(R): a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Based on both XL250S and 250R with identical frames but more suspension travel, disc front brake and slightly hotter cam giving small power increase. Early monoshock with twin carbs could be a sod to start when hot - go for the later single-carb model. The XR250 makes a very good off-road all-rounder - light weight and adequate power (30bhp claimed) makes it perfect for trail riders and clubman enduro riders alike, and tolerable on the road.



All Honda 250s need to be revved hard if you want to get a move on. New ones come with electric start and there's now a Baja version available with

huge twin headlamps, among other detail changes. *Verdict: Popular and versatile trailie.*

XR250L: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Grey import with road-legal lights, speedo and indicators. Slightly heavier than R.

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

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

XR600: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc,

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

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

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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.

XLV600VP Transalp: w/c, 4-str, 6-valve, sohc, 583cc, V-twin, e/s. Called the Rally Tourer, its name befits its description. True dual purpose machine, great all-rounder. Engine based on the VT500, and larger versions now power the Bros and Africa Twin. Unburstable and torquey motor churns out a claimed 55bhp but can be tricky to work on unless out of the frame. Expensive cosmetics worth protecting if you're going to venture off road. Early versions easy to spot due to hub rear

brake which was prone to going oval. Suffers from rotting wheel rims (like Dominator) in certain cases, and single front discs (identical to CBR600s) can wear fast. Slight facelift in 1993 improved fairing protection slightly. Later versions also come with handy centre stand which was an option on earlier models. Beware handlebar rubber-mountings wearing out giving 'twisted' and remote feel to bars. Sensible secondhand prices. *Verdict: Superb trail bike for touring on.*

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

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

XR750 Africa Twin: w/c, 4-str, 6-valve, sohc, 742cc, V-twin, e/s. Bored out from 650cc to 742cc in 1990 to make an impressive but rather top-heavy Paris-Dakar styled mega-trailie. Much more expensive than the competition at the time, though they had high build quality and came with trick on-board computer. Better off road than you'd imagine, especially on fast and dusty trails.

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

Husaberg

Swedish range of competition only four-stroke machines which use what is basically a two-stroke bottom end mated to a four-stroke barrel and head. Light, powerful and exception-

ally vibey, they lack both balancer shaft and oil pump. No specific trail bikes.

Husqvarna

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

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

Jawa-CZ

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

Kawasaki

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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production run means Kawasaki must have got it right. *Verdict: Long lived.*

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

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

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

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

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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.



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.

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.

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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 bash-plate 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 import 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

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

Quota: a/c, 4-str, ohv, V-twin. Big Guzzi that like Triumph's Tiger is really just a road bike in trail bike clothing, but without the Triumph's impressive on road performance. A truly monstrous beast with a seat-height that requires a ladder if you're under 6ft. It makes even the Tiger feel small by comparison. Agricultural engine with torque reaction from the shaft and dangerous lack of ground clearance both on

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and off road. Good fuel consumption thanks to fuel injection and high gearing, are about all it has going for it. Incredibly expensive when it was launched, but prices did come down. Strictly for straight dirt roads and motorways. Should come with a government



health warning. *Verdict: Proves that big is not necessarily beautiful.*
MZ

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

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

Suzuki

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

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

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

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

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

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

TS125/185: a/c, 2-str, single. Early seventies twin shock trailie

with distinctive high level pipe which was unusual at the time. Not many left now.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



time. *Verdict: Good secondhand buy.*

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

TS200R: w/c, 2-str, 199cc, single. Grey import with its own French championship. As above but with more poke. Not many around.

PE175: a/c, 2-str, single. Basic

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DR200 Djebel: o-a/c, 4-str, sohc, single, e/s. Japanese home market version of above with more street mods (including electric boot), and less trailability.

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 search-*

ing 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 kickstart 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. Lee Waldie Craig Scott Chris Koira

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



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earlier DRs and with civilised half fairing and twin silencers. Good road bike, but first gear very high for trails and despite half decent suspension, still a bit of a handful on the dirt no thanks to its seat height. Engine sounds like a tractor and vibrates like one. Carbs can give iffy running at low revs. *Verdict: Okay I s'pose.*

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

DR750: o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. The original 'Dr Big' - Suzuki's first attempt at a Paris-Dakar style big trailie. No-one has built a bigger single - except Suzuki



themselves. *Verdict: Not for the faint hearted.*

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

around if you really must have one.

Verdict: Why bother?

Triumph

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

Yamaha

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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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.*

DT250: a/c, 2-str, single. Late Seventies cantilever shocked version of the smaller bikes, more power but less agility.

