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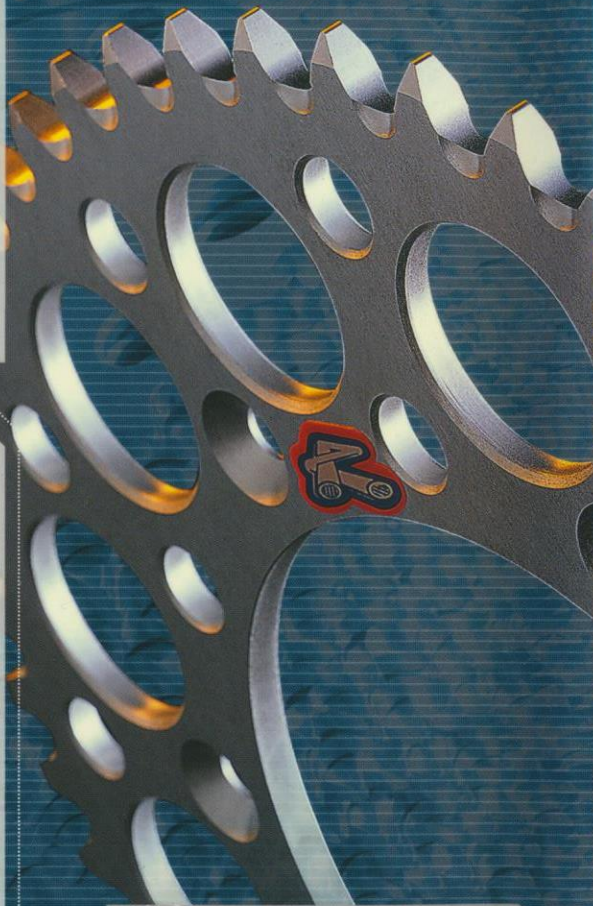


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Inside:

FOUR x 450s

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TAKES ON ITS RIVALS...



PLUS:

FIRST LOOK...

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 colour: Black

ELBOW

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EDITORIAL

Animal Magic



Contrary to all the doom-mongering surrounding DEFRA's latest attack on off-roading, I remain quietly optimistic about the long-term viability of off-road sport in the UK. Because what DEFRA's draconian re-drafting of the rules and its subsequent and rather hasty policy U-turn has shown us, is that this government accepts that grass-roots level motorsport has a right to exist - or more likely that DEFRA doesn't want to be held responsible for farmers losing another valuable part of their income.

Either way we've hopefully established the principle that motorsport helps contribute towards the rural economy - something we already knew of course - now we have to convince the doubters about its eco-friendliness.

So just how eco-friendly can off-road riding be? Well, listening to the radio the other day I heard a bunch of shooters putting forward the argument that blasting a slow-witted bird out of the sky - a process known as 'conservation' in the shires apparently - is extremely good for the environment. The logic goes something like

this - in order to rear pheasants, the landowner has to provide a habitat which is both well looked after and diverse - viz the untimely termination of a few of our avian friends can help stop the polar ice-caps from melting thus drowning the good people of Yarmouth. Whether you believe that that is a good or bad thing is not really at issue here, the point is that we could put forward the same argument for off-roading.

How so? Well there's already a body of evidence which shows that riding green lanes helps prevent unchecked vegetation overgrowth and keeps the lanes clear for other users. But I would go further and argue that in certain areas, trail and enduro riders must surely be responsible for the widespread distribution of spores, seeds and pollen.

Indeed I did once hear that a rare native plant had become re-established in an ancient woodland following an enduro which used a part of the wood during an event. The upshot of which was that since this race had taken place, not only had these rare flowers grown back, but that they in turn had encouraged more butterflies and bees to visit, and that had meant more humming-birds, kingfishers, swallows and mongoose, and that had encouraged the return of Bambi and her mates because they knew that all the good folk of happy woodsville were back in town.

Or something like that.

Anyway it just goes to show that if you can make an eco-credible case for the peppering of live animals with (non)-lead buckshot, we've surely got to be able to come up with our own polemic to show that riding dirt bikes across farmers' fields will assuredly encourage the imminent return of the Wild Boar, Timber Wolf, and ultimately the Woolly Mammoth to our countryside. Who'd want to argue against that I wonder...

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TWIN PEAKS

Aprilia debuts 450 Enduro V-Twin...

Aprilia debuted a factory version of their 450cc twin cylinder SXV enduro bike at the Italian round of the WEC last month. The machine ridden by former 125 world champ Stefano Passeri utilises Aprilia's novel 449cc, 72 degree, V-twin motor in a bizarre cast alloy and steel trellis frame. Although factory insiders were remaining tight-lipped about the V-twin's WEC race debut, two things were clear - that it was incredibly powerful and amazingly quiet. Although a super-moto version of the bike won the S2 world championship last year, a factory MXer was reportedly much harder to ride. That didn't stop

Passeri scoring points on the second day in Italy though.

Whether the V-twin Aprilia will feature in more WEC rounds this year or if this was just a one-off ride in their 'home event' wasn't clear, but rest assured we'll be aiming to bring you a test report of the factory bike at the earliest opportunity...



Fancy a V-twin enduro bike? Aprilia's revolutionary 450 twin made its debut in enduro form at the Italian round of the WEC. Just check out that funky frame...



Dakar Dreams

The 28th Dakar rallye will start from Lisbon in Portugal on 1 January 2006 and finish in Dakar 15 days later, making it the shortest rally route in recent years.

Designed by the last winner of the 'Gilles Lalay Classic' David Castera, the route promises to be more focused on the technical and navigational aspects than on distance alone.

The first 200km special stage will use the Portugal Baja route, before the Rallye moves

onto Morocco, Mauritania, Mali, Guinea (first time there since 1996) and finally Senegal.

Key differences include refuelling stops every 250km instead of 350km, allowing standard enduro bikes (with a rally tank) to take part. The race speed limit has also been cut to 150kmh, which aims to level the playing field between the 450s and the bigger capacity machines.

There's also a new satellite monitoring system enabling real-time competitor position monitoring.

Log onto dakar.com for more information regarding the 2006 rallye.



The Dakar Rallye has just got a whole load easier for hobby riders thanks to rule changes which come into effect for the 2006 event!

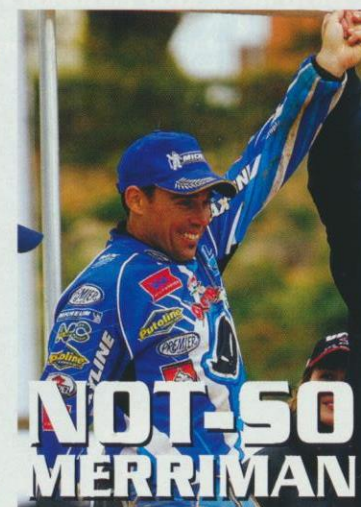
DEFRA U-turn

Unlucky for some, but not for off-road motorsport, on Friday 13 May DEFRA announced a revision to the controversial SPS rules that had been threatening to effectively ban off-road in the UK.

Updated guidance on non-agricultural land use during the SPS 10-month qualifying period was released just three days before the original scheme's deadline for farmers.

Lord Bach, Minister for Sustainable Farming and Food, said: 'DEFRA received a number of representations from motorsport interests following the issue of new guidance on 29 March. Having considered these, I am happy to announce the publication of updated guidance, which now provides for motorsports to take place on up to 28 days during farmers' 10-month eligibility period on land used in support of 2005 Single Payment claims'.

However, we're not out of the woods just yet - SPS guidance will be reviewed for 2006 and beyond, after seeing how this first year pans out. **See page 14 for the full story...**



NOT-SO MERRIMAN

It looks like four-time WEC champ Stefan Merriman's quest for his fifth title has been all but ruled out this year after a serious crash at the Italian round of the World Championship.

The Kiwi rider high-sided his Yamaha WR450F early on day one and was hit by the bike. He got back on to finish the special test but was later rushed to hospital where his spleen was removed.

It's expected he'll be well enough to compete in round four in Spain on 4-5 June but the 61-point difference between Merriman (75pts) and leader Finn Samuli Aro (136pts) may be too big a gap to bridge.



CARRY ON CAMBRIAN

This year's Cambrian Rally will be held on Saturday 22 and Sunday 23 October. Now in its 11th year, the predominately roadbook event will for the first time feature checkpoints to ensure riders complete the course.

The first day will be approximately 100 miles including two special tests, while Sunday's route will be around 120 miles long. The whole course is designed so that even the biggest trailies can get round comfortably.

Entry fee is £100 (including evening buffet) and priority will be given to those on trail machines. Log onto enduronews.com for regs.



Motorcycle Mafioso

Fancy trail riding in the beautiful island of Sicily? A new tour company, Sicilia Offroad, is now offering a variety of guided off-road tours across the entire island.

A day's riding will typically cover 75-95 miles and include ancient stone tracks and forest, sand and clay trails. A day costs 199 euros and includes experienced local guide, bike hire, fuel, B&B, lunch, dinner and

third party insurance, although you will need to bring your own kit. Also available is a 5-6 day tour around the whole of Sicily.

For more experienced riders there's the ideal opportunity to get involved in the local 'Motocavalcate', which are organised rides with local trail riders tackling more advanced trails. Check out the website siciliaoffroad.com for further details.

Next Month...

Next month's TBM will likely include some, all or none of the following:

- The launch test of BMW's exclusive new 1200cc HP2 boxer being ridden in the mountains of Spain.
- A low seat height test of a number of small

- capacity trailies including one from China. Just how good can a brand new £1500 trailie actually be?
- Archives: something old... rides something not quite so old!
- 100s of free classifieds.
- T-Mag Trials section.
- er... loads more stuff!

SNIPPETS

★ ON TRIAL

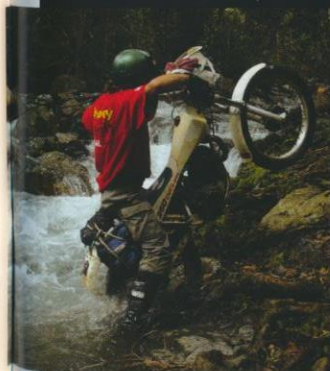
Feedback for TBM's new Trials Mag supplement has (so far) been very positive. Here's a selection of what a few of you guys have told us:

'Congratulations to you all - a shockingly refreshing take on trials to an area of the sport that has been deprived of non-TMX journalism for some years.'

'Great mag, great trials review, hope this can be continued. Just shows that an honest test can be carried out with good and bad points given. Well done TBM.'

'Having read the trials content in this month's TBM I think you have proved that you can produce an alternative, informative and entertaining mag for the trials market. I would buy it for sure and so would the vast majority [of trials riders] if it became available.'

Thanks guys, we really do value all your feedback (good or bad) so please email us on trials@trailbikemag.com with your views. Remember, it's up to you if trials in TBM stays or goes...



★ TRIAL TIME

The new TBM-sponsored 2005 trail bike / trials championship starts on 30 July, with the first round, the Ivor Morkott LDT, being hosted by the Caerphilly Club. Entry forms are available on acu.org.uk.

MY FIRST BIKE

FORMER SPEEDWAY STAR BERT HARKINS RUNS THE SUCCESSFUL ACERBIS AND SCOTT 'IMPORTERSHIP' BERT HARKINS RACING...



When TBM asked me to write about my first bike I wondered if they meant my first road bike, a 200cc Triumph Tiger Cub, my first road-race bike, a 250cc Velocette (!), or my first speedway bike, a very old 500cc methanol-burning JAP.

Anyway, from an early age, I wanted to race speedway, but by the time I was 16, there were no speedway teams left in Scotland so I saved up my baw-bees [cash] and bought a second-hand Triumph Tiger Cub. This was my pride and joy even though it had a habit of chewing up big ends. Somehow it took forever to get a new big-end sent up to the Glasgow dealer, JR Alexander Ltd, where I was working as a penniless apprentice mechanic - no 'next day delivery' back then.

Eventually, the wee Cub was back on the road again and a speedway track was due to open in Motherwell, just outside of Glasgow. The promoter, Ian Hoskins, advertised for grasstrack riders or even any motorcyclist to come along and have a ride - so never having raced grass or speedway, I went along on the Cub to see what it was all about.

Painted pudding basin helmet, American army goggles (this was before Scott goggles were even invented!) and a leather flying jacket with fur-lined collar - not quite the attire that an aspiring

world champion would wear these days, but back then it was all I had. Now even a complete novice won't be seen dead without the latest Kevlar trickery, carbon helmet and three bikes!

Anyway, I even got to wobble around the speedway track, but almost fell off with shock when Scottish champion Bill Landels came blasting past me in a flat-out slide. Very demoralising.

Speedway only lasted a few weeks at Motherwell so I joined my friend, Denis Gallagher for a season of road racing in Scotland and even the Southern 100 in the Isle of Man. Good fun, but I still wanted to ride Speedway. When the Edinburgh Monarchs track reopened at Old Meadowbank, I sold all my other motorcycle gear and bought an old (very old) long-stroke JAP. It cost me all of £50, but the rider I bought it from, Glaswegian Jimmy Tannock, took pity on me and gave me a fiver discount. Even now Jimmy tries to get that fiver back, saying that he set me on the road to fame and fortune, but so far, I still have neither fame nor fortune.

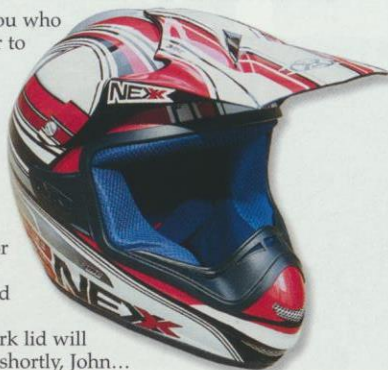
My speedway career progressed slowly from there - it took me ten years to become an overnight success, but I will never forget that wee Tiger Cub. Although I reckon that if it was around now, the number plate - SL4789 - would be worth more than the bike!

NEXX TIME

Well done to all those of you who guessed the correct answer to last month's 'Win a Nexx helmet' competition. 'The correct way through boggy terrain is...'

of course, any way you can get through! The lucky winner was John Walsh with his tie-breaker of 'Blez's excuse for getting stuck... I found the bog okay but I couldn't find the paper.'

A red Nexx X20 Pro Spark lid will be winging its way to you shortly, John...



GOING UP

More good news for overall motorcycle sales, up another five-percent on last month's figures. The rising trend carries over into the Adventure Sport category with an impressive nine-percent hike partly due to the big Beemer shifting another 251 machines! Over in the Trail and Enduro camp the overall figure has climbed another two-percent on last month, and there's no stopping Honda's XR125L with yet another 100 units sold. Lower down the chart it's been a battle in the middleweight class with the Yamaha WR450F just overhauling KTM's 450EXC for fifth position.

ADVENTURE SPORT

1	BMW R1200GS	743
2	Honda XL125V	215
3	Triumph 955 Tiger	162
4	KTM 640 SM	143
5	Honda XLV650V	139

TRAIL/ENDURO

1	Honda XR125L	277
2	Honda CRF250X	168
3	Suzuki RV125	154
4	Yamaha DT125	140
5	Yamaha WR450F	127



SNIPPETS

THIEVING SCUM

A dying man's dirtbike was stolen as he lay next to it in Choats Road Quarry, in Barking, east London on Sunday 1 May.

Paramedics treated Robert Sutcliffe 38, at the scene of the accident after he apparently lost control of his Yamaha but were unable to save his life. Meantime heartless thieves made off with his bike.

Police returned to the quarry a week later to appeal for witnesses amongst riders, but at the time of going to press there have been no further developments. The stolen bike's number plate is T698 PVM - if you know of any information that could help catch the thieves call Barking and Dagenham police station on 020 8984 1212.

TOP SHOP

Bike Frenzy is a new off-road bike shop open seven days a week on the Surrey / Kent border. Stocking a large range of spares, accessories and clothing there's free parking, a café and toilets plus free tea and coffee for any cold and tired trail riders. Try bikefrenzy.com for more details or call on 01959 573737.

JOIN THE CLUB

Trail riders in the Greater Manchester area now have a new local TRF club. Meeting at the Arden Arms, Bredbury on the second and fourth Mondays of the month, all trail riders are welcome (not just TRF members), for further info call Phil Kinder on 0161 339 5343.

LIGHT UP

Just in for the new Honda CRF450X are road legal lighting kits. The basic package includes wiring loom - direct plug-in and colour coded for easy fitting, handlebar switch with on/off, high/low beam, kill switch and horn, hydraulic brake light switch plus rear moulded add-on with legal light, reflector and number plate board.

Price is £275 including delivery, but optional extras are available such as ignition switches, indicators and speedo. You can call Pro Racing on 01788 510300 for more info.

MOTUL

fluidforce

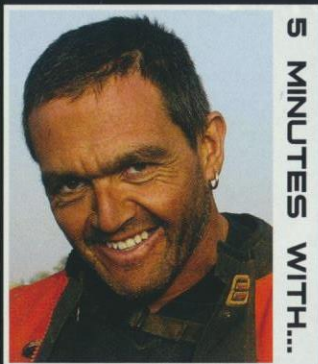


Event Partners



Racing Partners





5 MINUTES WITH...

HIGHEST PLACED BRIT FINISHER AT THE 2005 DAKAR, VETERAN RALLY RIDER MICK EXTANCE WILL BE SWAPPING HIS TRUSTY XR650 FOR A 450 THIS YEAR...

WHAT WAS THE FIRST ENDURO BIKE YOU OWNED?

My first enduro bike was a 125cc KTM. It was so long ago I can't even remember what year it was, but it was the same year Paul Edmondson was competing on an 80cc Honda. I think it must have been early Eighties. I bought it from a local dealer and it was a great bike - I was a motocrosser before I got the KTM.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST ENDURO?

It was the Breckland and I finished second in the 125cc Clubman class on day one and first on day two. I didn't really understand the way enduros worked but after doing a Geraint Jones enduro school two weeks earlier I wanted to give it a go. The weather was good, but the distances we rode were a bit of a shock to the system. It was a nice feeling driving home knowing that I'd done pretty well, despite the fact that I couldn't hold onto the steering wheel due to blisters.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE HARDEST ENDURO YOU HAVE EVER RACED?

The toughest one-day event is the Gilles Lalay in France. I rode it in 1995 and ran out of fuel. It was incredibly difficult that year. The Dakar is tough in different ways. Because of the length of the event the mental strain

is incredible. Staying focused is so hard during the event as so many things happen. You really need different skills for the Dakar, which is what makes it special.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE ENDURO?

Now, it's not an enduro but the Dakar Rallye. It's such a special event. Each one brings with it its own challenges and it's something I wanted to do since I was 17. The first Dakar I finished was in 2003 and I look forward to it months before the race starts.

WHAT RIDER HAS HAD THE BIGGEST INFLUENCE ON YOUR CAREER?

Geraint Jones. My first proper enduro experience was on one of his schools and he remains enthusiastic about, and committed to the sport today.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR BEST EVER PERFORMANCE?

I guess it would be the 2005 Dakar and the ISDE held in Assen, Holland. I was really happy with the way I rode in the Dakar this year. I felt like all the aspects of my rally riding were really coming together well. Also finishing third or fourth in the 80cc class at the ISDE in Holland in horrendous weather I felt, was a good performance.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST DISAPPOINTING RESULT?

Stage seven of this year's Dakar, due to running out of fuel when things were going so well. A possible top 20 finish was taken away from me due to an organisational blunder. I'd worked so hard and the result I wanted was within my grasp when I ran dry and had to sit in the sand dunes unable to do anything about it.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST CRASH?

That was again at the Dakar this year. Two days before the finish I hit a hollow at about 100kmh and my bike bottomed out and sent me flying through the air. You know you've had a big crash when another rider wakes you up in the desert. Luckily I was still in one piece but really shaken. I still had 140km to go until the end of the stage but I made it somehow.

WHAT IS YOUR MOST TREASURED ENDURO MEMORY?

Finishing near the top of the 80cc class at the ISDE in Holland. There were a few people who doubted whether I should be in the Trophy team that year so to come away from the event with a good result and a gold medal finish was special.

WHAT BIKE HAVE YOU ENJOYED OWNING/RIDING THE MOST?

I'd probably say the XR650 that I've ridden in three Dakar events now because it has been the bike that has helped me achieve something that I've always wanted to do. I hope to keep this year's bike as a memento as I'm switching to the 450 now.

WHAT IS YOUR PREFERRED TERRAIN?

Sand. I always went well in sandy enduros. I love it.

WHAT DOES ENDURO/RALLY NEED MORE OF?

Younger riders keen to give it a go. It would be great for the sport if more young riders would try rally events, like some of the young Spaniards are starting to. I think that would be good for the future of the sport, especially in the UK.

WHAT DOES ENDURO/RALLY NEED LESS OF?

Older people in high places who won't listen to competitors' suggestions. There needs to be more organisational personnel who have actual experience of riding themselves. The sport is moving forward but needs some more youth and enthusiasm.

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

I hope it will be even stronger than it is now, especially in the UK. Again things are starting to get better, it just needs to keep moving forward.

WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE?

I want to finish to get a top 20 Dakar finish. Then I want to continue my involvement with both rally events and Honda, possibly trying to encourage younger riders to compete seriously.



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RIGHT TO RIDE

It was the news that every right-thinking TBM reader wanted to hear... On the afternoon of Friday 13 May 2005 the short-lived and ill-conceived 'guidance' to farmers relating to the new Single Payment Scheme issued by DEFRA which effectively placed an economic ban on motorsport on farmland was reversed. Mark Williams explains the full story behind DEFRA's timely U-turn...

Since the Government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) issued its original consultation document 'MPVs on RoW' some 18 months ago, the dirtbiking fraternity has had very little to celebrate as far as our collective off-roading future is concerned. This was particularly true when, in late March, DEFRA announced a policy that threatened to spell the end of motorsport on agricultural land. But a sudden change of heart

means that we can perhaps allow ourselves a sigh of relief as the government made one of its rare policymaking u-turns.

Barely a week after our feature appeared in TBM detailing how the new EU Single Payment Scheme (SPS) would severely curtail the sport of trials, MX and enduros, Lord Bach, newly appointed *Minister for Sustainable Farming* issued a brief statement rescinding DEFRA's draconian proposal to cut subsidies to farmers who allowed such events to take place on their private property.

This is what he said. *'DEFRA received a number of representations from motorsport interests following the issue of new guidance on 29 March. Having considered these, I am happy to announce the publication of updated guidance which now provides for motorsports to take place on up to 28 days during farmers' 10-month eligibility period on land used in support of 2005 Single payment claims. Guidance for 2006 and beyond will be reviewed in the light of experience of this first year of the Single Payment Scheme.'*

As outlined in the TBM article, these 'representations'

included vigorous lobbying from the ACU and the Land Access & Recreation Association (LARA) who pointed out that many hundreds of events and thousands of competitors would suffer as a result of this 'guidance', as well as putting additional pressure on the RoW network by disgruntled trials and MX riders who no longer had anywhere to legally compete. In addition, an on-line petition imploring DEFRA to re-consider (which could be accessed and signed via various websites including TBM's) had more than 10,000 signatures on it in a matter of days. In the event, however, it may well have been the legal challenge mounted by LARA that tipped the balance.

As reported, having been advised by barristers that we had a strong case against DEFRA's interpretation of the EU's guidelines, and despite trying to get an urgent meeting with senior

'We shouldn't necessarily celebrate the departure of Alun Michael from DEFRA because his successor's credentials don't suggest that he's at all likely to be any more trailriding-friendly'

officials to discuss the issue, LARA submitted a 'Pre-Action Protocol' to the ministry, although this had to be delayed until May 6th after the general election results had been confirmed. A prelude to a full (and undoubtedly costly) judicial review gave DEFRA officials a week to respond in order to avoid hiring its own 'learned friends' to defend such an action.

As the deadline for a response approached, LARA's barristers prepared to deliver the papers to the High Court on May 13th, but the previous day ACU chairman Neil Hellings heard that the Welsh Assembly intended to issue an amended 'rule' allowing some level of motorsport on eligible land - this driven by the threat to the Welsh Two-Day Enduro.

When this was duly confirmed by the assembly later that day, LARA's Alan Kind, the force behind the legal challenge, commented that 'This must surely put DEFRA in an even-more difficult

position now that they are faced with a visit to the High Court.'

With matters proceeding at breakneck speed, by 3.30pm that same afternoon, DEFRA did indeed find themselves in just such a predicament, and published the above statement. All concerned suddenly had smiles on their faces.

However despite this victory, Kind remained worried about the costs involved, noting that 'Since we issued proceedings before DEFRA changed its position (in line with what we asked for) and DEFRA has not contacted us anyway, (our barrister) thinks we should get costs, but costs are always ringed with uncertainty.'

The Motor Cycle Industry Association issued a statement shortly thereafter thanking Alan Kind and his team for their efforts, but added that





RIGHT TO RIDE

'Unfortunately some damage has already been done,

with many planned events already cancelled because of the original SPS rules. It is hoped that many of these can now go ahead, but MCI will continue to monitor the situation in partnership with LARA members and respond as appropriate.'

The ACU's Neil Hellings added: *'Although this is a great weight off the shoulders of motorsport, we cannot be complacent and must continue to push for sensible discussion with DEFRA and stabilise the future for off-road motorsport.'*

'Over the coming months, the ACU and it's clubs need to make the correct bodies/individuals aware of the excellent work put in by thousands of volunteers and of the impact any such 'ban' will have. If possible, I urge clubs to invite their local MP to events, to witness the responsibility of competitors and the care taken to protect the land. Perhaps invite them to present the monies to local charities or consider working with the local Police to tackle the problem of illegal and illicit riding.'

Hellings' final reference should serve to remind us that we are not by any means out of the woods (sic) just yet, as far as the impending 'MPV on RoW' legislation is concerned. Neither should we ignore Lord Bach's caveat that 'Guidance for 2006 and beyond will be reviewed in the light of experience of this first year', which could mean all

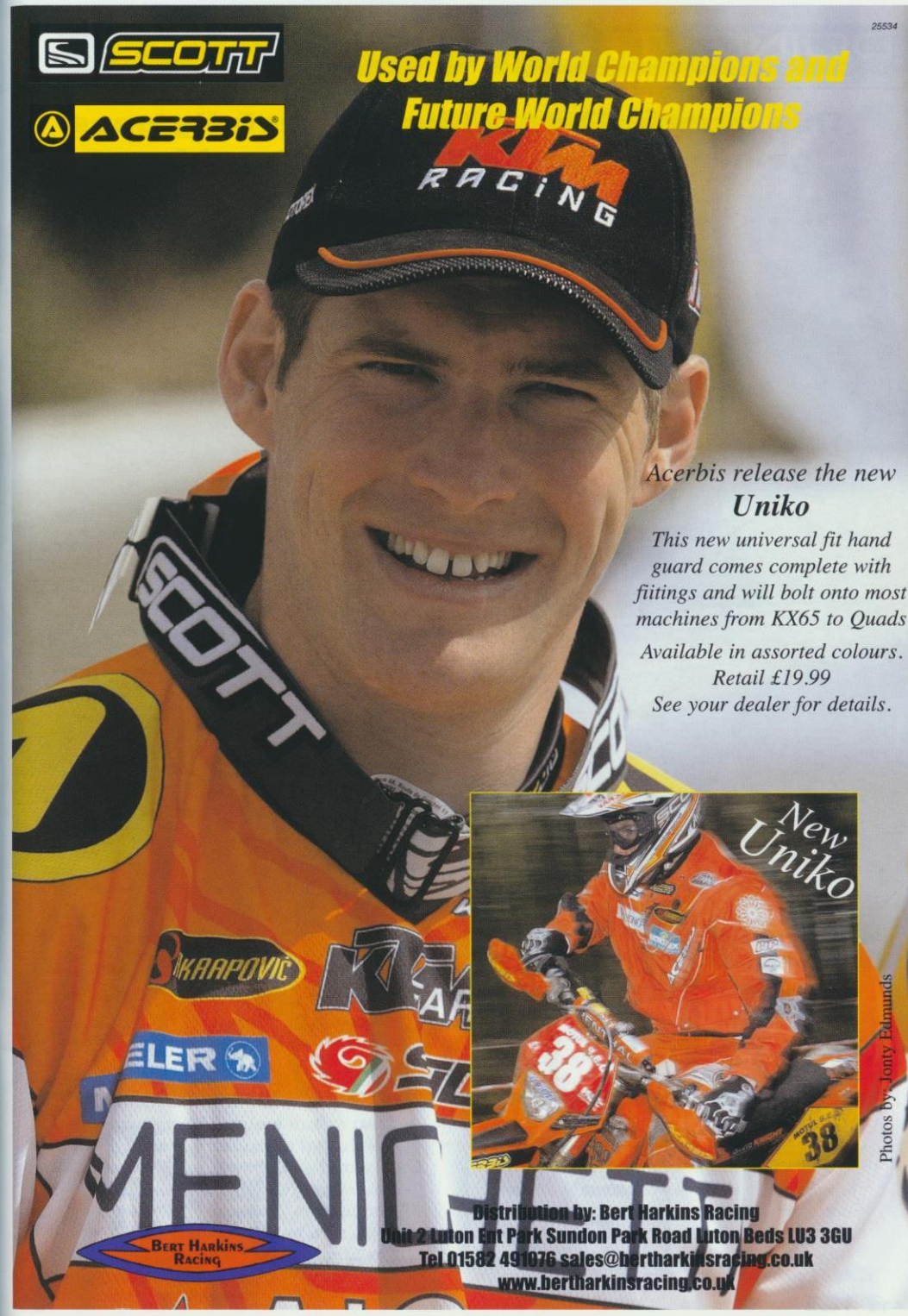
'Although this is a great weight off our shoulders, we cannot be complacent and must continue to push for sensible discussion with DEFRA and stabilise the future for off-road motorsport'

sorts of problems with SPS eligibility next year. Nor should we necessarily celebrate the departure from DEFRA of its architect, Alun Michael, because his successor's credentials don't suggest that he's at all likely to be any more trailriding-friendly.

Like the aforementioned Lord Bach, Jim Knight, the new minister, staunchly supported the ban on hunting with dogs and is a well known supporter of the Country Landowners' Association. Moreover before he became an MP for Dorset South in 2001, as a councillor in the Mendip Hills, it's our understand he allegedly supported the local anti-MPV by-laws that made parts of the Mendips a no-go area for trailriding.

For the moment it is up to LARA and the TRF to build bridges with Knight that have disappeared with Michael's demise and hope that the good work they've done on our behalf will not have been wasted. We should also hope that within DEFRA's portals reaction to their somewhat humiliating retreat on SPS and motorsport leads to a more conciliatory attitude to various user groups in the future...

What do you think should be done to help protect the future of off-road motorsport in the UK? TBM has long believed that the ACU should be looking to purchase land to ensure the long-term survival of our sport. But could individual clubs (or even TBM) do the same? And would YOU be prepared to contribute to the purchase of land (providing you were a share-holder), and how much would you be prepared to pay to protect your sport? Did you sign the on-line petition or write to your local MP? We want to hear from you with your thoughts and ideas. Send your emails to letters@trailbikemag.com or write to us at the usual address: TBM, PO Box 9845, London, W13 9WP.

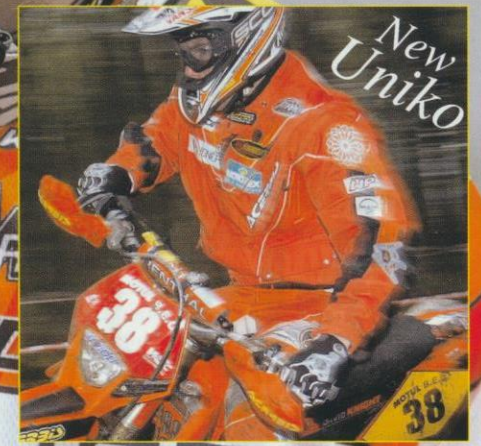


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This month, Mark Williams gleefully goes gallivanting around Gloucestershire...



Glossop Gallop

The Campaign for Real Trailriding on one of their regular outings...



chance to fully explore first time around.

And so it was that I accepted Mike Morrallee's long-standing invitation to discover areas of the Cotswolds that I hadn't seen before, ie when I went out with Charlie Morris and his mates (TBM 106) almost exactly a year ago.

Mike was also keen to further the cause of what he calls the 'Campaign for Real Trailriding', a very unofficial crusade to restore the enjoyment of the countryside's innate pleasures as much as those of riding bikes. And of course he knew he'd have a sympathetic ear from your elderly, unfit scribe who has written about this very subject.

His assurance that we'd be riding at a 'sensible' pace and I'd have plenty of time to 'stop and smell the view' certainly seemed spot-on to me, and after a certain amount of date-juggling I eventually turned up on a gloriously sunny May morning.

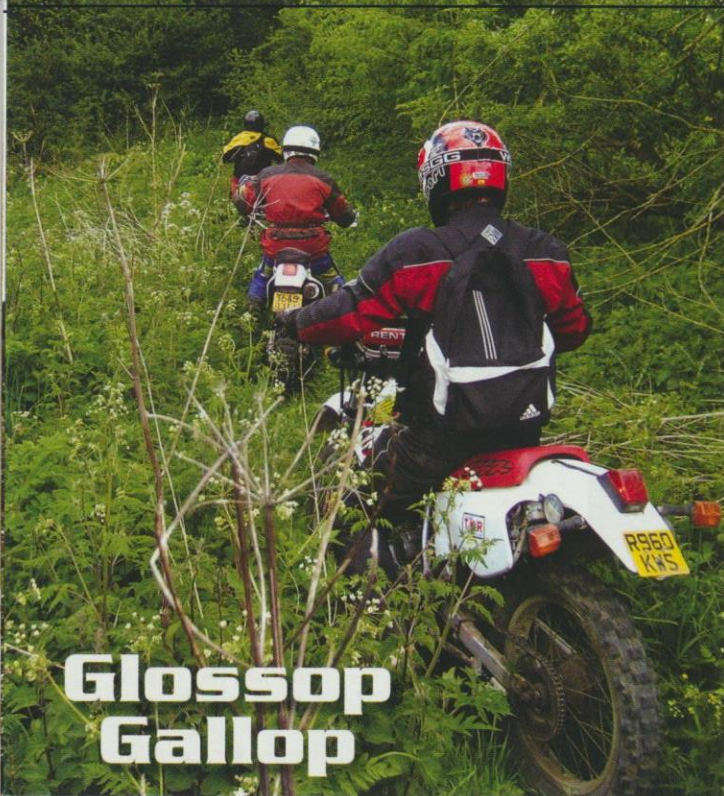
I was, however, slightly apprehensive as Mike had mentioned that he was currently undergoing chemotherapy to treat what he cheerfully admitted was 'probably terminal' cancer. And with one learner, one lady and what turned out to be an average age of over 50, it promised to be a rather different outing than any earlier round I'd done. So here are the reasons why:

Man of Many Mounts

Far from being the wan and frail figure that I imagined, Mike Morrallee was hale, hearty and full of good humour when I arrived. He's one of those redoubtable chaps who lives and breathes biking in all its forms, owning a total of eight machines which includes an immaculate F650GS,

Forward not back' our (in)glorious leader opined during the recent general election campaign. And indeed that's a particularly appropriate maxim not just for political parties but also as far as trailriding is concerned: after all, don't you just hate going backwards down a greasy slope. Especially on your bum?

But in one vital respect it never does any harm to metaphorically go into reverse... and that's when investigating an area you never had a



Glossop Gallop

a 50cc Piaggio Dragster, a partially-built CB750-engined chopper and the spiffed-up XR250 - complete with 280cc big-bore conversion and Mikuni flat-slide carb which he'd be riding on this outing. 'Technically a retired teacher and new-born plumber', he unsurprisingly had to give up work when got sick in January. Not that you'd know it.

The Fast Lady

Mike's vivacious wife Marilyn, who happily bears the arguably masculine nickname 'Mazz' manages a business selling designer silk garments and has been trailriding for five or six years. Her bike, an XL125 with a 200cc conversion (!) shares garage space with a 535 Virago, and as if that wasn't enough, along with hubby she's a regular contender in the BMF's Moped Mayhem race. And, due in part no doubt to her petiteness, beat all comers on a Piaggio-based contrivance to become the Funky Moped Grasstrack Drag Racing World Champion (honestly, there is such a thing).

20 TBM

The Record Holder

Paul Wylde is also something of a trophy collector, having won both world and European powerboat racing titles for Heron-Suzuki ('Me and Barry Sheene at the same time') in a past life. His day job is selling specialist TV aerials and satellite gear and on dry land he rides a 1981 XR200 but, owing to unidentifiable ignition gremlins, today he'd borrowed Mike's spare and almost identical, but not quite so old machine. As the map-meister of this happy band he was also our leader for the day.

