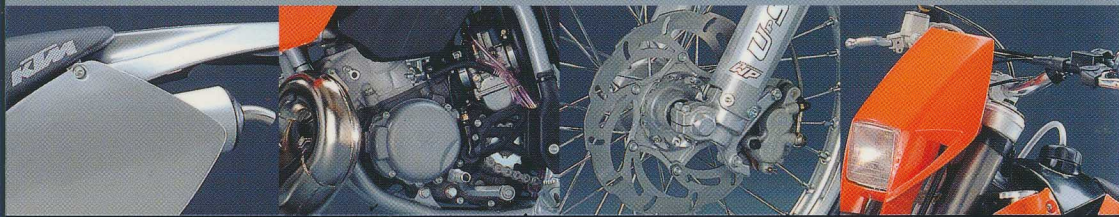


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**SUZUKI
DR-Z400S**
Testing The New
Trail Bike Version

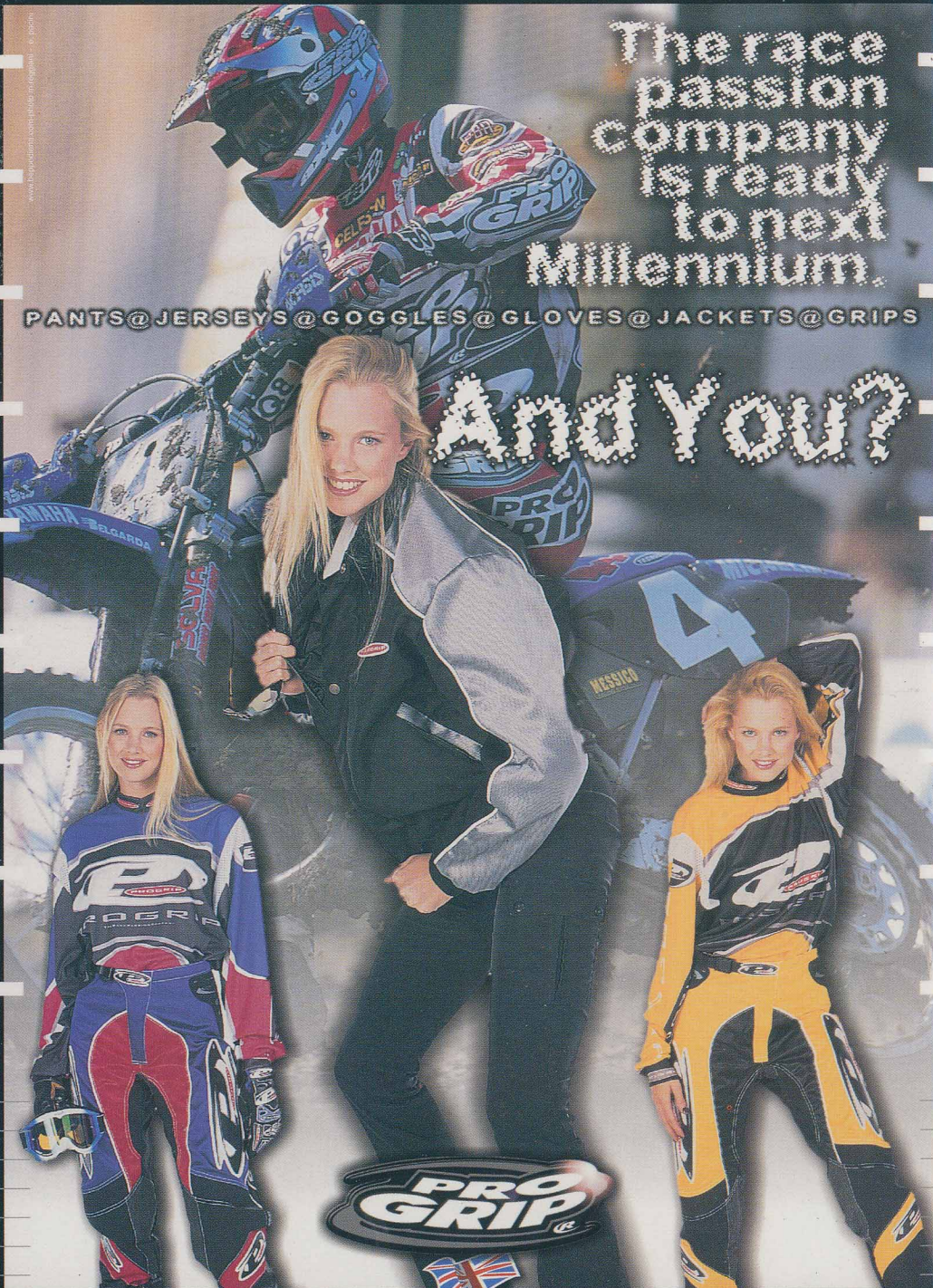
Seven Hours of Madness
KLX300 on a Seven Hour Endurothon
Long Distance Trial
Yamaha TW125 v Honda KLR125 tested
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Lazy Days...

Boy oh boy some of you guys get easily confused. I'm referring of course to the 'missing' January issue of TBM. You remember, the one we told you wasn't going to happen back in the December issue. Just to make things clearer we labelled the December issue as the Christmas issue (in other words it wasn't month dependant), then in my editorial (in that issue) I explained that because of our printing schedule getting messed up by the extended holiday over the millennium period (not to mention our preparations for the Dirt Bike Show), we wouldn't be producing a January issue.

Well that set our phone alight come the new year: 'Where's my January issue?' at least a hundred of you bleated, obviously not having read all of the December issue, otherwise you would've known that there wasn't one!

Okay a few of you hadn't seen the December issue, so I can understand how you got confused, but as for the others...

But the strangest thing of all was the number of women callers who rang. Now TBM prides itself on having a large number of female readers who obviously appreciate our fantastically unsexist opinions (give or take the odd topless model that appears just to lighten up the tone) - well nobody's perfect.

But even we were taken aback by the numbers of women callers. So we decided to ask them whether they were readers themselves, or whether they were simply phoning on behalf of their bloke. And do you know what they said? Without exception they were all wives or girlfriends who were simply fed up with their blokes whining about how TBM hadn't dropped through the letterbox this month, and had either been instructed to phone us, or had taken it upon themselves to sort it out for their blokes. Are you guys lazy or what?

Of the few blokes who summoned up the considerable energy required to call us themselves, I liked the one who told me he read TBM cover to cover and he was calling because he needed his 'monthly fix of dirt bikes'.

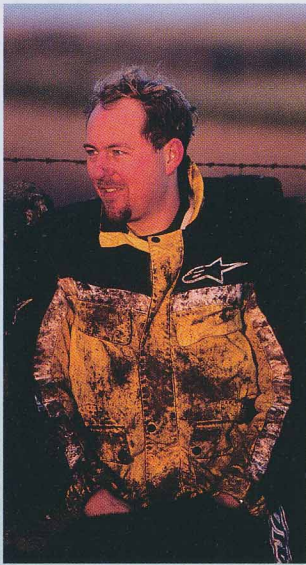
'If you read TBM cover to cover' I said, 'how come you didn't spot the bit we put in the editorial leader page last month, explaining why there wouldn't be a January issue?'

'Oh I never read that bit' he said, 'too bloody boring.'

Fortunately I'm not the sort of bloke who takes comments like that personally... though I would like to take this opportunity to inform all the readers that P. Beldon from West Midlands is not only incredibly stupid, but he probably rides like a donkey...

Good job he doesn't bother to read my editorials, eh?

Si Melber



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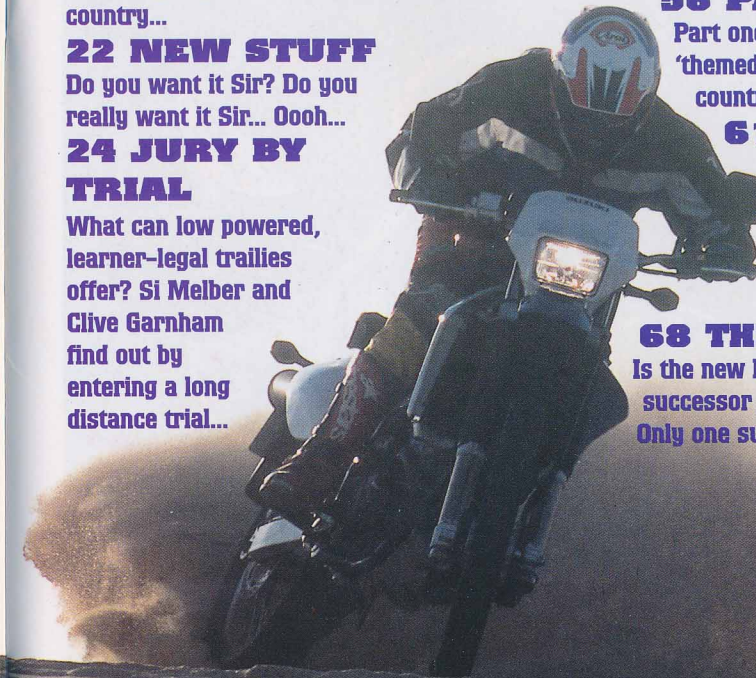
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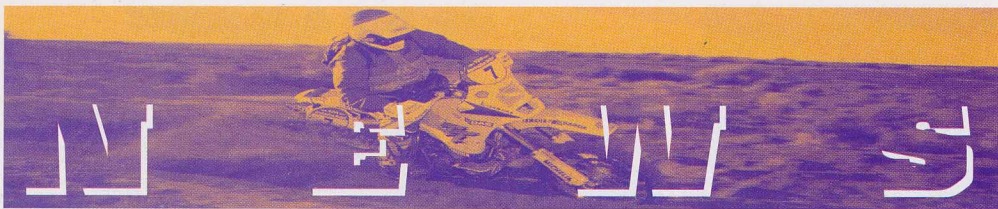
Is the new DR-Z400S the spiritual successor to the DR350? Only one sure-fire way to find out...



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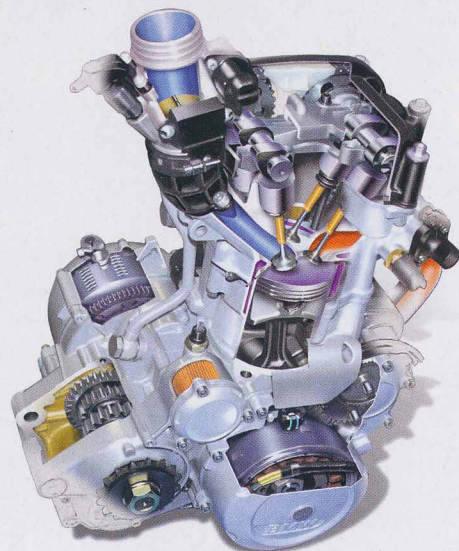
March 2000

No.55



Park & Ride

BMW launches two new trail bikes and a new off-road school in Britain...



Hot on the heels of their incredible success in this year's Dakar Rallye where BMW's took the first four places, the German manufacturer has announced two redesigned F650 dual-sport models - now called the F650GS and the F650GS Dakar - as well as exciting plans to introduce a BMW off-road school into Britain.

The original F650 Funduro which was launched back in 1993 and went on to become BMW's best-selling single cylinder machine, was developed as a joint concept with Italian manufacturer Aprilia. Now with the launch of the all-new machines, BMW has brought assembly in-house to the main production facility in Berlin.

Both bikes feature a number of innovations including relocating the 17.3 litre fuel tank under the seat in the traditional airbox location for better

weight distribution, while a switch to fuel injection and a full electronic engine management system should make this one of the most emission-friendly BMW's there's ever been.

The engine is a development of the single cylinder, DOHC, Rotax-built mill, with a bore and stroke of 100x83mm for a capacity of 652cc, turning out a claimed 50bhp at 6500rpm (slightly up on the old 650). This has been achieved with a redesigned four-valve head and cam profiles based on experience developed from their all-conquering M3 car engine

The GS's engine utilises a dry sump, with the oil tank hidden under the cowl that would normally be the fuel tank on any other bike. The total oil capacity is an impressive 2.3 litres and BMW's confidence in the reliability and durability of their product is highlighted by their recommended service interval of 6000 miles. The engine also features a balance shaft, five speed gearbox (with chain drive), water cooling, electric starter, and a powerful 400W alternator.

The dummy 'fuel tank' cowl also hides the battery, airbox and coolant reservoir, while the twin stainless-steel exhausts (which feature catalysers) now sit under the seat allowing for a much narrower tail (and larger optional panniers).

The phenomenal sales success of the F650 concept has not only been down to the availability of an entry-level BMW at an affordable price, but also we reckon thanks to its broader appeal to both sexes. Part of this is doubtless down to BMW's adherence to the policy of offering variable seat heights which continues with the new model. As standard the seat height of the new GS is just 780mm (30.7"), but options are available to lower it further still (should you require), or indeed raise the seat with a taller saddle.

The price for the new 650GS will be £4995 (or £5395) for the special limited edition Dakar model which features a 21" front wheel, longer suspension travel, a taller screen, handguards and a unique paintjob featuring the famous TSO Dakar logo.

As well as launching new bikes, BMW will be opening a new off road training school down in South Wales based around their GS range of motorcycles. The BMW Experience will run along similar lines to the Hechlingen Enduro Park

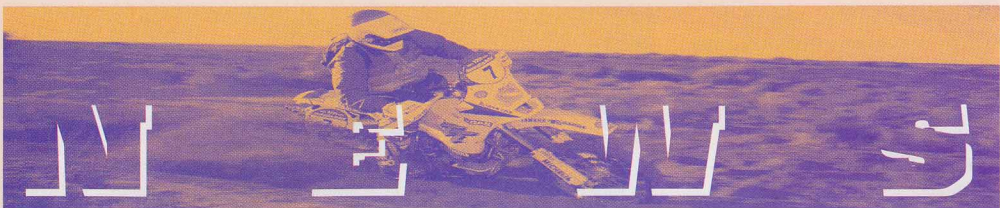


in Germany run by Richard Schalber (the man behind BMW's recent racing successes). The course which will run over two days will include coaching in the technical aspects of riding off-road on BMWs and will be run by Dakar veterans Simon Pavey, John Deacon and Andrea Mayer.

The course will cater to all levels of ability, but will particularly welcome newcomers to off-road riding. BMW's David Taylor said: 'We are aiming to introduce people to off-roading... and to demonstrate that the GS models are not only excellent motorcycles, but that they have some off-road capability.'

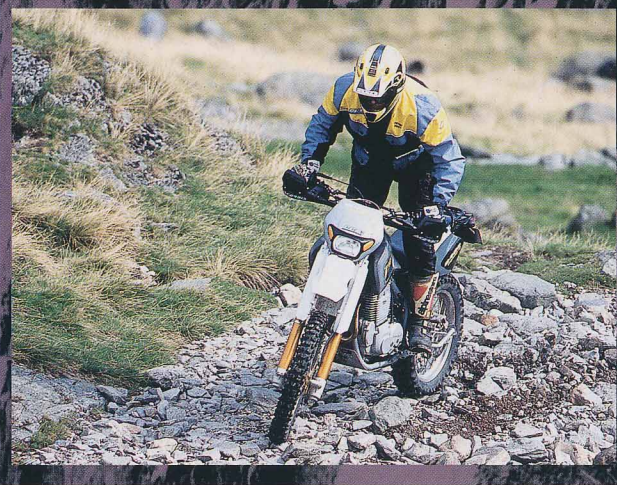
TBM's Si Pavey added: 'I'm really looking forward to being involved in this venture. The venue is absolutely fantastic - scenic and with trails for everyone to enjoy. More importantly the course structure is such that everyone will learn new skills that will help them develop their bike control no matter what surface they wish to ride on.' The first dates are in June and you can find out more by telephoning 0800 0131 282.





SNIPPETS

★ CCM have announced that they are extending their Factory Rideouts to take in the Peak District in Derbyshire. The Rideouts which run fortnightly between March 3 and November 5



will alternate between the Lake District and the Peak District, (ie once a month in each), and the cost for log-cabin accommodation, bike hire, fuel and insurance is £200. Contact the factory on 01254 296321 for more details.

★ Pro-Racing have now got a wiring loom available for Suzuki's new DR-Z400E, to help convert it to road legal spec. You're going to need new head and tail lights plus the other bits and pieces (horn, speedo etc), in order to put it on the road. Pro-Racing can be contacted on 01327 301322.

★ The year 2000 TMs which had been delayed by production difficulties should've arrived by the time you read this. On the plus side, TM UK will be supporting all its customers and owners at the British Enduro Championships this year with a van full of spares and support. In order to qualify you need to register with your local dealer who will supply you with a registration card which you must take along to events. Check with your dealer or directly with TM UK on 01249 715523 for further details.

DIARY Dates

★ The Sphinx Long Distance Trial, organised by the Cheltenham Home Guard Club takes place on 16 April, and is primarily designed for clubman & occasional riders on trail bikes of any capacity (trials or trail tyres only). There's a side-car route as well (which novice riders can follow), with about 60-70 miles of riding around the picturesque Cotswolds, and about 30 or so observed sections. The club are also running a two-stage trial on 16 July which involves a number of straightforward observed sections in the morning, followed

by a cross-country blast in the afternoon (trail & enduro bikes only). Phone Steve Venn on 01242 697494, or Mark Kirby on 01242 241764 for more details of both events.

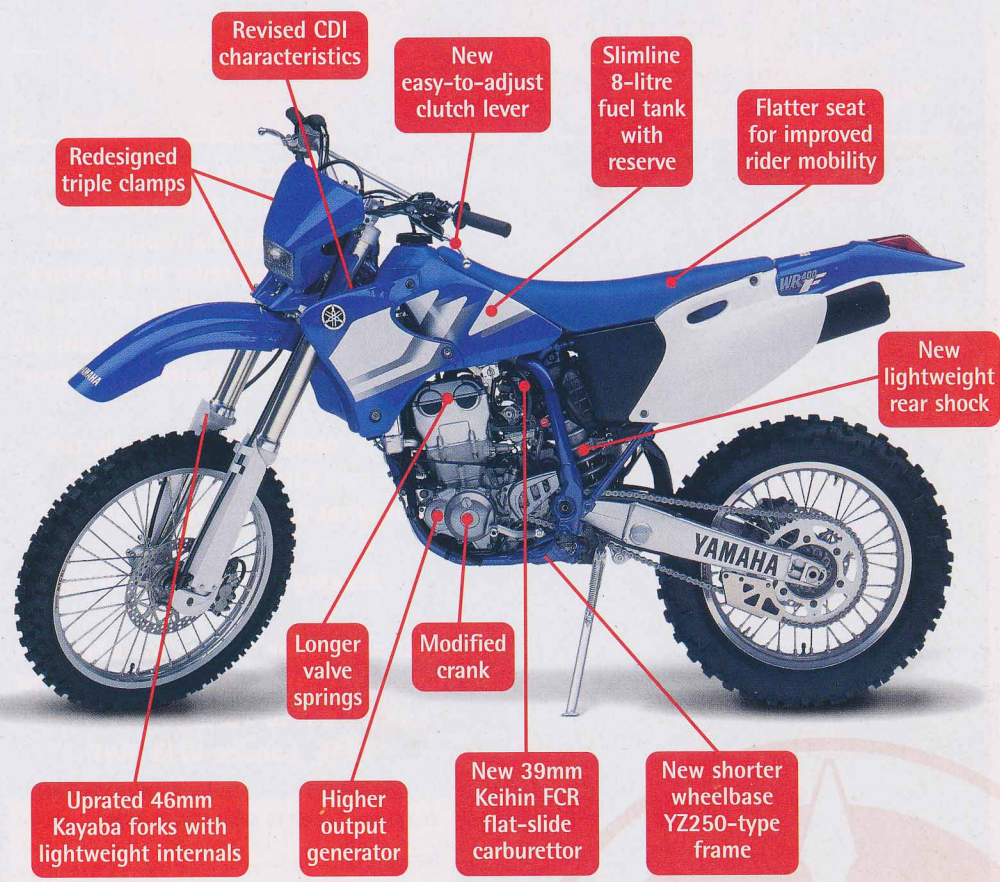
★ The 17th annual Wyegate (Long Distance) Trial takes place on Sunday 19th March, organised by the West Glos & Dean Forest MCC. As always this is a reasonably tough and challenging event by long distance trial standards, but well worth entering, if only to try your hand at the infamous 'Niagara' section. More details from Ian Vessey on 01594 832854.

★ French off-road club Hors Macadam are organising a one day raid - the 12th Triangle Vert

- with a 200km route for cars and bikes in the region around Calais on Sunday 16 April. The entry fee is FF400 (about £40), and more details are available on 00 33 3 21 35 23 44.

★ Dakar Rallye organisers TSO have postponed the first Desert Rallye of Libya. Their press release explains that a feasibility study found that the date they had reserved for the rally (3-11 June) 'coincides with a period where the temperatures are too high'. High temperatures in the Libyan Sahara during June - fancy that! Those dates have now been allocated to the Atlas Rallye (run by NPO) which will be a full FIM Rallye-Raid event staged in Morocco. Details from Nick Palmer on 01579 384384.

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Dire Straights on Dere Street

Dear TBM

Scotland's Dere Street in the Cheviot Hills could be downgraded to Bridleway with access for farm traffic only if something isn't done about it. Pressure from a landowner and environmental groups concerned about erosion damage which they have blamed on recreational vehicles, has led to Scottish Borders Council (no doubt anxious to avoid maintenance costs), referring the decision to the Secretary of State for Scotland. It is expected to go to a public inquiry. The 2000 year old Roman road is a listed ancient monument and on its Scottish borders the council lists its street as D 89/3 Roman. Damage was caused on its first section by forestry vehicles over the winter of 97/98, and this will no doubt be blamed on us. Anyone with an interest in being able to use this ancient road should voice their concerns to the Scottish Borders Council, Newtown St, Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA or tel: 01835 824000. Please help...

Bruce Mathieson
East Lothian

Dirty Business

Dear TBM

Do you or any other readers have any trail tips for keeping spray, mud or road dirt away from the rear shock of my Honda Dominator, as it is not

Speak up or lose it - Dere Street is threatened...



protected from the elements by a plastic guard like most other trail bikes? Is there any reason for this - the shock on the Africa Twin for example is protected. So is there a guard that will do the job and can be made to fit around the twin pipes down from the rear of the airbox. I would be grateful for any suggestions.

Brian Deakin
Bangor, Co Down

To be honest Brian we hadn't noticed the omission of this plastic guard on the Dominator and our guess is that Honda

imagined most owners wouldn't need it, but without a close up look at the rear of a Dommie I can't say whether the air-box pipes to which you refer could or couldn't be re-routed. It's possible that the shock guard off an Africa Twin could be made to fit, but there is one other solution. We have heard of a company that makes gaiters for shock absorbers out of neoprene, however when we came to looking them up, nobody could remember their name. Doubtless someone reading this will know who they are, or if someone from the company concerned would like to contact us, we'll

pass the information out to readers in next month's snippets or New Products page.

Aha, Baja

Dear TBM

Could you please give me some advice on parts. I own a 1992 Honda XLR250 Baja, which I've had for two years without any major problems - aside from a lack of advice from Honda dealers. I've spent many hours phoning round seeking a rear disc and a CDI unit, but none seem to be available for the Baja. On asking whether parts for the UK model XR250 would

Dear Trail Bike...

Honda's Baja - similar to an XR250?



do, no-one seemed to know, though some thought it might be a possibility. But most people weren't interested as it was an import. Could you please advise me as to whether the rear disc will fit or not, or if any of the other parts are interchangeable. If not, do you know of any breakers who might have parts for this machine. Many thanks.

Keith Walker
Carnforth, Lancs

Your chances of finding one in a breakers are zilch Keith, on the other hand we're sure that the UK XR250 disc will fit, and if you don't want a Honda item, many aftermarket companies can sell you pattern discs, like Talon for example. Likewise we reckon the UK XR250 CDI will almost certainly do the job. Try any one of the companies that regularly advertise Japanese imports in TBM for help with obtaining parts. Best of luck...

