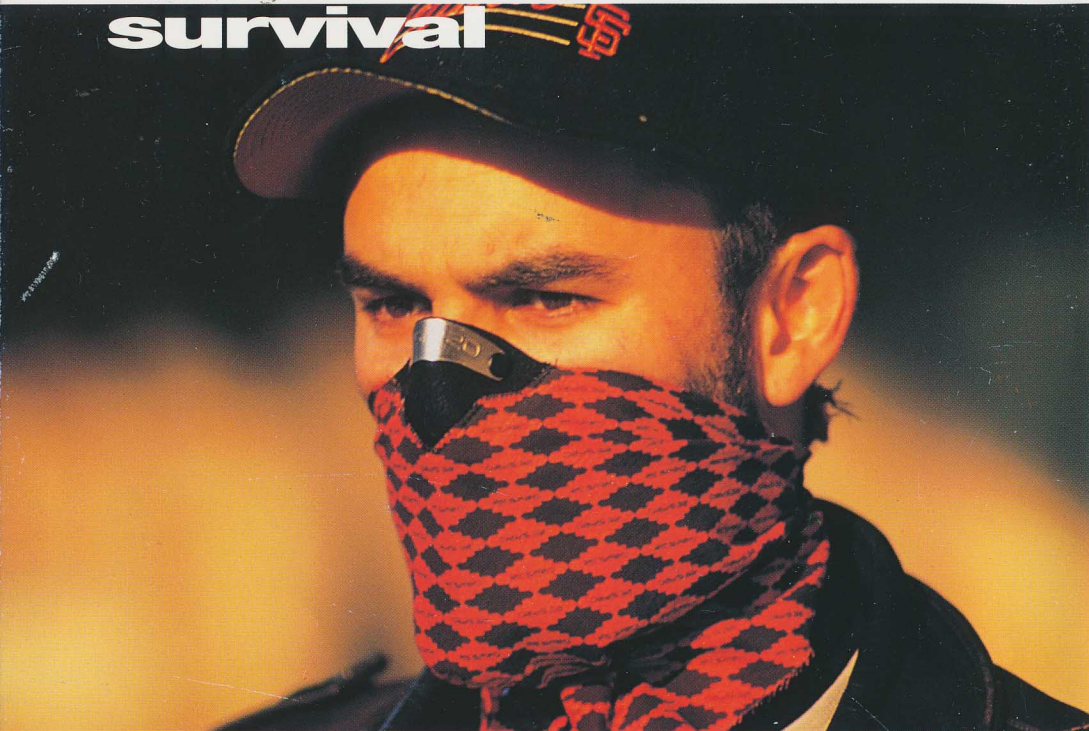


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CONTENTS 6



6 Letters Page
You get your say

8 DR650
Suzuki's best big thumper yet?

16 3 Stage Trial
Full Service History

20 Derbi 50
Does size matter?

28 Beginners Guide
How to find green lanes

34 TM125
How does a 40hp 125 sound?

42 Moto Gori RGS250
One Careful owner reveals all

51 Trail Bike Guide
The ultimate trailie reference

64 Classified ads
Pages of bikes & gear for sale

72 Trail Tales
International stardom? - Not



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tm trouble?
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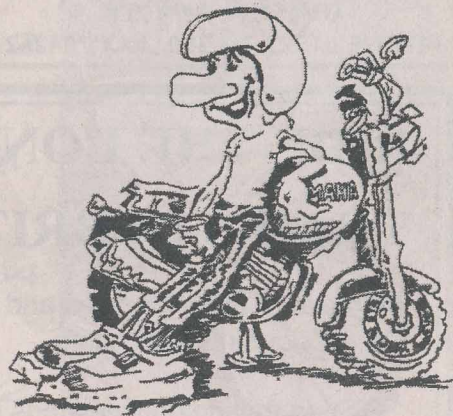
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A LONG WAY OFF, WHAT WITH THE ICY WEATHER THAT'S
GRIPPED THE COUNTRY FOR THE PAST MONTH OR SO, BUT
THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN'T GO OUT RIDING. SO WHAT
IF ITS COLD? SOME OF THE BEST TRAIL RIDING TO BE HAD
IS WHEN YOU CAN SEE YOUR BREATH IN FRONT OF YOU.
COLD WEATHER THROWS UP ITS OWN SURPRISES; ICY PUD-
DLES, FROZEN RUTS (NEVER MIND FROZEN FIN-
GERS), AND SOMETIMES SNOW. BUT WITH

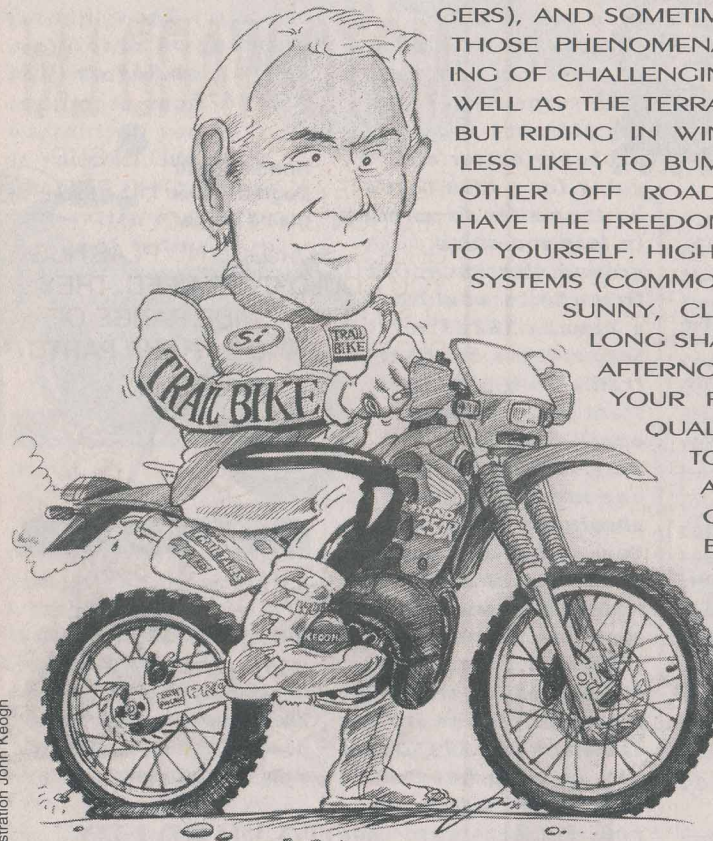


Illustration John Keogh

THOSE PHENOMENA COMES THE FEEL-
ING OF CHALLENGING THE ELEMENTS AS
WELL AS THE TERRAIN. NOT ONLY THAT
BUT RIDING IN WINTER MEANS YOU'RE
LESS LIKELY TO BUMP INTO WALKERS OR
OTHER OFF ROAD USERS, AND CAN
HAVE THE FREEDOM OF THE LANES ALL
TO YOURSELF. HIGH PRESSURE WEATHER
SYSTEMS (COMMON IN WINTER) BRING
SUNNY, CLOUDLESS SKIES AND
LONG SHADOWS IN THE EARLY
AFTERNOON THAT CAN GIVE
YOUR PHOTOS A MAGICAL
QUALITY. I KNOW IT'S EASY

TO MAKE EXCUSES BUT
AFTER YOU'VE HAD, A
GOOD RIDE, A HOT
BATH AND WET YOUR
WHISTLE WITH A PINT
OF BEST OR A
WARMING MALT,
YOU WON'T HALF
FEEL GOOD WITH
YOURSELF. WELL?
WHAT ARE YOU
WAITING FOR?
SPRING?

Si Melber

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Dear Trail

Short & Gurly

Dear TBM

I am writing to you for some advice, and also to congratulate you on your excellent, informative magazine. I especially like the Trail Bike Guide, Beginners Guide and Rough Guide to Britain.

Now for my question. I used to ride motocross bikes in my teens, but ended up swapping my much loved RM100 for a car. However I'm now older, wiser and have more cash, and am desperate to get back into biking. I particularly fancy trail riding however I am only five foot three and a half (the half is important when you're as small as I am), and of slight build (being a woman). I fear that I may never find a good trailie which is suitable for my height as they all seem to have really tall seat heights.

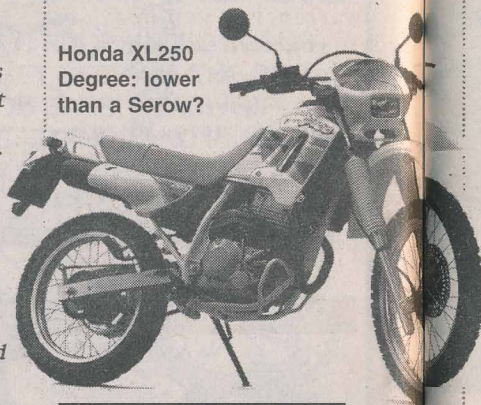
Could you please let me know of any 125-250cc machines which would accommodate my small stature. Alternatively you may be aware of some trailies which could have their suspension lowered to suit. I would be very grateful for advice as I am keen to take my test in the spring and hopefully purchase a bike for the summer months.

Jane Edmond
Cleveland

Okay Jane, first of all you're not small.... petite maybe, but many trail riders are no taller than you so don't panic. A small number of bikes can be fitted with suspension lowering kits, but you're probably better off going for a bike that's built smaller so as not to lose too much ground clearance. Our first choice would be a Yamaha XT225 Serow, it's a brilliant trailie with electric start (on the newer ones), and doesn't weigh a ton. We tested one in issue 6 and absolutely loved it. You should also consider the Yamaha TW200, which is an unusual, fat tyred and very low trailie, or how about a Honda TLR200 which is a trials-styled trailbike. Yamaha's old XT250 was nice and low but they're getting on a bit now. But here's an interesting alternative how about a Honda XL250 Degree, they come with electric start, a modern engine and best of all a seat height of just 31 inches (that's even lower than a Serow), which should squash down a fair bit when you sit on it. You can always get the seat

cut down a bit if you want it even lower still. You won't find most of these in your local dealers so try The Container Company on 01362 698147, or RAP on 0181 452 2672

Honda XL250 Degree: lower than a Serow?



Big Bore

Dear TBM

Just a few lines to compliment you on a great magazine. I have got a DT125R and would like to know how easy it would be to de-restrict it, and also if a big bore kit is available.

L Keech
Finchley London

The DT125R is fairly easy to de-restrict, it requires you to remove the powervalve and rotate it around one notch, then to earth out the wire from the CDI box which runs up the loom and back again in a sort of a loop. I sug-

Bike...

gest however that you get a dealer to do the work because the powervalve needs setting up correctly, and if the bike is new you'll invalidate your warranty if you do it yourself. We don't know of any big bore kits available for the DTR, but tuning guru Stan Stephens in Kent can do almost anything with a two stroke. Call him on 01474 854331

Which Bike

Dear Si

Today I found your mag in a newsagents I rarely use and I must say it's a nice change from the 'boys own comics' that devote themselves to silly language, and antics designed to attract the police or make their willies look bigger.

As a mature biker (okay read boring) who gets his kicks out of touring on a big bike I am looking for a change. Last year I took an XJ900 to Morocco in April - it rained - and an off piste bug sort of caught me. At the time I wished I had a big trailie, but certainly not for the ride down via the glorious sweeping roads of France and Spain, yet the sight of those gravel tracks heading off across the High Atlas made me think

Got an opinion?
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that it would've been fun.

At 6ft and 16+ stone I want a bike that will carry me without being swamped, I have no desire to ride fast but simply to wobble about enjoying the scenery. I need it to be quiet so no two strokes please, and as I have a home in SW France surrounded by green lanes (in the foothills of the Pyrenees), a bike that will be able to get down there without too much trouble would be good.

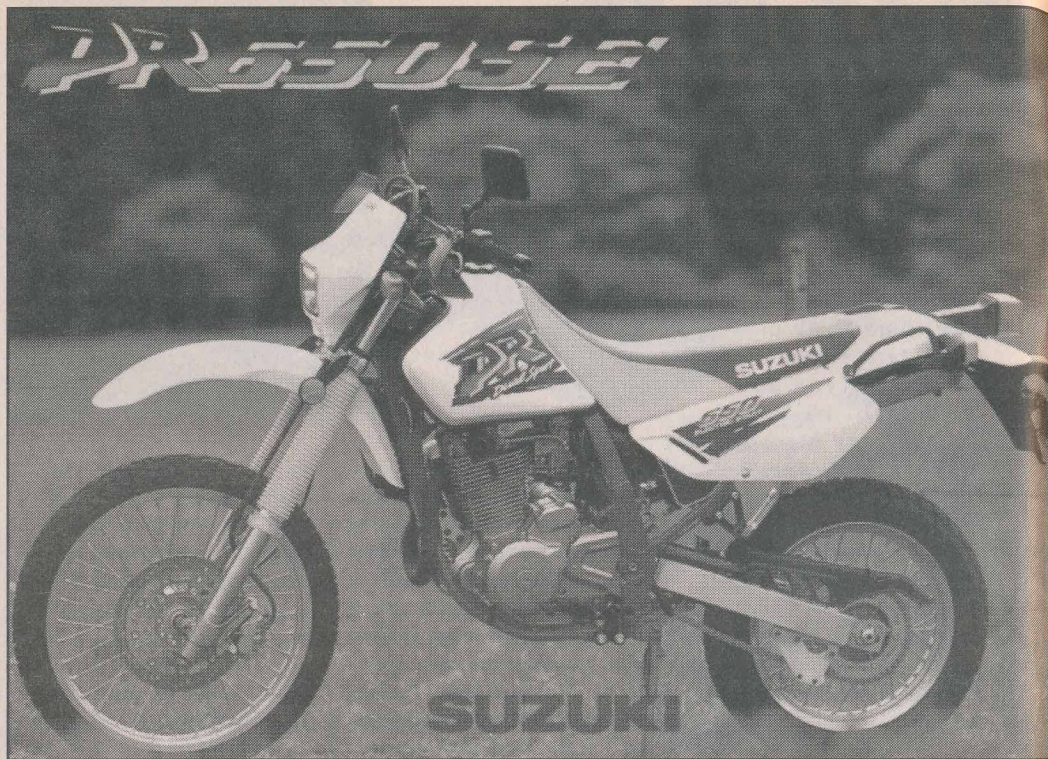
I fancy a Yamaha - they seem to have a good 'un in most categories, and like the idea of a 350/500/600. The light weight of the XT350 appeals but would it be too much of a toy for someone my size? Whilst I think that this size would be easy to pick up on the many occasions I drop it whilst learning, would it be big enough to satisfy a more skilled rider (hopefully as time goes on)? Despite 19 years road riding, my off road experience is nil.

Barry Charman
Newbury Berks

This is the perfect job for Yamaha's XTZ660. Not only is it a brilliant dual purpose bike (I've ridden one off road in the Pyrenees) but it's got the power and range to get you there, and is great fun on the twisties. I reckon the XT350 will be too small for you, and the XT600 has no fairing and is not much fun for any real distance. You're big enough to get away with a heavier bike and the XTZ has real off road ability especially on dry and dusty trails.

Other bikes to consider are the Aprilia 650 Pegaso, Honda 650 Dominator, or even something like a KTM 620EGS, though you'd want to fit a small screen and bigger tank to the latter for distance work. Whatever you buy, let us know how you get on





With the latest incarnation of the DR650, Suzuki have abandoned the Paris Dakar type of trail bike in favour of something more traditional. Paul Blezard cast an appraising eye over its credentials

TrailBike -8- Magazine

Suzuki have been making big banger trail bikes for over a decade now. The first to see these shores was the DR600 which had a small but faithful following who were easily distinguished by their lop-sided leg muscles from trying to kick start the things. In 1991 Suzuki gave their then new DR650 an electric start and a complete revamp turning it into a heavier and more road oriented machine in the process. But the styling never really caught on and last year Suzuki gave up on the 'poor man's Dominator' look and went back to basics. They stripped off the fairing bringing the weight back down to the same 155kgs (341 lbs) as

the XT600E, and knocked £200 off the price to boot. Unfortunately the bike was still long, overly tall, and lacking in bottom end stomp. So enter the new, improved 1996 DR650SE. Still with the same 'basic' look, but with some much more profound changes to accompany the subtly altered cosmetics.

