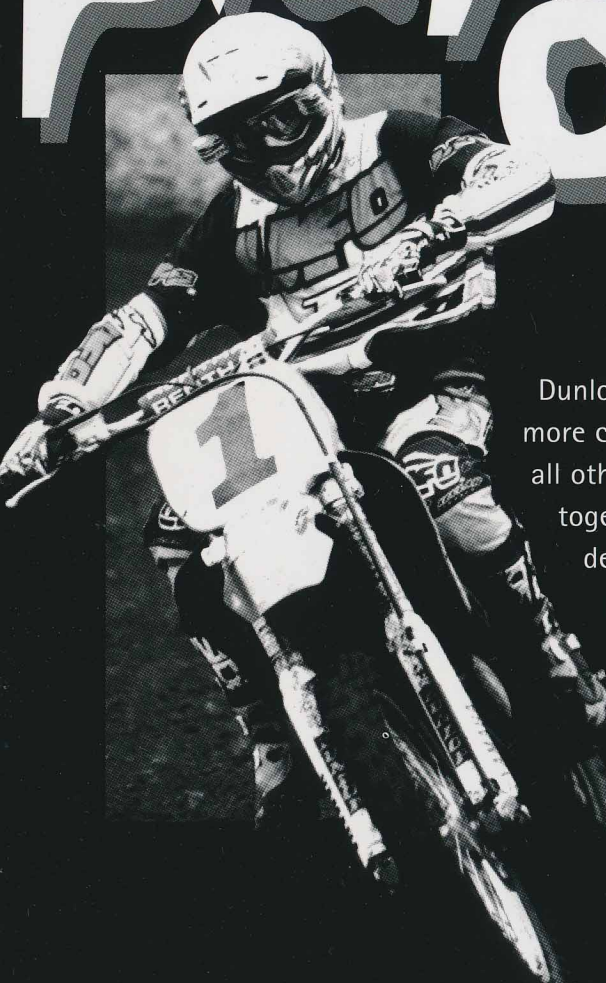


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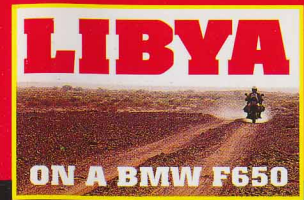
TRAIL BIKE & ENDURO MAGAZINE

£1.95 AUGUST 1998 ISSUE 37



MXR 440!

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LIBYA
ON A BMW F650

Getting The Low Down - Super Sherpa v Yam Serow



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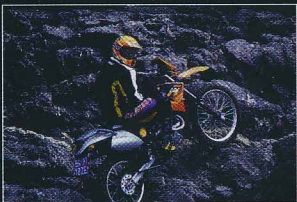


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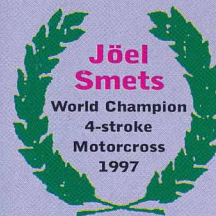
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S

o there I was, flat out in top when suddenly....

How many times have we heard that old chestnut at the beginning of a 'crash and burn' story? Well here's a funny thing: at the recent Pencarreg Rally held in Wales I found myself trotting out a similar line from the back of the St John's Ambulance while concerned medical staff removed my riding jeans and kept asking me silly questions like what day of the week is it? Or how many fingers am I holding up? Honestly, if these people don't even know what day it is or how many fingers they've got on each hand, are you sure you can trust them with sensitive parts of your anatomy?

Okay so I wasn't in top gear, I was in fourth when a tightening left-hander saw me launch the Berg off the edge of Special test two straight into the DNF column of the result sheet. That was two DNFs in the last two races, Crasher Cornish was beginning to worry about losing his position as the official magazine 'Lobber'. Mind you the one prior to the Pencarreg wasn't my fault. A mate and I had entered another enduro on the Husey and the WR-F (which we had on test). He was still recovering from a broken collarbone sustained at the Tunisie Rallye just five weeks previously. We decided we'd do an enduro to keep us bike-fit and besides he wanted to get back on and ride again after his enforced layoff.

Unfortunately for Clive, five weeks wasn't quite enough time for the bone to heal properly and although he didn't actually fall off when the WR's front wheel washed out, he went to save it with a steady dab and 'Bang' his collarbone just sort of unknitted. I fancifully tried to claim it was because I was all over the back of his bike just itching to get past that forced him into making a mistake, but Clive was having none of it.

So we left early and Clive went to hospital claiming that once again he had tripped over while taking out the rubbish - something he does with alarming frequency, and always while dressed in his riding gear. Boy these medics are a suspicious bunch... Anyway, get well soon mate.

That's the trouble with riding bikes, just occasionally it all goes horribly wrong and you end up thinking to yourself 'I knew I should've taken up flag waving or hamster racing or something a bit safer than dirt bikes'. Still the Pencarreg week-end wasn't a complete write-off: the event was good, the weather got better, Blez miraculously stayed on and finished and we all had a thoroughly pleasurable time. So although I'm still limping, I'm actually really looking forward to the next one, and this time I've got my excuses all lined up. Who knows? With any luck I may not even need to use them....

• It's survey time again - you lucky lot you. Your chance to tell us exactly what you think about us, about the magazine and about the stuff we write. Please feel free to massage our egos and heap praise upon us. The wittiest, most informative and downright sycophantic reply receives a free TBM sweatshirt, while one lucky reader will walk away with a complete set of Sinisalo riding gear (that's jeans, race shirt, gloves and a fabulous Reflex jacket), just for taking the trouble to respond. And remember we're completely corruptible here at TBM; bribes (both large and small), offers of free entries to events or any other indecent inducement will all be taken into consideration.

Si Melber

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Si Melber.

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N E W S



• We're changing logo. As of next month the new look TBM logo will be appearing on the front of the magazine and shortly afterwards on a T-shirt near you. Be sure to look out for it because we don't want you mistaking us for any other A5-sized, full colour trailbike & enduro magazines out there! Hope you like it - 'cos it's too late to change back now...

Snippets

• Pro-Racing are offering riders the chance to ride a one or two day trail loop with them in Northants, with a bit of riding tuition thrown in. The first day will be 70 mile loop, with another 50 odd miles riding the following day if riders want it. Accommodation can be arranged at a friendly local pub, and there's the opportunity to try your hand on an MX course en-route. More details and costs from Rob or Nick at Pro-Racing on 01327 301322.

• Are you desperate for a career in dirt bike journalism? Are you literate (if you have to look it up, then don't bother), witty, enthusiastic, willing to work long unsociable hours for

next to no money (and we do mean that), young, informed, good on the phone and living within the M25 radius (surely circumference!)? You are? You sad person. You sound just like one of us. TBM is looking for a part-time editorial assistant prepared to help out for very little reward apart from the thrill, nay the sheer exhilaration of working alongside such dirt biking luminaries as Si, Dave and Blez (ahem). Being knowledgeable about dirt bikes is not enough. We want good English skills, great spelling and the ability to spot a split infinitive at 50m (if you have to look it up... etc). Most of all (given what we do) you need to be good with machinery: coffee machines, bis-

cuit trolleys, photocopiers and pressure washers. If you think that's you then write to us at the usual TBM address with an abbreviated copy of your CV as well as three ideas for features within TBM, plus of course (ahem) the obligatory crisp twenty. Er... failing that then if you meet some of the above requirements we want to hear from you anyway (by post). Get scribbling...

• The Essex Group (TRF) are running a fun day trail bike trial on 12 July at Poles Wood, Kelvedon Hatch, Brentwood Essex map ref 167/568,995. They hope to attract a heap of new members to have a crack at this event which will consist of ten marked out sections ridden twice - once am, once pm with a break for lunch. There will be three distinct routes: one for novices or riders of large capacity trailies, one for clubmen and one for experts. All welcome, more details from Aelwood Finch on 01245 329118.

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Dear Trail Bike...

Hare-Brained

Dear Si

Last month two so-called friends of mine entered me in my first ever competition event - the Pencarreg Rally. Having only recently passed my bike test as a 'mature' (in age if not attitude) thirtysomething and now getting around to doing those things my mother never let me do as a child, I was delighted to find that as rider number 198 I was in fact the last entry and as such would have nobody chasing me through the stages.

Imagine my disappointment therefore to find that there was in fact one further entry for that day's race - a last minute entry under the name of Si Melber (who's he anyway?)

To all those of you who have never raced before, the adrenaline rush that you feel when you're sitting on the start line knowing full well that 20 seconds after you start you will have another competitor bearing down on you is one you just have to experience for yourself (see Paul Rudd's comments in the June issue). But to have Si and his new machine chasing you for what seemed like a lifetime but was actually only a minute or two, was just what I didn't need.

Don't panic I thought as we approached the technical climb on stage one; take your time; stay in control; don't lose it... Too late, I lost it. The pressure had got to me. The bike slipped from under me and as I went down on my side with the bike on top I turned round to see you riding straight over my back wheel shouting: 'Are you okay?'

Only my pride was hurt as I picked up my bike. Falling off in front of the editor of your fave

mag was not top of the 'Things To Do' list that day. Hot starting problems on my DR350 didn't help my blood pressure either. But once back on the open track with your dust in my teeth I soon forgot about the pounds of sweat I'd just shed.

Now the stewards of the course sensibly allowed us to ride round the circuit for the opening lap so that we could familiarise ourselves with the odd hairpin etc, but as I approached such a bend halfway around the second timed stage, after you'd rocketed past me again about a minute before, I could see you and your bike clearly detached from each other several yards into the rough stuff and way off the marked course.

Oh dear Si! Overshot that one did we?

Naturally I returned the courtesy and shouted 'You okay?' to which you signalled 'Yes - carry on' (I think you were winded and couldn't speak). That was the last I saw of you and your bike for the rest of the day, and somehow the story about a tortoise and a hare seems strangely appropriate here. I hope the bruises have healed by now.

This was my first event and I've heard that there is an enduro for novices sometime, somewhere during July. I can't wait. If anybody reading this is in two minds about entering, don't be. Just do it. It's worth every penny.

Stewart Fox
Reigate

PS please don't tell my mum!

Ahem, yes... there's a moral in there somewhere Stewart. Thanks for sharing that with me and a few thousand readers - (smartarse)!! Just wait till I tell your mother you've been riding dangerous

motorbikes - she's gonna' give you such a hiding...!

Bearing Up

Dear Bodger Blezard

'Five sets of wheel bearings in 14,000 miles...' well what do you expect if you just take the old ones out and put the new ones straight in? New bearings come with little grease in them - grease must be very expensive in Japan - so a little bit of preparation can add a few more miles to them. What you need to do is take out the plastic seals and fill the bearings with a good quality grease and then replace the seals before putting the new bearings into the hub.

Also, I know this doesn't concern you, but try to keep the jet washer away from the hubs as well, that'll help make 'em last a bit longer also. Just thought you might like to know.

Lloyd Thomas
Glos

What the hell's grease? - Bodger Blez

Domina-tricks

Dear Sir

Having just read issue 35 (June 98), I would like to use my NX650 Dominator for off road use, but would like to remove items like the fairing (because of possible damage), and convert the bike to XR600-type spec. But I would like the conversion to be reversible if possible - your advice would be invaluable.

K Boyle
Dorset

No problem. The Dommie actually makes a pretty good (if heavy)

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green-laner. Depending on how serious the lanes are you want to tackle, you can get away with riding the thing as standard providing you pick your lanes carefully. By summertime, many of the trails in the south of England, particularly the high well drained chalk ones like you find on Salisbury Plain or the South downs, are easily navigable with a standard Dommie. On the other hand, spending a day preparing your bike properly for off roading will doubtless repay you in the long run as the risk of costly damage is great. I'd start (as you suggest) by stripping away the fairing, as well as everything else you don't need for the dirt - rear pegs and brackets etc, try and save as much weight as possible. All this stuff can go back on afterwards - undamaged. Acerbis make an aftermarket plastic fuel tank for the Dommie, which though it costs about £185 will save you from scuffing up (or denting) your steel one, and it also offers useful extra range. Remove the bendy steel bars and replace them with a much stronger (and nicer) set of alloy high-rise ones and attach to these a set of wraparound lever guards which will prevent you from breaking levers (or lever mounts). Drain the oil from the front forks and replace with some good quality 10W fork oil, adding about 8% more than the handbook recommends. If you're happy using the standard trail tyres, okay, but if you want a bit more grip, choose a knobblier set of hoops and while the tyres are off, drill the rims and fit a set of rimlocks (easier than it sounds). You're probably going to want lower gearing, so remove both sprockets and the chain and invest in a complete XR600 chain and sprocket kit - that way there's no

need to faff about trying to find links for the existing chain etc and it can go back on as a set when you've finished. Finally, put a layer of tape over your shiny plastic side panels and indicators (if still fitted), and drop your tyre pressures down to 15psi front and 13psi rear. Now you're ready for the trail...

Slide-Ways

Yo Si and gang,

Are you finding it hard to get out of bed these days? The mag has been late on the news-stands for the last two months. I keep thinking you have finally gone out of business! Panic sets in. What am I gonna' read if you go under? I reckon you are just trying to force people to subscribe!

Anyway - good mag again this month. I'm glad you are not like the yank mags and say that the latest kit is always so much better than the last model etc. Your article on the new WR400 Yam tells it like it is, and more power to yer elbow for saying what you did. Yamaha need to tidy up the details.

Question: Where exactly are the holes in the 'Berg's carb slide? I think I have a similar problem with the slide on my XR600. I think the slide gets stuck (or rocks slightly) against the carb body at idle, possibly due to intake velocity, causing the idle speed to be inconsistent. If I bung the stock exhaust insert back in the silencer and reinstall the airbox snorkel, it idles perfectly. As soon as I remove the snorkel and change over to the Thumper racing 'Stealth' insert, the problem reappears. (I am running a 65 pilot and a 155 main). Has Blez had any similar problems with his old nail??



Keep up the good work you old scrotes!

Regards,
Vic Price
Via e-mail

We're still here Vic - three years on and counting. The official line is that as we're packing a whole lot more info and features into each issue, we occasionally run a smidge over deadline. Actually the truth is more likely that we've spent so much time spanning on the Husey recently, we haven't left enough time to finish our work. Thanks for the compliment on our WR report. You are one of a number of people to have called our office to say how much they agree with us. We write what we find, not what we're told in press releases. The symptoms you describe with your XR6 sound more like a mixture problem than the heavy throttle sensation we were experiencing. Check all the settings and try altering the set-up with the bike un-restricted (ie without the snorkel and stock insert in place). Finally, are you kidding when you ask about Blez's XR6 problems? His bike has suffered everything from piston slap to genital warts, but if you think he learns anything from his experiences, then you don't know Blez...!



TALKING *Dirty*

Will a Brit or UK-based competitor ever win a North African rally in the near future. Chris Evans thinks they will...

Those of you who still actually bother to read this column are no doubt heartily sick of it starting with 'I've just come back from....' closely followed by some exotic destination you've always dreamed of going to. Sadly for readers suffering from a delicate constitution there's no let up this month. Yup, as I write this I'm still digging grains of Moroccan sand out of an ever-more difficult to access belly button. 'Got you, you bugger.'

The reason I was in Morocco was for the Rallye Atlas, and before I tell you something

about it, I just want to get a few things straight. Firstly I am not the beneficiary of some wonderful philanthropic European Community grant. In fact I'm employed by the various rallies to fulfil several, allegedly important functions - which, given the cost of transporting/feeding even one as economical as me (ha, ha - ed), they would happily do without if they possibly could.

Secondly it is bloody hard work. During the rallies you hardly get any sleep, work in terrible conditions, and are under constant pressure (sounds like the TBM offices - ed). Worst of all, your colleagues are almost without exception that highly undesirable combination - French and male. Finally it plays havoc with your personal life. My last girlfriend (before she dumped me), tersely informed me that over the six month period we'd been 'together' I'd been at home a whole four weeks. But before you reach for your Kleenex, I have a confession to make - as a Francophile masochist, with a low sex drive (enforced, not through choice, I believe - ed), a terminal case of wanderlust and a strange attraction to sand, it's a lifestyle I find just about bearable.

Okay, that cleared up, lets get back to the rally itself - or at least a couple of aspects of it. One that is particularly worthy of note is the increasing professionalism of the Brit/Irish/South African/Australian/Zimbabwean contingent. When I first started this malarkey the above mentioned group of competitors were frankly something of an embarrassment - badly equipped, ill prepared, and under-financed dreamers. Now there's a hard core of native English speakers that have considerable experience, and know exactly what it takes, both in terms of man and machinery, to make it to the finishing line. The fact that so far this year, Desert Rat supremo, Nick Palmer, by offering his assistance services to the Anglophone contingent, has managed to match me suntan for suntan, tells you exactly how commonplace it has become for UK-based competitors to make up something like 10% of the bike entry on any given rally.

If it carries on like this, it can only be a matter of time before they match the Latins for honours in the upper echelons of the privateer entry. As it stands, it means that a first time UK competitor can enter a rally in the knowledge that he or she will be able to talk to experienced competitors before the off and benefit from a reliable source of advice and encouragement during it. I personally know of ten serious UK entrants for next year's Dakar and I confidently expect to shake a sizeable per-

centage of their hands on the finishers' rostrum in Senegal.

The other thing I was struck by on the Atlas rally was the genuine pleasure of the organisers that the Brits have finally started entering and, more importantly, finishing African rallies in significant numbers.

It is a commonly held belief among non-French competitors that they are just there to make up the numbers, and that African rallies are run by the Frogs - a sentiment voiced loudly this year by leading Spanish rider Juan Roma, after copping a three hour penalty for pushing his bike through the final time control on the penultimate special. Without going into the 'whys' and 'wherefores' of Roma's misfortune I can honestly say, hand on heart that if anything, the French organisers positively discriminate in favour of the 'foreigners'.

In a general sense this is because the status of their rallies is directly linked to the percentage of overseas entries. Quite simply, rallies are like any other business - if they aren't global, they aren't major players. If Coca-Cola was only sold in America it would be a marketing irrelevance - it's the fact that it can be bought anywhere in the world that gives it its clout. The pride with which the Dakar organisers announced that there were nine different nationalities in the first ten bike finishers this year was utterly genuine.

The Brit entrants are if anything even more important to the organisers and here's why. In France, as everywhere else, Britain is considered the spiritual home of motorsport. Obviously the dominance of British constructors in Formula One is part of this, but it goes deeper than that. Our motorsport heritage and our love of everything mechanical is justifiably famous throughout the world. Which is why the organisers were genuinely hurt by our historical reluctance to enter their events and why they are so thrilled that we've changed our minds. The boss of TSO Hubert Auriol, having been bought up in Ethiopia, is perhaps less ethno-centric in his perspective than your average Frenchman. But nevertheless his avowed intention to make English the 'lingua franca' of his rallies within two years is some indication of how seriously the rally organisers take the necessity to internationalise their events.

The logical conclusion of all this is that one day soon a Brit speaker will win the Dakar - and I intend to keep 'suffering' these events until that day comes. Next month: Something other than rallies...



Long Distance Non-Competitive Off-Roading in France

Raid Normandie 24/25/26 July

Takes in the best trails in what is a spectacularly beautiful area. Lots of woodland, lots of sunken tracks and a fair splattering of mud! "Enjoyed every minute of it" TrailBike Magazine.

£240***

Raid Burgundy 10/11/12 Sept

The area where the country's top enduro riders train. 360km of tight, technical trails over the wooded hills of Burgundy - "Three of the most enjoyable day's trail riding I've ever had" - TrailBike Magazine.

£240***

Raid Normandie 23/24/25 Oct

Exactly the same as the July date - though probably a bit muddier!

£240**

* easy ** average *** difficult

Navigated by road book, prices include half-board accommodation, full back-up, great food and an absolute minimum of road work.

For further information contact:

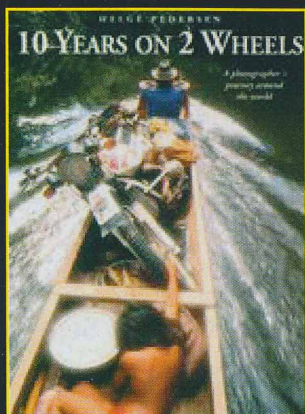
**Chris Evans, Sport Adventure,
14 rue de la Chappelle, 75018 Paris**

Tel: (00 33) 1 42 09 97 73

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TESTED 10 years on 2 Wheels

by Helge Pedersen. £29



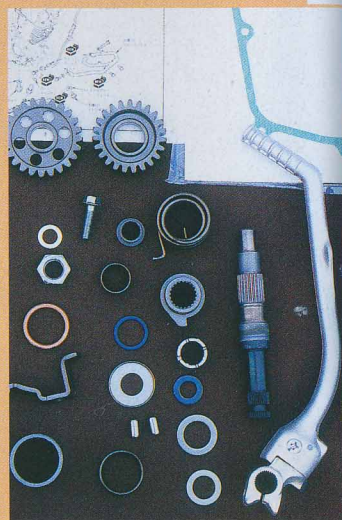
In 1982 Helge Pedersen left Norway to ride 'Olga', his R80G/S across Africa. Returning two years later with plenty of tales but only a fiver in his pocket, little had changed in his former home and he decided to keep riding. He shipped Olga to Argentina and spent three years riding and working his way around Latin America, which included crossing Panama's 'uncrossable' Darien Gap (pictured on the cover). North America, Australia and Asia followed: 77 countries and a speedo-frying 250,000 miles until he slackened the pace with current partner Karen in Seattle in 1992 and began putting together this beautifully designed book.

The result is a top quality photographic essay and a bike travel book unlike any other. Not since Ted Simon's Jupiter's Travels (which Helge used to swat a pesky scorpion in Nigeria) has a writer succeeded in letting you feel part of their adventure. But there's none of that 'Next day I got up and...' stuff here. Instead short essays with titles like 'Palm Wine', 'Sushi', 'Ganges' and 'War' help illustrate a subject or location. But even if you don't read a single word the photography is worth the price alone. This is a book to treasure and you'll turn the last page feeling as if you'd spanned the globe right alongside this great traveller. **Chris Scott**

Published this autumn but 35 advance copies available to TBM readers from Travellers Bookshop, tel. 0171 493 0876. Ask for Alan or Lucinda.

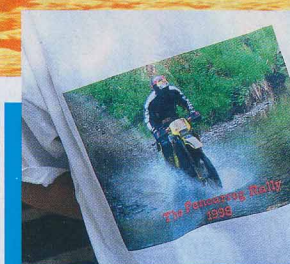
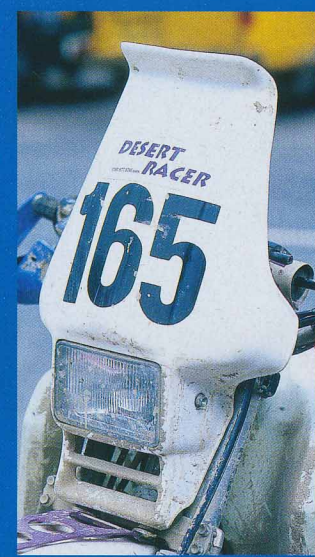
Kick Back

Kickstarter kits are now available for retro-fitting on three electric start grey import trailies: the XR250, XT225 and TT250R. The kits which include everything needed including fitting instructions start at just over £150 (inc VAT), and are available direct from the Container Company on 01362 698147. More kits will follow if there's demand.



