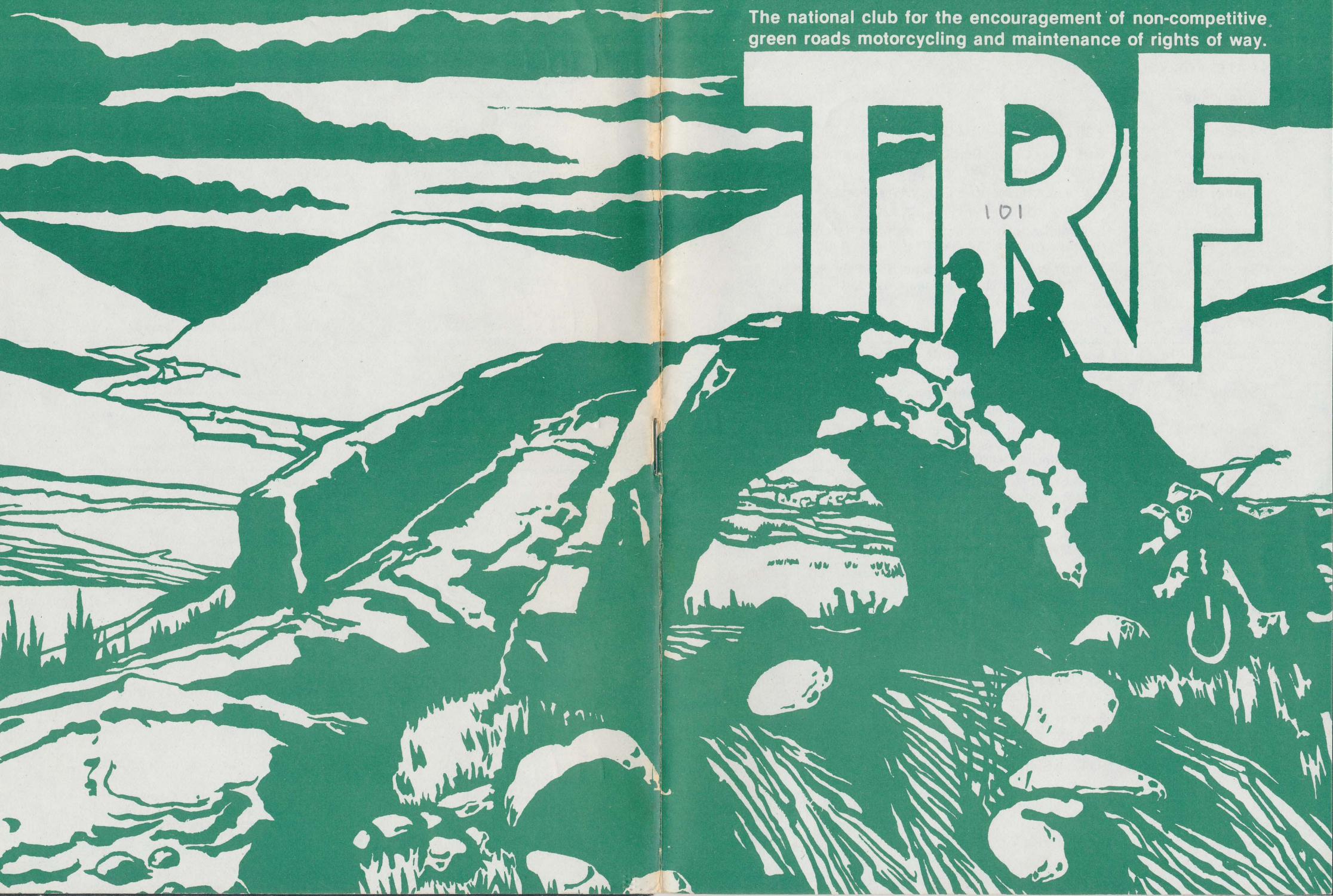


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# TRE



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**TEST REPORT — YAMAHA XT125 — Ros e Swindells**

The advent of the much debated learner law has brought a crop of up-dated 12bhp 125cc machines onto the market. However, whilst a drop of 2 to 3 bhp on a 2 stroke 125 is not going to make too much difference to performance, on the 4 stroke it appears to effectively kill it. I started my bike riding on an XL125K and know that lack of ground clearance and poor suspension movement let that bike down before any lack of power; in fact that bike could attain a top speed of over 75mph whereas the modern-day restricted versions seem only to be able to manage a top whack of around 65mph.

The XT125 was first introduced in 1982 and, unlike most Japanese road bikes, has not been through any model changes. The engine is a simple air-cooled, single overhead cam, single cylinder, 2 valve motor with a gear driven balancer shaft to dampen any vibration — which it does very effectively as I was not aware of any bad vibes.