Model Behaviour

Dear TBM

Please find enclosed £26 to renew my subscription - looking forward to another fabulous year of TBM, though preferably with less Sarah-Janes (our model - ed) and more inspirational stuff like the article on the Roof of Africa penned by Simon Pavey in the last issue. I know, I know, we've had this discussion before, and it's a sad fact (but true) that men's brains and consequently their wallets tend to be driven by the groin area. Ho hum...

Janette Edwards
Cambridge

Er... No comment - ed

No Show #1

Dear Si

Couldn't agree more with the sentiments you voiced in the

last issue in relation to the Dirt Bike Show. I attended the show (not a cheap trip when you and the wife have to travel from Guernsey - flights, hire car, hotel etc), as I had decided to part with my KTM Adventure. I mistakenly thought that by visiting the show I would be able to inspect, sit on and speak to people about, all of the options open to me. As you have already highlighted, no DR-Z400, in spite of the bike's launch at the Paris Show. If small importers like VOR can afford to attend the off-road show, surely the 'big boys' should make the effort too. Keep up the good work.

Tim Marquis
St Peters, Guernsey

PS I take it that Yamaha have forgiven you now, in light of the full page Yamaha WR400F advert in last month's issue!

Only just...

No Show #2

Dear TBM

I have just read with interest your editorial leader commenting upon the large numbers at the recent Dirt Bike Show, and the fact that Suzuki didn't turn up with their DR-Z400. I can't seem to figure it out either. What I can understand though is an increase in the show's attendance figures. As a CBR600 owner I'm sick to death of the increasing threat to my licence by the use of indiscriminate speed cameras, not to mention the unbelievable cost of broken plastic, which must be turning

large numbers of road bikers onto trail bikes. That's why I'm selling the CBR for a WR and re-joining the TRF. Thanks for printing such an honest and informative mag.

Shawn
Bristol

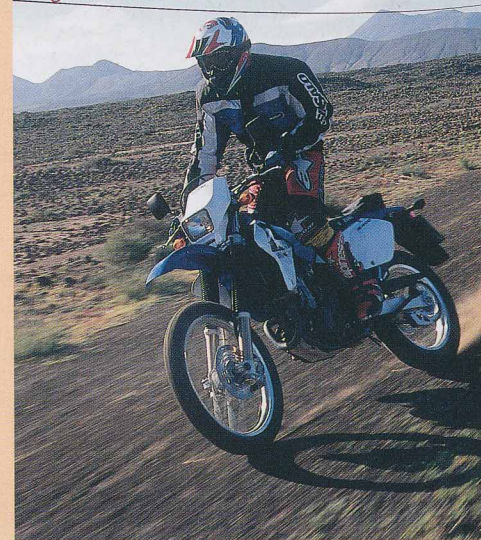
No Show #3

Dear TBM

I've found the answer to your editorial leader in last month's issue where you asked the question: What was Suzuki's excuse for not attending the Dirt Bike Show? The answer is in fact: B) They forgot they made dirt bikes. I came to this conclusion after visiting the Ally Pally Roadracing and Superbike Show in February where I found an example of that well known superbike - the DR-Z400 - on display, as well as an XR650 on the Honda stand. Confused? You bet I was. If Suzuki and Honda aren't sure what sort of bikes they make, perhaps you could help them out with an identification chart!

Joss
Seaford, Lincs

Oh we're sure it was only a slight oversight on Suzuki's behalf! Any day now they're going to realise that they produce TRAIL bikes and actually ADVERTISE them in the UK's only Trail Bike Magazine - aren't you Suzuki? Let's see how long it takes them. Will they be in next month's magazine I wonder...?



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TRAIL Tips

TRAIL TIPS * TRAIL TIPS * TRAIL TIPS * TRAIL TIPS

This month, keeping water out of your gearbox, a cheap grab handle and an easy way of stopping your sidestand from sinking into the mire...

We begin this month's tips page with a follow up to last month's tip about CRM gearbox breathers. You may recall that reader Steve Crossland from Amesbury in Wilts wrote in to say that in order to prevent gearbox seal failure because of a blocked breather tube, he drilled a small hole in the bottom of the airbox and pushed the breather tube in so that it breathed relatively clean air. Well, a trail riding friend of ours, Justin Ogilvie from Kent, dropped us a line to query this.

Justin writes: In your Trail Tips column you pass on the advice about the CRM blocked breather tube tip (say that quickly if you can!), I don't know that this is such a good idea. If this modification is carried out I would avoid places like the Strata Florida in Wales on a wet day. This is because in very deep water the airbox invariably fills up and this could have the effect of feeding water directly into the gearbox - which is a very bad thing indeed. As you know, unlike with a four-stroke which uses a common oil to lubricate both engine and gearbox where the engine oil gets very hot (evaporating out any moisture from the gearbox oil), two-strokes have separate gearbox oils which don't get as hot. That's why we often see



milky inspection windows on two-strokes' crankcases. The point being if we arrange for a relatively easy passage of water into a two-stroke gearbox, it will stay there with detrimental results (unless you change the oil frequently - see this month's Technical Topical Tips p58).

There are a few breather filters designed specifically to do this job (K&N do a good one), though I've always found that a small strip of washing up sponge wrapped round the end of the breather and held over with a zip-tie does the job and costs just pennies. Bearings and gears get easily pitted by dirt and sand and if more people used these filters, gearboxes would live longer. In the US where desert racing is common, everybody uses breather filters especially on four-strokes which breathe quite heavily - just try putting your finger over an XR breather tube, while the engine is revving and you'll see what I mean.

Cheers Justin, thanks for the advice. Next tip comes from our own Paul 'Bodger' Blezard, who in the course of riding with the East

Cornwall TRF for his 'Doing the Rounds' column this month, came across a couple of handy tips which he has relayed on to us (see the accompanying photos).

The first concerns a cheap and easy grab handle for the front of your bike. Old fan belts are incredibly strong (and most car breakers are happy to get shot of them). You have to slip the front end of your bike out to fit it, but once fitted it should be able to cope with towing your bike out of bogs and last forever. The second concerns a tried and tested mod to stop the bike falling over in soft mud. Simply remove the sidestand and weld a large foot onto the bottom of it, before refitting. Good tips... Keep 'em coming and we'll keep on publishing them...



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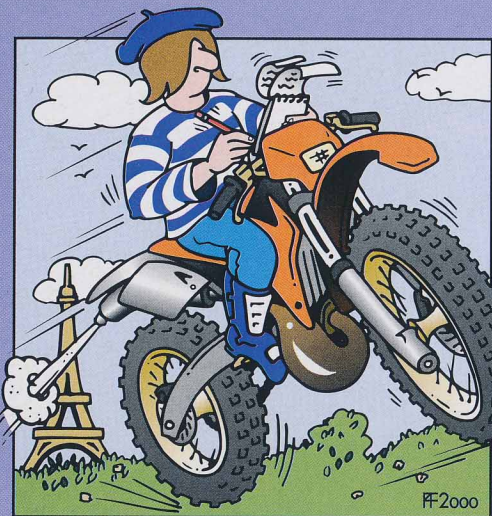


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TALKING *Dirty*

From West Africa to the West Country, Chris Evans revels in the contrast of our sport...

The last time I put finger to keyboard I was on my annual hols in Burkina Faso, as one of the press officers for the 2000 Total Dakar Rallye. As you may already know, things didn't quite work out as planned, and the rallye had to be air-lifted away from a potential 'hot-spot' by three huge Antonov transporter planes which flew back and forth to Libya. Apparently the bad guys were waiting for us out in the Ténéré desert - though later it was suggested that what the spy satellites had actually picked up was not a marauding bunch of bandit's, but in fact a regular camel caravan. Technology is a wonderful thing.

It feels so long ago now that it hardly seems to matter - though certain aspects of the whole charade gave me a damn good chuckle at the time, even if the situation itself was potentially very

serious. One of these lighter moments was everybody's desperation to get to Libya. Global politics is a strange thing. Six months earlier, Colonel Gaddafi was considered by most people to be Hitler with a spiral-perm and a suntan, and then suddenly, his was the safest country in North Africa. To be honest I have no idea if we were safe there or not, but it was definitely the most welcoming place we went to, and uniquely in Africa, not one person hassled me for a T-shirt.

The Europeans working there confirmed my impressions, saying that the locals were super friendly - while petrol cost less than 7p a litre

Barely a week after stumbling blurry-eyed out the flight from Cairo, I was lining up at the start of a much lower key, but in a way, no less bizarre motorcycle and car event - the Exmoor Long Distance Trial.

How this actually came about I'm not entirely



sure. I remember calling his Editorship to inform him I was back in circulation. I also have a vague recollection of telling him I was anxious to get back on a dirt bike as soon as possible, and the next thing I remember we're all hammering down the M4 in the TBM Transporter on our way to Minehead, discussing the finer aspects of life - girls, dirt bikes, curry and warm beer.

The meeting point for the start of this event was a hotel in Barnstaple, Devon. And if you didn't know what was going on, you could have easily mistaken the car park for an autojumble. I'd always wondered what happened to all those truly awful, early-80s trail bikes... And now I know - they're all down in the West Country taking part in trials like this one. Perched high up on the brand new KTM125 long term tester, decked out from head to toe in the latest Premier/Sinialo/Alpinestars' clothing, I felt vastly superior to the rest of the welly-bedecked ensemble - until that is,

we came to the very first section!

Now I've never done a long distance trial before, but apparently they've been holding them ever since man had the bright idea of squeezing an engine into a bicycle frame - and some of the competitors looked like they'd taken part in the very first one. Despite their advancing years and bikes with more shock absorbers than mine, they scurried up sections like a ferret up trousers, while I slipped, slithered and generally paddled to the top, completely exhausted. On most of the sections you had to ride up a reasonably steep and slippery hill and then, just when you're getting into your stride - stop, and restart again. This might be a reasonable proposition on a 1978 DT175, but on a modern 125 enduro bike it's simply a recipe for wheelspin.

It wasn't all bad though. The countryside was pleasant, the weather not too cold for the time of year, and in among the old nails there were some truly lovely old British specials. In fact the whole thing had something of a time-warp feel about it. Team TBM were the only people who weren't wearing waxed cotton and industrial wellies, and whose plastic overtrousers didn't smell like the inside of a trowel.

Happily the olde-worlde charm extended to the good nature of the participants and while Team TBM pushed to the front of the queue on the dodgy pretext of needing to take photos, the good-natured and predominately local competitors merely moved politely to one side, continued their conversations about side-valve tappet adjustment and relit their pipes. Apparently this last item is essential in maintaining balance, and has I believe an important stabilising function similar to the modern day helmet fin.

But the incongruity of the whole thing really hit home when some delightful chap regarded me from the saddle of his 500cc Ariel and said I looked like I was dressed for the Paris - Dakar. 'Funny you should say that' I replied and off we went into a strange but morally uplifting conversation about our respective worlds during which he declared himself a keen follower of that annual desert excess, while I sung the praises of this distinctly uncommercial long distance trial.

The weirdest thing about the whole conversation was that we were both utterly sincere. He really was in awe of those nutters who charged across the desert for days on end. While for my part I was just delighted to be out on a motorcycle on an event every bit as silly as the Dakar, but without all the big money, big egos and the big accidents.

They say that life is all about contrasts and I for one wouldn't disagree. I wonder if I could get used to smoking a pipe...?



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Doing the Rounds

Story & Pics Paul Blez; Illustration Peter Flynn

In the first of a new series, TBM gets out and about to meet groups of trail riders up and down the country, discovering the pleasures and problems of riding in their area. In part one, Paul Blezard heads out with the East Cornwall TRF...

East Cornwall has a rich variety of interesting green lanes to explore, and my host for the weekend - Tony Stuart - is not only chairman of the Cornwall branch of the Trail Riders Fellowship, but also the former national chairman.

The TRF is the prime defender of our right to ride green lanes against a whole host of powerful forces who would love to see our favourite

pastime banned, but the best reason to sign up is the simplest, as Tony told me: 'I first joined the TRF because I wanted to have fun on a motorbike.'

That was nearly 30 years ago, and Tony's been having fun trail riding ever since, although like all of the TRF's unpaid officers he's also spent thousands of hours researching the rights of ways in his particular area.

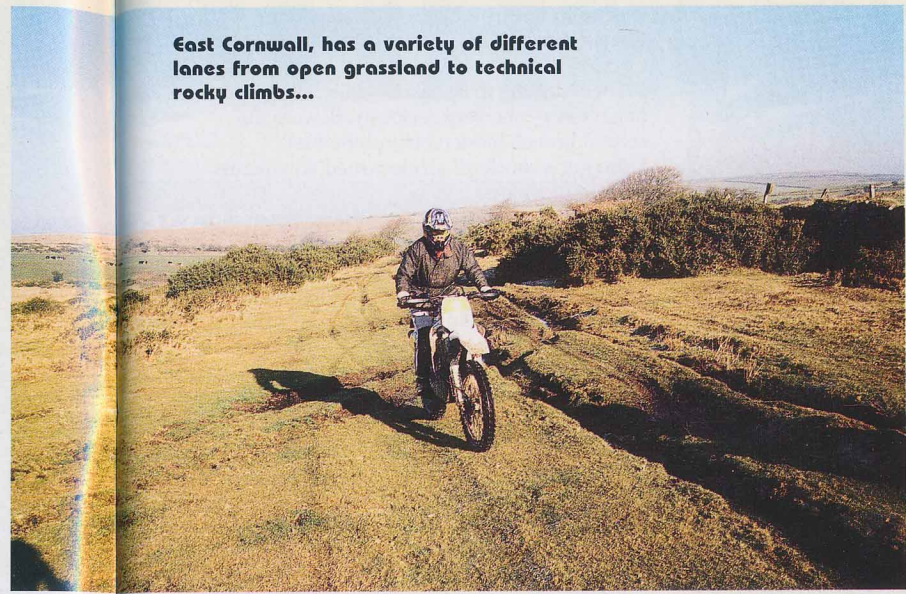
The route we rode was typical of the runs he leads every month. We started from Tony's house in Trebetherick near Wadebridge, soon after 9am on a sunny Sunday in mid-January. And by the time we returned home again at 5.30 in the evening it was pitch black and freezing cold. In between we'd ridden 26 lanes of all shapes and sizes - from mid Cornwall to the Devon border and back. I was treated to a wonderful selection of trails, the vast majority of which I'd never set eyes on before, despite having ridden in this part of Cornwall several times before.

Our first trail was an easy ride up the old road from Wadebridge to Bodmin, which goes straight over the top of a hill while the modern road detours around the base of it and our last was the notorious climb at Muchlarnick, where a combination of slippery, jagged rock steps, fatigue and failing light got the better of us only halfway up. In between we did lanes which appeared to start or finish in people's gardens, crunched our way through icy puddles up on Penkestle moor, splashed across several fords, fought our way through dense undergrowth, rode under and over fallen trees and even across the middle of a very posh golf course - all legal of course. There isn't room here to give a blow-by-blow account, but a few of the more memorable lanes - and incidents - are worth describing, as indeed are my riding companions and their mounts.

The Chairman

Born and bred in the Midlands, Tony's lived in Cornwall for the past 15 years. Now a sprightly 62 he's been riding road bikes since 1958, but didn't start trail riding (on a BSA B40) till he was 32. After owning a DT400MX and a BMW twin, he finally settled down with more sensible steeds. Having just recently sold the MkII CRM he's had for three years, he fancies a new DR-Z400, but still has his faithful four year old K LX250 which in many ways is more suited to Cornwall's rocky climbs.

To see him ride, you would never guess that he has very limited hip movement, but as he explained: 'When I became national chairman in



East Cornwall, has a variety of different lanes from open grassland to technical rocky climbs...

1996 I became a life member of the TRF, which cost the equivalent of eight years subscriptions, so I've got to keep riding till I'm at least 67 just to get my money's worth!

The Ex-Trials rider

Des Wickett rode his first trial in the year I was born (back in the Fifties), but he's only been trail riding for five years. You could see his trials experience in the way he rode his WR200, but the Yam must seem pretty light compared to the 650 Triumph he rode in the Land's End trial for ten years on the trot! I was gob-smacked to discover that he's 63 years young. As he said: 'I have just as much fun as I did when I was competing, and spend far more time actually riding the bike.'

The Gifted Late Developer

Steve Welch is living proof that you can teach an old dog new tricks. Now a youthful 50 the former hotel owner only started off-roading at the

religion. He owned road bikes as a teenager, but gave up two wheels altogether for nearly 30 years, until his mate Steve Welch persuaded him to have a crack at trail riding. This was only his sixth time out on his DR250 but he got up all but the most difficult hills and his delight at getting up the wonderful climb at Morden was a pleasure to behold. Despite breaking four indicators in six outings, he told me: 'This is by far the most enjoyable thing I've ever done - beats sex any day!' If you say so, Alan...

The Last-Minute Latecomer

While we were having lunch in the Coryton Inn at St Mellion, Tony's mobile phone rang. It was a potential new member who fancied going trail riding. Half an hour later Dave Howells had joined us on his stone-stock MkII CRM250. A founder member of the Welsh Trail Riders Association and a former motocrosser, he was coming back to biking after many years away. He was



Doing the Rounds



map from waterproof cover all day long)
Unexpected danger: Two members of Cornwall TRF have been injured in the last two years by hitting their heads while riding under fallen trees - one very seriously. Beware the second branch hidden behind the first. I also got a shock off an electrified wire across the end of a lane!

Breakages: One indicator lens, one indicator support bracket (metal fatigue) and one clutch lever.

Cornish peculiarities: Most bikes in the club seem to be fitted with what Tony calls 'Girlie' trials front mudguards, which seems to be a little local perversion. Also none of the 26 lanes we rode was a RUPP or Byway, they were all Unclassified County Roads with vehicular rights. Not one was correctly signposted and you can't tell a UCR from a private road on an OS map. The only hint, in a few cases, was the 'Unsuitable for Motors' sign.

Huge thanks to Tony Stuart and wife Liz for hospitality above and beyond the call of duty and to Jeff Hewitt for the loan of his sprightly DR350 (sorry about the clutch lever Jeff!). Cornwall TRF meet at The Ship pub in Govenna Hill, Wadebridge on the third Thursday of every month and usually do their monthly ride the following weekend. Less in July and August 'cos the county's full of Emmetts (tourists). Enquiries to Tony Stuart, 01208 862960.



Blez urges his borrowed bike up one of the trickier climbs

soon wishing he'd replaced the standard rear tyre on the CRM as it spun frantically on the slippery stones of Morden, but he was still full of enthusiasm at the end of the day and keen to join the TRF.

Biggest shock: the dramatic weather-caused erosion on Muchlarnick and Pink Panther in the last two years. Far worse than anything a bike could do. It's made a challenging climb near impossible in both cases.

Lesson learned: Trials rear tyres really are better than enduro tyres or knobblies on slippery rocks.

Interesting equipment carried: Fold-up saw, secateurs, fan belt (for pulling on) huge transparent map bag (no need to remove

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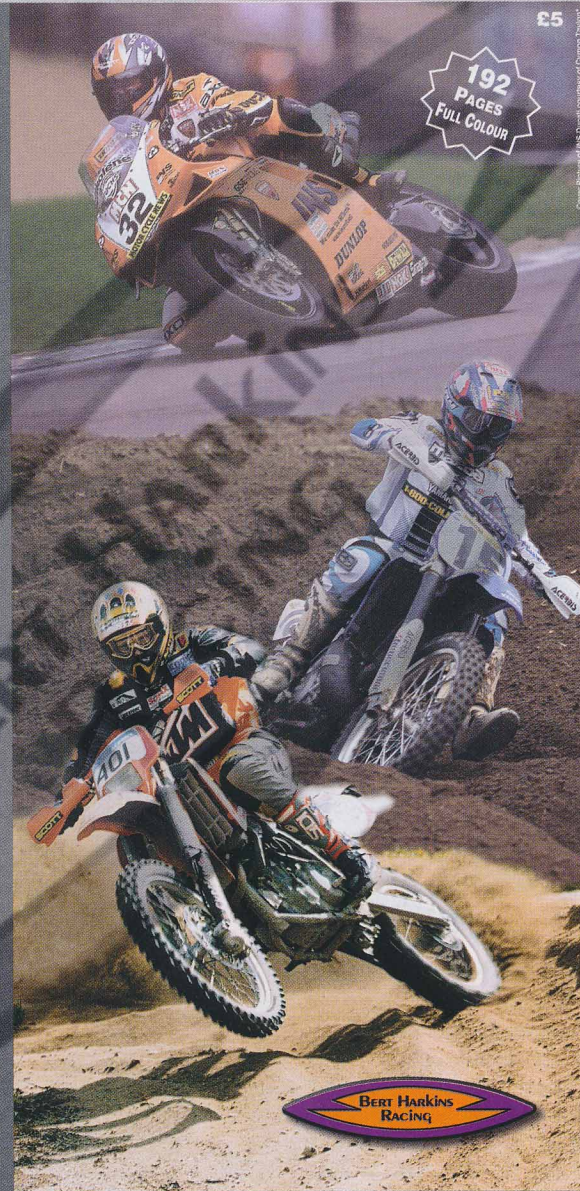
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Put The Boot In

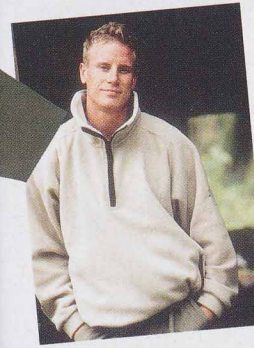
Everybody's heard of Diadora football boots, but now the Italian footwear giants have turned their hand to constructing high quality MX boots. Their latest 'Rainbow' Skywalk Boot is a regular four-buckle design with toe, heel, shin and calf reinforcement, or what Diadora terms 'gel & air protection pads'. This stylish boot is constructed from full-grain leather and available in either silver/tan (pictured), black/white or blue/black/white, in sizes 39-47. They cost £176.15 (inc) and are available from Sinisalo stockists (more details on 01483 450560).

A Cut Above

Alpinestars Racer Pants are made from a combination of matt and shiny ballistic nylon with stretchy spandex and durable kevlar for the high wear areas on the seat and knees. With a generously cut seat, ratchet-waist closure and soft, flexible logos, Alpinestars claim these pants to be incredibly comfortable - ideal for riders spending long hours in the saddle. They cost £89.99 (inc) and are available in sizes 28-36" waist, in green, red, blue or grey. While their casual T-shirts come in a heavy-weight, side-seamed, 100% cotton, in either black or green. There's a choice of either 'Spiral' (pictured) or 'Space' versions complete with futuristic Alpinestars logos. Available in sizes M-XXL, and costing £17.75 (inc), for details of your nearest Alpinestars stockist, call CI Sport on 01372 378000.



Getting Fleeced



Everyone wears fleeces these days, especially once the sun has gone down on hot and sweaty ride. Outdoor clothing company Regatta's new Zenith fleece is constructed from an entirely new (technical) fabric with good wicking and thermal qualities, and comes in either light or medium weights. There's both male and female shapes and costs vary from £30-35. Available in sizes S-XXL in a whole variety of colours from all good outdoor shops. For more information contact the Regatta Hotline on 0161 749 1313.

TESTED



Bootee-ful

They aren't fashionable or sexy, but these army surplus Gore-Tex bootees are the best new product we've used recently. I've always accepted wet feet to be part and parcel of riding off road in winter, but these boot liners have proved it needn't be so. On my last four outings I've worn a pair of these Gore-Tex (high) boot liners over the top of a pair of skiing socks, and despite returning with sodden boots, my feet

have stayed dry and (best of all) warm. With their velcro top-closing, they prevent water getting to your feet even when the water is deeper than the bootee itself, and they're so comfortable to wear (over socks), you don't even know you've got them on. I can't recommend them highly enough. For £20, they're the trail and enduro rider's best friend. Don't wash them in the washing machine though, simply sponge them down and allow to dry. Available only in Army green, ours came from Springfield on 01283 566137. Essential.

