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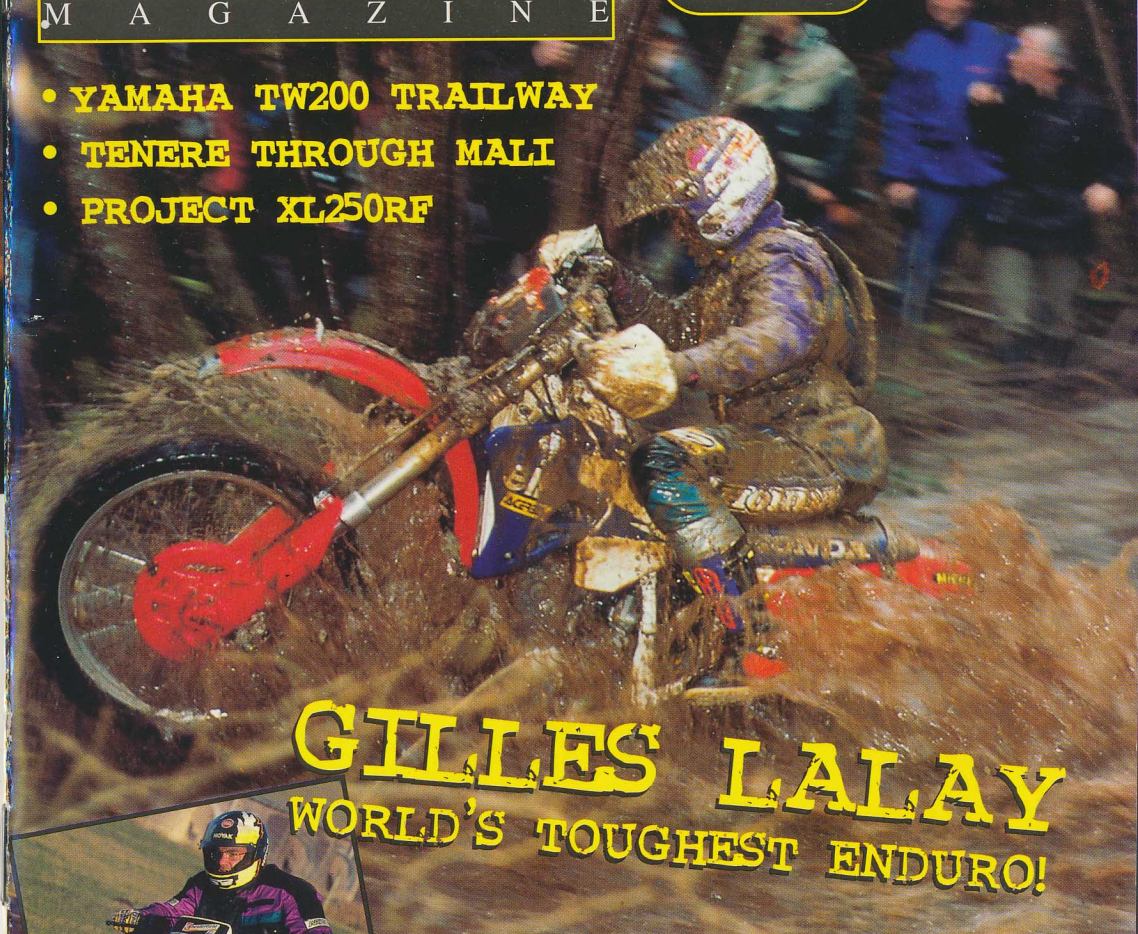
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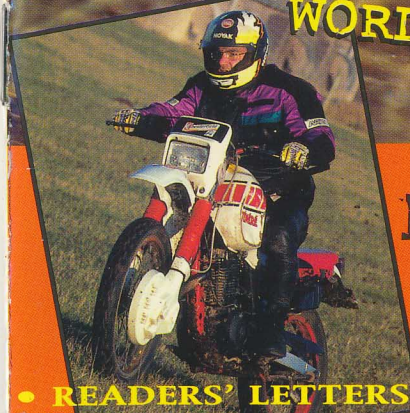
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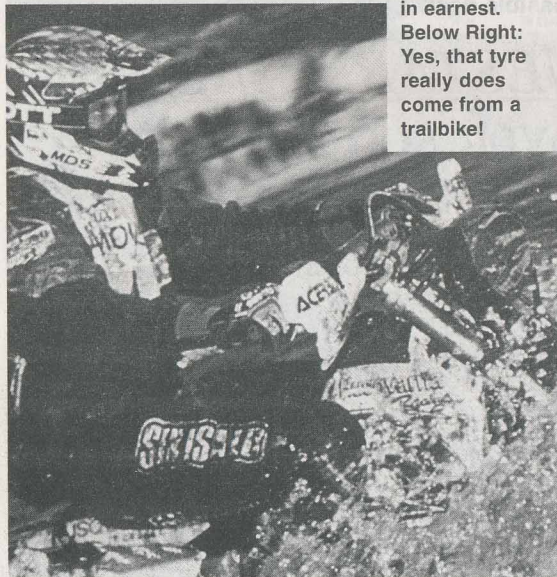
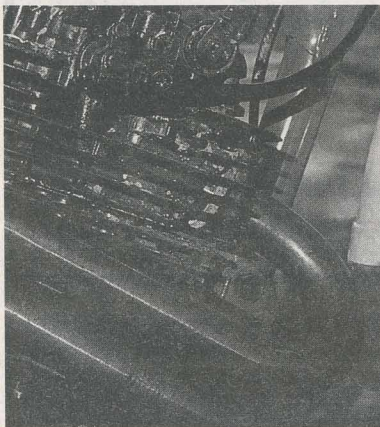
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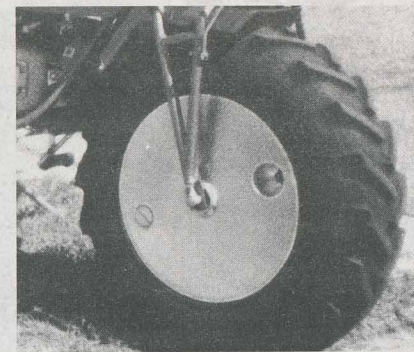
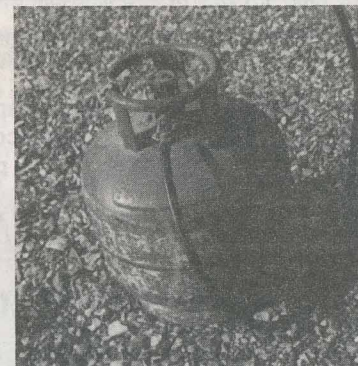
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Below: Tough action from the Gilles Lalay Classic. Right: It's a Gas. Work on the project bike begins in earnest. Below Right: Yes, that tyre really does come from a trailbike!



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D

oes it bug you as much as it bugs me the way trailbikes are treated in the regular bike press. I recently picked up a copy of one magazine to find them trotting out the usual cliches in their big trailies test: trailbikes are fun because you can chuck 'em around, pull stonking great wheelies, do burnouts and slides etc etc. Yeah yeah yeah we know all that - but what are they like to trail ride? They then went on to say they took them to an off road park and also went green-laning on them. The photos are there for all to see: Wheelies, burnouts, tarmac etc, but not a green lane in sight. No fields, trees, woodland, or slippery climbs - in fact not a single photo of anything that resembles a trail - with the excep-

tion of a big muddy puddle that they obviously crossed and recrossed for the sake of the photographer. I mean come on, who are they trying to kid? It's not hard to carry a pocket camera with you out on the trail, just something to take a few snaps with to convince us that they actually did what they claimed to do. Or why not do what we do and take the photographer (or all the camera gear) out on your trailbike to get to the proper lanes. In the write up about it afterwards they confused the bikes (in the photos) and suggested spurious information like: 'If there's little grip, let your tyre pressure down to 15 to 20psi'. Hmmm. More like 10-12psi if you ask me, and if it's really slippery and the wheel comes with a security bolt then I'll go as low as 8-10psi. I mean perhaps I shouldn't be surprised at their lack of knowledge, after all big sportsbikes are really their stock-in-trade - but then again if you

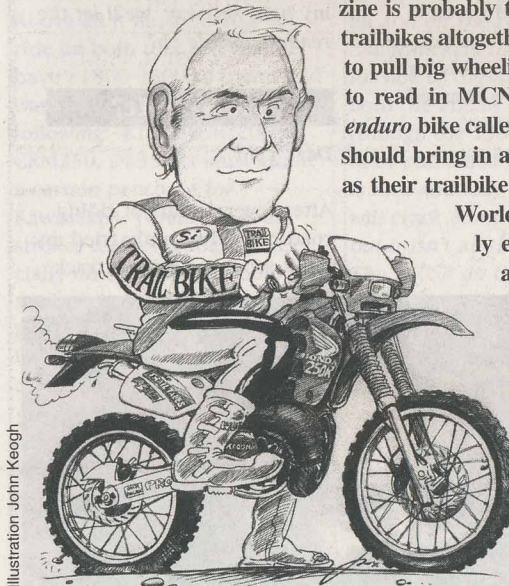
want to test trailies then why not do it properly. In truth this magazine is probably the best of a bad bunch - the others either ignore trailbikes altogether or simply spend all their time on tarmac trying to pull big wheelies for the camera. But I must say I was surprised to read in MCN that Honda were thinking about importing an *enduro* bike called the CRM250R. How strange I thought, that they should bring in an enduro machine with exactly the same moniker as their trailbike - unless of course the hardworking hacks at the

World's Number One motor cycle newspaper had merely enjoyed one too many refreshments at lunchtime, and had somehow managed to confuse a trailbike and an enduro bike. An easy mistake to make - which presumably explains why it's the second time they've done it in as many months.

• By the way, we've got a pleasant surprise in store for you next month. I'm not going to tell you yet exactly what it is, but be sure to get hold of a copy of next month's Magazine - I'm sure you won't be disappointed. Nuff said.

Si Melber

Illustration John Keogh



Edited and produced by Si Melber. Contributors: Paul Blezard, Dave Cornish, John Keogh, Geoff Meyer. Editorial address: PO Box 9845, London W13 9WP. Tel (9.15 - 6pm, Mon - Fri) 0181 840 4760. Distributed by USM Distribution Ltd, Tel 0171 396 8000, Printed in England by YCG.

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Dear Trail

Bike...

Hair We Go

Dear fellow baldies

I have recently considered buying an off road toupee, but I'm not sure whether to go for kick or electric start. Could you tell me what you recommend? No, what I really want to know is how come Si reckons he's so hairy and Dave Crasher Cornish is not (ref Jan Issue page 23), let's look at the facts:

- Few full facial pictures of Si are published and most are from a distance.
- A cartoon drawing of Si on the editor's page would have you believe he has a mass of flowing locks.
- A little hair pampered and pruned can be spread

out fairly thinly thus creating an illusion of Hirsutiness.

I think there has been a cover up - in more ways than one. Sorry, but I believe Si to be a closet baldy. If his spread out mat is pulled back it reveals the truth. No amount of trick suspension parts, big bore tuning kits or all the free stickers in the world can hide it. A trip to the Donington Dirt Bike Show proved it for me. At least Cornish and I aren't afraid to get our hair cut, so now all that remains is for Si to publish and be damned (photo provided).

Yours in baldness

Chris Stinson
Newry, N Ireland

PS Has Crasher got any of that 22 litres of trick CCM hair restorer left?

Hmm I think this might be a case of the pot calling the kettle black Chris. You think I'm bald what about you? I've seen more hair on a billiard ball, and as for that moustache - it looks like you've just bitten into a badger. Besides I'm not going bald, I'm just too tall for my hair. Anyway, we'll let the readers decide eh?

Stroke-It?

Dear TBM

After several years of riding road bikes, I recently tried my hand around a moto-X track.



Spot the baldy: The editor (right) finds little in the way of purchase on the super-smooth pate of Chris Stinson from N Ireland

Got an opinion?
Then write to:
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London
W13 9WP



Although fun, it is not really me, but on finding your magazine I decided that trail riding is perhaps a better way to biking fun.

However my big problem is deciding on a bike. It has got to be able to handle the occasional summer commute into work, trail riding, and maybe later on tackle a trailbike enduro. Above all it must be 'fun' to ride on both dirt and road. I have £1800-2300 to spend and was considering either of the following:- KDX250SR/200SR, CRM250, DR350 (I must admit a certain penchant for Kawasakis). Would the four strokes feel too gutless especially on the road or would the stokers be socially unacceptable for trail riding? I have been told that the TRF are not too keen on stokers, but need your advice as I am completely stuck as to what to do. Keep up the good work - an excellent magazine.

Mark Digby
Brixworth, Northampton

I don't know about the TRF objecting to stokers - that would probably rule out half their members - including the chairman! I suspect what you've heard about are individuals opinions who certainly don't speak for the TRF. I should just ignore them if I were you. Right, now we come

to the choice of bike. All of them are powerful enough - on and off the road, but if you like Kwackers then why not go for one of those. We've tested both the 200SR and the 250SR (though the 250 test hasn't been published yet). The 200 is nice and easy to ride and will crack 85mph on the road but it isn't all that torquey. The 250SR on the other hand is a lot more serious - more power, suspension, height and weight. It's a harder edged bike all round (and quite different to the 200) but it takes a bit more skill to ride it. The choice at the end of the day is up to you

Cheap Plastic

Dear TBM

A couple of months ago a reader was enquiring as to cheap replacement plastic parts for his XT350. The M&P catalogue lists cheap mudguards and headlights and you can also find them in the Sammy Miller catalogue. Sportsbikes used to be my

passion but due to a little addition to the family and the fact that there are just too many damn cars out there I've got myself addicted to riding off road. Although I only had a small budget I picked up an ex-army Armstrong MT500 at an auction for less than £600, complete.

I'm well chuffed because for the money I think it has a lot of potential. I'm currently grafting on the front end of an '88 CR250 because my granddad on his Sunbeam using his clogs as brakes can stop quicker than I can with that poxy front drum brake.

Brilliant magazine. As a 33 year old newcomer, any future articles on riding gear or enduro wear would be highly informative. Thanks.

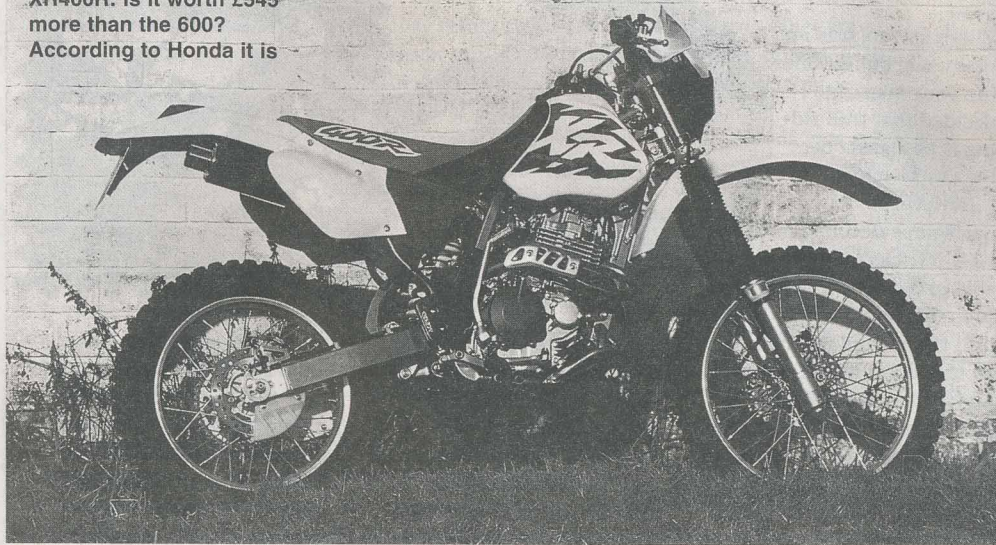
Jon Jackson
Scorton, Lancs

Thanks for the tip Jon. Glad you like the mag, there will hopefully be an article on clothing in the next issue. Army Armstrongs often come

Dear Trail

Bike...

XR400R: Is it worth £545 more than the 600? According to Honda it is



up at auctions for that sort of wedge but if yours is a good one you've got yourself a bargain trailie. On the flip side we've heard of a number of horror stories about people buying ex-army Armstrongs through government auctions, like the guy who bought one marked 'Low compression' who found that when he opened up the engine, all the valves were missing!

Ask Honda

Dear Sirs

I wonder if anyone at Honda can explain their pricing policy regarding the XR range in the UK? First off we have the newly developed, XR250R at a reasonable £3995 (list price). Next up is the almost identi-

cally specified XR400R at a staggering £4695 (a difference of 700 quid for 150ccs), and finally the evergreen XR600R at a bargain £4150 (though it is an older and lower specified machine). Okay, now let's look at the pricing in the USA. The XR2 comes in at \$4699 (that's £2880 by the way), the XR4 at \$5199 (£3190) and the XR6 at \$5099 (£3128).

Let's just for once ignore the fact that we're paying far more than our American counterparts for essentially the same products, and look instead at the price differential. In the US the price difference between the 250 and 400 is 500 bucks (£306), as opposed to more than double that over here. Likewise the XR4 costs just \$100 (£61) more than the old 600, yet over here we pay a

massive £545 extra for the privilege of owning the new 400. Why???

Come on Honda, give us a rational explanation for these figures, and drop the corporate b*llsh*t just for a change.

M Wilks
Redditch, Worcs

Honda UK replies: The Honda XR400R costs us £243 more than the XR600R ex-factory. In other words that's before you take into account extras like shipping costs, import duties, VAT and any dealer bonus schemes we offer. Taking these costs into consideration it's possible to account for the extra cost of the XR400 in the UK. We don't know the price the Americans pay for their bikes from the factory, so can-

not comment on their pricing policy.

Land-Over

Dear Si

I am planning an overland trip to Cape-Town via Morocco, Mauritania, West Africa, Zaire, Zambia, Zim, Botswana, Namibia and RSA, possibly returning via East Africa and the Nile route. I expect to leave October 1997 and will be riding a modified 1987 BMW R80GS. In 1991 I rode to Nairobi via the Hoggar route, Zaire etc either solo or with people I met en-route. Two things: Can you or any of your readers help me with up to date information on my proposed route, and, I would like to hear from anyone else interested in making the trip or part of it.

Ian King
29 Hartwell Crescent
Leighton Buzzard
Beds LU7 8NP
01525 378820

Sounds great fun Ian. There you go, anyone know anything or fancy joining Ian for the trip of a lifetime - contact him direct or via us at the magazine

Good Greeves

Dear Si

Okay lad is Si short for Sid,

Simon or as I suspect Silvester? I first bought a copy of your magazine because it said at the top of the cover 'Dig the Dirt' and I was at the time in the market for some new garden tools, but alas...