The most obvious difference is the size of the machine. This year's DR650 is a lot more approachable thanks to its 'fun-sized' proportions and moveable seat height - which is now adjustable over a range of 40mm. It's not a massive amount I grant you and although it requires a dealer to set it up, it's definitely a step in the right direction for trail bikes. The first impression when slinging a leg over the beast was to doubt that it really was on the standard, higher setting - though Suzuki's workshop manager assured me it was. It's supposed to be 34.8 inches high but even with my 32 inch inside leg, I could get both heels on the ground comfortably.

The new DR has also been given a completely new frame which is lighter, stronger and lower than its predecessor. The most obvious distinguishing characteristic is the broad box-section rear part just above the swinging arm spindle. The swing-arm itself is now genuine alloy and hollow wheel spindles reduce unsprung as well as overall weight. The Kayaba suspension is all-new too; the Suzook has Fireblade-style' cap-ended leading axle forks with the brake caliper hanging off an alloy

bracket. At the back end the prospective DR owner can specify either grab handles or a rear rack, but sadly not both, and likewise the sumpguard is an optional extra too. Although part of the lowering kit is a shorter sidestand, the one fitted to the test machine was much too long resulting in it toppling over a couple of times when parked on uneven ground.

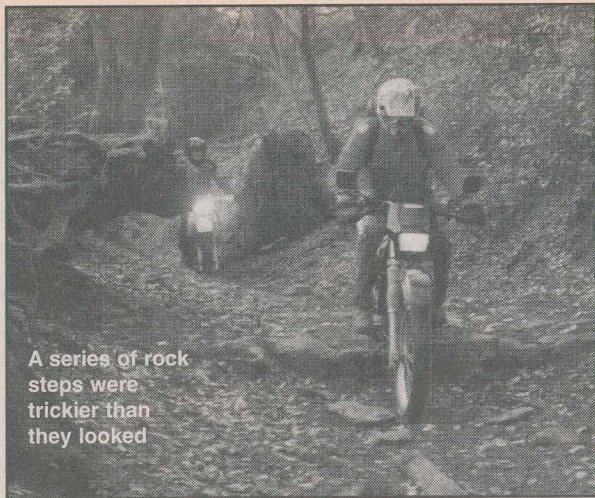
But Suzuki haven't simply stopped at altering the chassis and appearance of the DR. In the engine room too, considerable changes to the motor have made it a much more rideable machine. Despite it's obvious similarity to DRs of yore Suzuki claim a thorough revamp of the engine has brought new life back to a motor that on appearance alone looks to be from another age. Whilst still devoid of a water jacket, Suzuki claim that the trademark air/oil cooling efficiency of the DR has been improved. In any case, it no longer sounds like a bag of nails at tickover, and runs creamy smooth right off the bottom of the throttle.

Starting procedure is simple - flick the choke on the left handlebar, pull in the clutch lever (even if the bike's in neutral) and keep the throttle firmly shut as you press the starter. It chuggs into life immediately every time, even in sub-zero temperatures, although it requires a good few seconds to warm up before you can even blip the throttle, let alone pull away.

The bars feel low and wide in relation to the rather hard seat and the mirrors remain usefully



TrailBike -9- Magazine



A series of rock steps were trickier than they looked

clear at all speeds, but are easy to adjust without recourse to spanners - they'll even fold flat should you need to squeeze the DR into a van or confined space.

My first ride was to the Ally Pally show in London where the DR impressed with its ability to cross town quickly and safely, even on the capital's salt encrusted roads. I showed a clean pair of heels to a Fireblade around the Hammersmith one-way system, and felt light and flickable enough to make lane splitting and traffic carving a doddle.

The first real thrash on open roads was a little less auspicious. Like all good lightweight singles the DR was 'demon' through roundabouts, great on the brakes and punched its way out of corners like an angry Mike Tyson. But just as I was starting to enjoy some serious high-speed bend-swinging on the A338 Ringwood to Salisbury road, it cut out, as if running out of petrol. I turned to reserve and filled up at the next garage but it

cut out again in the middle of an overtake - not good. It was one of those infuriating problems which came and went without warning. Most of the time the bike ran perfectly - cruising in the mid-90s and topping out at exactly a ton on the clock. But now and again it would cut out suddenly, and then return to normal once the throttle had been shut for a few seconds. I presume it was fuel starvation of some sort, but never found out the precise cause.

Anyway, back to Berwick St James, erstwhile rural residence of the editor, for some pics on road and trail. It was easy to turn the bike around feet up on full lock (how come you fell off then? - Ed) and the suspension was super-plush both ends without being too soft. After an easy trail for a warm up, I tackled a deceptively difficult one which leads to the south side of Stonehenge. In the cold, damp conditions prevailing the wet grass was like riding on ice with the standard Bridgestone Trailmaxes that come fitted to the DR.

With both ends slithering and sliding beneath me, I took it steady to start with, got confident, then cocky and finally fell off - as you do. First time the back slid out beneath me and I stepped off, second time I lost the front and dropped the bike completely. It was easy to lift up thanks to the sturdy grab handles fitted behind the seat and there was no harm done, except for an origami rear brake pedal.

After this little familiarisation



Even the worst winter trails could be tackled by an intrepid DR pilot on standard tyres

exercise I took the DR out for a much more serious assessment on both road and trail a couple of days later, along with a Honda XR650L with which to compare it. It took exactly 27 minutes to ride from Barnes in London to the Hogsback lay-by on the far side of Guildford, despite being slowed by traffic, speed cameras and that mysterious unpredictable cut-out.

Once off road I decided to keep the tyres at standard road pressures for as long as possible because I like a bit of a challenge. The DR and I 'cleaned' the first three green lanes no bother, but ended up in the bushes on the tricky climb up Gibbett's Hill near Hindhead. Then came the first of the really snotty sections which I steamed through with no bother, thanks to its stonking bottom end, easy-paddle low seat. A slippery climb where I'd come to grief on my XR last year got the better of me, but again thanks to the grab-han-



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XR650L vs DR650ES

Despite coming from opposite ends of the off-road spectrum, both these bikes impress with the way they can handle the dirt. The XR650L is basically a serious off-road machine (the XR600) fitted with an electric-start Dominator engine, whereas the DR is a fully legal trail bike which this year has been lightened and improved to make it more off-road friendly. The biggest difference between them is at the front end; while the Suzuki feels very much like the road bike that it is, with lots of weight on the front for tarmac riding, the XR's front end feels much lighter than the DR's and can be lifted at the merest blip of throttle. Not only that but after riding the low level Suzuki, getting aboard the lofty XR is like clambering onto a horse. But while the XR has a punchy engine, it doesn't have the same creamy-smooth stomp as the new DR, which beats it right throughout the rev range. Of course the XR's suspension is superb off road, but it says a lot for the DR that

The DR compares favourably with Honda's XR650L



it could stay with the XR unless the trails were really fast and bumpy; on the road however the DR takes the honours, its smoother faster and easier to ride. In short then, I'll take the engine and rear end of the DR with the front end and geometry of the XR650.



dles and the bike's relatively light weight, I was able to heave it out unassisted. By now the rear wheel looked like a slick and would not pull me uphill from a standing start so I had to run alongside and jump on cowboy style; yee-hah!

The biggest problem I was encountering off road was that the whole front end felt ridiculously heavy considering that the bike is supposed to weigh a stone less than a KLX650. This is partly because, with the fairing gone, the instruments, headlight and mirrors are all steered weight and partly because at 58.7 inches the Dr is still quite long. Furthermore, I suspect Suzuki may be being a teeny weeny bit optimistic in their claims of a 324lb dry weight!

We headed back to the trails just north of Hindhead Common where one of the biggest challenges of the day was the series of natural steps of rocks and roots up to Ridgeway Farm. I knew that a 'clean' climb on the Bridgestones would be right at the limit of mine and the DR650's abilities so decided to just attack the steps with the clutch fully home - I needed all my fingers on the bars to wrestle with the beast. On the trickiest 18-inch step the DR came almost to a stop, to the point where many a bike would simply have stalled (as the XR650 did) but when I rolled the throttle back on, it just stomped up the steps like Sammy Miller's old Ariel 500. I was well impressed I can tell you, and in view of that performance, I cannot honestly say that the bike is overgeared, even though it will top 35mph in first!

Simon Fenning, owner of the XR650 had a quick spin on the DR and pronounced himself impressed enough to consider buying one - he couldn't believe how small and low it felt. Across the sand of Frensham Common he gave it some throttle, kept his weight well back and the

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(summer prices differ)

INTERESTED?!

Ring Bob on 01823 433972



TOP: The DR's got enough plonkability to lift the front end on firm tracks, but in softer going the front feels overly heavy

BOTTOM: On the road the DR is fun and flickable like all good singles

pretty reasonable 47-50mpg, (better than the 40-45mpg I get with my XR600 even on tall gearing). The three-gallon tank is a lot smaller than last year's model, but still big enough to take you well over 100 miles before hitting reserve.

Conclusion

The DR is an excellent all-rounder. Fast and smooth enough for high-speed cruising on the motorway, but low enough and light enough for serious trail riding if you've got the confidence. Okay, you wouldn't want to get stuck on the Monk's Trod with one, but I reckon I could get around the Welsh 2-day with enduro tyres fitted, so long as it was reasonably dry - that electric start would be worth its weight in gold.

I'm not sure that I would choose the DR in preference to an Aprilia Pegaso or indeed an XR650L if it was my only bike, but it feels vastly superior to the XT600E. It's blessed with the same rugged crashability but is a much classier bit of kit altogether.

The only black mark against the bike was that mysterious cutting out problem. Suzuki also get a raspberry for making the bash-plate and rear rack optional extras and for giving the DR the crappiest horn in Christendom. At £4,899 the DR650ES is £700 more expensive than last year's model, but I reckon it's definitely worth it.

DR just skimmed across the top no bother at all, feet up all the way.

We swapped back again and the last couple of trails were a doddle. So with the tyres still at full pressure, I was soon thrashing home on the A3 at 90mph plus.

Fuel consumption (both on and off the trail) worked out at a



DR650SE

Engine: Air/oil cooled, sohc, 4-valve, 644cc single

Bore/stroke: 100x82mm

Comp ratio: 9:1

Transmiss: 5 speed gearbox

Seat height: 33.3 - 34.8in

Dry weight: 147kg (324 lbs)

Wheelbase: 1480mm (58.3in)

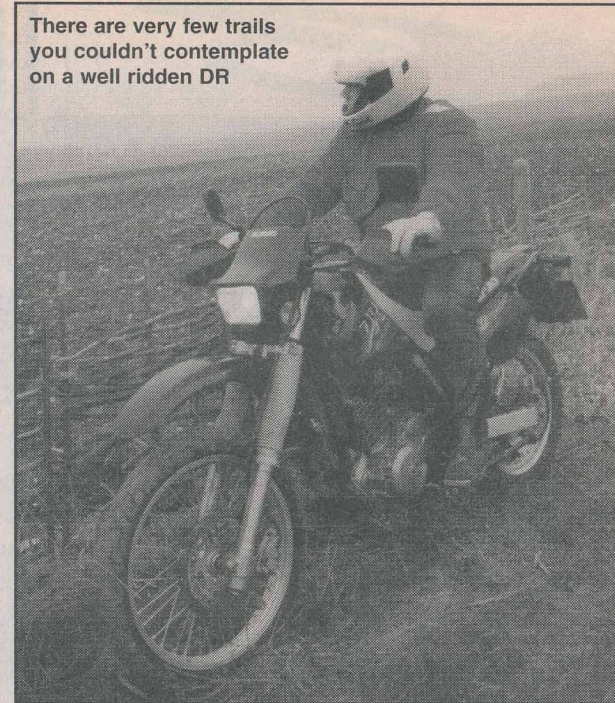
Fuel capacity: 13L (inc res)

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- +** Low, chuggable motor, electric start
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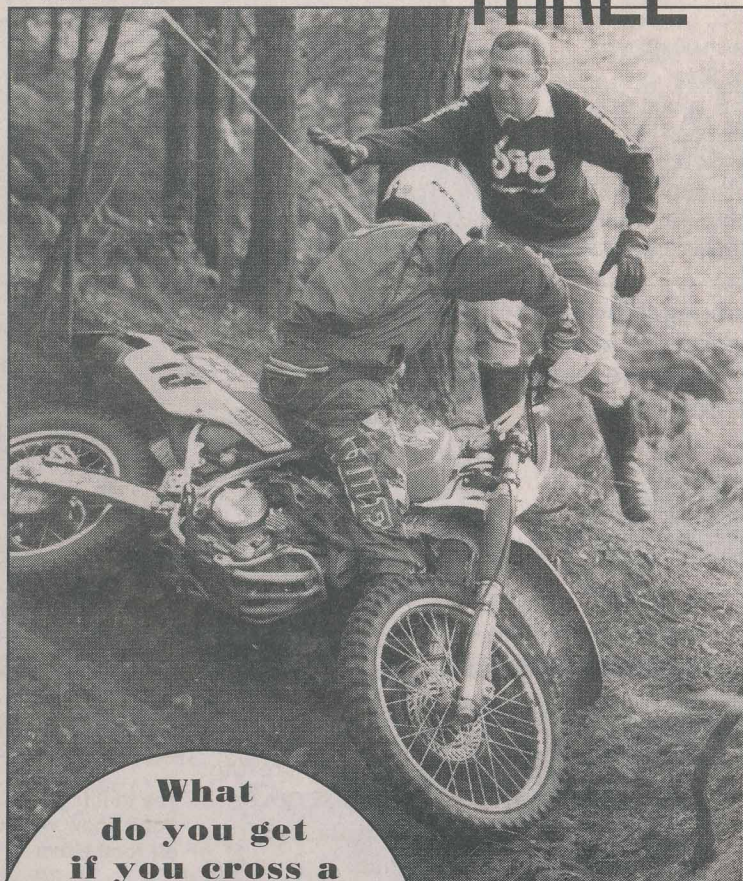
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THREE

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What do you get if you cross a rally with a trial and an enduro? A Three Stage Trial that's what. Dick Coles went along to find out more

The Three Stage Trial is generally acknowledged to have originated as a Service event designed to cater for all levels of riding skills and encompassing a wide range of classes of machine. Often held as an army exercise the prospective despatch rider would find himself entered as part of his training in the event alongside seasoned veterans of ISDT standard.

The event is quite simple in format. There are three 'stages'. During the first stage of the event several laps of a course are ridden during which the competitors attempt sections. These are marked in conventional 'kick-start' manner. There is then a short break before the competitors commence stage

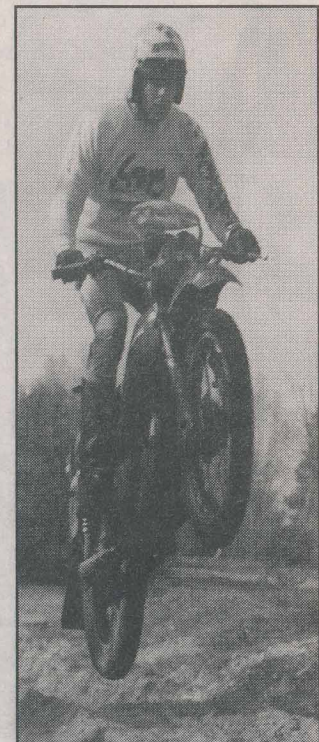
two during which they again ride several laps of the course, attempting the sections and again being marked on their performance but with a bogey time and the possibility of time penalties. Stage Three is a glorious thrash against the clock, using the start gates of the sections as check points only, and a number of laps to be completed before there is the threat of time penalties.

Perhaps the longest running Three Stage Trial is the CSMA's Services Trial. Fifty years old last year, the event survives in unaltered form and now caters for trail, trial, competition, and standard service machines. All ride the same route and of course the advantages gained by the trials machines in stage one will be balanced by the advantages that the competition machines have in stage three. Awards are made for the separate classes, which are further split into novice and expert riders. Expert status is achieved by two class wins in two years.

The Army Championships survive in a Three Stage format, albeit over two days, and a number of Police forces including Surrey, Hampshire and Gwent all hold three stage trials. All allow, indeed depend on, civilian entries, although service riders may get priority in the entry to some events. Some civilian clubs also hold three stage trials, amongst those that come to mind are the Aldermaston Nomads, Swindon, Farnham and SETRA .

