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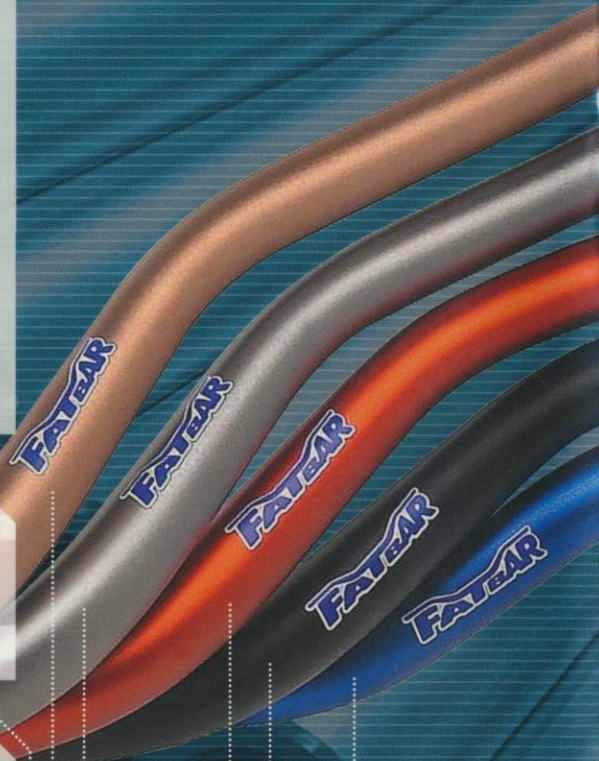
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Inside:
**GOLD
DIGGER**
Husky's 12K
Enduro Bike
Tested...

**WELSH
RAPID?**

Yamaha WR250F
Husqvarna TE250
At Welsh 2-Day...

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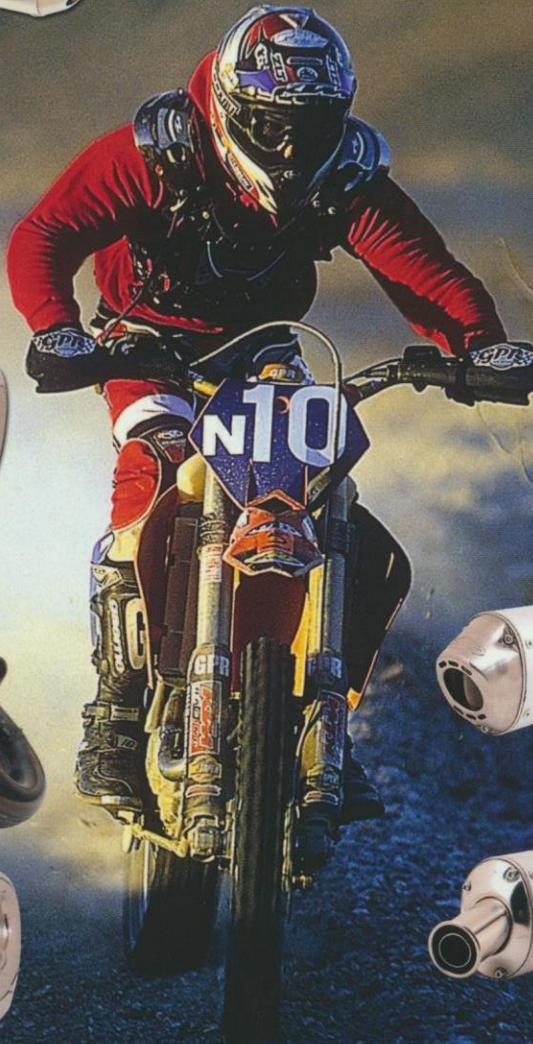
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EDITORIAL

Lookin' Good...

Sadly for all of us, well me in particular anyway, we can't change the way we look. But we can change the way our dirt bikes look by voting with our overdrafts. Trouble is... you try buying a good-looking dirt bike these days. You're not exactly spoiled for choice.

We were having this *very* debate in the office the other day. It was sparked by the fact that Yamaha (erroneously) claim that their new DT125 trailbike was styled on their winning WR enduro machines - as if that was supposed to make you want one. Notwithstanding the fact that the DT's styling actually predates the WR's by at least a year, even if it didn't and Yamaha's claim *was* true, it's not exactly a fantastic aspiration is it - to look like the WR. It's a bit like walking into a barber shop and saying 'I want to be a famous footballer so I'd like you to make me look like Wayne Rooney please'. He may be a bit of a Billy-Wizz with a ball and he probably earns more in four seconds than I'm likely to earn in my whole lifetime, but that doesn't mean I want to look like him. And frankly I don't want my DT to look like a WR either. I want it to look much better than that.

Oh I know, there'll be those of you who say that the WR looks alright, and anyway, with a dirt bike it's more about function rather than form. Bullsh*t. You show me a bloke who doesn't care about what he rides (or drives) and I'll show you a certain TBM contributor! We all want our bikes to look as up to the minute as possible, because that way it makes up for all the inade-

quacies of our riding. We may not have the speed of a certain Mr D Knight, but that doesn't mean we all want to ride around on the dirt bike equivalent of a Robin Reliant.

So where have Yamaha gone wrong? Well let me state straight away that it's not just Yamaha who are to blame. Suzuki's DR-Z is currently flicking through the Yellow Pages in search of a good plastic surgeon and praying for an Eighties revival. Honda's XR range (including the newest XR650) looks like it was styled by the same bloke who designed the Vauxhall Belmont, and the Kawasaki KDX is so retro it's almost chic again. And the Europeans aren't much better. The Gas Gas looks like it was designed by the bloke who works in the spare parts department, after he bolted all his spares together one lunchtime and the factory adopted it; the Husaberg was obviously influenced by Captain Nemo; and don't even talk to me about the VORs.

So do I think there are *any* good-looking dirt bikes out there? Well I reckon the Honda CRFs look like they were designed in *this* century at least, KTM manage to make a functional design look incredibly stylish, but far and away the best looking dirt bike has got to be next year's Husky thumpers. Their edgy avant-garde bodywork won't appeal to everyone - but that's the great thing about aesthetics - beauty is in the eye of the beholder. What you find appealing, I probably won't, and vice versa.

As I said at the beginning of this piece 'we can't change the way we look.' If we could I'd make myself three inches shorter and four more stone overweight... just to give the other blokes a chance with the ladies, eh..!

SI MELBER

Edited & produced by: **Si Melber**
Deputy Editor: **James Barnicoat**
Staff Writer: **Mel Falconer**
Contributors: **Mark Williams, Chris Evans, Dave Cornish, Jonty Edmunds, Paul Blezard, David Knight**

Designed by: **Caleb Mason**



Editorial Address:
TBM PO Box 9945
London W13 9WP

Tel/Fax (10am-6pm Mon-Fri):
020 8840 4760/5066

Subscriptions:
020 7903 3993

Advertising Manager:
Natalie Watson
01225 786815

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NO.108

THE BORROWERS

New range of Italian enduro bikes powered by proven KTM engines

Beta's all new RR enduro bike powered by a range of electric-start KTM engines could be in the UK as early as November this year...



to be slightly less racy, the Beta should sit a bit lower and brake slightly better than the equivalent KTM.

Beta, which celebrates its centenary this year, and is best known for its high quality trials bikes, will be offering 250, 400, 450 and 525cc versions of the bike (all electric-start of course), when the first models arrive in the

Feast your eyes on the new Beta RR Enduro, the latest enduro weapon to emerge from Italy. If parts of the bike look familiar, that's because they are. The engine is from a KTM thumper, the swingarm looks to have come off a Husaberg, and the suspension (Sachs shock and Marzocchi Shiver forks) are the same as you'll find on any Husky. Nevertheless, despite being something of a 'bitsa', the new Beta RR appears to blend some of the best components from market leaders in the enduro world to form a good looking enduro bike. And quite apart from offering riders an alternative to buying a KTM, the Beta also addresses one or two of the least-liked aspects of the orange bikes (PDS, Brembo brakes, steering geometry?).

With a linkage-equipped rear shock, Japanese Nissin brakes (featuring Braking Wave discs), and geometry which is expected

UK in November (according to importer John Lampkin 01535 655970). No details on pricing as we went to press.



New bike features a relatively low seat height which should make it popular with shorter riders...

HUSQ-NIRVANA

2005 Husky thumpers have undergone a stunning restyle...



Inspired by the gorgeous TE510 Centennial, Husky's entire four-stroke 2005 range will share the limited edition bike's streamlined design. The same-shape bodywork styling includes the headlamp, seat, sidepanels, front and rear fenders and fuel tank.

And it's not just the looks that have changed. In a bid to improve throttle response the TE250 and 450 have got rid of the old stutter-prone Mikuni carbs and replaced them with new Keihin FCR type carburetors - 37mm for the 250, 41mm for the 450. The motors have also been fitted with a kick-start to back-up the electric start, and a new generator should improve battery charging.

Further engine mods include a camshaft redesign for increased performance and stronger titanium valve stems. The new multi-layer steel head gasket should also reduce the potential for the cylinder-head to warp, making for improved reliability, and an expansion tank is now fitted to the cooling system. The 450 motor also gets a billet clutch basket for additional strength.

The Marzocchi/Sachs suspension comes with revised settings based on factory riders' recommendations, though whether this is a good thing for the average rider we'll have to wait and see.

On both TE and WR models the Sachs shocks come with lighter reservoirs, new seals, and a top-out spring to improve stability under heavy braking. The enduro bikes will also use solid rear discs, with axle pullers attached to the spindles for quicker and easier maintenance. A new front master cylinder will hopefully eradicate the lack of feel the Brembo brakes have traditionally suffered from.

For 2005, the WR125 and 250 two-strokes have undergone a light cosmetic makeover with a new headlight surround, yellow rear fender, different graphics and a plastic reinforced front fender for increased support. The biggest change has been to

the 125's exhaust system, which has been radically overhauled to improve power delivery, following input from world enduro rider Roberto Bazzurri.

Expect a test of the '05 models just as soon they reach these shores...

...While 2005 two-strokes stick with the old 'banana bodywork'...





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NEWS

TBM
TRAIL BIKE & ENDURO MAGAZINE

DON'T DE-SPARE



CCM Motorcycles were closed down and put into the hands of liquidators early last month. The Blackburn manufacturer had suffered financial troubles for much of its life, and despite launching new Suzuki-powered models (seemingly with some sales success) the company simply ran out of money. Since the news broke on 7 July many rescue plans have been proposed but as of yet

nothing has been put into action.

Fortunately, those needing spares won't be left high and dry. Haines & Co Motorcycles have been a CCM retailer since 2000 and have most parts in stock, from Rotax-powered models to the current 644 and 404 Suzuki-powered ranges.

To order spares or get technical info, call 01594 822202 or log onto ccmspares.com.

IT'S A DATE

Provisional dates for next year's World Enduro Championship reveal a ninth event is being planned to ensure the series finale isn't held in Greece. Either France or Italy will hold the round, joining Spain in being the only country to host two rounds of the 2005 series.

Promoter Alain Blanchard commented, 'I want next year's championship to end on a high. An event in Greece won't have the same atmosphere as an event

in either France or Italy and it will probably only have a small entry as well.'

The series starts next April, with Spain and Portugal hosting the first events back to back, whilst a break during September is planned to allow for the ISDE.

Financial implications after the low turn-out at the recent Slovakian event have also led the FIM to consider allowing up to 120 riders to enter each WEC event in 2005, instead of reducing the number of entries as originally planned. There's also the possibility of an Under 21 Junior World Cup to bring younger blood into the series and increase entry figures.

SNIPPETS

☛ HARE 'N' HOUNDS MEMORIAL

The Rhayader Motor Club's annual Hare 'n' Hounds on Sunday 22 August will this year be held in memory of club member Simon Rees, who tragically died after a short illness.

The event will feature a three-mile lap of grassy fields and parts of the Cwmythig Hill motocross circuit will be used. There's beginner to expert classes, plus ladies and trail classes with free overnight camping available on site. Entry forms are available to download on enduro.uk.com but be quick as this event always fills up quickly.

☛ DIRTY DOG

Entries are now open for the one-day Clywedog Enduro on Sunday 12 September. The Dyfed Dirt Bike Club organised event will be held at Clywedog Plantation, near Lampeter, Ceredigion, Wales and kicks off at 10am.

Designed mainly for sportsmen and clubman riders, the course is a multi-lap of approximately 25 miles. Regs are available on enduro.uk.com and entry is restricted to 180 riders, costing £40.00 before 5 September, £45.00 thereafter.

☛ NO MAN'S LAND

The Isle of Man two-day enduro has been postponed. The event, planned by the Southern Motorcycle Club for 14-15 August will hopefully take place at a later date. Check out southernmcc.com for more info.



ON TRIAL!



Got a trail bike and fancy a spot of competition? Try the Sammy Miller Classic Trials Series...



If you own a big capacity trailie and fancy taking part in competition, then a number of rallies held around the UK will no doubt satisfy your sporting instincts. But, if you own a small capacity trail bike - say up to 400cc - then just what do you do for sport? The answer is surprisingly simple and results in a very enjoyable and competitive day. You enter yourself in one of the popular Sammy Miller Classic Trials series rounds, in which there are two classes specifically for trail bikes.

In case you don't know, trials are different from rallies/enduros in that you ride a marked course and tackle marked-off sections over which you must ride without putting your feet down - and if you do (put your feet down), you lose points: one for a single dab, three for a paddle, and five for a stop or failure.

The Sammy Miller series is a national 11 round series, which this year is held predominately in the Cotswold/West Midlands,

South and Mid Wales areas with a round in the Lake District, Isle of Wight, Yorkshire and Berkshire - well spread out - to cater for riders from many areas.

All rounds run over a road/green lane course that varies in length from around 15 to 45 miles and which may be lapped twice. Each trial will have up to 40 sections and all will be observed by marshals supplied by the club. All you do is enter in advance, turn up, sign on and ride the trial.

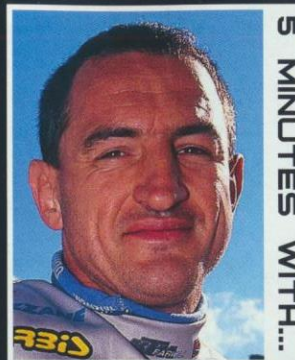
The Trail bike class runs over two routes. You can choose the hard course or the easy course. The hard course is generally pretty easy and if you have any sort of ability it will suit you. The easy course is aimed at sidecars and riders on rigid pre-65 bikes, so is very easy. If in doubt, pick easy.

The Sammy Miller series is a fantastic day out and is aimed specifically at trail bikes, ancient pre-65 bikes and old Spanish trials bikes, so attracts the type of rider that wouldn't normally be seen

dead at a modern trial.

Even though we are mid-way through this year's series, there are still five rounds to enter. On 15 August the Builth Wells club have their round, then on 5 September the Neath club hold a round, followed on 10 October by the Isle of Wight club, then on 24 October the South Birmingham club have their round with North Berks concluding the series on 7 November. To obtain the names of the trial secretaries for entry forms, contact the Auto Cycle Union on 01788 540519 and ask to speak to the trial office.

Go on, enter that Gas Gas Pampera, Beta Alp, Yamaha Serow, Honda 200, Yamaha DT, Jailling Easy Rider, or indeed any other old or new trail bike in a series that guarantees total fun. **MIKE RAPLEY**



5 MINUTES WITH...

MULTI-WORLD CHAMP, ITALIAN ENDURO LEGEND GIOVANNI SALA, IS ALWAYS A FAVOURITE WITH THE CROWD...

WHAT WAS THE FIRST ENDURO BIKE YOU OWNED?

It was a 50cc Fantic, the year was 1976. Close to me lived an enduro champion when I was younger, and I really used to love watching him ride. I started to race around on my bicycle and after that, when I had some money from my job, I bought myself my first bike. I was 14 and it was a really good bike.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST ENDURO?

It was in '79 this time with a Fantic 125. After two years of just riding around and having fun my friends asked me why I didn't compete in any competitions. So I started to race. I really enjoyed the race and I was so happy because I finished in sixth position.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE ENDURO?

There have been many different enduros that I have enjoyed. But I think my favourite would be the ISDE in Australia in '92. I won the overall so I was really, really pleased with that. It is the race that I remember the most.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE HARDEST ENDURO YOU HAVE EVER RACED?

Well, of course it is the races when it is raining and the ground is really muddy. The world championship race in Spain in '93 was so difficult. At each checkpoint I was delayed and there was no time to change anything on the bike or to take a leak. I won the race. But not in the special test because I remem-

ber one Czech rider passing me. I was stronger in the controls though so I won the race because I took fewer penalties.

WHAT RIDER HAS HAD THE BIGGEST INFLUENCE ON YOUR CAREER?

Because I started riding in enduro after I raced in motocross it was the motocross riders that I looked up to. There wasn't really any rider that I wanted to be like, possibly Gritti but nobody really. Now I want to be like Fabrizio Meoni. It is incredible the power that he has during the Dakar. He is quite old but he has incredible motivation. The other rider that I love is Mario Rinaldi, because he has been my friend for so many years.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR BEST EVER PERFORMANCE?

The Six Days in '97 in Italy and my first world title. Both these two races were great for me because they gave me so much satisfaction. I arrived in really good condition for the ISDE in Italy because I had made a lot of training and the special tests were very good because they were on grass and the ground was hard, which I love. I tried to ride really hard and I won five of the days. The support from the people helped me win that race.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST DISAPPOINTING RESULT?

In '92 when I lost the world championship title because the chain came off my bike in Sweden in the special test. I was so nervous then at the final race of the championship I made so many mistakes. Tullio Pellegrinelli won the title - the 500cc two-stroke championship.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST CRASH?

In the Dakar Rallye. All of my biggest crashes have been on the rally bike. You know, in enduro even high speed crashes are not so fast. In the Dakar the high speed is so much higher and the bikes are much heavier.

The worst one was in '98 when I was 300m from the finish. I wanted to win the stage and was riding in the dust of another rider. I didn't see a chicane and there was a step of about 40cm. I tried to wheelie over it and then was flying through the air. I had pain all over my body and was on the ground for 20 minutes. Someone helped me onto my bike and I managed to get to the finish.

WHAT BIKE HAVE YOU ENJOYED OWNING/RIDING THE MOST?

Well, for sure when I was riding with a two-stroke from '94 to '97 I was really happy with my bikes from this period. Also in '99 when I rode the 400 four-stroke - I really liked riding this bike. It was nice to change because I had been on two-strokes for so long. But for me it is the two-stroke that has been the bike of my career.

WHAT IS YOUR PREFERRED TERRAIN?

I really like the hard ground. My style of riding is to be really aggressive, so when the ground is really slippery I have many problems. I also like cross-country tests with a lot of rocks.

WHAT DOES ENDURO SPORT NEED MORE OF?

The enduro world championship needs more of its riders to be more open with the public. We need more factories to really get involved in enduro. If you look around, KTM is the only factory with a real presence in enduro. If the factories get more involved then the level of the sport will get higher.

WHAT DOES ENDURO SPORT NEED LESS OF?

Some of the crazy people from the organisation. The people who want to do the strange things and try and make a race that no one will forget, like having very tight times in the controls. Enduro races must be hard but also enjoyable for the riders.

WHAT DO YOU THINK THE SPORT OF ENDURO WILL BE LIKE IN FIVE YEARS TIME?

I don't know. For sure we need to take care about the land. To have the bike without noise and to respect nature. Maybe the answer is like they have in Sweden where they have an area for enduro within the military area.

WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE IN ENDUROS?

If I come to the races for sure I want to win. Winning is the target of all the riders. I want also to enjoy my racing and help KTM to develop new bikes. I wanted to stop racing this season but I received so many emails asking me to race another year that I decided to race again and have fun.





GO FIGURE

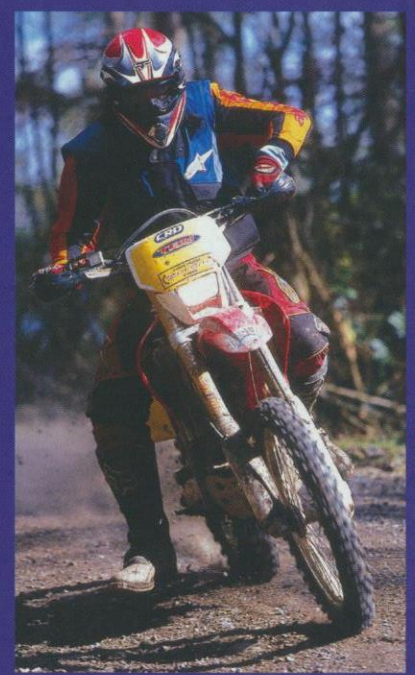
Despite the continuing downward trend of the motorcycle marketplace, sales of 'Adventure Sport' models are up four percent from the same time last year. However, sales of 'Trail/Enduro' bikes are down 17 percent, although they're still ahead of the total bike sales (registrations) which are down 21 percent this year so far!

Playing musical chairs in the 'Adventure Sport' category are the BMW R1200GS and Honda XL125V, with the Beemer now back on top of the table, hotly pursued by the diminutive Honda.

Heading-up the 'Trail/Enduro' class yet again is the pocket-sized

Honda XR125L, with sales up another 117 units in June. Climbing another two places to third is Honda's CFR250X, with an impressive 76 unit sale increase, swapping positions with the omnipresent KTM 450EXC, now down in fifth place. The complete figures are as follows:

Adventure Sport	
1 BMW R1200GS	459
2 Honda XL125V	432
3 Triumph 995 Tiger	300
4 BMW F650GS	262
5 CCM R30 supermoto	260
Trail / Enduro	
1 Honda XR125L	789
2 Suzuki RV125	292
3 Honda CRF250X	281
4 Suzuki DR-Z400S	251
5 KTM 450EXC	234



SIX OF THE BEST

Fancy winning £500 in six hours? Just find a friend who rides to your standard and enter the Fast Eddy organised Six hour cross-country race.

Open to Pro, Expert and Clubman riders, the two-man team six-hour event will take place on Sunday 15 August at Park Hall Farm, Ellesmere, Shropshire. Starting at 10am, teams must consist of two riders of the same ability, ie two pros, two experts or two clubman.

Each pair of class winners will receive £500 for first place, with £200 for second and £100 for third. There will also be a mini-bike practice area with a hog roast on the Saturday evening before. For entry forms, call Amanda at the AMCA on 01543 466282 or log onto fasteddyraceseries.co.uk.



SNIPPETS

CAMBRIAN CORRECTION

After WTRA announced last month that ALL two-strokes were banned from the 2004 Cambrian Rally, they have since informed us that this only applies to two-stroke enduro machines (of course).

Being responsible journo's, we did phone up and check the 'no to all two-strokes' story at the time and were assured this was indeed the case... must've been a crossed line!

So, everybody with a bona fide trailbike stoker is now welcome at the rally, which takes place on 23-24 October.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Feeling a bit enduro-rusty or think your riding skills could do with an MoT? Then get yourself on the Witley Motorcycle Club enduro training day. Taking place on 15 August at Ironhill near Liphook in Hampshire, the event is open to riders of all abilities and has a unique 'ride and train' approach.

With access to a large area of forest and a dedicated special test area, the Witley ISDE squad will lay out a route, complete with training stations, to illustrate obstacles and problems typical of enduros in the southeast.

In the afternoon, you can try out your newfound skills either with instructors or as free riding. Costing just £40.00, the day runs from 10am - 4pm. For more info or to book a place, contact Roger Johnson on 01252 654722 or email offroadrog@hotmail.com.

PROPOSED 2005 WEC DATES:

- 2-3 April** Europe GP, Guadalajara, Spain
- 9-10 April** Portugal GP, Durem, Portugal
- 7-8 May** Italy GP Tolmezzo, Italy
- 4-5 June** Spain GP Gernika, Spain
- 2-3 July** Czech Republic GP Pvr Kralove, Czech Republic
- 16-17 July** France GP Digne, France
- 27-28 August** Finland GP Heinola, Finland
- 1-2 October** Greece GP Serres, Greece
- 24-25 September** Europe GP (2) (Italy or France)

MY FIRST BIKE



TBM COLUMNIST CHRIS EVANS NEARLY DIDN'T MAKE IT INTO ADULthood THANKS TO HIS FIRST BIKE. SOME MIGHT ARGUE HE STILL HASN'T...

My first bike, a three-speed BSA Bantam D7, cost 25 quid and redefined the term 'hanging'. Stripped of all its road gear, and featuring a high and badly bent alloy front mudguard, an equally mangled rear fender and a pair of moto-x handlebars, it actually didn't look too bad, but boy was it a death-trap. There was no front brake, the clutch lever just kind of flapped about, as did the front forks, while the rear suspension was seized solid. It was also an absolute nightmare to start and got even more difficult once the kickstart shaft splines had worn away. To get a decent swing at the kicker you had to lift up the 'peg and if your foot slipped off the kicker you risked impaling it on the sharp end - my brother still bears the scars - on both sides of his right foot! Naturally it had a voracious appetite for plugs and needed its points resetting every half hour.

With a bald road tyres front and back, if we ever got it to run, a crash was almost inevitable. After someone rode it into a tree its wobbly front forks also bent several degrees backwards. And fitted with a high level Bushman exhaust it was also incredibly noisy and the neighbours hated us with a vengeance! My Dad seemed quite relaxed about alienating the whole neighbourhood but panicked a bit when we bought a speedo from a breakers and started running 'speed trials' in the nearby woods.

Eventually the old Bantam started to disintegrate faster than we could bodge it back together again, and after considerable pressure, we succeeded in persuading mum to finance a replacement - a second hand Montesa Cota 123 trials bike that cost an eye-watering £240. The Bantam however hung around for another couple of years as nobody could bear to part with it. It might have been hanging but I absolutely loved that bike and had some brilliant fun learning to ride it. It just seems incredible that any of us lived to tell the tale!



COME AND HAVE A GO...

Calling all hardcore dirt bike enthusiasts...The first ever Red Bull roManiacs Rally will take place in Romania on the 24-29 October 2004.

Held across the South Carpathians of Romania, the route includes two days of city riding and four days of mainly single trails and technical tracks through forests and mountains, covering between 170-270 km daily. According to sponsors Red Bull and KTM, this six-day long event will be comparable to the legendary Roof of Africa in terms of toughness.

Top names already signed up include World Rally Champ Cyril Despres, seven times and current World Enduro Champ Juha Salminen and Roof of Africa veteran Alfie Cox.

Limited to 100 entries, there will be two classes - single and team, with 30 pros in the single and 35 teams of two in the team class. There's 25,000 euros prize money up for grabs, with 19,200 of that going to the top eight riders of the single class.

Entry fee is 790 euros and includes food, drinks, hotel, and fuel transport for the entire rally. Extra costs are getting to Romania and back, and 'party expenses', whatever that means...

If you're feeling brave you'll find more information by logging onto redbullromaniacs.com or call Bernd Hupfauf on 00 43 676 403 4036.



SNIPPETS

★ HOLIDAY HEAVEN

Adventure Motorcycle Holidays are a new bike activity centre based in the picturesque Clwydian range of North Wales. Offering a plethora of activities such as green laning, hare 'n' hounds and trials riding, all levels of riding ability are catered for, with the off-road routes chosen for their user friendliness and scenery.

Using Yamaha TT-R250s, you can choose between a one-day ride/try-out or an all inclusive holiday from two to ten days. Fuel, clothing and safety equipment are all included, and accommodation is a Georgian manor house, set in 17th century gardens.

For more details call 01352 742122 or check out amch.co.uk.

★ BARGAIN HUNT

Roll up, roll up! After last year's roaring success (ahem), TBM are again holding a kit 'n' clobber Enduro Jumble at the Trail Bike Enduro Club Benington enduro. Taking place near Stevenage (Herts) on the weekend of 5 September, it'll give you the perfect opportunity to clear out all that old riding gear out of the shed, sell it on... and then replace it with old riding gear we're selling from the TBM shed. In 2003 stalls were shifting everything from complete bikes to mismatched gloves, and literally everything in between. It's just the place to pick up a bargain and what's more, the hare and hounds enduro is one of the best on the TBEC calendar. For more info, log onto tbec.tk.

AUSTRALIANS WOULDN'T GIVE A CRF-X...

Not content with having an entire country created for off-roading - and the weather to boot - the Aussies can now buy a road legal Honda CRF250X for a mere £4400!

Honda Australia are offering the CRF-Xs fully ADR-compliant (that's road legal to you and me), with approved indicators and tail lamps. Not only that, they're about £500 cheaper than a non-

homologated European model.

As reported in June's TBM, Honda UK's reasoning for selling the 250X in enduro rather than road-ready trim is that the bike is built mainly for the US market and changing production to make Euro-bound bikes road legal would cost too much. C'mon guys, if they can do it in Aus, is a road kit too much to ask..?

