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D I R T J U N K I E S

# TBM

TRAIL BIKE & ENDURO MAGAZINE

£2.20 APRIL 1999

ISSUE 45

## KLX300R

Lightweight Thumper  
On Test



# CRM 250 AR

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want to complain about pot-hunters. I'm not talking narcotics here, but about the guys who knowingly enter themselves in a lower class at hare & hounds events, just so they can scoop the silverware. Now I'm not a bad loser (matter of fact I'm pretty good at it), it's just I can't see the point of coming first in a class where you know you're way better than the opposition - not that it happens to me all that much (ahem).

I'd much rather be last expert than first clubman anyway. Why? Because who cares if you can beat slower riders? My aim is always to try and beat faster ones, then I'll be happy. I've lost count of the number of results I've received on our fax machine recently where the top sportsmen riders would comfortably have placed in the expert class. And you end up with the bizarre situation we've come across recently, where a rider who entered the clubmen class would actually have done better if he'd entered the experts! That surely can't be right?

The only fair way of doing things would be to not have classes at all (at the entering stage), but simply to have everyone riding the event as a whole. Then, when the results are drawn up, the organisers could simply draw a line under the top 20 say, and call them experts; the next 75 riders could be clubmen and the remainder sportsmen - or whatever percentages were appropriate. Organisation-wise, it would be a whole lot simpler, not to mention heaps fairer.

It would of course be impossible for a ringer to ride for a class win by holding back a little, because at any stage in the race, they'd never know exactly where they were placed compared with other riders, or indeed what class they'd end up in at the finish. And in the event of a good rider collecting a lower class award by default (because of a bike problem say), they'd simply be expected to hand their award to the next rider down who'd finished the event.

There are those who say that this would result in the same people winning trophies each weekend, but the best riders will always win, that's not going to change. And anyway, creating an artificial class at your club just so you can enter it and win doesn't make things any better, you just prevent the next guy below you from winning anything because he's not quite as good as you.

Ultimately, if you want to win trophies you need to go on improving, and as you get better you'll find yourself making your way steadily up the list. When you think about it, you've got a much better chance of winning a class award by gradually improving or accidentally landing it, than you have of winning a class which is stuffed full of ringers. Get my point?

So it's up to organisers and club officials to do something about it. It shouldn't be possible to win a class unless you come lower in the results than the bloke at the bottom of the class above (DNFs and oddities excepted, of course). It's a much fairer way of going about things, it doesn't distort the classes (nor class sizes), and it prevents the genuine error of entering an inappropriate class (either up or down) at an unfamiliar event.

Mind you the organisers already have their own secret weapon against class cheats... it's called the club trophy. I don't know about you, but for me the thought of winning a gold-effect, plastic cup, topped with a guy wearing a cork-lined helmet and wheeling a 1974 CZ, is incentive enough to steer clear of class wins. Know what I mean?

**Si Melber**



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Distributed by:

**USM Magazine**

**Distribution Ltd,**

**0171 396 8000,**

Printed in England by:

**ROWE THE PRINTERS**

**TrailBike Magazine**

is published on the first day of every month by Extreme Publishing Ltd, Registered in England and Wales,

**Company No:**

**3051747.**

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**ISSN 1359-0324**

## 6 NEWS

Some more gossip and other stuff...

## 8 LETTERS

Your views in print, come on, tell us what you think about things

## 14 TALKING DIRTY

Chris Evans gives us tips on 'raising your game'

## 16 TRAIL TIPS

This month - a sensible chain mod, a KMX200 tip and how to avoid a muddy milk shake...

## 18 NEW STUFF

Baggy trousers, and not the sort Suggsy used to sing about...

## 22 BRECKLAND ENDURO

Round one of the British Enduro Championship

## 26 KLX300R - GREEN LIGHT

Four-stroke enduro bikes aren't always big and heavy, as Si Melber discovered...

## 32 KLX300R - GREEN GODDESS

KLX300R Racing Parts, we track down a special built by enduro champion Laurent Charbonnel

## 36 BREAK FOR THE BORDER

Alex Marr quit his job in the city and headed off to Africa on his XR400...

## 44 HONDA CRM250AR

Honda's Active Radical 250... on test

## 50 SET UP & GO

How to set your bike up just right...

## 54 STAFF BIKES

Si Melber on the newly acquired CRM250CR and Blez going on about his XR, and his better halves KTM125...

## 60 HUSQVARNA TE410E

First test of Husky's new middleweight 400 by one Crasher Cornish...

## 64 FRANCILIEN FROLICS

Racing between wine tastings with our French correspondent Paul Blesshard, hic...



# Contents

**APRIL 1999**

**ISSUE 45**

## SNIPPETS

### ★ Fast Females

Girls, don't miss the chance to get your entries in for the '99 Ladies Enduro Championship which begins this year on 6 June with the Powys enduro in Wales. Round two is at the Welsh Two-Day, and that's followed by the Brechfa and provisionally the Natterjack enduros. And don't think you aren't good enough to enter - all women off roaders are eligible for this championship which runs to clubman schedule and sportsman distances. The Motorsport for Women club will be running a refuelling syndicate at the Welsh Two-Day (and possibly a creche syndicate too) for any lady riders in the championship who need help with back-up and support. Contact Coral Powell on 01686 689145 for more details.

**C'mon girls, why not sign up for your own championship? Er... Don't forget your race-shirts though.**

### ★ Diary Dates

Regs are out for the Welsh Two Day enduro on 17/18 June. This historic event takes place midweek in and around Llandrindod Wells in Wales. With a 165 mile lap on day one and a 130 mile lap on day two, the Welsh is one of those unique and unmissable events, which everyone should ride once. If the weather is good, the going's easy, but the last two years have been run in horrendous conditions. Even so, last year's event still attracted nearly 450 riders on all sorts of machinery (inc sidecars), so if you want to take part send an SAE (quickly) to Mrs Anne Kilvert, Windy Way, Nantoer, Newtown, Powys, SY16 1HH.

★ Two fun enduros you might want to know about. If you're thinking of going to the BMF Rally in Peterborough on 23 May you can turn up and enter a fun enduro which takes place on the showground in front of 25,000 people! Likewise the Garden of England Show which takes place on 20 June and offers another fun but in this case, more challenging course. Details of both events from Martin Christie, at 36 Cheltenham Place, Brighton, BN1 4AB.



### Enduro News

★ Back to School  
Ady Smith is running one of his excellent enduro schools near Stevenage in Hertfordshire on 17/18 April. The event takes place at Lordship Farm, Bennington, and riders are welcome on any dirt bike fitted with MX or enduro tyres. Interested parties can ring Ady direct on 01283 813760.

### Staying Out

★ There wasn't room in last month's Rough Guide to mid Wales to include the information on accommodation in the area, so here it is:

#### Places to stay:

The Lion Royal: tel 01597 810202 - secure parking in barn  
The Horseshoe: tel 01597 810982 - secure parking in courtyard  
The Cornhill: tel 01597 810869 - secure parking for bikes only  
Liverpool House: tel 01597 810706 - secure parking for bikes possible  
Brynteg: tel 01597 810052  
Camping, Wyeside Park: tel 01597 810 183 - £5 per night inc hot showers

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# Dear Trail Bike...

Got an opinion? Then write to: TrailBike Magazine  
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## Getting Even

Dear TBM  
Top mag. Just subscribed, so it must be good. The reason I am writing is to report an attack on one of our group when we were riding Breast High Road (BOAT number 355003) in Cumbria recently. The basis of the attack was that a total lunatic came out of nowhere and set about our mate, then he stole the keys from his ignition and ran off with them. Turned out he was a local land-owner who has taken it upon himself to single-handedly stop people from using a public right of way.

The tip? If your bike has a key ignition, run a strong cable-tie through the key and fasten it to your handlebars, so if some loony tries to run off with your keys, they won't manage it.

It turns out from talking to the ROW officer, that the land-owner is making quite a habit of this type of action - some funny people about aren't there? When we finally caught up with the guy he tried to tell us this was the first time he'd done this, and that he'd only taken this action because he's a poor farmer, loss of subsidies, government grants etc - the lying b\*\*ger.

In case you're wondering, we got the key back, but that's another - rather more violent - story. Needless to say the lads will be making full, but legal use of this route regularly with the blessing of

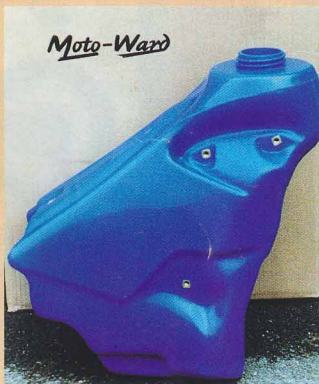
the local ROW officer. Ride free.

Mike Clarke  
Co Durham

**If it had been me I'd have stuck the key up his butt and said: 'How's that for "Where there's muck there's brass?"'**

## Tanked Up

Dear TBM  
I have recently purchased a Yamaha WR250K (98 model), but the 7L fuel tank has a limited range of around 50 miles. Do you know of any companies which supply aftermarket fuel tanks of larger capacity than the stock items?  
Chris Wilson  
Derby



**Try Moto-Ward on 0181 399 0630, they offer a range of tanks from 11-14L specifically for the WR and YZ models.**

## Sweet & Sour

Dear TBM  
I'll start by saying what an

excellent magazine TBM is, I've subscribed since issue two, it's straight to the point, informative and a good price. However the reason I'm writing to you is this.

I recently purchased a secondhand Suzuki TS200R from a grey importers on the strength of your review in issue three. And what an excellent bike it is, although mine was fitted with alloy rims whereas yours were steel. (Ours was a French bike rather than a Jap import - ed).

The problem is though, the powervalve assembly on mine decided to let go in a big way, smashing the top of the piston and causing severe damage to the engine internals. Thankfully the bike came with a 12 month warranty which just happens to cover power-valve assemblies (phew). But now I can't seem to find anyone who can supply the parts. A number of advertisers in TBM seem to be quite happy to take the order for parts, note down my credit card details and quote a delivery date, but when it comes down to supplying the goods, they never arrive. This has happened to me a number of times, from brake pads to air-filters either incorrectly supplied or never arriving at all.

The only good thing I've got from these companies is that they say power-valves and pistons seem to let go on this particular model as a matter of course. It's a shame you didn't mention this in your review of the TS200R - or perhaps you were none the wiser.

Here's Crasher demonstrating just what happens when the powervalve sticks open on a TS200R!



Anyway at least you know now, and I know much to the loss of my valuable trail riding time.

This whole grey import experience has left a very sour taste in my mouth, so I shall be selling the TS and staying well clear of grey imports in future. At least with an official import DR350 I'll get the assurance of readily available spares.

I would be interested to know if other dirt junkies have had the same sort of problems with their 'greys'. Anyway keep up the good work and best of luck for the future.

Jon Knight  
Salisbury, Wilts

When we tested the TS200R in issue three Jon (back in 1995), my guess is that there were only a handful of them in the country, and the short time we got on it (it was a reader's bike after all), we were unlikely to have come across power-valve problems. That said I can understand how you feel about having to wait for spares though you appear to have had reasonable service from your dealer (what with the warranty etc). Other readers have mentioned problems obtaining Suzuki spares in the past. Mind you a DR350 and a TS200R are no different in one respect: both are built in the same factory in Japan, so obtaining spares for one

should be no more difficult than for the other. The TS200R was an official model in France and indeed a fair number of them were sold, so parts should be readily available in Europe. When we spoke to Suzuki GB on your behalf they told us: 'As long as you've got the part number we can place it on special order for you and get the spares you need.' Time to visit your official Suzuki dealer we reckon...

## Losing the Front

Dear TBM  
Many thanks for nearly a year's worth of subscribed copies, I find it a great deal more relevant than the usual glossies who seem to concentrate their efforts on hype and world champions rather than riders who are mere humans like the rest of us. I regularly use your maintenance tips, while the bike reviews allow me to dream of new machinery I can't yet afford.

I cut my teeth in local enduros on a 92 KDX125SR (de-restricted), but have recently been bullied into buying a 94 KX250 by my MX buddies so I can race more often in both MX and enduro disciplines.

I have just one question of a technical nature: every time I fall, and I do with monotonous and surprising regularity, I invariably twist my head-set (sounds painful I know). Rather than ride on with handlebars, forks and front wheel pointing in various different directions, I waste valuable time trying to straighten the whole affair from the front with the front wheel between my knees, rather like one would with a bicycle.

I know that the stock answer would be to stop

# Dear Trail Bike...

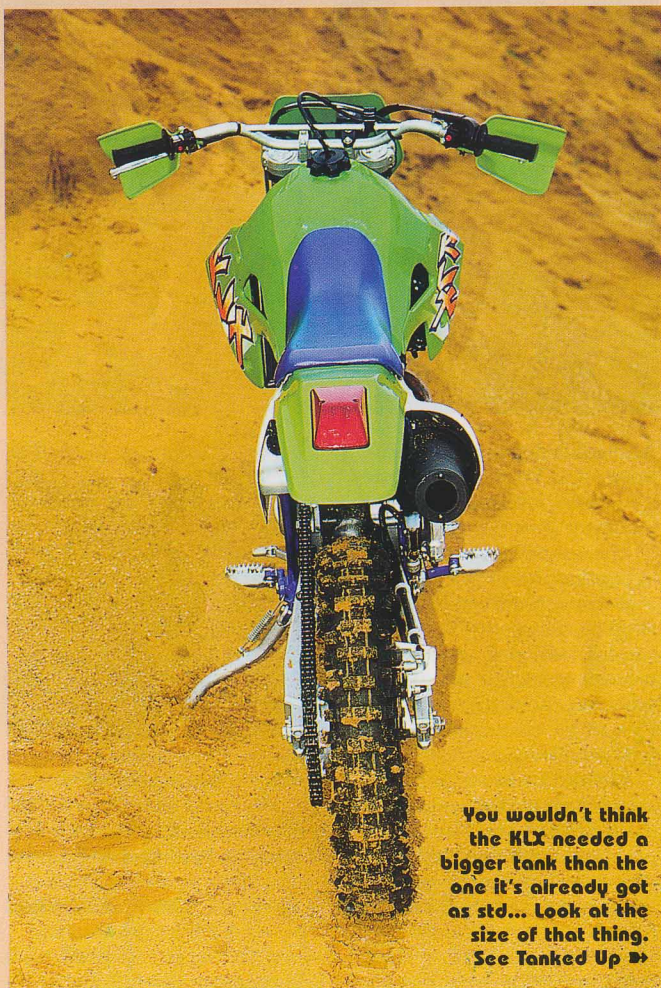
falling off, and I have tried tightening every nut and bolt on the front of the bike, but to no avail. Could someone please explain how to avoid or rectify this situation which is ruining my berm-roosting technique.

Oh, and any pointers for wiring up UFO head and tail lights to a KX so I can compete in the heavily oversubscribed British Enduro Championship rounds wouldn't go amiss either. Keep up the good work and continue to cater for the ordinary rider. We all love our off-road motorcycling and constantly reading about world champions can be more than a little off-putting. Many thanks. Spike Corsie Ipswich, Suffolk

Sounds like the front end is under slight tension to begin with Spike, and every time you come off it simply springs back into a 'relaxed' position. The '94 KX has a slightly sturdier front end than later models so the chances are it isn't permanently bent, but it's worth checking. Also now would be as good a time as any to check your head races are in good condition, so start by putting the bike on a stand and stripping the front end down. Check the head bearings for pitting, add a little fresh grease and then reassemble the forks and triple clamps making sure that the clamp bolts are tightened bit by bit (rather than one bolt at a time), using a torque wrench.

Then before attaching the front wheel, climb onto the bike and 'sight' down each fork leg to ensure that everything is straight (both the legs and the clamps). Finally re-attach the front wheel ensuring that the axle clamp bolts are nipped up evenly (ie not

one side then the other, but bit by bit). That should cure it. Lights are fairly easy to fix to a KX, but assuming you want them to work you'll need a lighting coil. Try Pro-Racing on 01327 301322 for the bits and advice. Good luck...



You wouldn't think the KLX needed a bigger tank than the one it's already got as std... Look at the size of that thing. See Tanked Up ➤

## Tanked Up

Dear TBM Firstly I'd like to congratulate you on producing an informative and impartial view of biking. Having read all the mainstream biking press, it's refreshing to find some good journalism for a change.

I'm a recent convert to green-laning and now own a KLX650R. This is an excellent bike - somewhat better than I am - but I would like some advice on a few aspects of the bike:

- 1) How to increase the range. No-one seems to supply big tanks for the KLX, are there other tanks which will fit?
- 2) How to increase the headlight power. It's fitted with a standard 30W bulb which is feeble. Of course there's no battery so lights are driven from the generator, but how do long distance desert racers manage when it comes to night-time riding?
- 3) I want to get some 17" wheels made up for road use but is there a problem with using tubeless tyres fitted with tubes - I have heard this can cause overheating?

Your help with the above would be much appreciated, keep up the good work... Brian Bowen Bath

Despite having an unbelievably wide tank as stock, the KLX650R only holds about 11L of juice. Acerbis make an aftermarket tank for the KLX650C (the electric start, trailbike version), which holds 16+L and might be persuaded to fit (the frames are actually slightly different), but Acerbis importer Bert Harkins Racing (01582 472374) should be able to tell you more on that point.

As to better lighting,

because the KLX-R only has a basic lighting kit, you really need to boost the power output from the generator. Probably the best way of going about this would be to transplant a lighting coil and associated wiring from the trailbike version, then get an auto-electrician to help you fit it. There would undoubtedly be a bit of messing around required, but once fitted you would enjoy decent lighting or could fit auxiliary lamps (like the Baja racers have). A word of warning, don't try fitting a more powerful bulb to your existing headlamp because you'll only melt the plastic lens. Go for a proper glass unit or use auxiliary lamps.

Finally, there's no problem fitting tubes into tubeless tyres. The tyre manufacturers don't recommend it, but every supermoto bike uses this system, and we've never heard of anyone having a problem - even at track days where the tyres get pretty hot. If you want more info on the KLX650R, we tested it back in issue 30 (Jan 98), and back issues are available by sending three £1 stamps to us at our usual address...

## Ride more - Work Less

Dear TBM Chaps Great mag and general top job you're doing all round! But enough of that, could I have some advice please? I have recently become a dad for the first time (which in itself is pretty cool), but has put predictable pressure on my dirty time with my year old XR400R. I only get out and play about once a fortnight, having put about 2000km on the bike so far. I keep the chain well oiled and correctly tensioned, jet wash

the bike about once every other outing, and liberally apply WD40 once it's dried off. Oil and filter changes have been carried out at 500km and 2000km so far.

What I wanted to know was what is the minimum amount of routine maintenance I should be undertaking to keep the bike in good all round nick, and 'er indoors' happy with the amount of time I spend in the garage in order to continue this arrangement for the foreseeable future?

To date, all seems to be hanging together nicely, but I was wondering whether there was any simple lubing or fiddling about that might save me time and expense in the longer term and/or prolong the life of vulnerable parts?

Also as the rear tyre begins to show signs of wear I would be very interested in your 'What's the best tyre choice for what particular use article' that you've been promising us for a while now! Look forward to your comments. Rob McLennan Hook, Hants

Well Rob, the XR400R is a pretty sturdy bike when all's said and done, requiring far less periodic maintenance than some machines. That said, there are a few things I would advise you to do from time to time. Drain the carb float bowl after you've ridden in wet conditions because water always gets in somehow. Check spoke tension from time to time with a spoke key, and obviously take a look at your air filter (even if it's only a visual check) after every ride. The XR400R has no grease nipples on the suspension linkage either, so at some stage (say once a year), it'd be a good idea to pull that apart and apply

# Dear Trail Bike...

some grease to the joint pins. I suppose the same could be said of the headstock bearings, and if you're not pulling the wheels off regularly and lubing the bearings, at some stage you'll probably need to replace these. But other than that I don't think you have too much to worry about, given what you're already doing.

As for tyres, we will eventually get around to doing that tyre test soon (c'mon, we've only been promising it for three years), so I can't specifically recommend one brand of tyre over any other right now (as we've not tried them all). What I can tell you is that recently we've been using tyres from Trelleborg and Bridgestone on our own bikes (both knobbies and enduro tyres), and found them to be excellent in terms of grip and wear rates.

## Ouch!

Dear Si  
I recently made the transition from tarmac to trails, and have noticed that one of the things about riding dirt is that you fall off a lot - at least I do! Now I'm lucky enough to have both a nearby enduro course to play on (the farmer rents it out to riders at a weekend), as well as The Ridgeway nearby. Giving me the chance to find all the challenges a beginner could ask for - especially a beginner on a Honda XR250 Baja who hates being overtaken.

Now don't get me wrong,

I'm not a bad sport, I just like to keep up, and for the best part I do. It's just that it gets me into trouble every now and then. One of the things about riding off road is that the same section of trail or track can change from week to week - trees come down, roots get exposed, muddy puddles get deeper, that sort of thing. And as a beginner my specialities appear to be nose-diving off jumps and reversing down very steep hills after knocking the bike into neutral half-way up.

My most recent accident happened at the practice track. After three hours of solid and speedy riding, the bike and I were still in one piece, I hadn't suffered a single nose-dive and all the trees were still upright and accounted for. Then no sooner had my paramedic mate (who also rides a dirt bike) just left for his supper than I dislocated my knee attempting to get on my bike to go home.

Having put the knee-joint back in place myself (not recommended for the squeamish), I had the embarrassment of ending up in the local A&E department where my girlfriend works (not much sympathy there I can tell you). So now I'm out of action for five weeks, my girlfriend thinks I'm an idiot and my mate's busy thrashing my bike 'cos he's sold his. There's no justice in this world...

Simon Jones  
Headington, Oxford

At least you'd had three good

hours of riding. Crasher once took both him and me out of an event when he torpedoed me from behind after we'd covered less than five miles - and we were both in the same team...!

## Going Solo (pic)

Dear Si  
I was interested to see your Wiltshire route in TBM43. Last October, four of us made our way down there to try out the other Wiltshire ride you published back in issue four (now sold out - ed). Our research had shown that little appeared to have changed since publication, and an excellent two day's riding was enjoyed - thank you.