See Fairing!

Spotted at the recent Pencarreg Rally, Rob Loupart's XR600 sported this specially made KTM-style fairing which bolts straight on to the existing XR headlamp unit without modification. Manufactured from tough, one piece, vacuum formed plastic by Rob himself, the Desert Racer fairing helps reduce wind blast and rider fatigue over long distances, and is ideal for mounting with a GPS and rolling roadbook. So far he's only made them to fit XR6s, but if you want one for a different bike, give him a call on 0181 977 8795 (evenings) and he'll see what he can do. The Desert Racer fairing costs £50 plus a fiver P&P.



Cover Up

Fancy a T-shirt featuring a picture of yourself in action. Photographer Mick Murphy will print any picture you want onto a T-shirt accompanied by the date and name of the event. He also sells pictures taken at the events which can be used as well. The white T-shirts are available in size XL only and cost just £6.00 plus two quid P&P. More details from Mick Murphy on 0151 521 8813.

The Good Book

If you're a fan of the Dakar then don't miss out on this superb book which tells the story of this year's remarkable Paris-Granada-Dakar race in a day by day account. The book published in both French and English by the TSO organisation is not only informative but also beautifully illustrated by hundreds of colour photos of competitors racing across the desert (bikes, cars and trucks), as well as a number of behind the scenes shots. The book costs £29.95 and is available signed or unsigned from Dakar competitor John Deacon on 01752 606888.



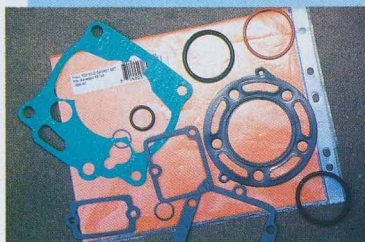
High & Dry

Waterproof socks are all the rage with trail riders these days who've come to realise that they no longer need put up with a day of wet feet, just because of one deep river crossing. These Seal Skinz manufactured by DuPont are guaranteed waterproof thanks to a unique three layer construction with hardwearing nylon on the outside, a middle breathable waterproof membrane, and finally an inner layer of CoolMax fabric to wick away any perspiration. They're not bulky like some waterproof socks, have no annoying seams to cause blisters and best of all are long enough to reach right up over the calf. They cost £34.99 are available in sizes S-XL and ours came from Cycle-Logical on 01443 218700.



Blow Your Top?

A new alternative to expensive original equipment gasket sets are now available for your off road racing two-stroke from IMD pistons. Manufactured under licence in the USA, the gasket sets are exact copies of oe stuff (using exactly the same materials), and the range includes most Japanese racing applications ie CR/RM/YZ/KX. Top end sets cost between £5-20, while clutch cover gaskets are available individually for £3 each. Unfortunately the range doesn't yet include four strokes or grey import trailies. More details from Adrian Wright on 01928 740701 or mobile on 0410 547026.



TRAIL Tips

This month some cheap handguards, how to extend your chain life, easy boot cleaning and a tip involving a microwave oven...

Noel Squibb from Exeter starts off our tips column this month with a cheap and cheerful way to make yourself a set of handguards and a roadbook reader for long distance trials. To keep your hands dry and warm in bad weather try cutting up an empty lightweight rectangular 25 litre plastic oil drum. Use the corners of the drum to make curved guards which wrap around your hands, cutting and filing the plastic into shape. Self tapping screws will be sufficient to attach them to your existing alloy Bark-Busters or plastic handguards and the resultant guards will be virtually indestructible in normal use.



To make a route-reader or road-book holder for long distance trials, take a plastic video cassette box and cut a big hole in the back. Stick a panel of strong clear acetate over the hole making sure you seal it around the edges properly. Now drill (or melt) two holes in either side of the box through which you need to insert either a pair of knitting needles, or welding rods (or similar). Insert the rods and blob up the ends with several turns of tape (sticky not video) to prevent the rods from vibrating out or puncturing you in the event of a getoff. Join the rollers together with elastic bands which will then allow either roller to be turned

in any direction, keeping tension on your route instructions. To ensure that water stays out, make sure that the video box opens at the bottom, not the top of the finished product!

Thanks for that Noel, meantime here is a tip passed on to us at an enduro by someone who didn't give their name. The easiest way to clean your MX boots when they're caked in mud is to make use of that plastic cone that you wore home on your head after your last lager frenzy with the boys. Place your upturned boot onto the cone and wash either with a hose or sponge in the usual way. Not only does the weighted cone keep the boot steady, but cleverly it prevents water from running down inside the boot which takes ages to dry out. Nice one.

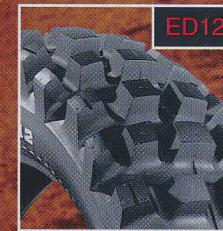
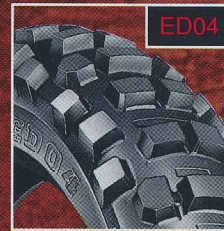
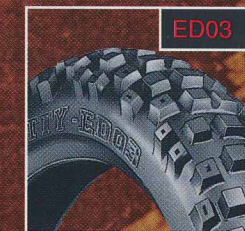
P Johnson from North Yorks provides the next tip: 'For those riders covering a lot of miles on dusty tracks, or even those people touring abroad on their big trailies, a cheap way of keeping the chain lubed is to cable-tie a small tin of WD40 onto the handlebar crossbrace and cut off and glue about 20cm of the original tube into the nozzle. Then using heat shrink to join them together, run a long length of tubing from the end of the nozzle all the way down to the front sprocket following say the clutch or throttle cable. This means that you can give the chain a quick squirt every few miles or so without having to stop. NB chain lube is too thick to work properly, but WD40 works a treat.'

Okay, here's a tip we picked up from Australian off road Magazine, SideTrack. Apparently a quick way to make lens changing much easier with your goggles is to bung them in the microwave for a few seconds before removing the old lens. This apparently makes them much more pliable, and turns a fiddly job into an easy one. Can't say we've tried this one yet so go steady if you decide to have a go at this. We don't want to be responsible for thousands of pairs of melted goggles.

Finally Chris Scott who's just returned from a desert trip (see Diesel and Dust feature in this issue) reminded us of an old trick to prevent tyres from slipping on the rim when running low pressures such as on sand. Drilling the rim and fixing a few short self tappers through the rim and into the bead of the tyre will hold the tyre steady and prevent unwanted slippage.

BRIDGESTONE

ON/OFF ROAD...ON/OFF ROAD... ON/OFF ROAD...ON/OFF ROAD...ON/OFF ROAD...ON/OFF ROAD...ON/OFF ROAD...



	SPECIFICATIONS		TYRE APPLICATION CHART		
	tyre size	pattern	soft	intermediate	hard
F.I.M Approved enduro tyres. Soft/Intermediate terrain. Street legal.	120/90-18 140/80-18 90/90-21	ED660 ED660 ED661	ED660 - ED661		
F.I.M Approved enduro tyres. Intermediate terrain. Street legal.	410-18 120/90-18 300-21	ED04 ED04 ED03	ED03 - ED04		
F.I.M Approved enduro tyres. Intermediate/Hard terrain. Off road use.	460-17 460-18 100/90-19 300-21	ED02 ED02 ED02 ED01	ED01 - ED02		
Enduro/Moto X tyres. All terrain. Off road use only.	110/100-17 100/100-18 120/90-18 80/100-21	ED12 ED16 ED12 ED15	ED12 - ED15 - ED16		

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RANT!

Kick the habit!

Paul Blezard vents his spleen over the pitiful lack of electric start dirt bikes...

In the early days of motorbicycles there was only push-starting and pedalling. These arcane practices continued for decades for road-race bikes and mopeds respectively, but some time between the two world wars most road bikes acquired a useful device called a kick-start. At this time cars still came with starting handles although luxury saloons had electric starters as well. You may find this hard to believe, but behind my boyish visage lies a memory that's old enough to remember people using starting handles on Moggy Minors, Austin Cambridges and the like when their batteries went flat.

It was just about that time - the early sixties - that those clever Jap chaps, especially Honda, starting fitting electric starts to motorcycles of all kinds, from 50cc scooterettes to the top of the range CB77 twin. Meanwhile, the still-dominant British motorcycle industry fervently ignored this perverse development, put on the blinkers and continued to dig themselves into an early grave. Electric starts were for girlies, wimps, poofters and big girls' blouses; they were completely unnecessary on British motorcycles and unwanted by their customers. Nortons, Beezas, Trumpets, Ajays and the like were Real Men's Machines built for and ridden by Real Men.

History proved how crass that decision turned out to be and by the late seventies almost all four-

stroke road bikes came with electric starts as standard. And just as the British motorcycle industry had realised, too late, the importance of smoothness and reliability in motorcycles, so it was with electric starts. By the time they got around to fitting them to their out-dated Commandos, Bonneville's and Tridents it was too late (the bodged-on electric starts on British bikes didn't work half the time anyway) - the Japs had ridden off with their livelihood.

Now here we are, 25 years on, approaching the new millennium and the motorcycle is 100 years old. As far as road bikes are concerned, kick-starts are now as out-dated as plunger suspension and girder forks. Even the easiest-to-kick two-stroke moped or scooter comes with an electric button. However, as most of you will know, the only type of road-legal bikes still made in large numbers without leccy-starts are trail and enduro bikes. Including somewhat perversely, those which are the hardest to start: the big banger four-strokes.

We all know that a large four stroke single is the hardest type of engine configuration to start (particularly when hot), even in perfect conditions. Now doesn't it strike you as a trifle odd that those bikes most likely to be made even harder to start by being dropped on their side when red hot, stalled half way up a hill or half-submerged in a Welsh bog, are those very dinosaurs least likely to be fitted with an electric boot? Shurely shome mishtake?!

I find it equally bizarre that many purpose-built desert-racers still don't have an electric button either. I mean, it's bad enough having to pick one of the buggers up when you drop it, but what could be worse than trying to kick-start a big-bore single with a 40 inch seat height carrying 50 kilos of fuel plus water, tools, emergency beacon and all the rest of it, when you've just been over the bars at 80mph, twisted your left knee and sprained your right ankle after ten hours in the saddle?

I'm damn sure that tiny Cyril Neveu would never have won five Dakars if he'd had to kick-start his works XR750s, nor would Stephane Peterhansel have won his first Dakar in '91 when he was still suffering from a broken scaphoid if he'd had to kick his SuperTénére into life every time he stalled it in the dunes. Our own Jon Watson-Miller would never have been able to continue for a week in the '92 Dakar with a broken foot if his Africa Twin had been kick-start only.

But the argument's just as valid on bikes used for enduros. My XR600 starts easily once you've got the knack, especially when it's warm, unless you drop it. Even then it'll still re-start okay, but

you know it's going to take at least ten kicks to get it going and while you're switching the petrol off, kicking it through a few times with the valve lifter open and finally getting it going again, all the slow-coaches that you've just overtaken come wobbling past and you've got to work that much harder to catch them back up. Of course now you're even more tired from picking the bike up and kicking it over which means you're even more likely to drop it again - and so it goes on.

Or else you simply stall on a steep hill or in a deep rut and can't get the necessary swing to re-start the thing. Believe me, I've been there and this was one of the key experiences which made me resolve never to buy another non electric start big banger. There must be other people like me out there (let's hope not - ed), and frankly this must be costing the manufacturers sales.

What annoys me is that the Japanese know all this perfectly well. They know they'd never sell any of those lovely little 250 four stroke trail bikes in Japan if they didn't fit them with electric start. And why do you think Serows and TTRs are so popular over here if not for their ease of starting? Yet ironically the 250s are the bikes which least need an electric foot. Those grey 250s prove that electric starts needn't mean excess weight. So why can't we have a TT400R or an electric start XR400? I demand it - NOW - and so should you.

Suzuki is the only oriental factory offering a medium-sized electric-start trail bike in the DR350 - and all credit to them. Whenever anyone asks me to recommend an all-rounder I always go for the DR350S for the simple reason that (apart from the European KTM 400EGS) it's literally the only one available with a combination of decent power, light weight and electric start at an affordable price. But it's getting a bit long in the tooth now.

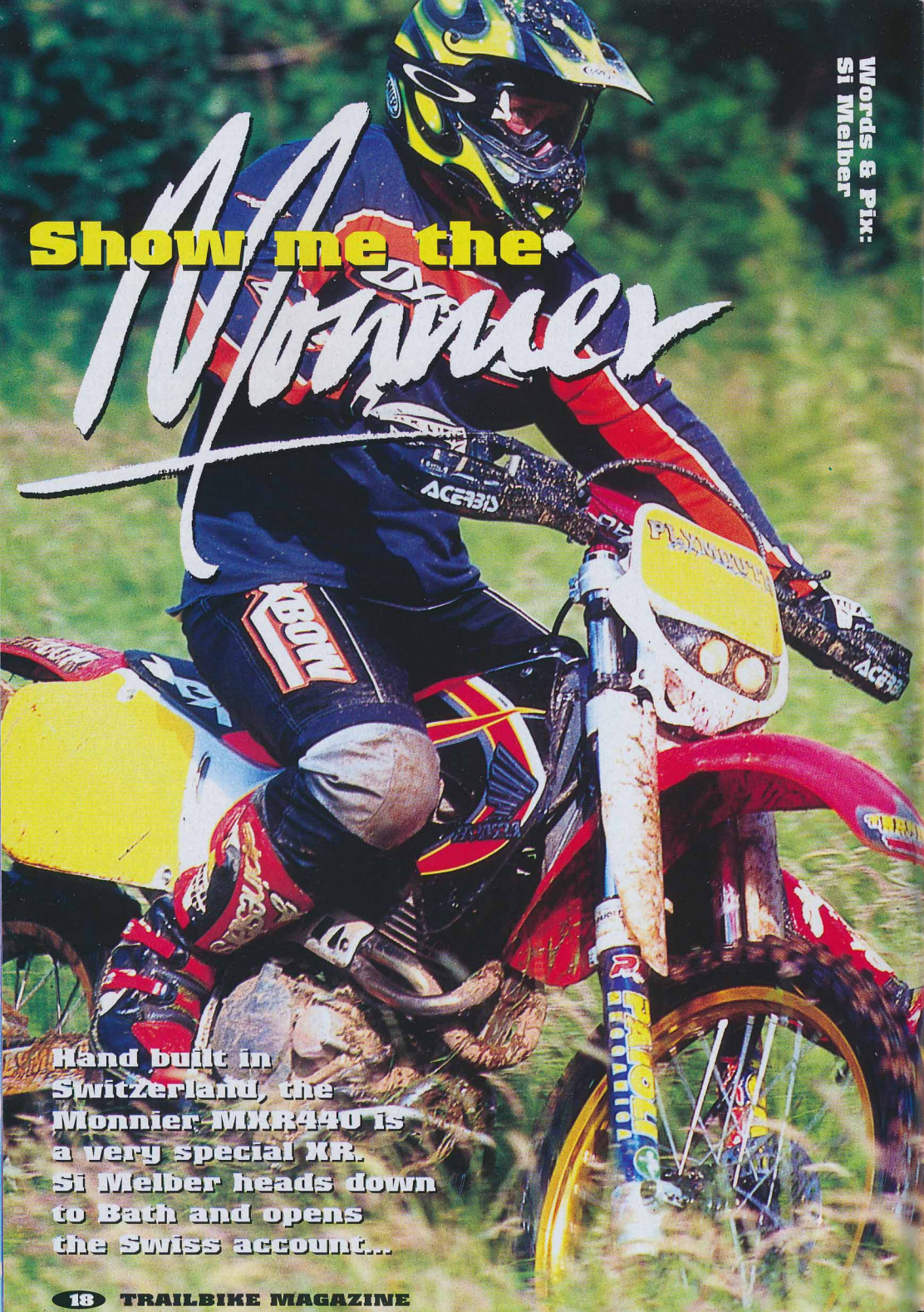
I know several women who simply wouldn't consider a bike which doesn't have electric start - and why the hell should they? Why should anyone in their right mind, I say. My good female friend Ludmila for example has owned an XT600E, TW200, a Serow, a DR350 and two Transalps. Guess what they all have in common?

I'll end this rant with a prediction. I bet you a year's supply of cream cakes to a pile of broken kickstarts that ten years from now ALL road legal trail and enduro bikes (even two-strokes, if they still exist) will come with electric starts as standard. Non electric start versions will only be available on special order for perverts and masochists who actually enjoy jumping up and down on a lever, sweating profusely and shouting 'Start you bastard, start!' Remember, you read it here first. **Paul 'thigh cramp' Blezard**

Show me the

Monnier

Words & Pix:
Si Melber



Hand built in Switzerland, the Monnier MXR440 is a very special XR. Si Melber heads down to Bath and opens the Swiss account...



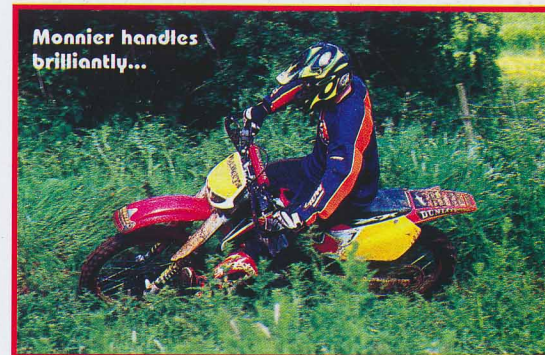
The trouble with the Honda XR400R is that they're so common these days. Everywhere you look there are XR4s on the trail, at rallies and enduros, parked outside the chippy, being used as prop stands for KTM Adventure-Rs etc. Okay I just made that last one up, but you get the picture. Everyone seems to have one, own one, want one, know someone who's just got one, or else just sold one to the bloke next door who uses it to go and collect his giro from the post office. So now if you like the idea of owning an XR4, but don't want to lose it among all your mates' XRs you've got to have something different. Something like a Monnier in fact.

Anybody who went to last year's Donington Dirt Bike Show (and there were nearly 25,000 of you) surely couldn't fail to have noticed these beautiful looking, hand made machines nestling on the Talon stand. Made in Switzerland and based on the Honda XR range, they are the brainchild of Olivier Monnier, ex-Dakar rider, and the Swiss Honda-importer. You see Honda XRs aren't sold in Switzerland in the usual way; what happens is that all XRs imported into the country are first homologated (for use on Swiss roads) and then rebadged as Monniers (MXRs). Some however are taken a stage further and transformed into either rally, supermoto, motocross or enduro specials.

These machines are modified using a range of top quality components, although the individual specification is up to the customer who can choose from a long list of optional accessories. That means you can tailor the bike to your own individual requirements, whether that be the brakes, wheels, frame, lighting, tank, or

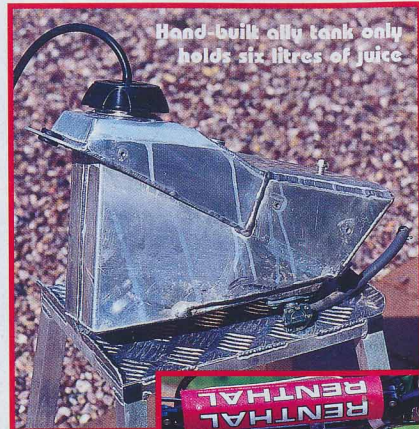
safety and nav gear as well as the size of the motor.

Of course the reason why the XR4 has become so popular (and partly why it's been chosen as the Monnier donor bike) is because it's soooooo versatile - it can turn its hand to virtually anything. From desert racing to enduros, trail riding to supermotard, it's one of the nicest all round dirt bikes there is. Which is perfect if you're planning a range of bikes for different disciplines (which is what Monnier do) using just one basic model. Mind you that's not to say that the XR is perfect as standard of course - far from it. For racing (enduros and motocross) it feels pretty bulky to ride, the suspension needs a lot of work, it's pretty tall, a bit heavy and it could do with a whole raft more power. And while (given a bit of time and a wedge of money) you could address all those problems individually on your own bike, at the end of it all you'd still end up



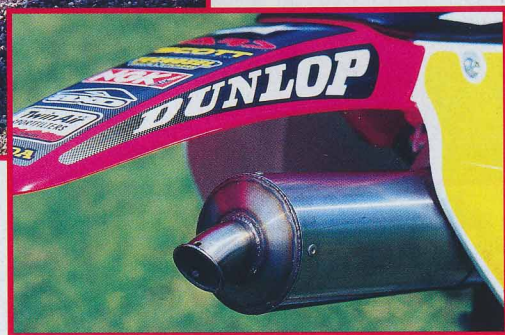


Left: Perimeter frame attaches to stock XR swingarm

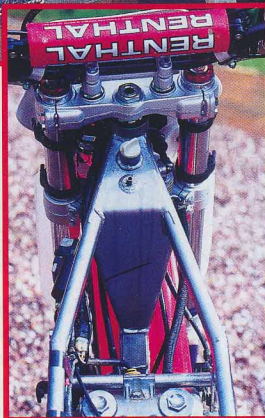


Hand-built alloy tank only holds six litres of juice

Below right: Twin top tubes include a new oil tank



Right: Hand-made pipe adds to the Monnier's sound but not its mass



with an XR - just like the bloke next door. Alternatively you could save yourself a whole load of hassle and go buy yourself a slice of exclusivity, which is why Monnier exist at all.

The bike you see here (frame number 001) or the MXR4403T-E to give it its full title, is the first of the perimeter framed models, built to enduro spec. It began life as a stock XR4 before the top half of the frame was sliced off and a hand made, box-section perimeter steel frame grafted onto the existing lower frame rails. The swingarm, front and rear brakes, motor, carb and a number of other components were carried over from the original machine, though the front suspension units were replaced by a pair of supple legs belonging to that well known Italian striker: Paioli (Blue Steels). Meantime the rear shock also went onto the subs bench to allow for that excellent Swedish team player: Ohlins. From the England team there are of course the excellent Talon hubs and Renthal bars, while the bodywork comes straight off the current CR250R. That's rad panels (no rad of course), side panels and the seat. Which if you look closely has had a slight re-touching of the CR logo so that it now reads XR instead. Neat.

A small but perfectly formed hand-made alloy tank sits between the frame rails just behind the new oil

tank and holds just six litres of juice - testament to the fact that the perimeter framed bikes were originally designed as motocrossers. And on this one the original controls have been replaced by smaller and neater Domino items - though the (aftermarket) quick action throttle was giving cause for concern when we rode it. Finally there's a fairly poor attempt at an airbox (which doesn't seem to seal anywhere) and a set of aftermarket handguards. The original rear fender which came fitted to this one - complete with light and number-plate - has been substituted for a UFO unit because the bike is currently being used for closed course enduros, though it is registered and has been used on the road.

Oh, did I mention that motor? Thought not. This one's a 435cc full monty with a high comp slug, reprofiled cam, altered primary drive gearing and a freer-breathing stainless silencer, so it should be good for getting onto 40hp - though we never got a chance to dyno it. All up it flattened the terrifyingly accurate TBM scales to the tune of 121kg which is lighter than the WR400F and not bad for a middleweight four-banger.

