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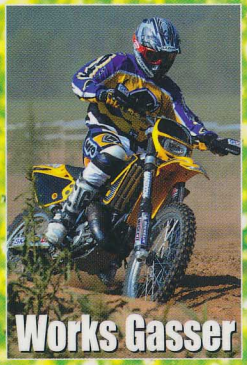
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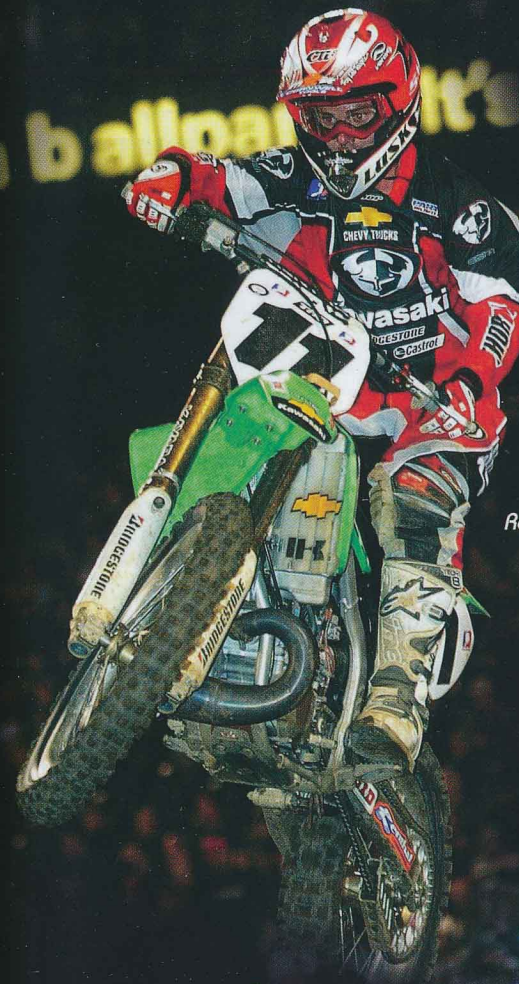


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# EDITORIAL

## Missing Words...

I don't know which is the more worrying. The fact that our printers accidentally managed to leave a page out of last month's issue (the last page of the World Enduro Championship report), or the fact that (up till now) no readers have rung up to complain about it. Either way it was a cock-up, and one we're not particularly proud of. What's even more galling was the fact that we didn't know anything about it till the magazine was printed. Obviously all the correct pages were sent to the printers in the first place, but in their infinite wisdom they chose to leave an editorial page out and replace it with a repeated advert instead. Doh! Anyway, we've had a little word with the printers and it shouldn't happen again. We hope! Sorry about that.

But while we haven't received any complaints about missing pages, we've copped a bit of flak this month from a few industry insiders. Apparently our editorial last month (where we reasoned that importers should have test bikes on hand throughout the season) sent a few shock waves through the industry.

But why?

It doesn't seem that unreasonable. If you bring a product into the UK and you make your living selling those products to UK consumers, it seems entirely appropriate that you make those products available to the relevant consumer magazines for proper scrutiny and evaluation. And obviously that's got to mean available at a time when the magazines want to test them. It's no good offering the excuse that 'all our new bikes arrive in September so you're welcome to test them all then.' The fact is that no magazine (with any semblance of credibility) is going to cram one issue full of seven or eight different models from the same manufacturer. That's what we call a brochure.

And there's another good reason why we believe it's imperative that test bikes are kept available throughout the season. Because for most customers it's impossible to get a test ride on a dirt bike from their local dealer. Okay I know that there are exceptions to that rule, but judging by the number of people who ring up our office to ask about the merits of one bike over another, clearly dirt bike test rides are in short supply.

Part of the problem (we're told) is that the selling season is getting ever shorter. With next year's bikes

arriving earlier and earlier each year, importers are always keen to clear the decks to make way for new models and ensure that old models aren't left hanging around for too long.

But what difference does it make?

It seems to us that if you're the importer (as opposed to a dealer) then a bike is worth pretty much the same in

July as it is the previous September. And even if it isn't, there can't be more than a couple hundred quid in it. In other words about the equivalent of a quarter page of advertising. So what price ten pages of editorial? TBM doesn't sell editorial space (though a lot of mags do - and dress it up by calling it advertorial), but if we did the cost would comfortably exceed the depreciation on the cost of a test bike by a factor of about 40. Besides if an importer who's turning over millions of pounds a year can't afford to keep a test bike on hand, then they're doing something wrong - surely?

So what do you guys think? Would you rather buy a bike blind (as it were), untested by any magazine, or do you think we're being unreasonable asking importers to support us like this? What sort of responsibility do importers have to their customers and the market as a whole? And have you ever bought a bike on the strength of a test report in TBM, because you couldn't get to ride the bike yourself?

We want to know. And we'll be reporting your responses in the Letters section. That's always assuming the bloody printers don't leave out the pages of course...



SI MELBER

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## NIFTY FIFTY

Believe it or not, this is the new Yamaha DT50, due to be launched in the UK later this year. The learner legal-50 fills the gap in Yamaha UK's range for an off-road styled moped, whilst continuing the tradition of lightweight two-stroke DTs.

Developed in partnership with Italian manufacturer Malaguti, the DT50

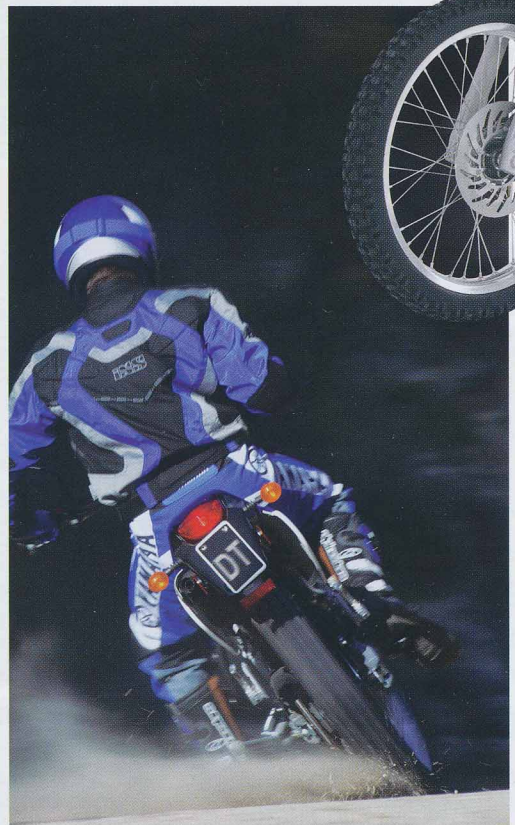


borrow heavily from the styling of the WR and YZ ranges. The liquid-cooled, Minarelli two-stroke motor is held in an all-new steel perimeter frame (styled to look like an aluminium beam frame), which allows the fitment of a slim, flat seat and a neat 7.5 litre plastic tank.

Sold as a trail bike, the new DT comes fully road kitted with indicators and a comprehensive set of instruments. In fact, it's the digital instrument display which really impresses. Alongside the obvious information of speed, trip and total mileage, the instruments can also show engine rpm, battery condition, engine temperature, time, average speed, lap times, and our favourite: acceleration from 0-40km/h. Lights are used to indicate when there are low oil and fuel levels.

Yamaha claim that the new DT 'offers a true big bike feel' and gives riders 'a real idea of what the big bike experience is all about'.

Whatever, it's got to be the hot ticket for off-road minded sixteen year olds everywhere. The only problem is that when they do finally step up to a bigger bike, they'll probably find that it is less well equipped than this one...



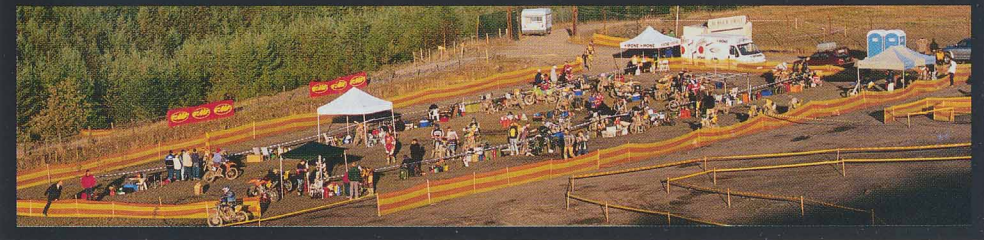
## TBM'S DOUBLE D'S

After the huge success of last year's TBM-sponsored Dawn to Dusk (D2D) 12 hour enduro, the Adventure Racing Club are now well underway with organising the 2003 event - set to take place during the 23/24 August bank holiday. With almost three months still to go, interest in the enduro is huge, with the number of entries received already exceeding last year's total. An up to date entry list should be available on the D2D website by the time you read this, and if you've paid your money and not sent back the form (signed, don't forget), get them sent off.

The organising team (which includes two TBM members) received a huge amount of feedback after last year's event, and have taken some of your suggestions on board - and are gearing up to make this year's

race even better. The course will be a flowing 18 mile loop over some excellent, though not too demanding Welsh terrain. And the format will be similar to last year: 12 hours racing with classes for Experts, Clubmen and Sportsmen - subdivided into Ironman (1 rider), 2 rider teams for Experts, 2 or 3 rider teams for clubman and sportsman.

The D2D is receiving some big name sponsorship from the likes of Talon, Ipone, FMF and of course TBM, with prizes awarded throughout the classes. Camping will be available on site, and there's likely to be the usual post-event 'entertainment'. For further info and a set of regs, click onto [www.dawntodusk.com](http://www.dawntodusk.com), or write to Adventure Racing Club, PO Box 11, Ystalyfera, SA9 1YA, enclosing three big SAEs. See you there...



## SVA UPDATE

Latest news on the impending Motorcycle Single Vehicle Approval (MSVA) is that enduro bikes are likely to be exempt. The scheme, which comes into effect on June 17, has caused concern within the motorcycle industry, with many existing models being dropped due to non-compliance, (see page 44 for our DT-R 'obituary') whilst enduro bikes were thought to be a grey area.

Up until now, many people had speculated on just how bikes like Suzuki's DR-ZE and Yamaha's WR-F range would pass the test due to their lack of road kit as standard. But it's their competition orientation which has, in effect, saved their status as registerable machines. Having conducted a 'Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment' (PRIA) the government decided that certain vehicles would be 'excluded from the scope of the scheme'. One such category is for 'vehicles intended for use in competition, on roads or in off-road conditions'. And both enduro and trials bikes fall under that definition. However, certain characteristics have been laid down for each type of bike. Trials bikes must have a minimum ground clearance of 280mm, a maximum seat height of 700mm, and a maximum fuel capacity of four litres. Enduro

bikes will have to have a minimum seat height of 900mm and a minimum ground clearance of 310mm.

Clearly this is excellent news for the dirt bike industry as a whole. The draft copy of the SVA Inspection Manual simply states that 'vehicles intended for use in competitions' are exempt, so it may be that their realised registration is a fundamental part of certain motorcycle sports (in much the same way that rally cars require the ability to be driven on public roads). Or could it simply be the path of least resistance? Either way, we're not complaining...





## SNIPPETS



### ON TRIAL

Doing the rounds at this year's Scottish Six Days Trial was a neat little Scorpia four-stroke trials bike. With trials supposedly set to go all-four-stroke from 2005, Scorpia were keen to demonstrate their latest model which is powered by a Yamaha TTR125 engine. In fact there were two 125s and a 140cc version - all of which finished the event.

### WEC TO ABC

At a press conference before the French round of the World Enduro Championships (WEC), the FIM awarded the TV and merchandising rights for the WEC to ABC Communications. Who cares? Well, the French ABC company already promote the highly regarded European and French Supermoto Championships, and intend to bring similar success to the sport of enduro.

And part of that success involves staging a WEC round

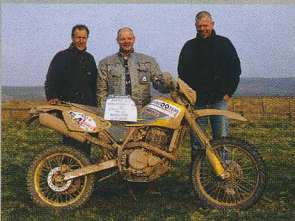
in each of Europe's five biggest enduro nations (France, Italy, Spain, UK and Scandinavia), as well as other countries in Europe and beyond. ABC's Alain Blanchard explained how they intend modernising the championship and attract some much needed television coverage.

The biggest alterations are expected to be to the class structure. The five capacity classes, and the overall 'Scratch', are likely to be replaced with a simple 125cc, 250cc and Open class structure. 250 thumpers would run in the 125cc class, with the 450 four-strokes up against the 250cc stroke in the 250cc class. The enduro calendar is also likely to see some changes with a longer series and

more rounds outside of Europe. The contract with ABC extends from 2004 to 2006, so the sport's profile looks set to continue upwards...

### ALL FOR CHARITIDEE MATE!

Three Kent coppers combined raising money for a good cause with masochistic pleasure last Easter weekend when they attempted to ride off-road from Kent to Mid Wales on CCM 644s. Les Smith, Mark Fairhurst, and Dave Greenwood clocked up 310 miles by the time they got



to Llandovery, of which at least 150 miles were on green lanes. They were aided and abetted by members of the TRF who led them a merry dance across England and then met up with fellow rozzer Huw Watkins when they crossed the Severn Bridge. Huw had prepared a road book which enabled the intrepid Old Bill to navigate themselves all the way to Llandovery using a maximum number of trails. They then spent the whole of Easter Sunday competing in the Cambrian Rally and all three finished, thus successfully completing the challenge they'd set themselves. They raised over £1000 for Cancer Research in the process and were worthy recipients of the 'Spirit of the Cambrian Rally' award. They'd like to thank everyone who helped guide them in their quest and especially Mark Fox of CCM for the loan of the bikes, which never missed a beat.

### TBM NEEDS YOU!

Fancy yourself as a full-time dirt bike journalist? Think you can impress us with your writing skills, your enthusiasm and your commitment to hard work? If so then we want to hear from you. We're looking to fill a junior position working for both our titles (TBM and Supermoto Magazine). The ideal candidate will be young, enthusiastic, trustworthy and mature beyond their years. They'll have a clean driving licence, boundless energy, the ability to spell and the necessary commitment to work for a small salary (initially) while they gain valuable experience. We will also consider applications from experienced journalists for other positions (including a senior position on Supermoto Magazine). If you fit the bill, drop us a line with your CV, a brief letter explaining why we should choose you (containing five good feature ideas for either magazine), along with a recent picture of yourself. Send your applications to TBM Job Offer, PO Box 9845, London, W13 9WP.

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David knight



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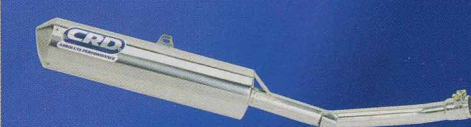


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# The Gov'nor

Powervalve Governed YZ250



**Right: Fierce YZ motor makes this a common occurrence on a grippy special test. But adjusting the power delivery helps keep it under control...**

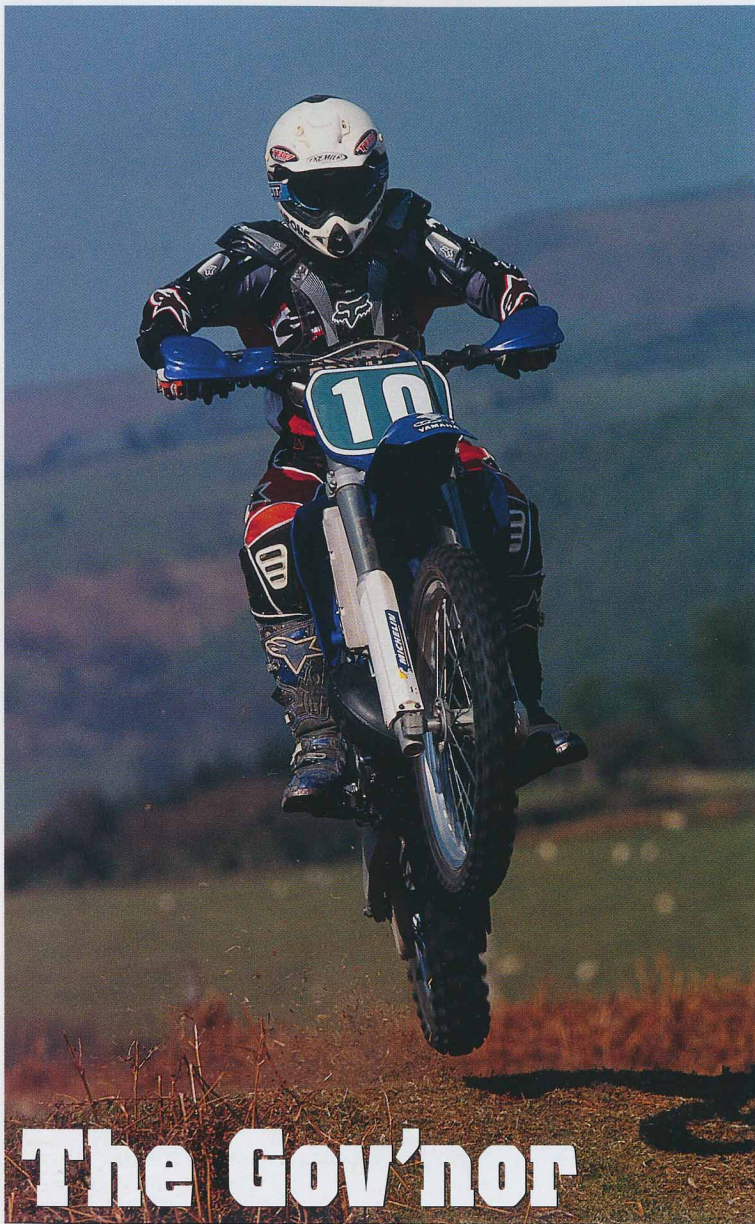
**T**he demise of Yamaha's much loved two-stroke WR250 enduro bike has received much attention within the pages of TBM, not least because we own one of these excellent machines ourselves and are at a loss to understand why Yamaha stopped making 'em back in 1999. Of course they still build (for the time being at least) the similar looking YZ250 two-stroke, but it is powered by a far more ferocious engine - the next generation on from the delectable WR. Fine for motocross, but for a sport like enduro where you need to be able to finesse the power delivery at times, it takes a skilled or incredibly fit pilot to be able to ride a YZ at pace - all day long.

Which is presumably why Italian engineer Tulio Provin set to work designing and building a powervalve governor which would help tame the YZ's brutish motor. Provin is no stranger to enduro competition - he works for the factory Husky enduro team (his governor also works on Huskys by the way), so he understands what's required of an enduro motor. The governor itself is a relatively simple piece of kit. A cylindrical billet alloy body contains a small, adjustable hydraulic damper which attaches to the power-valve actuating rod (through the right hand side



crankcase cover) and limits the speed at which the powervalve opens. Crucially, the damping only works in one direction, allowing the power-valve to snap shut at the normal rate when the throttle is closed. And there's a five-position adjuster which sticks out of the top of the governor and can be altered on the fly.

We got a chance to briefly try out a kitted YZ250 during our recent 250 shootout in Wales



## The Gov'nor

and were mightily impressed with the effect it had on the fearsomely fast YZ. First-off we should establish that this wasn't a test of an enduro-prepped YZ - merely the briefest of quick-spins on a governor-equipped MX-er to see what

effect the governor had on the bike's power delivery.

Initially we rode the YZ250 with the powervalve set to position five (effectively stock). And discovered that even on a relatively smooth and short grassy test, the YZ was a handful at times, particularly on the way out of corners. The trouble is that as standard the powervalve opens up so suddenly (bringing the power in with a bang) that the bike snaps instantly into oversteer on the way out of turns. Which is fine when there's plenty of grip, but on a slippery test it just wastes so much time, because you end up constantly feathering the throttle in order to re-establish grip and straighten her up again. I also found that the bike would want to lift the front end unless you kept your weight forward at all times - which is incredibly tiring after a while.

Conversely, with the powervalve adjuster set to position one the bike becomes much more mellow - all the power's still there but it arrives considerably slower and in a much

more controllable way. Actually I found that I liked position two and three best of all - two felt similar to my old WR250, whereas three gave the bike a bit more rip in the dry conditions we were riding in. Although we didn't bother timing our-

selves around the short test, I'm convinced I was much quicker with the governor set to position two - certainly it let you get on the power much earlier in the turns, and didn't punish you if the traction wasn't always perfect.

Even with the governor set on position one there's still enough zip to hoist the front end easily, and interestingly I found that it allowed you to carry more speed into the turns. Odd though this sounds, I can only put it down to being able to keep the power on much longer (braking later) and then getting straight back on the power once the bike was beginning to turn. Whatever the reasoning, it's clear that as so often is the case off-road: less is more.

That's the good news - here's the slightly less palatable stuff. A Provin Governor is going to set you back £350. Now before you recoil in horror at the price, consider these facts. That's about the same price as an aftermarket exhaust - arguably less important than a governor in the great scheme of things. Also that's an exchange price, in other words you hand over your bike's right-side outer case, and in return you get a replacement case with the powervalve already attached. Then all you've got to do is fix it in place (it takes just a few minutes - it's pretty simple) and away you go. Finally consider the cost savings that can be made. A secondhand, three year old (2000 model) YZ250 can be picked up for about £2000-2200 (or you may already own one). Fit a governor, and a few selected enduro items (18 inch rear wheel, head and tail lights etc), and you've got yourself a relatively modern, and competitive enduro bike for what, £2650?

The governor is designed to be fitted to any YZ250 from 1999 onwards (before that the YZ and WR shared similar engines), so if you're a fan of the blue bikes you can still keep riding competitive two-strokes for as long as they continue to make them.

And interestingly we've seen these items attached to bikes being ridden by no lesser riders than David Knight and David Fretigne (French enduro champion). If it proved nothing else, our brief ride on a governor-equipped YZ showed that it's possible to sacrifice power without sacrificing speed. We thought it was a great bit of kit, but reserve our final judgement on it until trying one out in much more demanding conditions.

Steve Plain (at Llandrindod Wells in mid Wales) is the importer for the Provin Governor and you can reach him on 01597 825817. Tell him we sent you...



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# Smooth Operator

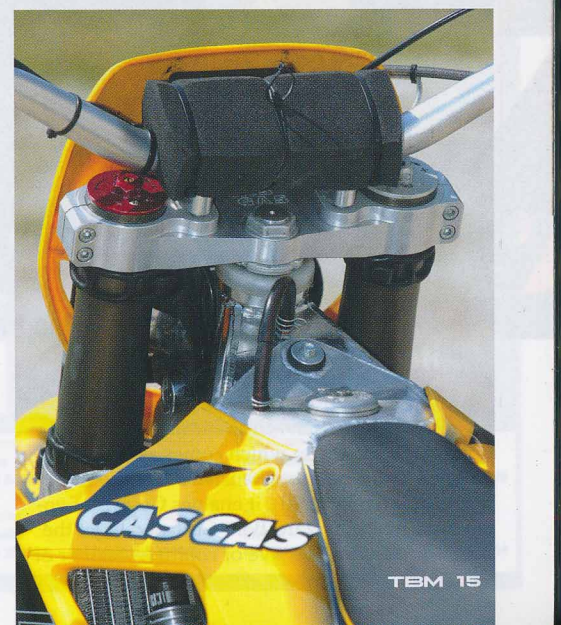
**With Finn Petri Pohjamo at the controls, Gas Gas' EC125 has headed this year's eighth-litre class in the World Enduro Championship since round one. TBM took the pre-production '04 spec machine for an exclusive ride. This is what we found out...**

**Right: Beautiful hidden fuel tank will feature on the 2004 production bike, though is likely to be plastic rather than ally...**

**P**etri Pohjamo, or Pete as his team know him, is a no-nonsense kind of a guy. Stocky, lean and seemingly never flustered, the hard-charging former ice-racer from Finland is a man of few emotions and even fewer words. He's also the current leader of the 125cc World Enduro Championship class. His bike is a lot like he is. Lean, lithe, functional and not the sort to attract unnecessary attention. Instead the pair go about their business in a methodical, but deadly serious kind of a way. Their aim..? To win a much coveted world title of course.

### Factory Finish

Casting an inquisitive eye over the bike it soon becomes apparent that like all factory Gas Gas enduro bikes, there aren't that many obvious differences between the factory racer and the production bike. But there is one thing which stands out - the apparent lack of a fuel tank. Manufactured from aluminium, tucked almost out of sight and fitted with a trials-style filler cap which is inserted and then locked into position with a short latch rather than being screwed on, the 2004-shape tank allows weight to be transferred to the very front of the bike when cornering. This is just one of a number of parts which will come as standard next year - though the tank will doubtless be made of plastic, rather than aluminium. The seat is also different to the '03 unit, mainly so it fits the new shape tank. Together they offer





Pohjamo's bike is set up very much for his own unique style...

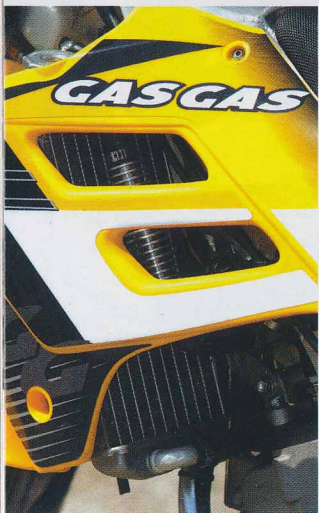
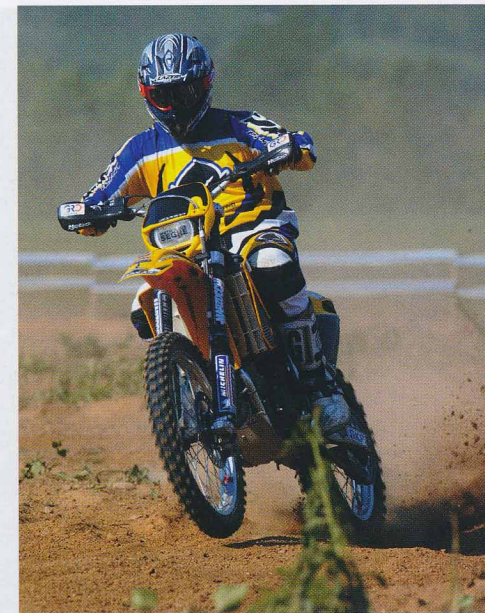


need them, rather than having to wait for special parts to be built. Though he does concede that although the bike uses a standard barrel and head, the porting is 'slightly different.'

Boni reveals two further differences. Although the silencer is completely standard - it's positioning (along the pipe - relative to the expansion chamber) is not. In other words it's positioned slightly closer (down the length of the pipe) towards the expansion chamber - something which helps boost the motor's bottom-end power apparently. By contrast, the fitting of a lighter, MX style ignition system and CDI unit means the motor is able to rev a little more freely than standard.

Another interesting fact Boni reveals is that all Gas Gas enduro and motocross machines (standard and factory) feature exactly the same gearbox. Apparently these days few enduro riders want the lower first, higher sixth gear that used to be popular a few years ago. The bike's final gearing is typically 13/50.

