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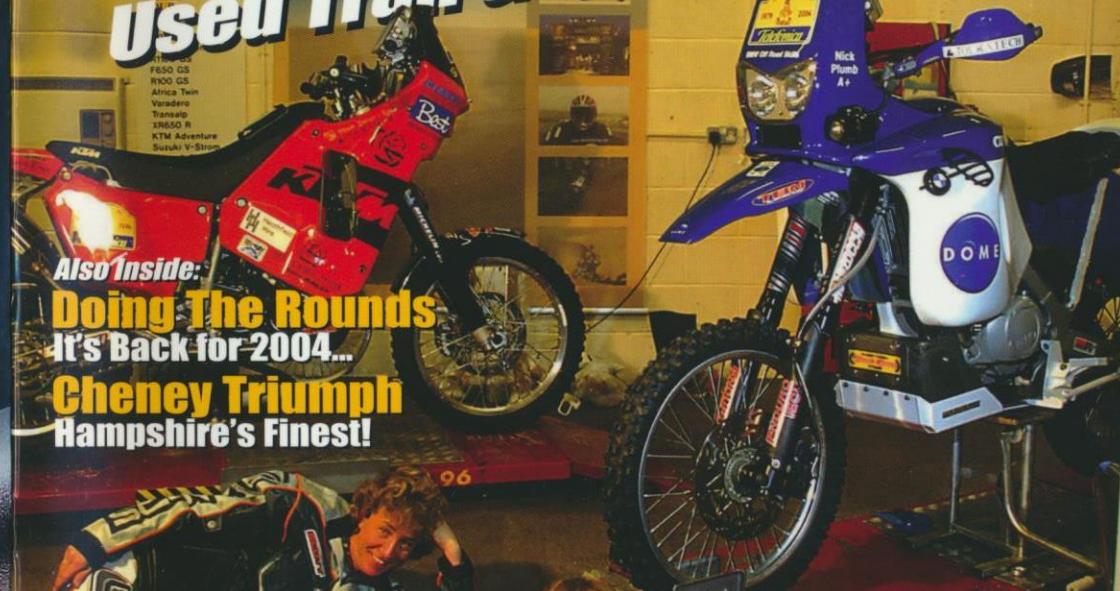
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EDITORIAL

Justice For All...

Rather like an over-ripe Norfolk turnip, the newly discovered leader of Iraq was recently turfed out of the ground and unceremoniously served up on an American dinner plate for general consumption - just in time for Christmas. He now faces a pretty uncertain future. Unlike the turnip however, he is fortunate in that he didn't emerge into the harsh realities of New Labour's Britain in 2004. A country where the government seeks to overturn centuries-long traditions like, for instance, trial by Jury.

This is one of the problems with a government which measures its success by the warped yardstick of 'reform'. Casting my mind back many years to school history lessons, I seem to remember that virtually all unsuccessful governments used the cloak of reform to help justify their continued hold on privileged positions of power; when in fact the job of government is actually just to get on and damn well govern.

The problem with constantly seeking reform (and believe me this is a Labour watch-word) is that it assumes that the existing status quo is fundamentally flawed. Now I grant you there are big problems with the Health Service, Education, Crime and Transport, but did anyone elect this government so that they could have a pop at trail riders? I ask you, aren't there more important issues worth tackling in 21st century Britain?

Apparently not according to the Minister for Rural Affairs, Alun Michael, who has decided to issue a consultation paper entitled *The Use of Mechanically Propelled Vehicles on Rights of Way* - which doesn't so much consult, as state his one-sided opinion that he's against such use. This Minister, who let's face it, will end up becoming nothing more than a footnote in New Labour's obituary, states: 'I do not think that it makes sense

that historic evidence of use by horse drawn vehicles or dedication for vehicular use at a time before the internal combustion engine existed can give rise to rights to use modern mechanically propelled vehicles.'

Would those be the same modern mechanically propelled vehicles that his Labour colleague John Prescott was hoping to see tear up large tracts of unspoilt green belt for Labour's unsustainable and frankly ludicrous housing policy? Or is he referring to the modern mechanically propelled vehicles which have recently bulldozed their way through parts of Warwickshire and the Midlands so as to build New Labour's first socialist-(un)friendly toll motorway. No of course he's referring to the modern mechanically propelled vehicles needed by his colleague Alistair Darling to turn yet more of our green and pleasant into new runways that nobody wants or really needs.

So let's see if I understand him correctly? According to our Minister for Rural affairs, the ordinary people who wandered our highways and byways centuries ago (unlike Ministers who today use chauffeur-driven cars for transport - thanks entirely to a rights of way network which allows them to do so), would *not* have had cause to use a mechanically propelled vehicle on their travels (had such a vehicle existed back then).

Has he taken leave of his senses, or is the Minister really so ignorant of history as to believe that ordinary people (*let's face it, the term Working Class is so Old Labour*), had no desire to better themselves, or improve their lot?

Whatever his motives, it's clear that his grasp of history is about as tenuous as the former Iraqi leader's grasp on reality.

Perhaps before the Americans seal up the former dictator's hole in the ground we can suggest a use for it as a landfill site for pointless and poorly researched ministerial consultation papers.

As for turnips, well at least they have a use in life. I wonder if Alun Michael can claim the same?

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JANUARY 2004

NO.101



TRAILBIKE & ENDURO NEWS

NEW THREAT TO TRAIL RIDING

The Government has signalled the biggest ever threat to the future of trail riding with the issue of a consultation paper entitled the Use Of Mechanically Propelled vehicles On Rights Of Way. The consultation paper which has been prepared under the direction of Alun Michael the Minister for Rural Affairs, seeks to limit trail riders' legitimate access to the countryside with a series of one-sided proposals aimed at toadying up to large landowners and middle-class Labour NIMBYs. Amongst the many proposals - including the suggestion that RuPPs be downgraded to Restricted Byway sta-

tus (ie without vehicular rights), neatly removing nearly two-thirds of all the RoW network available to trail riders - is the suggested abolition of the use of historic evidence for claiming rights of way.

'Our policy aim is to ensure that any historic evidence or use dating from a time when it could not have been envisaged that the way would be used by the sort of mechanically propelled vehicles we have today, should only enable that way to be recorded as a right of way for vehicles that are not mechanically propelled.'

In other words because man's

ancestors weren't able to predict the future, that should prejudice future generations' rights of access to the countryside. Mad. Absolutely mad! But then again perhaps we should expect no less from an urban government whose grasp of rural affairs is tenuous at the best of times - witness their continued mishandling of the fox hunting bill.

Fortunately there's an opportunity for us all to write in and voice our opinions on this subject matter. Responses must arrive by 19 March and be addressed to William Propert-Lewis, Countryside (recreation & landscape) Division 5, DEFRA, Zone 1/01, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6EB. Fax 0117 3728587 or email rights.ofway@defra.gsi.gov.uk. Copies of this consultation paper can be found on www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/cl/index.htm.

Please do something about this NOW. Write and express your dissatisfaction at the possible introduction of an unjust law which could never be effectively policed. Don't ignore this threat...

ORANGE HOLIDAYS

Orange fans book your annual hols for 10-13 June. South London KTM dealers Bracken Motorcycles are offering to transport your bike down to Mattighoffen in Austria (the home of KTM) - the venue for this year's KTM Festival - the factory's annual celebration of all things orange.

The Bracken deal includes a round-trip for your bike to the event, entry into either the enduro, MX or supermoto to race and camping fees, all for a very reasonable £350. Bracken can also advise on flights and as we went to press it was possible to get a return flight from Stansted to Austria for as little as £40 if you book now. The number of places are limited so don't delay - Bracken are on 0207 232 1814, get cracking.

TM LAUNCH 450E FES

Italian dirt bike manufacturer TM has launched a 450 electric-start enduro bike for 2004. The bike which features Ohlins suspension front and rear, kick and electric-start and some styling updates from the old 400 version will be available from springtime at a cost of £5991...



CCM IN SPAIN

CCM dealer Fast-Trak have leapt into bed with CCM to run the official factory ride outs. This year's (bike supplied) events cover trail riding in Wales Scotland, England and for the committed adventure-seeker, Spain and Eifel Mountains in Germany. Bikes are the fantastic new CCM404s but bigger riders can opt for the 644 big bore trailie if required. Accommodation, packed lunches and insurance is included but you will have to make your own way there and pay for evening meals. Prices vary from £175 for a day's trailing without accommodation up to £950 for the full-on five day Spanish trip. CCM's ride outs have always been popular with non-dirt riding bikers and the Fast-Trak connection adds a whole new slant. The Dual-sport German and Spanish trips really are what they say on the tin.

Punters will get the chance to spend time with the knobbles on before swapping for some sticky 17" supermoto rubber for the

best of both worlds. Check out www.livingyourdreams.co.uk or try calling 01743 443300 for the full run down.



RALLY LIBYA

Morocco and Tunisia no longer a challenge? Well the latest destination for budding rallyists is Libya. The inaugural eight day Rally Libya kicks off in Le Mans (France) during October, and heads across the Med to the unspoilt dunes and pistes of The Socialists Peoples Libyan

Arab Jamaria (aka Libya).

Organised by French company FMO, the Rally Libya has been commissioned by the Gaddafi Foundation to showcase the first ever international rally held within Libya's considerable borders. The Dakar has historical links with Libya but now the clubman

rally fan has a chance to race the same stages without the expense of the Big One. Libya's huge desert features everything from high rocky plateaux, fast pistes to the more usual romantic mile after mile of rolling dunes. No prices or confirmed details as we went to press, so contact Francois Migault on 0033 243 722 596 or fmoir@wanadoo.fr alternatively info@rallylibya.com. Oh and don't forget to take your US dollars with you...



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NEWS

TWIN SPARKS

The best selling BMW F650GS trailie has just seen its first major revision since 1999. The latest 650 models feature a new improved dual spark plug cylinder head together with an updated engine management

system. This should offer smoother throttle response over a wider rev range, improved fuel economy but perhaps more importantly it allows the single cylinder GS to pass the ever-tightening Euro-2 emission standards. A new up-rated catalysed



exhaust system has also been developed to keep the boys in Brussels happy. However the most obvious changes for '04 are tweaks to the GS's styling which includes an improved quickly detachable screen that offers better rider protection and a redesigned 'beak' that echoes that of the bigger GS twin. Overall the single cylinder F650GS and F650 Dakar models have been improved to be even more rider friendly with a host of small but important tweaks to the bikes ergos. New colours have also been launched, including silver, yellow and deep black, which can be combined with either a black or orange seat on the standard F560 model. And the Dakar version sports a new blue metallic/matt white aluminium two-tone paint job for that all-important 'works' Dakar-racer look. Prices for the new F650 range are yet to be announced but the 2004 bikes should be available mid-January with the new eagerly awaited R1200GS to follow shortly after...

SNIPPETS

☛ TRICK SPARKS!

Top French dirtbike specialist CRD has just launched a trick new programmable CDI unit for most KTM, Husqvarna and Japanese dirtbikes, including the new range of hot 250 thumpers. The Vortex X10 Dual Curve CDI unit can be switched from either a low rpm torque curve, to a top-end power curve. This system is claimed to give the best of both worlds and allows the rider to switch from one curve to the other via a bar mounted flick switch. Race Spec are the CRD importers and the X10 CDI retails at £399.95 including vat. Contact 01531 631700

or sales@racespec.co.uk for further details.

☛ HERE'S JOHNNY

Despite hitting a rock early on that destroyed his front wheel, Johnny Campbell (Honda XR650R) took his seventh straight win in a row at the tough Baja 1000. In the company of Steve Hengeveld, off-road legend Campbell took overall victory by covering the 808 mile course in a staggering 15 hours and 39 minutes, an average of over 51mph including pit stops and rider changes and half of it in the dark! Campbell's seventh Baja 1000 win is excellent

preparation for his entry into the forthcoming Dakar Rallye.

☛ MID-WALES TRF

One of the biggest and most 'at-risk' areas of prime trail riding territory is finally getting its own TRF group. After a preliminary meeting in December the Mid-Wales TRF Group representing riders in Powys and Ceredigion - is holding its inaugural meeting on 28 January at the Crown Inn, Rhayader starting at 7.30pm. The meeting will outline the group's aims and elect officers. All existing and potential TRF members in the area are invited to turn up to meet fellow riders and help stem the tide of malign legislation aimed at our local byways.

FARMING TODAY?

STORY: PAUL BLEZ; PICS: PHB & RAY GRICHER

Britain's first ever 'all-weather' indoor trail and enduro park is now open down in south Devon. Paul Blezard went along to try it out for size...

Believe it or not, two decades ago I spent several months researching and writing a 50,000 word dissertation into the problem of Planning and Motorcycle Land Use. I was inspired to write it by meeting wheelie king Dave Taylor, visiting his trail park near Dartford and hearing about the problems he was having over a proposal for a second trail park at Tottenham Marsh in East London. I ended up visiting and writing about more than 30 different facilities and proposed sites all over the country and flogging copies of my dissertation to over a hundred local authorities and other organisations.

I spent a large part of the next decade looking at off-road motorcycle sites of all kinds, providing advice to would-be developers, clubs and voluntary groups and writing two guides to setting up trail parks. I gave expert advice for planning applications and at planning enquiries into off-

road riding areas. Some were gratifyingly successful, others were heart-breakingly and unreasonably refused. Anyway, suffice it to say that I saw a lot of sites and heard every conceivable argument both for and against dirt bike facilities of all kinds. But in all that time, I never once saw a proposal for anything like the new KTM Adventure Tours facility at Wheeldon Farm in Devon. And I certainly never saw anything like it in operation.

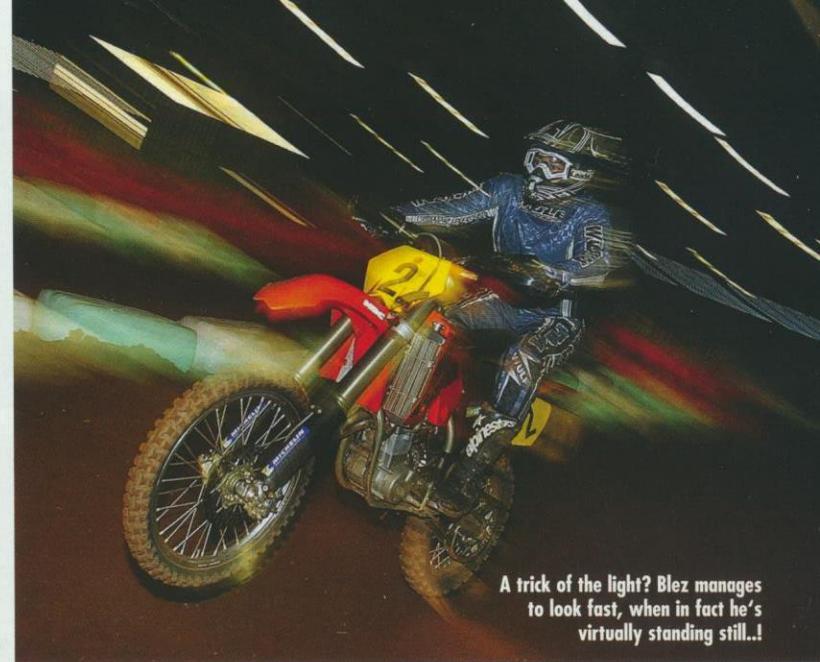
It's an indoor trail park! An off-road practice track disguised as a barn. A bloody big barn, with enough space for a circuit over 400 metres long and with adjoining rooms full of bikes, workshop facilities and suitable riding gear to equip a novice from head to toe. But Wheeldon Farm is much more than that. It's also a stunningly attractive set of stone buildings, based around a beautiful central courtyard with enough space

to accommodate more than 20 visitors in refurbished and thoroughly modernised cottages and feed and water them in a spacious kitchen/dining area and a bar. Oh yes, and it's still a working farm set in 260 acres of Devon countryside with a green lane running right through the middle of it and space for several outdoor riding circuits to be set up in the near future. In short, it's dirt biking Nirvana in the rolling hills of Devon, roughly half way between Exeter and Plymouth.

As I know better than most, it takes a rather special set of people and circumstances to create a facility like this. It's owned by the Savery family. Brothers Andrew and James Savery grew up nearby and moved to Wheeldon Farm with their parents over 20 years ago and ran the place as a mixed arable and dairy farm until the end of the Nineties, by which time there was very little money in milk production. They decided to

sell off their milk quota, cut back on the farming and, like so many others in Devon and Cornwall, diversify into the holiday cottage business. That was great for the summer, but not much of an earner in the winter. Well it just so happened that the Savery brothers were both keen on dirt bikes and James had actually been a pretty handy motocrosser in his youth. They also happened to be acquainted with Jeff Philp who's been running trail rides in the area with his Adventure Tours company since 1997, when he first set up in partnership with the late great John Deacon ('You Should've Seen Him').

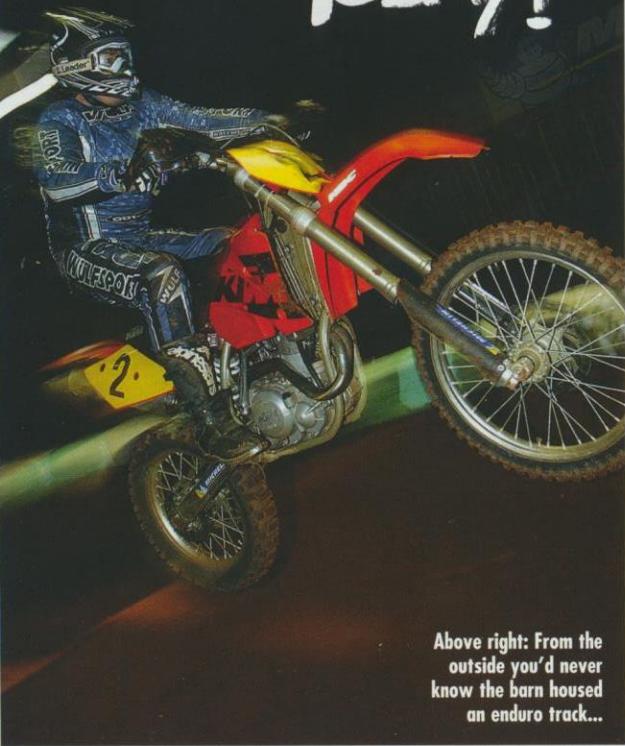
Jeff was interested in using Wheeldon Farm as a base for his trail rides and the Savery brothers were happy to oblige - Adventure Tours have been using it since September and as Andrew told me, 'You can go out for a day's trail riding and never use the same lane twice, there are so



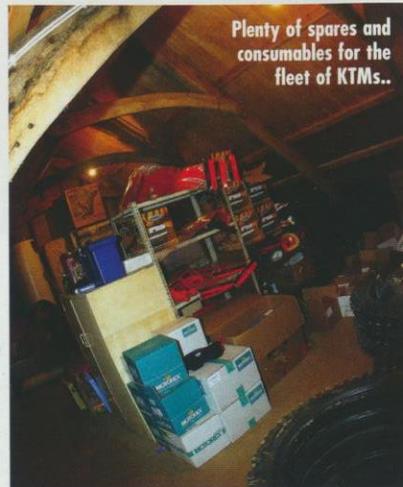
A trick of the light? Blez manages to look fast, when in fact he's virtually standing still..!



FARMING Today?



Above right: From the outside you'd never know the barn housed an enduro track...



Plenty of spares and consumables for the fleet of KTMs...

many in the area'. And then the idea of the indoor riding area came about, and it's added a whole new dimension to the facility.

Anyone who's ever been trail riding with a group of strangers, especially if some of them are novices, will know that a gung-ho, boasting, beefy road bike rider can be reduced to a bruised and battered, bleating, big girl's blouse in a matter of minutes on a muddy lane, while those with a bit more experience get bored and cold twiddling their thumbs waiting for them to catch back up. The facilities at Wheeldon Farm enable the Adventure Tours operators both to assess the abilities (and fitness!) of their customers and to give them a bit of basic training to improve their skills, before they even set out on the lanes. Their weekend 'rallye-raid' events now start at noon on Friday, giving their customers several hours to get used to the bikes, the equipment and the new techniques required before the trail riding proper starts the following morning.

The new indoor arena offers a lot more than pre-trail training for novices though. With the

right tuition you could easily spend a whole weekend dramatically improving your riding without ever having to set foot outdoors. And of course it doesn't matter if it's dark and raining, or even snowing, outside.

The Track

I suppose the simplest way to describe the circuit itself is as a sort of indoor motocross/enduro track, but with none of the scary jumps of a supercross circuit. There are a couple of sets of whoops though, which will always test riders of any ability and (for the launch at any rate), one double jump. The lovely loamy surface is made up from topsoil from a nearby field, but with virtually no grass or stones. It was damp enough to be virtually dust-free without being slippery, although I managed to lose the front a couple of times and fall off in a heap, as you do! The track winds back and forth inside the L-shaped barn with great berms in every corner and a small jump of some description every few yards to keep you on your toes. I was glad that the

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FARMING Today?

Bikes and riding gear are stored in a beautiful stone barn...

double jump was there to separate the useless riders from the merely mediocre like myself, but although it was easy so long as you had the confidence to just open the throttle and 'go for it', it would have been intimidating for a beginner. In fact one journo took a dive over the double in the first five minutes and took no further part in the proceedings. Andrew Savery assured me that they'd turn it into a table-top before they set any paying punters loose on the track.

We were split into four teams, with one good rider in each, for an hour's endurance competition. Actually it was supposed to be 90 minutes long, but after only ten minutes of practice, several of my illustrious colleagues were begging for a reduction to an hour. Ten minutes was about as much as most of us could manage before our muscles and sinews were screaming for a rest. I made good use of the downtime to admire and learn from the lines and riding styles of Stephen Sword and Ady Smith who were along to promote the opening of the arena.

Ady was self-deprecating about his skills but

the way he hoiked the front of the KTM 250 thumper up over the whoops was truly impressive. Ady reckoned he needed seven or eight laps just to get warmed up, while most people were well past their peak after three or four! Supercross rider Stephen Sword set the fastest time in only 35 seconds, going at twice the speed of the slower riders. The KTM 250s made near ideal machines for the course, although the lack of steering lock made itself felt when we were turning round in the confined space of the pits. They can be lowered by an inch or two for those of a shorter persuasion.

The endurance competition also provided a good demonstration of the electronic timing facilities (rather like the ones you find at an indoor karting track). Triggered by transponders on the bikes, the scoreboard showed lap count, fastest lap, last lap time and so forth. There's a good chance that the arena will also soon be equipped with video equipment, which I think would be an excellent educational tool. There's nothing like seeing yourself on tape to realise how much worse you look than you fondly imagine...

At the end of an exhausting but exhilarating morning I'd dramatically improved my racing lines, been off the bike twice and just about got the hang of the combination of the double jump and the berm which followed. And I could easily have spent the whole afternoon just trying to learn to ride the whoops.

Wheeldon Farm may not be Joe Public's idea of how farmers should be diversifying, but as Andrew Savery told me, it's actually a lot 'greener' than you might imagine:

'The new facility enables us to look after the land. We're very proud of it and we want to keep it looking good. Because we've gone away from intensive farming it's enabled us to look at conservation programmes, which is what the authorities want. So we're diversifying and looking after the countryside at the same time. We still have over 100 head of cattle and 100 head of sheep and then we rotate a variety of crops on the rest. We grow corn, wheat or barley and it's all fed back to the animals in a self-contained cycle'.

As I went back to my room to get changed the noise of the well-silenced bikes was drowned out by the shower and they were inaudible long before I got to the boundary of the farm. I can't wait to go back to try out the outdoor circuits when they're ready in the spring.

If only every county in the UK had a facility like this!

For details of all KTM Adventure Tours events, and prices, call 01752 840831 or try www.ktmadventuretours.co.uk



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The Unreliables

Mark Williams begins a new series of Doing The Rounds riding his home turf, which turns out to be rather more eventful than he bargained for...

Oh the shame of it. My credentials for scribbling the odd Doing The Rounds are not those of an esteemed international motorcycle penster (eg Blez), or a respected top class rally and enduroist (eg Si Pavey), all I can claim to be is a vaguely humble weekend trailrider albeit of many years standing - well, mostly sitting - which Wing Commander Melber seems to think renders me ideal for the gig. His blind faith might be better founded had I a van or a trailer with which I could ferry my bike hither and yon around what's left of our green and pleasant in order to meet the plucky souls who're still out riding in the depths of winter. (You can bet he'll assign some young hotshot with a leather-padded MPV to the role once the barometer

swings to the right).

But without suitable transport - and long gone are the days when I'd ride 150 miles of tarmac to plug a little Welsh mud - I'm somewhat limited as to the Rounds I can do. 'No probs,' soothed the Wing Commander, 'start off by writing about your own riding pals. It'll make a good start to the series.' Which is why, on a (literally) freezing December Sunday morning I grumbled my way out of bed, slung some toast down my throat, kicked a recalcitrant XT350 into reluctant life and hobbled all of half-a-mile down to our regular rendezvous.

Yes indeed, one of the joys of living in rural mid-Wales is that there are bazillions of off-road opportunities within an easy ride, in fact at my last address I had a RuPP literally going past my doorstep, and for the loose-knit band of chums I rather disparagingly refer to as the Radnorshire Unreliables, an overwhelming choice of trails means we tend to leave route planning 'til the very last moment.

Actually, we tend to leave route planning to Roy, which is where I must conform to the time honoured Doing The Rounds tradition and introduce a Gallery of Rogues.



Paul receives a helping hand with the big KTM...



The Bearded Comedian

Paul Mathews won't thank me for that description, but he is a very amusing chap who could probably make a living doing stand-up but instead - perhaps wisely - works for the same outfit as Roy, as a machinist. Which is why he's a good man to have around when things break down... which

of course they do with monotonous regularity. Paul actually lives furthest away from the rest of us in Tenbury Wells but the 20 mile schlep to our rendezvous at Roy's cottage in Little Brampton is accomplished easily enough on his 18-month old Katosh LC4. The bike replaces an old kickstart XL600 and has thus far been reliable enough 'except when it makes me fall off.' Yeah, right.

The Hot Prospect

Heating engineer Stuart Hicks moved down to God's Own Country from Nottinghamshire, not least for the improved trailriding opportunities - there's commitment for you. He's a big guy with another big Austrian machine, in his case an EXC520. Actually he's pretty brassed-off with the bike because even though it was barely six months old when he bought it, he's already had the camchain idler gear fall off, necessitating a partial engine rebuild, plus the woodruffe key that holds the primary drive gear onto the crankshaft dropped out causing yet more damage, on top of which aggravation he's none too happy about the bike's thirst, especially given its relatively small tank.

The Board Member

Roy Simcock works for the only hi-tech manufacturing company hereabouts, where he supervises the printing of computer circuit boards. (It's actually far more complex and important than that, but I'm damned if I'll give him the opportunity to order a bigger crash helmet). Roy's been riding off-road for a good few years, graduating rather alarmingly from a learner-legal DT125R to a sodding great CCM 604E, complete with a snazzy GPS unit. Its previous, obviously short-arsed owner removed most of the seat padding, thus explaining Roy's characteristic 'stand-alone' riding style. Having ridden it myself, I found the CCM heavy work, but as he's (much) younger and fitter than I, he claims to be pleased with its 'struggle anywhere' capability, although recently the bike has been bedevilled by electrical problems - most irritatingly a flat battery just when we're due to trot off trailriding of a morning.

More importantly, having lived his whole life in Radnorshire, Roy knows the lay of the land better than all of us and unless we can be arsed - which isn't often - we rely on him to put a good route together.



He's Tony, but he's not Swiss

He won't thank me for that, either, but there's no escaping the fact that Tony Reddock is a car dealer but - staggeringly enough - one who's extremely witty, admirably reluctant to talk about cars and doesn't wear a shiny mohair suit. He does have his faults however, which from my point of view are a tendency to clean and prep his XR250 to showroom condition before every outing, with further humiliation stemming from the fact that he's a far better and faster rider than I. Which I'm not at all comforted to know may result from his experience as a rather handy trials rider 'longer ago than I'd care to admit' he reveals.

Bob the Builder's Boss

It seems I can't help myself with these arguably unamusing aliases, but Phil Armstrong is indeed a site manager for a building company and like Stuart, this is his first proper outing with the Unreliables. Until recently, Phil rode a Suzuki DR-Z400 but some miserable sod stole it, thus obliging him to reconsider his options and thence the purchase of a DX220R, which he admits to being very happy with, 'although it's a little on the tall side.' This Sunday we had a bit of a debate about the road-legal kit I fitted to TBM's KDX long-termer, and when I explained the instructions were a bit confusing, he wryly nodded in Stuart's direction and said, 'Well I'll leave it to him, then.' And though I'm not sure why, the otherwise dead popular leccy-start Suzuki is thin on the ground round these parts, most people opting for more serious kit. Except of course...

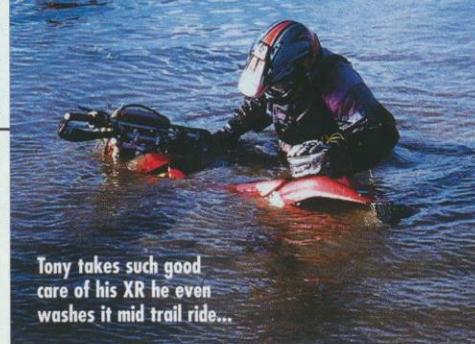


The Unprofessional Journalist

That's me, obviously, and I've already bored the pants off you about my hoary old XT350, but I should point out that it's a meticulously maintained old girl with all the mods and trick kit one could reasonably (and even unreasonably) bestow on such a bike... and this statement of course has nothing to do with the fact I'm now aiming to flog it.

Now We Are Six

Honourable mention should also be made of another regular Radnorshire Unreliable, Dave Barnet, and on this particular outing we were also to be joined by an additional chum, menswear magnate Nick Ashley



Tony takes such good care of his XR he even washes it mid trail ride...



but both were sadly unavailable at the last moment (and nothing to do with the brass monkey weather... allegedly). But six, evenly-matched riders is a goodly crew to go with and also ensures that gate opening 'n' shutting duties would get evenly shared, so we sped off from Roy's place in the brilliant sunshine looking forward to a good craic.

As a group, and with such an embarrassment of riches available to us, we tend to ride the same trails quite frequently, though in different combinations and directions to spice things up. It also helps improve our skills to revisit the scenes of past pratfalls and make good our mistakes. But this time for once I'd spent an evening poring over maps with Roy in an effort to mix more familiar trails with those less ridden, including some classified on OS maps as Bridleways but which reference to Powys CC's 'master maps' clearly showed as RuPPs. Our route began, as it invariably does, with a fast mile-long blat along the BOAT that skirts Roy's home and drops down a bit of nadgery into the Hindwell Brook. This wasn't really sufficient to dull the sub-

zero temperature and so after only a mere three miles of tarmac, fingers were getting a mite froz'd.