Like any hand built bike the Monnier is not without its teething troubles, the rad scoop mounts (without a radiator to mount onto) have a habit of breaking (new ones have been designed), the airbox looks like an

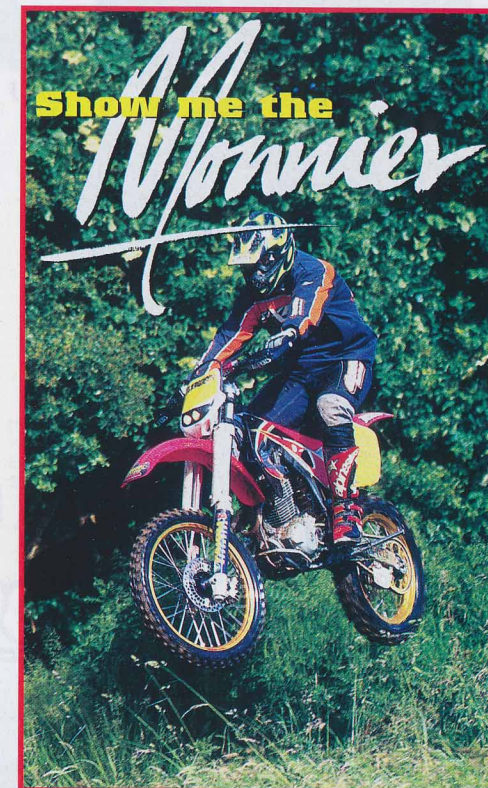
afterthought, a bigger tank would be useful, and we've heard that some of the early frames had a nasty habit of cracking at one of the joints. Indeed the Monnier factory have already produced a weld-on gusset to cure this. Then again to put that into perspective, as long term readers of the magazine will know, even Honda's own XR4 was not without its faults early on, so for a bike like this, that's not too bad a start.

Put that lot together and you have what basically feels like a CR250R, but with XR440 power, fantabulous suspension and one-off looks. I know what you're thinking - that lot doesn't sound cheap - and nor is it. But then again this is a hand finished bike built in extremely small numbers to customers' specifications - you wouldn't expect it to come free with a packet of Frosties. Even so £6500 (which is the new price - though this one cost considerably less), doesn't seem outrageous (providing you've got that sort of whack to spend on a dirt bike in the first place), and that's with a heap of expensive, top quality components, plus all the engine work done.

To ride it though is to find out what the XR400 might have been like had Honda chosen to go in that direction with its development. First off it feels small - and consequently light. Climb on the thing and it's actually about the same height as a stock XR but it doesn't feel like it. It's much narrower of course, that lovely low tank and the narrow frame rails mean that you can get as far forward on it as you want, and the lack of bulk around the tank area (where the stocker is quite podgy) makes for a bike that's easy to master. Moving the pegs backwards a little has transferred more of the riders' weight over the forks when stood up, and it's easier now to get right over the bars and peg the front end.

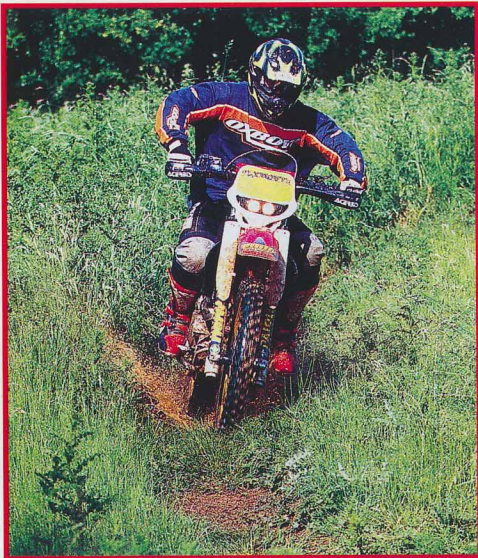
I won't claim we gave the bike a thorough testing - because we didn't. A sticking throttle and a lack of time saw to that, but the short time we spent on it was sufficient to demonstrate a couple of its strengths. Easy handling and great, great suspension. Show this thing a bump and it rolls over it as if it wasn't there. Likewise get the thing airborne (we're talking small air here) and it will set down again without drama. Two or three times I got the thing crossed up in the air, yet the MXR landed and straightened up without any fuss. In particular those Paiolis were superb: supple, well damped and capable of getting roughed up without deflecting off line. The Ohlins rear worked equally well. A series of large whoops hidden in long grass didn't deflect the bike off line and even a mistimed landing from a jump failed to bottom out either end. Impressive.

Other aspects of the handling felt equally assured. The stock XR can occasionally head-shake thanks to a combination of sharp geometry and a short wheelbase, yet the Monnier always feels stable and under control. Good suspension accounts for some of that, but a stiffer chassis and lack of weight high up make the



MXR handle unlike any XR I've ever ridden. It turns quickly, flicks easily from side to side, and resists badly timed applications of throttle by staying under control. The brakes are impressive too, the front has serious bite and plenty of feel at the lever allowing the rider to brake hard and deep into a corner while the rear is just as it should be - progressive but not overly sharp.

The engine? Well imagine an XR400 with 10% more capacity and 20% more power. At least that's what I had to do as ours wasn't running right, and felt a little sick. It hadn't started out that way when the owner bought it, but a change of throttle and jetting had conspired to give the bike a case of the grumps! I still enjoyed it mind - who wouldn't? Basically you've got the thumping bottom end and midrange of the stock XR which allows you to find grip and plenty of drive exiting corners but with more wallop up top than the stocker. Even so ours felt better being shortshifted and driving through the midrange than revving the thing till the limiter cut in. Despite a few niggles it still felt good to ride - nice and meaty in the midrange without frantic amounts of wheelspin to upset the bike's balance. In other words it had the positive aspects of a thumper in a chassis which handled like a stroker's, which in many ways seems to be the best of both worlds - shame it didn't have a 'leccy start as well!



Conclusion

Okay there's no getting away from it, this is a bike that few will be able to afford. On the other hand, unlike with a lot of 'specials' this machine could be ridden by virtually anyone - it's so easy. It's strengths lie in its forgiving handling, superb suspension and flexible powerplant. You may think that over six grand is a lot to pay for any motorcycle - particularly a dirt bike - and I would agree with you. On the other hand that sort of dough is Husaberg, CCM (and up till recently) Husky territory. Bikes which though far from commonplace, don't have the cachet of something as exclusive as the Monnier. And although this bike may have started life as nothing more exclusive than a common or garden XR4, that at least means Honda reliability, solid build quality and robust mechanicals. Plus of course, simple air cooling, good spares availability and a dealership in every large town. Now though, it's something more than an XR - it's a Monnier. It looks different, feels different and goes differently, and if you'd ridden it, I reckon you'd feel the same as I do... I want one. Please.

Monnier

Swiss Roll-ers

It doesn't cost a fortune to own a Monnier, £4200 will get your name on the ownership document of an MXR400R - basically an XR400 with key ignition, homologation and Monnier written on the seat. If you want to own one of their 'specials' however then bud-



... or how about a rally racer?



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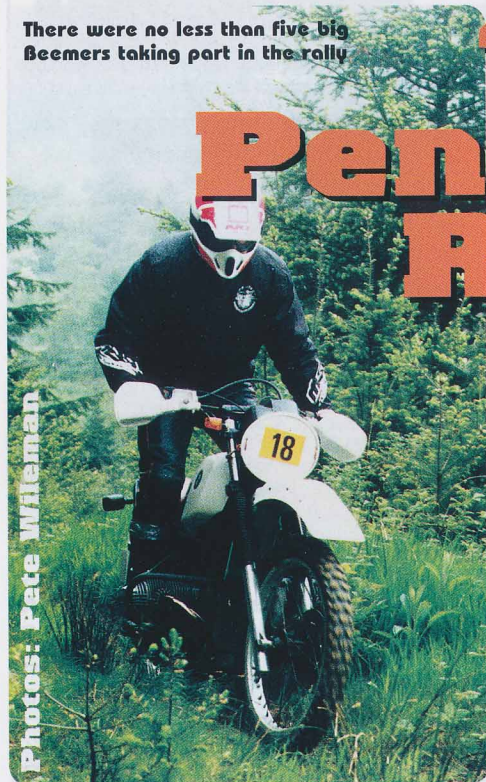
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Congratulations to everyone who
took part in the 1998 Cambrian Rally



There were no less than five big Beemers taking part in the rally

Photos: Pete Wileman



'98 Pencarreg Rally

Five years after the inaugural Cambrian Rally, a third such event has been added to the UK rally calendar in the form of the Pencarreg Rally. Paul Blezard and Si Melber were there from TBM, but only one would make it all the way to the finish...

Genesis...

In the beginning (1994) the Lord Bobs (Perring and Jeffries) created the Cambrian Rally. And it was good (despite the Biblical downpour). In the second year (1995) St Geraint (of Jones) and St John (of Edmunds) created the Hafren Rally and it too was good (despite the hurricane force winds). And lo verily, the trail-riding folk of these islands enjoyed themselves mightily and did flock in great number to both rallies even unto oversubscription. And so it came to pass that in 1998 St Phil (Hodges) and St Gail (Lucas) prayed mightily unto the Forestry Commission and finally, after a near-miscarriage, they were blessed with new issue and it was called the Pencarreg Rally. And the trail riding folk rejoiced and flocked unto the Brechfa forest in the merry month of May. Or something like that.

Hippy Hippy Shakes...

This latest addition to the trail bike rally tradition was very nearly stillborn. For 14 of the last 16 years a hippy commune has been camping out in the Brechfa Forest and they chose the very weekend of the event to return, all 300 of them. One special stage had to be cancelled and a car and transit van were only narrowly prevented from setting off down the first special stage - in the wrong direction! Bearing all this in mind, the Pencarreg actually went off very well.

Nearly two hundred riders entered, proving that there is plenty of demand for more events of this type, even so soon after the Cambrian. (although for some reason, 30 of them, including ex world champ Graham Noyce, didn't actually make it to the start). Organisationally the new rally was a cross between the Cambrian and the Hafren in as much as there was a base at the Black Lion Hotel in the centre of Llanbydder (like the Cambrian in Llandoverly) but signing on and all the actual riding was off the public highway (like the Hafren). If you're wondering why signing on wasn't at the Hotel the answer's simple - it avoided the need for an RAC permit and saved the organisers £1,000 - that's £1,000 more that could go to the two Welsh ISDE teams going to Australia which is what the event was all in aid of.

The rally itself also followed the Hafren model insofar as the first of the three 30 mile laps was untimed. From a safety point of view this must be better than trying to go flat out 'blind' on the first lap, (even if some disorganised people didn't get the message, ahem) and it's fairer in future years for newcomers too. A good innovation was the list of 50 acceptable trail bike tyres to choose from, printed in the regs.

In fact there were quite a few debutants - and debutantes - to the sport of rallying at the Pencarreg. No less than 13 women (a record?) and a splendid selection of really big trailies too, including no fewer than five BMW twins, a clutch of big Hondas and a Triumph Tiger! At the other extreme there were lots of cheap and cheerful DT125s and 175s, MTXs, KMXs, little XLs and Serows. Most popular mounts still seem to be the evergreen Suzuki DR350 (19) and ubiquitous XR400 (19) closely followed by the lightweight two-stroke all rounder the CRM250 (15).

There was a great variety of machinery altogether, from Keith Elliot's sole Moto Guzzi TT650 to the exotic brace of ATKs, several CCMs and a nice mix of Husabergs and Husqvarnas too.

Going Up...

A long steep hill in the first stage caught out a lot of riders on the first lap. The organisers had debated whether to include it at all and the beauty of having a 'sighting' lap is that you can 'suck it and see' and take it out for the timed laps if necessary - which is what they did. It was a shame to lose it from the point of view of an experienced rider, but I'm sure it was the right decision bearing in mind the nature of the event and the fact that it's supposed to be a painless introduction to off-road competition. Stuck riders also means the results can become something of a lottery as fast men and women get baulked through no fault of their own.

The biggest hazard by far was dust - with only 20 seconds between start times it barely had a chance to settle before the next man was away and this undoubtedly gave CRM-mounted front man Brian Eland an advantage with a clear track in front of him all day. In the end though Big Bri was beaten into second by Tony Gush on the trailbike version of Suzuki's RMX. Moral victor for me was Shaun Skinner on his Yamaha TT600E. His bike may be heavy but there ain't a pound of fat on the superfit flying squaddie even if an old ankle injury renders him officially unfit for army motorcycling duties! No wonder he likes an electric start! Despite losing 'several seconds' in every special stage fighting his way past the dust of slower riders Shaun still wrestled the big thumper to third overall, just ten seconds down on Gush. These three were all faster than winner of the Sports bike class Manny Smith and XR400-mounted runner up Gareth Williams.

Those two were the only sports class riders quicker than Katrina Price who took her humble Army Armstrong 500 to best Service rider and fourth trail bike. Almost as impressive was Sgt Paul Hodgkins' seventh trailbike position on the gutless army Harley 350, just behind Rob Wyszomersky's scorching ride to sixth on the CRM that he seized in the Cambrian, leading Team Wiz team-mates Darrell Groat and Richard 'pin leg' Brown to a well-deserved victory. David Almack pipped me to best over 40 on his CRM and Mike Griffith did well to take his Dominator to 16th - and best over 50 trailbike. 50-something Julian Bishop did even better in the sports class on his Husaberg 501, coming eighth overall, while our illustrious editor (also 501 mounted) managed to set off on special test one, sling his Husaberg into a ditch, get back on and finish and still beat my time on the TT600R by six seconds. Mad. Meantime irrepressible Irishman Phil Gunn would have won best over 40 on his XR400 if he weren't so modest about his age. Phil and Gordon French arrived hot-foot from the Atlas Rally, having both done the Land's End/Cambrian double over Easter - a right pair of gluttons for punishment!

That's the spirit...

It was nice to see special 'spirit of the rally' awards going to Judy Armstrong (87th, Serow) Mathew

Neale (72nd, Rieju 125), Martin Akrigg (85th, Elefant 750) and Richard Williams (28th, DT200) who took over his late father's entry just two weeks after his death. Other deserving recipients were Marcel Noller who came all the way from Germany on his Africa-scarred Africa Twin and Philip Rushworth who was pleased to finish the Pencarreg on his road-bike derived BMW R100 after only managing half of the Cambrian.

But Blez's 'Man of the Match' award could only go to one rider - Yoshi Adams. Not only did Yoshi heroically enter on his utterly unsuitable Triumph Tiger 900 - the first time (that I'm aware) a bike with more than two cylinders has ever attempted one of these events, let alone won the multi-cylinder class - but he thraped the 85bhp, 130mph monster around the course faster than most people riding 'proper' trail and enduro bikes and with a front tyre that looked more suitable for Brands Hatch than the Brechfa. Not only did he beat David Brown's BMW 800 (29th, best over 700cc) but on the second special stage he was only seven seconds behind me on the TT600R! His 26th position on the Tiger is right up there with Mike Jones' top ten Hafren finish on the Super Ténére and it's only a pity that Mike wasn't there to defend his 'RallyNutter' crown. Yoshi, I salute you.

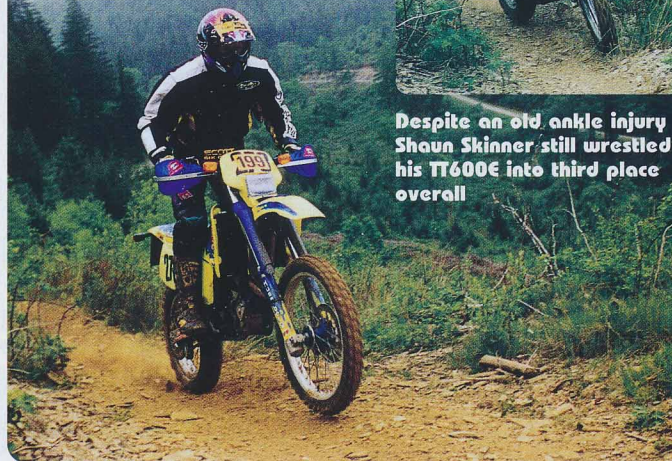
Fear of Flying - Si 'Red Mist' Melber

What a great day out the Pencarreg Rally turned out to be... for all those riders who didn't have to watch the event from the back of the St John's ambulance that is. The day started well enough. For sure there was a bit of drizzle in the air, but there was promise of better weather to come, a new course to ride, a lively and enthusiastic bunch of nutters, and a helpful, not to mention patient

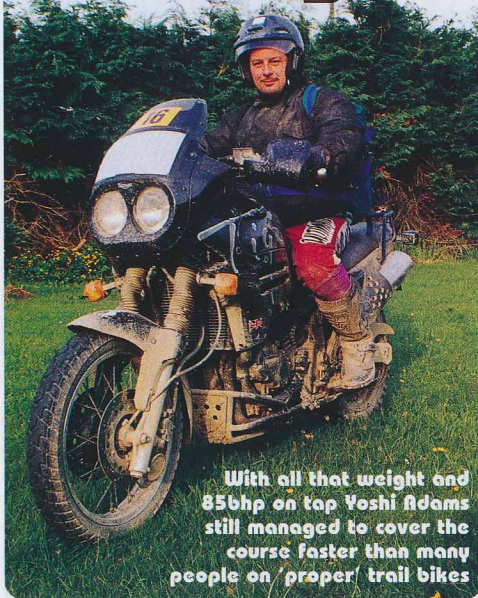


Despite an old ankle injury Shaun Skinner still wrestled his TT600E into third place overall

Si was going well on the Husey, until this enormous log jumped out on him...



'98 Pencarreg Rally



With all that weight and 850hp on top Yoshi Adams still managed to cover the course faster than many people on 'proper' trail bikes

crew of organisers, marshals and scrutineers.

You could tell what sort of event it was going to be by the bikes that were showing up at the start. Scrutineer Steve Plain, had a grin on his face which told of countless loose spokes, wheel bearings, chains, head bearings, brakes and saddles. But hey I could've told him; trailbike riders are a bunch of laid-back guys at the best of times - they think that maintenance is what you pay your ex-wife. Scrutineering which was due to finish at '9.50am sharp' went on for another hour after that and as the first riders were completing the opening lap there were still people rocking up for scrutineering. Last of all was our own Paul Blezard.

Lap one was a sighting lap to give everyone chance to acclimatise to the course and conditions and sort of feel their way around, the majority of the going was fire road with the occasional diversion into the forest, up a bumpy hillclimb or along narrow ruts. The Rally proper started on lap two with the first of the timed sections beginning as soon as we were flagged away from the start.

I blasted the Husey away from the line with the intention of setting every farm dog between here and Abergavenny barking - remember it's not how fast you go which counts, as much as how fast you're going when everyone can see you. Soon enough of course, I ran into trouble. The tricky little hillclimb near the start which I'd ridden perfectly on lap one had been bypassed for the second circuit and the course stuck to the fire roads for a long flat out straight which must have been about a quarter of a

mile in length. I had the Husey up into fifth when I realised to my horror that there was a tightening left-hander up ahead. I knocked the Berg down a gear, threw it into the corner and before I knew it I was practising my kneesliding techniques and heading for the ditch. Oh no, I couldn't believe it. This was only the first of four special tests and already I was body surfing.

I stopped in the ditch with a thump and apart from ripping through the sleeve of my jacket (and part of my elbow), everything else looked alright. I remounted, fired up the Husey on the button (there's no way I would've got a swing at the kickstart even if I'd wanted to from where I was), and before you could say 'slow down you fool' I was away again. By the time I reached stage two I was well fired up...

Free Air Miles...

Stage two began with a long uphill start through the woods (but still on tracks) as the Husey and I set off in hot pursuit of the lost seconds I'd spent ditch-digging in special stage one. Within about a mile I'd passed the guy in front and was revelling in the Husey's ability to take complete control every time I wound it on. Within a couple of miles the course came out of the woods onto the open fire roads for some more fast blasts - fourth and fifth gear stuff. Then, just as I thought I was making progress, another tightening lefthander caught me not just napping - more like hibernating. (Duh... once bitten, twice sore...)

Again the Husey was in fourth, again I went in too hot and once again I ended up doing a Bellamy (close inspection of the flora and fauna). This time I ran a little wide on the way into the bend and thought I might just save it. Mind you that was before I saw THE LOG.

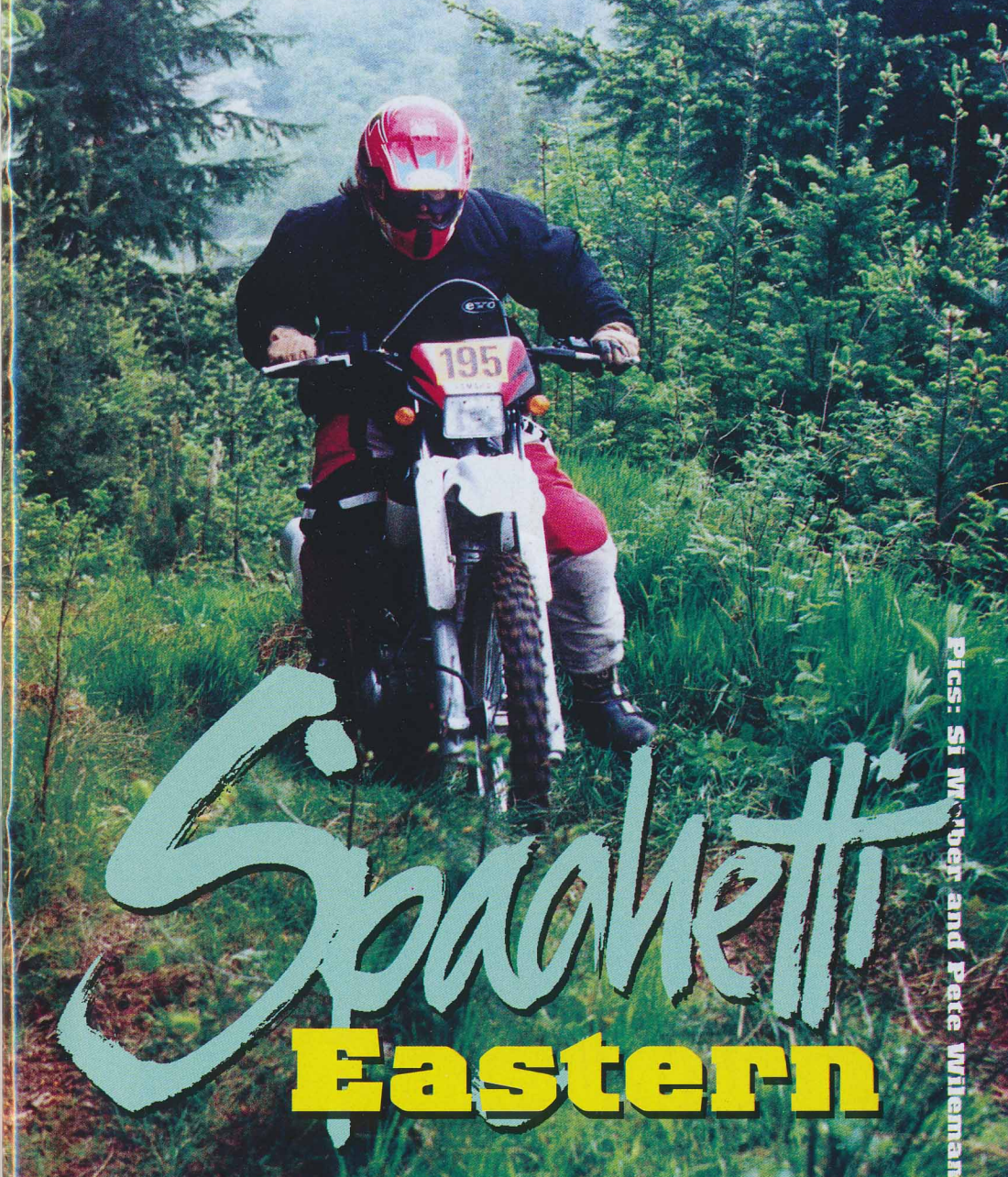
The Log' which had probably been sitting there in the deep grass just minding its own goddamn business for the past decade wasn't going to give up its one and only chance to aviate some hapless rider - particularly as it was given a serious whump by the Husaberg, just to rattle its cage.