Having enquired about the suspension, I'm told that the Gas Gas factory only utilise three



altitude. However it's unlikely that this mod will find its way on to production bikes next year.

The third noticeable change is the fitting of an additional cylinder head brace. Holding the engine firm in order to reduce the intrusion of any unwanted vibrations, a cast aluminium connecting bracket is mounted on top of the cylinder via extended cylinder head bolts, then fastened forward securely to the frame. And behind each of the bike's radiators is a 15cm long, finned aluminium hose, which replaces the normal rubber

a very flat platform on which to perform.

The second visible change, is that Petri's bike is fitted with a 38mm Mikuni carburettor and not the 38mm Keihin which comes as standard. Offering a more comprehensive selection of needle jets (so I'm told), it enables Gasser's two-stroke technical wizard Boni Geebelen to jet the bike perfectly irrespective of country, weather or

radiator hose and is claimed to cool down the motor by as much as five degrees.

Other engine 'changes' include a new design of power-valve and a different Messico expansion chamber. When I enquire as to why the bike runs so many standard parts, Boni tells me that it affords them the luxury of being able to grab items from the production line as and when they

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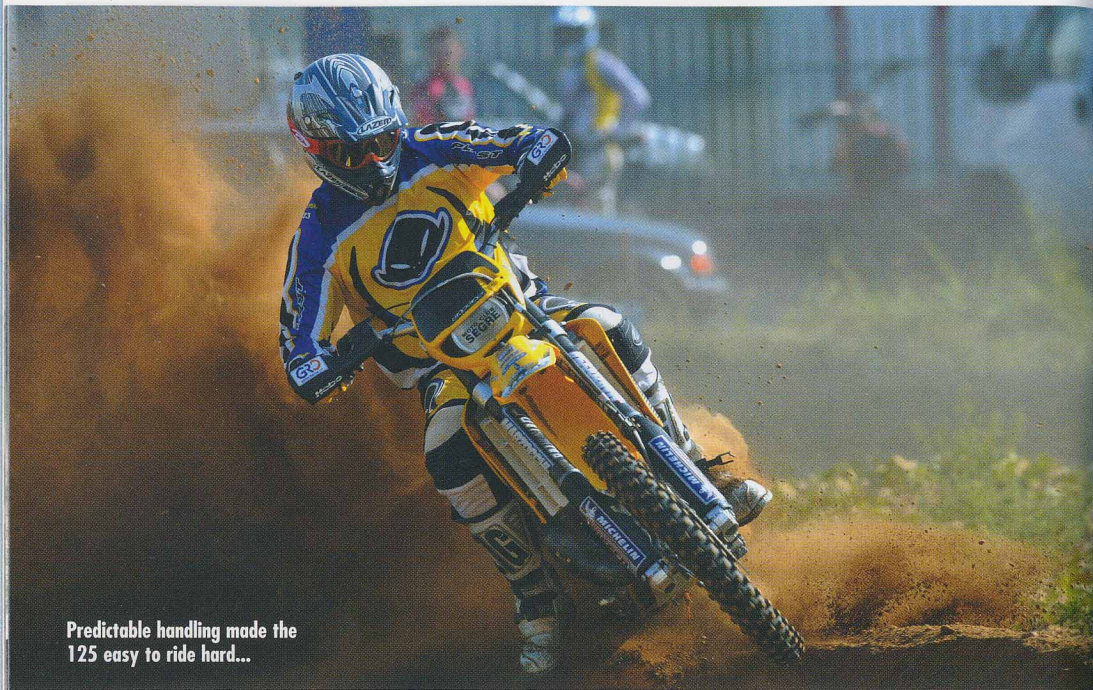
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Predictable handling made the 125 easy to ride hard...

different shock absorbers. One for the 125cc motocross bike and 250cc enduro bike, and one for the 300cc enduro bike and 450cc four-stroke. When it comes to the suspension fitted to Petri's bike, the forks are identical to the 45mm Marzocchi units which come fitted as standard, only with firmer springs. The rear shock however is a new Ohlins unit for 2004 featuring both high and low speed compression damping adjustment, again firmer than standard.

### Smooth as Silk

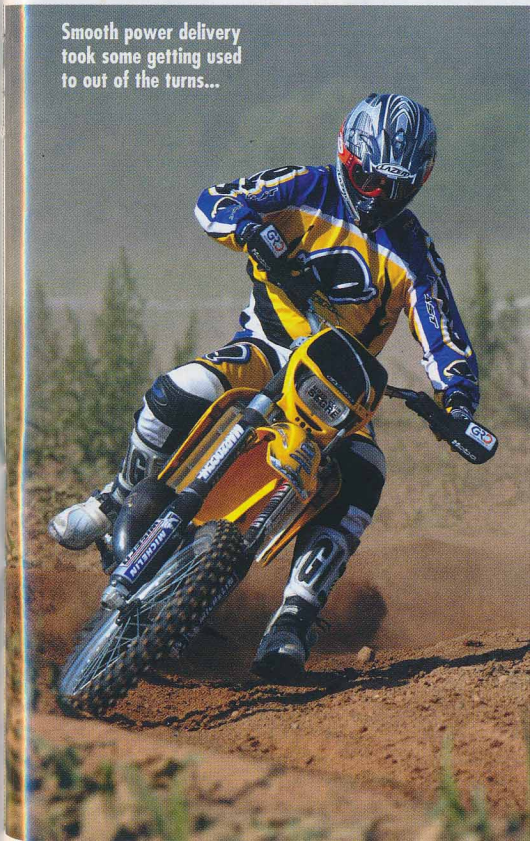
I was warned beforehand that because of Petri's background in ice racing, he likes smooth power - having learned to keep up good speed and 'smooth lines' around corners. And they weren't kidding. This thing feels so docile, you could quite easily ride it on ice. And yet for all its docility it's still deceptively fast (remember it is leading the 125 championship). With the test venue offering hard-packed slippery flat corners, hard rutted corners, hard flat and rutted corners and the occasional corner with a dusty berm on the outside, the slow revving power was both easy and difficult to use at the same time. I'll explain...



Producing a noticeably smoother type of power than the majority of 125s I've ridden, on one of the long sweeping left handers on the test track, the motor's stubborn refusal to build revs quickly meant that every ounce of power it produced was transferred to the rear wheel. With little in the way of mid-range hit, the bike felt almost incapable of breaking traction - and thus extremely fast. And while the track I was testing on was baked bone dry, I got the impression that



Smooth power delivery took some getting used to out of the turns...



this bike would be a very nifty tool in the wet thanks to its predictable power delivery.

However, when trying to exit the rutted corners, I found the bike a little harder to get on with. Feeling like the bike was fitted with a sizable fly-wheel weight, it seemed that no amount of clutch abuse would build the required revs to sling-shot me out of what I considered to be the second gear corners on the track. Trying differing lines and increased approach speeds I still failed to exit the rutted corners comfortably. Finally, deciding that other than requesting that a larger rear sprocket be fitted I'd have to

use first gear. Bingo. Now able to roll the power on without needing to use the clutch, the smooth tractable power was impressive but not overly punchy. Just as a good enduro bike should be.

What I'd really confirmed was that the bike's power is definitely tailor-made to suit Mister Pohjamo - more-so than most of his competitor's machines. In order to get the best from the motor you need to use it like Petri does, and at the speeds he does. On the few occasions that I was able to get close to doing that, the bike showed exactly why it is currently the leading contender in the 125cc title chase.

### Small is Beautiful

Although the test area offered nothing in the way of hills or jumps - it was a typical flat Italian motocross special test - the sizeable braking and acceleration bumps gave a good indication of the handling in quite rough conditions. With a flat yet aggressive handlebar set-up (a set-up almost identical to the team's 300cc machine that I rode last year), I was surprised at how spacious the little bike felt considering the difference in size between the two of us. Offering ease of movement from front to back, it felt typically Gasserish in its ease of manoeuvrability despite the steering head feeling strangely tight.

On the few high-speed areas of the course the bike felt incredibly stable, again slightly surprising considering the difference in our weights. But what was particularly impressive was the positive response from the front wheel. Put simply,



wherever I placed it, it would stay. Holding its line in a way that enabled me to quickly become very confident with the handling. The fact that it never once did anything I wasn't expecting it to, made riding it hard and fast, very simple. Just like a good enduro bike should be in fact.

### Conclusion

Despite its super-smooth power delivery and impeccable manners, Petri's bike is not the simplest of rides, nor typical of most 125s, inasmuch as there is very little you can do to break traction when you need to. Instead there is a linear progression from bottom to top which makes it feel a bit like a rocketship trailbike. With a suspension and chassis combination that is typical Gas Gas - predictable, reassuring and well mannered - it's not hard to get the little Gasser flowing along quite nicely, as long as you remember to carry plenty of corner speed (even more than you would on a normal 125) and ride it on the throttle rather than the clutch. Not that this was in any way a bad thing. Excellent at maintaining grip around flat corners, it's only when tackling rutted or bermed corners that you have to ride slightly differently - and be less aggressive with the clutch and throttle. As a pointer towards the direction of next year's bikes, I'd say that there's much to look forward to in the eighth-litre class. And with only two rounds remaining, Gas Gas are keeping their fingers crossed that this machine can bring them another world championship. Which just goes to show that in enduro, power isn't everything...

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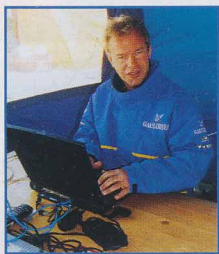
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## DIRTY

BATHED IN BONHOMIE AND SURROUNDED BY FRIENDS I HOPE YOU LL FORGIVE ME THE QUIET MOMENT OF SATISFACTION I ENJOYED...

**B**ack in March, The Ed and young James came over to Normandie to test the new Yamaha WR450 and Gas Gas 450 and in the process inadvertently sparked off a wave of nostalgia chez moi. Out of the blue I experienced vivid flashbacks to a time eight years previously when the then unknown-to-me Melber and a certain Crasher Cornish

## CHRIS EVANS REFLECTS ON THE RECENT BOOM IN OFF-ROADING...

rocked up for one of my very first Normandie trail rides armed with lots of front, and if memory serves me correctly, a CRM250 and a Jap import KDX. At the time Si had just launched his pocket-sized, black and white TBM, while I had just launched a last ditch attempt at avoiding having to work for a living.

We were both reasonably young and reasonably optimistic, but also both very uncertain of what the future would hold. Financially supported by his wife and operating out of his loft, Si was trying to sell his 'unusual format' and not very beautiful-to-look-at magazine to a motorcycling public who, unlike the rest of Europe, had completely ignored the trail bike phenomena. Me, I was simply an unknown quantity trying to persuade a micro-niche market of notoriously tight-fisted TRFers to occasionally swap their cheap local

trails in favour of my modestly priced (it said in the brochure) but relatively expensive French 'dirty weekends' with only an 'unauthorised' £6000 overdraft for company.

Fast forward to 2003 and there I am sitting down to dinner in the company of a slightly older looking Melber, together with young James (his sidekick), Dominique my faithful sweeper and a handful of regular punters. Bathed in bonhomie and surrounded by friends I hope you'll forgive me the quiet moment of satisfaction I enjoyed at the realisation that we'd both more or less succeeded in realising our dreams.

The feeling of achievement I felt was no doubt enhanced by the knowledge that it had been a long hard slog. Things that come easy are never very rewarding, but to be honest, if I'd known how much work and sleepless nights I would have to endure in the intervening eight years I'm not sure I would have had the courage to take the first steps. Proud I might have been, deluded I'm not, and if His Melbership and my good self have both managed to pull off unlikely feats of passion-driven entrepreneurship, I'm only too aware that our modest parallel successes are not just down to our own endeavours, but also an explosion in the popularity of off-road riding.

Bizarrely ever since that weekend of self indulgent self-satisfaction a proverb of unknown origins that goes something along the lines of, 'beware of wanting something so much, it actually happens' has been running through my head.

I think what kicked it off was

someone telling me that he'd been out riding 'Up North' somewhere and pulled in to a service station to be confronted with the sight of nearly a hundred off-road riders filling up man and machine. Instead of rubbing my hands with glee at the prospect of all those potential punters I instantly thought, 'Jesus how long are the powers that be going to put up with those sort of numbers on the trails?'

This was shortly followed by someone else e-mailing me about a letter that had appeared in TMX written by a Frenchman who had been justifiably horrified to see a group of British riders ripping up heavily protected and extremely fragile dune systems near Cherbourg in Northern France. My depression plunged even further when the man who sorts out my cross channel ferry tickets rang to apologise for not getting back to me sooner - he'd been busy trying to sort out the repatriation of the body of a UK rider who'd died while out in the Spanish Pyrenees. Since then my black mood has been easily maintained by a steady drip-drip of tales of lane closures and accidents.

Oh yes we've come a very long way. The explosion in trail riding that has allowed myself and Si to realise our dreams is ironically beginning to threaten the very sport for which our passion pushed us down our respective roads in the first place. On a global scale it has created the demand for fast, reliable machines that are great fun to ride and which have attracted ever-increasing numbers of people into the fold. But the down side is that unless we ride responsibly we're in danger of losing our right to ride those machines through the open countryside.

Of course just because I happen to have started trail riding 25 years ago gives me no more right to ride than somebody who started just last week. Neither would I want to turn back the clock and ride around on an ill-handling snail that breaks down every five minutes. What I can legitimately do however is implore each and every one of you, whether at home or abroad, to ride legally, responsibly, respectfully-and safely, and to resist all temptation to fit noisy, trail-closing exhaust pipes to your already too powerful machines.

If you're a newcomer reading this - welcome to our sport. Please respect it...



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# COMPLETELY IRRITATED



**I** knew I was in deep... well, deep in the squillion gallon pool of slurry on the Eppynt Military Range that lay mischievously within the first mile of the opening special test of the Cambrian Rally - that things weren't going to work out for me. Regular readers of this column - if such there be - will have already been irritated by my

## MARK WILLIAMS TELLS OF HIS CAMBRIAN SHAME. LET THE EXCUSES BEGIN...

cack-handed efforts at re-building a 1989 XT350 in readiness for my first competitive off-road outing since 1981. And it's only at the cruel insistence of Editor Melber that I now report the upshot.

Just two weeks before the event the bike was finally up together but proved incredibly hard to kick over and impossible to fire up. Oh dear. Utterly baffled, I shrunk with horror at the prospect of missing the event after all the money, angst, midnight oil and jogging that I'd invested in the plot. Or the equally daunting prospect of a top-end re-build that I had neither the time nor, frankly, the skill to execute. Suffice it to say that without the reassuring drop-everything-else-I'm-doing help of A44 Motorcycles' Martin Leach, I wouldn't have diagnosed an overtightened, and thus damaged cam-chain which he managed to replace for a not unreasonable sum. A sum which included a second re-shimming.

So just seven days beforehand, I took the bike out for its first ride dur-

ing which a number of problems materialised. Thankfully none of which could deter me from turning up for a chilly 10:30am start at the German Village looking, as Cambrian founder Bob Perring later remarked, 'really worried' And of course he was correct. Quite apart from my 22 year sporting hiatus, most of those years having been spent devoid of any off-roading experience whatsoever, I was one of the very few over-50s competing, and I damn sure felt my age with all those young whippersnappers joshing around the paddock.

I also felt like a bit of a twerp for so assiduously adhering to regulations which insisted on road-legal tyres, low decibel mufflers and, for that matter, pillion footrests. Because clearly these stipulations weren't being enforced. Okay, I'm being peevisish because I'd shod my bike with dual purpose 'cats paw' trail tyres which frankly would've been better suited to a cat. It was some small comfort then that the forecast downpour never happened. As it was, directional stability on the lengthy gravel fireroads was dreadful, and I had to slow to a crawl on the tighter corners as the front-end threatened to wash-out with coquettish glee.

And yet, and yet... like swimming or riding a bicycle, returning to dirt bike racing - albeit in one of its gentlest forms - after a so long felt great, even familiar, beyond the first mile or two. Reading forward terrain and adjusting your speed, stance and general control of the bike soon became second nature again in a way that the constant stop-start-stop of trailriding cannot. Certainly I lacked the boundless stamina and fearlessness I once had,

# MARK WILLIAMS

but establishing a realistic pace and riding within the limits of myself and my machine came easily. And miraculously enough, the XT's engine with its slightly lowered gearing proved stronger and more flexible than I'd dared hope. What's more having connected the decompressor cable to a handlebar-mounted lever instead of the automatic gizmo actuated by the kickstart, I could now properly 'feel' the piston over TDC and open for business first kick every time, hot or cold. Marvellous.

However my litany of excuses isn't over. For the hard, often bumpy going exposed the weakness of the rear shock I hadn't had sufficient time to shake down. 'Shake' being the operative word for the spring rate was just too stiff for the weight of man and machine, and even with the pre-load wound off to near its minima, the back end thrashed around and lost too much ground contact too much of the time. The progressively wound Hagon front springs helped the front forks behave more respectfully, but the mis-match made the XT impossible to ride as fast as I wanted over bumpy bits. Er... as evidenced by my less than impressive times in the special tests. A 20 percent softer spring has now arrived from the understanding Messrs Hagon and made a significant difference. And replacing the stock 10W fork oil with 15W has improved damping upfront even further.

But then there was *that bog*. Seeing my immediate predecessor already stalled, I decided to ride in fast and trust momentum to carry me through to the far shore. But that wasn't accounting for the liquidity of the content which simply threw up a massive bow-wave as I shot into it. A bow wave that completely coated my goggles, and thus blinded, I elected to try and ride onwards rather than stop and get stuck. Wrong move. Beneath the gloop was of course a rut and of course my front wheel fell foul of it. And I in turn, fell off sideways and the bike fell over on me. A combination of suction and the XT's not inconsiderable weight made it impossible for me

to extricate my right leg from under it and were it not for a passing Samaritan (who'd probably tired of laughing) I'd still be there now.

Whilst pushing the bike out I breathed a small prayer for the lengths of bicycle inner tube and silicone sealer I'd used the previous night to waterproof the electrics, but in my sodden daze and having hastily drained the carb, checked the air-box and replaced a whiskered plug I put my tools back in their fender-mounted bag but *forgot to zip it up*. So when I finally bounced off down the track, my tools - including a 60-quid Leatherman multi-tool - happily bounced out of the bag never to be seen again.

This I only discovered when I went to adjust the virtually brand new chain at the third time

## 'I KNEW I WAS IN DEEP... WELL, DEEP IN THE SQUILLION GALLON POOL OF SLURRY ON THE EPPYNT MILITARY RANGE THAT LAY WITHIN THE FIRST MILE'

check, and my blood ran cold at the prospect of running the rest of the event without an sort of toolkit. Which cautioned me against going barmy and risking a compression puncture

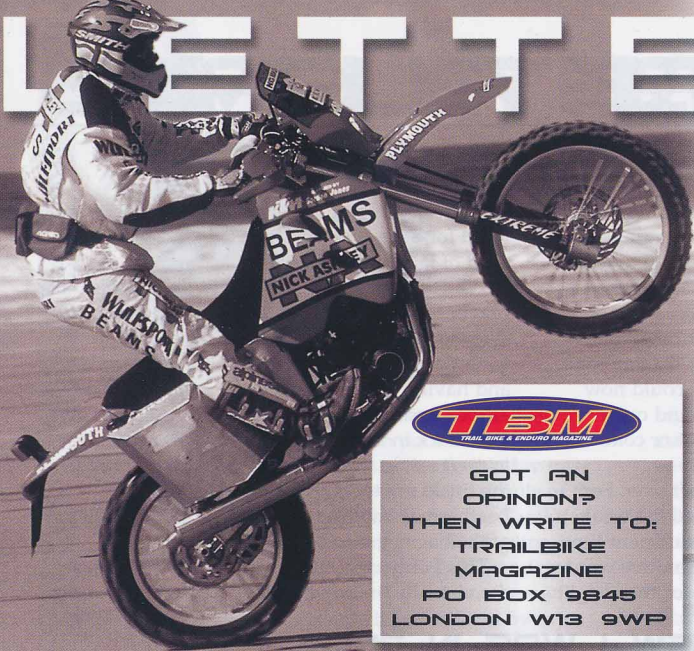
or breakdown. Or at least gave me an excuse for being overtaken a lot.


As it happened, although fatigue inevitably crept in, my second and third laps felt more assured as the obstacles and opportunities became familiar, and I found myself overtaking quite a few even slower riders. For whatever the organisers might claim to the contrary, once you're out there and the adrenaline starts to flow, the *Rally* quickly becomes a *Race*. But I also lost effective use of my rear brake by the third lap, and slurry that'd found its way into the clutch cable meant that clutch actuation became a monumental effort. Problems not quite in Mr Blezard's league perhaps, but that doesn't mean I'm not going to whine about them.

However at least I finished, and though 111th isn't really anything to crow about, and brutally ensures that I'll never be elevated to the lofty heights of TBM Team membership, I was quietly pleased with my so-called performance in this thinly disguised enduro.

And, somewhat more disturbingly, rather keen to have a crack at another one...

# LETTERS



  
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## It's Good to Torque

Dear TBM

Love your mag etc etc! But I find it very strange how people's views differ so much on how a bike rides. I know it takes all sorts, but sometimes your view of a bike can be so different from my own. Although I've been riding for ten years I am unfortunately

still very 'Sportsman'. I mention my riding standard because in a recent test you gave the impression that the KTM 300 and Gas Gas 300 were ferocious bikes, to be treated with great respect, and not really suited to the lower standard of rider. I have ridden both of these bikes and provided I stay at the lower end of the rev range (which was not hard), I found both bikes very easy to ride. Maybe the power is so great and the spread so wide that a novice like me can just bumble along on the torque of the engine without getting into trouble?

John Coyne  
 Ewell, Surrey

Well John, as you say it takes all sorts. Here at TBM, one of the most important things we consider before arranging any test (particularly group tests and shootouts - like the 300s test), is just what sort of people these bikes are aimed at? And even more importantly (but slightly different), who's going to be buying them? We like to 'set the scene' if you like, to position the bikes in the marketplace so as to give readers the broadest possible background before they read about how the bikes perform.

You're quite right to say that the 300s can be ridden by a sportsman rider, and many of them choose to do so. However, while there's no doubt that 300s provide plenty of 'chug' - they can also be an intimidating ride for those who are less experienced. We weren't trying to put people like yourself off 300s, just open your mind up to the possibilities of other (perhaps more suitable) machines. Get it wrong on a 300 and it's an unforgiving animal - tweak the throttle at the wrong time, or accidentally gas it hard whilst going uphill, or even attempt to follow your mates at a speed at which you feel uncomfortable, and a 300 can quickly bite back.

For certain you can waft along on a whiff of throttle without breaking into a sweat, but I'm bound to say that your riding won't improve any. Whereas on a lighter, smaller, less powerful bike, you should feel much more at ease, and you can begin to explore the limits of the bike. It won't have as much torque, but in most other respects you should find it easier to ride. However if it's a 300 that you want, then don't let me put you off, they are great machines with oodles of grunt and plenty of ability on tap.

As for the picture of Cyril Despres' bike you saw in the magazine - well we're hoping to get a quick spin on the bike for next

month's issue. At the moment though we don't have any info on the modifications that have been carried out, but bearing in mind that Cyril is one of the world's best extreme enduro riders, we suspect that his bike has had plenty of attention lavished on it in order to make that particular mod work. We'll keep you posted on that score, but in the meantime, best of luck...

## Lincoln In Fields

Dear TBM

Well it's not often I write in to a mag as most publications are owned by EMAP, and I believe that anything EMAP produces has a set template which you can't influence. They tell the readership what they think they should believe. Well you're not EMAP and reading your magazine it's easy to see that you do have your own opinions and are not worried about letting anyone know about them - whether they are complimentary or scathing.

As Abe Lincoln said: you can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time. Well change the word 'fool' to 'satisfy' and that's what I want from a mag - which I believe is what TBM is all about. Anyway enough of the semantics, here's my challenge to you. Over the next ten months (when my subscription expires) I'd love to read some more about the following topics...

GPS - what should you look for as a newcomer? Battery life is a problem I know so the ability to charge it from the bike is useful - as is memory capacity, plus all the other things you needed to know before you bought, but find out afterwards.

A secondhand buying guide on the Gas Gas 400/450 and KTM 400/450. Your review of the WR400F was excellent, so along those lines please.

Off-roading in France - maps, signs, how do you know what you can use. Is there an equivalent of

the TRF in France? Chris Evans may wish to consider providing input on this topic.

Roadbooks - how do you use them? I have an idea but have never seen one so this could be an interesting article for those of us who might be contemplating an event that uses them.

Finally, in last month's issue you had a letter headed School Report about Ady Smith's enduro school. Do you have his telephone number please?

Andy Furlong  
 Ashford, Kent

Well Andy thanks for the compliments, questions and Abe Lincoln quote. We did actually prepare an article on GPS many years ago, but never ran it because we weren't sure how popular (or relevant) it would be. That's certainly one we'll look at again though. A secondhand buying guide on the Gasser is still a bit premature we reckon - even the oldest bikes are only a year old and the 450 has only just arrived (we only tested it two months ago, remember). However a secondhand guide on the 400 KTM makes a lot of sense to us. Off-roading in France? Hmmm, well seeing as Chris Evans makes his living out of doing this, I think it might be a bit much, expecting him to give away all his trade secrets, don't you? A road-book article, now this is something we've actually published at least twice before in the mag - but it was a long time ago and we'll certainly consider running a small piece on this again. Watch out for that.

And finally Ady Smith's telephone number for his schools is 07779 418336. Hope that answers your questions and encourages

you to keep on reading the mag. As Abe Lincoln also wrote: The people who like this sort of thing, will find this, the sort of thing they like... Smart man, that Mr Lincoln...