The first problem with the XT125 was starting it. Four hours of intermittent kicking only produced a slight grumble from the engine and much grumbling from me! There was nothing actually wrong with the bike, it's just extremely particular about it's starting habits. The only way that bike would fire was on full choke and no throttle — even the slightest touch of throttle would kill the engine. Once fired up it was a case of waiting for about 20 seconds until the revs started to rise before you dare try to set off. Using this method the XT fired up reliably over the rest of the test period. However, I did find it extremely awkward kick starting the XT and keeping my right hand from twisting the throttle even the slightest bit.

To compensate for it's finicky starting, the XT ran well, never missed a beat and was a very smooth and quiet running unit. As there was no rev counter, at a stand-still against a noisier bike it was sometimes difficult to tell whether the engine was still running. Apart from cost cutting, I can see no reason why a rev counter has not been fitted to the XT — a set of colourful warning lights staring you in the face instead just doesn't have the same feel. Typically, the 'power' was unimpressive. There was no power band as such, the XT just went progressively faster until it reached 65mph but then would not do anymore. For town riding, any manoeuvre had to be preceded by a down gear change to get any sort of fast acceleration and performance. Having said that, I have to confess that I came to like the XT.

The monoshock rear suspension was superb — riding over changing road surfaces effortlessly. On the trail it never bottomed out or lurched about and gave a sort of armchair type comfort. However, unlike the DT's suspension unit, the XT's monoshock is not adjustable so I reckon I was lucky that the suspension suited my weight. The riding position and seat were also very comfortable for me, but for anyone much over 5'5" it will probably feel rather cramped as the distance between seat and handlebars is quite short.

Over the easier type of lane it was difficult to fault the XT's green laning performance. Uphill lanes though, proved to be the undoing of the 125 as it just didn't have the low down grunt needed for some of the climbs. You needed to have the bottle to take everything uphill as fast as possible to ensure reaching the top. I suppose there was some consolation after all that the bike didn't have a rev counter! Downhill though, the addition of the 4 stroke's engine braking was useful.

The tyres actually were not as bad as I'd feared they would be. (I'm used to using a trials tyre on the front wheel and a knobbly on the back.) Obviously they let the XT down when riding through mud, but once I'd got used to the bike squirming a bit, but not actually losing traction, I felt a lot more confident. Over rocks and stones the bike handled very well. What surprised me was that on one particular muddy climb the DT175 was all over the place whilst the XT plodded slowly up on next to no revs with just sufficient grip to keep moving. In that instance any more power would have probably had the back wheel spinning.

For 6 volt electrics I thought the lights were excellent. The system is completely direct (except for the indicators which run off the battery). Most trail bike systems I've seen just have the headlight running direct. I thought the XT's electrics basic in this respect as in the event of a breakdown or even just stalling at a junction at night, it is safer to at least have the rear light working so people don't come crashing into the back of you. The indicators, which surprised me by actually working, were sensibly rubber mounted. Because of completely direct lighting system, it may be possible to run the XT with no battery, but I wouldn't like anyone to quote me on this.

The ignition switch was rather fiddly and I can see quite a few keys being snapped off in the first few days of ownership. A steering lock is incorporated into the switch and the key needs to be pressed in hard and allowed to spring-release slightly before it can be turned. I'm not sure if there is an easy way of removing the key, I never found one. I just had to yank it out and hope that the key would last for the 3 week test period.

All the controls were smooth, even the gear change, which on a bike that seemed to need a gear change every few seconds I would have expected to have been hammered to death. The brakes were excellent, far better than I have come to expect from a trail bike.

To keep the weight, and more probably the cost down, a lot of plastic is used — even down to the seat base. However, as the seat base also acts as part of the rear mudguard this is probably just as well, as a metal base would rust through in no time. A shame the exhaust system couldn't have been made of something that didn't rust as even on a bike with only 400 miles on the clock, the system was rusting quite badly. In common with the DT175 the XT125 has a box section swinging arm which, although looks like aluminium, is in fact just silver painted steel.

The fuel consumption was reasonable at around the 75 mpg, but considering the top speed was only 65mph I would have expected a figure more up in the 90–100 mph range. I liked the styling which is very similar to the 125's big brother, the XT550 and to my mind gives the bike quite a sporty appearance.

Although quite high, the bike sinks down when you sit on it and I found that on the trail I was able to dab easily and at only 212 lbs (dry) it was light to throw around.

I thoroughly enjoyed riding the XT, but I had to feel rather sorry for it. I can't see it selling awfully well beside it's 2-stroke rivals. However, it may appeal to 4-stroke lovers who are willing to sacrifice that bit extra performance for a quiet and very civilised bike.

To my mind, it is unfortunate that Yamaha decided not to import the XT200 into this country as I feel that could have been a popular bike amongst trail riders. However, as a minority group of potential purchasers, we are just not, I suppose, economically viable.

#### TEST REPORT — YAMAHA DT175MX — Dave Swindells

The DT has hardly changed since 1978 when it was given monoshock suspension and suffixed by 'MX'. To my mind this machine had it's hey day a couple of years ago when it was considered by many to be the only trail bike to buy. Today it looks rather basic and old-fashioned against it's more moto-cross styled rivals — not that styling means everything.