Arctic Scott

At this time of year keeping your fingers warm on the trail (and particularly on the road in between lanes) can be a real problem. But now we've found some really good gloves which are not only warm, but also 100% waterproof. Scott's Adventure gloves have appeared in TBM before, but during the past few months we've had a chance to try them out properly in all sorts of adverse weather conditions, we can



now vouch for their effectiveness. They work superbly - staying dry all day - in part thanks to a decent high wrist-closing, helping to seal the gloves over your jacket cuffs. Obviously they're a bit bulkier than standard off-road gloves - they have to be, in order to insulate your fingers from the cold - but during the winter and spring months they always find a place in my riding kit bag. One word of warning, don't let the inners get pulled out from the outer shell - it's virtually impossible to get them back in again. Price £29.99, sizes S-XXL, in black only, from all Scott Dealers (01582 472374). Highly recommended.

Jury By

TRAIL

What can low-powered, learner-legal trailies offer the dual-sport rider?

Si Melber and Clive Garnham entered a long distance trial on a Yamaha TW125 and Honda XLR125 in a bid to find out...

The Barnstaple Grand Prix was in full swing. Crouched down on the tank of the wailing XLR125, I was eking every last ounce of power from the screaming engine. Ahead of me the fat-bob combination of Clive and the TW125 (at full throttle) were slowly

being reeled in - with every passing minute. I saw my chance on the entry to the next corner. By leaving my braking late, and diving up the outside I knew I'd have him on the exit. But I'd figured without Clive's 'Dick-Dastardly' approach to losing. Knowing full well the

corner was mine, he callously swung straight out across me - forcing me to chop the throttle for a second - before cutting back in and closing the door. I should've known better than to trust an Aussie.

It took me another mile of draughting him to get by, but this time I didn't telegraph my intentions.

I feigned a move up the inside, and as Clive swung across to block me, I dodged right and swept majestically around the outside of him. I sat up for a second to give him my best victory salute, but the extra drag was crucial. Before I could do anything about it, he was in my slipstream and less than a quarter of a mile later was up alongside me, as the TW eased past once more. It was the sixth time the lead had changed in the last five miles, and neither of us had even broken the speed limit. Who says you can't have fun on restricted 125s?

Trials & Tribulations

If you're going to test a pair of commuter-friendly trailies like these, what better way than to enter them in a long distance trial? A mixture of road-work, green lanes, timed special tests and a dozen observed sections are the ultimate workout for a great day of competition. Which is how we found ourselves at eight o'clock one Sunday morning on the fast and swoopy A39 from Minehead to Barnstaple, heading for the start of the North Devon Motor Club's Exmoor Trial.

We'd entered them in the 'up to 225cc' class, and had got special dispensation from the clerk of the course to use them with the standard fitment dual-sport tyres - well you try getting hold of a trials tyre with a 180-section! The idea was to swap bikes in between sections to get a feel for both machines - this was going to be fun.

If you've never ridden a long distance trial before, then you haven't lived. Classic sections like Beggars Roost, Jenny Wren and Snapper were going to have to be negotiated before we could find a winner, and not just between the bikes, either. Tired of being whupped by Clive in



Grip isn't the problem on the fat-tyred TW...



Whereas with the XLR125...

enduros, I reckoned I had half a chance to put one over on him in a long distance trial, where skill and a little finesse count for more than just pure aggression.

Choose your Weapons

I'd taken the precaution of trying out both bikes first, before handing the keys of the Yamaha to Clive. What made it all the more enjoyable to watch was that the TW has probably the lowest seat height of any bike we've ever tested, while

Clive must be at least six-foot-one! He was virtually sitting on his haunches, how could I lose?

The day began badly for me when I fell off within sight of the first marker board on the infamous Jenny Wren section, breaking one of the Honda's mirrors, but Clive being new to the feet-up game, lost his footing early on, so honours were even. At the first of the stop-and-go special tests the XLR eclipsed the TW by just over half a second, and my mood brightened considerably despite the darkening weather. The next few

sections were all in my favour as I cleaned both Sepscott-II and High Bray while Clive battled with the TW's non-existent suspension and an overheating clutch, picking up a hatful of penalty points.

Come the early afternoon I'd established a fairly healthy points lead and could relax safe in the knowledge that Clive was well and truly beaten - only a miracle could save him now. But I'd reckoned without the indomitable Garnham spirit. With the dogged determination of a true fighter,

he came back at me, cleaning both Beggars Roost and Lyncome Bridge sections while the best I could manage was six points apiece. That left us just one point apart - in Clive's favour. Everything now rested on the final section.

The Hand of God

Floyd's Bank is a notoriously slippery section within site of the finishing line. With everything to play for, I urged the XLR up the grassy slope, and managed to get to the seven point marker



The XLR looks and rides like a proper trailbike

Honda's neat little trailie-styled commuter was introduced a couple of years back with little in the way of fanfare. Its simple, air-cooled, sohc, engine is quiet and economical and has been the basis for countless learner bikes over the years. But now with the addition of an electric start, it's been brought up to date, and early sales figures for the XLR have been promising. Whether its the bike's dual-purpose styling, or simply its excellent road manners, commuters have taken Honda's little dual-sporter to heart, and it has regularly featured in the top-ten sales figures in the 125cc category.

And make no mistake, this little Honda may be at the budget end of the spectrum, but it's still built like every Honda we've tested. That means

corners haven't been cut in terms of quality (the switchgear and controls feel light but strong), and the bike looks to be properly screwed together. XR owners will certainly recognise the family resemblance immediately (headlight, dials etc), even if the smaller XLR doesn't look anywhere near as chunky as its bigger brothers.

While the XLR may have been principally designed as a robust learner bike, its off-road credentials are not in question. It will tackle most green lanes with aplomb, provided the rider is up to the challenge - the biggest of which is fitting onto the thing. With new or inexperienced riders in mind, Honda have made the XLR relatively low and compact. The seat height is a friendly 858mm (35") which sounds high, but it squashes

HONDA XLR 125 R

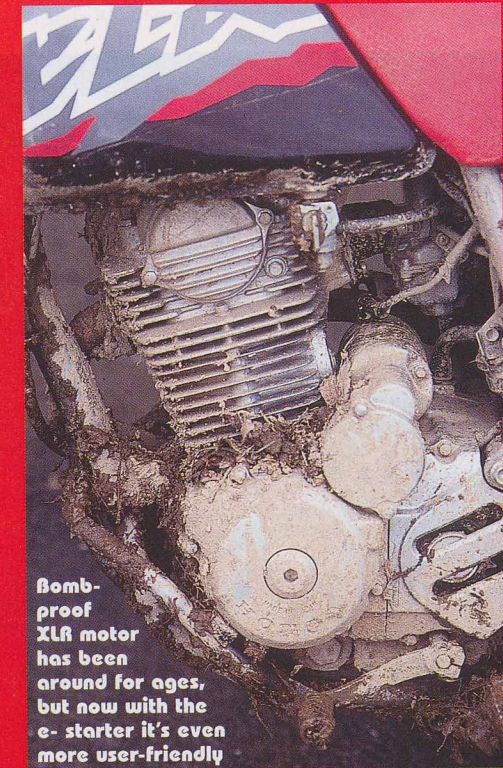
Price:	£2675 (+otr) available May
Engine:	Air-cooled, SOHC, electric-start four stroke
Bore & stroke:	56.5x49.5mm
Displacement:	124.1cc
Seat height:	858mm
Fuel capacity:	9L
Trail weight:	125kg

down a lot when you sit on it, and there's not much of a stretch to the bars. That makes it un-intimidating for the novice, but for everyone else, it just feels cramped. And standing up on the thing is even worse - with the bars much too close to your thighs.

At least the suspension is good (especially the front forks), which easily eclipse the crudely damped units fitted to the Yamaha. Likewise the rear shock which gave no cause for concern for an 83kg rider. Ruts are the bike's undoing, though undoubtedly a better front tyre and a change of handlebars would help. That said the XLR will rattle along like a good-un once up to speed and though it could never be described as stable thanks to its short wheelbase, it doesn't flap or wander about on the move.

The XLR comes fitted with an excellent front disc brake - strong and progressive, it works well both on and off-road - which is more than can be said for a lot of bikes. The rear drum (the same as on the TW) looks old fashioned these days and means a lot more maintenance if you regularly ride off-road.

On tarmac the XLR can be coaxed up to a jaw-dropping 65mph given a favourable incline and prevailing wind; but 40-50mph is the norm and at those sort of speeds it will return well over 100 miles from its nine litre tank. With five widely spaced gears there's a lot of revving involved and most off-roading is tackled in first and second gear. Nevertheless the little XLR always gets the job done - somehow.



Bomb-proof XLR motor has been around for ages, but now with the e-starter it's even more user-friendly

XLR also comes with a lockable fender bag containing a comprehensive toolkit



board before the Honda spun to a frustrating halt. All I could do now was sit and watch Clive's progress.

Picking the smoother right hand rut, Clive worked the TW upwards past the 12-point marker board, the 11 and 10-point boards - only three more to go for certain victory. Suddenly there was a loud 'BANG', the TW ground to a halt and Clive, bemused, looked down to find his chain sitting on the ground. How could fate be so cruel? It was too harsh for words - uncanny almost - as if someone had been fiddling with the adjusters!

I consoled him afterwards in the bar, but

secretly it was my day. No matter that we'd come 14th and 16th in a class of just 20 riders, victory had been mine by one clear point. I wouldn't let him forget this day in a hurry...

Conclusion

Okay let's get one thing straight - these bikes are meant for learner riders or people without an A1-category licence. In truth neither one of them is a patch on something like a decent secondhand Serow, and you'd be better off spending two and a half grand on a two year old XT225 or TT-R250.

But for those of you governed by your licences who want an economical four-stroke commuter

bike on which you can play at weekends, which is the better deal?

Well, despite favouring the Yamaha's styling, loving its cheeky confidence and preferring its more generous riding position, this was a battle that the Honda was always going to win. Not only does the XLR have a more 'regular' bike feel, but its suspension, brakes and overall quality outshine the Yamaha by some margin.

But that isn't quite the end of the story however. As a town bike the gap is narrowed considerably. Though the Yamaha isn't quite as smooth or as well braked as the Honda, its looks count for a lot - its chunky design might well fool people

into believing it's bigger than it really is, and its styling shouts 'fun' whereas the XLR's screams 'commuter'.

If I had to ride one every day I guess I'd opt for the Honda, but as a play bike, the Yamaha would probably be my first choice. It's the sort of bike you could imagine strapped to the back of a motor-home or sat on the deck of a yacht in the south of France. Perfect for the beach, ideal for the kids, and great fun to take down-town of an evening.

Mind you if learner legality was the only reason for buying one, I'd opt for a used KTM LC2 anyway... ➔



TW feels more like a fun bike than a proper trailie

YAMAHA TW125

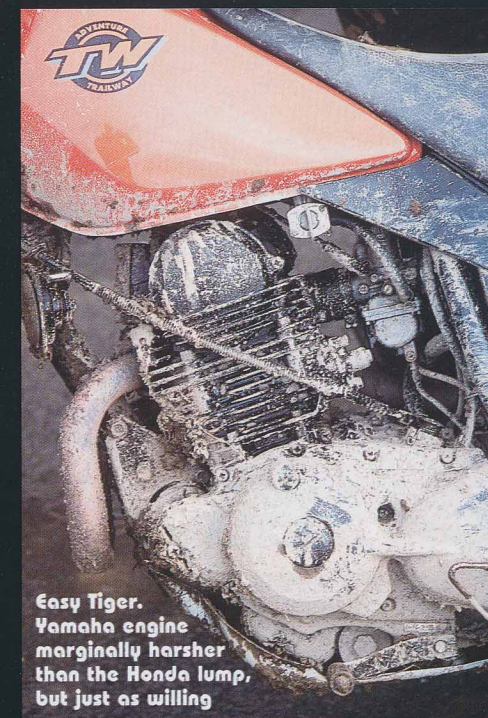
Price:	£2269 (+£300 otr)
Engine:	Air-cooled, SOHC, electric-start four stroke
Bore & stroke:	56.5x 49.5mm
Displacement:	124.4cc
Seat height:	805mm
Fuel capacity:	7L
Trail weight:	124.5kg

simply can't match the Honda in terms of quality. The brakes, suspension and drivetrain, look and feel inferior, while the motor is harsh and crude compared to the smooth Honda lump. Swap between them and the XLR always feels the nicer to ride.

The Yam isn't quite as well specified either. It's switchgear and dials are a shade cheaper than the Honda's, and though it sports a sort of mini-rack and a bar-mounted choke, it doesn't have the XLR's handy rear grabrail, fender bag or its handguards and ignition-key steering lock; though (unlike the XLR), it does come with a useful sump-guard.

On the plus side the TW's riding position feels much better, both sitting down and (especially) standing up. Despite its lower (but wider) saddle, there seems to be much more room on the fat-tyred Yamaha than its diminutive size would suggest. It also handles well; and while it takes a minute or two to get used to the way it corners, it certainly instils confidence in the rider, simply because there's always so much rubber on the road.

Off-road the fat tyres and superior riding position would almost certainly make it a better proposition than the XLR were it not for the crudest set of forks we've ever come across. It feels as though the Yamaha has rubber bushes doing the damping rather than a proper hydraulic set-up.



Easy Tiger. Yamaha engine marginally harsher than the Honda lump, but just as willing

Small bumps feel like big bumps, and big bumps simply jolt straight through to the bars.

With better suspension (at the front in particular), the TW could be a trick little bike. It doesn't tramline in ruts like the XLR, and the extra grip it affords makes it easier to ride in sticky situations. But oh dear those forks really let it down.

On the road the TW feels fine, there's five ratios to choose from, but its pint-sized (seven litre) tank limits its range somewhat. At £2500 all-up, you wouldn't exactly call the TW a bargain, but for some that may well be the price for individuality...

Visit Paris for a day and you'll be amazed at how many TWs you'll see buzzing around. Billboards advertising the TW are everywhere you look, and trendy Parisians consider the little fat-tyred Yam every bit as chic as a Renault Clio. While in the UK the TW has been a lot slower to take off (I've never seen an ad for one, let alone a billboard), Yamaha inform us that they've sold fairly well - mostly to the sort of buyer considering a scooter. It's doubtless a reflection of our conservative nature, that we Brits rarely ride anything which looks a little 'offbeat'. Which is a shame, because the TW is a lot of fun, even if it isn't a match for the Honda in terms of the

quality of the package.

Let me elaborate a little. The TW has in its favour, fun styling, an unbelievably low 32.8" seat height, and simple mechanicals. Like the Honda it's powered by an electric-start, air-cooled, sohc, two valve motor, though the black painted Yamaha lump looks slightly prettier than the skinny (and dated) Honda mill. Performance-wise there's absolutely nothing between them, both in terms of acceleration and overall top speed, though (if anything) the Yamaha's gear ratios feel marginally better chosen.

But for all the TW's deep orange paint (I loved the colour), and cheeky styling (great fun), it

If you see my missus, tell 'er
me thermos is empty...



It's a *Classic*

What exactly is a Long Distance Trial then? TBM explains...

Classic Trials or Long Distance Trials as they're more commonly called, are a fun and pleasurable way of competing on your trailbike. The beauty of these events is that you don't need the latest bike, heaps of skill (or bravado), or piles of cash. All you need to have

a crack at them is a trailie, a trials tyre and a good sense of humour.

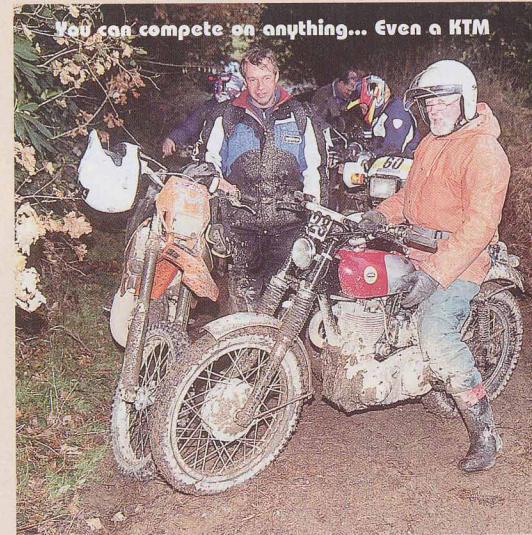
Most follow the same format. You're given a roadbook which includes all the instructions you need to get round the course via a number of observed 'sections'. These sections are usually just a green lane or hill, picked for its slippery nature, adverse camber or deep, muddy ruts; along which you must try to progress without stopping or putting your feet down. Competitors are marked depending on how they do, and at the end of the day it is the rider with the lowest accumulated score, who wins.

If that sounds pretty simple, that's because it is. There are anywhere between ten and 30 observed sections during the day, and these generally take one of two forms. Either a countdown: where the boards number downwards from say 12 to 1 - in other words twelve is nearest the beginning of the section and one is at the far end of the section,

and the higher you get up the section, the lower your score. Or alternatively a normal observed section with a marshal watching your progress to see whether you put your foot down.

Just to make things interesting, some of the sections have what is known as a 'stop and restart' in them. This can toughen up the mildest section considerably. The normal procedure is that you need to stop astride a line or within a box (usually marked with cones), and once stopped (you can put your feet down here), then you've got to try and get going again. You're usually allowed about a metre to get your feet back on the pegs, then you've got to try and stay feet up the rest of the way - which can be a lot trickier than it sounds.

Tie breakers such as a timed dash around a field or simply an acceleration and stop test against the clock, helps decide the winners. But it's not really about winning so much as having a



great day out on your trailie, on some pleasant green lanes, with an element of competition thrown in.

There are classes for every type and size of bike (ancient and modern), and not surprisingly, events such as this



The idea of a stop and restart is to make things more challenging. Like we needed a bigger challenge...



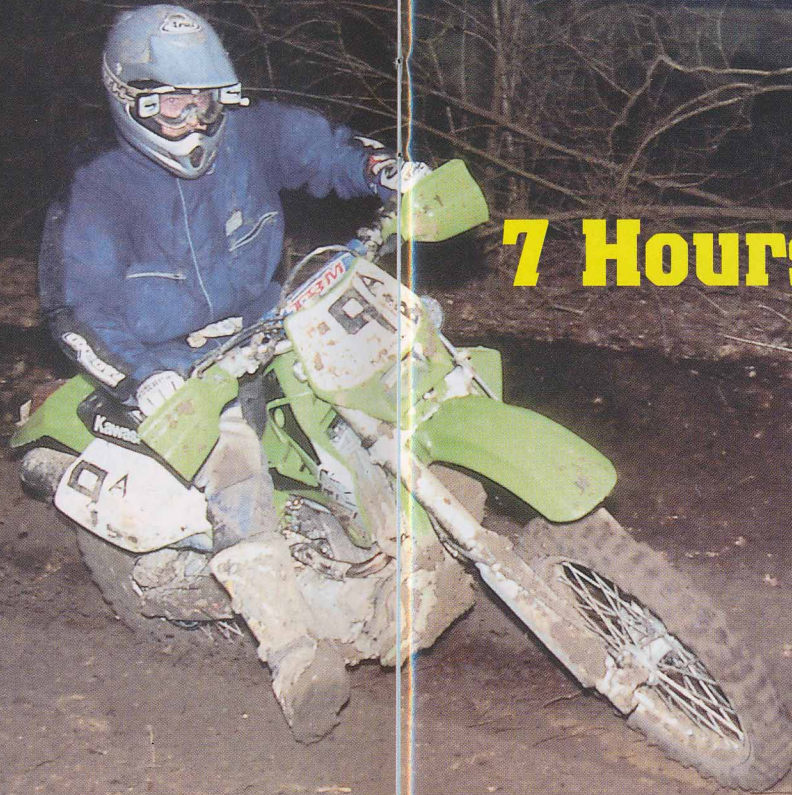
tend to attract an eclectic mix of riders and machinery. From weardie-beardie sidecar crews, to plain barking mad enthusiasts on home-built specials, old Brit irons or long out of production trailies (did someone mention Morini?). And the best way to find out more is to go along to one and have a go...



Various weaponry is allowed in long distance trials... We liked the look of this one...

Seven

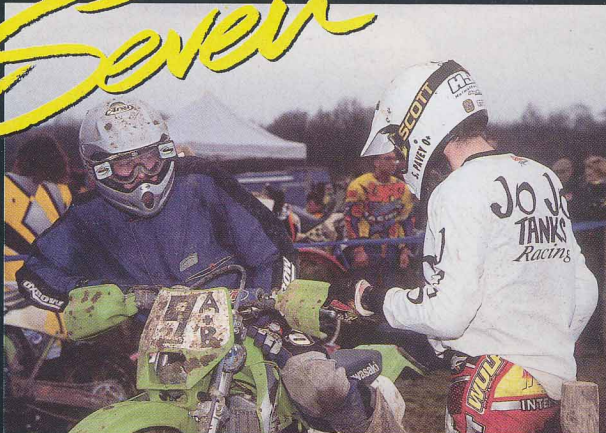
Linford Christie would've had a fit. Not at the quality of the opposition, but at the state of the running track. There were tufts of grass and rabbit holes everywhere. I bet he never had to run on anything so rough - then again I bet he never attempted the 60-yard dash dressed in all his riding gear, either.



7 Hours on a KLX300R



Seven



There was a loud 'bang', and 70 fully grown adults set off on foot across a rough bit of pasture, looking like an eliminating heat from It's A Knockout. It was one seething mass of motocross boots, body armour and helmets.

I got to the KLX300R pretty quickly, I'd already primed the piston - just over TDC - the kick-starter was poised, all I had to do was boot it. I could hear the rasp of starting strokers, I gave the kickstarter one full swing, and the engine roared into life. Matter of fact I got the holeshoot, keeping all the star riders at bay into the first turn, then I let her rip on the straights, held the best line and maintained the lead. No-one could touch me, by the end of the first lap I had a ten second advantage, and come the end of the first hour it was approaching ten minutes. And then a strange thing happened; just as I was nearing the chequered flag at the end of seven hours of racing, there was a loud buzzing sound. I reached below the tank and found... my alarm clock. Oh hell, it was 5am on the morning of the race. I hadn't even got up yet.

Entering the Lazer Helmets, Two-Rider, Seven Hour Endurothon seemed like a good laugh at the time, now here I was standing in a muddy quarry at nine o'clock in the morning with nearly 180 other riders, and it somehow didn't seem quite so funny. The bike we'd chosen to ride was Kawasaki's neat and evergreen KLX300R; a cross between a trailie, an enduro and a play bike. We figured that the KLX would be the ideal tool: light enough to chuck around for seven hours, quick enough for the conditions, yet soft enough not to tire us out too soon - so how come no-one else was riding one?

Just to remind you, the KLX is a bit of an odd-ball in terms of off-road thumpers. The only four-stroke of this capacity, it developed from the KLX250R and now occupies a class of one.

Smaller, lighter and far more nimble than a 400 thumper, yet grunter and quicker than a 250 four-stroke, it's an excellent compromise. At its heart lies a jewel of an engine - a dohc, four-valve single which revs to the moon (well 11000rpm anyway), producing a useful (if not exactly mind blowing) 23-odd horsepower.

But it's not the amount of power it delivers (though its reasonably feisty for such a small capacity thumper), so much as its versatile nature. It's not an out-and-out racer, nor even a dedicated trail bike, but it will perform both tasks admirably well, and it has the benefit of light weight and nimble handling which makes it an ideal woods bike.

Si Pavey (my riding partner) had cleverly calculated our riding times, manipulating them so that I ended up running both Le-Mans starts (morning and afternoon session), while he stood around drinking tea. Cheers mate.

The first 45 minute session was relatively uneventful so I just tried to settle myself into a rhythm, picking the lines I hoped I'd be using later on, and catch my breath after running for the first time in 15 years. The excellent course



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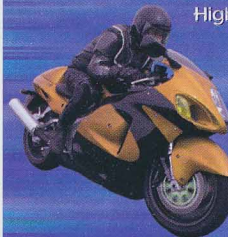
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was laid out in an old sand and gravel quarry with a superb mixture of tight terrain, small climbs and plenty of small lumps, bumps and jumps, that would really test the KLX to the limit. Slightly concerning was the fact that the course began to rut up fairly early on and with the KLX's lack of ground clearance I knew that that could prove to be a problem later in the day.

