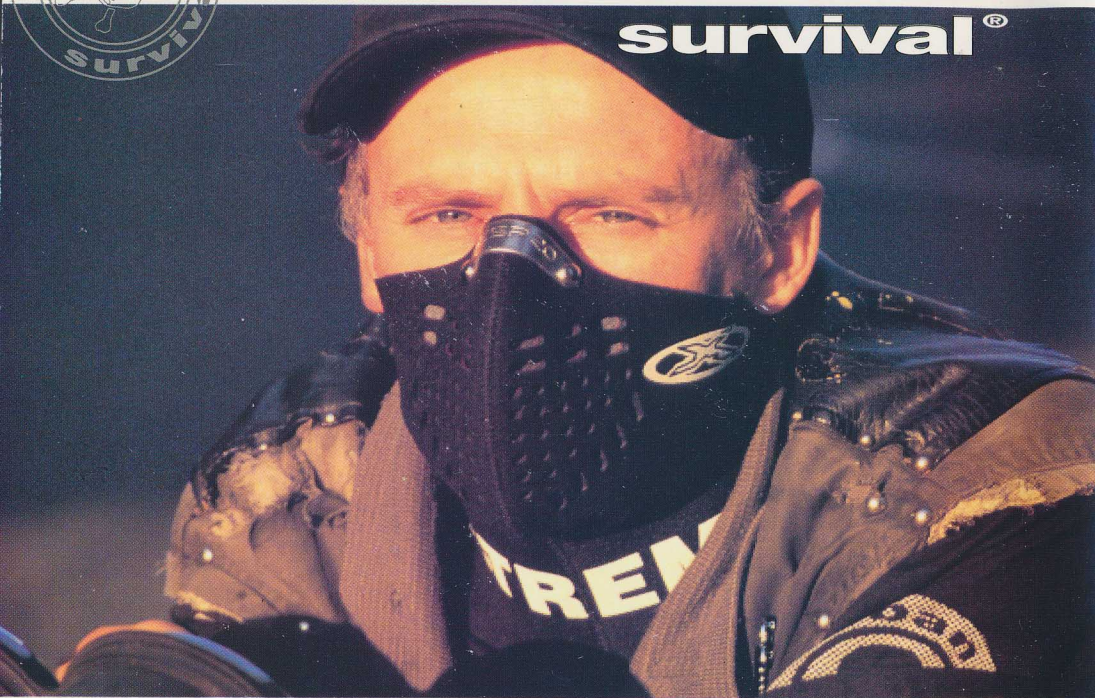




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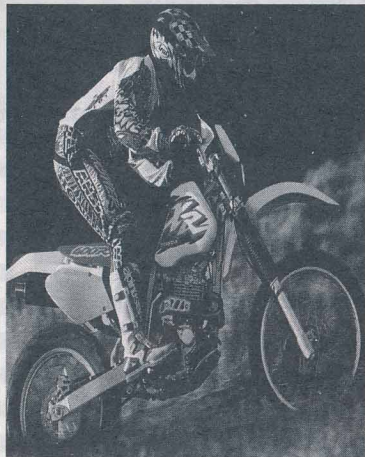
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TrailBike -4- Magazine

N

ow is the time to start thinking about your trailbiking year and which events, tours, and holidays you plan to fit in '97. Don't leave it too late, most events are already filling up fast, and really popular ones like the Cambrian Rally are already completely full. This year TrailBike Magazine has also planned a couple of events for you (the full details of which are on page 10). A number of you have asked us to run some events and though it's actually a full-time job just getting the magazine out every month, we've managed to arrange a couple of one-offs which should appeal to anyone with a bit of adventure. If they turn out to be a success - and that of course depends on what you think of them, then we plan to repeat them again next year, as well as adding a couple more. So get out your diaries, sort out a few spare weekends and really go and enjoy yourself on your bike this year. Over the past few months we've been telling you about all the things you can go and do on your trailie, now its up to you. If you don't make the effort then the weekends are just going to disappear. Of course its your decision, but if you've got nothing planned on a particular weekend how are you going to be able to get out of visiting the mother in law, cleaning the car, painting the house and all those other little delightful chores the other half keeps up their sleeve? We're giving you the perfect excuse. The ideal opportunity to say: 'sorry love, I'm all booked up that weekend - but I can

book you in for late November' Hell, I know which one I'd rather be doing.

• At last I can say that the TBM survey has finally made it into the magazine and it sure makes interesting reading. Thanks to all of those that responded - your comments have been noted and you should start to see the effects taking place soon. In fact next month you'll notice that the TrailBike Guide is back - fully updated and in one piece - but only for one month. So many of you mentioned that you wanted to see the Guide in the magazine just three or four times a year, so that's exactly what we plan to do. Next month's issue will include a Guide but after that we will run it (probably) quarterly and update it more regularly so that you'll be able to cross-reference the bikes we test with those already in the guide. You won't end up paying for repeated pages every month, and those people that want to see it in there will still be happy. Makes sense huh? Happy New Year by the way.

Si Melber

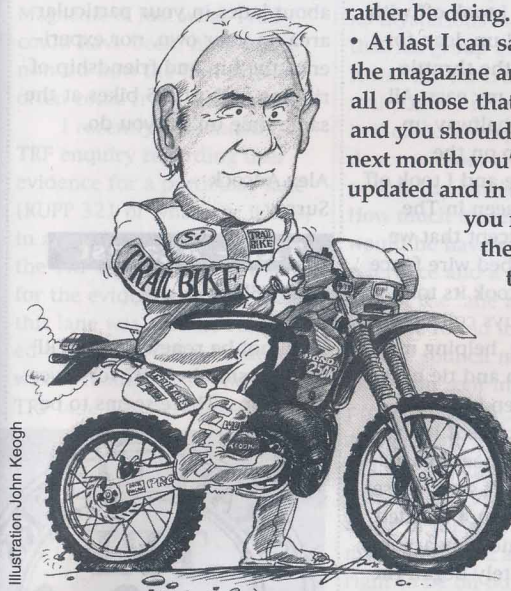


Illustration John Keogh

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TrailBike -5- Magazine

Dear Trail Bike...

TRF - For

Dear TBM

I'm one of those converts from tarmac. From the age of 17 until earlier this year my time was spent on road bikes, but that all changed when my friend Martin bought a stolen-recovered KMX200. He brought it round for me to try: 'Yes, of course I'll be careful Martin, it's only a 200 innit?' I leapt on the bike wound the throttle wide open and promptly disappeared off the back... I had to have one. I flogged the road bike and after much searching, found one for £1195 that promised new tyres and clutch, with most of the original paint.

After spending a few weekends running around nearby tracks wondering if it was okay to do so, I met an old school friend who told me her father was in this group called the TRF who went out for rides all over the county and beyond. Intrigued by this I joined the local group for one of their Sunday rides. Initially I was met by the sight of several different types of bike. From home made XL specials to Husabergs and everything in between. We then proceeded along the South Downs Way on more trails than I thought were in existence, and I was already knackered when after four hours instead of turning

back we turned into a pub.

After a hearty Scampi and chips we then headed towards a well known hill in the area called Butser Hill. Imagine the north face of the Eiger crossed with Colditz (it has barbed wire running all the way up one side of its rutted 200 metre 1:2 incline). I sat quaking at the bottom watching the experienced riders breeze up this mountain and then finally it was my turn. I took off with the words stand up, lean forward and keep the throttle open ringing in my ears. All went well until halfway up when I met a lip on the incline, the bike and I took off like Steve McQueen in The Great Escape except that we cleared the barbed wire fence before gravity took its toll.

The TRF guys collected the bike for me, helping me get it to the top and tie back on all the broken bits with string! I don't know if it was the fear or just sheer exhaustion but moments after we set off again the Scampi decided to make a second appearance while I desperately began the unequal struggle of trying to remove my helmet with gloved hands!

Seven hours after setting out and having fallen off everywhere including into a huge puddle which soaked me and the bike through, I fell into a hot bath completely exhausted but having had a great day. Since then I've done

loads with the TRF including helping out at horse trials which allows you to ride around all day on paths you wouldn't ordinarily get to use.

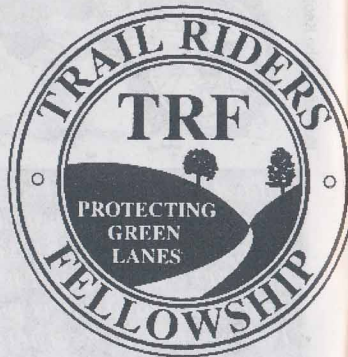
The TRF are not 'Dull' as suggested by a previous letter writer, and I would suggest to any would-be off roaders to contact your local group and go out and enjoy a free day's riding with them. You'll never accumulate the knowledge about lanes in your particular area on your own, nor experience the fun and friendship of ridding with 10-15 bikes at the same time unless you do.

Alex Adcock
Surrey

TRF - Against

Dear TBM

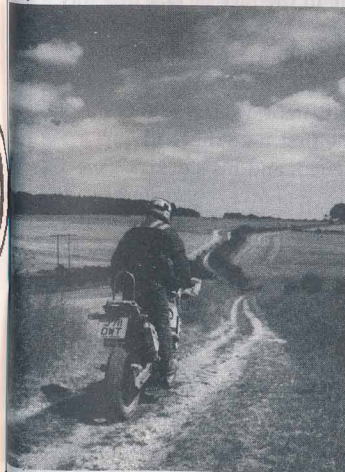
I will not be renewing my TRF membership in 1997 for several reasons: There seems to be



The TRF comes in for both praise and criticism this month

several pro-active TRF groups, but as most action appears to come from outside the Fellowship (including the 4x4 folk), I reckon that other green lane lobbies are stronger. I find the TRF newsletter 'Trail' depressing, and the bickering about trivia annoying. Sadly, as an information source, Trail Bike Magazine is just what Trail could have been, have you noticed how the best articles often come from TRF stalwarts?

I recently responded to a TRF enquiry regarding user evidence for a particular lane (RUPP 321 or whatever it was) in an area I frequent. I asked the TRF member who'd asked for the evidence, exactly where this lane was, and he responded with a put-down because I wasn't familiar with the official TRF lane number. You see it



Got an opinion?
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was 'his group's lane' and not for us ordinary folk to know its mysterious location - not that his group ever rode it as it was too far from their normal Sunday rat-run. How the hell could he expect user evidence without telling other people the lane's location? How much more response would he have got with a map reference and a short description of the lane in question?

I've found it now (by the county council notice on the gate) and sent in my own protest to the CC, but these arrogant 'do as I say, not do as I do' individuals totally p**S me off. There are too many of these in the TRF in my opinion, we all have a right to be on our legal carriageways, and if we are sensitive to others needs (just like we have to be on metalled roads) then we'll all get on. In my opinion two is company, five is a definite crowd, and thirty massed ramblers, mountain bikers or worse still one hundred Coast-To-Coast trail riders is unacceptable.

I shall not be giving up

motorcycling or indeed trail riding as I adore the former and the latter has given me new friends and a perfect way to traverse the roads frequented by my ancestors.

Peter Lee
Towcester, Northants

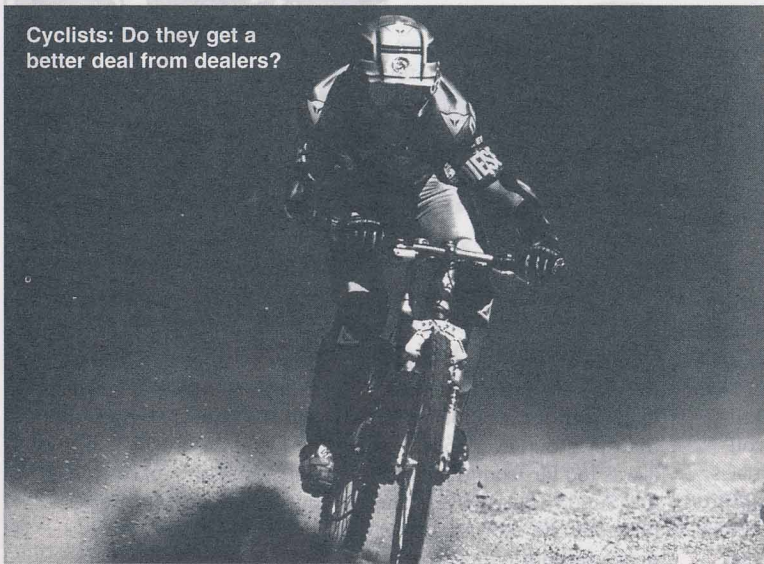
Boom Time?

Dear Si

At last, the motorcycle magazine I have been waiting ten years for? What I cannot understand is why there is so little published for off road motorcycle enthusiasts? The contrast between how the interests of mountain bike enthusiasts are catered for, and what we have could not be greater, yet in 1975 the author Don Smith predicted a boom in the recreational use of trailbikes for the 1980s. Sure masses of people bought trailies in the early Eighties including me, but I wonder how many of these bikes were ever ridden off road? For me the great dilemma has always been where can you ride off

Dear Trail Bike...

Cyclists: Do they get a better deal from dealers?



through the window! Eventually I persuaded them I was a serious punter and they got the bike out for me, but while the mechanic went to look for some fuel the boss pulled out the keys in case I nicked the bike! Then he told me I couldn't start the bike, that it had a two year warranty and 'that was all I needed to know.'

The bike seemed good, but was £100 more than the price it had

road which is challenging enough without breaking the law?

I have always dreamed of using my motorcycle for the kind of adventure holiday of the sort that Bob Combely recounted in the January issue (Baja Break), though fortunately your Rough Guide series show that considerable opportunities exist for the lone explorer closer to home. Officially it appears that trail riding is merely tolerated rather than encouraged though many other outdoor activities such as horse riding, powerboating or jet skiing could be construed to be 'at odds with protecting the environment'.

Maurice Courcha
Edmonton, London

What Service?

Dear Si

As editor of a mountain bike magazine I get plenty of reports of newcomers being treated badly by the trade, but I never figured it would happen to me. I was after a trail-bike to use as a camera bike for photoshoots in the magazine. I did all the research, singled out a bike and called the guy at my nearest dealers (two hours away), then went down to look at the bike armed with a fat wad of cash.

When I got there, the bike I wanted was in the window of the showroom with the rest of the stock behind it. I asked if they could get the bike out so I could look over it properly and was told I could see it

been advertised for in MCN. I figured a deal was in order, but the boss simply said that the price he quoted was the price and that was that. Then he sloped off somewhere never to return. Not once during this bizarre encounter did he look me in the face or talk in a way that I or my colleague would consider articulate. His mechanic was left red-faced but silent, I imagine this wasn't the first time this had happened, and his sidekick gave me the old 'we've been here 47 years while others went to the wall' routine.

Yeah, well I can really do without that. The point is that this guy has two showrooms stuffed with stock that he'll never shift with such a sucky attitude. He had the bike I wanted, I had the money, but

he wasn't prepared to talk. Instead the bike is festering away in the window along with all the other museum pieces, and I can only think that in those 47 years the guy has earned enough cash to allow him to act the Nazi to all and sundry.

Is this a symptom of British motorcycle shops? I hope not. I can't help thinking that in The States I could've had that bike shipped to my hotel room with all the 'yes sir, thank you sir, have a nice day sir' bullshit that makes you feel like you've both come out on top.

Geoff Waugh
What Mountain Bike Magazine

Sounds like you had a hard time of it Geoff. Don't give it a second thought, spend your cash elsewhere mate and let this guy go out of business. You're right about The States though, and while I don't like the sickly-sweet sales pitch of the Yanks, it's infinitely preferable to the offhand and surly British approach you've come across

Lights Out!

Dear Si

Following a telephone conversation with you, my friend and I bought a pair of CRM250Rs from the Container Company. The bikes are excellent, but when I came to buy

a headlight bulb (it has a special halogen one) I found that they are not freely available in the UK. The part number is 34901GJ1003 and any dealer should be able to order it from Honda Belgium, the price is £20.28 plus VAT. Top marks to Ciaran at the Container Co for supplying me with a spare one FOC.

K Bettis
Eaton, Cambs

The Container Company replies: They're a heavy duty fitting which is why they're so expensive, but we've now sourced some which will retail for about £12 and should arrive early February.

Overlander

Dear TBM

I'm a recent convert to trail-bikes having bought a cheapish Yamaha DT250MX and have also been looking for another bike of around 500-600cc between £1000-1500, which will do as a commuter and overlander. One obvious candidate is the XT600Ténére, though I'm having trouble finding a reasonably priced one. Most I have seen have been Italian imports with little or no history.

One bike that does keep popping up is the ex-army Armstrong MT500. The bike seems fairly basic and almost entirely green, but available

and in my price range. I would like your opinion on the bike. I would like to think the army wouldn't but rubbish but would the bike suit a life on civvy street. Thanks for a great magazine and for any advice you may have.

Jon Shepherd
Watford, Herts

You're right The Yamaha XT600Ténére does seem to be going up in price at the moment, which is perhaps not all that surprising as they make an excellent overlander and you can't buy them new anymore. You may have to spend a bit more on one but then again when you come to sell it you'll probably get more than you paid for it, so there are some advantages.

The MT500 is also a good bike, but completely different to the Yamaha. As it's designed for the army it's a no-frills bike, without electric start and with more basic componentry. On the other hand it's cheap, reliable, incredibly strong and just about perfect for an overland trip though you might want to change its colour depending on which countries you're planning to visit (some African countries probably wouldn't appreciate you riding along near some military installation armed with a camera and sat on an army bike!).

We plan to test an MT500 sometime soon when we'll be able to let you know exactly what they're like

TrailBike Magazine Events 1997

You've asked for it, so here we are, two events to tickle your trailie taste-buds this year. The idea behind these is simply to enjoy yourself. There are no prizes for winning, Just come along for a good crack and an excuse to compete on your trailbike.

Sunday 1 June

• Supermoto

This fun supermoto-type event is open to all trailbikes and fourstroke enduro machines (but sadly *not* converted crossers because of noise regs), and will take place on a specially designed short course consisting of a mixture of mud, gravel, tarmac and concrete down in Wiltshire. You can ride it on any make of bike, any capacity, and fitted with any type or size of road-legal tyres, though there will be a distinction made for bikes over 501cc. All you need is a properly silenced, road-legal trailbike, some leathers and the spirit of competition. The event will be run along similar lines to an indoor Karting race and the course will be designed to enable riders of any ability to get round. We want riders new to the sport rather than racers to take part and just have a go at a completely different type of event. There will also be overnight camping and a barbecue for those that want it.

30 - 31 August

• Big Trailie Raid

The second event is aimed at anyone that owns a big trailbike (600cc+) who wants a chance at riding it in a non-competitive event. The TrailBike Magazine Big Trailie Raid (with a helping hand from Sport Adventure) will take place in Calais in France over a weekend and will allow you to test your navigation skills using a rolling roadbook. Utilising a mixture of tracks, trails and some tarmac roads, this raid is designed to allow you chance to take your big trailbike off road (on standard tyres) on some fairly easy going without destroying it. There are not many opportunities to make use of this type of bike in an event such as this so we urge you to make the most of it, apply early and really enjoy yourself.

Places on both these events are strictly limited and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. Regs for both of them are available by sending a stamped self addressed envelope marked TBM Events '97 to TBM Magazine, PO Box 9845, London W13 9WP. Don't forget to specify which regs you want - and we'll see you there.

What's On in Feb/Mar

Feb 2 The Snow Run. The first round of the British S/car Championships. An excellent clubman & Sportsman event with a 30+ mile lap. Good for riders and spectators alike. (10am) *Start & finish signposted from Glanbran Arms at Cyngordy on the A483 Builth - Llandovery Road.*

Feb 9 Phoenix Long Distance Trial. Run by the Bristol Phoenix club, this is an excellent 70+ mile event with no hold ups, just a good ride. *Start & finish at the Lamb Inn, Cladown near Radstock, west of the A367.*

Feb 22 Gilles Lalay Classic. The world's toughest enduro. 500 riders start at 6am from Limoges in France with only the top 200 going forward to the second afterdark stage. This second part is a straightforward race featuring some extremely serious terrain where forward motion is sometimes only possible with the assistance of some of the thousands of spectators. First man to the top of Dead Crow Hill at midnight is the winner. This year three UK riders Wyn Hughes, Rob Smith and Dave Baylis are taking part - why not go and cheer them on? *Starts 6am*

Limoges, France, plenty of good spectating.

Mar 2 Breckland Enduro. First round of the British enduro champs. The traditional season opener and good clubman event - traditionally not too tough. *Start 8.30am, Thefford Forest nr Brandon. Good spectating.*

Mar 2 TBEC Enduro. Easyish clubman enduro specially catering for trailbikes. Classes for both pre-83 and post 83 trailbikes plus production enduro machines. *Manby Showground, near Louth, Lincs starting 10.30. Details from Dawn King 01933 626009.*

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Due to popular demand (and the fact that we've still got hundreds of cards left) we've decided to extend our Christmas offer for a couple of months more, so all new subscribers will get a TBM postcard to send to anyone they want to, or just to stick on their mantelpiece to convince visitors that they're a popular sort of person who's got loads of friends. Just to clarify matters, we send the BLANK postcard to YOU or whoever's name appears in the POSTCARD box below. We DON'T write the card for you nor put any sort of message on it. That arduous task is left to YOU, okay? Send your cheque for £20, (£29.99 for Eire or overseas) made payable to TrailBike Magazine to the address listed below.

