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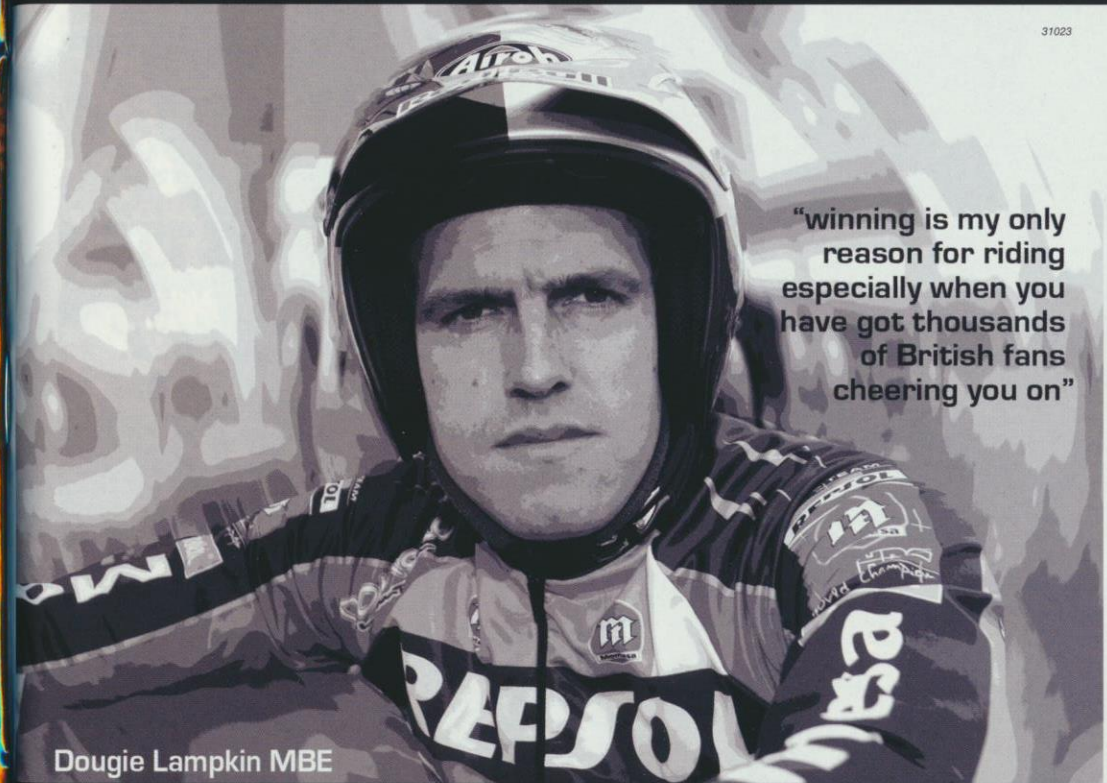


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EDITORIAL

They say that a picture's worth 1000 words.
Which is just as well because I can't think of
1000 words to write this month...

SI MELBER



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JULY 2006

PERSPECTIVE

What's that, Rover? Little Timmy's stuck in the bomb-hole, and can't get out?... We asked how his bike was running and the dog replied 'Ruff!'. Can you guess the make of bike? S'obvious... Pooch Maxi!

Pic: Jonty Edmunds



PERSPECTIVE

TBM's Jonty Edmunds is usually the one behind the lens, but here he is competing against David Knight in the twin-cylinder class at Erzberg. Knight won it, but Jonty came a creditable 11th!



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PERSPECTIVE

'...After you, mate.' There's hills and there's Erzberg hills! The annual off-road extravaganza attracts hundreds of riders keen to tackle its gnarly climbs. This year Knighter won it... Again!

Pic: Halwax



ALLY-LES-BIEUES!

At last - the all-new lightweight aluminium frame that graced the 2006 MX bikes has, as predicted, finally made it onto the '07 WR-F machines. As a result the 48mm front forks now have revised enduro-specific settings and the rear shock's been lengthened too.

Another welcome YZ-inspired change is the new style bodywork and graphics, although sadly the sexy new white/grey colourscheme is reserved for the YZ. How many WR owners will be ordering a set of YZ plastics, we wonder?

Both WR250 and 450 also benefit from a reduced seat height and a brand new footrest design featuring new wider and re-shaped pegs which Yamaha claim will reduce pressure on the soles of your feet. There's also a reworked headlight and an LED rear light ensemble.

And, for the first time, the WRs get wave type front and rear brakes which reduce unsprung weight by 80g, and claim to offer better braking performance in wet and muddy conditions.

Other weight saving measures include a new one-piece plastic bashplate along with lighter forged triple-clamps/handlebar clamps.

Nice touches include the fitment of Pro-Taper alloy handlebars as standard, as well as a compact digi speedo and single-fastener airbox release.

Engine-wise both WRs benefit from YZ-derived inlet/exhaust cam timings designed to improve low-

As usual the MX guys get first dibbs on new colours! Pass the Yamaha spares brochure, please...



Ally Cat: The WR-F's been given a thorough going-over for 2007. And not before time, too...



mid range performance, along with new carbie settings.

The exhaust system's also been reworked, with a longer, smaller diameter pipe and shorter silencer - now mounted further forwards.

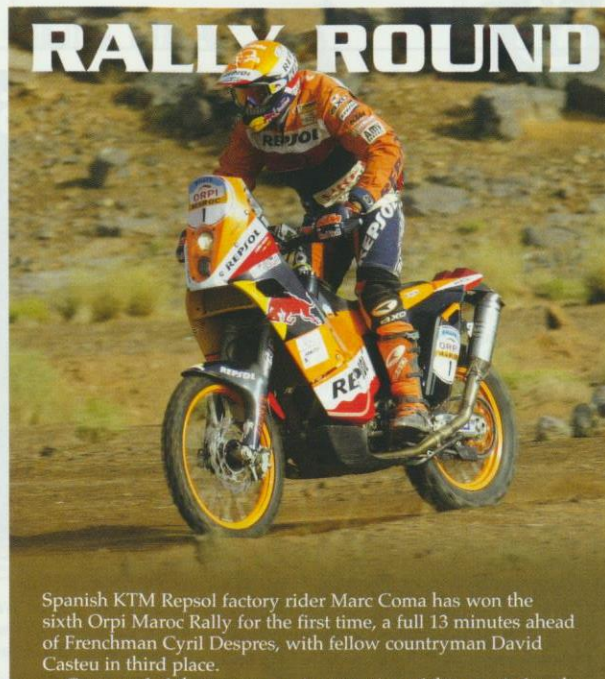
The 250 and 450 also get a new dry sump featuring a compact 720cc oil tank located in front of the engine, which carries the oil

much lower than the previous oil-in-frame layout and gets rid of the external oil pipes - this should make for better reliability and lighter handling when compared to the 2006 models.

Completing the raft of changes, larger YZ-style radiators have been fitted to improve cooling, while modified gear ratios should help WR owners get the most out of the bike's extra performance.

Expect a launch test in TBM this autumn...

RALLY ROUND



Spanish KTM Repsol factory rider Marc Coma has won the sixth Orpi Maroc Rally for the first time, a full 13 minutes ahead of Frenchman Cyril Despres, with fellow countryman David Casteu in third place.

Coma ended the two-year winning reign of this year's fourth placed pilot Esteve Pujol. But despite his victory, Coma is still nine points behind Casteu after this the fourth round of the FIM Cross Country Rallies World Championship.

The KTM-Gauloises team also had a good race, picking up second, third and fourth positions from their riders.

RED, WHITE & NEW



Husky's 2007 line-up has just been announced... And the most obvious change is the adoption of the sexy red/white/black plastics as the official new colours. Below the surface the Husky engineers have been busy making a few minor but important changes to the starting system, suspension settings and gearbox, as well as fitting a new Brembo rear master cylinder with integrated reservoir. The '07 bikes will be available from September with prices yet to be announced.

SNIPPETS

DIRTY DEALS

You can now save a huge £1000 on Honda's big trailie, the XL1000 Varadero - the new OTR price is now just £6999.

And Honda are also releasing a £500 cheaper limited edition run of 60 non-ABS models in a tri-colour paint job, coming in at £6499. Check out your local Honda dealer for more information.



GREAT SCOT

Last month's awesome SSDT Perspective picture was in fact taken by TBM contributor Mike Rapley, not Eric Kitchen. Sorry about that Mike!

ROMAN' HOLIDAY

In response to a letter in last month's TBM entitled 'Romania Roamings', we didn't mention the fact that trail riding company Adventuromania already runs fully catered riding tours in Romania - see adventuromania.co.uk or call 01368 840728 / 07967 887582 for more info...

PUT YOUR FEET UP

Here's your chance to learn the feet up game with new trials tuition company Trials School who are running one-day courses three days a week on Scorpa 125 four-stroke machines. All riding equipment is provided and it costs £140 per person. Check out trialsschool.co.uk for more information...

HARD SELL



Hurrah! Overall motorcycle sales are up two percent from last month, and up three percent from the same time last year.

This also seems to have had a knock-on effect on the Adventure Sport sector with a four percent increase this month, plus the Trail/Enduro category has only dropped one percent this time around, much better than the previous month's ten percent fall.

There's no stopping the BMW 1200GS in the Adventure Sport

sector, up a massive 151 units this month, and still in a strong second place position is its stablemate the 1200GS Adventure with an extra 93 units shifted. Swapping third and fourth places this month are Honda's diminutive XL125 and the Suzuki 650 V-Strom, the Honda just winning with 12 more units sold.

There's no change this month in the Trail/Enduro category - still top of the tree is the Honda XR125 with another 46 machines sold, followed by Yamaha's WR250F. Interestingly the Chinese 'Urban' cracker is holding onto its third place from last month, up another 42 units...

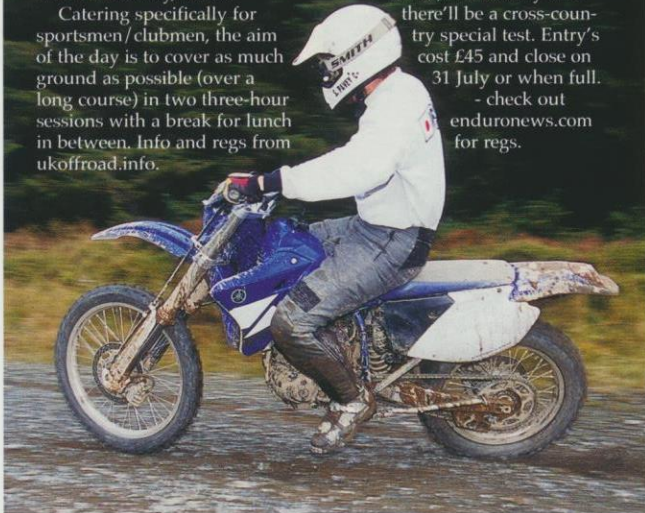
ADVENTURE SPORT

1 BMW R1200GS	719
2 BMW R1200GS ADV	278
3 Honda XL125V	233
4 Suzuki 650 V-Strom	221
5 Suzuki 1000 V-Strom	174
TRAIL/ENDURO	
1 Honda XR125L	435
2 Yamaha WR250F	175
3 Urban DZ125	172
4 Suzuki RV125	155
5 Beta Rev 3	133

SIX AND TWO THREES

Rally meets enduro: The WTRA Enduro Challenge is a new 'easy' six-hour event taking place on Saturday 16 September near Llandoverly, Wales.

Catering specifically for sportsmen/clubmen, the aim of the day is to cover as much ground as possible (over a long course) in two three-hour sessions with a break for lunch in between. Info and regs from ukoffroad.info.



Also being run by WTRA is the Jubilee one-day enduro on Sunday 13 August. The 25-mile lap will be run in the Crychan

Forest, Llandoverly and there'll be a cross-country special test. Entry's cost £45 and close on 31 July or when full. - check out enduronews.com for regs.

SNIPPETS

FOR SALE

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Currently operating in North/Mid Wales, Brecon Beacons, Lake District and Derbyshire, offers are invited. Call 01938 561203 / 07761 544793 for more details or check out in-4.co.uk.



LASER GUN

For any lucky riders out there who own a BMW HP2, Laser has just specially developed new set of titanium HotCam Produro exhaust and stainless steel downpipe units.

Prices should be around £255 for the HotCam and £275 for the downpipe - both items will be available mid-July. Call Motrax on 01933 418414 for your nearest dealer.



BUM DEAL

Thanks to all of you who have sent in your humorous bumbag-related stories to our 'Win a Bumbag' competition. Some have been incredibly funny, and we'll be publishing a selection of the best ones next month. There's still time to tell us your best bumbag boding tales by emailing your exploits to: letters@trailbikemag.com.

Don't forget, three fully-stocked Cruz Tools Rally Kit DMX1 bumbags worth £44.99 each (courtesy of Venhill Engineering) are up for grabs and we'll be announcing the three lucky winners in next month's issue, so get scribbling!



Top Racers' Excuses #54

We loved this hilarious press release from good ol' Watsy...

Funky Chicken National Hare Scramble

Mother Nature again failed to cooperate with KTMHutt.com /M2R/Maxxis sponsored rider Shane Watts in Elkton, Oregon this weekend at the Funky Chicken National Hare Scramble. Slippery conditions and several mistakes on his 200EXC left Watts with 5th place overall.

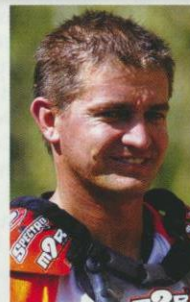
With more power off the start [than his usual 125], Watts was in second behind Nate Kanney, before quickly taking the lead and holding it for the majority of the first lap. Having clipped a tree and suffering a slow speed crash, Watts then found himself in a very unusual predicament; his KTM's handlebars had wedged themselves down the inside of his left boot whilst he was still standing.

The worst thing was that he was pinned in a straddling position with his upper body behind the right side handlebar and his right leg was in front of the front number plate and fender.

After having to remove his boot to get out of the situation, Watts then charged hard back up to third position, closing in on the leaders when he had the first of many major crashes. From there it was all downhill, literally, as the course featured several super slippery and scary downhills that even had the Pro riders bailing off to avoid trees and going over the edge.

I was just disappointed that conditions weren't better because this is my favourite track, and this is the last year for the Funky Chicken at the Big K, so I wanted to finish with a bang. There were some big hair-raising moments out there, and the handlebar deal was outta' this world. What a way to remember this race!

Indeed...



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Play Different

RIGHT TO RIDE

Mark Williams asks the question... Where do we go from here..?

In the wake of the NERC Bill's passage into law on 2 May this year, it would be tempting to say that the non-appearance of a Right to Ride feature in TBM this past few issues is a consequence of waiting for the dust to settle. Or at least a little mature reflection. But the truth is less straightforward. Indeed the likely consequences of NERC are themselves less straightforward than one might think and in any case, as critics have sometimes pointed out, this writer doesn't do 'mature reflection' very well.

However a few things are now clear post-NERC, and one can apply a little informed

speculation on how the Bill will affect the average trailrider. So here goes...

The thing that's struck me most clearly having talked and exchanged e-mails with a lot of riders around the country, plus some regular scrutiny of TBM's web-forum, is that opinion is sharply divided as to how we should respond to the imposition of NERC. On the one hand there are those who are simply going to ignore the downgrading of RuPPs to Restricted Byways (RBs) which we can no longer legally ride (unless they are subject to a DMMO claim made prior to 20 January 2005, or 19 May 2005 in Wales), at least until they're made impassable by stiles or

locked gates. 'We've always used them, we've never caused anyone any harm by using them, and we'll carry on using them' broadly summarises their attitude.

Asked what their reaction would be to Ramblers Association and GLEAM extremists (or 'sad, malevolent bastards' as I prefer to think of them), who we understand are preparing to go out with cameras and notebooks and take down registration numbers which they'll snitch to the cops, their perhaps understandable reaction is to say that they'll make sure their number plates are sufficiently muddy as to render them unreadable. Fair enough.

No Appetite, No Resources

Such tactics may well prove successful in the short and even the medium term and there are those who consider them justified in view of the way that clauses 61 and 62 NERC were drafted and enacted: bad, unduly discriminatory law carried through on the back of lies and skulduggery. Whether or not the police, local councils and the legal system will allow this to happen is a moot point. After all, the Hunting Bill hasn't really stopped packs of hounds and their equestrian masters charging across the countryside, not least because most police forces haven't the appetite and/or the resources to implement some aspects of the law. And these two clauses in NERC may well fall foul of similar considerations.

But on the other hand there is greater public antipathy towards 'bloody scramblers ruining the peace and quiet of the countryside' than there is to toffs in red jackets chasing dumb vermin, which may impose on the authorities an obligation to actually 'do something about it'.

And of course as was repeatedly argued during the NERC debate, the law will do little to stop yobs of all ages tear-arsing along RBs aboard MXers and field bikes, upsetting other users and causing responsible, ie law-abiding green-laners to wring their hands in irritated shame.

However despite correctly regarding Clauses 61 and 62 as bad, unfair legislation (which may yet be challenged in the courts), there is another body of dirtbiking opinion that intends to stay

within the law, or at least will try to. Broadly speaking this means die-hard TRF members who look to their RoW experts and executive members in general for guidance. Guidance that has now been handed down in a couple of significant forms.

Firstly, there is an interpretation of the Bill as it affects claims to upgrade or reinstate rights of usage that might still allow vehicular use. According to the TRF's Tim Stevens: 'Any route that was mainly used by the Public with MPVs (Mechanically Propelled Vehicles) for the five years prior to commencement (of NERC) will retain its motor-vehicular rights. So we need to look at all the routes we have lost to see what the pattern has been for the last five years.'

Private Rights on Public Routes

Stevens and other legal minds believe that this includes farmers with tractors and anyone accessing property along the route if it is a 'Public Route', because there is no such thing as a 'private right' on a 'Public Route'. This will however have to be tested legally and requires members to engage in some serious ferreting through local archives, interviewing long-established local users and preparing evidence forms - all of which are available from the TRF.

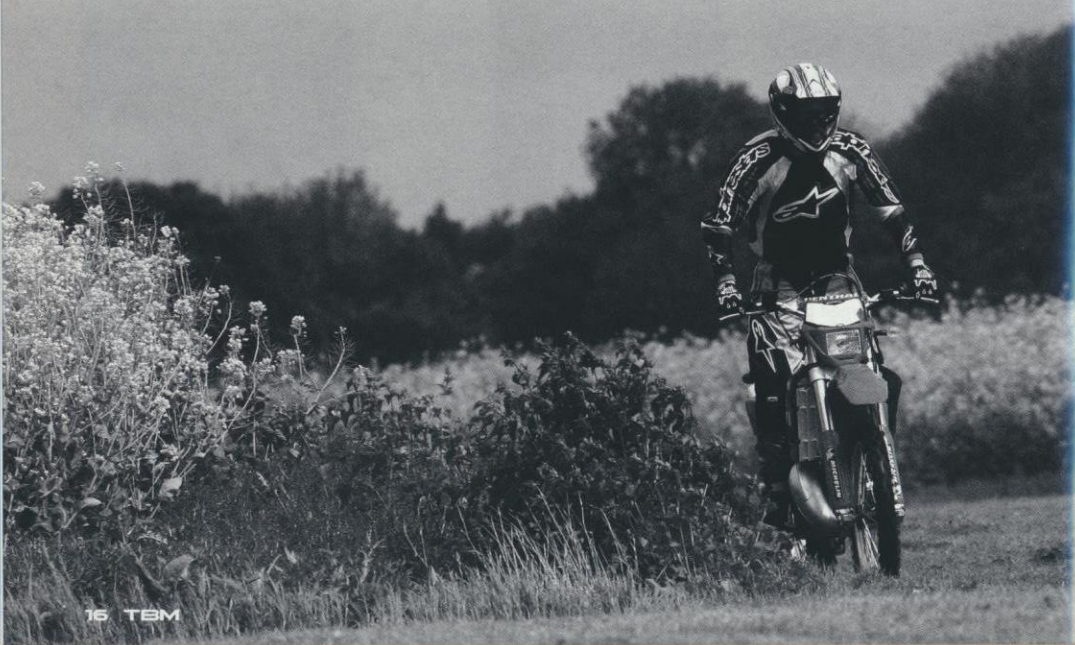
[Using the TRF's own 'Public RoW Evidence Forms', local groups have for some time been urged to record which riders have been using which routes and on what dates, in order to help substantiate sustained MPV use, but few of us kept any such accounts... certainly prior to the emergence of NERC].

Two other historical

loopholes exist, namely any evidence of MPV use prior to 1930 remains a basis of a successful Schedule 14 claim for BOAT status. But as anyone driving or riding pre-1930 will be at least 90 years-old, sworn statements will be hard to come by. Evidence may be recorded in old motoring journals or newspapers, but finding it could prove difficult.

However 'if a route was specifically established for MPV use', its rights remain. Some routes recorded in old Inclosure Awards use the words 'for all purposes', and this would clearly include MPV use, so all we've got to do is trawl

'For those determined to keep riding legally there is therefore an implication, if not an obligation, to be much more careful about where and how we do it. For those who aren't, it is possible that their actions may augur even more onerous restrictions...'



through some dusty, distant records and see what a judge thinks.

Oh, is that all?

Indeed what has become increasingly apparent in the past few months is that much of the rank and file TRF membership has grown a little weary of exhortations to spend considerable time and effort attempting to guarantee future rights or, as one cynical West Country member put it, 'turn back the clock to a time where we could ride, within reason, where we liked.'

The 'Why Bother?' Attitude

In my own local group, the effort involved in making DMMO claims which was effectively wasted due to NERC's rolling back of the cut-off date to January 2005 has acted as a powerful disincentive to engage in further time-consuming paperwork, and I know this is reflected elsewhere in the country. This 'why bother?' attitude may of course be entirely understandable and as one TRF member in the Midlands shrugged, 'I don't think the people who run the TRF fully appreciate how different their thinking is from those of us who just want to go out and ride, even those who try and ride legally and responsibly.'

But even if the small core of RoW activists within the TRF are still prepared to nobly carry on with the taxing and often arcane business of securing the right to ride on RBs of questionable status, the organisation is urging all its members to be much more careful about their modus operandi when they do go out riding. As well as adhering to the TRF Code of Conduct - which all members sign up to when they join - the TRF has recently re-issued and updated its 'Organising & Participating in a Trail Ride' guidance, first drawn up way back in 1996. This whopping, even unwieldy 45 point document contains much sound advice, including ensuring that 'you know the legal status and physical condition of all lanes'. And it also requires the ride leader to 'take the necessary User Evidence

Forms, "Caring For Green Lanes" leaflets and /or TRF "challenge cards" along on each run.

Other guidelines include 'having the moral courage to turn away inappropriate motorcycles and other than six pre-arranged people' and 'if there is any unacceptable behaviour, explain that the person (responsible) will be sent home if it continues.'

Much of this - whilst theoretically sensible in view of current circumstances - smacks of the censorious, and reminds me a little uncomfortably of my boarding school outings. And it's debatable whether grown men and women will take kindly to its strictures... Although

I have been on organised runs where, for example, bikes with noisy exhausts have been banned by the run leader.

For those determined to keep riding legally there is therefore an implication, if not an obligation, to be much more careful about where and how we do it. For those who aren't, it is possible that their actions may auger even more onerous restrictions once our enemies - for that's unfortunately what they've become - marshal their forces after their latest victory.

In my column in the last issue I warned against county councils emboldened by NERC slapping TROs on over-used BOATs and UCRs as one likely example of this.

It's up to the trailriding community as a whole to decide which way they want to go. But it's also arguable that the TRF should seek to better understand and cater to the psychology of that community if it hopes to galvanise it into further action. Issuing edicts and demanding complex procedures suggests to some that they still have work to do in this respect...

For further information on how you can join and/or help the Trail Riders Fellowship do its vital work, visit their website - www.trf.org.uk - or contact the membership secretary at memsectrf@aol.com or 01631 657627.

RIGHT TO RIDE



OFFROAD WORLDWIDE

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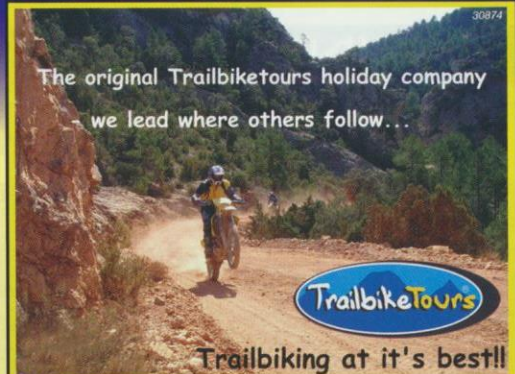
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DOING THE ROUNDS

Mark Williams is game for a LARF with the Leicestershire Area Riders Fellowship...

STORY & PICS: MARK WILLIAMS



LARFing out Loud...





LARFing out Loud...

After a notable absence of spring, summer at last arrived in early June just in time for me to get off my fat backside and go and Do the Rounds again, and where better to do it than in Leicestershire? Well actually I could think of a lot better place to do it than this rather flat and featureless county, an opinion I feel qualified to hold because - yet again - I've lived there. What's more, having worked on a farm just outside Ashby-de-la-Zouche in the early '60s, I felt smugly comfortable with my somewhat negative opinions of the landscape.

However as I'm known for my open mind (or empty head, as it's sometimes unkindly referred to), I was happy to accept a longstanding invitation to ride the lanes of Leicestershire from a bunch of guys who operate under the admirable acronym LARF, or Leicestershire Area Riders Fellowship. And if you check out their website, you see they're a well organised and enthusiastic outfit which embraces both competitive and recreational off-roading.

We met up at the home of Andrew Wright, aka 'Ritz' (because he's crackers?) in Sapcote, conveniently located just off the M69 which'd



meant just a three hour journey for me, my filthy TT-R250 (my pressure washer is no more) and my spanking new CFM trailer. Before we took off on what they call 'The Coalville Loop', and over a welcome spread of large bacon butties cooked on the Barbie by Ritz himself, I acquainted myself with my comrades for the day, and this is who they were.

Chairman of the Not-so-Bored

Tearing around on a 525 KTM, Ian Tyler-Bond is chairman of the outfit and also secretary of the East Midlands TRF Group. He runs a catering

LARF a minute: the four principal LARF lads in all their gruesome glory...



equipment business, which together with his club duties must make him a very busy man, and he told me that LARF came about as a direct consequence of the TBM web-forum which quickly recognised that there were a 'lot of [Leicestershire-based] riders out there who were looking for others to ride with in the area, and others who just didn't know where to go.'

The group was officially formed last year and now has over 70 paid-up members, and welcomes new ones whether they live in the area or not, and has applied for ACU affiliation because a lot of the LARF boys are getting into enduros and rallies. Indeed the weekend before my Rounds, Ian and some of the others had competed in the Powys Enduro.

Dent in his Personality

I've come across some odd trades in my time, but freelance dent remover was a new one on me until I met Martin Keefe. What he does is pull small and not-so-small dents out of car bodywork without drilling into the metal, a business much in demand amongst car dealers and fleet managers in the area.

But as if that's not enough he also imports soft luggage under the name Winding Road (which is made by the same Italian outfit responsible for KTM-branded gear), and naturally his 400EXC sported lots of it. Martin is also secretary of LARF and has strong views on why it's so popular, not least because he reckons that 'a lot of people find the TRF a bit aloof and not very welcoming.'



LARFing out Loud...

Trained to Perfection

I'm not sure why, but there were hoots of laughter when Mark Page told me his profession, namely as a regional manager for a training provider, mostly along the lines of 'he doesn't do anything'. But like all of the lads he gives as good as he gets in the witty retort department (which partly explains the name of their group I guess) and, like Martin he rides a 400EXC. But I won't hold that against him.

He likes a Drink

Andrew Wright, the aforementioned Ritz, runs a drink wholesaling business and to break the KTM-monopoly rides a Yamaha - my kinda guy in both respects. Of course in his case it's an immaculate WR450 on which he expertly led the day's ride out at a pace that didn't embarrass this writer but nevertheless kept us all on our mettle. And like I mentioned earlier, is a dab hand with the bacon butties.

So with the introductions out of the way, we set off northwards on a voyage of discovery, not least to see if bigotry had got the better of me when it came to my memories of a flat, and unimpressive Leicestershire landscape.

Well I have to say that initially it didn't look great. After a mile or two of fairly deserted back roads, we took an evenly surfaced lane into Potters Marsden before coming back onto the B548 and hanging a left through a farmyard at Earl Shilton. Like its immediate predecessor, this next lane was a mixture of hard, dried mud and stones, with episodes of rough gravel to punctuate the going and the odd rut and pot-hole to keep an eye out for - not always easy due to the dust we were kicking up.

This lane exited onto a backroad running north into Kirkby Mallory but before we hit the village we turned into the famous Mallory Park racing circuit for a snapshot or two and watched some single seaters strutting their stuff round



the hairpin. After this brief interlude we took a hard left back south again and turned right, opposite a farmyard along what was another stony, pot-hole, ratty and dusty track for a half a mile which brought us onto the A447. A few hundred yards along however, another right turn featuring more of the same took us north west, past New Park Farm and onto a road which skirted the race track and from there we rode mainly on tarmac - albeit punctuated by a bit of a ford on a track north of Peckleton - through Desford and up to the wonderfully named Newtown Unthank.

Dense but not Thick

At this stage I should point out that although I was beginning to realise that Leicestershire is quite a densely populated county with lots of small villages just a mile or two apart, there is still plenty of open farmland and much of this is dissected by unsurfaced RoW, though not all of them of course open to the likes of us. Many of the villages and hamlets are very pretty and apart from the inevitable speed humps, pretty

unspoilt, too... and they sport delightfully peculiar names.