The severity of the terrain upon which the event is held, obviously varies from venue to venue, as does the length of lap, but remember that the course has to be set out with all classes of machine in mind (some clubs also allow pre-65 machines). You won't find severe sections that you couldn't begin to fold your KMX200 into, or the first Army Armstrong that came along would probably block it for good!

Surrey Police hold their annual three stage event in October. Riders from Surrey Police rode in the early CSMA service trials and today their successors compete regularly in all manner of motorcycle events, including trials and enduros. The event is open to all service riders and to all civilian entrants who are members of ACU affiliated clubs. This year entrants enjoyed a superb days sport, in excellent weather, in the unique setting of the military vehicle



Yes that is a Z200, and no I don't know why he's riding it off road either

evaluation area at Bagshot in Surrey.

The course was a five mile lap set amongst open heathland, established mixed woodland and conifer clad gullies. For added spice, part of the test track, the 'alpine circuit', was included as well. This is a tortuous set of hair-pins of flint-dressed road winding up and down the face of the hillside and is often hired by Toyota GB to test their rally cars. The sections varied considerably but all proved to be rideable if challenging for the wide variety of machines entered.



Historically, three stage trials started out as competitions for service riders. That tradition continues to this day though you're just as likely to find civilians on modern enduro bikes as forces riders on army Armstrongs

About 25 percent of the entry were on trail bikes but this was without including the large number of Suzuki DR350 variants, all of which had been entered by their riders as competition machines. Virtually every sort of trail bike produced in the last 15 years was to be found in the line up - with a surprisingly large number of air-cooled Yamaha DT models. These machines are extremely competitive in this type of event, being nimble, light, and virtually bulletproof. One brave soul even had a Tenere, and he knew what he was letting himself in for, having done the event the year before!

The riders list showed the wide range of skills and experience in the line-up. Among the experts were Len Hutty - south east trials expert, Mick Noyce - veteran scrambler, and Ted Johns - veteran service rider and clerk of the course for the Natterjack Enduro. Amongst the novices were at least four riders on their first trial, one of whom circulated for the day with an L-plate on the front of his KDX125 thoroughly enjoying himself.

For the first stage, riders had to complete three laps of the circuit, attempting ten sections on each lap. They were allowed two and a half hours in which to do this. Stage two required two laps to be completed in one hour, and stage three saw the riders being required to complete four laps in the hour.

One of the nice things about a three stage trial is that the breaks between stages allow the riders to mix with friends and family, to have something to eat and drink, to repair damage to rider and machine, and best of all, to swap stories of daring do.

Computerised results enabled the trophies to be presented within 45 minutes of the last rider finishing, yet the most eagerly sought piece of information was the date of next years trial. If you fancy riding in the 1996 Surrey Police Three Stage Trial make a note in your diary for 6 October. Regulations are available from early August and entries will be limited to around 120 so you'll have to be quick. In the meantime, if you see some regs for a three stage trial, why not give it a try?



Old Yam DTs are a favourite weapon in this sort of event

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FUNKY

MOPED

The Derbi 50 may be a fully fledged trail bike but it's also a moped - at least in restricted form. Dave Cornish took an unrestricted one out trailing to see if size really does matter

Some of my fondest motorcycling memories go back to the dim and distant past, a time when my adolescent fantasies revolved around dreams of indulging in indecent acts with a certain Miss Deborah Harry (*That's Blondie to you and me...Ed*), and probably just as unlikely, hitting the magic 60mph on my ageing moped. Unfortunately I never managed to fulfil one of my dreams, but after spending a weekend with Derbi's Senda 50 that elusive 60mph barrier was finally broken and yes it was well worth the wait.

For those of you who are not familiar with the Derbi name, the factory is situated on the outskirts of Barcelona in Spain, and produces 120,000 bikes a year. Until recently it entered a works team in the smaller road

race Grand Prix classes with considerable success at the hands of Spanish national hero's Angel Nieto and Aspar Martinez. Derbi have been eight times world champions so obviously know a thing or two about screwing together quick two strokes.

Derbi's 50cc Senda is no exception, cracking the 60mph limit is within its ability thanks in no small part to a terrific little engine. The claimed power output of 6.5bhp is provided by a liquid cooled, two stroke single capable of spinning to over 10,000rpm. With a compression ratio of 11.5:1, the fuel/air mix is drawn into the engine through a reedblock mounted Dell'Orto 12mm carb and an autolube system takes care of lubrication. A bore and stroke of 39.9 x 40mm takes the cylinder



Right: Tiny motor puts out just 6.5bhp but its still enough for serious fun



capacity to a full 49.94cc (every little helps) and all that power is transmitted through a smooth clutch which has a pleasingly light and positive action into a slick shifting six speed box, and finally fed to the rear wheel via a puny looking plated chain.

Not surprisingly the rolling chassis is designed to handle considerably more power than the 50cc unit can throw at it (pretty much the same chassis is used in the forthcoming 125). The specification is

high, not just for a 50 but for any trailie for that matter. Trick looking Showa USD forks together with Akront alloy rims (21 inch front and 18 inch rear) handle the bumps, while a monoshock rear mated to a substantial delta-box swingarm keeps the rear under control. Stopping such a lightweight bike isn't a problem either with powerful AJP hydraulic disc brakes front and rear, and as a nice touch, both master cylinders are connected to their relevant calipers by stainless steel braided hoses.

FUNKY X MOPED

If first impressions count, then Derbi are onto a winner straight away.

picking the bike up from Portosport the UK's importer. The Derbi looked for all the world like a full size enduro mount. Gleaming red bodywork contrasts with the purple seat and frame, those alloy rims glint in the sunlight and check out the tyres, Michelin T61s are OE fitment and hint at the Senda's off road ability.

Starting the tiny motor is straight forward enough, turn the key, rummage around under the tank for the choke, and a quick prod on the stubby kickstart lever has the Derbi ready for action. At tickover the motor can barely be heard

but a handful of throttle reminds you of it's presence and seeing as this is the only way to make any decent progress I soon became less self conscious of the high pitched wail emanating from the carbon-look silencer. Half a mile later I had rediscovered the art of riding a 50cc.... don't back off the gas for anything, shift gears only at peak revs and try to make yourself as aerodynamic as possible, ridden in this way keeping up with traffic is not too difficult as long as fast trunk roads are avoided. Sticking to country roads or even better urban streets, the Derbi can easily hold it's own among the cut and thrust of today's town traffic.

Entering Sheffield's urban sprawl, the Derbi performed like an ideal city bike. Roadholding was very reassuring for such a lightweight mount, the tyres offering plenty of grip and feel and never giving cause for concern on the city's pot holed streets. And zipping away from the lights in a flurry of revs and perfectly timed clutchless gearshifts, would despatch most four wheelers in a haze of two stroke oil.

So much for the urban jungle then, but what about the real thing? How would the little Derbi cope with a gruelling day's off roading? To really test the bike's capabilities we enlisted the help of the South Yorkshire TRF who provided a guide to the trails in the Peak District National Park, as well as a few helpers to pick up the pieces (my reputation as a bike breaker well known in these parts).

Meeting up with the TRF guys first meant a thrash along some dual carriage-ways into a headwind. Throttle nailed in fifth, the poor little Derbi struggled to

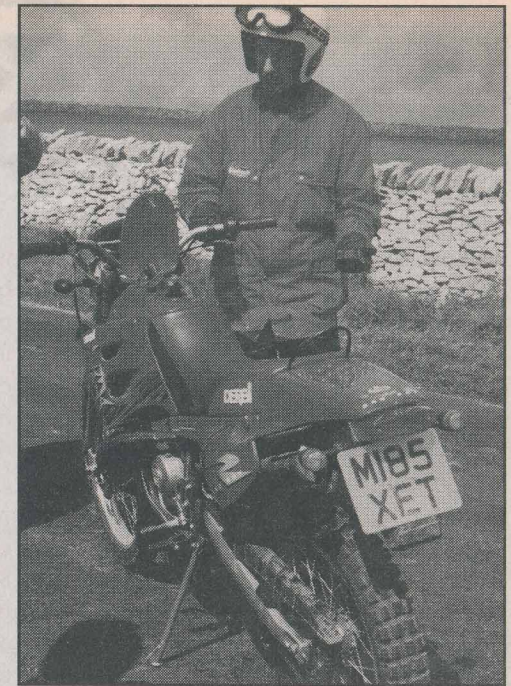
Petrol, oil and coolant reservoirs all live under a single lockable flap

crack 40mph.... still, at least I had time to admire the view. Five minutes later I found myself chasing a rapidly disappearing XT350 through an extremely overgrown trail. Keeping the motor spinning in the lower three gears meant progress was surprisingly swift, and any lack of cubic capacity didn't seem to be slowing me up, just so long as I didn't shut off.

As the trail deteriorated even further the Derbi's light weight combined with it's taut suspension shrugged off everything that was thrown at it; mud, rocks, streams, the Derbi just dispatched them all without a struggle. I was having so much fun I couldn't help but laugh out loud, the way it was coping with this sort of treatment made me feel unstoppable and all this on a 50cc.

Back on tarmac the first vehicle we met just happened to be another Derbi Senda going in the opposite direction, it's rider well tucked in, head down and going for it failed to notice me on an identical bike. In my mind this lad summed up life on board a 50cc machine (albeit a quick 50), everything the rider does affects the bike's performance, a mis-timed gearshift can make a 15mph difference when attacking a hill and as I found out slip-streaming another bike can add an extra ten mph to your cruising speed.

Off road again, this time through a shallow stream with a nasty looking 12 inch pipe running at 45 degrees just waiting to whip the front wheel away. After watching the other riders' mainly failed attempts at a clean crossing and with the honour of TBM at stake, I snicked the bike into first gear, revved the motor to clear it out and gunned the Derbi for all it was worth. To everyone's surprise (especially mine), both bike and rider emerged not



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FUNKY X MOPED

only upright but almost under control! After this show of bravura everyone wanted a blast on the Derbi to see if the bike was flattering it's rider, and to my dismay the general opinion was yes. the Derbi makes off roading seem ludicrously éasy and thanks to it's combination of light weight, quality suspension, and a willing motor, can not only keep up with bigger trail bikes but is actually quicker on tighter sections.

Over a cup of tea and a hot lard roll the Derbi was given a detailed going over by the assembled throng. The consensus of opinion was that neat touches such as grab handles on either side of the rear mudguard, tiny indicators, a plastic sump shield and the Acerbis panels would all be welcomed by the serious trail rider. For road use (where most bikes will spend their time) the Senda is also reasonably well equipped; the steering lock is combined with the ignition barrel, the garish purple seat (with kevlar wear panel) is removed with a key to reveal a tool kit and a wire loop that doubles as both a helmet lock or another grab handle. And really the only sign of cost cutting is the switchgear and instrumentation; a small kph speedo sits alongside warning lights for oil, water temperature, high beam, indicators and low fuel warning but there's no neutral lamp. The switchgear itself looks and feels cheap, but then you can't have everything, and besides, during our time spent with the bike everything worked OK and nothing fell off.

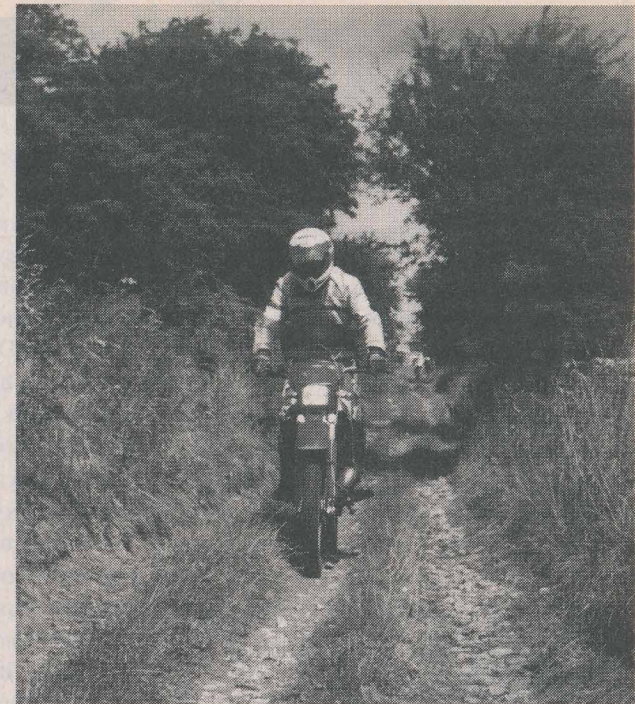
The handlebars themselves are a strange shape (*I bet they were once you finished with them - Ed*) and not very

strong (more about which later). Other equipment includes very effective lights, the rear a standard item used on numerous machines, and the front a well protected enduro style unit giving a reasonable beam pattern. Topping up oil, coolant, and fuel couldn't be simpler as all of the relevant fillers live under a single lockable flap on top of the petrol tank, and a vacuum fuel tap adds convenience but watchout because it has no reserve facility.

The final off road section meant a 12 mile flat out blast along some B-roads, here again the Derbi proved to be both fast and more importantly FUN. With five bikes in our group, finding someone to tuck in behind and take advantage of their draught wasn't difficult, the trick was to max out the revs in each gear, shift up without backing off and grab a tow from the nearest machine before pulling out at the last second and chasing after another bike. Sometimes this would entail attacking bends at 50+mph to avoid losing speed. The result of this inspired lunacy was 60+mph on the speedo, with the satisfaction of out cornering almost anything that had the temerity to try to spoil your racing line.

On to the last trail, a straight-forward drovers road with a gentle incline, no problem for the Derbi, the only obstacles being two 4 X 4s crawling along at a snails pace totally oblivious (or just plain ignorant) to our presence. We followed behind, unable to pass until the leading Land Rover came to an abrupt halt, it was obvious from the oil leaking from a cracked axle case his fun was over for the day. I passed on the inside and sped off up the

trail to the next hazard. This small river was about 18 inches deep and no match for a wildly revving Derbi. After playing about in the water for the camera I screamed after the others up a track that could stop even a pukka enduro bike if your concentration lapsed for a split second. Again the Derbi and it's tiny motor delivered the goods without a glitch. Even after running flat out all day on and off road the radiator was cool enough to touch and I couldn't believe



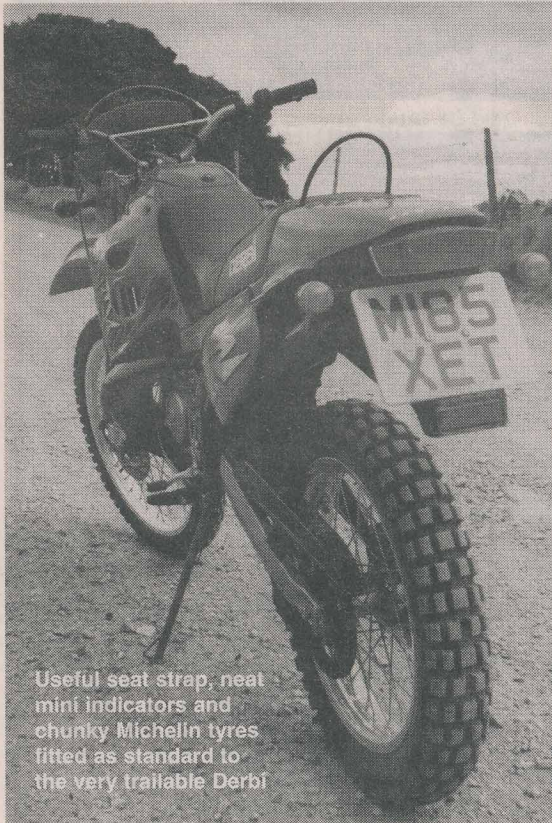
Right: On the lanes of South Yorkshire the Derbi acquitted itself well even in the company of more powerful machines
Below: Well proportioned isn't it?



FUNKY X MOPED

how easily the bike had stormed up this difficult section.

