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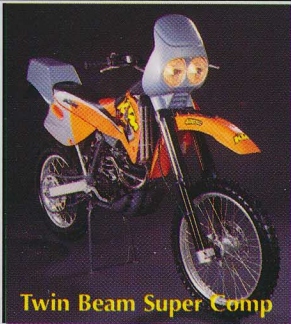
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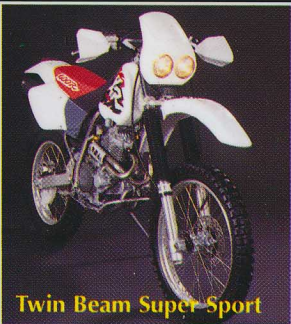
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ISSUE 38

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- We know what works because we race. Our latest recruit to the motorcycle department is Jamie Rowland, former Welsh International Youth Motocross Champion, soon to be riding a Gas Gas on the enduro scene for the UK's fastest growing off-road store.



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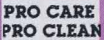
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Spitting the Dummy

From time to time it's not a bad thing to get all het up over something, have a good shout and get it all out of your system. If something is needling you I often find the best way of dealing with it is to address the problem head on, sort it out and then move on to the next issue. Those of you who know us will no doubt be aware that we enjoy a laugh here at TBM. We try and keep a smile on our faces whatever the problem and if we occasionally sound hacked off it's because the pressures of work have driven us to it. Although it may sound like a holiday camp working for TBM, I can assure you that it isn't, and just occasionally the odd reader who rings us at 10pm on a Sunday evening (on the night before deadline) after we've worked right through the weekend, has on more than one occasion caused the steam which vents from our ears to become super-heated.

Likewise there's the occasional letter or comment which gets our hackles rising. Don't get me wrong, we love to hear from readers with their comments and suggestions, but there are always a few people who set themselves up in life as critics. I'm sure you can all think of a few examples. They just love to complain, and whether it be telling you where Glen Hoddle went wrong, or pointing out one of your (our) many failings, we find these people incredibly negative in their outlook. They rarely offer solutions or answers - just plain criticism.

Now one of the best aspects of any magazine is a lively letters page; it shows the diversity, wit and interest of a cross section of the readers, and encourages debate. Of course we (like many other magazines) court controversy, it makes for interesting reading, gives everyone a laugh and serves to act as a vent for letting off steam. After all, you don't write in to a magazine for anonymity do you? For certain there are times when we've let people have both barrels verbally, but we try and do it with a sense of humour, and more often than not with our tongues pressed firmly in our cheeks.

But we've never really spat the dummy like Yamaha have recently. I'm referring to their decision to ban TBM from using any of their test bikes again. I won't go through the whole sorry saga now as the full story about how it came about is inside the magazine on the RANT pages, and I would urge you to read them and form your own conclusions. Suffice to say that blowing your top and being rancorous suggests (to us at least) that you've lost the argument. We may on occasions be a teeny-weeny bit blunt (particularly in our replies to letters), but even we know how to keep our temper....

Si Melber

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New XR650R Imminent

Rumours are rife that Honda are set to launch an all new ally-framed XR650R later this year. The new XR which will probably make its debut at the Munich show, will feature liquid cooling (the first time on an XR), and an aluminium-alloy beam frame similar to the current CR250R. It's also expected to be electric start. The bike which will replace the current XR600R which has remained virtually unchanged since its launch in the mid Eighties, will need to be lighter and at least as robust as the outgoing model if it is to be accepted by XR6 fans all over the world. And to prove its ruggedness and versatility Honda is expected to support a team of French and British riders in the forthcoming Paris-Granada-Dakar Rally next January. Factory insiders are remaining tight-lipped about the new bike's exact specifications and unusually there have been no leaked factory pictures or even artists' impressions so far. Rest assured however, that we'll be bringing you more news on this story as soon as we get it.

French Letters...

Ever seen an HRD enduro bike? If not - you will do shortly. HRD are a French engineering concern specialising in the assembly of high quality enduro bikes powered by Yamaha's well proven WR two-stroke engines. HRD hand build their own frames, alloy swing-arms and 11L alloy tanks, adding Paioli forks, Ohlins shock, Reikon bars, Acerbis plastics, DEP alloy silencer, Technosel seat and graphics and a full lighting kit to make them road legal. Not only are their bikes highly specified (and highly desirable), but now for the first time they're available in the UK thanks to On Time Racing - the new importers. An HRD250 will set you back £4237 and a 125 £3923, and we've got the first UK test on one next month. For more info call On Time Racing on 01937 557000 and tell 'em we sent you.



That's an HRD and we'll be testing it shortly...

Get Lost

You would have thought Chris Scott (see last month's issue) would have had enough of desert biking. Well he has, so now he's looking for an experienced desert rider to accompany his Land Cruiser from Djerba (meet November 10), through Eastern Algeria and the Ténéré desert, ending in Agadez 6-8 weeks later. If you need to ask what, where and how, this is not for you. The pace will be frustrating (4WDs are slow) and anything may happen from closed borders to outright robbery (let alone the usual desert problems). The biker's role will be to add safety in numbers, share guide costs in the Ténéré and act as a 'scout' through dunes. Your baggage and extra fuel will be carried for you, and there will be short range VHF comm's with the car. You're looking at about 4000 hard off-road miles and £500 from Djerba to Agadez where you're on your own (and in relative safety!). If you have the right bike, money, desert riding experience, time and nerves of steel, then fax this number (0181 761 8689) for an information sheet.

Snippets

• CRM importers Container Co have opened a new branch in Pontypridd in Mid Glamorgan. Intended as a one-stop shop for all off road activities, you can see their full range of bikes at the shop which can be contacted on 01443 486648.

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Dear Trail Bike...

Comfy KLR

Aldershot, Hants

Dear Si
Paul Atherton asks in TBM36 (Letters) whether there is a comfortable bike capable of cruising at 60-70mph with genuine trail riding capability, a range of 100+ miles and a comfy seat - something really practical?

There is such a bike and it's not one of those you recommended - it's the Kawasaki KLR250 - featured in issue three by Roger Evans. As Roger says, this bike is very underrated, but with some decent tyres and a change of front sprocket to 14 teeth, it will hold its own in the company of most genuine trailies such as the XL250 or the Serow.

We have at least two KLRs in our TRF group and mine is one of them. It is an American import with 23,000 miles on the clock and has had its pillion rests, mirrors and sidestand cut-out switch removed. I have fitted an O-ring chain and sprockets, a Bridgestone EDO3 tyre on the front and a Pirelli T17 on the back which can handle most of the muddy conditions in our area (NE Hants, Berks, W Surrey). It is a really comfortable bike, can cruise at 60/70mph and has the capacity to cover 150 miles on one tankful.

I am 6ft 2in and weigh about 13.5 stone and I find the bike very comfortable. It is also strongly built, easy to service and the design has stood the test of time as they're still being made. The KLR250 may not be state of the art, but as Roger says it is probably one of the great forgotten trail bikes of the last few years. Try one Paul - you won't regret it.

Great Mag
Tony Haigh

You're right Tony. The KLR is everything that you say of it. I guess I didn't think about the KLR250 because although I've ridden quite a few of them, I've always found them to be a little underpowered - 60mph okay, 70mph, I'd say is questionable. In all other respects though the bike is good. It's certainly very comfortable and economical, and they are built very strongly. On the downside they feel quite heavy for a 250 and don't have the suspension to match something like an XR250, but as a steady trailie however they are a great tool. Thanks for reminding us...

Don't Start...#1

Dear TBM

A few comments on your disappointing time with the WR400F. Many Japanese four stroke off roaders seem to suffer from the same hot starting problems albeit on a smaller scale. As the owner of a 1991 DR350 (notoriously difficult to start - ed), I think there are probably two causes. One is that the exhaust system runs very close to the carb float bowl and may cause problems with fuel vaporisation particularly when the engine is in a heat-soak situation (stalled, having been under heavy load at low speed). The difficulties are I believe exacerbated by crankcase fume recirculation systems, which by law are not allowed to vent to the atmosphere (on road going vehicles at least). So the sparkplug is expected to ignite a cocktail of fuel vapour and oily crankcase fumes rather than a nice mixture of fresh air and atomised fuel droplets.

I've often wondered whether the DR would be easier to restart from hot if the exhaust system was insulated along its length from the side of the cylinder to the start of the silencer? I know that it's possible to modify the crankcase breathing system so it exhales and inhales through a separate filter rather than the inlet tract just upstream of the carburettor. Fitting a SplitFire plug helped both the hot and cold starting of my DR to the extent that people look on in amazement as it fires first kick most of the time.

It can still be difficult to start when hot, particularly if it's been upside down in a ditch (don't ask!), but the best cure is to leave it for ten minutes or so. This is okay when trail riding, but not in competition obviously. With the difficulties you describe, would an electric start WR400F have fired up before it flattened its battery? Or would Yamaha be better off looking at the relationship between the exhaust header and the carb and perhaps replace the latter with fuel injection?

Richard Simpson
Gloucester

Good points you make Richard. Fuel vaporisation may be a problem, but I suspect the WR4's difficulties go deeper than this. The point you make about crankcase fumes however is definitely right (on many bikes). On our Husaberg for example the crankcase breather vents directly into the airbox - carb side of the air filters. This means that at full chat, a stream of oily fumes are directed straight into the mouth of the carb. The easiest mod is to simply take a new hose and vent the breather to atmosphere

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(which is what most owners do), even though it's not strictly legal. Other things I've found which affect the starting performance (on new bikes in particular) are the jetting and the tightness of the engine. Engines with very few miles on them don't tend to start as well as those which have been properly run in (the WR-F was run in by the way). While a bike which has been correctly jetted for the terrain and conditions will always be much easier to start than one with the stock jetting which is designed to work across a range of conditions. Lastly the point you make about an electric starter on the WR4. Again our experience has shown that an electric starter's ability to turn the engine over and over (much faster and for longer than you could possibly do with a single kick) has the effect of clearing the bike's lungs and helping a hot engine burst into life. Most bikes with electric starts usually fire up within the first second or two and battery performance isn't a problem. Besides, once the thing's running again it begins to recharge the battery - something that doesn't happen with leg power!

Don't Start...#2

Dear TBM

I Just had to write to congratulate you on the WR400F test in the July issue. How utterly refreshing to read a 'road' test that tells it like it is without any compromises whatsoever. I suppose that's one of the advantages of being a (relatively) small independent magazine and not one of the EMAP empire so dependant on corporate advertising and goodwill for test bikes and five day p*ss-ups in the south of

France every time a new model is launched.

I should imagine there are many KLR250/DR350/XR400 owners who are very grateful to you for informing them about the WR before parting with their hard earned cash for a bike which may be difficult to start when hot. I have seen grown men reduced to exhaustion and frustration trying to kickstart a stalled-out hot four stroke single, often in the wettest, muddiest and most inconvenient situations. It's no wonder that all the people in our TRF club who used to ride DRs, XRs, KTMs etc five years ago, are now riding WR200s, CRM250s, RMX250s or small electric start four strokes like Serows.

But why do big bangers have a hot starting problem? Here is my suggestion based on something I read years ago about hot starting problems with the very early MG Metro Turbos. On these early MGs the heat generated by the turbo was causing the incoming petrol/air mix to expand so much that when the mixture actually arrived in the combustion chamber, there was insufficient concentration of fuel to allow combustion to take place. These cars were subsequently fitted with intercoolers - a device designed to cool the incoming charge of mixture after it had been heated (inadvertently) by the hot turbocharger. The intercooler sits between the turbo and the intake manifold or injection system and is necessary because of the very high temperatures generated by turbochargers as they spin up to 100,000rpm.

I believe that something very similar may be happening with big single four strokes. These



bikes have to run very lean because of federal and EC emissions laws and as we all know, a lean mixture burns a lot hotter than a rich one. I believe that these engines get so hot that they are having the same effect on a fresh charge of mixture as the turbo unit was in the early MG Metros without the intercoolers. An electric starter is the obvious solution but as bikes like the WR400F are already liquid cooled I'm sure it wouldn't be too hard to install a liquid cooled intake manifold which would help alleviate the problem.

Anyway that's my tuppence worth. Please retain your honesty and forthright views in your road tests. Personally I would rather see the price of TBM double than you compromise your opinions - and the truth - for the sake of advertising revenue.

Paul Atherton
Blackburn, Lancs

Thanks for the compliment Paul, we'll continue to report on our findings as we've always done, though we reserve the right to go on foreign jollies and bike launches (if we ever get invited). The only difference is that no matter how much corporate hospitality we soak up and

Dear Trail Bike...

how much booze they pour down our throats, we'll always tell you the truth about the bikes afterwards..... If we can remember it that is!

Swinging the Lead

Dear TBM

I would be grateful if you could advise me on a query regarding a 1980 Honda XL500S and a 1980 XR500S. Please can you confirm if they will both run on unleaded petrol without problems. I have received conflicting reports from various dealers on this subject and am concerned that when the leaded petrol ban is introduced in the year 2000, whether these bikes will be able to run on unleaded with no ill effects.

Alternatively is there any modification which can be carried out to the engine and valves to make sure they run on unleaded okay. The handbook states that they need leaded petrol, but I find this confusing as the XL250S uses a similar engine and will happily run on unleaded. Any help you can give me would be much appreciated.

David Smith
York

We checked with Honda's technical department and I'm afraid the handbook is correct. Both bikes should use leaded fuel. The modifications you mention are probably not worth doing as this would require new valve seats to be inserted into the cylinder head - which would undoubtedly run to quite a few hundred quid. On the other hand don't panic. You're not going to be the only person stuck with an old machine which

requires leaded fuel. The general consensus among the petrol companies is that although they won't be able to supply leaded fuel, they will be able to supply an alternative which will probably be a blend of their unleaded fuel with new anti-knock constituents. You should therefore be able to continue riding your bikes well into the new millennium...

What's in a name?

Dear TBM

Forgive me for commenting, but I couldn't find one single article on trail bikes or about trail riding in TBM36, just enduros, rally raids and touring in Africa. Even the staffbikes are hardly trail irons any more! I know it must be tempting to go and do what you are interested in then write about it in the mag, but c'mon, you called it Trail Bike Magazine and aimed it at a minority group.

You could I suppose argue that it is what the readership wants, and that you have increased circulation as a result. Well the SUN has a greater readership than MCN but it doesn't mean that MCN should change to tabloid reporting just to increase circulation. The enduro season may be underway, but it doesn't mean you need to exclude trail riding articles from your columns. I ride my trail bike throughout the whole year and want to read about my hobby throughout the whole year which is why I subscribed to TBM. I do find quite a lot of the other stuff interesting (and I do the odd enduro), but quite a lot of trail riding relates more to trials than enduros and you don't ride in trials do you?

Chris Parkin
Leeds

Okay Chris I hear what you're saying but let me put you right on a few things. First of all the magazine is called Trail Bike & Enduro, and has been since issue 19 - in other words we cover enduro bikes as well as trail bikes. Secondly I think you're being a bit unfair in your criticism. In terms of staff bikes so far we've had an XT350, CRM250, XR400, FE501, Elefant 900, TTR250, KE100, XR600, XRV650 - a fair mix of stuff and interestingly more trail bikes than enduro bikes. You say it may be tempting to do what we enjoy and then report about it - well that's exactly what we do. In other words we write about the things that interest us, and we hope, interest the majority of our readers. Magazines which are staffed by un-enthusiastic writers who pen material on subjects about which they are forced to write, become boring to read. TBM is written by enthusiastic nutters who live the life and then write about it afterwards. Their backgrounds may be in trail riding, enduros, rally raids or more commonly a mixture of all of these.

Overall we'd like to think we've got the balance about right, but that's what the survey was for in the last issue. For sure I agree with you that at any one time there may be an issue with less in the way of trail riding stuff, but that's partly because sometimes it's difficult to find interesting (and fresh) trail riding features, and partly because other things which we feel we need to cover are happening at the same time. Besides one issue is usually balanced by other

issues with more trail oriented stuff later in the year.

Also I can't agree with your point about overlanding (touring in Africa story). I think a majority of people would call that trail riding: taking a trail bike like an XT600 over rough dirt roads in Africa - otherwise, what else would you call it? We never seek to exclude trail riding articles from the columns of TBM (as if...), it's just that at present we have received very little in the way of trail riding articles from readers or contributors, so perhaps you'd like to get your thinking cap on and come up with some good ideas for original features.

One further point - the term tabloid refers to the size and shape of the paper and not (as is commonly thought), to the type of reporting contained therein. Interestingly enough MCN actually changed its format a few years ago to become a tabloid, employing an editor who came from one of the daily tabloids and started using tabloid-type reporting. Their circulation increased as a result of that change. Lastly we do all ride trials here - of the long distance variety. We even report about them too as you will no doubt have noticed in TBM35 (The Wyegate).

Un-Hinged

Dear Si

I enjoyed the article on wiring (TBM36) and couldn't help noticing the pic of the dodgy wiring on P49, showing an XR400 loom that had been cut and bodged. I'd like to point out the likely reason for this. It's seems clear that the bike is a '96 or '97 XR4 and has had the carb fiddled with. Why? The manual recommends removing the rear subframe to be able to get right at the carb, what they don't tell you is that you have to delve all the

way back in the wiring loom to find the block connectors - hence someone has tried to find a shortcut using Mr Stanley's knife. I'd like to point out an easier way. To remove the carb from the bike simply hinge up the rear subframe on the forward pivot bolt, hold with a bungee and with the bike supported remove the top shock mount and then carb removal is easy.

Note: Honda say you can change main and pilot jets with the carb in place. This is tricky unless you have kiddy hands with adult power and a damn good stubby Phillips screwdriver to remove the float bowl (for pilot) and then the plastic baffle never stays in place!

This reminds me. Don't always trust handbooks as they do get it wrong. The '98 XR4 handbook states 2 1/4 turns out for the pilot screw (98 models have a different carb and jets to earlier ones so they are much better at fuelling/jetting), yet as delivered they are set at 1 turn out. Check yours before adjusting. Note on XR4s the pilot screw is an aerated fuel screw and not an air screw (it all depends on which side of the slide a pilot screw is) so remember turn it in to lean; and out to richen.

John Rushworth
<http://www.motorcycle.co.uk>

Cheers John

All-Sorts

Dear TBM

Because you asked in the survey I thought I would get in early with some comments about issue 37. A good selection of tests - very good in fact, but could the Monnier and the CR250XC have been head to head or is that planned for a later edition - that would be nice. Small report from the Pencarreg but at least you had a report, mind you there's a

dodgy photo of Yoshi-'mura' accompanying it. Nice bike - shame about the rider! Test on the TT nice but please note the XT600E sold in this country is a 4-valve motor as have all XT600 motors since time began. Trail tips? Nice read, lots of interesting points, maybe not all to be used but some produce a laugh - right?

In replies to letters you pointed a Dominator rider towards changing his complete gearing he doesn't have to, the Dominator and the XR had virtually the same gearing bar one tooth on the front: 15 Dom to 14 XR. But I would recommend 13 on the Dommie as the drive off the crank on the Dom is slightly higher than the XR. Also as standard into the UK the XR6 is restricted with an airbox snorkel and exhaust insert. As standard it comes with a 152 main, 62 pilot, but HRC recommend a 155 Main, 68 Pilot and 2.5 turns out with the airscrew, if fitting an aftermarket silencer. If your bike is sucking the carb shut, check the throttle housing or whether you have a worn carb. Hope this helps.

Brian Eland
Via e-mail

Thanks Bri. Actually the Dominator and XR600 (latest versions) do come with different gearing (front & rear). The Dommie is 15/45, whereas the XR6 has 14/48 You don't have to change the gearing but like we said, if you're going to the trouble of modifying the bike, you might as well gear the thing down as well. As for the XT600E having four-valves or not? You're absolutely right. How could this oversight have come about? The answer's simple. Blezard. From now on Blez will be confined to colouring in the TBM logo with his crayons...



TALKING *Dirty*

In the catalogue of classic excuses for crashing that TBM contributors appear to be amassing at the moment, Chris Evans has added yet another - bad suspension set-up - to account for his most recent get-offs. Well it can't possibly be operator error - can it...?

With the African rallye-raid scene over, your humble scribe has finally had chance to get out and run a few raids. And incredibly, despite organising four such events in quick succession, with participants clocking up a combined total distance of more than 30,000 off-road kilometres, nobody has spent so much as a nano-second in the local casualty department.

I can't begin to tell you how happy this makes me. As those of you who read my ramblings on a regular basis, escorting people to hospital is my least favourite pastime. It's not that I begrudge the time I spend hanging about in waiting rooms with only the French equivalent of Horse & Hound Magazine for company, it isn't even the fact that I invariably miss out on the 'Mousse au chocolat' waiting forlornly for me back at the hotel. Rather it is because it forces me to consider whether taking 15 or so throttle-happy trail riders over (and sometimes through) the French countryside is actually a reasonable way to earn a crust.

As I haven't got the faintest idea what other gainful employment I might actively pursue, posing such a question inevitably leads to a certain amount of career angst. Naturally therefore, while everything is running tickety-boo, and nobody is languishing in hospital, the question doesn't get posed and the madness continues.

Of course the Yin and Yang of dirt bike riding inevitably means that all my recent good fortune vis-a-vis punter injuries has to be balanced out somehow, and it seems the price I am paying for zero hospitalisations recently is falling off my own motorcycle with monotonous regularity.

Until recently I had always prided myself on 'loving it' on an extremely infrequent basis. I like to attribute this fact to a high level of skill (ha, ha - ed), and a sense of responsibility towards my (paying) guests, who would otherwise be deprived of my invaluable services if I was otherwise incapacitated. In reality it has a lot more to do with a large yellow streak and a low pain threshold. But whatever the motivation, the reality has recently become somewhat different. And while I haven't managed to put myself in hospital yet, if I carry on like this, it can only be a matter of time.

Among the multitude of get-offs to which I have recently fallen victim, the majority of which were thankfully low speed, two rather higher speed wipe-outs are indelibly engraved in my memory - not to mention the paintwork of my crash helmet. Both were the result of losing the front end in spectacular fashion, and both occurred completely without warning.

Again, out of deference to raid participants who have travelled considerable distances to ride with me, I always make sure that I set off with a bike sufficiently mechanically sound to go the distance. And in six years of organising raids, I've only once finished in the back of the van. It's true to say however that with my hectic schedule certain 'non-essential' niceties of machine preparation tend to get put off. My recent spate of crashes however has forced me to reconsider the wisdom of ignoring such minor details as blown fork seals while trying to stay ahead of the braying pack of lunatics that I politely

refer to as my clients.

Identifying a lack of damper fluid as a possible factor in my high number of recent head-dirt interfaces got me thinking about the broader issue of suspension set-up in general. I mean outside of a national or international enduro championship parc-fermé, does anyone actually know what all those little knobs and screws on your suspension units actually do? While personally I wouldn't dream of buying a bike without the full compliment of these essential little devices. I confess that I have never so much as laid a spanner on any of them.

Admittedly, a couple of years ago a Dutch enduro champion I was riding with suggested that the compression damping (whatever that might be) on my front forks was a little hard and then proceeded to twiddle in that clinical Dutch fashion, with a few nuts and bolts. But strangely the hoped for transformation which would turn my tired old suspenders into the latest hot-poop Paiolis failed to materialise.

If like me you can't actually tell the difference between contrasting settings then two conclusions can logically be drawn. One is that the bike manufacturers are perpetrating a massive 'snow-job' on us, forcing us to pay out for features which make not the slightest bit of difference. Alternatively I have come to realise that I'm just not sufficiently good enough a rider to appreciate the difference. And if I'm not then I've got bad news for you guys in readerland... nor are the majority of you. I'm sorry to be so brutal but it's true. I've ridden with literally hundreds of you guys over the years and 95% of you are at least as bad as me!

There are however a small percentage of riders that are simply sensational on a motorcycle. I watch them go charging into corners and find grip at speeds which defy all the laws of physics. They can improvise when confronted with impossible-to-predict obstacles and cover the ground twice as fast, for half the effort expended by plodders such as myself.

Could it be that this elite has somehow found the elusive key to the black art of suspension set-up and are secretly fiddling away in their garages to obtain an unfair advantage? I'd like to think so, but having furtively tried some of the bikes these superstars fly around on I'm forced to conclude that sadly, it is in fact all down to skill. Worse still, it isn't the sort of skill which can be picked up in five minutes by reading fancifully entitled articles such as 'How to master double jumps without killing yourself'. No, I'm afraid it all comes down to something even more mysterious than the black art of suspension tuning - innate talent. After 26 years of wobbling around I've resigned myself to never acquiring it, and if you're over 20 and are still as crap as I am then I advise you to do what I do: blow your fork seals and next time you crash - blame it on them...



Long Distance Off-Roading in France

Raid Burgundy 10/11/12 Sept

The same area as this year's French round of the world enduro championships. 360km of tight, technical trails over the wooded hills of Burgundy - "Three of the most enjoyable days' trail riding I've ever had - TBM £240 ***

Raid Normandie 23/24/25 Oct

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" - TBM £240 **

Raid Morvan 13/14/15 Nov

Deep in rural France - just south of Auxerre - the Raid Morvan is ideal for those who want to cover big off road distances. 170km per day, combined with hilly wooded countryside guarantees a challenging ride. £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 Chapelle, 75018 Paris
Tel: (00 33) 1 42 09 97 73
Fax: (00 33) 1 46 07 30 54

new stuff

Two-Into-One

Owners of 97 KTM Adventures, can now buy a single-sided upswept system to replace the twin silencer set-up on the original bike. The stainless steel system helps keep the silencer out of the way of rocks and has obvious advantages when it comes to crossing deep water. With a claimed power increase and significant weight saving, the slip-on pipe comes with a carb rejetting kit and costs £349 from John Deacon at Plymouth Off Road. Similar systems are also available for the EGS-E and 98 Adventure-R. Details on 01752 606888.