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Water is a fairly common hazard when off roading even in the summer months, indeed it is the very presence of fords, streams and rivers which greatly increase the pleasure of off roading. I know the temptation when you're out

Off-road Riding Techniques

S i m e l b e r

riding is to just charge headlong straight through water - particularly if your mate happens to be about three feet to one side and a bike-length behind you - so that he gets a complete ducking, but watchout. many streams and rivers contain hidden hazards waiting to catch you out. I know, I once fell off in a river which I was crossing in New Zealand drowning all my kit, and had to spend the night in a very soggy sleeping bag!

Rivers by their very nature can be extremely slippery places, smooth wet rocks, covered in a liberal dose of green slime do not offer the trail rider good grip no matter what tyres you're using. When you approach a water crossing be a bit circumspect. You may have crossed it dozens of times before but the very fact that rivers are transport mechanisms means that there could well be something new lurking below the surface, a flood may have moved a few boulders into the bottom, reorganised the river bed or jammed something like a log under the surface, if you just go headlong into it you never know what you'll encounter. I'm not trying to say you have to get off your bike and test the bottom, but at least stop and figure out what sort of substrate you're likely to encounter and roughly how deep it is. Remember the refracting nature of water means that it always looks only about as half as deep as it really is. In a couple of seconds you're going to find out *exactly* how deep it is anyway, so it's worth spending just a moment or two checking to see if it's flooded or there's any obvious obstacles in the way as well as working out your exit point before you head into it.

So then, standing up, leaning slightly back and using plenty of revs head into the water and look across to the other side to make sure you're lining up your exit point, if the bike starts to bog down a bit give it more revs and above all try and keep up your momentum. Obviously you need to be going fast enough to keep moving

(remembering that the force of the water will slow you down anyway), as once you stop moving forwards you're going to have to put a foot down which means soggy feet for the rest of the ride. Keep one finger on the clutch lever and try and keep

a steady speed through the water. Go too fast and you risk drowning the bike (some bikes cope better with water than others), even faster than that and water will fly up from the front tyre and soak you. If the bike starts to splutter, dip the clutch give it a quick rev and let out the clutch again. If the engine dies, well you're going to get wet anyway.

Occasionally in really deep crossings, water can get into the airbox causing the bike to stall. This is potentially an extremely damaging situation. If cold water gets right inside a hot engine it can cause a lot of damage and worse still if that engine happens to be revving hard at the time the damage is going to be terminal. Water is non-compressible (not even a little bit) and a whole carb full of water is going to stick a sizeable amount right on top of your piston just as it's coming up for the compression stroke. The first you'll know about it is a loud bang followed by a long walk home and a bill that'll make you far more cautious next time. While cases of 'hydraulic lock' are extremely rare (though one happened in the Dakar in 95), no-one wants to be the unlucky person that everybody talks about for the next few years. So make sure your bike's airbox is watertight, that the filter is regularly cleaned and oiled and the airbox drainage pipe is clean and free from obstructions.

There's no problem with going relatively swiftly through fairly shallow water up to about a foot or eighteen inches deep especially if you are following another rider, but just watch out for them dislodging something like a big rock which you then run into! Once you're out of the water (especially if it's a ford in between two roads), remember to try your brakes because although these days discs work well wet or dry, drums aren't usually as good once they're soaked through so take care. And remember, have fun.

Next Month Roots, rocks and ruts

TrailBike -12- Magazine

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A special raid beginning with a day's Kart racing before taking to the lanes of Devon and Cornwall for two days riding. Three nights accommodation, evening meals, breakfast and lunches, as well as your roadbook, holder and the karting are all included in the price of £249.

The Cider Raid

(Apr 4/5/6 & 18/19/20)

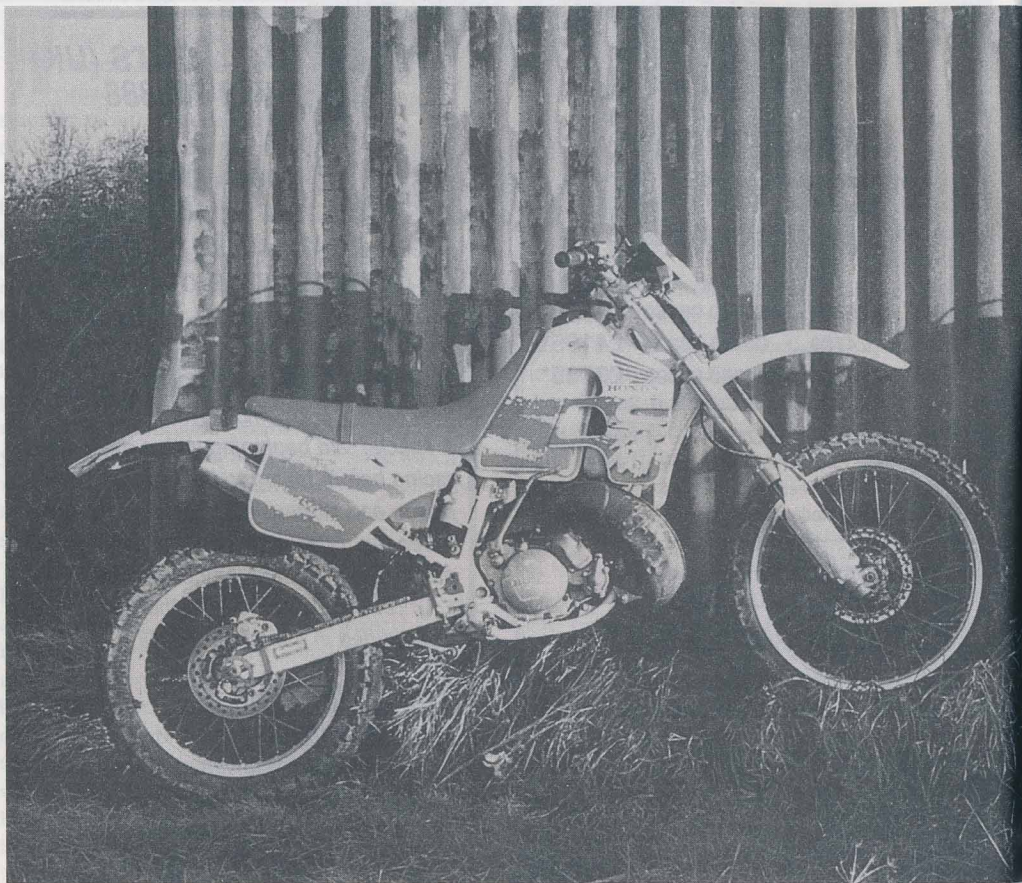
The westcountry equivalent to the Beaujolais run! The Cider Raid will allow you to explore not just Cornish and Devonshire lanes, but also the picturesque trails of Somerset - with an evenings spent sampling its famous brew! Two nights accommodation, evening meals, breakfast and lunches, as well as your roadbook and holder are all included in the price of £225.

The Pirate Raid

(May 9/10/11 & 23/24/25)

This Raid take the form of a fast paced treasure hunt through Devon and Cornwall. Find the clues along the trails and a chest of gold could be yours. Two nights accommodation, evening meals, breakfast and lunches, as well as your roadbook and holder are all included in the price of £225.

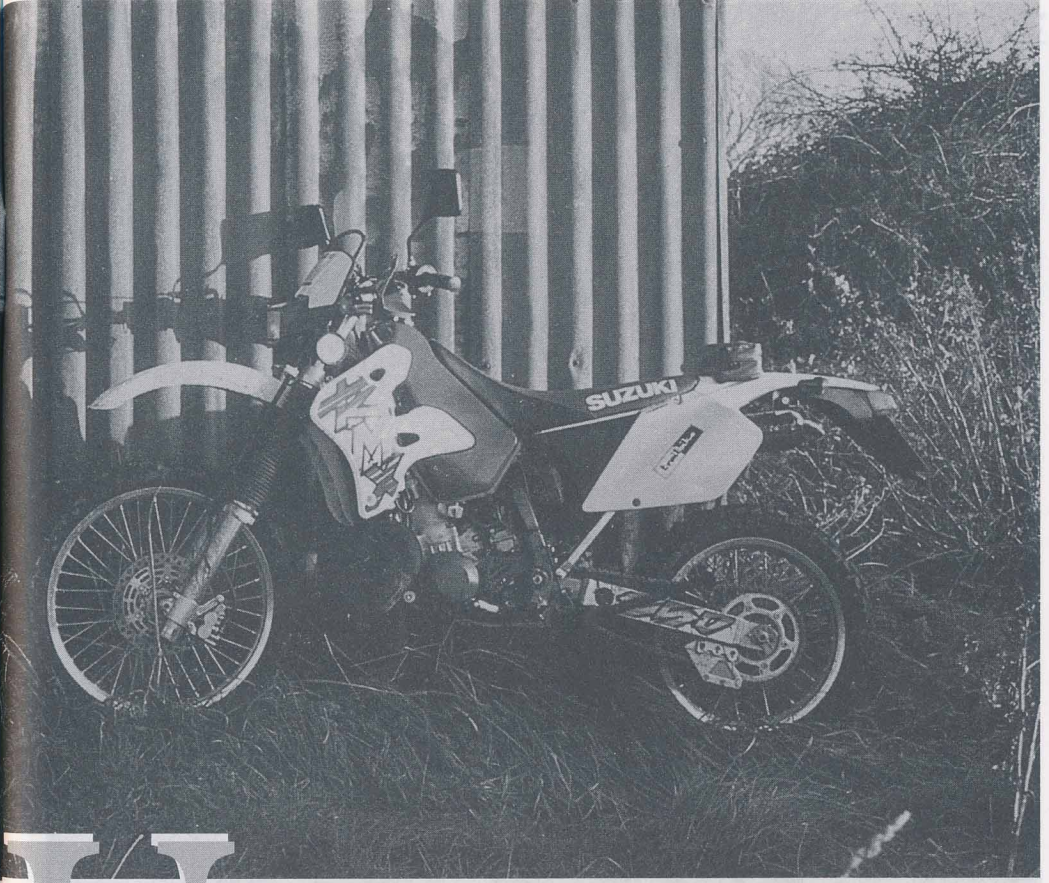
TrailBike -13- Magazine



HONDA CRM250R VS SUZUKI RMX250S

The new Suzuki RMX250S takes on the established leader of the two stroke trailbike class - the Honda CRM250R - on road, track and dyno. TrailBike Magazine's Si Melber and Dave Cornish rode them head to head in the ultimate shootout.

Words & pics by Si Melber



Up until now there's not really been a lot to touch the Honda CRM250R as a trailbike for all occasions. It'll not only handle the trickiest of tracks, but makes a comfortable enough street machine as well as a competitive racer - in the appropriate class. Sure the DR350 is another bike in that mould but it's heavier and less powerful than the Honda, and physically much larger. Of course there are a handful of exotic 125 trailies that fit the bill, Husky and Aprilia both make one and let's not forget the good old DT125. But some riders (me included) prefer the power of a 250 rather than the rev-the-nuts-off-it, all-or-nothing zippiness of an eighth litre. So that really leaves the existing grey

imports; the KDX200SR and 250SR, as well as the DT200WR and Suzuki's offering, the TS200R as alternatives... Or does it? Because now there is another grey import to add to that list in the form of the Suzuki RMX250S trailbike which threatens to steal the Honda's thunder as the best of the street-legal strokers.

Before you even ask, this bike has nothing to do with the RMX250 enduro bike currently imported into this country by Suzuki. We tested that machine back in issue 12 and it's a smoking bike for enduros, but its power and set up make it a little fierce for tackling a green lane. Not only that of course but its diet of premix means every time you stop and fuel up



Above: The RMX-S matches the CRM in most aspects - and beats it on power. As a trailbike for exploring unmade roads there's little to separate them though the Suzuki is blessed with plusher suspension than the Honda. Right: The RMX's instruments however can't match the Honda's

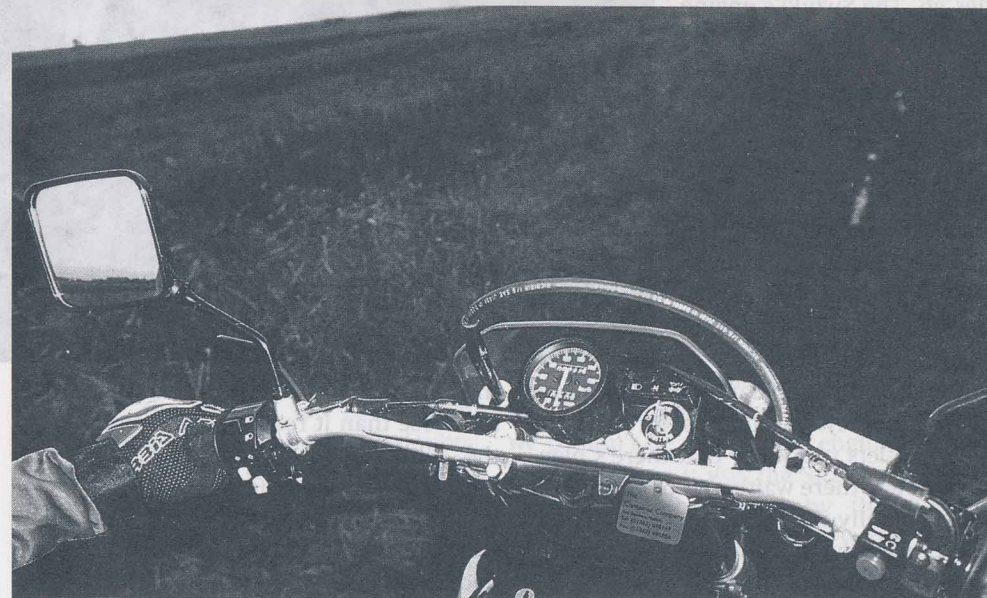
CRM250R V RMX250S

you've got to start messing about with fiddly measuring jugs. The RMX-S is completely different, it's been built as a trailbike, it comes with plusher suspension, all the roadgoing kit you need already fitted to the bike like dipping lights, brakelight, indicators, speedo etc plus a comfy saddle and best of all an oil pump. In other words it's the Suzuki equivalent of the CRM. But more than that, it's even styled to look like the Honda. Even the purple yellow and white colourscheme is the same as that which bedecks the latest version of the CRM. And though the CRM we used for the test (and which appears in the photos) was an earlier MK2 model we'd originally planned to test the RMX against a nice shiny MK3 but it was sold just days before.

There are though a number of detail differences when you start to look a bit closer. Starting with the Suzuki it feels a shade taller than the Honda, a tiny bit narrower and looks a little bit cheaper.

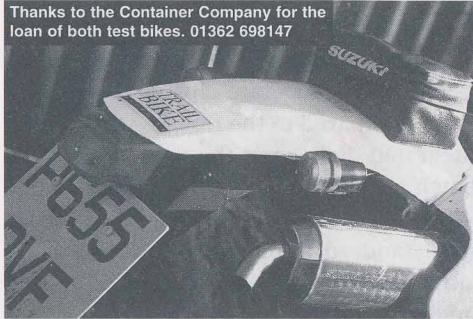
The paint isn't as thick, the instruments are a bit more basic - there's a round speedo and a separate cluster of warning lamps compared to the Honda's simple but integrated dials - and the switchgear is no match for the Honda stuff. Neither do the plastic panels look quite up to the Honda's high standard, though the Suzuki comes with a rear fender bag and the styling is if anything, a tad sharper. The Honda is the same as its always been - styled on the 1988 crosser with a few little updates along the way - and it looks purposeful and smart if not quite as modern as the Suzuki.

Both bikes wear adjustable suspension front and rear; the Honda has a pair of USD forks while the Suzuki sports a set of the latest cap-ended conventionals like those on the RMX enduro racer. Both come fitted with an alloy box-section swingarm but the Suzuki's looks the stronger of the two and more resistant to flex. Each one has adjustable damping on the rear shock,



CRM250R V RMX250S

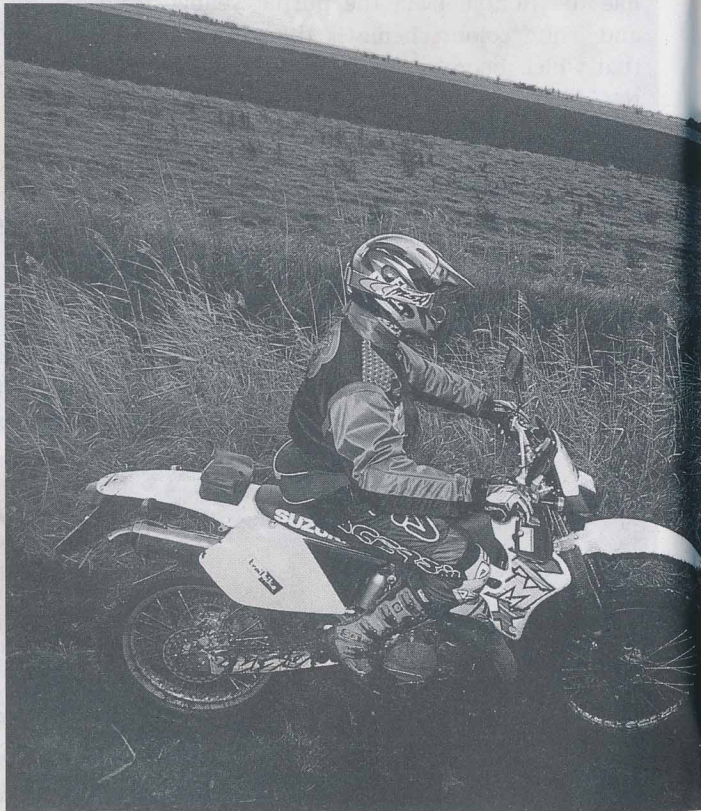
Thanks to the Container Company for the loan of both test bikes. 01362 698147



Pulling away from our starting point this vibration was immediately apparent and pretty unpleasant at first especially if you've been used to smoother machines. Build up a bit of speed (both bikes are geared for the road) and the vibration turns from an annoying tingle to a full blooded buzz that actually vibrated my left foot clean off the footrest on more than one occasion. As time goes on you get used to

with plenty of suspension travel, though the Honda manages to achieve a lower seat height thanks to its slightly sculpted saddle.

As far as engines go, both bikes are powered by thermostatically controlled, liquid-cooled, single cylinder, two stroke, reed-valve powerplants aided and abetted by electronic power valves, though that's about as far as the similarities go. The Suzuki's engine is much smarter-looking than the Honda's; finished in a thick matt grey paint on the crankcases, it looks neater and easier to work on than the bitsy CRM. Start them up and the difference in the powerplants is even more apparent: where the Honda is smooth and quiet thanks to its in-built balancer shaft, the unbalanced Suzuki is raucous and racy. It vibrates through the bars and lets you know that there's plenty of power there waiting to be unleashed and generally feels a bit more 'mad, bad and dangerous to know' than the slightly sanitised Honda.



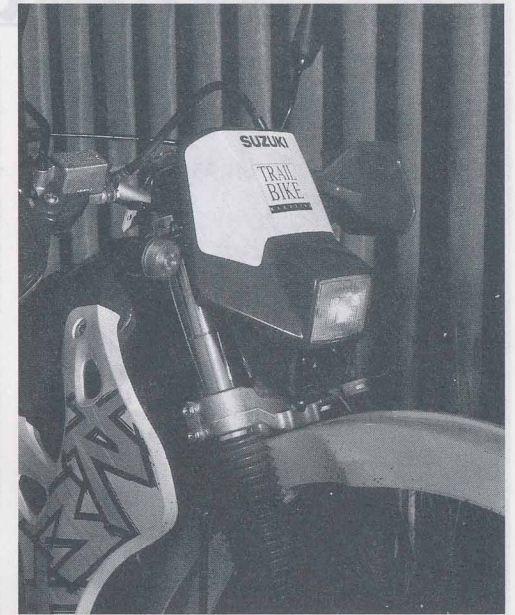
the Suzuki's vibes and it probably sounds a lot worse than it really is, but compared to the silky smooth Honda powerplant, the RMX is a bit of an animal.

Side by side on the road, both bikes were pretty inseparable - The Suzuki maybe had a slight advantage in pure acceleration

terms but then at the top end the Honda would reel it in before overhauling it flat out. Certainly the Suzuki certainly felt nice and pokey, blitzing between gears in the vital 25-50mph sector, but both of us that rode it felt that the Honda had it matched on power, and besides, was the buzzy engine slightly misleading, perhaps making the RMX feel more rorty than it really was?