The last thing I remember seeing as I fell to earth was the Husey describing a slightly higher and more expensive trajectory than my own, only it was performing Swedish somersaults whereas I was about to demonstrate the fine art of the English bellyflop. The worst thing about flying is always the landing and this case was no exception. In fact I landed on my hip which made a sort of horrible squelching sound... and then I blacked out momentarily.

It wasn't the crash which knocked me senseless, it was the thought of paying for all the Husaberg spares which did it for me, plus the fact that I knew Blez was going to end up beating me. Something he'd never let me forget. Oh the shame of it - beaten by Blezard. I figure in future I'll have to wear a black armband or something...

The St John's Ambulance lads were helpful as were the marshals who found me a few minutes later, kicked my bike straight and offered me a free ride to casualty. I declined. I may not have finished the rally but I was determined to finish the final special test which began in the bar of the Black Lion pub straight afterwards. Of course by the time I'd reached the bar the Husey was in top gear, I had been going flat out and my (unassisted) flight time had reached several exaggerated minutes. But then again if you're going to crash and burn, you might as well make the most of the story afterwards... Isn't that right Dave?

Yamaha's all new Italian built TT600R looks to have the XR600R firmly in its sights. Paul Blezard rode one at the Pencarreg Rally to see whether the Yamaha really has the beating of Honda's old warhorse...



**Spaahetti
Eastern**

Pics: Si W. Weber and Pete Wileman

Yamaha's TT range of bikes have always been held in fairly high regard by those who fancy an alternative to the ubiquitous XR, but aren't yet ready or willing to opt for something European. Oddly enough however, for the past few years, the larger TTs (the 600s, as well as a few rally specials) have not come from Japan at all (with the exception of the engines), but in fact have been assembled in Italy by the giant Belgarda concern - the Italian Yamaha importers. In Europe (though not in the UK of course), the Belgarda-built TTs have sold well thanks to their intriguing blend of

Latin styling and Japanese reliability, however the recent trend towards the street enduro look has seen a general softening of the marque with a corresponding increase in both bulk and weight.

For 1998 though Belgarda have sought to counteract that trend with an all new (read revised) TT-R which thanks to a host of improvements, aims at putting the Yam back at least on a par with the purposeful XR6. The smart looking beast caused quite a stir when it was displayed on the TBM stand at the Donington Dirt Bike show last November. We were to have tried the bike for

ourselves back in January, however thanks to a typically Italian manufacturing fault which saw the first few batches of bikes fitted with the wrong ignition pack, the Pencarreg Rally was the first chance we got to test one.

On paper at least, the TT-R seems to have the right ingredients to challenge Honda's mighty old stager. The competition quality Paioli forks and Ohlins shock are both fully adjustable for compression and damping and increase the suspension travel to an XR-equalling 280mm of travel (with a corresponding increase in seat height). The frame and geome-

try have been completely revised from previous models, with a steeper steering head and longer swinging arm to make the steering quicker with a shorter wheelbase, yet give increased stability.

The engine's been re-positioned in the frame for better fore and aft weight distribution and the motor itself has also been thoroughly revised while retaining its traditional air cooling and dry sump lubrication. Unlike the XR which uses the frame as an oil reservoir, Yamaha have chosen to equip the TT with a separate 2.6 litre finned alloy oil tank situated just below and to the left of the carb. The four valve, sohc lump is fed by a YDIS carb and now breathes through a 100% larger air-box with a very neat and easy to change 'slot in' air filter. The result of these changes (claim Yamaha) are to produce 5bhp more than the old TT at higher revs with a corresponding boost in torque as well.

The gearbox is still five speed but with a higher first gear ratio. Other nice touches include alloy handlebars, twin grab handles and a huge Termignoni alloy silencer with stainless steel

TT600 has Honda's XR600 firmly in its sights

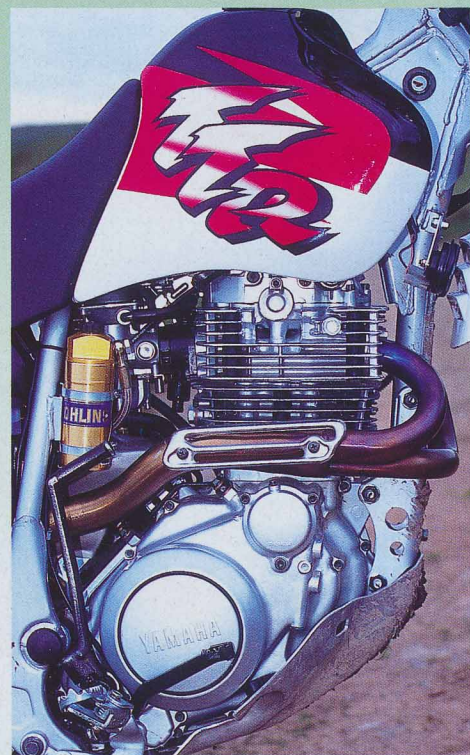


Spadavetti
Eastern

pipes from which emanates a rather pleasing and commendably quiet 'chuff chuffing' sound. The Belgarda TT600R is also 100% road legal, coming as it does complete with indicators and shod with a pair of street legal MT21s.

The one thing it doesn't have of course (unlike

Belgarda's lower spec TT600E and the lovely little TT250R) is an electric boot, although bizarrely it comes fitted with the same combined starter button/kill switch that is used on KTM's and Husabergs - the difference being that they do actually go 'brm brrrm' when you press the



Left: Considering the spec of the rest of the bike, the motor was a little disappointing. **Top:** Basic dials. **Right:** Slide in air filter was a neat touch.



Left: What other name would you expect to see but Brembo? Race spec suspension works extremely well. **Right:** The TTR comes fully equipped for the road and the dirt



starter button! The 600R also shares the same odd positioning for the ignition key as the 250 - behind the headstock on the right side of the frame.

When enduro and rally mechanic Steve Plain offered us a ride on his brand new TT600R in the inaugural Pencarreg rally I naturally leapt at the chance because as a big fan of the XR600, the TTR is right up my street. We were originally going to ride it just off road in the rally but circumstances contrived to force me to give the machine a thorough er... testing, for some 20 miles on the road immediately beforehand. I had no time to admire the bike's clean lines as I picked it up from Llandovery just half an hour before I was due to be flagged away from the middle of the Brechfa forest!

Fortunately it started with just three of four kicks from cold and I was soon thrapping it down the tarmac in a desperate bid to make the start line on time and I have to say that my first impressions of the TT600R were not too favourable. For all the high tech spec of the engine and chassis the bike actually felt really sluggish - as if it were fitted with nothing more exciting than the standard two valve motor from the porridge-like XT600E that Yamaha UK insist on foisting upon us.

Heading west out of Llandovery on the A40 there's a long straight on which I had the TT-R absolutely flat out for about a minute but the speedo needle crept only as far as the 140kmh (87mph) mark and refused to budge any further, and it certainly wasn't due to low gearing - it just didn't have the power to go any faster. Even allowing for the fact that the engine was still tight, with less than 300kms on the clock, this was a bit disappointing. After all, XT600Es will actually do quite a bit more than that and XR400s have been clocked as fast as that in the desert!

However, on the more twisty A482 and B4337 and the really tiny 'white roads' in between, the Yamaha braked and handled well, albeit with a slightly top-heavy feel thanks to that suspension and the high seat.

I just managed to get scrutineered and put my numbers on in time before rolling into the start of the first stage right on my minute. The first really 'off-road' section, a steep climb into the woods off the main dirt road, took me by surprise. I missed the main groove and hit the kerb-like step next to it really hard and was half expecting to be thrown over the bars, but instead the meaty 46mm Paiolis just soaked it up and took this rude shock in their stride - impressive. Shortly afterwards was an

Spaghetti Eastern



Sparshett Eastern

So can the Yam upset the
Honda appletart...?
Not in its current guise -
but it runs it close



even steeper hill which caught a lot of riders out. When I arrived there were a number of riders who'd ground to a stop on it - but with the help of the TTR's grunty motor I managed to maintain enough momentum to keep going and swept passed them straight to the top.

I calmed down a bit for the first liaison section and enjoyed short shifting and riding the wave of torque from the air-cooled 595cc engine which, just as it had on the road, still felt exactly like the unit fitted to the venerable two valve XT600E: nice'n'torquy low down, but flat as a fart at the top end. The motor also has a bizarre jerkiness when you throttle off, almost as if it's running out of fuel and other TT-R riders have confirmed that this was not just my imagination. Apparently 'they all do that mate'.

Thanks to the fast forest road type going at these rallies much of the time is spent sitting down, and here I have to report some good news. The saddle on the Yam is commendably soft and comfy - as good as the one on my XR600 and streets ahead of the anal torture inflicted by the likes of the so-called seats on KTM SCs and Husabergs.

The Yam's not in their league in enduro terms

though - it's just too big and heavy. The TT is actually a full 10 kilos (22lbs) heavier than even the XR600 at 153kgs (337lbs) fully fuelled, and it ain't the weight of more petrol that makes the difference - both machines have plastic tanks holding an identical 10.2 litres.

In the last liaison section of the thirty mile lap there was an 'optional' diversion and I couldn't resist the challenge. In purely technical riding terms, this was the trickiest part of the course. A steep and narrow rocky climb, it had been rendered extremely 'whoopy' by the passage of hundreds of bikes over the years due to repeated use in enduros. Its severity caught me out on the first lap but I managed to get up and over with a few judicious dabs without ever stalling and on the second lap I did better and rode it almost feet up. I was impressed by the way the Yam could be steered with the knees like a much smaller bike, and once again the Yam's forgiving suspension enabled us to stay shiny side up on the steep drop down back onto the road.

One the second lap, prompted by the stiffness of the clutch I switched to changing up and down without it, and was impressed with the way the Yam swapped cogs effortlessly. While the TT did-

n't have the feeling of power of my XR600 it was actually extremely enjoyable to ride - and deceptively fast. The tallish gearing and quiet but fruity exhaust make it sound much less dramatic than many of the barking beasts that were racing at the Pencarreg, but the video of the bike pulling away from the start shows that while others were roaring and spinning their wheels, the TT was finding grip and lolloping long-leggedly up the track with impressive acceleration. And while I would certainly have liked more power and less weight, the TT's stability, torque and high gearing made it deceptively quick and easy to ride.

Those same attributes helped in the corners too. Several times I rode around the outside of slower riders on the dirt roads, drifting feet-up in complete control while they nervously 'squirted' and dabbed. In fact thanks to the TT's wheelbase which is a full inch longer than the XR600's, I

was able to drift the bike into corners with more confidence than I can remember having on any other big thumper.

Not everything in the TT garden was rosy though. Having had a completely trouble-free first lap, I managed to stall the 600 dragging the rear brake into one tight corner, and would it restart? Would it buggery! I had a horrible sense of deja vu as I kicked and kicked to no avail - just as I had with the WR400 tested last month. What is it with Yamaha and their thumpers? After several minutes of futile hoofing the beast sort of spluttered back into life without any change in technique. This frustrating problem, (repeated several times during the day, but fortunately not in a special stage), certainly took the edge off my growing enthusiasm for the bike and made me treat slow corners with a degree of caution thereafter.

The third special test went ten seconds faster than the first time around and the fourth went even better and I was rewarded with a satisfying and unexpected 14th overall in the trail bike class - my best since coming 11th in the '96 Hafren on a DR650. (It's an increasingly tough call to distinguish between the trail and sports classes these days, but if anything the trail class is more com-

petitive - if I'd entered the sports class my time would actually have put me into the top ten. Besides, the other three TT600Rs in the Pencarreg were all in 'trail').

After the event was over I got the chance to try Shaun Skinner's TT600E as a mini back to back comparison on the road. As mentioned earlier, the electric start model is not only heavier but has a lower spec chassis all round and is supposed to be less sporting. In suspension terms it certainly is, with lower grade units and less travel, but that brings with it the advantage of a lower seat height, lower centre of gravity and correspondingly better handling on the road which was quite noticeable. More surprisingly, Shaun's bike was distinctly quicker than ours, thanks to a simple dynojet kit and mildly de-restricted exhaust. And whilst it's nice to have top-quality suspension, the lack of it certainly wasn't noticeable on the road and didn't do Shaun any harm on the dirt, since he was third overall in the Pencarreg and quickest four stroke across both classes.

Conclusion

So what's the verdict on the TT600R? Well I certainly enjoyed riding the bike but I hesitate to recommend this Eyetie-Yam unless you really can't face owning an XR. For all its high-spec chassis and suspension, it's just too heavy to be a really serious off-roader for most people and it's too high and hard to start to make a nice easy, user-friendly trail bike.

Having said that, the TT600R does have the makings of an excellent off-road all-rounder. It's well suspended to tackle the toughest trail and has enough comfort and performance to ride to them on the road rather than use a van or trailer. Certainly we expect the performance to increase as the motor loosens up, and as a bonus, the TT-R owner has the added comfort of knowing that the specification comfortably outshines that of the XR600. On the other hand having tried the 'cooking' electric start TT600E, I wonder whether the TT-R fails to distance itself enough from this altogether easier to ride machine which can be had for a bargain £500 less than the sportier 'R' model.

Which brings us to the price. A flick through the ads in TBM shows that somewhere around the £3500-4000 mark is what you can expect to pay for an imported TT-R which is pretty much XR6 territory. That may or may not be a bargain basement price these days as the price of bikes keeps falling, but it sure makes the tired old XT600E that Yamaha UK keep trotting out every year seem very expensive.

Finally there's a rival to the shorties' favourite, the Yamaha Serow, in the form of the new Kawasaki Super Sherpa. Dave Cornish takes a ride on them both to get the low down on the low seat contenders...

Two Low For Zero



**Kawasaki KL250 Super Sherpa
vs
Yamaha XT225 Serow**





Unless you've just arrived from outer space, there can't be many of you who haven't heard of Yamaha's brilliantly capable low seat trailie - the XT225 Serow. Although only available as a grey import, the little Serow has proved so popular over here that it has sold in probably larger numbers than virtually any other small capacity trailie, bar Yamaha's own DT125. What makes the little Serow so popular? Well despite its mere 225ccs, the thumpette's good nature, forgiving handling, robust construction, easy starting and go-anywhere ability make it a whole lot better than you would imagine for such a low tech machine. While the fact that the Serow sports one of the lowest seat heights of all trailbikes makes it's appeal so much more universal; short or tall, experienced or novice, the Serow offers something for everyone. Not for nothing was it voted Australia's most popular dual sport dirt bike, and frankly here at TBM we love it.

It's been 13 years since the Serow was launched and yet more than a decade on, the evergreen XT remains virtually unchanged in its design and still without serious competition. For sure others have tried to match it; the Honda Degree (TBM12 - sold out) and more recently the Honda SL230 (TBM34), have fixed a target on the little Yam's flanks, but so far all the shots have been wide of the mark. In fact nothing has yet managed to match the little Yamaha's levels of practicality, rideability and plonkability, so that the Serow remains as always, in a class of one.

Up until now that is, because Kawasaki have made a bid to oust the top goat from its rocky perch by launching its own version of a low seat height, low tech retro thumper, with a suitably tagged KL250 Super Sherpa - which looks remarkably like the Serow. So has time finally run out for the ageing Yamaha? We managed to get them together for the first UK test of the Super Sherpa and headed for the trails to find out.

If first impressions count then the Sherpa (silly name - conjuring up visions of rusty Leyland vans) has a head start over the dated slabby Eighties styling of the Serow. The Kawasaki's retro-cum-pseudo-military look may not be everybody's idea of good taste (or anybody's come to think of it), but you've got to admit it stands out from the dayglo crowd. A combination of khaki, silver and brown bodywork and graphics certainly give the Sherpa a distinctive look and believe me it does actually grow on you after a while - well, a long while maybe. It's not that the Serow is coyote-ugly or anything, it's just that styling wise it's stuck in a time-warp alongside Wham, Tory governments (remember them?) and striped-shirts-and-braces!

Mechanically both bikes share a simple air cooled, single cylinder, four stroke format with electric start to get 'em going (though the Serow had an optional kickstarter fitted), with six-speed trannies and decent charging systems thrown in for good measure. That's about as far as the similarities go however for a quick spell on both

TWO LOW FOR ZERO

machines is enough to tell you that there's nearly a decade's worth of development between the two powerplants. The KL (as far as we can tell), is essentially a KLX250 bottom end mated to an air cooled barrel and top end. Smoother in operation it has the Yam beaten hands down when it comes to containing the levels of vibration, noise and harshness. Interestingly it's no faster nor does it feel any more powerful than the XT - just a hell of a lot smoother.

The running gear and cycle parts on both bikes aren't anything to get excited about. Simple steel backbone frames mated to unadjustable conventional teles on the front and the usual single shock linkage rear ends. Disc brakes fore and aft and alloy rims (gold on the Sherpa) complete the picture. In fact the most remarkable

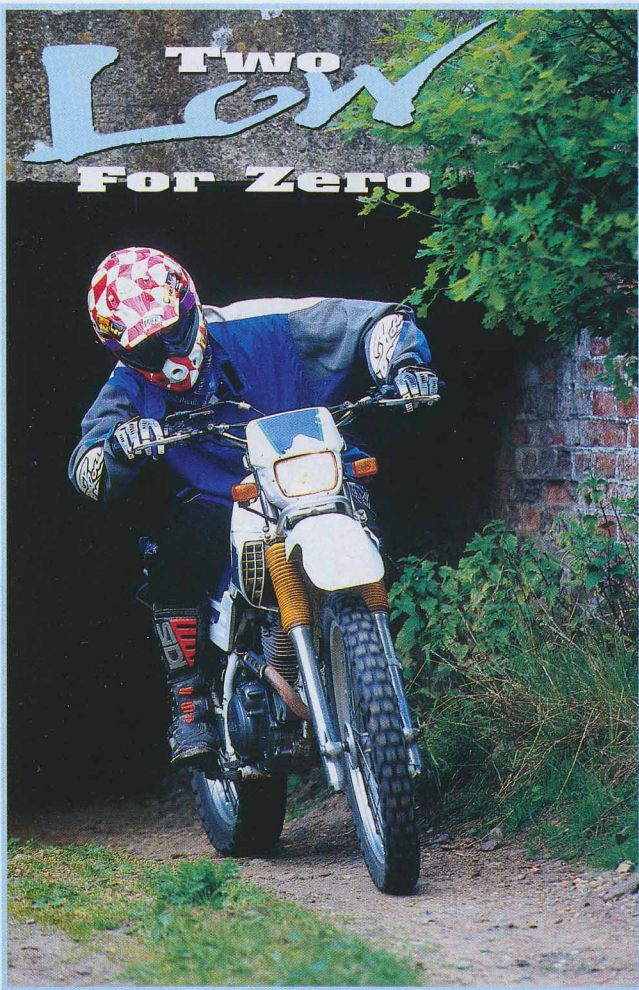


Sherpa's bouncy bits were bouncier than the Serow's

Below: Stainless silencer comes as standard on the well equipped Sherpa



Thanks to Mick at the Container Company for the supply of both bikes (01362 698147)



thing about both bikes is simply their amazingly low seat heights: 32 inches (we measured 'em), both of which drop down a good couple of clicks once you settle a 12 stone frame in them.

This gives the novice trail rider an enormous amount of confidence, knowing that should he or she need to, they can quickly get a supportive leg on the ground very easily indeed. Despite the Kwacker wearing a much wider and better upholstered saddle, the plusher nature of it means that it squashes down more than the Serow's, and it shouldn't confront the average short-legged rider with anything more difficult than the narrower Yamaha perch.

The view over the bars is likewise slightly different as the Sherpa employs a trick set of digital instruments incorporating twin trip meters and various other gizmos. Some versions of the Serow

come so equipped, but our one had the traditional analogue dials which felt a little old fashioned alongside the Shep's natty readout. Other user friendly details include light and easy to use controls, push to cancel indicators (better on the Yam), and mirrors which provide an unusually vibe-free view of the following traffic. This last point is more important than usual given the fact that it is often newcomers who are attracted by this type of trailie.

Out on the open road I found myself at the helm of a slightly more elderly example of the Serow (the bike used for the static photos wasn't registered), and at a steady indicated cruising speed of 70mph the XT feels relaxed in a strange, frantic, high revving kind of way. Sure the vibes are there but they're only really noticeable through the small serrated pegs which are set further back than on the KL.

The Serow's agile chassis combined with the gutsy little motor's eagerness to rev its heart out makes backroad scratching brilliant fun, and both these bikes can cover ground at a surprising rate of knots if you're prepared to work them hard. Swapping over to the Sherpa made an interesting comparison because despite a near 30cc advantage, outright performance was virtu-

ally identical to the smaller capacity Yam. Notwithstanding the fact that the Kawa offers an altogether smoother ride not to mention quicker revving motor, the differences in road speed and acceleration were negligible. Mind you on the road the Sheep feels a much nicer bike to ride. Everything from the riding position to the comfy saddle, smoother powerplant and neat digital instrumentation makes for a more relaxed experience than the slightly cruder Serow can offer. The gearing is also far more evenly spaced with a slightly taller first, which feels better on the road, but isn't quite as versatile off it.

While both bikes offer the facility for carrying a pillion, you wouldn't want to ride either of them very far like that - though the Kawa's perch is the one for which most pillion would make a bee-line first. A much subdued throttle response and

relatively soft damping and spring rates makes two-up travel an option though not a particularly exciting one. The Shergar in particular suffers from a lack of compression damping at both ends, which isn't really a problem at normal road speeds, but on the rough it is the bike which gets unsettled quickest.

Turn off the tarmac and the slight comfort advantage enjoyed by the Kawa pilot becomes a deficit alongside the more able Yam. We're only talking modest differences here, but the fact remains that the little Serow with its slightly more cobby feel, agricultural motor and utilitarian design, is the bike which copes with the rough best. Sauntering along gentle green lanes both bikes work pretty well, though the trick is (particularly with the Sherbert) to look ahead for anything out of the ordinary, and at the first sign of serious bumpiness get up onto the pegs. Ridden in this manner, both will tackle virtually any green lane, though beware really big bumps which can have the suspension crashing into the bumpstops if you're not careful.

