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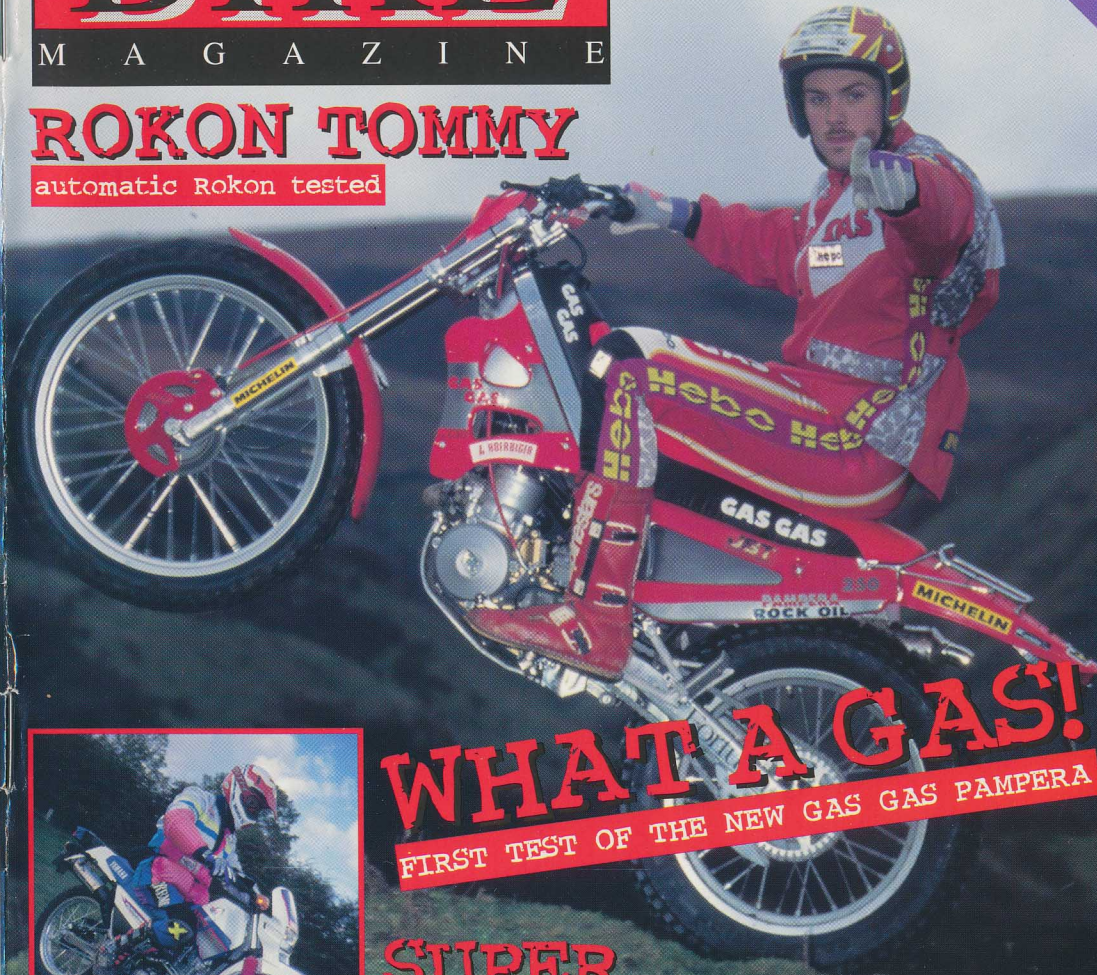
- KTM250
- Dales Trails
- Christmas Crossword

# TRAIL BIKE

M A G A Z I N E

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automatic Rokon tested



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## SUPER SEROW

Yamaha's XT225 tested



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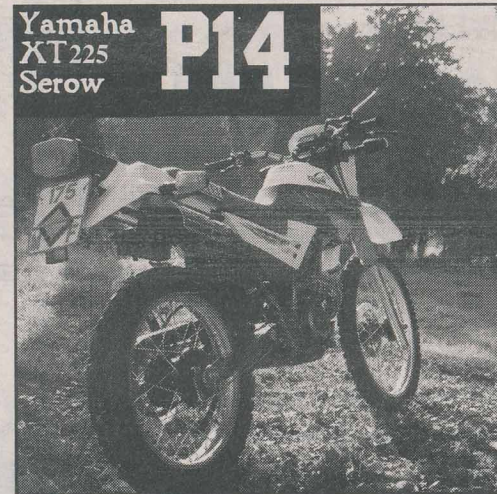
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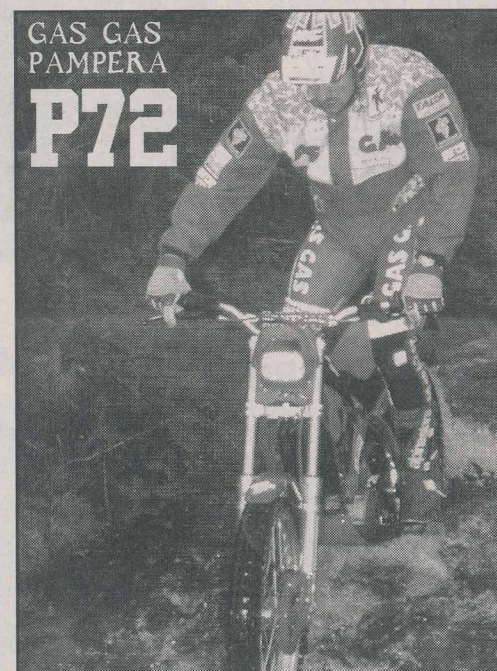
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PAMPERA

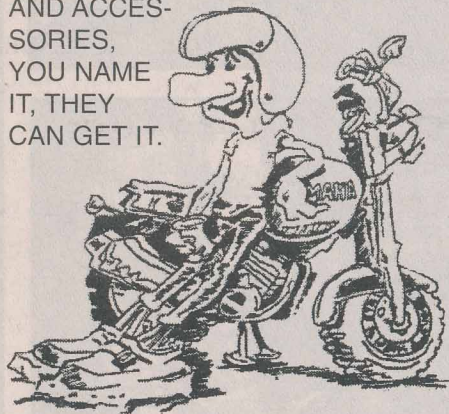
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**W**ELL MATE, I'VE ALWAYS FANCIED USING MY TRAIL BIKE OFF-ROAD, BUT NEVER KNEW HOW TO GO ABOUT IT. THEN I DISCOVERED

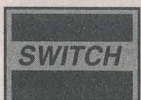
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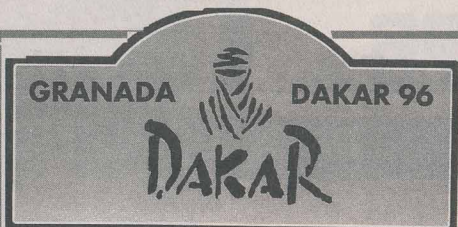


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**W**ELL CHRISTMAS is nearly with us and to celebrate the fact we've added a few more pages to this month's edition of TrailBike Magazine. That means there's more features, more road tests, more classified ads to scan through for that elusive spare part,

plus we've updated the TrailBike Guide with a number of new additions.

And when you've finally finished reading all that and are comfortably ensconced in your favourite armchair digesting the last of the leftover turkey sandwiches and endless repeats of 'Only Fools and Horses' on the box, you can turn your mind to greater challenges - like tackling our Christmas Crossword puzzle on page 50. There are no prizes it's just for fun and we hope you enjoy your whole Christmas time as well as this bumper edition of TrailBike.

Si Melber

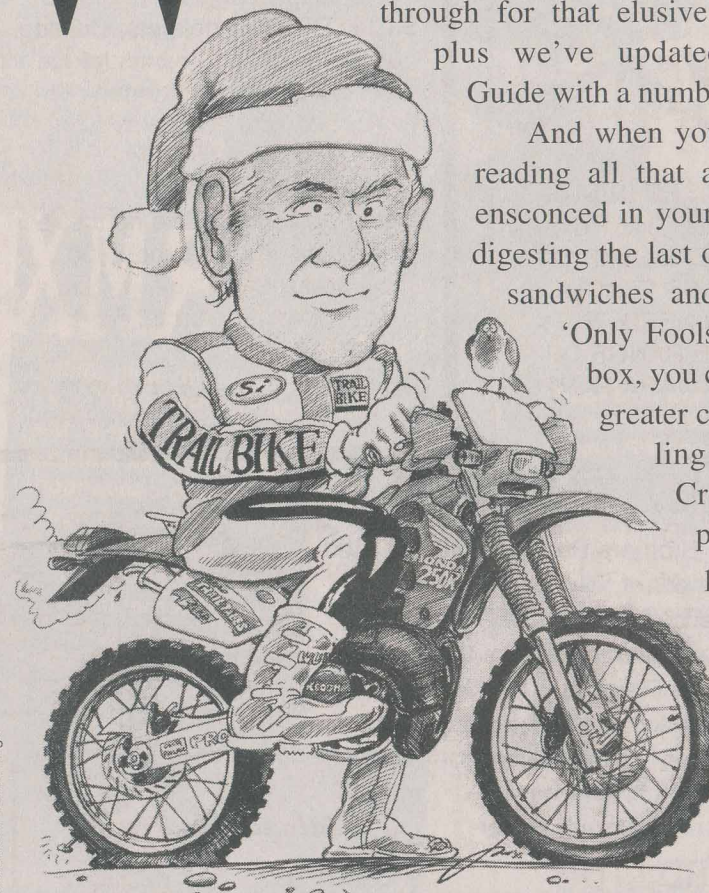


Illustration John Keogh

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# News

## ATK launch Dual Sport



ATK's new dual sport bike features Rotax power and WP suspension

ATK importers Wyse Brothers Racing, have released details of a small number of fully road legal dual sport bikes. The American-designed ATK machines feature a kick or electric start version of the trusted Rotax thumper in either 500cc or 605cc forms.

The dual sport spec includes full lighting kit with indicators, speedometer, Pirelli trail tyres, long range fuel tank, and single or twin exhausts depending on customer preferences.

With top quality cycle parts the unusual ATKs don't come cheap, though Wyse Brothers are planning to convert a number of used machines as a cheaper alternative. They also plan on releasing a dual sport version of the British-made CCM motocrossers early next year. The full specification of both machines is available from Wyse Racing on 01844 215142.

# Show News

BMW was showing off its seat lowering kit for their popular F650 model at the recent NEC show. The kit which includes a shorter linkage and sidestand will cost approximately £200 and be available as a dealer fitted option.

## RMX

Suzuki unveiled their all-new RMX250T enduro machine at the NEC. The bike features a return to conventional 45mm forks, a new front brake caliper assembly and an 11 litre resin fuel tank, along with a host of detail changes for '96. It now costs £4,399.



Suzuki's RMX features a return to conventional forks for '96

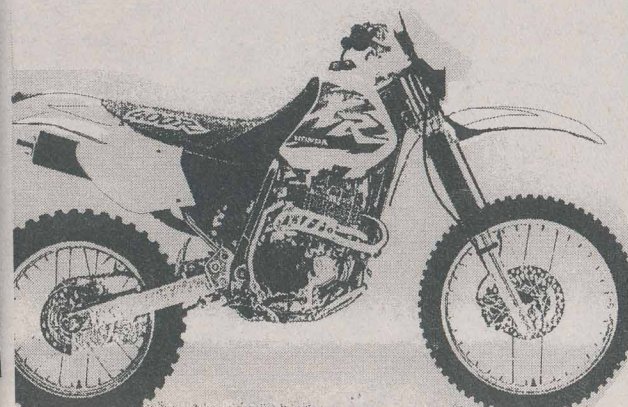


## XR400R Due in '96

Honda has confirmed that it will be importing a small number of XR400Rs early next year.

With demand for the new mid-sized machine expected to be considerable, Honda UK has taken the decision to import between 30-40 machines which will be available through selected off road dealers in late March.

Though no decision has been taken on price expect a figure of between £4,200-4,600.



## Show Smalls

### TEENAGERS GET THEIR OWN SUPERMOTO RACE SERIES

Teenagers as young as 13 years old are to get the chance to compete in a series of Supermoto races on circuits around the country next year. The one make race series will see youngsters competing on Derbi's 50cc Senda trailie which will be boosted by means of a big bore kit to 75cc, making the bike capable of speeds of up to 70mph. Series organiser and UK Derbi importer Wayne Mitchell said 'It's about time something was done to bring youngsters back into the sport of motorcycle racing'. Couldn't agree with you more Wayne. More details from him on 01246 583862.

### VERTICALLY CHALLENGED

Suzuki's new for '96 DR650 comes with height-adjustable suspension, allowing a range of seat height movement of 40mm. Unfortunately once set by the dealer, it cannot be altered easily by the customer.

### MZ TRAKKER

German manufacturer MZ had a new prototype road/ trailie on display. Best known for their cheap-n-cheeful two strokes, and more recently their Skorpion road bikes powered by a Yamaha XTZ660 engine, the new Trakker comes with longer travel suspension, spoked rims, and twin upswept exhausts for the street-scrambler type look. The bike which was built to gauge public reaction to a new model would cost in the region of £4,700.

# News

# News

## KLX300 Launched in Japan

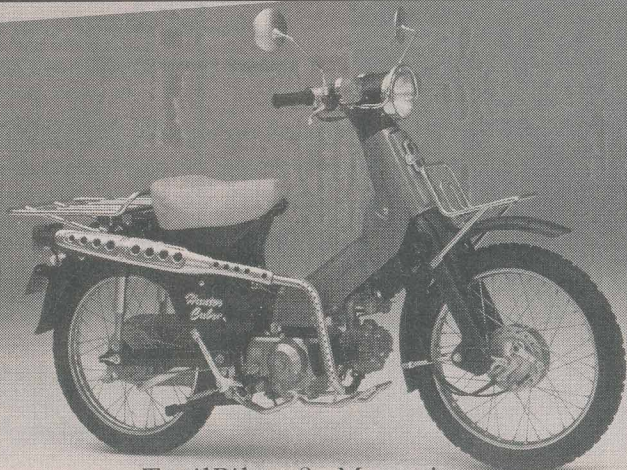
Kawasaki have released details of a tasty new KLX300 for the Japanese home market which made its debut at the recent Tokyo show. The new bike which is very similar to the existing KLX250 Enduro, features a punchier motor and modified suspension with USD forks. The 297cc machine is thought to have been produced to counter criticisms of the 250's lack of low and mid-range power. UK importers KMUK are remaining tight-lipped about the new bike at present confirming that as yet they have no plans to bring the bike to Britain. Our guess is that UK buyers will have to wait till '97 before getting their hands on one.

.....



## Rally Raid Cub C50/90

It's the ultimate bit of posing tackle for the urban, street-scrambler look. Honda's Hunter Cubra C90 has all the accessories of the rally raid bike - large headlamp with desert bar, upswept exhaust, crash bars and knobbles in the sort of package your granny would approve of. What will the Japanese think of next?



TrailBike -8- Magazine

# TOKYO SHOW SPECIAL

## DID THE EARTH MOVE FOR YOU?

Following on from the tragedy of the Kobe earthquake which devastated parts of Japan's industrial heartland earlier this year, Honda have launched a very special version of their XL250-Degree (see the TrailBike guide for details of the original bike).

Immediately after the catastrophe rescuers found their efforts hampered by a lack of transport capable of negotiating the rubble-strewn streets, and Honda's answer to this problem has been to produce the 'Degree Rescue'.

The trail bike which should allow fast access for rescue workers in the event of a similar disaster, comes fitted with a fire extinguisher, axe and specially designed top-box containing essential paramedic supplies.

Honda plan to make the bike available to all local councils in an effort to avoid a similar loss of life in future earthquakes, though for once, they hope the bike will never need to be used.



TrailBike -9- Magazine

# News

# Dear Trail Bike...

## TRF Replies 1

Dear TrailBike

Your reader Tim Newbrook criticises the TRF. We are seldom able to please everyone with regard to the pace at which we ride - a new member might be on 'L' plates with barely 100 miles under his belt or a retired motocross centre champion. A good leader will vary his speed to suit all the riders following.

Tim would like us to cater for 'normal' riders, but some people might argue that it is not a 'normal' person who braves the wilds of Wales or North Yorkshire in winter, trying to encourage a motorcycle up a muddy hill. Motorcyclists in general are inveterate storytellers, especially trail riders. After each run there is a tale to be told

and re-told, and when a trail rider asks 'How did you do' he really means 'Ask me how I did'.

We should perhaps treat trail riding as one would a 'pot of pleasure'. The rider who only takes from the pot will eventually exhaust that pot. Something has to be put back, preferably by all of us.

A years subscription to the TRF is about the same as to TrailBike Magazine. A club member will have the opportunity to learn where to ride, (even how to ride), and where to stay. He will benefit from: map marking, organised runs, lanes saved, new ones researched, and learn rights of way law, and the workings of local government. Club members sell and swap bikes, help each other with maintenance, and yes tell yarns.

Tim is probably right, we cannot be 'normal' like him,

otherwise membership would probably cost £250.

Brian Wright  
Vice Chairman TRF

## TRF Replies 2

Sir

With reference to a letter in the November issue of your TrailBike magazine where Mr T Newbrook stated that TRF members were old farts.

I would like to stress that I am a new member of the West Somerset TRF group. I am 32 years young and being a farrier by trade I am used to handling horses - which at times can be much more lively than any trailbike - for that reason alone, I do not consider myself to be an old fart.

If Mr Barry Sheen (aka Tim Newbrook) still wants to ride fast then I suggest he enters veteran class motocross where he will not endanger walkers, horse riders or other trailbike riders which may be coming in the opposite direction.

Surely one of the main reasons for wanting to ride green lanes is to explore and admire the scenery. Certainly where I live in Somerset, Exmoor and the Quantock Hills can be very challenging in the winter months without the need to go fast. Maybe the lanes that Mr Newbrook rides are as wide as the M25 and he

can see for miles at a time - in which case I suppose his riding style can be justified up to a point.

If this is so and he would like a change, get in touch with the West Somerset TRF and he will be more than welcome to come out on a weekend run. I can assure you that he will go home satisfied and tired, and will have changed his views about TRF members.

Bob Creedy (TRF Member)  
Somerset

## Itz Ze Law

Dear TrailBike

I have just read your article 'On the trail of the law' and wondered if you could provide some more guidance. I have just imported an XTZ850R from Yamaha Motor France and would like to get it registered before attempting the Dakar next year. I assumed this would be no problem as the bikes are usually ridden through France and Spain and on to the desert. But after reading your article I am now having doubts. Any advice would be gratefully appreciated re:

1. The best way to approach the registration process
2. Insurance companies

Got an opinion?  
Then write to:  
TrailBike Magazine  
P O Box 1555  
Salisbury  
SP3 4PF



that would pay out on such a machine. Should the need arise.

John Anderson  
Burnley

PS At last a magazine for Trail Bikers - No more scanning newsagents top shelves to find the 'dirty bits'.

*You should be able to get your XTZ registered, after all think of all those RAC Rally cars which are nominally 'legal' - and your best bet for insurance is to find a company which normally insures 'specials' such as chops or race machines. Er,... by the way, when you've got it registered can we have a go on it please?*

## Teenage Troubles

Dear TrailBike

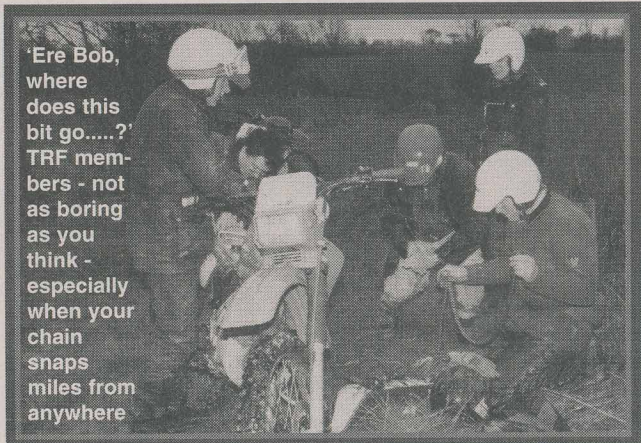
So far I have bought Issues 2 to 4 of your great magazine, and I will buy the rest. I am a fifteen year old

and own a Yamaha XT125 and DT50 and I am lucky enough to have permission to ride on nearby farmland. Both bikes are great except for the DT50's performance. Is there any way that I could de-restrict it and get a bit more power?

Only one suggestion to improve a great magazine; how about a regular article covering cheaper bikes which are affordable to young riders who cannot afford two grand for a dirt bike. Anyway Cheers for a great mag, keep up the good work.

Richard Hughes-Coppins  
Bracknell

*Unfortunately, Yamaha's DT50 is not restricted, it only produces that amount of power anyway. We already test second-hand bikes, and next month sees the start of our 'Beginners Guide' which will contain information on buying starter bikes.*



'Ere Bob, where does this bit go....?' TRF members - not as boring as you think - especially when your chain snaps miles from anywhere

# CHRISTMAS

## Watch out

For the man who has everything, how about a Camel Trophy adventure watch. Rugged, stylish and unashamedly expensive, the Camel Trophy watches are tested in the most vigorous of environments, and should be capable of withstanding any abuse you give it on the trail. It costs £185, but it sure as hell beats receiving another tie, or a pullover from your granny. For further info call Diana on

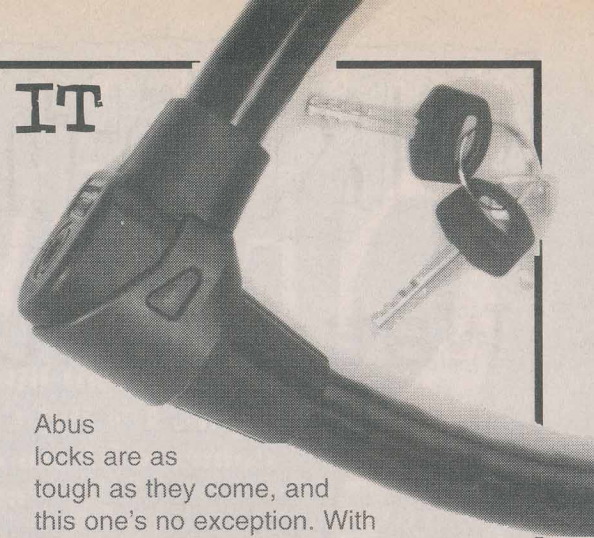
0171 353  
5272.



## BE FLASH

Ideal for those midwinter trail rides where you end up riding home in the dark with the bike covered in mud. Cacora's Be Seen flashing lamp emits a rapidly pulsing amber flash enabling the carrier to be seen in the dark from up to 400 yards away. The unit itself is water resistant, clips to a belt or jacket and weighs a mere 18g with the lithium battery which is included in the price of £4.99 inc VAT and p&p. To get hold of one contact Cacora on 01626 335543.

## LOCK IT OR LOSE IT



## AT THE BAR

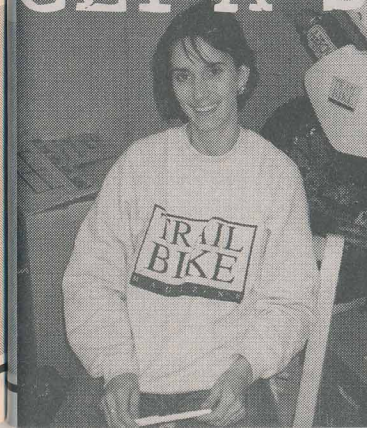
Making Tracks three in one bar-pack is a neat way of holding all those things you need when you're touring. It clips to the cross bar, doubles up as a bumbag, and can be carried as a

holdall. Made from tough nylon, it features numerous pouches, zips and mesh pockets, as well as a massive 13X20" clear map holder. We've tried it and it works well as long as you don't mind folding and re-folding your maps. It costs £29.95 plus £1.50 p&p and you can get one from Making Tracks on 01295 688073.

Abus locks are as tough as they come, and this one's no exception. With dirt bike theft reaching epidemic proportions it's high time you thought about real security. The 1000 Steel-O-Flex has a 9mm twisted steel cable protected by a coil of 22mm hardened, revolving steel links. It comes in either 1.7m or 1m lengths and costs £87.44 and £59.63 respectively - the larger one is long enough to wrap round two bikes or an immovable object such as a Rottweiler. Available from your nearest Abus stockist or by Phoning Michael Brandon on 01450 373333.

TrailBike Magazine sweatshirts are now available priced at just £13.99. Warm, fleecy and available in any colour you like so long as it's grey. Make your cheque out to TrailBike magazine and send it to the usual address: TrailBike Magazine, PO Box 1555, Salisbury, SP3 4PF. Available in either large or extra large it's the ideal Christmas present for absolutely everyone - but we would say that wouldn't we?