Then some bright spark chirped up 'It's amazing no one's come off yet....' and you've guessed it, ten seconds later I oblige - bigtime. After dusting myself down, a damage report confirmed that the bike had survived the acrobatics better than I had. Thinking only of TrailBike Magazine's already depleted wallet I had deliberately taken the brunt of the ensuing impact between bike and unremitting substrate, softening its landing using just



Useful seat strap, neat mini indicators and chunky Michelin tyres fitted as standard to the very trailable Derbi

my ribcage and left arm. The damage to machine being limited to a broken front mudguard, bent handlebars and smashed headlamp unit - believe me, I felt worse. Just as I thought nothing more could go wrong the Derbi ran out of gas and spluttered to a halt. It was then that I discovered its lack of reserve tap. After transferring fuel from one of the XTs with the aid of a Coke can off we went in search of a petrol station. Filling up the almost bone dry tank I managed to coax a fraction over 6.5 litres into its plastic depths (claimed 9.5 litres), this translates to 55+ mpg, which considering the amount of time it spent at 10,000rpm seems reasonable enough.

Of course fuel consumption figures will probably be the last thing on any Derbi owner's mind since most will be bought (if not actually paid for) by pallid youths to whom mph and not mpg will be their primary concern. Obviously the bike is only legal in restricted (ie 30mph) form to 16 year olds but just out of

Derbi Senda 50

Price: £1699
Engine: 2-stroke liquid cooled 49cc single
Power: 6.5bhp (est)
Weight: 89kg
Warranty: 12 months unlimited mileage
Importers: Portosport
01246 583862

interest an owner reaching his or her 17th birthday can simply fit a tail pipe from a full power model and hey presto, 60mph. Remember though, doing this whilst still 16 is illegal but I'm sure no TBM reader would flout the law in this way!

As an alternative to a larger engined trailie the Senda is certainly impressive. If you value light weight in your off roader's repertoire the Derbi at just 89kg should appeal. Still not convinced? well how about a purchase price of just £1699 (plus otr charges) no other serious trail bike comes near on value for money. Spares prices won't break the bank either, for example how does £8.50 for a genuine rear mudguard sound? Or £34.20 for a fuel tank and £24 for the enduro head lamp assembly? In fact crashing a Senda can be cheaper than filling the tank on some big trailies. Insuring one too is largely a painless exercise as the importers have reached an agreement with a major insurance company giving Derbi owners a sizeable discount thanks to realistic spares pricing and its limited capacity.

All in all there are some pretty good reasons to consider the Derbi as a seriously fun but cheap to run trailbike, and with an 80cc conversion available you're going to be seeing a lot more of these pint-sized performers on your local lanes.

Many thanks to Andy and the lads of the South Yorks TRF for providing the day's entertainment.

- ⊕ Looks, weight, fun, spares prices,
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The Beginners Guide to trail riding

**PART
THREE**

In part three of our guide to learning to trail ride, Bevis Billingham tells you how and where to find green lanes



You've got the bike, you've got the gear, you're taxed, insured and road legal, so you and hit the trails. But where are they? You know they are out there somewhere - the countryside is full of tracks, trails, green lanes or whatever you like to call them, but which ones can you use?

First of all, you will need a map. In one or two counties it might just be possible to ride by following the signs put up by

the local authority, but really a map is essential if you are to keep out of trouble and get the maximum pleasure out of your riding. The maps used by most trail-riders are the pink Ordnance Survey Landranger series, which are easy to

obtain and show sufficient detail for our purpose without the need for re-folding or changing sheets too frequently. At this point I should mention that the following

information applies only to England and Wales, because the law in Scotland and Ireland is different and rights-of-way there are less clearly defined.

If you examine the key at the side of the map you will see a

section labelled PUBLIC RIGHTS-OF-WAY, which shows four lines of symbols in red, representing Footpaths, Bridleways, Roads Used as Public Paths (RUPPs) and Byways Open to All Traffic (sometimes called BOATs, but we will refer to them as



Byways). Now as far as Footpaths and Bridleways are concerned the situation is simple - DON'T RIDE ON THEM! Some Bridleways and Footpaths are wrongly classified and can be used by bikes, but you must be absolutely sure, and unless you are prepared to do hours of research the rule is KEEP OFF!

So we are looking for RUPPs and Byways. The Byway symbols are easy to find on the map, but RUPPs are much more difficult, especially where there is very dense marking. Even if you can read the adverts for brake linings in the bike mags you will need a magnifying glass to pick out RUPPs in some areas.

There are 5000 miles of green lanes in England and Wales, but they are not evenly distributed and it will be just your luck that there are not many near where you live. Some Landranger maps have far more RUPPs and Byways than others, and if there aren't many on your local sheet try looking at the adjoining ones, because the chances are that there will be a good selection somewhere within easy riding distance.

The Ordnance Survey get their information from the Definitive Map, which is a map kept by the local highway authority (usually the County Council or Unitary Authority) showing all the rights-of-way in their area. In many counties the RUPPs and/or Byways hardly ever change and you can rely on a recent Landranger map, but in others there are major changes taking place, and the maps will be out of date by the time they reach the shops. A phone call to the Rights-of-Way (ROW) department of the County Council should enable you to find out whether there have been any alterations which may not be shown on the map. If there have been recent changes ask the council where copies of the Definitive Map are available for inspection and go along and check it yourself.

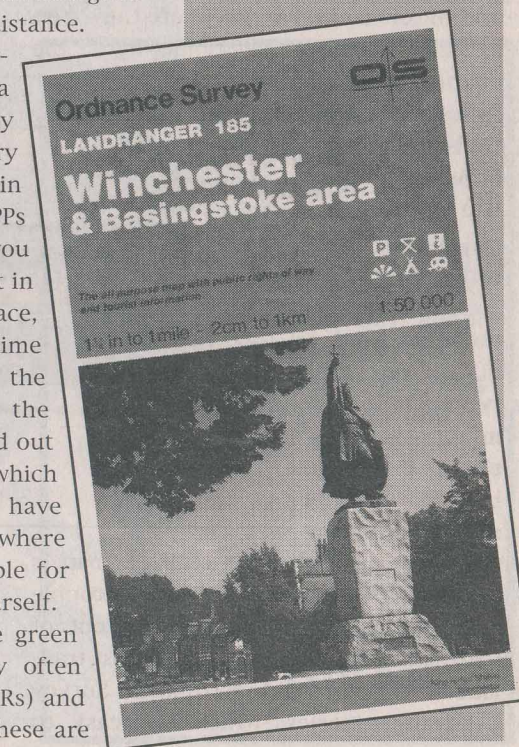
In most counties there will be some green lanes which fall into another category often known as Unclassified County Roads (UCRs) and marked in white on the map. Many of these are

Rights of Way

(red)

- Footpath
- Bridleway
- RUPP
- +--+--+ Byway

This is the type of map most trail riders like to use: an Ordnance Survey Landranger series. (For those of you reading in black & white, it's behind the pink.... cover!)



The Beginners Guide



not shown on Landranger maps, and even if they are, there is normally nothing to say that you can use them. On one Landranger sheet (No 124) they are being marked experimentally with a symbol described by the Ordnance Survey as an 'open magenta lozenge' (sounds tasty) but it is by no means certain that this marking will be adopted nationally. Different councils call them by different names, sometimes ridiculous ones like 'non-maintained maintainable roads', but if you ask the Highways Dept (not the ROW Dept) if there is a list of 'unsealed unclassified roads' they will probably know what you mean. If there is no list, forget it for the moment and concentrate on the RUPPs and Byways.

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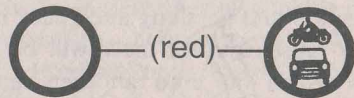
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On many Landranger maps you will find routes described as National Trails, which have names like 'Ridgeway' or 'Pennine Way'. These are long-distance routes devised by the Countryside Commission, but, despite the description, you can only ride on the parts which are RUPPs, Byways or unclassified roads.

To start with, mark out a few lanes on your map with a highlighter pen. You will notice that some RUPPs are cul-de-sacs or turn into Bridleways part of the way along, and these are best avoided at this stage. As you will need to refer to the map frequently, it is worth getting a map-case from a camping shop and fixing it to your handlebars or tank with cable ties or tape.

Highway authorities are supposed to put up a sign at the point where a right-of-way adjoins a tarmac road, which doesn't mean that you can rely on finding one there. Such signs may be in the form of a metal or wooden arm on a post, or a stone on the ground. Footpaths and Bridleways are usually signed as such, and Byways often are, but signs stating RUPP are almost non-existent (*except in Wiltshire - Ed*). On RUPPs and Byways the arm may be left blank or say 'RIGHT-OF-WAY', 'FIELD ROAD', or incorrectly 'PUBLIC BRIDLEWAY'. Other signs you will encounter are 'PRIVATE ROAD', put up by residents to deter traffic, 'NO THROUGH ROAD' and 'UNSUITABLE FOR MOTORS'.

A word of warning here. If there is a sign like either of these



you MUST NOT enter the lane, unless there is an additional notice stating that it

applies only to vehicles of a certain width or weight, or is valid only at certain times which do not apply to you. This is known as a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), and can be used to ban vehicles from any road or track, including a Byway.

If you are sure you are in the right place, do not be deterred by an incorrect sign, and proceed carefully along the lane. At this point, if you have a 'tenths' digit on your mileometer it is worth noting the reading, so that you know how far you have ridden along the lane if you have difficulty in finding the way at some stage. The distance between the grid lines on the Landranger map is 1km (approx 0.6mile).

One of the greatest pleasures of trail-riding is not knowing what is round the next corner, but it is best not to find out by running into it. Bear in mind that there may be treats in store for you like hidden ditches, metal water pipes buried in the grass and occasionally wire strung across the track at headlamp height. All these will have been put there innocently by the farmer in the course of his work, but when you land in a heap on the ground it will hurt just as much as if he had meant to fetch you off.

Where the lane intersects with other tracks or

the route is not obvious, you may find signs showing the direction of the right-of-way known as waymarkers. There is a system recommended by the Countryside Commission, using markers in the form of an arrow, coloured yellow for Footpaths, blue for Bridleways, and red for Byways. RUPPs are sometimes marked with black arrows, though this system isn't yet widely

used, and many authorities have their own methods of waymarking which you will get to know as you travel around.

Sooner or later (probably on the first lane you attempt) you will come to a point where you simply cannot find the way ahead. Don't blunder about all over the place hoping to strike lucky, if it doesn't mean too much running around, go back to the tarmac and ride round to the other end of the lane and try from the opposite direction. Failing that, come back when you have more time and explore the area on foot, because that way you are unlikely to get into serious trouble if you stray off the route.

The situation will also arise when you are making good progress along a lane and then come across an obstruction, which may be natural, such as a fallen tree, or deliberate, in the

You'll encounter all sorts of signs out on the trail, take note because some of them will apply to you!



The Beginners Guide



form of a fence or locked gate. Legally, you are allowed to take a reasonable diversion around the obstruction or remove it sufficiently to enable you to pass, but you must be very careful in taking such action. It is usually okay to ride round a fallen tree on a track through open woodland, but on an enclosed lane you should not break through a hedge or fence on to adjoining land.

If in doubt, especially where deliberate obstructions are concerned, it is best to turn back and report the matter to the council. Incidentally, gates across the track should always be closed behind you unless they are propped or tied open when you come to them. This applies even

if they appear to be there solely to stop the corn escaping from one field into the next!

Tracks on which the public have a right to drive vehicles cannot legally be ploughed, but it still sometimes happens. If the definitive line of the route is straight across the field and you can see the continuation on the other side you should ride directly across, through the crop if there is one, but if there is absolutely no indication of the line of the right-of-way you are in a difficult position. Unless you have a large-scale map and compass (and know how to use them), again you have no alternative but to withdraw and take the matter up with the highway authority.

If you are challenged in the course of a trail ride and you are sure you're in the right, stand firm and say so. However, if you are stopped by someone really aggressive, discretion is the better part of valour, especially if your opponent is waving a shotgun.

You should of course be prepared to take the countryside as you find it, and leave it in the same or better condition. Highway authorities are not obliged to maintain the surface of RUPPs and Byways to a standard suitable for modern traffic, and while you will be able to get along most unobstructed green lanes on a DR350 or XL185, some have permanently boggy sections or high rock steps which will rule out a big trailie unless you are a superman or trick artist.

Should all this seem too daunting to undertake, or you run into difficulties on almost every lane you try, think about joining the TRF. If there is a group in your area they will be aware of all the little irregularities in the local ROW network, and you will be able to ride the lanes in the company of other people who know the ropes (and let someone else find the one strung across the track!). As a result of intensive research the TRF are often active in areas where there are no RUPPs or Byways, and even if there is no group near you, there will probably be members who ride in your locality.

Finally, keep a note of when and where you ride, especially on RUPPs, because one day your evidence may make the difference between keeping a lane or losing it forever.



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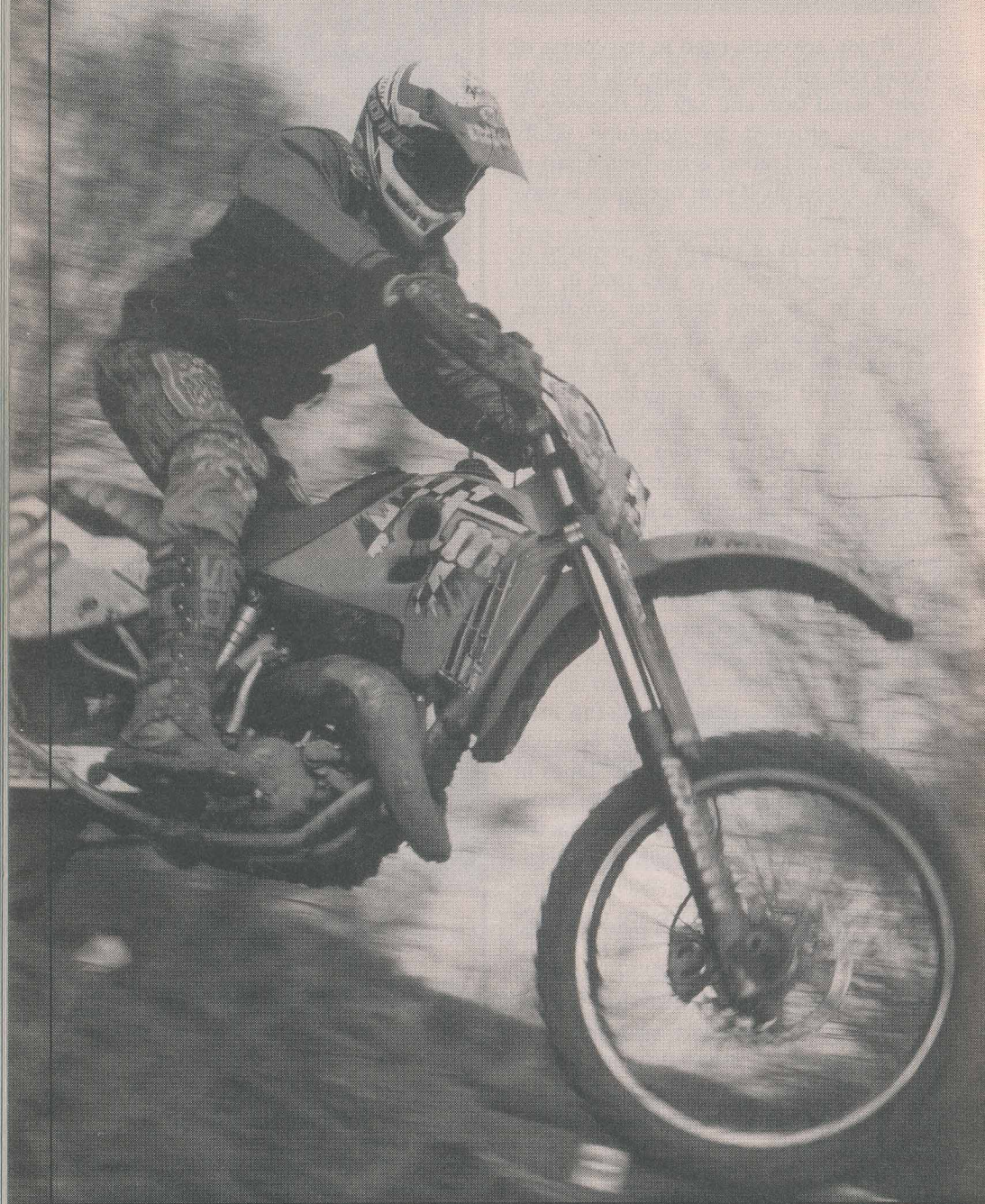
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PINK &

PERKY



tm125 Enduro

How do you fancy riding a 40hp 125? Dave Cornish and Si Melber discover the delights and demands of the TM125E

One of the best things about working for TrailBike Magazine is the chance to try some really trick tackle, and bikes don't come much trickier than the TM range of enduro machines. The little-known Italian company has a record of manufacturing extremely potent kart engines, and use this hard earned knowledge to produce some seriously powerful off roaders. These bikes come with so many special goodies it's almost like having your own off-the-peg 'works' bike.