By the time I handed the bike over to Si P, it was running sweetly and we had settled into a good rhythm, but when he handed it back 45 minutes later it looked like it had finished the Dakar. The numberplate was flapping about, there was sand in all the controls and worst of all the headlight had been punched in. Si claimed he never fell off - perhaps he just fell down a well or something!

The second session was ropier than the first, the course kept changing, as new lines emerged and every lap you would come round and find your preferred line had either disappeared, or

else there was someone stuck in it. This event being on sandy soil, some of the ruts were digging down really deeply, and the heavier or lower bikes were having their fair share of problems. The KLX may look and feel pretty narrow for a thumper, but it's fairly low (by enduro bike standards), with softish suspension, and it suffers from a distinct lack of ground clearance. Let me explain...

When I was a lad back in the Seventies, devouring all the US dirt bike magazines I could read, I remember always looking at a bike's ground clearance specifications. In those days two-strokes still had underslung exhausts and ground clearance mattered. Nowadays it's something you hardly ever think about, all bikes have raised exhausts and usually have plenty of ground clearance. But the KLX is different in this respect. It suffers from a lack of clearance in three ways. Firstly it is pretty low overall and its bottom frame rails are a couple of inches lower

than say a WR250's for instance. Secondly its pegs are set fairly low and when the bike is banked over in a corner, it's easy to drag the inside peg along the ground - especially if there's a berm or rut developed. And finally it has two little steel loops welded onto the frame rails to protect the brake and gear lever. Go charging into a narrow rut and you'll find yourself slowing rapidly (forcing a downchange) as these dig into the ground.

Don't get me wrong these are the sort of problems you'll only ever encounter when racing, and they aren't such a big deal unless you're riding in ruts all day long, but they do affect the way you tackle certain hazards.

But if the KLX is not fond of ruts, it absolutely loves tricky climbs. This is a bike which will storm up the steepest gradient without any run-up. During the seven hours I never once failed to get up any of the hills first time, even when there were bikes and riders scattered everywhere. Point it at a hill, select second gear and nail the throttle - hard. The motor will rev and rev and the KLX will simply thunder up the slope whatever the surface.

And the KLX has other advantages also. It doesn't tire you out like a more powerful machine; it's very hard to stall (you can virtually forget about the clutch, and just ride it on the throttle); and it has great brakes. Not that you need them particularly, with plenty of engine braking available I hardly used the rear brake all day. While other teams were busy changing pads, and adjusting chains, we simply got on with riding.

We didn't have to stop for fuel in the morning either. With three hours on the clock the chequered flag came out to end the morning session and we hadn't even gone onto reserve. Some teams had already refuelled twice.

When the gun went for the afternoon session I was still pushing the bike to the startline. I hopped aboard, fired her up and this time I really

The KLX300R has always been a well proportioned and muscular looking bike



DOHC motor is a real gem. It revs to 11000rpm and has no flat-spots anywhere in the rev range. Sadly the gearbox can't match the engine's qualities - there's far too many neutrals waiting for the unwary. Headlight only lasted 45 minutes in Pavey's hands...

did get the holeshot, well top ten anyway. It was very noticeable that within the first couple of hours of the start of the afternoon session, that the field had thinned out considerably. Some riders had obviously had enough, others must've had bike problems, whatever, the KLX was still going strong and as I handed over to Si P for the second time I couldn't help thinking about the tortoise and the hare. For certain we weren't the quickest team out there, but we were circulating steadily and accumulating the laps.

But with two hours to go to the finish, disaster struck. We'd been lapping in around nine to ten minutes so when Si P didn't show up for 16 minutes, I knew something must be wrong. Suddenly he appeared and pitted immediately, shouting: 'the bike's making a sort of squealing noise and



Seven

You look
knackered
mate!



complete an event like the endurothon on a fun bike like the KLX300 - even in the expert class against a sea of much more serious machinery. The Kawasaki's strengths are not straight-line speed, nor endless suspension, but unburstable reliability, and an ability to get around virtually any course. What most impressed us though about the KLX3 was the fact that despite running for half a lap without coolant, it showed no ill signs of its abuse afterwards.

Second Opinion - Si Pavey

When Si M suggested we race test the KLX300, in a tough seven hour event I agreed immediately - last year I raced the little KLX twice, scoring two of my best results of late. So for the start we swapped roles and Si M lined up for the dash to the bikes, while I pretended to be a photographer. After unsuccessfully trying to trip up the leaders, Si reached the KLX which fired up on the second kick - not bad. Like many four-strokes (here I go again) the Kawasaki can be a right pain to start, though it always starts from cold very easily.

We had agreed to ride 45 minutes each and then swap, so I returned to the van, got changed then settled down to watch and socialise, which is of course, one of the great advantages of these two rider events. I wandered over to the other side of the car park where the riders came up a short steep bank, and watched the chaos unfold on the greasy slope as riders tumbled over each other.

Out for my first session and the course which had been pretty virgin looking 45 minutes earlier, was decidedly rutted, slippery and physical. Straight away I remembered how much fun the KLX was to ride, but this time the course started to bring out its limitations. The first lap and the first time of many that my foot was swiped off the footpeg as the low pegs hooked up in ruts.

The course itself was nice and flowing with loads of bermed corners and plenty of bumps ranging from whoops in the sand to sharp edged ditches on the soft loam between the trees. There were also a few jumps in the open stuff and some short banks to climb or descend in the woods. The way the course switched between open going and wood sections was also about right, making it interesting without causing things to bottleneck in the trees.

But the bumps and jumps, not to mention the mud building up under the guards was starting to show up a KLX weakness. In this racy environment the suspension is just too lightly sprung -

me clutch has gone.' There was a flurry of activity as we removed the rad cap and discovered to our horror, no coolant. Water was found but no sooner was it poured in than it came shooting out the bottom of one of the hoses as a jet of steam. We'd split a water pump hose and had to do something about it, fast.

Though we'd packed spare brakes, levers and bars, we hadn't got a spare hose, but as luck would have it, the split was right at the bottom (it'd probably taken a sharp stone in one of the ruts) and there was just enough stretch on the hose to be able to trim off the torn piece and re-secure it. The coolant was topped back up, the clutch re-adjusted and a splash of fuel thrown in the tank, before I was despatched out onto the course again.

One of the problems with doing a two-man event on the same bike (as opposed to using two separate bikes), is that any repairs have to be carried out in riding time.

In other words with two machines you can send the other rider out onto the course while you repair the problem with the first bike, but with one bike you simply don't have that luxury. Not to worry, we reckon we lost about three laps in total, but we certainly weren't the only team having trouble.

Despite cooking the motor and clutch, the KLX continued to run perfectly right to the finish of the event, and by the time Si Pavey took the chequered flag seven hours and nine minutes after we'd started, we'd racked up 42 laps in total. That placed us 29th overall and 20th in the expert class - pretty good considering the problems we'd had, and the fact that I'm no expert rider.

For the record, John Shirt and Dougie Meek won overall with a superb 59 laps. But at the end of the day we'd set out to prove that you can



both ends were bottoming out harshly and certainly caused me to moderate my speed for my health's sake. That's not to say I'd criticise the suspension too much, as the action is plush, and complements the bike's fun and easy-to-ride nature. It's just that in the motocross-like conditions in which we were riding, the KLX would bottom hard at both ends in the whoops, over jumps and across ditches, and a set of stiffer springs certainly wouldn't go amiss if you were planning to race one.

My next session extended to the lunch break and straight away the little KLX made me smile. It made easy work of some of the little climbs out of the woods. The sweet motor and light weight means that when you see a hill littered with bikes - any line will do - the KLX will simply claw its way to the top. In fact you can even change your mind on the hill and take a different line altogether, it's just so easy to ride.

But, once again the racy nature of this course brought out a few more foibles. The gearbox is littered with false neutrals and an ability to find them. It is all too easy to slip in to neutral at just the wrong time - like the apex of a corner - and find yourself teetering on the edge of balance with no drive available. Additionally, because it lacks sufficient ground clearance the ruts either put you into neutral or just select any old gear. This isn't such a good thing, as the little Kwak

doesn't have oodles of power and simply won't pull if you're in the wrong gear, no matter how much you abuse the clutch.

My session had all but ended when a rut knocked the bike from first to second gear and I stalled in the rut. For some reason the clutch seemed to be too hot and the lever was nearly into the handlebar. Of course, as with most four-strokes the kick-start swings down past the footpeg and so you must lift the bike out of the rut to get a good kick at it. Fortunately, there were a few friendly marshals around and they helped me lift the bike out, so that I could start kicking. After five minutes of kicking the marshals felt sorry for me and they had a go at starting the bugger, but to no avail and after two attempts at pushing it down a hill it finally fired after more than ten minutes of trying. Thanks guys.

By my last stint there was only 20 minutes left and it had started to rain, so it seemed likely I would only do another couple of laps. But the little Kawasaki had other ideas and responded well to the slippery conditions - I sneaked in a third lap thanks to the bike's easy going nature.

Though the Kwacker was undoubtedly outclassed, it was still a real hoot to ride, and I still rate it as one of the best little thumpers available. With a bit of suspension work it could be lifted up higher which would almost certainly eradicate a lot of the problems we encountered. But hey? pick your events carefully and the Kwacker will amaze you - even as standard. It's that sort of bike...

Conclusion

We've always liked the little Kwacker, and we've always been aware of its strengths and limitations, but this was proof positive that it's a tougher cookie than even we had imagined. To its credit, it feels light, corners like it's on rails and doesn't tire you out, plus it's extremely economical with fuel. The suspension works well within the comfort zone, it'll do everything most people would ask of it, and it can be raced and ridden fairly fast, even though it's not an out-and-out racer.

It's biggest hurdle to overcome however must surely be its price because at £3895 it's the same sort of money as Suzuki's DR-Z400E, which is not only more powerful but comes equipped with an electric start.

Pricing aside however, take it for what it is and while you might not be the fastest of your riding buddies (nor the richest), you'll almost certainly be the one with the biggest grin...

Time Roamin'

So you want to race a desert rallye? You want to challenge the elements, compete against the world's greatest riders and push your body and your overdraft to their very limits. You'd better be prepared then. Here's what you need to know...

Without doubt, the Paris-Dakar Rallye is the ultimate goal for many off-road riders, yet one that very few will achieve. But that needn't stop you competing in a desert rallye at all. There are a number of smaller events which are much more achievable both financially and logistically while you build up (and save up) for the big one. Once you have decided to enter a desert rallye and put the first of many dents in your bank balance, there are a few things you need to know...

The Bikes

Modified Trailies

Apart from a few exceptions (CCM etc), modified trailies have all but disappeared from the rallye scene. Dominators, XT600s, DR650s and KLR650s (which used to provide a good starting point for a rallye bike), have become too road-biased. As a consequence, adapting them to rallye-raid has become more expensive and time consuming than adapting an enduro bike which has better suspen-

sion as standard. Unless you have to use one, stick to one of the more common rallye bikes.

Modified Enduro

Currently the majority of rallye privateers are equipped with either Honda XR400s or XR600s which are both reliable and easy to prepare - with a ready stock of specialist parts available to make them rallye ready.

Apart from Honda you could also chose a Yamaha WR400F or TT600R, a new Suzuki DR-Z400E, a Kawasaki KLX650R or even a Husky 410/610. But remember, the newer or more obscure make of bike you choose, the less you'll be able to find in terms of spares once the rallye has started.

Off The Shelf Racer

The other star of the parc fermé is the KTM LC4 Rallye which is a specialist ready-made rally bike. Despite never having won the Dakar, KTM singles have taken victory in every other major rallye and have been the dominant force in the rallying scene for the past five years. At most rallyes more than half the entry are KTM mounted (which means plenty of spare parts kicking around the bivouac) and KTM support trucks attend most rallye events.

The KTM Rallye bike began as a kick-start 640, before evolving into a 660 and this year gaining an

electric start. Tough, well adapted and easy to work on, the LC4 Rallye is both fast and expensive (about £7500 new). Plenty of secondhand ones exist but remember rallying takes its toll on machinery. Even so a well used secondhand model with loads of spares shouldn't set you back any more than £3000. The Rallye bike is already fitted with much of the stuff you are going to need - ICO tripmeter, electric road book reader, large fuel tank, bash plate with built in water tank etc. In fact you only need to add a GPS and safety equipment and she's ready to go.

Another option is to rent a fully prepped KTM rallye bike - with different prices depending on the rallye. It should also be noted that KTM provide an assistance package (at a price). Finally Husaberg offer the FR600E 'special desert' with electric start. Less complete than the KTM, it is the enduro bike fitted with an oil cooler, a big tank (19L + 5.5L) and tuned suspension. Husabergs' limited oil capacity means they don't like long specials with the throttle against the stop - but for short rallyes only, they should be fine.

Preparation

It isn't enough to buy a bike and bolt the accessories on. Your bike has to be set up to suit you and the particular rallye raid you have chosen.

Suspension

All the accessories and the extra fuel means increased weight. You therefore have to firm up the suspension using stiffer springs and/or modify the damping with thicker oil, or better still, revalving. Given that such work is fairly delicate we recommend you give the job to

someone who knows what they are up to. Well set-up suspension is essential for absorbing shocks at high speeds while at the same time providing a level of comfort that you will need to minimise fatigue. The other solution is to change the OE items with better stuff from Ohlins, WP etc - hard on the credit card though...

Gearing

African pistes aren't like enduros. Holding the throttle open for kilometres on end is part of a rallye

riders daily diet - so don't go gearing your bike down. In general standard gearing works best, as the fitment of desert tyres, tends to gear the bike up a bit anyway. The bike should just be able to pull top gear in slightly soft going.

Air Filter

A foam filter is fine but will have to be cleaned at the end of every stage - carry a spare with you. Certain people swear by sand-stop gauze, while others use filter skins. Others still say it is best just to run the standard set up or you'll restrict air flow. That's for you to decide.

Carburetion

It's important that your bike carburetes correctly in the hotter, drier conditions of the North African piste. Try and get some information on temperatures and altitudes, and remember to take a range of jets along with you. Obviously fitting a filter-sock or sand-stop gauze to the top of the airbox may well enrich the carb settings, so experiment with jetting before you go. The XR400R in particular is very sensitive to over-rich jetting.

Riding position

Feeling comfortable on your bike is going to be essential as the stages will be long and tiring. The riding position must obviously be adapted to your morphology and posture. A high set of bars is recommended so that you can ride comfortably standing up and save your back (visibility is also improved). A comfy seat for those long straight stages is also useful.

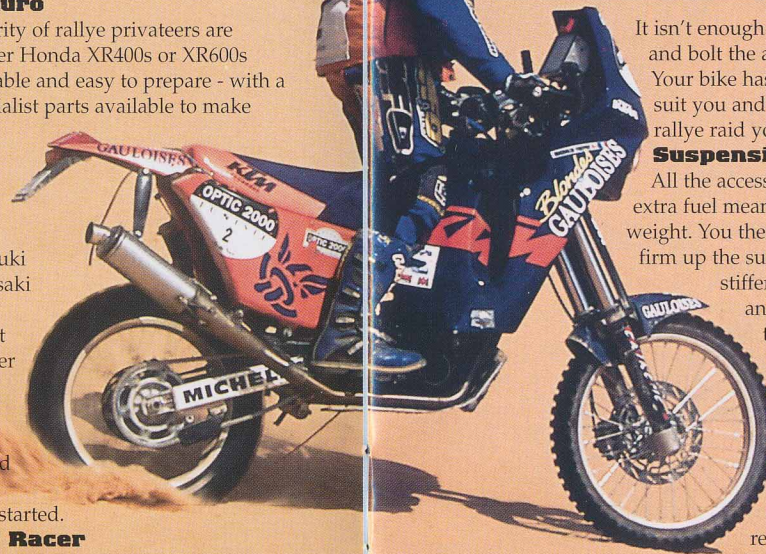
Tyres & Tubes

Changing inner tubes in the midday heat is no fun. You'll have plenty of opportunities to suffer, so make life easy for yourself and fit moussets. Michelin bib-moussets are the best - expensive and a pain to fit, they are worth both the money and skinned knuckles. If you must use inner tubes fit the thickest you can find, use lots of talc and use 15psi front and rear.

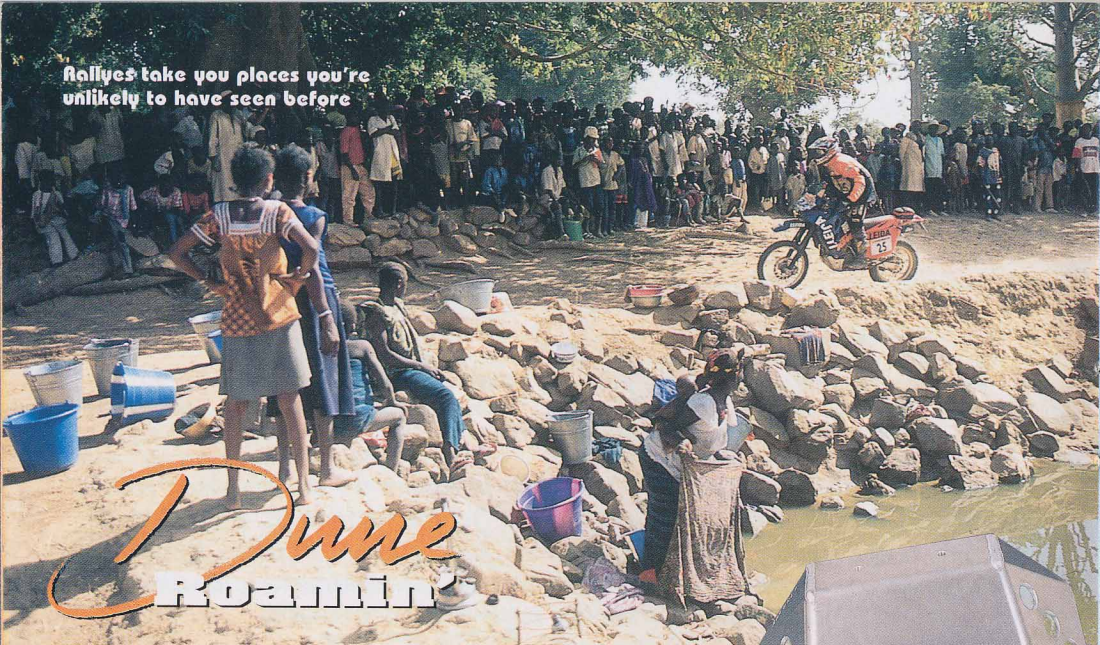
Michelin Deserts are still the top tyres but they are heavy (6kg) and expensive (£60-£90). For smaller bikes Michelin Bajas are a good choice, while Pirelli Hardcross or MT21s are also well suited to desert conditions. Remember though that a Michelin Desert has a much deeper sidewall than a regular MX or other knobbly tyre, and fitting bib-moussets into a non-desert tyre can be seriously time-consuming.

Fixtures and fittings.

Anything you fit to your bike has to be fitted solidly - very solidly. You won't believe the damage high speed rocky trails inflict on frames and seemingly solidly mounted accessories. If anything is going to break, it will on a desert rallye - leaving a trail of expensive accessories over the length of the special. Fit your navigation gear using rubber blocks to protect against vibration, simplify electrical circuits as much as possible and use Loctite or safety wire on nuts and bolts.



Rallyes take you places you're unlikely to have seen before



Dune
Roamin

Indispensable Accessories

Fuel tank

Rallye stages are sometimes very long, meaning you have to increase the fuel range of your bike. For a short rallye a 15 litre tank is the absolute minimum, but bigger is better if you want to ride without worrying. IMS and Acerbis do tanks for XRs, DRs, KLX-Rs and HVA TEs at between £150 and £200. KTM sell a 21 litre tank for their LC4 which goes for a steepish £400. For the big rallies you need even more fuel range by adding a tank either at the back or along the sides. French shop Challenge-75 do a 35 litre XR400 ally tank for about £800 while KTM have a 30 litre item for £400. For the extra tanks, Acerbis do a six litre tank that will go on the rear guard or you can chose a made to measure item in ally for between £200 and £500. Again KTM have two side tanks in plastic with fuel pump and fittings. Don't forget to fit fuel filters on each line into the carb.

Water Tank

Water tanks (of between 1.5-3L) are compulsory for all rallyes and must be fixed to the bike. The best solution is a bash-plate with an integral tank. For XR400s you can get 1.5L plastic tanks that go on the other side from the exhaust pipe.

Bash-Plates

A wrap around bash-plate will protect your engine cases and offer a convenient mounting place for tools or water. They come in either carbon fibre or aluminium, though ally is probably better as it is more flexible and versatile. Available from numerous sources (CRD, Devol, IMS, Acerbis etc) a standard bash-plate will cost about £50-70, with a built in

water tank you're looking at about £220, while a Dakar type plate featuring a toolbox goes for between £250 and £400.

Rear Lights

Another compulsory item is a fog light (to stop Schlessers running you over in the dust), Acerbis and UFO sell them. Alternatively Halfords fog lights (£5) work just as well. Make sure whatever you fit is strongly mounted as officials will not let you start a stage without working lights.

Navigation Systems

Certain organisers (TSO and now NPO) impose their own GPS system which you rent for the duration of the rallye. The idea is that GPS points are limited and everyone has an equal chance. On other rallyes, a GPS of one type or another is now compulsory. The most popular for bikes is the Garmin GPS II Plus (£250). Essential elements are strength and a nice big screen. An ICO tripmeter is also essential for recording distances, as is an electric road book reader such as that made by MD or Touratech. Saving money on trips and roadbook readers is like running inner tubes - a false economy (count on £500 for an ICO and MD).

The Essentials

Because of the weight of a rallye bike, handlebars suffer badly in a crash, so should be of excellent quality. Go for a braceless model so you will have



place for your GPS. It also needs to be high as possible so you are comfortable when standing up. Budget on between £100 - £200 (with top yoke).

Grips

To cut down on vibration and reduce blisters go for foam grips - but take a spare pair - they wear out quickly. About £8.

Hand protectors

Useful for protecting your hands from stones, they'll also save your levers in the case of a spill. Available either in plastic (avoid clear versions that are more brittle) or in metal (or a mix). Between £17 - £60.

Lighting

Long stages where you will have to ride at night are common on the Dakar and Master Rallye. Glass headlamps break easily and should be changed for enduro type headlamps fitted with halogen bulbs - check that the bulbs are far enough away from the lens so as not to melt the plastic.

Seat

Your bum is going to suffer, but less so if you change the standard plastic cover for a suede leather number. A car seat upholster should be able to do you one for between £50 and £100. While he's at it get him to add an extra layer of very dense foam (the type used in camping mattresses) to improve comfort. A tall seat is an advantage. You don't need a low bike in the desert.

Chain and sprockets

Run a good quality o-ring chain and clean off all the oil on it before you race (otherwise the sand will stick to the oil and make an excellent grinding paste). Steel sprockets last the longest - (Chain & Sprox £80), and carrying a rivet-type joining link is also good cheap insurance.

Wheels

TBM contributor Si Pavey managed to ride the Atlas, Tunisia and Dakar on standard Honda wheels, but our advice is to change the OE rims for a pair of Excel rims (the strongest). About £80 for the front and £100 for the back. Unless you're a rocket, the standard hubs should be okay, but stony pistes can break a stan-

dard set of wheels and spokes in a matter of miles - especially if you're using tubes and get a puncture. Talon are the people to talk to. A set of wheels will set you back about £600-700, but it's a good insurance, and they can be sold on when you return home.

Exhaust pipe

This is about the only situation where a noisy pipe is acceptable on a dirt bike - though go for one that is too loud and you'll have a headache after 10 hours in the saddle. Choose one in stainless steel, as aluminium and carbon fibre are too fragile.

Accessories

Steering Damper

A tank slapper when you're flat out in top is no fun at all, and a steering damper might just save you. WER make one that mounts on to the bottom yoke (£300), while Öhlins do one that is more sophisticated and fits on to the top yoke (£450).