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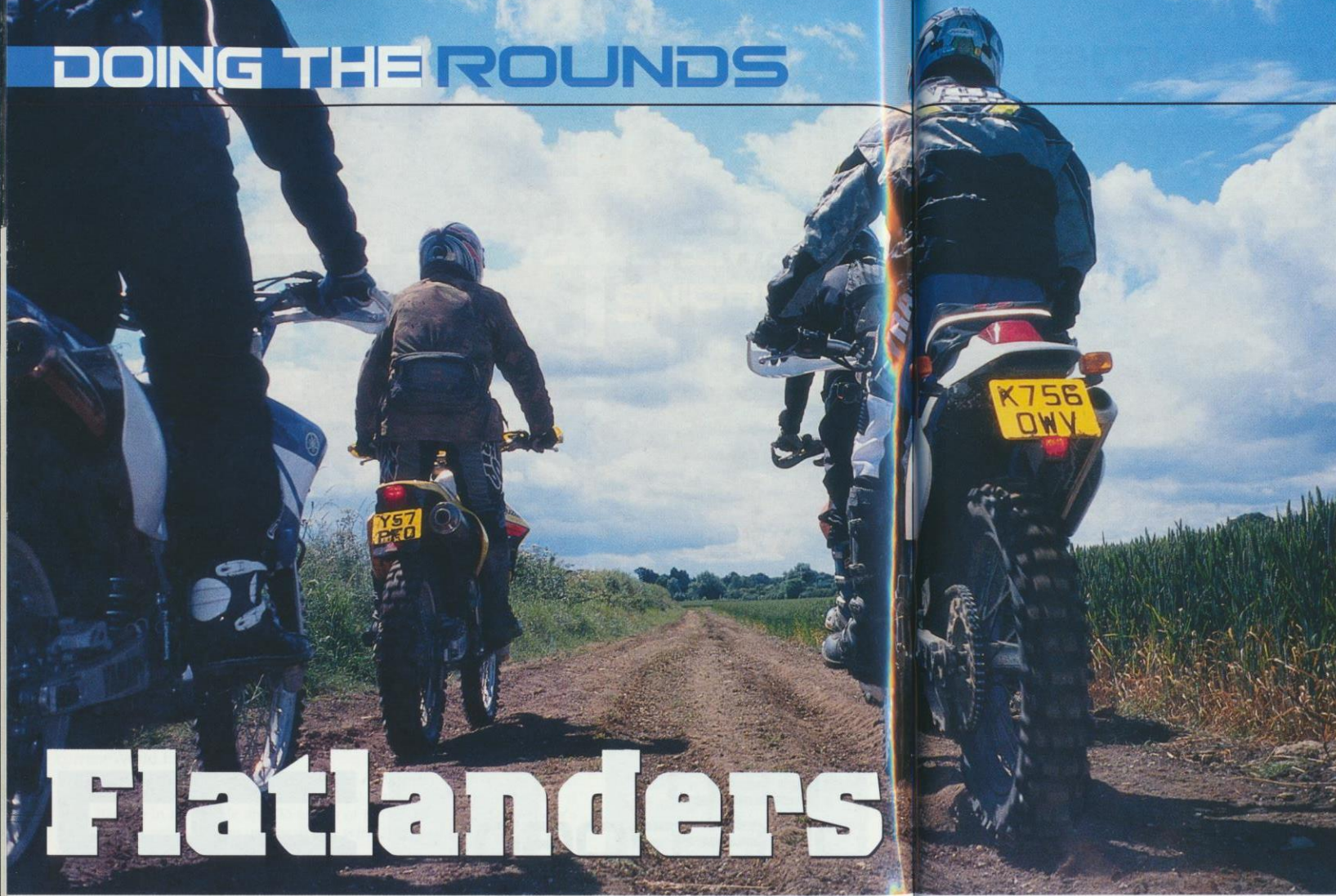
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Flatlanders

Despite the absence of hills, Mark Williams still managed to make mountains out of molehills when he took to the Cambridgeshire trails with a group from Cambs TRF...

Cambridgeshire... a county synonymous with a venerable seat of learning, madcap inventor Clive Sinclair and Britain's largest, but not necessarily best, publisher of motorcycle magazines (that distinction, of course, belongs to Ealing). It was not, however, a neck of the woods where trailriding automatically sprang to mind, or at least not the sort of dirtbikery I'm used to. Because Cambridgeshire is very, very, flat.

And flat to me equals tedium: no steep rockery to get exercised by, no glutinous boggerly hiding behind the next hill, and probably not much in the way of torrential streams to fall off into. So armed, as per usual, with my well-cultivated prejudices, I accepted an invitation from Richard Sugden, RoW officer of the Cambridgeshire TRF Group, to hit the trails with him and three other partners in crime. After getting it wrong Doing

the Rounds in both Surrey and Gloucestershire earlier this year, I was absolutely sure that as far as the East Anglian flatlands were concerned, this time it would mean a gentle bimble. As if...

An early start was the order of the day as I had plans to get back to Wales for a friend's rather grandiose outdoor 50th birthday bash, which meant a B&B just outside Huntingdon. And the nearer I came to my destination, the wetter the weather became, which didn't bode well for Saturday's activities. And my mood wasn't much improved when arriving there with a trail bike on a trailer instantly had me branded as 'one of those noisy scrambler racers' by the ageing farmer and his wife, who also insisted I smoked my evening cigar outside his



house. So before I even got to start the bike up I was ostracised on two counts! So much for a warm Cambridgeshire welcome.

Happily, things bucked up considerably when I got to Saturday morning's rendezvous a few miles away at sun-dappled Grafham Water, even though I managed to waste everybody's time by pitching up at the wrong car park. Big thumbs-down for my map-reading skills... But thanks to that vital trail riding accoutrement, the mobile phone, I caught up with my four accomplices half a mile round t'other side of the lake, and this is who they were.

Sparks Won't Fly

The aforementioned Richard Sugden, who also turned out to be the day's team leader, is an electrician working to maintain the Royal Mail's many buildings in the area and he rides a very smart DR-Z400E. But being a responsible RoW Officer, his bike's fitted with the quieter 'S' version's 'zorst.

Interestingly - well interesting to me in my current bike buying quandary - his last mount was a KDX200: 'A great trailbike, but it just got too tiring with all the roadwork we have to do round here between lanes,' an observation that would have resonance later in the day.

Barrett, Him Strong?*

Biggest banger of the day, a KTM 520EXC, sat beneath the tall, impressively tough-looking Nick Barrett - well most of the time, anyway - which he moved up to from a DR350S and finds



And let that be a strongly worded warning to you all...

'very rideable, although perhaps a little too much for these sort of lanes.' Ah-ha I thought, it is going to be a nice, gentle little bimbie as I predicted. When we stopped for what we'll generously refer to as lunch on a garage forecourt, he quoted chapter and verse on a rather tasty old Mercedes 230SL Coupe sitting in the showroom. Impressive stuff if you're a petrolhead, but then it turned out he does work in a Mercedes paint shop.

Forging Ahead

Also working for a Teutonic motoring outfit, though not aboard a Teutonic two-wheeler, Stuart Forge earns his living 're-finishing' (which I suspect is posh-speak for painting) bashed-up Audis, but rides an 18 month-old WR450F. 'It took a lot of getting used to after my first bike,' he wryly smiled.

As well he might because that happened to be an RM125 moto-crosser. 'But ultimately it's a lot more fun.' Which is why I had to watch out for Stuart whenever he was behind me, because let me tell you, he is fast.

Many After My Own Art

My eyes fair lit up when I saw that fourth man Mark 'No relation to Peter' Frampton was riding a mid-90s TTR250 Open Enduro. At last, with a bit of blagging I'd hopefully have the opportunity to compare this model with my 2004 long-term tester, rather than rely on the hearsay that'd thus far inclined me to favour the latter as a possible purchase - even if I can't really afford one.

I was encouraged to note that he'd fitted an acceptably quiet but probably liberating CRD silencer, but mildly incredulous that he, too, sprayed metal for a living, although in his case these are really expensive bits for Formula One racers and NASA spacecraft. It seemed Cambridgeshire was turning out to be a county of graffiti-ists.

Ain't no Mountain High Enough

So, after finally finding the right rendezvous and taking the obligatory Celebrity Dirtbiker snapshots, we swept northeast around Grafham Water

Flatlanders

Did anyone see that badger run out and attack my front wheel.?



and off into a leafy little lane called Hartham Street. Betraying its origins with its name, this was a nifty little BOAT which also bore evidence of excessive 4x4 use in previous years and also set the tone for much of the day's riding.

As Richard had already explained to me, many of the county's trails were now only open during the summer months because of damage caused by 4x4s, although some, like Hartham Street, do permit motorcycle access through the winter. It's a nifty compromise, but it has its downsides - quite literally in fact - as I was to rather painfully discover later on.

After a roughshod, twisty (but fairly flat!) mile scamper along Hartham Street, we had to cover only a short right angle of tarmac into the hamlet of Easton, before embarking on another mile of roughery along Three Shires Way and into the village of Spaldwick. And it was here that my flatland bigotry took a pasting because as we turned west along Cockway Lane, a magnificent, if gentle valley vista opened up to our north.

I really should've taken a snap of this, but a row of pylons dissecting this otherwise bucolic outlook deterred me. Cockway Lane itself was a cracking romp, although we had to keep our wits about us to avoid getting rutted. As it happened, it also crossed a RuPP between Little Catworth and Stow Longa (no, I'm not making these names up), the top half of which is a designated Bridleway that Richard's group are claiming to upgrade to BOAT status. A decision is expected in September and in view of their

respectful restraint thus far - which is of course why we didn't ride it - and its consequently decent state of repair, they're quietly confident of a result.

Something Nasty This Way Lies

With only a little dirt work behind us, a topographical pattern was already starting to emerge, and it wasn't just spelt F-L-A-T. With many of the lanes having essentially been protected from 4x4 churning during the

winter, their fallow state had allowed the vegetation to develop unchecked, especially the grasses, which in many cases hid the deep rutting of previous years. Add to this intermittent overnight rainfall that slicked the greenery without penetrating far enough to soften up the soil down below and you, or rather we, had the makings of treachery in the steering and braking departments.

By the time we got to Molly Rose Lodge at the end of Cockway Lane, all of us - except the apparently indefatigable balancing act that is Richard Sugden - had experienced a nasty moment or two, if not actually had an off.

So after taking a right on the B660, then south east onto the A14 before hooking a left into Belton's Hill, I was feeling a little chastened and suitably cautious about undertaking any heroics when we took to a track north west to Leighton Bromsgrove. Just as well, perhaps, that a slow moving horse and rider blunted our progress along what was a long, straight and potentially fast BOAT.

I managed to stay upright on the trio of tracks that immediately followed, although it has to be said that the lengthy Bullock Road - a BOAT north east of Hamerton, broken in two by a short stretch of tarmac - was fairly easy to negotiate at a decent clip. But the track that followed it, starting at the evocatively named Moonshine Gap just south of Lutton was indeed bedevilled by a slippery green carpet, but under the circumstances, proved mercifully short.



Flatlanders

Sign of the Times

My luck, if not my restraint was short-lived however, for after a few miles of roadwork in a southerly direction we found ourselves at the entrance to the ominously named Gibbett Lane.

Having now crossed into the rather less trail-bike-friendly county of Northamptonshire, we were greeted by a misleadingly worded sign which initially suggested in big red letters that it was banned to vehicles, but closer inspection of the small print parlayed this as a threat if 'any damage is caused to the surface by vehicular use'. This sort of officious and menacing warning may well be a sop to the rambling public - who we saw little evidence of all day, incidentally - but can only harm relations between us lot and the county council in question.

As it happens, the only harm done down Gibbett Lane was to my pride, when I managed to stuff the TTR deep into a hedge after getting it crossed up in a rut hidden deep under the long, wet grass. I slowed down and tried steering the bike in the direction of where I thought the rut

was going, but in fact I steered myself into the dense undergrowth. The only consolation to this was that when I looked back expecting to see Mark and Stuart gloating behind their chinguards as they floated towards me, I saw that they too were on their arses and being helped upright by Nick who, as a KTM rider, was clearly exempt from such pratfalls... at least for the moment!

And the horror show didn't end there, for after Gibbett turned left into the much less overgrown Broad Lane, my rear wheel somehow managed to pick up a three-inch nail along the lumpy, ratty, root-strewn track which wasn't even slightly broad, and beset by such dense tree cover that a set of halogens would've been a great help in plotting our course.

Once I got onto the B662, a further pratfall ensued when I elected to use an aerosol tyre-sealant for the first time in 25 years, rather than hoike out the rubberwear and do the job properly. In fact, the last time I used such a product it was on a front tube, and I seem to recall that it worked. I also thought that you're supposed to



remove the tyre valve before letting rip with the sealant, which was of course completely dumb because when you've discharged the aerosol the glutinous rubber foam squirts back out of the tube.

Desperate efforts to re-insert the valve resulted in losing half the sealant, mostly over my hands and forearms and almost certainly reducing the effectiveness of the seal, so although the tyre stayed somewhat inflated for the next few miles of roadwork, by the time we were halfway

along Warren Lane, just north of Bythorn, it was flat as one of my jokes.

A Proper Job

So, I did what I'd hesitated to do earlier and took off the wheel, took out the tube, (I think it was with Stuart's tyre levers, on account of I'm too naively optimistic to carry my own), and patched it with Richard's bicycle puncture repair kit, finally enabling the show to get rolling again after 20-25 minutes faffing about.

Added to the debacle with the foam, this put us a good 45 minutes behind schedule so that by the time we'd crossed back over the A14, down into Catworth and then along the (legal) bit of the RuPP that leads into Stow Longa (which involved a real live hill!), it was well past Richard's designated lunchtime. Not that any of us were going to go without fuel of one sort or another, and in fact we managed to kill two budgies with one brick by stopping at the filling station in Kimbolton where a magnificent choice of, ooh, three different soggy sandwiches

and oodles of molten choccy bars were consumed in gourmet splendour beneath an awning as rain began pouring down.

Fortunately, by the time we'd fuelled our indigestion as well as our bikes, the deluge has dwindled to the odd fitful shower, one of which doubtless contributed to Richard's fairly substantial 'off' as he rounded a grassy corner in Spanoak Wood... Well, it was about time he came a cropper too, as far as the rest of us were concerned. In fact, the BOAT that got us there was a long, rather challenging loop from Tilbrook south and then west towards Lower Dean, and once again characterised by heavy rutting frequently buried beneath lush grass, and wet lush grass at that.

Having managed to swop TBM's long-term, 2004 TT-R250 for Mark's 1995 Open Enduro version at the lunch-stop, I soon found myself savouring some subtle, if occasionally salutary differences. Whereas the revised geometry and suspension of 'my' bike gave it the edge on directional stability and steering control - especially when the terrain got really bumpy - Mark's bike had demonstrably more bottom end and quicker, more useful throttle response. This was probably, as he agreed, due to the tolerably quiet CRD silencer he'd fitted. I also found the rear brake on his bike needed a ton of pressure before it did anything, which was a bit unnerving on the slippery stuff.

Here Comes the Sun

But just as suddenly as it had materialised, the rain was replaced by strong sunshine and by the time we exited the short BOAT from Lower Dean to Hargrave and covered a mile or two of tarmac down to Shelton, the sky was bright blue and punctuated by just a few fluffy white clouds. All hideously idyllic.

And from Shelton a dried out, mud'n'stone (but not deceptively rutted) track took us through a skirting of trees into a cornfield bisected by a BOAT. Here the flat landscape and the big sky prompted memories of riding through Montana back in the early Eighties, thus inspiring me to submit the long-suffering lads to some arty stuff with the Instamatic.

Once we'd got that over with we shot west through Yelden and into Newton Bromswold where Richard had managed to find us another hill, albeit a fairly gentle one and with a wide expanse of undeceptive grass cover. A little further on this did, however, turn out to hide some

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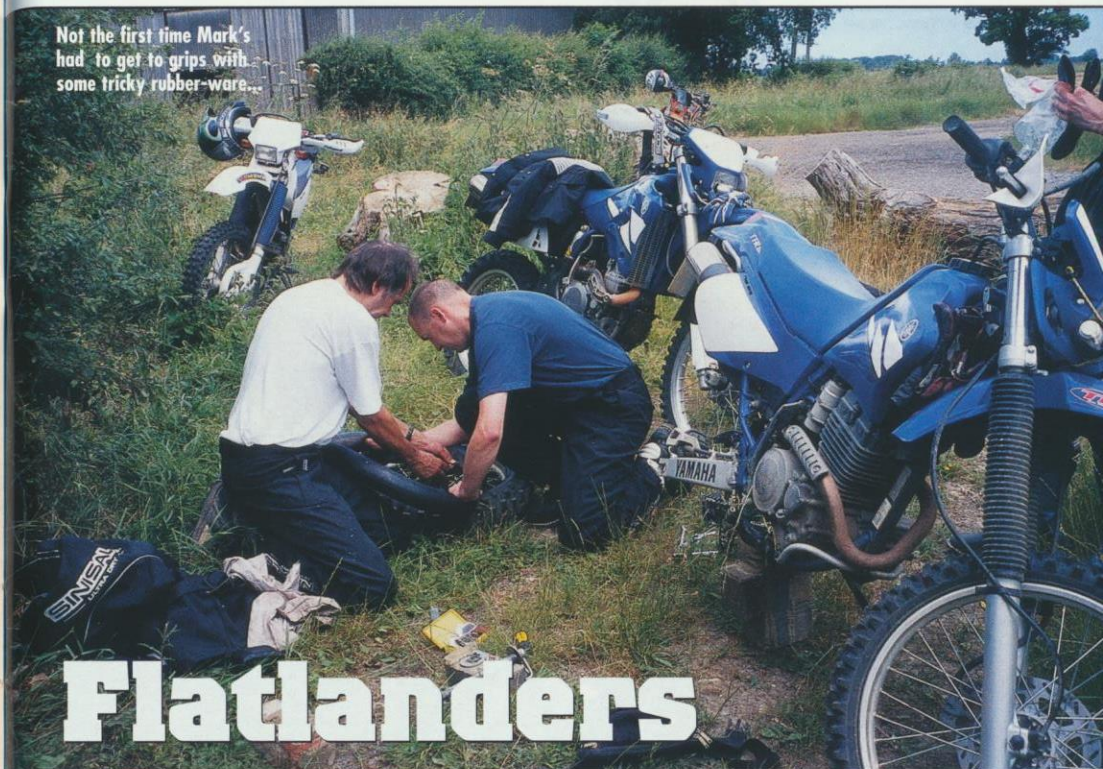
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DOING THE ROUNDS

Not the first time Mark's had to get to grips with some tricky rubber-ware...



Flatlanders

ruts, which caused poor old Stuart to take a painful tumble, winding him for a minute or two.

By now, the prospect of ending our adventures by 3pm so that I could get back to Wales by 6.30pm was looking a bit remote, so Richard suggested we cut out a couple of fairly long tracks to our west which would've taken us even further away from our base at Grafham Water. However that still left a few gems, the best of which was Donkey Lane, a twisty, mile-and-a-half long RuPP near Little Staughton. I imagine it would've been quite taxing when muddy due to its narrowness and lots of troughs, ruts and roots, but now it was, well, satisfyingly 'technical' and we ran along it at a boisterous clip.

Hangman's Lane and Scott Street were two adjacent BOATs that kept us amused in between rather a lot of roadwork we had to endure before eventually tipping up again at Grafham only a few minutes past three. A glance at my odometer as I loaded the TTR onto the trailer revealed that we'd enjoyed some 64 miles of slightly watery summer fun and, once again, I'd had a few preconceptions torpedoed. Thanks for this

were obviously due to the stalwarts of the Cambs TRF who'd generously given up their Saturday to make it happen: still, I hope it beat traipsing round Tesco's with the missus and sprogs.

There was, however, a final obstacle to overcome and one that also gave lie to a further misconception: namely that I'd make it back to Wales in the same three and a half hours it took me to get there. But then I hadn't reckoned with what I should've learnt is the typical malevolence of Northamptonshire Highways Department who, in order to circumvent just two or three miles of roadworks on the A14, treated me to a one hour, 31 mile crawl of a detour. I should've gone by trailbike...

**Absurdly cryptic and obscure reference to the early Tamla-Motown recording star whose minor, 1959 US hit 'Money (That's What I Want)' was later recorded by the Beatles ('With The Beatles' LP) and was a hit UK single for The Flying Lizards in 1980. Barrett Strong's version is of course a zillion times superior to both, as any anorak R'n'B fan in their mid fifties will testify.*

Meet the New Boss...

Yamaha's brand new DT125RE looks remarkably like their old best-selling DT125R. TBM headed to Wales to ride it, and decide if anything's changed...

As information goes, this little snippet was quite revealing. Tucked away on a photocopied sheet of background data accompanying the glossy press pack for the launch of the new electric-start Yamaha DT125R was an interesting little statistic. There, amid the reams of blurb about how many miles the average owner travelled, and whether advertising had had much influence on their buying decision (only in 11 percent of the cases, so we're told), was the fact that apparently 17yr olds don't buy 125s. Or at any rate they don't buy the majority of new DT125s; 25-34yr olds do.

Hardly surprising you may think. Show me a 17yr old who's got the cash to spend three-and-a-half big ones on a learner bike, and I'll show you a street of cars with their stereos missing. Back when I was 17 I could barely afford the price of a tank of fuel, let alone a set of wheels to pour it into. So we all know that 17yr olds buy second-hand DTs off 25-34yr olds who've presumably bought them in order to pass their CBT. That's not all though, because the stats also reveal that

Yamaha's new RE appeals more to 30-somethings than teenagers apparently



there are as many purchasers in the 35-44yr age group as there are in the 20-24yr range which kinda' brings a whole new meaning to the term 'grey bike'.

Of course we've always known that Yamaha's ubiquitous DT has traditionally enjoyed universal appeal. It's a classless bike which can pass muster as a learner tool, a weekend trailie and an urban commuter - all at the same time if necessary. And it has always sold incredibly well. Yamaha UK must have been gutted when greedy Brussels

bureaucrats decided to stuff and cook their golden goose and serve it up on a bed of European emissions regs, with a side salad of pointless new laws. Which is a roundabout way of explaining why we've now got a brand new DT125RE (the 'E' part is new).

Naturally the new bike is slightly different to the old machine - Yamaha have taken the opportunity to refresh its styling (more about which later), to address the emission 'issues' (there's now a catalyser in the exhaust and it meets all current EU emissions targets), and to generally update a few details (including fitting an electric-start - hence the 'E' in the title), but to all intents and purposes it's a very similar bike to the old one, and fulfils an identical role. So everyone's happy. Yamaha have got their best-seller again, the suits in Brussels have done their meddling and can now go and enjoy a fine lunch at someone else's expense, and we the consumer, have got our old favourite back.

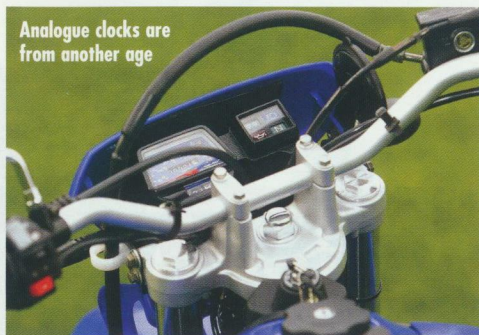
Or have we? Just how good is the new DT125RE? Is it good enough to replace a bike which had entered the realms of being considered a classic? Or did Yamaha miss a golden opportunity to actually take the bike on to the next level? The best way to find out was to ride the thing on both road and dirt, so we headed to Wales to Yamaha's Off-Road Experience, to try one out.

Doppelganger Trailie

Cast an eye over the new DT125RE (hereafter referred to as the E) and you could be forgiven for thinking you'd seen the bike somewhere before. Yep in TBM. Because way back in March '98 (TBM issue 32) we first tested the grey import DT230 Lanza - with which the new bike shares identical styling. Which kind of makes you wonder about Yamaha's claim that the new E's styling 'has been influenced by Yamaha's World Championship winning WR enduro models'. Oh yeah? It's headlight and front fender maybe, but nothing else.

Not that there's anything fundamentally wrong with the way the new bike looks. It's not exactly cutting edge - which might yet turn out to be a mistake on Yamaha's part (in light of some of the modern designs coming out of Italy right now) - but neither is it horribly out-dated either. Time will tell whether it'll be as well accepted as the previous model. But it's certainly not going to offend too many people.

The electric-start? Well that's essential on a modern bike these days, even one as easy to light



Analogue clocks are from another age



The magic button makes an appearance for the first time on a DT125...

up as a two-stroke 125. Push a button and the engine springs into life. No problem. There's also a new set of cheap analogue dials on the E (instead of the Lanza's nice compact digital instruments), and an ugly new 'D-shaped' top-clamp incorporating the steering lock so that the main key-switch for the bike is located just forward of the tank (exactly the same as on the Lanza). When you twist the key to lock it, it pushes a small steel bar into a recess in the D-shaped top clamp locking it in one of several positions. I'm all for improving bike security, but this is rather an inelegant (if presumably effective) solution to the problem.

If I sound a little cynical at this point, that's because I am. Personally I'd have loved to see Yamaha come out of the gate with an entirely new DT, rather than simply taking an existing bike like the Lanza, knocking it back a few ccs and then passing it off as a new model.

But we've got to live with what we're given, and I'm pleased to be able to report that in terms of build quality, the new DT appears to be every bit as hardwearing and robust as the old model. This is an important issue for purchasers, because part of the DT's timeless appeal is its hardwear-

Meet the New Boss...

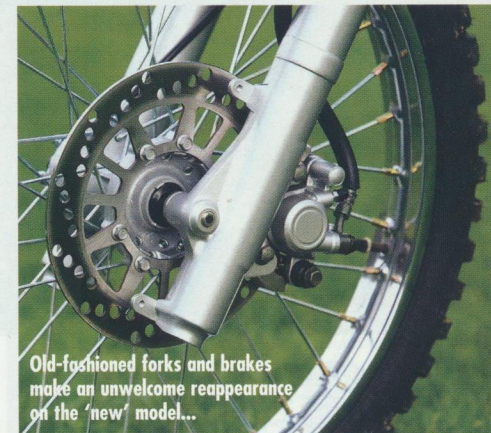


ing qualities and its ability to shrug off the knocks and scrapes of everyday use. If you're paying £3549 for a new 125, you need it to survive a fair few years in order to get a decent return on your investment. No problem, DTs are built strong. Sure you can break an indicator or bend the steel bars, but you can do that on any bike. The fabric of the DT is as tough as one of Blez's overcooked steaks.

This is exactly what you'd expect of a Japanese bike, and it's why machines like the DT have always remained popular. Everyone knows someone who's owned one in the past, and there are still plenty of DTs kicking around which are eight-ten years old, and even older. Which means that there's always a healthy demand for second-hand bikes, and that in turn fuels the new bike market.

Dirt & Tarmac

Clamber aboard the new DT and you'll feel right at home. At 915mm the saddle is only moderately tall (and very comfy), the riding position is spot on, and the whole bike feels very user friendly. It fires on the button and the controls are all light and easy to use. Your left foot accesses a sensible



Old-fashioned forks and brakes make an unwelcome reappearance on the 'new' model...

six-speed gearbox, your right foot a rear brake which requires a firm push, but which offers plenty of retardation without suddenly locking up. Nothing for a beginner or novice to get concerned about here.

Likewise, the way the bike rides. We tested the DT in standard restricted form and it's a doddle to use. There's just about enough power to keep

Meet the New Boss...



New DT-RE is as good as ever off-road...

you ahead of most of the traffic (in both town and country) and as long as you're prepared to gas the little 14.3hp, power-valve-equipped, liquid-cooled motor hard through the gears, you'll find plenty of reward. But even ridden in a relaxed manner, it'll bop along at a decent clip. It never feels particularly strained, though you do notice its limited power - especially when you're looking for a bit of extra urge during an overtake for example. Ridden sensibly it'll return over 40mpg from the 11L tank, sipping two-stroke oil at a miserly rate, but thrashing it drops the fuel

economy down to the mid 30s.

Off-road the new DT is remarkably capable. Remarkable, because this is after all, not a purpose-built off-roader, but a dual-sport trailie which tips the scales at more than 130kg once fully fuelled. Despite that handicap, it copes with the rough-stuff surprisingly well. The plush suspensions which initially seem soft - even on the road - do a fine job of keeping everything in check, albeit you can easily overwhelm them if you go too fast. But up to speeds of say 25-30mph the DT-RE will handle any amount of abuse and

tackle the trickiest of green lanes - providing it's fitted with a proper set of tyres.

But the best thing about the DT off-road, is its chassis. It's completely unflappable. Even when you bottom-out both ends with a bang, the chassis refuses to lose its composure. Headshake simply isn't in the DT's vocab. And once again the E proves perfect for those new to biking or at least new to off-roading.

Decision Time

So is it *three cheers* for the DT, or 'Cheers, I'll look elsewhere thanks'? Well that depends on your point of view and what you're really looking for from your learner-legal trailie.

In our opinion the new DT-RE does just enough to cover all the bases - but no more. It obviously addresses all the emission issues of the old bike but without significantly improving upon it in any particular area - starting excepted. It's still a strong bike, certainly a capable bike and has lost none of its off-road versatility. And given that the old DTR was always a strong seller, you'd have to say that Yamaha UK must be fairly pleased with the way the new E has turned out.

Me, I'm not so sure. Riding the new bike was a step back in time for me. I can remember riding one just like it twelve years ago. It was good then, and it's still good now, and while it can still put a smile on my face, so can tickling my feet - and that doesn't cost three and a half grand.

In the final analysis, you can't help thinking that Yamaha have played it safe with the DT-RE. It doesn't rock the boat, but then it won't rock your world either...

YAMAHA DT125RE

Price:	£3549
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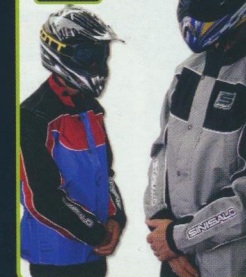
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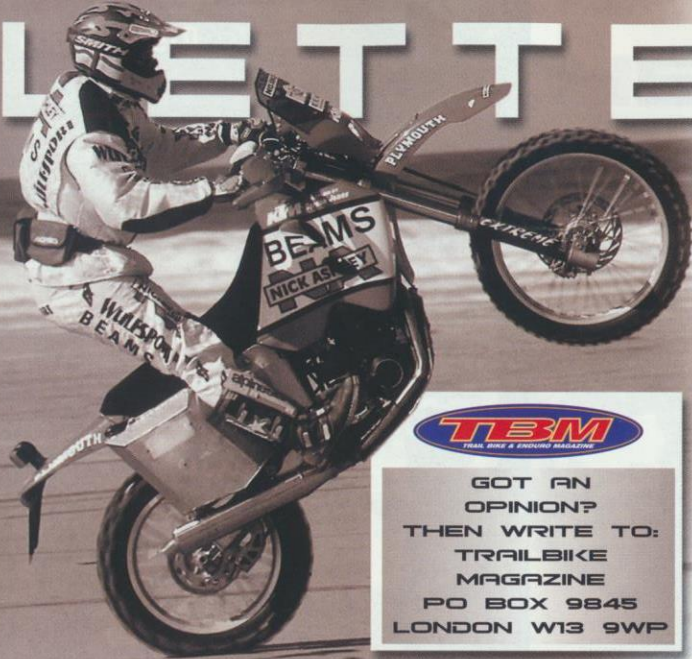
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LETTERS



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Stock Options

Dear TBM

As a regular reader (and trail bike shop owner) I have noticed that over the last year or so the content of your magazine has become rather more enduro and less trail.