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 stoker 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 light-weight chassis and 'soft-tune' engine, but plenty of power. Rear

suspension oversprung, and they need gearing down for low speed trails. Good if you like your bikes tall. Easy to ride with a nice light front end. *Verdict: Modern classic.*

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

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

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

XT125: a/c, 4-str, single. Learner legal motorcycle without the need for restriction! *Verdict: Reliable but intensely boring.*

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

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XT250: 248lbs, a/c, 4-str, 249cc, sohc, single. Early Eighties Cantiver shock trailie of some note. Light and strong with balancer shaft engine, they can still be found for not much money and make an excellent second-hand buy if in good condition though occasional early ones suffered valve problems. Nice and low though not very fast. *Verdict: Good all-rounder.*

XT250: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, single. Foreign market mini XT350 with all the benefits but slightly lighter. Rare

TT250-R: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, single, e/s. Modern lightweight trailie/enduro that is Yamaha's version of the Honda XR250. Revvy motor and a reasonable spread of power, but rather expensive.

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

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

XT500: 304lbs, a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. The original big banger trailie that started it all. Produced for years and years, even when superseded by later versions. Twin shock, 6-volt, character building bike that could often get into more trouble than it could get out of. All sorts of special parts were produced

for it for the would be overlander over the years. Vibrates like a jack hammer, and very basic by modern standards but the lack of sophistication is part of its charm, and the low seat height makes it much easier to 'paddle' than some of its more monstrous successors. Can be horribly unreliable and a pig to start, but its easy to work on and plenty still around. Classic buffs have inflated the prices, but don't pay over the odds. *Verdict: Your dad would love it.*

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

XT600 Tenere: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, single. Superb Paris-Dakar inspired big trailie with unburstable engine, supple suspension, mammoth tank and comfy saddle. Loved by overlanders the world over. Huge touring range, and clever attention to detail (for instance air filter positioned under tank to avoid



being clogged by sand and dust). Later versions inherited a full fairing but lost some of the attention to detail. Feels like riding a great big cosy armchair, and regardless of Yamaha's claims to the contrary seems to have more power than later

'cooking' versions. Real off road ability in most hands. *Verdict: Best of the big Yams.*

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

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

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

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

TDM850: w/c, 4-str, 10-valve, dohc, parallel twin. 'New sports' road bike with trail styling developed from the XTZ750 but with much

TRAILBIKE GUIDE

gruntier 850cc lump. Lower seat height, much torquier engine and better brakes and handling. Early versions had appallingly clunky gearbox and exhaust collector box rules out an aftermarket centre stand. Not really a trail bike unless it's high summer nice and dry and the trail is easy. Soft suspension limits speed off road. *Verdict: Brilliant trail influenced roadie.*

TW200: a/c, 4-str, 18bhp, single, e/s. Fattish-wheeled fun bike which makes a brilliant and economical (though odd-looking) trail bike for the short of leg, with both electric start and kick. Surprisingly good on the road, and makes a competent commuter (70+mpg possible), but let down by lousy SLS front drum brake and needs an extra gear. Suspension a bit basic and tyres can be expen-



sive. Gearbox sprocket a special part due to outrigger bearing. Will embarrass pukka trail bikes in the right hands. *Verdict: Strangely attractive.*

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

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

TRAILBIKE Magazine

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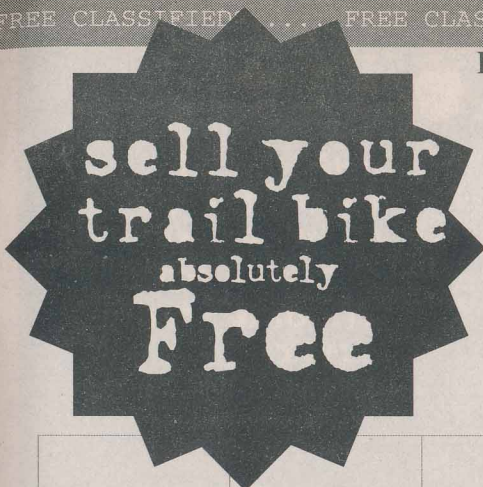
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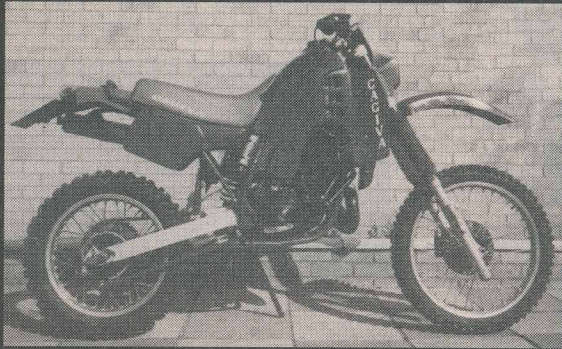
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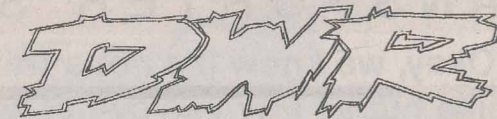
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**VAN
TEST**