Protection Racket

Fancy a set of carbon-Fibre fork protectors for your CR/XR/YZ/KTM or 'Berg? Trail & Track are the importers for the tasty range of USA-made E-line products which include aftermarket carbon accessories for a whole number of bikes. In addition to the fork guards there are clutch covers, pipe guards, chain guides, rear disc guards, skid plates, lighting coils and a special carbon fibre oil pipe & filter guard for the XR400/250. Give Tim a call for more info on 01481 66140



TESTED

It's a Steel!

Here's a product no trail rider should be without. QuikSteel is the ultimate get you home repair material. This chemical product - actually a steel reinforced epoxy putty (as if you cared!) - comes in a small sausage-shaped roll with the hardener sandwiched in the middle. All you do is simply twist a small bit of



the material off the roll, knead it with your fingers till it's completely mixed, then press into the part which needs repairing and wait for a couple of minutes. QuikSteel sets like, er... steel, and bonds with every known material. It will fix a cracked crankcase, rebuild a stripped thread, seal a leaking radiator or exhaust or even a plastic petrol tank (so the makers claim). In fact the stuff even sets under water - we've tried it. We've used it a couple of times now (not just for emergency bike repairs) and the stuff works brilliantly. A word of warning though, only use enough to fix the repair, because a great big blob takes ages to file or drill down again afterwards - oh and it makes your fingers smell funny afterwards. Nevermind, it costs just £5.99 for a small-sized tube and best of all we've got ten tubes of the stuff to give away to ten lucky TBM readers. Simply call the QuikSteel Hotline on Freefone 0800 787 3717 and the first ten callers will get a tube of QuikSteel absolutely free (bet you wished you subscribed now). Otherwise you can find QuikSteel at plumbers and builders' merchants or by calling the Freefone number and ordering direct.

Air We Go

No room to stash a bicycle pump on your bike? Then I guess you need to carry a Rep & Air kit in your bumbag. The kit comprises of an incredibly compact quality innertube repair kit, a valve extractor, spare valve, plus four CO2 cartridges to operate 'the world's smallest air pump' and reinflate your tyre. The Rep & Air kit costs £19.99 and is available from Cycle-Logical on 01443 218700.



Hey Sucker!

Here's the ultimate accessory to hop-up your Honda CRM250R - a 38mm Keihin flat-slide race carb from Japan. Designed to fit all the CRMs (except the Active Radicals), the race carb comes ready jetted for the CRM and is claimed to help boost power. It costs £130 + VAT and more details are available from the Container Co on 01362 698147.

If The Cap Fits

Here's a neat idea that's so simple, we wonder why no-one has thought of it before. Fed up with losing your valve caps in the mud every time you stop to put some air in your tyres? Then replace them with these Cap Keeps and forget about it. The nickel plated valve cap is secured to the innertube valve thread by means of a short rubber band so you can't lose it, and has a seal built into it so that even if you've got a leaky valve, you shouldn't lose any pressure. Smart huh? Sold in packs of two for £3.99 or four for £5.95, you can get 'em from Bike Stop on 01438 317038.



Liquid Engineering?

Specifically designed for high-revving four-strokes (like the WR400F), is Denicol's latest synthetic formula engine oil - Thumper Lube. As used by world class riders Joel Smets and Darryl King to keep their thumpers performing at the highest level, Denicol's latest product costs £6.20 inc VAT (per litre), and is available from professional dealers or direct from Pro-Racing on 01327 301322.



TRAIL TIPS

This month a way of cleaning up old plastic, a home made funnel and probably sunlight too. However help is at hand. The chemical company 3M make a product called General Purpose Adhesive Cleaner which not only cleans up the old tacky residue from your tank graphics, but will also remove other dirt and stains helping to restore the tank to its original colour. It works well on side panels and mudguards as well, particularly at cleaning up the sticky residue left by old numbers or stickers.

Here's a neat tip we heard about recently for owners of old plastic-tanked bikes. Very often the petrol tank gets discoloured through years of ingrained mud, adhesive from graphics, petrol seepage and probably sunlight too. However help is at hand. The chemical company 3M make a product called General Purpose Adhesive Cleaner which not only cleans up the old tacky residue from your tank graphics, but will also remove other dirt and stains helping to restore the tank to its original colour. It works well on side panels and mudguards as well, particularly at cleaning up the sticky residue left by old numbers or stickers.

Our old mate Richard Thompson from Berkshire provided us with this next tip. If you need a funnel which will fit into a small filler hole, take an empty washing up liquid bottle with one of those pull-up caps (Persil for instance). Remove just the pull-up cap (the bit which does the closing) leaving the nozzle in place. Next cut the bottle in half and clean it out thoroughly, and you'll end up with a convenient funnel that's just perfect for getting into tight areas. Cheers Richard.

Brian Eland from Newcastle supplied the next few tips this month. 'If you have trouble with levers snapping close to the perch and leaving you with a unusable stub, use a hacksaw and cut (at the ball end of your lever) a third of the way through your lever from the top and also from the bottom. Now you have weakened the lever enough to make the ball-end snap off next time you have a big get off - leaving you with enough of the lever to keep riding the bike. Note: once the ball has

been broken off you must change the lever at the earliest opportunity as it is both dangerous and would fail scrutineering at an event.'

Here's another tip from Brian: 'Don't carry a brand new spare spark plug with you - sometimes they don't work very well (from new). Instead carry a plug that's been in the bike for at least a day (to prove it works). Always keep swapping plugs and cleaning them, that way you can trust your spare plug and start looking around for another problem if the bike still won't start.'

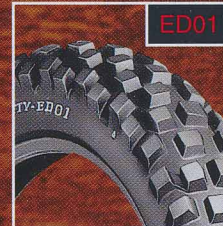
Lastly here's another tip from big Bri. 'Do you end up taking your expensive stickers and graphics off with the power washer every time you take your bike to the jet wash? Well, you can either stop washing the bike - like Blez does - or better still, fasten the edges of the stickers down with some nail varnish. This can take some time but does work. Use clear nail varnish all around the edge of the sticker and onto the plastic. This will stop water from getting behind the stickers and peeling them off.'

Cheers Bri, we wondered why you carried nail varnish around in your bum bag. Mind you, doesn't explain why you need the silky underwear though... Finally here's the tip we mentioned a couple of months back sent in by Alan Weaver from Redditch in Worcs. Alan sent us in a handy tool for tube changing which he'd made himself having seen one in the White Bros catalogue.

Essentially its a piece of steel cable (like an old throttle cable) about 45cm long with a ring pull at one end (to put your finger through). And soldered or glued on to the other end there's a tiny plug of threaded steel which screws into the valve thread of an innertube (once you've removed the valve). So when changing tubes, instead of trying to locate the hole in the rim with the innertube valve (once the tyre is on), all you need do is thread this little gizmo through the hole in the rim first, screw it into the valve and then give the thing a tug whereby it will locate your innertube valve straight through the hole - simple, eh? Cheers Alan, very useful. More tips next Month, but please keep them coming in.

BRIDGESTONE

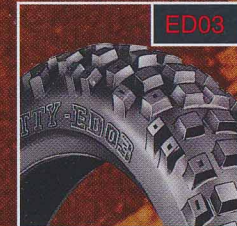
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ED01



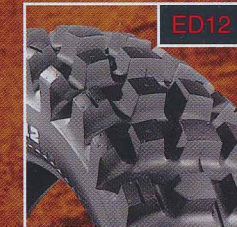
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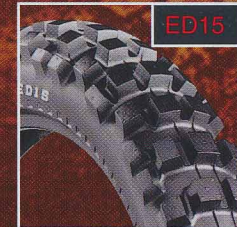
ED03



ED04



ED12



ED15



ED16



ED660



ED661

| 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 | | |

Got any good Trail Tips?

We want to hear from you with your trail tips: what do you use on your bike or gear, and why. Send your tips (preferably accompanied by a few clear photos) to: **TBM Tips, PO Box 9845, London, W13 9WP.**

Available from Quality dealers nationwide

RANT!

What would you do when one of the major Japanese importers starts throwing its weight around? Si Melber explains...

Well, we finally got the phonecall a number of people had been predicting. A month after publishing our Yamaha WR400F report, Martin Marshall, motorcycle sales manager at Yamaha UK, rang the TBM office to say, and I quote: 'Please don't ever speak to Yamaha UK again for the loan of a test bike. We have no interest in your publication from both an editorial or advertising point of view.'

It would be churlish of me to suggest that Yamaha UK were upset over our recent WR400F test. After all, by his own admittance, Mr Marshall hadn't actually read a copy of the test report before he rang (indeed he asked us to send him a copy), so how could he possibly form an opinion on it? He had, it transpired, received a number of irate phonecalls from Yamaha dealers up and down the country, upset with some of the findings in our report.

That's not surprising. They weren't the only ones upset with the findings - we were too. The tone of the article had been set by the bike's inability to start during a hot and muddy enduro, and however good a bike may be, if you can't get it started, it's useless to you. If we came across as negative about the bike, then it simply reflected the fact that we were genuinely disappointed that the Yamaha didn't live up to expectations in certain key areas. Without letting commercial decisions cloud our judgement, we wrote the test as enthusiasts, not hard-headed Yamaha businessmen - I believe that's what our readers expect.

But we didn't leave it there. After testing the bike at three different enduro courses as well as on the dyno, we rang Yamaha UK to ask whether this bike was restricted or suffered from any particular starting problems. The answer was no to both queries. So we wrote the test on the basis of our findings.

Yet despite what at first appears a negative outlook, our test actually revealed a number of positive findings on the WR-F. Presumably none of the dealers who had contacted Yamaha had bothered mentioning that our report also contained the following quotes about the WR4: '...one of the most compact and powerful middleweight thumpers available.' '...will certainly impress you with its ability.' 'Excellent...' '...superbly suspended...' '...hooks up well (in the dry)...' '...simple to turn...' '...frankly sets new standards for agility for a four stroke...' And had Mr Marshall actually read the test prior to making his decision to withdraw support he would've found this out for himself.

Undeterred by our protestations, Mr Marshall announced that henceforth TrailBike Magazine would not be welcome at Yamaha's door ever again (or words to that effect); in the process, verbally sticking two fingers up to the many thousands of readers of TrailBike Magazine. He didn't ask us how we thought the WR might be improved, nor indicate that he would pass any of our findings back to Yamaha head office in Japan. He simply washed his hands of the whole affair.

Any reader who didn't know better might assume by his actions that he didn't care about the thousands of dual-sport and off road fans who purchase new bikes every year, and base part of their purchasing decision on the findings of consumer magazines like TBM. Or they might conclude that Mr Marshall didn't want Yamahas being tested unless that test was to obtain favourable reviews. Or perhaps both those assumptions are wrong, and in fact he was merely doing a bit of corporate chest beating, hoping to influence the result of any future Yamaha tests carried out by this mag.

Whatever his reasons we believe that the net result of withdrawing 'support' would be to deny independent testing of their products in a open and competitive marketplace. And to reduce the amount of choice enjoyed by readers of this magazine. As for cancelling any advertising, well that decision simply reeks of a bully-boy attitude taken by a large multinational on a small independent publishing house.

This is not the first time we've had a difference of opinion with Yamaha. In truth their 'support' for this magazine has frankly been virtually non-existent since we started back in 1995. Look through this copy of the mag and try and find a Yamaha UK advertisement featuring any of their range of off road or dual sport bikes. You won't find one. Nor will you find one in any one of the other 37 issues we've produced over more than three years of publication. Yet they advertise these bikes in other sections of the biking press. 'Support?' Don't make me laugh.

Of course for our part we've never stopped telling you about Yamahas. Why should we? We believe that the off road market is bigger than TBM and certainly bigger than Yamaha. We've simply got on with the job of testing all the bikes we can, whatever make they are. And of course we've never stopped telling you about how much fun you can have on a dual sport or off road bike. And while we're far too modest to claim any credit for the growth in off roading in the UK, the fact remains that Yamaha (among others) are benefiting from the increasing demand in the number of new dirt bike sales, thanks to a revitalised interest in enduros and events like the Cambrian rally covered in the pages of TBM.

Of course whether Yamaha or anyone else decides to advertise their products or show 'support' for the market through the pages of TBM is a matter for them. It won't affect the way we report on our test bikes, in exactly the same way that the withdrawal of that supposed 'support' will not affect us either.

One thing I can assure you of is this. Yamaha's decision has merely strengthened our resolve to tell it like it is (whatever the consequences). If they, or

anybody else for that matter, don't like it then tough luck. Unless things change we'll be getting our Yamahas from one of the parallel importers in future, and in the meantime we have only one message to Martin Marshall at Yamaha UK: Get A Life Mate!

Here is a copy of the letter we sent to Yamaha on 7 July.

Dear Martin

Please find enclosed the copy of TrailBike & Enduro Magazine which you requested. Perhaps when you've had a chance to read the report on the WR400F and digest the information it contains, you might like to reconsider your decision. You may not like everything we wrote but I would point out that the test also contains a number of positive comments about the WR400F, and is in our opinion a true reflection of our findings.

If you think our report was unfair, perhaps you would like to tell us what you don't agree with and suggest improvements we could've made to the test. We will of course be delighted to publish your reply in the letters pages of TBM.

Bearing in mind a number of people witnessed the difficulties we had in starting the WR400F at one of the enduros we entered, perhaps you would also like to comment on whether you would have felt duty-bound to report that information or not? Our readers (many of whom are your customers), have come to expect honest opinions from TBM - as opposed to merely trotting out the company line - we would not have been happy about withholding that information. You may feel otherwise.

I'm sure you'll appreciate your decision to withdraw the supply of both test bikes and (non-existent) advertising to Trail Bike & Enduro Magazine will of course be aired within the next issue of TBM.

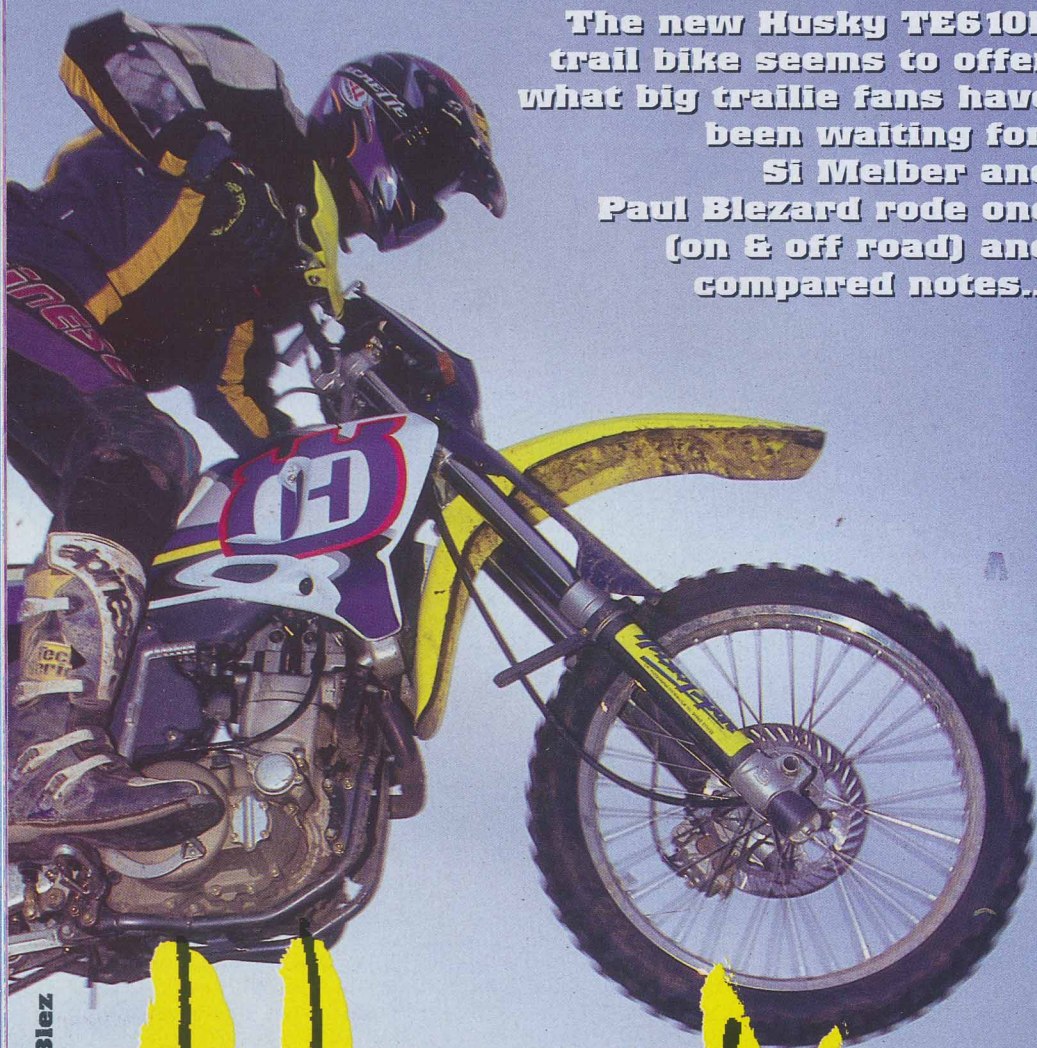
Finally I would like to issue you with a fun challenge. If you believe that the Yamaha WR400F has no hot starting problems perhaps you would like to put your money where your mouth is and race us on one to prove it. Replicating our test, we will use an electric-start Husaberg FE501E and you a Yamaha WR400F (supplied new, by an independent dealer). The event will be an enduro of our choosing. I look forward (with anticipation) to your reply.

Yours sincerely

Si Melber
(Editor, TrailBike & Enduro Magazine)

Following receipt of our letter Martin Marshall telephoned us to say that he wished to begin a dialogue with TBM and would try and arrange to meet us in order to discuss future relations. He insisted that his decision had been based upon our dealings with Yamaha in the past going back over a number of years and had nothing to do with the WR400F test published in TBM36. At the time of going to press we were still awaiting Yamaha's official written reply, but we'll keep you posted if anything turns up...

The new Husky TE610E trail bike seems to offer what big trailie fans have been waiting for. Si Melber and Paul Blezard rode one (on & off road) and compared notes...



Story: Si Melber and Paul Blez
Pics: Neil Pidduck

Husqvarna TE610E

The next time you're talking to some trail riders let it slip that you ride a Husky 610 (even if you don't) and watch their reaction. Total respect. The big-bore Husky has a reputation for being a serious piece of metalwork with a kick in the pants that few will ever experience, let alone tame. But not all 610s are the same. Husqvarna's all new TE610E trail bike has been a long time coming, but now its arrived there's going to be a lot of serious interest.



Technically Speaking

Let's put one fact straight immediately. This bike is not a 610 enduro model lightly dressed up with a few road-going niceties. This is an all new machine with a completely redesigned engine featuring a counter-balancer, twin oil pumps and best of all, an electric start. Okay it shares a similar liquid cooled, sohc, four valve layout, displacing 577cc with a bore and stroke of 98x76.5mm as the other TE model, but that's where the similarities end. The compression ratio is a much lower 9:1, there's a new system for valve adjustment and visually the engine looks completely different. The kick starter (which it retains) has been switched from the left to the right hand side of the engine, while the drive train has moved from right to left - Japanese style. To dampen the Husky's vibes there's a counterbalancer which sits behind the crankshaft, while forced lubrication from twin (lobe) oil pumps should, in theory, allow this motor to rack up healthy mileages on the road. And just in case it should get hot while sitting in traffic, there's an electric fan mounted on the rear of the right radiator. Finally a six speed transmission and 16/45 gearing allows for a serious 100mph top end.

The chassis, which is similar to others Huskys, uses a curved steel backbone with a redesigned rear subframe offering a sensible 900mm (35 inch) seat height. There's a dual density foam saddle (removed by a single dzus fastener), below which sits the traditional side-mounted airbox that's



On the fence? We liked the Husky as soon as we tried it out for ourselves. Some niggling problems remain though...

also home to a gigantic battery. Behind the seat there's a very practical and sturdily built rear rack which doubles as the pillion grab handle, and if you look carefully is shaped like the Husqvarna crown logo.

Up front the plastic fuel tank is smaller than

ideal on a trailie of this type: 9.2 litres won't last more than about 80-90 miles and the right side fuel tap gave us a few problems during testing. In front of the rider sits a set of braceless steel bars with neat switchgear featuring push-to-cancel indicators, while the stylish asymmetric dials include a small tachometer - rare these days on a trailie.

Front suspension is handled by 45mm Marzocchi forks offering 285mm (11") of travel while at the rear, a Sachs/Boge shock gives a commensurate amount of rear wheel movement via the long alloy swing arm.

A 260mm floating front disc and 220mm rear with Brembo calipers are some of the best brakes we've come across.

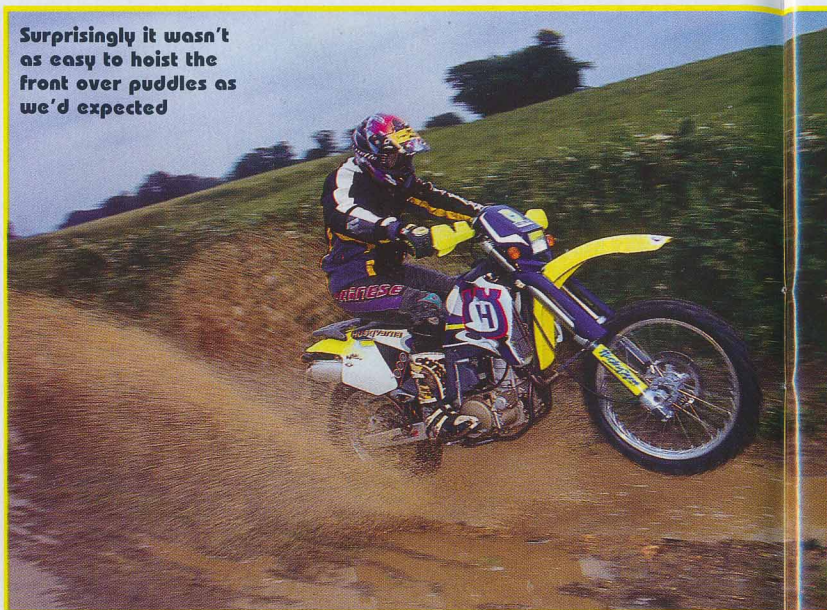
It's obvious from the specifications then that the bike was built as a trail bike first and foremost. No enduro pretensions, no enduro compromises, but simply a big capacity, practical, dual sport mount capable of tackling the trails, yet be equally at home on tarmac for the journey back afterwards. Time to try it out...

Blez Let Loose

For those that don't already know it, Husqvarna have been owned by parent company Cagiva for years, and nowadays are Italian in all but name. That may go some way towards explaining why the Husky TE610E felt to me like the dirt biking equivalent of a Ducati (another of the Cagiva conquests). It was both one of the nicest big trailies I've ridden, yet like many Italian bikes, slightly flawed in its detail. But I'm getting slightly ahead of myself.

We're often surprised here at TBM, how agricultural some big European off road four-stroke singles can feel - particularly when applied to a road or dual sport application like this. Well I'm pleased to report that the Husky TE-E with its new counterbalanced engine, does a good job of keeping the vibes down to an acceptable level. It may not be as refined as something like a DR650, but it has the new KTM 640 beaten hands down when it comes to smoothness. In other areas however the Husky motor doesn't score quite as highly. Mechanically it's pretty noisy which probably

Surprisingly it wasn't as easy to hoist the front over puddles as we'd expected



isn't helped by the asymmetric side-panel arrangement which allows much of the intake roar and other mechanical hullabaloo to reach your ears. And the rorty sound that emanates from the twin (catalyst-equipped) silencers can be a bit ear tingling at times. Anyway, let's just say that riding around the leafy suburbs of South West London late on a Friday evening meant I had to keep the revs down to avoid incurring the wrath of the neighbours.

Wobbly Bits

Heading out of London the next day for a weekend's trail riding, the low and narrow 610E was a joy to thread through the traffic on the congested roads, but things got unexpectedly exciting as I opened it up on the, er... autobahn on my way to some Hampshire trails. As the speedo passed the 140kmh mark (no mph markings), the bars started to weave in a fairly purposeful manner. Not just the 'friendly flapping' that I'm used to from my XR or most other enduro-derived big trailies, but a serious, tank-slapping sort of a weave. Gripping the bars and leaning forward calmed things down temporarily but before the needle got to 150kmh it was all getting exciting again - enough to require the full width of the outside lane.

Knowing that the wind blast on a rider's chest and arms can do a lot to create high speed wobbles on naked bikes, I took a deep breath and tried the old flat track racer's trick of taking my left hand off the bars completely and that calmed

Husky

Husqvarna TE610E

Husqvarna TE610E

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Price: | £4995 |
| Engine: | Liquid cooled, sohc, 4-valve, single with e/start |
| Capacity: | 577cc |
| Bore/Stroke: | 98x76.4mm |
| Comp Ratio: | 9:1 |
| Carburettor: | Dell'Orto PHM40 |
| Transmission: | 6-speed |
| Gearing: | 16/45 |
| Frame: | Steel cradle with alloy subframe |
| Forks: | 45mm Marzocchi - 280mm travel |
| Shock: | Boge/Sachs unit - 285mm travel |
| F Brake: | 260mm disc, Brembo caliper |
| R Brake: | 220mm disc, Brembo caliper |
| Wheelbase: | 1485mm |
| Seat Height: | 900mm |
| Fuel Capacity: | 9.2L |
| Trail Weight: | 156kg |





Good looking, functional, neat...
and blessed with a 'leccy boot.
What more could you ask for?

things down for long enough to get up to an indicated 160kmh (100mph) for a few seconds before I decided to 'cool it' lest the test came to a premature end. Passing back through the 140-150kmh mark slowing down it went into the worst weave so far, prompting me to gently caress the rear brake before the bars shook right out of my hands.