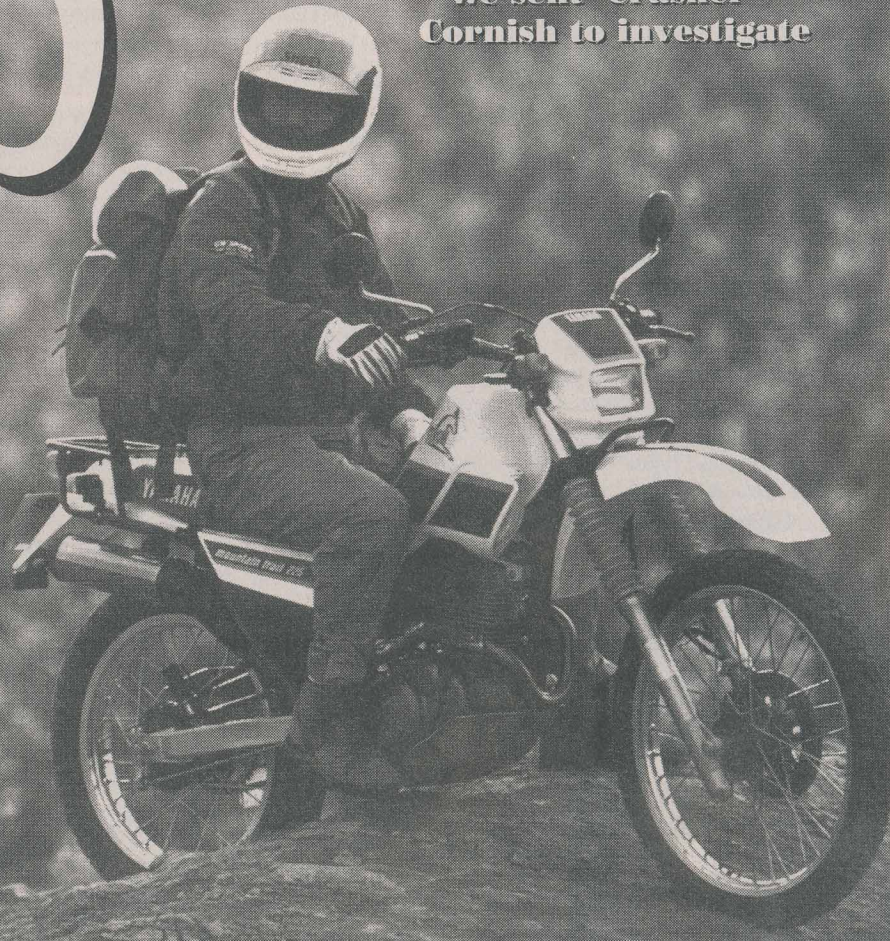
## GET A SWEAT ON



## CRACKERS

## SEROW 225W

**It's the trail bike everyone's talking about. It's light manouevrable and it comes with an electric start, yet its not officially imported. We sent 'Crasher' Cornish to investigate**



## MOUNTAIN TRAIL 225

According to my *I-Spy* book of sheep and goats, the Serow is a small, rare and extremely agile mountain-dwelling creature originating from Asia. Like its four-legged namesake, Yamaha's XT225 Serow trail bike fits this description perfectly, which is good news for all those dyed-in-the-wool trail riders who haven't stopped mourning the demise of the Honda XL185 back in the early Eighties, and who quite rightly demand a sensible, cheap to run, no-nonsense trail bike to replace their ageing mounts.

The Serow manages all this and what's more is brought bang up to date by the fitment of monoshock suspension, modern switchgear and an electric starter. Combined with its light weight, high ground clearance, (yet low seat height) and simple mechanicals the Serow is equally as welcome to the novice rider, daunted by more competition-inspired off road machinery.

Yet despite the bike's undoubted qualities it is not officially imported into the UK through the usual channels, which means that you can't just go down to your local dealers to try one for size, but instead have to rely on sourcing one from one of the dealers that are bringing the machines into the country as personal imports. We borrowed ours from a dealer in London and took it along to the Whitley MCC Classic Trial one weekend in October in order to give it a workout both on and off the road.

Our particular bike was an American import, but Serows come in from Europe and Japan as well as from the 'States, and all vary slightly in their specification. Ours had a speedo conveniently calibrated in mph, full sized indicators (which glowed permanently), though Japanese versions wear trick mini indicators which are far less vulnerable in a tumble, and was missing the headlamp-mounted grab handle and remote reservoir shock which are fitted to some models. On the other hand it had the most up to date styling, drawing its influences from other members of the current XT range. All versions have the lights permanently wired on and there's nothing you can do about it without adding in an extra switch.

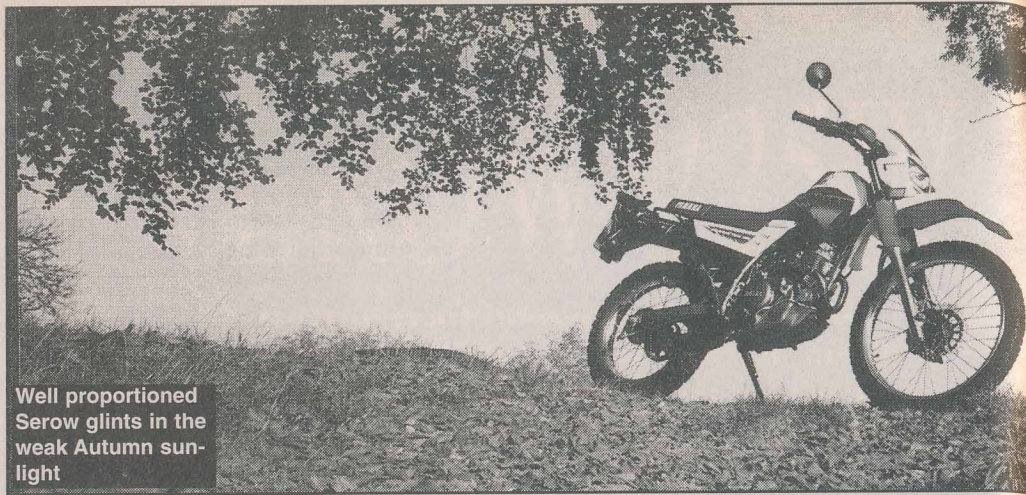
Unloading the bike at the start of the trial, the Serow attracted a lot of attention from admirers of the bike's lithe proportions. There's no doubt it's a pretty-looking trail bike, ours came in blue/white, but they also come in an unusual green/white and purple/red/white. Gleaming in the weak Autumn sun, it seemed a pity to get it dirty but the Serow had a job of work to do and we were anxious to explore its capabilities.

At just 31.9 inches from the ground to the top of the saddle, the Serow must have one of the lowest seat heights of any trailie available today, and equally importantly is exceptionally narrow making it a particularly attractive proposition to those short in the leg or simply just novice riders. For the more experienced pilot the Serow's low seat height allows a quick dab to prevent a tricky situation getting out of hand, and inspires confidence in difficult going.

The view from the saddle is familiar to anyone who has ever ridden a Yamaha trail bike. The Speedo houses a large resettable trip meter, while warning lamps for high beam, neutral and indicators sit in a separate binnacle on the right. The ignition barrel (with integral steering lock), and the choke control are all protected by an XT-type headlamp and surround, switchgear is conventional Yamaha fare with push-to-cancel indicators, horn and headlamp beam being operated by the left thumb, and the starter button/kill switch by the right.

The Serow's spec sheet informs you this bike is a no-frills, practical machine powered by a simple sohc, two valve single pushing out a claimed maximum power of





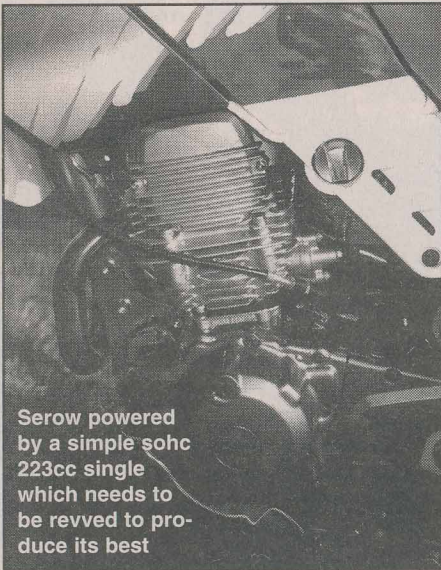
Well proportioned Serow glints in the weak Autumn sunlight



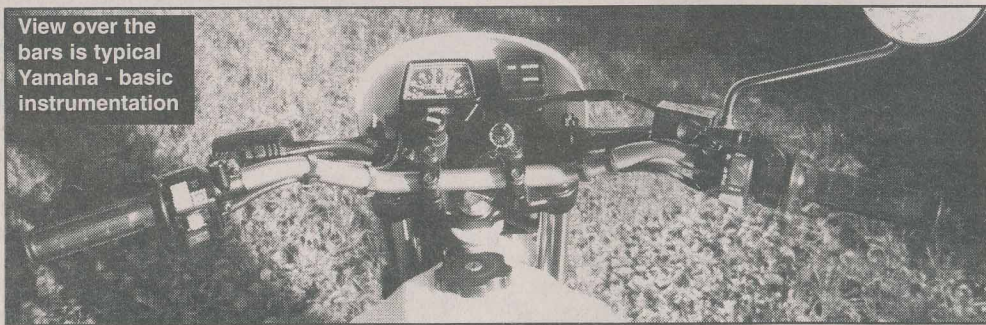
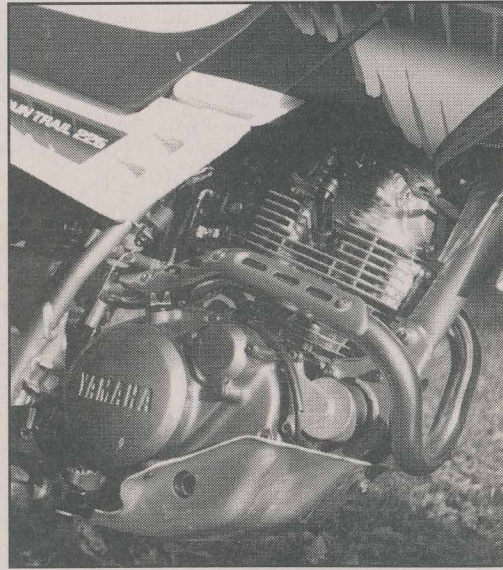
MOUNTAIN TRAIL  
**SEROW**  
 225W



変化に満ちたフィールドを歩き回るハンティングのように、ケモノ道、ブッシュ、ぬかるみ、岩場など、あらゆる道を征服するウッズライディング。森を知り尽くしたSEROWのマウンテントレール機能は、そんな厳しい大自然の中でも、野生動物のような逞しさとしなやかさを発揮する。山の走り方は、誰よりも詳しい。SEROW



Serow powered by a simple sohc 223cc single which needs to be revved to produce its best



View over the bars is typical Yamaha - basic instrumentation

20bhp at 8000rpm, and a modest 13.6ft/lb of torque at 7000rpm. Finished in a pleasing metallic grey, the air cooled lump has a 9.5:1 compression ratio, and a bore and stroke of 70x58mm to give a true displacement of 223cc. A single 34mm Mikuni carb provides the fuel/air mix and ignition is by CDI. No kick starter is fitted to the latest Serows which instead make do with a tiny electric boot located at the front of the engine, protected from knocks by the front down-tube and a substantial alloy bash plate. I know some people still prefer kick starters to an electric start, but when you've managed to stop in a stream crossing, or you're up to your axles in mud, the leccy start is a welcome companion. If you really must have a kickstarter then many of the earlier Serows came so equipped or you can order a kick starter kit as an optional accessory. Ours required plenty of warming up on the choke which is a sure sign of a lean burning Californian emission set-up, the plus side being that the Serow should be able to comfortably stretch a gallon of unleaded to in excess of 70 miles on the road.

The Serow's running gear is well thought out. With a bike not designed for high speed blasting over rough terrain there's simply no need for yards of suspension travel. Thus it comes equipped with 8.9 inches of fork travel and approx-

imately the same amount of movement at the rear. With a preload/five way compression adjustable shock working via a linkage from a box section swingarm there's just enough suspension adjustment to keep you happy without being overly complex. Wheel rims are light alloy in 21 inch front and 18 inch rear sizes, and the rear rim comes fitted with a security bolt to prevent tyre slippage when running low tyre pressures. Just a word or two here about the grippy Bridgestone tyres which came fitted as standard. These really were one of the best dual sport tyres we've come across with plenty of soft rubber available on the road but a fairly aggressive pattern with good deep knobs for the dirt. They worked as good as they looked and easily out perform the sort of rubber that comes fitted as standard on most other trailies.

Braking is taken care of by a 220mm hydraulically operated drilled front disc at the sharp end with a reassuringly strong drum at the rear, which offered heaps of feedback at the folding brake lever despite me wearing bulky MX boots. Other markets like their Serows with disc brakes front *and* rear and it should be possible to find one in such a specification if you prefer or even just retro fit a disc braked wheel.

Nice touches abound on the Serow, including grab handles either side of the



## YAMAHA XT225 SEROW

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rear mudguard which not only help when pulling it out of the mire but also make conveniently handy tie-down points during transportation to your favourite trails. The braceless handlebars give an uninterrupted view of the dials, and a stainless steel header pipe avoids the onset of a rusty exhaust at the first sign of muddy water. Grease nipples on the shock linkage together with a quickly accessible air filter and valve adjusters all add to the Serow's well thought out practicality.

From the start of the trial, I set off in the company of Si, the erstwhile editor riding his newly acquired Honda CRM250. Now as I have trouble finding my way around our local Sainsbury's without a map I decided to let Si get on with the navigation while I set about exploring the Serow's handling. On the A31 (a fast section of dual carriageway) I soon had the Serow humming along in 6th gear at an indicated 75mph. Not exactly FireBlade velocities, but fast enough to keep up with the flow of the traffic, and at this speed the bike felt nicely stable and thanks to a supportive seat, comfortable with it.

Chasing Si and the CRM down some twisting country lanes required a tap dance on the gear lever to keep the little thumper on the cam, but despite the motor's limited power, the Serow's agile handling and grippy Bridgestones allows you to make the most of every one of the available 20 ponies. On these sorts of roads, progress can be surprisingly rapid for such a little bike - acceleration only tailing off when approaching 70mph on long straights, and as the miles clocked up, our brand new and still fairly tight example began to loosen up nicely. The notchy gearshift quickly becoming easier to use and the bike responding more eagerly to large applications of

throttle.

Within a few miles of the start the first of the observed sections appeared, I snicked the Serow down into second gear and with a whiff of throttled tackled the first of the day's climbs. Trickling along at walking pace, the bike's light weight (just 106kg), and low C of G helped me tackle some off-camber banks, with the odd nasty looking tree root failing to upset the bike's progress. Opening the throttle provided all the grip that was needed and the section was cleaned without drama.

Carrying on after the section ends marker, the track opened up to become a faster, sandy byway, the XT's unsophisticated suspension soaking up the bumps easily as we pressed on passing slower riders. Now I'm not suggesting for one minute that the Serow has the ability to stay with a well ridden DR or XR once the going gets faster, but on this sort of mixed terrain where care was just as important as speed, the Serow was in its element. With its easy manoeuvrability thanks to a short (53 inch) wheelbase and superb steering lock, the Serow can be persuaded to turn on a sixpence. And aided no doubt by the low gearing and light controls, it really is a bike that is astonishingly easy to ride feet up, in fact I can't think of an easier-to-ride trail bike.

Blasting through a nasty, deeply rutted track had the bike sideways for a moment or two, but as it always felt controllable and you're so close to the ground anyway, a steadying dab isn't really a problem. The deep power-sapping mud required big handfuls of throttle to keep the momentum up but the XT felt reasonably torquey, and by keeping on the gas till I reached the top of the climb I managed to pass several more riders on much more powerful tackle who'd managed to



TrailBike -19- Magazine

The Serow isn't a new machine, in fact it's been around since 1985. From the outset it was designed as a pure trail/adventure bike with the initial concept focusing on three main design goals: that it should be slim; compact; and light.

Japanese sales brochures make much of the fact that this is the sort of bike on which you might conceivably wish to spend a weekend away in the wilderness somewhere, camping and taking in some of the trails en route. For this reason many of the early designs incorporated racks both front and rear and although these are not found on the current models, they almost certainly could be sourced from suppliers in Japan via your local grey importer.

Other changes along the way have included the adoption of an electric start which has made the Serow even more user friendly. Earlier models built prior to 1989 (the 2LN model) came with a kick starter, but electric start models began to appear in 1989 (the 3RW model) and some bikes built between 1989 and 1992 come with both kick and electric start. For those people wishing to retro fit a kick starter there is an accessory kit available from Yamaha (part no. 3RW-W0795-00) which includes all the relevant bits including gears and gaskets.

Disc braked models also appeared in 1989 and other changes have included (for some markets) the adoption of a neat adjustable remote reservoir shock located on the front downtube, as well as slight bodywork alterations and regular updating of graphics.

It's usually the case that when the Japanese get things right, they are sensible enough to leave things alone. The Serow is a good example of that policy in action and remains today an excellent and practical machine that is virtually unchanged from its original design.



Original designs show remarkable similarity to actual bike

get themselves stuck in the mire. It's at times like this that you appreciate the Serow's almost idiot-proof qualities, it's just so rider friendly that unless your idea of off roading is speed at all cost you honestly don't need any more performance than the mild-mannered Serow has to offer. When the bike finally did get bogged down trying to avoid a fallen rider its light weight and conveniently placed grab handles meant progress was halted only briefly while it was manhandled

**Price** £3,595 otr

**Engine** Air cooled two valve sohc single

**Weight** 106kg

**Plus points**

Low seat, electric start, simple maintenance, easy to ride

**Minus points**

Pricey, solo use only

onto firmer ground.

Of course my luck was not to last. Ever mindful of my 'Crasher' tag I was beginning to wonder if I might just make it through a whole event without coming to grief when circumstances conspired to ruin my whole day (*surprise, surprise - Ed!*). Back on the road and following Blezard (who had turned up like a bad penny) and Si, I was having to work the little Serow hard to avoid being left behind. As we approached a junction I sneaked a quick glance at the route card (which was taped to the tank) and when I looked back up both of the other two bikes had stopped dead. Seeing my life flash before me and hauling on the anchors in a vain attempt to stop myself being impaled on the CRM's number plate I realised it was a futile attempt at preventing the inevitable. At the last moment I released the brakes and attempted to steer around the back of Si's bike but just managed to collect the rear tyre of the CRM while I was still travelling at about 30mph. I torpedoed the blissfully unaware editor who was promptly launched clean over the bars, and in the ensuing carnage the cartwheeling Serow took its revenge on my small but up till then perfectly formed body.

Afterwards sitting on the grass bank surveying the damage to man and machine I pondered my future at TrailBike Magazine. In one swift moment I had managed to wipe out two thirds of the editorial staff, dumped two bikes on the road and probably ruined my chances of collecting a company pension. Fortunately both Si and his CRM 250 had escaped with barely a scratch and considering the end over end impact the Serow had just been through, we were encouraged to find that damage was limited to lightly scratched plastics, a broken tail light lens, two smashed indicators, a dented tank and a pair of handlebars that were bent so low they wouldn't have looked out of place on Foggy's Ducati. Oops!

For all its advantages - not to mention its crash-worthiness - the Serow is not perfect. Its size dictates that it is realistically

only a solo performer. It may come fitted with a pair of pillion footpegs but these are made redundant by the seat which is far too short to consider carrying a pillion. And the price too could be keener: at £3,595 on the road, the Serow purchaser has the luxury of a number of other trail bikes including Yamaha's own XT350 which will doubtless be heavily discounted by dealers now that Yamaha have announced it won't feature in their '96 line up of bikes.

That said there is definitely a need for bikes like the Serow to make trail riding available to more people, and it really must be said that it makes one wonder just where the big four official importers think future generations of riders are going to come from without bringing in bikes such as this.

**Conclusion**

The XT225 Serow is the bike serious trail riders have been hankering after for some time. It may not be the quickest form of off road travel, but its simple no frills design and layout, make it a must for the serious green laner. It comes fitted with all the equipment you need, alloy rims, folding tip gear and brake pedals, sump shield etc in a package that's designed to be the most user friendly of all the trail bikes currently on the market. What's more the low seat height, small overall dimensions, light controls and of course the electric start, make trail riding more attractive to the beginner and experienced rider alike. Okay it could be a little cheaper but the build quality and scarcity should ensure the Serow keeps its value and we can personally attest to its crash-worthiness. In our opinion the XT225 Serow really is the spiritual successor to the Honda XL185. Take a look at one and you will see why Australian Motor Cycle News voted it best 'Off Roader' of the year, last year.

**THANKS**

To Rick at RAP Superbikes for the loan of the XT225. If you want to buy one give him a call on 0181 452 2672

# The Mro u g h g u d e t o B r i t a i n

(OS maps 92, 98, 99)

**The Yorkshire Dales are the setting for our area guide this month. Leo Crone follows in the footsteps of legionnaires, pack-horses and veterinary surgeons as he takes us on a guided tour of Herriot country**

Yorkshire Dales National Park



A view over the picturesque village of Bainbridge nestling in the Yorkshire Dales



**T**he Yorkshire Dales lie at the geographical heart of England in the northern Pennines. They are the watershed between east and west and provide the picturesque rural backdrop to the BBC TV series, All Creatures Great and Small. Our route begins in the market square of the historic town of Richmond, a Norman garrison town whose charter dates back to 1144.

Begin by taking the A6108 west towards Reeth, but 6km out of town ease off the throttle and watch out for a right hand turn signposted Marske. Go over the 18th century bridge spanning the river Swale and on to Marske passing a sign marked 'Tracked army vehicles 25mph' after which the walled remains of Marske Priory can be seen on the right - if you stand up on the pegs!

At the bottom of the hill bear left then take the first right, helpfully marked with a dead-end sign. A narrow, undulating, potholed road it passes Skelton Hall (095,009) before starting up a slight gradient. Look out for the house on the left because its boundary wall is also one of the two walls which define your first green lane (094,013). Carry on up the partly made climb to the gate leading to Skelton Moor - the lane stays in the field, with the wall on your left and a gently sloping grass bank to your right - to the next gate where your lane splits. Here you should bear right following a well defined track along the moor edge, and after about 1km of wonderful views the track bears left then splits again. Take the right track between the two gate posts down to Helwith (075,030). The lane drops down to Shaw Beck, but before the ford take care as the lane hooks 180 degrees right to a gate by the ford.

Once through the ford the lane takes you to Helwith Farm turning left at the stable door onto tarmac and the steep climb up to Holgate Pasture. At the crossroads turn left towards Holgate Farm, go over the cattle grid and as the tarmac bears left, the lane to Washfold starts on the right. In practice you continue straight on rather than following the road down to the farm. It's a steep rocky descent to the ford, after which it's more of the same as you climb away from Moresdale Gill with the sunken lane zig-zagging up the fell side before flattening out in a narrow lane with ancient stone walls either side to a gate.

Go through the gate into a field, keeping the stone wall on your right, to the next gate which is within sight of the first. Once through that you should find tarmac re-appears 200m later. Go straight on over the small bridge, carrying on up the hill, through the large gate and onto the road junction at Washfold. Again go straight on (technically right) which leads to the row of houses called Hurst followed by a farm and it's at the farm that the next lane begins.

With the farm on your right there will be a fence on your left with a large gate in it (045,023). Once through the gate the lane climbs up past piles of mineworkings to yet another gate on the corner of a wall. When you get there have a good look around as this is Jingle Pot, the site of extensive lead mining and smelting during the last century, the chimney

# The rough guide to Britain

stacks dotting the landscape like currents in a spotted dick. Similar activities would now produce a national outcry instead of which this landscape is preserved as part of our heritage!

Back to the gate and once through it you're on Marrick Moor. There's a well defined track over the moor leading to a gate in a stone wall to the start of Fremington Edge. On a clear day the villages of Grinton and Reeth are laid out like toy towns in the majestic sweep of Swaledale with the start of Arkengarthdale leading away to the north west.

**On a clear day the villages of Grinton and Reeth are laid out like toy towns in the majestic sweep of Swaledale**

Back on the bike and the lane heads due north from the last gate, dropping down Fremington Edge with another gate at its steepest point on a bend (where else?). After which the lane rejoins tarmac and continues to drop into Swaledale by means of a very narrow walled road, so caution please as you descend into the hamlet of Fremington. At the junction with the B6270 turn left for Grinton, and once over the bridge the road turns sharply left while you turn right down

the road signposted Redmire/Leyburn. No more than 20 metres later, look out for a right turn by Grinton Church signed Harkerside, and follow it. Four kilometers from here is the start of the next lane, just after passing a large bridge on your right (005,983) and then a small forecourt appears in front of a barn. At this point the road bears left up Harkerside Moor

while the lane bears right signposted 'unsuitable for motors' (what a wonderful sign) (003,982). This is part of a corpse road which winds its way along Swaledale to the church at Grinton. A green lane in its purist form, it is enclosed by stone walls on either side and connects Low Whitta to Low House. In the past it was part of a network of roads used to carry the dead from remote farms and houses throughout the Dales to hallowed ground for burial in wicker baskets. A journey that sometimes took three days!

The lane finishes in Low House farmyard (watch out for the chickens!), and just past the farm House and barn there is a refurbished grand house which in Autumn has a glorious mantle of red ivy leaves all over the front. At the junction you should bear left, (the road has a small hump-backed bridge which if approached quickly enough can yield a little air time) and once over the bridge the road bears left up to the collection of farm buildings and houses called Crackpot (973,966) - yes, really! Here the road splits with a very unhelpful signpost in the middle of the road mis-directing any unsuspecting tourist who may happen to pass by. It has remained unchanged in this position for at least the last six years - perhaps the reason being if you get this far you must know where you are going!

Anyway go straight on between farm outhouses towards Summer Lodge (964,957), where the road splits, right taking you into Summer Lodge, while straight on brings you to the gate leading to the beginning of the next lane. (To the right of this gate is a tractor which has been parked there for the past thirteen years, and looks likely to be there for at least another thirteen). Through the gate the track starts to climb up Summer Lodge Moor getting steeper and rockier the higher up you go, culminating in a tricky rock

strewn zig-zag before flattening out near a little ford after which lies the last gate before tarmac, a further 1/2 km climb up the stoney track.

At the road you need to bear right up onto Askrigg Common which in summer is covered in a glorious expanse of heather, while in winter, if the road is open, it's a desolate windswept plain. On dropping down from the Common into Wenslydale it is always worth slowing down just to take in the view. Ahead lies the table-top mound of Addlebrough, the site of Saxon dwellings. To the right, Butterset high pastures and the Roman roads which bisect its length, while in the valley bottom nestles the village of Askrigg - your next port of call.

Near the bottom of the hill the road bears sharp right then goes over a bridge, up a small hill, and down to a road junction. Turn left down Garland Hill to the next junction where you then turn right into Askrigg. If this looks familiar, it's probably because the television series *All Creatures Great & Small* used it extensively during filming and so Herriott heritage cups, saucers, key fobs etc can all be purchased at any of the three shops in the village.