The Greenhorn Guitarist

As is the nature of *the Rounds*, it's never been the case that I've ridden out with a complete novice trailrider, but today broke the mould as Glen Lander has been riding bikes for just five months and only recently joined the Gloucester TRF Group. Glen works on an IT helpdesk but his passion is

rock'n'roll and immediately after our outing he was due to spend the night in a recording studio with his band, Chinese Burn. And such are the constraints of the two-part test that he rode a L-plated XL125, although he has a DR-Z400 waiting at home 'til he's passed his test.

One for the Pots

Modestly, if rather mysteriously claiming to be a 'retailer of pots and pans,' Simon Roberts brought the tally of Hondas up to five with his well-used XLR400, which he'd ridden to Mike and Mazz's place almost half the distance I had trailered my bike from Mid Wales. It's also worth noting at this point that this is the first time I've done a 'Round' where every single mount has been a pukka trailie rather than an enduro bike, and perhaps all the better for it.

After a restorative cup of coffee we set out from Mike and Mazz's place in a pleasant suburb just south of Cheltenham's city centre, aiming north towards Prestbury where we took a innocent looking left turn off the B4362. Paul had

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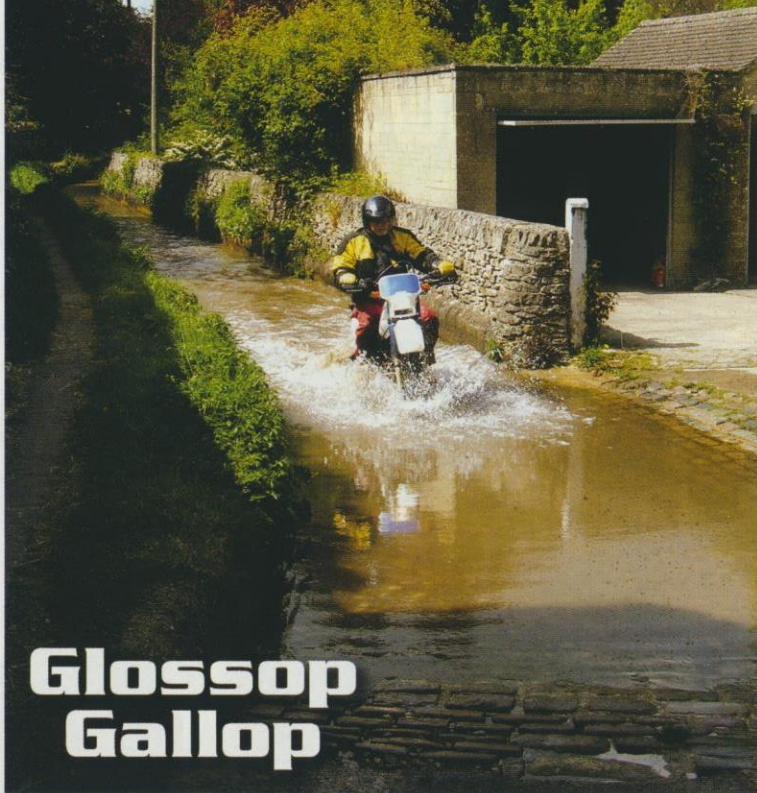
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Glossop Gallop

casually informed me that we'd be doing one of the more 'exciting' bits of the route at the get-go, and oddly enough this bit of tarmac slightly reminded me of the prelude to the first, deeply 'technical' climb that began my 2004 Cotswold caper. That was south of Cheltenham up something called Shurdington Hill, and this wasn't.

Almost Pear Shaped

Known as Noverton Lane, or colloquially, Pear Hill (presumably as in 'pear shaped'?), it proved, however, to be even more of a monster. Beginning innocently enough as a fairly wide ascent on hard-packed earth and stone, it quickly turned into a narrow, loosely-rocked gully which steepened the further up you got and offered a plenitude of football-sized boulders and steps.

I managed to stand up on the pegs and negotiate it trials-stylee - albeit at a second-gear pace - until I hit a fallen branch lying diagonally across the track which threw me badly off course (halfway up the bank, if truth be told). But I man-

'I say old bean, would you care for a little snifter...'



aged - just - to stay onboard and completed the remainder of the hill still in the saddle, albeit legs akimbo.

The very last bit of the climb involved a tricky, v-shaped rock step which I was lucky to overcome in my somewhat control-free state, (perhaps not too surprising since a large chunk of the aforementioned branch had lodged itself in my front wheel), but Glenn was less lucky, requiring a helping shove from Paul who'd managed to ascend the climb in a largely seated and fuss-free manner that, I was to discover, exemplified his general riding style.

Mind you, when we got to the top of the hill, and ignoring the unauthorised motocross track and fly tipping all about us, the view west towards the racecourse and beyond was quite stunning. Understandably given his medical condition and her feminine sensitivities, Mike and Marilyn joined us to 'smell' it via a tarmac back route, but Paul promised that the rest of the day would be 'easy by comparison' and the Morr ales were set to enjoy all of it.

Indeed, the next few tracks weren't too taxing, although a twisty scamper through woodland

east of Puckham Farm typified many of the moderately rutty, root-strewn lanes that followed during the day. This particular track then opened out into a stony, undulating track across farmland with fabulous views that was equally characteristic of this part of our green and pleasant.

Not So Hot

A little bit of roadwork northwards then took us to almost the only lane I remembered from last year's outing, but re-tracing my tyre tracks down a lightly rutted track into a valley, past Wontley Farm and then up and around some loose, rocky bends towards Belas Knapp, was a very pleasurable clip.

After that Paul apologised for a few miles of tarmac

before we got off-road again at Manor House in the lee of Guiting Wood where sadly disaster struck Marilyn... or rather her Honda. 'It's never been too happy starting from hot,' muttered Mike when repeated blips of the magic button failed to ignite it, but worse was to come when after letting it cool for a few minutes, ominous, acrid smoke emerged from beneath the saddle, suggesting that wiring was a' burning. And after that it was truly kaput. (Mike discovered the next day that an inadequate earth wire had indeed fried under starter-motor pressure).

Debate ensued about the best course of action, with Simon tying on the rope that Paul had wisely bought with him with the intention of towing it to the nearest village. In the event Mike elected to leave the bike in the garden of a nearby but currently unoccupied cottage for collection that evening, and carry on with Mazz riding pillion. Now I haven't seen anyone trailriding two-up since the early, slower-paced Seventies, and if you've ever tried it you'll know why. So I have to say that diminutive and expert rider in her own right she may've been, I found it deeply impressive that in his medical condition Mike cheerfully took off with her out back.

It did however mean they circumnavigated

some of the more 'exciting' terrain that Paul took us along that morning, including a spirited, somewhat tortuous ascent just beyond Mazz's breakdown - or rather her bike's - through Guiting Wood which, just for the crack, Marilyn jumped on Mike's bike and went back and did a bit of riding on her tod.

Riding eastwards into Kinton we crossed a brace of fords in quick succession and then rode south and further east through Barton and along a leafy UCR, past a bunch of friendly walkers towards Chalk Hill. However before we arrived there we backtracked slightly on tarmac and took another UCR south past a horse training 'gallops' and up a hill to Grange Farm, over the road and down into Naunton.

Chocolate Boxing

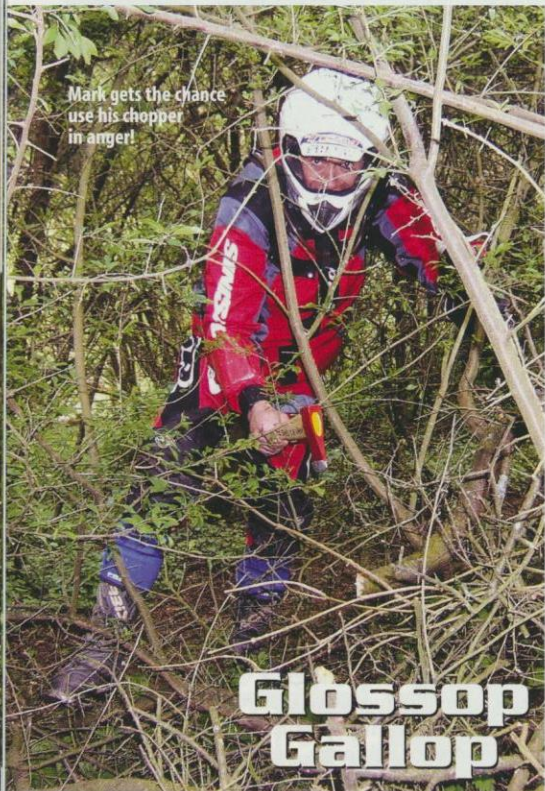
A few miles of roadwork, still basically travelling south, eventually led to Cold Aston where we started moving west, past the quixotically named Bang-Up Farm and along some really great RuPPs and UCRs along an elevated escarpment through Turkdean and onto Hazleton. This involved a mixture of barely metalled lanes and loose, stony surfaced tracks which coming into Hazleton included some great views up a valley and pleasingly bucolic woodland.

As elsewhere on our route, the hamlets and villages we rode through were almost chocolate-box picturesque, but unlike some parts of the country - like Mid-Wales for example - they haven't been too aesthetically contaminated by unnecessary road signs and the dreaded 'street furniture'. I was also very aware that with Cheltenham racecourse nearby and others not far beyond, there's a lot of serious money about these parts, as evidenced by the preponderance of training tracks, stud farms and immaculately groomed nags we saw strutting around.

Fortunately we only came across two or three of the latter on the lanes we rode, but generally speaking their riders reacted cheerily to our slow walking pace and quiet silencers. And the same could be said for all the many walkers - generally as middle aged as us (not that they would know with our helmets on) - we passed during the day.

Spoilt Fun

From Hazleton we dropped south towards the A40 through open fields arriving at an east-west RuPP that had, according to Paul, been sorely ploughed up by 4x4s. Fortunately we only took the last few hundred yards of this and found



Mark gets the chance use his chopper in anger!

Glossop Gallop

ourselves exiting just by the Puesdown Inn over an artificially created 'hump' that had clearly failed to deter the four-wheelers it was meant to.

Having supped many satisfying pints at the now rather gentrified Puesdown over the past 30 years, I had mixed feelings about pressing onwards, but we still had plenty to do before lunch. Indeed Mike and Mazz decided to whip back to Cheltenham so she could collect her Virago (!) and, more importantly our lunch, so we also embarked on a fair few more miles of tarmac along the A40 then left through Compton Abdale, where we stopped for a drift half - well I did, anyway - at the Green Dragon in Withington and waited for them to catch up.

When they arrived I was forcibly reminded of the days when some of us, well those of us who couldn't afford a pukka dirtbike, tried trailriding on roadsters and was impressed that Mazz wasn't much phased by joining us on a long, stony track running south from Upper Cobberly. A quick squiggle through Cockleford then took

us onto an old and extremely overgrown road parallel to the A435 overlooking the charming River Churn, and the welcome news that we'd reached our lunchstop.

Peak of Civilisation

And here the Campaign for Real Trailriding came into its own, for not only had Mrs Morralee brought along a pack of neatly manicured sandwiches and an array of cheesecakes and yoghurts for each of us, but her husband produced a bottle of Bucks Fizz and plastic flutes for us to quaff along with them. Very civilised!

The break also allowed Mike and Paul to present me with a celebratory axe, inscribed with the 'CRT' motto 'Stop and Smell the View', having sardonically figured that the one featured atop my monthly column had been well and truly ground near to bluntness.

Initially I was embarrassingly touched by this, just a few minutes later I realised it was, literally, a double-edged gesture for once back aboard our bikes and struggling through the over-growth, a wayward tree blocked our progress and as the lone axeman, it fell to me to, er, fell it.

By this time Mazz had wisely decided to call it a day and return home on the totally unsuited Virago, dignity fully intact, and just as well for once out of the woods, we turned right up what was clearly a RuPP on the map, but instead turned out to be a roughly ploughed field.

Hopefully this'll be reported to the county council's RoW department, but in the meantime we had to negotiate our way up it, and onto Sparrowthorn. From there we continued south adjacent to the charmingly named Slutswell (well they certainly are alright with me) down through a leafy wood and northwest to Elkstone.

Ford Unpopular

Shortly after this we made a twisty, somewhat tricky but not quite 'exciting' ascent through rutty woods, opening out into a delightful meadow above Duntisbourne Abbots, before dropping down into the village itself where a slippery-bottomed, hundred-yard long ford threatened to give us a dousing, but fortunately didn't.

West of Duntisbourne we went through a gate to view a steep meadow sorely scarred by 4x4 tracks, but I was informed that this is because it's regularly hired by Mitsubishi to demonstrate its Chelsea Tractors, so I guess that made it all right. We however took a steep, loosely surfaced UCR up Parsons Hill, the negotiation of which wasn't

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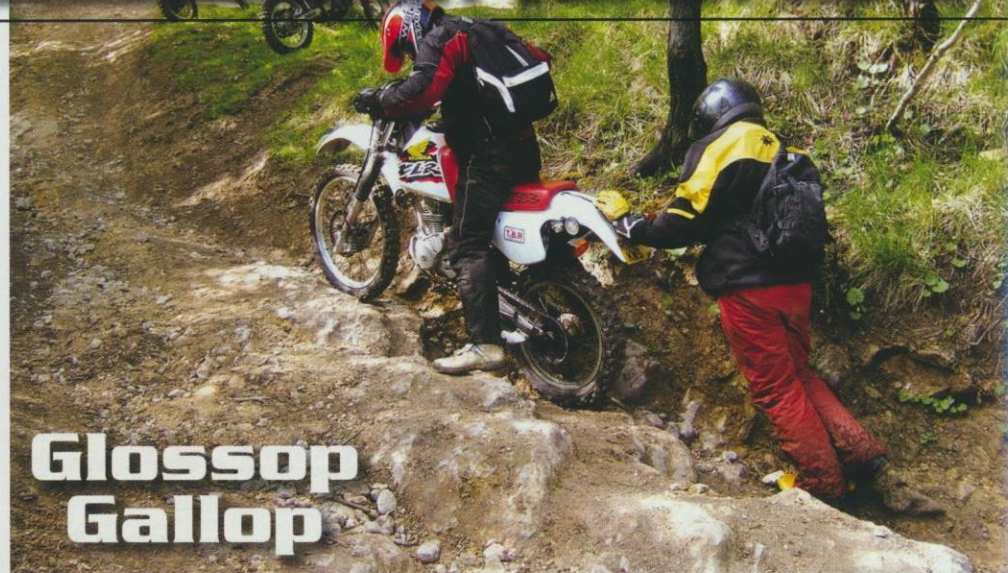
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DOING THE ROUNDS



Glossop Gallop

exactly helped by a gate inconveniently located halfway up it. The rest of the afternoon was mainly spent in a small corner of the Cotswolds north and west of Chalford, a veritable honeypot of twisty, wooded lanes well worthy of investigation.

Perhaps most interesting, nay challenging of these was the mile or so long blat through the Daneway Woods just east of Fampton Mansell.

Accessed via a bridge over the disused and barely recognisable Stroudwater & Thames canal, this took us first up a mixture of stony and hard-packed earth to the main rail line to Swindon, and then we doubled back through some deeply rutted, but thankfully mostly dried-out forestry-style track and out by the Daneway Arms pub.

Mick, who by this time in the proceedings I had expected to have bowed out and pattered home, cheerfully recounted the winter when the going had been much slimier and that one rider had flung his bike up a bank and had to be stretchered out. So let nobody say that Cotswold trailriding is genteel.

Nicely Dressed

En route back home towards Bisley we took a look at the 'dressed well', an example of the local tradition whereby villagers compete to bedeck their communal water supplies with floral decoration, although as it was by now looking a little faded, I resisted the photo opportunity and we rode onwards Lypiatt.

Here another somewhat 'exciting' hill confronted us - all narrow and cross-rooted and dark enough to confuse a foreign pilot such as yours truly, although it wasn't as tough as the much steeper descent further north by the Charlton Kings golf course - which I was glad we didn't have to ride up.

In between the two there were some more variously scenic and not overly 'exciting' lanes which I'm afraid have all blurred into one in my memory (and what I laughingly call my 'electronic notebook'), but suffice to say that as well as being fun to ride, they afforded plenty of opportunities to 'stop and smell the view' although as time was marching on, we didn't.

All in all it was however a most satisfying day's outing, with barely a mile of the 80-odd we travelled offering anything but great scenery - on or off-road. It also reminded me, and may inform you also, that 'real' trailriding, to borrow Mike and Paul's campaign slogan, doesn't have to be embarked on at a manic pace on what are essentially designed and marketed as competition machines. It also proved that ladies and novices can have just as much fun as anyone else and without feeling overwhelmed by their tougher or more experienced peers.

In fact this can be summarised no better than to quote from the e-mail Glenn sent me the next day: 'It's the whole spirit of it all I enjoyed, plus the chance to take a bike places I didn't think you could take a dog for a walk!' Quite...

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DIRTY



J

ust after writing my last monthly missive I had to rush back to France to run three back-to-back Lozere trips, and with time pressing and the bike already down there and ready to roll, I thought I'd found the ultimate foolproof means of penetrating the Massif Central - a low cost flight from Stanstead. All I had to do was taxi my sorry arse out to the airport (a cool £115), catch the flight and then get picked up at

CHRIS EVANS RIDES THE EMOTIONAL ROLLER-COASTER...

the other end by the hotel owner. What could possibly go wrong?

Well of course, I'd reckoned without the Large Bottomed and Very Surly Check-In Bunny (LB&VSCIB) on the airline desk.

LB&VSCIB: 'Hold on a minute sir, I'll have to check if your passport is acceptable.'

Me: 'What to you mean acceptable? I travel all over the world on that thing and nobody's ever raised any objections before.'

LB&VSCIB: 'Yes but your passport is in very poor condition and I'm not sure if we can accept it. I'll have to get the manager.'

Manager: (a slightly older/ruder version of the check in bunny): 'No sir, I'm afraid we can't accept you on this flight. You'll have to get your passport replaced and come back another day.'

Me: 'But, but, but... that's ridiculous (compose yourself Christopher), I've got 16 punters waiting for me down in the Lozere and you're ruining my life.'

Manager: 'No sir - you have ruined it all by yourself.'

I promise you she really said that. And

I thought I was sometimes lacking in the customer relations department!

Faced with an impenetrable wall of sadistic jobsworths I was left with no choice but to jump in a taxi (another £115), go back home, drag my beloved Citroen Xantia out of the garage and rattle off the 650-odd miles by car (so ended up paying for a wasted flight - I was offered no refund - as well as petrol, Autoroute tolls and a Eurotunnel ticket) - the first part of the trip nicely spiced up by idly wondering if I would receive the same frosty reception at the tunnel entrance.

Of course I needn't have worried. The tunnel operators don't practice an over-booking policy, and with nobody looking to spoil a customer's day, I sailed through the necessary formalities and finally arrived in Mende around midnight - still fuming with rage and mentally composing abusive letters to an airline that is so *low cost* they probably don't even have a complaints department. The next day, still knackered and stressed-out by my 'contre-temps' I managed to leave my wallet, complete with all credit cards, at a service station. Deep joy.

Now I'm not a religious man but some of those strange Eastern religions have a certain appeal: the yin & yang 'thang' in particular. The knowledge that something good will come along to compensate for all the crap you have had to endure has always been a comfort to me, and I was more than ready for a 'magic moment'.

And rather unexpectedly that magic moment arrived just as I was taking a fast sweeping corner on a smooth gravel track a few kilometres from home on the first day of riding. Coming into the corner I moved forward a little in the seat, got my elbows up and my inside leg out and hit the gas. Incredibly the back end came

'THE BACK END CAME ROUND IN A CONTROLLED ARC, AND I POWERED OUT OF THE BEND IN ONE GORGEOUS SMOOTH, OPPOSITE-LOCK SLIDE. TOTAL PERFECTION...'

round in a beautifully controlled arc, and I powered out of the bend in one gorgeous smooth, opposite-lock slide. Total perfection.

Merriman, Peterhansel, David Knight; none of them could have done it better. To you it might sound like scant recompense, but for me, who has been trying to perfect such a slide for well over 30 years, it was a truly magical moment. In the space of a few seconds my yang had rocketed back into the black. And happily that's where it stayed for the rest of the three weeks down in the Lozere, before it was time to head back to Paris for the Dakar press conference, to find out where I would be spending next year's birthday.

Of course all the potential entrants for 'the Dak' eagerly await this moment to try and get a rough idea of how tough the route will be. Me, I'm more interested in my chances of avoiding food poisoning. For all of us it turned out to be pretty good news. Traditionally Mauritania is the country that forces most of the competitors out of the race and any remaining nutrition out of my bottom. So the fact that we won't be spending all that much time there is globally positive.

The other major announcement at the Dakar press conference was the organisers' neat side-stepping of the 'over-450cc' dilemma (ie whether to ban the big bikes or not) by introducing a maximum 150kmh speed limit (policed by each competitor's bike having a GPS attached which records maximum speed). Last year's winner Cyril Despres isn't very happy about this new ruling, but for the rest of the entrants it shouldn't make too much difference.

The other good news is that refuelling will now be provided every 250km (as opposed to every 350km previously). Suddenly, entering the Dakar need be no more onerous than finding a big tank for your regular enduro bike. And if my estimates are correct, a record 20 or so Brits will be doing exactly that - I wish them all the yang in the world!

My only hope is that the organisers aren't planning on flying me to the start in Portugal with the same low-cost airline as before. I don't think my yin can take any more...



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COMPLETELY RUTTED



H

ere in Mid-Wales we're fighting something of a desperate rearguard action in the war against trailriding. And if that sounds like emotive or even alarmist language, damn right it is.

Just in the last few weeks a blizzard of TROs (Traffic Regulation Orders) have been applied to a number of important byways in the area, all of them alluding to damage done by

MARK WILLIAMS IS GAME FOR A LAF...

motorised vehicles. In one case this involved a hitherto grassy track that runs north from the improbably and inaccurately named Moelfre City which, after a recent diversion order, now comprises part of Glyndwr's Way. Moreover the council chose to organise a photocall with politicians inspecting and lambasting the damage done, very obviously, by 4x4s. Photos duly appeared in the local rags alongside claims that 'organised tours are bringing 4WD vehicles from across the UK and Europe' which led to what is unmistakably a lengthy, and muddy morass.

As in the case of the even longer, and more awesomely scenic Water Break Its Neck byway mentioned in my March column and which now has an indefinite TRO on it (also accompanied by near-hysterical press coverage), the Moelfre City debacle and the circumstances of other recent TROs are clear evidence of malign influences ranged against local trailriders. Most obvious of these is the emboldening of local Rights of Way

and/or Highways Departments in their attitude to vehicular use of green lanes.

Powys County Council, like many others, signed up to the Government's Making the Best of Byways (MBoB) guidelines in 1998 which requires them to consult or at least inform *all* interested parties when considering a TRO. But in all the recent local cases they only solicited the views of local landowners and parish councils, most of whom of course have little time for convoys of Land-Rovers and frantically ridden dirtbikes disturbing the rural idyll - which of course is exactly how they see it.

When I wrote to the relevant council officer citing his avoidance of MBoB's guiding principles, his reply dismissively claimed that consultation - at least with the likes of us local TRF bods - was an arbitrary consideration.

In other words and to coin a phrase, 'bog off'. Worse still, a little investigation discovered that in the case of Water Break Its Neck, the relevant parish council specifically asked only for a ban on 4x4s, not bikes.

Another consequence of these TROs is that local people, and their servant/masters on the council, are openly claiming that it is outsiders, and big, organised groups of outsiders, who are largely causing the damage. Can't argue about that, indeed I've noted as much in previous columns, but what's happening now is that steps are actively being taken to curtail such activities, but with the crudest of weapons, the TRO.

Of course many vehicle users simply ignore TROs, unless, as is increasingly

MARK WILLIAMS

'THESE ARE RIGHTS OF WAY WE'RE TALKING ABOUT, AND EVEN IF WE DON'T APPROVE OF THE OFTEN INSENSITIVE, FOOLHARDY MANNER IN WHICH SOME PEOPLE TRAVEL THEM, WE ALL SHARE THE SAME FREEDOM OF ACCESS...'

the case, they are physically locked out. And even if that prevents access to a damaged track, they'll simply use others nearby that remain open... at least until their overuse attracts further TROs. And as councils - rightly - claim that they've got limited resources to effect the necessary repairs (and in the case of Water Break Its Neck I was told Powys CC's entire 2005 RoW budget would be insufficient), the TROs will remain extant until such time as they themselves can apply to have the byways downgraded to bridleways... which they will more than likely do.

Now there are a number of possible responses to this situation. We could, for example, beg the editors of 4WD magazines to sternly instruct their readers to, well, 'act responsibly' and steer clear of mid-Wales... but even if miraculously they did so, that would only drive (sic) them elsewhere in the country that probably already has similar problems. We could beg our 4x4 driving and trailriding brethren not to gang up in large groups and ape David Knight along our green lanes, and we could try persuading the new breed of businessmen who run organised off-road outings to instead turn their commercial energies to developing lucrative burger van empires, but fat chance of any of that. And after all, these are rights of way we're talking about, and even if we don't approve of the often insensitive, foolhardy manner in which some people travel them, we all share the same freedom of access.

So short of sticking our heads in the mud and hoping all this disagreeableness will somehow not personally affect you or me, what practical steps are still open to us?

Well as I've said many times before, join the TRF and then via their website (www.trf.org.uk) find details of and attend meetings of your local group. As well as invaluable access to marked-up maps, the camaraderie of ride-outs etc, you can help research claims to upgrade tracks for all vehicular use and mount organised protests against TROs... which such groups should be

notified of under the MBoB guidelines.

But even if you do none of these things, you can always attend meetings of your Local Access Forum. Never heard of 'em? There are dozens, if not hundreds of LAFs across Britain, unelected groups of individuals who are concerned about public access to common land and rights of way.

Moreover their meetings are open to the press and public (who nevertheless rarely attend) where they make recommendations on virtually any related subject to legal, RoW and highways departments who are obliged to take notice. At the last meeting of my local LAF I was astonished to learn that members had voted to petition the Welsh Assembly to ban all motor vehicles from BOATs and RuPPs in the Principality, save of course from tractors which, in the case of Moelfre City may've caused as much damage as anything else. Fortunately subsequent legal advice reined this in as a non-starter, but it reflects the strength of feeling against the MPV hordes descending on Mid-Wales... as well as the fact that LAFs are comprised largely of farmers, ramblers, environmentalists and well-heeled NIMBYs.

Which is exactly why, if you've got a level head and can make a cogent case for responsible trailriding, you should approach your local council and put yourself forward for LAF membership. Fortunately for us, all LAF chairmen (and their council administrators) are duty bound to ensure their forums represents as many countryside interest groups as possible, and I was therefore somewhat surprised to find a warm welcome from the top table... if not the rest of the initially hostile membership.

So be warned, if you decide to approach your LAF you will be grilled on what you and your TRF chums can do to help curb the upsurge of illegal, irresponsible trailriding long before you can get involved in pre-empting TROs or forcing farmers to unblock byways they've decided to fence off. And those are battles we still have to address before we can hope to win the war.

HACKED



OFF

I'm writing this having just raced back from Devon under the cosh of a fast-looming deadline and an agitated editor - a familiar feeling I must say, although this time I'm on the receiving end of the angst for a change.

Anyway, the reason for the West Country jaunt was a stag/hen combined off-road day out - cue monumental bender. Held at KTM

ALEX HEARN MUSES ON THE LEAST PAINFUL WAY TO POP YOUR DIRTBIKE CHERRY...!

Adventure Tours, not far from Totnes, 14 of us (four girls, ten guys) were involved and most had been before as I had organised a similar day six months ago for a feature in my own esteemed rag.

It was, for some of the troops (who by the way are a motley assortment of bike hacks and high-pressure sales bods) their first experience of off-roading and dirtbikes. For others, it was maybe their second or third time away from tarmac, but where the former had an open mind about the whole thing the latter were unanimous in one matter going into the day - they didn't like trail riding, not one bit. They'd all been on manufacturers' days, had a thoroughly miserable time, crashed their brains out and crawled away scarred by the whole experience. Or, they'd started out their off-road career in completely the wrong way and weren't really planning on coming back any time soon.

That first day in the indoor arena course (which is a fun, not-too scary

lap) with full tuition got everybody buzzing about the simple act of riding a dirtbike, and the new skills that even experienced road riders (and road testers) need to acquire to master one.

So this time around I was keen to get them out in the real world and see if the balance could be redressed - after all, once you've acquired the basics, go use 'em, right? Three of the original group refused to leave the sanctuary of the indoors, their memories still too fresh to conquer with an expanded skills base, but others were up for it.

So we had a good steady morning's ride at a moderate pace through some stunning countryside - experiencing a tiny part of the best that trail riding has to offer. Sure, there was plenty of crashing going on but all were fairly

'BY THE TIME WE PARKED THE BIKES UP HE WAS BATHED IN SWEAT, A LITTLE BATTERED BUT GRINNING ALL THE WAY AROUND HIS HEAD.'

gentle and over the course of our 40-mile loop a lot of people made a lot of progress; in other words flipping over from 'I can't do it so I hate it' to 'I can do it and I love it...' But all from the original group still needed clues and advice about why they were falling off because while the indoor arena had got them used to many aspects of dirtbikes versus roadbikes, when you're confronted by a tight and twisty, greasy, downhill trail, all that newly learnt technique goes flying out the window. A lap is repeatable and learnable, trail riding however is quite the opposite.

ALEX HEARN

'I THINK THERE'S A STRONG ARGUMENT FOR SENDING NEWBIES SOMEWHERE THAT OFFERS TUITION FIRST, RATHER THAN ARMING THEM WITH A SPARE BIKE, GEAR AND SOD-ALL ELSE...'

One guy in particular (who'd not long had his road licence and missed the first day's tuition) rode indoors in the morning and hit the trails in the afternoon. He's a brave chap, and would gamely try anything. And, while he crashed a lot early on he listened to the advice he was given and through the course of the afternoon steadily improved to the point where he could tackle a nasty, rutted trail with relative confidence.

By the time we parked the bikes up he was bathed in sweat, a little battered but grinning all the way around his head. 'That,' he beamed, 'was the best day out on a bike I've ever had...' He's not had many mind. But what he'd had was the right experience, the right introduction into our little world. Now, he's hooked and can't wait to do it all over again.

With the others, feelings were mixed. Half were well on their way to becoming trail riding regulars, the rest still unsure about the variables the trail throws up (as opposed to the consistencies of tarmac!). Interestingly, the people who were still unsure had all had unpleasant first off-road experiences.

And that's the whole point. A mate of mine first got me into trail riding and I suffered and crashed my brains out, learning only the hard way and by bitter experience. Nobody told me a thing, because it was funnier to watch (for them, obviously). I only persevered because I enjoyed creeping up a steep learning curve, even when it got painful and because I'm fairly obstinate (and a little stupid).

A lot of people are much more sensible and here's the rub; if you've gotten (or are thinking about) getting a mate into off-roading I think there's a strong argument for sending newbies somewhere that offers tuition first, rather than arming them with a spare bike, gear and sod-all else. They'll be much better prepared, you'll have to pick them and their bike up a lot less and all in all, everybody'll have a better experience and that, after all, is what it's all about...



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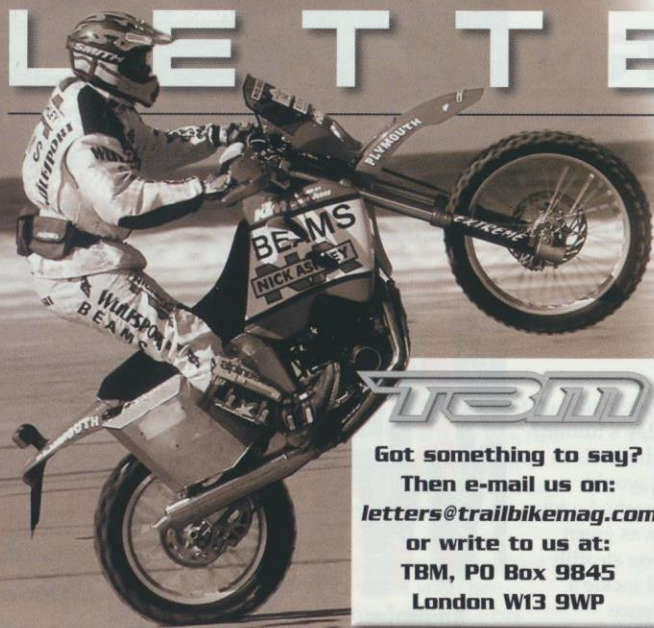
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CRF Depreciation Society

Dear TBM

Great mag, although less competition and more trail would make it better, as I bet most of your readers don't race. Oh, and your U-turn on the CRF250X opinion was worthy of a politician!

Nice to see I'm not the only magazine sniffer - I love the smell of TBM in the morning! Brave of you to 'come out' Daniel (Letters TBM116).

Enough now - here's the reason for writing. I tried to part-exchange my 11-month-old CRF250X this week for another shinier CRF250X, so imagine my horror when I discovered that, according to a certain dealer, my bike, (which is a minter only used on a Sunday back and forth to a church (at the top of the Brecon Beacons), has de-valued 33-percent!

Now having owned about 6000 bikes in my lifetime I

know that just isn't right. My mate Paul tells me that's just the way it is with these new high-performance thumpers, as they are expensive to fix when they go wrong and nobody (including the dealer) wants to take any chances on the used ones, hence the titanic depreciation.

Thing is, because of the distances I travel I like the assurance of a new bike, but am I stupid? No! I won't be going back to said dealer, and no, I won't buy another four-stroke but I will tell everyone I meet about my experience. Oh, and are the manufacturers and dealers short-sighted? Yes! What do you think?

Gary Jeffs, Swansea
 via email

We think that our opinion of the CRF250X hasn't really changed Gary - we still think it's a great little dirt bike. What has changed is the fact that another year has gone by and

that means new models have emerged (new Beta, improved WR-F, improved TE etc).

And that it's only when we get the chance to have all the opposition bikes together for a proper shootout (including running them on the dyno) that truly objective comparisons can be made.

We also think that trading-in a bike when it's less than a year old is bound to result in 'titanic' depreciation - as would trading in virtually any consumer item (car, mountain bike, camera etc). If you really have owned 6000 bikes you would have come across this before. Truly you *should* have known...

Honda CRF250X: Are you thinking what we're thinking..?



Old Timer

Dear TBM

Mark Williams's 'Completely Ruttled' column in the April issue was excellent.

As a 53-year-old, I was able to empathise with everything that he said. The article was poignant and funny, truthful and hopeful at the same time.

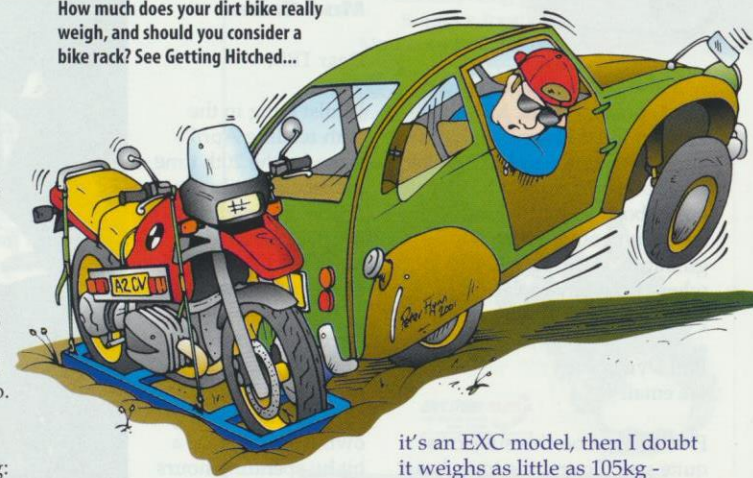
I had to give up trail riding in 2000 due to arthritis in my hips but as it hasn't worsened I'm about to give it another go. What I think Mark needs to do is what I decided was the correct way to go green laning:

- 1:** Don't ride as if each run is a practice for next years Paris-Dakar Rallye, but treat it as pony trekking on wheels. It's far less tiring - and cheaper.
- 2:** Don't dress like a gladiator. My Dutch army-surplus waterproof suit cost £15 a number of years ago and still gives excellent protection. As it's dark green, I blend in better with the countryside, and with the countryside dwellers who seem to hate us so much.
- 3:** Buy a cheap old trailie rather than spend £5000 on the current must-have enduro tackle. I bought a non-running TL125S for £250 and spent another £350 including all parts, tax, MoT and insurance to get a totally legal superb little trail bike that would go anywhere - albeit slowly - and did 110mpg.