We stayed at Manor Farm, Burcombe, having also obtained the details of accommodation from the original article, and I don't hesitate to recommend it. A lovely house, charming hostess, excellent food and a warm welcome to responsible riders. If the animals aren't in for the winter, you may also be offered covered parking for bikes and vehicles.

On a slightly different note, I have always been one to advise riders not to ride on their own, but a few weeks ago I had the choice of doing so or missing out on a day's ride. Enthusiasm overcoming common sense, I elected for the ride, but fortunately a bare minimum of tools was added to the rucksack at the last minute - the lanes around Crowborough in East Sussex



can be quite challenging. One rocky step and a badly bent chain guide later, I was stuck for nearly an hour with a badly jammed chain. At least it wasn't more serious damage or worse, an injury. But it made me think!

Keep up the good work and keep riding with a friend. All the best...  
Dick Coles  
Surrey

## B.A.D.

Dear TBM  
You will doubtless have heard of the Born Again Bikers (BAB), well at the ripe old age of 36 I decided it was time to return to the fold and become a Born Again Dirt-biker. It only took the slightest encouragement from my better half (when I hinted on the petrol savings to be had on two wheels). Little did she know what I had in mind.

This was all back in March last year and it was at this time that I first came upon your excellent magazine, I haven't missed an issue since. By June, after careful consideration, I became the owner

of a brand new XR400RV, and apart from some minor carb problems (which were soon resolved), I am made up with it. The bike has proven an excellent compromise for my 35 mile a day round trip, all through the winter, commuting and occasional trail riding trips in the Hampshire area. With only limited time to play I am still honing my skills at my own pace and enjoy every moment - I reckon to get out once every couple of weeks.

But my original rear tyre has just reached the end of its life and your advice on its replacement would be appreciated. You seem to have rated MT21s highly in the past, but has anything better hit the market yet - bearing in mind the amount of road use I will put it through? I realise that any off road tyre is not going to last very long on tarmac, but are any particular tyres better than others for my purpose?

Thanks for a great read, by far the best dirt magazine on the shelf. Please add me to your subscriber listing...  
Ray Burnett  
Fareham, Hants

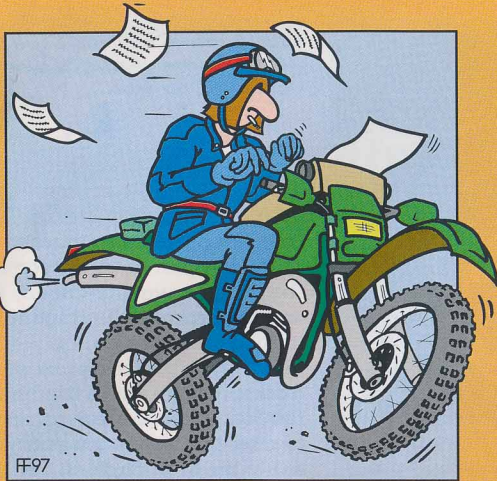
Look carefully and you'll see what happens when you go riding on your own...

Cheers Ray. For sure there are more aggressive tyres for winter off roading than MT21s particularly when it comes to finding grip in mud. But for the purposes you describe, and in particular the amount of road-work you do, the MT21 is the best compromise dual sport tyre we've tried so far. Blez had one break up on him recently when it was fitted to the MuZ Baghira, but we put this down to their combined bulk, plus Blez's inability to travel anywhere at speeds less than warp factor ten. In most cases with a relatively light bike like the XR4, the MT21 should be perfect for what you describe.

## Winter Warmer

Dear TBM  
Just a quick note to say thank you for such a good magazine. A friend of mine who had a KL250 kicking about unused has now stated a preference for dirt riding rather than thrashing around on his ZZR1100. Yes, there are a large number of us out here who also own big road bikes, but when it comes down to it, we've realised you can have a lot more fun on a KDX, DT, XLR than on a FireBlade, EXUP, TLR1000, 916 etc, without half as much risk to your license. I feel your mag has gone a long way towards making the winter months much more fun for all of us.  
Cheers  
Tim Gooderson  
TRF Lifer, Kent

Cheers Tim. But I didn't realise the TRF were handing out life sentences now...  
Er, only joking lads!



who was better than me - let's face it, they're two-a-penny - and so for my first outing I accepted the invitation of my French mate Cyril. Unfortunately Cyril isn't just a lot better than me, he's a lot better than virtually anyone you care to mention. Last year in his first national season of enduro he won the French National 'B' category and recently finished ninth in the infamous Gilles Lalay Classic. He's also an extremely nice bloke (on the GLC for example he let his training partner past to take eighth place and £2000 prize money), and so I foolishly believed him when he said he'd take it easy.

In fact the ride started off calmly enough with some fairly straightforward forest tracks that Cyril attacked at a reasonable pace. Turning regularly to see if I was still there he gradually upped the tempo so that despite the March chill and the lightweight jacket I was wearing, I started to do a Blez-like impersonation of a boil-in-the-bag salad. Still... after an hour or so of high velocity riding, I got the distinct impression that my 'game' was indeed being 'raised'. And although I was struggling to stay with him, the effect on my riding was proving highly beneficial. For once my mind was totally focused; all I could think about was keeping Cyril in sight which meant that I forgot about technique and rode instinctively. It was as if I was running on automatic pilot, and as a consequence, I rode with a fluidity I'd rarely managed to achieve before.

Eventually we came to a series of quarries where Cyril likes to train and the riding got a little more technical. With just a few weeks to go to the beginning of my raid season, I'd made it very clear that I wasn't about to take any risks, but Cyril nevertheless had me tackling stuff I wouldn't normally contemplate - which is another crucial element in the 'raising your game' stakes.

It all started to come unravelling however when my guide became my tormentor and started taking me up ever-longer (and steeper) climbs. A couple of near disasters later and the spell had been broken. On reaching the top of yet another brain-out, one-in-one ascent, Cyril turned round to see me still at the bottom, arms firmly folded and bottom lip stuck out defiantly. An individual's game (and especially this individual's game), can only be raised by so much.

And there's the rub. As the 'Take a horse to water' clichés amply testifies, while anyone's performance envelope can be pushed to a certain degree, there comes a point

where, in one session at least, you just can't improve any further. Cyril tried persuading me that I was perfectly capable of accomplishing the climb up the side of a rockface which Chris Bonnington would have had second thoughts about, even suggesting an alternative and (marginally) easier route. But eventually he realised I wasn't going to budge, so I took a break for half an hour while he played Crusty Demons of Dirt, and then we left the quarry for some nearby single track stuff.

By shifting venues we both hoped that I'd get back into the groove and regain some of my confidence. To help things along I attacked as hard as I could, thinking that adrenaline would blot out my nagging doubts and keep me focused. But confidence is a fickle friend, if he doesn't want to come out and play, there's just no persuading him. And when it comes to riding off road, confidence is everything. To borrow a very apt French expression I began to 'crisp up' and the more 'crispy' I got, the more tired I became and the worse I rode.

From long and bitter experience I knew that the next part of the 'lack of confidence - freezing up - getting tired' sequence was the 'big lob' ending. Whenever you push yourself you inevitably get a little ragged, and a bit out of control. Usually however you have more of a margin than you might think and can keep up a good pace. But push it further than that, to the point where you're overshooting corners and missing gears and not only are you actually covering ground slower, but you also start to become a major health hazard. It was at this point in the proceedings that I suggested we call it a day and retire to the nearest cafe for a well-earned 'chocolat chaud'.

Despite a less than perfect ending, I'd proved to myself that the theory worked. I'd learnt a lot from watching a much faster rider at work, and I reckon that if I rode with a rider of that standard once a week for a year, my riding would improve beyond all recognition. However I'll level with you - interesting though the whole experience was, I'm not planning to make a habit of it. You see like the vast majority of you guys (I guess), I ride first and foremost for fun, and certainly not in order to push myself to the limit on a weekly basis. Besides, it's just too demoralising. Impending race programme or no, my fragile ego can only stand so much humiliation.

# TALKING *Dirty*

**If you've ever hit a ball about with any serious intent, you'll know doubt have come across the expression 'Raising your game'. The idea is that by playing with someone of a higher standard than yourself, your abilities are extended and hopefully you become a better player...**

**N**ow as someone who's bashed the odd ball about in his time (some of which weren't attached to my body), I can vouch that the technique actually works. And with something of a race programme approaching this year (okay, three enduros), I was curious to see if the same benefits could be reaped when it came to off-roading. The easiest part of the whole exercise was finding somebody to ride with



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# TRAIL TIPS

**This month a sensible chain mod, a KMX200 tip and how to avoid a muddy milk shake...**

**W**e begin this month with a tip which most seasoned green-laners will already be aware of, but if you're new to the sport, is worth knowing. The front sprocket cover of most trail bikes is badly designed with insufficient openings to let mud and gunge out. If you're riding through claggy mud the chain will pick up a lot of this crud and deposit it inside this cover. One bit of that mud only has to have a small stone in it and you could

riders, they at one time owned KMX200s and were forever having trouble with sticking throttles. Despite trying new cables and twist-grips they couldn't resolve the problem until one day they tried substituting the KMX carb for one from a KDX125. Problem solved. No re-jetting necessary and no more sticking throttles. Simple as that - thanks lads.

Matt Clarke from Stoke Bishop near Bristol sent us this next tip after a problem with his KMX125. 'The trail tip relates to the problem of taking muddy water into the engine through the crankcase breather tube - turning the engine oil into a gritty milkshake. Every time I had a vaguely serious off road session it cost me a tenner changing my engine oil. The solution came from my local Kawasaki centre who sold me a filter and plastic reservoir normally used as an addition to the starting system on a Kwacker road bike. The top nipple of the plastic reservoir fits into the crankcase breather pipe, the filter



**Filter Tips:** A cheap filter may be enough to save your engine from serious abuse...

well be in for a chain jam.

Cutting big slots in the cover, opening up the existing holes or even cutting the cover away completely will not only prolong chain life, it may well save you a derailment as well. Whatever you do, don't forget to remove the cover and clean out the area after each muddy ride, because you'll find all sorts of sticks, stones and other debris get carried in there by the chain, and if you don't clean the thing out regularly, eventually they'll cause the output shaft oil seal to fail.

Now, here's a tip passed on to us by the lads at Leisure Trail in Nottingham. Although they only work with CRMs, like a lot of trail

is inserted into the reservoir and a clear tube then slips over the wide end of the reservoir with the filter in it (see photo).

'On my bike I've also routed the breather pipe over the carb and down next to the frame where the coolant reservoir's located. It's been vertically zip-tied to the frame and now keeps out all the mud and most of the water, even in seat-deep puddles. The reservoir part number is 16160 - 1151 (for the body) and thanks to Avon Motorcycles for helping me with that one.'

Thanks to you Mike for sharing it with us. Remember, keep those trail tips coming in and we'll keep sharing them with all our readers...

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## Baggy Trousers

When it comes to riding gear, we don't usually go in for fashion statements, preferring the simple 'what works best and feels comfiest' school of fashion. So when we heard that 'Baggies' are all the rage in American Supercross, we thought 'so what?' That was until we decided to try a pair out for ourselves. Obviously with Blez having had a fashion-bypass operation at an early age, it was left to yours truly to wear the loon-pants for the photo shoot. And do you know what, they work brilliantly. I don't know about supercross, but I do know that in the average trail riding situation with twigs, leaves, mud and particularly water, making a bee-line for the top of your boots, wearing riding pants that cover the top of the boot makes a lot of sense. As Chris Evans pointed out, they save you from having to clean your boots (well the top half anyway), not that he knows much about that subject - and I reckon they'll probably protect your frame from getting all scratched up as well. Of course they're going to take a pounding, both from the boots' buckles on the inside, and the elements on the outside, so I can imagine the material won't last as long as regular MX pants without getting ripped. I suppose it's a bit like the argument over conventional vs usd forks, everyone will have an opinion on whether they like them or not. Whatever you think of the look, I can confirm that they seem to do the job and they feel well made and extremely comfortable. Better still is that although we tested the MX version, there's a special trail/enduro version available which is waterproof and breathable. Our advice is to order a size larger than normal because ours came up slightly narrow around the knees. Colours red/black, orange/black, yellow/black for the MX ones which cost £94.95; or blue/black for the waterproof & breathable enduro ones which cost £104.95. For more details contact your nearest Sinisalo stockist.

Si Melber

**Bags of Room: Baggies really do work...**

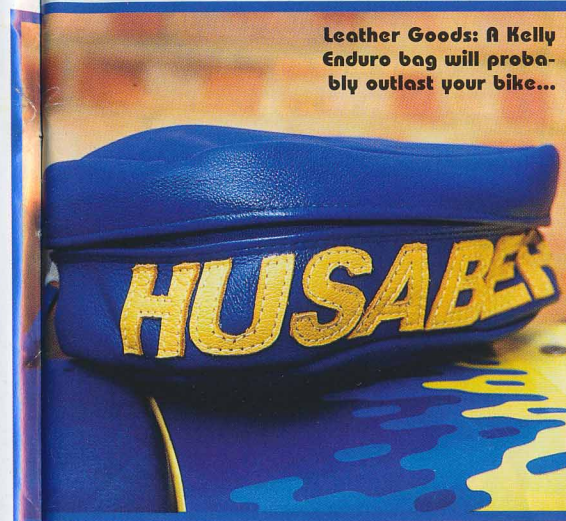


## Chip Off The Old Block

Own a CRM which runs non-standard gearing? Then you're going to need one of these little anodised Dropper Blocks to lower the chain-guide so it works with a larger rear sprocket. The DB costs £24.95, is made from a milled ally block which is shaped to glance off any offending rocks, and comes with its own fitting kit. Go without and you'll be replacing chain-guide blocks monthly. Available from Leisure Trail on 0115 973 2466.



**Leather Goods: A Kelly Enduro bag will probably outlast your bike...**



## Big Down Under!

There are fender bags and then there are Kelly Enduro Fender Bags; the two are (quite literally) worlds apart. Kelly Enduro are an Aussie company who've been making hard-wearing leather bags (both fender and bumbags) for trail and enduro riders for a number of years. The leather fender bags are not only much tougher than anything built out of man-made fibres, they're also bigger in size, which means you can fit in that last pair of pliers or even a big rear tube without a problem. The zips are substantial, the leather is thick and as anyone who owns one will tell you, the great thing about these bags is that often as not they'll outlast your bike, so our advice is get your name stitched onto the bag rather than the make of your bike (like this one). Available in a full range of colours, the leather fender bags cost £49 plus 50p a letter, while the bumbags are a tenner more. Available through OwenSport on 0870 744 6936 and highly recommended.

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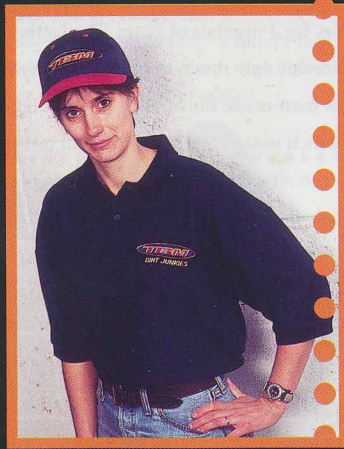
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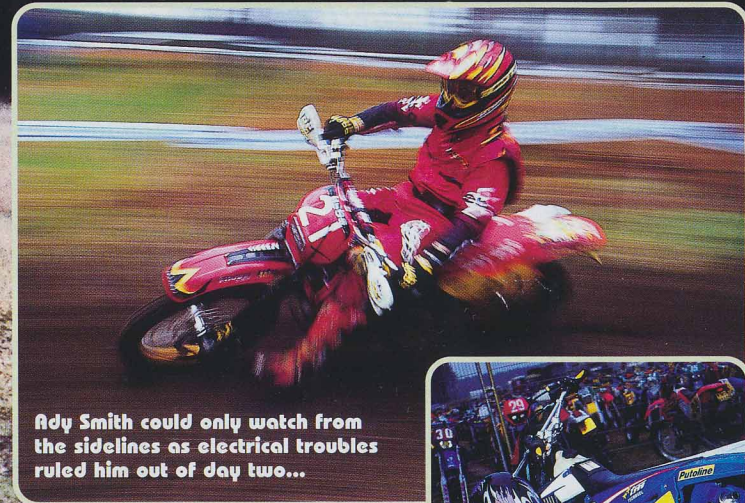
# BRECKLAND ENDURO

**M**anxman David Knight demonstrated he means business this year by blowing away the opposition at the opening round of the British Enduro Championship at Thetford Forest - storming to his first ever Breckland victory.

As usual the Diss club had prepared a superbly laid-out event with a five-check, 50-mile lap and a long special test through the trees. With flurries of snow greeting the 300-strong entry, the competitors headed off on the opening check of the day, the championship class having to complete two and a quarter laps, plus four special tests on day one - the last two tests back to back.

From the outset, Knight (Yamaha 250) stamped his authority on the event with a blistering special test time of 394 seconds - 12 seconds quicker than second placed rider Tim Lewis (TM250), and the only person to break the 400 second barrier all weekend. Wyn Hughes, and Richard Hay were bubbling under, while Ady Smith, last year's winner could only manage fifth fastest. Knight followed this up with two more sub-400sec tests to place him comfortably in the lead at the end of day one.

Meantime with the weather improving, Ady posted a much faster second and third test,



Ady Smith could only watch from the sidelines as electrical troubles ruled him out of day two...



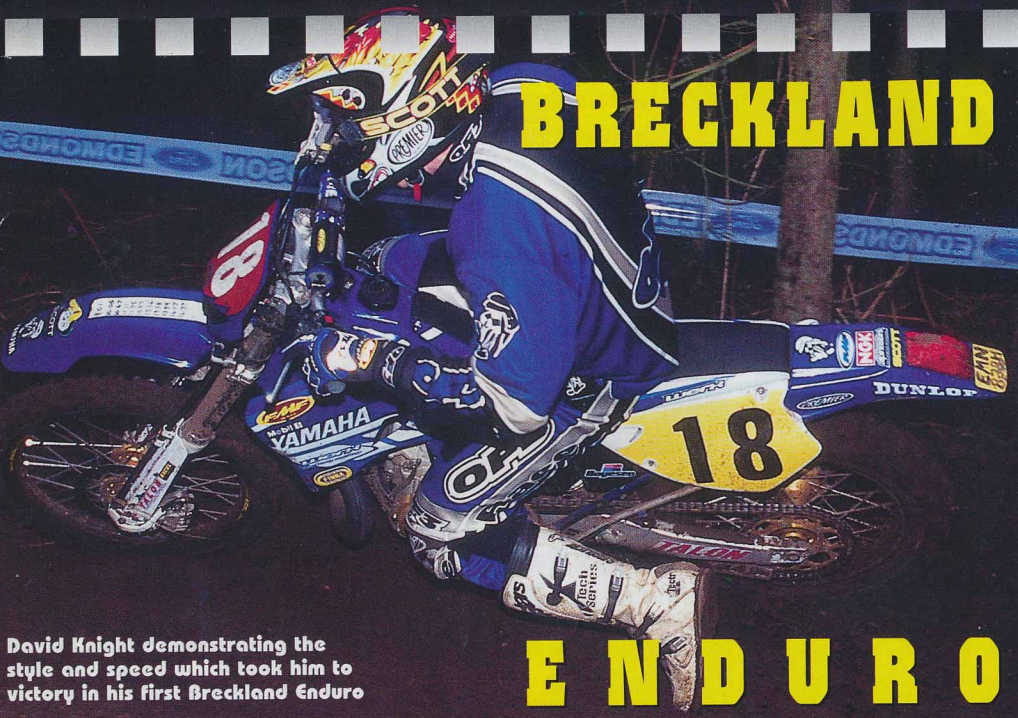
moving him up to second place with John Shirt (Gas Gas 300) in third. Rob Meek, Richard Hay and Mark Vaughan (on a 250 for '99) followed close behind, while Tim Lewis and Wyn Hughes were down in seventh and eighth respectively.

In the four-strokes, Jason Fraser looked on good form on the YZ-F finishing the day in ninth, while John Deacon had the big 540 KTM on full rattle ten places further back. This was also the first year for the new 250cc thumper class with a handful of XRs entered, but too few bikes to really make the class an important one yet.

Out on the going the soft loamy soil was beginning to cut up badly with plenty of tree roots and stumps exposed, and the traditional Breckland bumps beginning to take shape - the following day would prove to be all important.

Day two dawned wet and cold and although the times were relaxed slightly on the tight checks, further down the field many of the riders were struggling to stay on time. Not the championship boys though, all the top contenders would remain clean and the result would rest purely on the specials.

On his first test Ady came out of the blocks flying,



David Knight demonstrating the style and speed which took him to victory in his first Breckland Enduro

**BRECKLAND**

**ENDURO**

aiming to cut back his deficit on overnight leader David Knight, but a spectacular crash three quarters of the way round cost him dear and he was only able to post third fastest time behind Knight and Shirty. Meanwhile Wyn Hughes, not long back from the Gilles lalay, was getting faster as the conditions deteriorated. He posted second fastest on tests two and three despite a crash just yards from the finish.

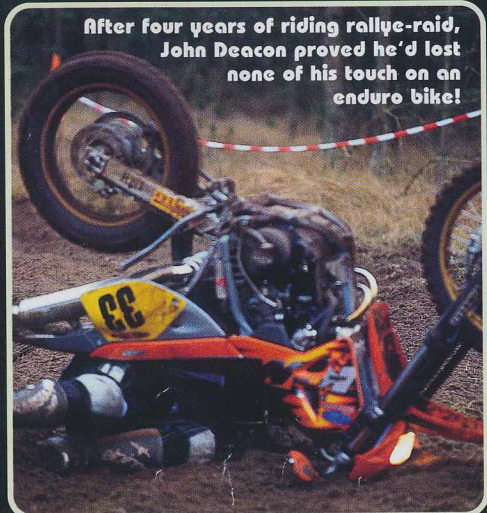
One of the clubmen was also having his share of problems on the special test when his WR400F went up in flames, destroying the bike and temporarily blocking the course in the process.

