

# TRAIL BIKE

M A G A Z I N E

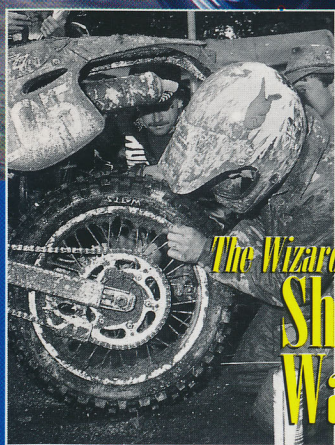
October 1996  
issue 15  
£1.75

*Plus*  
*Over 40s*  
*Moped Mania*  
*New bikes for 97*

**Africa Twin**  
**Cagiva E900 X**

**KTM LC2**

**TT350**  
**IT175**



*The Wizard of Aus*  
**Shane Watts**

*Paul Edmondson Column*

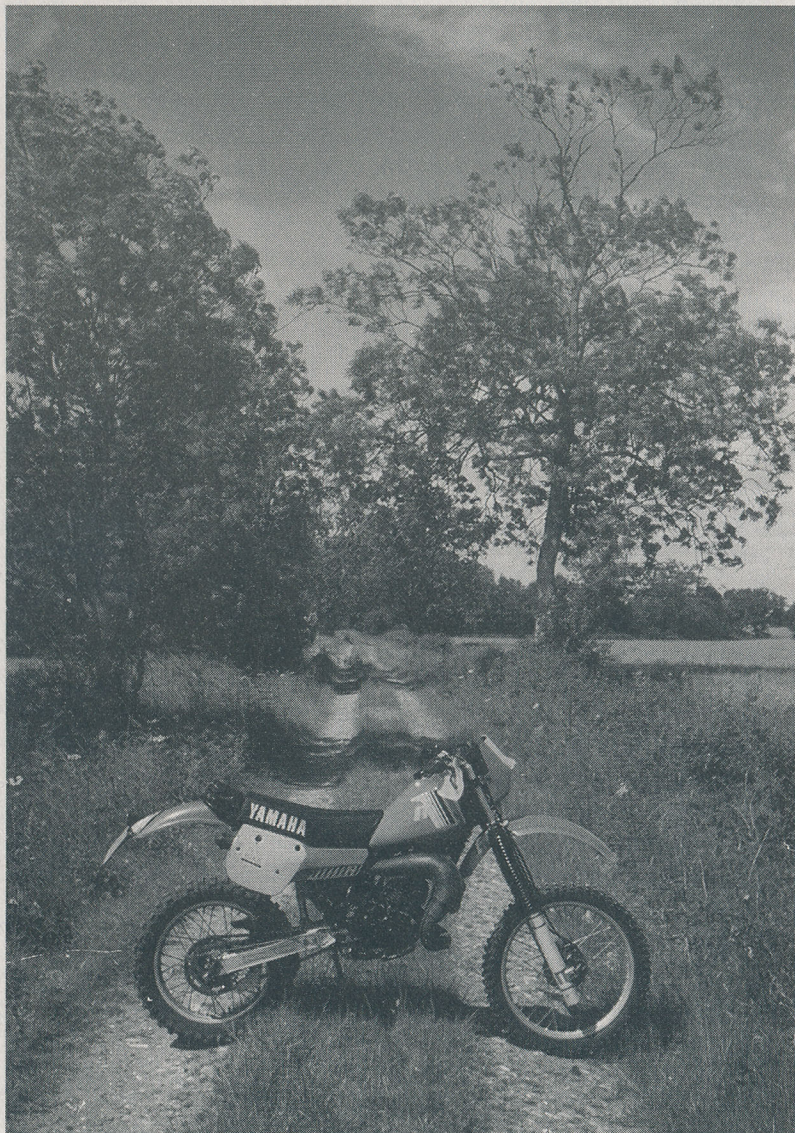
9 771359 032014

107



# THAT'S IT

1982  
YAMAHA  
IT175J



Yamaha  
IT175J:  
One of  
the best  
clubman  
enduro  
bikes  
ever and  
still a  
great  
dirt bike