But descending from Old Radnor along the short BOAT to the A44 is a bit taxing and by the time we were back on tarmac we were warming up - well I was anyway because negotiating muddy rockery and slippery ruts is hard work for an old codger. Left onto the A44 and a right shortly afterwards onto a spraucey RuPP produced our first casualty of the day. Well actually it was the bolt that held the rubber chain-guide atop Stuart's KTM swingarm - and apparently not for the first time. Jury-rigging the guide with zip-ties looked to me like only a temporary cure, but surprisingly enough they stayed the course without being eaten away by the chain.

Immediately after our forced stop was a brook followed by a slippery little bank which caused another a stoppage when Tony got a bit too ambitious with his front wheel, coming down awkwardly on leaf-covered ruts which abruptly had him off. A grim portent of what was to come. Indeed one of the challenges of post-autumn riding is that you simply don't know what lies concealed beneath thick carpets of leaves, so caution should be the watchword. Should be, but usually isn't. At least our knowledge of some of these trails gave us some idea of what actually went on underneath the chocolate box terrain. Well sometimes.

But enough of the sermonising already: within a few minutes of Tony's endo, we'd exited the RuPP onto a narrow lane where we immediately hung a left onto a fairly flat but overgrown BOAT leading us into New Radnor. From there we crossed back over the A44 and up toward Yardo where a choice of tracks would eventually take us to the Black Yat (green) road. One of these, through Pwll-y-Rhedyn wood, is marked as a Bridleway on the OS map but is in fact open to vehicles, and that's the one we took. Big Mistake. The track rises up through the heather towards a farm where the landowner has, by design or accident, decided to feed silage to his cattle in the middle of a wide, tree girt trail. And where cattle feed, they also deposit the end result - in this case Big Time. So Roy - who was leading us at the time, unable to avoid a veritable pond of noxious slurry, found himself quite literally stopped by sh*t. Seeing his plight, I managed to skirt the worst of it, as did everyone else behind me, save Paul who managed to get through it by sheer momentum (I do so hate to apply the word 'skill' if I can avoid it).

Taking a Bath

'Stinker' Simcock managed to wash the worst of it off his boots in a spring just past the farm, shortly after which Tony took a bath of rather more epic proportions. After descending gently into a shallow ford beyond Upper Blaen-y-cwm, Tony decided to speed

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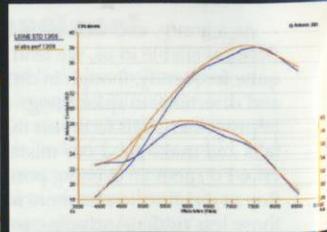
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DOING THE ROUNDS



Paul's efforts to tow-start the bike using another strap only gushed water out of the silencer, together with a lightly grilled carp! (Alright, I'm lying about the fish supper).

Tony's profuse apologies for upsetting our outing were only matched by our concerns for his body temperature, but fortunately a short detour took

up a bank and perform his aeroplane impression again, only he didn't know there was a pool on the other side... a very deep pool. So one minute he was there, the next he was playing submarines, or at least his Honda was. Since no-one else was anxious to court hypothermia, it was lucky that Stuart had a long webbing strap which Tony was able to wrap round a fork stanchion so that we could haul the bike out.

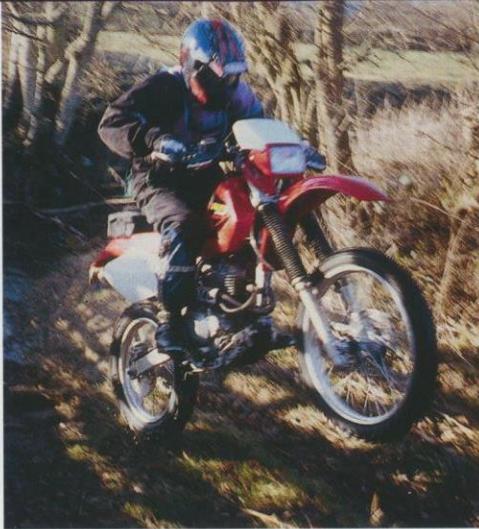
The seriously sodden Mr Reddock stoically ignored various offers of dry clothing and set to trying to resurrect his bike, which ultimately was having none of it. Litres of water gushed out of the airbox, and as XR owners will know, the spark plug - which is right behind the front down-tube - is a sod to remove even when your fingers aren't numbed by a bitter wind. But when it did emerge it bore no spark and the electrics repelled all ministrations from Roy's (otherwise very handy) miniature can of WD40. Fortunately there was water in neither the oil nor petrol (after we drained the carb, that is), but

us all to the ubiquitous A44 and a downhill coast to the Red Lion at Llanfihangel-nant-Melan, infuriatingly shut for a private function. Having rung his missus to come and collect him and the bike (a mobile phone being essential to a trailrider's toolkit nowadays), Tony insisted that we carried on without him, but having lost an hour or more, Roy and I took an executive decision for a radical route change. Instead of back-tracking and continuing along Black Yat and points south-west, we led the Unreliables - now perhaps better known as the Unpredictables - down the road and off onto the Water Break Its Neck track, which rises up through pine forest onto harsh upland moors for some seven miles.

And Then There Were Five

Though it's deeply rutted in places and there are some tricky wash-outs and shaley drops over numerous hidden hillocks, the track offers some majestic vistas and can be ridden at a satisfyingly swift clip. Except, that is, for one notorious bog

DOING THE ROUNDS



which another friendly farmer has chosen to fence right into the track so it can't be skirted. I also reckon he tips truckloads of cow-dung into it, just to further his bloody-mindedness, for it smells worse than Blez's sofa. Normally we approach 'the bog' from the north which has the slight benefit of pulling out of it up a bank, but from the south you just have to drop into it and hope for the best.

Both Roy and Paul got stalled there, but fortunately not beyond their air-boxes and with the miracle of electric boots, they re-started and ploughed on through. I managed to drop the XT trying to cross over into what experience had taught me was the lesser of the two cavernous ruts that descend into the mire - the Yam's relative lack of ground clearance vexing me not for the first time that day - but happily I didn't stall once I'd got into it. Phil, also on his kick-start KDX fared the same, but all our bikes were now a uniform brown livery from the saddles down. And a malodorous livery at that.

Still, the rest of journey was a bit of a blast, and what should we bump into towards the end of the Necker but a convoy of 4X4s trundling slowly in the opposite direction. They were driving considerably enough, but I honestly can't see the fun of an activity that hardly taxes the body or brain, although when they got to the dreaded Bog at least they'd have winches to feel good about.

Boys from the Black Country

Just after we'd finished the trail we took a right at Upper Pen-rhiw along a delightfully varied if rather heavily gated RuPP that leads eventually into Bledffa with its ever-welcoming pub, and within a few hun-



dred yards we met up with a quartet of riders who just lunched there. Up for the day from Stourbridge, they'd got a little lost and after much conferring

over maps, we directed them from whence we'd come with cheerful warnings about bogs and Land-Rovers.

From there we took a BOAT south-west of Bledffa up into the Radnor Forest and over into Cascob, in itself not too demanding although a steep, muddy ascent we normally deal with in the opposite direction would've been tougher had the weather been wetter of late. After a choccy bar and jimmy riddle break in the Forest - we're only human, for heaven's sake - we continued beyond Cascob and turned right through the ramshackle, time-warp Dyffryn farmyard after which was another steep, muddy ascent that was too demanding, at least for some: once again heavy leaf cover hid treachery beneath and Stuart, in particular, pretty much lost it when the KTM's brute force gave way to wheelspin. However with the smugness of foresight I just gave it plenty of body-English and trickled up, expert trials rider-stylee around the strugglers and the fallen. But then so did Phil who'd never been up it before, and he made it look effortless. Hmmm.

The rest of this particular BOAT is a romp between overgrown hedgerows that's actually easier to negotiate once winter's denuded the undergrowth, although the single rut you're obliged to sit in can be more troublesome after weeks of rain. After exiting just before Beggar's Bush crossroads we had but one more, mile-long RuPP before we descended in Evenjobb and home as the sun began to set. It'd been an eventful day but by common consent an enjoyable one for all... except poor Tony of course.

Later by 'phone he told me that, although closed, the landlord of the Red Lion had eventually taken pity on him and provided a warming cup of tea whilst he waited for his Samaritan of a wife, and after a long hot bath was even then dismantling his XR in an effort to restore it to rude good health.

As for me, well rude good health ain't on the agenda and whether it turns out to be the first or the last Round that I end up Doing, if nothing else it proved that I don't need to travel too far afield to enjoy a trailriding surprise or two...

If you're part of a group of trailriders who fancy being featured in our Doing The Rounds series, give us a call at the TBM office on 020 8840 4760 and we'll try and come out for a ride with you...

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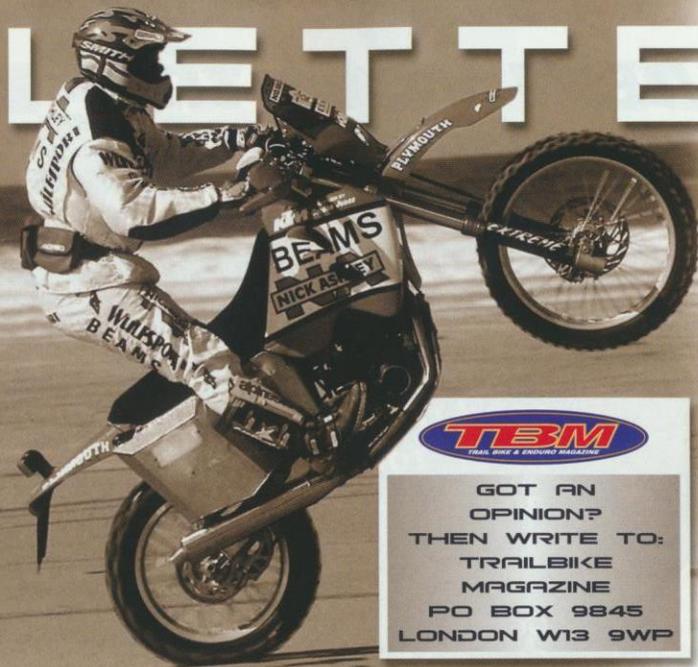
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LETTERS



TBM
TRAIL BIKE & ENDURO MAGAZINE

**GOT AN
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4-speed automatic to a Tomas 50! Some of these classically stylish machines were given nicknames such as Ruby, Rusty Rebel, Flash, Lightening (my bike) and Nitro.

Mechanical modifications included fold-up footrests, straight-through exhausts (or no exhausts), and the tyres were standard road equipment.

The afternoon's racing included three heats of three races, a one lap special test, a wheelie competition and a 15 lap hare and hounds. The track consisted of berms, two jumps and various hairpin bends, and took approximately 35 seconds to complete. All races had a Le Mans style start, and all I can say about the competition is I've never laughed so much in my life!

Luckily, injuries were kept to a minimum - surprising considering the get-offs we had. The bikes on the other hand suffered slightly more. All footrests were bent over the jumps, Rusty Rebel had frame damage and Nitro just died!

This has now become an annual event and if anyone fancies a go give us a shout. Just so everyone can take the Mick, here's the race list:

- 1 Charlie Richards - Honda 90cc
- 2 Paul Draper - Yamaha 90cc
- 3 Karl Ingarfield - Honda 70cc
- 4 Stuart White - Yamaha 90cc
- 5 Sam Richards - Honda 90cc
- 6 Ivor Ingarfield - Tomas 50cc
- 7 Steve Potter - Yamaha 50cc
- 8 Shaun Potter - Honda 90cc
- 9 Pete Crouch - Honda 50cc
- Non-starter due to injury - Chris Stuckey

Karl Ingarfield
Chard, Somerset

PS By the way we all think TBM is an excellent mag.



One Step Beyond

Dear TBM

Just thought I'd drop you a line to tell you what we got up to one September afternoon - 'The Step-Thru Challenge 2003'. After a hard season on the hare

and hounds/enduro circuits, we decided we needed to make things just a little bit harder. So with a maximum £100 budget, nine of us set out to find two-wheeled vehicles with a step through design. With all of us successful, they ranged from a Yamaha 90cc shaft-drive

Erm, there's not a lot we can say about that Karl, except save us a place for this year and we'll send Crasher along to show all of you guys how to properly fall off and totally demolish a 'motorcycle'...

Chiselled Features

Dear Sirs

I write with reference to the Changing Mousse article in TBM 99, which I thoroughly enjoyed. Having changed numerous mousses myself before participating in enduros, I would like to offer the following suggestion regarding rim locks - there is an alternative. It is possible to chisel the rim of the wheel at regular intervals (say about every four inches) to form notches, which hold the tyre in place. This method is equally as effective as using rim locks and avoids the inconvenience of levering the tyre over the rim locks - thus speeding up the whole process.

In addition, when the tyre is put on the wheel, it doesn't always fit tight around the rim. This problem can be solved by putting a tubeless valve in the wheel rim and inflating the tyre with an air line.

In a situation where time is of the essence, this alternative method to using rim locks could prove extremely valuable. I hope this information will be of some use to your readers. It comes on good authority from Paul Edmonson, whose bike I purchased in 1992 and I used this method successfully myself during two years of British Championship Enduros.

Nicholas Phillips
Fossebridge, Gloucester

Thanks for the tip, Nicholas. Extra hints are always worth knowing when wrestling with

mousses. I believe we actually mentioned this idea in one of our old Tips features years ago, though I'm not sure that everyone would be comfortable chiselling into their rims, and personally I've cut my fingers on sharp chiselled rims before, so I'm not that keen on this method. But if it works for you then fair enough... The inflation tip however is commonly used (it helps seat the tyre - which is always a problem with mousses) and though I don't usually bother with it myself I know people who swear by it. Thanks for the info mate...

Take the High Road

Dear TBM

Having recently made the decision to sell my road bike and buy a trail or enduro machine to do some green laning, I have found great difficulty in finding places to ride. I stay in the central belt of Scotland and have been checking Ordnance Survey maps, then later found that BOATS and RuPPs were not marked on Scottish maps. I have looked on the internet for some related sites but have been disappointed by the lack of information.

I would be grateful if you could print this letter to see if there are any like-minded people in my area. I bought the October issue of your mag for the first time, an interesting and informative read. Thanking you in advance for your co-operation in this matter.

Stuart Small
Brightons, Falkirk

Over to you, readers. As we've stated before on these pages, we're not familiar with the law in Scotland regarding trail riding. All we can suggest is that you continue your research, try

and hook up with some other trail riders, and in the meantime hope that an informed reader can shed some light on the situation. Drop us a line to the usual address please...

Ice 'Berg'

Mr Melber

I want to introduce myself. I am Gummi Baldurson, writing to you from Iceland. I'm one of four brothers who have been deeply involved in the rise of enduros and trail-riding in Iceland and our father, who has been around helping at every enduro, gave his name to the clubman-championship - it's named the Baldurs-championship. When you came to race in the beach race on Kalli's KTM we were there; four brothers racing against you and our father helping us.

The reason I write to you is that I have, over the years, been reading everything you wrote about the CRM, and I have been following the racing life of your CRM/CR, which I would like to have, if you mean what you said in issue 93.

I would not be surprised if you kept on using it, as fine as it seems to be, but if you are ready to let it move to Iceland into the hands of a true enthusiast, for the money you want, let me know.

At the moment I have no bike, the last one being a DR-Z400. The other bikes in the family are: KTM520, KTM450, two Gas Gas EC450s, CR500, GummaBerg (homemade enduro) and my father had DR-Z400.

My wife, who gave me the subscription to TBM, has a Montesa 311. Her name is Maria Pisani.

Thank you Mr Melber.

Gummi Baldurson
Iceland

LETTERS



Thanks for the letter, Gummi. That's quite a family of bikes, and we'd love to see some pics of the 'GummaBerg'! Unfortunately, the sale of the CRM/CR generated a huge amount of interest, and there was a waiting list of prospective purchasers stretching well into double figures. Despite Si's...ahem, shambolic performance in the beach race he is keen to return to Iceland. Whether they'll let him into the country again of course is an entirely different matter...

Pretty in Pink?

Dear TBM

Hi, I'm John, I live in Portugal and I ride a CR80R (1994). I'm writing this letter to ask you if you know where to get some plastics for it. In summer it was so sunny that they faded away and now they're pink! In Portugal it's impossible to get any plastics. I've been on some American websites and they only have the front and rear fender, which are hard to get from there to Portugal. So could you help please?

John
Portugal

Firstly, John, we'd try contacting the Portuguese Honda importer for help. If you have no luck there and can't get any through MX shops in Portugal then you're going to have to mail order some from another country. We've had a look through the catalogues of various plastics manufacturers

(UFO, Acerbis, Polisport etc) and the earliest CR80 they list is 1996. But, hey, we're no experts on schoolboy motocrossers, so perhaps these fit. Otherwise, I'm afraid that you may need to continue your search on the net.

Silver Serow

Dear TBM

I am a retired gentleman and have been motorcycling for 56 years, and up until my retirement I rode motorcycles to and from my place of employment, both in this country and in Singapore for the past 46 years. I was the trials secretary for the East Cornwall Motorcycle Club and ran the Arena Trials at the Liskeard Agricultural shows.

I presently own six vintage bikes including Sprites, Cottons, Dots, Greeves and BSA machines.

I have just sold my Fantic 200 Trials twin-shock motorcycle and have purchased a 2002 Yamaha Serow 225. I find it a very nice little machine, but the main reason I purchased it was because of its weight, being older and not as strong as I was and because of the seat height of 810mm as I'm only 5ft 7 in tall.

I would be extremely grateful if you could provide me with any information on this machine, past road tests etc or photocopies of the same. I remember reading about the Serow in TBM many years ago. Could you also please advise me where to obtain spares etc? Your help would be appreciated.

Colyn Thomas
Millbrook, Cornwall

Unfortunately we've sold out of back issues containing Serow tests, though the Buying Guide we published in issue 84 is pretty comprehensive and still available. This should be of help to you as it details some of the areas where the little Yams suffer. We don't produce photocopies for a variety of reasons too boring to go into here, but if you phone our subscriptions line (020 7903 3993) they'll relieve your credit card of £4.50 and post you the issue. As for spares, two companies spring to mind, both in the West Country. Firstly, there's Riders in Yeovil. They sell Serows and should be able to provide you with parts. Their number's 01935 421681/420508. Alternatively, give Fowlers of Bristol a ring (0117 977 0466).

They supplied us with the spares prices in the Buying Guide, and hold a stock of Serow bits. Good luck Colyn...

Old Skool Rules

Dear TBM

I have been an avid reader of TBM for years and in view of some of the recent changes within the mag, I finally feel compelled to put pen to paper. You originally started testing and writing about trail and enduro bikes, hence your name TBM. You gave (and still do) honest opinions that pull no punches and gave praise where praise was needed. However, I now find the content of TBM has somewhat strayed from its original format, ie trail and enduro bikes. We all love to read about how bikes perform and ride, we can't all ride all of the bikes you test in order to make our next purchase a good one, so it goes without saying that TBM readers (like me) rely on you guys to keep us informed. But I have noticed many recent changes and I'm not sure if I like them...

For instance, TBM now has page after page of top-flight enduro race reports (WEC), motocross tests (12 pages in issue 99) and more and more irrelevant stuff like trials and now drag racing. What's happening to my favourite magazine? I know that you guys have your own hobbies but just keep trials/drag racing confined to your own personal lives. I don't want to read about it in TBM. Old so-called classic stuff is okay now and again but every issue? Come on guys. Supermoto was okay I suppose, but since you started up a specific magazine we don't even see any of that anymore.

Talking of other publications, if you continue in this newfound direction you may as well simply rename issue 101 'Classic

TMX and MCN Monthly Magazine'? At least we would know drag racing, trails and motocross would be featured on a regular basis...

Another thing. A few years ago I had a 1998 model TTR600 import and I had to kickstart it every morning. This wasn't so much of a problem on the road but if I stalled it or dropped it on the trail it was a bitch to fire up again. I picked up TBM issue 96 with the news that Yamaha are to officially import this bike and the test you ran mentioned many things, including motorway suitability, mpg and the bike's ability to race around stubble fields. You also mentioned things like the easy change, slide-in air filter and handy grab handles etc - all in all a reasonable and informative evaluation of the bike. But judging from the photos and the lack of any relevant information in the text, what would I do if it stalled? Bump it? Or do Yamaha UK now supply 'magic wands' to start the motor? Or does the new TTR differ by having an electric boot? One final moan. What ever happened to the CRM250CR you had in the TBM lock-up? You were (I quote) 'going to keep the readers informed'. I'm still waiting...

I have no doubt in my mind that I will continue to buy your mag for the very reasons stated at the beginning of this letter. Anyway, getting back to the plot. Please revert to the old style TBM. Funny, informative and an all-round good read. Let's see more of the old style stuff (but less of the old classic bikes) from the World pie-eating champ aka 'Bodger Blez' and 'Crasher Cornish' 'coz let's face it, where would TBM be without a man who crashes with such style and a man that a certain French tyre company styles their logo on. I will be very surprised if this letter makes it into print without



LETTERS



being cut. If it does, then you obviously aren't like all the other mags after all...

Neil Tanner
Hayes, Middlesex

Well, Neil, I'm surprised it's taken you so long to realise that TBM isn't like the other bike mags at all (your letter has been printed in its entirety). But listen mate, we deal with this subject time and again, and the answer is always the same - we can't please everyone all the time. In fact we stated last month how it's our intention to include a bit more trail riding in the mag this year (though in fairness your letter did arrive before that issue was published). But if you'd have read our test of the CR-F in detail in issue 99 (rather than simply dismissing it as 12 pages of motocross), you'd have discovered precisely why we felt justified in reporting about that particular bike, amid the bigger picture that Honda are coming back into enduro. But what really confuses me about your letter however, is your wish to see more of 'the old style stuff... funny, informative and an all-round good read.' That was precisely the reasoning behind our small but quirky feature about drag racing your dirt bike. Now obviously it's preposterous to consider this to be a serious attempt to go drag racing - which is precisely why we thought it a light-hearted and irreverent idea for a mere double page spread. Sorry you missed the joke or didn't find it entertaining enough but that's precisely my point - not every-

one's the same. Thank God. However, just to cheer you up a bit, here are a few answers to your questions. Yes the TT-R has got an electric boot (sorry we didn't mention it, we just figured that you'd take one look at the engine pic on the bottom of the details page and realise that there wasn't a kick-start in sight and work it out all by yourself - obviously not). Yes the TBM CRM250CR has now been sold, I was going to save that info for an editorial later on, but now you know. And finally, you will find despite the rigours of editing Supermoto Magazine, Crasher Cornish will indeed be making a few more welcome appearances in TBM this year. Blez? Well, he never went away - unfortunately!

MAG Wheels

Dear TBM

Firstly, congratulations on 100 issues. I can remember buying my first issue in which you were trying to sell a black and red XT350 with direct-wired ignition. Let me know if it's still for sale and I'll make you an offer!

I've just read Mark William's column in issue 100 and agree with his suggestion about how to increase TRF membership by the motorcycle industry providing an incentive to purchasers of off-road machines to join the Fellowship. In fact, I suggested this in my letter back in TBM 90.

Going further down this route, the main players in off-road machinery sales could perhaps also make donations to the TRF to provide additional funds to protect our hobby. Obviously they would want the money to be spent wisely but as we are all fighting for the same cause this shouldn't be too onerous.

I also agree that the TRF should do something to arm the membership with 'ammo' as to how to address RoW issues. I have been writing to my MP on a regular basis about RoW issues, although I was initially reluctant to do so as I was not sure what should go in the letters. I wrote to the TRF publication ('Trail') suggesting direction is given to members about what to put in letters to councillors, MPs, etc. It was also raised in a recent TRF executive meeting so others also feel this way.

I think that the TRF need to start thinking more like MAG. They are a much more politically aware organisation that actively encourages their membership to lobby Councillors and MPs to show them that they have a voice and will fight for what they believe in.

I am a member of the TRF (and MAG) and feel a bit guilty writing this sort of negative stuff, but the way things are going maybe a change of tack is what's needed.

Lastly, any chance of some stickers to cover the scratches on my side panels?

Cheers, and here's to another 100 issues.

Neville Daytona
Swindon, Wiltshire

Thanks Neville, stickers on their way to you...

Big Boy

Hi there TBM

My mate 'Big Pete' wants a new trail bike as he finds his Cagiva W16 too heavy and short of ground clearance. He rides mainly in Wales and needs a bike that's man enough to haul his 26 stone up a mountain and

through a bog!

His problems are that he fears a KTM525 sub frame won't be man enough and the saddle will cut him in half anyway! The DR-ZS is not powerful enough at 400cc and the XR650 doesn't have an electric start!

We have looked at the KLX650 trail bike but it's low on power. Any ideas of a lightweight 600cc bike with an electric start that's going to be strong enough to go everywhere two-up? Great magazine - ta.

Ian Weston
Somewhere

When you say 'two-up', do you mean Big Pete plus another rider, or is that just a euphemism for Big Pete on his own? How about the CCM 644 Ian? It should be man enough for the task with enough power for what you need and it has an electric-boot. Good luck mate...

Be Inspired

Morning TBM, Hilly here...

Do you realise what you and that A5 mag of yours have done? After buying a DR250, and riding all the local trails for just under a year, I entered my first ever enduro last weekend (the TBEC event at Hardwick). So much to learn, so many nerves, scrutineering... passed, phew! Sat on a grid of 140ish bikes making so much noise I couldn't tell if my DR250 was even running... Torrential rain, no prior sight of the course and just trail rides as preparation... Boy was I out of my depth... Eight km course, and it took nearly two hours to do three laps... fell off six times (no damage by the way... tough little critters those DRs). Stopped for a breather, started again and promptly picked up 100m of rope which I had to unwrap from the back wheel. Refuelled and went out and managed a lap in 20 minutes... So happy I called it a day. It was so muddy... and after all that, all Adam (three laps on an XT250 before his back gave out) and I could talk about on the way home was how to get our hands on some KTM 200s... Bloody brilliant day! Until the next morning, anyway... The aches, the poor bike, (I'm still cleaning mud out of nooks and crannies a week later), but looking forward to the next one... Thanks for the inspiration guys.

Hilly
Herts

Welcome to the fold mate. I'm afraid it's all downhill from here...

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DIRTY

'IN MY DIM AND DISTANT YOUTH I USED TO DO A LOT OF ROAD BIKE MILES AND ALWAYS ASSUMED THAT PEOPLE WHO CRASHED DID SO PURELY BY DINT OF THEIR OWN STUPIDITY...'

A

t the end of last month's column I let slip my wish for the next 100 editions of TBM, and I quote: 'to spend more time on a bike in glorious countryside and much less in anonymous hotel rooms on the other side of the world'. What I didn't realise at the time was that

CHRIS EVANS DISCOVERS
A NEWFOUND FREEDOM...

the French boss who employs me as press-officer in the Yamaha MotoGP team must presumably be on TBM's mailing list. A conclusion I am forced to draw, given that barely 24 hours after TBM started dropping onto doormats the world over, he called me up and told me that from now on I would have plenty more time to spend with my motorcycle - I was being 'let go...'

There was however an element of softening the blow. Instead of the 16 MotoGPs I attended last year, I would be working for the team at the FIM Rallye-Raid World Championships, with the added bonus of lots more time to concentrate on my trail bike trips.

For about three days after I'd shaken on the deal I walked around in something of a daze as I contemplated just how much all this new found 'freedom' was going to cost me. In an effort to convince myself that I'd made the right decision concerning my future, I gave His Melbership a quick call. It went something like this...

Me: 'Hey Your Melbership, guess what? I've just jacked in the MotoGP contract and am instead going to do the Rallye-Raid World hampionship and use the extra free time to do two new routes for my trail riding tours. Isn't that great?'

His Melbership: 'Say what? You mean that the moment Valentino Rossi, possibly the world's greatest motorcycle racer ever, joins your team you decide to leave?'

Me: 'Yes well you could look at it like that, but I'm sure it would have been a big PR nightmare and it would have made it very difficult to carry on with the trail holidays.'

His Melbership: 'But what about the money, the prestige, the broly bunnies?'

Me (cutting in): 'I'm so glad you have been able to reassure me. I'll call you in a few days - if I don't throw myself off a tall building in the interim.'

As you have probably guessed by now I didn't in fact throw myself off any tall buildings. Instead I started to feel absolutely thrilled about my (or rather my boss's) decision. Why? Well I suppose 'cos I was utterly sick of all the travel involved in working on MotoGP and the degree to which it had stuffed up my personal life. To be perfectly honest with you, it is also because my heart just isn't really in road racing. No, the truth is that even though there's no money in it, not much prestige and absolutely no broly bunnies (tragically), my soul belongs to off-road riding.

All of which is kind of ironic given the other major event of the last month - my second ever completely unavoidable off-road crash.

In my dim and distant youth I used to do a lot of road bike miles and always assumed that people who crashed did so purely by dint of their own stupidity. But during the past six months I had three accidents on the road that were absolutely unavoidable. The first was caused by a woman going through a red light - and into me. The second was courtesy of a removal van turning across my path without indicating. The nail in the coffin was being hit from behind while sitting stationary on my bike waiting for a truck to cross the road. As I was lying in casualty after the third 'off' I came to the conclusion that if I continued in a similar vein I would shortly be hovering around on wings (that's always assuming you go up and not down - ed) and vowed to stick to off-road bikes in future.

Now of course I have had lots of big off-road crashes in the past, but happily they have almost all been reassuringly my fault. A couple of years ago, while riding along on my own minding my own business, a sapling got wedged in my front brake which pitched me straight over the handlebars. Freak accident number two happened a few weeks ago when a branch sticking out into the track at an impossible angle to see literally lanced me off the bike in a most spectacular and painful manner. So the question I am now asking myself, just as my future appears to be inextricably linked to off-road riding, is how will I react when freak accident number three inevitably comes along?

Will I give up off-road riding as promptly as I gave up road riding? Or will I just accept that it is all in the lap of the gods? On reflection, and after lengthy consultations with my bank manager, the 'gods' option seems the more likely. One thing is for sure, as we approach the Yuletide season 'the gods' seem to be taking a particular interest in me at the moment. Let's hope *they* haven't got any plans for me to join their team this season...

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COMPLETELY RUTTED



Writing this having just returned from Dirt Rider Expo, I find myself more than a little excited. And no, this is not because strutting, spandex-clad lovelies bearing copies of Gas-Gas brochures excited my withered libido, nor am I still basking in the thrill of having shelled out squillions of quid on off-road paraphernalia I'll proba-

MARK WILLIAMS OPINES: 'IT'S A DIRTY BUSINESS...'

bly never use or wear.

