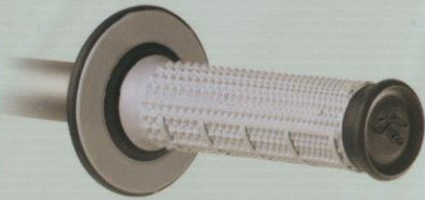




tapered dual compound

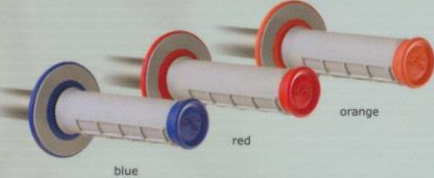
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Inside:

THE FRENCH INJECTION...

SHERCO 4.5i V GASSER 450FSE
HEAD-TO-HEAD IN FRANCE

GONE IN 60 SECS

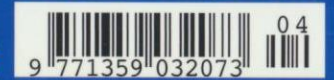
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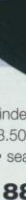
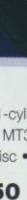
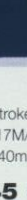
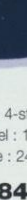
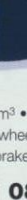
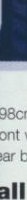
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EDITORIAL

Top of the Forum...

They say that it's good to talk, and that talk is cheap. And on the TBM Forum... it's absolutely bloody free!

Well, it is after you've paid your Internet Service Provider (ISP) for your connection.

Forum/ISP, what the hell are you on about this time Melber? Well I'm glad you asked me that, because I didn't have a clue myself about all this malarkey until just over a month ago when the TBM website went 'live'. Since then we've apparently had 13,000 'hits' on our website which you can find at www.trailbikemag.com.

And the Forum part? Well that's where like-minded individuals can shoot the dirt-biking breeze with others of a similar ilk. It's sort of like an electronic 'social' at your local dirtbike club, but without the stale ale and curly sandwiches - oh, and it's permanently open.

What you have to do is navigate your way to the TBM website (here's the plug again: www.trailbikemag.com), wait for it to load up (if you've got a slow dial-up connection), then press the big button on the right marked FORUM. Once there you'll see a number of topics up for discussion and you can either just read them or if you fancy con-



tributing then register your details and start posting your replies (or your queries for others to answer). Then sit back and watch the results.

The beauty of a Forum is that all sorts of people contribute to it and offer their own valuable opinions and experiences on all kinds of diverse (but obviously dirtbike related) subjects.

And they can do this under a cloak of anonymity because nobody (except us of course) can see their name.

So whether you ride a lovely old DT175 or a spankers new KTM 250EXC you'll be welcomed here as a fellow dirt junkie.

And if you still have no idea what I'm talking about, well get back on your Royal Enfield and Log Off...

SI MELBER

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TBM

GOT THE BLUES

Yamaha Tricker is little more than a BMX with an engine...



TTR230 will appeal to the shorter rider...



its predecessor - good news for shorter trail riders. Standard colour options look to be black or white. As with the last model, it's off down the grey import road if you want to get hold of one.

As if that wasn't enough, there's also a new BMX-inspired Tricker to play with. Billed as a cross between a trials, trail and streetbike, it has an air cooled, SOHC 249cc lump (the same as the Serow's), a semi-double cradle frame, 16in rear wheel, low seat and ultra-slim fuel tank, with a claimed dry weight of 111kg, and is available in yellow, orange or black. Watch this space...



The popular Serow gets a facelift...

no doubt appeal to novices and those small in stature, though it's unlikely that Yamaha UK will be importing the budget bikes. However, expect to see them in grey importerships up and down the country, where they'll no doubt be fitted with lighting kits and road gubbins.

Believe it or not, it's the Serow's 20th birthday this year and to celebrate Yamaha have revised the definitive small trailie, including a special anniversary edition in dark red complete with commemorative decals. The reworked Serow is now a 250, with a flatter seat, new frame, redesigned headlamp, digi clocks and looks to be even lower than

ROUND UP

Are you a keen trail rider or group who get out and about most weekends? We are looking for people to 'Do the Rounds' for us. If you think you can string together a sentence or two and take decent pictures then we'd like to hear from you. The job will obviously include some travel, mainly in the UK, although foreign jaunts may be an option. Contact us via our website trailbikemag.com or email info@trailbikemag.com.



FORUM FUNNIES

TBM's new forum is now up and running, with over 200 people registered already. And, after reading many amusing anecdotes, we've decided to choose our favourite torrid tale each month for your entertainment.

Our first story is 'curry-er' and his troublesome DT125R, which only revved to 3000 rpm then died as soon as the throttle was touched. Numerous suggestions by fellow forum friends followed, but even after changing the entire carb, checking generator, ignition coils, reed valve and powervalve, filing down the cylinder head and buying a brand new end-can, nothing was working.

Then, Eureka! Apparently the problem was a small plastic marble inside the DEP expansion chamber, resembling a 'widget' from a beer can, with 'curry-er' reckoning his two-year-old son had put the offending item in there.

Case closed - or so it seemed. But then another helpful soul



managed to clear up the situation once and for all.

'The same thing happened to our mate at a meeting, we laughed our nuts off when we found a 'plastic widget' in his exhaust pipe. The best mechanics in the pits could not work it out until we saw no smoke from the tailpipe. The widgets are used in the chrome plating process but I never thought it could happen twice!'

So, if you're not already signed up, log onto trailbikemag.com and click on the forum button and it could be you suffering public humiliation next month...

THE EX-HEX FROM X

No sooner had he landed on our doorstep, than the intrepid Kiwi JB was off again (scared off by Mel, we reckon). Rumour has it he's off to Lapland to play with some Huskys - of the dog variety that is. Good luck mate!

So, if you think you've got what it takes to work for TBM on a full-time basis, then check out our website trailbikemag.com.

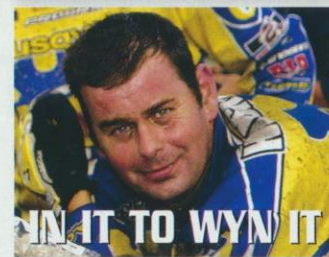


Simon Milward 1965 - 2005

Leading motorcycle rights campaigner Simon Milward has died after a bike crash in Africa on 4 March.

South Devon born Simon, who travelled the globe as a tireless charity fundraiser, died near the city of Kayes in Mali. He started work with the Motorcycle Action Group over 15 years ago and established the Federation of European Motorcyclists (FEM) Brussels headquarters in 1992, becoming General Secretary.

Simon was killed whilst on his five-year charity around-the-world ride. Our deepest sympathies go out to his family. For more information on Simon's work, log onto millennium-ride.com.



Former British Enduro Championship rider Wyn Hughes is again running his popular enduro training days. They are aimed at riders looking to improve their technique and will cater for all abilities. This year there are six dates to choose from:

- Sat 23 April
 - Sat 14 May
 - Sun 15 May
 - Sat 28 May
 - Sat 11 June
 - Sat 30 July
- nr Colchester
 - South Wales
 - South Wales
 - Salisbury
 - Salisbury
 - South Wales

To book your place, call Wyn on 01686 430455.

DUNE BUDDIES



Fancy doing your own bit of desert storming? The 2005 Qatar Baja event will be taking place on 25-26 November and is a two-day desert race over hard-packed sand, gravel and, of course, desert dunes.

The course will be mainly ridden by GPS points, which the FIA have agreed to even though it is a full FIM event.

Last year 22 riders took part and the race is ideal for first-time

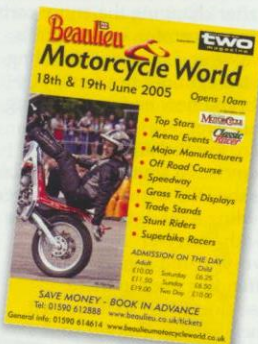
desert goers as the heavily subsidised event costs just £500! This includes your entry fee, bike shipping, four nights in a top hotel and help with flight expenses.

Any four-stroke enduro bike will be capable of competing and because there are sufficient refuelling points there's no need for a long-range tank. Riders who are interested can contact Clive on 01435 866860 or email clive@teamdesertrose.com.

SOUTH COAST SPECTACULAR

Don't miss the 11th annual bike extravaganza that is the Beaulieu Motorcycle World show. The two-day event on 18-19 June features an off-road course, a grass track arena display, speedway, plus stunt riders and past and present motorcycle stars.

All the major manufacturers will be there and of course the usual trade stands and refreshments. Adult day entry costs £10.00 on Saturday and £11.50 on the Sunday. Discounted tickets and further info are available on beaulieumotorcycleworld.co.uk or call 01590 612888 to book.



FIGURATIVELY SPEAKING

So far in 2005 the motorcycle industry seems to be pretty buoyant, with overall sales (registrations) bouncing up another eight-percent.

The big BMW 1200GS still tops the Adventure Sport category with another 50 units sold, with the pint-sized Honda 125XL in hot pursuit, just 36 bikes behind. Meanwhile it seems as if the supermoto bug is catching, as not only is Yamaha's streetwise DT125X in the charts but KTM's 640 motard makes its debut entry, tying with the Yam in fourth place.

Meanwhile, the Trail/Enduro chart just drops down one-percent

from last month, with Honda's ever-popular XR125L still outselling its nearest rival, the CRF250X, by 19 units. Trials fever hasn't abated yet either, with the Beta Rev 3 still holding

steady in third place, only two units behind the CRF-X.

The new kid on the block is the Suzuki Van Van, squeezing out the Yam DT125R in fifth position with a respectable 49 machines shifted. Complete figures are as follows:



ADVENTURE SPORT		
1	BMW R1200GS	112
2	Honda XL125V	76
3	Triumph 955 Tiger	46
4	KTM 640SM	45
5	Yamaha DT125X	45
TRAIL/ENDURO		
1	Honda XR125L	84
2	Honda CRF250X	65
3	Beta Rev 3	63
4	KTM 450EXC	50
5	Suzuki RV125	49

MY FIRST BIKE

FOUNDER OF THE WELL-RESPECTED OFF-ROAD WEBSITE ENDURONEWS.COM, BOB MULLINS HARKS BACK TO THE EIGHTIES AND HIS HONDA XL185, ONE OF THE CLASSIC GREEN LANE MACHINES...



In the autumn I then entered the XL in the Brechfa. I had ridden to my first two events on the road with my petrol cans hung around my neck on bungs, but as it was my first proper timecard enduro, I decided to go in style and bought a Reliant Robin three-wheeler.

By dumping the passenger seat I could get most of the bike into the car and by unbolting the bars, forks and front wheel I could fit them into the space behind the driver's seat. I arrived early, assembled the bike and was very polite to the scrutineer.

The bike went well but at the start of the second lap my left-hand footrest snapped off and I had to finish standing

‘M’y first off-road bike was a nearly new Honda XL185, which I bought in 1981. I had caught the off-road bug that year riding a 1969 Triumph 650 with road tyres and chopper forks around the local coal tips. The XL was mint and a lot lighter than the old Trumper, so I joined WTRA and did a lot of trail riding.

In August 1982 I rode the XL to Mount St. Michel in Brittany but on the following Sunday - my 33rd birthday - the holiday was over for the bike and me when I rode it in my first event at Caerleon. I arrived late and got put into the Expert race. Trying to keep out of the way, I ground off the lights, mudguards and indicators but the Brittany Ferries stickers stayed firmly put.

on one leg. The bike took a real pounding. As well as the footrest (and mostly because of it) the front wheel was buckled, the seat brackets had snapped, I had broken both levers and my spares, plus I had lost the headlight.

The chain also appeared to be slack but on closer examination it turned out that the frame had snapped and the bike was actually getting shorter as I accelerated!

I gave some thought to lashing it together to ride in the new Weston Beach Race, but out of respect I retired the old girl to a happier home and bought the much tougher Pro-Link XR200.

So, in 12 months I had hammered my first bike into my first finishers medal. On reflection I think it was a fair exchange.’

SNIPPETS

★ON TRIAL

Latest news from the ACU Trials & Enduro Committee is that there will be a new trail bike/trials championship this year, sponsored by TBM. Dates are as follows:

- 11 Sept **Neath MCC**
Fred Rist Trial
- 25 Sept **Stratford-upon-Avon**
OK Supreme Trial
- 16 Oct **West of England MC**
Moor to Sea Trial
- 4 Dec **Golden Valley MC**
The Golden Valley Trail Bike Trial

If any other clubs want to be involved, it's not too late - please call Alison Devine on 01788 566409 or email alison@acu.org.uk. Entry forms are available on acu.org.uk.

★WANDERING NOMADS

Martenique Barracks in Bordon, Hants is the venue for a three-stage trial on Sunday 8 May. The Aldermaston MCC organised event attracted nearly 100 riders last year. Regs are available by phoning Mike or Margaret Slatter on 01672 810768.

★MAORI MADNESS

The 2006 ISDE will take place in sunny New Zealand from 14-19 November. Lake Taupo on the North Island is the venue, with the going similar to Scandinavian terrain - pine forest and woodland.

★TRIALS MAGAZINE

Keep your eyes peeled for the imminent arrival of Trials Magazine on a news-stand near you. The latest title from the TBM stable will cover everything in the feet-up world. And you can even save yourself 15-percent on a subscription by logging onto extremepublishingltd.com/trialsmag/



5 MINUTES WITH...

FORMER BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIP AND ISDE COMPETITOR WYN HUGHES IS NOW HUSQVARNA TEAM MANAGER...

WHAT WAS THE FIRST ENDURO BIKE YOU OWNED?

A Maico 400 in 1981. I was 16 years old and rode clubman in the British Championship that year, and somehow came ninth or tenth overall in the clubman class, something I was pretty pleased with at the time.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST ENDURO?

It was the Natterjack in 1980, on Geraint Jones's 440 Maico and I managed to place third in class.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE ENDURO?

I've got lots but my absolute favourites have to be the Breckland, Bordon and Beacons between 1987-1996. I think I've rode the Breckland 15 times - I just love the course, it's physical and sandy, and it's a cracking event.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE HARDEST ENDURO YOU HAVE EVER RACED?

Without a doubt the Gilles Lalay Classic in France. It starts at 6.30am and goes through until 1 o'clock, then starts again at 3.00pm and ends about midnight so it's very tough.

WHAT RIDER HAS HAD THE BIGGEST INFLUENCE ON YOUR CAREER?

Well obviously Geraint Jones - he taught me so much and I learnt a lot

from him. In the later years it was Paul Edmondson. And there was David Knight. I've raced against him a lot, went to the Bordon and came second five times in a row so I've never beaten him!

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR BEST EVER PERFORMANCE?

I think there's two. First off, there was the 1996 ISDE in Poland where I rode very well. Then I came back from there and rode the Beacons enduro a month later and think I only dropped about four or five minutes. The next closest person to me in the British Championship lost about ten or twelve minutes and that's when Rob Sartin was top four in the world.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST DISAPPOINTING RESULT?

I've had my fair share, but not one sticks out more than the others.. What really gets me is when you drop out of an enduro because your bike breaks and there's nothing you can do about it, it's something you can't control.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST CRASH?

There's been quite a few of them! When I was younger and a little wild and mad as most youngsters are now, I chipped my hipbone in a small Hare and Hounds event down in Hampshire. This happened just before the Breckland and I had to ride it with a busted hip - very painful indeed. The actual accident happened in a water pool where the ruts had got very deep. I went into the water way too fast, hit the ruts, and the fork legs just stopped dead and the bike fired me off and I landed on my hip. But on the whole, most of my big crashes have happened at home when I've been practicing, not when racing. I've broken my collarbone twice as well, but that's been it, I've been lucky.

WHAT IS YOUR MOST TREASURED ENDURO MEMORY?

Finishing second overall in the British Championship in 1999, again to Knighter. Also, reaching Dead Crow Hill in the Gilles Lalay is an absolutely great feeling. I was just standing up on the top of the hill and

looking down at all the people at the bottom - fantastic.

WHICH BIKE HAVE YOU ENJOYED OWNING/RIDING THE MOST?

I've got to say out of the bikes I rode, the Suzuki RMXs are pretty good. Husky's are very good too, if not the best. Oh, and the Alfer I rode in 1999 which was a top bike.

WHAT IS YOUR PREFERRED TERRAIN?

I like deep sand, deep mud and deep, deep ruts!

WHAT DOES ENDURO SPORT NEED MORE OF?

More people getting involved at a young age. More encouragement and opportunities need to be available for training youngsters up.

WHAT DOES ENDURO SPORT NEED LESS OF?

For me, three classes is a backwards step in my opinion. For the up and coming riders it's been nice for them to think 'well, if I maybe go in the 450 class I could get second or third'; now, they're going to look at the three classes and think they've got no chance. So I think that may lose people out of the sport.

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

Sitting here at the Breckland, this will maybe be the last event here. I'd like to say the sport as a whole is going to be bigger and better but I really can't say that because of the way people are being stopped more and more from riding in certain areas. Decent ground is also getting so hard to find, so maybe it's going to be a struggle in the future.

WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE IN ENDUROS?

For me, it's bringing youngsters up in the sport as it's very expensive to get started now. I'd like to take Daryl (Bolter) to the very top, which I think he can do - he's young, keen and there's nothing to stop him. Oh, and making Husqvarna bigger and better of course..!

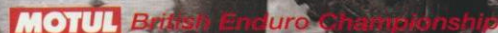


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Watership Downs

Mark Williams heads to the Garden of England for a memorable day's trailriding...

As I don't generally bang on about it with the parochial zeal with which I trumpet the virtues of Mid-Wales, you probably won't have heard me reminiscing on my formative experiences trailriding in Kent. However in company with one Pete Furlong, who used to make custom chaincases for big Jap multis in South London, and like myself was an early enduro enthusiast, I did a fair bit of dirtbiking in North Kent in the Seventies.

In those days it was on a quite ridiculous converted 197cc DoT scrambler and an only slightly less ridiculous 250 Triumph Trailblazer.

And perhaps it was the awkwardness of hefting such machinery around the often tight 'n' twisty lanes of the North Downs that expunged the experience from my memory. However some vague notions of pleasantness were clearly re-awakened when Gillingham-based Richard Colquhoun contact TBM Towers and offered to conduct me around his patch. After a couple of false-starts, we finally managed to nail down a mid-week date with a few of his Kent TRF compadres early last month and when I planned my trip down there with the road atlas, I had visions of negotiating the hazards of burnt out

cars on brownfield sites, because Gillingham is about as urban as trailriding territory gets.

And although as the day stretched out I wasn't entirely wrong in my assumptions, the other major mistake I made was thinking it'd be smart to save money on a B&B by rising at 4am and driving the 220-odd miles from my place to his for a 9:30am start. Not allowing for a rush hour pile-up on the M40 and the inevitable crawl around the M25 meant I didn't arrive until just before ten, but much appreciated sausage and bacon rolls, and good humoured banter from the assembled throng in Richard's kitchen left me feeling slightly less guilty about my late arrival.

So let's introduce you to that throng.

Gone Nuclear

Neil Smith is Head of Works Control at British Nuclear Fuels' Dungeness Power Station, which means he's in charge of operational planning and maintenance. I'll resist the obvious jibes about his KTM 450 benefiting from nuclear power, although I was surprised that he didn't glow when we were barrelling along some of the darker lanes we encountered.

Chairman of the Not so Bored

Plumber Stuart Cocksedge is actually Chairman of the Kent TRF Group and gently pointed out to me that he wasn't even born when I last rode the Kent trails, which rather puts this month's 'Rutted' column into an even ghastlier perspective. His mount was a very tidy DR-Z400E, which seems like a pretty ideal choice for the sort of going we were to experience.

Retired Ungracefully

'Robbo' - the only name he'd admit to - is in the happy position of being a retired civil servant to whom trailriding is a serious hobby. He changes bikes 'every six months or so' his latest being a CRF250X, which followed a WR250, KTM450, and Gas Gas 450 in that order. So a civil servant's pension can't be that bad!

Got it Nailed

I didn't venture to enquire if carpenter Nigel Jeffrey was even younger than Stuart (but he kind of looked it), although he's been trailriding for at least seven years, most of

'em on a KLX250. Sadly, due to some completely unfathomable fuel-related problem the bike refused to start the previous day, but he was lucky enough to borrow a friend's CRM250-AR. Pity really, as I'd have liked to see how the Kawa performed in comparison to my TT-R250.

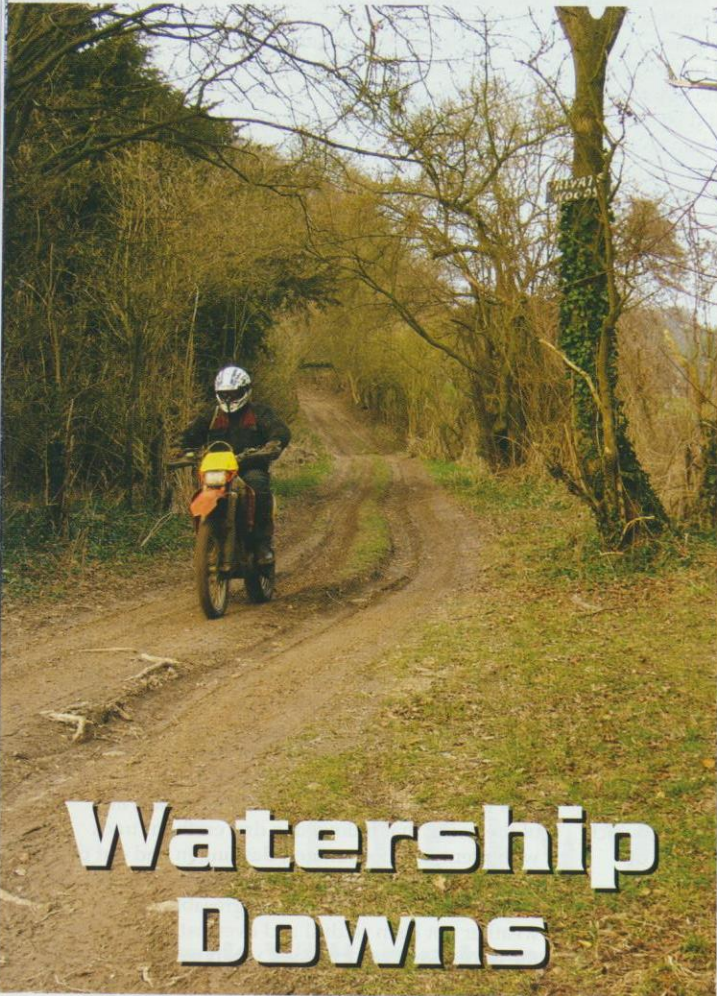
The Man in Black

And finally our leader, BT engineer Richard C, who also rides a Katoom 450, but in rare and slightly sinister black livery. Extremely active in local RoW issues - he admits to spending most of his spare time corresponding with the local council - Richard proved an avuncular host, expert group leader and when occasion demanded (or even when it didn't), the sharpest of wits.

After my late arrival, proceedings were further hampered when Richard tore the valve out of his front tyre when checking its pressure. Fortunately with his electrical engineering, and Nigel's carpentry skills a new tube was inserted in something approaching a trice and off we finally went.

Unsurprisingly given his location, the route from Richard's home to our first bit of rough took us through the Medway towns of Gillingham, Chatham and Rochester, much of it along the busy A2 which wasn't much fun on a trailbike without mirrors or indicators, so I was pleased when we finally hung a left onto Scotland Way just to the south of Shorne Wood Country Park. This RuPP typified much, but by no means all of the going that followed: a dry, earthen track with plenty of loose stones, dashing in and out of woodland across a gently undulating landscape. It would've been all the more agreeable had the weather not been so dull and overcast, but it got the juices flowing nicely and when we got to the





Watership Downs

hamlet of Cobham, a sharp right onto some tarmac soon brought us back onto another RuPP which took us back to where we started.

Successfully Claimed

We then doubled back down Scotlands - an exercise repeated several times during the day in order to cover as much rough stuff and as little tarmac as possible, which made perfect sense in such a near-urban environment. However the next track, extending from the east end of Cobham, was Lodge Lane, a wide, engagingly pot-holed track that Kent TRF successfully put a claim in for Byway status. A key piece of evi-



dence justifying vehicular use was the width of the railway bridge near its southern end, so I had to stop and take a snap of Richard riding through it.

From Lodge Lane we did a wee bit of road work further south, to travel along the short, narrow and oddly named Pig's Dean Road - which Kent TRF have a claim in for - then down along Buckland Road and up through the woods of Hatch Hill. Here the going got a little

tougher, with a fair bit of mud, bloody-minded tree roots and some sudden twists, turns and awkward cambers - but it was a nice little scamper nonetheless.

In retrospect and even staring hard at the map, I must confess at this point to being slightly confused where we went next because during the course of the day there was a whole lotta' looping going on, but I think we forked right down a RuPP then a BOAT into Ten Acre Wood, finally hitting the tarmac of Chapel Lane. This brought us into Upper Halling where we made a right onto the famed Pilgrim's Way which ceased to be surfaced at Lad's Farm, its narrow, twisty and,



once again, awkwardly cambered path taking us just a klick or so to Crookhorn Bungalow, where a left turn took us onto the similar, if ruttier Whitedyke Road - actually a RuPP - down and rather unsettlingly past the Snodland cemetery.

Doubling back out of Snodland and along Paddlesworth Road soon took us back up to the Pilgrim's Way at Birling Hill where we turned left along more twisty which, for some reason, calls itself North Downs Way. This I know because there was a small stone signpost right where a fallen tree forced us to an abrupt halt. As we were to discover, this wasn't the first rotten old bit of wood felled by the weight of recent heavy snows, but at least it was possible to get round it without too much difficulty. So eventually on we sped westward, the track getting a little wider and muddier as we neared Wrotham. (This section of the track, technically a bridleway, Kent TRF have a claim in for as a BOAT).

Slippery Sleepers

However rather than continue along the Way on what would've then been tarmac, Richard led us right up a steep, tree-girt hill into Hognore Wood made all the more, er, 'technical' by the railways sleeper wedged at right angles to preserve its hard mud surface (and presumably make it easier



Aside from removing obstacles, Kent TRF also spend time clearing the lanes for everyone to use...

for walkers). Good fun, though, and hanging another right at the top took us back down onto the Way where we hung a left. A mile or so along this stretch we climbed another steep, sleeper-shod hill, this time blemished by fly-tipping - an all too frequent feature of home counties trailriding, as I was rapidly discovering.

Reversing - well not literally - all the way back down the hill and left onto the Way again brought us back to the fallen tree which was slightly harder to get round this time due to the awkward drop off at its extremities, and after I'd taken a few snaps of the lads jiggling their way through I was directed up a steep, chalky gully that as Richard said, could be 'a bit of a nightmare in the wet'.

Even in the dry it was rather taxing, but I managed to hold second gear - and my nerve - throughout and it eventually topped out easily on White Horse Road. This we crossed straight over and into Fowles Wood which got a bit nadgery as we rode north along Wrangling Lane - another RuPP - stopping just short of Great Buckland where a hard right took us up another steep, tricky hill to Holly Hill House.

Another sharp turn, this time to the left, and some more slightly nadgery but not unduly difficult going brought us to the highest point of our

day thus far - 150m above Horseholders Wood. As if to celebrate, we stopped for chocolate bars and to allow Neil to remove metres of baler twine that had somehow wrapped itself about his bike's rear axle.

Knee Deep, No Trouble

Once again I must confess to getting a bit retrospectively disorientated at this point, but I'm sure that Chapel Lane featured again and we seemed to do rather a lot of roadwork before reaching a quite spectacular - or at least spectacularly deep - ford in the village of Ditton. We actually had to ride along, rather than through it for a hundred yards or so and with the bow waves it was well up to my knees, but fortunately no-one fell off.

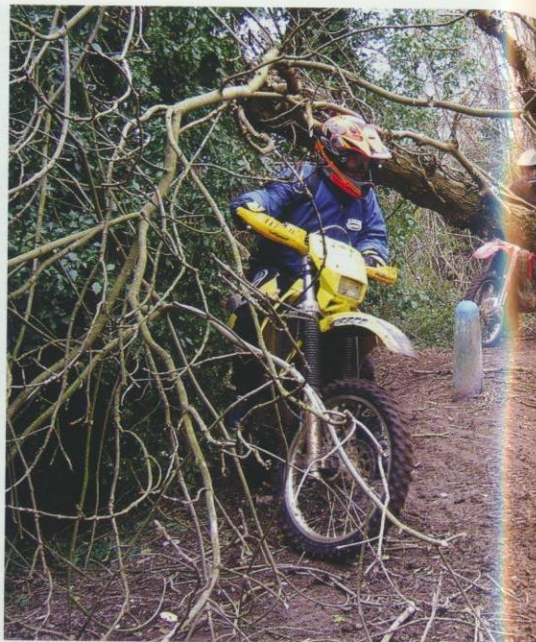
More roadwork followed, taking us north through Burnham and eventually onto a steepish RuPP across Wouldham Common and a right turn for a fast blatt along Hill Road. A bracing couple of miles later we were on tarmac and turning right at the Robin Hood pub up one of Richard's signature steep, slippery-ish climbs.