However onto more serious stuff. You nearly got me to subscribe when I picked up January's issue as on page 52 you had a photo of a once world leading make of off-road motorcycle (*a Greeves by the way - ed*). It is so beloved that even the chap in the photo is on his knees praying to it (*er, no... actually he's pleading with it to start - ed*). I read the article twice expecting to see a worthy tribute to such a famous make - what did I find? Sod all (pardon my agricultural English), not even a caption to the photo. Oh dear, oh dear Si, you've let all the more mature members of your readership down. We who chug along slowly enough to hear the birds sing and watch the grass grow with our somewhat mature motorcycles do sometimes worry about all these youngsters going potty (in more than one sense of the word). Or could it be that the combined age of bike and man of 92 years should not expect anything else?

I do think that an occasional word of warning to all those speedy tinkers reminding them that not only does excess speed get them noticed by the boys in blue, but that

it can also severely damage your health.

Reading through your mag, I'm surprised at the variation of bikes now available, and especially the British CCM. It does seem however that the enduro spec machine is getting used under the trailbike label. I can't believe that they can be considered for 'proper' trail use unless we are asking for trouble from those who hate all forms of motorised vehicles off road, as they certainly appear too aggressive for the genuine scene.

However in conclusion young fellow, carry on with your excellent magazine, the young lads and lassies will benefit from it and they should be grateful that someone has taken the time and effort to forward the cause of trail and enduro riding in Britain. The final question is, do I spend my money on a year's subscription, or a new garden implement...?

Dave Rice (and his two Greeves Scottishes)
Brentwood, Essex

I reckon the garden implement - something like a scythe to cut the lawn. After all you must be used to managing without modern technology! Only joking. Peter Meek from East Gristead is the man in the photo. He was one of five Greeves riders in the event last year and finished (with a loss of 29 marks) in the top three in his class. Oh and by the way, Si is short for...

What's On in Mar/Apr

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, Thetford Forest nr Brandon. Good spectating.*

Mar 9 Jack Frost Hare & Hounds. Cash prizes for clubman, expert and ch/ship riders. A 5 mile course with no stoppers, but which should prove very demanding. Cash should draw the names. *Start 11am, Waun Forest nr Rhayader, Mid Wales 01597 810396.*

Mar 12 Overlanders' Evening.

£10 gets you entry to an evening of talks and presentation on how to prepare for an overland journey in Africa organised by the Expedition Advisory Centre. Predominantly aimed at 4x4s, but travel Author & TBM contributor Chris Scott will be there to offer advice on bike trips. *Wine & snacks included. Starts 7pm at the Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR.*

Mar 16 Gwent Police Mad March Hare & Hounds. Farmland course which is very rideable for clubmen and sportsmen, inc trailbike class. *Start 10am, Thetford*

Forest nr Brandon. Good spectating 01495 785766.

Mar 30 Cambrian Rally. Oversubscribed months ago - a timed blat through Welsh forestry & MOD land for trailies & 4-stroke enduros. *Llandovery Rugby Club, Llandovery, Mid Wales, start 10am.*

Apr 6 TBEC Enduro. Easyish clubman enduro specially catering for trailbikes. Classes for both pre-83 and post 83 trailbikes plus production enduro machines. *Barnhill Farm, Whaddon nr Milton Keynes, Bucks. Details from Dawn King 01933 626009.*

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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.

Roots and rocks are some of the most unforgiving and difficult hazards you're going to have to deal with on any ride, so it's good to know beforehand how to tackle them properly. Tree roots often sit close to the surface and with the passage of a few bikes as you get in an enduro or classic trial, can easily become exposed.

Tree roots are notoriously slippery even when dry, throw in a bit of dampness and adhesion is reduced to virtually nil, which is why course designers often take riders close to trees. The favourite ploy is to route the course around a tree so that the roots are on the inside of a corner. Because they're so slippery its pointless just leaning the bike over to attempt the corner because as soon as your front wheel touches the root it's just going to let go. In this situation you should either attempt to go around the roots (perhaps by taking a wider line on the corner) or line up to cross them perpendicular to the root (ie at 90°) as this will be your best chance of avoiding slipping.

Sometimes this just isn't possible and you've got to cross the roots at the angle they are presented say for instance when they cut across a rut you're in. If this is the case then always aim for the lowest point of the root. In other words aim to cross the root at the point at which your wheel would end up if it hit the root and slipped. That way you limit the amount of slide possible.

If a root looks particularly hazardous try popping the front wheel up and over it. This will avoid the bike being deflected off line though there's nothing you can do about the back wheel following on, so having cleared it with the front, now you need to be very careful with the throttle. Ex-enduro champ John Deacon suggests declutching as your rear wheel hits the first root (or series of roots) so that there's no risk of slipping because of power being applied. This makes sense because not only is the tyre going to slide if you're on the power, the same will happen if you hit the root with a trailing throttle as the engine braking (particularly on a four stroke) causes the tyre to lose its grip. With careful prac-

Off-road Riding Techniques

S i m e l b e r

tise and lots of experience you should become adept at recognising which roots are likely to cause problems for you and what action needs to be taken.

Rocks are another obstacle that you might well have to tackle when out on

your trailbike. Like roots, some rocks are extremely slippery wet or dry and it goes without saying that they are pretty unforgiving when it comes to landing on them. Most riders will attempt to tackle rocks quite slowly picking their line carefully and avoiding the biggest ones. This is one way of doing it but it isn't the only way. Although the centre of a track is likely to be the smoothest path where the smallest rocks lie, sometimes the side of the track is better still. Often it will be slightly overgrown by vegetation which will have the effect of binding loose rocks together. Look out for an alternative to the obvious central route and don't be afraid to cross back and forwards across the path to find the most grip.

Once again you should be standing up (whether going uphill or down), don't look down but look ahead and try and try and suss out your exit point (the point you're eventually aiming for). Don't be afraid to let your front wheel hit some of the bigger rocks - as long as you've got plenty of momentum you shouldn't be deflected off course. Above all keep your concentration and you should get through it okay.

If you do have to stop, say on a gnarly uphill climb, don't rush at getting going again. Look where you're headed, get your breath back, select second gear (if it's not too steep) and feed the clutch in slowly. Stand up as quickly as possible and try and relax and let the bike move about beneath you. That way if it does get deflected by a rock you shouldn't be caught off balance.

One further word of warning: if you know you're going to be crossing rocky terrain, make sure your tyres (in particular the front) are pumped up to at least 12psi to avoid percussion punctures from nipping the tube between the rim and a boulder. Above all enjoy yourself out on the trail!

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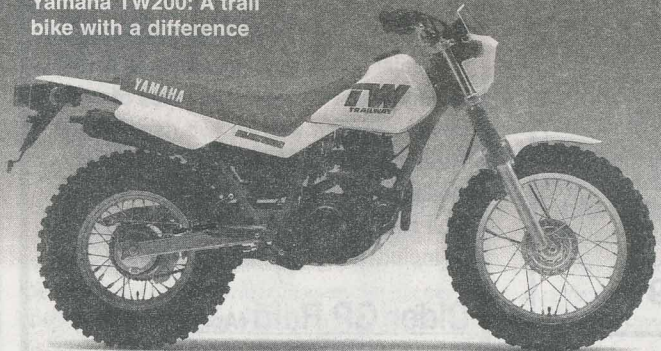
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BIGFOOT!

Yamaha TW200: A trail bike with a difference



It's like popping huge dollops of your favourite Chunky Monkey ice cream into your mouth then trying to talk without smiling. Yamaha's Trailway has that sort of effect on you - it makes you want to do silly things just because you can. Here at TBM we get to ride all manner of trailbikes but I doubt any has caused as much of a stir as the Yamaha TW200 Trailway did. This little fat-tyred thumpette always drew a crowd wherever it was parked and was such a blast to ride that we didn't want to give it back. Everywhere we went people would ask: 'What is it?' 'How much do the tyres cost?' And the most common one: 'Can I have a go?'

Which is all quite remarkable really,

considering the TW's Serow-derived motor only puts out a claimed 16hp (4 less than its 25cc larger stablemate) hardly life-threatening, and the basic suspension can only boast five inches of barely-damped travel at either end. But of course it's not the engine or the suspension that attracts people's attention to the TW, it's those socking-great Bridgestone tyres and the tiny look of a monkey bike that has everyone doing a double take. The TW you see has that cutesy, dough-eyed look of a kid who's eaten one too many biscuits after you hid the cookie jar. People of all ages simply can't resist checking over the winsome little Yammie, eyeing up its slim flanks then staring aghast at the 180-sec-

Yamaha's TW200 Trailway offers an alternative to conventional style trailies. Dave Cornish went in search of fat-tyred fun

Pics by Paul 'Spare Tyre' Blezard



Above: TW is the perfect tool for a chalky and slimy Sussex green lane on a damp winter's day. Below: TWs are a bit like busses - you never see one, then two come along at once



BIGFOOT!

tion rear tyre. The only problem with this is that after a while all this attention can get a trifle tedious.

There can be very few people out there that the TW wouldn't fit. (Sure Magic Johnson might struggle to get on one, but I guess you get the picture). The TW's long, low and flat seat should please even the most vertically challenged of riders, in fact thanks to a seat height of just 31" (790mm) on a TW your butt sits a full inch closer to the ground than it does on the shortie's favourite the Serow. A slim seven litre fuel tank (with locking cap) holds enough juice for up to 100 miles of gentle greenlaning and thankfully the dual seat remains comfortable for this sort of mileage.

The bike's conventional tubular steel frame utilises the four stroke mill as a stressed member and sports a 'Mono-Cross' rear end working through a linkage onto a wide steel swingarm. Up front a set of weedy and unadjustable 34mm forks are clamped by a pair of yokes so wide they wouldn't look out of place on a 'chop'.

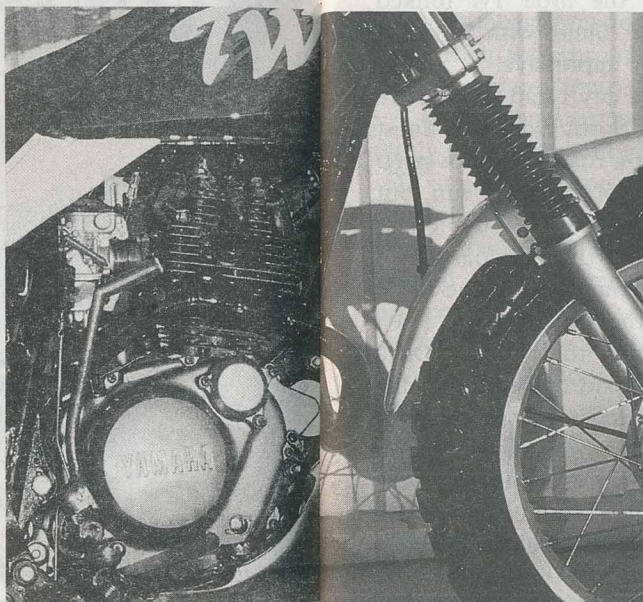
The simple specification continues with a pair of tiny single leading shoe drum brakes which are dwarfed by the TW's huge (in profile) spoked rims. Onto the rear steel rim is levered a tyre that must be the largest in the on/off road world yet still be road legal. A massive 180/80-14 TrailWing dominates the tail

end of the diminutive Yam, while a modest (by comparison) 130/80-14 boot graces the alloy front rim.

A sidestand is almost surplus to requirements on the TW as those fat boots are nearly enough to support the bike's weight on their own, but there's no centrestand fitted and a luggage rack is only

an option. What there is however is a sturdy steel bash plate to protect the low slung underbelly, rubber mounted indicators which flex on impact (don't ask how I know), and a wide low-level front mud-guard to keep the worst of the muck and grime away from bike and rider. Maintenance looks to be a cinch on the simple 200, grease nipples are a worthy addition to the suspension linkages, snail cam adjusters make chain tensioning easy and the motor features a sight-glass for quick oil level checks.

With only 16hp to play with, the 196cc sohc motor isn't going to set the world alight. In fact the motor's only talking



Below: At the heart of the TW200 is an electric start, 196cc, air-cooled sohc single which it shares (albeit in a different capacity) with its sister bike the XT225 Serow. Right: Just because it's small doesn't mean it isn't big fun even for someone the size of Paul Blezard!



Thanks to the Container Company for the loan of the TW200. 01362 698147

point appears to be the 'trick' Mikuni carbs altitude compensation device which can be altered manually as the air thins out over 4000 feet. Hmmm, not much use here in the flatlands of Norfolk but probably invaluable in somewhere like the Rockies when the relatively weedy motor needs all the help it can get.

Another quirk of the borrowed motor is that in order to clear the huge rear tyre, the chain is offset by some three inches to the left which in turn requires a special counter shaft sprocket complete with tubular spacer. The downside to this configuration is that the essentially slim motor is therefore wider on the left side

thanks to its offset casing.

On the plus side, just like the Serow, the TW comes with the benefit of an electric start which is also backed up by a kickstart lever. Either way with just a touch of choke the motor will burst into life first time and soon settles down to a pleasing 'duff duff' sound on tickover. In fact the bike's exhaust system seems to achieve the impossible - its quiet enough to offend virtually nobody yet at full cough emits a muted but pleasant sounding bark to accompany your ride. Nice...

Collecting the bike from a dealer miles away would've meant an hour of tedious throttle on the stop along dual carriage-



On the trail the TW is very forgiving, the more slippery the better. Wide tyres track well, yet leave little evidence of their passing

chris sake) while the little TW tonked along at a steady 70mph with Steve sat bolt upright. Very impressive!

The following day I had the chance to ride some of North Norfolk's finest trails. This meant a road ride of over 60 miles to the start of the dirty fun, but happy in the knowledge of the bike's impressive showing the previous day I wasn't too concerned about the TW's ability to cover the road mileage. But I had figured without the weather. Once out on the open road battling into driving rain and a biting headwind the poor little 200 was struggling to top 55mph and refused all attempts to pull top (5th) gear. Of course there's no fairing and the bike's chunky frontal area can't have helped matters.

Clearly with such little power on tap any gradient or even adverse weather conditions is going to make a difference to your journey so plan for this. Stopping to refuel also revealed that in these kind of throttle-on-the-stop conditions the bike would gulp unleaded at a rate of 45-50mpg, not brilliant though I'm sure nearer 70mpg could be coaxed out of the engine in more clement conditions.

Meeting up with my riding companions for the day I was soaking wet before I had even started and wasn't particularly looking forward to the next six hours. But once out on the first trail the bike was soon showing what fun it could be. Tooling along on a whiff of gas the 200cc mill purrs away

BIG FOOT!

with little or no vibration. In fact only at valve bouncing rpm do any sort of tingles make their way through to the bars and heavily serrated footrests.

Letting some air out of both tyres certainly aided grip and gave a comfortable ride at low trail speeds but as the rain stopped and the pace speeded up a few clicks, the bike's crudely damped and limited travel suspension began to protest. Standing up on the pegs eases matters of course but the bike's shortie-friendly dimensions forced me into a hunched riding position which gets painful after a while. Still I suppose a pair of higher bend handlebars would sort this problem out - either that or simply ride slower so you can remain seated.

Onto my favourite river crossing where in the past all manner of serious tackle has come to grief. No probs though for the fat-tyred 200. Keeping the revs up by slipping the light clutch in first gear the TW stormed through the swollen water with ease, even though at its deepest point the water level was lapping at the bottom of the tank. Exiting the river, the bike cleared it's throat, spun the back tyre on the gravel and simply came up for air like a surfacing 'U'-boat.

Back on dry land, the bike certainly felt much more comfortable when kept at lower speeds both on and off the road, and whilst in most trail situations the TW's large tyres cope admirably with the uneven-ness of the terrain, high speed

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ways so I managed to persuade a friend of mine Steve, to ride it back home for me. Now I'm not saying Steve is on the large side but for sure he'll never see less than 18 stones indicated on his bathroom scales again. So you could imagine my surprise when after setting off a few minutes later than him it took me 20 miles to catch him up (on my 900 Elefant ferr

cornering on tarmac is, ah, umm... interesting!! Pitch the bike into a corner and the front turns in extremely quickly, however the huge 180-section rear boot seems to slow the bike's cornering down, and it's almost as if the whole thing is being forced around the massive tyre's profile which consequently makes the bike feel very 'rear-endy'

This strange feeling isn't alarming it's just, well... different I suppose, and to be honest after a while you quickly learn to live with it. But chuck a few bumps and potholes into the equation and the TW's lack of damping can really cause the bike to get out of shape as the suspension vainly tries to keep all of the unsprung weight of those wheels and tyres under control.

Bringing the bike down from speed is not much fun either because the size of drum brakes fitted just aren't up to the job. Stomping on the rear brake and hauling the hand lever back to the bars just about has the desired effect, but considering the TW's all up weight of just 118kgs the feeble stoppers are not the bike's cleverest feature. What's needed is a front hydraulic disc as fitted to the DT range, rather than the antiquated drums with which it comes fitted.

Back on the trail though and the bike is turning out to be one of the most rider-friendly trailies on the market. With a low seat height and mild power output not to mention light controls and loads of grip even the rawest of trail novices can soon feel at home on the bouncy TW. In fact after lending it to one such trail novice Ann Marie, (who felt her DT125's seat was just a shade too high on the rough), that was the last I saw of the TW until the day's trailing was over.

Parked outside the local, and once again the bike drew plenty of curious

admirers; styled like a pseudo flat tracker mated to a pair left-over quad wheels, the TW200 is nothing if not unusual. Most *non* motorcyclist love it's chunky good looks, its cute appearance and its non-threatening seat height, whereas riders' opinions are split fairly evenly between classifying the bike as a misplaced Tonka toy and occasional grudging admiration - though most doubters soon change their minds after a brief spell aboard the TW and have to admit that *maybe* the TW is a real trailbike after all.

To really test the TW in it's natural habitat however required a trip to a deserted beach, where the fat tyres could enjoy a roll in the sand (*sounds like one of your ex-girlfriends Dave - ed*). Gunning the little four stroke in the first two gears and with the help of the bike's low centre of gravity to aid control, the whole plot can be forced to drift out at will. Stuff the quick steering front-end into a turn, keep on the gas and the wildly spinning rear steps right out, speedway style. Such is the easy nature of the TW that drifting the rear feels both safe and predictable, and seemingly impossible stunts can be forced out of the bike without any undue drama.

