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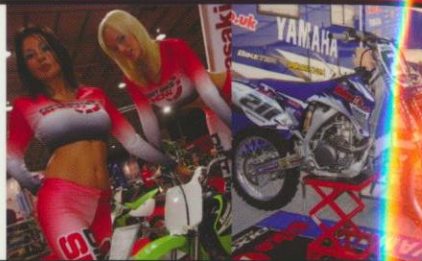


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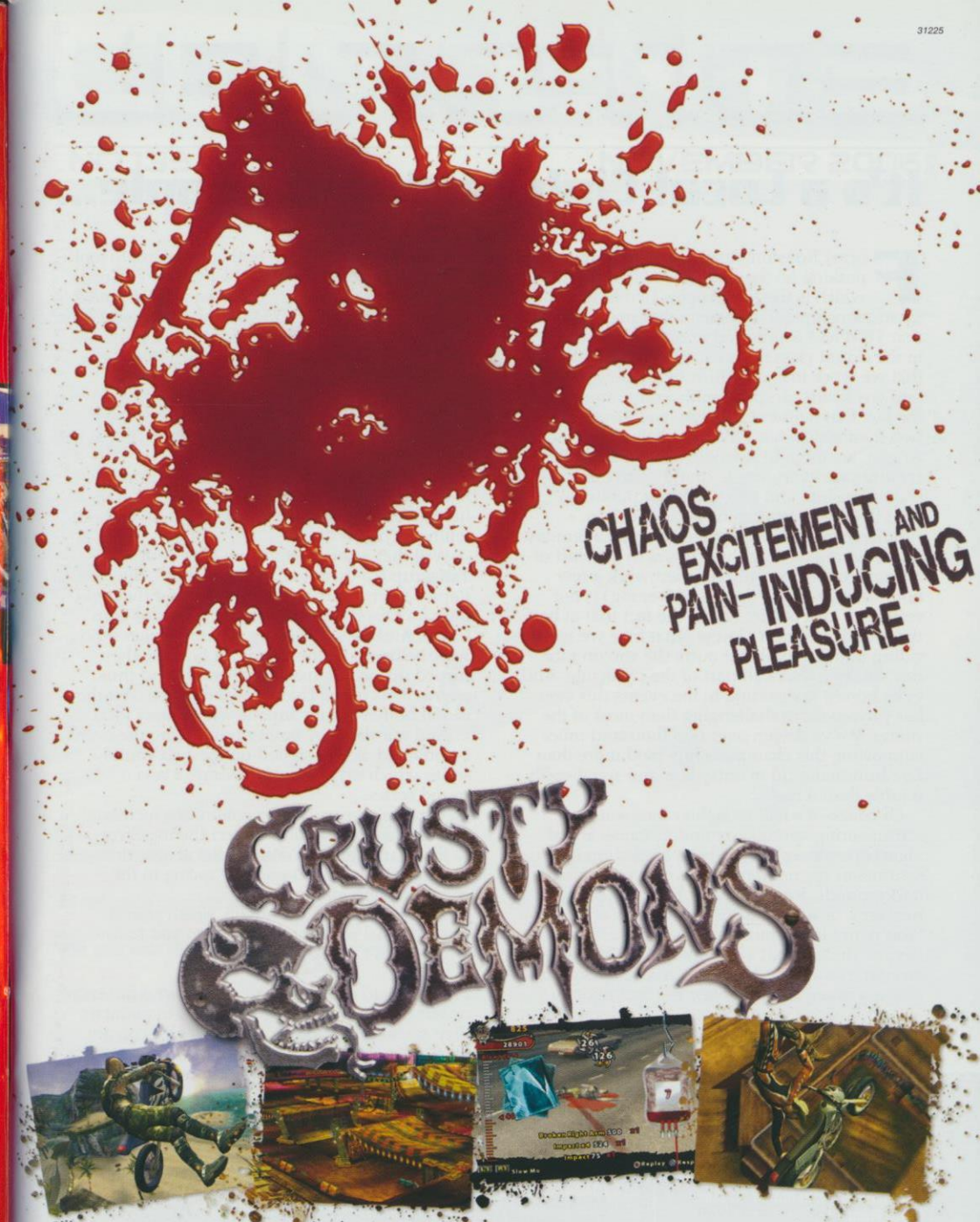
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EDITORIAL

It's a Local Club for Local People...

Forget Royston Vasey, because it's got nothing on the 'League of Gentlemen' which is the East Anglia Two-Man Enduro Championship! Now some of you may be aware that TBM had committed to race this entire series in the expert class this year. And despite the fact that we work in a job which frequently spills over into weekends; despite family commitments and the fact that neither Clive (my team-mate in the two-man series) nor I live remotely near East Anglia, we thought it would be kinda fun to try and race every single round of an entire championship, and give it a bit of publicity. And that's a commitment we've stuck to.

Believe me, getting up at 6:00am on a Sunday morning and driving three hours to the start of an enduro (having only finished work a few hours earlier on the Saturday evening) is not really my idea of fun. Nor is the fact that at half the rounds we didn't know what bike we were riding until we pulled it outta the van on race day. But hey, that's all part of the challenge. And to be honest just getting to the events this year has proved more challenging than most of the riding. We've driven over two thousand miles supporting this championship, paid more than five-hundred quid in entry fees and spent easily double that in fuel.

Of course it's had its lighter moments: scrutineering springs to mind. Because at just about every event we've been hauled up by scrutineers for not having the correct coloured backgrounds, for not having the right colour numbers, or for not having a Norfolk accent 'You're not from round here, are you...?' This despite the fact that virtually half the paddock has got away with the wrong colour backgrounds on their bikes. But then they're 'local people...'

And it hasn't been the easiest of seasons either. Both of us got injured early on (I got run over by

a bloke who didn't even bother stopping to look behind him - cheers pal, and Clive got T-boned by... well... by an inmate from the nearby lunatic asylum as far as we can make out). At most of the rounds we've shared a bike for testing purposes, which is always slower because of refuelling, and we've had our fair share of mechanical problems - a mysteriously quitting Husky, a TM which refused to start at all, and a Gasser which dropped all of its oil around the course (see elsewhere in this issue for details).

But the final straw came when we turned up at the last round of the series to find that they'd held an extra round a few weeks before without telling anyone.

Well that's not strictly true. They told Tubbs Tattsyrup (co-owner of the local shop), they told Papa Lazarou (circus ringmaster), and they told Barbara Dixon (the transsexual owner of Babs' Cabs). And they obviously told the blokes who were below us in the standings because they turned up, scored maximum points and thus overtook us in the championship chase. But they didn't bother telling anyone who wasn't local.

And nor did they bother publicising the event beforehand. So we signed up for a six round series which mysteriously became a seven round series...

'Oh don't worry' said a committee member, 'we checked and it didn't affect the top three in the championship.' Well that's alright then, because obviously no-one else racing in the championship matters...

So where did we eventually finish after a controversial season of racing? Do you know what, I don't really give a damn...

PS Thanks to all those kind people who did help us out this year, and who managed to maintain their sense of humour. You know who you are...

SI MELBER

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The end of this month sees the second running of the Red Bull Last Man Standing extreme enduro. How did it earn that name? Judge for yourself...
Gary Barber/Red Bull photofiles

PERSPECTIVE





TBM Towers comes under attack from the octogenarian cell of Al Qaeda. Safely ensconced in our secret underground bunker, magazine production remained unaffected... Pic: Si Melber

PERSPECTIVE

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Aprilia's sexy V-twin powered
RXV has undergone a whole host
of changes for 2007 in order to
broaden its appeal. But does it
hit the mark with UK riders.
Find out on p56... Pic: Aprilia

PERSPECTIVE



BACK IN BLACK



Spanish-French concern Sherco has launched their 2007 new-look enduro bikes. Notable chassis changes to both the 5.1i and 4.5i models include new front and rear hubs, black anodised Excel rims, triple clamps and handlebars and a black (newly reinforced) frame. The rear suspension linkage has also been strengthened along with the footpegs, and there's a new rear master brake cylinder.

Motor improvements include switchable ignition, modified flywheel, better hot-start system

and the electrics have also been overhauled. And Sherco is claiming that their all-new 250cc, liquid cooled, electric start, DOHC, 2.5i powerplant will be the lightest, most compact four-stroke enduro engine available on the market. A new chassis has also been developed for the 2.5i that promises to be completely different from the existing 4.5i frame.

Expect a TBM test as soon as we can get hold of 'em...

WESTON FRONT

WEC champion David Knight beat ten-times world MX winner Stefan Everts to claim top honours at this year's Weston Beach Race.

In front of a 35,000 strong crowd Knighter took the chequered flag after completing 18 gruelling laps of the 3.5-mile course in three hours on the north Somerset coast.

David took the lead going into the first corner ahead of the 950 rider field but then later on, with a two-minute lead on Everts, managed to destroy his front brake after crashing into a slower rider.

Fellow Brit Paul Edmondson also suffered problems when after taking the lead from Knighter on

the second lap his bike took on water and wouldn't re-start.

At the finish David waited just short of the line for the clock to tick over and then rolled across to win, while Stefan ended up pushing his bike across the finish-line as it had unfortunately stopped running.

Check out official race website wbruk.com for more details...

RESULTS

1 DAVID KNIGHT	KTM	18 LAPS
2 STEFAN EVERTS	RINALDI YAMAHA	17 LAPS
3 BRAD ANDERSON	PIONEER YAMAHA	17 LAPS
4 STEVE RAMON	SUZUKI	17 LAPS
5 ASHLEY GREEDY	PAR HOMES HONDA	17 LAPS



WINTER SPORTS

This year's Hafren Rally will take place on Sunday 10 December, starting from the usual venue of the Sweet Lamb motorsport complex near the village of Llangurig in mid-Wales.

Sponsored by Husky Sport, the course will be a mix of fire roads, forest tracks and open moorland, with a lap being approximately 50 miles and three special stages per lap.

New for this year is a special beginner's class that will cover the same course but entrants will ride one less lap and start at the back of the field so they won't be riding amongst the quicker classes.

Regs are available from the club website hafrendbc.co.uk or by sending an SAE to John Begley, Hafren Deg, Old Hall, Llanidloes, SY18 6PS.

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Are you a Dirt Junkie? Here's your opportunity to work for TBM. We're looking for an ad sales executive to join our small editorial and ad team. The ideal candidate will be able to demonstrate a successful background in media ad sales and will have at least 12 months experience.

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SNIPPETS

SCHOOL RUN

Back by popular demand are the Geraint Jones' two-day winter enduro schools. These weekends are aimed at riders of all abilities - trail riders and enduro experts alike.

Riders will be split into groups based on ability and will rotate around different coaching areas and instructors. Techniques such as cornering, how to handle ruts, hills, cambers, logs/ roots, and special test riding will be covered, plus there will be an optional bike prep/ maintenance session on Saturday evening.

Coaches will include Geraint himself and the rest of the Jones clan, plus Wyn Hughes and other guest instructors.

You can use your own bike (£130) or there will be a limited number of Yamaha WR250/450s available for hire (£260 inc fuel). Places are limited so book up now - call 01686 413324 between 2-6pm Mon-Fri or email info@yamah-offroad-experience.co.uk. Dates: 16-17 December 2006, 6-7 and 13-14 January 2007.

AIR POWER

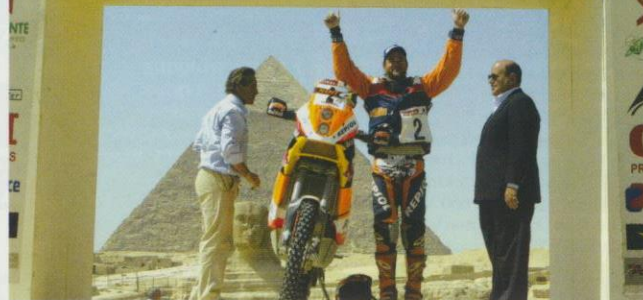
The RAF enduro team is running another new event, the 2007 Ardua Enduro I, which will take place on Sunday 28 January at the Eelmoor Driver Training Area, near Aldershot in Hampshire.

The lap will be approximately six miles long with lots of woods, hills, a mile-long straight and a motocross track section, and will feature the RAF's trademark hard and easy options.

For more details, check out rafenduro.co.uk.



EGYPTIAN GOD



Repsol KTM rider Marc Coma won the 9th Total Pharaohs International Rally aboard his new KTM 660 Rally bike.

The Spanish rider - who has won all the rallies he has competed in this year - crossed the finish line in Cairo after seven days of hard desert racing.

Teammate Jordi Viladoms didn't fare so well, as he was forced to retire just 100km short of the finish. Jordi, who was running in second position overall before his retirement, suffered a rear shock problem that unfortunately put him out of the race.

And Chilean rider Carlo De Gavardo was also forced to withdraw after breaking his leg in a heavy fall on the penultimate day.

On his victory Marc Coma said 'I had the chance to get more familiar to my new KTM and to exercise my navigation skills, ending a long and successful season.'

RESULTS

1 MARC COMA	KTM 660 RALLY
2 PAL ANDERS ULLEVALSETER	KTM 660 RALLY
3 JEAN DE AZEVEDO	KTM 660 RALLY
4 DAVID CASTEU	KTM 660 RALLY
5 FRANCISCO CONTARDO LOPEZ	CRF 450

BEST IN SHOW

Mark your diary for 16-19 November because that's the date of this year's Dirt Bike Show at the NAC in Stoneleigh. And of course TBM's going to be there. With a big stand located right near the main entrance you can't miss us because this year we've got our '57 Chevy pick-up truck gracing our stand.

So come on over and have a chat, pick up some missing back issues and sign up for a subscription. This year's Dirt Bike Show will be your chance to ogle the new X-bikes from BMW, the new KLX450R and grab yourself



some bargains in the retail hall. With trailbikes, enduro, supermoto, MX, kids bikes, quads and classic stuff on display, don't miss your sport's one and only show. For advanced tickets call 0870 010 9019.

See you there...

OUT NUMBERED

Total motorcycle sales have dipped one percent on last month's figures, with both the off-road sectors also recording slight falls.

This month the Adventure Sport category sees a one percent drop in its sales, with the only change being Suzuki's DR-Z400SM taking over fourth place from the 650 V-Strom.

The Trail/Enduro market also sees just one change in its sales table this month, with the Urban DZ125 finally being replaced in fifth by the Yamaha DT125 - making three Yamaha machines in the top five.

And the only bike stopping the Trail/Enduro table from becoming a 125-only chart is the WR250F, down in fourth place. But it'll have to go some to beat the Honda XR125L, which is currently enjoying a whopping 391-unit lead over its nearest competitor.



ADVENTURE SPORT

1	BMW R1200GS	1219
2	BMW R1200GS ADV	661
3	Honda XL125V	516
4	Suzuki DR-Z400SM	356
5	Suzuki 650 V-Strom	333

TRAIL/ENDURO

1	Honda XR125L	681
2	Suzuki RV125	290
3	Yamaha XT125R	270
4	Yamaha WR250F	243
5	Yamaha DT125	226

GERMAN HELMET

BMW has just launched a brand new off-road helmet to complement its new range of dirtbikes. Called its Enduro helmet it has a built-in (quickly removable, scratch-resistant, and three-dimensionally-curved) visor and the Enduro can be worn either with visor, or with goggles. Constructed from a light-weight laminate of carbon-kevlar/fibreglass the Enduro weighs just 1344g and has been aerodynamically shaped to produce a minimum amount of drag - even when you turn your head. With an extremely soft and noise deadening (washable) Coolmax lining, an innovative neck strap to prevent the helmet twisting in an accident, and the usual BMW build quality it's not surprising that the Enduro costs £235 in plain colours, or £255 with graphics. The new Enduro is available in a range of sizes and should be in BMW dealers this month...



SNIPPETS



TRY AGAIN

Last month TBM reported that Beta were the second company (after AJP) to offer try-out days on their bikes, with a full refund on offer if you then went on to buy a bike from them.

In fact Husky Trails were the first to offer this type of deal (since May 2005). Simply go for a day's trail ride with them, buy a new Husky from an authorised dealer within a month of your trail ride and the full cost of the day is refunded - either as a cheque or simply knocked off the bike's price at the dealers - whichever you prefer.

Check out huskytrails.co.uk for more info...

TOTAL RECALL

A number of Yamaha's XT660R/X bikes are to be recalled due to a potential problem with the throttle position sensor fitted to certain machines.

In a small number of cases, the idle speed may become intermittently erratic, causing the engine to stall. Owners should shortly (or may already have) received a letter from Yamaha advising them of how to get their machines rectified, but Yamaha have confirmed that bikes can be still be ridden in the interim.

If you own either a 660R or X and haven't received a letter yet, call Yamaha UK on 01932 358000.



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WIN A



KIDDIMOTO SCRAMBLER!

Here at TBM Towers we are all big kids at heart, which is why we love the Scrambler from Kiddimoto. We have three of these brilliant trainer bikes to give away in time for Christmas, each worth £89.

Kiddimoto is aimed at children aged 2-6, and it looks just like a real motorcycle. It's just won the 'One of a Kind' category in the prestigious Hamleys Toy Awards 2006, for the most original and quirky toy of the year. That involved the toughest test of all - in the hands of real children - and it came under scrutiny from a panel of expert judges as well.

Handmade in Somerset from birch ply, the Kiddimoto Scrambler exceeds all current safety standards. It's simple, safe and robust, and this pedal-free trainer bike is a great way of building confidence and balance through play. It comes in a whole range of colours, including natural wood, bright yellow and racing red, plus there's an on-road style Superbike as well. And our three giveaway bikes will all come customised with a range of TBM stickers.

Winning one of these fabulous toys couldn't be easier, all you have to do is send (by email or post) a small picture of your offspring that's got something to do with dirt bikes, which you're happy to have published in TBM (don't forget to include the name and age of your child along with your contact telephone number so that winners can be notified by phone). Then next month we'll print a selection of the photographs in the mag and pick three winners at random. Send (or email) your entries to Kiddimoto comp, TBM, PO Box 9845, London, W13 9AA or kiddimoto@trailbikemag.com. Good luck...



Child's Play

Somerset engineer Simon Booth developed the idea for the Kiddimoto when his motorcycling friends began to have children. 'I seemed to spend most Sunday mornings watching the kids wash their trikes while dad washed his bike,' he said. 'I realised that they were copying, and that a bike that looked just like his would go down a storm - hence the Kiddimoto.' For more details on the Kiddimoto bikes see www.kiddimoto.co.uk or call Kiddimoto on 01934 733654.



Terms & Conditions. TBM's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. No cash alternatives will be offered and TBM reserve the right to alter, amend, withdraw or substitute any part of the prize. This offer is only open to UK inhabitants. TBM cannot accept any responsibility for any damage, loss or injury suffered by the winner or any other persons using the prize. TBM reserves the right to verify the eligibility of all entrants. Please note that we cannot return any photographs sent to us, so if they are irreplaceable, don't send originals. This draw and its conditions will be governed by English law.

TRIPLE-X



X marks the spot, as BMW reveal a new range of dirtbikes...

Swelling their line-up of big off-rovers, BMW have launched three new 'dirt-bikes' based around an updated version of their versatile 652cc single-cylinder motor. The bikes in the G650-X range (as it's called) also share the same all-new steel frame, with a Husaberg-esque alloy swingarm and 9.5L underseat fuel tank, and effectively represent new niches in the market for the German company.

Of most interest to TBM readers will be the G650 Xchallenge, a big-bore 'enduro' bike in a similar vein to Husqvarna's TE610 or the Honda XR650R. Weighing in at a claimed 156 kilos (wet), the Xchallenge features fully adjustable 45mm USD forks and the Air Damping System air shock from the monster 1200cc HP2. A big 300mm disc and twin-piston caliper help slow the bike and, unlike the F650GS and HP2, the use of 21/18in wheels allows the fitment of a wide range of off-road rubber. The long, flat-ish seat and minimal bodywork mark the 'challenge out

18 TBM

as more than just another big trailie, though the overall styling could perhaps be described as 'challenging'.

The Xcountry is a street-scrambler, with a mix of modern and traditional styling. Although it looks a little like a giant Yamaha Tricker it's likely to appeal more to commuters and city riders than trail riders. Nonetheless it should have the capability to tackle some gentle lanes.