So it was that from Newtown Unthank we rode north for a mile or so before hanging a sharp left along a leafy and occasionally rutted lane to Merry Lees. Back on the road again, we negotiated our way toward Nailstone, crossed the A447 and half a mile thereafter turned right onto a BOAT that struck north. This also had lots of potholes - some potentially treacherous - and quite a few bricks strewn about randomly, perhaps evidencing attempts at filling said holes, and halfway along there was a muddy ford which managed to drench Martin, after which we stopped to admire the remains of a burnt out caravan some pikeys had chosen to dump there.

This track, which like many during the day was skirted by mature tree cover, eventually opened out onto tarmac and from there we took the by-now ubiquitous A447 northwards into Ibstock. From there a left hung into Sence Valley Forest Park (we just used to call them 'forests' in my day) took us along another wriggly, leafy lane up towards Ravenstone, which uncoincidentally is where LARF hold its monthly meetings at the Plough Inn.

DOING THE ROUNDS



Riding due north from there up a UCR towards Sinhope (and in my book, where there's sin there's always hope) took us briefly left onto the A511 from which we took another left back down south along a lane which nearly got the better of me thanks to its myriad ruts, and up to Hill Farm and back again as it became illegal after that. Backtracking some of the way before turning south towards Normanton-le-Heath meant another fine romp along a wooded lane that eventually emerged into open countryside. A few miles of roadwork through Normanton, then south through Heather on towards Newton Burgoland and eventually we branched right onto Ivanhoe Way which, I was accurately warned by Ritz, boasted 'some serious ruts'.

The Chairman Stinks

Fortunately the recent spell of dry weather meant that they weren't too treacherous, although Martin managed a wee 'off' a few hundred yards in, narrowly escaping the humiliation of my camera lens, after which we stopped where Ritz horsed around with yet more fly-tipped detritus. We left Ivanhoe Way shortly afterwards and came out of the woods near Tivey's Farm near Shackerstone, just before what was a pool of foul-smelling farm slurry, unavoidably sitting beneath an old railway

bridge, claimed our fearless chairman as its victim. I was glad we were riding that track in summer: apparently in wet weather it's a good two feet deep. Half-a-mile east we turned right onto another rutted lane which as was increasingly the case during the afternoon, had its perils hidden by long grass and which took us into Newton Burgoland.

A bit of a dog's leg towards and then down from Snarestone led us to a nice, but thankfully largely dry lane which eventually brought us over the Ashby Canal, but not before I had to employ all my trials riding skill (ie none) to negotiate a nasty accretion of fly-tipping. Ritz showed us where the travellers responsible for this had been parked and bemoaned the mess they'd made - a problem all-too frequently evident during our run that day.

Whoops To Do

Anyway, from there we swept along backroads to Norton-Juxta-Twycross where the next track, again featured humungous ruts which seemed to last forever, and where I finally managed to lose it, and I fear in front of some of my compadres' cameras. Eventually this opened onto a bridge over the M42 and into No Man's Heath via a lane that was full of whoops, and some of those whoops were still full of water.

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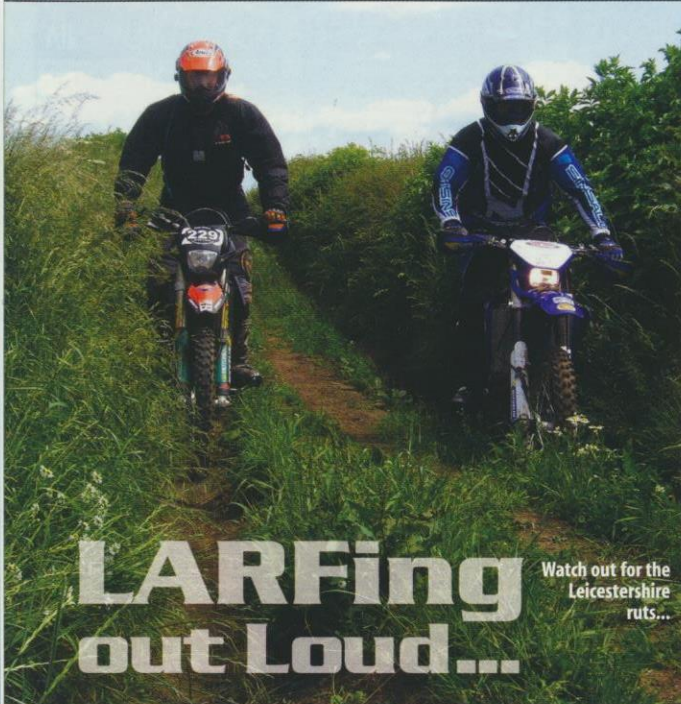
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DOING THE ROUNDS



LARFing out Loud...

Watch out for the Leicestershire ruts...

Back south and under the motorway this time, we rode onto Austrey, just outside of which we hung a left up what was the nearest we got to a steep hill, but at the top we had to turn back to avoid upsetting the owner of a house which was bang alongside the RoW. So considerate, these LARF boys. The ruddy descent was in fact a tad more challenging than going up, but we were all back on the road to Orton on the Hill without mishap.

The next two lanes were, at least for me, the most taxing of the entire jaunt. South of Orton we hung a right, squeezed past an awkwardly parked tractor and trailer onto a mile or more of heavily rutted, grass-obscured BOAT that ended at Frog Hall Farm (which I believe is the well-guarded residence of Triumph Motorcycles owner, John Bloor) and which obliged one to choose what looked like the best ruts, keep the 'bars loose and ride along in second or third in the hope that there weren't too many hidden nasties.

Martin - or was it Mark - managed to step off his bike along this lane and I certainly had a few nervous moments, but the temptation to slow to a crawl and feel your way along isn't really a

runner as it leaves you prey to imbalance.

At the end of this sweat-inducing bimbble we turned left onto the B4116 for quarter-of-a-mile and then left again up another rut-monster onto a road that took us eastwards to The Cross Hands immediately after which we turned down a short BOAT which took us, quite literally, into the River Sence.

Once again I was grateful it hadn't rained for a while because even in this dry spell the wide crossing was over a foot deep and surfaced with loose, slippery rocks. Nice photo opportunity though.

After that it was back up onto the B585 and down through Sibson on the A444. South of that little hamlet we took a left turn onto a loosely surfaced, but utterly unthreatening track which took us eventually onto the Roman Road above Stoke Golding where we stopped for a welcome libation at the biker friendly George & Dragon, which was the last bit of dirt I'd see.

Just over 75 miles of varied, but generally non-technical terrain was just the job on this hot summer's day, the essence of enjoyable trailriding. And, as I must begrudgingly admit, an experience that confounded my prejudices about the Leicestershire countryside.

Interestingly, we never passed a single rambler or equestrian all day, just a few friendly souls out walking their dogs on tarmac'd lanes, which supported Martin's contention that if it wasn't for the likes of us, many of the tracks would become overgrown and impassable.

Whether or not that's the reason the local council aren't (yet) too bloody-minded toward trailriders I wouldn't know. But my advice to anyone thinking of it is to give the Coalville Loop a whirl whilst it's still feasible: the lads at LARF will be more than happy to show you around.

Thanks again to the lads from LARF for a great day out, and if you want to join their happy band, all it'll cost you is a tenner. Check out their website: www.larf-online.com for more details.

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PUNTING ON

Amongst the changes in KTM's 2007 line-up is the new long awaited DOHC 250 EXC-F. Barni headed to Austria to do the cam-cam...



THE CAM

The launch of a new model is generally an exciting time: What's it gonna look like? How's it going to perform? There's always that air of expectation. In the enduro market however, it's often something of an anti-climax. Not because the bike isn't quite as good as was hoped, but nine times out of ten there'll have been a motocross version launched the previous year. So even before the enduro bike is wheeled out onto a dry-smoke hazed stage and the flash bulbs have, er, flashed, we have a pretty good idea of what the new machine's going to be like. And the 2007 KTM 250EXC-F is no different... Or is it?

The Austrian factory released their new DOHC baby thumper last year in MX guise and the high revving machine seemed to be well received. Initially the motor felt strong from the mid-range upwards, though when we tested a home-built enduro conversion the power seemed... well, a bit hollow. Oh, well, we thought with a resigned sigh, at least it's gonna be better than the dull old SOHC 250EXC Racing. So now that the orange factory HAVE launched the official version, is it that much better? Well...

...You're gonna have to wait a few hundred words to find out, as before we give you the low-down on the new 250, it's worth running through the other changes and alterations in the range for 2007. First up, there's a new DOHC 450 MXer - with electric start. In fact, there's no kicker on the new motor at all! There's no need to panic though, at least not just yet. The SX-F gets a mention not because it'll provide a replacement next year for the 'class leading' SOHC 450EXC, but rather because, we were assured, it definitely *won't*. KTM have designed the hi-tech motor as a motocross/(SM?) engine only and don't want to compromise this with the clutter of the 'back-up' kickstart an enduro bike requires. And, as with all '07 SX models, the new chassis is also MX specific. The new frame (looking very much like a steel version of an ally beam frame), new swingarm, and other revisions would easily cross disciplines, but the wider, yes *wider*, rad panels and airbox (to help MXers grip and 'feel' the bike, apparently) wouldn't really

be welcome. The new motor is awesomely strong, though with a wonderfully strong and smooth power delivery not *too* intimidating, and doubtless a few headbangers will convert them for cross country use (no doubt buoyed by that leccy boot). But the four-speed 450SX-F really is an out-and-out crosser.

The EXCs' chassis have seen few changes. The front forks, and rear shock, have received their 'yearly' new settings and the front spindle is now a 12mm ally part instead of the previous year's 14mm steel item. New wave discs are claimed to reduce weight and improve performance and the rims are now black Excels (an update the MXers received in '06). And that's about it for the rolling stock.

It's the boys in the KTM engine department who've been hardest at work. The 125 has a new cylinder and head, with the powervalve now located in front of the barrel, rather than at the side. This has not only saved a claimed 700g in weight, but also improved the performance of the littlest EXC. We know from our own (2006) long-termer that the onetwofive is a real

flyer, but the 2007 machine now also seems a little smoother in its power delivery. The power, whilst still there in spades, doesn't come in with such a bang, making the bike even easier to ride fast - especially on slippery going. It's awesome. With the new cylinder comes a

new design of water-jacket, which along with a new waterpump impeller, is claimed to give improved cooling. The 250 also receives a new cylinder, with the same design of water-jacket. The 200EXC has been given a new Boyesen reed block, altered ignition curve and a Keihin 36mm carb (replacing a 38mm part). And the muscle-machine 300 gets a new V-Force reedblock.

Crucially, all of the two-strokes have been given a switchable ignition, with a choice of two curves. As standard you get the stock ignition map. But unplug a connector down by the CDI (at the side of the headstock) and the ignition delivers a softer, flatter curve. I tried this out on the 250EXC and through the bottom-end and mid-range, the power feels very much

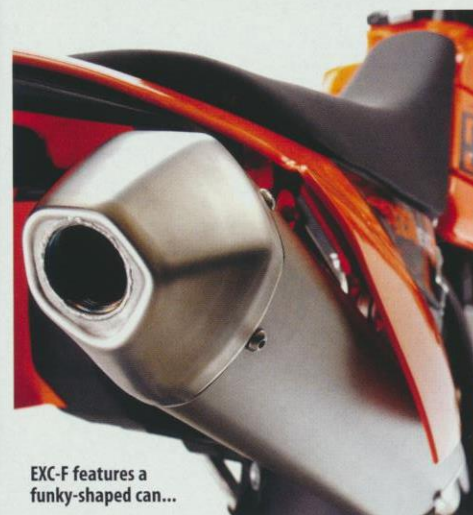


Little has changed on the 450EXC, but then it didn't need to..!

PUNTING ON THE CAM



The 450SX-F is the world's first production MXer to come with a leccy boot only. Restyled frame and plastics are also new for 2007...



EXC-F features a funky-shaped can...

unchanged. But given full gas the bike didn't rip into the top-end with anything like its usual ferocity. On the greasy roots and slick mud of an Austrian forest this made the power far more controllable, providing forwards-, rather than sideways-motion! The only bugbear with this system is the fact that you have to unplug an electrical connector to achieve this. A thumb-switch for the bars will be available through the

Power Parts catalogue, but I'd much rather see it fitted as standard. As it stands, it's like keeping the remote control for your telly on top of the set. You've still gotta get up to change the channel...

The only other detail change (new graphics aside) is a redesign of the kickstarter on the 250/300 motor. It's intended to give 'better ergonomics for easier starting' though should you fancy a new 300 you'd be mad not to wait until December for the 300EXC-E. As we first reported back in issue 127, the three-hundred is going to be available with an electric-start (the first time a KTM stroker will come with 'the button' since the LC2 trail bike of the late Nineties), with a compact bendix-type motor, mounted longitudinally above the ignition cover. Should be good.

As for the four-strokes, the only dedicated change is a new clutch cover. But then the bikes didn't really want for anything (with the possible exception of some better brakes!). And a blast on the 450 reminded me why it's so popular, and why it doesn't need a new engine. The grunt available from the SOHC motor makes light work of virtually any climb, and even when you think you'll never reach the top (as I did a couple of times on loose wet climbs) the motor digs deep and the bike claws its way upwards. Truly a great engine.



PUNTING ON THE CAM

New barrel and power-valve assembly (right) makes the potent 125 even better...

Cam on, cam on...

Okay, so what about the 250EXC-F? Well the first thing you notice are the typical KTM ergos with straight and reasonably high braceless bars and that narrow, slightly forward canted seat. The tank comes with the same quick release fuel cap that was used on the SX-F, something here 'n' hounds riders will welcome for quick pitstops. And so with a stab at the button the electric-start fires the DOHC motor straight away. Fairly obvious really, but it gets a mention because we've found that the kickstart-only 250SX-F can be a real pig to start - especially if stalled.

Out on the mud 'n' roots of the forest, the suspension seemed set-up slightly differently to the other EXC models. Where the two-strokes felt firm (at times perhaps a touch too firm given the conditions) and the other thumpers felt plush to the point of being soft, the EXC-F occupied a middle ground between the two. And, for the most part, this worked well. On the slick, technical going the plushness of the bigger four-strokes instilled a little more confidence, though when the track opened out, or in some places whooped-out, the firmer suspension of the 250 made it easier to keep up a good pace. And although it was probably lurking under the surface like a menacing Great White, not once did I experience any headshake...

With that typically sharp KTM front-end, threading the twofifty between the trees wasn't a problem. Rarely do you notice the tank and radshrouds when cornering, allowing you to really dominate the bike through the turns and helping make it feel small.

The motor itself isn't particularly diminutive. Honda's 'Unicam' CRF lump looks miniscule, and the TE250 lump is seriously compact, though the RC4 250 motor (as the new KTM engine is known) isn't quite so tidily packaged.

In the mud of Austria, the new motor really did feel strong. Compared to last year's SX-F engine, the enduro version has received a different ignition system (purely to enable it to run lights and charge the battery), a close-ratio



six-speed gearbox, and a dual-diameter header pipe feeding into a 94dB-legal pentagonal-shaped silencer. The real change though, is a new pair of cams. These, it's claimed, give smoother power delivery than the '06 MX items, and KTM are so pleased with the results that they've fitted the self-same parts to the 2007 SX-F250!

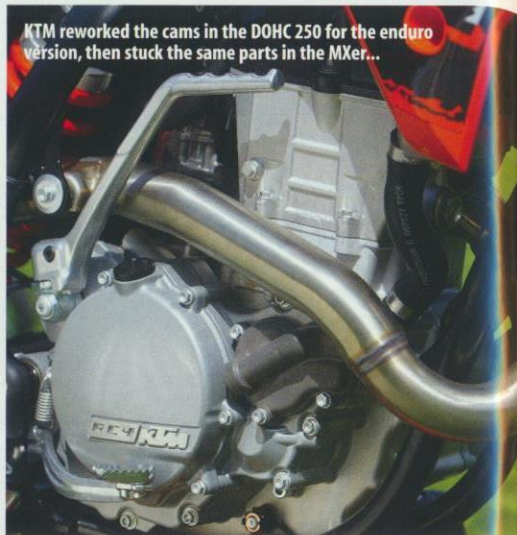
Off the bottom, the power isn't as tractable as you get with a CRF-X, though it's not that often you ride a 250 thumper around in the lower reaches of the rev-range, and once up into the mid-range the EXC-F really comes alive. Much of the criticism of the SX-F conversion we rode earlier in the year was levelled at its

lack of power through the mid-range, and the factory bike felt far stronger in this area. So now there's slightly less of an explosive transition into the top-end, and the bike will still pull strongly if you decide to short-shift. But oh boy, does the EXC-F fly when the motor's working really hard.

Ride the new KTM without mercy (and perhaps a lack of mechanical sympathy) and it really hauls. Then, when you're finally thinking about slotting home another gear, don't. Keep the throttle pinned and the motor continues to rev-on, and pull hard. The six-speed 'box allows you to keep this up through the gears, without falling out of the power, though the engine builds revs quick enough for it not to be a problem should you get bogged down.

As for negatives, well I can really only muster two. The first one is pretty obvious; it's those Brembo brakes and their lack of feel. The 250s at the launch weren't the worst offenders (that honour went a 400EXC which simply didn't want to stop), though they were still a way off perfect. Can we have some Nissins please, Mr KTM? The second point is simply that the new end can seem to be mounted quite close to the rear fender, making it just that little bit awkward to grab under the fender and hoik the back-end out of a deep rut without melting your gloves and burning your hand. Not a major point, but a consideration on an enduro machine all the same...

PUNTING ON THE CAM



KTM reworked the cams in the DOHC 250 for the enduro version, then stuck the same parts in the MXer...

Double Top

With a claimed weight of 107kg (and KTM are usually pretty honest about such things) the 250EXC-F looks set to enter the market as one of the lightest and most powerful 250 thumpers in the class. And with the new ally-framed Yamaha and the existing Husky being so good, the 250 class (not to mention our 250 shootout) is going to be a real corker come the end of this year.

Yep, we may not like playing second fiddle to the motocross boys. But in this case, it was definitely worth the wait...

Thanks to: Eva Priewasser, Joachim Sauer and Thomas Kuttruf of KTM Sportmotorcycles and Shaun Sisterson from KTM UK.

What'll it Cost?

At time of going to press, the retail prices for the 2007 range hadn't been confirmed. Provisional prices are as follows:

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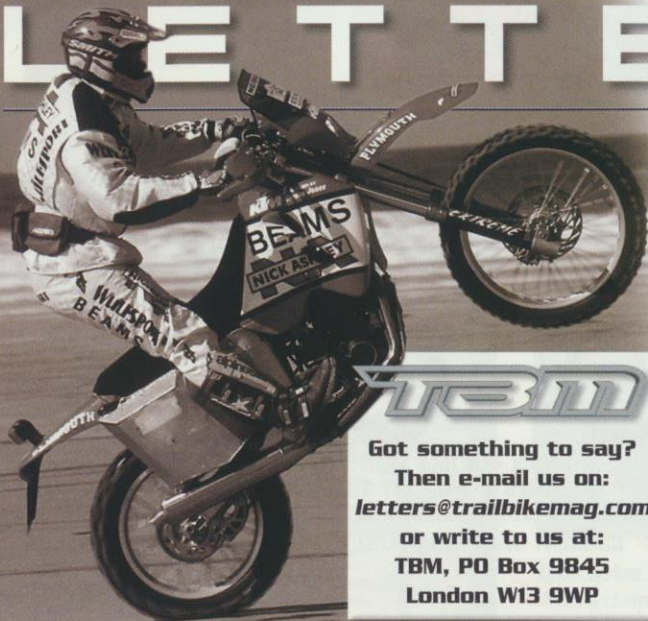


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LETTERS



TBM
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Don't Start!

Dear Mel

Your article (issue 129) was full of despondency as it described the mysterious starting problems with your Husky TE250.

I also have a '06 model and have had no problems (so far). I did have a 2004 machine that for a short while behaved in a similar fashion to yours. Sometimes it would start first time; other times it refused to start for ages then it would change its mind all over again!

Anyway, I soon discovered that the coil had not been securely tightened to the frame and this had caused an irregular electrical connection. Once the fastening bolts had been done up tight the bike never again misbehaved - sweet!

Of course when I picked up my new '06 bike I tweaked up the coil frame bolts for good measure. Hope this helps.

Steve Whetman, Devon
Via email

month, and Chris Evans is, as usual, brill.

Couldn't agree more Paul - and we're glad you like Lois 'cos we think she tells a good tale too. And Mr Evans will be over the moon - finally, someone other than his mother who actually reads his column...



Mel's Husky has had a harder time than most...

Bad Attitude

Dear TBM

I bought this month's mag yesterday and couldn't believe the tosh I read on the letters page in 'To the Point'.

The attitude of this knob is the very attitude that has seen the rise of the NERC Bill - petty minded individuals who can't understand why other people can't just be happy doing the same things that they enjoy.

Everyone who enjoys riding off road enjoys it for a different reason - some enjoy the solitude of the trail, some riding with their mates. Some get excited tootling along, some chasing their mates. Live and let live Mr Wheelnut! Maybe you should join the Ramblers Association, I think you'd fit right in.

Paul Howey, Morpeth
Via email

PS Lois on the Loose is fantastic, can't wait for next

Piers Pressure: Piers Dowell flies high at this year's Red Marley Hill Climb. TBM's coverage of unusual events like this has attracted plenty of praise...



Thanks for that Steve - as you'll have no doubt read in the last issue the Husky seems to have been sorted out now on that front, but I'll be checking the coil bolts, just in case!

See Red

Dear TBM

Great article about the Red Marley hill climb in the May issue (129) - it made it sound as 'hairy' as it looks! I've been for the last three years and I would recommend it to anyone who wants to see something a bit different. It makes a fantastic day out with non-stop action.

Glad you gave the 'young guns' a mention - I've sent in an alternative angle of the same shot you published in your article, as I thought your readers might want to see Piers Dowell, not just his wheels, flying over Arthur Browning!

It was a shame he overdid it in the over 350cc semi final as his riding style was spectacular. Keep up the good work.

Noeline Smith
via email

Pipe Down

Dear TBM

After my WR250F was stolen in December I was wondering what bike I would get next. Although I loved the WRF, as a novice on a budget I thought I would try a TTR due to the fact that the owners seem to love them, they seem less maintenance-hungry and a good bike for both road and trail.

I was not looking for a race bike as I'm trying to learn as much as I can at the same time

as having as much fun as possible. So... I have just got a great deal on a 2005 TTR250 - £2,999 and free delivery! I've also got Dakar high bars and changed the gearing to 13/48, plus I've also fitted the essential frame and sump guards.

The question I want to ask is, what exhaust pipe do I get? TBM's forum has been great for getting all kinds of tips but the topic of new pipes is a minefield of different opinions. As you had done a report on the WRF with a CRD pipe I thought I would get a full system fitted, only to be told that they are too loud for green lanes or even enduros. Have you done any testing of the new FMF Q2 pipe (on TTRs) or do you have any other suggestions?

Also, as my last bike was stolen I was thinking of getting a tracker fitted but are they any good? Anyway, excellent magazine and great people on the forum!

'GFoz', Manchester
via email

GFoz, we haven't tested the FMF pipe on a TTR, but our esteemed contributor Mark Williams owns a TTR and has done a fair amount work to it, including some exhaust mods - try back issue #123 for his opinions. Also check out ttr250.com - as the name suggests this is the website for all things TTR related so there's bound to be something on there to help you. And we wouldn't personally bother with a tracker system, because good as they are, it's quite a large proportion costwise of the actual value of your bike. Better off spending your hard-earned on a decent chain and ground anchor. Or else a big scary Rottweiler...



Mark Williams discusses the finer details of TT-R exhausts in TBM123...

LETTERS

Romania Rules #1

Dear TBM

The cat's out the bag, thanks to Tim Jervis's letter in the last issue. I've been going to the Banat region of Romania for three years and never seem to tire of it - it always leaves you wanting more.

A riding holiday here should be in the top five things to do before you die. No fences, no NERC, no NIMBYs, next to no police. Just great rides, weather, scenery, and people. Yes, it really can be that good! And Tim's right about the mountains - they're proper mountains.

David Ramsay, Fife, Scotland
Via email

PS Great mag! And the forum's pretty good too...

Romania Rules #2

Dear TBM

Like many avid TBM readers I often go to bed reading the magazine and bore my partner by telling her all about the articles. She generally agrees with what I say, but I never realised she actually took any notice of it! Until that is in April when I was given my present for my 40th birthday - she had booked me five days trail riding in Romania during July. So all those nights boring her about what I would like to do (on a bike!) had actually paid off.

It emerged that my partner had borrowed one of my TBMs and spent time looking at and investigating the different

holidays advertised. She knew she had to find just the right one, as I had never travelled abroad on my own and never been away from my family, so she had to find a company that would care for me from the minute I arrived until I left; as well as providing excellent riding. She felt the trip to Romania met the criteria best, especially after chatting to the owners, Steve and Vica.

I will admit that I was extremely nervous when I left, as I had no idea what to expect. However as soon as I landed at Timisoara airport in Romania, my host met me and from then on all my worries disappeared. All the riders stayed with the hosts, and the hospitality was exceptional. The meals consisted of home cooked food and the dinners were great social events as everyone sat around talking about the day's ride.

The riding was excellent on really great bikes (KDX220s), with a very experienced and knowledgeable tour-guide leading the group of four. The riding was varied with us passing through wet grasslands, beech woods, pine forests, disused waterfalls, rivers and at times we had mud up to the fuel tank. There were extremely steep hills to climb, ditches to jump, rocks to navigate, in fact everything you could want. The weather was fantastic and the countryside and scenery was just incredible.

The glimpses of Romanian rural life was fascinating, for example when the children in the mountain villages heard our bikes approaching they would rush out into the streets to meet us and would put their hands out to be touched as we passed.

This trip was the best

experience of my life and I would highly recommend it to anyone that wants fantastic varied riding along with great company. I will be returning to ride with them again - because as they say... life begins at 40!!

Vincent Shepherd
via email

PS. If you fancy being bought such a trip as a present it may be worth leaving TBM around; your partner may just take the hint!

Thanks Vince. Advertisers take note: TBM really works...!



Double Dutch

Dear TBM

In the May TBM letters pages Paul Carlyle from Glasgow showed interest in the Yamaha Moto France Desert kit for WR450Fs. My reply (which you printed in the June issue) had an interesting alternative from Belgian Jos Jansen but gave the old website details. The correct one is jansen-jos.be. Cheers!

Steve Sabandar, Holland
via email

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What's that coming over the hill, is it a monster?

Monster Mash

Dear TBM

Just thought you might be interested to see my bike I have just finished. It was inspired by my love of dirtbikes and big trailies in particular, together with a picture of the late great John Deacon cresting a sand dune in the Dakar rally before the big BMWs were banned for being too fast.

That plus a frustration of no manufacturers apart from KTM (too expensive for my pocket at the moment) making a credible, good looking trail bike. Mine is based on a 1994 R1100GS and features a new front subframe, 48mm WP forks, TDM850 fairing, Varadero front mudguard, YZ426 rear mudguard, and Kawasaki GPZ seat, all sourced through eBay or autojumbles.

I have also dealt with the standard bike's weak points, such as the flimsy rear sub-frame mounts. All the parts on the bike are made by myself and were considerably cheaper than accessory parts from the well-known big trailie parts supplier.

Total cost including the initial

purchase of the bike and selling unwanted parts on eBay was about £2650, a lot cheaper than an HP2. Finally, TBM's a great mag full of extremely entertaining reading.

Alistair Chapman
via email

'I was working in the lab, late one night... when my eyes beheld an eerie sight...'

The Knowledge

Dear TBM

I am a motorcyclist from the 1960s (brand new to dirt biking) who is now retired who would like to waft along the green lanes gently and quietly. I am not really interested in speed competition, not being fit enough at 60-odd years old, but I would love to be able to wander on the BOATS and former RuPPS.

However, I am somewhat put off by the latest diktat from Westminster restricting my rights to do so. In short, I am worrying about taking my interest and subsequent investment any further in view of all the barriers that seem about to hinder us.

I have read about the lack of cohesion in the various mechanical off-road users associations that tend to be amateur led (although the people involved are extremely hard working).

Consequently I feel that it is about time that the enthusiast-press should get together, both two wheeled and 4x4, and come up with a definitive map/ list/ atlas (call it what you like) of all the places that can be legally ridden. I am

aware that county definitive maps are not up to date, but subsequent editions of such a valuable publication could be offered from time to time, as the rights of way get clarified.

People like myself would pay handsomely for this knowledge and I believe would do what we could to help compile it. But what we need is the commercial drive and leadership, which can only come from the interested press, who, after all is said and done, have an equal interest in the survival of the UK off-road industry.

Keith Denley, Preston, Lancs
via email

Fantastic idea Keith, and ultimately it's what we *all* want. But the reality is that things change on the ground so quickly, that at present, having a central resource is nigh on impossible. The best way to get out riding is to join the local TRF and be guided around to start off with - there are still plenty of lanes to ride, so don't let it put you off just yet.