Footrests

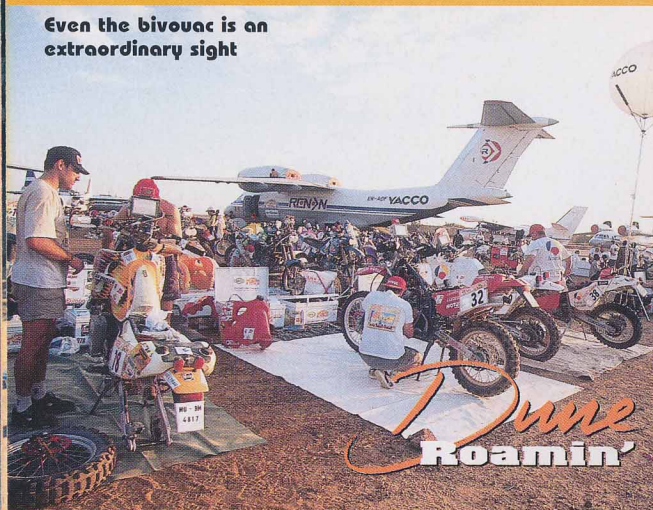
You will spend a lot of time standing up on the bike so fit some wide, strong pegs which will increase comfort and be less prone to breaking. From IMS or Pro-Circuit (about £75).



A well-prepped rallye bike is a thing of beauty...



Even the bivouac is an extraordinary sight



June
Roamin'

Protection

Other than a bash plate and something to cover the headlamp you might want to protect the discs and the fork tubes (£25).

Brakes

Standard pads are usually okay though you can get special desert spec brake pads (eg Ferodo Desert) that are more resistant to sand abrasion. If you are a big braker you might want to consider a larger front disc from someone like Braking (£170).

Fork yokes

Standard yokes have been known to break, so if you like jumping off the top of sand dunes think about investing in something more solid.

Other Stuff

Long distances, soft sand, heavy bikes and extreme heat are all part of rallye-raid fun! The following will come in useful:-

Get fit & Ride Conservatively

Competing in a rallye will make huge demands on your body so get down to the gym and work on your stamina. When you're on the rallye, try and ride as smoothly as possible - and keep your feet on the pegs all day. Hanging it all out in a corner (with your foot down!), won't make you any faster over 400km, but it will tire you out faster, or perhaps leave you with a smashed foot if you catch it on a rock. Ride conservatively if you want to finish.

Learn how to use a GPS

You'd be amazed how many competitors start reading the instructions to their GPS on the boat. Don't be one of them! Practise in town and why not do a couple of orientation races (you'll get fit in the process). Learning a bit of basic navigation could also come in useful when your GPS breaks down in

the middle of nowhere!

Prepare your road book

When you get into the bivouac late at night all you want to do is get something to eat and crash out. Tempting though this may be, it is a big mistake. As well as fixing your bike (if you're mad enough to enter without at least a share in a mechanic) you need to spend at least an hour on your road book. Everybody has their own system, but blue highlighter for a change of direction and red for danger is a good start. Also make sure the pages are properly stuck together. Make sure you add in any of the alterations the organisers post on the bivouac noticeboard. In the '97 Atlas Rallye, there was a crucial turning missed off the original road book, which gave those who didn't notice it an extra 100km ride!

Sort out your riding position

Even more so than in enduro, in rallyes you ride standing up. It saves your back and allows you to see better what is coming up. For the same reason make sure you don't ride with your nose stuck in the road book.

Stay calm

Don't panic Mr Manwaring! When everything is going belly-up try and keep calm and analysis your situation as carefully as possible so that you make the right decision. Rushing to save five minutes is not the way to get to the end. Also don't ride above yourself - even rallye gods like Peterhansel and Saint never ride at more than 80%. Don't necessarily follow the tracks of others and don't ride too close behind another machine as you and your engine will eat a lot of dust. Finally look out for the TV cameras and photographers as they often situate themselves somewhere where you're likely to fall off. Think tortoise and hare!

Soft sand

This can wear you out both physically and mentally super quick. Getting through it demands plenty of practise, but as a general rule accelerate and never cut the throttle suddenly, even when going downhill. Also avoid riding in other peoples tracks as the sand here will be softer. Finally, learn to control your speed. Arrive at the crest of dune too fast and you'll do yourself an injury. Arrive too slowly and you'll stop dead. The top boys approach fast, lock the rear wheel just as they hit the crest to tip the bike over the crest, then get on the gas again to ride down the slope.

Mad dogs and Englishmen

On African rallyes the sun is your worst enemy. Fit your goggles with a smoked or tinted lens to protect your eyes (but carry a clear one for riding at night). Be also extremely careful to drink plenty of water (from the start of the day, and all the way through it) to avoid dehydration and eat your rations at refuelling. Understand that dehydration will kill you - you don't know you're dehydrating until you're already in trouble. And you can't drink your way out of a dangerous situation because your body will not process the water - you must drink before you get hot and thirsty. Even if it is hot, don't be tempted to ride without a jacket, it's cold in the morning and evening - a proper jacket with built in camel-back pocket and lots of ventilation is a good idea.

Be careful on liaison stages

After riding hard in the special there is a tendency to switch off in the liaison. That's a big mistake. Firstly because the tracks can be just as tricky, and secondly because liaison often means population and in Africa people aren't used to vehicles going at high speeds. Remember, more people have been hurt in liaison stages in rallyes than during racing!

Sponsorship

And finally a word about getting sponsorship. A lot of first-time rallyists assume that because they're embarking on something which is a big challenge to them, that manufacturers and equipment suppliers will be falling over themselves to provide them with gear - they won't. You're not the first person to undertake a desert rallye, and you won't be the last - they've seen it all before. However if you want to try and get some sponsorship to help offset your costs - think 'locally'. Talk to the local paper, the local bike shop, the local pub even, and see if they will help you out. But remember, the important thing about sponsorship is not what you can get out of it, but what you can offer a potential sponsor in terms of payback. If all else fails, pay for it yourself. That way you won't feel embarrassed if you go out on the first day, and will get a lot more respect from potential sponsors in future...



But ultimately it's about you and the bike, riding through some of the world's most awesome scenery

The Races

Dubai UAE Desert Challenge

Dates: 30 October to 4 November 2000
Place: Dubai (United Arab Emirates)
Route: A short rallye (four-six days of racing), very popular with the factory teams who go there to set-up their bikes for the Dakar. For the amateur it is a good occasion to hang out with the top riders on a sand rallye that isn't too difficult.

Rallye de Tunisie Optic 2000

Dates: 14 to 23 April 2000
Place: Tunisia and this year Libya.
Route: Two days in Libya and the rest in Tunisia. No Sardinia this year but a finish in Tunis which avoids the long haul back from Djerba. Generally a good atmosphere and popular with the Brits, it is relatively easy (though can be hard round El Borma, especially if there is a sand storm - which there invariably is).

Atlas Rallye

Dates: 3 - 9 June 2000
Place: Morocco
Route: This has only just been announced and very little is known except that there will be five days of racing, seven days in total, with five loops centred around Ouarzazate. Run by NPO.

Rallye d'Egypt 2000

Dates: 30 Sept to 7 October 2000
Place: Libya and Egypt
Route: Supposed to be for all levels, about 5500km, of which 2500 is special stage. Organised by the Italians, this relatively new rallye doesn't always run smoothly. Last year dissatisfied competitors went on strike!

Master Rallye 2000

Dates: 27 July to 6 August 2000
Place: France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Romania, Turkey
Route: The master is becoming more and more European. In the past it has suffered from uncertainty due to passing through countries with dodgy politics which has consequently meant low numbers of entries. It is however spoken of extremely highly by all those who've ridden it - especially privateers. The boss, René Metge, has an excellent reputation and is extremely concerned with the welfare of the competitors. Definitely an up and coming rallye, and this year with a special two-man 'gentleman' class.

Paris-Dakar 2001

Dates: Jan 2001
Place: Senegal, Mali, Libya, Egypt?
Route: TBA

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D. Parsons, Surrey.

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Rideout 2000 Dates

	LAKES	DERBYSHIRE	DERBYSHIRE
March	3rd-5th (3days)	17th to 20th (4days)	
April	31st-2nd (3days)	14th to 16th (3days)	28th-1st* (4days)
May	12th-14th (3days)	26th to 29th* (4days)	
June	9th-11th (3days)	23rd to 25th (3days)	
July	7th-10th (4days)	21st to 23rd (3days)	
August	4th-6th (3days)	18th to 20th (3days)	LAKES
September	1st-4th (4days)	15th to 17th (3days)	29th-1st (3days)
October	13th-15th (3days)	27th to 29th (3days)	
November	3rd-5th (3days)		

Please contact the factory for additional dates (*) Denotes Bank Holiday

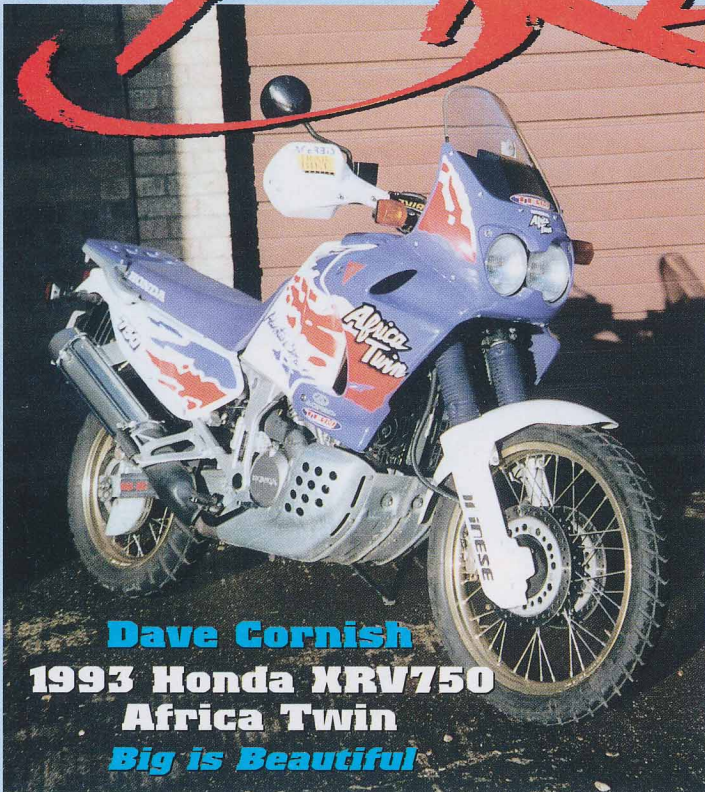


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STAFF BIKES



Dave Cornish

**1993 Honda XRV750
Africa Twin**

Big is Beautiful

Julia, my long suffering wife, thought I should have known better than to stump up for another second-hand Africa Twin, especially after my last expensive A-T experience. However this time it was different (it always is). You see unlike my ex Honda-France XRV650 that required a heap of cash and hard graft to get it up to scratch (then I sold it after only a couple of hundred miles), this stock 750 was a minter that required nothing more than a few service items to be ready for action. Well, that's what I told her anyway

I first saw the bike in Wales last summer whilst out testing in the hills around Rhayader. Ben the A/T's owner, explained that he had virtually stolen it off a car dealer for a miserly £2500 and said he'd give me first refusal when he wanted to sell. Now I'm a real sucker for Dakar style big

trailies, and so I looked forward to receiving a phone call from him.

Months passed and I'd completely forgotten about the A-T until Ben called telling me it was up for sale. To be honest, I wasn't particularly interested at first, what with Christmas just around the corner and the road bike season limited to the odd short sunny day's ride. But then Ben threw in his trump card, mentioning that Blez had been showing an unhealthy interest in purchasing this particularly pristine example of Honda's finest. Well that clinched the deal. The thought of such a tidy bike being reduced to a pile of clanking scrap at the hands of TBM's one man demolition derby, was more than I could bear.

So on an uncharacteristically bright but cold Monday morning I hitched a lift to the metropolis clutching a pile of folding, and duly handed over two and a half big ones in return for the keys to the bike. I've ridden plenty of Africa Twins over the years including a great thrash down to the Italian Alps for the Stella Alpina Rally, so it only took a few minutes to get into the swing of things. The familiar smooth but progressively torquey motor feels great and while it may not have the same amount of get up and go as the newer Varadero, the A/T is still an immense pleasure to ride.

However, working my way around the North Circular, it was becoming obvious that the throttle was getting stiffer by the minute, and by the time I was heading north on the M11, I could use it as a cruise control! Barrelling along at speed

(not too sure as the speedo cable had by now snapped), an intermittent misfire was getting worse with every mile, until finally the bike came to an embarrassing halt at the side of the Newmarket bypass. Now this was really spooky, I'd actually stopped in exactly the same place last year with a similar electrical problem on an XTZ660 I'd bought. Oh dear, I could just imagine the look on my wife's face as I rolled up on the back of yet another RAC transporter!

With a distinct feeling of deja-vu I considered knocking on the door of the same farmhouse as last year to telephone for assistance, but luckily a quick check under the seat revealed nothing more serious than a disconnected battery cable. Phew. More amazingly, the rogue nut and bolt were sat on the top of the crankcase, and a few minutes with my trusty Leatherman and we were on our way home again.

To be fair to Ben, he did say the Africa Twin desperately needed a service and a good check over which is what I decided to do before venturing out onto the slick winter roads once more.

The first problem to tackle was the stiff throttle. I stripped out the twist-grip and discovered that the cables were merely in need of some lube. So I punched two holes in a small plastic bag and taped it to the tops of the cables, then by filling the bag with ATF (Automatic Transmission Fluid) I left the cables to soak overnight. Whilst waiting for the oil to work its way through the cables, a new pair of Scott Superbike grips were wrestled (and wired) in place and to my surprise I discovered that the barkbusters and handguards that used to grace my old Cagiva Elefant slotted straight on without any cutting or bending.

The Cagiva also donated its automatic chain oiler, which fitted discreetly underneath the left sidepanel. The chain and sprockets are not exactly in their first flush of youth but I reckon the autolube system should eke out a few more winter miles before replacement is required. To my surprise the brakes were also in pretty good nick but I stripped all three calipers and cleaned out the previous 10,000 miles of crud before carefully reassembling with copper-grease, I'll treat the old girl to a fresh set of pads in the spring!

Like most trailbikes the Africa Twin isn't fitted with grease nipples on the swingarm and linkage.



This usually means that most owners simply ignore this part of the maintenance; luckily for me the roller bearings, seals, spacers and bolts were all in top condition and required nothing



more than a clean up and reassembling with some waterproof Denicol grease. Future plans for the bike include fitting a lightweight pipe, a dynojet kit and opening up the air-box a little. And I'm

planning on fitting a centre stand to help with maintenance chores.

A quick oil and filter change and a cursory look at the plugs, and the A/T was as good as new. In fact the bike is a real testament to Honda's build quality; despite being nearly seven years old, it still looks good, with the thick paint and quality plastics standing up well to the accumulated years.

In the spring I hope to tackle some green lanes on the beast as well as the odd trailbike rally, so some form of protection for the lamps and bodywork seems like a good investment. Off-road tyre choice will thankfully be much easier than with most big trailies as the Honda is fitted with a 21" hoop at the front (although the blunt end features a 17 incher). As for riding! Well a big Euro trip beckons, taking in some scenic Alpine tracks en route, which is really what the bike was built for. I can't wait!

STAFF BIKES



Clive Garnham
TM250E &
KTM125EXC
Say Hello & Wave
Goodbye

On one hand I'm bursting with anticipation and enthusiasm for the coming year's riding on the Kaytosh, yet at the same time it means that I have to part with the trusty TM. In the light of that I think it would be inappropriate for me to dismiss the TM without first allowing a suitable period of mourning. So please excuse me as I take stock of my past year with the blue streak.

It's been a memorable year of riding, not least because it's included the first actual improvement in my results since the acne subsided 15 years ago. Now honest self-appraisal suggests that an increase in my skill level is unlikely, seeing as I've actually gotten fatter and less courageous than ever. So by a process of elimination that leaves either my new boots or the TM as the culprit behind this uncharacteristic crawl up the result sheet!

The excellent riding position has encouraged me to get my lazy ass to the front of the seat and my notoriously gravity-affected elbows vaguely upwardly mobile (the only part of me which is these days!). In fact there are so many things I'll miss about life with the TM:

the fantastic quality of the whole machine, those billet hubs, that clear tank (why aren't all bikes supplied with clear tanks?). But most of all I'll miss the adrenaline rush as you pick a gear, crack open the throttle and watch the world streak past your watering eyes!

Over the year it's been thoroughly reliable. The list of parts purchased (mainly tyres, sprockets,

brake pads and a single piston ring) were consumed through natural attrition - along with those that were damaged by my decidedly unnatural attrition (half a day riding on a flat tyre at the Welsh cost me a few spokes for example!).

Among the few criticisms I would level at the bike are a fragile (read easily dented) exhaust pipe (which I've had blown-out twice and nickel plated to stop the rust), weak centre-stand spring and slightly stiff forks. But in truth, it's been a small price to pay for a great year and an awful lot of fun. I'll sure miss her...

Out with the sold in with the new

However time moves on and the new photograph in my wallet is none other than KTM's tiddler, the 125EXC! My appetite for this machine was whetted when TBM tested the '99 model in the summer of last year. I was highly impressed with the very un-125 like engine of the little-un, but was less impressed by the suspension.

However after then riding the 2000 model KTM four-strokes later in the year, it seemed to me that KTM had found the right equations and sorted the sussies for the Y2K models.

Well the first opportunity for a shakedown ride came when a local enduro club-secretary called to say he was checking out a new enduro course and would we like to help him look for a route through its numerous bombholes, slippery roots and deep ruts?

It was a tough choice between another hard day's graft or running in the TBM 2000 staffer. We grabbed our gear and loaded up as soon as the phone hit the cradle. On arrival a couple of hours later, we first balanced it precariously on the cryogenically calibrated UHF/VHF TBM scales (99kg with half a tank of juice), before realising fuel was pouring out from the overflow. Five minutes with the spanners and we'd put a stop to that.

First impressions were indeed as I'd been really hoping: the suspension was worlds better than

the previous year's model, feeling far more compliant yet progressive. The engine still maintained the relatively broad and tractable delivery (for a 125 that is) of the '99 donk, and most of all it felt so light - I could have been riding a bicycle! Want to do a U-turn but the track is barely wider than your arm span? Simple on the 125, plant your boot, lean it over and gas it - the front comes up and round in a second. It flicks through S-bends effortlessly, yet it still somehow stays planted firmly on your intended line like it's 20kg heavier, regardless of how rough the ground. Also I can't help noticing how incredibly light the controls feel: throttle, brake and clutch are as light as a feather - which feels really nice.

So far then it's looking good and I can't wait to really put the 125 through its paces at a few enduros. The coming season is going to be an entirely different one to last year's, but I'm looking forward to reacquainting myself with a highly flickable, super-light machine. And anyway,



A leaky float-bowl needed sorting out before the Kaytosh could turn a wheel!

I'm sure my tired arms are going to thank me for the reduction in horsepower.

If the results of my fellow Aussie, Shane Watts (125EXC), are any sort of indication (*dream on mate, about the only things you've got in common are your accents - ed*), then there's no reason why the steady improvement in my results shouldn't continue for another year yet.

The champagne corks have all popped and the new millennium has been heralded in, but it is with a certain amount of regret that I have to say goodbye to the TM250E and welcome in its replacement - a KTM 125EXC - to the plush, centrally-heated, underground garage network below the sprawling TBM Towers. It's a sort of bitter-sweet, pain/pleasure moment.

- Engine: 503cc/399cc Single Cylinder Four stroke Liquid cooled
- 4 valves gear driven overhead cam
- SEM electronic ignition system
- Frame: Steel chrome molybdenum frame 2 heat treatments
- Forks: Paioli upsidedown forks ø46mm
- Rear Shock: Ohlins progressive system
- Brakes: 270mm front, 220mm rear
- 9 litre fuel tank
- Wheelbase: 1485mm
- Weight: Motocross 109kg Enduro 114kg Supermotard 115kg

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STAFF BIKES



Paul Blezard
KTM 125LC2
Nice legs...

It's nearly a year now since I last wrote about my girlfriend's KTM 125LC2 in TBM45 so it's about time for an update. I mentioned then that the fork seals had blown and needed replacing - little realising that this simple bit of maintenance would turn into a major saga. I naively imagined that I'd be able to order a pair of replacement seals for the LC2's standard fitment 41mm Paioli forks, but KTM UK said you couldn't just order the seals alone, you had to have a full refurbishment kit which costs, wait for it, £110 plus VAT, a princely £129.32 in all!

When I remonstrated with them, they offered to find some seals to fit, if I could get the forks up to them. On removing the LC2's front wheel I discovered that two of the four pinch-bolt studs which hold the axle in place were defunct - one was missing altogether and the other was stripped. But I dropped the forks out of the yokes and duly delivered them up to KTM.

About three weeks later I was down in Cornwall at John Deacon's Saltash shop and knowing that they used to run LC2s for their trail riding weekends, I asked what they did when the fork seals blew - surely they didn't buy the £129 refurbishment kit? 'Oh no, we just measured up the seals and ordered some pattern ones' they said 'there's a pair over there if you want some'. At less than a tenner, they seemed like good insurance, and so it proved because I posted the pattern Motoline seals up to KTM and a few days later the forks were returned fully refurbished, complete with helicoils to repair the knackered studs. A snip at £92.60 including £20 delivery.

Two months later, long after the bike was back up and running, there was a surprise delivery for me from KTM. Guess what? A Paioli fork refurbishment kit - complete with bill for £129.72. Before returning it I took the opportunity to see what you actually get for your money. The kit consists of one blue felt cloth about a foot square; one owner's manual with detailed instructions and diagrams - in German and Italian; one pair of seals; one pair of dust covers; two pairs of metal bushes and one pair of large washers - about 30 quid's worth in all. If all those things are worn out and need replacing then it wouldn't be so

bad, but nine times out of ten all you need is a £10 set of fork seals. Furthermore, the seals would almost certainly not have worn out in the first place if the LC2 came fitted with fork gaiters as standard like the rest of the KTM range. I fitted a set over the fork stanchions before slipping them back in the yokes.

I also replaced all the blown bulbs except the stupid oil warning light which defied all attempts at disassembly. It's a useless device anyway even when it's working because the light is designed to stay on all the time (I just use the breather tube in the top of the filler cap as a dipstick). I also fitted a new speedo cable and replaced the brake lever pivot bolt which had playfully leapt out and disappeared when I was demonstrating the bike to a prospective buyer last year, almost causing me to crash into his own parked machine.

So, at last, in October '99, the LC2 was ready for action again. For her return to the dirt I went out with a couple of lads from my local TRF group for a gentle amble around the green lanes

near Box Hill, Leith Hill, Leatherhead and Dorking. As a 125 it naturally had to be kept on the boil to keep up with their KDX200 and KTM 400SC, but it got up the trickiest climb without difficulty and was actually much quicker on the road than the ridiculously undergeared KDX was.

A couple of weeks later I entered the LC2 in one of the Farnham Royal club's fun enduros near Beaconsfield. I thought it wise to add some lever protection so dug out the old pair of red Acerbis brush guards which used to adorn my XR600 and which the editor had advised me to throw away - I knew they'd come in handy one day! I had to fill out the bar inserts with tape because the KTM's standard steel bars are a bigger 'bore' than the alloy Renthals fitted to the XR and I also had to improvise the clamps at the other end because the stupid standard clamps had broken when I prised them apart (why don't they make them in two halves like any sensible person would, and why doesn't someone make such clamps and sell them separately?) I even cut up an old plastic yellow number plate and made it into a handguard deflector to go with the odd purple one I already had.