NOW I'M NOT suggesting for one moment that you don't ride your trail bike to wherever you're going to go trailing, after all that's the point in having a trail bike so you can ride it on the road as well as off it. But the reality is that there are times when for whatever reason it's simpler to lob the bike in the back of a truck along with all

ing, removable stereo, and permanent four wheel drive were also thoughtfully added to the demo vehicle by those nice people at Volkswagen - though they were at pains to point out that 4WD is usually only available on the diesel versions and that the stereo is standard. Got that? Right, on with the story. It's arguable whether most people

MAN THE VAN

VW TRANSPORTER SYNCRO

your gear, an overnight bag, some spares, a few tyres and.... well, you get the picture. If you own a trailie

Okay, we know it's not a trail bike but as any van owner will tell you, they are useful things to have around, especially when it comes to transporting bikes

will want or need 4WD on a van though the amount of times I've spent pushing stranded Transits out

and you already own a van you'll know what I mean. If you don't, let me tell you about the VW Transporter.

The Trainspotter has been in production in one form or another for over 40 years with seemingly more re-generations than Captain Kirk. Like most panel vans these days the VeeDub comes in a variety of sizes with both long and short wheelbase variants, and with a combination of petrol and diesel engines ranging from the ordinary four cylinder 61bhp diesel cooking version, right up to the stonking 2.5 litre, five cylinder petrol engine that the demonstrator came fitted with. Not only that but ventilated front discs, 'leccy windows, power steering, central lock-

of muddy fields indicates that it's probably far more useful than people think. However the system fitted to the VW Syncro is rather less like the sort of switchable versions on something like a Land Rover, and more akin to the sort of set-up that you find on Audi cars and the like, with full-time, permanent 4WD giving improved safety and stability wet or dry, and helping to even out tyre wear. Not only that but you've got the security of knowing that grip is there should you need it. For the technically minded the Syncro uses a viscous coupling located between the front and rear axles, and comes with a switchable diff lock for really sticky situations. Where Volkswagen have scored is

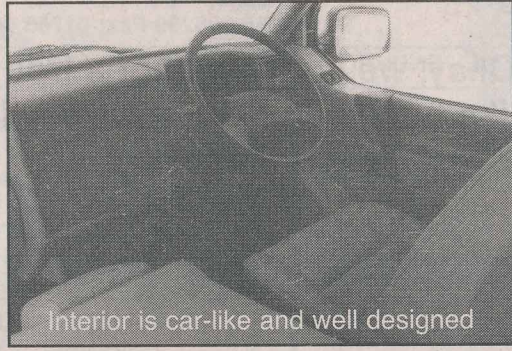
**VAN
TEST**



Twin rear doors make it easy to load a trail bike

in making their Van extremely driver-friendly. Climb aboard and you feel like you're getting into a tall saloon car rather than any kind of commercial vehicle. In front of you sits a comprehensive range of instruments lifted straight out of a VW Golf, with first class ergonomics such as adjustable height seat belts, high quality switchgear, and good ventilation. Attention to detail shows in the fitment of a rear wash wipe as standard to each of the rear doors, superb asymmetric door mirrors that eliminate blind spots, and a host of other useful details.

The load area (which measures 1220mm across, between the wheel-arches) features a handy sliding side door, twin rear doors (which open out to 180 degrees), or optional tailgate, and a low floor design with



Interior is car-like and well designed

the door seal tucked out of the way so it doesn't get damaged when sliding heavy objects in or out. The SWB version comes with a load volume of 5.4m³, the LWB one has an extra 0.9m³. That equates to heaps of room for a couple of bikes and all the kit you'd need for a weekend away. And although we didn't try it, you could probably fit three bikes in should you need to.

Driving the Transporter is a breeze with only a slightly notchy gearbox letting down the otherwise superb drivetrain. Top speed is pretty academic but it'll cruise at 80mph no problem and even our petrol ver-

sion bettered 20mpg. However not everything was perfect and a few design faults marked the Trainspotter's card. Firstly the seats need to be more comfortable if they are not to contribute to driver fatigue - there doesn't seem to be much support for the lower back and it's a problem that needs to be addressed in a vehicle which may be occupied for hours on end. I didn't like the way the front wheelarch protruded into the pedal box area either necessitating an accelerator pedal that is markedly off-set to the left. And most annoyingly of all from

a bike carrying point of view, was the fact that the anchorage points set into the floor area were too small to accept a standard bike tie-down strap. Problems aside, we were impressed by the

Transporter's ability to swallow up endless amounts of bikes and kit, by its good road manners and well designed cab, and confident that like all VWs it comes with decent build quality and a thick covering of paint.

