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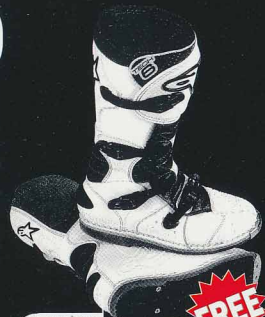
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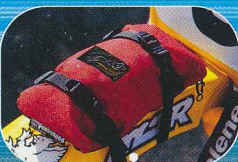
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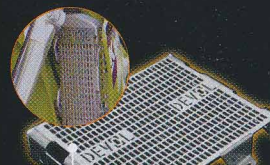
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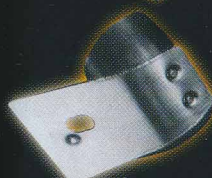
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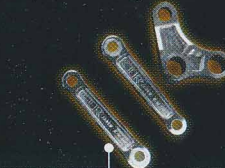
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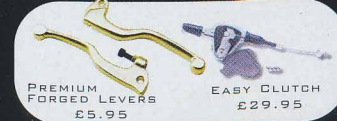
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Marshal Law...

I recently spent the day helping out at a local enduro as a travelling marshal. Actually it was an enforced layoff from racing after being used as target practise by a deranged MXer the week before - who'd presumably learned his death or glory tactics from one too many video games.

Nevertheless the job of travelling marshal appealed as it meant I could ride the course at my own pace, help a few guys out and just generally have fun without any of the pressures of racing. I dug out the old CRM250CR war-horse, loaded it in my van and headed out west.

It was a superb day with baking hot sunshine, a cooling breeze and I was looking forward to being back on the bike. There was a full entry for the four hour hare & hounds with a varied and well-marked seven mile course to ride.

Within minutes of starting I'd come across my first casualty. Not the human kind you understand, but a casualty of the mechanical variety. There was an XR600R with no spark, and the bloke was just beginning to remove the fuel tank to get at the wiring - I chatted for a bit then left him to it.

Further along I came across a bike with a broken clutch perch (one of many that day). The owner was sitting beside it enjoying the sunshine. He didn't seem in the least bit interested to get back to the pits and fix things up - as if riding ten minutes of a four hour enduro was his best result yet. I casually asked him if he'd got any spares back in the pits?

'Spares?' he replied, chuckling, 'I'm lucky if I remember to bring along my riding boots and some fuel...'

I left him sitting on the grass watching the race unfold.

Just around the corner sat a guy on an old Husky. His chain had come off the rear sprocket and wrapped itself around the front one, jamming solid against the swingarm. The chain looked to be about 12 years old and was completely knackered. But a glance at the rest of his bike made the chain look new. Most hare & hounds riders don't bother carrying tools with them, but this guy produced a neat little toolbag from behind his front number plate.

Great I thought. I unzipped the toolbag and was horrified to discover the sort of tool set you get free when you buy five litres of diesel oil. Everything was stamped 'Made In China', nothing fitted, and worse still, nothing was suitable for working on a dirt bike. I gave up, unclipped his chain link and he began the long slow push back to the pits.

Next to the Husky sat an old KX, the rider had his helmet off and was enjoying a well-earned breather.

'What's up?' I asked him.

'She just sorta conked out and now I can't get her started again' he said dejectedly.

I hopped aboard and was surprised at how small and low it felt, the suspension was sagging, the seat was flogged and when I grabbed the front brake lever it came all the way back to the bars.

'Whoah' I said, 'what's up with your front brake?'

'I like it that way' came the ominous reply.

I flicked out the kick starter and was about to boot it when I asked: 'What capacity is this thing anyway - a 125?'

'Nah mate... she's a fiv vundrid!'

When it wouldn't fire after the third kick I handed it back to him figuring I was doing the bloke a favour by leaving him to walk.

On my second, third, and fourth lap the XR600R was getting progressively more and more stripped down and I calculated that at the rate he was going, he'd have the crank out before noon. I finally saw him wheeling away a rolling chassis, leaving what remained of the engine sat in the bushes.

Eventually after helping more than a dozen people with various machine failures and muttering under my breath about incompetent riders who shouldn't be trusted with complicated machinery, I returned to my van and loaded my bike. I went to start the engine only to hear a faint clicking sound. I'd left the stereo on all day and the battery had gone flat...

'Er... has anyone got a set of jump leads - please...'

Si Melber

Edited & produced by:
Si Melber

Contributors:
Paul Blezard, Dave Cornish,
Chris Evans, Clive Garnham,
Debs Melber, Ted Melber,
Si Pavey, John Rushworth

Designed by:
Andy Riley

Editorial Address:
TBM
PO Box 9845
London W13 9WP

Tel/Fax
(10am-6pm Mon-Fri):
0181 840 4760

Advertising Manager:
Paula Braddon
01225 426600

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Seymour:
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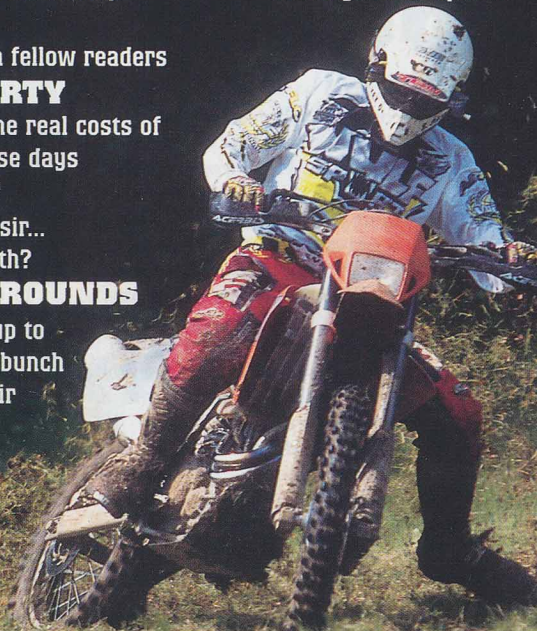
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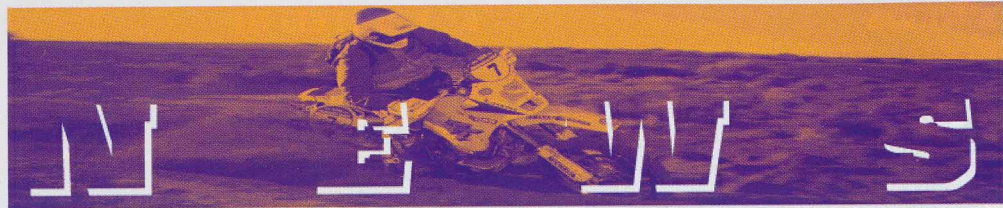
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Eddy Down but not Out

Britain's Paul Edmondson (KX250) who'd been lying third in the American GNCCs this year, crashed hard last month in Kentucky while leading the race. Eddy who had clawed his way back up the championship with a run of good results after a disastrous start to the season (when he ran out of fuel), clipped a rock in the track and the resulting get-off damaged his left thumb.

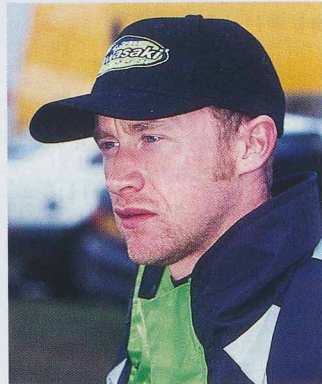
Despite physiotherapy, Eddy missed the next race and will now have to count it as one of his throwaway rounds.

Fortunately for him however, series leader Aussie Shane Watts

could only manage seventh in the race which Eddy missed and DNF'd the Hare Scrambles the following week. That means Eddy is still fourth in the GNCC series and currently leads the Hare Scrambles championship.

He reckons to be fully recovered in time for the next GNCC round in June.

Also in June (25th) is the first round of the Fast Eddy Cross Country series, which takes place at Matchams Park in Hants. Rumours are rife that a few well-known French riders will be in attendance in the Pro race. We can't wait. Book your entry or come and watch...



Paul showed off one of his GNCC KX250 race bikes recently. Apart from the obvious attention to detail with everything from footpegs, top yoke-nut and brake calipers lockwired in place, the most striking thing about the bike was the use of a 20" front wheel. Eddy claims this puts more rubber on the ground and gives a better 'feel' to the front end. We simply want to know where he buys his front tyres from...



SNIPPETS

★ Confirmation that the new Ipone Ryedale Rally will go ahead on Sunday 9 July has arrived at the TBM office. The new rally event which is based in the forests of the North York Moors National Park, features a 55 mile lap of tracks and green lanes chosen with trailbikes in mind. There will be three timed stages per lap and approximately six hours riding in total. There's the usual rally classes - Trail & Sports (two-stroke enduro bikes are banned) - plus an innovative Scooter & Step-Thru class. And all bikes must be fully road legal. For a full set of regs write to David Baker, 31, Otterwood Bank, Wetherby, W Yorks, LS22 7XT, or download them at: www.enduro.webdare.com

★ Six Days

Interested parties are invited along to an Open Forum Meeting to discuss all aspects of the International Six Day Enduro, due to be held in Wales in 2003.

The meeting is due to take place in June (date to be announced) at the Metropole Hotel in Llandrindod Wells. There will also shortly be a Six Days website on: www.isde.co.uk, and anyone who requires further info can either send an A4-sized stamped, self-addressed envelope to Bob Jeffries, 9 Rose Court, Ty-Canol, Cwm Bran, Gwent, NP44 6JH, or ring him on 01633 874610.

★ Shaun Skinner, recently had his Hafren Rally-winning TT600E (electric start) stolen in Cardiff on Mayday

bank holiday. The bike is unique regarding the work that has been done to it and has a distinctive plain white tank. Its registration number is P940 BRU and the steering lock must now be broken. If anyone gets offered this bike please pass the details onto Shaun on 07971 648940.

★ HRD - the bespoke French enduro bike manufacturers who last year announced they were halting production because of a lack of supply of Yamaha engines; have just brokered a new deal with Yamaha. It has yet to be confirmed exactly which engines they will use, but if it turns out to be the latest WR250 motor, it's our guess there'll be a lot of people placing orders for HRDs next year...

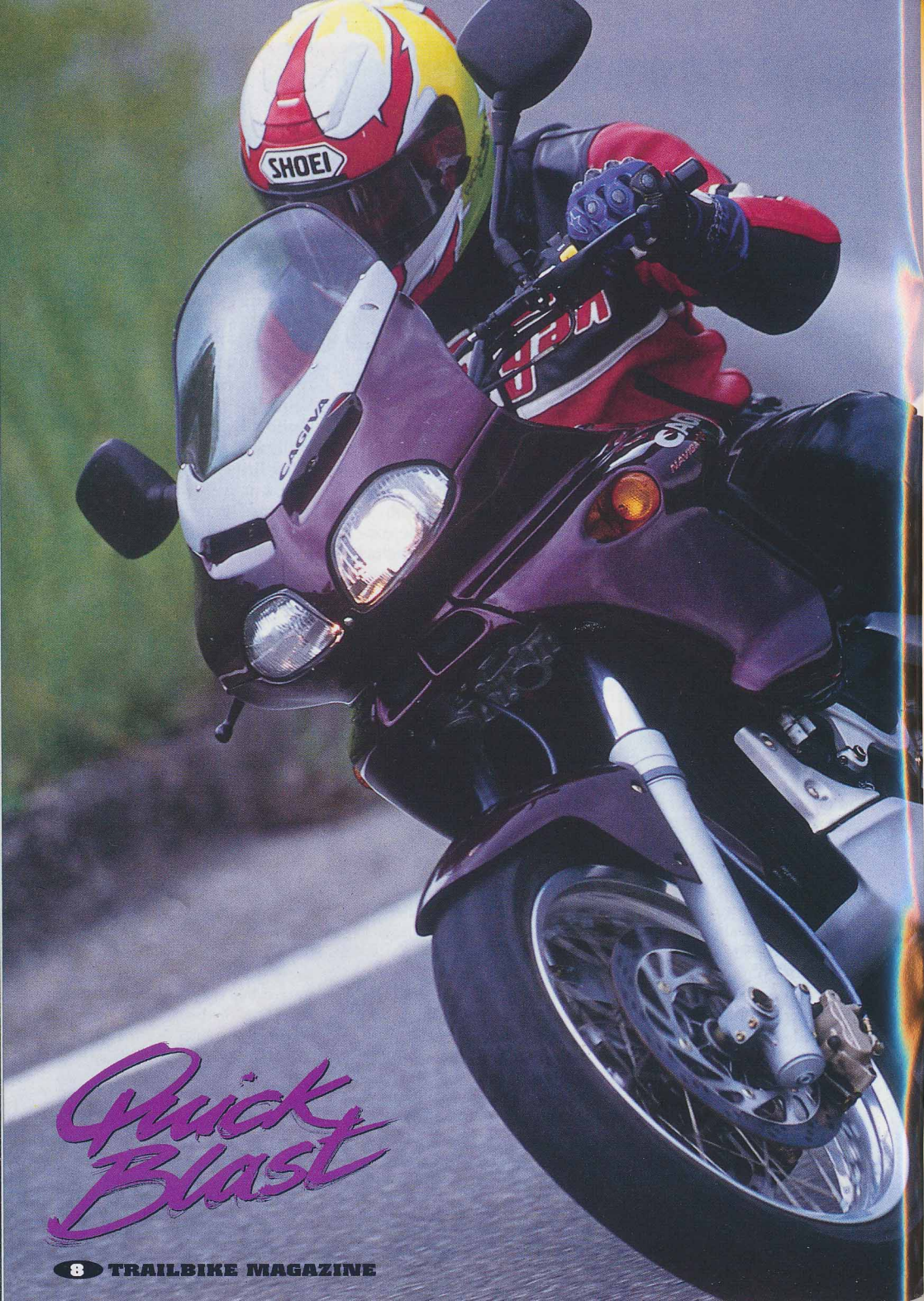
★ Further to our snippet in last month's news pages about baffles for the DR-Z400E, Simon Howarth is now selling them. The insert costs £38 + £2 p&p. Call him on 01332 781116 or mobile 07980 742939 and tell him we sent ya'...

★ This year's Transdanubia Rallye (an event designed specifically for big trailies) begins on 26 August in Munich, crossing Germany, Austria, the Slovak and Czech Republics before finishing up in Hungary on 3 September. Designed as an easy introduction to rallying, the mix of special and liaison stages are ideal for rallye rookies, and stages can be bypassed if necessary. The accent is more on participation than competition, no special licence is required and only four-stroke bikes, quads

and outfits are allowed - with bikes ranging from DR350s to R1150GSs.

The entry fee for rider and bike is approx £610 and this includes all maps, roadbooks, accommodation in the bivouacs (with showers), food, assistance from the accompanying service team, but not fuel. So far there are two Brits entering, on a Yamaha XTZ660 and an ex-Optic KTM LC4. They'd be really keen to meet up with other Brits wanting to take part, but are more interested in completing the event than breaking any records. To contact them call John Ross on 0044 5254 808760 or e-mail: john.ross@alphasurf.de

★ The 15th Australian Safari takes place this year during August 20-27 in some of the country's harshest and most remote locations. The rally which runs for 5000km from Alice Springs to Darwin through the Australian outback will also be contested this year by former 500cc GP world champ Kevin Schwantz on a Suzuki DR-Z400. Schwantz who will be sporting his customary number 34 plate, admitted he was no expert at rallying, but grew up on dirt bikes. 'I can't remember riding for more than two or three hours non-stop before' said the Texan legend, 'but the only way to find out what it's like, is to have a go.' If you want to race against him and have the necessary £1150 entry fee, call Andrew Coaker on 020 7545 4459 (w), or 020 7538 8240 (h), or email him at: coaker@globalnet.co.uk



*Quick
Blast*

CAGIVA

Navigator

Cagiva's new Suzuki-powered Navigator aims to wrestle the big trailie crown from the likes of the Honda Varadero, R1150GS and Triumph Tiger. Chris Moss decides if it's got a sporting chance...

Some of the better things in life don't always hit home straight away. Just like a decent bottle of St Agaria Chianti, the best things in life need a bit of savouring to really appreciate their quality.

It's the same deal with Cagiva's new megatrailie, the Navigator. On paper at least it sounds like it's going to be a blast to ride.

A powerful and grunty Suzuki TL1000S sportsbike motor wedged into what is basically a scaled-up Gran Canyon chassis - itself a top handling tool - sounds like the ideal recipe for instant gratification. But the Navigator requires you to exercise a little more self-restraint...

Be patient - the Cagiva delivers plenty of reward, it's just that the impression it makes on you when first see it, can't compare with those you'll have when you flick out the side-stand at the end of a long day's ride.

Looks Aren't Everything

Italian machinery is, more often than not, a visual delight. No one seems to be able to conjure up the sort of stylish lines and pleasurable shapes that Latin bike designers can. They're world famous for it. The Navigator seems to be the exception to that rule. It looks like it might have

CAGIVA Navigator



*Quick
Blast*

been penned in a hurry just before a hot date. Perhaps a different colour-scheme to the dowdy maroon hue might've helped, but as it was, it didn't light my fire one little bit. Similar in shape to the Gran Canyon - the bike it replaces - I can't help feeling that a new bike should have a new look, and a fresh approach.

Vital Statistics

But if the looks don't inspire you, the ergos should put you at ease. Though the seat height can feel a bit intimidating at first, once rolling, the size and weight of the Cagiva seem to reduce significantly and it becomes a cinch to slice through the Italian traffic. Especially as the lofty perch facilitates a commanding view of the surrounding tin boxes. In a part of the world where driving manoeuvres are erratic at the best of times, it makes sense to have as much advance warning as possible.

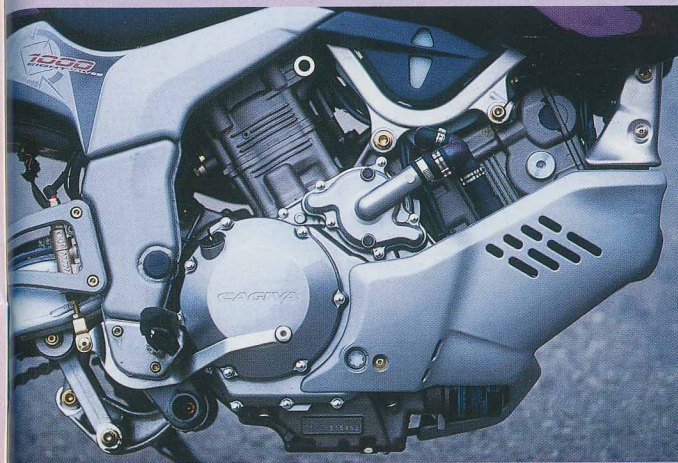
A relaxed riding position helps calm things down. The plush seat, decent fairing and clear, but basic instruments do an efficient job and don't divert your attention from the task of riding. A clock would've been a nice touch, but hey... it's not essential.

If you're in a hurry though, the 90° V-twin

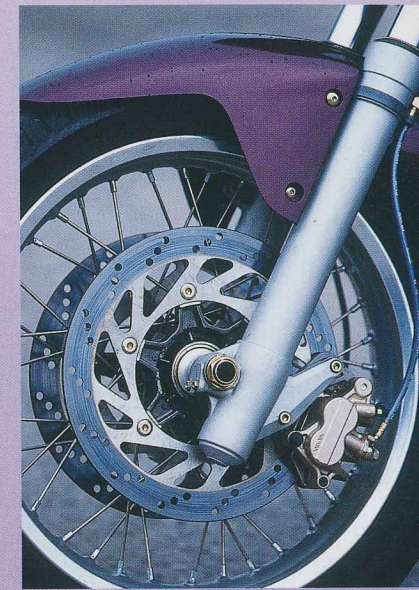
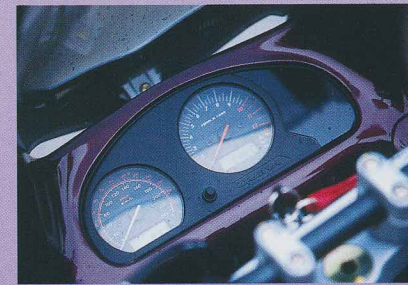
motor drives the Navigator along rapidly enough, even though it could never be described as seriously quick. In its original home this motor made 125bhp, but Cagiva has made some subtle changes to the Suzuki engine more in keeping with its trailbike looks. Softer-spec cams, a smaller airbox, new exhaust system and modifications to the fuel-injection mapping have effectively reduced peak power to a relatively sane 96bhp. This reduction might sound huge, but it's offset by a broader mid-range to make things easier, and a little less intimidating.

There's enough punch left to aviate the front tyre with a quick dip of the clutch if you're feeling irresponsible, but fast forward progress is generally free from such scary antics; and the engine's torque and flexibility means the gearbox (which is ultra slick in typical Suzuki fashion), doesn't need to be troubled too often for swift acceleration.

Even pootling slowly through traffic doesn't require the selection of low gears to keep things sweet. There's no snatching from the motor at low rpm in higher gears, and partial throttle openings don't give any of the typical switch-like power delivery associated with a lot of fuel-injected bikes.



Above: There's 96hp on tap from the liquid-cooled Suzuki lump which makes the Navigator one of the fastest big trailies on the market...
Right: Clear but uninspiring dials lack any sort of clock...
Top Right: Twin discs feel pretty strong, but have to work hard...



But turning the Cagiva into bends takes more effort than you'd anticipate. First impressions are that the standard Metzeler MEZ4s are to blame - they appear to have a flatter profile than most - though undoubtedly the Cagiva's lazy

geometry and long wheelbase don't help. In fairness the Metzlers provide plenty of grip to get the Cagiva well heeled over, but you can award yourself some points if you touch anything down as the ground clearance is massive.

Even over rougher roads the bike's composure stays solid as the forks and shock ride the ripples well, keeping the bike on the desired line. There's a fair bit of dive under fierce braking but no more so than with any big trailie. Suspension adjustments being limited to preload and rebound damping on the rear shock, though you'll have to possess the dexterity of a brain surgeon to get to the pre-load adjusting collar.

Quality-Schmality

Notwithstanding the fact that the engine comes out of Japan, the whole bike has a Japanese feel about it, far removed from the Italian Quirkiness of old. Today's market demands such solid dependability - the days of tolerating dodgy switchgear, harsh rides, and indifferent build quality are long gone. Biking has become more refined, and owners more sophisticated. In fact it's only when you thrash the motor somewhere near its limit that you find any dent in the Navy's polished armour. At high rpm, there's

The Riding Experience

By now my opinion of the Navigator had become a little more favourable. It might not be as eye-catching as some other litre-bikes, but it's nevertheless a pleasant enough travelling companion. That view grows stronger as soon as you get out of town. On the motorway the Navigator is a perfect mile-munching tool. Power is strong enough to quickly see off 100mph on the clock and staying there presents no physical challenge. Protection from the fairing is excellent, diverting the high-speed air around your upper body without any buffeting or excessive wind noise. The same goes for 120mph.

Hours in the saddle bring no urgency to fidget to keep your bum comfy either, and the 170-mile fuel tank range keeps interruptions to a minimum. Also a genuine after-market top box and pannier kit will help make long-distance touring even more comfortable and convenient.

Scratching is something the Navigator achieves with quiet confidence. Even when driving hard out of corners with the bike cranked over, it never got ugly. The steering is sure and stable, the suspension soft but controlled, and the brakes good enough to calm things down even if they couldn't be described as eyeball-popping.

*Quick
Blast*

CAGIVA *Navigator*



some tingling which makes it through to the bars, pegs and mirrors - but it isn't obtrusive. And frankly it's made all the more conspicuous by the big Cagiva's refinement and civility in all other areas. No, this is a bike which is free from the bulk of the usual Italian foibles...

Rounding Off

In fact, after nearly 400 miles I was finding the Navigator difficult to fault. Okay, you could moan a bit about the tank's twin fuel-caps which can be a bit laborious at filling time, but let's face it these sorts of thing are minor irritations rather than serious problems on an otherwise well-sorted motorcycle. It's not often you can label an Italian bike with terms like refined, civilised, and well-mannered.