Alongside the Xchallenge and Xcountry comes the Xmoto - BMW's take on the KTM Duke and the company's first production streetmoto. Visually similar to the seminal Austrian machine, the Xmoto is fitted with wide cast wheels and a 320mm front disc with four-pot caliper. The (adjust-

able) suspension has been stiffened and lowered for road use and as on the other two models, ABS is available as an option.

Staying with the supermoto theme, BMW have also revealed an SM based on the Boxer twin HP2. While the company recently released a 17in wheel kit for the big



Up for a challenge - BMW's new G650 big bore 'enduro' bike...



G 650 Xmoto



G 650 Xcountry

BMW Motorrad



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G 650 Xchallenge

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Let the ride decide

Call 0800 777 155 or visit www.bmw-motorrad.co.uk to book your test ride

32265

TRIPLE-X

Scrambled X: The new Xcountry street-scrambler, coming to a street near you...



enduro bike the Megamoto takes the concept a step further, with an uprated SM-specific chassis and tuned engine.

At the front-end is a set of 45mm Marzocchi forks, with an Ohlins shock replacing the off-roader's air suspension. And gone are the spoked wheels, with gorgeous blue cast wheels (sporting a twin front brake set-up and wide, sticky tyres) in their place. The motor also now employs a beautifully-made Akrapovic exhaust systems and the whole bike looks nothing short of stunning in its white, grey and

blue colour scheme.

Whilst it's great to see new dirt-bikes from BMW (and the factory entering the streetmoto market) we're even more excited by the prospect of the 450cc off-roader we've heard is in development for 2008. You read it here first...

The G650-X bikes are likely to retail at around £6000, and the Megamoto will doubtless be a similar five-figure sum to the enduro HP2, though final prices have yet to be confirmed. Expect TBM (and Supermoto Magazine) tests in early 2007.



BMW's first production streetmoto - the Xmoto...

X-pack

BMW's 652cc, DOHC single was originally built by Rotax before BMW took production in-house, using the engine in the F650GS and CS models. For the G650-X machines the fuel-injected motor has been worked-over, with a lighter crank assembly allowing it to rev freer and a re-designed cylinder head. New magnesium engine covers and all-black cases give the motor a new look. Peak power has been upped to a claimed 53hp at 7000rpm, whilst torque remains the same at 44lb-ft at 5250rpm.



Mega Mega White Thing - the gorgeous HP2-derived Megamoto...

Vee Rubber

Rubber Stamped!

Vee Rubber's amazing 211R road-legal enduro tyre has the opposition beaten . . . but don't take our word for it. Here's what TBM said about them in their independent seven-brand tyre shootout:

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SCOTT ON THE ROCKS

Mike Rapley spends a unique day Doing the Rounds at this year's Scott Trial...

If you're an off-road fan, particularly a trials fan, then the third Saturday of October is a very special day for you. Or at least it should be, especially if you are fortunate to live in the north of England, for that day - this year it was October 21 - is the day of the Scott Trial.

First held in 1914 and run every year since, with the exception of the War Years, 1922 and 2001, the original Scott Trial was organised as a Yorkshire Dales outing for employees of the former Scott Motorcycle factory, but is now the world's toughest one day trial. A time and observation event (ie riders are riding against the clock as well as trying to avoid scoring points in the sections) over a 75 mile, 76 section course based around the village of Reeth.

So this month's Doing The Rounds is very different to others that have featured in TBM as it's the story of a great day in Yorkshire and one that proved to be a classic in its own right.

There have been two, seven time winners of the Scott; Sammy Miller (58, 62, 63, 67-70) and Graham Jarvis (96-99, 03-05), and both were scheduled to be at the start, Sammy to perhaps witness his record being broken, and Graham to do the breaking. However, there was likely to be a fly in the ointment, another seven time winner in the form of Dougie Lampkin - seven times Champion of the World.

So, with the prospect of a truly classic day in the offing, any trials enthusiast just had to be there. And they turned up in their thousands!

I've been to every Scott since 1978 and two prior to that, so that's 30 in all. And for the past few years I've been one of the 100 or so officials that have acted as an observer on one of the 75 sections. But for the first time I had a compatriot, so Scott Rowland, four times British Sidecar Trials Champion and a good friend for over 20 years and I were booked to observe sections 41 and 42, Blackhills.

Feldom Lane, near Marske, the field where the Scott starts is 55 miles from my home, so after an

'...And don't you dare beat my record': Two seven-time winners of the epic Scott Trial meet up before this year's event to compare notes. The legend that is Sammy Miller, and Graham Jarvis who was trying for a record-breaking eighth victory...



early start, Scott and I met at 8:15am and spent a quick half hour renewing acquaintances, signing on, collecting our observing books and with the first rider not due at our section until 12.40pm, we had plenty of time to see some of the early action.

Mounted on our trials bikes, mine a Montesa 4RT and Scott's a 250 Gas Gas, we headed west to the day's second section, Rubbing House, where the short limestone path gave early riders a bit of trouble. Keeping up with the Scott (confusing this, Scott the trial and Scott my mate), is always a problem as being a time



Katy Sunter demonstrates the style that took her to her first ever Scott Trial finish...

SCOTT ON THE ROCKS

and observation event, competitors wait for no man. So after ten minutes and a few pictures at our first stop it was quickly off to Orgate for another short look.

The water was fairly deep at the river crossing and sure enough a couple of riders took an early bath, which is not a good idea as drowned bikes that early in the trial do nobody any favours. The number of spectators perhaps totalled 50 or so, but parking is not so good and the bulk had travelled there by bike. We stayed long enough to see Katy Sunter through, one of just two girls

riding, and she was to feature later in this tale.

Nearby Cold Knuckles is a vicious gully, dank and dark, the rocky waterfall proved to be easier than it has in the past and riders were finding it fairly easy the first time through, but when the survivors returned several hours later, to ride it again - this time observed - many found it quite difficult.

However, it's good for pictures and we stayed until the last rider came through, enjoying a chat with veterans Norman Shepherd, Tony Calvert and Neil Gaunt, all previous Scott riders who



have long since given up on this tough classic.

Keen to bag some piccys for this article, Underbanks is pretty good and with good car parking in a field off the Fremington to Marske road, attracts hundreds of spectators. However we were bike mounted so were able to ride closer and see plenty of action.

The superb Scott programme (£4 with all the profits going to local charities) describes Underbanks as 'one step, two step, bigger step'! It's actually quite easy but with a significant step at the end, makes for good snaps and it's easy to work out who is up/down on time.

The trial's 200 riders start at 20 second intervals from 9am and the trial's fastest finisher sets standard time with all riders that finish the course within two-and-a-half hours of standard time collecting a mark per minute in addition to their section observation score.

For those in the running is it a case of going steady and perhaps saving marks in the sections, or going flat out and risk losing more marks on observation? No matter what anybody says, let me tell you now that *everybody* gets carried away and it's as fast as you can go, for as long as you can go!

With breakfast having been eaten four hours earlier, Reeth bakery had to be the next stop (Cornish pasty, sausage roll, buttered tea cake and scone, pack of ginger biscuits, aching belly), before battling on up the road to Surrender. Scott

was moaning that his Gasser doesn't like being thrashed on the road, so I had to back off the 4RT a bit to let him catch up (the Mont loves big handfults!).

No bikes were allowed off-road at Surrender so we had to abandon our machines and walk the 300 yards to the two sections where the trial was getting really busy. It's every man for himself in the Scott, there's no 'after you mate', it's push and shove and get to the front of every queue as quick as you can. A minute saved on your final time is worth a lot!

The gathering there was huge with crowds lining the steep rocky gully eager to see the aces ride it. Both Jarvis and Lampkin scaled it with ease but it caught out many riders. Jarvis who started 4mins 40sec before Lampkin, led, but Dougie was less than that behind, so had already made up some time at the third way point of the trial.

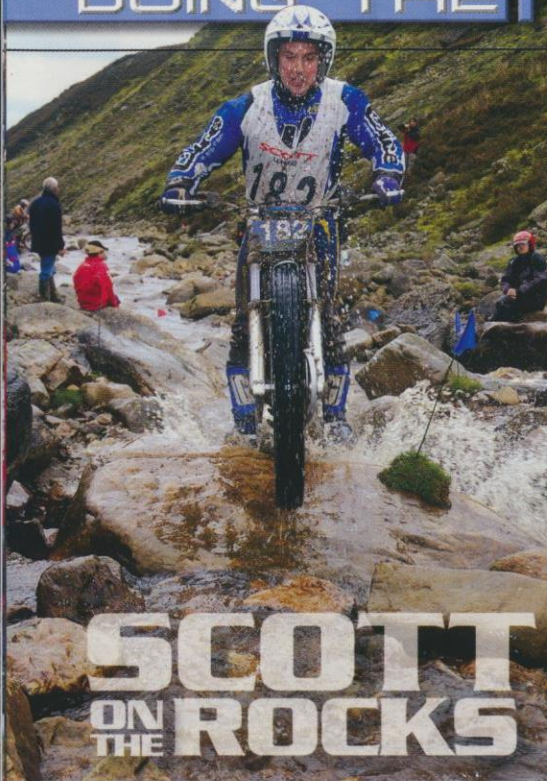
After Surrender, riders are out of view for the best part of an hour as they traverse the Grouse Moor (no spectators allowed), so we were able to stay at this group until nearly 12:00 when we decided that we'd better push on to our sections.

Fortunately I knew exactly where our sections were, having observed there several years ago, and we were able to get there with 25 minutes to spare and eat our lunch. Then, bang on 12:38 we heard a bike approaching and at exactly 12:40, Graham Jarvis arrived to ride the sections. He had the look of utter concentration on his mud-splattered face, but we know each other well and he had time to tell me that he was riding well but he knew Dougie was not far behind. Graham jinked the Sherco up the rocky ravine with ease, but I knew from past experience, all that would soon change.

Not two minutes later, Lampkin appeared, he too was all concentration and he zapped up for an easy clean. The observers books have 13 riders per page. My first page had eight cleans, the second page three, the third two with only four cleans on the remaining six pages and two of those were together on page seven when a quick but heavy shower of rain washed much of the mud off the rocks.

An hour and 55 minutes after Jarvis had arrived it was all over, 117 riders had been through and our day of marshalling was over, but not our day of spectating. Catching the front runners after such a delay is not possible, but we zoomed back to Rotten Wood (next to Rubbing House where we had been in the morning), but

DOING THE ROUNDS



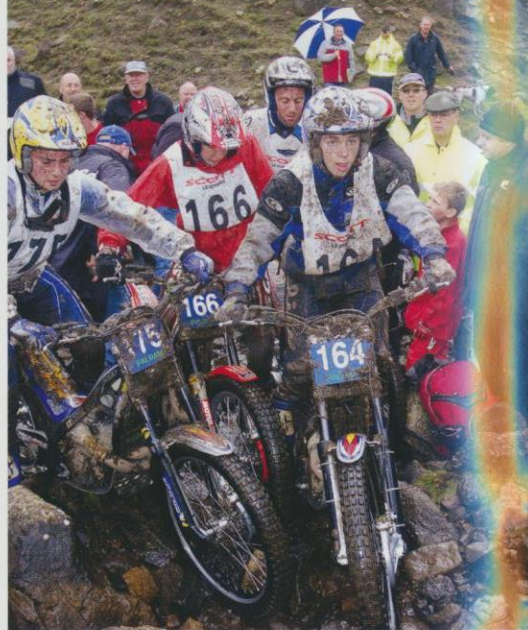
SCOTT ON THE ROCKS

had by then missed the first dozen or so riders. And it was at Rotten Wood that the main story of the trial began to unfold. The rumour had it that Jarvis had missed a section (which if true would mean automatic exclusion). Jarvis had been the first to arrive but Lampkin, who had once been almost on Jarvis's tail, was about eight minutes later. The inference being that Lampkin knew Jarvis had missed a section and rather than continue flat out, preferred to go at a steady pace and conserve some energy for section cleans.

We stayed in the steep, rocky gully long enough to see some great riders give it a go. At that stage of this super tough event, the lads are hanging, totally exhausted but with less than ten minutes of the trial left, somehow found a few last bits of energy to give the section a real blast.

But you can't stay anywhere for long in the Scott and the day's real tales are back in the start/finish field. The news appeared to be true that Jarvis had in fact missed a section. And Dougie had told him! Jarvis probably knew already as such a sensation gets around before

It's every man for himself at the Scott Trial. Richard Ellwood 164 bagged himself the best first-timer award. Eventual runner up (Wayne Braybrook) can be seen just behind him.



the riders, but if he hadn't known, Graham then realised that all his incredible effort had been for nothing, and the chance to amass record breaking win number eight would have to wait for another year.

The day's fastest time proved to be 4hours 56minutes 49seconds, by Lampkin with Jarvis out, so all riders that finished within the next two-and-a-half hours of that time would be classed as finishers. Eventually 80 managed the feat from the 200-strong entry with final scores ranging between Lampkin's 33 in the sections and none on time to the final finisher Paul Terry who lost 126 on time and 259 in the sections. Yet he wasn't the slowest as there is actually a special award for the slowest official finisher, this year David Hardy took 7hours 23minutes to get round!

In various states of exaltation and exhaustion riders blasted battered bikes up the final field, some wheelying with exuberance, some hanging over the 'bars, but without doubt the day's biggest cheer was for Katy Sunter who, after crossing the line could do nothing except have a quiet weep. ➔

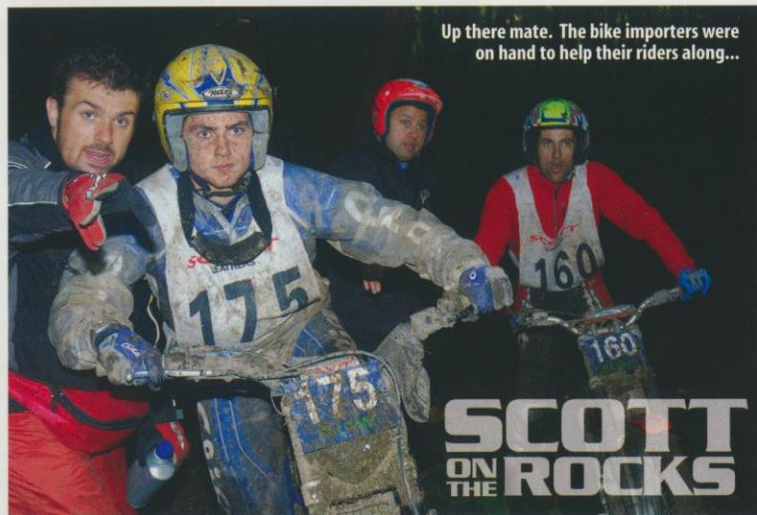
DAVID KNIGHT: ENDURO 3 WORLD CHAMPION 2006 »



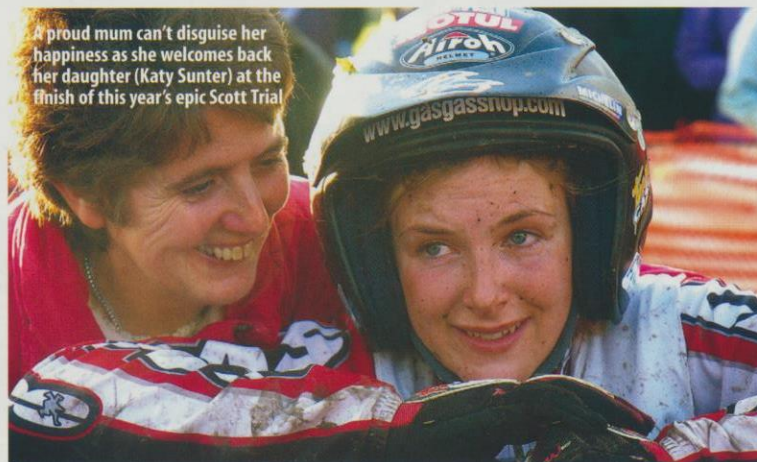
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DOING THE ROUNDS



Up there mate. The bike importers were on hand to help their riders along...



A proud mum can't disguise her happiness as she welcomes back her daughter (Katy Sunter) at the finish of this year's epic Scott Trial

The effort for such a diminutive, but very capable lass to get round is unimagineable. Mum Angela was there to welcome her home, as were many friends and fans, but then it had to be a case of working out whether she was actually in time. In the confusion mum said yes, then had a rethink then said no, which left it to yours truly to work out a definitive answer. Yes, by just five minutes. The relief on her face was fantastic to behold, and after four years of trying, Katy had finally done it.

'I am never, never, ever, ever going to do that again' said an exhausted Katy. But I bet she changes her mind when the regs and entry forms

appear in 12 months time. But there was still more drama to come. The field was beginning to empty as finishers and retirees loaded up and headed home in various states of euphoria and dismay. Katy's brother John had not yet arrived back, so the eager journos were plugging the suggestion that Katy say to John when he arrived 'Where have you been?'

But she's more honourable than us lot and when John did arrive to collect yet another Scott Trial Certificate all that passed between them was a quiet smile. John had had more than his fair share of troubles. You will think that riding a couple of miles on a flat front tyre is nigh on impossible. John rode 74 sections and 73 miles with his flat after puncturing at section two, and also much of the

day with no clutch after knocking off the fluid line in the Montesa's engine case. Mark, the third Sunter had finished much earlier. So all in all it was a grand day for the Sunter family, all three siblings home in time. A special day for mum and dad.

Inevitably there are many more tales of joy and woe about this year's Scott. But this very special Doing The Rounds is meant as a tribute to all those incredible individuals who took part.

If you've never ridden the Scott before, let's hope that this encourages you to do it in the future. It's one of those 'things you must do before you die.' See you there next October...

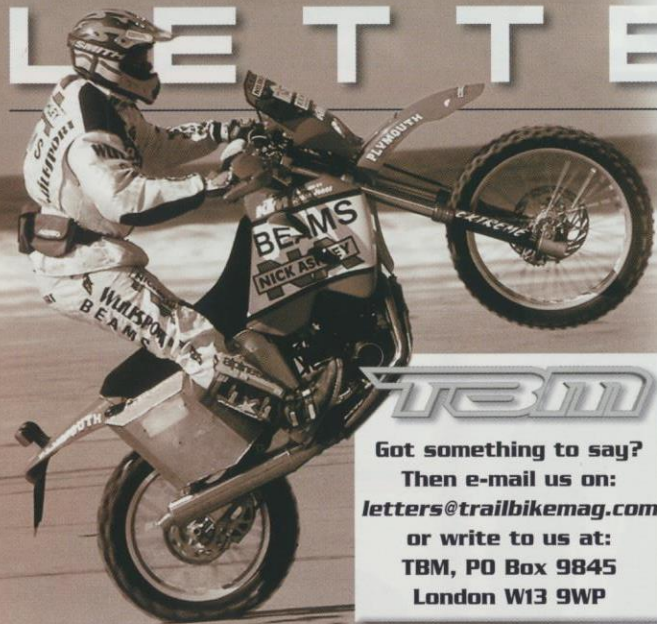


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LETTERS



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only one summer of non-use. It wasn't much of a RUPP I'll grant you, half a mile long at most, in the middle of nowhere, it cut the corner off a nasty road junction. I used it regularly as a bit of fun, brightening up an otherwise dull day on my way home from the office. In all my years of using it I never once saw anybody walking or riding a horse along it. Given the state of the bramble growth after only a handful of months, I doubt anybody will ever be able to soon.

How many other lanes are there out there like this? The ones that are in areas where people are never going to walk or trot along because they already have other far better or more scenic ones to use. Some of the RUPP's I used to use were in bloody awful areas, but I loved them.

Can I therefore propose an amendment to the NERC Bill? Instead of user groups having to prove previous vehicular use. If after a period of, let's say one year, I can prove that no other user has travelled along a former RUPP, can I have it back? They obviously don't want it, so they're not going to miss it. Seems fair to me m'lud...

You know, in the future I can see an underground movement developing. One that digs out and rides along old buried rights of way that people have long since forgotten about. Roll on that day.

Keith M, Bristol

Keith, I reckon this is probably the best letter we've ever received at the mag. It's amusing, informative prophetic and poignant. Good on ya' for writing it. Why not send a copy of

This is the state that countless rights of way will descend into after just a few months of non-usage...



your photos and your thoughts on this to your local MP and ask for their views. Personally I'd be tempted to just keep on riding the overgrown lanes (though I couldn't possibly recommend that). Don't think of it as law-breaking, think of it more as a service you're providing to local users...