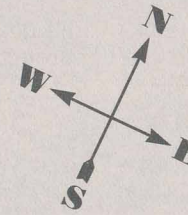
Heading west as you should be, you now take the next left turn about 1.5km from Askrigg (933,909) signposted Bainbridge. This village derives its name from the bridge that's historically been sited here over the River Bain (*getaway - Ed*). At the next junction bear left again (there is no right turn in case you are tempted), then left once more past the village green. The road then takes a 90 degree turn over the bridge from which if you take a look over the right parapet, during times of flooding, you can see the

waterfall. Turning right takes you off the bridge and past two very important places in the village. On the left rises a mound on which once stood a Roman fort that gave rise to the village, on the right is the petrol station, local mechanic and paper shop all rolled into a collection of ramshackle buildings which look to pre-date the Roman remains by a few hundred yaers!

As the road rises out of Bainbridge, take the right turn for Semer Water and Carpley Green. Go just 1/2 km down this narrow road before taking the left fork (934,893) for Carpley Green. You are now on Carpley Green road which on a clear day

gives you a wonderful view of Ragdale over the right hand wall with Semer water reservoir in the Dale bottom. As you near Carpley Green farm be prepared to be barked at by the collection of loud sheepdogs. The lane can be seen as a non-tarmac continuation of the road stretching north away from the farm and passes through the farmyard by means of two gates forming a pen. This is not without good reason, and if there is livestock in the yard, kill the engine and push through.

Once on Busk Lane which is usually a stony, well defined right of way but if subjected to heavy rain can often flood (942,858) you should eventually join up with High Lane at (934,839). Here you need to turn right towards Stalling Busk and if the sun is out can enjoy the view of Cragdale Moor. If it's raining, watch out for some deep pot holes, and if it's snowing good luck! At the lane's junction with tarmac, turn right onto Stake road, past Semer Water over the crossroads and up the north face of Ragdale without oxygen or Sherpas. At the summit pause for the view of Wenslydale before dropping



# The rough guide to Britain

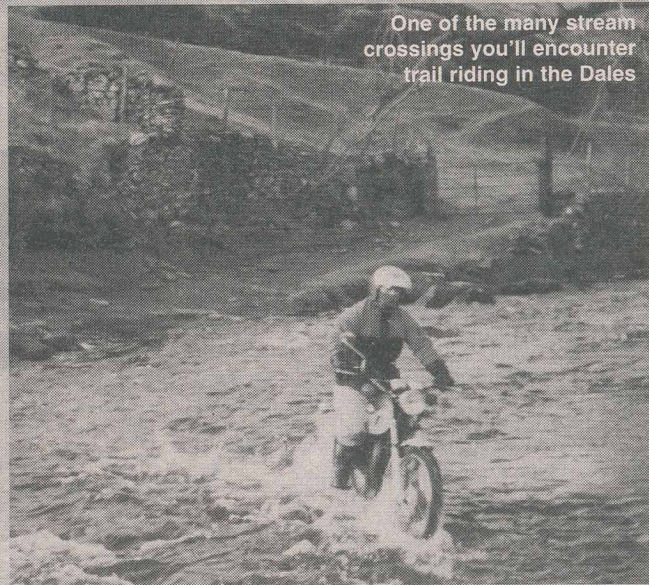
into said Dale. About 1/2 km from the summit SLOW DOWN as the crossroads you are looking at can be passed in a flash. It's the point at which the Roman road from Bainbridge crosses the road from Countersett to Buttersett (906,883), and if you are at the correct junction the track to your left should rise up the Dale side while the track to your right drops slightly arrow straight into the distance.

Take the left lane called Ham High Road, the Roman road created to join Bainbridge to Ingleton and possible Lancaster, which at its highest point by Wether Fell (874,867) is 2,014ft above sea level. This point on a windy day can get quite crowded with parked cars whose owners are to be found 1/2km north throwing themselves from the Fell edge hoping to catch a good updraught. Yes hanggliding, a dangerous sport at the best of times and this particular spot has been the site of a number of near misses between gliders and RAF Jaguars (*I know who I would put my money on - Ed*), which have been known to fly underneath the hang-gliders!

About 4km from your last sight of tarmac the quaintly named Beggarsman Road should halt any further trail riding (863,854), turn right down Sleddale, taking care as the right turn is on the brow of the climb out of same. Three and a half kilometers down the road the small village of Gayles appears on your left. As the road flattens out and just past the Council carpark cum depot is a ford - very wide, usually slow flowing and fairly shallow, but always slippery. Go on I dare you.... try it. If your bottle has gone, follow the road over the bridge into Hawes, but if you've made it over the ford, bear right to the small road junction then turn left down to Hawes. At the next junction, left takes you to the petrol station, while right takes you to a high street full of pubs, cafes, sweet shops and a chippy. Might I recommend you to the first cafe on the left, well used to sweaty muddy types, and serving simple hot food which is not too expensive. If it's a warm summer's day you may have a problem getting in - not just to the cafe but Hawes as well! In winter you've usually got the place to yourself.

After lunch, head west out of Hawes past the petrol station and take the next left (B6255) heading for Ingleton. About 1/2km along this road you will see a sign for Honeycott caravan park on your right, slow down the road to your next lane is on your left and its just a six foot gap in the wall, which is easily missed. You are now on Mossy Lane (864,897), proceed with care, with no white lines or passing places, the lane's high walls and blind corners can have you face to face with anything from Mr & Mrs Metro with 2.4 kids, to a two ton Massey Ferguson with a trailer full of slurry.

Ignore all turn offs and keep on Mossy Lane as it eventually turns right around a



One of the many stream crossings you'll encounter trail riding in the Dales

barn (866,888), at which point the tarmac ends at the gate leading to Faw head (866,887). Past the house, the lane is enclosed by two walls and interspersed with about eight or nine gates. You near the end of unclassified County Road B3956 when the right hand wall gives way to open fields. Finally the track goes through a gate in the left wall (859,877) - the last one you'll be glad to hear - after which it joins up with a well made stony road, passes through a ford and climbs up onto Beggarmans Raod (863,876).

Turn right to climb out of Sleddale, at the summit turn 180 degrees left, back onto the Roman road to Bainbridge (863,854), and this time do the entire length back over the crossroads (906,883) to its junction with the Countersett, Bainbridge road (926,895). Turn left into Bainbridge, and as you enter the village the road swings left while you want to turn right down to the bridge past the fort and up the hill bearing left with the road onto Worton (956,901). About three km after Worton keep an eye on the right hand verge for B&B signs at Hawthorn farm. Take the right turn helpfully waymarked with a dead-end sign by the side of Thrustle Nest (986,892), and go past thrustle nest up a hill to the entrance to Hawthorn farm. Look to your right, and between the wall and the hedge lies Richmond Gate (985,889) - go for it. A double walled lane, usually gate free, it has in its 1/2km length a narrow rocky gully, a wide muddy grassy climb and a finish on crumbling tarmac. At the lane end turn left towards Aysgarth and at the next junction you rejoin the A684 heading east. For those among you into waterfalls Aysgarth Falls are well worth a look (signposted from the A684).

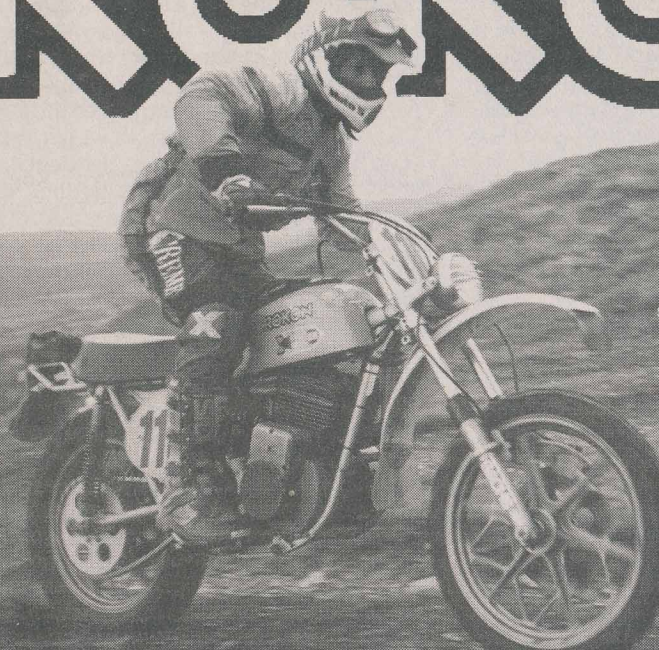
If time is getting on and it looks like headlights might come in useful, carry straight on out of Aysgarth and take the third right for West Burton, Buckton and Kettlewell (016,884). This road joins up with the B6160 just outside West Burton, turn right onto the B6160 but only for about 100m after which a very old bridge

can be seen on your left bearing a weight limit. Presuming you are not on an FJ1200 with sidacar and trailer, go over Burton Bridge (017,871) and start the long climb up Morpeth Gate onto High Lane, an old packhorse road and more recently (mid 19th century) a drove road which is more than 60ft wide in places. Evidence suggests part of the road was penned off to graze cattle during the journey to market and High Lane also offers some superb view of Wensleydale before ending at its junction with Witton Steeps (063,877). Now turn left down to West Witton where you once more join the A684, turning right to Wensley and Leyburn. In Leyburn go straight on at the roundabout to Bellerby which has the only 'Beware of Ducks' sign in the Dales. At the road end turn right which actually keeps you on the A6108. Ignore the first left signed Richmond/Downholme instead take the second left which is a shorter, faster route back to Richmond and the end of this trip.

Lastly a word of warning; in extreme conditions (ie rain) some of the fords are impassable. In snowy conditions the higher lanes such as the Roman roads are usually blocked so check not just the days weather but the previous week's to ensure you are not confronted with a two metre torrent instead of a moorland stream or a wall of snow where a green lane once ran.



# ROKON



Rokon didn't just produce enduro bikes - their main line of business was building strange 2WD farm bikes



# -ROLL

get it going has to be at a bit of a disadvantage in my book. With Roy holding the front brake on (remember this thing is automatic and permanently in gear!), two people balancing the bike at a convenient angle, it was left to muggins to spend a fruitless twenty minutes tugging at the pull cord - yep, that's right, it's got a pull cord starter like a lawn mower.

We went through the starting routine again: empty the float bowl (the Rokon has a convenient tap for doing this), turn on the fuel, remove the spark plug and heat it with a braising torch - nice 'n' convenient huh? Refit the plug taking care not to burn your fingers, leave the choke off, but this time I suggested we try a handful of throttle. I psyched myself up for one final attempt, and with all the strength I could muster, gave the cord an almighty tug. Instantly the Rokon crackled into life, leapt forward about five feet, straight out of the hands of the two helpers who were supposedly steadying it, and pinned Roy up against the back-yard wall, snarling at him as it did so. His hands were still clenched tightly around the brake lever when we reached him and managed to pry the bike away from on top of him. Uh-oh, I thought, this thing's a

bit of an animal.

We steadied Roy's nerves with twenty Bensons, and set off to try the Rokon on the trail. As *Cycle* magazine opined more than 20 years ago, there's nothing conventional about the Rokon. Just sitting aboard the thing feels totally weird. For a start you are completely phased by the lack of a clutch lever - your left hand seems unsure of its role, regularly grasping at thin air. The bike itself is low and quite wide thanks to small wheels (the front is just 19 inches in size), minimal suspension and that huge primary drive cover. The seat is squidgy and comfortable in the manner of all older bikes, and the suspension, the complete opposite.

Pulling away from Roy's back yard the first thing you notice is how loud it is. Despite the fact that the silencer fitted to ours was bigger than the original, it still makes one helluva racket. On the road the bike shakes and vibrates thanks to a combination of the rorty air cooled engine and a pair of full knobby tyres. It's fast though - deceptively fast. At full chat, the Rokon will quickly blast to 80mph with a flat droning engine note like a V2 rocket. In fact comparisons with the wartime 'Doodlebugs' don't end there, for you'd have a better chance of knocking a V2 out of the sky with a catapult than you do of stopping the Rokon going downhill.

Despite the Rokon wearing a pair of discs the size of dinner plates - which in itself is remarkable enough when you consider that back in the Seventies very few road bikes sported disc brakes, let alone machines built for the dirt - I came to the conclusion the brakes on the Rokon were there just to appease the scrutineers. The best way of stopping this thing is to ignore them completely and simply dig your heels into the ground while at the same time pulling back hard on the handlebars. I've known better braked airport trolleys - no kidding.

**It's only got one gear, a hand starter and is powered by a snowmobile engine. Si Melber takes a Christmas ride on the strange Rokon 340RT**

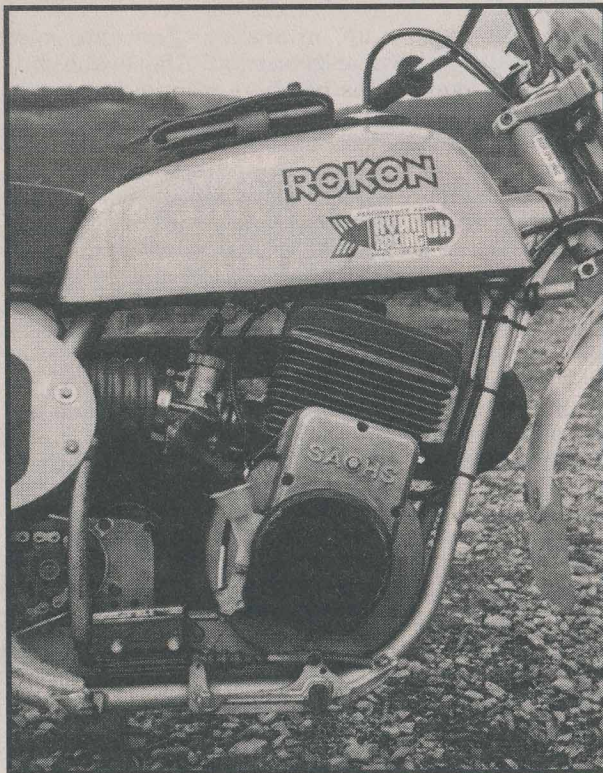
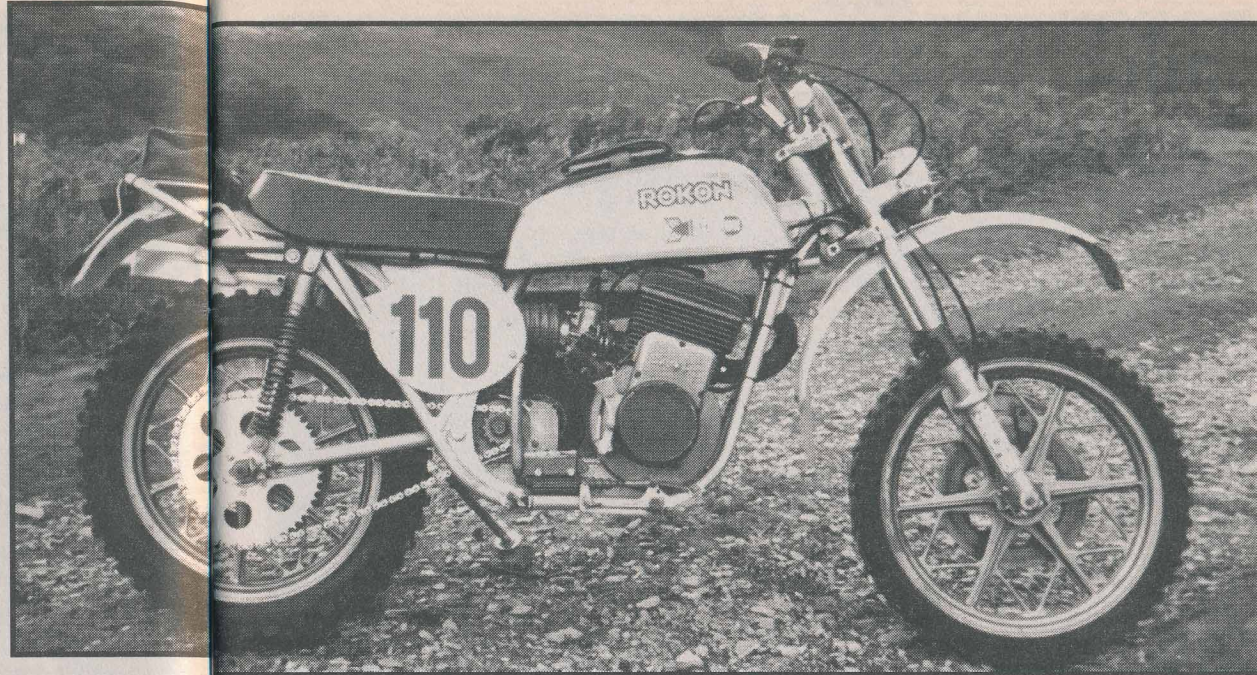
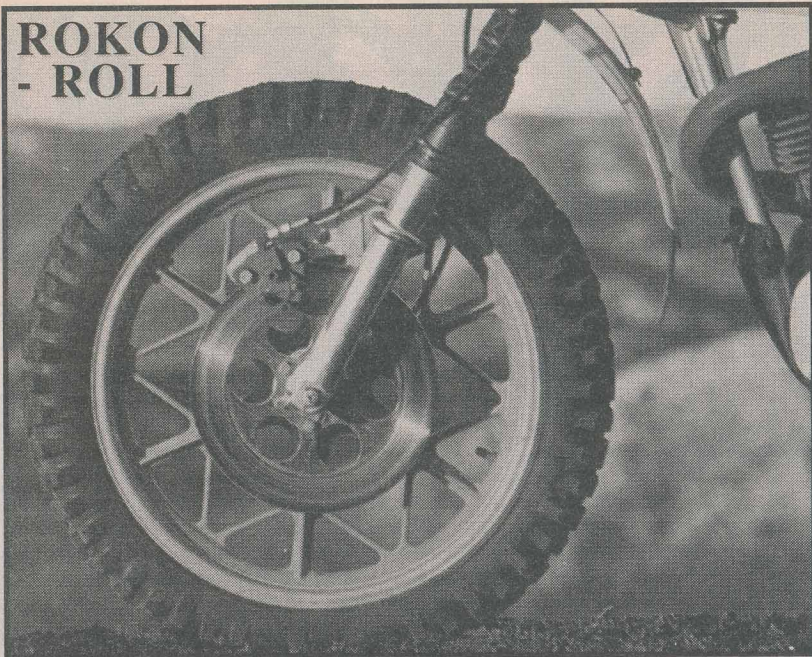
'Rokon's automatic motorcycle is a breakthrough in conventionality.... good enough to revolutionize off road motorcycling' proclaimed American dirt bike magazine *Cycle*, back in 1973, and they weren't alone. In May 1974 *Cycle Illustrated* had this to say about the Rokon: 'A few years from now we may all be on bikes very similar to this one.'

What they were talking about was the American built automatic Rokon RT340, a strange hybrid motorcycle designed around a 335cc, air cooled, Sachs snowmobile engine. The prophesies of course proved incorrect, but the reasoning behind them was not, as we had a chance to prove when we tracked one of these rare beasts down to Ryan Racing - purveyors of high class rubbish - located in Rhayader in the heart of Mid Wales.

Proprietor Roy Bevis who specialises in (mainly) CZ and Jawa dirt bikes from the Seventies, convinced us we should come and ride his Rokon as we would be amazed at what it could do. First of all though, we had to start it.

Any enduro bike which requires four people to

# ROKON - ROLL



**Topleft: Brakes may be big by today's standards but they're not very effective**  
**Left: Massive air-cooled, two stroke Sachs engine is derived from a snowmobile**  
**Top right: Look at the size of that rear sprocket!**  
**Rokon's automatic transmission means it's always in the right gear for maximum traction**

Part of the reason for the Rokon's aptitude for accelerating down hills is thanks to its strange transmission which supplies virtually no engine braking at all. Unlike ordinary car automatics with three or four gears and a torque convertor, the Rokon uses the principle of 'Continually Variable Transmission' or CVT. Much the same principle was used in the Daf and Volvo 'Variomatic' cars of the late Seventies, and continues in use

to this day in automatic scooters.

The principle works like this: Behind that huge primary drive cover on the left hand side of the engine sits a pair of pulleys, the front one of which is geared to the crank, and the rear to a transfer box and thence the drive chain. Each of the pulleys has moveable sides around which runs a V-shaped belt. As the engine rpm rises, a trio of spring-loaded centrifugal weights in the smaller front pulley, push its sides together engaging the belt and overcoming the tension of the rear pulley spring, opening it accordingly and raising the speed ratio. This variable ratio primary drive is further complicated (but significantly improved), by having a ramped cam on the rear side of the driven pulley which allows the system to be sensitive to rear wheel traction. If the rear wheel is spinning, the pulley ratio automatically adjusts to the load and throttle opening, and when it finds grip, maximum torque multiplication is sustained at full throttle - at least that's the theory.

In effect this means that the Rokon should always be in the right gear for the job, and find grip whatever the conditions - just the sort of thing you want in a dirt

bike really - in practise it's a little more complicated than that. The Rokon certainly finds plenty of grip and is an ace hill climber, storming up the steepest of ascents without any bother. Acceleration is impressive too with just a slight lag as the belts and pulleys adjust themselves to the engine demand. There's certainly enough poke to hoist the front wheel off the ground when you need to, as long as you anticipate things a little earlier than you would normally, and give the engine time to react. Chopping the throttle shut is the equivalent of downchanging and allows the engine chance to build up speed a little quicker. In fact you pretty quickly get used to riding the Rokon and in all other aspects it feels the same as any other twin shock dirt bike from that era. The advantage the Rokon does have however, is to eliminate the need for gearchanges allowing the rider to concentrate on the terrain. In that sense it is simplicity itself to ride, as you can never be in the wrong gear, or waste time by stalling. In fact the Rokon or something similar would make a great bike on which to learn to ride off road. The problem comes when you get to water!



# ROKON - ROLL

Ah yes, water. The Rokon's great downfall. You see in order that the belt doesn't overheat, the casing surrounding the pulley mechanism is not completely sealed which allows the ingress of water. And when water gets in, the belt slips. And when the belt slips you go nowhere fast. If like me, you happen to discover this little quirk as you are negotiating a river crossing you'd probably be about as chuffed as I was.

It's not that the belt takes all that long to dry out, in fact after about a minute of slipping and squealing the thing dries out enough to get you going again, it's just that you begin to get paranoid every time you go through a puddle. This is a bit of a problem for a dirt bike as water is a fairly common hazard, but perhaps the biggest problem of all is the Rokon's lack of any form of neutral. This means that just manoeuvring it around your yard or garden requires either enlisting the help of the local rugby team or removing the spark plug to release the compression. And of course if you break down on the trail, without a neutral it's impossible to tow unless you remove the drive chain!

For all it's foibles though the Rokon is a pleaaant bike to ride off road. Okay, the suspension is bone-jarringly harsh, no doubt aided by those unforgiving cast wheels, but its ability to cross tricky terrain is deceptive. The drive system works, the motor is full of beans and it feels and sounds a bit like riding a 37bhp chainsaw, scything its way through the countryside.

Weighing in at 220kg it's certainly porky by dirt bike standards (even those of its day), and this shows in its

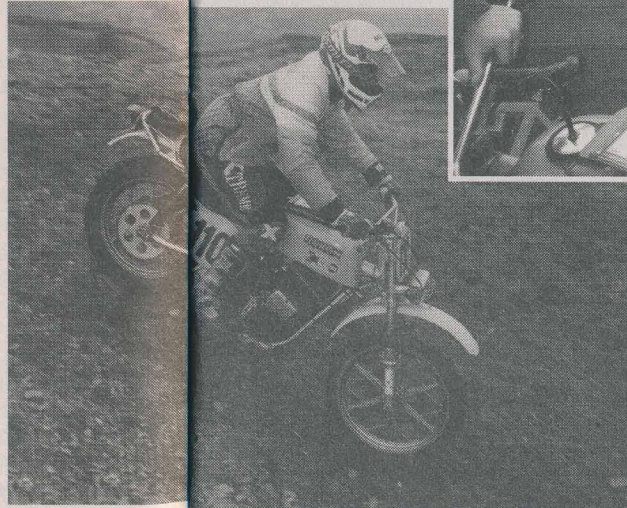
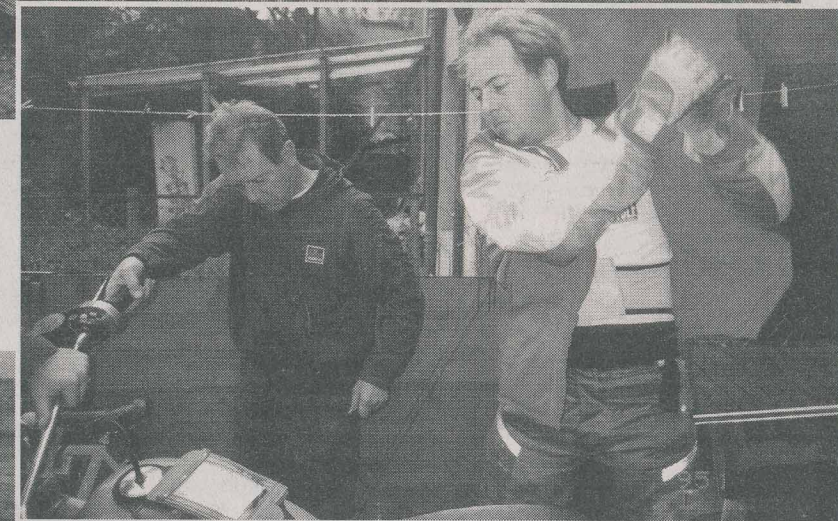
reluctance to flick easily from side to side. In fact despite wearing a 19 inch front wheel which should help quicken the steering, the Rokon is reluctant to turn without plenty of bodyweight. On the road this means it feels rather less skittish than a good many other dirt bikes, but thanks to the excessive vibration, the road is the last place on earth you'd want to spend time riding it. Especially when you take into consideration its fuel consumption - a smidge under 17mpg.

