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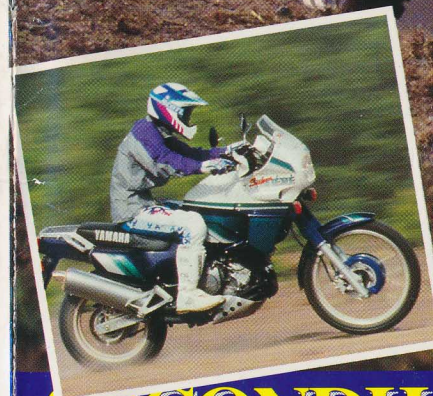
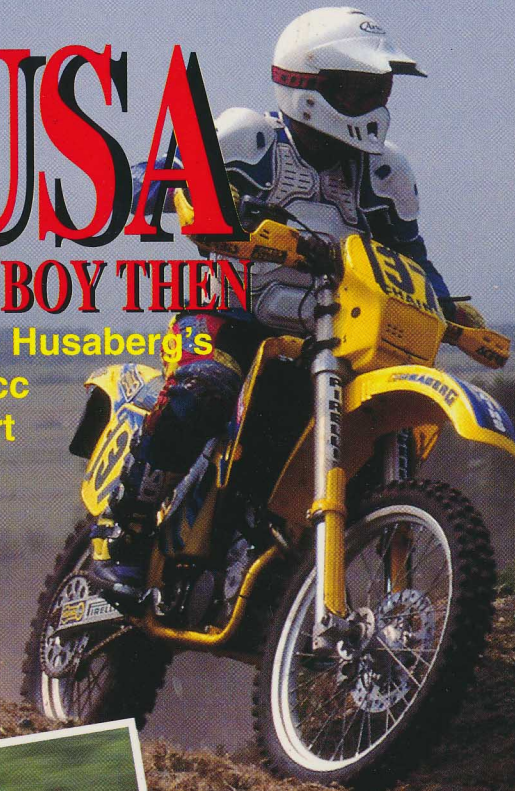
PLUS

- XR600 in Wales
- Cagiva WMX
- Pennine Trails
- Competing on your trail bike

TRAIL BIKE MAGAZINE

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We unleash Husaberg's
mighty 501cc
electric start
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TRAIL BIKE

MAGAZINE

Issue 2
 September 1995

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As used by TrailBike Magazine

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Road racing
Speedway
Trail riding
Hillclimb
Trials



Grasstrack
Motocross
Enduro
Ice racing
Touring

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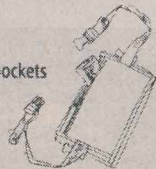
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W

OW, WE CAN hardly believe the response we've had to the first issue of TrailBike Magazine. Everybody we've spoken to has expressed delight at finding a magazine that caters for their particular interest, and the general opinion is that this magazine has been long overdue.

Many of you have been quick to suggest topics to be included in future issues, and the consensus is that we should test anything from the latest generation of trail-styled road bikes to pure enduro machines as well as everything in between.

We of course, are keen to ride anything that comes equipped with lights and a pair of knobblies and would like to hear your opinion on what should be included in future issues. If you want your voice to be heard then write to us at TrailBike Magazine, POBox 1555, Salisbury SP3 4PF.

After all it's you the magazine is aimed at.

Si Melber

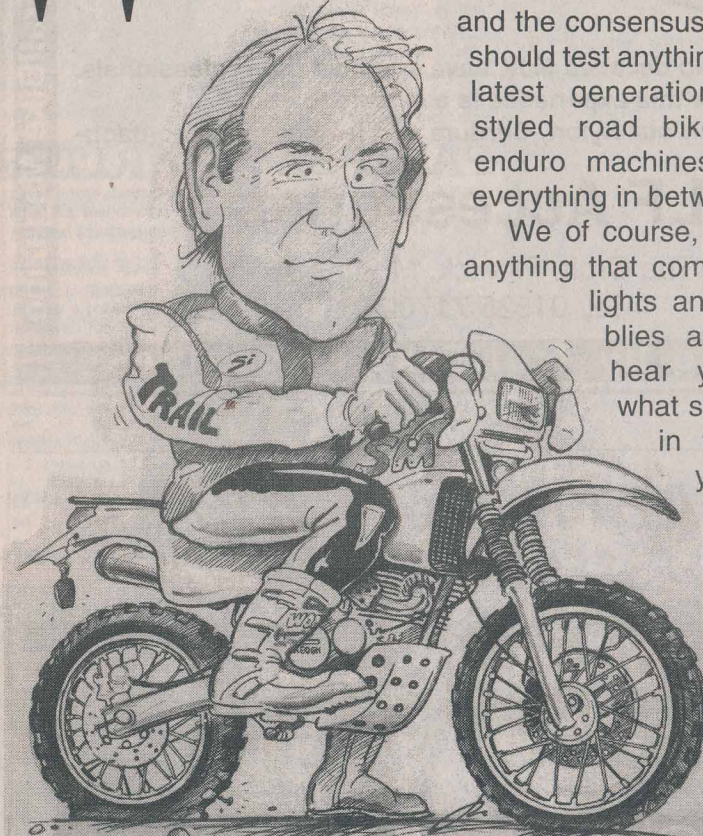


Illustration John Keogh

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SUPERMOTOS FOR BRITAIN

Next year looks set to be the year of the SuperMoto with radical new bikes from Cagiva, Suzuki and Aprilia.

Cagiva whose 600cc Canyon (powered by the same engine as the WIG trail bike), is due to debut in the UK this autumn, looks set to follow it up with a pair of radical new Ducati-powered V-twin SuperMotos.

The new bikes which will probably be available in 650 and 800cc sizes, feature swoopy modern roadster bodywork mated to trail bike inspired chassis, and will be marketed alongside the existing range of Elefants, primarily as easy going sports tourers.

Suzuki will also be launching a new SuperMoto styled version of its existing DR650 which is expected to make an appearance at this year's NEC bike show in October replacing the stop-gap model that was launched (in the UK) at last year's show.

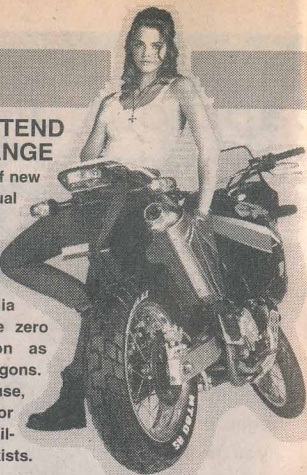
Aprilia whose Pegaso is set to be replaced by a more road-oriented model (as reported in last month's TRAILBIKE MAGAZINE) are remaining tight lipped about any eventual launch date.

PIRELLI EXTEND RANGE

Pirelli have added a range of new fittings for their latest dual purpose tyre the MT80RS.

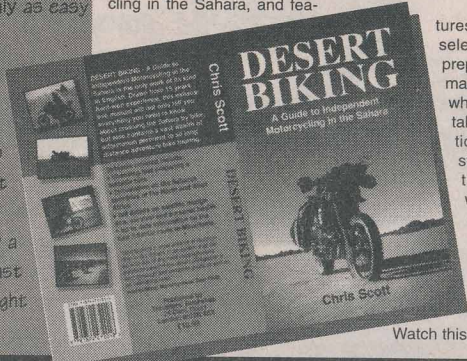
The new rubber which is designed to fit a range of big trailies such as the Cagiva Elefant and Aprilia Pegaso, features the same zero degree radial construction as found in the best selling Dragons.

Designed mainly for road use, the tyres can run either with or without a tube and are available from all good tyre stockists.



PAPERBACK WRITER

Soon to be launched in paperback form is the guide to desert biking by Chris Scott. The fully revised, updated and illustrated 200 page book is the result of the author's 12 years experience of motorcycling in the Sahara, and fea-



tures chapters on selecting and preparing a suitable machine, advice on what you'll need to take, and a selection of eventful stories on bike travel in the world's largest desert. Launched in September We'll be reviewing a copy shortly.

Watch this space.

New trail bikes from old MX-ers

A company in Daventry is breathing new life into old bikes by taking used Honda CR Motocrossers and turning them into enduro and trail bikes.

The conversion carried out by Pro Racing, adds a lighting coil, wiring harness, new head and tail lights, quieter silencers, and includes the option of a wide ratio fifth gear and larger tank, to convert any Honda CR125, 250 or 500 from 1990 onwards, to road legal spec.

Using secondhand motocross bikes which are cheaper than equivalent trail or enduro machines, means buyers get a bike with good suspension and plenty of power for a fraction of the price of an equivalent aged trailie.

Owners can get their existing machine converted or choose from a limited number of ready-converted bikes in stock.

Certain pre-1990 CRs can also be given the treatment as well as Yamahas, Kawasakis and Suzukis, for more details call Pro Racing on 01327 301322.

Caption Competition

Here's our very own Paul Blezard caught during a moment of deep thought during the recent Welsh Two Day Enduro (full story begins on P38). All you have to do is come up with a

witty caption for the photo, send it in to us and the lucky winner will get a spanking TrailBike T-shirt absolutely free. Answers on a postcard (with your name and address please!) to Caption Competition, TrailBike Magazine, POBox 1555, Salisbury, SP3 4PF



In Brief

BIG BRISTOLS!

Owners of big trailies in the Bristol area can now join a new club that's been formed just for them. Bristol Big Trailies aims to cater for anyone with a 500+cc trailbike that wants to go green laning, adventure touring or just meet up with like minded souls. Contact Trevor on (0117) 924 8762 if you want to join.

PRICES UP!

Honda have just announced a price increase for a number of their models. This takes the price of a new Africa Twin to £6995, a Transalp to £5525, and a Dominator to £5190.

BMW have also had a price hike with their R1100GS now costing £261 more, taking the price up to £8976 and the Funduro goes up from £4910 to £5059.

PRICES DOWN!

Honda have slashed the price of genuine brake pads/shoes on all their existing trail bikes. The reduction of up to 72% will apply to a number of older machines too.

SALES UP!

Bike sales are up again by 10% YTD (excluding mopeds). The Funduro remains the UK's best selling trail bike with 268 registrations for the first six months.

LAST UP!

BMW look set to launch an 850cc version of their monster GS trailbike late this year or early next year.



So you want to compete eh?



You've got your trail bike, you've done a bit of off roading, and now you want to know how to compete on it. TrailBike Magazine gives you the low down

IF LIKE US you've always fancied the idea of competing on your trail bike but aren't really sure what sort of events are suitable, it may come as a surprise to you to learn that there's a whole panoply of competitions open to the trail bike owner.

From French circuits to the beaches of England, from Welsh bogs to Irish pubs, all play a part in the huge variety of competition available to anyone with a trailie and the willingness to compete. We've listed a number of different events any of which can be tackled by a rider of modest ability on most types of machinery, the only limit is your own imagination -good luck and see you there.

Long Distance/Classic Trials: (On/off road) These are very much fun events run along the lines of the original pre and post-war trials. Unlike modern trials they don't require specialist machinery, are not too taxing, and involve a fair amount of green laning and road work between sections. You can enter on practically any bike (an ordinary sturdy road bike will suffice) though of course, a trailbike of any size and capacity is obviously better, purpose built trials bikes are specifically excluded.

The format is this: Competitors are divided up into classes depending upon the size and weight of

machinery they're riding, and the idea is to navigate your way to, and along (usually up), a series of marshalled sections over the course of a day.

This involves following a simple road book for directions (or better still following someone else), and a reasonable degree of machine control in order to get your bike to the top of the sections. Most sections which are invariably tricky green lanes, are reasonably navigable, though there are some real humdingers out there to sort out the wheat from the chaff.

The details vary from trial to trial, but usually sections are numbered down from 12 to zero (along the length of the section), and you have to get as far up them as possible without stopping or putting your feet down. If you fail to get to the end of a section the last marker becomes your penalty point for that section, and obviously the person with the fewest penalties at the end of the event is the winner. That said most competitors are far



There's no reason why you can't compete in a whole host of events on your ordinary trail bike

more interested in taking part in an enjoyable event with the opportunity to test themselves on some excellent green lanes than they are in trophy hunting.

INFO

Classic Trials

Association
of Classic
Trials Clubs

Secretary
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76 Church Road
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Surrey
TW10 6LW
0181 332 7035

MCC

Membership sec
Mike Furze
405 Chatridge
Lane
Chesham Bucks
HP5 2SC
01494 774885

Sheffield &
Hallamshire MC

Membership sec
Lynne Healy
35 Barnet Avenue
Sheffield
S11 7RN
0114 2302381

So you want to compete eh?



Get out and ride your trail-bike in one of the long distance trials held up and down the country

Long distance trials seem to cause all manner of riders to come out from the woodwork, from complete novices on L-plated 125s, through enduro riders out for a shakedown ride, trail clubs and TRF members on a club run, to competitors that probably competed in the original post-war trials - in fact I've often been beaten by riders more than twice my age! There's always help on hand should you need a bit of advice, or require a push and the variety of machinery involved means that however inappropriate your bike, there's always some poor bugger struggling along on something worse than you.

Rain or shine (and it's usually the former), you're guaranteed an enjoyable day out, riding in some of the most spectacular parts of the country without the distraction of white hot competition. The relaxed nature of the events means there's usually enough time to stop for a spot of lunch in a handily placed local, and the beauty of the events are that you really can compete on any machine without prior preparation.

Long distance trials are often run in conjunction with cars, and there's usually a smattering of spectators to give you a cheer on some of the trickier sections. Competitors are required to use either trail or trials tyres (and there are usually classes for each), but motocross and enduro tyres are specifically excluded in scrutineering to give everyone the same chance.

There are a handful of clubs running this type of event up and down the country with most taking place in spring and autumn. There is also a championship should you wish to get serious about it, and certain clubs like the MCC run 24-hour events (such as the Lands End Trial) which go on through the night with greater distances and see many riders competing in fancy dress!