At it's peak we hung a left and then another left down a flinty, rutty lane where a monster tractor, or rather its driver, only begrudgingly stopped to let us squeeze past against its high banks. Must've got out of bed the wrong side.

With the prospect of lunch looming attractively large, I thought that that'd been the last of the morning's obstacles, but was I wrong? Yes indeed I was, for just as we rode towards the designated gourmet filling station at White Horse Stone on the A229, we came upon an ominously flooded underpass. And I wasn't encouraged when Richard cheerily informed me that there could be 'all sorts of tyres and rubbish' lurking beneath its dank and darkened surface.

Anyway I watched Neil, followed by Nigel wade through it, and off I wobbled, nearly coming a cropper when I hit a submerged kerb (I think) which incongruously skirted the road.

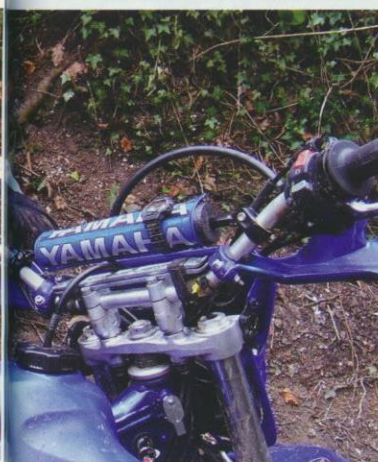
Nigel's CRM almost spluttered to a halt the other side, but he managed to nurse it up the bank to the filling station and we promptly forgot about it until after we'd availed ourselves of Messrs Ginster's and Kipling's finest cuisine, splashed a few litre of unleaded into our tanks and readied ourselves for what was left of the afternoon. When of course Nigel found his Honda reluctant to spark up. Much pushing and shoving didn't help until he'd drained the carb of liquid, some of which was obviously water, and off we eventually went.



Our first post-lunch experience was yet more of the Pilgrim's Way, which we rode first eastwards and then back west before rising north up a spraucney little hill onto Lower Warren Road, a RuPP with some tarmac that eventually became Bell Lane.

Continuing east along this partially surfaced lane we eventually came to Bredhurst where Richard took us south, uphill into Bredhurst along Byway KH94. No, this is not a little known Kawasaki lightweight, but a byway infamous for flytipping which Kent TRF, with local backing, cleared of dumped cars and much other rubbish last year. Another example of the unsung heroism that typifies some TRF groups.

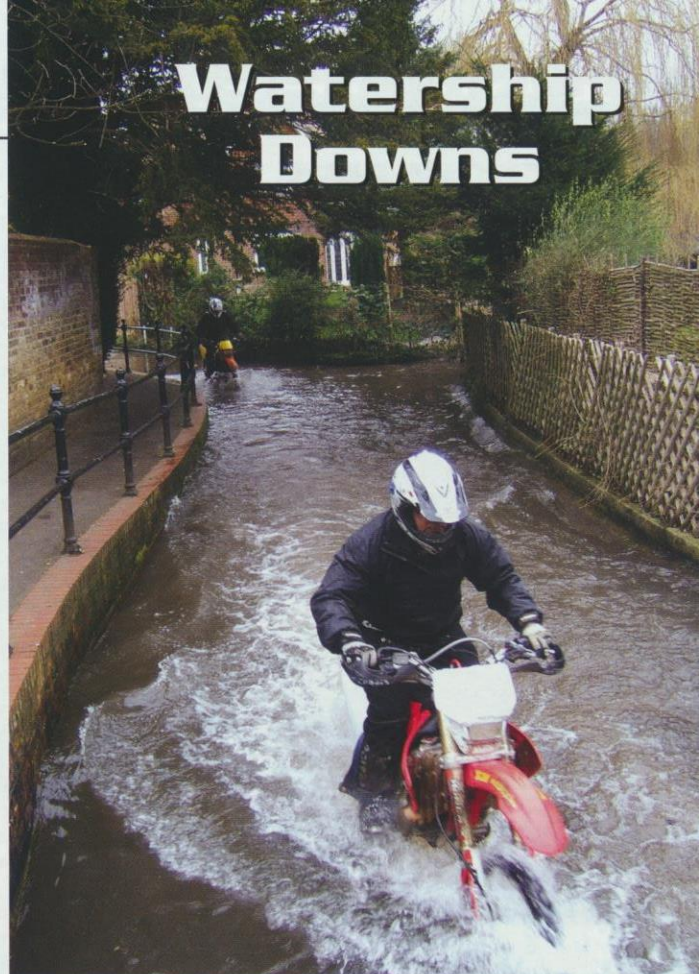
The council have now put up slightly fatuous signs warning of CCTV surveillance. Suffice to say such cameras were pretty much absent as far as I could see.



Attacked by Foliage

The other thing I failed to see after we'd begun zig-zagging along the deeply rutted, deeply muddy RuPP through the forest, was the branch of a fallen tree that with a malevolence typical of fallen trees, chose to jump out and knock me off my bike. As I was going at a decent clip at the time, I fell hard and against the opposite bank, my bike on top of me, to discover a layer of

Watership Downs



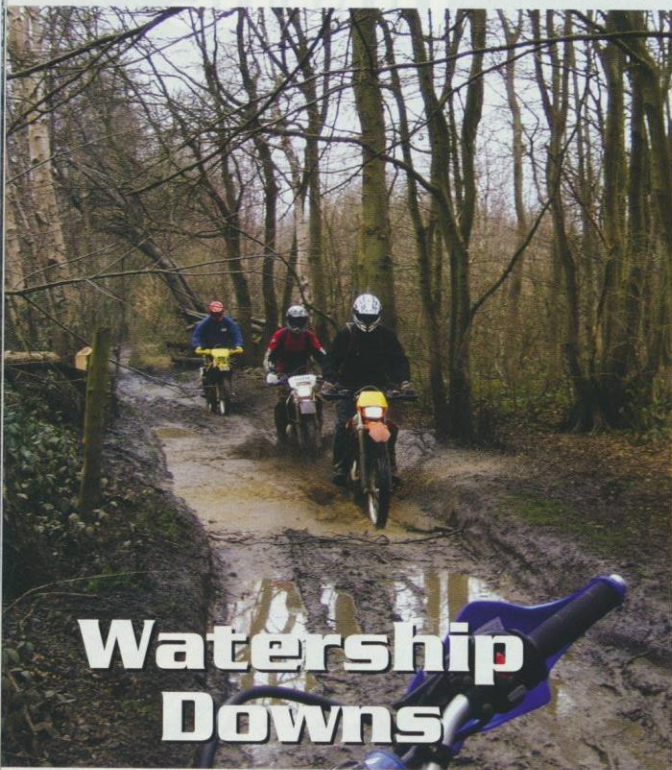
Left: Mark seems to spend more time on the floor than the average shop steward. Above: Kent has some unusual lanes to offer the adventurous trail rider...

stones cunningly hidden beneath the hard-ish earth. Damage to the Yam was fortunately minimal but damage to me included a sprained thumb, bruised lower arm but most annoyingly of all, a badly pulled muscle in my shoulder.

Robbo calmly checked everything was working in the limb departments as I sat slightly in shock, whilst Nigel and Richard kindly took to fettling the bike and eventually I re-mounted, only to have another malicious branch take a swing at me just a few hundreds further on as I swept down a slippery gully.

This time my barkbuster pulled itself out and my pride was further damaged. But having picked myself up and eventually got down through Monkdown Wood to Scragged Oak Road, I feared I was going to be in some discomfort for the rest of the ride. And without an effective front brake.

And this month's column, which was written a week before my trip to Kent, was now proving



Wood, just north of Hollingbourne in order to effect a loop. The first bit of Drake's itself was a nasty, deeply rutted track covered in the dark, near-black slime they call mud in these parts, and I had to keep stopping to give my sprained muscles a rest. There was also another, in fact our third fallen tree to deal with, in this case involving much breaking and re-arranging of branches and walking our bikes under the main trunk.

However there wasn't much chance of such respite when I rounded a bend to find a couple of the chaps ploughing carefully through a deep, watery bog which seemed to occupy an entire and very sharp left hand corner, after which I had no alternative but to try and ascend a(nother) slippery slope but without the benefit of any run-up. Miraculously I managed it without a pratfall, but somewhere further on through this muddy forestry the treacherous track opened out into a flat, open field... preceded by another glutinous bog!

By now I have to admit I was thoroughly knackered, and hurting badly with it, so Richard took pity on me and after a short, undemanding skidaddle along yet another RuPP, we made our way back to his place along 12 or 15 miles of tarmac... much of it actually part of the ubiquitous Pilgrim's Way which threads its way through tiny hamlets and villages like Broad Street, Thurnham and Detling.

In truth what with mechanical problems and the late start that was entirely my fault, it was well past 5:30pm and getting dark by the time Richard's daughter brought us welcome mugs of tea and we began getting our boots off.

So despite my whingeing we couldn't have covered too much more terrain anyway. But it had been a great day with lots of disparate and, er, interesting tracks, plenty of laughs and a few stories to tell.

And did I remember any of them from 30-odd years ago? Truth be told, stretches of the Pilgrim's Way seemed vaguely familiar, and I just hope that they'll still be rideable in another 30 years time... If they aren't, it certainly won't be for lack of effort on the part of Richard, Stuart and the rest of the lads at Kent TRF.

Watership Downs

dismally prescient, for whenever the going got at all technical, ie when muscle power was required to pilot the bike anything like accurately, my right shoulder muscles protested painfully. This was somewhat true of Magpie Lane, another slightly muddy incline a mile or two past Scragged Oak (and which we rode in both directions), but I think Hayes Lane, which exits off the mighty (and rather frightening) A249 really had me wincing under my helmet.

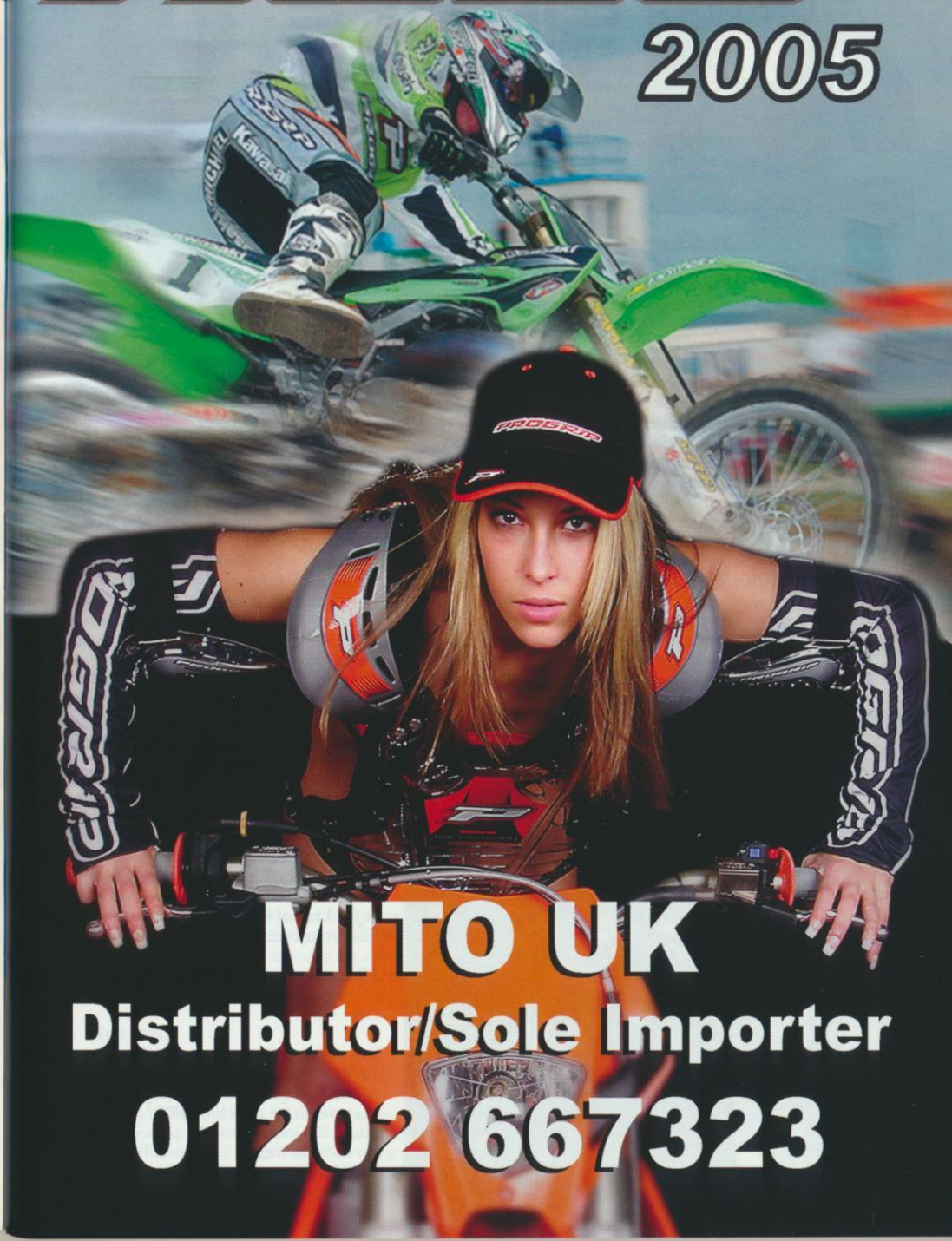
By now the pain, plus the fatigue engendered by my damn fool 4am start, was certainly taking its toll and my concentration wasn't at its best by a long chalk so when we got to what I was cheerily told was the 'infamous' Drake's Lane, I was in a right old state.

More Treacherous Trees

We actually tackled Drake's in two hits, although for the life of me I can't recall in what order, but as well as the Lane itself, it involved charging past a sign warning us of rattlesnakes (!) up a steep, twisty and somewhat rutted climb to hitt's

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Ticking Off

Dear Steve

After a one-day rally last year the engine in my 1999 WR400F started to make a ticking noise. This noise is the same hot or cold, and speeds up with engine revs.

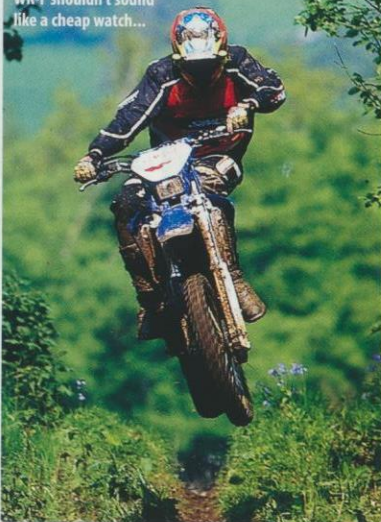
I have checked the valve clearances three times and re-shimmed twice, have replaced the piston rings, piston pin, circlips, cam-chain and cam-chain guides but still it persists.

The bike starts first time (really!) and runs as I believe it should. Any ideas?

Jon Ludlam
Via email

As you've replaced the cam-chain, Jon, I trust you ensured that the cam-chain tensioner is working fine. Otherwise I'd suggest that you check both the primary and cam-chain gears for broken or damaged teeth.

Tick-tock, tick-tock, your WR-F shouldn't sound like a cheap watch...



Idle Hands

Dear Steve

I live in Portugal, so my XT350 is a European model. Recently I had to replace the inlet rubbers (the parts were supplied from the UK), and on the new parts the left-hand ally casting has a much smaller inside diameter than the one it replaced. I did think of drilling it out but decided to try it first. Now the bike starts better, idles better and is much smoother when pottering along at low speeds. I know that some of the initial idling problems were probably caused by air leaking through the perished old rubber, BUT it's definitely down on power. Should I drill/ream it out to get more power and will the low speed smoothness suffer?

Steve
The fabulous, gateless, fenceless, DEFRA-less trail biking paradise of central Portugal

Okay Steve, no need to rub it in. You could try opening out the casting, but you will almost certainly lose that bottom-end smoothness. What you've probably got are the later model inlet parts, where the bike made considerably less power though more torque (as you've found) than the older bikes. I'd suggest looking at the kind of riding you're doing and base your decision on that.

Plastic Fantastic

Dear Steve

I've just bought my first dirtbike, a 1991 Honda CRM250 mkII, and love it to bits. My question is: will a plastic tank designed for a 1989/90 CR250 fit my bike? I'm looking to fit a plastic tank to save a little weight and can't find one for the CRM. Also, could you recommend a good trusted engine builder to rebuild my



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Most CRMs can be tuned with the aid of specialist Mugen parts...



motor and maybe tune the barrel for a little for a little extra top-end pull? Thanks very much in advance for any advice you can give. Keep up the good work all at TBM.

Dan Young
Via email

Unfortunately Dan, a CR tank is unlikely to fit onto your CRM without (at the very least) some modification to the frame mountings. If you're prepared to do this, then give it a whirl. An early CR tank shouldn't cost the Earth, so you won't be much out of pocket if it all looked like too much work. Earlier in the year the Ed sold an oversize plastic tank for a CRM that was kicking around the shed but it was an ultra rare part, and although it was made by Acerbis they don't list a tank for this application. If you're intent on losing weight from your Honda then you can remove the pillion pegs, indicators, grab rails, and swap the glass headlight for a plastic item.

As for your motor rebuild, we'd suggest that you talk to CRM specialists Leisure Trail (0115 973 2466) about your needs. For more top-end hit without work on the barrel there are Mugen tuning parts available (pipe and ignition), though at a price...

In the Mix

Hi Steve

I've recently made the switch to two-strokes after the last few years on KTM thumpers and have bought myself a rather nice KTM 250EXC. The thing is, I'm just trying to get my head around the fuel mixtures.

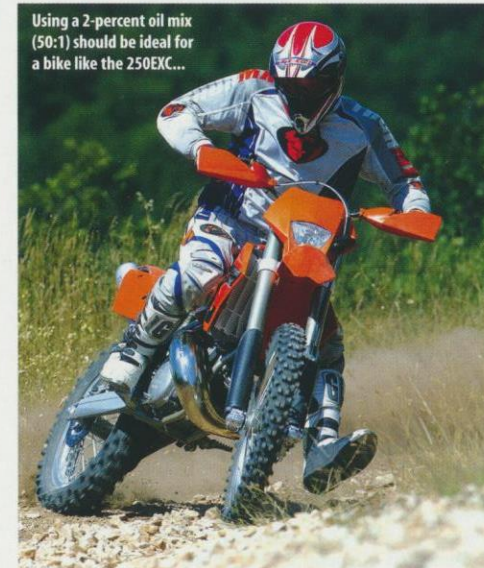
The KTM manual says that the mixture should be

60:1, but my dealer said 40:1 while I run the bike in, and then switch to 50:1. However, everyone I speak to on this subject tells me different ratios. Could you please enlighten me on which is best? And what difference does it make?

Shawn Holland
Bristol

I'd listen to your dealer, Shawn. Assuming you're using a high quality, fully synthetic pre-mix oil designed for competition use then 50:1 will be fine - though a slight variation won't really matter. Just remember to mix it well (preferably with super unleaded), and keep an eye on the jetting. The amount of oil in your fuel obviously dictates the mix's lubricating properties, and as the oil is less explosive than the fuel, an oil-rich mix can give less power. Too much oil can also have the same affect as running the jetting too rich, resulting in loads of smoke, a lack of throttle response, and a propensity for fouling plugs and gumming up powervalves. Too little oil and the results are fairly obvious...

Using a 2-percent oil mix (50:1) should be ideal for a bike like the 250EXC...



PLAIN & SIMPLE

Law Man

Dear Steve

My query is general as opposed to specifically to do with my DR-Z. After reading the article on the DR-Z versus the KTM 400 in issue 114 I was wondering what I have to have on my bike to make it legal in the eyes of the law (ie reflector, horn, speedo etc) and what it has to have to get it through the MoT?

The exhaust it came with is an FMF, which is darn noisy so I want quieten that before I go out on it. Does this have to meet a certain db level to get through the MoT? The bike doesn't have a rear brake light switch but the front brake does activate the brake light. Is this okay? Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Rob Andrews
Via email

Okay Rob, as you've figured out, what you need for an MoT and what's road legal are slightly different. But it's generally safest to regard them as one and the same. Your best bet is to find a testing station which understands dirt bikes as the book of MoT regulations is about two inches thick, and we can only give you a rough guide here. So, the basic requirements (other than the usual brakes which work, bearings in good nick etc) are a horn and a legal numberplate. Yep, you can run without lights, or with your lights taped up, which is known as a 'daylight MoT'. But don't go out in low light or fog! On an enduro bike your lighting needs to feature a dipping headlight, tail-light, reflector, and a brake light which works off *both* brakes. And if you've got no indicators then you can't have pillion pegs (trail bike owners take note). Your exhaust no longer needs a BS stamp, though if it's marked 'not for road use' or similar then it'll fail. The sound level is at the discretion of the tester, but you're right in thinking that you should sort out your raucous pipe. You don't need a speedo for the MoT, but you do need one to make your bike road legal. Lastly, tyres appear to be a bit of a grey area. For the MoT they must be E-marked, yet on the road it's sometimes possible to get away without this. But just to help you get your DR-Z through the MoT, have a pair of E-marked Michelin AC10s on us.

22 TBM



Suzuki's DR-Z400E.
How do you go about making it road legal..?

Budget Racer

Dear Steve

At long last I've sold my old DT250 and have bought a 1989 XT350 to take part in hare 'n' hounds with Chiltern Hills Enduro Club this year. Are there any cheap mods I can carry out to improve performance? It's already got a Micron exhaust.

Dave Heath
Via email

The first thing to do, Dave, is to make sure that what you've got is working well. Service the suspension and brakes, fit a decent front tyre, and for CHEC events you'll obviously want to run a trials rear (the club penalises those on MX/enduro rear tyres 20-percent of their total laps). Then get the riding position to your requirements with a decent set of alloy bars and make sure the controls work smoothly. As you've got a late model XT you'll be suffering the same problem as Steve from Portugal (see Idle Hands), so you could try to source some early inlet parts for more top-end. Otherwise, I'm afraid there's not much to improve the XT's performance if you're on a budget.

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DIRTY

I

usually expect to suffer a little on my first trail ride of the season - mainly 'cos I haven't been on a bike since November. If I've got my act together I might have done a spot of cycling beforehand and even indulged in a few stretching exercises - an essential activity for the over 40s off-roader - but even that can't really prepare you for three solid days in the saddle, over

CHRIS EVANS FINDS THE NOVELTY OF WINTER RIDING WEARS OFF, RAPIDLY...

a healthy dose of winter slop. I didn't however expect to suffer quite as much as I did over the first few days in March, when Siberian winds and our generally weird twenty-first century climate dumped around 20cm of snow over an unsuspecting Northern France.

Now a little bit of the white stuff - say 2-3cm - never did anybody any harm. It transforms already beautiful countryside into something out of a Disney cartoon and allows you to achieve lovely controlled slides. But any more than that and it becomes frankly a bit of a pain in the bottom.

The biggest problem is that you just don't know what's underneath. Most of the time this isn't a big deal - ignorance is bliss and all that - but hit a slippery hidden log at an odd angle and you'll know all about it. Worse still are frozen puddles lurking under a smooth carpet of unmarked powder.

And it was just such a puddle that prompted one of my 'best' crashes in quite a while. One second I was

barrelling along a relatively fast, open track, the next I was flying over the handlebars as my front wheel broke through the ice and buried itself axle-deep into the semi-frozen sludge that was lying beneath.

Another problem was getting the bike through the drifting snow that had been blown across the fields and collected in the sunken tracks between them, because over a certain depth it becomes simply impossible to ride the bike through. The only solution in this case is to dismount, walk ahead to stamp the drifts down, walk back and push the bike through. At the end of the first day - which miraculously we managed to finish - I was completely knackered from all the effort and aching all over from the crashes.

Apparently I wasn't the only one, as when I came down for breakfast on the second day I was informed that five of our group had elected to forsake the winter wonderland for the comforts of the hotel bar - and if I had had any choice in the matter I think I might well have done the same.

Miraculously, Day two started off pretty well and we were actually making reasonably good progress until KTM400 mounted Gary fell at low speed and bashed his right thigh on an innocuous looking log. By the time he'd finished lunch his leg had swollen up nicely, and unable to get it over his bike, he was loaded into the van and shipped off to casualty, where he was diagnosed with internal bleeding caused by a broken blood vessel - a new one on me...

Day three saw Gary still in hospital, and another punter choosing to go by road, but everybody else on the track

'FIVE OF OUR GROUP HAD ELECTED TO FORSAKE THE WINTER WONDERLAND FOR THE COMFORTS OF THE HOTEL BAR - AND IF I'D HAD ANY CHOICE I WOULD HAVE DONE THE SAME...'

and again making good progress until just after lunch, when huge fluffy white flakes started falling out of the sky. These seemed to be magnetically attracted to goggle lenses and that, combined with a 'white-out', made it almost impossible to see where you were going. Surprisingly it was the lead riders, who had been pushing on relentlessly for the last two days, who raised their hands first, and after a quick vote it was decided to quit while we were ahead and cut out the last 40km of track. I don't mind telling you I was mightily relieved to get to the end and chuck my bike back in the van.

When not waist deep in snow drifts I seem to have spent much of the last month discussing various ideas aimed at improving rallye-raïd safety with the organisers of the Dakar Rallye. Some, such as increasing the number of fuel stops (to reduce weight), increasing the navigation element (to reduce speeds) and the imposition of a speed limit make good sense. But others, like banning front bib-mousses, are just plain ridiculous. The theory behind this last one (from the organiser's point of view) is that forcing riders to use inner-tubes will slow them down in the rocky sections. But as the top riders have pointed out to me - the rocky sections aren't really a problem. This isn't where they'll get punctures, but on fast 'piste' when they hit an isolated rock at high speed. And the idea of 'promoting' percussion blow-outs at 160kmh doesn't seem a very intelligent way of increasing safety to me...

As is often the case, many of the less well thought out ideas come from people who aren't themselves racing, but nevertheless have the power to impose their half-baked brainwaves on the guys that are. For their part, the riders, while welcoming anything that might genuinely reduce risks, are quick to point out that unlike (for instance) circuit racing, when riding off-road, it is always nature that has the last word. And whether it be sand or indeed snow, Mother Nature will always have her say...



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COMPLETELY RUTTED



MARK WILLIAMS HOPES THAT YOU'RE NEVER TOO OLD...

Suddenly I feel very, very old.

And this nagging, discomfiting feeling of incipient deterioration stems from a trailriding colleague recently telling me that this would be his last year riding the dirt. He explained that he simply couldn't cope with the physical demands of the admittedly often 'technical' terrain on his mid-Wales doorstep.

Or keep up with the pace of some of the younger men he now found himself riding with. He was also finding it more and more difficult picking his bike up when he fell off it, and didn't much enjoy the falling off either. And like many of us, he felt marginalised and perhaps imminently criminalised by the threat of legislation and the increasing, almost casual use of TROs in his area. In short, trailriding wasn't fun anymore.

Thing is, this guy, isn't really what I'd call old. In fact he's only got a few years on me... and that's as far as I'll go in the numerical self-humiliation department.

But after a few Doing The Rounds when I certainly had some problems of my own in all the areas my friend complained about, it got me wondering exactly when right thinking men and women should give up the game. Since I hardly qualify as 'right thinking' of course, this is

probably irrelevant... but as you know, that won't stop me.

All of us who actively dirtbike do so for different reasons and at different levels of skill, that much is obvious and lends our game the multi-faceted character that makes it so absorbing. But different skill levels are ultimately dependent on different degrees of fitness, mental as well as physical, and despite the sessions at the gym and my 'other job' which requires me to negotiate complex business deals with wily foreigners, I must 'fess up to ebbing strength, stamina and cerebral acuity.

Riding in the 'Over 50s' class in a couple of competitive events in 2003 brought this home even more forcefully than the *Rounds* I've *Done* more recently, and even though the spirit is willing, I don't think I'll be repeating such exercises. And therein lies the rub.