Si Melber

Ohlins, Marzocchi, Excel, Brembo, the list of top quality components that comes with a TM goes on; in fact if you were to take your average Japanese bike up to the same spec you wouldn't get much change from 1500 quid on top of the bike's purchase price.

Fully adjustable (conventional), 45mm Marzocchi Magnum forks are the hot ticket this year and naturally grace the front end of the TM, clamped by a set of beautifully crafted magnesium alloy yokes. At the rear an Ohlins shock needs

no introduction to the discerning rider and provides enough suspension adjustments to keep even the most die-hard techno-freak happy for a season. Machined billet hubs laced to Excel alloy rims (21" front and 18" rear) come fitted with Brembo disc brakes (260mm front and 220mm rear) and mounted atop the yokes are a set of Reikon Dural handlebars. Grips and controls are a mixture of Domino and Brembo items, and the TM is finished off in a set of none-too-subtle fluoro pink plastics.

Power for the 125 enduro model comes from TM's own liquid cooled, powervalve equipped, 123cc two stroke engine, which pushes out a claimed 39.5bhp at a lofty 11,500rpm (though it revs to a maximum of 14,000rpm). A huge (for a 125) 38mm Keihin carburettor, squirts the 40:1 premixed fuel and air into the plated cylinder (via a crankcase mounted reed valve), before being ignited in an unbelievably high compression (16.7:1) combustion chamber. Burnt gases are then expelled through a hand-fabricated Messico exhaust fitted with an aluminium enduro silencer attempting (rather unsuccessfully) to quieten things down.

So much for the spec then, but there's only one real way to find out how a bike like this goes, so we entered it in an enduro. The first round of the Eastern Centre Two Man Championship seemed the ideal way to appraise it and compare notes afterwards; (two riders take it in turn to ride the course, swapping over every 30 minute session).

For a pair of shortarses (*well one*

anyway - ED), the TM's a tall bike with a seat height of 960mm (37.8"), but the plush suspension settles down as soon as you climb aboard. A slim MX-style seat runs all the way up to the filler cap and incorporates a timecard holder. At just 93kg, lifting the lithe TM onto its centre-stand in order to adjust the chain is painless enough and there are handy grab holes located either side of the seat with which to pick it up. We fuelled the bike up (the tank holds 9 litres, enough for about three hours continuous hard use), and took it through scrutineering.

Being the slick, well oiled, professional team that we were, we had somehow managed to misplace our race numbers, so I went off in search of some more while a small crowd of onlookers gathered round the very pink TM. Although TMs have been imported into the UK for more than three years, away from the British Championship they are still a rare sight in the paddock.

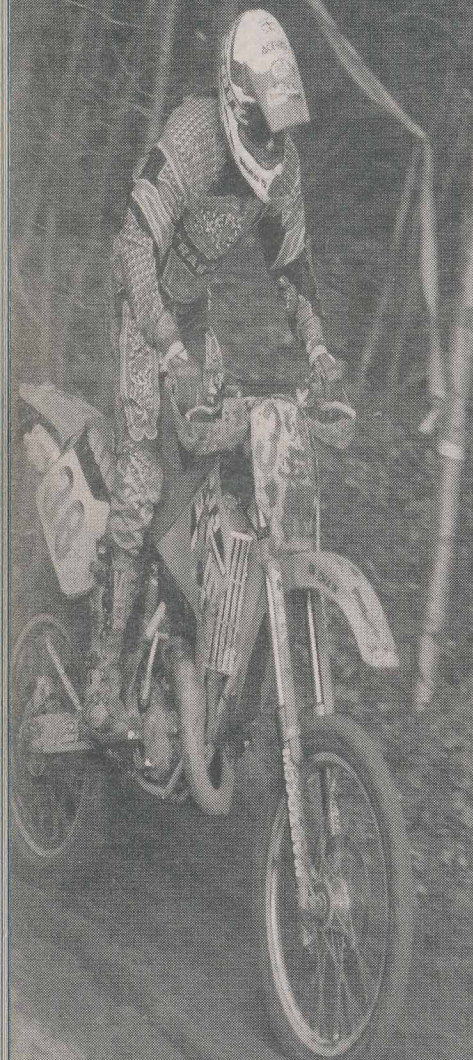
Without a chance to fire up the engine before our allotted time we were pleased when it crackled into life on the first prod of the stubby kickstarter and I blasted off for the holeshot, while other riders kicked and cajoled their machines into life. The 2.5 mile course was rock solid thanks to the freezing weather, and the permafrost surface made slippery going for the first half of the day. Entering the first wooded section the weight of the little TM meant it was superbly easy to flick around and over trees roots and the hydraulically operated clutch (a rarity it shares with the Gas-Gas enduro) allowed repeated, easy use where necessary, with the benefit of a constant biting point.

Arriving at the first climb however,

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ABOVE: That'd be about right, two knackered XR250s equal the same sort of power as one TM125
BELOW: If you work at it the TM is an astoundingly good enduro bike



The tighter wooded sections are where a bike like the TM scores over its rivals. Hydraulic clutch means biting point is always the same

the powerful but peaky nature of the TM's motor became all too apparent. I'd just crossed a marshy section flat out in second gear, but even this was too high for the following climb. As the motor began to bog down, I knocked it down a gear, fanned the clutch and promptly disappeared off the back as the front wheel reared up in the air. No doubt factory TM125 rider Massimo Bartolini appreciates the hard hitting top-end delivery of this motor, but for the average clubman it takes a bit of getting used to.

Back on an open section of track I wound the TM up through the gears and was amazed at how fast it blitzed across the ground. This must be the quickest 125 out there, it's easily capable of staying with a 250 if you keep it on the pipe, and of course lighter and easier to turn than any 250 (its also got a pretty good steering lock). What it lacks is the initial grunt for powering out of a corner and you find yourself either carrying more speed into the turn to maintain your momentum on the way out, or else fanning the clutch frantically and catapulting out with the front wheel pawing the air. As the day wore on I was beginning to get the hang of riding the TM, and enjoying it more and more. Getting the best from the bike requires plenty of revving, to unleash that awesome top-end, and a certain amount of clutch slipping to get the rear end to hook up.

During the break we topped up the fuel, adjusted the chain and compared notes. So far all the talk had been of that impressive top-end wallop but what of the chassis? Both of us agreed the bike handles so neutrally, turns so quickly and rides the rough so effortlessly, that you simply don't even consider it, concentrating instead on getting maximum drive

Thanks to Steve at In Chains for the loan of the TM125, if you want more information about any TM call him on 01425 474800

PINK & PERKY

all the time. That said, Si reckoned the forks were a little soft for his liking and since they were already set to maximum compression, thicker oil was needed.

We both agreed the forks had a brilliant action with loads of supple travel, handling the frozen ruts superbly without being deflected. With the adjustment for compression on the top of the left fork leg, and rebound on the top of the right, for most people it's a simple matter of playing with the screw-type adjusters till you find the right balance. At the rear the Ohlins shock was superb - brilliantly supple, evenly damped and we wisely left it alone all day. Though the front end would occasionally use up all of its travel, nothing we did caused the rear shock to bottom out, yet it always felt compliant without undue harshness.

With a rapidly thawing track, the pace of the afternoon session was quickening up and becoming more suited to the TM's rev hungry motor. With a few hours riding under our belts we both began to get into the groove - though Si continued to loop the TM lap after lap on one of the steeper climbs. Riding such a single minded bike requires a certain amount of commitment from the rider, too little throttle and the engine bogs down, too much and the front end shoots skywards. Body positioning on climbs is more critical than on something like a torquey 250.

Although in this respect the TM is more demanding of its rider, having such a light bike really began to pay off towards the end of the race as I found out. Generally I begin to slow down as fatigue sets in and my lack of fitness begins to show, but the bike's lack of bulk was definitely an advantage, and I was lapping

tm 125 enduro

Price: £4300 otr

Engine: liquid cooled, two stroke 123.5cc single

Bore & stroke: 54x54.4

Comp ratio: 16.7:1

Frame: Steel cradle with alloy swingarm

Fuel capacity: 9 litres

Weight: 93kg

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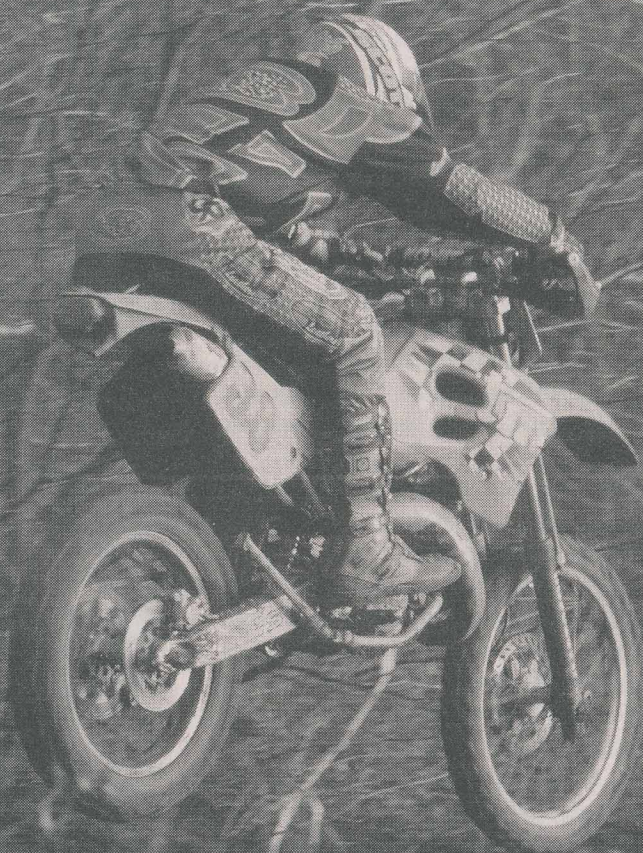
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The TM seems to get easier the longer you ride it. Superb suspension copes with everything you chuck at it whilst maintaining the bike's superb handling

quicker as the day wore on.

The faster pace meant the brakes were getting a pounding. And while the floating front disc felt good with plenty of feedback without locking up or fading, with the rear the opposite was true. This was proving to be a bit tiresome as on some of the tighter corners it was necessary to use the rear brake to turn the bike, and every time it locked up it caused the engine (with its lack of flywheel effect) to stall.

This niggle aside, after a day's riding I'd warmed to the TM and handing in my timecard for the final time I sneaked back out onto the track for a last adrenaline fix from the addictive motor's top-end surge. The TM125 Enduro is like that. It's the sort of bike that grows on you, at first the lack of midrange can be frustrating, tiresome even. But it's not that the TM particularly lacks torque in the midrange (it's still only a 125 remember), it's just that the killer top-end is so fierce it feels very tame before it comes on the pipe.

TM's background in building super quick kart engines (some of which rev to 22,000rpm), shows in the way the bike delivers its potent kick. The powerplant dominates this bike, it is the key to its blistering speed, but you mustn't forget that without a competent chassis, all this power would be wasted. Undoubtedly the TM is a classy package with a chassis that is superb in every detail, but overshadowed by a dominant engine. If you're a capable rider, the TM will let you exploit every available ounce of power and reward you with impressive results, but if you're the sort of lazy rider that doesn't stay on the ball, the TM can be a real handful at first.

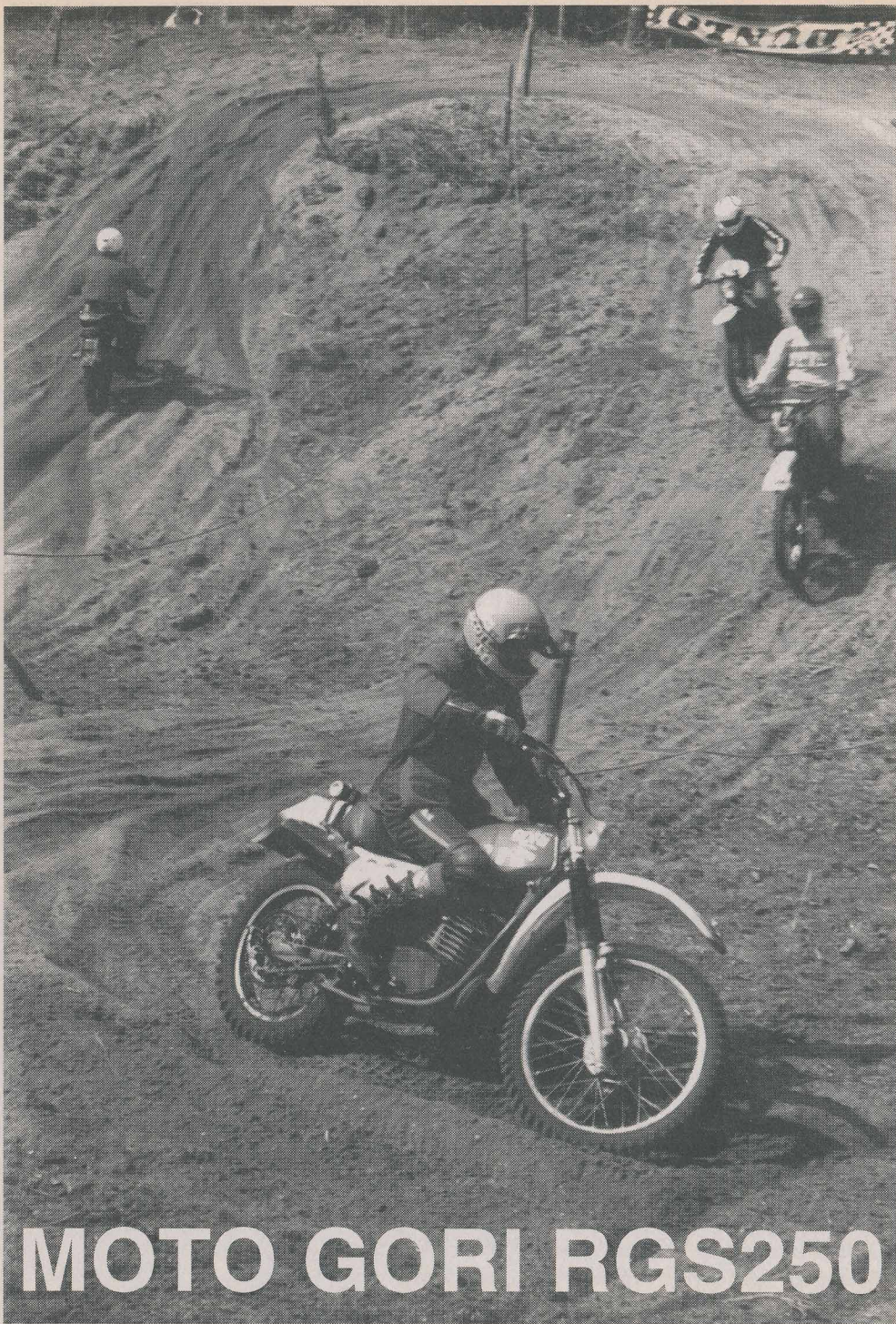
And if you're at all concerned about reliability of highly tuned motors consider these facts for a moment. So far importers 'In Chains' have yet to sell a

conrod kit or any gearbox internals for a single TM. Our test bike had over 70 hours of hard enduro use on it (including competing in the ISDE), and the motor has never been touched - even the piston ring is original. If you do find yourself on the wrong side of the spares counter then you won't be too shocked by the prices either; £16 gets you a front mudguard, £28 buys you a complete kickstart assembly, and rad shrouds work out at £36 a pair. Not too bad really, and remember there are pattern parts available for levers, guides, bearings and lots besides.

Highly strung the TM may be but in some people's minds it's still a capable (if slightly antisocial) trail bike. In Chains have sold three of them to TRF members who are planning on using them for green lane use only, citing light weight, easy starting and quality components as reasons for purchase.