I checked the Husky's tyre pressures before heading for the first green lane - 14psi. Not great for high speed stability, but I've ridden at speed many times with that amount of air in the tyres and felt that there was more to it than that (and so it was to prove). I was disappointed to note that there wasn't even a hole for a security bolt in the rear wheel, although strangely there was a hole for one in the front rim (though no security bolt was fitted).

Getting Dirty

Out on the trail, my initial road impressions were reinforced. You can feel the Husqvarna's competition heritage straight away as the excellent suspension soaks up the bumps, but the Husky hides its avoidirpouis (that's weight to you and me - ed) much better than the Austrian company's electric start thumpers. At 156kg fully tanked, the 610 actually weighs much the same as a KTM 620EGSE, but feels lighter because the

weight is so low and well centralised.

Or rather, the Husky feels light until you get into really naddy stuff or deep, narrow ruts, at which point a combination of the heavy front end weight bias and a tallish first gear starts to give your arms a work-out. With the standard gearing it's a real effort to lift the front wheel on the dirt which means that rut-changing has to be planned with care. In fact you simply can't get out of anything other than a shallow rut on the move - even with a handful of throttle. On the other hand, this attribute helps give the Husky fantastic stability in sloppy mud, and in that respect, it's just like the traditional Husky (enduro) thumpers of old. I well remember riding a friend's old TE510 that was the most stable bike I've ever ridden off road, and the 610E has a similar (if rather more front-heavy) feel.

All my fellow TRF riding companions remarked on this stability and to my surprise, none of them complained about the heaviness of the front end even though, by comparison, their DR350s, XR400s and KTM400SC were much easier on the old arm muscles. In fact one of them (Steve), who had willingly shelled out the extra half grand for a pukka 400SC rather than settle for the soft compromise of an XR400, actually said of the Husky: 'That's a really nice bike; it's the first dual-purpose machine I've ever ridden

that actually feels good off road'.

Mind you, the high 16/45 gearing feels a bit tall for the dirt, especially first. The beauty of having six gears is that there should be a gear for every occasion, whether picking through naddy going on the rough, or going flat out on the motorway, though I suspect many riders would gladly trade a bit of top speed for more versatility off road. Having said that, the engine pulls so well at low revs that the Husky chugged happily through some of the trickiest trails that Surrey and Hampshire could offer, including a 'clean' climb up the classic trials section of Ridgeway steps.

In Deep Water

Actually there was one obstacle that the 610E objected to: water. There's a trail just north of Alton which, thanks to the softness of the terrain, combined with the attentions of the four-wheel drive brigade, is almost always waterlogged for most of its length, seat-high in several places. All the other bikes chugged through okay, but the Husky conked out several times. A look at the airbox revealed the reason - the only intake is at the bottom of the box, which is only just above the top of the crankcase, so as soon the water reaches this point, the engine is struggling to breathe. Why there isn't an intake at the top, goodness only knows, but a solution might be to drill your own to avoid this happening.

There was one other obstacle we encountered on the trail which had unexpected consequences. Riding gently around the outside of a deceptively slippery corner I managed to lose the front end completely on the ice-like surface, and was obliged to dismount rather hastily. The Husky slid gently into the fence alongside and came to an abrupt halt on its side. When I picked it up I was astonished to discover that the front mudguard had broken clean in two. Okay, it had slid right into the fence post, but my XR600's mudguard has hit countless obstacles with twice the force without ever doing more than twisting in protest. Apparently the 'guard is common to all the Husky range and I'm not the first person to break one, though sensibly the gussetting has already been re-designed on the latest models.

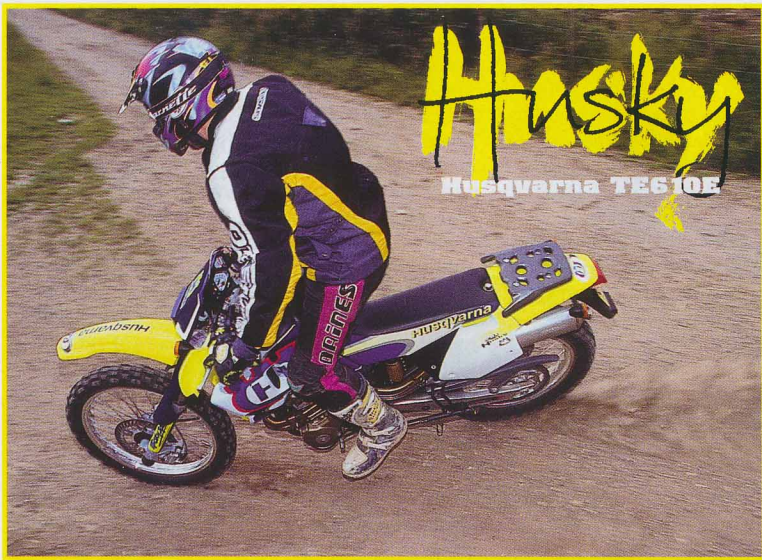
Other Stuff

Anyway, the neat rack came in handy for carrying the broken-off front half of

the mudguard back home, and comfortably carried a lot more weight when I subsequently loaded it up with a heavy rucksack and U-lock. The broken guard did at least remove one potential cause of the high speed weave for the ride home. I also pumped the tyres up to a more tarmac-friendly 20psi. The result was simply to make the weave start at a higher speed - at 140-145kmh rather than 130-140 - a reduction in the symptoms rather than getting to the root cause, although there was enough improvement to make the bike feel even better on twisty tarmac and I had an absolute ball thrapping the bike round some of my favourite corners at ridiculous angles of lean at anything up to an indicated 80mph. And in contrast to its rather wobbly feel at high speed on the motorway, the Husky felt absolutely fantastic on the twisty roads between the trails. With that low seat and tall gearing it feels spot on for tarmac use. The Brembo brakes are excellent too, and it would be a brave or foolhardy rider who needed more in terms of stopping power.

Deep water caused the TE to miss the occasional beat, but we reckon that could easily be cured.





When I repaired the broken front mudguard the next day it made absolutely no difference to the high speed handling, but a further increase in tyre pressures, to 28psi at both ends improved things further. Using the 'lean well forward and take one hand off the bars' technique I managed to get the 610E to an indicated 172kmh - about 107mph, which, even allowing for the optimism of Italian speedos, is faster than a lot of more road-oriented trailies - just about as fast as a Funduro in fact, though the Husky felt nowhere near as comfy of course.

Niggles

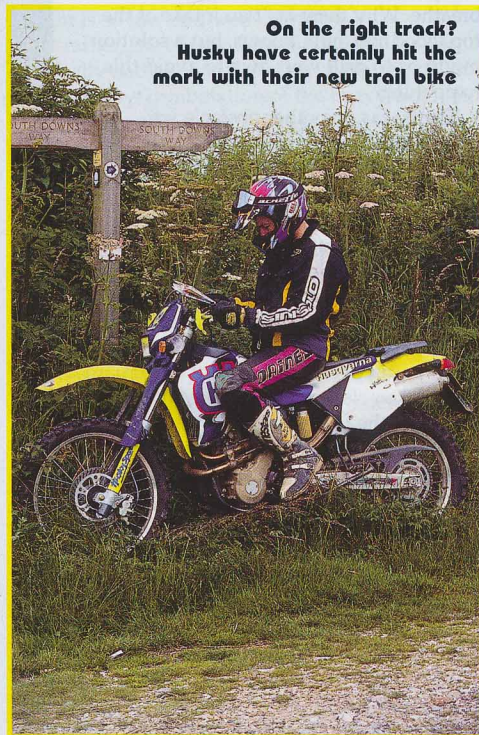
Slightly less impressive was the constant dripping from the carb overflow which we noticed at our lunchtime break. bizzarely, this persisted even with the petrol tap turned to 'off' and only stopped when I zip-tied the overflow pipe to the top frame tube. It dawned on me that this meant the 'reserve' position was in fact completely redundant and this was confirmed when I filled up the tank. It took 9.2 litres - its entire claimed capacity - even though I'd only been running in the normal 'on' position. Later, as an experiment, I tried riding with the tap switched to 'off' and the Husky continued to chug away merrily for mile after mile without so much as a cough or splutter! Fortunately there's also a petrol warning light which comes on after about 100kms, when there's still about half a gallon left in the tank so you shouldn't run out of gas unexpectedly.

The neutral warning light is rather less reliable than the fuel light however, coming on more often than not when the bike is still in gear - the

sort of foible that can only be described as 'typically Italian'. Still, at least the idiot lights are visible in daylight, unlike those on a lot of Italian bikes although the strange blue colour of the speedo markings makes them hard to read after dark.

The neutral warning light is actually quite important because the Husky proved reluctant to start on the button while in gear with the clutch pulled in - I think I managed

it just once in maybe a hundred starts. No problem on terra firma, but not so clever if (like the Ed in the Pencarreg Rally) you should find yourself in a big hurry stalled in a ditch in 4th gear. The Husey's button got him out of trouble a treat



**On the right track?
Husky have certainly hit the
mark with their new trail bike**

in that situation, but the Husky's sure wouldn't have. The 610E also won't start unless the throttle is shut completely and even then it churns with what sounds like a real reluctance, despite the superbike-sized battery. It's nothing like as willing as the electric feet on KTMs or Husabergs, let alone any Jap bike you care to mention and I suspect that the starter motor gearing is a little high. It did actually go on strike one morning, which gave me a chance to use the kick-starter. It worked okay, but only once I'd pivoted my foot out at an awkward angle to avoid fouling the pillion rest and it's cunningly placed helmet holder. The kick start really needs to swing out further to clear them both, and if you don't need to carry a pillion you might prefer to remove these items and save a bit of weight at the same time.

We were planning to give the Husky a thrashing on the dyno, but decided to spare it in deference to what appeared to be a tiny head-gasket oil weep, but I would guess from the feel of it and the high top speed that the Husky was putting out at least 35bhp at the rear wheel (same as an XR600R) if not a little more. It loosened up noticeably in the course of the test period, though it still had under 1000kms on the clock when we handed it back to the importers.

Conclusion

There are very few electric-start trail bikes available which offer the Husky's combination of off-road ability and on-road speed and handling. Okay, a Husaberg is as powerful and quite a bit lighter, but it's more expensive, more temperamental and in fairness not a true dual purpose bike like the TE-E. The KTM 620EGSE runs it close but feels a lot bigger and heavier to ride (even though it isn't). The KTM also feels a lot more vibey despite its so-called balancer and costs more to boot. Suzuki's DR650 probably comes closest of all, being smoother and more civilised and nearly as capable off-road - and the DR was even cheaper. But in their infinite wisdom, Suzuki GB elected not to import it any more! Likewise Kawasaki's KLX650 which feels sweet on the road, but is no match for the Husky off it.

And besides, the Husky's looks and name definitely offer more street-cred than most of the Japanese opposition. The only doubts are over its very newness combined with those typically Italian niggles. Will that nice new engine prove to be as reliable as a KTM, or in fact as maintenance-heavy as a desmo Ducati? Only time will tell.

And then there's that high-speed weave. Legal

Second Opinion - Si Melber

Husky have almost hit the nail on the head with their new TE-E. It might be soft and front-heavy compared to an enduro thumper, but I reckon plenty of trail riders will appreciate the Husky's low seat, 'leccy boot and conservative manners - particularly those looking for a road-based machine first and foremost. Apart from superb stability on the roads (at all but top speed), the 'E' is a bike that can hustle down a green lane with aplomb providing it's not too rutted. It's the sort of bike that will appeal to those people who want a versatile trail bike; one that can be toured, scratched, commuted, rallied and trailed. It may lack off-road performance compared to the enduro TE, but it's altogether more civilised and practical to live with in a day-to-day capacity. And it feels as if it would make a killer Cambrian rally bike.

There are however still a few question marks hanging over the bike. The high speed stability problem may require nothing more than a change of tyres, or it might be a little harder to eliminate. And niggling faults (like the oil weep and leaky fuel overflow) will also need to be ironed out by the Husqvarna factory if they are to attract a new range of customers to their marque.

And why shouldn't they be attracted? I can think of a lot of riders who will find that Husky badge too tempting an alternative to resist compared to some of the opposition.

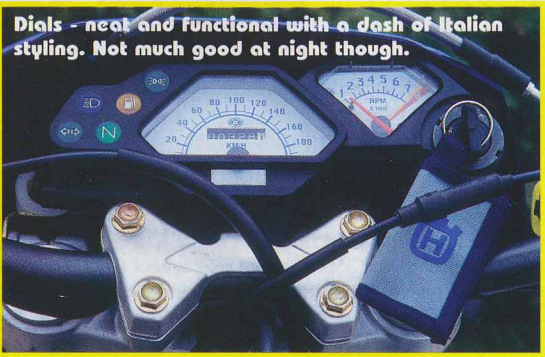
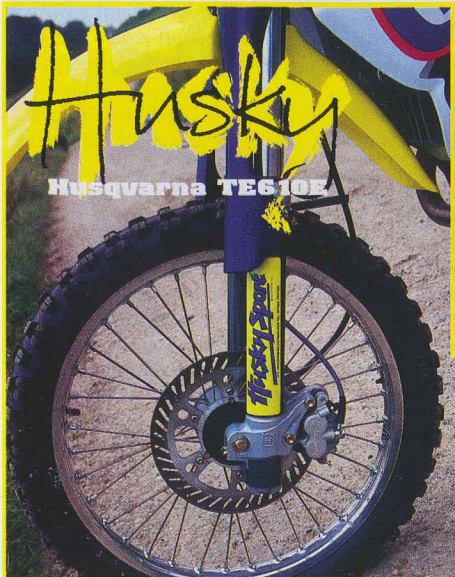
For now though, the jury is still out as to whether the Husky TE610E is a good large capacity trailie, but one thing's for sure - it's certainly got the makings of one. **SM**



**Husky felt at home on
the roads, in between
the trails we rode**

considerations aside, I don't think there's much point in having a 100mph bike if you don't feel safe to take it above 80. Thanks to the improvement effected by those higher tyre pressures I think I could cope with the Husky's flat-out friskiness, but as tested, it's definitely not for the fainthearted. A few suspension tweaks, or possibly a change of tyres, might improve things further. Of course on balance, there are very few bikes with the Husky's sort of off-road ability which can even go that fast, and for many riders

(who don't require 100mph speeds), the TE-E will comfortably satisfy their demands?
 All in all then the Husky would make a pretty good replacement for my XR600 - almost as capable off-road and better on it, with the all-important plus of that electric foot. The Husky's certainly competitively priced at £4,995. (It was originally going to cost over £6K but thanks to the strong pound we've got ourselves a bargain). A real trail bike in the truest sense then, and one that (niggles excepted), I'd be happy to own.

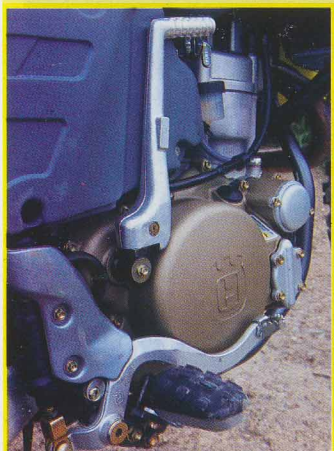


Dials - neat and functional with a dash of Italian styling. Not much good at night though.

Left: 45mm Marzocchis support a shiny new mudguard. Blez managed to snap the old one clean off within five minutes of hitting the trail.



Below: See those footpeg rubbers? You won't for long. Airbox intake sited just above crankcase which seems needlessly low - particularly in deep water.



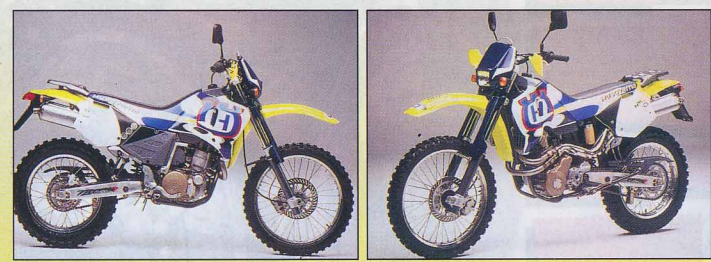
Above: Right hand side helmet lock and rear peg foul your boot when using the kickstarter. I'd take them off if it was mine - but then again with electric start, I probably wouldn't use the kickstarter either...

Above: Traditional Husky twin pipe arrangement conceals twin catalyts. Rear rack (shaped like the Husky logo) doubles as pillion grab handles and shows clever design combining function with form.

**Great Performance Great Engineering
 Fantastic Value Reliable & Fun
 Great People to do business with...**

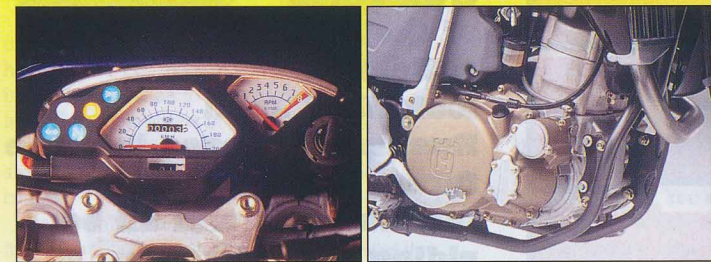
Husky Sport

Motorcycles & Accessories Specialist



£4,995

**MONNIER-HONDA
 SINISALO**



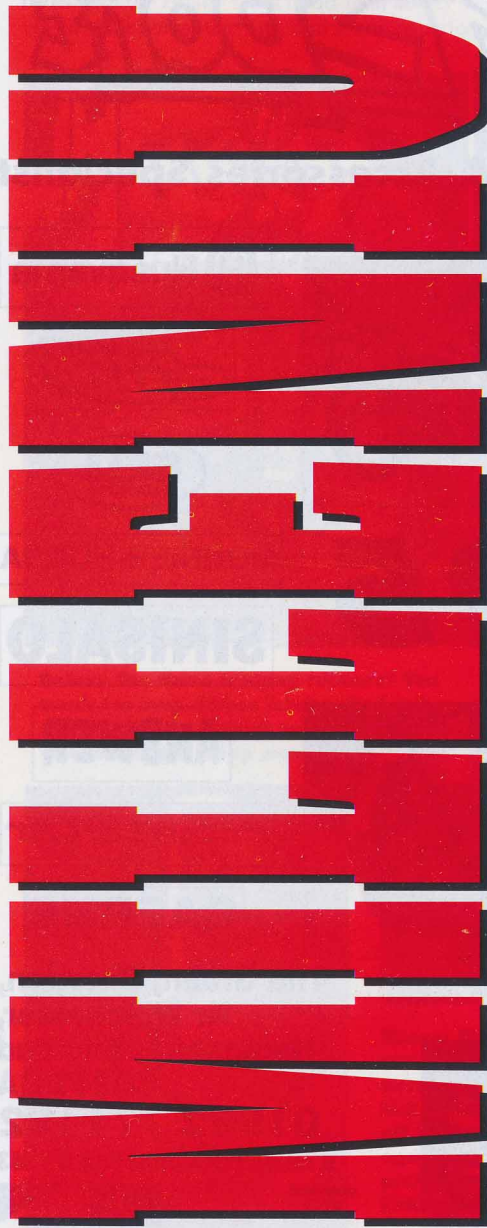
**ANSWER
 AlpineStar
 GAERNE**



**The Green, Cheriton,
 Nr Winchester,
 Hampshire, England
 SO24 0QA
 01962 771122
 6 miles from Junction 9 - M3**



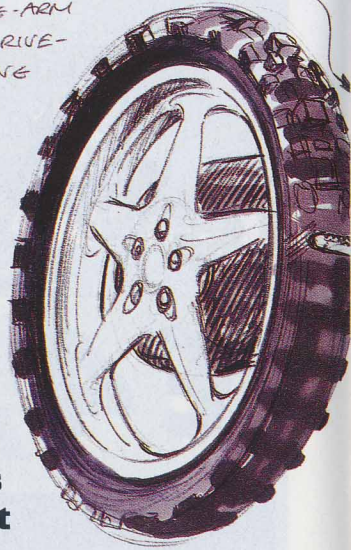
100 ON/OFF ROAD MODELS IN STOCK



Great Performance

TWIN SILENCERS
IN FORE-SHORTENED
TAIL SECTION

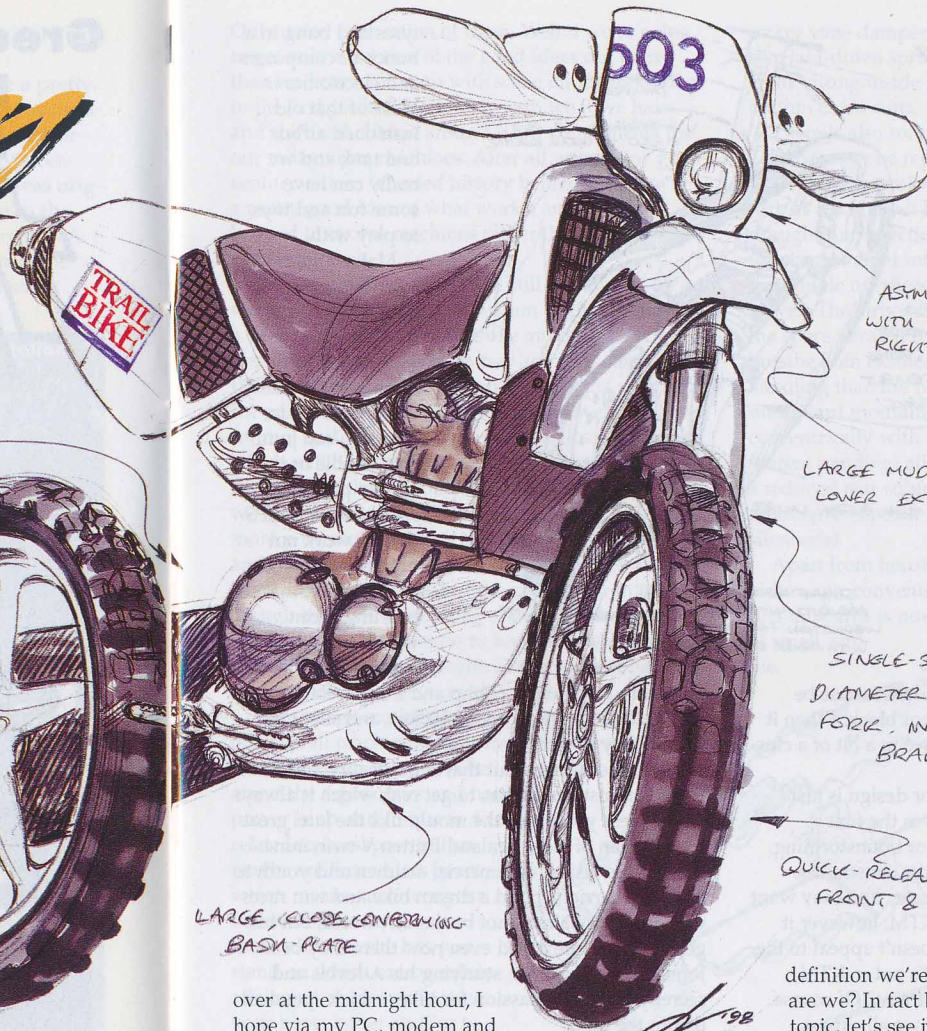
SINGLE-SIDED
C.F.R.P. SWING-ARM
CONTAINING DRIVE-
CHAIN & SPRING



**What
will the
trail bikes
of the next
millenium
look like? John
Rushworth gazes into the
future and tries to imag-
ine what we will all be
riding next century...**

Date: 31 December 1999
Time: 23:59:59

The privileged few that live the extra second to see in a new millennium have opportunity galore. Theirs is the future. Another chapter in the complex history of design and manufacturing of vehicles for transport and - of course - pleasure. While many revellers (and computers for that matter) are busy falling



ASYMMETRICAL FRONT
WITH RADIATOR ON
RIGHT HAND SIDE

LARGE MUDGUARD WITH
LOWER EXTENSION

SINGLE-SIDED, LARGE-
DIAMETER TELESCOPIC
FORK. IN-BOARD SINK
BRAKE DISC

QUICK-RELEASE WHEELS
FRONT & REAR

LARGE, CLOSE CONFORMING
BASIS PLATE

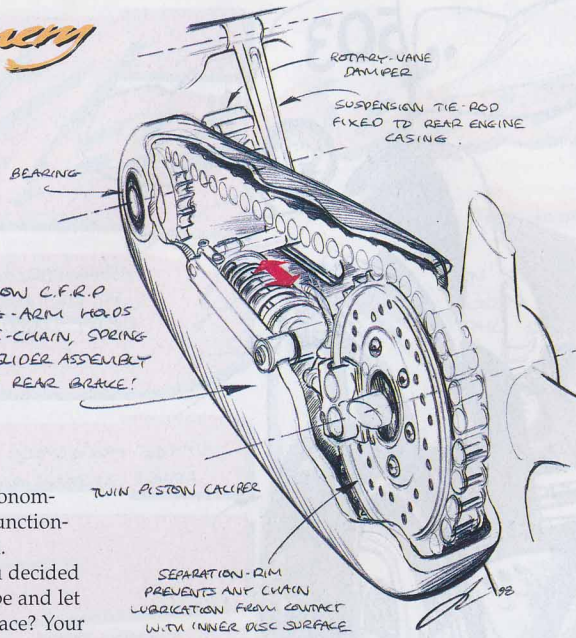
over at the midnight hour, I hope via my PC, modem and internet connection to have hacked into all the computers of the main motorcycle manufacturers to try and influence the shape and design of trail and enduro bikes yet to come.