We all like to think that we can appreciate, master and then wring the best out of our dirtbikes, and indeed are encouraged to do so by manufacturers' marketing blurbs and yes, the talented young turks who test 'em for magazines such as this. But those of us sufficiently pragmatic to recognise and admit our own shortcomings - whether age-related or not - may favour less pokey machinery. (Ironically, my February column, 'Small Is Beautiful' which ruminated on exactly this point, received dismissive snorts in our Letters

MARK WILLIAMS

'CRAP WEATHER I CAN DEAL WITH, BUT THE INCREASING CERTAINTY OF A MAJOR OFF AND/OR LOBBING MY BIKE HALFWAY DOWN (OR INDEED, UP) A TORTUOUS, ROCKY HILLCLIMB ARE EXPERIENCES I'VE COME TO DREAD...'

pages from no lesser personage than the press officer of the TRF, an organisation whose management backbone and, dare I say it, the bulk of its membership, are predominantly over 45).

Intellectually - not a word often found in the bike press, let alone on this soapbox - whilst there is no shame in this, even owners of more modest trailbikes such as Serows, Sherpas and Alps seem to busy themselves trying to make them perform better, as if admitting that it's not quite good enough to be seen riding in mixed motorcycling company on something so mundane. Anyone in any doubt about this should witness the heated tuning discussions on Yahoo's TTR250's internet user group, for example.

But as middle-aged dirtbikers, I suppose this uncomfortable dichotomy between what we want and what we actually need was most brutally foisted on me when a classic bike magazine recently invited me to test a tarted-up 'trail' version of the Indian-built Royal Enfield: as a fifty-ish year old design they thought it might best be appreciated by a fifty-ish year-old man. And, despite my instinctive if politely suppressed indignation, I still might be tempted. Just out of vicarious interest, you understand.

Going back to the inevitable decline in competence that comes with ageing, I've actually found myself wincing when much younger mates plan ride-outs with gleeful anticipation of death-defying descents or aggravated ascents that require the muscularity of a young mountain goat and the judgement of, well, a judge. Crap weather I can deal with, but the increasing certainty of a major off and/or lobbing my bike

halfway down (or indeed, up) a tortuous, rocky hillclimb are experiences I've come to dread.

So yes, with increasing diligence I try and exercise regularly, eat well, drink less, swallow vitamin and mineral supplements by the fistful - especially those supposed to maintain bone strength and supple ligaments - and if truth be told I choose my riding routes and companions with a care I would have derided a decade or so ago.

How hard this is to admit in print is mirrored by the recent experience a couple of younger - but not by much - mates who were out riding with one of our mutual heroes, a man fitter and more accomplished as both enduro and trailrider in his day than I could ever have hoped to've been. And now, many more than ten years older than me, he still goes out riding the hills and refuses to give in to his infirmities.

Even so on that particular day's jaunt he balked at crossing a deep, fast-flowing river known for its slippery rock substrate and tricky exit, and with glistening eyes he had to let the others manhandle his bike across for him.

I'm sure this was done with dignity and good grace all round, and equally certain that this won't have proven a watershed in his long and impressive off-road career, but when I heard the story I felt more than sympathy for him and wondered whether I'd have taken this incident as a sign to hang up my boots?

A hypothetical question of course, but what worries me even more than that, however, is that I'm starting to think the unthinkable... No, not giving up trailriding just yet, but perhaps swapping my bike for a quad. Then again I'm not quite dead yet...



To The Extreme

Jonty Edmunds headed to the Isle of Man recently to spend a day with David Knight, the world's best extreme enduro rider, and threw a leg over the bike that won the Hell's Gate extreme enduro...

Tracking' wasn't a term I was familiar with until my recent trip to the Isle of Man to ride David Knight's Hell's Gate-winning two-stroke KTM. Having heard David use the phrase numerous times before, I didn't know exactly what it entailed. But I felt sure that it had to involve engines... and more likely than not a little bit of danger too. I was correct on both

counts. 'It's what we do when a load of us go out on our bikes,' explained Knighter. 'A bit like trail riding, but different.'

Tough at the Top

Now there's a few things that you need to keep in mind here. The bloke we all know as David Knight thrives on two things: firstly, he loves

competition - any kind of competition. Secondly, he likes nothing better when out practicing on his enduro bikes than the challenge of difficult, nasty, horrible, snotty, rut and rock littered tracks and climbs. The type of going that used to feature in 'proper enduros', 15 years ago.

When David said that tracking was like trail riding 'but different' he was half right; it's certainly very different. Because as I remember it trail riding is an enjoyable, leisurely pastime where one's heart rate remains below 130 beats per minute. You see tracking with David is nothing like that. No, tracking with the younger of the two Knight brothers is a pastime that consists of the following, but not necessarily in

this order. Tracks, lots of them (hence the name), most of which are fast fourth and fifth gear going. Some of which are flat, but others are rutted and rough. Steep descents, which more often than not are slicker than the inside of a fairly liquid bottle and normally lead straight into a rock littered stream or river. And then there are the climbs. Some short and sharp, others long and slippery, all require commitment, confidence and, well, bike handling skills above and beyond those of most riders, myself included. Like I said, tracking is nothing like trail riding. Oh, it also requires a certain amount of bravery.

Two by Four

Despite racing a KTM 525EXC in both WEC and BEC competitions there are several reasons why David prefers to ride a two-stroke for events that require pushing and shoving. The first is weight. Two-strokes are lighter than four-strokes when clean, and noticeably lighter compared to the equivalent thumper when they're covered in mud. They're also more manoeuvrable, something that is a hugely important when trying to hop, skip and jump up or down stream beds. Thumpers are prone to getting hotter quicker, and occasionally refuse to start when they're hot. Two-strokes are also easier to drag up climbs if needed. And so it goes on.

So for his 'Extreme' bike David decided to start with a 250cc two-stroke (they were always used by winners of the Gilles Lalay Classic). But what is surprising about the starting point of David's Hell's Gate winning machine is that it is an SX (motocross) and not an EXC (enduro) Katoom. Why? Because as well as riding enduro, supermoto and trials David also likes to do motocross. 'It's easier to modify an SX for the woods than it is to race an EXC in motocross,' he explained, 'and the SX motor is good and strong.'

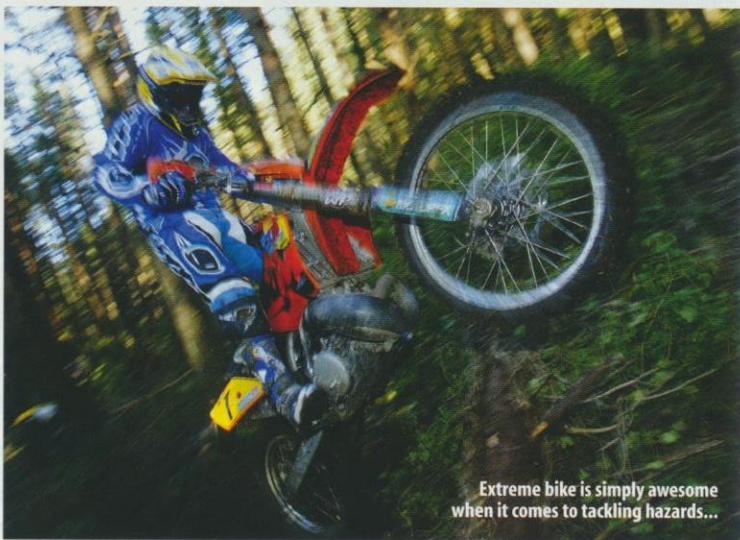
Not surprisingly the SX didn't stay very SX for long. Having raced a 300MXC (a US specification 300, which is fundamentally half SX and half EXC) in the Endurocross in Las Vegas late last year, and having seen how 'grunty' his brothers 300cc gasser was, he then raced an EXC250 at the Genova Indoor Enduro earlier this season. David decided he liked the bigger of the two bikes best so increased the capacity of his 250 by 50cc. Fitting a 300EXC top-end (cylinder, head and piston) Knighter effectively had a 300 that was a little livelier than a standard EXC of the same size (the SX crank is a little lighter than the EXC crank). He also fitted an EXC ignition, and a

bigger EXC flywheel, to mellow things slightly so it would be better for the trials going. The other reason why David decided to 'self build' rather than opting for the out-of-the-crate alternative is because he's happiest when tinkering with engines in his garage. Unlike most professional riders that prefer to do the riding and let their mechanics do the spannering, David loves to do both. Building his Hell's Gate bike gave him something to do during the winter months.

David decided to leave the five-speed SX gearbox in place as few indoor or extreme events require a higher sixth gear. Besides which the SX's slightly closer ratio first, second and third gears are also better suited to slower going, according to Knighter. Having tried a 36mm carburettor in the hope of adding yet more bottom-end strength to the motor, DK has reverted back to the standard 38mm unit because the smaller carb robbed the bike of its 'zap'. The exhaust system is 'one that gives the motor more bottom end.' Interestingly David prefers a shorter motocross style tail pipe because although longer silencers aid low-end performance, they also make a bike rev on further, which makes the 300's power hit harder than he likes. The final modification David has made to the motor is the fitting of an Italian made Provini power-valve governor. Designed to dampen the action of the power-valve as it opens, David has the unit switched off because the bike



Knighter uses a power-valve governor for when conditions get really bad. Normally it's switched off!



Extreme bike is simply awesome when it comes to tackling hazards...

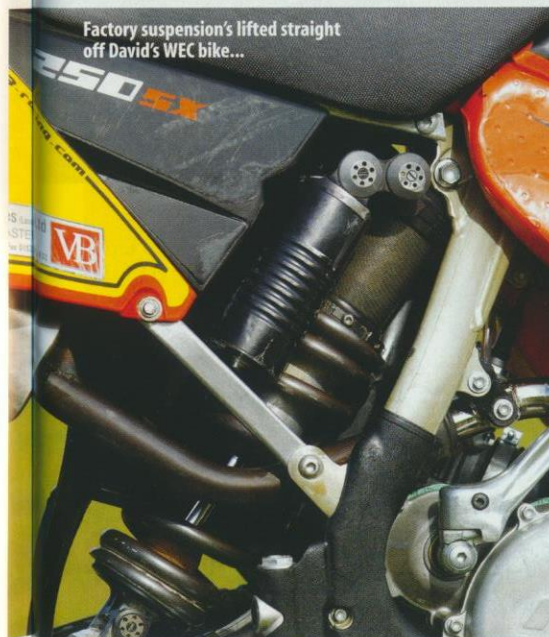
doesn't have any snap off the bottom anyway. 'It's just there in case I need to really mellow the power, if I got stuck in a slippery river bed or somewhere like that,' he explains.

Money ain't Enough

The remaining changes made to the bike includes David's factory WP suspension, which he borrows from his 525cc four-stroke whenever needed. With the 52mm USD forks requiring their

To The Extreme

It's not only functional, but this bike looks good as well...



Factory suspension's lifted straight off David's WEC bike...





To The Extreme

own set of 18mm off-set triple clamps, Knighter simply swaps the complete front end from his enduro bike to his 'extreme machine'. Included in the swap is the factory Brembo front brake set-up, which again can't be bought. The very latest fork produced by WP, the 52mm dampers feature lower legs made from specially coated aluminium, and not steel like on production forks. Making them just a little special they weigh next to nothing in comparison to standard forks and are available only to a select few. It's a similar case with the shock. Featuring a titanium spring, a machined aluminium body as well as high and low speed compression, the weight saving over a standard shock is massive.

The remaining parts fitted to Knighter's bike can be bought off the shelf. Talon wheels are

fitted with Metzeler enduro tyres and mousses. The standard 13/48 gearing is retained with the rear sprocket replaced with a Stealth unit from the KTM Hard Parts catalogue. A higher seat foam is used, Renthal Twin-wall bars and grips along with Acerbis rally guards, Raptor Racing Titanium footpegs and an 11ltr fuel tank are all fitted. When it comes to protecting the bike an E-line sump and exhaust guard are used. And that's about it. It's not a complicated machine.

Bigger is Better

It doesn't take a genius to notice that Knighter is a sizeable fellow, which is why I was surprised by just how small his bike felt. David runs no spacers under his bar clamps nor does he move his bars forwards to gain extra space, like most

Knighter's thoughts...

I remember watching the World Enduro Championship on TV when I was younger, when Sala and those guys were riding at their best, and the events had difficult cross-country special tests. They looked great and were really exciting to watch. When the WEC came back on TV a couple of years ago they would film either the course, where riders ride slowly, or the grassy, motocross special test, which is boring to watch. To make good TV the events need to return to harder, faster cross-country tests. Grass tests are good to ride, but not three of them in one event. The riders need to be able to do all of it, motocross, cross-country and now extreme tests, because that's what enduro is about. If you can't do it you have to learn, that's what the top riders are getting paid for.

The French and British riders seem to want to still do difficult events but that's about it. Extreme races are difficult to do but I have more fun doing them than anything. It's the type of terrain I ride during the winter with my mates. Events like Hell's Gate aren't as hard as the Gilles Lalay, which was horrendous in places.

I think that a lot of the world championship riders want to do the WEC and that's it. A lot of them don't seem to want to work at getting better in other, harder, terrains. They don't like pushing and shoving, which you have to do sometimes. The world championship is my job and the extreme races are my hobby really. I think that's the difference between me and most of

the other riders. I just do them for fun and most of them pay pretty well, so it's worth putting some effort into them.

I think that a mixed indoor enduro and extreme enduro championship, or just an indoor enduro championship, would be good but not as a world championship. The Indoor Trials World Championship isn't what it used to be before it became a world championship. You used to have riders trying stuff that was never even possible, just because they wanted to try and see if they could be the first to do it, which made for great TV. But now that it is a world championship, the riders are a lot more serious (read conservative) - which they have to be - but inevitably they end up following in each other's wheel tracks rather than

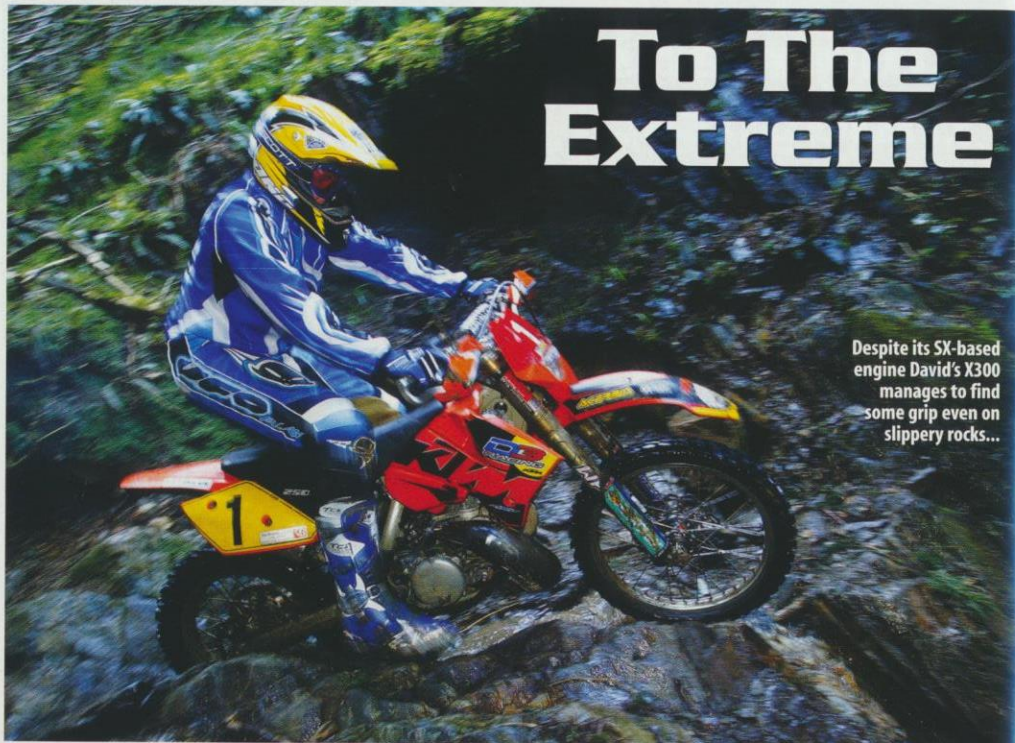
'It's not extreme it's just traditional'

trying something different. I think indoor enduro events, with some start money and prize money is the best way of doing it. If you have a good or a bad result it doesn't really matter because there's no championship to chase. But when it comes to competing in extreme enduros, a lot of the top riders don't enjoy them. Maybe it's because a lot of them are now coming from motocross. Me, I love 'em all - the tougher the better!



Knighter lends a helping hand...

To The Extreme



Despite its SX-based engine David's X300 manages to find some grip even on slippery rocks...

bigger riders do. With his bars in a very 'normal' position in their clamps, and with a higher seat foam fitted, the front end felt low to me making the bike a little harder to ride when standing. In fact when the going gets tough David spends most of his time sitting down, which is why his handlebar set-up is the way it is. 'I used to have my bars higher and further forward than standard,' he explains, 'but I found that with the lower bars I can pull on them harder when I'm standing, which helps to get over stuff easier. Also I quite often run the rear end of my bike quite low and when I do, the footpegs feel too low. By lowering the front it levels the bike out and I can correct the front wheel quicker when it starts to slide. It helps when cornering as well.'

Unlike the original SX250, Knighter's modifications make the bike incredibly docile so that it doesn't have any hit at all in the power delivery - bottom, middle or top. Which makes the bike incredibly easy to ride. With the motor all about low-end and mid range power, when riding on faster going the bike builds power progressively and then just, sort-of stops. Where most

mid-sized two-strokes get faster as the revs build, Knighter's bike didn't - it just kinda' peters out at the top-end. It wasn't slow, it's just that the bike felt much more like a strong 200 than a potent 250 - let alone a ballsy 300. Which left me able to ride the bike at full throttle and feel comfortable doing so. There were no scary moments and knowing that I was boss, inspired in me the confidence to push harder and tackle stuff I normally wouldn't.

While the top-end was incredibly subtle, the bottom-end was really impressive. Building revs from nothing, the motor was more than happy to chug away in the slower going and then deliver excellent drive on the way out of corners. With the power being incredibly smooth the bike found grip in places I wasn't expecting it to. In fact the more I rode the bike the more I enjoyed riding it, because it felt so different to a traditional two-stroke.

Fitted with WP's finest factory suspension, I wasn't at all surprised to find that the suspension worked every bit as well as the unique motor. But what I was surprised to discover was how soft the suspension felt. Especially when set up for a



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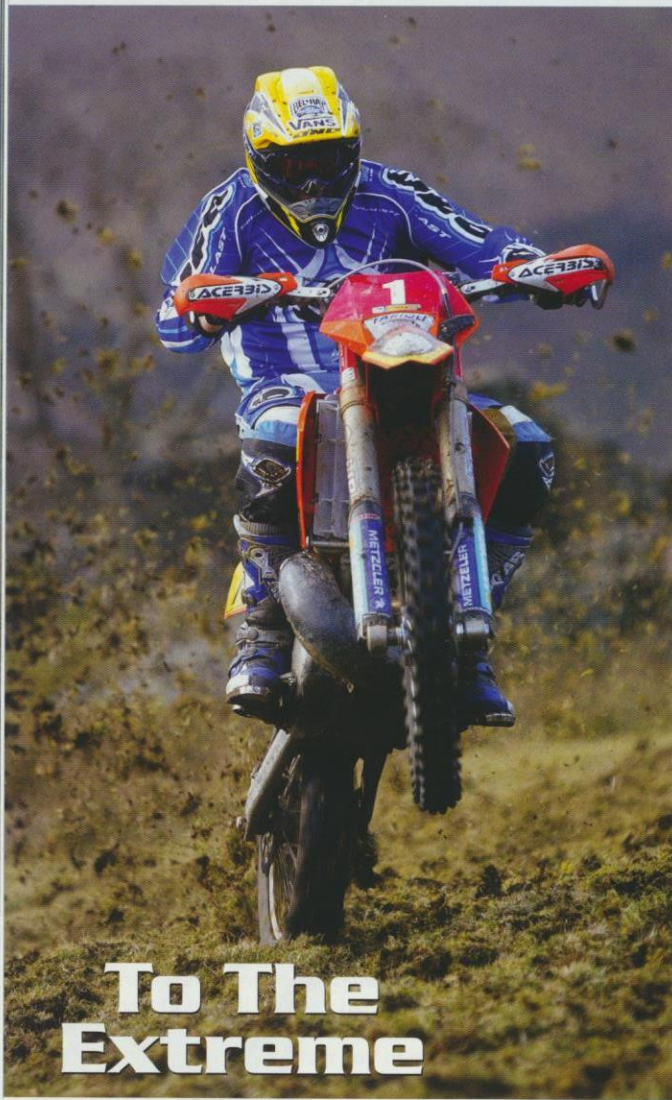
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To The Extreme

just how softly it was set-up.

Naturally I was able to cross smaller forest-floor bumps, roots and stones with ease, but then even hitting bigger bumps didn't seem to upset the handling. With both indoor and extreme enduro events all about technical going - rather than fast, bumpy straights - the fact that the bike felt so at home in tighter, more technical going, like when riding across logs or up and down river beds, was proof enough that 'factory' suspension really does give you the best of both worlds. Supple on the smaller bumps yet able to soak up the rougher ground without ever feeling stiff, the whole package proved extremely good in the conditions it was designed to be ridden in.

Gentle Giant

David's 250/300 SX/EXC hybrid is the easiest mid-sized two-stroke I have ever ridden. I wasn't expecting it to be quite as gentle nor as strong as it was. With the power coming in almost un-noticeably before gradually passing through the mid-range towards its very useable top-end, not once did the bike get away from me under acceleration... although it did plenty of times while trying to follow David up rivers.

But it was the all-round 'gentleness' of the bike that was so impressive. What I still can't get my head around is how it deals with having a rider of David's size and speed on its back all day long while still able to work as effectively for him as it did for me - a lighter and less-able pilot.

The one-off motor's strong but placid power delivery puts every bit of the performance to the ground - aided no doubt by ultra supple suspension which ensures that the rear wheel is always firmly planted. So that the motor and suspension work together to give Knighter an incredibly confidence inspiring ride. And with his unquestionable skills, love of the tough stuff and steely determination it's not hard to see how he comes to dominate events on this purpose-built weapon.

But when riding the bike it didn't handle in any strange way at all - which was odd knowing

rider of David's size, weight and speed. Having been lifted wholesale from his 525 and fitted to his Extreme bike without alteration, both the forks and shock were much, much softer than I was expecting. I assumed that they'd be plush but firm, but in fact they were quite simply soft. Just sitting on the bike made the forks dive and the shock squat down.

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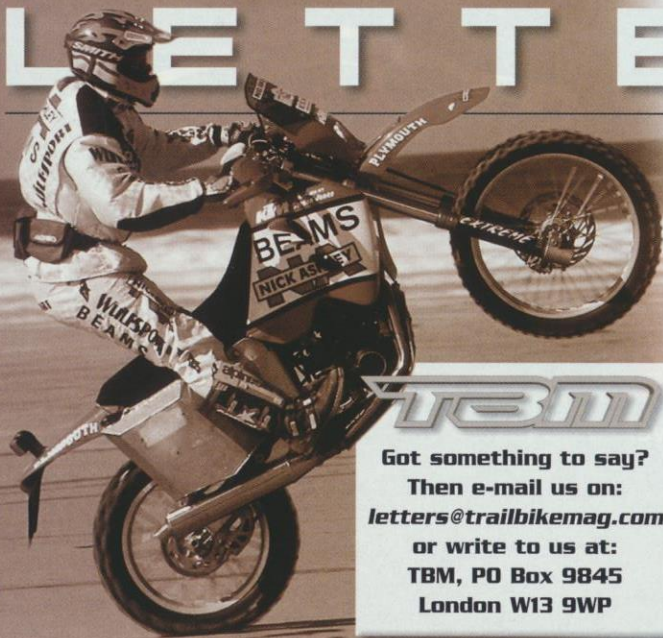


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Clockwork Orange #1

Dear TBM

I just thought I'd drop a line in defence of Gassers. I've just purchased a Gas Gas EC200 from new. The first thing I do with all my bikes is strip them down and re-assemble them (greasing and loctite-ing where necessary).

Having done this with the Gasser I was surprised with the quality of the components. I say surprised because all I ever read in your mag when you test a Gas Gas is moaning about the build quality.

Two points - First, KTM use lots of different fasteners and nobody moans about their build quality (having owned a EXC200 where after every race there were bolts missing and others loose).

My second point and most important, these are basically competition machines not dry weather only FireBlades, and as

such should be over checked thoroughly after every race. So, the odd bit here and there that's not put together right should not be an issue.

Sorry to rant but our sport is not a beauty show, it's racing. Something Gassers do extremely well. The future is not all orange!

PS This is not slating your great mag, I just thought someone should stick up for Gassers (especially as you get such good service from the importers).

Lloyd Halsey, Berkhamsted via email

Lloyd I'm not quite sure where you've got this opinion that we don't like Gassers? Look in next month's issue and you'll find a test of the Gasser EC200 (which TBM has always reckoned to be the ultimate two-stroke clubman enduro bike - and has done for a number of years). We rave about how Gassers handle

and ride - well the two-strokes anyway. Having owned my own Gasser for a number of years I feel qualified to comment on the Spanish build quality (and build design and integrity). It's simply not as good as the Austrian bikes in this respect (even the importer admits this). For instance my own bike (bought new in the box), came with a buckled front wheel and a broken speedo. Like you I can live with this stuff because I like the way the bike handles, but you've only got to take a look at the standard rear enduro light (and exposed wiring and block connectors) on any Gasser EC enduro bike to understand that the Spanish factory pay less attention to this sort of stuff than the Austrians. We feel it is our duty to point this out to prospective purchasers...

Clockwork Orange #2

(NB this letter arrived before last month's issue was published)

Re KTM400 v DR-Z400 test in TBM114

Dear KTM Monthly

Come on guys, you can do better than this surely! What about the new 2005 WRs or the Huskys? So, a 400 is 2005's must-have accessory, not the Honda CRF250?

Okay, so the orange machines are excellent, in fact I might even get one myself, but let's get some more realistic facts on the DR-Z comparison. My own new DR-Z, road legal and kitted out for enduros (exhaust, bashplate, bars etc) still cost me

£1000 less than a KTM. Yup, one big thousand pounds - that's a lot of cash. Depreciation on two-year-old DR-Z say £3000, two-year-old KTM450 around £4000, which is a pretty similar loss, and the Jap bike will have cost you less in maintenance.

Four years with two DR-Zs, nearly 20,000 miles, several enduros, several clubman silvers, and I never had to replace one single thing apart from the usual consumables. And that's Jap consumables - no fork seals needed or cam chains, batteries, engine seals (WD-40 on the output shaft works wonders!) etc. Hey, even the valves stayed in spec! And of course, more bearable oil-change intervals.

Pretty good value for money I reckon - not all of us get 'throw-away' test bikes so cost of ownership over several years is an important consideration. TBM readers are constantly brainwashed that you 'must' have a KTM or KTM-type machine, along with the associated expense, otherwise you will struggle and have less fun. Which links with the point made by Mark Williams of course - that you don't need the latest enduro tackle to go trail riding, and not that riding an enduro bike on the trail is wrong (ref: letter from Ian Packer).

Consider that the DR-Z, or indeed my current modestly powered TTR250 or my 'lardy' XR650 are all capable of going way faster on the trail than is deemed acceptable for publicly shared RoWs.

Talking of which - excellent articles on the latest DEFRA stuff by Mr Williams - perhaps

you should give the TRF's newsletter TRAIL permission to re-print them! Rant over, keep up the good work, but orange not the only colour eh?

Steve, Southampton via email

Steve, hopefully you saw our five-way 250 shootout in the last issue mate (which included the CRF250X, WR250F and Husky TE250 which you wanted to see reviewed). If so you will have read that the KTM 250EXC came dead last in our comparo test. No 'brain-washing' going on there I believe. We judge every bike on its merits and not its colour mate. Your experience with two DR-Zs sounds good, but it's not all that dissimilar to what our own Chris Evans got from his two KTM 400EXCs (approx 18,000 miles apiece, no serious breakages and a healthy resale value). Plus, as he no doubt would've put it himself, 'during that time he *didn't* have to ride a DR-Z'. The point we were trying to get across in that article is that what may appear to be a bit of a bargain at first - doesn't always work out that way - once you've taken into account some of the additional costs of bringing the machine up to an equivalent higher spec.