With prices ranging from £10,748 (plus VAT) for the base model up to £16,217 for the LWB Syncro, there's pretty much a model to suit most people's needs and pockets though if you add all the goodies listed in the options pack the price rockets enormously. All in all, a well designed van, and a capable work-horse. **Si Melber**

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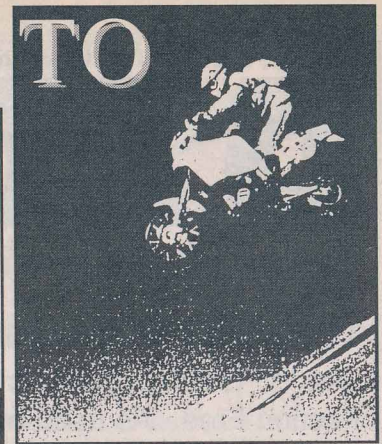
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...One Careful Owner...

Kawasaki's KMX125 and 200 are popular small trailies, but do they make a good secondhand buy?

Dave Cornish takes up the story.

The KMX range was launched over ten years ago with the 125cc learner legal version, shortly followed by a full power 24 bhp model, the long awaited 200cc made its debut in early 1988. All three

bikes share a similar rolling chassis, the main difference being rear wheel size; 17" on the 200 and more dirt tyre friendly 18" rim for the 125s. A common mod is to fit the 18"-er on to the 200 allowing a far greater tyre choice than you'd otherwise have. Except for a steel swingarm fitted on the 125 (alloy on the 200), most of the other chassis differences are purely cosmetic, although later 200's are fitted with an improved remote reservoir rear shock, so swapping parts is straightforward enough and second hand spares are simpler to track down.

The power unit is based on an early KX motocrosser; it's a reed valve KIPS equipped, liquid-cooled, two stroke single fitted with a coun-

terbalance shaft to dampen the vibes. The restricted 125 is easily brought up to full power spec (it's mainly exhaust restricted), and a full 30 bhp is claimed in 200cc guise. A de-

restricted 125 gives away very little in top end performance to its bigger brother, and the extra torque of the 200 is only really evident in sticky off road situations.

My particular 200 was used for commuting, trail riding, enduros and even an International beach race in Holland; but it felt happiest on mild green lanes at slower speeds as upping the pace off road showed the suspension's shortcomings; and for serious off road use some ingenious mods are called for.

The front suspension is certainly undersprung and underdamped and experimenting with fork oil and preload spacers only masks the problem rather than curing it. The rear end is a bit better with the shock adjustable for both damping and preload, but given abuse, the oil quickly over-

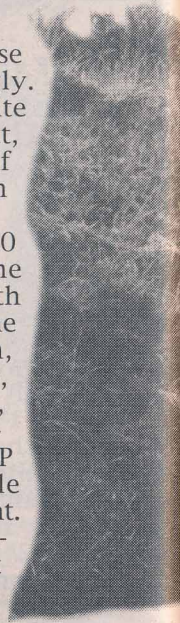


heats with predictable results. In less arduous situations of course there's really no problem with the suspension, and commuting six miles to work was never more fun than on the KMX.

Weighing in at only 100kg fuelled up, carving through the holiday season gridlock turned the daily grind to work into something akin to an urban enduro. Keeping the throttle nailed and making full use of the slick six-speed box the performance was very respectable with a top end approaching 90 mph (and acceleration to match), and the KMX can easily hold its own in town traffic. Roadholding is reassuringly good with decent dual sport tyres fitted, but at higher speeds the front end becomes a bit flighty, and hauling on

the brakes hard has the nose diving quite alarmingly. Longer faster trips can quite literally be a pain in the butt, after only 25 - 30 miles if you're cruising at 70mph plus.

Off road prepping the 200 consisted of fitting some decent rubber, (not easy with a 17" rear wheel), junking the stock exhaust system, instruments, indicators, mudguards and headlamp, and fitting a Gianelli expansion chamber with a DEP muffler to release a little more power and save weight. Acerbis provided the headlamp, mudguards and a front disc cover. Rental bars



spersed with sections of woodland at regular intervals. Unfortunately two days of rain had formed a slimy covering over the rock hard stubble fields and the first few laps were taken very cautiously. Upping the pace showed the shortcomings of the standard KMX suspension, and as the track cut up the problem went from bad to worse.