With such light machines and a reasonable spread of power on tap, both

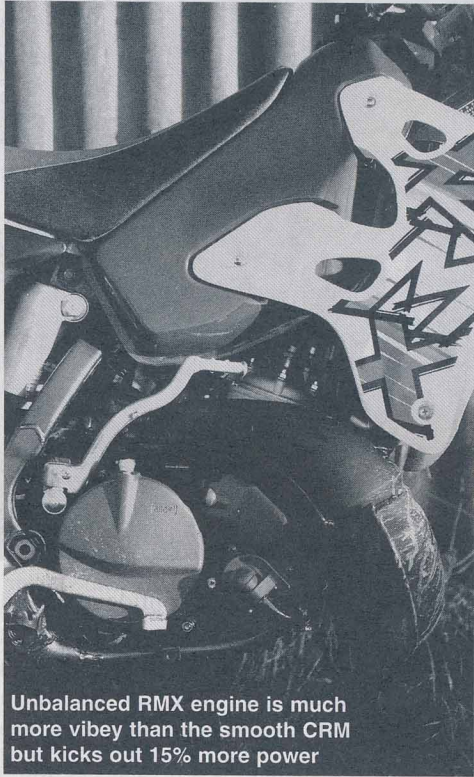
Top left and top right: The RMX is cleanly styled with well tucked in indicators, though it bears more than a passing resemblance to the latest version of the CRM. Below: It's fun to ride too!



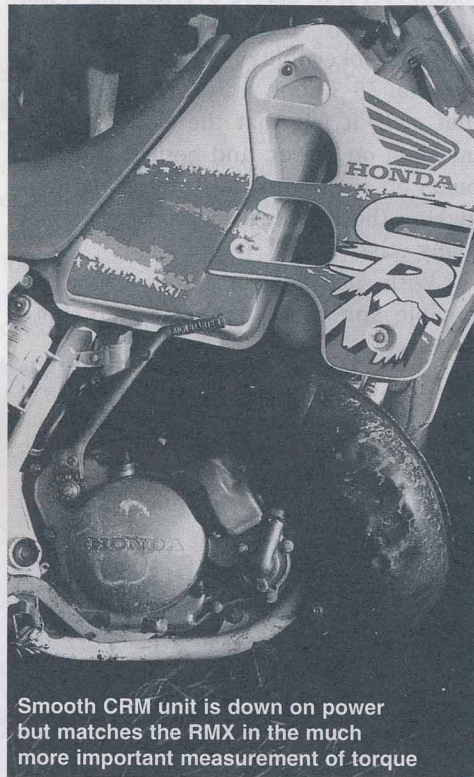
into bends with absolute confidence), and its brakes were in a different league to the wooden-feeling ones fitted to the CRM. In short it offered more than the Honda in every respect except comfort and top speed. We chalked up a good few road miles on both bikes and in truth neither could show a real advantage over the other, though the Suzuki was proving to be a demon wheelie machine, lifting the front end at the slightest provocation. It was going to take a dyno run to separate them.

We placed our bets, as the bikes were strapped onto the dynamometer, that there probably wouldn't be much more than 1-2hp between them. The Honda went first registering a respectable if not exactly overpowering 28.5bhp @ 8000rpm at the back wheel (that's more than 10% up on a DR350), though since it wasn't a new bike we couldn't be sure of the engine's condition. But when it was the Suzuki's turn we were both gobsmacked by the figures: 32.5bhp @ 8000rpm just blew the Honda into the weeds, and this from a bike that

were prone to a bit of head shake if you wound on the throttle too early when straightening up after a bend. No doubts though, the Suzuki suffered more than the Honda but on the other hand it steered a bit quicker, felt the sharper handling of the two (it could be chucked



Unbalanced RMX engine is much more vibey than the smooth CRM but kicks out 15% more power



Smooth CRM unit is down on power but matches the RMX in the much more important measurement of torque

was barely run-in yet. The more important torque curves confirmed the differences between the two; the Suzuki registering a peak of just over 24ft-lbs @ 5800rpm compared to the Honda's 22ft-lbs @ 6200rpm. No doubt about it, the Suzuki was the clear winner in the power stakes - and by a comfortable margin.

Suddenly things were starting to fall into place: the vibey engine, the big hitting power, the head shake. What we had here we reckoned was a trailified RMX enduro engine slotted into a trailbike chassis. Maybe one from an earlier generation, but almost certainly something which started life as an enduro motor before being modified by the addition of an oil pump, to something more suitable

for powering a trailbike. The CRM on the other hand (and in typical Honda fashion) has a purpose-built motor sharing virtually no component with the CR race machines from which it takes its styling cues - in fact it has more in common with the MTX200. Smooth, tourquey but ultimately less powerful (certainly, on this particular one), it's a matter of deciding where your priorities lay. Ultimate power or user friendliness?

Out of the dyno room and onto the rough for a selection of green lanes to test each bike's mettle. We'd planned a route that would take in a few muddy tracks, some tricky woods and then a flat out blast along a smooth grassy lane. We knew that the Honda would be good on this sort

of going as we've had one here at the magazine for over a year, but could the Suzuki match it?

Certainly at first there was very little between them and nowhere near as much difference as shown up on the dyno. If anything the CRM seemed to respond more sharply to its throttle being cracked open than the RMX. Though the Suzuki's suspension and in particular its front end definitely gave it an edge. On the mud the Honda stuck to the Suzuki's tail-light like glue and nothing we could do could shift it, but into the nadgery stuff - point and squirt through the trees - the Suzuki's quicker steering, smoother suspension not to mention slight weight advantage all helped hammer home its advantage over the Honda, and the suspension seemed to be getting better as the bike loosened up with the miles.

On some of the slower trails where there was either a lot of footing involved or plenty of feet-up riding the CRM clawed back a clear advantage, thanks in part to its slightly lower centre of gravity and the fact that it could be coaxed along on a whiff of throttle without bogging down or risking fouling the plug. It seemed torquier at the bottom end too, and would pull from virtually nothing. In fact the beauty of the Honda is that anyone can get on it and ride the thing straight away. It's a very forgiving bike, not at all intimidating and lets you get away with things that the Suzuki wouldn't. Feet up, the RMX would also plod along where needed, but its taller gearing (first was really too high for a trailbike) and its lumpier motor all conspired to make it feel better flying along at high revs than pootling along lower down. There wasn't a lot in it though - these bikes are not exactly like chalk and cheese apart, more like cheddar and cheshire, similar but not the same - if

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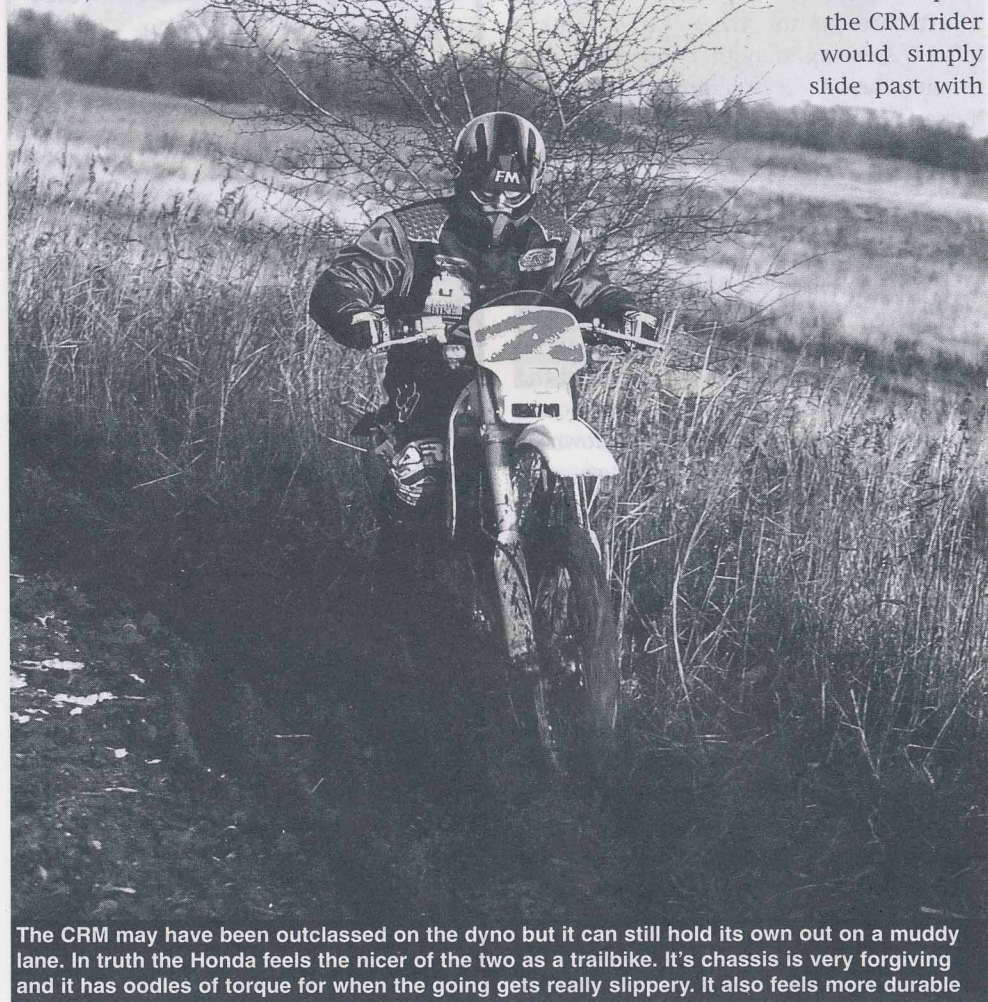
Mill Lane, Yeovil, Somerset

CRM250R V RMX250S

you know what I mean.

In fact the Suzuki's whole choice of gearing seemed slightly strange. On the one hand (and in typical Suzuki style) the gearbox swapped ratios with an effortless click that's better than almost any other bike on the market (say anything you like about Suzuki, but

they sure know how to build a gearbox). Yet on the other hand, the final choice of ratios left a bit to be desired. First felt too tall for trickling along at walking pace with the clutch fully home, whereas top gear (sixth) seemed inexplicably low, and meant that the bike would be absolutely flat out at 80mph. Whereupon the CRM rider would simply slide past with

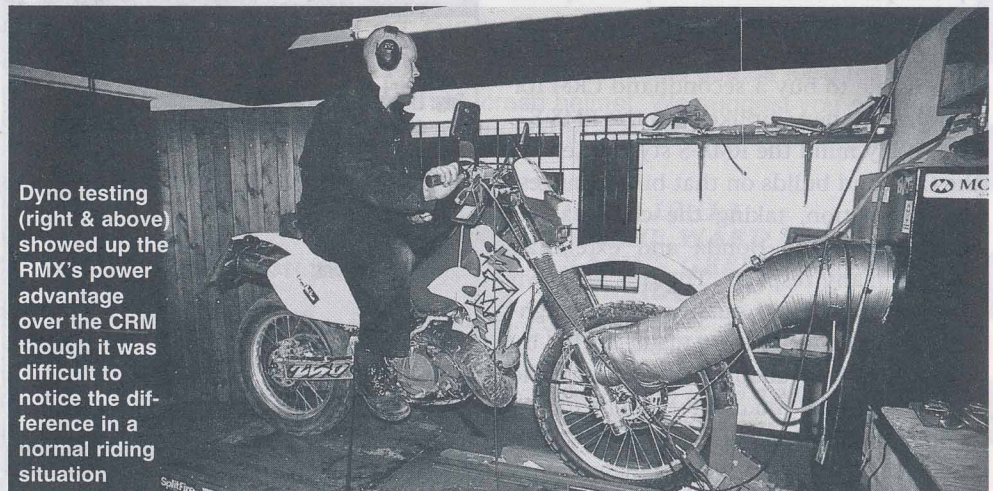
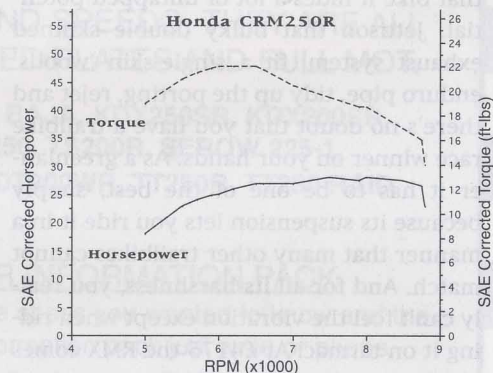
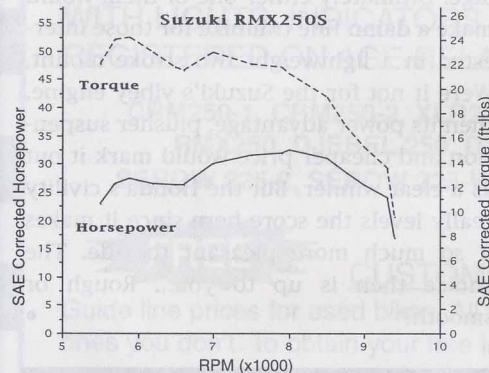


The CRM may have been outclassed on the dyno but it can still hold its own out on a muddy lane. In truth the Honda feels the nicer of the two as a trailbike. It's chassis is very forgiving and it has oodles of torque for when the going gets really slippery. It also feels more durable

an extra 5-7mph in reserve thanks to its taller top ratio. All of the RMX's intermediate gears felt perfectly spaced and once on the move there's a gear for every occasion, but it felt like a change of sprockets was what was needed.

The CRM too could also benefit from a bit of sprocket swapping, and though perfectly adequate on standard gearing, there's quite a gap between first and second which can leave you floundering in no man's land. You only really notice it once you hit the off road sections and only then when pressing on a bit, but a switch to slightly lower gearing (meaning you spend less time in first gear) would surely help to cure the problem.

So where did this leave us. Well to be fair despite its lower power output and slightly harsher suspension we both preferred the CRM to the RMX - especially if ownership and longevity are taken into the equation. The Honda felt better screwed together, and more able to resist the rigours of a life spent off roading every weekend. It also felt much nicer when ridden on the road, and our own experience has proved it's a capable performer off it too. True it was beaten on the dyno by the Suzuki but that difference didn't show up in use and for us the Honda's smoother, better balanced engine makes it a much nicer bike to ride particularly if you use your bike for commuting



Dyno testing (right & above) showed up the RMX's power advantage over the CRM though it was difficult to notice the difference in a normal riding situation

CRM250R V RMX250S

during the week. Sure the suspension is perhaps a little wooden by very modern standards and the brakes could be better, but as an allrounder there's little to touch the versatile CRM.

What then of the Suzuki? Well the RMX may lack the refinement and polish of the Honda but what it loses in sophistication it more than makes up for in ability. As a sporting tool, for instance in the trailbike class of an enduro or for entering in trailbike rallies, the Suzuki simply smokes all of the opposition with the possible exception of the big KDX250SR. Like that bike it hides a lot of untapped potential. Jettison that bulky double skinned exhaust system, fit a single-skin 'woods' enduro pipe, tidy up the porting, rejet and there's no doubt that you have a trailbike race winner on your hands. As a greenlaner it has to be one of the best, simply because its suspension lets you ride it in a manner that many other trailbikes cannot match. And for all its harshness, you really can't feel the vibration except when riding it on tarmac. At £4175 the RMX comes up cheaper than a new CRM by a couple of hundred quid which may be enough to swing it for some people, though of course its possible to buy a secondhand CRM for a lot less money - unlike with the RMX-S.

To my mind the RMX-S styles itself on the CRM and builds on that bike's impressive reputation, taking the class-leading standards of the Honda and extending them in many respects. That it's let down by indifferent build quality and a rough-feeling engine is at least made up for by the extra poke available once you turn the twistgrip, and if you can forgive its harshness in the interests of extra oomph then you'll revel in its ability. Having spent

more than a year in the company of a secondhand CRM it would be interesting to see if the Suzuki could take the regular abuse and punishment that have been meted out to our own CRM. Judging from this first impression I reckon it probably could, as Suzuki are no strangers to building decent off roaders - and when you take into account the savings over the Honda in cost terms, then it starts to make the Suzook look like a serious proposition.

At the end of the day these two felt a lot closer than we imagined, and it took the dynamometer to sort out an advantage. Ultimately either one of them would make a damn fine trailbike for those interested in a lightweight two stroke mount. Were it not for the Suzuki's vibey engine, then its power advantage, plusher suspension and cheaper price would mark it out as a clear winner. But the Honda's civility really levels the score here since it makes it so much more pleasant to ride. The choice then is up to you... Rough or smooth? •

HOW THEY COMPARE

HONDA CRM250R SUZUKI RMX250S

Eng: Liquid cooled, single cylinder two stroke Eng: Liquid cooled, single cylinder two stroke

Cap: 246cc Cap: 249cc

W/base: 1460mm W/base: 1467mm

Weight: 114kg Weight: 112kg

St ht: 895mm St ht: 895mm

Fuel cap: 11 litres Fuel cap: 11 litres

Price (new): £4250 Price (new): £4150

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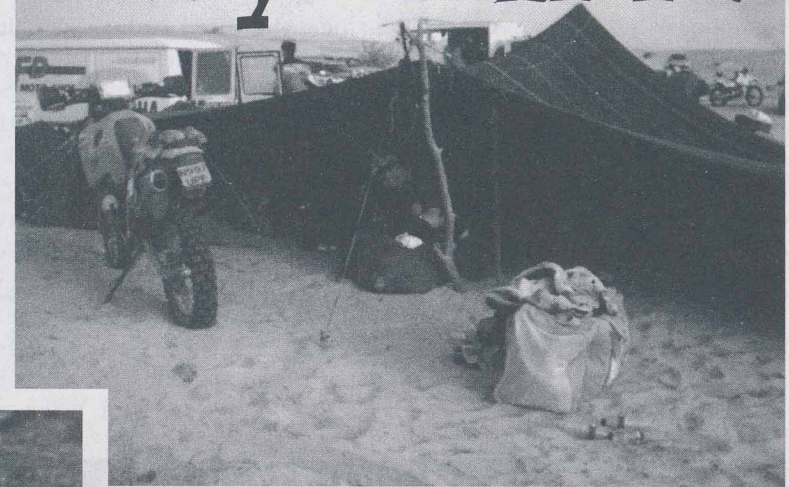
So you want to ride

The Optic 2000 Rallye Tunisie is the easiest and most affordable of all the desert rallies. UK organiser Chris Evans tells you what you need to know about the 'desert race for privateers'



the Rallye Tunisie?

Below:
Cornishman Nick Palmer really attacks the rocky going on his KTM 620EGS on last year's Tunisie Rally. Right: the evening bivouac; luxury accommodation it aint, but at least it's authentic



After years of being ignored by both press and public alike, UK interest in African rallye raids is now at an all time high. Quite why it's taken us so long to catch on to what the rest of Europe has been going gaga for these last 15 years is a bit of a mystery. Maybe it's because with no colonial links we don't feel as comfortable in North Africa as the French and Italians (who after all have been laying waste to the area for centuries). Or maybe it's because as a race of people not exactly renowned for our fluency with foreign languages we've been put off by French speaking organisation. But whatever the causes of our previous failure to embrace the rallye-raid phenomena, the reason for our current enthusiasm is fairly obvious - satellite telly.

On a cold winter's evening after watching Peterhansel and co effortlessly skimming over the hot Saharan sands, I defy anyone who's ever swung a leg over a dirt bike to not think to themselves, 'I wouldn't mind having a go at that'. Fortunately for the country's national debt and divorce statistics, 99.9% of desert dreams stop there. Those who decide to take it any further usually start by inquiring about the Dakar.

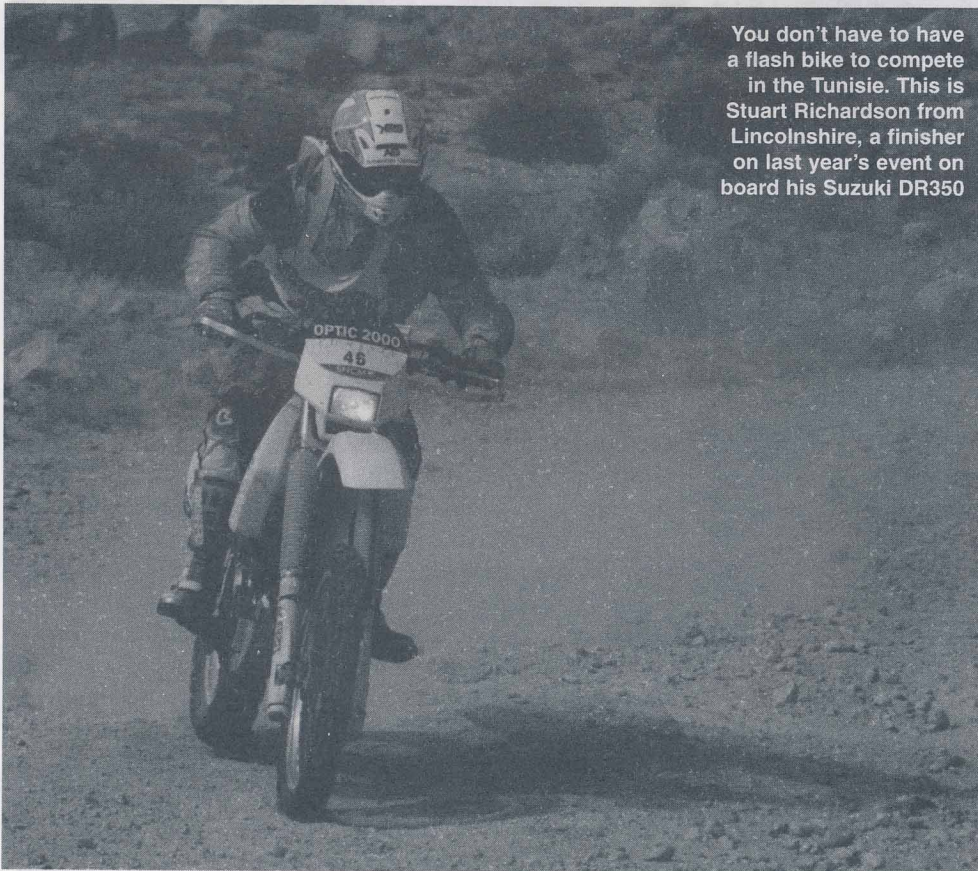
Which is entirely logical. It's the prestige event of the rallye-raid calendar, it's the race that gets the bulk of the coverage; and it's the one that makes us all dream. The problem with dreams is they often don't have a whole lot in

So you want to ride the Rallye Tunisie?