Rallies: (UK and abroad, mainly off road)

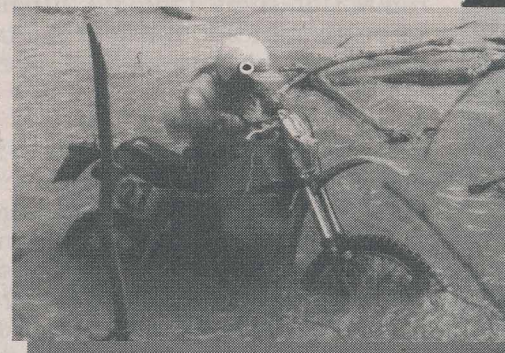
These are fun events designed to encourage people to ride off road in a semi-competitive format. Like Long distance trials the events are formulated very much with fun in mind, but with a timed element adding an extra dimension. The

Cambrian Rally in Wales (run by the Welsh Trail Riders Association), is a typical example of such an event. You can still compete on any trail or enduro bikes (and there are classes for both, as well as sub-classes for multi-cylinder machines, over 750cc etc), but unlike long distance trials, there's more off-roading (primarily along forestry tracks), and you don't have to worry about putting your feet down and picking up points!

In the Cambrian, competitors complete two 60 mile laps of a well marked course through forest, green lanes, farmers land and along public metalled roads. Rather like an enduro there are a number of timed stages to make the event competitive, and sort out winners and losers, but many riders simply take part just for the ride and the scenery. Again the timings are relatively relaxed, the competitors friendly, and the whole event one big PR for the sport.

Bike preparation is minimal, although because of the higher speeds involved, things like sump guards are well recommended. Again tyre choice is limited to create equality, and the whole event is concluded with a prize giving and nosh-up at the local rugby club (no jokes about Welsh Rugby please!).

The Bracken Rally is another such event though run more along the lines of a treasure hunt with competitors responsible for planning their own routes and finding a number of markers along the way. There are not that many of these events at present, but their increasing popularity is forcing many clubs to consider running this type of 'semi-serious' competition in the future.



'Right. The first person who says "I s'pose you were only dipping the lights" gets hit'

INFO

Rallies

Welsh Trail Riders Association

Secretary
Steve Williams
11 Pwllmawr Ave
Rumney
Cardiff
CF3 8HH
01222 799151

Bracken Rally Jon Watson-Miller 330 St James Road

London SE1 0171
232 1814

Rally of Discovery
Philip Gunn
Watergrass Hill
County Cork
Eire
00353 2188 9462

So you want to compete eh?

Rally of Ireland: (Road and some off road)
Again this is a fun event open to riders of any machine, but primarily aimed at big trailies. The format is again like that of a giant treasure hunt lasting a number of days. Riders are given a certain amount of information from which they have to deduce and plan their route enabling them to arrive at a number of set destinations where they acquire a piece of information. These destinations may be on or off road but are generally along farm tracks or ancient lanes. The event is made even more fun by the spurious nature of Irish Ordnance Survey maps, the unpredictable weather, and the rumbustuous Irish people. Almost every activity seems to start and finish in the boozier, and there are awards for finishing first, last and every place in between!

Events like the Francilien allow you to ride your trail bike around the outside of road bikes on a number of French circuits

French Rally Championship: (Road/circuit)
As the name implies this is a serious championship made up of a number of rounds which take place throughout the year in France. The events closely resemble a car (tarmac) rally with special stages taking place on closed public roads, a few private lanes, and best of all on a number of French racing circuits.

Although the event is open to any type of machine, trail bikes and supermotards are the most popular, due to the, er, indifferent nature of some of the French tarmac. Again there are classes for different capacities, and there always seems to be a small but noisy British contingent reveling in the wonderful French atmosphere.

There's a fair degree of preparation needed if you want to compete successfully in this type of event, including reccying all the stages, and converting the bike to run with extra lights for the night time stages! Then you could probably do with a support van to provide help should you need it, and some spares etc etc..... The events cover a huge area as well so be prepared for a lot of road mileage in-between special stages.

In many ways though, the most fun is to be had by entering on your standard trailie with an extra set of headlamps and a road-book holder - and just go and enjoy yourself. Not only will you have a great time, but it gives you the opportunity to get abroad, compete on your trailie, ride against some spectacularly fast French riders (men and women), and hack round a number of famous French circuits such as Le mans and Magny Cours. Then of course there's the food and wine and the fact that if you take a van you can stuff it full of duty free on the way home.

Enduros: (Off road)
These are off road competitions that range from fun events right up to national and international standard, though the format is essentially the same. Competitors race around a pre-marked course usually on forestry or farmers land, and must complete as many laps as possible in the allotted time. There is a time card which you must hand in at every check-point and competitors are required to arrive at check-points within a given time span, points being deducted for late or early arrival!

Unlike motocross, the course is usually much longer with a lap being measured in miles, and tending to feature more natural obstacles rather than man-made jumps etc. Very occasionally road sections are involved between the stages and for this reason bikes must be, arbitrarily at least, road legal.

A number of different formats exist such as Hare and Hounds and Two Man/(Woman) enduros, and it's possible in some events, to share a bike

INFO

Rallies (cont'd)

Francilien
FFM
74 Avenue
Parmentier,
Paris 75011

Enduros

Trail Bike
Enduro Club

Membership sec
Dawn King
27 Park Road
Raunds
Northants
01933 626009

Sand Racing

Mablethorpe MC
Sand racing Club
Marie Nicholls
01205 722923
(long ring)

So you want to compete eh?

with another rider. Most competitors use specialist enduro bikes but more and more clubs are encouraging riders to use trail bikes and many enduros run a special trail class for this purpose.

Though in theory you could use any trailie, because of the arduous nature of the event, smaller, lighter machines such as DTs or DRs are best unless you are super-human.

SuperMotos:

(France, circuits)
The biking equivalent of (car) rally-cross with competitors racing around a half dirt/half tarmac circuit on specially converted motocross bikes wearing hand cut slicks.

Unfortunately there are no events in the UK except for a one-off in Northern Ireland, though there was a failed attempt to get a British championship underway in 1989. In France however events still exist with certain classes for production trail bikes (such as Yamaha's TDR250 and Cagiva's SuperCity) using dual purpose tyres and keeping costs to a minimum. Good fun as long as you don't mind falling off a lot, and great for learning machine control.

Beach Racing: (Beaches!)

Wild, unbridled, hairy racing for riders with nerves of steel and wanting more grit in their diet! Competitors race along huge courses constructed on famous beaches like Weston in Avon, and Le Touquet in France. Generally riders use motocross bikes, but there's no lack of Enduro machines,

trailies, quads, or specials to add to the spectacular atmosphere.

Usually more pushing, digging and walking than actual riding, and races tend to last for hours. Try to imagine digging the entire allied trench system of the Somme with your bare hands while people kick sand in your face and you'll get an idea of what competing in a beach race is really like.

Sand Racing: (Beaches!)

Peculiar British sport with its roots firmly embedded in the history of early motorcycle racing. Unlike a beach race the courses are smaller and run along the lines of grass-track or speedway. Just about anything goes as far as machinery is concerned from full blown motocrossers to trailies, specials, enduro bikes or any combination of the above. Fun, frantic and quaintly eccentric - not good for chain life though.

Hill Climbing: (Closed roads)

Another peculiar British sport that sees competitors aiming to get to the top of a (generally) short and twisty hill in the least possible time. Runs are fast, explosive and exciting to watch with no run-off areas, and generally a lack of grip. Absolutely any machine is eligible and you can enter your trailie, and lock horns with things like Formula One cars and GP bikes!

Fortunately racing is against the clock rather than each other, and the best machines have a combination of power and manoeuvrability. There's usually two runs each giving an aggregate time, and there are sometimes classes for different types of fuel used.

Because of the twisty and often slippery conditions, it's a great chance to stuff it to big sportsbikes with your trailie! Well worth it.

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Water is a great leveller, and a favourite hazard in a number of off road events

J

The Cagiva WMX500DE was built between 1986-1988 for the American dirt bike market and designed purely for the purpose of desert racing. The Americans you see, have hundreds of thousands of square miles of trail terrain on their doorstep, much of which is classified as desert, and they like to enjoy themselves by racing across it. This calls for specialist machinery. Trail bikes are all right, but they are generally too heavy and not dirt oriented enough. Motocrossers on the other hand

are a little too peaky, nervous and thirsty for this sort of terrain. What's needed is a machine that combines the agility and power of a motocrosser with the stability, comfort and range of a trail bike. Come on down Cagiva's WMX500DE.

At its heart is a water-cooled, reed-valve, single cylinder, 495cc, two stroke engine from the 1985 Cagiva motocrosser. This is a high compression motor with loads of power and plenty of useable low-down torque. It's fitted with a wide ratio, five speed gearbox, and a generator and lighting coils to bring it up to enduro specification. Either side of the massive 18 litre plastic fuel tank sits a pair of radiators for

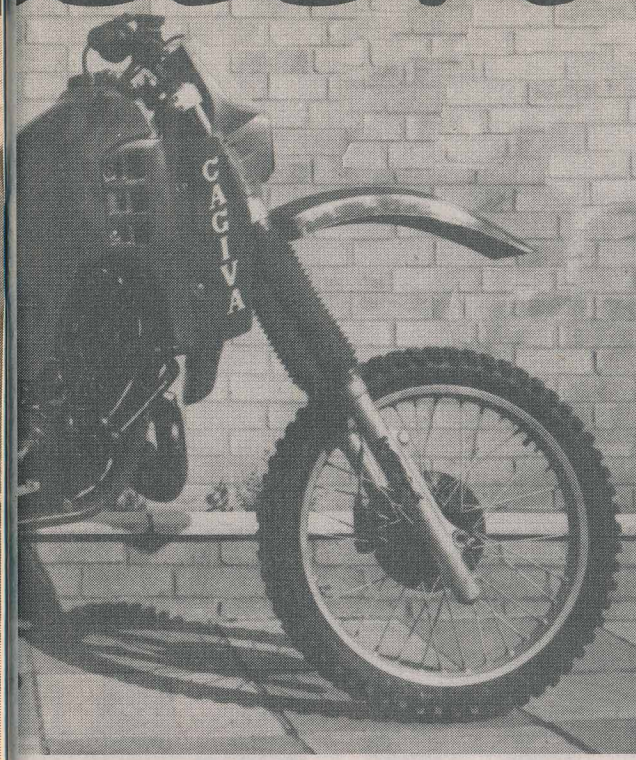
ust desert



the liquid cooling, and cycle parts include Marzocchi forks, Brembo front brake complete with a floating disc, and a large Veglia speedo calibrated in mph. At the rear there's an alloy swing arm with a 'Soft-Damp' linkage mated to a remote reservoir Ohlins shock, a rear drum does the stopping and Akront alloy rims grace both ends.

The story of how the bikes ended up in the UK is an interesting one. Back in 1988/89 Husqvarna (and off road Cagiva) importer Mike Carter, spotted them sitting around in a bonded Swiss warehouse where they had been sent prior to despatch to the US. It appears these machines had nowhere to go, due to the US importer

S



clutch cover for which spares are already unavailable!

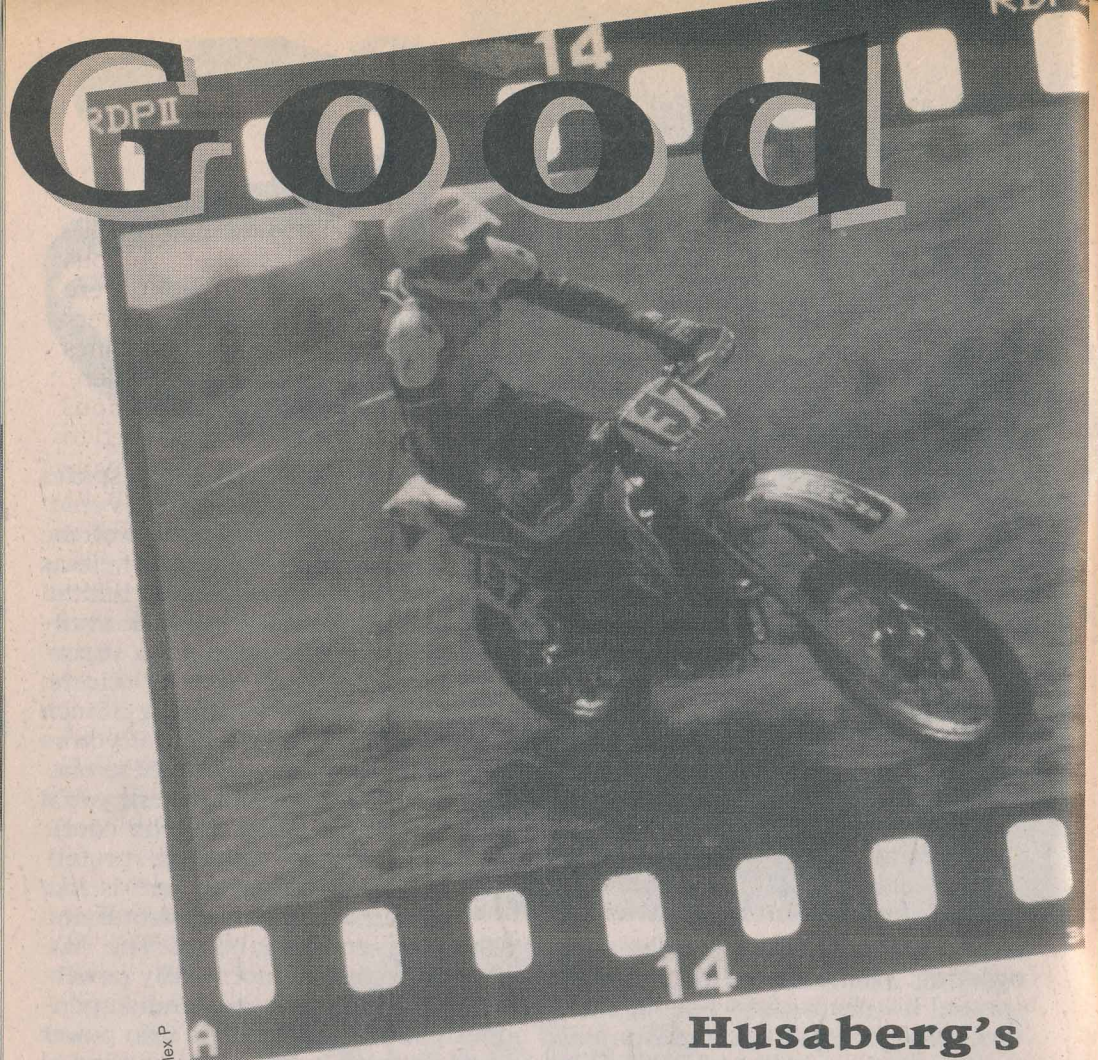
Thanks to the nature of the terrain for which it was designed, there's only limited amounts of steering lock available and this makes for a super-tanker sized turning circle. This combined with the 35inch seat height means that if you're going to ride one anywhere outside the American desert, you'd better be either tall or confident in your ability - preferably both. To ride one is like sitting astride a caged bull and

either going bust or simply over-ordering. Whatever the reason, Mike spotted his chance and bought six of them on a hunch. That hunch proved to be correct, and after advertising he received orders for ten bikes. He got back in touch with the Swiss warehouse and another six bikes were duly despatched, and this went on until Mike had brought in 27 in all.