Plus it's worth remembering trail riding is like sex as you get older - you can't do it as quickly or as often, but if you take your time it can be even more pleasurable...

Paul Atherton, Lancashire
 via email

How much does your dirt bike really weigh, and should you consider a bike rack? See Getting Hitched...



Getting Hitched

Dear TBM

I am considering buying a bike carrier, one of those ones that bolts onto the tow hitch and is held clear of the ground.

My concern is whether the tow hitch on a Toyota Celica is capable of holding 105kg of KTM as all that force will be downwards, whereas a trailer exerts less down force on the hitch and more pulling force.

I have asked for opinions from various members of Caerphilly Riders club (where I'm a member), but very little information is available. What do you think?

Mike Davies
 via email

I think you should contact Toyota, Mike, only *they* will know the correct specs for the tow-hitch loading on your particular make, model and year of car. But bear in mind a few things: I don't know which model of KTM you ride, but if

it's an EXC model, then I doubt it weighs as little as 105kg - even the 125 was heavier than that the last time we weighed one (despite what the brochure claims). Factor in the weight of any fuel (as much as 8kg), mud (easily an extra 4-5kg after a muddy ride), and any accessories you've fitted, handguards, bashplate, tool bag, number-plate etc, and you can begin to see how the claimed weight becomes a bit academic. I do know that our own Chris Evans uses a bike rack to lug his KTM 450EXC around on the back of his Citroen Xantia (with self-levelling suspension) so I'm sure it is possible providing you don't exceed the manufacturer's specifications (for either the car or the rack).

On The Road

Dear TBM

How about doing an article on what makes a trail bike road legal? I'm fairly new to this, and have just bought a Suzuki DR250RW import, which has the number plate bolted to the rear fender (almost horizontal, and without illumination).



Mod Cons

Dear TBM

It also has no chain guard or front sprocket cover. Most bikes I see on the trail are like this, and as my bike was MoT'd like this I presume it must be okay, but nobody seems to know for sure. Can you offer me any guidance? Also, any ideas where I can buy replacement plastics? Mine are quite tatty.

Phil Dynes
via email

Phil, the law on this subject is quite specific and the topic has been covered in TBM a few times in the past, nevertheless we'll try and publish an updated feature covering this very subject in the near future to help you out.

In the meantime, bear in mind that a vehicle which is more than three years old is *required* by law to have an up-to-date MoT certificate which merely indicates its 'roadworthiness' - as opposed to its road legality - these are two separate and quite distinct states.

Road legality is defined by 'Construction & Use' regulations and includes the fitment of items like (for example) a speedometer, which isn't a requirement of the MOT test.

In terms of plastics, we're not aware of anybody making replacement DR items, so it's a Suzuki dealer (or ebay) I'm afraid unless any of our readers know any different?

Whilst lying in the bath reading April's issue for the 20th time (particularly like the article on Knight's bike), I had an idea that I felt I just had to share with you.

How about devoting a couple of pages a month to reader's bikes? Having modified my own KTM 250EXC a bit by spending hours tracking down bits on the net and making adjustments, I would love to see a regular feature on bike owner mods and why and how it works for them.

Also, do's and don'ts could be included as well as personal kit carried on the trail. I feel this would make an already excellent mag even better. Keep it up!

Michael Brown, Hereford

PS Happy to put myself forward for such an article.



A reader's special, yesterday...

Spare Rib

Dear Mel

My sincere thanks for coming to my aid at the Chiltern Hills Enduro Club race at Bovingdon (as covered in TBM issue 116).

I was the unfortunate KTM (450EXC) rider who came flying off on the concrete and you were spot on when you wrote 'only the wind (and a little pride) was knocked out of [my] sails,' particularly when I recognised it was you coming to my rescue!

Truth was, whilst I told you to ride on, I later found out I had cracked a couple of ribs but I'm pleased to report I was back and fit enough for the next club race at Lane End. I trust my fall didn't put you off, as I saw you again at Lane End but this time as a spectator. Hope to see you riding in the next event!

Having just changed bikes from a Suzuki DR-Z400

obviously the KTM is better than I am but I'll keep plugging away.

Chris Martin, Aylesbury
via email

Funny you should mention that Chris - I wasn't competing at the last event due to, er... a couple of fractured ribs sustained whilst riding (or rather crashing) in Morocco which you may have read about in last month's issue. Anyway, glad I could be of assistance and I hope your pride has healed as well as your ribs. I wish mine would heal as quickly as yours did...

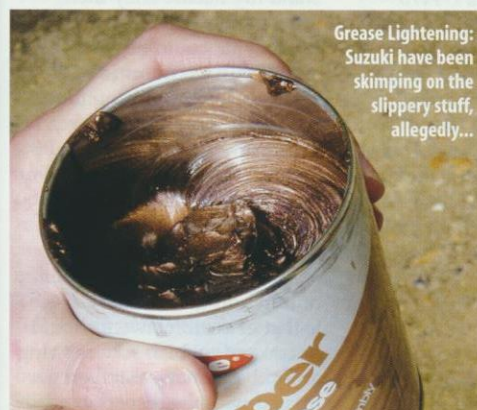
Pin Sharp?

Dear TBM

Over the years I have subscribed to TBM I've noticed that when it comes to complaints about manufacturers, you don't take any prisoners - nobody is safe, not even your advertisers! So, I've been having some grief with the brakes on my DR-Z400S and have had a moan at Suzuki about it. I am not sure what I expected them to do but I didn't expect them to ignore me - I haven't even received an acknowledgment from them. Here's what I said to them in my letter:

'My grizzle concerns the shoddy workmanship in the assembly of the brake calipers. I am attempting to replace the brake pads on my DR-Z400S but the pad pin hangers have been factory assembled without any easing grease to assist disassembly.'

'I have managed to remove the pin from the rear



Grease Lightening: Suzuki have been skimping on the slippery stuff, allegedly...

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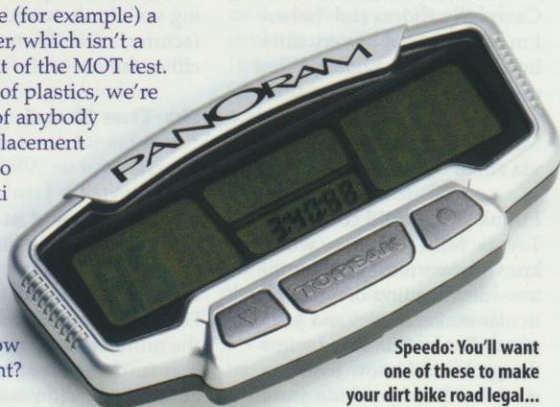
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Speedo: You'll want one of these to make your dirt bike road legal...

caliper but the front has resisted my attempts. I have asked my local Suzuki dealer to help and they finished up shearing the pin in their attempt to remove it.

I am now faced with the prospect of either finding an engineering company who can drill the old pin out and re tap the hole for the new pin, or buying a new one at a cost of some £320! All for the want of a smear of grease!

I am very disappointed this has happened but my dealer tells me they have apparently experienced this many times in the past and I won't repeat their opinion of your manufacturer's assembly practices.

I know that Suzuki don't actually manufacture the calipers but you must dictate the quality and assembly protocol, so why do you allow them to assemble them without a thought for servicing? As a result of this, should your dealers really be recommending to customers that, on delivery, they should strip their motorcycle down and reassemble it properly?

Inspecting and replacing brake pads is a regular servicing task so selling something that needs to be serviced but making or assembling it in such a way that it cannot be serviced could be described as 'not of merchantable quality', might not be 'fit for purpose' and might be construed as a breach of the Sale of Goods Act.

'Apart from all this, just think what it does to your reputation. Your marketing team works hard selling a quality product and some prat just throws it all away'.

Hopefully this will warn other DR-Z owners that if they are still running on the original brake pads, to take out the pin hangers and put a smear of

'copper ease' on the thread to save them the same problem.

Peter Fancourt
via email

I share your frustration Peter. I know that it may be sensible to remove the pin and put a smear of copper-slip on it from new, but who bothers to actually do this until the pads are due for replacement - by which time it may well be too late. These days we expect our purchases to work from new and to continue working for a sensible period of time. I agree, Suzuki knew that this item would need to come apart for pad changes and should have assembled it in such a way that it would. Over to you Suzuki...

Cheap and Cheerful

Dear TBM

Here's two points you may want to mention to your other readers:

1: Enduro second-hand bike prices.

Having started off on green lanes in 1992 on an old TS250 bought from a mate for £50, I then moved on to a DT175 (£475) in 1994 on which I started riding monthly hare and hounds events. Having caught the bug, a year later I bought a 1992 RMX250 for £1,500.

In 2005 I still own the same three bikes. Their value now? TS250 - still £50; DT175 - now £700 (still looks great) and the RMX250 must be worth about a grand (still used monthly and stripped/rebuilt each year).

So the message to any guys trying to convince wives/girl-friends that it's not expensive to get involved in enduros does

hold to be true. All you need to do is buy a good decent second-hand machine and look after it and do your own maintenance (half the fun anyway).

2: Customer service.

I am renovating a 1990 KTM300 that has been standing for the past seven years. Classic engine problem of water in the gearbox as a consequence of the water pump gasket leaking due to standing for years and not having the coolant drained (which in turn gradually corrodes the alloy casing). Top tip - remember to drain your water coolant when not using your bike for long periods and/or during the winter months.

Needing a variety of spares to get the ol' girl back on the dirt, I naturally went through the TBM ads. First call to a main KTM dealer (who shall remain nameless) was very disappointing. As soon as I mentioned the age of bike and the parts needed, they were disinterested and unhelpful.

My next call was to 'Gear 4 Limited' in Peterborough (who also advertise in TBM). What a complete contrast - the guys at this shop were happy and more than keen to listen and understand my needs. They then immediately contacted KTM to see what could be achieved and within ten minutes had returned my call having found the complete set of engine gaskets needed. Subsequent calls to the same shop for more parts have resulted in exactly the same enthusiasm, albeit from different employees.

I am not trying to plug this outfit, but I guess the message is that as customers we should not accept rubbish service - ring around and make sure you get treated with the respect every

customer deserves.

Steve Giles, Norfolk
via email

PS I subscribe to TBM and have a magazine rack next to the toilet. I spend quite a lot of time on the toilet thanks to your mag!

Thanks for your letter Steve, have a box of Immodium tablets on us mate...

Starter's Orders

Dear TBM

Great mag, liked your 250 four-stroke shootout in the March issue. Do you have any ideas for a good starter bike? I need it to get to work and for a bit of fun. My budget is about £1500-2000 - it was more until I realised that good clothing and security equipment are expensive! Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Andy
via email

Andy the bike we always recommend for that sort of budget is the Honda CRM250R. It's a true dual-sport bike capable of motorway speeds on the road, and great fun off it. Plus it's tough, reliable, fairly plentiful and holds its value really well. For more info on the CRM and indeed a whole bunch of other bikes within that price range (both race and trail, two- and four-stroke), see our article entitled *Two Grand Designs* in TBM110 (October 2004). For a full listing of back issues and how to order them online log onto trailbikemag.com and click on the online store.



TBM110 had an article entitled *Two Grand Designs* for those buying on a budget...

Testing Testing

Dear TBM

I have been subscribing to your magazine for four and-a-bit years now and am still enjoying it. After many years riding trials, progressing into road bikes, back to trials, then hare and hounds events, I have decided the nice quiet pastime of trail riding is for me. I currently have a Gasser 250EC at the moment which I can highly recommend.

Anyway, the point of the letter is I'd like to see more of the following in TBM: group tests (they mean so much more than individual tests), more enduro/H&H reports (like how Juha Salminen is doing in the States for example), more 'celebrity' testers if possible and most importantly of all I'd like to see a test of the 67bhp Maico two-stroke 500cc enduro that I've seen on the web!

Jake, Exeter
via email

As you know Jake, here at TBM we love our shootouts and just like you, reckon that they reveal much more than an individual test ever can (check out the four bike 450 shootout in this issue). More of these on the way.

A Salminen report has already been commissioned and is scheduled for publication later in the year (once he has a few more results under his belt).

As for 'celebrity' testers... who did you have in mind? Julian Clary perhaps? Maybe we can get him to test out the 67bhp Maico 500 Enduro 'cos we're not butch enough!

Let Them Eat Dirt

Dear TBM

For the past three years I have been riding in enduros flying 'clubman class' and had a go at just about everything possible, including most of the British Championship rounds. Having 'sort of' ridden at the last two-day round in the wet and pretty miserable Brechfa forest, I was amazed to read a lot of the comments from championship riders about how such a 'challenge' is just what we need.

My view is that houring out whilst stuck in two 'marshal-controlled traffic jams' was not just what I needed and frankly a bit of a waste of two days and a couple of hundred quid!

I would have been very happy to have run out of time trying to get up a hill by myself (weird!) but felt sort of cheated doing so waiting in single file on the side of a hill until the marshals called us up.

And perhaps just before the championship riders start to enthuse about how great a difficult event is (when there's

LETTERS

no-one stuck in your path) perhaps they should ask a couple of lowly clubman riders how it was for them because I believe that these events can only financially function if the masses subsidise the elite's fun. Now, where's my entry forms for the next two-day rock and rain fest...

PS Perfectly average magazine

Duncan Buck, Buckingham via email

I believe you're right on the money there Duncan. I don't think the problem is with the events so much as with the timings allowed for clubman riders. Other readers have suggested having a Clubman B schedule to allow for experienced riders who aren't quite as fast anymore. In my opinion the clubman class should either be tough and technical or tight on time - not both. You're right, the clubmen and sportsmen pay for the event - they should be catered for properly...

Bath Time

Dear TBM

You may like to know that the 'twat' riding the tatty XR around Longleat (Letters pages, issue 116) could well have been the current Lord Bath's son. When I worked for the estate some years ago his XR200 was always in the workshop looking somewhat sorry for itself!

On another note, the thieving idiots who stole my KTM should have smiled for the CCTV cameras as the pictures

have been passed on to the authorities!

Keep it muddy guys.

Ian Courts, Somerset via email

Billy No Mates

Dear TBM

Since my girlfriend bought me a year's subscription to the bible that is TBM this is now how we (I mean I) spend my Saturday nights (see pic below) - I hope you're happy with yourselves! Still, on this occasion it did at least inspire me to hit the fells of Coniston on Sunday morning.

Also just wanted to let you know how great the trials section was. I loved the Peru trail feature - and I thought it was just me who preferred a trials iron?

Actually, whilst I'm here the only thing I hate about TBM is the overuse of the word 'mate' in that sort of condescending, 'trying to get pally with the builders round at your house,' sort of way on the letters page - makes me cringe every time. Cheers... mate!

Noel, via email

Sorry about that, mate. Anyway Noel, glad to see that you've got the missus well trained - although we did notice that there wasn't a beer in your hand and never mind the ironing, she should be out washing your dirt bike... in a bikini... Mate..!

Trialled and Tested

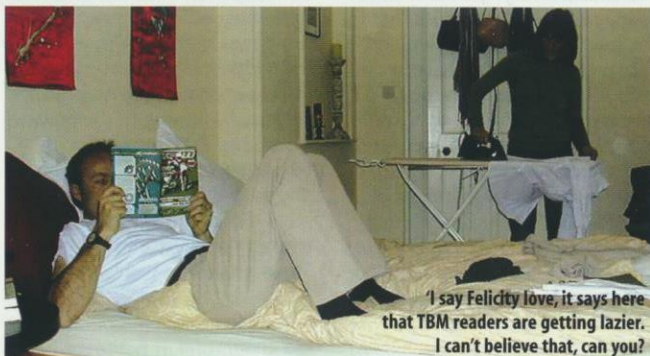
Dear TBM

I received the new TBM May issue today. Great stuff with the trials section at the rear. Hope this is here to stay for good.

Mike Little via email

Thanks Mike, what does everyone else think?

And finally... back in TBM116 (Letters) 'Steve from Southampton' accused us of having orange-tinted glasses and even went so far as to call us 'KTM Monthly'. Well we hear on the grapevine that Steve allegedly bought himself a new dirt bike recently. And the colour of his new machine? A fetching shade of orange... Don't worry, your secret's safe with us, Steve!



'I say Felicity love, it says here that TBM readers are getting lazier. I can't believe that, can you?'

PAUL COOPER
DOUBLE MOTO WINNER, RND 1 MX1 BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIPS



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KTM's new DOHC 250cc four-stroke enduro bike is here at last - at least as a factory machine. Jonty Edmunds takes a closer look at the bike which has dominated the WEC Enduro 1 class so far this season...



things come to those who wait. In the capable hands of Spaniard Ivan Cervantes, their new factory 250cc EXC-F has so far claimed victory on both days of the Spanish, Portuguese and Italian rounds of this season's WEC series. An impressive start for a hitherto unknown machine.

Well kept secret

So what is known about KTM's factory 250EXC-F? The simple answer is not all that much. With just two bikes entered in this year's WEC series (the other's being ridden by Petteri Silvan), we know that the machines are closely based on the production kick-start MX bike, the 250SX-F - which is planned for release in a month's time.

And indeed factory insiders confirm that the factory enduro bikes (now) utilise SX-F engines. But a glance at the spec sheets supplied to us by the KTM factory and the official spec sheet for the new MXer reveals that there are subtle differences between the two - and at this early stage we can't confirm whether those differences (a small change in bore and stroke) are likely to be carried through to the production enduro bikes when they finally arrive.

What is clear is that Cervantes' and Silvan's works bikes share many of the same factory works parts as the bigger 450cc and 525cc machines. The front-end being fitted with the same 52mm USD WP forks (48mm on the production MXer), factory Brembo front brake set-up, factory triple clamps and Renthal Twinwall handlebars. The small 7.1L fuel tank and oval chrome-moly frame are lifted straight off the MXer and are 100 percent new for the DOHC bike; whereas the

Head Works

Trying to find a fan of KTM's existing 250 four-stroke enduro bike is a thankless task. Frankly you've got more chance of spotting Alun Michael down your local TRF meeting. Never was a bike more inappropriately named than KTM's 250EXC 'Racing Four-Stroke'. In fact, ever since Yamaha launched their WR250F in 2001 the SOHC KTM hasn't really got a look-in. Sure, it's a nice little trail bike - but in a class

where capacity counts, this is one little puppy which forgot to do its maths homework.

In the heat of World Enduro Competition the bike's shortcomings are even more apparent. Since 2000 when a prototype version won the 250 4T world championship (but, it has to be said, against very little opposition), it hasn't really measured up to the competition. And that's meant that up till the start of this season, KTM

has been forced to rely on their proven 125cc two-stroke to uphold orange honour in the E1 class.

With their 450cc and 525cc enduro four-strokes already well established, KTM has long been in need of a competitive 250 thumper - and this, despite a motocross version of the bike having claimed the MX2 world championship in the hands of Kiwi rider Ben Townley last year.

But finally, KTM have shown that the best

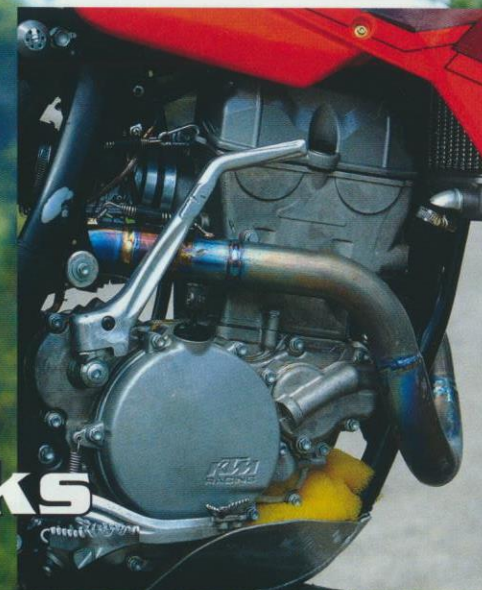
swing-arm, rear WP shock, footpegs, rear wheel, rear brake system and sub-frame all appear to be the same as on existing 450 and 525EXCs.

Motor-vation

Compared with the existing SOHC 250EXC (which is effectively a sleeved down version of the original 400cc lump), the new engine features a much more compact bottom-end. The 249.61cc lump utilises four titanium valves actuated by chain-driven double overhead cams. An intermediate lower cam gear behind the water pump impeller and hydraulic cam-chain tensioner allows the use of a shorter cam-chain, which KTM claim provides more consistent valve timing at all revs. The motor also features a close ratio six-speed gearbox and is designed in such a way that the rocker cover can be easily removed with the engine still in the bike, to make valve adjustment easier. Having the spark plug sticking out of the side of the cylinder also makes working on the top-end of the motor much simpler (it can be removed easily without removing the tank). And with the carburettor surrounded by little more than fresh air, that also appears to be incredibly easy to access for quick jetting changes. KTM have obviously decided that time spent in the workshop should be kept to a minimum - something which will no doubt appeal to future customers.

A born performer

But it is the motor's performance that has already proved impressive this season. Seemingly offering Cervantes a plentiful supply of easy to use power, the new engine appears to produce both



Head Works



250F: A potted history

KTM's SX-F first appeared briefly on the international motocross scene early in 2003. Back then the original engines used gear-driven cams (we seem to remember), but reliability issues proved impossible to overcome, and they promptly disappeared again. However, with an engine redesign came some much needed reliability and the MX bike finally proved itself last season when it claimed the MX2 Motocross World Championship in the capable hands of Kiwi rider Ben

Townley. America was next in its sights.

In order to comply with the American Motorcycle Association's (AMA) production rules a small number of SX-Fs were put into production, shipped to the states and put on sale, allowing KTM US to enter into the 2005 US Supercross championship. Here the SX-F claimed more successes with Nathan Ramsey and Josh Hansen winning five main events, as well as a couple of World SX championship events.

Now a proven product, production MXers will be appearing in a dealer near you within the next four to six weeks, but we'll have to wait a while for the official enduro version...

Ivan Cervantes in action aboard the WEC round-winning 250EXC-F...



a 2007 model), although the factory have stated that they will build a small number of pre-production bikes for the end of this year for the purpose of magazine testing!

But with the 250SX-F model due to appear in dealers' showrooms this July, those that can't wait to compete aboard KTM's new twin-cam will have to convert an MX machine into a woods weapon - something numerous riders will doubtless consider doing. However, the factory has confirmed that differences between the MXer and enduro bike will be quite substantial. Apart from the usual fitment of head and tail lights, 18in rear wheel, prop-stand and the rest of the road gubbins, the enduro bikes will have a quieter exhaust, a re-programmed ignition, altered valve timing (to soften the power hit), a wider ratio six speed box (the MXer also has six speeds), and an electric-start and battery.

So should you bother taking a 'punt' on the 'twin-cam'? Well - only if you've got money to burn, because we can't see many people wanting to buy a converted MXer in a year's time when the leccy-start enduro bike arrives. On the other hand here 'n' hounds riders (whose bikes generally don't need road-registering) will doubtless be queuing up to get their hands on one.

Either way, whether you buy and convert or wait for the official enduro bike, the new twin-cam 250F looks likely to be a serious improvement on the existing model. Mind you, that's not too hard when you think about it...

KTM250EXC-F (Factory)

Engine:	Liquid-cooled, DOHC, four-valve
Displacement:	249.61cc
Bore & stroke:	75 x 56.5mm
Starter:	Kick-starter
Silencer:	Ti Akrapovic
Transmission:	6-speed
Carburettor:	Keihin MX FCR39
F susp (travel):	USD WP 52mm (300mm)
R susp (travel):	WP, PDS shock (335mm)
Front brake:	Brembo 260mm
Rear brake:	Brembo 220mm
Steering angle:	27°
Trail:	116mm
Wheelbase:	1461mm
Ground clear:	390mm
Seat height:	925mm
Fuel capacity:	7.1 litres
Weight:	98kg (approx)

Head Works

strong, low-down grunt and serious top-end performance. With a claimed (theoretical) 38hp, watching Cervantes rev the bike hard when needed, as well as short shifting to utilise the mid-range power, suggests that while his race bike is a motocross-derived machine, its power would be just as well suited to enduro riders of most levels.

So when is KTM's new DOHC 250cc four-stroke enduro bike expected to appear as a production model? The disappointing answer to that question is... not until July 2006 (ie as



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STORY & PICS: JONTY EDMUNDS



Three Radical

Three British riders at the forefront of WEC competition. Jonty Edmunds takes a look at the bikes that have got them there...



Daryl Bolter's Husqvarna WR125

As 2005 is Daryl's first season of WEC competition (racing in the new Enduro Junior class) it's not surprising that his race bike is little more than a well-prepped production machine, with a few trick bits and a lightly modified motor. Prepared in Italy by the Mucci Racing Husqvarna team, a 'satellite' factory-supported squad comprising mainly of youngsters, the machine Bolter campaigned in Spain is very different to the machine he first threw his leg over in pre-season testing. Then little more than a motocross bike with lights,

At the opening round of this year's FIM World Enduro Championship in Spain, three British riders placed on the podium. Each was entered in a different class, riding for a different team, and with one bike a near standard two-stroke, another a converted motocrosser and the third a much revered 'factory bike', their machinery really couldn't have been much more different.

Daryl Bolter, Paul Edmondson and David Knight might all share the same goal this season - WEC success - but the bikes they hope will carry them to victory are every bit as individual as their riding styles.

Three Radical



Bolter prefers a smoother, more tractable motor (despite coming from a motocross background), and he eventually persuaded the team to tame the motor a little, which instantly resulted in faster test times.

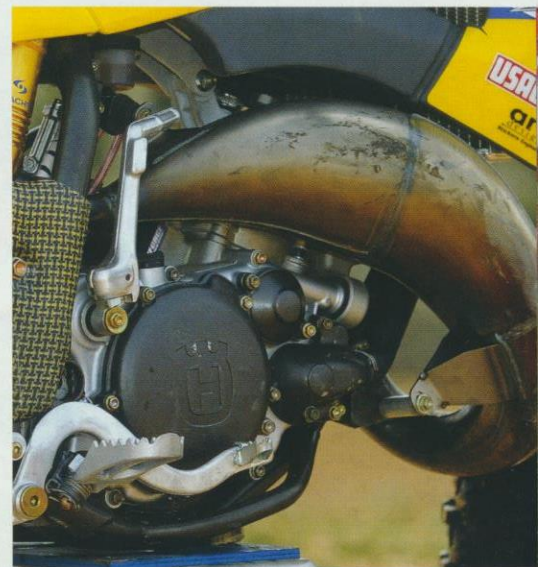
The motor in Daryl's race bike comes direct from the Husqvarna factory, and features a standard bottom-end, clutch and gearbox, but the cylinder and head have been lightly modified and it's fitted with a Vertex piston. Due to the fact that the motor was prepped in-house, and not by the Mucci team, none of the team's mechanics could give details of exactly what work had been done. All they could say was that it had a little more compression than stan-

dard and that the differences between it and a completely standard WR motor were few and far between. The only other notable modifications are the fitting of a V-Force motocross reed block, which is spaced away from the motor slightly to fractionally soften the hit, the use of a carburettor boot from a WR250 and a 2C expansion chamber. The idea behind fitting the 250 carb boot is that it holds more air than the standard WR125 part, which means that when the throttle is opened a larger amount of air is ready to be sucked through the motor. The carb and airbox are standard parts.

As with the motor, the chassis has barely been touched. The swingarm, sub-frame,

Five Facts: D Bolter

- Daryl has recently developed a liking for Freestyle MX. No slouch on a BMX bike, Bolter has perfected several tricks including the Heel-Clicker and Can-Can.
- Daryl has only ever raced for one manufacturer and on one model since starting enduros three years ago. Husqvarna's WR125 has been his weapon of choice.
- Daryl is supported by US drinks company SoBe (South Beach Beverage Co).
- Despite always wanting to be a professional bike rider Daryl ran for Wiltshire while at school. Despite finishing inside the top 20 Daryl hated running and hasn't run seriously since.
- Daryl recently got chatted up on a plane by a girl who spotted his EEC round 1 winning trophy in his hand luggage. Embarrassingly, the whole plane heard her ask him for his phone number...



radiators, silencer, tank, triple clamps and seat are all OE Husqvarna parts. Even the wheels are standard, with the rims having been anodised black and wrapped with Pirelli tyres and mousses. The brakes are essentially stock, though the rear caliper's fitted with a quick-release pad system and a solid disc is employed. Even the rear shock is standard, with the 'clickers' set to Daryl's liking.

The forks are slightly different to standard, being 'semi-factory' 45mm Marzocchi USD units with specially coated lower fork legs. These were re-valved to be a little softer in the early part of the stroke, though the fork springs are standard.

The remaining additions to Daryl's bike are aftermarket parts such as Fro Systems footpegs, a BOR/Hope alloy fuel cap, carbon/kevlar frameguards and front fender brace, UFO plastics (including a two-piece rear light to replace the standard one-piece unit), an RK chain, CHT sprockets, Twin Air filter and Tommi bars.

At Daryl's request the bike is fitted with bar clamps which are 15mm higher than standard, to raise his handlebars to personalise the riding position. And with this lightly modified bike, Daryl reached the third step of the Enduro Junior podium on day two in the GP of Spain.



Three Radical



Paul Edmondson's Honda CRE250F

Competing in the Enduro 1 class in this year's WEC after finishing runner-up in the E2 class last season, Paul Edmondson has unsurprisingly decided to opt for a 250cc four-stroke, rather than compete on Honda's eighth-litre stroker. With the 'Big H', like most manufacturers, having shifted their research and development energies towards thumpers, opting for the four-stroke was an obvious choice.

Of the two CRF250 models that Honda produce - the enduro 'X' and the motocross 'R'

versions - it's the 'R' that Edmondson has opted for as the base for his Honda Racing Fast Eddy PAR Homes WEC machine. The MXer was chosen because it has stronger power, is lighter and doesn't have the additional weight of an electric start, whilst the gearbox is also considerably better suited to WEC use due to its closer gear ratios.

As with any motocross bike used for enduro competition, there are a number of modifications that have been made to adapt the bike for 'off-road' use.

Firstly, Edmondson's race motor remains

close to the specification of the CRF motocross machine, with only a handful of modifications carried out - many of which were to smooth out the power delivery. Inside the motor the cylinder head is 'cleaned up' to allow for better gas flow, with the fitting of a Vertex piston and modifications to the carburettor the only notable changes. The cams, valves, and crank are all standard parts.

To produce the required juice to run lights, a generator from a CRF-X is fitted in conjunction with the standard motocross ignition. While this ignition was used at the opening rounds,

Paul will very likely switch to using a Vortex ignition with dual (switchable) ignition curves later in the season. Further helping to make the power smoother and more tractable, Paul runs 13/50 gearing on the Renthal sprockets, which is one tooth lower on the rear than standard. A complete Hinson clutch (inner and outer basket, and pressure plate) is fitted, with stronger springs to prevent Paul from cooking the standard clutch plates.

Like an increasing number of four-strokes in the WEC paddock, Paul's bike is fitted with an Akrapovic exhaust. The system isn't a

Three Radical



'customer' part, instead it's built to give the type of power delivery Eddy requested: stronger bottom-end and mid-range power with similar top-end performance to a standard MX system... only much quieter!

With the exception of a few brackets welded onto the frame to ease the fitting of the carbon sumpguard, additional gussets fitted to the swingarm to strengthen the chain-guide, and aluminium sliders designed to reduce mud build-up under the footpegs, the frame is standard. The aluminium sub-frame is also stock, though the bike will soon feature a carbon fibre, one-piece, sub-frame and airbox, as used by Stefan Merriman and Bartosz Oblucki

on their UFO Corse Yamahas.

The suspension fitted to Paul's bike is also modified standard equipment, re-valved to ensure a suppler, more progressive action. The rear shock is shorter than standard, helping to lower the rear-end of the bike. A softer than standard spring is also used in order to aid traction out of turns, as well as reducing the amount that the bike kicks-up over bumps. The forks feature softer springs and are re-valved to give a smoother action. These are held in place by the standard triple clamps, which also hold Renthal 997 Twinwall bars in Renthal bar clamps.

The rest of the bike features numerous after-

Five Facts: P Eddy

- Paul has all four of his world championship winning bikes. Paul's '89 and '90 KTM 125 (he used the same bike for two seasons), '93 Lucky Explorer Husky 125, '94 125cc Gas Gas and '96 250cc Gas Gas live in a very special trophy room.
- Paul is 35 years old - making him one of the oldest riders in the WEC. Next year will be his 20th year as a pro racer.
- Paul was the first reigning WEC champ to go and race in the US. Two others have since followed: Aussie Shane Watts and Finn Juha Salminen.
- Paul became the first Brit of the modern generation to win a US National Championship when he topped the '00 US Hare Scramble series for Kawasaki.
- Paul has won all of his world titles wearing Smith goggles. Eddy is one of their longest standing supported riders.



market parts, some designed to save weight, some for protection and others to improve performance.

Helping curb the kilos are Talon carbon fibre centred hubs and titanium fasteners which litter the bike. CRM carbon guards prevent damage to the engine, whilst Venhill hoses and Newfren discs improve the standard brakes. The front brake hose is actually longer than standard to take into account the fact that it has to be routed past the front headlight and the front disc is a floating, but standard sized unit. GMX oversized radiators are used not only because they aid cooling but also because they are stronger than the standard rads.

The bike is finished off with UFO plastics sporting MXM graphics, whilst the ubiquitous Michelin tyres and mousses are slipped onto the rims.

David Knight's KTM 525EXC

As the only British rider to compete aboard a true factory bike this season, David Knight's 525 KTM not only looks the business but also features a 'non-standard' engine configuration and numerous 'money can't buy' parts. That said, it also features a surprisingly high number of parts that anyone could purchase over the counter.

The KTM Enduro Factory Team Farioli, for

Three Radical



whom David competes in WEC events, are famous for producing some of the WEC's smartest looking, most reliable and best performing machines, and David's bike is no exception. According to Knighter, it goes every bit as well as it looks. And judging by David's performances at the opening two rounds of this year's WEC series (DK has claimed six Enduro 3 day-wins from six starts) few would disagree with him.

Much of what makes David's bike special is that his motor comes direct from the Austrian factory and his suspension straight from WP.

Both are 'official' components, which means they are built to the latest specifications and are only used by the KTM factory teams. And along with the official engine and suspension come two specialist technicians, on-hand at all WEC events to fine tune DK's machine to ensure that it performs exactly as he asks. Alongside these technicians, David also has D3-Racing's Julian Stephens at his side, travelling to all WEC events to assist him.

The main changes to the engine on David's 525 are a shorter con-rod (which doesn't affect the standard bore and stroke of 72 x 95mm),

the use of titanium valves, a 41mm mx carb with enduro settings, a six-speed MXC gear box (that's motocross first to fourth and enduro fifth and sixth), non-standard cam timing, an MX flywheel and ignition. Also fitted is an Akrapovic exhaust system, which is essentially an MX front pipe, with an external diameter of 48mm, fitted to an enduro silencer.

Although it's not too far removed from the engine set-up that Knighter used during the second half of last year in his D3-Racing 525KTM, his '05 factory bike produces softer power, especially off the bottom. Any 525cc

machine has more than enough power as standard, so David's bike has a more refined, but stronger delivery making it easier to use.

The clutch on David's bike is modified to ensure a more progressive feel and easier maintenance. A two-piece SXS cover is fitted, simply to ease access to the clutch plates should the need arise. The clutch master cylinder features a 9.5mm piston, which gives a more progressive action but feels firmer than standard. And the total depth of the clutch plates is also different from stock: 22mm deep on a production bike, the set in David's bike is

Three Radical



roughly six to eight millimetres deeper than standard, which gives a little more pre-load on the springs. The actual plates and basket though, are standard.

Knighter's suspension is obviously very different to that on a standard half-litre KTM. DK's bike is fitted with WP's giant 52mm USD front forks, the action of which are incredibly soft for a rider of his size and weight.

The forks feature aluminium coated lower legs and precisely machined, although already slightly battered, spindle and caliper mounts. And the weight saving over a set of standard forks is massive! Holding the forks in place are a set of 18mm off-set KTM triple clamps, onto

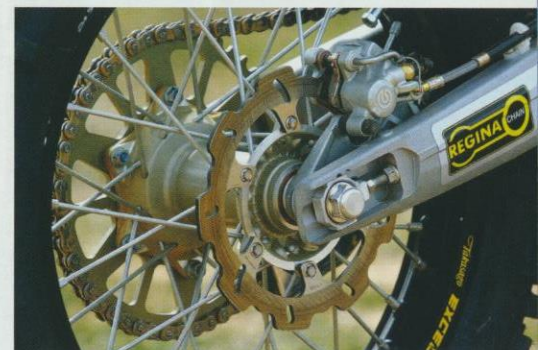
which David has a set of Renthal Twinwall 996 bend bars fitted.