Golden Wonder

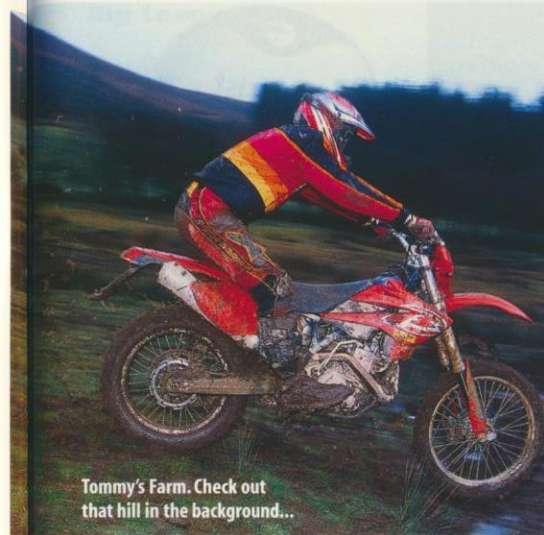
Dear TBM

Just bought the June issue of your superb mag. As a keen trials rider I must say how much I enjoyed your articles on the SSDT and the Old Gold feature on Italjets.

The contents and photos are excellent - just keep up the good work and plenty of trials articles please.

Neil Woodley, Stockton-on Tees

We'll see what we can do, Neil...



Tommy's Farm. Check out that hill in the background...

Tommy Fun

Dear TBM

Hi, great mag. Can anyone help? Me and a pal have just got back into bikes after a 20-year absence and have so far enjoyed the few green lanes in our area (North Oxfordshire).

We have heard of a mythical place in central Wales that's maybe called Tom's Farm? I've checked the web but can't find anything recent on it - does anyone know if it's still open? Anyway, keep up the good work.

Tim Homewood
via email

Tim, you'll be glad to know that Tommy's Farm is definitely not mythical - it's based at Pant-y-Dwr near Rhayader and there's over 1000 acres of land, with varied terrain including big hills, streams and marshland. Tommy the farmer usually charges around a tenner per bike and the place is open pretty much all year round - just turn up, pay and ride. However, it can get pretty rutted and chewed up as there's no limit on numbers and if you're just getting back into riding then summer is a better time to go as it's a lot easier (and more enjoyable) in the dry. We'll be covering it in our 'Access All Areas' series in the near future.

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On Guard

Dear TBM

Could do with some help - I own a '06 Husky WR250 and can't find anyone that makes sump guards for the '06 bike, can you suggest anyone? Cheers.

Lee Ward
via email

Lee, give Julian a call at Gadget Racing Products on 01858 880345 and he'll sort you out...

The Price isn't Right...

Dear TBM

Just picking up on a point you made in the Gas Gas Hobby v CRM test in the last issue - I reckon £1500-1700 quid for a well used CRM is a bit steep these days. I paid just £1250 for my 1996 mk3 last year.

It was (and still is!) a tidy bike with good consumables, albeit with slightly faded

Honda CRM250R. A good one can be had for less than £1500...



plastics. And to be honest, the only thing I have found to be expensive is the lack of aftermarket plastics available, hence why most of them are still faded.

As you have said before and will no doubt say again, the CRM is an excellent 'do anything' bike, I love mine to bits (bar the hideous purple tank, had to paint that!).

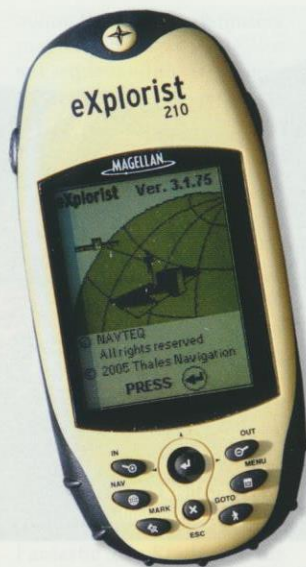
Jon James
via email

Lost In Space

Dear Mel

Thanks for good coverage in both the articles on GPS units. However, I feel there could have been some more detail such as just how easy is it to actually ride and trace a new route with a GPS?

Some are as-the-crow-flies, while others give you turn-by-turn directions. I have just used a Garmin Etrex but found it more of a hindrance than a help. What about the Garmin GPS Map 60 series or the diminutive Foretrex which could strap to your bar pad?



Also, many of us might want to go with a PDA and moving maps as an option. Any chance of a third article?

Mathew Shaw, London
via email

Thanks for your suggestions Mathew, but as you can appreciate, there are dozens of GPS units out there and trying to evaluate them all would be impossible. Plus, as is the case with new technology, more advanced units come onto the market all the time and it's a tall order to keep up with all of them.

Fair point about actually testing them out on the trail but to be honest, it is down to the individual on which navigation method they prefer. No plans for a third GPS feature right now but try checking out our forum: trailbikemag.com/forum - as there are plenty of experienced GPS users on there that you can ask for advice.

Big League

Dear TBM

I am planning on getting a serious mile-munching big trail bike, possibly a Honda Africa Twin in the 2000-2003 age range.

I'll need to fit luggage and will be doing maybe 95 percent road and the rest off-road. It needs to have a decent screen to minimise the windblast. I can't afford an 1150GS but what about a BMW F650GS... they have big fuels tanks, right?

My budget is around £2500-3000 - any advice would be appreciated.

Lloyd Davies
via email

The choice is huge Lloyd, but both bikes are among the best. The Africa Twin looks good, is very reliable, and can cope with 'mile-munching' no problem, though it's not the fastest big trailie out there.

The 650GS is much more modern, and slightly more manageable, but only boasts a single cylinder. For your budget you should be able to pick up a mint Africa Twin, or a four-year old 650GS.

Councillor Out

Dear TBM

I'm not sure if the word has reached the lofty heights of TBM Towers yet, but Haccombe With Coombe Parish Council in Newton Abbot has recently made a TRO to close one of our local routes, Hiller Lane.

Mark Williams may, I think, have ridden this one when 'Doing The Rounds' in South



Devon and will be aware that we have an excellent network of similar lanes in the surrounding areas.

This decision was made against the advice of the local council officer's recommendation. Plus 200 letters against the proposed order were received with only one in support. So what's going on?

One local worthy/councillor reported a near-miss once upon a time with a lone biker 'traveling between 40-50 mph, and how it missed me I don't know,' to the local Herald Express, which made front page news! Needless to say, the bikes using the lane were described as 'noisy and dangerous' but was there any evidence of other alleged misuse? Apparently not, it seems, but are we surprised?

The Devon TRF (of which I am a new member) is proverbially 'gobsmacked' and trying to see what can be done by way of appeal or protest. Is this something TBM wants to look into? After all, this could be the thin end of an enormous countrywide wedge...

Chris Bittlestone
via email

Chris, it strikes us that you can't TRO a lane on the basis of a near miss, otherwise half the roads in Britain would be TRO'd! Definitely worth a dig around from us - we'll get Mark Williams on the job...

Yorkie Star

Dear TBM

I recently rode in the Ryedale Rally up in Yorkshire and had a wonderful weekend. I managed to achieve two major feats - firstly I coaxed my elderly KLR250 to the finish, and secondly I beat Blez to the buffet on Saturday! In fact, he probably ate too much as I didn't see him on the Sunday.

I would however like you to pass on my thanks to rider 118 from Bedfordshire on an XR400 without whose kindness (and fuel can) I would not have finished on the Sunday - sorry if I was ungrateful but I was knackered. Cheers!

Mike Worthy (rider 120)
Via email

There's normally an award for beating Blez to the buffet...

TALKING

Chris Evans
divulges all his
dirty thoughts...

DIRTY

Every so often bike mags run stories where blokes with too much money and not enough time/taste (delete as appropriate) throw open their carpeted garages so that us mere mortals can have a drool over their contents.

These mechanical boudoirs usually contain as many cars as bikes, but amongst the two-wheeled exotica there is almost always a Ducati 996 and/or a Honda RC30 sportsbike. And almost inevitably the geezer in question claims that when he is worrying about where his next million is coming from he chooses a bike over the Lambo 'cos, 'with a bike you have to stay so focused you forget all about your worries...'

Well I don't know, maybe I'm not worrying enough about my millions, or perhaps I'm not going fast enough, but whenever I get on a bike my already addled brain becomes positively stuffed full of invasive ruminations. And more often than not it is one of a rather limited number of subjects that mysteriously pop into my mind the moment I ping my goggles into place.

Bizarrely, one of the most common of these recurring thoughts centres on the seemingly large proportion of lesbians among the rambling fraternity. I first noticed this phenomenon a number of years ago while doing the recce for the Tour de Morvan, when I came across two women and a dog having a picnic. Keen to get in a bit of PR I stopped for a chat and during the course of our conversation they informed me that although they weren't from the area they had just bought a country cottage nearby.

Now of course they didn't explicitly divulge their sexuality - they could have been a couple of short haired sisters for all I know - so I can't say for certain that they were that way inclined, but from then on I kept a running tally of possible female homosexual couples I met out on the trail and you'd be staggered by the percentages.

But it was only recently I plucked up the courage to broach the subject with 'la patronne' of the hotel where I often stay in the Morvan and she confirmed the trend, claiming that at least half her female guests requested double beds. The thing is, why? My on-bike explanations have ranged from excessive amounts of time available (due to not having kids), through to a liking for sensible shoes - either way, it is a subject over which I must have whiled away literally thousands of kilometres.

Another sight that can spark off hours of reflection is trackside signs. It all started when I was riding in the Lozere and went past a falling rocks sign on a remote forest piste. Given the limited amount of traffic on this track my first thought was 'why bother?'

The second thought was 'how should I respond to this information?' I mean, should I avoid the track altogether, so as not to get buried in an avalanche of rubble, or should I ride extra fast so as to minimise my exposure?

And again, only recently did the sign start to make any sense whatsoever when just beyond it a load of rocks had fallen into the middle of the track - something that could have caused me rather a big mischief had I hit them.

Other signs that can spark off hours of rambling suppositions include ones stating 'foraging for mushrooms is forbidden' and 'only those that live in the area can collect firewood.' These inevitably get me thinking about the net worth of illegally gathered mushrooms or the precise definition of 'local'. Sometimes it can get so bad it actually brings on a migraine!

And overlaying all this uncontrollable genuflecting is the most consistent and regularly reoccurring rumination of them all, concerning what bit of me is currently hurting and why.

Y'see, when I first started running trail riding holidays some 15 years ago, I suffered from an incredibly painful back. So bad were the muscular contractions around my spine that I developed serious intestinal problems and actually succeeded in blocking the toilet of the then Sunday Times correspondent in Paris and was never invited back to one of her bijou soirees again - pity 'cos the grub wasn't too bad at all.

Later on a virus caused swelling in my joints, particularly in my wrists, which also caused me considerable pain, and each time a new ailment has come along I have been absolutely convinced that my riding days are numbered.

Currently I have the mother of all tennis elbow pains in both arms and am forced to rub gel into my forearms and pay regular visits to the physiotherapist. But what is so remarkable is that as soon as one problem is treated, or as is more often the case, simply disappears, another ailment pops up from nowhere to take its place.

With time of course I have become a little more circumspect and don't immediately think the worst, but nevertheless many an hour of on-bike time is spent analysing the pain, considering the causes, cures and the likely outcome.

And, dear reader, just before sitting down to write this column I gave the Ed a bell to run the topic by him and see what he thought. As usual he wasn't impressed. 'Instead of spending all that time ruminating uselessly you'd be better off trying to think of interesting subjects for your column,' might best sum up his response.

Typical of him to be so considerate. As if I really needed something else to think about when riding my bike..!



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Off-Road...

RUTTED

What seems like decades ago - because it actually was - I scribbled what I thought was a pretty ballsy column in A N Other motorcycle magazine about poseurs on trailbikes who never rode them anywhere near the mud. It was a reflection of the early 'Eighties vogue for big and not-so-big trailies that people bought essentially to ponce around on and pull the occasional wheelie 'twixt work and pub. And with my cruelly eviscerating wit I sneered that such people would be far better off on a roadbike, or even a Harley Davidson, if they wanted to travel swiftly and comfortably from A-to-B. And best leave the trailies to those who knew how and where to use them properly. Which I rather arrogantly assumed included myself.

Thirty years on and I'm ready to eat my words. For such is the state of Britain's urban thoroughfares that only something with plenty of suspension travel, masses of steering-lock and get-out-of-trouble-fast torque will see you safely through. Since these days I seem to be dividing my time

'Unlike the rural councils in Wales who have a budget of ninepence per annum and couldn't give a toss anyway, they can't slap a TRO on Kentish Town High Street just because it desperately needs maintenance...'

fairly equally between the delights of the Welsh Marches and the dubious pleasures of Central London, I can inform you with some authority that many of the capital's busiest streets are as unpredictably surfaced as a Powys BOAT.

Now what this means in fact is that potholes - often a good five or six inches deep - come at you just as you're overtaking one of the thousands of tinted window SUVs that mummy uses to take little Chantelle and Justin to school in. And because there's so much bloody traffic, avoidance manoeuvre options are limited. So - BANG - you thump into and out of the hole which if you're riding something with small wheels and only three or four inches of fork travel, means your steering head bearing and forks seals aren't long for this world... as I have the bills to testify.

But worse than the actual potholes are the softly tarmac'd repairs which in hot weather melt, bubble up and disintegrate and in wet weather, crack, ripple and disintegrate... usually betraying several kilos of loose gravel on which you really don't want to brake. Then there are

the lumps, bumps or what I'd call hillocks if they weren't actually covered in tarmac which appear to've emerged as a consequence of some hideous monster from The World Time Forgot who can't stand up straight in a sewer.

Indeed some of these lumps, bumps and hillocky things do actually have grids on top of them that vent the drains beneath. 'Raised ironworks' is I'm told the technical term for this, and I'm told it by a man from Camden Council whose sorry job it is to answer the phone to angry drivers and riders who've just had their alloy wheels cracked whilst traversing them. Or possibly their lower spines.

Your local council - well not my local council you understand - but that of a friend whose house I sometimes stumble bleary-eyed from of a morning, is responsible for maintaining the highways 'pon which I ride. But unlike the rural councils in Wales who essentially have a budget of ninepence per annum and couldn't give a toss anyway, they can't slap a TRO on Kentish Town High Street just because it desperately needs maintenance as they might do on, say a lane like *Water Breaks Its Neck* which runs north west from New Radnor. And whilst Camden Council and their ilk would much prefer to spend taxpayer's money on widening pavements that hardly anyone walks along and building speed humps in order to break vehicles' suspension (don't get me started on that subject) as well as erecting signs warning us that there's a speed limit half a mile away - all of which they do anyway - they sometimes grudgingly have to make good road surfaces that imperil anyone who isn't driving a gas-guzzling Chelsea tractor or a 450EXC. It is in fact, their legal duty to do so and they can suffer in the courts if they don't.

Hence if I ring up Westminster Council and tell them that there's a particularly treacherous pothole slap bang in the middle of Mortimer Street which I've just swooped into at a stylish angle of lean, there's a reasonable chance that it will have some hardcore and a splattering of soft tarmac slapped into it within a couple of days. And as you might imagine, there are hundreds if not thousands of these half-arsed repairs dotted around the capital, waiting for the first sustained rainfall or hot sunshine to break out into a gash.

And to these terrain-challenging pitfalls must be added a wide range of partial, and thus ill-fitting re-surfacing exercises that follow the constant round of infrastructure repairs evident in most big cities these days. What is extraordinary is that none of these are co-ordinated, so that one week the road will be dug up to deal with a leaky gas main, a few weeks later some electricity cables will need replacing and a few

'Then there are the lumps, bumps or what I'd call hillocks if they weren't covered in tarmac which appear to've emerged as a consequence of some hideous monster from The World Time forgot who can't stand up straight in a sewer...'

weeks after that the ancient and leaky cast iron water pipes that have contributed mightily to the current drought conditions in the South East will be hauled out and replaced with blue plastic ones. And every time this happens the holes and trenches will be filled and topped off with varying degrees of efficiency and zero uniformity.

The long terms effects of this patchwork of disparate surfaces, potholes, lumps and bumps are gulleys that open up where repairs meet and widely inconsistent levels and qualities of surface that render riding around the city, especially in wet weather, a ruddy nightmare.

Which is why I come back to my contention that the best and certainly the safest way to ride around this or any other seething metropolis is to jump on a trailie, ideally equipped with dual-sport tyres and a very loud horn.

And it was whilst thinking about this and preparing myself for a Doing the Rounds, I dimly remembered that my predecessor in that department - that svelte playboy of the western world, Paul Blezard - had actually Done a Round in some blighted urban landscape (if memory serves me correct) and found the whole thing rather amusing, and not a little challenging.

It then occurred to me that perhaps I shouldn't be bitching about the sorry state of our surfaced city streets. I should instead be out there on my TT-R enjoying them along with five or six fellow TRF members on our DRs, Serows and Pamperas, enjoying the challenges of wildly undulating terrain, assiduously obeying the highway code, respectfully stopping to let wild-eyed cyclists race through red lights and tolerantly letting ramblers cunningly disguised as soberly suited office workers jay-walk into our paths whenever they damn well felt like it.

Yes, as the nation's unsurfaced routes available to us become fewer and further between, I have seen the future in the form of urban trailriding and it's not a pretty sight... But at least there's plenty of it...



The Patman bemoans the life of a magazine columnist...

THE PATMAN

Three o'clock Thursday afternoon. On the other end of my cell phone was my good friend Joel Watson. 'Hey Patman, we're all headin' up to Clayton Oklahoma for some trail riding, camping, barbeque, and beer this weekend. And we haven't seen ya in a while, so whaddaya say? You in?'

I paused just for a moment, and then with an exaggerated sigh said, 'Awww. I'd sure love to go man, but I fear I've gotta work this weekend up at the airport.'

My reply was a fabrication. One that is becoming an all too irrepressible habit of late.

There was in fact, an element of truth to my story though. I did have to work, and I would at one point be at the airport.

Ya see, like many of us in the motorcycle media, I was too embarrassed to tell him the real source of my reluctance - cos he wouldn't have believed me. Like an alcoholic trying to hide his real life from those around him, I had

'Like an alcoholic trying to hide his real life from those around him, I had to fabricate some wild-assed story about how they needed me at work that weekend...'

to fabricate some wild-assed story about how badly they needed me at work that weekend.

In reality, I had a photo shoot with MSR on the Saturday morning out at a new track in Whitewright, Texas, with all the flashy new gear, and those pesky models. Then later in the day I was expected at the Maxim Exposure Party back in Dallas (at the airport), to attend what would surely be an all-nighter with booze, loud music, and half naked girls.

Then on Sunday, with what would be little or no sleep, I had been coerced into pre-riding a brand new track with some old pro racers including Guy Cooper, David Culpepper, Dick Burleson, and Gary Hazel over in east Texas - where I would be obliged to be on my best form. No endos, flying-Ws, slide-outs or stalls allowed with this crowd. The pressure would be immense. What was worse, is that I'd been roped into having to test ride a new KTM 400 with an auto-clutch, and lowered suspension... a bike that I am totally unfamiliar with I might add.

All the while wearing my fancy new clothes from MSR, which I should

really try to keep clean long enough for the logo to be seen. Oh and don't forget the latest Italian-made boots. Not yet broken-in of course, but at least giving me a fair excuse for any missed shift or over braking. As you can see, it was shaping up to be a miserable weekend to be sure.

Now some of you may be envious of the magazine test rider, photojournalist, or columnist, but that's only 'cause you see the outside. Here inside, it's a life of hidden misery. Horrible. That's what it is, just horrible.

Oh, sure, we'll all smile and tell you about how great the industry is, as we munch on white bread sandwiches in the media trailer with the Hooters girls hanging on our every word. But secretly, late at night, as we hunch over a dimly lit computer screen with our warm vodka and long since extinguished cigarette still stuck to our bottom lips... we long to be just like you, riding our very familiar three year old dirtbike, in comfortable old boots, and maybe even enjoying a little mud on the sleeve of our no-name sweatshirt.

I know you don't believe me, it sounds crazy, but there are signs of the hidden insanity. Signs like seeing your media heroes in this very magazine sporting tree bark underwear, or wielding an axe for no apparent reason. The rigours of this kinda life can be brutal to both mind and body.

Still don't believe me?

Just imagine for a moment the woefulness of being out at the race track, and not being able to go anywhere in less than 30 minutes, for having to smile and wave, and talk and shake hands with folk. Being offered food, and especially beer, at every encampment only quickens the eventual breakdown of the psyche.

'Hey everybody look, it's The Patman. C'mon over here Patman and have a beer with us, I want you to meet my wife.'

It sometimes takes me three hours just to get to the loo and back. In fact, once on a trip back from the refreshment stand I ended up with no food at all after having stopped to autograph a young lady's bare midriff. I think I may have handed her my hot dog and Coke while I dutifully signed her flat belly, then somehow, as she and her girlfriends stood giggling and fluttering their eyelashes at me, I forgot to retrieve my lunch and had to go hungry for the rest of the afternoon. So now you can add long periods of hunger to the list of afflictions that can befall a 'popular columnist'. It's really tough, I wantcha to know that.

On another occasion, I had been invited to a huge banqueting hall to give a live narration to a short video in front of a crowd of about 1300

'Many times I've wanted to quit. Wished I could just drop out of sight and take a leisurely ride with a few mates... wearing my old boots, and a favourite Bultaco sweatshirt...'

riders during their year-end awards ceremony and gala. So of course as any good speaker would do, I asked for a copy of the film a few days beforehand, and knuckled down to watching it over and over, jotting down fitting narration to (what I thought were) the humorous moments of the film. And knowing that I would be at a podium facing the audience, with the show going on behind my back and out of sight, I cleverly cued all my humorous quips to the various sounds and music of the program.

And all would've been fine had the sound engineer not disappeared off for a sneaky drink right at the moment I was beginning my speech. Unfortunately his absence allowed the sound to get out of synch with the video, and unbeknownst to me my cleverness was about 20 seconds ahead of the film.

I should've realised something was wrong when I heard the roars of laughter from the crowd when I wasn't expecting them. Because what I thought I was describing was a picture of a guy trying to extract a big ol' 610 Husky from a muddy bomb-hole...

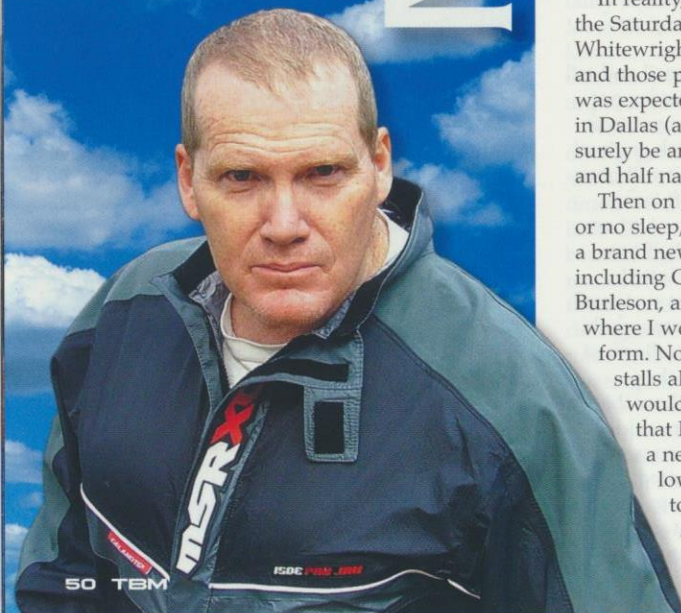
'He's been wrestling with that fat momma for years' I said, 'he oughta get something smaller.'

But what was actually showing on the screen behind me was a picture of the club president along with his good lady wife - who was, how shall we say, of a certain size.

The crowd roared its approval, but I was never asked back there to speak again.

Often I'm asked to come out and test ride the coolest new tracks, have some food and beer, and publish my opinion of its technical make up and its 'flow'. Often I'll get several such requests a weekend, leaving me to bear the terrible anguish of having to choose where to ride, eat and drink. So you see, it's not easy being me.

Yep, then there's the signing of autographs, the free stuff, sponsorships for no apparent reason, riding the latest machinery, and the coolest tracks, and of course the beer and babes... though if Mrs Patman is reading this, then let me assure her that the babes are a terrible bore. Ahem.





Yes one would think it's a fantastic life indeed... The problem is of course, living up to the hype. Having to actually be as fast as people expect you to be. Having to race everywhere you go, always staying clean, never having any fun like the rest of you.

And remember it's you the readers that we do all this for. Our brothers and sisters in arms. We endure the suffering, the partying and (let's be honest about this) the humility, to bring you this fine publication every month which helps to pacify you when you can't be out on your scooter.

Sometimes it's just too much, the scratchy new clothes, constantly breaking in new boots, learning the intricacies of the latest test bike. So don't envy us, folks. No. Have pity instead.

Pity us for the all-night parties we must endure at the dealer meetings. Pity us for the constant flying to and from test bike launches. For never being able to wear the same riding gear twice over, for the free food and beer we're forced to consume at the media trailer, served up by the Red Bull babes wearing bikinis smaller than the rag I use to clean my reading glasses.

Many times I've wanted to quit. Countless times I've wished to just drop out of sight and take a leisurely ride with a few mates... wearing my old boots, and a favourite Bultaco sweatshirt. Mates who are tolerant of errors in your riding form, and who don't care whether your kit matches or not.

But do ya know, it just isn't possible. Why only yesterday I got a call asking me along to pre-ride the new Last Man Standing course, and then stay and have a few beers afterwards courtesy of my hosts.

Just another dull day at the airport it is then...

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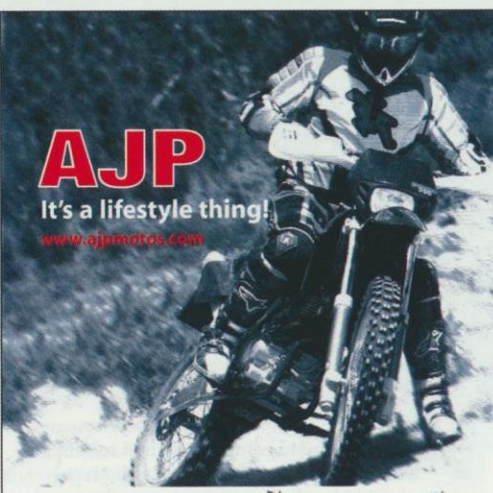
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WELSH TWO PLAY

STORY & PICS: SI MELBER



Husqvarna TE610 V Yamaha XT660R

At just over 700ft, Chipping Norton can lay claim to being the highest town in Oxfordshire. But the gentle climb out along the A44 heading north-west past the town's historic Bliss Mill - built in 1872 by Chipping Norton's greatest benefactor and industrialist William Bliss - slips by without eliciting a down-change from either the Husky TE610 or Yamaha XT660R. Two trailies which while offering torque aplenty for cruising the mean streets of the county's curvaceous country-roads, are unlikely to get you into trouble with its law enforcers. Unlike a certain James Hird who lived here back in the 17th century.

He gained notoriety by becoming the town's most infamous highwayman until he was tried for high treason and executed in 1652. These days the only threat to your wallet comes from the patrolling traffic wardens who carry on the town's tradition for larceny. At least Mr Hird had the decency to wear a mask while he was fleecing his victims...

Yamaha's XT and Husky's TE are on the face of it, two quite disparate challengers for a sector of the market which - in the UK at least - remains resolutely unpopular, despite the huge growth in speed cameras and badly surfaced roads. And in fairness it's not too difficult to understand why.



Two 600cc trailies seemed like fitting transport for a pilgrimage to the annual Welsh Two Day Enduro. But which would get our vote...



Our overcrowded little island has always suffered from an unhealthy obsession with speed limits and regulations. So much so that when it comes to choosing our toys, we invariably opt for the biggest, baddest, bonkers bikes we can lay our hands on. It's our little way of sticking two oily fingers up to the kill-joy legislators, and entirely in keeping with the nature of a group of people who have rebellion woven into their DNA. And it's also why bikes like these will always remain low-volume sellers in Britain.

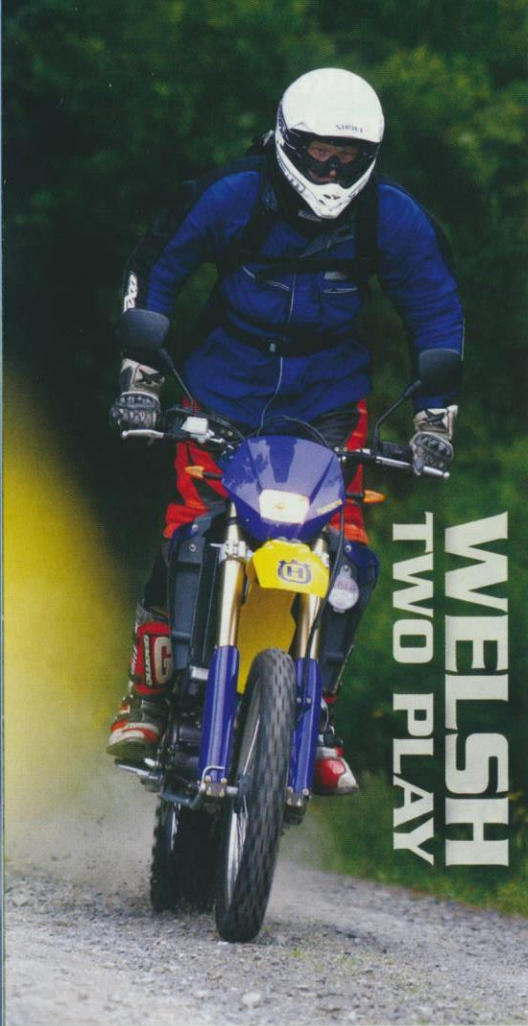
Which is probably no bad thing really. Because after travelling nearly 400 miles in a single day

(the majority of which were on tarmac), I have to say that neither bike thrilled me for more than a few minutes at a time - though one was considerably better than the other.

Say Cheese...