The motor however was a joy to use as long as the rear enduro tyre found traction, and it was possible to see 70mph down the long back straight. With the track drying quickly the top riders were really motoring and a hard-riden RMX flew by, kicking up a rock from the spinning rear wheel which hit my glove, knocking the bars clean out of my hands and I wobbled to a halt with a badly shattered knuckle. With only half a lap to go I struggled to the finish and to cap it all, the Kawasaki's

replaced the bendy original items, and the rack, rear footrests, mirrors, and side stand cut-out switch joined an ever growing pile of discarded parts in the corner of the garage. Finally a home on the lower frame rails and to keep the bike road legal a mini speedo and cable sourced from a Yamaha TY250 was mounted neatly on the fork leg.

The finished bike was finally completed with less than 24 hours to go before its competition debut in a local championship enduro, after a quick shake down run to the chip shop, the KMX was loaded on to the trailer for an early morning start. The event was held on farmland at Caistor st Edmund, Norfolk and the course consisting of mainly flat out bursts around fields was inter-

clutch gave up the ghost in the final few yards. With man and machine back to full race fitness the rest of the season was spent vainly trying to sort out the suspension. The final race on the KMX turned out to be another disaster, and after spending a night in a Dutch hospital my mind was made up; get home, sell the KMX and get a more serious off roader. Reading this you may well be thinking 'what do you expect from a trail bike?' after all its not built as a competition machine, but my previous trail bike, a DT125, coped with two seasons of abuse with little more than a precautionary set

Carving through the holiday season gridlock turned the daily grind to work into something akin to an urban enduro

clutch gave up the ghost in the final few yards. With man and machine back to full race fitness the rest of the season was spent vainly trying to sort out the suspension. The final race on the KMX turned out to be another disaster, and after spending a night in a Dutch hospital my mind was made up; get home, sell the KMX and get a more serious off roader. Reading this you may well be thinking 'what do you expect from a trail bike?' after all its not built as a competition machine, but my previous trail bike, a DT125, coped with two seasons of abuse with little more than a precautionary set

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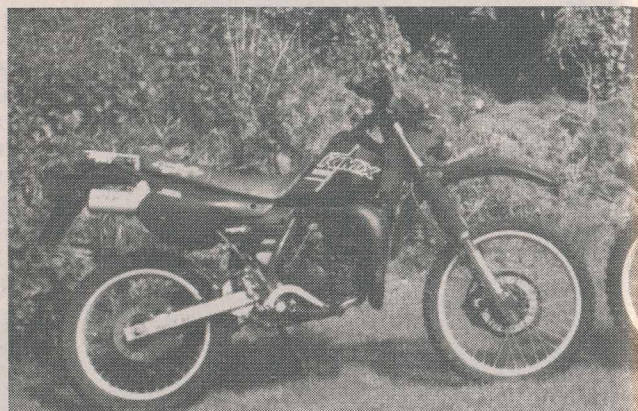
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of piston rings. And on top of that the handling from the Yamaha Monocross suspension really put the KMX to shame. I must admit I do expect a lot from my bikes but I carry out an extremely strict maintenance schedule. Obviously if your KMX is used mainly on tarmac it'll require far less attention to keep it running sweetly. Be warned though, the discs and pads wear at an alarming rate (especially off road), the clutch needs stronger springs to keep it working properly, the KIPS valve has been known to fail at higher mileage's filling the exhaust system with mechanical debris (my bike ate a piston shortly after selling it), and the overall finish of the bike is frankly below average.

Others however have been luckier. Jon Cooke bought his 1992 KMX125 18 months ago and has suffered no problems with it whatsoever. Jon's bike, which is completely stock except for the favoured Gianelli/DEP exhaust set-up, is mainly used for scratching round the local lanes and on his daily commute to work in all weathers, and the bike's light weight combined with the zippy motor make short work of his congested commute. The bike hasn't been used off road yet and Jon's few criticisms are confined to the soft fork action.