As far as the shock is concerned, it is every bit as special as the forks. Far lighter than the standard unit and offering much more in the way of adjustment, it features a main body machined from billet aluminium and is fitted with a titanium spring.

The final part of David's bike which isn't available over the counter is the front brake set-up - it's a little bit special. Featuring a twin-piston caliper machined from Beryllium, it is both lighter and stronger than standard. The master cylinder is fitted with an 11mm piston, one millimetre bigger than standard,

Five Facts: D Knight

- Recently voted Isle of Man Sports Personality of the year, David has been trying to persuade the WEC to let him stand under the Manx flag and not the Union Jack.
- David much prefers to spend an evening in his garage than down the gym. One of the WEC's fittest, and strongest, riders, he can prep a bike as well as he races one.
- As well as scoring BEC and WEC points in recent years David has also scored points in British and European Supercross, British champ MX, and is a talented trials rider.
- More commonly associated with Tennis, Football or Supercross stars, David is the only WEC rider to have a 'shoe deal'. US footwear supplier Vans sponsor him.
- At the Italian WEC event David not only posted the fastest extreme test time but rode the final extreme test 'feet-up'...



and the overall result is a stronger brake which doesn't fade. This is due, in part, to the fact that it remains cooler for longer and clamps onto a standard diameter floating Braking Wave disk. A standard brake hose is employed, though David prefers to use a thinner, longer front brake lever.

The rear brake set-up features a standard lever, master cylinder and caliper, the only changes being the fitting of a quick-release brake pad system and a standard diameter Braking Wave disk.

The rest of David's WEC race bike is pretty much standard. Both front and rear wheels feature stock hubs fitted with black Excel rims,

with only the front spindle having a quick-release tab welded onto it. The frame, which is painted black, the sub-frame and the swing-arm are all standard parts, as are the radiators and airbox. All of the plastics, including the handguards, are supplied by Acerbis, and the plastic, quick-release sumpguard will be familiar to KTM owners everywhere. However, this particular one has large holes drilled into it to aid cooling.

As with all KTM factory enduro bikes, David's 525 is fitted with Metzeler tyres and mousers, whilst Sunstar sprockets provide 14/50 gearing, with drive coming from a hand-built Regina O-ring chain.

BRAND X?

Can the new 450 Honda CRF-X show a clean pair of heels to its middleweight rivals? We headed to wales with a gang of 450s to find out...

Brand loyalty is one of those strange untenable subjects so beloved of the suits in marketing. The principle goes something like this: convince a customer of the merits of buying and using one of your products, and as long as that product gives good service and is backed up by decent customer relations at dealer level, then that customer will reward you with repeat business. It stands to reason that if your cat likes Brand-X cat food, then providing Brand-X isn't three times the price of Brand-Y and that it doesn't send Tiddles into a tail-spin, why bother changing?

Of course dirt bikes are far more complex, not to mention more costly, than a can of horse, but the principle is exactly the same. Once you become a customer, the chances are that unless you've had a bad experience (Tiddles choked on a bit of ear for instance) you'll certainly consider that same brand next time you come to purchase.

But just in case you don't, the marketers have got some pretty clever and none-too-subtle ways of keeping you on-side. For instance how silly are you going to look riding along on a Yamaha when all your riding gear is branded KTM? What sort of message does that send out - that you



BRANDX?

With its alloy beam frame there's no doubt that the new CRF450X is a looker...



can't even be trusted to buy your own clothes?

When it comes to brand loyalty Honda are out on their own. Although they don't really go in for marketing gimmicks, Honda is very clever in that its products span a number of different but inter-related arenas, so that the marque gets a huge amount of exposure.

For instance if you like your Honda motorcycle perhaps you might consider owning a Honda car, mowing your lawn with a Honda lawnmower, powering your shed with a Honda generator, or propelling your boat with a Honda outboard etc. Honda have grown big simply by being present in so many leisure markets. And because their products tend to be innovative, well constructed, and widely distributed, their popularity (world-wide) is assured.

So the launch of a new Honda dirtbike is always a mouthwatering prospect - especially one as eagerly anticipated as this. As the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles, Honda can call upon the sort of R&D resources which exceeds most dirt bike manufacturers total turnover. On top of that Honda dirt bikes tend to come along fairly infrequently.

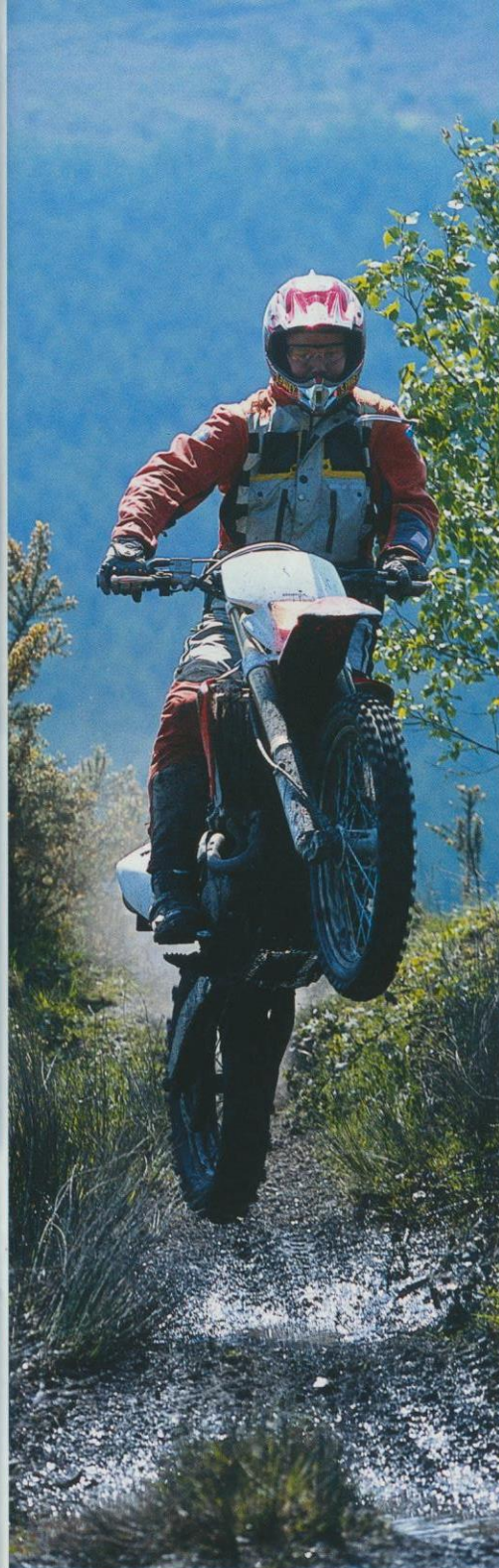
The launch test of the 450X on the Isle of Man last month showed that the new Honda had enormous potential, but how would it stack up against the main protagonists in the 450 class? We intended to find out...

Competition Rules

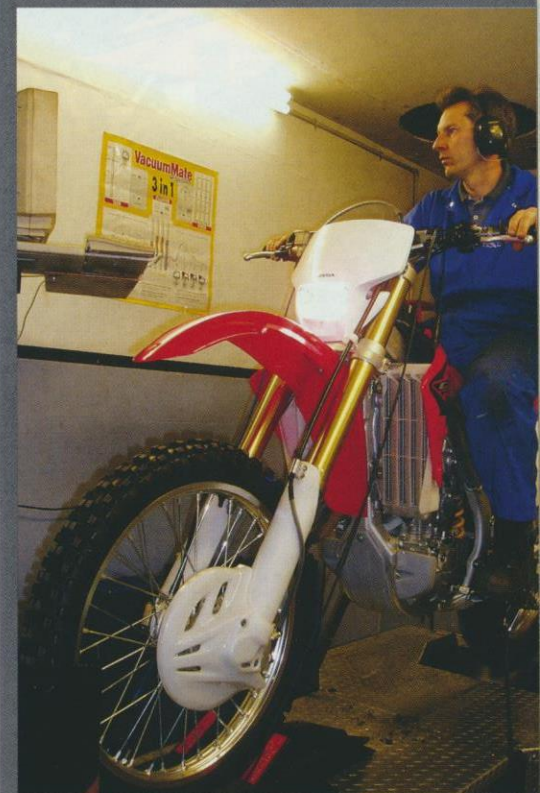
Of course there's a wealth of competition in the 450 market right now, and Honda's recent release has merely turned up the heat on a pan which was already bubbling over. KTM's 450EXC has long been the UK's number-one selling 450 enduro bike (not to mention TBM's 450-class champ - albeit it was comfortably outsold by Honda's CRF450R MXer last year) and with the introduction of Honda's smaller-brother 250X a year and a bit ago, the big-H has demonstrated that it means business in the dual-sport arena.

But KTM aren't about to let a usurper steal their hard-won market-share - their 2005 bike has recently seen a mid-season revamp (in the form of the Limited Factory Edition) and with their 2006 models just around the corner (barely two months after Honda's '05 bikes have landed), KTM can justifiably claim to be taking the fight to Honda.

Meantime over at Yamaha UK, staff must be wondering what they have to do in order to shift serious numbers of WR450s to UK customers. Because it's not like the bike doesn't sell in other markets: in Australia for instance the WR450F isn't just the number one selling dirtbike, it's the number one selling *bike* in the whole country (not counting a 110cc version of the Honda Cub used by the Aussie postal service). In France too, the big Yam sells nearly eight times as many units



Rolling Thunder



First stop the dyno - often the proving-ground for winners and losers in TBM shootouts. The dyno only tells part of the story of course, but it does graphically demonstrate where a bike's strengths and weaknesses lie. Before we go any further let's explain that we weren't able to use our regular dyno shop (PDQ in Slough), but we did manage to locate a dealer with an identical Dynojet set-up (the extremely helpful and friendly Royston Edwards in Caldicot, south Wales Tel 01291 422226, thanks guys), so the results should be comparable.

The first thing to say about all four dyno readings is how similar they all are. Take a look at the power curves for example, and there's very little to separate them. Okay, the two DOHC machines (Husky and Yam) make

BRAND X?

Husky's looks have improved for 2005 but it's gained a bit of weight...



there as it does over here. Now in fairness, the latest registration figures show that the WR450F has just overtaken KTM's 450EXC this month - but bear in mind that those figures include both 2004 and 2005 models (there's some blinding deals to be had on 04 models right now, as long as they were registered in '05), so the figures look a little skewed.

For 2005 Yamaha took a look at their WR450 and made some much-needed changes. Out went the bloated 'fatboy' tank and in its place came a taller but narrower version matched up with a suitably modified seat. There were changes to the suspension and engine too which have resulted in making the 450F a little easier to ride and a lot easier on the eye. But would it be good enough to match the new Honda and the hugely popular KTM we wondered.

Husqvarna have had a similar problem to Yamaha in as much as their DOHC TE450 has a reputation for being a bit of an 'animal'. Last year's bike was scarily fast and although everyone likes something with a bit of cream on top, Husky could justifiably have been accused of over-egging this pudding. For 2005 Husqvarna are back with a restyled bike and a reworked engine and suspension. The changes aren't massive but the effect is good enough to give the machine a new appearance and a softer edge to it. We were looking forward to the ride.

Why Have One?

Before we get into the comparison proper, let's just take a moment considering the reason behind choosing a 450 in the first place. For us a modern 450 is something of a Jack-of-all-trades. As an all-rounder it's nigh-on perfect. It has the speed and power to cope with a variety of different terrains and uses, yet it's still competitive for racing - providing the events you ride aren't ridiculously tight and technical.

Because as a pure race bike a 450 can still be quite hard work. A good 200/250 two-stroke will comfortably match it for performance off-road and arguably out-handle it in the technical stuff, yet cost less to purchase and be simpler to maintain. If however, racing is only a small part of your riding repertoire then the swingometer heads back in favour of the middleweight thumper.

The beauty of a 450 of course is that it'll work in all manner of situations. If the going is fast and open then the 450 has the performance to let you really enjoy it. There's plenty of torque available for the big climbs, and enough power for long stretches on the road. And your mates aren't going to kick roost in your face like they would if you were on a nine-stone weakling of a 250 thumper. Plus, 450s are the sorts of bikes you can take to any kind of event (MX practice track, supermoto, hillclimb, rally) and have a lot of fun. ➔

Fortunately you don't have to be an expert rider to make the most of a modern 450, though it helps to have a bit of muscle if you're going to throw one around all day and pick it up off the floor occasionally.

None of these bikes feels particularly light, yet the scales show that the class as a whole is getting lighter - fully fuelled and ready to ride we recorded the following weights:

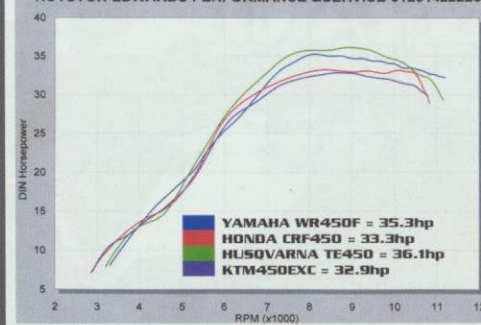
Yamaha: 125.4kg, **Honda:** 124.6kg,

Husky: 127.2kg, **KTM:** 124.7kg.

Less than three kilos separates the lightest and the heaviest, and statistically speaking, there's not a lot in it.



ROYSTON EDWARDS PERFORMANCE & SERVICE 01291422226

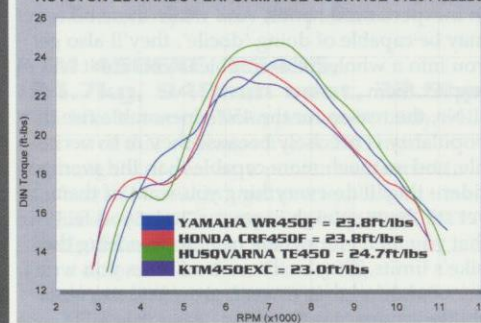


a touch more top-end power than either of the SOHC bikes (Honda and KTM), but no bike stands clear as an absolute winner or loser. Between the most powerful (TE450, 36.1hp) and the least powerful (EXC450, 32.9hp) there's about 3hp or approximately ten percent, but to be honest you wouldn't believe it if you rode them back to back.

Pretty much the same is true of the torque curves which again all follow a similar path. Once more the Husky is king of the torque mountain with the tallest and broadest curve of all the bikes, but the difference comes down to less than ten percent overall. Of more interest perhaps is that three of the bikes (CRF, EXC and TE) all show a dip in their torque curves between 4000-5000rpm (the Husky is hardest hit) whereas the WR-F continues a fairly smooth progression towards its maximum torque output. But once again this is barely noticeable on the trail.

In fact perhaps the biggest conclusion which can be drawn from these comparison charts is that all the manufacturers know exactly what sort of power their 450s need - and that is about 35hp (measured at the rear wheel on a knobbly tyre) with around 23-24ft-lbs of torque. Job done.

ROYSTON EDWARDS PERFORMANCE & SERVICE 01291422226



BRANDX?



'05 Yamaha WR450F has inherited the smaller seat and tank from the YZ...

A few years ago, when we weighed a bunch of 400s for a big shootout, the majority of them were heavier than this line-up.

The same could be said of their seat heights - which again seem to be getting lower year on year. We measured each of our test bikes and got the following figures: **Yamaha:** 920mm, **Hon:** 950mm, **Husky:** 945mm, **KTM:** 940mm.

So with less all-up weight, lower seat heights, a broad spread of torque and the universal adoption of electric-start, it's no wonder that more and more people are buying 450s.

On the other hand, don't go assuming that just because manufacturers have made their 450s more accessible, that they're the ideal bike on which to start off-roading. Unless you're fairly confident, a 450 is still a big, fast, scary bit of kit in inexperienced hands. And while these bikes may be capable of doing 'docile', they'll also get you into a whole lot of trouble if you don't respect them.

No, the reason for the 450's inexorable rise in popularity is precisely because they're so versatile, and so much more capable than the average rider - they'll do everything you want of them, yet still have enough in reserve to let you feel that you aren't anywhere near approaching the bike's limits. They're the sorts of bikes you won't tire of and feel that you can grow into as your ability improves.

Honda CRF450X, £5470, 124.6kg, 950mm seat, 33.3hp

That Honda got the CRF-X so right may not come as a particularly big surprise to you, but we were still mightily impressed. You see Honda generally play the 'percentage game' aiming for the middle market where the bulk of their customers lie. In the past this has meant some capable, if slightly dull dirt bikes. And in fairness the CRF-X is nowhere near as 'explosive' to ride as the CRF-R. But it isn't meant to be. Honda have taken that bike's essentially sound dynamics and mellowed it out so that it works in far more varying conditions: grunting its way up slabby rock climbs, trickling down hills without stalling, blasting its way through bogs - all these are now in the new 450's repertoire. That the X is far less powerful than the R shouldn't be a great cause for concern for the majority of trail or enduro riders - there's still a great big heart beating underneath that red tank and the Honda has plenty of performance to offer - the majority of it arriving in the bike's mighty midrange.

Husqvarna TE, £5599, 127.2kg, 945mm seat, 36.1hp

Another bike with plenty of performance on offer, Husky's big brother version of their excellent TE250 has serious amounts of stomp - even though this year's bike felt considerably slower

Thanks to the following people without whose help this feature couldn't have happened. Royston Edwards Performance & Service (01291 422226) for the use of their dyno. Based in south Wales (near the Severn Bridge) they also do bike repairs and servicing and are an extremely helpful and friendly bunch. Simon Pavey who runs the BMW Off-Road Skills course (08000 131282). Nick Plumb at Touratech (01792 816660). Gwynn at Husky Trails (01865 390481). Harley Stevens at Yamaha UK (01932 358000). Scott Grimsdall from Honda (01753 590500). And Tegg from Paul Green Tyres (01639 722251). Thank you one and all...



than the missile we rode last year. Thank God. Last year's bike was certainly fun to ride... for oooh, about ten minutes... and then you felt you needed to get off and go lie down for a while.

Sensibly Husqvarna have realised that this class is about big torque as much as big power and this year their TE actually has both in abundance. But what it also offers is a decent suspension package, a well controlled chassis and in my opinion, a touch too much weight. The bike feels slightly bigger and more awkward to throw around than any of the others (though I'm bound to say that not everyone agreed with me on this point).

So let's stick to the stuff we can all agree on. The Husky looks great, is extremely well equipped, goes really well and it definitely feels a bit on the heavy side.

Yamaha WR450F, £5299, 125.4kg, 920mm seat, 35.3hp

Another bike which has been criticised in the past for being overweight is Yamaha's WR450F. This year Yamaha have done all they can to slim down the WR450F - both visually and empirically - and the bike certainly feels a bit lighter and a touch more wieldy than the 2004 model. The new smaller tank (narrower but taller) helps give the appearance of a slimmed-down bike and allows the rider better machine control. The problem is

that the Yam can still feel on the lardy side once you go bush.

No doubt part of that is down to the 450's potent engine which gives effortless performance - but can feel a bit overwhelming at times. Like the Husky, this year's bike feels a bit more mellow than last year, but it's not so much the power as the 'impression of weight' which the WR's engine imbues on the rider.

We've got to say that we continue to be impressed with Yamaha's build quality. Although quite sparsely equipped as standard (you need to buy the £200 legaliser kit if you want to make it road ready), there's nothing here which is flimsy or likely to break in a crash, and big WR-Fs seem to go on forever. Turn up at any enduro or trail ride and you will always see plenty of older WRs. Owners report very few problems.

KTM 450EXC, £5495, 124.7kg, 940mm seat, 32.9hp

If the bike in our photos appears to be fairly well used - well that's because it is. A 2005 model it was bought last year by a punter and loaned to us when KTM couldn't get us a test bike in time for this shootout. That explains why it's in slightly different spec to standard and comes with a different rear tyre. Thanks Tegg.

How much more is there to say about the 450EXC which hasn't already been written in

BRAND X?

KTM 450EXC just seems to look 'right'...



TBMs past? Compact, lightweight and we think incredibly stylish, the 450EXC remains one of our favourite bikes because dynamically it feels much smaller than its 450 capacity suggests. The motor provides tremendous power of the usable variety (providing its dry), the chassis is swift turning (too swift for some, but you do get used to it... eventually), and the quality of construction stands the test of time. Bits do break and fall off - ours had a floppy sidestand, though that's not too bad considering the amount of work this bike has done - but again owners report very few quality issues with the orange bikes.

Of course it had nothing in the way of a front brake, and the suspension managed to feel both choppy and squishy at the same time, but hey... they all do that, sir.

Motor-vation

The heart of any great 450 should be a storming engine with a decent slab of torque, but also plenty of 'grippy' power. Each of these bikes fulfils that criteria but in a quite different way. For instance the Honda has a storming midrange, you feel like you can drift along forever in third or fourth gear just twisting the throttle and riding the bountiful wave of torque that the engine produces. There's a fine top-end too, with a serious amount of go if you choose to wind the X into the upper reaches of its rev-range. On the other hand

the Honda lacks a bit of low-down punch. The dyno says otherwise, but on the stock gearing the CRF doesn't really impress right off the throttle. There's sufficient go to keep things rolling along nicely, but for real low down torque look no further than the KTM.

Once again the dyno doesn't tell the full story because when you ride the EXC it always has power in abundance. Twist the throttle and the KTM jumps off the line with an instantaneous response. Power builds from no-where and progresses from a hulking bottom-end into a wonderful mid-range and a howling top-end. Yet the dyno says it's the least powerful. Go figure. On the day it was the bike which responded best to rider input and always had an answer whether it was grunting its way up power-sapping climbs, or charging along a fast fire-road.

There was little to split the remaining two, except to say that the Husky felt (if anything) even more powerful than the Yam 450 (and that's saying something). And whereas the Yam built steadily from next to nothing into a voracious midrange and a speedy top-end, the Husky went from a big bottom-end shove into an almighty top-end rush. The Husky was by far the best bike on the hill-climbs - or at least it would have been if it wasn't for its propensity to cough-stall if you let the revs drop too low. When it wasn't stalling the Husky found excellent traction, and unlike



the Honda (which felt the most disappointing on hill-climbs, partly we think due to overly-tall gearing), the Husky would always respond to extra throttle by producing great big gobs of power just when you needed it most.

The Yamaha by contrast felt arguably the most linear of all the bikes and certainly the smoothest. It's not a major factor, but if you spend long periods on tarmac the Yamaha's lack of vibes will be a real bonus.

Handling

If the Yamaha had one of the nicest motors, it offered probably the least exciting handling. Now that may be a good or bad thing depending on your point of view. From a trailriding perspective the Yam felt solid and self-assured, but compared with the others it was reluctant to change direction and a little too conservative for our liking. We resorted to dropping the forks 5mm in the yokes to try and quicken up the steering and although this improved matters, it didn't completely cure it. For certain the WR-F is good and stable and with a motor this powerful it's probably best to err on the side of security. But I imagine that racing the Yamaha could get tiring just because it requires that bit more physical effort than the others to get it to turn.

At the opposite end of the spectrum lies the KTM. It turns incredibly easily, drops into corners

beautifully but can become flighty at the extreme. It encourages good riding skills because you feel you always need to be over the bars keeping the front-end under control. Nine times out of ten the KTM will do exactly what you want it to do - think it around a corner and it's done and anything more can be corrected with a quick blip of throttle. But there's always that one time when the wayward front-end will catch you out and flap in a way which has you questioning the parentage of KTM's engineers.

More stable than the KTM, the Husky is a fairly good handler for a bike of its size and weight. It feels a little tall at times but nevertheless the steering is neutral and you can throw it around - helped of course by an engine which is always ready and willing to correct things with a punch of performance. But for all its good manners it somehow manages to feel about twice the size of the diminutive KTM, and that's a real eye-opener when you're jumping between the two bikes. Hop off the TE and onto the EXC and it's like moving down a capacity class without losing the power. One small bermed section of track we rode eight or ten times on each bike, and every time the KTM felt the smallest and lightest when it came to hustling it around the berms.

Interesting the Honda felt next best. Honda of course rarely get this sort of thing wrong and the



BRAND X?

CRF-X is no exception. Its handling offers possibly the perfect compromise needed on a 450 - fast enough steering for when you need it to be, but fairly stable for the faster stretches. Of course the KTM will out-turn the Honda through the twisty stuff, but then the CRF-X always manages to remain just on the sure-footed side of things. A trick which the KTM has yet to master.

For pure racing the KTM will always be the better bike but for the average Joe, we reckon that Honda have got it just about taped on the handling front.

Suspension

A tricky subject because different riders like a different set-up, and also because every one of these bikes has great suspension nowadays. For plushness, nothing really beats the KTM. On the other hand, certain bumps can have the Katosh skittering along like a three-legged horse.

The Yamaha started this test with overly firm suspension (it was brand new) but by the end of the day it had become too soft and wallowy and we needed to firm up the clickers. Once done there's very little to fault with the Yamaha's

suspension except to say that the rear feels a bit too soft and that's possibly exacerbating the bike's slightly lazy steering. The Husky on the other hand was a bit too firm as standard and could've probably benefited from a little fettling. It had a tendency to deflect off rocks and needed careful guiding in the trickier sections. But it too has great suspension and felt like it could be dialled in to suit a rider's preference.

Once again it was a toss-up between the well damped Honda and the plusher KTM. The Honda felt fine but unremarkable - as usual it had a great front-end and an efficient rear. The KTM on the other hand felt too soft at times, yet this let you feel exactly what the wheels were up to. My gut feeling would be to go with the Honda on this, it has the benefit of a linkage and that in itself is a good enough reason. Overall we were very impressed with the level of standard suspension you're buying on a bike of this type.

Other stuff

It's only taken Honda ten years to perfect, but the new CRF-X has the perfect airbox door. Secured by a single (but sturdy) Dzus fastener, it swings

open to reveal the airfilter in all its naked glory. Excellent. Other Honda details are equally as good - from its beautiful aluminium beam frame to its well designed sidestand, the Honda is a model of clear thinking and sensible design solutions. On the other hand it lacks all the necessary road kit to make this dual-sport bike a true dual-sporter. Oops.

The Husqvarna on the other hand comes fully equipped for the street and lacks nothing, except for a tirelessly reliable electric-start. It always churned for a second or two before cranking the bike into life and eventually failed completely. A problem traced to a bent terminal on the starter-side, caused (the Husky importers tell us), by a crash - though it actually stopped working in the middle of a hill-climb! And wasn't the easiest bike to fire up on its kick-start.

We also had to resort to using the kick-start on the Honda when the battery mysteriously quit working during the day. It fixed itself later on, but even then (like the Husky), the Honda sometimes required more than one stab at the starter button to get it sparked into life. Not so the Yamaha and KTM which started on the button, first time every time.

Unlike the KTM, the Yamaha also sported great brakes, in fact you'd be more than happy with the brakes on all of the bikes except for the KTM. The Honda's should be singled out for praise too - the front brake is especially powerful.

But the Yamaha (like the Honda) requires you to dip into your pocket for a second time if you want to use the bike for trail riding on. For having shelled out on their machines, Honda and Yamaha owners then have to pay a second instalment for road-legal kit. In this day and age this really is a disgrace.

The Verdict

And so, as with every TBM shootout we have a verdict - unanimous in this case, though the minor placings were settled on majority verdicts and will be continued to be argued about for some time to come. In fourth place (not by much) we have the Husqvarna TE450. Its storming engine can't quite make up for its additional feeling of size and bulk when out on the trail. Good in virtually all areas, it's arguably the best equipped bike here and the nicest looking, yet it didn't quite manage to convince us on the day.

In third place we have the Yamaha WR450F. Again strength in all key areas, and again no real problems to report, save for the fact that Yamaha's weight savings have not really transformed the way the bike feels, and it's still too poorly equipped as standard.

In second place comes the new CRF450X.

It feels light to ride, has an engine blessed with a wicked amount of midrange, comes with tremendous suspension and brakes, and handles far better than we imagined it would. And were it not for a lack of bottom-end, a starting problem and a dearth of road kit it might well have been our winner.

Instead the undisputed winner of our four-bike 450 shootout is the King KTM 450EXC. It's still the best of the middleweights. And despite what the stats may say, it feels lighter, smaller, and arguably more powerful than all the others on test here. That the KTM can come to this test as one of the oldest bikes and yet still beat the others says volumes about the bike's original design integrity.

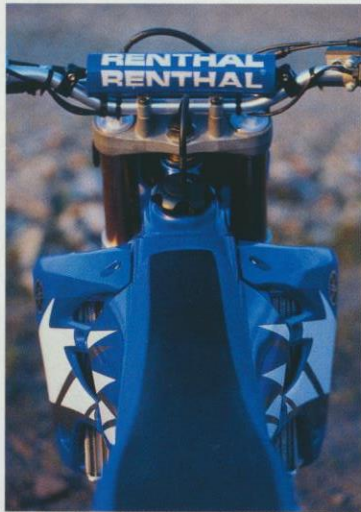
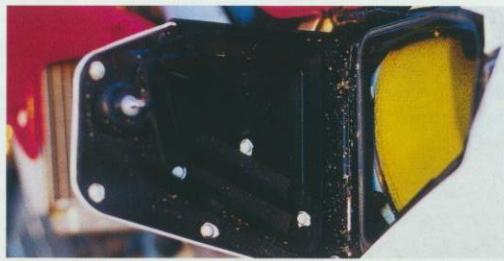
And although we always grumble about the KTM's Brembos, its (occasionally) twitchy steering and rear PDS, the fact remains that as a package the KTM is hard to argue against and even harder to beat. It works so well, it's incredibly easy to ride and the fact that British riders have voted it the most popular 450 with their wallets, well... Who are we to argue with that...

Second Opinion: Si Pavey

In first place I definitely have to put the KTM 450EXC. Despite a few serious flaws with the KTM in the brake and suspension departments, as a package it is just simply the best. As soon as you swing a leg over it and ride around the first corner it feels smaller and lighter than all the others. The engine is the most versatile and has usable power throughout the rev range. It starts immediately every time you touch the button and even kicks over easily.

I'd opt for the Yam next, primarily due to it starting well throughout our test. By contrast both the Honda and Husky struggled at some point during the day, despite the provision of electric-starts. I liked the way the Husky handled, but the Honda seemed the better built of the two.

However, if it was my money buying a 450 four-stroke I would be first taking into consideration the deal I could get and how enthusiastic my local dealer was - that can make an enormous difference when it comes to running a bike. All four bikes could be competitive and enjoyable as either trail bikes or race bikes (with a little setting-up perhaps), but if I had to split them I'd have to say its orange for me...



Clockwise from top-left: Husky battery pivots up out of the airbox to allow access to the air-filter - once you've removed the seat which is held in place with a Dzus fastener. Honda has the simplest air-filter access via a hinged door secured with a single Dzus fastener. KTM dials are the best of the bunch. Yamaha is much slimmer for 2005 thanks to a new petrol tank.

BRAND X?

Second Opinion: Barni

With a smaller tank and narrower front-end, Yamaha's '05 450F is a definite improvement on the previous year's model. Yet I'd still put it in fourth place. Somehow the WR still manages to feel big, weighty, and just *too* stable. For wide-open spaces it could be just the ticket (which, I guess, is why it sells so well in Aus) but I found it just too much like hard work.

The top three is a little bit harder to call. Each bike offers a completely different riding experience, though none realise their full potential. The Husky makes good power, climbs hills beautifully and handles well. But it's put on some weight this year and you notice the bike's size. If it felt as good as its 250 stable-mate then it'd be challenging for top honours. But it doesn't, and it isn't.

Which leaves the EXC and the CRF. If it's low down grant you're after then the Katosh

is the bike to choose. And with its great riding position, full road kit and good residuals it's easy to see why the bike is often regarded as *the* complete package. However, if you factor in those 'will they or won't they' Brembos, the oft unpopular PDS rear-end and the nervous steering it's just as easy to see why some people *don't* choose orange.

But where Honda's 450X loses out to the Euro bike is in its lack of road kit. And simply bolting on any old set of (road legal) lights is going to do nothing for those minimalist looks. I'd also have to spend a few quid on tailoring the too-low riding position and dropping the too-tall gearing. So it's just as well that the CRF comes with a strong motor, good suspension, powerful brakes, and top-notch build quality.

So which would I choose? Well, on the day it was the KTM's comprehensive equipment and compact, focussed nature which *just* swayed it for me. But only just...

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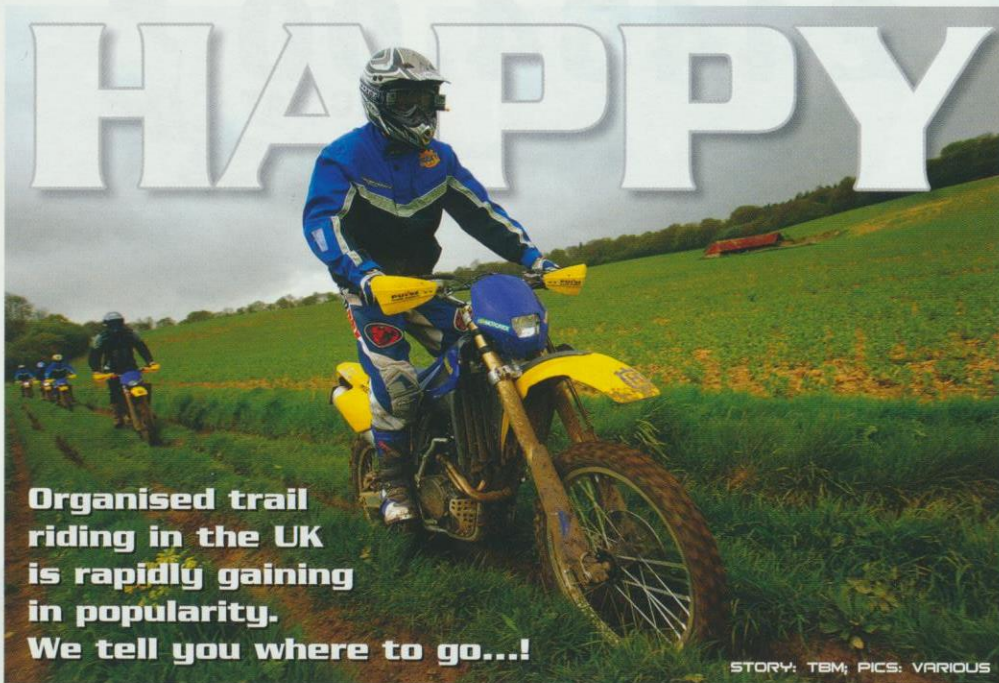
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HAPPY



Organised trail riding in the UK is rapidly gaining in popularity. We tell you where to go...!

STORY: TBM, PICS: VARIOUS

TRAILS

Okay, so you're new to trail riding, you've just picked up this copy of the magazine and you want to know where you can get a feel for riding off-road before committing yourself to all the expense of purchasing a bike and kit. Or maybe you're an experienced trailrider introducing a friend or partner to the sport and don't know where to take them. Or perhaps you're just keen to try out a different make of bike or a ride a few trails in another part of the country. Whatever your background and experience, this guide is designed for you.

First of all a word or two about trail riding. Trail riding is all about enjoying the countryside from the seat of a dirt bike. It's about respecting rights of way, other trail users and people whose villages and homes you pass along the way. It's not about racing your mates or pushing your bikes to its very limits. That doesn't mean that you always have to ride slowly and can't have fun. The challenge of unexplored trails, varied riding and ever-changing scenery not to mention

riding a bike on a loose surface and enjoying telling a yarn or two about it afterwards is what trail riding is all about. Start out with that frame of mind and you won't go far wrong.