So love it or hate it the Yamaha TW200 Trailway is a bike you just can't ignore. Personally I just couldn't keep off the thing, in fact as soon as I've finished writing this test I'm off for another fix. Sure the bike has its faults, mainly the crude suspension and brakes and as previously mentioned the motor's feeble output will make the bike hard work if used regularly on trunk roads.

But just take one look at the TW and you know that this thing is gonna' be fun. The bikes climbing ability is nothing short of amazing, the rear tyre finds grip where more serious tackle would simply spin

BIGFOOT!



A low centre of gravity and those stubby tyres make for great fun playing on a deserted beach

out, and thanks to the low seat, snatching a quick dab couldn't be easier. Yep, the TW200 is certainly more than just a plaything and together with a (generally) frugal appetite for fuel and low insurance costs, owning a TW shouldn't break the bank either.

I suppose it really boils down to the type of riding you do. Keep away from main roads and ride at sensible (ie low) speeds off road and the TW200 will constantly amaze you with it's go-anywhere capabilities - even making you seem like a better rider than you really are. For the novice off roader or those of diminished stature (okay... shortarses like me), the bike is up there with the best of them with the added bonus of sporting the lowest seat height of any trailie on the planet (unless you know different). So if you can live with all of the (sometimes unwanted) attention the TW Trailway brings with it, make sure you grab a test ride before buying any of the other low-seat bikes out there, and I guarantee that like us, you'll be amazed. •

TECH

Yamaha TW200 Trailway

Price (new): £2995

Eng: air cooled, sohc, four stroke, single

Cap: 196cc

Bore/Stroke: 67x55.7mm

Comp Ratio: 9.5:1

Trans: 5-speed

St height: 31" (790mm)

Ground clear: 250mm (9.8")

W/base: 1460mm

Dry weight: 119kg

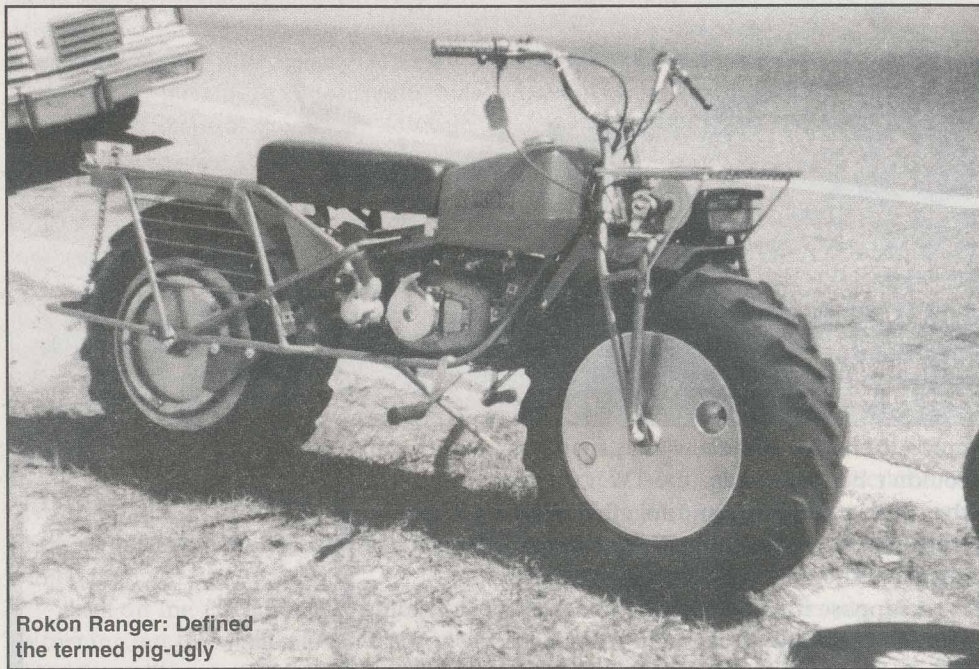
Fuel cap: 7 litres

Tyres: 130/80-18 f
180/80-14 r

S P E C

FAT

ON THE LAND



Rokon Ranger: Defined the termed pig-ugly

Fat tyred trailies like the TW200 are not a new development. For a number of years they have come in all different shapes, sizes and capacities - though many of them have been barely street legal. Bevis Billingham who has owned more than his fair share of these strange looking machines charts the history of the fat tyred trailbike

A trail bike with fat tyres? Who would want such a thing? There's no point, and it won't work anyway! Well, fortunately we are not all slaves to convention and thanks to a few die hards who are convinced about the benefits of low ground-pressure and high contact area, some big-wheeled dirt bikes have already seen the light of day.

It would take a brave person to state categorically which was the first fat-tyred trail bike, but it is likely that such an honour goes to the truly extraordinary Rokon Ranger which first appeared in the USA in the 1960s. First impressions are of a fuel tank, seat and engine slung but not

suspended - because there was no suspension - between two huge wheels with tractor-like tyres. The 125cc engine with recoil starter drove both wheels, the drive to the front being selectable via a lever with a little black knob which would have been more at home on a lathe. This was no fun bike, but a serious means of cross-country transport meant for forestry workers, hunters and people living in remote places - the disc wheels serving as water containers for forays into the desert. The top speed was 25mph, which is probably just as well bearing in mind that the sole means of absorbing bumps was tyre compression. Believe it or not the Rokon was in production right up until about 1990.

To many people the definitive fat-tyred bike is still the Suzuki RV125, which hit the streets of Britain around 1970.

Originally sold in other markets in 50 and 90cc versions, the RV was unlike anything except the smaller and less extreme Honda ST70. The frame was actually quite conventional (unlike the Honda) and the funky styling was achieved by the use of plastic panels. Special Bridgestone 'sand' tyres were fitted, with a relatively fine tread, the front being 5.4x14, and the rear

Honda Fat Cat: 200cc, automatic clutch, baloon tyres. Weird



6.7x12. To enable the chain to clear the rear tyre the engine was slightly offset in the frame, resulting in the bike being weighted to the left, and the handling was, as you can imagine, rather strange: one owner describing cornering as 'like abseiling on wheels'. The RV was well-equipped and road-legal, but with just 9.8bhp to power it along and a dry weight of 244lb it was not a sparkling performer off-road, although I remember seeing one in original form in the first Weston Beach Race. It was always considered to be a bit of a novelty in Britain, but the manufacturer obviously saw it in a different role, because in North America a range of practical accessories were available, including snow tyres, chains, and a supplementary fuel tank. Most fell by the wayside but today a few RV125s are being restored to their former glory and there is a small but

FAT

ON THE LAND

enthusiastic following for them.

With the widespread popularity of the balloon-tyred ATC trikes in the early 1980s it was inevitable that sooner or later a two wheeled version would appear, and in 1985 Yamaha obliged with the BigWheel 200. Not street-legal, but intended as an entry-level bike for use on the approved long-distance trails of the USA, the BW was an unprecedented success, and was shortly followed by the Honda FatCat.

Looking at the BW first, the front end is typical ATC, with a front tyre measuring 25x8-12 (for non fat-tyre freaks this means 25" diameter, 8" wide on a 12" diameter rim), but it is at the rear that the BW goes to the extreme, with a tyre almost like a roller, at 23x12-9, ie 12" wide! The obvious problem of offsetting the chain to clear this massive tyre is overcome by transmitting the drive through a jackshaft built into the swinging arm, which means that there are in fact two chains. Snail cam adjusters are provided on the wheel spindle to tension the rear chain, but tensioning the front one is a night-marishly fiddling job, involving eccentric mountings for the swinging arm spindle. At first sight the bike appears to have a single shock at the rear, but in fact there are two short shocks concealed under the side covers.

The BW200 engine is a 196cc 4-stroke, vaguely similar to the XT250 in general design, and from 1986 onwards electric start was an option. At around 250lb dry weight the bike was not light, but the 31" seat height made it easy to handle and

attractive to newcomers to trail-riding.

Also in 1986 the range was extended to include the 2-stroke BW80, and the rather more serious BW350 with a 4-valve engine very similar to the XT350. Yamaha then had an offering for the whole family; the 350 for dad, 200 for mum and 80 for the kids. At 295lb dry the 350 was actually a bit of a brute. The spec was generally similar to the 200, but it had single shock rear suspension, and for some obscure reason the rear tyre was slightly narrower, at 23x11-9 (11" wide).

The success of the BW caused Honda to bring out the smoothly-styled FatCat, which was fairly similar, with a 199cc 4-stroke engine of typical Honda design, incorporating electric start and an automatic clutch. The front tyre at 24.5x8-11, was almost the same as on the BW, but the rear end was altogether simpler, with a 23.5x8-11 tyre (8in wide), the gearbox sprocket being positioned far enough out to avoid the need for a jackshaft.

Despite their initial success, the BWs and FatCat were only in production for three or four years, probably because there was a limited market for bikes labelled 'NOT FOR HIGHWAY USE' especially ones which were not competition-oriented either. A few of these (mainly BW200s) have found their way to Britain but with the balloon tyres it is virtually impossible to make them road-legal here. It is possible to register them - after all, you can register a Victorian china teapot if you put an engine and wheels on it, but that doesn't make it road-legal, and it would be difficult to make a BW comply with the Road Traffic Act without destroying its character completely.

Fortunately, recognising that there was a demand for a street-legal bike with fat tyres, Yamaha brought out the TW200 in

A RIDER'S VIEWPOINT



Of the 1000 or so bikes which overtook me and my XR200 in the 1986 Le Touquet Beach Race, only one really grabbed my attention - a strange ballon-tyred device which seemed to traverse the dunes with the greatest of ease. This was my first sighting of a BW200 and in due course I imported one from the USA.

During the following Blackpool and Weston beach races I discovered why the guy at Le Touquet didn't get very far (the drive system and electrics needed a lot of modifying to make them work properly). But once some development work was completed the bike ran perfectly in the next outing at Le Touquet as well as in the numerous other beach races it entered (which is more than can be said for me). It was not fast by any stretch of the imagination but it was great fun to ride and almost impossible to get stuck - just what I needed in all that sand. **Bevis Billingham**

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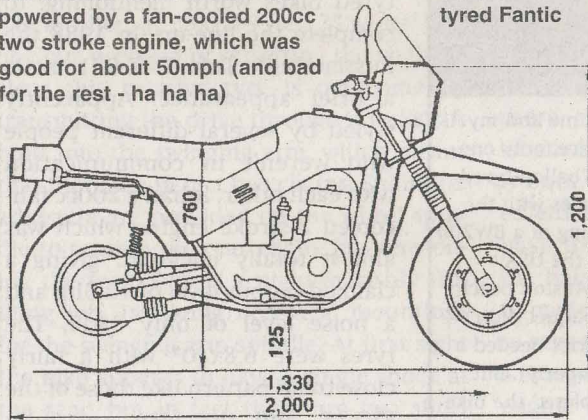
1986 (tested in this issue). This has wide tyres of conventional construction, with strong sidewalls (as you will find out if you try to fit them) and a tread pattern close enough to meet legal requirements. Both tyres are specially made by Bridgestone, the front being a 130/80-18 and the rear 180/80-14. The engine is similar to that of the BW200, but has a considerably extended gearbox shaft with an outer bearing built into the side cover, to bring the chain out far enough to clear the tyre. During the ten years of production the general construction of the TW has remained largely unchanged, and by now a considerable number have been brought into the country, and of course new ones are still available from companies specialising in grey imports.

There are a couple of other fat-tyred bikes worth mentioning, to complete the line-up. In 1988 the Russian-built Tula TMZ-951 made a brief appearance. Apparently styled by several different people who weren't in communication with each other, it had a 200cc fan-cooled 2-stroke engine which was almost totally enclosed, giving a claimed output level of 12.5hp and a noise level of only 83dB. The tyres were 6.8x10" with a fairly close tread pattern like those of the RV125, and the bike was fully road-legal. At £820 it wasn't bad value, but it is doubtful whether many, if any at all, were sold in Britain.

The only attempt to make a high-performance fat-tyred 2-

wheeler came about as a result of one of the most unfortunate business decisions of the century, in which a private company imported a large number of Yamaha 250 Tri-Z three wheeled ATCs about a week before the government banned their sale in this country. Most were ultimately converted to quads (the Autoquad), but a handful were made into 2-wheelers, called Sandflies, by a north country quad specialist. The ATC front end was retained, with some modification, and an identical wheel (25x8-12) was tacked on behind in line with the ATC swinging arm. This resulted in a mind-bogglingly long wheelbase (about 70" long), and a chain which, despite intensive guidance, had a tendency to droop down like the cables holding the Severn Bridge. The Sandflies made their appearance at several beach races over the following years and with 250cc motocross engines providing the power

Soviet-built Tula TMZ-951 was powered by a fan-cooled 200cc two stroke engine, which was good for about 50mph (and bad for the rest - ha ha ha)



Above: Fat-tired Fantic

they went like hell while they were going, but the riders spent half the time in the dunes unravelling the immense chains and ultimately they soon died out as riders quickly tired of untying several yards of mangled chain.

FAT

ON THE LAND

So what does the future hold for fat-tired trail bikes? Italian bike maker Fanticmotor recently exhibited a new fat-tired trailie, though it has yet to be put



into production, and bikes like the TW continue to sell in only small number. In most other areas of wheeled transport,

tyres have become wider to cope with increasing performance, but the dyed-in-the-wool attitude of the off-road motorcycle competition world has created a 50-year time warp as far as tyre sizes are concerned, and until that is broken it is unlikely that we shall see much in the way of progress. Perhaps the only salvation for fat-tyre freaks comes with an increasing awareness of environmental impact caused by wheeled vehicles which may yet force manufacturers to design bikes fitted with low pressure (and wider) tyres.

Until then we shall have to be content with the few quirky and unusual fat-tired bikes that we have already, now where are the keys to my BW200?



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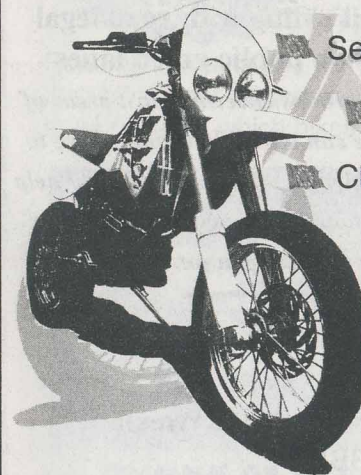
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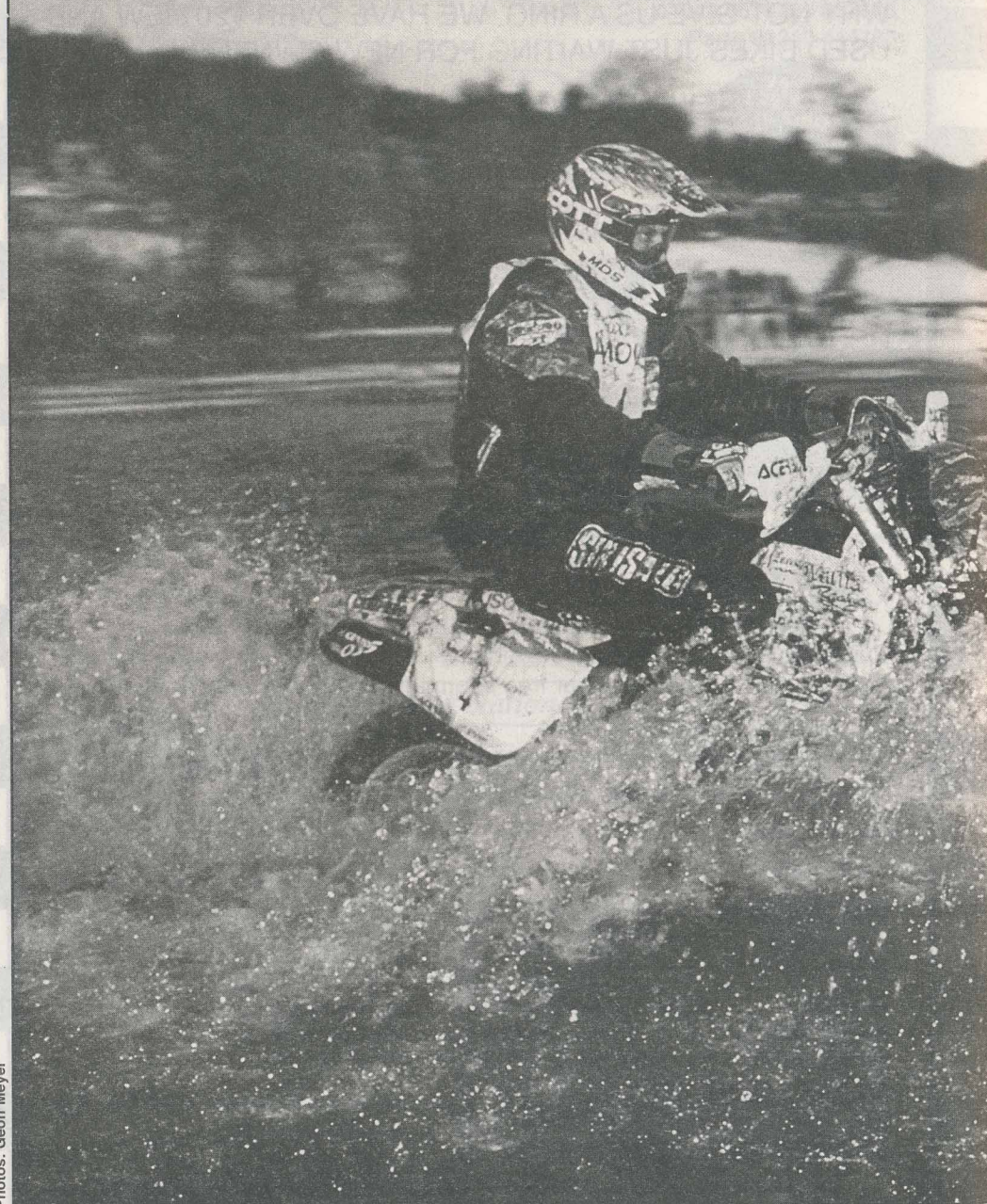
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Stephane Carbonnel splashes through the water on his way to joint victory in last year's Gilles Lalay Classic