After a slightly tardy start from our base in west London, the beautiful 18th century Cotswold town of Moreton-in-Marsh was our stopping point for an early lunch at the delightfully named *Cotswold Cheese Company*. And if the sandwiches and coffee are anything to go by, this purveyor of fine cheesy





comestibles is well worth a visit. Especially if like us, you happen to find yourself in desperate need of an excuse to wiggle your butt.

Why it is that neither Yamaha nor Husky saw the need to make either of these 'trailbikes' comfortable for more than about 20mins at a time, is frankly beyond me. The Husky is blessed with an unfeasibly tall seat. Higher in fact, than the miasma coming from the English stilton in the shop window, and harder than the aged Parmesan hanging from its ceiling. What's more its narrowness divides your butt cheeks as effectively as a cheese-wire slicing through a crumbly Wensleydale.

The Yamaha by contrast has a seat as soft as a ripe brie and the tank and peg combination forces your legs up into the sort of unnatural posture which looks like you're giving birth to a whole Edam. Ironic then that the Husqvarna website claims that: 'With the new TE610, Husqvarna intends to widen its range to include those less

competition-minded riders who use their bikes every day and need more comfort and practicality... Who are they trying to kid?

But if it's somewhat lacking in terms of commodious accommodation, at least Husky can claim their bike has another role in life - that of a reasonably competent (if rather sizeable) off-roader. Yamaha can't even boast that. Their current XT is surely as emasculated a caricature of any of the legendary machines to sport that illustrious XT moniker, as the factory has ever made. Good job then that the present-day Moreton-in-Marsh bears little or no resemblance to its early days as a moorland settlement sited on boggy ground, otherwise we'd have had to tow the Yamaha out using the Husky. These days the Gloucestershire town's claim to fame is that prior to boundary changes in the last century, it stood at the meeting point of four counties - Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire. And to this day a short distance from the town centre lies the Four Shires Stone which marks the crossroads of the four counties.

I'd reached a bit of a crossroads too, because after travelling a mere 65-odd miles from our starting point my butt was beginning to wonder whether this wasn't a crazy idea - heading all the way to Wales and back in a single day on bikes which were clearly designed by people who don't actually ride themselves. Still at least the sun was shining, even if the ambient temperature was actually far colder than the day appeared. Good job I'd worn my ventilated leathers, then!

Sadly, if we were to make it to Wales in time to see the afternoon special test, there wouldn't be time to visit the Wellington Aviation Museum which is located on the left just as you head out of town. This curious little building is a tribute to the Vickers Armstrong Wellington Bomber and is chock full of exhibits of aircraft parts (especially engines). Even the door handles are made from the pistons from a Bristol Hercules motor.

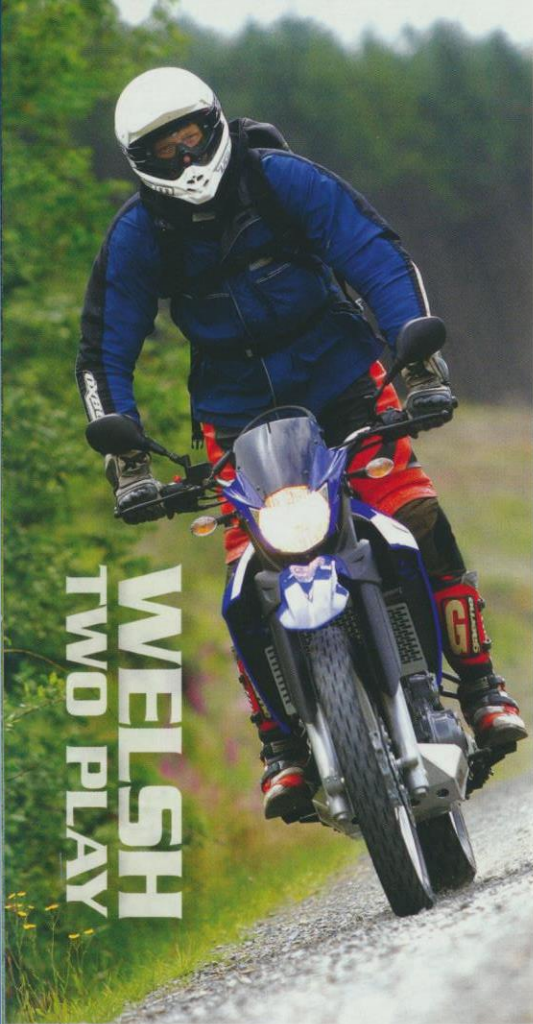
Despite the Husky's solitary piston being rather smaller than that of the Yamaha (the TE displaces a true 576cc compared with the XT's 659cc), it was the Husky which always felt the more lively on the road, thanks in part to a flat-slide Keihin and an engine which was always ready and willing to rev. Open the throttle and the Husky leaps forward with the enthusiasm of a puppy, and can be coaxed all the way up to an indicated speed of 90-odd mph depending upon the tailwind.

But appearances can be deceptive... And in fact the Yamaha has the Husky beaten in real world performance. It's more torque, more powerful and actually much faster - even if it doesn't feel like it. Side by side it's the Yamaha which soon pulls away, once it's overcome the handicap of having one less gear to play with. And continues to press home its advantage right up to a top speed some 15mph faster than the Husky's. Blessed with an abundance of torque and a beautifully smooth engine (once on



Main pic: Updated TE is a great looking bike. Below: Digi dials include no less than two low-fuel warning lamps! Bottom right: Husky hadn't travelled much more than a mile before it set light to its own numberplate!





WELSH
TWO PLAY

song), the Yamaha's loping powerplant would be a real asset were it not for an incredibly annoying snatchiness at low revs - particularly once you shut the throttle (on the way into a roundabout say).

Unable to hold a steady throttle through town - especially where you need it most (filtering through traffic etc), the bike see-saws back and forwards as the soft suspension rises and falls with the uncontained power-pulses.

Perhaps now would be an appropriate time to mention our test-bike's non-standard exhaust. The single high-level can has been designed by Metal Mule to replace the heavy and rather vulnerable standard twin-pipe set-up, which in principle is no bad thing. Especially for owners thinking of venturing farther afield than Chipping Oxfordshire. The pipe is commendably quiet, nicely made, and fits in with the bike's design. And together with a matching and rather sturdy aluminium bashplate and a set of removable metal panniers (not fitted to our

test bike), enhances the XT's versatility and help make what is actually a rather effete bike look a touch more butch.

Anyway, back to the point... Was it the aftermarket can causing the bike to misbehave at small throttle openings - as Yamaha had claimed afterwards? Well I would've been quite happy to have believed this, were it not for the fact that we've twice experienced and reported this exact same phenomenon before with the XT660X model tested in our sister title Supermoto Magazine. Let me quote you what we said on the first occasion: '...there was an annoying on/off surge at really low rpm on small throttle openings. This can make trickling to the front of a queue... a rather jerky affair.' So I'm drawn to the conclusion that this is obviously a widespread and well documented glitch with the latest generation of fuel-injected XTs and I'm surprised that Yamaha haven't sorted it out before now.

By contrast I found the Husky fuelled perfectly, although James reckoned it also suffered from a certain amount of stuttering at low rpm in town, which he put down to Husqvarna's choice of a flat-slide carb. Certainly it had none of the hang-ups of the Yamaha on the A44's numerous roundabouts.

Approaching in top gear, you'd merely have to knock it back a couple of cogs and then crack open the throttle again, and the Husky would respond with a lovely flat drone as it accelerated back up to speed. The Yamaha by contrast was much harder to ride smoothly. Not only did the stuttering make the transition from throttle-off to throttle-on a rather haphazard affair (especially when there was other traffic to negotiate on the roundabout), but the greater gap between the gearbox ratios had much more of an effect when you downchanged so that if you were forced to drop down to second, the bike virtually stood on its nose as you let the clutch out.

On the other hand at least this was a way of slowing down the XT, because plainly the front brake wasn't up to the job. It's been a long time since I rode a bike which was as under-braked as this one felt (the Honda XR650R was the last one I can remember being scared by). Unlike the Honda, there's nothing actually wrong with the size of the XT's 296mm front rotor - it just wasn't very effective, that's all. By contrast the Husky had a demon set of brakes which hauled the bike up beautifully every time and with none of the anxious will-I-or-won't-I-make-it moments I experienced on the Yam.

One particular moment sticks in my mind. James was leading on the Husky heading along a fairly fast and sweeping downhill stretch of road, when the car in front slowed and indicated right. Unfortunately because of the bright sunlight I couldn't see his indication and it was only when James jinked rapidly left, that I realised that the Fiat Uno had virtually stopped to turn into a tiny side road. How I missed joining him for a chat in the front seat of his car I'm not sure, but I remember going for the Yamaha's front brake and thinking to myself:

Main pic: An XT in name only. Single pipe conversion and chunky bashplate seem like a good idea in principle but who in their right mind's going to take one of these bikes off-road?

Below: Good dials spoiled by the routing of the front brake hose which prevents you being able to see the low-fuel warning lamp...



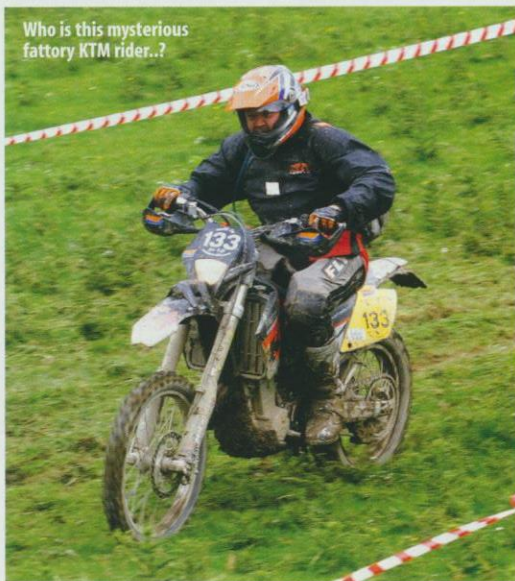
hmmm... well let's hope that the rear brake works, otherwise this is really going to spoil this bloke's day.

At least I had a chance to forget all about the Yamaha's misgivings as the spectacular mediaeval village of Pembridge hove into view. With its riot of crooked black-timbered buildings, Pembridge lies just a few miles short of the Welsh border (just south of the River Arrow), and offers the thirsty visitor ample opportunity to sample some of Hereford's famous cider. Sadly for us there wasn't time to stop, we still had a fair few miles to go before we reached the Welsh market town of Llandrindod Wells where the 'Two Day' is based. Shame, cos after the Uno incident I was in need of a stiff drink...

The final few miles to our destination flew by in a bit of a blur as the roads became less busy and our speeds increased to the point where we were able to hold both bikes flat-out through the gears for stretches at a time - though this didn't stop us getting overtaken by a variety of cars, bikes and even a white van being driven at a truly spirited pace.

At last the town of 'Dod Wells appeared and after a brief foray into the paddock to check the course map, it was over to the special test at Abbey-cwm-Hir - a tiny village noted for being the burial place of the very last native Prince of Wales 'Llewellyn the Last', whose body is marked by a memorial stone in the grounds of the ruined abbey which was founded in 1143 and gave the settlement its name.

Here on the side of a quiet hillside the organisers had laid out a magnificent grassy special test (in anticipation of a bunch of noisy bikes!), which meandered its way around the field utilising all the geographi-



Who is this mysterious fatty KTM rider...?

cal features available. And by the time we'd got ourselves sorted and begun taking photos of the two bikes, the first of the sidcars and sportsmen riders were coming through.

Silent Witness

With a few hours to kill, James and I got a rare opportunity to sit in the long grass and just watch other people working hard for a change. We enjoyed seeing the sidcars struggle up the test's final off-cambered hill (very few made it up unassisted), and noted the varied riding styles of the sportsmen

through to experts as they crossed the special test's rutted bog-hole. Honda-mounted Paul Eddy looked to be on a charge with only Husky's Daryl Bolter getting near to him. Both made the test look ridiculously easy, and indeed the results would prove that they were the two quickest riders at the Welsh this year - taking a day-win apiece.

All too soon the 600 plus riders had filed through the test and it was time to turn the bikes around and head for home. I really wasn't looking forward to the return journey, not least because with the sun now well past its zenith, the temperature had dropped and I was beginning to regret my choice of heavily tinted goggles. Nevertheless the journey back to London was as unavoidable as the inevitable bum-ache that would accompany it, and with a heavy heart I stuffed the road atlas down the seat of my pants and clambered aboard the Husky.

Spotting an opportunity to ride a small section of the course - it would've been rude not to - we noted the Husky's stiff suspension, limited steering lock, towering seat height and protruding exhaust. Whereas the Yam just felt like a fish out of water.



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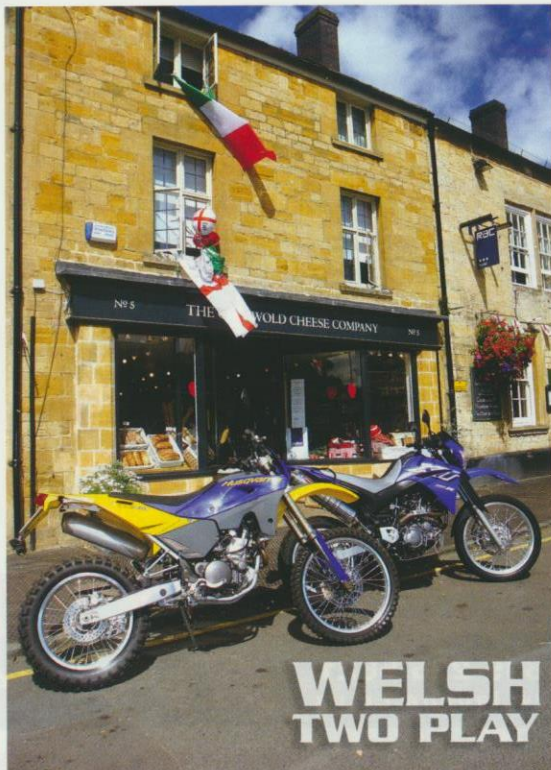
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WELSH TWO PLAY

anywhere near their potential off-road... well, just occasionally the dirt will open up and you'll be able to rip into that fantastic motor's powerband. As a bike for an event like the Hafren Rally - hell yeah, it'd be awesome. And additionally the Husky is firmly enough sprung that you could order up another set of wheels and use it as a super-moto for when the mood takes you - it might not even need a bigger front brake.

The Yamaha on the other hand was a let-down. Sure, it's fair to say that James didn't find it as uncomfortable as I did. But on the other hand it didn't exactly fill him with joy either. With its uninspiring looks, insipid brakes, stuttery fuelling and lack of off-road ability I just didn't get the XT-R at all.

True, it's got a fantabulous engine - but it's hampered by its clumsy fuel-injection. And as an off-roader it's really a non-starter thanks to its weight, shape, build, ground clearance, and... well you name it, really.

On their website Yamaha list the XT660R as an 'Adventure' bike... Which I can only take to mean that if you choose to ride an XT-R to out-of-the-way places, you're likely to be in for an awfully big adventure!

So that just leaves the Husky TE. A bike which is larger than life and firmer than a bodybuilder's mattress. And which will encourage owners to stand up off road...

And on it!

At least it was easy to get your feet down, though the bulbous tank and 180kg weight (nigh-on 40 kilos heavier than the Husky) counted against it on the rough stuff.

Back on the road and at the third fuel stop of the day we worked out the combined economy for the two bikes at 59mpg for the XT, and a rather less healthy 48mpg for the Husky (though in fairness it was slightly shorter geared and had to be worked harder to stay in touch with the Yam). Neither is awful though and if you were more inclined to potter about than we were, then it's my guess that the Yam would return you figures well into the mid-60s and the Husky the mid-50s.

Who'll Want One?

Who indeed? In my mind I can just about make out a case for the Husky - despite its additional cost over Yam - for the bigger/heavier rider who uses his bike both for a daily commute and week-end exploration of the nearby lanes and backroads. It suffers from overly stiff suspension and a seat designed by a sadist (though the factory informs me that the latest batch of bikes have a seat which is 10mm wider and slightly softer - thank God). But unlike its predecessor it's a fun bike to ride both on- and off-tarmac, and although we all know that it's nearly impossible to use powerful bikes like this,

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LOIS ON THE ROAD



STORY & PICS: LOIS PRYCE

Lois Pryce set out to ride from Alaska to Chile by Serow. But getting her bike impounded in Vancouver was only one of her problems...

After much wrangling with the Vancouver authorities, I rescued the Mighty Serow from the vehicle pound and made a hasty getaway over the border into the good ol' USA. My route took me down the West Coast to California, from where I would cross into Mexico at the notorious border town of Tijuana, before striking out for Central and South America. As far as I was concerned this was a fine plan, but not everyone shared my

enthusiasm - almost every American I met bombarded me with horror stories of death, drugs and violence south of the border.

'You'll get robbed!' 'Murdered!' 'Or worse!' they exclaimed, horrified at my travel plans.

Due to this catalogue of doom, I entered Mexico terrified, expecting gun-toting bandits and corrupt policemen to jump out from behind every cactus, but it didn't take me long to realise that the scare stories were based on little, if no

fact. Riding down Baja was a blast and the rest of Mexico was turning out to be a breeze (except for the small problem of not being able to speak Spanish).

So when a policeman flagged me down, I wasn't all that worried. I'd already had a couple of brushes with the Mexican bobbies, and they hadn't roughed me up, squeezed a bribe out of me or attempted anything that could be considered even the slightest bit improper. In fact, one member of the force had even bought me breakfast, finally putting to rest the image of the corrupt, greasy-palmed policia. This latest member of the constabulary was no different; he just wanted to impart some important information to me about the road ahead. Unfortunately, I had no idea what he was talking about.

But he spoke in Spanish to me anyway, gesturing to get his message across, pointing in the direction I was heading, shaking his head and waving his gloved hands in a manner that suggested there was trouble looming. I nodded, pretending I understood, thanked him profusely and carried on. Whatever he'd been trying to tell me, I figured it couldn't be that serious.

After a while I wondered if I'd got the wrong end of the stick; there didn't seem to be anything on this road to hinder my journey. What could he have meant? I rode for a mile or so along the empty two-lane highway, passing a few wizened old men ambling along on their donkeys and a farmer herding an unruly bunch of cows. But

after a couple of miles I put the whole thing down to a case of miscommunication and forgot all about it.

That was, until I came round a bend to discover the tail-end of a lengthy traffic jam. Oh! So this is what he meant. There must be road-works going on I guessed, and with the motorcycle proving itself as the finest form of transport, I whizzed up the side of the mile-long queue to the front, where to my utmost surprise, I found not the gang of swarthy, pickaxe-swinging workmen that I had envisaged, but instead, a mob of rowdy protestors, who, using a combination of themselves, rocks, tree trunks, branches, burnt-out cars and blazing bonfires, had brought the Pan-American Highway to a grinding halt.

Despite the impassioned activity of the demonstrators, the road-block had something of a fiesta atmosphere about it, with a few entrepreneurial types selling barbecued corn and overpriced cans of Coke to their captive market. The protestors were chanting and shouting, some of them had linked arms, creating a human barricade across the road. The entire blockade was a family affair with everyone out in force, from granny and granddad down to babies slung on their mother's backs. But although the atmosphere seemed reasonably good-natured, the message was coming across loud and clear: NOBODY'S GOING ANYWHERE.

In typical laid-back fashion, none of the drivers of the trucks and cars seemed to object

ROAD
PART 2



The sands of the Baja peninsular can be tricky at times...



Lois performs a clutch swap on the 'mighty Serow...'

to the hold up; it was just another day in Mexico. Some of the truckers were taking the opportunity to have a nap in their cabs, while others strolled up and down the queue, chatting to each other. Families sat outside their cars, enjoying an impromptu picnic, as if this was the most normal thing in the world.

As I pulled up to the frontline, the noisy crowd waved their arms at me, shouting 'NO PASAR! NO PASAR!' and glaring angrily. From the centre of the throng, their leader appeared, a man with twinkling eyes and a face that had seen it all - brown and lined from years of outdoor toil and strenuous roadblock organisation. I had to admire his tenacity.

'Que pasa' I asked him. What's happening?

The jeers of the crowd fell to an excitable hum when I spoke, all eyes turning to their head honcho, as he addressed the foreign *muchacha* on a motorcycle. Having made my opening gambit in Spanish, the leader understandably assumed I could speak his lingo and launched into what I guessed to be a stirring, rebel-rousing piece of agitprop, if the raised fists and whooping cries of his supporters were anything to go by. I thought it best to put him straight.

'I only speak a little Spanish' I explained apologetically in his language. This was one



phrase I had learnt pretty quickly.

Undeterred, he continued to bombard me with more unintelligible propaganda.

After I'd listened and nodded for long enough not to be considered rude, I popped the million-peso question.

'Es posible...?' I asked him, motioning my request to continue my journey.

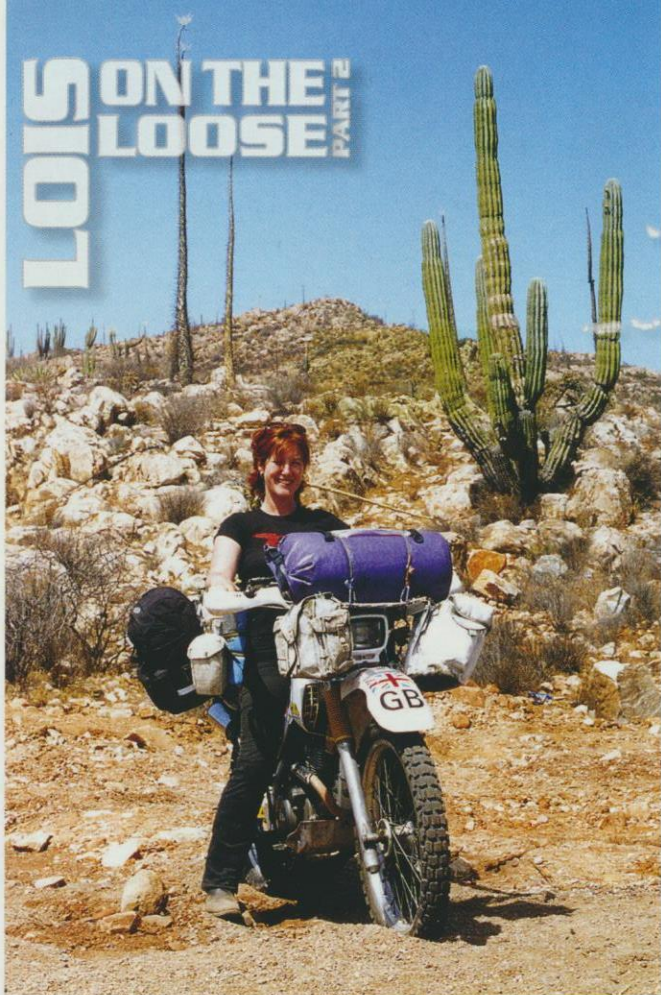
He beamed a kindly smile which seemed at odds with the vigorous shaking of his head.

'No. No pasar' he replied firmly.

I surveyed the hostile crowd. But curiosity

LOIS ON THE LOOSE PART 2





had got the better of them and having dropped the offensive they were now edging towards me, pointing and nudging each other excitedly. The protestors at the front gathered around me, gingerly touching the bike and staring at my map of Mexico. I pointed to our location, and seeing the name of their hometown, they gaped in astonishment, beckoning their fellow campaigners to take a look. I smiled at one of the women and when she smiled back shyly, I realised that this was the moment. I had them in the palm of my hand and if I was going to get through this blockade, it was time to start playing the crowd.

With a big smile I addressed the leader and his followers again in my faltering Spanish.

'What's happening?' I cried, 'Please may I go through?'

The murmur of the rabble rose to an excited chatter and they stood transfixed as the twinkly-

eyed man once again refused my request.

'No pasar.'

The crowd, deferring to his command, began to ebb away, moving back to their positions.

Damn! I was losing my audience. It was now or never, and I had an idea...

With an exaggerated flourish I whipped out my Spanish dictionary from my luggage and displayed it to the demonstrators, prompting peals of laughter and a hearty

cheer. They stared at me engrossed, murmuring to each other, as I quickly flicked through to the 'H' section where I found the translation for the magic word. OK, this was it, time for a bit of method acting. Clutching the dictionary to my heart, I imagined myself as the leading lady in a Shakespearean tragedy (not that I'd ever seen any but it didn't matter at this moment). I stood up on the footpegs and in what I hoped to be an anguished tone, I delivered my plea to the crowd in their language.

'Ladies and gentlemen, please may I go through? My husband... he waits for me in the next town!'

For added effect I pulled off my left glove and raised my bare hand to the protestors, pointing to my fake wedding ring that glinted convincingly under the late afternoon sun. A gasp went up from the female members of the crowd. I turned to them, all dewy eyed and

pleading. But all eyes were on their leader, as they stood still and silent, awaiting his response.

In the hush I could hear the whirring of insects in the trees and the shriek of exotic birdcall high above me.

The leader looked at his people, then back at me. Our eyes met and I smiled wanly, still in character.

A dog was yapping somewhere in the queue of stationary vehicles. A tinny car radio played a wailing Spanish ballad.

The man turned again to his followers. They hadn't moved or uttered a sound, still waiting for his decision. I stared at him, steeling myself for the worst, imagining the forthcoming night, or days or weeks even, camped out at the roadblock, hundreds of us drawing straws for the last piece of barbecued corn, starving and thirsty, forced to drink from the Serow's radiator.

But just as I was getting carried away with my survivalist nightmare, I was yanked back into reality by an almost imperceptible nod from the leader. A deafening roar erupted from the crowd! The magic sign had been given! I was free to go! The demonstrators leapt into action, cheering and clapping as they hurriedly cleared me a rough path through the debris, waving me on, patting me on the back as I bounced and bumped my way over the remaining rubble. Oh! The roar of the crowd, the smell of the, er... grease. My Oscar winning performance had done the trick!

'Muchas gracias! Muchas gracias!' I shouted jubilantly, not daring to look back in case they changed their minds.

I gunned it down a deserted southbound Pan American Highway, hoping to make it to the Guatemalan border before it shut for the night. My heart quickened as signs for la frontera appeared and once again, I felt that stomach-churning excitement of a new country to discover and the thrill of the unknown ahead.

My journey through Central America was surprisingly smooth, and with the exception of Honduras, even the notoriously corrupt border crossings weren't too dodgy, as long as you didn't mind getting mobbed by gangs of kids demanding 'dollars,

dollars' to guard the bike while you set off on the endless round of paperwork. But I knew it was unlikely that I would make it through all of the Banana Republics without a hitch

And sure enough, on a lonely dirt road in Nicaragua, riding through endless banana and coffee plantations, I was forced into an emergency stop when a crumbling little Honda 125 appeared from out of the bushes, straining under the weight of two policemen.

'Your licence!' demanded the older one. He had the corrupt cop look down pat - a monstrous moustache grew from his mean face, thriving despite the shade of his mammoth peaked cap. The crisply ironed charcoal uniform featured an array of impressive stripes and badges and his trousers were tucked into his boots in the military style. His identically dressed pillion-riding sidekick was some years younger and not quite as intimidating, lacking the necessary facial hair for the job.

He greeted me with a hint of an apologetic smile. The good cop, bad cop thing must be a global police tactic, I surmised, or maybe it took a lifetime's service in the Nicaraguan force to get really grumpy. I couldn't say, but I had a feeling I was about to find out.

'Your licence' barked the scary one again.

I had a momentary flashback to my run-in with the Canadian Mounties - a trip to a Nicaraguan vehicle pound was definitely an experience I could live without, but this pair

didn't seem organised enough to pull off a stunt like that. Their own bike was a heap of junk; the tyres were bald and the seat held together by gaffer tape. Could this really be a police vehicle, I wondered? God knows what the cops use to get around in a country as poor as this, but this little runabout hardly looked up to delivering pizzas, let alone transporting a couple of burly rozzers along this ramshackle highway.

The two men were examining my licence, still stalking round my bike, pointing and talking between themselves in sinister muted tones.

'Motorcycle papers'



LOIS ON THE LOOSE PART 2



came the next demand, again in Spanish.

There was something funny about the whole situation, I couldn't put my finger on it, but then I remembered the Foreign Office travel department advice. What was it again...?

'You should be wary of persons presenting themselves as police officers. There have been instances of visitors becoming victims of theft, extortion or sexual assault by persons who may or may not be police officers.'

May or may not be police officers? How were you supposed to tell? These guys looked pretty convincing, with their matching uniforms and shiny badges. I stood there in silence while they muttered between themselves, until eventually they agreed on their tactic.

'Prohibido' said bad cop, pointing at my headlight.

Prohibited? I said.

'It is illegal to have your light on' good cop explained.

Well, they were certainly imaginative, I'd give them that, but there wasn't much I could do about my felony, the Serow's headlight is wired into the ignition so I couldn't turn it off, but God knows how I was going to explain that. I went into my emergency default Spanish of adding o's and e's on the end of everything.

'Es automatico con la ignicione' I said hopefully.

Amazingly they understood, but not to be defeated by technology they continued to circle the bike, homing in on my second heinous crime - my rolled up sleeping bag, strapped on the front above the headlight.

'Prohibido' said my moustachioed bandido/policia man. He was deadly serious.

There was nothing to do but play along. I removed the bag and strapped it onto my top-box instead.

'There we are, that's much better isn't it?' I said with an inane grin.

Their muttering became more animated.

'Prohibido' they said again pointing at my panniers.

'Prohibido' my tent.

'Prohibido' my jerry-can.