No, what impressed me most about Dirt Rider Expo this time around is how fantastically busy it was on the first day, half of which is supposed to be what we old professional scribblers used to know, rather quaintly, as 'Press Day'. In fact long queues of people who clearly weren't anything to do with the press - you could tell this because they didn't look stressed... or drunk - were paying good money (something else that set them apart from the hacks) to get into the event. And all on a Thursday morning when decent, god-fearing folk should've been at work.

This was all the more amazing because admission, unless you were a card-carrying scribbler, was a hefty £12 - which is International Bike Show territory - plus an extra £2 for the demo arena (which was free-to-all last year). Sure, you could book online for the whiz-bang discount price of £11 plus, of course, a mandatory booking fee of a quid. Not per-

booking (as at the NEC), but per ticket!! So although the NEC event occupied, I guess, five times the acreage, it shows that dirty boys and girls like us are willing to pay the same sort of money for a much smaller, more esoteric show.

And last year the place was not nearly so crowded by lunchtime on the opening day as it was this, and although the overall exhibition area was exactly the same, some important names from the world of off-roading absent from last year's jolly jamboree were present this time. I'm talking CCM, Husqvarna, oh yes, and MCN.

'MCN?,' I hear your brain frantically whirring, 'what has MCN got to do with the wonderful world of muddy motorcycling?'

Indeed you could be forgiven, alright you are forgiven, for assuming that this is a rhetorical question to which the answer is basically, 'Naff all'. But you would be wrong, for in recent months this mighty organ, the flagship of the indomitable EMAP publishing empire, has been covering the off-road scene with what we might call gusto. And before I pontificate - as you know I will - on exactly why this should be, it must be pretty obvious to anyone who knows what they've been up to that the biggest selling motorcycle publication in Britain - which don't forget appears every week - is bound to augment trends, if not actually set them rolling.

Here at TBM - well not actually at TBM because as you know, Gruppenfuhrer Melber is the beating heart and sole conscience of the magazine - we view this with mixed feel-

ings. On the one hand we should be and generally are delighted that more folks are getting dirty on two wheels (a fact evidenced by our letters columns with their steady litany of 'I'm-new-to-trail-riding-and-wondering-what-I-should-buy-to-replace-my-roadbike-so-I-can-be-the-next-David-Knight-within-two-weeks' type queries). But on the other hand we, or at least I (because His Melbership is far more savvy and diplomatic than I) fear there may be untoward consequences of MCN's editorial spotlight.

Not that it's hard to see what's driving EMAP's corporate noodling. Sales of the sorta' bikes that bring in MCN's bread'n'butte reader-ship and, perhaps more tellingly, its advertising revenues, have been flat for well over a year and, in some cases hurtling down the toilet. For example, year-on-year sales of 'Supersport' machines have dropped by nine percent, 'Sport-Touring' bikes by 11 percent and 'Touring' by 15 percent. And then there's the scooter phenomenon, or rather the lack of it. Eighteen months ago scooters were still being seen as the salvation of the bike trade. But for all sorts of reasons I won't bore you with here (not least because they're wild guesses on my part), sales of scooters in September 2003 compared to the same month in 2002 (the latest data available at press time), were down from 3866 to 2464, or an eye-watering 36 percent!

And as specialist scooter shops have gone out of business in droves and importers drastically cut back their ranges and ad budgets this past year, sales of dirt bikes have risen by a whopping 39 percent and MCN have (as far as I can see) virtually stopped writing about scoots whilst, conversely, their off-roading coverage has mushroomed.

This in itself isn't too shocking of course - hey, we live in a commercial world - but have the head honchos at MCN paused to consider what the effect of sending several thousand new trailriders off into the mud might be? Pressure on shrinking land resources will become greater for a start: indeed in the few places where legal off-road routes are relatively plentiful - like here

in mid-Wales for example - vastly increasing numbers of riders are transporting their bikes from parts of the country where green-laning is being systematically outlawed. This is a Catch 22 situation, because local landowners, NIMBYs and pea-brained politicians then feel justified in demanding downgrades and closures because their local patch has become clogged up with 'nasty, noisy, negligent' bikers.

I know that early on in its 'get dirty' exercise, MCN did alert their readers to the whys and wherefores of legal and responsible off-roading, but unless these imperatives are regularly rammed home, who can blame neophyte trailriders for breaking laws and ignoring rural sensitivities? And if you're in any doubt about this, despite constantly banging on about it in a dirt-

dedicated mag like TBM, some of our readers still go out and cause trouble for the responsible majority.

How fine it would be, therefore, if MCN invested a little of the energy behind the 'Back Off Biking' campaign they're currently running in response to hardening political attitudes towards road-riders, into promoting conscientious trailriding. Of course my exhortations might seem like sour grapes, for in their series of used off-road bike guides (Be an expert on...), by extraordinary coincidence they've espoused exactly the same empirical observations and conclusions as previously found in TBM's Used & Abused features, sometimes down to the exact same phrases and sentences!

But if in the EMAP universe an editorial fad is credible only as long as it makes money, MCN's hacks and editors might not give a stuff if they inadvertently worsen the already tarnished public image of trailriders, because they can always move onto another commercially attractive trend when trailriding become a legal impossibility. But in the meantime if they're too weary from wheelie-pulling on the Queen's Highway to engage in any joined-up thinking over the future of off-roading, then they're very welcome to rip-off some of the scaremongering stuff in my columns...

HAVE THE HEAD HONCHOS AT MCN PAUSED TO CONSIDER WHAT THE EFFECT OF SENDING SEVERAL THOUSAND NEW TRAILRIDERS OFF INTO THE MUD MIGHT BE..?

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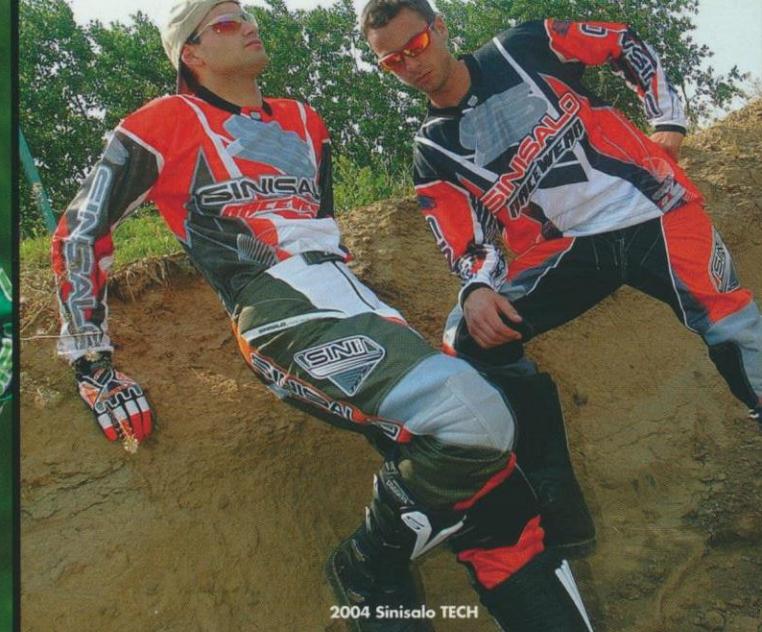
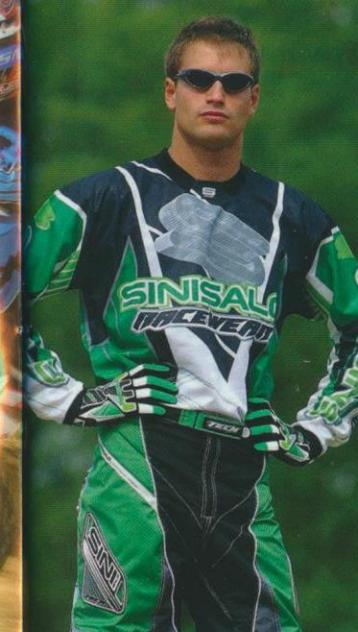
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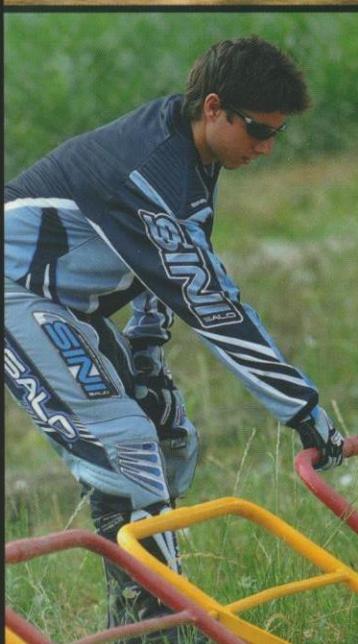
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REACH WALES

STORY: SI MELBER; PICS: JAMES BARNI



This year's Dakar Rallye sees a whole host of British teams slogging it out amidst the dunes of north Africa. TBM hooked up with two teams to get a feel of what it's like to ride a rally bike in sand...

No matter how much I screwed up my eyes and tried to imagine it, I still couldn't conjure up the image that I was at the beach near the Senegalese capital of Dakar. In fact I was having trouble pretending that I was anywhere other than in a desolate, windswept seaside town on the west coast of the UK. Welcome to Wales in wintertime.

The idea had been sound, even if mother nature had intervened and sent us home early for our tea. Here we were with two (well actually three) rally bikes, plus three rally riders from two British teams who are contesting this year's Paris-Dakar Rallye. What was left of an already shortened day after taking

photos was assigned to razzing the bikes up and down the beach and then manhandling them through the dunes for a couple of hours. So that's exactly what I did.

I chose the BMW first. Or to give it its full name the Team Dome BMW F650GS. Push-in the large red power button on the side of the nav gear, wait for the warning lights (and fuel injection) to power up, release the on/off switch and thumb the green starter. The engine whirrs for a second or two then barks into life with a healthy boom (one thing you soon learn about rally bikes is that baffles are deemed unnecessary luggage). Think it down into the first of five ratios, drop the clutch and... wonder why I'm not going anywhere? Of course, it's sand and the wheel is spin-





toggle switch which powers up the nav gear, thumb the red starter button and the engine thunders into life with a deep and meaningful bark which comes chattering from the twin upswept cans - also lacking any baffles. Like the BMW the clutch feels heavy, but the gearchange is sweet. The bike snicks into gear, I release the clutch and this time I can put my feet down either side to lift my weight off the bike to help get it moving. There's no need. The KTM digs in hard and begins to power forwards. The gears slot home easier than the BMW and the motor seems slightly more fruity and freer breathing. Again I rev each gear till the limiter chimes in and again I get it maxed out along the beach (this is no great shakes by the way - any fool can ride fast in a straight line). Is it any faster? Marginally

ning but the bike is only slowly clawing its way forwards. I bounce up and down on the pegs a couple of times and the bike responds - lurching forwards and upwards like a speedboat rising up onto the 'plane' as the back wheel climbs out of the trench it's been digging and begins to power us forwards.

First gear hits the rev-limiter, second does the same, third and fourth follow suit. I've just clonked her up into fifth gear when the bike goes into an almighty shimmy. Oh my God this is real lock to lock stuff. It's not headshake but a full-on side to side weave with the rear wheel heading first one way then back the other. Resisting all temptations to shut off, I wind the throttle fully open in top but it doesn't go away. By now it's gone on for about six or seven seconds, the amplitude getting bigger and bigger all the time. And then just as I believe that it might actually throw me off, and I'm about to throttle back, it stops as suddenly as it arrived and all I can hear is the drone of the exhaust as the bike thunders up the beach at full chat. On this gearing and pulling hard through soft sand I estimate the speed to be no more than about 100-105kmh (60+mph). Scary? You better believe it.

The KTM is next - that's the Team Desert Rose KTM 660Lc4 Rallye. It's lower, firmer in the saddle and actually feels a tiny bit smaller (relatively speaking of course). This time I flick a waterproof

perhaps, the KTM's greater power and revvier top-end give it five or ten more kmh perhaps, in these conditions. I don't get long to find out though, because just like the Beemer the KTM suddenly goes into a vicious weave. Bloody hell fire. It's not quite as scary as on the BMW, nor quite as pronounced, but it's every bit as unexpected, and it too ends seemingly without reason.

I repeat this procedure seven or eight times on each bike, until I begin to feel comfortable with the weave (or at least as comfortable as I'm likely to feel), though sometimes it doesn't happen - it seems to depend on the softness of the sand. At speed, both bikes sound like a WWII bomber flying low on the approach to target. Booming noise, close to the ground with a bassy droning staccato roar. Good job there's no-one else for miles around. The echoing bellow of the exhaust drifts off on the howl of the wind which is whipping up the surf into a frothy white cappuccino. My nerves are tingling, and right now I could really do with a coffee.

Team Talk

Earlier on it was big mugs of coffee all round as we photographed the two bikes in the relative comfort of a dry workshop on a dreary industrial estate near the M4 motorway. Both these teams are privateers of course - riding for a finish, neither has any realistic chance of winning. And



There's plenty going on in the cockpit of the KTM...



Svelte, sophisticated and stunning. And that's just the bike...

both have been lucky enough to get their (two) bikes (for two riders) supplied from their respective manufacturers. Both teams also have previous Dakar experience, but both have also experienced failure. This year there's no talk of failure, just excited anticipation at the thought of this year's route, and a small amount of apprehension at the lack of time available to finish their preparation. At the time of writing (two weeks before Christmas), only one of Team Desert Rose's KTMs had made an appearance.

Despite their similarities, the biggest difference between the teams is their bikes. One (the KTM) is an off-the-shelf rally racer honed over the years to something approaching the ultimate privateer weapon. The other is a standard production bike, heavily modified and fitted out with different bodywork and an impressive array of bolt-on



Powerful Lc4 motor is protected by a kevlar and plastic bashplate...

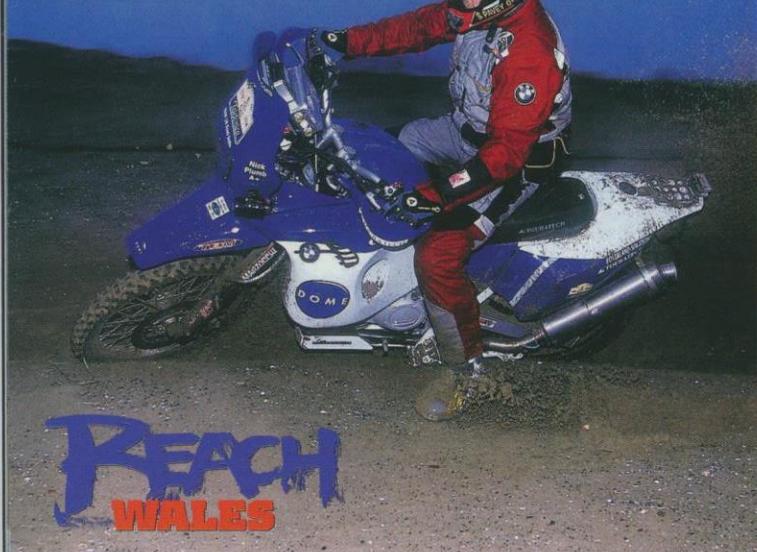
rally kit. To look at the bikes the KTM carries its weight down low, but is wider at the bottom. By contrast the Beemer is narrow at the bottom and its mass appears more centralised, but up top it's a lot broader in the beam than the slinky KTM.

Both bikes are incredibly heavy, the Beemer tips the scales at an approximate 187kg dry and about 238kg fully fuelled with 51L of unleaded (we weighed them both but we had to guessimate the amount of fuel they currently had in their tanks). And that's before you take into account all the extra kit which is carried on the bikes: three litres of water, a comprehensive toolkit, spare parts, tubes and a distress beacon. Before we arrived the BMW team weighed their bike fully loaded at 253kg!

The KTM is certainly lighter - it weighs in at an approximate 163kg dry, or 211kg once its 48L tanks have been brimmed (but before any spares or tools have been added). Despite weight savings, once you get into the realms of 200+ kilos, they all feel bloody heavy, let me assure you.

Strip away the bodywork however - a process which takes no more than three or four minutes max (thanks to it mostly being held on with Dzus fasteners), and the similarities and differences are clear to see. The KTM features that tried and tested Lc4 lump - this time in 660cc rally trim with a Hi-Flow head and twin open pipes. The frame is a specially built tubular steel semi-perimeter jobbie with an ally swing-arm and alloy sub-frame.

Anyone interested in taking part in an African rally can sign up for one of BMW's two-day Rallye Raid Schools on 6-7 March this year. The schools aim to teach riders all about bike preparation, using GPS and road book navigation, riding techniques for rally bikes, logistics, fund raising and paperwork. For more details call Neil Munro on 0800 0131 282.



The exhaust pipes are underslung, a gigantic airbox sits atop the frame and motor, with a huge blue foam filter about the size of a squashed rugby ball on top. Behind each of the front pannier tanks (ie either side of the engine) is a mass of plumbing for extra oil filters, fuel pump, breathers and wiring. Actually it's a bit of a mess in there. It gets better towards the rear of the machine where the rear side tanks meet and encase the battery under the seat. At the opposite end of the bike the nav-gear, all the switches and the rest of the cockpit feels a bit haphazard and not quite as well laid out as on the Beemer, but it does the job.

By contrast the BMW is a model of clarity and tidiness. Remove the front pannier tanks and you'll find an uncluttered 651cc engine housed in a box-section steel perimeter frame with steel rear subframe and an enormously heavy steel swing-arm (apparently BMW did experiment with some alloy swingarms last year but none of them lasted the course). The main tank is accessed via a fuel cap under the seat, behind which sits the fuel pump. In front of this tank is the pump for the fuel-injection and the semi-down-draught fuel-injection throttle body itself. Like the KTM the Beemer wears its airbox atop the motor, though unlike the Lc4 the BMW's intake is off to the right hand side (to make space for the battery), and air is ingested through what appears to be a laugh-

ably small paper-element K&N filter (about the size of a Rubik's Cube).

The exhaust pipe exits underneath the left side of the engine (like the KTM's it's protected by the bash-plate), and the cockpit and nav-gear have an order about them which makes them clear and easy to understand. The majority of the additional parts fitted to the BMW come from the Touratech catalogue, but some of the parts are one-offs like the agricultural (but incredibly strong) footpeg mountings fabricated locally because last year's ones weren't strong enough. The BMW's motor is all standard by the way - with the exception of some beefed up bearings, a bit of tweaking of the fuelling on the injection and that straight through pipe. We estimate the Beemer to be putting out around 50-55hp, which is probably at

least 10hp down on the fiery KTM, even though it has more weight to tug along; though my subsequent blasts down the beach reveal little difference between them in overall performance.

In essence you get the impression that the BMW's mass has been well centralised, whereas the KTM's mass has just been kept nice and low. Both bikes wear metal rad protectors and metal radiator guards, kevlar bashplates (reinforced by steel on the Beemer and plastic on the KTM), alcantara (suede) seats and wide braceless bars. Suspension on both bikes is quite different though. The KTM features WP forks and a conventional WP shock working through a linkage (there's no sign of PDS here). By contrast the BMW boys have decided to experiment with their suspension this year after the stock units turned out to be the limiting factor last year. So up front they've opted for the latest set of 50mm Marzocchi Shiver front forks courtesy of Marzocchi specialist Chris Hockey. While at the rear end the bike features a very unconventional French-made Fournales air-shock. This item has been made especially for them by the Fournales factory, and its springless design and alloy body help make it incredibly light - all the adjustment being carried out by air pressure. Just in case this proves to be a mistake the back up team will be carrying spare conventionally sprung Ohlins units.



What's She Like Mister?

Unless you're used to piloting a GS1150 on the trail, there can't be many experiences akin to lugging 200-plus kilos of dirt bike through deep wet sand. The first thing you notice is how big they are. Bloody HUGE. Sticking out a leg in the slow corners seems appropriate if a slightly pointless exercise - because first of all you're sitting so far back as to make next to no difference to your forward weight bias, and secondly because if anyone is daft enough to think that I'm going to prop up 200 kilos of falling steel with one of my knee joints then they don't know me well enough.

Despite all that weight, these things do still feel like proper off-roaders. The suspension though firm is compliant and impressive; the riding position when seated or especially standing, works well and they can jump and roost just like any



normal dirt bike. Though they do tend to flatten the smaller bumps and plough through some of the bigger ones.

Working our way through some big dunes (for Wales, not the Sahara), the bikes will power their way up them okay, but it needs a hatful of confidence and plenty of technique to avoid getting bogged down - both

on the way up and indeed, on the way down! The problem here is the amount of weight and power these bikes deliver to the ground. It's ever so easy to dig huge trenches beneath the rear wheels on the way up a dune. Once that happens there's virtually nothing for it but to tip the bike on its side, drag the front wheel down (so it's pointing downhill) and have another run at it. When you do eventually make it to the top of a dune, there's quite a feeling of elation before fear sets in on the way down again.

One of the big problems with bikes of this size is that you feel so remote from the terrain you're riding over. The BMW was worse in this respect, in as much as you feel like you're perched up high on a horse which feels likely to stumble at any moment. And it's a long way to fall. The KTM felt slightly better in the dunes perhaps,

but when we moved onto a bumpy area of small hummocks, the Beemer seemed the better of the two - particularly suspension-wise.

There were other differences too. The KTM has a rock hard saddle whereas the Beemer's feels pillow-like by comparison. And for all its size, I felt slightly cramped on the KTM, whereas the BeeEmm feels nice and roomy.

But if I had to plump for one over the other I'd still opt for the KTM simply because of its proven track record, its established pedigree and the ready availability of orange spares on the race. That said, the Dome Touratech BMW team got one of their two bikes to the finish last year, and this year's bikes are a 'massive improvement', so don't rule them out just yet.

But the best thing about both these teams is



BEACH WALES

that they're British (well British and Australian - let's say they're in the Commonwealth), and they are only part of a British entry this year which is the biggest that there's ever been. I had a blast riding these two behemoths up and down the beach despite the freakish weather, but that's because I knew I could use up all

my energy having fun, and then kip in the van on the way back home. When these guys get out

there into the desert (and they'll be riding about the time you read this), they won't be concentrating on having fun, so much as making sure they get all the way to Dakar. With 21 days of racing planned - one of which is due to total over 1100km of special stage and liaison - you can bet that having fun is the very last thing on their mind...

THE TERMS...

Team Dome BMW riders Simon Pavey and Nick Plumb have already got a wealth of Dakar experience behind them. Simon first did the Dakar in 1998 on an XR600 following it up in 1999 on a 'factory' CCM 604 (winning the manufacturer's Team award). Last year Simon and Nick entered the Dakar on F650s, and although Nick made it all the way to the finish in Egypt, Simon was unfortunately sidelined when he ran out of teabags in Libya (okay, his rear mousse disintegrated and the tyre came off the rim).

This year, with the benefit of a much refined bike (with better suspension), they both hope to make it all the way to Dakar.

Support for the team comes in the form of a Ford-sponsored Ranger 4x4 crew-cab pick-up with a driver, a mechanic and an extra helper. And you can follow the progress of the team by emailing: bmw@worldofbmw.com, and then asking to be added to the mailing list.

Team Dome BMW would like to thank their sponsors: BMW, Dome BSPM, Touratech, Castrol, Enduro Tech (Marzocchi), K&N, HJC, Overland Solutions, Remus, CTI, & Talon.

Team Desert Rose KTM riders Patsy Quick and Clive 'Zippy' Town, may have slightly less rally experience behind them (they both successfully completed the Rallye Tunisie in 2000), though Patsy sadly failed to finish last year's Dakar rallye after a crash left her needing an emergency operation; but they are both experienced enduro competitors with an incredible amount of enthusiasm.

They will be supported on the event by Patsy's husband as team mechanic, as well as a second mechanic in a Nissan 4x4, while lots of pre-event help came from spanner-twirler extraordinaire Martin Wittering.

The team would like to thank their sponsors KTM UK, Bel-Ray, TwinAir, Michelin, Talon, Bert Harkins Racing (Scott), Oxtar, Shark, Touratech, Crazy Horse and Best Demolition.

To follow the progress of the team, click on www.teamdesertrose.com, alternatively BBC News 24 will be running daily updates of Patsy's progress during the evening bulletin, and BBC Grandstand will be covering the event (and the team's performance) on 11 & 18 January.

14626

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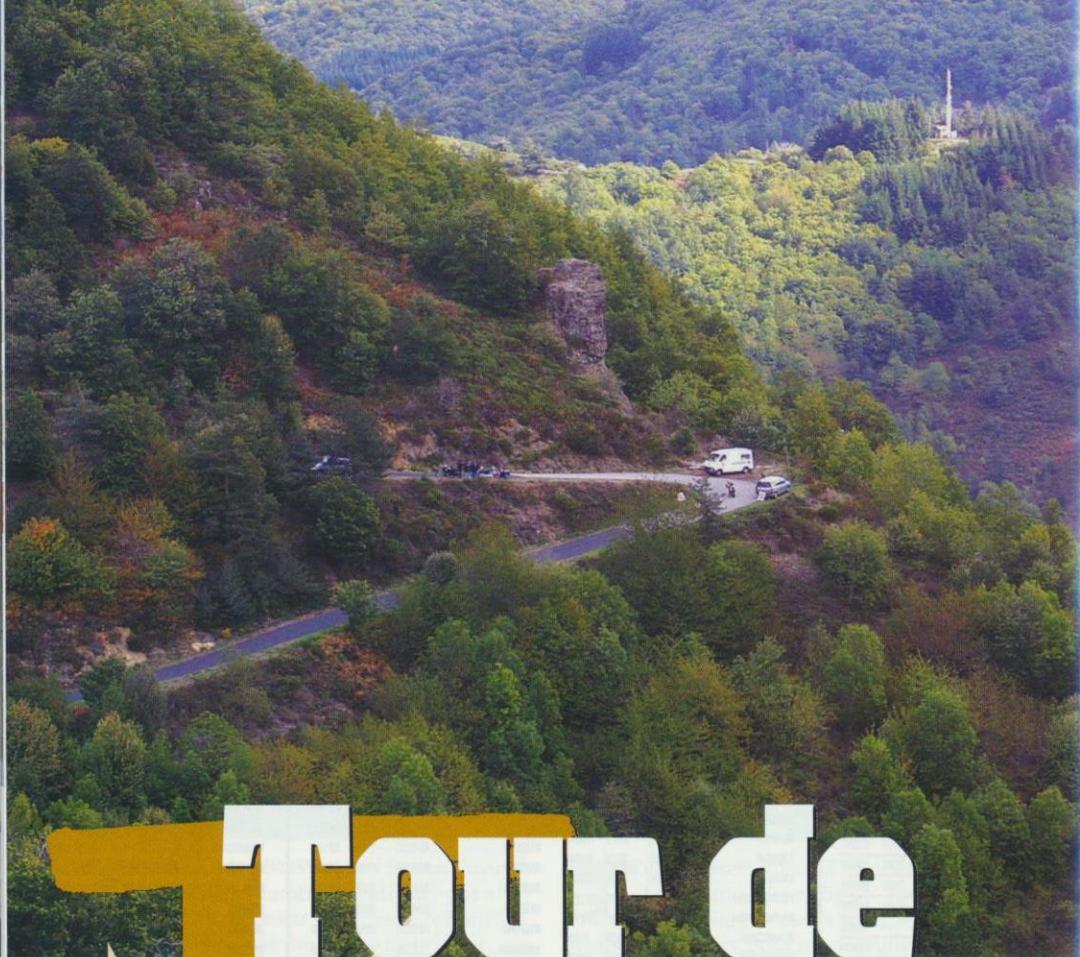
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Tour de Force

Not all rallying takes place in the desert or in the wilds of a Welsh forest. Paul Blezard entered a 'road-rally' - the Moto Tour de France - which took more than 200 riders on all sorts of machinery right across France, on road and track. Naturally there was more than a fair share of riders on dirt bikes, as Blez recounts...



Blez with the well-organised Team Picarloux...



Closing the public highway is not a problem in France...

When I heard about the Moto Tour I knew it just had to be done. As a veteran of the '88 Monte Carlo Moto and three Francilien Rallies in the 1990s, it sounded like the best of all of them all rolled into one. Like its predecessors, the 2003 Moto Tour was a classic 'rally routier' or 'road based rally' with a mixture of 19 closed public road special stages (including two at night) and three circuit special stages, at Le Mans, Issoire and Ales. It covered 2,300km on an extremely roundabout route from Paris to Toulon via overnight stops at Tours, Montlucon, Issoire, Villefranche and Ales. Just as in desert and in many other rallies, we were guided by a 'road book' through both liaison and special stages on open, mainly minor, public roads on which you still had to average 60kmh - one kilometre per minute regardless of traffic, gravel, roadworks or any other interruptions. And naturally, we were supposed to stick to the French Highway code at all times...(!)

In the closed road special stages we ran one at

a time, at one minute intervals against the clock while on the circuits we raced initially by category and then by overall placing in the event. All bikes were kept in a parc fermé overnight.

World Champs

The start of the Moto Tour was held at the vast Exhibition area on the south side of Paris, timed to coincide with the last day of the annual Motorcycle show. The parc fermé ran down one whole side of the Parc des Expositions and a large crowd had gathered for the 'off'. You could hardly move without bumping into some motorcycling legend or other, and most of them were actually taking part in the event! Former Grand Prix riders included Phil Read on a Fazer 1000, Dominique Sarron on a Yamaha R6, Didier de Radigues on a Ducati Multistrada, and former endurance champions Bruno Bonhuil and Bertrand Sebilleau both on Kawasaki Z1000s. Even the 18 strong scooter class included two former winners of Le Mans, a nine-fingered

Tour de Force



Singles lead sportsbikes at the third and final circuit of Ales...



Leaving Tours before dawn to race at Le Mans...

ex-TT racer, and a Hell's Angel!

The 'mono' class was going to be hotly disputed between former and present rally champions Vincent Loustalot and Sebastien Perrier on XR650s and well known enduro rider Serge Nuques on a WR450. 14 times Dakar veteran Bernard Pascual rode another WR and virtually all the monos were fitted with supermoto brakes and wheels.

The 18 sidecar entries included a desert racer outfit which looked a Dakar escapee, and a GSX-R1100 monster driven by a bloke in a wheelchair, not to mention others powered by R1s, Hayabusas and ZX12s!

The highlight of the morning for me was meeting Dakar legend Raymond Loizeaux (more bike finishes than any other rider) who was there to escort us out of Paris on his police bike. The course 'opener' for the whole week was another well known police rider, Hervé Joseph, a former French rally champion on an XR600, he was mounted on a BMW GS1150 carrying the 000 number plate and was flagged away by a government minister.