It's funny really, I suppose after all these years of riding and racing dirt bikes I still haven't learnt my lesson when it comes to choosing a suitable off road machine. Maybe it's a desire to be different or more likely just a blinding excuse for finishing well down the field. Way back in 1982 when a glance at the parc ferme at any enduro in the country revealed a veritable sea of blue ITs, I spurned the

obvious choice in favour of a Moto Gori RGS250. The result of that decision and its consequences have been well documented in the pages of this magazine, but inside I have always secretly wanted to try one of the Yamaha ITs just to know what I was missing. Back then it became obvious (to me) that IT riders spent far more time riding and less time pushing than I ever did and even now a well looked after IT175 would still make a competent and reliable trail/fun enduro machine for the financially challenged rider, which is a testament to the bike's design integrity.

**Before dirt bikes became sophisticated, Yamaha's enduro weapon used to be the ever-popular IT. Dave Comish takes a nostalgic spin on one of the best clubman machines ever made**

Norwich immediately brought memories flooding back of previous encounters with IT mounted opposition. The light blue plastics still sported the original IT graphics and the simple steel duplex frame housing the air cooled lump was, despite its age, gamefully hanging on to its black-painted finish.

No power claims for the IT175 were made by Yamaha, but at a guess roughly 25 lively horses are produced by the compact, air-cooled, two stroke mill, which with a bore and stroke of 66x50mm gave the IT a true capacity of 171cc. Running

Fourteen years later and I find myself offered an unbelievably original condition 1982 IT175 for a day's greenlaning, not enough time for a full test, but more than enough for me to find out what might have been all those years ago. Showing a mere 800km on the DT-style speedo, our test bike was in totally standard trim and had obviously had very little off road use.

Picking up the bike from Clive at TrailSport in

# THAT'S IT

1982  
YAMAHA  
IT175J

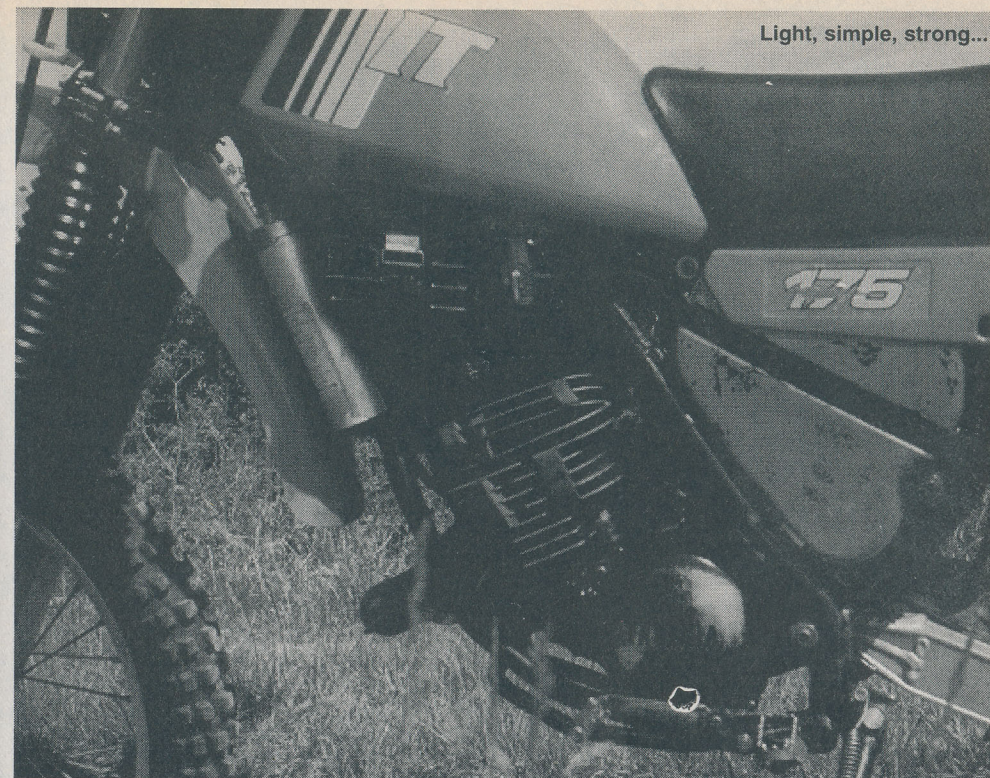
on a diet of pre-mix at a lowly 25 to 1 mixture, the fuel is metered by a reed block mounted 34mm Mikuni carb which features Yamaha's YEIS (Yamaha energy induction system) device. This simple idea involved a 'boost bottle' chamber plumbed into the inlet rubber, when the incoming charge is halted in it's tracks by the piston closing the port, any remaining fuel/air mix is stored in the chamber ready for the port to reopen. Simple, but exactly how effective it actually is is anybody's guess and as it's no longer fitted to any Yamaha stroker you can draw your