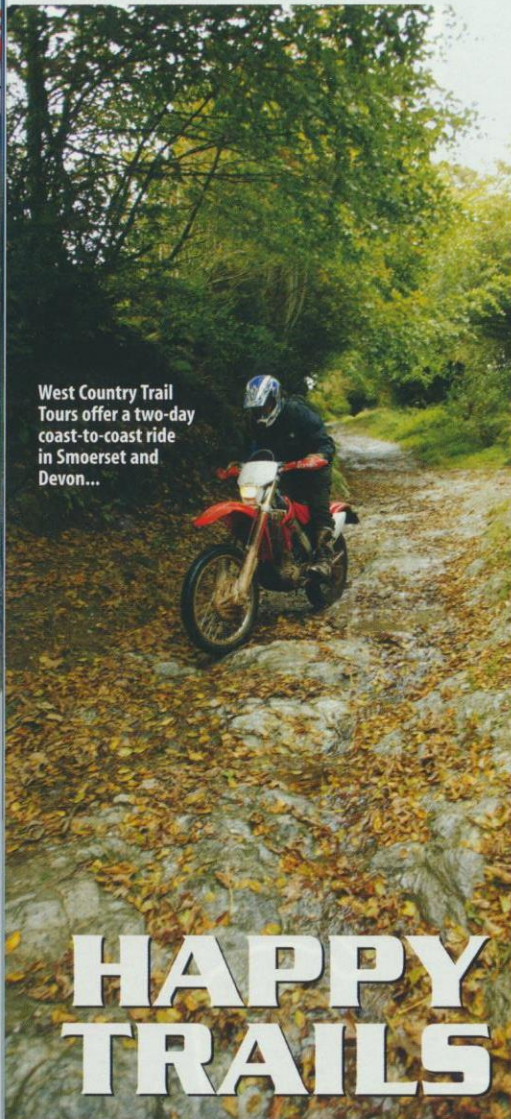
Listed on these pages is a selection of UK-based trail tour operators with our findings about what they do and how and where they ride. We've been along and sampled one or two of these for ourselves, (the ones where there's a bit more info), so find the one that best suits your needs and give 'em a call...

HUSKY TRAILS

What is it: Guided trailriding in the pretty Oxfordshire countryside with routes of varying difficulty of up to 100 miles long. With the full backing of Husqvarna importers Husky Sport and using a fleet of brand new (electric-start) TE250 enduro bikes (plus WRE125s & TE450s also available), and run by an incredibly



- 1 HUSKY TRAILS OXFORDSHIRE
- 2 WEST COUNTRY TRAIL TOURS DEVON/SOMERSET
- 3 YORKSHIRE TRAIL RIDES YORKSHIRE DALES
- 4 NORWEST TRAILS SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS
- 5 COTSWOLD TRAIL RIDES YORKSHIRE DALES
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- 7 BJC MOTORCYCLE TRAIL TOURS WILTSHIRE/BERKSHIRE/ OXFORDSHIRE/HAMPSHIRE
- 8 OVERLANDER TRAIL TOURS PEAK DISTRICT/DERBYSHIRE/ STAFFORDSHIRE/CHESHIRE
- 9 ADVENTURE MOTORCYCLE HOLIDAYS CLWYD/NORTH WALES
- 10 TRAIL TOURS R US PEAK DISTRICT/STAFFORDSHIRE/ DERBYSHIRE/CHESHIRE
- 11 CORNWALL TRAIL RIDES EAST DEVON/EAST & SOUTH-EAST CORNWALL
- 12 WILTSHIRE TRAIL RIDES WILTSHIRE/BERKSHIRE/HAMPSHIRE
- 13 LLANECHINDA FARM CYNGHORDDY, LLANDOVERY, MID-WALES



West Country Trail Tours offer a two-day coast-to-coast ride in Somerset and Devon...

HAPPY TRAILS

experienced local guide (ISDE team manager, Gwyn Barraclough). Apart from experiencing the beautiful Oxfordshire countryside the idea is to allow potential customers to try out a Husqvarna for themselves.

What it isn't: Enduro training or any sort of off-road school. Speeds are moderate and sensible to reflect the conditions.

What bikes are on offer: New Huskys of course. From the learner-legal WRE125 through the fantastic TE250 to the bonkers TE450. All are electric-start.

What it costs: The Husky Trails day costs

£150 all in, which includes a full English breakfast, hire of bike (& third party insurance), kit, fuel, lunch and a day's guiding (midweek only).

Anything else: Yes, anybody who goes on to buy a Husky within 30 days of a tour will receive the full cost of the tour back.

What's it like: Meeting up at a beautiful country club (and golf course) The day begins with a cooked breakfast followed by a quick change into the new kit and a sensible but short briefing and introduction to the bikes. Then it's off onto the lanes for about 2.5hrs before ending up at a pub for lunch. In the afternoon it's more of the same - another 2.5hrs of riding before arriving back at base for about 4pm.

How difficult is it: No more difficult than any trail ride. The route uses a mixture of green lanes and tracks, some of which are open and easy, and others which are rutted and slippery. There are some deep puddles, some slightly more technical tracks and lots of long easy lanes with outstanding views over the countryside.

Can anyone do it: Yes provided they have a bike licence and a modicum of common-sense and self-belief. Groups are tailored to experience and ability.

Best thing(s) about it: Husky TE250, beautiful countryside, great value for money.

Contact: Phone: 01865 390481, Email: info@huskytrails.co.uk, or Web: huskytrails.co.uk

WEST COUNTRY TRAIL TOURS

What is it: A two-day, coast to coast trailriding tour in Somerset and Devon with local guides. Using their base mid-way between the north Devon and Somerset coasts, the full tour runs to approximately 220 miles, and is guided by very knowledgeable locals. Hire bikes and kit are available.

What it isn't: A race! WCTT welcome considerate riders, with a maximum of six customers per tour.

What bikes are on offer: Take your own, or alternatively hire one of their trail-ready, electric start, low seat Honda CRF230s.

What it costs: It depends whether you're hiring a bike. Two days' riding (using your own machine) with two nights in a comfortable B&B costs £160. Bike hire (including third party insurance and fuel) is £100 per day, and kit hire is £25 for two days.

Anything else: Tours are available either mid-week or at weekends.

What's it like: Arrive the evening before, and meet up with your guide in the local pub. After a good night's sleep and a hearty breakfast, head

out across the Quantocks to the north Devon coast. Lunch can be 'pub or pasty'. Arrive back at the B&B early evening, before dinner at a restaurant of your choice. The following day the route takes you south, with a lunch stop on the beach at Beer. You then head back to base in time for your journey home.

How difficult is it: With the routes tailored to riders' abilities, it's as difficult as you want it to be - within reason. The easier trails are open and flowing, though the technical going can be slick and rocky - some of the lanes are used in Long Distance Trials. In short, there's a good mix of terrain to tackle.

Can anyone do it: Assuming you have a full bike license and some basic off-road know-how, then yes.

Best thing(s) about it: Good riding with some stunning scenery, very friendly people.

Contact: 01460 281173; **Email:** fun@trailbike-tours.co.uk; **Web:** trailbiketours.co.uk

YORKSHIRE TRAIL RIDES

What is it: Guided one-day trail tours starting from various points throughout Yorkshire, with the Dales offering varied riding terrain including grass lanes, rocky hill climbs, deep bogs, moorland and river crossings.

What it isn't:

A competitive ride-out. The tours are all about encouraging not-so-experienced trail riders get the most out of their day, whilst also catering for the more competent rider on more technical runs.

What bikes are on offer: Hire choices are two 2005 KTM 450EXCs, an '04 and '05 Yamaha WR450 and one Husaberg '05 450FE. These are only available to over-25s with a current driver's license.

What it costs: £160 per day including insurance and guided trail service, you can hire kit for £20 per person.

Anything else: Tours tend to run either on Wednesdays or at weekends.

The guys also offer guided trail rides for intermediate to advanced level riders with or without their own bikes.

How difficult is it: It all depends on riding ability, but a typical tour group will be made up of riders with similar experience and pace.

Can anyone do it: Yes, especially people who are newcomers to the sport - there are also 'give it a try' days available designed specifically for complete novices and tend to be on a one-to-one / one-to-two instruction basis.

Best thing(s) about it: The chance to ride in the spectacular Yorkshire Dales plus the very beginner-friendly approach.

Contact: Phone: 07875 280888;

Email: yorkshiretrailrides@hotmail.co.uk;

Web: yorkshiretrailrides.co.uk

NORWEST TRAILS

What is it: A fantastic opportunity to ride in the Scottish Highlands with an experienced local guide and scenery as varied as the terrain. Trails range from simple stony tracks, hill climbs, ruts, bogs, slippery slopes, sandy beaches, through rivers and literally up mountainsides without tracks or trails. A basic tour is two days with three nights accommodation plus all meals.

Norwest Trails can show you thousands of acres of Scottish Highlands many of which are on a private estate...



What it isn't: A walk in the park. The vast amounts of trails available to ride on are either trail riding heaven or hell, depending on your skill level.

What bikes are on offer: Trusty Yamaha Serows, although people are welcome to bring along their own bikes if they prefer, up to 450cc capacity.

What it costs: All-inclusive tour price starts from £365 with own bike and guesthouse accommodation to £450 including hire bike and hotel accommodation.

Anything else: Will only take group bookings, with three-ten riders per group. How difficult is it: The tours are tailor-made to suit all riding levels so the best bet is to book with some mates who are around the same kind of ability as you.

Can anyone do it: Yes, although the more seasoned trail rider will probably get more out of it, as they'll be able to cover more of the miles of terrain available.

Best thing(s) about it: Norwest has exclusive access to thousands of trails (which are all on private land) featuring Hamburger Hill - 5000+ acres of unspoilt open mountain tops, which means you probably won't see a 4x4, bike or even another person (apart from your fellow riders of course) for the whole two days riding.

Contact: Phone: 01599 577314;

Email: gordon@norwesttrails.co.uk;

Web: norwesttrails.co.uk

COTSWOLD TRAIL RIDES

What is it: A wide choice of trail rides is available, including one-two day Cotswold tours, two-day Exmoor excursions, two-day Welsh trips (covering the Black Mountains, Brecon and Gwent) and one-day rides in the Wye Valley. The going in the Cotswolds varies from tracks on open rolling hills and common land to steep stony narrow lanes through woodland and a mixture of just about everything else in-between. The Exmoor tour features predominately loose rock / solid bedrock / clay technical trails, with stunning views out to sea whilst on the Quantock Hills. The Wye Valley ride-out includes lots of wooded tracks, many of which are also rocky - these trails are more challenging than the Cotswold ones. The Welsh trips take in Grwyne Fawr and The Gap road (March and September only) - superb mountain passes with some absolutely breathtaking views.

What bikes are on offer: Riders must provide all their own bikes and kit - the tours are aimed at people who have a suitable bike and wish to get away for the weekend and enjoy different areas to ride in.

What it costs: £35 per rider per day for the Cotswold tour; all other tours £40 per rider for one day only, £75 per rider for two days.

Anything else: Food and accommodation are extra with a guesthouse/pub costing around £25 per person per night. Places are used regularly on the tours so they are 'bike-friendly', with parking/bike storage facilities.

How difficult is it: All abilities are catered for. Beginner/novice days are also arranged from time to time to give inexperienced riders the opportunity to join a group with similar experience and boost their confidence.

Best thing(s) about it: Value for money and knowledgeable local guides.

Contact: 01242 584060 / 07973 637867;

Email: allanwhittington@blueyonder.co.uk;

Web: cotswoldtrailrides.co.uk

HAPPY TRAILS



Cotswold Trail Rides offer tours of not just the Cotswolds, but also Wales, the Wye Valley and Exmoor...

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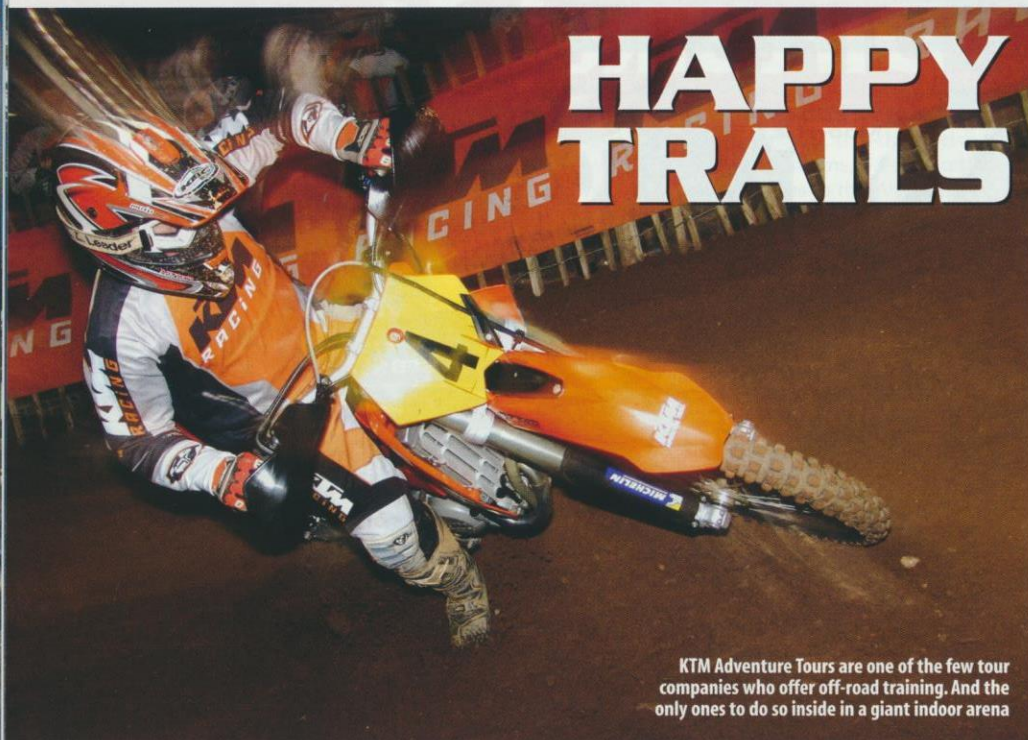
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HAPPY TRAILS



KTM Adventure Tours are one of the few tour companies who offer off-road training. And the only ones to do so inside in a giant indoor arena

KTM ADVENTURE TOURS

What is it: KTM run two and a half day long 'off-road academy' weekends, consisting of a half-day basic training if hiring a bike or the option to do a setup and maintenance course if using their own KTM. This is followed by a day in a 30,000sq ft indoor arena using video recording / playback to improve technique plus electronic timing equipment to monitor consistency. The final day is spent either learning to trail ride, with an escorted ride-out in and around the beautiful South Hams in Devon with enduro riding being available for the more experienced riders. ACU Coaching is available.

What it isn't: A no-holds barred trailriding experience. The main focus is on improving existing skills and ability levels.

What bikes are on offer: Riders are welcome to use their own KTM or rent the latest model 250EXC Racing. The 400, 450 and 525 are also available to try. Full riding and safety equipment is provided - Alpinestar boots, Axo knee-guards, 661 safety suit, KTM clothing, KBC safety helmet and goggles.

What it costs: £349 for the full course including bike hire and comprehensive road

risks insurance. One-day courses start from £189 including all equipment.

Anything else: Luxury on-site accommodation is available from £35 per person per night (twin) and £45 single. Groups and/or individuals are welcome.

How difficult is it: Attendees are challenged according to their current ability levels so nobody will be riding above the level they feel comfortable with.

Best thing(s) about it: Regardless of riding expertise, a lot of improvement in ability and confidence can be achieved.

Contact: Phone: 01752 840831;

Email: info@ktmadventuretours.co.uk;

Web: ktmadventuretours.co.uk

BJC MOTORCYCLE TRAIL TOURS

What is it: Normally a one-day guided trail ride at weekends in Wiltshire, Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Hampshire from a base in Wootton Bassett, Swindon. The typical riding is on BOATs with a fair sprinkling of RuPPs and UCRs. There's a real mix of conditions from chalk to mud and there's plenty of technical lanes and open, faster trails onto Salisbury Plain.

What bikes are on offer: Bullet-proof leccy-start Honda XR250s or Yamaha Serows - you can also bring your own bike if preferred.

What it costs: £150 per person inclusive of bike, all kit and bike insurance (third party only), lunch and fuel or £50.00 per person if you bring along your own machine.

Anything else: Although one-day rides are the norm, two and three day tours can be arranged and there's a B&B very close by. Ride-outs also take place in the quieter mid-week days. Also, if anybody wants to buy a bike from the BJC motorcycle shop afterwards the cost of the day will be refunded.

How difficult is it: Suitable for varying abilities and routes can be tailor-made with experience levels in mind.

Best thing(s) about it: It's a cheap and memorable day out and a great introduction to trail riding to those who want to try it out before deciding to buy their own bike and kit.

Contact: Phone: 01793 849661 / 07913 444099;

Email: bjctrailtoursuk@tiscali.co.uk

OVERLANDER TRAIL TOURS

What is it: Peak District tours encompassing the many varied green lanes of Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Cheshire, starting at 9.00am and finishing around 5-6.00pm (back for tea and medals!), one or two-day ride outs can be

arranged along with the chance to go further afield if you have the confidence and ability.

What bikes are on offer: There are three Suzuki DR-Z400Es (all less than a year old, one brand-new) and one Yamaha TTR250 available to hire. People are also welcome to bring their own bikes if they would prefer.

What it costs: Prices (with hire) start at £170 per day (depending on size of group) that includes all riding and protective gear (except helmet), road insurance, accidental bike damage, petrol and guide, or with your own bike prices start at £50 per day. One-to-one tuition costs £205 if hiring or £95 if on own bike.

Anything else: Riders must be 25-plus and hold a full motorcycle license. There is also a converted barn on site for those wishing to stay and use of the jet-wash or workshop is free.

The guys also specialise in GPS navigation and overland training and run the annual OTT Desert Odyssey, which takes riders on a 2000-mile mountain and desert tour of Morocco.

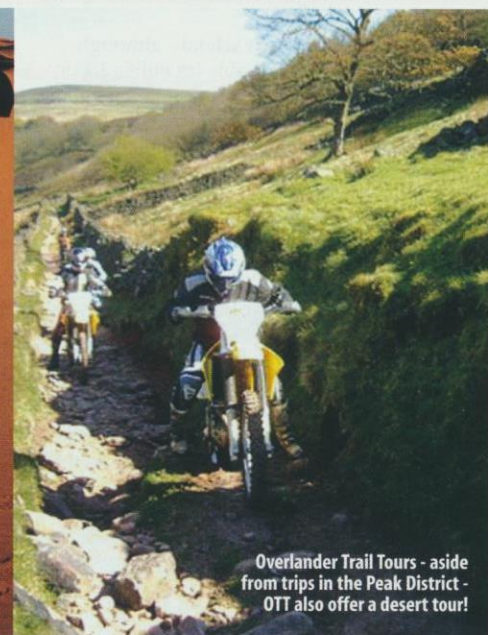
How difficult is it: All the tours are tailored to suit the riders concerned. On offer are some very technical rocky trails for advanced riders and some easier, more flowing trails for novices.

Best thing(s) about it: The atmosphere - OTT pride themselves on not being a commercial 'sausage machine' type operator.

Contact: Phone: 01625 668966;

Email: boyd@overlandertrailtours.co.uk;

Web: overlandertrailtours.co.uk



Overlander Trail Tours - aside from trips in the Peak District - OTT also offer a desert tour!

Adventure Motor Cycle Holidays have the beautiful mountains of North Wales as a backdrop to their tours...

HAPPY TRAILS

ADVENTURE M/C HOLIDAYS

What is it: A new motorcycle activity centre based within the picturesque Clwydian range of North Wales. One, two and three-day long distance green lane tours are available around north and mid-Wales, covering all types of terrain - mud, stone, mountain and forest tracks and open byways.

What it isn't: A sweat school - although instruction is readily available (in either 2:4 or 1:4 formats) the focus is on getting people going away happy and having learnt something useful.

What bikes are on offer: Yamaha TT250Rs, AJP 125s and various other 250 four-strokes. There are Scorpa TY125s for trials training (no license required). All riding gear is supplied and there's accommodation on-site in the form of a classical Georgian manor house.

Be Prepared

It always amazes us how some people come incredibly ill-prepared for a day's trailriding, whilst others are equipped with enough tools and equipment to pull a bike's crank assembly.

As always the answer lies somewhere in between. When you're out on an organised ride (using other people's bikes), the general rule of thumb is that you won't need to carry tools - they'll be carried by the guide. However it's

Guided tours are also available for people with their own bikes.

What it costs:

One-day trips cost between £135 and £185 depending on distance. The two-day tour (which includes accommodation and food) is between £350 and £425 depending on numbers. The three-day tour with the above starts at £550 to £650. Trials training costs £135 per day. The costs are for guidance only as they depend on numbers and length of stay.

Anything else: Large groups can be catered for. Also available, beginner's one-day rides or two more challenging single-day

routes for the more experienced rider.

How difficult is it: There is something for everyone - the youngest so far had been six years old and the oldest 69. The routes are always chosen depending on rider experience and are tailored to the individual.

Best thing(s) about it: User-friendly routes and stunning scenery.

Contact: 01352 742122;

Web: amch.co.uk

TRAIL TOURS R US

What is it: Two days guided trail riding in and around the Peak District, through Staffordshire, Derbyshire and Cheshire. Day one is around 140 miles of demanding trails with the second 120-mile day being a bit more easy-going. Both days include limestone/sandstone tracks,

still worth carrying a bumbag if for no other reason than it gives you somewhere to stash your car-keys, wallet, camera, phone, energy drink and choccy bar and perhaps carrying a pen-knife or simple multi-tool is a smart idea. Other things you might want to consider carrying are anti-histamine/hayfever tablets, Anthisan cream (if you're allergic to bee or wasp stings), or an inhaler if you suffer from asthma. A pac-a-mac and a spare pair of gloves are always useful.

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muddy ruts, river crossings, open byways and rocky trials-type sections.

What it isn't: It's not really aimed at complete dirt beginners - better to get off-road bike tuition first as this will enable novices to enjoy the more easy-going routes on offer.

What bikes are on offer: None - riders are required to bring their own bikes and equipment.

What it costs: A two-day guided tour plus B&B costs from £90 per person depending on party size and the type of route required.

Anything else: The accommodation is in a 16th Century inn. Highlighted OS maps are available showing the routes, plus a full GPS memory map download facility. For trail riding newcomers there are 60-80 mile routes that are a little more forgiving.

How difficult is it: All tours are planned to suit rider ability, with tailor-made routes allowing novice-expert riders to ride at their own pace.

Best thing(s) about it: Trails start right on the doorstep of the accommodation with plenty of varied rugged terrain.

Contact: 01298 83262; **Email:** info@trail-toursrus.com; **Web:** trailtoursrus.com

CORNWALL TRAIL RIDES

What is it: A choice of one or two day guided rides in East Devon and East/South-east Cornwall. The riding includes open moorland, forestry roads and unmarked tracks across open land, with plenty of fords to navigate and several rocky climbs.

What bikes are on offer: None, you bring your own bike plus kit along, although there is a spare Honda XL250 if needed.

What it costs: £50 per rider per day, plus around £30 per person per night accommodation, with a £5 single person supplement.

Anything else: Tours can be run either at weekends or during the week. Rear trials tyres are a good idea as most of the tricky climbs en-route are quite rocky. The guide is also a qualified off-road instructor (six years as a BMW off-road skills coach).

How difficult is it: As much as you can handle - all the routes used have alternative lanes on offer depending on weather and rider ability. **Best thing(s) about it:** With ten years tour experience any day can be easily changed to keep

everybody happy.

Contact: Phone: 07802 408083 / 01579 384384;

Email: desertrat1@tiscali.co.uk;

Web: cornwalltrailrides.co.uk

WILTSHIRE TRAIL RIDES

What is it: Wiltshire, Berkshire and Hants one-and two-day trail rides, covering a mixture of demanding byways combining clay, chalk, stony and muddy tracks.

What bikes are on offer: Road legal Yamaha XT225s, all kit available (including boots, trousers, jacket, helmet, goggles, gloves, full body armour, knee protectors). Riders can also use their own kit/bikes.

What it costs: £145 for hire riders - all must be over 21 years old and have no more than six penalty points on their licenses. These must be brought along on the day - the guys operate a strict no license, no ride policy. The cost includes fuel, kit, third party insurance, pub lunch, morning and afternoon tea/coffee. It's £45 if you use your own bike and you must have own kit and pay for fuel.

Anything else: Accommodation can be arranged at one of two guesthouses or a local pub. A maximum of six riders on hire bikes or up to ten on their own machines are taken out at any

one time. There's also a no-alcohol rule when out riding. First aid-trained staff are on all rides, and there's always two to three staff on-hand during the day.

How difficult is it: There's always a variety of different riding abilities on the tours so they're suitable for most riders.

Best thing(s) about it: Friendly no-nonsense safety approach combined with fantastic trails ensures riders get the most from their day.

Contact: Phone: 07789 345566;

Email: davidwright@wiltshiretrailrides.co.uk;

Web: wiltshiretrailrides.co.uk

LLANERCHINDDA FARM

What is it: Big off-road centre in Cynghordy, near Llandovery, mid-Wales, offering range of trail riding circuits such as the Florida circuit (102 miles), the Beacons run (including the Gap Road when it is open) which is around 130 miles and the Hundred House route (86 miles).

What bikes are on offer: Bikes are not provided directly by the farm but new KTMs and full riding kit are available from IN-4 Tracks who will take them there for you (www.info.in-4.co.uk).

What it costs: £150 per guide per day divided by however many people in the group.

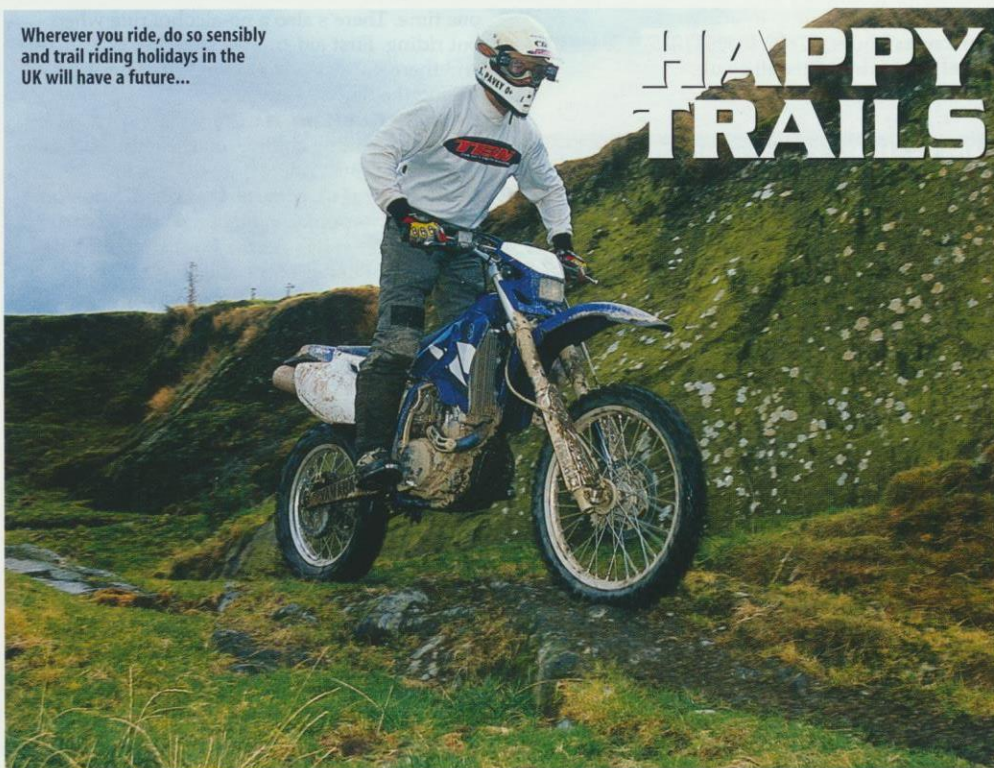
Llanerchindda Farm - this is the view from the front garden of the farm...



HAPPY TRAILS

Wherever you ride, do so sensibly and trail riding holidays in the UK will have a future...

HAPPY TRAILS



B&B accommodation is £28 per person per night.

Anything else: Loads of accommodation available at the farm - 45 beds in total. There are six guides and riders have a choice to join others or have their own guide. There's often up to two groups going out per day. Ideal group number is six although more can be catered for. Midweek specials and tailored programmes are also available for the two months per year when the Gap Road is open.

How difficult is it: All standards are covered - the guide will ride to match the speed of the slowest rider in the group.

Best thing(s) about it: Excellent facilities (secure lock-up, pressure washers, workshop, map and drying rooms), remote trails plus access to an enduro circuit and private off-road sites like the 22,500 acres of Glyn Mawr.

Contact: Phone: 01550 750274;

Email: llanerchinda@cambridgeway.com;

Web: offroadwales.co.uk

We don't claim this list to be comprehensive, so if you run a UK trail ride tour and we've missed you out contact info@trailbikemag.com and we'll inform our readers...

What (not) to wear?

Many of the organised trail rides offer the chance to borrow riding kit without having to invest in your own. But if you've got your own crash helmet and boots all the better as you know they'll be comfortable. But what should you wear underneath the riding kit? Most novices always underestimate how warm you get when out trail riding. The best advice is to wear a few thin layers which can be removed if necessary and stashed in your bumbag (T-shirts etc). Don't wear long-john's unless you're riding in winter-time. And try to avoid thick fleece material as you'll simply overheat. Likewise thick armoured road/off-road jackets may be fine for touring on your BMW R1200GS but they'll be too hot and bulky for proper trail riding. A lightweight trail/enduro jacket (preferably with removable sleeves) is ideal. One last thing, a thick pair of socks (or proper off-road socks) will help keep your feet comfortable in hired boots.



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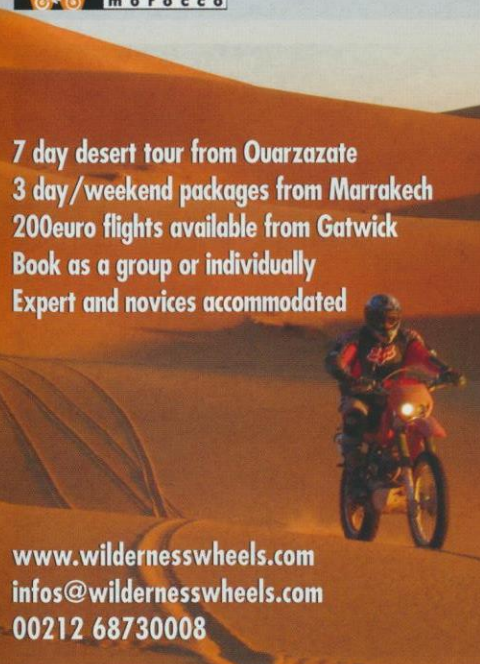
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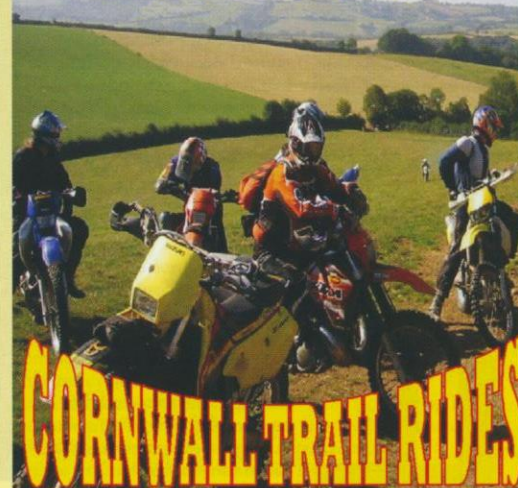


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Armed Rubbery

Dear Steve

I am unable to get a firm front brake lever on my 1997 Kawasaki KLR250. I've replaced the master cylinder seals and piston, caliper seals, fitted a braided hose and bled the system top-to-bottom and bottom-to-top (several times). I've also tried cable tying the lever overnight (suggested by local bike mechanic), but all to no avail. The lever is as rubbery as before I started! Can you suggest anything I've missed? The bike has only done 2000 miles, although the Royal Artillery Flying Gunners display team put the first 1200 on it! The brake is good enough to stop the

bike and pass the MoT, but the lever will touch the grip without too much effort. Is it a case of replacing either the master cylinder, or caliper, or both? If it's as serious as that, is there a better system I could put on to upgrade it?

Steve Holbrow
Via email

Essentially, the hydraulic side of your braking system is made up of four basic components: the caliper, the hose, the master cylinder, and the fluid. And so you need to ensure that the fluid is new (this is very important) and hasn't absorbed water, that the caliper and master cylinder aren't leaking, and that the hose isn't spongy. It seems that

you've done this, Steve, so where to look next? Well, if the problem *only* occurs when the bike is ridden (or moved in the garage) it could be that you've got a warped brake disc, which is pushing the pistons back into the caliper. Ordinarily though, lever travel returns to normal once the bike is stationary and you've pumped the brake a few times. Are you sure that the brakes are standard? Otherwise, incompatible parts could be the problem. If nothing else works, I'd look at picking up a complete system from a breakers. If you get something from a late model MXer you'll probably need to get a bracket machined to mount the caliper, but you should end up with great brakes. Just make sure the parts you buy are in good condition and don't require a complete rebuild.

Of course, a decent set of tyres will also help you stop the Kwaka, so for your tech question have a pair of Michelin AC10s on us...

solution. One thing I can suggest is that you buy a new needle and needle jet of the correct specification and see if these help.



Clutching at straws: Sherco clutch feels too much like a switch?

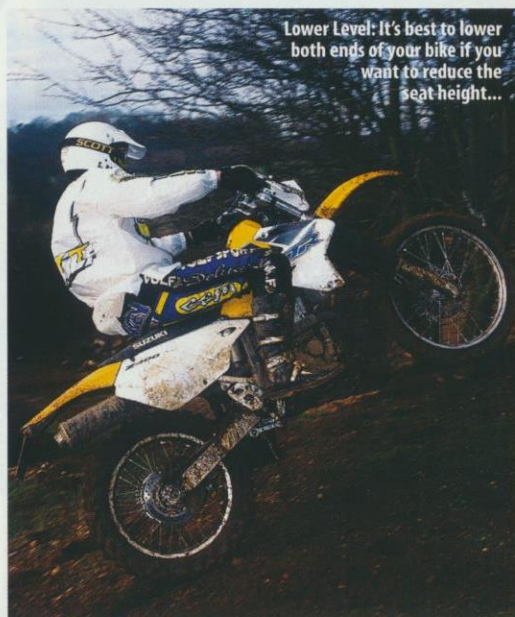
Down and Dirty

Hi Steve

I'm quite short and want to lower my 2002 Suzuki DR-Z400E for green laning. I've purchased some Talon lowering links but is it best to also lower the front-end? If so, by how much? And what's the best way of going about it?

Alan
Via email

Ideally you should lower the front-end by the equivalent amount to maintain the handling. Dropping the forks through the yokes might be enough, otherwise seek out a suspension specialist to do the job for you.



Lower Level: It's best to lower both ends of your bike if you want to reduce the seat height...

Spark Out

Dear Steve

I have a Suzuki PE400X with a strange problem: The spark plug only lasts about 30 miles. If you blast them up (to clean them) then they will spark again but only last ten miles before stopping again. But if you put them in a 12-volt system (car or bike) then they spark when they won't in my bike.

The PE has had a new magneto (the last one had cracked magnets), the ignition coil has been rewound and a new CDI has been fitted. The crankcase seals have been replaced and the bike has recently been re-sleeved, so the top-end is okay. I'm running 50:1 oil mix with a 280 main jet and the needle on the standard setting. The plugs simply don't last and no mod has significantly improved this. I have tried different plugs and manufacturers, and I did get a little longer out of an iridium plug, but not much longer! Any ideas?

Jack Taylor
Via email

Jack, this must be a hugely irritating, not to mention costly, problem though sadly I don't have a definite

Feathered Friend

Hi Steve

I'm a novice trials rider and find the clutch on my '03 Sherco 250 is too much like a switch. Feathering the clutch is very difficult as it's either 'on' or 'off'. Can you suggest a way of making it any more user-friendly?

Jon Hall
Via email

Jon, I've come across this on certain trials bikes and by far the easiest, and most common, method is to fit a larger master cylinder. Most modern Spanish trials bikes (that's Gas Gas, Montesa and Sherco) use AJP parts, so take a look and see which run a larger master cylinder than your own. You should be able to pick up the part for under 40 quid (including the lever) and then once fitted you simply back-bleed the system using a syringe. Hopefully, this will make your clutch more 'user-friendly'.

PLAIN & SIMPLE

Finding TDC on a KTM 525MXC shouldn't be too difficult...

PHOTO: H. MITTERBUER



Staying On Top

Hi Steve

I'm going to adjust the valves on my 2004 KTM 525MXC and have read up on the subject. However, I'm unclear on one thing: Is there a foolproof way of finding top dead centre (TDC)? Please help.

Nigel Colledge
Via email

Okay Nigel, finding TDC is actually pretty simple. First off, remove the spark plug and turn the engine over (using the flywheel) until you think it's somewhere near TDC on the compression stroke. Then lower a soft punch (or similar) through the plug hole onto the piston crown and rock the flywheel to and fro. Keep an eye on the end of the punch, and when it's at its highest point that's TDC.