Slip Up

Dear TBM

How about an article on slipper clutches? Whether by choice or 'manufacturer pressure' more people are moving away from two-strokes in favour of big four-strokes.

Now, having owned and

ridden (badly) both types, my preference is two-strokes for various reasons, not least of which is the four-stroke tendency to wash out at the front when you shut off the power, which makes riding in slippery conditions and ruts very difficult (well, it does for me). From what I can tell, it does seem that many top riders are adopting slipper clutches on thumpers to improve handling and to counteract this four-stroke trait (ref for example your excellent article on Stefan Merriman's 'works' WEC' Yamahas).

So can a slipper clutch really make a four-stroke easier to ride when the going gets muddy and slimy? Does it detract from any of the thumper's good points, eg slightly softer power delivery, better hook up/traction, better climbing ability?

A slipper clutch article could include: different clutches on the market and who sells them, how they work, pros and cons and how easy they are to fit? Can the bike be easily put back to standard - other rider/owner experiences?

As someone who feels their next bike will inevitably (and possibly slightly reluctantly) be a thumper, I would be really keen to know if a slipper clutch equipped four-stroke offers the best of both worlds...

Gerald Andrews via email

Fair point Gerald, although don't get too carried away by the potential advantages of a slipper clutch. Elsewhere in this issue you should find a test of the 2005 Gasser EC450 which has one fitted as standard...

KTM Clampdown

Dear TBM

This is a picture of the 'handlebar clamps' on my 2001 CCM 604. As you can see, one of them has cracked around the casting. I have seen this type of clamp fitted to KTMs (so therefore I presume the bike is fitted with a 'KTM' front-end).

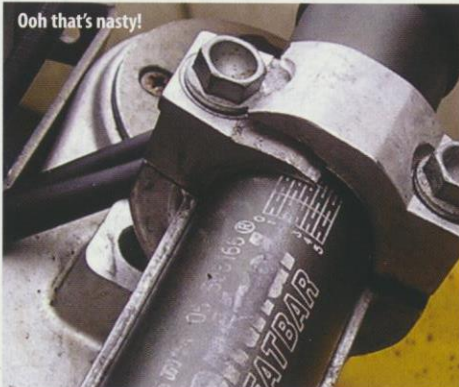
I telephoned two KTM dealers in the West Country (and ended up sending a picture and a letter to them, explaining my problem) and asked if beefier clamps were available for my CCM?

Guess what? Neither of them replied.

If this is the service from KTM dealers, they know where they can stick their new bikes! So can you guys help me out please? Many thanks.

Andy Sharp, Yeovil
via email

Andy, you can't really blame KTM dealers for choosing not to deal with a CCM! However



we think we can help. The CCM's WP front end is indeed the same as fitted to some early KTMs - all you need do is order a replacement part from a KTM dealer (say it's for an EXC or something). Alternatively there are aftermarket companies who offer replacement top yokes for WP-equipped bikes (and taller/stronger fat-bar mounting kits). You could try the ads in TBM first or failing that go onto the internet and see what you can find...

Long In The Tooth

Dear TBM

I recently bought a new DR-Z400S for green laning having found my CCM 644 a bit too much in the brown slippery stuff! Mind you, I had the standard knobbles on which I understand are pretty much useless.

Anyway, with regard to the DR-Z I would like some advice on what sprocket sizes to go for. Would just dropping down a tooth on the front be enough - I assume this wouldn't require a shorter chain? Also handlebars - I'm six foot two inches, so

would you recommend a higher bend or risers and if so, would longer cables be required?

Other than that and fitting a better bash-plate, case protectors, filing the sharp edges off the gear lever and fitting it with a decent set of tyres, any

other recommendations would be most welcome.

Chris Fellows, Warwick
via email

Chris we reckon the optimal gearing for off-road use is the same as that fitted to the DR-Z400E ie 14/47, down from the original bike's 15/44, which means you're probably better off going for a chain and sprockets package. While you're doing that, we recommend that you fit a lowering block to the rear chain guide to accommodate the larger rear sprocket (Leisure Trail can probably help you source one of these). As for the bars - this really is a matter of personal preference but on the DR-Z, the higher the bars, the better we reckon. Providing you're not fitting a set of 'ape-hangers' there should be no need to change the cables. Enjoy...

Brace Yourself

Dear TBM

I have been a subscriber of your magazine for a couple of years and I must say I await its arrival at the beginning of every month with great anticipation. I find it informative, insightful and entertaining.

Anyway, perhaps you will be able to help me with something quite specific. Due to the repercussions of some 30 years of motorcycle riding (on- and off-road) and similar amounts of skiing and other equally tolling outdoor activities, my knees are no longer what they used to be.

This means I need to ride my Honda CRF with some very

serious orthopaedic-quality knee braces on both legs. As such braces are not specifically designed for off-road riding, their lower part interferes with my enduro boots, so I can't tie them all the way to the top - so they stay uncomfortably (and probably unsafely) loose.

Do you know of any enduro boots maker that produces a model that is a bit shorter in the shaft than the standard? We are talking one or two inches shorter, not a big deal, really, but it would make my riding more enjoyable (and safer).

I know this is not the most thrilling question you will get this month, but you will earn my eternal gratitude if you can give me an answer.

Miguel Ruano, London
via email

Miguel, although there are slight variations in the height of different makes of MX boots they all seem to be quite high in order to offer maximum protection for the shin bone. Our advice would be to switch to wearing a pair of Trials boots as these are always a bit shorter in the leg - but you will be compromising on protection slightly.

Dangerous Liaisons

Hello TBM

Before I start I'll get the usual out of the way - congrats on a fantastic magazine and long may it continue (in A5 format!)

And now for the main reasons I'm writing. I'll bet a few quid that I'm not the only TBM reader that saw our esteemed scribe (Mark Williams) on a documentary on Channel 4 (I think) about his liaisons with a 'beautiful ginger haired woman' and his exploits with cocaine and money laundering.

What I can't understand is why hasn't anything appeared in TBM about it? Is he trying to forget his past and look to the future, through his Oakley's, or are you waiting for someone to mention it? I remember in the first column he wrote there was a mention of Mark's time at her Majesty's pleasure but that was it. I'm just curious that's all, I don't want to upset anyone!

Also, (and here's where it gets silly) I'm 24 and have been doing the same job for the last six and a half years and I'm thinking of doing an OU course in journalism. I've finally realised I'm

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LETTERS

never going to make a living from riding motorbikes in competitions but I'd like to try and make a living writing about people riding bikes! Keep up the good work.

Danny Taylor, via email

PS I too, am a great fan of Rondo Talbot and his legendary putdowns in the early Dirt Bike mags (damn those mini bikers!), although I think a lot of it is missed on some of your readers, so if this drivel is published I expect to be ridiculed like Chris Evans stuck on a Welsh rock-step.

Danny you're right... the irrepressible Mark Williams is both an ex-con (and we believe) a national treasure, that's why we get him to write for TBM. Well that and the fact that nobody else would have him! Good idea about the OU journalism course mate - it pays to have all the qualifications and experience you can get for this industry - although Mark Williams managed to get by with just four O-levels and no specific qualifications. And doesn't it show, eh!

Back Track

Dear TBM

I'm swapping trackdays on a Suzuki Gixer 600 track bike for green lanes and off-road mess! I part exchanged a FireBlade for an RMX years ago, then changed that for a CRM AR, but this also got sold to go back onto road bikes!

42 TBM

I've always wanted / liked Husabergs, and Dave Clarke is only down the road for parts, help, etc. which is nice. I've also got the chance of a mint 2001 XR250, but my riding buddy has just got a DR-Z400S, and that is fun!

So do I play safe with the XR250, go for an electric leg on the DRZ - but an E version, or go all out and get a serious 450 'Berg? I'm not the best off-roader at all, but tend to throw my all into what I do. Maintenance is my middle name, (funny parents I know), so the Husaberg would get the TLC it probably needs.

I'm sure loads of other folk are in my position of what to buy, so the advice would be good for the masses. My beloved also wants a bike, she only weighs eight stone wet through, is 5ft 4in tall but likes getting dirty (!)

Again, what d'ya reckon? If you can help, many thanks. If you can't, many thanks for at least reading this.

Snazzy, via email

PS Top mag. Far better than the biased roadbike mags that I used to spend me money on.

Snazzy, go for the Berg mate, you'll have loads more fun - and the 450 scored very highly in our three-way shootout earlier this year. As for a short bike for your 'beloved' how about either a Yamaha Serow, or one of the new CRF230s we tested in May last year (TBM105). Both are low, leccy start and really good little (grey import) bikes. Be aware though that Yamaha are about to replace the Serow with a new

model (see the News pages this month). The Honda though is a new bike...

American Beauty

Dear TBM

In your Jan 2005 issue (page 61, under ATK), the last line read: 'But all are incredibly rare in the UK'. So, being an owner of one I thought you might like to see mine.

It started life as a 1987 560 MXer (now converted to an enduro). Specifications are as follows (I think!) A 'nickel-plate' frame, (ATK made), front and rear WP suspension, 1986 KTM swingarm and wheels, Yamaha YZ490 seat and fuel tank (as standard), a Rotax 560

ATK: Rare in the UK.
And with good reason...



SOHC four-stroke lump - and I mean a lump. You want to try taking it out the frame and lifting it onto a workbench! Twang, there goes another disc in my back. I also use the Mk2 'concentric' carb; (38mm).

Andy Sharp, Yeovil
via email

PS Brill mag. The wife leaves me in peace for days when it arrives on the doormat.

Teenage Kicks

Dear TBM

I am 15 years old and quite big-built. I'm thinking of buying my first bike, and have been riding bikes with my friends



Yamaha's TTR125LW; A great starter bike...

but never owned one of my own. I was looking maybe at a TT-R125LWE but I'm not sure. The TT-R appeals because it's a four-stroke and I don't want a

two-stroke - please help.

Eifion Pughe
Powys, Wales

Eifion, the TT-R's just fine.
Go for it...

Reckless Riding

Dear TBM

Still an excellent read and thank God you've finally entered the 1990s with the very professional looking website.

Now here's the reason for writing. This is to the t**t riding a sh**ty Honda XR illegally round the Longleat Estate in Wiltshire on Sunday 6 March who pulled out onto the Shearwater Road (which at the time was full of walkers and dogs).

If you're reading this, you are exactly the reason trail riding as we know it will disappear (although you probably don't care). Also, if I'd been 20 yards further down the road, walking as I was with my 15-month old daughter next to me, I'd have pushed you off.



LETTERS

There, spleen vented.
Thank you!

James Brown, Warminster
via email

Mediterranean Maturity

Dear Si

The article in the February 2005 issue about trail riding in Cyprus prompted me to comment. For the last four years I have been in a group of five who have been regularly trail riding there. We are aged 54 ('the baby' who still works), with two in their sixties and two in their seventies. The groupings vary from two, three or all five, dependent on other commitments.

If you leave it late, flights and accommodation can be had

for about £100- £250 per person. We usually go to Paphos in November, February or March. This Feb we caught the end of the rains but it was almost as cold as London - riding in snow was also interesting.

The bikes are hired locally, and we were originally advised that the bike shops normally would not lend out to a group of five, but looking at our ages they considered we were 'responsible'. We now know the staff at one particular shop and email beforehand to book bikes. This company's bikes were the best we have seen but still left something to be desired.

My preference is a Serow, which I own but only one place in the area has them - too far away for convenience. So I usually hire a DR350, these being well used models, the only problem being when you least want it neutral is too easy to find. The bike is a bit too tall for comfort, and thus harder to

get on and off. I did try an XL250 but on the rough my right knee was bruised from it hitting the fan but it was all right on the road because you can sit well back.

The type of going varies considerably and we don't usually look for the sort of 'Mark's Hill', though just occasionally one finds us. Unmade surfaces are everywhere, even on a beautiful tarmaced road you can suddenly be trail riding for five miles. On one occasions the tarmac finished in a car park and the main road disappeared into a track about a mile back.

The major problem I've found is that there are no good maps like our 1:50,000 (the nearest to the old one-inch if you want). The best for scale is available from the tourist office and covers very limited areas and is often incorrect with tracks hardly marked. This may not be a problem if you happen to live in an area and can devote time to get to know your territory, but difficult for the twice-a-year visitor.

Seymour Moss
Chingford, London

Smelling Of Roses

Dear TBM

Hi everyone

I love the smell of TBM - I could sit and smell a pile of mags for hours! Great website, just a shame it doesn't smell. Worryingly yours...

Daniel Lucken, London
via email



Cyprus: A bit like
Wales only warmer!



AXO

THE FRENCH INJECTION

Sherco's new 4.5i takes on the established Gas Gas EC450F5E at a two-day French enduro - in a battle of the fuel injected dirt bikes...

STORY & PICS: SI MELBER; ADDITIONAL PICS: BARNI & VOL PHOTOGRAPHER





Val de Lorraine Classic 2006



Normally exemplary, the Nissins on our test bike weren't at their best...



THE FRENCH INJECTION

I like it when things get a little bit physical. I know it sounds strange, but I really enjoy the sort of riding where it takes a bit of pushing and shoving to get you to where you want to go. That way you feel that you have achieved something; put yourself under duress, manhandled the machine, felt its weight and overcome the physical barriers. You could call it masochism but I prefer to think of it as 'suffering for my art!' But this was getting ridiculous. This push must've been at least 400m long. I could feel prickles of sweat breaking out on my brow. Bloody, heavy four-strokes. Alongside me, James had stopped pushing the Sherco and was reaching for his inhaler. Up ahead a big crowd loomed large, cheering loudly, while a timeclock was counting down the seconds to our due arrival time. We got there with just 15 seconds to spare. Phew. That was a hell of a push just to get from Parc Ferme to the START of our enduro...

Cover Story

I've got to say I'd been really looking forward to this event. With the deadline of Supermoto Magazine only a few hours old, we were already in the van and speeding across northern France after a 3:30am start - the TBM Transporter creaking under the strain of an excess of hastily packed bikes and kit. Time to forget the pressures of the

past couple of weeks, to think about enjoying the chance to ride two 450cc dirt bikes at a fantastic two-day enduro in a country which knows how to put on a great event. Just then the mobile phone rang: 'It's the printers here...' the voice said. 'We've got everything we need for Supermoto Magazine... except the front cover...' and then the line went dead.

Oh Merde!

Printing issues aside, this test nearly didn't happen at all. The UK Sherco importers were initially very reluctant to let their precious bike out of their sight. They wanted us to test it with a Sherco representative on hand to ensure that nothing went wrong with their product. We weren't about to let that happen - journalistic independence and all that - so we hatched a plan to take both bikes to France to race them back to back in a two-day event. We'd swap bikes at the end of the first day so that each of the two TBM testers could spend a whole 250km per day aboard either machine without anyone trying to hold our hands.

The choice of a suitable rival for the new fuel injected Sherco 4.5i was pretty straightforward. Only one other manufacturer currently builds an 'injected' 450cc enduro bike - Gas Gas - and this was an ideal opportunity to try out the 2005 variant of their EC450FSE which had undergone



Ohlins suspension was set-up particularly plush...



Gas Gas have reworked their four-stroke motor for 2005...



Val de Lorraine Classic 2005



The Sherco's AJP brakes were easily a match for the Gasser's Nissins...



THE FRENCH INJECTION

a number of subtle changes from last year's bike. Additionally both machines have their gene-pool, if not their manufacturing base in Spain (Sherco enduro bikes are actually constructed in the south of France - though the parent company is Spanish). I was really looking forward to it.

Vive La France

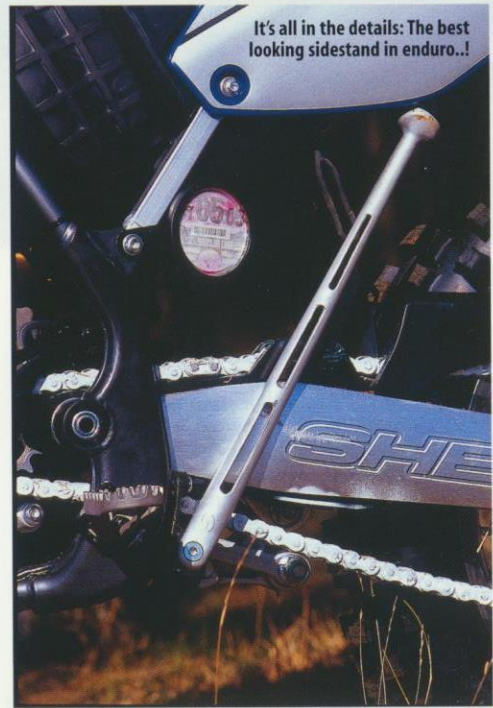
Take a part of rural France which few Brits seem to visit. Mark out a 500km long enduro course, liberally sprinkled with optional hard/easy routes. Add in no fewer than *eleven* separately marked-out special tests, including a rally-cross track, a *nine* kilometre cross-country test and a final stadium motocross. Now mix in 650 riders and spice that up with a few big names (like legendary six-times Dakar winner Stephane Peterhansel, and fellow ex-WEC stars Eric Bernard and Marc Germain). Encourage thousands of spectators to come along and watch - and what do you get? A French 'Classic Enduro' that's what. Bienvenu a la Val de Lorraine Classic 2005.

If you're still not sure what that's like, try and imagine the Welsh Two-Day Enduro but with twice the distance to cover, five times the number of special tests to ride, and 100 more competitors. Imagine loud rock music, mad French commentators and pretty pom-pom

girls welcoming you into many of the specials. Imagine finishing the day in a giant marquee with a bar, a couple of rock bands and catering laid on for all competitors and their assistance crews. Imagine an event where many of the checkpoints are in the centre of towns, where the French police smile sweetly and hold up traffic as you jump (and I do mean *jump*) across some of the main roads. Imagine a race where the riding consists of mile after mile of hard-packed, high-speed single-track. Where the ruts are (almost) entirely absent, and where the sun shines so brightly that even in March we were riding in shirt-sleeves, with tinted lenses in our goggles. It's a tough job, but somebody's got to do it...

Gas Gas EC450FSE

According to the factory blurb, Gas Gas have given their four-banger a good going over for 2005 in order to make the machine more competitive in a hard-fought class. And not before time. Changes include a lighter steel perimeter frame with slightly revised steering geometry to try and make the bike turn a little quicker. With the new frame comes new (slimmer) bodywork as well as revalved suspension. There's been attention paid to the engine as well, including the re-positioning of the electric-start (now sited behind the barrel),



It's all in the details: The best looking sidestand in enduro..!



The Sherco motor was modelled on the KTM 400 lump, but bored-out when the class went to 450...



THE FRENCH INJECTION

of the time; through the turns the opposite is true and it require a bit more effort than you expect.

That said, by the end of the first day of the Val de Lorraine Classic, I was what you might call 'fairly satisfied' with the Gasser. Apart from its slight reluctance to turn (nor start reliably at the first push of the button), it did everything else I demanded of it, and in a way which was very unthreatening. If you've ever owned or ridden (or even considered buying) a KTM 450EXC, Yamaha WR450F, Husky TE450 or even Honda's CR450F (motocrosser) you'll probably know that at times, some 450s can seem like a bit of a handful. The Gasser's not at all like that. For the most part it's a relatively easy ride. It's got plenty of speed (and six ratios) for when you need to press on a bit. It's got a comfortable riding position and fairly decent Nissin brakes. It's got the sort of suspension which cossets you to the end of a long day's ride (Marzocchi Shiver front forks and an Öhlins rear shock), and a saddle which won't have you wincing in pain afterwards. And at £5356.71 it's ever-so-slightly cheaper than the bulk of the opposition. Not bad then.

Sherco 4.5i

The new Sherco enduro bike is still relatively unknown in the UK, and with good reason. Because since its launch early last year (TBM102), deliveries from the Nimes factory have been sporadic to say the least, while the factory went about ironing out a few initial 'teething troubles'. These of course are only to be expected with any new machine and included electrical problems as well as details like a header tank which didn't allow enough clearance for the forks on full lock. But these problems appear to have all been sorted now, and customer bikes are starting to arrive in the UK in reasonable numbers.

Just like the new Italian Beta 450RR we reported on back in January this year (TBM113), Sherco have clearly taken their starting point as the market leader in the middleweight class (KTM's EXC) - and then built their own interpretation of what a modern 450 should look like. But unlike Beta who buy their engines directly from the Austrian factory, Sherco appear to have simply copied the design of the KTM lump instead. In fact the 4.5i's engine was (we were reliably informed by a Sherco employee), based on the original KTM 400EXC lump (with the shorter 64mm stroke) rather than the later 450EXC which utilises a longer (72mm) stroke. And was simply bored out to achieve the requisite 450cc. This probably goes a long way to explain why the Sherco feels more like a powerful 400EXC rather than the grunter 450EXC. And with a number of hobby riders professing to favour the more modest performance of the old 400 Katosh over the torque-laden 450, it's probably no bad thing.

a modified crank to cut down on vibes, and one or two other changes designed to improve reliability and gear-changing - including the fitment of a slipper-clutch.

I had high hopes for the 2005 Gasser EC having trail-ridden both the '03 and '04 versions (both in France actually) and for the most part enjoyed the experience. The problem with last year's bikes however (apart from a few reported overheating problems) and a slight lack of power, was a definite reluctance for the bike to turn-in to corners. This manifested itself as a tendency to understeer through turns so that you occasionally ran wider than expected. Other notable four-stroke Gas Gas traits included a relatively stable chassis, decent (read plush) suspension, an incredibly light clutch action. Oh, and a commendably low seat height.

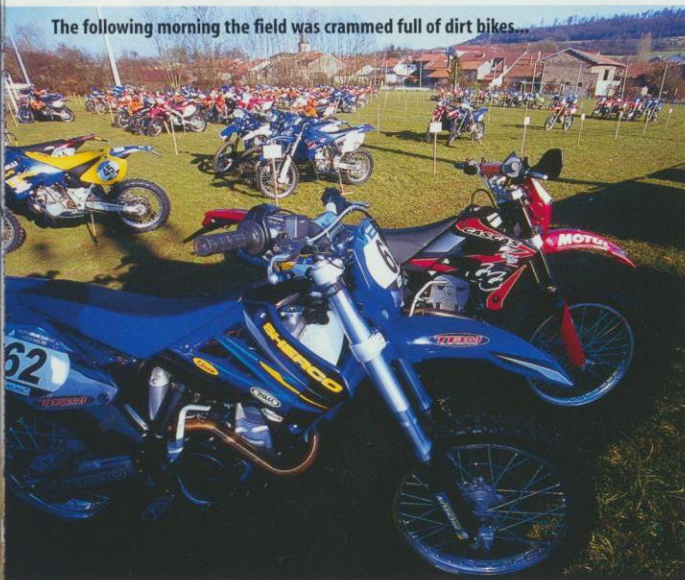
Two hours into our test of the 2005 model and I was at a bit of a loss to notice any significant improvements over the outgoing model. Just like the old one, the new bike is still incredibly stable, it still has good suspension, a decent low seat height, it still lacks a bit of power compared with other 450s, and most annoyingly of all it still runs wide into corners. Let me try and explain this last point in a bit more detail.

What happens as you approach a loose-surface corner is that as you bang it down through the gearbox and apply the rear brake you expect the tail of the bike to slide out wide to help you make the turn. The Gasser does do this - but thanks to the FSE's oh-so-stable geometry and the addition of the slipper clutch (designed to prevent the rear wheel locking up on downshifts) - the effect is not as great as you expect or want. This means

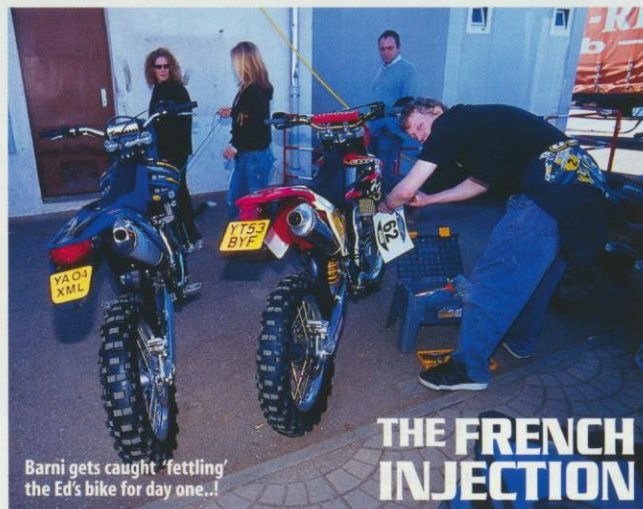
that the bike is still only partly turned as you arrive at the apex of the corner. Ordinarily the effect of dropping onto the seat (from a standing position), whilst at the same time sticking out your inside leg and burying the throttle, helps peg the front end in the turn while at the same time swinging the rear end of the bike around.

But not on the FSE. In reality, such is the bike's stability that the front wheel tends to track a slightly wider arc than you're expecting, and the rear not quite as wide as you want, and you end up having to muscle the bike through the turn using a lot of body positioning. This isn't really a problem when you're just trail riding along (and you haven't got another bike right up your jacksy to compare it with), but the truth is that you do still notice it. And whereas the Gasser is one of those bikes which is very easy on the rider most

The following morning the field was crammed full of dirt bikes...



'Oh okay, so I lied about my age...'



Barni gets caught 'fettling' the Ed's bike for day one..!

THE FRENCH INJECTION

Certainly we had no objections to the sweet way in which the 4.5i spun through its rev range - from a mild-mannered bottom-end it built into a decent mid-range and progressed onwards into a really powerful top-end hit. And although it lacked the grunt of a bike like the 450EXC on climbs (occasionally a downchange was needed), it did make for a power delivery which felt much more linear and less inclined to break traction where grip was at a premium. And it was significantly more powerful than the Gas Gas, which simply couldn't match it for top-end.

As for the rest of the Sherco design, I've got to say I was pleasantly surprised by the whole

package which gelled nicely and exhibited none of the traits you might expect from a low-volume manufacturer. In fact it was rather better equipped than the Gas Gas (for example ultra-wide pegs, braceless bars, QD seat and air-filter etc) and you really got the impression that just like with a KTM, the attention to detail suggested that this was a bike which had been designed with enduro use in mind (axle pullers, lightweight alloy stand etc). Both Sherco and Gasser are EU homologated of course, so come fully street-legal, but in our humble opinion the Sherco is by far the better looking.

When it comes to suspension, Sherco (like Gas Gas) eschews KTM's use of a linkless rear-end

in favour of a more traditional linkage assembly. With Paioli suspension front and rear (the rear has both high- and low-speed compression damping adjustment), the Sherco's set-up felt firm but compliant, with plenty of adjustment (we backed off the settings on day two). And compared with the way our Gas Gas was set-up, the 4.5i offered much more in the way of suspension travel and ground clearance.

The Sherco's riding position was slightly better too - with higher braceless bars offering more in the way of control - while the tall, flat seat allowed you to get further forward over the tank compared with the Gasser. Mind you the Sherco's

tank did feel a touch broader than the Gasser's new slim-line unit and the clutch was slightly heavier, though the throttle felt lighter (single cable pull on both these bikes thanks to the fuel injection).

But it was the 4.5i's fantastic handling which was the bike's most memorable feature. Just like the Gas Gas it too exhibited excellent stability on the bumps (though just occasionally it'd shake the bars, slightly), but unlike the Gasser, the Sherco could be turned easily, and made to exit corners in a beautifully controlled powerslide. At the launch in France the previous year we reported that Andreu Codina (Sherco's MD) had remarked that the 4.5i's geometry had been modelled on the Honda CRF450. And this really is a crucial difference between the Sherco and the Gas Gas (or even a bike like the KTM 450EXC). Because the Sherco exhibited none of the reluctance to turn which we'd found with the Gasser (nor none of the twitchiness or the feeling of falling into a corner that you get with a KTM). Compared with the FSE, the Sherco could be flung hard onto its side in a corner and the front end positioned with pinpoint accuracy, before powering out of the turn hard on the gas. Brilliant. And as we were to subsequently discover - this was more than just our impression - the stopwatch confirmed it.

So an impressive start for the blue bike which retails at £5499 - slightly more expensive than the Gasser, but coincidentally about the same price as a 450 KTM.