Whatever you plan to use it for, at £4300 on the road the TM compares favourably with equivalent machines from Honda and Suzuki, both of which cost more when brought up to enduro specification, and remember comes with a host of trick goodies as standard. With manufacturers seemingly capable of coaxing ever more power out of engines, there may come a time when most clubmen will find the power and weight of a 125 easier to handle than a 250 (as they did when 250s replaced open class machinery). But for the moment the TM125 remains a light-weight rocketship needing careful handling - but what fun it is when you get it right!

- +** Quality components, power, light weight, rare
- Peaky motor, rear brake



MOTO GORI RGS250

TrailBike -42- Magazine

One careful owner

For one man the Moto Gori RGS250 was the enduro bike from hell. The nightmare of two years of ownership still haunts him. It has left its indelible mark on his body and mere mention of the name is enough to make him weep out loud. It's taken years to get over the trauma, but now for the first time, Dave Cornish speaks on the record about his living hell

GORI in all the DETAILS

I suppose over the years I must have owned literally dozens of dirt bikes, some good, some bad, but one particular machine sticks in my memory as being probably the worst two wheeler ever to be fitted with a set of lumpy tyres, the 1981 Moto Gori RGS250. Maybe that's a trifle unfair on what seemed on paper the answer to my enduro aspirations, but unfortunately the reality never matched up to the promise.

In the past the volatile state of the Italian bike industry has thrown up some strange and wonderful marques, the Gori

story started when a certain Mr Giancarlo Gori split with his former employer (SWM, remember them?) and started producing not just enduro bikes but motocrossers and trials machines. Most Goris utilised the acclaimed Austrian-built Rotax disc valve stroker engines housed in Gori's own lightweight chrome-moly chassis, however the mongrel in the pack (the RGS250) came fitted with the slightly cheaper Sachs unit sourced from West Germany.

When Jim Jones set up Moto Gori UK he realised the quickest way to establish

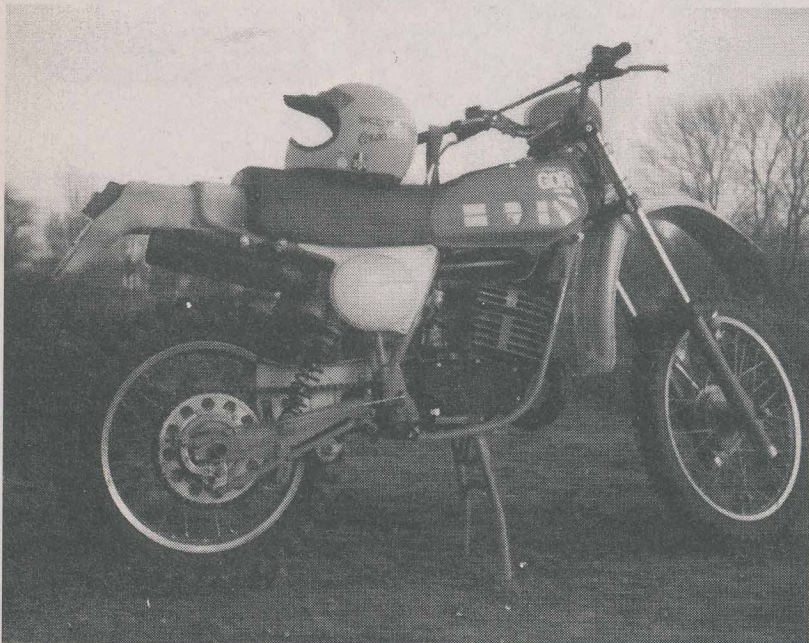
TrailBike -43- Magazine

the bikes' potential was to support some good riders in the British enduro championship. All of these top guys rode Rotax-powered Gori's and within a year the bikes were beginning to become a more and more common sight in the park ferme. In fact after a visit to a Welsh round I had convinced myself that the only reason I wasn't as quick as the Gori mounted riders was the fact I was riding a good old Japanese Yamaha DT175MX and not an Italian rocket. The next problem, was where would I find 1500 quid to enable me to take my rightful place at the top of the championship? After a lot of soul searching the decision was made, sell my beloved Laverda Jota and buy an RGS250, the RGS weighed in at a cool 300

sovs cheaper than a Rotax bike it also had a seven speed gearbox (more pose value). The cash difference allowed me to splash out on some new riding gear to match my anticipated rise to the top of the enduro world.

Moto Gori's reasoning behind the cheaper RGS250 was to supply a fully equipped enduro mount for the advanced clubman rider, and the spec sheet seemed to back this up. The Sachs supplied mill measured in at 244cc thanks to a bore and stoke of 71.5 by 61mm, running an unbelievable 11.5 to 1 compression ratio, the piston-ported air cooled lump pushed out a claimed 38bhp through it's unique seven speed gearbox. The carburation was taken care of by a 36mm Bing unit with the

fuel/air mix ignited courtesy of a six volt Motoplac cdi system.



Sachs engined Gori looked innocent enough, but it had a vicious streak a mile wide

The Gori duplex frame featured a hefty tubular swingarm worked by twin Marzocchi piggyback shocks and a leading axle Forcella Italia fork held up the front end. Grimeca QD brake hubs were laced onto 18" rear and 21" front alloy rims fitted with rim locks, and the bike came fitted with Acerbis plastics, a perfectly balanced centre stand and all the necessary equipment to enable the RGS to be fully street legal. Not only did the Gori have all the right bits it also looked the part; the frame, swinging arm, shocks and steel tank with integral tool box, finished in an eye catching bright orange, contrasted with the white plastics and a thickly padded black seat. I was in lurve.

Arriving at the local purveyors of all things Italian to pick up my brand new (X-reg) Gori, I was greeted by a wildly grinning mechanic warming up the rather noisy motor, 'this thing's bloody wild... she goes like stink' he informed me in between blipping the throttle 'I've just filled 'er up, it should get you home' he added optimistically. After handing over 1200 portraits of Her Majesty I pushed the bike off the stand and after a few stabs of the high mounted left sided kickstart I leapt aboard. Riding on wet salt-covered roads in the depths of winter on a highly strung Latin race bike wasn't exactly my idea of fun and after numerous slides from the Metzeler moto cross tyres it came as a bit of a relief to run out of fuel after only 35 miles.

Luckily a friend had been following me home and after refuelling and a quick warm up in his Vauxhall Viva we made it

home before dark, which was just as well really, as the lighting didn't work. Non of the electrics had been wired in at the factory and the grinning mechanic had obviously not checked this on the pdi, other faults included an incorrectly routed speedo cable which had snapped on the journey home, tyre pressures set at 8psi and a badly routed wiring loom which tugged on the connectors every time the bars were turned. With these niggling faults sorted out I had just four days to run the bike in and set it up before entering an eastern centre enduro event. After a practice session at the local MX track the fork oil was drained and replaced by lighter (5 weight) oil which helped make

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the front end less harsh (and more responsive) but the rear shocks refused to respond to any amount of fiddling and seemed devoid of any sort of rebound damping.

As for the motor, well yes it certainly had heaps of power but unfortunately all at the top end and at the expense of any mid range. And as for low down torque, forget it. The power band resembled that of a 125cc MX machine, which is fine on a 125 but when a motor twice the size suddenly comes on the pipe you certainly have to have your wits about you. On an open track with plenty of traction available the Gori's power delivery wasn't really a problem but on a tight and twisty enduro course who knows?

Just getting to the start of the weekend's race was problem enough, a steady snow fall and several days of sub-zero temperatures meant that what should have been a relatively easy first event for

the Gori turned out to be a battle against frozen ruts and the intense cold. At least I managed to finish despite numerous get offs and a spinning rear wheel that plainly refused to hook up and grip (thanks to the on/off power band).

Still optimistic about my assault on the Eastern centre championships a few weeks later saw me lined up in Thetford Forest (Norfolk) for round two. The weather couldn't have been more different to the previous round, dry and sunny but still a bit chilly the conditions were perfect, time to see what the Gori could really do! Blasting away from the start the Gori found enough grip to make use of the motor's full potential, and within a few minutes I was blitzing down a fire road in 6th gear catching the riders who had started a minute in front.

Reeling in a Yamaha IT250 in front of me the Gori rocketed past with a gear to go. Into 7th and the blue Yamaha was his-

Getting the Gori airborne wasn't so much of a problem as coming down again



TrailBike -46- Magazine

tory, well at least he was until the course headed off into the woods. As the going got tighter the lack of mid range punch combined with a serious lack of steering lock resulted in frequent excursions into the boonies, not only that but the track was getting more and more cut up, the Gori reacted to the whooped sections by kicking the rear end up so viciously that it threatened to pitch me over the bars.

By this time Mr IT had caught up and passed me as I disappeared off the track for the umpteenth time. Determined to save face I gunned the now wildly bucking beast down a particularly bad section, trying to keep the smoothly ridden Yam in my sights I hung on to the bars with a

grim determination until the rear end rebounded so hard from an inconsiderately placed tree root that the inevitable happened. The seat whacked me with such force that I ended up 10 foot in front of the wildly ending wop stinkwheel, the resulting crack of front wheel spindle against right kneecap could be heard in three counties.

Six weeks may not sound a long time but that's how long I was in plaster, the Gori however came off much lighter with just a broken rear mudguard to show for it's acrobatic tendencies.

In a vain attempt to cheer myself up I went off with a few mates to a practice track to try and find out why the Gori's

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TrailBike -47- Magazine

rear end appeared to have a mind of its own. Unloading the Gori at the test track



Gori ownership was downhill all the way

the bike attracted a few curious inquiries one of which turned out to be from a well known ex World Championship racer and 500GP mechanic. After explaining the bikes peculiar rear end antics he hopped aboard the Gori and wheeled off towards the track in search of a solution. Nearly ten minutes passed before a rather second hand Moto Gori and rider reappeared, through a barrage of four letter words we deduced that 'yes the bike did have a lack of rebound at the rear' and the best thing to do with it was to go back to the guy I bought it from and shove it up his a@*e' Oh dear! This wasn't going to be easy.

With my knee healed as good as it was going to get I decided to give the Gori one more chance and entered a forest enduro in sleepy Suffolk. Lining up for scrutineering imagine my surprise when I spotted another Gori RGS250. After a few words

with the bikes owner he asked me why my rear shocks were bolted on upside down! 'No' I replied 'Yours are upside down mine came like this from new', My fellow Gori owner went on to point out that my chain was gently sawing it's way through the right shock's piggyback reservoir and that it was definitely my shock absorbers that were, without a shadow of a doubt, wrongly inverted!

In a twirl of spanners the offending items were removed and refitted the correct way up, well blow me down (or words to that affect), how I laughed at my previous eight months of tormented ownership, the pain, the frustration, the agony, I was so ecstatic that I promised to buy him a pint (*a rare occurrence - Ed*). Immediately after setting off on my first lap the difference was obvious, and although far from perfect, at least I wasn't in constant fear of being spat over the bars. I had missed most of the season thanks to the Gori's problems (and rider injuries) but over the winter I became more determined than ever to make my mark on the enduro world.

Can Dave and the Gori make it through a race without ending up in hospital? Will the Gori ever finish an enduro in one piece? Or will the Italian stallion exact its terrible revenge on Dave's defenceless body? Find out next month in part two of the GORI STORY, only in TrailBike Magazine



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the TRAILBIKE GUIDE

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

APRILIA

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pegaso 650: 1992-on, 348lbs/157kg, w/c, dohc, 4-str, e/s single, with a claimed 50bhp. Stylish and quick trailie using poky 5-valve Rotax engine, good for about 110mph with cornering to match. Lighter than the BMW F650 and the Pegaso's twin exhaust is much better tucked in, but it has a much higher, less comfortable seat (36 inches) and fewer layers of paint. 19 inch front wheel limits tyre choice, and beware iffy sidestand, cunningly hidden fuel tap and small reserve. Capable big trailie both on and off the road and good value. *Verdict: Flying horse, flies high.*

ARMSTRONG

Grew out of Jeff Clews' CCM company of Bolton and CanAm/Bombardier bikes for the army. (Bombardier were originally a French Canadian

company that manufactured snowmobile engines - they are now a massive worldwide engineering company that owns Rotax, among others).

250: a/c, 2-str, singles (Bombardier engines).
500: a/c 4-str, singles (Rotax engines) with left hand kick starts.

CCM: A few enduro bikes based on the motocrossers).

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

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

BARIGO: a/c, 4-str, sohc, Rotax-powered singles. French-made range of specialist on/off road bikes built by Patrick Barigault. They specialise in supermotard bikes and desert racers, both of which have had some competition success, though they also do a trail/enduro bike. The same basic rotax mill that in MZ guise churns out 32bhp produces a claimed 60bhp when tuned to Barigo's specification... but they say it's reliable. *Verdict: Gallic charm.*

BMW

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

R80G/S: 374lbs, a/c, 4-str, 797cc, twin. One of the first mega-trailies. Launched in 1981, Monolever rear end, kick and optional electric start. Special big-bore versions of which took Hubert Auriol and Gaston Rahier to four Paris-Dakar wins. Original 'Paris-Dakar' version of G/S

TRAILBIKE GUIDE

was just the standard model with a big tank and bore no relation to the real desert racers, which were built specially by Herbert Schek. The most trailable of all the Beemers distinguishable by its high front mudguard and simple instruments. *Verdict: The one to go for.*

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

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

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

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

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

CAGIVA

Italian manufacturer that now owns Ducati, Husqvarna and Morini.

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

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

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

W8: 264lbs, w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single, 6-speed, 31hp. Excellent trailbike version of above but with a couple of ponies less and no upside down forks. very few sold in UK.

T4: a/c, 4-str, sohc, 450cc, single. A few imported to UK in 1989 by Moto Vecchia. Fore-runner to W12 and W16. Plastic tank holds 4 gals. e/s option as well as kickstarter. Alloy rims and swing arm. Poxxy rose joints on gearchange broke early on.

W12: a/c, 4-str, sohc, 350cc, 4-valve, single, e/s 6-speed, 25bhp. Simple, no frills trailbike (as used by Italian army), a bit like an Italian XT350 but not as tough. Very few were sold in UK. *Verdict: Something different.*

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

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

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

Elefant 750: 1988-1990. 188kg/414lbs, o-a/c, 4-str, desmo, V-twin, e/s. Distinctive looking big trailie with white/red/blue/blue paintwork, angular styling and gold anodised rims (21 inch F, 17 inch R).

TRAILBIKE GUIDE

750 motor was nice, but suffered from poor carburetion at bottom end thanks to Bing carbs. Nimble handling and good off road ability.

Elefant 750/900 (Second generation): o-a/c, 4-str, desmo, V-twin, e/s, 60bhp/68bhp (claimed). Second generation Elefants from 1991-ish are bigger, and slightly heavier than their predecessors. Lovely torquey engines are based on the Ducati 750 and 900SS. 1991 versions (distinguishable by Lucky Explorer paintscheme), were higher spec than later ones, with Ohlins suspension and electronic fuel injection. Although they have a high CofG the new generation Elefants make a great touring bike for the road, but they're a bit monstrous off-road - more like a Super Tenere than the original Transalp-sized 750s. *Verdict: For those who like to be seen and heard.*

ENFIELD INDIA

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

GAS-GAS

Pampera: 85kg/187lbs, w/c, 2-str, 238cc, single, 6-speed. Brand new hybrid trail bike from top Spanish trials manufacturer using a trials engine and suspension mated to an enduro style chassis. Brilliant performer off road, but trials inspired gearing limits road use. Top-notch components make this a real steal. *Verdict: What are you waiting for?*

GILERA

Now defunct part of the Piaggio group with legendary road-racing history.

50/125: a/c, 2-str, single. Learner bikes - not officially imported.

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

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

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

HARLEY DAVIDSON

Not the V-twins, but a mish-mash of European-

made stuff with the H-D badge.

H-D 90: a/c, 2-str, 90cc, single. Aermacchi-made 1970s mini-trail funbike. Very rare these days. passable off road. CCM sold the rights to the Armstrong army bikes to H-D circa 1992, and H-D duly won the British army contract. Now electric start (after heavy squaddie casualties with the old left-side kick-starts) and reportedly more robust but down-sized from 500 to 350cc.

HONDA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CRM250R: 114kg, w/c, 2-str, 249cc, single.