By the time I'd finished riding the Rokon I was rather less misty-eyed about this particular piece of mobile history than when I'd started out. My shoulder ached from starting it, my feet were wet from stopping in the middle of every bit of water I encountered, and when I ran out of petrol on the way home after filling up just a couple of hours before, I was ready to lob it in the nearest reservoir and tell Roy we'd been accosted by deaf and blind muggers who thought they were stealing a power tool.

When Rokon launched this bike they were all too aware of its limitations and planned to develop the model to take account of them. Of course this never happened. A deeply mistrustful public never took to the weird yellow bikes, the sales never took off and the Rokon was confined to dirt bike history, but not before two very important things happened.

Firstly, Husqvarna despite producing excellent and desirable 'normally geared' dirt bikes went and launched an automatic... which was a commercial flop. And secondly, this particular Rokon which originally came across the 'pond' in the hands of the US ISDT team and was found by Roy quietly rusting away on the Isle of Man, was entered in the twin shock class of the 1993 Welsh Two Day Enduro in the capable hands of British Champion Christian Walton..... and it won!

Which must go to prove something..... but I'm damned if I know what.



Top: Left hand side crankcase hides variable ratio transmission  
Middle: Don't even think about trying to start the Rokon without first consuming at least a box of Weetabix  
Left: Downhill riding is more exciting than it should be thanks to lack of engine braking and old fashioned anchors

Thanks to Roy Bevis at Ryan Racing for the loan of his Rokon. It certainly was educational. If you fancy a classic twin-shock give him a call on 01597 811181

# ...One Careless Owner...

K T M

2 5 0



Would you buy a used KTM 250 from this man? No, neither would we, but that didn't stop Paul Blezard from using and abusing one, then flogging it to some poor unsuspecting sap. This is part one of his story. Read it and weep

# ...One Careless Owner...

## The prologue

I'd been working at Langbaurgh Motorsports for just over a year when I bought my KTM250. The previous year, 1989, I'd done a season of supermotard racing on a whole variety of machines ranging from my thoroughly unsuitable Honda Transalp to a fire-breathing KTM500. I'd also used a KMX200, a CR250 and a TDR250 before buying a YZ490 which was a bit of a bugger to start, frighteningly quick and a real handful to get round corners. In the winter of '89/90 we held a series of supermoto meetings at the Motorsports project and I was dismayed to discover that on the damp track I was actually lapping quicker on the bog-standard KMX200 trailbike than on the monstrous YZ 'widowmaker' with double the power. I decided that what I wanted was something with the speed of a 'crosser, but the street legality and handleability of the KMX.

I sold the YZ490 to a brawny local lad who had the necessary gifts to get the

best out of it (big bollocks and no frontal lobes) and started seeking out a two-stroke enduro machine. I had a look at a converted Honda CR250 motocrosser which had been well maintained but was about five years old and didn't have quite the acceleration that I needed for supermoto. (Supermoto is a mixture of tarmac and dirt racing, analagous to rallycross for cars). Then I heard about a KTM250 Enduro for sale just up the road in Guisborough, which seemed to meet my requirements: street legal, easy to ride and bloody quick.

During a short road test on a dark and rainy night I discovered that the KTM was quite happy to potter along out of the power band, but when you gave it a handful it took off like a scalded cat. With 40bhp on tap and less weight than a restricted 125 to shift, the performance felt more than adequate for my requirements. The deal was done, I handed over a large wad of dosh and in return got the bike and some useful spares including the

owner's manual and a special tool to set the carb float-bowl level. Q352 XSC was a 1988 model KTM250 EXC - less than two years old when I bought it in January 1990 - so £1200 did not seem like a bad deal at all, considering that they were about £2000 new. It seemed to have been

very well looked after and the only sign of repair was on the water pump cover on the left crankcase.....of which more later.

It came with White Power suspension as standard - trendy upside-downies at the front and a remote-reservoir mono-shock at the rear, both with multi-adjustability. Like all KTMs it had a left-foot kick-start, but I've never had a problem kicking with my left foot (Why does anyone? it's not difficult!). It also came with a natty little tank-top leather pocket for putting your enduro time card in. I later discovered that compared to contemporary oriental tackle, it was a bit tall and top-heavy, and the brakes definitely lacked bite, but it still felt pretty impressive when I first bought it. In fact in that year, 1990, the Austrian firm gave their machines a thorough revision, making them much more 'Japanese' with quicker steering and a lower centre of gravity - you can tell the later generation machines at a glance because the final drive chains were switched from right to left at the same time.

**'We shall fight them on the beaches....'**

Within a few weeks of buying the KTM I entered the Le Touquet beach race. I'd done it for the first time four years earlier on a clapped out Honda XL500 and managed two laps of the the ten-mile circuit, so felt that with this much more serious bit of kit, I should be able to do at least four laps. (The quick boys do ten or eleven!). I started well enough, blasting the three miles down the beach flat out without mishap, up the notorious gully without getting stuck and back around through the dunes to complete the first lap in under half an hour. Blimey! I'd do six laps at this rate, no bother...I stopped for a breather and a drink and returned to the fray only to discover that the the course had changed out of all recognition; instead of the smooth, easy passage through the dunes, the sand had thoroughly cut up and become twice as hard to ride - I had to keep stopping for

breathers and by the end of my second lap the race was two hours old. By the time I finished my third and final lap an hour later I'd fallen off loads of times, and the 'lightweight' KTM seemed to be made of lead. To complete my humiliation I bumped into a German girl on the finish line who had just done 5 laps on a 510 Husqvarna four stroke.....(she turned out to be Jutta Kleinschmidt, an experienced desert racing Amazon who went on to win the women's class of the Paris-Cape Town rally, which made me feel slightly less humiliated).

At the prize-giving afterwards they showed some fantastic helicopter-shot footage of the winner, Eric Geboers, dancing through the whoops and dunes on his Honda 500 at about four times the speed of mobile chicanes like myself. But this time I couldn't blame my equipment - I'm sure that Geboers could have done at least ten laps on my KTM. A hopeless lack of fitness coupled with a serious skill shortage was the only plausible explanation for my desultory performance....

**'.....And in the forests.....'**

Although I'd done several AMCA 'hare and hounds' multi-lap events way back in '84 on my XL500 I'd never done a 'proper' enduro, so now that I had the right tool for the job I decided to have a go. I drove up to Bonnie Scotland to do a Border club event with my colleague from Langbaurgh, Jeff Sadler, who had just bought a brand new KTM300. I fondly imagined that my relative youth and fitness (compared to him, anyway) would more than make up for him having the latest generation machinery but I'd underestimated Jeff's riding ability and greater enduro experience; where I dithered and struggled in the bogs and mudholes he blasted through and beat me fair and square, although neither of us was much of a threat to the experts...I had no complaints about the bike though, it was a damn sight easier to get through the forests than an XL500S and the standard grab-handle mounted behind the seat on



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# ...One Careless Owner...

the left hand side, came in very handy for bog extraction...(All off-road machines should have them, preferably on both sides).

## '.....In the hills.....'

The local bikeshop in South Bank, Frontline Motorsports, was (and still is) run by Dave Skelton, who helped out with the running of the local Langbaugh motocross club. He and his brother Derek were both experienced motocrossers and (with superior machinery) I'd managed to beat both of them when the first supermoto event was staged at Langbaugh Motorsports in June '89...Dave encouraged me to have a go at motocross and assured me that I should do well in the novice class, so I entered an event at Glaisdale, on the North Yorks Moors.

Glaisdale is a really spectacular circuit, with a climb from the start that is so steep that it could easily double as a section for a pre-'65 trial. Frankly, I felt it was a major achievement just to get to the top without stalling; riding back down on the far side of the course was even more scary. In fact it took most of my limited ability just to get around the course without falling off and my heart was in my mouth for much of the first lap. I discovered that I just didn't have the necessary mixture of skill, fitness and sheer brain-out lunacy required to be competitive at motocross, even in the novice class. Most of my fellow competitors seemed to be callow youths with no fear or imagination (whereas I could imagine cartwheeling down the hillside only too easily). I improved a little during the day, so that at least I wasn't being lapped by the end of a race, but I think the only people I beat were those who'd fallen off - and some of them got back on to re-pass me! Until that first meeting I'd been fairly scathing about the amount of skill required for motocross - never since though!

I did a second meeting at Glaisdale a bit later in the year which was mainly memorable for the dust. You literally

couldn't see your hand in front of your face in the dash from the start line, and when the dust cleared there were often a dozen riders picking themselves and their bikes up off the ground. Very hairy, and I just felt pleased to have survived in one piece.

## '.....And on the tarmac.....'

Sometime soon after this I had my first scratch around a road race circuit on the KTM when I turned up at a Morini Owners' Club practice day at Cadwell Park. The bike still had the standard sprockets on it so it was ridiculously undergeared on the back straight, but I had lots of fun riding around the road bikes on the corners.

At the end of April I returned to France for some serious supermotard-ing in an event which the French called 'Le Biker de Paris', (not realising how silly this sounds to a Brit.). It took place at the historic Montlhery circuit which is like a cross between Brooklands and Daytona - a steeply banked concrete oval on which an amazing Velocette 500 once averaged 100mph for 24 hours - a record for the capacity which still stands today. I'd done the event the year before on a CR250 lent to me by Bob Farnham and scared myself silly because the course had led us up the steeply banked concrete and then down off it straight onto the dirt at an angle.

For 1990 they'd shortened the course and made it a little less hairy, but it still included a flat out thrash along the banking, several jumps onto concrete of varying severity, and a mini bridge which we rode over and under like the Scalextric tracks of my youth - (except of course that there was no slot to stop you falling over!) The organisers had also changed the race format. 1989's TDR cup, open only to riders of Yamaha's Jekyll and Hyde 250 twin, had been replaced by a 250 production class open to any make of 250 motocross-

er. Standard wheel sizes had to be retained and the only modifications allowed were to the gearing and brakes - the French company SEMC produced a large disc and caliper conversion kit for all marques and everyone had to use either that or stick with the standard brake set-up. (The puny standard disc on a YZ250 warps dangerously within a matter of minutes in the white heat of supermoto). I couldn't afford to change from the standard, rather unimpressive, anchors which was definitely a handicap. The only other change allowed was to the

but I got on well with the organisers and they knew that I wasn't going to be winning any prizes so they let me enter the production 250 race as well as a special event for the gentleman of the press. The 250 races were incredibly competitive with many of the riders sponsored by their local bike dealer and riding the wheels off their bikes in the hope of attracting sponsorship in the open class where they could compete with the French superheroes like Stephane Peterhansel, 'Shorty' Chambon and Laurent 'Poum Poum' Pidoux, who were an absolute edu-



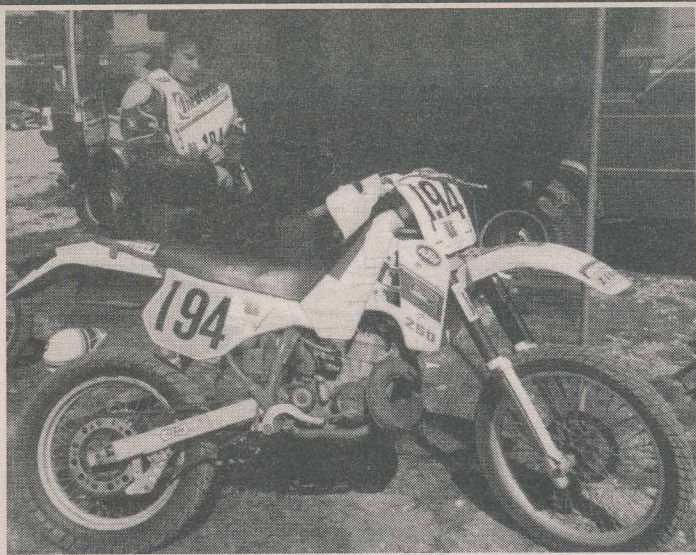
Blez launches the KTM off a jump in a supermotard race at Montlhery in France

tyres, and that was compulsory - everyone had to use identical Dunlop Trailmaxes front and rear, which were available at the site for a 'reduced' price of about £50 each, and fitted free on the spot.

Strictly speaking, as an enduro model, my KTM wasn't supposed to be eligible

cation to watch.

I had gone to Montlhery with a friend from Langbaugh, Mike Palfreman, who was an experienced moto-crosser with whom I'd had some good dices in the local supermoto meetings. He had a tuned CR250 complete with supermoto wheels



**Blezard prepares for battle at Montlhery. Bike preparation included adding fuel and putting air in the tyres**

and tyres and a tuned exhaust, but he returned it to standard in order to be eligible for the production 250 race. He also entered the press race with me, even though he'd never written a word for the press, British or otherwise. Turned out that half the Frogs were racers-turned-journalists rather than the other way round and many of the 'proper' journalists, being French, were pretty seriously demented once they got their leg over a bike... especially when it was someone else's.

Mike actually got on the rostrum with third place, while the race was particularly memorable for me because two of my mates from the French weekly Moto Journal crashed right in front of me. Photographer Nicolas Sonina fell off and was run over by his mate Bertrand Thiebault and I just barely squeezed past the pair of them.

When watching me race, Mike Palfreman had noticed that, as a non-motocrosser, I was shutting off the throttle to change up, (as any civilised person would). He pointed out that this was costing me several seconds a lap because any 250 racer worth his salt keeps the throttle nailed hard against the stop and just strokes the clutch lever as they bang the next gear in: brutal but effective. It took a real effort of willpower to overcome my natural reflex to shut the throttle but I eventually managed to make myself do it and to my surprise the KTM made no complaint. (Don't try this at home on your XT500 though boys and girls....)

In May 1990 Langbaurgh Borough Council (my employers at the time) allowed a beach race to take place in Redcar for the first time ever, encouraged by local stars like Richard 'Quad King' Cole and Jared 'Animal' Smith. Well, I had to have a go didn't I? It wasn't exactly Le Touquet but it was enjoyable just the same and I managed to keep circulating for the full distance albeit with plenty of minor prangs along the way. None of mine was as painful as Scott Gardner's though, who slashed his knee open when he crashed heavily on the very first lap. Iron man that he is, he not only got back on and continued racing but he actually won the event outright! Boxing champion Barry McGuigan added a touch of celebrity to the event, and rode his own quad to a respectable finish.

#### **'....Even unto Brands Hatch.....'**

At the end of June, 1990, I did my first proper road race on the KTM, at Brands Hatch no less. Not only was it at Brands, but it was the long, Grand Prix circuit, which is very rarely used for motorcycle club meetings.

## **...One Careless Owner...**

My old sparring partner Bob Farnham was there with a seriously hotted XR600, complete with supermoto wheels, fat, sticky tyres and dinner-plate sized disc. Bob's cousin, Mark Tippey came along too, riding a similarly kitted-out Cagiva Desert racer (as previously featured in TBM). With our motocross bars and lofty, 'sit-up-and beg' riding positions the three of us stuck out like sore thumbs from the rest of the racers on their lean, low be-fairinged road racers.

I rode in the 250 production class, and also in the singles, scratching round with old LC250s and the like not to mention pukka racing 125s. It was disconcerting to be passed on the long main straight by these tiddlers, which had a top speed of about 130mph, compared to about a ton for my geared up enduro machine. They'd come flashing past under my elbow and on the KTM's tall seat I felt as if I was on top of a double-decker bus.

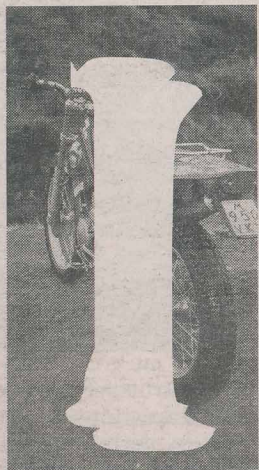
Round the back of the course, deep in the woods, is the section known as 'Dingly Dell'. Since I'd last ridden on the GP circuit they'd put in a chicane just over the crest of a rise, to stop the Formula One cars from launching themselves into the trees. Even at the relatively sedate speeds at which I was travelling, the chicane took me completely by surprise on the first lap of practice and I was glad that I still had the trusty Trailmax tyres fitted as I stood on the pegs and rode right through the gravel trap and over the grass before returning to the fray. In fact the chicane kept taking me by surprise, even after I knew it was there(!) and I took to the gravel several more times in the course of the day. I don't think I beat a lot of people, but I wasn't last and I had a lot of fun. I was certainly riding the KTM as hard as it could go with those tyres, as I proved to myself when I lost the front end going into the up-hill left-hander onto the GP circuit at Surtees bend. Fortunately I had a precautionary supermoto-style moto-cross boot already skimming the tarmac with which I was able to save the situation and carry on regardless. Phew!

The very next day there was a fun enduro being held by the Owls club a few miles down the road in Frant, near Tunbridge Wells. Bob was entered on his KDX and I thought I'd have a go on the KTM, complete with the same trail tyres and road race gearing that I'd used on the GP circuit. It sounded like an unmissable challenge, and besides, it would save on the spannering, which has never been my strong point at the best of times. But little did I know that the course would include a stream crossing followed by a steep muddy hill.....

**Can Blez get around the enduro course on road race tyres and gearing? find out next month, when he also does the Kielder enduro, more road racing at langbaurgh and tries speedway on the sands at Saltburn.....**



# LAUGHIN



**The GAS GAS Pampera is half trials bike and half enduro machine. Si Melber went along to find out more about this remarkable revolutionary trail bike**

It's not very often you get chance to ride a bike which is genuinely innovative. A bike which breaks the rules of conventionality cutting its own path and refusing to follow form. Gas-Gas' new 250cc Pampera is such a bike, and I want one.

For those of you that know anything about trials competitions, the name Gas-Gas will be familiar to you. This little Spanish manufacturer has only been producing bikes since 1987 but their products have been good enough to win the last three world championships on the trot in the hands of Jordi Tarres, a Spaniard who's idea of having a good time is attacking a 20' wall of solid rock aboard a motorcycle.

Not content with winning trials at the highest level, Gas-Gas turned their hand to making enduro bikes, and with Paul Edmonson at the helm soon notched up the 1994 125cc World Enduro Championship to add to their growing list of achievements. Then some bright spark at the factory obviously had the idea of taking the best bits from each championship-winning motorcycle - the torquey engine and supple suspension of the trials machine, and the frame, seat and tank of the enduro bike, fitted a couple of neat roadgoing extras and hey presto, the Pampera trail bike was born.

From a distance the Pampera looks like no other trailbike you've ever seen before. It is an odd sort of hybrid with a tall saddle and a strange almost delicate-looking front end. The brakes, headlight, mudguard and forks are all minimalist in appearance, and mate to a heavily braced headstock and polished alloy frame which wraps around a diminutive-sized engine via a substantial looking bashplate.

But look a little closer and the Pampera starts to appeal. It is sleek, purposeful and crafted from the sort of exquisite componentry that usually only find its way onto thoroughbred competition machinery. The hubs and frame are polished alloy, the Deltabox-style swinging-arm a work of art, the engine is made of sandcast magnesium, the silencer is alloy, and the handlebars a pair of Renthals' finest. The clutch and front brake are both hydraulically operated with small but perfectly proportioned reservoirs, the seat is a Technosel item and so the list goes on. The upshot of this is that the Pampera is incredibly light weighing in at only 85kg, (that's 187lbs in old money). If you want to know how light that is, let me put it in some kind of perspective: it's 22 percent (24kg) lighter than a Honda XR250, 35 percent (45kg) lighter than a Suzuki DR350, and just for the record, a staggering 60 percent (118kg) lighter than Honda's Africa Twin..... Now that's what I call light.

# G A S G A S

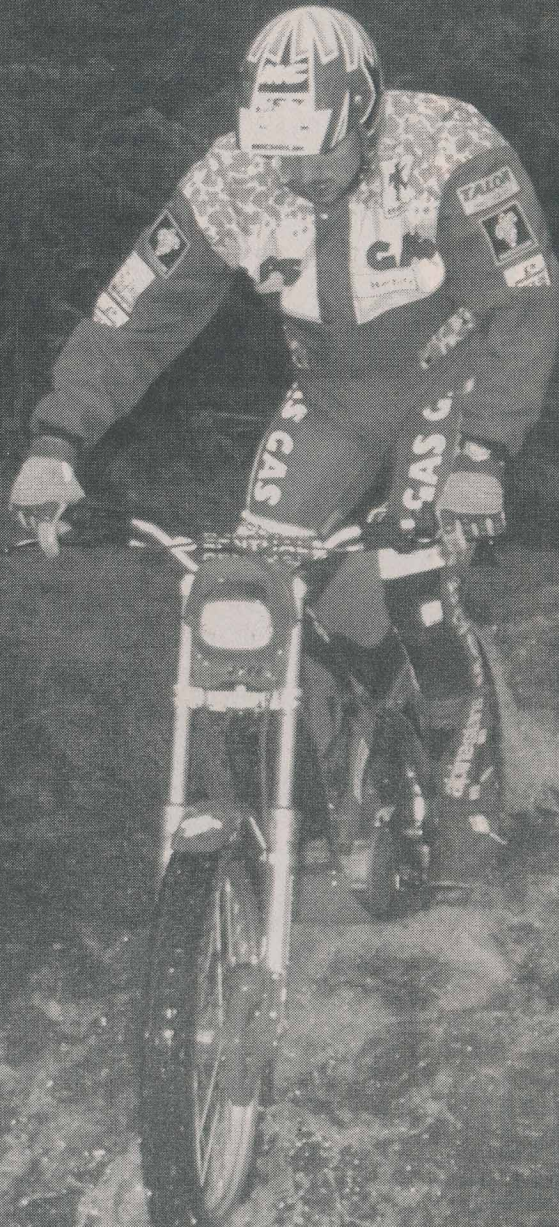


# LAUGHING GAS GAS

The Pampera is perfect for feet up riding over tricky terrain....

But this is no single-purpose trials machine (they incredibly, are even lighter still). For a start it's got a seat - a usable one, not just a picture drawn onto the bodywork - and at a sensible height too. It may look tall but in fact it's lower than an XT350's. Behind the seat is a small chromed rack, usefully fitted with bungee hooks, and poking out from beneath the rear mud-guard is a proper tail-light with twin filament bulb and number plate holder. Squeezed between the narrow beams of that pretty frame is an eight litre nylon fuel tank (twice the size of a regular trials item and enough for a full day in the saddle), and there's also a pair of pillion pegs just in case you feel the need to share the perch with an extremely close friend. At the sharp end the dials are a little limited for the norm, with just a speedo mounted trials-style down on the fork leg, but the neat little headlight comes with dip and main beam and the switchgear includes a horn. Okay it's sparsely furnished accommodation for a trailie, but lets face it what more do you need?

Like the cycle parts, the engine is a model of simplicity, functional design and above all tenacity. The mill itself is lifted straight out of the 1994 trials machine, differing only in its exhaust and final gearing. In all other respects it's the same crankcase-fed, watercooled



two stroke single featuring a Nikasil-lined barrel with a bore and stroke of 71x60mm and a true displacement of 238cc. There's no oil pump on this engine, instead the Gas-Gas imbibes a diet of fully synthetic premix at a ratio of 70:1. A solid prod on the kick-start is all it takes to fire the Pampera into life (there's no key to worry about), and within a few seconds it's warm enough to pull off the bottom.

And pull it most certainly does. Depress the lightweight clutch and select second gear (first is for maximum engine braking, and pulling stuck Land-Rovers out of bogs), give it a sniff of throttle and away you go. So torquey is this little motor that it will happily pull away in third gear..... or fourth with a bit of coaxing. It's quiet too, not rorty like some stokers, but there's no lack of punch when it's needed. Crack open the throttle sharply in any of the bottom four gears and it will hoist the front wheel skywards.

On the road the Gas-Gas wriggles and squirms on its sticky, soft-walled Michelins. The wide bars present maximum frontal area to the elements and the gearing (11 tooth front and 40 tooth rear) is too low as standard (though importer John Shirt is including an optional 12 tooth front and 35 tooth rear pair of sprockets in with the price). The proximity of the bottom four gears necessitates a frantic rev and change mentality until you reach fifth, at which point the gearing changes character to a pair of far wider spaced cogs, allowing a realistic cruising speed of about 60mph (100kmh) in top (6th), though it will go a fair bit faster if you push it. Such is the gulf between fourth and fifth gear that it can easily catch you out

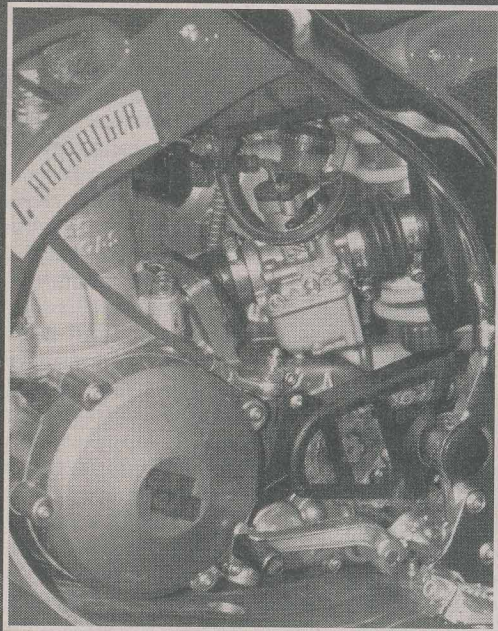
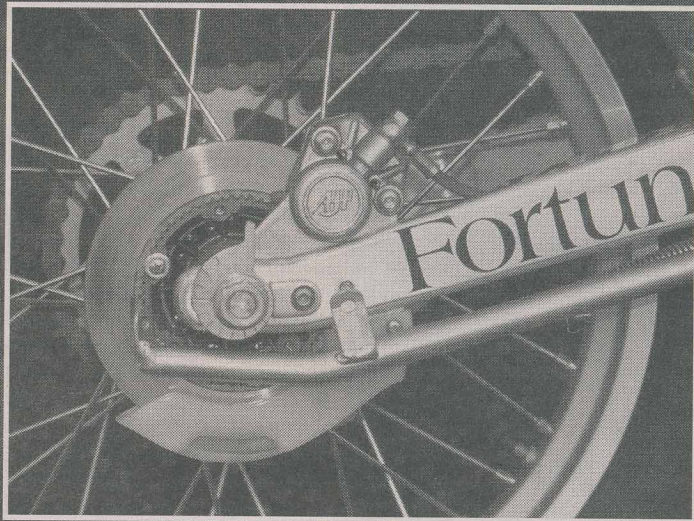
if you're overtaking something, leaving the bike a bit breathless until it builds momentum.