Ex-international road racer Andy Bond's 1989 KMX200 gets round this problem with a series of modifications. While the motor is standard apart from an uprated clutch, White Power forks replace

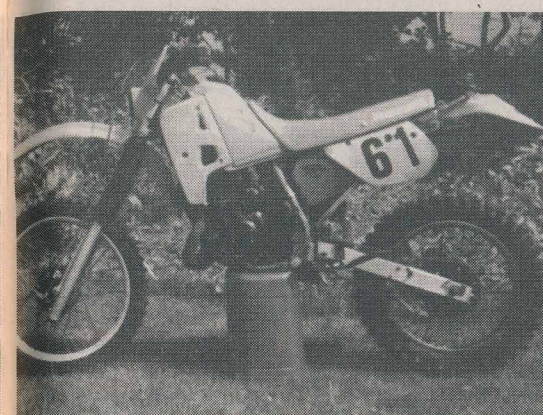


A KMX125 and a heavily modified 200

the standard Kawasaki items and a KTM front wheel graces the front end. At the rear the swingarm has been cut and extended by two inches and is now suspended by a White Power shock mated to a KMX lower mount.

You've probably guessed that Andy uses his KMX for off road use only, mainly trail bike enduros, and reckons the bike handles better on the dirt than the standard version but suffers from slower steering and a taller seat height thanks to the revised suspension. However an added bonus of the KTM front end is the stronger wheel fitted with a twin leading shoe brake - so no more worn out discs! Andy's done other mods like moving the footrests back four inches and shortening the brake and gear levers to suit but reckons the standard bike is pretty good as a starting point. Acerbis plastics and the usual DEP muffler finish off the subtle modifications!

Andy says he likes the 200's tough, torquey motor which makes for a stress-free ride, but reckons a few extra horsepower are waiting to be liberated from the engine without harming reliability. Thanks to a diet



of fully synthetic oil, the motor has seen two full seasons' abuse with no mechanical failures so far.

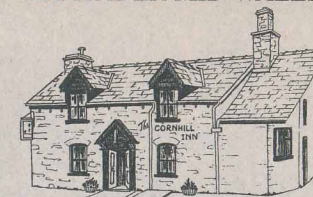
If you're in the market for a short haul city bike with occasional off road capability a KMX125/200 fits the bill perfectly, but bear in mind hard off road use will show up its shortcomings. If you're thinking of buying a used one look for signs of general neglect as even normal road use can take its toll if maintenance is neglected.

A well looked-after, de-restricted 125 may be a better buy than a 200 as the motor is only slightly less powerful, the 18" rear wheel is better when choosing MX or enduro tyres, and a 125 should be easier to sell on afterwards.

Year	Model	KMX125	KMX200
86	B1	£775	---
87	B2	£895	---
88	B3	£1025	£1495
89	B4	£1095	£1595
90	B5	£1225	£1695
91	B6	£1325	£1850
92	B6	£1450	---
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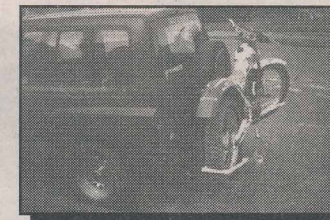


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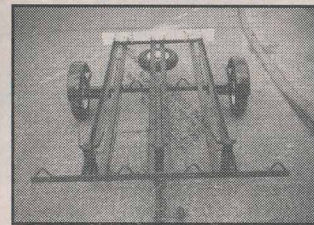
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Trail Tales...