With the general conditions worsening, the organisers sensibly decided to cut short one of the checks and re-route the field, and it was while on this slack check that the most significant change in the leaderboard occurred. Ady Smith who'd been lying second was forced to retire after his Gas Gas suffered an electrical failure as the result of a broken earth wire - the first time since 1987 that Ady had DNF'd an enduro due to machine failure. Minutes earlier TM rider Tim Lewis clouted a tree stump with his foot, breaking three bones and forcing an early retirement.

So David Knight posted his first Breckland victory with a superb win from start to finish, and takes a points lead onto the next round in Wales. There was a second place for John Shirt and a well-deserved third for Wyn Hughes on the 250 Alfer. Andrew Edwards took victory in the 125s (and sixth overall)

while Stevie Roper won the Expert class on his 125 KTM just ahead of Chris Hockey and Simón Evans. In the Clubmen, Kevin Murray beat Dylan Jones into second place with Rees Williams third. Donna Gray won the ladies class with Dougal Walker winning the best over-40 award.

**Next round: Isca Enduro, May 9**

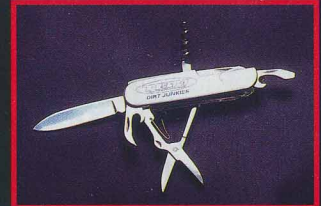
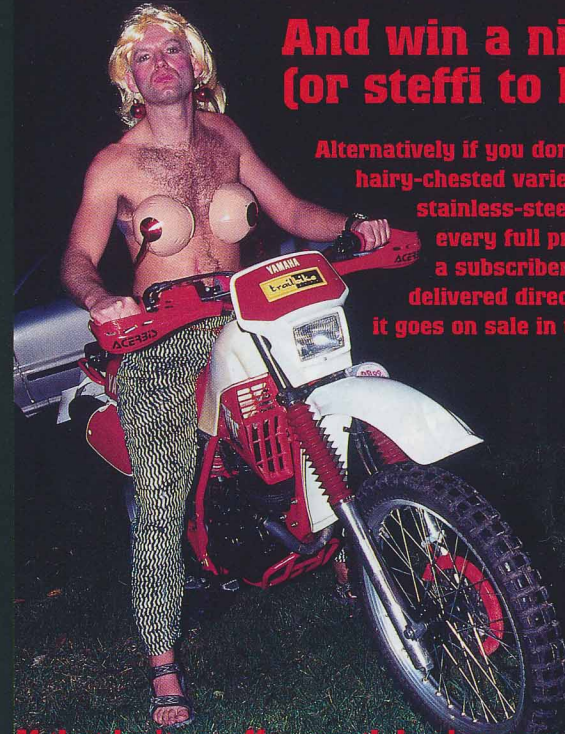


After four years of riding rallye-raid, John Deacon proved he'd lost none of his touch on an enduro bike!

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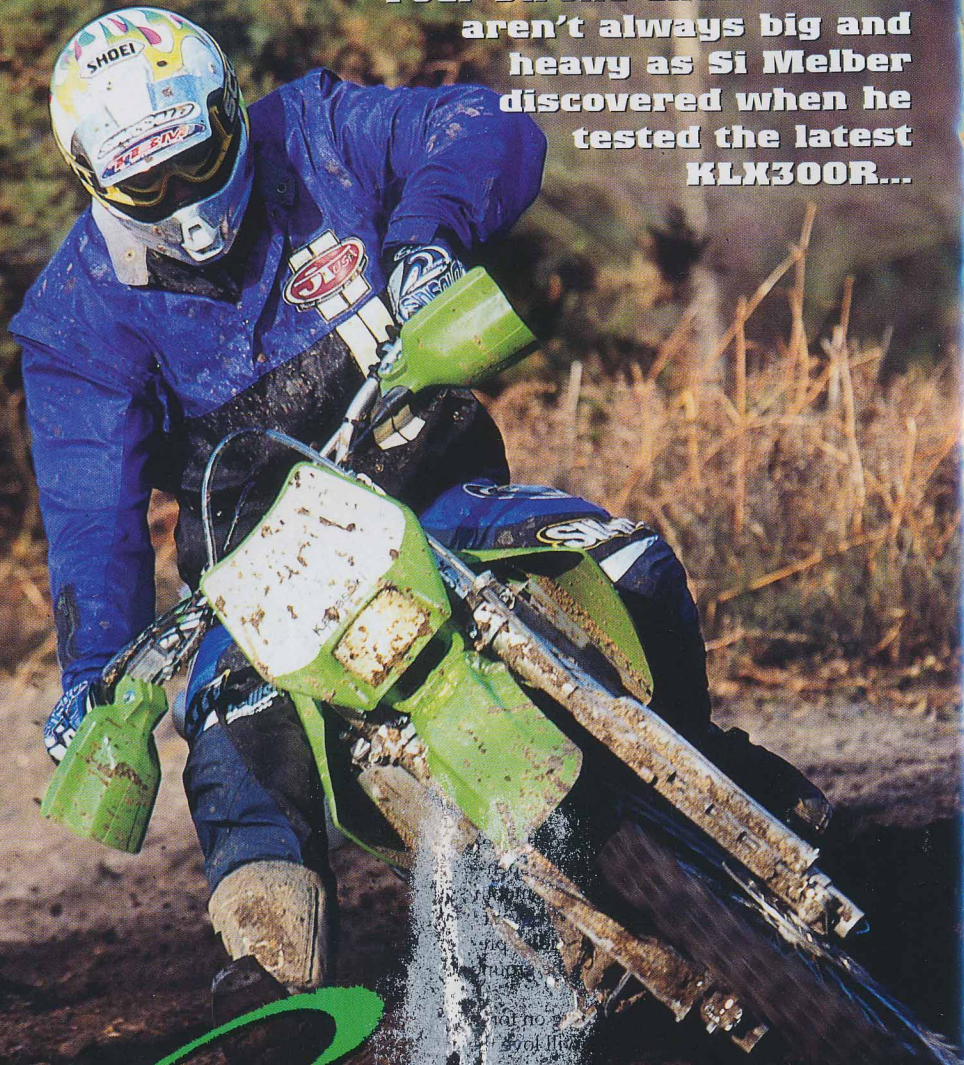
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**Four-stroke enduro bikes aren't always big and heavy as Si Melber discovered when he tested the latest KLX300R...**



Pics: Si Melber

**Green  
Light**

**W**hen it comes to racing (enduros, hare and hounds, whatever), we all like to steal a march on the opposition. I mean if, you're roughly the same standard as the bloke stood next to you on the start line, but your bike is better than his, it stands to reason you're in with a chance of beating him.

So how come that when it comes to lightweight four stroke enduro bikes we don't all ride KLX300s? According to our subscriber database, you guys only purchase one KLX300 for every 16 XR400s you buy. Add in the smaller and lighter XR250 and the figure gets even more distorted - just one in 30. In other words there are very few KLX300s out there, but heaps of XRs. That may tell you something about Honda's reputation, but it's no reflection on Kawasaki's.

So we're going to let you in on a little secret, the KLX300R is a peach of a bike which for the average clubman enduro rider at the average hare and hounds event, will run rings around any XR - two or four. There. The cat's out of the bag. Which is bad news for existing KLX riders (they've just lost their little advantage), but for the rest of us, it's worth knowing.

So what makes the KLX300R such a good bike? In a word... weight - or lack of it, plus great suspension, a stonking little powerplant, a super-smooth torque curve and gearing which is spot-on. Want more? Well it's nice and chuckable, it handles predictably and it's low and easy to touch the ground when you need to.

In fact this last point is worth dwelling on for a moment. Those riders short in the leg will love the KLX's lowish seat height, though it does compromise ground clearance slightly. It's easy to drag a footpeg in a loose turn and taller riders may like to set up the suspension a little stiffer than it comes as standard.

Last year when we tested the KLX300R against an XR400R we remarked how good it felt by comparison. In fact in a race against the clock over a short enduro loop, the KLX actually beat the XR by a couple of seconds (despite giving away a third of its capacity), yet hardly any of you went out and bought them. Our only reservation at the time was that at £4195 it seemed a little pricey for a bike of this capacity. Well this year the price has come down nearly ten percent, making the KLX if not

**Small, light and compact the KLX is a secret weapon in the thumper class**



**Kawasaki KLX300R**

exactly a bargain, then at least a bit more bearable. Officially the KLX costs £3795 (plus £75 delivery charge), but we know of Kawasaki dealers who'll sell you one for just less than £3500 (all in), which sounds like the right sort of money, especially when you add in the cost of a free spares kit, six months parts warranty (virtually unheard of with race bikes) and a free machine set-up day to help you dial the bike's suspension in to your needs. That's still 300 quid more than an XR250, but the KLX is a bit more sophisticated than the humble XR - not to mention bigger in capacity.

But before you all rush out and buy KLXs, there are a few things you should know about. Despite the fact that the KLX would make an ideal trail bike, Kawasaki continue to equip it for off road use only. In other words (unlike the XR) it's not road-ready. The very least you're going to have to do to put one on the road is to fit a dipping headlight, a brake-light switch (and twin filament bulb), add a horn and a speedo. There's actually an odometer driven off the front wheel already fitted to the bike, and we hear that a set of clocks from a DT125R hook up neatly to this cable and give accurate measurements. As for the rest of the road gear, it's a matter of sourcing it from the various advertisers within TBM. Needless to say Kawasaki don't encourage this... but we do.

But don't let an inconvenience like that put you off. Once you've got your KLX300R you'll discover what a fantastic little piece of kit it is. From cold the KLX starts easily - first kick every time. Switch on the fuel, pull out the choke, ease it over compression and then boot it. There's an auto decompressor to help when kicking it over, but thanks to the motor's smallish capacity, it's actually pretty easy to kick-start.

Pull in the light clutch ease it into gear and away you go. One of the KLX's great assets is that it's virtually impossible to stall under normal circumstances. It doesn't bog down, or do that sort-of hiccup that four strokes are prone to, and if you wind the idle speed up just a tad you should be safe from the dreaded stalling. Which is just as well because the KLX can still be a bit of a pain to start from hot. It's nowhere near as bad as the old 250 was, but it can sometimes take seven or eight kicks to get it going if you're unlucky - though strangely, sometimes it fires first time.

In virtually all other respects the KLX is a blast to ride. It's not that it's all that fast, it's just that it makes use of every one of its horsepower to put the power down to the ground where you need it. Total power? Ours registered just 23hp at the rear wheel on the TBM dyno (as opposed to Kawasaki's claimed 33hp), but that's with a very restrictive air-box lid and a quiet exhaust. There's more to be found if you go looking, but even as standard, there's plenty of fun to be had from the KLX's modest output.

Don't get too hung up about the power output, not only is it an unreliable indicator of a bike's ability (and fun quotient), but it's also largely irrelevant off road. What you need is grip and drive and the KLX has that in spades. Point it up a slippery hill and the KLX3 will find traction where there isn't any. Good tyres help, and the Kwacker's Dunlops rate highly, but ultimately it's the engine which fires the thing up hills and here it can't be faulted.

There's just so much grunt available that you'd swear you were riding a 400, and the KLX just pulls and pulls. The power curve is so smooth and linear (all the way to 11,000rpm), with no frustrating flat-spots to overcome, and no annoying steps in the power to make the bike break traction. Just a seamless amount of twist and go.

In fact you find yourself having to change your riding style on the little 300. Whereas with most bikes you need to feed in the throttle carefully as you exit a corner, on the KLX you can just bang the throttle open as soon as you enter the turn, whereupon it'll find grip and propel you out of the bend. And it turns in easily thanks to its modest weight, low CofG, and neutral steering. The bigish tank (there's 9.8L of fuel in there) sits quite high at the front, but it doesn't seem to intrude at all into your riding. Getting forward on the seat isn't a problem, though just for once I reckon the KLX's perch is actually a bit too soft, you can feel the seat base pressing into your bum when the bike's cranked over in the turn.

The standard steel bars are a good couple of inches too wide so there's actually too much leverage at the bars, but then again any sensible owner will have those in the bin quicker than you can say Renthals. Likewise the chunky handguards look old fashioned now and just aren't rigid enough.

Adjusting the suspension to your preferred set-up (it comes reasonably soft as standard) is simple, and there's a full range of adjustments at the rear, but only compression damping adjustment (plus an air

Light weight of the KLX makes this sort of behaviour a doddle



Green  
Light

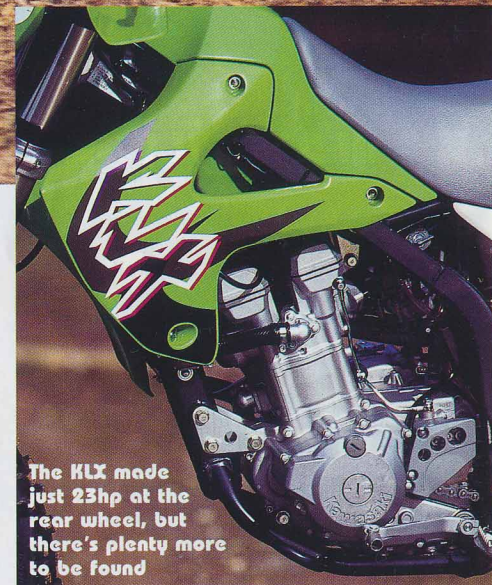
You'll need to fit a proper speedo to make it road legal...



bleed valve) on the front. Access to the air filter is via the seat which is held in place with two 8mm bolts, and like other Kawasakis we've tested, the KLX is designed to be easy to work on - we like that. Oil changes are recommended every 300 miles, and couldn't be simpler to perform. Only the spark plug is difficult to access, stuck as it is, right down in the recess between the two cams.

Like the XR250, the KLX is designed as a play/enduro bike rather than an out-and-out racer - in other words it isn't going to beat a good stroker in an enduro, but up against other four-strokes it stands a fighting chance. But just to be sure that you really could race a little bike like the KLX3, we entered it in a couple of hare & hounds enduros in Dorset and Bucks with two different riders. Here's what happened...

...oh, and a dipping headlight



The KLX made just 23hp at the rear wheel, but there's plenty more to be found

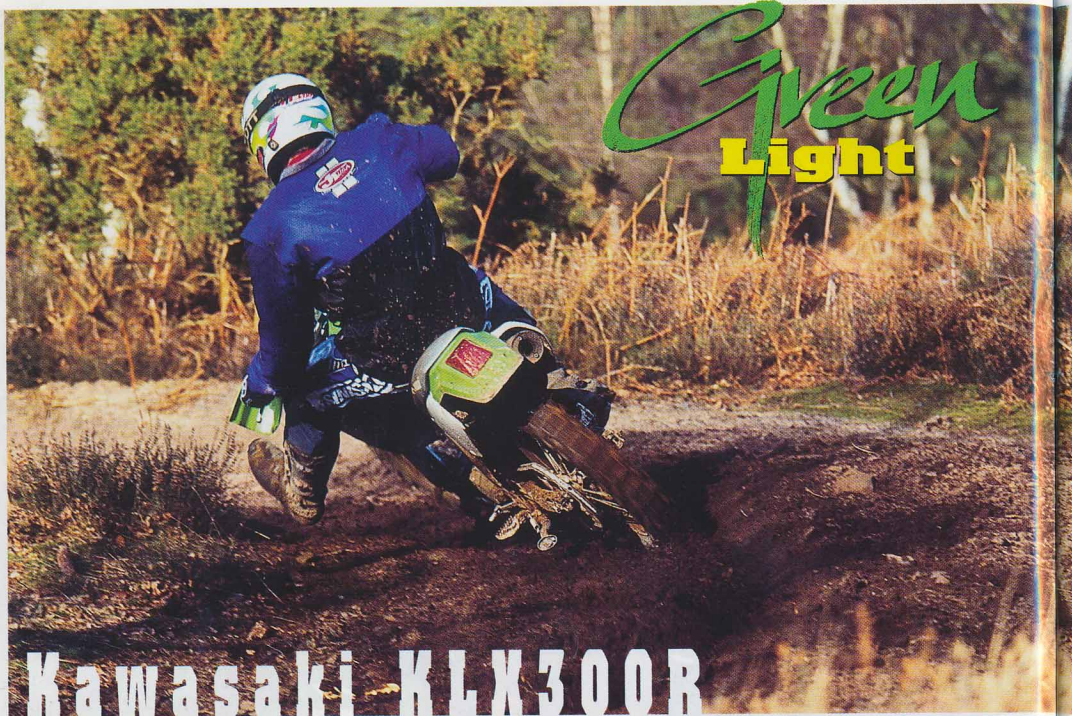
Beefy swingarm is more than up to the job



## Kawasaki KLX300R

Well proportioned and lower than it looks, the KLX should suit a rider looking to get started in enduros





### Round One - Maiden Newton

The Dorset course was great: slippery and a little tricky in places, though not too technically demanding. A mixture of fast open stubble fields, slippery descents, slimy climbs, a bit of woodland and a short blast on an MX track. Three hours to do as many laps as possible. Great.

The blast away from the mass start was a pain since the bike had to be run to get to the start. Sure enough it started first kick from cold in the pits, but took two kicks to get going on the start line (where it was already warm). So I found myself facing a rapidly disappearing wall of CRs which were already 50m ahead of me by the time we reached the first turn. In truth, this and the fast straights across stubble fields were the only times I wanted for more power from the little KLX, everywhere else it felt just about okay.

By the time I reached the first slippery climb there was already a collection of bikes halfway up, their owners struggling on tip-toes to touch the ground with the rear wheels spinning like mad. There was mud flying everywhere, with some riders turning round to get a better run at the hill. Not me. I didn't even have to try. I just pointed the KLX at the slope, stuck it in second and charged up the hill without drama. I'd like to claim it was thanks to my tidy riding style - but actually it was all down to the bike's limited power and solid traction. Still, who

cares when you get up and get ahead of other, more powerful machines eh?

The same thing happened when I got to the slippery descents, where other bikes were locking up and sliding into the fence at the bottom, the KLX could chug down with the clutch home, just using engine braking. And whereas some big thumpers have so much engine braking that it's just like locking on the rear brake, the KLX's mild motor seems to possess just enough to work, but not too much to make the bike want to swap ends every time. I like that.

The KLX and I circulated steadily for about an hour before I dived into the pits to replace my goggles, and took the precaution of adding a couple of litres of fuel. Then it was back onto the course for another couple of hours of slithering around on the chalky clay. There was one long uphill stubble field where the KLX could be held wide open in every gear, and had just enough power to hook up sixth by the time it crested the final rise in the field. Sure, I got passed by a few 250 strokers on that stretch simply because the KLX had less than half their horsepower, but I still overtook a number of other riders by leaving the braking late for the following corner.

And the KLX can really be braked hard. Thanks to its light weight, healthy engine braking and a fantastic set of anchors, you can steam up to corners

leaving it till the absolute last minute to squeeze on the stoppers and still pull-up in time. An advantage which can often get you in front of a rider just as you dive into a wooded section.

And in the woods the KLX is king. Leave the clutch alone and simply point the front end where you want to go using just the throttle. Unlike much more powerful machines which can explode out of your hands when you twist the grip, the KLX is much more forgiving; it tracks over roots and ruts with panache yet will rapidly turn and accelerate when you need it to. Again it's not quite in stroker territory, but then it's much more confidence inspiring than a two-stroke when the ground's slippery, and it'll turn on a Euro.

Slightly more troublesome are the larger whoops which can work the suspension well into overtime. In fact the suspension units themselves work pretty well even at a reasonable chat, but the KLX's short wheelbase, softish set-up and lack of ground clearance limit your attack speed compared to larger machines. One such bump bottomed both ends every single lap no matter how I tackled it, and although it didn't seem to upset the bike's poise, it was pretty disconcerting hearing the loud 'crack' from both ends (and the shorty sumpguard) as it bottomed out at about 30mph.

Then on the short section of bumpy MX track where I'd expected the KLX to flounder, it positively revelled, launching off the rolling bumps and railing the berms, showing a clean pair of heels to a lot of the other, heavier four strokes - weird.

Ultimately with a bike of this capacity and power there's a fair bit of gear-shifting to be done to keep the thing rolling along at any speed. Clutchless shifts on the KLX aren't quite as smooth as they might be and it found neutral a couple of times when I didn't need it (halfway up a hill); but in fairness it wasn't really that much of a problem.

By the end of it all I rolled into the pits with a big grin on my face, and a few litres of petrol to spare - the KLX could've done all three hours on a single tank. Naturally I didn't come in the top ten (I wasn't even close) but on a course with half a dozen long straights the KLX will always lose out to more powerful machines. Perhaps more interesting was that, out of the thumpers, the KLX was fifth in class, with three WR400s and a Husky TE410 ahead. Not a single XR, DR or KTM beat it which must say something about power and traction, though I don't know what.

For me though, even more remarkable was the amount of fun you could have on a machine like the KLX3. It's not the fastest bike out there, but it's got plenty of go, is easy to handle, doesn't tire you out like some bikes and needed nothing more than a jet-wash and a lube of the chain to be ready to go for a second time. Pads, sprockets and tyres should last a reasonable time and I didn't even drop the oil before I handed it over to Si Pavey for part two of our test... Si Melber

### Round Two - Whaddon

The phone rang late on Saturday afternoon: 'Hi Si, it's Si here. My bathroom's just exploded! Do you want my entry for the enduro at Whaddon tomorrow? You'll have to ride the new KLX300 we've got on test.' Did I answer:

1. 'No, sorry, I've got to fit a new kitchen. Or?'
2. 'What time should I pick it up?'

I scorched off to collect Clive and the TBM TM (leaving my other half, Linley, to fit the kitchen), then headed for the palatial TBM headquarters, to relieve a bleary-eyed Si of the shiny KLX. Poor bloke looked like the little boy who'd spent the night with his finger blocking up the dyke.

We managed to arrive at Whaddon slightly late



for the first round of the Cotswold Enduro Club's event, threw on our kit, and signed-on just as the first bikes started. The event was a hare scrambles - the KLX fired up first kick and I left the pits racing. The last bike I rode in anger was my CCM rally bike in the desert, so things felt a little strange at first. Mud, bogs, serious bogs, ruts, a very light bike and small bore power, not exactly what I was used to, but a bike's a bike, right?