Given the size and nature of these bikes, their advantage really hits home when the trail deteriorates into either tricky technical going like a long series of ruts, or else nadgery, slow feet up stuff. Manoeuvrability is both bikes' biggest asset though the Serow is marginally better in this

respect. Some of this may be down to the slight weight advantage the Serow enjoys (120kg over the K's 124kg), but I suspect it's more the fact that the Yam's slightly different geometry and better lock make it easier to get your weight forward over the bars. Whatever it was that made the difference, both machines worked well at walking pace speeds, and both bikes feel like a trials iron in comparison to something like a DR350.

We covered around 70 miles of mixed going on both these machines (interrupted only by the need to soak up a TBM liquid lunch), and enjoyed the majority of it; only when we got carried away and tried racing each other did the whole plot unhinge a little. In the main however, both machines can keep up a reasonable lick on fairly easy going as long as you don't try pushing your luck.

If this paints a second-rate picture of either



Serow remains probably the best small capacity four-stroke trailie





Sherpa sports high-tech digital instruments... Serow's analogue dials look old fashioned but work just as well



machine, then don't let it. For people who aren't in a hurry or those riding sensitive areas, you won't find a better type of bike (Gas Gas Pampera excepted). With whisper quiet exhausts, a frugal appetite for unleaded and terrific versatility, both can offer the novice trail rider an easy introduction to the sport, on a machine capable of tackling hazards some bikes couldn't get anywhere near.

Of course you don't have to have an inside leg measurement in single figures to enjoy riding bikes like these. We've seen many a lanky rider perched on one simply for the sheer fun of it, and don't go thinking that they can't take on the toughest of trails either. If you haven't yet been overtaken by a greybeard on a long slippery rock-strewn climb who makes it look like a pleasant ride to the shops, then you haven't entered enough long distance trials. These are the weapons of choice for such events whether you be six-foot-four or perhaps four-feet-six.

But perhaps the biggest disappointment (we felt) was the fact that Kawasaki have aimed at,

rather than just ahead of the Serow with their new KL. Given a stiffer set of fork springs and some shock revalving, there's no doubt that the Sharpner would make a much more pleasant bike to ride. It has the Yamaha matched in most areas and offers an interesting alternative to the ever popular XT. But for now though it's the Yamaha XT225 Serow which retains the title of best of the low seta height trailies, eclipsing the Sherpa by the slimmest of margins.

Second Opinion

Call me strange if you like, but personally I love riding quarter litre (or nearly quarter litre) trailies for their blend of easy handling, rev-to-the-sky willingness and for the fact that on the roads in between the trails you can give them a good thrash and still stay within the law. They are the sort of machines you'd choose to ride while on holiday in Spain or Greece where the back roads can resemble trails at times. Quick enough to keep you ahead of the traffic, and light and easy to handle both on and off the road, they are the ultimate tool for trail riders who want to explore the trail without peeling it off the ground and flinging it out behind them. Of the two I liked the super Sherbert best for everything but its off road ability. Ultimately the Yam is a slightly better bet, but the Kawa's higher spec and comfort make that decision much harder to arrive at...

Si Melber



The 1998 TBM Survey



Oh my gawd it's survey time again. That time when we ask you to tell us exactly what you think of TBM and its hardworking staff (ahem); what you like (and dislike), and how we can make things even better. As usual those people who write in and tell us they want a 500 page TBM delivered every week for three shillings and sixpence will find their names and addresses being passed onto every junk-mailing house in the land so that they will be inundated by people trying to sell them DIY colonic irrigation kits and commemorative china plates with puppies on. All the rest of you, by taking just a few minutes to fill in the reader survey properly, will be helping to shape the future of the magazine and influencing its direction. Your details will not be passed onto any third party, and one lucky person will walk away with a complete set of SINISALO riding gear - jeans, jersey and a jacket - all completely free, just for filling in the form. Plus we'll be giving away a few TBM goodies for those we feel deserve them. Think about your replies, feel free to flatter us, bribe us or induce us with offers we daren't tell our other halves. You know it makes sense...

Section 1

How old are you?
 Under 18 18 - 24 25 - 34 35 - 44
 45 - 54 55 - 64 Over 65
 Are you: Male Female
 Are you a home owner? Yes No
 Occupation: Self employed Employee
 Unemployed At home (eg housewife/husband)
 Student Other (please specify)

Are you a: Manual worker Professional
 Director Doctor Engineer Management

Motorcycle trade Retired Shop worker
 Secretary/Clerical worker Student
 Teacher/Lecturer Other
 What is your annual income?
 Under £10,000 £10,000 - £20,000
 £20,001 - £30,000 £30,001 - £40,000
 £40,001 - £50,000 Over £50,000
 Which of the following national newspapers do you read regularly?
 Times Telegraph Financial Times
 Guardian Express Mail Mirror
 Sun People Other None

Section 2

How many off road or dual sport bikes do you own?

None One Two Three Four

Four plus Please specify Make/Model/Year

Do you own a pure road bike?

Yes No Please specify (Make/Model/Year)

What do you use your off road bike for?

Trail riding Enduros Long distance trials

UK Rallies (eg Cambrian) Raids Commuting

Foreign Rallies (eg Atlas) Touring (ie big trailies)

Supermoto (street) Supermoto (racing)

Everything Other (please specify)

How often, (if ever), do you compete on your bike?

Once or twice a year Three or four times a year

Once a month or so Every weekend you can

How often do you go trail riding?

Every week About once a month

Just occasionally Never

When you go trail riding, who do you go with?

Alone With a few mates With a TRF group

On an organised (paid) outing

What accessories have you bought for your bike in the last 12 months?

What do you expect to buy over the next 12 months?

How much approximately do you spend in terms of running costs and accessories on your bike(s) each year?

Up to £500 £500 - £1,000 £1,000+

How often do you change your bike?

More than once a year Every year

Every 1 - 2 years Every 2 - 5 years

Other

Do you usually buy: New Secondhand

From a: Main dealer Any bike dealer Privately

Other (please specify)

Will you be purchasing a bike in the near future?

Yes No If yes please specify make & model

What maintenance tasks do you normally do yourself?

Everything Nothing at all

Engine work Pads/filters/tyres

What new riding gear have you purchased over the last 12 months?

Boots Gloves Helmet Goggles

Off road jeans Off road jersey Off road jacket

Body armour Other protection Drinking system

Other

What riding gear do you intend to buy over the next 12 months?

Section 3

How did you get this copy of TBM?

Bought from newsagent By subscription

Borrowed from a friend Regular order/newsagent

How many copies of TBM have you bought in the last 12 months?

All of them More than 6

Between 2 and 6 Just this one

What makes you buy TBM?

Cover picture/feature Interesting articles

Thinking of buying bike/accessories

Other (please specify)

How long have you been reading TBM?

Three years More than two years

More than a year One year or less

How did you first hear about us?

Saw it on sale Saw it at an exhibition/show

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How many people look at your copy of TBM?

Just you Two or three people More than three

How do you like to read TBM?

Flick through it Read some articles in depth

Read the whole magazine

Do you keep TBM for reference? Yes No

Which of the following other dirt biking publications do you read?

Regularly Occasionally Never

TMX DBR US Dirt Bike

Other foreign dirt bike mags

Do you buy any road bike mags, if so which ones?

How would you like the editorial content of TBM to develop? Tick the topics you want to see more of

News Letters Columns Tips

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Rally reports (UK) Rally reports (non UK)

Travel stories Rough Guides

Humourous articles Other articles (please specify)

Would you like TBM to increase its size to A4 even though it would cost a lot more?

Yes No Why?

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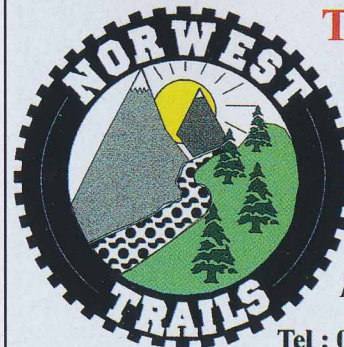
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Tooled Up

Having the right tools to hand can make all the difference between a good job and a bodge-up. John Rushworth is a man who likes to keep his nuts in order...

We've all met the bloke whose 'works' toolkit consists of a bloody big adjustable spanner and a lump hammer. They turn up at events with a bike which looks like it's been maintained by king kong, and its not long before they invariably break down, the bike is loaded back in the van and they're off home again having paid for (but never finished) their ride. To some people bike maintenance is the downside of off roading. It's a necessary evil which allows them to continue to enjoy their chosen sport - but they don't like doing it anymore than they'd enjoy having keyhole surgery undertaken by a locksmith. Others like me however find the attraction of bike maintenance part of the reason that they got into dirt biking in the first place. This attraction to all things mechanical probably spawned from a deep desire to understand how things work, so that I get just as much pleasure from spannering on bikes as riding them.

Whichever of these two camps you fall into, one fact applies equally: a well stocked and well sorted toolbox will save you a load of time, hassle and general inconvenience when it comes to working on your bike. A fact which was graphically demonstrated to me recently when I was down at the TBM office doing a couple of simple maintenance jobs on the staff bikes.

I say simple jobs - well they would have been simple given the right tools and some sort of toolbox organisation. What I actually found was a hotch-potch of old, oily misshapen, mismatched tools which would have been perfect for say installing a kitchen sink, but bore very little resemblance to the sort of tools needed for working on bikes. There was a tile-cutter, a pair of pinners, a plug spanner from an old Villiers engine and a

collection of odd Allen keys of various types and sizes. The metric sockets were mixed up with the Whitworth ones, and the most regularly used tools (8/10/12mm spanners) were invariably missing.

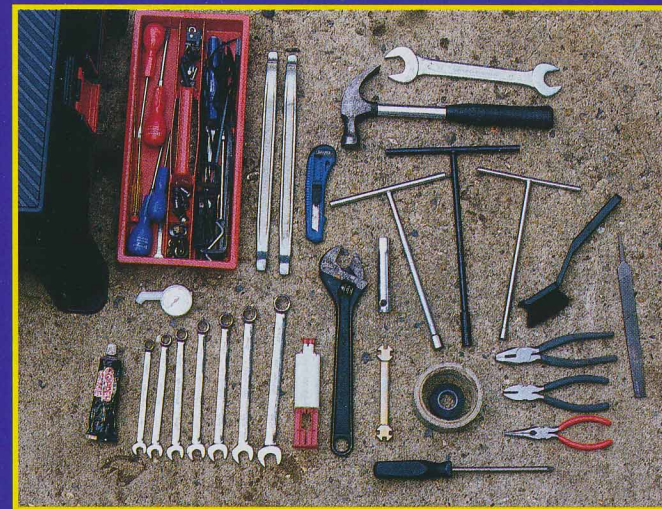
Sure there was a set of T-bars (good), a neat set of Snap-On spanners, and allegedly a fully functioning toolbox, but they were all locked in the TBM van and nobody could find the keys! So I was stuck with using what I had available and struggling on as best I could. (Ahem this situation has now been rectified - ed). A million such toolboxes exist across the land and nowhere more so it seems than in the biking world. Maybe bikers are prone to purchasing the sort of cheap and nasty all in one toolkits you can buy at your local DIY store. Where the tools are all stamped 'Made in China' and have a habit of breaking first time out. If you're going to try and save money by buying ready-made tool collections, then at least save yourself a headache and take out all the tools you definitely don't need and stick them in another toolbox where they won't get in your way.

Here's a better solution though. When you get your new bike, start at the front and work towards the back making sure you have every spanner, screwdriver and Allen key necessary for the job, stored in a dedicated toolbox. Then, make a list of the tools you don't have and purchase them along with a few simple spares like levers, cables, spark plugs, filters (air and oil) and brake pads. Ever worked this way? You won't realise how much easier it is until you try it. Okay, I know it's a pain to organise but my how it makes for expedient and ultimately cost effective maintenance.

What then is required? Much will depend upon your level of mechanical/electrical skill, and also what sort of riding you are doing (hard racing obviously takes more out of a bike than the occasional gentle trail ride). Here I have listed what is needed for an XR400 (because that's the bike I currently own), but most of the tools will be common to all bikes, and even if you don't have a 400 it'll give you an idea of what sort of things are required.

Home requirements

6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 17, 19mm combination spanners
10/11mm combination flat ratchet key
3/8" drive 0-75lbs/ft torque wrench
3/8" drive, 8 (Deep Reach) 10, 12, 14, 17, 19, 24mm sockets
3/8" drive ratchet, 200mm extension, 75mm extension
3/8" drive breaker bar



Sort out the tools you need and stick 'em all in one dedicated toolbox

3/8" drive 5, 6mm hex head keys
3/8" to 1/2" drive adapter
1/2" drive 8, 10mm hex head keys
Folding hex key set
Spoke spanner 5.8x6.1mm
Spark plug wrench
Stubby small Phillips
Stubby terminal screwdriver
Long terminal screwdriver
Medium screwdriver
Medium Phillips screwdriver
Side cutters
Long nose pliers
Bull nose pliers
Hacksaw
Assorted files/chalk/wire brush
Deadblow plastic hammer/drifts
Brass wire brush
Mini chain press/chain breaking tool
Multimeter
0-150mm steel rule
Feeler gauges
Vernier 0-200mm
Drill/drill bits/centre punch
Scissors/knife
Torch
Tyre pressure gauge
Telescopic magnet. (If you need to ask why - you've never dropped anything in an engine!)
Puncture repair kit/valve removal tool
Tyre levers
Oil measuring cylinder/small funnel
Brake bleeding hose
Soldering iron/solder

All those tools are needed yet more expensive items like a Vernier could be left out or borrowed. The torque

Tooled Up

wrench, well that's a must. Don't believe me? Soon enough the day will come when you'll wish you'd just swallowed the cost and bought one. Also remember that some European bikes like 'Bergs use the occasional odd sized (but always metric) bolt or two, so if you switch from a Japanese machine to a European one, don't just assume that your existing toolkit will do the job - check it out thoroughly.

Next we come to spares. It's well worth stocking a few service items like cables etc because you never know when you might need them. Most trail rides or enduros take place on a Sunday when bike shops are closed and nobody's going to be impressed if you don't even have a spare spark plug when your bike drowns out in a river. Here's a list of spares I like to keep 'in stock'.

Basic Spares

- Spark plugs
- Carb jets; main and pilot variations
- Clutch lever and bracket
- Front brake lever

- Gear lever
- Cables
- Tubes
- Bulbs
- Chain masterlink
- Oil filter
- Assorted fasteners/washers



Okay, so the list could be expanded to include bars, grips, chain, pegs, throttle, plastics etc, however millionaires aside, most of these spares are readily available from dealers when required. It all depends how seriously you take your trailing and racing and what you consider are mission critical items.

Moving on we come to the chemical products which any well stocked toolbox (or shed) should contain. Everybody makes their own choice of brand of oil, but suffice to say modern machines prefer a diet of quality synthetic oil rather than cheap multigrade. You can save money (in the short term) by using non-dedicated products such as engine oil for oiling your air filter, but ultimately the best stuff is the stuff that's meant for the job. Here's the list of stuff I always keep.

Chemical products

- 10/50W synthetic engine oil
- 5W fork oil
- DOT 4 brake fluid
- Chain lube
- Foam air filter oil/cleaner
- Contact cleaner
- Grip glue
- Loctite
- Multi purpose lithium grease (eg wheel bearings)
- Molybdenum disulphide grease (spherical bearings)
- Colloidal paste (1/2 Engine oil and 1/2 molybdenum disulphide grease for engine assembly on specific parts such as cam lobes, valve stems, rocker arms)
- Silicon grease (e.g. electrical connectors, caliper piston seals)
- Spray-on water dispersant
- Coppaslip
- Cleaners/polish



Other stuff

- Cable ties
- Duct tape
- PVC tape
- Self amalgamating tape
- Safety wire
- Hose clamps

So, that gives us a well equipped toolkit save for those special tools or ser-

vices required when getting major work done. The only additions might be a clutch holding tool and gear blocking tool in case you need to dive into the motor and remove the clutch basket. For other work you may need a few larger 1/2" drive sockets too. Other than that it's time to consider what to do in an enduro or when out on the trail.

Folk have many variations here and it comes down to weight and bulk of the toolkit versus the likelihood of anything happening. Of course if you're clever about it you can always stash a certain number of tools on your bike - either in a ready made fender bag or simply cable tied onto the bike. Look under the seat or in front of the dials for handy places to stash such things as a spare innertube or tyre levers. The more you attach to your bike, the less you have to carry on you, but remember, tools attached to the bike will get shaken around a lot more than those kept in a bumbag. Always wrap your tools in some sort of rag or cloth because not only does it provide you with something to clean your hands on once you've done with the spannering, but it also prevents the tools from fretting against each other and ripping through the fender bag. The best equipped tool-bag in the world is no good if its contents are scattered over the last two counties you've travelled across.

When it comes to enduros, don't carry too much. Depending upon the type of event you are riding, only carry what's really necessary. If it's a short multi lapper and you get stuck without the right tool, it's only going to mean a short walk back to the pit area. On the other hand if you're going to be out riding all day across sparsely populated terrain, carry enough to get you home again. Here's the bare minimum (for the XR4) if you want to stay in the event.

Enduros

- Honda wheel spanner
- 8, 10, 12, 13, & 14mm combination spanners
- Small bull nose pliers
- 8mm Allen key (footrest mount)
- Flat screwdriver
- Stubby Phillips
- Spark plug in waterproof holder
- Plug spanner



One thing not pictured is a decent hand cleanser...

- Mini chain press and split link
- Folding hex key set
- 8" tyre levers
- Front tube
- Small double action pump
- Puncture repair kit/valve removal valve cap
- Tyre pressure gauge
- Clutch lever and bracket
- Front brake lever blade
- Tape/wire/cable ties

That lot will fit in a small bumbag and if you want spare cables you can tape them alongside the ones already in service. A length of fuel tube either inside the handlebars or an extra long breather hose can come in handy for siphoning too. If you're out trailriding and (lack of) weight isn't a priority then consider adding the following to your enduro list:

Trailriding

- Compass/marked up maps
- Tow rope
- First aid basics
- Space blanket
- Water bottle
- Snack bars
- Waterproof matches
- Mobile phone if you have one



So there you have it. All tooled up and ready to go. Remember having the right tool for the job will not only save you a lot of aggravation, increase your spannering enjoyment, save you time and keep your bike looking tip-top, but it may well save you the odd skinned knuckle or two or perhaps one day, a long walk home...

It's worth keeping a few basic spares 'in stock'



Go to most embassies and at least you'll find a few pamphlets and a poster of a couple frolicking by a fountain. No such noncing about at what passes for the Libyan embassy in London's Harley Street. Down in the grubby basement, mean looking guys grind another fag into a Brit passport and ignore you purposefully. Tourist literature is limited to a defiant newsletter commemorating the 'drawing of the line of death' against imperialist aggressors. Charming. Just the spot to enjoy a spring biking break I thought.

'Visa?' I asked meekly, pointing at myself. 'Hello, Visa' they said. No-one smiled. It had taken me months to get to this point. Last November with my Adventure Motorbiking Handbook completed (that's enough plugs - ed), I decided it was time to practise what I preached. Libya sounded interesting and BMW's Funduro trailie would make a nice change from yet another Ténéré.

Buying a '94 F650 was easy, getting a visa involved countless dead end faxing to various Libyan tourist agencies for the required invita-

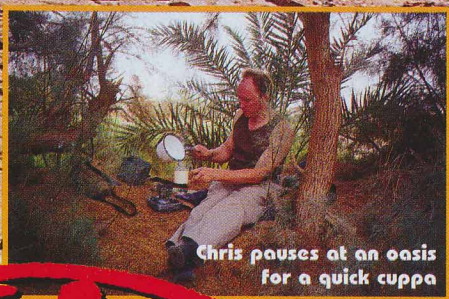
tion. Eventually a mysterious Internet connection provided an invite at a price and my permit was telexed from Tripoli in early April. A week later I was walking down Harley Street with the requisite stamp. There was no going back now.

I may have been nervous about my destination, but I was sure of the bike. I'd always fancied the look of the Funduro: a trusty combination of Rotax engine and BMW build quality. No one had anything bad to say about them other than being a bit lardy for off-roading but I was sure the 650 was up for some piste-bashing.

The revvy engine took a bit of getting used to after plonky XTs, and as I'm permanently skint, mods were kept to a minimum. A fat Mich' Desert

squeezed on the back after a bit of sawing at the outer knobs and removal of that back bumper thing (what are they about?). The front end took a 'rear' 19' Pirelli MT21 with considerably more knob-chopping, and a VT500 mudguard.

Road riding on these tyres was initially hairy, especially the 'marbles-on-glass' MT, but I soon got used to it. The bike had come with a new O-ring chain, some brand I'd never heard of made in Bolivia or somewhere, but I figured it would last the distance. A 27-litre plastic Acerbis tank looked barely bigger than the original unit but promised a 500km range. To help work out distances in kilometres, BMW gave me a metric speedo which saved the possible errors in converting from miles to kms. A chunky alloy Touratech GPS bar mount held my sat-nav gadget firmly in place, a cheapo ball compass screwed on the



Chris pauses at an oasis for a quick cuppa

Diesel & Desert

Motorcycle adventurer, TBM contributor and author of the Adventure Motorbiking Handbook Chris Scott, decided to take a leaf out of his own book and head for Libya on a BMW F650. As usual, things turned a little sour....



Pics: Chris Scott

Diesel & Dust

There's miles and miles of track like this in Libya



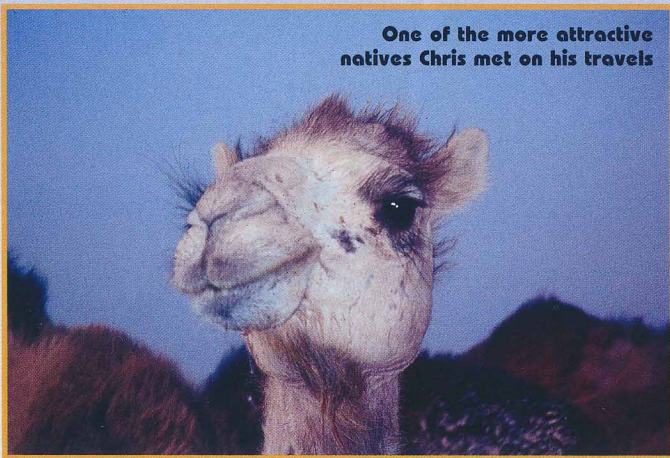
dashboard (or whatever you call it) and a neat CycoActive Bar Pack took the place of the tank bag. Lastly, I bunged on an in-line fuel filter, a ciggie lighter power take off for the GPS, fork gaiters and a high screen. Time to head South.

To save my knobs so to speak, I caught the overnight Motorail from Paris to Marseilles and

then caught a boat to Tunis where ensued five hours of passing around from one counter to another. If this was Tunisian immigration, what would Libya be like? And another thing troubled me: was I running out of time? By now (late April) temperatures across the Sahara were climbing steeply, and with them came increased

water consumption and a host of other problems.