So is the Cagiva Navigator good enough to steal sales from other European marques - notably BMW and Triumph? At a little over six grand the Navigator undercuts both the R1150GS and the Tiger, which will undoubtedly add to its appeal, and armed with Japanese reliability under the hood, it may yet prove to be capable of taking on the best-selling Varadero here in the UK. That is if Three-X, the Cagiva importers offer prospective owners a long enough test ride, so they can truly appreciate all of its subtle virtues...

CAGIVA NAVIGATOR

Price:	£6249
Engine:	Liquid-cooled, DOHC 8-valve, 90-degree V-twin
Bore x Stroke:	98 x 66mm
Displacement:	996cc
Lubrication:	Wet-sump
Transmission:	6-speed
Claimed power:	96bhp @ 8400rpm
Claimed torque:	65ft/lbs @ 7000rpm
Frame:	Steel tube trellis
Front suspension:	Marzocchi 45mm telescopic forks
Rear suspension:	Sachs monoshock, adjustable pre-load and rebound damping
Fuel capacity:	20 litres
Wheelbase:	1530mm
Dry weight:	210kg
Seat height:	800mm
Tyres:	Metzeler MEZ4
Top speed:	130mph (est)
Fuel consumption:	38mpg

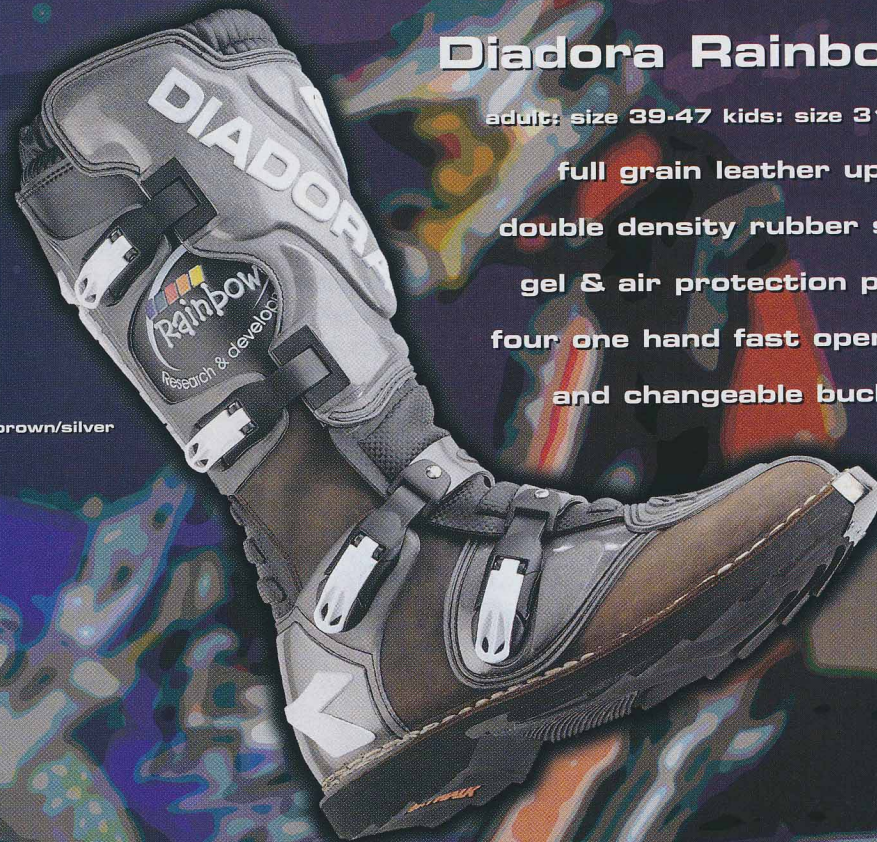
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DIADORA

RANT!

my bike 'walk' ten feet across the garage on tick-over! I have now lockwired the front caliper bolts to stop this happening again. In fact my wife made me do it because believe it or not, when I came a cropper I was on the first day of our honeymoon (a two day trail ride in the Peak District). I kid you not.

Now, in flipping me over the bars and cartwheeling through the air, the rear mudguard pushed the subframe in through the back of the airbox - a flimsy affair made of a material from the 40s called Bakelite. No, no, I tell a lie - it's definitely papier mache, or some kind of Spanish pottery. Anyway, I ordered the rear part of the airbox, very reasonable, about five quid. Reasonable, that is, if it had ever turned up. Still, hey ho, one day it will come. That was last November by the way, and anyway I repaired it with some aluminium. Also on the same day, the left peg disintegrated right out from under me. Okay, it probably took a knock in the earlier crash but I've had bigger crashes on Jap bikes and never ever had to change a footpeg.

Anyway, since then what else has happened? Hmmmm, let me think. The handlebars have vibrated loose (twice), the rear wheel spokes have on two occasions become so loose over the course of a day, it's felt like a rear wheel bearing has gone. I've been through two airboxes (apart that is, from the one above): caused by (a) the bike falling against a garden wall, and (b), the bike blowing over on a windy hilltop. Amazing. I've dropped bikes everywhere and never ever, had to even think about repairing, let alone replacing, an airbox. The other problem I've had is with the rear mudguard support bracket. Now to a jobbing clusman like myself, a supported mudguard just cries out to have some sort of tool bag put on it. I couldn't resist. Mine's made from an old cut-down fanny-pack. It's good, it's handy, it's a bit of a trail tip really (where's my litre of oil?). However, as the bracket it sits on is made of tin foil wrapped around balsa wood (which then leads to the mudguard cracking), you really need to order about five spare ones in order to be sure of making it through an enduro with all your tools in place.

I should say at this point that I'm not a complete numpty. I'm a fully qualified maintenance engineer, I don't skimp on spares and I spend at least four-to-five

hours a week fettling the bike. I am a hard rider, not fast, not furious, just hard. I try to extract every ounce of pleasure I can out of my bike with my meagre skills, and I'm sure in doing so I put more stresses and strains on the bike than a good rider would. But so what? I've had Japanese bikes that have gone to hell and back to give me riding pleasure and not cried enough or spat the dummy at the ill use I have given them. Surely, an 'Enduro Bike' by its very nature should be strong enough to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune (I'm sure I wasn't the first person to say that?) without self-destructing? So, should I excuse the bike for my shortcomings? If José, Manuel or Pedro can't design a bike to withstand Dangerous Kevin, is that my fault?

When I picture the Gas Gas boardroom I can't help imagining that Señor Gas Gas was given 100,000 pesetas and a remit to build a world class enduro bike. Trouble was he chose to spend 99,000 pesetas on the engine and suspension, and didn't have enough left for the rest of the cycle parts - let alone a leakproof tank.

It is now May 2nd and I have just read in this month's issue of TBM the report on the EC300. I'm amazed it had no reliability problems (although I see you picked up on the airbox too). Yet secretly I'm very glad. I hope I got the runt of the litter, if for no other reason than that a bike like this needs, nay deserves, better build quality than mine obviously got.

I spoke to someone today about the bike and was asked if I'd have another. Without a moment's hesitation I said 'yes'. 'Yes I would have another', but there again I did get married a second time as well, didn't I!

Seriously though ('cause the wife's reading this), don't let me put you off... I may want to sell it one day. No, really, any bike that can give its rider this much passion must be good, mustn't it? And, paradoxically by inciting such reactions within me, it tells me that this bike has hit a chord within - which is the goal which we all yearn for, isn't it? This is something all the previous bikes I have owned definitely haven't done.

So in conclusion I think that the Gas Gas has been the most emotive bike I have ever owned. If you desire Mediterranean passion and don't mind Mediterranean build quality; if you have the patience and like to fiddle then look no further... I promise you it is a great bike. However if taking a chance and maybe waking up with the fat bird isn't your idea of fun, then go buy a Land Rover 'cause you're in the wrong sport mate!

With thanks to my lovely wife for typing this, and hopefully to Gas Gas UK for having a sense of humour! By the way I take it that in Gas Gas's eyes a two-litre Seat Ibiza is only 1600cc...!
Dangerous Kevin Marshall.



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TRAIL Tips

IPONE IPONE IPONE IPONE IPONE

This month: keeping your tax disc dry, an easier way to remove wheelbearings, and guaranteeing a clean pair of goggles...



Look closely and you'll spot fishing line underneath the roll-off lens

Jane Church-Fraser of Flat Top Racing in Scotland came up with an excellent tip to start off the tips page this month. The perennial problem of keeping your bike's tax disc dry when your riding takes you through deep water, mud and bogs (not to mention the jet washing afterwards), can be solved by taking the tax disc along to your local high street print shop and putting it through the laminating machine.

We reckon it shouldn't cost you any more than a quid or two - tops, but remember to allow at least 2mm around the edge of the disc to seal it, when you're cutting off the excess laminate afterwards. Thereafter you can either just tape the tax disc to your headlight surround or sling it back into the tax disc holder without having to worry about how wet it gets. Good tip Jane, thanks for that...

Now here's a tip from reader Nick Payne in Northants. Nick suggests what sounds like a really good tip to help remove old wheel bearings (or possibly even head bearings for that matter). Nick writes: 'To remove your wheelbearing

without trying to hit the edge of the bearing with a drift (which can be a bit hit and miss - literally), try using an expanding anchor bolt - the sort of thing used for fixing sheds down onto concrete, these are available from most good DIY stores.

'Slip the bolt into the bearing (with the nut facing outwards), then tighten the nut up until the bolt grips the centre of the bearing solidly. Now you can hit the other end of the bolt with your drift to drive the bearing out. Once done the bolt can be loosened off and should be able to be used again.'

We reckon that's a great tip mate - well worth a bottle of Ipone oil which will shortly be winging its way over to you.

Finally here's a good tip of

our own. If you use a Smith Roll-Off system on your goggles, then you'll know how susceptible they are to jamming up with grit or mud. Worse still they get water between the tape and the lens and you can't see a thing. The solution is to run a fine wire of fishing line across the front of the goggles (behind the tape) so that it just lifts the tape off the front of the lens - top and bottom (see photo). Ours have worked like this for a number of months without any more snagging problems.

Don't forget if you've got a tip you want to share with your fellow trail riders, send it into us here at TBM Tips, PO Box 9845, London, W13 9WP and we'll publish it. You may even win a bottle of oil for your trouble...



KDX 200 Plastic 95-2000
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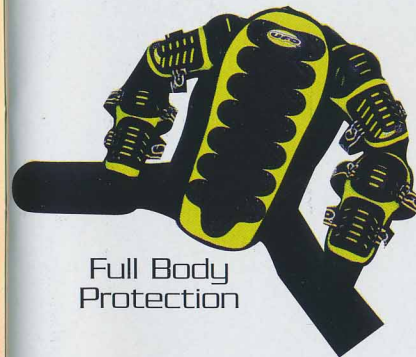
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IPONE IPONE IPONE IPONE IPONE



TALKING *Dirty*

Chris Evans ponders the real costs of running a dirtbike these days...

Over the last few months myself and his 'esteemed editorship' have been in protracted negotiations regarding my possible purchase of his truly fabulous CRM250CR. Initially my people were talking with his people and then there were talks about talks before finally a state of the art video conferencing system was installed so that we could face to face across the channel.

As everyone knows, it is impossible to afford to run two bikes at once (unless of course you are the Sultan of Brunei) so I softened His Melbership up by suggesting he had to sell at least one of his bikes. Then armed with the knowledge that he has recently become something of a race junkie, I pointed out that his WR was an eminently more suitable tool for chasing other like-minded 'fun-loving' individuals round and round a muddy field somewhere in

Buckinghamshire. My coup de grace was to plant the notion that in the white heat of competition a brand new bike (funded by the selling of both machines) was of course the ultimate solution.

However, the ed's response to all this Machiavellian manoeuvring took me somewhat by surprise.

'Forget it - I can't sell the WR' he protested, 'I've spent too much money on it!'

Knowing from bitter previous experience the futility of trying to point out to His Highnesses the seemingly illogical nature of his thought processes, I seamlessly switched to plan B - counselling him to keep his ageing WR (barely two years old) and flog the CRM-CR to me to pay for some of the outstanding bills (creditors please form an orderly queue).

From there we moved on to the thorny question of how much he actually wanted for the rusty heap of rubble he had once described as 'the best bike I have ever ridden'. And once again Lord Toast's reply left me momentarily lost for words:

'I'll have to ring the dealer who worked on it and find how much he's going to charge for the total engine rebuild he's just done'.

I naturally thought this was just another way of bumping up the price of the worthless piece of junk he was trying to off-load on to me. Until that was, I took my less than one year old Katosh over to my mate Cyril for a spot of race prep prior to the Val de Lorraine Classic.

Now normally I do all that stuff myself, but having spent a grand total of three days at home in the last five weeks I was running a little tight on time. And if the truth be told, I had the sneaking suspicion that my maintenance schedules had resulted in a slow but steady performance deterioration of the kind you only notice after a quick spin on somebody else's much fresher example (*That's funny... that's what your girlfriend said to me about you Chris - ed*).

When I finally got round to picking up the 200EGS from Cyril the telling-off I received was uncomfortably reminiscent of the time I went to the dentists after a lapse of eight years. Apparently to put everything right took him a whole day - and to back up his astronomical invoice he produced an endless array of items that had worn out, fallen apart or quite simply disintegrated. As each incriminating item was pulled out of the waste basket, Cyril's mates, who had all

turned out to watch the ritual humiliation, doubled up in hysterical laughter. The accompanying commentary along the lines of, 'I've never seen one as far gone as this' caused the assembled 'Afternoon Boys' to clutch their stomachs and beg for mercy before the offending item was dumped unceremoniously back in the dustbin.

As I shamefacedly wheeled my pride and joy out to the van I consoled myself with the thought that, as expensive and humiliating as the whole experience had been, at least I wouldn't have to see Cyril for a while to come. Wrong - just before driving off Cyril casually added that a new piston would be needed in the very near future...

So the next week I was back again and this time hung round while they all had another good laugh at the state of the piston

as everyone knows, it is impossible to afford to run two bikes at once, unless of course you are the Sultan of Brunei...

rings and shook their heads in amazement at the KTM's coked-up exhaust. Sadly for me their astonishment didn't end there, because while changing the piston they brought to my attention the fact that the main bearings were completely shagged. Cyril is working on this problem as I write and I have just had another call from him to inform me that the drive shaft bearing is also knackered.

So just to recap - my one year old bike, which while ridden regularly (long distance), is rarely ever raced (and only then in an extremely half hearted fashion), has undergone three major spanner twirling sessions in less than one month. As a result I am now seriously thinking of moving into Formula One racing to save money.

Which brings me back to why Capt Melber's initially dubious logic concerning the eventual price of the CRM-CR and his reluctance to sell the WR now makes perfect sense. And to be frank with you, it is the only thing in this sorry tale that makes any sense whatsoever. As Cyril so eloquently put it as I complained about the amount of money it was costing me to run a pukka two-stroke enduro bike: 'that's why people buy XR400s' he said.

I knew there had to be a reason...



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Getting the holeshot

The more riding you do, the more you'll appreciate just how costly it is keeping your bike in fresh tyres. Which is why Shinko's new Holeshot MX treads may well be of interest to you. Unlike some other Korean tyres these use ultra modern Japanese tyre technology from Yokohama in Japan. And what's more they're cheap - seriously cheap. Rears (available in either 18" or 19") cost between £31-38, and a 21" front will only set you back between £27-29. They're available from your local dealer, or in case of difficulty call Cambrian Tyres on 01970 611736. We've been sent a set to test so we'll keep you posted, how they work out.

Open Up

Elegantly modelled by the junior Mr Pavey, this traditional open-faced M Robert helmet is constructed from a seamless thermoplastic shell with a seatbelt-type buckle fastening and comes with the top ACU gold rating. It's available in either plain black or white and costs just £56.55 - or a tenner extra with a chinguard. Sizes go from XS to XL and the importers tell us they're popular with the Long Distance Trials riders. Call BHR for more information on your nearest stockist on 01582 472374.



Gripping Stuff

Own an old KDX which looks a bit down at heel? You may think fancy graphics are just for show, but they actually protect the tank from getting badly scuffed and ingrained with dirt. Makes sense to match them up with a nice new seat cover, and suddenly your £1500 KayDeeEx looks a whole lot better (and easier to sell afterwards). N-Style graphics are designed to last and a complete



set for a KDX will cost you £97.95. If on the other hand you just want a gripper seat cover for your bike's worn or torn saddle, then £39.95 will see you done. Both products come from Vesty UK on 01483 450560.

Protect & Survive

Made Italy from high strength injection moulded plastic, this Moose chest protector features fully adjustable, suspension-type shoulder pads, large curved bicep pads to protect against overhanging branches, and a long contoured spine protector. Colours are either white/black, blue/black or black/grey and the armour costs £89. Available from Cycle-Logical on 01443 218700 or try www.cyclelogical.net





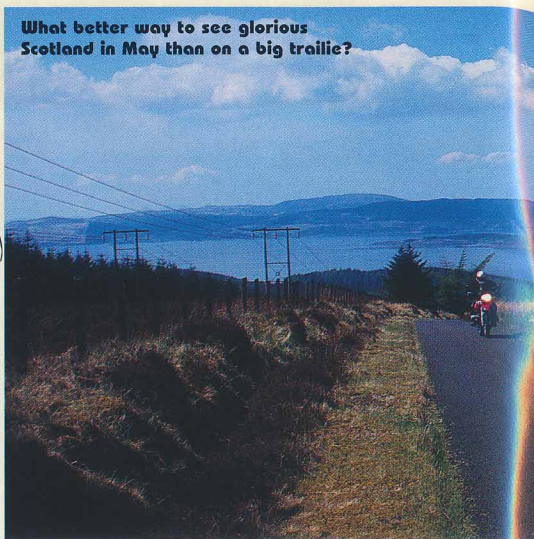
Doing the Rounds

Paul Blez rode up to Scotland to meet a big bunch of big lads who get their kicks on big trailies...

The Big Trail Bike Club has only been in existence for about two and a half years, but it already has 320 members, including 120 overseas from as far afield as Australia, Holland, South Africa, the USA and Brazil. As you might've already guessed, it's internet based and the members are all fans of big trailies, from Titchy Transalps to Vast Varaderos.

I stumbled across the BTBC website via a link from the Trail Riders' Fellowship site and, being a big trail bike fan myself, joined the email discussion group, in which anything and everything of relevance to big trailies is discussed, from tyres to tappets, screens to sprockets, fuel consumption to fairings.

What better way to see glorious Scotland in May than on a big trailie?



But the BTBC members don't just meet via computers, they have regular ride-outs to twisty roads and easy trails all over the country. Ever since I started adding my three ha'pence to the internet discussions, club founder Paul Clarke has been urging me to get out and meet them face to face. On the Mayday Bank Holiday, the right juxtaposition of time, machinery and place enabled me to join them on the BMW Dakar 650GS we had on test (full report next month) during their annual jaunt to Scotland.

By the time I met up with the 23 BTBCers in Fort William on the Sunday lunchtime, they'd already enjoyed a good session of serious bend swinging on their way up to the first overnight stop in Applecross opposite the Isle of Skye and some of the bolder ones had even ventured up a few loose-surface mountain tracks to 2,000 feet. They'd had a bit of drama too; Carl Blackburn had not only been nicked for speeding on the M74, but his Africa Twin had suffered a collapsed wheel bearing near Loch Lomond. He'd been rescued by the AA and a kind-hearted bike dealer in Perth and rejoined the group in Fort William the next day.

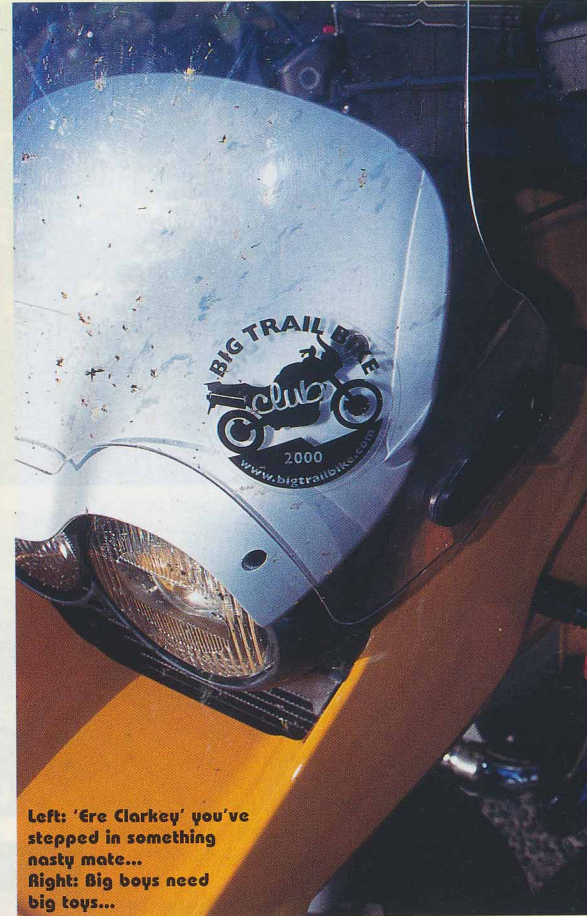
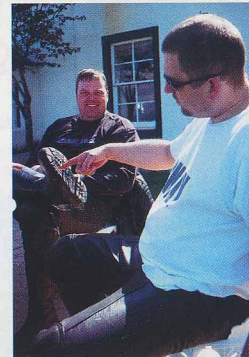
There was more drama and excitement as we made our way down the west coast of Scotland past Oban and on to our overnight stay in Tarbert on the Kintyre peninsula. On a gravel-strewn single track road near Loch Awe full of blind crests and bumpy corners Paul Crosland ran out of road on his ABS-equipped 1100GS but kept things shiny side up, while Dave Bonsall pranged his immaculate Mk1 Triumph Tiger 900. Fortunately man and machine emerged more or less unscathed thanks to a robust set of crash bars and a soft landing and a couple of following riders were able to give him a hand to heave his beast out of the mire. 'I was trying to



avoid a stone in the middle of the road' he said afterwards, by way of strange explanation.

I had some excitement of my own chasing Paul Clarke on his 1150GS and by the time we'd got to Tarbert I'd convinced most of the BTBC-ers that while I might come across on the email as a nit-picking softy southern git, I could actually ride a bike okay. Mancunian Tony Bramah was particularly relieved to hear that my dad actually comes from Padiham, near Burnley (most of those present were from well north of Watford and looked well fed enough to make me feel quite slim, for a change). A few hours and much eating and drinking later I felt like one of the lads as we staggered back to our cosy hostel accommodation. After a very full breakfast and a few photos on the quayside we set off for another fantastic mix of challenging Scottish tarmac to Otter Ferry, on the far side of Loch Fyne, in time for an idyllic al fresco Mayday lunch, before storming across a couple of Alpine-like passes to Dunoon and the parting of the ways.

The kernel of the club started originally as a bunch of off-road enthusiasts from Sheffield who all belonged to the South Yorkshire TRF and bought big trailies primarily for the road. Africa Twins still seem to be the most popular bike in the club, but in Scotland there were plenty of GS BMWs and



Left: 'Ere Clarkey' you've stepped in something nasty mate... Right: Big boys need big toys...

Triumph Tigers as well. Most members have more serious dirt bikes in addition to their big 'uns but the catalyst for the setting up of the BTBC was Paul Clarke's annual trip to the Stella Alpina rally in 1997 with John Burkinshaw - as he explains.

'I'd just got on-line and I kept meeting like-minded people with big trailies and email addresses who I wanted to keep in touch with, so an internet-based club seemed the obvious solution'. By the end of 1997 Paul had set up the BTBC website and linked it to a host of existing sites, and since then the club has grown exponentially.

Sixty of the members don't actually have internet access at all and in a reversal of the usual situation, the club has recently started to produce a six page paper version of the website newsletter for their benefit. So you don't have to have email to be a BTBC member or to stay in touch - but it certainly helps! In another back-to-front scenario, last year they did an off-road run in the Peak District and some of the members enjoyed it so much that they

Story & Pics Paul Blez; Illustration Peter Flynn

The Big Trail Bike Club gather on Tarbert quayside. Club founder Paul Clarke, far left...



Refuelling in Fort William

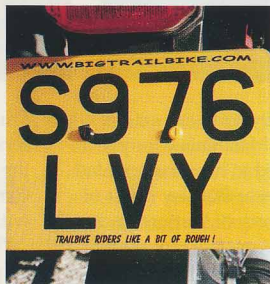


sold their big trailies and bought themselves smaller dirt bikes instead!