For obvious reasons I would be quite happy to see you reverse that trend, which is why I am writing to offer any of my stock for appraisal, should you be reviewing entry level or budget bikes.

Most of my stock is imported from Japan and you can see what I have in at any time by checking out my website on tottontrailbikes.co.uk. If you take me up on my offer, it will be the perfect excuse to shut up shop for a day and go riding.

Keith Whitten
Totton, Somerset

Thanks Keith. We'll probably take you up on that...

Berg-a-King

Dear TBM

Last year, aged 42 and after 20 years of riding, I got my first trail ride on a demonstrator CCM404. Four weeks later I sold my Honda Blackbird and purchased an XR400, which gave me hours of fun.

However, having just traded in my XR400 for a 2004 Husaberg FE450E, I am a bit concerned at being told by a friend that the 'Berg is a high maintenance machine requiring regular strip-downs and even more regular top-end adjustments. This terrifies me, as an

import, especially when the official UK DR400 wasn't that great a bike to start with? I think the words 'don't touch' and 'barge-pole' spring to mind...

Pluggin' It

Dear TBM

On behalf of the Aldermaston Nomads motorcycle club, thank you for the 'plug' in May's snippets for our Pathfinder three-stage event that took place on 23 May. Our entry was definitely increased as a result.

Out of the 100 or so entries very few retired, which is how we like it as an organiser, and so hope a few more riders will be encouraged to do further events. All the best.

B Haines
Mortimer, Reading

No worries mate. Anyone else got an event they want to shamelessly plug?

Leave it, it ain't worth it!

Dear TBM

In a shop in London there is a Suzuki DR500 for sale. B-reg, 24,000 miles (or maybe kilometres), in very good condition, for £1594.00, which seems expensive.

Having read your opinion in the TBM guide, which says: 'foreign market, bigger-bore version of 400. None known in the UK' (thank god!), is this your definitive view of this machine? Can you give me the low-down on this bike? After reading the guide I'm very unlikely to buy it, but I would like your opinion.

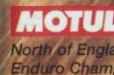
Andrew Price
Via fax

Well Andrew, the simple answer is that we stand by our comments. Why would you want an old, vastly over-priced

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LETTERS



Husaberg 450: How much maintenance do you need?

oil change is about my limit!
 The handbook is excellent as far as maintenance goes but does not seem to cover how to adjust valve clearances. Do you know where I could buy a Haynes-type manual? I would be quite willing to tackle these tasks myself with a book to guide me.
 I read with interest your report on my 'Berg and can tell you that although the motor may be 'essentially 15 years old' it is, in my opinion, superb.
 By the way, just finished reading the June issue and your report on the Lozere (in France) sounds excellent as do the trails in the Cotswolds - would love to go on a CRF250X in the Pyrenees, could I manage a GS1150 trail ride in Belgium? That reminds me - I will have to speak to the boss about the holiday entitlement.

Jack,
 Renfrew, Scotland

Welcome aboard Jack. We had to smile when your letter said you had a demo ride on a CCM and then went out and bought a Honda! As far as the Berg is concerned, most of the maintenance is what we'd call nuts and bolts stuff - checking spokes, exhaust bolts etc for tightness, but you do need to stay on top of the valve-clearances. There's no such thing as a Haynes manual for the Berg (I guess they're still writing it), so if your Berg manual doesn't explain it, have a word with importer Dave Clarke on 01772 612118, and he'll be able to point you in the right direction.

Four by 4 Winch Willy!

Dear TBM
 I feel that I must write in to defend Mark Williams and his attitude towards users of 4x4s. Since the whole issue of banning recreational vehicles exploded last year, I have found

myself writing to local papers, my MP Charles Hendry, John Mann MP, Lembit Opik MP, Ministers of State, the Charity Commission and the Chief Executive of the 'Ramblers'.
 As you can expect, all my letters were in support of our pastime and defending the right of all recreational vehicle owners to legally use the byways



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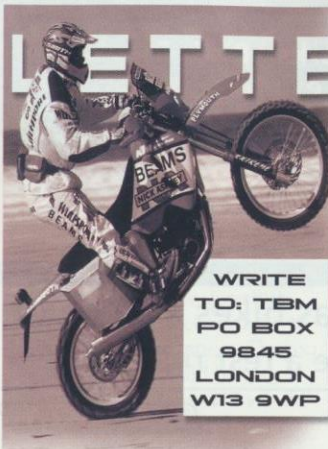
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available to them.

However, I am finding it increasingly more difficult to justify the actions of our 4x4 brethren - in the same way that I can't defend those who choose to ride illegally. I thought I had won-over my MP, but then I find he had signed the Early Day Motion raised by John Mann MP to ban all vehicles from unsurfaced byways.

When I quizzed him on this, he said he was convinced of the need for the ban because of the damage he was shown that was done to Crowborough 8, Brattles Lane. This lane is better known as Inchreed Lane and is one of the most badly damaged lanes I have ever seen; it has ruts that could swallow a bike whole.

Now I know that this lane has not been repaired for the last 10-15 years but even so, the local 4x4 boys keep using it because they know they will get stuck. This then gives them the 'opportunity' to winch themselves along it, not only adding to the damage but also harming any fence or tree to which they decide to attach their winch to. Their actions appear to be condoned by the local 4x4 groups as I have yet to see any condemnation of this practice by them.

To my mind, this is unacceptable and indefensible behaviour on their part; if they really need to do this why not go to an off-road centre? How can I defend their actions to my MP? So I have come to the conclusion that I can't. If these people want to continue in this manner then fine, but you won't find me supporting them.

Peter Christmas
Buxted, East Sussex
34 TBM

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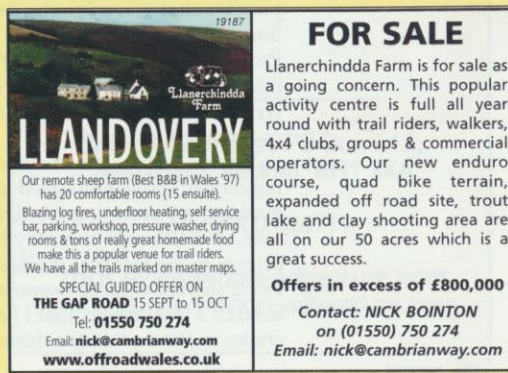
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DIRTY

'WHO SAID OLD GITS RUN OUT OF ENTHUSIASM? CERTAINLY NOT THE SAME PERSON WHO SAID THERE'S NO FOOL LIKE AN OLD FOOL...'

Back when I was a callow youth, one of my big worries concerning growing up (apart from the idea of having to go and actually get a job), was the fear of losing my enthusiasm for things. At the time it seemed to me that all the Old Gits around me never managed to get worked up about much. And that

CHRIS EVANS GETS ALL EXCITED AGAIN...

struck me as very sad. Which is why now, as an Old Git myself, I am delighted to be getting so excited about the various projects I've got on the go.

As this is a dirt bike magazine I suspect you won't want to hear about how excited I am about refurbishing my new sock (AKA my apartment, copyright Martin Amis) - though if you have any good space-saving ideas for bathrooms I'd be keen to hear from you. You're probably not that interested in the 'Great Evans Reunites All His Stuff In Less Than Five Places' project either. But it is just possible that you might be vaguely interested in the Great Evans Bike Project, so I'll tell you about that instead. Frankly it is all I have to write about this month, so it's that or nothing I'm afraid...

You see virtually ever since I can remember I have fantasised about modifying / restoring / building a bike, and although this may have its origins in the fact that the first bikes I ever owned were so desperately in need of a 'makeover' that I had little choice in the matter, the desire never

really went away. All through school I used to spend hours doodling diagrams of bikes, with little annotations indicating ingenious little mods that would leave admirers gasping at my ingenuity, but which left my Latin master fuming. It got so bad that in one school report my class tutor actually wrote, 'if Christopher devoted just a fraction of the energy he dedicates to designing motorcycles, to his school work, exam success would be virtually assured'. Tragically, a lack of time, money, workshop facilities and (let's face it) talent has meant that I have never had the chance to realise my dream - until now, that is.

As is often the case, the Great Evans Bike Project came about through a series of (un)happy coincidences. (Un)happy coincidence number one was selling my 'barely used' 2001 KTM 400 (just 22,000km!) to Bike Magazine staff photographer 'Chippy' Wood. Actually, selling the shagged old nail was a stroke of unprecedented genius - it was what happened shortly afterwards that was unfortunate.

Of course I could've shouted 'buyer beware' down the phone at him till I was blue in the face, but I couldn't stop him writing the whole sorry incident up in Britain's best selling motorcycle magazine. Nor, once it had it had gone to press, could I do much about his rather unkind, 'Chris Evans could sell ice to penguins' comment. It did however make me slightly more reticent about off-loading the other lightly used (just 16,000km) yr-2000 model KTM 400 I still had kicking about the garage.

And it was while dithering about

what to do about that old girl, that (un)happy coincidence number two reared it ugly head in the form of a breakdown on my 2004 KTM 450 (see last month's Talking Dirty). As I was running a trail bike holiday two days later I had no choice but to force 'Miss-2000' out of retirement and in the process fell in love with her all over again. After that my reasoning went something along the lines of:

- I'd be lucky to get more than two and a half grand for her.
- The person who bought it was bound to blow her up.
- It just wasn't worth the grief.
- Having an emergency spare bike was a truly wonderful thing.

So instead I decided to hang on to Miss-2000, do her up and turn her into a supermoto for posing about town, that could rapidly be converted into enduro trim should the need arise.

Which is how I found myself learning against the counter of Tony and Wendy's truly excellent Sussex Sportmotorcycles emporium, ordering vast amounts of new plastic with my, er... plastic.

Of course, true to form the only concrete progress in the transformation so far has been a sweaty couple of hours frantically stripping down a distinctly tired-looking KTM and chucking the resulting chaos into a large plastic container. So you could say that there is still a way to go yet. You could also say that the project isn't that great or even that ambitious. And you'd be right on both counts.

Except I don't care - 'cos I'm confident that once I've had the frame shot-blasted and repainted black, the engine rebuilt by my mate Egg at K&S racing, and then bolted it all back together with sexier 17in black rims, she'll look the absolute mutt's-nutts. And I will be one very proud and satisfied bunny.

After that the sky's the limit. There's my twin-shock 1982 Fantic 200 trialler that could benefit from a bit of TLC, and once that is out the way I can us all my new found abilities to tackle my 'Ultimate Project' - a supermoto XT500 with disc brakes front and rear, upside down forks and a monoshock rear end. Frankly I'm so excited about it all I can hardly sleep at night. Who says that Old Gits run out of enthusiasm! Certainly not the same person who said, there's no fool like an old fool...



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COMPLETELY RUTTED



One of the downsides of having my mug atop these monthly scribbles is that complete strangers recognise me at the sort of events where we dirty boys go, or at least go minus our helmets. I should be flattered, but depending on what I've scrawled on the issue of the day, I'm usually embarrassed - often because due to extreme old age, I can't actually remember what it was and am too busy worrying what in all hell I'm going to pontificate on next month.

MARK WILLIAMS RECKONS THAT THE SALE OF DIRT BIKES IS A GREY STATE OF AFFAIRS

The embarrassment I suffered a couple of times when I was waiting for Messrs Melber and Barnicoat to ease off the heroics and replenish their unleaded at the Welsh Two-Day Enduro was not, however, due to incipient Alzheimer's. Instead it was the consequence of being cheerily asked if I'd 'found a bike yet?' in reference to the mawkish retail deliberations of my May column. It would be trying your patience and, more brutally, that of my Ealing paymasters to chronicle the various pratfalls and vacillations that've contributed to my continuing bikelessness, especially since I had the luxury of a long-term TTR250 indulgently provided by Yamaha. But the combination of a tight budget and extreme pickiness are more relevant here than bad timing or misleading advertising.

However, in the process of trying to track down this or that particular model which I felt, at least until I'd seen or ridden it, was precisely what I'm after - a process which was frankly becoming

obsessive to the point of being unwholesome (at least according to the Blonde) - certain truths have emerged which I must share.

I've already commented on the web as a potential source of used dirt bikes, specifically the Bob Mullins Enduro site and the more comprehensive, if ultimately less patronised, Muddy Stuff UK. But having been alerted to eBay by TTR maestro Brian Sussex (who has his own, highly informative site for owners of this model, briansussex.btinternet.co.uk) to a 2001 TTR which I foolishly underbid on (it went for £2400 - probably £200-300 less than it's worth), I soon became a slave to its daily updates. And as I logged on, sometimes twice a day, to see how the bidding was going or what new bikes had been added, I began to realise that a significant percentage of 'em were grey imports.

Indeed, on just an average day in early July, of the 294 Japanese off-roaders being auctioned on eBay, I estimate that 60, or 20-odd percent, were not officially imported into the UK. With an average churn rate of 35-40 bikes per day, that's some 240-250 bikes per month, say 3000 a year. Which got me pondering the whole grey import business and the impact it has not just on the motorcycle trade, but also on the overall nature of UK dirt biking. A little more digging revealed that on the same day, about 20 percent of the bikes on Bob Mullins site were probably grey imports. And with a churn rate of approx 4.7 bikes a day, that represented about 350 grey imports a year. Funnily enough, in the July issue of TBM, I reckoned a remarkably similar percentage of the bikes advertised were also grey imports, 21.4 percent, ie some 30 bikes. And a trawl through three random back issues

MARK WILLIAMS

from the past six came up with a slightly higher figure of 23.8 percent, or 32 bikes, which, if averaged out over a year, would mean 384 machines.

Now I hasten to add that this was all very unscientific (and damned time-consuming), because I only counted bikes I absolutely knew were never officially imported into the UK, or were honestly advertised as imported versions of UK models, which means that the totals were almost certainly a lot higher. And of course it's always possible that some of the bikes were then re-advertised again shortly afterwards. But (notwithstanding duplication), let's say that some 3750 grey imports are being traded annually on the private second-hand market, and that takes no account of the specialist retailers like TBM's old friends Conquest Motorcycles, Totton Trailbikes and LeisureTrail, all of whom have built up substantial and respected businesses importing container loads of used trailies from Italy and Japan.

Now the point I'm getting to, and you'll doubtless be surprised that there is a point, is that Honda, Kawasaki, Suzuki and Yamaha are missing out on a huge amount of revenue here. In 2003, approx 12,600 trail/enduro bikes were sold by the major importers. Although that was substantially up on 2002's figure of 9,800 and with registrations

running some 10-15 percent lower so far this year, I'd guess they'll be lucky to have sold 11,000 by the end of this year. That being the case, then according to my back-of-envelope sums and assuming, albeit contentiously, that grey imports are coming into the country in the same sort of numbers as used bikes sales would suggest, then 20-30 percent of all trail/enduro bike sales are through unofficial channels! (In comparison just 2.47 percent of car registrations last year were for grey/parallel imports).

Generally speaking (and you'll note that I'm liberal with the sweeping generalisations), dirtbike riders are handy with the spanners and ingenious when it comes to sourcing parts, so they don't need to rely on accredited dealers to keep their bikes running sweet. And if they do own a grey, non-UK spec import, then there's a fascinating sub-industry of parts suppliers able and willing to furnish their needs. Once again the internet is a rich repository of information, starting with owners groups and forums from which flow details of specialist parts

suppliers, literature and maintenance advice.

Manufacturers warranties aside, in a sense the desirability of an officially imported dirtbike is therefore redundant and, let's face it, anything that brings the cost of used trailies down to more affordable levels is to be welcomed. But of course it's not as simple as that.

In fact many, if not most, grey imports are initially sold through dealers at prices comparable to those of officially imported models of a similar age, and it's only when they've changed hands a few times and start requiring serious repair that a price differential starts to appear: the number of busted and seriously weary grey imports, aka 'project bikes', featured on eBay are testimony to this. Indeed, nowadays there are even a few dealers who specialise in selling such heaps to those with the mechanical ability... and the patience to wait for spares expensively flown in from abroad.

But in view of dirtbiking's fragile future, there is another dimension to the grey import business that bears some scrutiny: It wasn't until mid-May that the Motorcycle Industry Association (MCIA) issued a coordinated response to DEFRA's anti-trail riding proposals, and this was almost certainly only because of pressure from the TRF and, to a much lesser extent, the specialist off-road

press. Up until then, as far as I'm aware only one importer - KTM - had taken any action to alert its dealers and via them, its customers, to the imminent threat.

Despite the recent-ish upturns in trail/enduro bike sales, they still represent only 6-8 percent of total (official) motorcycle registrations, which hardly renders them a priority in the Big Four's marketing strategies. If, however, an extra 3-4000 units boosted those numbers, we might have a little more clout with both the industry and the MCIA that represents them. We might even, as I have suggested in this column and as the TRF is now also considering, persuade the importers to put a small levy on every dirtbike sold to be donated to the TRF's fighting fund. A little fanciful perhaps, but even existing owners of grey imports may be thankful for this as, indeed, might the dealers they bought them from.

But then I can afford to be smug, for at last I've bought a new trailie... an officially imported one of course...

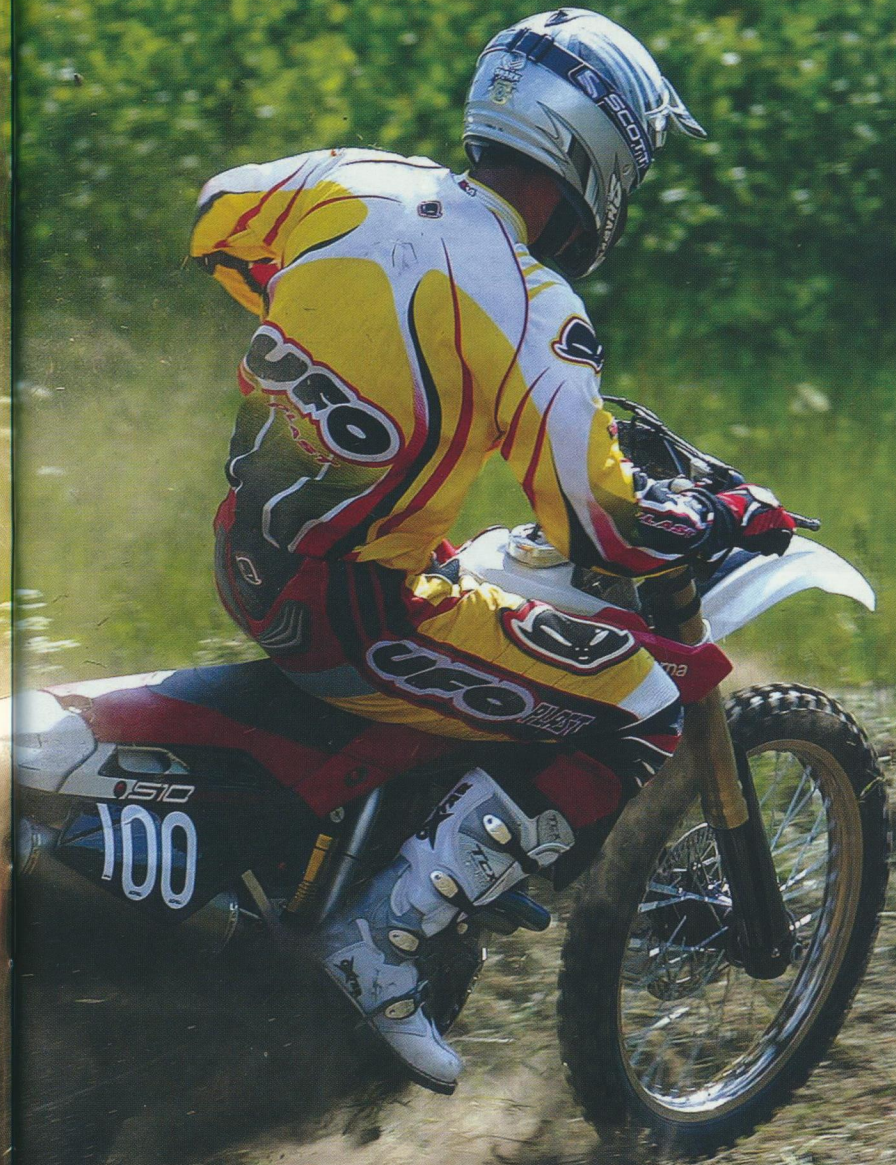
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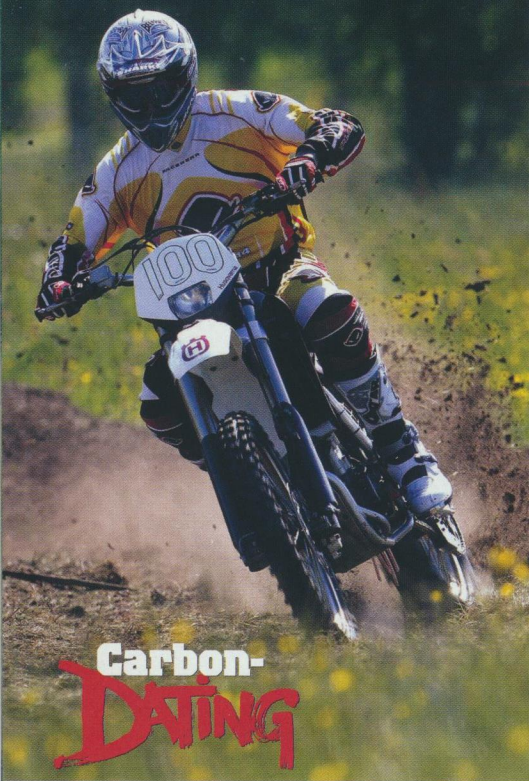
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DATING



It's the most outrageously 'blinged up' production enduro bike ever, and it costs a cool 12 grand. But can money really buy you love? Jonty Edmunds took a spin on the limited edition Husqvarna TE510 Centennial to find out...





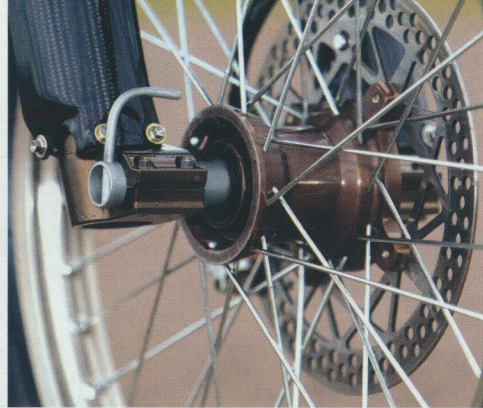
Carbon-DATING

I clearly remember the first time I caught a glimpse of Husqvarna's stunning Centennial TE510 - it was at last year's international motorcycle show in Milan. As I hurriedly rushed from hall to hall weighed down by press kits and camera gear while photographing bikes, bits and birds for his Editorship, I suddenly found myself stuck behind a huge crowd. Whatever it was they were looking at was generating serious spectator interest. Edging closer to see whether she was blonde or brunette, I saw for the first time what for me is undoubtedly the sexiest production enduro bike ever built: the Centennial TE510.

Surrounded by sharp-suited Italian businessmen with intricately shaped facial hair and pointy tan-coloured shoes, the TE510C was resting on a mirrored surface, illuminated from every possible angle and polished as if it were a diamond. The message was clear: this bike was the jewel of the Husqvarna range. I simply stood there and stared.

High Five

Trick looking bikes aren't uncommon at international bike shows. But Husqvarna's Centennial TE510 certainly isn't your average show-bike. Produced in limited numbers to celebrate



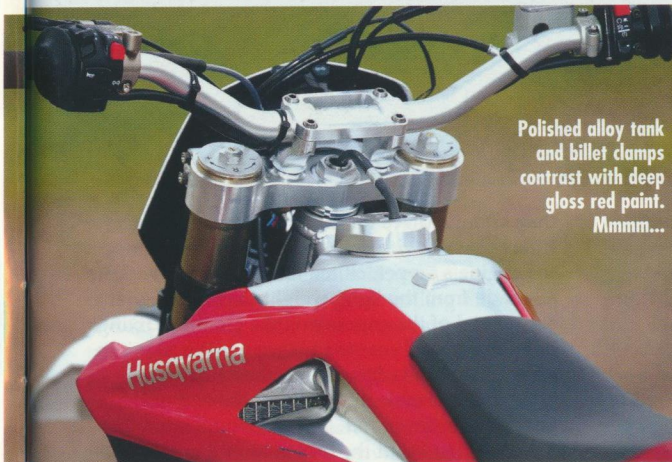
Husky's 100th birthday, the digits 510 are special to the (once Swedish and now Italian) Husqvarna brand, since in 1983 their 510cc thumper heralded the 'new era' of four-stroke enduro and motocross technology. With 2003 having marked 100 years of Husqvarna production (and 20 years of Italian ownership), building a TE510 Centennial (and not for example, a TE450 Centennial) made a certain amount of sense.

With Husqvarna claiming that only 500 Centennials will be built, the beautiful machines offer 'retro' colourschemes combined with 'the latest styling and finest technology available today'. It also comes at a price of £12,500, ensuring that only wealthy Husqvarna aficionados and collectors can afford them. At twelve and a half grand the Centennial costs a little more than double the price of a standard TE510 - hence the reason why UK Husqvarna importers Husky Sport decided not to stock any of the red, black and silver machines.

Dressed to Thrill

A quick look over the bike is all that's needed to realise that this isn't just a well dressed production machine fitted with the usual aftermarket, bolt-on goodies in an attempt to justify the price.

Isn't she gorgeous? Undoubtedly the most beautiful enduro bike ever, how could Husky make the faux pas of fitting an anodised bolt kit?



Polished alloy tank and billet clamps contrast with deep gloss red paint. Mmmm...

Oh no, the Centennial is the real deal. The majority of its elegantly contoured bodywork (that's the radiator shrouds, headlight, front and rear fenders, fork guards, front mudguard strengthener, chain guides, seat base and frame guards) is made from carbon fibre, much of which is painted in white and red - Husqvarna colours from the 60s and 70s. To complete the 'retro' look,

the frame and side stand have been painted in centennial silver, something that gives the bike a much lighter look than the standard TE510. Holding the long list of carbon fibre chassis parts in place are red anodised, hexagonal-headed bolts. Oh well.

When it comes to the bike's suspension, Husqvarna wanted their birthday bike to be more than just a thing of beauty and decided to remain 'true to the bike's racing purpose' by using parts tried and tested by their WEC team riders. At the front there's a set of 50mm, TiN-coated Marzocchi USD forks that accept a 195mm oversized front axle. These are held in position by an incredibly sexy set of triple-clamps, machined, need you ask, from billet aluminium. And at the rear, a 'motocross type' Sachs racing shock is fitted.

With the forks, bar mounts and braceless Tomaselli bars all held in position with titanium fasteners, the cockpit has a decidedly upmarket feel to it - especially as the beautifully crafted aluminium fuel tank and Husqvarna 'H' shaped

Jonty tries his level best to give the TBM accountant a coronary...

Carbon-DATING



fuel cap are most definitely 'money can't buy' items. This is dirtbike modern art.

The rest of the bike is equally well detailed with the hubs machined from billet before being anodised a glossy bronze colour, laced to aluminium rims and covered in Michelin rubber. Both front and rear wheel spindles are fitted with 'pullers' to aid removal and re-fitting before and after tyre changes and titanium foot pegs also come as part of the Centennial package. The bike's brakes are also a little special as a PF-26 rear Brembo caliper is fitted (it's smaller than standard) along with very functional hinged front brake and clutch levers - like the race teams use.

When it comes to the bike's engine, it's not really surprising that the majority of the changes made are either cosmetic or designed to save weight, after all the DOHC, single cylinder, four-stroke, six-speed lump already puts out more

than enough drive for all but the very best of riders. Awash with carbon fibre like the chassis, the engine's tappet, clutch and ignition covers are all made from the light, weight-saving material as are several of the engine guards. Titanium fixings hold all external covers in place while a titanium exhaust system is fitted. The factory has also gone to the trouble of anodising the end of the gear selector lever, red. Not the whole lever, just the end. Like I said the bike is anything but a machine that's simply laced with off the shelf 'trick bits'. Time, effort and a whole lot of money went into producing each and every TE510C.

Money Talks

Having sent a request to the Husqvarna factory saying that I'd like to ride the bike at the next possible opportunity I was quickly informed that 'the test' would probably take place in conjunc-



Only when tipping into turns do you notice the TE-C's reduced weight...

event organisers, my request was politely turned down by Fabrizio on the grounds that a possible collision with a Scandinavian conifer would probably cost more to repair than most WEC riders earn in a season. By getting to ride the bike around the training area used by the event's competitors, not only was I faced with heavily rutted corner after heavily rutted corner but a circuit littered with hundreds of tennis ball sized rocks. Oh, and the occasional WEC star like Giovanni Sala dropping by to put in a few fast laps.

Eat the Rich

I feel fairly confident in saying that no one in the UK, not even some of the filthy rich TBM readers, will ever own a TE510C. Not because of a lack of desire, but simply because of the price. And not solely the purchase price either; it's the cost of repairing the bike, should anything happen, that'll really scare the pants off most people.

Which left me wondering why Husqvarna's limited edition Centennial machine wasn't built as a street-legal supermoto bike? Okay, I

realise that Husqvarna are saying they want the bike to remain true to its racing roots, and don't misunderstand me, I think the bike is stunning in its knobby-shod format, but hell... it's a dirt bike and people fall off dirt bikes. And the first time you tip off this thing you're going to hear the sound of splintering marriages.

Truth is, it would be cheaper to keep Blez in organic Duchy Original farm sausages, to keep columnist Chris Evans in red wine and cigarettes, and to keep the rest of the TBM team in Prada riding gear than it would be to have this baby fall off its sidestand.

Knowing that even a simple, slow-speed fall might cause serious damage to the carbon fibre bodywork, at first I wished that I was riding something a little less treasured - like a WEC


With the bike having been ridden briefly in Italy earlier in the year by 'privileged guests', it had spent a couple of months prior to my appointment with it, travelling the length and breadth of Europe as a show bike. Getting parked outside the CH Racing Husqvarna team's work base at WEC events for the public to ooh and aah over, the bike had only a couple of hundred kilometres on the clock.

Asking if I could ride a full lap of the Swedish course on the bike, having cleared it with the

On the Money

Asking if I could ride a full lap of the Swedish course on the bike, having cleared it with the


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title-winning machine. Okay, so some of the 'official' bikes I've ridden are probably worth as much as the TE510C, and no-one takes kindly to their bike being crashed, but at least WEC machines are built to be raced and are used to taking knocks and scrapes.