own conclusions. Burnt gases (or lightly singed ones anyway) exit by way of a standard expansion chamber and tiny silencer which by today's standards is unbelievably noisy with a sharp crackle in its note.

Our test bike was the final IT175 version - the J model - launched in 82 which proved to be the definitive IT. Only subtle updates were deemed necessary from earlier versions to keep the bike competitive, the most noticeable being to the 'MonoCross' rear suspension which sported a 'UniTrack' style linkage whilst still retaining the layed down suspension unit.

Other changes for the 82 season included the introduction of a larger street legal headlamp unit with a 25/25 watt bulb, a tiny battery, and an ignition lock which joined the kph speedo mounted on the top yoke. Maybe by this time Yamaha considered the 175 to be more of an all round off roader rather than a fire breathing race bike, after all if you were serious about winning enduros the 250 (or if you were certifiably insane) the 465 models in the IT range could provide all of performance required for a gold medal.

However for the average clubman and trail rider a 175cc was (and in my opinion probably still is) the ideal allround package, combining light weight with enough power for the people. And talking of weight, it was claimed at the time that the IT175 tipped the scales at a meagre 108kg - including fuel and oil! Take a closer look at the photos and you'll see it's not hard to understand why. There's no surplus



Light, simple, strong...

plumbing or watercooling, little in the way of weighty extras (like brake calipers) and even the frame and running gear seem fairly spindly by today's standards. That light overall weight combined with a superb user friendly torquey motor and competent suspension meant that the 175 remained a popular bike right up to its demise.

Throwing a leg over the 36" high seat was a pleasant enough surprise. First of all the suspension squatted down a few inches which allowed my rather stumpy limbs to make proper contact with terra firma, and secondly unlike on a modern bike, the seat actually felt like it could be comfortable for more than just a few laps of

an MX track. Starting up the motor entailed nothing more than a prod on the large kickstart lever and after enduring a few noisy seconds sat stationary the carb mounted choke was dispensed with.

Feeling more than a little self-conscious about the raucous din emanating from the single skin expansion chamber, I eased the bike out of the city (followed by an obnoxious blue fog) and onto a main trunk road. Showing little more than 100kph on the speedo the IT felt as if it was about to self destruct and fitted with the standard low gearing I was only too glad to reach my turn off onto a twisty country lane.

Mind you I almost missed the turn

**Thanks to Clive Hillier at TrailSport for the loan of the IT. Before you ask, this one's already sold, but Clive often has bikes like this in stock. If you're interested give him a ring on 01603 504595.**

## CHAINMAIL

CHAINS AND SPROCKETS FOR THE OFF ROAD ENTHUSIAST

SUPER  
VALUE  
KITS

QUALITY & SERVICE  
COSTS LESS WITH  
CHAINMAIL  
SPROCKETS & KITS  
FOR ALL MX/TRIALS &  
TRAIL BIKES

### TRAIL BIKE KITS

ALL MODELS HD KIT "O" KIT  
50/80 (420) £36.50 --  
100-350 (428) £41.50 £71.50  
200-650 (520) £52.75 £79.50

Big chain (520) conversions for  
MTX, XL, KMX, DR, DT, XT  
DID Standard chain, take £4.00  
off HD kit