Prior to departure, a New Year's meet up with TBM's Crasher Cornish, who's worked in Libya, actually put me off the whole idea. Besides the grief he'd got as a reluctantly tolerated ex-pat, he warned me about the enervating ghibli winds which blew in April and melted strong men's brains. A story of a guy who'd driven out into the storm for no real reason sounded pretty grim. 'About a month after the guy'd gone missing a nomad came into the camp and asked if we



One of the more attractive natives Chris met on his travels

wanted to know where our Toyota was? We said yes and it cost us. Then he asked did we want our body back? That cost us some more. Turns out the guy had just parked up with the engine running and walked out into the sandstorm. That was the end of him.'

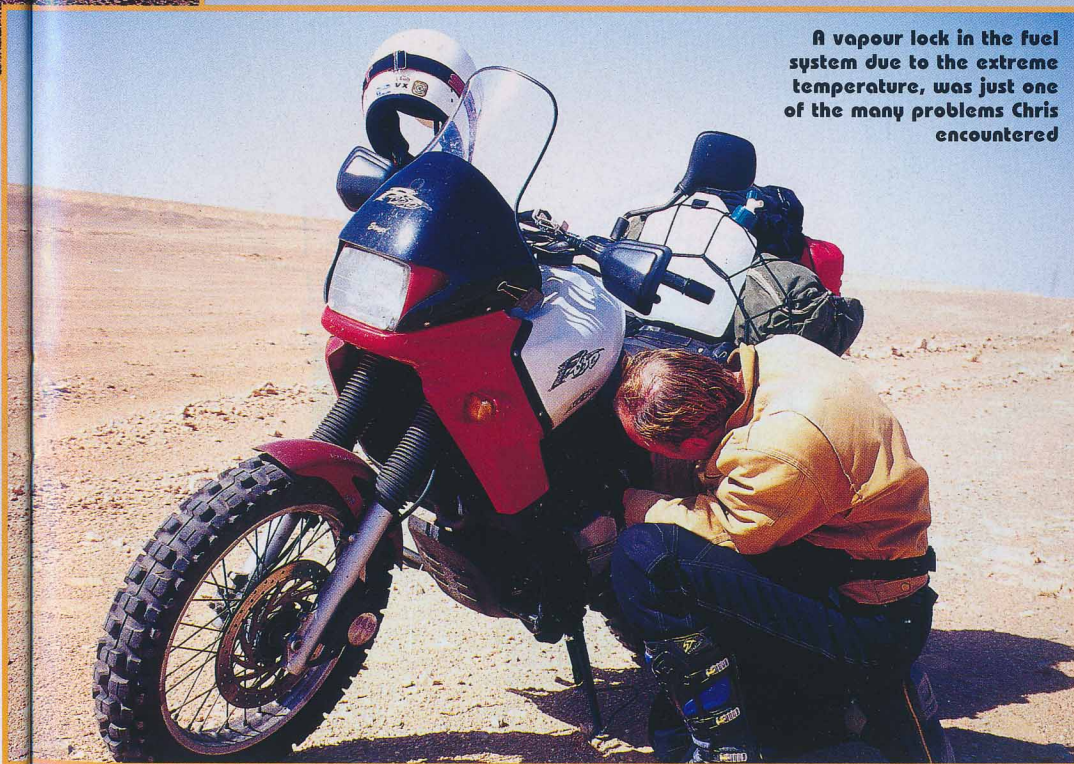
By the next afternoon I was close to the Libyan border, a wedge of illicitly purchased Libyan currency stuffed down my underpants where I hoped no-one would bother searching. At the border I was resigned to hours shuffling from one hanger to the next filling out forms and getting stamps. But by pure chance one of the Libyan travel agents I'd given up on months before, recognised me and whisked me through the formalities in just 20 minutes (plus a hundred quid bribe!). Stunned at my good fortune, I set off towards Tripoli in the fading light and soon pulled over to fill

up with fuel. With the tank brimming with four star I paid the attendant just 60p. That's right, sixty pence. Four star works out at 2.5p a litre or, if I you're feeling stingy, two star costs 2p.

With dozens of roadside wrecks, traffic along Libya's main coast road was a lethal mixture of grand prix craziness and farmyard bangers and I was relieved to eventually turn south towards Ghadames, 550km away.

Next morning as I rode into the desert on super smooth highways I wondered when the real heat would begin. I didn't have to wait long. By mid-afternoon the temperature had risen to the high 30s and out of the blue the bike started spluttering. Surely I hadn't got through a tank of fuel already? Undoing the cap revealed plenty of juice and the bike started up again but a few miles later cut out once more. I got off, had a look at things and guessed at a cause. A combination of minimal throttle at cruising speed plus the sweltering afternoon heat saw the trickling petrol evaporate in the fuel filter, causing vapour lock. Stopping for a bit cooled things down and got the petrol flowing again, and when I discovered that pouring cooling water over the filter body made the petrol level rise instantly (inside the filter), I knew I'd guessed right.

A vapour lock in the fuel system due to the extreme temperature, was just one of the many problems Chris encountered



Knowing the problem was as good as solving it so I carried on to Ghadames, arriving zonked out at the empty campsite just as the sun was setting. Slumped out on the sand, I had a good think. If it was reaching nearly 40 degrees centigrade this far north, how hot would it be further south? The vapour lock was easily fixed with a cardboard heat shield, but I was keen to get the BM on the dirt. Was I taking too great a risk riding alone? From here my plan was to ride across the Hammada el Hamra plateau and then cut over the edge of the Ubari Sand Sea down to the Acacus Mountains near the Algeria/Niger border, altogether about a week's riding.

My French guidebook claimed the route across the plateau was a straightforward 450km gravel track with a well about half way. Just about within my range, though in these temperatures water consumption was another matter. I checked over the bike, wrote myself a road book and planned to leave early next morning.

That night at 2.10am a rising gale woke me and I dozed fitfully as the tent wobbled and palms flapped. Dawn revealed an orange sky and a thick dusty haze. Was this the ghibli Dave had warned me of? I postponed my departure hoping

it would die down, but in the end decided to set off back to the village of Derj where the plateau track began and where I'd see how I felt. As it turned out, this was the same day that three competitors in the nearby Tunisie Rallye permanently checked out of the event because of the heat.

Filling up at Derj and on the verge of heading back to Tunisia, my dithering was quashed when a German Isuzu pulled in. A brief chat with the occupants revealed that Rainer and Katja were also heading across the Hamra and would be happy to have another vehicle along for safety.

Rising to 2000', the Hammada el Hamra is aptly-named the Red Plateau: a barren, undulating prairie of rust-coloured gravel cut by dry water courses. Crasher Cornish hadn't much good to say about it: 'a pitiless void that was either freezing or baking and criss-crossed with enough tracks to confuse even the wily nomads.'

Enjoying the security of another vehicle, I felt great to be back on the dirt. The BM handled the 40-50kmh pace well and it was fun concentrating on the riding instead of sitting on the blacktop. As expected I was a lot quicker than Rainer's ex trans-African Isuzu, but I didn't mind stopping

once in a while, their very presence made this whole excursion much less tense. But there was one thing which bothered me...

'Rainer, shouldn't we be at Bir Gazell by now?' I asked. According to my speedo the landmark should have been close.

'Bir Gazell? No, that is on the direct route' he replied. 'We are taking the southern route.'

'The southern route?' I enquired, amazed.

'Here, look, it goes down to the Ubari Sand Sea, turns east and follows the dunes' edge to Idri. My guide book says it's much more scenic than the direct route.'

'How far is it?'

'About six hundred kilometres.'

'I doubt I've got enough fuel to go that far, especially if the piste gets sandy.' We paused for a moment to consider the implications.

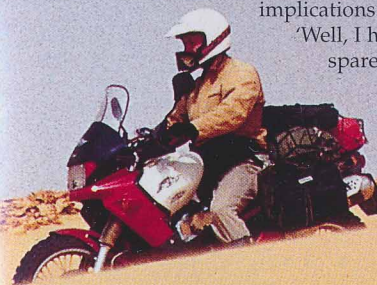
'Well, I have some spare petrol, about six

litres,' said Rainer whose Isuzu ran on diesel.

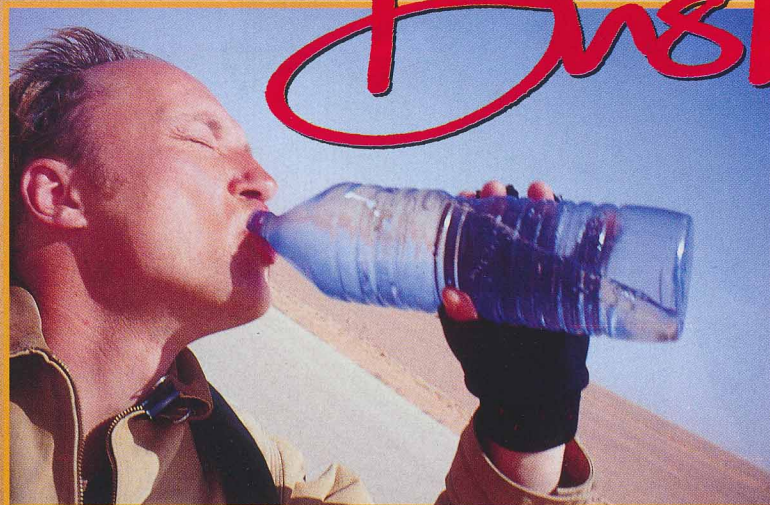
Topping up the bike's tank we decided to take a gamble and press on. But by late afternoon we'd got ourselves lost. The next GPS waypoint was through the hills to the south, but our track was now heading west. This is all part and parcel of Sahara travel so, not unduly worried, we made camp and resolved to head directly for the waypoint next morning.

Desert riding may sound fun on a trail bike, but in fact it's incredibly slow. Once you ride off piste, you find yourself walking the bike down rocky slopes, blundering up dead-end valleys, edging towards drops and digging out of huge dunes. Even with an early start and the bike reconnoitring a way through the hills, it still took us till noon next day to cover the 14km to the waypoint and the route.

Having lost altitude coming off the plateau, the day began to really cook and, as I feared, the plateau's firm gravel turned into plains of soft sand. As all you beach racers know, soft sand has



Diesel & Dust



When Chris finally ran out of fuel there was nothing left for it but to take shelter and hope for the best...



Diesel & Dust

Some of the wells had long since been abandoned



to be attacked standing on the pegs with a nailed throttle and eyes firmly fixed on the ground ahead. There is no easy option: lose speed and you're off - go too fast and you risk crashing. I finished the day shagged senseless by more different shades of soft sand than Alum Bay.

By now I was already cutting into Rainer and Katja's water reserves, so we needed to find a well soon. Their German guidebook identified a source 40km away. Having located what seemed the right place, we ploughed into the sands where the Trooper soon mired. While they shovelled I headed over the dunes, riding the sandy banks in all directions just to keep from getting stuck. After a while I found the well - bone dry and full of sand. This little excursion had cost us two hours, a heap of energy and still more water. We flopped out under some meagre shade. No one said anything.

Eventually we moved on, at one point encountering the vile surface-crusting powder known as feche-feche. Spotting it too late, my BM broke through and sank in, engine screaming in first gear as a 20-foot roost spurted vertically from the back wheel. By paddling madly I just about regained firmer ground to grab yet another slug of water. But by now every minor exertion demanded a drink and the exhausting conditions went on for hours. In this sort of terrain the

Funduro was just plain Duro, and while the engine was amazingly zippy on the highway, it lacked the plonk needed to chug through soft sand. Even the super stiff Desert tyre running just 10psi didn't flatten out enough to give enough traction. Result: lots of wheelspin and wasted fuel for not much forward motion.

At dusk we finally located a well, and filled up with much needed water. By now though we were so exhausted it took all our strength to cook up some grub. We crashed out for the third night running while camels wandered all around our impromptu campsite. Though we never discussed it, that evening we all knew we'd bitten off a bit more than we could chew. It was an uncomfortable night

By nine the next morning the bike was halfway down a dune and out of gas. We'd seen no other vehicles since Derj so there was nothing for it but to lug out twenty litres of water from the car and watch the Isuzu chug off over the sands and out of sight. With a bit of luck they'd be back tomorrow. I prayed they wouldn't get lost or stuck, or worse still, ambushed, but you never know in the desert. Confident that lying still in the shade was the best way to save water, I crawled under a makeshift lean-to and tucked into some TBM back issues.

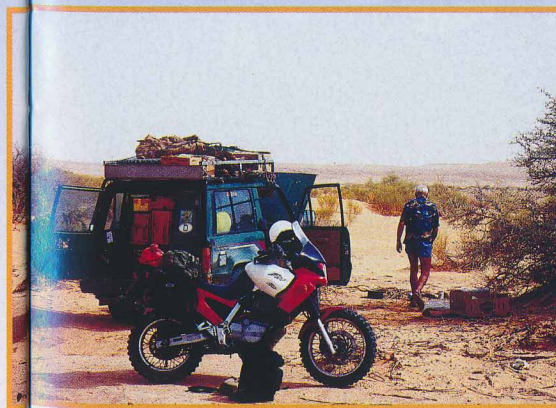
The burning sun inched across the sky and the

wind peppered me with sand as I reviewed Blez's litany of motorcycle abuse. Then, just as I began thinking 'What if they never make it back', and wondering whether Blez would ever discover the meaning of preventative maintenance, a toot-tooting heralded the blessed return of the Isuzu. I could've kissed them both. In the end I made do with kissing just Katja - she tasted of diesel and dust, but I didn't mind a bit.

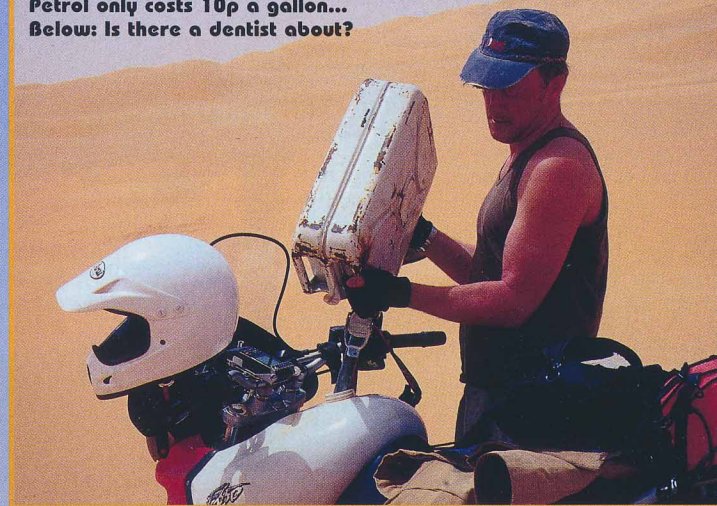
They'd chanced across a date plantation where a guy had tapped off a jerrican's worth of fuel from his pick-up's oil drum - we were back on the move again. Now the riding became really hard as the track squeezed between the dunes and rocky outcrops. Again we found ourselves hunting wind-erased tracks and taking repeated wrong turnings up boulder-strewn slopes that half the time even the nimble bike couldn't manage. We'd covered just 40km, when the Isuzu got stuck on a dune, but we'd all had enough anyway and called it a day. Hopefully an early start on firmer night-cooled sand would finally see us get to Idri.

We set off at first light at 6am and after another four hours riding pushing, digging, sweating, and cursing, finally rolled into Idri, caked in dust and absolutely knackered. I felt like I'd done a four day marathon enduro on a heavy loaded bike in 40-degree temperatures. I guess I had.

At Idri I bade farewell to the tough German



Petrol only costs 10p a gallon...
Below: Is there a dentist about?

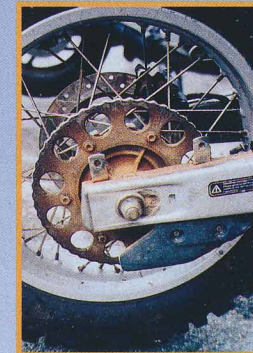


couple deciding that the rest of Libya would have to wait. I headed north again setting the co-ordinates in my GPS that would take me home. Everything was sore after the 400 mile pummeling I'd endured, but heavy winds hindered my retreat, and at one point I had the distinctly

novel sensation of leaning the wrong way round a bend to counteract a 50mph crosswind. By the Tunisian border that cheap chain was on the way out, and when O-rings go, they go fast. Back across Tunisia, back across the Med, another Motorail to save the chain and a quick coffee with TBM columnist Chris Evans in Paris who looked at the sprocket and said 'yeah, you'll make it.'

Well Evans, you owe me one. I made it to the Channel but by Maidstone the sprocket was history. There was nothing for it but to walk to a phone, hire a van and drive home. I'll be back for more Libyan sand later on this year, but somehow I don't think it'll be on a Funduro. Comfy seats in those Transits though.

Thanks to El-Crasher Cornish for providing additional information on Libya. Check out Chris Scott's Adventure Motorbiking Website at www.compass-star.co.uk/AMW.htm for even more of this lunatic adventure stuff.



CROSS- Bikes Needs

Take the fastest looking dirt bike currently available and flavour it with a load of specialist off road parts and you have a recipe for one sexy trail bike. Si Melber went to Northamptonshire to ride the Honda CR250XC...

You get to see all sorts of things out on the trail; old fridge-freezers, ancient buses driven by travellers, water diviners and even the odd couple making out, but you don't see many alloy-beam-framed dirt bikes out there do you? Let's face it, you're more likely to see Gerry Adams and Ian Paisley sharing a joke over a pint of Pure Genius than come across an alloy framed trailie. That's not surprising because apart from one-off specials, only Honda make an alloy framed bike and that's a motocrosser. Or is it?

Well yes and no. For sure the CR we borrowed from Nick Hargrave from Northants-based Pro-Racing started off as a standard '98 MX-er when it left the factory in Japan; but by the time we got to ride it, it had transmogrified into a trail

demon, perfect for the hard, dusty and occasionally muddy lanes of the east Midlands.

Nick and Rob who make up Pro-Racing have for the last 20 years been taking motocross and enduro bikes and turning them into user friendly trail bikes that suit their blend of cross country riding to perfection. Before you get carried away and start hyperventilating let's lay a few demons to rest shall we? The Pro-Racing CR250XC (XC stands for Cross Country), is not only fully road legal including a dip-beam headlamp, brake light etc (and actually much more legal than a number of bikes we've seen out on many trail runs), it's also astonishingly quiet. For sure it snarls a little once the power-valve opens up, but it's quieter than virtually any full-on thumper, and at tick-over you can barely hear the thing.

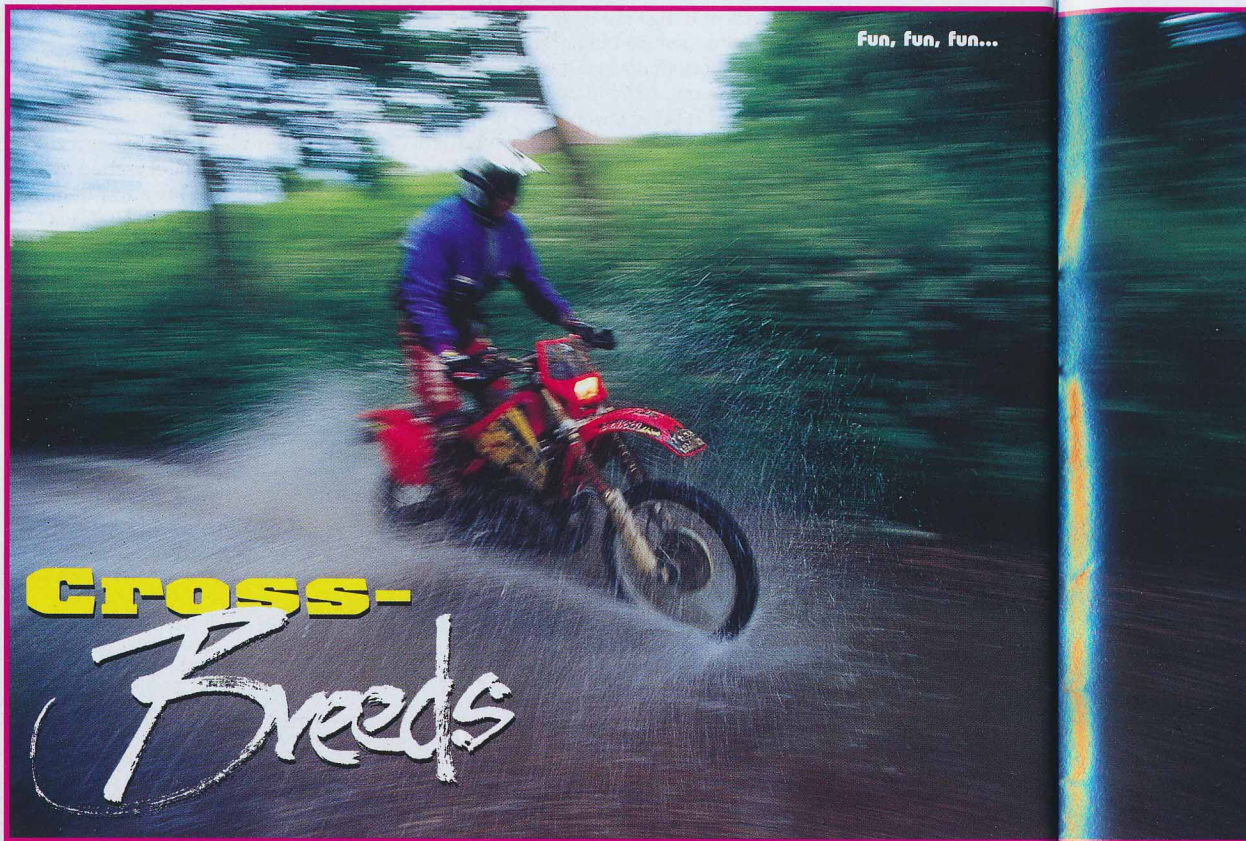
This is not the first time we've ridden a Pro-Racing bike. Two and a half years ago in the



Main pic: Take a CR250, add lights and various sundries and you have yourself a brilliant all-rounder

Right: The guys at Pro-Racing prefer to stand around all day holding their bike up rather than buying a side stand





Fun, fun, fun...

Cross-Breeds

depths of winter, we rode a steel-framed CR which the boys had converted for trail use, and loved the way the thing handled. But time has marched on, Honda has considerably changed the look of the CR250R and Pro-Racing's conversions have followed the CR's own development with a number of new parts specifically designed for the alloy framed model.

So just how do you take a bike that was designed to win motos and turn it into the sort of trail bike you could happily ride all day? The secret is in the suspension. Ask anyone who's ridden an ally-framed CR and they'll tell you, the biggest problem with making it work on the trail is that the hard suspension was designed to cope with heavy landings from jumps. Fortunately however, Pro-Racing are suspension specialists. They earn their Euros by revalving forks and shocks to customer specifications, so turning the CR's Showas into something a little more forgiving was never going to trouble them unduly.

Both forks and shock were revalued to give softer low- and mid-speed compression, but rebound damping and spring rates were left as

stock. The '98 CR has slightly plusher suspension than the '97 model (which was criticised for its harshness), and European versions come with softer springs than US bikes. The other thing to remember is that once you add the road equipment (head and tail lights, big tank etc) plus the weight of your average trail rider (and rucksack, tools, sarnies, camera), as well as 14L of fuel, you're going to be squashing down that suspension more than Mr Honda intended anyhow.