And this bike was great. Everything you would



expect it to be and then some. Incredibly easy to ride, great chassis, felt light, and is light. It absolutely carves in the tight stuff, but I never felt any instability at speed, though I never had the bike flat out around the flowing but muddy five mile circuit, and I got the feeling that head shake was unlikely to be a problem.

Suspension both front and rear is nice. By that I mean it's soft and very capable as are most trail bikes these days, but competition enduro standard it is not. When you start to up the pace, it soon starts to wallow in the whoops and the rear shock faded as the day wore on.

The engine is mega friendly - That extra 50cc makes a great difference. It just has that little bit more punch when you need it, to drive through some slop, or chug up a rut. Whereas a 250cc four-stroke really needs to be ridden on the boil all the time, the 300 has enough torque to help you out of technical situations. That said, to go quick you still need to rev it.

Of course, the big question with every four-stroke dirt bike test these days is: 'Does it start?' I dunno. It's so easy to ride, that I didn't get myself into any of those classic situations where four-strokes become hard to start.

The greatest thing about riding this bike is that it isn't tiring and after four-hours I didn't suffer any aches the next day. To me a bike that's this easy to ride just means you can enjoy even more time spent in the saddle. Perfect! **Si Pavey**

*Si Pavey's being a little modest - his result on the KLX was to win the expert enduro class at Whaddon. Which surely goes to prove that a little cracker like the KLX can make even an old dog like Pavey look half decent. Top man, top bike...*

## Kawasaki KLX300R

Price:	£3795
Engine:	Liquid-cooled, dohc, 4-valve single
Bore & stroke:	78x61.2mm
Capacity:	292cc
Transmission:	6-speed
Frame:	Steel perimeter with steel subframe
Forks:	43mm usd cartridge forks with compression adjustment
Shock:	Uni-Trak linkage, fully adjustable shock
Seat height:	925mm
Fuel capacity:	9.8L
Wheel base:	1435mm
Race weight:	115.6kg
Importer:	KMUK 01628 851000

**In France they know a thing or two about building KLX racers. TBM tracked down a very special KLX300R created by French four-stroke enduro champion Laurent Charbonnel, and discovered that you too can have a bike like his...**

**T**he KLX300R has a place apart in the world of four-stroke enduro bikes. More discreet than the 400s from Yamaha and Honda, it has carved a small but important niche for itself (particularly in France), thanks to its light weight and ease of use.

KLX fans will no doubt be delighted with the Racing Parts version; more horsepower, top suspension and an up to the minute riding position. Catch a glimpse of this version in the paddock (dressed up like a KX), and your immediate reaction is: why didn't Kawasaki think of it sooner?

Climb aboard and you immediately realise that the riding position has been transformed thanks to a small fuel tank and a flat seat. Rather than being sat 'in' the KLX with its sloping seat and bulky, high fuel tank you're on a KX, ready to attack. More race-oriented, better looking, more efficient, the seat/tank interface gives the impression of riding a 125 'crosser so that the mighty midget 300 becomes even smaller, even easier to throw around than the standard bike.

The 6.5 litre fuel tank made out of special composite carbon/kevlar material allows a range of about 120kms and will be black in colour on production versions (the model tried was a prototype). As far as the engine's concerned, there's a high compression piston, gas-flowed cylinder head and aluminium silencer which together give a useful power increase of about 4bhp (or +20%). In terms of

**Does that look serious or what? KX panels and a smaller tank transform the thumper's looks. Inset: Hydraulic clutch...**



## Kawasaki KLX300R Racing Parts



# Green Goddess



pure power it's not phenomenal, but the Racing Parts KLX remains easy to use whilst being more efficient and even torquier than standard. The increase in power is especially noticeable at low and medium revs and the tuned version can be kept in a higher gear than the stock bike.

But if more power is required it's possible to fit a different cam and increase maximum power at the top of the rev range: 4bhp more according to Racing Parts. In other words, 8bhp increase in total, not bad (it's 40% up on stock, remember). Any more and most would agree it would destroy the balance of power and handling which makes the little green demon so appealing.

### Better everywhere

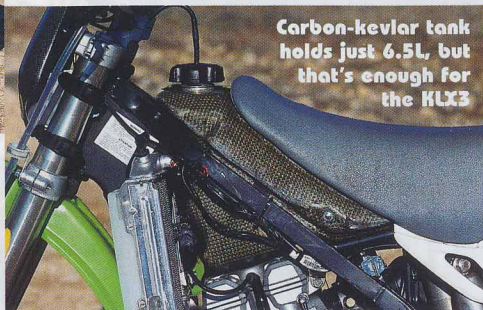
Finally, the suspension has been extensively modified. The standard KLX is fitted with an old-generation cartridge fork, similar to that from a '91 KX. But on the Racing Parts bike the fork internals have



Serious, and fun...

for the test. The response in whoops in the braking zone showed an excellent front/rear balance and brutal shocks were absorbed without fuss - the whole plot feeling much tauter.

So finally the KLX comes of age. Still a delightful little four-stroke, but with a slightly harder edge. Light and easy to ride, poky and superbly suspended, original and good-looking. KLX fans be warned! This bike is difficult to resist.



Carbon-kevlar tank holds just 6.5L, but that's enough for the KLX

been replaced by more up-to-date equipment. The damping rods have been modified to enable the fitting of rebound damping in the right fork leg (the same principle as Marzocchis) to work alongside the existing compression adjustment.

The rear shock's damping has also been modified and the remote reservoir volume increased for better cooling. The Racing Parts KLX now finds itself with 15mm more suspension travel front and rear, not to mention some much needed additional ground clearance.

The builders of this bike are serious enduro riders and have tested their KLX extensively. The result is near perfect: supple and comfortable at the beginning of the stroke, yet compliant and capable under heavier landings. Best of all the suspension gives great rear wheel traction and astonishing grip when leant over, even on the stony tracks which we used

### Special Charbo Motos

Laurent Charbonnel knows the KLX well: French four-stroke champion in '95 and fifth overall with a 300 in '96, he's come to be regarded as the national KLX specialist and is offering via his shop, a limited series of KLX300s equipped with KX bodywork (tank, seat and rad scoops) at £4,500. Contact: Charbonnel Motos on tel: 00-33-4-66651431.

## What changes?

**1999 KX tank, seat, rad scoops:** £300  
6.5 litre fuel tank in composite material; high seat foam optional.

**Stage-1 Engine Tune:** £300

Flowed head, high comp piston, labour included.

**Stage-2 Engine Tune:** £550

Flowed head, re-profiled cams, high comp piston, labour included.

**Stage-1 Suspension Prep:** £200

Damping mods to forks and shock.

**Stage-2 Suspension Prep:** £220

Damping mods to forks and shock, increased travel front and rear, 5-15mm as desired.

**Stage-3 Suspension Prep:** £310

Damping mods to forks and shock, increased travel front and rear, 5-15mm as

desired, change of fork internals and fitting of rebound damping in fork, larger capacity rear shock reservoir.

**Hydraulic Clutch:** £170

Keeps the same lever pressure even under extreme conditions, fits without modifications to original bracket.

**Manual Decompressor:** £200

Useful for starting flooded engines.

**Aluminium Silencer:** £200

For enduro competition use.

**Heavy Duty Clutch Springs:** £17

Wide UFO mudguards: £15 front, £35 rear.

**Full Option:** £1,200

Tank, seat, rad scoops, plus Stage-2 engine tune, aluminium silencer and Stage-3 suspension tune. Contact Racing Parts on 00-334-666-78283.

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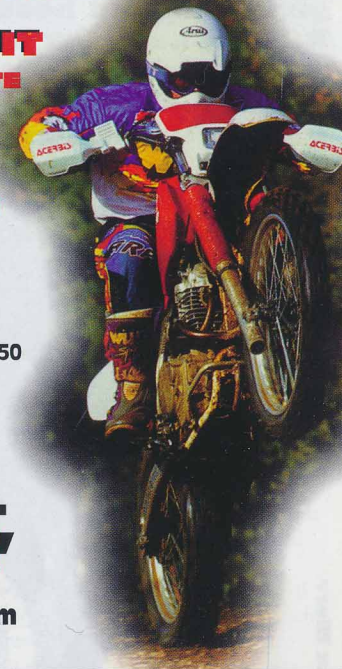
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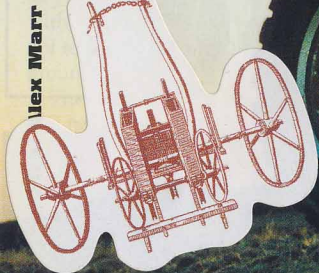
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When Alex Marr quit his city job, chucked his girlfriend and headed off to Africa on his XR400, he didn't know what he was letting himself in for. In this, part one of his travels, he begins his long trek in the 'dark continent'...



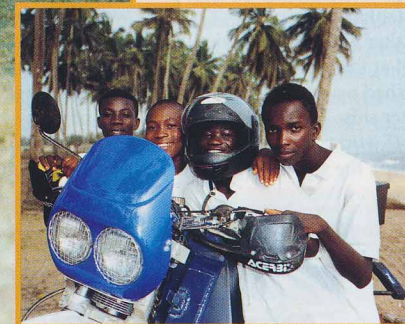
Alex Marr

# Break for the border

Spectacular scenery is everywhere



half of it anyway). It had a 34 litre aluminium tank (requiring a fuel pump), a large fuel filter, stronger fork springs and Talon wheels. I also fitted a Detour headlight unit powered by a Baja Designs uprated stator which gives out a beefy 240W at anything over 4000rpm. Another addition was an alloy B&B exhaust baffle which I had purchased from a certain editor of this august magazine, who had a whole box of them going rusty in his garage. I vaguely remember him saying something like 'twice the power, half the noise' (or was it the other way round) and rather naively reached for my cheque-book. All I can say is that it's a good job there aren't any noise pollution laws in Africa.



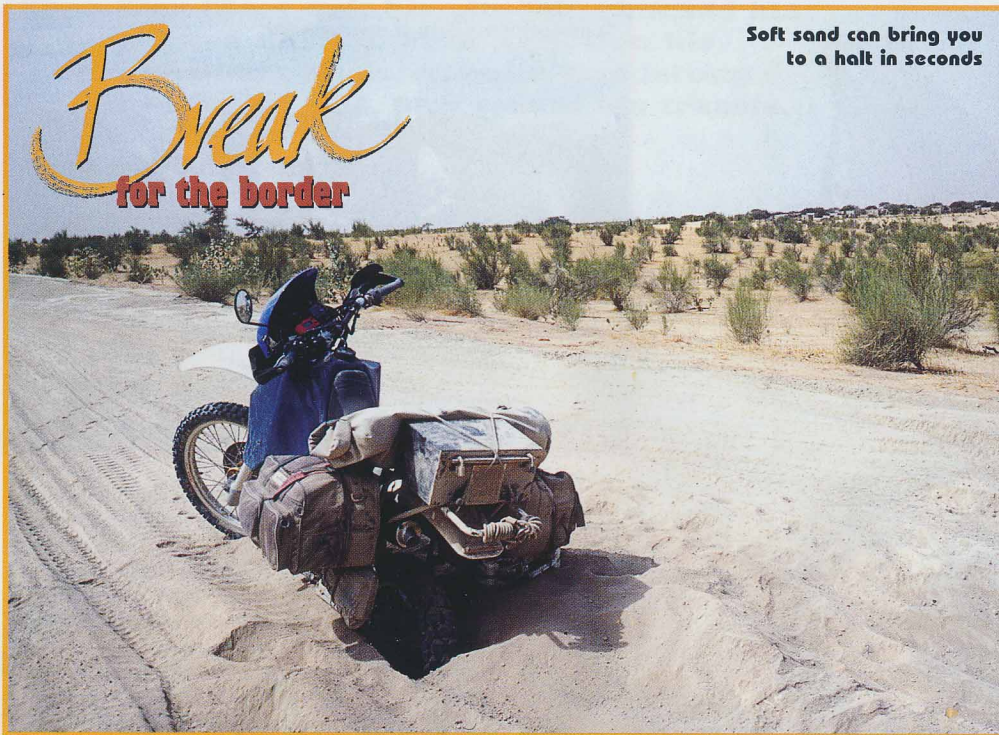
Budding young desert racers

The only major problem with the bike was how to carry the weight of my stuff; the XR400 subframe was hardly built with luggage carrying in mind. So with the help of specialist welders Altech Services in Houghton Regis (Beds), a framework was designed

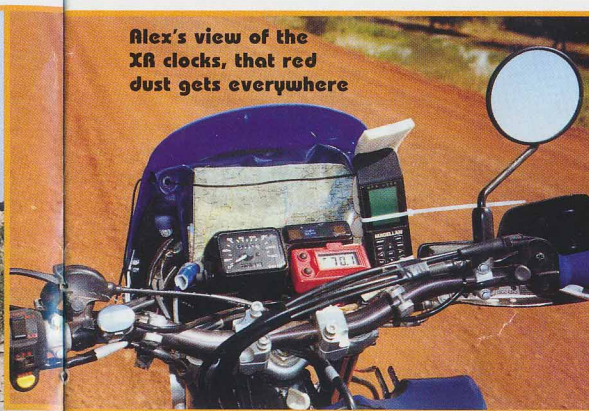
It seemed like a good idea at the time: jack in my job, sell my apartment and ride my bike to South Africa. The thought of another recession-hit English winter and the decision was made. Now three months and 9000km into the trip, stuck in Ouagadougou with malaria, it doesn't seem quite as good an idea. But I suppose it's all part of the experience.

I already had a bike that was in many ways ideally prepared for a long overland trip: a Honda XR400 on which I'd done the 1998 Paris-Dakar rally (well,

which would support two heavy (soft) Oxford panniers and transfer most of the stresses onto the main frame. Altech did a brilliant job with the fabrication and it has withstood a fair battering with no problems at all. I also bolted on a small lockable aluminium top-box at the rear of the seat and fixed a ten litre jerrycan under the left side pannier. When I need to carry spare tyres a rear fits nicely around the top-box and a front sits vertically around the right side pannier. A long tubular Sealine Drybag containing camping gear lies across the back of the seat and



Soft sand can bring you to a halt in seconds



Alex's view of the XR clocks, that red dust gets everywhere

the panniers. The whole thing is pretty heavy but most of the weighty items sit low in the panniers and between the axles and it's fairly well balanced, at least when the front fuel tank is full.

I decided to start from Dakar where I had ended up after my aborted attempt at the rally last year so in mid-October, having brushed up on my French, I left for Senegal on a container ship. I'd been lucky enough to organise a free ride (I worked in shipping until I quit my job for this trip), the ship's crew were

Ukrainian and all to a man thought I was an absolute nutter even getting off the ship. They all hated Africa which was slightly unfortunate as they were on a liner service calling at every major port on the west coast. Still, they were nice enough blokes and would ask me lots of questions like 'how many horsepower inside your bicycle?' in a Russian sort of way.

Actually in the end the ship never stopped at Dakar and I got off in Conakry; the filthy sweatbox that is the capital of Guinea. Some of the Ukrainians were shaking their heads in disbelief at the thought of some violent incident which was bound to befall me while my bike was winched down to the quayside into a crowd of excited locals. My guidebook warned that the Guinea officials were as corrupt as they come in Africa, so it was some relief when the immigration, customs, police and army checks at the port waved me by without a hint of a bribe. In fact this was to become a surprising feature of the trip - in three

months I have been to seven countries and never had to pay a thing to any officials, give or take the odd cigar.

Once out of Conakry, Guinea is a great place - quiet, peaceful, safe and best of all there are almost no tourists. Up in the beautiful Fouta Djallon mountains, I left all my stuff in a hotel and went for a bit of unencumbered trail riding down some remote pistes. I knew I was well off the beaten track when a group of naked kids ran away petrified as I rode slowly past - I don't think they had ever seen 'un blanc' before.

I thought my bike was struggling with the crummy petrol when it started coughing and spluttering, but it turned out to be the altitude; I certainly had no intention of re-jetting the carb. That would be against my principle of XR400 engine mechanics; take religious care of the oil and air and otherwise don't touch a thing. Of course the fact that I wouldn't know what to do anyway has got nothing to do with it. Out of the hills the bike was chugging away merrily as I headed for the heat and dust of Mali.

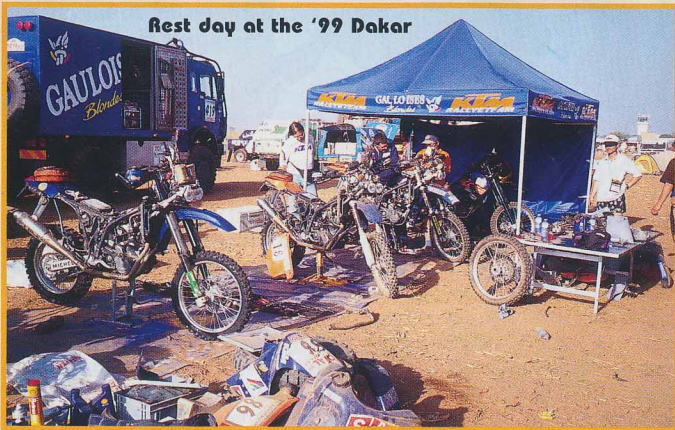
The lure of the desert was still there and once in Mali I decided to go to Timbuktu, a three day trip northwards from Mopti on a steamer up the massive Niger river. The boat, which like most pieces of machinery in Africa was well overdue for its appointment at the scrapyard, arrived at Mopti at ten at night. The riverbank was a frenzy of people and cargo, everything from bags of cement to baskets of mangoes. All had to be loaded up a 20-foot plank of wood, just wide enough for a small child - it was chaos.

The offer of a bit of cash got the crew interested in getting my

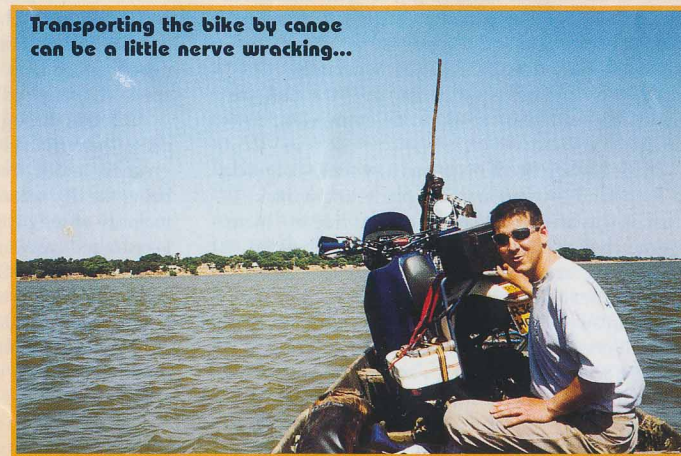
bike on board and somehow it was pushed up the plank without falling into the river. It was strapped onto the railings with the fuel tank resting about six inches away from a stove in the fourth class kitchen, to which a very large woman who looked like Mike Tyson's mum, took violent exception. Nobody was going to argue with her and the bike was taken ashore again as there was nowhere else for it to go. In the end, at three o'clock in the morning, after I'd removed the luggage rack and loosened the handlebars, it was squeezed through some impossibly small gap in the boat's railings and found a home next to some bananas at the front. I retired to my 'first class' cabin - a sweaty box with two bunks which fortunately I had to myself. Not so lucky was an Argentinean bloke who had to share with a Malian army officer who'd smuggled in his girlfriend (presumably of the temporary variety) from fourth class, and made squeaky noises all night on the top bunk.

Another local man filled his whole cabin nearly up to the ceiling with huge watermelons, so he didn't have to pay for cargo space, and slept on top of them. On the second night we collided with a sandy island and later ran out of fuel, and had to be rescued by another boat coming the other way. The two vessels hooked up in the middle of the river to transfer fuel and, ever resourceful, the locals took this as an opportunity to jump between boats exchanging goats, cooking utensils and anything else they could trade.

When the bike was unloaded near Timbuktu I was pretty surprised that it still worked - it had disrupted about half the people on the boat, so I was half expecting sugar in the fuel tank or something similar. It was in Timbuktu that I discovered something even more uncomfortable than an XR400 seat; a camel. The obligatory tourist camel ride into the desert was more painful on the bum than 12 hours

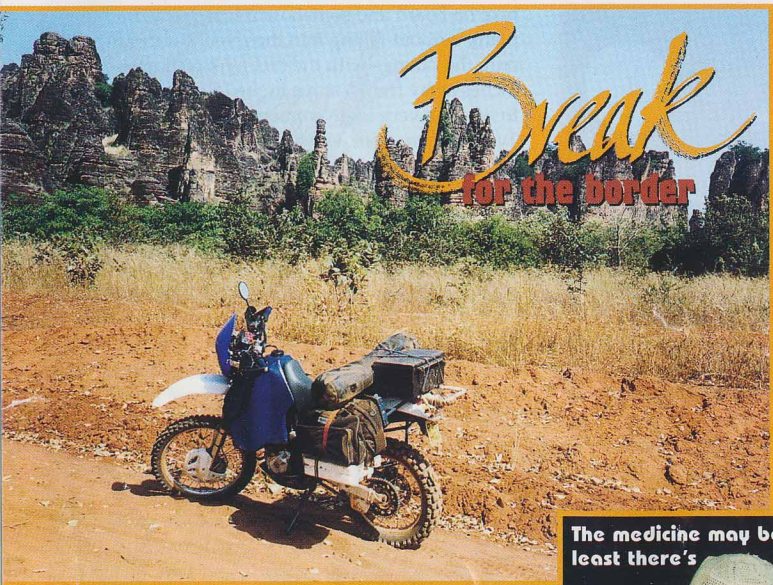


Rest day at the '99 Dakar



Transporting the bike by canoe can be a little nerve wracking...

# Break for the border



The medicine may be rudimentary... but at least there's no waiting lists



on the bike and that's saying something. I arrived late in the Tuareg village that night; ate some odd scoff, drank a lot of sweet tea and then slept in the sand under the stars. Actually you don't sleep much because it's so cold. I should have known; I had an involuntary night in the desert on the last Dakar.