The riding position though feels fine with a decent amount of room on the saddle (for solo use), and a comfy if rather firm perch with well positioned pegs, though I'd have preferred slightly narrower bars. Thanks to its light weight, it can be slung around bends easily enough, turns without effort and the brakes are adequate for the sort of medium speeds for which it was designed. In essence though the Pampera is not the sort of machine on which you'd set out for a fortnight's holiday, touring Europe. What it is, is a bike that can be comfortably and easily ridden on the roads, keeping up with the traffic while you are looking for the next green lane to explore.

Not surprisingly it is off road where the Pampera really shines and we enlisted the help of John Shirt's son (confusingly also called John) to put the thing through its paces for the photographer before we took it out ourselves for a spot of rather more ..... er, modest green laning. Now John (that's John Junior if you're still with me), is no stranger to trials machinery, he's currently ranked seventh in the country and knows a thing or two about riding them, but even he couldn't contain his enthusiasm for the Pampera. 'It's a bloody good fun bike, and it's so comfortable you just want to play on it all afternoon'. Slightly biased he may be, but there was nothing he couldn't get the Pampera to do - and he attempted all sorts. I'll spare you the details of tricks like stoppies, one handed wheelies and the like and tell you that the Pampera can climb a shale slope so steep I couldn't walk up it and clamber



# LAUGHING



TrailBike -46- Magazine

# GAS GAS



Everywhere you look the Pampera exudes quality and functional design

Left: Stand fits neatly around swingarm and axle. Rear brake neat and efficient

Bottom Left: Engine crankcases are made from cast magnesium. Plastic flywheel cover keeps weight to a minimum

Top right: Miniature speedo lives on right hand fork leg



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# LAUGHING GAS

over rocks taller than the machine itself.

But before you conclude that the Pampera is nothing more than a specialised trials iron bear in mind that it's versatile enough to take two people anywhere they want to go - and to prove it we did a spot of two up trailing. Perhaps it would be stretching a point to claim that it's comfortable for the pillion, but it's certainly possible to get two full sized adults aboard.

By the time we'd finished the photographs I was itching to get my paws on the Pampera and see what it really felt like out on the trail. I loaded it into the van on my own (try doing that with a Tenere) and headed up into the hills surrounding the Peak District spring town of Buxton for a spot of exploring.

The ancient lane that leads up towards the Roaches, around Cut-Thorn Hill to Three Shire Heads begins as a tarmac road passing through a farm gate before becoming a broken surface and finally just a notch in the rugged hillside, punctuated with puddles and the odd sandstone outcrop. I knew the Gas-Gas would be more than capable at walking speeds but would it all hold together when the pace was upped?

Off road the bottom four gears provide the necessary range of speed from a sedate walking pace to a relatively fast charge. There's no real powerband as such, more a smooth spread of torque and at the top end the engine crackles a bit more with a slightly rasping sound. Incredibly the bike's suspension which had felt supple and compliant at low speeds seemed to get better at higher velocities and though I never got the chance to really cane it for any distance, both ends felt remarkably controlled with superb damping never once bottoming out. One thing you have to watch out for

though is that the leaning-forward riding position when standing up on the pegs, puts a great deal of weight bias on the front end which can wash out if you're not too careful.

Muddy bombholes were dispensed with nothing more than a casual flick of the right wrist and even deep ruts, the scourge of the trail rider were overcome with contemptuous ease. Just before Three Shire Heads Bridge a long section of rock steps scar the path like giant rotten teeth sticking out of a sandy gum. I have never before managed to complete this trail feet up in one go and I was so gobsmacked when I got to the top that I promptly turned round and did it all over again. And again, and again and finally once more, but this time sitting down! The Pampera is so light and slim it can be guided through the tightest of constrictions. With feet controls which are well tucked in (the gear lever is of the fold-back variety but the brake lever sadly isn't) and a sturdy bashplate there's virtually nothing you can encounter on an ordinary trail that you cannot attempt on the Pampera. It simply floats over most hazards, and if you do manage to get bogged down or stuck there's so much torque available you simply turn the screw and the Pampera crawls out.

That's not to say it makes a mockery of trail riding. On the contrary I found myself enjoying it more - instead of just attempting to get to the top of the lane I tried tackling the trickiest route I could find - feet up. What's more if you do eventually find the limit of the Pampera's adhesion or your abilities, the tight steering lock means turning it around couldn't be simpler such is the ease of control you have.

Perhaps the bike's most annoying habit was its reluctance to select neutral

# GAS

and of course there's no warning lamp to help you. The right-hand-side propstand also takes a bit of getting used to, and some will express discomfort in the proximity twist front mudguard and tyre. All I can say is that it never once gave problems even through I encountered fair amounts of claggy mud. But before you decide to move the mudguard to beneath the yokes bear in mind that it conceals a fork brace which contributes massively to the bike's front end rigidity.

At the end of the day I was truly amazed at the Pampera's sheer ability, at its quality components, and frankly at the price of the thing. At £3,450 the Pampera is something of a bargain amongst the massed ranks of more sober, downbeat, not to mention less exotic tackle. Perhaps you don't get much metal for your money but in a pastime where weight is a penalty not a bonus the Gas-Gas strikes a knockout punch to hordes of corpulent Japanese trailies.

Don't get me wrong, the Pampera isn't a dual-sport nirvana, the gearing is less than perfect on the road, the difficult-to-select neutral and the right-hand side propstand slightly awkward, and the lack of any creature comforts such as indicators or warning lights a tad disappointing. But if you take pleasure in owning as well as riding a well constructed motorcycle which delivers as well as it promises then like me you'll put the Gas-Gas Pampera straight to the top of your Christmas list. Sorry Cindy Crawford, but there's a new pretender to the throne of 'most desirable pressie' this Christmas.

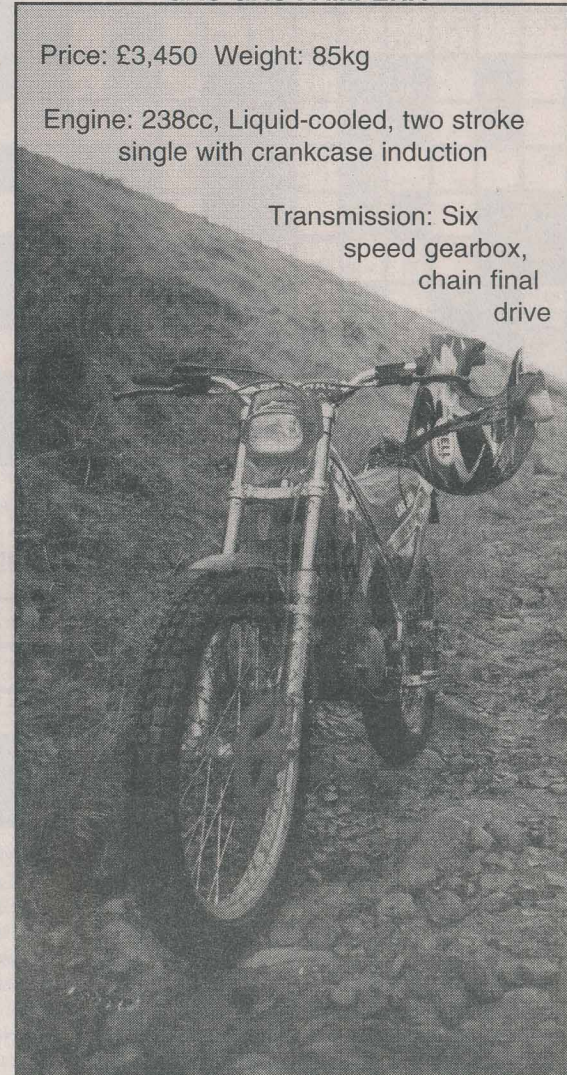
Rocky trails like this one are laughably easy aboard the Pampera

## GAS GAS PAMPERA

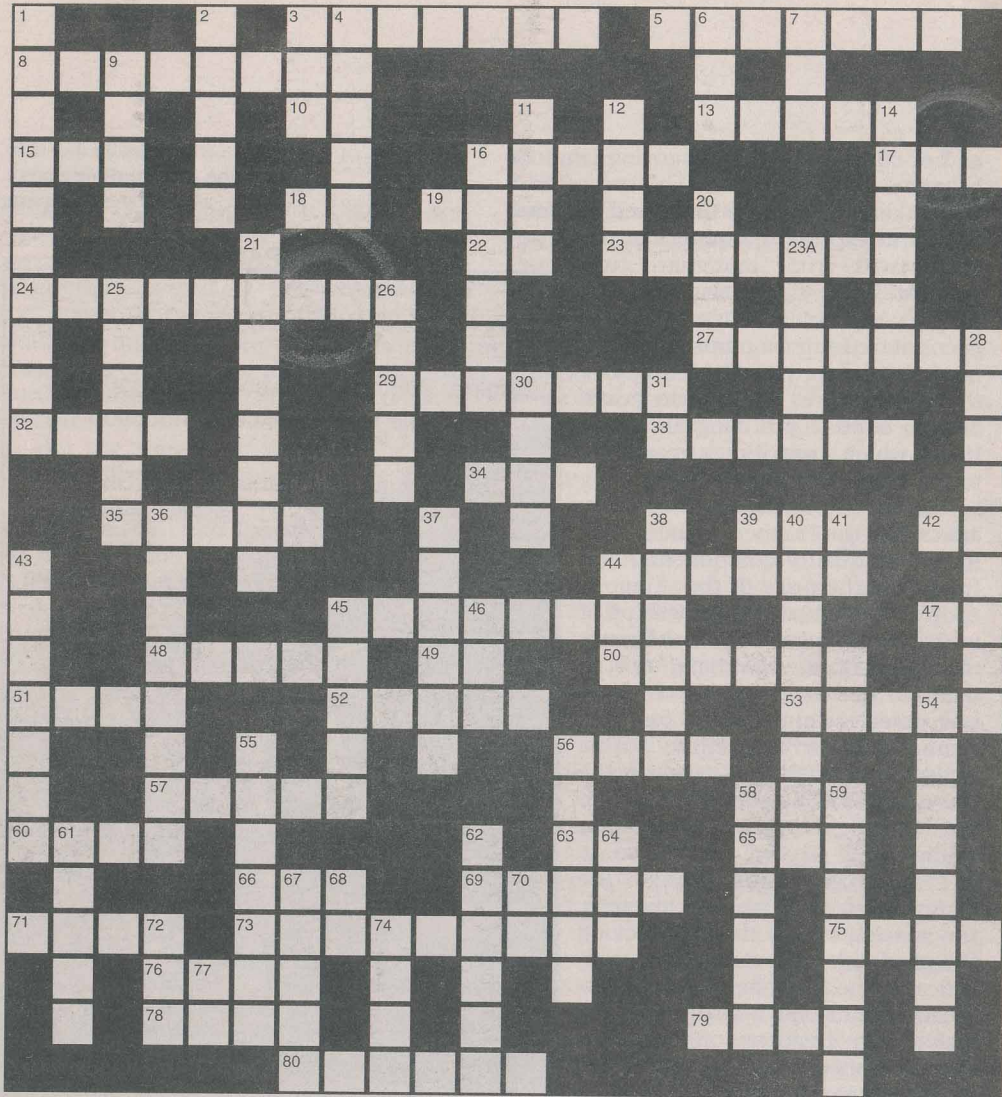
Price: £3,450 Weight: 85kg

Engine: 238cc, Liquid-cooled, two stroke single with crankcase induction

Transmission: Six speed gearbox, chain final drive



# Christmas Crossword



## ACROSS

- 3: Funduro assembler. (7)  
 5: Fern rally? (7)  
 8: Heavy artillery shows the way. (8)  
 10: Trendy short fork style initials. (2)  
 13: Ed's first name in full. (5)  
 15: Their badge is a revolving propeller. (3)  
 16: Green Lane open to all. (5)

- 17: Mechanical lifeblood. (3)  
 18: Early Kawabanger. (2)  
 19: Sticky Blacktop. (3)  
 22: Reversing Suzuki's early stroker trailie range. (2)  
 23: Italian accessory manufacturer, used to organise the Incas. (7)  
 24: Honda's 'Norton'. (9)  
 27: puncture-proof desserts. (7)

- 29: Bumpy tyre. (7)  
 32: Highway. (4)  
 33: Yankee cable fastener. (3-3)  
 34: Initial command banning vehicular use. (3)  
 35: Laverda's North African range. (5)  
 39: Alternative liquid for forks and cogs. (3)  
 42: Motorcycling's volumetric measurement. (2)  
 44: Yamaha's desert cost Thierry Sabine his life.  
 45: Swedish manufacturer. (8)  
 47: Early Suzuki enduro range. (2)  
 48: Dakar champ, now organises Tunisian. (5)  
 49: Yamaha's range of 4-stroke enduro tools. (2)  
 50: Frantic over a missing letter from Italy. (6)  
 51: The edges locating tyres. (4)  
 52: Said to hold the wheel together. (5)  
 53: Securing devices. (5)  
 56: Halt. (4)  
 57: Gilles was a Paris-Dakar winner, then it killed him but his name lives on in the toughest enduro in the world. (5)  
 58: Opens the valves on the river of a university town (abbr'v). (3)  
 60: Odometer. (4)  
 63: Honda's rotary valve. (2)  
 65: Balloon-tyred three wheeler. (3)  
 66: Helps you find your keys. (3)  
 69: Oil or brake pipe junction. (5)  
 71: Deep rut, that everyone uses. (4)  
 73: Sturdy-limbed army bike. (9)  
 75: Rugged Russian range. (4)  
 76: Small stones, get everywhere. (4)  
 78: Charge for spring adjustment? (4)  
 79: Leave it as you find it. (4)  
 80: Baby's toy sounds like top end trouble. (6)

## DOWN:

- 1: Squaddy trail bike. (10)  
 2: Morini's Dromedary. (5)  
 3: Motorcycling's governing body. (3)  
 4: A lever to sell? (5)  
 6: Numberless BMW Trailie. (3)  
 7: Bolton's Best. (3)  
 9: Hill. (4)  
 11: Pneumatic device. (4)  
 12: Desert race in Spain or Mexico. (4)  
 14: Sounds that annoy. (6)  
 16: French manufacturer of supermotards. (6)  
 20: Banked corner. (4)  
 21: Welsh Mountain Race. (8)  
 23A: Not sharp (5)  
 25: Land Access Organisation's full acronym. (6)  
 26: Automatically twin shock. (5)  
 28: These wheels have teeth! (9)  
 30: Northern stream on fire. (4)  
 31: Yamaha's pukka off-rovers. (2)

- 36: Use this for crossing Switzerland? (8)  
 37: Racing on the sand, above the Latin sea. (6).  
 38: Winged Italian stallion. (6)  
 39: Einstein's Initials. (2)  
 40: Suzuki's seventies feline off-roader. (8)  
 41 Husaberg's enduro model designation. (2)  
 43: Juice from dried grapes? (7)  
 44: Brotherhood of green laners. (3)  
 45: Swedish-born, Italian sledge hauler. (5)  
 46: Austrian-engined Yank with trick chain arrangement. (3)  
 54: Heavy Industry hit by earthquake. (8)  
 55: Hannibal's bike? (7)  
 56: Rebound source. (6)  
 58: Italian conglomerate. (6)  
 59: Late, great, biker escapologist. (7)  
 61: Trail bike event discovered tobacco? (5)  
 62: The first Paris-Dakar winner. (6)  
 64: Gearbox internal. (3)  
 67: Starting sequence. (5)  
 68: A Short German! (2)  
 70: On (anag). (2)  
 72: Initially, Suzuki's stoker trailbike. (3)  
 74: Slip on one when it's raining - over? (4)  
 77: Call out when you're stuck. (2)

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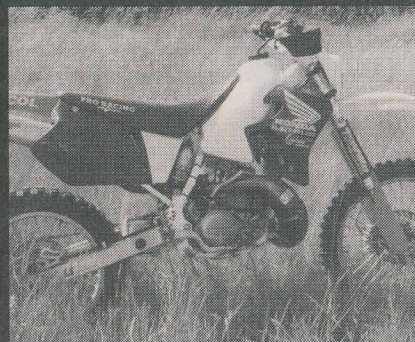
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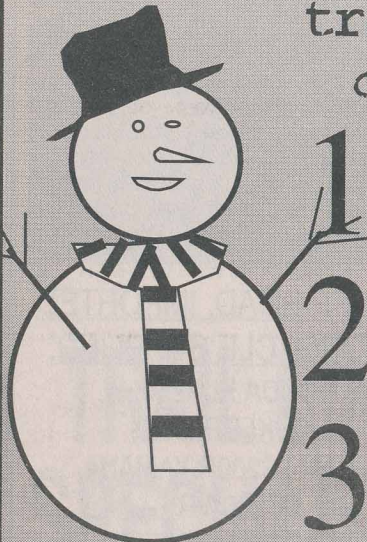
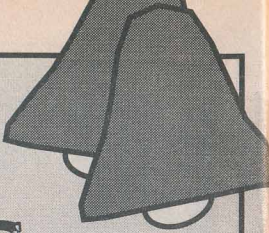
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RING FOR DETAILS

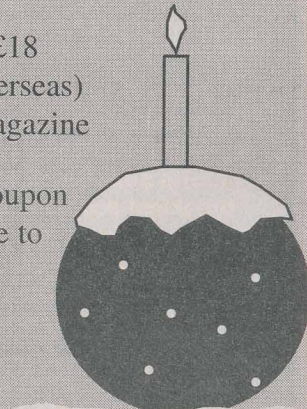
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# the TRAILBIKE GUIDE

We don't claim this to be the definitive guide to all the trailbikes ever made, merely the sum total of our collective knowledge, trawled from the depths of dim and distant memories and assembled in some sort of order that you may find useful. What we do know is that no-one produces a guide to trail bikes that is as comprehensive as this, and that if you think there are revisions we should make, bikes that need adding to the list or merely things we've got wrong please feel free to write them down on a scrap of paper and stick it up your nose. Thank you.

#### APRILIA

Italian concern assembling rather than actually manufacturing bikes. In their short history they've enjoyed much competition success, and the products are generally well made, up to the minute and above all stylish.

**RX125:** w/c, 2-str, single. Superb, modern trailbike in both learner legal and full power form. Peaky and powerful engine with great suspension, and massive amounts of pose. Useful off-road. *Verdict:* A modern Italian DT.

**Tuareg 50/125:** w/c, 2-str, single. Smart little trailbike with Paris-Dakar styling cues designed to encounter nothing more hostile than Rome's potholed streets.

**Tuareg 125 Rally:** w/c, 2-str, single. Outrageously good looking Paris-Dakar styled trailie with a high spec inc USD forks, fully adjustable suspension etc. High seat height more than made up for by poseability.

**Pegaso 125:** 242lbs/110kg, 124cc, w/c, 2-str, single with a claimed 31bhp.

**Tuareg 600/650:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, Rotax-powered single, e/s. Paris-Dakar lookalike with a high specification (USD forks etc), and flashy paintjob. Reasonably light and not overly tall for this type of bike, nice machine if you can find one. *Verdict:* Posing tackle that works.

**Pegaso 650:** 1992-on, 348lbs/157kg, w/c, dohc, 4-str, e/s single, with a claimed 50bhp. Stylish and quick trailie using poky 5-valve Rotax engine, good for about 110mph with cornering to match. Lighter than the BMW F650 and the Pegaso's twin exhaust is much better tucked in, but it has a much higher, less comfortable seat (36 inches) and fewer

layers of paint. 19 inch front wheel limits tyre choice, and beware iffy sidestand, cunningly hidden fuel tap and small reserve. Capable big trailie both on and off the road and good value. *Verdict:* Flying horse, flies high.

#### ARMSTRONG

Grew out of Jeff Clews' CCM company of Bolton and CanAm/Bombardier bikes for the army. (Bombardier were originally a French Canadian company that manufactured snowmobile engines - they are now a massive worldwide engineering company that owns Rotax, among others).

**250:** a/c, 2-str, singles (Bombardier engines).

**500:** a/c 4-str, singles (Rotax engines) with left hand kick starts.

**CCM:** A few enduro bikes based on the moto-crossers).

NB: Armstrong sold out to Harley Davidson who now build 350cc electric start versions of the old 500s for the army.

**ATK:** a/c 4-str, sohc, Rotax-powered singles. US-made, high quality motocrossers with some unusual features such as engine-sprocket mounted rear brake on some models. All have one-sided mono-shocks (without linkage). Dual sport bikes now produced by the importer using converted MX bikes, solid, unburstable but pricey. *Verdict:* For those who hanker after something different.

**BARIGO:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, Rotax-powered singles. French-made range of specialist on/off road bikes built by Patrick Barigault. They specialise in supermotard bikes and desert racers, both of which have had some competition success, though they also do a trail/enduro bike. The same basic rotax mill that in MZ guise churns out 32bhp produces a claimed

## TRAILBIKE GUIDE

60bhp when tuned to Barigo's specification... but they say it's reliable. *Verdict: Gallic charm.*

### BMW

Traditional air-cooled, pushrod boxer flat twins. Some rare collectibles: early pre-G/S ISDT boxers which weigh only 320lbs! Genuine Paris-Dakar machines. Specialist builders: Schek and HPN. UK expert: Jon Watson-Miller at Bracken motorcycles in South East London (0171-231-9438).

**R80G/S:** 374lbs, a/c, 4-str, 797cc, twin. One of the first mega-trailies. Launched in 1981, Monolever rear end, kick and optional electric start. Special big-bore versions of which took Hubert Auriol and Gaston Rahier to four Paris-Dakar wins. Original 'Paris-Dakar' version of G/S was just the standard model with a big tank and bore no relation to the real desert racers, which were built specially by Herbert Schek. The most trailable of all the Beemers distinguishable by its high front mudguard and simple instruments. *Verdict: The one to go for.*

**R100G/S:** 1988-on, 220kg/484lbs, a/c, 4-str, twin, e/s. More powerful 60bhp engine complete with double-jointed drive shaft (Paralever) and much improved suspension front and rear. Colours were white/blue and black/yellow (the wonderful 'bumble-bee') with mini-fairing. One of the most versatile motorcycles on the planet with neat panniers, clock and heated handlebars all available from the BMW catalogue. Superb go-anywhere tourer with surprising off-road-ability but a bit thirsty on the motorway (35mpg). *Verdict: A two-wheeled Land Rover.*

**R100GS:** a/c, 4-str, twin, e/s. Revised in 1991 with proper fairing and more garish paint job. Final revision for UK in 1993 with 'P-D' version when humungous plastic tank (already available on the continent) finally became legal, also sported a set of external fairing crash bars. Single-seat with extra large rack available as option. Last officially imported in 1994. *Verdict: Big and butch.*

**R80GS:** a/c, 4-str, twin, e/s. Small bore version of the above with same dimensions and 50bhp.

**R1100GS:** 1994-on. 209kg/461lbs, o-a/c, 4-str, 8-valve, 1086cc, twin, e/s, 5-speed, 80bhp. Mega-Monster trailie based around the brand new four-valve boxer engine mated to Telelever chassis. Huge stomp plus ABS which can be turned off if desired. Superb road bike but not nearly as off-roadable as the old boxers. Recall in '94 for problems with Telelever ball joints. *Verdict: The first trailie superbike.*

**F650 'Funduro':** w/c, 4-str, dohc, 652cc, single, e/s, 48 bhp (claimed). Aprilia-built, Rotax-engined trail bike launched in 1993 to bring BMWs to the masses. Based on Aprilia's Pegaso, but with four valves instead of five, more expensive, heavier and more 'roadified', with larger tank, stainless exhaust and much lower seat, although still eminently trail-able. Great fun to ride on or off road, and surprisingly quick - these babies will make a genuine 46bhp at the rear wheel. Beware clunky gearboxes, 19in front wheel limits tyre choice. Sold like hot cakes thanks to legendary BMW build quality. *Verdict: Solid and sensible.*

### CAGIVA

Italian manufacturer that now owns Ducati, Husqvarna and Morini.

**W4:** w/c, 2-str, 50/80cc, single, 6-speed gearbox trail moped. Looks like a pukka enduro tool but restricted model wouldn't pull the skin off a rice pudding. 80cc version much better bet.

**Super City:** 125kg/276lbs, w/c, 2-str, 124cc single, e/s, 7-speed, 34bhp. Outrageously styled super-moto available in learner legal and unrestricted flavours. Even the full power model is hard work due to peaky and raucous engine inherited from the Mito sports bike. Fast and handles well with sticky road tyres. Could be fun for humiliating bigger bikes on the road but otherwise pretty pointless. Makes a TDR feel civilised. Off road? Only for super-moto racing, for which it had its own class in France. *Verdict: Teenage kicks.*

**WMX500DE:** 1986-88, w/c, 2-str, single. Strange specialist desert racer with large tank, limited lock and high quality components. Very few around.

**W8:** 264lbs, w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single, 6-speed, 31hp. Excellent trailbike version of

above but with a couple of ponies less and no upside down forks. very few sold in UK. **T4:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, 450cc, single. A few imported to UK in 1989 by Moto Vecchia. Fore-runner to W12 and W16. Plastic tank holds 4 gals. e/s option as well as kick-starter. Alloy rims and swing arm. Poxy rose joints on gearchange broke early on. **W12:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, 350cc, 4-valve, single, e/s 6-speed, 25bhp. Simple, no frills trailbike (as used by Italian army), a bit like an Italian XT350 but not as tough. Very few were sold in UK. *Verdict: Something different.*

**W16:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, 601cc, 4-valve, single, e/s, 34bhp. Tasty looking, but a little underpowered at only 34bhp for new learner laws. Looks similar to Yam XT600E but lighter, lower and more colourful - and less robust off-road.