Which is not to say that the XC is heavy by the time it's fit for the highway. On the contrary it's one of the lightest trail bikes we've ever tested. Complete with all fluids on board it tipped the atomically-calibrated, precision engineered, mass-measurer TBM scales at just 110kg which is remarkably little. Particularly when you remember that each litre of four star weighs 1kg and this thing had 14 litres of juice on board. I'll leave you to do the maths for yourself, but it's clear without fuel this baby weighs well under 100 kilos - ready for the road.

But sorting out the suspension and adding road legality isn't the only thing you need to

make a CR ready for the trail - far from it. Not for nothing is the CR250R known as one of the most powerful (and linear) MX bikes available. It makes very little low down, then when it hits, it hits hard. Not the sort of power curve you need for snotty trails with muddy ruts, rocks or bogs. Pro-Racing tried fitting different carbs but ultimately went back to the standard one and decided instead to take a closer look at the CR's powervalve and chamber (the so-called CRV). They experimented with increasing the powervalve's chamber volume and found that (while the powervalve is closed) a larger CRV chamber fooled the bike into thinking it was fitted with a longer pipe - increasing the low end torque available. A spacer was machined up which increased the CRV chamber volume sufficiently and meantime they fitted a screw adjuster into the powervalve which marginally lowers the exhaust port - providing yet more useful bottom end.

Twin 100W lighting coils were fitted (though the XC only uses one side) and the generator magnets provide the additional flywheel weight needed to prevent stalling at low rpm. Now there's enough juice to power head and tail lights as well as a couple of auxiliary lights or indicators should you want them, and a neat screw-in brake light switch provides the power to the twin filament rear bulb.

Juice of another kind required a different strategy. The stock CR fuel tank holds just seven litres of petrol, but the Pro-Racing bike is fitted with an aftermarket Clarke fuel cell which manages to squeeze 14 litres between (and around) those narrow frame rails. Amazingly the Clarke tank is no wider or longer than normal though it sits about an inch higher up top, which makes the XC narrow about its middle and simple to move about on (eat your hearts out Yamaha WR-F owners). 14 litres may or may not be good enough for a full day's riding (depending upon the sort of distances you cover), but it gives the XC the sort of range that most four stroke owners enjoy, and means you can contemplate covering 90-100 miles between fill-ups. Of course the bike is pre-mix only there's no oil pump fitted, so you've got

to remember to carry a small container of two-stroke oil in your backpack.

Other changes to the stock CR? Well, there's a wide ratio HRC fifth gear nestling in the gearbox (predominantly for road work in between trails), and neatly welded onto the lower right side frame rail is a small alloy case saver, while the bottom of the engine is protected by a carbon-fibre skidplate. Pro-Taper bars, rally handguards, one-off graphics, and an especially quiet tailpipe complete the job. Neat.

Okay I'll come clean, the bike hasn't got a sidestand yet (which is why Nick is holding it up in most of the photos), but that's not down to any weight-saving reasons. In fact the reason for it is that the stock CR doesn't come with a stand and so far they haven't found one which meets their exact specifications. The Pro-Racing boys are fairly picky about what goes on their bike, even details like the design of the sidestand have to meet with their approval.

After a couple of months testing thumpers I'd forgotten just how nice it was to ride a well set-up two stroke as we threaded our way through the back roads of Northants and onto the first of the day's trails. The XC (like most two strokes) starts easily from cold, requiring the barest mini-





before the p/v opens up fully and the bike rockets forwards. On the other hand you've really only got four (close) ratios to choose from as the gap to fifth is quite a jump, unless you're really threading the needle and prepared to buzz the motor up into the upper echelons of its rev range.

On tighter trails or ones with rock hard ruts and unexpected hazards the gearing is nigh on perfect with a ratio for every obstacle and smooth, vice-

free power on demand. The thing I liked about the XC was that there was power available to lift the front end any time you needed to hop it over a hole or fallen branch. A quick blip would aviate the front (there's no need to tug on the bars) and place it exactly where you required. Particularly useful when you need to keep the front end light over a series of ruts baked hard by the early summer sun.

In fact the bike shone in all those conditions where your average trailbike can give you a shot of unwanted adrenaline. Cross-ruts? No problem, lift the front and fire it over with a quick squirt of throttle. Muddy bombholes? No bother, pick a tallish gear and feather the clutch. Rolling whoops? A series of staccato throttle blips will launch you from one to the next. Gnarly, log-strewn, loose-surface climbs? Hey, this was Northamptonshire not mid Wales. There are no gnarly climbs round here. On the other hand I've no reason to doubt that what the XC can manage on the level, it can do on a 45 degree slope, also.

For sure I was enjoying myself getting to grips with the XC's predictable way of doing things. Part of the reason for its easy handling is the lack of weight - particularly high up; the XC is easily ten kilos lighter than something like a CRM or XR4 and the difference is noticeable. For a start the XC turns easily, the low tank means that either sitting or standing you can get your weight forward with your chest over the bars. Whether

ular was virtually faultless. With nigh on perfect springing, compression and damping for my combination of riding and bodyweight I felt totally confident in launching the XC over whatever obstacle lay in my path knowing that the back end would soak up the punishment. In fact the best way to ride the XC was to keep the front end light and simply float it over any hazard, letting the rear shock tackle the ditches, logs or bumps in your path. Impressively the shock kept the rear end smoothly tracking the dirt even when the bike was heeled over in the turns, and only a swift application of throttle would cause the back end to break away in a smooth progressive sweep.

But undoubtedly it was the suspension that was playing its part in making the XC such an easy bike to ride cross country. The rear in partic-

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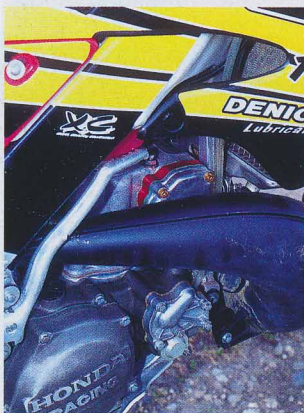
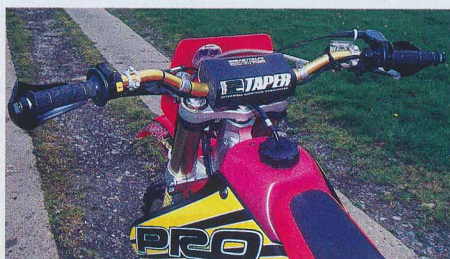
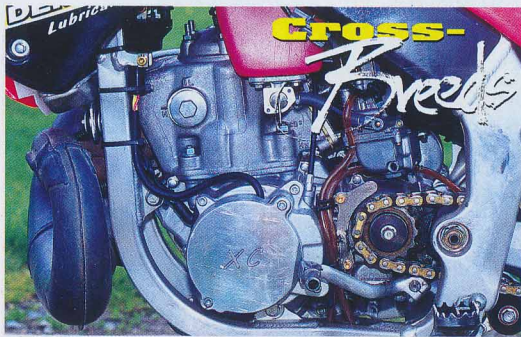
But undoubtedly it was the suspension that was playing its part in making the XC such an easy bike to ride cross country. The rear in partic-



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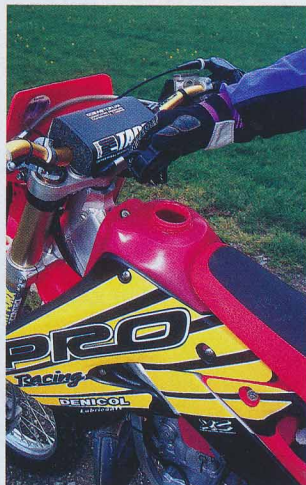
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Clockwise from top left: Two 100W lighting coils provide juice.

- Pro-Taper bars & neat switches.
- Clarke tank holds 14litres.
- XC legaliser kit.
- Power valve spacer increases torque.



The front end was nearly as good. I confess to preferring a soft fork over a harder one, whereas Nick, the bike's owner prefers a front end that doesn't dive too much. So the bike was set up for Nick's preferences which felt just a little harsh for me. On the other hand we are talking degrees of harshness here. For most of the time the revalved USD Showa forks handled the bumps with superb poise, it was just the occasional hit which would transfer up through the bars and cause a little shimmy. For the most part though the XC which uses stock CR geometry remained resolutely stable - far more stable in fact than a number of bikes I've ridden with more conservative geometry.

Perhaps the best example of how well the XC works is when you decide to force the gate a bit. I'm not talking about tear-arsing down gentle green lanes, I mean up the pace on the sort of muddy-puddled, bombhole-ridden lane you'd normally tackle in first or second gear on your trailie. The XC would tramp on through in third, switching lines between puddles as easily as if you were steering around a Coke can in the road. In fact one short but memorable lane comes to mind which was narrow, overgrown, hideously bumpy and tackled at a decent lick. The XC remaining stable and well controlled despite the animosity of

the terrain. Great fun.

In the end though it's the package as a whole which impresses as much as any individual aspect of the Pro-Racing XC. And that's exactly what you'd expect from a bike of this type. To say it's good for a converted crosser would be tantamount to saying it's a compromise between a bike which was built for one job but has been coerced into doing another. Nothing feels farther from the truth. The XC feels like it was built for trailriding from the off; the suspension, motor and accessories work together to provide the rider with a light-weight, flickable yet powerful package that has the range and comfort to tackle all sorts of trails, but with the extra performance envelope that comes with progressive power, less mass and reasonable comfort.

If you require easy performance from your trail-bike, or you just want to stand out from the crowd by riding something a little different, then there's no doubt that the Pro-Racing conversion can extract the essential elements from Honda's race winner and distil them into a very tasty trailbike indeed. With ally-framed CRs fetching as little as £1500 in the trade, and a conversion costing from £500 upwards, then it's an affordable way of buying individuality.

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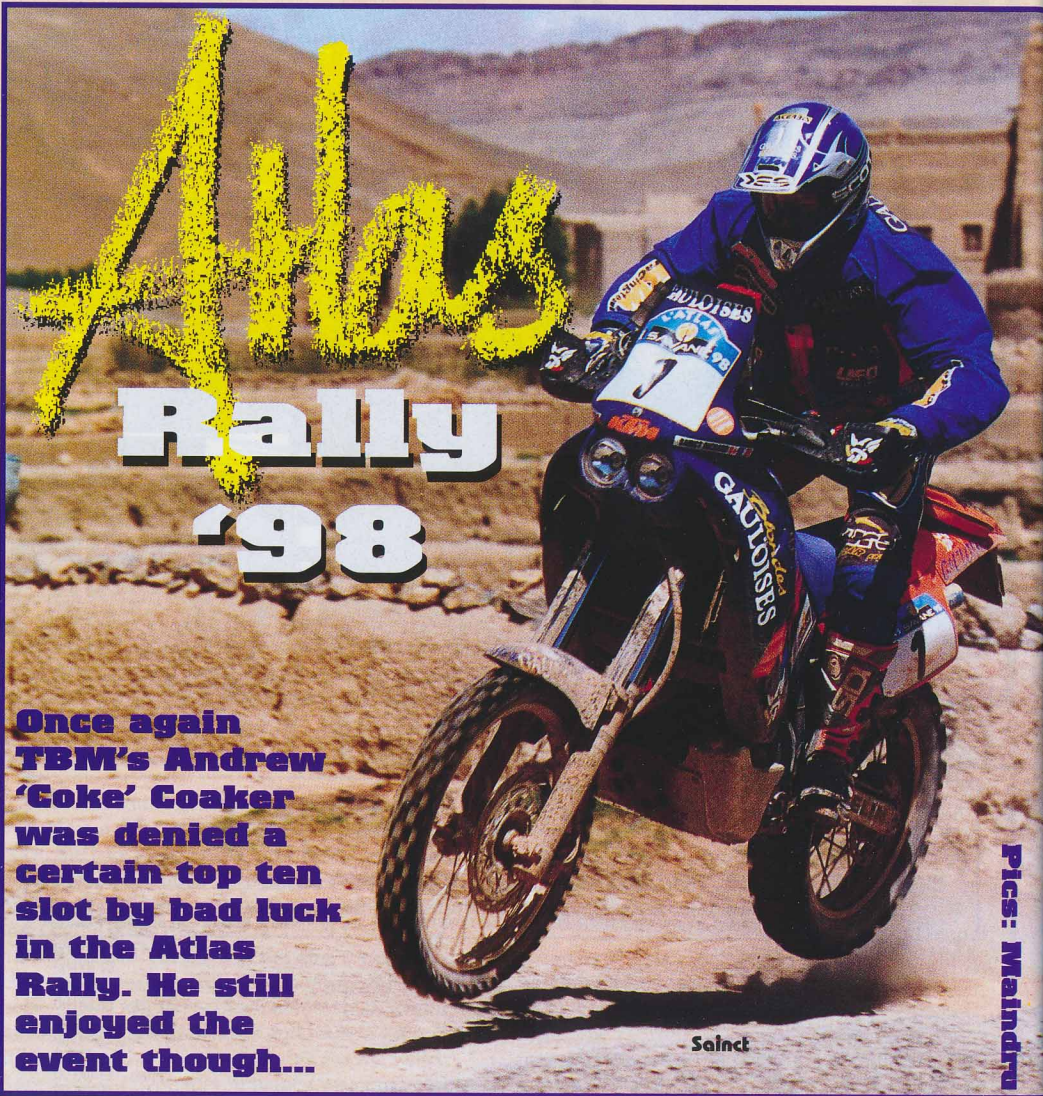
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Atlas Rally '98

Once again TBM's Andrew 'Coke' Coaker was denied a certain top ten slot by bad luck in the Atlas Rally. He still enjoyed the event though...

Pics: Malindru

Saint

Bloody brilliant! That's the simplest way for me to describe the 1998 edition of the Atlas Rally held in Morocco. Breathtaking scenery, relatively short days (for assistance vehicles and competitors alike) and an array of different riding, ranging from 100mph stints across the chotts to first gear waddling through sand ergs as well as the usual 'switchback' mountain trails that the Atlas has become renowned for.

After the tragedies of the Tunisian Rally earlier this year, it certainly felt refreshing to be able to enjoy this event so much. With the exception of the Australian Safari, I'd have to say that I enjoyed this event more than any other. It's not in

the same league as the Dakar in terms of the challenge, but value for money wise (fun factor from each French Franc spent) it sure is good value.

From the way I'm raving on about the rally you're probably thinking I had a good result and that's why I liked it so much. Well unfortunately that wasn't the case. My run of bad luck continued with the Husaberg's ignition coil failing only 25km from the start. So without even getting off the tarmac I'd already copped over seven hours in penalties and restarted the following morning stone motherless last.

So while Roma, Saint and Meoni were battling it out at the front of the pack, I was trying to hard

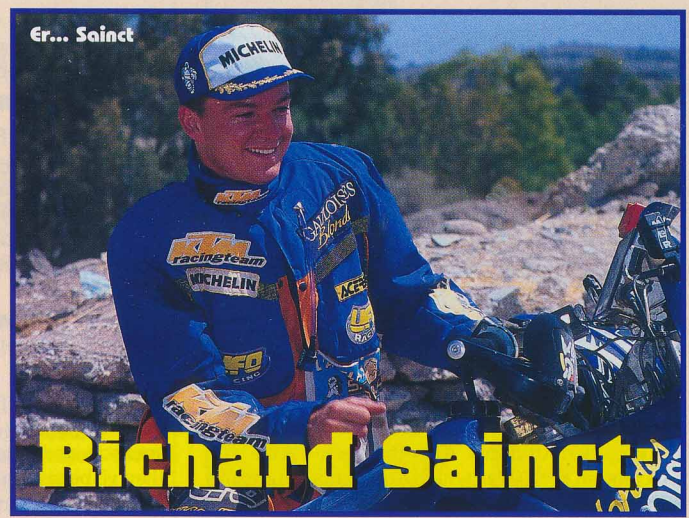
to keep in front of the lead cars while dodging the slower traffic amongst the bikes. Days two and three consisted of twisty mountain trails, with heart stopping drop-offs and very skatey gravel corners - a bit like the Cambrian Rally! The saying 'guts equals glory' though certainly applied here.

One thing that wasn't expected (but probably made the Brits feel at home), was the bucket loads of rain and the flash floods that swept across the desert plains. Believe it or not, at least two riders drowned their bikes in the deep (and fast flowing) water.

With perfect weather for the rest of the event, we soon forgot about the rain and concentrated on the task in hand. Trying to juggle the act of riding at pace, reading the roadbook, keeping an eye on the GPS and stay upright, can all be a bit too much at times. Two of the British riders (Martin Maisey and Sean du Bernard) appeared to be having a competition for who could have the biggest crash and consequently the blackest bruises. Every day for the first half of the event, they would ride into the bivouac and re-live their tales of huge crashes and near-death experiences to the amazed group of onlookers (the number of which was increasing daily). The pain must have sunk in however, as they eased off a bit over the last few days, and both made it to the finish - bent bikes and all.

In fact, the entire British contingent finished. Not quite Guinness book of records material, but a fine achievement all the same. Faced with the near impossible task of clawing back seven hours from day one, I was 'chuffed' (as you Poms say) to find that my daily results were quite respectable with a fifth outright on day six and a spattering of other top ten placings proving that the bike was more than capable of mixing it with the likes of the works KTMs. I Guess I'll just have to wait for the next event before I can realise the Husaberg's true potential!

Anyway, to round things off.... the KTM's were again the main show of force, taking all the top ten positions with Saint, Meoni and Perez finishing one, two and three respectively. For those of you who are high tech and up with the information age, you can check out the web site at www.dakar.com/ATLAS98/indexus.html (or you can e-mail me at coaker@globalnet.co.uk if you have any questions about entering a rally yourself). Cheers. **Coke**



Richard Saint:

Man of the moment

Hot on the heels of his recent Tunisie Rallye victory, Frenchman Richard Saint has just followed it up with a win in the Atlas rallye.

TBM caught up with him in Paris and Chris Evans asked him a few questions...

TBM: Having won both the first two international rallies this year and with Stephane Peterhansel now retired, you are looking more and more like the new king of Rallye Raid - aren't you?

RS: No, you can't say that. For sure I'm one of the favourites, but there are a number of riders out there capable of winning.

TBM: Like who?

RS: Fabrizio Meoni for one. He has a lot of experience and is very good in fast, sandy going. Then of course there is Juan Roma. He's proved that he's fast and is starting to get good at navigation. When he's got a little bit more experience

Juan Romo - a threat?



Pics: TSO & Maindru

he'll be a serious threat. After that there's Alfie Cox, and in the Dakar where experience counts for a lot, you can't discount Magnaldi and Arcarons.

TBM: Coming back to Alfie Cox, what are his chances of a win in the near future?

RS: Well he's certainly got the speed - there's no question about that. But he has very little experience on north African rallies. He's not too confident with the road book and isn't yet really capable of 'opening the piste'.

TBM: But he won the last stage of the Atlas from the front?

RS: That's true but it was a short mountain stage with not much navigation. Plus only Perez was really chasing him; the rest of us were concentrating on preserving our positions.

TBM: How long then before he becomes a major threat?

RS: Normally you need at least two seasons in Rallye Raid before you can really successfully expect to challenge for the lead.

TBM: Changing the subject slightly, do you make your living from rallies?

RS: Yes. Of course it isn't the same sort of money as an F1 driver gets, but I live off what I earn in rallies.

TBM: And what's your programme for the rest of the year?

RS: Well I'll do the Masters in September, then the Dubai and finally the Dakar at the end of the year.

TBM: And who'll win the Dakar this time now there's no Peterhansel?

RS: Somebody on a KTM I hope! Obviously the same people I mentioned earlier; Meoni, Roma, Cox, Magnaldi and Arcarons will be my main rivals. But the Dakar is a case apart, it's a very

long race where anything can happen. I have the ability to win - but on the Dakar that's no guarantee of success.

TBM: And what about the pressure?

RS: For sure from a media point of view it's a very important race in which your sponsors want you to do well. But at the end of the day it's a bike race like any other. You get up and ride, and when you're out there that's all you're thinking about.

TBM: What about the FIM Rallye Raid World Cup that everybody is talking about?

RS: It's a good idea. It's good for the riders to have a goal and will help attract sponsors and other bike teams to the events. But they've been talking about it for a long time now and have never managed to come to an agreement. I'm not holding my breath.

TBM: Would you like to see other bike manufacturers come into rallies?

RS: Yes, we need them. Rallye Raid can't be allowed to become just a KTM challenge. Okay I know that right now if a rider wins, you know it is down to him and not just because of his bike. But ultimately it isn't so good for the future of the sport.

TBM: What about the new 'non-Latin' riders coming into the sport?

RS: Yes that's a very good thing. Obviously from a media point of view, to have riders from Australia, South Africa and America challenging the established order is a good thing indeed. But from a personal point of view it is also enriching. We get to learn about different cultures and also to practise our English. (Laughs).

TBM: And will we see a British winner of the Paris-Dakar?

RS: (Laughs) Who knows... One day maybe...

TBM: Thank you.