'In some ways that one backfired!' said Paul, 'but we'll do another one anyway'. There are runs out most months, many of them with green lane sections in the summer, but the next big event is the club's inaugural coast to coast run on September 9-10th and there's even talk of doing a BTBC track day... Count me in for that one lads!

The Founder

Paul Clarke, 33, is a larger than life character in more ways than one. At 21 stone, he'd look pretty silly on an R1 or a 916, but he takes great delight in blowing off poseurs on sports bikes on his 1150GS. A Financial Adviser in his native Sheffield, Paul's been riding bikes off road since he was a nipper but says he owes his super-fast road technique to a Police Class 1 instructor. His first ever road bike was a Super Tenere which he describes as 'terrible apart from the seat' and he moved on to a succession of Africa Twins. Last year he bought an 1100GS and after some initial doubts fell in love with it during a trip to Italy. On his return he ordered the brand new 1150 version



which shares garage space with an XR600 (and very soon) a pukka Saint Dakar replica BMW.

The Gypsy Teacher

John Burkinshaw's scholarly demeanour - grey hair and glasses - belies an ability to ride his Africa Twin like a

demon in Clarkey's wheeltracks. He really is a teacher too, although a very unusual one since his pupils are the offspring of Sheffield's nomadic travellers. At 51 he was the oldest BTBC member present on the trip but he was undoubtedly one of the fastest, without being in any way reckless. He used to have an Aprilia RX125 for more serious off roading and prior to the AT had an early Cagiva Elefant.

The Heating and Ventilating Engineer

John Gartside, 38, from Ross on Wye has only been riding bikes seriously for the last six years (after a flirtation with a Montesa Cota in his youth) and treated himself to a brand new Transalp the day after passing his test. He's since moved on to his current Africa Twin to which he's added all manner of bells and whistles - GPS, Corbin seat, gel pad, Motad bars, Scott-oiler and several go-faster goodies but despite a claimed 8bhp extra he would still like 'more power'. Garty's also got a KTM250 endure 'that I usually hurt myself on' and a Peugeot Speedfight scooter, not to mention a souped up Go-Ped. He gets a lot of stick as a 'softy southerner' but gives as good as he gets.

The Fast Couple

Andrew Ellis was the only participant riding two-up but having comely wife Katrina perched on the back of his high-screened Mk1 Tiger didn't seem to slow him down at all - much to her chagrin. Another one of the Sheffield clan - but one who is not emailed up - Andrew has his own small haulage business and a DR350. Another ex Africa Twin owner.

The Third Man

The third Mk 1 Tiger was ridden by 40-something Dave Edge, who, by common consent is the fastest road rider in the club. The way he stuck to my bike's rear muffler like a manufacturer's sticker, reminded me eerily of the guy who assessed me when I did a Metropolitan police advanced riding course a few years back. I never did find out what he did for a living though - he was a man of few words who let his riding do the talking.

How come there were three Mk1 Tigers in the club but no MkIIs? 'They just don't look as good' he said. 'We had a guy come to Wales with us on a MkII, but he crashed it on a wet cattle grid'.

The Deja Vu Cagiva fan

I first met Tony Bramah when he took an Elefant 900 to the '98 Rally of Discovery in Eire and he blames TBM for persuading him to swap it for a Cagiva Gran Canyon which he says is okay (if a bit thirsty) on the road, but not a patch on the Ele off it (which I recall is exactly what we claimed in the road test!). 'It's like trying to land a jumbo jet in a

cabbage patch' he said by way of an explanation afterwards. A freelance design engineer from Manchester, Tony also has a shiny new XR400.

There was also Dennis on the Pegaso who got a lot of stick for leaving his brand new Dakar 650 at home and Fraz from Sheffield who was desperate to get it up for the camera (the front wheel of his 1100GS that is) but failed most of the time.

They weren't all hard riding nutters by any means - everyone had their own route map and knew where they were headed for, so there was no pressure to keep up with the fast boys at the front. In fact a natural running order soon develops, with everyone riding at a pace they feel comfortable with and periodic stops to allow everyone to catch up and chew the fat. And it wasn't all Sassenachs either - the Rodkiss Brothers came up from Hawick on their Africa Twin and Elefant respectively and John Bruce came over from Ulster.

The great thing about an email-based club is that everyone can relate their experiences and feelings about the event to all the others when they get home, so I think it's appropriate to end with an excerpt from John Bruce's missive to the group after he got back to Belfast 'knackered' having clocked up 1192 miles over the weekend:

'Had a brilliant three days. Thanks for making a stranger so welcome and showing me just what my AT can do when pushed. I really enjoyed myself even if I was bringing up the rear for much of the time'. I can only echo his sentiments. **PNB**

Lesson learned:

Advanced sight lines really are much faster on unknown roads.

Breakages:

One set of AT rear wheel bearings and one broken chain; one Tiger indicator;

Biggest shock:

How fast a Mk1 Tiger can go down bumpy back roads in the hands of a good rider.

Hard Luck award:

Carl Blackburn: to compound his speeding fines and collapsed bearings, Carl's chain snapped on his way home. He's already part-exed the AT for an 1100GS - it was clearly jinxed!

Thanks to: Paul Clarke for the advanced riding lessons and all the BTBCers for making me feel welcome, especially those who let me have a spin on their trusty steeds.

Club address:

BTBC
PO Box 1628
Sheffield S20 4BR
Website: www.bigtrailbike.com (which includes members' own accounts of the Scottish trip).
email: Paul@bigtrailbike.com
Membership: £6 per year.





FOUR X FOUR

The inside line on the new crop of mid-weight thumpers as we get down to the annual TBM 400 shootout...

There's never been a better time to test the middleweight thumpers. Just a few short years ago this class consisted of the ageing DR350 and the bulky KTM SC. Now there are at least eight different manufacturers vying for your business with one or more 400cc four-strokes in their range. Vor, Husaberg, Husky, Cannondale (in addition to the four we've tested here) all make 400s, and both TM and Gas Gas are about to launch 400s of their own.

So the class is unbelievably strong right now and not without reason. The 400s are the best selling sector of the competition marketplace, because there's so much you can do with them. The 400cc four-stroke is one of the most versatile dirt bikes you can buy; it has sufficient speed for the street with plenty of flickability for the dirt. It can be raced, rallied, trail ridden, supermotarded and overlanded. They've got enough power to make 'em fun without having too much to really scare the pants off you.

They're fast, competitive, relatively light, tirelessly reliable, easy to maintain, for the most part easy to start, and what's more, some of them don't cost a fortune. Why wouldn't you want to own one?

For our shootout then we gathered together, the biggest sellers - Yamaha's feisty WR-F, Suzuki's hot new DR-Z and Honda's excellent XR-R - and pitched them up against the 400 everyone wants to own - the KTM EXC - to see just how much the class of 2000 has developed. We took them around an enduro track with numerous different riders, we raced them, we timed them and we simply enjoyed them. Then at the end of the day we compared notes and wrote about them. What we learned was that there isn't a bad bike in this bunch, and that the differences on the stopwatch are smaller than you might expect.

But first to the bikes. Four enduro 400s with about as much in common as Tony Blair and Ken Livingstone. Four different manufacturers with four

completely different ways of doing things. And despite having tested them individually, this was our chance to finally put them head to head against one another. To jump off one machine and straight onto the next and to analyse exactly what we liked and disliked about each bike; its strengths and weaknesses compared to the competition...

Honda XR400R

Although it may seem like the XR4's been around for ages, it actually only dates from early 1996. Nevertheless that makes it ancient compared to bikes like the EXC, and the Honda is already beginning to feel its age - check out the old-fashioned narrow pegs. There's talk of an all-new liquid-cooled XR400 to deliver the range into the new century, but for now we're stuck with the good-old air-cooled, SOHC, four-valve XR, which apart from being redder, looks much the same as it did when it was first launched.

A lot of riders love the XR just exactly as it is. It's been phenomenally successful in the US and Australia, and even in the UK you can't ride anywhere without coming across a bunch of XR riders. In fact, Tony, the owner of this well used example has returned to XR ownership for a second time after a brief flirtation with a troublesome Yamaha. For him the XR is everything he wants out of a bike - fun, fast, friendly but without the hassle of something slightly more specialised.

The Honda has been subtly tweaked over the years so that it's now a well-proven, reasonably

suspended and assuredly competent machine. It has no particular weak spots, in fact it's the ultimate easy to live with dirt bike, the sort of thing you ride then put away filthy. And not surprisingly the Honda's clever blend of rugged reliability, excellent build quality and simple mechanicals means it's become the bike of choice for the sort of rider who doesn't possess a set of T-bars.

Tony's one had had a number of sensible mods carried out, from replacing the headlight and bars, to moving the CDI into the airbox out of harm's way. But the suspension, motor and chassis were as stock as a rock, and the bike (despite its well used appearance) was only a few months old.

The TBM team hard at work on a cake test...



FOUR X FOUR



Yamaha WR400F

Yamaha's second generation of the potent WR-F is not only much improved it's also taken the enduro world by storm. Believe it or not the WR4 is Yamaha France's biggest selling enduro bike, comfortably outpacing its nearest rival (the WR250) by a factor of two to one. Other 400s simply don't get a look in. And it's not just in France either. Turn up at any UK enduro and you'll find heaps of WR-Fs, so Yamaha must be doing something right.

Why is it so popular? Undoubtedly the Yamaha's bad-boy image has got a lot to do with it. When you make the fastest, most fearsome 400 (up until the KTM arrived), you're bound to attract a sizeable audience, add in the fact that the WR (like many Yamaha's) is intrinsically sporting, fun to ride and comes with good suspension, then you begin to see why the 'F' has found so many takers.

From our point of view we're pleased to be able to report that the 2000 model WR has improved in a number of key areas: most obvious of which is the new slimline tank and seat unit which all but transforms the machine. But Yamaha haven't just left it at that; they've also been hard at work making changes to frame, steering, suspension, carburetion, ignition, generator and motor. The WR still has the most rip-snorting powerplant of all the 400s with its sexy liquid-cooled, DOHC, five-valve design, but now its better carbureted, easier to start and simpler to ride fast. Apart from feeling slimmer it also looks a lot nicer and the ergos are vastly improved.

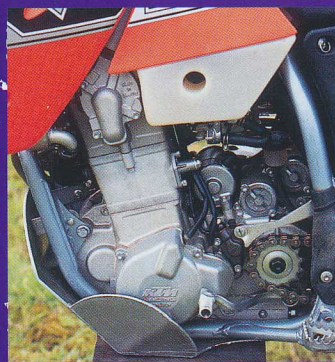
We slipped an MX tyre onto the Yam since the rear enduro hoop was well past its best, and loosened off the headbearings which were way too tight. Other than that and the fitment of some sensible Rental bars, the Yam is exactly as you'd buy it.

Suzuki DR-Z400E

Suzuki's all-new electric-start enduro bike was launched earlier this year and has very quickly established itself as a top-selling (if not currently, THE top-selling) 400 in the UK. There's three different models to choose from (with or without electric start), and all feature a similar liquid-cooled, DOHC four-valve engine in a capable if not remarkable chassis. In our first test we reckoned the DR slotted neatly between the Captain Sensible XR and the Wild Child WR, but with a hulking midrange motor which could blast them both into the weeds in the crucial torque wars.

The DR-Z is newer in design than its nearest rival - the XR - and it shows, with more modern ergos and a great mix of trail-ability and raceworthiness. The seat is comfy, the tank big but not too bulky and the suspension though soft, is extremely effective.

The new DR-Z sensibly builds on the tremendous success of the old DR350, with an easy-to-ride chassis, a tremendous engine and featherlight controls.



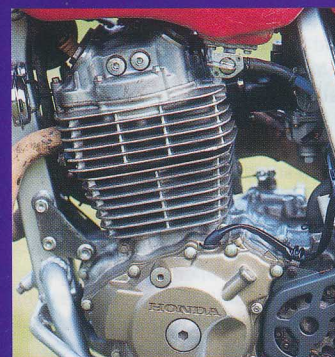
KTM uses a mix of old and new technology in their new sohc engine. The motor loves revs, but has enough bottom and mid-range grunt to get by. Slotted into a regular KTM chassis, the new thumper feels superbly light...



Suzuki's new DR-Z was the surprise engine package of the 400 test. With barrel-loads of torque on tap, the DR needed fewer gear changes than all the others. Sadly the chassis can't quite match the wonderful engine and gearbox...



Yamaha's WR4 still has one of the best motors in the 400cc class, and now the chassis is even better too. With fine handling and good ergos the WR is much improved. All it lacks is the electric start of the EXC and DR



Honda's valiant old stager still has a part to play in the 400 class for those who require simplicity over power and performance. The chassis is good but not exceptional but the whole is still greater than the sum of its parts...



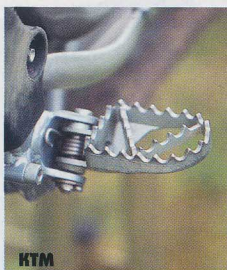
Suzuki



Honda



Yamaha



KTM

Pegs might not seem like a big issue, but it's amazing what a difference they make to bike control. Big pegs (like the WR's and EXC's) are more comfortable, give better grip, and are less prone to clogging up...



Clive pretends to get the WR stuck in the bog then dumps the Yamaha's clutch just as Si closes in on the XR. Now, now girls...

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It carries a few extra pounds compared to the others here, but it has the distinction of being the first of the Japanese dirt thumpers to feature a thumb-starter and that counts for a lot. It's also the cheapest to buy which makes it good value in our books.

This one turned out to be the same bike we'd tested a few months before, and with more miles on the bore it was clear that the engine was loosening up nicely - with even more power on tap. There was also evidence of a few scrapes and dings (the bike had been used by the DR-Z sensation school) but overall the finish was standing up okay to the abuse which had been meted out. However it was also the only one of the Japanese bikes to have its original steel bars in place. And the only one to end up with bent bars at the end of the day. It was also too loud...

KTM 400EXC

KTM's new enduro thumper has come straight in at the number one slot if the combination of consumer demand and race results is anything to go by. It's the lightest, slimmest, sexiest, easiest starting, best handling thumper that the Austrian factory has ever produced - and it's also comfortably the most expensive bike on test here.

As part of the new generation of KTMs, it shares the same lineage as the two-stroke EXC models, with a commonality of parts (and handling traits), and good build quality. And while the liquid-cooled, SOHC engine with its six-speed gearbox is unquestionably impressive, it's single-purpose nature (and 100 hour limit before requiring attention) will not appeal to everyone.

Undoubtedly however it's the fact that this bike comes with the magical electric button which has made it so attractive. Because despite its good looks and fine chassis, without the thumb starter it would almost certainly be perceived by the casual rider as expensive exotica. The fact that it can be ridden EAST by virtually anyone is testament to the KTM's overall design integrity.

Our test bike owned by TBM reader Tim West (*KTM had sold out*), had been fitted with a sump-guard and the rear light cluster had been removed. With its wide pegs, braceless alloy bars, clear tank and digital speedo it's certainly well equipped, as you would expect of a bike costing 20 percent more than the others. It's also the bike we couldn't wait to get our hands on again...

Si Pavey

As we all now know the four-stroke has made a resurgence as a serious off-road bike over the last five years. Yet while I have been a four-stroke lover and rider for a lot longer than that, I'm the first to admit that even now a good two-stroke is much easier to ride in the typical British off road slop. In my opinion, there are still two key areas that need to be fixed: starting and weight. However, four-strokes offer all-round capabilities that the two-strokes can't match, and every year the thumpers get better. This year they have once again taken another big leap forward...

Giddy Mite!



Engines

Engines are definitely where it's at with a 400cc four-stroke. These days they are fast enough to match any two-stroke (faster at the top end), and they deliver that seamless power in a more controllable way - plus they sound great.

Last year the Yamaha had the motor to beat with vast amounts of power on tap, but glitches meant that it was very easy to stall and occasionally difficult to restart. Yamaha has made some changes to the CDI and fitted a new carb, and the WR-F now deals with slow speed stuff and low revs faultlessly. I didn't stall the bike once during testing this year. The WR-F is still stonkingly fast, pulls from everywhere and revs to the moon.

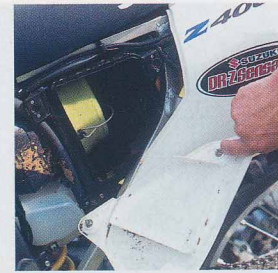
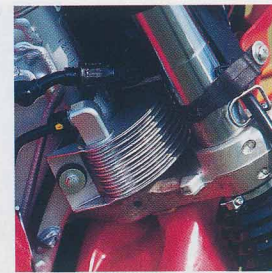
The KTM is a very exciting motorcycle because it takes the modern four-stroke concept yet another step forward. As with the Yam and the new Suzuki it has a short-stroke, fast-revving powerplant. But the KTM easily feels like it produces the most horsepower. It will wheelie out of every corner, decimates any mud that might be in the way, and just generally hauls ass. The trade-off, is a very two-stroke-esque power delivery, with less grunt and a little bit of clutch work needed to keep the Austrian flag flying. Exhilarating yes - simple to ride? Almost.

The Suzuki is also all new and the motor is a cracker. In the overall peak power stakes I reckon the DR-Z slots into third place just behind the Yamaha, yet it more than makes up for that with its hoofing mid-range delivery. The DR-Z has plenty of bottom-end grunt, builds revs quickly and revs hard through the middle and top. It has by far the most flexible engine and required the least amount of gear changes around our enduro circuit. Yep, the DR-Z motor was definitely the surprise engine package of the test.

Honda's XR400 motor is unchanged yet again for the year 2000 and is still in great shape. It feels like it has more bottom-end and mid-range grunt than both the WR and KTM (matching the DR-Z), and experience tells us it's virtually indestructible. But, and this is the bottom line, it is now starting to feel a little slow next to the newer models in this test.

Ergonomics

Both the KTM and the Yamaha have excellent ergonomics. They are slim with long flat seats, large footpegs and good handlebar positions. The KTM comes out on top in this category simply because it comes standard with a decent (and adjustable) set of bars. The Suzuki, while still being fairly slim, feels a little cramped to me and may suit shorter riders best. The seat is also quite soft which while



When it comes to detailing, all four bikes had something on offer. The XR features a neat, curved headstock-mounted oil cooler; The XR features a neat, curved headstock-mounted oil cooler; The Suzuki shows its practical touches with a quick release air-box door - great for a quick check of the filter while waiting for your minute. Unique wavy-edged discs on the KTM are designed to keep the calipers from clogging up with crud; and the WR had an odometer drive which could easily be hooked up to a speedo to make the bike road legal

nice on those road sections between trails and on your way to work, makes it a little more difficult to move around on in corners.

The Honda once again feels a bit dated with the bulbous tank being more noticeable than the others. The seat foam though is spot on, it just doesn't extend far enough - forwards, or back.

Suspension

Because of the nature of the circuit we were using I just couldn't split the Yamaha and KTM in suspension performance. Neither bike tried to hurl me off through the whooped section we rode, and both were stable and predictable around the fast grassy turns. The XR4 while not in the same league is still pretty good. It's comfortable to ride and doesn't beat you up on those horrible little stutter bumps in and out of every corner. And surprisingly it was predictable through the whoops. On the one big jump on the circuit it would bottom hard and my feet sometimes touched the ground which was a little unnerving.

With the KTM and the Yamaha I feel like I'm the limiting factor in any given situation whereas on the XR the suspension definitely limits me. The Suzuki was frankly disappointing - way too soft and scary in the whoops. After several near misses I resorted to riding slowly through the whooped section one at a time. Admittedly we left the Suzuki settings standard

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despite moaning to each other that we should try and adjust the rear shock. I guess it just wasn't bad enough to warrant interrupting some great riding.

Handling

The KTM wins this section easily and for me the best thing is that it shows what can be achieved with a four-stroke. Yes it's official, an electric start thumper can be light! It also shows once again how much difference weight makes. The Yamaha and the Suzuki both handle extremely well. They can slide fast corners, zip through tight woods, rail berms and nail ruts as well as any bike on the market. The difference comes when you make a mistake on the WR, DR-Z or XR it takes considerable effort to get the bike back in line and to get the next corner right. On the KTM a little bit of muscle or body English and the bike goes where you want - without backing off the throttle. Combine this light weight with great ergos and the KTM wins hands down.

The Suzuki and Yamaha are harder to split and once again the Suzuki is a bit of a surprise package. The DR-Z front wheel really sticks to the ground and the Suzuki seems to hold its line through corners superbly well. It steers slightly faster than the WR and despite my criticisms of the suspension, the overall package works better than the component parts, and as the lap times and the riders' smiles showed, the DR-Z is very competitive and plenty fun to ride. The Yamaha has also improved over last



Every rider gets to try out each bike for a number of laps, then gets timed against the stopwatch...

year and it demonstrates what a few detail changes can make to a bike. This year's model has a slightly shorter wheelbase and a new triple clamp and the front end no longer pushes through the corners.

The Honda...? Well it's an XR and handles as they've always handled. It is safe, predictable and easy to ride - and it turns pretty swiftly too. On the day, ours was a little handicapped by worn tyres, but otherwise it doesn't really lose ground.

Other Bits and pieces in no particular order

The Suzuki has typically effortless controls. I haven't quite figured out why Suzuki can achieve this and the others can't, but Suzukis always have the lightest and smoothest throttles and clutches going. The gearchange is so easy that you barely need to move your foot, and the brakes truly are a one-finger operation.

The KTM and Suzuki have the only starting system we should be prepared to accept as motorcycle customers. The Honda and Yamaha still have crank handles or something. Oh and we left the Suzuki's lights on for nearly an hour without noticing, then when it came to starting... it just fired right up on the button. First time.

But it's still too noisy...

Conclusion

The year-2000 400cc four-stroke shootout was very different from last year. Two brand new models, two with electric start, one as light as a two-stroke and all four with fantastic sales figures in the UK and world-wide makes this a very important test.

So which should you buy? Well that decision rests with you and your riding needs, but I've ranked 'em in my reverse order of preferences.

4. The Honda XR400R is as ever a trusty steed. The bike still performs well after four years on the market. It has plenty of grunt, has proven itself totally indestructible, and is a total all rounder. On the downside it's no longer at the cutting edge of thumper performance and it is still kickstart.

3. The Yamaha WR400F is an awesome off-road bike that is even better for 2000. Fast, great handling and kickstart only.

2. The Suzuki DR-Z400E is an amazing motorcycle. When I thought about all its characteristics while taking notes for this test I often marked it down, yet when I rode it I was only quicker against the stopwatch on the KTM. Of course it comes with e-start.

1. The KTM400 is the fastest and lightest 400 on test here. It equals or betters the opposition in every key area, and it's newer, fresher and comes with electric start. Reliability we can only guess at, but we know the price and we know they're still sold out. If you can find one, go and buy it and roost away from your mates...

Clive Garnham

Okay so you've all seen the nominees for the winner of this year's shootout, but before I announce my 'Overall Winner' award for the best 400 this year, other categories up for grabs were: 'Best All Rounder', 'Most Improved Performer', 'Best Engine', 'Best Handling', 'Best Suspension', 'Quietest Bike', 'Best Ergo's' and 'Best supporting actress who slept with one of judges'! So in true tradition we'll have everything in reverse order.

Last spot in the 'Best Ergo's' category goes to the Suzuki, this is not only down to the awful standard bars (the Honda and Yamaha both had non-standard bars fitted), but also something to do with the Suzuki's all-round low squat feel and piddly, narrow pegs. That low seat could actually score positive points for the non six-footers but it just felt awkward for me. Third place goes to the Honda which is still afflicted with low, narrow pegs and that big old tank preventing you sliding right up the saddle, but it was high enough to suit me better.