My lawlessness knew no bounds, I was an out-and-out criminal, terrorising the poor people of Nicaragua with my felonious luggage system. It's a fair cop, chuck me in the slammer and throw away the key.

'Prohibido, prohibido, prohibido...'

But I had stopped listening and started laughing; the whole idea was completely ridiculous. Here I was in a country where motorcycles tear around the streets loaded up with entire families, various livestock and multiple crates of bananas, but my neatly packed bags were suddenly a cause of great concern to these two conscientious coppers. Why didn't they just come out with it? How much did they want?

They must have been reading my mind.

'Monies' said the older one.

Aha! That's more like it, and how funny that he can speak English all of a sudden, but I guess you learn the most important words first.

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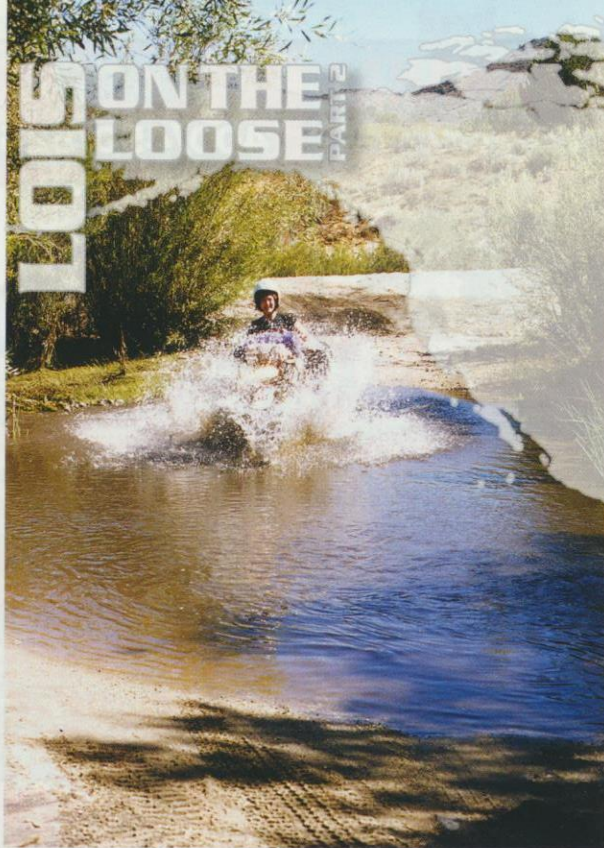
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'Monies' he repeated, my documents still tight in his grip. His tone was firm, but an underlying hint of menace was creeping in now.

'Monies.'

He might be speaking my lingo, but I was still going to try the dumb foreigner act. Our play acting went on until we were in danger of reaching stalemate.

But the sidekick spoiled our fun.

'You pay money' he said quietly in my ear. I gave a resigned sigh.

'How much?' I asked in Spanish.

'Fifty' said the older cop, taking control of the proceedings again.

'Cordobas?' I enquired, hoping that we were talking Nicaraguan notes.

He responded with a sneering, nasty laugh. He was right. It was a stupid question - bribery only deals in one currency. But I was damned if I was going to hand over fifty greenbacks to these jokers. We faced each other out for a while, not because I was feeling particularly cocky, I was just thinking about my next move. Good cop used the awkward silence to launch his charm offensive.

'Where are you from? What is the weather like

in England?' and most bafflingly, 'do you like Nicaragua?'

'England. Cold. Not at the moment.' seemed the easiest, if slightly unimaginative response.

'Fifty,' repeated the moustache.

We glared at each other for a bit longer, until it became painful.

'Fifty.' This time he handed me back the bike papers as some sort of negotiating chip, but his thumb and forefinger kept their tight grip on my driving licence.

I tucked the papers away in my luggage, and allowed myself a secret jubilant smile. He didn't know it, but he'd just blown it.

'I leave now' I announced, climbing on to the bike 'Goodbye'.

'No no. Fifty dollars' he demanded again, waving my licence in my face with a smug smirk on his face.

'No necessito' I waived the licence away with a gloved hand.

'Yes! Licence. Fifty dollars'

'No thank you, I don't need it.'

I flashed them a benevolent smile.

They looked at each other, confused. He thrust the licence under my nose.

'No thank you, I don't want it' I insisted. I started the engine.

'Fifty dollars' he repeated, annoyed.

'No thank you.'

Of course, any British bobby would have spotted the laminated photocopy a mile off, but in the backwoods of Nicaragua, who's going to know the difference? And besides, I could afford to donate one of them; I had another three tucked away in my purse for any future brushes with the 'law'.

'Adios!' I shouted, as I roared away down the bumpy road, leaving them staring after me and then back at the bogus licence with an air of utter confusion. I was half hoping to get involved in a motorcycle chase that, for once, I could easily win, but they showed no interest in pursuing me, confirming my hunch that their badges and uniforms were merely a front for a couple of desperados.

I gave them a victorious wave as I disappeared in a haze of dirt and satisfaction. You don't get many proper 'Eat My Dust!' moments in life, but this was a real corker.

Will Lois make it safely through the rest of Central America and finally reach the southern tip of Chile? Find out next month in the final instalment of Lois on the Loose..!

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A WAILY

The famous Fantic Caballero is back and TBM got the exclusive first ride...



Picture the scene. Ten identical 50cc enduro bikes lined up on a startline, their riders chatting to each other. Everyone's mates with everyone else.

Each bike has a small team of helpers/mechanics/brolly dollies fussing around the rider, making last minute adjustments and giving helpful advice about the first corner charge. There are big smiles all round. The ten second board goes up and the helpers move away to watch the fun unfold. The starter's flag twitches and all of a sudden the atmosphere crackles with a high-pitched shriek, as the sound of ten 50cc engines fills the air and they scream off the line as one. Everybody's laughing...

Welcome to my imaginary world of 50cc enduro racing. A world where *teams*, not individuals, buy one of these race bikes - a Fantic Caballero Regularita Competizione 50 - and enter it in a mini race series run by... TBM perhaps? Each of the bikes is identical - a full sized pukka racing 50, with granite-tough build quality, and exquisite detailing.

Here's how it works. The bikes cost three grand a pop, but the money comes not from an individual but perhaps a team sponsor - like a local garage/estate agent/builders' merchant/pub/even a charity looking to raise its profile, that sort of thing.

Each sponsor gets a bike onto which they apply their bespoke graphics advertising their message. At the beginning of the season, each of the ten teams gets a picture in TBM of their bike in its full sponsor's livery and a photo of the team helpers and riders, along with a light-hearted write-up about their season ahead. In addition the five round series is reported on throughout the season in TBM and is seen by thousands of people. Sponsors are happy.

Each race is three hours long (and takes place within an existing H&H enduro), but

FIVE-OFF

there's a compulsory pit-stop and rider change every 45min. This keeps the racing close and makes for interesting viewing.

The bikes must be kept standard - or as near standard as possible. The engines will be sealed at the beginning of the season and any work on the motor has to be carried out by the bike's importer (that gives him a little profit into the bargain). Likewise you can't replace items like the suspension etc (not that you'd need to of course), the bike must look visually similar to all the others - this would be checked at scrutineering. However you'd be free to use whatever service items you liked (chain and sprockets, air filters, brake pads, handlebars, oil, tyres etc). And set-up would be limited to dialling in the suspension, adjusting the gearing and riding position and setting up the mixture before each race - the idea being to keep costs to a minimum.

Then, when you line up for each race, you know that the bloke next to you has got the same machinery underneath him - and so it comes down to trying to beat them with some imaginative lines into corners!

Each team would be encouraged to build up a small local following by publicising their team and its efforts in the local paper or on the web etc - using the 50cc capacity size as a hook to draw people in (everybody loves a crazy idea and what could be more crazy than grown men and women racing 'mopeds'). And the battle wouldn't be so much among individual riders, but between the teams (almost like mini Formula One teams!). It would be the teams' job to ensure that riders pitted on time, got refuelled and knew their race position at each pit-stop. And of course silly rules could and *would* be applied at any point throughout the season by the series organiser in order to keep the racing as close as possible.

After every race there would be a huge barbecue and chance to have a laugh and sink a few beers with the other teams. And at the end of the season the sponsors would get a good chunk of their money back by selling off their bike. For the sake of a minimal investment they've generated heaps of publicity and had a good time doing it. Everyone's happy.

Join the Club

Okay, I know what you're thinking - that three grand sure would get you a lot of dirt bike - perhaps something like a year old 250cc two-stroke which is much more versatile. Course it would, I'm not denying that. But a year old 250 wouldn't get you into 50cc racing and the chance for a seasonful of belly laughs. And rather like the whacky world of Citroen 2CV racing (which

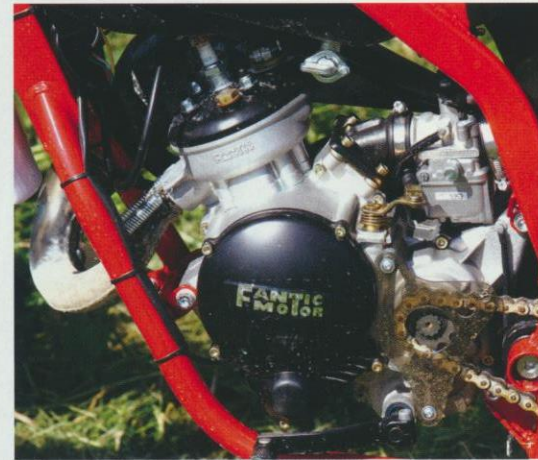
Styling takes some getting used to - being an odd mix of semi retro (round side panels) and sensibly practical...

Below: check out those chunky footpegs.

Right: You'd never know it was only a 50. Shame about the protruding side-stand tho'.

Bottom: gripper seat and timecard holder come as standard - as do superb Wave brakes.

Far right: hand-welded pipe and banshee motor!



Whoah. Steady-on Ed, don't get carried away with all that power...



A WAILEY FIVE-OH

I've tried, obviously), the idea of a great handling machine is all well and good (the cars are lowered by 12in, stripped out and fitted with a roll-cage), but it's their limited horsepower and the absurdity of it all which makes the racing so engaging.

So what about the Fantic Caballero? Well unlike any other 50 we've tested in this magazine, this thing is the real deal. Built purely for racing and loaned to us by the new Fantic importer (Fantic UK), this bike has got fully adjustable racing suspension (Marzocchi and Sachs), lightweight machined hubs with San Remo rims, incredibly powerful Braking calipers and Wave discs (front and rear) and weighs in at just 99.5kg fully fuelled.

How different is it from a regular 50cc trailie? Well take a look at the pictures. Road equipment is minimal but the bike's race build is evident everywhere you look. The pegs are broad and shallow, the bars are alloy Tommaselli items, the controls are Domino, the brake and clutch levers are forged alloy and the perches use matching socket-headed fasteners (are you listening Gas Gas?). The seat is a Selle Dalla Valle (the same as fitted to the KTM Six Days limited edition bikes), the frame is stove enamelled with an incredibly durable finish, as is the swingarm and engine cases, the radiator is a curved alloy item and the tyres are Michelin Enduro. The subframe, plastics, and everything else on the bike are tough, durable and built to be strong. Pick the bike up using the rear fender for instance and it won't bend nor splinter horribly like happens with most 50s. This bike is not just meant to look the part, it's designed to be thrashed, crashed and raced hard. Then raced again the following weekend.

So to really prove its credentials we entered it in a three hour hare and hounds enduro in Wiltshire. Now obviously there's no such thing as a 50cc class (in the UK at least), so we simply stuck racing numbers onto our Caballero and entered it in the Expert class. I gotta' say it felt a bit weird sitting on the start line with a bunch of guys and girls some of whom were riding bikes with more than ten times the capacity of our little Fantic, but I got a decent start (the Caballero isn't 'primary kick' which means you've got to start in neutral with the clutch out), and I was probably about tenth or 12th into the first corner.

Gottle of Gear

The first thing that strikes you about the Caballero is not how light or easy it is to chuck around, but actually how low-g geared it is. You've obviously got to be fairly liberal with

More Frantic Fantics!

The Fantic Caballero Regularita Competizione 50 is only one of a range of Caballero 50s coming to the UK. The regular trailbike version (Fantic Caballero Casa) looks identical to the racer, but features less sophisticated suspension and brakes and costs a more reasonable £2600. There's also two Supermoto versions available (competition and street) with the obligatory wider wheels and bigger brakes. Fantic also have plans to introduce a 125cc and 250cc version of the bike in competition enduro trim, as well as a trailbike version of each. Meantime, the factory is developing a brand new Fantic trials bike which they hope will perhaps rival the success of the orange machines of the 1980s. Mmmm, can't wait...

your applications of throttle, but you soon get used to keeping the engine zipping along at stratospheric revs and banging the thing up through the gears. And unlike with other 50s we've tested the Caballero would actually accelerate up hills, albeit you generally only had the choice of just one gear (usually first) on the steeper ones!

But on downhills you could accelerate up through the gearbox and get to do plenty of overtaking because the Fantic feels so light you can afford to leave your braking until the very last moment and still get away with diving for the inside of the turn, chucking the bike on its side and then opening the throttle without it busting through the berm or just getting away from you. Matter of fact for about the first hour of the race I couldn't stop myself grinning inanely because the Fantic feels so different to ride (the noise, the buzz, the sound, the weight etc). And also because you find yourself adopting the sort of tactics you might've used when racing your mates on push-bikes.

Things like slipstreaming the rider in front of you in order to get a bit of a tow, before diving past at the end of the straight. Or sticking your elbows out on the way into a turn in order to make yourself just that little bit wider! It also ensures that you learn a whole bunch of new tricks. Tricks like adopting much more sweeping lines into turns before letting the bike drift out wide on the exit in order to... a) keep the revs up, and b) cut-off other people's ideal line.

For sure, piloting a 50 brings out the worst in a rider!

A WAILY FIVE-OH



But that's all part of the fun. Because if like me, you've been riding and racing for years, then a new challenge is just what you need to keep you fresh. And racing the Caballero was certainly a challenge. The thing is you're constantly battling to overcome the handicap of having a limited amount of performance at your disposal, and you're always trying to come up with novel ways of eking out every last drop of power. So you try tackling the course in different ways - keeping up your momentum over jumps or letting the back end get all loose on the entry to a turn, so that the bloke who's lining you up for an overtake just before the course turns into the woods, actually thinks better of it.

Now it's my opinion that enduro has always been the thinking man's motocross, but riding this thing was turning into a kind of cerebral challenge akin to deciphering a TMX editorial.

And by the time I pitted for fuel at the halfway point my mind was a blur. Although not quite as much of a blur as the tips of my fingers - which appeared to have been dipped in white paint and were still revving away at 17000rpm thanks to the Caballero's high-frequency vibrations. D'ya know I'd forgotten quite how uncomfortable this feels. I swear that when I reached for my bottle of thirst-aid I shook out most of the contents before it got near my lips.

There was only one thing to do. Get back on and go hammer a few more laps. Now I don't know if you've ever been applauded on a dirt bike before, but I promise you that people were cheering-me-on that day and clapping as I came past. Though thinking back, perhaps they were just being sympathetic to my plight.

Anyway, usually when people applaud me, I look over my shoulder to see who's about to



come past - but not that day. Because that day people were actually cheering on the dumb schmuck who entered a race on a weedy 50!

What's it like, Mister?

Anyway, riding a 50 certainly gives you plenty of time to appraise the bike, and I was amazed at what I found. First of all the good points: the Caballero handles brilliantly. It's not junior-sized like some small capacity bikes, so you don't find yourself all cramped up after a few minutes. The full-length wheelbase also means that the Cab doesn't drop into all the big holes on the course nor get horribly outta' shape on braking bumps. In fact the riding position was spot-on. The bars, pegs and full height seat were just as you would expect on any regular enduro bike, and the Cab handled well. Not at all twitchy, it nevertheless turned fairly effortlessly and could be provoked

into doing more or less whatever you wanted.

I've ridden 50s before where at the first sign of a decent jump, the suspension squashes like a ripe tomato - leaving you with double-vision for minutes afterwards. Not this time though. Provided the jump was on the flat, the Cab would attack it in third gear and go sailing off the top without bottoming on landing!

And a word of praise here too for the brakes which were truly awesome. The only bike I've ever ridden with brakes as powerful and progressive as this was the Sherco 450 we tested a couple of months back. Basically you could stop using just one finger, yet balance the braking so that you never locked a wheel. Fantastic.

Less good was the sidestand - which though sturdy and much more functional than some we've come across (KTM, Gas Gas!), stuck out too far in the upright position. And though I never actually managed to get my boot caught behind it, I'm sure with a bit of trying I'd manage it. Also a negative was the carb bogging which seemed to happen if you decided to change up with any less than about 20,000rpm dialled in (no tacho, obviously). Now to my way of thinking, this has got to be something to do with the fact that this 50 has been fitted with a 26mm carb (big enough for some 250s). I'm sure this helps the Caballero really fly when the throttle's held wide open, but I would happily sacrifice a tiny bit of top-end for some more manageable midrange. To me this is something which could easily be rectified by re-jetting, or perhaps adding a small restrictor, or simply changing the carb for a slightly smaller one.

That said... Power? I'd like a tiny bit more, please. I know it's *only* a 50 and it's bloody amazing for a 50. But when you see how well this thing goes and how competitive it is straight out of the crate, you just long for a bit more zip - maybe a 75cc big-bore kit - just to give you a tiny bit more choice of which gear to use, and to show those pesky 250s and 400s a clean pair of wheels through the woods!

And finally... Vibes. Lots of 'em. OUCH! Hence why our 50cc race series would have rider changes every 45mins.

Result!

Despite having to stop a few times to rescue Mel (more about which, elsewhere), and dropping the bike off a log bridge into a ditch which bent the gear lever into the frame rail (I had to stop and find a fence post to bend the lever straight again), I managed to reel off 14 laps - which was good enough for 13th place in the experts. Not an amazing result I grant you (the winner did 19 laps), but nevertheless one which gives you

A WAILY FIVE-OH



some idea how competitive a 9hp bike can be!

Why Buy?

Despite the giggles, not one of these problems would put me off owning one of these bikes. Why not? Because ever since riding it, I can't stop going over to it and patting it on the seat, every time I walk by. That for me is the mark of a bike which has got under my skin. Any other reason? Yep. It sounds like a proper rorty race bike with a high-pitched rasping noise that reminds me of the ill-tempered air-cooled two-strokes which sullied much of my childhood. Happy days.

And also because owning a bike like this would doubtless be a sheer pleasure to all the inveterate 'fiddlers' out there. Because it would give you loads of things to mess about with as you tried your damndest to extract a tiny bit more horsepower from the minuscule motor using all sorts of technical innovations like home-made power-valves or boost bottles etc.

Also because this is the first 50cc bike I've ever ridden which has build-quality akin to a Honda. After our three hour race the Fantic's frame paint wasn't even scuffed. Yamaha could learn a lot.

But lastly because even if the TBM 50cc Challenge Cup never even got off the ground, you'd have so much fun on a bike like this entering it in UK rallies, enduros, hare and

hounds and anything else you could think of (Weston Beach Race anyone?), that it would never fail to put a smile on your face.

If the idea of a 50cc series really did become reality, you can bet that the first person lining up to race one of these little beauties would be me...

FANTIC CABALLERO

Price:	£3100-3200
Engine:	Liquid-cooled Minarelli / Fantic single 48.9cc
Displacement:	48.9cc
Bore & stroke:	40 x 39mm
Carburettor:	26mm Dell'Orto VHST26
Transmission:	6-speed
Frame:	CroMoly perimeter
F susp:	40mm Marzocchi Magnum / Ti nitrided adjustable for comp/rebound
R susp:	Sachs monoshock with linkage fully adjustable
F brake:	260mm Braking Wave disc with Braking caliper
R Brake:	220mm Braking Wave disc with Braking caliper
Wheelbase:	1400mm
Seat height:	940mm
Fuel cap:	8.5L
Race weight:	99.4kg (measured)
Contact:	Fantic UK 07900 881455

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TT Winner

In its 40th anniversary year, Mark Williams details the rare and beautiful Yamaha TT500 thumper...

Having already set the benchmark with its 'DT' range of two-stroke trailies, in 1975 Yamaha surprised the Tokyo Motor Show with a brace of big thumpers which doubled the capacity of Honda's successful XL250 and set themselves squarely against BSA's ancient push-rod B44/B50 singles. One of them, the XT500, has been referred to regularly in Archives, mainly as regards its seminal influence on virtually every four-stroke trailie that came after it. But what hasn't been mentioned before is that the XT's stripped-down stablemate, the TT500, was launched simultaneously in 1976 but to a rather different market. And the reason for that omission is very simple: TT500s are as rare as hen's teeth here in Britain.

But a call to TBM Towers a couple of months ago yielded the intelligence that there was just such a beast lurking in the leafy suburbs of Welwyn Garden City, and what's more it was little used and in pristine, totally original condition. However, I'm afraid that I've heard those claims made many times before, only to turn up after a four hour drive to find a bike that is a shadow of its former self, and one that's often bent and bodged to boot.

In this case of Lee Ashley's bike however, for once the truth exceeded the fiction and like the SWM Enduro featured in our March issue, the condition of Lee's TT500 was sufficient justification for the Archive treatment. However before we deal with his personal bike, a profile of the model itself is in order and the first thing that must be said about the TT500 is that it looks damned similar to its XT sibling.

That it exists as a separate model at all is a consequence of Yamaha's marketing department which back in the early- to mid-Seventies realised that the all-important American market was quite unique in that it supported not just trials, motocross, desert racers (for which read

The ultimate toy - Yamaha's TT500 'playbike'...



enduros) and trailbikes, but also a huge demand for 'playbikes' which roughly translated meant machines that didn't have to conform to licensing regulations (eg trailies) but weren't out-and-out race bikes (eg moto-crossers). The idea was that you could load up your playbike in a van or pick-up, drive out to the boonies and hare around to your heart's content pretending to be Joel Robert, but without having the skill or the need to be competitive about it.

I suppose the nearest thing we had - and still have - to such bikes in Britain were 'field bikes', but of course they're usually stripped-down roadsters or shagged-out trailbikes that are no longer legal, but in Yankeeland playbikes were a viable commercial commodity with BSA, Hodaka and other marques offering options

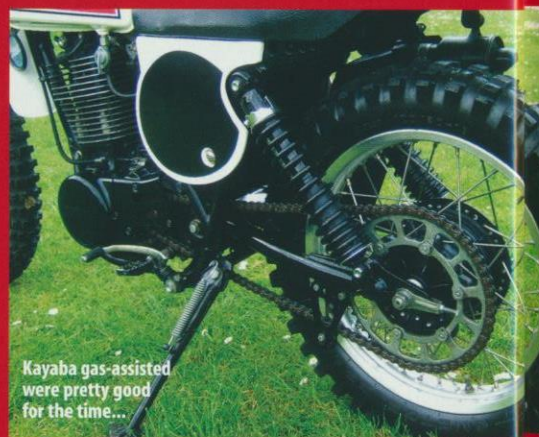
The Wonder of Welwyn



The first TTs had a lovely (if impractical) underslung pipe...

Lee Ashley is a relatively recent convert to the merits of Yamaha's half-litre dirt-bikes, having owned his TT500 for a little over a year, and an XT since 2002. But as their condition testifies, finding someone more passionate about these bikes would be a difficult call.

Obviously Lee is especially proud of his TT because it's so rare and, considering that most of these bikes were used and abused in America some 30 years ago, in such extraordinarily good condition. Like his XT500, the TT is an early 'C' model manufactured in 1976 and sold to its first owner in Costa mesa, California. The bike was obviously properly stored for much of its life before it came to the UK, as evidenced by the tenacity of the black finish on the engine finning and lack of pitting on the forks. Without a speedo, it's impossible to tell how many miles the bike's done, but the engine sounds and feels remarkably tight - more so than his XT's for example which although on a replacement speedo, has well over 20,000 miles under its belt. (That bike was originally an Italian import with a non-func-



Kayaba gas-assisted were pretty good for the time...

tional k/ph speedo, so it's hard to be precise about these things).

Equally remarkable to anyone steeped in fear of starting big, old four-stroke singles, once he'd eased it just over TDC with the exhaust valve lifter Lee's bike fired up first kick and quickly settled down to a gorgeous, even throb at low revs. (Interestingly, the 1976 XT/TT

engine lacked the porthole through which TDC could be observed on the offside end of the camshaft. That only became a fixture the following model year). In fact Lee's XT started equally easily, although with its slightly longer secondary muffler it sounded a tad quieter, though neither bike was offensively loud.

Comparing the two bikes under Lee's expert guidance I quickly appreciated the subtle and sometimes elegant differences: the brake arms on the TT are neatly cast in alloy as opposed to the XT's steel items, although both bikes sport lovely DID alloy wheelrims. At first glance, the fuel tanks appear identical, but in fact it's only the paintwork that's the same - for beneath that the TT's livery is an alloy item. Later versions of the TT (and indeed the XT) proudly bared their alloy tanks, and yet others were painted yellow and even orange.

Other upgrades to later versions included a sprung chain tensioner and differently rated springs for the Kayaba shocks.

Lee regularly rides both his Yams and plans to visit his third annual XT/TT jamboree in Biele, Switzerland, this June with his friend Ray who also owns an XT. In fact it was Ray who found Lee's TT for him, imported directly from the States by a dealer in Southend-on-Sea, Essex. 'It's not a bike you want to ride all day,' says Lee 'partly due to the vibration which can get a bit much, and partly due to the lower gearing, but it's great fun and utterly reliable.'

Unlike the XT which was far from original, and needed a new piston and camchain when he bought it, Lee's had to do very little to his TT except enjoy it. 'Some parts are hard to come by though,' he explains, 'especially the plastics. And the exhaust system is just about impossible to find because it was only made for one model year.'

Just as well that it's in near-immaculate condition then, which is something that Lee intends to maintain indefinitely. Asked what its value might be, he responds rather guardedly by assuring me it's not and is unlikely to ever be sold. 'It's just too precious,' he says. And indeed it is.



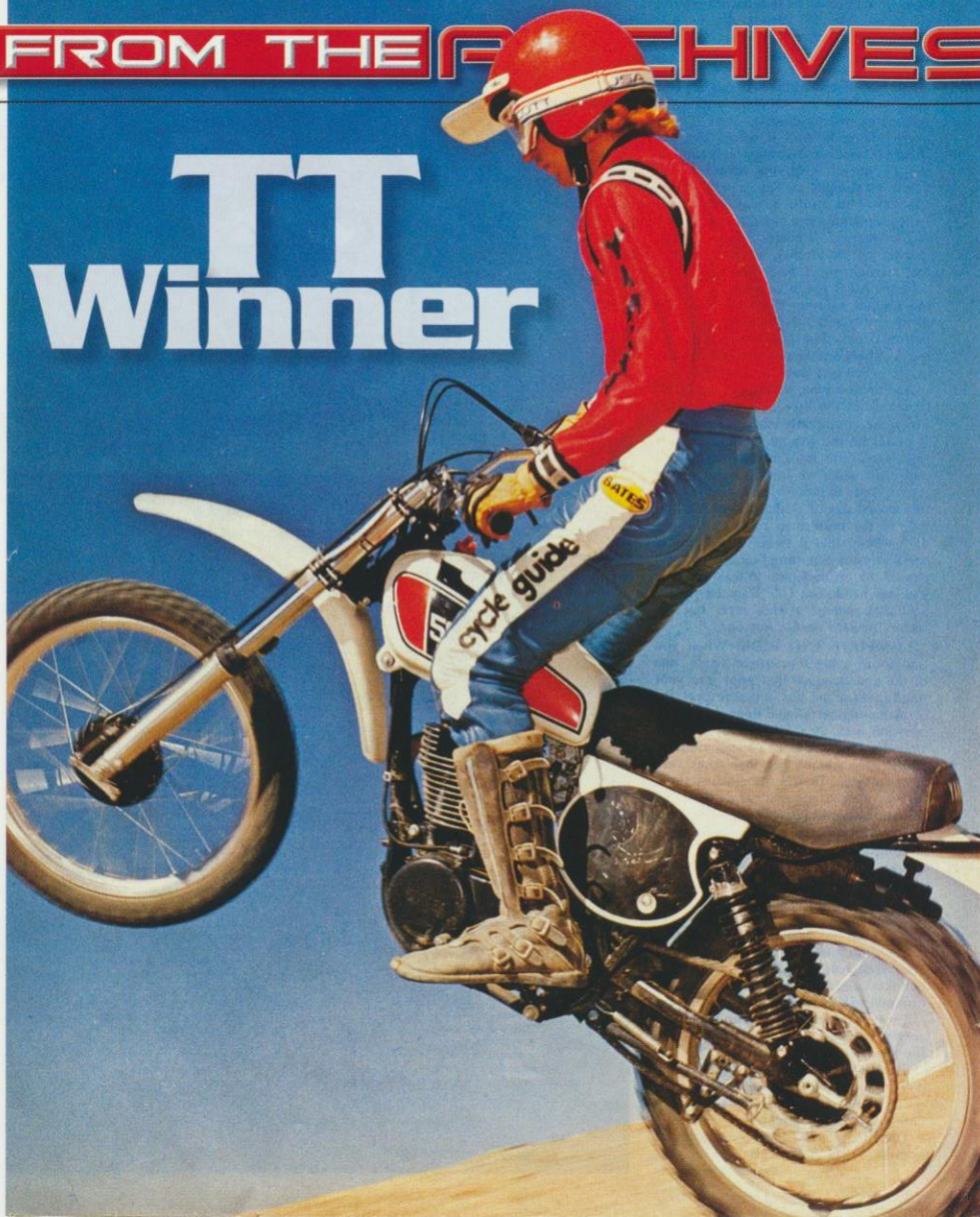
for playtime.