When we contacted Mike he told us of a few problems he'd come across, apparently some spares are becoming difficult to get hold of and some are already non existent. He also told us that the bikes can be difficult to start and have a tendency to kick back, in the worst circumstances this can break the kickstart and

giving its gonads a slap! The MX-derived engine is enormously powerful, wonderfully torquey and stupendously loud, though there's no power band as such, it just keeps coming in huge waves, sweeping you along with its force, and usually catching you out.

If you fancy something entirely different you can pick one up for as little as £400, if you can find one, but a 'good-un' will fetch nearer £800. That's budget money by anyone's standards for something as much fun as this. With lowered suspension, a pair of 17inch rims laced on and some sticky tyres it would make a very outrageous supermoto. Now that's what I call cheap thrills.



Alex P

Husaberg's half-litre thumper now comes with an electric start and all the roadgoing niceties of a trail bike. Si Melber pushed the button and hung on

Vibrations

'SO YOU WANT to ride the Husey do you?' Said Steve From Husaberg dealers *In Chains* eyeing me up much like a spider would a fly. 'You want your body to be pummelled to a pulp, then be chewed up into little pieces and spat out eh?' I nodded solemnly. 'Okay, as soon as I get out of traction I'll bring it round.' Ooh-er, this was not shaping up to be a brilliant start.

The history of Husaberg is a relatively recent one. Begun in 1988 by a group of Swedish engineers that defected from Husqvarna, they set about designing and building a lightweight enduro machine that could compete at the highest level. The bikes which are not unlike Husqvarnas in design, use a simple philosophy of a powerful four stroke motor housed in a lightweight chassis which utilises the cream of European components to make a race winner straight from the crate. Results followed swiftly, and by 1991 Husaberg had won every single world championship four stroke enduro title. More recently Husaberg have been bought out by Austrian manufacturer KTM who look set to give the small company a firm financial footing on which to build its future generations of machines.

Along the way however, Husaberg

became famous for building tyre-chewing, fire-breathing, blood-spitting, stomach-churning, gob-smacking off road four strokes. Famous because the bikes they built were light, strong and very, very powerful. Famous because the machines they produced kept a legion of dentists in foreign holidays, and famous because although everyone wanted to ride a Husaberg, no-one would volunteer to start the thing. With its left foot kickstarter, high compression motor and a reputation for biting back, it's no surprise that people would rather stick lighted matches under their fingernails than make eye contact with an unstarted Husey.

But all that's about to change with the latest generation of electric start bikes. One simple prod of the button, a whiff of throttle and Bob's your uncle, or at least should be Steve assured me, when the test day finally dawned. 'If for any reason the electric starter should pack up' he added 'don't bother with the kickstart, bung the bike in the van and find the nearest pub!'

Though they built their reputation on enduro bikes, then later, motocrossers, the newest Huseys are a cross between a trail bike and a balls-out enduro machine. And though they don't come fitted with indicators or mirrors they do come with all the relevant and neatly fashioned switchgear including an

indicator switch, horn, a proper wiring loom, superb 60W quartz-halogen glass headlight with dip and main beam, stop and brake lights, road legal silencer and a speedo. Putting one on the road is simply a question of fitting trail tyres and registering it.

In making the Husey more civilised for road work, the factory certainly

haven't compromised on power, in fact quite the reverse. The fitment of the electric starter has allowed the engineers to increase the compression of the Husey's big-valve head to a whopping 11.8:1, and the 501cc engine now fires out between 55 and 60hp depending on who you believe.

The beauty of the engine is in its simplicity. Unlike ordinary four strokes the Husaberg uses what is essentially a two stroke bottom end mated to a four stroke barrel and cam. There's no oil pump to go wrong or add weight to the engine which instead relies on the splash created by the camchain running in a bath of oil to carry lube up to the single overhead camshaft on the end of which is attached the water pump. The rest of the engine is a conventionally designed, liquid cooled, four valve single with a bore and stroke of 95x70.7mm fed by a single 38mm flatslide carb breathing through a pair of filters neatly located in the frame backbone.



The Husaberg has astonishing amounts of grip and loads of engine braking

Everywhere you look, the Husaberg oozes quality. From the span-adjustable Brembo brakes to the stainless steel exhaust, from the neat frame welds to the Ohlins rear shock, there is a mark of quality and clever design which lifts this bike out of the morass of the ordinary opposition and places it in a class of its own.

Fire up the motor on the press of the button and it quickly settles down to a satisfying 'toomp-toomp' sound, but blip the throttle and the engine responds instantly with a sharp crackle to the exhaust note. On the road the Husaberg is a blast. With grip all the time, the Husey simply responds to a twist of the throttle by charging forwards and lifting the front wheel in the air. It's a brave man that gives it a handful away from a standing start. So flexible is the motor that the big Husaberg will pull away quite comfortably in third gear and still manage to lift the wheel if you're not watching out for it.

Of course with a bike weighing so little (it tops the scales at a smidge under 110kg), it takes no effort to flick it from side to side, and dashing down to the shops for a packet of 20 Bensons brings a whole new experience to the term bike control.

Earlier Husabergs were notorious for excessive vibes but this one has a

unique way of dealing with it. Power comes on so strong that you simply spend all your time clinging to the bars with white knuckles trying to get the front end back on terra firma, and barely even notice the vibes.

But it's on the dirt that the Husaberg truly excels, and with this in mind we decided to enter it in a two-man enduro to really get the measure of the beast. You should have seen the look on the faces of the other competitors when we lined up for scrutineering and they spotted the Husberg's electric start. The rumour went round the paddock that one of the bikes had an electric boot and before long we were surrounded by people poking and prodding the button just to

see what effect it would have. Now to you and me an electric start is something that's been around for aeons and really should come as standard on just about every bike you can think of, but in the parochial world of enduros we couldn't have attracted more attention if we'd have turned up wearing three helmets.

The nature of a two man enduro is that the competitors race around a natural course that contains a bit of everything, in our case some sandy



When the going gets tough, the tough get... er, blisters. Husaberg thunders between the trees at the Lowestoft Invaders enduro

hillclimbs, a tricky wooded section and a bumpy flat out blast within a lap that ran to about 1.5 miles in length. The first rider sets off and tries to complete as many laps as possible in 30 minutes before switching over to the other rider who may use the same, or a different bike. And this goes on for two hours non-stop with a break for lunch followed by another two hours riding.

The format varies from place to place, but the start is always the

same. Competitors line up in fours with a silent, cold engine and when the flag drops it's a matter of kicking and prodding the kickstart, turning petrol on and off shaking the bike from side to side, fiddling with the choke and trying everything to get it started before finally disappearing in a haze of blue smoke. Or at least it was for the other competitors. We simply pushed the starter button and fired off into the distance, getting the holeshot every time. Round one to the Husey.

Unfortunately our luck wasn't to hold for long. Ten minutes into the first session the Husey spat off my riding partner and in the ensuing carnage both he and it got run over by a brace of pursuing stokers. The result being the Husey's front brake line got torn out of the master cylinder. At the end of the first half hour session he came into the paddock to see if we could make running repairs but there was nothing we could do. We had a straight choice of either retiring or continuing with no front brakes. Gulp.

Knowing just how potent the Husey could be, it was a fairly daunting prospect to set off into the morass of a hectic enduro without a set of front anchors to rely on, but being the true professionals that we are (yawn!) we decided to continue. I jumped on the Husaberg for the next session with my right foot practically glued to the rear brake lever. But I needn't have worried, thanks to the engine's high compression there was masses of engine braking available to slow it down just by dropping down through the gearbox. On the downhill sections it was necessary to simply engage first gear and let the engine tick over. If the motor stalled you

pulled in the clutch and pressed the starter button without even slowing down. No problem.

By the beginning of the afternoon session, not only were we still running but we were really beginning to get the hang of the big four stroke. Firing it out of the corners and along the back straight, the Husaberg sounded like a squadron of bombers thundering along. The drive and grip it managed to find even in the soft sandy going was truly awesome and the only time we were passed on the straight was when braking into the final turn, or when backing off caused it to shake its head from side to side.

Otherwise, the chassis and suspension was superb. Up front fully adjustable 57mm White Power upside-down forks take the hammering out of the bumps while the rear Ohlins shock (again fully adjustable), is simply sensational. The faster you tackle bumps the better the suspension irons them out with the best approach seemingly to keep the power on and 'float' the front end over the undulations leaving the rear to soak up the shocks. On some of the larger 'whoops' it was possible to bottom out the forks though we didn't try fiddling with the adjustments, but the rear end was set up exactly to our liking.

For a big four stroke, the Husaberg is a quick steerer though it could do with a few degrees more lock to help it through the tightest of sections. The other chassis trait is its tendency to understeer a little, though it teaches you to get forward and plant the front wheel firmly, in time for the turns. Despite acres of suspension travel, the Husaberg has a relatively low seat height which

helps low speed manoeuvring, and even short riders shouldn't be phased by its dimensions.

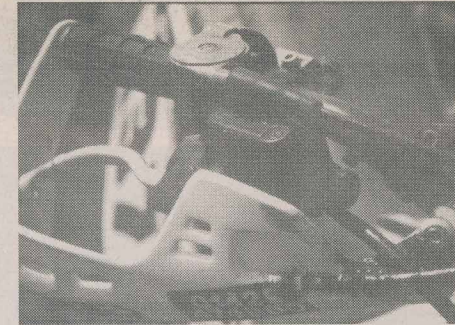
But it's the power of that thundering engine that really impresses. No matter what the throttle position the Husaberg simply churns out grunt. On the steep, sandy climbs, it would chug up in second or third gear, and if the engine began to bog down you simply opened the throttle wider and the motor would reach into its vast reserves of power and with a roar, dig you out of trouble. The only thing you had to watch out for was finding unexpected grip, which on the uphill sections would send the front end soaring quicker than a startled pheasant.

Each time we fell off (and there were plenty of times), the Husaberg started on the button without fail, saving vital seconds and more importantly in an enduro, precious energy. In fact as we swung into the paddock for the final time and handed in our time card we had chance to reflect on the fact that were it not for the 'leccy start we would never have completed the course - simple as that. For trail riders the electric boot is a boon, for enduro bods it's an absolute necessity.

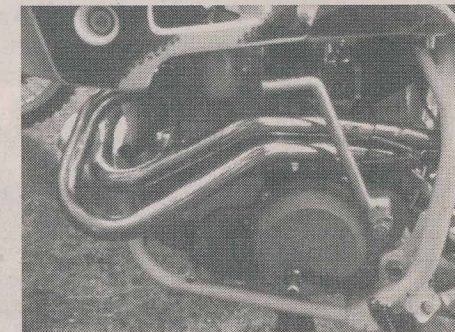
Were it not for the fact that the Husaberg costs a not insignificant £5,500 on the road (with the electric start), I would order one tomorrow. It's a lot of money to pay, and many people will consider it too much for a dirt bike. But you must remember this is a competition winner, and a road going trail bike all in one. Its specification list reads like a who's who of top European suppliers and it's so much fun to ride you almost feel like writing out the cheque on the spot.

Of course if you really can't afford it you could always save yourself a few hundred quid by opting for the non electric start model.... ha ha ha.

Hoo hoo hoo. Hee hee hee hee hee. Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha. Ha ha ha ha ha ha...



Hands up those of you who want to ride the Husaberg without brakes. Front hose ripped from the master cylinder by an errant rear tyre



Thumping Husaberg motor uses two stroke style bottom end and four stroke top end to produce its power - and boy does it produce some power

Price £5,500

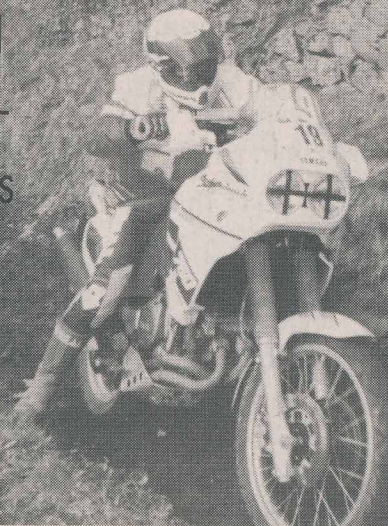
Plus points
Wonderful engine, instant throttle response, quality components, electric start.

Minus points
cost.

Many thanks to Steve at In Chains for loaning us his Husey demonstrator. If you want to be seriously scared call him on 01425 474800

...One Careful Owner...

How super was Yamaha's SuperTenere, and what sort of second-hand buy does it make? Dave Cornish thinks he knows



After the dust had settled (quite literally) on Yamaha's successful XTZ750 SuperTenere Egyptian launch back in 1989, all of the UK's allocated batch of 350 bikes were keenly snapped up by the dealers. This meant the SuperTen had immediately outsold Honda's brilliant but underrated Transalp more than twice over. While the initial press reports were favourable and Yamaha's innovative Spirit of Adventure tours kept interest high for the next few years, here in Britain after the initial fuss had died down, the SuperTen's sales never really took off as expected. The reasons for this are that unlike our

garlic munching chums over 'La Manche', the Paris-Dakar replicas (and dirtbikes in general) don't have the same street-cred as a set of super-sport wheels, and while desert heroes such as Stephane Peterhansal and Mr Dakar himself, Hubert Auriol, are French household names, over here they are just unpronounceable Froggies.