TRAILBIKE GUIDE

Japanese-spec trail bike roughly based on CR motocrosser but with usual trailie luxuries. Low seat height, reasonable spread of power, superb suspension. Later ones (after 1990) had USD forks. *Verdict: Best of the stroker trail bikes.*

CL250S: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Bit of an oddity sold to farmers in the early Eighties, for on and off road work. Unusual in that it featured a 5-speed gearbox with a range of both high and low options. More roadified than most trailies with low saddle and front mudguard, and chromed (twin) shocks. boxy styling and front and rear drum brakes makes it rare but not highly desirable. *Verdict: Conversation stopper only.*

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

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



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

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

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

XL185: a/c, 4-str, sohc, 185cc, single, 5-speed. One of the definitive original green laners. Twin shock version only, but can be upgraded with

later 125R parts, including chassis!

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

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

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



XL500S: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Practically identical to the XL250 apart from the bigger cylinder and head and a longer frame although it is possible to squeeze the bigger engine into a 250 chassis. Only 32bhp, but loads more stomp and the same crappy front brake - green racing linings help a bit, but beware low-speed lock-ups! Fortunately the 23 inch wheels can be re-laced with 21 inch rims which actually improves the handling and provides a vast increase in tyre choice! Beware starting problems and low revs misfire caused by furring of the alloy earthing plate - solution is to take a

TRAILBIKE GUIDE

lead direct from engine to coil.

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

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

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

XL600LM: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Paris-Dakar version of above with big tank, flashy twin headlights, red painted engine, tubeless gold spoked rims and glory-be, electric start. Unfortunately it didn't go as well as it looked - one of the magazines put one on a dyno at the time and got only 26bhp at the rear wheel. *Verdict: Nicely individual.*

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

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

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

XR200R: a/c, 4-str, sohc, single, 5-speed. Early

twin shock bikes (originally based on the XL185) made brilliant green laners. Still fairly popular though later monoshock versions are better and more plentiful. Drum bakes let it down though some late Japanese spec models come with discs. Light enough to pick up if need be. *Verdict: Still a great trail bike.*

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

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

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



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

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

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

TRAILBIKE GUIDE

tunately extra weight.

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

XR600: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Several versions since 1984, mostly imported from USA until Honda UK started importing in 1994. Early versions easy to tell by drum rear brake and twin carbs. All are great off roaders, with pukka suspension and lightweight chassis. Not much fun on the road because of the vibes, lack of creature comforts, and twitchy handling. And some can be real pigs to start. Often the bike of choice for overlanders but beware, rear sub-frame is not built to take a lot of weight. Honda UK have not homologated the latest continental-spec version even though it comes with proper speedo and head and tail lights (but no indicators) so they're still not officially road legal and sold by Honda dealers 'for off-road use only' - but it's easy to road-register as an individual so can still be ridden away from the shop. Great wheelie-pulling ability, and very light compared to something like an XT600. Has become the privateer's desert rally bike by which all others are judged - light, relatively simple and very robust. The best noise/power compromise is to keep the main body of the original baffle, but take out the inner core - this looks and sounds 'kosher' but liberates most of the power. Official HRC hop-up kits with big bore (630cc) and hot cam are available but not recommended for off-road use or long-distance reliability. Tons of other tuning parts available. *Verdict: Definitive 'pukka' big banger.*

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

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

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

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

NX650P Dominator: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, 644cc, single, e/s. The definitive civilised big-single four-stroke trail bike, with genuine off road ability. Torquey 44bhp motor with handy electric start - early versions had kick-start as well. Classy cosmetics make crashing expensive and despite the mini-fairing still much more tiring than something like a Transalp on M-ways. Nevertheless a good touring bike providing you don't want to go too fast. Watch out for rotted wheel rims on early models. Plentiful in UK but high build quality means secondhand prices are quite steep.

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

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

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

XR750 Africa Twin: w/c, 4-str, 6-valve, sohc, V-twin, e/s. Even closer to HRC P-D specials, mass-produced monster trailie that was extremely popular in Europe in 1989. About 100 were specially built for HRC-supported mass entries to Paris Dakar.

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

TRAILBIKE GUIDE

quality and came with trick on-board computer. Better off road than you'd imagine, especially on fast and dusty trails.

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

HUSABERG

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

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

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

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

HUSQVARNA

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

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

JAWA-CZ

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

KAWASAKI

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

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

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

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

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

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

KE 80/100: a/c, 2-str, 79/99cc, single. Very basic disc valve learner trailie with drum brakes both ends. Has been around for donkey's years and value will be dropping as new learner laws come in. Ideal second hand bike for the vertically and financially challenged to start trailing with.

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

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

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

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

KDX175/200: a/c, 2-str, single. Originally sold as a competition only machine with no speedo or horn and a plastic tank when they were still illegal on the road. Fine for enduros but a bit uncivilised on the road. Peaky and raucous, the first models were however lighter, lower and torquier than the later w/c models.

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

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

TRAILBIKE GUIDE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

plenty of trail-ability. *Verdict:* Sensible thumper.

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

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

KLX 650: 337lbs/153kg, w/c, 4-str, dohc, 651cc, single. Bigger version of the 250 with the same drop-dead motocross looks, but with USD forks. Early ones were designed without enough clearance between the rear wheel and the mudguard which meant the wheel hammers into the CDI box at max compression with expensive consequences. No bashplate either. Not as torquey as the Dominator or the Pegaso but great for smooth dirt roads or gravel-strewn tarmac. Ideally suited as a supermoto or town bike. Fast and furious, but not much plonkability. Enduro version and later models didn't suffer the same suspension problems. *Verdict:* Good but not good enough.

KTM

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

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

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

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

TRAILBIKE GUIDE

LAVERDA

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

MORINI

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

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

MOTO GUZZI

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

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

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

MZ

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

Bloc.

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

ROKON

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

SUZUKI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TS50: a/c, 2-str, single. Undistinguished twin shock trailie.

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

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

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

TS125R: w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single. Latest version of above with power valve fitted that just needs connecting up to get full power.

TS200R: 112kg, w/c, 2-str, 195cc, 35bhp, single. Grey import with its own French champi-

TRAILBIKE GUIDE

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DR125/200 Djebel: o-a/c, 4-str, sohc, sin-



gle, e/s. Japanese home market version of above with more street mods (including electric boot). Later ones had big single headlamp with surrounding protection bar.

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

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

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

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

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

DR600S: 136kg/299lbs, o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, 589cc, single. Classic big banger with modern monoshock rear end and balancer shaft motor. One of the best (and most sensible) of the DRs, but a bit overgeared and heavy. Can be a bugger to start when hot till you get the knack. *Verdict: Good secondhand buy.*

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

DR650: o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single, e/s. Latest version of above without the half fairing or twin exhausts. Still overgeared, still rather

tall, but with the best suspension in class. Not very refined and feels a bit cheap, but definitely heading in the right direction.

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

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

TRIUMPH

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

YAMAHA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

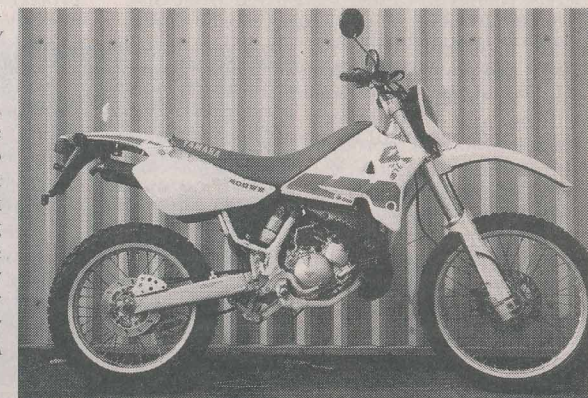
DT125(LC): 1987-on, w/c, 2-str, single. The DT came of age with the adoption of watercooling, motocross styling, and most important of all, a power valve. Lost some of its torque but gained a revvier motor and lots more top end

TRAILBIKE GUIDE

together with sophisticated suspension front and rear. In 12bhp restricted form they're as flat as a pancake, but unrestricted make a capable 24bhp. Although in the fashion stakes they've been overtaken by trickier looking tackle, they still top the sales chart because of their hard earned reputation. still good at off roading though they're taller and peakier than ever. Stripped down and tuned up they will pass as a good clubman enduro mount. *Verdict: The king lives on.*

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

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



DT250: a/c, 2-str, single. Both early and late Seventies, twin shock and cantilever shocked version of the smaller bikes, more power but less agility. *Verdict: The first Jap trailie.*

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

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

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

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

TRAILBIKE GUIDE

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

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

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

TDR 250: w/c, 2-str, parallel twin. A TZR250 in trail clothing. Great road bike with demon brakes thanks to dinner-plate sized front disc, and all or nothing powerband. Peaky motor makes it difficult to use off road apart from on fast fire roads, supermotard or competition road rallies for which it is ideal. A thoroughly uncivilised motorcycle - raucous, peaky and excruciatingly uncomfortable with an unquenchable thirst for fuel - and absolutely fabulous. Beware seizures on left hand cylinder, and high speed wobbles on the road. Has a few passionate and delinquent supporters. *Verdict: For petrolheads everywhere.*

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

XT225 Serow: a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. Small but perfectly formed grey import trail bike with kick and e/s versions, but sadly not both together, although retro-fit kick is possible. Light, manoeuvrable, and easy to ride. Brilliant attention to detail such as mini indicators and sensibly placed grab handles marks this out as a superb green laner. Small engine needs to be worked hard especially on the road to get decent performance, but its a small price to pay for such a good bike. Reasonable numbers brought in so far. *Verdict: Makes sense.*

XT250: 248lbs, a/c, 4-str, 249cc, sohc, single. Early Eighties Cantilever shock trailie of some note. Light and strong with balancer shaft engine, they can still be found for not much money and make an excellent secondhand buy

if in good condition though occasional early ones suffered valve problems. Nice and low though not very fast. *Verdict: Good all-rounder.*

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

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

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



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

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

XT500: 304lbs, a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. The original big banger trailie that started it all.

TRAILBIKE GUIDE

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

TT500: a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. More serious off roader version of the above. Much lighter and with a punchier motor, but still with 6-volt electrics. *Verdict: Rare.*

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

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

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

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

TT600 (updated): a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Latest version of the above now available

with an electric start. Much more modern styling includes USD forks, still only available as a grey import.

XTZ660: w/c, 4-str, 5-valve, dohc, single. Another attempt at making a long-distance overland/road version of the venerable XT. Heavier, with less range and not much more power than the original. Less crashworthy than the first and the taller saddle may put some off. Nevertheless it's had a lot of success in desert racing form and with some mods is eminently trailable. *Verdict: Another good Yam.*

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

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

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

BW200: a/c, 4-str, single, e/s. True beach balloon-tired version of above but not street legal. Not recommended for anything other than sand. *Verdict: Sand sled.*

BW350: a/c, 4-str, single, e/s. Hairy-arsed version of above. *Verdict: Get out the bull worker.*

BIKES

Honda XR250 road registered, completely rebuilt with spare cables, tyres, excellent cond, £1100. Tel 01737 556378

Kawasaki KLR250, Q-reg, mostly 92 model, fully sorted, receipts for loads of parts, great little bike, long T&T, swap p/x bigger bike 500cc+ or sell £1295 ono, can deliver. Tel 0191 281 0661 Tyneside

Kawasaki KLX650, Sept 95, N-reg, less than 1000 road miles, 21 months warranty remaining, £3800 ono. Tel 01685 884572 (South Wales)

Yamaha XT600E, blue, excellent cond, low mileage, bad back forces sale, 2 sets of tyres, £3500. Tel Mark 01672 540538

Jialing JH125L, M-reg, 4-stroke single trail, based on Honda XL125S, vgc, very reliable, 6600km, spare mx rear tyre, £650 ono. Tel 0181 953 1004 (Herts)

Kawasaki KDX250SR H-reg, 1990, 2700 genuine miles, good runner, on/off road, T&T, many new parts, must be seen, good as new, £1200. Tel 01242 518259 anytime

Yamaha DT125LC, Y-reg, no MOT but good runner, with Haynes manual, £300. Tel 01242 820339 (Glos)



Honda Transalp, white/red/blue, F-reg, 23000 miles, very reliable, good condition, T&T, £2000 ovno. Tel 01629 640616 eves, 0589 844796 daytime (Derbyshire)

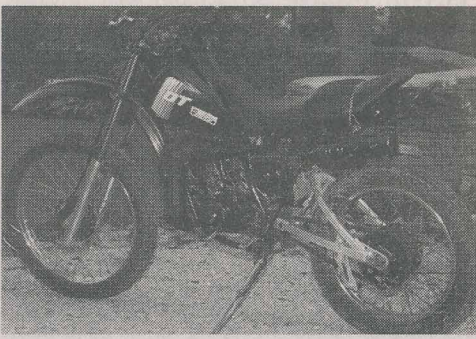
Suzuki DR500S, 83, Y-reg, black, T&T, lovely bike, very very rare, £750 no offers.

Tel 01296 330389 (Bucks)

Husaberg 501, reg/91, road registered, good cond, very fast, very reliable, £1900 ono or exchange XT600E late model or w/h/y. Tel 0181 452 7254 (London)

Kawasaki KX100, 91, recent clutch, chain, sprockets and front mudguard, ready to race, £700 ono. Tel 01527 522458

Yamaha DT175 early mono for spares or repair, not registered, £70 ono. Tel 01539 735764 (Kendal)



Yamaha XT500 special, Moto-X frame, forks wheels, Fox shox, one-off alloy tank and oil tank, stainless exhaust, electronic ignition, many new parts, needs wiring to finish, £750 ono. Tel 01597 860332 (Wales)

Suzuki DR350R Enduro, K-reg, vgc, well maintained, road legal, new tyres, O-ring chain, sprocket set, used for green laning, £2100. Tel 01626 334210 (S Devon)

Suzuki DR350R enduro, 1994, road registered, only 1000 miles from new, green lane use only, £2750, consider DR600 in p/x. Tel 01984 632036 (Somerset)

Kawasaki KLR250, late 93, 10,000 miles, road use only, vgc, £1650 ovno, first to see will buy. Tel 01705 377900 (Hants)

Aprilia RX125, M-reg, low mileage, good condition, £1650. Tel 01903 762239

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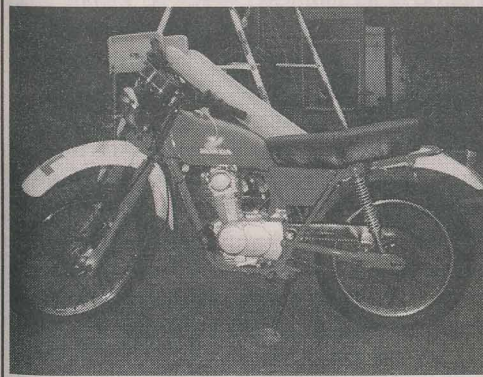
Kawasaki KLR250, H-reg, blue/green/white, mint condition, T&T, factory workshop manual, new O-ring chain and sprockets, tyre, road use only, £1450 ono. Tel 01202 884550 after 6pm, (Dorset)

Honda XR500, 1980, twinshock, very good all round, you won't find a better one, MOT. Tel 01823 433972 (Somerset)

Kawasaki KDX200, 1988 E-reg, T&T, owned for five months, too extreme for my needs, new throttle slide fitted, £800 or p/x 4-stroke 250-350cc trailie. Tel 01483 894459 (Guildford)

Honda XR250R, May 94, L-reg, 2600 miles, road and green lanes only, very good cond, regularly serviced and maintained, Renthals, taxed and fully road legal, £2600 ono, Tel 01845 578389 (York)

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K - Suzuki DR350S, 1-own, 1.2k, as new	£2795
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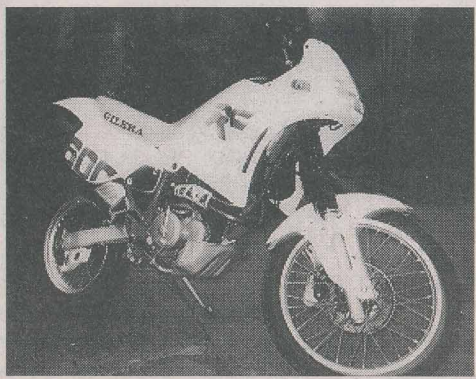
BMW R100GS, 1988, 2 owners, last owner 5 years, 35000 miles, new MOT, White Power rear shock, hand guards, heated grips, screen extension, BMW panniers, the ultimate allrounder. Tel 01792 367051 (Swansea)