Second spot is much closer for this year's WR than it would have been with the '99 version. Vastly



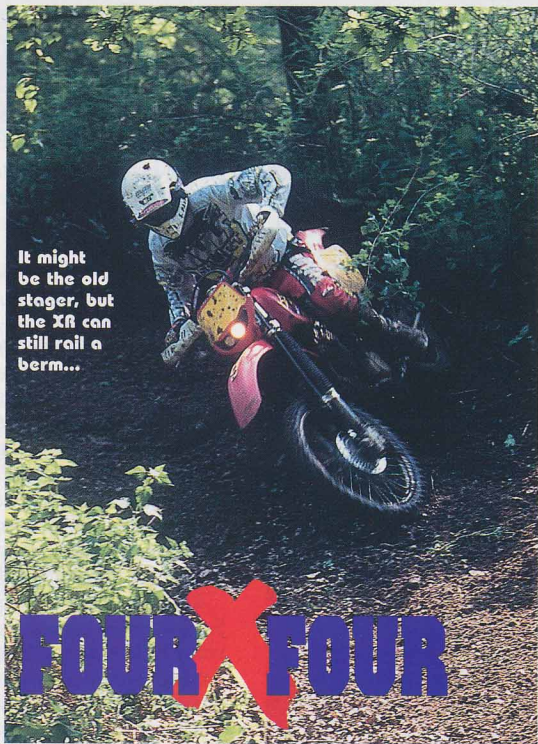


The WR, just storms out of corners

improved with the small tank and flatter seat it really is nip and tuck for first spot with the braceless Magura-barred KTM and its super-light hydraulic clutch. Indeed I'd say it's easier to slide up the saddle of the Yam than the Katosh now. The Austrian bike however just gets the nod for everything feeling comparatively light with the added extra of being able to adjust the standard alloy bars forward or backwards to suit. Both bikes had great pegs by the way.

I know we all love the sound of a deep throaty four-stroke thundering away. But we love having places to ride more and if all bikes are as loud as the Suzuki then there will soon be no place left for us to ride. We'll all end up doing

DIY on the weekends instead, and then we'll be sorry! So it's another thumbs down for the 'Big Yeller' in the 'Quietest Bike' category. Second to last is the Honda which although quiet when corked up, needs to be silenced to run properly. There wasn't much in it between the Yam and the KTM, both



It might be the old stager, but the XR can still rail a berm...

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your DR-Z you'll need to think about suspension.

The 2000 Honda felt better than previous XRs I've ridden. It worked well through some of the deeper corrugations and whoops on our test course and really didn't misbehave at all in this category.... But neither did it feel astounding - just pretty neutral.

were commendably quiet though it was the Katosh that impressed with its admirable whisper from its end-can. I know there will be eejits who think they're not going fast until they sound fast and I reckon they'll be more tempted to replace the Yam's, ugly steel silencer than the KTM's classy alloy muffler. Don't do it... lets all make a point to the bike and accessory manufacturers to get the volume down. It's up to us... it's our sport!

Unfortunately the Suzuki comes last in the category of 'Best Suspension' as well, but don't go home yet Suzuki fans, the best is yet to come! Way too soft in the shock and not much better up front, the bike sits too far down through the stroke which ends up giving you about six or seven inches of actual travel for bumps and jumps. Though we didn't have time to fiddle, it's probably fair to say the adjustment range of the standard set-up isn't sufficient for fast race speeds so if you are doing anything serious with

I'll have to be honest here and put the sussies of the Yam and the KTM in a draw for top spot as on the day, I couldn't pick a winner. Both performed really well. Both felt supple and responsive, helping the bikes find grip on the slippery course, yet soaked up the bigger hits too. Certainly the WR felt like a marked improvement over last year's bike thanks to reworked internals front and rear.

In the 'Best Handling' category the wooden spoon goes to the Honda this time. I just couldn't get on with it. I suspect that it wasn't entirely due to the off colour front tyre and the inability to get my ample weight over the front of the bike. But perhaps that the overfirm suspension prevented the bike from sticking to its line. I found the Honda wanting to stay too upright forcing me to the outside of turns where previous experience with XR4s has shown them to be like a slot-car on the inside line. So room for improvement there.

Now although the Suzuki is in third spot here this doesn't truly represent what a surprise I had from the excellent way this bike turned and tracked around what was a pretty slippery courses. The Suzuki was fantastic, really confidence inspiring. I'm sure the soft suspension would have helped but it was rock solid around the corners. I couldn't get the front to wash at all, it remained firmly planted wherever I put it! Magnificent. The back would only slide around when you actively encouraged it to do so. I'd say that this isn't a bike that's going to catch you out with any really nasty surprises in corners, great for those less confident in slimy conditions!

Out front again it's the thoroughbreds, with the Yam being let down slightly by its extra weight and (despite much improvement over last year), still comparatively slow steering. This is okay if you're just tackling faster more open riding (such as trails) but if the going gets tough I'm afraid you'll probably get overtaken by a KTM. Experience at the KTM launch on a track where silly speeds were possible showed that the Katosh is inclined to shake its head at high speed on rough ground (like all KTMs). But again on the day on a track where top speed wasn't high, both the Yam and the KTM really impressed with their stability.

Now in the category for 'Best Engine' there are all sorts of potential sub-categories. 'Best Starting', 'Fastest Overall', 'Most Usable' etc but in the interests of brevity all these factors are going to lumped together into a more general 'Feelgood' award. In reverse order, I guess fairly predictably the Honda brings up the rear. A difficult decision when there is all that reliability to be factored into the equation. But against the new generation of water pumpers, the XR donk looks dated and feels slightly uninspiring. The old air-cooled lump is sensitive to the correct jetting but as mentioned they are totally oblivious to the treatment you hand out.

Tim West: KTM 400EXC owner

When TBM asked me if I would bring my KTM along to be used in the 400 shootout, I had visions of my new bike being caught on film in that perfect picture: hanging in the air upside down with Crasher jumping to one side as bits of the bike disintegrated on impact. But Si reassured me that Crasher would be on a short leash and I would get to try out all the test bikes and have a great day's riding. How could I resist?

Coming back to off-roading two years ago after a 15 year layoff, things had changed big time. I'd always previously ridden four-strokes (or more correctly attempted to hang onto them), but back then the old story of heavy and difficult to start bikes rang true. So when I read the TBM review in the Nov '99 issue on the new lightweight, electric-start KTM 400 I placed an order immediately before they sold out. The test day was hopefully going to confirm for me whether I'd made the right choice...

I'd owned an XR400 for a while, and the test bike reminded me what a fun and usable all-round machine it can be. Loads of low-end grunt, almost indestructible, low maintenance etc, but the handling felt a little 'woolly' and no electric start. The DR-Z was also great fun. More low end stomp than both the WR or KTM and with the benefit of electric start. But the suspension package couldn't match either of those machines and the exhaust noise would get annoying after a few hours riding.

The WR felt closest to my KTM - good everywhere except no button - which I wouldn't be without now. So that just left my EXC, having done a few enduros, a couple of moto-X events and a French raid, I can't really fault it. It does everything well and gives me the confidence to hopefully improve. Besides... after spending over five grand on it, how could I say anything else? **Tim West**

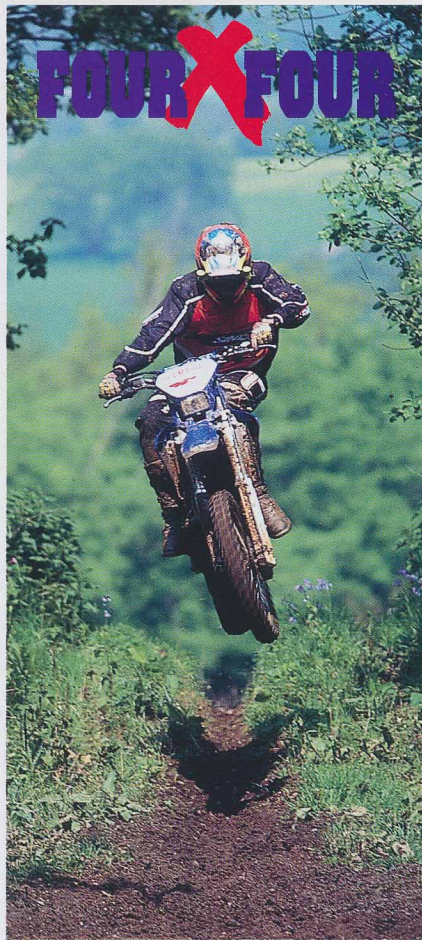


So that's how the Suzuki's bars got tweaked eh Tim...?





Side by side into second spot are..... wait for it..... the Yamaha and the KTM! That can mean only one thing Einstein.... Yep the Suzuki has got a fantastic engine and it wins my 'Best Engine' award. And it's not even really meant as a full on fire breather. But to old die-hard traditionalists like me the Suzuki delivers just what I want out of a four-stroke. It fires up at the push of a button and rips into a fantastically torquey bottom-end which just keeps on building through the mid-range and then surprisingly still likes a few revs as well. The softish chassis (and quick steering) almost certainly helps the Suzook find impressive amounts of grip and so it even manages to loft the front end out of slippery corners. Great fun! Interestingly the engine also appears to be a very solid unit. That may mean plus points if you're looking for reliability and minus points if looking for light weight. The bottom line though remains, I was really bowled over by that engine and am sure you will be too!



'Yes sir... I can boogie...'

So surprisingly the runner up spot is a split decision between the EXC and the WR4. The Yamaha edges ahead of the KTM in actual power output and delivery but then the KTM makes that ground back up again with that beautiful little start button, so at the line it's a photo finish. They both lack torque, the Katosh more so than the Yam, which also feels slightly more willing to rev on as well. On the track I reckon there would probably only be a cigarette paper between them in a drag race.

The category for the 'Most Improved Performer' is really a category made up especially for the Yamaha so that its efforts over the last year



don't go unrewarded. The KTM and Suzuki don't qualify as they are both newcomers and the XR has (more or less) only changed its graphics for the last few years.

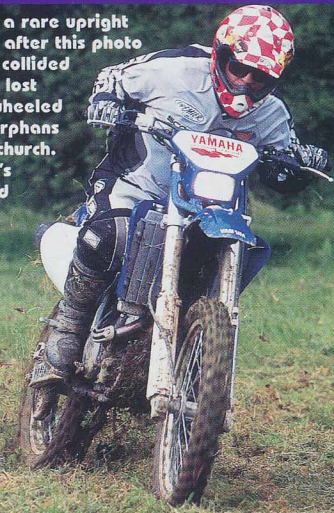
But just because there is no real competition for the title, doesn't mean the Yamaha's achievement this year should be downplayed. There are few changes visible with the naked eye but those changes have added up to a significant improvement in the whole package. For example the smaller tank and revised seat have vastly improved the ability to move around on the bike. The suspension and geometry changes have helped it track and corner better, and the carb and CDI mods have contributed to a better spread of power and easier starting than last year's model. Don't get me wrong it's still a high compression four-stroke and I'd much rather see it fitted with an electric boot, but despite dropping

the bike on the floor, we encountered no significant problems coaxing the WR back into life.

Last year's 400 shootout was run in better conditions but, although I had to acknowledge the potential of the WR400 then, I didn't really enjoy riding it. This year in worse conditions and with the full expectation that I wouldn't warm to the WR, I was very pleasantly surprised by the updated Yam, so much so that it could yet manage run off with the top prize!

The category of 'Best All Rounder' has lived in the Honda trophy cabinet for years now. With versatility and dependability that the pure racers can't match there was no competition for the title. But now with the DR-Z on the scene the XR4 is threatened. How do they stack up? Sadly the exhaust note knocks huge points off the DR-Z and in unmodified form restricts the bike to closed course use only. That shoots the Suzuki squarely in the foot and along with the bike's lack of any road gear compared to the XR, hands the crown back to the Honda for another year! But with a few small amendments from Suzuki..?

Here's Crasher in a rare upright moment. Seconds after this photo was taken, Dave collided with a wild bear, lost control and cartwheeled into a queue of orphans waiting to go to church. Fortunately Dave's custom painted lid was unmarked...



Second Opinion

Okay let me start off by saying that in this test there simply aren't any losers - every one of these bikes is good. But of course I have my favourites and for me the much improved Y2k Yamaha just sneaked it ahead of the DR-Z.

The XR4 will always have its fans but in this company the old girl is starting to show her age. KTM's latest offering while undoubtedly a quality piece of kit is a tad too serious for my liking. The motor loves revs but lacks any real grunt off the bottom - and just check out that price!

So that leaves the WR and the new Suzook. Well the DR-Z has a superb lecky-start motor, heaps of grunt all through the range which makes it a cinch to ride, but as tested, the Suzuki's suspenders felt too soggy and soft to really push-on over rough terrain.

Which leaves the WR as my choice of 400 four. Much slimmer at the tank, a few chassis and suspension tweaks and further general all round development, make this year's Yam a big improvement over last year's offering. Not only does the WR have a powerful, well silenced motor, it's also much torquier at low rpm than the Austrian bike. The overall suspension and chassis feels well sorted and extremely neutral. But for me the best thing about the 2000 WR is the ease of starting the thing.

Despite being dropped several times and stalled out by locking up the rear end, the motor started just about first kick every time! This bike would be my ideal enduro-trail-rally machine if only Yamaha bit the bullet and fitted the electric boot we said it should have way back in issue 36.

Crasher Cornish



FOUR X FOUR

Despite the fact that the WR4 has finished some African Rallies it is obviously not targeted at anything other than enduro use. Even trail riding won't be as good on this bike as last year's because of the smaller tank and lack of range. The same applies to the KTM, unlike its predecessor - the LC4 - with its agricultural strength motor which you could easily rally or trail ride, this is not a realistic option with the svelte new EXC. Light weight was the priority not cast iron longevity. People like to take this the wrong way, as a comment on the EXC's reliability. Not so, there is no reason to suspect the reliability of the EXC in normal enduro use, but you'd be ill-advised to set off to do the Paris - Dakar on one. Okay, is that clear?

Can I have the envelope please...?

So now with a drum roll it's time to announce the results in the category of my 'Overall Winner'. Based on the type of riding that I like to do....

I love 'em all, of course, but in everything there has to be a loser (don't I know it!) and unfortunately the one that I'd least like to buy would be the XR. I respect the bike immensely but feel that its days are numbered and can't wait for its replacement.

Thoroughly impressed as I am with the new Suzuki and I really am, it's bounced into third place by average suspension and a raucous exhaust. The fact that its motor is far more fun than the two racers should have placed it higher. But expect great things next year from the DR-Z.

All it would have taken is one little button to put the Yam in first place. I'd have traded the slight weight disadvantage for the Japanese quality, excellent brakes, fine suspension, good manners, slightly meatier power and extra cash saving of the WR. Well done Yamaha!

But the middleweight thumper crown goes this year (in my opinion) to the KTM 400EXC. A bike that has its flaws but is outstanding for a new model. It feels as light as a two-stroke and behaves impeccably. The biggest problem with the 400EXC is the fact that right now you can't buy one for love nor money...

Thanks to: Tim West and Tony McColley for the loan of their bikes - you guys are too trusting!

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Dry weight: 115kg

S U Z U K I D R - Z 4 0 0 E

Price: £3799 (+otr)
Engine: Liquid-cooled, DOHC, electric-start, four-stroke
Bore & stroke: 90 x 62.6mm
Displacement: 398cc
Seat height: 945mm
Fuel capacity: 10L
Dry weight: 125kg

Y A M A H A W R 4 0 0 F

Price: £4399 (+otr)
Engine: Liquid-cooled, DOHC, kick start, four-stroke
Bore & stroke: 92 x 60.1mm
Displacement: 399cc
Seat height: 940mm
Fuel capacity: 8L
Dry weight: 117kg

H O N D A X R 4 0 0 R

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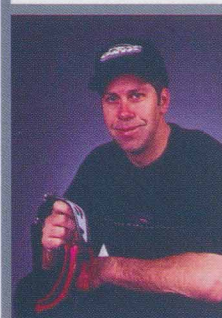
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STAFF Bikes



Si Melber Yamaha WR250 The Money Pit...!

To say I was gutted would be an understatement. There I was on the final check of the last lap in the White Horse Enduro deep in the heart of North Yorkshire. I was 46 minutes late, exhausted but exhilarated because I was about to finish the first round of the North of England Enduro Championship - reputed to be the toughest series in the country. Suddenly the bike made a sort of hiccup sound, hesitated for a moment, then the throttle stuck wide open.

I grabbed the clutch, hit the kill button and coasted to a halt, but not before scaring myself shi... half to death. Then, just as it stopped there was a sort-of 'SSHTOOK' noise which I took to be the sound of the carb slide dropping back down. As it turned out, the throttle cable had detached itself (at the carb end) when I was no more than a mile from the finish.

From my lofty viewpoint at the top of a hill I could see the rows of vans and trailers in the car-park, I began to push the bike, but clattered in mud, it was interminably heavy. After about

100m I gave up, dumped the bike and laid down exhausted. It surely couldn't get any worse than this. Five minutes later it began to snow...!

Stripping the bike down afterwards revealed that the throttle cable had somehow managed to detach itself from the needle holder, and pull past the little plastic locking ring, I ordered a couple of new carb parts from Allens Performance R&D (01949 836733), and tried to put the disappointment out of my mind as I set about prepping the bike for the following weekend.

We'd entered a two-day enduro in north-east France and would have to set off by the following Thursday - there was surely plenty of time to get the bike ready? Apart from fixing up the carb, I renewed the throttle cable (leaving the old one in place as a spare), and completely cleaned up the twistgrip assembly making sure that the cable was routed correctly. I fitted a new set of Rental bars and as a precaution added a pair of Apico cold-forged brake and clutch levers (£6.15 each), which don't snap if the bike gets dropped. On went a set of superb Dunlop FIM enduro tyres and double tubes went in - just in case.

The Yorkshire course had been a fantastic mix of open going and forestry ruts, though towards the end of each lap it ran through a bunch of big

rocks. Needless to say by the end of the event the WR's exhaust looked more battered than Blez's van and I'd flattened part of the bottom section. There was no time to get it fixed before leaving so I got on to the guys at MD Racing (they're the FMF importers - 01935 429646), and the following day a shiny new FMF Gnarly pipe arrived with a note saying 'bend this if you can.' I can never resist a challenge.

The Gnarly is basically FMF's Gold Series Fatty pipe (I've got one on my CRM) but constructed from thick 18-gauge steel to resist bangs and dents. Nickel-plated and designed with extra volume to give increased mid-range and top-end, the gnarly pipe retails at £185 inc vat, and fitted straight on to the stock tailpipe without requiring any jetting changes (on the 250). Thanks guys.

A stiff clutch and a certain amount of clutch judder had caused me to order a new cable and take a look at the clutch basket, but when I pulled the plates out, the basket looked badly worn. Talon make beautiful hard anodised replacement baskets but on the WR you need to send your old one down to them in order that they can machine the gear off it and attach it to the new one. When I saw the new basket I swallowed hard, but the enclosed invoice was less than £100 - considerably cheaper than a Yamaha original.

Because we didn't have a clutch holding tool nor the requisite 29mm socket, I foolishly let Clive talk me into using an air-wrench at the local Quick-Fit tyre centre to spin the hub-nut off and then back on again with the new clutch basket in place. We bent the locking tab washer around the nut but it had the consistency of warm dough and I wondered how long it would hold up. And I had good reason to.

Anyway, we refilled the bike with oil and started it up, but the screeching noise it made was unbelievable. There were cats running for cover in all directions and when I closed the throttle, the engine stopped dead. In desperation I phoned around everyone I knew with a WR250, but no-one could make any sense of it. In the end Clive convinced me the hub-nut must be on too tight, but Quick-Fit had long since closed and we didn't have the appropriate tools. It was now getting dark.

So we leant the bike over, removed the clutch cover and tapped the nut loose with a cold chisel. Then we nicked it up a tiny bit and bent the tab washer back over. SNAP. The tab fell off in my hands. Oh Great.

With just a few short hours to go before our ferry departed I had no choice but to leave the bike as it was. Two days later I was down in France sitting on the start line of an enduro praying that the clutch nut would hold up.

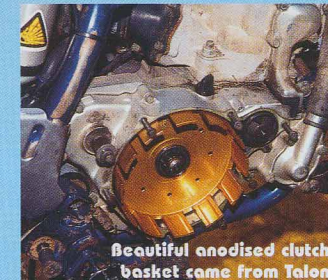
It didn't. On the way to the first check it packed in leaving me with drive, but no way of declutching. I wasn't looking forward to the road crossings up ahead.

Somehow I managed to make it to the first check, pulled the clutch apart and found that the hub-nut had spun itself off. So I turned what remained of the tab washer upside down and used one of its locating lugs as a tab. Believe it or not, it's held up ever since.

By now I was seriously late having dropped 20-odd minutes fixing the clutch, and I was trying to make up a bit of time on the going. That's when the throttle decided to stick wide open again - WAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHH! I shot past a few surprised riders and stopped the bike with the kill switch, but I was pretty shaken. It doesn't take a genius to work out the consequences of a sticking throttle and an inability to declutch. Thank God it hadn't happened 30 minutes earlier.

I figured I'd had my share of bad luck for the trip and even a fouled plug couldn't dent my optimistic mood as I rolled into parc ferme at the end of day one. Of course I should've known better...

The next day it took a few smart kicks to get the WR started but once underway it seemed okay - for about the first 20 minutes. Then the problems started again. The bike seemed to lose power, wouldn't rev-out and it felt like the power-valve wasn't working. I didn't want to pull it



Beautiful anodised clutch basket came from Talon



An FMF pipe and a set of Wers graphics helped smarten up the look of the WR...

apart at lunchtime for fear of what I might find, so I pressed on riding a 250cc with an 80cc powerband.

By tucking in behind the bars on the fast road sections I could just about build up enough speed for the power-valve to sort-of work (the engine makes a kind of 'ripping' sound when it's open), but on the rough stuff it simply wouldn't function at all. That left me seriously short of go for the special tests and the final motocross. Every time I changed up from second gear the engine would bog down and I had to downchange and scream it again.

Nevertheless it finished the event and once I got the bike back home I removed the powervalve cover to take a look. As the cover came off, out dropped a little screw and a horseshoe-shaped clip which was supposed to hold the powervalve in place. Two minutes with a screwdriver and a dab of Loctite and it was working fine again!

While I had the bike apart I figured it was time for a bit of a tidy-up. The head and linkage bearings were regreased, the old torn seat cover removed and the graphics stripped off the tank. A beautiful new set of Werx graphics had recently arrived courtesy of BHR (01582 472374), and these were grafted into place. I'd purchased a new tab washer for both the hub-nut and the front sprocket as well as a new tank strap which had somehow gone missing. These spares arrived along with a few gaskets and seals from Yamaha parts specialists ARD (01283 521302). These guys are not only well stocked with parts, but helpful and knowledgeable to boot - and of course they advertise in the mag.

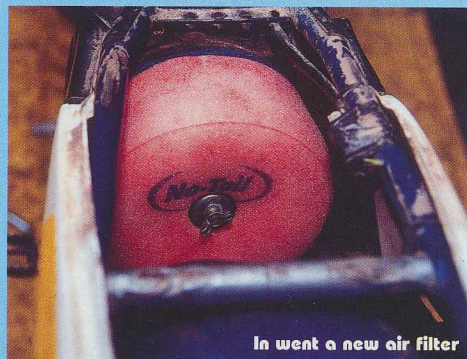
I reassembled the bike, ready for a spot of trail riding the next day, but at the first long downhill I came to, I couldn't stop the thing and ended up in the bushes on the opposite side of the track. Something was definitely wrong! I knew the pads were okay and there was plenty of lever pressure, but when I looked down at the fork leg, the left seal was blown and oil was pouring into the caliper. Curses I was racing the following day, too.

The bike wasn't running very well either; it wouldn't idle, felt lumpy and was stalling all too frequently, a little look around the engine revealed traces of oil around the base gasket. Oh no, here we go again.

I arrived at the race the following day with some trepidation. For whatever reason we'd



Prepping the bikes ready for France...



In went a new air filter

elected to do a motocross for a change and I can't say I was particularly looking forward to racing without a front brake. I cleaned up the fork leg with contact cleaner and a rag, and the

bike sailed through scrutineering, which was no more than a precursory twist of the throttle.

After practice which wasn't too bad, I found myself lining up for my heat. I got a reasonable start, stayed out of trouble at the first turn and was about halfway down the short downhill straight when some idiot on a Kawasaki just took me out bigtime. I went down with a clatter and was badly winded. But by the time I got my breath back, Mr Kawasaki had cleared off. Just as well.