Sitting aboard the Centennial felt much the same as sitting aboard a standard 510. It did feel a bit lighter, but I only really noticed this when tipping into the corners. As with any half-litre thumper, the torque and power produced by the motor reminded me that no matter how much weight had been shed, a 500cc four-stroke will never feel small and light.

But the most striking thing about the bike was the fact that it felt as hard as a rock. With the 'beefed-up' suspension making for an uncomfortable and at times twitchy ride, a tight gearbox and near solid seat foam didn't do much to help me settle. Could it be that the bike had access to my bank statement and was trying to tell me I wasn't welcome? I guess like all suspension designed to perform at the highest level, to get the best from it you need to spend time dialling it in.

Having ridden a 'straight from the crate' TE510 mid-way through last season and loved it, I was a bit surprised to find that I didn't really gel with the Centennial. While the brakes worked well, the riding position was comfortable and the engine as strong, if not a little stronger, than I remembered, for some reason the bike didn't seem to work as a complete package. Yes, the motor had plenty of grunt, yes, the bike turned well, and yes, the more I rode it the more I started to feel at home on the TE-C. But it just wasn't the tractable, rider-friendly machine I'd ridden last summer.

Display Purposes Only
There's no point in being over analytical as to how the bike performed because, let's be honest about it, the Centennial was never designed to be raced or even ridden seriously anywhere near



Unfortunately, Jonty found the Centennial better to look at than it was to ride...

dirt. Sure, you could race it. And with time spent setting it up it would probably perform well. It's just that you wouldn't bother. If you could afford to buy a TE510C you'd put it in a glass show cabinet or give it pride of place in your living room and invite your mates around so that you could all stare at it - just as the Italian businessmen did in Milan.

So, was I disappointed that the bike didn't ride as well as it looked? No, not at all. I'm just happy to be able to say I've ridden the most expensive, best-looking production enduro bike ever built. And... I didn't crash it!

WELSH

For Beginners?



This year's Welsh Two-Day Enduro was a classic. Armed with a Yamaha WR250F and a Husky TE250, TBM joined the 520 other riders for the annual pilgrimage of dirt...

'There's a first time for everything' is such a great phrase. Usually accompanied by a shrug of the shoulders and a deep sigh, it signifies that you're resigned to your fate, just before launching yourself wholeheartedly into something rather foolish. Think... that bungee jump on holiday that looked so good in the brochure, but stood on the precipice looking down at the raging torrent below, you're not so

sure; or the plate of exotic-looking nosh served up in a north African restaurant which doesn't seem so appealing once you've realised the waiter's pet monkey's gone missing. Nonetheless, 'there's a first time for everything' so dive in head first and to hell with the consequences!

Here at TBM HQ you'll find the phrase uttered quite a lot. Whether it's used in sarcasm (as in 'I wonder if Blez'll get his copy in on time? Well

there's a...') or in connection with another one of Editor Melber's hare-brained schemes. Which is exactly how, back at the end of June, we found ourselves running around like headless chickens trying to organise bikes/kit/fuelling etc for the Welsh Two-Day enduro at the same time as putting an issue of the magazine to bed.

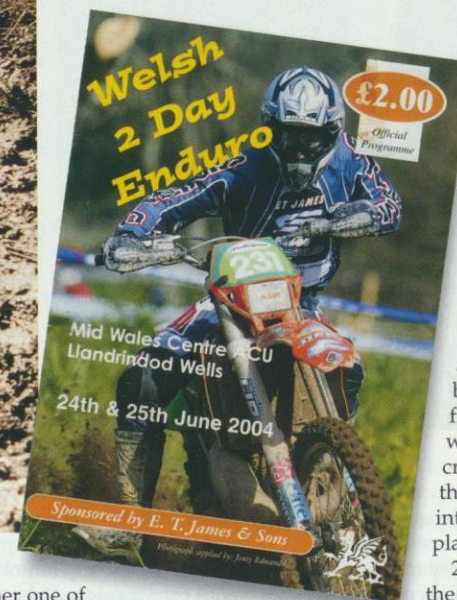
Right about now you're probably wondering why this is a first? It's not the first time Si's entered the Welsh, and it's certainly not the first time that we've been so hideously unorganised as to not even set eyes on our bikes until half an hour before scrutineering closed! However, it was the first time that muggins here had entered the Welsh, and the first time I'd ever done a proper

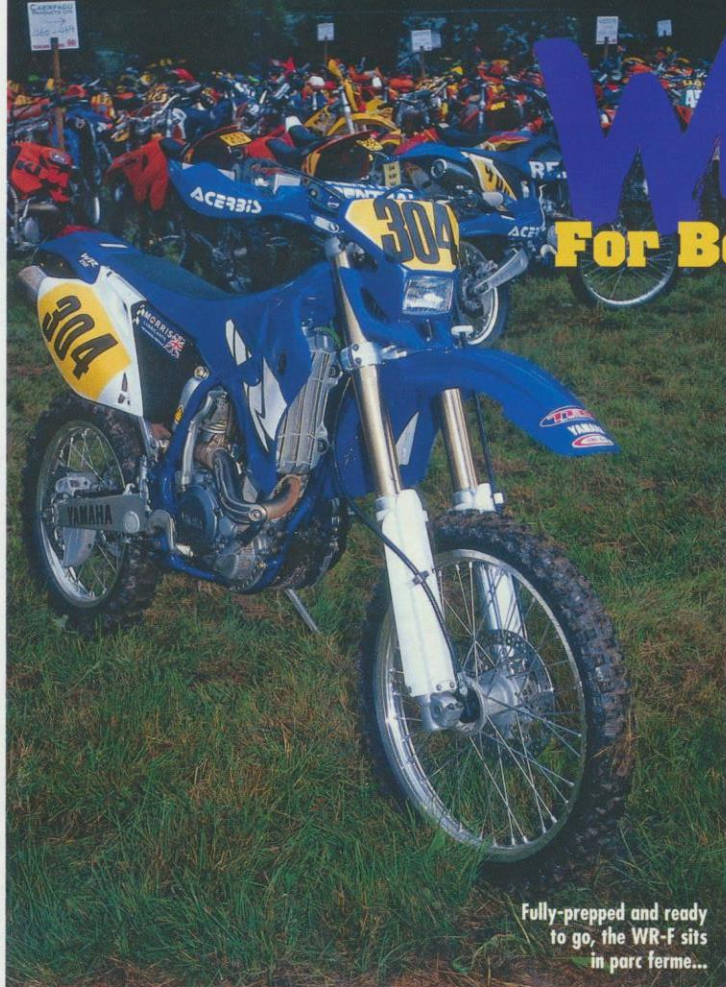
time-card enduro. Yep, that's right, I've done plenty of hare and hounds and the odd UK rally, but until last month never a time-card event.

Of course, it wasn't until about a month before the event that Wing Commander Melber actually had this particular brain-wave. Getting a late entry wasn't too hard - not half as tricky as deciding which bikes to ride. Should we be sensible and pick bikes which would be easy to ride and get us to the finish, or choose a pair of oddballs which would see us break down/crash horrifically (or a combination thereof), but would make for an interesting story? For once, we played safe...

250 four-strokes are undoubtedly the clubman racer's weapon of choice. Light and easy to pilot, they

produce the kind of power that'll propel you around a test at a decent clip without turning you into a gibbering wreck. But which pair to choose? The obvious bike would be the CRE-X, but we've tested it enough in recent months. A converted KX-F or RM-Z might have been interesting, but finding one was another matter. And so we looked to our 250 thumper test in issue 91. Back then, Husqvarna's TE250 had run the all-conquering WR-F pretty close, and a couple of testers had actually preferred the Varese-built bike. So, we wondered, which would be the better bike in the white heat of competition?





Fully-prepped and ready to go, the WR-F sits in parc ferme...

WELSH

For Beginners?



The WR-F's nicely stable, though slower turning than the Husky...

Wells Far to Go

Arriving in 'Dod Wells late on Friday afternoon, it didn't take us too long to locate our Husqvarna. Parked up under a row of blue awnings sat our twofifty, resplendent in its Husky Sport graphics. Already prepped for enduro use, the bike was devoid of its road kit and all that was required was a set of backgrounds, race numbers, and some mousses. Whilst new-girl Mel was despatched to purchase backgrounds and numbers, Si set about the task of fitting the Bib-mousses.

Blagging the use of a mousse-board made things a little easier on the wet grass and all was going well until the rear tyre refused to slip onto the rim. With time passing by and scrutineering soon to close, more and more people gathered to watch, 'advise', and hold onto tyre levers. And it was as I held onto one such lever, that his Melbership decided to 'noble' the competition.

Of course, he denies all knowledge of what occurred next (and I'd be surprised if this account makes it into print unedi.....), but 'somehow' one of the other levers snapped out of the tyre and straight onto my knuckles! Aaaaarrgh!

With the wheels back on the TE, and my hand swelling up nicely, we figured we'd better find the Yam. The bike was coming from Geraint Jones' Yamaha Off-Road School, and we knew the Jones boys would be in the paddock. It was just a matter of where? Unfortunately, a frantic search failed to locate them and information that they were 'in a white van' proved little help. With 20 minutes before the scrutineers headed off for their dinner, things were getting kinda' desperate. As the clock ticked down it was with some relief that we found the bike tucked just inside the fence of parc ferme. Thankfully, it was already shod with mousses, though the sticking throttle tube required a little 'attention'. With back-

grounds and numbers slapped on with all the care of a fly poster, both the Yam and the Husky passed muster and were returned to parc ferme for the evening.

Showing organisation far beyond our usual means, we figured it might be a good idea to go and walk the two special tests. Both were marked in the program as MX-type, so we wanted to see what we were letting ourselves in for.

A few miles out of town and the first test looked nothing like a motocross course. From the van, we could see the tape twisting and turning around a grass field, and it looked far shorter than the two miles the program claimed. How wrong we were!

After ten minutes traipsing around the field we caught up with two marshals putting the finishing touches to the course. 'Oh, there's loads more', they gleefully revealed. 'Go into the woods, out into the top field, up and down

the hill, and back into the woods.' And half an hour later we were still walking...

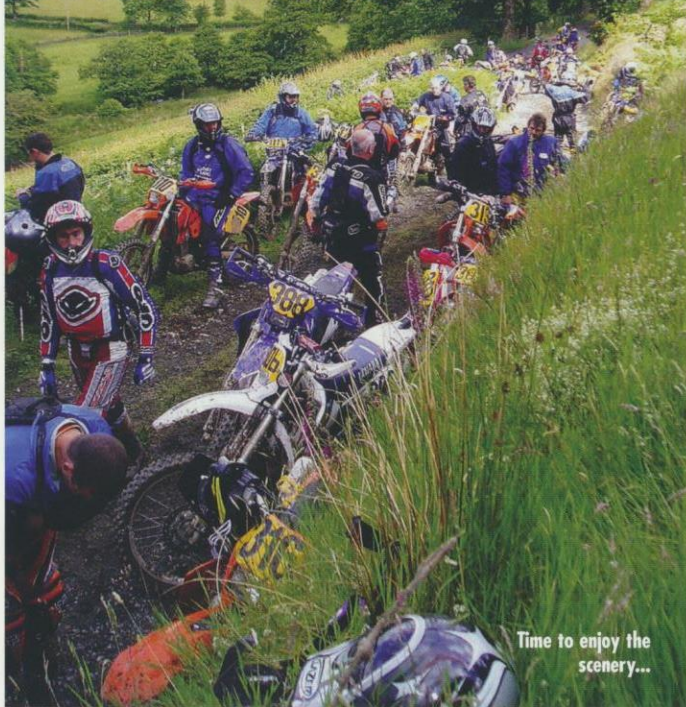
Shunning the second test, the rest of the evening was spent filling in timecards, dining on mediocre pub grub, and plotting fuel stops for our pit chick, Mel. Si tried his best to explain the finer points of using a timecard, but I was too engrossed in my sticky toffee pudding to pay much attention.

Easy Risers

The following morning we were up bright and breezy, prepping goggles and filling camelbacks. Amazingly, we were somewhere near prepared as we headed off in the van for the start at the Lakeside.

Half-past nine, and we were sat on the startline listening to the banter of the sombrero-wearing starter official. As the minute rolled over, starter buttons were thumbed and we were off - Si

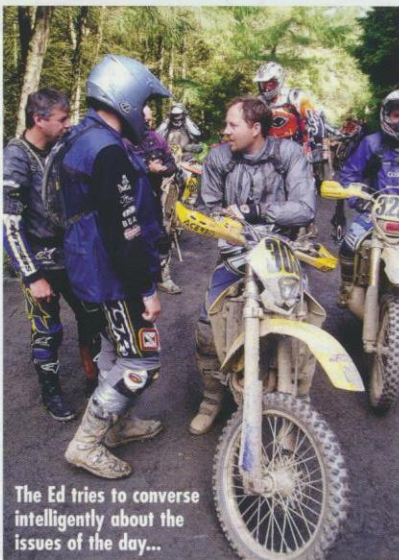
Wash For Beginners?



Time to enjoy the scenery...

aboard the Yam, myself on the TE.

A few miles of tarmac, a short section of trail and we were at the first special test. It's at this point that I really need to kickstart my first excuse. Now, it always takes me a while to get into my riding. Jump straight on a bike and I ride like a squid (some would say that I do that all the time). Then the arm-pump kicks in, and it takes a good hour or so before I really get into the groove. And so with that one out of the way you won't be too surprised to hear that I dropped the Husky a test-ruining three



The Ed tries to converse intelligently about the issues of the day...

times. I could comment that the bike felt nice and light, stable yet sharp steering, but the truth was that at this point I was simply along for the ride. However, those grab handles in the sidepanels proved pretty handy!

More than a few road miles and a gentle 'trail ride' later and we arrived at the next check. The Irfon Forest stage was only eight miles long, yet we had 30 minutes to cover the distance. Those in the know reckoned that a brisk pace was required, so we headed off into the woods with the little 250s singing. Keeping it pinned up the side of the hill, the rear tyre clawed at the rocky soil, and we carried the speed to the top of the climb. The way back down, however, was another matter. A snotty, rutted morass seemed to be claiming bikes left, right and centre. Trying to skirt around the mangled mess of mud, men and machines, I slipped back into the slop and got caught up behind a stuck rider, allowing Si to slither off into the distance.

In the tighter sections of woods the Husky seemed to be just about the perfect tool. Quick steering yet stable(ish), the TE made jinking between trees an absolute cinch. Not usually a fan of tight nadgery going, I was glad to be on something so flickable. Unfortunately, the Husky remained flickable in the ruts, and the blasted thing flicked me straight into the undergrowth! Rock-solid on smooth going, find a stretch of ruts and the TE's nose would start to wander, faster than Blez at a buffet. The 250 definitely has the mind of a female; bored of one rut, it would head for another, then change its mind and its direction, part way through.

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WELSH For Beginners?

SECOND OPINION

Tough call this one. Husky or Yamaha - heart or head? I remember the last time we tested them back to back I struggled to make up my mind because they were so close... but in very different ways, if you know what I mean!

Your head and your wallet says Yamaha. And you can't argue with the fact that the WR-F's been the 250 anchorman right up till the point that Honda spoiled the blue party. It's strong, fast, dependable and torquey, and at least you've got a fair chance of getting some of your money back when trade-in time comes. At this year's Welsh I found it incredibly stable. In fact it was so stable, I originally thought it was down to my brilliant riding that I only fell off once during the first day (albeit on the wet special test). But it wasn't...

Because five minutes into day two, having swapped to the heart-achingly seductive Husky

I was picking myself off the ground out of a sloppy Welsh rut. I had to fight with the Husky for the first half of the day, until I learned to let it have its way. And on anything other than relatively easy going, it was (I'm convinced), slower than the Yamaha.

That's because on the Yam you could just hit things flat-out (and I do mean flat-out) without it deflecting off its path. The WR-F's chassis is truly brilliant in this respect. It's just a shame that the rest of the bike isn't up to matching it. The seat on ours was sacked-out: too soft, too wide and made worse by that big ol' tank which is fitted to the 2004 models (remedied for next year I might add). Throw in the soggy suspension and it feels like you're piloting a sofa around a special test. Compared to the Husky's 'rapid patrolboat' feeling, the Yamaha was a lumbering battleship - effective but somewhat crude.



'Would sir like tea, coffee, or maybe a quick massage?'

Having picked the bike out of the bushes, I knew I needed to 'press on a bit', so I turned up the wick. Once more the Italian bike came alive and we were soon flying. The final stages of the check were on twisting fire road. Across the hillside I could see the Ed and the Yamaha, so the 250 was gunned for all it was worth. The twin cam motor really loves to rev, and as long as you keep it on the boil (pretty easy thanks to the six-speed box), and carry your corner speed, it's possible to make

pretty rapid progress.

Rounding a corner, the end of the check hove into view. I could see that Si was already in the checkpoint though I couldn't see the timing clock, nor dare look down at my bar-mounted watch. Having been focussing on catching the Yamaha just a couple of hundred yards ahead, it took a littler longer than usual to work out that I really ought to be slowing down... about 50 yards ago.

So, I'm happy to report (and I'm sure the timing officials stood on the track are quite pleased about this, too) that the Husky's brakes are pretty powerful. Of course, there's that horrible sponginess that seems to afflict every twin-pot Brembo set-up, but there's plenty of bite both front and rear. Arriving more than a little crossed-up, the



Needing a nap after the first check is only to be expected at his age..!

Ours wasn't all that fast either. In the past the Yams have always been well quick, but ours felt tired and slow and the Husky could leave it for dead in a side-by-side drag. And... well this last point is a bit more intangible, but the Yamaha sort of feels like an older design compared with the Husky.

Get off the soft 'n' squidgy Yam and onto the razor-sharp TE and you feel like you're on a proper competition bike. This is more like it: the brakes are sharp, the suspension is stiff, the tank is narrow between your knees and the seat gives you piles within an hour. Bliss.

But boy does it feel like a blade compared with the altogether blunter Yamaha. The Husky dices a special test like it's a ripened mango and it turns soooooo much better. Sure it's a bit more jittery in the ruts and definitely more tiring to ride, but it makes you feel alive. The Yamaha on the other

hand reassures you, cossets you and informs you in a soft whisper that it'll wake you up when you arrive at your destination. Please enjoy your nap, Sir.

If I was buying an enduro bike (not just a 250 thumper by the way, but any enduro bike) I reckon the Husky TE250 would be at, or very near the top of my list. Honda's CRF-X would be right up there too, but d'ya' know something, the Husky might just eclipse that as well. It's mad to think I know, but remember the Husky is street-legal, narrower, arguably lighter, possibly better suspended and definitely much more feisty than either the Honda or the Yam. You step off the Husky (sometimes at speed) with a real feeling of having worked hard for your enjoyment. And I like that. Not just in women, but in a bike also...

SI MELBER



Apparently Si couldn't see a thing with those orange goggles. That was the idea...

WELSH For Beginners?

clock read 52 seconds into my minute, which I think you'll agree is a pretty close run thing.

Water Sports

As the day wore on, I was getting into the riding and started to enjoy the little Husky more and more. Strata Florida, another first for me, proved slightly easier than I'd expected as the water seemed to be pretty low. Only once did we get off and push just to ensure the bikes remained water-tight. The square-edged rocks tried their best to deflect the bike this way and that, and at times it

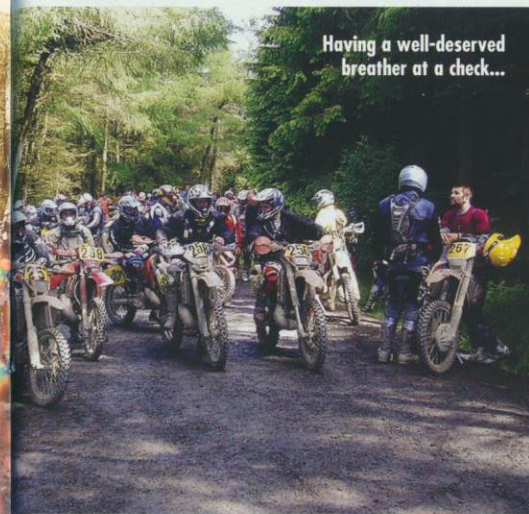


felt a little like they were winning. Whilst not as twitchy as some bikes, the TE is certainly a touch fractious. We don't think that it's down to the Marzocchis, 'cos they're about spot-on, but more to do with the quick-turning chassis. Nonetheless, we made it down the stony sunken track without incident, and enjoyed a few minutes rest at the end of the check.

This pretty much set a pattern for the day. Ruts, roots or rocks; the TE required more than its far share of body

English and peg-weighting to keep running straight. But pretty much everywhere else you could exploit the revvy motor and sharp-steering chassis with no more effort than you'd expect on any twofifty four-stroke.

As we dropped down the hill towards the second special test the heavens opened. It wasn't a downpour, but it was enough to make the grassy test as slippery as a freshly lubed eel. Feigning interest in a particularly unusual species of grass, Si pulled to the side of the track to let me into the test first - a cunning ruse to ensure that he could



Having a well-deserved breather at a check...

chase me around the test. So I feel no guilt in reporting that, as I careered around the course, I looked back across the field and spotted the WR spinning like a top on the wet grass with his Melbership seemingly practicing his yoga positions on the floor next it. I think we'll call this one the 'Upside-down Yam position..!'

With the pressure off, I set about chasing down the KTM in front. At last, the TE felt in its element. With plenty of feedback from the Marzocchis, I could turn-in as quick as I dared, knowing that the front would remain planted. On the way out of the turns the rear would light up with ease as the motor spun up quickly, and I ended up running a gear too high to find some traction. This didn't reward with particularly quick progress as the little Husky loves to rev, but softly, softly, catchy Orange monkey!

From the test, it was little more than a few miles of predominantly road work back to the final check at the lake-side. Here the bikes were given a once over with the tools and a liberal coating of water-dispersant before being propped in parc ferme for the night.

Switching Blades

By all accounts the Friday looked set to be the better day. The sun was shining, the sky was blue and we had a rough idea of what lay ahead (albeit ridden in reverse order). Only this time I would be on the WR. Yes, yes, I know, swapping bikes (and therefore timecards to match) is against the rules, punishable by flogging and all that. But we were hardly up for any trophies and besides, who would know? Certainly not the marshal at the first check! 'Ooh, it's good to put a name to a face', he stated as I handed over Si's

timecard. Or not, as the case may be...

The special test turned out to be just as slick as on the previous day. Where before there was slippery grass now everything was coated in slime, and there were a few more off-cambers than I remembered. From the off the WR felt markedly heavier than the Husky, and its lack of dynamism let the Japanese side down. The turn-in wasn't as quick as the Husky's and the wide soft seat made moving around on the bike that little bit harder. But the redeeming feature was the WR's torque. Although it felt like it had more than a few miles under its belt, compared to the revvy TE it would still grunt out of the turns, pulling tall gears and hooking up nicely.

After the test, it was on up a section of fire-road. And here the Yam's motor didn't feel quite so strong. Wide open, the motor lacked the kind of pull we expect from the 250F, and I'd have to say that the TE eclipsed it on top-end. Thankfully, a rutted climb up into the forestry evened things out a bit. Point the Yam in a straight line and you can almost take your hands off the bars, it's that stable. Fairly early on in the day there was one section of gooey ruts I'd been particularly dreading. Running through a forest, the previous day they'd taken their toll on me, and I'd pretty much run out of puff lugging the TE uphill over the tree roots. But the WR simply sailed through without any trouble.

Onto the forestry roads, and sneaking up the inside of bigger bikes was made all the easier thanks to that stable turn-in and the Nissin brakes, which could be grabbed with total confidence late into the corners. Of course, the 450s powered away on the straights, and even the TE could eke out an advantage. But the WR was still capable of surprising a few bikes.

Before Strata Florida we stopped for fuel and to give the bikes a good waterproofing. The Yamaha was still sporting its ridiculously placed rocker-box breather (running down below the bottom frame-rails), though there was little we could do about it. The Husky had already developed a bit of a splutter after a particularly wet and smelly section across the clear-fell forestry and was treated to half a can of WD40!

Thankfully, the river crossings were even shallower than they'd been the previous day, and we didn't encounter any problems. In fact, catching other riders just as they rode through huge puddles soaked me more than all of the river crossings combined. Through soaked goggles I could see that Si was working hard to keep the TE pointing straight on the slick rocks, getting a little bit sideways on more than one occasion.

Towards the end of the check, the fast whooped-out track seemed to be working

WELSH

For Beginners?



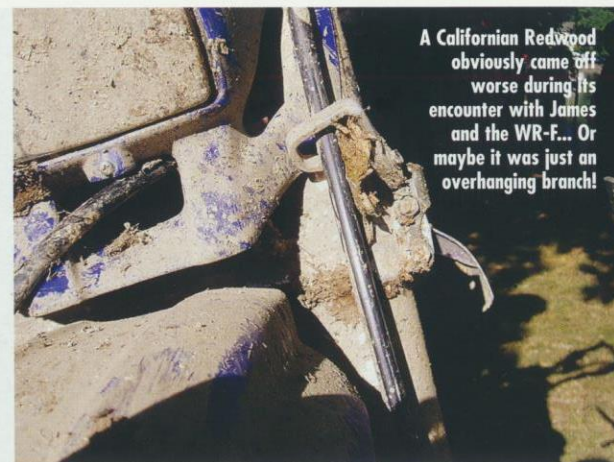
the Yam just as hard as the Husky. A few ill-timed landings tested the Kayaba suspension to its 'bump-stops', and while it took the abuse, the Husky felt that bit better sprung on the front-end. Here you certainly noticed the Yam's extra kilos, but it felt reassuringly stable and refused to deflect off the bumps.

After eight miles of road work, we reached the Irfon Forest with thirty minutes in hand. Crashed out on the grass, it was time for a choccy bar and a change of gloves. I knew I'd have to work hard on the fire-roads, but the sticky gloop of the forest would prove far easier on the WR. Which is exactly how things turned out. Si easily kept the Husky ahead on the open going, but once we got into the woods I jinked past the cross-rutted editor, getting to the end of the check with a couple of minutes in hand. Next stop, the final special test...

After my dismal performance in day one's opening special, I knew I'd struggle to make up

the time on the 'Winco' in the final test. However, that wouldn't stop me trying! So ensuring that he entered the test first, I took off like a bat out of hell. A missed gear coming out of the woods didn't help matters, but I was sure I was reeling him in. Until, that is, we ran back through the woods. Just as I was planning what kind of gesture to give as I sailed past, everything went a little sideways. Heading straight for a particularly solidly rooted tree, I thought now might be a good time to abandon the good ship Yamaha.

Plucking the WR out of the woodwork I was amazed at the lack of damage. Somehow the only evidence of my misdemeanour was a lump of bark wedged into the brake-hose guide, and it hadn't even cracked the plastics - testimony to the Yam's robust construction I'd say. But the guys would never believe me! So now fully fired up, I set about clawing back some time. The grass was still pretty slippery, and it took more effort to get the Yam to turn than the lightweight TE. But I



A Californian Redwood obviously came off worse during its encounter with James and the WR-F... Or maybe it was just an overhanging branch!



Show me the way to go home...

was sure I was gaining on Melber. Until...

Until, powering out of the final turn, I'd forgotten about a small ditch (now turned bog). Si claims he remembered it, and therefore skirted around the edge - I reckon he was simply going so slow he had plenty of time to pick his line. But with the red mist clouding my vision, all I could see was the finish 20 yards beyond. So I didn't look for an easy line, I simply grabbed a big handful of throttle.

Landing head

first in deep mud is never fun, especially with an audience. But I couldn't hear their laughter. All I could hear was the Yam's twin-cam motor bouncing off the limiter as the throttle was wedged deep in the mud. Desperate to keep going, I dived over to the bike and picked it upright with the throttle still open, the rear wheel roosting sloop high into the air.

I eventually crossed the line in a time 16 seconds down on Si. Not bad, I thought, for crashing

into a tree and leaping into a bog. But I knew I'd never live it down...

Back at the finish it was ice creams all round and a final appraisal of our mounts. The Yamaha had proved amazingly stable in the ruts, with a feeling of solid dependency and blinding brakes. But the engine just didn't perform as it should. We know that the WR's motor is good and strong, especially from the mid-range to the top-end, but this particular bike just felt a little bit tired.