## Web Browsing

Dear Sir

Regarding Steve Mansfield's letter in the April issue of TBM wanting greenlane information in Yorkshire. He may find the Northern Greenlanes' website of use. It is at:  
[www.northernlanes.freeuk.com](http://www.northernlanes.freeuk.com)

Brian Pratt  
 Burnley, Lancs

## I Spy

Dear TBM

Thought you may like to see the enclosed photocopy of a leaflet being distributed to various walking/hiking/rambling club members around the Yorkshire area. The leaflet asks walkers to record any details of 'abuse' they may

YORKSHIRE DALES GREEN LANES ALLIANCE			
<b>REPORT ON USE OF GREEN LANES BY MOTORIZED VEHICLES in the YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK &amp; NIDDERDALE AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY</b>			
Please help to save the Green Lanes of The Dales (see overview) from further abuse by completing this form in as much detail as possible (those shaded and in bold are essential, but all other information will be useful) whenever you see any recreational motorised vehicles using Green Lanes, and return to the address as below			
Date of sighting	Time of sighting		
Name of Green Lane			
Green Lane runs from		to	
Location where vehicles spotted			Map Reference
<small>(Use a scale south of Arnhem's Canal)</small>			
Number & Type of vehicle(s)	4 x 4	Motor bikes	
Registration number(s)			
Estimated speed of vehicle(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> < 4 mph (walking pace) <input type="checkbox"/> 4 - 10 mph (running speed) <input type="checkbox"/> 10 - 20 mph <input type="checkbox"/> > 20 mph (excessive)		
please tick one box			
Did the vehicle(s) disturb your peace and tranquility?	Yes	No	
Was the vehicle -- proceeding along the green lane? off the route of the green lane? exercising 'challenging' activities off route?			
State of ground	Dry	Was there prior damage to the surface of the Green Lane?	Wheel tracks
	Wet	please tick one box	Ruts
	Very Wet		Total loss of vegetation
	Saturated		Morass
Was the vehicle(s) causing any damage?	Yes	No	
Were photographs taken?	please tick one box	Yes	No
Name of person making report			
Phone no.	e-mail address		
For YXGLA use only			
	Reference number	Green Lane number	
Please return to: YDGLA, The Old Chapel, Sutton Howgrave, Bedale, North Yorkshire. DL8 2NS			
or fax to	01765 640477		
or e-mail to	tharg.thomas@care4free.net		
<small>mag green lanes overview report form 02.02.04</small>			

# LETTERS

have seen of green lanes by recreational motor vehicles.

It's reassuring to know that these fine upstanding members of the community (?) will be taking note of our registration numbers and whereabouts whilst green laning in Yorkshire.

What exactly they hope to achieve by their actions is completely beyond me. But I feel sure that their actions infringe our human rights to go about our business without undue harassment. As it's only 'law abiding' riders who have registration plates (tax discs, insurance etc) that'll have their details logged, it obviously won't go far in deterring illegal riders.

Dave Baker  
Wigan, Lancs

Couldn't agree with you more Dave. This form targets legitimate users of green lanes and attempts to criminalise many of their activities. Obviously the people distributing this leaflet are anxious to receive lots of information, so for anyone interested in sending them lots of information - they can email them at: marg.thomas@care4free.net or phone/fax them on 01765 640477. Obviously I'm not suggesting that they get sent lots of Spam etc - that would be quite wrong.

## Plastic Fantastic?

Dear TBM

I've just finished reading the May issue of your great magazine and felt I had to put pen to paper when I read Graham Russell's letter saying that the XR400R was ugly and that he would like to put more plastic over it. The fact that it didn't have plastic all over it was one of the main reasons

why I was interested in buying one. I like the look, and it also means that I don't have to take loads of bits off to work on it.

Therefore, I don't have to carry more tools with me when I'm out on the lanes. (The fact that it's never broken down on me is beside the point. Though it probably will now I've said that.) Also, the more plastic panels you have on your bike, the more there is to break when you come off.

On a different subject, I have just started doing enduros and I think they are brilliant. Great value, friendly, and you get to ride some great tracks, I wish I'd taken them up years ago. The problem is I need more practice. Needless to say, I can't go screaming around green lanes so are there any enduro tracks I can use? I've found a list of MX tracks but I would prefer not to use these. Any help would be really appreciated.

Ashley Moule  
Buckinghamshire

A list of enduro tracks is in the pipeline Ashley...

## Poetic Injustice

Dear TBM

Just a quick note to let you know, and pass on to anyone who is going to the ACU Isle of Wight festival, that the Tennyson Trail has been closed from the Lynch Lane section all the way up to Freshwater.

The first part of the trail, from Carisbrook, is open and there are still many other trails to ride. For those who also like a bit of tarmac for their big trailies there is the A3055 Military Road.

In my view this is the best road on the island for those who like to use their big thumpers like road bikes. Try it, and tell me different.

Brian Gregory  
Isle of Wight

## Coast Rider

Dear Si

Re: Coast to Coast, TBM 85. As there is no trail riding here in Northern Ireland, a couple of friends and I were considering copying Bruce Mathieson's article by riding, for charity, from Portpatrick to Dunbar in June this year. I am writing to ask if you could either pass this enquiry on to Bruce, or maybe help with the following:

Could you list the eight OS maps needed to organise the run.

Where appropriate, identify the co-ordinates to assist, where trails may start or finish as we go. And any other relevant information. (We intend to use GPS in conjunction with the maps.)

We intend to start from the Crown Hotel in Portpatrick (obviously with no hangover and fully physically prepared), and attempt to complete around half the run before finding a B&B for the night. Any recommendation would be greatly appreciated.

As an alternative, perhaps I could supply the OS maps if Bruce could indicate the route he suggests; no joke routes or ambushes please.

Grant Ashcroft  
Carrickfergus, N.I

As if we would set you up Grant... Perish the thought! Your details have been passed over to Bruce and he should be in touch with you shortly. Good luck.

## Web of Intrigue

Dear TBM

As a devotee of all things dirtbike related, I take great pleasure in bringing to your attention a new website entitled Dirt Riders International. This website is a non-profitable forum for all dirt riding related discussion. Included are bikes, riding locations and

sections on supermotos and ATVs.

The site was put together by individuals who are passionate about riding and talking dirt bikes and who also have the experience and drive to run a successful website. Please mention this to your readers - it's free and it's set to provide an invaluable long-term resource to dirt riders in this country. It is mainly run in the UK so there is none of the US-bias that some other sites suffer from.

Whether you are an enduro rider or a casual trail rider it matters not, because there'll be something here to interest you and it's growing quickly. I stress that I've got no vested interest in this site other than wanting it to do well.

In the absence of a TBM website, maybe some collaboration could be possible. The site address is: [www.dirttridersinternational.com](http://www.dirttridersinternational.com).

Paul Mankelov  
Nottingham

Thanks for that Paul, we'll be sure to check it out.

## Which Bike?

Dear TBM

My pride and joy is a R1150GS but I would also like to get a bike that didn't make me so paranoid about the effects of winter salt; that I wasn't scared of dropping because I'd never pick it up; and one that I could actually tinker with. I want a bike that is great fun, is quite light and easily put on a trailer to take on those holidays when a car is a prerequisite. It needs to be capable of short commutes so it has to have a 'get you out of trouble' top speed and most of all be good off-road, down green lanes etc. I am 6'4", less than 14 stone and too close to 60 for comfort! My maximum would be £2500.

As I have no real idea about this kind of bike I bought some magazines including TBM. I very much liked the handy A5 format, the quality of production and the mature interesting articles, so I eagerly sought out the next issue

(93). I have taken out a subscription today!

In my quest to find the ideal second bike I have spoken to several dealers and asked a lot of damn fool questions; and almost without exception I have been given enthusiastic advice and help. The trouble is this advice often conflicts. I originally only thought in terms of a four-stroke but then was encouraged to think about the Honda CRM 250 mkII or III. Then someone said don't touch two-strokes they are going to be banned next year (is that really true?) and they need new pistons every month, you want a road legal Yamaha WR400F or the like. I have also been told that the Suzuki DR-Z400S or DR350 would be fine for my needs.

Model specifications are a total mystery, CR, XR, CRM, YZ, WR, DR-Z, DR - help! A 'plain man's guide' to what is available on the market would be a godsend. Is there such a thing?

Ultimately I know I have to make the choice but would you be so kind as to say what you think about the relative merits of the bikes I have mentioned, or if there are others I should definitely think about and whether I should steer clear of two-strokes? (in actuality I rather like the idea of their inherent simplicity) Yours in almost total confusion...

David Thorpe  
Huntingdon, Cambs

Welcome to the wonderful world of dirt bikes David. Firstly, you may find it worthwhile getting hold of a copy of issue 89 where we published our most recent 'Bike Buyer's Guide 2003' listing virtually all the trail/enduro bikes out there. (Back issues are available from 020 7903 3993 and cost £4.50 inc p&p.) At a glance you'll be able to compare the various bikes you've talked of.

So, what do we reckon you should buy? Well, first of all ignore the advice about 'two-strokes being banned next year'. And they certainly don't need a



# LETTERS



## Bum Note

Dear TBM

new piston every month. Two-stroke motocross bikes do require you to change the rings fairly regularly (say once or twice a season), with a new piston every second or third set of rings. But this is with regular MX use. Two-stroke enduro bikes require less maintenance, though that's not to say you can get away without rebuilding the top-end every so often. But as you rightly say, two-stroke motors are remarkably cheap and simple to work on.

As for the list of models mentioned. Ignore the Honda CRs and Yamaha YZs - these are motocrossers, and even if they have been converted to trail spec we don't reckon you'd get on with one. We also think the DR-Z should be knocked off your list. It's a great trailie, but you'll be hard pressed to find one within your budget. Early, electric start, road kitted bikes start at about £2800. And we wouldn't choose a WR400F either. You'd be looking at a 1998-99 bike, the first two years they were produced, and they weren't the easiest of bikes to start from hot. We assume that you've little in the way of off-road experience, and the WR-F may prove a bit of a handful.

Which leaves either a CRM, an XR or a DR350. Liquid-cooled two-stroke versus air-cooled four-stroke. The CRM is actually reasonably heavy for a stoker, and on the scales there'll only be a few kilos between all three. But the CRM is still the lightest and will feel the lightest when you're riding. Given the choice we'd pick the CRM250.

I saw the bit about the plan to import Bum Tanks from Australia in Issue 92 (cheaper than buying an oversize fuel tank etc), and felt I had to let you know about my experience with the ghastly things.

I've just come back from travelling; visited Thailand, Bali, Australia, the Cook Islands and the US. Did a bit of off-roading in Thailand which was fun... And whilst in Oz I decided to treat myself to a beautiful new KTM 640E. I didn't fancy the Adventure, which has the bigger tank as standard, but was persuaded by the guys at the KTM dealership that I could have the 640E and still get the mileage between gas stations by fitting a

Bum Tank. They duly fitted the tank (I only had to sacrifice my bike's rear rails and let them drill two holes in the lovely new guard and I was away).

Only problem was, the damn thing leaked. Not the tank itself you understand, just the filler cap and all of the joints. On the first day out I noticed my throw-over bags (and all my luggage) smelled of petrol (love the smell but there is such a thing as overkill, as I know you know Si). I endured the constant weeping and stenching from the cursed Bum (hope I'm not disturbing you too much with this imagery!) for weeks! Finally, creeping, very tired and hot through Brisbane rush-hour traffic I realised that petrol was now pouring over my legs. I managed to staunch the leaking joint again but it made me absolutely, positively, unutterably sure I will never, never, never own a bum tank again. In my opinion it truly is a bum piece of equipment. Of course, this could have just been a one off experience...

Love the mag (one of the joys of returning to dear old Blighty was the pile of new TBMs awaiting my attention). Keep up the good work!

Debs North

PS Have you ever considered running a few advice stories on how to hire/buy bikes in foreign parts? Whether it's worth bringing them back to the UK. And fun countries/places to ride? Would be mighty interesting I think...

We've run a few similar stories in the past Debs, and we hope to bring you more in the future. Perhaps you could be persuaded to write about your experiences though...

A far better bum, yesterday...



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# RANT!

**READER MARK  
HOLLAND RECKONS  
VOLUNTARY LICENCING  
IS THE BEST WAY  
FORWARD TO  
FURTHER LEGITIMISE  
OUR SPORT...**

**M**y love affair with off-roading started about 25 years ago, having decided it was a 'safe substitute for sex'. But it wasn't long before I was hearing a familiar cry, that continues to this day; 'Oi! Get off my land!' and 'look out the cops are coming!', and I bet just about every dirt biker has a similar story to tell. (Blimey Mark, what sort of sexual practices do you get up to? - Ed!)

So why not get the government to further 'legalise' trail riding, by way of a special licence available through the post office? This could be renewed annually, and would allow you to ride on authorised lanes. Let's face it, numerous other activities have been licensed. Take fishing, for instance. If you want to go fishing you need a rod licence. Part of the money goes towards restocking the waterways, some goes to bailiffs to enforce the law on poaching, and some goes to the government. I'm no expert on the matter, but I figure the licence helps pay for the upkeep of the waterways and that the licence payers are putting something back into the land.

Maybe a similar scheme could be set up for dirt biking? You will have to excuse my ignorance on this subject, but has anybody thought about licensing trail riding before? Is there some reason that I'm not aware of, why trail riding for pleasure cannot be licensed?

Just after Christmas this year, I read about the good work that the TRF was doing. 'That's it, I thought, I'll see about joining this bunch.' However, after joining I became confused with all the abbreviations that are used; TRF, LARA, BBTAC, BOATS, RUPPs, DFRA, etc etc and so on.

'Well, stuff that!' I thought. 'All I want to do is ride my bike on some green lanes, not go to college part time'. In their leaflets the TRF mention about contributing to the Fighting Fund to help keep green lanes open when under threat of closure. Well imagine this scenario:-

Some lanes have been closed and the TRF employs a fat cat lawyer to re-open the lanes, using the money from the 'Fighting Fund'. The TRF wins the battle, the lanes get re-opened then six months later Farmer Giles has vandals smashing up his fence, makes an appeal to get the lanes closed down and blames it all on trail riders. What are the TRF going to do, save up another £40,000 and fight the case again? No chance. By having a licence to start with, trail riders have a stake in the land.

The following is nothing more than a suggestion on the basics of a workable licence for green laning. The government draws up a licensing bill in Parliament. They then advertise this in the relevant press and take the money from trail riders through the post office. The land owning bodies would then apply for a 'Green Lane Grant', which would enable them to maintain the land. The money could also be used to construct barriers onto exposed land to help deter fly tipping and car dumping, problems which obviously cost land owners and rate payers a fortune. With the various land owning bodies earning very little at the moment, I reckon they'd be falling over themselves to open up places for riding and make some money from riding enthusiasts.

In my area there are six police deployed to catch problem bikers. But instead of half a dozen cops chasing riders, they could use four of them to catch criminals who had committed serious crimes, and leave two officers patrolling the trails for licence evaders and those not obeying the 'Country Code'.

If this system worked well, perhaps with a trial period, there could also be a whole host of spin-offs - books and maps telling us where we could ride, for instance. Produced by HMSO, of course.

It would be interesting to hear other people's views on this. With all the bad press we've been receiving of late, can anyone think of a better system? Because by doing it this way we will be putting something back into the countryside and the future of green laning could be secure for ever.

*TBM says: Obviously we already have a licence Mark, it's called our Tax Disc. However what you're saying does seem to make a lot of sense. What do others think? Comments please...*

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Continuing our series of 450 shootouts, Vertemati's new electric-start 450 takes on the might of the KTM 450EXC. Let battle commence...

# EURO THRASH



STORY: SI MELBER, PICS: JAMES BARNICOTT

Seven kilometres. It doesn't sound very far does it? That's about five miles or approximately ten laps of our chosen test track. Which by a strange co-incidence is precisely the distance that our Vertemati E450E test bike travelled before a mystery fault called a halt to any more back-to-back testing for the day. Which is a crying shame because this new electric-start version has all the right credentials to be the best Vertemati yet.

So one of the shortest ever tests in terms of distance travelled (by one of the bikes) but not necessarily short in duration. Because before the Vert cried enough we'd had plenty of time to take a good long look at the bike – we'd pored over its unique design, checked out its build quality, stuck it on the scales and spent ages taking photos. Then afterwards we pulled it apart trying to figure out what was wrong.

During that time we'd had chance to discover

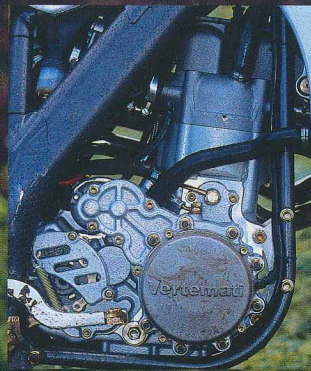
the Vertemati's merits, some of its strengths and weaknesses and its unique positioning in the market place. And over the course of ten laps or so we'd got to know enough about this bike to want to spend more time in its company in the not too distant future.

## Moto Vert

These days Vertematis are probably better known for their achievements in supermoto racing rather

than off-roading. Indeed at the time of writing, one of the factory's silver dream racers is currently leading the World S1 Supermoto Championship in the hands of Gerard Delepine. And the importer (and Vert enthusiast) Mark Oxley is no stranger to supermoto racing here in the UK. Which probably gives you an idea of how fast the bikes are. What it won't tell you is just how beautiful they look in the metal. Vertematis have in the past been labelled as

# Euro Thrash



Left: Battery lives under the seat - exposed connectors not so good. Centre: Toolkit comprehensive but bulky. Right: Filler at rear

automotive pornography (doubtless by me, at some point). I'm not sure I recognise that description any more, but there's no doubt that they are beautifully detailed (just look at that engine, will you), exceptionally specified and shamefully priced. The sort of bike which can't fail to provoke opinion - both pro and anti.

But the trouble with exotica is that it's generally hand built in small numbers for a selective audience. And like any small production run, it takes a while to iron out all the faults which can occur, simply because the amount of man-miles on the bikes is still very limited compared with a mass produced motorcycle like the KTM for instance.

So what sort of dirt bike does the best part of six grand buy you these days? Well there's nothing particularly unusual about the Vert's steel perimeter frame, nor its choice of suspension components (top of the range WP units front and rear), even its quirky underseat fuel tank and SOHC gear-driven engine are features you can find elsewhere in the dirt bike market if you look hard enough. In fact there's nothing particularly innovative about the Vert's make-up, full stop. Which is probably a good thing on a bike as individual as this, I reckon.

Slide yourself over the Vert's (rather tall), full-length saddle and you'll find yourself in an exceptionally good riding position. With a comfortable seat, broad pegs and nicely swept bars leading up from the sexiest set of machined handlebar-clamps you've ever seen - you'll instantly feel at home on the Vert, providing that you buy your trousers in the long-leg length rather than regular fit. The seat is held in place by means of a single Dzus fastener, and stretches all the way back from the headstock to the (rear mounted) filler cap located amidships on the rear mudguard. With a set of well-tucked-in radiators and small and neat rad shrouds, the ability to move about freely (forwards and backwards) on the Vertemati's flat saddle without coming into contact with a sticky-out part of the bike remains one of the Vert's best features. In front of you, you'll find a key operated ignition switch, a set of analogue dials (which are functional, if not the very

Vertemati's 450 may be the answer to your trail riding dreams...



latest in design), and switchgear which is pretty neat for a dirt bike - though the kill-switch part of the starter button is not wired in for some reason. There's a slightly heavy hydraulic clutch on the left bar matched by an equally heavy throttle on the right. Brembo brakes provide the stopping power.

Details like the Vert's machined alloy hubs, neat little frame-mounted case savers (embossed with the Vertemati logo) and clever use of space (such as the battery box moulded into the under-seat fuel tank) impressed us a great deal. As did the high-mounted, quick-release air filter tucked away below the high point of the seat. But there were other details which weren't quite so clever. For instance the shock adjuster is completely obscured by the rear brake reservoir and cannot easily be fiddled with; the clear fuel tank (which forms the underside of the rear mudguard quickly becomes clattered in mud (and thus opaque);

there's one or two exposed block connectors (in vulnerable places), which look like they'd suffer from water ingress; and the lack of a kickstarter on a bike like this, is we reckon, a real omission. Even the comprehensive toolkit (which includes amongst other items, a plug spanner, spring puller and embossed wheel wrenches) is not immune from criticism. For instance one of the two wheelnut spanners is at least a foot long! Just where you're supposed to stick that when you're riding an enduro, I wouldn't like to guess! It's a shame that some of these details spoil an otherwise stylish package - because the look of the bike is spot on.

However it's stuff like this which arguably makes the Vertemati the bike that it is. Let me explain that rationale to you. The very fact that some of the design is flawed is almost part of the attraction of owning something so unique. I'm not making excuses for the Vertemati, in fact I'm sure that both the factory and the UK importer would prefer it that the bike was absolutely perfect. But the fact remains that it isn't, and just like you get with Italian cars, the Vertemati owner buys something which is utterly beautiful - but technically flawed in one or two areas.

### Weighty Matters

One thing you can't fail to notice even before you begin to ride the Vert, is the bike's all-up weight. You can feel it as you lift it in and out of the van, or push it around a yard. This thing is no stripped down racer, that's for sure. As usual we fuelled up both bikes (to the brim) and stuck them on the TBM scales, and the results were as follows: KTM 450EXC: 124kg (including 9L of fuel); Vertemati E450E: 136kg (inc 10L of fuel). That's an incredible 12 kilos difference between them - or in other words, nearly ten percent.

It's hard to see where all the Vertemati's extra mass comes from. Doubtless the Vert's steel silencer accounts for some of it, and the chunky steel perimeter frame a little more, but other than that we can only assume that the extra weight (over and above the KTM) lies in the engine - which given the fact that there's no kickstart (or mechanism) within the cases (as there is on the KTM) seems a little strange to us.

No doubt about it, you notice that weight from the moment the bike turns a wheel off road. Flick up the big Dell'Orto's choke lever, turn on the fuel tap (right-hand side, just behind your thigh!), switch on the key ignition and then thumb the starter. Our Vert burst immediately into life with no wheezing or grumbling from the starter motor, just a distinct throb and a pleasant sounding rumble from the bike's big oval silencer.

Away down the farm track and the Vert's aural

cacophony is music to the ears. Not loud or booming, but a sophisticated roar from the gear-driven single's lusty motor. In the past, vibration has always been a part of the Vertemati formula, but I can't say that I noticed it at all with the 450. In fairness, apart from the short metalled farm track, we never got near a road, but certainly off-road there are other more-important things to worry about. Like getting the bike to steer round corners. Okay in fairness, when you're stood up on the pegs the Vert tracks straight and true, and goes more or less where you point it. It's nice and stable in a straight line and doesn't feel all that tricky to turn.

But once you sit down in preparation for a muddy corner say, a strange thing happens, the Vertemati refuses to turn in. Actually that's not quite true. If you plonk your weight down in the middle of the saddle then the Vert turns about as quickly as a supertanker on full lock. However, if you get your weight well forward and drop onto the saddle just behind the steering head and then wind the throttle through three-quarters of a turn, the Vertemati responds with a beautiful controllable slide through the corner. Ridden like this (on the throttle) the bike makes drifting turns into an art-form. I swear you could slide the thing onto full lock through virtually any turn. No wonder it makes such a good supermoto.

Part of the reason for this we figure, is not just the Vertemati's extended wheelbase for 2003, but the fact that the majority of the fuel is located so far away from the headstock (the pivot point around which a bike turns). And this is one of those design details which probably works better in theory than it does in practice. The theory says that the fuel is located lower and the space better utilised - all of which is true of course. But in practice the effect of having nearly ten kilos of fluid-mass located at least two or more feet away from the headstock has the effect of turning the bike into one gigantic pendulum. No wonder then that once you've got it sliding it loves to swing its way through a turn.

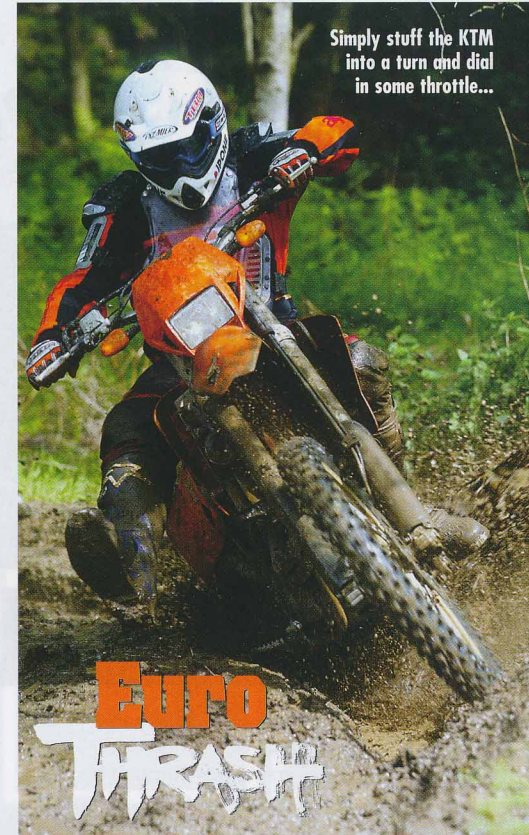
This is not such a big problem as it might sound. All bikes (and especially four-strokes) need to be powered through a turn in order to



Still one of the best looking 450s around we reckon...



get them to steer easily. The only difference with the Vertemati is that you need to use a bit more body English and a slightly larger throttle opening - that's all. Once you get used to it however you can have a ball slinging the bike in and powering it round. On an event like the Cambrian Rally I can imagine you could find addictive pleasure setting the bike up for a gravelly turn by sliding it first one way, then using the pendulum effect to swing the back end around the other way in a big smooth arc. Great fun.



Simply stuff the KTM into a turn and dial in some throttle...

Unfortunately in mud and slop the Vertemati wasn't great fun. It was fine, acceptable even, but not great fun. The suspension is not the problem here. In fact in the short time that we rode it, the suspension never gave us any cause for concern. That felt fine. No, the problem is simply down to a combination of a tall saddle and excessive weight. Even taking into account the Vertemati's lusty motor, there's no getting around the fact that every time you accelerate that mass, there's ten percent more of it to shift than there is on the KTM. A slightly heavy and cumbersome throttle doesn't help either. I'm sure it must come down to either cost or a misplaced sense of patriotism, but I can't think of any other reason for fitting the Vertemati with a big Italian Dell'Orto carb when a nice Japanese Keihin flatslide would do the job so much better.

I know all this makes it sound like we didn't enjoy the Vertemati, but in fact nothing could be further from the truth. Notwithstanding our 'technical difficulties', the Vertemati was a pleasant enough ride. The 450cc capacity is a great size for the Vert lump, it makes decent power, even if

'Just as well it's all downhill from here, mate...'



stroke and 250 two-stroke are in my opinion overpowered, while the 250 four-stroke isn't powerful enough. But the 450? Yep the 450 is absolutely bloody brilliant. Got that. If you don't believe me then ask your mates. They've all got one. I checked out the sales figures for the year, and the 450 KTM is currently lying in fifth place in the 126-600cc category for road bike registrations. That's one place higher than the CBR600 for God's sake. And means that KTM have probably sold more 450s than Rover have shifted of their hideous 75 model. I'm sure I

the heavy carb accentuates its slightly slower rate of rev gain. The bike works fine, makes all the right noises, powers its way through bends and produces plenty of useable grunt. Moreover it starts on the button every time, the cockpit layout and ergos are first class and there's something deeply satisfying about riding a bike which is this desirable and exotic. No, the problem comes when you introduce the KTM 450EXC into the equation...

### Agent Orange

This KTM is in fact TBM's long-term test bike. Box-fresh and with only 30 miles on the bore, we hastily swapped over the road gearing and extended rear number plate holder (that it came fitted with) for the optional enduro items and then headed for the dirt.