It is unfortunate, therefore, that the 125 learner law has killed the 175–200 class stone dead in this country. The DT itself is now a discontinued model, having been superseded by the DT125LC. However, there is still a market for the 175/200cc machines in trail riders who find that the combination of weight, size, power and economy suits their needs; I number myself among these.

The first point that impressed me about the DT was that it had a security bolt fitted as standard in the back wheel. How many nother non-competition bikes have this? It might sound strange, but it is a trail bike that actually seems to have been designed for trail riding! Manufacturers openly admit that their trail bikes are usually designed for around 80% road use and 20% 'off road' use. The detail design is very neat with rubber covers over almost all points where water and mud would like to do their worst. A chain tensioner as standard is quite rare as are fork gaiters. All the controls were light and unobtrusive which is as they should be — a stiff throttle or clutch can erode your concentration at a vital moment. The brakes in particular fitted this pattern of working without fuss and with plenty of feel. However, I only realised just how good they were when I sailed down our drive and into the middle of the road with brakes full on the first time back on my own XL185!

The lights, however, are not up to much — a blob of yellow light about 3ft diameter 20ft in front of the bike is not enough, and main beam only moves the 'blob' 5ft further forward and 1ft to the right. Not enough when you see what Cibie can do with even their 6V tungsten headlight conversions. The indicators and rear light in contrast are very bright and visible — a shame because these are the very items that most trail riders either remove or replace. The tyres, due to the aforementioned lack of development were not the hopeless 'fancy pattern' trail type fitted to most new trail bikes, but the more standard trials block pattern Bridgestone Trailwing tyres, which were quite reasonable covers giving good grip in most situations except for 2ft deep mud. As for road grip, they gave as much as I asked, which admittedly was not a lot, since I gave up trusting trials tyres after a DT250 once led me to believe I could ground the footrest — it lied!

Yamaha were first in the field with monoshock suspension and they got it right first time. The only change from the 1978 specification is the box section swinging arm (it used to be round tube). Although it looks like aluminium, it is only silver painted steel. The seven position shock absorber under the seat worked perfectly well on the street and on rocky descents where it would never kick out or get out of shape. The rear end would absorb huge bumps and craters without bottoming or topping out. The forks worked in harmony but gave an alarming clonk over large bumps.



Yamaha XT125



Yamaha DT175

For those who are interested, the road top speed was 65mph in 6th (top) gear at 8000rpm, but of more importance, I liked the way it would pull over rocks and through mud from as low as 2000rpm.

The engine is a 171cc piston ported 2 stroke with reed valves and oil injection. Our machine used rather a lot of oil and I suspect that Yamaha set the oil pump rich on the press fleet to avoid the bikes being returned to them with remarks like, '... 9000rpm in second then it stopped ... and the kickstart has gone stiff ...'. The oil tank is under the right sidepanel and is easily accessible. There is also a warning light in the rev counter which illuminates when the tank is about 1/4 full.

The engine on our test bike had a slight flat spot just off idle. This caused no real trouble, but was slightly annoying when picking a line through boulders. Maybe it was not set up properly which may also account for the high fuel consumption of just 50mpg giving a full tank range of only 78 miles — I know, I pushed it! (So did I! — Rosie) Not good enough, my wife's Kawasaki KE175 manages 85 mpg with better performance than the DT.

Overall the bike is still as good a bike as it was in it's hey day (during the early 80s) and at almost the same price (around £800) if you are prepared to shop around.

#### SPECIFICATIONS

	YAMAHA XT125	YAMAHA DT175MX
Engine	single cylinder, sohc	single cylinder 2 stroke
Bore and Stroke	57 x 48.8mm	66 x 50mm
Capacity	124cc	171cc
Compression	10:1	6.8:1
Carburation	24mm Teikei	24mm Mikuni
Bhp @ rpm	12 @ 9000	15 @ 7000
Primary Drive	Gear	Gear
Clutch	Multiplate, wet	Multiplate, wet
Gearbox	5 speed	6 speed
Electrics	6V/4ah battery	Flywheel magneto, CDI ignition, 6V 6ah battery
Lighting	35/35w headlight	35/35w headlight
<b>Dimensions</b>		
Wheelbase	53"	53"
Seat Height	33"	32.5"
Ground Clearance	10.5"	10"
Weight (dry)	212lb	218lb
Fuel Capacity	1.6 gal	1.4 gal
<b>Cycle Parts</b>		
Brakes front & rear	5.1" s/s drum	5" s/s drum
Tyres front	2.75 x 21" Bridgestone	2.75 x 21" Bridgestone
rear	4.10 x 18" Bridgestone	3.50 x 18" Bridgestone

#### Performance

Top Speed	65mph	65mph
Fuel consumption	75mpg (overall)	50mpg (overall)
Price	£809	---

Both motorcycles supplied by Mitsui Machinery Sales  
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\* \* \* \* \*

Next issue I hope to report on Cagiva's new 16bhp 125cc trail bike — the Aletta Rossa — no one under 5'10" need apply!

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