Apart from giving me a badly bruised set of ribs he'd also torn one of the fork leg protectors clean off my bike, and though I wobbled round for a finish, and managed one more race in the afternoon, it was clear I wasn't up to much racing.

So it was back to another spannering session, a new set of fork seals and bushes from Pro Racing (01327 301322), a replacement DID X-ring chain, another set of sprockets, and as I write this I'm just about to pull the barrel off, replace the head and base gasket and fit a new set of rings. To be honest I've now stopped trying to add up all the costs from the past couple of months for fear that my £2000 'investment' might have actually cost more in parts than it did to buy in the first place.

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STATION TO STATION

Clasica Raid Enduro Las Merindades.

While readers Jim and Dot Jones were holidaying in Spain they decided to take in an unusual Spanish off-road competition. Here's the story...

The Raid-Enduro Scene. Dot:

You will know the expression 'as one door closes another one opens', well this is exactly what happened when we tried to attend the first round of the 2000 WSB (World Super Bikes) in Valencia. My husband Jim and I were spending the winter in southern Spain, plenty of vino with lots of trail riding in the warm sunny weather.

We hadn't any particular timetable other than to be in Marseilles in early April. Our youngest son Mike and his wife Susan had entered the Optic 2000 Rally in Tunisia in their special Land-Rover Freelander and needed both our moral support and crèche facilities for the grandchildren. A few days in Valencia on March 12th seemed a good idea and we looked forward to cheering Foggy on to the start of his fifth title year.

Unfortunately Spain called a general election and voting was set for... yes, you guessed it, March 12th. All major sporting events were rescheduled in case they prevented the natives from getting to the polling booths.

We were camped right next to a beach on the Almeria coast at Mojacar, a good location for trail riding as the coastal plain is a narrow strip and the mountains reach down to the Mediterranean. While thumbing through a copy of Moto Verte (Spanish version) to see if there were any other events within reach, we came across an even better alternative. First we found an Indoor Trial in Madrid, then the Spanish round of the outdoor World

Trials Championship in Cordoba, both too far away. But over the page was a snippet about the first round of a series of Raid-Enduro events being held at Baza (pronounced Batha), just down the road. We had even been in that area whilst trail riding in the high Sierras.

The next day was spent trying to get more information from a secretary who only spoke Spanish, eventually a visiting Geordie came to the rescue and translated the bad news (though we could've done with an interpreter to translate the Geordie); apparently entries closed the next day.

Using his best 'grovelling' tactics Jim got an entry, provided his entry fee was paid into a bank and his details were faxed to Madrid. The entry fee included camping, food, music, entertainment as well as the competition itself and for a small extra fee his 'buddy' (me) could be included in all but the competition. Sounded great. After a morning wrestling with the banking system, a photocopier and a fax machine we crossed our fingers and waited. A few days later a letter arrived confirming Jim's entry in the Veterans class (he is, after all, over 60) - together with his riding number, 601.

On Friday morning we headed towards Baza to find the start which we'd been told was in a town-centre park. A bit of detail had obviously been lost in translation and the start area parking and camping was actually at a disused railway station. All we found were a few guys sorting out the bar and disco music. Not a problem, it was mid afternoon and we knew that between 1pm-5.30pm all Spaniards were eating, drinking or doing something more important. As more competitors arrived, the secretary set up 'shop' and we were made welcome. We were given background ovals and numbers for the bike, a set of regulations (in Spanish) and

tickets for meals. Jim looked a bit concerned that all the riders seemed to be fit young Spaniards riding Gas Gas or KTM enduro bikes, doing wheelies and stoppies everywhere, but he prepped the bike nonetheless.

By talking to many people we gradually found bits of information: a Raid-Enduro is unlike any UK event; it's in three parts (*bit like Blez's bike then - ed*), a short timed special test, an optional knockout motocross and a timed cross country stage. No scrutineering, no time cards, no stages between the tests. Only the later stage counts towards the: '4 ESTACIONES CHAMPIONSHIP'. Estaciones? Railway stations, apparently!

The disused railway buildings provided offices, toilets, showers and an outside area ideal for the bar and disco. The disco music began to boom out and went on all through the night, competing with the local youth brass band using the building beside our camper. We tried in vain to sleep while riders arrived throughout the night and unloaded their bikes. It seemed obligatory to start the bike and do a few circuits of the car park on the back wheel while their 'buddies' tried to knock tent pegs into concrete. Competitors came not just from all over Spain but from North Africa as well. The emphasis however was on enjoyment, though some riders obviously take the series very seriously indeed, whilst others arrived with large trailbikes or dirt classics including a Montesa Capra.

Bacon butties weren't on the breakfast menu, instead a slice of cake, a mug of cold chocolate milk and a piece of fruit was on offer. Jim's Honda CRM250R attracted a lot of attention, they aren't available in Spain and the local youths thought my Yamaha TTR250 shouldn't be ridden by an old woman like me. As the designated start time (9.30) approached, riders were still fettling their machines, so in typical Spanish fashion, there was a 30 minute delay. At the new start time, the local police arrived in their 4x4, sirens blaring. Everyone including buddies on road bikes and scooters formed up behind the police car for a noisy escorted ride through the centre of town and out to the start of the special stage.

Part One. The 8km special test. Jim:

I followed the police car, along with 100 other competitors and a similar number of 'others' until we arrived in the mountains at the start of the test. The briefing and 'pep' talk was wasted on me but I got the drift of it, 'try to stay alive'. We were to follow a marshal for a 'sighting lap' and then return back to the start in our own time using 1-2km of tracks. Simple?

Well nobody followed the marshal, he was ridden over by the hundred competitors within 30m of the start, as we all took off at pace. Initially my worst fears were realised, the course was 100mph dusty tracks inter-



persed with rocky outcrops and hairpin bends. But after about a third distance the course entered a ravine and started climbing. It eventually went to 800m (2500 feet), and when I got there I found the entire entry trying to emulate mountain goats leaping from ledge to ledge. The CRM was in trouble, first the temperature light came on, then it brewed tea and finally the clutch started slipping. With some delay I reached the finish and made my way back down to the start. There I found most of the competitors sitting on their hands, none of them wanted to go first. I reasoned to myself that to go late would be

a mistake as the course could be blocked, so I headed for the line and was sixth away. Starting at thirty-second intervals gave everybody a chance with the dust. I was passed by two faster riders and passed two myself. But by the time I crossed the line there was more than two minutes between me and the following rider.

The Background. Dot:

While Jim was involved with the 'sighting lap' I found out that there was a track to the top of the mountain where it was possible to see the finish. Unfortunately an over-zealous marshal held me back where the course crossed the road and Jim shot past into the gorge. By the time I reached the top he had been there for some time. There was a real party atmosphere as riders stayed to cheer on their mates or rivals, the schoolboys were given a rousing cheer as they struggled up the steep climb on 100cc MX bikes. One rider, an experienced desert racer, on a Kawasaki Tengai 600 shod with trail tyres was spectacular and got a huge cheer as he wheelied across the line. The view from the top of the mountain was awe inspiring, on one side the plain with Baza and the coastal mountains in the distance, while round the other was a huge reservoir with clear blue water and the snow capped Sierra Nevada as a backdrop.

STATION TO STATION

Then it was back down the mountain to Baza to fettle the bike and have lunch. Two giant paella pans were simmering over a circle of burning logs. One contained a potato concoction and the other a sort of meat stew. Everyone with a ticket got a bit of each on their plate, a bread roll, a creme caramel and as much beer as you wanted to drink. The sky was blue, the sun shining and the talk at the bar was all the usual excuses, I didn't need to understand Spanish to know what they meant:

'I was going for it when this rock jumped out and knocked the back wheel off line'. Or: 'I would have been much quicker if the guy in front hadn't fallen off right on my line, and blocked my run at the big hill...'

It was hot and we were tired after our sleepless night so we crashed out on the bed for a mid afternoon siesta. We awoke to the revving of a big four-stroke and realised everyone was getting ready to start something else. Jim dashed out and came back with the news that the motocross started in ten minutes at 4.30pm. he put his clobber back on and joined the rabble behind the police car for another noisy route out along a track beside the main highway to a MX circuit. Well I think that is what it was because with so many riders going for a practice lap it was impossible to see for the huge clouds of dust. Once again we struggled to find out the procedure and after much discussion realised it was a voluntary elimination event just for fun.

Part Two - The Optional Motocross. Jim:

The simple formats are the best, somebody told me that. In this case you chose any heat and lined up with four other riders, the winner went though to the next round. Because I didn't know any other riders, the other four in my heat could have been national champions - or regular riders like me. The motocrossers put on a good display and I watched in awe as they stormed round in the deep sand disregarding the dust and drop offs. At last I lined up and as the flag dropped I shot off the line to get the holeshot. As expected I was soon overtaken but finished fourth and retired gracefully. We stayed to watch some more races especially the one with the big Tengai in it, whose rider seemed to be able to make the bike as wide as a double decker bus so that none of the others could pass him. The crowd were cheering and urging him on but soon the more nimble bikes overtook him and he was also eliminated.

The Background. Dot:

Back to town to refuel, clean the air filter, oil the chain and enjoy a hot shower. The times for the morning stage had been posted and the fastest was number 99 on a Honda CR250. Out of 100 riders who completed the stage Jim was 55th, three minutes behind the leader. There were a few surprised riders who found the old English bloke on a trailbike had beaten them and he was congratulated on a good ride. The organisers had been concerned as he was the oldest competitor in the over 50 class and figured he would struggle with the type of going. Particularly on the next day in the 70-100km enduro. However I knew his performance would be indirectly related to the number of beers he consumed



at dinnertime. By 9.30pm the grilled pork chops and sausages that are a speciality of the region were ready, and of course the beer was again free. The awards for the timed stage and MX were presented by several young ladies to the winners of each class amidst much cheering and applause. At 10.30pm the crowds began to gather and the entertainment began. Two local trials riders, mounted on a Gas Gas and a Bultaco Sherco performed their tricks to flashing lights, smoke and beat music for about an hour, riding up steps onto high walls and leaping onto cars. The crowd roared and everyone enjoyed the spectacle. It soon became clear that we wouldn't be getting much sleep tonight either as the music became louder and louder.

Sunday was another glorious sunny day and even more riders arrived for the enduro that included a class for quads - thankfully using a separate route on the tight bits. The police led the parade through town once again, while the riders were getting more daring, wheelieing off the pavements and trying to get their front wheel on the back of the police car! The enduro course started on the hillside above town beside a dusty track in a gully and Jim tried to use the same tactics as yesterday and go early. It was explained to him that the start is in numerical order in groups of ten and he would be at the back, just in front of the quads.

Part Three. The enduro. Jim:

The start area was chaotic, but was gradually sorted out by the organisers. The riders had to complete two laps to qualify as a finisher, except those on machines over 600cc, schoolboys, veterans and quads who were timed over one lap. Classes were simplified into two-stroke MX and enduro, four-stroke MX and enduro, trailbikes, schoolboys, classics (twin shock), quads, over 40 and over 50. The actual course length was 82 km (50 miles), I decided to treat it like a Hare & Hounds event: start at a reasonable pace and try to settle down.

For the amusement of the spectators, the organisers had lined up the oldest competitor (me) alongside the youngest, a 14 year old on a little Kwacker. All it took was one kid to disrupt my strategy - so when the flag dropped we were racing. The little b****r was defending his lines into corners, he thought he was going to be



able to motocross for 50 miles. A couple of bends later I nipped past him when he fell off and gave him a nudge with my boot as I went past - I never saw him again.

The course was the most varied I have ever ridden. It wound along dusty trails, through dark tunnels, up rocky climbs, steep downhill and even through a hand-dig bar-width gorge as high as a house. I settled in quickly and to my surprise found I was steadily overtaking riders, not my usual experience.

Then we arrived at a river containing water. Tank deep water. One thing the Spaniards do not like is water and mud, so they formed committees to decide on the best route. The crunch came at a blind steep-sided canyon where I met some riders that were riding out to retire. As I approached they tried to stop me as I pushed past trying to find a suitable line further up. By riding the banks from side to side I went over the top without stopping. Looking down from the top edge I realised that I had passed more than 40 riders at that one place. At this point I was passed on a river-bed by a Yamaha 350 quad, going like 'stink' - the quad course had bypassed the canyon. A little further on as the river bed crossed a track he took off over a six foot drop and cartwheeled, I never saw him again either.

Seeing him disappear into the dust should have warned me but didn't, I took the same drop and landed in boulders, but stayed on. It wasn't possible to relax anywhere and the 50 miles were ridden standing up. Despite this, when the finish came into view I was disappointed to finish because it had been so enjoyable. I rode in with numbers 29 and 40 having started an hour behind them.

Background. Dot:

Back at the start and finish area things were much the same as at any enduro with back-up crews sorting out fuel cans, tools and drinks. It wouldn't have been possible to enforce a 'no smoking' rule in the refuelling area as it's compulsory for all Spaniards to keep a lit cigarette between their lips when carrying fuel around.

The expected time for a lap was around two hours

and sure enough after one hour 40 minutes the fast riders began to arrive for a splash and dash. The local hero number 7 on a Gas Gas was first, he seemed to know the route rather well! He was way ahead of number 6 riding a KTM closely followed by the winner of the timed stage number 99 on a Honda CR, then 147 riding a 510 KTM, he was on a flier.

All the early arrivals were enduro riders and it was some time before the first MX bike arrived. The air was full of shouts from pit crews trying to attract the attention of their rider and with riders yelling at the pit crews to get some urgently needed tool, the usual melee. The timekeepers set up their equipment on a trailer with several umbrellas to give some shade and they looked down with amusement at the activity. They weren't expecting anyone, who had to get a finish time (ie the one-lappers), to arrive for quite a while and suddenly found Jim rushing towards the tapes. He had taken a few minutes over two hours to complete the 50 miles, one of his better rides. El 'Supa-veterano' they shouted and slapped his back and shook his hand amazed that he had got round the course and was first to arrive. A quad that had in fact put up a slightly faster time closely followed him in but the next veteran was some five minutes behind. Many riders who were due to do a second lap just decided not to continue, as it would've taken even longer than the first.

All eyes were focused down the track looking for the dust as the winners came storming in. As expected it was to be number 7, Miguel Martinez who arrived first, closely followed by Jose Ferrandiz number 99 with rider number 147 on the big KTM tucked in behind him. He finished in third place overall, his name in the results was shown as just 'Jesus' so maybe that explains the fantastic ride. Riders arrived thick and fast including the Montesa Capra that finished the course.

Back to town to load the bikes, shower and enjoy a dish of paella that was cooking over the open fire. Not too much beer as we had to drive and try to stay awake until we reached a campsite. The awards ceremony was the usual noisy affair with much cheering and clapping. Jim had won his class and was congratulated by riders saying they hoped they were still enjoying their riding when they were his age. The organisers of the event had put in much hard work to provide a good weekend of fun and entertainment and Jim wished he could stay to take part in the next event.

It is a good format and works well with everyone able to take part at their own level. Free food and beer with music and entertainment is a novel idea but it is all part of the spirit of the series. For those that are tempted the next available round is in Burgos on 4/5/6 August and the final round is on 11/12 November - venue to be announced just as soon as they find a suitable disused railway station!

So why not have a Spanish holiday with a difference this year? Forget Benidorm, Torremolinos and Ibiza, instead load up your trailbike and watch the world's best enduro riders at the Six days in Granada, October 31st-5th November and then do the last round of the TT LAS 4 ESTACIONES. You will be made most welcome and have a great time especially if you say Jim Jones sent you. Contact: Rafael Rubio, Moto Club Rozas Racing, Dtor Toledo, 44.28230 Las Rozas (Madrid), Tel: 608723420 or 915769339. Fax: 914012453.

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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)	
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X-TRACKS

TUSCANY, ITALY, 2000

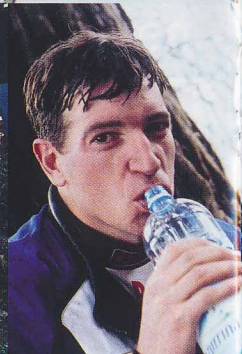
Photos: Michael Alschner & Niki Krutak; Story: CG, SP and LS-P

X-TRACKS is the crazy brain-child of Gunter Mair, an Austrian TV journalist, who just loves bringing wacky off-road events to our screens in Eurosport's 'Off-road Magazine'. He dreamed up the idea of combining off-road riding with survival skills, with the result being a made-for-TV grueling mix-up of trials, mountain climbing, enduro and outward-bound adventure challenges.

The general idea is to take a handful of international two rider

teams, equipped enduro bikes; all bristling with hooks, loops, pulleys and ropes, and drop them into an exotic and photogenic location. There, the teams promptly create havoc by trying to navigate a course comprising of nerve-wracking natural obstacles while attempting to race each other, all captured for posterity by intrepid film crews.

As with all good adventures, this one was located somewhere exotic - the sunny snow-capped Appennino mountains, where we descended on



■ **Above:** Tatjana, Austria's top female enduro rider got soaked early on. Team TBM gallantly offered to towel her down

■ **Above:** Dakar legends Jean Roma and Esteve Isidre wish they were back in the desert. ■ **Right:** Team TBM, drenched, dejected and dehydrated and there was still two and a half days to go...

■ **Main pic:** Hanging it out to dry. This is what you do with your KTM after submerging it in a river...

■ **Above:** X-Tracks HQ, deep in the heart of Tuscany. ■ **Right:** If you're going to fall here... Try and make sure both feet are on the same side of the rope! Ouch...

X TRACKS

TUSCANY, ITALY, 2000

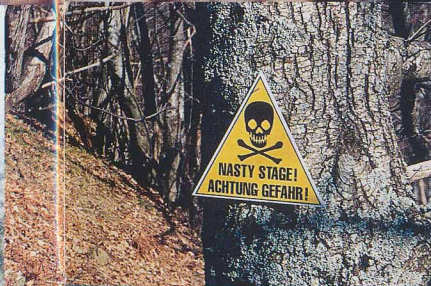


the little town of Lucca, not far north of Pisa in Italy.

The rest of the competitors were the usual impressive mix of top European riders, aided and abetted by the likes of former snowboard champ, Jean Nerva. In the best traditions of Aussies pretending to be Brits, we prepared to defend our national honour against two Austrian teams, two German ones, one Spanish, one Israeli and one mixed International Women's team.

There was no skiving off in this event, it was straight into a 'trials on steroids' section - two kilometres of monstrous wet and rocky uphill going in the Salamander River, and we hadn't even left the hotel grounds yet!

Everyone got stuck, but eventually pushed and carried their bikes to the top, dripping with sweat to arrive at the first lunch-stop near the snowline. We had a long wait ahead, so a fire to dry us out was

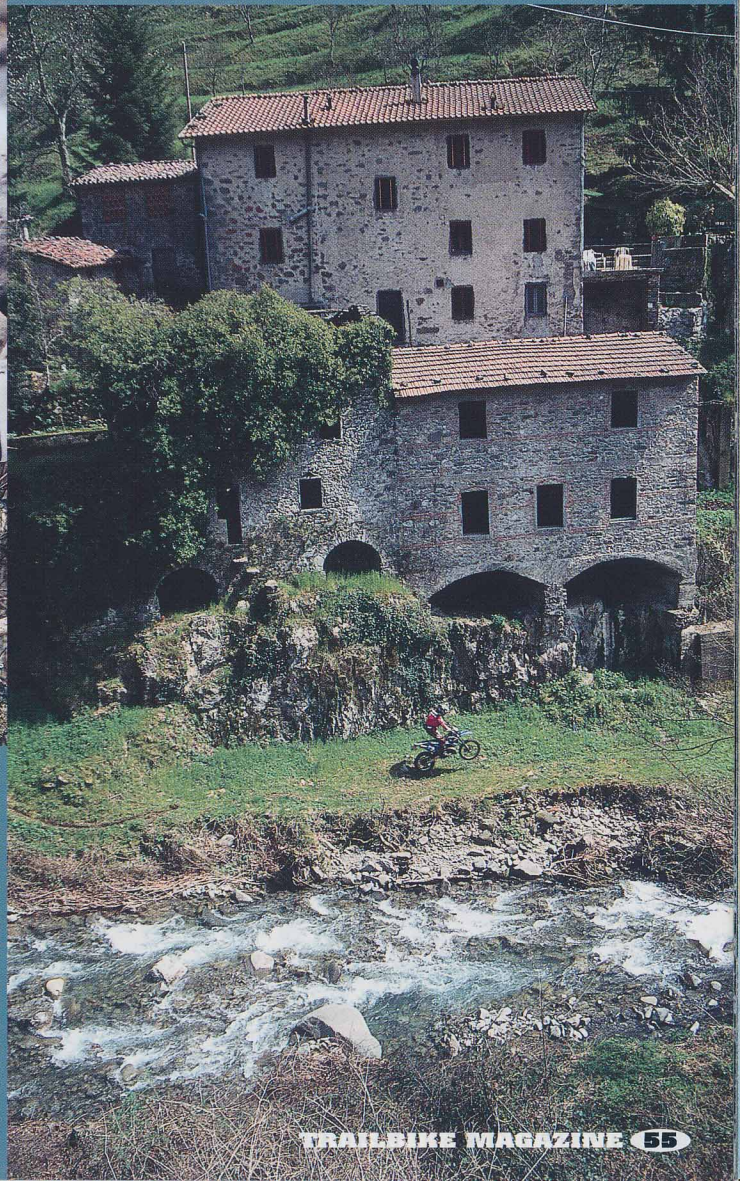


■ **Top:** 'Eeeeyyaaaarrhhouch' German hard man Thomas Gunther demonstrates the classic goose-step.

■ **Above:** Uh-oh. When you see that sign you know you're in for trouble. The only thing worse would be if the sign read Achtung... Mines!

■ **Left:** Hold-it while I get your picture... The TBM boys push and heave more than they do at the dinner table!

■ **Right:** This is Italy - biking heaven. Clear waters, bright sunshine, stunning scenery, and pretty girls (not shown)...





X-TRACKS

TUSCANY, ITALY - 2009

■ **Left:** 'The rear end's not hooking up too well mate, and it's all getting kinda' squirrely.' Clive tries a novel line while Si sensibly waits to see what happens to him before following on.

■ **Right:** In X-Tracks there's at least as much pushing as riding.

■ **Bottom left:** Gunned to have finished behind team TBM, the Spanish superheroes take it out on their tyres.

■ **Below:** Spurred on by the producer's bet that they wouldn't make day two, Birgit and Tatjana not only finished the whole event beating a number of well respected riders in the process, but went on to claim their prize - the chance to cut off the producer's long hair. You can be sure they didn't let him get away without a short back & sides...

■ **Right:** With icy glacial waters below them, the German Gas team heads inland.



very welcome, although I don't know if melting my helmet liner was a smart move.

After blowing out the flames in my lid and enduring some ribbing from the rest of the teams, we proceeded to tackle the descent of the three-step waterfall, followed by a 'Tibetan rope bridge' (this is just a fancy name for a bridge without much rope). Having wrangled bikes and riders over this obstacle, a further 40km of nice fire roads and excellent single track saw us finish the day, by another very welcome fire. This time I kept my lid away.

Fortunately there was an old mountain house for us to sleep in, so we didn't have to freeze in a tent. Clive always claims he's never had a bad night in a tent, but then he's never had to spend a night in a tent with Clive!

We started day two in excellent form and proved it by riding the first section twice - accompanied by the French team who missed the

same course marker that we had. The next section was a rock strewn, snow-melt river complete with a six metre drop, where we caught up some of our lost time as other teams struggled with drowned bikes.

As we manhandled the Gasser over the edge of the drop, the rope snapped. Neither of us saw what happened to our sturdy blue EC300, as we were left standing at the top with a short piece of rope in our hands - but we heard the sickening crunch! Surprisingly, it survived in better shape than the KTM, which suffered a broken throttle, despite being very cautiously lowered.

After sweating over the potential damage to our two precious test bikes, we were able to take it easy in the untimed last stage of the day. And we were rewarded with 50km of fantastic tracks before fetching up on top of a mountain, in a glorious part of the world.