More recently, the cost of the ever rising Yen has forced up the Yamaha's price to £6099 (from £3799 in 1989) while Cagiva's superb 750 Elefant is currently more than £500 cheaper. Since the launch over six years ago, very little about the XTZ

has changed apart from the usual annual paint and graphic updates, a clutch actuating mod in '92 to ease the clunky gear shift is about all the improvements you get for your extra £2300 today.

Yamaha's engineers had a virtually clean sheet of paper when designing the power unit for the SuperTen and for those of you that don't already know, the XTZ is powered by a 360-degree, 749cc, 10-valve, liquid cooled, dohc, parallel twin. A counter-balance shaft cuts out unwanted vibes, while a brace of 38mm down-draught Mikunis supply the fuel/air mix via virtually straight inlet tracts. To keep the length of the motor down, the gear shafts are stacked alongside the dual balance shafts behind the barrels, which are canted forward in true Genesis fashion. All this technology means the dry sump motor pumps out a claimed 70bhp at 7,500rpm though the maximum torque of 49ftlbs does not appear until 6750rpm is showing on the tacho. As you might expect, the engine loves revs and power doesn't drop off even when pushed hard into the red zone. Interestingly they didn't get it completely right though, because while the chain driving the cams is mounted on the right hand side allowing a reduction in engine bulk, it is com-

The engine loves revs and power doesn't drop off even when pushed hard into the red zone

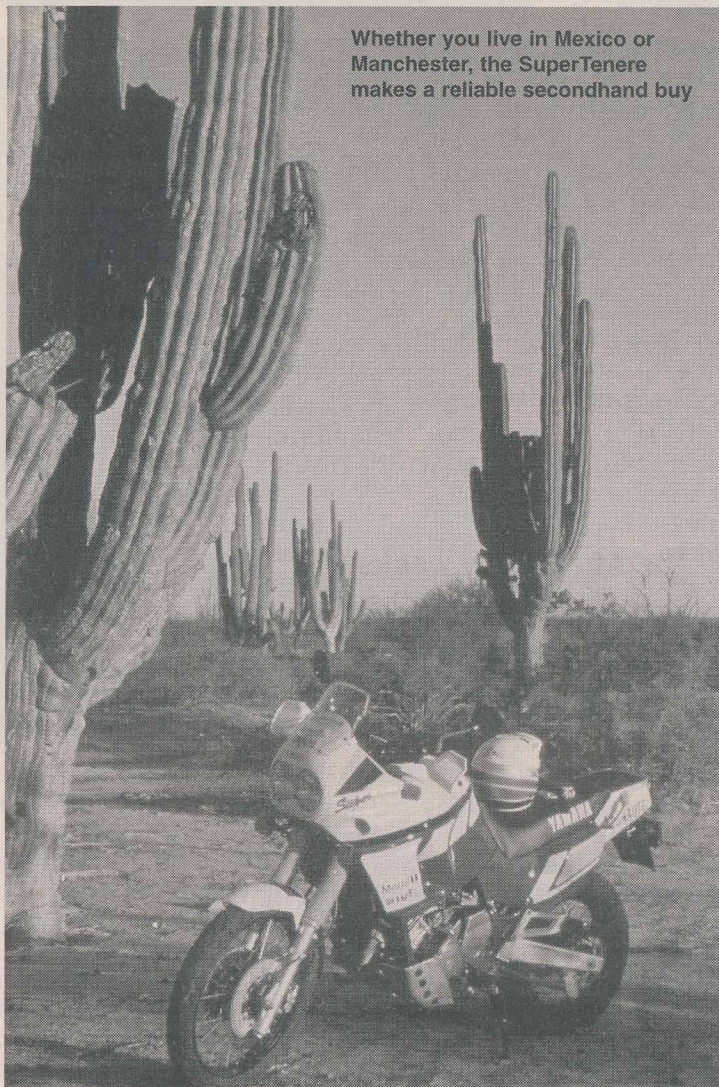
pletely at odds with the exhaust headers routed haphazardly around the engine, increasing the width so much as to cause the footrest to be off-set by several inches and which in turn greatly reduces ground clearance on the right.

Chassis-wise the SuperTen uses the usual trail bike 21inch front wheel, but fitted with twin 245mm discs and suspended by a pair of well damped 43mm forks. At the rear, a

Deltabox steel swingarm is mated to a preload adjustable shock keeping the 17inch wheel firmly planted on the tarmac. With a dry weight of 447lbs and a seat height of over 34inches, the SuperTen is definitely no pussycat when it comes to chucking it around. Add 26 litres of fuel into the equation and things

become quite exciting especially when attempting low speed manoeuvres. However, once on the move it starts to become a little easier, and at higher speeds the fairing, which houses a powerful set of twin headlamps, diverts most of the wind blast away from your body, though taller riders may find a flip-up extended screen a wise investment.

First impressions of the bike are of its sheer bulk, your knees are forced wide around that huge petrol tank and if you're under six foot tall, just reaching the ground can be a



Whether you live in Mexico or Manchester, the SuperTenere makes a reliable secondhand buy

and there must be a question mark over the speedo's accuracy as it's possible to see 130mph indicated.

Starting the motor is a simple affair only necessitating use of the bar-mounted choke when cold. Whilst mechanically the XTZ is very quiet, it is in my opinion disappointingly so, especially the noise emitted from the two into one exhaust. The huge exhaust can, with its stainless steel heat shield, reminds you more of a Super-Dream than a works desert racer.

The shift into first gear doesn't bode well either, the only bike I've ridden with a worse gearbox action was an early 80s Guzzi - surely not the target

Yamaha were aiming at. A good, positive prod with a motocross boot gets results, but when revving hard the XTZ can be reluctant to hold onto the chosen ratio, sending the tacho spinning into the red zone; and it's probably best not to rush gear changes if you want to ensure mechanically

longevity. At the bottom end, power delivery is smooth and strong but it runs into a rather weak mid-range which is frankly as flat and uninspiring as the exhaust note. Dial in more than 6,000rpm though and the Yamaha retrieves itself with a final flurry of top end which may well surprise many a sports bike rider.

If that's not enough for you, TTS dyno'd a stock XTZ at 60bhp (at the rear wheel) and after fitting a less restrictive silencer, a pair of K & N filters and setting up with a Dynojet kit the figure not only shot up to 70bhp (at the wheel) but more importantly filled out the mid-range by an equivalent amount. Any more power isn't really needed as the chassis starts to flex at high speeds, and over 110 mph (autobahn only of course), a slight weave will set in even when riding in a straight line, although this tendency is reduced with the fitment of new tyres.

On the subject of tyres, the Bridgestone Trail Wings that come fitted as standard, grip well enough in the dry to allow you to ground out the brake lever closely followed by the sump shield, however in the wet a certain amount of caution is called for especially when braking. The twin front disc set up requires a firm tug on the lever to slow you down quickly, and suffers from the usual spongy hoses and lack of feel. Experimenting with pads and fitting stainless brake hoses would definitely help out on the front while conversely, at the rear the brake

seems too fierce, locking up frequently (especially in the wet) and when playing at Dakar raiders off road. Interestingly the same rear caliper is used on the 900 Elefant and in this application it works fine (except for the same appetite for pads and disc) and provides good feedback, although this may be down to a different master cylinder (Brembo) on the Cagiva. Why couldn't Yamaha have done the same on the SuperTen? After all, Brembo is used on other Yamaha's notably the TDM 850 as standard equipment with satisfactory results.

Before I stuck my hand in my pocket and shelled out for my SuperTen, I decided to ride both the XTZ and the Africa Twin to compare notes. What I discovered was that the Honda is a superior bike in almost every department, but at the time (mid 1990) the

Africa twin cost almost £1000 more than the Yamaha and for me (a Yorkshireman) that was a 1000 good reasons to purchase an XTZ. Eventually I picked up a 1990 model less than three months old with 1200 miles on the clock for a saving of £450 over a new bike. The paintwork was a superb pearl/metallic white with graphics in red and silver with matching red gaiters and disc guards, the previous owner had fitted a pig-ugly top-box which prevented access to the toolkit inside the lockable compartment at the rear. Once home the top-box was ripped off and a spare pair of alloy Renthal handlebars replaced the higher and bendy

After a few weeks of ownership the SuperTen proved itself to be a brilliant all-rounder

originals, a couple of Chesterfield-Belgarda Yamaha stickers fitted onto the fairing gave the bike a works look and finally adjusting the rear shock to give a firmer ride meant the bike was just as I wanted it.

After a few weeks of ownership the SuperTen proved itself to be a brilliant all-rounder although hacking backwards and forwards to work on it proved to be a bit of a pain, especially in heavy traffic with a full tank of gas. Out in the country on sweeping B-roads or less congested A-roads the Yamaha came into its own. The riding position is comfortable, and fitted with the lower bars, allowed me to tuck beneath the stubby screen at high speeds (90+mph) making progress quick and easy. Fuel range varied with use, though hard riding prompted the SuperTen to gulp unleaded at an alarming rate. On several occasions it managed less than 30mpg, however a more restrained throttle hand could stretch a gallon to a little more than 40 miles with 35mpg being the norm. These fuel consumption figures may seem poor but the motor encourages and responds well to a good caning (oooh matron), the lack of midrange means that much of the time the tach is between 6 & 8000rpm with frequent excursions deep in to the red just to keep the power coming.

This sort of hooliganism will provoke similar mpg returns from many bikes, but other bikes don't need revving as hard to achieve an equivalent level of performance. Two-up riding is okay on short to medium distance trips, although longer hauls (over 120 miles) the soft seat means that you and your passenger are

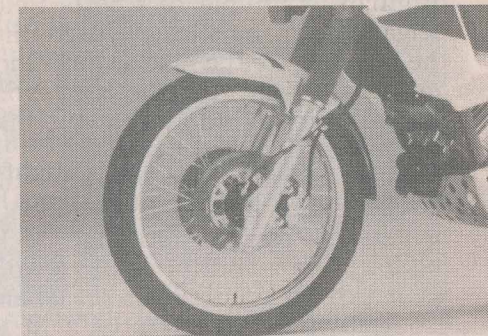
basically sitting on the seat base, and it's a bit of an endurance test to last out until a fuel stop is needed - 160-200 miles being the average before the tank runs on to reserve. On a weekend trip to the Donington Park GP, Julia my long suffering other half said that the XTZ (with top box re-fitted) was just about the most uncomfortable experience this side of childbirth, and only recently has she been persuaded back onto a bike. Riding solo is infinitely more comfortable, with more room to shift around on your backside, and it's possible to last out a full tank of fuel without too much discomfort. That excellent fairing combined with after-market hand-guards keeps most of the elements at bay and allows highish cruising speeds to be maintained - license permitting - with the only flaw the fairing's tendency to resonate against the tank at about 5000 rpm.

Running costs for SuperTens are reasonable considering all that available performance, servicing being simple enough for all but the most mechanically incompetent owner. Valve adjustments are only required at 25,000 mile intervals, and keeping the carbs balanced and fresh oil in the tank (dry sump remember) is basically all you have to do. Other consumables are inexpensive; a rear Bridgestone lasted over 6,000 miles and was replaced by another costing only £55. Rear brake pads only last about 3,000 miles (EBC and Ferodo pads were tried with no real improvement), and the OE chain and sprockets were still serviceable after 7,000 miles. The only recurring fault which was carried

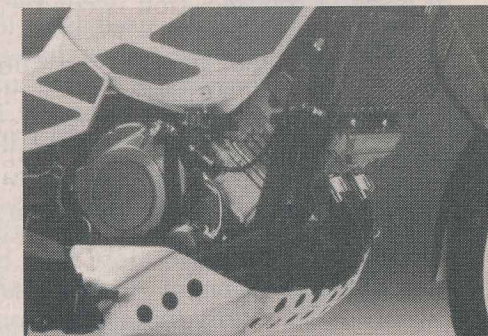
out twice under warranty was the leaking cam cover gasket (they all do that sir!) which continued to leak long after the Yamaha guarantee had run out.

The mainstream press dismissed the SuperTen as having off road styling with little or no ability in the dirt, this is unfair and patently untrue. Any half-decent rider can make good progress as long as care is taken with the throttle. Dry green lanes are no problem for a well ridden SuperTen, the tyres are the most limiting factor when the going gets tough (ie wet), but obviously, with all that weight and bulk to control (*come come Dave, you're not that heavy - Ed*), when things go wrong they go wrong both quickly and sometimes painfully - not to mention expensively. all right I know it's no DR350 or Dominator, but do you really want to ride 180 miles to the Peak District, do some trails and ride back in a day on a DR or Dominator. The SuperTen can cope with this sort of treatment no problem and the intrepid pilot wouldn't suffer too much in the process.

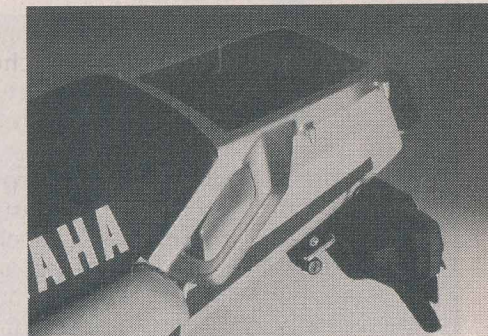
To prove the point I entered mine in the White Peak (long distance) Trial. The first sections weren't too bad and fairly dry conditions meant that by using the big Yam's smooth bottom-end pick-up, sections could be cleaned without any bother. Unfortunately as the day progressed the rain came down making things very difficult and getting underway from section starts was almost impossible. Towards the day's end my SuperTen, didn't look quite so super, having been stuck in the mire and dropped more times than I care



Beefy 43mm forks work well but brakes lack feel



Ten-valve Genesis motor has a weak midrange but a stonking top-end



Seat is, surprisingly, too soft to be comfortable

...One Careful Owner...

to remember.