Which explains why Yamaha offered the TT alongside their XT500, and priced it at \$1398 - a hundred and fifty dollars less than the fully road-legal bike. And what you got for your money was essentially an XT500 Lite. Whereas mechanically the TT and XT were virtually identical, some of the cycle parts were different or, in the case of lighting arrangements for example, entirely absent. Relying instead on energy-transfer ignition, the TT also lacked a battery, as well as a speedo, tachometer and a horn and the exhaust system sported a stubbier spark-arrestor/secondary muffler.

Other changes involved smaller SLS hub brakes (cast in sexy magnesium), the rear one devoid of the cush-drive found on the XT, and another bit of shock-reducing rubberwear, namely the handlebar mountings, was also jettisoned. Finally although they looked identical, the TT's fuel tank was fashioned out of aluminium instead of steel as per the XT.

What all this added up to was a claimed 123kg as opposed to 129kg, although not all creature comforts had been sacrificed in favour of being mean 'n' lean. The TT shared the same long, deep, well upholstered seat as the XT, and should its owner actually want to, a set of rudimentary lights could be hooked up to a lighting coil which sat in the magneto, courtesy

TT Winner



of Yamaha's TY250 trials bike.

Apart from an indeterminate boost in power afforded by the slightly less restrictive exhaust system, the only concession to the TT's true purpose was the lower gearing afforded by a larger, 52 tooth rear sprocket. So, in case you're not actually an aficionado of Yamaha's half-litre single, let's take a quick canter through the basic mechanical virtues of both bikes. What you got was a slightly oversquare, 87 x 84mm four-stroke

with two valves and an overhead cam driven from the crank by a chain arrangement borrowed from the company's XS-2 (later XS650) twin machine.

A 9:1 compression ratio and modest cam timing produced a claimed 27bhp at 6000rpm and an equal number of ft/lbs of torque at exactly the same revs. Which was all very neat and tidy until a couple of American magazines stuck the bike on a dyno and revealed that the

true figures were around 23bhp and 25ft/lbs, albeit both at the aforementioned six grand. However this was power a plenty for a playbike and several contemporary testers were pleasantly surprised that the TT could keep company with and even beat most 'stokers - of whatever capacity - up hills and down the straights even if the smaller, lighter bikes were better in the twisties. In fact if you found yourself with a tarmac straight in front of you, the TT could be wound up to over 75mph in top gear, at which point the engine was howling at around 7000rpm. What's more, it would've got there from below 3000rpm when the bike would've been traveling at less than 30mph.

Indeed the key attribute of the TT/XT motor was its tractability, rendering it easy and undemanding to ride for longish periods of time, although the vibes would get to you after a while due to the wide, un-insulated handlebars. The motor was extremely well built too, with a caged roller big-end and even roller bearings for the camshaft. The wet clutch was essentially taken from Yamaha's two-stroke MX400 'crosser with a couple of extra plates thrown in for good measure and the slick, five-speed gearbox was driven from the crankshaft by surprisingly quiet, straight-cut gears. The gearchange itself was a little quick and a little grabby, but entirely manageable... especially for those weaned on slippery-clutched Brit bikes and thanks in no small part to a progressively calibrated push-pull 34mm Mikuni carb, the engine accelerated cleanly and without any dramas.

Slowing down was rather a different matter because the small single leading shoe hubs were something of an all-or-nothing affair and the front one suffered the additional disadvantage of suddenly fading when overheated.

Deceleration was therefore something TT500 owners had to plan reasonably well in advance if mishaps were to be avoided, but fortunately the big four-stroke's engine braking helped and

Ah that's more like it. The early TTs and XTs got used for competition purposes like the first Dakar Rallye...



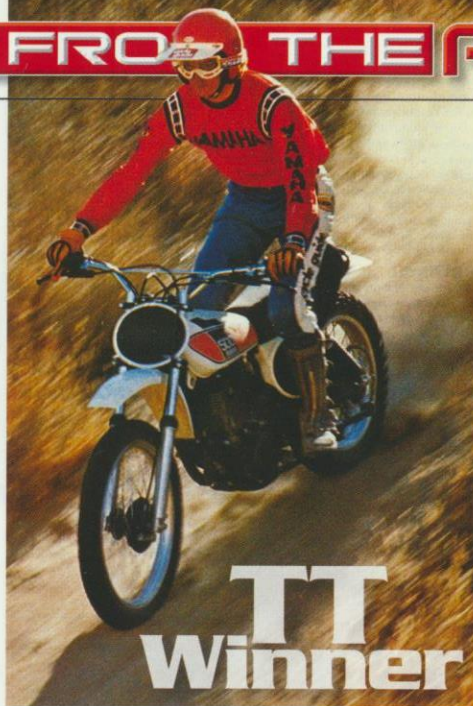
the bike's handling

was also rather forgiving. A long, 56.3in wheelbase mean that the chassis tracked pretty true along fire roads and scrubland, although a reasonably steep steering angle (at the time) - 30.5 degrees of rake and 5.28in of trail - helped it round fast-ish, bumpy corners without too much hard work and gave it a satisfyingly controllable ability to slide its back-end in third and even fourth gear. Where these numbers let the bike down were on tight, wriggly trails and picking its way through dense woodland where the TT's weight and length became all too apparent.

Having said that, the suspension was by-and-large up to anything you could throw at it, or rather anything you could throw it at. Over seven inches of progressively damped travel were what you got at the front end, although some testers found the forks harsher in extremis - ie towards the end of their travel - than they liked. But they all unreservedly applauded the steeply angled Kayaba gas-assisted shocks at the back-end, these units having already proven themselves on several Suzuki and Kawasaki moto-crossers, with differently rated springs.

Oddly enough, given the thoughtful design engineering evident in the suspension department, the mild steel frame itself was pretty mundane... and heavy. Because it held the oil for the dry-sump engine - a nod to the British thumpers its engine superceded - the backbone was broad and heavy, and the single downtube splayed into a dual rail subframe that did little to protect the crankcases... which was further compromised by the skimpiest of tin bashplates. The swingarm also, was a tad on the spindly side and not too well gusseted.

FROM THE ARCHIVES



And whilst we're dealing with the lower boundaries of the bike, for reason best known to themselves - and in direct contrast to what Yamaha's American importers had requested - the earliest versions of the TT and XT sported an underslung exhaust which compromised ground clearance (at 8.3in) and rendered it vulnerable to damage. The header pipe eventually married up with a box section muffler behind the offside plastic side-panel which looked neat enough and deadened the decibels very effectively, but because part of it wrapped round the back of the nearside shock absorber, it had the effect of overheating it and thus reducing its effectiveness.

Needless to say, within two years Yamaha replaced this exhaust system with an up 'n' over design which obviated all the problems. They also junked the tinny bashplate in favour of a much larger, wraparound item fashioned out of aluminium.

As a playbike, the TT500 quickly found favour with its intended market and indeed many older Yanks who were still keeping the faith with their BSA and even AJS/Matchless motocrossers in hare 'n' hounds and desert races changed their allegiances and with a few simple mods started winning with Yamaha's single. Of course the XT was always the more popular bike as it was a true dual, or rather multi-purpose bike: a trail-

bike, an urban commuter, a rugged back-roads tourer and let's not forget that in 1979 in modified form XT500s trounced all comers in the Paris-Dakar Rallye... and then did it all over again the following year.

But by 1981 the TT version had got rather left behind in developmental terms and was dropped from Yamaha's range whilst the XT soldiered on until 1983. And then of course in 1984 Yamaha launched the XT600, a considerably improved design which, once again, simultaneously spawned a TT version, although by the early 'eighties America's appetite for stripped-down playbikes had somewhat withered. This was partially due to creeping legislation and partially to a change in the market which found trailbikes getting relatively cheaper and more competent off-road.

The TT/XT500 engine of course continued to see service in Yamaha's SR500 road bike, albeit with different flywheels and valves, and it's testimony to the robustness of the original design that 30 year-old examples of this engine are even now chugging along reliably... and still providing plenty of fun for their owners. As for the XT and TT brands, well of course they're still going strong even now, although one could argue that the last real spiritual successor to the TT500 was the TT350 of the late Eighties, which was actually more of a real enduro than a playbike. But that's another story for another time.

YAMAHA TT500C

Price (1976):	(US) \$1398
Engine:	Air-cooled, SOHC, 4-stroke
Bore & stroke:	87 x 84mm
Displacement:	499.4cc
Comp ratio:	9:1
Max power:	27bhp @ 6000rpm (claimed)
Transmission:	5-speed
Chassis:	Single downtube, duplex sub-frame
Front susp:	Oil damped, 7.7ins. travel
Rear susp:	Kayaba gas/oil damped, 5.7in travel
Brakes:	Front & rear SLS drum
Wheels (F/R):	DID Alloy, 3.00 x 21in, 4.50 x 18in
Wheelbase:	56.3in
Seat height:	33in
Ground clear:	8.3in
Fuel capacity:	2.2gals
Dry weight:	271lb (claimed)

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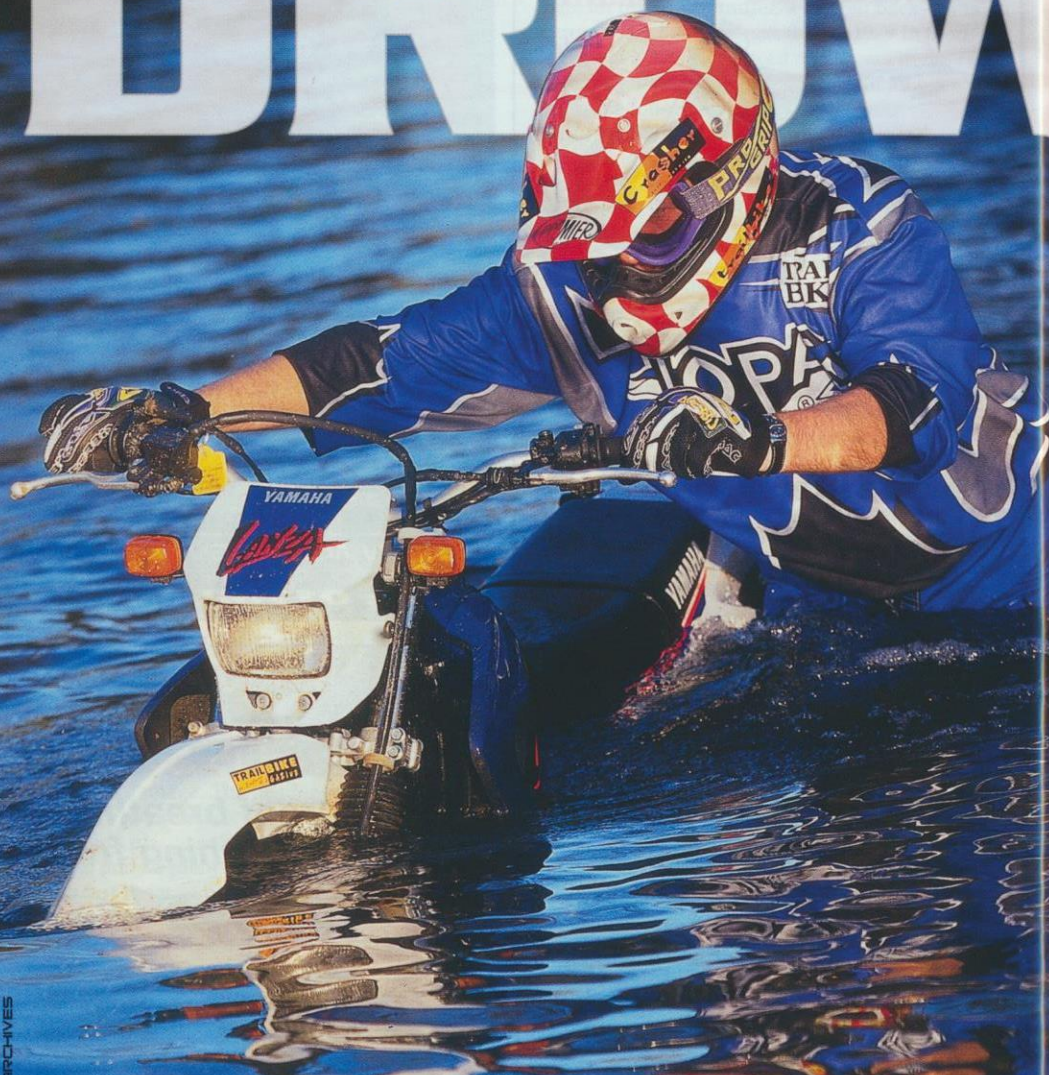


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DROWNING BY NUMBERS



Water crossings are one of the trickiest hazards you're likely to come across on your dirtbike. TBM gives you tips on how to cross safely and what to do if it all goes wrong and you end up filling your bike with water...

I can still remember that fateful moment to this day. It was mid-way through the second afternoon of a tough three-day enduro in France. The sort of race where you couldn't relax for a second - especially as we were tight on time that day. A tricky descent into a wide stream-crossing was followed by a stony climb out the other side. Or at least it would've been, had the 250WR and I actually made it out the other side. Instead we made it part way out and then (road-test excuse #34 coming up) the bike sort of 'bobbled' and down we went... With a splash! I dived for the kill-switch just in time to hear the motor make a strange gurgling sound and then 'silence'. Merde!

Crossing deep water can be a tricky business - take it from me. And filling your bike's engine with the stuff is to be avoided at all costs. At the very least it's an inconvenience - at worst it can mean forking out for a whole new engine. But don't panic, help is at hand - providing you adhere to the following rules you should be able to avoid the problem in the first place. Or if the worst does happen, then at least you'll know how to get out of the situation.

1) Prevention is better than cure

Naturally enough you don't always get a chance to suss out the depth of water before you cross it (especially when racing), but there are some obvious giveaways to look out for. Remember the old adage 'still waters run deep' - though in fact a metaphor for life, this old saying wouldn't make sense if it didn't have a basis in fact. If you can see swirling or rippling 'white' water, the chances are it's going to be shallow enough to ride through.

If the water crossing has been used frequently by bikes, there's a good chance that there's likely to be a big hole just before the far bank where riders have opened the throttle and the tyre has

When crossing shallow water wheeling comes in particularly handy...



DROWNING BY NUMBERS



spun. Watch out for this as it can catch you out! If other bikes are ahead of you, watch what happens when they go through the water: is it slippery or bumpy, is there algae on the rocks, are other riders struggling to make it across? See if you can pick a line beforehand which looks like the best/shallowest route, but don't try changing lines midway across - there may well be hidden ruts which could have you over.

If the water crossing has a firm base such as stone or rock (as in the case of a ford) and you can see the bottom, then once again the chances are that it should be okay to cross. If on the other hand a bike has just gone though and all you can see is muddy water, then be on your guard - it may be deeper than you think. Likewise, look at the vegetation - if there are reed beds the chances are it's going to be at least a couple of feet deep, because plants don't like drying out and tend to live in deeper water.

The way you cross water makes a difference too. If you know the water to be fairly shallow (less than a foot or so), then hoisting the front wheel across a puddle for instance can help keep both you and your bike, relatively dry. Beware

though, the extra drag on the rear wheel as you wheelie through water can bring down the front end with a splash. If on the other hand you simply charge through water as fast as you can, then you risk water being funnelled into the bike's electrics or airbox. The best course of action is to ride steadily through water so as not to make too big a wave.

2) Stand, sit, walk or carry!

How deep does it have to be before you should get off and push? Well, that depends upon you and your bike (and its ground clearance). A few years ago, bikes like the old KDX used to have fully sealed airboxes which only drew air from just below seat height. That meant that crossing any sort of water which was below the height of the seat-base was fairly safe.

However, since the mid-90s, bike manufacturers have made bikes with non-sealed airboxes and thus cross-ing water has become a significantly more hazardous affair.

In general if it's a fairly shallow crossing - a big puddle, flooded sunken road or ford perhaps - then stand up on the pegs as this gives



you the best chance to adjust your weight to account for any undulations in the underlying terrain. If on the other hand you're crossing a stream or river, you're usually better off sitting down as it's much easier to take a 'dab' from a seated position and this allows you to 'paddle' the bike over any sunken rocks, submerged branches etc.

Pushing your bike through a water crossing

(usually with the engine running and using first gear) will raise the bike's ground clearance by about 50mm from the height it would be if you were riding across - and this may be just enough in a swollen river to keep you out of trouble. But there's still a danger of losing your balance or stumbling and the bike going into the water with the engine running. So keep you're finger hovering over the kill-switch in case you begin

I drowned the bike...

Rob Sartin

It's not often that you start an enduro and end up losing your bike altogether. But that's exactly what happened to former British Enduro Champion Rob Sartin back in 1998. The event was the Hafren Enduro - the fifth round of the British Enduro Championship - and Rob was riding a brand new perimeter-framed TM250 which had arrived just days before the start of the event.

It had been raining hard for hours before the race and Rob was riding number one on the course, when shortly after the fuel stop on lap two he arrived at a stream crossing. Having already crossed it in the morning, Rob pointed his bike into the fast-flowing water, but unbeknown to him the water level had risen considerably in the intervening few hours. The sheer force of the water swept Rob and his bike downstream, and despite

fighting the current Rob was forced to let go of his bike after being taken under with it.

'I must have been swept 200m downstream with the bike and at one point I had it pinned against the bank' said a dejected Rob afterwards, 'but I couldn't hold onto it and it just disappeared...'

Rob was forced to walk back to the check-point - without his bike - and ended the day without a machine. Next day he set off to try and find his missing TM. Arriving at the stream crossing where he last saw it, Rob walked more than half-a-mile downstream before he eventually found the stricken bike wedged against some rocks. Stripped of virtually all its plastics, its subframe and even the lockwired grips which had been torn off the handlebars, the bike was scuffed all over and had lost most of its frame paint. Moral of the story? Watch out at water crossings...

If in doubt, get off and push...

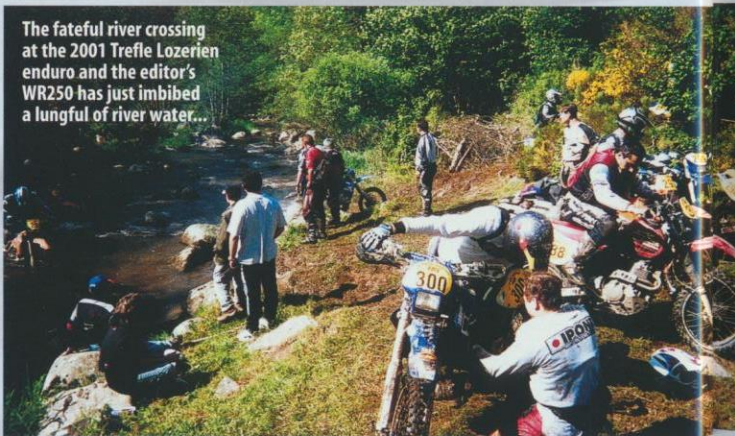


DROWNING
BY NUMBERS

to lose your footing or if you're at all unsure about the depth of the water, it's better to kill the engine and simply push it across. And if it's really deep then carrying the bike with four or five mates is the only solution, assuming there isn't a bridge nearby!

3) What you're trying to avoid...

...Is filling the engine with water. Unlike the fuel/air mix which your bike relies on for propulsion, water is non-compressible - not even a little bit. So think about the mechanics of a big slug of cold water getting into the red-hot barrel of your bike while the engine is running; up comes a rising piston (the irresistible force) and it meets up with the water (the immovable object) which it tries unsuccessfully to compress between the piston crown and the cylinder head. The result is an ugly phenomenon known as 'hydraulic lock' which has been known to bend con-rods, shatter pistons, crack barrels and lock up gearboxes. When it happens, engine destruction is more-or-less assured.



The fateful river crossing at the 2001 Trefle Lozerien enduro and the editor's WR250 has just imbibed a lungful of river water...

This situation can occur whether the bike is two-stroke or four- and the results are almost always equally as destructive - though obviously because four-strokes are more complex and run higher compression ratios, the damage is usually greater and rebuilds more expensive.

But what happens if your bike takes in a bit of water - as more commonly occurs when it goes completely underwater when it's running - so that it stops but doesn't hydraulic lock? What then..?

4) What you should do...

Stop and think. Under no circumstances should you attempt to fire up the engine using the kick-starter or worse-still the electric-start if it has one. The right decisions made at this stage can make the difference between getting going again or ending up with a blown motor, so just don't rush anything.

First of all recover the bike back onto firm ground by *pushing* it out of the water. Next take a moment to assess the likelihood of water having reached the engine. Obviously if the bike stayed upright and the exhaust and airbox were nowhere near water level then the bike probably just stalled due to one of a number of possibilities (water in the electrics, an earth through the plug cap, or the carb vent hoses becoming air-locked). If this is the case then it'll probably start up as soon as it's clear of the water. If on the other hand the bike went into (and under) the water with the engine revving, then chances are you have a much more serious problem on your hands.

If this is the case then the first thing you have to do is to get the water out again. So start by turning the fuel tap off and putting a kink in the tank vent hose so that fuel can't escape when you turn the bike upside down. Next, get out your plug spanner and loosen (but don't remove) the spark plug - this ensures that any crud which may be resting in the plug 'well' doesn't fall into the engine. Then take off the seat (or remove the side panel, open the door or do whatever you need to gain access to your bike's airbox). Remove the airfilter and cage and place it to one side where it won't get stood on.

Okay, assuming you're riding with a group of mates, get them to help you up-end the bike into a vertical (wheelie) position in order to drain any water from the exhaust pipe and airbox. There's a good chance that quite a lot of water will flood out from the pipe, so keep the bike upended but vary the angle until no more water emerges.

Once drained, turn the bike completely upside down so that it's resting on its handlebars and rear fender (ensuring that the electric-start button can't be depressed accidentally), and unscrew the spark plug and remove it. Water should begin to flow out from the spark plug hole. Okay, now using your hand to operate the kickstarter, begin cranking it over slowly to pump out any remaining water from the barrel. If it's a two-stroke you'll need to continue this process for a good while until the crankcase has completely emptied. Once no more water is emerging, then continue to crank the kicker for a minute or two - just to be sure - and to feel

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Quick Tip: Open cell foam in the bottom vent of the airbox and up around the tank interface will help prevent the airbox flooding if you go too fast through water. Remember to always carry at least a plug-spanner (and preferably a spare plug) with you whenever you ride, in order to be able to let water out of a waterlogged engine...

if the engine is turning over smoothly.

Right, turn the bike back onto its wheels and then turn your attention to the carb. You're going to need to drain the floatbowl, so either remove the drain plug or drop the bottom off the carb. Flick the fuel back on momentarily to wash fuel through the carb, then reassemble the bottom of the carb. Next go over to where you left the air-filter and remove it from its cage, and give the thing a good wring out. Chances are you're going to get a sloppy mixture of water and air-filter oil all over your hands, so it helps if you've got a bit of rag to clean up your hands afterwards. Continue wringing the air-filter out until no more fluid emerges, then go and stand a good way away from your mates and flick the filter - hard - because you want to get every last drop of moisture out of it if you can, otherwise you're in danger of fouling your new plug.

Once it's as dry as can reasonably be expected in the circumstances, reattach it to the filter cage

and (checking that the airbox is empty of water), reinstall the cage in the airbox. Next, take out your spare spark plug and fit it into the plug cap and (wearing your riding gloves and gripping the rubber plug cap), touch the metal part of the plug against an unpainted part of the engine such as a mounting bolt so that it's earthed.

Then crank the bike over on the kickstart (fairly swiftly) and look out for a nice fat blue spark across the plug's electrodes. If you don't have a spare plug (and none of your mates have the right sized one - don't worry if it has a different code), you're going to have to try and clean up the old plug as best you can using a bit of rag to ensure it's completely dry, and repeat this process. Assuming you have a spark, screw the plug back into place tightening gently with the plug spanner and pressing the cap into position.

Right, unkink the fuel breather hose, turn the fuel on (and the choke) and try and restart the



The late, great JD getting a little bit of help (from past winner Hubert Auriol) in the 1997 Dakar Rallye...

bike - preferably using the kicker so that you can feel if it suddenly locks up unexpectedly. Once it fires it'll run erratically at first with a mixture of both white and blue smoke emerging from the exhaust. Avoid the temptation to rev the bike at this stage - even if it's popping and banging and stalling all the time. What you want to try and do is to take the bike gently through its warm-up stage until the engine is running sweetly and responds smoothly to the throttle. Once warm, refit the seat (if it's off) and away you go.

If it's had a proper dousing, there's a fair chance that the engine may sound a bit rattly and ideally once you've got it up and running again you should head for home as soon as possible. If this isn't possible (say if you're in the middle of an event - like I was), then at the next checkpoint you should replace the air-filter with a freshly oiled one and pick up a couple more spare plugs.

Once you get the bike home, drain out all the oil (gearbox oil in a two-stroke, and engine oil and/or gearbox oil in a thumper) and replace with fresh. If the oil comes out milky then it's worth flushing the engine through with a proper flushing oil before refilling. If your thumper uses

paper oil-filters then replace these at the same time and clean out any mesh ones as well.

Drain the carb floatbowl again and replace the air-filter element. And keep a close eye on the engine over the next few rides - because the chances are it's going to need a rebuild at some time in the very near future. If the bike is already three or four-years old and to the best of your knowledge hasn't been rebuilt yet, then now's the time to yank the motor and strip it down (or give it to your dealer to do it for you). This may seem like an expensive option - but think about it. Better to have a nice box-fresh engine ready to deliver all its performance when you need it, than a rattley, smoky old lump which may just give up the ghost when you're miles from home. You won't be able to sell a bike like that, so you may as well bite the bullet, pay for it to be sorted, and get the benefit of using a fresh motor...

And finally, the best bit of advice of all is try and avoid getting water in the engine at all costs. Once you've experienced the hassle and cost of a drowned bike, you'll truly appreciate why it's worth exercising a little extra caution at your next deep water crossing...

SOLAR POWER

You've just finished a four-hour H&H on a glorious summers day and you're hot, dirty and probably don't smell too great either... and you've got to wait ages before you can get home and dive into the shower.

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New from US company Cycra, these are probably the best looking plastic wraparound handguards we've seen.

Made from a tough composite plastic, the complete 'probend racer' pack includes a U-clamp 'bar mounting system that should provide decent clearance for cables, plus a handy replaceable integrated black plastic abrasion end guard to keep things looking good.

Even though they're plastic, the guards won't offer much in the way of weight saving over alloy ones as they're pretty substantial, but at £54.99 will save you a fair amount of cash instead.

They're available in a range of colours that should match most bikes and will fit most 'bars' - call Madison on 01908 326002 to get hold of some.

PICTURE THIS

A pleasant trip down memory lane is just what '20 Years of Twinshock Trials' will deliver.

The new 120-page, 200-picture strong book offers a nostalgic slice of twinshock trials history from 1965-1985 and the assortment of black and white/colour photos feature some of the world's greatest trial heroes from days gone by, aboard some truly awesome machinery.

Compiled by none other than TBM's 'Old Gold' contributor John Hulme and his brother Alan, the limited edition book costs £19.99 (plus p&p) - to order, call 01663 733137 or check out yoomie.co.uk.

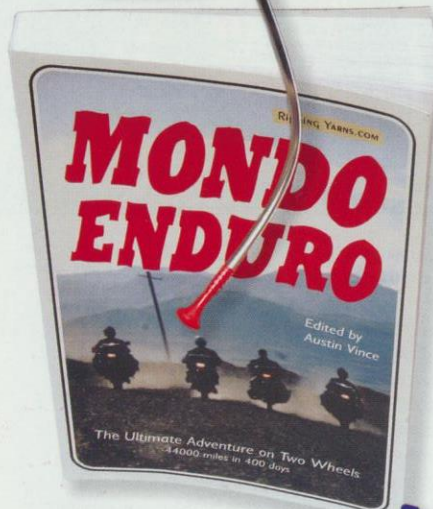
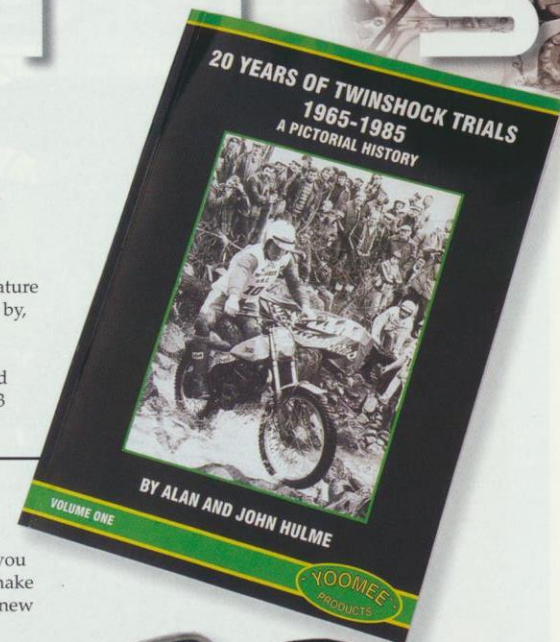
TIGHTY-WHITIES

Buckling up boots can occasionally be awkward, and if you wear knee braces then you'll know it's a little tricky to make them fit comfortably with normal boots. Thankfully the new Acerbis Impact X-Tight boots from Bert Harkins Racing solves the problem rather niftily with its innovative ratchet-strap system.

The quick-release mechanism (one upper, one lower) on each boot is easy and -dare I say it - quite fun to use and can be easily tightened to your required tension, making them perfect for people with larger calves or bad backs.