WOW! Wow, Wow, Wow, Wow, Wow. I know we've tested the 450EXC before and I know we liked it before. Well now we've tested it again and guess what? We like it even better. Look I don't say this lightly, nor because we've been leant a 450 for the year. In fact if you want my honest opinion there's a lot about the current KTM's which I'm not all that keen on. The brakes and handling certainly take a lot of getting used to, and the suspension is not as plush as it could be. And for what it's worth I don't think all KTM's are great - the 125 is nice, the 200 two-

even saw Tony Blair riding around on one the other day. John Prescott's probably got two.

Fuel on, push the starter button and the Katosh bursts into life with a slightly metallic sound. There's a lot more harsh rumblings emanating from the belly of the KTM than there was from the Vertemati (which was a bit of a surprise to us), but once warmed up the KTM throbs like a good 'un.

Then it's onto the dirt and time for some serious fun. After the Vert the KTM is a revelation. With a lower saddle, a lighter throttle, a lighter clutch and lots more urge, there really is nothing you wouldn't tackle on the 450EXC. Point it at the steepest of hills, select third gear and grunt her up using just the torque. Alternatively gun her uphill with plenty of revs on and the KTM will steam up a climb like it doesn't exist. Corners are taken at pace (better on the throttle than off), but the bike turns in whatever the throttle setting. (Mind you it's much easier to overcook, and the KTM is definitely less forgiving at the ragged edge). In the slop of a waterlogged test track, mud and gunge just get annihilated, and the KTM seems to get better, the worse the conditions you're riding in.

And the reason for all this fun? No doubt about it in my mind - that 450 long-stroke engine. It's a classic. Not only is it plenty powerful enough at the top end, but more importantly

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## Settling Scores

As a contest we thought this might be a really good challenge. Vertemati are well known for producing powerful singles (in a road test in our sister magazine Supermoto, a Vertemati 501 consistently outdragged a Honda XR650R). But as it turned out, the writing was already on the wall for the Italian machine. Not because it failed to last the entire test (a silly little thing like a blocked breather, erratic fuel pump or badly sealed ignition cover may have been to blame – it's still being investigated). No the problem for the Vertemati is that the KTM 450 is just too good. It may not be any more powerful (though its quick-revving motor suggests that it probably is), but its considerably lighter and a brilliantly cohesive package. KTM have been building enduro bikes long enough now, they ought to know what does and doesn't work. Well

let me tell you that the KTM 450EXC works. And works brilliantly.

We haven't given up on the Vertemati yet. Once the fault's been diagnosed and repaired we'll have it back again for a decent trail ride. I personally reckon it's got all the makings of a damn fine trail bike. One thing's for certain. It'll undoubtedly be a pretty exclusive one...

*Thanks again to Mark Oxley at Vertemati UK for pulling a 450 out of stock and making it available to us at short notice. Mark's a true enthusiast and he supports his product wholeheartedly. He deserves to do well with Vertemati and if you want to know more about the exclusive Vertemati line-up you can call him on 01274 201122. Thanks also to Vic Noble at Ipone UK Ltd for his help with this test. And finally thanks to our friendly farmer for the loan of his land. Top guys, one and all.*

## VERTEMATI E450E

<b>Engine type:</b>	Electric-start, liquid-cooled, gear-driven SOHC, 4-valve head
<b>Frame:</b>	Steel perimeter
<b>Displacement:</b>	449cc
<b>Transmission:</b>	6-speed
<b>Seat height:</b>	900mm
<b>Fuel capacity:</b>	10 litres
<b>Race weight:</b>	136kg
<b>Price/Contact:</b>	£6295 / Vertemati UK, 01274 201122

its got grunt coming out of its ears. And yet unlike the Yamaha WR450F engine for instance, it isn't overwhelming nor in any way intimidating. I fired it up a short, twisty, and narrow stretch of metalled farm track and felt happy to give it full throttle through the gears. Try that on the Yamaha and you're either David Knight... or David Blane!

The point is that the KTM works - for you. It's got the sort of power delivery which is on the one hand quick and powerful, but on the other, easy to live with. There's oodles of power with which to aviate the front wheel, yet the 450 never feels trigger-happy. Whether you're a relative novice with a bit of experience, or a seasoned professional, I guarantee that the 450EXC won't disappoint.

Arguably the other reason why it works so well is it's lack of all-up weight. Okay it's a four-banger so it feels that bit heavier than a two-stroke, but not that much heavier, and its broader powerband means that it's less snappy on the throttle, more controllable through the revs and there's fewer gear changes to be made. All of which means that although it will eventually tire you out, you never get tired of riding the EXC. In fact once the Vert 450 expired we didn't just call it a day, but we hammered in lap after lap on the KTM. Then when we got tired we swapped riders and rode it some more. It's that sort of bike.

I could go on more about the 450EXC, about its design integrity, its list of standard parts, its relative merits and its desirability. But the fact is that we've told you all this before and if you don't already own a 450EXC, then you obviously can't afford one. Otherwise what other reason could you possibly have for not trying out one of the orange middleweights?

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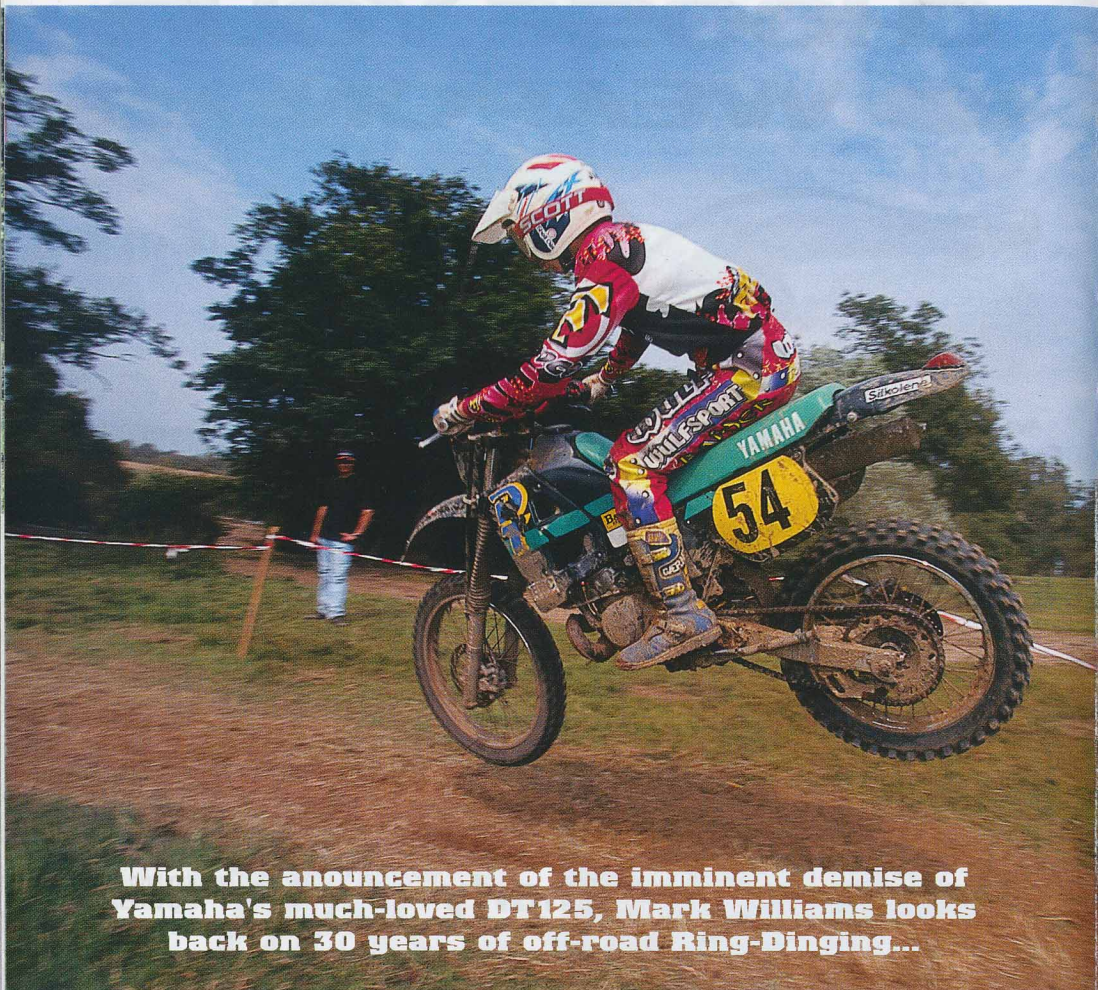
## The Q

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WORDS: MARK WILLIAMS  
PHOTOS: MARK WILLIAMS, MILES DAVIDSON

With the announcement of the imminent demise of Yamaha's much-loved DT125, Mark Williams looks back on 30 years of off-road Ring-Dinging...

# Bye Bye DT125

Sometimes we take for granted those we've known the longest. So when they suddenly disappear, we find ourselves bewildered - trying to cope with their loss. Could the same be true of an off-road bike I wonder - surely not? After all we thrive on the latest advances in design and technology that appear with each new model year. But Yamaha's announcement that the long-standing DT125 had fallen victim to increasingly draconian European emission legislation had us mourning the loss of a much-loved friend.

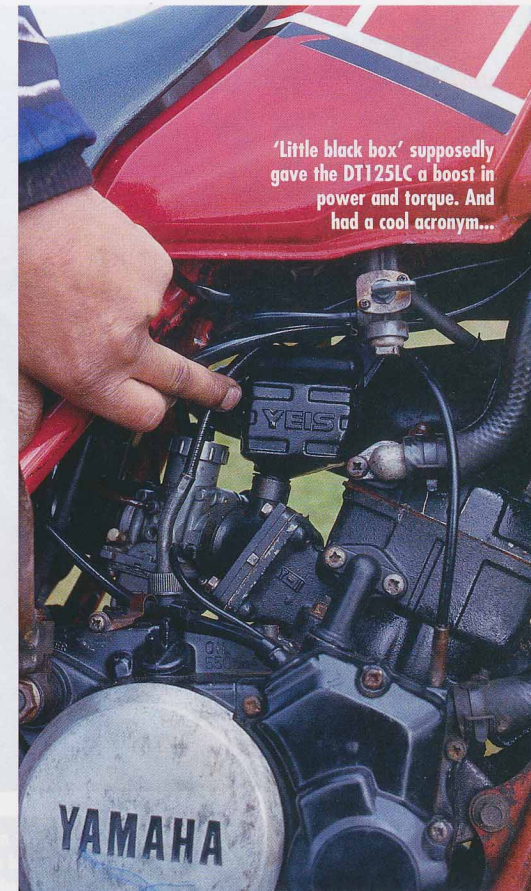
It's not that the diminutive eighth-litre trailie represented cutting-edge trailbike design (though there was a time...). Nor even that it was renowned for competition prowess over the years (though it wasn't bad). No, it's just that so many of today's dirt bike riders have cut their teeth on one of these great little trailies, that it's long since become part of the off-road firmament.

Think I'm waxing a bit too lyrical here? Well just consider for a minute that at least four of the five TBM teamsters have owned one of these mighty midgets over the years - some of them more than one. And here's a thing; both myself and my near neighbour (and regular trailriding partner), Roy Simcock, bought DTs as our first purpose-built trailies. Nothing too surprising about that perhaps, except that these baptisms took place 20 years apart. His was an H-reg 1990 liquid-cooled, monoshock jobbie bought in 1998, and mine was a pretty basic 1976 air-cooled version with twin-shock rear end, purchased in the late Seventies.

We'll come back to Roy a bit later, but I hope you get the point. The DT's been around for ever. What's even more remarkable is the fact that throughout its 30 year lifespan (and numerous different incarnations), the DT's engine dimensions have remained essentially the same at 56 x 50mm. (Well actually the R version was fractionally longer-stroked at 50.7mm, but who's counting?)

## Where Do I Begin...

Back in 1969 the fore-runner to the DT (the AT1) was launched - its single cylinder engine essentially one-half of the TD250 two-stroke road-racers of the time, but de-tuned to 7.1:1 compression, with a centrally mounted plug, autolube oiling system (at a time when most of the other manufacturers were still expecting their



'Little black box' supposedly gave the DT125LC a boost in power and torque. And had a cool acronym...

customers to mess around with pre-mix) and a rubber-mounted primary drive to the clutch.

The AT1 was itself a development of Yamaha's 250cc DT1, and although it was never officially imported into the UK (nor the subsequent AT2/AT3 models which rapidly succeeded it in '71 and '72), a few of them made their way to these shores all the same.

It wasn't until the following year however, that the UK got its first official DT125 shortly after manufacturing began at the Hammamatsu factory in 1973. For which owners were charged the princely sum of £257 for the joy of having one of these new breed of lightweight trail bikes.

Even so, apart from the cosmetics, it still hadn't changed that much from the AT1, with its identical 24mm Mikuni carb, upswept, flat-sided near-side exhaust system, five speed gearbox and 50.5in wheelbase. Delving a little deeper however, we found that the DT125 was a little heavier, had better ground clearance (9.4in as opposed to 8.8in) and slightly revised steering geometry.

# Bye Bye DT125

Even on a humble bike like the DT125 you can still have plenty of fun...



Hot on the heels of the 125 was an even more purposeful DT175 which retailed at £298 and soon became the favourite at a time when you could still wear L-plates on a machine displacing up to 250cc.

Back in 1978 I roadtested the shortlived DT125E, the last twin-shock incarnation of the breed, alongside its major rival from Suzuki, the TS125 and even in those days the Yam was the better bike despite being lumbered with a hefty rear carrier, and one less gear (five-speed). With seven as opposed to six ports and a superior reed-valve set-up, the Yamaha's motor delivered a wider and thus more usable powerband, coupled with far superior suspension which in turn rendered the bike far handier on the rough.

Later that same year we got the first cantilever

Many DTs came in for modification. So were improved and enhanced. And some were painted purple..!



suspension offered on a 125cc machine - apart, rather embarrassingly perhaps, from NVT's ill-fated 125 Rambler which ironically used the older AT3 engine bought in from Yamaha themselves. The new DT125 and the 'MX' suffixed version



which followed it in late '79 had a single de-Carbon rear shock located within the backbone of the frame, and its cantilevered swing-arm offered a whopping 5.7 inches of rear travel, alongside the 7.9 inches found at the front end. The chassis also featured 10.4 inches of ground clearance (as opposed to the 9.5 inches of the previous twin-shock version), all of which were the kind of figures that impressed us in those days! The engine was also blessed with improved combustion chamber design, a revised moto-cross style expansion chamber and had had a sixth gear added. Oh, and the price had risen to £590.

## Things Can Only Get Better

By this point the nascent British enduro scene was underway and people were starting to look seriously at the little stroker as the basis for many a clubman racer. Messrs Boyer offered a more responsive reed valve unit for the bike and Essex-based dealer Dave Rayner developed a revised linkage that permitted even greater rear wheel travel, plus an improved front suspension kit which, if memory serves, amounted to little more than a pair of slugs and a bottle of heavier weight oil! Serious riders replaced the steel wheel rims with alloy versions and junked the trials tyres for proper knobblys. And a few found that ex-BSA Victor Trail (alloy) tanks could be made to fit!

However it was the 175cc version that soon copped most of the interest amongst enduroists, not least because of its extra power - 17bhp as opposed to 15bhp - broader powerband, CDI

ignition, yet identical 220lb weight. And that was the second DT I bought and first one I enduro'd. The DT125 and 175 MX-ers remained popular in their classes for a couple more years despite the emerging pre-eminence of Yamaha's own more purposeful and much better handling IT125 and 175 racers - not least because the ITs were several hundred pounds dearer and considerably less forgiving to pilot.

Were it not for the change to the learner laws in 1982 when the maximum capacity for provisional licence

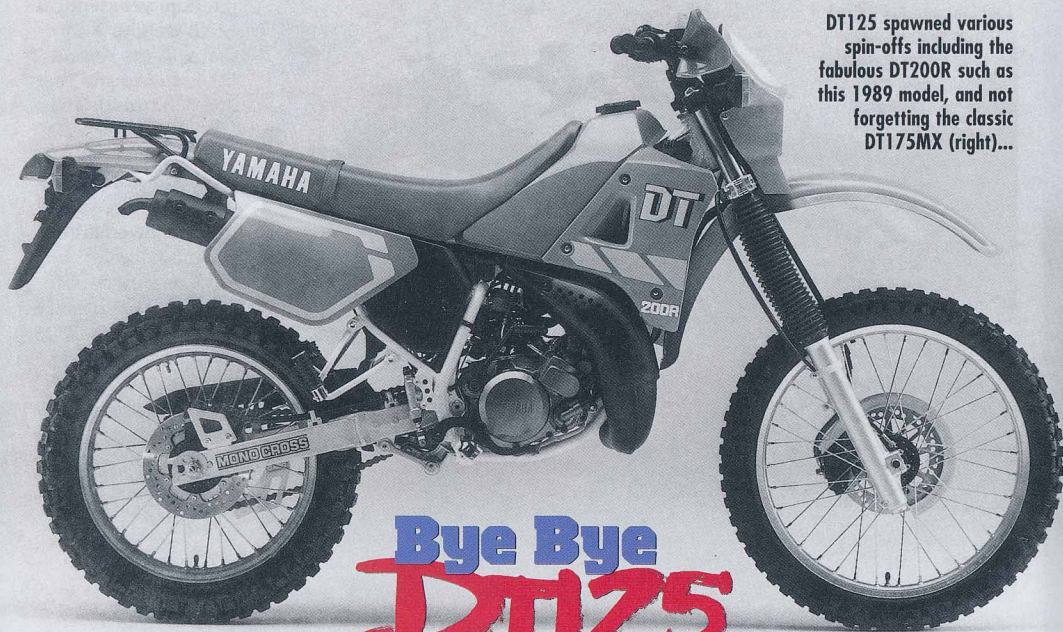
holders was reduced to 125cc, the excellent DT175MX might've continued being imported. And although it remained in production until '84, supplies here dried up well before that. Though a version of the bike is still being built in Korea or Malaysia I understand.

## Cool!

In 1983 Yamaha announced the DT125LC, an inevitable spin-off from the hugely popular RD250/350 liquid cooled-twins which were the best-selling roadsters at the time. As well as a radiator, the newest DT got proper rising rate monoshock suspension, although like the last MX-ers, the swing-arm was still painted silver in a feeble effort to fool us into believing it was fashioned from lightweight alloy.

It also got the Yamaha Energy Induction System (YEIS), which was a sort of rubber storage box which took a wedge of gas from ahead of the reed valve but behind the carb as the piston descended. When the piston rose again, it drew the charge into the reed valve, thus providing an extra power boost - at least in theory. Coincidentally, it also (claimed Yamaha) stabilised induction and throttle pick-up and improved low-end torque, especially after you'd shut off the throttle for, say, a downhill drop. This was actually a bit academic with the DT125 as although clearly capable of more, the engine was restricted to 12bhp in the UK because of the learner laws, although a flat out top speed of almost 60mph satisfied most 17 year olds.





DT125 spawned various spin-offs including the fabulous DT200R such as this 1989 model, and not forgetting the classic DT175MX (right)...

## Bye Bye DT125

In truth, even with the dubious benefits of YEIS and the monoshock - both derived from the sexy YZ125 moto-crosser - the LC wasn't really a significant improvement on the old MX (though we all considered liquid-cooling on a 125 pretty cool at the time). And it was also more expensive than most of the opposition at nearly £900. Which may be why there seem to be more air-cooled MX-ers still being ridden off-road nowadays than the younger LCs.

The picture changed quite dramatically in 1989 when we started getting the first of the R models, this time nominally based on the revvy TZR125 motor with its power-valve induction, although of course still restricted to 12bhp in the UK. The chassis was completely redesigned however and although determined off-roaders were still critical of the slightly soggy front end - a criticism that dogged the bike to this day - a cottage industry in de-restricting the engine blessed the motor with plenty more useable horsepower. Oh, and now there was a pretty decent disc brake, too.

By now the price had risen to £1349, ie £50 more than its immediate predecessor and the most expensive bike in its class. Nevertheless the DT's popularity continued growing and it was soon outselling the KMX125 which for a year or two ruled that particular roost.

From then on the story was one of steady refinement of a basically sound dual-purpose

machine, including of course their cunning use of induction technology which more than makes up (in useable torque) what it lacks in restricted top-end poke. And so eventually the bike became bigger, heavier but by any standards more impressive both off-road and on, where to the delight of the provisionals it can still whack along at a fairly respectable 70mph.

In the early '90s a few de-restricted power-valve models found their way into the country - while many owners of restricted bikes were tempted to purchase the optional kit which unleashed the full might of their learner legal machines, albeit at the expense of their warranty: Roy Simcock being amongst them.

'There was a 'black box' you could buy for about £200,' he recalls, 'but although the DT was a cracking bike off-road, once I'd passed my test I really wanted to get a bigger bike and move on. But the DT was a cheap bike to run and easy to work on, even though I had to replace the wheel bearings regularly and it needed the occasional ring job, too. It was also dead cheap to insure.'

For the more demanding trails of the Welsh uplands where Roy now rides perhaps even the extremely competent R model might run out of heft, but for some riders it more than fits the bill. A member of the Surrey TRF, John Wright bought his a year or so ago, partly to take care of commuting chores, and partly to introduce his girl-



friend and her son to the joys of motorcycling. And, as he confirms, 'It's absolutely excellent for the sort of lanes we ride around here and in Hampshire and east-Kent. It's got good mid-range and once I'd adjusted the rear suspension, it copes with just about any sort of going.'

'The main fault,' he reports, 'is the weak front brake - which really isn't up to proper off-road use. But I've put in sintered pads and fitted a stainless hose which helps. Generally speaking I can keep up with the boys on DR-Zs off-road - some of 'em can't quite believe it's only a 125!'

Apart from a speedo cable and the oil-seal

of all our desires. Now it's Kylie's bum...

*My thanks go to Dave Barrett for resurrecting his rather, ahem, well used LC which is pictured here and getting it going for the pics. Anyone interested in buying it can reach Dave on 01547 510318. Also to Bazza at Yamaha and all the others who helped in the researching of this feature. The normal 'From The Archives' feature will return next month.*

## FROM CRADLE TO GRAVEL... DT MILESTONES

### 1969 AT1 (not in UK)

11.5bhp @ 7500rpm, reed-valve, six-port barrel, autolube, twin-shock, 207lbs, 50.5in wheelbase

### 1972 AT2/AT3 (not in UK)

13bhp @ 7000rpm, otherwise as above but 220lbs and 50.3in wheelbase

### 1973 DT125

13bhp @ 7000rpm, seven port barrel, otherwise as above but 232lbs and 52in wheelbase

### 1978 DT125MX

15bhp @ 7200rpm, otherwise as above but with motocross type expansion chamber and cantilever rear suspension, weight now 200lbs, wheelbase 53in

### 1983 DT125LC

12bhp @ 7000rpm, liquid cooled, YEIS, CDI ignition, otherwise as above but with Monocross rear suspension, weight now 211lbs

### 1989 DT125R

14.1bhp @ 7000rpm, powervalve, otherwise as above but with revised rear suspension, disc brakes F & R, weight now 255lbs, wheelbase 55.6in

### 1999 DT125R

As above but barrel and powervalve re-designed to deter de-restriction

### 2003 Gone, but not forgotten...

**Montesa don't just make trials bikes. Back in the Seventies the H6 250 Enduro was a force to be reckoned with. Naturally, we thought it would be ideal for this year's Cambrian Rally...**

# The Full Monty

**E**ver get the feeling you're being set up? That nagging doubt in the back of your mind that says there's something not quite right. Perhaps you've felt it when looking at a bike you were thinking of buying. Or when your 'mate' said that the river crossing 'really isn't that deep', despite it having rained non-stop for the past fortnight. Well, I had that very feeling not so long ago, and it was all down to the scheming mind of TBM's illustrious editor.

You see, ever since he first rode the Cambrian Rally (way back in 1995 aboard a BMW R1100GS) his Editorship has gained something of a reputation for wishing to compete on some, er... 'alternative' machinery. Who could forget last year's assault on the 80cc class aboard the screaming little 50cc Motorhispania Furia? And so, this year, he was all lined up to ride a 1975 Montesa 250 Enduro H6 on the 120- or so mile event.

Reader Dick Tett had visited our stand at the Dirt Rider Expo last year and offered the loan of his bike, and Si was (or so he claimed) very much looking forward to piloting the classic Spanish machine. Yours truly would simply shadow the Ed aboard a rather more modern machine to snap a few photos and take a pleasant day's ride through the Welsh countryside. At least that was the plan.

All went well, until the week prior to the event. Tuning in to the BBC's weather reports, it seemed that the beautifully dry springtime



**Montesa 250 Enduro H6**

we'd been experiencing was about to come to a premature end. It was going to chuck it down, and the weather map showed a large black cloud (with matching lightning bolt) slap bang over the Eppynt ranges where the Cambrian was due to take place. Oh, joy.

Little did I know things were about to get even worse. Coincidentally, about the same time as the weather girl prophesised a diluvian downpour of biblical proportions, the Ed mysteriously developed a slight sore throat and complained that he was feeling extremely poorly. Despite his protestations that he would definitely be well enough to ride at the weekend, in the back of my mind I had the nagging feeling that I'd be heading off down the M4 alone.



but I don't reckon you'll have time to change 'em now.'

Aargh!

Before I could clasp my hands around his throat the phone rang, and he darted into the next room. It was Blez on his way down to the Cambrian telephoning to say that he was stuck on the M4 with a slipping clutch on his Beemer. Situation normal.

As it turned out, the Sunday morning wasn't all that bad weather-wise. In true journalistic fashion, preparation had been limited to stocking up on choccy bars and a night on the town. At least this time I'd remembered to take my riding boots with me, but that's another story. Despite brilliant sunshine blessing the rest of south Wales, the German Village (an MoD mock-up on the Eppynt ranges which forms the paddock and start-line for the Cambrian) was as bleak as ever. Under an overcast sky, a cold wind whistled through the gaps between parked vans and burnt-out tanks.

### Dick Tat

After a quick lap of the paddock I found Dick busily preparing the bikes. Introductions over, I turned my attention to the bike. And once again a slight feeling of trepidation washed over me.

'You're looking a little worried,' said Dick. And I had to admit that I was. Looking at the mirror finish on the bike, combined with my experience of classic machinery, I wondered what I had let myself in for. The Montesa was absolutely mint. There wasn't a trace of dirt or grime to be seen, and it was clear that Dick'd lavished a great deal of both time and money on the project. The seat had been re-covered, the tank repainted. The engine was a brilliant gloss black and the forks had a beautiful bare alloy finish. Lord alone knows why Dick was loaning us his bike. Thankfully he eased my conscience - slightly.