DUNLOPAD DISC PADS  
EBC DIRT BIKE SHOES

-Kit price includes VAT, p&p  
-Good choice of ratios  
-Same day despatch

RENTHAL  
MX/ENDURO KITS

### TALON

'GOLD' TRIALS KITS

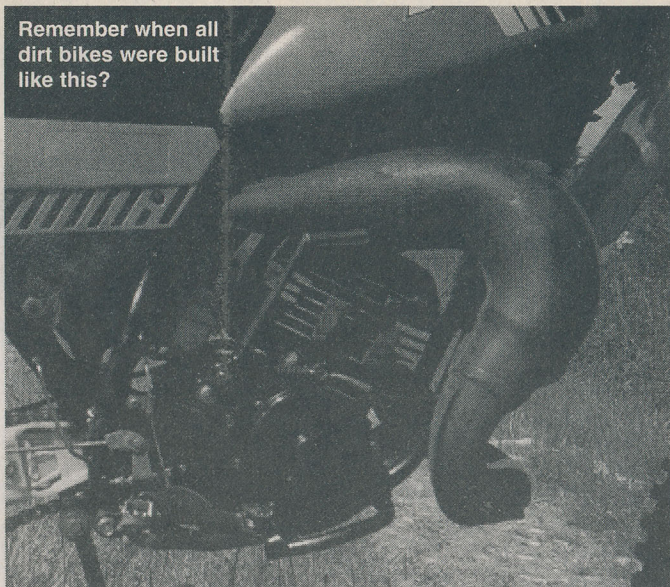
Now in stock  
4.00 x 17  
Trials tyres

12 Coniston Road  
Old Woking  
Surrey GU22 9HU

Visa

Tel: 01483 726299  
Phone 9am-9pm  
for personal attention

Remember when all dirt bikes were built like this?



altogether; hauling on those tiny single leading shoe drums soon reminded me why modern bikes are equipped with hydraulic discs. A huge effort is required to slow the IT from any sort of speed, let alone it's relatively modest top end of around 65-70mph. Tug hard on the lever and the bike will (given enough space) eventually stop, but some serious mental readjustments are needed if the rider is to stay out of trouble.

Quite apart from the non-existent brakes, there's another good reason for keeping the cruising speed down to below 50mph, and that is because the vibrations coming through the footrest are (at least on tarmac) unbelievably obtrusive. After

only a few miles I found pins and needles setting in as all sense of feeling disappeared from my feet. Strangely the feet numbing vibes don't seem to afflict the rest of the bike, only a slight tingle finds it's way to the bars and that large well upholstered seat positively isolates your bum from the worst of the vibes, but that said I still wouldn't like to ride on tarmac for too long.

After a quick check of the map, I took off down a badly rutted,

overgrown byway. Suddenly the Yamaha's low gearing and rorty motor began to make sense; the close ratios meant that you're never stuck for the right gear for any given situation, and gassing the light throttle in the lower four gears keeps the elderly Yam on the pipe with just enough power available to keep the front light enough to clear any nasty obstacles. The first five gears are all usable even in tighter off road situations, the fairly close ratio nature of the six-speed box allowing you to make the most of the IT's motor.

Only on faster sections is top gear needed, and consequently it seems to be more of an off road overdrive with the jump from fifth to sixth quite pro-

# THAT'S IT

TrailBike -50- Magazine

## Yamaha IT175J

**Price (as tested): £800 otr**  
**Eng: Air cooled, piston ported, two stroke single**  
**Bore & Stroke: 66x50mm**  
**Displacement: 171cc**  
**Transmission: 6-speed W/R**  
**Frame: steel cradle**  
**Kerb Weight: 108kg**

Lee Waldie Craig Scott Chris Koira nounced. Getting the power down to the dirt isn't a problem on the IT, the softly sprung and damped suspension is ideal for greenlaning. Giving a plush, well controlled ride, and the early 'MonoCross' rear is perfectly matched to the conventional, no frills leading axle forks.