Redesigning the dirtbikes of the next few decades may be only a pipe-dream, but nevertheless it makes for an interesting and topical discussion. For instance what would you do given a digitally blank screen? Would you go for looks or function, practical or performance-oriented, radical or retro? Design that erred on the conservative, or something so advanced the likes of which has not yet even been dreamt about?

Yet design which is dreamt about, is not necessarily what comes to be produced. But of course we're not in the business of producing our dreams - merely imagining them. This is a magazine article and by

definition we're not constrained in that way - or are we? In fact before we go on to discuss this topic, let's see just how free thinking you are?

Imagine that steel pipe 8" long that is sunk 4" into solid concrete inside a bare room. The inside diameter of the pipe is 0.06" larger than the diameter of the ping-pong ball (1.5") that has been dropped inside the pipe. You along with five others in the room have the following 'tools' at your disposal: 100 feet of throttle cable, a ballpeen hammer, a chisel, a box of Weetabix, a file, a wire coat hanger, a 6" adjustable wrench and a light bulb - plus of course yourselves and your combined intellect. Now think of as many ways as you can to get the ball out without damaging the ball, pipe or floor. Pay attention to how you think about the problem. Do you notice anything? Have you come up with objections or questions? No doubt you have and so it is with design. By the very nature of motorcycle design we limit ourselves along the way from concept to production machine. Limits may fall into any number



HOLLOW C.F.R.P SWING-ARM HEADS DRIVE-CHAIN SPRING AND SLIDER ASSEMBLY AND REAR BRAKE!

TWIN PISTON CALIPER

SEPARATION-RIM PREVENTS ANY CHAIN LUBRICATION FROM CONTACT W/TA INNER DISC SURFACE

of categories such as economic, material, aesthetic, functional constraints and so on.

So, how many of you decided simply to pee in the pipe and let the ball float to the surface? Your reluctance to put your excess millennium fluids to good use could in this case be described as a cultural constraint or block. When it comes to the future of dirt bikes we're a bit of a closet society.

Of course freeing your mind for design is just what engineers and designers do in the first instance. It's called blockbusting or brainstorming. It's not till later that we build in the constraints, many of which are simply pragmatic. You may want a puce green pink polka-dotted KTM, however it won't sell because first of all it doesn't appeal to the majority of riders and secondly it's not in KTM orange. A corporate identity constraint? Of course.

Yet as the millennium beckons we all expect something more than a colour change. So how about programmable heat affected paint that changes colour as we ride? A bit like those Global Hypercolour T-shirts a few years back. In fact forget that, we don't even want an engine that produces heat so let's insulate it so more of that fuel energy is converted to usable power at the back wheel, might as well make the front wheel driven too. New material technologies allow that sort of innovation. Fluid drive? Well if we are going that far we might as well ditch the internal combustion engine and gearbox and rely on a beautifully torquey electric motor run on lightweight, powerful, re-chargeable batteries. In fact we may as well have our concept bike driven by cold fusion to get the ultimate in sustainable power. Throw in a fluid or rim driven drive-train and active suspension, single sided fork and swingarm with nice QD wheels, puncture-proof

tyres and bung in a bunch of computers and electronics in place of that old fashioned airbox and tank and we really can have some fun and toys to play with.

Make your bike learn from you as you ride, download the data at home and plug it into your virtual reality headset to figure how you can jump that double or just simply plot your route from the GPS data to work out how on earth you ended up on that bowling green which was supposed to be a legal

trail. Let's have about 60bhp and a super flat torque curve, 200lbs weight (under 100kg), and silent too - sound okay to you?

Well it does to me but that is not reality and that's where brainstorming has to get real, which it always does unless you break the mould like the late, great John Britten of New Zealand Britten V-twin fame. He had the vision, commercial acumen and youth to push the barriers, build a dream bike and win races with it. Daytona may not be the dirt world, but his genius overcame it and even now there may be a John Britten out there, studying his A-levels and secretly nursing a passion for bikes which spend all day in the mud.

Of course John Britten was only one man and not a corporation like Honda (who build the majority of bikes we come to ride), so inevitably what we get in the day to day world is design and safety by committee, nay committees. Don't forget the Euro legislators too. If they have their way we are in for type approval, tamperless bikes with end of life compulsory disposal orders. Not a pretty thought I can tell you.

However assuming some compromise to the environmental impact can be agreed, what we'll end up with in ten to 20 years time is an evolved yet more capable version of what we have already. Disappointed? Well that's normal amongst innovators. Next time you visit the library (when you're working on your local rights of way), just take a look at the patents CD ROM and see just how many bright ideas actually make it into full production.

Only a tiny proportion of them. Well if we're going to get only a fraction of the good ideas out there then we better come up with some damn good ideas in the first place. So let's start with what we have and shift and change around a few components for our millennium machines. After all we've now got a century of two wheeled history behind us so we've a pretty good idea of what works, and we've learned to evolve machines rather than build white elephants.

In ten to 15 years time we'll still be running on a variant of the internal combustion engine. It may be a two, four or even a five stroke motor (a sort of clean-burn cross between a two and four stroke) but that's as radical as the powerplant will get save for the adoption of better fuel mixture delivery in the form of fuel injection, and exhaust gas scavenging which will be digitally sampled and controlled. As fuels, materials and computing technology evolve we're going to end up with slightly lighter and more powerful machines together with better fuel and noise efficiency. Look at the way power outputs have progressed in the last ten years. Bear in mind though that as we're talking about dirtbikes here we'll need to compromise to keep them simple, reliable, robust and lightweight. Don't you just hate compromise!

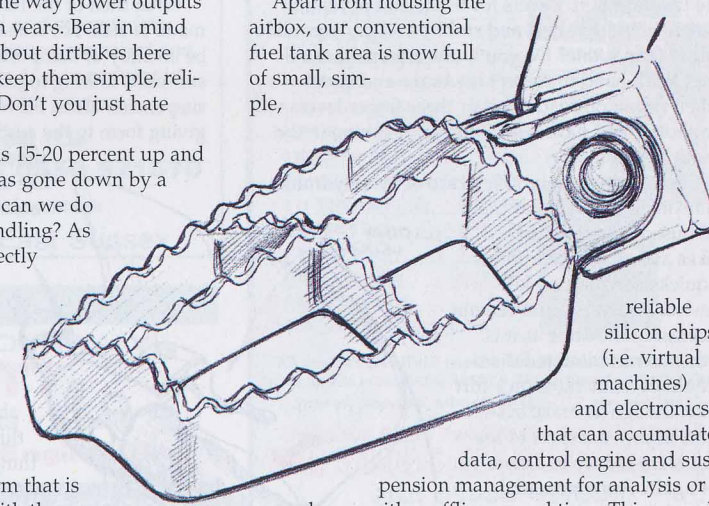
So now our motive power is 15-20 percent up and our overall machine weight has gone down by a commensurate amount, what can we do about the ergonomics and handling? As power is up and torque is directly related to horsepower then maybe we'll need less gears which means narrower gearboxes. That in turn means more room for the bits you stand on which can be subtly re-shaped to accommodate your boots better and/or to make room for a rear swingarm that is single sided and concentric with the gearbox sprocket. Constant chain tension results and although that is not new it may now well begin to make production. Chain? Yes, it'll still be there although improved in longevity, and perhaps sealed into a chaincase (with a QD service hatch) so that it doesn't get infested with crud. Chains are still the most efficient way to transmit power and maybe the new concentric rear end will allow a nicely shaped carbon-fibre swingarm that has the chain running inside it with the composite rear wheel and hub quickly detachable.

Hopefully tubes and spokes as we know them now will have disappeared as will the desire to have all those seemingly complex linkages for rising rate suspension. Maybe the rear damping will be taken care of in the concentric gearbox sprocket hub by a

rotary vane damper leaving just a simple progressive laid-down spring operated by a tie rod and bell crank sitting inside the swingarm between top and bottom chain runs.

There is also room where the airbox used to be. That has now be replaced by the fuel tank (keeping the weight down low where we want it) and the carb as we know it has disappeared and a down-draught fuel injection body sits atop of the motor injecting straight into the top of the heads between the double overhead camshafts which operate seven valves. The airbox has now been incorporated into the space vacated by the fuel tank where it will breathe both cleaner air and have less of an effect on handling than the fuel did up there. A new rear mudguard moulding arrangement which moves concentrically with the rear wheel movement (patent pending) allows more scope for seating and a reduced rear subframe which in fact is now a modular composite seat and shroud for the silencer(s).

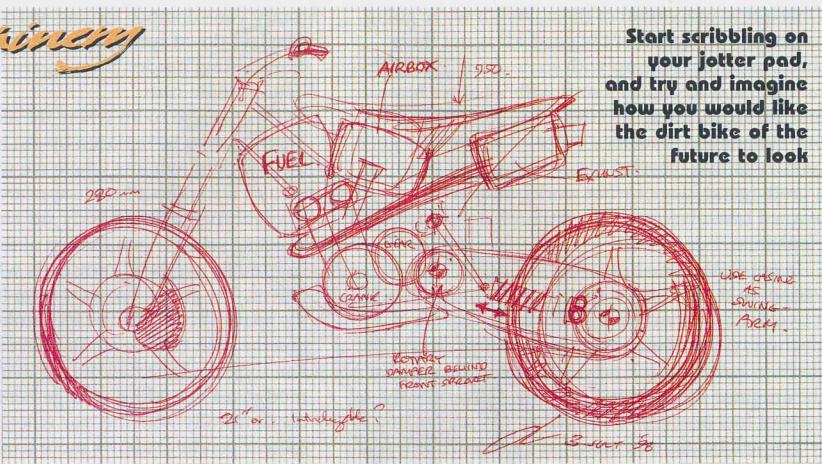
Apart from housing the airbox, our conventional fuel tank area is now full of small, simple,



reliable silicon chips (i.e. virtual machines) and electronics that can accumulate data, control engine and suspension management for analysis or change, either offline or real time. This may all sound complex yet we've learned to trust CDI units over points so why not chips where mechanical devices would have been? Virtual machines and sensors are just smart chips and input/output devices that can do what complex and bulky mechanics may have done in the past, yet they can be neatly housed and waterproofed in the 'chip tank' so pre-silicon age riders don't need to see or worry about them.

That leaves us the front end and machine controls. Maybe again a single sided, oval shaped fork, inputting braking forces into them so controlling dive, although some amount of dive will still be desirable on a dirt bike so telescopic forks may not die altogether, although they would be far more capable and tuneable than those we have today.

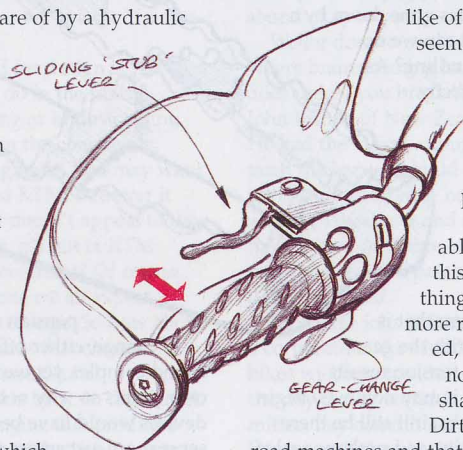
MACHINERY



Start scribbling on your jotter pad, and try and imagine how you would like the dirt bike of the future to look

Control cables as we know them would disappear and throttle control would be by potentiometer for the fuel injection. Levers for brake and hydraulic clutch would be short and stubby and perhaps slide rather than rotate? Do you know anyone that still uses a full hand to control the brake and clutch when riding off road? Two or three finger levers will be shorter and have less chance of breaking in the result of a fall.

Gearshifting can be taken care of by a hydraulic indexing device similar to that used on mountain bikes and could incorporate a quickshift/ignition kill device. Braking would remain ostensibly the same as it is today as rim mounted discs would be vulnerable on a dirt bike, though as brake systems improve, expect to see disc sizes reduce in diameter again. Some potential though exists with single sided forks/swingarm for inboard discs, with the rear combining the disc with the sprocket on a sliding caliper which could accommodate differing sprocket sizes. The chain would run dry with just its O-ring sealed grease for lubrication and as it would be shielded from the elements anyway, that would prove sufficient and keep any lubrication out of the brake caliper where it wouldn't be welcome. Whatever brakes we're using, they'll be more powerful, possibly incorporating a force feedback mechanism and/or anti lock that directly relates to the amount of grip available at the wheels. As the levers push back against your inputted braking force you'll know exactly where the loss of traction is.



and how much braking force can be applied to give maximum retardation.

What then of the frame? That I'm sure will not be made of steel nor constructed as a single unit. It will be an alloy or composite and would be composed of sub-units linking together with engine castings and suspension arms. Flowing lines and complex shapes giving form to the aesthetic mish mash of former times. Proper sump guards the like of which manufacturers never seem to fit would be integrated into engine case design with no gaps for that 20lbs of mud and a shock absorbing material built in to protect our ritzy new power unit.

Does all this sound palatable or even probable? Well this is the paper world and anything goes. We could be way more radical, as previously indicated, yet in all probability we'll not even get any of the above shapes and technologies.

Dirtbikes are a poor relation to road machines and that equates to smaller R&D budgets together with lower capital costs i.e. bikes built to budgets for a minority. So if you want to see something different then now is the time to make noises before the legislators and corporate conglomerates decide our millennium fate.

Prepare for that minute before midnight then, and as the philosopher William James said 'A new idea is first condemned as trivial, until finally, it becomes what everybody knows'. Who knows? Maybe you are shaping the future of dirtbikes right now, just by letting your imagination run riot while reading this article...



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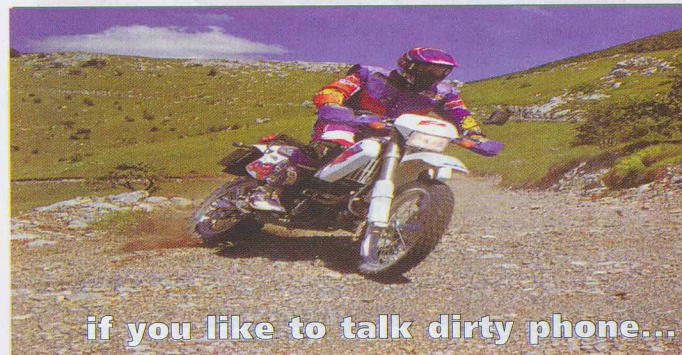
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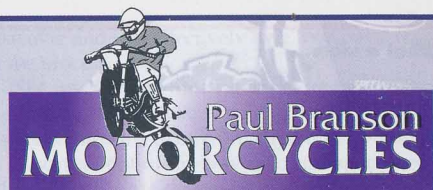
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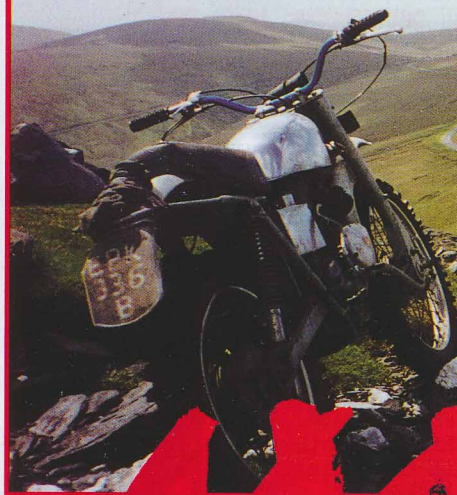
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What a view...



Story & pics: Paul 'out of focus' Blezard



The History Man

I made my first pilgrimage to the Isle of Man TT back in 1975 when I was but a long haired, bike-mad, despatch riding teenager with a café racer Honda CB450 'Black Bomber'. At the time I had no knowledge of the joys of dirt digging and was still fantasising about being the next Mike Hailwood.

I well remember coming ashore to be confronted by bikes, bikes and more bikes, as far as the eye could see. Parked at the roadside, on the pavements and roaring up and down. Every bike I had ever dreamed of or heard about was right there on Douglas seafront. Then came the shock of watching my first TT race from the bottom of Bray Hill - the absolutely unbelievable speed at which the riders flashed past the stone walls, kerbs and lamp-posts and the intoxicating smell of Castrol 'R'. I scared myself to death riding around the unforgiving 37 mile public road circuit at about half racing speed and saw the film Emmanuelle in the Douglas flea pit. There were wild nights in the pubs and at the chalet

which I shared with a mad bunch of fellow Despatch riders. Mona's Isle was undoubtedly motorcycling's Mecca and I loved every minute of it.

By the time I returned to the TT ten years later I was the proud owner of an XL500S and thanks to the late great Dave Taylor, my whole perception of Ellan Vannin changed when I spent a day trail riding with him and his mates. It was suddenly apparent to me that if you could only have one bike at the TT, it had to be a big single trailie - fast enough to have fun on the road embarrassing wallies on sports bikes, but light enough to double your grin factor by taking to the dirt.

Fly By Night

But in 1994, with the help of the Taylor family once more, I hit on the perfect formula for TT Nirvana - get your mates to take your bike over in a truck and fly direct from London. The total shared cost is actually less than taking yourself and a

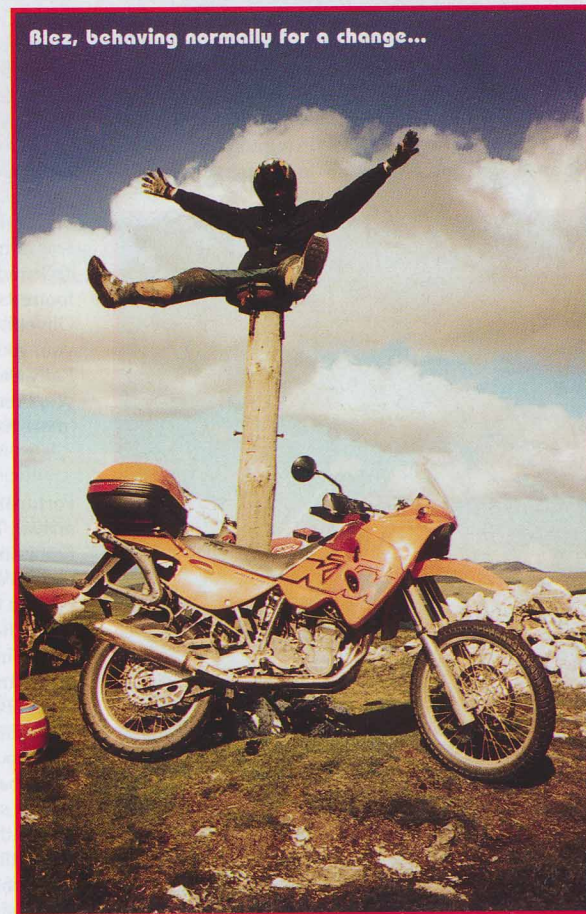
bike over and you effectively save two days' travel in the process.

1994 was the first time I spent more time trail riding (on my XR600) than watching the racing, but I also combined the two. With a trail bike you can get to all sorts of out-of-the-way spectator spots even when the roads are closed and unlike those who arrive early on road bikes, you're not trapped there all day. In fact by combining the track underpass at Braddan Bridge with the right selection of trails, you can get to every section of the 37 mile course on either side of the circuit.

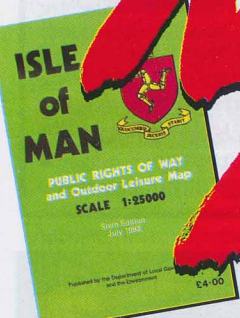
I remember Dave Taylor taking us to a café on the Sulby straight via a trail and alleyway. It's normally completely cut off once the racing starts, but we were able to shelter from a sudden downpour and have a cup of tea while TT heroes splashed past the windows at breakneck speeds, then leave when the rain stopped while the roads were still closed.

By 1994 the number of trail riders at TT week had definitely grown dramatically compared to '86 - I

Blez, behaving normally for a change...



MAD MAN



(Beyond the Blunder Zone)

The Isle of Man is not just the home of the world's most famous road race. For those of a dirty persuasion, there's a whole series of green lanes to be tackled during TT week, while watching some of the racing. Paul Blezard packed his waterproofs and saddled up a KTM Adventure for a slice of Island life...

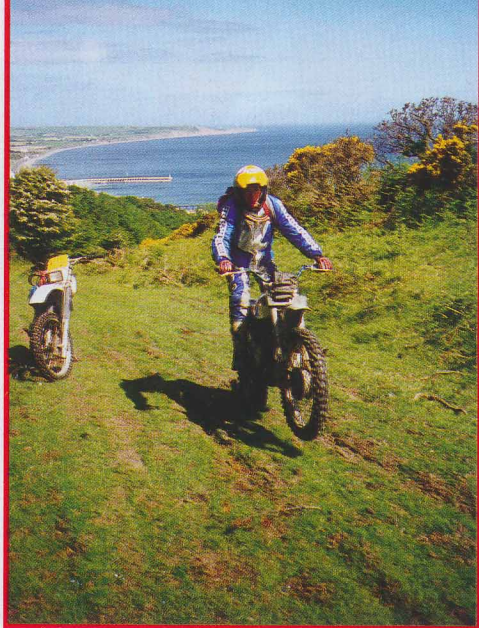
saw more XR600s in one day on the Island than I had in the whole of the previous year in England. Dave Taylor's group of mates from the Dartford area was at least a dozen strong, and they used to meet up with people from all over the country who they only ever saw in the Isle of Man. Sometimes they'd ride with them, sometimes just swap information about different trails or tips and tweaks on bikes. The whole atmosphere during TT week is wonderfully relaxed and biker-friendly and the natives positively enjoy the two-wheeled invasion.

Happy Holidays...

So, fast forward to 1998 and my annual dilemma - to TT or not to TT? This year the temptation was too strong to resist: the Taylor lads were going in a massive seven-tonner with a whole tribe of trail riders and another mate of mine had hired a house in Port Erin and could put me up for the duration. My lady friend was keen to get away for a few days and best of all, the KTM Adventure I tested lasted August was sitting idle at Windy Corner, just waiting for me to ride it.

It wouldn't have been worth going if we hadn't flown because we couldn't get away from the Metrolops until the Wednesday of TT week. Liz was convinced we were going to miss the Manx Airlines plane because we didn't leave Hampton till 10.35 for an 11.45 flight from Luton but despite torrential

The late, great Dave Taylor first introduced Blez to the joys of the Isle of Man trails



Blez with Liz, affectionately known as ballast...

rain on the M25 her fully-laden F650 got us there in 40 minutes, and we parked the Funduro right opposite the main terminal for free, with several minutes to spare. By 1.30 we were watching the rain-reduced Junior TT race at Union Mills, thanks to being met at Castletown by my mate Ian with his wife's car.

There were only about half a dozen people watching from that particular TT vantage point, but one of them had a DR650 and as I was admiring the neat home-made rack and cleverly lowered pillion footrests, the owner, Roberto Olivetti, sauntered over and said, 'Last time I saw you, you'd just blasted past me in the Cambrian Rally then gone straight over the handlebars'. Ah yes, I remembered it well. A Melber-like case of 'more haste, less speed'. What a small world!

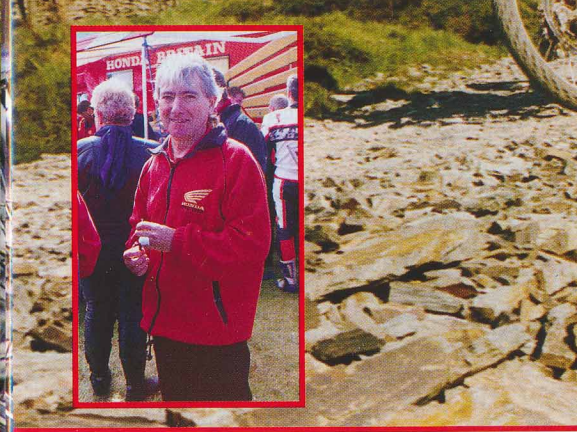
Happenings...

Fortunately, better weather coincided with our arrival. The next day, Thursday, was practically the first rain-free day since the start of the festival fortnight. We started by getting a lift over to Douglas to pick up the big KTM from the Taylor boys' luxury digs. They'd managed to squeeze 12 bikes and ten blokes in their 'works' truck so even with all the diesel and the ferry crossing the whole trip only cost them £100 each. Compare that with £130 for a bike and rider just for the ferry crossing, plus petrol to Liverpool and back. (For seating, they had two sofas in the back!)

First stop was Laxey for Honda's 50th anniversary gathering where a host of celebrity riders and interesting machines were on display, including some immaculate trailies - a brace of very early XL250 singles and a rare CL250 - one of the first



MAD
MANX



proper trail bikes ever fitted with electric start.

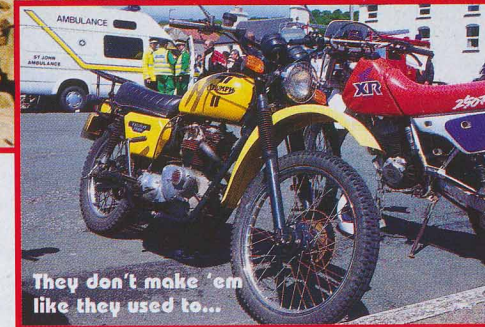
One of the highlights of the Laxey gathering was the show put on by the Purple Helmets, the daft display team who use modified C90s for all sorts of unlikely stunts. One of their machines had obviously been doing some serious dirt digging because it was covered in mud. Their best stunt was the ultimate stoppie - a complete 360 degree rollover (thanks to a set of semi-circular roll bars) - in which the bike finishes up back on its wheels, still moving.

Apart from all the owners' clubs get together, ride outs and vintage rallies there's a host of supporting competitions during TT week in addition to the road races themselves, including several off-road events: arena trials, beach races and even an enduro. We were going to watch the Beach Race in Douglas on Thursday evening, but ended up stranded on the far side of the island with a conked-out Quasar, but that's a whole saga in itself...