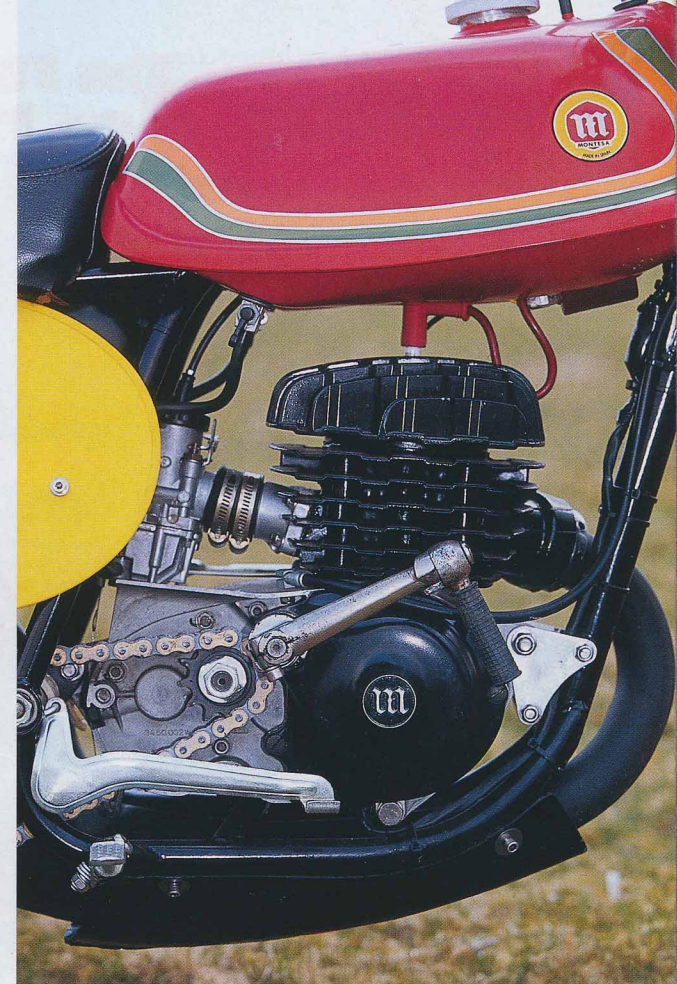
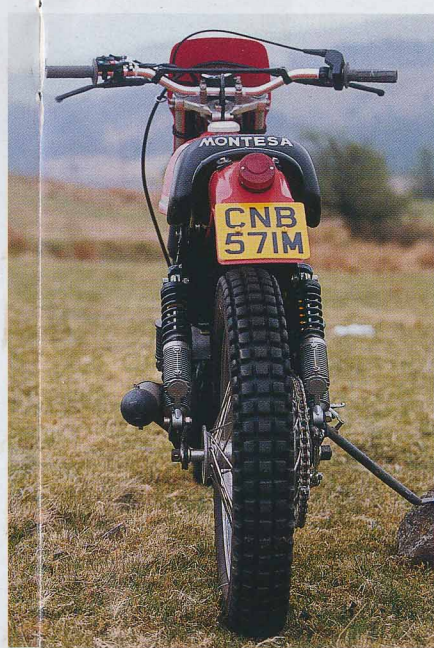
'It's built to be ridden', he stated. 'I'm gonna do some long distance trials on it, events like that. It only makes about 18hp. I've got the KTM 400 to go twin-shock racing on.'

Sat next to the Mont was the elderly Katosh. Looking a little rough around the edges, it was clear that it had seen some heavy use. It was to be Dick's mount for the rally.

'I bought it last year' he said. 'And haven't had chance to rebuild it yet. It's had a service, done a race and here it is.'

Having reeled off the obligatory films of shots of the Montesa, I went back to the van to don some riding gear and contemplate my fate. '18hp?', I thought. 'I'm sure Si said it had 28bhp. Why the little...'

Upon my return to Dick's trailer he was



Beautiful in its simplicity, each component is immaculately finished. From the analogue speedo to the heavily finned motor, the bare alloy forks to the piggy-back Marzochis, the detailing is simply stunning...



Saturday morning dawned and Si phoned me at home. 'Oooh', he moaned, 'I'm still feeling really ill. You'll have to ride the Mont. Come round later and pick up the camera gear'. And before I could offer up an alternative, the phone went dead.

### Restoration Project

'Dick's just finished the restoration' the editor managed to croak awkwardly, when I arrived at his house, 'so the bike may need a bit of running in. But it should be great fun. I reckon it's probably putting out about 28hp.' He then handed me an old piece of notepaper with a couple of telephone numbers on it. Scrawled next to them were the words 'take MT21 tyres'.

'Er, what's this all about?' I quizzed him.

'Ah, yes,' grinned the Ed, a little bit of colour re-appearing in his cheeks, 'the thing's on trials tyres. I was gonna' take some trail tyres to fit

# The Full MONTY



fuelling up the bikes. 'Got enough for the day', I enquired. It was a loaded question. Not being in our regular van I'd forgotten to bring a jerry can of fuel with me.

'I hope so,' replied Dick, as a small pool of fuel collected under the KTM. Uh, oh. At some point in its life the KTM's tank had split down its seam, and someone had 'repaired' it with what looked like tiling grout.

'I've never completely filled the tank before', explained Dick. 'Hopefully once the level drops it'll be okay.' We had our doubts. With a 40 mile lap ahead of us before refuelling it would be touch and go. So we hatched a plan. Filling a plastic petrol can, we wrapped it in a carrier bag disguise, and lashed it to the back of the Katosh.

Diminutive Mont felt most at home on the gentler trails...



It was neither subtle, nor secure.

'You know what?' I questioned. 'That looks just like we've wrapped a petrol can in a carrier bag and strapped it to the back. They'll never let us past the start line'. So we resorted to plan B. I would wear the camera bag and Dick would wear

my rucksack - containing the petrol can. And none would be any the wiser. My how we laughed at the thought of Dick setting the fastest test times, assisted by a blazing 'jet pack' of fuel.

Of course, all this messing about meant that we were late for the start. The Mont sounded really sweet as it fired into life, the KTM slightly more raucous as it fired its exhaust packing out of the silencer. It looked like the motor had sucked in a chicken. In reality, Dick had overpacked the can to help keep the noise down. As we rolled towards the start I checked the brakes. The drum rear locked up a treat. The drum front did, well, nothing really. Boy, was I looking forward to those high-speed fire roads.

Approaching the start, the row of bikes that

should have been behind us were sat on the line, waiting for their minute. The starting marshal pointed at us, and waved us through past the clocks and onto the course. Dick rode in front, setting a gentle pace as we reached the first 'obstacle', a series of water splashes. The first was just a couple of inches deep. The second however, was not. I could hear the unmistakable bark of a fast approaching thumper, and stopped before the water to let them past. Unfortunately, out in front, Dick was mid-way through the 'puddle' as the DR-Z flew past. He emerged the other

side covered from head-to-toe in muddy water, though despite being drenched had a huge grin on his face. From that point on I could tell it would be an enjoyable day.

## Onwards and Upwards

With Dick leading the way, we bounced across the moorland and onto the first of the fire roads. Stones clattered against the Mont's fibreglass exhaust guard, its motor was singing along nicely, and I was getting used to the heavy clutch and lack of suspension and braking. Dick fired the KTM up the hills, as I hung back, struggling to see in the clouds of dust. The odd missed gear also hindered my progress, and I winced every time the revs sky-rocketed. Standing on the narrow pegs gave a slightly better view over the dust as the wind seemed to be blowing it down the hillside. Ahead I could just make out the silhouette of the KTM, and I pressed on hoping that there weren't any turns in-between.

Reaching the first special stage, Dick leant the stand-less KTM against a bank and we inspected both of the bikes. The Mont seemed to holding together well, but the tank was still leaking on the 400. 'Probably hasn't used enough to get down past the leak,' figured Dick. We made sure it wasn't dripping anywhere near the exhaust and wandered off, chatting with the DR-Z pilot who'd soaked Dick earlier.

The first untimed test was surprisingly short. No fire roads, no scary drops off to the side of the

track. Instead it was a dry and bumpy sprint. We met up at the finishing point and set off across the ranges. Only at this point did I realise that the course was almost identical to that of last year's event, only run in reverse. Thanks to the recent dry weather, the going seemed a lot faster than last year. Or maybe it was because, unlike last year, I wasn't shadowing a zinging 50cc trailie.

Shortly after starting off we stopped again. Having glanced at the speedo, I'd noticed that the needle wasn't moving and that the cable was flapping around by the front wheel. With the headlamp off, the speedo was removed and placed in the rucksack, alongside our spare fuel.

Back onto the fire roads and Dick again shot off into the lead. Up ahead were a group of riders on somewhat more modern tackle, and Dick was using all of the KTM's 400ccs to chase them down. When we reached the second special stage he apologised for his actions. 'Sorry about that. But I just had to pass a new un'. I just wish I could've seen their faces as he came by - no doubt showering them with leaking petrol and exhaust packing!

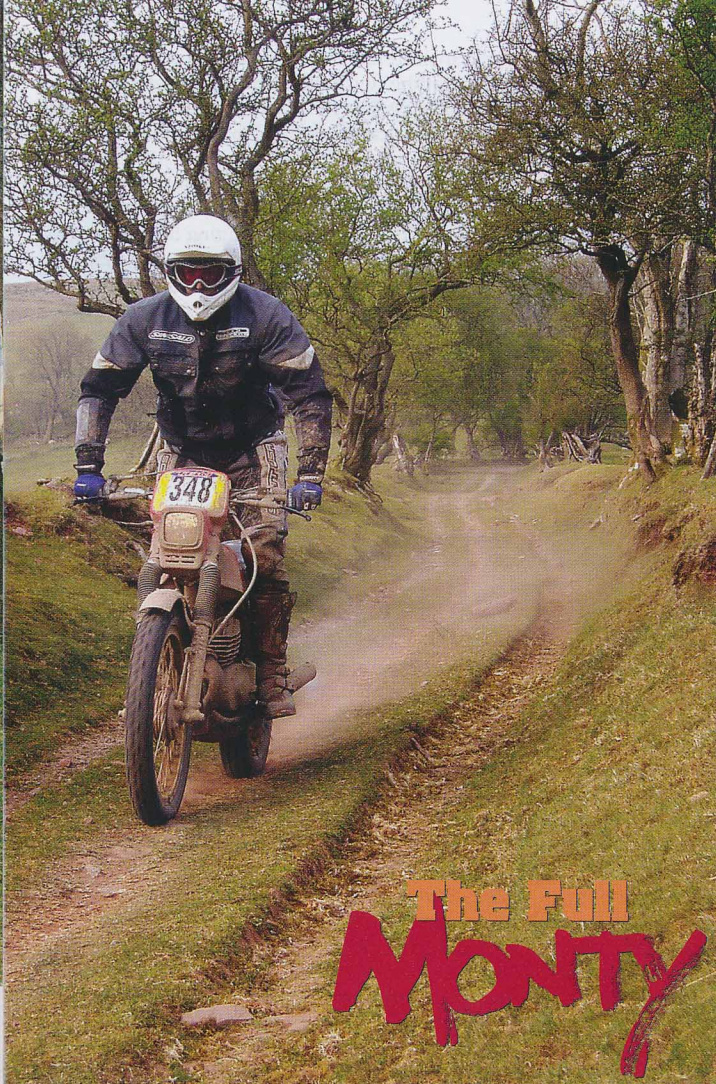
As we sat munching chocolate, awaiting our 'minutes' a marshal arrived on a KTM 200. 'Anything to watch out for on this section?' Dick asked him.

'Nothing really,' answered the man from WTRA, 'apart from the first bit of water. It's quite deep but you can go to the right of it.'

Dick had warned me that he didn't know how waterproof the Montesa was, and that he was a little concerned about the water splashes that lay ahead on the tank course. He needn't have worried - I had no intention of getting any wetter than I had to. The Mont's low slung exhaust had already gurgled its disapproval through an earlier water hazard and I'm sure Dick didn't want his bike sucking up a lungful.

Skirting around the first water splash, I found the way blocked by a steep sided ditch. Pausing for a second, I selected first and zipped down into the hole. Thankfully, the little Mont made short work of it. I later found out that the line wasn't quite that far to the right - that was actually a trench dug by the army.

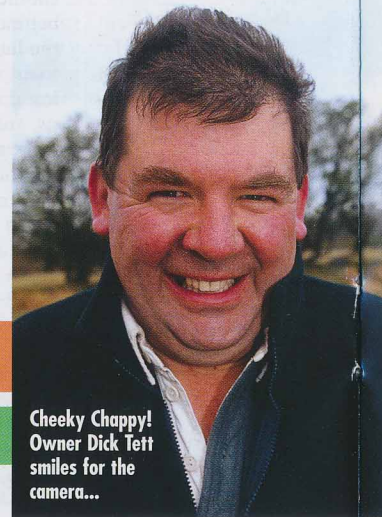
With one lap completed we made our way back to the trailer to refuel. Unscrewing the knurled metal fuel cap and peering into the tank showed just how frugal the H6 had been. Either that, or the long tank held a surprising amount of fuel. By comparison, the big ol' KTM had guzzled almost all its juice. Sure, the leak didn't help matters, but that had long since dried up. So we half emptied the petrol from the rucksack, filled the Mont from a jerry can and gave the bikes a quick once over.



## The Full Monty

### Second Time Around

Yet again we were late for the 'start'. The same line-up as earlier were waiting for their minute, and we were simply waved past. Dick reckoned the Montesa was probably run in by now (perhaps he heard all those missed gears) and so now I could rev the thing a bit higher. This new turn of speed certainly helped matters. Because whereas before I'd hit every bump, now as the suspension unloaded I could bounce over some of them with my feet off the pegs. A lack of virtually any damping from either end (at least compared to modern suspension) meant that the H6 acted less like a motorcycle, more like Tigger on a spacehopper. When the going turned rough and bumpy, all I could do was hold on for the ride.



Cheeky Chappy! Owner Dick Teft smiles for the camera...

But when everything smoothed out the suspension proved to be amazingly comfortable. Combined with the lightweight and trials-like steering lock the bike proved surprisingly nimble.

The weather was great, the riding excellent, and the bike an absolute gem. I couldn't believe how much I was enjoying myself. 'Si would've loved this', I might've thought. But I didn't, because I was having way too much fun. Everyone seemed to be smiling at the sight of these old classics, and one of the marshals (Yoshi Adams), gave us a thumbs up as

Dick and I queued for the first timed special.

Blasting away from the timing lights, Dick's KTM roosted stones high into the air. Once he was clear, I lined up and awaited the green light. When it came, I dumped the clutch and let all of those 18 ponies loose through the rear tyre! Shortshifting up to the first corner, I figured it best to go in slow and exit... well, almost as slow, rather than over-cook the turn on the brakes. In the distance I could see the cloud of dust thrown up by the KTM and tried to catch up. The relatively straight course meant that once the motor was up to speed, all I had to do was hang on for the ride. However, up in front Dick was slowing and it wasn't long before I was riding blind. The dust from the 400 hung in the air and there was

no way I could get close. Not knowing exactly where the track went I hung back. As we neared the end of the test I could see the reason for Dick dropping his pace: He too was caught behind someone, and had also backed off rather than risking a crash.

With just a 90 degree right turn before the end of the stage, I let my concentration slip. 'I wonder if I could pass them both before the timing beams', was my rather ambitious thought as I entered the corner way too fast. In a desperate bid to keep the front-end planted I tried in vain to get somewhere near the front of the bike. Unfortunately with a raked out front-end that Peter Fonda would've been proud of, the Mont was having none of it. Needless to say, I went straight on. Up a bank, down a hole, and eventually back onto the track, by this time Dick had finished the stage and was sitting patiently waiting for me to arrive.

This time it was my turn to race after the modern bikes. Time on the fire roads was spent baiting other riders through the turns, knowing full well that they'd come flying past on the straights. However, there was one section that always scared the bejeezus out of me. It was towards the end of the lap, a downhill section past some logging machinery. The little Mont would be humming along at a reasonable pace when a deceptive right-hand kink would 'appear' from behind a log pile. Of course, everyone knows that you should look in the direction you want to go, yet for some strange reason I found myself, with the back brake locked up, sliding towards the edge of the track and staring at the bush that grew there. Every lap, Dick led through this section, and every lap I had the same thought; 'At least if he's in front he can't see me trashing his bike'. Thankfully, it never came to that, and the Mont would slow just in time for me to turn it away from the danger.

### Final Lap

Back in the pits, we prepared for the third and final lap. The Katosh was just about running on fumes after a markedly quicker lap, and the little H6 required more than a splash and dash. We tipped what we had left in the jerry can into the 400. It didn't even reach the leaky seam. Spying what appeared to be a better equipped team, I ambled over and blagged some fuel. As it turns out one of their bikes had expired and they were more than happy to help us out. The fuel had even been pre-mixed. Cheers, guys.

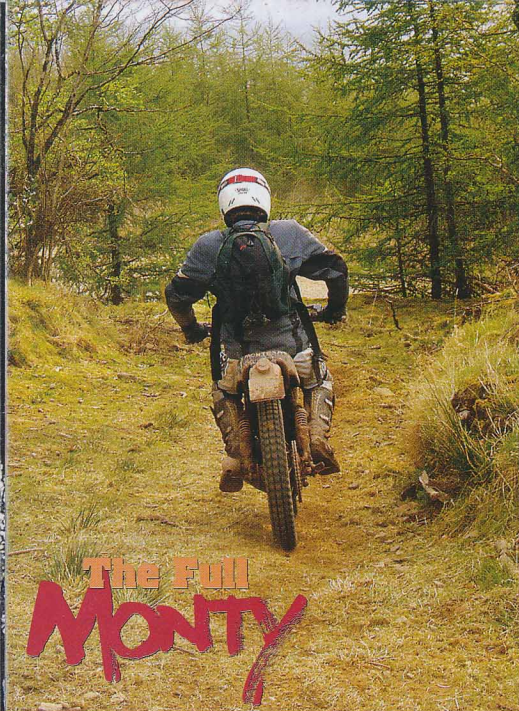
For the third time we reached the startline late. The same row as before were lined up awaiting their start time (we were nothing if not consistent), and once again we rode around them and

onto the course. Impressed at how well the bikes were running, we made great time in getting to the special stage. The queue to start the test was relatively short, and I was soon zipping along, trying to catch up with Dick and his 400. Three quarters of the way through the test was a slight left-hand bend, nothing to slow down for instead you could ride the slight berm that had formed at the edge of the track. The previous lap, I'd caught my foot on something here though somehow I'd forgotten about this unseen hazard. As I barrelled into the corner with reckless abandon I hit the 'berm' and immediately had my foot wrenched from the footpeg. Whatever it was had caught my leg, twisting both knee and ankle, and lifted me clean off the bike. The first thing that went through my head was 'ouch, that felt nasty'. The second was littered with expletives as I landed my unintentional 'Superman' and tried to regain some semblance of control. Thankfully, the forgiving nature of the Mont meant that it tracked straight, even pointing the right way down the course, and I continued at a somewhat reduced pace to the end of the stage. Dick was sat waiting as I turned the corner out of the test. I regaled my tale of freestyle MX antics, and we agreed to ride at a somewhat reduced pace. Luckily, and despite being the only TBM staffer who doesn't wear knee braces, my knee felt fine and it was only my ankle which was giving me any gip.

Over the next few miles the ankle got progressively better, and my attention turned to watching Dick wheeling the KTM up the hills. Despite the seemingly all-or-nothing power delivery, Dick was doing a great job of lofting the front wheel and carrying it a good distance. As he later explained, 'I couldn't help it. The front just comes up of its own accord'. By contrast the Mont simply wouldn't wheelie at all.

### Stand & Deliver

Shooting photos (and crashing into trees, but we'll gloss over that) on the last lap meant that we arrived at the final test almost as they were packing up. Dick decided to take on the first water hazard and rode cautiously into the gloop. As I pulled alongside (on the grass bank, I should add) it looked like he'd stalled in the depths, but he gave me the thumbs up and I scooted on ahead. I'd picked my line from the last lap and was having an absolute hoot. Part of the test looked like small, dried out bomb holes and I was sure that the quick riders would've been jumping between them as if they were table-tops. The little H6 didn't quite afford me this luxury, and bounced its way in and out of the bumps, the Marzocchi suspension working flat-out. On more than one occasion the back-end stepped out of



day. Having tried, unsuccessfully, to secure it with cable ties, I simply hooked it back with my foot every time it fell down. And it fell down a lot. So much in fact, that I really ought to thank all those people who pointed it out during the course of the day, no doubt saving me from a certain crash.

### Picture This

A couple more quick stops for photos meant that we were also pretty late getting back to the German Village. We were so behind time in fact, that once we got to the end they'd run out of finisher's medals. Most people were either packing up and leaving or enjoying the free buffet that the organisers had laid on. After a quick sandwich and a cup of coffee, we loaded the bikes into Dick's box-trailer. I was actually quite sad to hand the Montesa back. I'd had such a good time on the bike, and it was certainly beautiful to look at, not to mention astonishingly robust. The bike had suffered nothing more than the aforementioned speedo and sidestand niggles, a testament to both the original design and Dick's workmanship. And despite its fuel leak and a slight carb problem, the KTM was beautifully reliable, too.

When the results arrived at TBM Towers, I must admit I was ever so slightly disappointed. 48th in class was not quite as high as I'd hoped. Then I noticed which class I was in. 'Sportsbike! How could that be? It's a 30 year old bike on trials tyres and I was up against WR450s and KTM525s ferchrissakes!' Last year I managed to wangle my way into the trail bike class riding an unsilenced XR250R. Do I sense the scheming mind of Editor Melber at work again, or am I being a little too paranoid? Anyway if I'd have been put in with the trailies, me and my Mont would've finished 16th in the Trail Bike class. A far more respectable result.

So next year I'm going to repay Si the favour. We've already got a daft bike lined up (a 500 two-stroke) and I've volunteered to ride it. But then again, like the Montesa, it too has a rather ineffective front brake, and I'm sure we've got some trials tyres in the shed that'd fit it a treat. Now all I've got to do is perfect my excuse; 'Aw, Si. I can't possibly ride. Niggling ankle injury from last year's event, y' see. You'll have to ride in my place.' Yep, that ought to do it.

*Huge thanks to Dick Tett for the loan of his immaculate Montesa 250 Enduro H6, for riding shotgun and for helping with the photos. And thanks to WTRA for keeping a place open for us on such an enjoyable event.*

line over a jump, only for the remarkable little bike to pull straight on landing. It was hard to think of more challenging terrain for the old bike, and it was coping amazingly well.

The run down to the end of the test was fast, bumpy, and steep. After the timing beams the course turned sharp left through a gateway, and I'd noticed many riders were slowing down on the test to try and make the turn. This obviously cost them vital milliseconds, and there was no way I was going to lose any amount of time. Descending the hill on full bore, I had no intention of shutting off. Flat out through the timing beams, I over shot the corner and ran on down the fire road. Eventually I got the bike stopped, and after a quick check that no-one was following my route, I turned and headed back to the gate. As I did so a marshal called me over to the timing vehicle. 'Oh, God. Here it comes', I thought, 'Not sticking to the track, wrong way down the course (although it wasn't actually on the course) What's it gonna be?' He was clearly shouting something.

'Your stand's down, mate!'

'Eh?' I could barely hear him under my crash helmet.

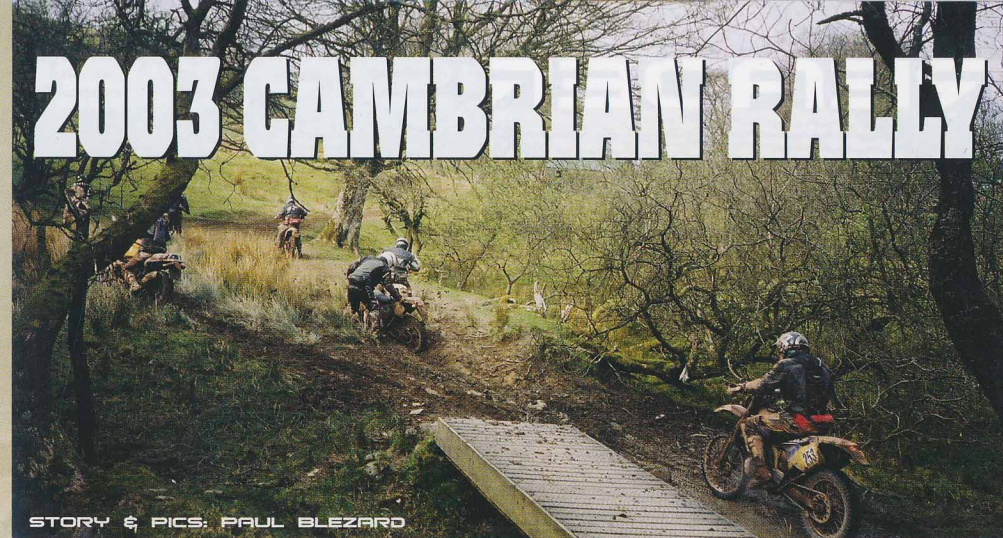
'Your stand's down'.

I looked down to see the sidestand stuck out on full extension.

'Oh, right. Cheers', I replied.

The sidestand had actually been playing up all

# 2003 CAMBRIAN RALLY



As usual, this year's Cambrian Rally attracted a 'full house' of 350 entrants.

After last year's successful move to the mock-German 'FIBUA' village on the Eppynt ranges, this battle-scarred collection of empty breeze-block buildings was once again used as the rally base. The 35 mile, three lap course was also very similar to 2002 but this year ran in the opposite direction.

However, with Easter Day falling very late in the calendar, combined with an unusually dry April, dust was much more of a problem. With only 15 seconds between riders, the organisers (WTRA) felt they had no choice but to make last minute changes to the two special stages. The first was completely re-located while the second was drastically shortened. While this reduced the challenge, it was undoubtedly a wise decision, especially since there turned out to be a surfeit of riders hurling themselves at the scenery...

Under the influence of 'Red Mist' rather than red dust, several riders failed to make a simple left hand bend on the firm tarmac of Route 60 and one of them actually demolished the fence a good 50 metres further on, prompting an unscheduled trip in an ambulance. An Irish rider who shall remain reckless, sorry nameless, first knocked another rider off with a completely idiotic overtake, and then punished himself shortly afterwards by riding off the side of the mountain. By all accounts he was very lucky to get away with 'only' three weeks in hospital. Even marshal Phil Wilkinson came a cropper shortly after help-



ing a rider with a broken collarbone.

For those with more sense of self-preservation than the average lemming, this year's Cambrian was one of the easiest ever to complete on a monster trailie and it was good to see a decent turn out of big 'uns. There were plenty of

Boxer BMW twins, several Teners and a brace each of KTM Adventures and Cagiva Elefants plus the odd Dominator and KLR 650.

In the very first Cambrian Rally, back in 1994, Katrina Price beat most of the men on an Army Armstrong MT500, but this year she took the Premier award for the first time on a CRM 250 trail bike. Annika Sorenstam eat your heart out! Katrina was also the third fastest of the whole entry, with only Sports class winner Andy Winterbourne and Andy Harris, sports runner-up, going quicker (but only a trail bike can take the Premier). Bryn Largue was trail bike runner up just ahead of Richard Brown who was third trailbike and best 250.