The conditions were extremely wet and slippery and the well-worn rear knobby really struggled to find any grip at all on the slippery grass slope near the pits. Nevertheless, the KTM was easy to handle and thoroughly enjoyable to ride although I really noticed the big jump between first and second gear in the woods, which hadn't been a problem on the trail and the rear shock bottomed out over the jumps when I was feeling enthusiastic early on. However, after about an hour of steadily circulating at a respectable pace the power valve went on strike making the engine horribly peaky to ride. And then, to cap it all, the overheating warning light came on, forcing me to stop at least

once a lap to allow the bike to cool down. It never boiled or lost any coolant, but I didn't want to risk seizing the engine.

Nevertheless, despite having to stop for several minutes every lap in the last hour I was amazed to finish 35th out of 75 official finishers, not bad for a 125cc trailie. The bike required three jet washes to get all the clag off and the brake pads were completely knackered, but it sure had been a lot of fun!

The Blez-mobile LC2 is currently for sale (with new brake pads) to the highest bidder - contact TBM if you're desperate - er, sorry... interested.



Refurbished Paioli forks awaiting re-fitment with after-market gaiters

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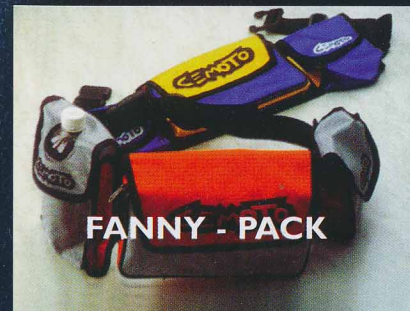
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Beautiful scenery awaits the trail rider in Rivington Country Park

Words & Pics: Rodger Davies



Park & Ride

In this, part one of a series of 'themed' trail rides, Rodger Davies explores Rivington Country Park in Lancashire...

Conventional wisdom would suggest that motorcycles and country parks don't mix. But living next to one of the oldest and most visited country parks in the country brings home the vast number of visitors that have to be catered for - including trail riders.

Any riding done in this area is highly visible, and so best behaviour is required in order to preserve the goodwill built up over many years. Promoting trail riding as 'pony trekking on bikes' may not please the adrenaline junkies out there, but it is one aspect of our pastime, and essential if we are to be able to continue using certain lanes without confrontation.

If you've never heard of Rivington Country Park, it was the inspiration of Lord Leverhulme, the soap tycoon who, in a typical display of Victorian arrogance, transformed a moorland area into an early theme park, complete with Italian

and Japanese gardens and a number of follies. There's a reproduction of Liverpool castle, a designer dovecote and a tower, which boasts outstanding views of the Lancashire plain, the North Sea and the Welsh Mountains. With the construction of eight reservoirs to provide water for Liverpool, there is good reason to describe the area as a 'mini Lake District', and if you've ever watched BBC2's Top Gear programme, you'll almost certainly have seen Rivington as much of the filming is done there.

As well as the usual activities such as walking, mountain biking, horse riding and sitting in cars reading the paper, there is a meeting place for our leather-clad, pocket-rocket riding brethren, who have been known to ride up to ten miles on sunny days, without stopping... And then there is us.

About ten years ago we were asked to give up the use of a lane called 'Lead Mines Clough' because of its popularity with walkers and, in return, we would be allowed the use of a much longer concessionary lane. Since that time, we have negotiated with the landowners, Northwest Water, for the use of a number of routes, which, along with our usual trails, complete a good day's riding. There is a catch though, and that is that there needs to be someone with a key present to be responsible for the behaviour of the group.

On to the trail riding. Armed with OS Explorer 19, placing flat caps firmly on top of open face AGVs and inserting ferrets down Wulf jeans we set off from Rivington Hall car park (633,144) near the ancient barn/café/info centre. Passing Rivington village and its stocks we climb up a steep, rocky trail to the dovecote (640,144) and the

meeting point of Belmont Old Road and George's Lane, which will take us past Rivington Pike and its tower. The mountains of Wales, the flat expanse of the North Sea and the peak of Blackpool Tower can be seen on a clear day, beyond the dark satanic mills and the Reebok football stadium.

Passing Matchmoor Riding and Trekking Centre (660,116), it's difficult not to compare riding horses to riding bikes. On the one hand bikes don't tend to have personality problems, don't need constant attention and can be left festering in the garage after use. Horses, however, are self-replicating (saves a lot of money at trade-in time), and they do tend to attract women in tight jodhpurs!

At the entrance to the golf club, we pick up an old pack-horse route leading down to the picturesque hamlet of Barrow Bridge (688,118). Further byways take us past Smithills Hall (699,119), which is well worth a visit, since it has a coaching house with real coaches and a distinctly Dickensian atmosphere.

Picking up the A675 we head North to Belmont village, turning right past the ancient bleaching and dyeing works, and up to the start of Catherine's Edge, our first concessionary lane and part of the 'Witton Weavers' Way'. This passes behind the sailing club and has views of the radio

masts of Winter Hill. Rumour has it that you can pick up Jazz-FM through the fillings of your teeth up here. It eventually brings us out at the road to Tockholes, and the Roddlesworth Visitors' Centre (666,215). The 'space ship' you can see on the right is yet another folly, the Jubilee Tower built to celebrate Judy Dench's 60th birthday, and although we can't climb up it on the bikes, we can take Darwin Old Road over to Sunnyhurst (680,225), which has a pub and cafe.

Doubling back along a concessionary bridgeway and along Trash Lane and Weasel Lane we arrive at Tockholes (683,231). It's well worth exploring the lanes here if you want a quick wallow in 18th Century Britain. Back on the main road a right turn past the car park (664,203) takes us down 'Slipper Lowe', so named because of the wheel marks made by the desperate braking of carts and more recently, bikes. A diversion, on foot, down to Hollinshead Hall (663,199) is well worth the time because, as well as the ruins of the hall, there is a strange building housing a Healing Well (supposedly haunted), which is said to cure ophthalmic complaints - can't see it myself!

Crossing the main road, Twist Moor Lane takes us past NW Water's wood yard into Brinscall and its village lodge full of ravenous ducks and carp. A good diversion is to White Coppice (625,191), a picture postcard village, at the top of which, is a

Technical TOPICAL Tips

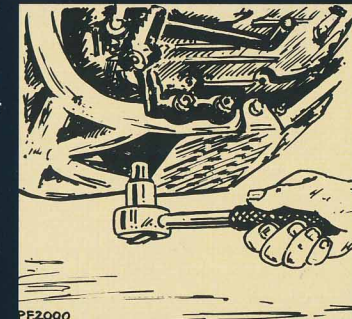
CHANGING THE OIL

Changing the oil on your bike is an essential part of routine servicing that shouldn't be overlooked. Whether you ride a two-stroke or four-stroke dirt bike, the performance and reliability of your engine and gearbox depends upon regular (and frequent) changes of oil. This isn't hard to understand, because unlike in a car (which carries plenty of oil), with a (four-stroke) dirt bike, the engine and gearbox oils are not kept separate. What's more, dirt bikes only hold a small volume of oil by comparison.

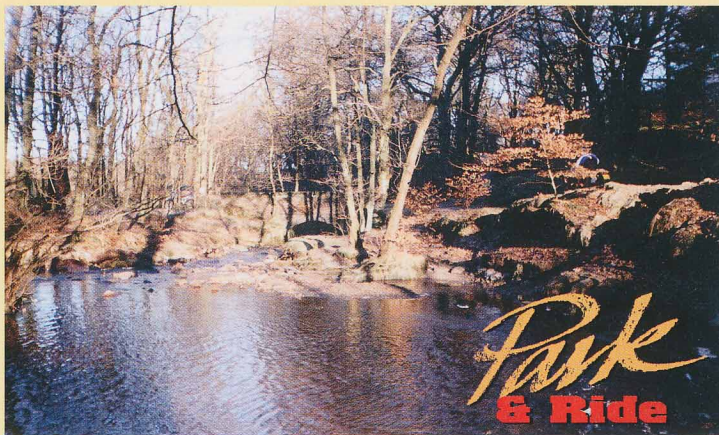
Don't go on the number of miles you ride, just make it a rule to change the oil after every fourth or fifth outing on your bike (or whatever you feel suitable - more often if you're racing). There is sound reasoning behind this practice which isn't just a rumour put out by the oil companies to make us all buy more lubricant.

Everytime you use the clutch, fine particles of material are dislodged from the plates which contaminate the oil and can block up the intricate oilways and filters. At the same time, mechanical shear stresses inside a high-revving bike engine, break down the lubricant, while crankcase breathers (which vent to atmosphere) can allow water and other contaminants to get into the oil.

Two-strokes - despite being lubricated by a separate (engine) oil - should not escape the regular oil change treatment. Although the shear stresses aren't as high as with a four-stroke, two-stroke riders tend to be much heavier on the clutch. Besides, frequent flushing with fresh oil helps keep you aware of any engine problems your bike might have (for instance a blown water-pump seal), and helps remove any swarf from within the gearbox.



unique village green and cricket pitch that recently featured in a children's TV series called 'Sloggers'. A scenic tarmac road with Anglezarke Moor on the left and views across to the sea on the right takes us to Jepson's Gate and the concessionary trail down to Lead Mines' Clough. This, as the name suggests, is the site of an ancient lead mine and, on the top of the hill, there is a memorial where a bomber crashed in the war. Following a track by the stream we emerge at Alance Bridge. We can now either backtrack a little to do two more concessionary lanes alongside the Anglezarke and Upper Rivington reservoirs or head back to the cafe at Rivington Barn and look at all the clean road bikes.



Fuel? You won't need any if you start with a full tank and your bike does more than 20mpg. Pub stops? I can recommend the Black

Dog at Belmont (674,158), the Dresser's Arms at Wheelton (604,212), Bob's Smithy on Chorley Old Road (674,111) and The Black Horse at Limbrick (602,163) which is very old, quaint and yes, haunted. Information centres lie at Roddlesworth and Rivington Barn. And if you want more information about riding here, contact me Rodger Davies, ROW Officer via the Lancs TRF, or by e-mail on davies@chorley50.freeseerve.co.uk. Happy riding...

The first thing to do when considering an oil change is to make sure you have enough oil of the correct variety to hand (a good quality fully- or semi-synthetic, bike-specific brand). Don't laugh, I've seen people drain the oil out of their bike into an already used tin, and then find they need to use their bike to get to the dealer's for oil. So assuming you've got your oil and filter(s), begin by warming up the engine.



Warm the motor for at least three minutes, then fetch the oil tray, place it under the bike and remove the sump plug. Don't forget to undo the oil-filler cap to allow air back into the system. It's a good idea to let some of the oil run out through your finger and thumb where you can feel for any bits of swarf and examine its colour. Excessively light coloured, milky-looking oil usually means water has got in, while black treacly oil is generally an indication of infrequent changes. Check the sump plug (which is usually magnetic) for swarf and clean it if necessary.

Assuming the oil looks pretty normal, tip the

bike from side to side and allow it to drain out for a few more minutes. If it's a four-stroke, now's the time to change the filter or filters. Obviously all bikes are different, but most thumpers have a disposable oil filter and a cleanable mesh gauze. Clean up the gauze with petrol and an old paintbrush and replace the disposable filter with a new one. Then measure the correct amount of oil (allowing for the filter), refit the

drain plug (very important!), and pour in the new oil. With two-strokes there's no filters to change it's simply a case of measure-and-fill.

If your bike has a particular oil change routine - CCM's for instance - then follow the manufacturer's guidelines in your handbook. Finally, don't forget to replace the oil filler cap, check the sump plug for tightness, wipe away any drips and start the bike to circulate the new oil and check for any leaks. If everything looks and sounds fine, you're ready to ride...

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Everything you've always wanted to know about buying a secondhand XR600R... by the UK's most infamous owner...

Honda's mighty XR600R first appeared way back in 1985, a full decade and a half ago, and it's still in production today. Almost immediately it became the definitive big banger by which all others were judged and the fact that it's still on sale in fashion-conscious America in the year 2000, is a measure of how successful a formula Honda hit on right from the start.

In off-road terms it's always had a reputation as a bit of a 'big bruiser', and rightly so, but although it was designed as a full-on competition machine, it was never intended to win Welsh enduros. The wide open spaces of the Western USA and the Australian bush are its natural habitat for both racing and simple fun off-riding, but as many a happy owner has discovered (including me) the XR600 makes a truly versatile trail bike which can handle anything from the toughest green lane to a London commute, yet still have enough oomph and comfort to cover serious distances on the open road. Above all, the XR600 has a well-deserved reputation for rock-solid reliability.

History
This torquey air-cooled thumper evolved naturally from the old Honda XR500 (enduro bikes) and XL600 (trail bikes) which preceded it in the early 80s.



Story: Paul Blezard; Pics: TBM & library shots

It used the XL600's RFVC (radial four valve combustion) head in a stripped-down (relatively) light-weight monoshock chassis which didn't even include the sturdy bashplate fitted to earlier XRs (definitely a mistake!). At only 123kg (271lbs) the US enduro version of the XR600 was barely heavier than the old XL250R trail bike and much lighter than contemporary beasts like Yamaha's XT600, or indeed the original XT500. (And fifteen years on, the new XR650 isn't any lighter).

The XR6 was a hit with the Yanks and Aussies straight away and soon became the 'must have' machine for events like the Baja 1000 and the Australian Safari. In fact the XR's record in the Oz safari is unsurpassed, with nine wins recorded between Hedericks and Chapman alone. The Safari was just about the ideal event for the XR because traditionally it's been too nadgery for a big twin to

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Honda XR600R

Honda's XR600R has always been a bit of a bruiser. Note drum-braked rear wheel on this early US model



have an advantage, and far too long and arduous to consider using a converted crosser, whether two or four-stroke.

Specifications

The XR600 was deliberately built by Honda to be simple and easy to maintain. It's an air-cooled, SOHC, four stroke single with kickstart only, no battery and easily-adjusted screw and locknut tappets. An automatic de-compressor helps starting, and there's a manual lever on the handlebars too. The sophisticated bits are the RFVC head (which helps combustion and never seems to give any trouble) and the gear-driven balancer which smoothes out the worst of the vibes. The gearbox is a five-speeder and the 2.3 litres of oil for the dry sump engine are carried in the frame with an easily-accessible dipstick just in front of the 11litre (including reserve)

plastic petrol tank. The conventional forks have always been protected by gaiters and the monoshock rear end has a sensible grease nipples for both the swinging arm and the linkage and an easily-accessible remote reservoir with plenty of damping adjustment with just a twiddle of the fingers. The smallish air filter is easily accessible behind the left side-panel held by quick-release Dzus fasteners and the oil filter can be changed in a couple of minutes by removing the three allen bolts on the right hand crankcase.

What Changed?

The earliest XR600s came with twin carbs and drum rear brakes. These had a reputation for being hard to start (as did the contemporary twin-carb XR250). Richard Alexander of Tippet's Motors in Surbiton recalls, 'We sold some to the police at Hendon for surveillance work and if you dropped them on the left hand side, you were finished'.

For 1988 Honda switched to a single carburettor and added the auto-decompressor which

helped starting. The barrel also got a Nikasil coating to aid cooling and save a little weight and the 2-2 header pipes were made of long-lasting stainless steel.

The last significant changes to the XR600 came way back in 1991, when a much-needed rear disc was added along with improved cartridge forks. Sadly, the header pipes reverted to 2-1 in rustable steel. Wider CR-style footpegs came in '92 but since then, believe it or not, the only real changes have been to the colours and graphics.

Legalities

As with the rest of Honda's XR range, there are several different versions of the 600 machine for each model year, depending on its destination. The basic bike remains the same but its degree of road legality differs from country to country. The basic model is

the US-spec which comes with a single 25watt headlight, no brake light, no horn, no speedo, no indicators and a low output 80-watt alternator. It does have a spark arrestor and very quiet exhaust though. There is even a special California version with extra emission control gubbins as distinct from the '49 state' models. (For street legal use the Yanks have the electric start XR650L, which is a sort of half-way house between an XR600 and a Dominator).

Most of Europe and Canada now gets a more civilised (and slightly heavier) 'virtually legal' model with a proper glass dipping headlight, speedometer, horn, big rear light with brake light operated off both levers, handlebar switchgear and a left hand mirror - but no indicators. This is the version which has been officially imported into the UK since 1994 as 'for off-road use only'; before that there was a break of eight years when the XR600 was not officially imported into Britain at all, but Honda UK did import the earliest XR600s for just two years in '85 and '86.

Finally, places like Australia and Holland get a 'fully road legal' version with all the above fixtures and fittings, plus indicators and different tyres. My understanding is that there's nothing on a standard UK spec XR600 which contravenes Construction and Use regulations or which would cause it to fail an MoT, it's just that Honda UK don't feel it's worth their while to get it homologated for road use. But it is still possible to pay your money, sign a few forms and ride away from a Honda dealer on a brand new legally taxed and plated XR600.

As with the XR400 set up described in TBM52, all XR600s come with a snorkel in the air box which is easily removed for better breathing, (but whatever you do don't remove the metal gauze in the air-box, unless replacing the entire filter assembly). Even the off-road only US spec bikes (like my own) come with a really stifling baffle in the exhaust which, if removed, is far too loud for road or trail use. The best solution is to remove the core of the baffle but leave the rest of it in, which gives a good compromise between noise and power. You do need to increase the main jet size and often the pilot jet too, otherwise the bike will be harder to start and pop and bang when it does. There are any number of aftermarket pipes available of course, but in the opinion of well known tuner Bob Farnham (who has owned several XR600s), none offers a better compromise for the responsible citizen with the standard header pipes.

As for the effects on power, mine gave 31bhp at the rear wheel standard, 35bhp with the baffle removed and 33.5bhp with the 'half removed' but much quieter solution described above. For comparison, a Honda Dominator only gives about 36bhp despite having huge and heavy twin exhausts and an extra 50cc.



Used & Abused

Living with it

The XR600 is definitely not for novices, either on or off-road. Just starting it can be a major stumbling block if you're only used to pressing buttons with your right thumb. It's actually easy to start once you know how, but there is a knack to it. Many's the time I've watched friends kick and kick my XR when they've stalled on the trail and then I've started it first go, to their huge annoyance. You just feel for compression, then return the kickstart to the very top of its travel and give it a good firm boot all the way to the bottom. Works every time when it's warm, so long as you haven't dropped it of course. If you have dropped it, it's worth using the manual decompressor while kicking it over with the throttle open a few times, then it should start with a few more kicks. If it's in a bad mood, then I turn the fuel tap off as well.

XR600s don't like being left for weeks either, but draining the float bowl usually helps revive them much quicker. A Splitfire plug is a good investment too, especially on the early twin-carb models.

Once you've got the knack of starting the beast,

the XR is the original 'go anywhere, do anything' all rounder. Almost anything is possible on an XR600, from touring the world to racing in a supermoto, provided you are aware of your own and the bike's limitations - and you change the oil and filter every thousand miles.

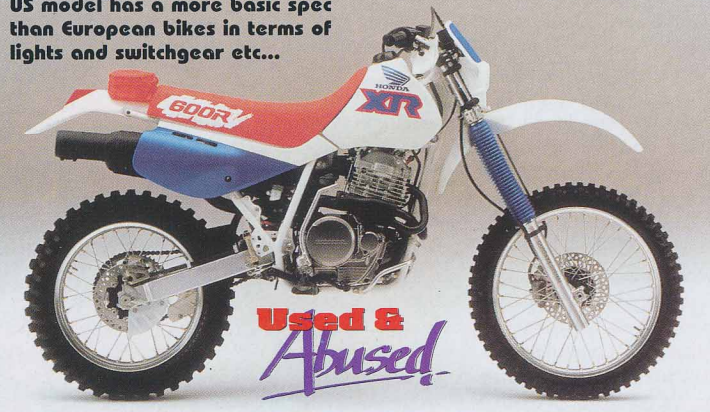
On the dirt, and especially if you're bold enough to enter an enduro, it certainly helps to be fairly beefy, not just for starting the bike and picking it up when you fall off, but just for muscling it through the more nadjery bits. The XR actually gives a superbly plush ride - much more comfortable than an XR400 for example, but it's not nearly as good through the trees.

In UK terms, it's definitely more of a trail bike than an enduro machine unless you're John Deacon or indeed the legendary American Scott Summers who has 'defied the laws of physics' (according to one Yank mag) with his winning ways on surprisingly standard XR600s for many years. Long before doing the Dakar on a Honda UK one, Si Pavey brought his own '88 XR6 over from Oz and did rallies in Spain and Italy on it along with several British championship enduro rounds. And as regular readers will know, even I have survived the Welsh Two-day and several other enduros on my own '91 XR600, despite suffering from very little skill and utterly unsuitable gearing.

Gearing

Standard gearing is fine off-road, but makes the bike very lively on the tarmac - wheelies everywhere. I went from 48 to 40 or 41 teeth on the rear sprocket when I knew I had a lot of road miles to do and ended up with a compromise 44 rear sprocket for trail riding and town use. Interestingly, Si Pavey decided to stick with standard gearing even on the Dakar after speaking to Oz safari veteran Jeff Ballard who knew from experience that you could rev the nuts off a standard XR and it would never blow up, but raising the gearing could put too

US model has a more basic spec than European bikes in terms of lights and switchgear etc...



Used & Abused

much strain on the gearbox in racing conditions. The standard 14/48 set-up is still good for over 90mph.

What to look out for

Nearly everyone I spoke to, from dealers to owners always said the same thing about the XR6 when I first asked what went wrong with them: 'Nothing'. Certainly my own experience bears this out, at least as far as the engine and chassis are concerned. Robin, the workshop manager at Honda dealers Paul Bransons in Somerset said, 'Apart from regular maintenance parts like wheel bearings, and sprockets we've had no problems at all. We've done the odd piston and big end but they'll rattle away forever'. However, both discs and pads are very thin and can wear out very quickly although my experience of having both pad retaining pins pop out (!) seems to be unique. Cheap aftermarket discs are available. On the other hand my kickstart breakage appears to be not uncommon, and I recommend the fitting of a Mk1 Dominator kickstart in its place if you want

European bikes look much clumsier, but are far better specified for the road



Honda XR600R

something cheap and strong.

Amongst all the fans of the XR6 I did find one dissenting voice, that of Rally of Discovery organiser Phil Gunn. His XR600 gave up the ghost in the Dakar and only finished the Dubai rally after he rode the whole of the last day stuck in second gear. If the XR600 has an 'Achilles' heel', it's definitely in the gearbox, especially if it has got really hot. The hard facing comes off the gears and third gear tends to wear out first. This happened to Si Pavey's first XR600 and Bob Farnham discovered wear in the same place when he stripped his own machine, although he pointed out 'I would never have known if I hadn't stripped it - the gearbox was still working perfectly'. In contrast, Pavey had to strip his gearbox because it was jammed and the culprit was a piece of swarf which had lodged in the selector mechanism. One way of taking some strain off the transmission, especially with a tuned motor, is to fit a Dominator clutch basket and primary drive gear - and this actually comes as part of the official HRC 628cc hop-up kit. This makes the gears spin faster, reducing their load. The standard XR6 clutch is actually very robust if you leave the motor standard (unlike early XR400s) - I never touched mine in nine years of ownership.

Tuning

Apart from Honda's own big bore kit, there are any number of tuning parts available for XR600s - that subject could be a whole article in itself. But the consensus all around the world is that the XR600's 'bullet-proof' reputation does not apply to tuned motors. The XR400 seems to withstand tuning better and the younger engine does seem to have benefited from the extra decade of development since the XR6 was designed. Bob Farnham recommends leaving the motor standard for longevity (which is how Scott Summers rides his), and advises against using a hot cam for off-road use because it spoils the lovely low-down 'oomph' which is the 600's trademark. If you want 'more of the same' just increase cubic capacity, and it is possible to take an XR600 all the way out to 660 by using a Dominator barrel.

For off-road use, I would tune the chassis before the engine and again, there's a plethora of parts available to improve both handling and looks. The standard rear shock is remarkably good, but the front end will benefit from a fork brace (eg Scott Summers) and different springs (eg Eibach, Race Tech) and thicker oil if you're a big boy (or girl). I strongly recommend fitting a set of frame guards and a bash plate from brand new - they'll keep the paint on your frame and stop the lower frame rails being squashed flat by the XR's bulk. Talking of which, the sidestand mounting bracket is liable to break off eventually and the back of the frame should be reinforced XR650L-style, if you're plan-

ning to really load the bike up for overlanding. The standard bars will bend the first time you drop the bike - take your pick of the aftermarket choice.