The last day started gently, by taking us on a long untimed trail





Left: Thundering down the stairs in a quaint Italian village is all part of the X-Tracks experience.
Left inset: The bike doesn't look too bad considering team T&M had just dropped it off the top of a six metre waterfall when the rope broke.
Above: Riders eye view of the rope-bridge crossing. Don't worry it's only a 20m drop!
Below: Going down!
Right: In contrast to the Austrian team's approach to this waterfall (pictured), the French team adopted the curious, but effective tactic of lowering the bike down with the rider still on board!



ride through some absolutely fantastic tracks. Having built up a false sense of security, the rest of the track was extreme, with loads of pushing, pulling, and truly scary and dangerous drops into very fast rivers. Somehow we made it to the end intact, to take fifth place for Britain, with first place honours going to the Austrian team.

Another mad adventure safely over, we managed to get home and return both test bikes (which were well and truly tested), without getting lynched by the importers!

To anyone who fancies a go at this sort of silliness... Just try walking on a foot wide, sloping granite path, in slippery motocross boots, whilst wrangling your enduro bike across with you.

Now imagine that some heartless creature is filming your endeavours for the amusement of all your mates.

Mind you don't slip now.....



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Technical TOPICAL Tips

FILTER FETTLING

Cleaning out your bike's air filter is an essential (if somewhat tedious) part of routine dirt bike maintenance. As the engine's main defence from the ingress of mud, grit, water and dust, it is essential that you keep your airfilter as clean and well oiled as possible so as to avoid the risk of engine damage, or excessive wear.

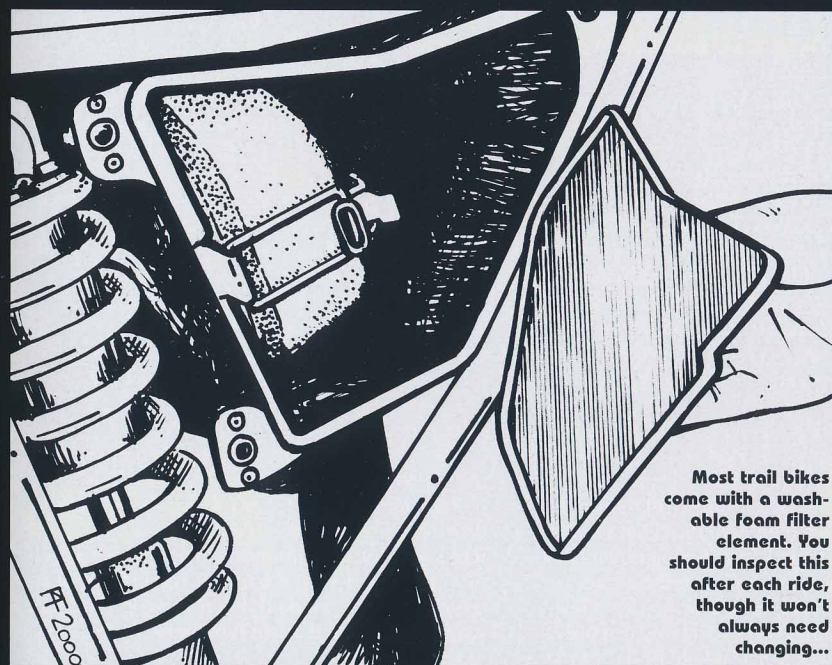
You won't necessarily have to clean your air filter after every ride - it depends upon the conditions you've been riding through. A regular trail ride on a dryish day shouldn't clog the filter that much. On the other hand if you've been racing, or have ridden through sloppy mud, deep water or worst of all dust, then you're going to have to give the filter a wash.

Smart riders have at least one spare filter (if not a few) kicking around. Pattern filters cost from as little as £7, and not only does it save time, effort and money if you wash a whole bunch of them together, but it means you can restrict your filter cleaning sessions to a once monthly occurrence.

Air filter cleaning is getting easier thanks to the advent of water-based solvents and aerosol filter

oils, even so it's a dirty job and one that shouldn't be tackled without a pair of waterproof gloves. Latex gloves, washing up gloves, plastic diesel gloves (from a garage fore-court) or even just a pair of plastic bags slipped over your hands will all do the trick.

Begin by removing your airfilter from the bike and taking out the filter cage (which



Most trail bikes come with a washable foam filter element. You should inspect this after each ride, though it won't always need changing...



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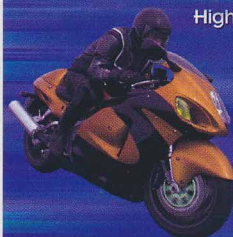
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Technical TOPICAL Tips

Once the filter is dry you should examine it for nicks or tears and if its got ANY holes which go all the way through, then discard it and buy a new one. Assuming it's fine however, next you need to apply oil to the outside of it, and there are any number of ways of doing this.



One way of applying oil to your air filter is to pour the oil into a plastic bag and drop the filter in afterwards, working the oil well into it...

The simplest and cleanest way is to buy spray-on air filter oil (which comes in an aerosol can). Simply place your air filter on an old newspaper and spray it liberally all over, and then leave it a few minutes to dry. This is by far the easiest way of doing things - even if it's perhaps not the cheapest.

While specific filter oil (which is stringy and tacky to the touch) is certainly the best stuff to use, it's not the only way of oiling a filter. Any (CLEAN) oil will do the trick, although light gear oil is probably better than heavy engine oil.

Take a small transparent plastic bag, pour in a good slosh of oil and then drop your air filter in and

wrap the bag around it. Now with the bag held tightly closed, squash the filter around in your hands ensuring that it gets a good dosing with the oil. You may find that you need to add more oil as the filter soaks it up. Then, once you've ensured that the filter is completely covered, give it a good hard squeeze to wring out any excess oil and put it back on the cleaned cage.

Before reinstalling it in your bike there's just a couple of more things you need to do. Using a rag, clean out the airbox and filter mounting plate, making sure that nothing drops down into the carburettor boot. Then take some waterproof grease and smear it on the flat edge of the filter in order to ensure a good waterproof seal with the mounting plate.

Finally, reinstall your filter ensuring that it's fitted properly, and you're ready for action. Remember don't discard your used solvent down the drain (unless it's water soluble). Allow it to stand for ten minutes so that any debris settles out, then decant it back into an old petrol can which is clearly marked 'Filter cleaner', and that way you can use it again next time.

Good luck.

holds the filter in shape). Bung the dirty filter(s) in a bucket (along with the cage) and slosh in some solvent. There are a number of specialist solvents on the market, and the new water-based filter oils have their own unique solvents, but the quick and easy one everyone uses is petrol. Give the filter a good work through with the solvent ensuring that any oil or grease is dissolved, and rinse the filter through with fresh solvent (from the inside out) to ensure that any dust or remaining dirt is completely removed. Some people stop at this stage and leave their filters to dry (obviously petrol evaporates pretty quickly), before applying the oil. But if I've got time I always wash the air filter out for a second time with a big bucket of soapy water. This avoids any risk of solvent residue dissolving the fresh oil, and gets them really clean. Having washed the filter thoroughly, squeeze out any excess water, then give the filter a really hard shake to drive out as much moisture as possible. Now bung it in the corner of the garage, or on top of the boiler and leave it to dry for a few hours. Obviously, this is where having a spare filter to hand can save you a whole heap of time.

Good luck.



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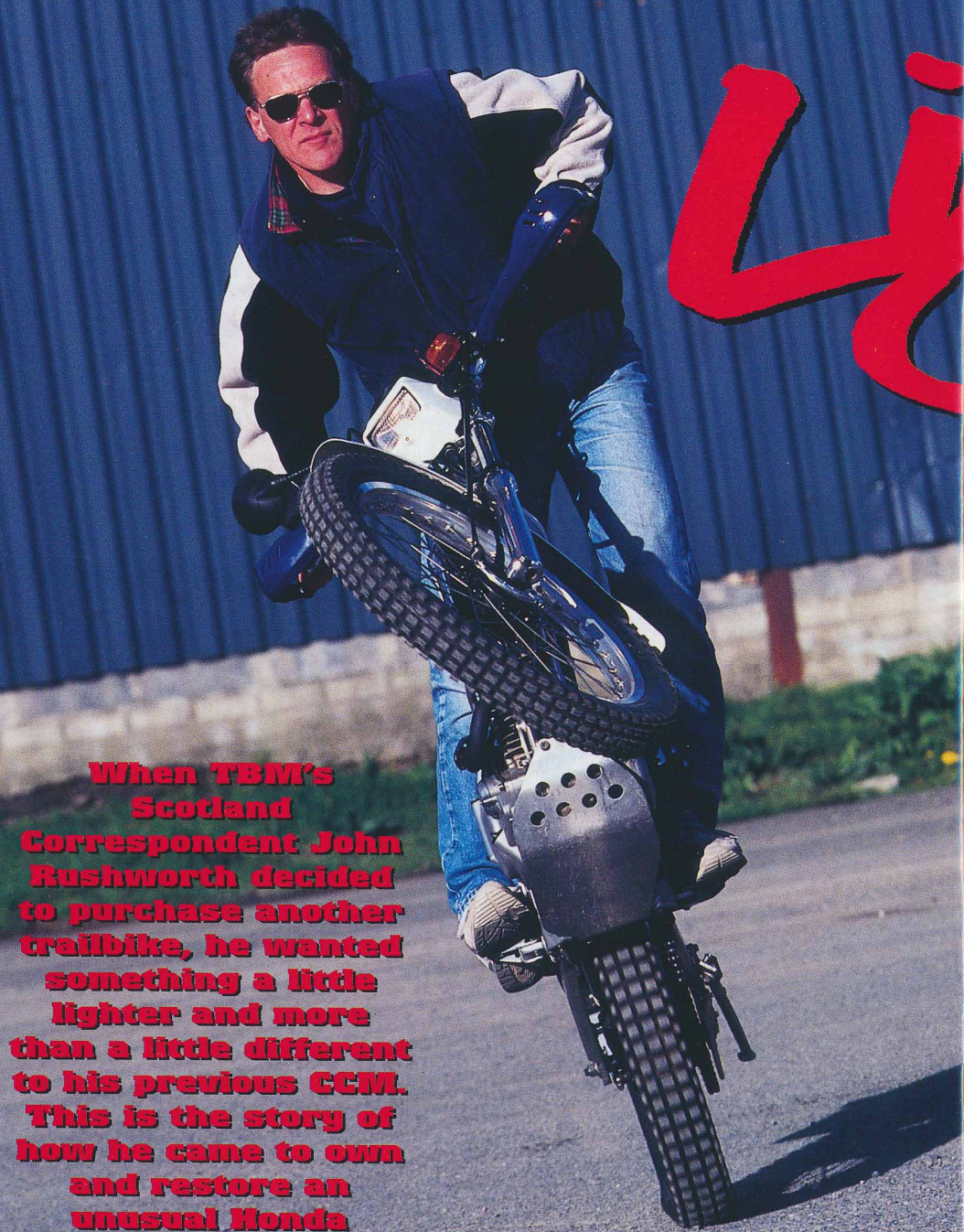
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**Trials+Motocross
News** (the original)



Lighten UP



When TBM's Scotland Correspondent John Rushworth decided to purchase another trailbike, he wanted something a little lighter and more than a little different to his previous CCM. This is the story of how he came to own and restore an unusual Honda TLR250...

Story: John Rushworth, Pics: Si Melber

For much of the recent past my trail bikes have doubled up as my main form of transport, so I've needed a simple and reliable all round on/off-road machine. This has dictated mid to large four-stroke singles, as these tend to have good (road) cruising speeds with fair off-road manners and economy. Yet when cost and environmental considerations are added into the equation I find myself going back to smaller and lighter four-stroke trail bikes. Add in a few factors like costs and age (mine), and small bikes begin to make a lot of sense. Larger four-strokes tend to eat tyres, chains, pads and fuel, and I'm not keen on the buzziness of stokers. One other paramount factor of bike choice features highly here in Scotland: much of my off-roading is undertaken on my own (with the minimum of disturbance), and the prospect of falling off and getting trapped underneath a heavy bike, is too scary to think about.

Time for a re-think. As most of my competition off-roading has been in trials in my 20s and 30s, why not try a four-stroke trials-type trailie with a few modifications for the type of riding I do? Of course there's no point in going back to a Triumph Tiger Cub, as I'd probably end up stuck in the hills fixing the distributor or something, but then again no modern trials bike is four-stroke. I'd already owned an Italjet Scott so that was out, as was the Honda (HRC) RTL four-stroke trials bike of the 1980s - simply on the grounds of cost. They still fetch £2500-3000 now! That left (if I'm not mistaken) the Honda TLR200 and 250cc twinshocks.



It may look like a fully fledged trials bike, but the TLR is a proper trailbike, complete with horn, lights and ignition key...

It was while browsing the web that I came across an unusual Japanese import which appeared at first sight to fit the bill exactly. The Honda TLR250 trailbike was a later monoshock version of the TLR we got over here, modelled (I believe) on the exclusive RTL250 trials iron. In much the same way I suppose that the awesome RC30 was the road-going version of the all-conquering RVF750 road racer. The good old Japs... Now all I had to do was find one.

Shortly after Christmas (having sold my CCM), I found myself flicking through an old copy of T&MX (while nursing the obligatory Hogmanay hangover), when out popped the ad: 'Honda TLR250 for sale (choice of ten) - open to offers'. Bill Smith's of Chester had brought in a batch of ten bikes back in November and when I rang them to find out more, they told me they had still had one bike left.

Lighten UP



This sort of stuff is child's play on the TLR

My heart sank as I arrived in Chester (a 700 mile round trip) and laid eyes on her for the first time; the frame was rusty, the engine corroded and the rest of the cycle parts looked pretty average. Nevertheless it started up and ran well, and made no horrible sounds as I whizzed up the road, so a deal was struck for £1000 (the earlier

ones had gone for 1500 quid) and I bundled the bike into my car and headed home - questioning my own sanity for having just purchased a 1986 motorcyle at such a price.

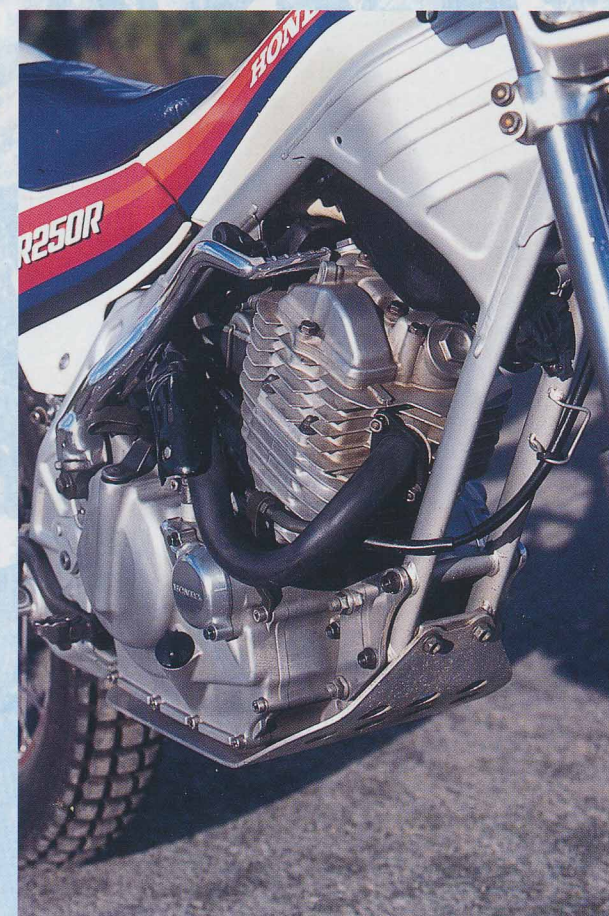
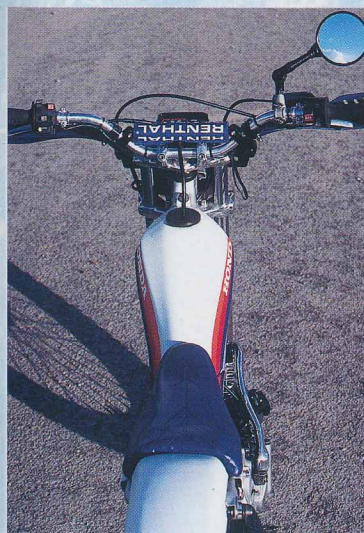
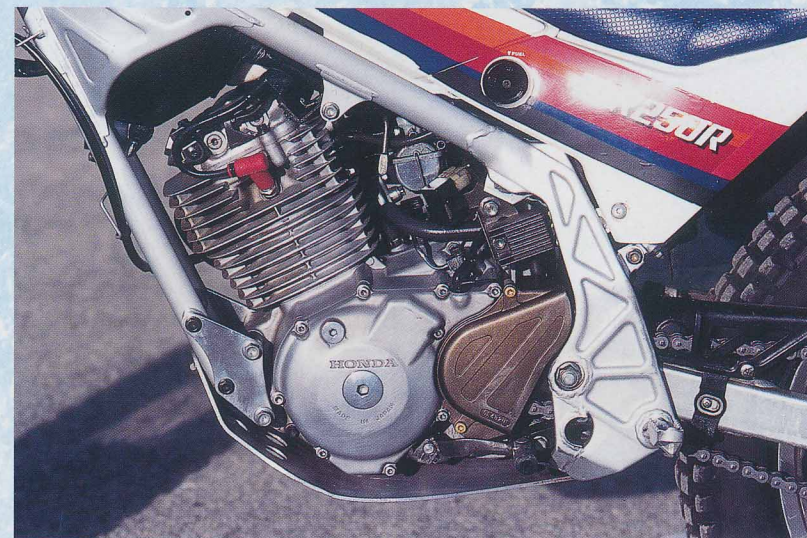
No fancy workshops for me, up a flight of stairs and into the living room of my one bedroomed flat to evaluate matters. What, though, had I bought?

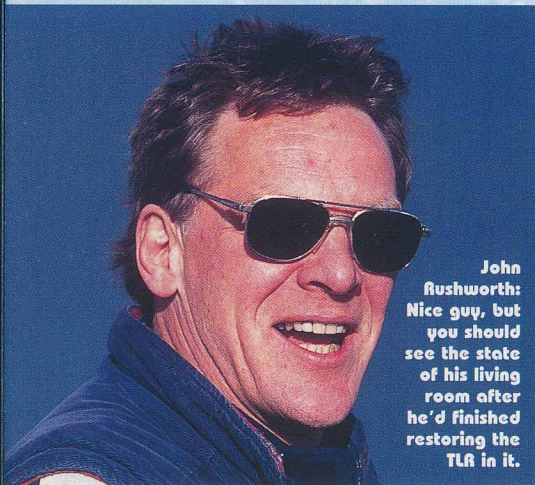
On the face of it this Jap market TLR250G (G being the '86 year suffix) appears to be the four-stroke equivalent of the Gas Gas Pampera (a trail oriented trials bike), and seems to slot in nicely between today's modern trials bike and something like a Yamaha Serow. The TLR has all the road going niceties that modern trials bike do not - decent seat height, indicators, ignition key, electric horn, some fuel range and a fair top speed.

The perimeter style frame (with die-pressed side plates) is actually made from steel even though it's painted to look like alloy, and like all bikes of this type, the sumpguard doubles up as the bottom frame rails. Conventional non-cartridge forks with air caps (to effectively increase spring rate) are fitted at the front, and a Honda Pro-Link rising rate monoshock handles the rear. As you would expect there is only pre-load adjustment on the shock to fiddle with and certainly no niceties such as rebound and compression damping at either end.

A trials style wheelbase of 52 inches ensures rapid feet-up turns together with an estimated weight of about 200lb (80-90kg). Compare this to an average trail bike with a wheelbase of about 54-58 inches and a weight of around 120-140kg and you begin to appreciate the size of the TLR. The other main differences of course are the slim-

Right: By mid-80s standards the TLR looked pretty radical, with its perimeter frame & underseat (dual) fuel tank. Below Right: SOHC Honda lump is superbly compact for a four-banger. Note highly polished kickstarter. Bottom: The TLR is incredibly narrow. Wide trials bars offer plenty of leverage. J&R has raised the seat height by 1.5". High gloss finish didn't stop him entering it in the Cambrian Rally this year...





John Rushworth: Nice guy, but you should see the state of his living room after he'd finished restoring the TLR in it.

ness of the tank, the forward-sweep of the wide bars and the fact that the seat height is incredibly low. Naturally a 21" front wheel and 18" rear grace the machine which is now fitted with trials tyres. Teensy but neat drum brakes show up the bike's age and are probably its biggest drawback even though they work well enough. Completing the cycle parts is a dual fuel tank holding just over a gallon of petrol.

The larger of the two tanks sits between the frame rails (in the normal place), but it's linked via a pipe to the smaller (reserve) tank which is where the air-box usually sits. On the TLR the airbox is placed neatly behind the headstock, directly above the engine. That means there's no battery room and the lights and CDI ignition run straight off the motor. A tidy out of the way ignition and steering lock switch it all on before an easy kick, with kick start operated decompressor, fires the motor.

The engine technology is nothing whizzo and in fact that's part of the appeal. It's an air-cooled, chain driven, two-valve, SOHC, 244cc four-stroke single with a six speed gearbox. Unlike some other small bore Hondas however it has a proper cartridge oil filter (like the XR range) instead of the cleanable gauze found on bikes like the SL230. This leads me to think the bike may well have had some serious, if costly design, thrown at it; the presence of alloy yokes and an all-alloy swingarm also suggest this, as similar bikes tend to have these items fabricated in silver painted steel to save on production costs.

As you would expect from a motor of this size and technology it's no fire breathing monster. The long inlet tract and vertical (oval shaped) small-port carb helps deliver strong bottom-end, and together with a soft cam and small-bore header

pipe makes for a lovely mellow power delivery - perfect for finding grip in the most slippery of conditions. No surprise then that this engine cranks out just 12hp at the rear wheel - top end power counts for nothing in this game.

The living room inspection revealed the winter project work to come. Rusty frame, rust in tanks, corroded engine and cycle parts, cracked rims, no front mudguard, pitted and leaking forks, bent bars and controls, ripped seat and 17,000km on the clock. This bike had obviously lived outside and been workaday transport for someone. A crooked sidestand that allowed the bike to lean precariously accounted for the bent bars, but at least the engine ran sweetly.

Slumping on the sofa I checked the cash balance from the sale of the CCM - it was going to be tight. If one thing was in my favour it was that this bike had done no competition work. It simply appeared from the flat-worn tyres, unscarred sumpguard and sweet motor that the TLR had been run on the road with regular oil changes. A sticker on the swingarm revealed the address of some unpronounceable Japanese city near the coast (as I subsequently discovered), hence all the corrosion.

As is my want, many roll-up cigs and coffee later, the TLR was in bits in my living room and costs could be quantified and parts despatched for fixing. Not though without some elbow grease from me first. Fortunately I have some nice files and an old 1hp Barr & Stroud buffing machine (which my brother picked up for a fiver) for polishing up metal. I'd run out of buffing wheels but the local bead-blasters had some part worn ones for sale and polishing soap compound is easily available.

Before cycle part polishing began in earnest, the engine was sent to be bead-blasted. It was done in one piece with very careful masking of seals, ports and bits that didn't need blasting (such as the chrome oil pipe). It seemed a shame to split the motor when it ran so well - so I left well alone. The frame and cycle parts like the side-stand and pegs etc got sand blasted. Sand is too coarse for engines, hence bead or vapour blasting is preferable in that area.

What to do though about the head and barrel nuts that were corroded? Rather than disturb them I let them get blasted and then used Gun Blue to re-colour them from their sorry corroded and non galvanised state. The cases got stainless cap head screws as I hate things that rust.

Popping the cleaned carb back on after wiping off blast material and unmasking all the parts - had the motor looking good. Shame it had lost the gold coloured cases and black barrel. But when it comes to restoration I'm no pedant, so I

Warm spring days were just made for this...