Getting Dirty

Friday was the last day of TT competition and we were unexpectedly able to combine watching the Production and Senior races with some serious trail

This pic: Blez trying to look like a hero... and inset Joey Dunlop, zillion times winner at the TT

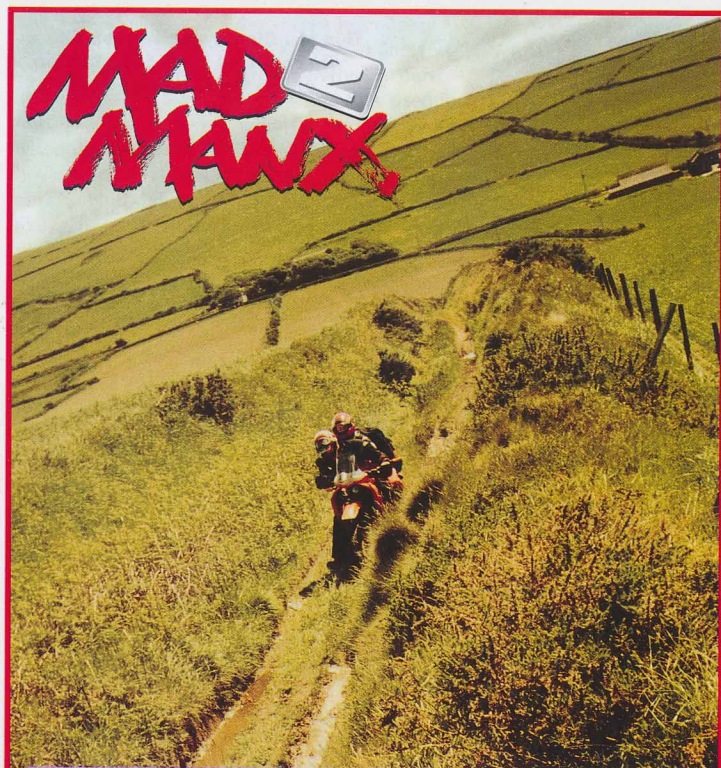


They don't make 'em like they used to...

riding, courtesy of some friends of mine from the South London TRF who we bumped into at the petrol station in Port Erin. The TT's like that, simply because so many enthusiasts of all persuasions are drawn to it like a magnet.

Anyway, turned out they were off to watch the production race from the Cronk y Voddy Straight, but were going to get there via a variety of trails on the south west corner of the island. The only problem was that time was tight - the race started in under an hour and there were five trails to do along the way, so we had to get a move on. Liz (my lady friend), not really knowing what she was letting herself in for, readily agreed to give it a go on the pillion of the Adventure, complete with rucksack on her back and the Givi top box to lean against.

The first trail was one I'd never done before,



Radio TT

If you want to keep in touch with both the racing and all the other myriad bike-based activities that take place in the island during TT fortnight, it's essential to have a TT programme and a transistor radio with medium wave - preferably a Walkman. The latter enables you to keep abreast of the racing even while riding and can lead to some surreal scenarios. I vividly remember struggling to the very top of the mountain peak called Clagh Ouyr, near Ramsey, with Dave and Dave T junior and being rewarded with the most superb view of the Verandah section of the TT course (see archive pics). The riders in the singles race looked like motorised fleas on the circuit far below, but I knew who was where thanks to the running commentary in my lughole so that, a few minutes later, after a precipitous descent to the trackside over rocks and bogs, I could easily identify the bikes flashing by just a few feet away and still knew how the race was progressing.

starting on the outskirts of Port Erin itself and running due north for a couple of miles before joining the A36 coast road. I hadn't ridden a trail two up since I took a Cagiva 900 Elephant for a ride across Wiltshire in '93. Now, with no time for practice or explanations, we launched straight into the first trail and I was immediately fighting to keep the front wheel pointing in the right direction, with Liz bouncing like a sack of potatoes on the back. It was

OK when the trail was smooth and wide, but in some places there were 'slots' only a few inches across which were very hard to aim for with the front wheel floating about a foot either way. Nevertheless, we managed to stay feet up all the way and moved on to trail two, a couple of miles further up the road towards the Keroodhoo Plantation. I recognised this one from '94 and it was no problem due to being mainly rut free gravel and because we took the easier route east where the trail divides, rather than the steep descent to Niarbyl Bay.

The trail from Garey to Sleau Whallian does get pretty steep towards the end, but it had definitely been smoothed out since '94 and fortunately one of the riders reminded me about the opposite camber, 90 degree bend at the start. We ended up drifting round with the back end locked as it was. Liz tried standing up for the steep descent and was mortified when I said I'd hardly noticed the difference, especially since her thigh muscles were killing her within minutes as a result.

We continued past Tynwald Hill, site of the oldest parliament in the world, and on to the next short trail to Laurel Bank to join a back road running parallel with the TT course, before finally turn-

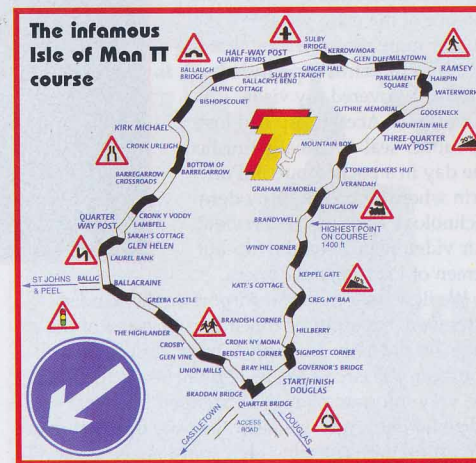
ing east at the prehistoric hump of Manannan's chair. Some road bike riders were just parking up their machines to walk the last few hundred yards to the Cronk-y-Voddy Straight as we dived down the slippery and narrow trail in front of them.

I arrived at the bottom going a trifle faster than I wanted to, lost control in the narrow rut and 'splat' we were off in a crumpled heap, just yards from our objective. Liz wasn't impressed, but there was no

harm done and I persuaded her to remount for the final climb up to the course. The Production race had already started when we got there, but had only been going a few minutes.

Even More Dirt

The Cronk-y-Voddy is one of the fastest parts of the circuit and it was incredible to be so close to the riders as they whistled past only two feet away at 170mph - you could actually feel their 'bow wave' as they sliced through the air. In between races we adjourned to the café which is part of the 'open farm' at the Cronk y Voddy crossroads and on the way, Liz and I practised our two-up trail riding technique. I was delighted to discover that the bike's off-road handling was transformed when she just bunched up closer on the seat and held on to me instead of the bike. That way we were able to act and react as a single unit and for the first time I felt more or less in control of the front wheel.



We watched the nail-biting Senior race from the far end of the Cronk-y-Voddy, which is one of the most breath-taking places I've ever spectated from. The top riders peel in to the downhill bend absolutely flat out, without even shutting off, let alone braking - a truly awesome sight.

With the race over it was time to return to the Island's trails. Next up was the enjoyable climb alongside the Sartfell plantation, a couple of miles east of the Cronk. There are a

whole series of jumps created by drainage ditches where we got the bikes well airborne - then did it all over again for the benefit of both stills and video cameras. Afterwards we paused for a breather and admired the view across to Snaefell, the highest point on the island at 621 metres, from which, on a clear day, you can see England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Not much lower is the 488 metre summit of Slieau Freoghane and that provided the first real challenge of the day. There's a track to the top and I could see the others ahead of us paddling like mad on their XR400s as they bogged down in the peaty mud, so with Liz hanging on for grim death behind I took to the bracken and went for it. The (still original) well-worn Metzeler trail tyre managed to find a lot more grip on the green stuff and to my great satisfaction we stormed to the top, feet up all the way. Yes! We were rewarded with a great view and hearty congratulations all round. Coming down was even trickier, but we just managed to keep shiny side up as the front tyre did its best to slide away from us.

After a brief stop for refreshments in Kirk Michael we squirted further round the TT course to the famous Ballaugh bridge, turned east and took to the trail once more. The climb up through the Ballaugh plantation is short but very steep and rocky at the beginning. It caught me unawares and the monster KTM soon ground to a halt with the rear wheel spinning. Liz valiantly dismounted and walked up the worst couple of hundred yards till



the track smoothed out again. And with the extra 'ballast' removed, I soon got the Adventure going again unassisted.

Emerging from the forest at the top of the climb we turned left (North East) on to a minor road for less than a mile of tarmac before taking the track to the Ballacuberagh Plantation. (Strangely, this is marked as a footpath on the OS map, but has those bike-friendly signposts at both ends meaning it's a right of way). Just before you drop down into the trees the steep track has largely crumbled away and there's a huge ditch on the right which would be very easy to fall into. Liz wisely got off for the worst hundred yards or so before remounting for the rest of the rocky descent which provided us both with more excitement, but we made it down to the Sulby Glen road without mishap.

Time was getting on, so we started to head for home. We turned back down the TT course from Sulby crossroads to the Cronk y Voddy taking care to keep well over to the left, but at Barregarrow we saw the sobering aftermath of an accident where a FireBlade had failed to make it through this notorious natural 'chicane' and accident black spot.

Retracing our steps along all the trails that we'd done in the morning, with an extra one added for good measure, from Manannan's Chair to Knocksharry, we found that at the lowest point of the trail there were a couple of huge puddles where the water was seat high. Liz wisely got off for the third and last time and with some judicious throttle blipping to stop the water going up the low-rise exhausts, the Adventure sailed through with no problem.

By now The big KTM, Liz and I were a pretty good team and we stormed back up the Slieau Whallian climb. On the easy track from Kerroodhoo we were really flying and actually had the big thumper two-wheel drifting in the gravelly bends. We slowed right down for the last trail to Port Erin though, to admire the magnificent view of the Calf of Man and the whole south west corner of the Island as the sun went down. It had been an exhilarating, exhausting day but we'd all come through with flying colours.

Wet, Wet, Wet

In stark contrast to the beautiful weather all day on Friday, Saturday dawned wet and sodden and it stayed that way for most of the day. When the rain finally stopped we went up the road to the Port Erin Hotel to take some fun photos with the other KTM Adventure that was staying there, riding down the hotel steps together and nobody batted an eyelid. Only in the Island would you get that sort of tolerance of bikes. Amazingly, there was yet a third identical orange machine on the Island that week. Remember what I said about seeing every bike

Groups of trail riders can frequently be spotted on the island



you've ever heard of at the TT? Well it's still true!

We went for a quick lap of the Island, joining the TT course at Kirk Michael after filling the Adventure's huge 28 litre tank at Peel. I could certainly feel the difference of the extra weight of fuel but far more disconcerting was the fine mist of petrol vapour that suddenly covered my visor because the Acerbis cap had lost its rubber seal. We finally finished the day in a packed pub in Port Erin where the magic of modern technology enabled us to review our video footage on the flip-out screen of Liz's Digital camera.

We flew back to Luton Airport on the Sunday afternoon, but still had time to watch some of the races on the hairy and very bumpy closed-road Southern 100 circuit at Castletown. Strolling around the very informal paddock I bumped into Paul 'Orrible' Orrit, who is one of that rare breed of men who combines awesome high speed skills on the TT tarmac with an equal love of the dirt. Last time I saw the forty-something Orrit, he'd just fished himself and his bike out of a Welsh whirlpool, having rather dramatically overcooked a corner in the '96 Cambrian Rally. Now here he was campaigning a CBR600 and 900 on the Island, fortunately with a little more success in keeping to the track, which was just as well considering the speeds involved.

I was still listening to the radio coverage of the last race at Castletown as we climbed aboard the flight to Luton. And less than two hours later we were back home tucking into a chicken Jalfrezi. Flying beats the hell out of the ferry every time, believe me. But if you've never been to TT week, you've gotta go, even if you have to ride your DT125 from Cornwall and are seasick all the way from Liverpool to Douglas. I swear you won't regret it, but beware, Ellan Vannin is addictive.

Paul Blezard.

MAD MANX

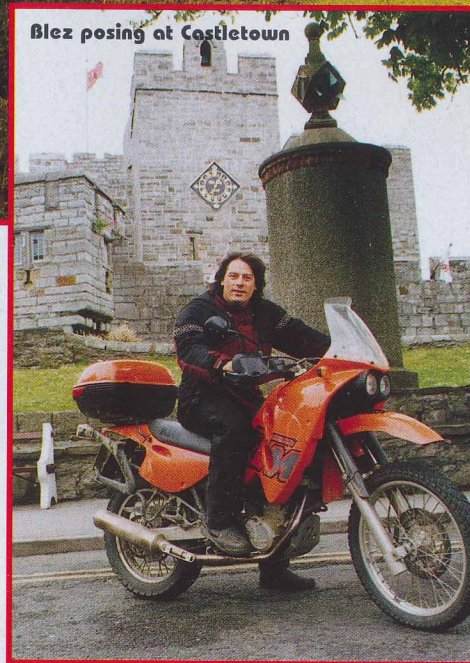


Who would want to watch the racing with scenery like this to ride through...?

Other Isle of Man Happenings...

The June TT is not the only motorcycle festival on the Isle of Man. There is also the Southern 100 in July and the amateur and classic races at the Manx Grand Prix at the end of August, which also coincides with sand racing and the Two-day Trial. The atmosphere is less frenetic at the Manx because the roads are less crowded with loons on sports-bikes and it's arguably more oriented to those of a dirty persuasion. The weather is often better too! There are also scooter, cycling and car rally festivals during the summer. For more information speak to the Isle of Man Department of Tourism on 01642-686766

Blez posing at Castletown



A huge thanks to Gary Taylor, Martin Ward and Ian and Jackie Dunn for superb logistical assistance and hospitality above the call of duty. This feature is dedicated to the memory of Dave Taylor MBE, (1943-1996) who first showed me the Isle of Man trails. The only man ever to wheelie around the TT course, he was one of the Island's most enthusiastic supporters and his ashes were scattered there by his sons Gary and David in 1997.

Way To Go...

Waymarking on the Isle of Man has improved dramatically in recent years, both on the ground and on the maps. My original OS map of the Isle of Man, bought in '86, doesn't show a single RUPP or byway - just the black dotted line for a track. The latest OS map of the island is covered in red byway crosses and on the ground the trails are waymarked with unique 'horse and motorcycle' signs. The best map is actually the 1:25,000 'Public Rights of Way and Outdoor Leisure Map' published by the island's own Department of Local Government and the Environment. It's twice as detailed as the OS Landranger 1:50,000 map (no.95) and has the trails even more clearly marked. Interestingly, it makes no distinction between bridleways and byways, only between 'Public Rights of Way' and 'Footpaths only' [which makes me suspect that motorcycles at least (but not 4X4s) may have the same rights as bicycles and horses on the island, but don't quote me on that. One thing you can be sure of though - if a trail has that motorcycle sign on it, then it's OK to ride it!

KTM

Adventure

Revisited



It was like being reunited with an old friend when I saw the KTM Adventure in the Island again. It was the self-same one I tested last year in TBM28 with 1700 miles on the clock and it still had the original Metzlers fitted. The only difference was the fitting of a set of colour-matched Givi panniers and top box, which was done for last year's NEC show but came in dead handy for our luggage, especially the top box which will take two full face helmets.

Gary Taylor (himself an island racer - he came third at his first attempt in the Manx Grand Prix a few years back), had already ridden the bike up from Leicester and done a lap of the TT and he reckoned it handled better two up than solo. Can't say I agreed. It felt very vibey and top heavy after the F650 and the KTM was much less heavily loaded than the Beemer and lighter to start with. The front brake felt really spongy too and there's no adjustment at the lever. Storming down the mountain section of the TT course two-up the KTM started to feel pretty under-braked, and that was with no luggage. For a bike specifically designed to be a load carrier, a second front disc would be reassuring.

The engine has a wonderfully loping, long-legged feel although with the extra load of a passenger it could have done with a bit more oomph which, I hope, the new 640 'R' version provides. I hope the new engine is a bit smoother too because the ever-present vibration on the 620 is a real downer. It's really weird, but sometimes the vibes were entirely livable-with, such as when blasting down twisty A-roads, but other times they drove me crazy, such as when riding with lightweight boots on a crowded motorway because the left footrest buzzed horribly through the thin soles and 70mph corresponds to 5,000rpm in top, the worst period of vibration. And this is a motor with a so-called balancer! Okay, it's better than the raw 620SC, but nowhere near as smooth as even my old XR600, let alone the silky DR650 Suzuki.

While I'm moaning, the sidestand on that Adventure is without doubt the worst I have ever used. It's so badly angled that if you park it on a bit of a slope, the bike can actually fall over 'backwards'. The new model comes with a centre stand which is great for maintenance, but a pain to use every time you park up, especially on rough ground. KTM's detailing engineers really

do need a kick up the backside on this one. A bike like the Adventure needs a centre stand and a sidestand - not one or the other.

Having said all that, the KTM gets the 'top two-up and all rounder' award for the way its fantastic suspension soaked up the bumps on the Island trails despite being so heavily laden. With its fairing to provide reasonable protection from motorway blasting, this has got to be the very best trail bike available if you actually had to ride the 200-odd miles to get to the Isle of Man ferry and back again, yet still tackle all the best trails Mona's Isle has to offer.

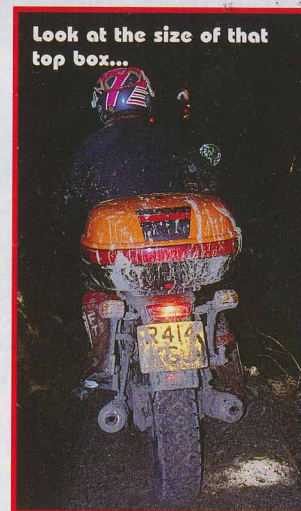
When I got back from the Isle of Man I spent an entertaining day out in Surrey and Sussex with my local TRF group and they were astonished to see me get the Adventure up every trail we tackled, including the vertiginous Butser Hill, despite the handicap of a worn out trail tyre and a big top box! And while they messed about load-

ing their bikes back on trailers in Midhurst, I just pointed the KTM back up the A283 and A3 and was home in Hampton in under an hour.

My last journey was a solo trip down to Beaulieu and Dorset using the extra luggage capacity properly for the first time. The panniers could and should be fitted much closer to the frame because as they are, they make the bike ridiculously wide and act as an air brake which must knock at least 5mph off the top speed, although I did actually manage to hit an indicated 100mph on one long downhill - not bad for a big dual sport single.

Even with the panniers, I still enjoyed a fantastic cross country 60 mile Saturday evening thrash from Beaulieu to Pulham where the KTM's excellent handling was able to shine through the high of CofG and bulky encumbrance. And on the way home the following evening I couldn't resist taking in a few Hampshire trails east of Winchester as the sun disappeared over the horizon.

I am still convinced that the Adventure is probably the best off-the-shelf overland bike you can currently buy and without doubt the most off roadable of the big trailies. I know two happy owners who adore their Adventures, although for me the bike's fantastic versatility is negated by the vibes and the side-stand problem. Here's hoping the new high-exhaust model is better in both respects. Can't wait to try it. **Paul Blezard**



First of the **BREED**



The Yamaha DT250 was the first mainstream, purpose-built trail bike which could truly justify the name. Bill Hawker remembers with fondness his experiences on one and tells how nearly 30 years on, he came to own another...

As American as Coca-Cola', was the way that US Magazine Cycle World described the new Yamaha DT250 at its launch, way back in February 1968. In a world where today, the trail bike is a part of every manufacturer's model range, it is difficult to imagine a time without them. Yet before the DT came along, the nearest thing we got to an on/off road-er was usually a converted road bike.

Specialist European manufacturers had realised for some time that the American market was different. They had what Europe did not have: vast areas of open space with easy access. Woods, trails and deserts beckoned the off roader, but the only serious tackle available were scramblers, and as Cycle World explained at the time, the vast majority of Americans did not want a bike that waved its front wheel in the air all the time. The bike importers had the right idea. They said what the customer wanted was a motorcycle with a comfortable seat, a long wheelbase, and a fat

front tyre. In short, a bike built for off road use which would still be road legal, yet perform well enough to be entered in the occasional off road competition.

One manufacturer - Yamaha - took up the challenge and built a new concept motorcycle designed from the ground up, specifically for the US market, and that bike was the DT250.

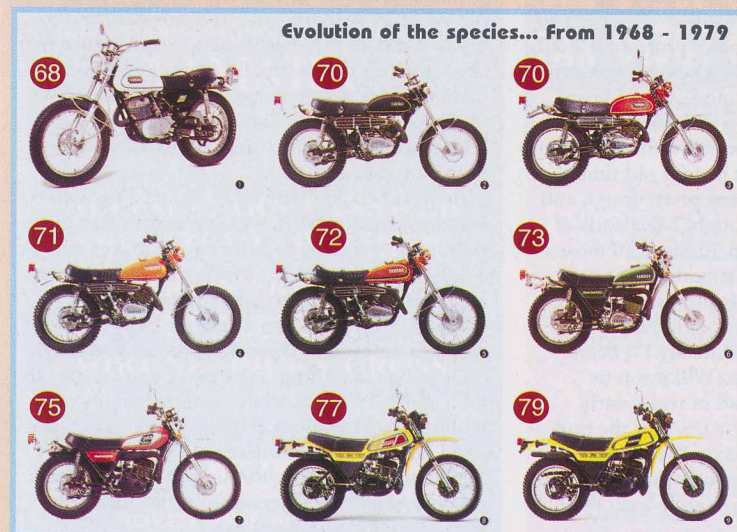
In 1969 I emigrated to Canada and ended up in Vancouver working in a Mercury/Ford car dealership. Like me, some of the other guys working there were bike nuts, and we would spend time downtown ogling the bikes at the local bike dealership - North Vancouver Yamaha

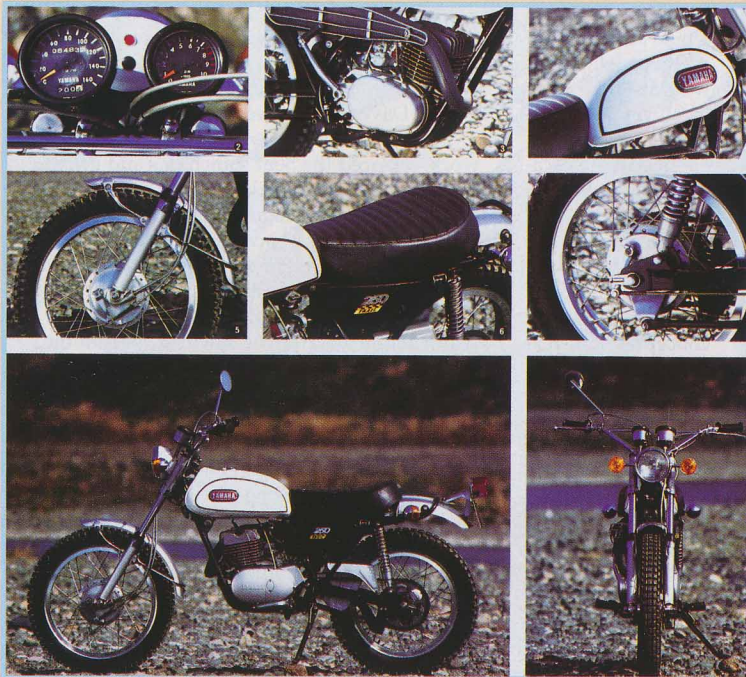
- just chewing the fat and talking bikes with the salesmen. This dealership also happened to sell Triumphs, and on one visit I was looking at a bent 650 Trumpet in the workshop when the owner, Dave Scott, asked if I knew how to fix it?

'Sure.' I replied so I went in one night after work, replaced the bent stanchions and got the motor running again. That led to the offer of a job as a mechanic at a wage far higher than I could earn selling cars, so I accepted the job on the spot, on one condition - that at the weekends I could have use of their Yamaha DT250 demonstrator.

For the next six months I lived the film 'On Any Sunday' - riding the sawdust trails in the woods and mountains outside Vancouver with friends from the bike shop, and from the car dealers down the road. The DT1 (for that's how it was known) was a magic bike that would do anything you wanted of it, and go almost anywhere. By today's standard the engine was pretty basic, but back in 1968, five port cylinder technology was considered very advanced indeed and a direct development from Yamaha's 1967 Daytona race bikes. Autolube was also relatively new, and a five speed transmission was also considered a bit special. An unusually wide power band gave a good spread of torque from the (claimed) 22bhp, and the motor had the benefit of both excellent throttle response as well as smoothness from idle to maximum revs. As a bonus the DT1 felt good on the road. Very efficient (6-volt) lighting and silencing made it a pleasurable street bike, the five speed transmission giving 60mph at 6000rpm in top, while first gear was low enough for plonking through the woods.

The chassis too was state of the art in 1968; a classic double loop steel frame with Ceriani-style front forks gave six inches of travel, while a traditional twin shock rear end offered nearly as much movement. Most early American trail bikes utilised a 19" front wheel (as did the DT1), but a 21" wheel was offered as an option in the parts book. I clearly remember the early adverts for the bike in Cycle World claiming that it was the best two bikes you would ever buy, and that really did sum it up. It handled like a treat on the road





I set about the bike with vigour. Beneath 25 years of dried red desert dust that looked like rust, was an easy bike to restore. It only needed a coat of paint and a seat cover to restore it to its former glory. Even the wheel rims came up like new with a bit of polishing - testimony to the recorded mileage of just 6,600m. I replace one or two small parts like the sight glass in the Autolube tank that had cracked and the fuel tap that wouldn't stop leaking, all of which Yamaha had on the shelf. The 19" front wheel gave a slight problem as no-one now makes a 3.25 x19 trials pattern tyre, but

Dunlop's good old K70 is available in that size and there is a 4.00x18 to match for the rear. The only parts I have not been able to source so far are a pair of fork stanchions which look like they've been through a barbed-wire fence, though a pair of fork gaiters cover up the wounds.