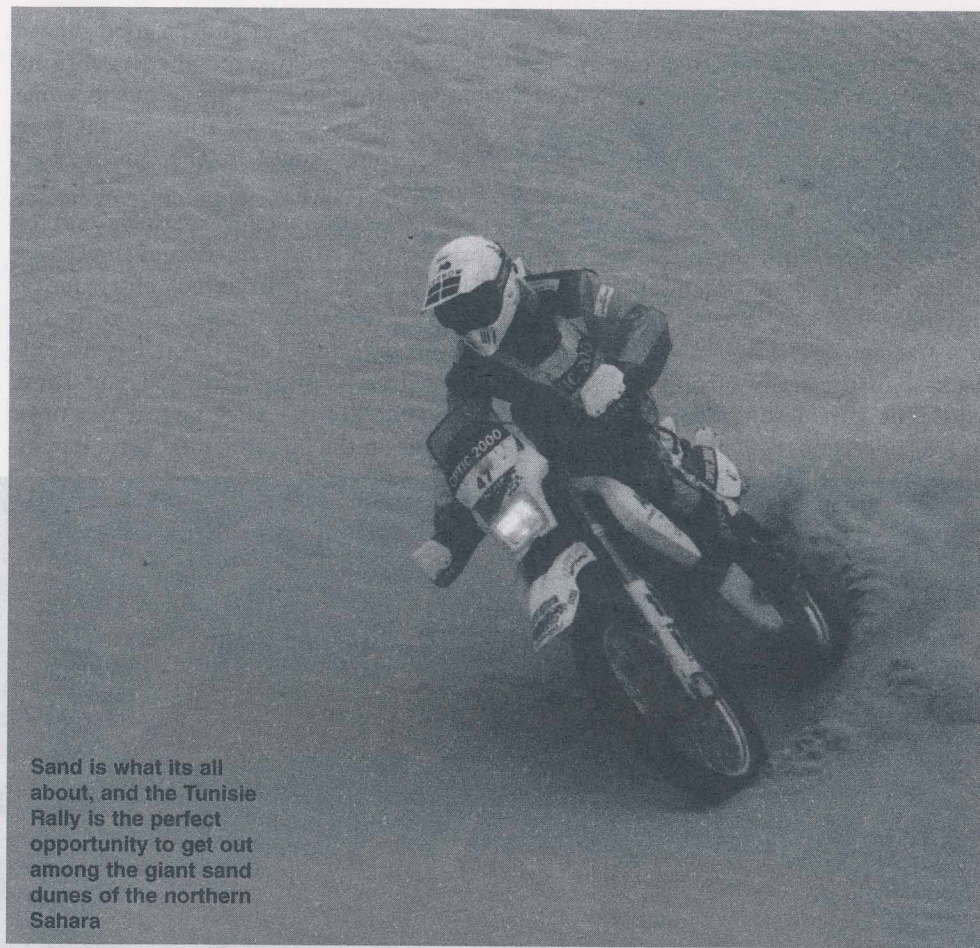
common with reality. And where the Dakar's concerned the reality is very hard indeed.

Hard reality No 1. Entering the Dakar costs a load of money. A French friend of mine, Patrice, is currently doing his third consecutive 'budget' Dakar. Yet even by doing everything 'on the cheap' (second-hand bike, early 'discount' entry, no assistance, and some serious blagging that would put even Crasher Cornish to shame) it's still costing him a minimum of £20,000. That's right *twenty grand*.

Hard reality No 2. It's bloody tough. Despite being a handy off road rider and mega-fit anti-terrorist policeman with a psychological profile that makes Jean Claude Van Damme look like a mummy's boy, Patrice has never yet finished a Dakar. That's not to say it's impossible. Every year about a third of the entry actually make it all the way to the 'Lac Rose'. Only a tiny percentage though are the cash strapped privateers with which we can identify. The vast majority are ISDE level riders, for whom sponsorship and



You don't have to have a flash bike to compete in the Tunisie. This is Stuart Richardson from Lincolnshire, a finisher on last year's event on board his Suzuki DR350



Sand is what its all about, and the Tunisie Rally is the perfect opportunity to get out among the giant sand dunes of the northern Sahara

back-up aren't a problem.

It doesn't take Mr Average club enduro rider long to work out that the Dakar is probably beyond his budget and ability. Usually he abandons his dreams there and then, but a few discover the existence of an all together more reasonable round of the FIA World Rallye Raid Championships - The Optic 2000 Rallye Tunisie.

At this point I have to come clean and admit I'm the UK co-ordinator for the above mentioned rallye. That doesn't mean however that what I've said or am going to say is biased. I don't expect you

to believe that I do it for love and make virtually nothing out of the deal - sad but true - but maybe a little personal history can convince you of my good intentions.

A little over six years ago I moved to France, and decided I wanted to get involved in African racing. None of the rallies at that time had an active UK co-ordinator and neither did they have any UK entries. As it didn't (and doesn't) cost rallye organisers anything they were all quite happy for me to represent them, providing I didn't work for anyone else. Even this desire for exclusivity had nothing to do with any financial considera-

tions, but rather secrecy. Co-ordinators you see get information about routes, entries, marketing strategies, budgets etc way before they are released to the press and all the organisers guard this information jealously.

So I had to make a decision - which rallye to represent. The Atlas was floundering due to bad organisation (since remedied by being bought out by TSO) and was (and is) unpopular with riders because of the stony terrain and lack of sand. The Paris-Peking's future was (and still is) uncertain, while the Pharons (now

lenge, but which they stood a good chance of finishing. One that didn't cost a fortune but was properly organised - in short, one that ordinary mortals with mortal type bank accounts could do. The Tunisie fitted the bill.

Marketed as the African rallye-raid for privateers it costs a fraction of the Dakar. This year the 'discounted' entry fee is £1345 (compared to seven grand for the biggie) and unlike the Dakar has no hidden extras. Transport from Nice to Tunis is included in the price and in fact once you get on the boat the only extra money

There's lots of fun to be had in the northern Sahara



the Cannonball) was almost as hard as the Dakar but less glamorous. No, what I wanted was a real sand rallye that I could promote to British riders with a clear conscience. One that would be a serious chal-

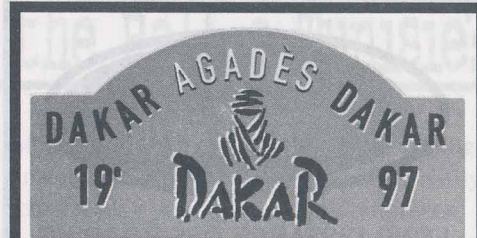
you have to spend is on petrol. Like with the Dakar you have to buy your petrol coupons in advance, but unlike the Dakar the organisers will refund the ones you don't use.

So you want to ride the Rallye Tunisie?

Bike preparation costs are also considerably reduced. Because the organisers provide refuelling every 150kms you escape the expense of one-off aluminium tanks, as well as the associated costs of frame strengthening, special brackets, re-routing of exhausts etc, Mods that often don't stand up to the rigours of charging across the desert at 120kph. But most importantly of all the distances involved are reasonable. Instead of the 600km daily average you have to ride on the Dakar, on the Tunisie distances are kept down to a human 300km or 180 miles.

That's not to say the Tunisie is a cheap picnic for unprepared dirt novices. For a kick off you still have to have the right bike - and your choice is relatively limited. Forget your Super Ténérés, BMWs, and Cagiva Elephants. With enormous expense they can be turned into desert racing bikes, but who needs the hassle - and the extra weight.

No, what you want is a four stroke enduro bike, and for reasons of spares availability, preferably the same as everybody else has got. Thanks to Kinigadner's antics, KTMs are very popular. And if you're planning to finish in the top ten (alongside Kini, Magnaldi et al) one of these is probably the hot ticket. For a finish however I'd go for something like an XR600 or XR400. The new XR400 in particular has got to be one of the best machines to do it on. Light, easy to ride and boringly reliable (a completely stock example finished seventh last year and none retired with mechanical problems), it's just what you need for a privateers' Tunisie bike. The only problem is there are virtually none secondhand, so if your budget is tight, go for the 600. Although now a bit long in the tooth they are still more than capable of holding their own, plenty of people use them still



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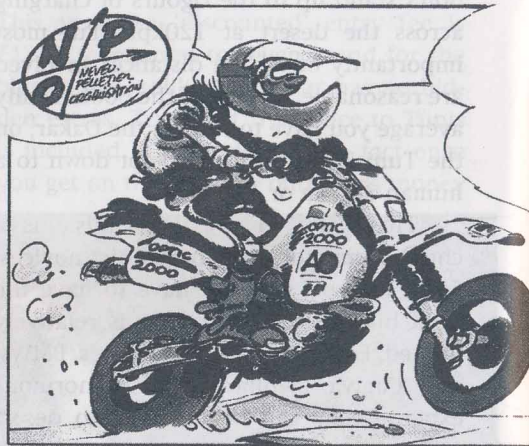
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(so there are enough spares) and they can be picked up in good condition for around two and a half grand. KLX650Rs are also worth considering - though avoid the UK model trailbike version which has a nasty habit of disintegrating in seriously bumpy terrain!



All of the above bikes benefit from the presence of factory support on the rallye, with stocks of spares and mechanics on hand should you have a problem. Other 'unsupported' bikes you could consider include DR350s (a bit slow but very reliable), Husky 610s or 400s (strong enough for the distances involved but rare, so not many spares flying round the bivouac) and TT250Rs (even slower than DRs but well suspended and blessed with an electric start). Even some 2-strokes are suitable provided they have strong engines and reasonable fuel consumption.

Whatever bike you choose you're going to have to make a few important modifications to it. First off you should fit a set of Michelin Deserts (or even Pirelli MT21s), ideally with bib mousses. You could get away with heavy duty inner tubes but you'll be sorry the first time you have to fix a puncture in a sand storm. Unlike with the Dakar where competitors

So you want to ride the Rallye Tunisie?

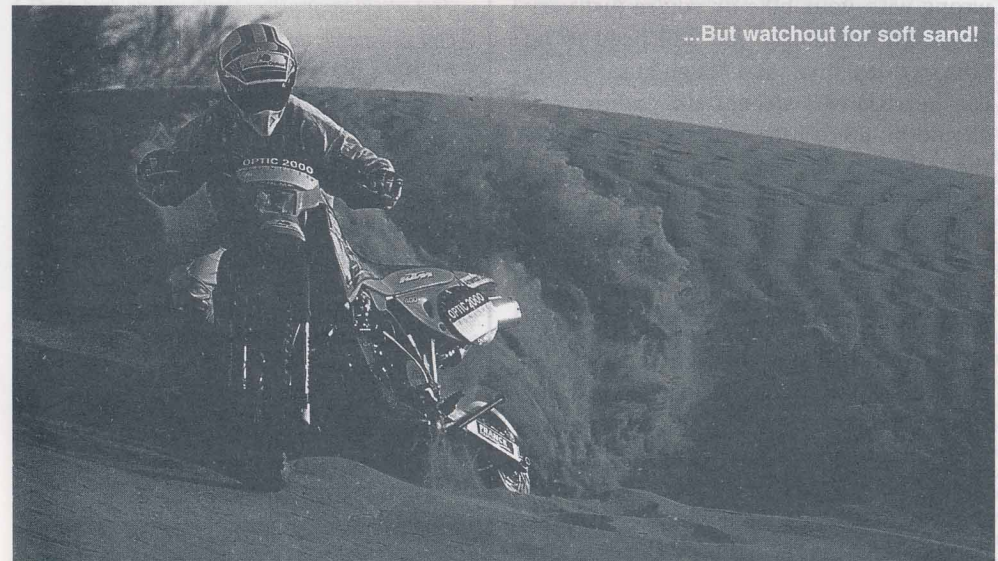
change their tyres every day or every other day, on the Tunisie it's possible to make a set of Deserts last the whole race though most go for the safer option of taking two sets and changing them midway through.

IT WAS GOOD OF BLEZ TO LEND ME HIS BIKE FOR THE RALLY... I WONDER WHY HE DIDN'T WANT TO RIDE IT...?

You'll also have to fit a decent wrap around bash plate, some rally guards to protect the levers and an off-the-peg Acerbis-type big tank. More fiddly you'll also need to devise some way of keeping the sand out of the engine. Filter skins over the standard foam filter are a popular option, but by far the best solution is something like a K&N air filter and a product called Sand Stop (a fine gauze) stretched over the top of an opened up filter box. Keep the rest as standard as pos-

sible and forget about any engine tuning. Instead spend the money on the really crucial bit - your navigation equipment.

The economy option is to buy a cheapo roadbook reader and stick with the standard tripmeter. Much better however is to splash out on an MD electric roadbook reader and an ICO resettable trip, plus of course a GPS satellite navigation device. For many years (primarily in order to keep costs down), the Tunisie was purposely designed so as to be navigable without this little electronic marvel. But now with prices for GPS units having come down so much, it has really become indispensable. For less than £200 you can buy yourself a GPS and of course you'll still have it to play with afterwards. Although the primary means of finding your way on the Tunisie remains the roadbook, a GPS really comes into its own on those 'oh my god where am I' type occasions, especially on the navigation specials where to get



So you want to ride the Rallye Tunisie?

out of one dune system and into another you have to follow a very precise route.

For riding gear your normal enduro stuff will do though you'll need a drinking system as well. In total, assuming you've got the bike and most of the clothing already, you're looking at between £1000-£1500 to get your machine completely race ready, plus the entry fee (approx £1400), an ACU international licence, the distress beacon (£200 hire charge or £1000 if you lose it - as one poor Brit found out to his cost), and the cost of getting to Nice and back (usually shared between all the UK entrants who pool resources, vans etc).

Assuming you've got the budget and the inclination, the really big question is have you got what it takes? The organisers help you as much as possible by allowing you to miss out five control points over the course of the rally (effectively one whole day's riding in case something goes wrong with your bike or you're just very slow), but obviously you still need to be able to ride a bike. As a rough guide if you can get round a decent UK enduro you should be up to it in terms of technique - the terrain is not as difficult as it looks.

More imponderable is have you got the right psychological profile? Because that is really what separates the DNF-ers from the finishers. Generally if you're very determined, can hold it together under stress, make the right decision at the right time, and not lose your head when surrounded by nothing but endless sand dunes (not as easy as it sounds) you should be okay. The real secret is to treat the whole thing like a giant trail ride. Forget about the race, the TV cameras and

the works stars and just say to yourself each day: 'right I've got all day to cover 300kms and I don't give a toss about my finishing position' and you'll be alright.

Because getting there - that final finish line - is what it's all about. Of the ten UK entrants on last year's Tunisie, seven did just that. And to say they were elated by the experience would be a major understatement. They'd suffered sure, they were completely knackered and they'd pushed themselves more than they thought possible. But they'd realised their dream - to take part and finish a round of the FIA World Rallye-Raid Championships. Now what about you? •

O P T I C 2 0 0 0

A Rallye-Raider's advice

"Most can only dream of storming through the desert but are too busy, too skint or think they are too old to do it. My advice to you is don't wait until next year, DO IT NOW - it'll be the best decision you've ever made."

Get physically fit and get your bike sorted then you'll be good enough to finish the course. Keep your head, but above all don't take it all too seriously (Peterhansel's position as number one will always be safe), and have fun - the feeling when you finish is like no other. And best of all it doesn't have to be expensive; I used a £3.00 Millets compass to navigate with!" **Stuart Richardson DR350**

The Optic 2000 Rallye Tunisie takes place from 3-13 April. For further information contact:

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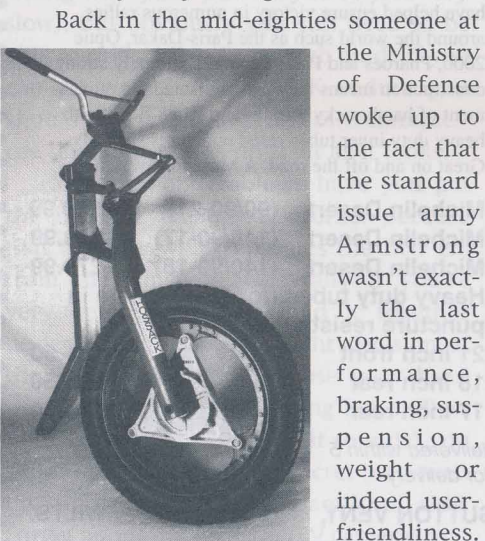
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WILTS.

STRONG ARM OF THE WAR

Ten Years ago an engineer by the name of Norman Hossack designed a trailbike for the army which dispensed with traditional front forks and instead used a single-sided mono-arm. Stronger, lighter and cheaper than conventional designs the army rejected it and today it lies discarded in the back of a garage. Paul Blezard recounts the true story of this remarkable bike and what happened to it

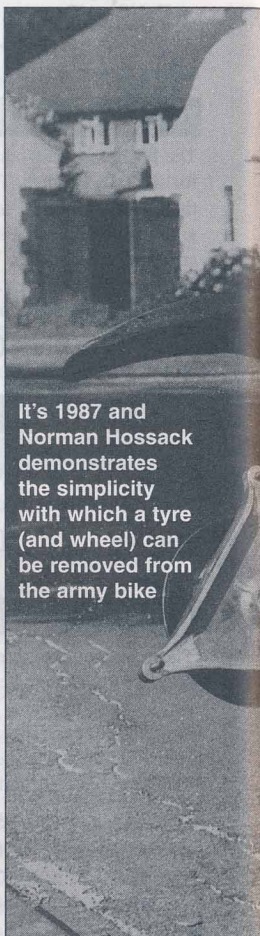
Have you ever thought how much easier life would be if you could change a bike wheel as easily as a car's? Have you ever wished that trailbikes had some sort of similarly easy-to-swap single-sided arrangement? I know I have. This is the story of a bike built with just such a system nearly ten years ago.



TrailBike -36- Magazine

A company called CJ Williams won the contract to look into ways in which the basic machine might be made to work better while maintaining the army's fundamental requirement for a rugged, reliable bike capable of carrying novice riders of all shapes and sizes with 80lbs of equipment over all sorts of terrain.

The project manager for CJW was a very experienced motorcyclist and engineer called Tony Rodger, who, as a veteran road racer, was aware of Vernon Glashier's Hossack-framed Honda 500 which had won the single cylinder championship several times. Tony asked Norman Hossack (a Scottish-born, Rhodesian-raised engineer who'd



It's 1987 and Norman Hossack demonstrates the simplicity with which a tyre (and wheel) can be removed from the army bike



spent a number of years as a designer for the McLaren Formula One team) if he was interested in modifying his wishbone steering design to make it suitable for an Army Armstrong and after a period of design and consultation he came up with a masterpiece of strength, simplicity and user-friendliness.

Hossack's road racing wishbone design was inspired by his experience of working on Indianapolis 500-winning race cars and its most important principle was that of separating the steering from the suspension (just as centre-hub steering systems do). While keeping this crucial feature, Hossack redesigned the system to

TrailBike -37- Magazine

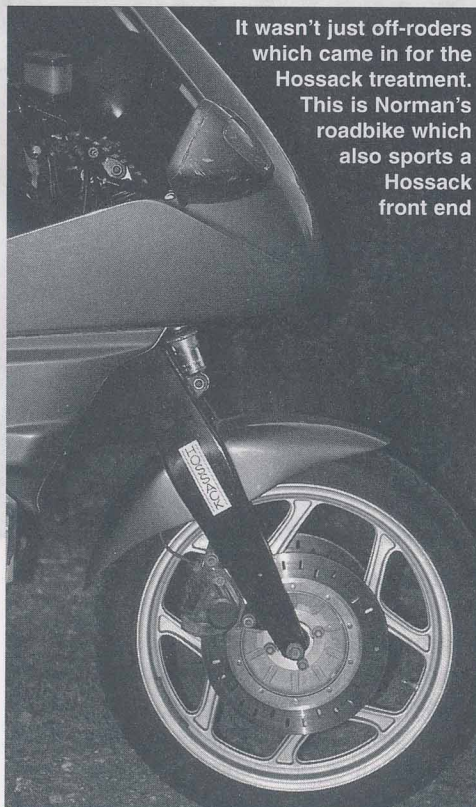
STRONG ARM OF THE WAR

make it single sided, using a massive tube-shaped 'upright' instead of the twin-sided 'fork' shape used on his racers (and road bikes). Since he had to design a new wheel anyway, he built in a few more advantages while he was at it. He designed the hub as a cast alloy triangle with a bolt hole at each point for attachment to the Dymag rim, so that by undoing three nuts, the rim and tyre could be removed leaving the hub, complete with brakes, axle, speedo cable and so forth all undisturbed.