Buying one

I was shocked to discover that the last Honda UK recommended retail price for the XR600 was no less than £4,950 but that was about 18mths ago before the price cuts which lopped over a grand off the similarly priced CR500, for example.

Since the advent of the XR400 no one in their right mind has ever paid more than about four grand for a new XR600 and even two year old ones can be had for as little as £2,500. However, there's a 'floor price' of about a thousand quid for most big bangers, no matter how old or decrepit they are, and as one of the most desirable of the lot, you'll be lucky to get even an early XR600 for less than £1500 from a dealer. A friend of mine paid £1800 for his 1987 model only a couple of years ago. Robin at Branson's said, 'They're very scarce and they hold their price very well'. With the price of Honda spares I'd be inclined to pay more for a later, low mileage machine in good condition than something old and tatty that needs a lot of work - but I'd say that about most dirt bikes.

Finally, a word of warning; if you're a bit of an armchair dirt bike enthusiast and just fancy an XR600 for posing around town and pulling wheelies on, don't do it! The lack of electric start will drive you crazy when it conks out at the traffic lights and the total lack of anti theft devices (not even an ignition key) will make you permanently paranoid every time you park unless you're happy to carry around a chain that weighs nearly as much as the bike. Buy a Dominator instead.

Conclusion

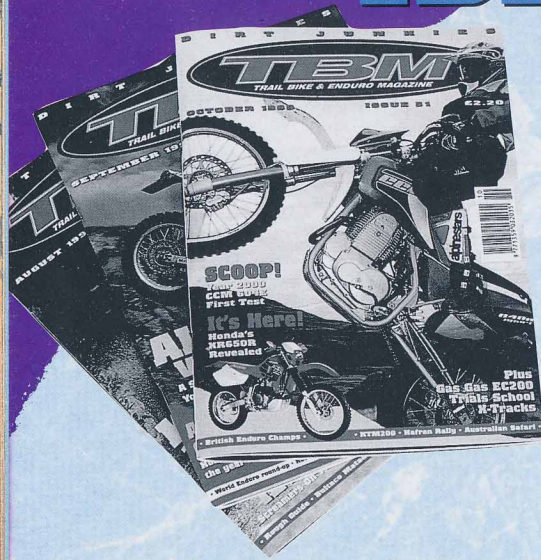
As an all-round, do-anything dirt bike the XR600 is hard to beat. It's no longer the best machine for any particular activity but it's a 'jack of all trades' which will provide years of reliable service with the barest minimum of maintenance. Keep an eye on the pads, discs and wheelbearings and change the oil and filter regularly and a standard XR600 will never let you down on the road or trail and I should know! In nearly nine years of ownership I only once removed the spark plug (to replace it with a Splitfire) and the tappets were only adjusted twice.

If you've got a bit of muscle, a bit of nerve and a bit of skill, an XR600 will reward you with big wheelies and big fun for years on end.

Thanks to:

Robin at Paul Branson's, Yeovil: 01935 474998; Bob Farnham Tuning, Kent: 01580 893577; Gary Taylor at Aye Gees, Welling: 0208 856 4273; Richard Alexander at Tippetts of Surbiton: 0208 399 2417; and my mate Alan Seagrave at Surrey TRF.

BACK ISSUES



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The King Is Dead

The Suzuki DR350 spanned nearly a decade in production, and was a truly dual-purpose trail bike. Now it's been replaced by a far cleverer motorcycle. But is the new DR-Z400S trailie the spiritual successor to the much-loved 350? Only one way to find out...

You've probably never heard of me and unless you're into roadbikes, quite rightly so. Let me introduce myself: My name is Alex Hearn, I'm a lucky git having been a motorcycle journalist for nearly five years. It's a brilliant thing to do for a living, obviously, wouldn't do anything else, best job in the world etc.

But a curious thing's happened over time; the passion for road riding, which as a young shaver burnt so strongly in me, has slowly ebbed. Road bikes, no matter how new, fantastic, fast, and sexy have become work, a job, almost. Still a good job, obviously, I'll not pretend otherwise, couldn't really.

Anyway, what I'm leading up to in a roundabout (and shambolic) way is this; three years ago a '94 Suzuki DR350 came into my possession.

It had done 6000 road miles, and was mint. I rode it a bit, put it in the garage, and forgot all about it. Until, in my vague capacities as road test editor for Performance Bikes Magazine, I had



an idea. There were three of us on the mag that had DRs (somehow, I don't know how or why). We were all really sportsbike/road racer types with no clue about the off-road scene. Why not do a story, with a mate who was well into puddle-jumping as a guide, on three idiot dirt virgins in Wales? If nothing else it'd be a laugh.

And in one long, wet, miserable, fantastic weekend I was converted, and fully signed up



to the whole green lane deal. I was absolutely useless, obviously, but the crack, good company and sheer unadulterated joy of slithering around beautiful parts of the countryside without fear of points on licence and mindless car drivers re-ignited a flame which, perhaps, had needed a bit of a stoking.

In the course of a solid year's green laning I got to know that DR350 well. I loved its stoic crashability and bombproof reliability. The engine and chassis would help you out, if it could, even in the face of stunning incompetence and idiocy (both of which I possess by the tubful). I didn't like trying to kick it into life after the usual Monks' Trod somersault and face-plant, nor its occasional sulks when it wouldn't start at all unless you ignored it for half an hour and leapt on it, taking it by surprise. But as I got a bit better I just grew bored with it. So I sold it, in the end, and part-exed an arm and a leg against a brand new Honda CRM250AR.

Right. I've got to the point of this intro. Suzuki invited me to test ride their new DR-Z400S - the

SUZUKI DR-Z400S

fully road legal trailbike version of the DR-Z400E tested in TBM54 (last month) - in sunny Fuerteventura. In my professional capacities as a bike journo, fledgling bog rat and ex-DR350 owner how could I refuse? Be rude to.

Now Fuerteventura's not at all like the UK. It's a volcanic island for a start, which means jagged rocks everywhere, lots of sand (dunes, scrubland) and loose cinder/shale and fire roads. I received my German-spec white/blue DR-Z400S with eager arms, smiled quietly and scurried off to spend an hour or so poring over it in detail, to see just what it was about.

It's no featherweight, I can tell you that, just by pushing it about. The Suzuki bumph says that the road equipment bolted to the DR-Z400S adds 13kg over the DR-ZE's claimed dry weight of 119kg. The NASA-calibrated TBM scales weighed the DR-ZE in at 137kg fully wet - and I reckon the trailbike's gotta be pushing the mid-to high 140s or thereabouts.

But there's a lot of gear that can go straight in the bin; the cushioning rubber inserts in the serrated footpegs, the pillion pegs, all the usual gubbins. Usefully the rear light unit/number-plate/indicators bolt off in one go. Some stuff you can't do much about - the 10L petrol tank's steel rather than the plastic of the enduro bikes, the exhaust header pipe is 3.2mm smaller in diameter and 0.2mm thicker, and the left hand radiator has a cooling fan. Unless you spend a fortune (or can be bothered hacking it about) that lot's going to stay where it is. Oh, and there's a steering lock welded onto the headstock, just like the old DR.

If you've owned a DR350 then you'll approve of some of the detail work Suzuki have put into their new bike. Getting oil into a DR350 could be a tricky manoeuvre, as the filler's sited on top of the frame spine near the headstock but also partly obscured by the petrol tank. The DR-Z's orifice has been re-sited, and sits on the right hand side of the headstock. Now you can get to it without a funnel - no more oil over the floor. Both brake and gear lever are blessed with foldable tips, sensible, and the LCD dash has two trip meters (that you can add/subtract to and from), a clock, timer and stopwatch as well as digital speedo. I must confess its unblinking cleverness easily defeated me, but then I couldn't be bothered to read the handbook. And I'm quite stupid.

The left hand sidepanel is held on with three quick release Dzus fasteners, and getting to the air filter is quick and easy. The panel's also the airbox lid, and a bit fiddly to get back in just the right place - two practice runs though and I had it cracked. A couple of niggles: the enduro bike has grease nipples on the swingarm, the trailbike

doesn't and while the trailbike does have an ally sump guard it does without the extra plastic guards of the racer which bolt onto both bottom frame rails and protect the water pump and generator cover. The threaded lugs are there, and the guards will be available separately. Should be standard, really.

Presumably you know the DR-Z400 engine's basic spec. If not, or if you've forgotten here y'are: it's a dry sumped (oil capacity 1.7l) 398cc, liquid cooled, four-valve single with bore and stroke of 90x62.6mm (a short stroke motor). There's no kickstart on the trailie, only a button and automatic decompressor. Instead of the Keihin 39mm flatslide carb fitted to the enduro bikes, the DR-Z400S has a 36mm Mikuni CV, and compression ratio is lowered from 12.2:1 to 11.3:1 by the simple use of a thicker base gasket. The digital ignition is linked (electronically) to the throttle position/engine rpm and adjusts its mapping accordingly. Gearbox has five speeds with 15-tooth front/43 tooth rear ratio (14/47 on the enduro models).

The DR-Z400S frame is a simple tubular steel double cradle, with rake/trail set at 27.4 degrees/109mm compared to 27.6 degrees and 114mm, of the DR-ZE. 49mm telescopic forks have stepless spring preload and 10-step compression damping adjustment, the rear shock's bolted to the ally swingarm via a progressive linkage and gets preload and 26-step compression adjustment. The enduro bikes come with 14-step rebound on the forks and 21-step rebound on the shock, but really compression's what you need to firm things up a bit if you're an aggressive or heavier rider. Brakes? A twin-pot caliper nips a 250mm disc up front, while a single-pot caliper does likewise at the rear on a 220mm disc.

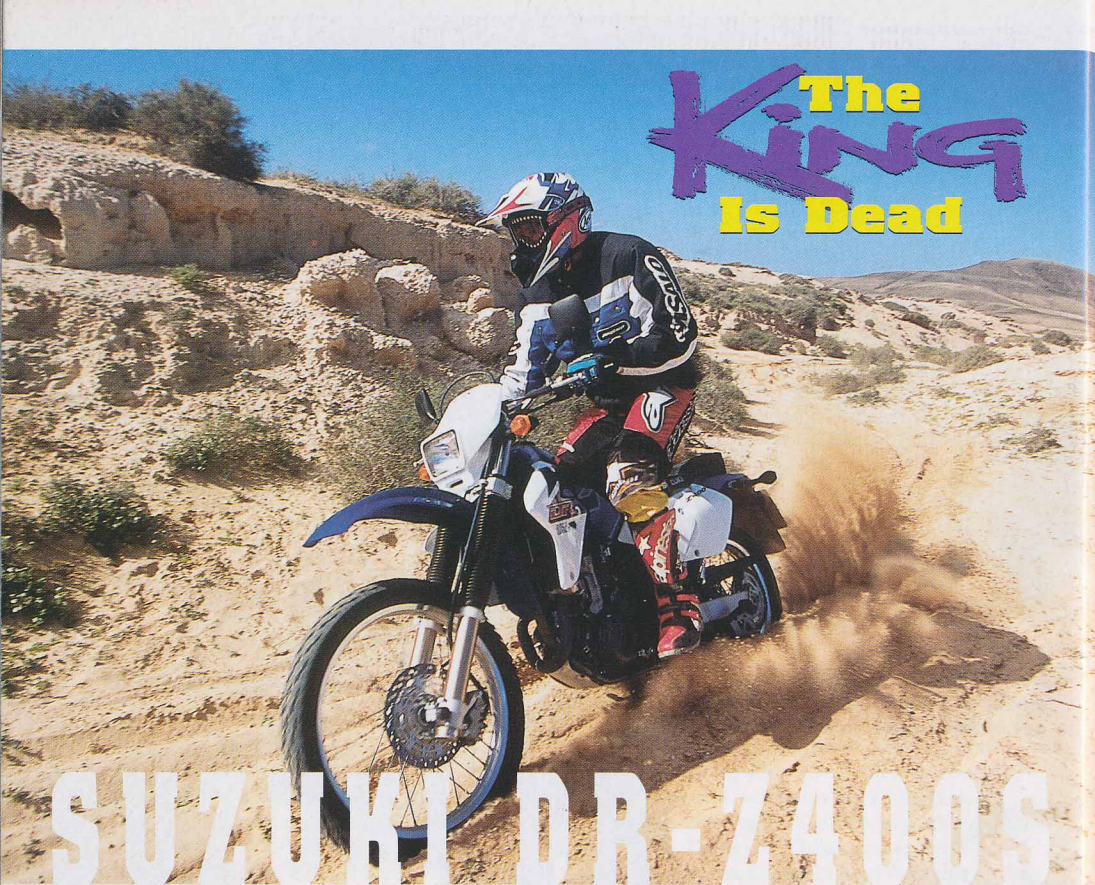
Er, enough of all that guff, if you need more - look in the brochure. What's it like? Well, it tucks itself away neatly, does the DR-400ZS. I'm a withered 5ft 10in, and could put both feet flat on the floor, no problem. It doesn't feel a big, tall bike because it isn't, and sort of reminded me of... a DR350, all narrow tanked and spindly. A flick of carb mounted choke, prod of the button (marvellous) and the DR-ZS lights up easy, and settles into a muted idle. It's quiet, very. The cable operated clutch is light, as is the buttery gearbox. It's a great little roadbike - chugging along, easily pulling 35mph in top and happily cruising at 75mph with loads to spare. It's much more capable than the old DR350 in this respect, which I always thought was a gutless old windbag on the road, especially dragging knobby motocross tyres around. You know it's a single cylinder motor beating away beneath you, but it thraps rather than thumps, so your fillings are safe.

SUZUKI DR-Z400S



New dual-sport DR-Z makes you just want to get on board and ride it...

The King Is Dead



The King Is Dead

SUZUKI DR-Z400S

This may be straying off the point a bit and not in the rulebook, but the DR-Z400S is the new between-trail wheelie king. A stroke of clutch in second gear with a smooth snap of throttle and the front wheel's hoisted high. If you had a ten mile stretch of tarmac you could wheelie into top gear, and travel for ten miles. It's perfectly balanced, steerable and if you're not a wheelie merchant at present, get a DR-Z400S and you soon will be.

The first opportunity to head off-road was provided by a dried up riverbed, consisting of deep, sapping sand and faster, firmer crust. To be fair the Suzuki was a handful, the Bridgestone Trailwings mounted on its ally rims being a lot more road than off. But the engine's strong midrange punch saved me from having to waste precious energy by constantly picking the thing up. Keeping the throttle jacked open in whatever gear (mostly second/third) and the rear wheel driving hard, stopped the front end washing out. But better tyres would help a lot off-road.

Snap the throttle open in second when charging a trail and it'll pick the front wheel up and

over anything you need to avoid. Feel for whatever grip is available comes flooding back through the firm seat, and when the rear tyre does hook up the bike really drives.

On the flatter, firmer expanse of riverbed the DR-ZS was a shedful of fun. Still not a lot of grip from either end, but it's one of those bikes you can slide in big, long lurid arcs. Wanna turn more? Stand up on the pegs, shift some body-weight, look where you want to go, punch in a bit more of that midrange and turn baby turn. The steering geometry lets you get away with murder, as does the suspension which seemed slightly softly sprung (the shock in particular) but beautifully damped with it. The adjustment's there if you think you need it. To be truthful I was having too much fun to even think about it, and it struck me as I was roosting about that the DR-ZS was one of those bikes you have to work at to crash.

So (of course) intentions truly overwhelming capabilities I crashed it, busting one of the rear indicators and bending the steel bars in the process. Oh well, to be expected, and all the trail



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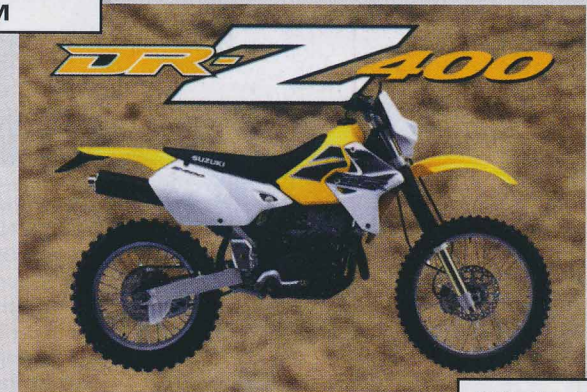
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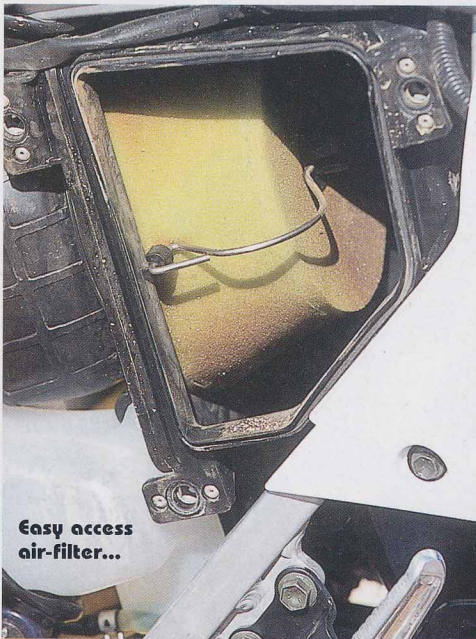


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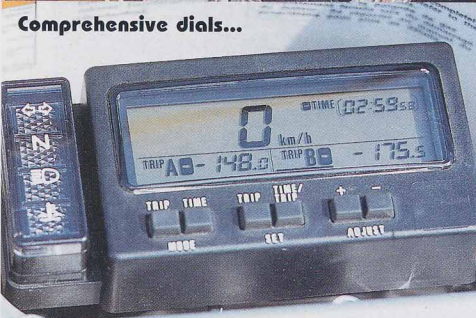


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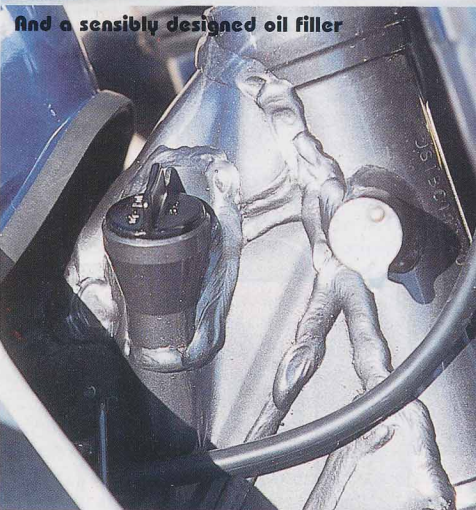
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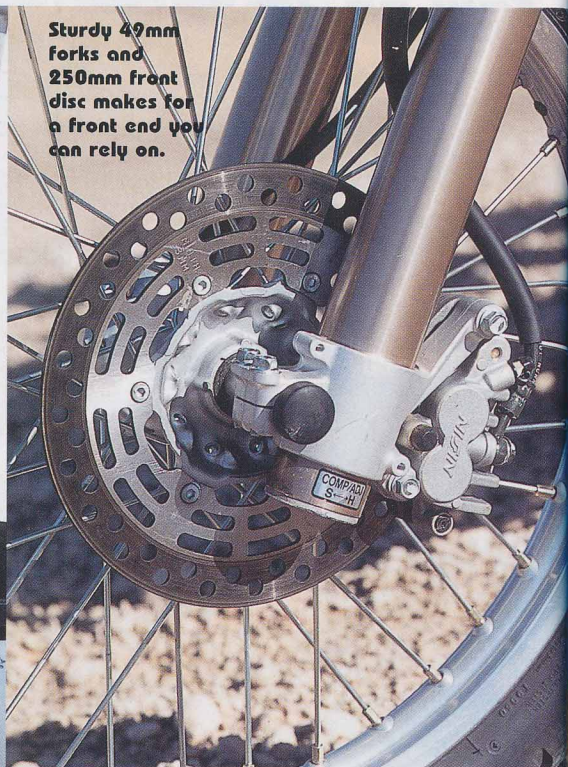


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bikes I've owned have received these mods free of charge. Now I fit proper bars and take anything smashable off before it gets broken off.

On the loose cinder fire tracks the DR-ZS was in its element. Plenty of poke, stable and with a front brake both powerful and sensitive enough to haul things up sharpish if necessary. The suspension coped with the odd heavy landing completely minus drama, though that's one of the places you notice the weight of the bike - when it's airborne. That and when you think the trail goes right but in fact goes left. Again the forgiving nature of the DR-Z's chassis helped me out on more than one occasion, battling on er, off-piste when other bikes would've spat the hapless dunderhead at the helm into the undergrowth.

I was fully knackered by the end of the day, but as the sun started to set I found the sand dunes more roosting, and one slight problem; under real heavy loads (third gear, full throttle, deep sand, sideways) the motor would sometimes stop dead for a second, then come back on song. It only happened a couple of times, and to be fair the bike I was riding had a load of German emissions-strangling gadgets plumbed into it, and these may have been the problem. I asked Roger Simmons, Suzuki GB's chief

Trail bike version of the DR400 looks to have all the right credentials...



The King Is Dead

SUZUKI DR-Z400S

mechanic (and a man who know his onions) about it, and that's what he reckoned. I'd given it full death all day, and it hadn't missed a beat up until that point.

Conclusion

Okay Fuerteventura isn't the UK, and we all know that bikes which feel great at a sunny foreign launch can feel completely different when axle-deep in British mud. But I reckon the DRZ-S has got too much pedigree to be a chump. If Suzuki have learnt anything from the DR350 it's that if you get the design right, it'll remain a good seller for years to come.

So if you want a bike that you can ride around seriously on the road/to work during the week and get some proper green laning in at the weekend then the DR-Z400S has to be somewhere near the top of your shopping list. It's a lot better than the old DR350, that's a fact, and its mixture of on-road civility and off-road competence make for an excellent all round dual-sport package. But I reckon there's not a lot of point in using the trailbike version of the DR-Z family as a basis for a serious off-road racer. The enduro models are not only a fair bit cheaper, but readily equipped for the dirt.

Nah, fit a pair of stronger handlebars to the DR-Z400S, some decent off-road tyres and invest in petrol. Lots and lots of petrol. Ride the DR-Z400S hard, use it as it was intended - both on, and off the road.

The king is dead, long live the King...

SUZUKI DR-Z400S	
Price:	£3999 plus £350 otr
Engine:	Liquid-cooled, DOHC, four-valve single
Bore & stroke:	90x62.6mm
Displacement:	398cc
Comp ratio:	11.3:1
Lubrication:	Dry sump
Transmission:	5-speed
Frame:	Steel double cradle, alloy subframe
F suspension:	49mm cartridge forks, adjustable preload and compression
R suspension:	Linkage-type, adjustable preload and compression
Fuel capacity:	10L
Wheelbase:	1475mm
Seat height:	935mm (36.8in)



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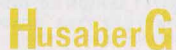
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Suzuki TS250X, 1987, MoT, 16,000km, engine rebuilt, new bearings & rings, handguards, ideal beginners trail bike. Tel Don on 0189 254 2098 (Kent)

Honda 650SLR, black, S-reg, 1200m, vgc, £1900. Tel Robert on 0189 265 3386 (Sussex)

Honda XR400, June 1998, taxed, 24,000m, HRC kit, Talon hubs, spares, bashplate, brush guards etc, £2650 ono. Tel Mike on 0152 575 3986 (Beds)

Honda XR400, 1999 model, as new cond, very little road use only, must be seen, £3200 ono.