Up in the Air

Dear Steve

Can you explain what the air valves on the top of the forks are for? I was told they are to let out excess pressure. If so, what is 'excess'? Also how should I set up the rear shock on my '95 XR250R for general trail riding? I weigh 12.5 stone.

Stewart Cox
Via email

The air valves in the top of your forks are there so that you can add air (up to a maximum of 8psi) in order to increase the preload. Also, they are there so that you can let out any extra pressure which builds up within the forks through use (if you're running them at 0psi). Ideally, you should do this on a regular basis, especially as all you need to do is undo the screw until you hear the air 'hiss' out.

90 TBM

As for your rear shock, Stewart, the first thing I'd do with a shock of that age is have it serviced, as the oil degrades with time and use. Once this is done, set it up to the standard specification in the manual (with the correct amount of sag etc) as you're about the 'average' weight.

It's All in the Timing

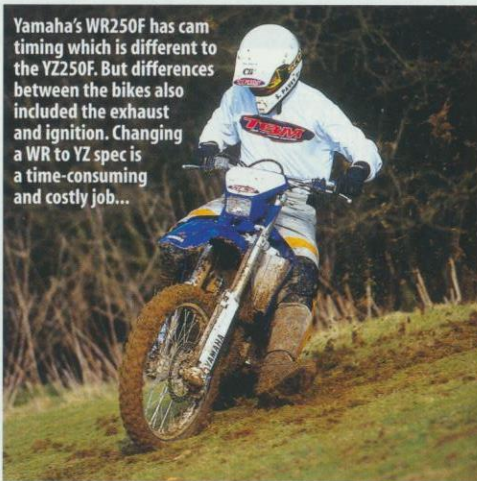
Dear Steve

I own a 2001 Yamaha WR250F that I bought on the strength of the report in TBM. What difference would changing to YZ cam timing actually make to the performance? And who would you recommend to set-up the bike on a rolling road?

Rob Leigh
Via email

Changing your WR-F to YZ-F cam timing will give you more top-end, but at the expense of bottom-end power. To be honest, Rob, it's not really worth the trouble. And without knowing where you live it's hard to suggest where to get your bike set up. We use PDQ (01753 811060) in Berkshire.

Yamaha's WR250F has cam timing which is different to the YZ250F. But differences between the bikes also included the exhaust and ignition. Changing a WR to YZ spec is a time-consuming and costly job...



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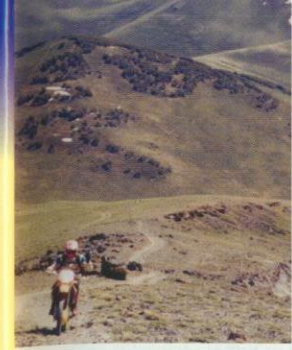
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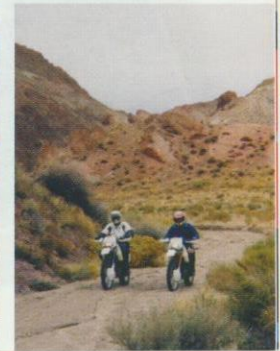
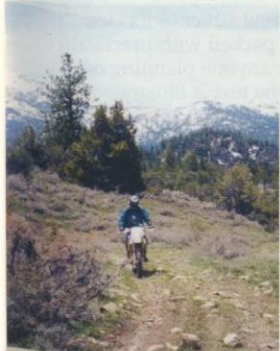
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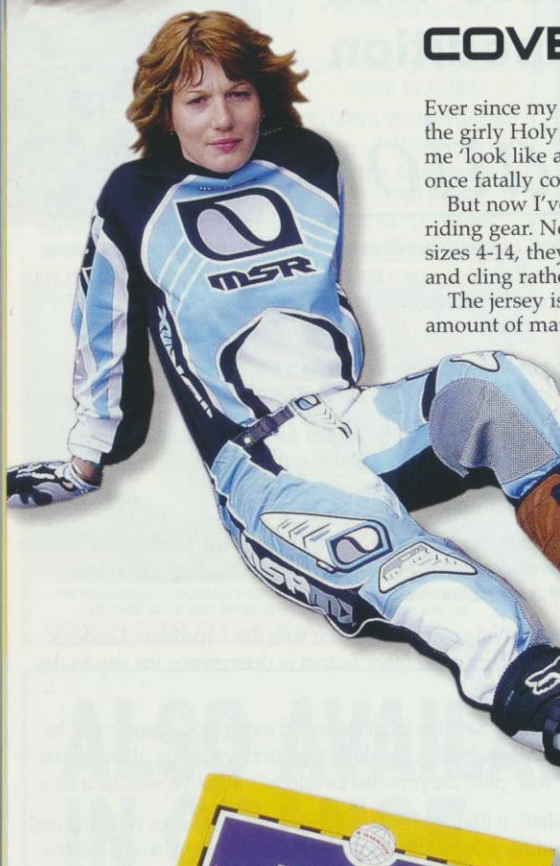
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COVER GIRL

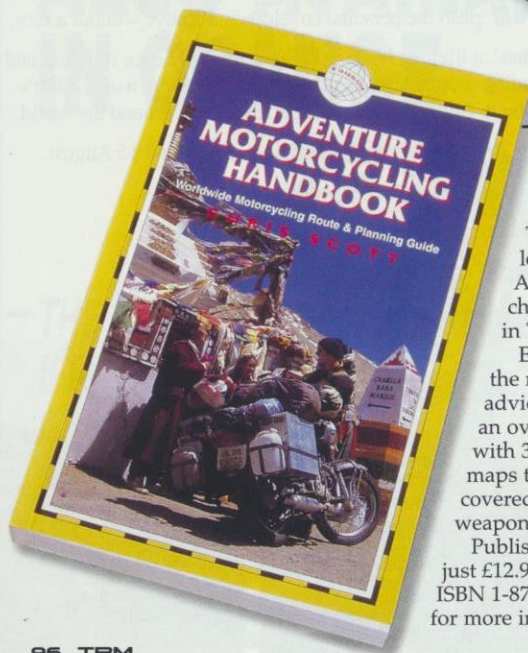
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The jersey isn't quite so billowy as they've cut down on the amount of material used (as we girlies are slimmer) and tapered the shoulders off for a more flattering look. Plus the gloves fit nicely, with a narrower fingered cut and smaller wrist openings. Looking good is a must for us ladies, and the duck-egg blue, funky fuscia pink and slim-line black colour options will do nicely.

However there is a catch - currently the kit is only available in the UK by special order from CI Sport, because they don't reckon there's a big enough market for it. So it's up to you girls to change their minds!

Having bought mine I'll be riding in it as much as possible. Prices are as follows: pants £79.95, jersey £29.95 and gloves £23.95. To order a set call 01372 378000 and tell 'em TBM sent you...



TRAVEL WISE

There's not many useful things that actually cost less over time, but the latest edition of Chris Scott's Adventure Motorcycling Handbook is now a pound cheaper than the last time we reviewed it way back in TBM issue 30 (January 1998).

Essential reading for the first-time adventure rider, the newly updated 272-pages are packed with practical advice and vital tips and tricks for anyone planning on an overland trip. To help matters, the text is illustrated with 30 colour and 100 B&W photos plus 15 route maps to help plan your journey. All the usual topics are covered plus some not so obvious ones, like... suitable weapons for self-defence!

Published by Trailblazers Publications, the guide costs just £12.99 and is available in all good bookshops (ask for ISBN 1-873756-80-1). Check out adventure-motorcycling.com for more info.

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Fender bags offer a viable alternative to bumbags for carrying tools and spares out on the trail. Made from 1000-denier durable cordura these rear fender bags fit Honda CRF models including the new 450X plus all Gas bikes.

They come complete with a rigid plastic base for mounting and the cordura fabric and sealed seams should go some way to keep things a bit drier, with the zip flap designed to reduce the amount of gloop that can get in.

Colours available are red, blue and black and all bags are made to order. Other size bags are available and will fit most leading bike makes, from Honda XR200s onwards.

However, at £28.00 a pop we think they are on the pricey side when compared to other well-known branded bags, although p&p is included. Call Oriana Tennant on 01746 718573 to order.



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Nicely finished, the boots have decent quality looks and feel with an easy-click chunky buckle mechanism. We'll let you know how they shape up we'll be using a pair over the coming months.

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'ENJOYMENT IS ONE OF THE KEY INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS IN ENDURO RACING. IF YOU'RE NOT ENJOYING WHAT YOU'RE DOING, YOU SIMPLY WON'T PRODUCE THE RESULTS...'

E

njoyment, like in any other profession, is one of the key ingredients for success in enduro racing. If you're not enjoying what you're doing, the company of the people you're working with, or the machinery you're riding, it doesn't matter how good you are, you simply won't produce the results. I've spent a season trying to race a bike that was never going to allow me to win anything. And I know first hand what bad feeling between a rider and a team manager

KNIGHTER REVEALS THE SECRET OF HIS SUCCESS...

does for a rider's motivation. I also know that right now I'm enjoying my racing more than I have at any other point of my career.

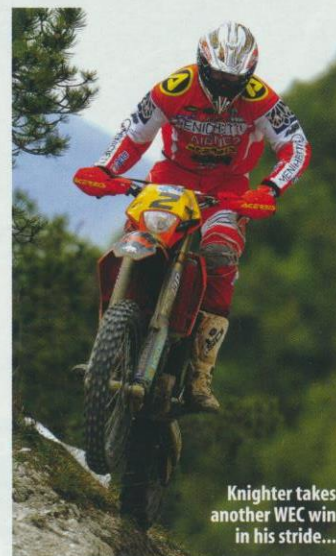
Winning has a lot to do with enjoyment, and enjoyment has a lot to do with winning. At world championship level, more so than at any other level, it's not the taking part that counts but the performing at your very best, which hopefully results in race wins. When you're getting paid, you're getting paid to win, not to take part. But in a highly competitive environment like the WEC there are several key factors that need to gel in order for success, and enjoyment, to be achieved. Right now all those factors are certainly gelling together for me.

It basically splits three ways - bike, rider and team. A rider needs to be fit, confident, injury free and focused on winning. The bike needs to have a competitive motor that has strong, useable power, a well-mannered chassis package, and be reliable. But equally as importantly the bike needs to be set-up the way a rider feels comfortable with. Even if that means setting the machine up differently to other riders in that team.

As far as a team is concerned, good organisation, encouragement, a friendly laid-back environment and hard working staff are the key factors. Also important is a good relationship between the team, the manufacturer and sponsors with which they are associated. At the moment I have all that, which is a big part of why I'm winning right now. And an even bigger reason why I'm enjoying what I'm doing so much.

In terms of competitions the past four weeks have been pretty busy. Racing in mud 'n' ruts soon after competing in dry and dusty conditions is something that is never easy to re-adjust to, no matter how many years you've been riding a bike. But switching from dry to wet is exactly what I had to do for the second round of the British Enduro Championship after flying back from the GP of Portugal for the Brechfa Enduro. With conditions at the two events in complete contrast to one another, sliding my way around a Welsh forest was great fun after I'd had my fill of the dusty tracks and trails one weekend earlier. Topping the Brechfa, to strengthen my lead at the top of the BEC, made playing in the mud even more enjoyable.

Despite the Brechfa Enduro being horrendously wet I loved it. It's been ages since we've had a really tough, really wet BEC event and it certainly sorted the men from the boys. The course was spot on. With lots of interesting and challenging going it was a shame to see the club's hard work spoiled a little by the bad weather. Despite the fact that it pretty much chucked it down for most of the day, not to mention being cold as hell, I was kept warm trying to keep my 525 KTM pointed in the correct direction while weaving my way around all the Sportsman, Clubman and any other riders unfortunate enough to have come unstuck on the test.



Knighter takes another WEC win in his stride...

It was also good, despite the fact that they later had to scrap the times, to see a club willing to include a tight check in their event. Top marks to the Dyfed Dirt Bike Club for running the event.

From the Welsh ruts of the Brechfa my next outing was a motocross race at home on the Island. Switching between my 540SX thumper and my 250SX two-stroke during the day, getting to race some motocross practice was bloody good training, and something that certainly helped me at round three of the WEC.

But having spent the weekend racing on two different bikes to the one on which I earn my living, I decided I'd better have an outing on my race bike to re-familiarise myself with it before travelling to Italy, for round three of the world championship. I also wanted to have some fun with my mates before going back to work!

The second round of the Wirral Off-Road Motul GB Hare Scramble series was one of the most enjoyable three-hour events I've ridden for a long time. Featuring fast open sections of track, tight wooded areas, a few tricky bits and a good mixture of everything else, the course was great fun and gave me the work out I was looking for.

After winning the Enduro 3 class at the opening two rounds of the world championship I was sure that things would get a whole lot tougher for me at round three in Italy. And to a certain extent they did. With both Marko Tarkkala and Mika Ahola, the two riders behind me in the championship, having had the best part of a month to lift their game prior to the Italian race, the fact that the motocross and cross-country tests were both fast 'n' flowing meant that winning wasn't going to be easy. Or so I thought. As a rule, when tests are fast, everyone goes fast. And winning gets a lot, lot harder.

That's why I was pretty surprised that I won the first day by over a minute. Having not really ridden on grass at all this year, I was a little apprehensive

about the race as both the MX and cross-country tests were covered in the green stuff. But I needn't have worried too much.

With the event being the first this year to use transponders to time the special tests, no-one really knew exactly who was in what position on day one as the information that was being displayed often didn't tally up with what my team was telling the riders. Because no one could be sure about how far ahead I was, I decided to not worry too much about what I was being told and simply pushed on to make sure I would win. And I did.

Knowing that I'd

topped the class on day one, and in light of poor Stefan Merriman getting carted off to hospital (see WEC 3 report), I decided to only push hard on the first two laps and then ease off a bit on laps three and four so as to not do anything stupid as the tests were getting quite a bit rougher.

Still winning tests even though I was riding really relaxed, I managed to top the day by about 30 secs. Having now had six day-wins from six starts it doesn't take a genius to work out that things are going really well for me at the moment, which is why I'm enjoying my racing so much.

Like I said winning and enjoyment go hand in hand in racing and at the moment it's great to have my hands full with both...

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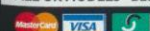
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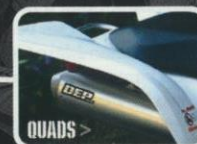
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'05 MAXXIS FIM WORLD ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP

And the winners are...

The Italian round of the WEC series was a hugely important one for E1 class leader Ivan Cervantes. Last year, after winning the opening two rounds of the series (mounted on a 525cc KTM) cracks started to appear in his championship campaign at round three, which led to him finishing third at the end of the season. This year he needed to continue his run of good form and in doing so prove to his rivals and the Farioli KTM team that he's not just an early season wonder. In Italy he topped the E1 class both days.

But it was close, extremely close. With the race being in Italy, it meant that Honda's Simone

Albergoni had a home-advantage, and with two of the three tests being grass covered, that suited Frenchman Marc Germain just fine. As a result Cervantes knew that he would have to work harder than ever to claim victory. And he did work hard, winning both days and showing that he's determined not to let his chance of world championship glory slip through his fingers again.

Cervantes' winning margin at the end of day one was a mere 6.72 seconds. His smallest winning margin of the season up until that point. What was impressive though was the fact that he came from behind to win. Placed in third mid-way through day one, the flamboyant Spaniard worked his way past

both Albergoni and Germain to secure victory. He then did exactly the same on day two. Starting slowly after overnight rain left the special tests a little too slippery for his liking, less than five seconds separated Cervantes from Albergoni at the end of the day. Ivan wasn't as dominant as he was in Spain or Portugal but he continued his winning ways and further extended his lead at the top of the E1 world championship.

SPORT

Paddock Pointers

✓ The Italian event saw all bikes fitted with transponders, which were used to time each of the special tests and clock the competitors into the time controls. Despite some initial misgivings, a full set of results was produced on time at the end of both days.

✓ Italian manufacturer Aprilia ventured into the WEC for the first time in more than 10 years with their radical looking 450 V-twin. Ridden by pint-sized pilot Stefano Passeri, (who rode for Aprilia the last time they entered 'official' machinery into the WEC), he placed 22nd and 19th in the E2 class.

✓ Finn Valtteri Salonen jumped back on a 250cc two-stroke Honda in Italy after campaigning a CRF450X in Spain and Portugal and rocketed straight back into the points with sixth and fifth place finishes in the Enduro 2 class. Valtteri, along with E2 day one winner Fabien Planet, showed in Italy that two-strokes are fighting back.

For Simone Albergoni, the first of the series' two Italian rounds proved to be a frustrating one. Second on day one and third on day two, meant that instead of taking a bite out of Cervantes' championship lead he simply nibbled away at it and let Marc Germain close to within four points of him. He still finished as the best Italian rider though.

For Germain the Italian event was one in which he *had* to produce strong results. Yamaha

'05 MAXXIS FIM WORLD ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP



SPORT

Paddock POINTERS

☒ Hard standing car parks are all well and good as no-one likes to wade ankle deep through mud if it rains but in Italy the WEC paddock took over a supermarket car park, which proved to be a little chaotic at times.

☒ The first of Italy's two WEC rounds attracted far fewer spectators than expected.

☒ Australian Stephan Merriman injured himself for a third time this season. An injury that resulted in the UFO Corse Yamaha rider requiring surgery to remove a ruptured spleen.

Yamaha rider Bartosz Oblucki could only manage a best of fifth on day one...

The event...

A month is a long time in motor racing and those that failed to deliver the goods at the opening two rounds of the WEC series needed every day of the four week break leading up to the Italian event to test, train and improve in the hope of getting their WEC campaigns back on track.

WEC races in Italy are always cracking events and the third round of the '05 series (the first of two Italian rounds this year), was no exception. Despite fewer spectators than expected - due to the fact that the event was tucked away in the extreme north east of the country - for those taking part, the Moto Club Carnico organized competition was a challenging and enjoyable one.

With the paddock and park ferme situated a few kilometers from the centre of the event's nearest town, Tolmezzo, the 160km long course traversed mountainous terrain and featured 70 percent 'mule tracks' and 30 percent metalled roads. Four laps were ridden each day.

As well as massive altitude changes, difficult climbs and one of the widest river crossings ever seen in WEC competition, the course also featured just two checks per lap and three special tests - one motocross, one cross-country and one extreme. Of the three, the cross-country and extreme tests were the ones that proved to be the most demanding.

The cross-country test in Tolmezzo was typically Italian. Long and fast, the 11 minute special saw riders wind their way through natural woodland and across fast, flowing tracks that looped around and across numerous grass covered fields.

The extreme test, unlike those in the opening and second round of the WEC series, was 100 percent natural. Winding its way up, down and across a barren, rock-littered landscape close to the end of the lap, the slow speed test proved troublesome for more than a few riders.

France had warned him that unless he did, it would likely be his last Yamaha-supported round. As a result he rode fast and smart and proved that despite the pressure to perform it won't be long before he tops a WEC podium in '05. As for the non-podium finishers it was Finn Petteri Silvan who finished best of the rest with fourth on both days.

One thing is now all but certain in the E2 class - Frenchman Fabien Planet will pick up a factory ride for 2006. After strong performances in both Spain and Portugal the shy KTM rider did what he'd been threatening to do and topped the podium on day one. Not by a huge amount, and in part due to the fact that Samuli Aro crashed heavily on the cross-country test and well and truly rung his bell, but nevertheless he won. As a non-factory supported rider mounted on a two-stroke that's an achievement that doesn't happen every day.

With Aro failing to regain his rhythm after falling, he was unable to catch Planet despite giving his all for the remainder of the day. Forced to settle for second, Aro and Planet were a clear cut above the rest of the E2 riders with Husqvarna's seven-time

world champion Anders Eriksson finishing third, one minute adrift of the two-stroke of Planet.

Day two saw Aro claim the win, his second of the season.

Certainly not having things all his own way, and seemingly unable to shake off his inability to get back into his groove early in the day, it wasn't until the final lap of the event that the laid back Finn finally managed to up his pace and start winning tests. 15 seconds up on Planet at the end of the day, the two riders were again significantly faster than any other E2 competitor.

After a day long fight between Italian Alessandro Botturi and Swede Eriksson, it was Botturi who finally clinched the third rostrum position squeezing Eriksson into fourth by just three seconds.

Over in the Enduro 3 class David Knight was simply unbeatable. Winning every test in his class on day one, the Manxman also finished the event as the fastest rider overall. A level above the rest of the E3 competitors, those who thought he'd be beatable once grassy special tests started appearing were wrong. Very wrong. David claimed another 25 championship points while his rivals were left scratching their heads as to what they had to do to beat him.



David Knight was 'on it' in Italy...

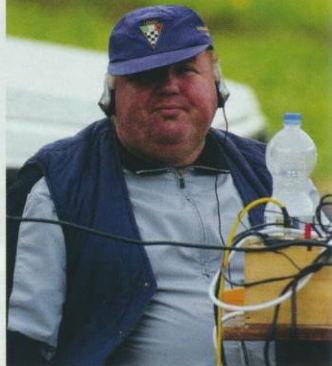
Conditions were absolutely perfect, check out the look of this special test...



SPORT

'05 MAXXIS FIM WORLD ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP

Doesn't time fly when you're having fun...



Paul Eddy had a hard time in Italy dropping to sixth on day one and eighth on day two...



With the layout of the grassy motocross and cross-country tests being typically French in design it was little surprise that Gas Gas rider Seb Guillaume produced his strongest ride of the series finishing runner-up.

Less than a second ahead of Finn Marko Tarkkala, Guillaume upheld the honour of two-strokes much as Planet had done in the E2 class. For Tarkkala it wasn't the first time in '05 that the factory KTM rider has been pushed down a position by such a small margin.

Next day, knowing that he didn't need to push as hard as he had on day one to claim another 25 championship points, David simply relaxed.

Still topping all but four of the day's special tests, Knight finished 30 seconds clear at the end of the day, even managing to navigate his way around the final extreme test without putting

his feet down once.

Guillaume slipped to fourth on day two allowing the two Finns Tarkkala and Ahola to place second and third. With Ahola having struggled to perform on day one, something that surprised many as the Husqvarna rider is a known grass specialist, he battled hard all day with Tarkkala to eventually finish nine seconds adrift.

In the Enduro Junior class Spaniard Cristobal Guerrero again dominated proceedings topping the class on both days ahead of Aussie Jake Stapleton.

Close to 40 seconds ahead on both days, Guerrero again produced strong results that would have seen him well placed in the E2 class.

For Husqvarna mounted Daryl Bolter, a crash on day one demoted him to fifth before he bounced back on day two to take third position. A result with which he was naturally delighted.

Better luck next time...

A number of riders found themselves unable to finish the third round of the WEC series due to injury, most of whom were Enduro 1 competitors. On day one TM factory rider Roman Michalik DNFed with a suspected dislocated shoulder while Italian Simone Tonelli broke a collarbone on day two, joined by former 125cc world champion Fausto Scovolo crashing out of the event.

But the biggest surprise of the weekend was Stefan Merriman's early exit after just two timed special tests. Having had the type of start to a new season that every rider dreads - an injured finger at round one and then a potentially much more serious injury to his knee at round two, Merriman needed to win in Italy, not end up in hospital. But hospital is where his weekend ended following a relatively slow speed getoff.

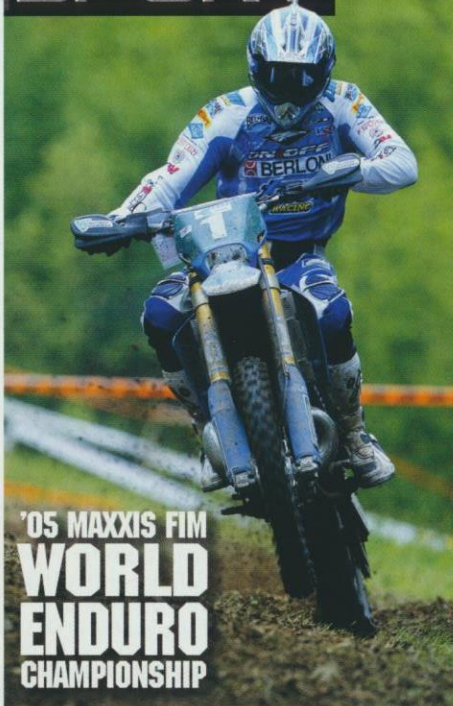
Believed to have taken a handlebar in the stomach as he was high-sided off his UFO Corse Yamaha, Merriman limped to the end of the test where he was advised not to continue. A few hours later Stefan was under the surgeon's knife undergoing a three-hour operation to have his spleen removed. With no points scored on either day, and having failed to score any points on day one in Portugal, the loss of 75 championship points means that Merriman almost certainly won't be winning a world championship in '05.

The Brits...

The Italian event proved to be a fairly good one for the majority of British riders with Euan McConnell, Tim Lewis and Si Wakely joining David Knight, Daryl Bolter and Paul Edmondson as point scorers. In fact had it not been for a clutch problem on day two, Scot McConnell would have produced his best ever world championship result as a podium place looked all but assured.

The Italian event also proved a disappointing one for Honda Racing Fast Eddy rider Paul Edmondson. With competition fierce at the sharp end of the Enduro 1 class, Edmondson placed sixth on day one but dropped to eighth on day two.

Claiming his first WEC points of 2005, Cornish TM rider Tim Lewis placed in 18th and 16th in the Enduro 1 class. Having been just outside the points in both Spain and Portugal, Lewis struggled a little with the extreme test but rode well on the cross-country test. And it was a similar story for Honda mounted Enduro Junior Si Wakely. Tenth on day one and ninth on day two, Si didn't really master the extreme test as well as he might. But Wakely still holds eighth in the EJ championship having scored points on all but one day so far.



'05 MAXIS FIM WORLD ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP

RESULTS - DAY 1

ENDURO 1

- 1 IVAN CERVANTES (KTM) 1.02:15.87
- 2 SIMONE ALBERGONI (HONDA) 1.02:22.59
- 3 MARC GERMAIN (YAMAHA) 1.02:31.80
- 4 PETTERI SILVAN (KTM) 1.02:56.12
- 5 BARTOSZ OBLUCKI (YAMAHA) 1.03:16.35

ENDURO 2

- 1 FABIEN PLANET (KTM) 1.02:47.56
- 2 SAMULI ARO (KTM) 1.03:13.08
- 3 ANDERS ERIKSSON (HUSQVARNA) 1.03:48.01
- 4 ALESSANDRO BOTTURI (KTM) 1.03:52.94
- 5 JARI MATTILA (BETA) 1.04:07.86

ENDURO 3

- 1 DAVID KNIGHT (KTM) 1.01:17.97
- 2 SEBASTIEN GUILLAUME (GAS GAS) 1.02:31.74
- 3 MARKO TARKKALA (KTM) 1.02:32.08
- 4 MIKA AHOLA (HUSQVARNA) 1.03:23.84
- 5 ALESSIO PAOLI (TM) 1.03:51.31

ENDURO JUNIOR

- 1 CRISTABOL GUERRERO (GAS GAS) 1.04:30.23
- 2 JAKE STAPLETON (TM) 1.05:10.09
- 3 ORIOL MENA (GAS GAS) 1.05:28.85
- 4 PAOLO BERNARDI (HONDA) 1.05:52.17
- 5 DARYL BOLTER (HUSQVARNA) 1.06:01.40

The manufacturers' race...

The mighty orange riders just got stronger in Italy topping the E1, E2 and E3 podiums on both days while things went from bad to worse for Yamaha following Merriman's DNF. For Husqvarna, Gas Gas, Husaberg and the like the event was so, so - much like the opening two rounds of the championship.

With Cervantes and his Finnish team-mate Petteri Silvan going one-four in the E1 class on both days, Fabien Planet, Samuli Aro and Alessandro Botturi went one-two-four in the Enduro 2 class on day one before claiming a clean sweep of the podium positions on day two. That, added to the fact that Knighter claimed another double E3 class win, which was backed up by Marko Tarkkala's three-two finish, helped really rub the other manufacturers' noses in it.

Claiming three class wins, KTM continued what they started in Spain - to make the other manufacturers' riders and products look very, very average. Not only did KTM dominate the event in terms of the number of riders on the podium, in the case of the Enduro 2 class they had one of their winning riders competing on a two-stroke (Fabien Planet) and the other on a four-stroke (Samuli Aro). While numerous teams struggle to place their best riders into the winners circle no matter how hard they try, KTM, by winning with a two- and four-stroke couldn't have asked for a better weekend.

RESULTS - DAY 2

ENDURO 1

- 1 IVAN CERVANTES (KTM) 1.04:02.21
- 2 MARC GERMAIN (YAMAHA) 1.04:06.74
- 3 SIMONE ALBERGONI (HONDA) 1.04:26.24
- 4 PETTERI SILVAN (KTM) 1.04:45.13
- 5 ALESSANDRO BELOMETTI (KTM) 1.05:17.22

ENDURO 2

- 1 SAMULI ARO (KTM) 1.04:22.40
- 2 FABIEN PLANET (KTM) 1.04:37.93
- 3 ALESSANDRO BOTTURI (KTM) 1.05:42.44
- 4 ANDERS ERIKSSON (HUSQVARNA) 1.05:45.61
- 5 VALTTERI SALONEN (HONDA) 1.06:00.46

ENDURO 3

- 1 DAVID KNIGHT (KTM) 1.03:47.97
- 2 MARKO TARKKALA (KTM) 1.04:18.73
- 3 MIKA AHOLA (HUSQVARNA) 1.04:27.65
- 4 SEBASTIEN GUILLAUME (GAS GAS) 1.05:25.48
- 5 ALESSIO PAOLI (TM) 1.06:26.62

ENDURO JUNIOR

- 1 CRISTABOL GUERRERO (GAS GAS) 1.05:20.67
- 2 JACOB STAPLETON (TM) 1.06:01.42
- 3 DARYL BOLTER (HUSQVARNA) 1.06:06.12
- 4 ORIOL MENA (GAS GAS) 1.07:46.83
- 5 MARC BOURGEOIS (HUSQVARNA) 1.08:18.44

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September 2003. Don't remember it? Well perhaps this'll jog your memory: less than six grand brand new (plus VAT), oh and that includes a three-year/60,000 mile warranty. Can't think of a cheaper new commercial vehicle.

So what do you get for your (lack of) dough? A stylish car-based pick-up with a 600kg+ payload - good enough to lug two dirt bikes, all your riding kit, a couple of Jerry-cans and your toolbox to wherever you want to go - all powered by an economical, fuel-injected, 1.5L, five-speed petrol engine. Our GLS version cost an extra £1000 (before VAT) but for that you get alloy wheels, electric windows, electric mirrors, metallic paint, CD player, driving lamps, central locking, remote alarm/immobiliser, velour seats and a chunky roll-bar for that authentic Malaysian urban cowboy look.

It seemed like a good idea at the time. It was the end of a long hot enduro and I'd already changed out of my dusty riding gear and into a pair of shorts and a T-shirt. But with no-one about to help me load the bike into the van I thought I'd just be smart and ride it straight up the loading ramp and into the back. Now you've gotta' remember that the TBM van isn't one of those high-roofed versions, but a regular height low-roof model. Of course I knew that, but I thought that if I ducked low enough...

Well the bike made it into the back of the van... even if I didn't. The roof of the van caught me squarely across the bridge of the nose and the resulting blow was enough to knock me clean off the back. When I picked myself up off the floor with watering eyes and a forehead like Moe the bartender from The Simpsons, I found that the bike had wedged itself into our box of 'essential lubes' and was busy disgorging the contents of a can of chain-lube into my riding gear-bag. Oh happy days.

No such problems with our latest bike hauler though, because we've been loaned a long-term Proton Jumbuck pick-up. You may recall the Jumbuck from an earlier TBM test back in

than five miles on the clock and after a brief running-in period lasting almost a minute, it was set to work as the TBM runabout. So far it's been on photo-shoots, been to the races and hauled all manner of bikes and heavy equipment around for us and has already clocked up nearly 1000 miles in three weeks. With only 1500ccs to pull you along you do have to work the Jumbuck's four-cylinders fairly mercilessly if you want to make even steady progress, but thanks to a set of ultra heavy-duty springs it exhibits less body-roll than a skip. Mind you the payoff is a pretty harsh ride around town - especially when unladen. And you do have to get used to the indicator/wiper stalks (not to mention the radio volume knob) being on the opposite side to normal. The first time I drove it I got beeped so many times when changing lanes that I reverted to winding down the window and yelling out: 'Of course I want to turn left can't you see my wipers are on...'

Our intention is to use our Proton Jumbuck as often as possible for hauling TBM bikes around to events and test sessions. So if you see a dark blue pick-up waiting at a junction with the wipers going flat out, you know it's only the TBM crew getting confused again...

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BMW F650GS: Dakar: Will it be as good on the dirt as it is around town?



good point... because unfortunately our Beemer has yet to see dirt. With 800 miles on the clock, it's spent all of its time on blacktop, ferrying TBM staff to such faraway exotic locations as the sandwich shop, the photo processors and our local Tesco. So I can happily report that the capacious luggage can easily swallow three ciabattas, ten rolls of unprocessed Fuji Velvia and plenty loo roll. Even when it's

It took a bit of huffing and puffing, and at first it wouldn't quite fit. But after a darn good shove I finally got it into the van. Phew. That was the owner's manual taken care of, now I was ready to load up the bike!

Barely run-in, our long-term F650 Dakar had appeared from within the BMW Batcave fully loaded - literally. For alongside the ABS, heated grips and alarm/immobiliser, our GS was wearing a full complement of luggage, including tankbag, soft tail-piece, and hard panniers. Oh, and of course there were the three manuals; a Rider's Manual, Maintenance Instructions, and a weighty little tome detailing the intricacies of the alarm. And being a bloke, I have of course read none of them...

So how's the 650 shaping up, and what are our plans for the bike now that we've actually got our grubby mitts on it? Well, personally I'd quite like to fit all the aftermarket rallye kit (y'know, big tanks, funky fairing, mammoth bashplate), some black rims, fat USD forks and a chunky shock. But knowing how tenacious Melber's grip on the company credit card can be, I suspect this is highly unlikely. However, a pair of bigger foot-pegs, some added protection and some alloy bars shouldn't break the TBM piggy bank, and will certainly help for those off-road excursions.

What off-road excursions, you ask? Hmmm,

on buy-one-get-one-free. Rock 'n' roll!

Initially, the Dakar felt a little strange to ride. It carries its weight quite high and although the seat isn't actually that tall, it does splay your legs, making it harder to touch the ground. It doesn't really trouble me, though shorty Mel has to keep an eye out for the camber when coming to a halt.

I was expecting the ride to be quite squidgy and was pleasantly surprised to find that it's actually fairly taut - well for a big trailie anyway. Obviously when you jump on the brakes, or if you're riding a little, ahem, spiritedly then the suspension dives quickly through part of its stroke, so we'll see have to see how it performs on those Welsh fire-roads.

The motor seems to be all about mid-range. There doesn't appear to be too much low down, but you can wait along just fine with the tacho needle halfway round its dial. It's quite a vibey lump though, and you can especially feel this through the narrow pegs (now that I've removed the rubber cleats). The cleats are a pet hate of mine and in order to gain some grip from the pegs, especially in the wet, I'm prepared to live with tingly feet..!