**Elefant:** mid-eighties. o-a/c, 4str, desmo, V-twin. Engine originally derived from Ducati Pantah. Started as 650cc in mid-eighties, grew to 750cc by 1988, though there was a smaller 350cc version available to suit learner laws in other countries.

**Elefant 350:** o-a/c, 4-str, desmo, V-twin, e/s. Middleweight version of the lovely 750, with much less power but almost the same weight. Not many imported for the simple reason that no-one really wanted one. *Verdict: Curiosity value only.*

**Elefant 750:** 1988-1990. 188kg/414lbs, o-a/c, 4-str, desmo, V-twin, e/s. Distinctive looking big trailie with white/red/blue/blue paintwork, angular styling and gold anodised rims (21 inch F, 17 inch R). 750 motor was nice, but suffered from poor carburetion at bottom end thanks to Bing carbs. Nimble handling and good off road ability.

**Elefant 750/900 (Second generation):** o-a/c, 4-str, desmo, V-twin, e/s, 60bhp/68bhp (claimed). Second generation Elefants from 1991-ish are bigger, and slightly heavier than their predecessors. Lovely torquey engines are based on the Ducati 750 and 900SS. 1991 versions (distinguishable by Lucky Explorer paintscheme), were higher spec than later ones, with Ohlins suspension and electronic fuel injection. Although they have a high CofG the new generation Elefants

## TRAILBIKE GUIDE

make a great touring bike for the road, but they're a bit monstrous off-road - more like a Super Tenere than the original Transalp-sized 750s. *Verdict: For those who like to be seen and heard.*

### ENFIELD INDIA

**Bullet trail:** a/c, 4-str, ohv, single. Indian made version of the venerable Royal Hen, now with 12v electrics and sprung saddle option. *Verdict: Strictly for masochists everywhere.*

### GILERA

Now defunct part of the Piaggio group with legendary road-racing history. **50/125:** a/c, 2-str, single. Learner bikes - not officially imported.

**RC 600:** w/c, 4str, 558cc, single, e/s. Nice-looking P-D styled trailie with unimpeachable Paris-Dakar winning pedigree. Shares engine with Northwest. Quite a few still for sale brand new from selected Italian specialists. Good value at approx £3500. Watch out for fragile plastic.

**Nordwest:** 140kg/308lbs, w/c, 4-str, 558cc, single, e/s. Supermoto version of the RC 600 with 17 inch cast alloy wheels, USD forks, and serious brakes. Superb 'street scrambler' with drop-dead looks, but not as powerful as the Pegaso or F650, and engine can be vibey. Still a few new ones around. *Verdict: Wonderful style.*

**XRT600:** w/c, 4str, 558cc, single, e/s. Clumsily styled, Paris-Dakar influenced big trailie that uses the stock Gilera lump in yet another manifestation. Big, heavy-ish and extremely rare in the UK. *Verdict: Ugly duckling.*

### HARLEY DAVIDSON

Not the V-twins, but a mish-mash of European-made stuff with the H-D badge. **H-D 90:** a/c, 2-str, 90cc, single. Aermacchi-made 1970s mini-trail funbike. Very rare these days, passable off road. CCM sold the rights to the Armstrong army bikes to H-D circa 1992, and H-D duly won the British army contract. Now electric start (after heavy squaddie casualties with the old left-side kick-starts) and reportedly more robust but down-sized from 500 to 350cc.

### HONDA

XL = a/c, 4-str, trail.

XR = a/c, 4-str, enduro.

MTX = a & w/c, 2-str, trail.

## TRAILBIKE GUIDE

Basic beginners' bikes: XL100S, XL125S, XL185S. 1970s-80s. All use basically the same sohc air-cooled engine in twin-shock chassis (but with different gearboxes). Great bread-and-butter trail bikes, but getting a little long in the tooth nowadays. As with all small Hondas, frequent oil changes are the key to a long, trouble-free life.

**Cub 90:** Whacky off-road 'scooter' for whacky off road riders, different, but lacking any lights or credibility! *Verdict:* For planet-e.

**MT50:** a/c, 2-str, single. Many a 16 year-old's first bike. Unburstable moped-legal trail bike. Staple fare for trail parks. *Verdict:* Fun in a small package.

**MTX 125:** 227lb/103kg, w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single. Learner-legal monoshock trail bike with an unfortunate propensity for brewing up in serious off-roadery. No longer imported. Definitely not as robust as the XLs.

**MTX200:** w/c, 2-str, 198cc, single. Bigger brother of 125, but never quite lived up to expectations. Quite rare and prone to boiling up - no cooling fan. Be very careful replacing ceramic seal on the water pump. Questionable reliability especially with old ones. *Verdict:* Good for making tea.

**CRM250R:** 114kg, w/c, 2-str, 249cc, single. Japanese-spec trail bike roughly based on CR motocrosser but with usual



trailie luxuries. Low seat height, reasonable spread of power, superb suspension. Later ones (after 1990) had USD forks. *Verdict:* Best of the stroker trail bikes.

**CL250S:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single.

Bit of an oddity sold to farmers in the early Eighties, for on and off road work. Unusual in that it featured a 5-speed gearbox with a range of both high and low options. More roadified than most trailies with low saddle and front mudguard, and chromed (twin) shocks. boxy styling and front and rear drum brakes makes it rare but not highly desirable. *Verdict:* Conversation stopper only.

**TLR200:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, 199cc, single. Early Eighties trials-styled trailie ideal for really snotty green lanes and long distance trials events, but not as comfy as some trail bikes and not really built for speed. Still available new as personal imports at fairly attractive prices.



**TLM200:** a/c, 2-str, 199cc, single. More modern version of above with 2-stroke engine and monoshock suspension built for Japanese home market. Not much of a seat but you can't have it all. *Verdict:* Nothing will stop you.

**XL100:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, 99cc, single, 6-speed. very basic, cheap to insure learner trailie. Later versions were smaller all round with more basic instruments. *Verdict:* Good starter machine.

**XL125:** 231lbs, a/c, 4-str, sohc, 123cc, single, 6-speed. Basic, twin-shock learner bike used by legions of beginners in the 70s & 80s. Usually badly treated, unusually they still survive.

**XL125R:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, 123cc, single, 6-speed. Monoshock version of above, analagous to 250R and 500R. Later, Italian-built monoshock Dakar version with big tank and electric start can be found as grey import.

**XL185:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, 185cc, single, 5-

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speed. One of the definitive original green laners. Twin shock version only, but can be upgraded with later 125R parts, including chassis!

**XL250:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. Started life way back in the 1970s with the Motorsport, a basic twin-shock trail bike not unlike Yam's XT500. *Verdict:* Capable plodder.

**XL250S:** 1978-on, 261lbs, a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, 248cc, single. Which sported a four-valve, twin-port head pumping out all of 26bhp, but still with 6-volt electrics at first; twin shocks and crappy SLS front and rear brakes and an unusual 23 inch front wheel, giving little tyre choice. Later versions adopted the Honda Pro-Link rear end and 12-volt electrics. Good all rounder, but better on the road than off it. Comfy saddle and decent build quality make this a good secondhand buy if you can find one. Because this was the bike from which the legendary RS250 despatcher's tool was derived it means you can bolt the complete 12-volt RS250 flywheel, generator and engine cover straight on to any of the 6-volt XL or XR 250s and 500s. The accelerator-pumped carb of the RS will also give a useful power increase to the 250.



**XL250 Degreee:** 119kg, w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, 249cc, 25bhp, single. Nineties style version of the venerable no-frills XL250, now watercooled and with a four valve head, but still with rear drum brake. *Verdict:* Nice little stylish trailie.

**XL500S:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Practically identical to the XL250 apart from the bigger cylinder and head and a

longer frame although it is possible to squeeze the bigger engine into a 250 chassis. Only 32bhp, but loads more stomp and the same crappy front brake - green racing linings help a bit, but beware low-speed lock-ups! Fortunately the 23 inch wheels can be re-laced with 21inch rims which actually improves the handling and provides a vast increase in tyre choice! Beware starting problems and low revs misfire caused by furring of the alloy earthing plate - solution is to take a lead direct from engine to coil.

**XL250R/500R:** 1984-on, a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. The cylinder heads were now blessed with Radial Four Valve Combustion (RFVC), vastly superior Pro-Link mono-shock suspension, beefier forks and much better TLS front brake in a 21 inch wheel, and 12-volt electrics - a much better bet all round than the 'S' models if you can afford them. Only snag with the TLS front brake is that it will not stop you from rolling back on a hill! The CR motocrosser front end will fit straight into the XL headstock so long as you use the whole assembly. Beware top end seepage of oil between head and barrel. The XL250R finally lost its metal tank and was developed into the XR version. Early XL500 engines were very popular in single cylinder road racing, so second hand spares are hard to come by. Frequent oil changes are essential to avoid the dreaded knackered head syndrome caused by the camshaft running direct in it although bearing conversions are available. Some 250s suffered from dodgy gearboxes and frequent top end problems. *Verdict:* Cheaper than an XR.

**XL350/400:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Grey import originally built for French and Japanese markets - a big-bore version of the 250 rather than a sleeved down 500. *Verdict:* Very rare.

**XL600R** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Larger version of 500R later swapped its drum front brake for a disc.

**XL600LM:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Paris-Dakar version of above with big tank, flashy twin headlights, red painted engine, tubeless gold spoked rims and glory-be, electric start. Unfortunately it didn't go as well as it looked - one of the

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magazines put one on a dyno at the time and got only 26bhp at the rear wheel. *Verdict: Nicely individual.*

**Honda XRs:** Most not officially designed for road use (except for the XR-Ls), but virtually all have been registered for the road by owners, with varying degrees of legality.

**XR75/80:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. Small wheel mini-bike with poky engine for teenagers, but we know of at least one street-legalised one used as a fun green-laner after modification with big wheels.

**XR100:** 68kg, a/c, 4-str, sohc, 99cc, single, 6-speed. Mini off roader based on XL100 engine but with 19 inch front and 16 inch rear wheels. Great, fun bike on which to learn basics. World champion road racer Kenny Roberts uses them to teach sliding techniques to GP hopefuls.

**XR200R:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, single, 5-speed. Early twin shock bikes (originally based on the XL185) made brilliant green laners. Still fairly popular though later mono-shock versions are better and more plentiful. Drum bakes let it down though some late Japanese spec models come with discs. Light enough to pick up if need be. *Verdict: Still a great trail bike.*

**XLR200:** 112kg, a/c, 4-str, sohc, 18bhp, single. Japanese-spec trailbike version of above with drum rear brake.

**XLR250R:** 113kg, a/c, 4-str, sohc, 249cc, 28bhp, single. Japanese-spec trailbike version of above with drum rear brake.

**XLR250-Baja:** 116kg, a/c, 4-str, sohc, 249cc, 28bhp, single. Japanese-spec trailbike version of the XR Baja, but with slightly lower spec and a pair of smaller headlights.

**XR250(R):** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Based on both XL250S and 250R with identical frames but more suspension travel, disc front brake and slightly hotter cam giving small power increase. Early monoshock with twin carbs could be a sod to start when hot - go for the later single-carb model. The XR250 makes a very good off-road all-rounder - light weight and adequate power (30bhp claimed) makes it perfect for trail riders and clubman enduro riders alike, and tolerable on the road. All Honda 250s need to be revved hard if you want to get a move on. New

ones come with electric start and there's now a Baja version available with huge twin headlamps, among other detail changes. *Verdict: Popular and versatile trailie.*



**XR250L:** 113kg, a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, 249cc, 28bhp, single. Grey import with road-legal lights, speedo and indicators. Slightly heavier than R.

**XR350:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Mid Eighties (monoshock) version, only imported for a very short time and now rare in UK. Much the same as the 250 but with extra poke and unfortunately extra weight.

**XR500:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. bigger version of XR250, as used by Eddie Kidd for wheelies. Early version was developed into the XR550RR on which Cyril Neveu won the 1982 Paris-Dakar rally.

**XR600:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Several versions since 1984, mostly imported from USA until Honda UK started importing in 1994. Early versions easy to tell by drum rear brake and twin carbs. All are great off roaders, with pukka suspension and lightweight chassis. Not much fun on the road because of the vibes, lack of creature comforts, and twitchy handling. And some can be real pigs to start. Often the bike of choice for overlanders but beware, rear subframe is not built to take a lot of weight. Honda UK have not homologated the latest continental-spec version even though it comes with proper speedo and head and tail lights (but no indicators) so they're still not officially road legal and sold by Honda deal-

## TRAILBIKE GUIDE

ers 'for off-road use only' - but it's easy to road-register as an individual so can still be ridden away from the shop. Great wheelie-pulling ability, and very light compared to something like an XT600. Has become the privateer's desert rally bike by which all others are judged - light, relatively simple and very robust. The best noise/power compromise is to keep the main body of the original baffle, but take out the inner core - this looks and sounds 'kosher' but liberates most of the power. Official HRC hop-up kits with big bore (630cc) and hot cam are available but not recommended for off-road use or long-distance reliability. Tons of other tuning parts available. *Verdict: Definitive 'pukka' big banger.*

**XR650L:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, 644cc, single, e/s. Grey imported, fully street legal version of the XR600 using electric start Dominator engine and some of the roadgoing niceties. Slight weight penalty, but a real beauty if you can find one. Balancer shaft makes this a much nicer animal on the road, and not much worse off it. *Verdict: Worth searching out.*

**NX125:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, 123cc, single, 6-speed. Mini-mini Dominator for continental learner market, based on the XL125 motor. Popular commuter in France, not seen much over here.

**NX250/350:** w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single, e/s. Mini-Dominator, much smaller and lighter than big brother and surprisingly quick (85mph) thanks to a relatively highly tuned water-cooled engine. Ideal for the vertically challenged and for doubling up as an economical commuter. 350cc (Sahara) version built in Brazil for South American market.

**AX1:** w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single, e/s. Japanese home market version of the NX250, built for the street only, with cast wheels and twin tail lights.

**NX650P Dominator:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, 644cc, single, e/s. The definitive civilised big-single four-stroke trail bike, with genuine off road ability. Torquey 44bhp motor with handy electric start - early versions had kick-start as well. Classy cosmetics make crashing expensive and despite the mini-fairing still much more tiring than something like

a Transalp on M-ways. Nevertheless a good touring bike providing you don't want to go too fast. Watch out for rotted wheel rims on early models. Plentiful in UK but high build quality means second-hand prices are quite steep.

**XLV400VP Transalp:** 183kg, w/c, 4-str, 6-valve, sohc, 398cc, 37bhp, V-twin, e/s. Japanese-spec version of below.

**XLV600VP Transalp:** w/c, 4-str, 6-valve, sohc, 583cc, V-twin, e/s. Called the Rally Tourer, its name befits its abilities perfectly. True dual purpose machine, great all-rounder. Engine based on the VT500, and larger versions now power the Bros and Africa Twin. Unburstable and torquey motor churns out a claimed 55bhp but can be tricky to work on unless out of the frame. Expensive cosmetics worth protecting if you're going to venture off road. Early versions easy to spot due to hub rear brake which was prone to going oval. Suffers from rotting wheel rims (like Dominator) in certain cases, and single front discs (identical to CBR600s) can wear fast. Slight facelift in 1993 improved fairing protection slightly. Later versions also come with handy centre stand which was an option on earlier models. Beware handlebar rubber-mountings wearing out giving 'twisted' and remote feel to bars. Sensible secondhand prices. *Verdict: Superb trail bike for touring on.*

**XLV750:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, V-twin. Mid-80s precursor to Transalp but featuring shaft-drive, and distinctive red engine. Never officially imported into UK, but quite common in France.

**XR650 Africa Twin:** w/c, 4-str, 6-valve, sohc, V-twin, e/s. Even closer to HRC P-D specials, mass-produced monster trailie that was extremely popular in Europe in 1989. About 100 were specially built for HRC-supported mass entries to Paris Dakar.

**XR750 Africa Twin:** w/c, 4-str, 6-valve, sohc, 742cc, V-twin, e/s. Bored out from 650cc to 742cc in 1990 to make an impressive but rather top-heavy Paris-Dakar styled mega-trailie. Much more expensive than the competition at the time, though they had high build quality and came with trick on-board computer.

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Better off road than you'd imagine, especially on fast and dusty trails.

**XR750-S Africa Twin:** w/c, 4-str, 6-valve, sohc, 742cc, V-twin, e/s. Lightened, lowered and improved 1993-on version of its forbear. Superb, top quality all-rounder but still relatively expensive.

### HUSABERG

KTM owned Swedish range of mainly competition four-stroke machines which use what is basically a two-stroke bottom end mated to a four-stroke barrel and head. Light, powerful and can be vibey.

**FE350:** w/c, 4-str, 349cc, single, e/s. Cross between a balls out enduro mount and a trail bike. Beautifully made, fast and light. Left hand kickstart negated by new electric boot. *Verdict: A serious tool.*

**FE501:** w/c, 4-str, 501cc, single, e/s. As above but more so.

**FE600:** w/c, 4-str, 595cc, single, e/s. As above but even more so.

### HUSQVARNA

Previously Swedish, but now Italian-owned company (Cagiva) manufacturing a range of (essentially) competition bikes (Enduro and Motocross), not to mention a rather nice line in lawnmowers. Both two and four stroke machines are renowned for their power to weight ratio and high quality components, though left hand kickstarts can be awkward.

**WRE125:** w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single. Modern, superb, high specification trailie with powerful revvy motor and top-notch suspension. Though classified as a trail-bike it makes a better clubman enduro mount than pure green laner thanks to tall seat height, and peaky top-end power delivery.

### JAWA-CZ

**Penta 125:** a/c, 2-str, 123cc, single. 12 bhp learner legal trail bike from the Czech manufacturers - unknown quantity.

### KAWASAKI

KE = a/c, 2-str, trail.

KL = a/c, 4-str, trail.

KLR = w/c, 4-str, trail.

KLX = w/c, 4-str, trail/enduro.

KMX = w/c, 2-str, trail.

KDX = a/c and w/c, 2-str, enduro then trail.

**KE 80/100:** a/c, 2-str, 79/99cc, single. Very basic disc valve learner trailie with

drum brakes both ends. Has been around for donkey's years and value will be dropping as new learner laws come in. Ideal second hand bike for the vertically and financially challenged to start trailing with.

**KE125/175:** a/c, 2-str, single. Early twin shock, disc valve trailie dating from the Seventies. Popular then, but most will have rotted away by now. Easy to learn on many were used as farm bikes. Later versions styled to resemble KDX. Lengthy production run means Kawasaki must have got it right. *Verdict: Long lived.*

**KMX125:** 216lb/98kg, w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single. Very able little trail bike powered by reed valve and KIPS power valve engine, which can easily be de-restricted to double power output to a lively 24bhp.

**KMX200:** 1987-92, 221lb/100kg, w/c, 2-str, 191cc, single, 6-speed. Big-bore version of the 125 with a claimed 30bhp, which makes a much more able all-rounder capable of motorway cruising and a top whack of nearly 90mph. Not as reliable as the 125 and if used 'in extremis' off-road the suspension, and especially the forks are not as good as later generation KDXs. Fuel range to bone dry is only 90 miles with 10 mile reserve, and KIPS valve can give trouble, as can clutch and radiator (no fan fitted!). 200 also lumbered with a 17 inch rear wheel, so it's quite common to fit the 18 incher from the 125 to improve off-road tyre choice. KMX also suffered from indifferent build quality, and could be fragile off road. Pads and discs wore out if you so much as looked at them. But seat height is much more accessible for shorties than KDX. Has not been imported for a few years now, if in good nick, an excellent trail bike for most conditions.

**KDX125SR:** w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single. 124cc. Similar engine to the KMX (with KIPS power valve) but with the stronger competition-derived 'perimeter', square-tube chassis. Later ones had upside-down forks, but were slower than cheaper KMX in restricted form.

**KDX175/200:** a/c, 2-str, single. Originally sold as a competition only machine with no speedo or horn and a plastic tank when they were still illegal on the road.

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Fine for enduros but a bit uncivilised on the road. Peaky and raucous, the first models were however lighter, lower and torquier than the later w/c models.

**KDX200:** w/c, 2-str, 199cc, single. Based on KDX125, completely redesigned from a/c version with increased suspension travel, revised Uni-Track rear end, and more top end power. Basically a clubman enduro bike, very few haven't been raced.

**KDX220R/SR:** w/c, 2-str, 220cc, single. As above but updated for '95, and with more power and torque. The SR is the street version. *Verdict: Yummy.*

**KDX250SR:** w/c, 2-str, 249cc, single. Trail bike version of the KDX with heaps of grunt, perimeter frame and huge USD forks. Tallish and very powerful. Japanese spec only. *Verdict: Wow.*

**KL250:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, 246cc, single. Late seventies twin shock trail bike derived from the 200cc road bike commuter. Pretty basic (no balancer shaft), but also pretty reliable, and extremely frugal.

**KLR250:** 1987-on, 260lbs/118kgs, w/c, 4-str, sohc, 249cc, single. Reliable if rather unexciting trail bike with just 23bhp on tap. Despite the complexity of w/c engine they're very robust, and easy to service. More than capable of economical daily commuting, but not very fast on or off the road. Revived as a budget trailie alongside more expensive KLX having been dropped when they first came in. *Verdict: Excellent starter trailbike with good manners.*

**KLX250:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, 246cc, single. Enduro version of the early twin shock KL, with less road manners.

**KLX250:** 1994-on, w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, 249cc, single. The four-stroke equivalent of the KDX, with similar motocross-derived perimeter chassis. Looks the business with handling and suspension to match, but performance of the 25bhp street-legal trail version is a bit flat. The lighter 30bhp enduro version is a lot more satisfying to ride, but early ones had carburetion difficulties, and both need to be revved hard to produce their power. Quite tall in the saddle.

**KLX300:** 1996-on, w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, single. Latest bigger-bore version of above with more power and torque and

generally improved all round. *Verdict: Nice.*

**KLE500:** 392lb/178kg, w/c, 4-str, 8-valve, dohc, 498cc, parallel twin. Slightly oddly styled 'town trailie' which shares its engine with the EN500/GPZ500 whose motors were in turn, effectively one half of a GPZ900R. The revvy little KLE makes 50bhp but is far less trail-friendly than the torquey Transalp and more tiring on the road especially with its uncomfortable (pink) seat and minimal fairing. Quite fast for the money and pretty good around town, but definitely not going to suit everyone's taste or backside. *Verdict: Unique.*

**KLR600:** 1984-on, 430lbs, w/c, 4-str, dohc, 564cc, single. Big banger trail bike which started out with a kickstart but became the first big trailie to be fitted with an electric boot. Some had balancer chain problems and early ones overheated due to poor siting of the thermostat, but otherwise a fine handling road machine with plenty of trail-ability. *Verdict: Sensible thumper.*

**KLR 650:** 1987-on, 286lb, w/c, 4-str, dohc, 651cc, single. Bored out version of the 600. Like the KLR 250, recently re-introduced as a cut-price all-rounder now that insurance rating system no longer unfairly penalises over-600s. *Verdict: Competent rather than spectacular.*

**KLR 650 & (Tengai):** 1989-on, w/c, 4-str, dohc, 651cc, single. Bored out to 651cc in 1987, Kawasaki have never had any success in the African rallies, but the Tengai (launched in 1989) is their be-fairinged homage to the genre. Simple KLR may be a bit basic by today's standards but it works well enough, and is tough and practical to boot. Plenty of bottom end grunt. Relaunched in '95 after a break of two years.

**KLX 650:** 337lbs/153kg, w/c, 4-str, dohc, 651cc, single. Bigger version of the 250 with the same drop-dead motocross looks, but with USD forks. Early ones were designed without enough clearance between the rear wheel and the mudguard which meant the wheel hammers into the CDI box at max compression with expensive consequences. No bashplate either.



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Not as torquey as the Dominator or the Pegaso but great for smooth dirt roads or gravel-strewn tarmac. Ideally suited as a supermoto or town bike. Fast and furious, but not much plonkability. Enduro version and later models didn't suffer the same suspension problems. *Verdict: Good but not good enough.*

### KTM

Mainly enduro two and four-strokes of dubious street legality. Older enduro bikes are sometimes trailed, but generally rather fast/peaky/specialised for green lane use.

**400:** w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, single. Trail bike version of an existing enduro bike, but with the added civility of a balancer shaft. Fast and exciting on forest roads, but not much of a chugger. Great on the road though lack of screen may be a problem for some. Tall seat height and left-hand kickstart make it tricky for shorties. Top notch suspension, but not as light as it looks. Also quite pricey. *Verdict: Specialist tackle.*

**620:** w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, single. As above but more so.

**Duke:** w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, single. Strangely-styled but quite unique Supermoto version of KTM's big-banger. Stylish little headlamp fairing contains two small headlights, and of course the bike rides on 17 inch wheels with wide, sticky rubber. Lots of fun, lots of cred, but expensive and rare since they're only imported in strictly limited numbers. *Verdict: Street rod.*

### LAVERDA

**DR650 Atlas:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, twin. Strange overweight trailie produced from the dying embers of the Italian Laverda concern. Using the Montjuic engine as its source the Atlas' only claim to fame is the inexplicable 'Soft Ramble' sticker that graced the swingarm. *Verdict: Rare with reason.*

### MORINI

**Camel:** a/c, 4-str, ohv, V-twin. Oddball twin shock, V-twin trailie utilising the heron-headed Morini lump. High saddle and limited spares can be a problem, but otherwise quite robust and great fun if you can master the left-handed kickstart. Not very plentiful, but fairly cheap.