Getting back to civilisation from Timbuktu (unless you're sensible and take the plane) is not as easy as I thought. On the map it was about 200km of unknown terrain to the nearest tarmac road. I started at first light, around 6.30am, and had to cross the river in a pirogue; a long thin boat designed to carry a couple of people and a chicken, not a 200kg, fully-laden motorcycle. The owner knew I had to cross and having a monopoly in the local pirogue business, raised his price accordingly, to some ridiculous level. After a bit of negotiation, and not wanting to return to Timbuktu and be pestered by Tuaregs trying to sell me souvenir daggers, I reluctantly coughed up and held grimly onto my bike. Still, we made it as one always seems to do in impossible situations in Africa.

The following bit of piste was just some 4x4 tracks in deep sand covered in dense plants and a thick crust. It was an absolute nightmare to ride in - there was no choice but to ride in one of the high-sided unforgiving sandy ruts, and it took me ten hours to get to the next bit of road; an average speed of 20kmh in sweltering heat. I almost thought it was worth it once the sand came to an end and I was cruising across dried-up lakes as the sun was setting with a flock of birds flying in front of me like dolphins before a ship. However when I reached Mopti (another two hours on the tarmac) and discovered

how much skin the hem of my Y-fronts had taken off my buttocks, I decided it probably wasn't.

I continued into Burkina Faso, a physically unremarkable country where the people don't live up to their super-friendly reputation; most of them seemed desperately unhappy to see me. Perhaps it was no coincidence that I had my only really bad experience there. A wall of children, ten thick, was blocking a long, straight tarmac road which ran through dense,

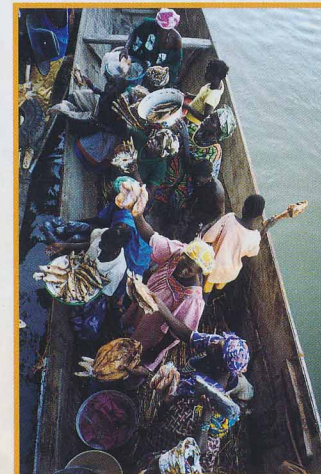
dry bushland. They were highly animated and aggressively excited, clenching catapults or stones the size of cricket balls. Foolhardily perhaps I rode up and asked if I could pass - they refused and rather impolitely told me to go away. As I rode slowly off I was hit on the back. I glanced round and saw a skyfull of projectiles, which then started landing on and around me. There was something slightly disconcerting about being stoned by three hundred people, albeit kids - but with a roar of my baffle I sped off, uninjured, into the distance.

As I rode through the Cote d'Ivoire to the Atlantic coast, the terrain changed from dry savannah to lush greenery and it even rained a couple of times despite being the dry season. The rude unpleasantness of a majority of the people there meant I didn't stay long. I continued eastwards along the coast through English-speaking Ghana where the people are great and there is loads to do and see, into Togo and Benin, where voodoo is still a prevalent part of society. I spent Christmas alone in the stunning Togo mountains, which was good as I didn't get any presents I didn't want.

On Boxing Day, in an isolated village, I ran over a chicken right in front of some villagers. It wasn't my

fault - it just darted out from nowhere straight under my front wheel. I dared not stop for fear that I might have mown down some poor villager's total livestock - run-over by the only westerner to pass that way all year. I just hoped I'd left enough of it unsquashed so at least they could still eat it for supper. I learnt later from a Belgian couple - both very experienced overlanders - that you should never stop if you hit something. Even if you knock down a person you keep going to the next place where there are police and report the incident there. Apparently stopping at the scene of the crime is, in some cases, tantamount to suicide.

I returned to Burkina Faso to visit the Dakar rest-day at Bobo-Dioulasso. It immediately struck me how small the bivouac was compared to the first few days of the rally. With well under fifty per cent of the starters still in the race, there was a much more uncluttered feel about the whole thing compared to when I did it the year before. The British/Irish boys were all in remarkably good spirits considering how knackered they all were. John Deacon looked very



mere rally bike around would be like riding a 125. Errr... well, maybe not.

After helping myself to a nearly new Michelin Desert from the Euromaster tyre-bin, I rode back to Ouagadougou where I was diagnosed as suffering from malaria and intestinal parasites, I thought I'd been feeling a little off-colour.

To be continued...

## Africa by Bike

There's no doubt that a bike is the way to go in Africa. A bike beats a 4x4 on two practical fronts. Firstly, you can more often than not cross large rivers by sticking your bike on a pirogue and being paddled across, and secondly I'm convinced it makes dealing with officials easier. I must have passed through hundreds of road checkpoints and border crossings and never had to give more than a cigarette to get through. There is something about turning up scruffy, dirty, and shagged-out on an overloaded bike which generates a sort of sympathetic admiration in all but the most heartless of officials. Arrive in a shiny new Toyota Land-Cruiser in a nicely pressed safari suit and you're more likely to be treated as a rich imperialist and invited to participate in an underhand bit of wealth redistribution.

There are millions of mopeds in West Africa and the odd DT125 ring-dinging around, but there are virtually no large bikes at all. A fully loaded big thumper is something out of the

ordinary for the locals and people take an interest in you. In the country nearly everyone waves and cheers as you cruise past. In fact, not infrequently I see groups of bare-breasted young women grinning and waving so enthusiastically that it's thoroughly off-putting. If I ever crash, that will probably be the reason.

Reliability has hardly been an issue so far and the bike keeps going with almost boring efficiency. I find it pretty incredible that it's now done more than 25,000km, most of them in Africa, with the engine needing only a new head gasket and valve adjustment before this trip. If it makes it all the way to South Africa, my ultimate goal, Mr Honda deserves a big pat on the back.

Needless to say, within the next week the bike will probably blow up and I'll have everything stolen. Actually that's not altogether impossible as I'm heading for the desert around Lake Chad where 600km of deep soft sand and a lot of nasty men with guns await. Almost as crazy as doing the Dakar!

JOHN DEACON AND

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# IS THIS THE BEST

Si Melber  
investigates



Pics: Gary Stuart

# CRM 250 AR

# TRAIL BIKE EVER?

**T**he hill was a corker. Long, steep, slippery and reasonably tortuous; the track snaked first right, then left and finally right again. A narrow tear of thick black mud running upwards between the trees which we were attempting to despatch first time. In front of me the XR400 was scrabbling its way to the top, tyre slithering in the slime. Russel (the XR owner) had had his doubts; not about attempting the hill, but whether his trials-shod XR would make it up there in one hit.

I had no such misgivings. I've yet to come across a hill on the trail, that the CRM won't simply growl up. Russel, mad-dog that he is, fired his XR to the top with a big grin. The CRM simply tractored up it, as if it wasn't there.

A similar thing happened half an hour before. Another climb, this time shorter and steeper, but lined with the same gloopy mud. I was about a foot away from Russel's back tyre when his rear wheel lost grip, spun and deposited the contents of its knobbles onto my goggles. I couldn't see a damn thing. I stopped halfway up (actually I ran into a bush), pulled down my goggles, engaged first gear and carried on to the top. The CRM simply clawed its way up from a standing start - no worries mate.

No other bike I can think of could've done the same. Because in this situation it's not about power, it's about traction. Traction and tractability for that matter. The CRM-AR has one of the most tractable powerplants we've ever come across. It spreads its power over the ground with a blanket-like delivery, limiting wheelspin and maximising grip. It is absurdly easy to ride on slippery trails.

Well proportioned and superbly practical

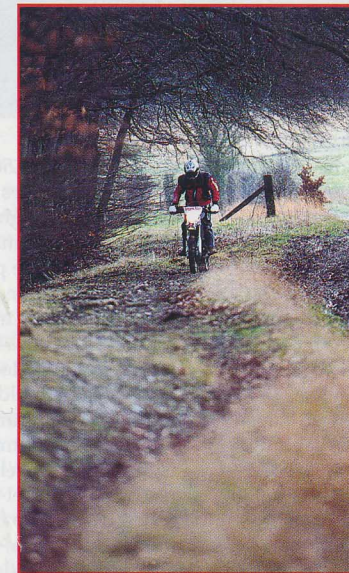


## Decisions, decisions...

Ask yourself, what is it that you look for in a trail bike? Everyone will have their own opinion of course; some require ease of use, others, good speed, most prefer light weight, easy starting, something with plenty of grip, and of course, it's gotta' be fun to ride. It needs to be legal as well, preferably easy to maintain and butch enough to survive the rigours of the trail. Thereafter there are a host of other less obvious but equally valid considerations: noise, reliability, depreciation, good looks, availability, reputation, versatility. You name it, the list goes on.

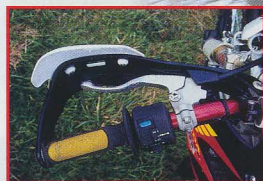
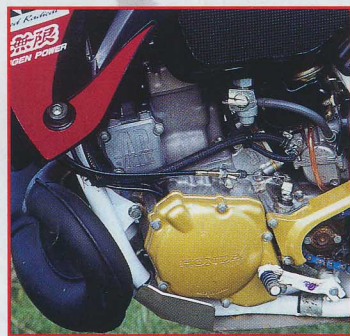
There are any number of bikes that'll match some of the above criteria but the CRM Active Radical matches them all. It's arguably the definitive trail bike, and one of the best all rounders we've ridden.

The bike we had on test wasn't completely standard, but modified for the trail with the addition of a few sensible extras: hand, frame and sump guards, wider pegs, headlight protector, lowered gearing,





# IS THIS THE BEST TRAIL BIKE EVER?



## Honda CRM250AR

Price:	£3800
Engine:	Liquid-cooled, single cyl, 2-str with AR exhaust valve
Bore & stroke:	66.4x72mm
Capacity:	249cc
Transmission:	6-speed
Frame:	Steel double cradle
Forks:	43mm usd Showa forks with compression adjustment
Shock:	Pro-Link, with pre-load and compression adjustment
Seat height:	920mm
Rake:	27.4°
Fuel capacity:	11L
Wheel base:	1490mm
Trail weight:	128kg
Importer:	Leisure Trail 0115 973 2466

**Above: Clocks, engine and switches... that's about it really**

that sort of thing - oh and the indicators were removed. The motor however was bog-standard. In fact the owner usually runs it with an aftermarket pipe, but had removed it for the purposes of this test so we'd be riding a machine which in terms of power, felt absolutely stock.

### Engine room

As standard the peak power output is perhaps the AR's weakest element. notwithstanding the fact that torque is arguably much more important with a trail bike, the AR's modest output of just 25.4hp at the rear wheel (compared to 29.5hp for a standard CRM), certainly looks (and feels) a little flaccid. Interestingly the first time we rode an AR (back in October '97) we reported that it didn't feel as powerful at the top-end compared to the ordinary version, but without access to a dyno at the time, it was impossible to measure what we were feeling. This time we took the AR to PDQ's dyno in Slough (01628 667644) and dis-

covered that at 6,500rpm the power curve just goes flat and stays there for 1500rpm. True, the AR generates slightly more torque between 4,500-5,500rpm, but it makes less from 3,000-4,500rpm.

A glance at the power curve suggests that power is being limited somehow (either by ignition, exhaust, air intake or perhaps design) and there's probably a bit more to come from this motor, if you go looking. Indeed twist off the Dzus fastener holding on the left side-panel, undo three clips and you're into the airbox, which is pretty small by two-stroke standards - as is the filter. As well as a full airbox lid there's a restrictive snorkel in there which should be jettisoned if you want to begin to emancipate a few more horsepower. Replacing the standard (and absurdly heavy) double-skinned pipe with an

aftermarket one and jetting-up accordingly should help release a few more ponies, but I suspect you're going to be looking at a bigger carb and aftermarket CDI if you want to start realising serious gains in performance.

### Moving along...

When you ride the AR you certainly notice the tractable nature of the power, but it's clear that the 'Radical' doesn't shred like a normal two-stroke - that's partly what makes it so user-friendly. The point is you can't have it all. Where most stokers rip hard once they come onto the pipe, the AR just pulls seamlessly. It spreads its power evenly over the entire rev range rather than simply delivering it all in the top half. That's the reason for its tractability, and why it works so well on the trail. It doesn't zing like a normal

stroker, and it certainly doesn't light up the tyre like an enduro bike, but it will put in a decent turn of speed (even on lowered gearing) and it's comfortably brisk on acceleration.

Right off the bottom it pulls cleanly and efficiently, but it's more of a rumble than a rip; the first part of the twistgrip seems to establish the grip and drive, and thereafter the power flows progressively the more you twist open the throttle. There's much less of a step in the powerband than with a normal two-stroke and the power curve is commendably smooth. On the trail this translates into ultimate traction; the AR is brilliant at finding grip on the way out of slippery corners for example, but it's noticeable that it doesn't leap forward in the same way that, say an XR400R will, with the first turn of the screw.



## IS THIS THE BEST TRAIL BIKE EVER?

**Thanks:-** To Leisure Trail for the loan of the superbly prepared CRM-AR. Leisure Trail are CRM specialists based in Nottingham and if you want to purchase a bike from them, give them a call on 0115 973 2466. Also thanks to PDQ for the last minute use of their dyno - they're on 01628 667644, and if you talk to Emma she'll tell you about her own special CRM...



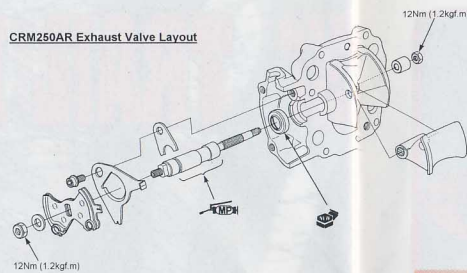
Some people will find this particular trait to their liking, others may not. Me? I find the AR's purchase more or less spot on for tackling the myriad of ground conditions you encounter on the average trail ride. Nail the throttle hard and the AR will certainly respond - just don't expect it to gather revs like a race bike.

### You've been framed

Like all CRMs the AR's chassis is a paragon of virtue. By that I mean it's user-friendly and forgiving on the trail; get it slightly wrong and the CRM won't pitch you off, lose the front end or do anything unexpected. Conservative geometry makes it almost impossible to tuck the front under in tight turns, and if you wash out the front on a slippery corner, it'll often come back again rather than putting you down. Equally however, the reverse is true; the CRM is a pretty slow steerer which requires a certain amount of body english to execute the turn. At speed the bike is rock solid and effortlessly stable - exactly as you'd expect for a machine capable of despatching 85mph on tarmac. This has obvious advantages on the trail; bumps taken at speed don't cause the CRM to head-shake or deviate off course, but the more stable the handling, the slower it is to initiate a turn.

All of this is relative of course. If you're comparing the AR with something like a DR350 then you need to re-evaluate your points of reference. In other words while the CRM may be described

CRM250AR Exhaust Valve Layout



as 'relatively slow steering', it's eminently flickable compared to moving the mass of something like a four-stroke in a turn, and though it's slower to react than some bikes, it never ploughs straight on like thumpers are prone to do.

The suspension is, by trail standards, simply superb. In truth the CRM's suspension has been getting better with each evolution of the bike, so that the Active Radical now enjoys the best mix of progressive damping of all the models.

Never wallowy, the adjustable front and rear Showas offer the sort of feedback which informs you precisely what each end is up to. Our test ride took us (among other things) over a few jumps and ramps, and the CRM never once bottomed out, no matter which wheel was planted down first.

On the regular trail litter: logs, stumps, wet leaves and ruts, the CRM simply rode over them without too much fuss. Like all two strokes it feels light on the front which means it tends to clout less and ride-over more. This alone helps instil confidence into the rider, allowing you to concentrate on watching the trail unfolding before you.

### All together now...

Taken together, the stable, well suspended rolling chassis, and smooth, torquey motor produces the easiest of trail partners; a bike that's fun, fast and easy to ride with excellent stability, good suspension and decent ergos. On that point there's other important stuff I should mention - a comfortable saddle, useful headlight, proper instruments, narrow girth, reasonable range and traditional Honda build quality; all of which make the long term investment in a 'Radical' eminently appealing, though don't expect the standard graphics to outlast the first jet-wash.

But what makes the CRM so good in our opinion is that it gels together so nicely. The styling, and handling match the engine's fluid output,

## Active Radical...? ...Whassat then?

The main difference between the CRM250AR and the earlier 'R' models is the AR exhaust valve and its associated electronic componentry (including a throttle position sensor and knock detector). Like a regular powervalve, the AR uses a servo motor and system of cables to operate an exhaust valve to alter the port height; however this valve assembly is also designed to encourage pre-ignition - where temperatures and pressures are high enough to

enable combustion to occur spontaneously (and independently of the sparkplug). At throttle openings of between 5-40%, the CPU adjusts the position of the exhaust valve to produce the desired cylinder compression for the fuel to reach its flash point - AR combustion: charged chemical particles known as activated radicals (the result of incomplete combustion) begin the next stage of combustion by self-igniting. The lower the exhaust valve sits, the sooner the exhaust port closes, and the higher the (effective) compression. The result is fewer emissions, improved torque and better fuel consumption. Oh, and a deeper engine note!

and the bike is just so damn easy to ride. It'll climb up anything, pick its way through the most technical terrain, and attack the fastest trails with aplomb. I did come unstuck in one of those bike-swallowing bogs where perhaps a ripping stroker, hard on the pipe might've powered through. That's debatable, but in general (certain bogs excluded), the CRM will dig itself out of virtually any hole thanks to the groundswell of torque located beneath your right hand.

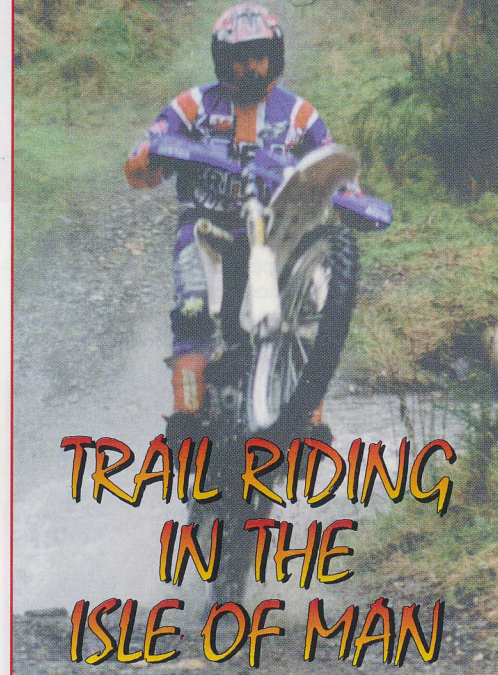
Okay, there are some areas where the Active Radical doesn't perform quite so faultlessly. Get the thing up to any sort of speed, and try lofting the front wheel (over a long puddle say), and you'll find it requires a hefty tug on the bars as well as a solid application of throttle - but it's not as easy as hoisting the front end up on an XR for instance. And for certain there are times when a competent rider would want a little more zip, particularly just at the bottom - to get the bike moving initially.

But these really are minor drawbacks in a well-executed package. The more you ride the CRM, the more you begin to understand just why so many people find them the ultimate all-round trail tool. Whether the Active Radical is any better than a stock CRM depends upon your point of view, but in terms of ease of use, the AR comfortably eclipses the standard bike with its fool-proof power delivery.

Active Radicals now start from around £2700 secondhand, but a new one will cost you about £3800. That's currently £700 cheaper than it was last year, and if the numbers you see out on the trail are anything to go by, that's exactly the price of perfection...

Si Melber

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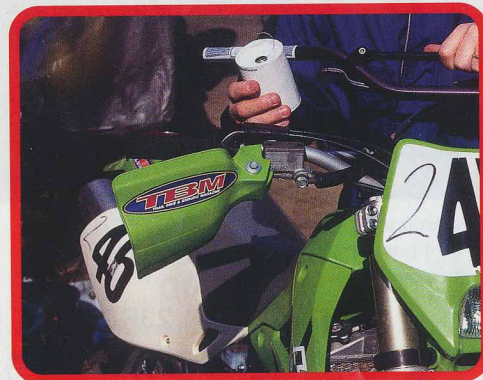
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# Set-up & go

**Y**our bike might have the fastest motor, the smoothest suspension and the trickiest looking graphics, but if you can't operate the controls easily, it's not worth a thing. Setting the handlebars up correctly, with comfortable lever positions and efficient brakes and clutch will make a world of difference to how you ride the bike, conserving energy and ultimately improving your speed and enjoyment...



## Getting started

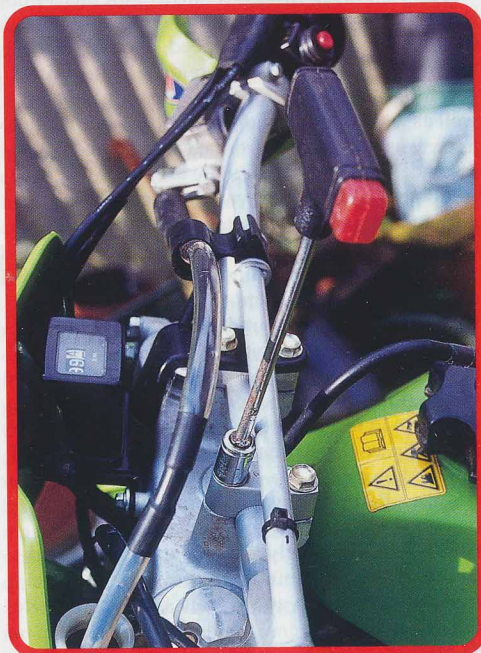
We've used a stock KLX300R for the photos, but if it were our bike, now would be the time to fit a stronger set of alloy bars, some comfier grips (lockwired on), and some wrap-around brushguards. Take your time when purchasing these products, there are plenty to choose from and selecting the right bend and height of bar (for instance) will make quite a difference to your riding.

Don't underestimate the importance of good grips. Your hands will be in contact with the bars for hours on end, and good grips can make the difference between comfy hands or blistered, cramped ones. And don't forget to wire the grips

on, most owners don't bother wiring the grips in place, but the time will come when water will seep under the grip and you'll be left unable to operate the controls properly - worse still if it's on the throttle side. It takes only five minutes a grip to wire them up, and it's a good insurance policy.