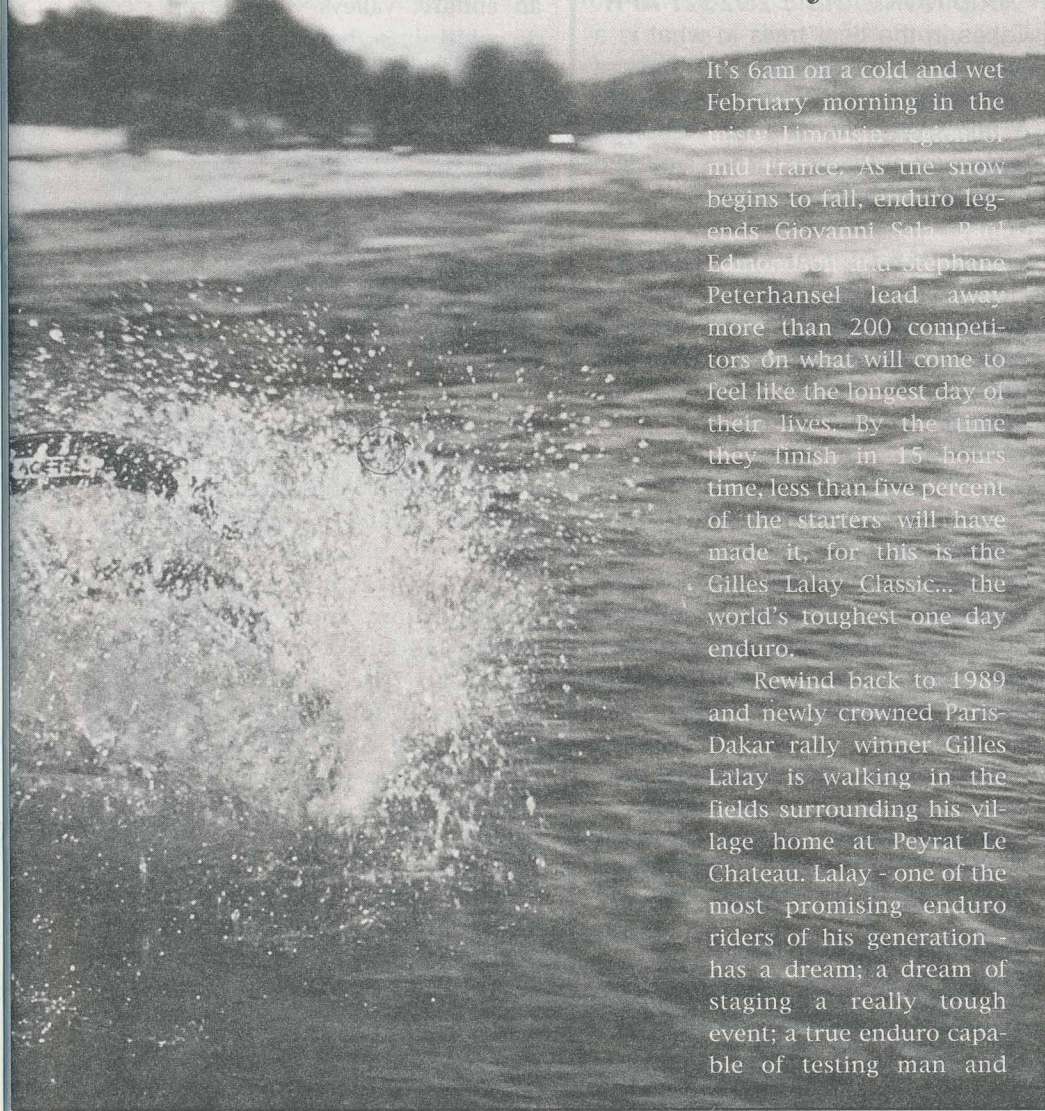
A HARD



Photos: Geoff Meyer

NIGHT'S DAY

Geoff Meyer tells the story behind the world's toughest one day enduro. The Gilles Lalay Classic



It's 6am on a cold and wet February morning in the misty Limousin region of mid France. As the snow begins to fall, enduro legends Giovanni Sala, Paul Edmondson and Stephano Peterhansel lead away more than 200 competitors on what will come to feel like the longest day of their lives. By the time they finish in 15 hours time, less than five percent of the starters will have made it, for this is the Gilles Lalay Classic... the world's toughest one day enduro.

Rewind back to 1989 and newly crowned Paris-Dakar rally winner Gilles Lalay is walking in the fields surrounding his village home at Peyrat Le Chateau. Lalay - one of the most promising enduro riders of his generation - has a dream; a dream of staging a really tough event; a true enduro capable of testing man and



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A HARD NIGHT'S DAY

machine to the very limit in the hills surrounding his beloved village. As his eyes gaze into the countryside it seems to him that this is just about the perfect place for an enduro: valleys which drop steeply downhill into bottomless bogs, stony, tree-lined climbs that rise at seemingly impossible angles, and ice cold rivers that flow with such force they can sweep a bike and rider away in a matter of seconds. For Lalay, the dream of staging the toughest enduro in history would be just that: a dream. Tragically the following year he was killed in a racing accident and soon afterward his unfulfilled dream turned into his memorial.

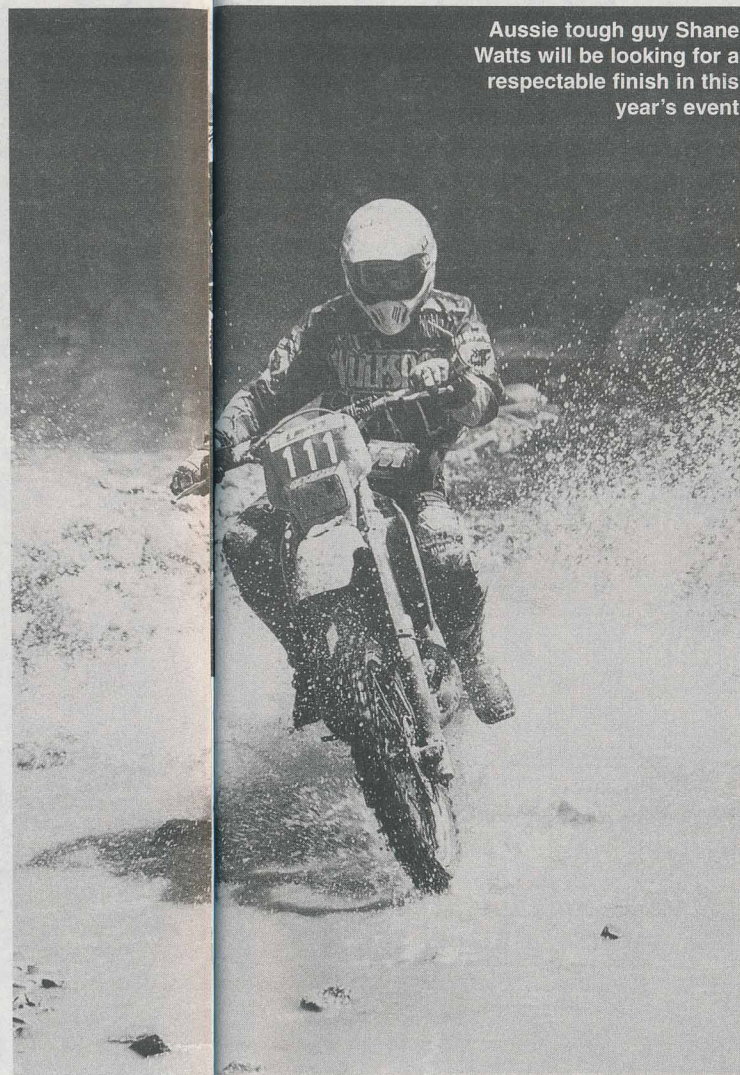
With his death came a determination from his friends and family, in particular his wife, that his indomitable spirit should live on in an event named after him. Two years after he died, the first ever Gilles Lalay enduro was set for the cold month of February.

The turnout was amazing: most of the worlds top enduro riders had turned up to show support for the event, and they were lead by France's rising star Stephane Peterhansel. It

was a great day with a boisterous crowd voicing support for their favourite riders. More than 200 combatants set off to begin the preliminary stages and a chance to ride in the second part of the event - the

race. By the early afternoon, most had succumbed to the biting cold, the hazardous conditions or simply failed to make the grade. But for the final competitors having survived the qualifying stages it was now a race to the finish. In the encroaching darkness it was Swedish tough man Sven-Erik Jonsson riding a Husky who reached the 199th kilometre mark first. What he found there he could never have possibly imagined: a human swarm illuminated by the continuous fire of flashguns lining the virtually unrideable ascent to the finish they called Le Corbeau Mort - Dead Crow Hill. Cheered on by the crowd and pulled to the top by some of his supporters he took the victory, the multiple world champion edging out Nevada Rally winner Alain Olivier with only 22 of the field of 200 actually making it to the finish line.

The following year Jonsson won it again, a remarkable effort considering the amount of luck needed in what had now become the toughest one off event in the whole off road calendar. Third place going to likeable French racer and course co-ordinator Laurent Charbonnel who would return to win the event in 1996. In the interim however, a brilliant performance by another French rider Cyril Esquirol riding a Husqvarna clinched the 1994 event ahead of defending champion Jonsson. 'You can never be sure you will make it to the finish' said a tired and muddy faced Esquirol after taking victory in '94. 'It is very difficult, if you relax a little it will punish you' he said shortly before he was carried away from Dead



Aussie tough guy Shane Watts will be looking for a respectable finish in this year's event

A HARD NIGHT'S DAY

Crow Hill in the arms of the patriotic French crowd to begin the victory celebrations.

That year there were only nine finishers - most of whom did so with minor injuries and major fatigue. Edmondson would leave the '94 Lalay with a severely bent bike but full of the desire to come back the following year: 'This really is the most demanding race I've ever entered' he said. 'It's bloody hard work, but it's one race everybody wants to win' added Eddy after his DNF.

The second win by Esquirol would be under the Honda France banner in 1995. Only three other riders would finish the event that year which for sheer impossible conditions would turn out to be the toughest enduro ever run. Second behind Esquirol was Charbonnel while Peterhansel would score his best finish yet with a fighting third place. As he remarked afterwards: 'In most events to finish third would be no great performance, but in the Gilles Lallay Classic it is okay' he conceded in typically understated fashion. Adding afterwards: 'Maybe I can come back and win this thing - but you need so much luck.'

Fourth place that year would go to Italian Arnaldo Nicoli who was the last of the finishers. Afterwards the Husky mounted rider looked cold and exhausted and remarked: 'I have never been so tired before. Near the end I was just riding with tunnel vision - it was like I was in a dream.' Once again Paul Edmondson would retire from the event, this time

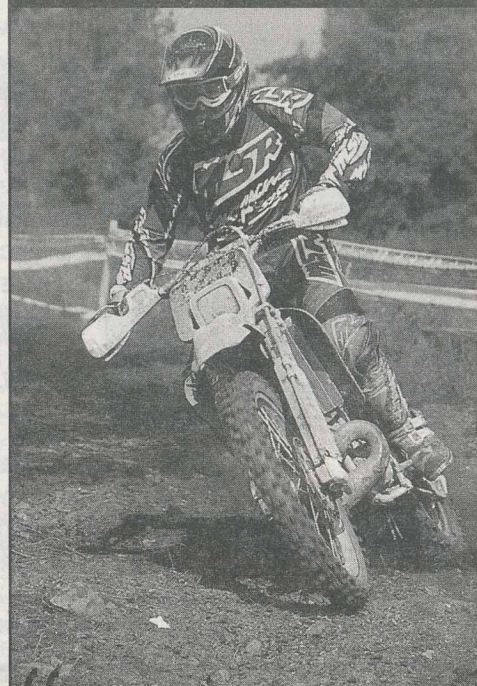
Peterhansel on his way up one of the gnarly climbs last year while the partisan crowd shout encouragement for their hero



with an injured finger which was to affect his form all season long: 'The GLC got the better of me this year' he was heard to say afterwards.

But without doubt the greatest ever Gilles Lallay Classic has to be last year's event. Once again held in terrible conditions, the favourites Sala and Esquirol (attempting an unimaginable third victory), had to give their best to Peterhansel and Charbonnel. All day long these two had battled it out for the lead with neither rider able to make the crucial break. After 15 hours of flat out racing they arrived at the bottom of Dead Crow Hill side by side. 'I was so tired' said Peterhansel afterwards 'that I made a deal with Laurent to ride the hill together', so that's what they did. Both sets of supporters grabbed their favoured riders and their bikes and carried them side by side to the top of the hill. The result was a draw - the first and probably the last in a remarkable event's history. An event which kindles hopes, destroys dreams and creates an electric, explosive atmosphere that can only really be appreciated by those that have stood on top of Dead Crow Hill awaiting the sound of an approaching motorcycle.

A RIDER'S VIEWPOINT

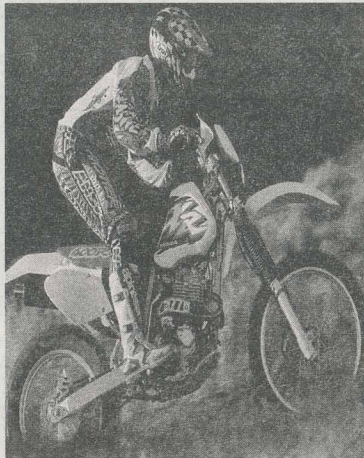


There is only one way to describe the Gilles Lallay Classic, 'It's Tough'. No event I have ever ridden has left me so drained, both mentally and physically. The whole event is incredible, starting at 6am, riding the first one and a half hours in the dark, with about a foot of snow on the ground, you complete the qualifying stage about six hours later.

If you are inside the top 40 international riders you now have the proper race to look forward to. The three o'clock start comes only too fast. Starting at five second intervals from your morning qualifying position, it's a flat out race to the finish. The last three hours of the seven hour race is in pitch darkness, over impossible terrain. Without aid from some of the thousands of fans, no rider would complete the course.

In 1996 30 riders reached Dead Crow Hill before the cut-off point. The organisers were bitterly disappointed with this high number of finishers - their tough reputation had slipped - they say it won't happen again. Good luck to all competitors in 1997. **Rob Sartin**

GILLES LALAY



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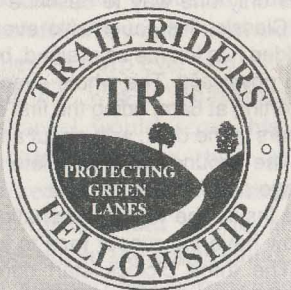
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WILTS.

TrailBike -37- Magazine

GOING LOCO

For one glorious moment in his otherwise lacklustre career, an unwitting Chris Scott lead the pack of factory Dakar racers through the Jungles of Mali in West Africa on his battered old XT600. This is his story...



For the last couple of days I'd been doing about ten miles to the gallon. That's to say riding about ten miles until, with a few seconds notice, I'd have to dive for cover to expel a gallon of effluent. It brought to mind Linda Blair's demonic, head swivelling discharges in *The Exorcist*, but we're talking about the south end of my alimentary system.

It was probably all due to a kilo of dates I'd bought from a roadside stall near Timbuktu. Unlike the fresh, moist and golden examples you get at Christmas time in England with 'Eat Me' on the side, these were the curled up at the edges, dried, fly-covered and worm-ridden 'Don't Eat Me' examples that never make it to your Christmas-time dinner table and, starved of a good chew in the last few weeks, I'd devoured half of them in a few hours and was now paying the price.

Timbuktu is in Mali, a West African country on the south side of the Sahara - a place which in those bad old days issued visas for one week at a time. And now, leaving the capital Bamako, I had just 48 hours to cover the 400 miles to the Senegalese border before they'd chuck me in the slammer or consign me to the chain gang for 20 years - or so my fertile imagination thought.

No one drove from Bamako to Dakar on Senegal's Atlantic coast. They all heartily preferred the Train From Hell which ran between the two capitals and

on which you could stash a vehicle to save the springs for the two day rail ride. The dirt track which wound the long way round to the border was notoriously rough. And from the Senegalese border to where the tarmac started again, the word was it was rougher still.

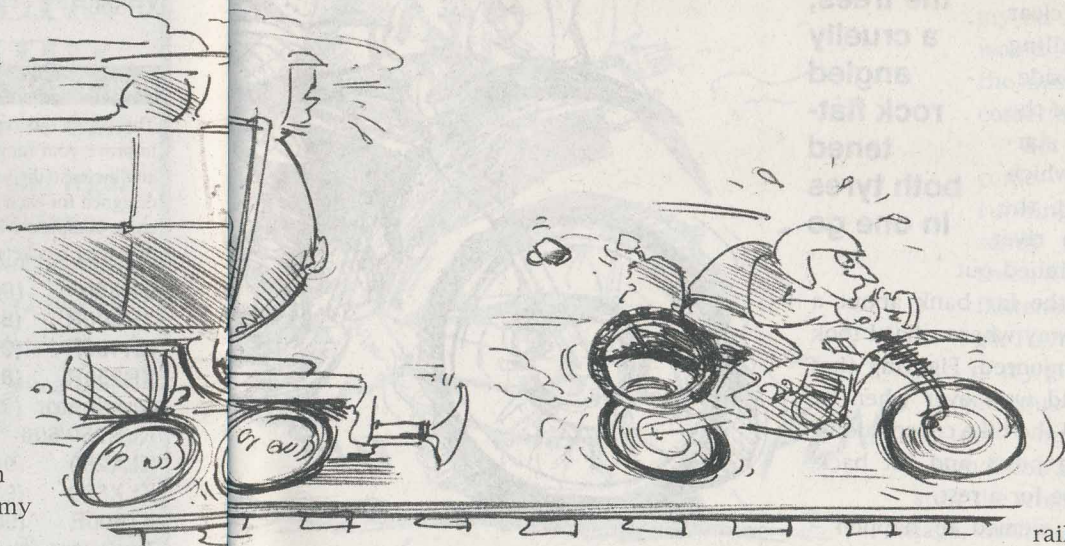
With my free-flowing mpg back on the mend thanks to enough Tum-o-Plug™ to block up the Chunnel, I'd wasted a day at Bamako's rail station trying to wade through the porridge-lake of bureaucracy so as to get a ticket for me and the Ténéré to Dakar. Sent from ticket office to goods depot to what turned out to be the station hotel I'd given up. I'd had about as much

it but to run for the border.

Five am next morning I quietly pushed the XT out of the hotel's courtyard and rode up into the hills north of town, giving a quick two fingers to the railway tracks as I crossed them. With a mixture of adventurousness and direct route logic I'd decided to take a backwoods short-cut which zig-zagged along the path of the westbound railway instead of the longer and harder track to the north. As well the rumble of my innards I felt a thrill at the challenge of the unknown track ahead. According to the map, it wriggled for 300 miles north-westwards, criss-crossing the railway which it was probably built to serve and half an hour from town a sign pointed west into the bush, indicating 180km to Kita, the only major town on the way to the Senegalese border.