Right now, the Dakar is off for its first service but when it's back we'll head out somewhere to get the thing muddy. Then the huffing and puffing will really begin... **Barni**

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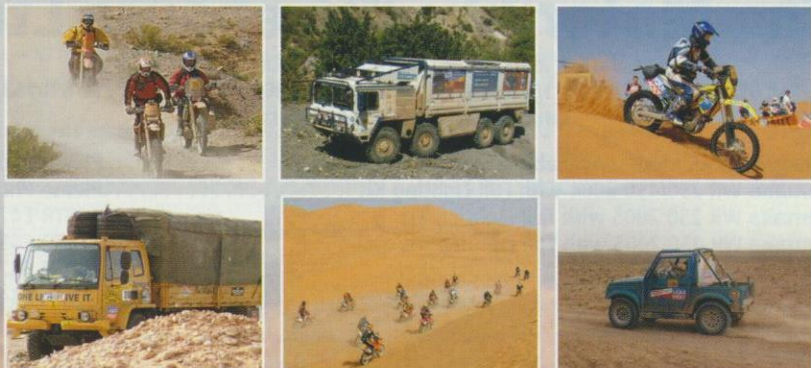
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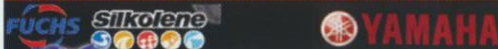
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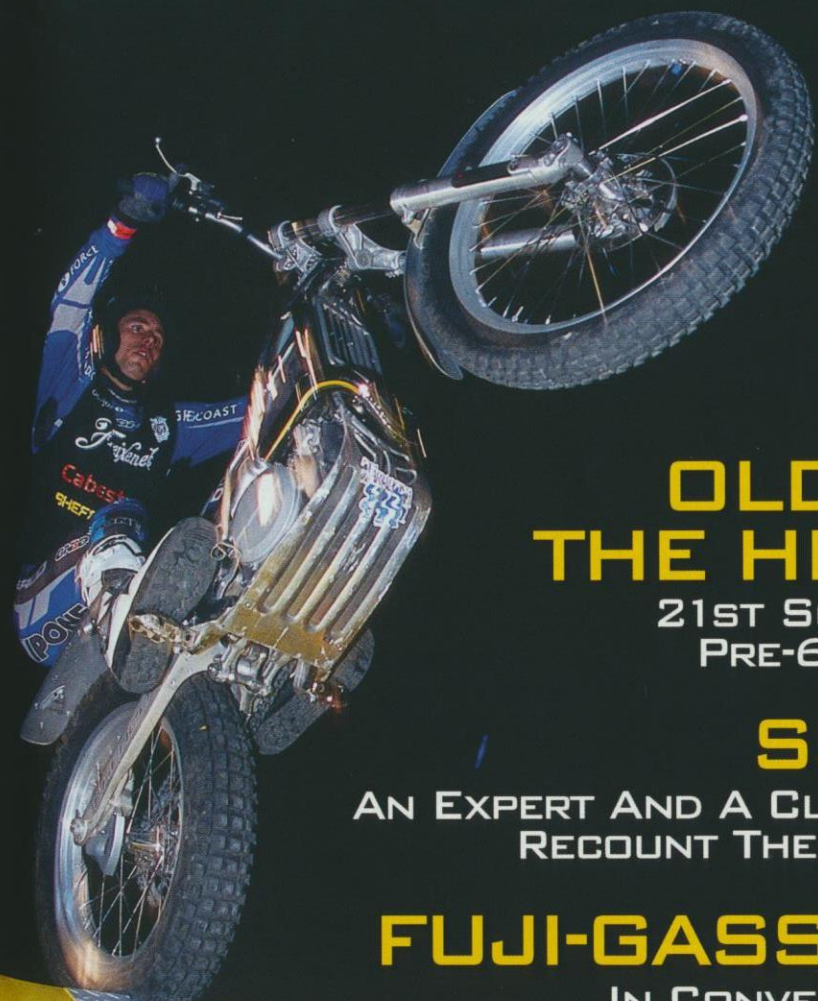
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TRIALS MAGAZINE



OLD AS THE HILLS
21ST SCOTTISH PRE-65 TRIAL

SSDT
AN EXPERT AND A CLUBMAN RECOUNT THEIR WEEK

FUJI-GASSING
IN CONVERSATION WITH FUJIGAS

Trials Magazine shoots the breeze with reigning world outdoor champ Takahisa 'Fujigas' Fujinami...

T-Mag: How did you start out in trials?

TF: It was my father who got me started. When I was a small boy, he was always looking for something to do together. I first rode a trials bike, a Honda QR50 when I was three years old. When I was nine I tried bicycles, (basically ones identical to trials machines minus the engine), and made World Champion (junior) a year later. Then I had enough of that and went onto motor-bikes properly, with my first trial being the 1990 Chiba event.

T-Mag: Who has been your biggest inspiration?

TF: My father and my family - we have worked towards winning the World Championship for years. Marc Colomer (three-times world indoor champion now turned mentor for 19-year-old Gas Gas rider Jeroni Fajardo) is my favourite rider.

T-Mag: What would you say is your favourite trials event?

TF: The World Outdoor Championship, of course!

T-Mag: What was it like to finally win the World Outdoor Championship last year?

TF: Amazing - it was a long time coming. Finally aged 24, and after nine international trials seasons I did it, having had my world trials debut in 1996 at the Spanish Grand Prix for Honda. So I am now Japan's first ever world trials champion, and it is something I will remember always.

T-Mag: Which rider is your biggest threat?

TF: Dougie, because he is consistent, has a good team, the same new four-stroke Honda as me and he is looking to regain his crown. You can never rule out a seven-times

world champion. But I will be doing all I can to stop him!

T-Mag: Was there ever a time when you thought you would never beat Dougie?

TF: Sometimes - it was very difficult not to lose faith, especially when I have been runner-up five times in a row. But after hard training in the winter of 2003, I managed to get runner-up position ahead of Dougie in the world indoor series in early 2004 so this gave me the confidence I needed in going outdoors afterwards.

T-Mag: How do you relax away from riding?

TF: Jazz music. My favourite artist is a Japanese female jazz singer called Chie Ayado. I also like driving my E-class Mercedes; it's very nice, all mod cons.

T-Mag: Where do you live in Japan?

TF: Mie, which is in the heartland of the country in the Tokai region, and it's very easy to get into Tokyo from there. It is very mild there as it's on the Pacific coast - not like England at all.

T-Mag: What do you like the most about Japan?

TF: I love Toyko, there's always something happening. But there are far too many people and far too much traffic - like the UK really.

T-Mag: How is family life now you have a new baby?



WORDS: MEL FRILCONERI; PICS: SI MELBER

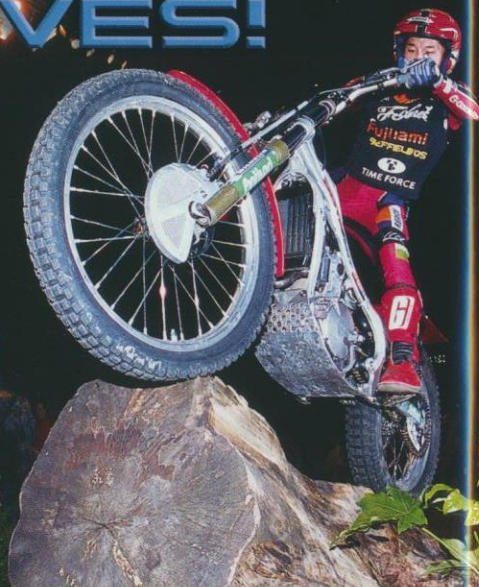
BUNCH OF FIVES!

TF: It is good - my little girl was born in October 2004 and is called Yumema, which means 'dream'. I spend as much time as I can with my family but they mostly stay in Japan as I travel so much when I'm riding. Also because I am now World Champion I need to focus even more. Maybe that will change as the little one gets older; we will see.

T-Mag: And finally... If you were asked to pose naked for a magazine would you do it?

TF: Yes! Why not? I have a nice smile, no?

Check out the official website at www.fujigas.net



Sheffield Steel

Here at T-Mag we've got a samurai sword signed by the great Fujigas himself to give away to one lucky reader. The 26-inch stainless steel blade is signed in Japanese and English and also has 'Sheffield 2005' written on it by Fujigas.

To be in with a chance of winning this unique prize, simply look at the photo of Fuji and Dougie and come up with a humorous caption. Best caption in the opinion of the Trials Mag judges wins the

sword. Closing date for the competition is 18 June 2005 and T-mag's decision is final.

Please note: The sword is a replica silver 'Katana' samurai sword for *display purposes only* and is not suitable for anybody under 18 years of age.

All entries must be accompanied by a signed declaration that the entrant is over 18yrs old. Please remember it is illegal to carry it in a public place and by entering this competition you are agreeing to this condition.



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The Motorcycle Diaries

REPORT & PICS: MIKE RAPLEY

Talented Twickenham rider Sam Connor became the third consecutive Sherco mounted winner of the Scottish Six Days Trial when he lost 20 marks over the six days and 180 sections of this year's event that took place during the first week of May.

Without once managing a 'best of day' score, consistency was the key to his success and with a display of sheer brilliance he snatched a single mark win over Ben Hemingway and third placed Amos Bilbao (both Montesa 4RT mounted).

Further down the running order (187th to be exact), regular clubman rider Orlando Harrison was having his first crack at the Scottish. Here are their respective reports from the week...

Second placed finisher in the 2004 Scottish, 24yr old Twickenham based Sam Connor is a sponsored Sherco rider and regular World Trials Championship competitor...

Sunday, in the Parc Ferme

'The World Championship is still my main aim for the year, but the Scottish is a big week, but it's very difficult to get prepared for it. I haven't ridden beck sections since last year's Scott trial and last year's Scottish before then, so it's a very different type of trial for me.

'I was second last year, so obviously this year I'm hoping to be able to win. I don't know that I can but the trial does seem to suit

Take two trials riders at opposite ends of the riding spectrum - one world championship level and one clubman - and see what they make of this year's Scottish Six Days Trial. It sounded like a great idea to us...

me even though it's so different from those I ride all year.

'I'm just about fully fit now after last year's problems (showing off the scar that needed 27 stitches), so I'm looking forward to tomorrow when we all get down to riding.'

Monday

'It took me a while to get going today, but I am happy to get the day out of the way and my score (2) was not too bad. I lost one at Blackwater on what looked like an easy section and one on the second section at School Falls. The chain tensioner wrapped itself round the sprocket and swinging arm when it caught a rock and I had to take a dab. It was silly on an easy section, but that's how they go. Then I had to sort that out, it all takes time and I felt that I had lost my rhythm.

'But the real problem was this morning before I left Fort William. The front sprocket circlip sprung off along with the chain, damaging the end of the mainshaft. I was only just up the road after the start so I got the bike back to the car park and we had no option but to weld the sprocket on to the end of the shaft.'

Tuesday

'We rewelded the gearbox sprocket this morning as there seemed to be some cracks in it. It should be okay now and will have to last the week. That lost me some time in the running order but fortunately there was plenty of time today, which is unheard of on Tuesday. We had the same time as last year and the same course, but last year riders

were losing time all over the place, this year everybody had stacks. Strange. I only lost two marks again today, so I'm happy. It puts me joint third I think.'

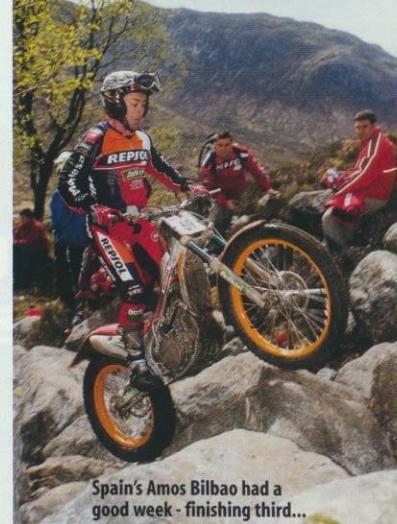
Wednesday

'Two again today, which I'm pretty pleased with, but I hear Jordi Pascuet has gone clean, that's good. But I have had no problems, in fact a steady ride round. The moor across from Annat to Trotters was hard, though conditions this year have been much easier and there's hardly been any delay. Tomorrow is my early day, I'll need to hang back a bit so I can get the best out of the sections, but I need to watch the time so I don't end up having to rush at the end.'

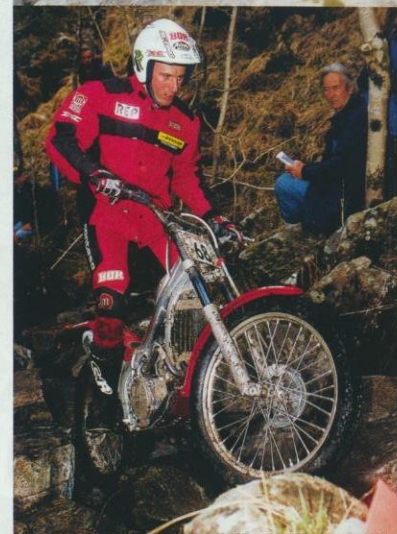
Thursday

'I tried to hang back a bit today but the weather this morning was awful, and despite everything I seemed to be near the front all the time. The first sections at Chairlift weren't too bad, but when we got to Ba House, which is only a few miles down the track the sections were flooded, gushing with water. I know it had been raining hard but the difference in the amount of water between the two first groups was incredible.

'Being early I knew it would be my worst day and like Jordi Pascuet, I lost eight marks, but his early day is yet to come so I reckon that with a bit of luck I'll lose fewer than him over the next two days. I'm happy with how I'm riding so far, and I haven't really made any mistakes, but it's all so close, any one of half a dozen riders could win.'



Spain's Amos Bilbao had a good week - finishing third...



Spaniard Carles Casas rode both the Pre-65 and the Scottish...



TBM 135

The Motorcycle Diaries

Friday

'I had a very good day today. The only slack dab I had was in the middle of the last sub at Meall Nam Each. It was a really hard section and I was so concerned about cleaning the last bit which was the worst, I forgot about the middle and had the dab.

'I've been virtually on my own here this week. There's been nobody driving round in a van looking after me, and I haven't had riding mates around me to fill in the holes and move rocks. I'm not complaining, it's all about getting the best you can out of the situation. If you ride with a bunch of riders all of a similar level, then you help each other, but this week I've been on my own and have just done my own thing. I've got it all to do tomorrow. Jordi has his early day so he might be out of the reckoning, I just don't know, all I can do is try my best and I'm not counting my chickens. Anything could happen yet.'

Saturday

'What an incredible feeling, it's a lifetime achievement for me and I still can't believe that I've won. They tell me that this is the first Scottish win by a proper Southern rider for 44 years, but Steve (Saunders) won many times and just to be in the list of winners is good enough.

'I've had to be on it every day, but I was worried today when I lost four in the middle group at Allt Na Lairige. The observer had been a bit lax letting riders loop out onto the bank to avoid the worst of the waterfall. It must have been easier early on as there were a good number of cleans, but when I got there at the back the rut was very deep. In the end I had to have a three to get through it and I thought it might have cost me the trial but I had no other option. It was a safe three and better than a five which was the likely alternative.

'I thought Ben would have a good day and indeed he was best and came so close to winning. I feel sorry for him, getting beaten by one mark, but even so I'm

For clubman Orlando 'Oz' Harrison this was his first Scottish - but definitely not his last...



really happy for myself, Mum and Dad, Malc, Rhoda and everybody else that sponsors me.'

What does it mean?

'This is more important than the World Championship. I'm never going to be World Champion, and this will be my last year riding in it. The World Championship is now just a series for half a dozen riders, with the rest of us making up the numbers. The Scottish means so much more worldwide. For example, when I go to Japan, everybody knows and asks about the Scottish, but they are not really interested in the World Championship.

'The Scottish is a trial that the average clubman can relate to and can ride, whereas the World

Championship is totally divorced from club trials. Any finisher in the Scottish has my respect. It's tough for me, so I know how tough it must be for the riders well down the results. Their struggle requires so much more effort than mine.

'I've always had a problem adjusting to riding this type of section after world rounds, in fact before I came I talked it over with my dad even whether to come. In the end I said I'd go up on my own, ride on my own and just see if I could get a result like last year. To go one better is fantastic, and unexpected really, even though I thought I could ride well enough. I haven't been particularly excited about coming here, it was just a case of I might as well ride it as I

have a responsibility to my sponsors, I'm glad I did now.

'I don't know what else to say expect repeat what I've already said, this really is a lifetime achievement. I'm made up about it and can only say thanks to everybody who made it possible.'

First time Scottish rider Orlando 'Oz' Harrison was a private entrant on an old TXT250 Gas Gas. Twenty-five year old Oz rides the Clubman class in Yorkshire and other northern trials.

Sunday evening

'This is the first time I have been this far north and I have never seen the Scottish Six Days, but my dad has ridden several times. I'm anxious, apprehensive, nervous but I'm enjoying all the scare stories folks have been relating to me. I'll sleep well tonight. The bike's been well fettled, I just hope it doesn't go wrong and I hope I don't bust any bits off it.

'I know it's probably going to be the hardest thing I've ever done, I don't think I can really comprehend what's coming, but I'm looking forward to it.'

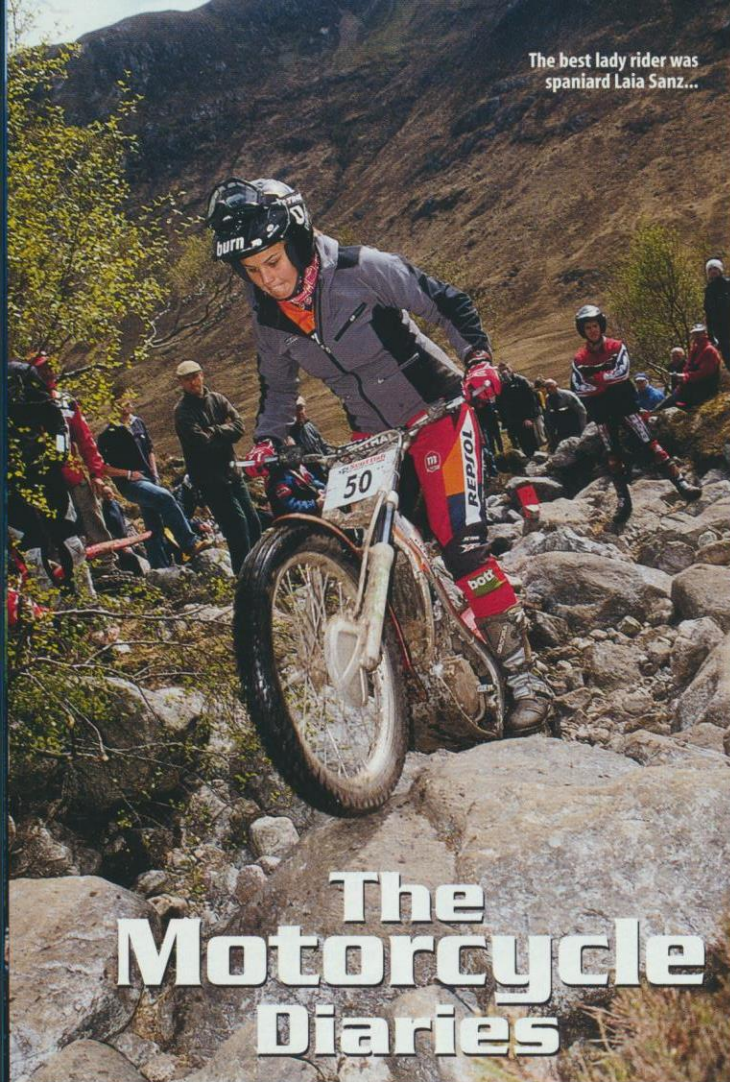
Monday

'I'm number 33 so today was my early day. I've enjoyed it, the weather has been good and I had three cleans this morning, but it got much harder after the lunch stop, all steep waterfalls. I expect they'll ride better later on but I didn't get any more cleans. I've had the prop stand fall off for some reason but I've managed to get it sorted tonight at the Gas Gas camp who were really helpful. I can't believe how hungry I am, but I get a good lie in tomorrow as I don't start until about 12 o'clock.'

Tuesday

'It was a hard day but satisfying, the sections were more rideable, but the going was a lot harder. I think I probably dropped less than yesterday and I was definitely riding the sections

The best lady rider was
spaniard Laia Sanz...



The Motorcycle Diaries

better. The bike is still going a treat, it went really well today, absolutely storming. I've got the tools in a seat box and that's so much better than carrying a rucksack.

'Across the moors I was thinking I should have done some more training, but when I got back to base I still had half an hour left which gave me a chance to change the air filter, look around the bike and oil the chain. I'm really enjoying the week at the moment, and today really wasn't quite as bad as I'd been led to believe.'

Wednesday

'I didn't enjoy it as much today; the sections were tougher, some were good but many were beyond clubmen of my ability. I tried to struggle through as many as I could for three, I may have been given fives, but that's the problem, when you know they are beyond you, and the best you can hope for is a struggling three, if I've been given fives, it will be disappointing. I'm not counting, and don't know how many I've lost.

'I had some bike problems today, the clutch started slipping

and we found out at the finish it had almost run out of fluid. Don't really know why, there were no leaks, I can only assume it wasn't quite topped up enough and the clutch wear has taken some of the fluid out. However, we topped it up tonight and it seems okay.

'Also had the chain come off today and it got all jammed up, I spent far too long doing that but fortunately I still had plenty of time at the end, just like everybody else.'

Thursday

'I'm tired tonight, the week is catching up with me. I reckon the fourth day of the Scottish is the second hardest day of trialling in the year - the most difficult being the Scott!

'The prop stand mounting bolt fell out again, but that was the only mechanical problem. I made a mistake this afternoon by seeing a bike on the skyline and going up a hill to follow him. The trouble was it wasn't the course and by the time I got there he had gone. I spent some time looking for flags then decided to retrace my steps and by the time I found the flags again I reckon I had lost 20 minutes. I still had time but I had to rush towards the end.

'I reckon some experienced riders know short cuts as there were wheel marks to follow, but no flags. It's dodgy if you don't know where you are going.

'Otherwise, it's been okay today, I managed a couple of cleans, but everything has been fairly rideable. Two days to go now. So near yet so far.'

Friday

'What a slog today, I never got with it all day. From the first moor crossing to the first sections it hasn't let up all day. The moors have been very wet, the sections mega hard, it's been cold and wet on the road, though other riders had a dry day!

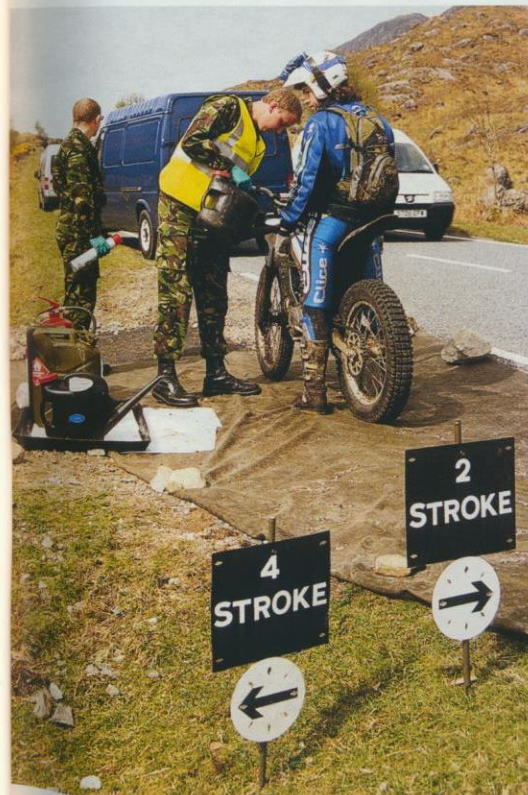
'What a day, but I suppose it's not meant to be easy is it? They said it was all easy today, round the Peninsula, but it wasn't easy, that was a really hard day.'

Saturday

'I'm dead happy, and absolutely knackered. I finished 187th, which means I'm just a section scrubber for the good riders, but it's a finish and I couldn't be happier. Today was so hard I had a couple of problems; the back brake went, I got it back but in the end it disappeared again, I also had some water get in the carb. I had to take three fives which was the only time in the week that I asked for fives, but because the bike was missing and running flat I couldn't risk crashing down a waterfall.

'I would really like to do it again though, and try to get a better result, but I have to say I'm happy with what I've done. Let me say to anybody that reads this, you must go prepared, that's the real problem, none of us are fit enough. And thanks to Toby, my dad for his help, and to everybody that has supported me. It's been great.'

As usual the army offered their services for the refuelling...



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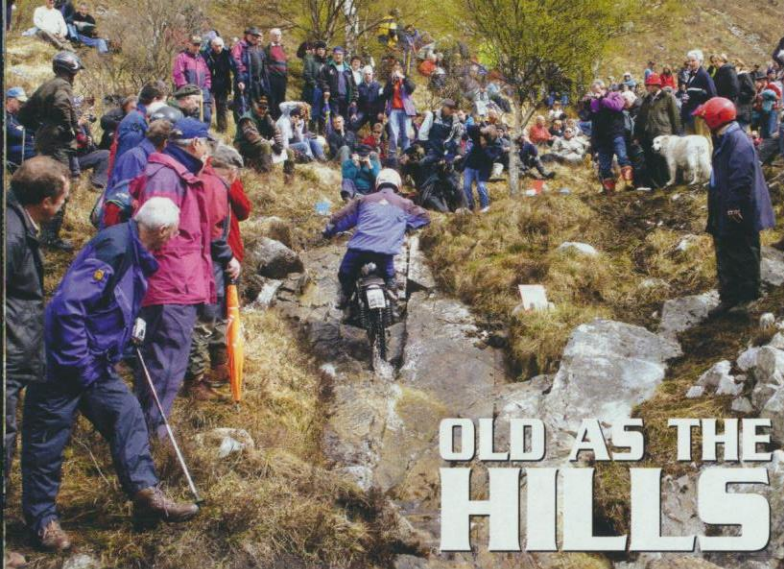


The 21st Scottish Pre-65 trial will go down in the record books as probably the wettest in its short history, and by consequence, also one of the most difficult, for the winning score went into double figures for the first time ever.

Mick Andrews, having been a joint winner of the trial three times in the past and in 2002 the outright winner, once more added to his lifelong list of successes with another outright victory in this year's two day trial that took place in the area surrounding Kinlochleven on the last Friday and Saturday of April. Andrews, aboard his 250 James finished with a winning score of 15 marks lost, while Dave Thorpe took second and Carles Casas third.

The Pre-65 Scottish is undoubtedly the most important old bike trial of the year and the organising Edinburgh Club once again promoted a wonderful, two day event of 30 sections each day, with a route totalling 50-odd miles. But the Pre-65 Scottish is much more than just a trial, it's a gathering of the faithful. A faithful whose religion is pure Pre-65 bikes, and those 363 souls that entered knew that purity was essential to get a ride.

Let me explain. By the nature of things, 40 year old bikes are not what they once were; they have been developed over the years until they have reached a point where they are now far more competitive than they were originally. With the addition of items like Mikuni or Dell'Orto carbs, electronic ignition, modern fork internals, high quality drum brakes and tubeless rims - all have combined to make old bikes better.



OLD AS THE HILLS

But some years ago, the Edinburgh Club decided to try and reverse this trend and now insist that in outward appearance at least, the bikes in the trial are more in line with what they were.

So out go 'foreign' carbs - unless available on the bikes pre-65; out go tubeless rims, out go fancy post-65 hubs, and out go non-genuine forks and yokes. But electronic ignition can't be detected, nor can modern internals in old forks, so these things stay, with the result that some bikes look the part but ride terribly, whereas others look the part and are superb.

We'll make no comment except to say that 363 riders decided last January that their bikes were eligible and put in an entry. In the end only 180 riders took part, and even though a few foreigners arrived with questionable bikes (after all when did you last see two pre-65 Montesas), the bulk entered into the spirit of things.

Mick Andrews, blond locks flowing, was his ever-cheerful self. Now resident abroad, he wouldn't miss this trial and was keen to post another good result. Factory Francis Barnett rider Mick Ransom and son Steve had their two green machines with them, but Mick reckoned this could be his last ride. 'Too old' he commented, 'and the trial is probably too hard now'. But Len Hutty, not yet 45, was eager for many more aboard his superb Matchless which he rides with aplomb.

Star all rounder Arthur Browning is a Jawa man through and through, his last big success was



winning the Red Marley hillclimb and prior to that, racing the 500 Classic in last year's Manx Grand Prix. He had a Jawa special for this event which was unique, while Mick Wilkinson claimed his last good ride was in 1970 - not true as he's won many sidecar trials.

With odd and even numbers heading off in different directions, delays were kept to a minimum and on Friday there was a big loop out towards Blackwater reservoir, and an out-and-back loop along the main road from Kinlochleven towards Glencoe.

And Friday was wet! With torrential rain hitting the start area close to 10am, and there having been heavy rain overnight, riders knew they were in for a struggle. Odd numbers set off for Cnoc A Linnhe, two, normally fairly easy rocky stream subs, but they were well flooded and with water cascading down, deep holes had been washed out. Whilst nearby Camas Na Muic was even worse, where many riders, fearful of drowning precious machines, simply took two fives.

Out on the even number loop, the sections were deep, and George Greenland, at 72yrs young on a 500 Ariel, considered that the trial was possibly a touch hard for him. Yet he had a superb ride

over the flooded rocks of Lochan Dhuibh out near Blackwater reservoir. But for several machines, it was too deep and riders were drying out drowned ignitions. However it was not too bad until Pipeline was reached. Few riders could remember six inches of water rushing down the famous gully, but it did that day - whilst nearby Aluminium Works was another section where discretion was often the preferred choice to a drowned bike.

Spanish ace Carles Casas, riding Pete Remington's Tiger Cub set the pace on the first day with a leading score of 11 marks lost after his horrendously wet and flooded ride, but Andrews aboard his James was only one mark adrift. Tony Calvert, once a well sponsored Bultaco rider, who now rides just this one trial each year, showed that he has lost none of his ability, and on another borrowed Cub, this time

belonging to John Holmes, finished third on 13 marks while Dave Thorpe, six times a winner of this trial, was hovering in a joint fourth place with Jersey rider Graham Du Feu on 15 marks lost.

Much of the early evening after the six hour ride was spent drying out machinery in order that they would run much better on what was hoped would be a drier Saturday. And wishes were granted!

Day two proved to be so much better for old machines, and with Johnny Brittain, stoically flagging away each and every rider, it was nice to know the flooded becks of Friday had all but disappeared. Sections along the Mamore Road opened the action including Sleubhaich, which though a single section, was mighty long and it was no mean feat to achieve a clean. Am Bodach looked worse than it was, the slab was horribly angled but grip was plentiful whilst Mamore, ridden earlier but immediately below the later section, was just as tricky with nasty slabs.

Jackson's - scene of (Gordon Jackson's) infamous dab on his 350 AJS in 1961 - was not so difficult, but Mam Breck, which looked innocent enough had a nasty root-step close to the end and it was here that

Andrews lost his only three of the day to be added to his 12 from Friday, for a comprehensive win.

Dave Thorpe matched his old rival Mick's score for the day, whilst third best on the second day was Spanish rider Josep Rovira who only lost four marks. Graham De Feu, Tony Calvert, Carles Casas and Len Hutty were the remainder in single figures with all of them on small machines except for Hutty who for once was topped as the king of the big bangers by Jersey's Ariel mounted Graham De Feu.

RESULTS

1	Mick Andrews	(250 James)	15
2	Dave Thorpe	(200 Triumph)	18
3	Carles Casas	(200 Triumph)	20
4	Tony Calvert	(200 Triumph)	21
5	Graham De Feu	(500 Ariel)	22
6	Len Hutty	(410 Matchless)	27
7	Neil Gaunt	(500 Enfield)	29
8	Juan Rovica	(200 Triumph)	30
9	Stig Karlsson	(285 BSA)	30
10	Mick Grant	(500 Ariel)	30

Rappers Rides It!

Back at the start of the year, my mate Michael Batty threatened to provide me with a bike for the Pre-65 Scottish. He only ever rides a Pre-65 James, and tackles every trial in the year on the same bike, whether it be the Manx Two Day, or the local evening trial.

His bikes are functional and he continually coaxes them through trials. So when he thrust an entry form in front of me in February I signed it. He paid for the entry and stated the bike's legality, and just six days before the trial took place, reckoned I should take his number two James out for a thrash.

I rode it in a Sunday club trial (where it cooked several plugs) before landing in Kinlochleven five days later on the very wet Friday morning of the trial. Now the Pre-65 Scottish has never really got me buzzing. It's nine years since I last rode, back then I finished sixth on an immaculate Peter Salt Greeves. I reckoned that would take some beating, and I was dead right.

All went well until the first group of sections out on the moors. It was hissing it down, and foolishly I laid the bike on its side whilst I went to walk a section. Twenty minutes later, Michael and I finally managed to coax it into spluttering life, and from there onwards, it suffered badly with the weather, water, plugs, a dodgy kickstart and general malaise from something now 46 years old.

I hadn't been bad through Friday's first half, but the second half was some struggle, until the

bike reached the point where it downed tools - sparks actually - and died at the side of the road. So, with two sections to go, I took fives, got a lift back by van, signed off four minutes late, then returned to recover my steed.

'We'll have it going for the morning' said Michael optimistically, and with a can of WD40 and several more plugs later, together with some carb and ignition fettling, sure enough it burbled back into life.

In fact on Saturday it was not too bad, that's if you don't count the need to wedge a stone under the footrest to keep it up whilst kick starting it. Oh, did I mention that the kickstart was now broken and required a flat washer wedging behind it to stop it turning fully the wrong way?

An hour and a half from the end the kickstarter gave up completely, so I had to keep the motor running, which meant it became terribly overheated. But after some miles of pinging, banging, a fried bum and frantic thoughts of how to push a James miles off the moors, I persuaded it home to the school car park in 46th place, where natives warmed their frozen bodies over the heat haze coming from the cooked Vale Onslow barrelled Villiers engine.

My thanks to Michael for his generosity, endless WD40 and some Germolene for my burn. And if I get an entry, I'll be back again, for it really is a wonderful trial, and I had forgotten what I was missing...

What's the Story?

STORY: RAPPERS; PIC: ERIC KITCHEN



BACK in the mid-Eighties, Steve Saunders was one of the great sights of world and British trials. Riding his trademark Honda RTL250 he was virtually unbeatable and when he took second place in the World Trials Championship in 1986, most enthusiasts reckoned that his elevation to world champion was only a matter of time.

Sadly for Steve it was not to be. His move to Fantic in 1987 ended a winning combination and he would never again reach the dizzying heights that he had achieved with Honda.

And although the switch to Fantic was considered by many to be quite astute at the time, as Steve recalls, behind the scenes all was not well...

'The move to Fantic in 1987 was not my first choice, I would have preferred to stay on the Honda. I really thought I could become World Champion on the Honda. But I was forced to go elsewhere because Rothmans [the team's sponsor] pulled out their cash to move into Formula One with Williams, and Honda weren't prepared to pick up the tab to carry on with me. I was out of contract at the end of '86, whereas Eddy Lejeune had another year to run, so they kept Eddy... and I had to go.

'The Fantic was probably the obvious choice, but certainly not my *first* choice. Their bike was simply no comparison to the Honda and we had loads of trouble with it. It was right at the start of the disc brake era and they gave problems.

'The move to Fantic was not my first choice. The bike was simply no comparison to the Honda, but I was out of contract...'

There were also lots of problems with the suspension which frequently broke and overall the bike was very heavy.

'The yellow model I rode in 1988 (on which Steve is pictured in the 1988 world round at Montbrison in France) was far better than the previous year's bike.

'Fantic employed Dario Seregni from Garelli who was a good engineer and he helped develop the bike into something that was eventually quite competitive.

'Even though I was British Champion in '87 on the red bike, the yellow (1988) one produced some better rides. I was again British Champion in '88 and I won the British world round at Petersfield that year, which I considered a good ride.

I remember the French round where this picture was taken, it was a great trial and many folks perhaps won't recall that it was the only world round won by Frenchman Thierry Giraud and the only World Round won on a Yamaha TY250, which at clubman level was probably the best trials bike of the time, but at world level - definitely not.

'Looking back, the Fantic era was *not* very memorable for me, but at the time it was the best of a limited choice of rides. So that's what I had to go with.

'But times move on, I turned 40 last December, so you live and learn and try to make better decisions all the time.