To be fair this sort of thing isn't the ideal terrain for the SuperTen but it's a measure of its versatility that it can cope with it all and still come out on top. Back home the Yamaha took two days of powerwashing, dismantling, and repairing to bring it back up to its pre-trial glory, and to my delight the only signs of any off road abuse were the dents in the bashplate.

Buying a used XTZ750 these days, is becoming more difficult, with new ones not selling in appreciable numbers, secondhand ones are getting thinner on the ground. 1989 models however can still be found for less than two grand, and providing servicing hasn't been neglected, any SuperTen has to be a sound buy at a relatively cheap price. Since Yamaha's updates to the XTZ have been few over the past six years, when buying a used bike look at the overall condition and mileage rather than just the age. A service record is a bonus of course and any accessories are well worth having (especially hard luggage systems) though they don't necessarily add to the secondhand value.

To sum up, Yamaha's XTZ750 is a good all-rounder which doesn't really excel at anything in particular. It can tour better than most road bikes, has a longer fuel range than many tourers, and allows you to explore areas totally inaccessible on mere road bikes. Not only that but reliability problems are virtually unheard of and if you discount its appetite for fuel, running costs are reasonable. What more can you ask of a secondhand trailie?

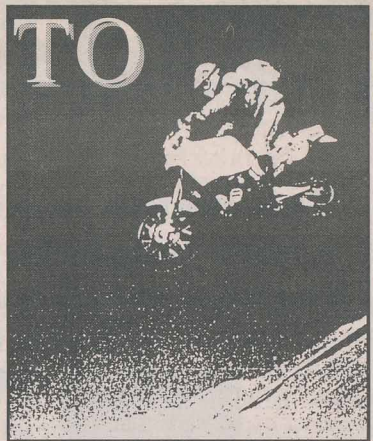
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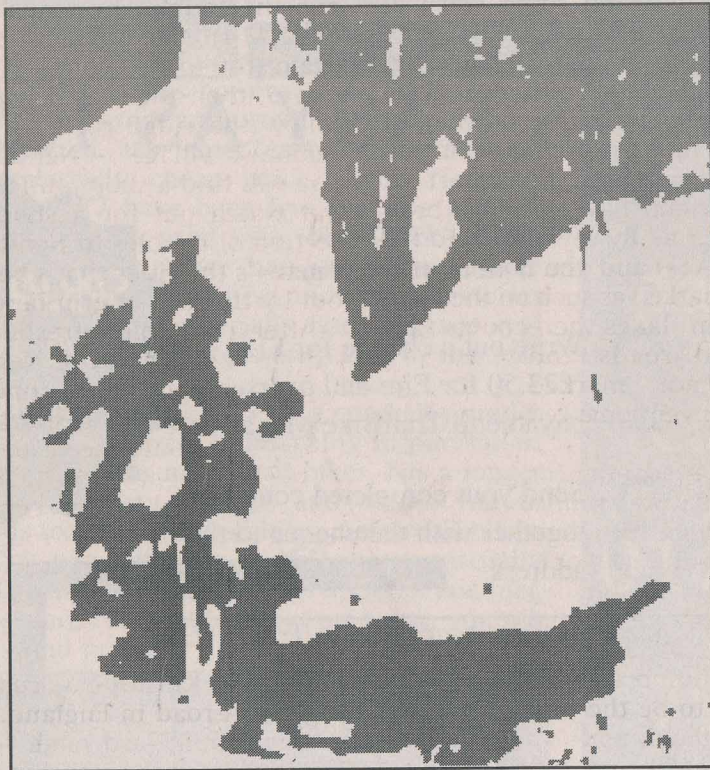
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This month takes us into the north Pennines, where Cumbria, Northumberland and County Durham meet, an area sometimes described as 'Britains last wilderness'



The Pennines - the backbone of England - a range of upland hills running roughly north-south from Northumberland to Derbyshire, providing some of the most spectacular scenery and enjoyable trail riding the country has to offer.

At the northern end of the Pennines lies an area whose bleak landscape is easily accessible by trail bike. It is

a remote area, with extreme weather in winter (that's all months except August) and without too many of the casual tourists that afflict the more picturesque parts, so if you decide to visit, come properly prepared.

Most of the old roads described here have a rough stone surface (or they did once, though in many cases it has sunk over the years), which offer a

challenging and inspiring ride to almost any well-ridden trail bike. To follow the suggested route you will need four Ordnance Survey Landranger maps: 86, 87, 91, and 92. And if you need to buy these, make sure you get the latest edition of sheets 86 and 87 as most of the unclassified roads in this part of Northumberland have recently been redesignated as Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs) and you'll be able to find them marked as such on the map. Other green lanes hereabouts are unclassified roads and therefore not marked with any conventional red symbol.

The old roads in this area form natural routes of varying lengths to suit the weather and available light. Alston, which lies at the crossroads of the A689 and A686 just inside the Cumbria border, claims to be the highest market town in England, and is a good base camp, as petrol and cafes are now open throughout the year.

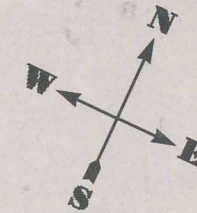
Start by going up the cobbled high street of Alston (take care in the wet!) and fork left (heading east) on the A689, signposted to Stanhope. After a couple of miles, a stony unclassified road leads off left (746,463), to join the B6294 where it bridges the River Nent at Foreshield. Climb the stony track past

Foreshield farm to the junction where a new wooden signpost points out the 'public by-roads' available (752,474). Turn right, and right again (the road becomes tarmac once more), then turn left (759,460) and follow the ridge road to 'England's remotest village' - Nenthead. Here you will find a shop, pub and toilets, but watch out for a short slippery section of cobbles in Nenthead itself - many's the rider that's been caught out by the lack of grip here.

After a suitable refreshment, head back out of Nenthead the way you came in and within a short distance you'll need to take the right turn (at 781,442) and begin climbing the steep, very rough road to Black Hill, turning right again, to meet up with the A689. Now turn left (uphill) to breast Killhope Cross - the highest A-road in England.

The rebuilt lead mine complex at Killhope is on the right, in the valley bottom, but press on into Upper Weardale, crossing the bridge at Cowshill and taking the left fork (not the mine access), which will carry you high above the valley, with superb views of the surrounding countryside.

Follow this for a couple of miles to the T-junction at Newhouse (873,389) - care is needed in icy



The Rough guide to Britain

conditions - before turning left up the very steep hill, then almost immediately forking left again. This is steep - try it on a bicycle some time and you'll see what I mean. Climb to the high point at Race Head, then descend steeply again to turn right by a grove of trees (893,406), on to Seeingsyke Road, a typical rough upland road.

You can follow Seeingsyke Road to where it meets tarmac (902,391) but a better idea is to turn left down a steep drop (901,399), past some fascinating old mine workings with a slippery ford, then up the hill and left onto Middlehope Lane (906,402). Go back to the tarmac, take a left, and come back to Seeingsyke Road, but this time go right the way along, before dropping down back to Newhouse.

If you now make your way on to the A689 and head for Ireshopeburn, you can bear left as the main road turns sharp right. This minor road climbs steadily up for a couple of miles, and after passing through two gates, the surface deteriorates into a rough, stony holloway. Climb right on to the

top and pass through two widely-spaced gateposts. The road itself is called Grasshills Causeway, or the Galloway Gate, and has the distinction of being the highest unclassified road in the country - you are now truly on top of the 'Roof of England'.

Drop back down to the B6277 (at 814,352) and turn left. After about three miles, turn right into what looks like the access to Greenhills farm (840,320), and follow the pre-turnpike road back up the valley. This becomes tarmac again near Harwood, then reverts back to being a green lane after Frog Hall (808,342), to join the B6277. Close by a milestone, (at 774,364), another council sign points out a 'public by-road' off to the left. This one needs

care to follow but, believe it or not, is the old stagecoach route from London to Carlisle. At Tynehead farm (763,381), the road now looks like somebody's front garden, but the council has erected more signs to point the way down to the sleeper bridge (762,381) and back on to the tarmac to Garrigill, which boasts a pub and a post office that serves big



Many of the routes are clearly marked with Public Byroad signposts

mugs of tea on request.

Keep left and follow the signs for Leadgate, then go left to join the A686 (693,433) heading west. Turn on to the pre-turnpike route (at 676,423), then if you feel like it you can stop at the local 'bikers' cafe' on Hartside Top - to enjoy a bacon sarnie while admiring the best view for miles around (the scenery, not the waitress!).

After a suitable break, head down the A686 and turn right on to the old road to Hazel Rigg (628,411). Now, bear right on the tarmac, then quickly left again on to an enclosed green lane. Turn left at the green lane crossroads (615,393) which takes you back to the A686, then go right to Melmerby, which has an excellent cafe and pub.

If you're not hungry, just before the village turn right to Gamblesby, then after about a quarter of a mile fork right (at 615,377) and climb the long green lane back towards Hazel Rigg. Follow the tarmac through Unthank to Five Lane Ends (604,420) where a BOAT sign points you up the climbing byway to Selah. Now you can retrace your route past Hartside Top, heading for Alston, but turn left on to The Award Road (700,439) and

into Alston via the hamlet of Raise.

If that's not enough for you, stay on the A686 and cross into Northumberland (at 741,510), and about three miles after the border, turn right (at 773,531) and right again at the T-junction. The steep climb of the Old Coach Road over Longcross rears up ahead. This is easy to follow all the way back to the



The Drover emerges from a tricky stream crossing on his trusty BeeEmm

A686 at Clargillhead (737,498). Turn right, then, after three-quarters of a mile as the road leaves the wood (at 739,508), turn left past Moscow farm, and down to the anthracite mine. Finally turn left again (732,498) and climb up to the A686, turning right for Alston and a relaxing pint of best. You deserve it! **The Drover**

New Products

New from Making Tracks is the Fore-arm Mapcase that avoids having to stop and pull a map from your pocket when you're out trailing. The case features a transparent vinyl window with velcro straps that attach it to your arm, and comes with a two year guarantee.

Fore arm Smash

It costs £14.95 plus £1.50 P&P from Making Tracks, on 01295 680294 and TrailBike Magazine have got five to give away absolutely free. Send your name and address on a postcard to Mapcase Offer, TrailBike Magazine, POBox 1555, Salisbury, SP3 4PF and the first five out of the postbag get the goodies.

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THE HEAT IS ON



If you're tired of washing your bike down by hand every time you come back from a trail ride, help is at hand. Power tool manufacturers Stihl, have just added two new pressure washers to their existing range of cleaning equipment.

The RE101K is designed for the domestic market with a powerful 1300psi jet of water that can be varied from a pencil beam to a broad fan.

The washer is equipped with a pistol grip lance, eight metres of hose and a container to hold degreaser or detergent. It costs just £188.94 plus VAT which is a snip when you consider their latest 'hot water' RE560W which is designed for industrial use costs ten times that.

Details of both machines from good tool suppliers or by contacting Stihl direct on 01276 20202.

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Wales



Tales

For many people, the Welsh Two Day Enduro is the ultimate trail ride. Paul Blezard went along to find out

AS I THRASHED down the A3 on the XR600 I felt a bit guilty that the poor beast had lain neglected since the Cambrian Rally, still sporting 100mph gearing and knackered rear wheel bearings.

Fortunately I only had to ride it to the M25 to rendez-vous with fellow TRF member and Welsh 2-day veteran Ian Pearce. We loaded the XR onto the trailer alongside his KDX200 and made good progress till the car ran out of diesel near Abergavenny! finally arriving at the lakeside paddock in Llandrindod Wells just before scrutineering closed.

Luckily, being a serious enduro competitor, Ian is speedy with the spanners and he'd slipped a new rear tyre on his KDX in the time it took me to procure three sets of black-on-yellow numbers and stick 'em on the XR. I had at least come with the required rear wheel bearings and seals and with some help from another competitor who took pity on me, we got the new parts fitted in record time. Ian also suggested replacing my completely shagged rear tyre, so I splashed out £40 on a brand new Barum and had it fitted in two shakes of a sheep's tadger.

Unfortunately there wasn't time to fit my 48-tooth rear sprocket so I was stuck with my motorway-friendly 40-tooth (not to mention an air filter still full of Cambrian dust) but with a final tightening of a loose footrest I was through scrutineering. Phew! nothing like a bit of last-minute machine preparation!

Strolling around the crowded paddock I bumped into evergreen Paris-Dakar veteran Heribert Schek who, at 62, was doing the Welsh on an electric start DR350 alongside his equally famous and similarly-mounted daughter. Patricia recently married Brit Paris-Dakar hero Jon Watson-Miller and the Welsh was her first event since the birth of their first child last Christmas but she looked as fit as a fiddle.

In contrast to Patricia, there were grey-beards, slap-heads and beer-bellies in abundance which made me feel quite sprightly as I figured if these old codgers could get around the course, so could I. I

Pete Willman



Wales Tales

was also pleased to spot a couple of other XR 600s in the programme, but couldn't help noticing that neither of them were entered in the hundred-strong 'Sportsman' (ie 'duffers') class. In fact the only big banger to keep my XR company was a much more serious KTM 600; hmmm...

Some of the lightweights were pretty humble though; air-cooled DT125 and 175 Yams, old Jawa and Bultaco twin-shocks, and some of the clubman-class bikes were far from exotic; a smattering of Armstrong/Harley Davidsons, an XL250S, a DT400 and some seventies twin-shock PE Suzukis and Maicos.

Team 'budget' Trailbike were camping in the paddock (a snip at ú3 a night) which at least meant we didn't have far to stagger to the start in the morning, and the well-appointed lakeside cafe has civilised ablutions and does an excellent breakfast.

You're allowed into the parc ferme 15 minutes before your start time but working on your machine - even stashing tools - is strictly VERBOTEN until ten minutes before the off. The 30-strong sidecar contingent (which included several German crews) started first - two per minute from 9am - followed by the solo sportsmen, three at a time, who ride on the same schedule. Unlike some enduros, everyone rides exactly the same course in the Welsh, it's just the time allowance which differs according to your class.