Most of the way to Kita the railway was to my south so regaining my bearings on the many confusing branch pistes was simply a matter of heading resolutely south until I hit the rails. Time and again I'd squeeze between huts into a village to ask the way to the railroad: 'Chemin de fer s'il vous plaît?' Then

one time, the track ended at a boulder-strewn river bed that even the bike could not manage. Up above me a rail bridge



luck as I'd had looking for desperately needed inner tubes and now, with just a day left on my visa there was nothing for

GOING LOCO

spanned the creek and taking a chance that the twice-daily train was not due, I bombed up the embankment, got between the rails and bounced along the sleepers to the other side. Unable to ride down the steep bank on the far side, I dragged the bike to the bottom on its side just as the clatter and rumble of the Océan-Niger Express passed overhead. Humbled by my close encounter, I decided that it would be ear-to-the-track, Indian-style on any subsequent rail bridges before I attempted a crossing.

Pressed for time and knowing it would be simpler to sleep in the bush than attempt to find a hotel in Kita, (if there was one) I rode on into the dusk, making the most of the good clear piste before falling asleep by the track side.

By the middle of the next morning I was staring at the piste which ended abruptly at the muddy bank of a river.

Presumably it continued out of the village on the far bank about a quarter of a mile away where what I took to be a ferry was moored. Figuring that the ferryman would waft over when he was ready, I parked the bike conspicuously by the mooring posts and sat back, pleased at an excuse for a rest.

When nothing seemed to happen - even by African standards - I began calculating the chances of loading the bike onto a dug-out canoe from which fishermen were working the river. Maybe this was

why everyone took the train to Dakar?

Exasperated, I rode upstream to find a bridge which, obvious to all but me, spanned the banks. Still wary of meeting an oncoming train or somehow getting into trouble, I hesitated by the bridgehead mulling over the wisdom of my actions. Then, summoning up the nerve, I set off across the bridge, eyes fixed ahead for the blunt nose of the loco and ears awaiting a cursing from some rail official.

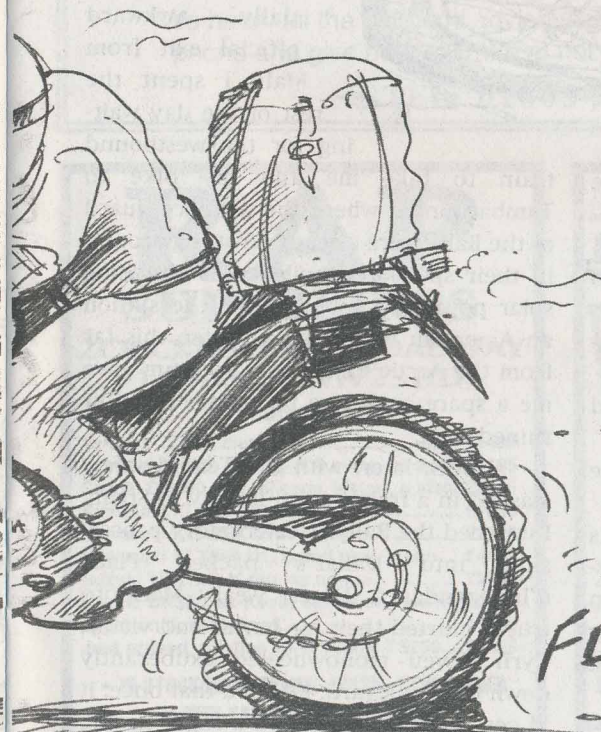
Running briskly through the trees, a cruelly angled rock flattened both tyres in one go



For days Malians had been shouting something unintelligible at me as I zipped

through their villages and now at last I worked out what it was. They were yelling 'Rallye! Rallye! Rallye!', mistaking me for a front runner in that year's Paris-Dakar Rally, which was building up like a tidal wave a few days behind me. In fact I was desperately trying to keep ahead of the race, knowing that prices would soar and commodities vanish as soon as the first riders roared into view.

The washed-out, stony piste climbed and fell through the rocky hills and a wild pig charged out from the high grass across my front wheel. As the afternoon wore on an ancient road sign, sponsored by



'Essence Sphinx', warned rather unnecessarily of bends ahead, as similar signs in

Algeria had advised 'Sand!' Accustoming myself to the pleasures of my back track excursion through Mali, I stopped off at a rather depleted waterfall and took an exploratory bite from some foul-tasting fruit which grew by the track side.

That evening, lost again on a fissured limestone plateau on the outskirts of Kayes, I finally found my way into town along the conventional route. Modestly saluting more cries of 'Rallye!!, Rallye!!' and buying an expensive half-tank of petrol, I attempted to make a run for the frontier post at Diboli with my newly expired visa now beginning to curl at the edges. A little over a hundred kms - a couple of hours on this sort of going - was

all that was left, but in the end

worn out by the long day, I collapsed in a cosp of portly

Baobab trees to spend the

night. Whatever lay ahead

for me at Diboli, I'd done

my best; surely the guards

would be sympathetic to

the misfortunes of a new-

comer on the Kita piste.

But worse was yet to

come. The next morning

running briskly along a

sandy track through the

trees, a cruelly angled rock

flattened *both* tyres in one

go. Having used up the last

of my glue and patches the

previous day, it was time to

test out the Sahara

Handbook's innovative tip and

stuff the irreparable tyres full of

foliage, clothing and anything that

came to hand. With no clothes except

those that I wore (a small fire in the

Sahara had seen to that...), I packed the

tyres out as advised and, thinking myself

GOING LOCO

to be a wily bushmaster as well as a fast 'n' loose rally racer, rode on to Diboli. Within a couple of miles the grass was reduced to powder and so I wobbled along at 15mph until the bemused villagers of Diboli surrounded me, trying to make sense of my urgent enquiries. Desperate more than ever to get a straight answer for once and more than happy to pay for it, I pulled out a bag of rice and planted it in the nearest man's hand, asking:

'Where is the frontier at Diboli?'

'Diboli?'

'Yes, the frontier with Senegal?'

'Down there,' he pointed down to the shallow river.

'Merci beaucoup,' I said gratefully, charged with the urgency of getting to Diboli as soon as possible so that whatever fine I might collect would be reasonable.

'Your tyres are punctures,' he pointed out redundantly.

'Yes, I know' and I weaved down the river bank and across the water.

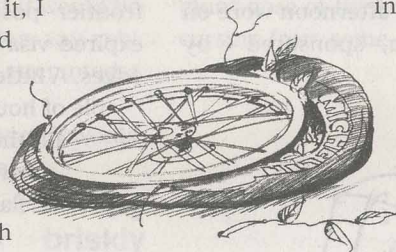
Thinking the town I approached was Diboli, I rode up to the policeman snoozing in his hut and sheepishly offered him my passport together with the last of my gifts - an unopened pot of jam I'd bought in Bamako - to smooth the way.

'Merci,' he said with a generous smile, 'Welcome to Senegal. Are you with the Rally?'

'Senegal?' I enquired 'What about Mali?'

'Over there' he said with a toothless grin from one too many pots of jam, pointing to the river I'd crossed.

In my rush to avoid the death sentence which Mali surely issued to any foreigners who overstayed their visas by more than 30 seconds, I'd somehow managed to bypass the frontier post, by crossing



ing the river into Senegal. Relieved at my good fortune in avoiding a potentially awkward official exit from Mali, I spent the rest of the day waiting for the westbound

train to take me and my bike to Tambacounda, where the advance guard of the Rally were already strutting around in their sponsored boiler suits clutching solar powered clipboards. At the station an American biker who'd ridden this far from the Arctic Circle on a BeeEmm gave me a spare back tyre to replace my now ruined item.

A week later, with the Ténéré safely stashed in a freighter on its way to Spain, I watched the Rallye's celebratory procession into Dakar's packed Place d'Independance. Desert weary Marlboro trucks blurted their air horn's and victor, Cyril Neveu monowheeled exuberantly down the boulevard. I'd tried that once: it'd cost me sixty quid and a night in jail, but that's another story.

Read all about Chris Scott's other African adventures in *Desert Travels*. See the special offer on the opposite page.

TRAILSPORT

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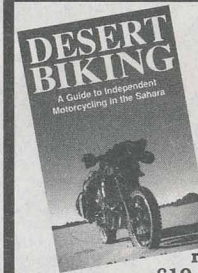
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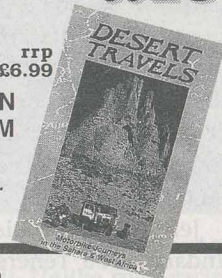
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Illustration: Ken Russell



SLEEPER

Jez Goodwin reckons he's built the ultimate street sleeper in the form of a Yamaha XT 690 Ténéré which wheelies in the first three gears. We just had to have a go. Neil Pidduck yanked the bravery cable and tried to hang on! - Photos by Si Melber -

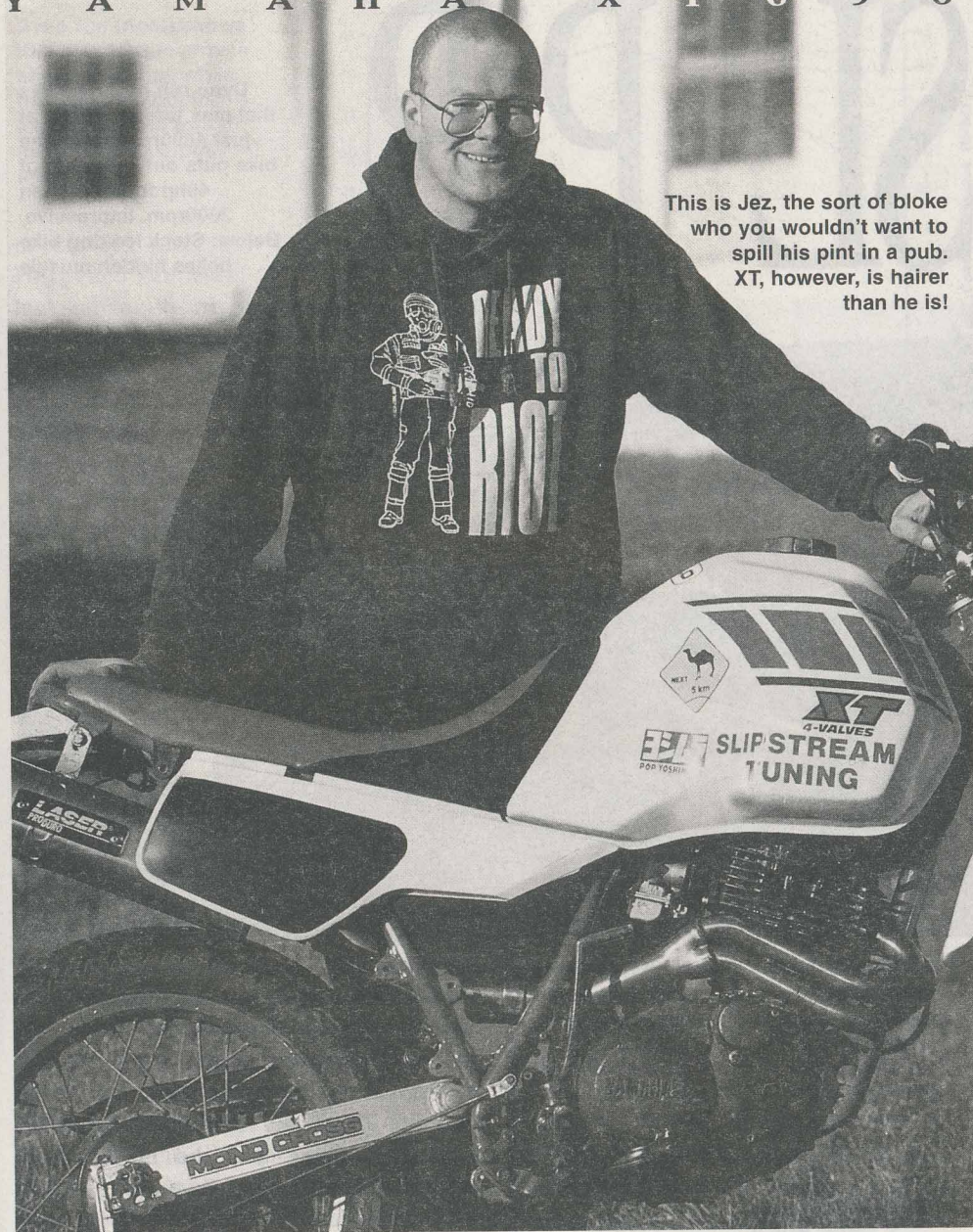
Jez Goodwin doesn't look like a guy who scares easily. A Real Ale drinking rugby player and ex-courier, he's a big lad with a passion for big singles - scary big singles. Back in the winter of 1994 whilst despatching his trusty 300,000 mile GT550 a chance meeting with a Ténéré-riding Italian courier started the ball rolling on a project that has become known as Prodigy 1, a wild 686cc Ténéré.

Jez bought his standard 1985 Ténéré for a bargain 600 quid from the aforementioned Italian. 'The motor was somewhat

tired' says Jez, 'but I started despatching it anyway and it soon blew up whilst being hammered along the M4'. Once back home the bike sat in the garden for a short while looking rather sad, but a fortuitous trip to the Ally Pally show in North London soon started things moving. 'I spied a Yoshimura 686cc (+7mm) big bore kit for an SRX600 on one of the stands' he said 'and just couldn't resist it. The missus was with me at the time and after several visits to the bar she too was convinced - well sort of anyway'. So with a belly full of



Y A M A H A X T 6 9 0



This is Jez, the sort of bloke who you wouldn't want to spill his pint in a pub. XT, however, is hairier than he is!

beer and an earful of objections £450 was parted with and Jez went home to sober up and work out a shopping list.

Two weeks were spent simply working out what was needed and, more impor-

tantly, what was available to make best use of the big bore kit. Unlike road racing singles that produce masses of power high in the rev range, Jez wanted usable power low down and plenty of arm stretching

SLEE PER

Dyno run (right) shows that max torque arrives at just 4800rpm, while the bike puts out in excess of 40hp for more than 2000rpm. Impressive. Below: Stock looking bike belies hidden muscle



torque for firing out of corners and leaving CBR owners feeling rather insecure. 'I wanted something unfeasibly scary but also something that would keep my licence in one piece, and I got what I wanted' he says with a grin.

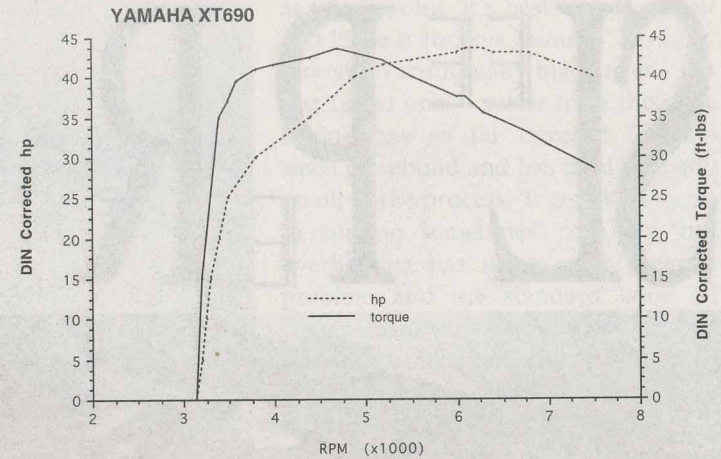
The shopping list grew - a Megacycle 266/20 cam (+6mm lift) from California, a pair of 35mm Keihin carbs (£500 to you sir), 120YD heavy duty valve springs with titanium retainers, a flowed head with 11.25:1 compression ratio and a K+N air filter in the standard airbox to ensure none of the neighbours' small kids were accidentally inhaled through those mas-

sive carbs. The clutch was left as standard but for heavy duty springs, and the bottom end was blueprinted but left unchanged (the XT motor is well known for it's hearty crank). Jez reckons: 'If I'd gone to 720cc the conrod would have needed changing and the bottom end would have become maybe too fragile. But as it is it copes admirably with the increased power'. With most of the shopping done the ingredients were added to the engine. The only stumbling block came when trying to mate the huge carbs to the standard carb rubbers. This problem was eventually solved when a couple

Dyno run (right) shows that max torque arrives at just 4800rpm, while the bike puts out in excess of 40hp for more than 2000rpm. Impressive

of tapered pieces of Polypenco (an excellent oil/fuel-resistant and easily machineable plastic) were machined up to do the job. The top end was tweaked and tuned by Slipstream Tuning who did a superb and well priced head job that Divine Brown would have been proud of. Some Devil stainless steel header pipes were mated to a free-flowing Laser Pro-duro exhaust, a Splitfire plug was inserted to help increase the spark without the expense of a twin plug head conversion, and the internals were bathed in fully synthetic oil.

Whilst the engine was out the opportunity was taken to powder coat the frame, and remove any excess lard hanging around like the luggage rack, pillion pegs and bashplate. Now the time had come to fire up the beast of Basingstoke, take it over to Dynotech (01256 881711) and put it on the dyno to see what the real results of the engine work were. 43hp at 6000rpm and 43ft/lbs of torque at 4600rpm. To put this in context, that's an impressive 11hp (or 33 percent) up on a standard XT and only slightly less grunt than a 750 Elephant - all on a bike that weighs only 140kgs! The main restriction to the already impressive power output is considered to be the Devil header pipes which ideally need to be a larger bore to help the engine breathe better. Renegade have offered to build a complete two into



two system for £350 which they reckon should release another seven or eight ponies.