Thanks #1

Dear TBM,

May I start by thanking you for the copy of the official 'Mondo Enduro' book plus supporting DVD that arrived on Friday last week. They couldn't have arrived at a better time, as I write this e-mail convalescing after surgery on my left knee.

Sadly a culmination of accidents and injuries (including some severe green-laning) have taken their toll. So until I'm well again, I'll have to watch and read about this epic adventure and dream of undertaking one myself in the near future. My newly acquired DR-Z400

sits patiently in the garage on the trickle charger awaiting the day that the wheels actually see some mud and dirt. Once again thank you for my prize.

Cheers.

Rupert Smith, Oxfordshire

P.S. Any chance of doing a piece on knee braces? I reckon that's got to be my next purchase!



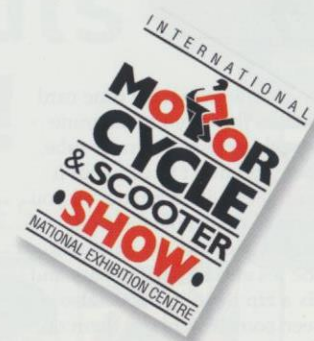
No worries Rupert. Congratulations on being one of the three winners of the Mondo Enduro goodies from last month. Kneebrace article on its way. Hopefully...

Thanks #2

Hey guys

Walked through the door Friday after work and picked up the post. Saw this letter amongst it all with the handwriting of a doctor. Thank goodness the postman can read cause it contained something that made my weekend.... free tickets to the NEC Bike Show!

I'm bikeless at the mo (had to flog my BMW 650) to finance my UK trip. And my plan is to buy one on my return to SA, with a little bit of savings I



managed to hold on to.

Back home we're very lucky when it comes to places to ride as one could easily go 300km or more on dirt without seeing the black stuff. We're surrounded by miles and miles of pine and blue-gum plantations. Makes me sad to read about all the battles of where and where you're not allowed to ride in the UK. Just hope the guys here keep the 'fight' going.

Thanks a mill to TBM and Dr Mel for the bike show tickets and what a great mag, pity we cant buy it in SA.

Cheers!
Stef Dannhauser

You might've worked out Stef that 'Dr Mel' is in fact a south-paw (a goofy, a lefty, in other words she writes with the devil's hand!) - hence the dodgy handwriting. By the way you can always subscribe from SA and keep on reading TBM!

Tip Off

Dear TBM

Just read your Oct 06 mag, another good read. I have a couple tips for your readers if you think they might be interested. Having just read

NERC'd Off

Dear TBM

A couple of photos for you. The first one, as you can see, is a former RUPP that is also the access road to my local church and cemetery where my late wife is buried (cancer at 36!). 'Oi Vicar... You're nicked!' Question is, am I allowed to burst into church on a Sunday morning and tell the whole

congregation that they're all breaking the law for driving to church? Are they allowed to carry on using this former RUPP until its change of use is approved, or has this happened instantly? And if they can carry on using it, can I elsewhere?

Second photo is of another local RUPP. This RUPP used to be wide enough to let 4X4s through. Dig around and the ruts will prove that. And yet this is the state it's now in after



Don't drive to church 'cause you'll be breaking the law...

LETTERS

your how to make a time card holder, the way I make mine is with a pushbike inner tube, then you don't have to cut it and tie-it with a zip tie, all you have to do is take the front brake reservoir off, fit it over the res and fit back to bars and fix a zip tie to it. I have also seen some riders use them on their bar pad.

Tip 1: When replacing bar grips, buy a can of hairspray or pinch your mum/grilfriend's. Take off your old grips, clean bar ends and throttle tube of old glue, then use some brake/clutch cleaner (cleans everything that stuff) and wipe with a cloth. Spray a small amount of hairspray inside of new grips and slide onto the bar end/throttel tube. It slides on so easy, not like bar glue which is like snot and is hard work just to get the grips on. Once on, lockwire in the correct place. Hair spray is a glue and will hold firm but like grip glue will give way after a while, plus it's cheaper and a can will last a lot longer than a tube of glue.

Tip 2: When replacing fork seals, use one of you old seals as a driver to seat the new ones. Not everybody has a proper driver, and can't be bothered or afford one. When forks are cleaned and ready to put new seals in, push new seal in position by hand, they will go in a certain depth before driving-in is required. On USD forks cut your old seal in half with a hacksaw, insert above the new seal then using a soft hide hammer, tap the old seal round the fork leg squarely, until they just sit above the housing. Then, using a small

screwdriver as if removing a dust cap, take the old seal out, and the new seal is ready for the clip and dust caps - no nasty screwdriver or other tool mark damage, plus no damage to fork legs by tools not meant for the job. It's quite amazing what some people will use, then wonder why their forks leak worse than before they started.

On conventional forks just slide the old seal down the fork leg to sit above the new seal and then tap it home. Remove as before fit the clips and dust caps and away you go. Hope these may be of help to somebody.

Baz, Midhurst

Cheers for that Baz. The hairspray trick is one we've mentioned before in TBM. It's a good penny-wise tip and *does* work, but be aware that it's not as secure as using proper grip glue - especially if you're riding in very wet conditions (remember you can wash hairspray out of your hair with water!)

French Letter

Dear TBM

Retired to Aveyron, SW France in 2005 - it's trail riding heaven here!

Read your article on the Beta 450RR - so I bought one. Then read your article on the Beta Alp 4 - so I bought one. Then saw your write up on the Scorpa TYS175 - so I bought one. If there's one thing I've learnt in life, its you've got to have the right tools for the job. Any chance of a write up on the

Scorpa 250TYSF Long Ride? Fancy that for the extreme bits.

Hope this missive helps you get the tests with importers - the mag sells bikes!

Tony Arnold - Villefranche de Rouergue

Cheers Tony. Thanks for your support, we'll see what we can do for you re the 250 Long Ride.

Band Aid #1

Dear TBM

You clever b*ggers! what a way to sell more magazines. Just stick a (worthwhile cause) wrist band on the front of your mag and let Dad (me) get his copy as usual only to get home proudly displaying his new band.

'Wow whats that?' came the cry from my kids. It's a wrist band to support the cause off legal off-road riding! I exclaim. 'Cool can I have one!' came the reply from my *two* kids who both ride off-road with me (legaly on private land). 'How do we get one' came next. 'Mmmmm I thought, you will have to get a copy of TBM or rather I will have to buy *two* more copies to get the wrist bands, now I know your mag is bloody good but come on chaps (and Mel) how else can I get hold of more wrist bands (I am willing to pay but not the cost of two more mags)! Help, I bet I'm not the only one in this predicament!

Darren Pickhaver, via email

Come and see us at the Dirt Bike Show Darren and we'll see what we can do...

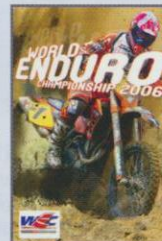
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We've sackfuls of gift ideas!

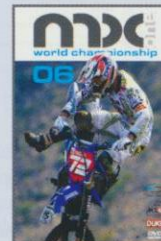
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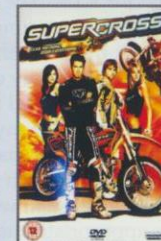
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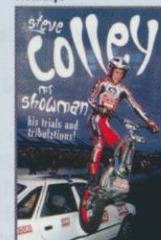
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LETTERS

Band Aid #2

Dear TBM

Well at least one manufacturer is willing to help fight our corner. Good for KTM. The wrist bands are a great gimmick but alas, I think that is all they will be as they will mainly only be observed and discussed by the converted! As one of my more cynical trail riding mates observed, 'they left 'yet' off the end'. Nevertheless I shall wear it wherever appropriate and keep preaching to the opposition.

Whilst writing, I couldn't believe my eyes when I read Robert J King's letter [asking for a free preview copy of the mag - Ed]...! And how appropriate the ed's reponse. Now I know the name of the guy who stands reading the magazines in WHSmiths and then puts them back and walks out empty handed.

He should think himself lucky that he enjoys a financial saving that the rest of us have to endure... With skin as thick as his he doesn't need to buy body armour!

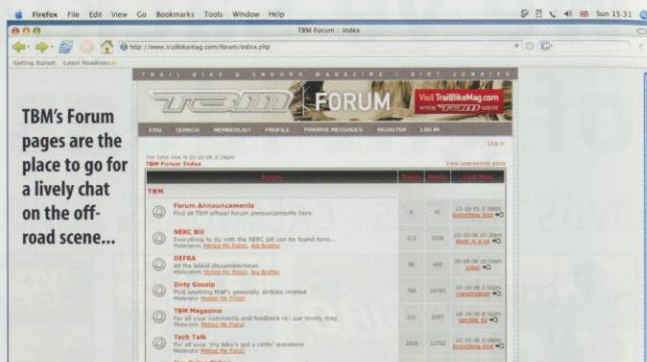
I suppose I have to say as everyone else does, great mag etc. That's why I subscribe...

Peter Fancourt, via email

Open Forum

Hi everyone at TBM

I have been visiting your forum and reading your mag for sometime now and would just like to thank you on doing an excellent job on the mag and



TBM's Forum pages are the place to go for a lively chat on the off-road scene...

the forum. I love reading all the articles and product tests and it's down to picking up your mag many years ago that I bought my first trailie and had to get out and give it a go. I have been hooked ever since. Once again thank you and keep up the good work

Adam (dirtjunky), Cornwall, via email

Wise Council?

Dear TBM

I read the *Right To Ride* article in the Sept 06 edition with increasing incredulity and interest, but for probably more reasons that most of your readers. The name Gordon Hook [the local councillor mentioned in Mark Williams' article- Ed] rang out like a well tweaked spoke. I'm not sure if it would be of any benefit to the local TRF guys fighting the decision, but it certainly may give them some idea of what kind of system they are dealing with. I suggest a visit to www.allerpark.com/theblot/.

I'll admit I know the guy who runs this website, and whilst he may have no interest whatsoever in dirt bikes, he most certainly is no fan of the

council and its policies.

A close scrutiny reveals the aforementioned Mr Hook's involvement with the CLS site. The website quite clearly explains the rest of the sorry story... Please pass this information onto Mark Williams and I'm hoping you or he can forward it to someone at the Devon TRF. Living just across the border in Cornwall and being a long time greenlaner and LDT competitor, I'm a firm believer in the adage that knowledge is power.

Tony Fry, Cornwall

Cheers Tony, all done. Readers may like to check out this site for themselves. It's a bit of an eye-opener...

Absolutely Prophetic

Dear TBM

Great mag. I'm fairly new to trail biking although I've fancied having a go for a while. The 'grown up' and useful articles are refreshing compared to the rest of the bike press and helped me take the plunge. Just one thing though, after reading your article on puncture preventative products, I managed

to get a puncture the next day! Please don't do any pieces on falling off, breaking down or otherwise coping with minor dramas. Life's complicated enough and reading them will only tempt fate!

I'm toying with using my newly purchased 450EXC as a daily commuter, 10miles each way, as well as an off roader at the weekend. Is this worth contemplating or is it a non-starter. What mod (tyres/servicing intervals etc) are worth looking at.

Keep up the good work.

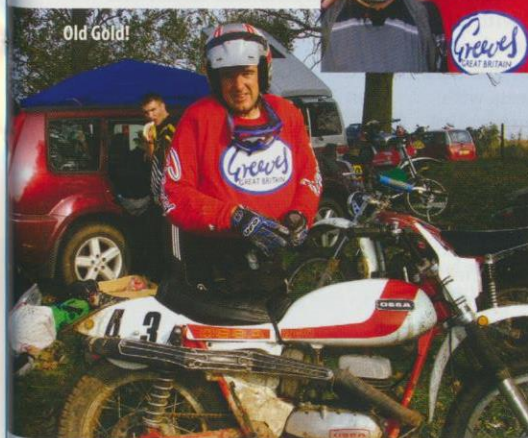
Tim Webster, Kent, via email

Hey Tim that's really spooky, 'cause next month we were going to publish an article about how to rebuild your 450EXC after it has unexpectedly 'grenaded'. Only joking, mate. In fact the EXC will handle this sort of commute easily and you needn't worry about anything other than what tyres you use...

Normandy Invasion

Hi all

If you ever doubt the power of the written word... don't!! Picture this, two forty-something's on the way to our annual pilgrimmage, the Netleymarsh bike jumble. The conversation in the car turns to a little snippet in TBM on the retro enduro for pre-81



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LETTERS

bikes in Normandy. Already owning a sort of suitable bike in the shape of a 350 Bultaco Alpina, my friend spends the rest of the journey trying to persuade me to enter and ride half of it each. Two hours later we end up purchasing a fully restored Ossa 250SDR, now we have a bike each.

Over the next few weeks all the arrangements are made and we are duly entered for the event. All I can say is what a fantastic weekend we had, one I will always remember, brilliant event, great track, great hospitality, great people and a great atmosphere, we were made to feel truly welcome.

I sadly only managed two of the five 25km laps (knackered, old, and out of time) but Mark finished the event after some hasty mid-race repairs. Both of us want to go back next year and I am now looking for a bike for my 18yr old son who is now desperate to have a go.

All of this because of a few lines in TBM. To the rest of you, where were you!!!! Keep up the good work.

Marc Swaffer

Good on ya' Mark. We were meant to be there, but we never got our act organised in time...

A question of Balance

Dear TBM

I have a KTM 200EXC and at about 50mph the front wheel 'bounces' up and down. Is this normal KTM behavior?

I have set up the suspension

sag, put new oil in the forks etc. However, having just changed the front tyre, I noticed it had a single rimlock. Would a single rimlock cause an out of balance wheel to bounce? I was thinking of turning up some weights, fitting them to the spokes and see if this helps balance the wheel.

Of course the rear wheel has two holes for rimlocks but they are not diametrically opposed - so would need balancing too. I have read about people fitting steering dampers to KTM because of the 'vague' front end at speed. Steering dampers are very expensive and my skill in riding would probably not notice the difference. However if I could remove some of the bounce with a few carefully placed weights, it would make me feel safer riding it between lanes.

Am I worried about nothing?

Sean Sullivan, Baldock, Herts

Sean, this is a very common phenomenon, and not just confined to KTMs - I often notice it when riding on the road on a dirt bike and it's nothing to worry about. You're exactly right with your prognosis, and readers have remarked in the past that they *do* balance their wheels with great effect. I've never tried it on a dirt bike for the simple reason that generally the speeds are slower than about 50mph (except on the road), and also because the mud never sticks evenly to a tyre so the wheel is almost always out of balance.

You've also got to be careful that whatever you use to balance the wheel (such as lead spoke-weights) doesn't get knocked off when riding

through deep ruts etc. Let us know how you get on, I'd be very interested...

Two's Company

Hi Guys

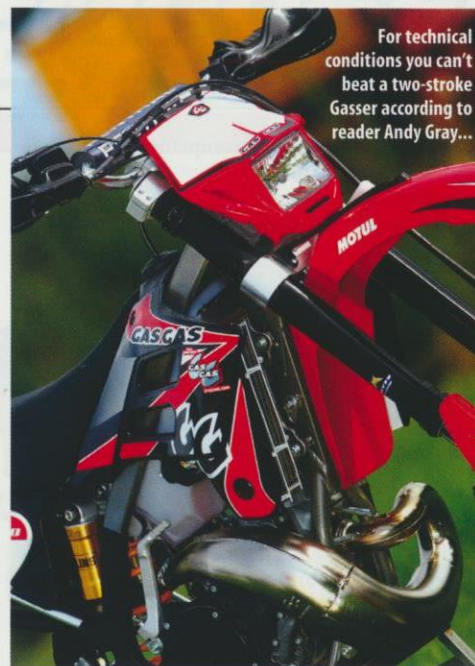
Just returned from a Chris Evans trip to the Lozere, which was excellent! But what I wanted to say was that a 2006 Gas Gas EC250 is even better! climbed up virtually everything (even if I couldn't) and amazingly reliable, unlike the four-strokes which managed to blow bearings, gearboxes or destroy their owners! One thumper even managed to turn itself into a smoking two-stroke! (that slowed him down!). Anyhow, everyone should get a two-stroke, preferably a Spanish one in my opinion!

yours (on commission)
Andy Gray, via email

Going Soft

Dear TBM

I have recently acquired a 1999 Yamaha YZ250. Info from my friendly Yamaha dealer has identified the machine as a French import model code 5CU-2. The bike already has an 18in rear wheel conversion and was fitted with an FMF Gold Series Fatty front pipe and FMF Power Core II tail pipe. The bike requires some attention both to engine and chassis to get it into a serviceable condition and I would like to carry out any modifications at this time to make the bike more enduro/trail suitable. Can you please provide me with any information on YZ to WR conversions. Information



For technical conditions you can't beat a two-stroke Gasser according to reader Andy Gray...

on lighting coils/ heavier flywheels etc. Recommended sprocket sizes, inlet tract length alterations all in an effort to retune the engine for more torque? I can recall a feature in the magazine on a Honda CR to CRE conversion some time past. Is there a similar article on WR conversions? I have bought/had a subscription to the magazine for a number of years so have a pretty well unbroken library of back issues to read up on if you can give me some guidance as where to look. The Staff Bikes articles from circa 2000-2001 on WR ownership have been informative but do not answer my questions. Any answers or references would be much appreciated.

Stephen Clark, via email

Continued →



The Provini Powervalue governor can tame the hit of your two-stroke MXer, (and we know it works 'cos we've tried it out for ourselves) but be warned, it doesn't come cheap...

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LETTERS

Stephen the YZ you've bought was probably one of the bikes converted for enduro use by Yamaha Motor France, a fair few of which made it across the channel after Yamaha dropped their two-stroke WR from the range at the end of '99. Good though they are, they're nowhere near as tractable as the earlier WRs. The best people we know to help you with improving this is Pro Racing in Northants on 01788 510300 (who did the CR to CRE conversion you mention, I believe) and have loads of experience in this field. But it's worth digging out back issue no 94 which has

got a review of the Proveni powervalve governor fitted to a Yamaha YZ250 and the effect it has on taming the YZ's hit.

Bleedin' Obvious

Hi TBM

In issue 133 there is a photo in the Trials Heroes section of who I presume to be Doug Theobald. While he is attempting that quite nadgery climb most of the spectators do not seem to care. They are mostly looking what seems to be skyward. What has got their attention, is it a bird? Is it a plane? Does anyone out there have any kind of idea what it might be. Perhaps you could start a

caption competition or something.

James Wilden, Coleford Glos

Yeah we could James... but then maybe everyone else would just read the bloody article to find the answer. Because there it is, printed in black and white in the first bloody paragraph. It's a jet fighter, alright James. That's what it says: a jet fighter.

And while I'm at it, you said a photo of someone you 'presume to be Doug Theobald'.

Did you guess lucky James or did the fact that the name DOUG THEOBALD is printed in big white letters at the bottom of the photograph give it away, mate..?

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TALKING

Chris Evans
pipes up about
piping down!

DIRTY

It is hard to believe that my monthly whimsical musings in TBM started off well over ten years ago as a rabid, Melber-commissioned rant on the future of trail riding. Apparently the Ed was so impressed by my purple prose that he decided to bestow the ultimate honour on your humble scribe - that of contributing a permanent column - and he's probably been regretting it ever since. To be honest I'd forgotten all about this until that rant issue fell off the bookshelf and landed in my lap while I was eating my virtual cornflakes - we're talking metaphorically here by the way.

Of course, given the rant's unexpected re-appearance I had to re-read it and was impressed by three things. One: all my predictions were wrong. Two: I'd obviously taken quite a lot of care in writing it. Three: it was very boring.

'Surely everybody has read the recently published article concerning the exponential correlation between small male member size and exhaust pipe decibel levels?'

Apart from Spike giving me the hump a couple of months ago - and I promise this is the last time I will ever mention him - I haven't been moved to vent my spleen much in the ensuing decade - until the other day when an irate Frenchman leaned out of the window of his flat to complain about the din my punters were making revving up their noisy motorbikes.

In true Latin stylee I should have rushed to defend my valued clients from Monsieur Fache's verbal onslaught, instead I just felt Northern Europeanly embarrassed. Worse still, with my sensibilities aroused, as the days went by I became increasingly pissed off with the sound of aftermarket 'silencers' echoing across the valleys, so that by the time I was back under Monsieur Fache's fenetre later that week I was ready to buy the bloke a Pastis and vote for Les Vertes.