However quicker enduro type going would have the travel used up fairly easily, and no doubt in actual competition

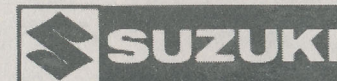
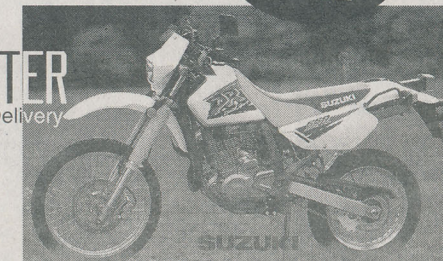
situations the bike would get out of shape without too much provocation. A certain amount of this can be put down to the bike's age. I've no idea how recently things like the fork oil have been changed, and no doubt fiddling around with thicker oil and rear shock settings would improve matters, but let's not forget this is a 14 year old bike, and considering it's age the IT comfortably manages about 90 percent of what most new enduro machines can do.

Looking back to 1982 I can now see why so many riders chose to ride an IT, the 175 in particular (even now) makes a superb, easy to ride and perhaps even more importantly, cheap to buy and run trail or fun enduro bike. Spares are still readily available and being air cooled, maintaining the little Yam is a cinch. Use a modern synthetic race oil, keep the air filter clean and the venerable IT should give



**WHITE BROTHERS USA IMPORTER**  
 390 Page Full Colour Catalogue Available £10 inc Delivery

**Massive stocks of DR XR KLX XT**  
**Silencers, Carb Kits, Cams, Seat**  
**Covers, Tank Covers, Acerbis**  
**Plastics, Bash Plates & on and on**



23-25 Station Hill Chippenham  
 Wiltshire SN15 1EG  
 01249 657575 / 657576  
 Parts 01249 444193

**DR**  
 Specialists  
 RMX & DR  
 Enduro  
 In Stock

96 RM  
 125 & 250  
 IN STOCK  
 DERBI 50 SENDA  
 (+80CC CONVERSIONS)  
 96 XR250  
 400/600  
 AVAILABLE

TrailBike -51- Magazine

# THAT'S IT

1982  
YAMAHA  
IT175J

years of cheap service.

However actually finding an IT in reasonable nick is going to be your hardest problem. Plenty were sold and many of these were thrashed to destruction, but that said, the IT was designed as a race machine and was meant to be ridden hard. If you can find one that's been tucked away in the back of someone's garage or protected from the elements then there's virtually nothing that can't be put right with the appropriate amount of attention, and like the equivalent

Suzuki, the PE175, owners will quickly grow to appreciate the bike's simple rugged charms.

As for my verdict, well let's just say 'if only'. If only I could have swallowed my pride and followed all the other happy IT owners instead of trying to be different, I may have realised my enduro ambitions instead of wasting my talents aboard various unsuited (and unreliable) European mounts. Still they say you learn from your mistakes, now where are the keys to my Bultaco 370?



TrailBike -52- Magazine

## WEST SOMERSET GUIDED TOURS

Join me for a weekend and let me guide you across Exmoor and the Quantock hills taking in the best green lanes and views in the West Country - ranging from open moorland to steep, rocky climbs with plenty of fording. The weekend includes two full days riding, two nights B&B at a local inn and two packed lunches. The fun comes free

**£89.00 all in**

Discount for groups (4+), and TRF Members. Daily rates also available

**INTERESTED?!**

**Ring Bob on 01823 433972**



## TRAIL RIDERS FELLOWSHIP

*365 days trail riding  
for 5.5p per day!!!*

Patron: Lord Strathcarron

**THE TRF HAS 42 LOCAL GROUPS  
THROUGHOUT ENGLAND, SCOTLAND  
& WALES, & IT ONLY COSTS £20 A  
YEAR TO JOIN!**

**WE ALSO HAVE TRIPS TO IRELAND,  
THE ISLE OF MAN & THE CONTINENT.**

## INTERESTED?

Then write (enclosing SAE) and mentioning TrailBike Magazine to TRF Membership Secretary, Graham Stratford, 38 Thornton Crescent, Old Coulsden, Surrey, CR5 1LH

**The TRAIL RIDERS FELLOWSHIP  
The National Non-Competitive Club**