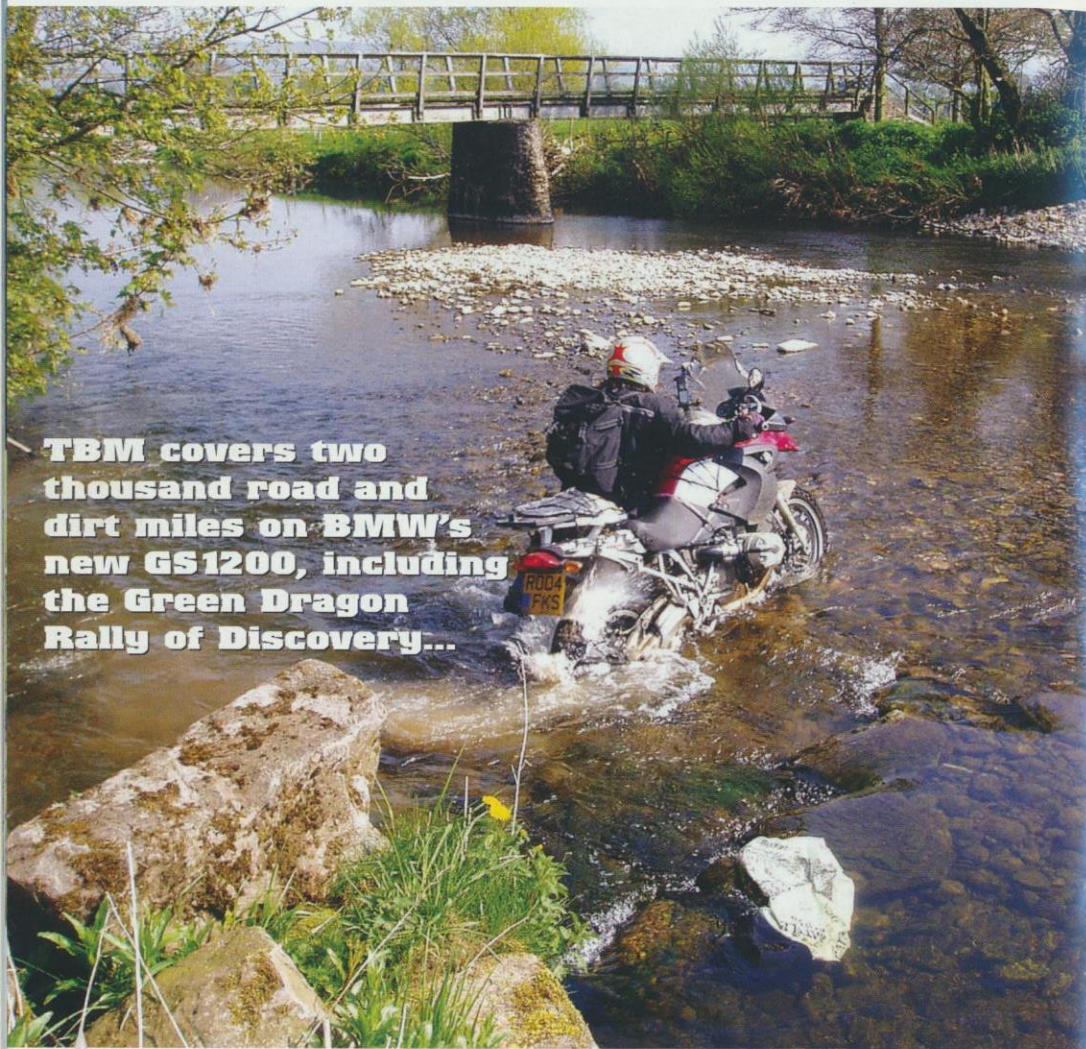
By contrast, the TE250 felt light and nimble, with more than a little pep. Okay, so the brakes lack feel and you really need to rev that motor, but it felt so much more lively and purposeful. Thanks to

the hard, flat seat you can really move around on the Husky, throwing it about like a 250 thumper should be ridden. The suspension is just about spot on, but in the ruts I started to hate its wayward antics. I'm no fan of the Tomaselli bars which Husqvarna use, but then these are easily changed. And we did encounter the odd carburetion 'glitch' during the two days.

However, which was the better bike is pretty hard to call. One side of the argument would say that enduros are normally won (and lost) on the special tests, and therefore, I'd pick the TE250. But looking at it from a different angle, it's pretty hard to make up time on the special tests if you've run late on the going (having crashed, tired yourself out etc) and in that respect the Yamaha is more likely to get you through with less drama. But if it were my five grand (which is roughly what you'll pay for either bike) I'd pick the Husky every time.

After all the little 'incidents', I was pretty chuffed to finish my first Welsh clean on time. As for the TBM competition, (the unofficial event between editor and deputy), that's a different matter. Despite swapping timecards (and therefore our official results being all to cock) I'd have to admit that (by some 30 odd seconds) the victory went to his Melbership. Well, you know what they say: 'there's a first time for everything...!'

Thanks to: John Edmunds for helping with the entry. Mike Carter of Husky Sport (01962 771122) for supplying and prepping the TE250. Harley Stephens of Yamaha UK, and Geraint Jones and Wynn Hughes from the Yamaha Off-Road Experience (01686 413324) for the WR-F. And huge thanks to Mark Williams and Karen for their help and hospitality - above and beyond the call of duty.



TBM covers two thousand road and dirt miles on BMW's new GS1200, including the Green Dragon Rally of Discovery...

Enter The

DRAGON

first outing, then all the way to Merseyside on a wet and windy Tuesday evening.

On that occasion I was damn glad to be able to plug my heated jacket and gloves into the bike's power socket, especially since my particular bike lacked the optional heated grips. At least you get handguards to keep the worst of the wet and windblast off your mitts, although, as I was to discover later,

immensely, yet deceptively powerful - hauling the beast down from three-figure speeds hooning to a bumble without any of the diving and squirming you get from most conventional telescopic.

It also got me from the Oxford Services on the M40 back to the far side of Godalming, using a mixture of motorway and country roads, in under an hour; a record that would probably be wise not to repeat.

Everything wasn't perfect though. The fuel gauge had already proved itself deeply irritating, with its automatic 'countdown' trip meter telling me that I had only enough fuel left to go another four miles when there was well over a gallon of juice still in the plastic tank. If you get to nought miles, the meter stays there as the miles continue to roll past.

I quickly learnt to switch the gauge back to the normal trip-meter setting as soon as the 'countdown' setting tripped in. Even after the gauge had been indicating nought for ten miles, I could still only get 16.78 litres into the 20-litre tank after 169 miles. (BMW have since had a recall to rectify this problem).

Puff the Magic Dragon

The most enjoyable - and demanding - part of the test came when I took the GS12 up to North Yorkshire for the Green Dragon Rally of Discovery. Based at the Green Dragon pub-cum-hotel in the tiny village of Hardraw, near Hawes, it ran over the May Day bank holiday weekend.

The last time I was this excited about testing a new machine, it was an industrial doughnut maker with a four-gallon jam and custard hopper. But I was hoping my experience with the new Beemer 1200 wouldn't prove to be quite as messy. With a GS1150 of my own in the garage, I'd read the launch test with anticipation (TBM102), and was anxious to discover how many parts of the new bike would swap straight onto my own machine.

After picking up the shiny red 1200 from Guildford, I was immediately struck by how much smaller and lighter it felt - much more like swinging your leg over one of the old 'air-head' GS100s than the lardy 'oilhead' 1100s and 1150s. Yet the performance of the new bike makes

even the 1150s feel gutless. Within half an hour, it was rocketing me down some of my favourite Home Counties roads at speeds that would have given the local magistrate palpitations, yet which felt absolutely safe and responsible to me. I was convinced the speedometer must be seriously over-reading, but a check on the GPS showed it to be only very slightly optimistic. Gulp.

The GS accelerates like no BMW I have ever ridden and goes round corners as if on rails. Ironically, considering that it's fitted with a balancer, the new lightweight motor felt a bit buzzy than the unbalanced old bruiser, but I soon got used to the different feel.

Time for some serious mile-munching. I rode it up to Mallory Park and back to London in my

they're not very robust.

With the adjustable screen set on the highest setting (and the seat on the lowest) coupled with the significant extra protection provided by the front of the tank, the GS12 confirmed itself to be a more comfortable motorway cruiser than the old 1150. When I returned from Cheshire the following day using mostly A and B roads, it proved itself to be quite simply the best handling and most enjoyable road bike I've ever ridden. The lightened, telelever-steered chassis just gives you so much confidence; it will literally hurtle through high-speed bends like a sports-bike, yet also copes with bumpy back roads as well as the best of the big trailies. And the servo-assisted ABS-equipped brakes are

When the going gets tough, the not-so-tough just stop...



The test bike came with the cleverly designed new expandable panniers, but no top box, so I simply bolted my own rack to the standard (plastic) BMW item and slotted it into place.

With a kit bag on the pillion seat there was plenty of space for a spare off-road helmet and a good selection of dirt riding kit. Saying that, I had a frustrating half hour fiddling with the left hand pannier mounting when the pannier simply refused to go back on the bike until I'd adjusted the special bolt onto which it slots. I also added one of my own screen extensions for extra high-speed comfort and better radio listening - Radio 4 of course.

As is my unfortunate habit, I was just about ready to leave London on the Friday evening at the time I had originally planned to be arriving nearly 300 miles away, so all thoughts of taking the scenic route had long since gone out of the

window. The 1200's lights are better than the old 1150's, so I didn't have to slow down much on the fast but twisty A684 from Bedale to Leyburn and on to Hawes.

I strolled into the bar of the Green Dragon practically on the stroke of midnight to be greeted by a mixture of cheers and jeers, and was delighted to see that they were still serving.

One Nail and Two Knobbles

In true Blez style, I'd missed the briefing but fortunately my old friend and sparring partner, Pat Keenan, had marked up my OS map for me before he'd gone to bed so I was able to start on time with him after a bit of frantic machine preparation.

Pat had driven up in his Mobitec service truck and, along with his own KTM950 and a friend's

Where's a funny-looking inscription translator when you need one..?



Enter The DRAGON

XR, he'd also brought the Metzeler TKC Twinduro 'knobbles' that are usually fitted to the spare wheels on my GS1150.

The wheels on the 1200 come off more easily than any I've previously encountered outside of an endurance race and, with the help of Pat and his tyre machine, it only took a few minutes to get the rubber swapped over. However, I did get a nasty surprise when I discovered that somewhere during the drive up from London I'd picked up a nail in the 1200's rear tyre! Fortunately it hadn't caused any significant loss of air, and Pat repaired it properly from the inside at the end of the weekend.

While the rear wheel comes straight off with

the removal of five bolts, car style, and the front comes out with the removal of just one caliper and the spin of an allen key, the GS12 does require a 'chock' under the engine. Unlike its air and oil-cooled predecessors, it's not able to balance on the back wheel with the front wheel out and, it must be said, heaving it onto the centre stand is more difficult than it ought to be.

Red vs Orange

Having thrashed around Mallory Park on a KTM950, and finding it rather over-high and under-braked compared to the BMW, I had come to the conclusion that the GS1200 would make the better road machine. But, on the narrow, twisting, roller-coastering tarmac of the Pennines, the Austrian and German twins were well matched. Pat was standing on the pegs most of the time, Peter-hansel style,

with the back end often sliding around as his not-recommended near-knobbly tyre struggled to find some adhesion with a hundred-odd horsepower going through it, while I preferred to sit down in comfort. I could keep up with him, but I couldn't go any faster.

Mind you, I got well ahead when he completely missed the obvious turn for the Roman road that runs for several miles south west of Bainbridge. I had time to take photos and chat for quite a while with a couple of friendly rambblers as I waited for him to realise his mistake.

He eventually appeared from the other end of the trail having gone miles out of his way. He damn nearly dropped the high and mighty vee-twin when he turned it around, but the tables were soon turned as we continued back up the Roman road together. The GS12 is considerably more dirt-friendly than the 1150, but the KTM's superb White Power suspension still eats the BMW's Telelever for breakfast when the going gets rocky.

After a detour down to Oughtershaw, where there was a sign at the start of a footpath which made it clear that even pushbikes were not

'Are you sure it's this way, Blez?'



Enter The DRAGON

welcome, we returned to complete the Roman road all the way to Gearstones, barely a stone's throw from the all-important lunch stop at the Station Inn, within sight of the famous Ribbleshead viaduct.

While there for our compulsory one-hour break, we heard worrying tales of people stuck up to their waists in bogs, and Pat Creagh confirmed this when he appeared a short while later on his XR400 with his BMW suit covered in mud.

After lunch, Pat left while I was still faffing about with my maps and question paper, challenging me to catch him if I could. A few minutes later I was barrelling down the straight tarmac road when I noticed a brake warning sign on the dash. I slowed down, touched the brakes and sure enough, the servo had packed up, along with the ABS. The brakes still worked, but required a mighty heave to make them do so - much more than with conventional non-servo brakes. I continued on my way, but in a considerably less gung-ho state of mind, making sure to leave plenty of extra braking distance at all times.

The only time I saw Pat again was as he was coming back down a dead-end from a check, having got several minutes ahead of me. By this time I'd got used to riding with the non-servo brakes, and was just wending my way along a nice winding trail when BANG! without any warning, the servo suddenly started to work again and I was back to one-finger braking. A short while later, it was off again. Certainly kept me on my toes, I can tell you!

I finished the day on my own, having ridden some great lanes, seen some stunning views and enjoyed some very scenic check-points. I also took great heart from the fact that some of the

The winners receive their well-earned trophies...



One man and his dog went to mow his way through several meadows...



tarmac roads were visibly turning into 'green lanes' before my very eyes. I comforted myself with the thought that even if Alun Michael gets his way with his dreaded DEFRA bill, there'll be plenty of new lanes to ride in 20 years' time as all the minor paved roads crumble through lack of maintenance!

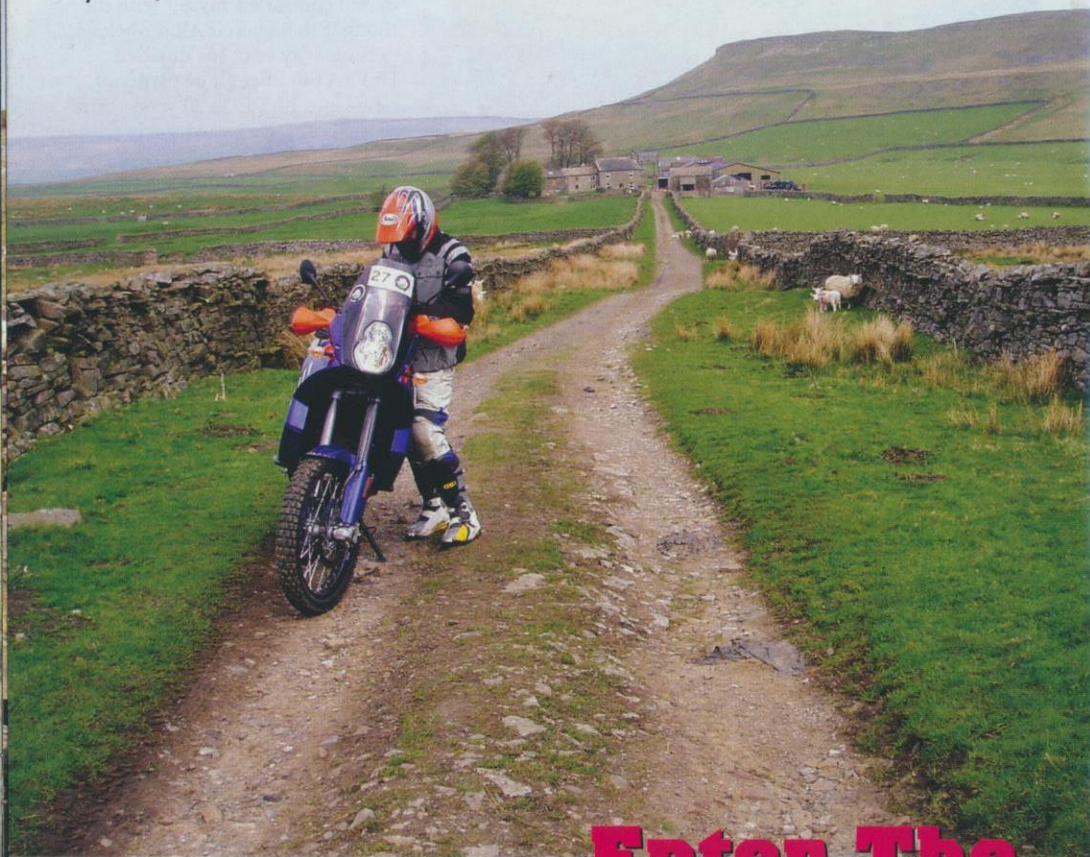
Back at the Green Dragon there was good food to be eaten, good booze to be drunk and good live music to be listened to. I couldn't be arsed to mark up my map before I went to bed.

I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue

Whereas Saturday's checks had all been set on OS Map 98 ('Wensleydale & Upper Wharfedale'), Sunday's were all further north, on OS 91 ('Appleby-in-Westmorland; Brough & Kirkby Stephen'). As usual I was faffing about until the last second before my departure time and set off in pursuit of Pat K and our mate Digger, only to realise, about two miles up the road, that I'd left without the essential clue sheet. There was nothing for it but to return to base and start again, this time having worked out my own route rather than following Pat's.

The first check I did was at the scenic ruin of Pendragon Castle where I saw Alan and Teresa Ogden on their Dominator, one of only two couples doing the event two-up (the other pair, Thomas and Jeannette, had ridden all the way from Germany on their GS1100). The first trail started only a few hundred yards away, and it was a beauty that turned into a bit of a beast as it appeared to peter out alongside the River Eden. Phil Gunn and some of the Irish lads were riding around in circles and erroneously trying to cross the river as I manoeuvred the GS12 through a really narrow, tricky climb and almost got stuck, but with my heart in my mouth, I just managed to get up and soon found the gruesome answer to the question 'What's under the bridge?' at the nearby check; (a dead sheep).

'The turning wasn't clearly marked, honest...'



Pride Comes Before a Ford

I was just congratulating myself at having navigated very successfully to the next check at a ford, when I got my come-uppance for being complacent. The ford had a concrete roadway right across and the water was only a couple of inches deep above it, so it looked completely innocuous. But I'd barely got my front wheel in it, doing no more than 10mph, when it slipped out from under me and I literally belly-flopped into the water. Damn! How did that happen? I soon discovered that the smooth concrete was covered in a dark slime with all the adhesive qualities of, well... slime. It was all I could do to keep my balance as I heaved the bike upright and saw to my chagrin that the left hand-protector was broken. I noted that it was cleverly designed so that only a small piece of plastic was 'sacrificed' which must be cheap to replace, but the whole thing is a lot more flimsy than even the cheapest enduro guards. A tiny strip of gaffer

66 TBM

Enter The DRAGON

tape was all it took to make it stronger and more flexible than new!

The second ford of the day was only a couple of miles away and a lot more daunting. It was about 50 yards across, and deep in several places, including the point where the crossing started. I brilliantly forgot to put the BMW in gear as I rolled down the bank, so when I most needed some 'go' there was none to be had, so I ended up having to get off and push ignominiously into the middle of the river. Determined not to make the same mistake twice, I was trying

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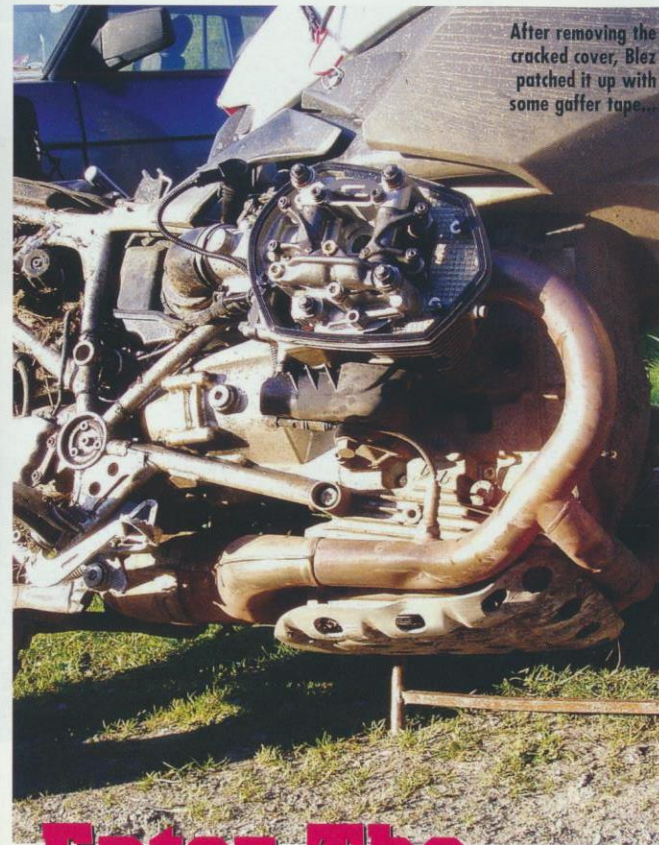
Hey, good-looking...

to get up some momentum for the steep climb out the other side when the front wheel hit a hidden rock under the water and the bike toppled over. Double Damn! All of this was recorded for posterity by another pair of friendly walkers to whom I'd given my pocket Olympus. Fortunately Andy Manahan, Gill and Nigel turned up on the other bank just in time to help me out and I had some amusement of my own watching Phil Gunn, Big Liam and Brendan Power cross the river with varying degrees of style and success.

Andy Manahan showed his classical education by doing a near-perfect translation of a Latin inscription on the next check, in Dufton, before we headed off north towards the source of the Tyne via what turned out to be the most challenging trail of the weekend for the big Beemer. It started near the striking white domes of the radar tracking station on Dun Fell and took us north east along the Trout Beck.

Within a few hundred yards I began to question the wisdom of taking the 1200 along this track as the boulders got bigger and the grass in-between got softer, but since there were by now about eight of us riding together I figured that the others would give me a hand if I got stuck and besides, if Phil Gunn could do it on his knobly shod R80ST, I should be able to do follow on the Twinduro-equipped GS12... shouldn't I?

I must admit I started to get nervous when I realised that there was definitely no going back, since we were following the course of the beck downstream, at the very limit of our own and the machines' capabilities, and there would be no way we could ever get them back up the way we'd come. I only got seriously stuck once in a bit of bog that was reminiscent of the Monk's Trod, but by picking very careful lines and using the GS's awesome torque with care, it got itself out of places most people wouldn't dream of ever venturing. The trickiest moment of all came when



After removing the cracked cover, Blez patched it up with some gaffer tape...

Enter The DRAGON

the trail narrowed so much alongside the beck that I had to stand on the opposite bank (below) Phil's Boxer as his left hand pot scraped along the bank, to stop it falling in. I knew there was no way the GS12 would squeeze by in the same way, so I took a deep breath and rode up the hill alongside and right around the top. It was one of my proudest moments ever on a big trailie and I'm still kicking myself that I didn't give somebody my camera to record it!

There was another tricky moment which involved a near-vertical climb up the side of the hill, followed by some serious going in deep heather, but we all got through. I was elated when we finally emerged back onto terra firma,

but we'd lost a huge amount of time - it had taken us well over an hour to cover about three miles! After 'snapping' the extraordinary piece of modern art that marks the source of the Tyne (which is only a few hundred yards from the source of the Tees) we were soon heading along the A686 towards Penrith and I had a ball thraping the GS12 through the twisty climb up to the famous bikers' haunt at the Hartside Café - our designated lunch-stop.

It was only after I stopped in the car park that I noticed the oil that was decorating my right boot and the back of the bike. Oh dear. Turned out the rocker cover had been cracked at some point during my rock-hopping adventures - possibly even in the seemingly innocuous spill at zero miles per hour in the second ford. Unfortunately you can't just turn the rocker covers the other way up, as you could with the old air-heads, but Phil Gunn assured me that the leak shouldn't be excessive, so after topping up with oil in the nearest garage we carried on, although I did

add some gaffer tape for good measure. I think it did actually slow the leak down a bit! At least the servo brakes and the ABS had mysteriously returned to normal, and never played up again. Why don't BMW fit the optional rocker cover protectors as standard - or at least to the press bikes?

There was a great check half way down the old road to Harwood and another in some old mine workings in nearby Ashgill Head. And I had a great thrape down the B6529 from Kirkby Stephen to the A684 but was a little concerned when I saw the tell-tale signs of a motorcycle crash just before the turn-off for Hardraw. Someone had obviously overcooked it into a bend and then bounced off a dry stone wall back across the road. I assumed it was some throttle jockey on a sports bike but when I got back to the Green Dragon I discovered it was actually one of our lot, riding a nearly new CCM 404! He'd actually got away with a severe shaking and managed to ride it back to the pub, albeit with a banana-shaped back end!

After a scenic group photo in the shadow



Blez gets his come-uppance tackling a tricky water feature...

Enter The DRAGON

of the famous Hardraw waterfall it was time for more food, drink and the prize-giving. The extremely popular and well-deserved overall win was taken by none other than Bob Jeffries of WTRA. Bob was making a welcome return to two-wheeled competition after a near-fatal accident on his previous GS1150, which literally left the Beemer in small pieces. His 'oppo' Taff Davies (The Welshman with the Gloucestershire accent) was runner up on his well used Tiger. Nick Dulk got a special award for doing the entire rally with his pet dog, Robbie, on the tank!

There was more drinking and merrymaking in the bar afterwards during which Brendan Power revealed that he has a superb voice and Mick Duston displayed an extraordinary ability to fall fast asleep while propping up the bar! Before I had too much to drink I removed the weeping right rocker cover from the GS1200 and glued up

the double split with Araldite before leaving it on a radiator to cook. I replaced it on the bike a couple of hours later and I'm pleased to say that it didn't leak a drop of oil on the way back.

In the morning Pat Keenan straightened the bent gear lever (why doesn't the tip fold?), swapped the tyres, (having first fixed the rear puncture) and I had a great ride home. It took a long time to get all the mud off the Beemer, (why no rear hugger?) but it looked (almost) as good as new by the time I returned it.

In my time with the GS12 I'd covered 2000 of the most enjoyable miles I've ever had on a bike at an average of 42mpg and at speeds which it would be wise to be vague about. (That's more economical than either my 1150 or the previous GS100 airhead).

The GS1200 is one of the very best motorcycles it has ever been my pleasure to ride. It ain't perfect (there have been four recalls already), but I still want one very badly. My 1150 felt like a right old heffalump when I got back on it. Or was that just me?

Thanks to Nigel Marriott, Sue Lynes and Gill Myers, Pat Keenan of Mobitec and Duncan Bell at Vines of Guildford, and GS12 owner Cynthia Milton...



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TIME MACHINES

Is it that time already?
TBM flew out to Italy
to the launch of
the 2005 KTM
range...



STORY: JAMES BARNICORT; PICS: REDEYE & HERWIG PEUKER

Throughout the modern world there are something like 40 different calendars governing peoples' lives. And despite many of them relying on the movement of the moon, very few seem to agree on the date. Should you subscribe to the Islamic calendar for instance, it's now 1425. According to the Chinese, the start of the New Year was 22 January, and it's now the Year of the Monkey, 4701. However according to the calendar sitting on the desk of the sales and marketing department of a certain Austrian bike manufacturer it's now 2005.

Yep, whilst here in TBM Towers the office calendar was showing the delectable Kelly reclining on a CR-F and the month of July '04, KTM decided it was time to launch their off-road range for 2005. Which is why in the first week of July, they flew the world's dirt bike press out to Italy to test the new bikes.

The Austrian company chose the rolling hills around San Severino Marche in Italy as the location for the launch. With a combination of technical rocky trails, flowing tracks, a winding European-style special test and a GP-class motocross track for the MX boys to play on, it seemed the perfect setting. And with the weather to match you couldn't have wished for better conditions...

No Time

So what's new from the Mattighofen concern? Well, actually I'll start with what isn't new. There isn't a new 250 four-stroke. We know that the littlest EXC thumper isn't the finest bike in the orange range. You know that, and KTM know that too, which is why

they've been developing a twin-cam 250 motor on the MX circuit over the past year. However, for 2005 the bike remains in development and probably won't be released (as an EXC model) until at least '06.

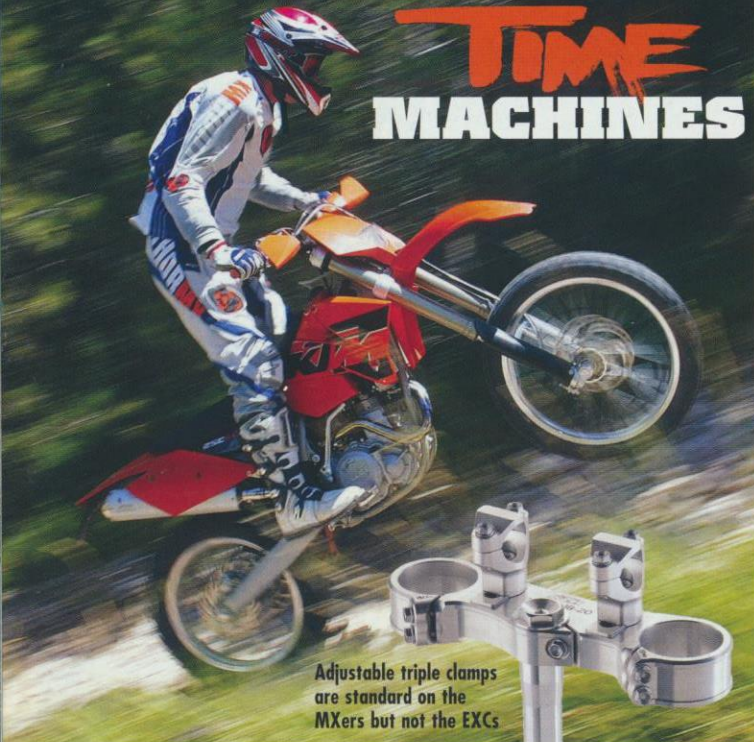
Every year since the turn of the century we hear a rumour that KTM are going to utilise fuel injection on their off-road thumpers. And every year we see the bikes retain their Keihin carbs. The 2005 models are no different, so maybe next year, then?

Timing Equipment

Whilst there aren't any fundamental changes such as EFI or indeed any new models, there are a whole raft of tweaks, modifications and alterations to the EXC formula. Probably the biggest, yet one likely to be overlooked by the casual observer, is the new frame. As with last year's bikes, it still comes powder-coated bronze, only now it's built using oval section frame tubes featuring a forged bracket where the sub-frame, top-tube and shock mount meet. The Austrians claim that the new chassis is stronger than last year's (without being any heavier) and allows more room for the exhaust. Makes sense to us.

Sticking with the chassis, the EXCs get a new cast ally swingarm where the old part was an aluminium fabrication. The press blurb states that it has an 'optimised shape according to the stress points', an 'optimal bending stiffness' and a 'premium appearance'. What it neglects to say is that the new 'rough cast' finish (similar to that found on Husabergs) will be harder to clean, and we suspect that the '05 swingers are far cheaper to produce than the old style part.

TIME MACHINES



Adjustable triple clamps are standard on the MXers but not the EXCs

Many of the modifications made to the EXCs are to further improve their reliability. The 'Racing' models (the four-strokes) have been given a new battery to provide faultless starting every press of the button. We've never actually encountered a problem with the KTMs losing battery power - but a bit more oomph can't be a bad thing.

The thumpers have also had their clutch pressure plates modified to allow better oil supply. This should help the clutch to run cooler, extending its life and therefore the amount of abuse it'll take as you try to dig yourself out of another Welsh bog.

All of the enduro models (except the 125 and 200) will wear Excel rims for '05, with the logo on the rim printed in orange. Well, Excel's more usual red logo would've clashed with the orange bodywork! The SX models received this upgrade last year, so it's good to see the EXCs receive what are regarded as amongst the strongest rims in the world. And looking at some of the rocks we were riding over, it was certainly a wise move...