## At the Bar

Adjusting the bars to your preferred setting is vitally important. A forward leaning bar will offer slightly more control when standing up, but will feel awkward when sat at the back of the seat over rough ground. The middle (straight up posi-



tion) is the best compromise and a good starting point. By straight up we actually mean following the line of the fork legs, and the easiest way to do this is to put a T-bar on the handlebar pinch bolts and adjust the bars until the cross-brace comes into contact with the T-bar. Small amounts of variation from this point will help you achieve a good, comfortable position.



## Cable & Wireless

There's no point in trying to adjust your controls if the cables are stiff, full of gunge and wearing thin. Begin by checking that the cables are all free-moving, uninked and in good condition - replace any cable that isn't. Clean out the throttle body assembly then re-attach the cables and adjust the throttle freeplay so that there's only about 2mm of movement before the throttle starts working. Make sure that the throttle snaps shut properly and equally, that the carb slide is being opened fully. Put your head down by the carb and listen for the slide to click as it reaches both the top (full throttle), and bottom (completely shut) position.



## Clutching at Straws

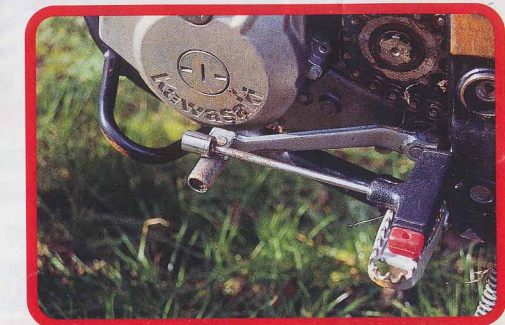
Same goes for the clutch cable (assuming your bike has a cable operated clutch). If the cable is old and the wire has begun to deteriorate, replace it immediately. Not only will it make the clutch pull easier, but chances are, if you don't bother, it'll snap just at the most inconvenient time. On

bikes with a stiff clutch, it's possible to make the clutch pull easier by using a longer lever either at the bar end or equally on the clutch actuating arm. Longer aftermarket items are available for both these parts, or equally you could always cut and weld an extra 3-4mm on the actuating arm itself. Don't try doubling its length (to make your clutch pull really easy), you'll just stop the clutch from disengaging. Always make sure that the clutch lever (at the bar) is inboard of the end of the grip. This is even more important when fitting wraparound handguards which will foul the lever otherwise. Even with handguards fitted it's worth having the lever perches slightly loose so that they can twist in the event of a fall. Lastly make sure there's enough freeplay in the clutch lever. As the clutch warms up the freeplay will diminish and the clutch will start to slip if you haven't allowed enough play. About 5-10mm (measured at the ball end) should suffice, but keep an eye on it when using the clutch a lot.



## Levers Alone?

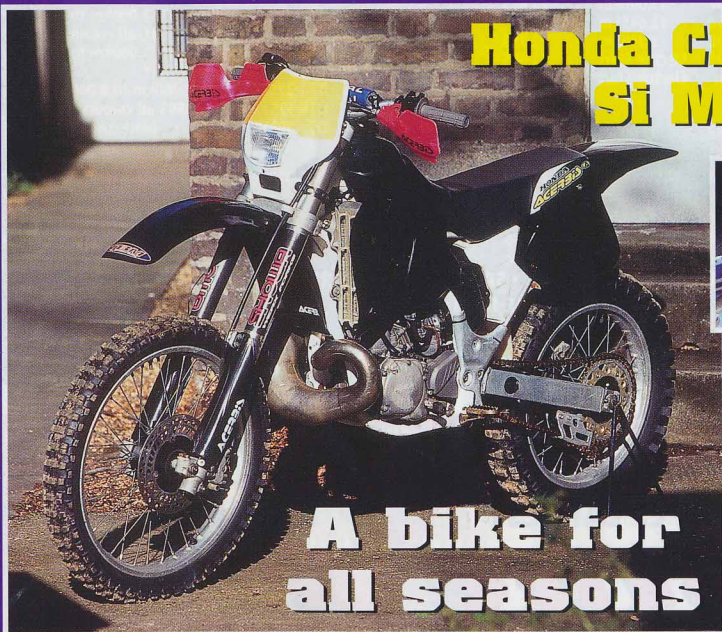
It's important to set the lever positions correctly, and for this you will either need to put the bike on a paddock stand or enlist the help of a friend to hold the bike upright. Loosen off the lever perches slightly and climb on board. Adopt the standing position you feel comfortable with, look up (forwards), and reach for the levers. They should fall straight to hand. If they don't, adjust





# STAFF BIKES

## Honda CRM250CR Si Melber



**A bike for  
all seasons**



petitions, I needed something with decent road speed, and more than 50 miles range. I'd already owned a CRM, but much as I liked it, wanted something more race-worthy for the odd enduro event. The CRM-CR just happened to come along at the right time and the right price - and pretty

much fitted the bill perfectly.

There's a sweet trail bike engine with all the low-down grunt you need and none of the rabid power of an MX bike, plus a six-speed gearbox, tolerable piston (and ring) life and reasonable fuel consumption. But it's harnessed in a lighter, well suspended, sharper steering chassis than a standard CRM trailie. Not only that but it's a little unusual, and seems to combine the best of both trail and race elements in a single machine - I was hooked.

### Getting it to work

Of course like any home-built special there are always a few compromises, certain idiosyncrasies and a little bit of ongoing development work to be carried out. But that's okay because I wanted to tailor the bike to my own particular needs and had some ideas for future changes. Besides, the bike wasn't exactly as I wanted it, it would need to be registered at some stage, and fitted with a few extras

before taking to the dirt.

The first problem needing to be addressed was that of its range. Fitted with the stock CR tank it wouldn't have managed more than 40-50 clicks before needing fuel. That's okay on a short enduro loop, but for a longer hare & hound event or a foreign raid I needed more, so I ordered an 11L Clarke tank from the 'States. The new tank is about a centimetre higher and deeper than the original item, but barely any wider, and on the CRM I reckon it should be good for 100 miles.

I'd ordered the tank in black because I wanted a change of colour-scheme from the original Honda red and white. A set of pattern Acerbis plastics including front and rear fender, side panels and rad scoops came to just over a hundred quid, and bolted straight on. Acerbis also let us have a new style rear enduro lamp unit to try, so that went on as well.

The previous owner had used the bike exclusively for club enduros, but in order to be registered it would need to pass the MoT test. That meant fitting a speedo, a brake light switch and a reflector. The horn already worked and there was a dipping headlight fitted, so a rear hydraulic brake light switch was ordered from Pro Racing and attached to the master cylinder. I was still a way off getting the bike ready for an MoT when the first chance to ride it came along. Fortunately it was all off road, so with the new plastics fitted and an aluminium Apico skid plate hurriedly bolted in place, the bike was strapped into the TBM van and whisked along to the Longmoor MoD training area for a spot of fun.

### Riding it again

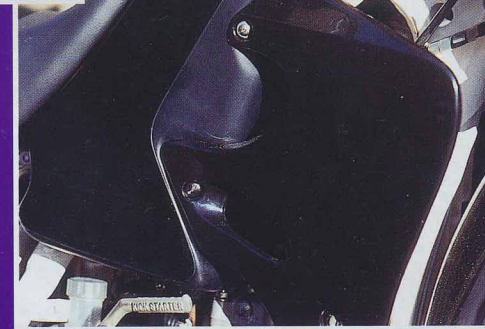
A slosh of premix fuel and it fired second kick so I headed off onto the track to try the thing out. Not surprisingly it felt pretty much as I remembered: smooth on the power delivery, but with a good turn of speed when you wicked things up. The suspension also felt pretty good though the back squatted down a bit too much for my liking, and I made a mental note to adjust it later.

Fortunately the bigger tank didn't get in the way, and a couple of hours spent playing in the sand revealed that the CRM-CR had lost none of its charm from when I rode it first time. However, a partially slipping clutch was limiting the fun, and there was more drama to come as I headed back around the tree-lined course with Clive and Si Pavey now in tow. Firing it out of a bermed corner I wound on the gas just as the throttle decided to stick wide open. WAAAAAAAAAAH!!

It was the first time I'd managed to pull away from the other guys all day and they were obviously impressed to see me riding ballistically between rows of Silver Birches. When I finally managed to bring the



**Bigger 11.2L tank, and an ally bashplate were among the first additions**



thing to a halt my mind harked back to the first few days with the Husaberg when a similar thing happened... Boy, do I get all the luck!

Back at the van I stripped the carb down but couldn't find any sign of crud, and as the clutch was playing up, decided to just take it easy for the rest of the day. Besides the (non o-ring) chain looked like it'd seen better days and one of the tank mounting bolts had broken away from the frame. That's the sort of thing you get with a bitsa, occasionally everything lines up and works perfectly, but more often than not there are ongoing modifications to be made. Since the CRM motor has different dimensions to the CR lump, the previous owner had been forced to re-weld various mounts (including the tank mounts) to allow the bits to all fit around each other, and some of his welding was... er, average to say the least.

Back home again the bike was washed down and a new digital speedometer I'd brought back from the Ally-Pally show hastily torn from its packet. 'Designed to fit all motorcycles', the blurb read but the instructions showed a push-bike being ridden along a cycle path, and I hoped the designers had allowed enough cable for a bike with more than a foot of travel. As it turned out I needn't have worried, the fitting was easy, there was enough cable and only the small matter of attaching the wire to the (upside down) fork proved troublesome and has yet to be sorted properly.

### More expense

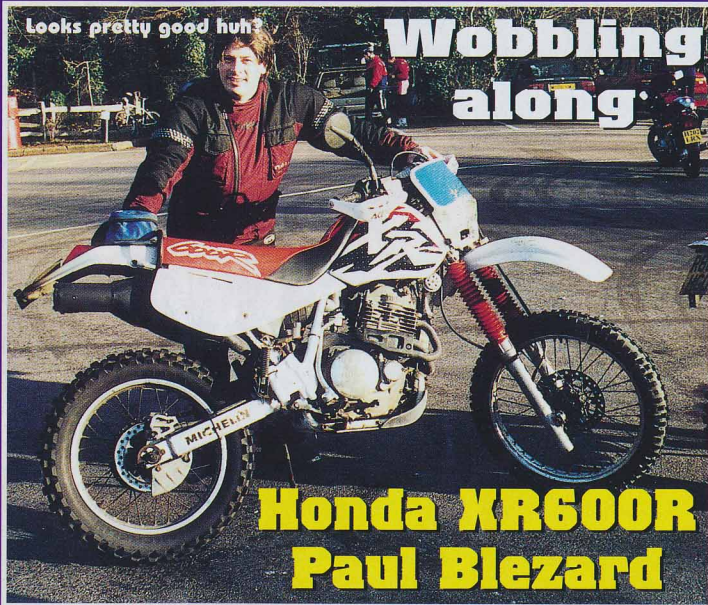
The first ride had looked promising, but then with an issue's worth of test bikes to get through I quickly found myself running out of workshop time - that's when I hit upon a cunning plan. I was due to collect a test bike from CRM specialists Leisure Trail up in

Nottingham, so I killed two birds with one stone and took the CRM-CR along for them to sort out the clutch for me.

They set to work on the bike, replacing the clutch cable, and plates, installing a new o-ring chain and sprockets, fitting a new rear tyre and cleaning up the inside of the throttle assembly which was full of gunge and the likely cause of the jam. While they had the bike in the workshop they took a look at

some of the other bits which needed attention. The front brake hose was too short they concluded, so they replaced it with braided cable, wired up the rear lamp and brake light, fixed the rattly footpeg and generally got their cleaning cloth into the nooks and crannies, replacing all vital fluids along the way.

Their conclusion was that the conversion was pretty sound though the previous owner obviously didn't believe in washers, nor any form of lubrication for that matter - his poor girlfriend, eh?



**W**e left my trusty XR600 last summer (TBM35) still suffering from mysterious rear end wobbles despite new wheel bearings and a new shock rose joint. I also mentioned that the original rear disc was well overdue for replacement having worn really thin and concave.

I managed to kill two birds with one stone thanks to John Deacon and his team down at Plymouth Off Road. They replaced the old XR wheel with a CR500 unit complete with the meatier slotted rear disc used on the 'crosser. Don't ask me why the lighter two stroke machine should get a thicker disc than the hefty thumper - in my experience neither of the standard XR600 discs is really man enough for the job. Anyway the only modification necessary to make the CR wheel fit was a new spacer which JD had fabricated locally.

It was great to ride the XR with a rear wheel that wasn't constantly disputing my desired direction of travel - I'd almost forgotten what it was like. The Michelin Bajas were still pretty lousy on wet tarmac

but at least I no longer felt on the edge of disaster every time I rode in the rain and for serious off-road tyres they've lasted well.

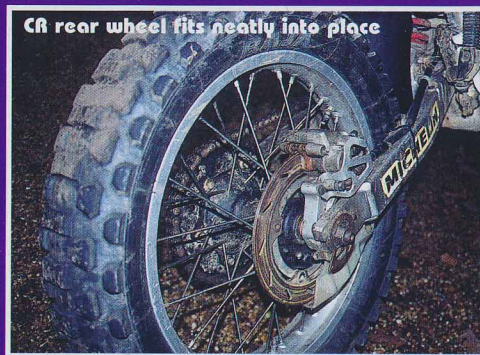
Deaks was really rude about the rattle from the air-cooled engine but when rallyist and TBM contributor Si Pavey heard it running, he reckoned it sounded better than his rebuilt Dakar-conquering XR600 which has done several thousand less miles and is seven years younger. The XR quiets down once it warms up, but I really should adjust the tappets soon.

#### On the dirt again

The next serious outing for the Honda was the Hafren Rally last October. As usual my preparation was pretty perfunctory (check the oil,

squeeze the tyres etc), but no one said anything rude about the bike at scrutineering (for a change).

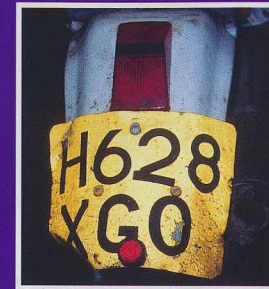
There's nothing like a spot of racing to heighten your perceptions of a bike's shortcomings though. As a trail bike my XR is still a great tool, but trying to go quickly on the slippery stages in the Hafren I became



When I got the bike back from them it was clean to say the least. They'd done an excellent job on it and the bill was pretty reasonable. I'd figured that I was in for a bit of expense on the bike, that's always the way with secondhand machines. But now sporting a new tyre, chain, sprockets, cables, clutch, tank, plastics, speedo, rear light and brake hose, the bike was almost as I wanted it.

Almost? Well there's still the small matter of the MoT, it still needs registering and at some point I

much more aware of how untogether everything felt - the steering, the suspension, the throttle, the brakes - there just wasn't the tautness and precision you get from a new (or better maintained) machine. Or maybe



I've just been spoiled by all the new test bikes I've ridden lately (Ha!).

I had an innocuous excursion over the handlebars when I got caught out by logs hidden in the grass on Saturday's 'warm up lap' but half way through the first lap on Sunday I experienced a more serious machine problem: at every corner my right foot was sinking deeper and deeper on the brake pedal with less and less effect. A few pumps got the retardation back at first but things got progressively worse until I had no rear brake at all. A quick check of the pads revealed that one of them was down to the metal.

Yikes! At first I thought that Deaks and his bodging mates had spaced the wheel wrongly so that the disc wasn't in the centre of the caliper but when I stripped it down I realised that that wasn't the problem at all - the wet conditions had simply worn the (far from new) pads out. The worst of the two pads was actually worn right through the backplate and considerably bent by the end of the event, even though I did my best to use it as little as possible.

want to change the knackered old handguards for something nicer. Finally, there's a fresh set of TBM graphics currently being made by Danger UK, ready to fit to the bike once it's all complete. By then it'll owe me around two grand, £1500 for the basic machine and about five hundred in extras I've spent. That's not bad for a registered, secondhand bike with a year's ticket and a load of new parts - especially one as unusual as the CRM-CR. All I've got to do now is ride it... **Si Melber**

Didn't do my nice new disc any good either, dammit. So learn by my mistake, fellow maintenance-shirkers: a new set of pads in time saves nine near heart attacks and some nasty disc scores.

Back home a rummage around in the garage revealed an unused set of pads still sitting in the unused caliper that I bought just for the hanger that was attached to it, to replace the one that broke a couple of years back (still with me?). Handy that - I just wish I'd fitted them before the Hafren.

The last thing of any note was the annual MoT test which this year the XR sailed through without a hitch thanks to the improved brakes. I'm using the bike a lot less thanks to a new addition to the stable. So if one of our more discerning readers would care to take this uniquely collectable machine off my hands for the bargain basement price of £1999 ono, I'd be delighted to part with it.

#### Half-a-Staffer: KTM 125LC2

My girlfriend Liz purchased a KTM 125LC2 last year and seeing as she already owned a perfectly functional Funduro, the little orange Austrian was more often to be found squashed under my burgeoning buttocks, than her rather more svelte ones. The price asked by the outgoing importers for the low-mileage secondhand machine seemed very reasonable compared to the £3,600 RRP current at the time, but not quite such a bargain after the new importers lowered it to a more realistic £2,999 and downright expensive after a parallel importer offered a batch of old-model (but new bikes) for less than two grand, (sob).

No matter - in regular use the KTM has confirmed everything we said about it in the April '98 test - good and bad. Let's talk about the good things first. I'd forgotten just how good the LC2 is off road, until I used it in anger on the trail again. The suspension's plush and compliant, all the controls are responsive and the (de-restricted) motor feels much bigger than a mere 125. The power-valve makes the Yamaha engine feel as torquy as a 250 four-stroke's. It may be a little tall and heavy for a 125 but it doesn't feel it on the rough.

Gruppenfuhrer Melber commandeered the LC2 for a day's trail riding ('I don't want to get the Husaberg dirty as I'm about to sell it' ho ho!) and

## STAFF BIKES

Liz on board the KTM but she lets Blez ride it, oh dear...



came back raving about the little orange Austrian. In fact he liked it so much he kept it for a month. Like us, he discovered that it's just as handy for tooling around town as it is for having fun out in the lanes. The electric start and sturdy rack make it far more practical for popping down the shops than my XR.

### Not all good

Now the bad news. The first time Liz really needed the KTM (when her Funduro was being serviced) the darn thing mysteriously refused to start. It had been running perfectly for weeks, but after a couple of nights out in the rain it just went on strike. A quick look at the plug (which is much more awkward to get at than it should be) soon revealed why - no spark. After some fruitless checking it was that man Deacon who came to the rescue again. Experience with recalcitrant LC2s on his Adventure Tours trail riding expeditions had taught him that they can often be revived just by disconnecting the wire from the YPVS motor (at the connector just behind the right hand tank panel). This disables the power valve, which makes the bike horribly peaky to ride, but at least it saves you from a long push home.

Sure enough, as soon as I disconnected the lead, hey presto, the bike burst back into life. It's refused to start a few times since (it definitely doesn't like a...soaking) but it's always revived with the unplugging technique. In fact we've discovered that once you've started the engine you can plug the power valve lead straight back in again and the engine won't stall and runs perfectly - it just has to be unplugged for the initial start-up and soon cures itself once it's dried out anyway. The new KTM importers were good enough to send us another power valve motor (it's

actually a Yamaha part, as is the whole engine) but I haven't actually bothered to fit it yet because the problem is no more than a minor inconvenience once you know the unplugging secret. Bizarre eh?

The only other starting problem occurred when Liz inadvertently left the parking lights on and the battery went flat (easily done with the bizarre and very fiddly multi-position ignition switch). The bike soon bumped back into life with very little effort (no kick-start remember), but the battery is very small so even after several miles running it still hadn't revived enough to start on the button. A few hours of trickle charging soon cured that little problem.

### Living with it

The LC2 has still only done about 2,000 miles from new so it's disappointing that both fork seals have blown - although they're obviously not helped by the fact that the stanchions are completely unprotected (strange in a bike that is so off-road ready in most other ways). The speedo light, the oil warning light and dipped beam filament have all blown and the rear brake pads are wafer thin, despite the gentle use the bike has had. Hardly what you'd call major problems though.

By far the most irritating thing about using the LC2 on a daily basis is the lack of a side-stand - whether you're parking it outside Sainsbury's or stopping to open a gate on the trail. It requires a mighty heave (using the pillion footrest) to get it onto the high centre stand. On the other hand the stand is brilliant when it comes to taking wheels out or oiling the chain - what the 125 (and all other KTMs) need is a sidestand that can be fitted without interfering with the centre stand.

Compared to my XR600 the LC2 feels a bit frantic but that's hardly surprising - it is a 125 two stroke, after all. But it still stops, handles and goes really well whether you're out on the trail or dodging the grid-locked 'jam jars' on the slippery streets of Lahnd'n. I'm still convinced that it's one of the best bikes available for a dirt riding debutant - at any price. It's certainly one of the very few 125s that would be worth keeping after passing your test. We're planning to get an experienced road rider to lose his or (preferably) her off-road cherry on the LC2 some time soon and we'll let you know what he/she thinks of it. Volunteers anyone?