Compensation Culture

One of the many advantages of electronic fuel-injection is that it automatically compensates for altitude, temperature and humidity variations such as you might find when riding in another country. No need to carry a box of jets about with you - as if! And starting these bikes couldn't be easier. There's no fuel tap on either machine - nor indeed a choke lever. Instead you simply turn a key to switch on the power and press the starter button. Both bikes fire easily (the Sherco quicker and invariably more reliably than the Gas Gas) and settle down to an EFI-controlled fast idle. On the going the fuelling felt perfect with no hesitations or stutters to report, just creamy smooth pick-up every time. Two things we should mention on this subject however were the Sherco's very occasional 'pop-popping' on a trailing throttle, and the FSE's annoying trait of intermittently stalling and then failing to restart for about 8-10 seconds. On the going this was annoying, but on the special tests it cost us both time at some point during the weekend.

Trench Foot

The riding at the 'Val' was a mix of fast-flowing forest trails, open fields and then anything else

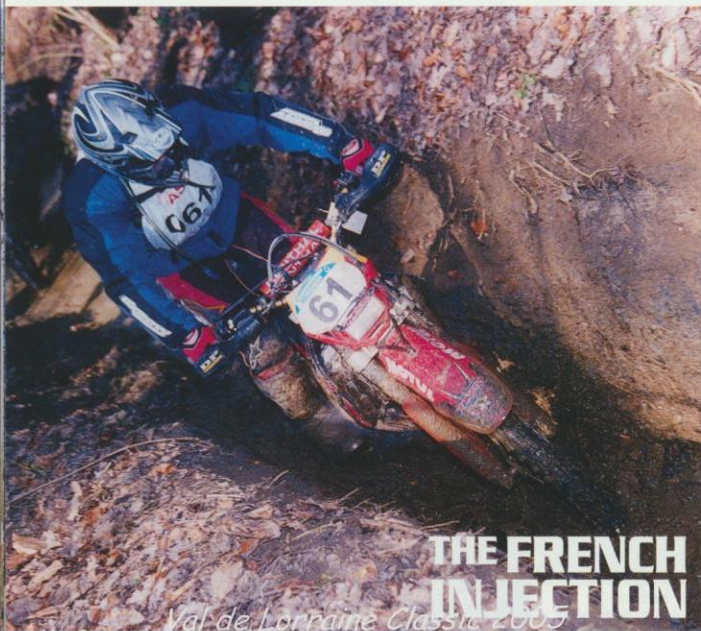
the organisers could throw at us. And they tried. Every so often the course would route us down a steep precipice into one of the so-called 'Hot-spots'. These were simply hazards (which you could choose to by-pass if you so-wished), which usually consisted of incredibly steep and slippery climbs, a tricky technical section through the trees or a combination of the two. But at one point the course entered a woodland and dropped into what I can only imagine must've been a trench from the Great War. This twisted and turned from left to right to left to right and then back around on itself again (and again), continuing for more than a kilometre. The effect was a bit like being in a skate park as both bikes climbed the walls of the trenches as we flicked them from side to side. No sooner had we climbed out of the trench than the course ran arrow straight for about two kilo-

Second Opinion

After the first special test on day two all became clear. It wasn't me, it was the bike. I'd fought back a smirk the previous evening when the day's results had been posted, and the Ed had reeled out verbatim every last word in his Ladybird Big Book of Excuses. For this Sherco-mounted Deputy had taken each and every test, including the one where I fell off! But now I was riding the Gasser and destined for a thorough pasting.

Sure, it's easier to chase someone around a test than it is to lead, but I thought I'd been going fairly well. Only as I split the timing beam, there was Melber on the Sherco right behind me. Darn it, I wasn't going fast, it only felt that way - just like driving my mate's old Mini down a bumpy road! In these dry and fast conditions the Gas Gas felt too soft (though it did improve with a tweak from a screwdriver), and just too stable. Had it been wet and greasy then the slipper clutch (which really works!) would've been a huge bonus, but as it was I actually wanted to be able to back the Gasser into the corners to help get around them. And it wouldn't let me!

No, for me the Sherco was holding all the cards. The firm suspension suited the terrain, the brakes were both powerful and positive, and it handled beautifully. The high 'n' wide bars made it effortless to chuck around, and everything conspired to make it easy to keep the motor spinning, and ride the 4.5 fast. Which seems the perfect excuse for why Melber beat me on all of day two's tests..! **Barni**

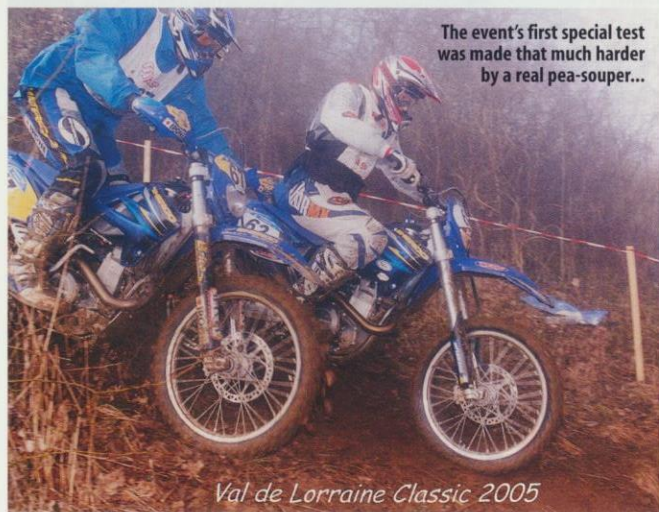


THE FRENCH INJECTION

Val de Lorraine Classic 2005



Huge thanks to Faulx Moto for a simply awesome event...



The event's first special test was made that much harder by a real pea-souper...

Val de Lorraine Classic 2005

metres along what felt like a giant rollercoaster of a Roman Road. You powered up the (dirt) hills, jumped off the top and then descended into another giant compression at the bottom, where the bike's suspension completely flattened out. Awesome. In fact the only thing better than the riding was the beautiful French scenery which rolled by in ever-increasing splendour.

Chalk & Fromage

Stepping off one bike at the end of day one and onto the other for the second day's riding, the

difference between the two machines couldn't have been more pronounced. Where the Gasser felt long, low and lumbering, the Sherco felt tall, eager and lithe. It reminded me of the difference I'd felt last year at the Welsh Two-Day when I hopped off the wallowy WR250 and onto the taut TE250. Even the normally dependable Nissin brakes on the Gasser were no match for the Sherco's AJP's!

And it wasn't just a suspension difference either.

After the first special test on day two I softened up the Sherco's suspension because I felt it was overly harsh for the sort of going we were riding. In fact much of the going at the Val de Lorraine consisted of glorious blasts through open woodland with shallow bumps taken at speed (fourth and fifth gear stuff) which was a good test of any bike's suspension. Both coped remarkably well with this sort of terrain - the supple Gasser more or less a match for the stiffly-suspended Sherco though it was noticeable that the rear end of the FSE hopped about more until we stiffened up the damping. However on

the special tests where the stutter-bumps were bigger and more irregular and there were numerous drop-off jumps, the Sherco coped far better. Here the Gasser's much plusher units were fighting a losing battle trying to match the Sherco's suspension. And despite there only being a slight (2.3kg) weight difference between the two machines (Gas Gas 127.8kg, Sherco 125.5kg fully fuelled), the Sherco felt and rode much lighter.

This was really brought home to us when we saw our special test times. Both James and I ride at more or less the same pace - there's never usually more than a few seconds between us. So when James won all five special tests on day one riding the Sherco, and I won all five on day two (the sixth was untimed) once I'd switched on to the Sherco (albeit wearing his bib), the result was unanimous: all ten fastest special test times were set on the Sherco. Game over.

Winning Ways

In many ways this test was as much about the Sherco and where it fits into the dirtbiking firmament as any comparison test with the Gas Gas. That it beat the Gasser hands down in this shootout should be obvious. Even so we have no hesitation in recommending the Gas Gas for those riders who are looking more for a trailie than a

racer. It's cheaper, lower and arguably a much less physical ride than the Sherco - despite having to muscle it at times - I came off the Gas Gas at the end of day one feeling much less tired than I did with the Sherco on day two. And past experience has shown us that, especially in rocky going, the Gasser swallows up the trails like few other four-strokes.

However perhaps more interesting is the new Sherco's capabilities compared with established market leaders in this class - such as the Yamaha WR-F and KTM EXC. I know I'm sticking my neck out here, but based on this experience, I think it's not overstating the case to say that the Sherco is right up there with the best of 'em. It may not quite have their muscle, but what it lacks in brawn it more than makes up for in dexterity and design.

It's got a fantastically fine-handling chassis. Excellent suspension, a great set of anchors and apparently sound build quality. Plus a decent equipment list. And a motor which feels both powerful and linear, and very easy to use. In fact the closer you look at it, the more you come to realise that (reliability issues aside - and only time will reveal that), the Sherco appears to have strength in all the key areas.

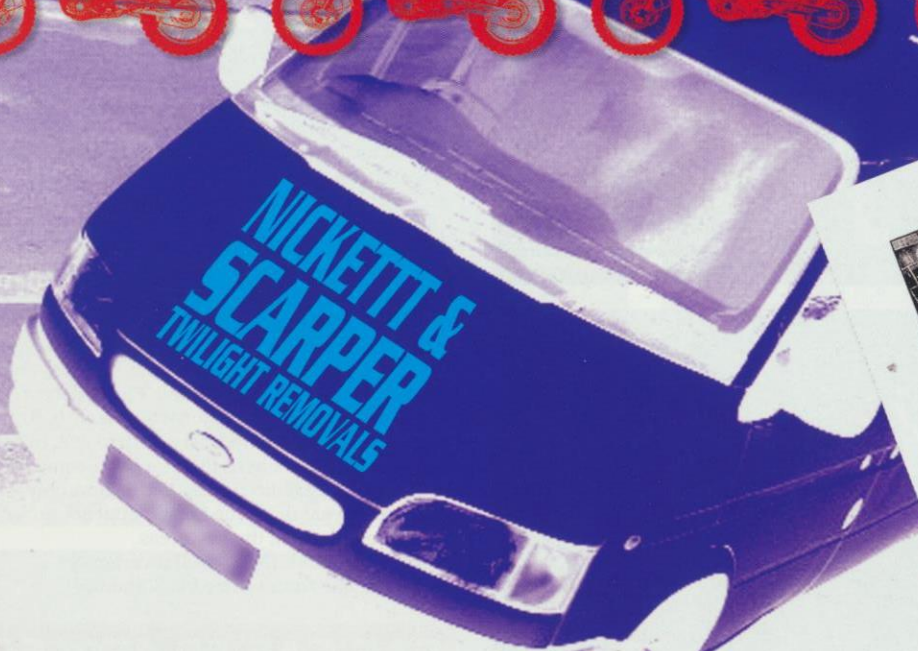
So is it a blue KTM...? Well it certainly looks like one from where I'm standing!

GAS GAS EC 450FSE

Price:	£5356.71
Engine:	443cc, DOHC, 4-valve, dual start, 6-speed
Bore/stroke:	95 x 62.6mm
Susp F/R (travel):	45mm Marzocchi (295mm), Öhlins (320mm)
Brakes F/R:	260 / 220mm, Nissin calipers
Seat height:	940mm (claimed)
Ground clear:	340mm
Wheelbase:	1475mm
Fuel capacity:	6.7L (claimed)
Weight (wet):	127.8kg (as tested)

SHERCO 4.5i

Price:	£5499
Engine:	448.6cc, SOHC, 4-valve, dual start, 6-speed
Bore/stroke:	94.5 x 64mm
Susp F/R (travel):	46mm USD Paioli/Kayaba (295mm), Paioli (310mm)
Brakes F/R:	270 / 240mm, AJP calipers
Seat height:	920mm
Ground clear:	350mm
Wheelbase:	1485mm
Fuel capacity:	8.5L
Weight (wet):	125.5kg (as tested)



Grand Theft

MOTO

Bike theft is big business. Motorcycles, and especially dirt bikes - which are much more portable and harder to trace - are a lucrative and viable target for criminals who see it as another way of making money to finance activities such as the purchase of drugs.

Figures for autocrime in general show a recovery rate of 65-percent, but in reality this means 35-percent of vehicles are never recovered. Break it down still further and the figures reveal that only 14-percent of stolen motorcycles are actually retrieved. Far fewer when it comes to dirt bikes.

Some get stolen to order, others are broken for spares and then sold off through the classifieds or fenced through dodgy bike breakers. Nobody can put figures on the percentage of stolen bikes that end up as second-hand parts because the problem comes in identifying the individual

“Not all dirt bikes are registered and if you buy a bike without a logbook, you could get the police knocking at your door...”

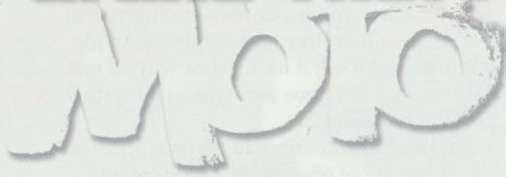
components. Imagine opening a lockup full of parts from hundreds of bikes. You know they are stolen but none can be identified as the only two parts carrying the numbers - the frame and crankcases - have already been disposed of. The law states that if you cannot positively identify anything so that an owner can be traced, then the people who 'own' the stock now, end up keeping it all. Some then even advertise it as police approved stock!

Stolen off-road machines are lot harder to identify by the police as they are normally caked in mud and many get transported in the backs of vans, so don't come to police notice as a rule.

And then there's the documentation issue. Not all dirt bikes are registered and if you buy a bike without a logbook, you could get the police knocking at your door. And while as an innocent purchaser you probably won't get charged with anything, if it does turn out to be stolen you will almost certainly lose your bike and all your money. Saying that, if a bike isn't registered, that doesn't mean it's stolen - but just exercise caution.

Motorcycle theft is one of those experiences you simply don't want to have. Serving police officer and dirt biker Ian Kerr tells you how to avoid it happening to you...

Grand Theft



Don't Help Them

Sadly, one of the biggest problems to overcome is people's enthusiasm for our sport and their desire to share it with like-minded individuals. I am sure we have all met somebody at a show or event and ended up back at their house being shown their bikes and workshop.

Now the thought that a fellow rider or club member may well be a villain might be unpleasant, but in the same way that legitimate dealers scour the For Sale advertisements looking for a bargain, so the crooks do the same. Nobody is suggesting that friends or club members are all thieves, but idle chat in a pub such as explaining in a loud voice how you've just purchased the genuine ex-works racer from the nineteen-fifty-something GP may alert others and you may find yourself being followed home.

Tip one therefore is be sure of the people to whom you reveal the location of your bikes. Don't just invite people round and show them everything you have, until you've got to know them. The same rule applies when selling. Make sure you have the machine out of the garage (but locked and covered up). Don't just open up your garage and reveal all the other bikes and kit you may have in there as well. Don't offer purchasers test rides and it's not a bad idea to take a quick photo of anyone interested in your bike -

if they're legit, what have they got to fear?

As we've stated, it's not unknown for thieves to follow riders home from the races, so don't just drive straight in to your drive - look in your mirrors and see if anyone's following you. And if you do suspect anything, take a quick trip around the block to ensure that you're not being followed home before pulling up and unloading your bike.

Likewise, when you're back from a day's trail riding or racing, try and park the bike out of sight while you wash it. A bike on a drive alerts people to the fact that there may be more like it in the garden shed. If you have to keep your bike outside, make sure you keep it

covered up. A person lifting a cover attracts attention.

It goes without saying that you need to keep all paperwork relating to your bike in a different place from the bike itself. I have seen bikes in garages that have everything in the way of documentation in the draw of a cabinet right next to them, so it does happen. And don't whatever you do, leave the keys of your trailbike in the ignition!

Locks come next, but whatever type you choose, try and use it to lock the machine to a solid object. Use it through the frame if possible and if you have nothing convenient to lock it to, sink a loop or ground anchor into the garage floor or wherever you park your bike. If you have several machines chain them all together, it makes them harder to put in a van.

Nobody is suggesting that this is foolproof, because even the best locks and chains will give way to disc cutters and oxy torches given time, but by making life as difficult as possible for the thief, you are buying time and increasing their risk of being caught.

Rather than spend pages listing the different

types of locks and chains, the simple rule of thumb is to buy the best you can afford as this is definitely one area where you get what you pay for. Having said that, anything is better than nothing.

Having secured your bike, you need to secure your garage or shed, again use the best security you can afford. Cover windows so people cannot see in and cover bikes so that when a door is open things aren't visible.

Keep tools locked away which could help to break the locks. Alarms are a good bet, either tied into the house alarm or there are plenty of portable battery types that can be used for sheds or remote garages without a power source. Parking vehicles in front of garage doors or the bike will again make life awkward, unfortunately it does for you too, but inconvenience is better than losing your bike.

Take a few decent photographs of your bike as these will help if the bike goes missing - especially if any components are non-standard and have been fabricated as one-offs. And make use of the local Crime Prevention officer at the police station who may well give useful advice based on local crime trends in your area. Remember not all thieves are

motorcyclists; to them your bike is just one more source of revenue!

Lastly be vigilant for vans with no markings prowling the area or old refrigerated vehicles with faded decals, these are some of the prime vehicles used for removing bikes. If in doubt call the police!

If the worst happens...

If you do fall victim to bike theft you need to be able to identify your bike. When doing rebuilds, time spent with an engraving tool marking the inside of clutch covers etc may well help identify parts at a later stage. If the bike is marked in a place which is out of sight it won't affect the value or the appearance of the machine but it may make a difference to its subsequent recovery.

An alternative is to use the Datatag system whereby you glue passive transponders inside various components (like the seat foam) and etch numbers onto parts. The transponders require no power source and will not damage

parts. This is relatively cheap - coming in kit form - and useful even on a dirtbike.

Believe it or not many stolen bikes which are subsequently recovered, sit in police yards because they cannot be positively identified and this is particularly true of off-roaders. The end result is that many of these machines get sold on for spares and are never re-united with their rightful owners.

How to avoid buying a stolen machine

If you're looking to buy a bike from a private advertiser, when you ring them up, just say to them 'I'm phoning about the bike'. But don't be any more specific than that. If they say 'which one?' be on your guard. It may just be a dealer masquerading as a private seller (though they are supposed to declare this fact in their adverts), but it may not!

Don't allow them to bring the bike to you. Ideally you want to go to their house and see a logbook or V5C as it is now called, relating

to that bike at that address. If the details don't match up, be suspicious and ask to see other proof or correspondence relating to that address. Some criminals have been

known to use the houses of people away on holiday and hang around outside until you come and then sell from the drive. Try and get inside, if only to deal with a call of nature!

Check the engine and frame numbers. If these look well butchered and over-stamped, then beware. Take a note and visit a local police station and ask to check if they have been reported stolen before parting with cash.

The Data Protection Act prevents the police telling you who owns a particular vehicle, but they will tell you whether it has been reported stolen. If it has, then doubtless they may want to accompany you back to the address!

Beware also of recently restored parts or a partly restored machine that has all the parts with numbers, missing from the deal. It may well be that these have been disposed of and the thief is just getting some money whilst reducing the risk factor to himself.

Whatever happens, if in doubt walk away from the deal. It's better to lose a potential purchase than to get stung buying a bad-un... ■



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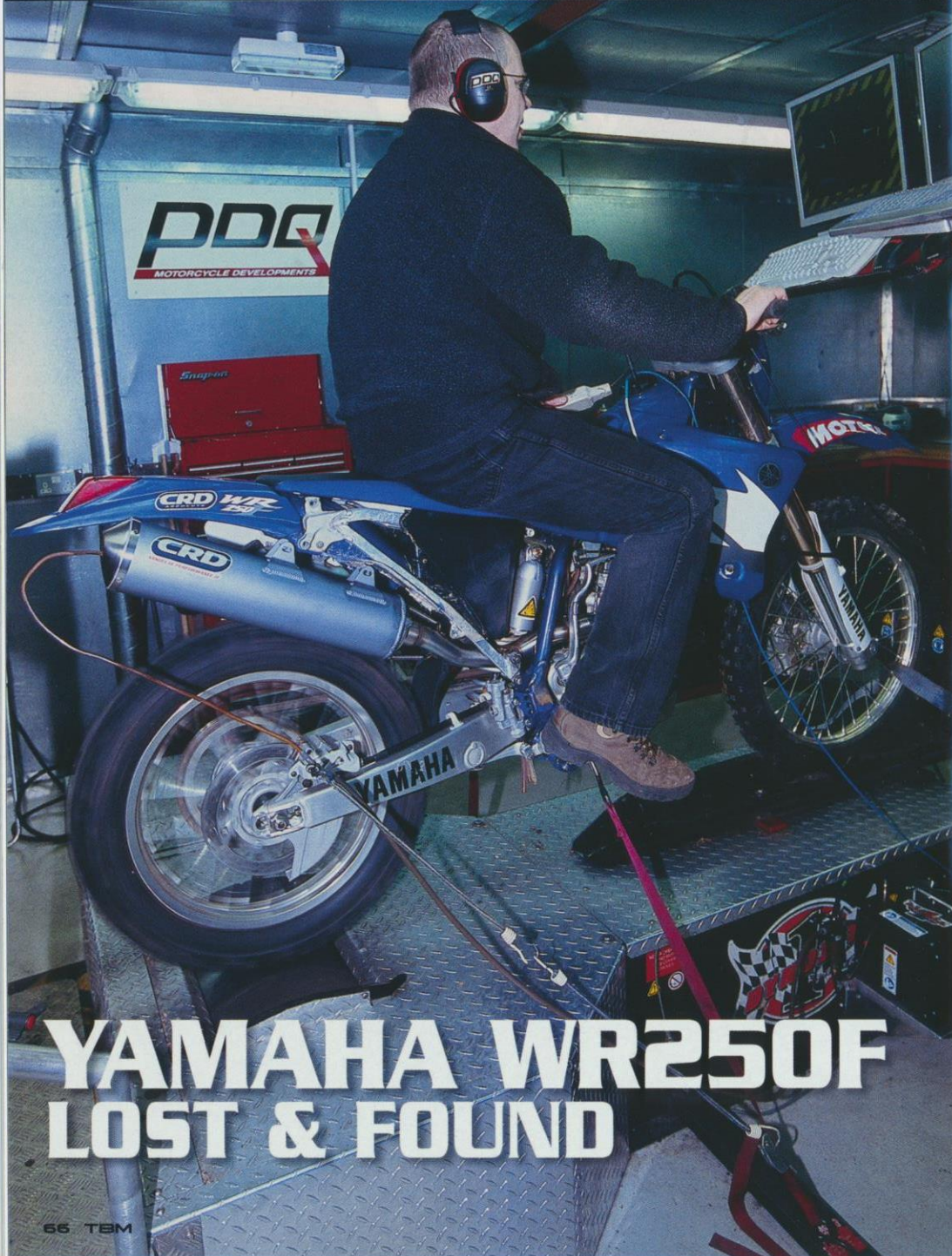
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TRAILBIKE





YAMAHA WR250F LOST & FOUND

Fixing the '05 Yamaha WR250F's flat-spot...

One of the issues thrown up during dyno testing for last month's five-way 250cc four-stroke shootout was the fact that as stock, the 2005 Yamaha WR250F seems to have a huge hole in its power-band at 7000rpm. A hole which - although it doesn't seem to harm peak power - badly affects the bike's midrange - particularly when trying to pull higher gears.

At the time, Nick, the dyno operator at PDQ where we go to measure all our bike's power outputs, reckoned it was a fuelling issue caused by the bike running over-rich in the midrange. But as the standard dyno run doesn't record this information, we had no way of knowing for sure. So we made a mental note to investigate the problem further.

Two weeks later we were back at PDQ's rolling road having persuaded Yamaha to let us keep the bike for a couple of extra months while we looked a bit deeper into the problem and reported on it through the mag. This time we came armed with a selection of jets, an aftermarket exhaust from CRD and a noise meter.

The idea was to try and establish if the Yam's missing midrange was a jetting problem or an exhaust issue with the standard pipe. And if it did turn out to be the exhaust, then how much better/worse, louder/quieter would an aftermarket pipe make it?

We were keen to see if we could restore the bike's missing power but not at the expense of noise. Prior to this test we'd requested pipes from exhaust manufacturers CRD, DEP and Akrapovic, but in the end only the CRD one turned up due to a lack of stock for the '05 model. So that was the one we used for our test.

Getting 'Control'

We began by repeating the standard power-check on the dyno to establish a base position to work from (the Control) and confirm that our earlier readings had been correct. Sure enough the WR-F produced exactly the same power curve with the big hole at 7000rpm and a maximum power output of about 28hp (0.3hp down on what we



How choked up is that? WR-F's stock pipe looked like this inside. Proof that it's definitely running too rich...

recorded last time - but no two dyno runs are ever exactly the same due to fluctuations in temperature etc). Next we linked the bike up to the gas analyser using a probe inserted into the exhaust which calculates the fuel/air ratio, and then repeated the dyno run.

Bingo. The gas analyser showed that while the bike ran a little lean off the bottom, at about 5500rpm the mixture richened up so much that it went off the top of the scale! This richness persisted right up till about 8000rpm where it came back to within reasonable tolerances. This coincided with the exact point on the power curve where the bike was losing power.

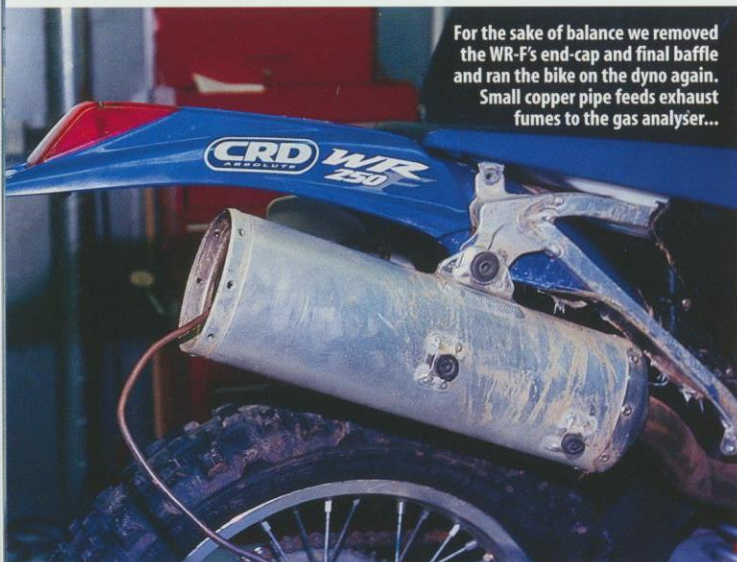
Seeing the read-out on his computer, Nick was convinced that it wasn't a carburetion problem so much as an exhaust one.

'Carbs which are that far out as standard are pretty rare' reckoned Nick who's dyno tested thousands of bikes in his time, adding for good measure that, 'you aren't going to correct that sort of anomaly just on jetting alone. The stock pipe must be so restrictive that it's choking it up'.

Time to try a little experimentation then...

Pipe Up

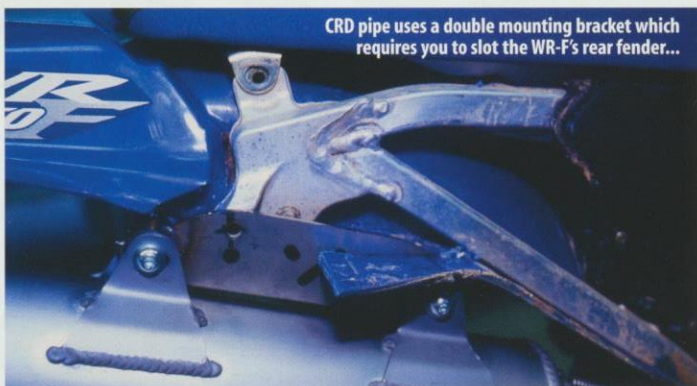
First thing we decided to try was removing the tail-piece of the stock Yamaha end-can to see what we could find. Unscrewing the six Allen-headed grub screws securing the cone-shaped tail section revealed a small diameter exit-pipe



For the sake of balance we removed the WR-F's end-cap and final baffle and ran the bike on the dyno again. Small copper pipe feeds exhaust fumes to the gas analyser...



CRD pipe requires you to make use of the existing (& fragile) graphite gasket



CRD pipe uses a double mounting bracket which requires you to slot the WR-F's rear fender...

attached to a metal plate bolted in place within the body of the silencer. If we removed this, perhaps we might yet locate our missing power.