Ride on Time

Swinging a leg over the first bike of the day, the riding position hasn't changed one bit since last year's lowered rear sub-frame and modified seat. There's still the familiar oversize bars, hydraulic clutch and Renthal grips (albeit in an 'improved' compound) though the comprehensive digital computer has been replaced - with an even smaller digital display

nestling behind the new headlight. The slimline, rubber-encased clocks are undoubtedly very trick, less vulnerable in a crash, and still feature the same comprehensive range of functions (lap timer, trip, time, speed, barometer - okay, not barometer). But the much smaller digits won't make it any easier to read and the thumb switch to operate them has been relegated to the options list.

Prod the kickstart or stab the starter button and we were away onto the enduro loop. The first few hundred yards comprised mainly of large loose rocks and showed that the KTMs had lost none of their front-end twitchiness. Okay, on this particular terrain any bike would've been moving around a bit, but the bikes had that same slight fidgety feeling KTM owners will be familiar with. And thanks to their light weight, it was the two-strokes which seemed more edgy.

However, turning off the rocks, the trail wound down a single-track path along the side of the hill, before a descent down a gully dropped to the valley floor. With no run-off and a tight corner at the bottom, the descent proved a good test of the Brembo brakes. 2005 sees the master cylinder's bore reduced in size from 11 to 10mm and although there was plenty of power available, they still suffered from that horrible spongy feel we know and hate. Or at least some did - a couple of bikes were blessed with all the lever-feel you could ever want. Proof if any were needed, that the Brembos are at best indifferent!

Through the tighter going, the slightly improved steering lock helped pick a line between the trees. Strangely, this improvement comes thanks to a slimmer CDI unit which lives on the left-hand-side of the headstock. And the unit is also claimed to give better performance, thanks to new ignition timing.

As the trail opened up, short whooped-out sections indicated the track was well used by dirt bikes. As happens year-on-year, the suspension has received updated settings alongside a few internal modifications to the forks (new seals, a chrome-plated piston rod). The PDS rear shock also gets a few changes, the most obvious of which being a more compact reservoir. Last year we found that KTM had improved upon their previous 'too-hard' settings resulting in what was probably the best EXC



Top left: There's an all new set of compact digital instruments, but the thumbswitch is now an option... Middle: All EXC models get a new swinging-arm for 2005... As well as a new master cylinder (bottom).

suspension to date. This year I reckon it's better still. Working best at speed, the rear shock's 'more progressive damping curve' felt just that - progressive - and though the suspension in general may want softening off for a wet and slippery special test, on the baked-hard terrain it felt about right.

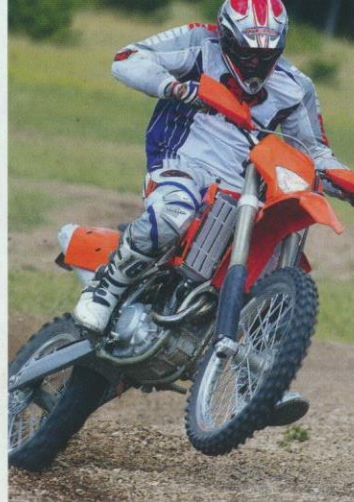
Heading out into the twisting special test (where once there was grass, now just soil 'n' shale), the suspension again worked well. At my clubman pace, the forks would dive just enough when tipping into the flat corners, yet remain positive when being 'slammed' ham-fistedly into a berm. Likewise, the rear-end took the mix of tricky off-cambers, rutted turns and braking bumps in its stride, finding traction and rarely kicking off the larger humps.

We all know that KTMs turn-in quicker than any enduro bike on the planet, and this can make for great special test times. But when the terrain is littered with braking bumps and rocks in equal measure, then the subject of 'stability' rears its ugly head. And despite some people (in orange shirts?) claim-

ing otherwise, the EXCs can still be prone to a little head-shake. But maybe not for too much longer! For '05 the SX (motocross) models get adjustable off-set triple clamps. Not only do they look super-trick, but with either 18 or 20mm of off-set you can choose between stability or 'in a stable condition', simply by turning the steering stem around in the clamps. Trouble is the EXCs don't get this mod, but I reckon they might next year. And until then, I suspect a lot of owners will be raiding the MX parts catalogue!

Sometimes, when we're testing bikes it's the things that you don't notice which are important. Generally, this means that whatever it is, it's doing a good job. So, I didn't notice the new re-profiled rad shrouds. Slimmer and shorter than last year's plastics, they were designed to allow complete freedom of movement when you stick your leg out through turns, and they certainly do the job. What's more, they look pretty neat too, though the new graphics with a silver shadow aren't perhaps as stylish as they could be. But that's just my opinion...

TIME MACHINES



Spring Time

Over the two days of riding I tested all but one of the new EXC models (the 125 with its new exhaust). However, most of my time was spent switching between the 250 stroker and the 450EXC, for no other reason than I, along with a fair few owners out there, rate them rather highly. The 450 will climb just about anything in front of it, find traction where others simply spin-up, and fire you around an enduro course at warp factor ten.

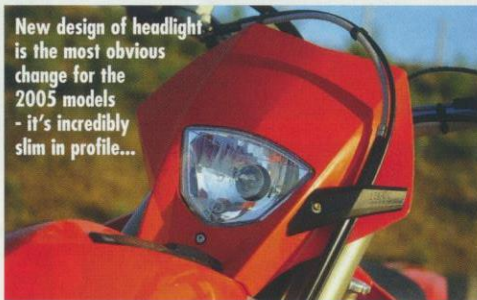
Like the 450, the twofifty two-stroke has an awesome motor which will carry you around a 'test at ultra high speed. And for me it's the more rewarding ride. For 2005, the bike (along with the 300EXC) features lighter clutch springs, which should make for an easier pull at the lever. If you're clutching a stroker out of turns time and again, a light clutch is quite a bonus, though frankly I found it hard to notice the difference. Besides, there are far heavier feeling hydraulic clutches out there than the KTMs'.

Along with new springs in the clutch, the 250 and 300 also now come with a couple of extra springs for the powervalve in the spares kit. One gives more aggressive, snappy power, the other offers a more mellow power delivery, which is just the job for trickling through narrow rocky trails. It's great that KTM offer this level of adjustment, as owners should be able to find the perfect set-up for any conditions, especially when you consider that the engine is fitted with an adjustable powervalve. Great stuff.

Time is Money

Although that pretty much covers the changes to the EXC range, there's one more very important addition to KTM's bikes this '05 year. And that is the fitment of a Datatag kit. To help combat the huge rise in dirt bike theft, KTM UK will be fitting each and every bike they sell with the (Yamaha) security system. Using microdots and transponders located on various parts of the machine, the Datatag system makes the identification of stolen bikes, and their constituent parts, much easier. And as the scheme is being run in conjunction with the ACU, officials at

New design of headlight is the most obvious change for the 2005 models - it's incredibly slim in profile...



race meeting and practice days will be supplied with scanners to read the transponders. Good stuff!

As for the 'investment' the Datatag will be helping to protect, only the 250 Racing (4T) has kept its price tag from last year (£4945). A 125EXC will now set you back £4125. The 200 costs £4435, with the 250 a couple of hundred quid dearer. Picking the 300EXC will add a further 50 quid to your bill at £4685. As for the thumpers, the 400 is up £100, to £5395, with the 450 at £5495. A 525EXC will set you back £5595, whilst the 525MXC weighs in at £5795. Expect the usual dealer charges on top...

Time Out

With a host of practical changes for 2005, backed-up with the sleek new headlight and rad shrouds to match last year's rear-end restyle, the EXCs look set to remain as popular as ever. Okay, so we still have 'issues' with certain models. The 200 is very flighty - too much aggressive power in a small chassis, whilst the 250 Racing (4T) doesn't have enough power. But the rest of the range felt pretty darn good. And if KTM would just address their stability problem I'm sure they'd be even better still. So maybe they'll sort that out for 2006. Which, going by the Austrian calendar, isn't too far away...

Thanks to: Dave Plummer of KTM UK for arranging everything. And thanks to Tony Marshall for locating my errant kitbag! Cheers guys...



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TRICK BITS

PRACTICALLY PRETTY

If you're a trail rider who likes to leave home with everything plus the kitchen sink, then you'll love Yamaha's new trail jacket. With more carrying space than your average Sherpa, it has no less than six built-in pockets - two popper fastening ones on the outside, two inside, one on the left lower arm and finally a wide back pocket to tuck the removable sleeves into.

Made from durable 420D nylon with a snug polar fleece collar, it has a (non removable) poly-mesh inner liner and also benefits from ventilation courtesy of two zip-fasteners located high up on the chest that undo for greater air flow.

A more flattering fit - for those of you who care about such trivialities - can be achieved via two adjustable side straps and the arms have expandable zips and Velcro adjustment options. If safety is more of a burning issue this jacket comes with detachable shoulder and elbow CE protectors, plus there's a Tecno Foam back protector, although you can replace it with a proper CE jobbie if required.

As you would expect, it comes heavily Yamaha branded, with an 'enduro' logo on



the chest and back, a rubber 'racing' effort emblazoned on the right hand lower pocket and a nice bit of detailing on the collar fastener. The overall impression is of a good quality, practical, well-made bit of kit, although it's obviously too bulky to be used for racing in. For trail riding though, it's ideal.

Of course, there's matching trousers available, made from the same hardwearing nylon in an over-the-boots stylee, with CE knee protectors and foam hip padding as standard. With four pockets, they don't let the storage side down, and the two cargo pouches on both legs look quite 'trendy'.

At £134.99 for the jacket and £99.99 for the trousers, they're definitely worth considering and both come in sizes S - XXL. For more details, get down to your nearest Yamaha off-road dealer or check-out yamaha-motor.co.uk.

CHAIN GANG

Always a useful bit of gear, a chain-breaker, this Japanese made RK Excel item definitely looks to be a quality piece of kit. Chunky, well-made components give it a heavy duty feel and it's nice and easy to use once you've figured out what each of the various items does.

The best thing about this tool-set though, is the fact that it does three jobs in one. As well as the chain-breaker part (for separating the chain), it also transforms into a press-fit tool that (funnily enough), presses the links back together again. And finally it transforms into a chain riveter - allowing you to peen over the rivet link and finish the job.

Packaged in a sturdy, compact hard case, this is a nicely finished, useful addition to any

rider's toolbox. Retailing at £49.95, this set represents good value for money for the quality, and is available from Talon on 01935 471508 or log onto talon-eng.co.uk.



FENDER BENDER?

Check out this new universal 'Tecknick' front fender from Acerbis. Apart from looking a little different, it does have some practical features.

First up, the two-piece design has thicker plastic construction than traditional fenders and is claimed to be much stronger. And that means there's no need for a fender brace as there's extra reinforcement built-in. Venting at the rear helps provides good airflow around the radiator, while crash repairs should be easier (and cheaper) as you're unlikely to have to replace the whole thing. Even though the front section is fairly



wide already, there will be an even wider version in the future for extreme wet 'n' wild enduro conditions, so you could have a winter/summer option for your bike.

There's plenty of different (front) colour options

available including blue, green, red, yellow, and grey (but not orange as yet), plus there's also a black centre/rear-section available. Costing £24.95, it's about a tenner more than standard offerings, but it does have the benefit of a few handy qualities that justifies the extra wonga - and anyway, it looks good! To get your hands on one, give Bert Harkins Racing a call on 01582 491076.

HANDS OFF

Hailing from deep in the northwest of the good ol' US of A, Fastway make extreme bike 'hardware' for tough riding conditions, and their handguard and damper mount system is one example.

Unlike with conventionally mounted handguards which clamp to the bars with individual clamps, the Fastway item utilises a single CNC-machined, adjustable lightweight aluminium bar clamp which is designed to resist the handguards twisting (in the event of a fall). Ours also featured an adjustable steering damper mount (allowing you to reposition the bars forwards and backwards), designed to fit Scott, Ohlins and GPR dampers, and claimed to be compatible with most manufacturers' bar mounting positions.

The 10mm thick alloy handguards look simple to mount, and the 'drop-down' bar-bend should let the handlebars flex naturally. The nicely finished kit has rounded edges for decent rider fit and cable protection. Mind you, the system only fits oversize bars and the plastic handguard deflectors have to be bought sepa-

rately - colours are blue, red, black and orange.

At nearly 100 quid for the standard (non damper mount) version, the Fastway kit can seem a bit on the pricey side for wraparound guards, especially as the deflectors will cost you an extra £10.99. But take our word for it, the quality and clever design of this kit really shines through. For those that need the adjustable damper mount it'll cost you 30 quid extra. For more info contact Madison on 020 8385 3385 or log onto madisonb2b.co.uk.



BANANARAMA

Mark Williams charts the history of the Greeves ISDT special - from invalid carriage to Six Days weapon...

Almost all of the bikes featured in this series so far have their origins in road or motocross bikes, but this time it's a little different, for here we have a bike that started out as an invalid carriage.

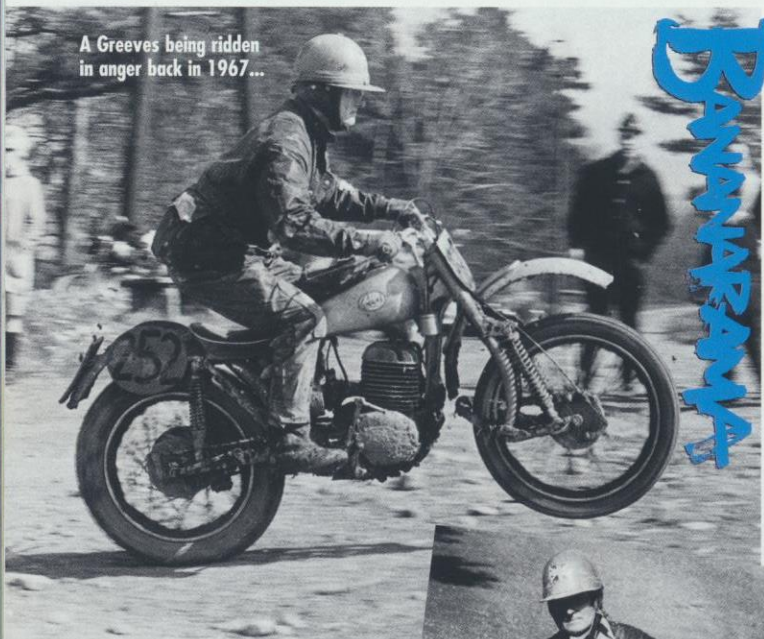
Not quite literally of course, but this 1961 ISDT special is a Greeves, built by a company founded by the eponymously named engineer, Bert Greeves, in 1945 with his severely disabled cousin, Derry Preston-Cobb. At the time, a horrid little electrical 'tent on wheels' was standard government issue for anybody with a immobilising disability. So, on the back of a wager from his cousin, Greeves designed and constructed a far more practical device powered by the then ubiquitous Villiers engine, and christened it the 'Invacar'.

Built in a new factory at Thundersley in Essex, it proved to be a big commercial success but Greeves was a keen motorcyclist and harboured ambitions for a whole range of bikes. With the same 'can-do' attitude that led to the Invacar, he indeed created a brand that for a time dominated off-road competition, not just in Britain, but across Europe.

Although he began the design work in 1951, the first fruits of Greeves' talents appeared at the 1953 Earls Court Show. These were in the shape of a trials iron



A Greeves being ridden in anger back in 1967...



BANKS



in torsion and the distinctive wrap-round linkage that was henceforth and forever more nicknamed 'the banana'.

Cheaper, more conventional all-tubular chassis versions of these early machines were also offered to the impecunious and traditionalist riders. And mindful of the demand for economical post-war transport, the company offered both lightweight, well-finished roadsters - some powered by British Anzani 2-stroke twins - as well the redoubtable trials and scrambles bike which used tweaked versions of the then ubiquitous 197cc Villiers 8E and 9E engines.

Not the first small volume manufacturer to recognise the need to harness competition success in order to achieve sales, Greeves nevertheless struck one of the great partnerships of the post-war decades when he hired the late Brian Stonebridge in 1957 as works rider-cum-development engineer.

The lanky Stonebridge was a scrambler of considerable talent and immediately began winning major British events for the factory,

upgrading both engines and chassis to maximum effect in the process. But in 1958, the new FIM European 250cc Trophy gave Stonebridge and Greeves the chance to make an impact on a broader canvas, which they manifestly succeeded in doing with a blindingly close second place to Jaromir Cizek on the well established, and bigger capacity Jawa. That same year, Stonebridge also won a first Gold Medal for his employers in the ISDT held in Garmisch, Germany.

and a scrambler, both using the same Villiers 200cc engine used in the Invacar, but with a close ratio gearbox for the former and a wide ratio for the latter. Where they differed radically from the offerings of contemporary lightweight manufacturers like BSA, James and Francis Barnet were in their chassis and suspension. Low weight and extreme structural rigidity were achieved by forging a magnesium alloy 'I-beam' from the headstock to the base of the engine. The front forks featured a leading link arrangement - based on the Invacar's - with adjustable friction dampers on each side, the idea being that the suspension could be quickly tailored to suit both rider and terrain. Friction pads were also used at the back end in an early, if rather crude stab at a swinging arm.

The innovative machines were not an immediate success but Greeves quickly sought to improve the suspension with a more conventional oil damped rear end, and a refined version of his front-end which relied on rubber

Meanwhile, in the rather more humble surroundings of East London, a separate strand in our story was developing, for here another talented rider, Monty Banks, was establishing his Greeves dealership.

Banks Snr was a canny businessman, having already converted what had been the family's very successful 'credit drapers' business into a motorcycle dealership in Cambridge Heath. He'd enjoyed success on both Ariel and BSA four-strokes in trials and scrambles during the early and mid-Fifties, and impressed by the new lightweights being produced up the road in Essex, decided to take on a Greeves dealership, which he located at new premises in Vallance Road EC4 (now better known as home to the infamous Kray twins).

Unsurprisingly he quickly abandoned the heavier, old-generation of British four-strokes, proving his talent as well as his adaptability by winning awards in both disciplines at regional events on his new Greeves. Often, as his son, Monty Banks Jnr explained to me, 'on the same bike - just by changing the gearing and the footrests!' The early bikes had a bolt-up rear subframe, which meant they were even more adaptable to different types of use.

Although a works supported rider, Banks Snr wasn't quite in the same league as Stonebridge, who was again pipped for the 1959 250cc Trophy by Rolf Tibblin on a Husqvarna. However, he did manage to relegate the previous year's winner, Cizek, to third place. This achievement was additionally satisfying because Stonebridge had developed a new 66mm bore 'square' finned cylinder for the Villiers engine, bringing it up to a full 247cc, and increasing power still further thanks to significantly revised porting.

Tragically, Stonebridge was killed in a car accident shortly afterwards, but as his replacement the factory took on the young, hard-charging Dave Bickers who went on to win his class in both the 1960 and '61 European 250cc Championships.

By now the Thunderley factory was on a roll,



with over 20 percent of its output going for export and a range of eleven models, seven of them competition machines. All of these were 200 or 250cc singles, with a choice of Villiers or the more costly (but higher performance) Greeves top-ends. A natural consequence of their competition success, the trials models were known as the Scottish (after the factory rider Don Smith's performance in Scottish Six-Days) and the scramblers, the Hawkstone (after a particularly stirring Stonebridge victory in the British championship at Hawkstone Park).

Meanwhile Monty Banks Snr was continuing his success, both as a dealer and semi-works rider at a more local level, and branching out into timed trials, the forerunners of the modern day enduro.

Throughout the late Fifties, Banks rode his specially modified Greeves scramblers in events such as the Welsh and Isle of Man Two- and Three-Day trials. By the early Sixties he was considered something of an expert in this rather specialised discipline, winning a silver in the 1961 ISDT, held in Wales for the first time since 1954, a silver in Germany in '62 and a gold in the particularly gruelling 1964 event in Czechoslovakia at the ripe old age of 52!

Banks went on to win a bronze medal in Sweden in 1966 but eventually bowed out of ISDT competition in 1968 where he was the oldest rider to compete in the event run from Vali Bergamo in the Italian Alps - Greeves-mounted right to the end.

LIKE FATHER'S, LIKE SON'S



It would be nice to report that Monty Banks Jnr had kept his father's ISDT bike in the family since 1961, but unfortunately I can't. In fact, like many factory-supported riders of the day, Banks Snr sold the bike on, in this case through his thriving dealership, and it was only in recent years that his son discovered its whereabouts on the North West coast. Eventually he heard through the rather grandly named Greeves Riders Association that its previous owner was thinking of



selling it, immediately got in touch and soon struck a deal.

Although the frame and some cycle parts had been restored when he bought it, it needed substantial engine work and a new exhaust system to make it (off) roadworthy again which, as a keen ex-motocrosser and trials rider himself, Monty Jnr was well equipped to undertake.

However, after filling the gearbox with oil, an undetected hairline crack led to slow weep which he has yet to accurately locate and fix. In the days before alloy bash plates became de rigeur, the gearbox drain plug was particularly prone to damage, which in turn could cause cracks around its perimeter and 'possibly means a new casing,' so Banks Jnr can't yet report on the bike's performance.

The bike has been so well restored that in all other respects it looks fresh out of the factory - even the Dunlop Trials tyres still have their 'whiskers' on them and the Amal carb has nary a trace of fuel stain. I was also quite impressed with the size of Greeves: many off-road bikes of the era look preposterously small when compared to today's trail and enduro bikes, but this ISDT special didn't feel remotely diminutive when I threw a leg over it.

Its original owner wasn't himself the tallest of men, but the fact that he could wrestle such a bike around an ISDT course with such assurance and to such good effect is testimony to his skill.

Essentially these were hybrid machines, the chassis culled from the Hawkstone scramblers but fitted with a centrestand to allow easy wheel removal. The swingarm was cunningly used as a reservoir for oil, which was dripped onto the chain via a threaded tap arrangement.

Other custom cycle parts included a pressurised air-bottle to help deal with the anticipated punctures, compact head-and rear-lamp units and a Smiths speedometer generously calibrated up to 120mph. (Although this wasn't perhaps quite as fanciful as you might think, for by 1963 Greeves had launched a ground-breaking clubman's 250cc road-racer, the sleek, 27bhp Silverstone, which in its later incarnations was quite capable of winning a Manx Grand Prix at an average of 86.19mph and topping 120mph!)

However, the engine was far from stock, with Greeves own 'Challenger' barrel, head and piston bolted onto on a set of Villiers Mk 36A engine cases, in which resided a specially balanced, one-piece crankshaft. Although the Challengers routinely featured a 12.7:1 compression ratio and allegedly put out 25bhp@6000rpm - a pretty impressive figure in those days - the ISDT bikes were fitted with a lower comp head in order to maximise torque lower down the range.

The gearbox ratios, too, were unique to the ISDT Special - with the low 7.75:1 cog from the trials models, the middle two gears borrowed from the scrambler and a high, 27.9:1 top gear off the trials bike. This was considered essential for the timed Special Tests that were increasingly important to success in ISDT-type events,

An ISDE Special... having just finished an ISDE...



although the actual top-whack of this particular bike is a matter for debate (see panel).

At the time still being developed, but soon to feature on other production models in the range, were the ISDT bike's heavily-finned brake drums. Designed obviously to improve the cooling of what had hitherto been small, half-width SLS drums, the distinctive 'turbine blade' casting was an economic as well

as practical possibility by

virtue of Greeves having their own aluminium foundry - the same foundry which of course had produced Greeves' distinctive chassis members and square barrels. Pity they couldn't stretch to alloy rims though, for the steel jobs fitted to the bike obviously added significantly to the weight.

I briefly owned a Greeves Scottish back in the mid-1960s - in fact I used it to pass my test on (!) - but quite what this ISDT bike must've been like to ride in a gruelling, six-day enduro I can only imagine... with a shudder.

Although the 'banana' front-end provided



exported to the USA although as far as I can discover none of these survive today in the UK.

Given the relative achievements of the ISDT specials campaigned by the likes of Monty Banks, the late Brian Stonebridge and Albert Glassbrook, they might have made a decent fist out of a production enduro bike - even though the term hadn't been invented yet. But in the end, only four or five such bikes were ever offered to privateers and as the factory stumbled on into the 1970s, their ISDT success was lost amongst the hard commercial realities of the era.

For Greeves, that meant not just the emergence of the determined design efforts and substantial engineering resources of Spanish and, to a greater extent, Japanese manufacturers, but also safety legislation. This eventually outlawed the invalid cars that had in effect initially bankrolled, and then under-pinned the factory's motorcycle manufacturing.

In fact, having switched over to high-revving Puch engines for their Pathfinder trials (and a few enduro) bikes, Greeves just about continued to build bikes until 1977, by which time Preston-Cobb and Bert Greeves had retired, and most of its income was as a motor trade factor. Shame...

very progressive suspension travel, there wasn't a whole lot of it, four to five inches depending on how it was set-up, and the way the wheel rose and came back towards the rider was both a little unsettling and a tad detrimental to steering precision!

It wasn't a particularly light front-end, either, and I'm sure all these characteristics contributed to Greeves offering an option of telescopic Ceriani forks in 1968, followed by the abandonment of the alloy spar frame the following year.

Although I don't want to go too far into the later history of Greeves, their efforts to stay competitive in the face of much larger and therefore better funded foreign competitors in the late Sixties and early Seventies deserve our admiration.

With the gradual demise of Villiers engines - which were in any case pretty wretched compared to the contemporary competition - the company was obliged to grasp the nettle and build its own engines from scratch. These culminated in a 390cc Griffon motocrosser that, according to Monty Banks Jnr, 'was a bit of a beast'. And it's arguable that had the company chosen to expand into the recreational off-road market rather than focus almost entirely on the increasingly specialised competition arena, they might've continued to prosper.

As it happened, in 1968 they did make a trailbike, a 250cc Villiers-engined effort called the Ranger, small numbers of which were

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Front susp:	Rubber in tension, leading-link
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Brakes:	Front and rear, 150mm SLS drum, 'turbine' finning
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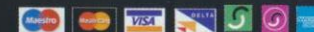


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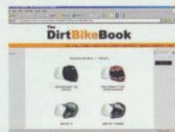
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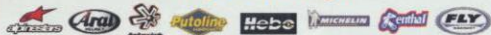


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Mud, mud, glorious mud, there's nothing quite like it for... making the opening day of the second round of the British Enduro Championship one of the hardest events staged in the UK for several years. And as anyone who

has ridden a wet Welsh Two Day, Beacons Enduro, Hafren or Cambrian Rally will tell you, when it rains in Mid Wales it rains harder, wetter and colder than pretty much any other place in Britain. On day one of this year's Hafren Enduro it started out wet, remained wet for the duration of the day and for those that battled on regardless and reached the finish, it proved to be much more than just your average 'test of man and machine'.

While the Championship class riders dealt with, and even enjoyed, the challenges the opening day provided, for many of the Expert and Clubman class riders it simply proved too tough. The organising Hafren Dirt Bike Club set out a course and two special tests that were designed to challenge the entry, unaware that mother-nature decided she was going to make things just that little bit harder. And when mother-nature decides she's going to rain on your parade, she certainly knows how to do it in style.

With the opening round of this year's BEC

series (back in early March) all but a distant memory, the re-awakening of this year's British championship was long overdue. Sponsored this year by Gas Gas and MD Racing, it was also the first British Championship event to fall under the new Motul lubricants supported BEC banner. And, it was also hoped to be a 'dry run' for the HDBC's hosting of a round of the European Enduro Championship in '05. As it turned out it was anything but a dry run.

Day One

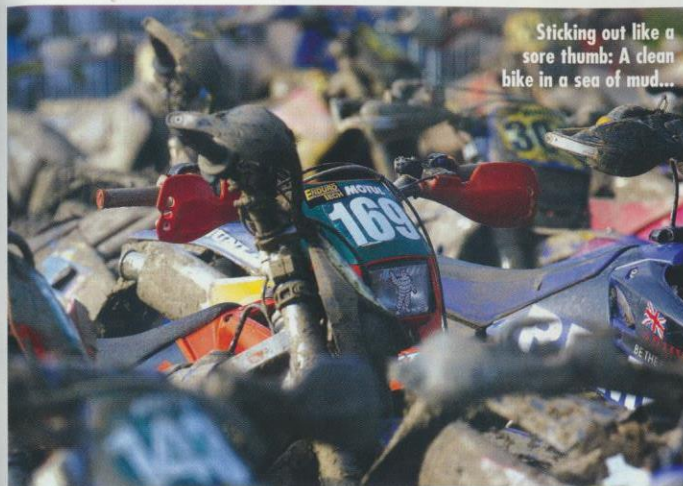
Day one started wet, very wet, and the weather didn't really get much better until sundown. Despite the fact that the majority of the Championship class riders managed to leave the start line before the heavens opened, by the time most had reached the opening special test (a short ride down the road) they were soaked to the skin. And that's how each and every competitor, marshal and support crew member stayed until the end of the day!

At the sharp end of the entry it was obvious that David Knight and Paul Edmondson were going to battle for supremacy and as a result comfortably out-performed all other Championship class riders during the day. Despite

no one really knowing exactly who was setting what times - due to there being no timing boards displaying times as riders exited each of the five special tests, it was clear that David and Paul were a cut above the rest. With David having pulled off a bit of an upset at the season opener with a double win, and despite his recent run of solid WEC results, many still thought that Paul Eddy and his smaller, more nimble two-stroke Honda would be the rider/bike combination to beat. Never one to let the fact that he is riding a half-litre thumper in very non half-litre thumper conditions get in the way of a good result, Knighter topped the first test of the day as Edmondson got off to a slightly sluggish start.

With the Hafren Enduro both known and expected to be a challenging event, as all Welsh forest-based events are, the addition of thousands of litres of water into the equation made for some very slippery, and in places downright difficult sections on this year's course. Despite the relatively 'tight' time schedule the fact that several sections of the tight check had to be cut-out due to having become unrideable - that's how bad things got after just one lap - meant that ten of the Championship class riders went

Sticking out like a sore thumb: A clean bike in a sea of mud...



STORY AND PICS: JONTY EDWARDS

Paddock Pointers

↑ Former British Enduro Champion Rob Sartin showed that he can ride a 125cc as well as he can any 250cc two-stroke by topping the eighth-litre class on both days at the Hafren. Another trials ace making a name for himself in enduros is Tom Sagar, winner of the Expert class on both days at the Hafren.