In addition to ultra-quick wheel removal, this layout had another major advantage: in the event of a puncture the tyre and tube could be removed without

disturbing the hub and axle assembly at all! Hossack also had the bright idea of filling the steering upright with compressed air, so that you wouldn't even need a pump or a canister to re-inflate the tyre. (The spokeless rim would also enable tubeless tyres to be used if desired).

Furthermore, a spare wheel (minus the hub) could also easily be carried on the bike, complete with spare tyre already fitted, just like the traditional Vespa scooter. Norman also designed a single sided rear wheel and deliberately made the



It wasn't just off-rod-ers which came in for the Hossack treatment. This is Norman's roadbike which also sports a Hossack front end

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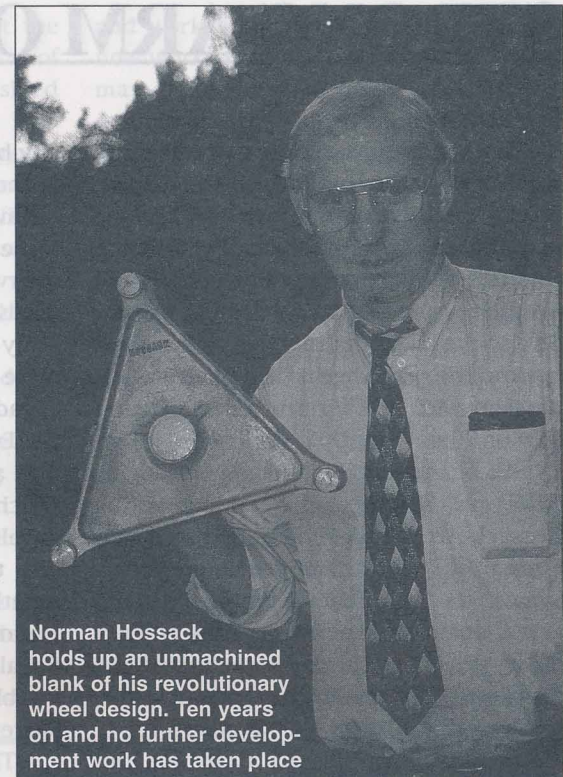
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front wheel an 18 inch so that the wheels could be interchangeable, so that only one spare would needed to be carried. Pretty clever eh?

Hossack made a full-scale model of his front end, complete with a wheel designed to take the standard Armstrong hub brake. The army were intrigued by the design but sceptical that it would actually work, so the next step was to build one for real and attach it to an army bike. The standard Armstrong frame (originally designed by the Italian firm SWM, incidentally) actually lends itself rather well to this kind of radical modification because the main spine is made up of two halves which bolt together under the petrol tank. Norman just had to make a new 'front half' of the frame to carry the handlebars, steering tube, wishbone, links, and separate spring and damper in place of the traditional steering head.

As a meticulous engineer Hossack naturally sat down and did a few sums before cutting any metal, so if you think the whole thing looks a bit dodgy (as some of the army people certainly did), here are some statistics to bear in mind. That 'simple bit of bent tube' (as Norman describes it) is actually *five times* stronger at the axle than the standard Armstrong forks! Furthermore, the whole assembly is 6kg, (nearly a stone in old money) lighter than the standard arrangement and unlike telescopic forks none of it requires any high-precision machining to produce. A compa-



Norman Hossack holds up an unmachined blank of his revolutionary wheel design. Ten years on and no further development work has taken place

ny like Armstrong could have built the whole thing in the same way that they made the frames and it could be bolted together by a monkey. Last but not least, if it had been fully productionised it would have been about 20% cheaper to make than the standard set up.

Norman Hossack insists that the first prototype was only built to demonstrate that the quick wheel removal facility actually worked; it was never meant to be ridden in anger at all. However, once the 'rig' was up and running, people naturally wanted to see how it performed and according to Norman 'it worked far better than anyone had expected'. He actually used it as a runabout to go to and from work for a while and he says 'It handled and stopped very nicely'. (As you can see from the photos, the main difference from

STRONG ARM OF THE WAR

the first mock-up was the change to a disc front brake, something which CJ Williams wisely specified to improve the braking over the standard Armstrong hub jobbie). One of the great advantages of the Hossack system is that it has built-in anti-dive so the bike is more stable under braking and the rear wheel is less likely to lock up than with any form of teles, whether USD or 'Right Way Up'.

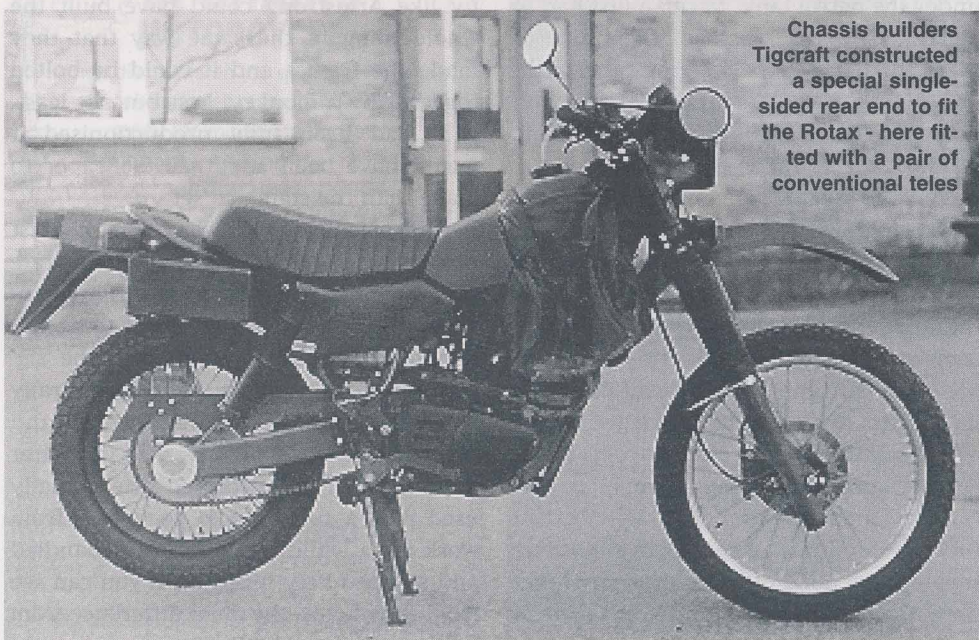
All of the foregoing happened during 1987 and at the end of the year the Hossack-Armstrong was featured on Tomorrow's World. The presenter, Robert Symes was shown riding the bike down a green lane and demonstrated the efficacy of the design on camera by swapping the front wheel for the spare that he was carrying on the bike. It was a superb bit of free publicity for Hossack's creation but sadly that TV appearance didn't attract

any big money offers from manufacturers (although it did bring one enquiry from as far away as South America). That proved to be the high-spot of the bike's career - afterwards the dream of supplying hundreds of funny front-ended bikes to the army soon faded and a frustrating nightmare took its place..... but I'm getting ahead of myself.

Even though Hossack regarded the bike as little more than a rolling mock-up which was only at the very beginning of its development, it was put through a rigorous testing programme lasting several months. It was tested on the road, at Mallory Park road race circuit, and at the Royal Army Research and Development Establishment's cross-country test track in Surrey.

The bike was one of five Armstrongs (all fitted with electric start) that were

Chassis builders Tigcraft constructed a special single-sided rear end to fit the Rotax - here fitted with a pair of conventional teles



TrailBike -40- Magazine

tested in a variety of guises against the standard issue machine. Dave Pearce of Tigcraft made an RC30-style single-sided swingarm and rear wheel for the bike which replicated the standard geometry and used a combined disc and sprocket without a cush drive complete with floating caliper and eccentric chain adjuster - and by all accounts it worked very well. The machine was also tested with an exposed toothed-belt drive which performed beyond all expectations, as did a system which linked the front and rear brakes to a single lever. Another bike was fitted with an Eric Cheney leading link front end and there was even an Armstrong-powered outfit built by Robin Rhind-Tutt of Wasp sidecar fame.

One of the people involved in the testing was Mike Eatough, a rider and development engineer of some repute who actually made his own forks at one stage

and worked for Armstrong in 1987. (He now works for Harley Davidson who, you may remember, bought the entire Armstrong army bike production facility and won the contract to continue supplying the bike, to our brave boys in electric start 350cc form).

Eatough recalls that in addition to himself and a few other civilians the bikes, in all their various forms and combinations, were ridden against the clock by squaddies of all sizes and ability, from novices to experts over a three or four mile cross-country 'Alpine' course which covered a whole variety of enduro terrain: rocks, sand, woodland, fire breaks, steep climbs and muddy bogs.

Tony Rodger of CJW also took part in testing the Hossack and rode it all the way from Surrey up to the CCM/Armstrong factory in Bolton and back. He says that it generally performed well on tarmac but





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TrailBike -41- Magazine

STRONG ARM OF THE WAR

was less stable with the 80lb payload than the standard machine and not as good on rough terrain. 'It gave a very harsh ride and it definitely didn't have enough suspension travel - it was continually hitting the bump stop'. When the bike was taken to Mallory Park for speed testing it proved to be a bit unstable at high speed; they thought at first that this might be down to the moto-cross style mudguard fitted, but removal didn't cure the problem.

In his machine's defence however Norman Hossack says that the army 'tested it in conditions it was never supposed to cope with - it was only built to demonstrate the feasibility of quick wheel removal. It needed a lot more development to be able to compete with the standard machine in all conditions - 'I never even had a chance to adjust the damper settings' he says wistfully. He also pointed out that while the standard Armstrong might have had a couple more inches of suspension travel than his design (228mm vs 180mm) this actually equated to the same amount of vertical movement at the wheel since his system operates in a vertical plane while the teles are tilted back at 30 degrees.

As far as stability is concerned, he felt that this was due to the lighter weight of his system, which was accentuated by the fact the Armstrong was very rear-heavy anyway and he wanted to lengthen the standard swinging arm to compensate (his own design for an interchangeable single-sided rear wheel design was never built).

On the other hand Tony Rodger says that CJ Williams did try a number of different suspension settings on the Hossack and experimented with different amounts of rake and trail and improved the bike in the process. He said that the best way of making the bike more stable was to carry the 80lb payload up at the front of the bike, either side of the petrol tank, (a modification which greatly benefited the standard machine too, which is why you'll find weird-looking leg-protector type things fitted to the army's standard-issue Hardley-Davidsons today these are in fact jerrycan holders). Tony said that with the weight carried up front the Hossack was as good as the standard machine on tarmac and admitted that it would undoubtedly have benefitted from more development time and money being spent on it.

'But we only had a limited budget'.

At the end of the day though, a 40 page report produced in September 1989 by CJW concluded that: all things considered, the Hossack didn't offer any overall advantage over the standard machine, (nor did the Cheney, in their opinion, although it was better off-road than the Hossack and had some advantages over the Armstrong in experienced hands).

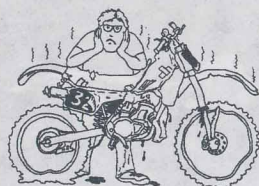
If you're wondering why the Hossack's obvious (and demonstrated) advantages of quick wheel changing and puncture repair did not carry more weight with the Ministry of Defence and their advisors then, like me, you probably have an unrealistic idea of what the army actually use their motorcycles for. It turns out that they spend most of their time escorting convoys of slow-moving trucks and Land-Rovers. Whilst they are supposed to have a 40% off-road capability they're never used in combat situations and if their riders ever did come under fire, the last thing they'd think about was fixing a puncture, no matter how quick and easy it might be to do. In normal service, apparently, a rider with a puncture is more likely to call for assistance than fix it himself, although they do actually carry puncture repair outfits.

Army bikes, it seems, are just supposed to be ultra-robust, ultra-reliable machines able to be operated by a novice squaddie. (So why, I hear you ask, did the army buy a 500cc four-stroke with a left-foot kick-start and deliberately avoid specifying electric start? And if the army never use bikes in combat, what do you call the

This is now all that remains of the radical Hossack designed Armstrong - the rest of the bike was taken back by the army after it rejected the proposal



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STRONG ARM OF THE WAR

XR250s and DR350s bought by the SAS and used behind enemy lines in the Gulf War?!

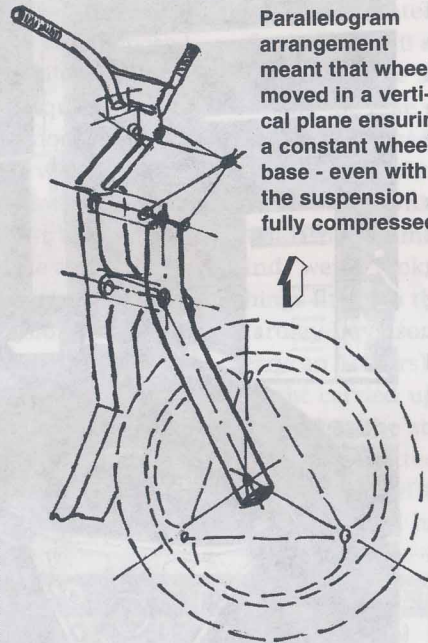
If the truth be told, the army's method of procuring equipment (at least where motorcycles are concerned) seems to combine common sense and sound science with a puzzling degree of wilful ignorance, perverse penny-pinching and arrogant stupidity. In fact the whole question of how the army ended up with Armstrongs and Harley Davidsons rather than something which most TBM readers would regard as more sensible, could be the subject of another whole article.

Suffice it to say here that Norman Hossack was not impressed by the Men from the Ministry whom he encountered. He told me, 'One guy I spoke to didn't even realise that the standard Armstrong's wheels weren't quickly detachable or interchangeable and that they couldn't carry a spare; he just couldn't grasp how much time and effort my design would save. He was a complete dork; just brain dead'.

Hossack feels that the army 'moved the goalposts' all the time and understandably, feels somewhat aggrieved that,

having been the one who was approached in the first place, and having spent a lot of time, money and effort on his design, it was then rejected because it was asked to do something which it wasn't designed to do. 'I offered them a design which I thought had significant advantages over the standard arrangement and they initially expressed a lot of interest in it, but they expected me to do all the development work at my own expense and I just

Parallelogram arrangement meant that wheel moved in a vertical plane ensuring a constant wheel-base - even with the suspension fully compressed



illus: Ted Melber

couldn't afford to do that. What I *did* do cost me ten times more than they ever paid me'. 'If I had been designing a system just to perform and handle better than the standard Armstrong - or for off-road competition for that matter - I would have done it completely differently - I could have used something much closer to my road design which would have been even lighter and kept the standard wheels'.

Tony Rodger says that 'If Norman Hossack could have made his system work better overall than the Armstrong's own then the MoD would undoubtedly have incorporated it into their next specification, but they weren't prepared to do the development work on it themselves - they wanted something which was ready to buy

off the shelf - that's just the way they work'. When you think of the billions spent on 'Defence' for armaments, battleships, aircraft and even tanks, this seems a curious state of affairs, but *that*, it seems, is just *The Way It Is*. Tony Rodger adds 'There are people in procurement who know quite a lot about bikes, but others vastly overrate their knowledge - just because some bloke once owned a 1952 Francis Barnett he thinks he knows everything there is to know about bikes.'

Mike Eatough knows better than most how the military procurement people work and admits that they sometimes make decisions which might seem perverse to civilian personnel. He was very positive about the Hossack though and agrees with Norman that it didn't really get a very fair crack of the whip. 'I think his ideas are really neat and interesting. The experiment only went to the first stage of development.'

As for me, I can only add that I have ridden three different Hossack bikes on the road (two BMW K100RSs and a Triumph 900 triple) and have been hugely impressed by the handling and stability of all three. I have no doubt whatsoever that the travel and stability problems of the prototype army bike could have been cured without too much difficulty. And as someone who loathes changing wheels and tyres, I would just love to have a trail bike with this kind of quick-release design at both ends.

Even if the army don't think it's worth having, think of the advantages in long-distance rallies and the ISDE where you know you're going to be changing tyres every day. For me personally, I think it would be worth having even for a two-day enduro - if you've ever had to take a wheel out in deep mud or sand and had the

nightmare of trying to fit all the spacers back in without losing them forever, I'm sure you too would like to try a machine where you could change the tyre in under a minute without having to dismantle anything!

In a totally different context, I'm sure that the men and women who use the down-to-earth trailbikes supplied by the Riders for Health charity to do their job as health workers in Africa would also appreciate the advantages offered by the Hossack design, as would a number of other third-world users.

Finally, one other tantalising thought is that this single-sided set-up would be ideal for attaching a front-wheel drive system to. David Watts, the Northants engineer who has already built a number of prototype 2WD systems did talk to Norman about making use of his design at one stage, but in the end nothing ever came of it.

Sadly, all that's left of this fascinating prototype today are the front-end bits which Norman made himself and now reside in the back of his garage (the army insisted on taking back its donor bike!!)

Here at TrailBike we'd love to see this bike put back together so that we can try it for ourselves, on road, trail and track - and perhaps even try and begin the development work that the army studiously ignored. So if any of you out there fancy contributing an Armstrong engine (preferably with electric start) or even a complete machine to the project, then contact us at the mag. Likewise, if you were one of the lucky squaddies or civilians who test-rode the original bike, please get in touch with us. It would be sad if a design with so much potential was allowed to simply disappear through lack of interest.

To be continued... We hope! •

Survey

- THE RESULTS -

We laughed, we cried we even chuckled at some of your jokes... and we somehow eventually sifted through all of your surveys you sent in and analysed the information. Here then are the results along with a few of your hints and suggestions of what you'd like to see in forthcoming issues of TBM

Wow, you're a funny lot you are. Having trawled through the hundreds of completed surveys returned to us we've finally found out what you guys (and girls) are like, and it certainly makes interesting reading. The trouble with surveys is that they don't always tell you what you want to know, or sometimes they tell you what you didn't want to hear, or even what you already knew but didn't need reminding. I don't need to go into the whole psychology of surveys here, but suffice to say that even just returning a survey marks you out as the sort of person that *responds to a survey* (sounds a bit obvious I know, but there are thousands of people employed in market research whose whole job is just to work out what that means!) In other words generally the keenest readers respond to the survey first and so it was in this case. Some people phoned us up later and said things like: 'I didn't bother responding to your survey as I knew you'd get plenty of replies'!!!? Eh? What does that mean? If everybody took that attitude there wouldn't be any response would there? Others were too tight to pay for a stamp and obviously a number of you couldn't be both-

ered. Fair enough but then your views won't get represented in the final reckoning so it's no good saying to us later I'd prefer such and such in the magazine. Too late. If you did reply your comments were noted (yes, every one of them) and five of you were lucky enough to have won yourself a free subscription for your troubles - so well done.



We were very flattered with some of the comments you put in your replies; asked how you would like to see TBM improved?: Paul Bendall living in Gothenburg in Sweden was typical of many of you when he replied 'Don't change it at all - you're doing a great job.' However there's always

room for some improvement and some of your better and more practical suggestions will be put into practice over the coming few months as we try and build on the magazine to make it even better. It was amazing how price sensitive a number of you were. For instance lots of people wanted to see an improvement in quality but not if it was going to cost any more! Some of you even thought £1.75 was expensive. I don't know if anyone out there has bought a birthday card recently but if you have you'll know that the average birthday card now costs about the same as TBM. That's for one printed bit of card folded over and stuffed in an envelope. No Journalists, no photographers, no opinions, information, free ads or anything else, not even something that lasts (most just get chucked away after a few days) just a bit of card folded in half. Get real. If you think that makes TBM expensive you've obviously got a strange sense of value.

Not all of you were quite so tight. Some were prepared to pay 'just whatever it takes' to have your favourite magazine come out each month, and were happy to pay much more for an improvement in quality. It just goes to show that once you ask the question the answers are going to be so varied that it's probably not possible to cater for everyone's taste. In other words we're going to do our best to improve the magazine for all of you but some price revisions are, I'm afraid, inevitable.

So what sort of people are you? Well on the whole you are male, or 97% of you are though 3% of you are female, and 60%

of you are married. One of you is married-ish, one of you drew and ticked a separate box for divorced, and one of you is not sure whether you're married or single!

On the whole you lot are mature riders - only 3% of readers are under the age of 20, while 54% are between the ages of 21-35; 38% of you fall between the ages of 36 and 54, and 4% of you are aged 55 and over, which left 1% of you who either aren't sure how old you are, or are coy about revealing your age... Ah!