The importer gave me the correct documents with the bike and Yamaha UK confirmed the year of manufacture as 1970 so registration was a doddle. After 28 years the bike still rides as fresh to me as it did all those years ago, despite worn rear shocks which do eventually work if you pump them up a bit. Put it alongside any modern day trail bike and it looks like a cross between a road bike and a flat tracker - and you won't find any plastic on it at all!!

Being air cooled with a big finned alloy barrel and an exhaust system which probably lost all its packing a couple of decades ago, it makes a bit of a noise - but that's what owning an older bike is all about. I get it out on a Sunday morning and give it a polish, and as an 'historic vehicle' even the road tax is free. The wife says: 'all you ever do is polish that thing. Why don't you take it out for a spin?' Which is what I wait for, so it's on with my Bell Magnum and rose tinted spectacles and I am out there with Steve McQueen and Malcolm Smith, riding through the dunes. Okay, it's only Shell Bay and not California, but hey, who cares? Certainly not me...

First of the BREED

and did everything an off road novice like myself could ask for thanks to an all up weight of around 240Lbs (110kg).

Of course all of that was many years ago, I had long since returned to the UK where I was working in the bike accessory business when I heard about an importer in Reading who was advertising for sale a 1970 DT1-F model. I went along to have a look at it more or less just for old time's sake. Even though the bike was pretty rough and was missing the clutch, it brought back loads of happy memories of riding on Sundays all those years ago on Burnaby Mountain, drinking beer with the boys, following trails through the woods, and numerous run-ins with the park rangers. I just had to have it. Luckily I'd heard about another enthusiast (Ken Wilkinson in Derby) who'd imported a load of really early twin shock trail bikes from the USA for the purpose of breaking them. I rang up Ken (01629 540600) and he confirmed he had a couple of early DTs and would be able to supply all the missing parts I needed.

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Scotland & the brave

Pics: Sam Glendinning & Alex Archibald



The fifth round of the 1998 FIM World Individual Two Days' Enduro Championship and The European Under 23 Enduro Championship took place in Scotland recently in atrocious weather conditions. The crack TBM reporting team - John, Bruce & Sam - were there in their sou'westers to cover the event. Here's their report...

It's not often a world championship motorcycle event comes to Scotland. When it does it can be both a privilege and curse. So it was on 27 - 28 June this year. A curse according to some of the competitors and with hindsight for some of the organisers. Yet to us mere mortals living in Scotland it was indeed a privilege. In living memory personally we can only recall two other world class events in the last 20 years. One a Moto-X on the west coast (complete with helicopter ambulance due to its

remoteness) and the other a round of the world trials championship in Fort William, the home of the SSDT which sadly no longer attracts all the world stars. Completing the dirt triple, in the Enduro discipline, this year it was the Melville Club hosting the fifth Round of the 1998 FIM World Individual Two Days' Championship and The European Under 23 Enduro Championship. We were stoked. Centred in the Tweed valley town of Selkirk in the Scottish Borders, the organisers had prepared 300 miles of going over the two days consisting of forest, fire roads, open hill, moorland and tracks. In fact just planning an event of this stature let alone getting to host it takes massive logistics by normal motorcycling event standards. Often it seems when the weekly comics have had their tuppence worth, concentrating on negative aspects, it's down to mags like TBM to bring you the story of the heroes and heroines, sung and unsung, whether competitor or not. Without the club, the bureaucrats, the ubiquitous lottery, the landowners, Forestry Commission, the rugby club (essential sociale aspects), ambulance and police, red cross, military, local companies for awards and signs, Bert Harkins Racing for course markers plus many volunteers, then none of this would have happened. That's just the current involvement. To get to that stage it's worth going back a little to see how this oft used British Championship terrain came to

be used at world level.

be used at world level.

The club is no stranger to champions. Formed in 1933, the Melville MC has been involved in all disciplines of motor cycle sport. Club members have had success locally and worldwide. In recent years in Road Racing, Niall McKenzie (Grand Prix rider and current British Superbike Champion), Brian Morrison (World Endurance Champion), Howard Selby (European Superbike Champion) and in Enduros, Dougie Kerr (British Trophy teamster, ISDE Medallist and British Champion), Richard Hay (British and Scottish Champion). Currently the Club organises Road Racing, Enduro and Motocross events. That's the club, but ultimately it's down to specific individuals to get things moving and as there is obviously no point in having a road racer organise a dirt event, it needed some special individuals to make the event happen.

Since the terrain was first used in 1976 before building up to the 1998 event world level it was down to three driven individuals with local knowledge and competitor participation at the highest level. They are Stan Young, Dougie Kerr and Trevor Hay. Put their international medals, many of them gold, together and it makes impressive smelting. To represent and win medals for your country in the International Six Days Trial (ISDT) and the now renamed International Six Days Enduro (ISDE) is no mean feat. With all this daunting background and special folk the TBM. Alongside such luminaries the TBM reporting team felt pretty humble - all we had to do was turn up, spectate, chat and string some words together for you.

That's the way it seemed anyhow as we rolled up on our XRs and pitched our tents by the river in the pouring rain on the Friday night. Well if you're going to get into the spirit of things there's no point in wasting the extravagant TBM expense account on 5-star hotels and hire cars. And anyhow we were closer to the beer tent and bikes that way. We missed the 'weigh in' - the bit where all bikes are



The four stroke riders and the stroker pilots struggled in the conditions



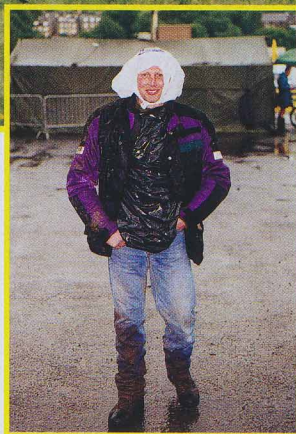
Mud, mud and more mud

checked but at least we got the press privilege of looking around the parc fermé where the bikes are stored and supervised by security overnight.

Unlike fun events like the Cambrian Rally this is all serious stuff. Bikes cannot be worked on once checked into the parc fermé either on the Friday or Saturday nights. The event is as much a challenge to the riders as it is to the testimony of individual and team preparation and reliability of their mounts. The only time the machines can be fettled, and then only by riders, is in the ten minutes preceding their start time on a morning and hopefully if making good time before checking in, in the evening. At this level it's something to behold seeing mud splattered competitors with equally caked bikes whipping out



Scotland & the brave



mousses and changing tyres with a speed that would have them on very well paid productivity bonuses at a bike factory. These boys and girls are fit and fast in more ways than one.

Saturday dawned or at least there was a semblance of dawn between the clouds and rain. Clumping through the mud and motorhomes to the start we got to see names we'd only ever heard or read of. Some 20 nations were represented with machinery from every major manufacturer consisting of championship classes in 125 and 250 two-stroke, and 250, 400 and 500 four-stroke, plus the FIM junior cup classes of 125 two-stroke and 250 two-and four-strokes. Champions galore. Names like Sala, Rinaldi, Tianen, Samofal and the no show Peterhansel to name but a few. Top that with our own boys like Ady Smith, Rob Sartin, Wyn Hughes, Adrian Lappin, David Knight, Tim Lewis and Scotland's best - Richard Hay - and the day was set for exciting competition.

Short of using the TBM helicopter (I wish! - Ed) to view the cross country going, it made sense to see the more accessible cross country and Moto-X special tests. Each test lasted around five or more minutes. It may not sound much but doing these tests twice flat out and then realising the competitors were doing two laps of the complete course at a hectic pace and in horrendous conditions made one appreciate the standard of rider and stamina required. Enduros are about staying on time and arriving at checks when you are meant to, with the deciding factor usually being the special test times. The severity due to the weather made overall course times very tight though and the planned Schedule 'A' times were reduced to the slowest 'C' times to accommodate.

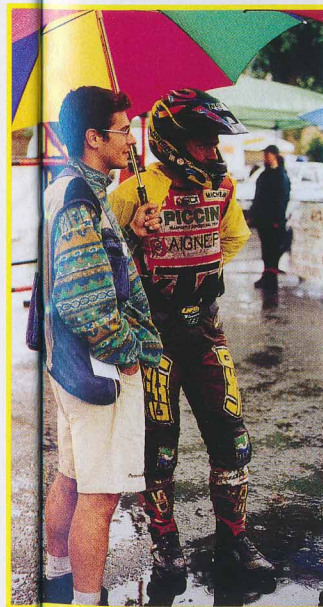
It didn't satisfy everyone though and only 18 clean sheets appeared that evening out of the 114 entry. That in itself is unusual and it begged the question, was this event too tough? It seemed there were many differing opinions around the paddock as we interviewed our own and world stars. If Enduros are meant to be tough then this was the event. Scottish rider Richard Hay summed it up when he referred to it as 'The Melville-Gilles Lalay'. Richard, who was one of the 18 on time, felt the Swedish world round in 1990 matched the Melville for severity yet peering through bloodshot eyes

(goggles get useless pretty fast in these kind of conditions), it was clear this was a very demanding event not helped by the conditions. Richard is familiar with this type of terrain so felt reasonably comfortable and stated that despite the hardship the event was 'Superb, just the way it ought to be' and "shows the world how it should be done".

The buzz round the paddock from many of the foreign riders used to drier, less demanding terrain was often less than complimentary, though Mario Rinaldi the '97 World Champion showed his class by not criticising the event but instead referring to it as 'Pure duro'. Asking through our hastily appointed interpreter if this was how enduros should be, he smiled and struggled to find an event so tough in memory. This time it was Spain '93 that came up as an equal. Rinaldi was tired but he was also very diplomatic.

So had the club and weather overdone it this time? We checked with Rob Sartin who we must say looked bright as a button having battled with Ady Smith to within 1/2 a second at the end of a gruelling first day. Once again the Gilles Lalay came up in conversation and although Rob felt that that event was harder, he conceded that this was a 'technically demanding event' and indicated he was happy with his and the TM's performance. Ady Smith the current leader on the UK Enduro scene and the best Brit on Saturday, referred to the

Melville as ***** hard - the adjective escaped us! Appropriate none the less in the circumstances, with Ady adding 'it's what Enduros used to be like'. At least the foreigners who had been psyched out by the course kept to one side and let the mud specialists (like Ady) get by. Wyn Hughes (another one who likes the going tough) spent ten minutes after having a big off and bending his bars yet put in a sterling performance to stay on time also. He still had time for a big grin and felt the first day was 'enjoyable but very hard'.



The marshals some how kept their sense of humour



Day two dawned brighter but with some sour faces at the 8 o'clock start. The event had been reduced to one lap instead of the two for the Sunday and some riders acknowledged that had they known the night before, they might not have pulled out. That, together with results mix-ups did not auger well for good PR. Sadly too we learned on Sunday that Italian rider Nicoli suffered major injuries after hitting a car on one of the road sections.

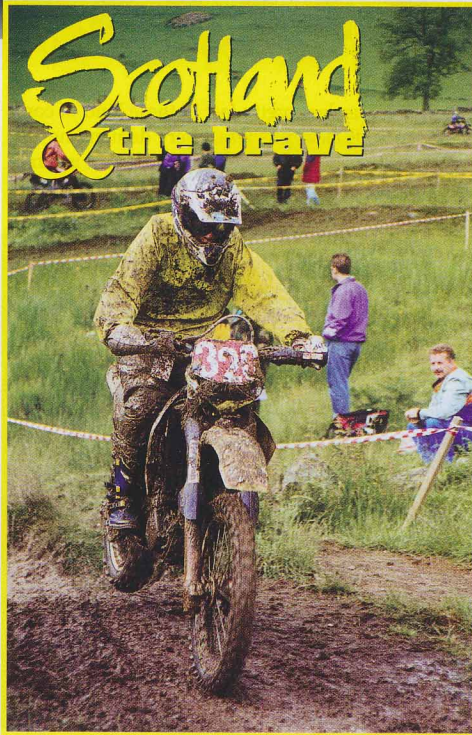
The police complained too of speeding riders and were out with the radar gun on the road. Rumour spread that anyone caught speeding would be excluded from the championship. Bundle that altogether with ridiculously tight schedules on the road and Ady Smith's decision to withdraw after starting day two began to make sense. Would you risk it when you had a stuck piston caliper to fix and little

or no time to get to the next check on the tarmac - even without a brake problem? Enduros may require speed and skill but surely not at the risk of rider or public safety. Some riders barely had time to eat or drink fluids in between checks which in itself is a major safety factor.

As the tracks dried out watching the special tests was a revelation. Team managers would stand in the track encouraging their riders to adopt a certain line off a jump or to get the least rutted and least muddy line of attack up a hill. The speed and skill was great to watch and the spectating superb with every part of the special tests being accessible to the public - so waiting to see riders was not a problem and there was continuous action. It seemed a shame to leave but all good things come to an end. The bonus in the paddock, as we returned for the finish, was the unannounced arrival of the Purple Helmets. If you've never seen these guys they are a hoot on their C90s with trench coats and bugles, pulling wheelies and broadsliding through the quagmire that was a grassy paddock. To top it all they did a pyramid in outrageous conditions to the pleasure of the whole paddock who all stopped to watch.

Looking at the grins all round it was clearly a perfect ending to a top class event and made many forget the areas that could have been improved upon. Still Scotland's lessons will serve Wales well as they get to host a world enduro round next April. Will that be 'pure duro' as well? We'll have to wait and see.

Of the 114 starters, 55 completed the event with the most notable class placing from our boys being David Knight who came first in the Junior 250 cup class. Rob Sartin posted fifth in class (and 11th place overall), followed by Wyn Hughes in seventh,



Richard Hay in ninth, John Shirt tenth and Adrian Lappin in 13th. Tim Lewis took his 125 Husky to an excellent seventh in the 125 two-stroke class with Robert Wrayford and Edward Jones getting a solid third and fourth respectively in the 125 Junior Cup. Good placings then from our competitors against the world's best - let's hope that the severity of the course and the conditions don't put foreign riders off coming to next year's world round in Wales. We'll be there to let you know...

World 2 Day Enduro Championship

Overall

- | | |
|--------------|-------|
| 1 Passeri | (I) |
| 2 Sala | (I) |
| 3 Eriksson | (Swe) |
| 4 Laaksonen | (Ger) |
| 5 Puigdemont | (F) |
| 6 Michalek | (Cz) |
| 7 Katrinak | (Cz) |
| 8 Bernard | (F) |
| 9 Rubin | (I) |
| 10 Samofal | (F) |
| 11 Sartin | (GB) |
| 12 Boano | (F) |

World Championship 125 2-Stroke

- | | |
|-----------|-----|
| 1 Passeri | KTM |
|-----------|-----|

- | | |
|------------|-----|
| 2 Michalek | TM |
| 3 Rubin | Hon |

World Championship 250 2-Stroke

- | | |
|--------------|-----|
| 1 Sala | KTM |
| 2 Laaksonen | Gas |
| 3 Puigdemont | Gas |

World Championship 250 4-Stroke

- | | |
|-------------|-----|
| 1 Johansson | Hon |
| 2 Rossi | Hon |
| 3 Thelen | KTM |

World Championship 400 4-Stroke

- | | |
|------------|------|
| 1 Rinaldi | KTM |
| 2 Carlsson | Husa |
| 3 Esquirol | Hon |

World Championship 500 4-Stroke

- | | |
|------------|-----|
| 1 Eriksson | Hva |
| 2 Katrinak | |
| 3 Tianen | KTM |

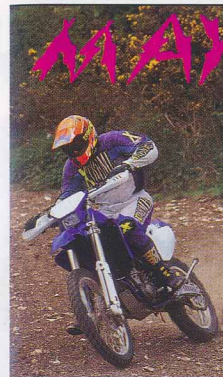
European Under 23 Enduro Championship

FIM Junior 125 2-Stroke

- | | |
|------------|-----|
| 1 Germain | KTM |
| 2 Da Silva | Hva |
| 3 Wrayford | TM |

FIM Junior 250 2/4-Stroke

- | | |
|----------|-----|
| 1 Knight | Yam |
| 2 Coma | KTM |
| 3 Porte | Gas |



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1998 Welsh Two Day Enduro

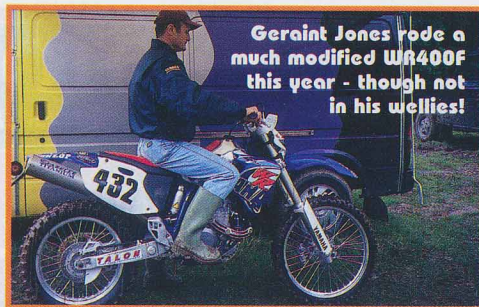


Another wet 'n' windy Welsh made for a challenging couple of days of competition. Si 'Bogmeister' Melber rode the event and this is how he faired...

The rain returned to this year's Welsh Two Day Enduro, but it couldn't spoil the party atmosphere as 400 riders contested this annual off road festival which took place in its usual midweek slot at the end of June. Last year when similar conditions blighted the Welsh, there were a complaints from participants about the severity of the event. I was one of those who felt that this great enduro - which has continued to flourish thanks to a healthy influx of riders who appreciate its status as a (more or less) timed trail ride across fantastic scenery - didn't reflect the changing ability of a number of the riders entering. In other words an event which is primarily aimed at, and funded by, a huge clubman and sportsman entry, ought to be designed to accommodate the majority of its paymasters with a route, which come rain or shine, can be comfortably ridden by the bulk of them.

I still believe that, but my experiences at this year's event were far more encouraging. The organisers did a good job of coping with the conditions, re-routing the event where necessary, took a realistic view of the ground conditions at the special tests and managed to stay cheerful throughout the rain-lashed first day. Well done ladies and gentlemen.

For sure, there were still problems at this year's Welsh: some of the timing went awry, the special test layout might have been better thought out (so it didn't have to be cancelled twice), and a number of cancelled



or unrideable checks added to the confusion. Plus there was a horrendous and avoidable accident which befell one of the competitors. So I guess there's still a lot of room for improvement.

It was the usual cheery faces that I saw wandering round the paddock as I arrived for scrutineering on the Wednesday afternoon. If you've never been to the Welsh before it's a bit like the sort of laid back atmosphere you get at one of the UK rallies - but with even more people. The Welsh is a great social event. There's ample opportunity to meet up with riding friends, have a natter and check out the competition, as scrutineering lasts all day long. Plus there are a number of stallholders selling everything you need from 'andlebars to zip-ties (I couldn't think of anything else beginning with A or Z).

There are sidecars, solos (ancient and modern), specials and scooters in the paddock as well as a number of assistance crews who provide the help and refuelling to the competitors. The army are there in abundance with a few four-tonners (which they use to help refuel riders without back-up), and of course a sizeable number of them ride the Welsh on military Armstrongs and XRs. Basically the whole place is one large melting pot for a trail and enduro junkie like myself.

The Husey slipped through scrutineering without any problems and after a couple of hours chatting with friends I disappeared off to walk the new special test which was laid out on the local ice-rink cunningly disguised as a practice track. I had no delusions (given the continuous downpour and expected overnight rain) that the special test would be completely unrideable the next morning, and so it proved to be - the organisers sensibly removed it from the proceedings. So next day it was straight off to checkpoint one where a small problem with the Berg (entirely of my own making I might add) meant that there was just time for a complete stripdown (tank, seat, air filter off etc) and rebuild before going through the first check on time.

Fifty metres ahead of check one a huge crowd of riders had gathered to watch the proceedings while they awaited their check-in times. The reason was a stream (which had risen to waist deep overnight), had to be navigated by dismounting and pushing the bike (with the engine running) across the stony river bed, with the full force of the water rushing down against you. Excellent. This is what the Welsh is all about. Overcoming challenges - not impossible ones, but interesting ones which, depending on where you regularly ride, might be the sort of hazard you rarely encounter on your local trail run.

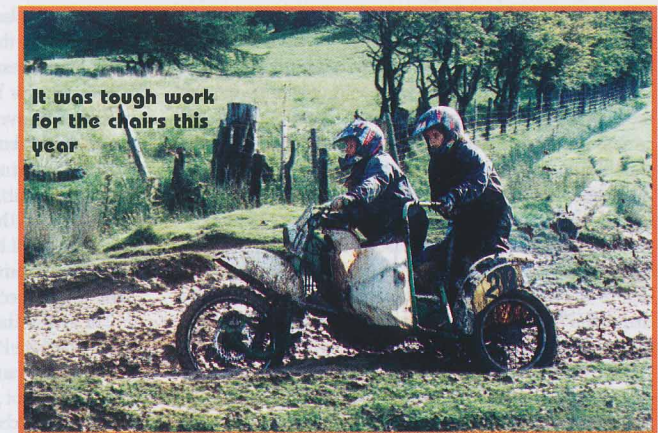
Once safely across with my feet making a sort-of sloshing sound and my Gore-Tex socks now full of river water, I was off and loving every minute of it. The Welsh is a mixture of stony tracks, fire roads, old trails, open moorland and bottomless bogs, plus of course the obligatory rutted forest. And I have to say that with the exception of the last of these, I enjoyed every inch of it. It would be boring and pointless of me to describe every check in detail, but let me single out a few highlights.

Strata Florida. An ancient rocky trail which consists of a series of deepish water splashes taken at breakneck speed. The going is fast (though not difficult), hard on tyres and wheels (there are always lots of punctures),



and tight on time. Especially so this year as the later numbers (like me) were re-routed around the deepest of the water splashes because they'd become virtually impassable. That made the timing even tighter because although there was little water to cross, the route was longer and incorporated some bendy switchback fire breaks like a trail bike rally. I was going pretty well at sort of eight-tenths speed (mindful of my Pencarreg getoff) when I rounded the corner to be confronted by a painful sight. There in the track lay one of the competitors who had suffered a head-on collision with a Mercedes G-Wagon. I don't need to tell you who came off worst. He was being tended to by a couple of marshals, but his bike was toast and the look on his face as I gingerly rode past, was enough to remind me to ease off a bit more around the blind bends.

Frankly it beggars belief that a marshal was driving the wrong way down a fast check, even if his intentions (to get to another injured rider) were good. This sort of thing can't be allowed to happen again - not only did it wreck this guy's bike and stick him in hospital for nine days, it might well have killed him. It's worth bearing in mind for all you rallyists and enduro riders out there that if you're taking part in a large event which utilises forestry roads, that these roads are rarely (if ever) closed to incoming (or local) traffic. In other words you may well meet a forest ranger, logging vehicle or even a car



1998 Welsh Two Day Enduro



Si begins the last special test at the end of day two. At least the sun was shining



around any blind bend at any time. Of course there are warning notices posted up and often as not the track is taped off with a log or other obstruction blocking the way. But it ain't failsafe. Ride accordingly, and get well soon mate.

Notwithstanding the fact that this bloke got injured, the Strata Florida check is always a highlight of any Welsh, and so this one proved. I was four minutes over my allotted time, but given the extra distance we covered, I was happy with that.

Moelfre City to Gravel Arch provided my favourite type of going - and most memorable. High up on a Welsh hillside with open moorland to cross and usually a fantastic view from the top. I say usually, because this year when I got to the top, the cloud and mist were so thick that I actually lost sight of the course markers (placed every few hundred metres) and rode around in circles for a minute or two before picking up the course again. But there was more trouble to come for me when I well and truly wedged the Husey into the deepest and most 'orrible bog you could imagine. The forks were jammed, the rear wheel had mostly disappeared and even the engine cases were stuck fast. The big yellow Berg stood out like a Belisha beacon advertising my misfortune for all to see, and allowing following riders to pick an alternative route. Even so a few of them still got stuck and I helped dig a couple of riders out before getting to work on the Husey. Off came the peak of my helmet and a mere 40 minutes later I had dug my way out of the mire with it!

I'd earlier dropped a few minutes on the second check and now I was in danger of houring out if I wasn't careful. Mind you, so had a lot of other riders. All the

riding numbers were mixed up and obviously a lot of people were having problems with the conditions. A mate of ours who had entered on his brand new TT600R had already lost 90 minutes when he filled it with water on the Strata Florida check. However because of the problems there, the organisers cancelled the check reinstating his lost time (and my four minutes). That was great for him and a lot of others, but I'd done fairly well on the Strata and was much keener on the organisers cancelling the last check and giving me back my 40 minutes! Oh well, that's life.

Radnor Forest. This traditional end of day-one check is notorious for being the worst and most unloved check in the whole event. I don't mind the stumpy, loggy, tricky climbs, but I can't find any pleasure in riding the bulk of the test which is a single rut running through the forest for about 300 miles. Coming at the end of a cold and wet day I think this worn out old check needs to be either confined to the expert class only (helping to distance them from the clubmen and sportsmen riders prior to the special test) or cut out altogether.

The end of day one was therefore a slightly dispiriting affair. Sure I'd got round okay, the bike hadn't broken and I was uninjured, but I was tired, wet, cold and in need of a hot shower. Day two could only get better.

The rain had stopped by the time I took to the start

line on a filthy bike the next day, but a number of riders had obviously seen enough for a year. A sizeable proportion failed to start day two which, given the improvement in the weather and a much shorter lap, meant that they missed out on an easier and more enjoyable ride.

The first competitive check (Esgairwy to Prysdyon I think) was a corker. And though it was partly new it turned out to be a real classic in the best Welsh tradition. A short, slimy section of forest with a couple of deep muddy ditches led onto a fantastic and fast blast through the woods on a very open trail. Apart from the odd log or bush to avoid, this track was flat out in second or third (or as fast as you dared). The Husaberg was ripping and I was really enjoying myself, even more so when the course took us up onto the hillside and 'over the top' once more. Unfortunately I let my enthusiasm get away with me for a second and launched the Berg over what I took to be a small drainage ditch, but actually turned out to be something much larger. Result: I cleared the ditch but the Berg didn't - landing right in the middle of it bogged down up to its axles again. Oh well... off with the peak once more!