*Verdict: Eccentric transport.*

**Kanguro:** a/c, 4-str, ohv, 344cc, V-twin. Looks like an accident between an XT350 and a Transalp. Lovely engine is a bit dated really, but the Kanguro (couldn't they spell Kangaroo?) is definitely worth a look if you're after something a bit different and don't mind the left-hand kickstart. Sold very slowly and remained in production for a number of years, so it's possible to still find new ones, and they're very cheap for an Italian bike. *Verdict: Strangely alluring.*

### MOTO GUZZI

**350TT:** a/c, 4-str, ohv, V-twin. Middleweight Guzzoid with all the attraction of chicken pox. *Verdict: see below.*

**V65TT:** a/c, 4-str, ohv, V-twin. Middleweight Guzzi trailie of average ability. Hard work on the dirt... and on the road. Not many around. *Verdict: Masochists only need apply.*

**Quota:** a/c, 4-str, ohv, V-twin. Big Guzzi that like Triumph's Tiger is really just a road bike in trail bike clothing, but without the Triumph's impressive on road performance. A truly monstrous beast with a seat-height that requires a ladder if you're under 6ft. It makes even the Tiger feel small by comparison. Agricultural engine with torque reaction from the shaft and dangerous lack of ground clearance both on and off road. Good fuel consumption thanks to fuel injection and high gearing, are about all it has going for it. Incredibly expensive when it was launched, but prices did come down. Strictly for straight dirt roads and motorways. Should come with a government health warning. *Verdict: Proves that big is not necessarily beautiful.*

### MZ

Ex-East German manufacturer with a reputation of making stodgy but solid bikes. A few a/c, 2-str, 250 ISDT specials around, though most road MZs are robust enough to be 'trailified'. Cheap and cheerful. *Verdict: Worth a trip around the Bloc.*

**500 Saxon Country:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, Rotax-powered single. Old-fashioned looking trail bike, that's really just a roadster with a set of trail clothes on. Expensive for what it is. *Verdict: Obsolete.*

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### ROKON

**340RT:** a/c, 2-str, Sachs-engined, 340cc, single. Obscure US bikes using a snowmobile engine with a pull start and an automatic gearbox. Manufactured during the seventies with a twin shock chassis. *Verdict: Bizarre but wild.*

### SUZUKI

TS = a/c then w/c, 2-str, trail.

PE = a/c, 2-str, enduro.

SP = a/c, 4-str, trail.

DR = o-a/c 4-str, trail.

**RV125:** a/c, 2-str, single. Strange looking fun bike from the seventies with small wheels and balloon tyres designed for riding on sand. Looks a bit like a full size monkey bike. Quite fun, but rare and more than a bit odd.

**TS120 Trailcat:** a/c, 2-str, single. One of the first purpose built trail bikes to come into the UK in the early Seventies, with unusual, Land Rover style high and low ratio 3x2 gearbox. Lightweight and easy handling twin shock chassis. A bit of a collector's item if you like that sort of thing. *Verdict: For anoraks only.*

**TS125/185:** a/c, 2-str, single. Early seventies twin shock trailie with distinctive high level pipe which was unusual at the time. Not many left now.

**TS125/185ER:** a/c, 2-str, single. Peaky learner bike from early Eighties still with 'twin shocks' *Verdict: Not bad considering.*

**TS250:** a/c, 2-str, single. Much the same as the early 125 but with punchier 250cc motor, and low-level chrome front mudguard.

**TS250ER:** a/c, 2-str, single. Early Eighties trail bike that's a bigger version of the 125 with twin shocks and electronic ignition.

**TSS0:** a/c, 2-str, single. Undistinguished twin shock trailie.

**TS50ER:** a/c, 2-str, single. As above.

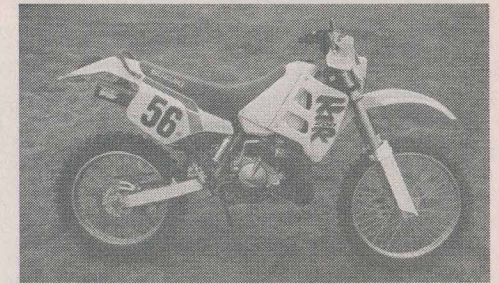
**TS50X:** w/c, 2-str, single. Modest trail moped with a roaring 3bhp on tap, and 'full floater' monoshock suspension. Good for a 50 though.

**TS125X:** w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single. Very competent learner legal trailie. Better than the equivalent DT at the time. *Verdict: Good secondhand buy.*

**TS125R:** w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single. Latest version of above with power valve fitted

that just needs connecting up to get full power.

**TS200R:** 112kg, w/c, 2-str, 195cc, 35bhp, single. Grey import with its own French championship. Higher spec than



UK 125s includes USD forks. Excellent stroker trailie that's not too expensive. Reasonable availability for a grey import. *Verdict: Good value trailie.*

**PE175:** a/c, 2-str, single. Basic twin-shock clubman enduro bike from the seventies, styled on the RM motocrosser. Poky at the time, but not by today's standards. Last ones had 'full floater' suspension. Reasonable number of tatty ones still about that can be had for not much money.

**PE250:** a/c, 2-str, single. Similar to 175 but with a better spread of power. Lots of fun, but noisy as hell.

**PE400:** a/c, 2-str, single. As above but with more power than most people could use in this chassis off-road. *Verdict: Wild.*

**SP370:** a/c 4-str, sohc, single. Early eighties twin shock trailie that seemed to go on and on. Frugal, robust and reasonably reliable despite lack of balancer shaft. Good, cheap hack.

**SP400:** a/c 4-str, sohc, single. As above.

**DR125:** o-a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. Small and not very powerful trailie but with the benefit of being robust, reliable and frugal. *Verdict: Slow but solid.*

**DR125 Raider:** o-a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. As above but with false header pipe and (marginally) bigger P-D style tank.

**DR200:** o-a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. As above but despite bigger motor, still a bit underpowered. Not sold as street legal. Beware rear wheel collapse on early ones.

**DR125/200 Djebel:** o-a/c, 4-str, sohc, single, e/s. Japanese home market version

## TRAILBIKE GUIDE

of above with more street mods (including electric boot). Later ones had big single headlamp with surrounding protection bar.



**DR250:** o-a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. Grey import baby brother of the 350 we get here in the UK, only with USD forks and a brilliant ride height control making it more accessible to little people. *Verdict:* *Worth searching out.*

**DR350:** o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Superb little trailie with dry-sump motor, excellent suspension, but tiny petrol tank. A bit cheap in places, but lightweight and fairly robust. Better off road than on it. Front disc brake not very powerful and wears out rapidly. Can look tatty quite quickly. Unfortunately kickstart only (until 95), and high seat height rules it out for sub six footers. Engine feels unburstable and will rev and rev though some have been known to drop valves occasionally. *Verdict:* *Great trail bike.*

**DR350(E):** o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Enduro version of above which is slightly 'harder' all round. Available in the UK but very few sold, and no 'leccy start available. *Verdict:* *Rare but good.*

**DR400S:** 287lbs, a/c 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, 396cc, single. Updated SP400 from the mid-Eighties with alloy petrol tank, but still twin shock and 6-volt. Beware camshaft rattles at high mileages. Very economical, but without the benefit of balance shafts. Watchout for things shaking loose like engine bolts or perhaps your leg. *Verdict:* *Shake, baby shake.*

**DR500S:** o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Foreign market, bigger-bore version of the 400. None known in the UK.

**DR600S:** 136kg/299lbs, o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, 589cc, single. Classic big

banger with modern monoshock rear end and balancer shaft motor. One of the best (and most sensible) of the DRs, but a bit overgeared and heavy. Can be a bugger to start when hot till you get the knack. *Verdict:* *Good secondhand buy.*

**DR650RSE:** o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, 640cc, single, e/s. More road than trail bike, longer, heavier than earlier DRs and with civilised half fairing and twin silencers. Good road bike, but first gear very high for trails and despite half decent suspension, still a bit of a handful on the dirt no thanks to its seat height. Engine sounds like a tractor and vibrates like one. Carbs can give iffy running at low revs. *Verdict:* *Okay I s'pose.*

**DR650:** o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single, e/s. Latest version of above without the half fairing or twin exhausts. Still overgeared, still rather tall, but with the best suspension in class. Not very refined and feels a bit cheap, but definitely heading in the right direction.

**DR750:** o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. The original 'Dr Big' - Suzuki's first attempt at a Paris-Dakar style big trailie. No-one has built a bigger single - except Suzuki themselves. *Verdict:* *Not for the faint hearted.*

**DR800:** o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. The ultimate ultimate. Monstrous single with gargantuan tank, massive seat height and weird styling. Could win awards for ugliness, but pretty good handler and surprisingly nimble. Massive tank gives good range. Dropped from the UK range in about 1993, suffered badly from Norwich Union's capacity-based insurance grading, but should be much cheaper to insure now. Many engines found their way into singles racing. But there's a few around if you really must have one. *Verdict:* *Why bother?*

### TRIUMPH

**Tiger:** w/c, 4-str, 12-valve, dohc, 885cc, triple. Brilliant but expensive road bike from the new Triumph factory, styled to look like an off roader for the German market. Grunty engine makes it quick on the road but don't bother venturing off road, as suspension leaves a lot to be desired. Rear linkage hangs down below frame rails and catches on practically

## TRAILBIKE GUIDE

everything. Tall seat height makes low speed manoeuvring tricky. *Verdict:* *A trailie in name only.*

### YAMAHA

**DT** = a/c & w/c, 2-str, trail.

**IT** = a/c, 2-str, enduro.

**WR** = w/c, 2-str, enduro.

**XT** = a/c, 4-str, trail.

**TT** = a/c, 4-str, enduro.

**TW** = a/c, 4-str, trail/fun.

**BW** = a/c, 4-str, trail/fun.

**DT125/175:** a/c, 2-str, single. The DTs are the bike that brought trail riding to the masses! Started out as a basic twin shock trail bike back in the late Seventies before adopting cantilever rear ends. They built up a reputation for being an extremely competent trail tool and taking an amazing amount of punishment. The 175s were dropped when the 125 learner laws came along in 1981. *Verdict:* *Still one of the best trailbikes ever.*

**DT125(LC):** 1987-on, w/c, 2-str, single. The DT came of age with the adoption of watercooling, motocross styling, and most important of all, a power valve. Lost some of its torque but gained a revvier motor and lots more top end together with sophisticated suspension front and rear. In 12bhp restricted form they're as flat as a pancake, but unrestricted make a capable 24bhp. Although in the fashion stakes they've been overtaken by trickier looking tackle, they still top the sales chart because of their hard earned reputation. Still good at off roading though they're taller and peakier than ever. Stripped down and tuned up they will pass as a good clubman enduro mount. *Verdict:* *The king lives on.*

**DT200(R):** w/c, 2-str, single. Grey import big bore version of the 125. Extra oomph makes it easier to ride. *Verdict:* *Competent all rounder.*

**DT200(WR):** w/c, 2-str, single. Japanese - spec trail bike version of the WR enduro bike. Visually almost identical, but with usual trail bike refinements.

**DT250:** a/c, 2-str, single. Late Seventies cantilever shocked version of the smaller bikes, more power but less agility.

**DT400:** a/c, 2-str, single. Hairy chested version of above, not many left now.

**IT125/175/200:** a/c, 2-str, single. Early eighties enduro tool. Useful off road, but a bit hairy on it no thanks to drum brakes. Use of premix is a bit of a pain, 175 is the better bet if you can find one.

**IT250:** a/c, 2-str, 246cc, single. Less peaky, bigger bore version of above with enough power for any off road activity. At the time it boasted more power and much less weight than the equivalent water-cooled RD250LC twin!

**IT425/465/490:** a/c, 2-str, single. Fire-breathing, hard to tame, monster stroker for serious enduro freaks. Only for those with lots of skill or very large gonads. Not the most reliable bike in the world. *Verdict:* *Melts visors at 50 paces.*

**WR200:** w/c, 2-str, single. Brilliant clubman enduro bike with lightweight chassis and 'soft-tune' engine, but plenty of power. Rear suspension oversprung, and they need gearing down for low speed trails. Good if you like your bikes tall. Easy to ride with a nice light front end. *Verdict:* *Modern classic.*

**WR250:** w/c, 2-str, single. As above but with 'hard-tune' engine. Essentially the enduro version of the YZ motocrosser but with wider ratio gearbox and more flywheel. It also came with a lighting coil, but no lights! *Verdict:* *Peaky and poky.*

**WR500:** a/c, 2-str, single. As above but using air-cooled YZ motor.

**TDR 250:** w/c, 2-str, parallel twin. A TZR250 in trail clothing. Great road bike



with demon brakes thanks to dinner-plate sized front disc, and all or nothing powerband. Peaky motor makes it difficult to use off road apart from on fast fire roads, supermotard or competition road rallies for which it is ideal. A

## TRAILBIKE GUIDE

thoroughly uncivilised motorcycle - raucous, peaky and excruciatingly uncomfortable with an unquenchable thirst for fuel - and absolutely fabulous. Beware seizures on left hand cylinder, and high speed wobbles on the road. Has a few passionate and delinquent supporters.

*Verdict: For petrol-heads everywhere.*

**XT125:** a/c, 4-str, single. Learner legal motorcycle without the need for restriction! *Verdict: Reliable but intensely boring.*

**XT225 Serow:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. Small but perfectly formed grey import

trail bike with kick and e/s versions, but sadly not both together, although retro-fit kick is possible. Light, manoeuvrable, and easy to ride. Brilliant attention to detail such as mini indicators and sensibly placed grab handles marks this out as a superb green laner. Small engine needs to be worked hard especially on the road to get decent performance, but its a small price to pay for such a good bike. Reasonable numbers brought in so far. *Verdict: Makes sense.*

**XT250:** 248lbs, a/c, 4-str, 249cc, sohc, single. Early Eighties Cantilever shock trailie of some note. Light and strong with balancer shaft engine, they can still be found for not much money and make an excellent secondhand buy if in good condition though occasional early ones suffered valve problems. Nice and low though not very fast. *Verdict: Good all-rounder.*

**XT250T(R):** 113kg, a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, 249cc, 27bhp, single. Foreign market mini XT350 with all the benefits but slightly lighter. *Verdict: Rare.*

**TT250-R:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, 249cc, 30bhp, single, e/s. Modern lightweight trailie/enduro that is Yamaha's version of the Honda XR250. Revvy motor and a reasonable spread of power, but rather expensive. Unusual electronic dials, and other neat touches. Now officially imported.



**TT250-R RAID:** 121kg, a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, 249cc, 30bhp, single, e/s. As above but with large, single, (Baja-style) headlamp and protective guard, bigger tank and slightly different styling. *Verdict: Appealing.*

**XT350:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, single. Plain Jane trailie that's better than it looks. Early versions boasted 31bhp, but later ones emasculated to 17bhp due to noise regs. Chassis and suspension a bit limited but nevertheless still pretty competent. Plenty of bottom end, not too tall in the saddle, and excellent economy (80mpg possible if you try hard). Long production run means it must be good, but demand for second-hand ones ensures prices stay fairly high. *Verdict: Carry-on trailing.*

**TT350:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, single. Grey import enduro version of above, with improved suspension, more power, and more basic instrumentation and lighting. Not that scarce considering, they make a nice trailie with similar reliability to the XTs. *Verdict: Nice one.*

**XT500:** 304lbs, a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. The original big banger trailie that started it all. Produced for years and years, even when superceded by later versions. Twin shock, 6-volt, character building bike that could often get into more trouble than it could get out of. All sorts of special parts were produced for it for the would be overlander over the years. Vibrates like a jack hammer, and very basic by modern standards but the lack of sophistication is part of its charm, and the low seat height makes it much easier to 'paddle' than some of its more monstrous successors. Can be horribly unreliable and a pig to start, but its easy to work on and plenty still around. Classic buffs have inflated the prices, but don't pay over the odds. *Verdict: Your dad would love it.*

**TT500:** a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. More serious off roader version of the above. Much

lighter and with a punchier motor, but still with 6-volt electrics. *Verdict: Rare.*

**XT550:** 1982-on, 292lbs, a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, 558cc, single. Updated version of above with 4-valve engine, twin carbs and cantilever rear end. Smoother than 500 but hard to get excited about, and some had gearbox problems. Not many around now. *Verdict: Not as good as the original.*

**XT600 Tenere:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Superb Paris-Dakar inspired big trailie with unburstable engine, supple suspension, mammoth tank and comfy saddle. Loved by overlanders the world over. Huge touring range, and clever attention to detail (for instance air filter positioned under tank to avoid being clogged by sand and dust). Later versions inherited a full fairing but lost some of the attention to detail. Feels like riding a great big cosy armchair, and regardless of Yamaha's claims to the contrary seems to have more power than later 'cooking' versions. Real off road ability in most hands. *Verdict: Best of the big Yams.*

**XT600E:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. No frills version of the much loved XT. Heavier and more sluggish than the original thanks to steel rims and generally lower spec. Unsophisticated especially in the suspension department, but thoroughly crashable and a respectable plodder. Heaps of grunt. Updated in 95 with more modern looks. *Verdict: Not as good as the original.*

**TT600:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Grey import enduro version of above, with improved suspension, more power, more basic instrumentation and lighting, and plastic tank. A few around, they make a more suitable serious trail bike than an XT. *Verdict: worth looking out for.*

**TT600 (updated):** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Latest version of the above now available with an electric start. Much more modern styling includes USD forks, still only available as a grey import.

**XTZ660:** w/c, 4-str, 5-valve, dohc, single. Another attempt at making a long-distance overland/road version of the venerable XT. Heavier, with less range and not much more power than the original. Less crashworthy than the first and the taller

saddle may put some off. Nevertheless it's had a lot of success in desert racing form and with some mods is eminently trail-able. *Verdict: Another good Yam.*

**XTZ750 Super Tenere:** w/c, 4-str, 10-valve, dohc, parallel twin. Yamaha's answer to the Africa Twin. Cheaper build quality makes it a good value, comfortable all-rounder on the road with plenty of touring potential and 200 mile tank range. Engine is strong but lacks a little bit of bottom end, and gearbox is atrocious to use. Genuinely fast and not too bad off road especially in the dry, but the standard exhaust is rather wide (catching on ruts). Decent suspension, but a bit bouncy on the road. *Verdict: A good try.*

**TDM850:** w/c, 4-str, 10-valve, dohc, parallel twin. 'New sports' road bike with trail styling developed from the XTZ750 but with much gruntier 850cc lump. Lower seat height, much torquier engine and better brakes and handling. Early versions had appallingly clunky gearbox and exhaust collector box rules out an after-market centre stand. Not really a trail bike unless it's high summer nice and dry and the trail is easy. Soft suspension limits speed off road. *Verdict: Brilliant trail influenced roadie.*

**TW200:** a/c, 4-str, 18bhp, single, e/s. Fattish-wheeled fun bike which makes a brilliant and economical (though odd-looking) trail bike for the short of leg, with both electric start and kick. Surprisingly good on the road, and makes a competent commuter (70+mpg possible), but let down by lousy SLS front drum brake and needs an extra gear. Suspension a bit basic and tyres can be expensive. Gearbox sprocket a special part due to outrigger bearing. Will embarrass pukka trail bikes in the right hands. *Verdict: Strangely attractive.*

**BW200:** a/c, 4-str, single, e/s. True beach balloon-tyred version of above but not street legal. Not recommended for anything other than sand. *Verdict: Sand sled.*  
**BW350:** a/c, 4-str, single, e/s. Hairy-arsed version of above. *Verdict: Get out the bull worker.*

# Classified ads

## Bikes

**Honda** XL250S 1979 Taxed & MOT'd, good condition £450. Tel 01299 271036 (Worc's)

**Fantic** 240 twin shock trials bike, just about everything new, nearly £1,000 spent on total re-build, must be the best in the country £800 secures, p/x possible. Tel 01454 774513 (Bristol)

**Yamaha** DT125R K-reg low mileage, one owner, learner legal, as new £1,500 ono. Tel 01708 349568 (Romford, Essex)

**Honda** XL125R ProLink, Y-reg, fitted with 200cc engine, XR cam, 12 volt electrics, 6 speed box, great light trail bike, will go anywhere (probably) plus many spares £425. Tel 01327 341255 (Northants)

**Yamaha** Super Tenere 750cc, taxed, MOT'd, Datatag, excellent condition, 1990, 18,000 miles, reluctant sale £2,750 ono. Tel 01584 810937 (Worc's)

**XR500**, very special, 9 gallon tank, twin headlamps, motocross suspension £1,100 ono. Tel 0836 702871/01277 810614 (Tony, Essex)

**Honda** MTX125 F-reg, full tax & MOT, 19,000 miles, good runner, not ridden off roads, learner legal, £550 ono. Tel 01625 529931 (any time)

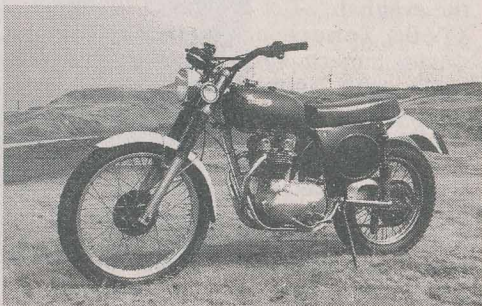
**Yamaha** XT600E Blue, 1990, 22,000 miles, vgc, new tyres, long MOT, £1,995. Tel 01594 836087 (Evenings)

**Honda** 250 Superdream, long MOT, perfect condition, all chromes perfect, good and fast bike, sell for £300 or swap for good (125 upwards) scrambler. Tel 01828 632168 (Perthshire)

**Suzuki** DR650SE June 93, 11,000 miles, needs tidying, bargain £2,200 ono. Tel

01159 244091 (Nottingham)

**Cheney** Triumph Six day replica, ultimate classic trail bike, built using new frame, excellent condition and spec, full



details £2,100. Tel 01524 771077 (Lancs)

**Yamaha** XT350 1991(Q), black/yellow, 11 months MOT, 520 'O' ring conversion, starts and runs well but smokes a bit, hence £650 ono. Tel 01604 701209 (Northampton)

**Honda** CR80R 1989, competition only, good condition, suit teenager, manual included, £700. Tel 01767 314648 (Beds)

**Honda** XR350RE 6 months tax, MOT, new clutch, MXA seat cover and plastics, white powder-coated frame, some spares, nice bike, slight rattle, £700 ono. Tel 01784 257469 (Brian, Surrey, Eves)

**Trico** 1972 Maico chassis fitted with '66 Triumph Tiger 90 350cc engine, new CZ competition forks, New Jawa competition shocks, recon crank, new con rods, new mains and gearbox bearings, TLS front brake, electrics under seat and tank, oil tank in original airbox position, Dell'Orto carb, £600. Tel 01597 810869 (pub)

**Kawasaki** KDX250DI 1991, upside down forks, perimeter frame, KIPS, fully road legal, MOT, spares include plastics, barrel, head, exhaust, tyre, new wheel bear-

# Classified ads

ings, sprockets, manual, unraced example £1,575 ono. Tel 01243 532032 (W. Sussex)

**Kawasaki** KL250 Super Motard style, needs tidying, T & T, T-reg, £295 ono also IT 250 Yamaha enduro V-reg, road legal, needs TLC £350 ono, p/x considered on both. Tel 01493 658620 (Ansafone)

**Aprillia** Tuareg rally 125cc, 1990, superb on/off road bike, very rare, very



fast, USD forks, recent sprocket and chain and back tyre, may p/x, £1,300. Tel 01284 304858 (Solihull)

**Cagiva** Elephant 900ie 1993, lucky explorer, K-reg, 14,000 miles, alarm/immobiliser, 'O' ring chain, new regulator, Ducati power, excellent condition, £4,900, may p/x. Tel 01915 818208 (Co. Durham)

**Honda** XR500 1980 twinshock, excellent original condition, T & T, first to see will but, £995 ono. Tel 01823 433972 (Somerset)

**Dalesman** Puch 125cc trials 1968, goes well, looks good, £400 or swap, road legal machine. Tel 01539 441429 (Cumbria)

**Transalp** June 94, 7000 miles, immaculate Gripsters, sump guard, desert bars,

Givi top box. etc. tarmac only, Honda warranty to June 96, as featured Nov issue £3,850. Tel 01978 780614 (Wrexham)

**Cagiva** Elephant lucky explorer, 1995 M-reg, 2,500 miles, mint, 750cc. Tel 0171 221 1221 (Daytime, London)

**PE175** 1981 New MT21's, new 'O' ring, C&S rebore, new piston and recon crank, all new wheel bearings, MOT, now its finished its too tall for me! £600. Tel 01772 792231 (Brian)

**Yamaha** DT125LC, E-reg, 9200 miles, white/red, good condition, £750 ono. Tel 01344 842851 (Evenings, Surrey)

**Beamish** Suzuki 325, outfit 1981, road registered, good condition, £500, no offers or p/x big banger trailie plus cash. tel 01179 229898 or 0374 219698 (Bristol)

**Kawasaki** KLR250 E-reg, 4 months tax, 10 months MOT, 16,175 miles, vgc, £1,100. Tel 0374 850267 (after 5.30pm, Staffs)

**Suzuki** DR400S 1982, recent new parts, s/arm bearings, rear wheel bearings, MT43 rear tyre, T&T, used daily, £635, Spare head barrel, piston, rockerbox cam, oil pump, £60, £680 the lot. Tel 01703 333955 (Southampton)

**Honda** XL500S 1981, good condition, MOT, recent chain sprockets, 21" front wheel, original available, £500 ono. Tel 01208 862508

**Kawasaki** KLX650 C1, 1993, green, excellent condition, taxed, new 'o' ring, chain/sprockets, enduro tyres, original road tyres available, stainless steel bash-plate, £2,600. Tel 01208 862508 (Evenings)

# Classified ads

**Honda** TL125, 1978, low miles, absolutely standard, lights, speedo, flashers, older MCC/trailrider changing steeds, T&T one year, £750. Tel 01300 320446 (Dorset)