The John Deacon Memorial Award for best trail bike over 600cc went to Mark Harris on a CCM 604 and Russ Olivant was fastest 250-600 on a DR-Z400. As ever, Pat Tighe took the multi-cylinder award on the Africa Twin - he rides over from Ireland each year to compete. David Brown actually beat Pat on a couple of stages and was the fastest GS Boxer by far. Gill Myers also humiliated plenty of blokes on her ancient XT350 to take Best Lady. The Cambrian Rally remains one of the most enjoyable events on the calendar. Thanks to all at WTRA.



## The Wright Stuff

**When Kiwi reader Simon Wright set about building his own unique XT350-based special he knew he wanted something out of the ordinary. This is the story (in his own words) of that machine and how it came to be built...**

**T**his story begins many years ago in New Zealand. I was 14, bored with school and looking for excitement. A friend of mine had bought himself a very old, twin-pipe CZ road bike, and with the addition of 16 inch knobbies, we began our dirt biking 'careers' - careering around the NZ countryside.

The CZ was dire at anything other than blasting along the beach, so I started looking for a bike of my own. I ended up with a Kawasaki F81M -

a 250cc motocrosser that had won the NZ Nationals a few years before. It was a very early design - with trick items that included three-position Hatta forks and a disc-valve engine. Fun as it was, it was very much a compromise. And me and my mate decided that as nobody was building the dirt bike of our dreams, we would each build our own.

So my friend built a nice trailbike using a CR250 Elsinore frame and running gear teamed

up with an MT250 engine. For those of you too young to remember all this ancient history, the MT was the early Honda trail bike that looked vaguely like an Elsinore motocrosser but had none of the trick bits. It was as bad a bike as the CR was good. The engine, however, was okay in a mild and retiring sort of way.

However, I was more interested in thumpers, and started thinking that a Honda SL125 motor in a CR125 frame might be fun. I had the engine already, and soon found an old Honda CR125 Red Rocket chassis which would do the job. Much cutting and welding later, the SL motor was slotted into the CR and off I rode.

The problem however was that the CR-SL hybrid just wasn't exciting enough. Some serious

engine work was required, so I bored it out until the liner was perilously thin, slapped in a Honda CB750 piston (minus most of its skirt to avoid hitting the crank), and put an 8mm plate between the barrel and crankcases to prevent the piston hitting the valves. Miraculously, it worked pretty well and never blew up despite some serious thrashing. The output was now up to about three horsepower!

Fast-forward to the year 2000 (missing out lots of specials, one-offs and assorted enduro bikes), I am 42 years of age and haven't ridden much in ten years. The Nineties had been spent in the UK, where the sheer difficulty of finding a place to ride had pretty much put me off dirt bikes - although I did buy an old Maico 490 Alpha 1 that I intended to restore but never got round to. I needed a project...

### What's Cooking?

The idea was to buy something that would keep me occupied during the winter, spanning happily away in the garage, and that I could ride in the summer. Cost had to be kept down, as a large mortgage and a family was (and still are) the first priority. This meant no real enduro bikes, so in the end I decided that my tried and tested formula of motocross chassis and four-stroke trailbike motor would be the answer. Light weight and strength combined with tractability - perfect. Bear in mind that all this was before the latest crop of modern four-strokes had hit the second-hand market at what I call realistic prices.

I eventually located an unfinished project that looked interesting. Basically it was a 1986 KTM 250 motocrosser chassis that a chap was trying to re-engine with a Yamaha XT350 motor. It was pretty rough, really no further forward than just testing ideas. However, it came with a spare XT350 for bits, so I shelled out £600, shoved it all in the back of a rented van and began the long trek back to Scotland where I now live.

Once home, the enormity of the project hit me. The previous owner had tried to solve the problem of slotting the engine in the frame by offsetting it quite a lot. This meant that there wasn't a whole lot of engine on the left, but a big lump of it hanging out on the right! This clearly wasn't going to work, so a clean sheet of paper approach was required.

Whilst the thinking process was underway, I rebuilt the spare XT and sold it, the money from that going towards the main project. The first major problem was chain alignment. The KTM



Battery mounts behind the sidepanel on a homemade bracket...

had the chain on the right, and of course the XT, being Japanese, had the drive on the left. This meant swapping everything over - and that meant flipping over the non-symmetrical swingarm as well, in order to get the rear wheel in alignment with the centreline of the frame. Suddenly I was into major surgery as all the suspension bracketry had to be swapped over - the linkage mounts now being on the top of the inverted swingarm rather than underneath.

As well as all this, the previous owner had cut the frame beneath the steering head, turning the double cradle frame into a single downtube to accommodate the twin exhausts on the XT engine. He had just braised on a bit of thin steel pipe, so all that had to be replaced as well.

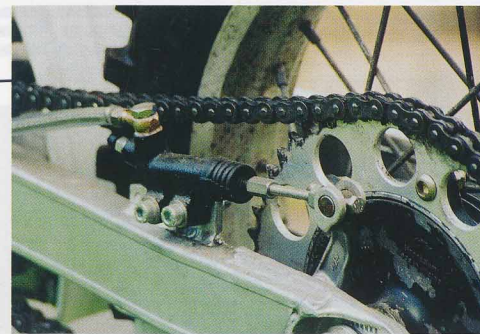
As my welding skills are pretty average, I needed to entrust this work to a specialist. So I had Cobra Conversions of Denny carry

out the work - they have the jigs required to ensure the finished product is straight. For the front downtube, I used a section of the original XT frame that had come as part of the package.

## Assembly Process

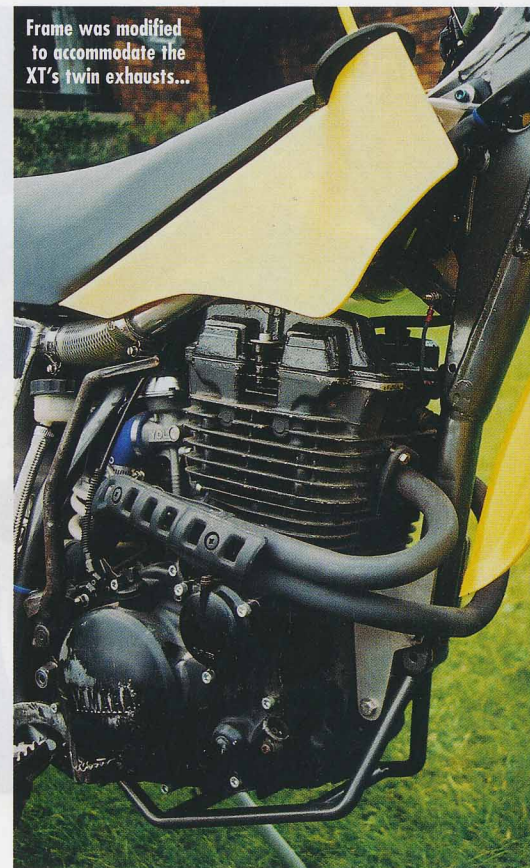
With the welding completed and the swingarm and linkage conversion now done, I set about the task of mating engine, frame and final drive. After many ingenious engineering solutions had been thought of and dismissed, I decided that simple is best. Use a damn big spacer. Several prototype spacers later, I had everything in alignment to within a millimetre.

As most of the engine mounts had gone with the double-cradle part of the chassis, new ones were fabricated from aluminium plate. A head-steady was devised to mate with some strengthening welded in below the frame backbone to



Waterproof switches isolate the ignition and fuel pump...

Frame was modified to accommodate the XT's twin exhausts...



triangulate the steering head and compensate for the increased weight of the engine.

With the engine in place, and the final drive sorted out, it was time to think about the rear brake. On this model KTM, a twin-leading-shoe drum brake is fitted, and of course this is on the same side as the sprocket - now on the left. I thought about replacing the entire back end with one from a newer KTM (the following model year had a disc set-up), but that was going to cost a bit, and the object was to stick to a budget - so I set about sorting out a linkage. It quickly became apparent that a mechanical one was going to be a nightmare, so I decided to go for a hydraulic set-up. The big problem was finding an actuator.

I fitted an old DT125 brake pedal, and linked this up to a DT125 master cylinder, mounted on yet another custom alloy bracket. The master cylinder got a new set of seals, and I found an

old reservoir that used to grace a Suzuki road bike. However, the problem of the actuator was still causing a headache. Despite searching high and low through motor factors' parts books, hydraulic component catalogues, and engineers supply directories, the answer wasn't obvious. Well not at the price I was looking for, anyway.

I eventually settled on a pneumatic actuator, which looked really good and was very light. However, the seals couldn't cope with the pressure the system delivered, and so it was ditched and eventually a suitable replacement found in the form of a clutch slave cylinder from a 1977 Toyota HiAce van. Not as pretty, but she does the job just fine!

With the brake sorted, it just remained for me to build an alloy torque link, and fabricate a chain tensioner. A fully floating rear brake system wasn't required, as there is no mechanical connection



Cobra exhaust was the only tuning part Simon could find for the XT...



between the brake pedal and the wheel, thanks to the hydraulic system.

## Fuels Rush In

With the basic chassis and engine components sorted out, it was time to start filling the holes. The first issue was a fuel tank - the original was never going to fit with the big four-stroke lump installed, and there wasn't a chance of finding a suitable replacement. I eventually decided to put the petrol tank under the seat - the reasoning being that it would lower the centre of gravity and aid handling. The downside is of course, that now I needed a fuel pump!

A few days of cutting and pasting resulted in a nice cardboard mock-up of a fuel tank that fitted where the airbox used to be. As I needed to maximise the amount of fuel I could carry, I had to fit it closely in the space available, taking into account all the factors such as swingarm travel, chain path, rear shock movement, etc. The resulting shape was thus quite complex, and looked

like it would cost a fortune to build. Therefore, with 'budget' firmly in mind, I paid a visit to my local aluminium stockists, who by now were getting to know me very well!

Armed with some alloy sheet, I cut out the various shapes and bent them to fit each other. I should perhaps mention at this point that, at the time I had no real work facilities - no bench, no vice, just hand tools and a sense of adventure! The alloy was bent to shape using doors, bits of wood, bricks and a hydraulic car jack - surely one of the finest feats of engineering masochism ever attempted (TBM exploits in the backs of vans on the way to enduros excepted, of course).

It worked, though, and I took all the bits to a local welder who was reputed to be very good. When I got the finished article back a few weeks later, it looked great and only had 18 holes through which the water I tested it with poured! Back to the welder, this time testing with water revealed only eight holes. Progress! A new welder was found - two days later, no leaks.



Above right: Underseat tank is linked to a marine filler with large bore pipe...

The tank fitted well, one small problem though - how was I going to get the fuel into the tank? I didn't want to have to lift the seat to fill the tank, so a large diameter hose and pipe system was routed up the frame backbone (where the tank used to be) to a marine fuel filler funnel and cap (very ingenious).

The next problem was the fuel pump - a small one was found at a used motorcycle parts place (from an FZR400 if memory serves), and fitted below the tank level, tucked in a small hole under the rear of the engine crankcases. A handlebar-mounted switch controls this. The problem here is that the fuel pump tends to deliver too much pressure, forcing the float valve in the carburettor open and venting fuel. The solution was to insert a T-piece in the fuel line near the carburettor, with one line going to the carb and the other routing fuel back to the filler cap area, from where it can flow back to the tank. A small restriction in the line results in there always being a (small) positive pressure in the line to the carb.



A proper fuel regulator would doubtless be a better solution, but it would add weight (and expense of course).

## Air Play

Right, what next? Oh yes - the fuel tank is sitting where the airbox used to be. Problem. Worse still, the dual-carb set-up was going to make solving that problem even harder. Eventually, working in a very tight space indeed, I ran two 90-degree pipes back from the carbs to an alloy plenum chamber and from there ran a large diameter pipe up the rear main chassis tube and along the backbone to a cylindrical foam air filter. Sounds easy, but it took weeks of experimentation with silicone piping and yet more custom alloy parts. Baffles were fashioned (from an old drinks bottle) to protect the filter from mud and water spray.

Of course, there is a downside and that is that the large intake pipe tends to intrude slightly on the left side of the bike - but given that there isn't the width of a fuel tank any more, so far I have found it to be fairly inconsequential when riding the bike - in fact the kick-start sticks out farther on the other side! The benefit of this system is that the air filter is now up near the steering head, and should survive deep water a lot better than one located under the seat.

As the stock exhaust was both heavy and restrictive, and didn't really work with the shape of the KTM chassis, a new one was needed. I eventually settled on an alloy Cobra ISDE pipe that I imported from the USA. It appears to be

the only aftermarket pipe available for the venerable XT - which funnily enough was until very recently still available new in the US, although dropped years ago by UK dealers.

So, we have fuel, exhaust, induction and...? Ah yes... electrics!

A new wiring loom was built up, using waterproof connectors sourced from the USA. With the XT electrical system, I could have decent lighting so I installed a UFO Oregon headlight/flasher combination, and an Acerbis enduro light at the rear. The original CDI unit and coil were plumbed in and mounted on yet more custom alloy brackets. An old handlebar switchblock was found at a second-hand parts dealer - it proved quite difficult finding one that had all the functions in one switchblock. Finally, some waterproof switches were obtained to control the fuel pump and ignition kill switch.

Next, I needed to modify the seat, as the original KTM seat ended at the (now missing) tank. I wanted the seat to extend as far forward as possible, so mated parts from several seats together to form a base, and then cut and glued various bits of old foam I had lying about to form the basic shape, which I covered with a piece of new, grey vinyl. The shape is not particularly eye pleasing, but that is because I deliberately designed it to be relatively soft and comfy for long trail rides.

Last but not least, a new set of plastics were required, so some sheets of compressed PVC were obtained, and cut and shaped to fit. The result looks a bit agricultural, but does the job and was cheap. Actually, shaping the plastics was a tricky business and I will probably refine this area more, in time. The frame has been sandblasted and powder-coated in metallic grey - I think I was inspired by CCM for that. Most fasteners are stainless steel or alloy. The footpegs are wide, stainless items.



## And Finally...

There are still some jobs to do - I need to get the wheels trued, and it still doesn't quite run right - probably due to all the changes in the induction and exhaust systems. The problem here is that there are virtually no tuning bits available for XT350s - forget about jets, for example. I will probably try to reshape the seat, play with the plastics, and take a look at different fuel delivery systems - I am even vaguely considering some sort of fuel injection system as a future project. With this bike I can make changes all the time, refining this and re-thinking that. The suspension needs a good sort-out, too.

Naturally, the bike will never be a potent enduro weapon, or even as capable as modern trail bikes can be. It was however, incredibly cheap. All up, it will have cost me less than £1000. And it is also very satisfying to have a unique bike that isn't the messy compromise that many 'specials' can be. It has unique systems and is really an 'ideas' testbed for future projects.

Because although right now I'm feeling like I probably wouldn't want to go through this again for a while, I would one day like to have a go at building a really original chassis with some fresh engineering concepts. For the time being though I've got to get the XTM running right. Unfortunately in the 'specials' game, there's no such thing as an owner's manual...



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# WORLD ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP

## 2 0 0 3

ROUND FOUR, AIGUEPERSE,  
FRANCE 10-11 MAY

The 2003 world enduro championship returned to mainland Europe on May 10-11 when the shortened seven round series pitched camp in the small village of Aigueperse, south of Clermont-Ferrand - slap-bang in the heart of France's enduro country.

The event marked a return to the more traditional style of WEC races, and as always, provided more than a few surprises. With longer days than in the previous three rounds, more special tests per day, and a number of extremely difficult trials-like sections - these factors coupled with the heat meant that the French race was the toughest of the year so far.

In the 125cc category the opening day's competition produced the closest class finish in 2003,



with just three and a half seconds separating Paul Edmondson from TM rider Rickard Larsson and Frenchman Marc Germain. Eddy was finally able to put his collarbone and rib injuries behind him and claim his first win of the year. With his hopes of claiming another world title destroyed after his unfortunate crash in Spain, his game plan for the remainder of the series became apparent in France - try and claim as many day wins as humanly possible. Unfortunately for Paul a lack of match fitness hampered his day two result and he finished fifth in class.

Topping day two after crashing twice on day one, Gas Gas rider Petri Pohjamo further strengthened his championship lead in France, with TM's Rickard Larsson and home favourite

**Far left: Despite riding 'for fun', French enduro champion David Fretigne placed 5-1 in the 450s. Middle top: Knighter takes on a wooded French hillside...**

## Paddock Pointers

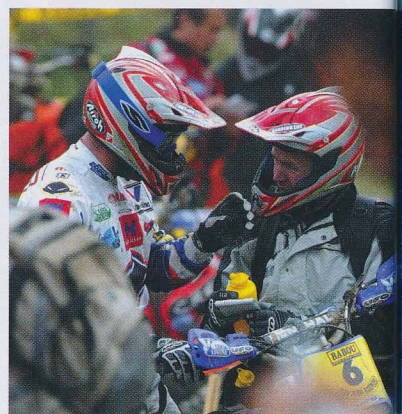
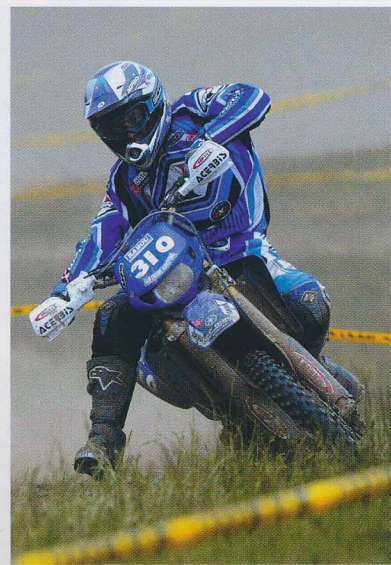
➔ Farioli 525 KTM rider Ivan Cervantes produced another impressive performance, placing third in class on day one before beating four-times world champion and series leader Juha Salminen for the class win the following day.

➔ The French crowd flocked to the fourth round of the WEC, lining each of the event's five special tests, as well as flooding the paddock at the end of each day.

➔ Paul Edmondson's class win on day one, proved that he's back to full speed (if not yet full fitness).

➔ French enduro legend Stephane Peterhansel came out for a one-off ride in the 250cc 4T class. Finishing fifth in class on the first day, he elected not to ride day two, much to the disappointment of his fans.





## Paddock Pointers

➔ Weeks of warm weather and very little rain meant that the special tests were cloaked in choking dust, causing visibility problems for many of the riders.

➔ Within sight of the end of the second day's competition, Spaniard Xavi Puigdemont suffered a mechanical DNF that put him out of the event - having been on course to claim his first ever WEC win on a 4T.

➔ Joining Xavi as a day two non-finisher was Mika Ahola after the swingarm broke on his VOR.

Marc Germain separated by next to nothing on both days, with Rickard claiming the upper hand on day one and Marc on day two.

The battle to top the 250cc two-stroke class in France again saw two riders dominate - Honda mounted Stefan Merriman and KTM Racing rider Samuli Aro. Both blisteringly fast over the dry French country side, it was Aussie Merriman who eventually triumphed over championship rival Aro on both days, as the pair pushed one another harder than they have all year. Third on both days, and again proving himself as the WEC's most promising newcomer was French rider Freddy Blanc.

With little separating Merriman and Aro on the three MX and one cross-country tests, it was Merriman's pace on the unforgiving 'extreme test' that proved decisive as the former interna-

tional trials rider put his years of feet-up experience to good use to claim valuable seconds. Seconds which would ultimately see him win the event overall. Topping the opening day's competition by eight seconds, day two saw the former two-times world champion finish almost half a minute up on Aro after the Finn crashed heavily on the final test.

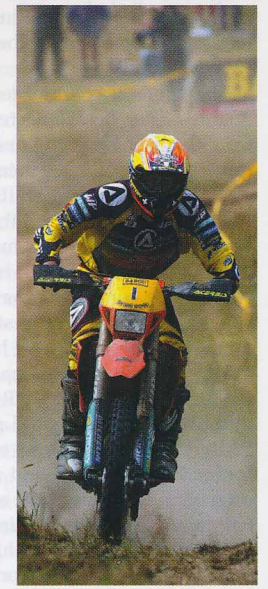
Making it two KTMs on the 250cc class podium at the end of the weekend, KTM France rider Freddy Blanc again produced an impressive result to finish third on both days. Despite being unable to match Merriman and Aro's pace, the French crowd took the young rider to their hearts - cheering him on to an impressive finish.

After ending the Greek round of the WEC series with no points and a badly broken collarbone, it looked as if UFO Corse Yamaha rider

Peter Bergvall had brought his hopes of winning a second 250cc four-stroke world title to a premature end. Gifting his closest championship rival Giovanni Sala a sizeable points advantage in the process, the French event should've been at best, a damage limitation exercise for him. But riding as if he'd never been injured, Bergvall dominated the quarter-litre thumper class on day one finishing an astonishing 60 seconds ahead of Sala and a further 22 seconds ahead of Italian Giuseppe Gallino in third. Signalling his intent on clawing back both the lost points from Greece and hopes of retaining his title, Bergvall's gutsy performance was certainly impressive.

Day two was a slightly different story though. With the once smooth special tests now extremely bumpy, Bergvall became locked in a three-way battle for the win. With both Sala and Gallino

**Far left: Hard charging Spaniard Ivan Cervantes took day two in the over 500 class.. Top right: Rowan Jones took his WR-F to a points scoring position...**



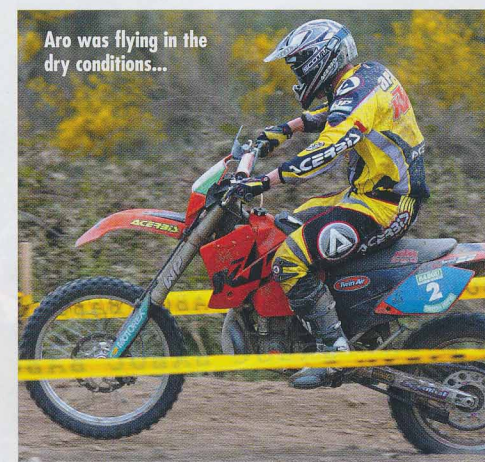
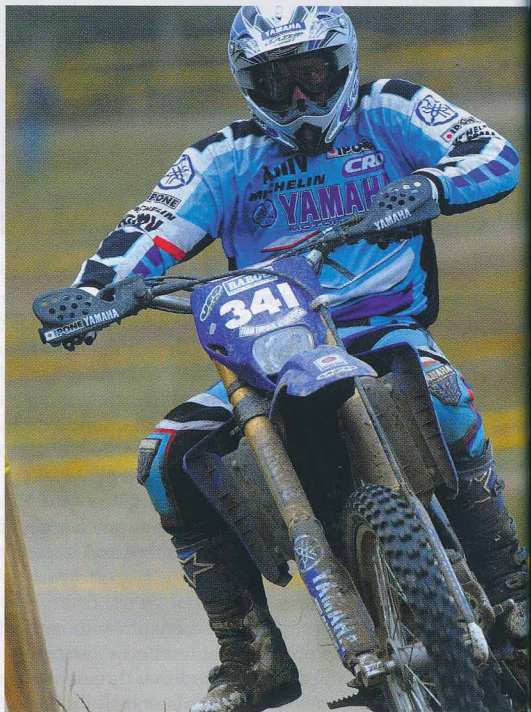


# SPORT

matching his pace, as the day drew to a close it was Gallino who edged ahead by the narrowest of margins. But with one test remaining and valuable world championship points at stake, Bergvall dug deep and somehow managed to claw back the deficit ending the day less than two and a half seconds ahead of Sala. Gallino was eventually third.

There was also controversy in the class when Spanish rider Gerard Farres was disqualified from the event late on Sunday afternoon for refusing to let officials measure the bore and stroke of his 250cc KTM. It had been alleged that Farres who had finished third in class on day one was using an over-sized motor. And by refusing to let officials strip down his machine, many came to the conclusion that he must have had something to hide and that the jury was therefore right to exclude him.

With just two points separating Husqvarna's Anders Eriksson and VOR's Roman Michalik in the 450s, France would prove to be decisive. Sadly for Michalik it was to be a weekend to forget. Fighting tooth and nail with Anders early on day one, Roman came across a stranded Juha Salminen on the second timed extreme test and with no way past, found himself losing 30 seconds while the Finn in front of him restarted his



Aro was flying in the dry conditions...

stranded KTM. Eriksson however had no such problems winning the day comfortably and extending his championship lead to 19 points.

Day two was another story as Eriksson could only manage third behind French enduro champion David Fretigne and Honda mounted Italian Alex Zanni. Fretigne (who according to French journalists was riding 'just for fun'), had struggled on day one and ended fifth at the close. But he picked up his pace for the second day finishing 18 seconds ahead of a disappointed Eriksson.

After a poor start to his championship campaign in the over-500s, VOR rider Mika Ahola produced his first class-winning performance of 2003 on day one in France. Finishing eight seconds ahead of countryman Juha Salminen on day one, and in doing so becoming the first rider to beat 'wonder boy' in '03, Mika then DNFed day two when his swingarm broke after landing from a jump on one of the event's special tests.

For class and Scratch series leader Juha Salminen the fourth round of the WEC series was a disappointing one. With his perfect season of six day wins ended by Ahola on day one and then Spaniard Ivan Cervantes on day two, Juha finished the event as disappointed as he was bewildered. Unable to put his finger on exactly what had gone wrong, the quiet Finn proved that

he is a human being after all. 'I'm not even close to being happy with my performance' was Juha's simple but honest comment at the end of the second day's competition. Despite his off-form he still holds a massive 47-point lead in the 500cc class and an equally impressive 23 point lead in the Scratch.

Sadly for Britain's David Knight, series newcomer Ivan Cervantes produced another solid points-scoring ride on day one, and did what he threatened to do in Greece and claimed the class win on day two, edging further ahead of Knight in the championship.

For Knighter, a fourth and a third were respectable finishes - if a little below what he'd hoped for. Placing well up in the scratch, David and his half-litre classmates again claimed the lion's share of the places within the top ten.

Despite a day win from Edmondson and consistent finishes from Knighter, the five other British riders in France didn't fair so well. Failing to see the end of the first day's competition after running his Husky a little too low on oil, Chris Hockey was forced to sit out day two as well. Meanwhile, Yamaha mounted Richard Hay failed to make any impression on the top 15 placing in 22nd and 18th respectively in the 450cc class. Fairing little better in the 250cc two-stroke class were Euan McConnell and Edward Jones. With Euan placing 12th and 13th and Ed 15th and 12th, the pair struggled to match the pace of several of the riders they'd been battling with at earlier rounds of the series. Also struggling to get to grips with the dry French terrain was Yamaha rider Rowan Jones. Despite claiming points on both days with 14th and 10th in the 250cc four-stroke class, he, like Euan and Edward, placed behind a number of riders he'd beaten at previous WEC events.



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Spaniard Xavi Puigdemont takes a steady 'dab' on the extreme test...