In the end I decided on a compromise - my first rant in 10 years - except I am still slightly speechless (and slightly deaf). I mean, surely we all know that noise is the biggest 'controllable' threat to the future of our sport? Surely we all cringe when we hear the bark of an open can in inappropriate settings? Surely people aren't so conceited as to think they actually have the ability to exploit the extra 2bhp their idiotic piece of plumbing gives them? Surely they

have better things to spend their hard earned cash on? Surely everybody has read the research recently published in the learned Journal of Human Sexuality concerning the exponential correlation between small male member size and exhaust pipe decibel levels? So why on earth would anybody actually pay money to advertise the fact they are deficient in the underpants department?

Of course there are exceptions. While I have yet to come across an American end-can (or an American come to that matter) that *didn't* have me frothing at the mouth, I accept that French manufacturer CRD do make some excellent systems that are no louder than the OE stuff and in some cases - DR-Z400Es spring to mind - considerably quieter. And for people who love beautifully made tubes of metal, the Akrapovic range with the baffle in, is entirely acceptable. I also came across a DEP system for KTM four-strokes the other day that was also surprisingly quiet...

Personally I always kinda' liked the concept of an educated population guided by a set of similar shared values and encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions. But then I always was an optimistic dreamer.

Let's face it we live in an egotistical age of self interest. All is not lost however as I imagine that, like me, it is in the interests of people who run clubs, rent out land and run motorcycles shops (and indeed dirt bike holidays) for off-road riding to continue as long as possible. We all have a say in the continued sale of noisy aftermarket pipes and so logically all we need to do is get together and stop their use.

Yes I know it is going to cost people money in lost sales and lost entries, but long term it will pay off. I'm not much of a committee man and so I am not proposing to get all interested parties together to thrash out a code of practice - apart from anything else I'm on the wrong side of the channel to organise something like that. I am however going to take a stand concerning my own trips next year.

Up until now whenever anybody has driven all the way over to France to come for a ride and wheeled a motorised megaphone out of their van, I've just bitten the bullet and sulked in silence. But from now on, whenever anybody signs up, I will make it crystal clear that if they turn up with a loud pipe they won't be allowed to ride - simple as that. If their pipe is non-standard they can always let me know the make and model in advance and I can give the nod either way. But that is as much leeway as I'm giving. Someone's got to make a stand, and you've got to start somewhere.

I feel so much better for having said all that!



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COMPLETELY

Mark Williams reckons he has an eye for a bargain...

RUTTED

'Action/Bikes/Girls/Stars/Bargains'. And just in case you're in any doubt I'll repeat that, 'Action/Bikes/Girls/Stars/Bargains'. Which is exactly what the advert in the last issue of TBM stated in order to ram home the attractions of this month's Dirt Bike Show at Stoneleigh.

Of course those on a tight budget and/or with limited excuses to pull a sickie or not spend the weekend at Ikea may find themselves torn between 'Action/Bikes/Girls/Stars/Bargains' and the 'Off Road Experience', 'Thunderdome Games' and 'Supermoto School' that are on offer a few weeks earlier just up the road at the NEC Motorcycle & Scooter Show. I know I am. But these days I figure that I'm a trail rider first and a motorcyclist second (and a scooterist third, but let's not get into that), so it'll just be the 'Action/Bikes/Girls/Stars/Bargains' for me this November.

Although actually it won't, for whilst I lust after all of those things except, under certain circumstances and for reasons I'll come to later, 'Stars', the main reasons I've visited Stoneleigh these past few years are for the 'Bikes' and the 'Bargains'. Oh, and the likelihood of bumping

'When confronted with aisles of glorified car-boot merchants, I somehow descend into a starry-eyed miasma of suspended disbelief and rampant acquisitiveness...'

into a few old industry lags I'd rarely get to see otherwise and exchange tall stories with.

The 'Girls' at Stoneleigh (and, to be honest, the NEC wing-ding - for they are, in many cases, exactly the same fair damsels), are usually straight from provincial tanning salons and modelling agencies, who strut and pout their way around in spandex flimsies, baring midriffs and giggling between themselves at the good fortune they have to be paid to do just that. These 'Girls', these svelte, stiletto-elevated goddesses are, of course, not for the likes of you and me. No, we have to make do with rather fuller-framed and properly-clothed female companions whose tans, if they existed at all, have faded from their ten days in Ibiza by the time they get to Stoneleigh.

Which is perhaps why most of the unpaid females trudging around bike shows tend to look a bit glum but at least have ambitions greater than to appear sheepishly disrobed and slightly out-of-focus in the pages of Nuts or Zoo.

But as I've never yet persuaded a girlfriend

of mine to accompany me to any such event, I nonetheless sometimes catch myself ogling the crumpet on parade whilst not for a second being persuaded to buy whatever it is they have emblazoned on their skimpy halter tops. Which is sometimes a particular make of motorcycle... which I've come to see anyway! And every year at Stoneleigh there have been a couple of 'Bikes' that have been the focus of my interest, perhaps even a reason for going, this year will be no different... I can't wait to see the new KLX450R or the Gas Gas Hobby.

As for the 'Action', well last year I ventured into the dank, hanger-like arena to watch some dare-devil Herbert on a ferocious UJM [Universal Japanese Motorcycle] pulling stunts that made me slightly queasy, and some altogether more graceful and immaculately controlled feats involving trials bikes and oil drums. Both of which will doubtless be on offer this year too but 'seen it once, seen it enough' is basically my attitude to such showing-off!

'Stars'? Well since there are no celebrity trail riders (except perhaps Ewan McGregor) and whilst the achievements of David Knight, Paul Edmondson etc are undoubtedly admirable and awe-inspiring, I don't really need to hear some fifth-rate Clarkson with a dodgy microphone asking 'em dumb questions on a makeshift stage. But that's perhaps a consequence of my old age and the fact that I'm not a racer.

But although these are probably all good and alluring reasons for most punters to fork out their ackers for a ticket, what it really comes down to for this old curmudgeon are the 'Bargains'.

A year hasn't gone by when I haven't stumbled out from Stoneleigh bearing items and appurtenances, some of which were actually useful. These included the foot-operated workshop stand that now lies chewed up and greasy in my shed (but still works much better than a cider crate), the body armour that reeks of two year's BO, owing to my inability to ascertain exactly how to wash it (but has saved my bones on numerous occasions), and several pairs of gloves that are too small and/or impossible to remove when wet because their linings aren't connected to their outers.

Of course at the time I bought them they were, just as the advertisement says, 'Bargains' so I just had to have them. But other Stoneleigh purchases that I'm rather less proud of were also equally essential at the time. Quite why, for example, I needed to hand over 15 quid for a highly comprehensive set of multi-hexagonal headed 'bits' which only worked with a quarter-inch socket drive (which I didn't then have) I only figured out two years later when I needed to take the

'Quite why I needed to hand over 15 quid for a set of multi-hexagonal headed 'bits' I only figured out later when I had to take the dashboard off my Citroen estate...'

dashboard off my Citroen estate. And I am still waiting for the opportunity to use the angled socket driver - a half-inch jobbie of course - that I paid a tenner for the following year, as well as the competition-style headlamp nacelle that was ten quid cheaper than anything else remotely similar simply because, as I discovered when I got it home, it wasn't remotely similar to anything that would fit my XT350.

But the trouble with me, and I reckon with the British as a whole, is that I can't resist what seems like a bargain. And when confronted with aisles and aisles of glorified car-boot merchants, I somehow descend into a starry-eyed miasma of suspended disbelief and rampant acquisitiveness.

As the friends who I routinely visit Stoneleigh with will wearily attest, at any given moment I'll excuse myself from perfectly sagacious appraisals of the new Sherco or a well-filled example of spandex beachwear - oops, there I go again - because I feel the need to dash off and buy that (ultimately useless) miniature tyre pump, or that carbon fibre (effect) brake lever, I saw earlier before someone else cops the last ones.

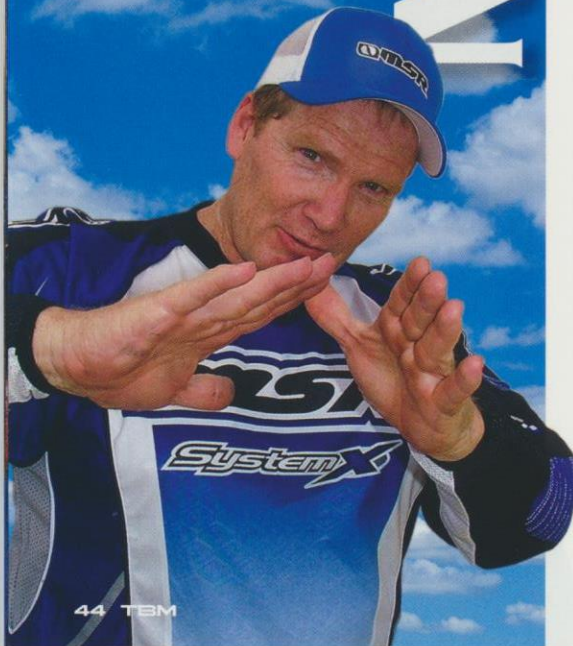
In the cold light of day, or more likely as dusk settles over the muddy, litter-strewn Stoneleigh car park, I'm invariably brought to my senses and accept that such behaviour is both irrational and foolhardy. Especially when I have a couple of extremely good specialist off-road aftermarket suppliers half-an-hour's drive from home. And every pound I've spent in the gaudy bazaar I've just left, which of course is difficult to get refunded should the need arise (thanks to my misjudgements, it often does), is one less pound I could be putting into both the local economy and Britain's dwindling retail bike trade.

But on the other hand, one can hardly blame the merchants who set up their stalls to cater to those muddy motorcyclists who often don't have a dealer anywhere nearby, and who can at least see, touch and where appropriate, try on the goods they'd otherwise have to buy, sight unseen, over the internet or by phone. I just wish they wouldn't save all those end-of-line, inappropriately spec'd, unusable and otherwise unsaleable items they find themselves lumbered with at the end of every summer and throw them in my face at Stoneleigh. A face that clearly has 'Sucker' written all over it...!



Patman gets himself mired in yet another sticky situation...

THE PATMAN



You guys remember the Red Bull 'Last Man Standing' event - the one David Knight won last year? If you do, you'll know it was held here in northern Texas, at a cycle park that the locals just call Muenster which is the name of the little town close by. Muenster has every kind of terrain that you can find in the north Texas area ranging from sandy washes and creek beds, to loamy twisty woods. And of course the Mighty Red River, marking the northern boundary of the park. With all this expansive and varied terrain and the ideal camping facilities, it's no wonder that this place is host to several off-road events each year - ranging from observed trials to enduro and cross-country events. And as I mentioned, the Last Man Standing event.

A buddy of mine once said, 'Ya just can't have a bad ride at Muenster.'

So it goes without saying that an opportunity to have this place to oneself on a Wednesday in the middle of October, well that'd be just... just... premium!

So, when this same buddy called up and boasted that he had wrangled the next day off his job and a trip to the local 'Disneyworld for dirt bikes' was in order, I had no choice but to call my own boss and explain that, 'Yes, it was indeed unfortunate to get the pox four times in four months.' And with my ever-lengthening nose, becoming entangled in the phone cord, the die was cast.

Next I called Racin' Jason and proudly boasted that while he slaved away makin' whatever it is he makes, that key members of Patman Racing, would be livin' large down at Muenster.

Further, I expounded on the fact that the local prognosticator was predicting perfect weather, and that we'd probably be all alone. After a moment of what sounded like whimpering, I heard him hang up the phone.

Mike and I decided that today we'd leave the little 450s and such in the garage and pull out the *Big Guns* for this trip.

I have only recently finished the build-up of a one-off Kawasaki KLX700 for the open expert desert races and general tomfoolery. It looks like a rolling parts catalogue, with everything from a 690cc titanium-nitride coated cylinder, to a custom ceramic-coated pipe and silencer. And of course I was anxious to see what she had to offer.

My best ridin' buddy Mike is currently campaigning a 100+mph aluminum framed, CR500AF in the cross country wars and believe me when I tell you, if ever a bike had *too much* raw horsepower, this is it. It's the stuff that

broken bones and motorcycle nightmares are made of... I know this to be completely true... I sold it to him.

Once, during my brief ownership of this monster, I theorized that the slight variations in the world's timepieces was due to too many of the world's open-class bike riders roosting to the east or west at the same time, the world over. Thus, causing the planet's rotation to consequently speed up, or slow down. I love open-class bikes!

Anyway the next mornin', Wednesday if I recall, introduced itself with the smell of Mrs Patman's piping hot pancakes. She's been cookin' pre-ride breakfast for my friends and I for years, and man it sure gets everyone off to a good start and sometimes the guys even let me lead - out of respect for Carole's cookin'. She's great at goggle prep, gas tank filling and not bad in shorts either. She is in my opinion the ultimate pit tootsie.

What a day! What a glorious day! When we finally arrived my butt had a waffle pattern on it that mimicked the shape of the springs in Mike's thinly padded seats. I should've just sat on the Hibachi grill, it would've been just as comfortable and we could've saved some space in the back. No doubt about it, Mike's van definitely needs new seats... but not today.

Today, we pulled into the campground, found our favourite picnic table and stepped out into the cool Autumn morning. There we stood hands on hips, surveying what was going to be our playground for the day. Not a cloud in the sky. It was pretty quiet, no other bikers, the birds were singin', the breeze was, er... breezin' and the creek was making that cute little 'babbling brook' sound.

We did the creek ride first... 'cause we always do the creek ride first. Or some variation of it. It was beautiful, the water was clear against the white sand and when the sun hit it just right, the creek looked like a silver snake winding through the sandy canyon ahead of us. Fourth and fifth gear stuff all the way!

The stream that day was only about six inches deep and maybe 50 feet wide, and, as it confined itself to the centre of the 100 foot wide creek bed, there was plenty of sandy beach on either side. The creek bottom itself was firm, traction-laden sand. And it goes like this for miles, all the way

to the Texas border. We ride this creek bed often, but usually not all the way to the end at the river. Normally we pull out of the canyon to go hit one of the many enduro loops along the way.

But for some reason today we got off in high spirits and wanted nothing more than speed! No tight trails, no rocky hill-climbs, just all-out speed! So be it then. It was fifth gear down the beach, drop to fourth, corner, and wheelie across the water, and then back into fifth and power down the beach on the opposite side! Always headed north, it was fantastic! When Mike did a 70mph power wheelie through the water, it looked like he was roostin' up diamonds as the water droplets flew high enough to catch the sunlight that was beaming over the top of the canyon. Just for a second or two the whole world seemed to go into 'slow motion' like on the television. It was that sweet.

Now, a word about 'slow motion' moments.

'When Mike did a 70mph power wheelie through the water, it was like he was roostin' up diamonds as the water droplets flew high enough to catch the sunlight beaming over the top of the canyon...'

Slow motion is the world's way of allowing a regular guy like me to experience certain moments in life, longer than others. Exciting moments. Moments that really get your heart pumpin'. I think you all know what I mean. Like when ya skydive from an airplane and pull the ripcord. Just for a second it seems that the whole world slows down right?

You know, while you wait to see if the parachute will deploy... or not?

So we're starting to have a great day of creek and canyon ridin'. We rode for a good five minutes full on, rarely dropping out of fifth gear. What a sight we must have been to anyone looking down on us from the canyon rim. A pair of big fast open-class bikes blastin' through the bottom of the canyon, roostin' up water and sand like a couple of those big offshore jet boats.

And as is usual with me and Mike what starts as a friendly trail ride, turns into a full on drag race. You guys know what I mean. You don't intend for it to be this way, it just happens.

Anyway, we're following the creek deeper into the canyon at ridiculous speeds and as the creek snakes from one side of the canyon to the other we wheelie across the shallow water to the beach on the other side...not really noticing in our adrenaline-induced race that the beaches are getting narrower and the canyon walls are getting higher. That is 'till we come around this one particular bend, a sharp right-hander.



Slow motion.

I could see the rushing river about 30 yards ahead. I could see there was no more beach. I could see only vertical walled canyon on both sides of me and worst of all (at that moment), was that the ground *wasn't* ground anymore. Nope. No more ground.

In fact there was no more discernable 'creek' per se.

In its stead was a mixture of the creek, the river and some red sand, that had the consistency of Jelly... Butterscotch I should think. Some call it quick-sand.

Patman was goin' 50mph directly at what appeared to be the end of the world... in a mud-flow, on a (adj deleted) new bike.

My cat-like reflexes and finely honed off-road skills are all that saved me from what would have been certain death... or worse. Keeping the throttle pinned, I jammed it down into fourth and tried to aim myself at the nearest canyon wall: 'think light... think light as a feather' I told myself, but it's really hard to ride in pudding, as it doesn't support a motorbike well at all. My speed was dropping so fast I thought someone tied a mountain to my back fender. I jammed it

Mike and I were now riding in the middle of the shallow stream, 'cause the canyon had narrowed to just water and walls, no beaches. And in order to stay somewhat dry and free of Mike's spray, I had temporarily allowed him to get the best of me and he was pullin' away around the corner, in a big wheelie of course. And of course not to be outpaced, I hit the gas a little harder and was in hot pursuit around the same corner.

Now these motorcycles aren't the whisper quiet machines we'd all like them to be, especially while travelling 65mph down in a deep canyon. So it's no wonder that neither of us heard the otherwise deafening roar of the rushing waters of the mighty Red River... which as we raced around that last corner were right there... and I mean, *right there*.

'Think light... think light as a feather' I told myself, but it's really hard to ride in pudding, as it doesn't support a motorbike very well at all...'

into third, with 20 feet of quicksand to go I thought: 'not gonna make it, not gonna make it' I hissed between clenched teeth. With my beautiful new Kawasaki slowing and sinking in the muck, I downshifted into second, with ten feet of bottomless slime to go.

Finally, just as all hope was lost, the back tyre found the tiniest bit of traction and I bumped up against the canyon wall. Dirty but alive!

'YESSSS! YESSSSS! Man that was great!!!' I reared my head back, let out my best war whoop and did a touchdown dance right there on the seat of the KLX700. 'Go Patman, Go' I sang to myself.

During the slow motion, I forgot all about Mike. I spun around in the saddle to see how he fared in 'the great mudride of '06'.

What I saw was a trench that started about midway out of the last corner, straight as a laser beam. Straight as an arrow, straight to the rear fender of the CR500AF. It looked like the crash path of an airliner. The funny thing is though how, as I watched, the trench was very slowly closing itself up, to hide any hint of its existence.

And there he sat, about one metre from the spot where the creek turned to turbulent river and exactly 18 metres from either side of the canyon.

Now I'm not one to laugh at a guy in peril, but ya gotta admit that seeing the guy who was roosting ya a few minutes ago, now buried up to his seat is kinda funny.

I cupped my gloved hands to my mouth and yelled over to him: 'Well, well, well, Mister Open expert, Mister sixty-mile-an-hour power wheelie. 'Why don't you wheelie you ass over here, where I am?'

The sound of the river musta muffled my voice, I guess. He thought I was asking what gear he was in, and he signaled back 'first' using just his middle finger. Hmmm.

Well I had to do something, as he looked kinda pathetic with just the top of his seat showing, I mean just the tops of his bars showing... wait, make that just his torso showing... no wait... uh oh.

This could be the end for Mike... and then I'd be leading my class out at the track! Hmmm.

I guess it took about five minutes for me to crawl out to where he was... a bird couldn't have walked on this crap. It was ten o'clock in the morning.

Do ya remember the scenes in the western

movies where the hero would be draggin' himself through the desert sand and the camera would look directly into the hot sun and you could hear the sizzling meat sound? (Insert that sound here)

Mike and the Honda were pretty well stuck. My bike lay on its side against the only solid piece of land around, and that only an inch or two wide.

We got Mike unstuck but the bike was not visible. The good news is that there was a solid bottom, but it was about four feet down!

It was now three o'clock. The sun had crossed the sky and was heading toward the other side of the small canyon. The KLX lay on its side, safely out of the goo. The CR5 was still stuck. We had pulled. We had pushed. We tried to start it, but water had fouled the ignition and the pipe was plugged. We tried lifting, but that only resulted in us sinking deeper into the muck.

The water was still rushin' a few feet away. The Sun was still beatin' down on us and we were both covered from head to foot with half dried butterscotch puddin'. We looked like a couple of well-baked gingerbread men.

By four o'clock, we had decided that in order to break the vacuum under the tyres, we would have to put our faces in the muck and reach down under the tyres to allow air in. I was particularly glad that I had not removed my helmet, when I realised that, with sag set to 100mm, the distance from the top of a seat, to the bottom of the tyre, is farther than my arm is long. Mike looked like he'd been hit in the face with a chocolate pie.