At 9:40 precisely I was off, with heart racing in anticipation of the 160 miles of road, trail, rocks and mud that lay ahead. I got off to a great start by missing the turn as soon as I went off road and found myself repeating a the first loop of trail. Brilliant! It was two months since I'd last ventured off road (and 18 months since my last enduro) so I'd barely had a chance to get back in the rough-riding swing of things when we were confronted with the

first special test.

Special tests are the only parts of enduros in which you're officially racing against the clock - everywhere else you're just trying to stay on the schedule set for your class. This is where the events are usually won or lost but my only concern was to avoid falling off. I've learned from bitter experience that it's far better to take it steady and stay on board than to try to save half a second, fall off and lose half a minute.

The first test at Church Farm was basically a tricky trail with a bit of trials thrown in. I was delighted to get around without stopping but, relaxing prematurely just 20 feet from the finish, I locked the front wheel on the slick grass and fell off at the time-keeper's feet! Curses!

As I pushed the bike over the line with my poor left pinky throbbing like a good 'un, a little old lady said, 'Don't worry dear, plenty of others have done just the same!' I was surprised to discover that I still beat most of the sidecars and a lot of the sportsmen, and was a mere two minutes behind world champ Paul Edmondson who set fastest time of the day on his Gas Gas 250 before crashing into a beach buggy on the road soon after.

We passed another casualty who'd come off at speed on an easy track - a sobering sight - shortly before arriving at the first check with a few minutes to spare. I felt trepidatious about the 'nine out of ten' on the difficulty scale that the following Radnor section had been rated by the organisers, and the sign with a skull and crossbones bearing the legend 'May God Have Mercy On Your Soul' was not exactly re-assuring!

My first crash of the day came on a really easy section of open moorland track when I was doing my Stephane Peterhansel impersonation. The front wheel tucked under while crossing a rut, and I made a graceful dive for the soft

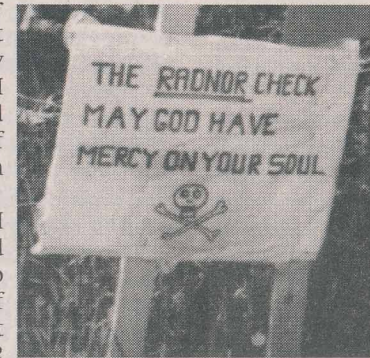
heather. The forks were twisted in the yokes and the bars had swivelled in the clamps, but I didn't dare stop and straighten things out until I got to the next check. (You must clock in exactly on your minute, neither early nor late). I also managed to get stuck in the first really nasty bit of bog because I didn't attack it hard enough, running out of steam about six foot from 'dry land'.

On the next section I encountered a new hazard - loose thin logs on a steep hill - which had me off before I even knew what was happening. The XR spun right around underneath me and it took ages to get the thing started again. On the way to check five I suddenly recognised the well-worn tracks of Cwmderw

farm, familiar from Jon Watson-Miller's inaugural Bracken Rally in October 1992. There was one really steep hill which I remember being incredibly slippery but the XR just stormed up it in the dry June conditions and at the top there were fantastic views of the surrounding Powys countryside.

There was time to recover from the morning's exertions on a great thrash down the fast and open A470 outside Rhayader. I made full use of the XR's high gearing to get ahead of schedule and even had time to stop for lunch in a lay-by.

Check six was supposed to be just 17 miles of road work, but some extra minor roads and trail somehow got thrown in without amending the schedule and a lot



Competitors line up at the start to begin 260 miles of on and off road riding

Wales Tales

of people, including some of the top riders, were caught out as they stopped to refuel. By the time I got to the start of the famous Strata Florida section, instead of the usual dozen or more riders, there were just three waiting to check in.

I'd also ridden the Strata Florida in the Bracken Rally - six miles of pretty easy stony track but the numerous river crossings can give you a ducking or drown the electrics if you're not careful. I was passed by another rider fairly early on but managed to stay with him until we got stuck behind a sidecar for the last mile or so - outfits are the the devil's own job to pass on a narrow, 'entrenched' track like that. I still thought we'd made pretty good time and couldn't believe it when I was three minutes late at the next check!

We sportsmen had been given 17 minutes but the experts had been allowed

just 12 - requiring an average speed of over 30mph! I'm not surprised that none of them stayed on time, although a couple of the 125 clubmen managed it in their allotted 14 minutes.

On one of the typically narrow, winding and tree-lined roads that abound in this area, there was a nasty accident when a 40 foot low-loader had a head-on collision with one of the sidecars. John Young tried to ride up the bank but unfortunately passenger Sam Oatley was catapulted into the truck's windscreen, suffering facial injuries and a broken leg and both men ended up in the intensive care unit of Carmarthen hospital.

By this time I was beginning to suffer from an injury of my own. I was wearing a rather knackered pair of soft contact lenses because the gas permeables I normally use are hopeless in dusty conditions and



LEFT: Yes that is an old Bultaco twin shock, and yes Pete Robson the rider did beat Blez!

RIGHT: That's one of the helpers pushing the German outfit of Pete Romer and Jorg Schroder over the line to finish fifth in the Clubmen class on their 604cc dohc Rotax Heos

the left lense was beginning to really smart. I stumbled across Richard Brown's support crew, removed the offending lense for a minute, sluiced my eye out and gulped down some juice. As he helped me lube the chain, Richard's mate noticed that my silencer had come loose and we traced the cause to a sheered-off mounting bolt, the remains of which were still lock-nutted to the frame. While I frantically set about getting the remnants out, my ad-hoc mechanic rummaged around for another bolt and came up trumps with a very long but useable replacement. With time fast running out, I just had time to fit it and flee to the next check, minus my side panel, but still on my time in my new, three-minutes-late schedule - Phew! (Once you've checked in late you have to maintain the same level of lateness - you're not allowed to make up the lost time).

The penultimate check was the toughest of the day, a genuine nine out of ten on the difficulty scale, full of boggy bits and steep, slippery climbs - I really missed having proper enduro gearing - it's amazing how wet a Welsh wood can remain in the middle of a drought. We began to encounter stuck sidecars for the first time and I only got through one section by taking a detour round them into the woods but the nastiest bits were the ones full of tree-stumps about a foot high. Going down a really slippery section I lost the front wheel on a log-ette and fell with all my weight onto one of the stumps which caught me right in the kidneys - ooyah!

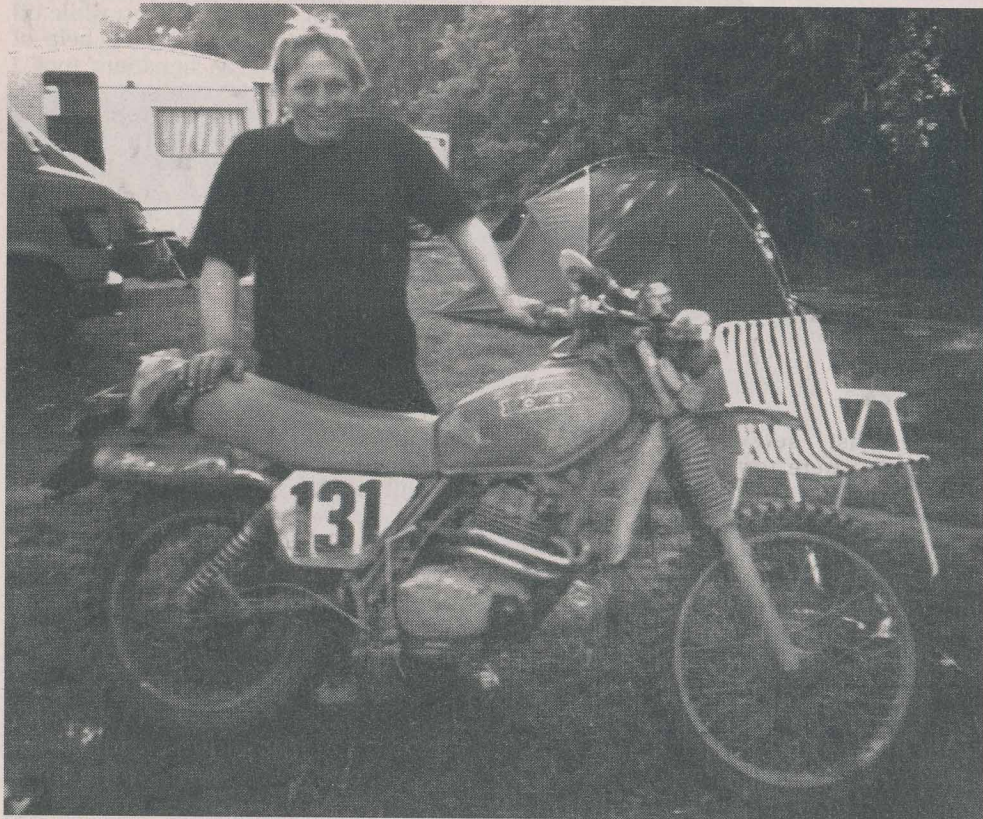
Further on there was a hill which was absolutely peppered with stranded sportsmen. I waited at the bottom for a while till some of them got clear with the help of marshalls, but being an impatient fool, I



Wales Tales

didn't wait long enough. The easier, right hand route was still blocked by another rider so I aimed the XR towards the left..... and promptly got stuck on the steepest, slipperiest part of the hill. It was so slick I could barely stand up, let alone push, in my motocross boots. Fortunately a marshall gave me a hand and, with the engine helping, we pushed the protesting bike up to an easier section. I was so knackered that I had to stop for a breather, the bike fell over and then

This man is smiling because he's just finished the Welsh Two day Enduro on a bike that is 15 years old. David Ainsworth from Swanwick was last to finish in the four stroke clubmen class but on a 1980 Honda XL250 that's worth smiling about



TrailBike -44- Magazine

refused to re-start. After five minutes of frantic but fruitless kicking, the recalcitrant beast was finally revived by legendary sidecar driver George Greenland, who was also marshalling - thanks George!

By the time I got out of the woods I'd lost another six minutes and my left eye was killing me - it felt as if someone was rubbing grinding paste into it and I could barely see out of it at all. But there were still two hours to go, with the second, much longer Bwlchciliau special test pro-

viding a real sting in the tail. By the time I got there it was all I could do to ride on the road, let alone through the woods, so the special test was like doing the stations of the cross - my own personal VIA DOLOROSA.

I crashed twice in the 'special' and at another point managed to stall in the one and only passable rut through a bog, incurring the wrath of a fast-riding clubman who shouted 'Do please get out of the way old chap, I'm in a dashed hurry' (or something like that) while I kicked the obstinate XR with all the energy I could muster. It seemed as though that special stage was never going to end - I was riding like an old woman as I tried to forget the agony in my mince pie and concentrate on where I was going.

The last few miles back to Llandrindod were torture on two wheels and when I finally checked in and removed the offending lense my eye looked - and felt - as if it'd been caught by Mike Tyson's ungloved right hook. I staggered over to the lakeside cafe for a much-needed mug of tea and joined Bob Perring and Gill Myers, both of whom had just clocked in themselves. Bob is T&M/X's 59 year-old enduro columnist and the man who initiated the Cambrian Rally. He was doing the Welsh on a KLX250 and at this half-way stage I was actually beating him. He complained that Gill (a regular



Blez and the Team TrailBike Magazine XR, charge through the Welsh forest on the way to humbling a few blind old crones who were riding the course on penny farthings

up with 'Q', an acquaintance of Ian's who'd been looking after our fuel stops; he's not even a motorcyclist but enjoys the unique atmosphere of the Welsh 2-day so much that he's been coming all the way from London to support Croydon club riders for over twenty years.

I awoke on Friday morning feeling as if I'd spent the night being trampled by the All Blacks, but was still determined to get around the final 130 miles, so I put on my old spectacles and wobbled out into the sunshine.

Can Blez survive another 130 miles of Two-day torture on the shagged out TrailBike-XR, with only one eye working and wearing his knackered old bins? Find out next month in the gripping finale to this sad and sorry yarn. Don't miss it.

TrailBike -45- Magazine

triathlon competitor) was so much fitter than him that she'd kept coming past on her humble XR200 while he struggled for breath.

Ian Pearce kindly took me down to Llandrindod hospital where they diagnosed a nasty case of self-inflicted conjunctivitis, gave me some anti-biotic paste and told me not to wear either lense on any account....

We repaired to the 16th century Llanerch Inn for some much needed refreshment and met

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the TRAILBIKE GUIDE

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

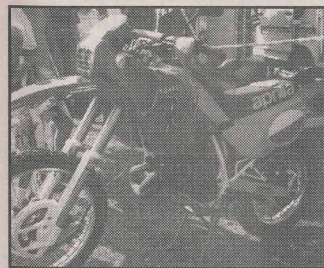
APRILIA

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

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

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

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



height more than made up for by poseability.

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

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

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

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

ARMSTRONG

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

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

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

CCM: A few enduro bikes based on

TRAILBIKE GUIDE

the moto-crossers).

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

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



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

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

BMW

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

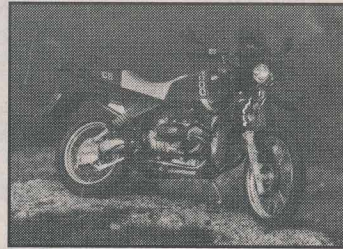
R80G/S: 374lbs, a/c, 4-str, 797cc, twin. One of the first mega-trailies. Launched in 1981, Monolever rear end, kick and optional electric start. Special big-bore versions of which took Hubert Auriol and Gaston Rahier to four Paris-Dakar wins. Original 'Paris-Dakar' version of G/S was just the standard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

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

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

R100GS: a/c, 4-str, twin, e/s.

Revised in 1991 with proper fairing and more garish paint job. Final revision for UK in 1993 with 'P-D' version when



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

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

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

TRAILBIKE GUIDE

The first trailie superbike.

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

CAGIVA

Italian manufacturer that now owns Ducati, Husqvarna and Morini.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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Curiosity value only.

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

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

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

ENFIELD INDIA

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



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

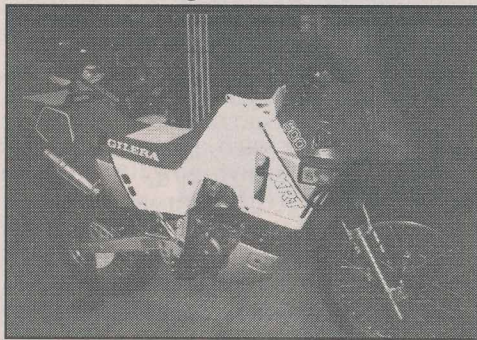
50/125: a/c, 2-

str, single. Learner bikes - not officially imported.