Sadly not. Behind this plate lies a further (non removable) baffle plate even deeper within the bowels of the muffler. Without resorting to the gas-axe, we'd reached the end of the road for the standard silencer. Nevertheless we decided to dyno the bike like this (without the pea-shooter end-plate and cone-piece) to see what effect it had on the power curve. And the answer was... Not a lot. There was a fractional improvement in midrange - but nothing statistically significant, however the volume increased by 2dB! Not good. It was time to try the aftermarket route...

Pipe & Slip On

CRD actually make two different exhausts for the WR-F. The one we chose is called the Absolute Performance II model and is designed with enduro and trail use in mind (92dB). Its makers claim it gives 'maximum performance with minimum noise'. And it was the noise issue which most concerned us here.

Like all aftermarket items the CRD pipe requires a bit of fiddling about with in

order to get it to fit properly. All the mountings line-up okay, but the muffler itself is slightly longer than the stock Yamaha item and requires you to cut a small slot in the rear mudguard to accommodate its (double) mounting bracket.

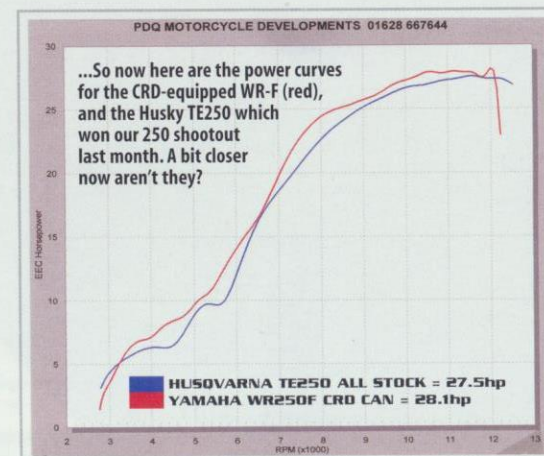
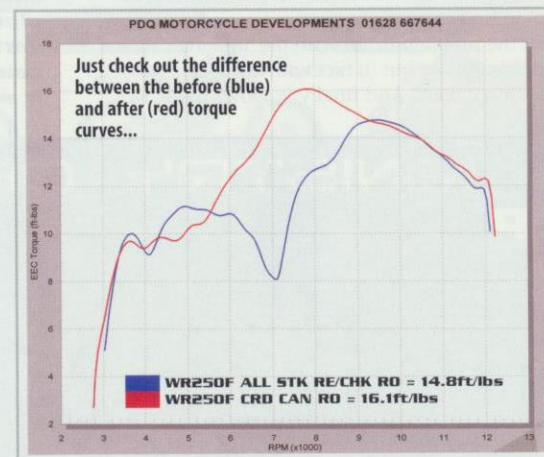
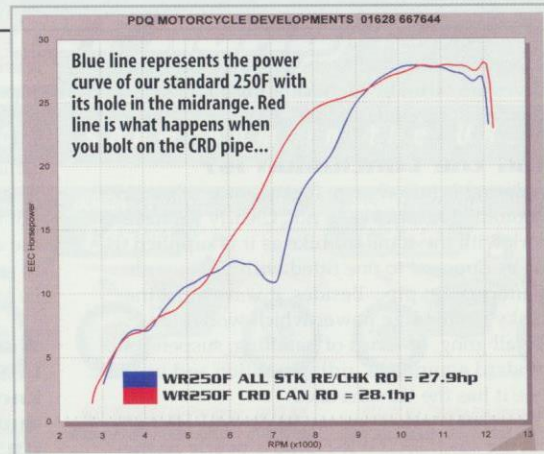
Annoyingly it doesn't come with the crucial little graphite gasket which is required to make the joint noise-tight - where the rear section of the pipe clamps onto the headers - so we had to resort to removing the stock gasket and re-using it. Not an ideal situation as they're quite fragile little items. Nevertheless once everything was in place and with all the mounting bolts tightened up it all fits fine. And with its satin grey aluminium finish, it looks the business.

It went to the gas analyser, the bike was warmed up again ready for its run on the dyno. And then the moment of truth. Up into fourth gear and the throttle wound to the stop... From 5500rpm onwards, Nick-the-dyno could already feel and hear that something was different.

It certainly was.

Because the Yamaha was responding differently - punching its way through the midrange developing nearly ten additional horsepower at 7000rpm (where the hole in the power curve had previously been), and then 800rpm later hitting its peak torque figure of 16.1ft-lbs (compared with the previously recorded 14.8ft-lbs with the stock pipe). This was excellent, and the best was yet to come. Because although the CRD-equipped bike made only fractionally more power at the top end (28.1hp compared with 27.9hp, nothing significant), the noise meter revealed that it was also fractionally quieter than the stock pipe (see panel on noise).

Interestingly the gas analyser showed that while the motor was still running a bit rich in the midrange - the freer-flowing CRD pipe had reduced this richness to an acceptable level. Just for the record we decided to plot the Yamaha's newly-amped power curve against our shootout-winning



Husky TE's one: and as the results show - the curves are virtually identical - the Yamaha just bettering it throughout.

And the Conclusion Is?

So does this info change the outcome of our 250 shootout? No, obviously not. Clearly we have to work with the standard bike as it is supplied to us - as opposed to one fitted with £260 worth of aftermarket pipe. Besides, it wasn't just the Husky's midrange power which won it the overall gong. In terms of handling, suspension, standard equipment, riding position and overall style it has the Yamaha ace.

So what conclusions can be drawn? First off that the stock 2005 WR-F pipe is overly restrictive, and that it's not just a case of 'opening her up' to find the missing power. Secondly it's clear that the problem is not with the Yamaha's motor or carburetion, but in fact with its stock pipe holding it back. And finally it shows that CRD

have done their research well and produced a pipe which works as well as it looks - a must-have for the serious WR-F owner.

Congratulations to them for building a pipe which works this well - it's just a shame that a few of the fitting details let it down. Now we've got the pipe fitted and we've seen the results on the dyno we can't wait to try it out on the dirt, to see how much better the WR-F responds. We'll be keeping you posted on this in future issues...

Thanks to Nick (and Larry) at PDQ in Slough (01753 811060) for their knowledgeable (and affordable) dyno time. Thanks to Race Spec (01531 631700) for the supply of the CRD Absolute Performance II pipe. This item costs £259.95 from various CRD stockists around the country and it does exactly what it says on the tin...

MINISTRY OF SOUND

Because noise is becoming such a sensitive issue, TBM decided to invest in a digital noise meter in order to measure the amount of 'overall sound' being produced and help make this test slightly more objective.

However, because of the limitations of working within a sound-deadened dyno room, and the specific way in which the FIM states that sound measurement should be carried out, our tests cannot be considered scientific.

The point was all about measuring the 'relative' sound outputs of the two silencers under test. And while FIM guidelines suggest that readings should be carried out at 5000rpm, we decided to measure maximum recordable sound at full throttle!

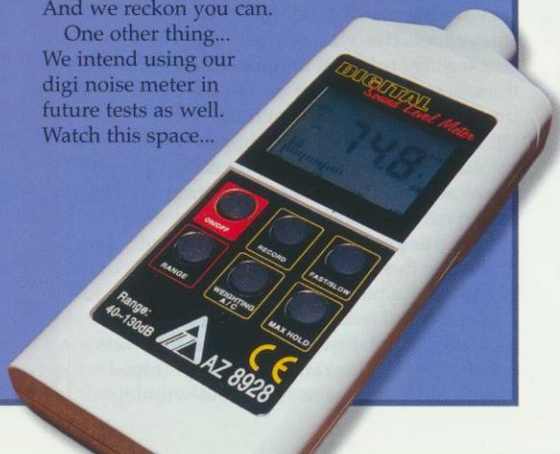
The noise meter was held at silencer height approximately 1m away (perpendicular to the end can). And then the bike was accelerated on the rolling road all the way up to full throttle. Bear in mind that there's a lot of background noise in a dyno room (the noise of the tyre on the revolving dyno drum, two powerful cooling fans and an exhaust extractor - though we did turn off the radio!)

The results were as follows: With the standard can we measured a peak (max) figure of 111.4dB. Removing the end plate baffle gave

a figure of 113.3dB (but no more power). However the CRD pipe gave the best reading of all with a slightly quieter 111.1dB.

Now 0.2dB may not sound significant (even though the decibel scale is logarithmic so small increments actually translate into quite noticeable differences), and it's well within a statistical margin of error. But the point of the finding was that the CRD pipe WAS quieter overall - and you could hear this. Ultimately the whole point of this test was to find out whether we could restore the Yamaha's midrange without compromising on noise. And we reckon you can.

One other thing... We intend using our digi noise meter in future tests as well. Watch this space...



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KTM 400EXC Forest Foray

Our long-term 400EXC went down to the woods for its first enduro outing, and it was certainly no picnic. But did KTM's middleweight prove to be the teddy bear we thought it was..?

Our long-term KTM 400EXC was first introduced back in issue 114 when we took it trail riding in the Peak District and it was the Ed's idea that this was how the bike should live out its time with us - being set-up solely as a trail bike rather than as an

enduro machine. I soon put paid to that idea! 'And how', I enquired, 'do we go about that?' The EXC comes fully road-kitted so there's nothing to add for the trail, except perhaps an alloy bashplate in place of the plastic one. And the only thing it needs to go racing is the removal

of the numberplate. Oh, and some mouses. We've always said that it's the kind of bike that you can either race or trailride, so let's do both.' It was a faultless argument and the Ed knew it...

Form Filling

The pressures of publishing mean that we're shockingly bad at organising our events calendar, and so, what with trying to put three magazines together, we don't really get to compete as often as we'd like. Thankfully, in this instance, help was at hand in the form of Officer Dick Coles of the Surrey Constabulary MCC. 'Would we like to enter the SurreyPol Enduro at the end of February?' Dick asked when he phoned us at the

STORY: BARNI; PICS: SI MELBER

end of last year. He even followed this up with another call just to remind us..! And so the TBM office was thrown into turmoil: filling in licence application forms, completing regs and prepping bikes. Okay, so the bike prep was fairly limited - all that was really required was a quick once-over. We checked the fluids (banking on changing the oil after the event), gave the spokes a quick tweak, and, er, that was about it. The grips were already lockwired, the filter was clean, and the Michelin bib-mousses could wait until the original tyres were shot (read: after this event). So the bike was topped off with the obligatory TBM stickers (still the old logo, I'm afraid) and that was it...

Cold Start

Sunday 27 February rolled around, and the morning dawned clear and bright, and very, very cold. Those parts of the paddock which weren't covered in vans and bikes were frosted with ice and it was all I could do to drag myself away from the van's heater. Southern softie? You're darn right!

Obviously, true to TBM form we arrived just in time for me to sign-on, put the EXC through scrutineering, jot down my times and pull on my boots before the event started. Which meant that I didn't get a chance to walk the special test, and in fact only made it to the startline with one minute to spare. Situation normal...

The course started with a huge, but relatively shallow puddle, setting the tone for the first mile or so. After a brief section of single track, which allowed me to drop the bike within sight of the start (doh!), it was out onto a very wet fire-road. What would have been a flat-out blast was turned into a mass of watery chicanes, skirting around the edges of some very cold-looking, and no doubt fairly deep, track-width puddles. Thankfully, that was the worst of the wet stuff over and done with, and the course headed into the woods to cut up and down hillsides.

With over half-an-hour to ride the first lap, I took it at a fast trail pace and enjoyed a good ride on the 400 through nadgery woodland, across cambers, and along flowing tracks. The lap had a good mix of everything and the bike felt just about perfect for this sort of terrain. But with times getting tighter and the loamy ground getting rougher by the minute I knew it was going to be physically hard from here on in.

James kept his head down worrying about whether his Tax disc was still in date...



Pond Life

At the start of lap two I elected to ride the special test (we had to ride it only once) and queued up along with ten or so other riders. It was clear that, as this was the last of the really slack checks, it would be the only real opportunity to ride the test without dropping time. Watching the riders before me disappear off into the distance and then arrive back at the finish (opposite the start) it was obvious that the test was fairly short, though I really wished I'd walked it. For just out of sight of the start, the test looped back on itself and although we'd be warned about the 'pond' at the finish I wasn't prepared for it to come up so soon. So having failed to leave the start quite as quickly as I should have, I then rode straight into

the water and had to foot my way out. Luckily, the Katosh simply dug into the silt and hauled itself through, whilst I suffered a Welsh Two-Day flashback of ruining a test at the final turn!

Four on the Floor

As the laps wore down, certain sections of the course opened out and became much easier, whilst others whooped-out and really started to sap energy. The Katosh's suspension proved a good compromise for fast bumps and greasy fire-roads, and the sharp front-end was a real bonus between the trees. Sadly, the package was let down by the Brembo's front brake's lack of bite. I'd tried beforehand to get some pressure into the lever by zip-tie-ing it back to the bars in

the van, but without time to bleed the system, I'd had little success. Now

it was fading at a similar rate to my energy level. With a fair smattering of downhill and high-speed fire-road braking, the lever would occasionally come almost back to the bars, at other times the brake proved simply average.

It was fairly obvious from the start that this was two-stroke territory, and despite the lightweight EXC being plenty nimble, it exhibited that typical thumper trait of dropping into things rather than gliding over them. Or maybe

KTM 400 EXC Forest Foray



I just wasn't going fast enough... [Probably - Ed]

I've no doubt that the 400 was a better bet than the 450 would've been around the course. Despite a couple of loose rock climbs there was very little need for the grunt of the bigger bike, the 400 was easily fast enough on the open going, and on such a physical course I'd much rather be on the bike which rides the lightest. Yep, the 400 presented a pretty good compromise, I reckon.

Halfway through the day my lack of bike

KTM400EXC Forest Foray

400EXC proved to be a good compromise for this type of event...



clubman A) - before collapsing against the TBM van.

Work in Progress

Having finally fully recovered (a few days later, mind) the KTM was cleaned up and checked over. The front fender sported a neat crack around the brace (from an argument with a tree), and the plastics looked slightly past their best thanks to the abrasive nature of the sandy soil. But with the clutch now fully operational the only other damage was to the airbox

fitness showed itself as the constant pounding meant that I could barely hang onto the Katosh's bars. Soon enough I found myself needing to use three fingers on the brake lever, and really started to wonder if I'd make it to the finish. During a brief pitstop, Mel mentioned to me that she thought I'd have had stronger wrists. I wasn't entirely sure what she meant, though knowing her it was probably a thinly veiled insult, and made me determined to get to the end.

Having figured out that there was no way I'd be able to make the tight checks in time, I tried to conserve energy and wasn't too surprised to have dropped a handful of minutes on both of the supposed 14 minute laps. With a total of 11 laps to ride, I was glad to see that the final circuit was pretty slack and, knackered as I was, rode it at a leisurely pace. Which perhaps was my downfall, as, following another rider through the trees, I dumped the EXC on the floor. Having lost concentration, the front-end washed out on exposed roots and although I kept the motor running I couldn't get any drive. The KTM handguards had saved the clutch lever, but the lever was wedged solid against the bars and filled with mud, sticks 'n' stones. Three hundred yards and a dodgy clutch stood between me and the finish line and, whilst pushing in was a definite option, as soon as the bike started to pull itself along I limped to the finish for eleventh in class (in the

graphics, which were flapping in the wind. It's been noted that my heavily armoured boots do seem to be pretty hard on bikes, but we've heard of other 2005 KTM's exhibiting the same problem. Could it be that the new oval section frame transfers wear to this area, or is it that the Austrians have spent their money on glühwein instead of glue? Either way, we'll need to tidy this up because the bike looks pretty shabby this way.

So the 'to do' list grows even further. We'll first be mending the aforementioned damage, then fitting a pair of the new Pivot Pegz to test out their benefits. The Michelin mousses (and FIM tyres) will be slipped onto the rims, and now the motor's fully run-in the oil will be dumped in favour of some of Motul's finest fully synthetic. We'll also be trying to improve the front brake, with, at the very least, a new set of pads and a quick bleed of the system. Then we'll be back out on the dirt, maybe for another event, or perhaps a spot of trail riding...

Thanks to:
KTM UK (01280 709500), Motul (01623 757262), Michelin (01782 401853), Pivot Pegz (01306 632962). And last, but by no means least, huge thanks to Dick Coles, Ian Lewis and all at Surrey Constabulary MCC for a great event.

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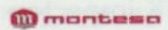
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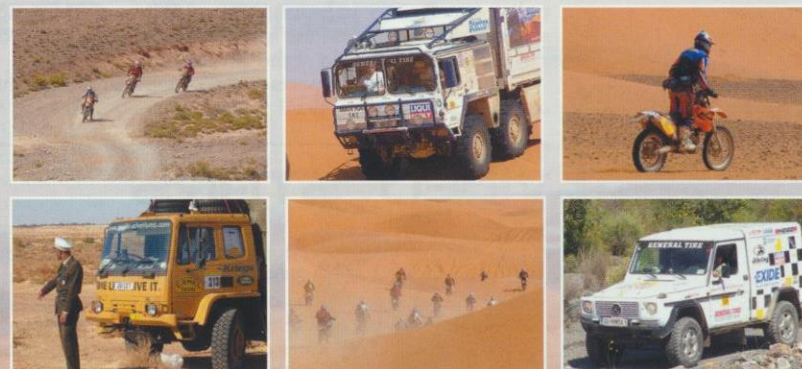


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THINK TANK



Only down under would a canoe manufacturer be responsible for ensuring desert racers don't run dry! Yep, Aussie company Aqualine are a major supplier of large capacity fuel tanks for all the top teams in the Australian Safari and a few were seen in this year's Dakar Rallye.

All tanks are made of high UV stabilised plastic and the fittings have metal or brass inserts. They also fit with the original tank and seat mountings. Useful features include a seat recess to allow maximum capacity with the stock seat, and the tank's specially moulded shape protects radiators from side impacts. The front cross-brace offers improved rigidity and high-density foam padding for support on the main frame. No pump is required and all tanks, bar those for the KTM EXCs, come with a taps and fuel line.

Currently, bikes catered for are: Honda XR650R 26ltr, Suzuki DR-Z400 28ltr, Suzuki DR650 30ltr, Kawasaki KLX400 28ltr, KTM EXC 400-525 23ltr, BMW GS1200 7ltr side tanks, Yamaha WR450F 26ltr and the Yamaha WR 2Trac 26ltr.

Also available is a monster 44ltr front, two-piece, split tank for the Honda XR650R which costs a cool £2,000. This is because it uses an underslung exhaust can and requires new tank mounts, radiators and sidestand. Clear or manufacturer colour-match schemes are offered and the front tanks cost £310, with side tank prices not yet confirmed at the time of going to press.

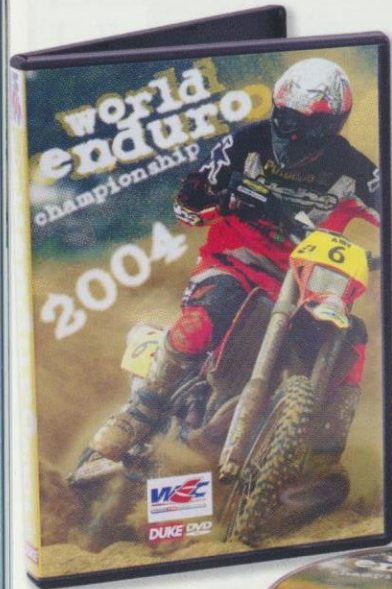
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VIDEO STARS

For all you armchair spectators out there, Duke Video have produced a review of the 2004 World Enduro Championship, and even if you have only a passing interest in top level enduro it's essential viewing. Covering all eight rounds of the series, plus the ISDE, the DVD separates out each event into each capacity class and each day's competition, running to three hours in length.

With race footage, on-board cameras and rider interviews there's a good mix to keep you entertained, though the commentary can be a little staid at times (with the odd mistake), and those with access to Motors TV may have already seen some of the action. But it does little to detract from the riding, and you can't fail to be impressed by the skill and speed of the world's best riders.

At £16.99 the DVD is well priced, and the technologically challenged can buy the VHS video for £14.99. So grab yourself a copy, get your mates around, break open the beers and sit back in awe. To order a copy log onto dukevideo.com or phone them on 01624 640000.



WATER SPORTS

Getting wet is a pretty common occurrence for most dirtbike riders when out on the trail, but nothing's more annoying than getting your valuables soaked too.

This handy DryPak pouch from Gas Gas Motos does what it says on the tin - it keeps things dry.

The DryPak claims to be 100-percent waterproof and floatable, always a bonus if you happen to fall off into a stream! It's also useful on dry land too, as it's designed to keep out sand, dust and grit.

The padded case is opened and closed via two twist 'n' go fastenings, and the pouch expands to easily allow a mobile phone or camera inside. The case comes complete with adjustable neck lanyard and a blue anodised spring hook. A nice touch is that the camera-specific case is clear backed.

We used one in a recent event and found it great for keeping our money safe for the all-important lunch stops. The DryPak phone holders are available in the following sizes: 4x6in, 4x8in and 5x8in, with the camera case available in 6x6in. Prices start at £10.99 and go up to £13.50 for the largest case. For more info, call Gas Gas Motos Ltd on 01298 766813.



LAZER SURGERY

Belgian helmet manufacturers Lazer have more than 80 years experience making lids, and their latest offering is the MX6 X-Ray.

Made from IMAC - Impact Modified Alloy Composite to you and me (or perhaps a certain ladies' hair removal cream..!), the helmet features a 100-percent removable cheek pad and lining interior. It also boasts a full 'FVS' ventilation system that claims to increase airflow inside the lid via a combination of upper, lower and rear air vents and through channels built into the internal lining.

It has a wide-angle adjustable flexible peak and noseguard that are, well, pretty flexible, and a double D-ring chinstrap fastening to keep things snug.

The finish is supposedly scratch and UV resistant and it isn't bad at all. The MX6 comes with a stabiliser fin (don't worry, it's optional) and is available in silver with either orange/red/blue or green colour combos, and in sizes XS-XL.

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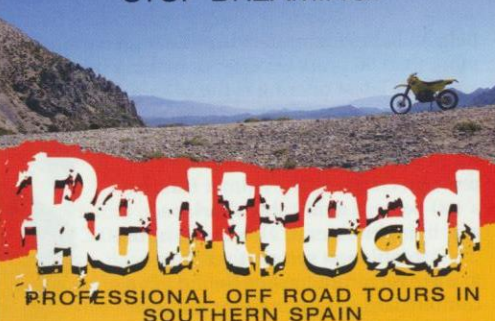
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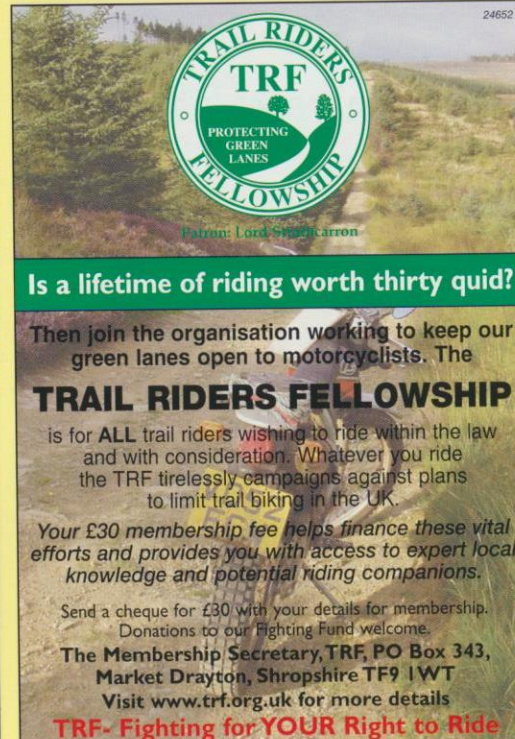
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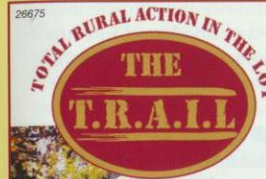
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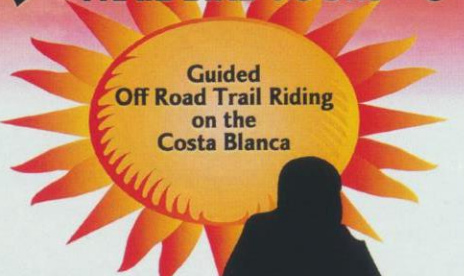
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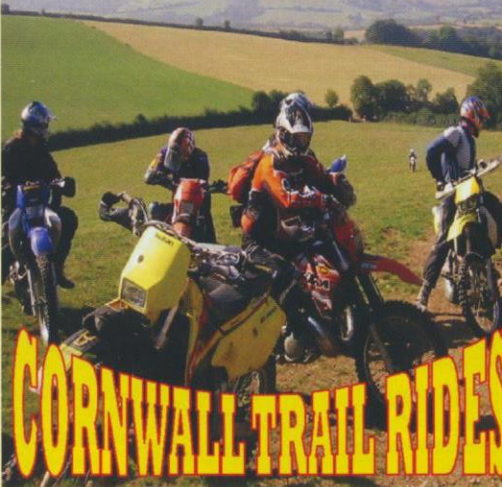
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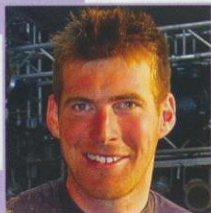
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SPEED



'OL' MAN FARIOLI TOLD ME THAT GIO SALA ONCE WON AN ITALIAN CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT WITH ONLY TWO GEARS. THAT WAS IT. I WAS DETERMINED TO RIDE WHETHER THE BIKE WAS WORKING PROPERLY OR NOT...'

By the time this appears in TBM the opening two rounds of the '05 World Enduro Championship will have been and gone. And as they say: when the flag drops, the bull' stops. This year's world championship is certainly an important one for me. Marking my fifth full season of WEC competition, I stand the best chance I've ever had of winning a world title - my first. I feel I'm riding better than ever before, have a great bike, and team, and am both confident and injury free - things

KNIGHTER'S ON FORM AND RARING TO GO...

are looking good. As I write this, before the season's opening rounds, I'm trying best I can to remain relaxed while feeling really confident and enjoying my riding.

The start of the new season, like any new season, is always an interesting time of year when the question of 'am I fast enough' is about to get answered. Thankfully, my pre-season racing has all gone really well.

Winning both the first round of the British Enduro Championship and, more importantly as far as gauging whether I'll be on the pace for the WEC, the second round of the Italian Enduro Championship has given me a real confidence boost. Both races were completely different to one another in terms of the type of terrain, weather and style of event.

The first round of the British Ice racing Championship, sorry, British Enduro Championship wasn't as tough as it normally is, despite the cold weather, the ground being frozen in places and the forest being covered

in snow at the start of day one. Knowing that the event will probably be the last two-day Breckland Enduro it would have been nice for it to have been a really tough one, like so many of them have been over the years with really tight checks, deciding the winners. The weather meant that the [slower] B schedule had to be used, which made for probably the easiest Breckland Enduro I've ever ridden in.

Getting to ride my factory prepped 525EXC, a replica of the exact same specification bike that I'll race in the WEC, in competition for the first time was good, as was simply riding an enduro after what seems like months and months of 'extreme' and indoor events. It was a case of 'back to work' after the holiday season for me!

The biggest challenge though at the Breckland, apart from winning, obviously, is getting back into enduro mode. By that I mean getting used to lifting your pace for the special tests, something that isn't easy to do at the Breckland because the check pace is quite tight anyway, and making sure you don't get side-tracked by talking to someone at the checks and miss your minute. Thankfully I remained focused and managed to win overall.

I won't bore you with too many of the details but both days went really well, especially day two. Heading into the freshly graded test first on day one, and still managing to finish with a similar time to Paul Edmondson, told me that I would be able to win the event there and then. A few people thought that I might not win after that first test [Eddy was a couple of secs faster - Ed] but having to carve a line through soft sand, which other riders could then follow, is a massive disad-

vantage. That was why I knew that I'd be able to win after that. Knowing that the test was still a little bit icy in places I rode steadily on the second test on day one and then when the test thawed out, and got really rough, on the final lap I pushed hard initially and then backed off. Don't ask me how I knew I'd done enough to win, I just did.

While I was confident that I would win the Breckland the same can't be said of the first round of the Italian Enduro Championship. Run just a few days after the WEC Preview in San Remo, I decided to enter the race as my team wanted me to test some new tyres. Having spent the two days prior to the event running-in my WEC race bike and testing suspension it was going to be my last enduro before the start of the world championship. Some riders put a lot of emphasis on their last race before the start of the championship but for me it was just another event. One I wasn't going to take too seriously.