By five o'clock, the CR5 was resting quietly on its side, on top of the mud. Mike and I started dragging it like a dead horse, towards the shore. Scooting on our butts backwards in the mud, tugging the bike an inch or two at a time, then scootin' again. That took us about 45 minutes.

Finally we made it over to where the red and black Kawasaki was laying. But now another problem arose. How to get the bikes up the steep embankment that was between us and the five mile trip back to the van. Several attempts to ride up the canyon bank proved fruitless, as there was no way to get a run at it.

Instead, fearing the sun would go down with us still here, (for the Boy scouts to find next Summer), I revved it up and dumped the clutch, launching the KLX like a rocket... albeit an

'The sound of the river musta muffled my voice, I guess. He thought I was asking what gear he was in, and he signalled back 'first' using just his middle finger. Hmmm....'

men on the front tyre, the other on the handle-bars. Holding onto the local flora with one hand and draggin' the mud encrusted Honda with the other.

We did make it up but there was no time to rest, so we set to the task of tying a rope retrieved from the trusty Hallman fanny-pack, to the front of the sparkless CR5 and the back end of the KLX.

We each hopped on our scoots and off we went towards the comforts of the thinly padded seats of Mike's van. For about a half of a mile.

That's when the KLX ran out of gas!

Now here's a tip from uncle Patman, remember to turn off the gas, when resting your bike on it's side for more than... oh, say, seven hours.

Okay, it's been a crappy day. The sun is all but outta site. The CR won't start. The KLX is out of gas, and the two gingerbread guys and their gingerbread bikes are three or four miles out of camp. Did I mention that we were alone today?

Alright, it's now a matter of principle. So I dig into the fanny pack for tools. CR Seat and tank off. Fuel from CR into the KLX. Reassemble CR. And again, back to the Gingerbread man doubles riding exhibition.

Now we're racing the darkness (and losing) and it's getting kinda cold in our mud suits.

I guess in my concern about the coming darkness may have caused a little heavier throttle hand than I would've normally used, cause at one point I had forgotten about Mike and was in third gear through the whoops, with only dry clothes, food and the barely operational van heater on my mind.

Mike, fearing to hit the brakes, (everyone knows you should never hit the brakes when being pulled through giant sand whoops in the dark, by a cold, hunger-crazed, gingerbread man) was helpless to stop me.

Yes we made it. We always make it. I couldn't have written this tale otherwise.

The moral of the story? Hmmm, nothing springs immediately to mind...

unmanned one. After about three of these 'launches', the bike made it up and over.

I could see the road home. The sun was headed behind yon hills now, But we'd make it. I hoped...

The CR5 was next. As it wouldn't start we ended up doing the dead horse thing up the hill, one of us gingerbread

BABY BOOMER

Husqvarna unveils a radically new DOHC quarter-litre four-stroke powerplant, and puts it to the test in an all-new chassis... in public!



Question: If you were a manufacturer with an all-new prototype bike, why would you casually wheel it out at an international launch where the world's press was gathered to sample your new production bikes? Answer: Either your R&D guys forgot to check for other bookings at the MX track that day, or - the more likely scenario - you want to give everyone a sneak peek at what the fresh blood in your engineering department have been up to.

Okay, the boys from Husqvarna's R&D department didn't exactly wheel this new prototype TC250 right into the middle of the 2007 model-range launch held at Italy's famous Malpensa GP circuit, though they did everything but. They plonked a couple of very conspicuous black Huskys just a few hundred metres

BABY BOOMER



Left: Multiple World Enduro Champ, Anders Eriksson gives the new 450 some Swedish what-for to ensure performance is matched by its durability...



away from a dozen nosy dirt bike journos, with little more than three trees and two judiciously parked vans to obscure our view. Not exactly a covert test location you might expect for a manufacturer with a barely-tested prototype!

Add to the mix a couple of high-profile testers

- former world MX and enduro champs, Alex Puzar and Anders Eriksson - and the fact that the bike's exhaust note sounded entirely different from everything else on-track - and the result was a distraction that became very, very difficult to ignore.

In fact, there was more than one of these prototype machines circulating the Malpensa track. While Puzar cut countless laps on what sounded like a very free-revving little black 250, Eriksson was putting a hard-barking 450 through its paces. The 450 didn't appear to be a huge departure from the current production unit.

Despite running a left-side muffler, its most obvious mods were a straighter air intake tract, offset rear shock mounts and an asymmetrical swingarm. On the other hand, the new 250 that Puzar was lighting up like a teenager was a completely new bit of kit from head to toe. Naturally, it became the focus of our attention.



The all-new compact DOHC 249.5cc powerplant runs an oversquare 79 x 50.9mm bore and stroke, four radially-positioned ti valves, just 900ml of oil, and is said to weigh in at just 22kg. It is 15 per cent more compact than the current TC250 donk.



As well as replacing their existing TE250 unit, Husky hopes this all-new DOHC donk will help deliver them a greater share of the MX market. It's light, compact, runs ti valves, and is likely to be fuel-injected...

BABY BOOMER

Like a lot of manufacturers Husky has identified the 250cc thumper market as a lucrative area for continued growth because of its appeal to younger riders. And it appears the Italians are very serious about this all-new powerplant and the opportunities they hope it'll open up for them.

The 250cc powerplant

Andrea Goggi - the former Aprilia GP road race R&D guru, who is now in charge of all engine development for Husky, Cagiva and MV Agusta - designed the all-new 250cc engine. While the prototype TC250 motor (it's currently an MXer but once development has been signed off it'll be built as an electric-start TE motor as well) has

machined crankcases, water-pump cover and rocker cover all matched to a well-finished cast cylinder, there's nothing incredibly revolutionary about it on face value. It displaces 249.5cc, runs a conventional chain-driven DOHC, features four radially-positioned ti valves, and runs a five-speed gearbox.

What is remarkable about the thing is how compact it is. Husky claims the motor is 15 percent more compact than the current TC250 donk, and that it weighs in at just 22kg. And with its super oversquare bore and stroke of 79 x 50.9mm (compared with the more conventional 76-78mm bores found on the current crop of quarter-litre Japanese MX thumpers), it is clearly designed to be a high-revving, high-performance little mill.



The future Husky 250 is more than likely to be fuel-injected. And lurking under the Husky tarpaulin was an alloy-framed machine - also under consideration for the production bike. The bad news: it's not out til 2008 or 2009...

The other interesting issue is how the engine will get its fuel. According to Husqvarna's marketing director Martino Bianchi, 'Right now, we are testing the new 250 and 450 motocross bikes with both carburetors and some Mikuni fuel injection. We are not sure what fuel injection the production bikes will eventually use. But all enduro bikes will soon have it, and the motocross bikes are likely to follow.'

And fuel injection is the natural choice, given that road-registered enduro bikes need to meet ever-stricter European emissions regs. Of course by moving the rear shock mounting points





Multi-time world Enduro Champ Anders Eriksson was putting a lightly-modded 450 through its paces at the same test session. Like the 250 the bike featured the revised shock position...

BABY BOOMER

off-centre, Husqvarna has made room for a larger, straighter air intake and a fuel injection system. Other differences between the TE and TC motors are likely to be a softer cam profile, altered gear-ratios (together with a six-speed box), an electric-start and an ignition and exhaust system designed to suit enduro use.

On Track

Despite early suggestions that we could throw a leg over the new 250, Husky's R&D guys would have nothing to do with it at the track. We were left to either watch Puzar and Eriksson from the sidelines or get out there on track and see how fast the prototypes were by comparison to the 2007 production bikes.

From behind the spectator fence, the 250 looked like an absolute rocketship. It charged out of loamy berms, up steep hills, and over hefty gaps with the snap of a 450, and it had the aggressive, free-revving bark of a Team Rinaldi-kitted YZ250F. In other words, it was a world away from a production TC250.

According to Puzar (and bearing in mind he's on the Husqvarna payroll), 'The bike feels very light, and the geometry is perfect. It is stable, quick to turn and easy to handle. The engine is really powerful in the high range. We are working now to make it more usable in the middle to low range. Clutch and gearing is excellent and there is very little vibration for a four stroke.'

When I managed to get my 2007-model TC250 alongside Puzar on a couple of occasions for a drag race up a third-gear hill, it reinforced the point that this thing is quick. With an even start (and not enough bumps to make the difference in our riding abilities an issue), Puzar was gone in a big hurry. He was grabbing fourth gear and 20 metres ahead while my TC was still winding up in third.

Okay, so the thing motors. But how will it last? Well it performed without a hiccup all day after countless visits to the rev limiter. And if you believe the Husky engineers, it's been faultless since day one.

Says Bianchi, 'We first saw this new 250 engine at the beginning of this year and we have already had it on the dyno for more than 200 hours. It has been incredibly reliable and we are very pleased with the progress our motivated R&D is making.'

On Dealer Floors

Now for the bad news. If all goes to plan, the all-new TE/TC may be a 2008 model, but Bianchi suggests that this might be optimistic: 'If the development is where we want it to be when we begin production of our 2008-model bikes mid next year, then yes it will be a 2008 production model. Otherwise, we will see it for 2009.'

Which begs the question: where will the Japanese 250cc thumpers be by then?

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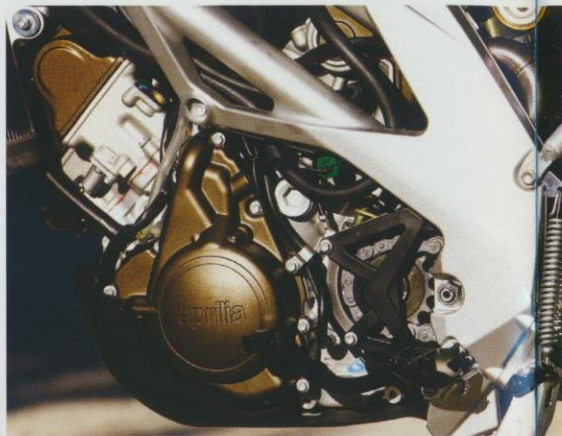
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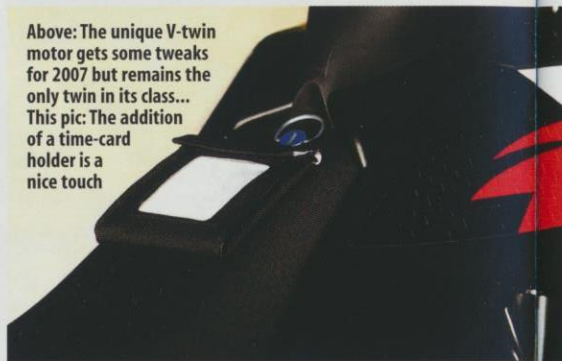
THE CAN CAN



Sexy they may be, but the first RXVs didn't exactly fly out of the dealers' showrooms. Aprilia has reworked the V-twins for 2007. Has it done the trick..?



Above: The unique V-twin motor gets some tweaks for 2007 but remains the only twin in its class... This pic: The addition of a time-card holder is a nice touch



Take a look at the picture on the previous page and you'll notice one major change for the 2007 Aprilia RXV. Yep, they've done away with what was undoubtedly one of the bike's most striking visual features; those gorgeous twin pipes which exited beneath the rear fender... Or have they? Because it's not quite as straightforward as that...

Carry the Can

Launched in early 2006, Aprilia's V-twin enduro models created something of a sensation with their compact 77-degree motors, stunning-looking chassis and underseat pipes.

Unfortunately, lightning throttle responses matched to ultra quick-revving engines meant that the riding experience didn't offer broad appeal. Thankfully, Aprilia have recognised the need for a more rider-friendly package and amongst the many changes the Italians have made to the bikes to give them better drive and make them more rideable is the adoption of an Akrapovic single silencer - as an optional (cost) extra! So there's no need to fret, a bog stock '07 RXV retains those beautiful twin pipes...

Right: The '07 Aprilias still come with twin underseat pipes but the factory riders all fit an Akrapovic single pipe system which is not only lighter but claimed to give better 'driveability'. Aprilia now offer the single-pipe system as a factory accessory...
Left: Nissin brakes help reign in a seriously fast dirt bike...





THE CAN CAN



The fitment of the single can is claimed to help improve power delivery though to what extent is unclear, as a stock twin-piped bike wasn't available for us to test on the 2007 model launch in northern Italy. That the factory enduro machines have been running the solitary silencer indicates that it must have quite some effect, tho'. Equally important as the exhaust mods is the use of a more progressive cam in the throttle housing, giving a greater degree of control than last years' 'switch-like' set-up, making it much easier to feather the throttle.

Starting also proved an issue on those early bikes and to counter these problems Aprilia have remapped the CDI, revised the ratio of the starter gear and given the RXV a new battery. And although a new model year can never pass without a manufacturer giving us 'new suspension settings', the RXVs also get an all-new linkage. Aprilia have also knocked a whopping five kilos off the weight of the old model, partly due to the use of a lighter battery, shaving 500g off the frame and presumably the use of a single pipe.

Aside from the single exhaust (which can be ordered in titanium, stainless steel or as a mix 'n' match full system of either material), other visual changes are the revised graphics/colours and the new race kit plastics, which come FoC.

This kit includes a slimmer headlamp unit and sidepanels with space for backgrounds and race numbers. The seat is now lower, with more rounded sides and a grippier cover, plus it now

comes with a timecard holder as standard. Yep, you did read that right - the Aprilia seat is fitted with a velcro'd pouch to keep your timecard safe, and to hand. When was the last time you saw a production model fitted with one of those..?

Perhaps the last thing we expected to find on the RXV, especially looking at the slim-line seat with its little hump onto the rear fender, is a set of pillion pegs. Nonetheless, there's apparently been some demand for two-up capability (from our continental chums, I'd imagine) and the V-twin has been homologated for pillion use. A 'motorally' model will also be available in early 2007 with a 12L fuel tank, alloy bashplate and mountings for a roadbook reader already in

place. Just the thing for UK rallies..?

Can Do

It's immediately clear that the modifications to the engine mapping and starter gear have gone much of the way to solving the RXV's starting problems. The largely ineffectual 'fast idle' button has been ditched and gone is the endless churning of the engine before it fires - it now only takes a few revolutions for the motor to catch. You do have to either blip, or hold the throttle for a short while to prevent it from stalling but this isn't really a problem. Especially when you're forced to listen to that glorious (and relatively quiet) exhaust note which, I'm glad to say, hasn't been affected too much by the adoption of a single silencer.

Quite frankly, any bike would struggle to put its power down on the wet and muddy rocks of the Italian hillside trail we were riding. Constantly changing between slabs of smooth stone, loose square-edged rocks and even sections of concrete, getting good drive up the slopes demanded careful throttle control and the new cam in the twistgrip is a definite improvement over last year's part. The motor still has an immediate response from the faultless fuel injection, only now it's much easier to control.

Aboard the 'little' 450, a relatively mellow bottom-end builds rapidly into a hard-hitting mid-range and strong top-end. Perhaps a little too hard hitting given the conditions as the bike



easily broke traction, even at speed, and fish-tailed its way along the trails. Although the driveability has doubtless improved over last year's bikes, that V-twin motor still revs up very quickly and will rip straight into the power if you're not careful.

In this respect the 550 actually proved easier to ride on the trails. Where the 450 has a more defined powerband, the 550 simply makes a smooth wave of power. Big power. Short-shifting through the 'box, even in the taller gears the RXV550 surges forward with a tweak of the throttle. Given too much gas it too will light-up the rear-end, though only on the most open of trails would you ever consider *really* revving the 550. It really does feel indecently quick...

Which is why it's reassuring to have Nissin brakes to slow things down. Matched to Italian Braking discs, once the pads had fully bedded-in the stoppers gave that wonderful progressive and powerful feel which we've come to expect from the Japanese items.

Leaving open tracks for more technical going, placing the front wheel at slow speeds proved easy, assuming you didn't get too twitchy with the throttle. On a couple of machines I found the idle speed to be set quite high, perhaps to counter the low-speed stalling which seemed to affect the bikes on the 2006 launch, making



a technical descent that bit more tricky.

Nonetheless, the RXV could be coaxed fairly easily down the hillside and failed to clang its underside on any of the boulders or rock-steps. Good job, as the bike still wears a plastic sump-guard which could do with covering a little more of those magnesium clutch and ignition covers. It's interesting to note that the factory bikes sport small extensions to their guards...

On the Can

A short grassy 'special test' had also been laid out for us - which two days of rain had turned almost as slippery as the rocky hillsides we'd ridden earlier. Again, any bike would struggle for grip in the conditions and the zippy power delivery of the RXVs made the motor feel *almost* two-stroke like in the way that it ripped through the rev-range and roosted around.

I never expected the Aprilia to eke out traction in the way that something like a CRF-X does, though the more progressive throttle meant that when the back-end did break away you could modulate the throttle rather than pirouetting at every turn. Swapping between the 450 and the 550, as you'd expect the open classer felt the heavier of the two (even if there's actually very little difference between the two) and took some muscling around the course. Yet at times the smoother power made it that bit easier to control and steer with the rear wheel...

The front-end, however, was a little less controllable and getting it to grip in the slippery turns proved quite difficult. The RXV's chassis is generally pretty stable and this, matched to firm-ish Marzocchi/Sachs suspension and a regular (as opposed to mud-specific) enduro tyre made it hard to plant the front wheel.

With a bit more time, softer settings in the forks (to allow the front-end to dive more and sharpen up the turning) and a change of tyre would probably boost confidence in the front-end. Though I wonder if there isn't a little more to it than that. When we tested the SXV supermoto version in Supermoto Magazine we found that you had to revise your riding style to suit the peculiarities of the V-twin's chassis and weight distribution, so perhaps the enduro bike also requires you to *learn* how to ride it (and set it up) to get the most from it - in the kind of way you have to adapt when swapping from a four- to a two-stroke.

Can of Worms

Overall, the RXV exhibits decent build quality and is well detailed, though it appears that Aprilia have overlooked a few areas. First off, a pair of rad braces would've been nice as the

radiators look a little exposed. And along similar lines, if you do opt for the single can then expect it to pick up a few dings and scratches along the way as it's left uncovered by any bodywork.

Lastly, changing the air filter isn't simply a matter of undoing a Dzus fastener and opening a QD airbox cover. The V-twin configuration necessitates locating the airbox in the crook of the vee between the cylinders, which means lifting the seat and tank, and removing a cover to get at the filter. Giving the area a good wipe over beforehand is also pretty crucial to prevent dust and crud falling into the throttle bodies.

In the Can

I can't help but feel that the RXVs are likely to be more at home on the fast 'n' flowing firebreaks of a UK rally or blasting across the open fields of a H&H than slogging through a Welsh forest or twisting through a slippery special test. With stable chassis and big power they seem to work better on more open terrain, where someone other than a championship rider could really make use of the explosive hit of the 450 or the ceaseless drive of the 550, and not be constantly trying to muscle the bike around tight corners.

Despite, or perhaps *because* of some of the RXV's unique characteristics (and the fact that I prefer more flowing terrain) it's a bike I'd happily own. It's well specced, relatively well priced (both bikes are now around 200 quid cheaper than in '06, with a 450 at £5869 and the 550 £5899) and offers something different to the single-cylinder machines around which the modern dirtbike world is based.

And that's has got to appeal to those riders who want something that'll stand out from the crowd. On top of which, it looks simply amazing. Even with that single pipe...

Race Can

Although the RXV hasn't really set the World Enduro Championship alight this year, that doesn't mean it hasn't seen some success in off-road racing. The bikes have placed third overall in the E2 and E3 classes of the Italian Enduro Championship and won the Italian Rally Championship. With this in mind, the company are looking to take the bike onto the rally-raid scene in the not-too-distant future, adding a fairing, oil cooler and 30L fuel tank amongst other 'desert' parts. So far the motor has proved itself to be tough, and with a lack of vibes and good power it has the potential to be a serious contender.

UNDERA T O M

Winter off-road riding in Blighty can be a cold and wet affair so a riding jacket is a must - but can you really buy a decent one for under £100? TBM discovers whether cheap can ever be cheerful...

Interest rate hikes, spiralling utility bills and exorbitant petrol prices are just some of the current crop of wallet-squeezing impositions, so when it comes to forking out on extras such as a new winter riding jacket, price is probably one of the main considerations.