Lighten UP

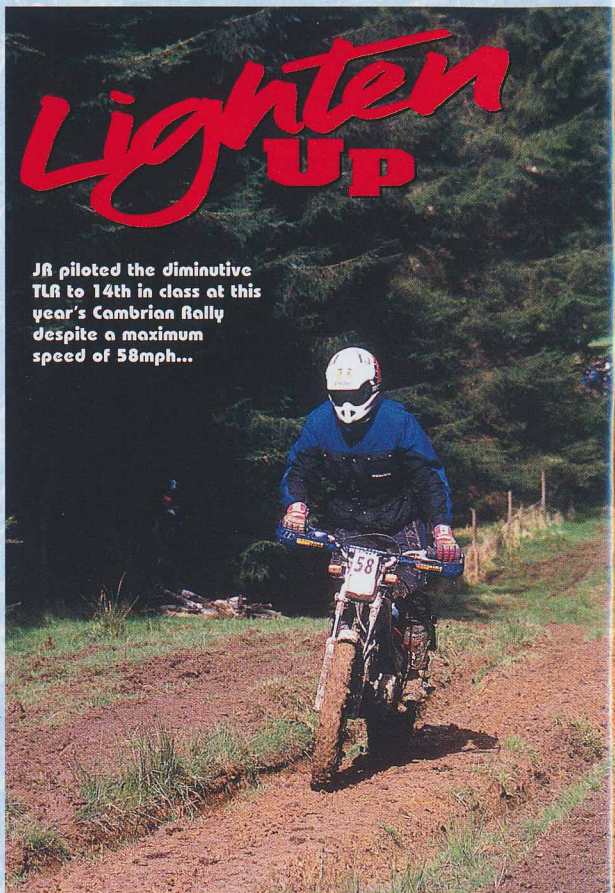
On the Dyno

We never expected major horsepower from a bike like the TLR so the rear wheel output of 12hp @ 5000rpm measured on the JK motorcycles Fuchs BEI-251 dynamometer, came as no surprise. This equates to a soft and manageable output from tickover through the mid range and with a flat torque curve (of 12.3lbsft) from 2000-5000rpm, offers maximum grip and traction. This is very similar to an XT225 Serow but is even flatter on the TLR. The fact that the TLR revs to 7000rpm is of no great consequence since both torque and peak power drop away after 5000rpm. And while 12hp may not feel like a lot, the benefits of having no traction-breaking surges of power means that all of it can be transferred to the ground.

Thanks to James Kilpatrick of JK Motorcycles for the dynamometer run. They're at Block 5, Unit 4, Munro Road, Stirling, FK7 7TP (01786 450249).

Honda TLR250R-G

Engine:	Air-cooled 4-stroke
Displacement:	244cc
Bore & stroke:	72.x60mm
Comp ratio:	8.5:1
Length:	2030mm
Width:	820mm
Height:	1110mm
Wheelbase:	1335mm
Weight:	93kg
Transmiss:	6-speed



JR piloted the diminutive TLR to 14th in class at this year's Cambrian Rally despite a maximum speed of 58mph...

let that go. It looked fine as a matt alloy colour anyhow, and could now be easily cleaned with a scouring pad when dirty.

Polishing is a mucky and time consuming (if satisfying) job, and draw-filing off all casting marks prior to polishing takes a lot of time. But it rewards with a nice contoured and gleaming finish when done. I did the yokes, fork legs, brake operating arms and that sensuous kickstart. I left the swingarm as is, due to the fact that anodising is better protection - it's harder than polished alloy and survives dirt scrapes for longer.

I decided against powder coating or enamelling the frame as both tend to chip and are difficult to touch up. Also the thickness of both processes means a lot of work getting bolt holes etc back to size. The simple solution is tins of smooth Hammerite spray which is relatively cheap and easy to touch up - no primer required. My loft with skylight open was the spray booth!

With the engine back in the newly painted frame I waited for the beautiful re-built wheels to

arrive from Talon - now fitted with Excel Rims, stainless spokes and new sprockets. A new DID O-ring chain was also fitted. Wheel bearings were renewed and hubs and brake plates cleaned. The brake linings were fine and each one was carefully re-assembled.

The swinging arm and suspension went back together well and thanks to generous production costs back in the '80s, all the bearings and seals in the arm and linkages were fine, as they'd been properly greased. Amazing what the fitting of simple grease nipples can do for maintenance!

Hard chromed and reground fork legs arrived back from Roackroam Engineering in Liverpool in good time, along with new seals, and in went a new set of head bearings. Soon a rolling chassis emerged worthy of accepting the engine which was a doddle to lift back in. With little chance of getting a workshop manual in English, reassembling the wiring and lights (no messy battery) was done from memory. The rear mudguard and headlight looked expensive to replace as they had

surface cracking from UV light and heat. Some work with steel wool made them look fair again and a carbon fibre sticker covered the cracks. Fortunately part of the purchase deal was a new genuine mudguard with fork brace which arrived a few days later.

New Renthal bars and shorty levers along with non standard Polisport handguards made up the tidy and compact front end. I chose cheap stubby levers to gain a good gap between bar end and lever to save on broken bits in a fall. It works well as do the high rise six-inch trials bars for standing up comfortably on the trail. The only other non standard item is the seat. MXA did a great job on this for me. Instead of the dipped and contoured trials style slippery seat, I opted to raise the front and back of the seat foam and have it flat across the top, thereby raising the seat by a full inch and a half. Luckily for me MXA had some colour coordinated strong seat material with built in grip (when standard you slide off the back when the bike rears up), and this gave a reasonable margin of comfort on the trail. Not bad for 30 quid.

Just about there. The one pain of a job was the fuel system. A normal way to get rust out of a steel tank is to use ball bearings and a good shake. The difficulty with the TLR is that there are two tanks and a bunch of small bore hoses, pipes and filters. I simply had to use Redex in the tanks and keep draining the rust solution. The Redex upper cylinder lubricant is kind to motors and helps keep any new tank rust at bay.

Between the two tanks at 60+ mpg it gives a range of just over 70 miles, which is okay if not ideal. With the airbox in the headstock it's great for deep water crossings and rather than buy a genuine Honda air filter, it was easy to make up the cone filter shape from an eight quid oblong of filter foam. The foam was simply glued with contact adhesive, and I've enough left for two more. A quick spray job on the tank with Ford Polar White (after masking off the Honda stickers) had the main fuel tank looking good again.

Time then to run the motor (after bouncing the bike out of my living room and back down the stairs) but not before an oil and filter change. Some GTX and a new XR400 filter helped the bike see life again, but I used some flushing oil prior to that for peace of mind. At first oil change I switched to Mobil 1 fully synthetic after a chat with their chemist and in the interests of motor longevity and potential parts rarity. A nice new Denso fine-wire plug and one of those neat, red T-shaped NGK fully waterproof caps got the sparks working reliably. The bike started second kick and ran near perfectly. The only problem I found was leaking fuel when the bike was on its

sidestand. This I discovered was due to the fact that the brass floats in the carb had corroded and punctured. At some time in the past a previous owner had soldered up the puncture holes and this now makes the floats too heavy. Some new ones are on order.

Apart from that, this is all the work that was needed and the bike got taxed, insured and MOT'd for 100 quid. A couple of shakedown runs and some secondhand trials tyres saw me with a Cambrian Rally entry and sheer delight at the sweetness, frugality, manoeuvrability and the whisper quiet engine of what must be one of only 20 or 30 of these bikes in the UK. They are also getting tough to find in Japan - I understand there may be a later 260cc version too, but have not yet seen one. In fact due to the rarity of either beast we'd be delighted to hear from any other TLR owners out there...

I've not had much time on the bike but the Cambrian turned out to be a great testing ground. I experimented with gearing and switched from the stock 14/43 gearing to 14/40 for the event (three teeth make a lot of difference on a small bike), in the hope of wider gaps between the gears, less gear changes and a better top speed. Wrong choice. On original gearing the motor would eventually pull 63mph on the flat. But my Cambrian gearing made sixth gear hopeless for the trail and only just achievable as an overdrive on the tarmac. Top speed was 58mph on the stages with 65mph on a good downhill tarmac road. We live and learn. The heavier 12.5wt fork oil was also too thin for the conventionally damped forks, so I'll try 17.5wt next.

Here's a little bike that is so much fun and so easy to ride (not to mention pick up and start), that size and power becomes almost irrelevant. I was well chuffed with 14th place in class. Were there awards for other areas, the bike would have placed me third in the over 40s against an 800cc BMW, second in the over 40s 250 class against a TTR250, tenth in the 250cc class against CRMs with twice the power - and if there were a class on power to weight - would the TLR have placed me first overall in the Cambrian Rally?

In conclusion I think I've found the perfect four-stroke Pampera-style trailie that is so cheap to run and doesn't scare me witless in the forest. And despite 150 hours of restoration work and some two grand spent (including the purchase price), I'm still delighted with it. In due course, I'm hoping to purchase a front disc conversion from Talon to ensure more braking performance in the wet. But for now it'll do just fine, and I'm planning on entering it in a few Long Distance Trials to see if I can remember any of my old trials skills. I'll keep you posted on that one...

April 2000, Llandovery, Wales.

CAMBRIAN

Rally

Story: Bleaz; Pics: Si M
Paul Bleazard reports from the seventh annual trailbike gathering in mid-Wales...

For an event that damn near didn't happen at all, the seventh Cambrian Rally turned out pretty well, all things considered. In mid-March, less than six weeks before the due day and with the rally booked solid since the end of January, Forest Enterprise, the guardians of the Crychan Forest, simply announced, without any warning, that the Cambrian was to be cancelled.

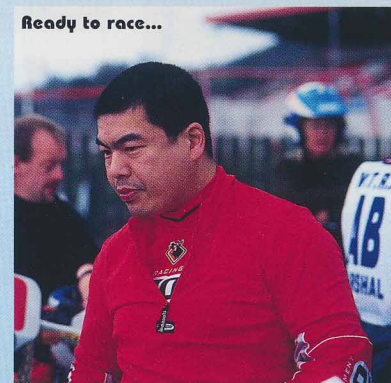
Fortunately event secretary Bob Jeffries didn't buckle under pressure and persuaded the FE to reconsider their peremptory decision once a few safeguards and route changes had been agreed to protect the bleedin', sorry, breeding wildlife which, as he pointed out, have managed to survive the last 25 years of occasional motorsport use without too much difficulty. (One of the concessions was a 10mph speed limit for about half a mile near a breeding site.) There was a large sigh of relief throughout the

British Isles and the usual motley crew of men, women and machines of all kinds descended on Llandovery for the traditional Easter fun-fest, providing a significant boost to the local economy. There were five riders from Guernsey this year and Ian Greasby came all the way from Gabon in West Africa to compete!

Although the course was the longest ever, with a lap of over 50 miles, this also meant there were fewer timed stages than ever since there wasn't time to run the usual three laps. With the three stages on the first 'sighting' lap untimed for safety reasons, this meant there were only three stages actually run against the clock - once each - rather than the nine (three times three) of earlier Cambrians. A total of less than eight racing miles in over 120 covered in the day. I think that was probably the biggest disappointment this year for those of a competitive bent, and it meant there



Ready to race...



was no opportunity to redress time lost on cock-ups in the stages on the first timed lap, since it was also the last.

The rain held off virtually all day and while some of the course was very wet from recent downpours, at least it meant there wasn't much of a dust problem. Most bikes had their waterproofing well tested though and quite a few failed to pass....

The first part of the course used the large chunk of MoD land east of the Llywell-Tirabad road which was first used about

three years ago. There were no special stages on it and nothing remotely difficult to ride but it actually accounted for several breakdowns due to the deep puddles and two of the most spectacular prangs of the event.

The first half mile of loose gravel-surfaced Route 60 is a long straight but it's followed by a downhill right hander which is hidden by a blind brow. It's a memorable sort of corner for most people and a guy on a 125 broke his collarbone there the first year it was used. I recognised and remembered a buttock-clenching moment from three years back but unfortunately Dave 'the Goldfish' Crasher Cornish didn't even remember it from his sighting lap a couple of hours earlier...

In his hurry to make up time lost looking for fuel and being nerfed off on the last stage of the first lap, Crasher cast caution to the wind and arrived at the blind brow with the brand new test

CAMBRIAN Rally

Some got off and pushed



XR650 wound out in top gear.... He left the road at about 60mph and parted company with the bike shortly afterwards. Dave was very lucky to get away with a severe shaking and a bit of concussion but for him, the rally was over before the timing had even begun.

The brand new (one day old) aftermarket alloy bars were bent into road race mode on the left (which we replaced, next day) and there was a core sample of terra firma about a foot long stuffed up the exhaust pipe... But apart from that the bike seemed virtually unscathed. I think Dave would appreciate a 'crossed arrows' danger sign next year, chaps, although I suspect he'll remember that corner now till the day he stops riding...

On the twin-rut section further on Chief Marshal Taf Davies was even luckier than Dave to walk away from an encounter with a very large boulder which left his CCM in two pieces. The impact was so severe that the forks were torn clean out of the headstock and ended up several yards away from the rest of the bike!



That'll be a new set of bars then...



the trailbike class from Roger Johnson's KTM 200 although neither was as fast as the top three in the Sports bike class, all of whom were on 400cc four-strokes. Harry Lampkin was quickest on a KTM followed by Matthew Reed on a WR400 ahead of Darren Wilcock on another KTM 400. The two KTM riders also took the best team award along with the Over-40 sports winner Jay Midgley the third member of their Eurotek MMC crew.

Those bold enough to ride big bikes in the Cambrian

tend to go pretty well though. Anthony Griffiths was third trailbike and best up to 700cc on a KTM 640 and Mike Griffiths was sixth on another. (Three unrelated Griffiths in the top six!). Best Over-40, Noel Fletcher was equally impressive coming ninth on his special BMW 800 twin, just ahead of another CRM and David Cooper's little electric start XR250 trailbike. Former 125 ace Richard Brown has obviously recovered most of his speed since shortening his leg in Africa a couple of years ago, although his eighth on a Yamaha DT200WR was not as fast as fellow Moose Motorcycles team mate Bob 'Whizzo' Wyszomierski who was fifth on a CRM250 just two seconds behind Steven Manning.

Several fast Cambrian regulars such as Yoshi Adams and Brian Eland were away eating sand in the Tunisie Rally but that should take nothing away from a couple of newcomers who were highly placed on far from ideal machinery. Phil Cottiga took 12th on his TTR250 Yam at his first attempt, while our man Rushworth stormed to 14th on the TLR250 trials iron that you can read about elsewhere in this month's mag.

Considering how fast some parts of the stages were (well over 80mph for the fast men) and that his little Honda has less power than a restricted 125, it was no mean achievement. It's even more impressive when you consider that John is even older (and therefore more decrepit) than I am and did the whole event on a budget of about two shillings and sixpence using his humble Citroen 2CV as both race transporter from Scotland and overnight accommodation. In fact I have no hesitation in awarding JR the Blez 'Man of the Meeting' award.

JR can also take some credit for the fact that no less than 15 members of his 'Rides List' internet discussion group took part, many of whom, including two women, had never done any kind of competition before. There was a fast lady there too though. With Katrina Price spectating this year, the undisputed Queen of the Y2K Cambrian was Gill Myers, whose fine skills and shapely form I had the pleasure of watching at close quarters as she harried me in the snottier sections of the special stages. Last seen with a cracked crankcase in Ireland (TBM52), her ancient war-horse of an XT350 was back in storming action and embarrassing lots of lads on the latest enduro weaponry.

And talking of the Emerald Isle, the Irish contingent was as strong as ever, despite the absence of their spiritual leader Phil Gunn - away in North Africa. Pat Tighe took his venerable Mk1 Africa Twin to 13th and the now customary multi-cylinder award, just a few seconds ahead of the titchy TLR and Gill's XT, while over in the Sports section Brian Landers took ninth and best services on a KLX300 just ahead of fellow countrymen Richie Fair, Justin Barry and Joe Cahill.

Julian Bishop chose to ride his Husaberg 501 rather than his BMW R1100GS to take the Sports Over-50 award while Amanda Stewart snatched best Lady Sports at only her second attempt albeit at a modest pace which at least ensured she got round in one piece, unlike some...

Of the 191 starters 178 finished, and most of the retirees did at least one lap, which, considering how inexperienced many of them were, is not too shabby.

One of the most unusual bikes in the rally unfortunately fell victim early on to the deep



April 2000, Llandoverly, Wales.
CAMBRIAN Rally

pouring rain and competed in his road gear. He survived a chain de-railment, a trip over the handlebars and a serious bogging in the notorious Stage Three to finish the event and ride home again, singing the praises of the event and the marshals but determined to buy a lighter bike!

One of the Irish lads rode all the way from Limerick on a nearly new Suzuki DR-Z400S with a natty little perspex screen on it, although he admitted that he got left behind by the van! Personally I think there should be an award for the rider

puddles. Mark De Cooper Jones' Suzuki TS250 had a Kawasaki KLE500 engine shoe-horned into its chassis and sounded extraordinary - and Mark said it was going well until it drowned. Shame.

Rally regular David Brown was rewarded with the best over 700cc award for manhandling his BMW R80GS to 58th despite being born in the first half of the 20th century. An even rarer shaft-drive twin was Keith Elliott's V65 Moto Guzzi (54th) and Stewart Signol got his XTZ600 Tenere to the finish despite spending a whole hour stuck in the lottery of bogs and deep water that was Special Stage Three. Russel Tyner's heavyweight XR650L (the US trail version) was mysteriously placed in the sports category but his time would have placed him 23rd in Trail.

One improvement this year was some rudimentary seeding, with riders graded from one to ten for speed. This certainly helped cut down the number of potentially dangerous overtaking situations compared to previous years. At the other end of the scale the perseverance award goes to first timer Dan Jones who waterlogged his ride-to-work DT175 early on, but after a lot of fettling from the ever-helpful WTRA marshals, managed to get going again only to fall victim to a nasty throttle-sticking scenario in Stage Three which saw him crash on the finish line. This ensured another major spanning session but he got round unscathed on the second lap to make it to the finish. Good one.

Another heroic effort came from Zimbabwe-born Bob Harris, a Cambrian newcomer who rode his XT600E all the way from London in

with the best combination of elapsed time and distance travelled on their bike to the event... and not just because I clocked up over 500 miles on the Dakar BMW. (Blow by blow account, complete with impressive excuses for disappointing result, next month.)

Finally, I've given a bit of thought to some ways of returning the Cambrian to Bob Perring's original idea of an event for big trail bikes and off road beginners, rather than a flat out blast for nutters on enduro thumpers and lightweight two-stroke trailbikes...

How about the following changes to the regs?:

- 1) 30 places to be reserved for multi-cylinder machines and singles over 650cc until one month before the event.
- 2) All two-stroke trailbikes, except twin shocks and 125s, to be put automatically into 'sports'.
- 3) Award for best twin shock bike.
- 4) Award for biggest finishing machine.
- 5) £10 entry surcharge for any machine over 250cc and under 600cc (two-strokes over 180cc).

What do readers reckon?

Whatever your views, absolutely everyone I spoke to said they had a great time this year, the weather stayed mostly fair and the organisers once again did a superb job. Roll on the new Dalby Rally in Yorkshire, due to run on 9 July.

The video of this year's Cambrian Rally (and all previous rallies) can be obtained from Frank Morgan on 01597 822642.

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OPTIC 2000

TUNISIE RALLYE

This year's Tunisie Rallye attracted the biggest ever field of British and Irish riders. Jim Jones reports on events...

The ninth Tunisia Desert Rally, named after its French sponsor 'Optic 2000' got off to a damp start this year. As in previous years the event began on the quayside at Nice where the organisers had secured excellent facilities.

The first stage is the prologue held some five miles outside town, and run on a motocross track that features a cross-over bridge. The purpose of this part of the event is twofold, firstly to entertain the locals and more importantly to decide the starting order for the event proper in Tunisia. After the prologue the competitors and their support vehicles were shipped by chartered ferry to North Africa. In previous years there's been a brief spell in Sardinia on the way across the Med, but this year the boat went directly to Tunis.

The docks at Nice was the usual bustle of activity, not dissimilar to any UK enduro; even the weather was familiar. Most of the record number of British and Irish competitors, 15 motorcyclists and one car entry, were competing in this type of event for the first time, though Dave King and Nick Craigie from Dublin (the TM importer) had both been before.

After seemingly endless paperwork and numerous attempts to communicate with the French, all the British and Irish bikes were admitted to the parc ferme. The riders feeling that a major hurdle had been overcome retired to their hotel or tent and awaited the start of the following day's prologue.

Heavy overnight rain forced the organisers to make a sensible decision

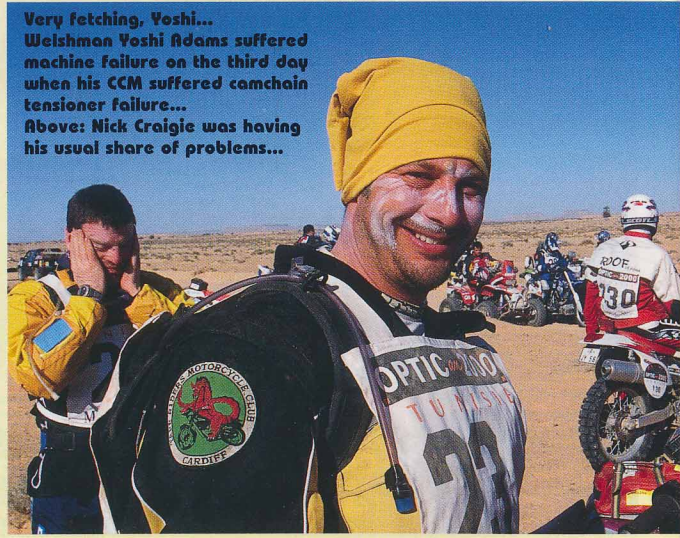
and cancel this part of the event for the bikes. Mike Jones, a regular enduro rider, but competing on four wheels this year, lined up his Land-Rover Freelander beside a six-litre Porsche engined buggy. Fully expecting to be totally trounced he surprised everybody by easily beating the Porsche. A superb drive meant that he finished

the prologue in sixth place overall, just eight seconds behind leader Bruno Gilles in his works IPSO.

Following the 24hr boat journey the competitors next faced a long drive, more than 300 miles, mainly by road and



Very fetching, Yoshi... Welshman Yoshi Adams suffered machine failure on the third day when his CCM suffered camchain tensioner failure...
Above: Nick Craigie was having his usual share of problems...



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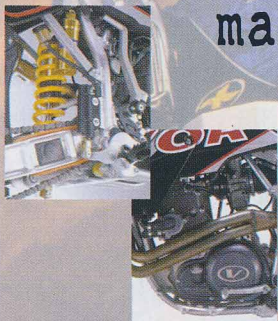
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track to the south of Tunisia. This backside numbing, engine-wearing exercise produced the first Irish casualty when the engine of Shamus Sorohan's KTM cried enough. The popular Irishman was sidelined for paddock duty as the other 15 Brit/Irish competitors reached the evening bivouac.

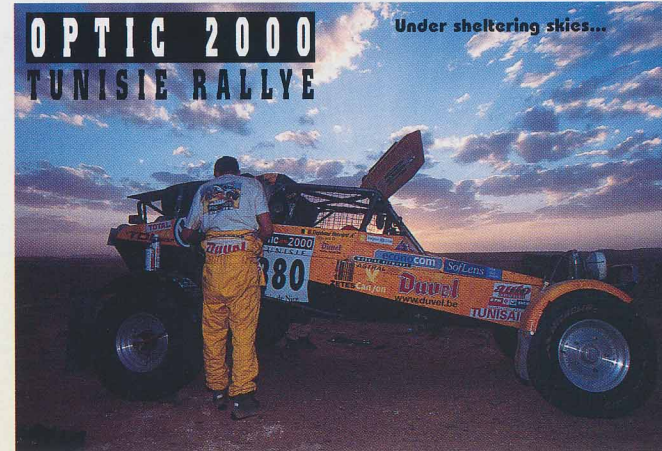
Desert rally bivouacs are like small towns with hundreds of competitors, backup and organisation vehicles forming a 'kraal' in the desert. In the centre a huge tent secured to four trucks as a precaution against high winds provides catering and other facilities. The lighting and level of activity takes on a surreal nature especially when you realise it'll all be gone by the middle of the next day.

Day two (in the desert) began with a clear blue sky and a light desert wind that threatened to grow into a sandstorm. The KTM's of Meoni and Sala led the bikes away, followed by the cars, the quads and lastly the trucks.

The works bikes bear some resemblance to the ones that anybody can buy, except that the attention to detail is unbelievable, as is their speed. This was the first taste of sand dunes and GPS navigation that took an early toll on some competitors who rode in circles in the sandstorm.