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

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

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



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

HARLEY DAVIDSON

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

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

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

HONDA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

able. *Verdict: Conversation stopper only.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



All Honda 250s need to be revved hard if you want to get a move on. New ones come with electric start and there's now a Baja version available with huge twin headlamps, among other detail changes. *Verdict:* *Popular and versatile trailie.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HUSABERG

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

ally vibey, they lack both balancer shaft and oil pump. No specific trail bikes, but plenty of enduros, now with e/s.

HUSQVARNA

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

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

JAWA-CZ

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

KAWASAKI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

KE125/175: a/c, 2-str, single. Early twin shock, disc valve trailie dating from the Seventies. Popular then, but most will have rotted away by now. Easy to learn on many were used as farm bikes. Later versions

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styled to resemble KDX. Lengthy production run means Kawasaki must have got it right. *Verdict: Long lived.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yummy.

KL250: a/c, 4-str, sohc, 246cc, single. Late seventies twin shock trail bike derived from the 200cc road bike commuter.

Pretty basic (no balancer shaft), but also pretty reliable, and extremely frugal.

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

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

KLX250: 1994-on, w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, 249cc, single. The four-stroke equivalent of the KDX, with similar motocross-derived perimeter chassis. Looks the business with handling and suspension to match, but performance of the 25bhp street-legal trail version is a bit flat. The lighter 30bhp enduro version is a lot more satisfying to ride, but early

ones had carburetion difficulties, and both need to be revved hard to produce their power. Quite tall in the saddle.

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

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

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

KLR 650 & (Tengai): 1989-on, w/c, 4-str, dohc, 651cc, single. Bored out to 651cc in 1987, Kawasaki have never had any success in the African rallies, but the Tengai (launched in 1989) is their be-fairinged homage



to the genre.

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

KTM

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

400: w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, single. Trail bike version of an existing enduro bike, but with the added civility of a balancer shaft. Fast and exciting on forest roads, but not much of a chugger. Great on the road though lack of screen may be a problem for some. Tall seat height and left-hand kickstart make it tricky for shorties. Top notch suspension, but not as light as it looks. Also quite pricey. *Verdict:* Specialist tackle.

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

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

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numbers. *Verdict:* Street rod.

LAVERDA

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

MORINI

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

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

MOTO GUZZI

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

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

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ous lack of ground clearance both on and off road. Good fuel consumption thanks to fuel injection and high gearing, are about all it has going for it. Incredibly expensive when it was launched, but prices did come down. Strictly for straight dirt roads and motorways. Should come with a government health warning. *Verdict: Proves that big is not necessarily beautiful.*



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

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

SUZUKI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

considering.

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

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

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

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

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

TS125X: w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single.



Very competent learner legal trailie. Better than the equivalent DT at the time. *Verdict: Good secondhand buy.*

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

TS200R: w/c, 2-str, 199cc, single. Grey import with its own French championship. As above but with

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more poke. Not many around.

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.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DR250: o-a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. Grey import baby brother of the 350 we get here in the UK, only with USD forks and a brilliant ride height

control making it more accessible to little people. *Verdict: Worth searching out.*

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

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

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

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

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,

TRAILBIKE GUIDE

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. Latest version of above without the half fairing or twin exhausts. Still overgeared, still rather tall, but with the best suspension in class. Not very refined and feels a bit cheap, but definitely heading in the right direction.

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



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

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

now. Many engines found their way into singles racing. But there's a few around if you really must have one.

Verdict: Why bother?

TRIUMPH

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

YAMAHA

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

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

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

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

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

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

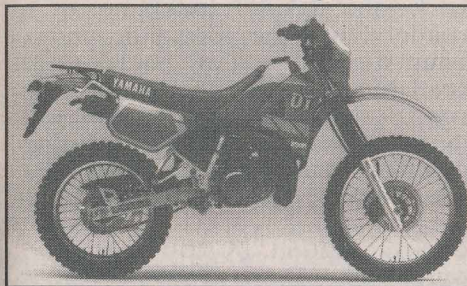
BW = a/c, 4-str, trail/fun.

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

DT125(LC): 1987-on, w/c, 2-str, single. The DT came of age with the adoption of watercooling, motocross styling, and most important of all, a power valve. Lost some of its torque but gained a revvier motor and lots more top end together with sophisticated suspension front and rear. In 12bhp restricted form they're as flat as a pancake, but unrestricted make a capable 24bhp. Although in the fashion stakes they've been overtak-

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en by tricker looking tackle, they still top the sales chart because of their hard earned reputation. Still good at off roading though they're taller and peakier than ever. Stripped down and tuned up they will pass as a good clubman enduro mount. *Verdict: The king lives on.*



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

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

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

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

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

IT425/465/490: a/c, 2-str, single. Fire-breathing, hard to tame, monster 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 light-

weight chassis and 'soft-tune' engine, but plenty of power. Rear suspension oversprung, and they need gearing down for low speed trails. Good if you like your bikes tall. Easy to ride with a nice light front end. *Verdict: Modern classic.*

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

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

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

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

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

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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.*

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

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

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

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

XT500: 304lbs, a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. The original big banger trailie that started it all. Produced for years and years, even when superceded by later versions. Twin shock, 6-volt, character building

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

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

XT600 Tenere: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, single. Superb Paris-Dakar inspired big trailie with unburstable engine, supple suspension, mammoth tank and comfy saddle. Loved by overlanders the world



over. Huge touring range, and clever attention to detail (for instance air filter positioned under tank to avoid being clogged by sand and dust). Later versions inherited a full fairing but lost some of the attention to detail. Feels like riding a great big

TRAILBIKE GUIDE

cosy armchair, and regardless of Yamaha's claims to the contrary seems to have more power than later 'cooking' versions. Real off road ability in most hands. *Verdict: Best of the big Yams.*

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

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

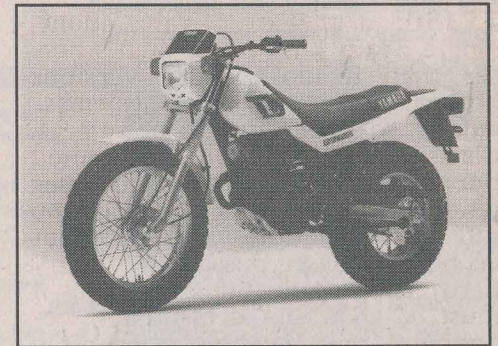
XTZ660: w/c, 4-str, 5-valve, dohc, single. Another attempt at making a long-distance overland/road version of the venerable XT. Heavier, with less range and not much more power than the original. Less crashworthy than the first and the taller saddle may put some off. Nevertheless it's had a lot of succes 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 gruntier 850cc lump. Lower seat height, much torquier engine and better brakes and handling. Early versions had appallingly clunky gearbox and exhaust collector box rules out an aftermarket centre stand. Not really a trail bike unless it's high summer nice and dry and the trail is easy. Soft suspension limits speed off road. *Verdict: Brilliant trail influenced roadie.*

TW200: a/c, 4-str, 18bhp, single, e/s. Fattish-wheeled fun bike which makes a brilliant and economical (though odd-looking) trail bike for the short of leg, with both electric start and kick. Surprisingly good on the road, and makes a competent commuter (70+mpg possible), but let



down by lousy SLS front drum brake and needs an extra gear. Suspension a bit basic and tyres can be expensive. Gearbox sprocket a special part due to outrigger bearing. Will embarass 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.*

Bikes

Moto Morini 350 Kanguro, G-reg, 7,500 miles, electric start, excellent standard condition, £1,250 ono, p/x Cagiva 125 W8. Tel 0161 980 6697.

Yamaha IT465, very original, 95% complete, needs clutch sorting, some spares included, must be worth £275 or may break if enough interest. Tel 01757 630038.

Honda XR250R 1987, 6 months T&T, mx and trials tyres, tank cover, manual, vgc, £1,095 ono. Tel 0171 3544135

Armstrong MT500 1987, 4,400km, excellent clean condition, rear panniers and bags, many new parts, very powerful, taxed, MOT, registered, workshop manuals, can send photos, £1,250. Tel Richard 01275 849993.

Suzuki DR350 Enduro, L-reg, 3,500 miles, taxed, excellent condition, road use only, £2,495, Tel Cornwall 01288 354891 eves.

Kawasaki KLX250 1994, g. cond, green lane use only, road registered, taxed, O-ring, £2,450 ono. Tel Cambridge 872367.

Suzuki DR600S, 1985, C-reg, 25,000 miles, T&T, kickstart only, run on synthetic oil, factory manual, good condition, not used off road, £1,250 ono, might p/x something cheaper, Billingshurst, West Sussex. Tel 01403 782723.

Swop Suzuki GSX750ES, 1986, vgc, tax and tested, value £1,500 for trail bike up to 350cc, prefer DR, XT or KMX. Cash adjustment either way. Tel 01524 735811.

KTM 600cc 4-stroke, water-cooled, enduro lights, excellent all round condition £1,695 (new £5,000+) consider p/x or swap diesel van, car, or 500cc+ XT, XR, KL, DR trail bike or why? Anything considered, details 01934 842900 after 6pm.

Kawasaki KDX200, E1, 1989, F-reg, T&T Jan 96, original spec, one previous owner, well maintained, £1,050, Tel Norwhich 01603 262175.

KTM 600LC4, 1994, L-reg, excellent condition, road use only, new sprockets etc, £3,200 ono. Tel Derbyshire 01246 278658, or mobile, 0831 619878.

Suzuki DR400, 4-stroke enduro engine, fitted into RM250 motocross frame, T&T, good condition, £595, may p/x smaller bike. Ring Ken on Blackburn 01254 581317, eves.

Wanted

Wanted. British or old Jap or just bits, trail or street, can pick up within 100 miles of Kendal, Cumbria, must be cheap, any condition. Tel 01229 474193. Good Mag!

Wanted Suzuki PE 400 parts for restoration, preferably good condition, anything considered. Tel Warks 01926 889120

Wanted Rickman Zundapp, ISDT or motocross, runner or non-runner, complete or otherwise, spares new or used, any condition. Tel 0161 980 6697.

Wanted travelling companion(s) for Moroccan raid, October. Ride through France, Spain, Morocco, Atlas mts etc

(camping), estimated cost £1,000. Call Clive on 01603 741423.

Wanted Yamaha DT175/125 MX incomplete or non-runner for spares, and Husqvarna WR400 for spares. Tel 01222 860762.

Wanted, large plastic petrol tank for Suzuki DR350S, eg Acerbis 16 litre, must be undamaged. Tel (Glasgow) 01236 825270.

Wanted road legal trail or trials bike, any condition, complete rolling chassis with log book considered, prefer 2-stroke but not essential, must be cheap. Tel Chris (stockport area) 0161 480 1601.

Spares

Rotax 490 2-str engine complete. Plus barrel, brand new, 175cc, four pistons, std, 1st, 2nd, 3rd oversize, Moto Gori 175cc silencer, new but rusty, offers. Tel 0161 980 6697.

KLR600 Spares, pair of wheels, seat, mirror, exhaust front pipe for sale. Tel Aldershot 01252 29938 answerphone.

Honda XL250S, official workshop manual, Honda XL250S/XR250 rear wheel sprocket, steel and alloy, 48 teeth, £10. Honda 125 workshop manuals, £5. Tel 0161 980 6697.

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So you wanna be a writer do you?

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INTRANSIT

FORD TRANSIT LWB CUSTOM

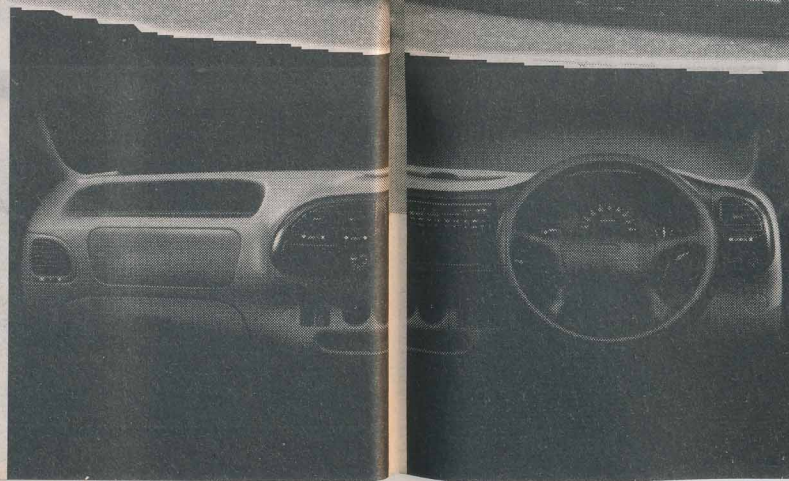
Few vehicles - let alone vans - can claim as much history as the ubiquitous Ford Transit. The van that launched a thousand rock stars on their careers, and now itself, star of stage and screen - the Trannie, has been ferrying goods, services, and of course bikes, around for some 30 years.

Today's Transit is light years ahead of its forebears, with modern direct-injection diesel engines, the option of luxury touches like electric windows etc and a ride quality that couldn't have been imagined when it was first launched back in 1965. But it's perhaps in the area of safety that most changes have been made. With the availability of airbags as an option, as well as the fitment of seatbelt pre-tensioners and proper strap and lap belts for front passengers, Ford has been able to offer Transit customers who may well cover hundreds of thousands of miles a year, improved safety on every journey they make.