I was also delighted to bump into several old friends and acquaintances from the Monte Carlo Moto and the Francilien. Old man Busquets was there, now aged 65, on a seriously hotted up old GS80, along with his two sons on a brace of R1100RS Boxer Cup bikes. My old mate Monster Mad Marco, now 50, was riding a Buell for the French importer alongside former policeman

Christian Lacoste who memorably lobbed his TDM into a field at 90mph in the '93 Francilien - and managed to ride it out!

Calm Before The Storm

The first day's ride from Paris to Tours was a mere walk in the park. A simple exercise in road-book reading along 150 miles of amazingly deserted French back-roads in the most densely populated part of France.

Things got serious on the Monday however when we were up before dawn to take more back-roads the 30 miles up the road to Le Mans, including a blast up the famous Mulsanne straight on open roads, before turning into the Bugatti circuit for some serious scatching, complete with transponders on the bikes for the electronic timing. No one was surprised when Dominique Sarron cleared off on his R6, but others were left wishing they'd seen a bit clearer through the red mist. Marco binned his Buell on the warm up lap and was stuck in second gear throughout, while an unfortunate girl on a ZX9 actually managed to crash out of the event on her slowing down lap! Ominously, there was an awful lot of standing around before things got under way, and this was to prove a mere taster of what was to follow.

The first closed-roads special stage was short and sweet, but wet for me, thanks to a downpour just before I arrived. When that happens, it's just 'tough titty'. The second was also wet, but so nar-

row that there was barely room for the sidecars to fit on the tarmac. It was more like a footpath than a road and wound its way treacherously between trees and ponds.

There was some fantastic riding on fast country roads, where I was hitting higher three-figure speeds than I had at Le Mans. A 'control de passage' was mysteriously cancelled for no apparent reason and I arrived just before dark, having covered 300 miles.

I had a chat with Vincent Loustaloux while he prepped his XR650 for the following day's ride and he told me that his engine was completely standard in the interests of reliability. I was amazed to discover that he was using the standard sized tank, which meant he had to fill up every 50 miles - that simple requirement alone requires an extremely well-organised support team. Talking of which...

Rally Racers

My whole week was made tolerable by the hospitality of a great team of riders from the St Etienne region. I only met them the night before the event but they fed and watered me and most nights provided me with somewhere to sleep, either in a tent or in their 40ft artic which was equipped with both a shower and a kitchen! They had three vans, seven riders and 12 assistants in their team, which included the current and former French road rally champions, Sebastien Bompuis on an XR650 and Francois Bos on an Aprilia Tuono.

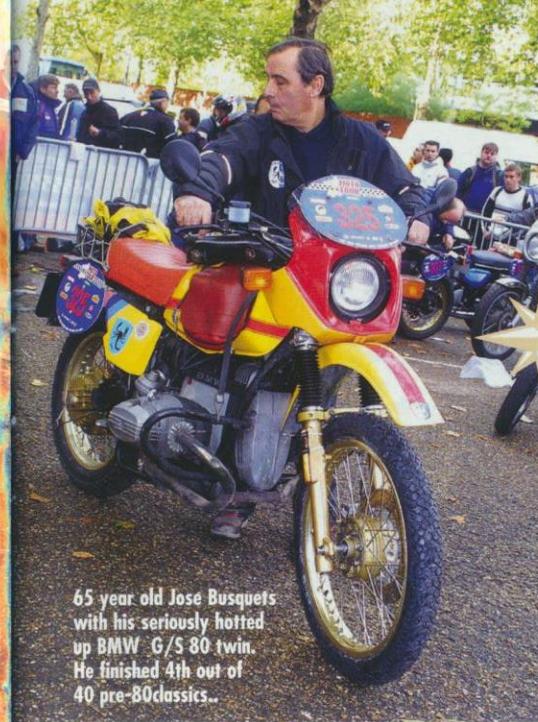
On Monday night Team Picarloux treated me to a technical tour de force. Patrick and Cathy's 1100 Guzzi outfit had run a gearbox bearing on the way to Le Mans. That evening they stripped the gearbox and sourced a new bearing. At 10pm they stopped for some dinner. At 11pm they start-

POLICE APPROVED

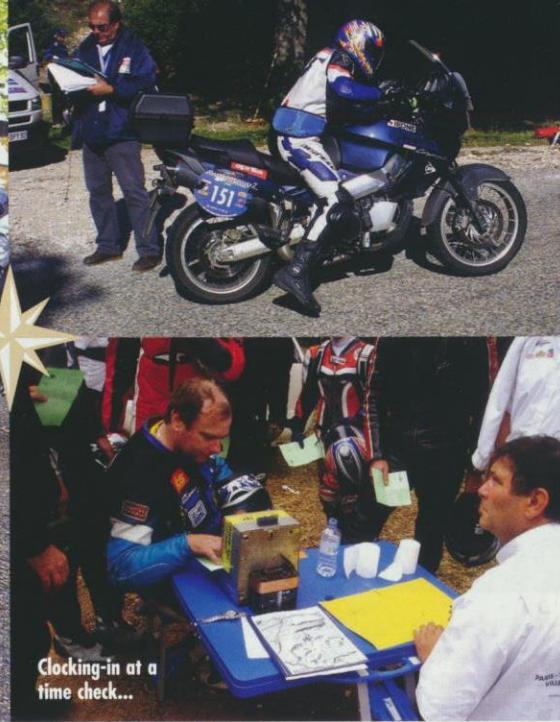
The Moto Tour was jointly organised by the commercial Option organisation and the motorcycle clubs of the CRS and the French National Police. The scale of the operation was huge: apart from the 240 competitors there were 246 officials and assistants and a host of local volunteer marshals. The man in charge of it all was former Grand Prix rider, endurance world champion and organiser of the French National motorcycle team, Marc Fontan who actually won the 250 class of the 1976 Tour de France Moto on an army Honda. Some 700 vehicles travelled from the start in Paris to the finish in Toulon including a whole caravan of trucks and artics which provided an all-day mobile motorcycle show at every overnight stop, complete with police display team on Harleys!

Tour de Force

Four monos in the first three rows of the grid at Ales. That's Serges Nuques on the WR450 at the front and Loustalot on the XR650 on row two...



65 year old Jose Busquets with his seriously hotted up BMW G/S 80 twin. He finished 4th out of 40 pre-80classics...



Clocking-in at a time check...

ed the rebuild. By 3am the outfit was ready to go again, and it lasted the rest of the week. Formidable! They had also brought with them a lap-top on which they could view CD-Roms of all the special stages that they had videoed, with sound commentary. The well organised teams had practised all the special stages at least once, while others, like me, were riding everything 'blind' - a serious disadvantage.

The Longest Day

On Tuesday morning the organisers had to bor-

row the Picarloux's printer to get the start times printed out. Then they announced that one of the three scheduled special stages would be cancelled. It was already clear that while the publicity and PR for the Moto Tour had been top notch, the planning for the actual running of the event left a lot to be desired.

We rode through the cancelled special on open roads and it would have been well hairy, especially in the wet, so I was half relieved that it was scrubbed. Time was tight to get to the afternoon's special stage after lunch, but then we had to hang

around for hours, literally. Turned out the organisers had been desperately trying to recruit marshals the night before, having previously turned down offers of help from the local clubs and having had all year to get, well, organised!

I made use of the time to watch the earlier numbers ride the first few corners of the special and was treated to the sight of my old friend Josep Busquets running straight into the ditch on the first corner on his 1100 Beemer. He was lucky there were plenty of people to help him heave it out because he would never have done it alone. He did exactly the same thing on a GS1100 in the '94 Francilien, where it was immortalised on video. That time he wasn't able to continue, this time he was, but it cost him about a minute and several places in the final reckoning. The Busquest team changed his fork leg that evening.

Serge Nuques was the most impressive rider I saw in that special, leaning his WR450 further over in the wet than most riders would manage in the dry - amazing. The long delay meant that many of us had to ride for several hours on winding Massif Central backroads in the dark. I also would have run out of petrol if I hadn't taken the precaution of carrying an extra can with me. This was the day when I really wished I'd taken the trouble to rig up a proper road book holder, complete with a light. The whole route was well signposted with big black and yellow plastic arrows, but they weren't reflective and were

very hard to see in the dark! (Riding in the dark was not part of the plan!).

After going miles in the wrong direction I ended up following a sidecar for the last 30 or so miles to Issoire, which was an education in itself. No shortage of illumination on those babies, and a passenger to look after the navigation too!

The racing didn't stop when we got to our overnight halt in Issoire, either. After time for food and spanning, we were back out again at 10pm for two night sections. Oh yes. Except that the first special had to be cancelled after two riders crashed heavily in the first ten minutes. One of them was unconscious for several minutes before he was even found. And as we rode through the treacherously slippery section, the heavens opened once more, ensuring wet roads for the rest of the night. Keeping to a 60kmh average on those roads, in those conditions, was a tall order and a lot of people copped time penalties, not least because you had to fight your way through at least 100 bikes and riders to get to the check-in clock. More delays...

I wished I had extra lights on both bike and helmet when I rode the stage, but I still enjoyed it and just made it back to the parc fermé right on my minute. There's no way I could have done it if I'd kept to the speed limit. I was fortunate to get back to a hotel bed by 3am, but many didn't get in till 5am, only to have to rise again at 06:30. Oh yes!

TRAVELLING CIRCUS

There were several aspects of the Moto Tour which made it different from earlier events. The first was the sheer scale of the thing. There were no less than 240 entrants, more than twice as many as any previous comparable event. There were no capacity classes, the entrants were divided simply into multi-cylinder, monos, sidecars, and reflecting the changing times, a brand new class for over-400cc super scooters. In addition, there was a slightly less gruelling schedule for the 40 pre-1980 classic machines. There were also a dozen or so ladies competing for the 'Coupe Feminine' all of whom were on multi-cylinders.

Age and ability ranged from a 17 year old on a CRM125 to multi-world champion Phil Read (64!) on a Fazer 1000.

Another key difference was that the Moto Tour was a commercial event, designed to make money as well as promote motorcycling. While there was a whole raft of sponsors, the price of entry was still high at 900 Euros (700 Euros for early entries) and unlike previous events, the entry fee did not include any accommodation or meals, apart from lunch. Even so, most of the categories were massively over-subscribed following year-long publicity in the French media.



Tour de Force

Check out the spotlight in this bike's screen...

Why Are We Waiting?!

Having got up unnecessarily early, we then spent the whole of Wednesday morning waiting to race at the Issoire circuit, just outside town. This at least gave me a chance to see Old Man Busquets thrashing his deceptively quick GS80 around the wet track with the other classic bikes. He was

third out of 40 behind a Ducati 750 and an LC350 - not bad for 65 years old!

We then returned to the 'night stage' ten miles up the road, and raced it in daylight - except that we again had to wait for several more hours before we could start. By this time there was mutiny in the ranks and talk of boycotting the

UN PEU D'HISTOIRE

The 2003 Moto Tour was actually a revival of an earlier event, the Tour de France Moto' which ran from 1973 to 1981 and traced its roots back to police and army events from the 1950s. However the 1973 Tour was open to all comers and was specifically designed 'to promote motorcycling to the public'. That first edition attracted 114 entrants, including three women and ran for 3,200km all around France with just 71 survivors making it to the finish at Le Mans. It was won by Alain Renouf on a Z1 Kawasaki, but the guy who came second was on an RD250 Yamaha and early Dakar hero Hubert Rigal came third on a Kawasaki 350 triple. He went onto win the event on a BMW two years later and again in '76 on a Honda 860 Four.

The '77 edition was marked by fog and snow in the Pyrenees and the appearance of the first successful dirt-based machine, a KTM 250 which finished ninth overall in the hands of Pierre Faucher. Big, four-cylinder road bikes from Japauto and Godier-Genoud continued to dominate, but in 1980 Faucher came close

to winning overall on a KTM 500. The last Tour de France in 1981 was won by Jean Louis Chevelle on a Kawasaki 1100.

Similar in principle, the Monte Carlo Moto of 1988 attracted a large proportion of trail bikes, both singles and twins. Although it ended up being won by a policeman on a GPZ750, it was led for three days by a 50 year-old Spanish ex-grand prix rider, Jose Busquets, riding a BMW R100GS, who recovered from a crash into an electrified fence to finish third (See TBM64). Similarly, the Francilien Rallies of 93 and 94 (TBM65) featured some extraordinarily quick riders on trail bikes vying for the overall lead and winning many of the tightest closed road special stages. The '93 Francilien was won by policeman Bruno Viaud on a Honda Dominator from Philippe Many on the fastest TT600 I've ever seen, while in '94 Vincent Loustalot came second overall and won many stages on an amazingly standard-looking XR600. Happily, I was to meet many of my old friends and rivals from both the Monte Carlo and the Francilien in the Moto Tour.

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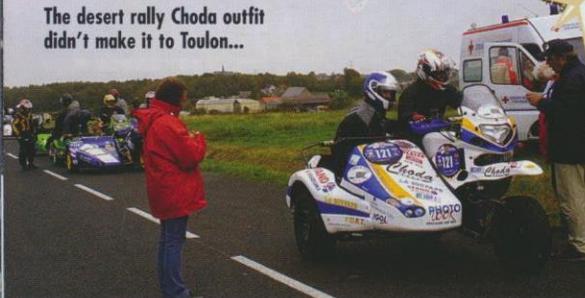
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The desert rally Choda outfit didn't make it to Toulon...



Spot the Moto Tour arrow, still a lot more visible in the fog than they were by night

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Supeyres
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controles de passage in favour of taking the direct route to the overnight stop at Villefranche. In the event most people rode the designated route, and we were treated to freezing fog on top of a mountain pass for our troubles.

I was pleased to make it to Villefranche by 10pm and to share a 24-euro hotel room with my new best friend Marc with the F650 and one of the mechanics. Sharing a double bed with a bloke still counted as luxury compared to most of my nights so far! Some poor buggers didn't get in till nearly midnight, having had only two hours sleep the night before.

Another Day

Thursday started with the announcement that another special stage had been cancelled. No surprise there. This disappointment was largely made up for by some of the best roads and scenery of the week, as we rode through the middle of the stunning Ardeche region on our way to Ales. And it didn't rain!

However the morning was chiefly memorable for coming round a corner on a fairly major D-road to find that the entire road surface had been removed - not just a top scraping, but the entire foot-deep coating. No warning signs whatsoever.

The dirt-ified road continued for several hundred metres before returning to tarmac, only to go back to dirt again a few clicks further on, and again, and again!

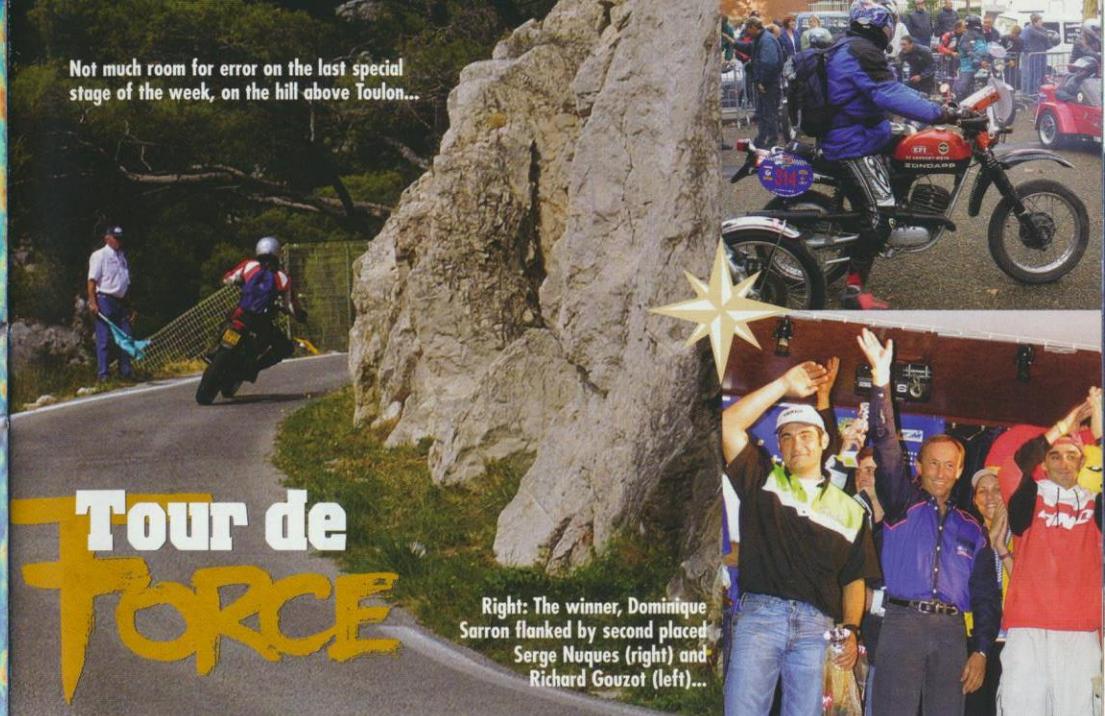
Several riders came to grief and I was damn glad of my off-road experience. I had another panic after lunch when I mislaid my time card and had to ride like a lunatic to stay on time, then I stopped to take pictures at the end of a scenic special and lost several minutes in penalty as a result. Doh! That was also where we lost the Dakar sidecar after it hit a roadside rock rather too hard for comfort and put the passenger in hospital.

After the earlier timing disaster, I was pleased to stay on time on the toughest open-roads section of the entire week. It was several miles of gravel-strewn single track road which wound up and down the side of a narrow valley. A girl on a Kawasaki bit the dust and retired at the end of the day, but tiny Pauline Mourgues stayed rubber side down on her Buell. At only 4ft 11, I was seriously concerned for her welfare when I saw the state of the road, but I needn't have worried. She had a bigger heart than many men twice her size.

Back On Track

By the time we got to Ales on Thursday evening, after another 300 miles of gruelling back-roads riding, the organisers felt the need to make a public apology for all the cock-ups in the running of the event. There must have been some serious arse-kicking going on behind the scenes because everything seemed to run much more smoothly after that. The warm, sunny weather helped to

Not much room for error on the last special stage of the week, on the hill above Toulon...



Right: The winner, Dominique Sarron flanked by second placed Serge Nuques (right) and Richard Gouzo (left)...

cheer everyone up too - we were only 50 miles from the Med.

As with the track at Issoire, I'd never even heard of the Ales Circuit, let alone ridden it. But it was a cracker, full of really testing corners which were just tight enough to give the monos a chance to keep the multis in sight - and in many cases, beat them. Reflecting his overall position in the rally, Serge Nuques lined up on his WR450 alongside Sarron's R6 on the front row and Loustalot was just behind. Bompuis was on the third row alongside another single - four of them in the top ten! Sadly Ales marked the end of the rally for Phil Read when he grounded the engine protector and it lifted the front wheel of his Fazer, crushing his hand in the fall. He gamely remounted and carried on for a few miles, but was forced to retire.

It was only at Ales that I finally caught up with another old mate, Emmanuel Combes, who did both the 93 and 94 Francilien Rallies with me on a Ducati 600. He'd changed his allegiance to a KTM Duke but was on crutches and suffering from a badly sprained ankle. He couldn't even walk, but he sure as hell wasn't going to stop riding now, with only a day and a half of the tour still to go!

Both Friday's special tests were on typical Provençal roads. The first was wide and fast - the fastest of the whole week and ideal for the multis, but with just enough bends to keep you rolling the throttle back no matter what you were riding.

The second was narrow and twisting, through a rocky gorge and much better for the single cylinder bikes.

It's not far from Ales to Toulon as the crow flies, but we were taking the scenic route and we'd done another 250 miles by the time we finally made it to the Mediterranean coast. I had a mad last-minute panic to stay on time in the Toulon Friday afternoon rush hour traffic, but for once arrived early enough to hear speeches from the organisers and the good burghers of Toulon who had paid serious dosh to have the event finish in their town. The strangest thing of all was hearing all the lip service being paid to keeping to the Highway Code, when we all knew that it was virtually impossible to do that and stay on time. Only in France...

The last day was just a 100 click loop out from Toulon and back, but it wasn't short of excitement. While the organisation had improved over the last few days, the sign-posting had deteriorated and I got lost within ten miles, but managed to stay on schedule. There was a hold-up while a group of gun-toting huntsmen came out of the forest near the start of the first stage, and then we finally got underway.

This penultimate stage was fast but hairy - it wound through another rocky gorge with big bumps and massive boulders, but was open enough to encourage silly speeds. Unfortunately fellow Brit Nick Ayrton got a bit carried away,

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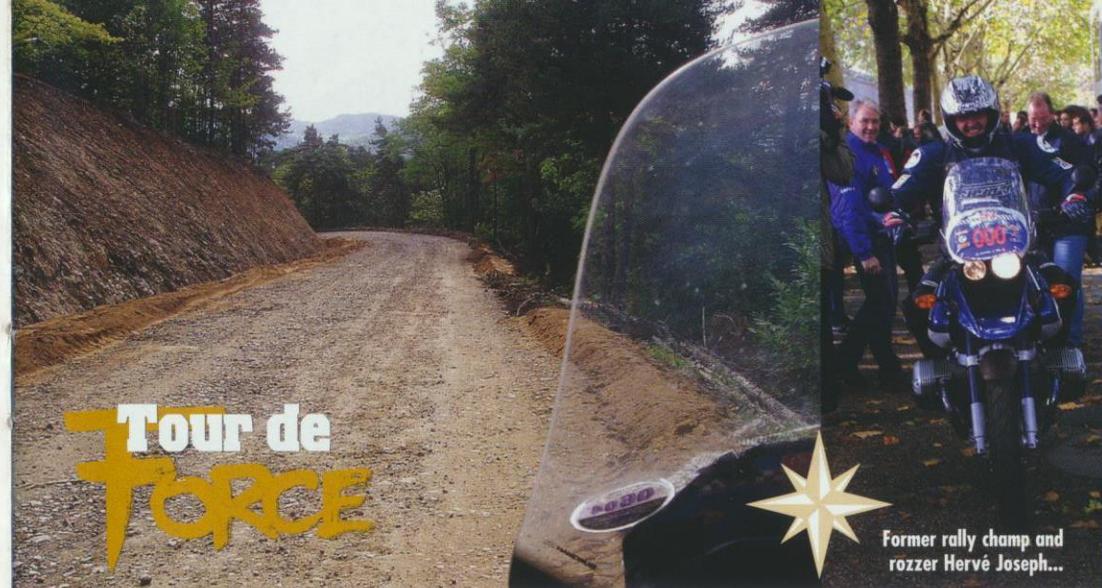


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Former rally champ and rozzler Hervé Joseph...

mistook a slow corner for a fast one and lobbed his R1 big time. In throwing away his bike he also lost a certain fifth place overall, and probably a fourth, since another rider Vincent Cathala, binned his Yam 600 (and fourth place) in the same special. Nick was very lucky to get away with several broken ribs and a broken ankle. The R1 was a write-off.

The last special stage was superb, but also very hairy. It actually ran up the mountain right behind Toulon itself and we actually raced the 'wrong' way up what is normally a one-way street. Very narrow, twisting and with plenty of loose leaves and gravel, it wasn't the place to take any chances so close to the finish.

Being so close to the town there were also hundreds of spectators cheering us on. And when we got to the top there was a welcoming bar just past the 'section ends' boards where I was damn pleased to sit down to a beer and an omelette.

It Had Been One Hell of a Week!

The results at the top could hardly have been closer. After a week of racing on road and track, Dominique Sarron and his R6 won by just 23 seconds from Serge Nuques and his demon WR450 and Policeman Richard Gouzot was only 25 seconds behind him on his Kawasaki ZX6. In fourth, less than half a minute behind was the XR650 of Vincent Loustalot. Thierry Rogier was fifth on another ZX6 ahead of Monte Carlo runner up and now 46 year old Patrick Curtat on a Suzuki GSX-R. T Francois Bos, leader of the Picarloux, was seventh on the first Aprilia home, just 29 seconds ahead of his team-mate Seb

Bompuis on the third mono in the top ten.

And if that wasn't enough machine variety for you, the younger Busquets brother came in tenth on his BMW Boxer and Didier De Radigues was first Ducati home in 15th on his Multistrada!

Talking to Sarron afterwards, he claimed that he had only recce'd two of the special stages, but none of the rally regulars believed him. However much recce-ing he did, it was still an impressive performance. However, there was no doubt in anyone's mind that Nuques would have won overall if the road stages hadn't been so significantly reduced.

My mates in the Picarloux team had a third major prize winner in Evelyne Colombet, who won the Coupe Feminine on her ratty old CBR600.

As you might imagine, the celebrations went on long into the night, and I seem to remember a certain amount of skinny dipping was indulged in, along with all sorts of alcoholic beverages.

As for me, well, I was just pleased to get all the way to Toulon without falling off or breaking down. I'd had some fantastic dices on road and track, ridden to my own personal limits and lived to ride another day. There were only 147 of us still classified at the finish out of the 240 starters, and I beat 20 of them!

I'll probably do the Moto Tour on my GS1150 next year though. It's all due to run again next October. Anyone care to join me?!

Huge thanks to all at Team Picarloux, Marc Bichouard and all the other friendly French men and women who gave me a helping hand. Merci mille fois.



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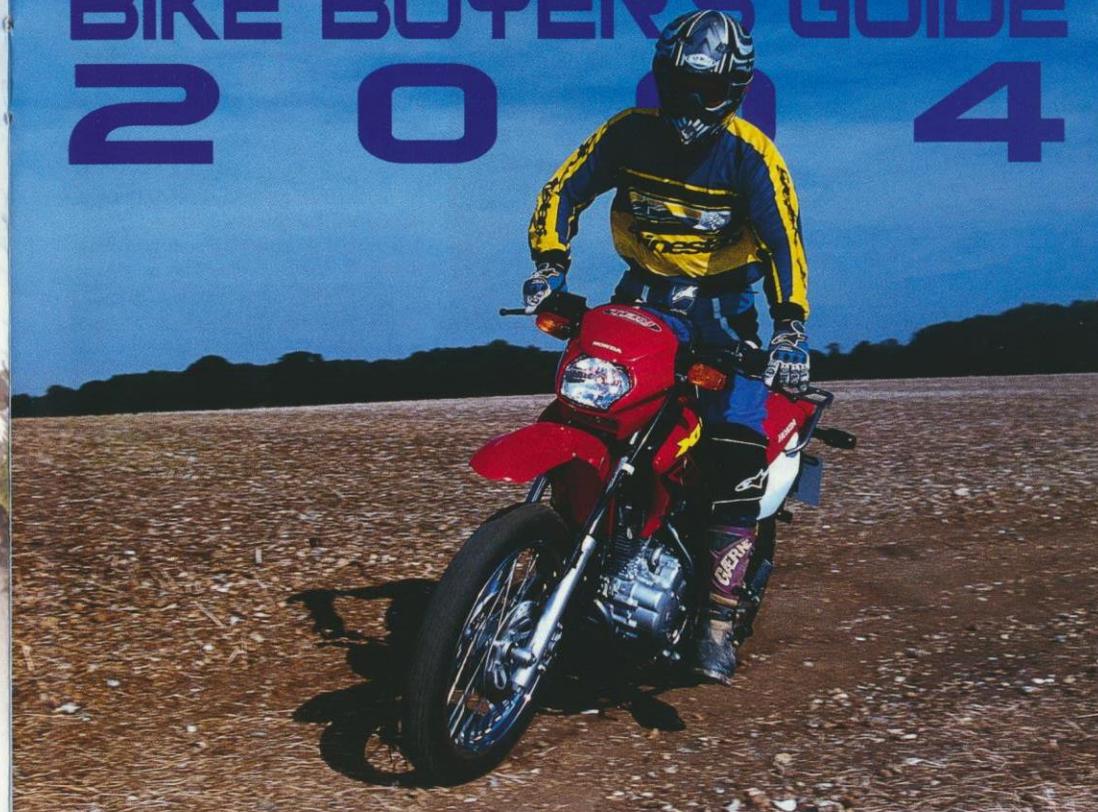
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BIKE BUYER'S GUIDE 2004



AJP

Made in Portugal doesn't get stamped on the frames of many bikes but the recently introduced range of lightweight AJP bikes are certainly worth a look for the novice rider seeking their first trailie thrills. Budget quality seems to be very much the order of the day but the 125cc PR4 features some nice finishing touches that bely its lowly sticker price.

PR4 125: 124cc, a/c, 4-str, sohc, 2-valve single, e/s and kickstart. 110kg (claimed) Taiwanese four-stroke motor powers this budget learner-trailie. Decent build quality and Paioli suspension matched to a strong looking alloy swingarm

mean that the PR4 has a lot to offer for not a lot of dosh. Under-seat fuel tank and mild power delivery make this bike a cinch to ride for the novice green laner. **Verdict:** Cheap intro into dirty biking for the younger rider.

ALFER/FACTORY

Small-scale Spanish manufacturer of two-stroke enduro bikes, and lightweight trailies. New (Yamaha-derived) enduro bike due to appear last year (2003) but never actually materialised. Will we see it in 2004?

VR125: a/c, 4-str, counter-balanced, sohc two valve, e/s, 6-speed, 119kg, seat height 920mm.

ALFER VR125



Learner legal mini-thumper styled (and specced) like its two-stroke brethren. Excellent off-road abilities, unlike most learner 125s.

VR250/260: (Up to 2002) w/c, 2-str, counter-balanced, adjustable power valve, 6-speed, 107kg (claimed), seat height 945mm. Powered by a versatile Rotax two-stroke motor that can have the power characteristics altered with a twirl of an Allen key. Replacement motor modelled on Yamaha's WR250 stroker, though as yet unseen. High quality suspension, a full road legal kit and a keen price make the Alfer a sensible option for those who like to be different. Limited supplies mean that used prices healthy. **Verdict:** Jekyll and Hyde enduro racer.

APRILIA

Italian concern who in their short history have enjoyed much competition success. Their products are generally well made, up to the minute and above all stylish. Recent introduction of a 450 V-twin for MX and supermoto racing should have the knock on effect of Aprilia launching a whole range of high-tech off-rovers. Watch this space.

RX125/50: 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 (particularly the 125). **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. **Verdict:** Peaky poser.

Pegaso 125: 124cc, w/c, 2-str, single with a claimed 31bhp, 110kg. 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) w/c, dohc, 4-str, e/s single, with a claimed 50bhp, 157kg. Stylish and quick

trailie using punchy 5-valve Rotax engine, good for about 110mph with tarmac cornering to match. Lighter than the BMW F650 and the Pegaso's twin exhaust is much better tucked in, but it has a 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. Has a much softer edge to the styling with the later 'cube' model. Updates for 2001 include fuel injection and a fresh set of plastics. Capable big trailie both on and off the road and good value.

Verdict: Latin lovely with the legs for the road.