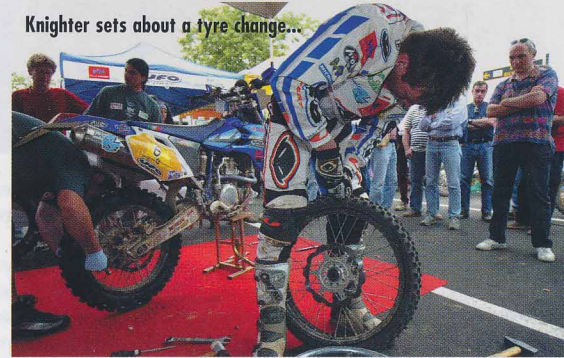
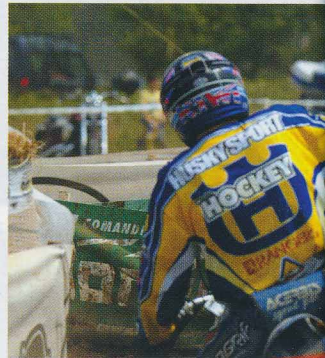
## PADDOCK POINTERS

➔ The extreme test in Italy was arguably the best yet. Challenging, reasonably long, and littered with enthusiastic spectators, the rock-strewn stage didn't favour trials riders quite as much as some tests have this year.

➔ It might only get used as a car park for the other 360-odd days of the year but the paddock in Italy looked fantastic. The fact that most teams had sizeable hospitality areas for entertaining sponsors helped give the fifth round of the series a positive lift.

➔ Aussie Shane Watts (former 125cc world champion and US GNCC title winner) rode in Italy. Despite not having finished a US race for a year and a half and riddled with injuries, the happy-go-lucky Aussie was happy to finish both days. 'I knew I wouldn't win, but not getting any points was a bit of a shocker' commented Watty.

➔ Finns Petteri Silvan and Mika Ahola produced possibly their worst ever WEC results in



Knighter sets about a tyre change...

When it comes to this year's WEC series there seems to be three different types of luck. There's good luck, the type that some say you make

yourself. There's bad luck, the type that can spoil a season's hard work in just a few short seconds. And then there's really bad luck, the type that brings genuine world title hopes to a premature end. During the second day's competition in Italy three riders suffered 'really bad luck' - Italian Giovanni Sala and Finns Petri Pohjamo and Samuli Aro.

As the most anticipated event of the year, and the final southern European event before the championship heads north to Finland and Sweden, the Italian round of the '03 WEC series was always going to be an interesting one. Featuring five tests per lap and long days over dry and dusty ground, the race saw both the 125cc two-stroke and 250cc four-stroke champi-

onships turned on their heads.

Offering the riders the rare luxury of a lie-in on Saturday morning, the 10 o'clock start saw KTM Racing rider Juha Salminen head off first for what ended up as a slightly disappointing day for the Finn. Beaten in France on day one by Spaniard Ivan Cervantes, Salminen was again to find himself finishing as runner up in the over-500cc four-stroke division as that man Cervantes topped the class by a staggering 23 seconds. As just one of three Team Farioli KTM riders to top a class on day one, he (along with Gio Sala and Alessandro Botturi) all posted incredibly quick test times on their first timed runs through the event's cross-country tests. Resulting in paddock mutterings of whether riders from the

locally based team had ridden the test prior to the event. One thing though was clear - Cervantes had again proved that he's one hell of a quick rider.

With suspension changes made to his KTM (he lowered it) at the end of the first day's competition, Salminen wasn't going to accept defeat on day two. Returning to the position he's made his own for the past four seasons, Juha finished 11 seconds ahead of his Spanish rival to top the day. In doing so he edged further ahead in the title chase and now holds a 47-point lead with his home round of the championship next on the calendar.

Finishing third on both days while admitting that he had no answer for the pace set by Salminen and Cervantes, David Knight in



Euan McConnell powers his Husky through a special test...

turn placed a country mile ahead of the half litre class's fourth placed rider on both days. Putting more points between himself and those behind him in the Scratch classification, DK's solid sixth in the WEC's overall championship added to his two consistent finishes in Italy. Impressively quick on both the extreme and cross-country tests it was the motocross specials that let him down.

Going into the event with a massive points advantage, a day one sixth and a day two DNF saw Petri Pohjamo's cushion at the top of the 125cc class completely disappear. A problem with his bike (after it mysteriously lost compression) resulted in him having to push it up one of the steep hills in the extreme test. And later on it expired altogether.

That left Swedish TM rider Rickard Larsson out front. Riding in what he now considers to be his home race, he outclassed all the 125cc division on both days to claim his first double class-topping ride. And had he not been disqualified from the first day's competition in Spain he would now be sitting right behind both Pohjamo and Frenchman Germain at the top of the standings.

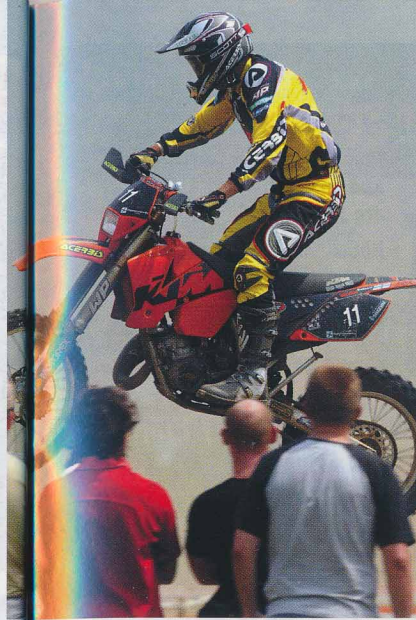
Gaining most from Pohjamo's day two DNF, placing second on day one and third on day two, UFO Corse Yamaha rider Marc Germain produced two solid results in conditions which were far from his favourite. Closing to within two points of Pohjamo at the top of the champi-

onship, the Frenchman could now pull off one of the season's biggest upsets, depending on how well he performs in Finland.

Meantime, placing third on day one, and then fourth on day two, Paul Edmondson wasn't quite able to match the pace set by Larsson and Germain. While CH Racing Husqvarna rider Mika Saarenkoski could well have topped day two had he not crashed extremely hard. Instead he claimed second on day two, and continued to improve in both confidence and placings.

Italy was always going to be an important race for the 250cc two-stroke class leader Stefan Merriman. Knowing that maximum points must be accumulated before the Scandinavian end of season rounds, the Kiwi-cum-Aussie was clearly focused on finishing in just one position - first. Remaining upright throughout the whole weekend (something he can't remember ever doing before), Stefan and championship rival Aro again distanced themselves from the rest of the 250cc class by a considerable margin. Eventually topping the day by a comfortable 16 seconds, day two would see Merriman's plan of claiming a third world title become a whole lot easier.

With just three special tests remaining before the end of the day, KTM Racing rider Samuli Aro failed to arrive at the final lap's first motocross test, his bike having stopped unexpectedly mid way through a check. Failing to get it started



despite his best efforts Samuli was out, his championship tally 20 points worse off. With Stefan going on to take the class and overall day win, Portuguese rider Helder Rodrigues posted second a distant one-minute 45 seconds in arrears. Third on both days was Gas Gas mounted Italian Fausto Scovolo. No longer a regular on the WEC series, the tiny former world champion proved that he still has the pace to mix it with the world's best - in Italy at least.

For Brits Euan McConnell and Edward Jones the fifth round of the WEC series wasn't a good one. While Euan claimed points, 15th and 13th place finishes made sure of that, Edward failed to break into the top 15. But neither rider was happy with their performances.

By winning the 250cc four-stroke class on day one the hugely popular Giovanni Sala looked to have taken another step towards claiming the quarter litre thumper title, especially as his closest championship rival Peter Bergvall finished third. Cheered on every inch of the

way by his excitable fan club, Gio also placed an impressive sixth overall (in the Scratch) on day one later admitting to having taken some sizable risks during the day. With Bergvall only managing third, it was left to Husqvarna mounted Roberto Bazzurri to scoop second some 48s behind countryman Sala.

Day two however saw Gio suffer a cruel DNF having consistently finished either first or second on every day of the series up till that point. Knowing that the championship was again up for grabs, Peter Bergvall increased his pace and topped the day ahead of Guiseppe Gallino and TM mounted Pole Bartosz Oblucki. Now just four points behind Sala in the chase, the final two rounds of the 250cc four-stroke class look like being as exciting as the 125cc class. From here on in, it's day wins that will decide the champions.

Finding things hard in the 250 4Ts, Rowan Jones brought up the rear of the points scoring positions with 13th on day one and 12th on the second day.

In the 450 class Farioli KTM team rider and local favourite Alessandro Botturi put his home advantage to good use, finishing a little under ten seconds ahead of Spaniard Jordi Duran on day one and 16 seconds up on Anders Eriksson on day two, to claim his first ever double class win.

Having another good championship weekend but not achieving the class wins he had hoped for, Anders Eriksson's consistency (third and second) helped him edge further ahead in the 450cc championship. Thanks in no small part to class rival Michalik's poor performances, Anders now knows that his seventh world title is well within his grasp.

With a 34-point advantage, the burly Swede can afford to drop a full day's points and still be in with a shout of the title. But Anders, like the other title hopefuls, has just a few short weeks to wait before the series draws to a close in early June. We'll keep you posted...

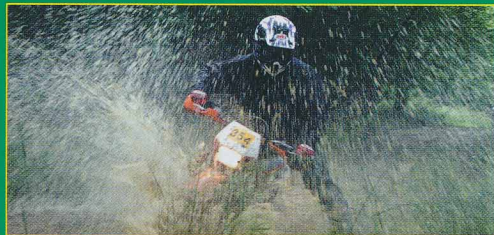
Italy with reigning 125cc champion Silvan placing fifth and ninth, while Ahola finished fifth twice in the 500cc class. Making things worse for three-time ISDE winner Ahola was the fact that TBM columnist David Knight caught and passed him on one of the event's cross-country tests! What few people know about Silvan is that he is awaiting the end of the WEC so that he can have an operation on his injured elbow.

Day one winner Stefan Merriman accumulated one hour and 20 minutes worth of special test time. That's about as much as most British Championship class competitors ride in a full season! When riders asked that the second day be a little shorter, the Italian organisers begrudgingly shortened day two to three laps. 'We're not machines,' commented one multi world champion.



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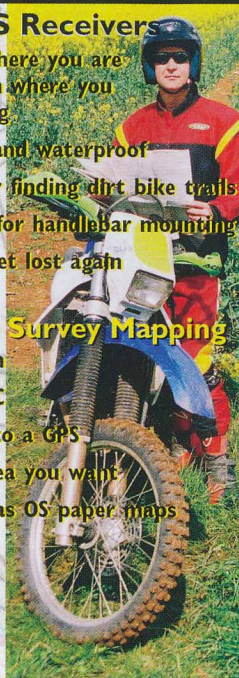
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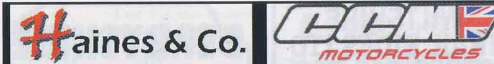
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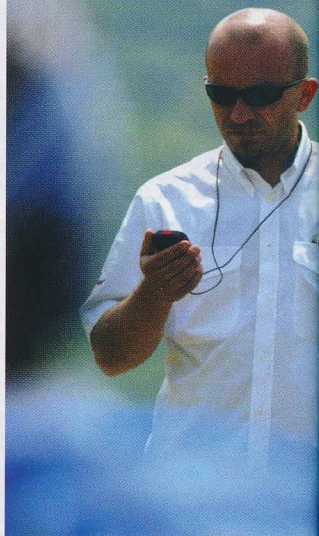
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After explaining last month why I've been getting a little hacked off with the 2003 WEC series, I can thankfully say that both the recent French and Italian events were spot on. Okay, they could have been better for me in terms of results, but the events themselves were well-organised, interesting to ride, tough in places and more importantly challenging for all - like world championship events should be.

The best thing about the event in France was the special tests - all five of them. With two MX tests, two cross-country tests and one extreme test it meant that none of us had any time to relax. It also meant that if anyone made a mistake they had the opportunity to try to pull back lost time - something that was difficult in Spain and Greece.

One thing that again became apparent in France was just how close things are in the 500cc 4-T class. While Juha and Cervantes seem to have a definite edge over almost everyone in the WEC right now, the difference between finishing first or fifth in the 500 class is slight, it's that close.



Finally getting his arse into gear Mika Ahola made the most of a Juha Salminen off-day to top the class with Cervantes and myself not too far behind. Gaining and then losing a few seconds on alternate special tests to Cervantes, some plastic track marking tape around my rear disk put an end to my hopes of getting third, but having had an enjoyable day I wasn't too bothered about it. Day two would have been better, if I hadn't got a little throttle happy on the very last test. As it happened Mika wasn't riding very well on day two and eventually failed to finish the day. Although I didn't crash all weekend, something that is quite rare for any rider, I think that I pushed a little too hard on a couple of the tests, which didn't help my times.

One thing that I think is affecting my riding slightly is the fact that my race bike is a bit different to the machines I'm training on. I guess it's a drawback of racing a non-production bike, whereas Juha, Ivan, Mika and Bjerne all have training bikes that are more or less the same as their race bikes, mine feels slightly different. It's not a big difference, just a handful of little things, which take a little bit of adjusting to. I can't think of any other reason why my day two results seem to be better than my day one results.

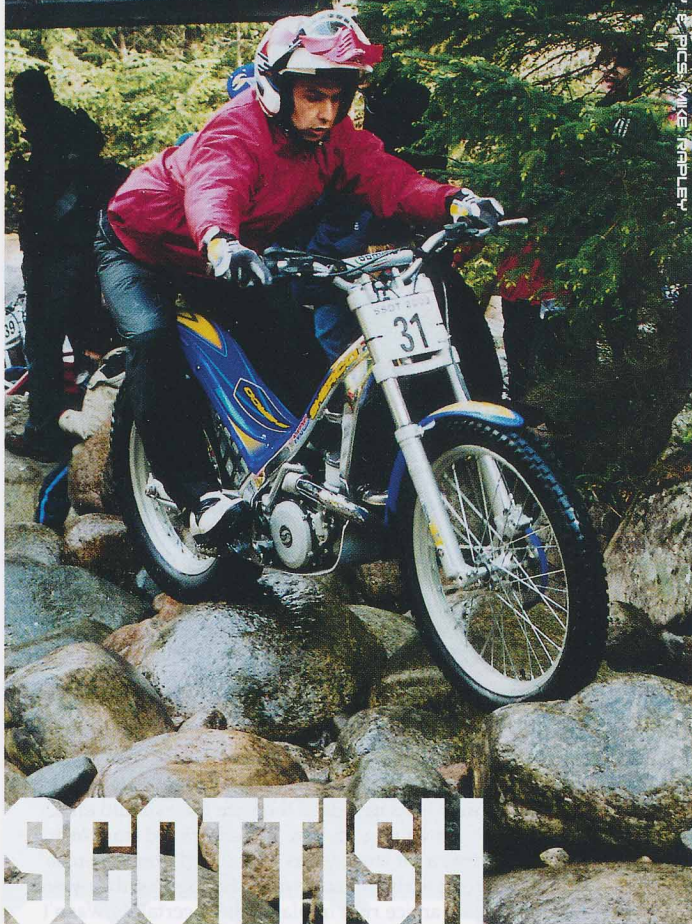
Needless to say the Italian race was an important one for the team. Mario Rinaldi not riding because of his foot injury was a bit of a disap-

pointment for everyone, especially as he only lives a few minutes down the road and loads of people had come out to support him. In fact, one thing that helped set both the Italian and French rounds apart from the opening three rounds of the series was the support from the public. Lining seemingly every special test, and then swarming around the paddock in the evening, their presence gave both events a definite lift. I guess enduro is still big business in both countries.

As for the race, everything went pretty well. Despite a few riders being unhappy with one of the event's cross-country tests, the race had great tests just as in France. Again having two long cross-country tests, two motocross and one extreme test there wasn't any time to really relax, which was good. One thing that I was happy about was the fact that the organisers didn't scrap or change the 'dangerous' cross-country test. Personally I felt that the test was okay. Fast in places, but otherwise fine. Yes there were some issues as to how the club might get injured riders out should someone get hurt. But as far as the test itself was concerned it wasn't too fast. Had the organisers scrapped the test and the event run without it, I think it wouldn't have been a proper enduro, like the events in Spain and Greece. Cross-country tests are dangerous because of the high speeds, but that's the way they are. Getting rid of them would be like putting the TT on a shorter course to make it safer. It wouldn't be the TT any more. The same goes for enduros. Cross-country tests have always been fast and a little dangerous, and as long as they are safe, that's the way they should stay.

One thing that the organisers did do which was a bit stupid was water the two motocross tests early on day two. Meaning that they were like an ice rink in places, Juha certainly wasn't impressed because he was the first rider to face them. Thankfully I stayed upright and two third place finishes were pretty good. Catching and passing Mika Ahola on one of the cross-country tests was a bit weird though. Having won on day one in France, Mika wasn't on form in Italy and when I started catching someone's dust on the cross-country test on day two, I'd never have guessed it would have been him.

Although I wasn't able to close the gap on Cervantes, I'm still confident that I can get second in the championship although I know it's going to be bloody difficult. I'm still hoping that I can get a day win before the year's out, with Finland probably being my best chance of doing so. If the tests are long and sandy then, with a little bit of luck and some good riding, I think I can do it. Guess only time will tell. Wish me luck...

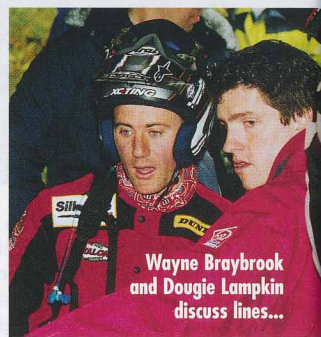
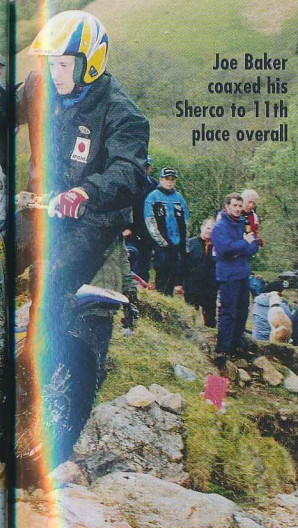


# SCOTTISH SIX DAYS TRIAL

**IF YOU'RE A TRIALS RIDER THERE'S ONLY ONE PLACE TO BE IN MAY AND THAT'S UP IN SCOTLAND FOR THE SCOTTISH SIX DAYS TRIAL. MIKE RAPLEY REPORTS ON THIS YEAR'S EVENT...**



Joe Baker coaxed his Sherco to 11th place overall



Wayne Braybrook and Dougie Lampkin discuss lines...



**F**or large numbers of trials riders from the UK and much of Europe, all roads lead to Fort William in Scotland in the first week of May for the Scottish Six

Days Trial, an event that has a long and distinguished history. This year was no different as this annual classic, which is preceded by a two-day Pre-65 trial, once again enjoyed a maximum entry that had been over-subscribed, and spectator attendance increasing year on year.

The Scottish is very much a trial for the enthusiastic rider of all abilities from around the world, with Frenchmen, Spaniards, Swiss, Swedish, American, Canadian, Australian, Japanese and Austrian riders mixing with both world class stars and ordinary home-grown clubmen who all ride exactly the same sections. But it's also a place for the factory support vehicles, small local dealers and club support teams as well as trials enthusiasts who regard the opening week of May as an opportunity to watch marvellous riding, in superb scenery on 'classic' trials sections.

Sections like Pipeline, Laggan Locks, Fersit and Lagnaha have been used for years and bring evocative memories for the many thousands of fans who have ridden or watched at these venues. And in 2003 there was the very real chance of a Scottish rider pulling off a win that has eluded the home nation for the past 66 years.

But sadly the likelihood of a first Scottish Six Days Trial win by a Scotsman for more than six decades was thwarted on the fifth day of this year's trial by Sherco mounted Spaniard Joan Pons who went on to claim victory in this most prestigious of international trials.

Nineteen year old Gary McDonald from Kinlochleven was the rider who at one stage looked likely to match the effort of Bob McGregor way back in 1937, but it was not to be as Pons, once the world number three, became the fourth Spanish rider to win this classic trial, following in the footsteps of Toni Gorgot, Jordi Tarres and last year's winner Amos Bilbao.

But whilst Pons's win was celebrated in typical Mediterranean fashion at the conclusion of an incredibly wet week, for the hordes of Scotsmen

who were expecting and wishing for a home win, it all went wrong on the fifth day of the event.

Young Gary McDonald succumbed to the pressure of leading the trial at the end of the fourth day, and despite a six mark lead after four days and 120 sections, a disappointing ride on Friday when he lost 12 marks compared to the mere three marks shed by his closest rival, left him languishing in second place on Friday evening, albeit by just one mark.

It was still possible for him to win when he and the survivors of the 276 starters left the West End car park in Fort William for another 30 sections in the Kinlochleven and Spear Bridge area. But the pressure was on the young Scotsman, who dropped a further 12 marks to complete the trial in third place overall, behind the Spanish winner and second placed Yorkshireman Ben Hemingway.

Yet whilst McDonald's third place was a disappointment, it was also great news for Scottish trialling as the Sherco supported rider is a member of the Sherco factory youth trials academy - and the academy is managed by Joan Pons, the trial winner!

Since reaching third place in the World Championship back in the mid Nineties, Pons has turned his efforts to coaching young trials riders from throughout Europe as well as contesting the Italian Trials Championship, but this year, to ride with some of his young proteges he rode the Scottish for the very first time. And winning the trial at the first attempt has not been achieved since Gilles Burgat managed the same feat back in 1982

Second placed Ben Hemingway, the younger of the two trials riding brothers from Yorkshire, achieved his best result ever in the SSDT to keep





**Left: Wayne Braybrook took a break from enduros to finish eighth. Above: Chris Myers rode his 1988 TY250 Yamaha to a finish. Below: Past winner Steve Colley could only manage sixth this year...**



the Beta flag flying for importer John Lampkin, who also had a pretty good week with a fine 14th place finish in one of the more difficult SSDTs for a number of years.

The trial attracted a significant number of past winners, including last year's victor Amos Bilbao of the Montesa Honda team, but his event fell apart on the second day when a series of minor disasters dropped him well off the leaderboard. However he fought back to fourth place, and though this was well below his expectations, he did well to achieve that placing.

Multiple winners Steve Saunders and Steve Colley never really matched up to their own expectations of the event with Colley having to settle for sixth after rumoured (but denied) bike troubles, while Saunders, despite sharing the first

day lead, never really found the Scottish form of which he was capable, coming home in 17th place.

Fourth former winner of the trial was Thierry Michaud, three times the World Champion in the mid Eighties. Michaud looked pretty good at various times during the week but engine problems caused him to miss three groups of sections mid-week, and although he was effectively excluded from the final results, the rules allow a retired rider to continue the event without an award. Michaud, always the sportsman, continued and posted

some really good rides including a top 15 placing on the final day.

The Scottish is currently on a high, with many more riders wishing to take part than the entry will allow. In the past the accepted entry of 275 riders has usually resulted in around 20 non-starters, but a change in entry procedure this year resulted in only five non-starters and their

places were quickly filled by six entrants the club took on Sunday afternoon at the weigh-in - and one of those was Pons who took over a fellow Sherco team management ride.

At the start, the favourites were Colley, Bilbao, Spaniard Jordi Pascuet, top enduro rider Wayne

Braybrook and any one of a host of young whizz-kids who could just possibly have a magic week. Pons never really came into the reckoning, though team manager (and former SSDT winner) Malcolm Rathmell did say on Sunday night at a talk he gave for a selected audience that he hoped Joan Pons might do well.

Several of the gathering scoffed at his suggestion, but six days later Rathmell's wise words had come true and as the Sherco importer, he was a happy man, for a Scottish win is a major achievement for any factory.

To illustrate how important the Scottish is now seen, all the manufacturers send big support wagons to look after their sponsored and private runners, with Gas Gas, Montesa, Beta, Sherco and Scorpa providing exemplary facilities for riders to service their machines after long and arduous days.

Scorpa also stole a march on the rest of the team camps by giving their new four-stroke trials bike its world debut. Three Scorpas, fitted with Yamaha TTR engines were used, two of which were 125cc versions ridden by the Japanese development engineer and another by importer Martin Crosswaite, whilst the third was a bored out 140cc version ridden by former Honda facto-

## SCOTTISH LEGENDS

The Scottish Six Days Trial has been running for well over 90 years with only the wars and Foot and Mouth Disease proving hiccups in the successful running of this trial by the organising Edinburgh Motor Club.

The trial used to start and finish in Edinburgh, but for nearly 30 years has been based in Fort William, with six separate routes used each day. This year the mileage totalled 518 miles with 180 sections. Perhaps not as long in distance as has been enjoyed in the past, but on modern machines with small capacity tanks, any further distance is impractical.

Much of the mystery of the Scottish involves tales of repairs to bikes in vans, swapping of bikes and engines whilst they are secretly repaired, riders travelling the 20 plus miles between groups of sections in the back of vans and all sorts of nefarious activities designed to achieve a finish or to overcome unpleasant conditions. Most are true but none can be repeated here.

However, there is one tale of derring-do which occurred this year that can be safely reported and it involves Nigel Birkett, who has

ridden every Scottish for the past 30 years or so.

On day four, way out on the moors his bike's swing-arm snapped in two. It was shattered, a hopeless case and a sure retirement was beckoning. But Nigel dragged his broken bike 300 yards to an isolated bothy where by good fortune two joiners were carrying out some repair work. 'Have you got a welder here?' asked Nigel. 'No', came the reply, 'and we haven't got a vehicle either as we've been dropped here for the week to do this job and live on site. But there's plenty of wood around.'

So Birkett persuaded his two saviours to fashion up a lump of wood that he inserted in the broken end of the swinging arm, then attached the remaining bit to that and held it all together with scrap bits of metal fastened with four-inch wood screws. Somehow he got it all back together and coaxed his bent bike back to Fort William.

Next morning he was handed a letter from the organisers stating that they couldn't let him re-start as his bike (which had been inspected overnight in the parc ferme) was not roadworthy. 'It will be in 15 minutes' said Birks as he flashed a replacement swinging arm under the nose of clerk of the course Willie Dalling, who immediately withdrew the letter. Birkett went on to finish with a First Class award.

# SPORT



Ben Hemingway tackles 'Wagnaha' on his way to finish as runner-up...



trial was wet for much of each day. And with the moors very wet in comparison to recent years, the 2003 Six Days proved to be a tough one. There were over 50 retirements, a huge number compared to the past few years, many of whom suffered bike troubles due to high road speeds, mechanical failures, section crashes and general fatigue.

All in all then, this year's Scottish will be remembered for the surprise win by a first time entrant, lots of bad weather, a fantastic turn out of quality riders and excellent spectator attendance. But also the potential of Scotland providing a future winner in 19 year old Gary McDonald, who came within a whisker of snatching a long overdue home victory. Roll on 2004...

ry star Takumi Narita. All three bikes finished the week without problems and there were a load of fans eager to know when production versions would be available.