I thought I'd blown it having spent at least ten minutes extricating the bike, but when I arrived at the check I was still five minutes early. There was more great riding to come of course and now the weather was improving as well. One of my favourites was the Pont Rhydgale to Blaenycwm check. This began with the usual difficult loggy climbs (where I somehow managed to get the Husa stuck on a giant felled stump), and continued with a fast blast (rally style) along the fire roads which led steeply downhill to a fantastic river crossing - stony, deep and wide, but very rideable - before charging back uphill and then onto the roads. The Strata Florida was a real blast again, the water crossings still high, but lower than the day before. I was soaked but exhilarated as I got to the end just three minutes over time and without puncturing.

By this time (early afternoon) the sun was shining, there were spectators lining parts of the route and I felt really good. But for some reason, the organisers decided to call a halt to the day's proceedings, cutting out the last two checks and re-routing us straight to the special test - though they didn't inform us riders. Needless to say, I was going like a bat out of hell on the roads expecting the next checkpoint to hove into view any second. Of course once I arrived at the special test it became obvious, but not before I'd broken every speed limit on the way. Some more info via the marshals would have been welcome.

I slipped and slithered my way around the special

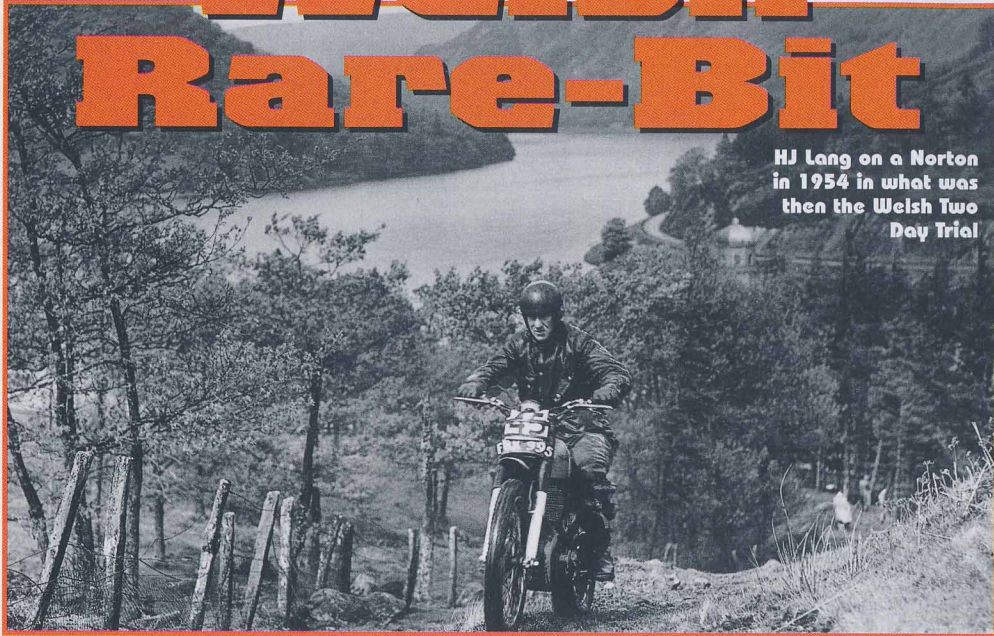


test before arriving at the penultimate hazard - a rutted, slippery climb (on stony clay) followed by a sharp left turn halfway up. There were bikes everywhere so I knocked the Berg into second gear, pointed it up the hill and went for it - bouncing off two banks, one bike, and a spectator or two before I finally spun to a frustrating halt (about halfway up). All of a sudden there were hands everywhere pulling at the bike, grabbing the forks and after what seemed like an eternity I was most of the way up with the tyre now starting to smoke as it spun on the stony ground. Meantime other competitors were doing the same, riding into me, bouncing off each other and generally adding to the melee. I was fast running out of steam and helpers as I inched my way to the top when who should pop out of the crowd like the Archangel Gabriel, but Cambrian Rally organiser Bob Perring. At 62 years young, Bob's nearly twice my age, but it didn't stop him grabbing hold of the front of my bike and hauling me to the top of the hill. I remounted (after catching my breath) and flashed through the timing beam. Thanks Bob - I owe you one for that.

So that was the end of yet another Welsh. I finished with only three minutes of penalties on day two though somehow the organisers didn't classify me as a finisher - I'm not sure why. Who cares? I'd completed the Welsh, the sun was shining and when I got back to the Lakeside at Llandrindod Wells a mate thrust a chilled beer into my hand and we had a good old laugh about it. Will I be back next year? You bet I will - but next time with a bigger peak on my helmet!

For the record, this year's Welsh was won by British Championship leader Ady Smith on his PJ1 Yamaha WR250 who stayed clean (on time) throughout both days. Current British Champion Rob Sartin (TM250) was a close second and Mark Vaughan (Honda CR125) was third. Yoshi Adams won the Trail bike class on his (Container Co) CRM250R, and Chris Walton was first Expert Four Stroke on his Husky Sport TE610.

Welsh Rare-Bit



HJ Lang on a Norton in 1954 in what was then the Welsh Two Day Trial

The Welsh Two Day is something special for all the riders who take part. Its peculiar blend of characters, scenery and enjoyable trails mark it out as unique in the enduro calendar. Nick Ashley takes a personal look at this, his favourite event of the year...

There is one event in the Enduro calendar that stands head and shoulders above all others in terms of popularity: The Welsh Two Day Enduro. Something about this event captures peoples' imagination and draws them in droves from all around the world to a picturesque little town in Mid Wales.

They bring all sorts of weird and wonderful machines with them; hand-built sidecar specials from Germany, lovingly created with thousands of man-hours to the most unbelievably high standard. An old Levis gets pulled out of the shed for another crack at the terrain, local lad Johnnie-two-stroke turns up on his trusty 1960 Bantam, a team of gleaming tin-tank, twin shock Maicos arrive with Midlands Motocross star Pete Mathia, and expert rider Christian Walton shows up on a hand star-tautomat Rokon and a cackle much louder than the exhaust pipe. That's the Welsh alright.

The bulk of the entry ride modern enduro and trail machines. Then heading up the rear, we have a handful of red plate British Championship riders with state-of-

the art racing machinery that has been prepped, preened, honed and dialled-in to such an extent that they become like an extra limb to the rider.

The riders and supporters connected to this event consist of a cast of characters that Ealing Studios would be proud of. Burly European sidecar crews turn up, pitch a tent and start frying sausages. Icelandic warriors with huge four-strokes. Dutch, French and German riders regularly enter. Craggy-faced Dakar veteran Herbert Scheck will arrive with a daughter or two to ride around with, and a son-in-law, all seasoned North African desert racers with GPS satellite navigation systems for the fuel crew. Penelope Pitstop lookalike June Zembrzusi in all-pink race gear. Ralph Venables (who has watched every Welsh for the last 41 years) will follow proceedings in his WWII Despatch coat, flat cap and imaginary Capstan full-strength. A mad keen Yorkshire enthusiast will spend days driving to the event in his Robin Reliant so that he can man a rain-lashed checkpoint for hours on end in his great-coat, waders and sou'wester. Super smooth Le Mans winner Derek Bell and his son will

swap four wheels for two for a change. While world Champ Paul Edmondson may enter with an exotic Spanish prototype just for the crack.

So why do all these people descend on the Victorian town of Llandrindod Wells in Mid-Wales each June? What makes the event so special? One of the key elements is the course. Unlike most modern multi-lap forest events, the Welsh features a 160 mile single loop on the first day, and a different 120 mile loop on the second. Considering the small size of Great Britain, the huge population and the pressure on land, this is really something quite staggering.

This gigantic course snakes its way through the most remote and beautiful scenery in Mid-Wales. Along old sheep drovers roads, across ancient Roman hilltop tracks, through rivers and bogs, old oak woods and pine forests with just crows, sheep and Red Kites for company, you can really get away from it all big time. Sorry to romanticise about this event, but I am not alone in my feelings. One year during a stage I came across nine-times winner Geraint Jones stopped on top of a hill, so I pulled up and asked: 'Okay Geraint?', to which he replied 'Oh no problem, Nick, just admiring the view!'

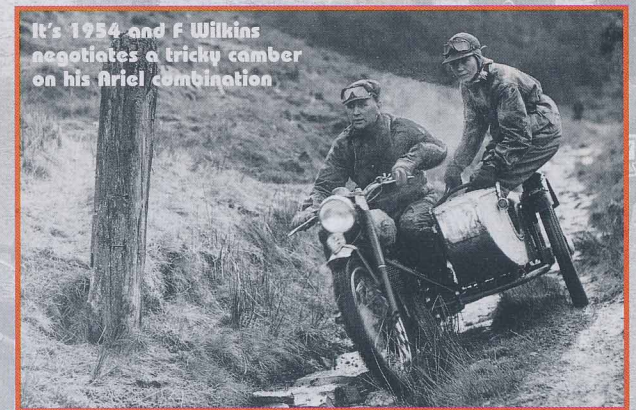
I have ridden the Welsh every year since 1974 (sometimes on my old Cheney Triumph), and like the bulk of the entry, I consider it as a mini-holiday consisting of two full days trail riding with all the gates opened for me, coupled to the added excitement of having racing numbers on the bike. Adrenaline pumping and red mist are optional extras. I have tried racing it, going for a particular trophy, but it always ended in disaster, so these days, like many others, I try my best to stay clean on time for as long as possible. But if I lose time I take a chill pill and cruise it, enjoying the view and having a laugh. My brother earned his nickname 'Choc-ice' when he pulled up at a checkpoint with a fresh one in his bumbag. He'd stopped and bought it at a village shop during one of the timed stages!

This laid back attitude can cause big problems for Clerk of the Course Elwyn Price. Many of the riders are taking it really seriously and trying really hard - the Welsh is a round of the British Sidecar Championship. In the past it has also been a round of the British Solo Championship. These peoples' needs have to be catered for. No less than 400 entrants turn up ranging from Mr Wobbly first-timer to Mr Factory pilot leading the British Championship - each enjoy the Welsh in their own way.

Keeping this lot satisfied can be a daunting task. The

top boys want tough, tight and technical stuff. The wobblers kick up a stink if the going gets too difficult. The solution is to err on the side of caution. A course is selected that everyone can get round, with some tightish going thrown in for the keen ones. At the end of the day it is the weather that decides on the level of difficulty. On a bone dry year it really is possible to get round on a road bike, and many riders complain about the course not being challenging enough. On a wet year however, the soft, muddy terrain and chest-high river crossings can cause major problems and riders complain about the course being designed by a sadist, but it's the same course as on a dry year!

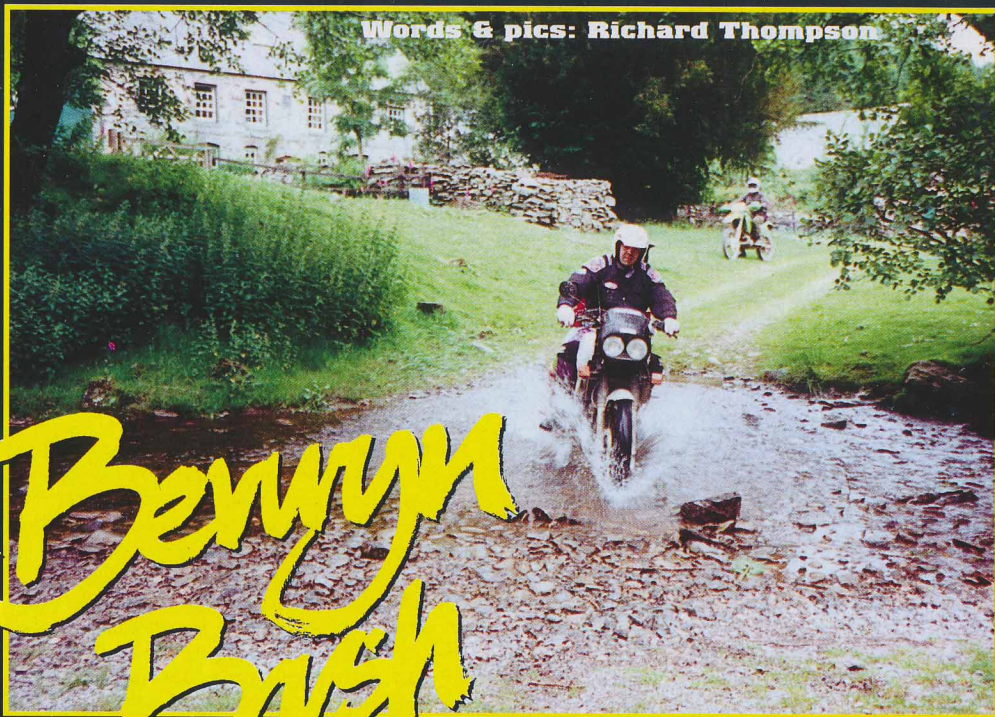
The heart of the matter is that when all is said and done the Welsh remains an extremely rare and unparalleled event. We should consider ourselves extremely lucky to be able to rip around this glorious green garden in such peace times. It has often been said that the eco-noose is tightening around the neck of this glorious event - I would disagree. A lot of the land that has been lost over the years was never re-requested on an annual basis. Once land is plugged into the system it is quite an easy task to repeat the permission. The success of the Welsh in recent years has meant that landowners get a



It's 1954 and F Wilkins negotiates a tricky camber on his Ariel combination

good land-use fee which helps. I would stick my neck out and claim that apathy is the greatest killer of terrain for the Welsh. Of the 400 entrants riding the event this year, there can't be more than four that actually help to get land. It is such an easy and pleasant task to plan a part of the route, get permission from the landowner, then pre-run with Elwyn to check for suitability that if more people did help, the course would improve no end. Who knows, with a bit of effort we could even restore the Welsh Three Day Enduro - like it used to be in former times. Now that really would make for a special event. **Nick Ashley**

Words & pics: Richard Thompson



Berwyn Bash

The first Berwyn Bash took place on 5 July - a sort of orienteering trail ride through the Berwyn mountains in North Wales, with all the proceeds going towards the British ISDE team for Australia this year. Over £300 was raised through the efforts of Dot & Jim Jones who laid out 20 checkpoints to be visited by the 20 teams of two people taking part.

The start was at Rhiwlas Community centre situated in the middle of nowhere, with spectacular views over the surrounding mountains, and situated only five minutes away from the first of the day's trails. Overnight camping with showers and kitchen facilities allowed the teams to arrive the night before, and the next morning each team plotted their own chosen route from a master map which gave the checkpoints' locations with a six figure map reference and a brief description of the surroundings. One team who neglected to note down the description spent a hard day searching around the undergrowth for the precise site of the checkpoint stamp once they'd arrived at the location!

The course covered 85 miles of varied going from open moorland through rocky climbs and

forestry tracks to slippery, muddy sunken lanes, and fortuitously the competitors were blessed with a fine, dry day with the occasional glimpse of sunshine. Four teams ended up on maximum points after visiting and finding all the checks, with the overall win going to Dennis Faith and his son Daniel, riding pillion. Best female team was won by Gill Myers with pillion Phillipa Naylor, who also visited all the checks, while mention in despatches should also go to Mike 'Warp Speed' Jones who piloted his SuperTen (with his wife Susan on the back) to a good finish - although they'd have come higher if they hadn't stopped for lunch in the pub!

All in all an excellent event and one which is sure to be repeated next year with even more competitors and some extra checkpoints to help eliminate a tie-break situation. Thanks once again to the Jones' for organising a great day out and if you can't wait till next year's event, don't forget the Bracken Rally (a similar sort of event) which takes place on 3 October this year - the day before the Hafren Rally. The Bracken returns to map 147 this year with all the old favourite lanes included, plus some interesting new checks. So come to Wales and make a weekend of it, riding and then racing your trail bike. Details of the Bracken Rally from Jon Watson-Miller 0171 232 1814.

Richard Thompson

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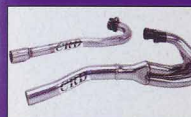
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A quick blast on KTM's 620 SuperMoto is the motorcycling equivalent of washing down three Viagra tablets with a tequila slammer. We borrowed it for a fortnight and didn't want to give it back...



Story: Si Meiber
Pix: Neil Pidduck & Si Meiber

LICENCE TO THRILL

Forget all the stuff you've read about sports bike riders changing to supermoto bikes in order to preserve a fragile licence. Two weeks with the KTM 620SM has taught me that if you live in a town or city like I do, you might as well go hand your licence into the local magistrates court at the first opportunity - it'll save you time in the long-run.

Why should a bike like the Six-Twenty be so licence threatening? Try accelerating away from the traffic light grand prix without hoisting the front wheel in the air; try braking from speed without standing the thing on its nose; try not to go hooning into every bend as if it's the last turn at Jerez, and try not to scythe your way through traffic on a bike which feels so light and narrow it's like being on a 250. I bet you can't - and neither could I... er, officer.

In truth the KTM 620 Supermoto serves no useful purpose whatsoever. It's a bike whose entire reason

for existing is simply to extract the maximum amount of pleasure from a litre of four star. This is a bike which is unforgiving, uncomfortable and unforgettable in equal measures. Tall, difficult to start from cold (kick start only), awkward to manoeuvre in tight spaces, prone to stalling if not fully warmed up, vibratory, full-on and extremely unpleasant to ride in anything other than banzai mode and in short bursts only. It is truly exhilarating - if utterly impractical.

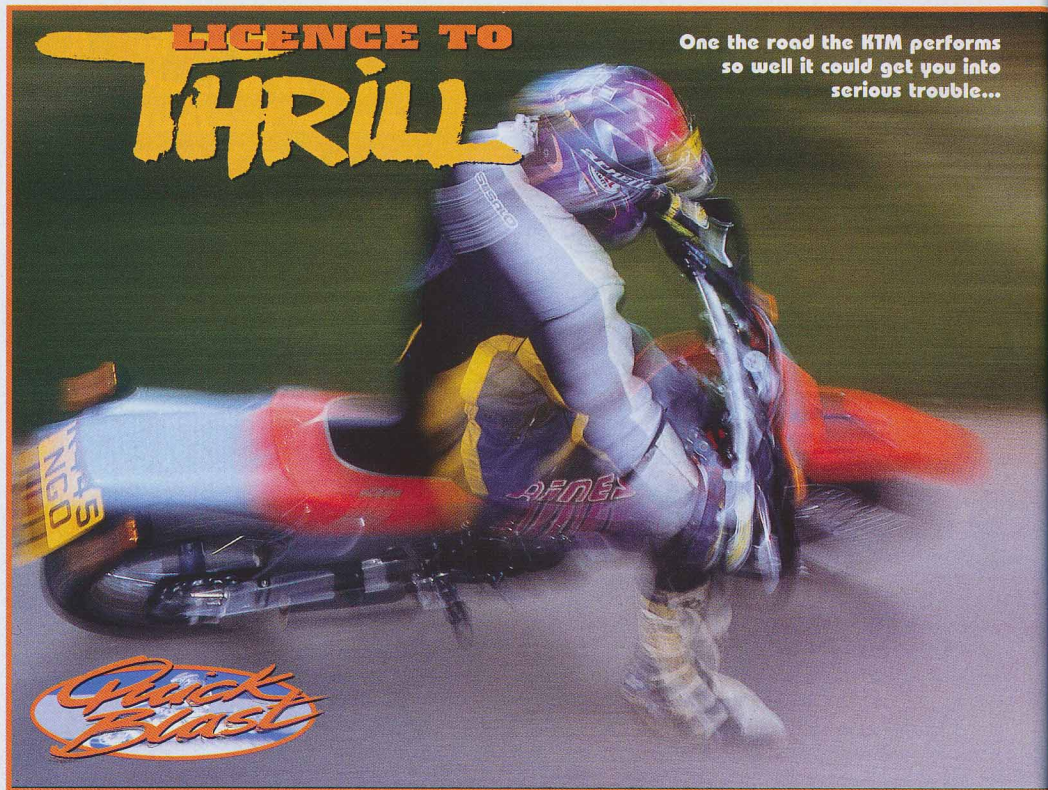
But strangely enough this is no one-off dealer special. The SM is built by KTM Austria and is available as a limited-run standard model in order to offer a sort of off-the-shelf supermoto racer to the well-heeled hooligan. If demand is sufficient (and by all accounts the popularity of supermoto is still growing), then it will probably continue to be available in the KTM line-up for some time to come, notwithstanding the fact that it has the knock-on

effect of using up a few surplus KTM 620 lumps, now that the 640EGS has been launched.

Try to ride the thing like a normal road bike, rolling on and off the throttle and pottering around the place and you'll be exhausted within minutes; your nerves will be frazzled, your arms will pump up and you'll wish you'd never got on the thing (remember there's no cush drive, no counter-balancer and zero creature comforts). But get into the groove, strap your helmet on - remembering to remove your brain first - and the



Stunning KTM looks the business...



One the road the KTM performs so well it could get you into serious trouble...

Supermoto suddenly all starts to make perfect sense. There's so much grip from those huge gum-ball tyres that it's impossible to lose traction - even in the wet. So much stopping power from that LP-sized front disc; and so much torque generated by that gutsy enduro motor that you just won't believe what a bike can do. And we all know how light and manoeuvrable a dirtbike feels on the road, compared to most lardy road bikes anyway.

But the biggest kick comes from arm wrestling that hulking 620 motor. In enduro guise (like this) it puts out more than enough grunt to comfortably surprise you. Off road much of that is wasted by spinning tyres and slippery terrain but stick the thing on the road and contain the wheelspin with toffee-soft rubber, and you have a recipe for vertical acceleration - bigtime. This is a bike which can race from nought to six feet up in the air in less time than it takes you to say 'I'm sorry your Honour'.

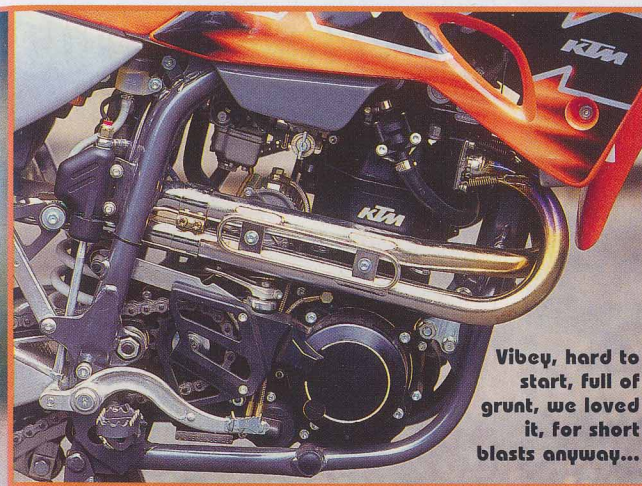
Depending on which side of the dock you're sitting at the time, that may sound like a helluva' laugh or alternatively a serious breach of the peace. And indeed it's both - if you're in the right mood. But if you just want to ride something that gets you home safely at night without attracting undue attention from the coppers; something that's comfy, prac-

tical and easy to live with, then banish all thoughts of this bike from your mind. Trust me on this one - okay?

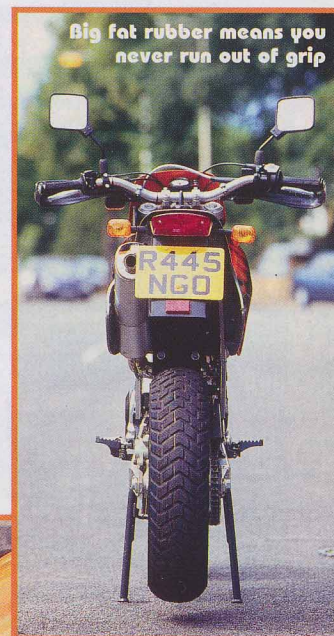
There's not the space to spend time detailing all the tech spec of the bike for you in a Quick Spin like this, suffice to say it's exactly the same as a 620 SuperCompetition but with a few important differences. Obviously it's fitted with wider rims: they're 17" Akronts buttered with a fat 130-section Pirelli on the front and a podgy 160 at the rear. Both tyres are race compound MT60s, and the rear on ours was virtually shagged-out in just over 120 miles.

If you're one of those people who's thinking: '120 miles for a rear tyre? Oh no. That wouldn't do at all.' Then you've already missed the point of the 620SM. This is a bike that will lay rear wheel darkies out of tight corners well within the speed limit. Grab a handful of front brake and you'll find a thick black line leading up to the front wheel. As I said before, it makes no commercial sense whatsoever - but then that's the nature of the beast.

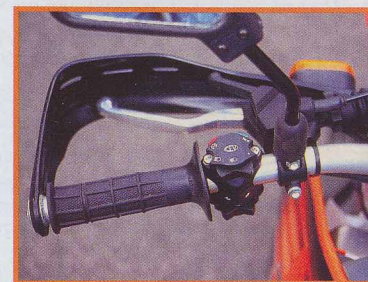
Other changes to the stock SuperComp include a set of indicators, a very bright (dipping) glass headlamp, and a whopping great front disc. There's even a pair of mirrors and a set of warning lamps if you're interested. Quite honestly I was more inter-



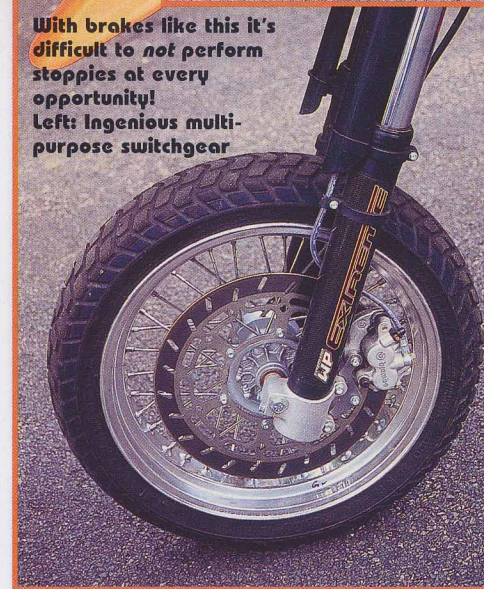
Vibey, hard to start, full of grunt, we loved it, for short blasts anyway...