When it comes to a question of trail riding experience you're a bit of a mixed bunch as well: Nearly 7% don't yet ride off road and 21% have just started trail riding; 18% of you have only been riding for 1-2 years, 13% for 3-5 years; and 41% of you are old hands at it having been trail riding for at least 5 years.

One of the interesting things that came out of the survey was on the subject of competition. We asked you whether you'd ever competed in an enduro before



'Employ a female tester' wrote one reader. Hmm, not a bad idea...

TRAILBIKE MAGAZINE READERSHIP Survey

- THE RESULTS

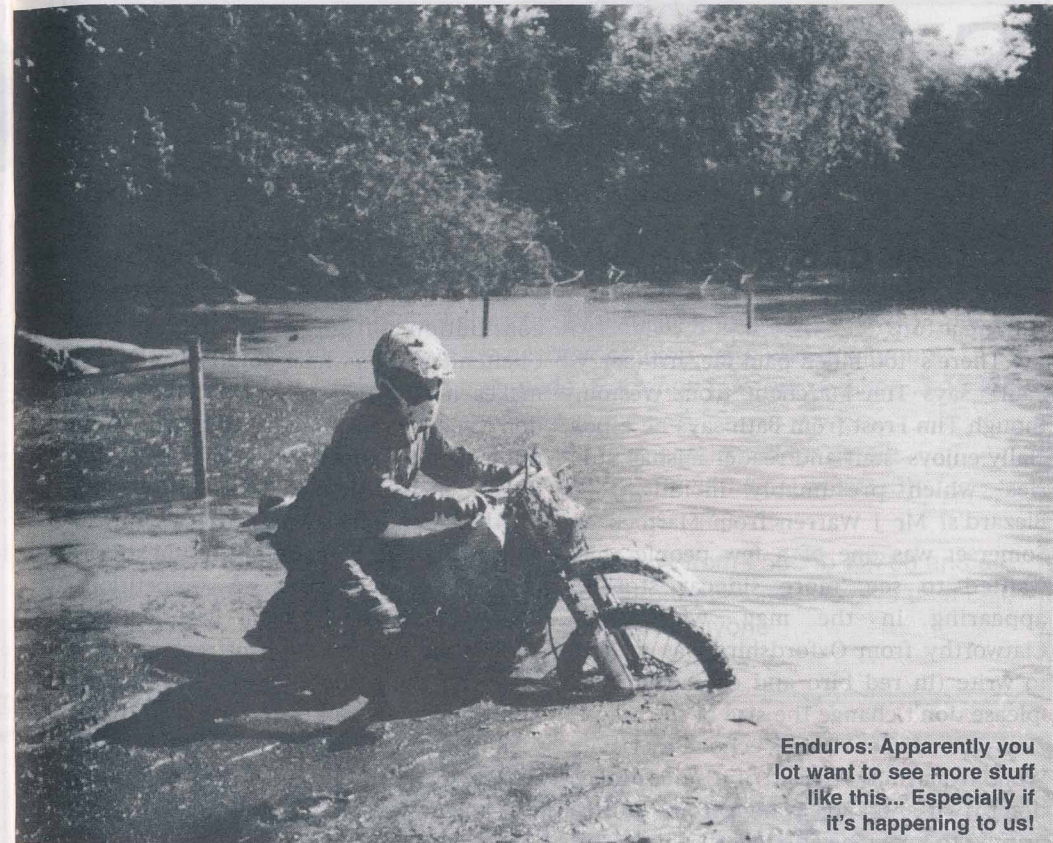
and also whether you'd like more information on that score. Despite a massive 74% of you having never taken part in an enduro before, an overwhelming majority of you (68%, and more than two to one) wanted to know more about enduros, and wanted us to cover the subject in the magazine. Interesting!

As for your taste in other magazines... well, who knows what this all means. Instead I'll simply list some of the mags that you lot read (not including the bike mags), and you can draw your own conclusions: They are (in no particular order) Horse and Hound, Radio Times, Rustler, Arcane, National Geographic, Steam Railway, Flypast, Fiesta, BBC Wildlife, Land Rover Owner, Heavy Horse World, Computer Shopper, Improve Your Course Fishing, Private Eye, Penthouse, Country Sports, Q, Vox, Truck & Truck Driver, MTB Pro, Windsurf, DJ Magazine, Airgunner, BBC Music Magazine, Internet, Mayfair, Razzle, Men Only, Bucketful of Brains, On Side, FHM, Viz, Loaded, Muzik, Armor, Camcorder User, Playboy, Club International, Parade, The Boatman, Womans Weekly, House Beautiful, Skywings, Cross Country, Yachting Monthly, Climbing, Treasure Hunting, Sporting Gun, Time Out, Vogue and Big Ones! The specialist bike mags got a lot of mentions with the US mags Dirt Rider and Dirt bike in particular being singled out as popular reading. And about half of you preferred to take a local paper rather than a national one, but chances are if you read a daily paper it is the Daily Mail.

Your interests in terms of off roading were fairly varied too with most respondents wanting us to cover everything from desert racing to SuperMotard street bikes. Generally you liked what we already included in the mag though the least popular sections were the TrailBike Guide (which most of you wanted to see just 3-4 times a year), the Paul Edmondson Column (now defunct) and for some reason bike show reports. Other than that you liked the humour, you liked the bike tests, you wanted more product evaluation and things like tyre tests, and more reports on raids, holidays, and events which you can ride on your trailbikes. Okay, we can do that.

Now we come to the interesting bit. The bit where we invited you to air your views on the magazine and tell us what

A couple of you said you wanted to see less of Blez... So here is the man in question - in a lesser form. You can't say we don't listen to you now can you?



Enduros: Apparently you lot want to see more stuff like this... Especially if it's happening to us!

you liked, what you didn't like and how you thought TBM could be made better. 'More road-oriented stuff' wrote Phil Dignan of Middlesex, 'Get rad' said Lee Evans of Coventry, and just 'More, more, more' was the verdict from Eric Walter of Guildford. 'Can you improve upon this? - No it's great already' said Craig Burrell from the Wirral, and 'Stay down to earth' suggested Mark Cashmore of Cumbria.

Craig Exley from Godalming said 'Don't fall into a set format. Its appeal is the 'unknown' each month - this variety makes you read all the mag'. While Richard May from Suffolk felt there was 'too much of you lot enjoying yourselves.' Sorry Richard, we'll try and remember to be much more serious in future and not

enjoy ourselves at all! Heather Huitson from Cleveland suggested we should 'employ a female tester' - hmmm, thinking of anyone in particular Heather? Though David Grimstead in Newport thought we should 'be much more sexist' oh, you lad you David, while Ian Cole from Warwickshire asked for some 'tips on how to convince my girlfriend to let me spend even more time and money on my bikes.'

'Maybe include some articles on wrinkly old b*st**ds green laning on old British bikes' wrote Paul Farley from Abergavenny, and Derek Pleney from Cumbria echoed many readers' comments when he wrote 'I would like more tests on older budget trailies... I paid £300 for my DR400 and though it's a bit of a shed, it's

TRAILBIKE MAGAZINE READERSHIP
Survey
 - THE RESULTS

“Be more sexist...” wrote one reader

still great fun.’

There’s ‘too much paul Blezard (sorry Paul)’ says Tim Marchant from Weston, though Tim Frost from Bath says he especially enjoys ‘staff and reader mishap stories’ which presumably includes Mr Blezard’s? Mr J Warren from Martock in Somerset was one of a few people who wanted to see ‘more sidecar stories’ appearing in the mag, while Rod Clatworthy from Oxfordshire was moved to write (in red biro and capital letters) ‘please don’t change the size of the magazine - it’s perfect.’ Words echoed by David Wood from Hull who said ‘if it’s not broke, don’t fix it’. Amanda Waugh from Carlisle wanted to know ‘how to fall off painlessly’ - I wish we knew Amanda, while fellow female reader Rachel Broido from Capel Curig thought we should cover ‘how to fix cheap and nasty bikes with bailer twine, bits of wire and empty washing up bottles’?! Oh dear!

Chris Wagstaffe from Cumbria was one of many who said ‘there’s just not enough of it - I want more please’, though Neil Middleton from Southampton wrote ‘the amount of info in the mag is enough... any more and I would struggle to find time to read it all.’ ‘Some articles are too light-weight’ thought Gerald Andrews from Banbury, but then again Glyn Calvert from Yorkshire said ‘some of the articles are a bit long.’

We were a bit puzzled at first by this

contribution from Paul Bagge of Cheltenham: ‘It’s what you don’t have that makes it so good’ he said, explaining ‘I don’t need acres of advertising and glossy photos, just good tests on affordable bikes.’ And Richard Reynolds from Northolt went one stage further writing ‘if your mag cost £5 a month it would still be cheap because there is no competition.’ Finally, Mark Lister from East Dulwich added ‘the price doesn’t attract me to a mag - it’s the readability that’s important and this mag is full of it, with a personal feeling between reader and writer.’ Cheers lads.

Asked what don’t you like about TBM, David Flippance from Wiltshire said ‘the price’ before adding ‘...but then I’m a tight b****rd’ - you certainly are David. While Peter Hemmings from West Midlands - wanted ‘less printing over the top of photos - it confuses my bifocals’ he said. On the subject of what else we should cover, Mike Hall from Leicestershire wrote ‘how about a full ‘getting started’ series from buying a bike to detailing the equipment you need.’ Hmm... What, you mean a bit like the Beginners Guide series of articles that we ran in issues 7-10 this time last year you mean Mike?

But I’ll leave the last word to Callum Gray from Gartmore in Scotland who when asked what else we should cover wrote in big red letters: ‘your own arses...’ Smartarse!

TRAILSPORT ▲▲▲▲▲▲▲▲▲▲▲▲▲▲▲▲
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TWO BY FOUR

**How do you combine
the thumping torque
of a DR350 with the
agility of an RM
motocrosser?
Simple - you
build your
own RM/DR
special**

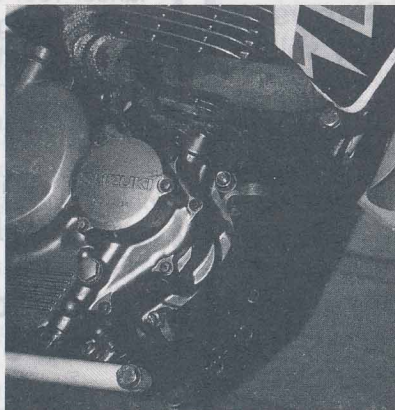


Illustration: Ken Russell

**Right: The man, the bike and
the garage. Ian Pearce is never
happier than when he's working
on some sort of project.
Below: Sturdy engine plates
hold DR motor in place**

Ian Pearce's home-built RM/DR350 is not unique, but as he says 'I've always like the power delivery of four strokes especially when it comes to finding grip in the mud or powering up steep climbs and I wanted the handling of an RM, but with the torque of a DR'.

This particular project began back in 1990 when Ian saw a picture of the then new DR350 in a US dirt bike magazine: 'I was riding an XR250 at the time and was after a bit more power, so as soon as the



DR became available in the UK in 1991 I bought one.' Ian loved it at first, it was grunty and powerful but gradually as he used it for more and more competitive events like enduros and even motocross he found the chassis - and particularly the suspension - was letting it down. Then as luck would have it, one day he was practising at Thrupton Supercross track when a guy turned up on an RM/DR special. 'That was it, I had to have

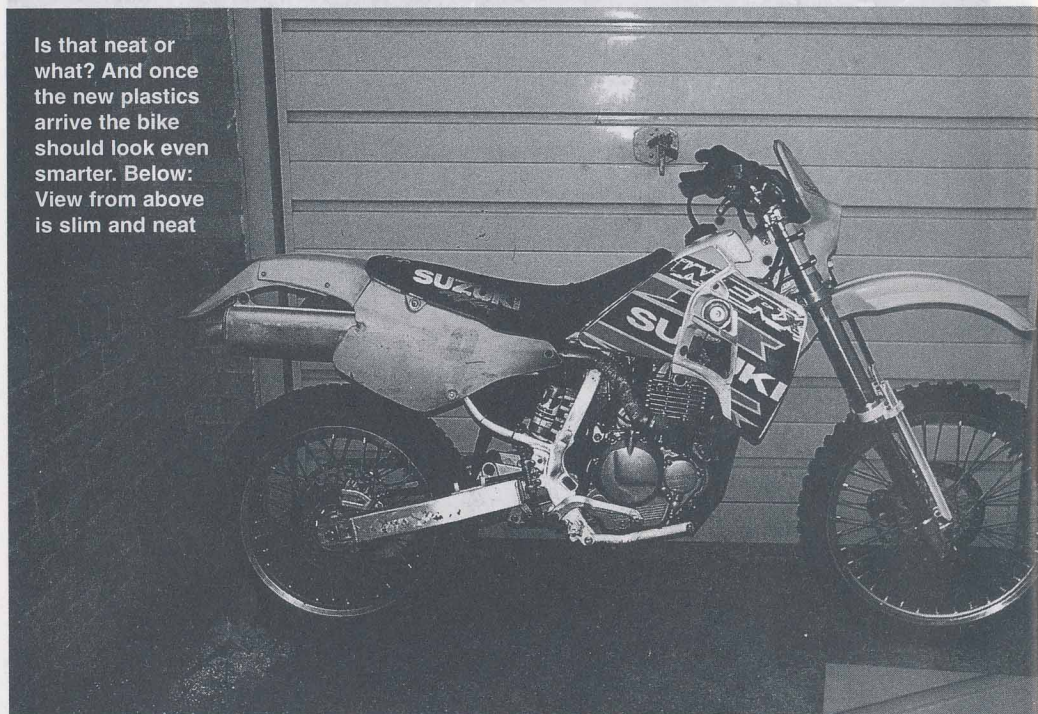


one' he says. 'I had a good look over the bike and the owner told me it had been built by a guy called Terry Mead in Kent whose usual business is making sidecar frames'. When Ian got home he rang up

Terry who confirmed he'd built the bike and still had all the patterns necessary for the frame plates and chassis mods to build a second bike. So the hunt was on for a suitable donor bike. A few months later

TWO BY FOUR

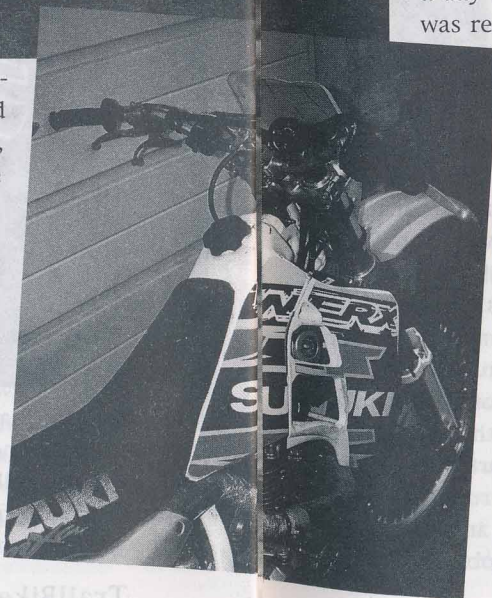
Is that neat or what? And once the new plastics arrive the bike should look even smarter. Below: View from above is slim and neat



Ian's friendly local MX dealer gave him a call to say he'd got a complete 1989 RM250 rolling chassis in, and he could have it for 200 quid. Now the ball was really rolling.

The chassis turned out to be in good condition, not having done much work, and Ian took it down to Terry Mead's for the frame mods to be done. Once that was completed he then set about installing the DR lump, and so the hard work of making everything fit and work, began in earnest. Because the four stroke DR lump is so much wider than the lithe RM engine, a works Suzuki (eight litre) alloy tank was sourced from the US and was cut and

welded to fit (the standard plastic tank fouled the new engine). Also, the gap between the engine and the frame rails was too narrow to fit in the rear brake pedal, necessitating a spot of cutting and rewelding of one of the frame tubes to allow space for the pedal to operate. A brake light actuator from Pro Racing was fitted to allow the



bike to pass an MoT, and at the same time the footpegs were moved lower to accommodate the arc of the kickstarter so that a full swing could be used to start it.

But the biggest problem turned out to be the air filter connection; because the RM engine is both smaller and lower, the carb didn't line up with the airbox. 'I puzzled over that for a long time' says Ian 'while I got on with doing the other jobs that needed completing.' The original RM/DR he'd seen at Thruxton had used a flexi hose connection which because of the shape and relative position of the carb and airbox actually curved around the outside of the frame and then back in again to make the connection. Ian figured there had to be a better solution. Fortunately for him, help was at hand from a local panel beater who restores classic cars. The bike was left with him and within a day or two he rang up to say it was ready. He'd made up a piece

in hand-beaten aluminium that had all the appropriate curves to make the correct connection.

There was one other problem to overcome and that was where to store and cool the engine oil. The DR of course uses the frame as an oil reservoir and cooler, but Ian had had experiences of getting his original DR so hot that it actually boiled the petrol, so he wanted somewhere on the new bike

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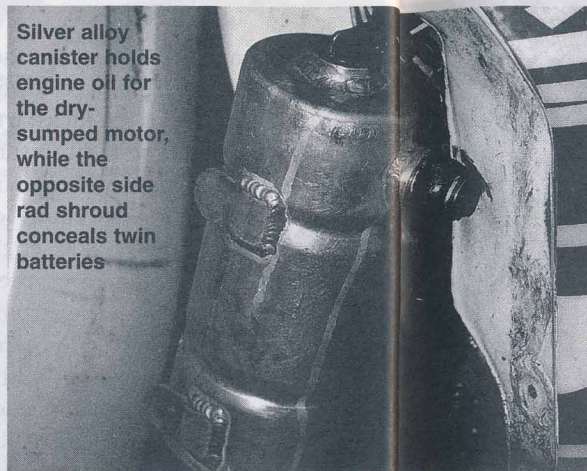
which would definitely stay cool. The solution came from utilising the area where the RM's radiators would normally have sat. With a specially fabricated oil tank similar but smaller to the types of tanks they use in rally cars made up by Gartrac engineering (who specialise in building rally and rallycross cars), the bottle shaped tank was fitted inside the left rad shroud, placing it directly in the airflow.

The bike was completed the night before the Breckland Two Day enduro in 1994 and without any time to test it Ian rode it in the event. 'It felt really good, but unfortunately I dropped it on the special test with about three corners to go and it was a pig to start. It cost me about 15-20 seconds and made the difference between getting a silver and a bronze medal.' Chatting to Paul Blezard about it afterwards he and Ian both agreed that an electric start is essential on a four stroke enduro bike, and though Ian continued to ride the bike in a number of events as well as taking it trail riding he was now on the lookout for an electric start DR motor.

A few months later he spotted an advert from a large Suzuki dealer who was selling three brand new electric start DR engines (they actually turned out to be from the Suzuki Goose - a grey import 350cc road bike which uses the same engine as the DR but with an unusual gondola oil tank), for sale at £1500 each. He bought one and after fitting a Wiseco high compression piston, a stage one cam and heavier valve and clutch springs, set about fitting it in place of the kickstart one he

already had. Although most of the problems had been solved with the last motor, the electric start engine turned out to be slightly different (slightly wider thanks to the starter clutch mechanism and most annoyingly of all from Ian's point of view, the carb sits a few centimetres further back because of the position of the starter motor). Ian tried fitted the original (shorter) DR carb inlet rubber to the new engine but the carb fouled the starter so a combination of the old inlet rubber plus a 2mm spacer between the inlet and the cylinder head cured the problem.

Silver alloy canister holds engine oil for the dry-sumped motor, while the opposite side rad shroud conceals twin batteries



The next dilemma was where to put the battery. 'I'd originally thought I'd put it in between the front engine plates keeping the weight nice and low' says Ian, 'but there wasn't room for a full sized DR battery and the 4-amp battery I'd sourced wasn't quite man enough to start the bike from cold. So I decided on two 4-amp batteries wired in parallel, and the only place left to mount them

was in the right hand rad shroud. It fitted the two batteries nicely, one above the other, mounted on a home-made steel rack.'

The first time he took the bike out both batteries went flat, but this was traced to a faulty regulator/rectifier unit replaced by one from a breakers. At about the same time the local MX dealer came up with a secondhand White Power shock which was fitted, and while the bike was off the road he took the opportunity to move the footpegs back to their original position since there was no need for clearance for a

kickstarter anymore. Finally the exhaust which uses the stock RM silencer ('quiet but restrictive on a four stroke') was swathed in Thermotec wrap to stop it burning through his leg, and a steering damper was fitted to prevent head shake. A Sammy Miler universal speedo and UFO head and tail lights completed the project and allowed the bike to be MoT'd and put on the road.