Luckily nowadays, cheap doesn't have to mean a compromise on quality - just look at the likes of Primark and all the big supermarket chains churning out Levis for under 30 quid and you'll see what I mean.

And the same goes for the off-road clothing industry - in most of the big-name manufacturers' 2007 ranges there are affordable, well-made items designed to cater for budget-minded folk. Sure, you may not get quite as many 'features' or hi-tech materials as the more expensive products, but neither does it mean you'll be riding around in a bin liner.

So we've have gathered together a selection of the latest jackets to see exactly what you get for less than a hundred notes...

ACERBIS HENGEL JACKET

PRICE: £89.95

COLOURS: Red, Orange, Blue

SIZES: S-XXL

WHAT YOU GET: Short jacket with removable sleeves, complete with Acerbis storage bag. Underarm, back and chest mesh ventilation openings, half-length wind flap, two vertical front pockets, elasticated waist, polyester mesh lining, two-position popper-fastened stretchy cuffs. Full front zipper with rubber 'Acerbis' tang, soft collar with adjustable velcro and button closures plus large rubber sleeve logos.

WHAT WE THINK: Due to its lack of sleeve storage and shortness it's probably more suited to the paddock than the trail, and the sleeve decoration is a bit 'Power Ranger' looking. But it does offer plenty of all-important ventilation in key areas and is nicely lightweight.

CONTACT: Bert Harkins Racing - 01582 491076 or bertharkinsracing.co.uk



CORE AQUA JACKET

PRICE: £79.95

COLOURS: Black, Blue/Black, Red/Black

SIZES: M-XXL

WHAT YOU GET: Outer cordura construction, coated with a 'Thro-Tex' windproof, waterproof and breathable membrane and a soft lined collar. Two front zip pockets with velcro'd flap, main zip protected by a double layer storm flap, and half-elasticated waist gaiter with popper adjustment straps. Spare poppers included. Two Core logos - one on the upper back and the other on the front left-hand side.

WHAT WE THINK: Durable, no-frills jacket, which'll do the job no problem out on the trail, although with no zip-off sleeves or air vents could prove to be a bit hot despite its claimed breathable properties. Styling is a little old-fashioned but at just under 80 quid it's not a bad buy, especially when you take into consideration that there's currently a deal to be had from some dealers on this RRP.

CONTACT: Core - 01686 412157 or core-uk.com

SCOTT SAN DIEGO JACKET

PRICE: £84.95

COLOURS: Black/Grey, Red/Grey, Orange/Grey, Blue/Grey, Grey

SIZES: S-XXL

WHAT YOU GET: A plethora of covered-zipped pockets including two front, two chest, one back (for sleeve storage) and one under the storm flap, plus two extra velcro'd back compartments. Covered zip-off sleeves with adjustable cuffs, soft brushed 'tricot' collar for comfort, upper back vent, mesh lining, polyamide 'dolby-coated' nylon exterior, lightly padded elbows and rubber Scott and icon logos on the sleeves, front and back.

WHAT WE THINK: Well-made, lightweight ergonomic jacket with loads of storage and roomy pockets - easily one of the most stylish choices here.

CONTACT: Bert Harkins Racing - 01582 491076 or bertharkinsracing.co.uk



ALPINESTARS SUMMIT OFF-ROAD JACKET

PRICE: £89.95

COLOURS: Black

SIZES: S-XXXL

WHAT YOU GET: Poly fabric exterior, large upper-back zipped mesh air vent plus two on the upper chest (one on either side). Zip-off sleeves, two front velcro'd pockets, small vertical zipped pocket on inside of storm flap and zipped rear sleeve storage pocket. Adjustable velcro waist straps and wrist closures. Three-sectioned main front flap, padded collar, printed 'A-stars' logos on wrists and upper part of storm flap, with 'Alpinestars' printed on the lower back.

WHAT WE THINK: Entry-level Alpinestars jacket, exceptionally roomy rear storage pocket with handy side-opening although tri-section velcro storm flap is unnecessarily fussy to use. Usual Alpinestars good fit, although does come up quite short.

CONTACT: CI Sport - 01372 378000 or cisport.co.uk



SHIFT XC JACKET

PRICE: £99.00

COLOURS: Orange, Red, Black, Blue

SIZES: S-XXL

WHAT YOU GET: Pre-curved zip-off sleeves, CE-approved elbow and forearm armour (which is removable) plus small front zip vents on the shoulders with extra venting on back and underarms. Front velcro'd cargo pockets, rear sleeve-storage compartment with zip access at either end plus additional back storage via another velcro'd cargo pocket. Front 'port' for hydration pack hose access, breathable polymesh lining and toggle waist size adjustment.

WHAT WE THINK: Well-made, stylish jacket with a host of useful extras, making the XC an excellent buy.

CONTACT: Shift - 0191 487 6100 or shifteurope.com



WULF SPORT RAID JACKET

PRICE: £49.95

COLOURS: Red, Blue, Black

SIZES: S-XXXL

WHAT YOU GET: Made from heavy-duty cordura fabric with full airtex lining. Velcro collar fastening, two-way main zip, popped front pockets, rear storage pouch and storm flap. Extra storage includes two zipped inner lining pockets and a clear PVC square front pocket. Removable sleeves, elasticated waist section with ratchet-strap style side adjustment plus stretchy wrist cuffs. Rubber 'Raid' logo on rear pocket with two Wulf Sport logos, one on the upper back and one on the left breast.

WHAT WE THINK: Front pockets are a bit on the small side although the PVC pocket is very handy for timecard storage. Substantial bit of kit for the money but quite bulky compared to some of the other jackets here. And for those on an even tighter budget, there's a 'Ride' jacket for £34.95.

CONTACT: Wulf Sport - 01900 873456 or wulfsport.com



UNDERA TON SINISALO SCD JACKET

PRICE: £99.95

COLOURS: Blue, Blue/Red/White, Black/Gum (Gold), Sand/Orange, Black/Red

SIZES: S-XXL

WHAT YOU GET: Tough Dynax nylon fabric outer, chest and upper back vents, four front pockets plus inner pocket behind storm flap and clear plastic pocket on left sleeve. Removable sleeves with neoprene finished wrist cuffs with lycra inner, vented mesh lining, inner waist adjustment cord, built-in compartments for optional CE protection, hydration pack tube hole hidden behind chest Sinisalo logo on right-hand side, large back pouch, 'velvet touch' collar liner.

WHAT WE THINK: Robustly constructed jacket with a generous upper back vent, subtle detailing and plenty of handy built-in features. Also worth knowing is that Sinisalo has a 'Tech jacket' series which starts at £85.00.

CONTACT: Race FX - 0845 450 1448 or race-fx.com



FOX PANTHER JACKET

PRICE: £90.00

COLOURS: Black/Grey, Black/Red

SIZES: S-XXL

WHAT YOU GET: Twelve storage pockets including hidden 'valuables' storage pocket under storm flap, detachable sleeves, front and rear plus underarm venting, removable EVA foam elbow pads, hole for hydration pack hose in left-hand chest pocket, moisture-wicking tricot lining, waist strap adjustment plus expandable side panels and two-way zip.

WHAT WE THINK: Maximum storage capacity is a bonus although some of the pockets are a bit small for gloved hands. Handy features - especially the extended rear flap and side zips - make this a good all-round jacket for the price.

CONTACT: Fox - 0191 487 6100 or foxeurope.com



THOR PHASE JACKET

PRICE: £99.99

COLOURS: Blue, Red, Black

SIZES: M-XXXL

WHAT YOU GET: Water-repellent outer shell with 1000D Dura-poly construction. Fleece-lined collar and lower front pockets, mobile phone pocket, two-way main zip, velcro'd storm flap, drawstring waist closure plus side adjustment zippers. Two upper back vents, detachable sleeves, rear cargo pocket, zipper-close wrist cuffs, elbow stretch panels.

WHAT WE THINK: Has a heavy-duty feel with some nice design touches and chunky zipper tangs, but really needs to have a few more built-in 'extras' to justify its high-end price tag.

CONTACT: Madison - ultimatepursuits.co.uk



PRO GRIP ENDURO 9011 JACKET

PRICE: £79.00

COLOURS: Red/Black, Grey/Black, Blue/Black

SIZES: M-XXL

WHAT YOU GET: Made from cordura with reflective strips and piping. Vented mesh lining, detachable sleeves, velcro side waist-adjustment straps with semi-elasticated section, lined collar plus popper storm flap. Three front pockets (two popped and one zip), transparent timecard holder panel on the right sleeve, rear zipped sleeve-storage compartment.

WHAT WE THINK: Practical no-nonsense jacket, and as the second cheapest item here, offers reasonable value for money. Also available is the Duo Sport 9014 jacket for £94.95.

CONTACT: Mito UK - 01202 667323 or mitouk.com



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GAS MARK 7



The Spanish Gas Gas factory has new management, new bikes and a tough new attitude to the market. And they're out to target new owners in the UK. Will they succeed with their 'new' 450 thumper where they've failed in the past? Si Melber investigates...

The little light glowed gently on the side of the dashboard, niggling away at my subconscious for a lap or two. I try not to look at the dials of bikes I'm racing. It's a needless distraction, and it's usually just a visual reminder you've accidentally knocked a switch onto high-beam. I fiddled with the switchgear without looking down, but the little light continued to glow red in my peripheral vision...

The hare & hounds course jinked left, over a slippery wooden bridge, cut through a small maize plantation and then curved sharply to the right - tightening up through the corner. It was one of those slippery turns where you needed to find the rut early to avoid the bike drifting too far wide and spoiling your entry into the next left-hander.

Fortunately, changes made to the '07 FSR450's chassis and geometry have helped in this respect. No longer is the Gasser 450 the barge it once was. Gone is the reluctance to turn into corners, the new FSR now cuts an accurate line through any turn whilst maintaining the sort of poise over bumps KTM owners can only dream about.

And as well as sharpening up the steering, the Gasser engineers have slimmed down the fuel tank (by making it taller) so that it now feels pretty slender for a 450 thumper (CRF-X owners take note). And this in turn lets you get your weight closer to the front of the bike enabling more accurate positioning through the bends. And of course it's fast and stable in the best Gasser tradition.

But far and away the new 450's biggest asset is not its narrowness, nor a blinding set of brakes which give you the confidence to sail past other bikes at silly speeds and still stop in time. Nope, the FSR's strength lies in a simply awesome suspension set-up which lets you get away with murder. Such is the compliance of the Marzocchi/Ohlins-shod bike (there's an Ohlins/Ohlins version available too) that on the FSR you can still be accelerating hard over braking bumps where other riders are already backing off for the turn. And once into the corner, the 450 can be turned on the bumps and then quickly righted again ready to power out of the turn. It may not be the lightest 450 out on track, but compared with previous four-stroke Gassers it certainly punches above its weight.

I stuck the FSR's front wheel in the shallow berm and began to wind on the power, when a little alarm bell went off in my head.....

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Red light...red light. Sh!t A RED LIGHT!

With my gloved hand I brushed away a light coating of dust from the dials and focussed my attention on the glowing red light.....
Ooooooh sh!t. The oil warning lamp was on.

I pitted at the end of the lap and grabbed a litre bottle of oil to top-up the motor, but as I bent down to pour it in, noticed something even more alarming than a glowing red light. Oil had drenched the left peg, running down the swingarm to the rear wheel and was also gently dripping from the bash-plate. And worst of all there was a hole where the oil-level window was supposed to be. Uh-oh, that looks bad!

Cookin' with Gas

The new FSR450 is a hugely important bike for Gas Gas in what may very well turn out to be a make-or-break year for the Spanish factory. With new management bringing with them a huge dollop of capital investment, the factory has reacted swiftly by redesigning the bikes and is now looking to make a return on its investment.

But while Gas Gas are renowned for building popular two-strokes, it's well known that pouring your savings into a Gasser with cams is the automotive equivalent of investing in the Baghdad buy-to-let market. Well... up until now that is.



The hole where the missing oil window bolt should be.

Because the Gas Gas factory are so sure about the integrity of their new bike that they proclaimed it to be '100 percent reliable' according to British importer John Shirt. And even *he's* sceptical about that. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating so when he offered us the chance to try and destroy one of their 2007 models, how could we turn him down? And d'ya' know what, we almost managed it. Almost...

Just a day after the bike arrived it was despatched to a practice circuit in Oxfordshire to cut a few gentle laps by way of running in. Our

Doesn't that look so much better?
New rear end gives the bike a sharp new look. Fuel tank is slimmer (but taller) than before...



Above: New for 2007 the Gasser dials are absolutely superb with a wealth of easy to read information...
...And for once they didn't stop working..!
Right: Kick-start is set ridiculously high...
Far right: New more powerful DOHC engine has had the starter motor relocated to the rear of the cylinder for more reliable starting.





original intention had been to trail ride the bike, then dyno it and then race it to give it an all-round proper assessment. But seeing as it came to us unregistered, we had no choice but to content ourselves with loaning it to a bunch of trail riders for the day to see what they made of it.

And so we met up with the good ol' boys of the Kent TRF and offered them a go on our brand spankers machine. And then made notes on what they had to say about it. Here are their unedited opinions...

Name: Rich Colquhoun

Age: 44

Height: 5ft 9in

Weight: 18st

Current bike(s): KTM 200EXC, '05 450EXC

'That's really nice that is. The motor feels more

powerful than my 450. The bars are a bit low when standing up. The suspension's nice - the bike feels light and narrow compared to my KTM and it pulls really cleanly. But the seat is solid...'

Would you buy one? 'If I was only going to have one bike I would consider it. It would come down to price...'

Name: Dave Heath

Age: 52

Height: 6ft

Weight: 16st

Current bike(s): '02 KTM 400EXC (just sold '02 Gas Gas 300)

'Very nice too. If I had the money I'd go and buy one. It's a better bike than my 400 - the suspension's great. It turns on a sixpence. It's got very linear power, there's no big hit. Great brakes but the back's a bit sharp. Don't like the seat...'

Would you buy one?

'Yes, if I had the money...'

Name: Ian Packer

Age: 45

Height: 6ft 3in

Weight: 17st

Current bike(s): '04 KTM 450EXC, '03 Gas Gas 300

'I really like it. Really impressive suspension.

The engine's smooth - less intimidating than a KTM. The brakes are fierce...'

Would you buy one? 'Yeah I would buy one. It looks better quality than mine...'

Name: Andy Field

Age: 35

Height: 5ft 8in

Weight: 12.5st

Current bike(s): '05 Honda CRF450X

'Feels good - very responsive, you have to ride it fast. Though it feels like sitting on a concrete block. It turns quicker than the CRF-X, and feels like a balance between a 250 and a 450 in terms of size. The seat's too hard for green laning...'

Would you buy one? 'I would consider it to buy - the road kit's good and it's got a lovely light clutch...'

Name: Rob Phelps

Age: 35

Height: 6ft

Weight: 16st

Current bike(s): '04 KTM 450EXC

'It's great - the suspension's really good. The throttle response is outta' this world. It turns tight, but the seat's sh!te. Power - good, bottom end - strong. It's not quite got the midrange of the EXC, but I can't believe how well it turns...'

Would you buy one? 'Yeah I would if I was considering another four-stroke in the future...'

Name: Dave Evans

Age: 43

Height: 5ft 11in

Weight: 12st

Current bikes: '05 KTM 400EXC

'It's unbelievably light - feels more like a 125 than a 450, and goes exactly where you want it to go. It needs a softer seat. There's no bogging off the bottom-end - it gets the power down well. A bit harsh on the front suspension, but there's no headshake...'

Would you buy one? 'I might consider one if the resale was good. It would make a great trailbike...'

So there you go. Instead of listening to TBM's thoughts on the matter, you're reading the opinions of a bunch of balding blokes from Bromley. I think it's fair to say our random group of testers rather liked the new FSR (much more than I thought they would, if I'm honest). Summarising their thoughts they raved about the suspension, enjoyed the bike's easy power and rapid throttle response, loved the way the thing handled, and thought the seat was crap. Easy, this test riding malarkey, isn't it!

Allowing for the fact that the bike was box-fresh (and all new bikes have a certain 'nice' feel to them because there's no wear in any of the components), the Gasser still won plenty of friends that day - the majority of whom are in exactly the bracket that Gas Gas needs to target if they are going to make any headway in what has become the sport's most competitive sector.

It's blokes like these who ride and race purely for fun and who can afford pretty much whatever bike they want to (in most cases a KTM), that Gas Gas need to win over. And on this evidence, it looks like they're on the right track.

Race Report

Next stop for our Gasser was to take it racing, and the final round of the Eastern Centre Two-Man Championship was the proving ground.

The Gasser proved itself an accomplished hare & hounds race machine. Easy to ride, no-one fell off the bike during testing!



Team-mate Zippy and I have been contesting this series all year, and the beauty of the two-man format is that it allows two riders to legitimately share the same bike for the four-hour event which is divided into a series of half-hour sprints. Each rider races for a 30min session before pitting and swapping with their team-mate - handing over the time-card. Most teams use two bikes but it's more of a challenge on a single machine because you have to keep it fuelled and any running repairs eat into your race time. As we were about to find out.

It was another 6:00am start in order to schlep all the way out to East Anglia, where a fast and bumpy stubble-field course awaited us. Slightly less loamy and more muddy than previous rounds, after our traditional argument with the scrutineers, the bike was readied for the off.

Fortunately I'd taken the opportunity of starting it up earlier that morning, and off the



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line it fired immediately and Zippy was away to a good start. Earlier in the day however, it was a different story. Gas Gas have completely re-engineered the fuel-injected 450 motor for '07, moving the Bendix-type starter from its original location in front of the cylinder to a more conventional position behind the barrel. And because of starting issues with previous models, they've taken the opportunity of beefing up the starter and battery in order to guarantee it fires first time.

And in fairness it generally does. This is one of the beauties of fuel-injection. There's no fuel tap, nor choke knob to mess about with, just turn the key and press the starter (making sure not to twist the throttle) and away she goes.

But not this particular morning it didn't. Because it must've taken me at least six or

seven minutes of fruitless pressing on the starter, and she still wouldn't fire up. Now in fairness the bike got put away wet after a wash - something we usually try and avoid, and had sat like that for a few days. In the end I had to resort to using the kicker.

And here's another thing. The kick-start on the FSR is ridiculously high. Not just a bit high, it's up in the Gods. And not only is it high, but (like a Husaberg) it has to be rocked over-centre before you can kick it, and then you've got to kick over that high compression engine - with your leg up around your ear-ole! Remarkably, the FSR fired second kick. And once started never gave any more starting difficulties that day. In general I don't think the problem is with the bike so much as our lack of preparation time. However (as with any dirt bike), it's always

Changes to the '07's steering and geometry have made it much more accomplished than any of its predecessors...

worth warming the thing after it's been jet-washed.

Zippy came in to the pits from his first session with a huge grin on his face. 'That he proclaimed '...is the second best bike I've ever ridden. It's absolutely incredible' he said. Praise indeed. But just for journalistic integrity I asked him what he thought was his best ever bike: '...my old two-stroke '98 Yamaha WR250' he replied. 'Nothing beats that bike... Wish I'd never sold it.'

I headed out onto the course on the FSR, but unlike Zippy (and unlike my previous ride on the bike a few days earlier) didn't get to grips straight away with it. I'm not quite sure why this was, because the course certainly favoured a fast four-stroke. And this thing was undoubtedly fast: I saw 129kmh (80mph) at the end of the bumpy straight in top gear with plenty more to come.

Undoubtedly there were certain things the FSR did incredibly well: it steered nicely, handled predictably and rode the bumps like a hovercraft, but the heavy throttle action (unusual - and unnecessary - with a fuel-injected motor) made the bike feel clumsier than I'd have liked.

My second session however felt better. With Zippy enjoying himself so much, I felt some pressure to let the thing hang-out a bit more, and *how* the Gas Gas rewarded this sort of behaviour. Carrying more speed into the turns and with the throttle wound to the stop on the way out, the Gasser was absolutely superb. It gobbled up the fast straights, demolished the braking bumps, and to be honest the only time I wasn't entirely happy with it was on the slow nadgery sections through the trees, where the weight of a thumper was noticeable, and I felt

the engine was much happier once it had a few revs dialled in - which isn't always possible in very slow going.