Trying them on in our office, there's no doubt that this system is far easier to use than conventional buckles, and considerably easier to adjust, though we reckon these boots may need a bit more TLC than standard ones as the ratchet design looks like it could allow crud to get into it. And only time will tell if the system is strong enough to last the distance.

As with all new technology, it comes at a price: the X-Tight boots will set you back £249.95 (replacement ratchet systems £33.95 each). Available colours are white, black, plus red and blue by special order only - call 01582 491076 to get yourself a pair. **Our verdict:** Innovative idea...



STAFF BIKES HUSQVARNA TE250



STORY: MEL; PICS: JACK STINGER

I'm convinced that one of you lot out there has got a voodoo-doll of my poor Husky and is busy sticking pins into it. Because necromancy is the only way to explain my latest bit of bad luck with the TE250.

After finally sorting out the starting problems last month, it was off to ride a H&H down in Wiltshire in mid-June and I was really looking forward to the opportunity to get out on the Husky now that it was back to its former glorious self. Especially with the Ed electing to ride a Fantic Cabellero 50 in the same race, as I reckoned his lack of horsepower might be enough of a handicap for me to maybe score a surprise result.

We signed on and sorted everything out with no fuss at all from the very friendly Mid West club officials - which contrasted sharply with some of our other recent experiences. Anyway I suppose I should've realised then that this was an omen that something had to go pear-shaped later on.

And despite the weather being absolutely scorchio, and suffering a couple of small offs on the sighting lap due to a combination of baked

dry ruts hidden under grass and an over-inflated rear tyre (the bike had come back from the dyno with 40psi in the rear tyre), I was hustling the Husky nicely around the 2.5-mile course and felt pretty confident as I lined up for the start in the sportsman four-stroke class.

Things started well, the course was a mixture of fast straights and flowing woodland sections with a grassy 'special test' style field thrown in as part of the course, and everything was going great guns. Until... coming to the end of a long straight on my third lap I reached for the front brake and... *nothing*. The lever came back to the bars! Luckily there was no sharp turn at the end, just a slight jink left over a hump into another field, so I used some hasty down-changes to come to a wobbly stop.

Five minutes later and some fiddling with the span-adjuster produced some front brake lever feel again. So off I went, but the brake failure had made me a bit more cautious when I subsequently got on the gas. However things seemed to be okay for the next couple of laps and I settled back down to a decent rhythm.

And even though the heat was claiming a

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STAFF BIKES

HUSQVARNA
TE250



Back-bleeding the brakes produced several large bubbles of trapped air and lots more tiny ones...

few victims along the way, I still felt fine and decided to pit near the end of my seventh lap as the front brake was feeling decidedly wood-en again. Ten minutes later and I couldn't get it working any better but there was still a bit of stopping power so I decided to head back out.

After bleeping through the lap-scoring transponder I charged into the woods early on in my eighth lap and just as I tried to slow down for a tight right-hand turn, the front brake let go big-time - spewing hot brake fluid all over my right hand. Sadly, that was the end of my heroic attempt to beat the Ed on his tiny tearaway.

After being rescued by a friendly marshal (cheers Sooty) I limped the TE out of the woods onto a field and rather optimistically tried the front brake, but as I could push the bike whilst pulling the lever all the way back to the bars I had to concede defeat (and yet another DNF).

Back at the TBM office, we spent a whole afternoon draining out the old brake fluid and replacing it with fresh, before attempting to bleed the system of any trapped air bubbles. Eventually after much cursing and swearing (not to mention dep Ed Barni getting squirted with brake fluid in *both* eyes), we got the system bled so that it was not just back to normal - but actually far better than normal, with a really firm lever pressure.

Because as they come as standard, these Brembo systems always have a squidgy feel at the lever, which we put down to tiny bubbles of air remaining in the brake hose from new

(we've never so much as topped up the brake fluid on our Husky before now, so it must've come from the factory like that). And we figured it must've been one of these bubbles of trapped air which began to expand as the brakes heated up, putting gentle pressure on the pads, which then fed heat back into the system. Until eventually the bubble expanded to the point where when I went for the brakes, there was nothing (no lever pressure at all) because of the volume of (now expanded) trapped air. Finally this got so bad that there was insufficient room for expansion in the front brake master cylinder and the whole system simply blew a gasket - quite literally!

Oh and before you ask - we checked the front brake's span adjuster and it *does* allow for sufficient lever 'freelap', even when fully adjusted either way - so it can't have been dragging at all.

Next month I hope to be able to report a bit of good news for a change, as the Husky's getting some lovely new red and white plastics and hopefully, a slimmer alloy tank to replace the bulky 9L plastic item. So I would really appreciate it if you lot could lay off using the Husky as a pincushion for at least one more month. Pretty please... **Mel**

Thanks to Midwest MCC mwmcc.co.uk for a great day's racing. And to Dep Ed Barni who suffered double vision in the TBM line of duty...

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Hit The Dirt

Where? Swaffham, Norfolk

What's It Like? The main enduro track is normally run about a mile and a quarter long, although it can be extended to 1.5 miles depending on layout.

It's run solely on Forestry Commission land so the course is based predominately in woodland and is made up of fast flowing bends with some tight corners thrown in. There's also a long whooped-out part that's split into three sections with short forest blasts in-between to provide some respite. The terrain is stony-loam.

The four-strong management team like to keep things pretty much as nature intended, which means that the vegetation and foliage surrounding most of the course is left

unchecked, making for a very scenic riding experience.

Even though the track's been designed for all ability levels more experienced riders will find it a challenge to ride quickly. Wet weather conditions mean the heavily wooded areas develop some big ruts so the course is changed accordingly to take account of this and keep things novice friendly.

What It Isn't: A farmer's field. The track is well maintained and regulated and the new owners have worked hard over the last six months to turn the place into a proper enduro/hare and hounds practice track.

Extra Info: In keeping with the professional image they want to portray the track is graded once in the morning and again at lunchtime if needed. It's well marked out, with straw bales around the circuit to indicate many of the turn-

Even if you're an off-road racing ace or just starting out, everybody needs somewhere to hone their technique - which is where practice tracks come in. TBM will feature a different track each month, which, in our opinion, offer an enjoyable day's riding on a well-maintained, safe circuit. And who knows, you might just learn a thing or two...

ing points which are covered with various dirt bike manufacturers' signs, plus there's bannering between some of the trees.

The track also actively encourages a 'stop and pick up any fallen rider' policy and there are no timed sessions. All riders are required to sign on before riding and youngsters are only allowed out on the main track under parental guidance. A recently extended beginners track is also available, which now has an optional jump for thumpsters and pit bikes.

Due to the fact that the track enjoys a relatively remote location there isn't really as much of an issue with noise as is the case with most other tracks; however, anyone turning up with an excessively loud pipe will be turned away.

Facilities: Toilets, changing area including a caravan to go in if it's wet, snacks, cold drinks

and a basic spares service is offered - levers etc.

Opening Times: Open weekends (10am-4pm) and Wednesday (midday - 6pm)

Cost: Main track: £20 adults, £15 kids

Directions (from south/north):

South: From the M11 heading north, at junction 9 take the A11 north (which joins the A14) and then re-join the A11 at J38. At Mildenhall take the A1065 to Swaffham. At Swaffham turn left onto the A47, then left onto the A1122. The track is 200m on the right (opp Swaff Raceway).

North: From the A1 heading south, take the A17 at Newark on Trent and follow it to King's Lynn. Take the A47 east to the junction with the A1122. Turn right, go for 200m and it's there.

Contact: 07900 904920 (track phone) or Chris on 07977 476166; alternatively try hit-the-dirt.co.uk. Always call to check availability before leaving home.

'06 MAXXIS FIM WORLD ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP



**ROUND 4:
GP OF VALLI BERGAMASCHE,
ITALY, 17-18 JUNE**



SAMULI ARO: 'DAY TWO STARTED WELL BUT I MADE A MISTAKE ON THE ENDURO TEST ON THE THIRD LAP AND STRUGGLED TO START MY BIKE - I HAD STOPPED IN A REALLY DIFFICULT PLACE SO I LOST SOME TIME GETTING GOING AGAIN. THANKFULLY I RODE WELL ON THE STONY MOTOCROSS TEST AND WAS ABLE TO WIN.'

Everyone's talking about...

Concerns that the fourth round of the 2006 World Enduro Championship was going to be too tough, occupied the thoughts of the majority of the series' best riders before the start of the GP Valli Bergamasche.

With the organising Moto Club Bergamo having announced that the event would be a hard one (in keeping with the FIM's wish-

es to ensure that the '06 WEC series is anything but easy), several riders asked why the event needed to feature four tests each lap, instead of the now-normal three, and four laps each day, instead of the regular three?

The event...

As the first WEC event this season to feature the controversial four special tests per lap, the fact that three of those tests - the

Paddock Pointers

WORDS & PICS: JONNY EDMUNDS

✓ US racer Kurt Caselli travelled to Rovetta to compete in the fourth round despite having only been back on a bike for a week since January due to injury. He placed in 11th and 12th in the E2 class aboard a 250cc two-stroke.

✓ Italian manufacturer Aprilia produced their best results of the series so far with Alessandro Botturi placing in fifth and sixth in the E2 class. The factory Aprilia bikes of Botturi and team-mate Zanni featured traditional single sided silencers

first motocross, the enduro and the extreme test - were all situated in the event's first time control was just one factor that made this a difficult event.

And with four laps each day plus a second motocross special test placed near the end of each lap, it meant that one-and-a-half hours worth of special tests were clocked up by the fastest riders each day.

The clear skies and hot, dry and dusty conditions also made the Italian round the toughest of the season so far, with even David Knight admitting that he was glad to see the finish.

With the first motocross test laid out on a grass field the enduro tests was laid out over exactly the same rocky hillside that the first ever extreme test there was marked out on back in 2002. Offering not much more than steep, loose climbs, tight turns, gravel tracks and a lot of dust the fact that this test has gone from being an extreme test to an enduro test in just four years shows just how much tougher the WEC has become.

As for the new extreme test, it was an all-natural, slow speed affair that started in tight

'06 MAXXIS, FIM WORLD ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP



DAVID KNIGHT: 'I HAD A BIG CRASH ON THE UN-TIMED ENDURO TEST ON DAY ONE, WHICH WOKE ME UP A BIT, PLUS IT WAS SO EASY TO BASH YOUR FOOT ON A ROCK OR DAMAGE YOUR BIKE, SO I JUST TOOK IT STEADY IN THE REALLY DODGY PLACES. THE TESTS WERE SO LONG THAT JUST KEEPING YOUR CONCENTRATION THE WHOLE WAY WAS DIFFICULT.'

woodland before winding its way up a dried-up streambed. With rocks littered everywhere the test played a deciding role in the Enduro 1 class results on both days.

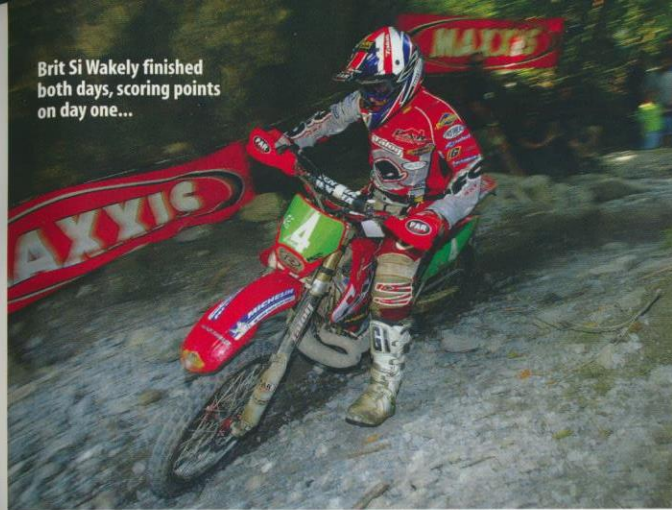
And the winners are...

Competition in the Enduro 1 class between reigning class champion Ivan Cervantes and his closest two rivals - Simone Albergoni and Alessandro Belometti - was fiercer than at any of the three preceding races this season for one simple reason... both Albergoni and Belometti wanted to win at their home round of the championship.

Day one turned out to be extremely eventful for these top three riders, with Belometti setting the pace, but with just two special tests to go before the end the Italian ran into trouble. Hitting a rock on the extreme test with his factory KTM the former motocross rider managed to bend his rear sprocket, which cost him seven minutes and dropped him from an almost certain win to 15th in class. Needless to say he wasn't too impressed with that!

So with Belometti out of the way, Cervantes managed to do just enough to stop Albergoni winning on home soil on day one. Interestingly, Cervantes, having read in the local newspaper that Albergoni reckoned he had what it took to beat the

Brit Si Wakely finished both days, scoring points on day one...

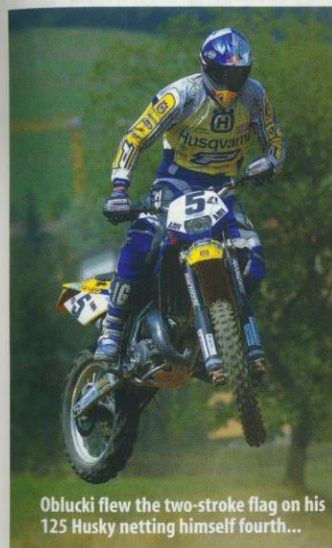


IVAN CERVANTES: 'TO BE HONEST IF BELOMETTI HADN'T HAD THE PROBLEM WITH HIS REAR SPROCKET HE WOULD HAVE WON - HE WAS RIDING REALLY WELL.'

Spaniard, he cut out and carried the newspaper clipping around with him all day and presented it to Albergoni at the finish.

With Cervantes beating Albergoni by seven seconds Italian Yamaha rider Maurizio Micheluz placed in third, claiming his first ever WEC podium while Bartosz Oblucki continued to fly the two-stroke flag and got fourth aboard his Husqvarna.

On day two, with Belometti unable to find the speed he had shown on day one, and with Albergoni simply running out of energy with one lap to go,



Oblucki flew the two-stroke flag on his 125 Husky netting himself fourth...

The Brits...

With the exception of David Knight's E3 class topping performance on both days the fourth round of the '06 WEC series was very much a disappointing one for the three other British riders in the competition. Starting the event with high hopes of a good result at his team's home race, TM-mounted Euan McConnell failed to finish either day due to 'silly little mechanical problems'. On the first day his bike's spark plug cap worked just loose enough to cause the bike to run intermittently, which eventually put him over the 15-minute lateness allowance. Then on day two, dirt worked its way into his bike's carburettor, which again caused the bike to run spasmodically, and Euan simply ran out of time and failed to finish for a second time.

Paddock Pointers

☑ Suffering from the flu, Frenchman Johnny Aubert went from leading the E2 class at the start of the event to only scoring points on day one following a big crash that then ruled him out from day two with a broken rib

☑ Swede Joakim Ljunggren saw his lead in the Enduro Junior class cut to just one point when he suffered mechanical troubles on day two. Halfway through the '06 WEC series Ljunggren and Aussie Jake Stapleton have everything to fight for to determine who will come out on top in the EJ championship

Cervantes claimed a relatively comfortable win to further extend his championship lead.

But Belometti managed to make up for his day one disappointment by claiming the runner-up spot while Albergoni came in third.

By contrast, over in E2, Samuli Aro's performance in Italy was his best for a long time, as he produced two first class performances that not

Things weren't much better for Paul Edmondson as the former four-time world champion only managed to finish the first day's competition. Affected by the heat on day one and getting badly dehydrated, Paul all but ran out of energy halfway through and cruised through the second and third lap to place in ninth in the E2 class. Starting day two Paul opted not to continue after just two special tests as he was still feeling less than 100 percent fit.

As the only British competitor in the Enduro Junior class, Si Wakely managed to finish both days in Italy but only scored points on day one.

Placing 10th on day one and finding the dry and dusty conditions tough, Si dug deep to finish day two but disappointingly failed to collect any points for his efforts.

Knighiter... On the charge!



only landed him the class win on both days but put him back at the front of the E2 world championship.

Despite constant pressure from Frenchman Johnny Aubert, Samuli kept his focus all day and hardly made any mistakes, and with Stefan Merriman never able to match the pace of the Finn or the Frenchman, it looked like Aro, Aubert and Merriman would finish first, second and third - but they didn't.



On the very last test of day one Aubert crashed heavily and lost close to a minute. Having been so much faster than the majority of the E2 class riders until that point he only dropped one place to third, which meant that the day ended with Aro winning from Merriman with Aubert third.

Breaking a rib when he fell on day one Johnny Aubert failed to start day two, which meant that things were a lot easier for Aro. Again riding well the Finn claimed the win with Merriman finishing not too far behind, with Honda mounted Mika Ahola claiming third.

Drama struck the Enduro 3

on, the Finn launched himself and his factory KTM off the top of one of the steep hills and came crashing to the ground. Lucky to be able to walk away from the incident, Marko later pulled out of the event. Told initially that he had re-broken a bone in his right wrist that he had injured two years previously, later x-rays showed that he hadn't in fact broken anything.

With Tarkkala out, David Knight finished four minutes ahead of his nearest rival on both days and was the event's fastest overall rider. Now at the halfway point of the E3 championship Knight already has nearly a 50-point advantage.

class no sooner than the event had started. With David Knight having set off first on the opening test of the day his closest championship rival and team-mate Marko Tarkkala crashed out of the event less than one minute into the same test.

Momentarily forgetting exactly which part of the special test he was

RESULTS - DAY 1

ENDURO 1 CLASS

1	IVAN CERVANTES	(KTM)	1.24:21.04
2	SIMONE ALBERGONI	(HONDA)	1.24:27.83
3	MAURIZIO MICHELUZ	(YAMAHA)	1.26:12.57
4	BARTOSZ OBLUCKI	(HUSQVARNA)	1.26:38.85
5	ROBERTO BAZZURRI	(HUSQVARNA)	1.26:50.04

ENDURO 2 CLASS

1	SAMULI ARO	(KTM)	1.23:03.69
2	STEFAN MERRIMAN	(YAMAHA)	1.24:50.41
3	JOHNNY AUBERT	(YAMAHA)	1.24:59.41
4	MIKA AHOLA	(HONDA)	1.25:17.67
5	ALESSANDRO BOTTURI	(APRILIA)	1.26:51.89

ENDURO 3 CLASS

1	DAVID KNIGHT	(KTM)	1.22:01.58
2	SEB GUILLAUME	(GAS GAS)	1.26:14.46
3	ALESSIO PAOLI	(TM)	1.26:25.15
4	BJORNE CARLSSON	(HUSABERG)	1.26:40.93
5	PAOLO BERNARDI	(HONDA)	1.29:02.13

ENDURO JUNIOR CLASS

1	JOAKIM LJUNGGREN	(HUSABERG)	1.27:58.57
2	MICHAL SZUSTER	(YAMAHA)	1.28:41.32
3	OSCAR BALLETTI	(HONDA)	1.28:50.59
4	ORIOI MENA	(GAS GAS)	1.29:50.46
5	JAKE STAPLETON	(TM)	1.30:05.51

RESULTS - DAY 2

ENDURO 1 CLASS

1	IVAN CERVANTES	(KTM)	1.25:00.41
2	ALESSANDRO BELOMETTI	(KTM)	1.25:40.91
3	SIMONE ALBERGONI	(HONDA)	1.26:31.43
4	MAURIZIO MICHELUZ	(YAMAHA)	1.28:21.90
5	ROBERTO BAZZURRI	(HUSQVARNA)	1.29:46.50

ENDURO 2 CLASS

1	SAMULI ARO	(KTM)	1.25:44.81
2	STEFAN MERRIMAN	(YAMAHA)	1.26:08.82
3	MIKA AHOLA	(HONDA)	1.27:27.29
4	ANDREA BELOTTI	(KTM)	1.27:54.74
5	XAVIER GALINDO	(KTM)	1.27:56.84

ENDURO 3 CLASS

1	DAVID KNIGHT	(KTM)	1.24:04.43
2	BJORNE CARLSSON	(HUSABERG)	1.28:18.48
3	SEB GUILLAUME	(GAS GAS)	1.28:51.57
4	MARCUS KEHR	(KTM)	1.29:35.85
5	PAOLO BERNARDI	(HONDA)	1.30:10.20

ENDURO JUNIOR CLASS

1	JAKE STAPLETON	(TM)	1.30:16
2	MICHAL SZUSTER	(YAMAHA)	1.30:59.24
3	MARC BOURGEOIS	(HUSQVARNA)	1.31:51.51
4	ORIOI MENA	(GAS GAS)	1.32:26.15
5	CARLO CONFORTI	(HONDA)	1.33:24.77

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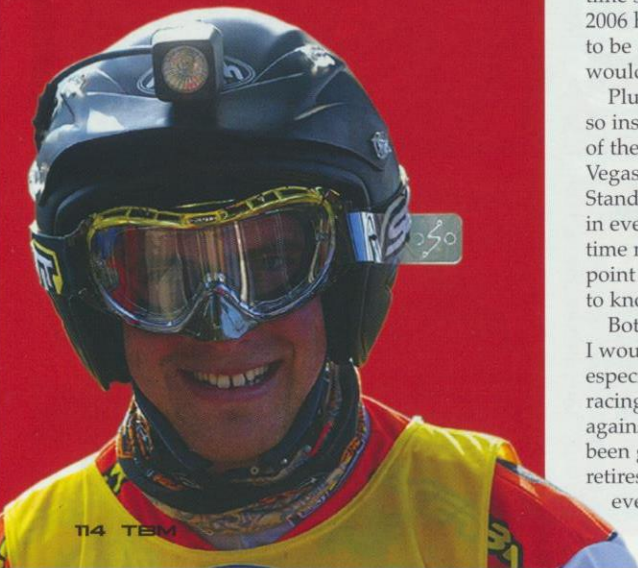
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KNIGHT

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SPEED



It's been 'make-my-mind-up' time recently. There are two big decisions that I have to make each season - the first deciding if and who I will race for at the upcoming ISDE and the second concerning what I will be doing next season. And in this case what and, more importantly, *where* I'll be racing in '07.

After two months of head scratching weighing up my options and basically having a good ol' think about where I'm at in my racing career right now, and thinking about what more I want to achieve, I've made my decision.

I will not be racing as a member of the British Trophy team in NZ in November, which might come as a shock to some people as I have always been a keen supporter of the event and won it outright last year. There are a number of reasons why I have opted not to represent team GB this year, but the biggest one is because of what I will be doing in 2007 - leaving the WEC and racing in the good old US of A.

In many ways my two decisions are closely linked. When I started racing I really wanted to achieve three things - win a world championship, win the Six Days and win a US GNCC title. And that is still what I want to do, hence the decision to race in the US.

As a result, this has meant that competing at this year's ISDE would have been impractical. Although the event runs for six days the actual

'I have always said that I would love to race in the US given the right opportunity...'

time spent away from home is about a month. 2006 has been an extremely busy year for me so to be away for that amount of time at one event would have been too much.

Plus I need to do some next season race prep so instead I will compete in the last two rounds of the '06 US GNCC series before racing the Las Vegas Endurocross and the Red Bull Last Man Standing, while testing in between. Competing in events in the US ahead of racing there full time next year makes sense from a promotional point of view as well as giving me time to get to know my new team, bikes, sponsors etc.

Both decisions were really difficult to make. I would have loved to have raced in NZ, especially as Stefan Everts is supposed to be racing there. I didn't get the chance to race against him in Brazil back in '03 so it would've been good to have challenged him before he retires, at what many are saying will be his last ever race. I also genuinely enjoy the Six Days,

Jumping ship... Knight's leaving the WEC for the challenge of the USA GNCC championship next year!



no matter what country it's in and I'm already planning on racing in Chile next year.

So why have I decided to leave the WEC? Well, I have always said that I would love to race in the US given the right opportunity. It was an option put on the table by KTM when I re-signed for them mid-way through last year, and with Juha Salminen having raced there for two years he's now coming back to race in Europe and I'm heading to the USA.

I'll initially go for a year and if I like racing over there then I'll look at staying on for another year, and so on. If for whatever reason racing in the US doesn't appeal to me as much as racing in Europe then I'll come back, but not before I've given my all to winning the GNCC.

I certainly haven't decided to leave the WEC because I am in anyway unhappy with it, although as I said in my column last month I *am* getting fed up of some of the whinging riders. If I had stayed in Europe then I think I would have probably moved to the Enduro 2 class, just so that I had fresh competition and a new challenge after two years in E3.

Anyway, with a two-month break in the GNCC series from the end of June till the end of August next year I will have time to return to race in Europe, so hope to race in a couple of world championship races and maybe a few British events too.

And as far as this year's world championship

is concerned things are still going really well. At the last round in Italy my team-mate Marko Tarkkala, who is also my closest rival in the E3 championship, injured himself and didn't score any points on either day, which means I'm now 48 points ahead half way through the season.

We hadn't even finished the first test of the event when Marko crashed. Obviously I didn't see it but from what I have been told he was lucky to have just broken a bone in his wrist. Basically he got confused as to where he was on the test and carried way too much speed over a steep drop and landed on the flat at the bottom of the slope.

Being almost a full two-day event ahead now (in terms of points) if things go well in Canada and the US I'll hopefully be able to wrap up the title in Slovakia, (the penultimate round of the championship), in early September.

I'm certainly not counting my chickens before they're hatched but if I *am* able to win with a round to go I'll hopefully ride something other than my 525EXC at the final round in France, maybe a 250cc four-stroke. Last year I didn't have another bike organised to ride in the last event hence why I'm going to make sure I sort it out for this year.

And if I can do all that then hopefully I'll have time for some well deserved R&R before my Stateside debut. Watch out America, here I come!



B BETA

TR 32



We're not convinced by this 1983 Beta brochure. Check out the angle of the tufts of grass. Was the hill really as steep as they're making out - we suspect not...

B BETA

TRIAL

OLD GOLD

Beta may be one of the world's oldest bike manufacturers, but their trials machinery only stretches back as far as 1981 as these early brochures testify. John Hulme takes up the story..

When Harglo the UK importers of the Italian range of Beta road and enduro range of motorcycles announced it was adding trials machines to its range in January 1981, it was the beginning of an exciting time in trials. Founded in the Italian region of Florence in 1904, Beta was a famous name in Italian off-road circles making enduro and motocross machines and enjoying a good reputation for building tough and durable machines.

The first trials machines into the UK were the 125cc TR (though a 50cc had been available in Italy), featuring a six-speed gearbox and Betor suspension front and rear, motoplatt electronic ignition and a Dell'Orto carburettor, the

What's the Story?

Mick Ransome



Fifty-three years of trials riding is pretty good by anybody's standards, and to still be well respected and in with a good chance of success when you compete is a rare achievement indeed. But that's the recognition afforded to Derbyshire's Mick Ransome, pictured here in this year's Pre 65 Scottish trial held at the beginning of May.

We've intentionally used a modern picture of the former Francis Barnett factory rider as the machine he rode just two months ago is the exact same machine that he campaigned 40 years earlier in the main Scottish Six Days Trial. An achievement few other riders can boast.

Mick, once a plumber, then a college lecturer whilst also running a small holding was offered a Francis Barnett works ride back in 1961 following eight successful years as a quality trials rider in the Yorkshire and Derbyshire districts. A ride he was more than happy to accept until the AMC factory closed in 1966.

'The reason the British motorcycle industry folded could have been down to me' joked Mick recently. But in reality Mick was a fine example of an expert trials rider good enough to be offered a factory ride, with results that enabled him to retain his sponsorship until the company came to a natural end.

'The liquidators told me I could buy my bike for the cost of the Purchase Tax in 1966, so I accepted and paid them £47.17s. 6d as I recall and I kept the bike for a further three years. 'But in 1969 what with a mortgage, a young family and other pressures, I sold the bike. Then about nine years later the guy I sold it to saw me spectating at the Northern Experts Trial. He told me it was in a poor state, but said I could have it back for free as long as I restored it, so naturally I was quite happy to have it back. I've owned it ever since; I ride it regularly and of

course it has been modified as time has gone on, but it's basically the same bike.'

Mick has been involved with trials for over 50 years. He started back in the early Fifties on a BSA B34 with a Gold Star engine, riding it in Yorkshire trials and of course riding it both *to* and *from* the event. 'Lads these days can't believe we rode the bike to the trial, rode the trial, then rode home again, but back then it was the thing to do.'

His first Scottish was sometime between 1954-57, 'I can't remember exactly' he confessed to me, 'but I know I won a Special First [class award]'. A semi-sponsored Ariel followed for

a few years on which he rode both winter trials and summer scrambles before the Francis Barnett deal came along, and it's with Fanny Bs that Mick has been associated ever since.

Riders in the Peak Trial (which Mick twice won) will remember riding at

Only Grange Farm, the smallholding Mick owned, before climbing over the hill to Back Tor Farm which still features in the Peak. 'I always marked out the sections on my land and my wife helped the club by observing and for a number of years I was a local club secretary and even now I still help out with organising trials for the Peak Classic Club.'

'I think I've a few more trials left in me yet; like so many people I pick and choose the trials I ride, it's a pity they are not all like Scotland which is a wonderful event.' And it's in that wonderful event that the Barnett now appears here. It is a glorious example of a Pre 65 two-stroke trials iron that has been kept true to its roots whilst enjoying 40 years of gentle development. And it's still competitive. At 70 years of age Mick rode to a First Class Award in this year's Pre 65 trial, so with a combined age of over 110 years, that can't be a bad achievement!

'He told me I could have the bike back for free as long as I restored it, and I was happy to have it...'