The bike's not yet perfect, it could do with some new plastics (the hotter four stroke exhaust keeps melting the right hand sidepanel), the front forks have yet

to be dialled in properly and Ian would like to be able to fit a smaller single, but more powerful battery, but he is now understandably keen to get on and ride the thing and plans a whole season of British Championship and local enduros this year. He reckons the whole project has cost him 'about two grand' including the new motor, but figures he's now got exactly the type of bike he wanted: 'I guess the only other changes I'd consider are fitting a big-bore conversion if the British enduro regs follow the European ones and allow a four stroke class of up to 400cc' (his slightly tweaked motor has been dyno'd at 28hp - ten percent up on standard). 'Other than that there's nothing really left to do and I'm looking forward to competing on it.' Looking at the amount of work that's gone into it, who can blame him...?



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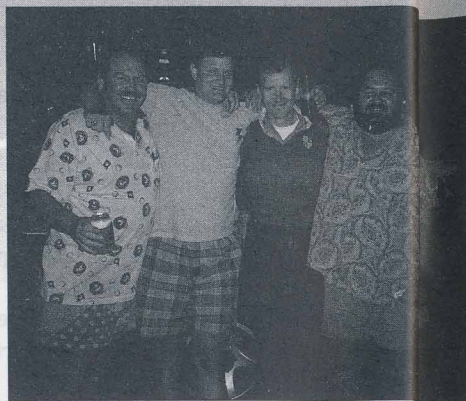
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Off-Road With Matchless

Running Scared

When Simon Fenning went to South Africa to take part in the annual Desert Run, little did he know what he was letting himself in for...

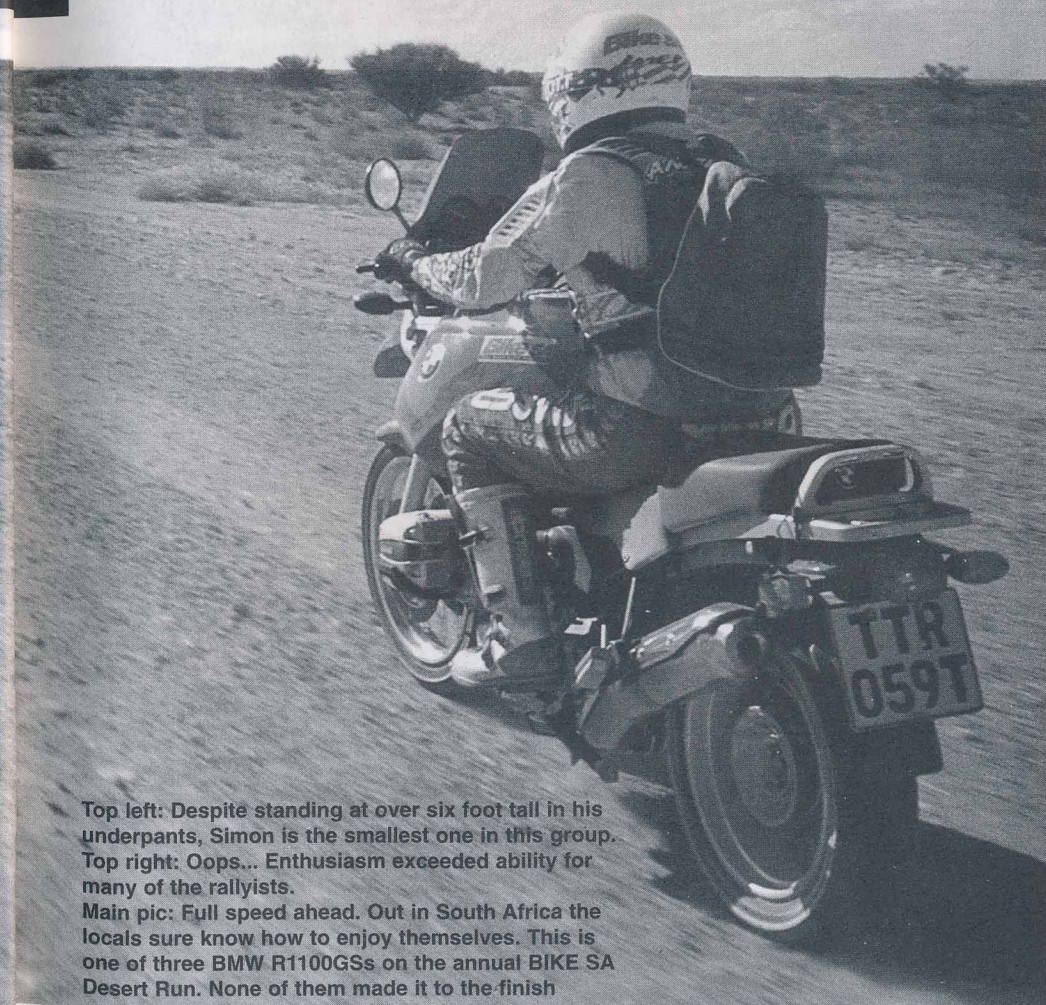


Within 72 hours of arriving in South Africa for the first time, I found myself participating in what could easily have been a scene from any Mad Max movie. 370 people were riding or driving bikes, 4X4s, cars, quads and even a 16 wheeler artic' in close convoy on unmade roads at full throttle. I was the only person present for whom this was an unusual way to spend an Easter weekend.

The experienced traveller prepares for the journey by taking just the essentials: a camera, a note-pad, toothbrush and credit card. If you don't take your credit cards you're in a country that hasn't been named yet. Leave behind your preconceptions and if my experience of South Africa is anything to go by, leave your bike at home as well. My XR650 was surface shipped in February but still

hadn't cleared Durban customs by the start of the Bike SA Desert Run in April.

So there I was, the sole British entrant on the Desert Run, at the wheel of the organiser's brand new minibus on a gravel road, towing a fully laden five bike trailer. I thought I was flat out until the bikes started coming past a lot flatter out than me. Some of them were practically on the front fender, some on the back, either way it looked damned scary. They kicked up rooster tails of sand and stones which entered the ventilation system and cracked the windscreen respectively. I foolishly tried to get a snap of one of the 1100GS Beemers corkscrewing past at 180kph whilst steering with my knees. The bus and the trailer got separately cross rutted and for what seemed like several minutes I



Top left: Despite standing at over six foot tall in his underpants, Simon is the smallest one in this group.
Top right: Oops... Enthusiasm exceeded ability for many of the rallyists.
Main pic: Full speed ahead. Out in South Africa the locals sure know how to enjoy themselves. This is one of three BMW R1100GSs on the annual BIKE SA Desert Run. None of them made it to the finish

had 45 degrees of opposite lock on to no apparent effect. I resisted the temptation to brake or back off to avoid being overtaken by the trailer. The co-pilot Diederick gave me a little confidence boost - 'man, I thought we were dead then' he said in a slow drawl before leaning back in his seat and resuming kip mode. These Afrikaners are tough as biltong and cool as..., well as cool as people who say 'man' a lot. Mind you, I finally put the wind up him by failing to notice a sign on the run up to a moderate incline only to find that over the brow was a steep drop through a small village to a tee-junction. The whole rig was airborne for several metres before I hit the brakes. We stopped rather more quickly than our dust trail, which assisted by a tail-wind, blotted out the sun for quite a time. As the dust cleared I saw that this

was the lunch stop, at a place called Hotazel - obviously named by some 19th century pioneer with a sense of humour. We were only about 150kms into the 2000km itinerary of Apocalypse Bikes, when somebody handed me a cold Castle beer; I don't normally drink and drive but the temperature was in the 90's, I didn't trust the water (wrongly), and when a South African offers you a beer - you drink it, okay.

So what is the Desert Run exactly? It's a sort of run-what-you-brung non-competitive raid through the arid terrain of Cape Province in north-western SA, which follows the arid Botswana border on the fringes of the Kalahari Desert, before crossing into southern Namibia and finally arriving at the arid Namib desert. The desert rises from barren

flatness to small- and then huge-dunes which I was surprised to find continued to within a kilometre of the cold and featureless Atlantic coastline. So having staggered through the boiling and utterly dry gallons of undrinkable sea water. Apparently, thirst-crazed animals do sometimes make their way to the sea from the desert and die as a result. That's because they don't have money to buy Castle beer I assume?

Meanwhile, speed crazy South Africans were battling with this beautiful but unforgiving terrain for no other reason than that it was better than working. For the local enduro riders used to 500kms per day on two day events, this run is a tea party. For the majority however, it was tough. The soft sandy

dry river beds caught out several riders and the broken bone count was quite high almost from day one. Up in the splendid Khomas Highlands many of the corners were blind and a wrong entry on loose gravel resulted in getting big air on the exit until gravity intervened at a point some distance below the road. Simon Fourie, the event organiser and South African motorcycling's Fidel Castro, had by this time broken both of his BMWs and I was therefore reduced to riding shotgun whilst he did the driving. More than once he would say something like: 'I broke my back there in '83... thought it was a right hander and had to lay it down at about 160kph'. Then looking over his shoulder he would add 'Oh no, I'm mistaken, it wasn't there it must've been this one.' At this point while he was looking out of the side

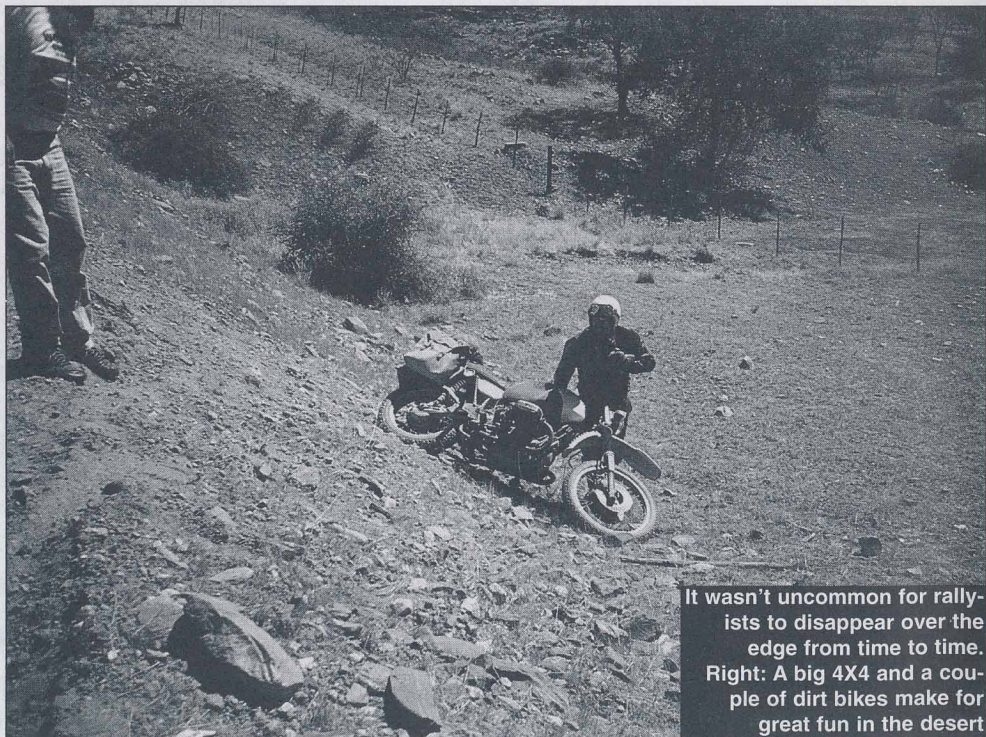


window at the gnarly terrain we were still doing 135kph. It would have been more, but there's a fair bit of drag when a 12-seater minibus gets completely sideways. This man has no fear but fortunately I had enough for both of us.

If I had great respect for desert rally competitors before, I worship them now. It's not just the heat, the sweat and the dust which saps your energy and concentration, there's also the absolute terror induced by the thick clouds of dust that follow all moving vehicles. Halfway through an overtaking manoeuvre you completely lose sight of the other vehicle, and if there happens to be another vehicle in front of the one you're trying to overtake this scary situation can last for several seconds. The scenario which

nightmares are made of however, is anything which brings you to an abrupt halt at speed because the vehicle travelling behind you will hit you long before it sees you. This almost happened to me when the bus dropped below its soft sand 'stall' speed, stopped, and all I could do was put my head between my legs waiting for the impact which thankfully never came.

As support driver I became part of the organiser's entourage and found myself giving assistance to other participants in many and varied ways. In addition to wheel changing and camp-site organising I was once mistaken for the event doctor by a female. For some strange reason she thought I didn't speak English and tried to explain her problem in sign language. By the time I realised



It wasn't uncommon for rallyists to disappear over the edge from time to time. Right: A big 4X4 and a couple of dirt bikes make for great fun in the desert

her mistake I was in little doubt as to the nature of her complaint which was, shall we say, to do with her down-below. Fortunately the British diplomatic chip was installed in me at birth and embarrassment was avoided.

The night stops were fantastic; barbecues over hardwood under a trillion stars. Umbrella trees silhouetted against the night sky, the screech of cicadas just audible above the braying of two stroke quads being raced. A live band played from the back of the aforementioned artic. They could only cover the genius of Hendrix, Dylan and Van Morrison, but when you've drunk a whole crate of Castles and you're lying on the dunes being fanned by a warm evening breeze you could forgive them for not going into the Waterboys.

Talking of the night sky in the south-



ern hemisphere; if you get the local Patrick Moore to point out the Southern Cross to you, then multiply the distance between the lower two of the four stars by two and a half to the right, and from that point drop an imaginary plumb line, that is true south, (or I've been had).Worth



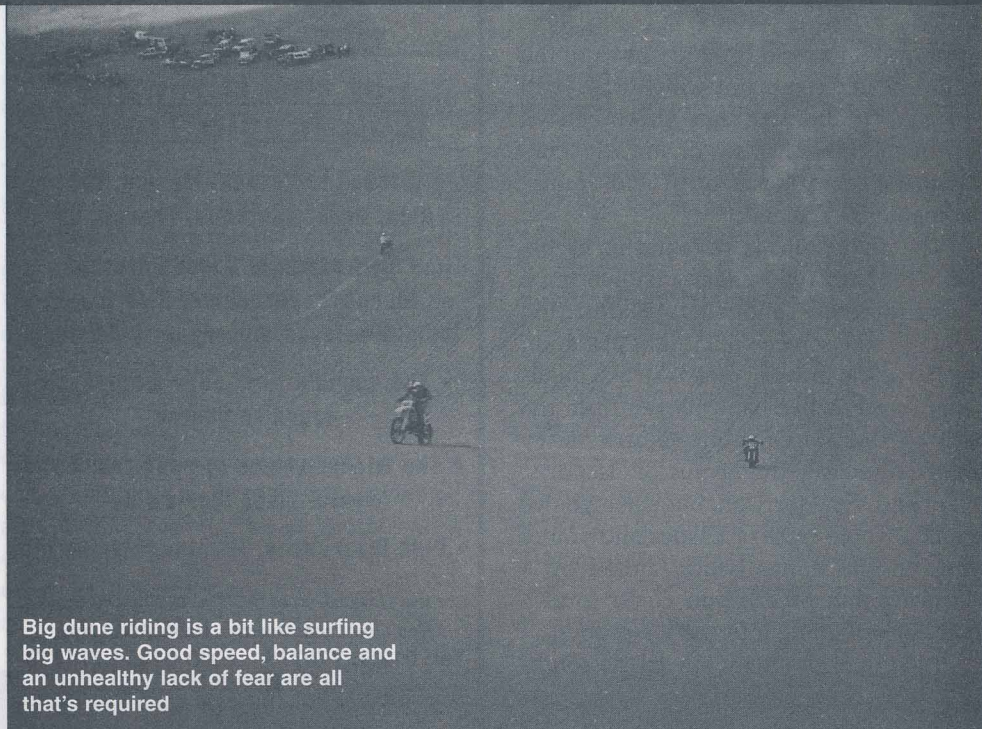
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knowing next time you are lost in the desert at night south of the Equator.

My original intention was to do the whole event on the bike, there and back, despite being unable to get an objective assessment of the practicality of that in advance. With hindsight I can say that



Big dune riding is a bit like surfing big waves. Good speed, balance and an unhealthy lack of fear are all that's required

whilst not impossible on a large trailbike, embarking on such an event without back-up would have been a bit too Bravo Two Zero, even for an experienced off-roader which I am not. As far as I am aware only one person did the whole trip on a bike, a BMW GS1100, but even he avoided the soft sand sections. Of the other three 1100s on the trip, one was looped off the top of one of the many roller-coaster hard pack dunes over which the trail passes to the Namibian coast. Another was ridden flat out across a washout (a dry river bed across the trail), and suffered a broken gearbox-to-sub-frame casting as a result - an identical failure to that already suffered by the remaining bike but which had been plated temporarily in order to continue. In spite of a number of other niggling problems, the riders were mightily impressed with

the trail capability of their monster Beemers, particularly as they all used standard issue Michelins. Just about every make and model of two and four stroke trail, enduro and MX bike was represented on the event except KTM which is currently not sold in SA. Most unsuitable bike by far was an Italian diesel-engined Enfield India with which visitors to Goa will probably be grimly familiar. It completed the event but due to the vibration, the owner although only 30 years old, is now a shadow of his former self and drinking heavily.

After four days and about 2000kms, the convoy, minus a number of stragglers and those missing in action, rolled into Swakopmund Namibia which until 1920 was a German colony and still bore the hallmarks of its teutonic history in the shape of the architecture, the street

Once you find your dune you've got to hit it at top speed with everything you've got



names and numerous Viennese tea rooms. I'm sure this had nothing to do with the rather concentration camp-like appearance of the entrance to our campsite with its barbed wire and sentry post. Frankly, Swakopmund has little going for it except a lot of sand. Even the roads are constructed from sand and salt which works remarkably well when dry but turns to gripless slime upon the first hint of rain.

I was looking forward to the following morning because we were going to ride the BIG DUNES. That is to say that publicly I was looking forward to it, privately I was apprehensive having no previous experience of riding in soft sand. Meanwhile one of the hotshots on the rally had already ridden out to the dunes that afternoon and returned summarily with a broken collarbone. Suddenly I remembered an urgent appointment with the bathroom.

As often happens, the foreboding was unwarranted. My ISDT triple silver medal coach drawled through the form with me: 'throttle wide open, sit right back on the straights and get over the front on the corners... man'. But to quote the Desert Run information booklet: 'The drop-offs are treacherous... you will nosedive headfirst into the ground... the damage caused by nosediving is considerable including (usually) a bent chassis and a broken back. Hmmm.

The place we were headed was called the 'Wall of Death', and is a natural bowl about 200m across, bridging two 150m high dunes, so each lap involves two climbs and two descents. Spectators stand on the ridge as a sort of human armco to prevent you from getting caught out by the drop-offs previously mentioned. I got high style marks on a borrowed WR250 for

my endos but after about 20 laps I was exhausted by the heat and adrenaline.

The real test for the 'pommie' though came in the afternoon at 'Dune Seven' which is around 350m high, and reputedly the world's second highest lump of sand. The windward side of these giant dunes are inclined at about 35 degrees which doesn't sound particularly steep until you express it as a 1.6:1 hill. There are two ways to ascend Dune Seven right to the top; the first is to get hold of a 500cc MX-er, correctly jetted and running absolutely spot-on. Start from the valley floor and open the throttle to the stop in third; the second approach requires a bit more nerve. You can do it with a 250 or even a powerful 4-stroke by riding up the gentler leeward side of the facing dune and then coming back down it flat out to get sufficient momentum so that when you hit the wall-like base of Dune Seven you've got enough to carry you to the top. Then if you're really good just as you reach the top you pull back on the bars and turn the bike on the back wheel in one move before free falling back to sea level. I finally achieved it on a '96 CR250 and punched the sky with spontaneous delight. As far as I'm concerned you can keep your bunjy jumping and white water rafting; dune climbing is by far the ultimate thrill.

Moving forwards by several days, I did eventually extract my XR650 from the shippers back on the Indian Ocean side of the continent. This was achieved only by lodging a cash bond with customs for an amount equal to the bike's declared value plus 25%. This is refunded on proof of re-export but the shipper takes a very hefty

admin fee. Insurance for the bike and for injuries suffered by me was unavailable anywhere, so at no time did I have the peace of mind that one is accustomed to in the UK. Third party insurance premiums are however included in the purchase price of petrol in many southern African countries.

Due to the favourable exchange rate, bikes are now roughly the same price in SA as in the UK so buying and re-selling is viable if you've got the time. A second option is to rent a bike for the purpose, but choice is limited, and there is no back-up once you are off the freeways. Alternatively there are tour operators who can provide the whole package for you.

Apart from the Bike SA Desert run there is an event called the African Friendship Safari which is also a raid type event with a different itinerary every year. Whether you travel independently or as part of an organised group, and I did both, SA and the adjoining countries are perfect for trail riding. Everything is cheaper than in the UK (including petrol), the scenery is at least as spectacular as any I have seen anywhere in the world, the roads are excellent, (although urban driving standards are appalling), and English is the main official language. It's pointless to make a general comment on a country's entire population so I'll only say that their reputation for hospitality above and beyond the call of duty is well founded.