CapoNord 1000 (2001-on): w/c, 4-str, dohc, 8-valve, vee-twin, e/s, 6-speed, 98bhp (claimed). Introduced mid-2001, the CapoNord is Aprilia's first dip into the giant trailie market. To say it's 'futuristically' styled is being polite, but powered by a re-tuned version of their RSV-R Mille superbike motor it certainly isn't short of performance. More of an adventure-tourer than a true trailbike, the CapoNord is a welcome addition to the Aprilia family. **Verdict:** Packs a hefty punch.

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 kickstarts. **Verdict:** Army surplus...

ATK

Predominantly a/c 4-str, sohc, Rotax-powered singles. US-made, high quality motocrossers with unique engine-sprocket mounted rear brake on some models. ATK recently acquired the remains of the defunct Cannondale concern and may soon be punting out ATK badged examples of this innovative but pricey trail/enduro bike. This will run alongside a crazy 700cc Maico derived stroker that was launched last year in the States. Just the job for wobbling around the lanes then!

BETA

Beta's world championship winning trials machines have kept the factory in the public eye. Now thanks to a tie-up with Suzuki, a new 4-stroke trials/trail bike hybrid powered by Japanese engines has been launched. The Beta Alp is available in either 125cc, 200cc or the latest 350cc form.

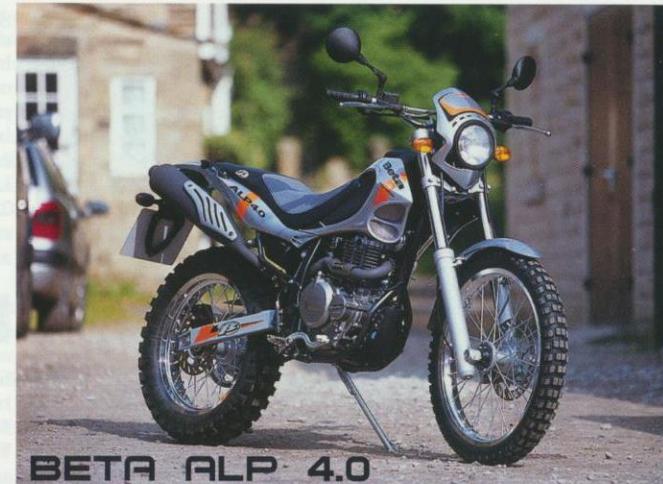
50 Enduro: w/c, 2-str enduro bike built for Italian one-make enduro series, available here in road-going form. **Verdict:** Spaghetti screamer.

RR50 Alu: w/c, 2-str fifty that looks like a factory enduro racer. Alloy beam frame gives it CR styling, whilst tuning kit gives it a beautiful exhaust and a whopping 11hp!

Alp: w/c, 2-str, 250cc, 80kg. Beta's early version of the Pampera with strange pyramidal petrol tank. **Verdict:** Nice oddball.

Alp 200: (2000-on) a/c, 4-str, sohc, e/s, 95kg, seat height 870mm. Beta's 200 Alp is a nicely styled low-seat (light-ish) trailie in the Serow mould. Old-fashioned air-cooled Suzuki lump feels a bit dated and is crying out for a sixth gear. Nevertheless it works well and features a funky re-style for 2003 on. **Verdict:** Head for the hills.

Alp 4.0: (2003-on) a/c, 4-str, sohc, 4-valve, e/s & kick, 145kg trail weight, seat height 865mm. Beta's latest version of its successful Alp format, is a low-seat height, middleweight trailie using the torquey and reliable lump from the good old DR350. Grunty and enjoyable on road, it's compromised off-road by soft suspension and excessive weight, though as a package the bike gels nicely. Like all Alps the 4.0 enjoys individual yet highly appealing styling, but unlike all the other Alp derivatives, this bike has got working brakes. **Verdict:** Feels like a sumo trials bike.



BETA ALP 4.0

BMW

Traditional air-cooled, pushrod boxer flat twins. Some rare collectibles: early pre-G/S ISDT boxers which weigh only 155kg! Genuine Paris-Dakar machines. Newer Boxer engine launched in early 1990s still with oil/air cooling, but more complicated four-valve head layouts, offering much more punch and more modern styling. 2004 should see the latest derivative of the boxer twin giant trailie hit a BMW showroom near you.

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

R100G/S: (1988-on) a/c, 4-str, twin, e/s. 220Kg. 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.

BMW R1150-GS



gearboxes, 19in front wheel limits tyre choice. Sold like hot cakes thanks to legendary BMW build quality. Road only ST version also available. All models up-dated for 2000 with fuel injection, twin cat exhaust cans, ABS option, and a new set of clothes. Limited edition Dakar model features 21" front wheel and Richard Sainct replica paint job. **Verdict:** Solid, stylish and sensible.

CAGIVA

Sometimes troubled Italian manufacturer now under the banner of Gruppo MV Agusta, along with Husqvarna.

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.

W8 125: a/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. Re-introduced into the UK a number of years later.

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 swingarm. **Verdict:** Something different.

W12: a/c 4-str, sohc, 4-valve, 350cc single, e/s, 6-speed, 25bhp. Simple no frills trailbike (as used by the Italian military), a bit like an Italian XT350 but not as tough. Rare in the UK. **Verdict:** Why bother?

W16: a/c, 4-str, sohc, 601cc, 4-valve, single, e/s,



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: (1994-99) & R1150GS: (1999-on) o-a/c, 4-str, 8-valve, 1086cc, twin, e/s, 5-speed, 80bhp, 209kg. Mega-Monster trailie based around the later four-valve boxer engine mated to Telelever chassis. Huge stomp plus ABS which can be turned off if desired. Superb road bike but heavier than the old boxers. Recall in '94 for problems with Telelever ball joints. Hogged out to 1150cc for '99, more power and torque, even funkier styling and a six-speed tranny kept the Bee-Emm on the pace. Adventure model gets a light restyle (and is all the better for it), longer travel suspension and a wealth of overland optional extras. New for '04 is the 1200GS, though no details at present. **Verdict:** The first superbike trailie.

F650 'Funduro': w/c, 4-str, dohc, 652cc, single, e/s, 48bhp (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 make a genuine 46bhp at the rear wheel. Beware clunky

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 - less robust off-road.

WMX500DE: w/c, 2-str, single. Oh my god! 500ccs of sheer insane two-stroke terror. Built for Stateside desert racing the DE (Desert Enduro) was imported in small numbers (27) during the late '80s. Huge 18 litre tank and over 300mm of suspension travel combine to make this bike way too big and brutal for the average rider. **Verdict:** 'Nurse, the screens please'.

Elefant: mid-eighties. o-a/c, 4-str, 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. **Pick of the bunch:** Lucky Explorer 900ie.

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.) o-a/c, 4-str, desmo, V-twin, e/s. 188Kg. Distinctive looking big trailie with white/red/blue/blue paintwork and angular styling with gold anodised rims (21 inch F, 17 inch R). 750 motor was nice, but suffered from poor carburetion at bottom end thanks to fitment of Bing carbs. Nimble handling and pretty 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 torque engines are based on the Ducati 750 and 900SS. 1991 versions (distinguishable by Lucky Explorer paint scheme, Ohlins suspension and electronic fuel injection), were higher spec and more powerful than later ones. 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.

Canyon 500/600: (1996-on.) a/c 4-str, 4 valve single, e/s only, 165kg, seat height 795mm. Stylish faired urban trailie, but a tad under-powered with its Euro licence 34bhp motor. **Verdict:** Italian Gelding.

Gran Canyon 900ie: (1997-2000) o-a/c, 4-str, desmo V-twin, e/s, 62bhp, 213kg (wet), seat height 825mm. Beautifully styled successor to the Elefant. Much more suited to tarmac than off-

CANNONDALE E440



roading. Great fun and almost practical for an Italian thoroughbred. Service history a must.

Verdict: A sexy Italian TDM.

Navigator 1000: (2000-on) w/c, dohc 4 valve TSCC, 90 degree V-twin, e/s, six speed, 96bhp, 210kg, seat height 850mm. Successor to the Gran Canyon, even more road biased, but with a much smoother and more powerful Suzuki TL1000 motor. The Navi is right up there with the best of the bunch, but the early paint (pre '04) schemes were a tad muted for a Cagiva. **Verdict:** Italian Stallion.

CANNONDALE

US mountain bike giant turned their hand to the internal combustion engine.

E440 Enduro: (2003) w/c, 4-str, dohc, 4 valve single, fuel injection, e/s, 110kg (claimed). Innovative design from the American MTB manufacturer, featured fuel injection, reversed cylinder head and crankcases that can be stripped from the side of the bike. Despite all this technology the E440 still managed to be overweight and underpowered. Well specced (alloy frame, Ohlins shock etc) but simply didn't have the performance the 450 class demands. Unsurprisingly went out of production mid-2003 only to emerge from a buy out sporting an ATK badge. **Verdict:** E440, take three..?



CCM 404DS

CCM

Blackburn-built range of tough trail/enduro and supermoto bikes, generally majoring on big-bore machines. Once used Rotax motors but switched to using Suzuki 644 (and now 400cc) engines after supplies began to dwindle in 2002.

C26, 350/604 Enduro: a/c, 4-str belt-driven sohc, 597/348cc (up to '98), single, e/s: The original modern CCM, in enduro trim only (with an optional road legal kit). All of the usual CCM refinements with a choice of 50mm or 45mm Marzocchi front forks. 350 version has smaller 34mm carb. **Verdict:** Better than it ought to be.

604E Sport: (1998-2002). A proper trail bike version of CCM's Rotax big banger. High spec includes: Paioli forks, WP shock, Talon hubs, Excel rims, Brembo brakes etc. A huge range of factory options available including rally tanks, tune up kits, and choice of paint finish. Later bikes cheapened slightly, but kept improving. **Verdict:** British Beefcake.

644 DS: (2002 - on) a-o/c, sohc, four valve, single, e/s. CCM featuring the old Suzuki Freewind lump. Similar to the 604, only much more refined with a smoother engine. WP suspension front and rear. **Verdict:** Still beefy but better.

404 DS: w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, single, e/s, 5-speed. Cool looking bike with decent handling

means the feisty DR-Z mill has at last got a chassis to do it justice. Mid-sized trail/enduro bike using Aussie-spec DR-Z enduro lump with a decent street legal can. Trick British made dash and usual high quality CCM frame construction matched to WP front and rear sees the best of British as viable contender for 2003 trailie of the year award. Enduro model comes with more suspension travel and a lofty seat height.

DERBI

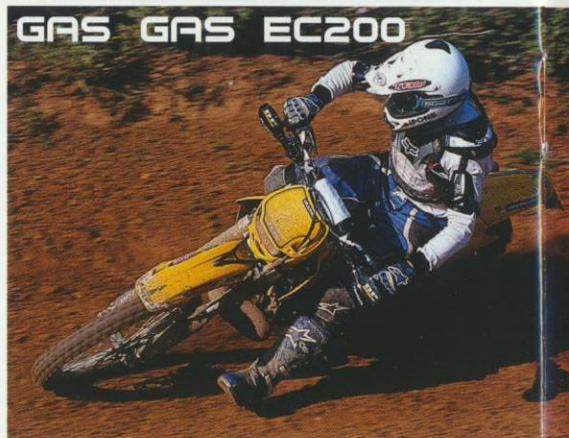
Spanish manufacturer of small capacity machines with a long history of GP World championships. Senda 50: w/c, 2-str, 6 speed, oil injection, 89kg. Surprisingly capable both on and off the trail. Light weight and okay-ish suspension makes it a cinch to keep on the pipe. Supermoto version also available. **Verdict:** For teenagers everywhere!

ENFIELD

Bullet trail: (1953 - on!) a/c, 4-str, ohv, single. Indian made version of the venerable Royal Hen, now with 12v electrics. **Verdict:** Days of the Raj.

GAS GAS

Spanish manufacturer of enduro and trials machines with many recent world championship victories. Quality components, light weight and good value, but some doubts over build quality. **Pampera 200/250/320:** (1996-on) w/c, 2-str, 6 speed, pre-mix and kickstart only, 85kg. Curious combination of pukka trials iron and trailbike.



GAS GAS EC200

The ultimate go anywhere trailie but early ones were a little too specialised for extended road use. MkII version launched in '98, not so well equipped but better suited to the trail. Latest mkIII version even more trail friendly with better suspension, brakes and chassis. Superb and affordable green laner. **Verdict:** Cheeky and cheap but chancy as a secondhand buy.

EC80/125/200/250/300 Enduro: (1994-on) w/c, 2-str, hydraulic clutch, seat height 940mm. Brilliantly capable and easy to race enduro machines which most owners love. The Gassers come equipped with all of the necessary road gear, and quality components such as Ohlins, Marzocchi etc. Variable build quality requires care when buying used. Pre '96 bikes have TM motors. 2004 versions refined with slim-line tanks and a host of minor changes. **Verdict:** The curate's tortilla - great in parts.

EC400/450FSE: (2002/'03-on) w/c, 4-valve, 399cc, e/s single. 6-speed, 47bhp (claimed). Fuel-injected, leccy-start Gasser enduro thumpers come well specified with Ohlins, Marzocchi, CRD, Nissin etc. Fully street legal and more DR-Z than WR-F. Again watch the finish when buying second-hand. Capacity increase for '03 to bring it in line with the enduro class, though reasonable weight and great stability mean it's more at home on the lanes. A trick looking supermoto is also available with Ohlins forks as an option. **Verdict:** No Spanish flier, but great on the trail.

GILERA

Part of the Piaggio group with legendary road-racing history.

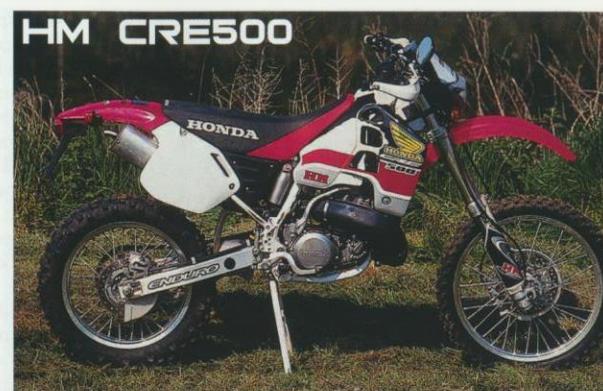
50: a/c, 2-str, single. Learner bikes - not officially imported (later w/c 50 trail and supermoto).

Apache 125: w/c, 2-str, single. Big trailie style with peaky powervalve-equipped motor. Better on-road than off, and not for those short of leg.

RC125/125R: w/c, 2-str, single. Grey import only Dakar replica, RC and more trailable R version, powerful and well suspended but obviously a rare sight in the UK.

RC600: w/c, 4str, 558cc, single, e/s. Nice-looking P-D styled trailie with unimpeachable Paris-Dakar winning pedigree. Shares engine with Northwest. **Verdict:** Italian eye-candy.

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.



HM CRE500

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 fun-bike. Passable off-road, but very rare these days.

H-D 350: a/c, 4-str belt-driven sohc, 348cc, single, e/s. 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) reportedly more robust but downsized from 500 to 350cc. **Verdict:** Army Hog.

HM ITALIA

The Italian Honda importers convert CR and CRF 'crossers into enduro ready CREs.

CRE 125/250/500: w/c, 2-str, 5-speed CR transmission, kickstart only. Modifications to all bikes include a heavier flywheel with lighting coils, re-sprung suspension, quieter silencers, head and tail lights and centre stands. Versions include steel and alloy framed 125 and 250, and a fire breathing CRE500. Relatively expensive and still rare in the UK. The CRE250 remains the pick of the bunch. **Verdict:** Good, but DIY is cheaper. **CRE450F:** w/c, 4-str, sohc, single. As with the stokers, Honda's MX thumper gets the enduro treatment.

CRE250F: w/c, 4-str, sohc, single. The Italian HM crew beat Honda to it with this enduro-isied version of the fantastic new 250 'crosser. A lack of lecky start and the bike's shortage of availability outside Italy mean that most Brit enduro fans will probably wait until March for the official X models.

HONDA XR400R



HONDA

XL: a/c, 4-str, trail. **XR:** a/c, 4-str, enduro. **MTX:** a & w/c, 2-str, trail. **CRM:** w/c, 2-str, trail. **CR:** a/c & w/c, 2-str, **CRF:** w/c 4-str Mxers, CRF-X latest generation of enduro thumpers. 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 long in the tooth nowadays. As with all small Hondas, frequent oil changes are the key to a long, trouble-free life.

Cub 90: Wacky off-road 'scooter' for wacky 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. **Verdict:** Fun in a small package.

MTX125: w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single, 103kg. Learner-legal monoshock trail bike with an unfortunate propensity for brewing up in serious off-roadery. 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 early ones. **Verdict:** Water heater.

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:** Ideal for muckspreading!

TLM200/250: a/c 2-str, 199/243cc single. Like the original 2T Beta Alp, the TLM (and TLRs) were more or less trailbike versions of trials irons dressed up for the road. Not as single purpose as a pukka trials bike, but perfect for real snotty lanes and long distance trials.

TLR200/250: a/c, 4-str, sohc, 199/244cc single. As above but thumper version. Cheap to buy and run, also easy to ride with a low seat height. Rare 250 Jap import version available.

XL100: a/c 4-str sohc, single, 6-speed. Very basic, cheap to run and insure novice friendly trailie. Later versions were much smaller all round with more basic instruments. **Verdict:** Good starter machine if you can still find a good one.

XL125: 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, analogous to 250R and 500R. Later, Italian-built monoshock Dakar version with big tank and electric start can be found as grey import. Still available new up to 2003 as e-start only.

XR125L: a/c, 4-str, sohc 123cc, single, 6-speed. New take on an old idea. Built in Brazil for novice, trail fans on a budget. Great on-road, not so good off. **Verdict:** Cheap and cheerful.

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 Motosport, a basic twin-shock trail bike not unlike Yam's XT500. **Verdict:** Capable plodder.

XL250S: (1978-88), a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, 248cc, single, which sported a four-valve, twin-port head, but 6-volt electrics at first; twin shocks and poor 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. 12-volt RS250 flywheel, generator and engine cover bolt 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: w/c, 4-str, 4-valve single, e/s only, 119kg, seat height 790mm. Grey import low seat trailie with smooth high tech liquid-cooled motor but off-road capability limited by soft suspension. Ideal bike for the short novice rider who spends more time on the street than on the dirt. **Verdict:** Green laner for the vertically challenged.

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, but loads more stomp and the same poor front brake! Fortunately the 23 inch wheels can be re-laced with 21inch rims which improves the handling and provides a vast increase in tyre choice! Beware starting problems and low revs misfire caused by furring of the alloy earthing plate - solution is to take a lead direct from engine to coil.

XL250R/500R: 1984-on, a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. The cylinder heads were now blessed with Radial Four Valve Combustion (RFVC), vastly superior Pro-Link mono-shock suspension, beefier forks and much better TLS front brake in a 21 inch wheel, and 12-volt electrics - a much better bet all round than the 'S' models. The early CR crosser 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. 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.

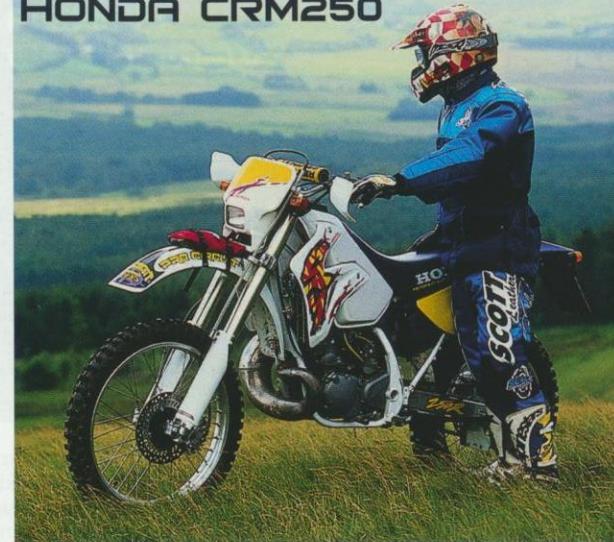
XL350/400: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Grey import originally built for French and Japanese markets - a big-bore version of the 250 rather than a sleeved down 500. **Verdict:** Very rare.

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 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:** Individual but soft.

XR75/80: a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. Small wheel mini-bike with poky engine for teenagers, but we

HONDA CRM250



know of at least one street-legal one used as a fun green-laner after modification with big wheels.

Verdict: The perfect start.

XR100: a/c, 4-str, sohc, 99cc, single, 6-speed, 68kg, 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.

XR200: 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 brakes 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.

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 difficult 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 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. Baja version available with huge twin headlamps, among other detail changes. Fully street legal Jap import version sports e-start and other road going niceties.

XR250L: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Grey



HONDA VARADERO

import with road-legal lights, speedo and indicators. Slightly heavier than the R.

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

XR500: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Bigger version of XR250, 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 identify by their drum rear brake and twin carbs. All are great off-roaders, with pukka suspension and lightweight chassis, but some can be real pigs to start. Euro versions come with proper speedo and head and tail lights (but no indicators). Great wheelie-pulling ability, and very light compared to something like an XT600. Become the privateer's desert bike and makes a decent overlander - light, relatively simple and very robust. Official HRC hop-up kit with big bore (630cc) is available but tons of other people make bits for them. **Verdict:** The definitive 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 road going niceties. Weight penalty, but 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. Rare to see one in the UK.

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

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 motorways. 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. Now built in Italy.

XLV600VP Transalp: w/c, 4-str, 6-valve, sohc, 583cc, V-twin, e/s. Called the Rally Tourer, its name befits its description. 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 had drum rear brake which was prone to going oval. Suffers from rotating 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 tourer.

XL650V Transalp (2000-on): w/c, 4-str, sohc, 6 valve V-twin, e/s. The latest 'Trannie' is blessed with a larger 647cc lump which offers a tad more power and torque than the 600 model it replaces. Smoother more rounded styling give this Italian built all-rounder a new lease of life for the new millennium. **Verdict:** Same as before only more so!

XLV750: a/c, 4-str, sohc, V-twin. Grey import mid-80s precursor to Transalp & Africa Twin but featuring shaft-drive, no fairing and distinctive red engine. Was quite common in France.

KRV650 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.

KRV750 Africa Twin: w/c, 4-str, 6-valve, sohc, 742cc, V-twin, e/s. Bored out from 650cc to 742cc in 1990 to make an impressive but rather top-heavy Paris-Dakar styled mega-trailie. Much more expensive than the competition at the time, though they had high build quality and came with trick on-board computer. Much better off-road than you'd imagine, especially on fast and dusty trails.

KRV750R 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.

XLV1000 Varadero: (1998-on) w/c, 4-str, 8 valve, V-twin. Huge (and some say ugly) cast wheel shod super-trailie featuring a cracking retuned FireStorm motor. Weird and over complex linked brake system coupled to a dry weight of over 220ks gives the 'Dero' only limited off-road ability. Honda luggage system available and together with a true 130mph plus performance makes this bike a serious adventure tourer.

Verdict: Point south, next stop Marrakech!

CRM50/125: Smaller versions of the popular CRM250. Very rare in Britain.

CRM250: (1989-2000) w/c, 2-str single, balancer shaft, oil injection, kickstart only. Only ever available as a grey import, since the mid '90s the CRM 250 has sold by the container load and has changed the face of the British off-road scene. A fantastic smooth, powerful and more importantly grunty two-stroke motor endows the CRM with more than enough performance to tackle just about anything. Surprisingly little changed until the advent of the Active Radical AR model in '97 - continues to be a good seller secondhand. **Mk1:** (1989-91) Conventional forks, oil in frame, red plastics. **Mk2:** (1991-94) USD forks, beefier rear shock, updated graphics. **Mk3:** (1994-97) Restyled, up-rated suspension, separate oil tank, stainless steel silencer. **Colours:** Pink/purple, white/black and white/purple. **AR:** (1997-2000) Complete redesign of the motor with its 'eco-friendly' Active Radical ignition. More torque but less power. Up to date styling the AR is the best looker of the bunch. **Colours:** Black/purple, white/black/red and purple/white. **Verdict:**

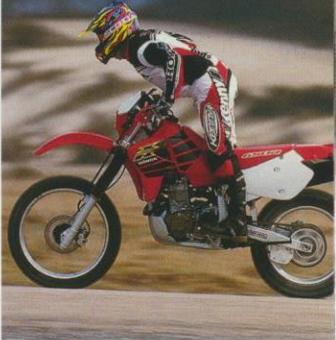
Quite probably the finest trailbike ever.

SL230: (1998-on) a/c, 4-str, sohc, 2 valve, single, e/s only, 112kg. Big H's attempt to muscle in on the successful Serow market. Smooth, soft motor and supple suspension give the mellow 230 a sensible trailbike image, this combined with a low seat height of 810mm and frugal appetite for unleaded make this an ideal bike for the short of leg novice green-laner. Less

robust than the Serow however. Only available as a grey import. **Verdict:** Unusual and pretty **XR400R:** (1996-on) a/c, 4-str sohc single, 5 speed, kickstart only, 118kg. Seat height 930mm. The much-loved XR4 has undergone only minor updates since its introduction to the trail/enduro market over five years ago. Heaps of useable grunt coupled to a quick steering chassis provides all the real world performance you could ask for. Decent suspension, good build quality and a bullet proof motor make the XR400 the people's choice. Red plastics for 2000.

Verdict: The best all-round trailie thumper? Maybe, but it's getting a little long in the tooth. **XR650R:** (2000-on) w/c, 4-str sohc 4 valve single, 5 speed, kickstart only, 144kg (wet), seat height 935mm. Alloy framed, liquid-cooled successor to the XR6. Seamless grunt off the bottom together with arm wrenching mid-range and seriously quick top end makes the XR650 the one to beat. Feels its weight and small brakes mean that it could do with more whoa to stop all that go. **Verdict:** Not for the faint-hearted.

CRF230 (2003-on): a/c, sohc, 2-valve, single. Available as a grey import only, the simple but effective CRF230 is the latest in a long line of air-chilled Honda learner thumpers. Off-roader only, should be popular with the ladies as well as those of diminished stature thanks to it low(ish) seat



HONDA XR650R



HUSABERG FE400

HUSABERG

Swedish designed range of competition inspired four-strokes which use what is basically a two-stroke style bottom-end mated to a four-stroke barrel and head. Light, powerful and fast. Early ones suffered some reliability problems but later bikes much better. Redesigned in 2000, the Berg has undergone a piecemeal change and gets better year by year. Considerably cheaper now than they were five years ago. Exciting well-designed and thanks to the input from owners KTM, becoming much better detailed. Latest models now all produced in Austria.

FE 350/400/450/501/

550/600/650 (1994-on): w/c, 4-str, 4 valve single, 6-speed (enduro models), E models had e/s. 117kgs, seat height 950mm. Seriously quick, lightweight, high spec thumpers. Some 470cc versions around using a mixture of 400 & 501cc engines. 650 engine introduced for 2001. Later bikes have better lubrication systems and better quality control. 450 supposedly new for 2003 but turned up for '04. **Verdict:** Swedish exotica.

HUSQVARNA

Previously Swedish, but now Italian-owned company (Groupo MV Agusta) manufacturing a range of trail, supermoto and competition enduro (and MX) bikes. Earlier models (esp four-strokes) were renowned for their good power to weight ratios. Looking a bit long in the tooth by modern thumper standards, and left hand kickstarts (4-T) can be awkward. New range of leccy-start thumpers finally arrived for 2003 model year and now for '04 a 125 and 250 Yamaha engine powers a pair of CH built budget trailies.

WRE125: w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single, oil injection. Modern, superb, high specification trailie with powerful revvy motor and electronic powervalve. SM125S supermoto also available.

WR125/250/360: w/c, 2-str, single, 6-speed, 93kg to 104kg. Seat height 890mm. Originally stylish and well appointed enduro racers - but starting to look a little dated. Major cosmetic

make over for 2000 models. **Verdict:** Not the force it once was but good all the same.

TE350/400/ 410/510/570/610: (1989-on) w/c, 4-str, 4 valve single, RAL lubrication system, 6 speed, 118kgs, seat height 900mm. The original high performance thumper looks slightly old fashioned now. Still gives heaps of grunt and an eye watering top-end rush but very agricultural compared to more recent competition. Has its loyal following and proves to be a popular supermoto conversion. Factory supermoto also available. **Verdict:** Are you man enough?

TE/E 410/610: (1998-on) w/c, 4-str, 4 valve single, 6 speed, e/s, dual oil pump, balancer shaft. Externally similar to the enduro model but this is a completely different machine designed as a fully equipped and civilised trailbike. Kickstart on the right (early models only) and electric start, luggage rack, full instrumentation and a dual 'cat' exhaust makes the TE/E a well-specified if heavy and slightly less 'lary' alternative. Factory SMS supermoto also available. **Verdict:** Latin temptress with Latin temperament.

TE 250/400/450: (Late 2002-on) w/c, dohc 4-valve, 4-str e/s, 6-speed single. Took ages to finally arrive thanks to Husqvarna's recent money problems. Lightweight and well specced, the new thumpers have put the Italian factory firmly back on the enduro map. 400 has awesome top end though never really saw general production. 450 (2003) is simply ballistic. A 450SMR supermoto is also available. **Verdict:** Get your order in quick!

TE510: (2004-on) w/c, dohc, 4-valve, 4-str, e/s 6-speed single, 118kg. More weight and more power from this latest new-generation Husky open classer. Built to give Husky a bike in every enduro class, it's more suited to fast rally type events or supermoto than typical British enduro conditions. Plenty of performance promised from the 510 which is actually a true 501cc. Limited edition (1500) Centennial model available with titanium pipe and carbon fibre everywhere all matched to a retro red and polished alloy tank. Priced at a wallet straining 12.5k, the Centennial is likely to be bought by collectors rather than hardcore off-roaders. Doesn't stop us from wanting one, though. **Verdict:** Are you man/rich enough?

CH125 Enduro: a/c, sohc, 4-str, e/s single. Budget 125 Yamaha powered trailie. Built and badged as a CH. Traditional cool Husqvarna looks in a CH assembled chassis together with e-start Japanese reliability should see this cheap learner-trailie sell well.

CH250 Enduro: a/c, sohc, 4-str, e/s single. Again built and badged by CH for Husqvarna, this time using Yamaha's TT-R250 lump. The e/s and easy manners of the smooth and revvy

HUSQVARNA TE250



motor should see it sell well to UK customers for trail riding and commuting. Huskysport UK's pricing policy is aiming to undercut the TT-R by a considerable margin. **Verdict:** Good looking trailster for those on a tight budget.

HYOSUNG

XR125 (2001-on): a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, e/s single. Korean built trailbike based on an early Suzuki DR motor. The XR125 offers the first time rider a cheap and cheerful entry into the wonderful world of trail riding. **Verdict:** Not much in the way of eastern promise...