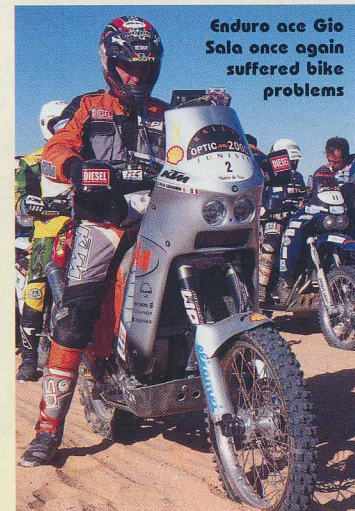
Brit Brian Eland (KTM) was one who struggled, riding a 100 mile circle before finding Yoshi Adams with a terminal mechanical problem. The CCM's timing belt idler bearing had failed, so Yoshi sat down beside the bike and erected some shade from the overhead sun and the 40-degree heat. Then sensibly he took stock of his water and food, after finding he had a good supply of gum he waited for either the 'sweeper' truck or nightfall. Brian's arrival meant he could be towed to the nearest track ten miles away where the truck collected him.

Having done his good deed for the day Brian then went off and dislocated his collarbone, which earned him a ride in a helicopter and retirement from the race. The other Brit/Irish competitors survived the day of excessive heat and hundreds of miles of sand and tracks, arriving exhausted at the next bivouac. They recounted many tales of falling off, near misses with goats and getting lost in the sandstorm. Nick Craigie sat for 20 minutes in the storm waiting for clear air only to find he had been less than 100 metres from the stamp check.



OPTIC 2000 TUNISIE RALLYE

Under sheltering skies...



Enduro ace Gio Solo once again suffered bike problems

The route followed terrain that varied from totally flat to high dunes, from smooth soft sand to rocky surfaces littered with boulders and at any time there were unexpected holes to catch the unwary. Most of the time the competitors were on open terrain without any tracks to guide them and on occasions went in one direction for 50 or 60 miles without seeing any noticeable features.

The base for the next three days was El Borma, then Ksar Ghilane both in a very wild region well known for high dunes and soft sand. These conditions along with the risk of dehydration were to prove the downfall of four more of the Brit/Irish contingent who retired exhausted or injured by nightfall. Among those effected was Daren Duesbury who was suffering from the local version of Montezuma's revenge. Mike Jones in the Freelander was not having an easy time either, having survived seized front shocks, broken engine mounts and a snapped rear drive shaft he had driven one whole sandy day with only two-wheel drive. His elation at getting to the bivouac at Tamerza was short lived when the event doctor decided his co-driver, wife Susan, was too ill to continue.

Another retirement at this stage was veteran Phil Gunn who 'cooked' the motor on his new

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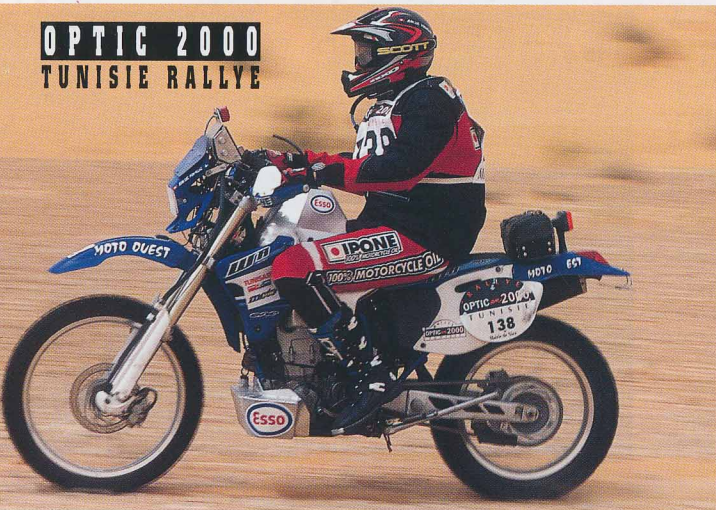
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DR-Z400 when a radiator hose was pierced. General opinion was that the 'gold' cylinder head was a distinct improvement and that Suzuki should adopt it as a styling feature. So there was now plenty of outriders to support the remaining six from our original 16 entrants.

Daily results showed Andy Winterbourne (Yam 600) was now Best Brit with Nick Craigie close behind him on a CCM but with a split fuel tank. Both had been through their share of problems and survived, Nick's front wheel rim attached to a big off, but in his usual quiet way he dismissed it with a shrug.

All six were to survive until the finish, moving up and down the results and on occasions not sure themselves if they would reach the end in one piece. Most regular competitors were of the opinion that this year's event was one of the toughest yet. Indeed Schlessler, the eventual winner of the car class, said he had not known the sand to be so soft. Up front Meoni was holding on to his lead as South African Alfie Cox (KTM) closed in. Giovanni Sala's challenge faltered towards the end when he had minor mechanical problems, which dropped him down to ninth place. Andy Winterbourne managed to hold off Nick Craigie who finished as Best Irish rider, the other Brit/Irish finishers were Dave King, Charles Main, Ivan Shanaham and Julian Beckett,



Essential navigation kit...

Winterbourne (who had a very well prepared TT600R), and Nick Craigie (whose much-modified CCM was very special indeed), the rest of the Brit/Irish finishers were on Honda 400s. This trend extends right down the overall finishing list; more riders finished on XR400s than any other make. Taken that most of these riders were unsponsored clubmen, it speaks volumes for the Honda's legendary reliability.

British/Irish results.

Place	Rider	Bike
31	Andy Winterbourne (GBR)	Yam 600
42	Nick Craigie (IRL)	CCM 604
73	Dave King (GBR)	Honda 400
80	Charles Main (GBR)	Honda 400
85	Ivan Shanaham (IRL)	Honda 400
93	Julian Becket (GBR)	Honda 400

(102 finishers in the bike class from 180 starters)

strangely all said they enjoyed themselves and would return.

There were three women competitors this year compared with ten last year. They ranged from a very experienced works rider to a desert rally newcomer. The first casualty was Elizabeth Jacinto from Portugal, a well-known competitor who has competed in many events of this type, she broke her collarbone on day one. Competing for the first time Bettina Hunke, a German dentist rode a very well prepared KTM 520EXC and destroyed her clutch in the dunes on the second day. The most experienced of the trio predictably put up a very creditable performance rising at one point to ninth place. Andrea Mayer competing on the only works BMW disappeared from the results on the last day after a mechanical problem halted her progress.

The event ended in Tunis where the awards were presented at the National Museum; then it was on the boat and back across the Med. Studying the makes of bikes in the list of finishers makes very interesting reading. Apart from Brits, Andy

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Yamaha	TTR	250	1994	2,595	Purple/White
Yamaha	Serow	225	1992	1,995	White/Blue
Yamaha	Serow	225 wle	1996	2,695	White/Purple
Yamaha	Serow	225	1992	1,995	White/Blue
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Yamaha	Serow	225	1994	2,495	Purple/White
Yamaha	Serow	225	1995	2,295	Purple/White
Kawasaki	KLR	650	1995	2,395	Red
Honda	XLR	125	1995	1,695	White
Rieju		50	1998	995	Green
Kawasaki	KDX	200	1991	1,495	Green
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Suzuki	Djebel	250	1995	2,395	Blue/White
Kawasaki	KLR	250	1993	1,695	Black
Yamaha	Serow	225 w	1996	2,595	Red/White
Yamaha	Serow	225 w	1996	2,595	Red/White
Yamaha	Serow	225 w	1995	2,495	Purple/White
Honda	Dominator NX	650	1989	1,895	Red
Suzuki	RMX	250	1992	1,195	Yellow
Yamaha	XT350	350	1989	1,295	White/Red
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PALIL BLEZZARD - Excerpts from: NEVADA ADVENTURE! By Paul Blezzard - Published in TRAIL BIKE MAGAZINE (England) Jan. 2000

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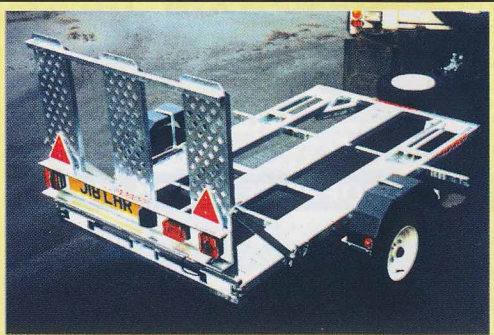
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Yamaha XT600 Tenere, Italian import, fantastic cond, excellent mechanics, virgin trallie, never seen grass, electric start, reluctant sale, must go, £1495 ono. Tel D Stacey on 01530 832 749 (Leics)
Armstrong MT500, T&T, excellent cond, new tyres, road tyres and spares, £950 ono. Tel G Till on 01782 522 486 (N. Staffs)
Yamaha XT500E, S-Reg, immac, total nut and bolt rebuild and rebore, v best available old thumper, £1600 ono. Tel S Brown on 01992 462 858 (Herts)

Kawasaki KLX300R, Renthals, bark buster, ring chain, nice cond throughout, £2050 ono. Tel Roger on 01452 854 178 (Glos)
Honda XR600, R-reg, vgc, good tyres, frame, sump, hand guards, recent c&s, Renthals, Tecnosel graphics, indicators, £2750. Tel S Mason on 01773 713 188 (Derby)
KTM 350LC4, M-reg, 9000km, Renthals, Acerbis handguards, bashplate, frame protectors, T&T, mainly green lane use, £2250 ono. Tel Keith on 01793 825 638 (Wilts)
Suzuki TS200R, G-reg, T&T, good clean example, £875 ono. Tel John on 01625 572 816 (Cheshire)
Kawasaki KLX250, K-reg, T&T, Renthals, handguards, usd forks, green lane use only, £1300. Tel Paul on 0780 117 8484 (m) or 01270 250 578 (Cheshire)
Gas Gas EC250, late '98, exc cond, v light trail use only, not usual rubbish, first to see will buy. Tel Pete on 01335 330 768 (Derbys)
Yamaha DT175MX, X-Reg, T&T, 9600km, excellent original cond, first to see will buy,

Kawasaki KDX250, K-reg, T&T, vgc, standard bike, £1295. Tel Dave on 01235 821 162 (Oxon)
Yamaha DT175MX, 1982, MoT, recent engine rebuild, still running in, green lane use only, exc cond, £525 ono. Tel M Palmer on 01271 325 118 (Devon)
Yamaha WR400E, 1999, six months old, long distance trials and green lane use only, good cond, £3200 ono. Tel Steve on 07787 562 501 or 01626 368 353 (Devon)
Honda XR600, '92, MoT, scruffy £1400; also Suzuki RMX250, '96, clean, Renthals, road reg, very fast, £1600. Tel Matt on 01273 504 144 (Sussex)
Suzuki DR250, 1991, blue/white, usd forks, excellent all rounder, vgc, ultra reliable, T&T. £1400 P/X cheaper trail enduro bike. Tel Nicky on 01209 821 610 (Cornwall)
Suzuki DR350, L-reg, T&T, Acerbis enduro tank, sump guard, bark busters, braided hoses, Rental bars, Supertrapp exhaust, £1550 ono. Tel R Lucas on 01928 563 801 (Cheshire)
Yamaha TTR250 K-reg, T&T, new front

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tyre, recent battery, rear shock rebuilt, good cond, £1800 ono. Tel David on 01293 773907 (Surrey)

Kawasaki KLX300R, T-Reg, good cond, bark busters, Werx decals, never raced, green lane use only, 1500m, bargain at £2800 ovno. Tel Martin on 01483 816501 (Herts)

Honda XR250, 1998, 1400km, trail use only, £2395. Tel Den on 01527 404 391 (Worcs)

Yamaha XT600E, 1992, T&T, 25,000km, new c&s, good cond. £1200. Tel Gabrielle on 0208 928 0804 (London)

Kawasaki KLX250, M-reg, 17,000km, T&T, excellent cond, hundreds spent on it, £1900 ovno. Tel Nick on 0116 231 2984 (Leics)

Honda CRM250R MK2, 1993, vgc, fully serviced, spare tyres, c&s, power pipe used adj forks, re-valve, shock, T&T, £1500. Tel David on 01252 837 870 (Surrey)

Honda CRM250MK2, K-reg, purple/white, good cond, £1800. Tel Dave on 01473 604 887 (Suffolk)

Yamaha YZ400F, '98/'99, blue, professionally converted road legal, gold rims Tecnosel graphics, green lane use, good cond, must sell, £3000. Tel Paul on 07957 353 505 (m) or 01462 624 207 (Beds)

Honda XR600, 1998, absolutely mint, you won't find better, FMF pipe, every extra, very little use. Tel P Evans on 07747 601 144 (S.Wales)

Honda XR250 K-reg, T&T, 280 Wiseco piston, Cobra exhaust, tank cover, fork and frame protectors, good cond, well maintained, £1400 ono. Tel George on 01761 452 606 (Avon)

Suzuki DR200, 1999, 10,000km, dealer serviced, new rear tyre fitted, good cond, £1750. Tel Graham on 01935 825 964 (Somerset)

Honda CRM250AR, black, 1999, T-reg, 2300km, immaculate, standard, £3300 ono. Tel Michael on 01638 612 078 (Suffolk)

Yamaha TTR250, L-reg, Renthal bars, recent chainset and tyres, T&T, green lane use with some commuting, £2000. Tel Tony on 01406 550591 (Lincs) After 7PM

Honda XR400RW, R-reg, 2100km, immac standard cond, tax, £2850 ono. Tel Paul on 01204 844 823 (Bolton)

BMW R1100GS, M-reg, 26,500m, red, MoT, good all round cond, never used off road, £4350 ono. Tel Graham on 01254 888 974 (Lancs)

Suzuki DR250RLS, M-reg, twin cam, 14,000km, stainless exhaust, elec start, T&T, high or low suspension, v good cond, £1895 or poss P/X Honda Baja. Tel Les on 01663 741 191 (Derbys)

Cagiva E750, R-reg, 5500km, blue, £2600 or P/X/swap XR600, XR400 or TT600. Tel Owen on 01339 756 345 (Aberdeen)

Honda CRM250, J-reg, low mileage, MoT, Datatag, excellent cond, £1995. Tel S Gibson on 01689 896 823 (Kent)

Kawasaki KDX125, H-reg, MoT, green, very reliable, 7300m, vgc, very clean for year, £1150 ono. Tel Nigel on 01384 372 783 (W Mids)

Kawasaki KDX125, 1994, team green, T&T, 11,000m, professionally serviced, used forks, alloy wheels, new exhaust, good bike, £1200 ono. Tel Richard on 0771 300 0094 (Derbys)

Suzuki RM250, 1987, water-cooled, disc brake model, complete rebuild with all receipts, four hours use since, £650. Tell Ian on 01883 626 852 (Surrey)

Honda XLR250 Baja 1989, T&T, Renthals, handguards, ideal green laner, good cond, new bike forces sale, £1150 ono. Tel Peter on 01832 293 583 (Cams)

Suzuki Enduro TS200R, yellow, T&T, 5000km, import, fantastic lightweight on/off road, spare tyres included, new pads, some spares, £1295. Tel Robin on 0403 386 082 (Kent)

Kawasaki KDX125SR, L-reg, blue, low mileage, excellent original cond, new tyres, £1395. Tel John on 0161 747 7836 (Trafford)

Yamaha TTR250, MoT, tax, 10,000km, good cond, £1750 ono. Tel Adrian on 01895 237 670 (Middx)

Kawasaki KLX250, L-reg, vgc, mainly road use, new tyres, must sell hence £1450 ono.

Tel M Hodgson on 01373 463 253 (Frome)
Yamaha WR400, 1999, 500m, frame guards, Renthals, new tyres, w/s manual, standard parts, oil/air filters, no dreamers!, £3200.

Tel Richard on 01242 519500 (Glos)
Yamaha DT230 Lanza, P-reg, 8400km, recent new tyres, elec start, good clean cond, road use only, £2300. Tel Ian on 01633 764 836 (S Wales)

Honda XL500S, excellent original cond, 11,000m, Ohlins, rear shocks, new tyres, reliable dual sport classic, £1195; also
Yamaha XT500, 1976, immaculate original cond, genuine 6000m, unused toolkit and owners instruction manual, ideal collectors piece, £1695. Tel Shaun on 01293 820 498 (Surrey)

Suzuki TSR200, H-reg, MoT, vgc, engine rebuilt, frame stove enamelled, DEP tailpipe, Renthals, 13,000km, new brake pads, not used off road, £1250. Tel Paul on 0208 204 9116 (Harrow)

Kawasaki KLX250 Enduro, K-reg, fully road legal, frame and hand guards, alloy tailpipe, £1300. Tel Brian on 0116 282 4762 (Leics)

Kawasaki KLX650, P-reg, green, 7500m, MoT, vgc, new sprockets, spare back wheel and tyre, £2450. Tel Mat on 01258 840 995 (Dorset)

Honda XR400, Y2k, immaculate, 400m, stainless pipe, frame guards, not used off road, official UK bike, house forces sale, £3500. Tel 01784 464 636 (days) or 07801 885 558 (eves) (Middx)

Honda CRM250 MK1, 1989, red, T&T, FMF silencer new pads and discs, recent tyres, and sprockets, Renthals, hand guards, £1650 ono. Tel Patrick on 01865 430 300 (Oxon)

Kawasaki KLX250, L-reg, excellent cond, MoT, new chain and sprockets, elec start etc, £1595 ono. Tel Daniel on 01254 875 794 (Lancs)

Honda CRM250 MKII, 1992, excellent cond, low mileage, DEP tailpipe, Renthals, handguards, light trail use only, £1695. Tel Phillip on 01264 358 035 (Hants)

Honda XL250 Degree, 1991 5000m, T&T, immac original cond, road use only, first to see will buy, £1500 ono. Tel Peter on 01902 604 388 (W. Mids)

Yamaha TTR250, 1993, elec start, MT21 tyres, new chain and sprockets, Supertrapp silencer, T&T, very clean bike, £1595 ono. Tel Carl on 0973 479 274 (Staffs)

Yamaha TTR250 Raid, M2 TTR-reg, 7000km,, immaculate, never, bashed, thrashed or crashed!! £2500. Also Cagiva 900 Elefant, P900 ELE-reg, 7000km, blue, road and knobby tyres, immaculate, never seen rain, £3500. Tel Jo on 01223 360 350 (day) (Cams)

Can-Am Qualifier 175, 1980 twinshock, enduro, Y-reg, good original cond, little use, £375. Tel J Walters on 01275 892 649 (Bristol)

Honda XR250, R-reg, green lane use only, 3000km, Renthal bars, £1900. Tel Paul on 01442 215516 (Herts)

Kawasaki KDX220SR, L-reg, 14,000km, superb cond, key ignition, autolube, indicators, Renthals, hand guards, MoT, £1850 ono, better than CRM! Tel Tim on 01202 885 855 (Dorset)

Kawasaki KDX200, '94, great all rounder, well looked after, recent bearings/rear shock, never let me down, reluctant sale, £1495 ovno. Tel Karl on 01803 666 976 (Early eves) (Devon)

Honda XR650L, 1994, T&T, good cond, Renthals, Bridgestone Grittys, original bike, 3600m, mainly road use, £2000. Tel Richard on 01305 779 206 (Dorset)

Suzuki DR650, R-reg, black, immac cond, 5000m, road use only, £2450 ono consider p/x up to £1000. Tel Alan on 01283 561 816 (Staffs)

Yamaha XT350, 1993, vgc, new tyres, MoT and warranty, Renthals, road legal, £1650. Tel Chris on 01752 340 781 (Devon)

KTM 640 enduro, R-reg, elec start, vvgc, low miles, never off road, you won't find better, £3995 ovno. Tel Alan on 01372 464 409 (Surrey)

KTM 620EGS, N-reg, 7000km, T&T, light

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trail use only, easy starter, excellent cond, extremely powerful and reliable, £1950. Tel Ian on 0798 919 0314 (W Mids)

KTM 250EXC, R-reg, 1500km, trail riding only, new chain, sprockets and rear tyre, exceptional condition, must be seen, £2395 ono. Tel Craig on 01388 777 697 (Durham)

Honda XR400, T-reg, 2500km, still on original tyres, chain and sprockets, road and light use, good cond, taxed, £3095 ono. Tel A Glover 01204 410162 (Lancs)

Yamaha XT550, MoT, 50,000km, adj shock, new clutch, good runner, spare tank, seat and side panels, £650 ono. Tel Steve on 01384 638 121 (W Mids)

CCM 604E, 1999, elec start, well maintained, green lane use only, new MT21s, £3595, gold supermoto wheels and tyres available, £795. Tel Mark on 01746 783 279

CCM 604E sport, april '99, 1300m, hand protectors, new chain and sprockets, new tyres, factory serviced, £3900 ono. Tel Mike on 07790 527 818 (Cheshire)

Yamaha XT600, B-reg, noT&T, runner, spares wheel, 30ltr tank, alloy panniers, replaced shocker, oil tank barrel, £600. Tel Leo on 01325 487 927

Honda CRM250 MKI, F-reg, good cond, T&T, a bit dirty, ready to green lane, £1000. Tel John on 01457 857 382 (Derbys)

Honda CRM250 MKII, J-reg, white/red, 3500km, T&T, new Renthals, bark busters, seat, good cond, £1800 ono. Tel Shane 01636 700 622 (Notts)

KTM 200EGS, autolube, T-reg, 1800km, £3000 ovno. Tel Bruce on 01368 863 343 (E Lothian)

CCM 604E, 1999, yellow/black, excellent cond, low mileage, maintained regardless of cost, £3350. Tel Scott on 0121 433 3088 (Birmingham)

Honda CRM250AR, V-reg, purple/white, 2300km, DEP exhaust, sump frame and disc guards, alloy bars, new tyres, meticulously maintained, absolutely immac cond, £3500. Tel Andy on 01543 361 407 (W Mids)

CCM 640, high compression, june '99, 1200m, immac cond, Y2k tank, carb, graph-

ics, new baby means cheaper bike, £4375 ono. Tel Paul on 01600 860 779 (S Glos)

KTM Rallye 640, 1997, with all extras, some spares, recent overhaul, 1000s spent, £4250. Tel Ian on 0374 800 736 (Cambs)

Honda CRM250 MKI, F-reg, red, T&T, 16,250m, O ring chain, FMF tailpipe, handguards, vgc, house move forces sale, £1250. Tel Glenn on 01908 261 656 (Bucks)

CCM 604E sport, '99, 1540m, carb, oil feed, hand guards, spare front sprocket, very clean, £4495. Tel Ian on 01257 450 549 (Lancs)

Honda CR500RG, excellent cond, well maintained, £500 of receipts for parts inc engine rebuild with first oversize piston and new water pump, choice of gearing and w/s manual, in my ownership for past 5 years, MoT, £1100. Tel Russell on 0208 715 0392 (sw London) or 07970 128 171 (Surrey)

KTM 250EXC L-reg, recent piston £1195 ono plus many different spares. Tel R Dawson on 01243 513 245 (Sussex)

WANTED

Wanted DT125LC Mk1 rear and front jack up kit for Yamaha. Pay top money. Tel Nick on 01753 662 077 (Bucks)

Trailer 2/3 bike in good condition. Tel Mark on 0118 977 1926 (Reading)

Kawasaki KLX250 w/s manual for 1994 model, any condition. Hand book and any other 1994 KLX literature required. Tel Richard on 0771 300 0094 (Derbys)

Wanted front and rear wheels for 1996 XR400R. Tel David on 01451 869 692 (Derbys)

Wanted Trail bike or motocrosser in exchange for CB900 A-reg, new MoT and exhaust, perfect cond, ready to ride. Tel Ceri on 01443 203 292 (Glams)

Wanted for Yamaha XT600, centre stand, speedo and w/s manual. Tel Geoff on 07971 462 375 (N Yorks)

Yamaha WR250 1998/9 any condition, can collect. Tel Miles on 0961 129 666 (W Yorks)

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14th July - Wildtracks - Suffolk

7th August - Wildtracks - Suffolk

28th August - Matchams - Hampshire

8th September - Wildtracks - Suffolk

13th October - Wildtracks - Suffolk

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