There can't be many people that have never owned, hired, borrowed or travelled in a Transit van. It is the UK's most popular commercial vehicle, and well over half the vans on Britain's roads are Trannies. It goes without saying that there must be a reason behind this, and without doubt the Transit has earned itself a reputation as a rugged, reliable workhorse, at an affordable price. The interior of the Transit has been revamped for '95 with a set of Mondeo-style instruments, and a redesigned dashboard and ergonomics. Though falling a little short of the quality of the VW Transporter, the Transit's dials were clear and concise, and the Ford had much more comfortable seats, with adjustment for the rear seat squab as well as vertical and horizontal adjustment. Like the VeeDub, ours came with 'leccy windows and central locking which are useful optional extras, and a superb digital stereo radio/cassette which is standard on all custom models. The redesigned dash has a useful drinks holder, though I am doubtful about the necessity of the rather dubious looking spring loaded paper gripper on top of the centre of the dash.

Engines range from a choice of 2.5litre (70hp) direct-injection diesels through to the 2.5litre (100hp) turbo diesel, with various power options in between, as

This month Ford's immortal Transit celebrates its 30th birthday. We see how the latest version shapes up to the rigours of life on the road



well as a 2.0litre (115hp) dohc, fuel-injected petrol engine - all with five speed gearboxes. Our test vehicle had the brilliant 100hp turbo diesel variant which frankly had power in abundance. Even with a full payload it would cruise at a steady 75-80mph with enough in reserve to be able to accelerate up hills. Of course you pay for it at the fuel pump (or rather we did), with economy ranging from a best of just under 30mpg to a low 22mpg after a high(ish) speed run. The tank holds 68 litres of derv so it should stretch to 300 miles even on a hard run, but we found we were looking out for fuel after only about 270 miles were up.

The ride quality of the Transit is frankly exceptional, it's quiet, very smooth (though the engine sounds noisy at tickover), and handles well with a slight tendency towards oversteer if pushed. The power steering on ours was well weighted and meant manoeuvring in tight spaces was a doddle. Inside there's loads of room for three bikes, with sensible floor mountings, and enough space (on our extra high roof model) to stand up comfortably if for instance you need to change into your riding gear. And compared to the VW it has an extra 154mm width between the rear wheel arches (that's six inches in old money), even though its rear load height is a bit taller as the Transit is one of the last vans to retain rear wheel drive.

During the two and a half weeks we spent with ours on TrailBike magazine, we were impressed by its versatility, comfort and above all speed and load carrying capacity, but it wasn't all plain sailing. For some reason the alarm kept triggering of its own accord, and we eventually had to have it disconnected. The new 'improved' 40W interior rooflamp didn't work, and the notchy gearbox occasionally made it difficult to select reverse.

Problems aside there's no doubt the Transit has come a long way from its early forebears. With its new levels of comfort and roadholding, increased safety and security, and now 10,000 mile service intervals, it looks set to retain its position as Britain's favourite van. With prices starting at £10,225 (plus VAT) for the most basic petrol, SWB version, they're likely to stay high on the shopping list of many trail and enduro bike owners. after all Legions of pop stars can't be wrong, can they?

NEXT MONTH

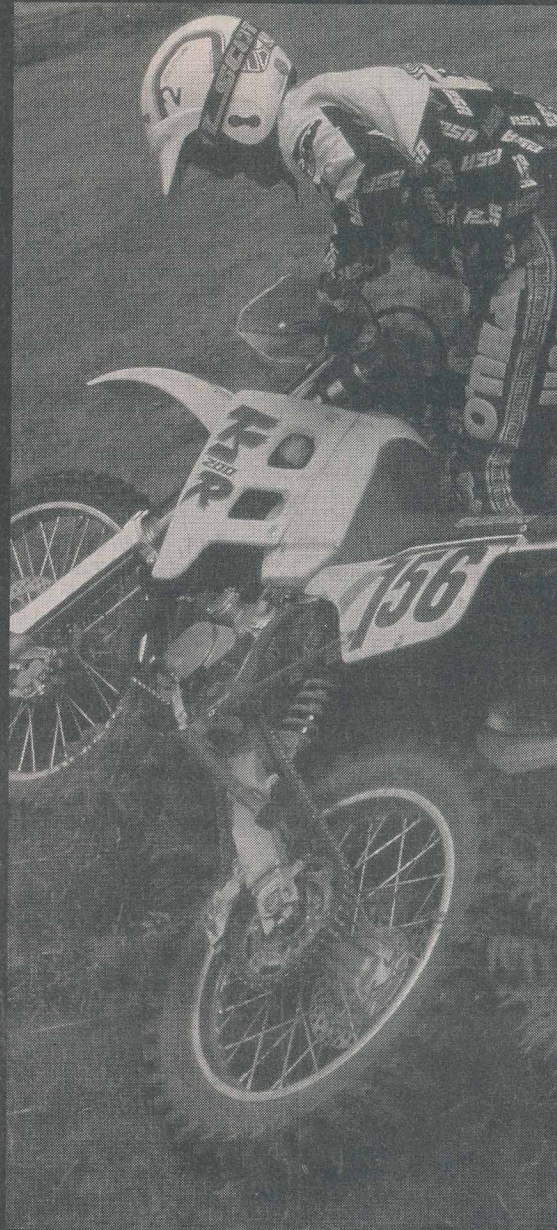
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TRAIL TALES...

WITH TRUE PIONEERING SPIRIT MARK WILLIAMS BEGAN HIS TRAIL RIDING CAREER

WE ALL LIKE to think of ourselves as pioneers, even if it's only being the first chap in our little group to drink a bottle of Rioja in one quaff, or the first hack on a bike magazine to lose his driving licence due to flashy behaviour on the Queen's Highway.

Whilst I can justifiably lay claim to one of the above (though I'm not telling which), back in the early '70s I had a rather inflated view of myself as a trail-blazing trailrider. My first brush with mud'n'guts was actually a couple of years before I became a bike hack when, as a result of some nifty horsetrading I briefly owned a Greeves trials bike into which a 500cc Daytona engine had been shoehorned - a dubious honour I see from issue 1, I shared with Dave Taylor. However unlike Dave I never went on to great feats of two-wheeled bravura. I just fell off a lot.

A few balmy Sundays lollaping around the softer edges of the home counties somehow convinced me that I should join the fledgling Trail Riders Fellowship and get rather more serious about this very peculiar form of self-abuse. And I'll warrant that there's not a much more peculiar form of self-abuse than going camping, on trail bikes, in Wales, in

the winter. Nevertheless it was to a soggy field in Gwent that I hied myself one miserable March weekend back in 1972 with only the camaraderie of similarly dysfunctional souls and a brand new BSA Victor Trail bike to offset my impending gloom.

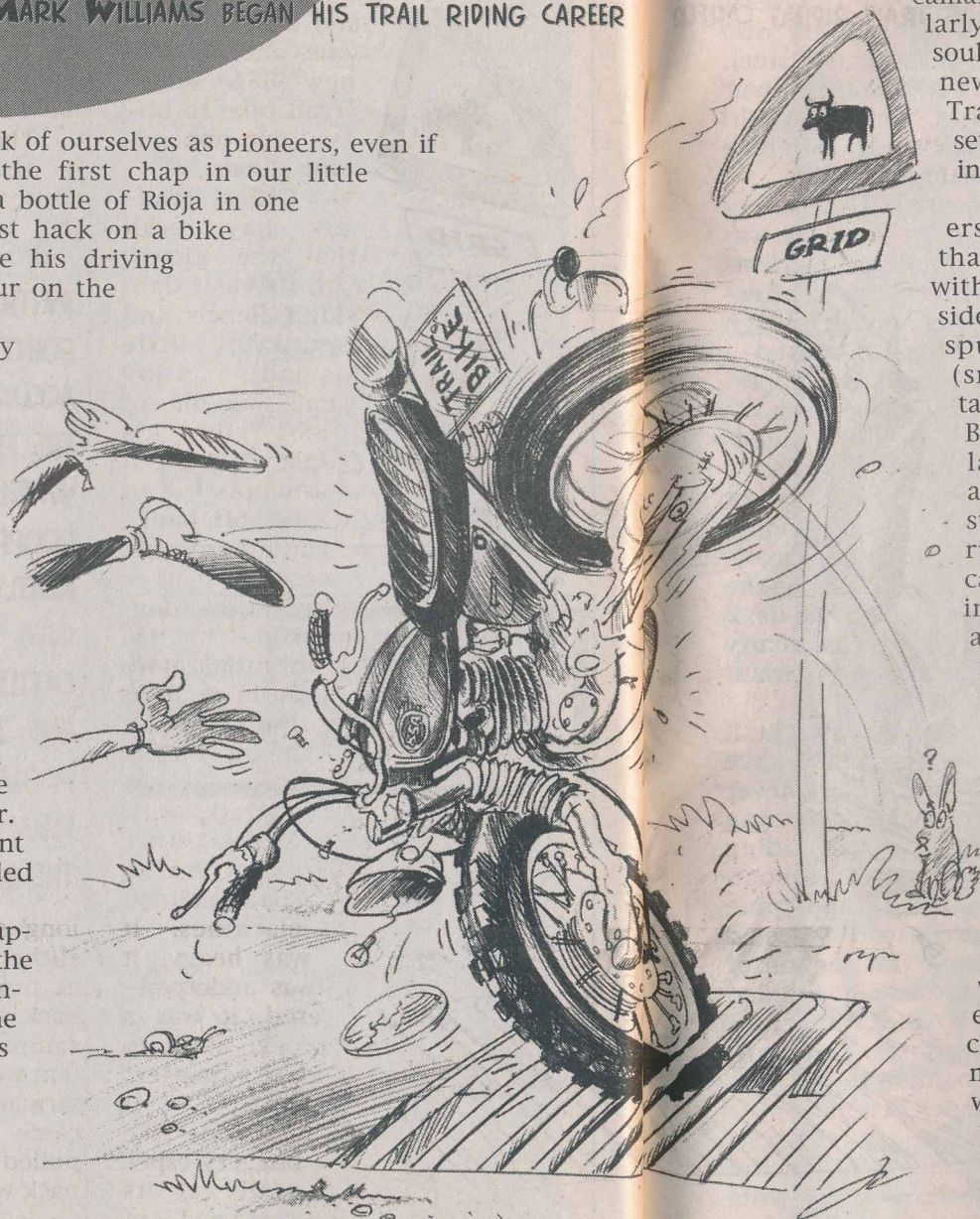
Older readers may recall that the Victor, with its vast, slab-sided silencer and spunky little (small) alloy tank was one of BSA-Triumph's last ditch attempts to stave off bankruptcy, in this case by marrying the dog-awful C15 (or, for rather more dosh, B50) push-rod motor into a frame it shared with three other essentially road inclined machines. It was heavy, it was underpowered, it was a crock, and to make matters worse, it vibrated like buggery especially at its top-whack of 65mph. But it

was the first new motorcycle I'd ever bought, and I'd only been able to afford it because I'd just been promised a large chunk of money (by my miserable standards), to launch Bike Magazine. Indeed the following Monday morning I was to report for my first day at work on the project, so I figured I might as well make the most of my mudplugging weekend.

The routes we took involved some of the stunning Black Mountain scenery that has since become familiar to many trail riders and enduroists, but even in the driving rain, driven to distraction trying to kick-start an overcooked Victor Trail, its beauty was not lost on me. The Victor was almost completely unsuitable for enjoying it on however, and most of my colleagues barely hid their derision as they sauntered past me on proper kit which included Bultacos, Montesas and, oh yes, a TriGreeves.

By Sunday afternoon any pretence at justifying my purchase, or indeed of just keeping dry, had long since vanished and I merely slithered and stalled along the trails as best I could. Eventually we got back on the road and tore back to the campsite in anticipation of the distant warmth of the local pub. Here on tarmac, for a brief moment the Victor came into its own and I quickly pulled ahead of the under-gear'd pack with a grimy grin on my face.

It didn't last long however. As I rounded a corner keeled over as far



TRAIL TALES...

as I dared on wet Avon knobbles, a large cattle grid confronted me. I braked hard but the combination of angle of incidence and a mud-caked front wheel sent me sliding sideways towards it. With pin-point accuracy the front wheel dropped neatly between the bars in the grid and I promptly flew over the handlebars.

14 hours later unable even to operate a typewriter let alone ride a motorcycle, I greeted my new employer with both wrists conspicuously in plaster - which is the reason why the first issue of *Bike Magazine* was postponed for a month, and coincidentally why I owned the Victor for not much longer.

But despite much pain and suffering, it didn't put me off trail riding, or even competing in enduros which I later took up, my first event being on a preposterously overweight Wasp-framed Triumph that I rode to and from the race.

Over the years, all manner of machinery came and went, including such improbable steeds as a 125 Beta Enduro (bent forks in the Beacons Enduro), a 175 Cotton (whose pitiful lack of a fifth gear once led me to fling it in weary exasperation off a mountainside it had failed to ascend), a DT175 Yamaha which was probably the best all rounder I ever owned (especially after it was heavily tuned, and garnered my first - and only - medal in the Welsh 2-Day), and a 198cc Villiers-engined DoT (which for the younger amongst you, stood for Devoid of Trouble - an acronym which these days would, quite rightly, attract the full force of the Advertising Standards Authority).



All of this was in the name of a kind of wilful eccentricity I felt might redeem my otherwise lacklustre life. There had been other bike journalists who trail rode (not least the very likeable John Ebrell, who was actually killed on his trailster), there were others who started their own bike magazines, but I felt I could be the first who started his own bike magazine *and* raced in enduros.

It seemed to me that the best way to attract attention to this folly was to ride the most outlandish machinery, and then write about it afterwards. Indeed later on at *Which Bike?* Magazine we even started a monthly 'Off Road Rambles' supplement in which the efforts of Team WB and their equally peculiar steeds received constant editorial puffs.

During that period I had my most competitive bike, an air-cooled Suzuki PE175, though I never managed to keep up with Pete Furlong (he of 'chaincase' fame - where the devil are you now Pete?) who regularly showed us all the way, on his road-illegal IT175.

But it never worked out. In a strange sort of way it might have been pioneering stuff, but it never got me the works ride or even a backer for the Welsh Trail Riding Centre that I long pipe-dreamt about.

Broken wrists, a squished spine (when I got the PE's front wheeled well-rutted during a fast section of the Beacons and collided with a tree), numerous cuts, bruises, and emptied bank accounts, but not much else...

... apart that is, from the sort of fanciful memories one can write about 20 years later in a trail bike magazine.

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