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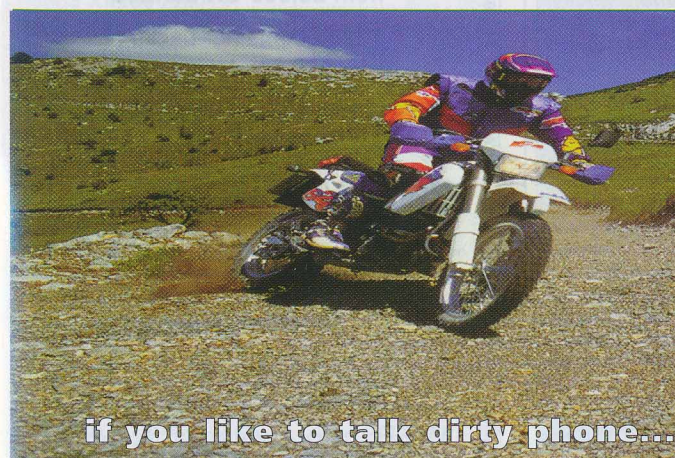
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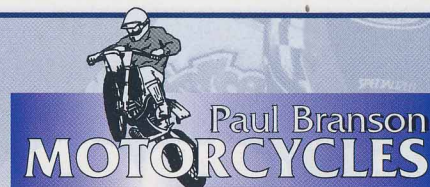
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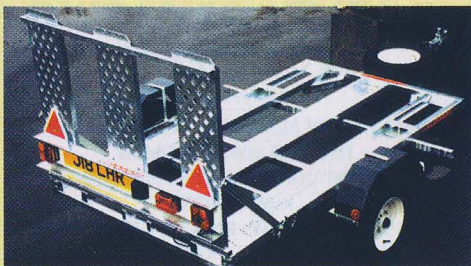
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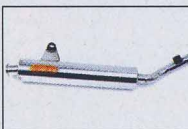
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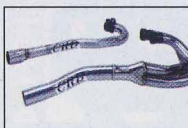
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Gas Gas Pampera 250, P-reg, great cond, not the new cheapie version, best offer-p/x, sports road bike. Tel Jim on 0186 586 5930 (Oxon)

Suzuki RMX250S, K-reg, MOT, 6,000 km, vgc, very fast trailie, CRM beater, green lane use only, £2200 ono. Tel Simon on 0181 341 0941 (London)

Yamaha TW200 Trailway, 1993, but H-reg, T&T, 5,000 km, good tyres, fantastic ride, 90mpg (honest!), I want a Gas Gas so it's for sale at £1550 ono. Tel Paul on 0125 420 9683 (Lancs)

Honda XR650L; also ex Paris-Dakar XR600 and XTZ660. Tel David for details on 0152 282 1609 (Lincs)

Yamaha XT225 Serow, elec start, G-reg, T&T, low mileage, nearly new tyres, good cond, £1750 ono. Tel John on 0198 086 2424 (Wilts)

Yamaha TT-R250, 1993, T&T, elec/kick starters, new chain, sprockets, front/rear brake pads, serviced & ready to roll, £1975. Tel 0160 678 2159 (Cheshire)

Kawasaki KLR250 1990, H-reg, MOT, 11,700 m, 'O'-ring chain, knobblies, £1250. Tel 0133 288 2602 (Derby)

Honda XL600R, white, 1986, C-reg, T&T, 22,000 m, new Gripsters and spare MT21s, reliable, vgc, £1150 ono. Tel 0142 567 4489 (New Forest)

Honda XL125S, 1982, X-reg, T&T, superb orig cond, genuine 18,000 m, just had £200 rebuild, £650 ono. Tel Tim on 0162 685 2856 (S Devon)

Honda CRM250-1, 1989, F-reg, T&T, new rear Michelin Comp III, new brake pads, new bearings, Renthals,

£1600. Tel (day) 0403 132861 or (eves) 0148 039 2829 (Cambs)

Kawasaki KMX200, green, H-reg, T&T, spare wheels, Renthals, Boyesens, low seat, DEP, well shod, well maintained, 520 c+s, some spares, £1150. Tel Dave on 0153 944 1252 (Cumbria)

Kawasaki KDX200, 1986, C-reg, enduro bike, full knobblies, recent complete rebuild, little use since, exc cond, £575 ono. Tel Nick on 0189 523 9757 (Midddx)

KTM 400EGS, 1995, 10,000 km, green lane and road use only, superb trail bike, new tyres, vgc. Tel Iain on 0179 384 8399 (Wilts)

CCM 604ES C26, 1997, Brush guards, new c+s, battery, spares, Marzocchis, Talon hubs & rims, immac, light use only, just serviced, £3800. Tel Martin on 0166 650 3663 (Glos)

Honda NX650 Dominator, K-reg, IMS plastic tank, Polisport enduro headlight, MXA Decals, new 'O'-ring c+s, Renthals, Brush guards, £2500 ono. Tel Trevor on 0199 383 2210 (Oxon)

Kawasaki KLR250SR, T&T, Datatagged, fair weather use only, RSV pipe, Reikon bars, showroom cond, much loved bike, work forces sale, £2225 ono. Tel 0181 306 0246 (Kent)

Yamaha (NVT) 175cc, trials, 6 speed, 1979, 6,400 on clock, exchange BSA Bantam or similar, must be T&T, or sell to best offer. Tel 0114 235 1006 (S Yorks)

Honda XR600RV, June 1997, P-reg, only year old, only used off road once, exc cond, first to see will buy, £3450 ono. Tel Mark on 0138 487 3894 or (mobile) 0585 214703 (W Mids)

Beta TR34 240cc trials bike, light use only, discs front & rear, ideal for beginners, bargain at £550. Tel 0137 274 2372 (Surrey)

Cagiva W16, 600cc, 4-stroke single, elec start, 1994, MOT, lady owner, 'be like James Bond', £2200. Tel 0145 272 0183 (Gloucs)

Suzuki DR800, black, 1993, K-reg, new c+s, centre stand, panniers, new bike forces sale, £1500. Tel Rick on 0148 372 3822 or 0410 313845 (Surrey)

Yamaha DT175MX, 1980, lovely orig cond, 8000 m, £600 ono. Tel Dale on 0124 627 2580 (Derbys)

Honda XL185, 1981, new tyres, exc cond, genuine 8000m, £800; also **Suzuki DR200** trail bike, T&T, good cond, ready to use, £900. Tel 0122 286 2585 (Caerphilly)

Husqvarna 250 Enduro, 1983, T&T, DEP end can, tool bag, good c+s, manual and spares, £550. Tel 0158 283 3219 (Herts)

Suzuki DR800SL, blue, 1990, G-reg, 44,000 m, vgc, protection bars, stainless Lazer exhaust, 'O'-ring chain, Renthals, h/grips, new discs, rear tyre, wheel bearings, £1850. Tel Andy on 0193 486 3662 (Somerset)

Husky 510, G-reg, T&T, Supermoto trim with 17" rims and sticky tyres, Rental bars, Ohlin rear w/p, usd, also orig wheels, spares, £1450 or p/x for XR600R. Tel 0136 782 0392 (Oxon)

BMW F650, 1994, MOT, 23,000 m, Givi top box and tank cover/bag, new Regina chain, fsh and just serviced, crash bars, vgc, £2650; big tank, high screen, part-worn Desert + MT21 knobblies, Touratech GPS mount and

new Oxford Enduro mag tank bag also available. Tel 0171 733 3031 (London)

Kawasaki KDX250SR, K-reg, T&T, 5,000 km, as new cond, totally standard, off road once only, one owner, ally frame & sump guards + pipe, £2050 ovno. Tel 0152 442 3389 (Lancs)

Suzuki DR650, Feb 1996, new c+s and tyre, exc cond, £2500, or p/x for small trial bike. Tel 0170 671 1109 (Lancs)

Gilera Nordwest, 1993, L-reg, T&T, 5000 m, exc cond, recent tyres & service, Ace Supermoto, £2800 or swap for late XR600. Tel Andy on 0127 058 9935 (Cheshire)

Suzuki RMX250, K-reg, exc cond, £1750. Tel 0179 547 0051 (Kent)

Yamaha XT350, new c+s, brake pads, wheel bearings, air filter, s/plug, fork oil, disc and other parts, maintained regardless, vgc, £1195 ono. Tel Nick on 0177 383 1751 (Derbys)

Husaberg FE501, 1991, H-reg, new rear tyre, chain, sprockets and bearings, reliable bike, £1395 ono. Tel 0181 287 1662 (Surrey)

Yamaha XT350, C-reg, T&T, Hagon shock, Brush guards, Micron exhaust, MT21s, good cond, well maintained, £1095. Tel Paul (after 6 pm) on 0170 271 1867 (SE Essex)

KTM 620 Super Comp, genuine UK bike, R-reg, exc cond, little use, £4195 ono. Tel Peter on 0128 070 5888 (Northants)

Kawasaki KLR250, 1994, L-reg, elec start, T&T, 4,000 m only, just serviced, good cond, includes Axo boots etc, £2100. Tel Scott (day) 0468 422112 or (eve) 01170 732 6599 (Herts)

Honda Dominator NX650, red, 1996, N-reg, anodised wheels, 4,000 miles exc cond, Tel Mike on 0135 277 0330 (N Wales)

Fantic 241 Trials, 1997, P-reg, (not '97 bike), good runner, £600; also **Honda CRM250**, 1994, L-reg, T&T, 3K, £2500 or p/x for Serow-W or similar, owner has short legs! Tel 0118 983 1695 (Berks)

Honda CRM250R MkIII, T&T, FMF Gold series pipe, spares, green lane use only, pristine cond, baby forces sale, only £2895. Tel Daniel on 0174 782 2347 (Dorset)

Yamaha DT175, 1981, T&T, 3200 m from new, exc cond, cantilever suspension, £550 ono. Tel Don on 0121 561 1543 (W Mids)

BMW R100GS, 1991, T&T, only 22,000 m, vgc, new XR forces sale, panniers, heated grips, ready to tour or trail - if you are man enough - £3350. Tel (eves) 0188 484 1457 (Devon)

Morini 500 Camel, 1982, T&T, 13,500 m, vgc, great v-twin, twin shock trail bike, beats XT500s hands down. Tel Mick on 0172 337 5015 (N Yorks)

Honda XR400, 1998, 1000km, immac cond, Acerbis rally guards, frame guards, bash plate, performance exhaust insert etc, genuine reason for sale, £3600 ovno. Tel Colm on 0181 847 4240 (Midddx)

Honda XR80, red/white/blue, hundreds spent on new engine internals, new seat cover, vgc, ideal for 5 to 10 year olds, £575. Tel Ian on 0178 446 5503 (Surrey)

Yamaha TTR250 Raid, M-reg, T&T, vgc, new MT21s, some extras, great looking, high spec, rally replica trail

bike, change of plan forces sale, £2295 or poss p/x; also **Honda** France Africa twin, full HRC Dakar spec, including twin tanks, (58 ltr), water tank, works Showa suspension and much more, only 200 km since overhaul, again change of plans forces the sale of this trick TBM staff bike, £3495 or poss p/x. Tel Dave 'Crasher' Cornish on 0149 372 1744 (Norfolk)

Kawasaki KLR250, T&T, knobbles, rim bolts, Renthal bars, Acerbis disc, h/guards, 'O'-ring chain, 6,000 m, good cond, £1250. Tel Stuart on 0199 370 2555 (Oxon)
Honda CRM250R mk1, H-reg, 5600m, vgc, Ohlins shock, new O-ring c/s, Renthals, h/guards, plus three unused new tyres, £1750 ono. Tel Neil on 01237 425681 or 0467 896140 (Devon)
KTM 620EGS, 97/P, kickstart model, 7000km, 95% road use, Acerbis h/guards, v nice bike, £3900. Tel 0181 876 8140 (SW London)

KTM 620, 95, 10,000k, purple, 10L main tank, 20L rear rally tanks, reinforced rear subframe, ally bashplate, screen, brand new c/s, includes orig tank & plastics, £3995. Tel Jim on 0131 315 2647 (Edinburgh)

Suzuki DR350E, J-reg, T&T, full Acerbis plastics, new tyres, DEP exhaust, VGC, p/x **Kawasaki** KDX250SR or CRM250 cash either way, or sell £1375. Tel 01524 732791 (Lancs)

Gas Gas Pampera 250 96/N, good cond, new C/S, brilliant ultra light trailbike, £1895 inc spare tyres. Tel 01773 745843 (Derbys)

Field bike, Yamaha RXS100 plus half a spare bike, £200 the pair. Tel 01604 832162 (Northants)

Yamaha XT600E, blue, Jan 95/M, 37,000m, T&T, FSH, new tyres f/r, complete new exhaust system and brakes, excel runner, £2100 ono; also **Kawasaki** KLR600, 84/A Italian import, T&T, truly excel cond, full eng rebuild, receipts, £1500 ono. Tel 0973 825267 (Notts)

Honda XR250, 95/M, 6000km, T&T, h/guards, MXA seat, new MT21s, green lane use only, £2200. Tel 01766 780853 (Gwynedd)

Honda XR400R, 98/R, only two months old, never off road, UK machine, injury forces reluctant sale, £3895 ono. Tel 01753 643928 (Bucks)

Rare KTM MC/GS 125, 1975, twin shock classic, collectors trail bike, exc cond, all orig parts, manual, known history, bike trailer and stand included, career move forces sale, £600 ono. Tel 01782 333060 (Staffs)

Suzuki DR350R, M-reg, green lane use, good runner, £1950; also **Honda** TLM250R, very rare HRCmodel, excellent cond £1500. Tel 01242 697494 (Glos)

Cagiva W16, P-reg, excel cond, not used off road, just serviced, new rear tyre & chain, £2100 ono or swap WHY. Tel 0151 6253244 (Merseyside)

KTM 250 & 350, 85 & 87 road reg enduro bikes, excellent cond 2-strokes, £900 each. Tel 01908 672302 (Bucks)

KTM 250 enduro, MOT, new c/s, green lane use only, £1000. Tel Mobile 07771 601020 or 01869 278438 (Oxford)

Yamaha XT225 Serow, E-reg, T&T, 13000k, exc cond, MT21s, new c/s, fender bag, gaiters, Renthals, £1350. Tel 01403 255875 (W Sussex)

Honda TLR200 Reflex, M-reg, MoT, new F/R Pirelli

P41s, new c/s, beautiful example of rare bike, £900. Tel 01483 211022 (Surrey)

Yamaha DT200WR, 97/P, Boyesen rad valve, FMF Fatboy, Renthals, forks and shock serviced, light use only, good cond, £2650 ono. Tel 01473 743965 (Suffolk)

Yamaha XT225 Serow, 91, 6000m, vgc, new battery, £1800 ono. Tel 01604 451375 (Northants)

Honda XL250S, orange/white, nice orig cond, MoT, Renthals, chrome Micron, 7,900m, mature owner nine years, £650. Tel 01702 544324 (Essex)

KTM Adventure, R-reg, immac cond, 3 months old, 2,500m, never used off road, FSH, incredible machine (see TBM28), sprag forces sale, £5995. Tel Matt on 01403 270313 eves (Sussex)

Honda XR250, J-reg, MoT, 14,000km, new front tyre, recent O-ring c/s, little off road use, £1900. Tel 01298 73500 (Derbys)

Yamaha XT225 Serow, 87, 17500km, good cond, tool bag, Acerbis h/guards, reliable, reg servicing, capable trailie, good genuine bike, £1100, can deliver. Tel Wells 678925 (Somerset) (put your std code in next time!!)

Armstrong MT500, T&T, very reliable and rugged bike, spares readily available, good on or off road, £895 ono or p/x trials bike. Tel 01257 263137 (Lancs)

Yamaha XT250, W-reg, 17,000m, MoT, clean orig cond, new rear tyre, recent chain & sprock & exhaust, £575. Tel 01494 521043 (Bucks)

Yamaha XT350, 91/H, 3000m, T&T, excel cond, brill bike but too tall for this petite girly's legs, £1900 ono. Tel 01366 383559 (Norfolk)

Honda XR200, 95, front disc, enduro lights, T&T, good reliable bike, £1650 ono. Tel 01943 466184 or 0468 893568 (W Yorks)

Yamaha YZ250WR, 92, 1500m, v fast, road reg, poss p/x for trail bike, £1300 ono. Tel 01507 466726 (Lincs)

WANTED

Wanted BMW R80/R100 GS head light unit, complete or parts; also speedo ignition switch or any other not wanted GS parts, why. Tel Andrew on 0159 064 2564 (Hants)

Wanted XT600Z Tenere fairings, side panels and rear fender for '88-'90 model, also front fender for '86-'88 model, all in blue. Tel Martin on 0170 233 3392 (Essex)

Wanted big tank to fit 1992 CR250, can anyone help? Tel Nigel on 0177 274 1589 (Lancs)

Wanted parts for Honda CR125RE, 1984, CDI unit, clutch cover, also tuned pipe or complete bike if cheap. Tel Jim on 0961 857423 (Middx)

Wanted workshop manual for Yamaha XTZ750 Super Tenere, also air box for XT500, anything considered. Tel Paul on 0156 137 8438 (Aberdeen)

Wanted KLR600 front hub/wheel disc and clocks, in good cond. Tel Dave on 0151 336 2821 (S Wirral)

Wanted Suzuki DR350 enduro, anything considered, cash waiting. Tel Neil on 0132 229 4943 (Kent)

Wanted Honda XL125S spares, all bits considered, need

wheels and exhaust, in Devon area please, limited transport. Tel Tim on 0162 685 2856 (S Devon)

Wanted Acerbis tank for Yamaha XT550; also complete front end for Yamaha DT175MX. Tel (after 5.30 pm) 0129 927 0493 (Shrops)

Wanted advice on converting XT600 Tenere to Supermoto, Supermoto or standard wheels needed for conversion. Tel Dave on (day) 0161 486 9191 or (eve) 0161 434 0019 (Manchester)

Wanted Aprilia Tuareg or Pegaso 600, elec start engine, consider complete bike or ATK with same engine. Tel Andy on 0175 763 0038 (N Yorks)

Wanted parts for 1980 XR500S/XL500S, rear wheel, engine, large fuel tank, or any other bits. Tel Richard on 0148 389 3847 (Surrey)

Wanted Yamaha DT250MX seat, side panels, twistgrip and carb/oil pump cables. Tel Eddie on 0121 705 6234 (W Mids)

Wanted Suzuki DR125, 1993, good cash paid for right bike, must be in good cond, or p/x my 1983 Suzuki DR125S, in mint cond, only done 6683 m from new. Tel Chris on 0199 442 7600 (Wales)

Wanted luggage rack to fit Yamaha XT250, genuine workshop manual for Honda XR500S; also Yamaha XT550, must be in exc cond. Tel David on 0190 4549 0764 (Yorks)

Wanted Fantic SWM parts, miniAvelly Hiro engine parts, 70s to 80s style, enduro plastics, books and mags, Shock absorber bars, why. Tel Robin (eves) on 0124 351 3243 (Sussex)

Wanted KTM or ATK560 enduro, anything considered, including parts or incomplete bike, Rotax engine model. Tel Chris on 0139 427 1134 (Suffolk)

Wanted XTZ750 luggage panniers, exhaust, std or aftermarket; also clutch basket for XR350. Tel Dave on 0124 970 7092 (Wilts)

Wanted XT600 frame or rolling chassis. Tel Adge on 0182 328 8087 (Somerset)

Wanted Swap my immac KTM 620EGS (30L rally tank etc) for late TT600 or older plus cash. KTM worth £3100ish, easy starter. Tel 01625 573299 (Cheshire)

Wanted Help, help, help, wanted XT350 parts, complete cyl head with manifolds, h/light, speedo, tacho k/stsrk & coil. Tel 00353 885 10165 and leave contact no. (Eire)

Wanted XR400 or large four-stroke in p/x for Suzuki Bandit 600S, P-reg, mint cond faired model, cash either way, value £2895. Tel 01653 697562 (N Yorks)

SPARES

Breaking all parts 1988 XR250, XL250, XT125, new tailpipes, £30 each, CR250 piston kit, £35. Tel 0159 067 5822 (Hants)

Yamaha XT550 complete front end, £80; orig black mudguards and rear light, £30; 1983 Yamaha, YZ250, J, rolling chassis, complete with plastics, £80. Tel (after 5.30 pm) 0129 927 0493 (Shrops)

YES helmet, pink, as new, ACU approved, (gold), £39. Tel Lud on 0117 986 6728 (Bristol)

KTM 22ltr tank, £250; Apico jacket, size: small, waterproof, breathable, £65; Rukka one-piece, unlined, waterproof suit, medium, £45. Tel Trudi on 0145 272 8609 (Gloucs)

Sidi Enduro boots, size: 46, as new £80. Tel 0186 933 1445 (Oxon)

Husqvarnas being broken for spares, WR & CR 81-88, most parts available at reasonable prices. Tel requirements to William on 0132 471 7467 (Scotland)

XR400 CLO header pipes, stainless steel, used only once, £60. Tel Andy on (mobile) 0374 870802 (Surrey)

Two-bike trailer, vgc, with lights, £160; also single bike trailer £140. Tel 0144 239 4839 (Herts)

Givi Monokey luggage system with 2 x 36 ltr cases and fixing kit for Honda Dominator, £140. Tel Kevin on 0125 254 6999 (Hants)

Honda XR400, 1998, spares, forks, yokes, plastics, headlight, clocks, as new, £500 the lot. Tel 0132 787 2143 (Northants)

Supertrapp exhaust for Suzuki 250/350, good cond, £100. Tel 0122 286 2585 (Caerphilly)

34mm new Dell'Orto carb to fit Armstrong MT500 E55, brand new pair of Harley side panels for same, very rare £30. Tel 0181 505 6971 (Woodford)

KTM 620 rear subframe, new £80, rally tanks Kini's 20L front + 20L rear & reinforced subframe, open to offers, 11L tank £50, complete set immac white elastics £50. Tel Jim on 0131 315 2647 (Edinburgh)

KLX650 w/shop manual £30, B/plate £35, genuine Kaw items, vgs, also TBMs 22-35 £12.50. Tel 01485 600833 (Norfolk)

KDX200 parts, 95 onwards, FMF front pipe, plus tail pipe, also flywheel weight only used four times, any reasonable offers. Tel 01653 697562 (N Yorks)

Clarke 11L tank to fit CR250 89-92, good cond, £70. el 0191 2660752 (Tyne & Wear)

STOLEN

KTM 400cc, Reg'n No H156 LPE, Frame No 890164030, Engine No 855508994, trail bike, white with purple seat, stolen from Sunbury on 24 May 1998. Tel Danny with any info or news on 0831 735915 (Middx)

ACCOMM

Chesterfield, Derbyshire, (gateway to the Peak District), Little Lonsdale Guest House, private carpark at rear, evening meals if req'd, pub opposite, B&B £17, evening meal £8. Tel 01246 272950

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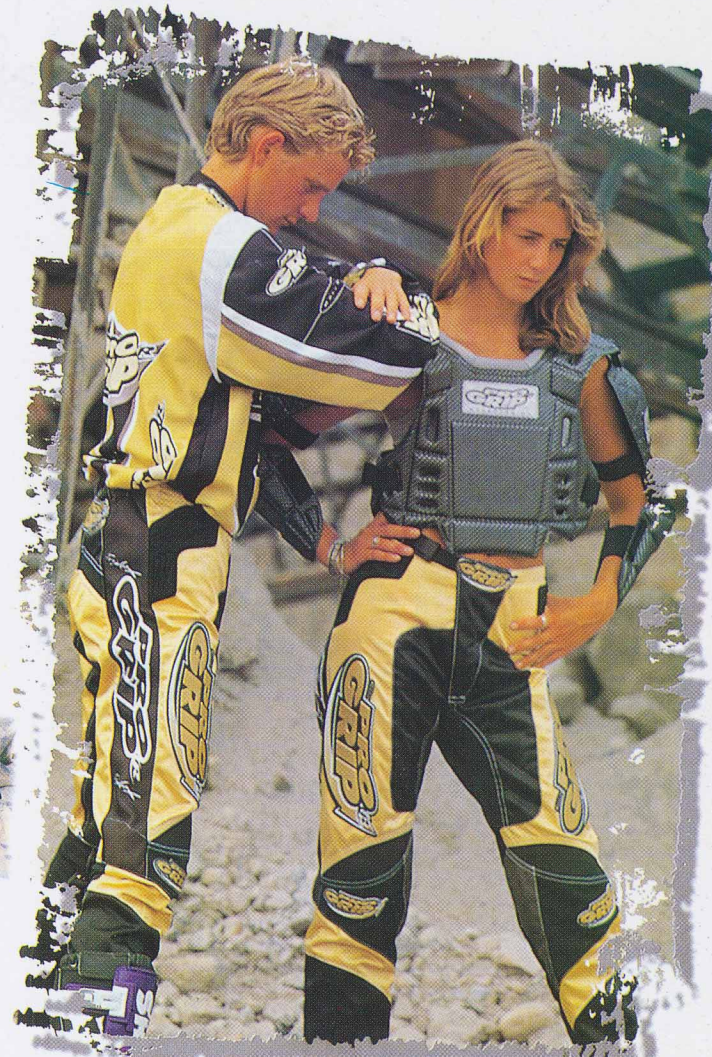
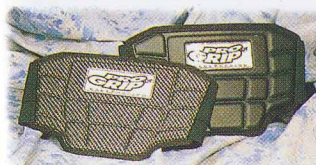
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