Honda Transalp, 1987, 27000 miles, long MOT plus all previous ones, lovely condition throughout, £1995. Tel 01582 864001 (Luton)

Honda XR650L, 1995, M-reg, 2300 miles, American import, one owner, vgc, £4000, also 1981/W Honda CD200 Benly, long MOT, £195, no offers or p/xs please. Tel 01425 674489 (New Forest)

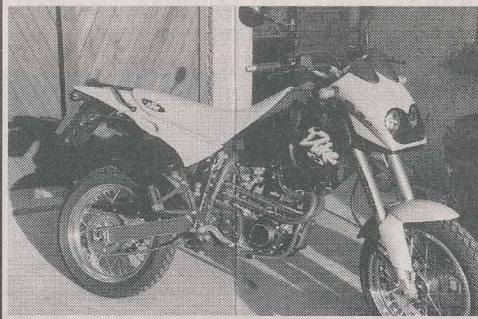
Yamaha DTR125, stolen recovered, front and back disc brakes, unrestricted, very fast, no lights, spare forks, monoshock, head, barrel, carb, piston, plus more, field bike or repair, £350 ono. Tel Croydon 656 3476

Gilera RC600, M-reg, white 11600km, taxed, major service 80km ago, fully sorted, under warranty, recent rear tyre, battery, remote alarm, disclock, rack and mirrors not shown in photo, £2900 ovno. Tel 01784 461961 (Surrey)



Exchange Suzuki GSXR1100K, 1989, standard, lovely condition, T&T, blue/white, 17k, Datatag alarm, very very fast, for 4-stroke enduro, or sell £2500. Tel 01483 723592

KTM Duke, first edition, only one owner, absolutely first class, 7000km, £5000. Tel 015395 58218, (Cumbria), no time wasters please



Suzuki DR400S, W-reg, T&T till Jan 97, new mudguards, various new bearings, trials tyres, recent chain & sprockets, consider exchange against DR350 or w/h/y, or sell £600 no offers. Tel 01626 774384 (Devon)

Yamaha XT550, 1982, 4-stroke, Italian import, rare big thumper, 4-valve, twin carbs, cantilever rear end, new tyres, long range tank, T&T Aug 96, vgc, £1150. Tel 01273 595629 (Sussex)

Honda XR600, K-reg, 17000km, Acerbis tank, handlebar guards, custom made extra fuel tank racks, vgc, £3000 ono. Tel 01535 603325

Husqvarna WRK260, 1989, enduro bike, F-reg, new chain & sprockets, new tyres, shock and engine rebuilt, light use only, vgc, £1150. Tel 0181 800 9919 a/phone

SPARES

Moto-X gear: Fox armour, boots, etc. Tel 01242 820339 (Glos)

DT175MX front wheel, good cond, £30. Tel 01604 701209 w/ends best

The great TrailBike Magazine garage clearout: Yes that's right we're getting rid of some of the stuff we've accumulated over the past couple of years that's been cluttering up our office and garage. Some of it is brand new (marked with an (N), most of it's been used (marked with a (U), but all of it is in good nick and looking for a new home. All prices *do not* include p&p which will be added once we know how much it's gonna' cost to post out to you. If you see something you like, check with us first to make sure it hasn't already been sold: 2 sets of white body armour, £15 each (N). Arai MX-E enduro helmet, top quality, size large (59-60cm), white, £75 (U). Bieffe BX6 Kevlar

helmet, white/coloured, size large (60cm), £45 (U). Renthal crossbar pad £1 (U). Trail/enduro simple bumbag, blue, £1.50, (U). Two Honda handguards, red, £2 the pair (U). Oakley goggles, yellow, £5 (U). Scott goggles, blue, £3 (U). Scott goggles, red, £3 (U). 3 small alloy tyre levers for carrying on the trail. £1 each (N). Brand new Pirelli trials tyre 3.25x18, suit small trail bike, £15 (N). Yamaha XTZ660 genuine parts still bagged up, choke & cable, s/be £13.25, £7 (N), twin throttle cables, s/be £26.80, £15 (N), Clutch cable s/be £32.17, £20 (N), folding gear lever, s/be £14.92, £8 (N) or £45 the lot. Suzuki DR350 genuine parts, front brake lever, s/be £13.75, £8 (N), folding gear lever, s/be £18.87, £10 (N), original black handlebars, s/be

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Wanted Honda TLR200, registered, road legal, lights etc, if poss, good price for good bike, will travel to view. Tel John on 01380 727200 home and 01225 791122 work Wanted Tomos NTX Paris-Dakar 50cc or any other small trials moped, must be in RC, will pay between £50-100. Tel Matthew on 0151 339 6750 after 4.30 Wanted Kawasaki KE175 manual and spares. Tel 01392 426211 Wanted Bultaco Matador enduro in any condition, to relive my youth on the trail. Tel 01905 820636 Wanted Yamaha WR250, must be good condition. Tel 1091 263 3052 Wanted DR350 Suzuki, enduro model preferred. Tel 0181 800 9919 Wanted anything for Sachs 125 trials bike inc manual, wiring diagram and Bing carb. Tel Steve on 01203 341390 Wanted Yamaha XT500, anything considered, runner or non runner, bits, also breaking Kawaski KLR600. Tel 01904

784068 (York)

Wanted Yamaha IT175 parts, headlight, sidepanels and switchgear specifically, but absolutely anything considered. Tel 01234 343280 (Bedford) and leave a message for Tim

Wanted rear wheel for KLR250 (drum brake). Tel Don on 01474 813977

Wanted Yamaha trail bike, ideally 350cc or bigger by mature, heavy novice, no objection to bike needing work, but must be basically sound, cash waiting. Tel 01488 668922 (Hungerford)

Wanted TrailBike Magazine back issues No 1&4, plus any spares for an XT350. Tel Steve on 01793 514287

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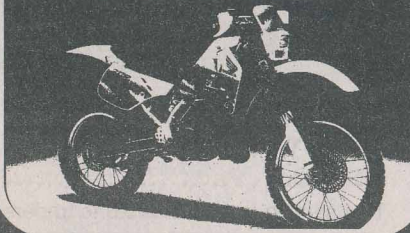
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Wanted Yamaha WR200, must be mint, cash waiting. Tel 01723 859893, 5-7pm
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TRAIL TALES...

GOING DUTCH: DAVE CORNISH ON THE WORLD'S SHORTEST INTERNATIONAL RACE CAREER

My off roading ambition had always been to take part in an international beach race. Le Touquet was the obvious choice but for several reasons (mainly the high cost of entering and getting there) the gallic adventure was shelved in favour of a similar race in Holland. The Scheveningen international beach race held in late October had all the right ingredients for an end of season knees up; free entries for British riders, cheap ferry crossings from Harwich to the Hook and discounted hotels.

Matt my intrepid sidekick came up with a cunning plan; his father works in Holland and as he would be away that weekend we could use his flat as a base (saving us some drinking vouchers), and furthermore, as his Dutch employers pay him in Guilders he would leave us a large amount of Dutch currency which we'd swap for Sterling commission free.

We arrived at the ferry terminal with my trusty KMX200 strapped to the back of the car and parked next to a quad team whose Winnebago motor home and trailer filled most of the lower deck. Gulp! These guys looked serious and had trouble stifling a snigger when I informed them this was our first time competing abroad and any advice would be welcome.

'Well' came the reply 'first thing to do is to park that street bike of yours in the pad-

dock, get yourself a motocrosser and gear it to hit at least 100 possibly 110, and that's mph not kph'. 'Hmmm' I thought, time for a stiff drink.

In the bar, Rick the third member of our team began to look decidedly pale and before you could say 'it's your round' had collapsed in a foaming heap. As no alcohol had yet passed his blue looking lips and the boat was still firmly tethered to Blighty this situation seemed a trifle odd. When the unfortunate Rick finally came to, he muttered something about suffering from anxiety attacks and had only agreed to come along to try to forget about a rather messy divorce. Being caring and sensitive types we soon had him drugged up and settled in the video room while we borrowed his credit card so he could 'stand his round' even 'in

absentia'. Four hours later I was engaged in a heated discussion with a visiting US forces basketball team about the fitness levels needed for various sports and as I quite rightly pointed out,

any off road racer was as fit if not fitter than anyone on their team, and if they would care to step outside I would challenge them to a lap of the ship. I don't actually recall the outcome of the race, but for some strange reason I woke up at the foot of a staircase two floors lower, with a badly bruised backside and a splitting headache.

A few minutes later we were eagerly awaiting customs clearance when a rather surly looking Dutch constable tapped on my window and began interrogating me on the subject of alcohol and the penalties of breaching the strict Dutch drink/driving laws. He then ordered me out of the car and frog-

marched me off into a back room inside the Customs building, where although it was only 8.30am the breathalyser showed I was still way over the legal limit from the previous evenings entertainment.

The result of this indiscretion was nothing more severe than an ear bending and a change of driver. With a rather nervous Rick at the controls trying to prevent another anxiety attack, we weaved off in the general direction of Scheveningen.

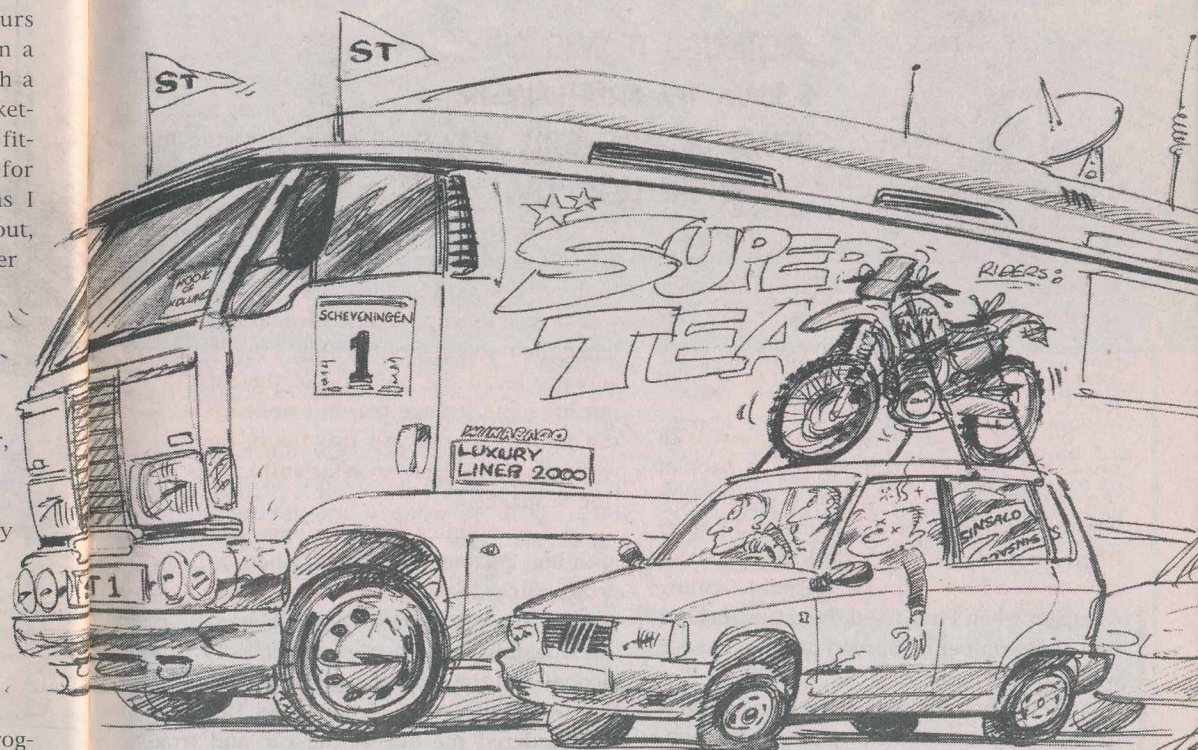
Stopping at a service station to buy a road map the next cock up became readily apparent. An inspection of the map revealed that Matt's fathers gaff (our free accommodation and a 100 quid each in local currency) was over 100 miles away from Scheveningen and as practice was today (Saturday) and the race started on the Sunday, commuting this distance several times just wasn't practical. A quick whip

round confirmed our collective finances to be a tad over 90 quid. Oh dear!

On arrival at Scheveningen we were greeted by a truly awesome sight; dirt bikes, motorhomes, race transporters and thousands of riders, mechanics and hangers on were swarming all over town. Whilst I joined a 50 yard queue to sign on, the other two set off (with the aid of a flexible friend) to track down somewhere to kip for the night. An hour later I finally made it to the front of the queue only to be told this was for the side-car crews and the solo's had to sign on over in the next portacabin - great!

The others returned with the first good news since we left home, a tidy hotel had one room available after a last minute cancellation. Spirits were lifted even further as I signed on, all riders received three passes, a free tee-shirt and most impressive of all, a trick souvenir aluminium anodised beach race bottle

ALTHOUGH IT WAS ONLY 8.30AM THE BREATHALYSER SHOWED I WAS STILL WAY OVER THE LEGAL LIMIT



TRAIL TALES...

opener. Maybe this international racing lark wasn't so bad after all.

On the short trip to the beach for my practice session I couldn't help but notice every bike waiting in the holding area was a full blown motocrosser fitted with amazing paddle type sand tyres. And when I peered over the sea wall and caught my first glance at the track my heart sank, this was no ordinary beach, the sidecars had ripped up the course so badly it resembled a war zone. No time to bottle out now as I joined in the mad dash down the slip road onto the sand. Hitting the deeply rutted track flat out in third gear the KMX almost came to a complete halt; 28bhp was plainly not enough as the power sapping sand tried its best to swallow up the struggling trailie. Riders passed me in a never ending stream as I fought to keep control.

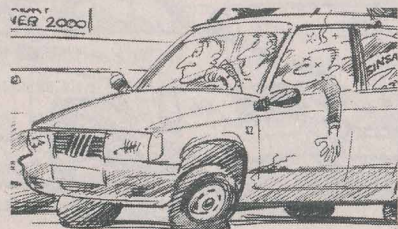
I was so demoralised I just wanted it all to stop, and almost immediately my prayers were answered but not in the way I had hoped. Holding the throttle wide open in second gear I launched off the top of a jump and what happened next is indelibly etched on my memory. As soon as the KMX took to the air I realised this was going to hurt. Rather than sailing gracefully through the air to the landing ramp, the KMX had barely enough power to get us airborne and together we slammed into the face of the following take off ramp. The weedy suspension clearly couldn't cope with such a massive impact and bottomed out with a sickening crunch the result of which catapulted me clean over the bars. I finally landed on the face of the next jump feet first and with personal survival paramount attempted to scurry to the relative safety of the trackside. Unfortunately my right leg refused to cooperate,

and closer inspection revealed the lower leg at a rather strange angle.

The super efficient marshals tried vainly to stop more riders hitting the blind jump at full bore but at least half a dozen bikes made expensive contact with the now rather sorry looking KMX. By some miracle no one actually hit my defenceless body, and after an eye watering ride across the beach in the back of a pick-up truck I found myself in a shabby looking hospital. My recently acquired Sinsalo riding jeans were cut off and cast aside, and when an X-ray revealed no broken bones four medical staff held me down whilst a fifth took several agonising attempts to put the stubborn knee back in to joint. Sat in the waiting room with my right leg in plaster I asked a nurse if Holland had a national health service, 'Oh ja' she replied and promptly handed me a bill for almost 500 quid.

The KMX came off even worse, the headstock was bent and just about the only part not damaged were the Renthal handlebars. My new carbon/kevlar helmet was split across the mouthpiece and of course the aforementioned Sinsalo's were good for nothing more than polishing my goggles. My five minutes of international action had cost more than the previous two seasons put together, and the rest of the evening was spent in some local bars cadging drinks off anyone who'd listen to my tale of woe (including a potentially embarrassing moment in Scheveningen's only gay bar) - even the quad team were moved enough to buy all three of us a meal.

'Well' said my wife on my return home 'I hope you've learnt a valuable lesson'. Sure did..... The following year we returned to Scheveningen fully tooled up with a seriously sorted crosser, some new Sinsalos and most importantly enough medical insurance to look after a small army.



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