To look at it you'd think the bike is just any old 600 Ténéré, but swing a leg over the old girl and give her a hefty swing



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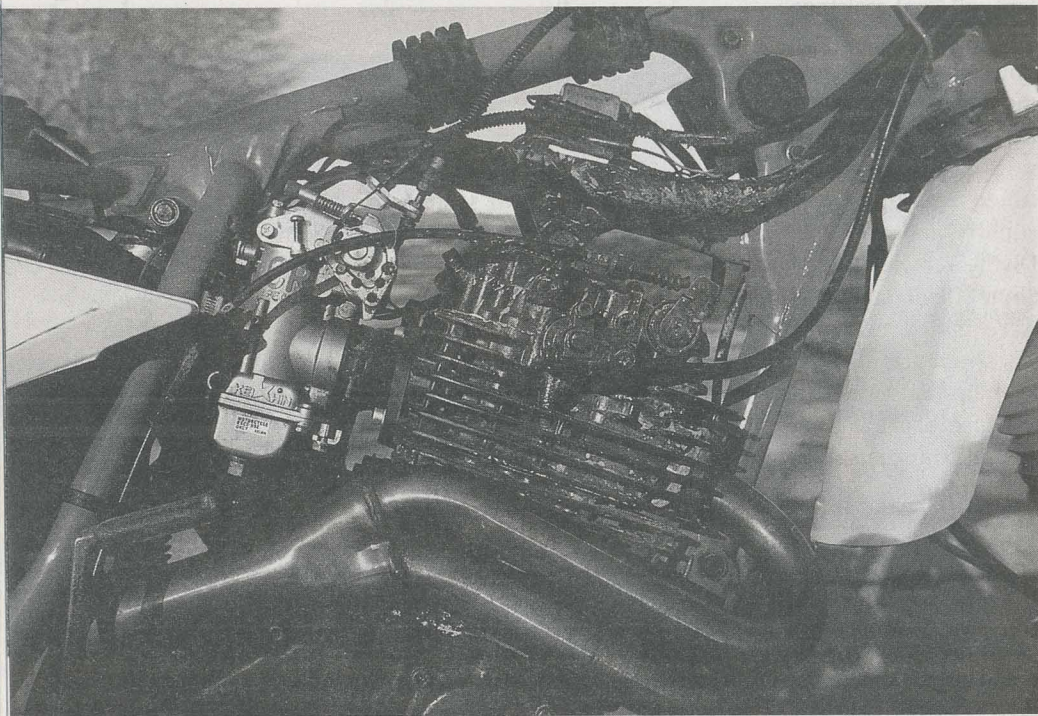
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SLEEPER

Below: 686cc lump slurps juice through a pair of tasty 35mm Keihin race carbs. Right: Fun, fun, fun



on the kick starter and she barks into life with a healthy growl. The motor revs freely and, unusually for something as breathed on as this, pulls smoothly in any gear from less than 1000rpm but really starts pulling hard between 3-5000rpm leaving you in no doubt that this is *definitely not* just another old XT. Wheelies are possible right up to third gear without resorting to the clutch, and Jez states 'I've sailed across a few roundabouts on the back wheel whilst trying to nip into a gap in the traffic'. Scary? Absolutely, although

the bike is actually very rideable with the power delivery extremely smooth, which is just what Jez had planned.

We rode the bike with standard 15/45 gearing but reducing the rear sprocket to 40 teeth makes the machine a little more sensible and it is possible to get close to 50mpg at legal speeds. Charging around the countryside with a big grin on your face can have those carbs slurping four star at the rate of 35mpg but Jez reckons nearer 40-44mpg is usual. Just occasionally the bike will sort of cough and cut out



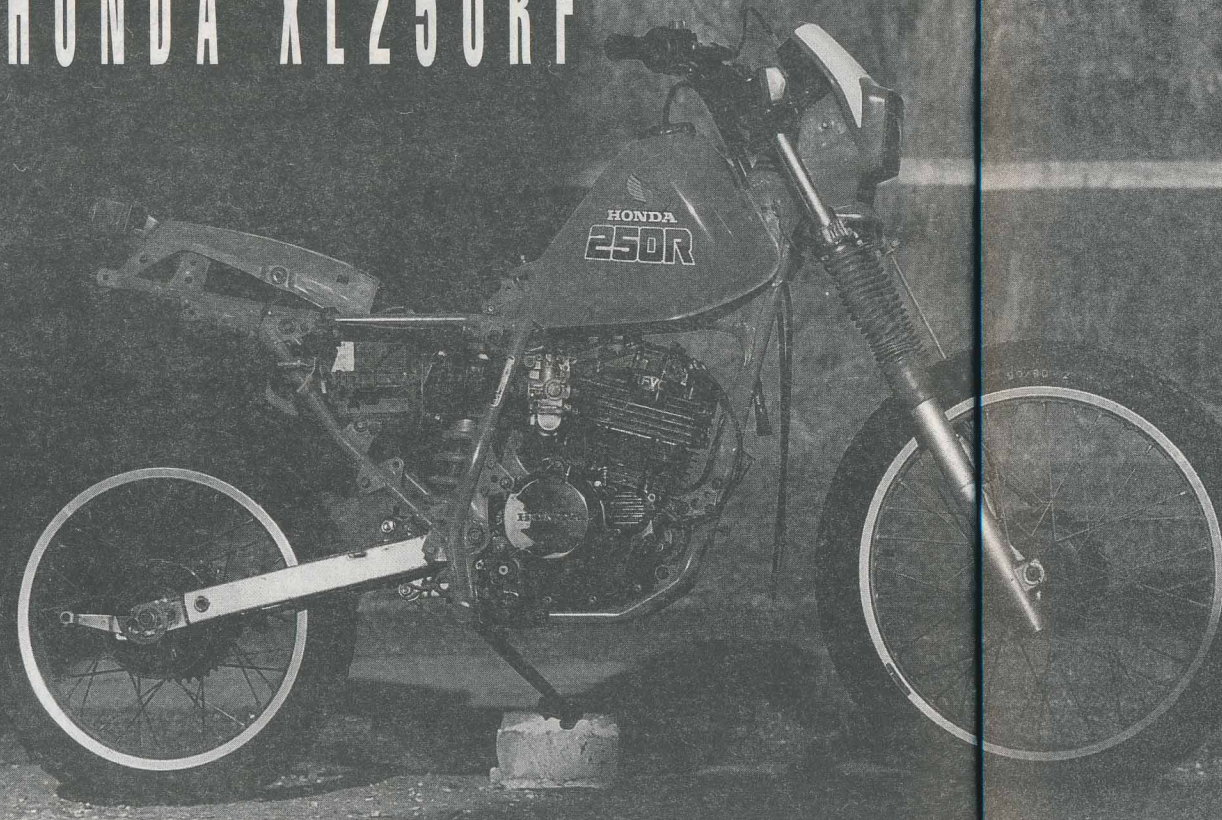
at which point 'it's best to just get off and leave it for five minutes' says Jez, though in truth many big singles - not just tuned ones - suffer from this. The engine has so far covered 5000km since its rebuild and has used virtually no oil in the process. 'It gets a bit warm in London sometimes' says Jez 'but overheating has never really been a problem and the standard issue oil cooler seems to cope well enough'. The cost of all this engine fettling came to just over £1500 which is a lot of dough to spend on an elderly XT, but riding the bike leaves me thinking it was money well spent. It's certainly different.

Aside from the engine, the rest of the bike is in standard form with both bodywork and suspension unchanged from the original. At the moment Jez is investigating alternative forks and the possibility of a YZ rear end. Some later model Ténéré bodywork may also make an appearance mainly in respect of a twin headlight fairing and screen to ease motorway cruising. Ideally an engine like this would be at home in a supermoto TT600 rolling chassis, but the fact that it looks just like a tatty old Ténéré is part of the attraction and has certainly left a few owners of more expensive and modern machinery chasing something they thought would never get ahead in the first place.

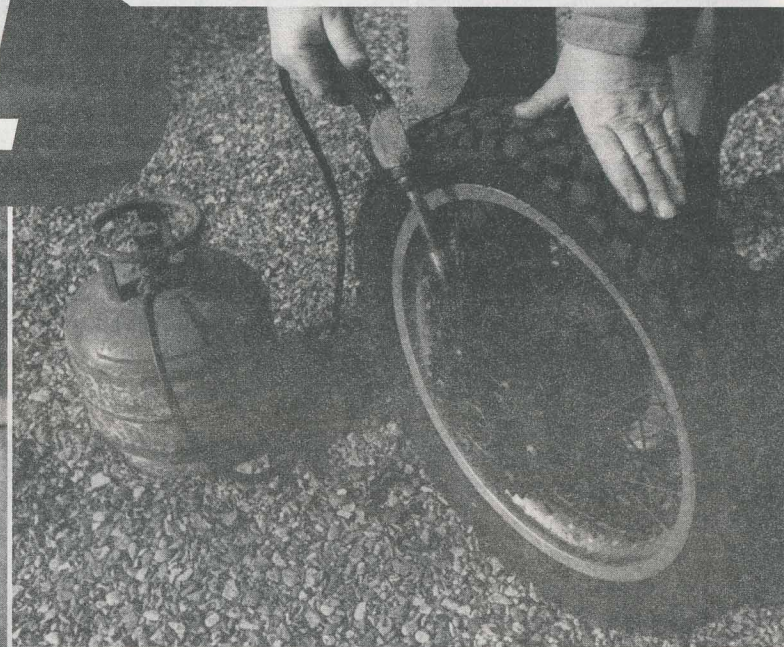
As for Jez, well he's just broken the news to his girlfriend of his latest addition to their family, an XTZ660, all in bits and just gagging for a whole load of tuning. All manner of evil additions were mentioned when I spoke to him and Jez was last seen heading for his garage with a sadistic grin on his face stating 'I shall return with Prodigy 2'. We hope he will.

Project

HONDA XL250RF



XL



Left: The project bike as it looks at the end of stage one. The engine is more or less complete and back in the frame, but the exhaust has yet to be welded up. Above: gentle heat applied to the sprocket bolts helped to free them

You've seen project bikes before. As far as most magazines go the term is loosely used to describe a machine that's been crashed so heavily during testing that the former owner has refused to accept it back and demanded the magazine purchase it. Many project bikes start their lives in this way, the mags shamelessly ligging spare parts from advertisers so that the finished product resembles not so much a motorcycle as a manufacturer's

catalogue of aftermarket bits crudely assembled and then passed off as a creative rebuild. Here at TBM we wanted a proper project biked, something which the average trailbike owner can get his or her teeth into without spending a lot of money. Which is how the idea behind the project XL250 came about. We wanted to spend as little cash as possible, yet end up with a half-decent trailbike.

We wanted it to appeal to beginner

TrailBike -50- Magazine

and experienced rider alike - and recognised the fact that though some of you can strip and rebuild a gearbox in your lunch hour, others break into a sweat when it comes to thinking about cleaning the airfilter.

We set ourselves a budget of £500, which is a realistic minimum for obtaining some sort of rideable trailie with a current MoT. Yes I know there are people out there who would happily machine them-

selves a new set of spokes from a dozen coathangers if they thought it would save money, but we have to be realistic here. Biking isn't the cheapest past-time. in the world, if you want something cheap, go take up origami.

So the idea was this: With a budget of just 500 quid we would try and get ourselves as reasonable a trailbike as possible for as little outlay as we could manage (without blagging any parts), and get the thing on the road to prove that it's still possible to trail ride for very little outlay. Then, if we still had some budget left, we would set about improving our bike with the addition of various new components to enhance its usability but still keep it within our budget figure.

So the hunt was on for some sort of trailie for the project. We thought about the idea of buying a tatty old MX bike and converting it as they are cheap and plentiful, but then we figured that a real challenge would be to build up a four-stroke

TrailBike -51- Magazine

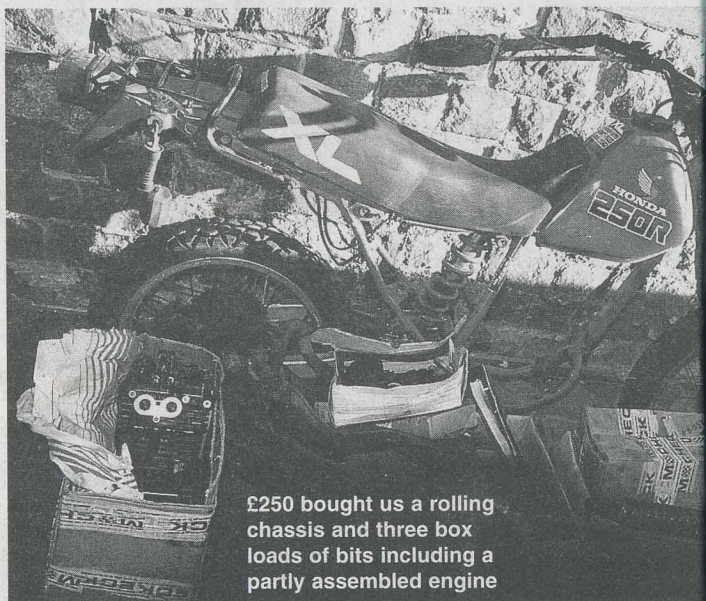
Project XL

trailbike within our budget. We considered a DR350 because the DR's a pretty popular trailie and has been around now for some time, but the problem comes when you try to find a cheap DR donor bike. Even the cheapest one we've come across would've doubled our whole budget and that's before the rebuild. So with our sights set a little lower we considered the options. It had to be four stroke, reliable, and plentiful (so parts were available) yet not too expensive. The XR250 was our first choice but finding one for not a lot of money proved tricky. In the end we found the next best thing.

Honda's XL250RF was the bike which preceded the XR by just a year. It already had the RFVC motor shoehorned into its frame which powered the XR models, and a Pro-Link rear end which provided decent suspension, but in

place of the XR's plastic tank and racy looks it had a road-legal steel item and plainer styling. Other than that there's not a great deal of difference between the late XLs and the earliest XRs. We scoured the classifieds and local papers but even late XLs seemed to be fetching upwards of £700. Then a stroke of luck. A few years ago while visiting my local bike dealers I remembered seeing a stripped down XL-RF. I chatted with them about it at the time and they offered me the bike for

£700. I declined and thought nothing more about it until the idea of a project bike began to blossom. I figured it was a long shot but stroke of luck number two was about to happen. When I called them they confirmed that one of the mechanics still had the bike, that it had been stripped down and partially rebuilt, and



£250 bought us a rolling chassis and three box loads of bits including a partly assembled engine

that a figure well within our budget would secure it for TBM.

I hurried down there clutching a fistful of twentys and loaded the remains into the van. But it gets better: because one of the mechanics had decided to keep the bike for himself he'd taking advantage of his chance to buy spares at trade prices and had replaced every bearing, seal and bush on the bike with new ones. The only thing he'd missed out were the front forks which he hadn't got round to. Now a move

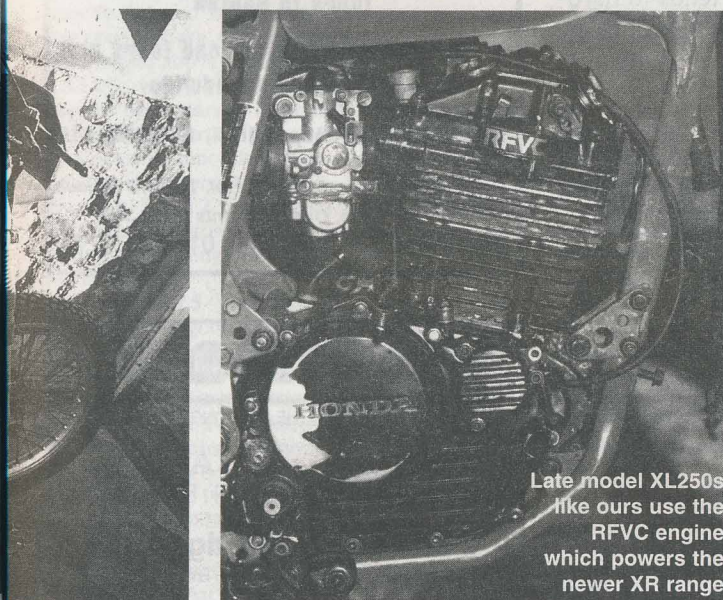
of house and a need for a bit more space had meant the old XL needed to be turfed out and it was mine for 250 quid if I wanted it. Sorted.

After I got home I examined the cardboard boxes it came in and the rest of the rolling chassis to see what I'd bought. The engine rebuild had been more or less complete, only requiring the installation of a new set of kickstart gears (thankfully provided) as well as the clutch to have it back in one piece. There was a small hole

workshop manual to follow, it took us several hours of sweating and cursing to reassemble the kickstart mechanism and make it work properly. The clutch casing went on and off numerous times but each time we tried the kickstarter it wouldn't return properly. Eventually we noticed a little asterisk in the manual which said something like 'dont forget to twist the cam notch hub bearing thrust grommet as you insert the kickstarter gears or it won't work'. Great. With that finally sorted we

examined the clutch plates which looked a little worn, but just about within their serviceable limit, and began to reassemble the clutch cover for the umpteenth time.

The crankcase threads were mostly all stripped out, but by careful drilling of the holes in the clutch cover we managed to persuade some larger Allan-headed bolts to fit in and with a fresh gasket in place (also included), bolted the whole thing back together with the



Late model XL250s like ours use the RFVC engine which powers the newer XR range

in the exhaust pipe (just before the silencer) which would need welding up, a couple of footpeg bolts were missing, and there was no chain or battery (both of which would need to be replaced anyway), oh and no registration document. Oh well. I couldn't really complain.

That weekend with the help of my father we set about putting the thing back together - at least superficially. Despite the fact that he's a mechanical engineer, I'm a bike journalist and we both had a

new oil filter which we found in one of the boxes.

After that it was a simple matter of fitting the airbox, putting the engine back in the frame, then removing the airbox again so we could attach the carbs. Now the airbox went back in again and finally with the help of a hair dryer we persuaded the cold, hard plastic airbox-nozzles to slip over the back of the carbs.

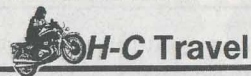
Despite the bike having covered more than 29,000 miles (which is quite a lot for

Project XL

a little XL if you think about it), everything looked pretty much okay. The dials and switchgear looked like new, the original tank had been replaced with a good secondhand one by the last owner and even the plastic panels weren't in too bad a state. A proper clean up with degreasant showed them to be serviceable if not exactly pristine and as age tends to harden them we'll probably invest in some new plastics if the budget allows. Only the seat looked to be really tatty; covered in grime and with a tear in it, it resisted all attempts at cleaning even with petrol, so a seat cover will be on our list of purchases in the near future.

As there was no chain with the bike and the old sprockets looked well past their best we contacted Gavin Shaw at Chainmail about a replacement set and a decent O-ring chain. The sum of £71.50 (inc VAT and P&P) changed hands and a few days later a heavy package thudded onto our doormat. Removing the old rear sprocket wasn't easy as the bolts had pretty much seized on. Out came the flame torch and after 20 seconds worth of heat on each they loosened off nicely. We cleaned up the whole of the rear hub, inspected the bearings, brake linings and cush drive (all fine) then reassembled the rear wheel. Finally it was wheeled out into the sun for a few photos.

So far, for a little over three hundred quid we've got something that resembles a trailbike - though there's still a fair bit of work to do before we get to ride it. Next month we'll be tackling some of the remaining jobs, and seeing if we can get the thing to run - here's hoping. •



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the (NEWLY UPDATED) TRAILBIKE GUIDE

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

APRILIA

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

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

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

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

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

Tuareg 600/650: a/c, 4-str, sohc, Rotax-powered single, e/s. Paris-Dakar lookalike with a high specification (USD forks etc) and flashy paintjob. Reasonably light and not overly tall for this type of bike, nice machine if you can find one. *Verdict: Posing tackle that works.*

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

ARMSTRONG

Grew out of Alan Clews' CCM company of Bolton and CanAm/Bombardier bikes for the army. (Bombardier were originally a French Canadian

company that manufactured snowmobile engines - they are now a massive worldwide engineering company that owns Rotax, among others).