**Paul Blezard**

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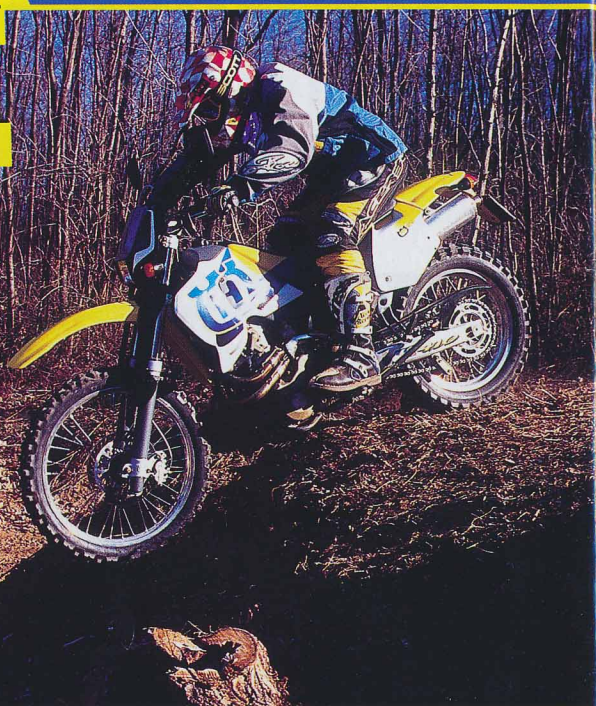
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# FIRST TEST

**Husky's new middleweight 400 trailie is a revelation claims Crasher Cornish. And he should know, he was the first journalist ever to try one out...**



It's not every day you get the chance to fly to Italy (at our own expense, I might add) for a world exclusive scoop first test - long before MCN or any other journalist settled their cordura-clad butt cheeks into the upholstery. But when I was told that the bike to be tested was basically a sleeved-down 399cc version of the 'cooking' TE610E dual-sporter we'd already tested, I imagined an overweight, underpowered range-filler special.

But after spending two days aboard a fresh-off-the-production-line Husky TE410E trailie, I've just got to say the bike I tried was a revelation. It's unbelievable that what on paper at least, appears to be a less powerful 610E without any significant weight advantage, can feel so different to ride than the lekky-start 610 we tested back in September last year (TBM38).

Whilst we found that the stylish 610E was undoubtedly a fine trail bike, there was a question mark over the bike's stability at high speeds (80+mph), and its rather heavy steering at lower trail speeds especially when encountering ruts. On top of that our particular test bike was blessed with a few traditional Italian 'quirks' as regards finish and gen-

eral build quality. So it was a pleasant surprise to find that the 410E we tested suffered none of those traits.

The latest '99 Huskys all seem to have benefited from a large influx of Lire from Cagiva's sale of its remaining interest in Ducati. Quality control is evidently much more of a priority at the recently completed Cassinetta assembly and testing facility, with all the bikes being 'dry run' before building up, then run up on a rolling road prior to despatch.

Hopefully those irritating traditional quirks will be a thing of the past, and certainly on our gleaming TE the finish appeared top-notch.

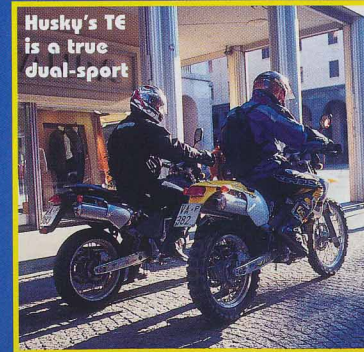
Technically speaking the new Husqvarna TE410E shares many components with its big-bore brother. The electric-start, liquid-cooled sohc unit, sports four valves, a balancer shaft and twin oil pumps and thanks to a massively oversquare bore and stroke of 91.5x60.8mm, measures in at a true 399.5cc. A light and smooth cable operated clutch works through a slick-shifting six-speed transmission that offers a set of ratios ideally suited to the bike's intended dual-sport role.

Comparisons with the pukka 410 enduro bike are

limited to the motor's internal dimensions since the new engine is a complete redesign from any existing Husky lump, and arguably the first real Cagiva inspired four-stroke mill since production switched from Sweden to Varese in 1988. Thankfully where the 410E does resemble the enduro tackle is in the styling department. In traditional Husky white, yellow and blue (gloss carbon black & chrome-effect is an option), the trailie version looks every inch the serious off-roader, and I personally reckon its one of the nicest styled trail bikes out there. Clearly the Italians' eye for styling has played a part here.

So the new bike looks good, but how does it perform? Well it's a dirty job, but someone's got to do it, and after a couple of frothy cappuccinos I set off in hot pursuit of Ennio 'one wheel's enough' Marchesin (Cagiva's number one test pilot), for the beautiful hills surrounding Varese - and some dirty fun.

Once clear of the main factory complex we found



**Husky's TE is a true dual-sport**

ourselves on a typical rural Italian road, and despite the frost-damaged tarmac doing its best to upset the bike's composure, the well-damped Marzocchis offered a remarkably smooth ride over the potted surface, with the supple rear Boge shock matching them inch for inch.

Thrashing down these mountain roads listening to the glorious throaty induction roar, it's pretty obvious that the Husky design team see the TE

as a true dual-sport bike with the emphasis firmly on 'Sport'. Firm, plush suspenders and dependable anchors allow the Husky to be thraped along at a decent lick, there was none of the high-speed instability we'd encountered with the bigger bike, and the dual-sport Michelins clung leech-like to the black top.... until it finally disappeared.

Cogging down a gear I simply dialled up a fistful of revs and tore off up the rapidly deteriorating track trying to keep Ennio within my sights. A badly rutted, dried-out stream bed was tackled without prob-

**The trailie version is every inch a serious off-roader**



# HUSKY TE410E

# FIRST TEST

The Husky's good enough on slower trails, but faster going is where it excels

lem, and on the steep (but thankfully dry) loose climbs that Ennio seemed keen to explore, the 410's willingness to rev was a distinct advantage over the torquier but slower-revving 600. Okay low-down pulling power might not be the 410's forte, but at least the carburetion is crisp and responsive at the bottom, and yanking on the throttle soon has the motor spinning round to the point where it makes some extremely useful top end.

On faster going, stability was 100% secure, flat out in fourth and fifth gears the 410 tracks straight as an arrow, with those excellent Brembos always reassuringly ready for action. It's not just on relatively smooth tracks that the Husky excels either, on slower trials-type going with tricky off-camber descents, the quick steering combined with supple, well-damped suspension makes the bike easy to ride feet up. In fact the TE-E is far better off road than it has a right

to be, I mean it weighs nigh on the same as the 610 (bar a couple of kilos), uses all of that bike's running gear, and yet here I was thrashing around the Husky test track where world 125 MX champ Chiodi, and four-stroke 500cc enduro champ Eriksson develop their bikes, and the 410 was coping with everything my incompetent riding style could throw at it.

Photographer Phil, who's almost an off road virgin (can you be almost a virgin? - ed), couldn't believe that I was raving so much about the 410 while he struggled to wobble round on the outwardly similar 600. So we swapped bikes and after a few

minutes aboard the smaller bike he was circulating like he'd been dirt riding for years. In fact I couldn't get him off the 400 so I continued with the 600 to see what he'd been clucking on about.

Sure enough the 610 is much more of a handful off road, feeling at least 10kg heavier. Quite why this should be I can't figure out (obviously there's more in the way of crank inertia with the bigger bike) but everything else is the same. And not only does the

410 feel a heap lighter, but the suspension seems to cope a lot better with your typical off road terrain. As a result the bike is much easier on the rider and less tiring especially when ridden for any length of time. On the road the 610s extra torque helps it comfortably outpace the smaller bike giving a less frantic, more relaxed ride, but it leads the rider to the conclusion that the bigger bike is more road oriented say 65% road, 35% off road; whereas the

410 feels like a genuine 50:50.

So Husky have succeeded in producing a modern, mid-sized (perhaps slightly heavy) but nevertheless, accomplished trail bike; with a good compromise between road and off road ability. At £4495 (plus £200 otr charges) the smaller bike is a full £500 cheaper than the 610, though not the cheapest bike in its class. Whether it'll feel this good in the rain and mud of a typical British winter remains to be seen, but for now Husky appear to have produced a winner. Viva la difference... as they like to say over in Italy!



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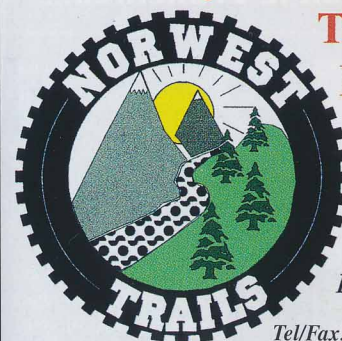
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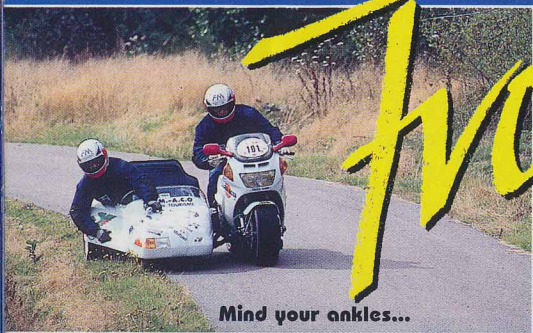
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# FRANCILIEN

## Frolics



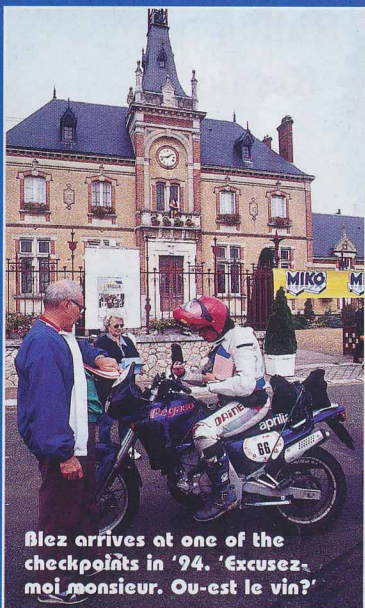
Mind your ankles...

After getting the bug for French road rallies in the Monte Carlo of 1989, it was a great disappointment when the event was canned and never repeated. Fortunately since then I've had three more chances to race on closed French roads in the Francilien Rally, two of which I rode on trail bikes.

For 1993 (the second year I'd entered), the French police bike club running the rally, expanded it into a much more Monte-like event than the previous year's two day affair: 1,000 miles over five days in a triangle roughly encompassing Paris, Lille and Le Mans, with 16 closed-road stages (of which six were ridden at night) plus four circuit stages, including a night-time one. Surprisingly, it still only attracted 51 solos and eight sidecars which was a shame, because it required 300 volunteer policemen to run it!

I blagged myself the SuperBike Magazine long term test TDM850 which I modified with my trademark screen extension (the remains of an old Acerbis enduro number plate). The only other non-standard parts were Michelin Hi-Sport tyres, 100/80 watt bulbs in the stock twin headlights and a Ventura rack and gear sack which I took off for the circuit racing but left on for the closed-road stages because it was so handy for carrying bits and bobs. Sadly, I was the one

Last month Blez recounted his adventures in the 1988 Monte Carlo competition road rally. In part two of his story on road rallying he blathers on about competing in Le Rallye Francilien...

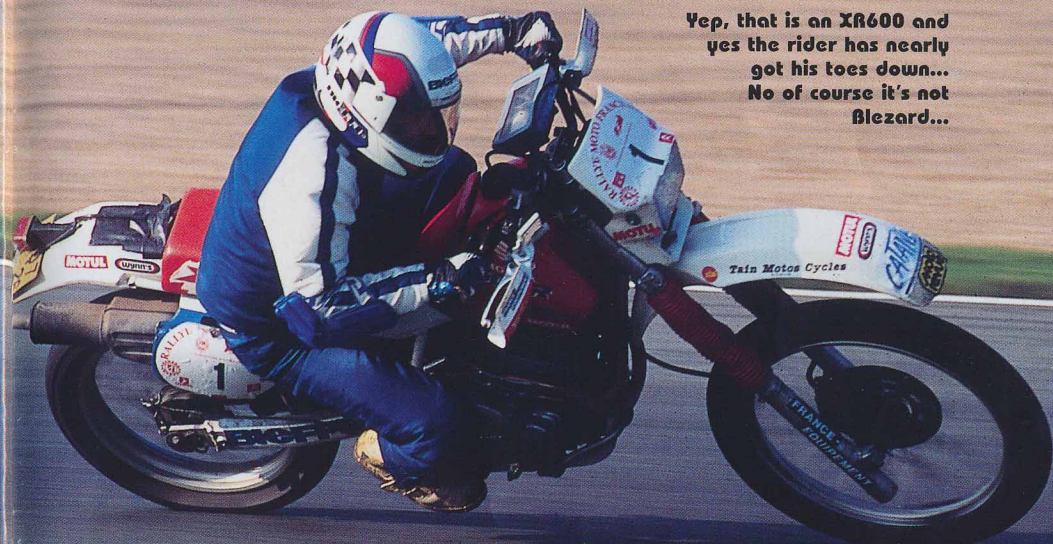


Blez arrives at one of the checkpoints in '94. 'Excusez moi monsieur. Ou-est le vin?'

and only Brit that year and had no spares, no back-up, no extra lights, no road-book reader and, the night before the start - no sleep!

With the TDM loaded to the gunwales, I actually left London at 5am on the very morning the event started, so I was pleased when, a few short hours later, I got third place in my over 650cc heat at a soaking wet Circuit Carole, despite starting from the back of the grid. One poor bloke on an Aprilia crashed out of the whole event within five minutes of starting and the drama continued the following day when we headed north towards Béthune along a myriad of tiny French back-roads.

Michel Dailly riding a an old-fashioned Kawa 750 had



Yep, that is an XR600 and yes the rider has nearly got his toes down... No of course it's not Blezard...

Pics: Paul Blezard, Daniel Nees, Francesco Scuderi, Ludmila Stiebner & Richard Watson

the first of two prangs and 41 year-old Marc Dufour, one of the most talented riders in the championship, stuffed his brand new Ducati Monster 900 a couple of stages later. Fortunately his crew were able to effect a miraculous bodge repair to his bike overnight and he went on to win several stages, although he was obviously out of the overall running.

Marc was luckier than Belgian BMW dealer Alain Mombaerts who bent his new 1100 twin and was unable to continue, despite a huge effort on his behalf by the Busquets family BMW team who had returned to French rallies mob-handed after an absence of five years. Old man José (whom I'd met in the Monte Carlo) had been joined by his sons Josep and Agusti on another 1100 and a KLX650 respectively.

Alain's misfortune was compounded by the fact that his support van had broken down about 100 miles away, which was bad news for me too, since I'd managed to persuade him to carry my kit, so my toothbrush as well as the rest of my gear was in it. (The good ol' French police rescued it for me).

The third day started with a 5.30am wake-up call and continued with a hairy drive through the fog in a convoy to the circuit of Croix-en-Thernois. We were

led by a police car which missed the turning for the circuit and then led the entire fleet of bikes, sidecars and support vehicles in a perilous U-turn across the end of a dual carriageway whilst huge artics thundered past in the fog!

Another real character was a guy called Didier Boulanger riding a Gilera Nordwest in his first rally. After surviving a particularly hairy gravel-filled stage he told me: 'I lost the front end completely and went up the bank, but I didn't shut off and got back on the road about 50m further on, but the pegs were so covered in grass and earth that I couldn't find the controls' - he still came in seventh fastest!

That same day there was another special stage that was better suited to the TDM because it had a long straight and reasonable quality tarmac. I remember hitting 100mph on this single track road and then just making it around a tightening left hander where there were two lines of skid marks going off into the adjoining field. I discovered that one set had been caused by fast flic (cop) Lacoste on a rally-prepped TDM. Not only had he managed to get back on and finish, but he beat most of the rest of the field on the next stage on his bent and battered bike. I was dis-

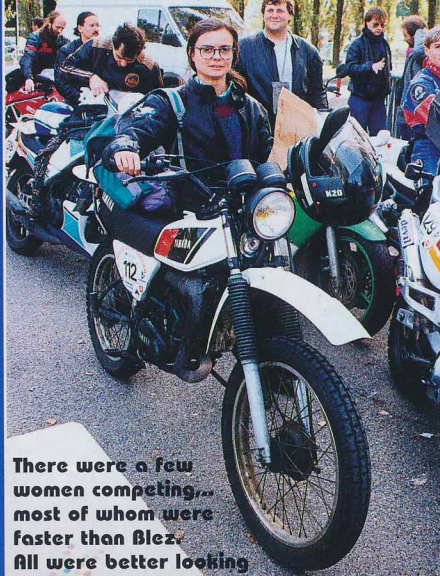
mayed to discover that even on this high speed stage I was soundly beaten by the two fastest 125s!

The first of the six night stages (three ridden twice) was actually the longest of the event at nearly six kilometres and the TDM's rather soft front end was a bit of a disadvantage in the dark, because every time I touched the brakes I lost about 50 yards of vision. The big advantage of bolt-on lights is not so much the extra candlepower but the fact that you can angle them so that they are pointing where you're trying to see when the bike is leaned over, which means right up into the sky when you're on the straights.

Nevertheless, Mad Marco still won the over 650 class with just the standard single beam on his battered Monster!

I had a couple of hairy moments in the dark but stayed both upright and on schedule, finally getting to bed, in a school dormitory, at 3.15am, but was up again just two and a half hours later in time to make the 7am police-escorted convoy to Le Mans at the start of the final day.

Racing at the famous Bugatti circuit where I'd often watched endurance and GP heroes was a fantastic thrill, and I made the most of it. I was dragging the TDM's footrests for the first time and had a fan-



**There were a few women competing... most of whom were faster than Blez. All were better looking**

tastic scrap with French policeman, Stephane Protin on another TDM, finally getting the better of him on the brakes going into the fast Musée left hander. Stephane was much faster than me on the closed road stages, but was a bit overwhelmed by the higher speeds at Le Mans. The TDM was doing the hokey-cokey at over 120mph down the back straight and the suspension was being seriously over-taxed for the first time. I had a big moment when I nearly had to take to the grass while lapping a slower rider on an

XTZ660. Again, I was staggered by the speed of the top rally men. Philippe Many came third at Le Mans on a tuned TT600 and Bruno Viaud (who went on to win the whole rally), was lapping four seconds faster than me on a mildly tuned Dominator, in front of loads of much faster four-cylinder sports bikes.

After the sublime high of Le Mans the low point of the Francilien '93 came later in the afternoon when one stop too many for a scenic photograph cost me a minute's time penalty. I'd been lulled into a false sense of security by arriving at one stage a full 20 minutes early and had spent too long jawing with Mad Marco. What made it even worse was that I was



**I mustn't be late for the wine tasting...**



**Blez uses all his skills of concentration...**



only a couple of seconds too late and actually saw the clock tick over as I arrived, but in rallying (just like in enduros), a miss is as good as a mile and that one minute penalty actually cost me five places in the overall results, dropping me from 19th to 24th. I was so annoyed that I set my best closed-roads result in the following stage (20th).

That man Philippe Many had more excitement later on when he rode his TT600 for 20 miles with a flat front tyre. He got the puncture repaired before the next special but the carcass was badly damaged, yet he still beat me by a couple of seconds on the fast hill-climb type stage; quickest time was set by a guy on a KTM250 supermoto who also beat a brace of TDR250s at Le Mans.

The open roads ride back to Paris was enlivened by chasing the 1100cc outfit of Meuret and Simonin. Meuret was overtaking in places I wouldn't have attempted on a solo and at one point I was doing 100mph on wet leaves to keep up with them. I was left in no doubt as to why they often beat the quickest solos, especially in the wet.

But the highlight of the Francilien '93 was yet to come. It was the last special of the rally, the night-time race at Circuit Carole on a wet track under the dingy lights. I actually got the holeshot into the first bend (a first for me!) and I could feel both wheels sliding as I got around the corner, foot down, supermoto-style on the meaty, big and bouncy TDM. Mad Marco and Josep Busquets soon barged past, but I

held off my Le Mans rival, Protin, on the other TDM for two more laps. This time he was on home territory though and wasn't going to be denied - I swear he came past me with both wheels, legs and handlebars all flapping together, but somehow he stayed on to win the over 650 class overall.

When Busquets Junior came past on the KLX650 I was determined to stick with him and I got back past him down the 100mph back straight. He did a Chambon on me into the next corner - sliding past me sideways on opposite lock - but I got him back again on the straight. He got past again and by now it was the last lap and I'd been using the brakes so hard, even in the wet, that the lever was starting to come back to the bar. I gave it a pump at the end of the straight and suddenly the front wheel locked and turned hard right at 80mph. 'Sheeeet' I thought, 'I'm off' but I let go and miraculously everything came

# FRANCILIEN

*Frolics*



straight again. I couldn't stop before the gravel, but stayed upright and with some mighty wheelspin I was back on tarmac without losing a place.

It may not sound very impressive to say I came fifth in the over 650 race and 16th overall but believe me, that's the hardest I've ever ridden in my life without falling off, and I knew I'd been right to the very edge of my own personal limits. Even with the off-road excursion I was still three seconds faster than former police road race champion Marc Granié who'd won the dry daytime race earlier in the week. Old man Busquets, who'd been following from a discreet distance on the BMW 1100, said he didn't want to get any closer because he was sure one of us was going to fall off!

There were only 45 survivors from the 59 who started the rally and at the typically French prize-giving I was delighted to receive a huge cup for the best British rider. The fact that I was the only Brit mattered not one jot to me!

### Francilien '94 - Mad Frogs & Englishmen...

The following year there was a small posse of Brits - two riders and two support crew - who made their way to the '94 Francilien rally, but as usual I rode to the event on the machine I'd be racing. I felt as if I'd already done a rally by the time I got to the start in Paris because... well, I had! The Francilien '94 ran back to back with the inaugural Rally of Discovery in

Ireland and I'd made a tight schedule even tighter by missing my plane from Dublin after a mad-cap six-hour thrash across Eire.

Instead of flying to Manchester where a Pegaso was waiting for me at the airport, I ended up staying the night in Birmingham and picking the bike up from Stockport the next day at about the time most people were going through scrutineering in Paris...

After almost falling asleep in the fog on the M2, just catching a ferry and riding from Calais to Carole in two and a half hours (including three stops for juice because the Peg was only doing 27mpg at 100mph), I arrived at Circuit Carole exactly 15 minutes before the first race. After all that, they went and cancelled the circuit stage because the ambulance failed to turn up - hardly the ideal start to the biggest competition road rally since the Monte Carlo six years earlier.

There was a full six days of competition organised with 2,200km of riding including no less than 40 closed road special stages (six at night) and three circuits including, for the first time ever, the F1 track at Magny Cours. For all that the (subsidised) price was still only 250 quid, including all meals (with wine) and hotels. Talk about a bargain! I was staggered that there were only 50 takers for this festival of fun and adrenaline so kindly organised and run by the French boys in bleu.