Finally, as far as I can tell, it would be possible at the moment to see all four corners of southern Africa without once using a tar road, but much 'improving' is currently taking place so if off-roading is your thing go now... man. •



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Reader and enduroist Paul Lear recounts the tale of a memorable excursion to a motocross track

I pulled on my boots, grunting as I struggled with the fiendishly awkward closure device. Why do they make boots that take longer to put on than it takes a normal person to get dressed on a morning? I mean if a simple buckle is good enough for horsey types, then surely its good enough for us too. Lets face it, if Geraint Jones can change a tyre in three minutes flat, why does it take me 20 minutes just to put my boots on? Perhaps its just me: feet like barges, boots like concrete and no muscles of which to speak. I donned my race face, today I was going to kick some butt... at least I hoped.

Back in the early Eighties I had been doing few AMCA motocross meetings (to hone my enduro special test times) and not totally disgracing myself on an ageing but cherished air-cooled, drum-braked KDX250 with a front end that tucked under more often than Elizabeth Taylor's plastic surgeon. Just occasionally I surprised a few of the MX stalwarts as they saw my tail-light creeping past them (lights are a great pose in an MX race aren't they)? But today was different. Today I had no excuses, because I'd sold the Green-Meanie and got something really competitive.

I'd done a deal with one of those strange blokes that know no barriers when it comes to obtaining things. Not that this particular person is in any way dishonest - far from it - he is simply able to blag, borrow or somehow acquire the type of things that most people drool over... Like a works KTM engine for instance, coupled to a top spec, no expense spared (or taken) chassis. I had purchased a 250 KTM six-days Special with a pukka works engine and today was *my* day.

The course at Skenfrith, near Monmouth, is built on the side of a steep hill so you are

either in freefall, climbing near vertical faces or on the nastiest cambered whoop-de-doo-dooos trying to look cool when really you're thinking 'OH MY GOD PLEASE LET THIS STOP' knowing that if anything alters the equilibrium you will be deposited off the side of the mountain at great speed. Gulp!

Practice didn't go too well. The trouble with the junior class is that that's where all the nutters who crash so much they never get enough points to be promoted into the seniors, languish. I found myself getting into the spirit of the thing and elbow scraping in the turns, only to have the rear wheel of some uncontrollable 17 year old's Christmas present skim my helmet on its way into the crowd! Not put off by the wail of the ambulance siren I concentrated on picking my lines until the end of practice.

Then it rained. This was serious summer rain. Thunder and lightning, hail and brimstone, the lot. It turned the carpark into a greasebowl and the track into something resembling the Somme.

The first race was the juniors. Me. As I lined up, my adrenal glands working overtime, a strange thought invaded the increasing crescendo of mercilessly tortured two strokes: this is the only enduro bike in the race. It didn't make much sense at the time so I concentrated on mercilessly torturing my own two stroke and cr**ing myself.

The gate dropped and immediately several nutters to my left ran over some poor monkey who was unlucky enough to fall off before the first corner. The ground had changed dramatically since practise. Then it was quite firm thanks to a dry if not particularly warm summer. Now it had a lethal sheen of slimy mud from the easing downpour, and was well slip-

pery. Being an enduro rider, and proud of it, I figured that the conditions were nothing that the average clubman enduroist couldn't cope with and I concentrated on just keeping out of trouble. I was amazed to be passed going down a steep drop with a 90-degree right hander at the bottom by one of the nutters as if it was dry. I watched incredulously as he plummeted off the course and into a stream taking about 100 metres of rope with him. More ambulance noises!

I was passed by more of the nutters on some of the downhill bits only to pass them all back again on the uphill bits by careful use of the throttle and picking the grippiest lines. The difference was that on the next lap around they would still be there, in first gear, screaming the nuts off their bikes with a blank look on their faces as if they had reached the end of their thought process.

'Uuh... in gear, . uuh... engine working, uuh... throttle wide open... I should be going forward. Uuh... not going forward, must need more revs...' I wondered how some of these riders floundering around on an AMCA motocross circuit would fare in a proper Welsh enduro? The bogs would be full of 'em.

They aren't all like that of course, which is why I was stunned by what I heard over the tannoy whilst completing another lap and taking the last lap board.

'And its the enduro rider number 232 ...Paul Lear, *with his lights on*, leading the field on the last lap....!!'

Well, you could have knocked me down with a sledge-hammer. Imagine Mrs Lear's eldest showing the rest of the field the way home. From then on however the course took on a different look. Every lump, bump, and crevice became a potential disaster waiting to have me off. With only one lap to go I *had* to stay on.

The crowd seemed to be more visible than they had previously been - and audible too - shouting and cheering. Was it for me, or was it just because the rain had stopped and they had all emerged from the beer tent? The fact was I was being caught. Two brothers, on their

way up the rankings and much too good for the junior class were on my tail - and I knew nothing about it.

The Llewellyn brothers had got caught on one of the greasy climbs and I had sailed past whilst they were floundering in the mud. But skill, determination, and an active pit crew had them right up my tailpiece - unbeknown to me. Meantime I carried on at my own pace, slower if anything, due to being overcautious. Ha! If only I'd known of my predicament I probably would've taken a few more chances, but bereft of a pit crew and a pit board warning me of their presence, I trundled on waving to the crowd, who by now had got into the spirit of things and were waving back and shouting like mad.

The last section of the track was a jump followed by a sharp left hander that went straight to the finish line. I made the jump, heart in mouth, as I tried my best to look like Ricky Johnson without the pink pants. Then came the last corner, I suddenly realised I was being challenged, the crowd were screaming, I had the racing line, and the Llewellyn brothers were all over me. All I had to do was make the turn and take the glory, I could actually see the chequered flag. I hit the berm perfectly balanced and... and... and... it disintegrated beneath me... completely. The nice firm, forgiving, gently rounded berm had disintegrated like a watery blancmange. I found myself in a heap looking on helplessly as the Llewellyns took a 1 - 2.

Oh well, at least I got third..... SH*T.

Back in the pits I heaved my muddy bike onto my trailer, undressed in the open, and put my muddy body into my clean clothes. In the background the Llewellyn's pit crew were washing down their bikes while the bros had a wash and brush up in their motorhome - by blondes.

Like the Murphys - I'm not bitter. The fact is I took them all the way to the wire and nearly won. They on the other hand went on to become two of the top AMCA riders in the country, and a race they probably can't even remember, I'll never forget.

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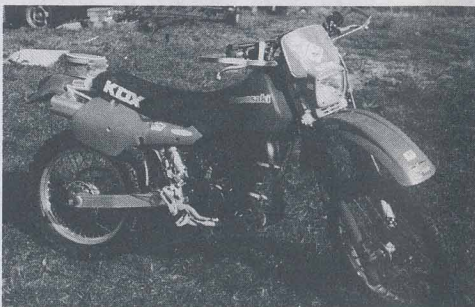
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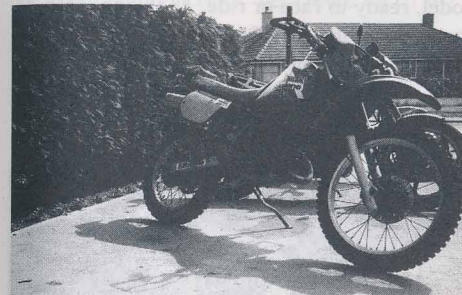
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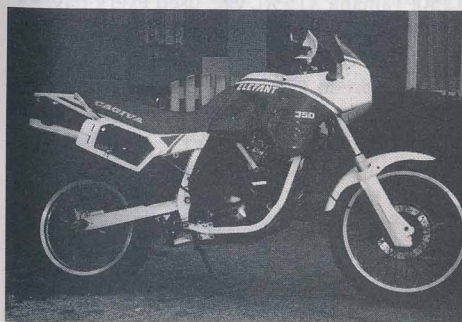
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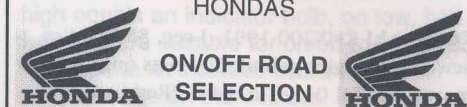


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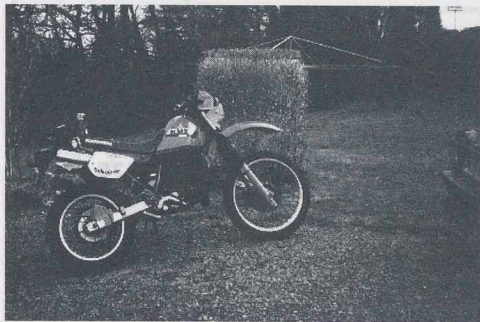
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XT500 tacho and inner & outer cable £25; h/lamp brackets £8; XL125R tacho complete (as new) £15; two plastic front m/guards £4 ea; one pair braced trail handlebars (black) £5. Tel Terry on 01703 333955 (Southampton)

Honda XR600 White Bros big bore downpipe, new £135; Jagg o/cooler kit, new, £160; std t/pipe, mint, £40; factory manual, £20; std rear m/guard assy, c/w light, mint £30. John Leon, 41 rubens Road, Northolt, M'sex. UB5 5JJ.

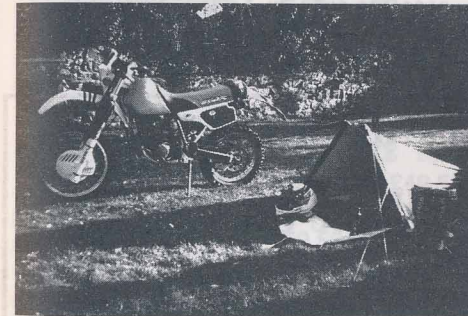
Ignition system (complete), suitable for Suzuki RM80 air cooled machine £100; also

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front expansion chamber, chrome £35; parts for Yamaha DT250MX magneto, crankcases, gearbox, carb inlet rubber, £100 the lot! Tel 01505 690004 (Houston, Scotland)

Kawasaki KLR250, white fuel tank, cush drive rubber, genuine brake & clutch levers, both side panels (brand new), £50 the lot! Tel (eves) 01527 404867 (Redditch, Worcs)

Solo tent (Bikers expedition) lightweight 3.5lb, packs small, double skin, breathable material, all seasons, genuine bargain, £85. Tel 01752 223008 (Devon)



Acerbis desert tank & headlight cowl to fit Kawasaki KLR600; KLR650/Tengai rear m/guard, radiator, r/h rad scoop unused; various unused levers, indicators, footpegs, pedals, sprockets, gaskets all cheap; also Honda XL250 generator stator, Michelin 140/90-17 Enduro comp tyre, MX body armour, front & rear m/guards, barkbusters, etc all cheap. Tel Brian on 01784 257469 eves (Middx)

DR350 Acerbis tank, good condition with fittings, would like to swap for standard 350E tank. Tel 01437 721325 (Pembrokeshire)

Acerbis fuel tank for DR350, white only two months old, cost £160 new, will accept £100 ovo. Tel 01268 521129 or 01426 227711 (pager) (Basildon)

Honda XL250RE spares frames, forks, head, crankcases, carbs, barrells etc please phone for more details. Tel 01884 243363 or 0402 362193 (Devon)

Yamaha XT250 rear wheel, gold rim, heavy duty respoke, brake, sprocket, snails etc £60. Tel 01633 484093 (S Wales)

KLX250 White Bros/Supertrapp silencer, vgc, cost £170 new, accept £100; also w/shop manual for KLX250 trail/enduro models, £15. Tel Jon on 01204 690171 (Lancs)

Various KMX125 tyres/wheels/suspension f+r, tank, also KMX200 tyre, Michelin T61 4.00-17 and Metz Comp-K 140/80-18 road tyre. Tel 01522 560033 (Lincoln)

WANTED

Wanted Companion for big trip (Africa or Asia), also XR600 clocks. Phone Dave for chat on 01522 560033 (Lincoln)

Wanted Suzuki PE250 & 175 parts, new or used, workshop manuals, parts lists or any other info. Tel 0161 9806697 (Altrincham, Cheshire)

Wanted Honda XR650L must be good cond, cash waiting. Tel Paul on 01925 290455 (Warrington, Cheshire)

Wanted TBM back issues 1 to 4, your price paid, Happy New Year! Tel Len on 01202 778186 (Poole, Dorset)

Wanted for Honda XL250R 1982 model, h/lamp cowling and orig clocks, also stainless steel exhaust complete (must be quiet). Tel Terry on 0191 2365966 (Newcastle)

Wanted 4-stroke single, eg CCM, ATK etc for road/trail use. Tel 0115 9268749 (Nottingham)

Wanted for Honda XR250 (1991) silencer, orig Honda or aftermarket DEP etc. Tel David on 0181 3687522 (London)

Wanted trials sidocar. Tel John on 01844 218267 (Oxon)

Wanted for Suzuki RMX250 (1993), plastic petrol tank & tail pipe, orig or aftermarket, tubular sump guard, any other parts considered. Tel Andrew on 0114 2830713 (Sheffield)

Wanted working CDI unit for Suzuki SP400

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Kawasaki KMX200 1991, J-reg, 5500 miles, new rings, engine rebuilt 50 miles only, £1400 spares inc. Tel 01527 546442 (Redditch, Worcs)

Suzuki TS250, T-reg, taxed & MOT, vgc for year, good runner & orig, £550 ovno or swop for 4-stroke trailie, 250 or bigger. Write to Matthew Fox, 9 Rimmington Close, Brandyhouse Brow, Blackburn Lanc, BB2 3DR
Kawasaki KLR250, 1990 G-reg, just 5200 miles by boring middle-aged owner, trail trim, batt elim, DEP, knobblies, Renthals, std parts,

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Rough Guide - Hants

Staff Bikes - Ele 900ie

BMW1100GS on/off

Tri-Greeves - D Taylor

KMX125/200 - O C O

ISSUE 2

Competing on trailies

Cagiva WMX500DE

Husaberg FE501e/s

SuperTenere - O C O

R Guide - N Pennines

Welsh 2-day part one

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ISSUE 11

Cambrian Rally

KTM400EGS

Chris Scott

Normandy Raid

KDX200SR

Reader KLX650

White Peak Trial Part 2

ISSUE 14

Night trailing

Staffbikes

Plymouth Raid

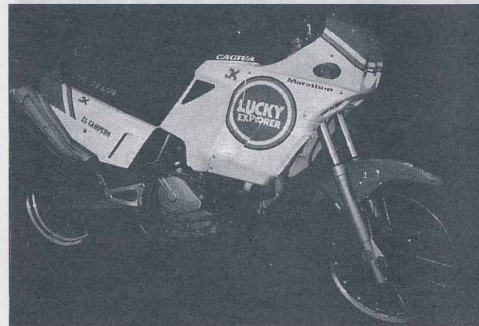
Husaberg FE400E

Reader story

£1200. Tel Peter on 01327 351159 (Northants)
Rickman Zundapp ex-army ISDT bike, taxed & MOT, ridden 1976 ISDT Austria Gold Medal, reed valve, Amal MKII, loads of spares, £850. Tel 0161 9806697

Honda XR250RE, B-reg, new MOT, twin carb model, ready to race or ride, £825 ono. Tel Martin on 01364 642204 (Devon)

Cagiva Elefant 750 1996, low mileage, Lucky Strike colours, still under manufacturer's warranty, mint cond, £4650 ono. Tel 015242 51345 (N Yorks)



Winter clear-out for new bike. 1992 KX250, 10 meetings from new, new piston,, £1250; Yamaha XT550, vgc, used every day, £1250; KX125, double disc, with Suzuki 370 4-stroke engine, £500; KX250, 1984, vgc, £500; Bultaco Impredo 175, 1971, trail bike, vgc, £600. Tel Mick on 01629 733889 or 0836 657406 (Matlock, Derbyshire)

Part-Ex my Suzuki GSXR750H, Jap import, mint, 6K, for XT225 or similar or legal Trials. Tel 01734 831695 (Reading)

Honda XR200 1990, T&T, white frame model, good reliable trail/enduro bike, light and easy to start, £1150. Tel 01943 466184 or 0468 893568 (W Yorks)

KTM500 ex-Sultan of Oman display team, 1983, age-related plate, T&T, 300 yes 300 miles, fun use only, £1200 ono. Tel 01465 714125 8.30-10pm or w/ends (SW Scotland)

Yamaha XT500, 1977, rebuilt wheels, Micron exhaust, new bars, cables, camchain, lovely

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condition, £1000. Tel 01772 614242 (Lancs)
Suzuki DR650RES 1996, P-reg, black, 1600 miles, vgc, priced for quick sale, £3650. Tel 0171 603 2414 (W London)

Kawasaki KDX200 E2, 1990, G-reg, T&T, clean & reliable example, excellent for enduro or green laning, £1495. Tel Trevor on 01392 877091 (Exeter)

Husky CR250 1983, air cooled, twin shock, MOT Nov 97, engine & frame 'soft'-tuned for enduro and green laning, reliable and easily maintained, £495. Tel Brian on 01392 811234 (Exeter)

Honda XR600 '96, N-reg, 7600km, O-ring chain, spares etc, £3400 also single bike trailer £90. Tel Stuart on 01474 708973 (Dartford)

Honda XL185, A-reg, 18000 miles, tidy bike, £375. Tel 01635 866816 (Berks)

Suzuki TS185 1976, years MOT, runs very well, vgc, £725 ono. Tel 01932 248525 (Middx)

JCM Weekend, 238cc, 1989, not registered, disc front, drum rear, monoshock, red with white frame, competition trials, soft power (hoppable), good cond, hardly used, £700 ono, will travel. Tel 01992 639098 (Herts)

Yamaha XT600 Tenere long MOT & tax, very good original cond, with full stainless Micron exhaust, excellent runner, £1495 ono or poss p/x smaller trail or road bike. Tel 01202 576648 (Dorset)

Kawasaki KLE500 J-reg, T&T, 12,300 miles, Baglux tank bag, vgc, £2400 ovno. Tel 01529 421478 (Lincs)



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TT350/600 Disc	£1700 - 2300
Aprilia Pegaso 125 89	£1275
Aprilia RX125 90	£1450
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(1979), will pay reasonable price, other spares considered. Tel Ian on 0121 7779380 (Birmingham)

Wanted someone to share a van or trailer from south coast to Cambrian Rally 97. Tel Jonathon on 01903 771562 (W Sussex)

Wanted for Kawasaki KMX125, rear shock, airbox wheels f & r, exhaust pipe, must be in good cond, not interested in silly money just a fair price. Tel Gary on 01747 855617

(Shaftesbury, Dorset)
Wanted info on trails, green lanes etc in Herts, Bucks & Beds, XR & DR owners new to sport - can anyone help? Tel Andy (eves) on 01296 336694

Wanted person or group to go green laning with at weekends in Okehampton or Dartmoor area. Tel Neville on 0181 661 2510 eves or answerphone (London)

Wanted information - have you otr do you know someone that has travelled overland via the East to Australia? Advice and info needed. Tel 0131 228 8780 or write to J Clelland, C/- Crook, 143(3F1) Warrender Park Road, Edinburgh, EH9 1DT

Wanted Yamaha TDR250 in West Country location. Tel Clive Young on 01749 850500 daytime (Somerset)

Wanted Bultaco engine 325 trial preferred, but 250, 350, 370, MX or cheap basket case okay, cash waiting, will collect. Tel Jason on 0181 450 2741 or 0958 426491 daytime (London)

Wanted road-legal trailbike, 175-400cc, £700 or less, must have an MOT and be ready to ride. Can travel and collect. Tel Steve on 01273 884965 (Brighton) great mag!

Wanted r/h side panel for XR350RD twin carb model, also rear fender for same. Tel 01333 424296 and ask for andy (Fife)

Wanted plastic fuel tank for DR350S. Tel 01244 533855 (Chester)

Wanted KTM 250EXC 1994 in excellent cond, must be registered, cash waiting. Tel 01874

624906 after 5pm (Powys)

Wanted two or three bike trailer. Tel Stuart on 01522 811503 (Lincs) excellent mag by the way

Wanted Honda sales brochures for the following models XR250R 86-89, also TLM200, also Which Bike Magazine 'On the Rough' specials featuring Fantic 245 and Beamish Suzuki trials bikes. Contact J Campbell, 58 Copeman Ave, Peterhead, Aberdeenshire, AB42 2BB

Wanted Yamaha XT350 f & r wheels, also rev counter, must be in good condition. Tel Wayne on 0121 308 6028 (Birmingham)

Wanted Issue 1 of TrailBike Magazine, good price paid. Tel 01376 349881 (Essex)

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Wanted plastic petrol tank for DR350S 1995. Tel 01629 580569 (Derbyshire)

Wanted for Honda XR600 (1990), flywheel, drum brake r/wheel or hub - anything else fit? Or any other bits? Tel Andrew on 0171 733 0806 (London)

Wanted Moto-X jeans 34"-ish waist, chest protector, knee/elbow pads etc. Tel Adam 01322

386080 (Kent)

Wanted Supertrapp silencer for XR600, must be vgc, other aftermarket make considered, also wanted w/shop or owners manual for KLX650. Tel Jon on 01204 690171 (Lancs)

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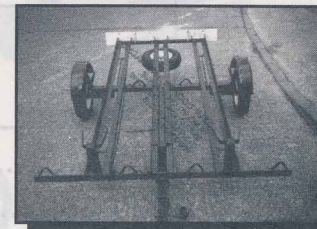
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