Tel Jason on 0142 047 5881 (Hants)

Suzuki DR350SEW, 1998, R-reg, 1000m, completely standard bike, immac cond, £2550. Tel Simon on 0189 265 3695 (E Sussex)

Suzuki RMX250X, 1999 model, fully road legal, 1500m, never raced, exc cond, injury & wife forces sale, £2400 ono. Tel Chris on 0163 975 0978 (W Glam)

Yamaha YZ250, 1981, air cooled, monoshock, many new parts, very fast, good cond for year, £500. Tel Stephen on 0169 165 4115 (Shrops)

Suzuki TS200R, 1989, T&T, Renthals, new tyres, DEP, £1400 or swap for XR400, XR600 or bigbore DR350 enduro. Tel 0172 551 3472 (Wilts)

Honda CRM250AR, 1998, 4500km, hand guards, frame, sump, h/light guards, well maintained, good cond, £2900. Tel 0181 556 1083 (London)

KTM 300EXC, 1998 model, well looked after, £2275. Tel Andy on 0175 763 8549 or 0850 304806 (N Yorks)

Kawasaki KX250 Enduro, 1989, MoT, new f/r suspension, full engine rebuild, road reg'd, new bearings, guards, Renthals, O-ring chain, £850 ono. Tel Ainsley (eves) on 0160 873 0026 (Oxon)

Yamaha XT600, H-reg, T&T, complete professional rebuild from wheels up, too much to list, details available, £2000 ono. Tel Graham on 0192 677 3546 (Warks)

Honda CRM250 Mk2, blue/white, 1993, K-reg, T&T, 4100km, road use only, Renthals, Mugen exhaust, immac cond, £1895 ono. Tel John on 0193 322 9162 (Northants)

KTM LC4, 1999, silver/grey, used as road bike, mint cond, £3300 ovno. Tel 0178 524 3805 (Staffs)

Honda XR600, 1995, Acerbis handguards, Renthals, well looked after, must go, hence £1700. Tel Paul on 0134 271 7182 (W Sussex)

Yamaha XT600Z 1VJ, elec & kick start, 1988, E-reg, T&T, 36,000m, new clutch, rear shock, stainless exhaust, overland trip cancelled, must go, £1300 ovno. Tel Henry on 0118 962 9307 (Berks)

Kawasaki KDX200, 1996, perimeter frame model, Renthals, handguards, new bearings, rear wheel, good cond, £1750 ovno. Tel Steve on 0199 264 0498 (Herts)

Yamaha TTR250, elec start, 1998/99, £2500; also **Yamaha WR200**, 12 mths old, ready to race, £1800; and **Yamaha WR250**, 1998, absolutely mint, £2500. Tel 0168 641 3324 (Mid Wales)

Yamaha TM125E, 1997, exc cond, Pro-Circuit silencer, Renthals, hand guards, little use, £1400 ono or p/x for XR400; also **Suzuki TSR200R**, 1992, J-reg, T&T, good cond, enduro tyres, handguards, Renthals, DEP, exc trail bike, £1200 ono or p/x for XR400. Tel Ian on 0163 529 9572 (Berks)

Suzuki DR350 Enduro, K-reg, T&T, good original cond, £1500 ono. Tel 01488 73253 (Berks)

Husqvarna 350TE trailbike, just had engine o/h and run in, datatagged, new c+s, MXA graphics, genuine easy starter, vgc, little used, £2095 ono; also **Yamaha TTR250**, elec start, M-reg, Datatagged, lovely cond, very very little use by lady owner, new battery, Renthals, Barkbusters, very low mileage, must be seen, £2095 ono. Tel Iwan on 0129 568 0085 (Warks)

Honda XR600R-W, T-reg, 2000m, vgc, hand guards, exc value at £2600; also large Acerbis tank and Renthals bars available. Tel Kris on 0174 882 2567 (N Yorks)

Suzuki DR350 Enduro, H-reg, good cond, many extras and spares, £1395. Tel Andrew on 0170 662 0723 (Lancs)

KTM 300cc enduro, J-reg, T&T, two owners from new, good original cond, £1100 ono, large tank available. Tel Andrew 0153 564 4975 (W Yorks)

Honda CRM250 Mk1, white/orange, T&T, above average cond, ready to ride, £1350. Tel Andy on 0238 046 4632 (Hants)

Honda SLR650, R-reg, UK bike, 300m, showroom cond, £3230 ovno. Tel Adrian on 0147 640 7463 (Lincs)

Honda CR500, M-reg, MoT, used for green laning, fast & reliable, £1800. Tel (mobile) 0589 104785 or 0123 522 3945 (Oxon)

Husqvarna 510cc, motoX/enduro conversion, 1985, unused for several years, £1000. Tel 0126 871 0946 (Essex)

Yamaha XT600E, 1991, 16,000m, Overlanding? Excel rims, Renthals, Laser exhaust, rack, bashguard, brushguards, road/off road tyres,

FREE CLASSIFIEDS

Datagged, garaged, £2000. Tel Ian on 0196 324 0318 (Somerset)

Suzuki DR350, white, 1999, 1300m, many extra offroad bits, Renthals, hand guards, only selling to buy a new DR-Z400, £2795. Tel 0152 752 3550 (Worcs)

Honda XR250R, 1999, T-reg, exc cond, maintained by mature caring owner, low miles, mainly road use, very reluctant sale, £2650 ono. Tel Mark on 0192 286 5946 (W Mids)

Kawasaki KMX125, 1997, P-reg, full power, recent rear tyre, good original cond, £1600 ono. Tel 0145 241 1695 (Glos)

Suzuki RV125 sand bike, great cond, looking for a good home, reluctant sale, no time wasters please, £1400 or p/x for DR350/XR400. Tel 0171 244 1014 (London)

Suzuki DR385S Trail, 1990, H-reg, used on & off road, lots of spares, £1200 ono. Tel 0181 304 8565 (Kent)

KTM 620 Super Competition, 1998, 1500km, full WP suspension, immac, £3300. Tel Phil on 0115 922 5693 (Nottingham)

KTM 125LC, 1999, UK model, e-start, Autolube, only 600m, just serviced, new MT21s and handguards, as new cond, spare road tyres, £1795 ono. Tel Steven on 0154 337 6980 (Mids)

Suzuki DR200, F-reg, lots of money spent but will not start, £300. Tel Lee on 0181 204 9051 (Middx)

BMW R1100GS, red, 1995, M-reg, MoT, 26,500m, never used off road, exc cond, £4350 ovno. Tel Graham on 0125 488 8974 (Lancs)

BMW F650 Trail, 1998, R-reg, BMW service history, one owner, alarm, Datatag, Scottoiler, gaiters etc etc, vgc, nearest offer to £3225. Tel 0125 726 3137 (Lancs)

KTM 620LC4, orange, 1997, road reg'd, green lane use only, vgc, £2400. Tel (after 6pm) on 0178 571 3225 (Staffs)

Honda CRM250 Mk3, 1994, T&T, genuine exc cond, 10,000km, Renthals, bashplate, DEP pipe, Barkbusters, disc guards, plus original parts, gentle green lane use. Tel Neil on 0122 988 9149 (Cumbria)

Yamaha DT250MX, 1982, restored, exc cond, MoT, lots spares, perfect green laner, £675. Tel Michael on 0129 982 2783 (Worcs)

Husqvarna 610TC, 1998, bought Aug '98, only raced 8 times by junior rider, not used in '99, ideal for super motard, £2200; also **KTM 620SX**, 1998, maintained regardless of cost,

Magura bars, new grips, decals & rad covers, exc cond, very reliable, also ideal for super motard, £2600. Tel Brian on 0132 734 0368 (Northants)

KTM 300EXC, L-reg, Magnum forks, WP shock, Excel rims, new c+s, Renthals, reliable and very fast, Tel Andrew (mobile) on 0860 789863 or 0158 245 2003 (Herts)

Honda CRM250AR, purple/white, 1999, 1000km, dry road only, Renthals + Acerbis, absolutely as new, £3100. Tel Keith on 0152 538 3999 (Beds)

Honda XR250, elec start, 1995, M-reg, full Japanese spec, new tyres, six speed gearbox, digital speedo, pristine cond, 5700km. Tel Jasper 0378 021626 (N Yorks)

Suzuki TS200R, 1991, 9500m, enamelled frame, Renthals, new O-ring c+s, little rocket crying out for another good home, bargain at £1375. Tel Steve on 0133 229 0326 (Derbys)

KTM 125cc, 1991, F-reg, good cond, lost interest, £400 ono. Tel 0192 681 7910 or 0780 813 8239 (Warks)

Yamaha DT200WR enduro bike, 1998, R-reg, low mileage, Power pipe, new c+s, graphics and tyre, good cond, bargain at £1800 ono. Tel Daniel on 0162 379 4867 (Nottingham)

Honda XR400, 1996, T&T, Pro-Circuit exhaust, vgc, genuine reason for sale, £2300, consider cheaper bike in p/x. Tel 0170 955 0800 (S Yorks)

Honda XR400RX, T-reg, UK bike, road use only, 600m, as new, £3400. Tel Keith on 0164 370 4047 (Somerset)

KTM 400LC4, elec start, P-reg, 1400m, original KTM documents, low seat, registered, taxed, spanking new cond, superlative all-rounder, £2500 ono. Tel Martin on 0148 262 9016 (E Yorks)

Husqvarna 410, 1996, genuine 1900km, superb machine, 100% reliable, easy starter, must be seen folks, just serviced, spares, £2400 ono. Tel 0161 980 3135 (Cheshire)

Honda CRM250AR, 1998, taxed, new tyre, Renthals, Barkbusters, rear rack, never been off road, 5700km, as new, £3450 ono. Tel Gary on 0132 252 4242 (Kent)

Honda XL600LMF, elec start, 1986, MoT, spare set of tyres, good runner, renthals, private number plate. Tel Rupert on 0124 523 1104 (Essex)

Husky TE610, 1998, 3500km, superb, road use only, spare supermoto wheels, manual, £3200

non or will take CRM/KDX in p/x, can deliver. Tel Andy on 0166 374 6081 (Derbys)

Honda XLR250, white/red, 1991, H-reg, MoT, 14,000km, new seat cover, hand guards, Renthals, Supertrapp + standard exhausts, truly exc, £1150. Tel Duncan on 0122 335 4352 (Cambs)

KTM 300EXC, 1998, S-reg, good cond, fast & reliable, some new parts. Tel Dan on 0802 236913 or (days) on 0120 267 4554 (Dorset)

Honda CRM250R, the best around, fullpipe, MT21, racing reeds, 2-bike trailer, house forces sale, £1600, you wont buy better. Tel John on 0192 241 4841 (Staffs)

Aprilia 650 Pegaso, black, 1997, P-reg, 7500m, fsh, one owner, T&T, vgc, stainless Arrow pipe, £2300. Tel Mark on 0126 879 5210 (Essex)

Kawasaki KLR250, exc cond, enduro trim, full lights, horn, speedo, reg'd 1994, £1475 ovno, no more time wasters. Tel Ian on 0148 386 0857 (Surrey)

Honda XR350, T&T, twin carbs, adjustable rear shock, £850 ovno or may p/x for 2-stroke. Tel Noel on 0175 284 8796 (Cornwall)

Gas Pampa 250, 1997, R-reg, fully road legal, good cond, £1650; also **Husky WR250**, 1994, L-reg, road legal and reg'd, £1000. Tel Chris on 0976 611531 or 0133 287 5049 (Derby)

Suzuki DR250, elec start, grey & black, used UK one year only, ride height suspension, Barkbusters, trials tyres, perfect throughout, bargain, £1400. Tel Paul on 0187 383 2407 (S Wales)

Honda XR650L, M-reg, T&T, 10,000m, first class cond, Acerbis 22 ltr tank plus standard tank, Dynojet, Supertrapp plus standard exhaust, filter, £3000 ono. Tel 0190 478 8115 (W Yorks)

Cagiva DE500, rare! Supermoto, comes with two engines plus brand new bodywork and petrol tank, sensible offers invited. Tel Richard on 0122 771 2573 (Kent)

BMW R100GS, black, 1990, 37,000m, s/s exhaust, Hagon shock, superb cond, £2795 or might swap for elec start single ie XR400 etc. Tel 0152 473 3502 (Lancs)

Montesa Cota 200, 1981, original, under 400m from new, T&T, £800 or swap for XR600 plus cash, why. Tel 0190 478 9113 (N Yorks)

Yamaha XT500, 1978, needs more TLC than I've got time to give, £1200 ono for fun bike. Tel Steve on 0860 393016 (Essex)

Yamaha XT225 Serow Mk2, blue & white, elec

start, 1992, exc cond, £1395. Tel Graham on 0147 470 6683 (Kent)

Suzuki RMX250, 1995, N-reg, superb cond, new piston, rings, main bearings, very little use, very well maintained, £1650. Tel Michael on 0130 577 6904 (Dorset)

Yamaha TT600, 1989, £1500; also **KTM 500 4-stroke**, 1984, £1000, both good cond, road reg'd and ready to go, need the space. Tel Pat on 0188 541 0757 (Worcs)

Honda XR400RX, 1999, UK model, taxed, sump guard, all original, immac cond, £2950. Tel Nigel on 0149 527 2451 (Gwent)

Suzuki DR350 trail, K-reg, T&T, 7000m, exc cond, Acerbis tank, Bridgestone tyres just fitted, mainly road use, alloy bars, £1600 ono. Tel 0192 641 9957 (Warks)

KTM 540SXC, 1999, V-reg, vgc, reliable, £3500 ovno. Tel 0168 981 0457 (Kent)

Honda XR600, 1996, exc cond, FMF pipe, new c+s, £2000, no offers. Tel Martin on 0179 289 7893 (S Wales)

Yamaha TTR250, elec start, 1993, L-reg, T&T, stored 10 mths, bashplate, handguards, oil cooler, new tyres, X-ring chain, pads etc, £1995; also **Honda CRM250AR**, 1998, S-reg, DEP chrome pipe, silencer, 5k kms, new tyres, pads, chain, bashplate, handguards, Renthals etc etc, reluctant sale, £2995. Tel Simon on 0162 273 5829 (Kent)

Honda XL250S, Michelin T61 on 21" front, Pirelli MT17 on 18" rear, standard 23" front with new tyre, new front mudguard, headbrace bearings, seat cover, rear dampers, T&T, good c+s, Renthal bars, Acerbis handguards & headlight, recent top end overhaul & Gold Tip plug, professionally resprayed tank & side panels, many other spares, only used for green laning, not ideal as commuter, £650 ono. Tel Tim (after 6pm) on 0181 303 2168 (NW Kent)

Suzuki DR650SE, 1996, N-reg, 8000m, Acerbis big tank, white plastics or standard tank, black plastics, you get both, £2000 ono. Tel Martin on 0152 782 1287 (Worcs)

Honda CRE250, 1999, T-reg, 13 ltr tank, frame, exhaust and sump guards, full spares kit, vgc, £3375 ono. Tel 0130 272 2769 (S Yorks)

Husky TE350, 1995, MoT, 2000km, green lane use only, not used for the last year, £2250. Tel Tony on 0139 832 4082 (Somerset)

Husky TE350, L-reg, MoT, new c+s, pads, f/tyre, piston kit, Renthals, Werx Graffix, seat

cover, DHH, solid enduro, vgc, £1650 ono. Tel 0194 225 7383 (Lancs)

Honda XR250, 1997, R-reg, T&T, powder coated frame, anodised rims, light use only, vgc, genuine bike, £1900. Tel Ian on 0138 644 6969 (Worcs)

Suzuki DR350SEW, 1997, 5000m, Renthal bars, Acerbis hand guards, Givi top box, regularly maintained, bargain at £1900. Tel 0152 930 3435 (Lincs)

KTM LC2 125, March 1999, vgc, derestricted, new MT21s plus original Bridgestones, brushguards, low mileage, great bike, £1750 ono. Tel 0163 424 6136 (Kent)

WANTED

Wanted Husky WRK250 engine, 1989, or barrel, piston and conrod kit or info on cheap, reliable replacement, good money, cash. Tel Andy on 0120 459 2422 (Lancs)

Wanted for Suzuki RMX250SN Trail, 1992, Power front pipe (FMF, Pro-Circuit) and/or tail pipe, any other performance spares for RMX, why, cash waiting. Tel Chris on 0182 261 0788 (Devon)

Wanted MotoX kit for new starters, eg jeans, boots, size 10 & 6, body armour, gloves, helmets, also seek cheap MX bike. Tel Simon (days) on 0170 735 3264 or 0793 155 8650 (Herts)

Wanted DT125R frame and log book, also loom, switch gear, black body kit and DEP exhaust system, willing to travel or pay postage. Tel Ben on 0115 911 3916 (Nottingham)

Wanted Supermoto bike, CR500 hybrid, XR600, KLX650 etc. Tel Martin on 0122 289 2258 (Mid Glam)

Wanted S/Moto wheels for CCM 604E, must be in good cond. Tel Paul on 0797 152 9410 or 0128 287 0028 (Lancs)

Wanted workshop manuals for 1995 Yamaha TTR250. Tel Martin on 0134 986 3506 (Ross-shire)

Wanted Yamaha 225cc Serow engine. Tel 0181 249 2767 (Kent)

Wanted XT500 or SR parts or complete bike, anything considered, your price paid, also MotoVilla 125 for sale, 1974, restored, mint, £675 ono. Tel Colin on 0190 955 0749 (S Yorks)

Wanted XRV750 Africa Twin or Transalp in exchange for KTM LC4 400, elec start, S-reg, vgc, light green lane use only, value around £3300. Tel James on 0182 789 3139 (Staffs)

Wanted XR600, road legal, also spares, will pay reasonable price. Tel Jeff on 0193 222 8871 (Surrey)

Wanted workshop manual for yamaha 250 Raid, 1995. Tel Roy on 0132 537 8105 (N Yorks) Wanted flywheel for KX500, 1991 model. Tel Stephen on 0124 657 0639 (Derbys)

Wanted Triumph Tiger goodies, sump guard, crash bars, Corbin, Baglux, Loud pipes, why. Tel Bayard on 0182 261 6097 (Devon)

Wanted complete rear wheel, bash plate, frame guards & disc guards for XR600R, 1997. Tel Matias on (mobile) 0956 306808 or 0171 511 2652 (London)

Wanted rear wheel and brake hub for KX125, '85-'92, also '85 rear shock. Tel Paul on 0151 346 9477 (Merseyside)

Wanted KTM LC4 wheels, to fit 640 Rallye/EGS 620, include ancillaries, also interested in other spares for above. Tel Ian on 0374 800736 (Cams)

Wanted for Honda XR200, 1980 model, complete exhaust assembly, footbrake pedal, complete tank assembly, kickstart pedal or a complete engine and gearbox assembly. Tel Jack on 0162 981 2986 (Derbys)

Wanted sales brochures for Honda XR600R and XR650, any year, also for Yamaha TT600R. A Strachan, 58 Copeman Ave, Peterhead, Grampian. AB42 2BB

PARTS

Givi bag with porch, Gore-Tex, expedition special, light, packs small, allterrains & weather, genuine bargain, £85. Tel Pete on 0175 222 3008 (Devon)

Husqvarna mph speedo, brand new, boxed, never used, £25 inc postage; also Marzocchi dirtbike forks, brand new, £150 ono. Tel Nick on 0181 532 2520 (London)

FMF race tail pipe for WR400, as new, £120. Tel 01488 73253 (Berks)

IT250, 1981, complete but partially stripped, ideal restoration project or spares, £250 ono. Tel Ashley on 0170 243 1505 (Essex)

CRD pipe, full, stainless, as new, fit WR/YZ

400, £195 ono. Tel Nick on 0117 961 5768 (S Glos)

Honda CRM250AR original pipe and silencer, brand new and unused, £100; also original IRC tyres, £50 the pair. Tel Andrew on 0154 336 1407 (W Mids)

RM250, 91/92, complete clutch basket, good cond, £50; also RM250SPES, 89/90, Power front pipe, clean, £25. Tel Chris on 0182 261 0788 (Devon)

DEP silencer for Kawasaki KDX125 also genuine workshop manual, £35 the lot. Tel John on 0190 822 5341 (Bucks)

Wulfspport Cordura enduro jacket, blue, XL, hardly used, as new, £40 ono, will post if necessary. Tel David on 0135 369 8711 (Cams)

Trailer, one or two bike, spare wheel, new tyres, tows well, £85. Tel 0148 327 2349 (Surrey)

XR400 spares, DEP silencer, exc cond, good performance, £140; front & rear wheels with discs, rear sprocket, as new, £420. Tel Dave on 0180 381 2940 (Devon)

Trailer, Dave Cooper, single bike, include spare wheel, light board and ramp, hardly used. Tel Andy on 0190 837 8378 (Bucks)

Wulfspport boots, size 12, Fox elbow & Axo knee guards, gloves, goggles, helmet, shirt etc, all vgc, offers, space needed. Tel 0172 775 0394 (Herts)

Honda NX650 Dominator workshop manual with supplement for 'N' model, £20. Tel Greg on 0128 371 3722 (Staffs)

Serow XT225W rear wheel assembly, complete with disc and Renthal sprocket, all in exc cond, £160 Email: jobc@lineone.net or tel 0190 350 5609 (Sussex)

Honda XR250 forks and yokes off 1997 bike, exc cond, hardly used, sale due to uprated front end, £250. Tel Jim on 0796 741 3961 (Derbys)

Husky enduro bashplate and Acerbis hand guards, were fitted to 1993 WR360; also **Barkbusters and Yamaha IT175J alloy tank**. Tel Grant on 0124 143 4166 (Angus)

Honda XR600R parts, all as new, mudguards, rims, tool bag, complete headlight, X-ring chain, Gold sprocket, subframe, manual and silencer. Tel Barry on 0178 264 4576 (Staffs) **Aluminium boxes** and heavy duty frames specially built for overland trip which has been cancelled, so they are surplus to requirements, £110 ono. Tel Henry on 0118 962 9307 (Berks)

Alpinestars Tech 5, new, size 7, black, not been used. Tel 0118 977 5106 (Berks) **XR400 supermoto brake kit**, 310mm disc, 4-pot caliper, steel hose, master cylinder, genuine Monnier parts, £300 ono. Tel Andy on 0118 934 5011 (Berks)

Trailer, single/two bike, £125; CTS helmet, MX boots, size 11, Cordura jacket, trousers, enduro tyre, 400x18, sensible offers, will split items. Tel Mark on 0192 286 5946 (W Mids) **Kawasaki KLX650**, original end can, £40. Tel Glen on (mobile) 0780 258 4747 or 0208 505 6971 (Essex)

Bell helmet, 'McGrath' replica, yellow/red, large size; Scott goggles, quick strap fitted, cost new £320, must sell, offers. Tel (after 7pm) on 0181 386 8932 (Herts)

WP Extreme 50mm forks, 1999, 5 hrs use, will fit KTM or any Japanese bike, includes fittings kit, £250 ono. Tel Craig on 0114 243 9240 (S Yorks)

Armstrong SWM frame, wheels and all brackets etc, rolling chassis complete, offers. Tel 0173 675 2628 (Cornwall)

Boots, Answer GSX, top quality, made by Gaerne, size 9, white/blue, good, £60; also MSR enduro jacket, black/purple, worn 4 times, as new, £50; System 6 jeans/top, '98, exc cond, £95. Tel 0161 980 3135 (Cheshire)

Acerbis long range fuel tank for Honda Dominator, £100. Tel Andrew on 0163 440 1547 (Kent)

DT175, pre MX, TS185ER top ends, £250 ea; breaking CZ250, 1974, enduro/mx, all parts available; wanted 1974/75 Husky 360 top end or engine. Tel 0196 455 1050 (E Yorks)

Breaking KX250 wheels, forks, s/arm, r/shock, frame, plastics, electrics, clutch, engine, gearbox, new cylinder, complete or separate. Tel Ainsley (eves) on 0160 873 0026 (Oxon)

WP usd forks, c/w yokes, wheel spindle and spacers, fully reconditioned, new seals, bushes, re-valved, suitable XR250/400, £225. Tel Nigel on 0149 527 2451 (Gwent)

XR250/400 set of wheels with enduro tyres, £450 ono. Tel Don (eves) on 0144 287 2538 (Herts)

Trelgo two-bike trailer, 9 mths old, very light, £250; XR400 Acerbis tank, £75. Tel Steve on 0121 355 2122 (B'ham)