250: a/c, 2-str, single (Bombardier engine). Simple but functional trailie with no frills, but competent nevertheless. Not many about
500: a/c, 4-str, sohc single. Rotax engined army bike designed to be functional but not pretty. Solid dependable and cheap they make a fairly useful if heavy trailie. Nice and low but with the drawback of left hand kick start and drum brakes. Generally reliable but watchout for ones which have been flogged mercilessly by squaddies with no idea of mechanical sympathy. *Verdict: a trailbike Skoda.*

CCM: A number of enduro bikes based around the sohc Rotax motor but in a much higher state of tune than the Armstrongs. Light, loud and with a reputation for fine if quick handling.

350: a/c, 4-str, sohc, Rotax single. Now available with e/s.

500: a/c, 4-str, sohc, Rotax single.

560: a/c, 4-str, sohc, Rotax single.

604: a/c, 4-str, sohc, Rotax single. Now available with e/s.

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

ATK: a/c 4-str, sohc, Rotax-powered singles. US-made, high quality motocrossers with some unusual features such as engine-sprocket mounted rear brake on some models. All have one-sided monoshocks (without linkage). Dual sport bikes now produced by the importer using converted MX bikes, solid, unburstable but pricey. *Verdict: For those who hanker after something different.*

BARIGO: a/c, 4-str, sohc, Rotax-powered singles. French-made range of specialist on/off road bikes built by Patrick Barigault. They specialise in supermotard bikes and desert racers, both of which have had some competition success, though they also do a trail/enduro bike. The same basic rotax mill that in MZ guise churns out 32bhp produces a claimed 60bhp when tuned to Barigo's specification... but they say it's reliable.

TRAILBIKE GUIDE

Verdict: Gallic charm.

BMW

Traditional air-cooled, pushrod boxer flat twins, and some rare collectibles esp early pre-G/S ISDT boxers which weigh only 320lbs, and genuine Paris-Dakar machines.

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

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

R100GS: a/c, 4-str, twin, e/s. Revised in 1991 with proper fairing and more garish paint job. Final revision for UK in 1993 with 'P-D' version when humungous plastic tank (already available on the continent) finally became legal, also sported a set of external fairing crash bars. Single-seat with extra large rack available as option. Last officially imported in 1994. *Verdict: Big and butch.*

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

R1100GS: 1994-on. 209kg/461lbs, o-a/c, 4-str, 8-valve, 1086cc, twin, e/s, 5-speed, 80bhp. Mega-Monster trailie based around the brand new four-valve boxer engine mated to Telelever chassis. Huge stomp plus ABS which can be turned off if desired. Superb road bike but not nearly as off-roadable as the old boxers. Recall in '94 for problems with Telelever ball joints. *Verdict: The first trailie superbike. Tested TBM No.1; Ridden on BMW off-road training course TBM No.12.*

F650 'Funduro': w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, 652cc, single, e/s, 48 bhp (claimed). Aprilia-built, Rotax-engined chain-driven trail bike launched in 1993 to bring BMWs to the masses. Fairly 'roadified', with large tank, stainless

exhaust and low seat, although still eminently trail-able. Great fun to ride on or off road, and surprisingly quick - these babies will make a genuine 46bhp at the rear wheel. Beware clunky gearboxes, 19in front wheel limits tyre choice. Sold like hot cakes thanks to legendary BMW build quality. Latest versions include a special low seat model, and most now have taller screens. *Verdict: Solid and sensible.*

CAGIVA

Italian manufacturer that now owns Ducati, Husqvarna and Morini.

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

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

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

W8: 264lbs, w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single, 6-speed, 31hp. Excellent trailbike version of above but with a couple of ponies less and no upside down forks. Very few sold in UK.

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

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

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

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

countries.

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

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

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

Elefant 750/900 (Second generation): o-a/c, 4-str, desmo, V-twin, e/s, 60bhp/68bhp (claimed). Second generation Elefants from 1991-ish are bigger, and slightly heavier than their predecessors. Lovely torquey engines are based on the Ducati 750 and 900SS. 1991 versions (distinguishable by Lucky Explorer paintscheme), were higher spec than later ones, with Ohlins suspension and electronic fuel injection. Although they have a high CofG the new generation Elefants make a great touring bike for the road, but they're a bit monstrous off-road - more like a Super Tenere than the original Transalp-sized 750s. *Verdict: For those who like to be seen and heard. Secondhand 900 tested TBM1.*

ENFIELD INDIA

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

GAS-GAS

Pampera: 85kg/187lbs, w/c, 2-str, 123cc, 238cc & 346cc, single, 6-speed. Brand new hybrid trail bike from top Spanish trials manufacturer using a trials engine and suspension mated to an enduro style chassis. Brilliant performer off road, but trials inspired gearing limits road use. Top-notch components make this a real steal. *Verdict: Vertical reality?*

GILERA

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

50/125: a/c, 2-str, single. Learner bikes - not officially imported.

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

Northwest: 140kg/308lbs, w/c, 4-str, 558cc, single, e/s. Supermoto version of the RC 600 with 17 inch cast alloy wheels, USD forks, and serious

TRAILBIKE GUIDE

brakes. Superb 'street scrambler' with drop-dead looks, but not as powerful as the Pegaso or F650, and engine can be vibey. Still a few new ones around. *Verdict: Wonderful style.*

XRT600: w/c, 4str, 558cc, single, e/s. Clumsily styled, Paris-Dakar influenced big trailie that uses the stock Gilera lump in yet another manifestation. Big, heavyish and extremely rare in the UK. *Verdict: Ugly duckling.*

GREEVES

British as bully beef manufacturer of scramblers, and road racers in the swinging sixties. Two-strokes used ubiquitous Villiers engines. Distinctive alloy box-section frames with leading link forks. Also adapted for Triumph twins. **Dave Taylor on his Greeves-Triumph 500 in TBM No.1**

HARLEY DAVIDSON

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

H-D 90: a/c, 2-str, 90cc, single. Aermacchi-made 1970s mini-trail funbike. Very rare these days. passable off road. CCM sold the rights to the Armstrong army bikes to H-D circa 1992, and H-D duly won the British army contract. Now electric start (after heavy squaddie casualties with the old left-side kick-starts) and reportedly more robust but down-sized from 500 to 350cc.

HONDA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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CRM250R: 114kg, w/c, 2-str, 249cc, single. Japanese-spec trail bike based on the look of an early (1988) CR motocrosser but totally different up close. Low seat height, good spread of power, plush suspension and all the usual trailie luxuries (soft seat, oil pump, indicators etc). All have metal tanks, but later ones (after 1990) had USD forks and slightly different rear suspension. *Verdict: Best of the stroker trail bikes.*

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

TLR200: a/c, 4-str, sohc, 199cc, single. Early Eighties trials-styled trailie ideal for really snotty green lanes and long distance trials events, but not as comfy as some trail bikes and not really built for speed. Still available new as personal imports at fairly attractive prices.

TLM200: a/c, 2-str, 199cc, single. More modern version of above with 2-stroke engine and monoshock suspension built for Japanese home market. Not much of a seat but you can't have it all. *Verdict: Nothing will stop you.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

XL250 Degree: 119kg, w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, 249cc, 25bhp, single. Nineties style version of the venerable no-frills XL250, now watercooled and with a four valve head, but still with rear drum brake. *Verdict: Nice little stylish trailie.*

XL500S: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Practically identical to the XL250 apart from the bigger cylinder and head and a longer frame although it is possible to squeeze the bigger engine into a 250 chassis. Only 32bhp, but loads more stomp and the same crappy front brake - green racing linings help a bit, but beware low-speed lock-ups! Fortunately the 23 inch wheels can be re-laced with 21inch rims which actually improves the handling and provides a vast increase in tyre choice! Beware starting problems and low revs misfire caused by furring of the alloy earthing plate - solution is to take a lead direct from engine to coil. **One careful owner TBM No.s 11 & 12.**

XL250R/500R: 1984-on, a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. The cylinder heads were now blessed with Radial Four Valve Combustion (RFVC), vastly superior Pro-Link mono-shock suspension, beefier forks and much better TLS front brake in a 21 inch wheel, and 12-volt electrics - a much better bet all round than the 'S' models if you can afford them. Only snag with the TLS front brake is that it will not stop you from rolling back on a hill! The CR motocrosser front end will fit straight into the XL headstock so long as you use the whole assembly. Beware top end seepage of oil between head and barrel. The XL250R finally lost its metal tank and was developed into the XR version. Early XL500 engines were very popular in single cylinder road racing, so second hand spares are hard to come by. Frequent oil changes are essential to avoid the dreaded knackered head syndrome caused by the camshaft running direct in it although bearing conversions are available. Some 250s suffered from dodgy gearboxes and frequent top end problems. *Verdict: Cheaper than an XR.*

One careful XL500R owner TBM No.13.
XL350/400: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Grey import originally built for French and Japanese markets - a big-bore version of the 250 rather than a sleeved down 500. *Verdict: Very*

rare.

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

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

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

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

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

XR200R: a/c, 4-str, sohc, single, 5-speed. Early twin shock bikes (originally based on the XL185) made brilliant green laners. Still fairly popular though later monoshock versions are better and more plentiful. Drum bakes let it down though some late Japanese spec models come with discs. Light enough to pick up if need be. *Verdict: Still a great trail bike.*

XL200: 112kg, a/c, 4-str, sohc, 18bhp, single. Japanese-spec trailbike version of above with drum rear brake.

XL250R: 113kg, a/c, 4-str, sohc, 249cc, 28bhp, single. Japanese-spec trailbike version of above with drum rear brake.

XL250-Baja: 116kg, a/c, 4-str, sohc, 249cc, 28bhp, single. Japanese-spec trailbike version of the XR Baja, but with slightly lower spec and a pair of smaller headlights.

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

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get a move on. New (Japan only) trailbike and baja versions come with electric start and LCD dials. Baja versions come with huge twin headlamps bar mounted on early kickstart models and frame mounted on later e/s ones. *Verdict: Popular and versatile trailie.*

XR250L: 113kg, a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, 249cc, 28bhp, single. Grey import with road-legal lights, speedo and indicators. Slightly heavier than R. **Compared with Yamaha TT-R 250 in TBM No.1**

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

XR400R: 1996 on. a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, 397cc, 34bhp, 122kg, single. Latest in a long line of Honda XRs this one promises to be the best so far. Small (similar in size and weight to a 250) it has enough go to almost keep up with the 600. Great suspension, but quite tall and some jétting problems still afflict the model. US spec models have different lights and lighting coil. New it costs more than the XR600R. *Verdict: The best XR so far.*

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

XR600(R): a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Several versions since 1984 (all very similar), mostly imported from USA until Honda UK started importing in 1994. Early versions easy to tell by drum rear brake and twin carbs. All are great off roaders, with pukka suspension and light-weight chassis - and okay on the road except for low gearing. Can be real pigs to start - especially after being dropped. Often the bike of choice for overlanders but beware, rear subframe is not built to take a lot of weight. Honda UK have not homologated the latest continental-spec version even though it comes with proper speedo and head and tail lights (but no indicators) so they're still not officially road legal and sold by Honda dealers 'for off-road use only' - but it's easy to road-register as an individual so can still be ridden away from the shop. Great wheelie-pulling ability, and very light compared to something like an XT600. Has become the privateer's desert rally bike by which all others are judged - light, relatively simple and very robust. The best noise/power compromise is to keep the main body of the original baffle, but take out the inner core - this looks and sounds 'kosher' but liberates most of the power. Official HRC hop-up kits with

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big bore (630cc) and hot cam are available but not recommended for off-road use or long-distance reliability. Tons of other tuning parts available. *Verdict: Definitive 'pukka' big banger.*

XR650L: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, 644cc, single, e/s. Grey imported, fully street legal version of the XR600 using electric start Dominator engine and some of the roadgoing niceties. Slight weight penalty, but a real beauty if you can find one. Balancer shaft makes this a much nicer animal on the road, and not much worse off it providing you're over 6' tall. *Verdict: Worth searching out.*

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

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

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

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

SLR650: a/c, 4-str, RFVC, sohc, 644cc, single, e/s. Latest offering from Honda is a sort of stripped down Dommie with 19" front wheel and built just for the road. No real trail pretensions with this ugly duckling. *Verdict: What's the point?*

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

XLV600VP Transalp: w/c, 4-str, 6-valve, sohc, 583cc, V-twin, e/s. Called the Rally Tourer, which fits its abilities perfectly. True dual purpose machine, great all-rounder. Engine based on the VT500, and larger versions now power the Bros and Africa Twin. Unburstable and torquey motor churns out a claimed 50bhp but can be tricky to work on unless out of the frame. Very expensive and fragile cosmetics worth protecting

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

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

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

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

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

HUSABERG

KTM owned Swedish range of mainly competition four-stroke machines which use what is basically a two-stroke bottom end mated to a four-stroke barrel and head. Light, powerful and can be vibey and occasionally fragile. restyled in 97.

FE350(&E): w/c, 4-str, 349cc, single. Beautifully made, fast, light and expensive enduro bike. Top notch suspension and componentry, left hand kickstart joined by electric boot on the Eldorado model. 350 has to be worked reasonably hard. *Verdict: A serious tool.*

FE400(&E): w/c, 4-str, 399cc, single. As above but just the right amount of power. *Verdict: Just right.*

FE501(&E): w/c, 4-str, 501cc, single. As above but more so, loads of power everywhere. *Verdict: Great fun.*

FE600(&E): w/c, 4-str, 595cc, single. As above but even more so. More power than anyone needs - could sometimes destroy starter clutch. *Verdict: OTT.*

HUSQVARNA

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

WR400/430: a/c, 2-str, single. Old headbanger enduro bike - not for the fainthearted.

WE125: w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single. Modern, superb, high specification trailie with powerful revvy motor and good suspension. Though classified as a trailbike it makes a better trailbike-enduro mount than pure green laner thanks to tall seat height, and peaky top-end power delivery. Some came in smart lucky explorer colours. *Verdict: Serious posing tackle.*

WR125: w/c, 2-str, 124.8cc, single, 93kg. High spec enduro bike with powerful motor and top-notch suspension. *Verdict: Serious tackle.*

WR250: w/c, 2-str, 249.6cc, single, 101kg. High spec enduro bike with creamy-powerful motor and top-notch suspension. *Verdict: Serious tackle.*

WR360: w/c, 2-str, 348.8cc, single, 103kg. High spec enduro bike with super powerful open class motor and top-notch suspension. *Verdict: Really serious tackle.*

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

TE410: w/c, 4-str, 399.5cc, single. Big bore version of above, started life as a 415cc but reduced to 399cc for '96 to qualify for 400 class.

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

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TE610: w/c, 4-str, 577cc, single. Super powerful enduro thumper with loads of stomp and much more modern styling than the 510. Makes a great SuperMotard. *Verdict: Learn to ride first.*

JAWA-CZ

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

KAWASAKI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

KDX125SR: w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single. 124cc. Similar engine to the KMX (with KIPS power

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valve) but with the stronger competition-derived 'perimeter', square-tube chassis. Later ones had upside-down forks, but were slower than cheaper KMX in restricted form.

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

KDX200: w/c, 2-str, 199cc, single. Based on KDX125, completely redesigned from a/c version with increased suspension travel (which still isn't bad by today's standards), revised Uni-Track rear end, and more top end power. Basically a good clubman enduro bike, very few haven't been raced. *Verdict: The 80s benchmark clubman racer.*

KDX220(R/SR): w/c, 2-str, 220cc, single. As above but updated for '95, and with more power and torque. The SR is the street version with oil pump, indicators, softer suspension and usual street tackle. *Verdict: Yummy.*

KDX250(SR): w/c, 2-str, 249cc, single. Trail bike version of the KDX with heaps of grunt, perimeter frame and huge USD forks. Tallish and very powerful. Japanese spec only. *Verdict: Wow.*

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

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

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

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

there.

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

KLE500: 392lb/178kg, w/c, 4-str, 8-valve, dohc, 498cc, parallel twin. Slightly oddly styled 'town trailie' which shares its engine with the EN500/GPZ500 whose motors were in turn, effectively one half of a GPZ900R. The revvy little KLE makes 50bhp but is far less trail-friendly than the torquy Transalp and more tiring on the road especially with its uncomfortable (pink) seat and minimal fairing. Quite fast for the money and pretty good around town, but definitely not going to suit everyone's taste or backside. *Verdict: Unique.*

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

KLR650: 1987-on, 286lb, w/c, 4-str, dohc, 651cc, single. Bored out version of the 600. Like the KLR 250, recently re-introduced as a cut-price all-rounder now that insurance rating system no longer unfairly penalises over-600s. *Verdict: Competent rather than spectacular.*

KLR650 & (Tengai): 1989-on, w/c, 4-str, dohc, 651cc, single. Bored out to 651cc in 1987, Kawasaki have never had any success in the African rallies, but the Tengai (launched in 1989) is their be-fairinged homage to the genre. Simple KLR may be a bit basic by today's standards but it works well enough, and is tough and practical to boot. Plenty of bottom end grunt. Relaunched in '95 after a break of two years.

KLX650: 337lbs/153kg, w/c, 4-str, dohc, 651cc, single. Bigger version of the 250 with the same drop-dead motocross looks, but with USD forks. Early ones were designed without enough clearance between the rear wheel and the mudguard which meant the wheel hammers into the CDI box at max compression with expensive consequences. No bashplate either. Not as torquy as the Dominator or the Pegaso but great for smooth dirt roads or gravel-strewn tarmac. Ideally suited as a supermoto or town bike. Fast and furious, but not much plonkability. Enduro version and later models didn't suffer the same suspension problems. *Verdict: Good but not good enough.*

KTM

Quality Austrian manufacturer with a reputation for building good two- and four-stroke enduro

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bikes and more recently serious trailbikes. LC4 = Liquid Cooled 4-stroke (both trail and enduro), EGS = trailbike, SC (Super Competition) = enduro bike. LC2 = Liquid Cooled 2-stroke.

125EXC: w/c, 2-str, 124.8cc, single, 94.5kg. Full monty up to the minute enduro bike with Marzocchi Magnams and Ohlins suspension.

250EXC: w/c, 2-str, 248.7cc, single, 112kg. As above but with 50mm forks and a bigger hit.

300EXC: w/c, 2-str, 297cc, single, 112kg. As above but with a torquy open class motor.