↑ The riders that will represent Great Britain at this year's ISDE in Poland were named shortly after the Hafren. David Knight, Paul Edmondson, Wayne Braybrook, Edward Jones, Juan Knight and Chris Hay will ride in the Trophy team, while Daryl Bolter, Simon Wakely, Robert Jones and Dylan Jones will represent the Junior Trophy team in the event that runs from 13-18 September.

↑ Former British Enduro Championship front runner Euan McConnell confirmed at the Hafren that he intends to return to full time enduro competition next season and that he's had enough of 'being away from bikes'. McConnell also recently raised £1000 for the British ISDE Trophy and Junior Trophy teams by running in, and finishing, this year's London Marathon. Good on ya, fella.

Ed Jones set some impressive times to finish third overall...



clean on time. If those sections had stayed in it would have been a very different story.

So, once again, it was down to the special tests to decide the class winners. With Knighter having topped the opening timed stage (a 'motocross' style test laid out on what started out as a grass covered field) the Manxman further opened up his lead from Edmondson as he won the day's two cross-country tests - the first by eight seconds and the second by nine. Combining what started out as grassy sections (but very quickly became muddy sections), at the start and finish of the test, the middle wood-

land part was where real time could be made up.

Looking as if he had his third maximum points score of the series in the bag, David then came close to spoiling all of his hard work as he hit the deck twice on the first of the back-to-back motocross tests just prior to the finish of the day. Having looked smooth, and at times slow in comparison to several of the Championship class's faster two-stroke riders in the morning, second, and third, time around Knighter was clearly struggling to put the power from his 525 KTM to the ground and was pushing too hard and making mistakes as a result. With Paul

posting a test time 13 seconds quicker than David's on his first run, and riding as well as he's ridden all year, the former world champion knew that with a second run through the test as good as his first he could take the day win.

Again quicker than David through the last test of the day, it looked as if Paul had done enough to pull it all back. And with Knighter clearly unhappy that he'd seemingly thrown away an almost certain win, it wasn't until two days after the event that Knighter, and not Edmondson, was named as the winner of the day. A bitter blow for Eddy, a nice surprise for DK and something that cast a shadow over not only the day, but the entire event. With less than one second separating the pair, the fact that none of the event's tests appeared to be timed with electronic beams raised a few eyebrows among competitors.

Behind Knight and Edmondson, Edward Jones on his 250cc D3-Racing KTM did his best to stay in contention with the WEC front runners. But despite an impressive opening test time wasn't quite able to stay in touch with either his

team-mate (Knight) or Birthday boy Edmondson. What he was able to do though was make the incredibly slippery conditions look easy. Comfortably placed ahead of Gas Gas rider Juan Knight, who had switched back from a 450cc thumper to his trusty 300cc mount for the event, with Juan placing fourth overall, Edmondson, Edward and Juan filled the top three spots in the Over 175cc two-stroke class. Placing fourth and fifth (in the Over 175 class) were Eastern Centre riders Chris Hockey

and Stevie Roper, both of whom loved the difficult event.

Coming fifth (overall), and showing that he can ride a 125cc two-stroke as well as he can a 250cc stroker, former double British Enduro Champ Rob Sartin chose the Hafren enduro to make one of his now yearly returns from retirement. By finishing fifth overall, just two seconds behind Juan, Rob topped the eighth-litre class comfortably. Making it an all Yamaha top three in the 125cc class, Jones cousins Robert and Dylan placed second and third respectively, despite Bobby managing to be the only Championship class rider to get stuck on one of the log crossings in the motocross test and DJ dropping one minute on the going.

What was interesting to watch was the difference in riding styles between Sartin, the two Jones' and fourth placed 125cc rider Simon Wakely. While each of the three youngsters were aggressive and confident, Rob by comparison looked extremely cautious, nervous-even at times, but very precise. Making his eighth litre Yamaha go exactly where he wanted it to, the former British

PADDOCK POINTERS

Two top Championship class riders were out of action for the Hafren Enduro - Honda Racing Fast Eddy rider Paul Whibley and Husky Sport's Daryl Bolter. Whibley was a spectator due to having landed heavily on his head while practising a week prior to the event - suffering two compressed vertebrae; while Bolter had an arm in plaster after crashing out of the second day of the Italian round of the European Enduro Championship.

The weather at the Hafren Enduro on day one was terrible. With torrential rain starting soon after 9.00am, the forest-based course simply proved too much for many of the Expert and Clubman class riders. Those that did get to the finish survived one of the toughest events in years. Many that didn't finish day one, took to the start of day two determined to at least finish one of the two days.

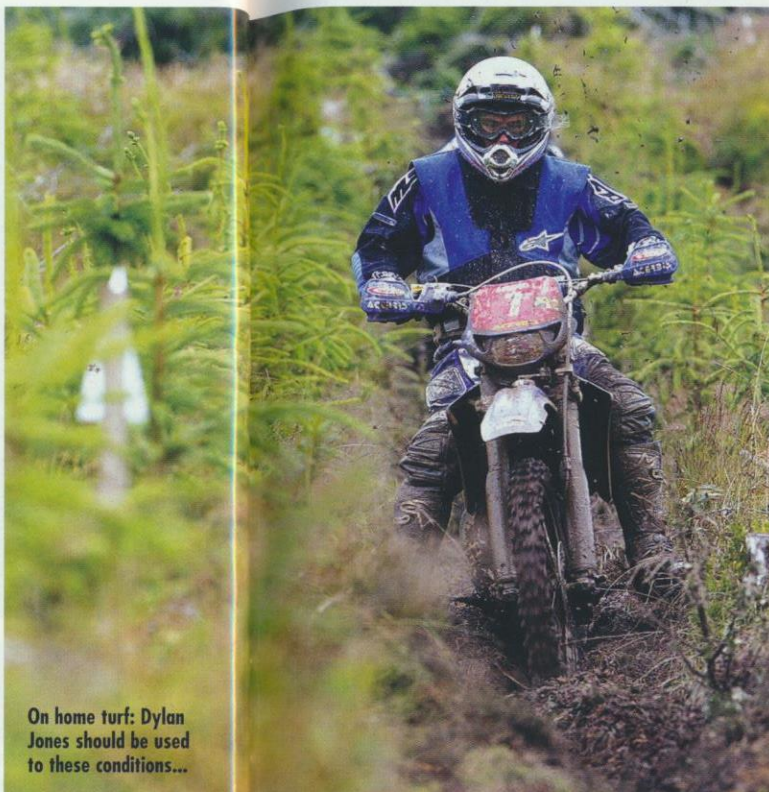
The issue of special test timing was a hot topic at the Hafren, as the company employed to time the two special tests did so without the use of electronic timing beams. Raising concerns over the accuracy of the timing, official results weren't issued until Tuesday evening.

On day one Knighter couldn't really exploit the 525's power advantage. But on day two...



Champion used a little more thought and fewer revs to collect the win.

In complete contrast to Rob's calm and calculated riding style, Sandiford Honda rider Wayne Braybrook thrashed his way around each of the day's special tests en-route to the 250cc four-stroke class win. Having struggled to perform at his best on slippery, grassy Welsh special tests in years past, Wayne's hard, aggressive riding did the trick. Having spent several weeks practicing on grass, Wayne had overcome his fear of 'tests



On home turf: Dylan Jones should be used to these conditions...

with no berms' and placed comfortably ahead of Rowan Jones. Finishing third and fourth in the quarter-litre thumper class were Jason Fraser and Gareth Edmunds, both staying clean on time.

With Knighter one of only two Over 500cc four-stroke Championship class riders who

managed to finish, Husaberg rider Chris Tett placed second to the Manxman while Richard Hay topped the 450cc thumper class ahead of Gas Gas importer John Shirt.

Day Two

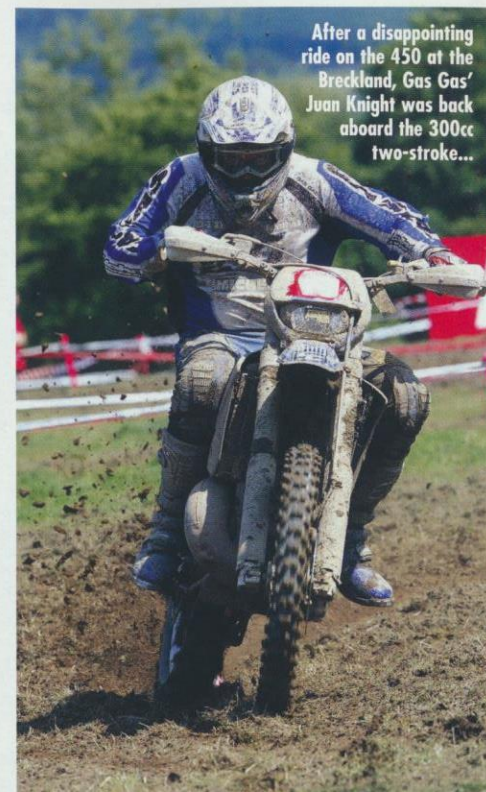
Thankfully, the weather on day two was much better than on day one. Unfortunately, the damage to the course, and to some rider's bikes, bodies and enthusiasm, had already been done. With alterations made to both special tests to try

and make them a little more Clubman-friendly just in case it did rain again, out on the going several sections were also by-passed. As a result a new 'A' time schedule was introduced but unlike on day one where numerous riders failed to go clean, only one Championship class rider dropped time.

Just as on day one, David Knight and Paul Edmondson were comfortably the fastest two riders in the event with the win again going to Knighter. But unlike day one where less than one second had separated the pair, DK's winning margin on day two was 26 seconds. Knighter again posted unmatchable times on the enduro tests to put himself well and truly out of reach of all his Championship class-mates. Trying every bit as hard as he had been on day one, Edmondson, faced with rapidly drying special tests which allowed David to use more and more of his KTM's power, simply had to push to the limit. Coming close to crashing on the day's second run through the enduro test, Eddy had to accept the runner-up spot at the end of the day.

The third to fifth positions in the overall classification were exactly the same as on day one. Edward Jones claimed third with Juan Knight

After a disappointing ride on the 450 at the Breckland, Gas Gas' Juan Knight was back aboard the 300cc two-stroke...



fourth, a lot closer to the Welshman than he had been on day one. Placing fifth, and in doing so topping the 125cc class again was Rob Sartin followed by Dylan Jones and Simon Wakely in both the overall and eighth-litre results. Perhaps Rob might not have found winning the 125cc class quite so easy had Daryl Bolter been competing and not sidelined through injury, but we'll never know.

Dropping to eighth overall, but still claiming the 250cc four-stroke class win, Wayne Braybrook had to work a little harder on day two as Rowan Jones finished just five seconds behind, making for the closest class finish of the weekend. Placing third in the turbo-diesel class was German rider Sasha Ekert. Competing on a 250cc four-stroke Husqvarna, Sasha commented after the race that he'd thoroughly enjoyed both days of the Hafren, despite reckoning it was much harder than any German Enduro Championship event he's ridden in, and harder than most WEC events as well! As on day one, Yamaha rider Richard Hay topped the 450cc four-stroke class with John Shirt second and Kevin Murray third. Chris Tett again placed as runner-up to Knighter. It goes without saying that all riders were glad to see the finish!

MAXXIS FIM WORLD ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP

2 0 0 4

ROUND 6, GP OF SLOVAKIA,
POVAZSKA BYSTRICA, 26-27 JUNE

T10 TBM



With two years having passed since a WEC event was last held in the industrial Slovakian town of Považska Bystrica, the 2004 World Enduro Championship circus arrived for its one and only Eastern European stop at the end of June. An event that would also mark the last of the opening six rounds of the world championship before the series' 'summer break'. With two events - Greece and Germany - having been 'saved' until after the International Six Days Enduro in Poland in an attempt to lengthen and add excitement to this year's world championship, all riders competing knew that round six of the WEC series was going to be their last chance for several months to improve or strengthen their current championship positions.

With the three-month break in the WEC series meaning that the championship won't be over until midway through October, many observers

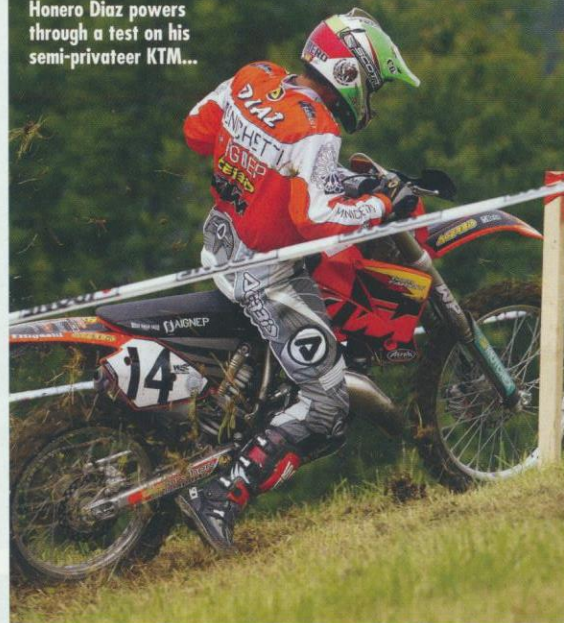
STORY & PICS: JONTY EDWARDS

were expecting riders, and a few teams, to make public their allegiances for 2005. But it simply didn't happen. With numerous teams rumoured to be unhappy with their current crop of riders leading up to Slovakia, it seemed that there would be a lot of riders looking for work during the summer months. With named riders, and reigning world champions, like Pete Pohjamo and Peter Bergvall having under-performed for one reason or another so far this season, and several other 'tipped' youngsters having performed very averagely, it seems as if the number of teams that are keen to sign winners for 2005 is far outweighed by the number of those

riders that are actually available. With Juha Salminen set to race in the US next year, Stefan Merriman and Bartosz Oblucki having already signed for Yamaha, Samuli Aro and Ivan Cervantes signed to KTM, David Knight emerged in Slovakia as the only non-contracted rider for 2005 capable of placing at, or consistently near, the top of a championship. Thus DK officially became the most-wanted rider of the 2004 season, much as Stefan Merriman had in 2004, though he's since agreed terms to remain with KTM.

If nothing else, the reduction in the number of WEC classes from five to three has opened up a rift amongst WEC riders. On the one

Honero Diaz powers through a test on his semi-privateer KTM...



The end's in sight...



PADDOCK POINTERS

↑ French Gas Gas factory rider Sebastien Guillaume placed a two-stroke on the Enduro 3 class podium on day one. A tight, technical special test meant that riding a half-litre thumper wasn't as much an advantage as at previous events.

↑ Portugal's number one enduro rider Helder Rodrigues put five rounds of below-par results behind him in Slovakia to finish fourth in the E1 class on day one. The reason for his new found speed? Lowered foot-pegs, a stronger mid-range and revised fork angle on his bike.

↑ It seems likely that the FIM are going to ditch their plans to reduce the number of riders that can compete in WEC events in 2005 as many organising clubs have pointed out that they need at least 100 riders to make world championship events viable. 2005 may also see the introduction of an Under 21 Junior World Cup!

↓ WEC series promoter Alain Blanchard expressed the importance of top teams employing riders from outside of Scandinavia (read Finland) at a team managers' meeting held in Slovakia. In order to better promote the WEC, Blanchard asked that

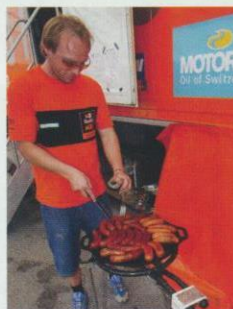
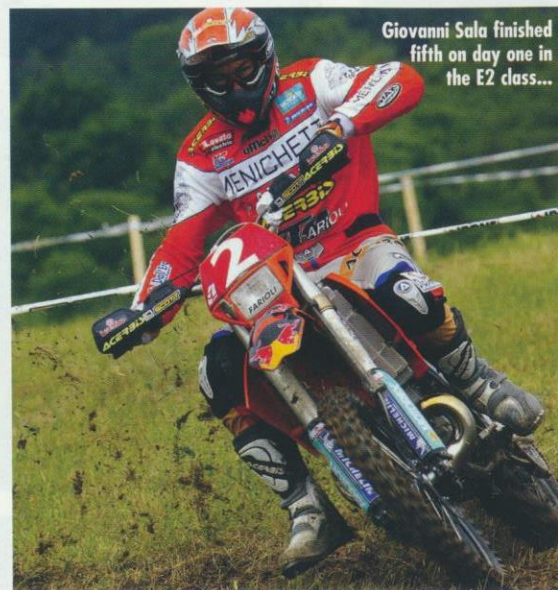
TBM 111



Merriman on his merry way to winning E1...



Giovanni Sala finished fifth on day one in the E2 class...



hand there's those who regularly place between fourth and eighth in every event. While on the other side there's the handful of elite riders that can, and do, regularly place at the top of both their class and the overall results. These are the riders that the teams really want and the riders that are going to earn the money in 2005.

The event in Slovakia was what most riders described as an 'old style' WEC event. With long days (longer than the FIM rules state they should be), and with reasonably tight checks and a 'proper' predominantly woods-based enduro test, the event certainly wasn't an easy one. One thing became clear: due to the nature of the terrain - extremely hilly - and Slovakia's uncertain weather conditions (it's as wet as Wales at times), the 2005 ISDE could well be a difficult event. Interestingly, numerous riders changed their front forks during the second day due to mud getting into the bushes on their front dampers and locking them almost solid.

Enduro 1

Just as in Sweden, there only ever looked like

being one rider that would top the Enduro 1 class in Slovakia: UFO Corse Yamaha's number one rider, Stefan Merriman. Well on his way towards winning his fourth world enduro title, Merriman again showed why he is one of the WEC's 'Premier Division' riders. Having now ironed out the few teething problems he'd had at earlier rounds of this year's series, Merriman came away from the Slovakian race with a 56-point championship advantage - the biggest of all three classes. Topping day one by 53 seconds before upping his pace on day two and winning by a massive 83 seconds, the Aussie was untouchable, winning the overall 'Scratch' classification on both days just for good measure.

Explaining after the race that prior to this event he'd taken a weekend off to spectate at a round of the MXGP championship (where he must've figured out ways of riding his Yamaha even faster!) the rest of the E1 class must have been thanking their lucky stars that the event marked a three-month break in the WEC series. Merriman's rivals can now hope that a break in the calendar will also mean a break

in the Aussie rider's momentum. For riders like Bartosz Oblucki, Simone Albergoni and Petteri Silvan, hoping that Merriman will somehow become derailed is realistically their only hope of beating him now. All of them know that the chances of that happening are very slim indeed.

With the twisty and technical special tests arguably better suited to 250cc four-strokes than any other size of bike, the fact that Merriman (not for the first time in 2004), put a quarter-litre thumper at the top of the overall results pretty much says everything about the way the pint-sized rocket rode in Slovakia. The fact that Merriman feels he is 'still improving' and that he reckons he can still go faster is a bit like Michael Schumacher announcing to the F1 paddock that he's only just realised that his Ferrari gearbox has another gear, and that he intends to start using it with immediate effect!

Once again, it was a four-stroke only podium on both days in Slovakia, and it was Italian and Polish youngsters Simone Albergoni and Bartosz Oblucki who claimed the runner-up and third place spots respectively on both days as the pair again showed themselves to be the best of the rest in the E1 class. With little separating them on either day it was interesting to note that despite the four-stroke dominance at the sharp end of the class, positions fourth through ninth were all occupied by 125cc two-stroke machines. An indication perhaps that in the E1 class at least,

two-stroke machinery is still very much alive and competitive. The only reason it's not winning is because manufacturers are choosing to place their salaried riders on thumpers.

Leading that gaggle of screaming two strokes was Portuguese rider Helder Rodrigues in fourth. Having dominated the then 125cc two-stroke class at the ISDE in Brazil, and having since been one of the major disappointments of the 2004 season, Helder produced his strongest results of the season having made motor and chassis changes to his eighth-litre KTM since the Swedish round of the series. The most notable non-podium finisher on day two was Italian Roberto Bazzurri who placed fourth aboard his Husqvarna TE250. As the rider to net Husky's only E1 class podium so far this season (he finished second on day one in Italy on a 125cc two-stroke) not only did Bazzurri show that he is a very adaptable rider, but that in the right conditions, Husqvarna's 250cc four-stroke can produce respectable results as well.

Enduro 2

Just as in the E1 class, and just as has been the case at seemingly every event this year, one rider was to dominate the E2 class in Slovakia and there were no prizes for guessing who that was.

PADDOCK POINTERS

more riders from Germany, France, Japan and the US be employed. Keep dreaming Alan!

↓ The Gas Gas factory team were without their E2 regulars Pete Pohjamo and Thierry Klutz in Slovakia due to both riders being injured. As a result, 2004 continues to be a trying season for Gas Gas.

↓ There was talk in Slovakia of more teams following the UFO Corse Yamaha squad and fielding four-stroke only teams in 2005. Italian marques TM and Husqvarna may well ditch their official two-stroke machines in favour of thumper-only teams next season.



Polish young gun
Bartosz Oblucki
took third in E1...

Juha Salminen, in his usual cool and calm manner went about collecting another 50 WEC points with ease. Topping day one by a healthy 49 seconds, just as Merriman had done in the E1 class the Finn extended his winning margin on day two.

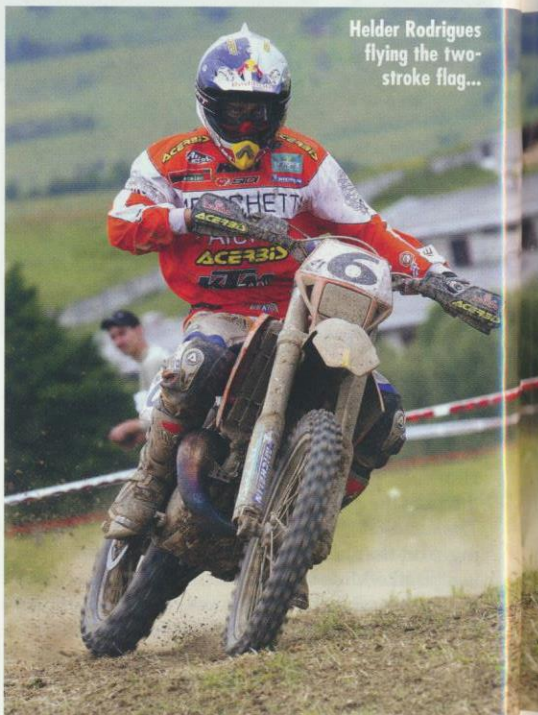
Despite not claiming the overall Scratch win on either day - although he did manage to come away from the event five points clear of team-mate Samuli Aro at the top of the Scratch championship standings - two small crashes on day one was all Juha had to report when asked about his week-end's work. Apart from that, everything went well for the Finn... which it always seems to do.

Separated by less than one second on day one (but a relative country mile behind Juha), were the second, third and fourth placed E2 class finishers. Okay, so Juha might have again been head and shoulders above his class-mates, but the battle of youth versus experience between Paul Edmondson, Alessandro Botturi and Arnaud Vilanova to place behind the dominant Finn, focused everyone's interests in the E2 class.

Fortunately for 'Eddy', experience won-out, the Honda Racing rider getting the better of his



Juha Salminen does
a spot of levering...



Helder Rodrigues
flying the two-
stroke flag...

championship rivals and finishing second. As all E2 class riders have now seemingly accepted that only an injury or an unlucky string of mechanical problems will stop Salminen from winning the E2 title, finishing second and keeping up the pressure is all that matters to Edmondson now.

With Botturi claiming third and Vilanova fourth on day one, day two was to see Eddy's good fortune reversed as he found himself



championship that really matters. Winning the E2 title for any rider other than Salminen is now a long shot.

The Slovakian event was a relatively good one for Paul Whibley and Edward Jones. With the pair claiming points on both days, it was Whibley who fared best with seventh and eighth place finishes. Faced with two virgin, grassy special tests on day one, Edward Jones finished just outside the top ten in 12th, but frustratingly dropped to 18th on day two. Despite dropping a few spots, Ed is closing in on a top 15 end of year E2 class finish and good rides in Greece and Germany might see him place higher still.

Enduro 3

In the Enduro 3 class it was a very familiar story in Slovakia. Samuli Aro claimed the day win on both Saturday and Sunday while David Knight placed second on both days. In fact the only thing that was different to pretty much every previous round of the series was that French Gas Gas rider Sebastien Guillaume managed to do what nobody thought was possible at the season's start - he put a two-stroke on the podium with third on day two. Other than that, the E3 class was a case of more of the same, with Husky riders Mika Ahola and Anders Eriksson finishing the event and wondering what exactly it is they have to do to finish on the podium. Ivan Cervantes did his usual hot n' cold routine of making a mess of day one before finishing on the podium with third on day two.

Samuli though was, like Merriman and Salminen, the deserved winner of the E3 class. Placing 25 seconds ahead of Knight on day one, and only 12 ahead on day two after a few small crashes, Samuli was quicker than David on the

behind the same two riders he'd finished ahead of on day one. With Botturi placing 57 seconds behind Salminen in the runner-up position, and with Spaniard Vilanova placing ten seconds behind in third, Edmondson finished fourth. Disappointed at having not recorded two podium places, Eddy knew that it was the 22 point advantage he holds over third-placed Botturi in the E2

two motocross tests while Knight went quicker on the cross-country test. With David struggling slightly to manoeuvre around the tight and twisty MX tests, Samuli edged ahead with each passing lap to claim the win, extending his world championship lead in the process. For Knight though, the poor showing by Cervantes on day one meant that he strengthened his runner-up championship spot, much to his delight.

Reigning 450cc four-stroke world champion Anders Eriksson came closer than he had at any other round this year to finishing on the podium, and probably would have if it hadn't been for a fall nearing the end of one of the cross-country tests on day one. Determined to finish the year with at least one visit to the podium, it seems the closer the seven-time world champion gets to a top-three finish, the more stupid little things happen to spoil his day. As for Guillaume, his day one podium visit was short-lived as crashes on day two saw him drop well down the finishing order. With Ahola placing fourth on both days, the final two rounds will be as much about seeing if Knight can get on level terms with Aro as it will be about seeing whether Husqvarna can salvage something from an otherwise disappointing season.

RESULTS - DAY 1

ENDURO 1

1. STEFAN MERRIMAN (YAM) 48:36.55; 2. SIMONE ALBERGONI (HON) 49:29.41; 3. BARTOSZ OBLUCKI (YAM) 49:45.19; 4. HELDER RODRIGUES (KTM) 50:03.77; 5. ALESSIO PAOLI (TM) 50:05.12

ENDURO 2

1. JUHA SALMINEN (KTM) 48:56.22; 2. PAUL EDMONDSON (HON) 49:45.45; 3. ALESSANDRO BOTTURI (KTM) 49:46.41; 4. ARNAU VILANOVA (HON) 49:46.46; 5. GIOVANNI SALA (KTM) 50:01.24

ENDURO 3

1. SAMULI ARO (KTM) 49:05.18; 2. DAVID KNIGHT (KTM) 49:30.64; 3. SEBASTIEN GUILLAUME (GAS) 49:39.87; 4. MIKA AHOLA (HSD) 49:50.29; 5. MARKO TARKKALA (HSD) 49:53.51

RESULTS - DAY 2

ENDURO 1

1. STEFAN MERRIMAN (YAM) 53:44.26; 2. SIMONE ALBERGONI (HON) 55:44.26; 3. BARTOSZ OBLUCKI (YAM) 55:19.11; 4. ROBERTO BAZZURRI (HSD) 55:28.01; 5. PETERRI SILVAN (KTM) 55:34.31

ENDURO 2

1. JUHA SALMINEN (KTM) 54:00.89; 2. ALESSANDRO BOTTURI (KTM) 54:58.19; 3. ARNAU VILANOVA (HON) 55:08.61; 4. PAUL EDMONDSON (HON) 55:12.07; 5. ALESSANDRO ZANNI (HON) 55:46.96

ENDURO 3

1. SAMULI ARO (KTM) 54:31.78; 2. DAVID KNIGHT (KTM) 54:44.67; 3. IVAN CERVANTES (KTM) 55:03.63; 4. MIKA AHOLA (HSD) 55:08.82; 5. ANDERS ERIKSSON (HSD) 55:16.46



'HAVING THREE CLASSES THIS YEAR HAS REALLY TURNED EVERYTHING UPSIDE DOWN AND THE 'RIDER MARKET' LOOKS AS IF IT IS GOING TO BE REALLY INTERESTING, WITH ONLY THOSE CAPABLE OF WINNING A WORLD TITLE IN '05 EXPECTED TO GET THE BIG BUCKS...'

of year championship positions and to impress potential employers, finishing with two more runner-up spots was just what the doctor ordered. Getting beaten by Aro on both days wasn't what I wanted of course, but he rode really well and, well, he won and I didn't! To be honest it's going to take a mistake from Aro for me to beat him now in the E3 championship, so my goal for the final two rounds of the series is to put him under as much pressure as possible, enjoy the races and see what happens. If the events are like the one in Slovakia with a proper enduro test and some tight checks then I guess anything is possible. Time, as always, will tell.

One thing that was strange in Slovakia was that no-one really had much idea as to which riders will be racing for what teams next season. Having three WEC classes this year has really turned everything upside down and the 'rider market' looks as if it is going to be really interesting, with only those capable of winning a world title in '05 expected to get the big bucks. With lots of teams rumoured to be clearing out at the end of the season very few were in a position to name their '05 rider line-up in Slovakia, which many expected they would do. It didn't really come as any great surprise to me as the enduro world never really sorts things like that out until after the Six Days. On a personal note, I'm happy to confirm that I'll be riding for KTM again next season and continuing my association with the D3-Racing team. I'll let you know more after contracts are signed!

BRITAIN'S TOP ENDURO RIDER WRITES EXCLUSIVELY FOR TBM...

It's weird, but having focused almost solely on the World Enduro Champs ever since the opening round of the BEC back in early March I feel a bit lost now due to a three month break in the WEC series. Instead of my next major event being in France or Sweden or wherever it might be, I'm now popping across to Wales for BEC events as I wait until October to bring my '04 WEC campaign to a close. Thankfully, the re-start of the British Enduro Championship has given me something to focus on while I start my preparations for the biggie - the International Six Days Enduro in Poland.