There were plenty of familiar faces from my previ-

ous Franciliens, including Mad Marco on his tuned Monster, the Busquets Barcelona triumvirate all on BMWs and, for the first time since the Monte Carlo, Dakar star Daniel Pescheur on a TDM. The two Brit riders (and their support crew) were newcomers to the Francilien but all were veterans of the police-only Liege rally which is a similar sort of event, and I had cause to be grateful for their help on several occasions.

Inspector Paul McKinney had actually reconnoitred the whole route beforehand and was riding his own creation which he called 'the beast' - a tuned LC350 motor in a KTM enduro chassis with a BMW front wheel. It looked very odd but in Paul's hands actually went pretty well, though it caused a bit of a stir at scrutineering because according to the regs all bikes are supposed to be very close to the machines homologated by the manufacturers - oops.

In fact the regs had actually been tightened between '92 and '93, which is why the French police team riders had had to switch from super-motarded XR600s to near-standard Dominators, although nobody was ever able to satisfactorily explain to me how some French riders were still able to compete on supermotard machines, complete with full-bore competition two-stroke engines and exhausts! Zat iz ze French for you!

Steve Wride from Bristol was riding one of the few out-of-the-crate supermotard machines then available - the Gilera Nordwest - and we got friendly with a Belgian policeman who was on another - the nice-looking but rather underpowered Cagiva 600 single.

After having 40 winks by the side of the open road I was snapped back to alertness by an off-road excursion on the first closed-road special stage and was pleased to survive the first day with bike and bod still intact, unlike one unlucky fellow who broke an arm.

The towns in which we stayed each night really pushed the boat out when it came to hospitality and it was a test of another kind to survive it all. After racing for the day, the standard procedure was to ride from the parc fermé in convoy, complete with police escort, to somewhere for some convivial cocktails

with the mayor, before moving on, once more in convoy, to our place of rest for the night where we would also have dinner. Nobody seemed too worried that half the entry and their escorts were fairly well lubricated for the final part of the journey and indeed there weren't any accidents, big or small. There were some good prizes too, with cash for the top three riders in each of the five classes every day.

The revelation of the '94 rally was Rhossetos Angelinardis, a 42 year-old Frenchman of Greek origin who ran a bike shop in Dijon. He was as fit as a fiddle and always in good spirits, but boy did he take the event seriously! Not only had he reconnoitred the whole route, he had actually drawn himself a map with the ideal line through every corner of every single special stage - his own personal pace notes, which he had apparently committed to memory.

The circuit sections at Magny Cours and Le Mans saw some serious competition



He just had a quick look at them before every stage to refresh his memory, but was quite happy to let any of his fellow competitors have a look too. I guess it's a measure of how confident he was, and with good reason.

Riding a YZF750 road bike fitted with motocross bars he blitzed the field on nearly every stage, and just disappeared over the horizon on the circuits. I wasn't surprised to discover that he'd won the Tour de France Moto in 1983. But Angel didn't have it all his own way; on the tightest, most slippery stages he was beaten by the rally championship regulars on their trail and enduro-based machinery.

In fact the guy who gave him most trouble could not have been more of a contrast. 23 year old Vincent Loustalot was riding a very standard looking XR600,

complete with standard sized wheels and didn't even have proper race leathers. As an XR600 owner myself it was a complete mystery to me how he managed to get the thing through the stages so quickly, especially as the brakes are pretty marginal for flat-out road work - I guess Vincent didn't bother using them much!

On average, the stages tended to be longer and more open than most road rallies and that definitely worked in 'Angel's' favour. While the Pegaso was much faster than my XR, I still spent large portions of the faster stages with the throttle absolutely nailed to the stop. It definitely wasn't ideal territory for two-stroke enduro bikes; winner of the 125 class, Fred Petel, fitted a new piston and rings to his Husky 'just as a precaution' half way through the event which was probably a wise move because the KTM250 of Hervé Ricord blew up on one of the faster stages, handing the '94 championship to Loustalot. Earlier, in the longest six-mile stage of the rally, Ricord had fallen off on the same gravelly corner as me (but in much

The youngest Busquets, Agusti, (who'd ridden the KLX in '93) came back in '94 on a bog-standard Funduro and rode the wheels off it. He was literally frightening to watch at Le Mans - taking it to the absolute limit of tyre adhesion and beyond at every single corner. He was also straightening the chicane - right across the rumble strips - and was sixth quickest around the superfast circuit. The young Catalan would have been fifth overall if he hadn't lost a minute with light problems in the night stages.

I went much better at Le Mans than I had at Magny Cours (possibly because I had a bit of air in the tyres by then) but it was depressing to see how much quicker Agusti was on a similar bike that was no faster on top speed. Much as I liked the Pegaso, I knew that for me, lacking the ability to make the Peg 'dance' on the tarmac as if it were on dirt (as the top guys could), the TDM made a better rally tool.

At least the Peg kept going to the end though, unlike Paul McK's LC-engined 'beast' which ran a big end at Magny Cours. That was a shame, because

we'd been running pretty close times, with him usually faster, but I knew I would have been faster on the circuits and it's one of the great joys of these rallies that there's always someone of similar ability to judge yourself against, often on a completely different kind of bike. Paul was brilliant at reading the closed road special stages (he ain't a Police Class-one rider and now Honda MAC instructor for nothing) but at the age of 49 he'd never been on a circuit before in his life.

Another one of the revelations of the rally to both of us - and most

of the men in fact - was Sophie Gillet, riding a humble XL600 - she beat me in lots of the special stages and I only beat her by one place overall, largely thanks to the Peg's extra speed on the circuits. Her boyfriend admitted to me that he couldn't keep up with her on the road - just a naturally fast lady.

My old TDM sparring partner Stéphane Protin returned on a humble XT600E in '94 but had to pull out after his front brake went on strike. Yet even with that huge disadvantage he still managed to pip me on one of the nastiest stages in the rally. The tarmac was literally crumbling at the edges and it was bright



'Angel' winner in '94 on his YZF. He went faster on gravel-strewn tarmac at night than Blez did during the day

more spectacular fashion, since he was going much faster) and we'd both been caught on camera by the official police video team.

The video crew certainly had a knack for picking the right spot to shoot from because they also caught the moment that Josep Busquets lost the front end of his R1100GS and put it in a ditch. The bike didn't look badly damaged but the Busquets team spent hours trying to revive it before they traced its fault to the kill switch. Josep was out of the overall results but he had a storming ride to second on the R-GS behind Angel on the YZF at Le Mans the next day.



green under the trees where the moss had really taken root, yet there were still great long black streaks left by the top guys as they locked their wheels in a frenzy of full-on braking. How they stayed shiny side up was a complete mystery to me, and I wasn't surprised that there were two sidecars in the top six on that one.

I got a chance to see the master at work when I followed 'Angel' on the open road in between the night stages; he was riding the road-tired YZF faster on gravel, in the dark, than I would normally have gone in daylight on 'tarmaca firma'. Awesome. And with the confidence gained from following him, I went faster on the next stage.

Of course, a lot of the regulars had done many of the special stages before, not just in the Francilien, but in the local Sarthe rally which runs at the end of every March (and also uses the Le Mans circuit).

It was certainly no disadvantage to me that I'd done all the specials we did on the last day before - but I still didn't seem to get any closer to the good guys. Mind you, I didn't lose any vital minutes on silly penalties either! I ended up 26th out of the 50th starters and 39 finishers and best Brit again. Angel won by an unprecedented seven minutes in front of the XR of Loustalot, the Dominator of Viaud and Mad Marco on the Monster.

The prize giving was as convivial as ever but my fondest memory of the '94 Francilien was the stop we made in Sancerre, the famous wine-making town.

Sadly, the special stage outside was cancelled, but the other highlight remained: we had 25 minutes on the official road book schedule to stop at the local Gendarmerie (police station) for... wait for it... a wine tasting!

As Inspector McKinney said to me afterwards, 'We'd get sacked for doing this at home!' Absolutely. Vive la France!

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**Kawasaki** KLR250, 1993, L-reg, T&T, 7900m, mainly

road use, good cond, £1650. Tel 0161 794 8758 (Lancs)

**Yamaha** WR250cc, 1999 model, yes 1999! ready for reg, only ridden 6 times, super bike, 4-stroke forces sale, bargain, £3250; also **Husaberg** 501, P-reg, recent £700 rebuild with receipts, reliable & powerful enduro bike, complete with a full lighting kit, ready to go, £1895. Tel 0120 225 2912 (Dorset)

**Honda** XR400RW, 1998, 300km only, bash plate, lowered suspension, will consider KDX200 in p/x, £3250. Tel Bjorn (days) on 0140 378 5843 or (eves) 0140 378 4636 (Sussex)

**Exchange** Suzuki DR BIG 800, low miles, for best XT1600 (or) XTZ750. Tel Dave on 0181 856 7687 (London)

**Yamaha** DT250, 1980, T&T, only 6000m from new, recent tyres, c+s, exc cond, £575. Tel Les on 0177 261 5867 (Lancs)

**Yamaha** IT465, 1983, registered, may have MoT, a real man's machine, hence offers around £550. Tel Wyd on 0128 070 1756 (Northants)

**Yamaha** Super Tenere 750cc, red, 1994, M-reg, T&T, heated grips, top box, low mileage, vgc, £2500 ono. Tel 0123 551 0733 (Oxon)

**KTM** 250EXC, 1990, White Power front & back, '1995' top end, very quick! Good cond, £1295 ono. Tel Shaun (eves) on 0174 387 3764 (Shrops)

**Suzuki** TS250X, blue/yellow, standard, 1990, MoT, 14k, (33bhp), Gold rims, water cooled, new rear tyre, reluctant sale, exc trail bike, £1099; also **Suzuki** DR350, yellow/white, standard, 1990, very clean, did run, has been standing, £700 or will break if enough enquiries. Tel David on 0152 523 7093 (Beds)

**Kawasaki** KLR600, runs, just! Loads of spares, no T&T, for spares or repair, £300 ono. Tel Steve on 0182 574 0491 (E Sussex)

**Honda** XR750 Africa Twin, 1990, G-reg, 37,000m, Scottolter, desert bars, vgc, received lots of TLC, full pannier system, £2200 ono. Tel Chris on 0121 434 5136 (B'ham)

**Kawasaki** KMX200, 1994, L-reg, exc cond, road use only, lady owner, £1350. Tel Yvonne on 0116 240 2718 (Leics)

**Honda** XR250, 1996, P-reg, Acerbis hand guards, bash-plate, new 'O'-ring & sprockets, new tyres, pads etc, vgc, TRF use only, low mileage, £2200. Tel Richard on 0124 222 6185 (Glos)

**Yamaha** DT125R, Aug 1997, R-reg, 18 mths old, taxed, just serviced, mint, learner, legal mature owner, 4400m, £1995. Tel Keith on 0148 270 9075 (E Yorks)

**Kawasaki** KDX250, 1990, H-reg, only used on Sunday trails, tested, team green papers, £1500. Tel Martin on 0164 282 0411 (Cleveland)

**Suzuki** DR350S, yellow/white, L-reg, T&T, 9000m, recent c+s, Renthals, good cond, trail use only, £1800 ono. Tel Anthony on 0128 763 4689 (Teesside)

**Kawasaki** KMX200, L-reg, in mint cond, under 1000m, £1850; also Beta Techno, 1995, hardly used, £1575. Tel Andrew on 0122 856 0502 (Cumbria)

**Suzuki** RMX250, 1993, maintained regardless of cost, green lane use only by geriatric TRF member, £1500 ono. Tel 0174 335 8423 (Shrops)

**Honda** MTX125, A-reg, used daily until recently, runs OK, minor work for road, ideal starter bike, bargain, £400. Tel Chris on 0129 341 4652 (W Sussex)

**Honda** XL250 Degree, elec start, 1991, MoT, 1st class green laner, only 4400m, 90+ mpg, £1600 ono. Tel Andy on 0160 474 0103 (Northampton)

**Kawasaki** KMX125, red/black, F-reg, T&T, new suspension bearings, rear damper head bearings, cables etc, good cond, £700. Tel Bob on 0128 354 3562 (Staffs)

**Suzuki** RM250, T&T, full enduro spec, working lights, new back tyre/bearings/pads, green lane use only, exc

cond, £995. Tel Andrew on 0145 373 1473 (Glos)

**Honda** XR600, 1991, exc cond, fully road legal, very good starter, Renthals, new c+s, £1875 ono or p/x for TT600. Tel Gary on 0117 978 4954 (Avon)

**Suzuki** DR250, elec start, 1991, £1650 ovno; also **Yamaha** TT600, 1983, C-reg, MoT, very clean, never seen ridden, better than XR600, disc front brake, £1750. Tel 0126 959 2915 (Carms)

**Armstrong** CCM, MX turned enduro, 560cc, B-reg, T&T, green laned last 6 yrs, good cond, big tank, £1100 ono. Tel 0178 275 0884 (Staffs)

**Yamaha** TT500H, 1981, T&T, exc orig cond, new brake shoes, c+s, £1875 ono. Tel Wayne on 01298 79462 (Derbys)

**Cagiva** 750cc Elefant, 1996, N-reg, Lucky Explorer, 6000m, service history, vgc, £3200 or swap for KTM 400EGS, 1996/97. Tel Roy on 0198 086 2697 (Wilts)

**Suzuki** TS200R, std black/blue, F-reg, 12,400m, MoT, usd forks, DEP tailpipe, alloy rims & swingarm, new 'O'-ring c+s, handguards, manual, £1200. Tel Glenn on 0190 824 2678 (Bucks)

**Honda** XR600R, 1995, M-reg, 8000m, Renthals, rally guards, new MT21s with spare tyres, large Acerbis tank, £2500 ono. Tel Rob on 0170 487 8474 (Merseyside)

**Yamaha** XT600Z, Tenere, 1987, kick/elec start, T&T, Micron exhaust, good orig cond, £1250 ono; also **Suzuki** DR350SEW, white/purple, March 1998, fsh, as new cond, 2200m, £2900 ovno. Tel 0184 434 6961 (Bucks)

**Yamaha** YZ250, N-reg, exc cond, new c+s, new tyres, Pro-valve suspension, flywheel weight, £1600 ono. Tel lan on 0123 581 9088 (Oxon)

**Yamaha** XT600Z, Tenere, red/white, G-reg, twin lights, MT21s, spare Gripsters, r/locks, b/busters, Micron, going 'down under', must sell, £1750. Tel 0170 342 2311 (Hants)

**KTM** 620EGS, purple, 1995, 10,000km, 20ltr tank, ally bashplate, Acerbis, new c+s, £2895 or p/x for KTM 2-stroke. Tel Jim on 0131 315 2647 (Edinburgh)

**Husqvarna** TE610E, Husky team colour, elec start, S-reg, 300km only, manufacturer's warranty, absolutely as new, £4100 or may p/x. Tel 0162 381 1005 (Derbys)

**Suzuki** DR350SP, 1993, L-reg, 2500m, one owner, £2000 ono; also **Kawasaki** KDX125SR Special, 1992, J-reg, fitted KX250 forks and rear suspension. Tel Neville on 0167 653 2709 (Warks)

**KTM** 620GS, M-reg, 5000km, exc cond, road use only, Acerbis, MT21s and road tyres, £2650 ono. Tel Jason on 0117 902 2914 (Bristol)

**Honda** XR600R, 1998, White Bros headers, Supertrapp can, 22ltr Acerbis tank, road use only, exc cond, £3000. Tel Andrew on 0181 876 6710 (London)

**Yamaha** XTZ660, 1994, new tyres/'O'-ring chain, low mileage, good overall cond, £2500 ono. Tel 0123 424 0247 (Bucks)

**KTM** 400 enduro, 1997, vgc, £3500. Tel (days) on 0181 309 7550 or (eves) on 0168 981 0457 (Kent)

**Honda** CRM250R Mk2, white/orange, 1991, T&T, 7800km, graphics, new tyres, light road use, immac cond, ideal green laner. Tel Ray on 0125 636 3974 (Hants)

**Honda** CRM250 Mk2, 1992, T&T, new rear tyre, c+s, swing arm & wheel bearings, £1750. Tel Alex on 0122 946 4635 (Lancs)

**SWM** XN500, recon Rotax, T&T, similar Armstrong but with useful extras, cheap, fun, £1095 ono. Tel Simon (days) on 0171 777 6468 or (eves) on 0181 673 5723 (London)

**KTM** 620SX, 1995, M-reg, green lane use or convert back to moto-X, some spares, good cond, £2900. Tel Richard on 0121 474 2468 (W Midlands)

**Kawasaki** KMX125, elec start, 1994, L-reg, T&T, exc cond, low mileage, £1800. Tel 0189 286 3712 (Kent)

**Husky** 410, 1996, T&T, completely original, even tyres &

sprockets, 1300km, £300 unused spares, looks superb, photos available, easy start, £2850 ono; also **KTM** 300EXC, 1998, R-reg, totally original, Tecnosel seat cover, 900km of very gentle trail riding, first to see will buy, £2750 plus VAT. Tel Malcolm (eves) on 0161 980 3135 (Cheshire)

**Honda** XR400RX, 1999, 500km, as new, CRD bash plate, frame protectors, brush guards, save on a new one, £3400. Tel Ken on 0147 456 8295 (Kent)

**Honda** XR600, 1995, T&T, supermoto Akront wheels, fully tuned 50bhp, exc cond, lots of trick parts, £3500 ono. Tel Darren on 0120 330 5605 (W Mids)

**Kawasaki** KDX250SR, 1992, J-reg, T&T, 5000km, work use and some green lane use, very clean, very quick, £1650 ovno. Tel Graham (work) on 0181 539 5559 or (home) on 0181 317 1368 (London)

**Kawasaki** KDX200E-4, L-reg, immac cond, hardly used, £1450. Tel 0193 487 6952 (Somerset)

**Honda** XR250, 1999 model, T-reg, exc cond, £2795 ovno or may p/x. Tel lan on 0124 645 6267 (Derbys)

**Honda** XL185, red, MoT, exc order, lots of nice touches, Akronts, shocks, starts & runs sweetly, some spares, £650. Tel 0170 366 3305 (S Hants)

**Honda** Dominator NX650, M-reg, MoT, vgc, new rear tyre/chain, just serviced, road use only, £2400. Tel Dominic on 0121 733 2035 (B'ham)

**Honda** CRM250R, mkII, K-reg, T&T, exc cond, £1850 ono. Tel 01642 823494 (Cleveland)

**Kawasaki** KLX650, 94/M, as new, 6,500 dry miles, two owners from new, £2650. Tel work on 01768 483254 (Cumbria)

**Cagiva** 750, 1988/E, v capable big trailie, just serviced, sell for £1750 or p/x stinkwheel exc CRM/KDX/TM/KTM 125-300. Tel 01273 507346 (Sussex)

**Husky** 360 enduro, 92, smart bike, £1200. Tel 0117 907 1066 (S Glos)

**Honda** XR600, 96, 7500m, new tyres & mouses, c/s, fork/frame/hand protectors, loads of spares, synthetic oil only, £2400. Tel 01737 556378 (Surrey)

**Suzuki** DR350 enduro, N-reg, one owner, green laned only, 4000m, exc cond, £2050 ono. Tel 0181 668 6099 (Surrey)

**Suzuki** DR400, 81, white, new tyres & shocks, battery-less ignition, lights, all Acerbis plastics, MoT, £700. Tel 01625 875738 (Cheshire)

**Honda** XR200R, mono, 83, T&T, new rear tyre, c/s, seat, recent powder coated frame etc, fork & engine overhaul, s/s fasteners, barkbusters, £800. Tel 01625 613600 (Cheshire)

**Kawasaki** KDX250SR, 92, J-reg, £1600, 7000km, vgc, long T&T, Renthals, Tel Martin on 01234 838878 (Beds)

**Honda** XR600RV, P-reg, 6500km, well maintained, only used to go to church and back, £2500 ono. Tel 01698 889590 (Lanarkshire)

**Honda** CR250, 97, ally-framed, Pro-Racing conv, T&T, rebuilt motor, big tank, sump guard, Acerbis lights, £2300. Tel 01372 456735 (Surrey)

**Suzuki** DR650, 95 FSH, two owners, T&T, just serviced, v clean bike, 19,000m, must sell, £2400 ono. Tel 0181 651 3293 (Surrey)

**Honda** XL250 Degree, J-reg, immac cond, ideal green laner, long MoT, £1200 ono. Tel 01953 881978 (Norfolk)

**Bultaco** 350 Sherpa trials, 1974, Sammy Miller frame, good cond, not registered, Renthals, £475 ono. Tel 0161 748 9731 (Lancs)

**Honda** XR80R, '87, little thumper, mint cond, spent most of life in shed, £750 ono, may p/x adult XR/DR or WHY. Tel 01406 362501 (Lincs)

**Kawasaki** KLX250, 94, 65000km, vgc, T&T, e/start, speedo, road legal, green-laned, raced once, £1700 ono. Tel Robert on 01672 564630 or 0468 568018 leave message (Wilts)

**Kawasaki** KDX250D1, J-reg, T&T, recent c/s, good





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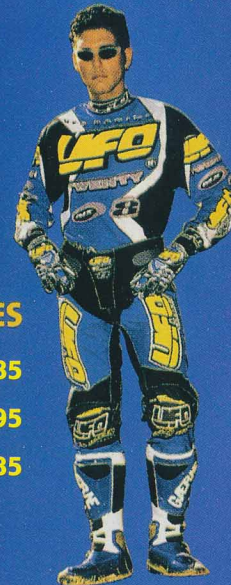


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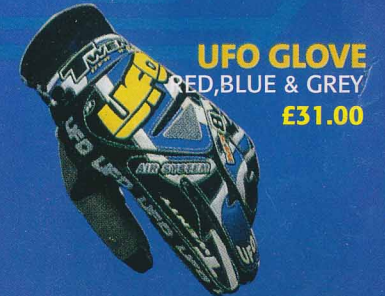


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