JAWA/CZ

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

and easy going trail manners.

CRF250X (2004): w/c, sohc, 4-valve, e/s single. If the MX bike's anything to go by this'll be a superb new 250 thumpette from Honda. Alloy frame and trick high revving motor should see the CRF-X go straight to the top of the class. MX kickstart only version available late '03 so some 'crossers may well be on the used market already. **Verdict:** Join the queue!

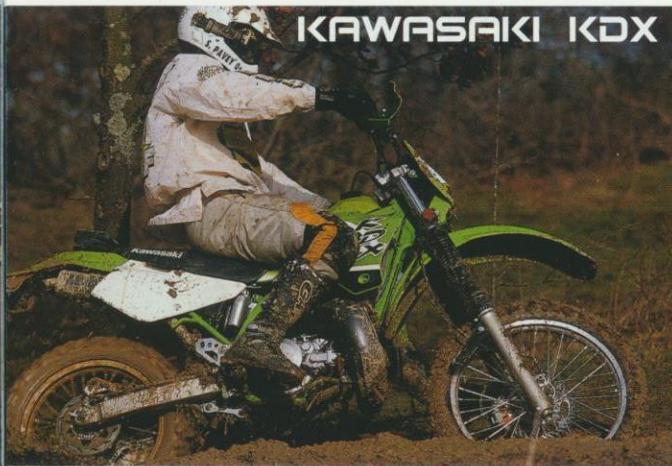
CRF450R (2001-on): w/c, sohc, 4-valve, k/s single, 45bhp, 108kg, 5-speed. Trick alloy beam framed CRF thumper makes all the right noises and comes with a fantastic Honda pedigree. Just what you'd expect from a modern thumper. MX spec only at present, but plenty have been converted into trail and enduro spec. Factory enduro version for 2004, which should come with electric start. **Verdict:** Top tackle.

HRD

A range of French built enduro bikes using Yamaha WR125 and YZ250 motors and a sensible mix of quality Euro/Japanese high spec running gear. Sadly went out of production last year.

125/250 GS: (up to 2001) w/c, 2-str, single, (6-speed 125, 5-speed 250), 118kg (wet). Paioli fork, Ohlins shock, Excel rims and Nissin brakes together with the powerful Yamaha YZ power-plant give the GS bikes a trick factory feel. **Verdict:** Sensible exotica.

KAWASAKI KDX



dards. Occasionally KIPS valve can give trouble, as can clutch and radiator. 200 also lumbered with a 17 inch rear wheel, so it's quite common to fit the 18 incher from the 125 to improve off-road tyre choice. KMX also suffered from indifferent build quality, and could be fragile off road. Pads and discs wore out quickly but low seat height is more accessible for shorties than KDX. **Verdict:** More tea vicar...?

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 a bit raucous, the first models were however lighter, lower and torquier than the later w/c models.

KDX200/220: (1989-on) w/c, 2-str, 199cc, single. Completely redesigned from a/c version with increased suspension travel, revised Uni-Track rear end, and more top end power. Went on to become an extremely popular clubman enduro bike (helped by a one-make race series) but just as happy on a green lane. 220cc version from '95-on claimed to offer more torque but it's hard to tell the difference. **Verdict:** The original clubman weapon.

KDX200/220SR: 2-str, 199/220cc, single, oil injection. Street legal Jap-market trailbike version of the venerable KayDeeEx. Looks the part but rarely impresses, and in truth there are far better Jap trailies. **Verdict:** Looks can be deceiving.

Super Sherpa 250: (1998-on) a/c, 4-str, single, e/s, low seat grey import trailie in the mould of the Serow. Strange retro/military styling but with modern running gear and a less vibey motor than the Yamaha, makes the Sherpa a viable alternative for shorties. **Verdict:** Smooth green Serow.

KDX250R: w/c, 2-str, single. Rather large for a 250 enduro bike but plenty of power from its lusty motor. Only officially imported for a couple of years during the early '90s.

KDX250SR: Street legal oil injection trailbike version of the above. Good well damped suspension at both ends and more power from the harsher motor than the CRM makes the 250SR

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 & trail. KX250F 'crosser promises to spawn a similar enduro model late '04. KLX400R powered by a DR-Z motor follows a collaboration with Suzuki to share development costs and resources but for some reason not an official import. Look out for more shared yellow/green off-road projects in the future, including a rumoured Kawasaki version of the V-Strom.

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, very cheap and cheerful. 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: w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single. 98kg. Very able little trail bike powered by reed valve and KIPS power valve engine, which can easily be de-restricted.

KMX200: (1987-92) w/c, 2-str, 191cc, single, 6-speed, 100kg. Big-bore version of the 125 which makes a more capable all-rounder. Though not as reliable as the 125 and when used hard off-road had a propensity for boiling over. Suspension could also feel pretty soggy by modern stan-

the boy racer of the trailbike world. Oil tank a swine to get at and motor is not as robust as the CRM. **Verdict:** Fast 'n' furious.

KL250: a/c, 4-str, sohc, 246cc, single. Late Seventies twin shock trail bike derived from the 200cc road bike commuter. Pretty basic but also pretty reliable, and extremely frugal.

KLR250: (1987-on) w/c, 4-str, sohc, 249cc, single, 120kgs (dry). Reliable if rather unexciting trailie which goes better than it looks (just as well). Despite the complexity of a 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-road. Revived as a budget trailie alongside more expensive KLX having been dropped a few years before. **Verdict:** Excellent starter trailbike with good manners.

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

KLX250R/S/SR: (1994-on) w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, 249cc, single. The four-stroke equivalent of the KDX, with similar perimeter chassis. Looks the business with handling and suspension to match, but performance of the street-legal S (e-start) trail version is a bit flat. The lighter enduro version is a lot more satisfying to ride, but early ones had carburetion difficulties and were difficult to start when hot. All need to be revved hard to produce their power and are quite tall in the saddle. SR grey import offers a slightly better suspension set up than the S model. **Verdict:** Good but don't stall it.

KLX300R: (1997-on) w/c, 4-str, 4 valve, dohc 298cc single. Despite broadly similar spec to the KLX250 on which it is based, the 300 is a completely different animal to ride. More grunt, more top end and a superb sweet handling chassis makes this bike a serious and svelte alternative to the XR400. Low pegs and wide frame rails are a problem in ruts and the 300s can also be difficult to start when hot, but otherwise worth searching out. **Verdict:** Much underrated thumper.

KLX400R: (2003-on) w/c, 4-str, dohc, single, e/s. The tie-up between Kawasaki and Suzuki produces a green DR-Z. Not officially imported.

KLE500: w/c, 4-str, 8-valve, dohc, 498cc, parallel twin, 178kgs. Slightly oddly styled 'town trailie' which shares its engine with the EN500/GPZ500. The revvy little KLE makes reasonable power but is far less trail-friendly than the torquier Transalp and more tiring on the road with its minimal fairing. Quite fast for the money and pretty good around town, but definitely not going to suit everyone's taste or backside. **Verdict:** Strange hybrid.

KLR600: (1984-on) w/c, 4-str, dohc, 564cc, sin-

KLE500



gle, 164kgs. Big banger trail bike which started out with a kickstart but became the first big trailie to be fitted with an electric start. Some suffered from 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:** Reasonable thumper.

KLR650: (1987-on) w/c, 4-str, dohc, 651cc, single, 171kgs. Bored out version of the 600. Like the KLR250, 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.

KLR650 & (Tengai): (1989-95) 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-fairing homage to the genre.

KLX650 (& R): (1993-on) w/c, 4-str, dohc, 651cc, single, 153kgs. Bigger version of the 250 with the same drop-dead 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 unit at max compression with expensive consequences. No bashplate either. Not as torquy 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(ish) but not much plonkability. Grey import KLX650R Enduro version was much meaner but overly wide tank and excessive weight meant it couldn't match the less sophisticated XR6. **Verdict:** Good but not quite good enough.

KRAMIT

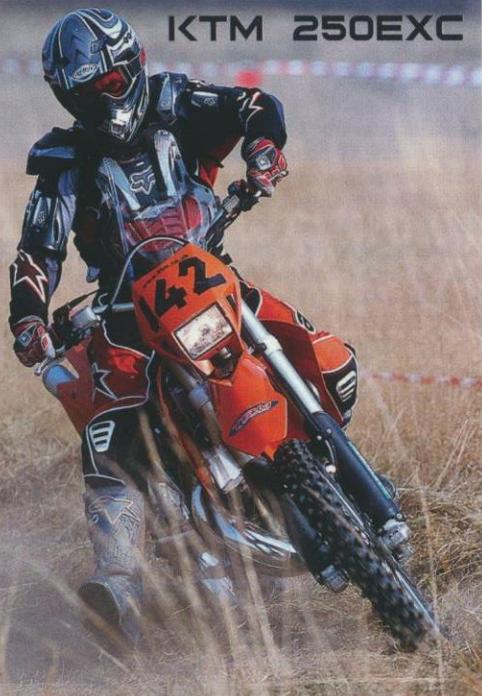
Small Italian manufacturer building enduro and supermoto bikes. Using high quality components, these rare machines offer more than their fair share of Latin style. At least they did before production of the Rotax motors stopped during 2002.

250GS: Rotax, w/c, 2-str, single, adjustable power valve, counter balancer, left side kickstarter, 6-speed, 107kgs. Drop-dead gorgeous styling together with high quality kit (Ohlins, Marzocchi, Excel) plus alloy fuel tank and carbon-fibre airbox and panels give the Kramit a works bike look. Slim and fast but slightly too specialised for some. 17" rimmed supermoto also available. 250GS now out of production, expect a big-bore thumper soon(ish). **Verdict:** Quality alternative, with looks to die for.

KTM

EXC: 2T & 4T enduro bikes. **EGS:** street legal versions of enduro bikes. **LC4:** four-stroke trail bikes. **SC:** four-stroke competition bikes. A major player in the off-road enduro/trail/rally scene. Older

KTM 250EXC



KTM's are reasonably abundant, and while most are competition bikes, there are a few trail bikes as well.

125/200/250/300/360/380 EXC: w/c, 2-str, 5 speed (125/200, 6 speed), 96 to 104kg (claimed), seat height 925mm. 97 bikes-on are quite different to earlier machines. Early ones were good, later ones even better. All of the two-stroke enduro racers are blessed with quick, torquey motors and fine handling chassis. This coupled with superb attention to detail and reasonable build quality makes the Austrian bikes extremely popular nowadays. 360 (and the subsequent 380) now long out of production. Later bikes (97-on) feature hydraulic clutches narrower riding positions and linkless PDS rear suspension (early PDS not so good). Modern 125 & 200s differ only in capacity, and use a smaller lighter chassis to the larger bikes. 250 is the racer's choice, 300 makes a great (but rapid) sport trailie for those that like to ride race bikes on the trail. In '98 200EGS introduced in UK (alongside EXC enduro version), which featured full road legal kit, oil injection, softer springing, taller seat and a rack. But 2000 model became an EXC (GS) and kept only the oil injection. All bikes tough, fast and prone to head-shake. Latest '04 bikes seem better suspended for enduro work and come with smoother rear bodywork plus other detail changes. New 250 motor is loosely based on the 03 MX lump, but is an absolute gem. **Verdict:** The racer's choice.

LC2 125/Sting: w/c, 2-str, single, 6 speed, oil injection, e/s, cat exhaust, 121kgs, seat height 860mm. Trailbike with a top specification. Brembo, Paioli, Dell'Orto etc make the LC2 a cut above the average 125. Sting 17" rim supermoto version also available with 'Duke' style ergos. Went out of production 1999. **Verdict:** Worth searching out.

350/400/620SC: w/c, 4-str, 4-valve single, 5 speed, 121kgs, seat height 940mm. Kickstart only competition bike that was the mainstay of the KTM range for the last decade. Power, stability and dependability are the LC4 powered SC's strong points. Left-side kickstart and weight are the downside. Out of production since 1999, still produces the goods but shows its age against more up to date tackle.

250 EXC 4T (2002-on): w/c, 4-valve, 4-str, e/s, 6-speed, single. Sleeved down version of the awesome 400/520cc thumpers. The 250 version suffers from carrying the same weight as the more powerful bikes, with early versions slightly reluctant to rev. Later bikes (March '02-on) a vast improvement on the original, but the Austrians are working on a new DOHC motor. Excellent build quality and comes better specced than the

opposition. **Verdict:** To be replaced next year?

400/450/520/525EXC (MXC)4T: (2000-on) w/c, 4-str, 4 valve single, e/s. 112kgs. Awesome power in a class leading lightweight chassis gives the EXC a competitive edge. Quality components coupled with the usual KTM attention to detail means that the bike sold out within weeks of its 2000 launch, and now you simply can't move for orange thumpers on the UK enduro scene. Updates for 2004 include smoother rear bodywork, the reintroduction of the much-loved EXC400 featuring the newer long stroke motor, and hopefully a cure for the leaky fork seals of the 03 bikes. MXC (525 only) designed for desert racing and comes with big tank and electric cooling fan. **Verdict:** Serious middleweight race thumpers!

400EGS: w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, single, e/s. 139kgs, seat height 900mm. Trail bike version of the old LC4 powered enduro bike, but with the added civility of a balancer shaft and e-start. 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. Major revisions for 1998 models LSE low seat (870mm) and supermoto version available. **Verdict:** Tough, dependable, heavy.

620/640EGS: w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, single. As above but more so. Major restyle for 640cc models for 1998 and 2001, LSE low seat model and supermoto version also available. Adventure (& R) 620/640: (1997-on) w/c, 4-valve single. 166kgs, 940mm seat height. KTM's attempt to cash in on their successful rally raid bike, the Adventure is a street legal rally replica featuring a 28L tank and a rally style twin headlamp fairing complete with trip computer/ GPS hook up facility. Early versions featured twin low level exhaust and no centre stand facility, later versions (98-on) came with high level single pipe and restyle. **Verdict:** You too can be Kini!

Adventure 950 (& S): (2003-on)

KTM 450EXC



w/c, 4-str, V-twin. V-twin monster trailie. Base model is the more road oriented of the two. S-model off-road version with longer travel suspension and rally kit options, though dropped for '04 (now special order only in Dakar rep colours). By far the best off-road performance in class, and with purposeful styling to match. Clutch recall should've been sorted on all used bikes, check if buying second-hand. Engine will also feature in new Duke 950 road bike. **Verdict:** Crazy Horses.



KTM ADVENTURE 950S

KYMCO

Stryker 125: a/c, 2-valve, 4-str, 5-speed. Old Honda motor slotted into Malaysian chassis. More for tarmac learner than young dirt junkie. Acres of plastic bodywork and humpy styling look like an accident between a TDM and a Mitsubishi Galant. Unfortunately without either vehicle's performance...

MAICO

Unbeknown to many, the famous marque still produces bikes in the Netherlands, albeit in limited numbers. Slightly dated styling gives the bikes limited appeal, as does the claimed 67hp that the 500cc stroker spits out!

MALAGUTI

Monte 50: (1975-77), a/c, 2-str, single, pre-mix, 6-speed, 50ccs of frantic, 9bhp screaming fun. Fitted with a full sized enduro chassis and running gear the 16er-legal Monte offered the 70s teenager real Italian racer performance unfortunately at the expense of reliability. **Verdict:** The best and worse of the Italian bike industry rolled into one.

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 kick-start. 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 kick-start. Sold very slowly and remained in production for a number of years - cheap for an Italian bike. **Verdict:** Strangely alluring.

MOTO-GUZZI

V65TT: a/c, 4-str, ohv, V-twin. Middleweight Guzzi trailie of average ability. Hard work on the

MOTO-ROMA MRX125



dirt... and on the road. Not many around.

Verdict: Not many around... for good reason! **Quota 1000ie:** 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 the Italians do have a sense of humour!

MOTO-ROMA

Motorhispania is a Spanish company with a range of small capacity bikes, quads and scooters. Moto-Roma is a brand name for the UK marketplace, rebadging other manufacturers' machines. **Furia Cross:** w/c, 2-str, oil injection, 49.7cc single, 6-speed. Capable little learner-legal (16) trailie. Well screwed together and easy enough to derestrict. Conventional Paiolis replaced the

USD Shows of the '02 bike. **Verdict:** Teenage trail tackle.

MRX125: a/c, 4-str, sohc, e/s, single Well specced learner four-stroke trailie powered by the ubiquitous Yammie TT-R125 lump in a very similar (read absolutely identical) vein to the Rieju.

MuZ

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 of the road MZs are robust enough to be used out on the trails. Cheap and cheerful.

Verdict: Worth a trip around the Bloc (not).

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:** Proof that the Germans have a sense of humour! **Baghira/Mastiff:** w/c, 4-str, 5-valve single, e/s. Yamaha XTZ660 powered and downright weird styling gives the MuZ Baghira and Mastiff supermoto a good punchy and reliable motor as well as a unique profile. Sort of capable off-road but much happier on the blacktop where the Yam motor shines. **Verdict:** German Rubik's Cube!

PRAGA

Czech built enduro, trail and supermoto bikes with reasonably high spec components but old technology motors - at bargain prices. A mid-range 450 is planned but hasn't broken cover yet. **250ED:** w/c, 2-str single, oil injection. Fully road kitted trailie with low compression engine based on a works Jawa lump from the '80s. Solidly built but heavy for a stroker and slightly dated looks. High comp, pre-mix enduro version also available. **Verdict:** Two-wheeled Skoda. **610:** w/c, 4-str single. Styled same as 2-T with engine similar in design to old Husky and 'Berg thumpers.

RIEJU

Spanish manufacturer of small bikes and scooters. **RR50/125:** (1997-on) w/c, 2-str single, 6-speed, oil injection, 89kgs. Good looking Minarelli-powered mini trailie that can be great fun both on and off-road. 50 has very basic suspension but still performs surprisingly well in the dirt. Even rarer (full-size) 125 has up-rated running gear but faces much stiffer competition.

Verdict: Cheap 'n' cheerful...

MRX125 (2002): a/c, 4-str, sohc 2-valve, e/s single. The Spanish factory has really gone to town with the styling of its new Yamaha-powered MRX. Beam frame and Showa suspension make the bike look much more serious than it really is. A similar SRX supermoto version is also available. **Verdict:** Chip shop racer.

SACHS

ZX125/ZZ125 (2001-on): w/c, 2-str, single, e/s, electronic power valve, 6-speed. The German made Sachs ZX125 is a competent and well built (if slightly overweight) alternative to the usual offerings. Weight penalty makes for modest performance, but Sachs impresses with solid engineering and fine handling. Supermoto version also available. **Verdict:** Teutonic trailie...

SHERCO

French/Spanish alliance and popular amongst the feet-up trials posse. Sherco are seriously committed to expanding their off-road range. Latest four-stroke 450i is their first foray into the enduro world. Just hope it goes as well as it looks.

125 CityCorp: 123cc, a/c, sohc, 4-valve, 4-str, e/s and kickstart, 6-speed. Formerly an HRD bike, this new Sherco model uses the tried and tested formula of putting someone else's motor in your own frame. Off-set shock looks a little odd, but low seat height and smooth styling are a plus. **Enduro 4.5i (2004-on):** 448cc, l/c, sohc, 4-valve, fuel-injected, 4-str, e/s and kickstart, 6-speed, 109kg (claimed). Despite a strong resemblance to a KTM motor the latest addition to the thumper market is Sherco's handiwork. Featuring fuel injection and a conventional chrome-moly steel frame, the 4.5i sports Kayaba-Paioli suspension front and rear and Spanish made AJP brakes. The French/Spanish concern has entered the toughest section of the marketplace so it'd better be good.

SUZUKI DR350



low-level chrome front mud-guard.

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: a/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 if cheap enough.

TS125R: w/c, 2-str, 124cc, single.

Later version of above with power valve fitted that just needs connecting up to get full power.

TS200R: w/c, 2-str, 199cc, single. Grey import had its own French championship. As above but with more poke and better spec (alloy rims etc). Relatively popular Jap import.

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. Not as nice as the 175.

PE400: a/c, 2-str, single. As above but with more power than most people could use in this chassis off-road. Not as nice as the 250. **Verdict:** Wild.

RMX250: w/c, 2-str, single, 5-speed, 113kgs, seat height 955mm. Enduro bike based on early RM moto-crosser, the RMX evolved slowly to become a regular sight in the enduro paddock. A tad heavy by modern standards the well suspended and grunty RMX is more KDX than CRE - but makes a good racy trailie thanks to plush suspension, 12L tank and comfy seat. Unfortunately for enduro fans, it never followed the RM's line of development. Cosmetics can soon look shabby but basically a sound bike - secondhand ones incredibly cheap. Power valves can give problems, so maintenance is essential. **Verdict:** Lots of bike for the money.

RMX250S: w/c, 2-str, single, oil injection, 5-speed, 121kgs, seat height 895mm. Fully street legal version of the above with metal tank and indicators etc. Decent suspension for a trailie, with slightly more power than a CRM - motor can be vibey though, and can have indifferent build quality. **Verdict:** Suzuki's CRM!

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 only even more so.

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.

DR200 Djebel: o-a/c, 4-str, sohc, single, e/s. Japanese home market version of above with more street mods (including electric boot), and less trailability.

DR200AE: o-a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. A truly hideous looking farm bike built for NZ sheep farmers to carry their girlfriend back to the farm! **Verdict:** Hurry up or all the pretty ones will be taken!

DR250: o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, 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. Big headlamp Djebel version available. **Verdict:** Well worth searching out.

DR250 (& Djebel): o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, e-start single: Later version of above with much more modern dohc engine and lekky boot - most had electronic dials. Good suspension, nice styling and easy to live with. Fine trailie for those that like quarter litre

thumpers - Djebel version came with big headlamp. **Verdict:** Mini DR-Z?

DR350S: 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. Kickstart only (until 95), and high seat height rules it out for sub five and a half footers. Engine feels unburstable and will rev and rev though some have been known to drop valves occasionally. **Verdict:** The definitive trail bike of the 90s.

DR350: o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single. Enduro version of above which is slightly 'harder' all round. Different carb, stiffer suspension, altered geometry, simpler lights and no dials - but no 'leccy start versions available. **Verdict:** Cheap thrills!

DR400S: 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. Watch out for things shaking loose like engine bolts or perhaps your leg. **Verdict:** Shake, baby shake.

DR-Z400S: (2000-on) w/c, 4-str, dohc, 4-valve, single, e/s, 5-speed, seat height 935mm. The replacement for the DR350, a worthy successor to the much loved oil/air cooled trailie. Fully equipped for the street, the e-start only trail ver-

SUZUKI

TS: a/c then w/c, 2-str, trail. **PE:** a/c, 2-str, enduro. **SP:** a/c, 4-str, trail. **RMX:** 1/c 2-str enduro & trail. **DR:** o-a/c 4-str, trail & enduro. **DR-Z:** 1/c 4-str, trail & enduro. New four-stroke 250 crosser will hopefully follow Honda's lead and produce an enduro version, but an updated 450cc replacement for the DR-Z is what's really needed. Will it come in 2005, when we're likely to see an RM-Z450 MXer?

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 - thank goodness.

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

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

SUZUKI DR-Z400S



TM 250



the best (and most sensible) of the DRs, but a bit overgeared and heavy. Can be awkward to start when hot till you get the knack. **Verdict:** Good secondhand buy at the right price.

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. Last version of above without the half-fairing or twin exhausts. Still

sion has a superbly versatile liquid cooled lump that pulls well off the bottom and makes reasonable power all the way up to the red line. Suspension offers masses of adjustment for the compulsive fiddler (but lacks grease nipples). Over-geared and a tad porky for serious off-roading and the general fit and finish could be improved upon, but overall the 400s takes the DR-Z range a step in the right direction. Starting to show its age a bit now, though as what is essentially Britain's biggest selling trailie it seems plenty of people like 'em. But have Suzuki shot themselves in the foot by supplying the 400 mill to CCM? **Verdict:** Hugely popular all-rounder.

DR-Z400 (S E): (2000-on) w/c, 4-str, dohc, 4-valve single, e/s (E version), 5-speed, 127kg, seat height 945mm. Enduro version of the above with far less in the way of road going niceties but more power/suspension, flat-slide carb, simpler electrics, altered geometry and ridiculously noisy (baffle-less) exhaust. Huge amounts of grunt means you're never stuck for power but the suspension feels soft for a race bike. Rare kickstart versions are about 4 kilos lighter, but not so desirable. Cheesy finish and an exhaust system that'll wake the dead - as standard it's too loud for enduro use!! Oh, and watch out for the output shaft seal (behind the front sprocket) failing and losing the engine oil. Essentially the same motor as the CCM 404 but in a worse handling package. **Verdict:** Time for an update?

DR500S: o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, single.

Foreign market, bigger-bore version of the 400. None known in the UK (thank God).

DR600S: o-a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, 589cc, single, 136kgs. Classic big banger with modern mono-shock rear end and balancer shaft motor. One of

over-geared, still rather tall, but with the best suspension in class. Not very refined and feels a bit cheap, but definitely a step 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?

DL1000/650 V-Strom (2002-on): w/c, dohc, 8-valve, V-twin. Monster trailie using detuned TL1000 motor. Excellent handling but cast wheels and limited off-road ability make this more tourist than trailie. Oddball looks are typical of the class. New 650 version should prove to be a top seller, less weight and bulk together with a lighter price tag to boot. **Verdict:** Stick to the hard stuff.

TM MOTO

Small Italian concern with a long history of getting big horsepower out of small two-strokes. Extremely well equipped enduro racers with high quality running gear, but not particularly suited to the novice rider. Pink plastics up to 1996

ensure cheap secondhand prices! Completely restyled perimeter frame design in 1999. And more recently a range of high revving thumpers has joined the range.

80/125/250/300 Enduro: w/c, 2-str, single, 6 speed (300 5 speed), 85 to 102kg, 10.5 litre tank (optional alloy tank). High quality Ohlins and Paioli suspension matched to a stable sweet handling chassis and big horsepower motors makes for a good enduro package. 125s can feel peaky to ride, but engines are strong and spares relatively cheap. Big and small wheel 80s are available.

Verdict: Are you committed enough?

250/400/450/530 4T (2001-on): w/c, dohc 4-valve, 4-str single. Another new range of Euro thumpers entered the enduro scene in late 2001. The Italian TM factory put all their race experience into making the new four-strokes just as competitive as their fiery strokers. Ohlins, Paioli, Excel etc means that the beautifully styled new bikes are immaculately kitted out as you would expect. Early models kickstart only, later versions with both. 250 not the best in class, though starts very easily either with the button or by kickstarter. 400 more focussed and harder to start with the leg - feels like the early WR-F but with a better chassis. 450 new for 2004. **Verdict:** Italian temptresses require committed partners...

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. Mk2 fuel injected version much improved with lower CofG and neater styling. 2001 saw the latest 995 lump from the Daytona sports bike fitted. **Verdict:** Rip-snorting roadster!

VERTEMATI

The Vertemati brothers developed their high performance gear-driven sohc thumper motor together with superbike builders Bimota. Following a short link-up with VOR, the brothers have gone on their own again to produce a more expensive development of the original. Superb attention to detail on these exotic enduro thumpers, though occasionally let down by nig-

VERTEMATI E450



gling faults. 250 version yet to see light of day but it can't be far off now.

V492/400: w/c, 4-str, 4 valve, gear driven sohc, 5 speed, 116kg, seat height 940mm. More suited to serious competition use rather than more casual trail/play riding. Weird non-primary kickstart is forward acting, but works great once you get the hang of it. Needs to be ridden hard to get the best from the chassis and motor.

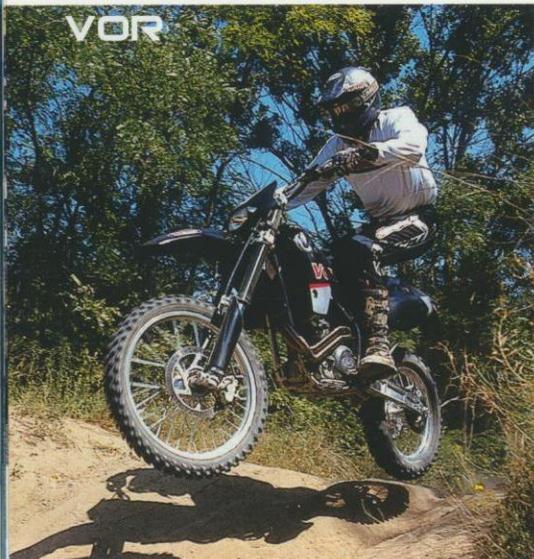
Verdict: The Parmaggiano Reggiani of thumpers. **E450/501/570 (2002-on):** w/c, 4-str, 4 valve, gear driven sohc, 6-speed, 116kg (claimed). Latest bikes from the Vert bros much more common in supermoto guise, where they seem to work much better. Underseat tank is fine on tarmac, but doesn't seem to help the handling off-road. Weird kickstart replaced with electric boot. 570 enduro is factory order only.

VOR

Offshoot of the original Vertemati concern, now a serious producer in their own right manufacturing exotic gear-driven sohc thumpers. Bikes aimed at thumper pilots who want something a little different. Up to the end of 2001 VORs were all kickstart only (with strange forward-acting kicker). Redesigned for 2002 with more mainstream look, oil-pumped engines, perimeter frames and electric starting. Planned 250 motor can't be too far away. Supermoto versions are also available.

400/450/503 enduro: w/c, 4-str, 4-valve gear

VOR



driven sohc, 5 speed. Powerful motors coupled with high quality running gear makes the VOR an exotic alternative for the serious racer. Fantastic attention to detail, but no primary starting. A factory supermoto is also available. New engines and chassis in launched in 2002 with a 450cc option and electric start. **Verdict:** Sensible exotica?

YAMAHA

DT: a/c & w/c, 2-str, trail. **IT:** a/c, 2-str, enduro. **WR:** w/c, 2-str and 4-str, enduro. **XT:** a/c, 4-str, trail. **TT:** a/c, 4-str, enduro. **TTR:** a/c, 4-str, trail. **TW:** a/c, 4-str, trail/fun. **BW:** a/c, 4-str, trail/fun. **DT50/80:** a/c, 2-str, single. Dependable 16-er special that changed little throughout the years. Until now. Latest 2004 model water-pumper European built DT50 features trick digi-dash and big bike looks and feel. Also available in supermoto trim. **TY50P:** a/c, 2-str, single. The original Yam trail 50. Early unrestricted versions came with moped legal pedals! Not many around now. **Verdict:** Field bike special. **DT125/175MX:** 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:** One of the best trailbikes ever.