Fear and loathing in the Lands End Trial

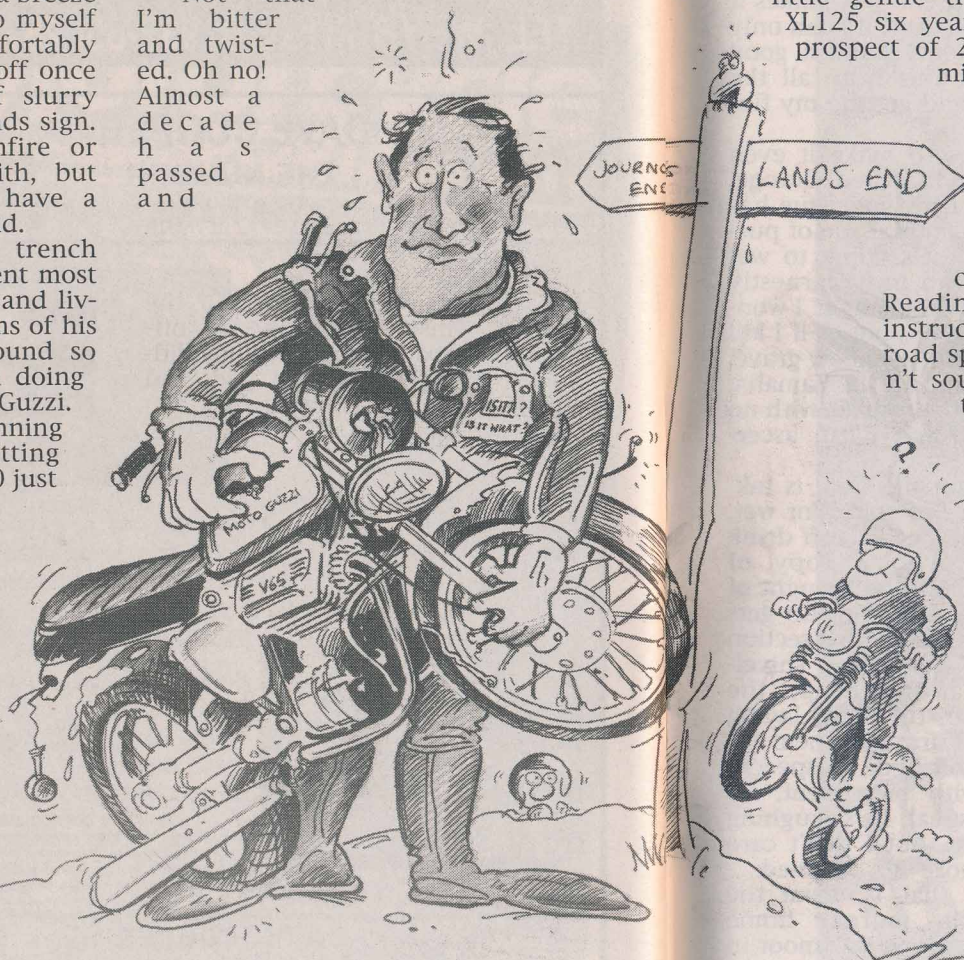
Passchendaele must have been a breeze compared to this, I thought to myself as I settled the Guzzi more comfortably across my shoulders and set off once again through three feet of slurry towards the distant Section Ends sign. Okay, so there was no gunfire or barbed wired to contend with, but then Tommy Atkins didn't have a 400lb Moto Guzzi to lug around.

Sure, Tommy developed trench foot, got shot at a lot, and spent most of his time crawling with lice and living amongst the rotting remains of his comrades, but that didn't sound so bad. Certainly no worse than doing the Lands End Trial on a Moto Guzzi. And as I contemplated the grinning physog of my 'comrade' sitting nonchalantly astride his XT350 just beyond the Section Ends sign, the prospect of living amongst his rotting remains seemed an attractive one. An amphetamine-induced paranoia was really beginning to set in.

I suppose I should explain. As a cub reporter on a certain motorcycle magazine I was suckered by a colleague (who shall remain nameless) into taking part in the Lands End Trial. Being new to the motorcycle journalism business at the time, and naive to the machinations of fellow hacks, I went along with the plan. Little did I know that the sneaky little bastard would scam himself an XT350, in those days the best trailie around for serious mud-plugging, and lumber me with a

Moto Guzzi V65TT, possibly the biggest pile of crap ever to call itself a trailbike.

Not that I'm bitter and twisted. Oh no! Almost a decade has passed and



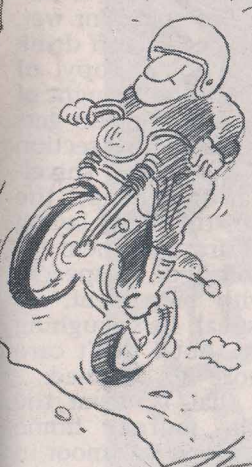
we're now on speaking terms again, so don't you go accusing me of nursing a grievance. Bastard, bastard, bastard! But I'm getting off the subject again.

The prologue...

So there I was in the Lands End Trial looking dejectedly at the road book and wondering just how I came to be contemplating 400 miles of on-and-off-road riding aboard a Moto Guzzi. I may have been a bit wet behind the ears, but even I knew enough to realise that a V65TT was patently unsuitable for the task expected of it. Actually, the truth is that I knew that I was patently unsuitable for the task expected of me. My off-road experience to that point was a little gentle trail riding on an XL125 six years previously. The prospect of 24 hours and 400

miles in the saddle, much of it off-road, on a cold March weekend wasn't a happy one.

But what the hell, eh? How bad could it be? Reading through the instructions, the 18 off-road special sections didn't sound that bad, and the rest of the road-riding should be a breeze. The plan, for those unfamiliar with this particular type of motorised madness, is that each competitor (150 bikes and 250 cars) sets off at one minute intervals and must arrive at the time-checks no more



than five minutes early or 20 minutes late. The Trial ploughs its way through some of the most scenic parts of the south-west and the competitor who

'cleans' the most sections without incurring time penalties is the winner. Well, something like that, anyway.