360EXC: w/c, 2-str, 354cc, single, 112kg. As above but the big hitter of the bunch with loads a poke.

LC2: w/c, 2-str, 124.8cc, single, e/s, 121kg. New 15bhp learner legal trailie, with easy handling and de-restrictable e/s engine. Pricey but very capable. *Verdict: We like it.*

400EGS(&E&LSE): w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, 398cc, single, 135kg. Smart competition-styled trailbike with great handling and fitted with a nice powerful engine with a balancer shaft. Fast and exciting on forest roads, but not much of a chugger. Great on tarmac though lack of screen may be a problem for some. Tallish seat height and left-hand kickstart make it tricky for shorties but can now be ordered with e/s. Top notch suspension, but not as light as it looks. Also quite pricey. Electric start versions come in 97. LSE version (also for 97) comes with a low seat height, big tank and 19" front wheel for real shorties. *Verdict: Serious trailbike.*

400SC: w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, 398cc, single, 121kg. Nicely balanced, and powerful, enduro version of above, fitted with top-notch suspension. *Verdict: Works well.*

620EGS(&E&LSE): w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, 609cc, single. As above but with even more go - never lacking power. *Verdict: Super serious trailbike.*

620EGS-Adventure: w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, 609cc, e/s, single. Specially designed rally-style trailbike with lots of extras including panniers capable of carrying spare tyres, bash plate and big twin-lamp fairing. Should make a great overlander though it's quite tall. *Verdict: Nice one.*

620SC: w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, 609cc, single. As above but enduro version. *Verdict: Only good riders need apply.*

Duke: w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, single. Strangely styled but quite unique Supermoto version of KTM's big-banger. Stylish little headlamp fairing contains two small headlights, and of course the bike rides on 17 inch wheels with wide, sticky rubber. Lots of fun, lots of cred, but a bit pricey. Slight facelift after a year and latest ones now

come with electric start which is definitely worth paying extra for. *Verdict: Street rod.*

LAVERDA

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

MORINI

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

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

MOTO GUZZI

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

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

Quota: a/c, 4-str, ohv, V-twin. Big Guzzi that like Triumph's Tiger is really just a road bike in trail bike clothing, but without the Triumph's impressive on road performance. A truly monstrous beast with a seat-height that requires a ladder if you're under 6ft. It makes even the Tiger feel small by comparison. Agricultural engine with torque reaction from the shaft and dangerous lack of ground clearance both on and off the road. Good fuel consumption thanks to fuel injection and high gearing, are about all it has going for it. Incredibly expensive when it was launched, but prices did come down. Strictly for straight dirt roads and motorways. Should come with a government health warning. *Verdict: Proves that big is not necessarily beautiful.*

MZ

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

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

ROKON

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

SUZUKI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TS200R: 112kg, w/c, 2-str, 195cc, 35bhp, single. Grey import with its own French championship. Higher spec than UK 125s includes USD

forks. Excellent stroker trailie that's not too expensive. Reasonable availability for a grey import. *Verdict:* *Good value trailie. Tested TBM 3.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DR250 (MK2): o-a/c, 4-str, dohc, single. Grey import with neat new dohc engine. Small, lightish and easy to ride make this a great trailie for beginners.

DR350S: o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single.

Superb little trailie with dry-sump motor, excellent suspension, but small petrol tank. A bit cheap in places, but lightweight and fairly robust. Better off road than on it. Front disc brake not very powerful and wears out rapidly. Can look tatty quite quickly. Unfortunately kickstart only (until 95), and high seat height rules it out for shorties. Engine feels unburstable and will rev and rev though some have been known to drop valves occasionally. *Verdict:* *Great trail bike - the standard bearer.*

DR350(E): o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Enduro version of above with firmer suspension, fewer lights, and bigger carb. Kick start only, but cheap compared to trailbike version. *Verdict:* *Good alternative.*

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

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

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

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

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

DR650: 1996-on. o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single, e/s. Latest version of above with much lower seat height and adjustable rear suspension to lower it still. A bit heavy, but eminently trailable and makes a pretty good road bike to boot. *Verdict:* *Pretty good actually.*

DR750: o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. The original 'Dr Big' - Suzuki's first attempt at a Paris-

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Dakar style big trailie. No-one has built a bigger single - except Suzuki themselves. *Verdict:* *Not for the faint hearted.*

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

TRIUMPH

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

YAMAHA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DT125/175: a/c, 2-str, single. The DTs are the bike that brought trail riding to the masses! Started out as a basic twin shock trail bike back in the late Seventies before adopting cantilever rear ends. They built up a reputation for being an extremely competent trail tool and taking an amazing amount of punishment. The 175s were dropped when the 125 learner laws came along in 1981. *Verdict:* *Still one of the best trailbikes ever.*
DT125(LC): 1987-on, w/c, 2-str, single. The DT came of age with the adoption of watercooling, motocross styling, and most important of all, a power valve. Lost some of its torque but gained a revvier motor and lots more top end together with sophisticated suspension front and rear. In 12bhp restricted form they're as flat as a pancake, but unrestricted make a capable 24bhp. Although in the fashion stakes they've been overtaken by trickier looking tackle, they still top the sales chart because of their hard earned reputation. still good at off roading though they're taller and peakier than ever. Stripped down and tuned up they will pass as a good clubman enduro

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mount. *Verdict: The king lives on.*

DT200(R): w/c, 2-str, single. Lots of zip from this grey import big bore version of the 125. Extra oomph makes it easier to ride. Later version much more modern. *Verdict: Competent all rounder.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WR250: w/c, 2-str, single. As above but with 'hard-tune' engine and even better suspension. Essentially the enduro version of the YZ motocrosser but with wider ratio gearbox and more flywheel. *Verdict: Pokey and purposeful.*

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

TDR250: w/c, 2-str, parallel twin. A TZR250 in trail clothing. Great road bike with demon brakes thanks to dinner-plate sized front disc, and all or nothing powerband. Peaky motor makes it difficult to use off road apart from on fast fire roads, supermotard or competition road rallies for which it is ideal. A thoroughly uncivilised motorcycle - raucous, peaky and excruciatingly uncomfortable with an unquenchable thirst for fuel - and absolutely fabulous. Beware seizures on left hand cylinder, and high speed wobbles on the road. Has a few passionate and delinquent sup-

porters. *Verdict: For petrolheads everywhere.*

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

XT225 Serow: a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. Small but perfectly formed grey import trail bike with kick and e/s versions. Light, manoeuvrable, and easy to ride. Brilliant attention to detail such as mini indicators and sensibly placed grab handles marks this out as a superb green laner. Small engine needs to be worked hard especially on the road to get decent performance, but its a small price to pay for such a good bike. Reasonable numbers brought in so far. *Verdict: Makes sense.*

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

XT250T(R): 113kg, a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, 249cc, 27bhp, single. Foreign market mini XT350 with all the benefits but slightly lighter. *Verdict: Rare.*

TT250-R: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, 249cc, 30bhp, single, e/s. Modern lightweight trailie/enduro that is Yamaha's version of the Honda XR250 but with the benefit of electric start. Revvy motor and a reasonable spread of power, but rather expensive. Unusual electronic dials, and other neat touches. Now officially imported. *Verdict: Pricey but nicey. Tested TBM No.1*

TT250-R RAID: 121kg, a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, 249cc, 30bhp, single, e/s. As above but with large, single, (Baja-style) headlamp and protective guard, bigger tank and slightly different styling. *Verdict: Appealing.*

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

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

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XT500: 304lbs, a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. The original big banger trailie that started it all. Produced for years and years, even when superseded by later versions. Twin shock, 6-volt, character building bike that could often get into more trouble than it could get out of. All sorts of special parts were produced for it for the would be overlander over the years. Vibrates like a jack hammer, and very basic by modern standards but the lack of sophistication is part of its charm, and the low seat height makes it much easier to 'paddle' than some of its more monstrous successors. Can be horribly unreliable and a pig to start, but its easy to work on and plenty still around. Classic buffs have inflated the prices, but don't pay over the odds. *Verdict: Your dad would love it.*

TT500: a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. More serious off roader version of the above. Much lighter and with a punchier motor, but still with 6-volt electrics. *Verdict: Rare.*

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

XT600 Ténére MK1&2: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single, e/s. Superb Paris-Dakar inspired big trailie with (almost) unburstable engine (but fragile 2nd gear), supple suspension, mammoth tank and comfy saddle. Loved by overlanders the world over. Huge touring range thanks to 29 litre tank (on MK1), and clever attention to detail (air filter positioned under tank to avoid being clogged by dust on MK2). Occasional overheating problems on some early ones. Later MK2 versions inherited a full fairing with twin headlights but lost 6 litres of fuel capacity. Feels like riding a great big cosy armchair, and regardless of Yamaha's claims to the contrary, seems to have more power than later 'cooking' versions. Real off road ability in most hands. *Verdict: Best of the big Yams and the overlander's favourite.*

XT600E: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single, e/s. No frills version of the much loved XT. Heavier and more sluggish than the original thanks to steel rims and generally lower spec. Unsophisticated especially suspension, but thoroughly crashable and a respectable plodder. Heaps of grunt. Updated in 95 with more modern looks. *Verdict: Not as good as the original.*

TT600: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Grey import enduro version of above, with improved suspension, more power, more basic instrumentation and lighting, and plastic tank. A few around, they make a more suitable serious trail

bike than an XT. *Verdict: worth looking out for.*

TT600 MKII: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Latest version of the above now available with an electric start option. Much more modern styling includes USD forks, but still only available as a grey import. *Verdict: Yes please.*

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

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

TDM850: w/c, 4-str, 10-valve, dohc, parallel twin. 'New sports' road bike with trail styling developed from the XTZ750 but with much grunter 850cc lump. Lower seat height, much torquier engine and better brakes and handling. Early versions had appallingly clunky gearbox and exhaust collector box rules out an aftermarket centre stand. Not really a trail bike unless it's high summer, nice and dry and the trail is easy. Soft suspension limits speed off road, but not on it! *Verdict: Brilliant roadie.*

TW200: a/c, 4-str, 18bhp, single, e/s. Fattish-wheeled fun bike which makes a brilliant and economical (though odd-looking) trailbike for the short of leg, with both electric start and kick. Surprisingly good on the road, and makes a competent commuter (70+mpg possible), but let down by lousy SLS front drum brake and needs an extra gear. Suspension a bit basic and tyres can be expensive. Gearbox sprocket a special part due to outrigger bearing. Will embarrass pukka trail bikes in the right hands. *Verdict: Strangely attractive.*

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

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

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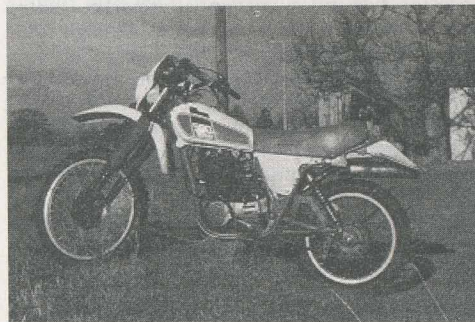
BIKES

Honda XR400RT, 1996, N-reg, 800 miles, 1 owner, immac cond, Renthals, Acerbis Plastics, Werx Connection, sump/frame guards, Scott Summers fork brace, N-style graphics, possible delivery, £4200 ono. Tel 01463 794539 (Inverness)

Honda XR400RV, 1997 spec, P-reg, 983 miles, showroom cond, Renthal bars, never used in competition, reluctant sale, £4300 ovno, first to see will buy! Tel Alan on (eves) 0181 686 7592, (day) 0973 713191 (Surrey)

Honda XR400R, 1996, 700 miles only, Supertrapp, sump guard, Acerbis Brush guards, frame guards, MXA graphics, exc cond, £3895 ovno. Tel Nick on 01222 890697 or 0402 243622 (S Wales)

Yamaha XT500, 1977, S-reg, taxed & MOT until August, 25,000 miles, not original cond hence £650 ono. Tel Jeremy on 01609 776851 after 6.30 pm (North Yorks)



Honda CRM250R-1, everything you've read is true which is why I'm so sorry to be selling it, Brush guards, Renthals, O-ring chain, £1700, also XT250 a bargain at £300. Tel 0117940 7868 (Bristol)

Honda CRM250R-1, TBM's own bike is up for sale thanks to arrival of XR400R, T&T, G-reg, red, 8k, brand new r/wheel bearings, head bearings, fork seals & bushes, f/brake

pads, extras include Renthals, brush guards, X-ring chain, RSV silencer and Pro-Valve fork tune-up, bargain at £1700, brilliant trailie - hot to trot. Tel 0181 840 4760 (9-5pm ONLY) (London)

Honda CRM250R, J-reg, excellent cond, USD forks, only ridden off road once, 5000 miles, £2300 ono. Tel Steve on 01244 660449 eves (Chester)

Yamaha DT400, a very sound classic with easy access to spares, needs some finishing for road and trail, new fork seals & cables, good tyres, £375. Tel John on 01483 284598 (Surrey)



Honda XR600RT, 1996, N-reg, 1300 miles, immac cond, oil changed every 300 miles, very little use, must be seen, £3495. Tel 0115 9445266 (Nottingham)

Honda XR650L, 1994, 3500 miles, taxed & MOT, exc cond, £3295. Tel 0802 450338 (Brighton)

Honda XL250RE, RFVC, B-reg, 10,500 miles, immac cond, 10 mths MOT, £1200 ovno. Tel 01634 254224 (Medway, Kent)



free

Yamaha IT125, 1984, full MOT, tidy light-weight bike, full rebuild, receipts available, reluctant sale, best offer around £750. Tel Pete on 01734 814416 (Tadley, N Hants)

Yamaha XT500, 1980, MOT June, 6800 miles, totally original, immac cond, too good to take out! New tank, mudguard, side panels - all genuine Yamaha parts, £2000 ono. Tel Russell on 01279 505648 (eves) (Bishop's Stortford, Herts)

Suzuki DR350M, big bore 385 kit, brush guards plus many extras, Shoei helmet, 2 pairs spare tyres. Tel Mark on 0181 316 0266 after 7.00 pm (London)

Honda NX250, 1992, 116 Kg, 29bhp, 4-valve DOHC, liquid cooled, exc dual purpose bike, also sold in Japan as AX-1 model, 80mpg, low mileage, £2299. Tel Eddy on 0181 372 2584 (London)



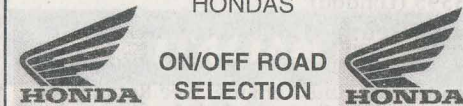
Honda NX250, white, 1988 model, good cond, supremely capable on/off road, very light and lowish seat height, very torquey motor, beautiful styling, £1999. Tel Michael on 0171 289 1174 (London)

Honda NX250, 5500 miles, '94, K-reg, never off-roaded, recent r/tyre, new f/tyre, new O-ring, mint cond, new bike forces sale. Tel evenings only 01202 877332 (Dorset)

Husaberg 400, 1996, the ultimate enduro/trail bike, exc cond, fully road legal, £4000 or p/x anything interesting. Tel (home) 0181 653 0141 or (work) 0181 746

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Yamaha XT600 Tenere, red/white, 1986, C-reg, 12 mths MOT, elec/kickstart, Italian import, orig cond, exc starter hot or cold, £1500 ono, poss swap for 250+, 2-stroke Enduro/Moto-X, road legal. Tel Glen on 01380 728729 (Devizes)
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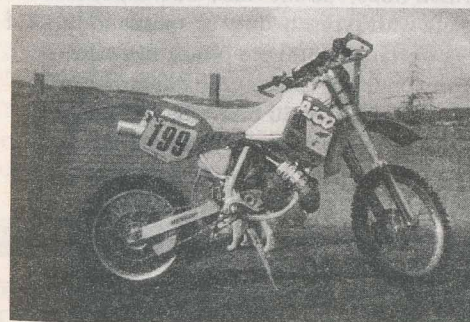
Tel Gary on 01377 256267 (Driffield, E Yorks)

Husqvarna 510TE, 1986, long tax, mono shock, f/disc, many spares incl gearbox, powder-coated frame, exc runner, recent rebuild, £950 ono or swap for XR. Tel 01691 831238 (Shropshire)

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KMX125/200 - O C O	Transalp O C O
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Competing on trailies	Cambrian Rally
Cagiva WMX500DE	KTM400EGS
Husaberg FE501e/s	Chris Scott
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Two-up trailing	Night trailing
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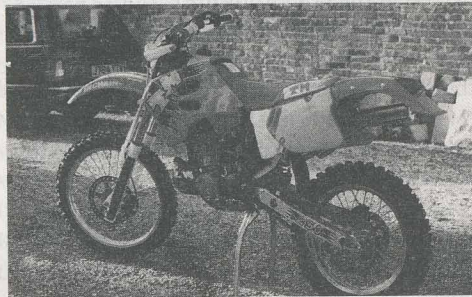
Honda MTX125, 1992, unrestricted French import, same styling as Elefant, low mileage, long MOT, square section frame, stored last year, good cond, not raced, £1475 ovno. Tel 01992 550842 (Herts)

Yamaha DT200R, imported '95, full test, showroom cond, white/blue/gold, first to see will buy, £1500ono. Tel John on 0191 551 8381 after 6pm (Tyne & Wear)



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Yamaha YZ125, 1991, cylinder, £50; YZ465, 1981, LH side panel, £15; TRI-Z clutch cover, £30; YZ125, 1991, manual, £10 & bottom shock bearing, £20, all parts boxed and new. Tel 01723 871172 (3-6 pm weekends) (Scarborough)

Honda XT600E, full workshop manual & parts catalogue, £20; throttle cable, £10; clutch cable £10; rear soft pannier frames, £10. Tel Tim on 01384 232711 (Dudley)

Honda XR500R brand new valves and crank, suit up to 1981 model, cost £600 new, offers invited. Tel Martin on 0181 296 0305 (Surrey)

Yamaha RD/DT125LC, Haynes workshop

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manual, 1982 to 1987, £5. Tel Mark on 01702 306680 after 6pm (Essex)

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Wanted workshop manual for 1979, SP370. Tel Stuart on 01264 366686 (Andover)

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Wanted Husky 510TC, 4-stroke, cylinder/barrel. Tel Chris on 0181 342 8286 (London)

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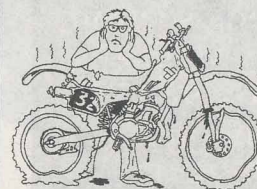
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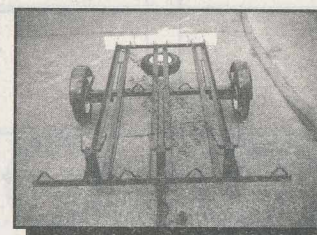
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