'Will I be riding a Fantic in the ACU Classic series? No chance'

FREE CLASSIFIEDS

BIKES

Honda CRM250 mkIII, 1995, T&T, 7000 miles, Pro Circuit pipe, bashplate, Renthals, brushguards, some spares, £1450 ono. Tel (mobile) 07900 206634 or 01438 869668 (Herts)

Husaberg FE450, 2003, 53-reg, taxed, 70 hours' use, with spare plastics/exhaust etc, exc cond, £3500 ono. Tel 01638 780923 (Suffolk)

Kawasaki KLE500, 1991, Italian import, H-reg, purple, T&T, rack, new battery/pads/plugs, vgc, £1150 ono. Tel 01797 361466 (Kent)

Honda XL600, T&T, new battery, Laser exhaust, superb cond, very reluctant sale, £1450. Tel (mobile) 07715 731333 or 01386 833210 (Worcs)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, 2001, T&T, hardly used, bashplate, bark-busters, FMF system plus original, exc cond, £2750. Tel 07951 469175 (Mid Glam)

CCM 404 Enduro, March 2004, road legal, WP suspension, handguards, bashplate, with spares, exc bike, must sell, £3200 ono. Tel 02476 352212 (Warks)

Husqvarna TE410, 1998, T&T, little use, green laned only, well maintained, £1950 ono. Tel 01252 653544 (Hants)

Kawasaki KDX220R, 2003, road legal, one owner, trail use only, handguards, Renthals, spares kit, exc cond, £2300 ono. Tel 02476 352212 (Warks)

Honda CRM250 mkII, J-reg, white/blue, MoT, very clean, much loved and well looked after, £1250 ono. Tel Neil on 07773 197443 (W Sussex)

Yamaha DT125R, 1997, blue, MoT, low miles, road use, exc cond, reluctant sale. Tel (mobile) 07702 481385 or 01234 772559 (Beds)

Husaberg FE400, '03 model, road reg'd, new AC10 rear tyre, handguards, loads of trick bits/spares, mint cond, £2800. Tel 01604 460914 (Northants)

Yamaha XT600 Tenere, 1990, twin headlamp 3AJ model, T&T, 73000km, new tyres, exc cond, £1295 ono. Tel 01246 209099 (Derbys)

KTM 520EXC, 2000 model, T&T, new tyres/c+s, lots of spares, lovely cond. Tel (mobile) 07977 984089 or 01248 602174 (N Wales)

BMW R1150GS, 2001, Y-reg, 25000 miles, T&T, Ohlins, carbon Remus plus standard exhaust, heated grips, full luggage, TKC80s plus road tyres, £5750. Tel 07811 108625 (London)

Husqvarna TE450, '04 model, low miles, elec start, taper bars, hand/sumpguards, vgc, OIRO £3450. Tel 0161 483 8487 (Cheshire)

Suzuki DR-Z400S, 2004, yellow, 700 miles, warranty, sump/frameguards, Renthals, AC10s, as new cond, bargain at £3299 ono. Tel (days) 07976 906234 or 01789 764050 (Warks)

Gas Gas Pampera 250, 02-reg, blue/black, 2500 miles, road legal, green lane use only, Renthals, handguards, good cond, £1950. Tel 07702 390830 (Hants)

Armstrong MT500, 1987, T&T, low miles, Mikuni carb, two sets of wheels, new tyres, runs well, mint cond, £975. Tel 07903 329699 (Cheshire)

Yamaha WR450F 2-Trac, 2004, auto-clutch, road legal, new tyres/c+s/plastics/pads, the ultimate dirtbike, £7250 ono. Tel 07817 301541 (W Mids)

Gas Gas EC300, 2003 model, blue/white, reliable, vgc, £2300 ono. Tel 01776 889443 (Scotland)

KTM 525EXC, April '03, hardly used, mostly trail/odd hare 'n' hounds, well maintained, oil changed every 8-10hrs due to infrequent use, hand guards, bash plate, graphic set, vgc, £3895. Tel 01438 234075 (Herts)

Gas Gas EC200, 2001, Marzocchis, recent c+s, carbon exhaust/forkguards, some spares, tidy, £2100 ono.

Tel 01252 640310 (Surrey)

Suzuki DR-Z400SK3, 2004, yellow, taxed, year's warranty, Alphadot, Gadget bashplate, exc cond, £3050. Tel 01452 610794 (Gloucs)

Honda Transalp 650, 2004, 54-reg, taxed, 1400 miles, Honda top-box, touring screen, heated grips, as new, £4100ono. Tel (mobile) 07753 635347 or 0191 2528452 (Tyne & Wear)

Honda CRF250X, 04-reg, taxed, Less than 30 hrs green lane use, £400 worth of extras, no time to ride, immaculate cond, reluctant sale. £3700. Tel (mobile) 07709 309004 or 01626 324819 (Devon)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, 2001, yellow, T&T, was set-up for green lanes, now standard, lots of extras, £2100 ono. Tel 01865 777629 (Oxon)

Honda XR400R, reg'd August '03, 2500km, CRD bashplate, handguards, B&B ally exhaust insert, Renthal Dakar bars, well maintained, £2950. Tel (mobile) 07974 191183 or 0151 644 9326 (Merseyside)

Honda CRM250 mkII, stolen/recovered, off-road use only, starts and runs well, phone for details, £750. Tel (mobile) 07966 605561 or 01685 870328 (S Wales)

Husqvarna TE450, 2003, 100th anniversary model, road legal, elec start, excellent condition, £3700 ovno. Tel 07831 682885 (Hants)

Honda CRM 250 mkIII, T&T, chrome DEP pipe, recent c+s/tyres, tidy bike, £1600. Tel 07706 163776 (Merseyside)

Yamaha XT350, 1993, black, T&T, Renthals, service history, MT21s, very reliable, good cond, £1500. Tel 07977 148445 (Hants)

Yamaha XT350, 1991, MoT, 26000 miles, new exhaust/battery, vgc, £1195 ono. Tel (mobile) 07921 224677 or 01993 846953 (Oxon)

Yamaha XT600, 1985, Acerbis tank, centre-stand, Goodridge hose, new tyres/c+s/seat cover, £900. Tel Ian on 01947 601341 (N Yorks)

Honda Transalp XL600V, V-reg, T&T, 8800 miles, Spyball alarm, engine bars, screen, exc cond, £2700 ono. Tel 01737 354914 (Surrey)

Honda XR600L, 1993, elec start US import, T&T, new c+s/tyres, ideal trail/commuter, good cond, spare wheels/forks available, £1450. Tel 01926 817183 (Warks)

Honda XR250R, 2003, low miles, Renthals, DEP pipe, bashplate, recent tyres plus unused originals, £2800. Tel 07981 532707 (Lancs)

KTM 250EXC RFS, 2003, T&T, new c+s/pads, recent service with valves set, recent tyres, many extras, exc cond, £3000. Tel 0114 233 9587 (S Yorks)

Yamaha Serow, 1992, same owner last eight years, dual start, new c+s, £990 or exchange for Honda XR200 twin-shock. Tel 01293 882694 (Sussex)

CCM 604E, 51-reg, currently in MX trim, very tidy, offers over £2000. Tel (mobile) 07780 978774 or 01668 213230 (Northumberland)

Yamaha WR450F, 2004, used twice, hand/frameguards, Renthals, FMF pipe optional extra, never raced, exc cond, £3850. Tel (mobile) 07957 353505 or 01604 767359 (Northants)

KTM 250EXC 2T, 2004, taxed, exc cond, new baby forces sale of this standard bike, £3150. Tel 07939 984582 (S Wales)

Yamaha DT125R, 2003, 03-reg, black/silver, taxed, 4300 miles, good cond, £1900. Tel 07946 415972 (Cheshire)

Honda CRF250X, 2004, road legal, little use, never raced, sump/handguards, serviced regularly, immaculate cond, reluctant sale, can email recent pics, £3400. Tel 01633 615874 (Gwent)

Honda XR600R, 1997, P-reg, new plastics, alloy bashplate, Big Gun exhaust, alloy discguard, immaculate cond, can email pics, £1950. Tel 07813 043356 (Dorset)

KTM 250EXC 4T, '04 model, 1000 miles, green laned, well maintained, hand/sumpguards, recent filters/pads, £3500

ono. Tel 01823 324475 (Somerset)

KTM 200EGS, 2001, FMF Gold exhaust, good cond, £2395. Tel 01279 771296 (Herts)

Husqvarna WR360, 2000, T&T, loads of torque, eats hills, vgc, £1700. Tel 01924 264024 (W Yorks)

Honda XR400R, 2003, Renthals, fork/sumpguards, barkbusters, halogen lights, exceptionally well maintained, vgc, sensibly priced at £2480. Tel 01428 683203 (Surrey)

Suzuki DR-Z400S, 2001, T&T, one owner, 4000 miles, used for gentle green laning, usual scuffs, good c+s, full service, £2200. Tel 01733 833691 (Camps)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, 2000, T&T, 3000 miles, CRD exhaust, bashplate, frameguards, Renthals, Acerbis bushguards, £2150 ono. Tel (eves) 01322 280535 (Kent)

Honda CRM250 AR, 1999, white/black, one owner, unused for two years, extras, good cond, £2000. Tel 01785 663832 (Staffs)

Yamaha XT225 Serow, 1989, T&T, 12000 miles, elec start, regularly maintained, good cond, £1150 ono. Tel 01896 754972 (Selkirk)

KTM 250EXC RFS, Jan 2004, mainly green lane use, regularly serviced, £3200 ono. Tel 0115 933 6384 (Notts)

KTM 640SM, 2003, taxed, KTM race can, factory orange chain, new Avons, sump/handguards, with 7'x4' box trailer and bike stand, £3800. Tel 01274 882470 (W Yorks)

Honda CR250, J-reg, lights fitted but no T&T, good cond, £700 ono. Tel 01373 463253 (Somerset)

Kawasaki KDX200, 1998, S-reg, T&T, nice light green laner, fantastic cond, first to see will buy, £1495 ono. Tel (mobile) 07879 418558 or 01942 604922 (Cheshire)

Montesa Cota 247cc, ex-Jim Sandiford, never registered, Spanish classic, good clean bike, please phone for full details. Tel (mobile) 07879 418558 or 01942 604922 (Cheshire)

Honda XL600R, 1983, fully photographed rebuild, powder-coated frame/swingarm, dealer rebuilt engine, many new parts, clean and reliable, £1250 ono. Tel 07817 507280 (Bucks)

Honda CRM250 mkIII, 1995, 7000km, T&T, DEP pipe, new tyres, Renthals, mature owner, tidy bike, £1795. Tel 01932 240150 (Surrey)

Yamaha XT225 Serow, 1999, blue/white, T&T, elec start trailie, only 7000 miles, lovely cond. Tel (after 6pm) 01209 831969 (Cornwall)

Honda XR400R, 2000, T&T, owned from new, standard apart from FMF exhaust, new enduro tyres, 99-percent road use, vgc, £2200. Tel 07773 174467 (Herts)

Suzuki DR800, two owners, Laser exhaust, Renthals, MT21s, alloy panniers, new sprockets/battery, stored for six years, vgc, £1500. Tel 01491 578692 (Oxon)

Yamaha XT600Z Tenere, 1989, blue/yellow, two owners, elec start, MT21s, Renthals, manual, new battery, stored for two-and-a-half years, vgc, £1250. Tel 01491 578692 (Oxon)

Beta Alp 200, 2001, X-reg, fully road legal, trials tyres, trials footrest position, aftermarket exhaust, exc agile green laner or long distance trials bike, £1650 ono. Tel Paul on (mobile) 07866 090721 or 01873 832407 (S Wales)

CCM 404E, 2004 only, only 700 miles, WP suspension, Brembos, exc cond, £3400 ono for quick sale. Tel (mobile) 07974798346 or 0191 523 8892 (Sunderland)

Suzuki DR-Z400, 2004, 53-reg trail riding only, not used recently, currently SORN, £3499 ono. Tel (mobile) 07860 209529 or 0161 338 5731 (Cheshire)

Honda XR600R, 2000, X-reg, 5500km, CRD exhaust, sump/handguards, good cond, £2350 ono or may p/x WHY. Tel 01708 857004 (Essex)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, 2003, Renthals, standard bike, vgc, bargain at £2395. Tel 01296 630396 (Bucks)

Husaberg FE400, 2003, elec start, blue Talons/Excels, mous-es, tyres only three hours old, sump/waterpump/hand-guards, £2750. Tel 01942 824955 (Lancs)

Cagiva W16 600, N-reg, T&T, 17000km, new c+s/brakes, loads of grunt, ideal green lane bike, £1000. Tel 01243 839008 (W Sussex)

Gas Gas EC200, 2002, road reg'd, full FMF exhaust, green lane use only, good clean bike. Tel 01946 861135 (Cumbria)

Suzuki DR250, 1992, J-reg, elec start, long-range tank, Supertrapp exhaust, vgc, absolute bargain at £1100 ovno. Tel (mobile) 07768 086310 or 01202 814510 (Dorset)

KTM 200EXC, 2001, MoT, Doma exhaust, bashplate, new rear tyre, good cond, £1900 ono. Tel 01805 624990 (Devon)

Suzuki DR350SE, 1996, T&T, good runner, new parts, good cond, can email pics, £1750 ono or p/x with cash for YZ-F/CRF etc. Tel (mobile) 07779 007709 or 01255 242211 (Essex)

Honda CRF450R, 2003, road reg'd, lighting kit, full spares kit, exc cond, £2550 ono. Tel (mobile) 07900 001351 or 01494 530618 (Bucks)

Honda XR400R, 2001, 6000km, green laned only, CRD, Renthals, very well maintained, some spares, £2200. Tel (mobile) 07734 308996 or 01794 523666 (Hants)

Honda CRF450R, 2003, road reg'd, conversion by HM Italia, Talons, very little use, showroom cond, delivery possible, £3750 ono. Tel 01258 820383 (Dorset)

Triumph Daytona, 1968 converted to pre-65 MX, MoT, tax exempt, many new parts, all original parts available, matching numbers, nice green laner. Tel 01737 217697 (Surrey)

Gas Gas EC300, 1999, T&T, new engine parts, loads of receipts, well maintained, good cond, £1695 or consider exchange for Honda CRM250. Tel 01384 858748 (W Mids)

Suzuki DR-Z400S, 2003, blue, 4800 miles, vgc, £2600 ono. Tel 01527 4560905 (?) (Worcs)

Kawasaki KLR300R, 2000 model, 2400 miles, CRD bashplate, White Bros exhaust, handguards, clean and tidy cond, £2000 ono. Tel 01282 867758 (Lancs)

Suzuki RMX250, 1993, road reg'd, recent engine rebuild, handguards, spare plastics, £1295. Tel 020 8857 7940 (London)

Kawasaki KLR600 B2, 1991, project bike, T&T, 27000km, genuine part rebuilt, fantastic runner, good cond, first to see will buy, £1100. Tel 01299 824836 (Worcs)

BMW F650GS Dakar, 2000, W-reg, white/black, MoT, 5000km, new tyres, FSH, ideal commuter/trail/world trip, exc cond, £3150. Tel 01233 851112 (Kent)

Yamaha Super Tenere, blue/white, MoT, Datatag, topbox, stainless exhaust, crash bars, £1950 ono. Tel 01189 479604 (Berks)

Scorpa SY250, 2004 model, long range and trials tanks, exc cond, £2500. Tel 07980 434210 (Gwent)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, 2003, 700 miles, Renthals handguards, spare sprocket, just had first oil change, first to see will buy, £2650. Tel 07946 782862 (Essex)

KTM 250EXC RFS, 2003 model, never raced, £2800 ono. Tel 01293 415031 (W Sussex)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, T&T, hand/sumpguards, full engine rebuild, too much to list, exc cond, £2800 ono. Tel 07968 272816 (Notts)

Honda XR250R, 2003, road reg'd, 1500km, one owner, sump/brushguards, some spares, £2200 ono. Tel (mobile) 07778 669322 or 01903 774669 (Sussex)

Honda XR250, 1998, import, T&T, 11000km, elec start, digital dash, like new, £2095 ono. Tel 01202 670605 (Dorset)

Suzuki DR650, 1995, road use only, good cond, £1200 ono. Tel (mobile) 07850 801633 or 01697 352549 (Cumbria)

Yamaha TTR250, Jap import, T&T, 3000km, immaculate cond, £1800 ono. Tel (mobile) 07951 024005 or 020 7916 0528 (London)

Yamaha TT250R, 1994, MoT, elec start, new Renthal high bars/cables/tyres/battery/toolkit/brushguards, exc cond, £1800 ono. Tel 01628 782656 (Berks)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, Oct '01, T&T, 2700 miles, Renthals, sump/frameguards, well maintained. Tel 07968 192187 (Derbys)

Honda XR250R Baja, 1998, elec start, twin headlights, digi dash, great on/off-road, immaculate cond, £2100 ovno. Tel 07762 837384 (Dorset)

Yamaha XT600E, 2002, blue, 1700 miles, exc cond, £1850 ono. Tel 01502 711029 (Suffolk)

KTM 250EXC RFS, 2003 model, 52-reg, 850 miles/36 hours' use, mint cond, £2900 ono. Tel 01332 727814 (Derbys)

KTM 450EXC, 2003, never raced, proof of oil/filter changes, road tyres, many new parts, priced to sell, £3200.

FREE CLASSIFIEDS

Tel 0115 952 9044 (Notts)

KTM 525EXC, 2003, UK bike, taxed, one owner, handguards, bashplate, trip computer, little used, mostly green lined, regular oil/filter change, vgc, £3650. Tel 01438 234075 (Herts)
Suzuki DR-Z400SEK3, yellow, taxed, 1400 miles, one year's warranty, Alphadot, Gadget bashplate, road use only, £3050 ovno. Tel 01452 610794 (Gloucs)

KTM 200EXC, 2004, very low mileage, less than 30 hours' use, usual extras, genuine reason for sale, exc cond, £3200 ono. Tel (mobile) 07789 918360 or 01276 682146 (Surrey)
KTM 520EXC, 2002, Ti Akrapovic, supermoto wheels, new plastics, many more extras, very tidy, phone for details, £3450. Tel (mobile) 07781123401 or 01481 245131 (Guernsey)
Honda CRM250 mkII, 1992, white, road reg'd, 13000km, owned for last six years, MoT expired, £1100 ovno. Tel (mobile) 07830 304610 or 01732 873680 (Kent)

KTM 200EXC, reg'd March '04, green lane use only, exc condition, £3500 or may exchange for mint 2005 CRF250X. Tel 07831 558866 (Worcs)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, 2003, green lane use only, lack of money forces reluctant sale, £2600 ovno. Tel 07834 266384 (Bristol)
KTM 450EXC, 2004, only 30 hours' use, all usual extras, well maintained, immaculate cond, would like to swap for 2004 250 4T in same condition, Husky preferred but open to offers. Tel 07790 100526 (Herts)

KTM 525EXC, 2003, model, one owner, trail use only, well maintained, new c+s recent tyres, extras, exc cond, £3650 ono. Tel (mobile) 07968 495130 or 01332 741415 (Derbys)
Yamaha XT overlander, big tank, alloy panniers, topcase, HD wheels, Scottolier, heated grips, loads of valuable spares, £825. Tel 01736 796857 (Cornwall)

Suzuki DR650SE, 1999, T-reg, black, T&T, 14000 miles, FSH, new c+s/pads, Renthals bars/grips, road use only, good cond, £1500 ono. Tel 01200 440348 (Lancs)

Kawasaki KLX300R, may '03, 1200 miles, extras, vgc, £2490. Tel 01524 846624 (Lancs)

Honda XLR250 Baja, J-reg, MoT, 16000km, good cond, £1295. Tel 01606 882399 (Cheshire)

Kawasaki KMX125 B11, 2001, 6800miles, very well maintained, only gentle use on green lanes, many spares, great bike, great cond, must be seen, quick sale for as little as £1950 ono. Tel 07704 799366 (Cheshire)

Honda XR250R, 1998, R-reg, T&T, low miles, new Michelins, Renthals, hand guards, occasionally green lined with TRF, lively but quiet, vgc, £1685. Tel (mobile) 07837 571208 or 01686 629734 (Powys)

Sachs ZZ125SM, 52-reg, only 6000km, reliable learner-legal supermoto with DT125R engine, great bike for 17yr old, £1900. Tel 07939 553395 (Surrey)

PBH 350 trail/enduro, T&T, only 2000 miles approx, Rotax four-stroke, 6-speed, WP suspension, used for MCC trials, £1000. Tel 01234 822074 (Beds)

Honda XLR200, T&T, 10000km, exc cond, must be seen, genuine reason for sale, £1800. Tel 01491 641476 (Oxon)
Yamaha XT600 Tenere, MoT, large tank, YZ forks, top-end rebuild, new plastics/battery/tyres, £1150 ono. Tel 07989 103220 (W Yorks)

KTM 125EXC, 2003, under 600 miles, one owner, green lane use only, £2600 ono. Tel 01787 281682 (Suffolk)

Yamaha TTR250, L-reg, T&T, elec start, Renthals, FMF exhaust, good cond, £1450. Tel 01539 561125 (Cumbria)
Yamaha Serow, 1991, T&T, good c+s/tyres, £995. Tel 01652 658787 (Lincs)

Honda XR125, 2003, 53-reg, low miles, regular dealer service, garaged all its life, great learner, as new, £1700 ono. Tel 07841 484555 (Beds)

Kawasaki KDX200, 1997, P-reg, T&T, FMF pipe, exc cond, £1300 no offers. Tel 01763 245518 (Herts)
KTM 640 Adventure, V-reg, T&T, full engine rebuild, sport

exhaust and airbox, few scratches but never off-roaded, £3250. Tel Harry on 020 7267 1121 (London)
Honda XR400R, 1998, no T&T but no problems, some spares, baby forces sale, recently unused toy hence £1400. Tel 01279 817728 (Essex)

Gas Gas Pampera, 2002, 02-reg, 2000 miles, mature rider, £1775. Tel (mobile) 07966 753890 or 01327 877094 (Northants)

Yamaha WR450F, 2003, elec start, new plastics etc, lack of use forces sale, £3000 ono. Tel 07946 436545 (Somerset)

KTM 525EXC, 2003, road reg'd, sumpguard, standard bike, exc cond, £3500 ono. Tel 01584 823342 (Shrops)

Suzuki DR-Z400SY, 2001, blue/white, road reg'd, one former keeper, green lined, new tyres, exc cond, £2300 ono. Tel 01584 823342 (Shrops)

Yamaha WR450F, August '03, taxed, light green lane use, standard, bike hardly used, wants for nothing, supermoto wheels also available, £3550. Tel 01795 661911 (Kent)

Suzuki DR-Z400S, 2002, yellow, taxed, 1300 miles, Renthals, bashplate, handguards, new tyres, used once off-road, standard bike, exc cond, £2750. Tel 07930 560987 (W Yorks)

Suzuki DR-Z400S, 2000, black/silver, UK bike, T&T, 1900 miles, new c+s/rear tyre, good overall cond, £2000. Tel 01844 339096 (Oxon)

Kawasaki KDX200 EI, 1989, powder-coated frame plus other bits done, needs rear tyre fitting, £1000 ono. Tel 01905 820584 (Worcs)

KTM 200EGS, 2000, low miles, green lane use only, exc cond, can email pics, £2000. Tel 01792 405224 (W Glam)

Yamaha Serow, H-reg, T&T, 14000 miles, elec start, lady owner, great runner, £995 ono. Tel 01992 522327 (Essex)
Husaberg FE400, '03 model, 52-reg, taxed, dual start, WP suspension, Excels, new c+s/pads/tyres/service, green lined, £2785 or exchange KTM450/525EXC. Tel (mobile) 07792 262841 or 01792 519287 (W Glam)

KTM 450EXC, 2004, handguards, bashplate, clutch saver, factory decal kit, well maintained, green lined only, exc cond, £3950. Tel 07811 213445 (Co Durham)

Kawasaki Super Sherpa, T&T, elec start, low seat, serviced, recent tyres/c+s/front disc, chainguard, £1750. Tel 02392 510603 (Hants)

KTM 250EXC 2T, 2003, road reg'd, taxed, 38 hours' /750km use, standard bike, green lane use, unused for 14 months, injury forces sale, £2750. Tel 07967 658928 (Lincs)

Kawasaki KDX220R, 2003, taxed, road kit fitted, green lane use only, vgc, £2650 ono. Tel (mobile) 07788 567091 or 01905 757950 (Worcs)

Yamaha YZ250, 2004, road reg'd, 100 miles, Yamaha WR road kit fitted with indicators/mirrors etc, knee operation forces sale, bargain at £3500. Tel 01429 282289 (Teesside)

Kawasaki KLX300R, 2003, road legal, low miles, vgc, £2500 ono. Tel 01458 223245 (Somerset)

Honda XR250R, 2001, T&T, 7200 miles, just had full service, very reliable bike, £2200. Tel (mobile) 07732 306619 or 01252 613819 (Hants)

Honda XR250R, R-reg, T&T, 3600 miles, sump/brushguards, light green lane use, good cond, £1800 ono. Tel 07888 847411 (S Yorks)

Honda CRM250 mkII, 1993, T&T, well maintained, FMF pipe plus original, brushguards, £1300 ono. Tel 07813 883202 (Surrey)

Yamaha WR450F, 2003, road reg'd, taxed, full road kit, full guards, exc cond, complete with supermoto wheels, £3995 no offers. Tel 07850 561490 (Kent)

KTM 450EXC, 2004, only 16 hours' use, hand/sump/rad-guards, Hot Wheels graphics, absolutely mint cond, £3950. Tel (mobile) 07870 553840 or 0151 521 0800 (Cheshire)
Suzuki DR-Z400S, 2002, T&T, only 1900 miles, Renthals, guards, loads of extras, road and off-road tyres, full history, beautiful cond, £2495. Tel 07977 179689 (Essex)

Honda XR400R, 1998, white, T&T, only 8000km, handguards, good c+s/wheel bearings, stock exhaust, exc cond, £1950. Tel 01865 331262 (Oxon)

Honda CRM250 AR, P-reg, MoT, under 5000km, sump/hand/frameguards, exc cond, selling due to lack of use, £2600 or poss deal for DR-ZE. Tel 01282 697891 (Lancs)

Yamaha XT600E, 1991, H-reg, red/white, MoT, 26000 miles, new supermoto wheels, Laser Produro exhaust, recent battery/chain set, £1700. Tel 01473 741707 (Suffolk)

Honda CRF250X, 2004, road reg'd, sumpguard, green lane use only by mature rider, £3700. Tel (mobile) 07881 803491 or 01992 579583 (Essex)

Yamaha TTR250 Raid, 1994, MoT, 6000 miles, exc cond, £1700. Tel 01244 528994 (Flintshire)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, 2003, reg'd Jan '04, 1200 miles, stainless Predator pipe, good condition, £2675. Tel (mobile) 07974 356341 or 01554 771996 (Wales)

KTM 450EXC, 2003 model, road reg'd, low miles, hand-guards, bashplate, green lane use only, exc cond, £3350 ono. Tel (mobile) 07870 675392 or 01869 249470 (Oxon)

Gas Gas 400 FST, 2002, trail version of FSE, taxed, hand-guards, sump-plate, exc cond, £2600. Tel 07778 212633 (Oxon)

KTM LC4 640E, 2004, 800 miles, one year warranty left, rear bag carrying rack, centre-stand, never off-roaded, amazing condition. Tel (mobile) 07968 583399 or 01305 852933 (Dorset)

WANTED

Wanted Kawasaki KLX250, 1980-84 A1/A2/B1/B2 model, complete bike or parts, any cond, anywhere, anything considered. Tel (mobile) 07968 226434 or 01297 35474 (Devon)

Wanted owner's manual and toolkit 2004 KTM 400EXC. Also sumpguard for same. Tel (mobile) 07771 858793 or 01833 690171 (Co Durham)

Wanted fuel tank for 2002 KTM 380EXC. Tel 07951 034005 or 07917 166422 (Middx)

Wanted help I need a bike, KDX/CRM preferred, age/condition unimportant, getting back on two wheels is! Tel (mobile) 07940 930694 or 01992 534660 (Herts)

Wanted KTM 525EXC or Yamaha WR450F, cash waiting for the right bike, private buyer, will travel. Tel (mobile) 07973 745414 or 0116 277 5682 (Leics)

Wanted workshop manual for DR350, must cover late models. Tel 01983 406090 (IoW)

Wanted Kawasaki KLR600 Uni-Track and rear shock, to finish project bike. Tel 01978 821519 (N Wales)

Wanted KTM 300EXC top-end, 2000-2003, wanted to fit '02 250 as I fancy a change. Tel 07870 204215 (Powys)

Wanted rear wheel for Yamaha WR400F, complete with on-/off-road tyre, can collect from most areas. Tel 0161 799 1885 (Lancs)

Wanted air scoops for Yamaha Serow, blue preferred. Tel (mobile) 07702 956194 or 01726 64911 (Cornwall)

Wanted late 70's early 80's twin-shock enduro, between 250-440cc, KTM, SWM, Moto-Gori, Maico, Cagiva etc, need a restoration project. Any spares wanted especially KTM GS and Gori parts. Tel (mobile) 07779 614779 or 01491 201333 (Oxon)

Wanted KTM 250 two-stroke engine 1986 bike, running order, sound engine and exhaust, poss p/x for 640 rallye parts, loads of spares. Tel 01269 594604 (S Wales)

SPARES

Talon wheels to fit '02-'05 KTM/Husaberg, gold hubs, mousses, tyres, discs, good cond, £250. Tel 01638 780923 (Suffolk)

Fuel tank to fit 2002 XT600, metallic blue, minor chips on filler, £45. Tel 0151 284 8086 (Merseyside)

Trail wheels for CCM 604, as new, £250 ono. Also CCM Remus race can, £100 ono. Tel 01535 674685 (Yorks)

KTM LC8 parts, twin Akrapovic Ti silencers, £400, Crash bars, new, £90. Pannier frame to fit Givi luggage, new, £50. Tel 01420 89910 (Hants)

Remus can to fit Yamaha XT600, hardly used, vgc, £150. Tel 07860 650097 (S Wales)

DEP front pipe to fit 2002/03 Gas Gas EC200/250, hardly used, exc cond, £100 plus p&p. Tel (mobile) 07786 316212 or 01386 832111 (Worcs)

Large tank to fit Yamaha XT500/550, steel, approx 20L, £60 ono. Tel (mobile) 07931 721209 or 020 8390 0496 (Surrey)

Dave Cooper trailer, built this year, used four times to carry one bike, includes ramp and light board, exc cond, £240. Tel (mobile) 07905 383210 or 020 8407 2659 (Surrey)

Large Acerbis plastic tank to fit Suzuki DR350, two pet-cocks, used twice, £100 plus p&p. Also forks, vgc, £80 plus p&p. Disc cover, white, £15 plus p&p. Tel (mobile) 07961594412 or 01221 249 0862 (W Mids)

Supermoto parts, rims for 2002 KTM, with discs, 310mm Beringer, cush-drive. Rims for 2002 CRF, with discs, 320mm Braking. Also tyre warmers and various plastics for both. Tel 07951 034005 or 07917 166422 (Middx)

Box of CRM spares, CDI, pipe, bearings, seals, pads etc. Tel 07706 163776 (Merseyside)

KTM exhaust system for 250EXC, £110. Also full set of used plastics, £25. Wolf MX boots, size 9, good cond, £60. Tel 07811 201626 (Hereford)

Supermoto wheels to fit Yamaha YZ/WR450F, YZ hubs, red WRP rims, good tyres/c+s, first class cond, £450. Tel (mobile) 07944 279803 or 01795 661911 (Kent)

Copies of TBM, issues 9-73 inclusive, all in vgc, buyer collects, £25. Tel (mobile) 07710 782442 or 01805 625463 (Devon)

Alpinestars Tech 8 MX boots, US size 10, euro size 44.5, as new cond, swap for larger size or sell for £130. Tel (mobile) 07813 884857 or 01325 287508 (Co Durham)

Haynes manual for Honda XL/XR600. Plus plenty of old issues of TBM. Tel 07752 888216 (London)

Pair of Michelin enduro tyres, 140/80-18 rear, 90/90-21 front, from DR-Z400E, hardly used, £50 ovno the pair. Tel 07771 823051 (Suffolk)

Predator stainless end can for DR-Z400E/S, road legal, two months old, cost £250 new, accept £150. Tel 07771 823051 (Suffolk)

Two-bike trailer, aluminium, built-in ramps, tie-down hooks, spare wheel, vgc, £230. Tel 01597 825586 (Powys)

Supermoto wheels to fit DR-Z400E, black, sprocket, discs, pads, caliper bracket, short sidestand, Michelin Pilots, only 500 miles, £495. Tel 07711 143140 (London)

TBM back issues, 60-117, 97 and 106 missing, offers. Tel (mobile) 07764 932888 or 01491 201839 (Oxon)

Honda Baja twin lamps, from XRL250 Baja, fit all XR/XL250-600, £100 plus postage. Tel 07979 906578 (Scotland)

Honda XR400 parts, from 2002 bike, indicators, clutch/brake levers, unused, £20 plus p&p. Tel (mobile) 07966 103733 or 01773 776466 (Notts)

Suzuki DR-Z400 parts, forks complete £150. Shock and swingarm, £60. Rear subframe/airbox, £40. Front caliper, hose and master cylinder, £50 plus postage. Speedo, £50. Tel 01296 630396 (Bucks)

Two-bike trailer, with lighting board, needs wheel bearings, £30. Tel (mobile) 07802 902797 or 01634 287207 (Kent)

Standard exhaust for KTM 520EXC, little use, vgc, £50. Also CRD sumpguard to fit KTM four-strokes, vgc, £30. KTM EXC sidestand, new, £10. Tel 07831 509260 (N Yorks)

Walker Engineering two-bike trailer, two years old, galvanized, lightboard, triple lock, vgc, cost £490, accept £295. Tel 07831 509260 (N Yorks)

Yamaha XT550/600 spares, wheels, tyres, new pistons, valves, CDI, cables, brake parts etc. Tel 01736 796857 (Cornwall)
Clarke 14L fuel tank for Honda CR500, 1991-onwards, red, brand new, cost £220, sell for £100 plus postage. Tel 01624 825735 (IoM)
Parts for 1998 Honda XR600R, forks, yokes, carbs, brakes etc, call for more info. Tel 07956 306808 (London)

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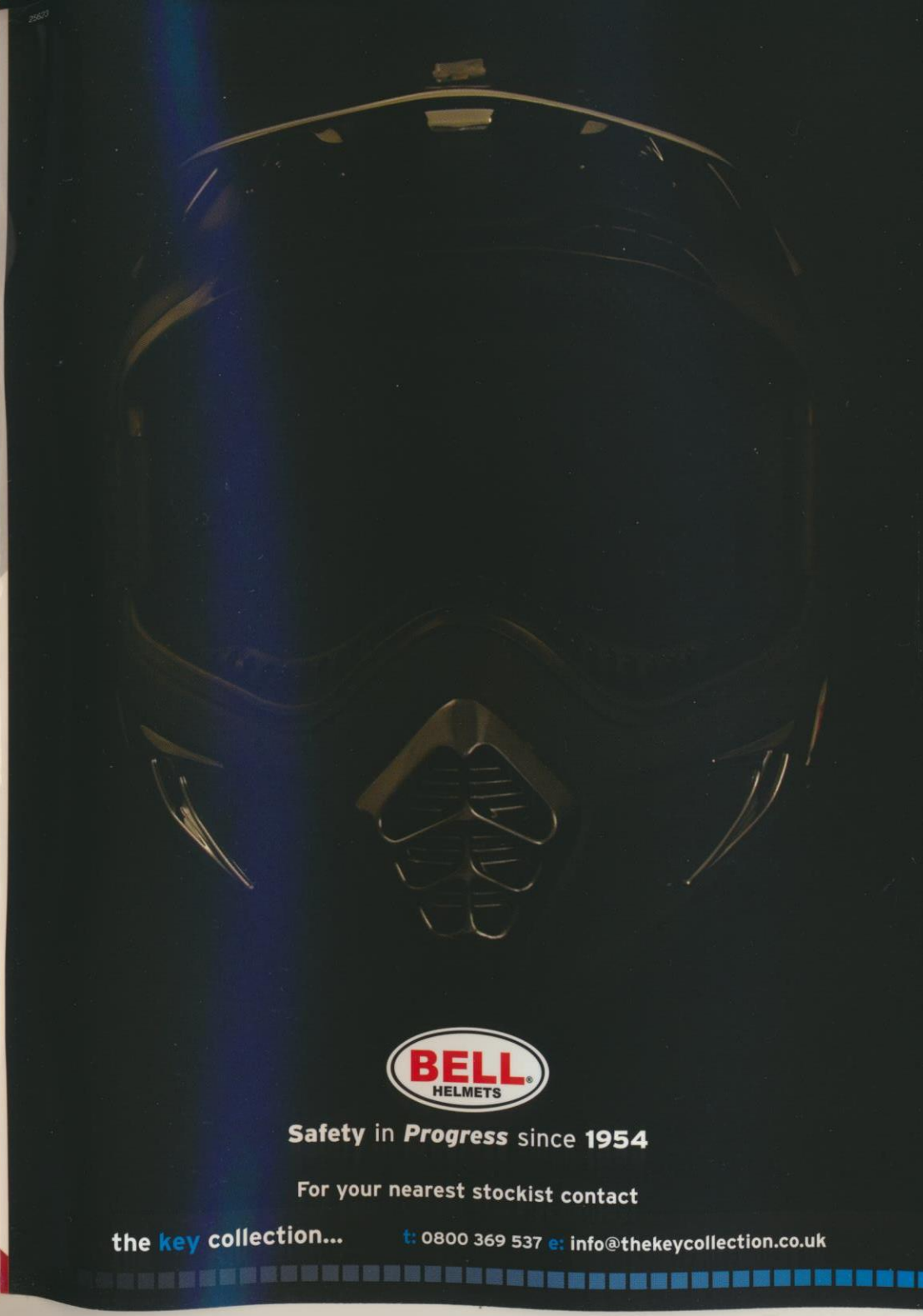


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