Rain, rain and more rain proved to be the recipe for much of the week, and though there were many long dry spells during each day, every rider in the

hillside. In fact it was never used prior to 1965 but is now very much the hill where spectators gather in their many hundreds to watch the riders negotiate a typically Scottish trials section.

For a spectator, the Scottish is a great event to watch as each day there is always at least two groups of sections near to each other from which to observe the action. On days like Tuesday and Friday it is possible to see four or five groups of sections. Then there is all the action at the car park both morning and evening, plus of course the traditional Sunday weigh-in where visitors can mingle freely with riders and officials and perhaps find a bargain one of the trade stands.

And following the final machine weigh-in, the riders parade through the main street in Fort William when the town welcomes the trial to Lochaber. A great week and one not to be missed if you're into feet-up action...

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Much of the magic of the Scottish surrounds the classic observed hills that have been used since time immemorial. Names like Laggan Locks, Pipeline, Blackwater, Fersit, Chairlift and Lagnaha have been associated with the trial for many years.

All are classic Scottish sections, but each year the club adds a few new names and drops a few others so that the trial is always changing. Sections like Laggan Locks, a rock strewn hillside path, has been used for over 50 years and whilst it is tame compared with other sections it still takes plenty of marks off the riders.

Pipeline, a classic hill in both the Pre-65 two day trial and also the main trial, takes its name from the hydro-electric pipes which traverse the

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**Honda CRM250 AR**, 1999, T-reg, white/purple, T&T, 9500km, new c+s, DEP pipe, handguards, good cond, £2500 ono. Tel 01482 618018 (Yorks)

**Suzuki TS200R**, 1992, J-reg, yellow/blue, T&T, 10000km, USD forks, DEP exhaust, Acerbis handguards, £1500. Tel 01865 429324 (Oxon)

**Yamaha TTR250**, 1994, L-reg, MoT, elec start, lady owner from new, road use only, exc original cond, £1600. Tel 01279 507857 (Herts)

**Yamaha XT600 Tenere**, twin headlamp model, T&T, lots of extras, vgc, some spares available, £1250 ono. Tel (mobile) 07811 964922 or 0161 613 7131 (Manchester)

**Kawasaki KMX200**, 1990, Renthals, handguards, powder-coated frame/stand/pegs, well looked after, vgc, very reluctant sale, £775. Tel 07984 406720 (Somerset)

**Honda XR250R**, 1992, J-reg, recent head overhaul, new valves/guides/rockers/camchain and 277cc conversion, £1100 ono. Tel 01344 486569 (Berks)

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**Kawasaki KLR650**, 2000, W-reg, maroon and black, 7000 miles, new bike forces sale, £2300 ono. Tel 01204 574392 (Lancs)

**Honda XR600**, N-reg, T&T, Renthals, performance exhaust, handguards, rarely used, good cond, £2000. Tel 01702 421060 (Essex)

**Kawasaki KX125**, 1998, Werx graphics, Pro Circuit exhaust, good cond, first to see will buy, £1600. Tel 020 8303 7026 (Kent)

**Honda CRM250 mkII**, T&T, full DEP, 'guards, spare wheels/cables etc, recon suspension, light trail use, mint cond, £1900. Tel 07974 804371 (Cheshire)

**Suzuki DR-Z400S**, 2001, 6000 miles, never raced, FMF pipe, Renthals, brushguards, Acerbis plastics, £2750 ono. Tel 01252 628438 (Hants)

**Suzuki DR-Z400S**, 2000, 8500km, green lane use, engine guards, disc protector, c/w original indicators/rear fender/bars, looking for £2800. Tel 07753 683523 (Cheshire)

**Yamaha DT125R**, blue, 1998, S-reg, T&T, 9900 miles, spare wheels with dirt tyres, £1100. Tel 01442 401794 (Herts)

**Kawasaki KDX200**, 1998, T&T, 2200 miles, standard exhaust, £1650 or extra £150 with FMF Gnarly and tailpipe. Tel (mobile) 07887 642441 or 01462 834050 (Beds)

**Suzuki DR-Z400S**, 2001, Taper bars, 17L plastic tank, Acerbis handguards, ally bashplate, mph speedo, c/w all original parts, £3295. Tel 01782 538529 (Staffs)

**Yamaha WR250F**, 2003 model, elec start, road reg'd, taxed, as new, £4800 ovno. Tel 07711 840008 (Lancs)

**Yamaha WR450F**, 2003, elec start, taxed, as new, £4995 ovno. SM wheels available. Tel 07768 601848 (Lancs)

**KTM 450EXC**, 2003, 700 miles, KTM handguards, CRD bashplate, as new, £4500. Tel 01633 441464 (Wales)

**Yamaha DT175MX**, only used between 1980-83, never been off-road, all up and running again, very original, new parts and spares included, £400. Tel 01787 228520 (Essex)

**Honda CRM250**, T&T, 12000km, well maintained, vgc, can email pictures if required, £1550 ono. Tel 01452 740376 (Gloucs)

**Yamaha WR250F**, 2003, brand new, still in crate, one available due to discount purchasing two together, £4750. Tel 07774 194194 (Gloucs)

**Gas Gas EC400FSE**, 2002, green lane use only, vgc, supermoto wheels available, £3900 ono. Tel 07870 667037 (Essex)

**Suzuki DR-Z400E**, reg'd 2002, CRD frame/sump-guards/pipe, green lane use only, vgc, £3450 ono. Tel 07831 834096 (Kent)

**Kawasaki KDX200**, 1997, FMF front pipe, Fretta parts, good fork internals, forged levers, reliable, great bike, £1600. Tel 01256 850405 (Hants)

**Honda XR400R**, 1997, 6500km, T&T, maintained regardless of cost, trail use only, £2200 ovno. Tel 01566 781245 (Cornwall)

**Honda XR400R**, V-reg, T&T, 3200 miles, exc cond, infirmity forces sale, £2550 ono. Tel (mobile) 07711 439557 or 01948 861024 (Cheshire)

**Honda CR250**, 1996, large tank, flywheel weight, recent rebuild, spares, ideal hare and hounds bike, exc cond, £1175 ono. Tel Ben on 07973 683849 (Bath)

**Honda XR650R supermoto**, 400km, gold Talons, Excels, c/w trail wheels, new tyres on both sets of wheels, virtually brand new bike, £4500. Tel 07973 770230 (Surrey)

**Suzuki DR-Z400E**, 2001, road reg'd, elec start, FMF,

Renthals, Trailtech, bashplate, never been off-road, immaculate cond, £3650. Tel 01732 865323 (Kent)

**Yamaha WR400F**, 2000, blue/white, under 3000 miles, green lane use only, clean bike, £2900. Tel 01202 256290 (Dorset)

**KTM 525EXC**, 2003, Acerbis 'guards, bashplate, 40 hours use, as new, £4000 can deliver. Tel Nick on (mobile) 07797 715148 or 01534 490330 (Jersey)

**Honda XR400R**, 1997, new tyres, CRD bashplate, handguards, commuter and green lane use only, good cond, £1900. Tel 01736 762786 (Cornwall)

**Honda XR650R**, 2002, 6000km, Renthals, new c+s/plastics, talon supermoto wheels available, £3300 ono. Tel 01920 485303 (Herts)

**Suzuki DR350**, H-reg, MoT, Renthals, handguards, good cond, £1100. Tel 01604 671215 (Northants)

**KTM 620SC**, 2001, 5000 miles, UK bike, taxed, one owner, new tyres, £3200. Tel (mobile) 07989 190314 or 01384 895107 (W Mids)

**Husqvarna TE410E**, 2002 reg'd, less than 1000 miles, Doma two into one race system, brushguards, spare gearing etc, great all-rounder, immaculate cond, £3400 ono. Tel 01942 879585 (Manchester)

**Honda XR250R**, 2000, W-reg, superb example in exc cond, lack of use forces sale, £7200. Tel 07802 479866 (Warks)

**Yamaha YZ250**, 1989, full engine rebuild, rebored to 283cc, exc runner but tatty, field use only hence, £425 ono. Tel 07855 283180 (Derbys)

**Honda XR600R**, 2000, W-reg, red, 3000km, T&T, stainless CRD exhaust system, Acerbis Pro handguards, bashplate, nice bike, £2650 ono. Tel 01708 857004 (Essex)

**Suzuki DR650SE**, 1997, white/purple, 7800 miles, MoT, new 'bars, not used off-road, all MoTs etc, reluctant sale, £1950 ovno. Tel (mobile) 07814 304549 or 0117 923 6246 (Bristol)

**Cagiva Elefant 750**, 1999, Lucky Explorer model, 15000 miles, MoT, service history, good cond, £2600. Tel 0151 606 0174 (Wirral)

**Husaberg FE501**, 2002, 2500km, fsh, never raced, green lane use only, as new, £3850. Tel (mobile) 07712 063210 or 01264 720227 (Hants)

**Honda CR250**, 1998 model, wired-in battery powered lights, 18" rear wheel, maintained regardless of cost, good cond, £1500. Tel 07765 585703 (Kent)

**KTM 200EXC(GS)**, 2000 model, autolube, UK bike, taxed, new tyres/c+s, reliable, great green laner, ill health forces sale, £2650 ono. Tel 01623 403229 (Notts)

**Honda XR650R**, 2001, UK bike, 4000km, IMS 17L tank, FMF graphics, Rental Fatbars, green lane use only, £3150 or swap for speedboat. Tel (mobile) 07771 674974 or 01536 725215 (Northants)

**Honda XR650R**, 2002, 1800 miles, exc cond, on a Q-plate hence, £2600 ono. Tel 01685 359049 (Mid Glam)

**KTM LC4 400 trail bike**, 2000, W-reg, handguards, spares, green lane use only, well maintained, vgc, £3200 ono. Tel 01633 882397 (Gwent)

**Suzuki DR-Z400S**, 2001, 2800 miles, full CRD system, Pro Tapers, sump/frameguards, spare plastics, c/w supermoto wheels and tyres, £2900 ono. Tel 01993 830471 (Oxon)

**TM 250 4-T**, 2002, road reg'd, taxed, 700 miles, mature owner, exc cond, £3850 ovno. Tel David on 07974 368174 (Oxon)

**Suzuki DR-Z400EK2**, full CRD enduro system, sump/frame/handguards, Trailtech computer, vgc, £3195. tel (mobile) 07968 478670 or 01685 383551 (Glam)

**Suzuki DR350S**, 1998, W-reg, purple/white, 10000

# FREE CLASSIFIEDS

miles, T&T, CRD, Renthals, Arrow, new tyres/chain, super cond, possibly the best available, £2150. Tel 02392 632418 (Hants)

**Gas Gas Pampera**, 2002, only 500 miles, Renthals, handguards, green lane use only, immaculate cond, £1900 ono. Tel 01903 264904 (W Sussex)

**Aprilia Tuareg Rally 125**, 2000, W-reg, 5000 miles, derestricted, new crank/mains, all receipts, good cond, £1200. Tel (mobile) 07836 621446 or 01635 869459 (Berks)

**Honda XR400R**, 1999, white, T&T, only 6000km, brush/frameguards, bashplate, Renthals, new graphics, exc cond, £2350. Tel 07811 351050 (Surrey)

**Yamaha DT125R**, 2002 model, low miles, road use only, exc cond, relocation forces sale, £2000. Tel 07810 873980 (Leics)

**KTM 450EXC**, 2002 reg'd, under 600 miles, Acerbis handguards, Michelin Enduro Comp rear tyre, trail use only, spares, £4300. Tel 01892 833643 (Kent)

**Honda XR280**, professional conversion, elec start, 17000km, Allens performance cam, large capacity Baja tank, £1900. tel 01752 345360 (Devon)

**Honda CRM250AR**, 2000, 6800km, T&T, Renthals, DEP exhaust, new c+s, a few spares and original bits, well maintained, reluctant sale, £2895. Tel (mobile) 07801 752230 or 020 7609 4800 (London)

**Yamaha DT175MX**, 1979, V-reg, T&T, white/blue, very good original cond, some spares available, 550 ono. Tel (mobile) 07971 677685 or 01568 615593 (Hereford)

**Honda XR600R**, 1997, low miles, loads of goodies, fully sorted plus original bits, A1 cond, you won't find better, £2400 ovno. Tel 01934 626227 (Somerset)

**Honda CR500**, 1988, enduro spec, road reg'd, lights, recent overhaul, road wheels/brakes included, torquey fun on- or off-road, offers around £750. Tel 01932 346329 (Surrey)

**Kawasaki KLR650**, V-reg, T&T, 4600 miles, pipe, Dynojet, K&N, green lane use only, as new, £2900. Tel (mobile) 07931 306174 or 01482 449886 (E Yorks)

**Honda XR400R**, T-reg, white, low miles, many extras, as new, first to see will buy, £2450. Tel 07855 525107 (Surrey)

**Suzuki DR-Z400E**, 2000, X-reg, new tyres, Acerbis handguards, FMF pipe, bashplate, One Ind graphics, green lane use only, £2600 ono. Tel 01633 862398 (Gwent)

**Suzuki DR350S**, 1994, T&T, large plastic tank, new exhaust/battery, spare tyres/exhaust and box of bits, bargain at £1395. Tel 07970 476667 (W Yorks)

**Yamaha XT600E**, 1991, blue, 20000 miles, T&T, recent tyres/pads/rims/spokes, new header pipe, £1350 ono. Tel 0161 877 7734 (Lancs)

**Armstrong MT500**, 1985, C-reg, MoT, red/white, engine rebuilt last year, stage one tune, receipts, some spares, reliable, great bike, £900 ono. Tel (mobile) 07887 708028 or 01236 759297 (Scotland)

**KTM 400EXC**, 2002, 22000km, green lane use only, Gadget bashplate, vgc, £3995 ono. Tel (mobile) 07966 661686 or 01202 668960 (Dorset)

**Yamaha XTZ600 Tenere**, 1989, twin headlamp model, fully equipped for overlanding with boxes, jerry etc, ring for details. Tel 07730 877779 (Bristol)

**Honda NX650 Dominator**, red, MoT, low miles, immaculate cond, lovely bike to ride, bargain at £1550 ono. Tel 01752 551857 (Devon)

**Gas Gas Pampera 250 mkIII**, 2002, 700 miles, taxed, road use only, house forces sale, priced to sell at, £2000. Tel 01206 570438 (Essex)

**Husqvarna WR250**, 1999, V-reg, 2500km, not raced,

maintained regardless of cost, genuine exc cond, £1875 ovno. Tel 07940 594469 (W Glam)

**Fantic 250 trials**, red/white, new tyres, just serviced, exc cond, £675 ovno. Tel 01604 601887 (Northants)

**Honda CRM250 mkII**, 1991, MoT, hardly used last two years, good cond, give it a good home, £1100. Tel (mobile) 07970 734442 or 01395 224148 (Devon)

**Yamaha XT225 Serow**, 1987 model, MoT, new rear tyre, vgc for year, ready for the dirt, £995 ono. Tel Wayne on 01793 848887 (Wilts)

**Suzuki DR-Z400E**, 2001 reg'd, CRD system, Werx graphics, Renthals, Trailtech computer, bashplate, immaculate cond, £3000. tel 01727 867755 (Herts)

**Honda XR600R**, 1998, S-reg, T&T, 9000km, Renthals, barkbusters, flat-slide carb, White Bros system plus original parts, green lined, reliable and clean, £1975. Tel 01932 228871 (Surrey)

**Honda XR650L supermoto**, 1998, S-reg, white, T&T, one owner, Talons/Excels, Pro Tapers, Yoshimura system, six pot caliper, barkbusters, c/w original wheels, pics can be viewed on the web, £2750 ono. Tel 07801 883698 (London)

## WANTED

**Wanted Gilera Nordwest**, must be in good cond both mechanically and cosmetically, light blue model only, good price paid for right bike in south of country please. Tel 020 8840 4760 (London)

**Wanted for 1996 Honda XR600R**, camshaft, exhaust rocker arms or consider complete engine, must be in good cond. Tel 01202 579837 (Dorset)

**Wanted Honda XL250 Motosport** or S model, in as original cond as possible, cash waiting. Tel 01525 854255 (Beds)

**Wanted Honda CR250 water-cooled engine**, running if poss but not essential as long as it's complete. Tel 01271 323021 (Devon)

**Wanted CR250 parts**, 9-10L tank, sidestand, 18" rear wheel to suit 2001 model, cash waiting, will travel. Tel Ben on 07973 683849 (Bath)

**Wanted CDI parts for 1983 Suzuki DR125S**. Tel 01455 552447 (Leics)

**Wanted workshop manual for Suzuki SP370 trail bike**. Tel 01624 626378 (IoM)

**Wanted supermoto wheels to fit Husqvarna TE610E**, 2000 model. Tel 07790 851743 (Notts)

**Wanted DR350 large capacity tank**, aftermarket exhaust and general spares. Tel (mobile) 07710 577629 or 01543 275641 (Staffs)

**Wanted KTM EGS200 or Honda CRM250**, top cash paid for right bike, £2000-3000. Tel 01823 433972 (Somerset)

**Wanted Yamaha WR426F CRD bashplate and frameguards**. Also supermoto wave rear disc, will travel or pay postage. Tel 01524 414225 (Lancs)

**Wanted Yamaha XT500**, anything considered. Tel 0191 551 0649 (Tyne & Wear)

**Wanted Husky TE350 parts**, plastics/wheels etc, must be in good cond. Tel Alan on 07711 306306 (Wilts)

**Wanted Honda CR250 water pump housing**, 1989 model. Tel (mobile) 07812 373498 or 020 8850 4622 (Kent)

**Wanted MDI or similar high screen for 1995 BMW F650**. Also grey or black seat. Tel Colin (eves) on 01634 250096 (Kent)

**Wanted race exhaust for 1999 XR250R**, FMF/CRD etc, must be reasonably priced. Tel (mobile) 07970 689340 or

01685 883309 (Mid Glam)

**Wanted full trail wheel kit** and performance parts for 2001 CCM 604E supermoto, cash waiting, can collect. Tel 01942 879585 (Manchester)

**Wanted trail/enduro bike**, anything considered from XR250R to TT600, must have T&T, £1200 to spend, prefer in Yorks. Tel 07711 527947 (N Yorks)

**Wanted Honda TL125**, any cond considered. Tel 01308 897370 (Dorset)

**Wanted FMF Q-pipe for XR400R**, must be in good cond. Tel 01455 446415 (Leics)

**Wanted Suzuki DR350 standard exhaust** or aftermarket set of clocks. Tel 01634 260309 (Kent)

## SPARES

**Parts for XR650/600R**, Talon 18" and 21" wheels, used once, c/w braking 320mm disc and Talon bracket, £500. Acerbis rally tank set, 24L front, 14L rear, rally seat, standard sidepanels, £500. XR600 stock exhaust, £50. All in good cond. Tel 07719 847544 (S Wales)

**Kawasaki KLX300R**, ex-TBM bike, engine blown, break or sell complete, engine parts to fix, CRD goodies, lighting kit, upgraded forks, plastics etc. Tel 07734 919800 (Kent)

**FMF Powercore IV for Yamaha YZ/WR250F**, c/w Powerbomb, exc cond, no dents, £190 ono can post. Tel 01736 754343 (Cornwall)

**CRM mkII spares**, engine, frame, suspension, swingarm plus bits. Tel 01773 821806 (Derbys)

**Single-bike trailer**, Dave Cooper De-Luxe, light board, straps, wall brackets, never used, cost £290, accept £145. Tel Phil on (mobile) 07831-477497 or 01844 274741 (Bucks)

**FMF pipes**, one Fatty, one Gnarly, to fit '96-'99 Yamaha 250, good cond, £50 each. Tel Shane on (mobile) 07932 766169 or 01202 682601 (Dorset)

**KTM competition silencer** to fit '94-'02 LC4 or '99-'02 Adventure, very little use, £100. Tel 01371 810183 (Essex)

**Touratech parts**, enduro tankbag, unused, £40. IMO 100R, £100. Tool roll, £10. KTM LC4 12L tank, c/w seat/plastics, £130. Tel 07717 093228 (Lancs)

**Yamaha YZ125 Steahly flywheel weight**, £30. Skidplate, £20. Barrel, £50. 19" Excel rim, £25. front pipe, £25. All plus p&p. Tel 01386 832111 (Worcs)

**WR400/426 spares**, Acerbis 13L tank, £70. Stainless frameguards, £20. CRD sumpguard, £30. XR600R DEP tailpipe, £80. Twinline filter, £5. XXL lined jacket, new, £60. Tel 01942 799045 (Lancs)

**WP Extreme forks**, little use, £200. Also KTM front wheel to match, c/w disc, £75 or £250 for both. Dainese Safety Jacket 21, size XL, worn once, £75. KTM EXC 4T alloy frameguards, unused, £10. Tel 07717 093228 (Lancs)

**Towavan twin-wheel box trailer**, fibreglass, clear roof, galvanised chassis, roller shutter door, new tyres, spare wheel, 9'8"x5'x6', vgc, £1200. Tel 01202 682601 (Dorset)

**WR400/426 UMS 13L tank** with rad scoops, £100. Tel 01905 359768 (Worcs)

**CR250 18" rear wheel**, c/w disc/sprocket/mousse and trials tyre, suit '93-'98 models, new side panels/ rad shrouds/magneto casing, genuine Suzuki manual, white plastics, offers, will post. Tel 01782 313011 (Staffs)

**DID X-ring and Hi-Q sprockets for DR350**, new, £50. Tel 07775 894464 (Bucks)

**Brembo four-pot caliper**, pads, 320mm Brembo disc, master cylinder, brake hose for Husqvarna 610TE/SM,

£150. Tel 01666 824952 (Wilts)

**CCM 604 starter motor**, £110. CDI, £60. Paioli Blue Steel forks and yokes, £190. WP shock, £110. Brembo brakes, without discs, £80. Ignition coil, £25, plus other bits. Also Yamaha TTR250 digital speedo, £40. Tel Stu on 01858 575697 (Leics)

**Alpinestar Tech 6 boots**, size 9/43, black, hardly used, offers. Tel Mark on (mobile) 07767 785589 or 01442 386019 (Herts)

**MX jersey**, size XL, 38" jeans, XL gloves, knee and elbow pads, body armour, £60. O'Neal helmet, size medium, and goggles, £40. Tel 07747 011109 (Kent)

**Supermoto wheels to fit XR650R**, c/w discs, Bridgestones, cush drive, six-pot caliper, braided hose, master cylinder, everything done 1000km, £400. Tel 01904 634389 (York)

**Suzuki DR-Z400S gel seat**, battery, CRD pipe, three clutch levers, oil filter, two mirrors, used tank, guards, all priced to sell. Tel (mobile) 07798 731460 or 02870 351335 (N Ireland)

**DR350 Clymer manual**, as new, £10. Also EBC front pads, unused, £5. YZ/WR250 1989 workshop manuals, £5. Tel Dan (after 6pm) on 01223 529468 (Camps)

**Rear wheel to fit XR250/400**, c/w sprocket and disc, £100. Tel 01823 433972 (Somerset)

**CRD Absolute Power exhaust to fit XR400R**, three months old, bargain at £125 inc p&p. Tel 01823 433972 (Somerset)

**White Power USD forks** to fit KTM 200EXC 2002 model, as new, £250. Also CRD Absolute Performance silencer to fit Yamaha WR250/426, as new, £180 ono. WR400/426 flywheel weight, £40 ono. Tel 01246 567556 (Derbys)

**Breaking CR250**, KLR250, TSX250, CDI for '91 KX250, XL125R engine parts, plus lots of other spares. Tel 07989 103220 (Yorks)

**Honda CRM250 mkII engine**, will break or £130. CRM250 manual, £5. Tel 01235 766108 (Oxon)

**Arrow full exhaust system** to fit KTM 250/400/520 2001-on, vgc, £120 ono. Tel 07771 850854 (Staffs)

**Wheels to fit Yamaha TTR600**, standard, as new, £200. Also KLR650 wheels, £100. Full exhaust system for KLR, £125. Tel (mobile) 07860 124986 or 01772 615867 (Lancs)

**Breaking KLR650**, all parts available inc forks, yokes, plastics, tank, frame with V5. Tel Stuart on (mobile) 07989 866631 or 01355 248109 (Glasgow)

**Acerbis twin headlamp**, new Polisport handguards, both in white, blue Renthal bars, vgc, £50 the lot. Tel 01252 691158 (Hants)

**Honda XR250L parts**, from 1996 bike, forks, £110. Yokes, £20. White Bros E-series exhaust, £100. Quiet core, £20. 250 barrel and piston, £40. Tel Manks on 07967 388875 (Notts)

**Husaberg 600 1999/2000 SPES exhaust**, complete engine in need of piston kit, radiator, carb, forks, carbon fender, tank, shock plus lots more. Tel 07816 882065 (Shrops)

**XT600 forks and front wheel**, £150. Drum rear wheel, £70. Caliper and m/cyl, £45. XL600LM wheels/tyres, immaculate, £140. Complete motors; SP370, £125. XL250S, £160. Tel 0117 914 3138 (Bristol)

**CCM 604 standard cam**, unused, £100. Talon/Excel trail wheels, MT21s, done 300 miles, speedo drive, spacers, immaculate cond, £285. Tel 02392 632418 (Hants)

**Suzuki DR350 parts**, CRD alloy bashplate, £50. Frameguards, £20. Genuine Suzuki carrier, £50. All brand new. Tel 01506 834503 (Fife)

**Full riding kit**, Stefan Evrerts replica helmet, size medium, Targa jacket, size XL, Oxtar Blaster boots, size ten, blue goggles/gloves/pants, all brand new, £275 ovno. Tel 01706 879283 (Lancs)










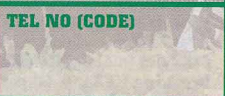
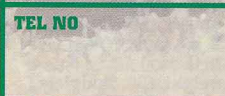
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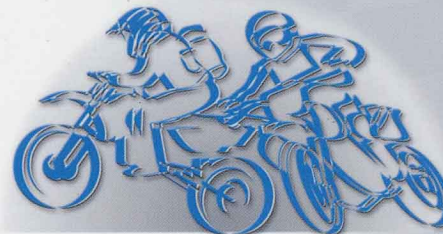
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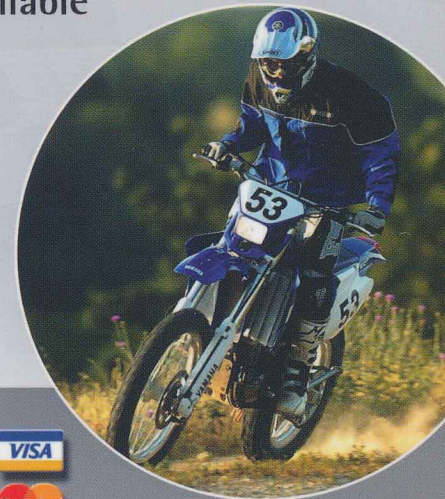
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