A cinch, eh? Too right. The event kicked off mid-afternoon and we were ready. The bikes had been thoroughly prepped — a squirt of lube and a full tank of fuel — and the riders bountifully supplied with sweeties, fags and amphetamine-sulphate (purely for medicinal purposes, you understand). Now I don't condone in any way riding motorcycles under the influence of two dozen Mars bars and a bad case of hyperglycaemia, but needs must...

So off we go. The first observed section is somewhere on the Somerset Levels and at 1.30am, a time when all

BY NOW THE GUZZI HAS SHED JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT WAS BOLTED TO IT

right-thinking men of this fair land are on a lock-in at the local. With reckless abandon I blast up the only hill for miles around and promptly toss the Guzzi into a ditch as the Metzeler Enduro tyres clog up and lose what little semblance of traction they once afforded. My 'colleague' laughs uproariously and putters off into the gloom. 'Sodding Italian pile of crap,' I mutter.

Bloodied but unbowed we continue south-west. Having 'cleaned' the first section I am in relatively high spirits, but they don't last long. The sections get increasingly difficult as the night goes on. And boy, does the night go on. And on. And on and on. With temperatures barely above freezing, a stiff south-westerly blows straight through our riding gear and chills us to the bone. When it wasn't actually raining, it was snowing. Dartmoor at 4am in the snow is bad. Having to push a V65TT up sections called Sug Lane, Polygon Wood, Beggar's Roost, Messines Ridge and such like, knee deep in mud and slurry, is worse.

To ensure that my cup truly runs

Trial/Tales...

neth over, the Guzzi starts to self-destruct. I suppose I should have expected it, really. I've ridden Guzzis before, and not once did one hold together for the duration. Nevertheless, I'm not too chuffed when an exhaust pipe bracket shears and the back brake seizes up. My colleague is full of helpful advice — 'Get off and milk it.' 'Ah yes, sir, they all do that.' 'We'll have those parts for you just as soon as the factory's back from its three month summer break' — stuff like that.

Throughout all this my colleague (who, it transpired, had extensive off-road experience) soldiers away on the impeccably behaved XT350, chuckling merrily as I push, heave, crash, sweat and curse my way through the mire. Sod this for a laugh, I think to myself, and crack open the nose-candy in a lay-by. With a schnozz full of Peckham Poison the first thing I see is a bunch of coppers from one of the Plod Motorcycle Clubs on identikit XT550s. They want to know if we need any help. I tuck my rolled-up fiver nonchalantly behind my ear and assure them that all is fine and dandy, thank you officer.

Suddenly I feel a lot better. The sun's beginning to rise, the snow is turning into a light sleet, and things are looking up. Twenty-four hours without sleep seem as nothing. The special sections get a little easier. I'm almost enjoying myself. In fact my enjoyment of the event is in direct proportion to the amount of whiskey going down my neck and the amount of Marching Powder going up my nose. Boy, this is great.

As the sections turn muddier again I all but give up trying to ride the Guzzi. Instead I sling it over my shoulder and sprint up the hills cyclocross-style. I arrive at the top of each sweating profusely and with a strangely magenta cast to my features, but I make it. My colleague at this point is almost apoplectic with



mirth. He clutches his sides and shrieks hysterically at the sight of me at the top of Hoskin Exit. I stand triumphantly at the top, beaming broadly, with the Guzzi tucked under my arm, while the spectator's look on in amazement. Anyone would think they'd never seen someone run half a mile up a muddy hill carrying a V65TT before. Idiots.

By now the Guzzi has shed just about everything that was bolted to it — footrests, exhaust, indicators, mudguards and lots of other stuff I haven't yet missed. This is great — it makes it that much easier to carry. If I can only lose the engine, then I stand a good chance of carrying this heap all the way to Lands End and getting my finisher's certificate.

But after failing to make it even half way up a section called Orange, I'm surprised to see my colleague has turned the same curious shade of purple as me. I think he's going to wet himself laughing, and pray earnestly that it forms icicles on his dick. I wonder whether anyone will notice if I kill him, bury his body in a shallow grave, and complete the trial on the Yamaha. The plan has definite promise, with no serious draw-backs that I can ascertain.

By mid-afternoon the Trial is taking its toll on me. I'm cold, I'm wet, and I'm knackered. I need a stiff drink and a rub-down with a copy of Motorcycle Sport. Only the thought of a very large whiskey in the pub gets me to the top of the last special section where I expire in a sweating, snivelling, bleating, panting heap, the remains of the Guzzi laying where I dropped them.

My colleague is speechless with merriment. He can't speak he's laughing so hard, but I don't care any more it's finished.... Apart, that is, from the 250-mile journey home again. Across Dartmoor in the snow, on the remnants of a Guzzi V65TT. Deep, deep joy.

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