DT125LC/R/E: (1987-on) w/c, 2-str, single. The DT came of age with the adoption of water-cooling, motocross styling, and most important of all, a power valve. Lost some of its torque but gained a revvier motor and lots more top end together with sophisticated suspension front and rear. In 12bhp restricted form they're easy to ride, but with the adjustable power valve kit fitted, even better! Later models ('96-on) harder to derestrict, almost to the extent that it's not worth bothering. Although in the fashion stakes they've been overtaken by trickier looking tackle, they were still top the sales chart until the latest Euro 2 emissions regs saw the original DTR pensioned off. New '04 DT125E variant is a worthy replacement and features an electric start as standard equipment.

Verdict: The best 125 trailie.

DT200(R): w/c, 2-str, single. Grey import big bore version of the DTR125 with slightly higher spec (alloy rims etc). Extra oomph makes it easier to ride and altogether more useable than the 125.

Verdict: Competent all rounder.

DT200WR: w/c, 2-str, YPVS, oil injection, single. 115kgs, seat height 895mm. Grey import trailie version of the WR200 enduro racer. Slim, well suspended light weight trailbike with a superb quick revving and powerful motor. Not as civilised as a CRM either on or off-road but addictive top end surge more than makes up for it. **Verdict:** Cheap thrills.

DT230 Lanza: (1998-on) w/c, 2-str YPVS, oil injection, single, electric and kickstart, 125kg (claimed), seat height 875mm. Unusually civilised trailie with superb grunty motor which has the benefit of an electric boot. Let down by an overweight chassis and less than perfect suspension, though still not a bad bike.

Verdict: Well worth a look.

DT250MX: a/c, 2-str, single. Late Seventies cantilever shocked version of the smaller bikes, more power but less agility.

DT400MX: a/c, 2-str, single. Hairy chested version of above, not many left now - thank God.

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

IT425/465/490: a/c, 2-str, single. Fire-breathing, hard to tame, monster stroker for serious enduro freaks. Only for those with lots of skill or very

large gonads. Not the most reliable bike in the world. **Verdict:** Melts goggles at 50 paces.

WR200: w/c, 2-str, single. Brilliant clubman enduro bike with light-weight chassis and 'soft-tune' engine, but plenty of power and largish tank. Easy to ride with a nice light front end. **Verdict:** Modern classic.

WR250: w/c, 2-str, single. Enduro version of the YZ motocrosser but with wider ratio gearbox and slightly softer tune. All WRs make great enduro bikes. Early ones had big tanks, but the later the model, the better they are. Last model (98 & 99 & some Y2k ones!) the best of the bunch - still very much in demand.

Verdict: Possibly the best 2-stroke enduro bike. Sorely missed!

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

TDR250: w/c, 2-str, parallel twin. A TZR250 in trail/SM 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.

KT125: a/c, 4-str, single. Learner legal motorcycle without the need for restriction! **Verdict:** Reliable but intensely boring.

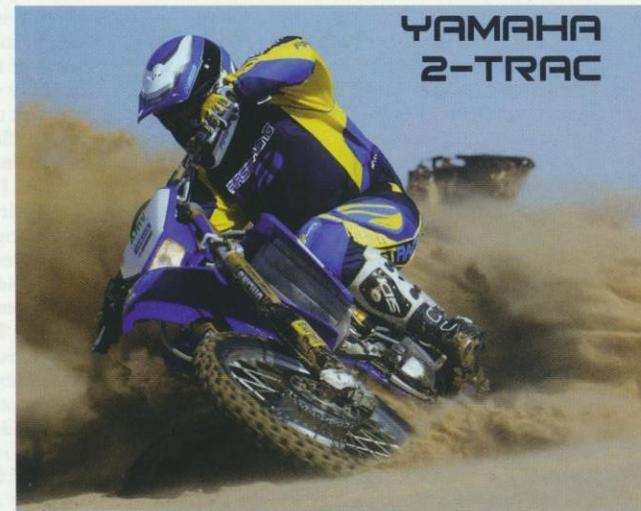
KT225 Serow: a/c, 4-str, single. Small but perfectly formed grey import trail bike with kick and e/s versions. Light, manoeuvrable, and easy to ride. Brilliant attention to detail such as mini indicators and sensibly placed grab handles marks this out as a superb green laner. Small engine needs to be worked hard especially on the road to get decent performance, but it's a small price to pay for such a good bike. A steady development over the years means that the Serow is still a superb buy. **Verdict:** Makes sense.

KT250: a/c, 4-str, 249cc, sohc, single. Early Eighties Cantilever shock trailie of some note. Light and strong with

YAMAHA WR250F



balancer shaft engine, they can still be found for not much money and make an excellent second-hand buy if in good condition though occasional early ones suffered valve problems. Nice and low though not very fast. **Verdict:** Good all-rounder. **XT250 (1989-on):** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, single. Foreign market mini XT350 with all the benefits but slightly lighter and smaller. Rare. **TT250-R/Raid:** a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, single, e/s. Modern mini-thumper trailie that is as civilised as it is competent. Revvy motor and a reasonable spread of power, but metal tank and excess weight a drawback. Watch out for restricted header pipes on later Aussie spec bikes. Big tank/big headlamp Raid version more suited to tarmac. Later all blue plastic tanked (2000-on)

YAMAHA
2-TRAC

YAMAHA XTZ750



Baby Blue is the colour...

WR400F/426F/450F: (1997-on), w/c, 4-str, dohc, five valve single, 5-speed, 121kg.

Yamaha's latest generation of enduro thumpers promised much when launched. Fantastic, powerful high revving lump coupled to a decent chassis made the Yam a quick but stable enduro weapon. Early bikes could be troublesome starters (particularly when hot) and the quality of finish wasn't up to Yamaha's best. Much improved 2000 model featured slimmer ergos, tweaks to the steering geometry and suspension. The motor also got a few carb and ignition mods to help improve

model has both kick and electric starters, and revised geometry and suspension. Officially imported from '03. **Verdict:** Mr Nice guy.

XT350: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, single. Plain Jane trailie that's better than it looks. Early versions boasted 31bhp (claimed), 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 shows it was good, but demand for secondhand ones ensures prices stay fairly high.

Verdict: Carry-on trailing.

TT225: a/c, 4-str, 2 valve, single. Kick start only enduro/play bike version of the brilliant Serow built for US market. Basic spec, but nice and low and great fun to ride - unfortunately starting to show its age now.

TT350: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, dohc, single. Grey import enduro version of the XT, with improved suspension, more power, and more basic instrumentation and lighting. Looking good for the trail now. **Verdict:** Not bad.

WR250F (2001-on): w/c, dohc, 5-valve 249cc single, k/s, 5-speed, 105kg. This is without a shadow of doubt one of the best 250/4 available to date. Superb quick-revving motor makes more power than some 400s and simply demands to be caned to within an inch of its life. This bike was so good when it was released on the dirtbike-buying public, that it sent all the other manufacturers scurrying back to their respective drawing boards. All that and a rolling chassis to match. Electric start for 2003 saw it edge even further ahead of the competition, but how it'll stand up against the CRF250X is another matter. **Verdict:**

hot starting. The fit and finish were also improved. 426F offers lots more go but little extra torque. Latest 450 version promised even more but is let down by its feeling of size and weight. Electric start features (at last) but the awesomely powerful motor makes the 450 almost too fast for most. **Verdict:** Muscle Machine.

XT500: a/c, 4-str, sohc, single. The original big banger trailie that started it all. Produced for years and years, even when superseded 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 it's 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.

XT550 (1982-86): 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, some had gearbox problems. Not many around now. **Verdict:** Not as good as the original.

XT600 Tenere Mkl, II & III: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, single. Superb Paris-Dakar inspired big trailie with unburstable engine, supple suspension, mammoth tank and comfy saddle. Loved by overlanders the world over thanks to its huge touring range. Later versions inherited a full fairing and twin headlights. 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, but high mileage ones break second gear. **Verdict:** Best of the big Yams.

KT600E (500): (1989-2003 R.I.P) a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, e/s, single. No frills version of the much loved XT. Heavier and more sluggish than the original thanks to steel rims and generally lower spec - still available new. Unsophisticated especially in the suspension dept, but thoroughly crashable and respectable plodder. Heaps of grunt, but pricey for what they are. 500cc version in Greece. **Verdict:** Not as good as the original.

TT600E: a/c, 4-str. 4-valve single, e/s. Much higher spec (Ohlins, etc) Belgarda Yamaha-built model using the same old air-cooled XT lump. Grey import only. **Verdict:** Nicer than an XT!

TT600: a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, single. Grey import enduro version, with off-road 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 for at the right price.

TT600R/E: (1998-on) a/c, 4-str, 4-valve, single. High spec running gear with a stone age powerplant. Tall and early grey import models kickstart only. Italian built serious trailie but certainly not a race bike. Ohlins, Paioli, Brembo etc give the TT600R more show than go. New for 2003 is an officially imported lecky start E model to take over where the old XT6 left off. Here to stay, or simply filling in until the XT660R arrives?

Verdict: Nice face, shame about the legs!

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 but plenty of power. Less crashworthy than the first and the taller saddle may put some off. Nevertheless eminently trailable (in the dry). Twin headlamps 96-on.

Verdict: Another good Yam.

KT660R: w/c, 4-str, 4-valve, sohc, fuel-injected single. New model for 2004 season, the latest Italian built XT features a bulky under frame twin exhaust set-up complete with some extra kilos to lug through the mud. Not that too many will find their way off-road. Promises to make a great commuter trailie.

XTZ750 Super Tenere: (1989-96) 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. Also known to lose second gear. Genuinely fast and not too bad off-road especially in the dry, but the standard exhaust is rather weird (catching on ruts). Decent suspension, but a bit bouncy. **Verdict:** A good try.

TDM850: (1991-on) w/c, 4-str, 10-valve, dohc, parallel twin. 'New sports' road bike with trail styling developed from the XTZ750 but with much grander 850cc lump. Lower seat height, much quieter engine and better brakes and handling. Early versions had appallingly clunky gearbox. Much improved from '97 onwards, fresh styling and updates to the gearbox. New updated 900cc version for 2002. Not a true trail bike but no less trailable than the Triumph Tiger.

Verdict: Brilliant roadster.

TW200/125: 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 on early models. Trendy 125cc UK model (learner legal) gets a much needed front disc, but needs an extra gear. Suspension very basic and tyres can be expensive. **Verdict:** Strangely attractive.

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

Verdict: Sand sled.

BW350: a/c, 4-str, single, e/s. Hairy-bummed version of above using XT350 lump.

Verdict: No thanks.

YAMAHA
XT600

PUT A LID ON IT



Grex - not a helmet manufacturer that we feature within these pages very often, and perhaps with good reason. At first glance this 'GO5' lid looks to be reasonable fare for a bargain (£59.99) helmet. You get removable cheek pads, a 'sanitized' lining, the choice of three colourschemes (blue/black, red/black, anthracite/black), large goggle retaining pads, and some reasonable sized venting. But you also get some rather dated styling, a fiddly to adjust peak, some weird (unlaquered) graphics, and worst of all a rather heavy shell. Yep, although the Grex is made from Lexan (that's plastic to you and I) it still tips the scales at a not inconsiderable 1460g. Hmm. What's more, the chin-bar is incredibly flexible and appears to be a separate moulding from the shell.

The sub-£100 helmet market seems to be growing in quality, though the Grex GO5 (despite its ACU gold approval) is a long way off the best of the bunch. Should you want more details, give Tran Am a ring on 01425 620580.

STAND PROUD

Whipp's are an Australian company (though we won't hold that against 'em) producing a large range of heavy-duty dirt bike hardware - bike racks, bashplates, fender braces, all hewn from gen-u-whine antipodean alloy. And this contraption you see before you is one of their lift-up stands. Clearly it differs from a regular stand by having only three legs, but that's not to say that it's any less stable. It also sets itself apart from the competition by having an adjustable (rubber-coated) platform, to suit different bikes' ground clearance. This means that it'll suit enduro, trail, trials and supermoto machines, where

lifting a bike onto a high stand can be a complete pain in the Walamaloo.

Unlike many other lift-up stands, the Whipp's stand is raised using a cylinder which slides over a vertical shaft, rather than the more common 'roller' method. This should mean that it is far more robust (we've broken plenty of those regular stands), though it does require lubing every so often to ensure free and easy movement. However, you should be able to get plenty of leverage on that long lifting arm (which rocks over-centre), to raise even the heaviest trailie with ease.

Okay, we like the fact that the stand is good and strong, but it also looks... well, a bit agricultural really. Big slabs of metal, joined with (good) thick welds, the finishing is limited to rounding-off the edges and more than a few logos. Function over form, for sure. We also think that a slightly larger platform for the bike might be worthwhile, along with a piece of non-slip rubber on the pedal of the lifting arm. Oh, and although two of the legs are removable for easier storage, we reckon it'd be neater if they simply folded flush or came with Q/D fasteners. 'Cos at the end of the day, it's bad enough having to spanner on your bike, let alone on your stand as well!

That said the three-legged Whipp's stand is a bit of an icon in Aussie dirt-biking circles and we reckon it's because it combines toughness with no-nonsense simplicity. We're going to be using this one for a while so we'll let you know how it stands up to regular TBM abuse. In the meantime, if you fancy a Whipp's stand you can purchase one for £90. Contact Mike at Woody's Importarium on 01443 742421.



FEED ME, SEYMOUR

For most of us, a nutritional snack when out riding involves scarfing a choccy bar and downing a sweet 'energy drink'. But for those who consider their body a temple, as opposed to a dustbin, there's an alternative that should give you the necessary energy boost in a far more nutritional way. Torq Bars are, as the packet says, a moist and chewy cereal bar. But unlike many other bars out there they come packed with 'ribose'. 'With what?' I hear you ask. Well, without donning a white coat and going all Open University on you, ribose is a simple sugar, naturally occurring in every living cell. It's used as the starting point for producing energy and is also a component of the genetic materials DNA and RNA. In other words, it'll help get you going when you've run out of steam.

Unlike our old friend the chocolate bar, they're low in fat, as well as being high in carbohydrate. Not so good if you're on the Atkins diet, but great if you're stuck in the middle of a Welsh bog! And Torq bars are easy to digest, unlike some dry cereal bars we've tried eating whilst on the trail.

Available in either 'Tangy Apricot' or 'Sundried Banana', they're not the tastiest snack we've ever tried, but they are far better than a lot of energy bars out there. Each bar will cost you £1, but unfortunately you can't buy them at the petrol station on your way to the races. For your nearest stockist call 0845 128 4312 or check out torqfitness.co.uk.



HELPING HANDS

Spanish company XC-Ting claim to be 'much more than "exciting"'. Quite what they're on about, we're not sure. Perhaps it lost something in the translation. But what we do know is that they do produce a range of well-made off-road gear, and these are their neoprene gloves. In the depths of winter such gloves are an absolute godsend. They keep your hands warm and dry in all but the most inclement conditions, whilst the neoprene gives some pretty good impact absorption. So what's so exciting about the XC-Tings? Well, compared to any other quality neoprene glove, not a lot. You get the usual reflective detailing, clarino reinforced palms, and lever gripping pads on the fingertips. But unfortunately, what you don't get is a long cuff, or an extension of the material underneath the velcro wrist fastener to keep out the weather. And these details let down what is essentially a good pair of gloves.

The XC-Tings cost £24.99 and for more information on the XC-Ting range, or the whereabouts of your nearest dealer phone Braybrook Off-Road on 0870 7742600.



BAG OF THE GODS

American company Thor haven't had much of a presence in the UK in recent years, though we expect all that to change in 2004 when we start using some of their kit!! This Basic Backpack is neatly detailed, comfortable to wear, and comes with a host of pockets, both large and small. Without a waist- or chest-strap it may not be ideal for trail use, but for the dirt biker on the street it makes a stylish and practical bag. £24.99 is the price and Madison are the people to call for more info and your local dealer. They're on 01908 326002.



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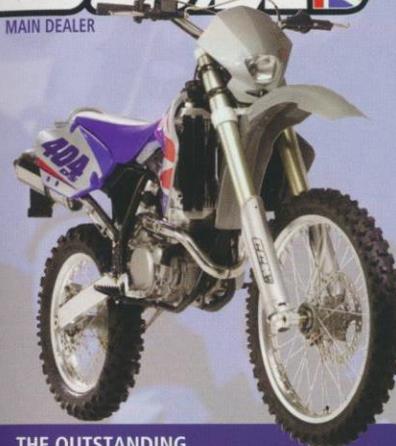
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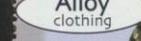
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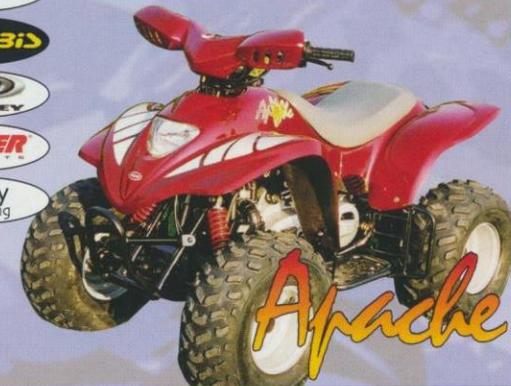


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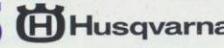
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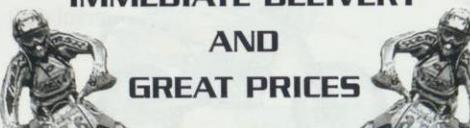
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Mark Williams details the story behind the successful Cheney Triumphs...

SILVER MACHINE

Enduring popularity, if not the longevity, of a particular bike's production run are matters I've occasionally wittered on about in this series, but this month's subject - the Cheney-Triumph - must surely be the most successful on both counts. How does 40 years of virtually unbroken manufacturing strike you?

Of course the odd caveat must be applied to this extraordinary claim. The first of them being that Cheneys are technically sold as frame kits into which you insert your own engine and choice of cycle parts. But ever since Eric Cheney started operations in the early Sixties he would source engines to your specification, and could supply complete chassis using the extensive range of cycle parts he held in stock. A practice which his son Simon continues to this day. So I guess that Cheney - or rather Inter-Moto, which is the name of the company now bearing the Cheney banner - qualifies as a manufacturer, albeit

catering to bespoke tastes and demand.

But it must also be admitted that the name Cheney may be unfamiliar to many trailriders (particularly the younger ones). And that's very much because the bikes are only built to order - and these days Simon's customers are mainly from the somewhat arcane world of twin-shock motocross: the bikes being built for use with BSA B44 or B50 singles. (Cheneys have won the British Classic Moto-Cross Championship with almost monotonous regularity since 1997). However there was a time when Cheney's machines represented Britain in the ISDT and were the *sina non qua* for serious riders at that level of competition.

The British Trophy team of John Pease, Mick Wilkinson, Johnny Giles, Malcolm Rathmell, Jim Sandiford and rider/manager Ken Heanes won their class on 504cc engined Cheney-Triumphs in the 1970 event, held in Spain. (Use of the compact, but slightly overbored Daytona-based engine enabled them to compete against bigger, heavier bikes such as the 750cc BMW which they generally outclassed). Cheney-Triumphs also won the manufacturer's team prize in '73 and were campaigned by the Metropolitan Police Team in 1975, as well as many privateers in both the Six Days and lesser events throughout that period. And scrolling forward a quarter of a century, Nick Ashley grabbed a Silver and won the Twin Shock class on his Cheney-Triumph in the 1997 Welsh Two Days, admitting that 'whilst there wasn't too much competition, it was nowhere near as hard a ride as I feared it might be.'

In their hey-day, and as Johnny Giles recently told me, 'they weren't as comfortable as the Triumphs I rode in the '60s, but that was mainly because they were 25-30lbs lighter. But as the ISDT got faster and they started putting in [more] trials sections, the Triumphs couldn't really have coped, and so the Cheneys were easier to ride.'

As much as anything else, it was the elegant little touches - like the nickel-plated frames and the first eccentric-cam chain-tensioner I'd ever seen - which set these bikes apart from the crowd, and I



Nickel-plated frame is a Cheney trademark...

lusted after one myself when I very first started enduroing. But limited funds unwisely prompted me to settle instead for a lookalike version produced by Wasp, which was essentially one of their deservedly famous sidecar chassis, but without the chair - a complete pig when I rode it in an early ISCA Enduro. I sold it soon afterwards but I've retained a hankering for the Real Thing ever since.

Occasionally you'll come across a Cheney being used for trailriding and long-distance trials - indeed Simon had a couple of bikes built for exactly that purpose awaiting collection when I visited him. But as I noted earlier, these days classic moto-cross is where his main market lies, which kind of brings things full circle.

Eric Cheney was a pretty handy scrambles rider himself following his discharge from the Navy, battling away on a Matchless 500 he'd fitted into his own, home-made frame. He competed on what was then the 'continental circuit' and in the winter rode in Nigeria where generous start money made the trip worthwhile. However after contracting a mysterious blood disease in 1961, he suffered temporary acrophobia (a fear of heights) and had to pack it in. But not before another visitor to the Nigerian circus, Ken Cleghorn, had asked Eric to build him a similar chassis he could take home and race in his native New Zealand. And from then on Cheney became a bike builder rather than a bike rider.

Though happenstance is not uncommon in

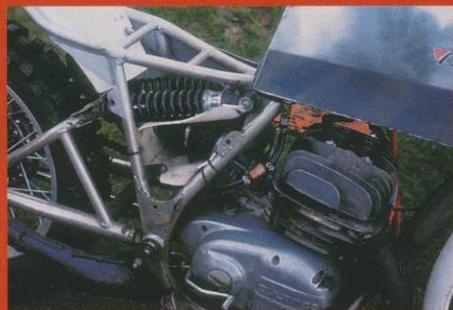
RARE BEASTS



One of two Cheney prototypes designed using a Bultaco motor. Note cantilever rear end uses twin shocks...



Above: Fearsome Jawa speedway motor in a Cheney chassis... Right: Simon Cheney with one of his frames...



Steve Gard is becoming something of a regular in this series, having supplied the highly original Honda XL250 featured in the April 2003 issue, but he also owns a couple of very rare machines which further testify to Eric Cheney's ingenuity.

It's a little known fact that in 1974 when works rider Vic Allen's Pursang moto-crosser was constantly fracturing its frame, Bultaco approached Cheney to copy the chassis in 531 tubing. Subtly strengthening and painting it in

Bultaco's trademark silver, no-one was any the wiser and Eastwood had no more breakages! As a precursor to this, in 1973 Cheney experimented with a 360 Pursang engine in his own cantilever design frame (based loosely on his Egli-Vincent chassis), which top Southern Centre moto-cross rider, Andy Bamford then raced with some success: 'Best handling bike I ever rode,' he recently recalled.

Steve bought the bike two years ago and took it for a re-furb to Simon Cheney who authenticated it as one of two original prototypes. And last year Steve rode it himself, seizing it first time out and 'locking the back wheel up flat-out in fourth on wet grass... which was interesting!'

But if the cantilever Bulto is a bit of a 'fiery monster', what can we make of his 500cc Jawa (speedway) engined Cheney, which runs on methanol with a 14:1 compression ratio? 'It's not too frightening,' laughs Steve, 'and first time out at Hawkstone Park it just sailed up that big hill in third every time.'

The genesis of the bike was a brand new 'old stock' engine bought at the Stafford Show, which



he took along to Eric with a Norton gearbox and said "build me a bike". 'It took about six months trying this and trying that before it was finished, but that's the way he works and it turned out really well. It's very fast and you have to get used to the gearbox being the wrong way round, but it handles brilliantly.'

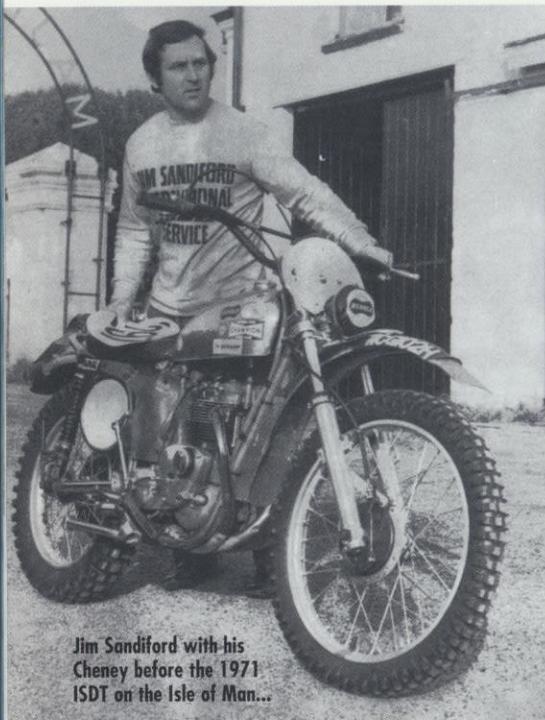


Malcolm Rathmell pilots his Cheney-Triumph across the Manx grass in the 1971 ISDT

the whacky world of competition motorcycle production, what's extraordinary about Eric's rise to fame is that he lacked any sort of engineering qualification, or even an apprenticeship! His skill - or perhaps 'art' is a more appropriate word - as a frame designer stems entirely from working as a submariner in World War II where, according to his son, Simon 'he had to fix anything that broke as they went along - you couldn't suddenly surface and sail back to a shipyard.'

I actually think Simon's being a bit too modest on his dad's behalf, because one of the things that's always characterised the Cheneys is their incredibly detailed craftsmanship, the like of which is impossible on a mass-produced bike. But more than that, and without any relevant technical education, Eric Cheney just 'knew' what dimensions and angles and materials would work best when he was designing a chassis, and so he went ahead and used them.

His bikes soon became successful at the top-end of the sport, with John Banks winning the 500 MX Championship in 1970 on a Cheney-BSA and Bengt Aberg taking second in the 1972 Swiss Championship before he was poached by Bultaco. Even Steve McQueen bought four Cheney Triumphs for the follow-up to 'On Any Sunday', though ultimately the film was never made. McQueen became good friends with the Cheney family and along with his friend,



Jim Sandiford with his Cheney before the 1971 ISDT on the Isle of Man...

legendary American racer Bud Ekins, came and stayed with them in Hampshire: on one infamous occasion disappearing for a couple of days in his sportscar with a couple of hostesses he'd met on the 'plane!

Although he could and did construct lightweight frames using twin downtubes similar in design to those of BSA, Matchless, AJS etc, his bright idea was to employ a single downtube design, with a cradle splaying out somewhere around the line of the crankshaft, which could accommodate single or twin cylinder engines. Using lightweight chrome-moly Reynolds '531' tubing, with the upper member doubling as an oil-tank (a novelty at the time), the meticulously brass-welded Cheney chassis were tough (thanks to the flexibility of the braised joints) and, being nickel-plated, they were also quite beautiful.

The distinctive 'silver machines' originally featured Girling rear shocks, but the wheel hubs, yokes and forks were hand-made by Eric from specially commissioned castings. The latter were carved from a solid alloy billet using a drill bought in America and originally designed for making 35mm gun barrels. 'The army came to

him and demanded that he lend it to them "for the sake of Queen and country," smiles Simon, 'but he refused on the grounds that he'd never see it again, or at least not in one-piece.'

Indeed amongst old hands in the off-road world, Eric Cheney was sometimes regarded as much for his blunt self-interest, if not downright parsimony, as he was for the excellence of his products, but I think that's more than a little unfair. As Simon explains, 'Dad always wanted to get things right, and that took time, and time is money. If someone wanted something in a hurry, or wanted it cheaply, they could always go elsewhere, but this [building bikes] was his livelihood and as he saw it, he couldn't afford to do it any other way.'

Indeed this determination to make things as good as they could be meant that most everything else - the seats, side-panels, exhaust systems, air-boxes and all the bracketry - were also hand-made in a succession of workshops and small factories in and around Fleet in Hampshire where Simon carries on the business today. At one stage in the '70s, demand was such that Cheney Engineering - as it then was - employed 15 staff, but the perilous economics of a demanded manufacturing business, and one without a marketing department, gradually obliged Eric to retrench to the point where it was eventually just him and Simon. And even after his first heart attack, that's how it remained until Eric died in his seventies, just a couple of years ago.

Bearing in mind the number of one-offs and specials (including experimental jobs for both Honda and Suzuki), no-one really knows exactly how many Cheneyes have been built, although it must run into a few thousand: as Simon explains, he alone has counted off 'about 270 since I started making the frames in 1994.' Nowadays he tends to build the standard BSA single/Triumph twin frame in batches of 25, using American 4130 tubing which replaces the similar, but British sourced T45, 'just because it was so much cheaper. But the T45 was costing £15 a foot for the 1.75in tubing, and even allowing for the import costs it was cheaper to buy from America, which is crazy, really.' The 4130 tubing also enables him to TIG weld some of the less visible joints, saving a good-deal of weight 'but even so each one uses fifteen sticks of brass weld.'

The finished frame weighs in at just 24lb, and although bought-in components - such as Ceriani and Marzocchi forks and the newly re-manufactured Koni or WP shocks, KTM magnesium front-



A line-up of ISDT Cheneyes ready for the off...

and Grimeca (Maico-design) rear-wheels, Magura controls and Rental handlebars - have gradually replaced Cheney-built items, they remain of the highest quality.

Nevertheless everything else is still hand-made or supplied to Cheney specifications by some of the few dozen small manufacturers that still keep the traditions of the British bike industry alive. As you'll see from the spec panel below, this all makes for a rather expensive product, but one that I guess is truly unique and certainly of unparalleled worth.

In terms of chassis and, of course, engine performance the Cheney is comprehensively outclassed by modern moto-cross and enduro bikes. But anyone with deep pockets who wants a tough, yet docile and comfortable trailie might do well to consider the delights of owning one of these rare and distinctive machines. Sure, you'd be relying on an engine of rather antediluvian design (but which can be bought for upwards of a few hundred pounds), and suffering only a few inches of suspension travel each end, but properly set-up and fitted with modern electrics (which Inter-Moto can supply), either a Triumph twin- or BSA single-powered Cheney will give years of highly satisfying service. And, of course, it'll hold its value unlike almost anything else in its class!

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Yorkshireman Malcolm Rathmell attacks a section on his Suzuki RL...