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Yamaha WR400F, 1998, T&T, road legal, little use, £1995 ono. Tel 07802 316302 (Manchester)

KTM 450EXC, 2004, taxed, 45 hours' use, bashplate, new tyres, green laned only, very clean, £3400 ono. Tel (mobile) 07917 208880 or 0114 265 3796 (S Yorks)

Yamaha TTR250, 2002, 52-reg, 2000 miles, new model, special rack, new tyres, hardly used, vgc, bargain at £1600 ono. Tel (mobile) 07836 711253 or 01993 822669 (Oxon)

KTM 450EXC, 2005, 36 hours' use, just serviced, new tyres / c+s, handguards, clutch saver, fork gaiters, loads of trick bits, £3650. Tel 07974 350805 (Yorks)

CCM 6440S, 2002, silver, 4900 miles, Suzuki motor, removable 33bhp restrictor, enduro wheels, new tyres, £2500 ono or may p/x Husky/Berg. Tel 01249 460796 (Wilts)

Yamaha XT225 Serow special edition, M-reg, white/burgundy, MoT, disc brakes, Renthals, exc cond, £1395 ono. Tel 01942 723585 (Lancs)

Yamaha XT225, 2004 model, 5000km, two owners, rack, handguards, some spares/manuals, vgc, £1895 ono. Tel 07966 580640 (Lancs)

Honda CRM250 mkII, 1993, T&T, new c+s/rings, well serviced, DEP pipe, phone for details, £900 ono. Tel 01642 806466 (N Yorks)

Honda XR250, 1999, T&T, oil/filter change every 600 miles, recent pads/brake seals/head bearings, new c+s, good cond, £1750 ono. Tel (mobile) 07976 981489 or 01484 864854 (W Yorks)

Suzuki DR350, L-reg, white, T&T, green lane use, good solid cheap bike, £950 ono. Tel (mobile) 07720628209 or 01384 349156 (W Mids)

Honda XR250R, 1997, no T&T, stolen/recovered, been re-registered, good cond, phone for more details, £1150 ono. Tel (mobile) 07720 628209 or 01384 349156 (W Mids)

Gas Gas Pampera 250, 1999, T&T, good cond, £1150. Tel (mobile) 07831 824663 or 01886 889202 (Worcs)

Alfer VR250, 2002, Rotax 2T with adjustable power-valve, road reg'd, spares, £1295. Tel Paul on 07813 047118 (Bucks)

Gas Gas EC300, 02-reg, ridden twice in '05, garaged since August '05, vgc, injury forces sale, £2250 ono. Tel 01634 319549 (Kent)

KTM 250EXC 2T, 2006 model, six months old, first service completed, as new, £3500 no offers. Tel 0118 950 7575 or 01252 394895 (Bucks)

Suzuki DR250 Djebel, 1998, T&T, 1998, well maintained and loved, light green lane use only, exc bike, £1500 ono. Tel 01840 213691 (Cornwall)

Yamaha WR250F, 2002, T&T, 1700 miles, recent c+s/Michelin, Arrow can plus standard, very well maintained, awesome bike. Tel 07971 391552 (Somerset)

CCM 404E, 2004, taxed, very low miles, road legal, extras, vgc, £2350 ono. Tel (mobile) 07952 242021 or 01543 416692 (Staffs)

Yamaha Serow, 1986, LDT special, kickstart only, alloy tank, gas-flowed head, many mods, £650. Tel 01242 678106 (Gloucs)

Yamaha WR250F, March '06, brand new unused, no engine, have '04 450 engine which may fit, £3100. Tel 07802 172774 (Lincs)

Suzuki SX200 trailie, 1990, white, vgc, £995 ono. Tel (mobile) 07852 251796 or 01508 570592 (Norfolk)

Gas Gas Pampera 250, 2005, very low miles, exc cond, fantastic green lane/trials, £1975. Tel 0117 937 2046 (Avon)

KTM 125EXC, 2000, not used past two years, lots of spares, good cond, £1500. Tel 020 8974 1516 (Surrey)

KTM 520EXC, 2003 reg'd, T&T, 2700 miles, road and enduro wheels, 14L MXC tank, cooling fan, may spares, £2850. Tel (mobile) 07989 190314 or 01384 895107 (W Mids)

Suzuki PE400 enduro, 1980, 3000 miles, history, rare bike in vgc, £1295 ono. Tel 01993 831580 (Oxon)

Husqvarna TE610, 2001, T&T, Talons/Excels, MTC pipe, hand/sumpguards, green laned only, vgc, £2150. Tel (mobile) 07736 061288 or 02380 869526 (Hants)

Honda XL600, 1985, T&T, large tank plus original, not messed with, good cond for year, £1150. Tel (mobile) 07855 954241 or 01430 441960 (E Yorks)

KTM 400EXC, 2004, taxed, very well maintained, too many extras/new parts to list, vgc, £3625 ovno. Tel 07776 234379 (N Ireland)

Beta Alp 200, 2003, yellow, T&T, exc cond, £1900. Also Beta Rev3 trials bike, 2004, road reg'd, light use, well maintained, exc cond, £1900. Tel 01892 680728 (Kent)

Gas Gas EC300, 2001, T&T, power pipe, anodised wheels, Renthals, little use, vgc, £1500 ono. Also have full riding kit. Tel 07973 427017 (W Mids)

Gas Gas EC250, late '03, sumpguard, front mousse, suspension serviced, full engine/gearbox rebuild, c/w receipts, new graphics, spares, no expense spared, ready to race, £2200 ono. Tel (mobile) 07736 878106 or 01458 259197 (Somerset)

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Honda XR250R, 1999, S-reg, T&T, receipts for £800+, fully sorted bike with spares, £1750. Tel 07753 807650 (Leics)

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Yamaha TTR250, '04 model, only 500 miles trail use, fender bag, Renthals, sump/hand/frameguards, vgc, £2450. Tel 01600 861848 (S Wales)
KTM 250EXC 4T, 52-reg, MoT, spares, vgc, injury forces sale, £1900. Tel (mobile) 07712 132201 or 01530 249978 (Leics)
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Suzuki DR-Z400S, 2001, Y-reg, yellow, MoT, low mileage, Alphadot security, £2150 ono. Tel (mobile) 07968 332096 or 01278 652993 (Somerset)
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Suzuki DR-Z400E, 2003, 2400 miles, road legal, CRD exhaust, rad/sumpguards, indicators and much more, great dual purpose bike, £2450. Tel 07779 600171 (Lancs)
Honda XR250R, 2003, UK model, T&T, light use from new, original cond, £2550. Tel 01803 812940 (Devon)
KTM LC4 640E, 2003 model, orange, 2200 miles, FSH, never been off-road, £3000 ono. Tel 07803 017365 (W Lothian)
Kawasaki KDX200, 1997, P-reg, T&T, low mileage, two owners, unused for two years, HPI checked, good cond, £1200 ono. Tel (mobile) 07835 824297 or 01925 767340 (Cheshire)
CCM 6440S, 2002, silver, T&T, trail trim, recent tyres/brakes, restrictor kit available, good cond, £2250. Tel 01249 460796 (Wilts)
KTM 525EXC, 2006, new in April '06, 77 miles/three hours' use, mint except small graze on exhaust, trail use only, back injury forces reluctant sale, £4200. Tel 07795 121838 (Cumbria)
Honda CRM250R mkIII, 1995, M-reg, loads of different parts been fitted inc chrome DEP system, £1500. Tel (mobile) 07754 961474 or 01692 406802 (Norfolk)
Gas Gas EC300, 2005, road reg'd, taxed, powdercoated frame, new tyres, '06 switchable ignition, radiator guards, HD tubes, exc cond, £2795 ono. Tel (mobile) 07947 572895 or 0191 385 7220 (Tyne & Wear)
Honda XR400R, 5-reg, recent c+s, new oil/filter, CRD exhaust plus original, bashplate, indicators, mirrors, lots of spares, £1100. Tel 07801 368686 (Dorset)
KTM 400EXC, 2004, only 13 hours' use, never raced, hand/sumpguards, original spares/docs, as new mint cond, must be seen. Tel 00 35 387 912 8464 (Cheshire)
Gas Gas EC300, 2002, green lane use only by mature rider, not been raced, lots of extras, new c+s, vgc, must be seen, £1950 ono. Tel 07761 081291 (Cumbria)
Honda XR600, 2000, only 3600 miles, CRD system, loads of extras, fantastic cond, can email pics, £2200 ono. Tel (mobile) 07906 911636 or 01903 751026 (W Sussex)
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Honda XR250R, 1995, good clean bike with history, private 'MUD' plate, currently SORN as wife has stopped riding, £1450 ono. Tel 07967 830934 (Notts)
KTM 250EXC, 2005, revalved forks, new tyres, recent c+s, sump/handguards, good cond, £2800. Tel 01792 234777 (S Wales)
Honda XR400R, 2003, 900km, Renthals, Gadget bashplate, no miles since full service, vgc, new bike forces sale, £2390 ono. Tel 07850 877682 (Norfolk)
Kawasaki KLX300, 2000, road reg'd but no MoT, currently SORN, 5000 miles, standard bike, new tyres, good cond, £1250. Tel 01206 845567 (Essex)
Honda CRF450R, 2005, Innovate '05 bike, £3000. Tel 07836 527838 (W Lothian)
KTM 950 Adventure S, blue/orange, 9000 miles, £4500. Tel 07836 527838 (W Lothian)
Honda XR600RW, 1998, 9000 miles, CRD stainless system, good cond, £1875 ono or poss p/x on XR650. Tel (mobile) 07836 333405 or 01626 824943 (Devon)
Honda XR600R, 1992, J-reg, recent engine rebuild, new tyres, MoT expired, good running order, £800. Tel (mobile) 07747 621315 or 01603 873044 (Norfolk)
Gas Gas EC300, 2000 model, W-reg, MoT, well maintained, very capable enduro bike, good cond, £1295 no offers. Tel 0151 336 2314 (Cheshire)
Kawasaki KDX200R, 03-reg, MoT, 2100 miles, Renthals, handguards, green laned only, vgc, £2100 ono. Tel (mobile) 07879 446030 or 01787 223492 (Essex)
KTM 400EXC, 2005, new tyres, Six Days graphics/seat, well maintained, £3500 ono. Tel 020 8206 2177 (Middx)
KTM 525EXC, 2003 model, one owner, 100 hours' use, green lane use only, all usual extras, well maintained, £2350 ono. Tel 01282 454476 (Lancs)
Honda XR400R, 03-reg, 3000 miles, Renthals, bashplate, handguards, vgc, green lane use, great bike, bargain at £2150. Tel (mobile) 07957 434316 or 01995 641290 (Lancs)
Honda CRF250X, 2004 reg, FMF system, carbon fibre sumpguard, bark busters, great cond, impulse purchase, never used by myself, £2600 ovno. Tel 07712 129983 (Hull)
Gas Gas EC300, 2002, road reg'd, MoT, £1400. Tel 07932 961258 (N Yorks)
KTM 250EXC Racing, 2003, low mileage, light green lane use only, regularly serviced, handguards, vgc, offers around £2800. Tel 07710 175514 (W Yorks)
KTM 300, 1990, engine rebuilt two years ago, never used since, needs attention hence £425, ring for details. Tel 07917 755718 (E Sussex)
Suzuki DR250, 1990, white/yellow, T&T, new tyres/bearings etc, handguards, DEP pipe, USD forks, alloy rims, good reliable bike, £895. Tel 07917 755718 (E Sussex)

Husqvarna TE610E, 2000, V-reg, well maintained, lots of new parts/spares, very nice bike, £2000 ono. Tel 01724 782491 (Lincs)
Suzuki DR-Z400S, 53-reg, yellow, only 3000 miles, FSH, only used off-road once, never dropped, exc cond, £2850 ono. Tel (mobile) 07973 817231 or 01580 860991 (E Sussex)
Yamaha XT350, 1987, T&T, handguards, new c+s/exhaust, Michelin Aces and spare road tyres, good bike, £975. Tel 01765 688251 (N Yorks)
Gas Gas EC250, 2006, hand/sumpguards, pro maintained, exc cond, priced to sell at £3000. Tel 07968 826486 (Leics)
CCM 604E, 1999, Rotax motor, white/purple, 4400 miles, unused for five years, very reliable, strong motor, vgc for year, genuine sale. Tel 07905 534567 (Surrey)
Gilera Dakota 350, four-stroke trailie, T&T, well maintained, new pads/clutch/shoes, vgc, call for photo, £825. Tel 01273 241035 (Sussex)
Yamaha WR400F, 1998, T&T, radguards, new discs, £1500 ono. Tel (mobile) 07739 880978 or 01305 778167 (Dorset)
Husqvarna TE450, 2004, only 700 miles, '05 Endurotech shock, revalved forks, lots of trick bits, many spares inc c+s/wave discs etc, green laned only, the best available, £2650 ono. Tel 07834 769007 (Dorset)
Suzuki DR-Z400S, 54-reg, blue, taxed, 1600 miles, bash/handguards, plus spares, immaculate cond, £2649. Tel (mobile) 07941 345242 or 020 8776 2461 (Kent)
Cagiva Elefant 750, T&T, good cond, £800 ono. Tel 01524 762627 (Cumbria)
Honda CRM250 mklIII, many new parts, many spares/extras, used as third bike, green lane TRF use, mint cond, just not used it. Tel 01925 724709 (Cheshire)
KTM 200EXC, 2003, T&T, many spares, moustes, frameguards, green lane use only, exc cond, £2500 ono. Tel 01784 457365 (Middx)
Honda XL200R Paris Dakar, 1988, elec start, just been serviced, new rear shock, rebuilt starter motor/carb, average cond, great trailie, £850. Tel 01460 234373 (Somerset)
KTM 450EXC, '05 model, reg'd Dec '05, 1500 miles green lane use, mint cond, £4250 ono. Tel 07795 480514 (Lancs)
Suzuki DR-Z400S, 2001, yellow, under 4000km, still on original tyres/chain etc, mint cond, £2500. Tel 01302 538240 (S Yorks)
Gas Gas EC300, 2002, T&T, Ohlins, maintained regardless of cost, loads of extras, hardly used, green laned only, superb cond, reluctant sale, £1900. Tel (mobile) 07790 776608 or 01948 661326 (Shrops)
Honda CRF250X, 2004, new plastics, Amsoil graphics, loads of new parts/extras, maintained regardless of cost, too much to list, exc cond, pics available, £2800 ono. Tel 07899 921535 (Cumbria)
Honda CRF230, four months old, 06-reg, 230 miles, ProTaper bars, handguards, Trailtech speedo, bashplate, big saving at £2400 ono. Tel 07876 756842 (Bucks)
Yamaha WR450F, 2004, road reg'd, Leo Vince exhaust plus original, 909s, frame/sumpguards, good tyres, some spares, well maintained, nice bike, £3050. Tel 0121 788 2179 (W Mids)
Beta Alp 200, 2002, genuine 190 road miles only by senior citizen owner, as new, £1995 ono. Tel 01202 896157 (Dorset)
KTM 200EXC, 2005, '06 model, some spares, injury forces sale, £3500. Tel (work) 01423 875001 or 01423 810751 (N Yorks)
CCM 404DS, 2005, 54-reg, one owner, 450 miles green

lane use, £2650. Tel (mobile) 07710 881914 or 01925 740342 (Cheshire)
Husaberg FE400, 2000 reg, loads of extras, new battery/chain etc, mint cond, £2000 ovno. Tel 07711 104214 (Derbys)
Honda CRF250X, 2004, taxed, genuine 1400 miles, FMF Q-pipe, braceless bars, bashplate, handguards, Trailtech computer, heated grips etc, exc cond, £3300. Tel 01924 863982 (W Yorks)
Yamaha XT600, 1984, four-valve, early import, T&T, rebuilt, repaint, gold rims/bars, lovely classic trailie, £1295. Tel 01886 822156 (Worcs)
KTM 200EXC, 2003, full FMF exhaust, new tyres, well kept, priced to sell at £1995. Tel 07980 862376 or 07855 888853 (Devon)
KTM 450EXC, 2003, T&T, 98 hours' use, rear mousse, case saver, sump/handguards, spare rear tyres, £2750 ono. Tel 07791 504718 (Cumbria)
KTM 950 Adventure, 2004, orange, 7500 miles, FSH, crash bars, bar risers, alloy handguards, topbox etc, vgc, £6000 ono. Tel Chris on 07791 504718 (Cumbria)
Suzuki DR-Z400E, 2003, under 1000 miles, one owner, usual trail kit fitted, new road legal tyres/battery, green lane use only, vgc, £2000 ono. Tel (mobile) 07736 599854 or 01380 830550 (Wilts)
Kawasaki KLX250R, 1993, K-reg, full enduro model, T&T, new c+s, serviced inc forks rebuild, vgc, ready to go, £1100 ono. Tel 01795 438769 (Kent)
KTM 200EXC, 1999, currently SORN, little use since engine rebuild, FMF front pipe, handguards etc, £1200 ono. Tel (mobile) 07887 790244 or 01535 653696 (N Yorks)
Yamaha YZ426F, road reg'd, T&T, H+H and green lane use by old fart, oil change every nine hours-ish, spare plastics, Talon 18in rear wheel, £1850 ovno. Tel (mobile) 07790 249839 or 01364 653218 (Devon)
Kawasaki KDX200, 1991, MoT, frame/discguards, exc engine, near new tyres, owner's manual, good cond, can email photos, £850. Tel (mobile) 07981 535142 or 01869 247757 (Oxon)
Yamaha WR450F, 2004, 2000 miles, Gadget 'guards, green lane use, very well looked after, vgc, £2875 ono. Tel (mobile) 07909 898914 or 0121 788 2179 (W Mids)
KTM 300EXC, 2005, 54-reg, low hours, as new, first to see will buy, £3500 ono. Tel 07831 544445 (Leics)
Armstrong MT500, fully rebuilt, 800 miles, T&T, all bills, immaculate cond, must sell £1400 ono. Tel 07768 221115 (Oxon)
Honda CRF50X, 2004, road reg'd, taxed, standard, green laned only, Trailtech computer, hand/sumpguards, well maintained, £3250 ono. Tel 02380 261062 (Hants)
Honda CRM250 AR, 1999, T&T, 2500km, all original, green lane use only, lack of use forces sale, £2100. Tel 01428 712746 (Hants)
Yamaha YZ250F, 2005, road reg'd, 40 hours' use, new plastics plus spares, rear light kit, bashplate, handguards, 18in rear wheel, meticulously maintained, exc cond, £2495 ono. Tel 01256 352028 (Hants)
Yamaha TT250R, 1998, good clean green lane bike, all set up and ready to go, plus road tyres, £1250 ono. Tel 01905 425550 (Worcs)
Honda XR400, red, 03-reg, very little use, must sell hence £2000 ono. Tel 01373 463253 (Somerset)
Yamaha XT225, 2005, only 1500 miles, perfect novice bike or for LTDs, vgc, new bike forces sale, £1800. Tel 01530 417482 (Leics)
Honda CRF450R, 53-reg, lights, 2004 plastics, Q-pipe, speedo, bashplate, Fatbars, handguards, spares kit, used twice, £2250. Tel 07929 841531 (Essex)
TM 125, 1999, new c+s, in need of cosmetic TLC hence £1150. Tel 07976 845117 (Herts)
CCM 644DS, 03-reg, yellow, T&T, 5000 miles, both sets of wheels, race and standard cans, good cond, quick sale required, £2100. Tel 07951 275949 (Staffs)

Yamaha XT600E, 1990, can only be used off-road, MX tyres, good reliable fun bike, £800 ono. Tel 01324 822526 (Stirlingshire)
KTM 250EXC Racing, 55-reg, only 18 miles road use, spares kit, immaculate, must sell, £3200. Tel 07713 154903 (Derbys)
FMF EG5, 1999, completely overhauled, engine rebuilt, new clutch/piston last year, £800 worth of extras, £2000. Tel 07713 154903 (Derbys)
KTM 250EXC 2T, 2006, 14 hours' use, with spares kit, as new cond, £4000 ovno. Tel 01284 701589 (Suffolk)
Honda CRM250 AR, 1999, 2400km, green lane use only, enduro tyres, brushguards, aluminium tailpipe plus standard, always garaged, exc condition, £2400. Tel 01332 664413 (Derbys)
Yamaha WR400F, 1999, T-reg, no T&T, race and standard pipes, frameguards, handguards, Renthals, good starter, £1650. Tel (mobile) 07876 787972 or 01925 791477 (Cheshire)
Honda XL125R, 1984, A-reg, monoshock, MoT, great trailie/commuter, runs well, very reliable, good cond, can email pics, only £595. Tel 07752 067590 (Cheshire)
KTM 525EXC, 53-reg, genuine 17 hours/596 miles, road legal, green laned only, extras, vgc, offers. Tel (mobile) 07931 306174 or 01482 449886 (Hull)
Gas Gas Pampa 250 mklIII, 2003, T&T, 1600km, new trials tyre, Renthals, sump/handguards, good clean bike, £1750. Tel 01622 692528 (Kent)

SUPERMOTO

Honda XR650R supermoto, 2003, MoT, Talons/Excels, wave discs, Renthals, Akrapovic, full off-road spec, serviced, immaculate, £3000. Tel 01782 536840 (Staffs)
Husqvarna SM125, 2004, 6500 miles, race plastics, fantastic looking, need quick sale, £1800. Tel 07810 401278 (Essex)
Honda XR650R supermoto, 2002, T&T, large wave disc, Fatbars, CRD exhaust, plus dirt wheels and standard parts, recent tyres, weekend toy, exc cond, £3495 ovno. Tel 01204 529956 (Lancs)
HM Honda CRF450 supermoto, 2003, road reg'd, director's toy, £3200. Tel (mobile) 07974 351016 or 01727 867369 (Herts)
Honda XR650R supermoto, T&T, £2000. Tel (mobile) 07739 880978 or 01305 778167 (Dorset)
Husaberg F650e, 54-reg, only 8.5 hours/470km, this bike is as new, £3400, can deliver. Tel 07976 257657 (W Yorks)

WANTED

Wanted Yamaha TY250 twin-shock spares, or bike if cheap enough. Tel 07716 489202 (Cheshire)
Wanted 250cc or bigger road legal enduro bike, no more than ten years old, cash waiting. Tel (mobile) 07967 731606 or 01491 871110 (Oxon)
Wanted Yamaha TT600R, kickstart model, in southern England. Tel 07759 187500 (London)
Wanted engine for Yamaha XT350, must be in good cond. Or may sell 1997 XT350 with blown engine, make me an offer. Tel 07966 015756 (Essex)
Wanted 2004/05 KTM 525EXC, must be clean & tidy and road legal, cash waiting for right bike, Midlands area. Tel 07917 475837 (W Mids)
Wanted 1972-79 CCM, any cond inc in bits/non-runner, will travel, genuine buyer. Tel 01663 747640 (Derbys)

FREE CLASSIFIEDS

Wanted Yamaha XT250 engine, must be able to be seen running. Also wanted cam and two rockers for same. Tel 01229 716814 (Cumbria)

Wanted Honda XR400R, must be in good cond, road legal, around £1500 and in Yorkshire. Tel 07951 966733 (N Yorks)

Wanted kids armour and boots, 4-5yrs and size 11, cash waiting. Also shirt and trousers, any year/colour. Tel 07851 531764 (Beds)

Wanted left-hand rad for 1995 Gas Gas EC125, TM-engined bike. Also other spares/plastics. Tel 01474 560409 (Kent)

Wanted 125cc off-road bike for absolute beginner, anything old and cheap considered, even if it needs fixing up a little, cash buyer. Tel (mobile) 07960 525722 or 01482 707353 (Hull)

Wanted 11L tank for 2005 YZ250 2T. Tel 0117 979 2298 (Bristol)

Wanted any overland kit for Honda XR400, particularly IMS tank. Tel 07713 154903 (Derbys)

Wanted a well maintained Yamaha WR250F, private buyer. Tel Steve on 07795 665921 (Berks)

SPARES

Budget brake upgrade or SM conversion, Nissin CBR600 twin-pot caliper with recent pistons/seals/EBC HH pads, a few scuffs, braided hose, Brembo master cylinder, 320mm floating disc 6-bolt Honda CR fitment, can email pics, £70 plus courier/postage. Tel James at TBM on 020 8840 4760 (London)

White Bros E2 enduro pipe to fit 2003-05 Yamaha YZ/WR450F, new in box, £140. Tel 07971 121107 (Hereford)

Ti silencer to fit BMW F650GS Dakar, £150. Touratech footpegs, as new, £40. Touratech sprocket cover, £20. Standard wheels for XR650, £40 each. Tel 01625 668966 (Cheshire)

Spada touring jacket, back/shoulder/elbow protection, had one short ride, exc cond, cost £105, looking for £75. Tel 07963 945781 (Bucks)

Kawasaki KDX parts, parts/workshop manuals, IMS pegs, SFB alloy ignition cover, White Bros sumpguard, air filter, Pulse alloy filler cap, HJC Kawasaki helmet, phone for prices. Tel 01380 729982 (Wilts)

Gadget bashplate to fit 2000-03 KTM EXC 4T, new and unused, £35 ono. Tel (mobile) 07793 515461 or 01736 788020 (Cornwall)

Indespension three-bike trailer, fully galvanised, lockable hitch, loading ramp, £200. Tel 020 8974 1516 (Surrey)

Fox 360 MX pants, orange/grey, 38in waist, high spec, used once, like new, £60 plus postage. No Fear MX pants, grey/black, 32in waist, small nick in knee, otherwise like new, offers. Tel 01600 861848 (S Wales)

Alpinestar Tech 4 boots, black, size 10, vgc, no damage, £60 plus postage. Hebo trials helmet, blue, size small, as new. Alpinestar trousers, orange/black, size 34, as new, offers. Tel 01600 861848 (S Wales)

Osbe trials helmet, white, size S, only worn twice, as new. Ikon MX helmet, blue/silver, size M, vgc, offers. Tel 01600 861848 (S Wales)

DEP performance exhaust for '03-05 Yamaha WR/YZ250F, exc cond, can post, £150. Tel 01803 812940 (Devon)

FMF Q-pipe for 1996-2005 Honda

XR400/250, exc cond, can post, £150. Tel 01803 812940 (Devon)

Ikon DMX enduro jacket, size XL, waterproof/breathable, shoulder/elbow/back protection, never worn, perfect cond, £65. Tel 01803 812940 (Devon)

Wulfsport adult full deflector body armour, new, size XL, cost £65, accept £30. Tel 07801 386866 (Dorset)

EVS R57 knee brace, right leg, size XL, used once, vgc, cost £150 new, sell for £120. Tel 07801 386866 (Dorset)

KTM supermoto wheels, genuine black rims, cush-drive, with discs/tyres/sprocket/fender and bracket, only 250 miles, like new, £875 ono. Tel 00 35 387 912 8464 (Cheshire)

MD roadbook on KTM bracket, ICO and switch, sentinel horn, Irirack bracket and antennae, pro loom, plus other rallye spares, £400. Tel 07980 613944 (Co Antrim)

Supermoto wheels to fit KTM450/525, 320mm disc, caliper bracket, sprockets, as new, £500. Tel (mobile) 07974 351016 or (work) 01727 867369 (Herts)

Supermoto wheels to fit Honda CRF450, 320mm disc, caliper bracket, sprockets, £500. Also silencer and bashplate. Tel (mobile) 07974 351016 or (work) 01727 867369 (Herts)

Yamaha DT175 twin-shock spares, complete engine plus some other bits, £75 ono. Tel 01451 860381 (Gloucs)

SuperMoto wheels, tyres, 310mm disc, Brembo caliper, cush-drive, 38T sprocket, will fit Gas/KTM/CCM, can email photos, £330. Tel (mobile) 07790 776608 or 01948 661326 (Shrops)

TBM issues 1, 2 and 3, offers. Tel 01202 778186 (Dorset)

Kawasaki KDX220 parts, alloy fuel cap, IMS pegs, SFB alloy ignition/oil filler covers, TwinAir airbox cover, Moose magnetic drain plug, HJC Kawasaki helmet. Tel 01380 729982 (Wilts)

Fantic 301 trials bike, 1986-87, monoshock, rebuilt 250cc engine, gold wheels, complete bike apart from frame. Tel 07866 580390 (Beds)

TBM back issues, March 1999 to March 2003, held in TBM green binders, £50 ono. Tel (mobile) 07796 273880 or 01296 397295 (Bucks)

Yamaha XT600E overland kit, Acerbis tanks, brush/sumpguards, rally fairing, rack, cables, tubes, £100 no offers, will not split. Tel 01225 336887 (Somerset)

Michelin AC10 road legal MX tyres, brand new, front 80/100-21. £35. Rear 110/100-18, £45, or £70 the pair plus p&p or collect. Tel 07752 067590 (Cheshire)

STOLEN

Stolen Honda XR600, 1998, reg no W632 VFM, frame no JH2PE4UOWK400867, engine no PEO4E8102632, stolen from locked garage in Holywell, north Wales on 31/05/06, any information tel 01352 715288 or north Wales police on 0845 6071002 (Flintshire)

Stolen Yamaha WR250F, 2004 model, reg no LJ55 AEW, frame no JYACG16W000009654, eng no G333E0014017, blue Ikon alloy fuel cap, blue Renthal rear sprocket, gold chain, UFO rear fender bag, black Renthals, Renthal grips, cracked front fender held with yellow zip-tie, new BF Goodrich Crossengos, stolen from garage in Wallington, Surrey. Tel 07956 502113 or DC Andy Chandler at Sutton police station on 0208 649 0451/5 (Surrey)

TBM

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