I rode Fabio Farioli's practice bike (the Farioli team manager) which he'd had from last season, and which had done quite a bit of work. The race was a typical Italian event with two fast as hell cross-country tests and an extreme test, which suited me down to the ground. It wasn't too long though before my bike started to jump out of gear, then I lost the use of fourth altogether. Thankfully, it wasn't too much of a problem on the extreme test but I had to rev the nuts off the bike in third in the hope that she'd take fifth on the cross-country tests. The bike got to the end of the day where, several hours later, we found out the results. I'd won by 44 seconds, which was a welcomed surprise as I hadn't felt like I'd pushed excessively hard.

Not wanting to damage the bike any further I wasn't going to ride on day two. Not until ol' man Farioli told me that Giovanni Sala once won a round of the Italian Enduro Championship with only two working gears. That was it. If they weren't bothered that I might do more damage to the bike, nor was I. So I rode it as it was.



Knighter hopes to replace that plate with a #1 this year...



Yer man... On the gas as always...

I crashed on the extreme test on the first lap, which compared to my other timed runs through it, cost me 20 seconds. I spent the day keeping out of fourth gear while trying to assess how well the new Metzeler tyre I was testing was working. At the end of the day I had won again, by a pretty healthy amount, which I was pleased about. While the event wasn't much like a world championship event, it was a good ol' race and a good ol' result. I just hope that I'll be able to say the same about the first two rounds of the WEC next month...

SPORT

ROUND 1: HAWKSTONE PARK, SHROPSHIRE, 20/3/05

The opening round of the '05 UK Cross-Country Race Series saw Honda Racing's Paul Edmondson (the series promoter) claim top honours - two and a half minutes ahead of Team Green LPE Kawasaki rider Ryan Voase with Gas Gas UK's Paul Whibley a further six minutes adrift in third.

It was Voase who initially lead in the punishing loamy conditions of Hawkstone Park, but with only a handful of laps under his belt, the Kawasaki rider's arms tightened, which allowed Edmondson to move to the front where he was never headed. 'Once I passed Voasy I just tried to ride smart, chose good lines and work my way through the lapped riders' said Eddy afterwards.

With Voasy a disappointed runner-up, Paul Whibley made it an all 250cc two-stroke one-two-three (Honda, Kawasaki and Gas Gas). Wayne Braybrook brought his 450cc Sandiford Honda home in fourth ahead of Si Wakely aboard his 125cc Honda with the pair separated by just 20 seconds.

Behind Wakely, Aussie rider Jake Stapleton claimed sixth in his first UK Cross-Country race ahead of yet more 250cc two-stroke riders, Martin Lear on his Kawasaki and mx rider Jason Thomas aboard his TM.

Husqvarna's Chris Hockey was the top 250cc four-stroke rider in ninth followed home by Honda-mounted Euan McConnell who suffered a crash early in the race.

Next Round: 24 April, Donington Park

'05 UK CROSS COUNTRY



RESULTS: PRO CLASS

1	PAUL EDMONDSON	HONDA	19 LAPS
2	RYAN VOASE	KAWASAKI	19
3	PAUL WHIBLEY	GAS GAS	19
4	WAYNE BRAYBROOK	HONDA	18
5	SI WAKELY	HONDA	18
6	JAKE STAPLETON	TM	18
7	MARTIN LEAR	KAWASAKI	18
8	JASON THOMAS	TM	18
9	CHRIS HOCKEY	HUSQVARNA	18
10	EUAN MCCONNELL	HONDA	18

Si Wakely puts on the style around a Hawkstone berm...

'05 MOTUL BRITISH ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP



**ROUND 1:
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There were two main topics of conversation at the traditional British Enduro Championship season opener - the Breckland Enduro - which were basically 'bloody hell it's cold' and 'isn't it a shame that this is the last ever two-day Breckland'. With a healthy covering of snow greeting those arriving at the event on the Friday morning and more of it forecast, some even began to think that the show might get cancelled. No chance.

With more snow falling during the early hours of Saturday, day one started with a thick layer of the stuff covering the forest, and the special test

needed to be graded prior to the arrival of the Championship class riders on day one. Thankfully, despite alternating between flurries of snow and rain, the weather did improve... slightly. On day two a heavy overnight frost meant that the first planned special test was untimed with the Championship class riders getting three, instead of four timed runs through the twisty test.

The event

Known as being one of the most physically demanding events in the BEC calendar this year's

EMG Ford sponsored Breckland Enduro was much easier than expected, strangely due in no small part to the bad weather. With the event run on B schedule on both days due to the snow and ice, no Championship class riders lost time in the checks.

The course and special test were, with the exception of a few minor alterations, the same as 12 months ago. The 50 mile course was split into four time checks with two of the checks away from the start in the Brandon Park area of the forest with the other two at the start/finish area, along with the test. With clubs

Fast Eddy charging hard through the Thetford sand...



'05 MOTUL BRITISH ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP



Bolter was favourite in the E1 class, and didn't disappoint...



PADDOCK POINTERS

It was good to see former top BEC riders helping some of the 'up and coming' stars of the British enduro scene at the Breckland. Former British Enduro Champion Rob Sartin was on hand to offer words of wisdom to Si Wakely whenever needed, while Husky Sport Husqvarna enduro team manager Wyn Hughes was never far from Daryl Bolter's side during the event.

Two-strokes are fighting back. It seems that an increasing number of riders are now 'over' four-strokes, with many more Expert and Championship class riders competing on two-strokes compared to last year. Despite the overall win going to a 500cc thumper, 14 two-strokes placed within the top 15 in the event's combined day one and day two overall results.

The replacing of the 125cc and Over 175cc two-stroke and 250cc, up to 450cc and Over 500cc four-stroke classes with the Enduro 1 and Enduro 2 classes has resulted in two extremely competitive, and exciting to watch, classes. Much as it did in the World Enduro Championship last year, good results are now much harder to come by.



It was definitely 'thermals weather' at this year's Breckland...

organising BEC events no longer required to store rider's bikes in a Parc Ferme, both days started with riders appearing at the start, rather than emerging from an official work area, as they used to. As in previous years the event also crossed the main road running through Thetford Forest, which prompted the Diss MCC to get 'Police supervision' on the crossing, at considerable cost.

The special test, as in recent years, was a mix of fast, open tracks and tighter wooded sections, all housed within sight of the start/finish area. Run in different directions, along with the course, over the two days, four timed tests were reduced to three on day two because of a heavy overnight frost. On day one the Diss MCC graded the test as best they could to get rid of unwanted icy sections.

And the winners are...

David Knight, as expected, topped the table without too many troubles. Despite the majority of his competitive rides since the end of last season's WEC having been either indoor or extreme events, Knighter proved to have lost none of his speed, and even at this early stage looks well placed to retain his BEC #1 plate. Although day one's results showed that he won by less than 10 seconds, the cool manner in which he worked his way back after being hugely disadvantaged by being the first rider onto the freshly graded opening test was impressive. He never looked ragged, nor indeed worried by the fact that he had some work to do on the remaining two tests. Instead it was a much cooler, calmer and more confident David Knight that secured the day one win at this year's Breckland. Knighter also topped

the opening test on day two by eight seconds, which meant that it was pretty much a case of game over for his competitors. Eventually finishing 17 seconds ahead of Paul Edmondson on day two David 'did enough' as he put it, to win aboard his factory prepped 525EXC.

The E1 class (125cc two-stroke and 250cc four-stroke) provided some extremely close results at the Breckland with two different riders claiming day wins. On day one it was Daryl Bolter, the rider expected by many to dominate the class

after his impressive Championship debut in '04, who claimed top honours aboard his Husqvarna. Having taken the decision to focus all his efforts on his racing this year (at the expense of a having a 'normal job'), Bolter's speed aboard his 125 put him in fifth overall, four places ahead of his nearest class rival.

On the first day he was a cut above the rest in the smallest of the three newly introduced capacity classes. The only 125cc rider capable of mixing it with the 250cc two-stroke riders that flooded the overall results, Daryl could well have placed fourth overall had it not been for the opening test getting rotivated so that all E1 class riders, Bolter included, struggled to place well in the overall results.

Behind Daryl in the E1 class, but down in ninth, tenth and eleventh overall were Dylan Jones, Si Wakely and Ed Jones respectively. With DJ having a strong ride on his 250cc four-stroke Yamaha, the Welshman managed to place less than a second ahead of Wakely, helped by being much further down the day's starting order. Like Wakely, Ed Jones was another rider that started at

'05 MOTUL BRITISH ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP

Even at this early stage, you wouldn't bet against Knighter for the championship...

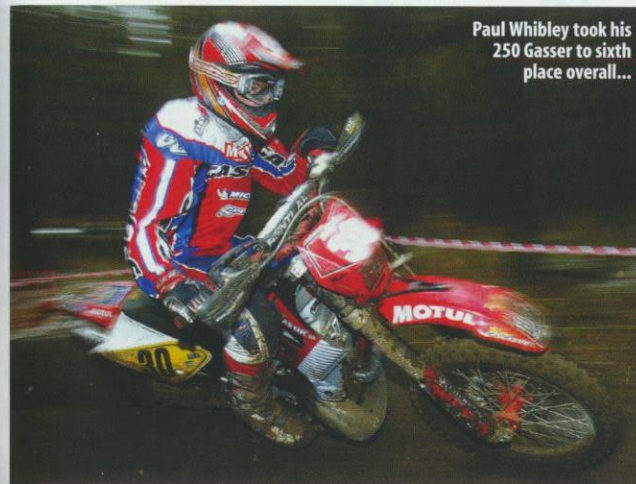


SURPRISE, SURPRISE...

The Breckland Enduro is known for being unforgiving on first timers, especially when those riders are overseas competitors. With proven riders such as former 125cc World Enduro Champion Roman Michalik, Paul Whibley and several of Spain's top enduro stars having all been beaten up by the Breckland over the years, one foreigner managed to not only finish both days of this year's event without injury or bike problems but with two solid results as well.

Aussie Jake Stapleton, the newest signing of TM UK importer Nick Craigie, wasn't fazed by the challenging conditions and produced two solid results at the Breckland. Making his two sixth place finishes all the more impressive was the fact that the event was his first national level race aboard a 250 having raced a 125cc bike last year. Finishing less than one second behind Daryl Bolter on day one, and right behind Paul

Whibley on day two, the arrival of a rider of Stapleton's calibre into the BEC is certainly a good thing for the series and adds to the championship's international flavour.



Paul Whibley took his 250 Gasser to sixth place overall...

the front of the Championship class, ahead of the majority of the E1 riders, and as a result also struggled on the first test.

On day two it was Edward Jones who claimed the win, returning to a 125cc machine after a few years aboard a 250. Finishing two seconds up on Si Wakely after a close final test battle. With Dylan dropping down to 16th in the overall results, and seventh in the E1 class, day one winner Daryl Bolter rounded off the all 125cc two-stroke E1 top three. Just five seconds separated the three riders after the day's three special tests, that's how close things are at the top of the E1 class this year.

Despite not being able to beat David Knight on either day, Paul Edmondson placed his Honda at the front of the E2 class on both days with relative ease. Having his opening test time on day one matched by Ryan Voase, Eddy then put the hurt to his E2 class rivals on tests two and three to finish 14 seconds clear at the top of the class. Voasy however proved, as he had in 2004, that in the sand he is pretty damn quick at weaving his way through trees and claimed a strong runner-up

spot. While Paul's winning margin wasn't a massive one, like Knighter's, it was certainly enough. Claiming third was Paul's Honda team-mate Euan McConnell on his return to full-time BEC competition. Just like the overall top three, the first three finishers in the E2 class remained the same on day two as they were on day one with Edmondson again placing ahead, a lot further ahead, of Voase with McConnell in third.

The winner said...

'Day one was really slippery early on, it was difficult out on the first few checks because the ground was really hard in places under the snow. The first test was really tricky, not because of the snow and ice but because the organisers had rotivated the test, the ground was really, really soft - like riding with a slipping clutch.

'Half way around the test I backed off because pushing hard, and having to cut a line through the soft sand for others to follow, wasn't getting me anywhere. I knew that the riders behind me would be using my ruts so I wasn't surprised three of us on the same second.

Paddock Pointers

While the E1 and E2 classes saw close, competitive racing all weekend, the E3 Championship class featured just two riders - David Knight and Chris Tett. With so few Championship class riders showing interest in riding 'big bikes' it seems as if a Veterans class, to bridge the gap between Championship and Expert might be a better idea.

Daryl Bolter finished the second day of the Breckland unable to do up his shoe laces up after re-aggravating a back injury. X-rays and an MRI scan confirmed that he had a badly prolapsed disk, which thankfully will be treated with injections and not an operation as feared.

Several of the countries' top riders risk being disqualified from the event (retrospective penalties can be handed out by the ACU) for not running the Motul logo of the series' title sponsor on their bikes. With the rule on '...having to use number plates if provided by a series sponsor...' clearly stated in the ACU Supplementary Regulations, the fact that some riders opted to ignore it deeply concerned the Trials and Enduro Committee, and Motul.



Left: 'Hey Daryl, ride over there and get me a burger...'

'05 MOTUL BRITISH ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP



'The course got much better on the second lap after bikes had been around it. I knew that there were some slippery bits on the test so I rode reasonably steadily on the second test and put in a pretty good time. I knew where I could push on the last test and again I felt that I was riding well, and well within myself.

The first timed test on day two was a little bit tricky as well because of the lines that the Clubman riders had left behind. I tried hard where I could, but I didn't want to push too hard or get caught out by the ruts. My first test was really good, I didn't know whether to go inside, or out wide on some of the corners and I think I took quite a few different lines to most

riders, which seemed to work.

'Having pulled a good lump of time on the first test I didn't have to ride too hard on the second one, which I won. On the last test I tried a few different lines and really relaxed and managed to win that one as well.

'My bike has been spot on all weekend and it's been a great opening round to the championship. The bike I rode was the same as I'll compete on in the WEC. I really enjoyed the event. The test was really good. It's just a shame that the organisers couldn't run tighter times on the checks because of the snow and ice.'

David Knight
03-Racing KTM

BETTER LUCK NEXT TIME...

After finishing in third place in last year's Enduro 2 class of the World Championship many expected newly signed Honda Racing Fast Eddy PAR Homes rider Arnau Vilanova to place near the top of the results at the Breckland. Making a one-off appearance in the BEC as part of his preparations for the WEC, Vilanova placed a lowly 27th in the overall Championship class results on day one following a heavy crash on the event's third and last timed test on day one. Clipping a tree the Spaniard was sent crashing to the ground hurting his shoulder as a result. Having posted quick times on the first and second test of the day, Vilanova decided to watch on day two.

The Breckland actually turned out to be a disappointing event for several Honda mounted Championship class riders. Lee

Edmondson's Championship class debut saw him fail to reach the end of the first timed test as a mechanical problem put him out, while Wayne Braybrook also ran into trouble on his 450cc Sandiford Honda. Wayne snapped a chain on day two and lost several minutes trying to fix it. Despite managing to finish the day, Wayne's weekend was ruined and he dropped to the bottom of the Championship class results on day two.

Two other riders that failed to set the world alight on their Championship debuts were Scott Ricky Mair and '04 Expert champion Tom Sagar. Despite being given more time on the checks on day one because of the adverse weather conditions Ricky still managed to crash and put himself into hospital with concussion. Despite wanting to race on day two Diss MCC's Andy Waters stopped the youngster from starting on the grounds of safety. Meanwhile Sagar finished 17th at the end of the two days.

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'05 MAXXIS FIM WORLD ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP

Preview



SAN REMO, ITALY, 7/8 MARCH

The World Enduro Championship is really going places. Already 'night and day' different to the championship it was two years ago, according to Frenchman Alain Blanchard (the man responsible for the promotion of the series) the WEC will reach new levels of professionalism in '05. With last season's sweeping changes having been the first 'very positive steps', as Blanchard saw them, towards a 'better and brighter' future, it's the Frenchman's aim to see the championship become as well respected as it is well travelled in the coming years.

'I always said that it will take three years to get the World Enduro Championship to where it should be,' explained Blanchard at the '05 WEC Preview in San Remo, the pre-season get-together in early March aimed at raising the profile of the series. 'The WEC has already taken significant steps towards becoming a more professional series that is well-run and has a good profile, but there is still work to do and it won't happen overnight. There are still changes that need to be made but the series needs stability after the big changes made 12 months ago. The biggest difference between this year's championship and last year is that the WEC will have a permanent time keeping staff for '05. One of the biggest problems with enduros has always been the results. Now that the series is easier to understand we need a more professional results service. I hope that by the middle of this season people will be able to watch the events unfold on their computers at home, as transponders will be used to time both the special tests and the time controls. Also introduced for 2005 is the Junior World Cup, a new class for riders under 21. We hope that stars of the future will come from this class.'

Listening to Blanchard talk about how well the WEC is progressing it's easy to imagine that the nine-round championship is fast becoming



SPORT

as high profile as the (four-wheeled) World Rally Championship, a series he has openly admitted he'd like the WEC to emulate. The reality however is a little different. Yes, the WEC now has an improved image but it's also a series that is a little wary of the transition it is going through. With the void between the riders who genuinely have what it takes to claim world titles and earn good money, and those who are, at best, occasional podium finishers growing ever rapidly, it became clear early last year that the FIM's hopes of making the WEC a 'professionals only' championship will never happen. As a result the hobby riders and serious amateurs who have for many years propped up the series are once again warmly welcomed in '05, with the criteria for qualification into the world championship eased. The FIM, and Blanchard, would never admit that these riders were ever made

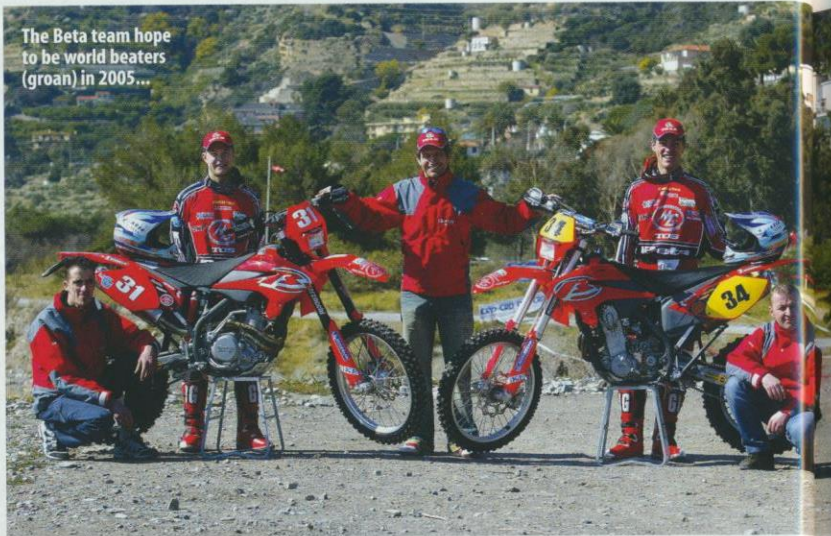
unwelcome, but many suspected that they were. In their hurry to cater for the salaried pros, the little guys were neglected. Placed in 'B' paddocks and given much less information and assistance than their 'A' paddock professional friends, many riders that paid their way to the opening rounds of the '04 WEC stayed away from the season's closing events.

Politics aside, the 2005 WEC series should be much more interesting than last year. Visiting two countries twice, a first for the WEC, the depth of talent in all classes looks set to provide close racing action, not only at the top of each class but right through their ranks.

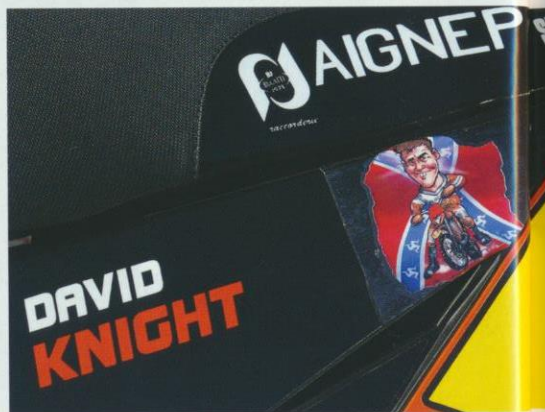
Enduro 1: 100-125cc 2T / 175-250cc 4T

With Australian Stefan Merriman moving away from the smallest of the WEC's three capacity classes, as with all of the WEC categories for 2005, E1 will not have a defending champion. However, what it does have for the new season is much more strength in depth than it did last year as any one of ten riders could, on paper at least, take the win. And most of those riders are on 250cc four-strokes.

With their new DOHC four-stroke KTM finally have a competitive thumper in the class, ridden by their two factory riders Finn Petteri Silvan and Spaniard Ivan Cervantes. And with Italian Alex Belometti aboard their 125cc two-stroke machine they have all their bases covered. So far the new thumper has proved both fast and reliable, but if any of the official KTM riders are to stand a chance of winning they must first beat the two riders that battled it out for the runner-up spot in last year's championship (behind Merriman) - Italian Honda rider Simone Albergoni and Polish Yamaha rider Bartosz Oblucki. As the only rider to beat Merriman last season, Albergoni has been tipped as 'the one to watch' and both he and Oblucki will certainly be at the forefront of the results.



The Beta team hope to be world beaters (groan) in 2005...



Joining the class for '05 is Britain's Paul Edmondson. Reverting back to a 250cc four-stroke, Edmondson hopes that his experience and consistency will help him stay ahead of the class youngsters in the championship race.

Other experienced campaigners in the E1 class include TM-mounted Swede Rickard Larsson and his former 125cc World Enduro Championship winning team-mate Roman Michalik. Whether either rider has the speed to consistently produce results, well only time will tell. Although TM have spent a considerable amount of time and money developing their 250cc four-stroke machine, both riders are expected to compete aboard 125cc two-strokes.

Although Bartosz Oblucki is the only 'official' Yamaha rider with a real chance of winning in the E1 class, two other riders - Frenchman Marc Germain and former 250cc four-stroke world

champion Peter Bergvall - could well cause a few upsets. Germain is competing in the full series for the first time in several years, whilst Bergvall makes a return to Yamaha after a disastrous season with Husqvarna last year.

Meantime Husqvarna's E1 effort hinges on the youthful Finn Mika Saarenkoski, and the solid experience of veteran Italian Roberto Bazzurri. In truth, the Varese-based concern aren't expected to be walking away with the E1 title this year.

GIOVANNI'S NEW JOB

With five world enduro championship titles to his name jovial Italian Giovanni Sala has finally decided to hang up his riding boots. But instead of moving away from the sport that has dominated his life for the past 20 years, Gio will continue to stay heavily involved with it and work closely with both WEC series promoter Alain Blanchard and the organising clubs to ensure the best possible events during 2005 and beyond.

I want to create a standard in the World Enduro Championship because until now the riders have had to deal with different levels of organisation and different types of special test at each event, which is especially difficult as enduro is their job and they are trying to win a world championship. Some weeks the special tests would be very slow, some weeks dangerously fast. I want to work with the organisers so that everything is right for when the riders arrive at the competitions. This way I hope the riders will be happy and the organisers won't get disappointed when the riders say that they are unhappy with something.

'This year I will arrive at the race on the Monday before the event, which is still a little late but it is a start to improving things. I will pre-ride all of the checks for each event to ensure that the times the organisers have set are fair, and that the course is safe. I think that it is best to have a rider who is not from the organising club check the times because when you've helped organise the event you know the course and the terrain very well, which can cause problems.

'As far as the special tests go I will mainly be checking to see that they are safe for the riders and that if the weather gets bad that everything will be okay. These are, more or less, my concerns at world championship races this season.

'Basically, I will be the guy who is between

Enduro 2: 175-250cc 2T / 290-450cc 4T

While E1 has the highest number of potential race winners, it's in E2 where two of the WEC's biggest hitters come face-to-face. Stefan Merriman has moved up to the E2 class as reigning E1 world champion and Finn Samuli Aro joins E2 as reigning E3 world champion, making the Aro meets Merriman, KTM meets Yamaha battle probably the hardest fought in



the riders and the organisers. This way the riders can speak to me about things and then I can discuss them with the organisers. In the past, when riders have spoken directly with the organisers it has not been a good situation because often the organisers refuse to listen and it creates bad feeling, which we absolutely don't want.

'I'm in a good position to do this because I have a good relationship with the riders and the manufacturers, as well as with the organisers. I have been racing enduro for a long time and because of this people respect what I say. I know that it won't be an easy job, but it will be the first step and I think that it will improve the WEC.

'The problem is that the riders are professional, but the organisers are not - they have to take holidays to make the races. I believe that it is important that there is a tolerance and respect between the riders and the organisers and vice versa. I hope to mediate between everybody so that the World Enduro Championship can continue to move forward.'

WEC this season.

Both Merriman and Aro have met before, in the 2003 250cc two-stroke championship which Merriman won, but since then both riders have gone down the four-stroke route and are both keen to fill the void left behind by the series' US-bound number one, Juha Salminen. While both remain with the same teams that they raced for last year, the rider who gels with his 450 the quickest could well take the class win.

And whilst there is no denying that Samuli and Stefan start the season as favourites, there are a number of other riders with the potential to consistently join them on the podium. Starting with those who competed in E2 last year, Arnau Vilanova, the hard charging Spaniard, Italian KTM rider Alessandro Botturi, Honda-mounted Finn Valtteri Salonen and Gas Gas rider Paul Whibley all have what it takes to podium, all having done so last year.

As for the rest of the E2 entry, seven-time world champion Anders Eriksson is making a return to a 450cc thumper after last year's disappointing season in E3. Also riding four-stroke machinery are Yamaha France rider David Fretigne, Swede Bjorne Carlsson on his Husaberg and Finn Petri Pohjamo aboard his TM.

Adding to the mix is the unknown potential of the two-stroke mounted riders such as Portugal's Helder Rodrigues (Gas Gas), Italian Andrea Belotti (Husqvarna), Scot Euan McConnell (Honda), and former motocross rider Finn Miska Aaltonen (Gas Gas). So it's clear that the top ten places in the E2 class will certainly be hotly contested!

Enduro 3: 290-500cc 2T / 475-650cc 4T

With 39 riders pre-registered into the E3 class, as apposed to 67 in E2 and 58 in E1, the big bike class has lost some of its star names for '05. But despite this, three riders remain from last season - David Knight, Mika Ahola and Marko Tarkkala, all riders that played an important role in making the E3 class the most competitive in 2004.

David Knight starts as clear favourite to claim the title, having placed as a deserved runner-up to Samuli Aro last season and



The media will no doubt be following the Merriman/Aro battle very closely...

having recorded some important confidence-inspiring race wins ahead of the WEC season. Alongside Knighter sit two Finns - Husqvarna's Mika Ahola and KTM's latest signing, Marko Tarkkala. Both are fast, yet inconsistent and while there is no doubting that the pair will place on the podium at most races, whether they have what it takes to beat David remains to be seen. Those in the know suspect not.

The remaining riders in the E3 class are a mix of youth, ex-motocrossers and a former world champion. Frenchman Seb Guillaume has the potential to make it onto a podium having managed to claim one top three E3 finish in '04, but the remaining riders will likely squabble it out for the lower places. Italians Mario Rinaldi, Alessandro Zanni and Alessio Paoli, Spaniard Xevi Puigdemont, and Belgian Thierry Klutz are the most likely to perform strongly.

Whilst there are only three riders with a 'real' chance of topping the E3 class, it's certainly still going to be an exciting battle.