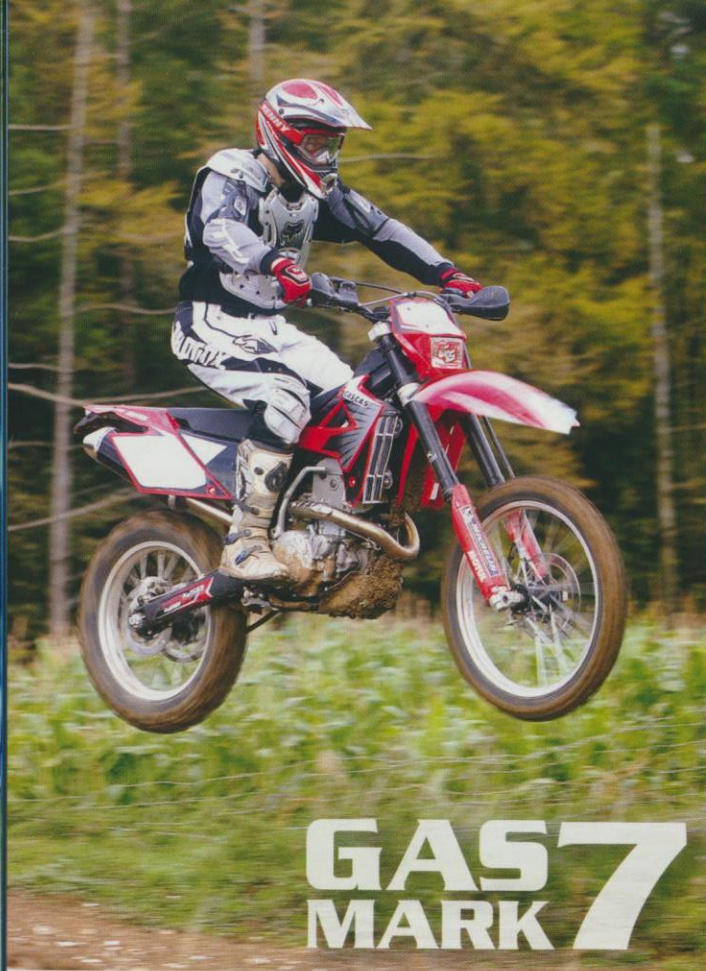
One thing worth mentioning here is that the FSR has got the slickest gearbox this side of a Suzuki. Not all that surprising given that the FSR's motor began life as a DR-Z doppelganger! And that's not the only quality issue we noticed. As part of the changes for 2007, the Gassers have gained a considerable number of improvements - many of them quality related. For instance a substantial layer of thick (satin black) paint now protects the frame and swingarm, and there are substantial frame guards fitted as standard as well as (insubstantial) hand and sump guards.

There's a new larger airbox which is now accessed from under the quick release seat via a cross-head fastener, a new more angular alloy subframe, and one-piece rear plastics like KTM (if you can't beat 'em, join 'em), which gives the bike a fresh new look. And (praise the Lord), that ancient tail lamp which has defaced the rear of Gassers for far too long has finally been confined to a Spanish land-fill. Halle-bloody-lujah.

Geometry changes have sharpened-up the bike's steering, while machined triple-clamps and braceless oversize bars now feature at the headstock. Plus I'm pleased to be able to report that for the first time ever in 12 years of testing, a set of Gas Gas instruments continued to function perfectly during the entire duration of our test. What's more these instruments are superb: clear, concise and easy to read - they're well tucked in and securely mounted and the information they provide including rpm, twin trip-meters, current speed, max speed, lap timer and loads of other things is all useful. That's progress, I can assure you.

Aside from the engine changes already mentioned, modifications to the cylinder head intake and exhaust ports have improved reliability further and somehow Gas Gas engineers have managed to shave nearly a kilo (800g) off the weight of the crankcases, while the whole bike is now 20mm narrower.

So is that the end of Gas Gas's quality issues? Well... not quite. I shan't waste too much paper repeating myself about the mixture of different fasteners liberally sprinkled about the bike - though the horrid little cross-head bolts securing the rad shrouds are particularly nasty. In fairness this is something an enthusiastic owner could address quite easily, but shouldn't have to. I also noticed that the right hand side footpeg wouldn't fold up properly because it bumped into the rear brake lever, and the piece of black tape holding the throttle cable into the housing looked like an afterthought and allowed you to



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hole left by the missing oil window bolt, and the fastener we found wasn't quite the right size and didn't fit securely. With time ticking away and our options limited, we really didn't want to chalk up a DNF - on the other hand we had no way of knowing whether the bike would make it to the finish if we headed out again. What we really needed was some plumber's PTFE tape to secure the bolt we had. What we ended up with, was a bit of stretchy plaster from the van's first-aid box!

The bolt was gently tightened in the case, we glugged nearly a litre of oil into the filler and off I set - rather gingerly at first - for a final few laps in order to effect a finish. I did my first lap very slowly, but when the oil light stayed off I decided to up my pace a little, finally caning the living daylights outta' the bike for the third and last lap. We'd lost a lot of time (and a whole heap of laps to our nearest competitors) but at least it all held together.

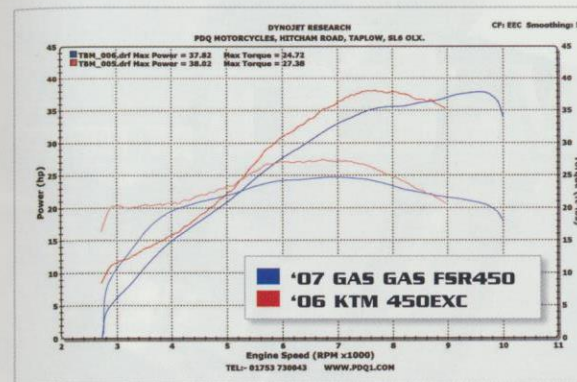
The next day the bike was due at the dyno but I wasn't sure I wanted to risk the motor - dynamometer testing is a sure-fire way of discovering an

engine's weakness. But Gas Gas were adamant we should go ahead with the test as planned.

A replacement oil window bolt was sent out to us and the bike strapped onto the PDQ dyno. With fingers crossed behind our backs the FSR was accelerated up through the gears to full throttle for a number of dyno runs.

The outcome wasn't a blown motor but in fact a very healthy 38hp at the rear wheel. Factor in the slippage from an enduro tyre (you can hear the tyre spinning on the rig), and you can easily add another 3-4hp to that. How does that compare with the opposition? Well the last time we put a 450EXC on the same dyno (an '06 model) it gave almost exactly the same reading (Gas Gas 37.82hp, KTM 38.02hp). Nothing in it really.

Okay, the KTM produces a bit more torque (Gas Gas 24.72ft-lbs, KTM 27.38ft-lbs), but the Gasser's curves are smoother indicating a more linear delivery, and it revs on slightly higher - as you'd expect from a DOHC motor.



Break Away

So the Gasser didn't explode, despite losing virtually all its oil and then being ragged around a high-speed enduro course. It makes the same power as a KTM, it's improved in quality and it now looks a whole lot better. Add to that a fantastic riding experience, demon brakes and superb suspension and you can begin to see why we were actually pretty impressed with the '07 FSR450. Okay it shouldn't have lost a bolt out of the motor - but the truth is, any engine can have something weird like that happen. I'm not making excuses for the Gasser, but the fact is that it continued to work afterwards, and this 'fault' has already been reported back to the Spanish factory (I know because I was copied into the email).

Yeah, we're impressed! Not impressed enough to declare it the best 450 out there (only a back-to-back test against the KTM, Yamaha, Sherco, Honda, Beta and perhaps the new KLX450 can do that), but what we can tell you is that this bike is a *significant* improvement on Gasser's previous models. It makes great linear power and *but* for a solid seat (which will doubtless soften up in time), would make a fabulous all-round trail and occasional race bike - as individual testers have confirmed.

Will Gas Gas make headway in the fickle British market with the new FSR450? Well, they certainly deserve to. I'm figuring this bike will sell to someone who only races occasionally and is fed up with fighting his orange bike's lack of brakes, and occasional violent headshake. In terms of dynamics and pure riding experience the FSR's arguably superior to an EXC in many ways, though the quality and integrity of design still hold the bike back (and this despite sporting a number of Japanese components like DID rims, Nissin brakes, Kokusan ignition etc).

We liked it, and we imagine you will too, but will that be enough to convince British buyers... You tell us!

Nick ran the bike up on the PDQ dyno (01753 730043), and discovered a lovely smooth power curve...



GAS GAS FSR450

Price:
Engine:

Bore & stroke:
Displacement:
Transmission:
Frame:
F susp (travel):

R susp (travel):

F brake:
Wheelbase:
Seat height:
Fuel capacity:
Wet weight:

£5401.22 + otr
Liquid-cooled, four-valve, DOHC, fuel-injected, electric-start single
97 x 60.8mm
449cc
6-speed
Cro-moly deltabox
45mm USD Marzocchi Shiver forks (290mm)
Ohlins shock with linkage (320mm)
260mm disc, Nissin caliper
1466mm
915mm (measured)
7.2L
126.8kg (weighed)

rev the engine just by tugging the cable! Oh and the right-side radiator was badly bent from new.

But even more serious was the lack of a kill switch (the bike has a key, remember), but a key tucked away in the dash is the last thing you need to be searching for if you drop the bike in a water-crossing for instance.

On the plus side we like the new black silencer and the high quality switchgear but the jury's still out on the monogrammed side-stand!

After Thoughts

The afternoon session started encouragingly enough with Zippy reeling off our requisite five laps within his 30min session before handing the bike over to me for the first of my outings. I was two laps into my session when I first noticed the glowing red light, and had chalked up a further two more laps by the time I pitted to take on oil.

It took us more than half-an-hour to find an appropriate-sized bolt to go into the threaded

How to...



STORY & PICS: TBM

...change linkage bearings

Your bike's 'suspension bearings' (shock-, and linkage-bearings if it has them) take one hell of a hammering. Not only do they have to cope with every movement in the suspension, but their location means that they're susceptible to the ingress of dirt and water. And as the linkage is all but hidden under the bike, if you're slack with your maintenance it's often a case of 'out of sight, out of mind'.

To keep them in tip-top condition you need to strip-out and grease the linkage from time to time or, if your bike comes with grease nipples, give them regular attention with a grease gun. If you don't the bearings start to wear, the rear-end will begin to feel a little clunky and, if left to sit for a while, can deteriorate to the point that they seize solid!

Where to Start

So how do you ascertain whether any of the bearings need replacing? Well, firstly you need to get your bike up on a stand, making sure that the rear wheel is clear of the ground and the bike isn't resting on the linkage.

From the rear of the bike grab the top of the back wheel and, with your shoulder resting on the rear fender, try lifting the rear wheel gently.

What you're trying to feel for is a small 'clunk' which will show itself as you gently raise and lower the rear wheel.

As the wheel is hanging down and the suspension extended, any up-and-down movement you can feel will be wear in the linkage or shock mounts.

Many bikes will exhibit a small amount of movement, especially as the length of the swingarm amplifies any play in the bearings, though if it makes a proper 'clunking' noise or it's moving more than a few millimetres, you're best off stripping the linkage.

Before you set to work it's worth getting a helper to see which bearing is worn (you should be able to see the movement quite clearly at the various bearings) and also check the upper shock mount while you're at it...

The bike in the pictures (a late '90s CR Honda hybrid) had worn the lower shock mount and made an audible clicking sound when lifting the rear wheel. And although the other bearings *seemed* okay, they were quite old and so we decided to replace the whole lot in one go.

Rather than obtaining the OE parts (which is the most expensive route and often involves buying every bearing, seal and spacer separately) we instead opted for an 'All Balls' swingarm linkage bearing kit which contains everything you need in one box. Very handy.

Let's Strip

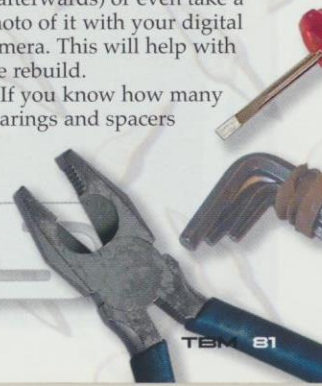
Before you twirl a spanner ensure that the area around the linkage and swingarm is clean of any dirt and then familiarise

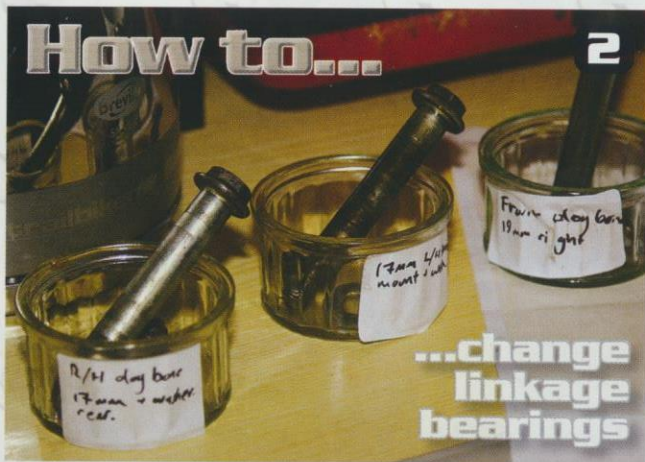


With your shoulder resting on the rear fender gently lift the rear wheel feeling out for a 'clunk'...

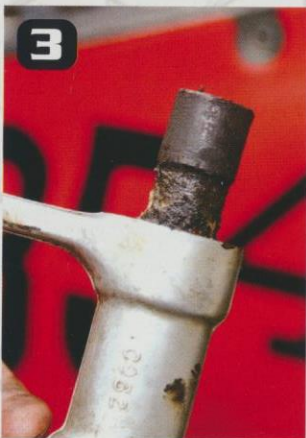
yourself with which parts of the linkage go where, which way up they sit and from which side the bolts go through. It may seem obvious when attached to the bike, but it all looks completely different once stripped down! To make the job easier mark up the various parts of the linkage with a permanent marker (don't worry, a squirt of contact cleaner will remove it afterwards) or even take a photo of it with your digital camera. This will help with the rebuild.

If you know how many bearings and spacers





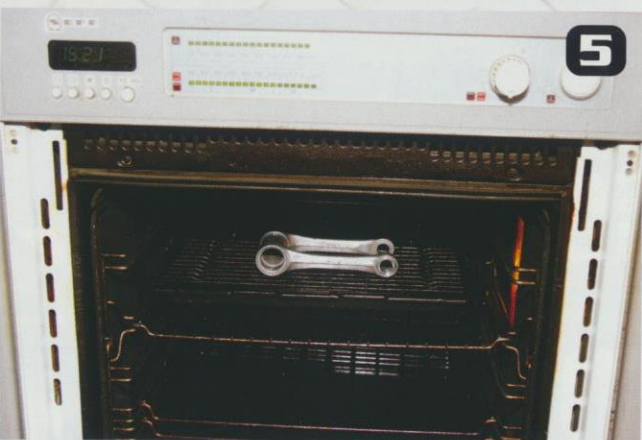
Make sure you label up all the constituent parts, ready for reassembly...



The old linkage spacers pushed out by hand revealing the horrible old grease



Make drifting the old bearings out a bit easier by securing the linkage in a vice



Before attempting to fit the new bearings, warm up the linkage in an oven...

there are in the linkage (or the information is listed in your bike's manual) then it's also worth checking you've got *all* the necessary replacement parts *before* you begin pulling it all apart...

You'll probably find that the nuts on the linkage bolts are torqued up fairly tight and you may need a breaker bar to help undo them. We also chose to use six-sided sockets as they're a much better fit onto the nuts and there's less chance of them slipping and rounding off.

And so, starting with the lower shock mount, we took the linkage apart... Each nut, bolt and washer was placed in a bowl and labelled as to where it came from and from which side the bolt was fitted.

Although the length of the bolts makes it fairly obvious where they go, it doesn't pay to mix up the assortment of fasteners.

Having removed the last section of linkage, the swingarm was free to pivot downwards so the rear wheel was supported with a stand to prevent damage to the brake line.

Bearing covers and seals were prised out (and should come out with minimal effort) before the spacers were pulled from the centre of the linkage. This left the needle roller bearings and a lot of old blackened grease.

Cleaning up the linkage with paraffin removed the old grease along with the needle rollers from each of the bearings, leaving just the old bearing shells in position.

Now ideally to get the bearings out of the linkage you'd use a specific bearing puller, though not everyone has one of these - we certainly didn't - so that leaves two options: pressing them out or using a drift to hammer them out. We went for a mix of both.

With, in most cases, a pair of bearings in each linkage mounting (one on each side) and a small inner shoulder

holding them in place, the first pair had to be drifted out from the opposite side using a hammer. To do this you have to be careful not to gouge into the bearing seat too much, though it can take some real effort to get the old shells out.

With one bearing shell out this usually allows you to *press* the opposite side out. We used a large socket which fitted into the linkage against the bearing and then wound it together in a vice to push it out most of the way. It's worth noting that the soft alloy of the linkage can easily be damaged by the jaws of a vice so we protected it with a piece of thick rag.

Together Again

With all of the old bearings out of the first section of linkage we gathered the new parts for that particular section. This way you can't confuse which bearings go in which piece of linkage. Any burrs on the



With new bearings in place (liberally smeared in grease) the linkage only needs the seals gently pressing in...

bearing seat were dressed with a piece of emery paper to ensure that the new bearing would press cleanly into place and we put the oven on...

Not for dinner, but because it's far easier to fit the new

bearings if you heat up the item they're going into so that it expands slightly. At the same time putting the bearings into the freezer for a short while chills them off - contracting them slightly, making the

Link-less systems

Of course, not every bike comes with a suspension linkage. Bikes like CCMs and KTM EXC models (among others) have the shock mounted directly to the top of the swingarm, and use a specially designed 'rising-rate' shock absorber to do the job of a shock *and* linkage.

KTM call this their Progressive Damping System (PDS), and although it's a matter of some debate as to whether it works as well as a conventional linkage, it's certainly lighter, less complicated and requires much less maintenance. On the other hand the shock mounts (and in particular the lower shock mounting) take all the stress, and this is where the most wear tends to occur.

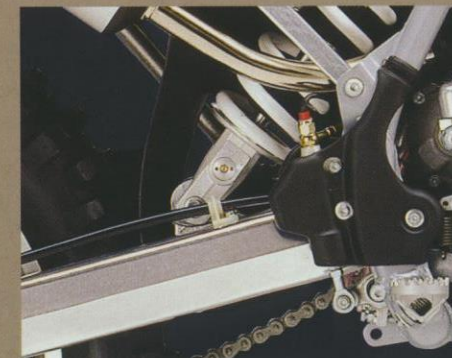
If you own one of these bikes (especially an older one) you should periodically check the lower and upper mountings for wear in the same way that you do for a conventional linkage-equipped bike - ie using a bike stand to lift the rear wheel clear of the floor, and then feeling for any unwarranted up-and-down movement. In fact the upper mount virtually never wears, it's the lower one which takes all the pounding.

The lower shock mount pivots in a spherical bearing (known as a Heim Joint) located in the top of the swingarm. Earlier bikes had a

smaller bearing (which tended to wear out faster) but later models come with a bigger (more resilient) bearing. The good news is that these bearings require no maintenance - they simply require replacing when worn out, and KTM supply the bearings as a full kit.

But here's the bad news, unfortunately they are virtually impossible to extract without the KTM special-tool. Removing the swingarm makes the job slightly easier, but it's still a swine to do without the right equipment.

You pays your money and you takes your choice...



whole fitting process easier. After a few minutes at 200 degrees centigrade the linkage was carefully removed from the oven (using oven gloves!) and placed back in the vice. Meanwhile the freshly chilled bearings were pressed into place using the same socket we used to remove the old ones. Again, you can use a special tool to fit the bearings or get a machine shop to do it for you, but the process is fairly straightforward and more or less the same as replacing a wheel bearing (though in this case the bearings aren't fully contained). Just a couple of warnings - the new rollers are very delicate and likely to be only held in place with some grease (and sometimes a specially shaped piece of foam), so don't get too brutal with them, otherwise you'll damage 'em. And secondly, make sure

that the new bearings are properly seated (all the way in) before adding plenty of waterproof grease and finishing off the re-assembly with the new seals and spacers. Okay, now it's a simple matter of re-assembling the whole linkage using your digital photo (or manual) as a guide. You'll probably need

to get someone to give you a hand to lift the rear wheel up as you put the final linkage bolt back in place. Finally torque everything up to the correct settings and just check that it all works properly before you head out on your first ride. And that's the job done for another year...