The last WEC event before the 'summer break' was a good one for me. Knowing, like everyone else, that a solid result was gonna' be important in Slovakia in terms of both my end

With the ISDE getting ever closer I'm starting to really look forward to this year's event in Poland. Not racing in Brazil last year seems to have re-charged my 'Six Day' batteries and I can't wait to compete. I'm looking forward to it because I know that I'm going to be battling against Finns Samuli Aro and Mika Ahola in the E3 class and I reckon that by pushing each other for the class win we're also going to be pushing ourselves closer and closer towards the sharp end of the overall results. I battled with Aro when the ISDE was in Czecho two years ago, so I'd like to give him a run for his money this year and help the British team get a good result. I should get my Six Days bike soon so I'll have plenty of work to do in prepping it for the event, which will give me something to do in the coming weeks!

With the exception of Chris Hay who will ride a 125cc two-stroke in the Six Days, the British Trophy team of Myself, Paul Edmondson, my brother Juan, Edward Jones and Wayne Braybrook proved itself in Czecho in '02. I personally think that Chris would possibly be better off in the junior team again with an experienced motocross rider possibly filling the sixth team spot. Although Chris is fast in the sand (conditions are expected to be sandy at this year's ISDE), I don't think it'll all be down to speed - it never is with a Six Days. That said it's good to have young riders in the squad and the British team manager Euan Syme has tried to send a team that he believes will do best in the conditions he expects us to face. Although most of us are experienced ISDE riders he didn't want to send a team of riders that would 'just finish', he wants us to do as well as possible. That means finding riders that suit the type of terrain and thinking about what classes to put us in. I admit I'm still not sure about his decision but he's the boss and we now have to work towards getting the best result we can. Can we finish top three? If things go our way, then yes. Again, time will tell.

Bringing things closer to home, the recent Hafren Enduro was a bit of a shock to the system



as it's been a while since I've ridden in conditions as wet and miserable as they were there. I've got to admit you get a bit soft riding WEC events all the time, especially now that WEC races are only six hours long and most of the hard bits are cut out before the start of the events. Although the Hafren was really difficult on day one, the hardest thing for me was the tests. In world championship events all the riders use the same lines because they are all riding at the same speed. At BEC events Expert and Clubman riders use different lines to the Championship class riders, which makes for a completely different playing field. That and trying to ride a half-litre thumper on what felt at times like ice certainly wasn't easy. Despite making a bit of a mess of things at the end of day one I was happy with the way I performed.

Unfortunately, the event was overshadowed by problems with the special test timing. The timing of BEC special tests needs to be sorted once and for all, which means finding a reliable and accurate system and sticking to it. I think that all riders realise that ranting and raving and blaming the organising clubs won't sort things because they don't want timing problems any more than the riders do. But something needs to be done... and fast. If they can time a WEC event in Slovakia why the hell can't we sort out the timing of special tests in Britain?

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KTM 250EXC two-stroke, 2001, T&T, low use, lots of extras inc new black plastics, service schedule maintained, immaculate and reliable. Tel 07919 521800 (N Wales)

Honda XR250R, 1999, T-reg, T&T, one TRF member owner, many extras, exc cond, £1900. Tel (mobile) 07850 706417 or 01942 259637 (Manchester)

Kawasaki KDX200, 1986, rebuilt engine, powder-coated frame, rear disc conversion, vgc, £1000 ono. Also Bultaco 340 Sherpa, 1983, six-speed, rebuilt engine, powder-coated frame, many new parts, lovely looking bike, £1400 ono or swap either bike plus cash for '99-'01 Beta/Montesa trials.

Tel 07905 227288 (Kent)

Yamaha XT600Z Tenere, 1985, 66000km, ratty but runs, restore or use for parts, can email pics, £600 ono. Tel 07905 258905 (London)

Suzuki DR-Z400S, 2002, yellow, taxed, 2600 miles, like new, £3300 ono. Also Honda XR250, 2001 model, red, T&T, like new, £2400 ono. Tel 02920 593457 (Cardiff)

Yamaha WR400E, 2002, less than 600 miles, hardly used, this bike's like new, £2900 ovno. Tel 01438 226588 (Herts)

KTM 450EXC, 2003 model, full lights, aluminium bashplate, seal savers, spare c+s, manuals, good cond, £4250 ono. Tel (home) 01484 714098 or 01422 35220 (W Yorks)

Beta Alp 200, 2001, T&T, low miles, dual start, new c+s/tyres, exc cond, £1900. Tel 01902 791275 (Staffs)

Suzuki RMX250, 1994, T&T, always serviced regardless of cost, exc high-spec green laner or cheap race bike, £1200. Tel 01622 692528 (Kent)

Husqvarna WR360, 2002, road legal, new tyres/c+s, handguards, serviced, immaculate, not for the faint-hearted, £2300. Tel 07919 364267 (Gloucs)

Honda XR250R, 1998, R-reg, T&T, 6000km, new c+s, not used enough hence sale, £1850 ono. Tel 01992 766523 (Middx)

CCM R30, 52-reg, taxed, 5000 miles, FSH, extras, £4000 no timewasters. Tel 07834 526870 (Middx)

Husqvarna TE250, 2004, green laned four times only, showroom cond, £4100. Tel (mobile) 07747 015778 or 01420 475881 (Hants)

KTM 300EXC, 2002, taxed, only 1500km, many KTM extras, spares, superb cond, £3500. Tel Chris on (mobile) 07967 676524 01535 645878 (W Yorks)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, 2002, road legal, taxed, Renthals, FMF exhaust, CRD bashplate, frameguards, Acerbis handguards, spares, rider retiring, £2950 ono. Tel (mobile) 07958 616176 or 01322 861118 (Kent)

Yamaha WR250Z, 1995 model, T&T, hardly used from new, must be seen, £1695. Also 1998 model, T&T, sorted bike, £2250. Tel 01723 871670 (N Yorks)

Moto Morini 350X Kanguro, 1981, T&T, 6-speed, as featured in TBM105, original cond, £800 ono. Tel 07776 171573 (Cumbria)

Yamaha WR400E, 1999, T&T, fully road legal, hand/sump-guards, hydraulic clutch, well maintained by old bloke, £1850. Tel 01603 754679 (Norfolk)

Honda XLR250 Baja, 1993, K-reg, T&T, 10500km, serviced, very light use, reliable, genuine bike, vgc, reluctant sale, £1500. Tel 07956 276649 (London)

Yamaha XT600E, 2002, black, 2500 miles, one owner, Datatag, exc cond, only £2800 ono. Tel 01827 708740 (Staffs)

KTM 400SC enduro, road legal, lightly used, must be seen, £2150 ono. Also Yamaha TTR125, one year old, four-stroke, big-wheel trail bike, suit 10-15 year old, hardly used, mint cond, £1700 ono. Tel 01903 816136 (W Sussex)

Kawasaki KLX300, 2001, taxed, easy starter, sumpguard, Trailtech computer, new c+s with spare, £2400 ono. Tel 07968 185957 (Midlands)

Honda XR440, 1998, R-reg, red, T&T, one owner, loads of money just spent, powder-coated frame, ready to ride, £2300 ovno. Tel 01538 371656 (Staffs)

KTM 300EXC, 2001, T&T, 2800km, new tyres/pads/c+s, bashplate, barkbusters, Renthals, handguards, green lane use only, vgc, £2600 ono. Tel 01789 765336 (Warks)

Honda XR400R, 2002, taxed, 150 miles, never seen mud, all the right bits, as new, £3600. Tel 0151 428 8420 (Merseyside)

KTM 200EXC (GS), 2000, autolube, loads of extras and new

parts, well maintained, good cond, can email pics, £2200. Tel 01223 843140 (Cams)

Honda CRM250 AR, 1999, white/purple, T&T, 3400km, totally standard, last of the CRMs, immaculate bike, £2850 ovno. Tel (mobile) 07801 629680 or 01255 431651 (Essex)

Suzuki XF650 Frewind, 1998, S-reg, black/silver, T&T, digital display, service history, great fub bike, exc cond, £1700 ono. Tel 01223 812362 (Cams)

Honda CRM250 mkI, 1989, red, T&T, 4700 miles, hand-guards, bashplate, well maintained, green lane use only, clean bike, £1250. Tel 01403 738025 (Sussex)

Yamaha TT600R, 2000, T&T, mainly road use, new tyres/exhaust, spares, totally original, £2310 ono. Tel 01376 343330 (Essex)

Honda XR400R, 51-reg, taxed, 7000km, sensible extras, spare set of tyres, good cond, £2350 ono. Tel 01642 806466 (Co Durham)

Gas Gas EC400FSE, 2002, taxed, frame/engine guards, new rear tyre, superb example of this model, must sell hence £2800 no offers. Tel 01284 810672 (Suffolk)

Honda XR250, 2002, 500km, loads of extras inc bashplate, Werx graphics, handguards, Renthals, spare plastics, excellent condition, £2500. Tel (mobile) 07932 338588 or 01438 861024 (Herts)

Honda XR400, 1999, W-reg, red, T&T, Renthals, handguards, new discs, suspension rebuilt, well used but well maintained, £2200. Tel 07932 602372 (Herts)

Husqvarna TE410, 2000, T&T, kickstart model, two owners, trail use, vgc, bad injury forces sale, £2400 ovno. Tel 01200 428135 (Lancs)

Aprilia RX125, 1994, L-reg, MoT, currently SORN, 12000 miles, recent c+s, nice standard bike, vgc, £995 ono. Tel (mobile) 07813 276290 or 01908 261656 (Bucks)

Honda XR400, 2001, X-reg, T&T, sensible mods, some spares, good solid bike, £2000. Tel 020 8683 2347 (Surrey)

Honda CRF450, 03-reg, full lighting kit, sumpguard, Fatbars, full spares kit, never raced, only used a handful of times, £3595 ono. Tel 07736 050351 (Powys)

Yamaha WR200, 2000, W-reg, MoT, new wheel bearings/brake pads etc, exc trail bike, bargain at £1900. Tel 0116 239 5696 (Leics)

Honda CRM250 AR, reg'd 2000, MoT, owned from new, DEP system, sumpguard, Renthals, good cond, £2650. Tel 02380 470870 (Hants)

KTM 200EXC, 2003, 03-reg, taxed, Doma pipe, gold Tag bars, maintained to highest standard, exc cond, £3295 ono. Tel 07789 951295 (Somerset)

Honda XR250R, 2000, 280cc conversion, MoT, UK bike, good cond, £2250 ono. Tel 07973 852113 (Bristol)

Honda CRM250, 1991, red/white, 7700km, Renthals, brushguards, performance exhaust, good cond for age, house move forces reluctant sale, £1795 ovno. Tel 07742 313652 (Leics)

Yamaha WR400E, 1999, V-reg, White Bros exhaust, all usual extras, exc cond, £2400. Tel Scott on 07769 700580 (Middx)

Yamaha WR250E, 2003, road reg'd, elec start, new tyres, well maintained, spares, green laned, little use, immaculate cond, £3850. Tel 0114 247 1567 (Yorks)

TM 250 4T, 2002, can email pics, great bike in as new cond, new bike forces sale, £3200 ovno. Tel 01223 843140 (Cams)

Honda XR400R, 2001, Y-reg, T&T, CRD bashplate, hardly used, good cond, £2895 ono. Tel (mobile) 07733 320809 or 01728 605676 (Suffolk)

Gas Gas EC450FSE, 2003, road reg'd, taxed, little use, £3500 ono. Plus new mint cond riding gear if required. Tel 07709 461654 (Yorks)

Peugeot 50cc trail/enduro bike, full size, copy of Honda racer, four months old, road legal, cost £2100, accept £1500 ono. Tel 07785 574966 (W Yorks)

FREE CLASSIFIEDS

Suzuki DR-Z400, 2003, blue/white, 3500 miles, vgc, £2995 ovno. Tel (mobile) 07973 241662 or 0114 246 9162 (S Yorks)

Bulfaco Sherpa, 1979, 350cc, owned for 20 years, exc cond, £1000. Tel 01495 792769 (Gwent)

KTM 200EXC (GS), 2000, T&T, new piston, green lane use, £2100. Tel 01535 645607 (W Yorks)

Suzuki DR350, 1994, MoT, 12800 miles, new road legal stainless exhaust, extras, good cond, £1300 ono. Tel (mobile) 07836 347130 or 01386 556950 (Worcs)

Honda XR400R, 2001, T&T, bashplate, handguards, extras, any inspection, first to see will buy, £2600 ovno. Tel 01268 281634 (Essex)

Yamaha TTR600RE, new in '04, not yet run-in, fork gaiters, as new, enduro bike forces sale, £4400. Tel 01380 729982 (Wilts)

Husaberg FE400E, 2002, gold Talons, Trailtech computer, bar-mounted choke, comes with supermoto wheels, absolutely mint, very reluctant sale, £3600 ovno. Tel 01622 730522 (Kent)

Gas Gas 250 trials bike, runs brilliantly, £850 ono. Tel 01929 550383 (Dorset)

KTM 250EXC, 2002, taxed, 300 miles, hand/frame/sump-guards, spares kit, as new, £2950. Tel (mobile) 07976 170120 or 01685 875301 (Mid Glam)

Yamaha TTR250, 1999, T&T, £2300. Tel (mobile) 07900 39861(?) or 01544 350614 (Powys)

Yamaha DTR125, 2002, blue/white, taxed, 5000 miles, vgc, £1650 or best offer this month. Tel 01284 752352 (Suffolk)

Honda CRF230, 2003, elec start, four-stroke, not yet run-in, 12 hours green lane use only, as new cond, £2700. Tel 01947 880677 (N Yorks)

Honda CRM250 mkII, 1993, K-reg, low miles, full DEP exhaust, well maintained, green lane use, needs MoT, quick sale, £1000. Tel 01535 604823 (W Yorks)

Honda XR250, 1995, T&T, good working order, £1450 ono. Tel 01726 844026 (Cornwall)

Husaberg FE400e, 52-reg, one owner, handguards, auxiliary tank, Trailtech, new Michelins, trail use only, immaculate cond, £3000 ono. Tel 01252 613316 (Hants)

KTM 350 LC4, 1994, T&T, handguards, green lane use only, vgc, £1200 ono. Tel Simon on (mobile) 07976 257439 or 01305 261111 (Dorset)

Honda XR400, T&T, 440 kit, frame resprayed, new plastics, Aloop kit, MX style rear-end, too much to list, delivery possible, £3350. Tel 01258 820383 (Dorset)

KTM 250EXC Racing 4T, 2003 model, 1500 miles, elec start, recent service inc valve clearances, hand/sump-guards, light trail use, exc cond, £3500. Tel 07771 691219 (Surrey)

Yamaha WR400F, 2002, 1400 miles, Yamaha road kit, hand/frameguards, Renthals etc, new c+s/pads etc, exc bike, £2995. Tel 01702 479900 (Essex)

Suzuki DR350SE, 1999, S-reg, black, T&T, new c+s, frameguards, recent tyres, good cond, £1800 ono. Tel 01474 705247 (Kent)

KTM 250EXC, S-reg, MoT, new top-end/tyres, exc cond, must be seen, £2000. Tel 01597 823321 (Powys)

KTM 400 LC4, 2000 model, orange/silver, 2000 miles, elec start, USD forks, robust, quality thumper, on-/off-road, £3195. Tel 01233 851112 (Kent)

Yamaha TW125 Trail Way, 1999, T&T, low miles, vgc, £1000 firm. Tel 01525 406865 (Beds)

KTM 400 LC4 supermoto, 1996, nice conversion, Talons/Excels, two exhaust cans, includes complete trail wheels plus some spares, £2475. Tel 01953 456885 (Norfolk)

KTM 450EXC, 2003, low hours, one mature owner, sump/handguards, green lane use only, maintained regard-less of cost, mint cond, £4100. Tel 01554 810409 (Carms)

Honda XR600R, MoT, 15600 miles, new O-ring c+s/MT21 rear tyre, rebuilt engine/forks/linkages, receipts, classic insurance, phone for details, £1095 ono.

Tel 01202 416932 (Dorset)

Suzuki DR-Z400S, 2000, X-reg, yellow/white, MoT, 2900 miles, handguards, bashplate, new front tyre, light green lane use only, £2650. Tel 07966 864811 (Oxon)

Yamaha WR400F, 1999, V-reg, White Bros exhaust, new plastics, green lane use only, vgc, £2400 ono. Tel 07746 142690 (Devon)

Kawasaki KMX200, 1990, T&T, ideal first green laner, good clean cond, £795. Tel 01865 880842 (Oxon)

Gas Gas EC450FSE, 2003, taxed, 950 miles, 2004 engine mods, green laned only, real thumper, £3795. Tel 01233 646168 (Kent)

Suzuki DR600SE, Italian import, re-reg'd, on B-plate, MoT, currently SORN, owners handbook, manual, great bike, reluctant sale, £1400 ono. Tel 07746 567835 (Perthshire)

CCM 604 SM, 2001, handguards, pillion pegs, race can, trail wheels, immaculate cond, £3400 ono or swap/p/x KTM400/WR426F. Tel 01978 844325 (Cheshire)

KTM 520EXC, 2001, elec start, hand/sump-guards, oil filters regularly changed, spares, vgc, £2995 no offers or p/x late trials bike. Tel 07711 375131 (Cheshire)

Yamaha DT125R, 2000, blue, 9000 miles, road use only, not used this year, exc cond, offers around £1600. Tel 01284 768289 (Suffolk)

Yamaha XT250, 1982, MoT, classic black/silver tank with gold rims, first class original cond, can email pics, £950 ono. Tel 01933 315307 (Northants)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, 53-reg, 1200 miles, CRD exhaust, bash-plate, Yoshi graphics, Renthals, green lane use only, £3300 ono. Tel 07050 149920 (Kent)

Honda CR250, 1998, hare and hounds use, flywheel weight, powervalve spacer, FMF system, handguards, spares, vgc, £1650 ono. Tel 01978 844325 (Cheshire)

Honda CRM250 AR, 2000, white/purple, T&T, purple rims, Renthals DEP system, barkbusters, rally levers, stainless frameguards, discguards, mint cond, £2950 ono. Tel (mobile) 07767 674008 or 0116 277 5603 (Leics)

Honda MTX125R, 1987, no T&T, stolen recovered, some parts for repair, reasonable cond, £700 ono. Tel (after 6pm) 01604 642414 (Northants)

Suzuki DR350SEW, 1998, T&T, Renthals, CRD frameguards, Ceet graphics, Goodridge hose, new disc/pads, green lane ready, good cond, £1750 ovno. Tel (mobile) 07941 896788 or 01865 379465 (Oxon)

Honda Africa Twin, K-reg, green/blue, 20000 miles, Laser pipe, topbox, centre stand, garaged all its life, very well maintained, vgc, £2450. Tel 01189 410033 (Berkshire)

Husaberg FE501, 2002, Talon hubs, first class cond, phone for more info, £2700 ovno or p/x for CCM 604E or XR650R. Tel 01978 842489 (Cheshire)

Honda CRM250 mkII, white/purple, T&T, FMF pipe, brushguards, good cond, £1450 for quick sale. Tel 07813 883202 (Surrey)

Husaberg FE400e, 2003, one owner, never raced, vgc, first to see will buy, phone for more details, £3600. Tel 0161 427 3448 (Cheshire)

WANTED

Wanted large capacity tank for Honda CRF450. Tel (mobile) 07787 113409 or 020 8551 8200 (Essex)

Wanted Yamaha XT600, any model considered, must be road legal for trail use, swap for my Yamaha TT350B enduro, J-reg, T&T, barkbusters, reliable, value £150. Tel 07779 011197 (Ceredigion)

Wanted standard silencer for KTM 250EXC 4T, 2004 model. Tel 07860 271732 (Gloucs)

Wanted Givi or similar wing-rack for 1989 Transalp, and/or full hard luggage, don't mind tatty cond. Tel Geoff on 07779 011197 (Ceredigion)

Wanted Kawasaki KL250 parts. Tel 01246 435297 (Derbys)

Wanted enduro/trail bike, prefer four-stroke, good or bad, runner or not, private buyer, will collect, cash waiting for right bike. Tel 07866 281588 (Staffs)

Wanted front and rear wheels to fit Yamaha WR/DT200, 1998 model, cash waiting. Tel 01376 516051 (Essex)

Wanted for enduro end can and owners handbook for Suzuki DR250, 1995 model. Tel 01278 457690 (Somerset)

Wanted could Danny please call Mat about 1985 XT600Z spares. Also CDI, any desert bits and second person to attempt ride to Timbuktu. Tel (mobile) 07796 365630 or 01564 994549 (Warks)

Wanted F Stuart who is holding an XR600 large capacity tank for me, your number has changed. Please call! Tel (mobile) 07966 795817 or 01235 525423 (Oxon)

Wanted XL600LMF barrel and piston, or complete engine and other spares. Also big fuel tank for XR400. Tel 07818 674251 (Surrey)

Wanted Yamaha DT175MX parts, forks, airbox oil tank, for restoration project, whole bike considered, MoT failure, basket case, WHY. Tel (mobile) 07729 219901 or 01296 688542 (Bucks)

Wanted Honda 1999 large petrol tank, must be in good cond. Tel Aaron on (mobile) 07769 872405 or 02893 372463 (Co Antrim)

SPARES

Yamaha XT600 Tenere parts, 1985 bike, seat panels, silencer, swingarm, front brake, a few engine spares. Tel Dean on 07767 703083 (Lincs)

Clarke 11L tank for 2000 Yamaha YZ250, Talon 21/18in wheels, Doma exhaust for same, best offer secures. Tel 01252 795190 (Surrey)

Genuine Honda workshop manuals, XL500, XR250, CR80R, XL125, ATC90/110, £15 each. Also XT600 spares. Tel 01246 435297 (Derbys)

TBM back issues, 39-105, £60 the lot plus p&p. Tel 01242 703536 (Gloucs)

Parts for 2003 Yamaha TT600, white rear panel, blue front fender, scratched in places, £30. Tel 01284 749240 (Suffolk)

K&N air filter for Kawasaki KLE500, £40 (?). Also stage III Dynojet kit, hardly used, £45 (?). Tel 07833 731085 (London)

TBM issues, 1-106, with seven binders, mint cond, £150. Arai Dualsport, black, unused, peak or visor, boxed, £60, p&p extra. Tel 01977 558779 (W Yorks)

Honda XR200 for spares or repair, 1982, complete bike, phone for info, £250. Tel 07787 981309 (E Sussex)

Warrior leather jacket, 48in chest, new, £55. Bib/braces, 38in waist, new, £55. Aroh flip-front helmet, new, size XL, black, £30. Tel 01932 782558 (Surrey)

Suzuki DR350 with broken camshaft, rest of bike okay, sell complete for £500 or break for spares, make me an offer. Tel 01730 893853 (Hants)

KTM 13L tank, with seat, used once, as new, fits all '04 four-strokes, cost £300, sell for £230 the pair. Tel (days) 07742 954570 or (eves) 01235 862933 (Oxon)

Touratech bits, BMW 1150 plastic headlamp cover, alloy oil filler cap, cost £40, accept £18. Tel 01785 243805 (Staffs)

Honda XL125RC parts, forks, swingarm, sidepanels, fenders, wheels, seat etc. Also TL125, MTX125 tank, XL250 Motorsport front brake cable. Tel 01225 866577 (Wilts)

GAR trail boots, size 43, £60. Wulf MX jeans, black/orange, 36in, £20. Sinisalo enduro/road jacket, £35. All used twice.

Tel 01353 666406 (Cambs)

Remus exhaust for BMW F650GS Dakar, improves mid-range, cost £400, accept £180. Tel 01785 243805 (Staffs)

Parts for Honda CR250RJ, seat, sub-frame, swingarm, shock, tank, air filter, sidepanels etc, £110. Also Honda XL185 parts, frame with V5, £75. Wheels, tank, swingarm. Plus DT175MX tank, IRC 4.00x18 tyre. Tel 01225 866577 (Wilts)

TBM back issues, 77-100 though missing 95 and 97, all good as new, 22 mag for £25 inc postage. Tel 07966 469583 (Gloucs)

XR400 parts, seat, carb, kickstart, rear subframe, airbox, all in good cond, plus some other XR400 parts, call for details. Tel 01761 453879 (Somerset)

Alpinestars Tech 6 boots, size 10, hardly used, £95. Tel 01793 526545 (Wilts)

Garmin GPS Map 76 Navigator, UK roads/recreation software, Touratech bar mount, boxed, £225. Tel (w/ends) 01202 247188 (Dorset)

Plastics for 2002 KTM LC4 Six Days, yellow, £50. Standard tailpipe, £50. Mirrors and indicators, £20. Tel (mobile) 07764 903353 or 01980 590429 (Wilts)

Home-built one-/two-bike trailer, lighting board, spare wheel, stands on end for storage, tows really well, £130 ono. Tel 01634 575090 (Kent)

DR-Z400S spares, from yellow 2002 bike, 2500 miles, surplus to requirements, phone for details. Tel 02392 632418 (Hants)

Single-bike trailer, light board, ramp, spare wheel, new wheel bearings, good solid trailer, £95 ono. Tel 01604 714913 (Northants)

Kawasaki KMX125/200 parts, front wheels, forks, swingarm, rear shock, rad, tank, exhaust, headlight and more. Tel 01761 452606 (Avon)

Acerbis 23L tank for Yamaha XT600E, £150 CRD sump-guard for same, £60. Tel 01827 708740 (Staffs)

Seat and tank for Honda XR, £80 ovno. Tel 01538 371656 (Staffs)

Arrow silencer to fit Yamaha TT600R, 2000 model, used for one run, complete with wrapping and brackets, only £65 ono. Tel 01376 343330 (Essex)

Michelin MX tyres, used once, 90/90-21 S12 front, £22 ono. 130/80-18 M12 rear, £30 ono. Tel 01376 343330 (Essex)

Talon wheels to fit Yamaha WR400F, blue Talons, gold Excels, used once, £300. Tel Scott on 07769 700580 (Middx)

Standard exhaust for DR-Z400E, brand new, £100 plus postage. Tel 0117 969 7418 (Avon)

Supermoto wheels to fit Husqvarna TE/SMR, as new D207 tyres, only done 100 miles, mint cond, £500 ono. Tel 07880 787210 (Kent)

Three-bike trailer, includes two spare mini wheels and light-board, exc cond, £200. Tel 07788 915277 (Cornwall)

Wulfsport MX boots, size ten, good cond, £25. Tel (mobile) 07970 880765 or 01462 814093 (Beds)

STOLEN

Stolen Honda CRF250X, red, reg VX04 WLW, frame no JH2ME11A14K00753, engine no ME11E5007673. Also taken Gas Gas EC250, red, reg KF02 UCD, numbers VTREC250 and 000121136, stolen from West Midlands on 13/07/04, £500 reward. Tel 01564 794597 (W Mids)

Stolen Honda XR400R, white, with distinctive drilled/corten pillion pegs braised onto subframe, stolen last summer near Hebden Bridge, Yorks, reward for info. Tel Chris on 07714 124620 (E Sussex)

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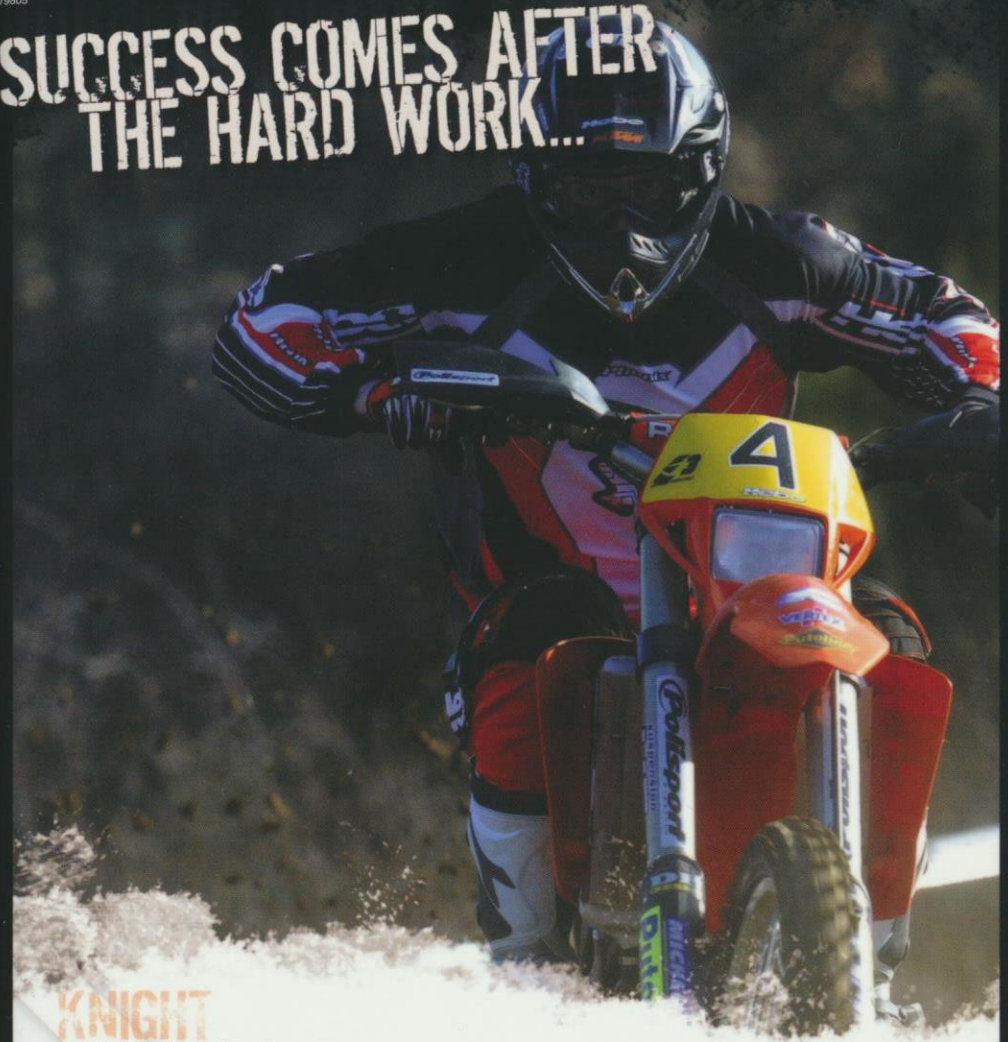
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