## Spares

**Honda** Transalp parts for sale, petrol tank, fairing, side panels white, nose fairing grey, carbs, wheels F & R, controls, clocks, seat (red) etc, also misc XL/XR500, CB100, KH100 parts. Tel 0181 876 3608 (SW London)

**Honda** Dominator speedo and tacho in a single unit, 15,000 miles on clock, excellent condition, 1989 model NX650K £30 ono. Honda Dominator petrol tank, very small dent at right side front, with petrol cap and tap, 1989 model NX650K £20 ono. Tel 0151 482 1798

**Tyres**, new Avon gripsters, AM24 300 x 21 £20, 400 x 18 £30, as new Barum ED9T 90/90 x 21 £20, 120/90 x 17 £25, used one rally, Dunlop D903 140/80 x 17 £30. Tel 01734 781850 (Wokingham. Eves)

**Yamaha** XTZ660 Tenere complete exhaust, back wheel, front wheel forks, clocks, lights, foot pegs, yokes, also loads of other XTZ660 bits (mint) condition, £300 or will split. Tel 01670 851824 (Paul Ashington)

**XR600R** Acerbis 20 lt tank £100, spares kit including pad levers, cables, sprockets, bash plate, air filters, all you need to run for a season, also DR350 Supertrapp exhaust £90. Tel 01457 860775 (Derbyshire)

**CR250cc** red rocket engine including

exhaust £50 ono. Tel 0181 690 6003 (Mark)

**Kawasaki** KE125 trail exhaust inc cylinder clamp, good condition, also red plastic side panel £20. Tel 01892 526024 (Tunbridge Wells)

**Alpine Stars** boots, Tech 3, black/purple, size 8, used 3 times £80. Honda TLR 200/250 steel exhaust silencer, vgc £20. Tel 01275 849993 (Bristol)

**DT175MX** front wheel vgc £35. Tel 01604 701209 (Northampton)

**Suzuki** PE250 air cooled engine, dismantled, carb, exhaust system, offers. Tel 01322 386396 (Dartford)

**DR650** clutch and throttle cables, new, £20, workshop manual (Suzuki) £20. Tel 01203 329696 (Day) 01455 890931 (Eve)

**Kawasaki** KLR650/600 90 bike, spares or repair, including Michelin deserts, super moto 17" rims and tyres, Acerbis 21 lt tank, Hagon shock. Tel 01784 257469 (Surrey. Eves)

**Yamaha** XT550 forks and front wheel, good condition £50. Tel 01299 270493 (Worcs)

## Wanted

**Wanted** Acerbis tank to fit XT550. Tel 01299 270493

**Wanted** IT125 Yamaha reasonable condition, reasonable price for a reasonable guy. Tel 01603 761422 (Norwich)

**Wanted** Motocross bikes pre 1980, any type condition, spares, etc. Also USA magazines pre 1980 required, can collect, good prices paid. Tel 01543 423042

# Classified

(Staffs after 6pm)

**Wanted** XT/SR500 Yamaha engine or any parts, must be cheap as unemployed. Tel 01493 658620

**Wanted** Honda XL250K3 1976, all used or new parts wanted for cash, or runners or non runner bikes, will collect. Tel 01277 631742 (Essex)

**Wanted** Spares for Honda XL250S 1978, T reg. Tel 01217 443358 (Solihull)

**Wanted** Wanted XT600 Tenere, must be in excellent condition and well maintained, cash available for right bike. Tel 0113 2931353. Z650B1 to p/x (Leeds)

**Wanted** Trail bike 1980 onwards, condition doesn't matter but it must be a runner and rideable, 125cc upwards, can collect within reasonable distance, will pay £150 cash. Tel 01526 398856 (Lincs)

**Wanted** Yamaha YZ490 kick starter. Tel 0181 952 4905 (after 6pm) (Middlesex)

**Wanted** Yamaha XT600 Tenere, must be in good condition, will make generous cash offer for right bike. Tel 01392 875202 (Exeter)

**Wanted** Rotax engine to suit KTM frame. Tel 0181 690 6003 (Mark)

**Wanted** Chromed petrol tank for 1977 XT500 (have seen item in Europe), must be vgc. Tel 01628 28241 (Berkshire)

**Wanted** Generator for Honda XL model, to improve lighting on my XR200R, or information to achieve the same result. Tel 01625 613600 (Cheshire)

**Wanted** XT500 Anything considered from basketcase to mint bike, would prefer late gold rim model, also TT500 but must be mint. Tel 01722 334183 (Salisbury)

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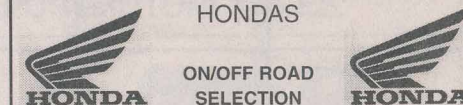
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F - Honda XR280 Mugen cam, USD forks etc	£1995
K - Yamaha XT600E 1-own, under 2k	£2995
L - Kawasaki KLX650 black, 1 own, 4K, as new	£3395
W - Suzuki SP400 v. tidy and original	£995
F - Yamaha XT350 full power 10k, v tidy	£1795
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# TRIALS AND ERRORS

It's been nearly six years since I last went trail riding, but recently I bought my first ever road bike, and I've really got the bug for biking again. The car just sits on the drive most of the time, the bike is in daily use, and this year I did my first long trip down to the south of France. I crossed the Massif Central, and the Southern Alps. Some of the roads became just dirt tracks, and there were some steep, narrow climbs and descents on narrow twisting tracks where two cars could never pass, and would probably have to reverse for miles if they ever met. These for me were the best parts of the journey, and I started to think once more about trail biking.

So now, encouraged by all of this I want to have another go, but there's a slight problem - I haven't got a trail bike. I'm beginning to look around, and one of the main criteria for me at the moment is price. It's got to be cheap, but there are a few painful mistakes I learned last time around that I will take into consideration, and by telling the sad and sorry stories of my own and my friend Pauline's experiences, maybe I can stop someone else from making some expensive mistakes.

When we started trail riding Pauline had an old Kawasaki KE125 and I owned a KMX125, a much more modern bike, with monoshock suspension giving a superior ride, but despite the rave reviews it received in the press, it was not wholly suited to the task for which it looked so good. The reviewers of this bike had obviously never taken it near any mud or water. The green lanes of Essex are renowned for these qualities, and it was in the Essex clay that I encountered a number of problems.

The first, and most annoying problem was the fact that the engine would not run underwater so every time we crossed a river, stream, or even a large puddle, both mine and the other KMX 125 in our TRF group cut out, and although the bikes would eventually start, they died as soon as we tried to pull away. Neither of us solved the problem before selling the bikes, but in retrospect, I think it was probably something quite simple.

The second problem was overheating. When the going got heavy, the bike overheated, and I had to stop to let it cool down for ten minutes, and after the third time in an hour, the group's patience would begin to wear a bit thin as bikes boiled over but body temperatures dropped.

A lack of rim locks was another minor annoyance, but more irritating was the fact

## Essex girl Liz Cannon struggles to find a suitable trail bike



that the forks did not allow the fitting of a 4 inch tyre, so you could not fit a standard trials tyre. I suspect (and hope) that these problems have now all been resolved on the current range of bikes.

So having tried a modern bike that didn't work for me, I was after a simple, lightweight, air-cooled engine, in a simple frame with no gadgets, wide rear tyre, and rim locks. A trials bike seemed to be the answer, and I bought an old, but hardly used 350cc Montesa. Pauline, thinking along similar lines was now the proud owner of an old Fantic 200. These were great over the local trail park, but due to the low saddle height, we had to stand up most of the time when trail riding.

A lot of the larger modern trail bikes, (including the one which is currently rated as the most capable off road by many magazines), seem to be modelled to some extent on desert racers, and one of the few characteristics these share with trials bikes is the positioning of the front mudguard close to the tyre. Now this is fine in the Sahara desert, but what you don't get in the Sahara desert that you do in British green lanes is mud - masses of it. And what do you get when you combine mud with a tyre hugging front mudguard? Flying lessons of course!

You're struggling through the mud, hit a drier area where you can increase your speed a bit, and then it happens. The mud jams up so tightly between the tyre and the mudguard the wheel won't turn, and you of course, go flying over the handlebars. Hopefully, not injured, but now covered from head to foot in smelly, slimy mud. You have to somehow dig the mud out of the mudguard, and get going again while everybody else stands around getting cold, lungs in agony from the laughter. After the third time in half an hour, they're not laughing anymore, and the rest of the group are beginning to regard you as a bit of a liability!

Pauline solved the problem by taking off the mudguard, and putting a motocross one on under the fork yoke. Other problems we had with the tri-

TRIALS AND ERRORS, BIKES

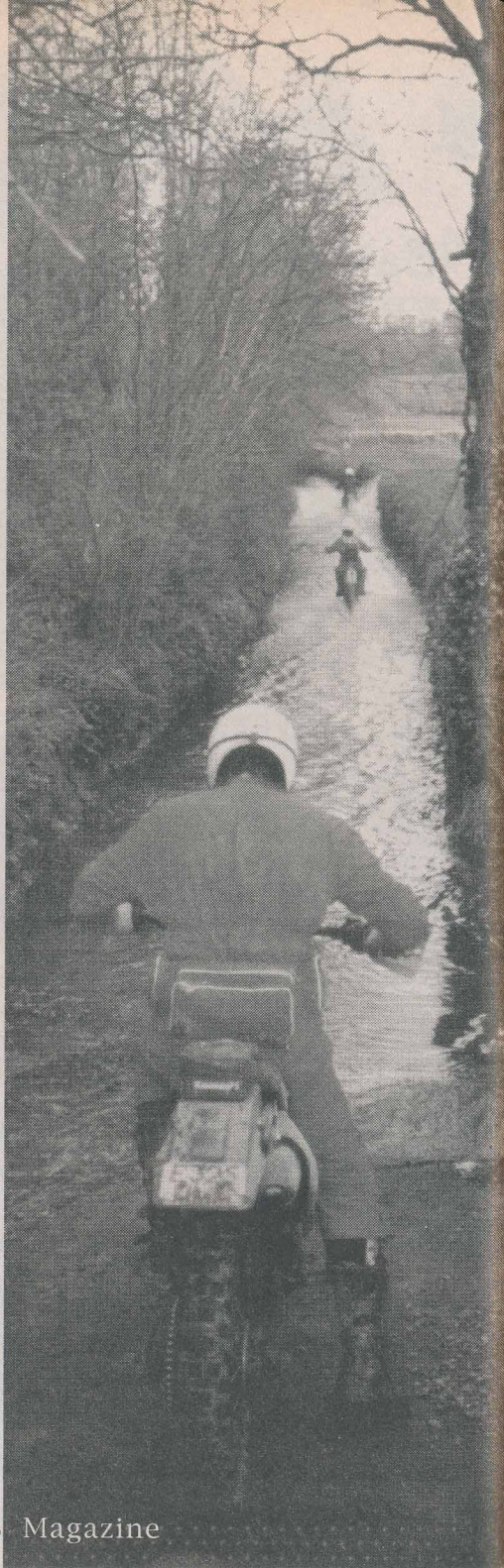
## TRIALS & ERRORS

Liz prepares to attack a flooded road in the Quantock Hills on her Kawasaki KDX

als bikes were poor lighting, (due to the 6 volt systems that were used at that time), and the small capacity fuel tank which meant that we had to carry a spare gallon on the back.

My next bike was a Kawasaki KDX200 enduro machine. I registered it, but had to make two modifications to make it road legal. Firstly, there was no speedometer, so I fitted an electronic unit purchased from a cycle shop. The second, and more tricky problem was the lack of a brake light. First I obtained a new dual filament bulb holder and fitted it in the existing lens, and connected it into the dynamo via a brake light switch, but there was not enough power to light this bulb as well, so all of the lights dimmed when the brake light was activated. This could be quite dangerous at night as you braked to make a tricky manoeuvre, and had to complete it in almost total darkness! There would also have been a problem when trying to get an MOT, so I had to re-think the problem. I solved it by connecting the brake light to a small motorcycle battery, and charging the battery from the dynamo via a rectifier.

At last I had a bike that was perfect for my needs. It was light, agile, powerful enough to get me out of most situations, the engine ran when completely submerged in water, and it didn't over-heat. I would have preferred a four stroke with all of these qualities as the KDX was a bit noisy, but I was now in the group that got to the end of the lane, and had to wait for some of the others to sort out their problems. Now why couldn't someone have manufactured a bike that I could have gone into a shop and bought off the shelf that had all of those features, and



KMX was prone to boiling over and didn't like deep water, But at the Kevedon Hatch trail park in Essex it proved ideal

was 100% road legal straight from the box? Hopefully some of the new generation of bikes really are trail bikes.

I went on several excursions, including a weekend in the Ridgeway area with the Berkshire TRF, and a weekend in the Quantocks, and generally had a really good time. So why did I give up? The first reason was that I started cycling, and having explored all of the green lanes in my area, found that there are many more tracks accessible to mountain bikes, than there are for motorbikes. My motorcycling turned towards trials, but looking back, I think it was that all of those ramblers who turned up at the public enquiries to portray us as the scum of the earth who finally wore me down. As I sit in my bedroom writing this article, there is a kid in the field behind me who has been illegally riding up and down all day on his motocross bike, annoying the whole street. Unfortunately, this is what most people see as trail riding, so we have a long uphill struggle. A lot of the green lanes around Britain are badly rutted with two parallel ruts about a foot or more deep and about four feet apart. They are obviously not caused by bikes, but it's amazing how many car drivers are so prejudiced against bikes that they actually believe this to be the case!

When I get my next trail bike I will resume riding the lanes that we fought so hard to keep, but I would also like to go somewhere where there are no disputes over rights of way, because most of the roads are still unsurfaced. The possibilities are endless, but my first two ambitions are a trip around Iceland, and a ride through the Arctic tundra up to the North Cape.

All I need now is a bike!



# TRAIL TALES...

RICK KEMP CROSSES OFFAS  
DYKE FOR A SPOT OF WINTER  
ENDUROING

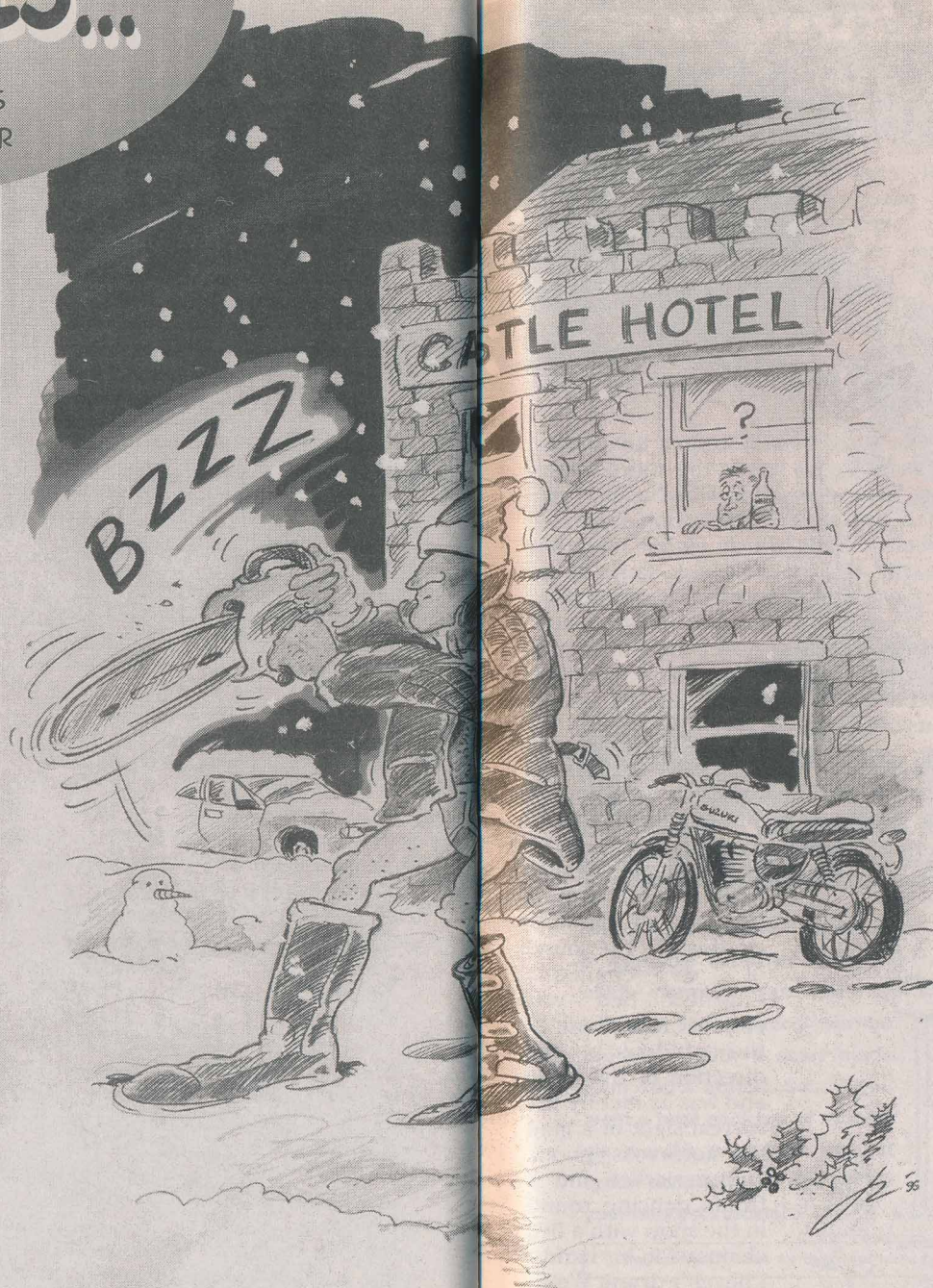
**S**ome time ago when I was still young enough to have some optimism about life in general and about my enduro riding capabilities in particular I had off-road fever and competed in as many events, including championship rounds, as possible.

I had attended Enduro School, the theoretical side anyway. Most of the practical, a half-day event organised by Mick 'Bonkey' Bowers (that ought to date it roughly), was spent trying to unfoul the plug of the entirely-unsuitable-for-a-novice 'works' Suzuki PE250 which I had recently purchased from a member of the Beamish clan.

The first event of that year and many previously was the Snowrun, just after Christmas. This event was based in Llandoverly in Wales. Team Tosser: Roger, Charlie and myself stayed at the Castle Hotel, if it is still under the same management, they may still remember the occasion.

The Snowrun lived up to its name, the stuff had been coming down since the early hours and it was still snowing at the start. I couldn't wait to get going, apart from that slightly nervous feeling which goes away as soon as you drop the clutch, it was bloody cold just standing around. The fact that I'd never ridden in snow before didn't dampen my enthusiasm, and by the time my start number came up there was a good 4-6 inches of it covering the ground.

Now, if you've never had the experience of riding on forestry fire breaks which have been deeply rutted, then frozen solid



and finally disguised by a thick covering of snow, let me tell you there's a lot of down-time involved, especially when your goggles are freezing on the outside and misting up on the inside.

I hit check one about 20 minutes late and feeling well shagged. If I kept on that pace, at least I would hour-out of the white hell by check three. No such luck as it turned out. Shortly after starting the second check and going too fast around a bend on a forestry road, I dropped straight off the side of the track.... a steep side. There's nothing like trying to avoid closely planted trees whilst hurtling down a slope at about 50mph for focusing the mind. After the trees stopped blurring I found myself at the bottom of what appeared to be a very large hole. The only way out was up and it was still snowing and, if anything, getting colder.

A helter skelter run down is one thing, but trying to ride back up through trees and over snow-covered roots on a peaky 250 with a tired clutch is something else. Plus there was no room to take a run at the climb as the ground at the bottom though open, was full of dead branches. The word 'dead' suddenly began looming large. Freezing to death in a hole in Halfway Forest wasn't quite what I'd had in mind, either for the day's activities or my eventual demise which would, of course, be on stage, Fender Stratocaster in hand being smothered by multitudinous muff.

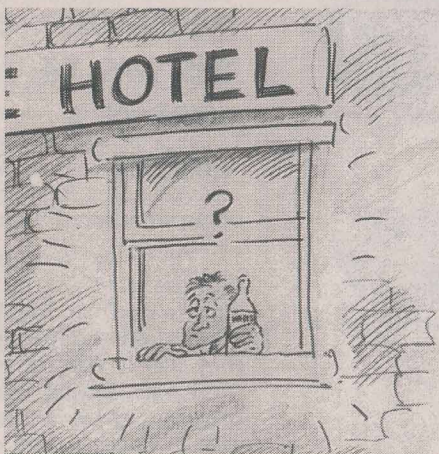
There was only one obvious place to get into the trees and up the slope. I managed to climb a route on foot back to the forestry road and waited and listened - nothing, where were they all? It was too cold to wait for long so there was nothing else for it but to ride that bike out, there was no way I would've been able to walk to safety and the 'don't leave the

course' golden rule had already been broken. Brain, throttle, back wheel, brain, throttle, back wheel, was my mantra to maintain grip for the seemingly endless time it took me to get out. I even made a pact with the Dark One that if he got me back to civilisation, I would do my best to be spectacularly wicked for the rest of my natural.

I had been on the forestry road heading back to check one (breaking another golden rule) for a couple of minutes, when I met a Marshal coming the other way. 'Where the 'ell 'ave ewe bin boyo?' (he was Welsh you see) 'We've bin lookin' for ewe for ages.' 'why?' I wondered, looking at my watch which told me that the event still had an hour to run. 'We abandoned the event at check two because of the weather, an' we've bin lookin' for you for hours so we can close the course.' I damn near kissed him, 'You mean all events aren't this tough then?'

By rights we should have been heading for the M4 and back to The Smoke. but rumour had it that most of the roads out of Llandovery were impassable so the Castle was unlucky enough to have us for another night. After a very welcomed hot bath, a couple of drinks and some supper I was starting to recover as was Roger, Charlie is never unduly phased by anything and wears a benign grin after a half of lager and so it's difficult to gauge his mood. 'Have you lads ever tried Welsh Whiskey?' enquired our host, obviously preferring a gargle with the punters to watching telly with the wife.

Free nips all

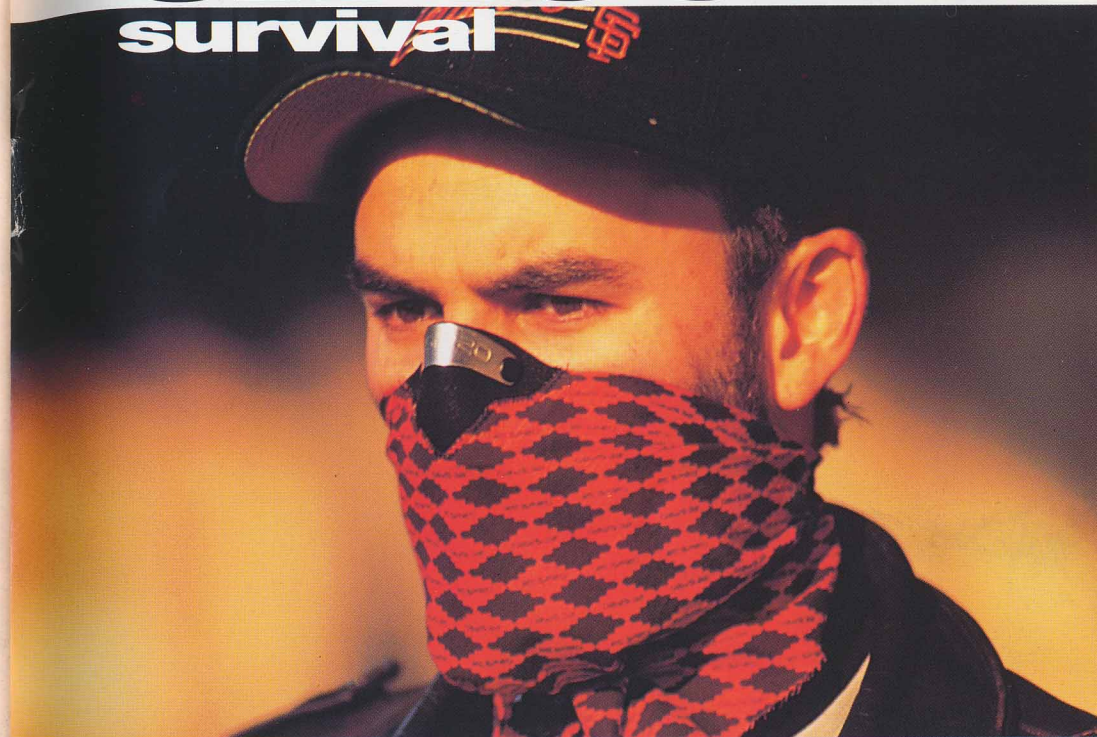


round loosened wallets and we soon had a bottle on the table to drink our coffee with. One led to another and after a small amount of glassware was broken, we eventually crawled upstairs to our three bedded room where it transpired that not only aspirant rock stars trash hotel rooms, ex-factory trials riders do as well. Charlie was intent on getting the wardrobe out of the window, and when that wouldn't fit, his eyes lit on the television. Now, as a pooper of many parties, I managed to dissuade the man but he was far from happy.

Our three beds were in a line, dormitory style. Roger was in the middle trying to get some sleep while Charlie and I continued our verbal altercation from our respective beds which ended with him throwing the brass bedside lamp at me which was still plugged in. It reached the full extent of its flex and snapped back, unfortunately for Roger he chose that exact moment to sit up. People are very difficult to move when they're unconscious aren't they?

Eventually we all passed out, but I awoke to the sound of a two-stroke motor firing up. It was still dark and I thought I was having a nightmare about the previous day's event until I listened a bit longer, this was no motorcycle this was the sound of a chainsaw. Charlie's bed was empty, I looked out of the window in the direction of the noise and was as met by the surreal sight of a man in motocross boots, enduro jacket and Y fronts dancing round in the snow with a live chainsaw in his hands. I haven't drunk Welsh whiskey since.

# urban survival



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