Big fat rubber means you never run out of grip



With brakes like this it's difficult to not perform stoppies at every opportunity! Left: Ingenious multi-purpose switchgear



ested in breaking all my personal-best times from A-B than worrying about finding neutral at the traffic lights, though the mirrors are a necessity given the sort of antics this bike encourages.

I'm not proud to say that the more I rode the SM, the more I enjoyed its wild manners and antisocial tendencies. I wanted to dislike the bike from the moment I started it and it blurred my vision whenever I blipped the throttle, but the sad fact is that I couldn't get enough of it. It made me want to ride around town just for the sake of it - even on a completely pointless journey across west London - with the pick of the test bikes to choose from, very few machines can lay claim to that fact.

Ultimately there's not a single good reason why I should recommend this bike to anyone... except just for the sheer hell of it. You won't find its range all that good, the seat height is monstrous and there's only a centrestand instead of a side one, but I'm figuring you've worked that out for yourself by now.

While I had it I couldn't help myself - I took the thing down the King's Road - and having blasted up and down a couple of times, parked it up outside one of the coffee houses and went in to calm my nerves with a double espresso. But that's what the 620SM is all about. It's a sort of modern day

Cappuccino-Racer. A two wheeled posing pouch With 'Big-Boy' written all over it. It's not really meant to be practical and it meets its design criteria perfectly. Take it out for a scratch at the weekend and then bung it in the garage once you've dealt with the itch.

At a shade over five grand it's not sensible at all, but then again, when did sense ever have anything to do with buying dirt bikes?

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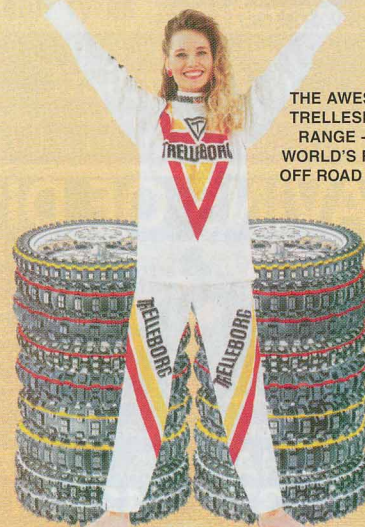
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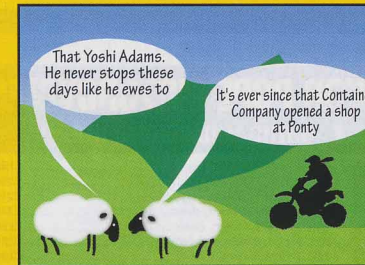


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Kawasaki KLX650, 1993, L-reg, 23,000 mostly commuter miles, recent Dyno-Jet and Laser, Pro-Duro exhaust, Renthal bars, little off road use, £2250. Tel Kevin on 0132 255 8028 (Kent)

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Kawasaki KLX250, 1996, 2000m, only green lane use, exc cond, £2500, also **SVM** Enduro, 1986, 175cc, 2-stroke Rotax, £500 ono. Tel John on 0186 532 6840 or (mobile) 0850 491740 (Oxon)

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Kawasaki KDX200, 1990, T&T, green lane use only, many spares, exc cond, totally reliable, £1100 ono. Tel Andy on 0142 047 2938 (Hants)

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Honda XLR250R, 1995, only 2000km, T&T, immac, £2400 ono or swap for 125 Moto-X bike, cash either way. Tel Steve on 0145 821 0498 (Somerset)

Honda NX650 Dominator, black/grey, 1995, N-reg, only 2000 road miles, immac cond, £3200. Tel Ian on 0178 274 9462 (Staffs)

Gas Gas EC250, 1998, ideal trail/enduro, immac cond, not imported cheapie, little use by over-40 owner, brilliant bike, £3200 ono or may p/x for CRM/XR400. Tel Steve on 0124 269 7494 (Glos)

Yamaha XTZ660, 1993, K-reg, Scottolter, new c+s, 25,000m, no MOT, needs little work and some plastics, £1750, no offers. Tel Martin on 0169 888 8864 (Glasgow area)

Honda XR600R, N-reg, one previous owner, taxed, just serviced, only 6500km, very little use, some extras, quick sale, £2500, no offers. Tel Philip on 0122 236 1858 (Cardiff)

Aprilia RX125C, trail bike, N-reg, full power conversion, immac, only 2800km, £1695. Tel Graham (weekdays) on 0128 284 3453 (Lancs)

Kawasaki KLX650, 1994, L-reg, T&T, MT21s, h/guards,

Renthals, 10,000m, Goodridge hoses, exc cond, £2450 ono. Tel Mat on 0145 529 9318 or (mobile) 0411 245782 (Warks)

Suzuki TS250X, 1987, power-valve model, MOT, Gold rims, Renthals, DEP silencer new chain & battery, work + green lane use, £950. Tel 0188 957 7043 (Staffs)

Yamaha SuperTenere 750, Paris/Dakar colours, Arrow can, 41,000km, £2850, no time wasters. Tel Franco on 0117 907 1066 (S Glos)

Honda XLR250 Baja Mk2, white with blue + red splash graphics, 1992, J-reg, T&T, 11k, indicators, twin headlights, rear footrests, exc cond, £1750. Tel Les on 0166 374 1191 (Derbys)

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Yamaha XT350, 1995, black, T&T, Renthals h/guards, 4500m, new MT70s, unrestricted, £2200 ono. Tel David on 0146 571 4783 (Ayrshire)

Kawasaki KE100, lime green, N-reg, taxed, vgc, garaged, many extras, 3500m, road use only, £800 ono. Tel 0161 343 2607 (Lancs)

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Suzuki DR350S, 1995, M-reg, new rear wheel bearings, Renthals, DID chain, new sprockets, green lane use only, vgc, £1900. Tel 0163 976 0829 (S Wales)

KTM 620EGS-E, May 1997, elec start, 1 owner, fsh, 3300m, taxed, this bike can go anywhere, exc cond, £4500. Tel Mike on 0125 272 1063 (Surrey)

Honda XL250 Motorsport, 1975, MOT, good runner, classic insurance, becoming collectable, £450. Tel Paul (work) on 0120 251 4344 (S Hants)

Honda XL350R, 1983, Italian import, fully rebuilt, needs nothing, T&T, ready to ride, £1250 ono; also **Honda** XL250S twin shock, 1981 exc cond, MOT, any trial, £650 ono. Tel Paul on 0147 656 7312 (Lincs)

Suzuki TS250, 1976, 3000m, in orig cond, MOT, unused for years but in vgc, cheap trail bike, £700. Tel (days) 0181 556 1083 (London)

Kawasaki KLX650, M-reg, 1995, absolutely immac cond, T&T, maintained regardless of cost, road use only, garaged, £2900. Tel Shaun on 0193 584 0301 (Somerset)

Yamaha WR250, 1990, '92 plastics, T&T, recent full motor rebuild, new c+s, tyres, £1195 or p/x late CR500, pref Supermoto. Tel Matt on 0158 260 8520 or 0468 483836 (Beds)

CCM 600 Supermoto, H-reg, T&T, 17" Akronts, Dellorto carb, race cam, 50bhp, titanium can, ready to race, £2000, MX trim £1500. Tel Keith on 0190 956 4031 (Sheffield)

Yamaha IT175, A-reg, new c+s, MT21 front tyre, bearings, lightweight and fast, good cond, £700 or p/x WR250. Tel Richard on 0144 240 1794 (Herts)

Honda CRM250R-2, K-reg, T&T, exc cond, too many extras to list, genuine sale, full details available, £2200 ono. Tel Richard on 0123 747 7794 (Devon)

Suzuki DR350, L-reg, 7000m, green laned only, new c+s, MT21s, Renthals, pads, service manual etc, real bargain, £1500. Tel Jason on 0797 073 9399 (Herts)

Kawasaki KX250, road legal, K-reg, T&T, lights, speedo, stand, horn, Acerbis guards, has to be seen, mint cond, exc enduro tool. Tel 0148 221 9511 (Yorks)

Suzuki DR350S, 1993, L-reg, low mileage, recent c+s, MT21s, new throttle, clutch cables, Dynojetted, K&N filter, some spares, £1950. Tel Neil on 0132 229 4943 (Kent)

Yamaha XT550, great fun bike with sensible bits, may consider p/x with 125cc learner trail bike, £1050. tel Gareth on 0196 262 0405 (Hants)

Suzuki DR350, 1995, N-reg, 5000m, exc cond, Acerbis 22 ltr tank and sump guard, Renthals bars and sprockets, handguards, all orig parts too, £2595 ono. Tel Nick on 0181 532 2520 (London)

Yamaha XT600Z Tenere, 87 blue, T&T, kick & e/start, Renthals, MT43s, recent full overhaul, terrific overlander, or long distance trials machine, £1600 one inc factory manuals; also **Honda** TLR200 Reflex, owned from new, N-reg, less than 5000m, recent MT43s and O-ring c/s, full road equip plus WES comp exhaust, brilliant unobtrusive trail bike, £1500 ono. Tel Keith on 01225 760415 (Bath)

Yamaha DT200WR, 93, K-reg, low miles, T&T, Renthals, O-ring, b/guards, exc cond, the best trail import available and this one is too fast for me, £1750. Tel 01488 73253 (Berks)

Yamaha DT125R, 89, p/valve, DEP, endured last three years, no MoT, extra quick, lodsas spares, £500. Tel 01708 751057 (Essex)

Honda CRM250R-2, J/92, 10k, Pro-Skill pipe, Acerbis guards, Datatagged, genuine good cond, not raced, £1900, be quick. Tel Gary on 0151 334 7772 (Wirral)

Honda XL200, e/start, 84/A, T&T, low seat, new chain, newish tyres, £575 ono. Tel 0115 930 8371 (Derbys)

Suzuki DR200, E/88, T&T, Renthals, DEP silencer, B/guards, tank cover, over £1000 spent, receipts, vgc, £900. Tel 01455 212182 (Warks)

Yamaha XT225 Serow, J-reg, e/start, Renthals, f disc, one careful lady owner, ISDE trip forces sale, £1800. Tel Dot on 01691 791307 (Powys)

Suzuki DR350, 96/P, 3000m, white/purp, £2650. Tel 01703 282366 (Hants)

Honda XR400RW, Jan 98, 1200km, key ignition, indicators, Renthals and car rack, only light green lane use, genuine reluctant sale, £3595. Tel 01252 844675 (Hants)

Suzuki TS200RM, H-reg, 11,000km, maintained regardless, yellow/blue, good cond, extras inc b/busters, DEP t/pipe, Renthals, excellent trail/enduro/road bike, truly dual sport. Phil Airey, 3 Windmill Hill cottages, Wrotham Heath, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN15 7SU

Kawasaki KLR250, 96/P, green, 6000m, mostly road use, good sound bike, screen, no damage, £2250. Tel 01578 750334 (Berwickshire)

Gas Gas Pampa 250, P-reg, maintained regardless, superb all rounder, new bike forces sale, £1750 ono, no test pilots please. Tel John on 01278 431143 (day) or 421595 (eves) (Somerset)

Yamaha XT600Z Tenere, 88/F, 22k, blue, new tyres & clutch, excel cond, £1550. Tel 01527 546824 (Worcs)

Honda XR650L, K-reg, 16K, good cond, new c+s MT21s, manuals etc, £3350 ono. Tel 01732 810733 (Kent)

Honda XR400RW, UK bike, R-reg, 5 months old, v tidy machine, £3495 or consider p/x cheap trail bike. Tel 01285 860252 (Glos)

Honda XR400R, P-reg, vgc, new c+s, b/guards, Race-Spec fork springs, recently serviced susp, £3200. Tel 01597 822953 (Powys)

Suzuki DR350SE, e/start, late 95, 2,400m, new MT21s, service history, spare tyres, road & trail use only, exc cond, £2800 ono. Tel 01420 562348 (Hants)

Husqvarna Trailmaster 400, 97, immac cond, 950 miles, ultimate trail bike, £3450. Tel 01937 573096 (W Yorks)

Moto-Morini 350 Kanguro, 1982, 13,000km, MoT, recent import, as new cond, £925 ono. Tel 01279 501187 (Herts/Essex)

Suzuki DR350 enduro, N-reg, exc cond, Cobra exh, shock been lowered by 2.5" (can be put back for a cost), road legal & taxed, £2700. Tel (day) 0171 627 1976, (eves) 0181 265 5847 (London)

Suzuki DR500S twin shock trail bike, 83/Y, T&T, outstanding orig cond, £800. Tel 01908 310554 (after 6pm) (M Keynes)

Yamaha WR250, 94, L-reg, new tyres, injury forces sale, £1200 ono or p/x Serow or similar. Tel 01773 534188 (Notts)

Honda XL500S, twin shock, T&T, vgc, very reliable, O-ring chain, powder coated, £1050 ono. Tel 01296 688542 (Bucks)

Honda XR500 twin shock, completely rebuilt, powder coated frame etc, looks like new, £1295 ovno. Tel 01582 650599 (Beds)

Yamaha TT250R, 94, recent O-ring c+s, new battery, good cond, light GLU (green lane use) only, £2295 ono. Tel 01782 773815 (Staffs)

Fully prepped KTM 640 Rallye with rear tanks - one converted to carry safety equip, dual icos, kevlar fairing, spare rims, tyres mouses and lots more, it's bullet proof (even if I'm not, ahem), everything you need to compete in a desert rally is available inc spares box, first aid kit, flares etc, giving it away at £5750. Tel Clive on 0171 924 4559 (London)

Honda XR600R, July 89, MoT, new tyres/plastics/gaiters, Supertrapp exh, v clean, Renthals, £1650 ono. Tel Jon on 0976 849046 (Staffs)

Suzuki RMX250M, 91, road reg, little use from new by one over 40s owner, £1650 with orig spares kit. Tel 0151 334 6485 (Wirral)

Suzuki DR350SE, 95/N, e/start, good cond, T&T, well maintained, low mileage, £2550 ono. Tel after 7pm 01202 605241 (Dorset)

KTM Duke 620, 97/R, 2100m, as new, UK bike, £4400. Tel 0181 563 9109 (London)

Suzuki TS200RN, J-reg, T&T, blue, new rings, Renthals, B/guards, DEP, may p/x TM or XR4, £1800 ono. Tel Ian on (home) 01635 299572, (work) 506786 (Berks)

Honda XL500S, 79, tatty but running, easy project, £500 no offers. Tel Dave on 01432 341791 (Hereford)

Honda XRV750 A/Twin, L-reg, serviced, Goodridge, Baglux, RWV hi-screen, recent tyres, changed plan forces sale, £3750. Tel 01622 735829 (Kent)

Kawasaki KLX250 Enduro, 94/L, T&T, excel cond, Acerbis h/guards, frame protect, speedo, new tyres, Renthals, £2050. Tel Dick on 01737 822312 (Surrey)

Kawasaki KLX250D, 93, T&T, starts and runs lovely, new tyres Acerbis guards, Renthals, extras, vgc, perfect all rounder, £1650 ono. Tel 04682 78466 (Essex)

Honda XR80, excel orig cond, well maintained, never raced, v reliable, suit 8-12 yr old, £550. Tel 01733 361425 eves (Cambs)

BMW R80GS, 1981, T&T, KLR forks, Koni shock, s/s exh, £2000. Tel 0181 530 2442 (E London)

Yamaha XT225 Serow, 92, e/start, recent import, good tyres, never trailed, low mileage, £1550 ono. Tel 0115 973 2466 (Notts)

Moto-Morini Sahara, 82/Y, 500cc V-twin, 494 miles, genuine one owner, pristine, not used for 15 years, £1700 ono. Tel 01233 635783 (Kent)

Kawasaki KLX650, 94/L, black & turquoise, 4,200m, as new, £2600 ono, would consider p/x for van. Tel Andrew on 01748 850364 (N Yorks)

Husqvarna WR500, 84/B, MoT, vgc, £700 or p/x for Armstrong MT500. Tel 01273 589374 (Sussex)

WANTED

Wanted fuel cap for KMX125, hinged to tank type. Tel 0128 354 3502 (Staffs)

Wanted for Yamaha XT600Z Tenere, 1988-91, ignition switch, side panels in blue and/or white, 1/h crank case cover and 21" DID rim. Tel 0170 233 3392 (Essex)

Wanted Suzuki DR200 trail parts, seat, regulator/rectifier, battery holder, tool container, complete wiring loom, complete bike if these parts are there. Tel 0173 246 1530 (Kent)

Wanted Corbin saddle for Honda Transalp, 1994 model, will pay up to £100 for as new saddle, prefer black finish. Tel Richard (after 6pm) on 0163 471 3712 (Kent)

Wanted workshop manual for 1990 Husqvarna TE/TC510. Tel 0148 484 4210 (W Yorks)

Wanted Honda CRM250 Mk2 performance exhaust & silencer, f/r wheels, red/white headlight & tank. Tel 0147 640 2447 (Lincs)

Wanted Yamaha XT350 in working order, would exchange if possible. Tel Mike on 0120 224 6975 (Dorset)

Wanted Suzuki DR350 clocks and plastic tank (Suzuki type). Tel Geoffrey on 0166 560 6301 (Northumberland)

Wanted KLR Tengai off-road spares, desert bars, tank, centre stand, s/s pipe, why. Tel Barry on 0860 676793 or 0163 556 9729 (Berks)

Wanted Kawasaki KLR250D manual desperately needed for service schedule and handy tips, have you got one for sale? Tel John on 0122 357 3443 (Cambs)

Wanted someone to join me exploring or as a guide, Shrewsbury/Oswestry area, quiet 4-stroke rider, new to area. Tel Andy on 0174 386 1110 (Shrops)

Wanted KTM 620 Adventure 1997 model, any cond considered. Tel Graham on 0173 784 2478 (Surrey)

Wanted anyone breaking Serow, various parts needed, following stolen/recovered, good prices paid, private, now selling XR200, £700 and XR250, £1450. Tel 0127 388 2986 (Sussex)

Wanted big tank for XR600, 35 ltr or larger, also cam shaft for 1991 XR600, will consider complete cylinder head. Tel Andy on 0031 11325 1332 (Holland)

Wanted Yamaha TT600, drum brake model, 1983/4, low mileage, good condition, will pay good price, can travel. Tel Shaun on 0162 860 2001 (Berks)

Wanted for '95 DR350, sidenav, orig Suzuki plastic fuel tank, enduro headlight, 36mm Mikuni flat slide carb, any other bits considered. Tel Steve on 0170 243 4169 (Essex)

Wanted DR600, KLR600, or something similar to p/x or swap for 1986 VT500, T&T. Tel David (after 6 pm) on 0175 476 1231 (Lincs)

Wanted for XLR600R RFVC engine or bottom end to convert to elec start, would consider a non-runner. Tel Allan on 0181 330 3106 (Surrey)

Wanted trail rider, do you fancy trail riding in Spain, October 3-12, share ferry costs, 5 people going. Tel Mick (eves) on 0158 258 5188 (Luton)

Wanted back wheel for KDX200C1, 1986 or later model, with disc caliper master cyl etc to convert. Tel Paul on 0154 558 0195 (Dyfed)

Wanted luggage rack to fit Yamaha XT250, genuine workshop manual for Honda XR500S, blue orig front fender for Suzuki DR400S, also Yamaha XT550, red or white, UK spec, must be in exc cond. Tel David on 0190 449 0764 (Yorks)

Wanted engine crash bars for DR800S and any other spares. Tel Adrian on 0181 641 5266 (Surrey)

Wanted BMW R1100GS tank bag and hard panniers, will consider R1100RS panniers and exhaust (which can be made to fit), off-road riding gear such as jersey, trousers, body armour, also f & r wheels for Suzuki TS125/200R. Tel Glenn on 0190 824 2678 (Bucks)

Wanted large Acerbis tank for a Yamaha XT350 please. Andy Barron, 9 Riverside Court, Keswick, Cumbria, CA12 5NS

Wanted KMX125 f & r wheels, also rear shock, must be in good cond, cash waiting. Tel Paul on 01851706429 (Stornoway)

Wanted panniers & exhaust for XTZ750, also wanted clutch basket for XR350. Tel 01225 707092 (Wilts)

Wanted f & r wheels, Supertrapp exh (or similar) and s/s headers to fit XR600R. Tel Dave on 01432 341791 (Hereford)

Wanted complete exhaust for DT125 LC 1/II, also plastics for both mk1 and mk2 DT LCs, and any other bits considered. Tel Callum on 01620 860856 (E Lothian)

Wanted 1985 Suzuki RM250 engine or whole bike for spares/repair, anything considered. Tel 01271 883301 (Devon)

Wanted TBM issue one, my friend's wife threw it away! Tel Dick on 01737 822312 (Surrey)

SPARES

Armstrong MT500 rolling chassis, everything except engine, B-reg, good cond, red/black, T&T, £450. Tel Peter on 0177 271 2812 (Lancs)

Cylinder & piston for Husky 350, 4-stroke, 1995, good cond, £100 ono. Tel Gary on 0148 865 8667 (Berks)

KMX rear wheel complete with disc, needs new rim, £30. Tel 0128 354 3562 (Staffs)

Suzuki DR400, X-reg, basket case, 90% complete, does run, new swing arm bearings (not fitted), spares or repair, £175, no offers. Tel 0130 235 9857 (S Yorks)

Sidi off-road boots, size 46, top of the range, as new, £80. Tel Justin on 0186 933 1445 (Oxon)

Honda XR600 lowering link with needle bearings and sleeves fitted, £50. Tel Charles on 0171 274 2756 (London)

XR600 Super Moto, 17" wheels, Akront rims, Honda hubs, Bridgestone radials, as new £425 ono. Tel Darren on 0170 387 3401 (Hants)

Kawasaki KDX125SR genuine manual, DEP sports can, front sprocket, some hoses, £35 the lot, may split. Tel 0190 822 5341 (Bucks)

Husky 510 1988 model, tank, seat, rad scoops, rear wheel, side panels & airbox, offers. Tel Anthony on 0126 874 6104 (Essex)

Suzuki DR600 service manual, £20. Tel 0181 991 0707 (London)

XL125S engine spares, stator, £25, camshaft, £15, layshaft, £10, were new parts, generator cover, £10, barrel, £20, plus other bits available. Tel Maurice on 0181 807 6838 (London)

Aprilia Trials clip on headlight, new, £30, Yamaha DT250MX crankcases & gearbox, £40, Honda MTX125 exhaust, complete, £65, Suzuki RM80, air cooled, complete electronic ignition system, £85, RM80 expansion chamber, chrome, £30. Tel 0150 569 0004 (Scotland)

XR400/600 Supermoto wheels, Talon hubs, Akront rims, Pirelli Dragons, superb cond, £495 or swap for standard XR400 wheels and cash. Tel Clive on 0147 657 8216 (Lincs)

Mikuni flat slide carb, KLX300R, £200 ono, also CRD exhaust, front & tail pipe, £200 ono, postage not included. Tel Mike on 0163 977 1549 (S Wales)

Kawasaki speedo, brand new, cost over £100, will accept £40. Tel 0190 822 5341 (Bucks)

DR350 spare metal tank & footrests etc. Tel 0181 641 5266 (Surrey)

XR600 Supermoto wheels complete with tyres, sprockets, disc & spindle, £325. Tel Ramon on 0122 238 8744 (S Wales)

Single bike trailer, includes ramp, tool box, straps, lightboard, mini wheels, etc, very stable, good cond, £60. tel Jason on 0797 073 9399 (Herts)

Shed clearout: Yamaha XT500 engine, rebuilt, v good, £250, XT500 stainless exhaust, £70, Yamaha SR250, engine & carb, £40, Honda XL250S, bottom end, barrel & piston, £40, Honda XL250 Motorsport, engine & carb, £75, Honda XL250S, petrol tank, as new, £35, SL125, petrol tank, f & r mudguards, v good, £60, SL125, engine, v good, £95, XL185 frame, s/arm, yokes, tank etc, £35, Motorsport tank, s/arm, chrome, exhaust, wheels, seat, mudguards, high capacity plastic tank etc, delivery can possibly be arranged. Tel 0158 021 1906 (Kent)

Bike rack, Dave Cooper senior, 60cc to 600cc, includes tail board, £45 ono, Evolution off-road jacket & jeans, XL/36", purple & black, never worn, featured in TBM27, cost £200, sell £130, T-Pro body armour, back, chest, shoulders, elbows & knees, used three times, cost £95, sell £65. Tel Stuart on 0152 754 4287 (Worcs)

Kawasaki KLR250, 87 for spares or repair, eng needs work, manuals inc, £600. Tel Simon on eves 0117 9614304 (Bristol)

Brand new Oxford 'Enduro' magnetic tank bag & cover, fits most trail bikes, £35, also 19" MT21 £20, 17" Mich Desert £30. Tel 0181 761 8689 (SE London)

Honda XL185 engine fitted with 200cc conversion, £75, may split. Tel 01635 866816 (Berks)

XR350 forks with yokes wheel and tyre (drum brake). Tel 01225 707092 (Wilts)

Back issues of TBM, £1.50 inc postage. Tel Mark on 01752 822218 (Cornwall)

BMW F650 pannier frames £40, R80GS tank/fairing panels £45, Suzuki SP/DR400 forks free, RM80D big wheel & 83 forks/wheels. Tel 01452 862023 (Glos)

XR400R FMF Megamax exhaust, vgc, £100, also Gaerne SX evolution boots, size 9, white/blue, worn once as new £75. Tel 01929 550924 (Dorset)