2005 WORLD ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP CALENDAR

ROUND 1	2-3 APR	GUADALAJARA	SPAIN
ROUND 2	9-10 APR	OUREM	PORTUGAL
ROUND 3	7-8 MAY	TOLMEZZO	ITALY
ROUND 4	4-5 JUN	GERNIKA	SPAIN
ROUND 5	2-3 JUL	DVUR KRALOVE	CZECH REPUBLIC
ROUND 6	23-24 JUL	DIGNE	FRANCE
ROUND 7	27-28 AUG	HEINOLA	FINLAND
ROUND 8	8-9 OCT	SERRES	GREECE
ROUND 9	15-16 OCT	BERGAMO	ITALY
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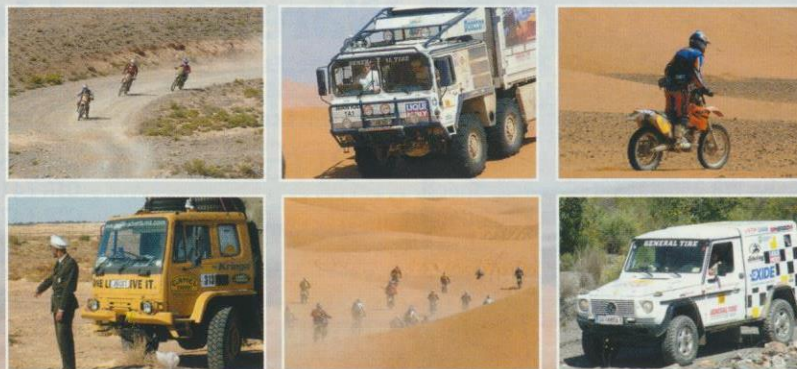
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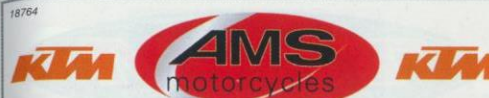
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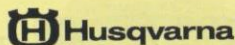
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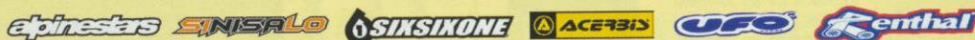
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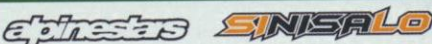
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Off The Road

(Part Four)

If at first you don't succeed...

In nine short months Mel has gone from off-road rookie to riding her first rally. Now it was time for her biggest challenge yet - entering her first enduro. But could she finish the job? Well... after a fashion...



One of the definitions of endurance in the Chambers dictionary is 'maximum performance under given conditions', which I feel is a rather fitting description of my initial enduro effort.

Not that I was expecting my first proper enduro to be a walk in the park you understand, but a more forgiving event would've been nice! As it was, I was signed up to take part in the Surrey Police Enduro down in Bagshot at the end of February, along with 180 other nutters.

Mind you, I've got nobody but myself to blame since the fact that it was a timecard affair should have indicated that maybe it wasn't quite the gentle bumble I was hoping for.

To cut a long and fairly humiliating story very short, I only managed one measly lap before

being forced to admit defeat, something I'm pretty bad at doing. But I had no choice in the matter after I thoroughly beat up my Yamaha WR250F by snapping the front brake lever clean off (no, I didn't have a spare) and somehow completely destroying the leccy start button, another first for the TBM accident file.

And due to the challenging going, I felt like a cast member in the sitcom Cheers - all the marshals knew my name - after I fell off for what felt like the hundredth time!

So, to drown out the office teasing and to exorcise my own enduro demons, I entered another event the following Sunday, this time a three-hour hare 'n' hounds scramble in Bovingdon, Bucks, at our local enduro club.

This time I wasn't taking any chances - after

checking out the comforting blurb on the club's website, *'We run fun three-hour events, often with a break in the middle for lunch... it certainly puts a smile on everyone's face'*, I knew this was the event for me. My confidence was further boosted after studying the entry list of 130-plus riders and realising they were almost all sportsman, with a healthy smattering of novices. Perfect.

As dep-ed James and I pulled into the meeting area (yep, he chose the short straw of looking after me again) we were greeted with a parc ferme covered in TBM bannering - always a welcoming sight. This time around I was riding two different bikes (A Husky TE250 in the morning and a Gasser EC200 in the afternoon for testing purposes - the

results of which you can read about in next month's TBM). Having never ridden a two-stroke enduro bike on dirt before, I decided to start on familiar territory with the thumper - the last thing I needed was to come a cropper on the more throttle-jockey-punishing stroker on the first lap.

The circuit was about four miles long and was designed to be an easy-going mixture of open grassy fields along with some tree-dodging in the woods - albeit with some slippery white rooty corners and mud-covered concrete areas.

Things didn't get off to a particularly flying start as the Husky's back end was slithering all over the show in the first fairly muddy section. After being launched through the air after about five minutes a very nice marshal helped me take most of the air out of the rear tyre, which greatly improved matters - thanks Rob.

Halfway round and my nerves were finally starting to settle down a bit. Choosing the TE to start on was a shrewd move as the thumper's low-down grunt and civilised throttle manners helped me out no-end, especially through the trees. Out on the open going and the Husky was great fun to hustle along. And even though it's obviously a little weightier than the Gasser, it wasn't too heavy to pick up after a tumble or two. And the electric-start was a bonus.

But as I was discovering, as a novice there's always something to watch out for. And I soon learnt the hard way on the concrete sections after scaring myself silly by accelerating down a straight with mud-clogged tyres, and then almost swapping both ends of the bike three times before the first corner!

A lesson sadly not learnt by a few of my other fellow competitors, including one poor soul on a KTM who locked up the front-end on a corner and ended up flying off onto the verge



Race face on and away Mel goes at the start of her second enduro...



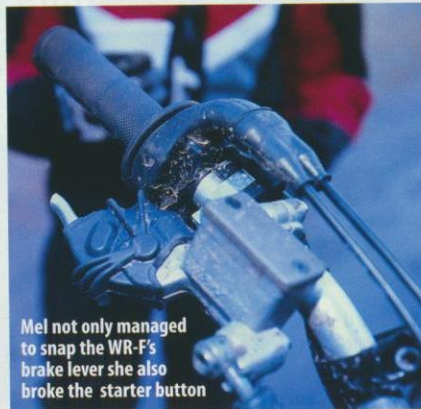
Off The Road (Part Four)

with the bike showering sparks as it slid across the concrete. Luckily, only the wind (and a little pride) was knocked out of his sails.

As lunchtime loomed I really didn't want to swap onto the Gasser as I was bonding with the Husky nicely and the course was drying out and getting a lot grippier.

But change I had to, and as soon as I jumped aboard the 200 the difference was apparent - lower seat height, slimmer and lighter. After charging away from the start, this time with the course being run in reverse, it didn't take long before I got into a spot of bother as I grabbed a handful of throttle and speared off into the undergrowth. I was expecting the Gasser's high kick-start to perhaps pose a problem but it was incredibly easy to use and the 200 fired into life all afternoon with no more than two attempts at every time.

Keeping it happy by constantly being on the throttle was a little alien to me after the four-stroke's laid-back approach but I soon got used



Mel not only managed to snap the WR-F's brake lever she also broke the starter button

to it, plus it was a whole lot more agile and turned into corners sharply rather than falling into them as the Husky did.

But after all that, did I actually finish the event? Yes, thank God, much to everyone's relief here at TBM Towers. And, after clocking up ten laps and thoroughly enjoying myself, I even managed to come 118th out of 131 riders!

But there's no rest for the wicked around here

so the guys in the office have come up with my next challenge - a spot of desert riding in Morocco. Watch this space...

A big thanks to Dick Coles and all the marshals at the SurreyPol Enduro for their endless patience. Also to Wayne Richards and the Chiltern Hills Enduro Club for all their help and for running such a good beginner's event. Check out their site: chilternhills.info...

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Honda XR400R, 2001, 5000km, T&T, frameguards, Renthals, new discs, twin headlight / Wexr seatcover / oil / filters, original headlight, enduro tyres, £2,550. Tel 07979 857084 (Wales)

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Suzuki DR-Z400E, 2001, 51-reg, T&T, under 2000 miles, One Ind graphics, ProTaper bars, new pads, some spares, exc cond, £2350 (Worcs)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, Dec 2003, taxed, 700 miles, Renthals, pipe insert, Acerbis 'guards, no off-road use, as new, £3000. Tel 01225 743415 (Wilts)

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Yamaha TT250R, 1998, S-reg, road reg'd, elec start, ideal green laner / enduro / commuter, good cond, £1750. Tel 01425 476948 (Hants)

Suzuki DR250, T&T, elec start, USD forks, adjustable ride height, £1250 ono. Tel 01708 869846 (Essex)

Yamaha WR250F, 2003, 53-reg, full Yamaha road kit, Renthals, handguards, green lane use only, vgc, £3600. Tel 01244 539308 (Chester)

Kawasaki KLX300, 1998, R-reg, T&T, well maintained, good cond, £1650 ono. Tel (mobile) 07976 806021 or 01462 711177 (Herts)

Honda CRM250 mkII, 1991, MoT, DEP system, brushguards, lots of spares inc wheels, no expense spared, totally reliable, great bike, £1700. Tel 07739 174511 (Bristol)

Husqvarna TE610, 02-reg, T&T, UK spec, service history, mainly green lane use, good cond, £2800 ono. Tel 01432 820175 (Hereford)

Yamaha WR250F, 04 model, green lane use only, mint cond, £3600 ono. Tel 01623 476770 (Notts)

CCM 644DS, 2002, yellow, 4800miles, spare consumables plus cans / jets, A1 cond, £3200. Tel (mobile) 07747 822204 or 01322 523852 (Kent)

Suzuki DR350E, Nov 1994, T&T, Supertrapp exhaust, bashplate, Acerbis 'guards, good condition, light use only, £1495 ono. Tel 01981 250749 (Hereford)

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Honda XR400R, 2002, one owner, lots of extras, trail use only, spare supermoto wheels, £3150. Tel 01403 211208 (W Sussex)

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Honda CRM250 mkIII, 1994, L-reg, red / purple, road use only, vgc, £1500. Tel (mobile) 07733 385288 or 01273 292718 (Sussex)

KTM 400 LC4, 2000, X-reg, MoT, very low miles, elec start, new c+s, exc cond, £2450. Tel 01233 851112 (Kent)

Suzuki DR350SEW, Dec '98, T&T, 7100 miles, new c+s / tyres, Renthals Dakar bars, bashplate etc, maintained regardless of cost, new toy forces sale, £1750 ono. Tel 02380 580484 (Hants)

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Gas Gas EC250, 2000, W-reg, T&T, new tyres, mostly green laned, well maintained, high spec bike, vgc, will be missed, £1750. Tel (mobile) 07717 291985 or 01980 652908 (Wilts)

Suzuki DR-Z400S, 2001, blue, T&T, 4000 miles, road use only, exc cond, £2500. Tel (mobile) 07711 447692 or 01952 813129 (Shrops)

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Honda XR650R, 2004, road reg'd, taxed, only 450 miles, road use only, £3995 ono. Tel 01942 521426 (Wigan)

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Honda XR250R, March 1999, T-reg, T&T, white, Renthals, brushguards, good cond, can email pics, £1800. Tel 07753 836031 (Wilts)

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Aprilia Pegaso, 1997, MoT, low miles, centre stand, good cond, £1250. Tel 01787 883302 (Suffolk)

Husaberg FE450E, 2004 model, road legal, elec start, light green lane use, well maintained, exc cond, priced to sell at £3300 ono. Tel 01229 587834 (Cumbria)

KTM 200EXC, 2001 model, X-reg, T&T, used for one year's green laning, lack of use forces sale, £2000 ono. Tel 01237 471863 (Devon)

Honda XR400R, 2002, 600km, light use only, extras, as new, £2850 ovno. Tel 01302 840000 (S Yorks)

Yamaha Serow, 1991, T&T, good cond, £1095. Also Montesa Cota 250, 1977, T&T, good cond, £895. Tel 01652 658787 (Lincs)

KTM 640 Adventure, 2001, Y-reg, used for green laning and work, new bike forces sale, vgc, £1995. Tel (eves only) 01509 262136 (Leics)

Honda XR185 twin-shock, 1985, one careful owner, stored since 1994, enduro / trail ready, garage sort-out, £650 ono. Tel 01477 534425 (Cheshire)

Honda XR400R, many extras inc Tag bars, sump / frame / handguards, regularly serviced, green lane use only, exc cond, £2000 ono. Tel (mobile) 07970 104484 or 01204 853284 (Lancs)

CCM 604E Sport, 2001 model, T&T, only 875 miles, elec start, almost showroom cond, £2500. Tel 01491 834059 (Oxon)

Husaberg FE450E, 2005 model, four months old, road legal, elec start, 30 hour's light green lane use, as new, bargain at £3900. Tel 01229 587834 (Cumbria)

Honda XR400R, 51-reg, 4000km, green lane use only, too many extras to list, used twice last year, mint cond, £2500. Tel (mobile) 07775 870828 or 0121 745 7360 (Warks)

KTM 640, 2002, taxed, great bike in exc cond, £2700 ono. Tel 01825 723146 (Sussex)

KTM 200EXC(GS), 02-reg, taxed, autolube, 12L tank, extras, spares, workshop CD manuals, ready for enduro / trail, £2350. Tel 01923 352828 (Herts)

BMW R1150GS, 2000, W-reg, black, 4600 miles, one owner, new tyres, all standard, road use only, immaculate cond, £6350. Tel (eves or w / e) 01233 851112 (Kent)

Yamaha WR400E, 2001, Y-reg, one owner, very tidy standard bike, exc cond, baby forces reluctant sale, £2650. Tel (mobile) 07841 656688 or 01225 768183 (Wilts)

Yamaha WR450E, 2004, UK bike, taxed, Renthals, hand / sumpguards, maintained regardless of cost, mint cond, £4250 ono. Tel 0114 296 7406 (S Yorks)

Beta Rev 3 trials bike, 250cc, 2002, road reg'd, one owner, some spares, good cond, £1450. Tel 01376 516051 (Essex)

Suzuki DR350SE, 1999, T-reg, 6100 miles, green lane use, vgc, £2095. Tel 01778 425509 (Lincs)

Suzuki DR-Z400, 52-reg, CRD exhaust, bashplate, handguards, braided hose, trail mods, wants nothing, the best you'll find, £2595. Tel 01823 433972 (Somerset)

Honda TLR250R, 1986, T&T, a few road miles, LDT or trail, showroom cond, £1850. Tel (after 6pm) 01792 522444 (W Glam)

Honda NX650 Dominator, 1995, M-reg, T&T, good cond, bad back forces sale, £1200. Tel 01235 848420 (Oxon)

Honda XR350RE, 1984, red, complete engine rebuild, all original parts, perfect cond, first to see will buy, £1200 ono. Tel 07971 273986 (W Mids)

Honda CRM250 mkII, MoT, new top-end / rear tyre / pads, DEP silencer, very clean, £1600 ono. Tel 01290 810248 (Ayrshire)

Honda XR650R, 2004, 1400km, CRD sumpguard, Renthals, handguards, green lane use, great bike, well maintained, A1 cond, £3700 ovno. Tel 01485 528963 (Norfolk)

KTM 525MXC, 2004 model, new tyres, extras, never raced, as new, £3800 ono. Tel (mobile) 07768 347792 or 01895 464409 (Surrey)

Honda CRM250 mkII, T&T, DEP system, sumpguard, new c+s / pads, light green lane use only, £1550.

FREE CLASSIFIEDS

Tel 01428 682651 (Surrey)

Suzuki RMX250, 1999, T&T, £1000 spent on engine, new c+s/tyres/seat cover, handguards, must be seen, 1750.

Tel (mobile) 07771 660601 or 01934 862086 (Bristol)

Suzuki DR350SE, R-reg, some spares, good cond, £1500. Tel 07866 471762 (Herts)

Honda XL600, 1986, T&T, Laser exhaust, new battery, on-/off-road, superb cond, £1495. Tel (mobile) 07715 731333 or 01386 833210 (Worcs)

Yamaha XT500 rolling chassis, c/w engine, tank, seat and switchgear, missing log book, carb and front springs, exc twin-shock resto project, £400. Tel 01743 790221 (Shrops)

CCM 404DS, silver, 900 miles, easy use from new, great bike that needs to be used, £3274. Tel 01323 761566 (Sussex)

Suzuki DR250RS, 1995, DOHC model, T&T, Renthals, bark-busters, new c+s, recent filters and pads, some spares, good overall cond, £1200 ono. Tel 01793 870064 (Wilts)

BMW R1100GS, N-reg, engine / tank / headlight guards, new tyres. Serviced, full Givi panniers, Touratech seat, wide pegs, sidepanels, £2400 ono. Tel 07718 291281 (Cumbria)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, 2001, X-reg, taxed, 6000 miles, one owner, new c+s/pads, immaculate, plus set of SM wheels with disc and c+s, will separate, £2900 ono. Tel (mobile) 07976 731452 or 01457 877246 (Lancs)

Honda XR400, 2004, elec start, 16L tank plus original, Renthals, handguards, CRD bashplate, new Michelins, road legal gear, £3475. Tel 07970 716613 (Lancs)

Honda XR650L, 1993, elec start US import, T&T, new c+s/tyres, spare wheels / forks etc, ideal trail / commuter, good cond, £1650. Tel 01926 817183 (Warks)

Gas Gas EC250, 2003 model, road reg'd, one owner, some extras, green lane use only, good cond, £2495 ono. Tel 01246 557892 (Derbys)

TM 250E, X-reg, fully loaded, exc cond, reluctant sale, £1750. Tel 07813 689072 (Shrops)

KTM 625SMC, 2002, taxed, 3000 miles, supermoto wheels. Tel 020 8368 1095 (London)

Suzuki DR350, 1995, M-reg, T&T, 16000 miles, two owners, elec start, well maintained, green lane use, £1200 ono. Tel 01830 520575 (Tyne & Wear)

KTM 200EXC, 2003, 24 hour's use, clutchsaver, bashplate, '05 Excels, '04 rear-end plus originals, green lane use only, vgc, £2900. Tel (days) 07773 808890 or (eves) 01432 359768 (Hereford)

KTM 400EXC, 2002, 2500 miles, bashplate, clutchsaver, oil/filter after every ride, meticulously maintained, excellent condition, can email pics, £2995. Tel (mobile) 07764 229741 or 020 8647 6040 (Surrey)

Suzuki DR-Z400S, 2000, W-reg, yellow, T&T, Renthals, new c+s, vgc, £2450. Tel (after 09/04) 01935 873319 (Dorset)

Yamaha XT1225 Serow, sorted reliable bike, TRF member, ring for full details, £1450 ono. Tel John on 07836 250824 (Leics)

KTM 200EXC, Y-reg, only 2000 miles, green lane only, excellent condition, £2150 ono. Tel (mobile) 07765 547871 or 01263 735776 (Norfolk)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, 2001, T&T, recent c+s/rear tyre, IMS tank, CRD system plus all usual extras, house move forces sale hence £2000. Tel 07759 187500 (London)

KTM 250EXC 2T, 2003 model, Red Bull graphics, clutch saver, well maintained, excellent cond, photos on request, £2750. Tel (mobile) 07951 795306 or 01992 442257 (Herts)

KTM 450EXC, 2004 model, road reg'd, taxed, CRD bashplate, brushguards, well maintained, £3600. Tel (mobile) 07812 708168 or 01782 773846 (Staffs)

Wilcomoto 500c MXer, British-made, never been used since new in 1984, first production bike serial no 0001, very rare, £3000. Tel (mobile) 07968 293113 or 01626 332763 (Devon)

Beta 125c twin-shock enduro / trail bike, needs tidying, not registered, £700 ono. Tel (mobile) 07968 293113 or 01626 332763 (Devon)

Kawasaki KDX200 E1, 1989, F-reg, Renthals, handguards, Boyesen reeds, DEP silencer, new pads, £575.

Tel (mobile) 07836 226462 or 020 8204 9116 (Middx)

Honda CR250, 1990, G-reg, T&T, lights etc, good cond, £900. Tel 07734 605078 (E Sussex)

KTM Duke II, 2001, T&T, FSH, almost mint cond, £3200.

Tel (mobile) 07855 272658 or 01246 863936 (Derbys)

KTM 950 Adventure, 53-reg, 4700 miles, just serviced, all mods and warranty upgrades done, engine bars, pannier frames, too fast for me, £5750. Tel 01258 861266 (Dorset)

Yamaha DT125R, 2002, blue, under 5000 miles, very reliable, just used for work, ideal first bike, only £1350 ono. Tel 07921 169049 (Cleveland)

Suzuki DR250, 1992, blue / white, T&T, elec start, USD forks, height adjustable suspension, £1250 ono. Tel (mobile) 07951 226720 or 01708 869846 (Essex)

Suzuki DR250RS twin cam, 1995, MoT, elec start, adjustable seat height, excellent versatile green laner, like a mini DR-Z, lovely cond. Tel (mobile) 07841 741500 or 01386 554572 (Worcs)

KTM 450 EXC, 2004, road reg'd, taxed, extras inc radguards, QD sumpguard, KTM factory graphics, handguards, £4100 ovno. Tel (mobile) 07900 243529 or 01256 330359 (Hants)

Husaberg FE501, 2003, dual start, new c+s, well maintained, green lane TRF use, £2900 ono. Tel 07790 003019 (Notts)

Suzuki DR350 enduro, 1994, L-reg, yellow, good cond, £1750. Tel 07968 503752 (Derbys)

Yamaha TY 80, suit 7-10 yr old, with all gear, original cond, £650 ono. Tel (mobile) 07909 924607 or 01305 781537 (Dorset)

Kawasaki KLX300R, 2002, road reg'd, new rad scoops, sumpguard, fantastic green laner, some spares, standard bike in good cond, £2350 ono. Tel 01452 610794 (Gloucs)

Yamaha DT125R, 2003, black/silver, taxed, 6000miles, excellent condition, Renthals, full DEP exhaust, £2000 ono. Tel (mobile) 07732 807395 or 0121 745 4936 (Midlands)

Yamaha WR250F, 52-reg, low hours, FMF Powercore IV with Powerbomb, frameguards, only used twice since June hence sale, £2850 ono. Tel (mobile) 07866 685531 or 01275 880333 (Somerset)

Aprilia Pegaso 650, July 2001, silver, only 3500km, Datatag, Patriot SpyBall, immaculate, £2350 ono. Tel (mobile) 07973 114 320 or 01625 616250 (Cheshire)

Honda Africa Twin, 1996, T&T, only 23000 miles, heated grips, centre stand, standard bike, exc cond, genuine bike, £2595 ono. Tel (mobile) 07951 411778 or 01204 468369 (Lancs)

Honda XR400, 1999, V-reg, white, T&T, 5600km, all original parts, extras, plus supermoto wheels and FMF Q-pipe, exc cond, £2700. Tel 01264 335097 (Hants)

Honda CRM250 mkIII, 1994, L-reg, purple/yellow, T&T, vgc, £1595 ono. Tel (mobile) 07773 319399 or 01691 658447 (Shrops)

Honda XR400, 1999, V-reg, white, T&T, 5600km, all original parts, extras, plus supermoto wheels and FMF Q-pipe, exc cond, £2700. Tel 01264 335097 (Hants)

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one of the buckles and can't find a dealer that supplies them.

Tel 01442 386019 (Herts)
Wanted KLR600 owners handbook, B-model elec start if possible. Plus same for KLR250. Tel 01978 821519 (Wrexham)

Wanted size 11 MX/enduro boots, for 15 year-old starting out, under £40 please. Tel 07962 023961 (Surrey)

Wanted enduro/supermoto bike, 250cc upwards, prefer YZ426F/CRF450, swap for GSKR600X, W-reg, 20000 miles, worth £3000. Tel 0131 453 3170 (Lothian)

Wanted DR-Z bits, workshop manual, seat, wheels, engine, carb, tank, clocks, consider complete bike / non-runner for spares. Tel 01792 535738 (Glam)

Wanted BMW R80G/S books/brochures etc. Also parts for rebuild, consider complete bike/basket case, will collect. Tel 07904 505496 (Lancs)

Wanted supermoto wheels for WR400F, must be black Excel or Morad rims, silver or gold Talons, must be good cond. Also FMF Q-pipe or full system, in good cond. Tel 07976 075482 (Wigan)

Wanted trials/MX bike to restore, anything considered. Tel 01909 550774 (Yorks)

Wanted DR125 crank or bottom-end, cash waiting. Tel Dale on 07976 273798 (Hereford)

Wanted any enduro bike from 2000 model onward, on-/off-road, 400-450cc, in good cond for £2000. Tel 01235 833665 (Oxon)

Wanted for 1986 XT600 Tenere, r/h sidepanel and handguards in blue. Tel 07702 011608 (Cheshire)

Wanted rear pegs and brackets for 1992 Serow, plus silencer for same, any cond. Tel (after 7pm) 01942 255707 (Lancs)

Wanted standard flywheel for DR-Z400E, cash waiting. Tel Neil on 07831 586691 (Lincs)

Wanted pillion pegs for Honda XR600R. Tel 07764 476934 (Hants)

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KDX220 parts from 2003 bike, headlight, front fender, sidepanels, rad shrouds, FMF Gnarly pipe, DEP silencer, all as new, £250 ono.

Tel 07961 147805 (Beds)
XR650R overland/rallye kit, long range tanks front and rear, rallye exhaust, sumpguard, racks etc, pro built, email pics available, £1800. Tel 07939 233687 (Hants)

OE pipe to fit Yamaha YZ250F, brand new, £250 ono plus p&p. Tel 07771 833954 (Dorset)

XR600 overland parts, Acerbis 22L fuel tank, £105. Suede seat cover, £95. Sumpguard-mounted toolbox, £45.

Tel 01625 668966 (Cheshire)

Ikon gold top clamps and bar mounts to fit 48mm WP KTM's, multi-adjustable, virtually unmarked, with original packaging, £65 ono. Tel 01600 715883 (Gwent)

Standard wheels for CCM 404, discs, sprocket, virtually new tyres, good cond, £300. Tel 01908 562837 (Bucks)

XR400R parts, IMS wide pegs, unused, £35. Talon lowering link, with bearings, exc cond, £25. Tel 01895 820394 (Middx)

G-Force end can for 2000/01 KTM LC4 640, good cond, £60. Tel 07962 023961 (Surrey)

Honda 250 Baja rolling chassis, everything but engine, not reg'd, exc project, £1200. Tel 01235 847237 (Oxon)

SFB Racing ignition cover for KTM 4T, gold, unmarked in original packaging, £65 ono. Also 2005 rad shrouds with Six Days graphics, and unused Six Days fender graphics.

Tel 01600 715883 (Gwent)

Pair of MX tyres, 18in rear, brand new, £55 the pair. Also mousse changing machine, unused in box, £45. Tel (mobile) 07779 417932 or 0114 247 8886 (Yorks)

Honda Dominator parts, flip screen, brand new, £20. Original exhausts, vgc, £45. XL/XR600 manual, £5. Tel 01673 849414 (Lincs)

KTM rally fuel tank, will fit Adventure, brand new in box, £180. Tel 01423 711570 (N Yorks)

Pro Circuit T4 system for 2001/02 WR426E, tuneable end-caps/noise suppressors, exc cond, £210 ono. Tel 07739 462222 (Notts)

SM wheels for Gas Gas, 320mm disc, Michelin Pilots, complete front brake, rear disc, sprocket, used once, mint, £600. Tel 01243 670688 (W Sussex)

Honda XL1000V parts, Technoflex shock, £200. New clutch/throttle cables, £10. K&N filter, £15. XT350 wheels, £40 ono. Tel 0121 360 2766 (W Mids)

XR125L3/4 wheels, with disc and rear sprocket, £200 the pair. Tel (mobile) 07976 069619 or 01634 720763 (Kent)

Alpinestar Tech 5s, white/blue, size 6, brand new, £120. Wheels for CCM 604E, brand new, Talons/gold Excels, £395. Tel 01480 471919 (Camps)

CRD end can for DR-Z400S, £95. Lowering link, £15. Plus used plastics etc. Tel 01628 541075 (Berks)

KTM SM wheels from 2001 520EXC, front disc, sprockets, chain, caliper and bracket, Michelin Pilots, £650. Tel (mobile) 07850 741439 or 01524 64373 (Lancs)

KTM plastics for 520EXC, two silver/two black sidepanels, two silver rad scoops, silver headlight, all new and unused, offers. Tel (mobile) 07850 741439 or 01524 64373 (Lancs)

Husaberg spares, sumpguard, drilled waterpump guard, two oil filters, front pads, front lever, will split, call with offer. Tel 07803 898804 (Yorks)

FMF Q-pipe for 2002/03 CRF450, used but as new, still with box, £180. Tel (mobile) 07843 202528 or 0121 745 4936 (W Mids)

DRZ-400E standard inlet cam, will fit S-model, £80 inc p&p. 436cc big-bore liner, only £40.00 inc p&p.

Tel Neil on 07831 586691 (Lincs)

KTM MXC 13L tank and seat for 2003 model 4T, will fit others, £150. Tel (mobile) 07812 708168 or 01782 773846 (Staffs)

CRD bashplate and Acerbis large tank to fit XR400R, £130. Tel 07887 996255 (Tyne and Wear)

Stolen KTM 5