BRITISH TOP TEN TRIALS RIDERS

- 1 STEVE SAUNDERS
- 2 SAMMY MILLER
- 3= MALCOLM RATHMELL
- 3= MARTIN LAMPKIN
- 4 MICK ANDREWS
- 5 DAVE THORPE
- 6 ROBIN LUSCOMBE
- 7 GORDON JACKSON
- 8 STEVE COLLEY
- 9 RON LANGSTON
- 10 EVERYBODY WHO RIDES TRIALS

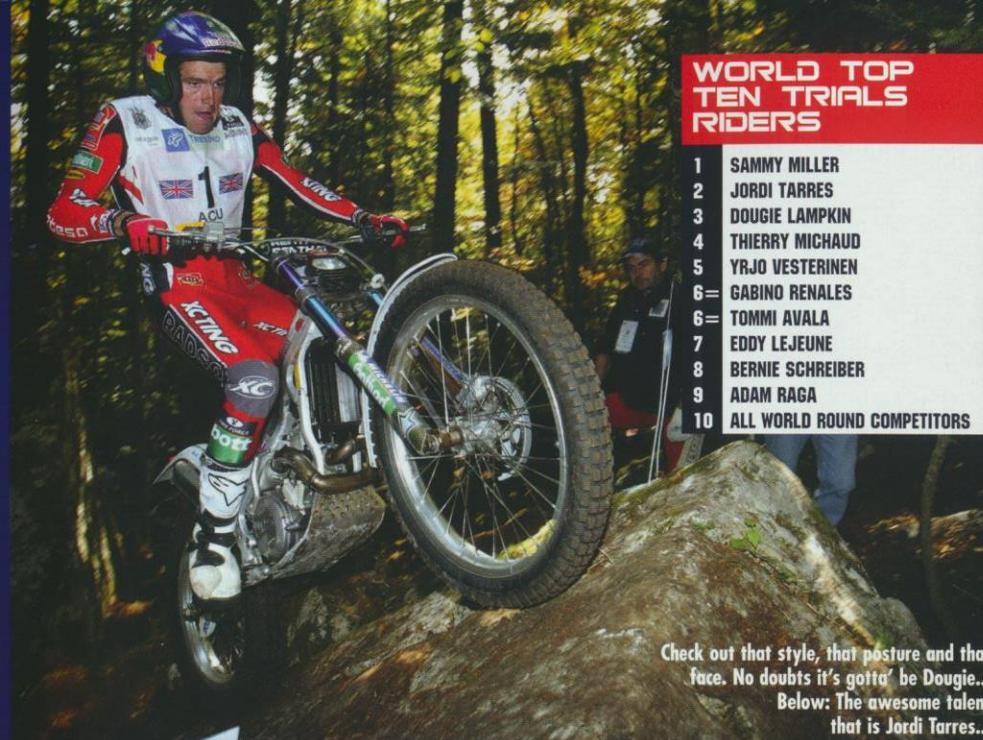
Trials riding as we know it today only really took off in significant numbers after the Second World War with the adoption of specialist machinery and dedicated sections, ridden in laps. Prior to that, most trials events (often called road trials) were rather more like feats of endurance, with riders covering sometimes hundreds of miles on lightly modified road bikes with the sections (usually on unmade roads) forming part of the route.

So my top ten British trials riders come exclusively from the Fifties through to the present day, and are of necessity, purely a personal opinion...

Steve Saunders takes my number one plate because he was the first youth trials rider who was a genuine star in the schoolboy ranks, then coped brilliantly in the adult British Championship (where he was ten times Britain's best), and then progressed to the World Championship where he finished runner-up to the all-conquering Eddy Lejeune. Steve continues to ride regularly today and still has the ability to perform at the highest level.

Sammy Miller is placed second, but only takes second in Britain because to my mind he is the world's number one - for reasons listed elsewhere in this feature.

Malcolm Rathmell and Martin Lampkin are equal third. These



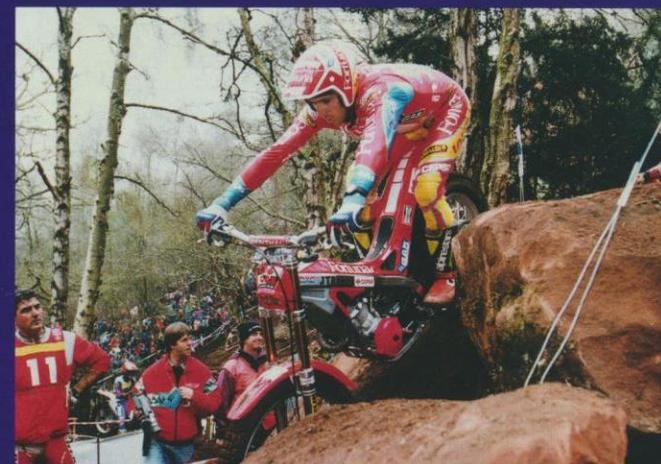
WORLD TOP TEN TRIALS RIDERS

- 1 SAMMY MILLER
- 2 JORDI TARRES
- 3 DOUGIE LAMPKIN
- 4 THIERRY MICHAUD
- 5 YRJO VESTERINEN
- 6= GABINO RENALES
- 6= TOMMI AVALA
- 7 EDDY LEJEUNE
- 8 BERNIE SCHREIBER
- 9 ADAM RAGA
- 10 ALL WORLD ROUND COMPETITORS

Check out that style, that posture and that face. No doubts it's gotta' be Dougie...
Below: The awesome talent that is Jordi Tarres...

So why does Sammy Miller head my list of the best in the world? Let me tell you. Sammy, an extrovert Irishman of fantastic ability, drive and enthusiasm was the first world famous trials rider. Go to any trial, anywhere in the world and without doubt, all those present will have heard of Sammy Miller. SHM dragged the world of trials away from old fashioned British bikes (though he was also famous for riding a lightweight Ariel), to modern Spanish two-stroke weapons with a chassis and steering design which he helped fashion. His promotion of trials around the world has been second to none, but more than that, since retiring from competition Sammy has gone on to develop a business selling spares for older trials bikes that is unrivalled, while his famous bike museum in Hampshire ranks alongside the best in the world.

At number two is Jordi Tarres, the Spanish rider who



was World Champion seven times on Beta and Gas Gas machinery and provided inspiration to trials-riding youngsters everywhere. Jordi comes just in front of Dougie Lampkin because he is now involved with youth development and runs his own team. He's a shy but very nice man who raised trials riding to a new level.

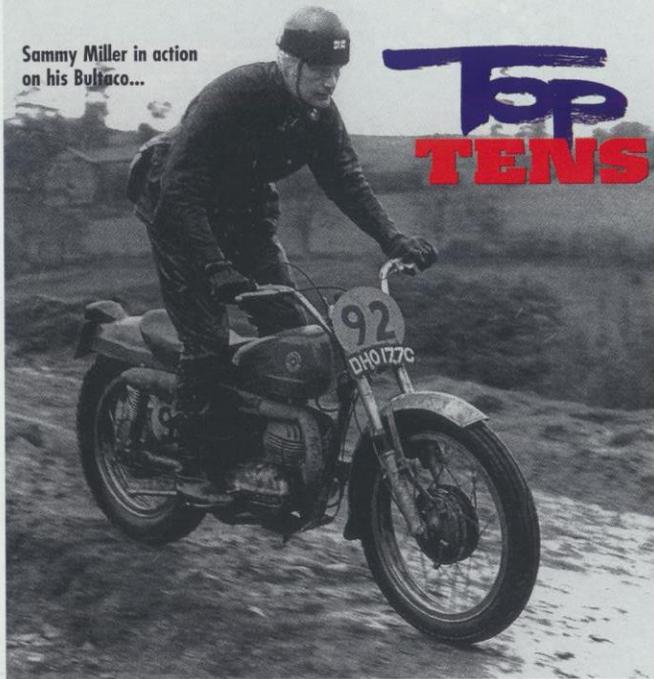
Seven consecutive World Championships mean Dougie Lampkin is third - but he could yet go even higher in future top ten lists. The current champion, nobody else has the same drive and determination to win as Dougie. And who can say how many more world titles he will own in future?

Frenchman Thierry Michaud

TOP TENS

Mike Rapley chooses his personal best Top Ten Trials riders...

Sammy Miller in action on his Bultaco...



two famous Yorkshiremen come from trials families who live and breathe the sport, and both continue to earn their living in trials to this day. Malcolm is the UK Sherco and Gaerne boot importer (amongst other items). He's been British Champion several times and enjoyed great rivalry with his friend Martin Lampkin (Dougie's dad) who was the first ever world champion and is Dougie's minder on the sections. Characters both, but in different ways, they'll be talked about in awe for many years to come.

In at number four is a Derbyshire man who was always considered the nice guy of trials - Mick Andrews. Riding Ossas and Yamahas, Mick regularly did battle with Malcolm and Martin (Rathmell & Lampkin), and along with Sammy Miller, remains one of only two riders ever to have won the Scottish Six Days Trial five times.

You may be surprised at Dave Thorpe coming in at five. Though sharing his name with



Britain's triple world champion motocrosser, this particular Dave Thorpe hails from Chesterfield and was never British Champion in the main series, and only once won a World Championship trial. But find me anybody else in the UK who rides more trials in a year than Dave, and I'll buy you a half! However, Dave has been the ACU Pre-65 class champion many times and rarely does a

weekend go by in which Dave has not ridden a trial - despite back problems that would have finished many riders years ago.

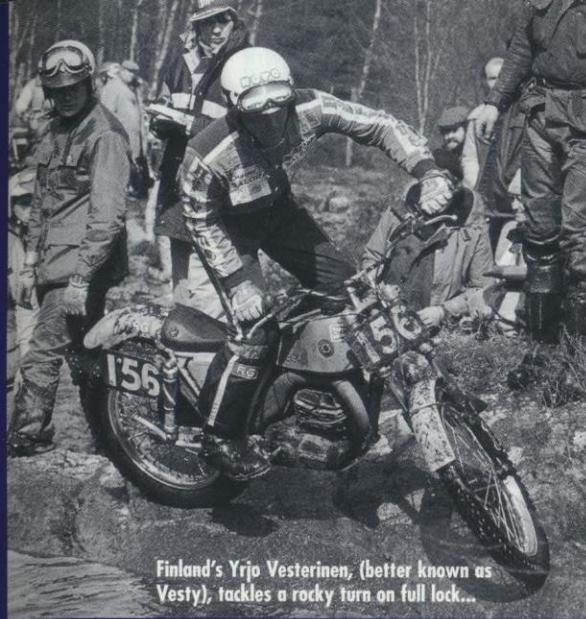
Twelve British Sidecar Trials Championships put Robin Luscombe into my sixth spot. Nobody, but nobody has dominated the sidecar scene in the way that Robin has - and he's done it with numerous different passengers. There's no doubt he's the three wheel king and is unlikely to be matched - ever!

Gordon Jackson comes seventh. An ace from Kent in the Fifties, he was slightly overshadowed by Sammy Miller, but still secured his fair share of national wins. And of course he remains the only rider to win the Scottish Six Days Trial with a single dab, famously captured on film by Peter Howdle on Grey Mare's Ridge during his winning 1961 ride.

Britain's first real king of the indoor trials scene is Steve 'Showtime' Colley, so that honour puts him in eighth place in my list. Along the way he has won the Scottish many times and the British Championship once, but under a roof, even now, there's nobody who puts on a show as well as Steve.

Ron Langstone was a great all-rounder of the Fifties and Sixties, excelling at solo and sidecar trials, scrambles, road racing and even the occasional enduro later on. As a kid of 14, I watched Ron's attack of a section at Buriton Pits in the Hoad Trial, which remains firmly imprinted on my memory and is one of the reasons that I took up and enjoyed six years as a sidecar trials rider, he takes ninth spot in my list.

And finally, in at number ten comes everybody that has ever ridden in a trial at any time in their life. It's a fantastic sport, and if you've only ever ridden once, or over a thousand times, you will remember the experience until your dying day...



Finland's Ryo Vesterinen, (better known as Vesty), tackles a rocky turn on full lock...

comes in at number four. He was World Champion three times and now heads France's youth academy where he works full-time, helping to bring on younger riders.

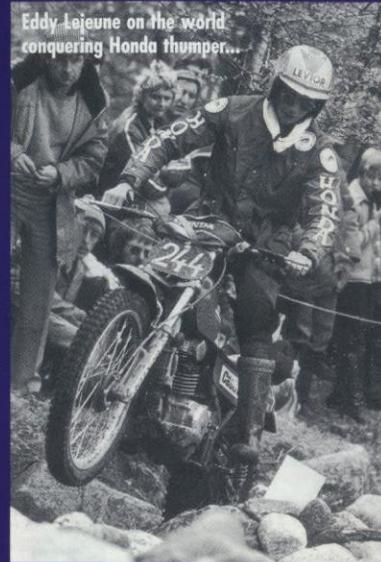
Another three time champion is in fifth place - Ryo Vesterinen. Better known these days as the boss of Apico and Vesty UK, the big accessory distributors, where he puts the same amount of effort into his business as he did in winning three world titles on Bultaco machinery in the late Seventies.

Gabino Renales comes next. Who? Gabino Renales and if you've never heard of him, then I'm not surprised. But Gabino, a Spanish rider from the early Eighties, is one of the leading figures in Octagon, the company that promotes the World Indoor Championship. He never won a world round, but he has used his influence and knowledge to develop the sport for the benefit of riders and fans the world over. It's a similar story for Finnish rider Tommi Avala who we've placed sixth equal. Tommi was best known as an Aprilia rider on which he won the World Championship in '92,

but when Aprilia pulled out of the sport Tommi headed to the States where he now works for Gas Gas promoting the sport of trials with a trick riding show.

Another three time champion was Eddy Lejeune and he comes in at number seven as he's still the only rider to ever win on a four-stroke machine during the modern era (1984/85/86 on a Honda). Though that could soon change when the world championship re-adopts four-strokes in 2005.

And in this list of top ten, the eighth placed rider is American Bernie Schreiber. Schreiber brought a new level of ability into world trials with a degree of trick riding that was outstanding 24 years ago. Now it would probably seem tame, but Bernie was the first to introduce trick stuff into trials and it brought him considerable success, including a world championship.



American Bernie Schreiber was the bloke credited with introducing trick riding into trials...



A youngster in the shape of Adam Raga from Spain comes in ninth. He gets my vote because of all the young riders currently doing the world series, he looks to be the best bet to take over the crown currently worn by our own Dougie Lampkin.

And finally in tenth place come all the lads and lasses that have travelled many miles from their home countries to world rounds miles away with no chance of making it into a points scoring position. It is these enthusiasts (both riders and helpers) that keep such an exclusive series going...

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Kawasaki KDX220R, 2003, 300 miles, fsh, novice rider, good cond, new house forces sale, £2800. Tel (mobile) 07779 018615 or (eves) 01252 673715 (Surrey)

Kawasaki KXL650, 1995, M-reg, red, T&T, 11000 miles, Lazer exhaust, Renthals, exc cond, £1700 ono. Tel (mobile) 07900 081588 or 01745 720378 (N Wales)

Honda Dominator 650, 1996 model, 7500 miles, recent c+s, serviced, c/w quality German luggage, £1850. Tel 01522 539174 (Lincs)

Yamaha Tenere, overland prepped by David Lambeth, emigration forces sale, must go, phone for details, make me a sensible offer. Tel 01495 279945 (S Wales)

Honda Africa Twin, 2003, 7300 miles, still under warranty, new tyres, totally standard, mint cond, £4500 ono. Tel 01527 61633 (Worcs)

Suzuki DR350, 1993, K-reg, T&T, standard cond, £1200 ono. Tel 01768 483558 (Cumbria)

KTM 525EXC, 2003, bashplate, frame/handguards, green lane use, £4500 ono. Tel 07771 650476 (S Yorks)

KTM 200EXC, 2000, green lane use only, well maintained, vgc, £2300. Tel 07761 979165 (Yorks)

Honda XR650R, 2000, W-reg, taxed, 800 miles, hardly used, immaculate cond, £3095 ovno. Tel 07970 217474 (Derbys)

Honda XR650R, 2003, taxed, under 2000 miles, as new, bargain at £3300. Tel 07813 919655 (Essex)

KTM 540SXC, 1999 model, S-reg, MoT, new chain, KTM handguards, Fatbars, SPES pipe, strong bike, £2200. Tel 07958 592502 (Kent)

KTM 400EXC Six Days, Ltd Ed, sump/frame/handguards, new tyres, just had main dealer 100hr rebuild, mint, genuine reason for sale, £4500. Tel 01626 854392 (Devon)

Husaberg FE400, 2000, W-reg, handguards, new chain/suspension service, recent wheel bearings, well looked after, superb bike, £2900 ono. Tel 07775 857747 (Northants)

Honda XR600R, 1995, M-reg, 9800km, Renthals, CRD bashplate, Gadget frameguards, Datatag, barkbusters, plus original parts, green laned, reliable and clean, £1700. Tel 01373 300966 (Somerset)

Gas Gas Pampera mkIII, 2001, infrequent green lane use, cracking lightweight trailie, immaculate cond, £2100 ovno. Tel 01706 281412 (Lancs)

Kawasaki KX125, 1996, just had complete rebuild, FMF pipe, powder-coated frame, new tyres, spare plastics, genuine reason for sale, £1500. Tel 01626 854392 (Devon)

FREE CLASSIFIEDS

Kawasaki KLX250R, well maintained, weekend use only, ideal first trailie, great cond for year, ring for spec, £1350. Tel 07951 757090 (Cumbria)

Honda XR250, 2002, elec start, 1500 miles, digital clock, new bars, vgc, £2750 ono. Tel 01206 571423 (Essex)

Kawasaki KMX200, 1989, new mains/piston etc, spare wheels etc, £700. Tel 020 8766 7792 (London)

Husqvarna TE570, 2002, taxed, supermoto and trail wheels, Arrow exhaust, Endurance speedo, Acerbis plastics, unused since April, vgc, reluctant sale, £3750. Tel 01493 301604 (Norfolk)

KTM 520EXC, 2002, taxed, useful extras, maintained to a high standard, vgc, £3695. Tel (mobile) 07939 926552 or 01227 733712 (Kent)

Gas Gas EC250 supermoto, 2002, 1200 miles, DEP pipe, never raced, dry use only, mint cond, house forces sale, £2500. Tel 01330 820009 (Scotland)

Yamaha WR200, 1996, N-reg, new c+s, good tyres, green lane use only, good cond, £900 ono. Tel 07796 838285 (W Yorks)

KTM 640 SM, 2002, 51 reg'd, red/black, 4800 miles, UK bike, exc standard cond, £3600 ono or may p/x DR-ZE, XR250/400, CRM250 WHY. Tel 01332 703212 (Derbys)

Beta Rev3, 2001, good cond, £1800 or p/x trail bike in good cond. Tel (mobile) 07970 157214 or 01773 744936 (Derbys)

Yamaha WR250Z, 1997, P-reg, new piston, FMF Fatty, WRP taper bars, 909 levers, great bike, exc cond, £2000. Tel (days) 07970 176604 or (eves) 01647 252866 (Devon)

KTM 125EXC, N-reg, £1495. Also Suzuki RMX250, T-reg, wave discs, new graphics, nice clean machine, £1895. Tel (mobile) 07793 449860 or 01527 523550 (Worcs)

Yamaha XT350, 1994, MoT, just serviced, very clean, standard trim, £1050 or swap for small car. Tel 02380 730241 (Hants)

Yamaha Serow, 1997, T&T, red, one owner, 12000 miles, disc brakes, FSH, gold rims, showroom cond, £1950. Tel 01242 678106 (Gloucs)

Honda XR400R, 2002, 3800km, Renthals, tailpack, regularly serviced, vgc, £3100 or p/x fore XR650R. Tel 07958 118655 (Devon)

Yamaha YZ426F, eight months old, road reg'd, spares kit, loads of extras, like new, supermoto kit available, must sell, £3600 ono. Tel 020 7462 2856 (London)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, 2001 reg'd, taxed, CRD system, Werx graphics, bashplate, Renthals, immaculate cond, £3000. Tel 01749 812855 (Somerset)

Yamaha XT250, A-reg, monoshock, white, T&T, spares, exc cond for year, £950 ono. Tel 07870 400706 (Northants)

Gas Gas EC300, 2003, IMS tank, barkbusters, bashplate, Rental high bars, 70 hours green lane use only, £3200 no offers. Tel 07816 897799 (Wilts)

Yamaha TT600S 1994, MoT, 24000km, two Acerbis tanks 9L and 22L, standard and Arrow cans, lots of spares inc plastics, £1750 ono. Tel 07801 029848 (Northants)

Honda XL125, 1988, elec start, new tyres/alloy rims/c+s/seat cover, lady owner, £995 ono. Tel 02380 848531 (Hants)

Yamaha Serow, elec start, T&T, handguards, nice bike, £1250. Tel 01538 754170 (Staffs)

KTM 450EXC, 2003, 25 hours use, handguards, bashplate, new tyres, mint cond. Tel 07739 000543 (Kent)

Yamaha WR400F, 2000, road reg'd, only 1000 miles, superb original cond, £500 just spent, £2775 ono. Tel (mobile) 07971 475376 or 01451 850589 (Gloucs)

Yamaha TTR250 Raid, 1995, elec start, lots of extras, little green lane use, immaculate cond, £1700. Tel 0161 456 0453 (Cheshire)

Honda XR250 conversion, 1996, T&T, clean, strong bike, great fun, much money spent, £1450 ono. Tel Tony on 01904 758400 (York)

Suzuki DR400S, 1982, classic four-stroke trailie, MoT, original cond, £895. Also BMW F650, MoT, 6500 miles, new tyres, £2750. Tel (eves) 01453 882687 (Gloucs)

Honda XR400R, 2002, 1100 miles, Fatbars, bashplate, barkbusters, fully serviced, light use only, £2995 no offers. Tel 0114 247 1567 (S Yorks)

Suzuki DR650, H-reg, import, red/white, top-end piston/valve damage, sensible offers considered. Tel (leave message, will return call) 07802 222876 (Oxon)

Husaberg FE400E, 51 reg, 1800 miles, taxed, one owner, all original, dealer serviced, trail use only, lovely bike, £3100 ono. Tel 01925 758334 (Cheshire)

KTM 525EXC, 2003 reg'd, used once, comes with stand, clothing, armour, lid, goggles etc, £5000 the lot or p/x sportsbike. Tel 07870 209988 (Herts)

Kayo mini MX bike, 50cc 2-T, elec start, red/yellow, brand new, not even started, suit 4-10 year old, unwanted present, £750. Tel 07950 035382 (Hants)

Yamaha WR250F, 2002, low miles, standard, little green lane use only, Troy Lee graphics, exc cond, £3200 ono. Tel 07973 667263 (Cumbria)

Yamaha YZ400F, 1999, T&T, very little use in past two years, £2195. Tel Pete on 07909 615866 (Oxon)

Honda XR400R, 1999, white, T&T, only 3900km, one previous owner, Renthals, hand/sumpguards, road use only, serviced, exc cond, £2650. Tel (mobile) 07752 014896 or 01733 578684 (Camps)

KTM 950 Adventure, 2003, silver, 1700 miles, as new cond, £5700. Tel 01522 808507 (Lincs)

Honda XLR250R, 1987, D-reg, MoT, genuine 8000 miles, little use over last four years, totally original, superb cond, £1150. Tel 01942 517915 (Lancs)

Honda NX650 Dominator, MoT, good cond, £850 ono or poss p/x smaller trailie. Tel (mobile) 07775 824281 or 0117 977 1013 (Bristol)

KTM 450EXC, 2002, 52 reg, 1400km, sticker kit, hand/sumpguards, spares, road kit, manuals, not raced, £4500 ono. Tel 07968 722515 (Sussex)

Honda XR250, 1994, ex-SAS, army green, T&T, rugged machine, £1250 ono. Tel 0151 648 0464 (Merseyside)

KTM 640 Adventure R, 2000, MoT, just serviced, recent plastics/tyre/chain/pads, great bike, £2600 or poss p/x 250. Tel 01803 607019 (Devon)

Suzuki DR-Z400, 2002, 02 reg, yellow, taxed, FDSH, Arrow can, Renthals, Goodridge, handguards, mint cond, £2995. Tel (mobile) 07980 900581 or 01622 691002 (Kent)

WANTED

Wanted road legal enduro bike, 125-250cc, about £1000 to spend, prefer local to Oxford or able to deliver. Tel (mobile) 07867 778343 or 01865 747325 (Oxon)

Wanted KLX or KLT250 CDI model spares, bodywork, stainless exhaust, KLX250B1 sidepanels. Also any manuals and shocks with 18" between eyes. Tel 01246 435297 (Derbys)

Wanted rear wheel to fit CRM250 mkl, must be in good cond. Tel 01256 812086 (Hants)

Wanted Kawasaki Super Sherpa, must be in good cond, can collect in Scotland/N England. Tel 01997 421911 (Ross-shire)

Wanted speedo for XR250R, must be in good working order, cash waiting. Tel 01535 674685 (W Yorks)

Wanted SM wheels to fit XR600R, or converted three-spokes. Also any performance parts and spares considered. Tel (mobile) 07966 910613 or 01902 846701 (W Mids)

Wanted Suzuki DR350, 1993-1997, low miles and good cond. Tel 01325 265813 (Co Durham)

Wanted for DR350, rear footrests and D-brackets. Also black late-model DR350 in exc cond. Tel 01983 406090.

Wanted alloy WM4 2.5x18 rim for rear wheel, may buy whole wheel if cheap enough. Will pay postage or may collect. Tel 07813 276290 (Bucks)

Wanted fuel tank for Yamaha DT250MX, 1979 model, will buy complete bike, non-/runner if cheap enough. Tel (mobile) 07890 537035 or 01298 27170 (Derbys)

SPARES

DR350 rear fender subframe, £20. Clocks, £90. Grabrail, £15. Sumpguard, £20. Indicators, £20. Plus footrest, engine bits etc. Genuine KMX manual, £15. Tel 01446 721578 (Glamorgan)

Lazer MX5 helmet, as new, size large, boxed, £35. Weisse waterproof/breathable jacket, new, £55. Oakley goggles, as new, £7. Tel 01732 763700 (Kent)

Gadget sumpguard for DR-Z400, £25. Acerbis Klima enduro jacket, blue/black, size XL, £60. 909 braced bars for XR/DR etc, 4" height, £15. Tel 01380 729982 (Wilts)

Axo RC5 boots, size 42, new and unused, cost £200, sell for £100. Tel Mark on 01442 386019 (Herts)

UFO headlight, red, brand new, cost £35, sell for £20 plus p&p. Tel 07867 977334 (N Wales)

DR-Z400E/S lowering link, unused, £40. Tel 07740 395537 (E Yorks)

KTM/Brembo front master cylinder, new cap/insert/piston seals, £90. Tel (mobile) 07778 195533 or 01691 648870 (Powys)

FMF Powercore square-baffle tailpipe for WR400/426F, two years old, £80. Tel 07860 739104 (Tyne & Wear)

Supermoto wheels to fit XR650R, gold Talons, black Morads, c/w spacers, disc and sprocket, £495 ono. Tel (mobile) 07950 950035 or 01795 554092 (Kent)

Yamaha XT600, 1986, dual start, most parts available. Also Tenere tank. Tel (mobile) 07767 703083 or 01754 820832 (Lincs)

Honda XL600LMF breaking for spares or sell complete. Tel 07761 360288 (Staffs)

Complete OE trail wheel kit for CCM 604, wheels, tyres, discs, sprocket, speedo drive, side stand, £325. Also factory end can, £30. Tel 01484 845120 (W Yorks)

CRD Power II exhaust to fit Suzuki DR-ZS, as new. Honda XR600 15/50 sprocket set, £20. Exhaust, £150. Tel (mobile) 0766(?) 814310 or 01342 832260 (Surrey)

KTM wheels, Talons/Excels, 21" front, 18" rear, with tyres, only four hours use, £495. Tel 07751 754504 (Wilts)

Stahly 13oz flywheel weight to fit Yamaha YZ250 '90-'99 and WR250 '89-'99, new, still in box, £50. Tel Shane

on (mobile) 07932 766169 or 01202 682601 (Dorset)

Beringer SM caliper, disc and pads, from CCM, good cond, £295. Tel 0161 980 6697 (Cheshire)

Parts and repair manuals for KTM LC4, 350/400/600/612cc 1993-95, will post free to anyone wanting them. Tel 01371 810183 (Essex)

SM wheels to fit XR650R, gold hubs, polished rims, Braking wave discs, Avon wets, as new, £725. Tel 07968 591654 (W Yorks)

DR350 front fender, £9. Rear fender, £8. Acerbis toolbag, £9. Tympanium regulator 54411034, £10. DR-Z lever covers, £2. Scott goggles, £10. Tel 01268 413136 (Essex)

TBM issues 4-63, bound, issues 64-89, loose, exc cond, £85 ono or may split. Buyer collects or pays p&p. Tel Ian on 07771 670421 or 07745 613216 (Northants)

Michelin desert tyres, 90/90-21 front, 140/90-18 rear, unused, £65 the pair. Tel 01388 718586 (Co Durham)

WR/YZ250 RPM big-bore kit, 1998-onwards. Scott triple clamps, flywheel weight, bash/sump/radguards, seat. Phone for full list and prices. Tel 0116 236 5986 (Leics)

Castrol 747 two-stroke oil, 12 litres, £80. DID 530 chain, 126 link, £20. Black CR plastics. Tel 01773 744936 (Derbys)

Single-bike trailer, new wheel bearings, £100. Tel 0161 285 1004 (Cheshire)

Axo MX boots, never used, cost £170, sell for £80. Will post. Tel (mobile) 07769 632423 or 01872 272870 (Cornwall)

KDX workshop manual, 1996-onwards, £10. Boyesen reed valve block, fits any KDX, £60. Tel 01594 529786 (Gloucs)

Suzuki DR350SE regulator/rectifier unit, brand new, £85. Many new and used TY250 and DT250MX spares. Tel 014 266 4423 (S Yorks)

Aluminium tank to fit WR400/426F, off factory bike, anodised gold, exc cond. Also Pro Taper clamps and bars, will split, £300 ono. Tel 01229 832442 (Cumbria)

FMF Q-pipe and Powerbomb header to fit DR-Z400E, used once, mint cond, paid £400, bargain at £280. Tel 07739 000543 (Kent)

SM wheels for XR650R, black rims, tyres, £450. Tel 01708 752696 (Essex)

Leo Vinci Titan end can, as new, cost £260, accept £160. Tel 0114 247 1567 (Yorks)

Alpinestars Tech 6 boots, UK size 8, black, worn once, unwanted gift, £100. Tel James on 020 8330 4817 (Surrey)

Standard rear light unit for DR-Z400S, complete, £10. 3NO (?) indicator lenses, £10. All unused. WR, DR-Z, KDX, KTM brochures, 2001-on, mint cond, £7 each. Tel 0115 973 1454 (Notts)

Supermoto/road wheels, tyres, discs, sprockets, pictures available, £200 ono. Also KMX125/200 tank, seat, front pipe, complete rear wheel, £70 will split. Tel (mobile) 07903 149861 or 01507 608938 (Lincs)

STOLEN

Stolen Yamaha DT125R, 2002 model, black/silver, reg no. YC02 FMG, frame no. SYA4BL0000013315, engine no. 4BL133080, TZR125 mirrors, taken with the keys. Tel (mobile) 07729 775282 or 01484 861867 (W Yorks)

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