Balls of Steel

US company All Balls was founded by bike enthusiast Stefan Laessig when he spotted a gap in the market for quality, comprehensive bearing kits at an affordable price. And so All Balls kits come complete with every part you'll need when replacing your bike's bearings. And not just linkage bearings either - All Balls produce bearing kits for

everything from wheels to crankshafts. Apico are the UK importers - call them on 0870 777 9201 for stockists...



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Battery Not Included

Dear Steve

I have an old 1994 kickstart DR350S and the battery has been totally flat since the day I bought it. It's not a problem - the lights will come on when the engine's running and that's all I need. It does seem a bit of a waste, carrying a flat battery around though!

I'd like to take the battery out and put a few spares in its place. Is there any chance that by doing this that I'll damage anything (rectifier, ignition etc)? If it's okay to run it without the battery is it just a case of insulating the

battery cables or is there anything else that I'd need to do?

Mike Williams
Via website

Good idea, Mike, there's little point in carrying a dead battery around as ballast. You can remove the battery, though you will need a 'battery eliminator' to absorb the power and dissipate the heat. These are available for DRs through the aftermarket.

And when you've finished fitting it, you can lever on the pair of BF Goodrich Crossengos you've won for your query...

Sponge Fingers

Dear Steve

Help! I have run out of ideas on how to solve my KTM's spongy front brake. I like to have a strong brake and am hampered by the fact that I cannot have a set-up with a lot of lever travel due to my large fingers. I have bled the brakes and then reverse bled them. I've hung the caliper overhead and bled it, cross-drilled the banjo bolt and I've tied the lever to the bars and left it overnight. I've fitted a Braking front disc, Venhill hose, and Nissin master cylinder, along with new pads, pistons and pins. Oh, and I'm using DoT6.6 brake fluid from a racing Porsche. And it still feels like there's air in there!

Am I expecting too much, as it's been like this from new? Would I be better off converting a YZ250 2T to enduro spec, and how much work's



involved (and what would it cost)? My bike's not 'ready to race' if it doesn't stop!

Gareth Mayfield
Via email

Gareth, it's one of the biggest complaints with KTMs - the awful brakes. Obviously switching to a YZ will solve the braking issue, but more than likely introduce far more problems than it solves because as it's an MXer you'll have to budget for a

lighting kit, 18in rear rim, tail pipe, flywheel weight, suspension work and various other tweaks. On top of which, it is now more difficult to register a motocross bike. Far more cost effective would be to simply purchase an alternative braking set-up for your bike.

Though I wouldn't necessarily recommend this, there are plenty of powerful supermoto set-ups with adjustable lever pressure which will do the job for you...

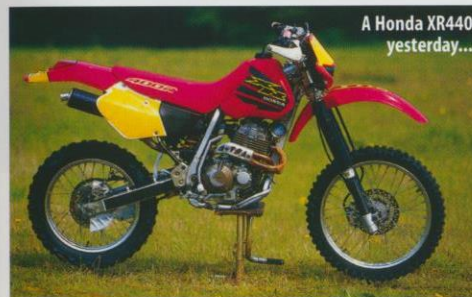
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Smooth Operator

Dear Steve

My 1999 Honda XR400R has a 440 big bore kit and high compression piston fitted but seems to suffer from a hesitance in the mid-range to top-end. I've checked the air filter/plug etc and it seemed to be running lean so I've lifted the needle which helped, but it's still not as smooth as my mate's standard 400. Any ideas on how to get it running right?

Jason Charleston
Via website



A Honda XR440 yesterday...

Fitting a 440 kit and a hi-comp piston is quite a modification Jason and although you're on the right lines I think you'll need to do a little more than lifting the needle to get it running right. Fit a richer needle and a larger main jet and work from there...

On the Loose

Dear Steve

I recently noticed a few of the spokes on the rear wheel of my bike had come loose. After tightening them I took the bike for a quick spin and checked them again. Those I'd previously tightened plus a few more had worked loose. I repeated this twice with the same results. The hub is from Talon but the rim is from the original wheel. Could this be the problem? Any help would be appreciated.

Jim O'Byrne
Via email

Hmm, it sounds like the spoke holes in the rim may be worn. If this is the case then the spokes will continually come loose no matter how often you tighten them. I'm afraid you could be looking at buying a new rim, Jim, and having the wheel rebuilt by a wheel builder.

Gearing Up

Dear Steve

I'm looking at using my 1995 TT600 Yamaha to commute to work 30 miles away and was wondering if changing the sprockets would help the gearing for such a journey (it's dual carriageway all the way). The bike currently runs 14-44 and I'm wondering what combination of sprocket sizes would be best - or do I need to change onto a bigger trailie?

Steve Smith
Via website

PS If a big trailie is required could you please word your advice so that I can use it to explain the need to my wife.

Ha ha, sorry Steve but I'm not getting involved in that age-old marital argument about buying a new bike. You're on your own there, mate... As for the 600, try it with a 15T front sprocket. The chain should be long enough and this will give the bike 'longer legs'. Good luck...



PLAIN & SIMPLE

Rocket Man

Dear Steve

I have a 1994 KTM 300EXC. When accelerating it misses like mad until it hits the power-band, then it's off like a rocket! The bike is standard, I've stripped and cleaned the carb and the reed valve looks okay. Any suggestions as to what's causing this problem would be greatly appreciated.

Brian
Via website

Assuming you've checked the basics (spark plug and electrical connections) I'd take a look at the power-valve. Ensure that it's opening correctly and check the mechanism for smooth operation or breakage. I suspect that's where your problem lays...

Lock and Load

Dear Steve

As I'm a newcomer to trail riding can you give me some information on rimlocks? I have an outline idea of what they are meant to achieve, but have no idea of what they are exactly, where you get them, and most importantly how you fit them. How many do you use per wheel? Does it affect the wheel balancing? And where do you fit them (right next to the valve, either side of the valve, 180 degrees away from the valve)? Many thanks.

Mike Wainer
Via website

Mike, part one of the TBM Tyre Test (issue 132) contained a section on rimlocks so I'll simply give you a brief rundown. As you can see from the picture here, a rimlock is a metal clamp and is designed to hold the tyre against the rim to prevent it slipping. A



bolt through the rim keeps it pulled tight. You generally fit one per wheel, drilling the hole for the bolt four 'spaces' (between the spokes) away from the valve. You can pick up rimlocks from any off-road dealer but make sure you buy the correct size 'lock for your rims - the rims will be stamped with their width. Dirtbike wheels generally aren't balanced so I shouldn't worry about this.

Non-starter Motor

Dear Steve

I've just bought a 1999 Honda XR400R and am having trouble starting the thing from cold. It takes me 10-20 kicks to get it



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going then it runs fine. Have you any tips please as it's doing my head in.

Julian Kendall
Via website

Julian, if as you say the XR is otherwise running fine I'd suggest checking that the choke flap inside the carb is actually still attached to the choke lever. Assuming it is then don't have the idle speed set too high and don't touch the throttle when starting. Good luck and I hope this helps.

WR450F anyone? See the Fast Show (below)



The Fast Show

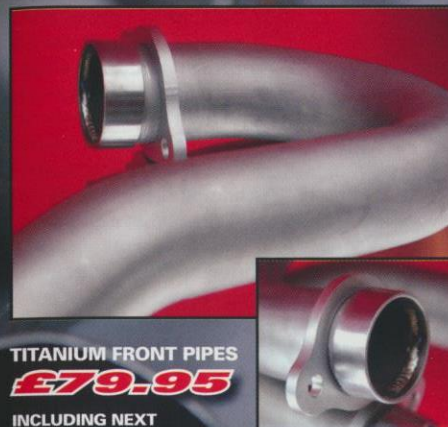
Dear Steve

I have a 2004 Yamaha WR250F. How can I make it faster?

Olaf Wright
Via website

Olaf, there are a number of ways to make your WR-F faster, ranging from just changing the gearing to fitting big-bore kits and engine tuning. What are you using the bike for? How much have you got to spend? And in what way do you want it to be faster? If it's straight-line speed you're after then buy a WR450F..!

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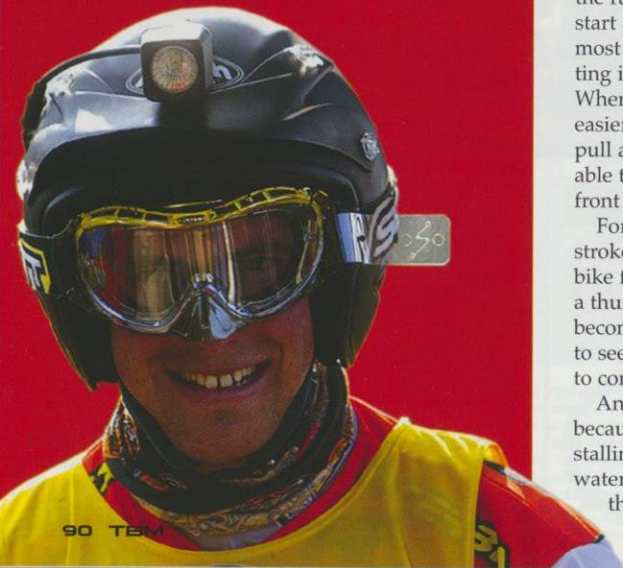
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KNIGHT

Getting used to getting beaten...? Don't bet on it. DK intends to kick some American butt next season...

SPEED



After finishing the '06 World Enduro Championship undefeated I recently suffered my first loss of the season - at round 12 of the US GNCC series. It's certainly not something that I'm pleased about, but in many ways finishing fourth and off the podium is probably the best thing that could've happened to me! I'll explain why...

The reason I opted to head to the US, and miss the Natterjack Enduro as a result, was to take in a round of the championship that I'll be competing in on a full-time basis next year. My intention was to race in the event to gain experience, try a few different things with my bike set-up, judge how my speed and fitness compared against the top riders in the US and generally see what was what. My priority was never to win the race, although it would have been nice. I was really there to learn...

The reason I'm not too disappointed with fourth place is because my speed was good, as was my fitness, and because I definitely learned from the event and the mistakes that I made. If I hadn't got at least one US GNCC under my belt ahead of '07 I wouldn't have known how

'As I've been racing thumpers I've never really spent the time setting up a two-stroke, so I'm looking forward to the challenge...'

my rivals for next season approach and attack the races. I learned that unless you get a great start and can push hard from the front early on, most riders choose to stay together before putting in a big effort in the closing laps of the race. When another rider has you in their sights it's easier for them to catch you than it is for you to pull away. I know that now, so next year I'll be able to decide whether to try and go from the front or bide my time and wait. Valuable stuff...

For this round I decided to compete on a four-stroke, which certainly isn't the preferred type of bike for most of the front-runners. Having raced a thumper for the past four seasons, and having become comfortable on a bigger bike, I wanted to see if there was any disadvantage compared to competing on a stroker.

And one of the reasons I didn't win was because I had a few problems with my bike stalling. I think it was because it took in some water but I spent way too long trying to start the bike each time it stalled to be in con-

tention for the win. So as much as I like racing four-strokes I realised why so many riders still use two-strokes in GNCC racing. It had been my plan to race a thumper in the dry events and then switch to a two-stroke in the wet but now I'm thinking that it might simply be best to race a 250cc two-stroke full-time.

As I've only been racing thumpers recently I've never really spent any time setting up a two-stroke for this type of racing, so I'm looking forward to that challenge. Being back on a stroker will take a bit of getting used to but I'm sure that with several extreme and indoor events over the winter I'll get back into the swing of racing one.

The race was one of those where everything bad that could have happened, did. Well, it probably wasn't *quite* that bad but when I was laying under my bike with a lapped rider on top of me it sure felt that way! I got a good start and moved into the lead pretty early on (having been held up by Fred Andrews for much of the opening lap) before my bike stalled and I dropped to about ninth. I then soaked my hands passing a rider in a water crossing, which meant I had to pit to change gloves before getting going again, settling into a good pace and passing riders.

Soaking my hands might not sound like much of a problem but with two hours to go and then unable to hold on to my bike I learned two very important lessons. Firstly, to always run grips which grip as well when they're wet as they do when they're dry and, secondly, to always have a spare pair of gloves one size bigger than usual available in the pits. Because getting a wet hand into a dry glove doesn't happen all that quickly..!

Once back on track I learned that my suspension can be a little firmer next season and that I have the speed to win. After stopping for fuel I caught back up to the leaders and could see the three riders ahead of me. But then I learned just how big a role lapped riders can play in a GNCC race. Hitting a backmarker I crashed and bent my right index finger back. And to be honest, at that point I wasn't sure if I could finish. But



Bye-bye big four-banger. Knighter intends to return to a 250 two-stroke next season...

I did and I'm glad of that.

The most important thing I realised while in the US was just how much I want to win next year. Considering all that happened, I wasn't too bothered finishing fourth because I know that without my crash and extra pit-stop for gloves I could have won. The whole 'Knight versus Salminen thing' was blown up pretty big, which made everyone watch me a little closer than they did Juha when he first went to the States, but that doesn't bother me either. No, what really annoyed me was the lack of respect race winner Barry Hawk showed me, and perhaps more importantly Juha, from the podium.

Okay, so he won the race and fair play to him for that when all the pre-event hype had surrounded Juha and I. But saying that he's the best cross-country rider and mouthing-off 'where were those KTM guys, they're not up here on the podium' [Juha finished fifth] really wound me up. Juha has spanked Barry all season and finished way ahead of him in terms of championship points for the second year running, and is now focusing on adjusting to life on a 250cc four-stroke rather than going all out to win GNCC races.

Most of the riders in the US seemed happy that I was racing, but there were a few that didn't really have much time for me. Which is fine with me because it just makes me even more determined to kick their asses next season..!

Everyone's talking about...

There was just one thing riders wanted to know prior to the start of the eighth and final WEC round in Boussac, France... how hard was it going to be? French events have a reputation for being extremely tough and with the weather set to make things harder still, those riders that needed good end-of-season results were the most concerned.

But while riders with world championship titles to settle tried their best to remain calm, one competitor prepared himself for the start of the GP of France almost unnoticed. Competing at the rear of the Enduro 3 class, having spent the past 12 months undergoing numerous operations, countless hours of physiotherapy and wondering if he would ever return to the WEC, seven-time world champion Anders Eriksson took part in his first world championship race since his near career-ending accident in August last year.

And the winners are...

With two of the four world titles already decided, just the E1 and E2 championships remained to be settled in France. And with defending champs Ivan Cervantes and Samuli Aro needing only a handful of points to seal their respective titles it was

odds-on that the Spaniard and Finn would join David Knight and Joakim Ljunggren in becoming world champions this season. But as well as crowning the remaining world champions the final championship podium positions in the E1, E2 and E3 classes were also to be decided in France.

Having topped the wet opening day at the GP of USA aboard his 125cc Husqvarna, Bartosz

Oblucki made the most of the sodden conditions to claim his second E1 class day win of the season. While Ivan Cervantes was focused on FINISHING the day rather than trying to win it, Oblucki battled with Italian Simone Albergoni for the lead - with just 15 seconds separating the pair after 50 minutes of special test action. With no other rider able to match their pace it was Frenchman Marc Germain who placed third in his first WEC event of the season.

In finishing fourth Ivan Cervantes did more than he needed to do to retain his Enduro 1 world title - and in conditions he has never excelled in - narrowly missed out on a podium finish. Both Ivan's (and the KTM team's), relief was clear to see.

With day two again wet, most expected Oblucki to post another victory. And for much of the day it looked as if the Husqvarna rider

ANDERS ERIKSSON: 'IT WAS A HARD RACE FOR ME - MY BODY WAS DESTROYED AT THE END OF THE SECOND DAY, BUT I AM REALLY, REALLY PLEASSED TO HAVE FINISHED BOTH DAYS. IT HAS BEEN A LONG ROAD, BACK TO COMPETING IN THE WEC - I'M SO, SO PLEASSED TO BE RACING AGAIN.'

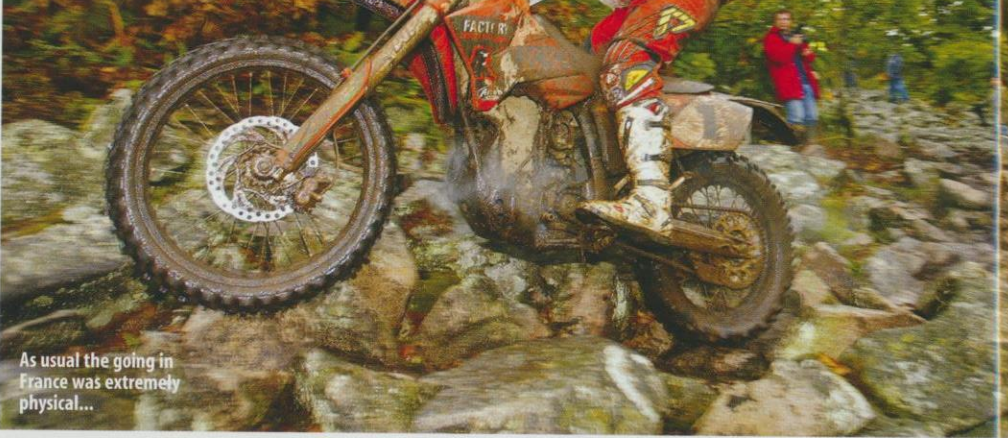


'06 MAXXIS TBM WORLD ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP

REPORT & PICS: JONTY EDMUNDS

**ROUND 8:
GP OF FRANCE
23-24 SEPTEMBER**

'06 MAXXIS FIM WORLD ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP



As usual the going in France was extremely physical...

DAVID KNIGHT: 'IT'S BEEN A GOOD EVENT REALLY, BUT I FOUND IT HARD TO GET MOTIVATED TO BE HONEST. I ENJOYED THE COURSE, IT WAS A REAL CHALLENGE IN PLACES. THE LAST TEST OF THE FIRST DAY WAS THE BEST FUN, IT WAS LIKE RIDING IN A RIVER THE WHOLE WAY AROUND BECAUSE THERE WAS SO MUCH RAIN. ALL IN ALL IT'S BEEN A GREAT SEASON.'

would do exactly that. But Yamaha France rider Marc Germain had other ideas. Competing in his home round 'just for fun', Germain topped the opening test of the day before being beaten by Oblucki on the second test. Germain then posted an almost identical

time to the Pole on the enduro test before going all-out on the final and deciding MX test, beating Oblucki by 30secs. And thus the Frenchman claimed a popular win before announcing that he plans to return to the world championship on a full-time basis in 2007.



Despite a second place finish in the E1 class on day one, Albergoni couldn't overhaul Cervantes who went on to wrap up the E1 title for the second year in a row...



The event...

The final round of the 2006 World Enduro Championship was for most riders the hardest event of the eight-round series. While the Swedish opener was challenging because of its frozen conditions, the Italian round difficult because of the long days and numerous special tests, the GP of France was hard because of the energy-sapping mud and ruts that made up the majority of the 40km course.

Starting from a cattle market on the outskirts of the small town of Boussac, the two time controls and three special tests proved too hard for many, with more riders failing to finish the French event than any other round of the '06 WEC series. In the heart of French enduro country, and with

the course in places utilising ground once used in the gruelling Gilles Lalay Enduro, after a long dry summer, riders from southern Europe suffered the most while the world champ's most experienced mud riders dominated the results.

Split into two time controls, the first including the extreme test, and the second both the enduro and motocross tests, the course in France was anything but easy. With hundreds of enduro enthusiasts gathering to watch at the numerous spectator points along the course, the tough going (with several boulder fields) proved difficult for even the world's best.

Each of the three special tests were muddy, slippery, rutted and extremely technical - with most riders falling at some time during the event. The extreme test was first and saw several riders crash out of the event on the first un-

timed run early on day one! A mix of man-made jumps, muddy off-cambered turns and technical climbs the test was changed on more than one occasion during the event due to riders getting badly stuck.

The enduro test was where the winning was done in France. Extremely technical and by the end of the event rutted from start to finish, for most it became a case of survival with Italian Simone Albergoni failing to finish the test on day two.

The motocross test, laid out across numerous fields, was typically fast, flowing and French and saw thousands of spectators gather on both days to watch the world's best. Despite four-stroke machines topping both the E2 and E3 class results, those riders competing on two-strokes found the event much easier.

With day one leaving most riders feeling extremely tired, heavy overnight rain on Saturday forced the organisers to reduce the race on Sunday from three laps to two, much to the relief of those competing.

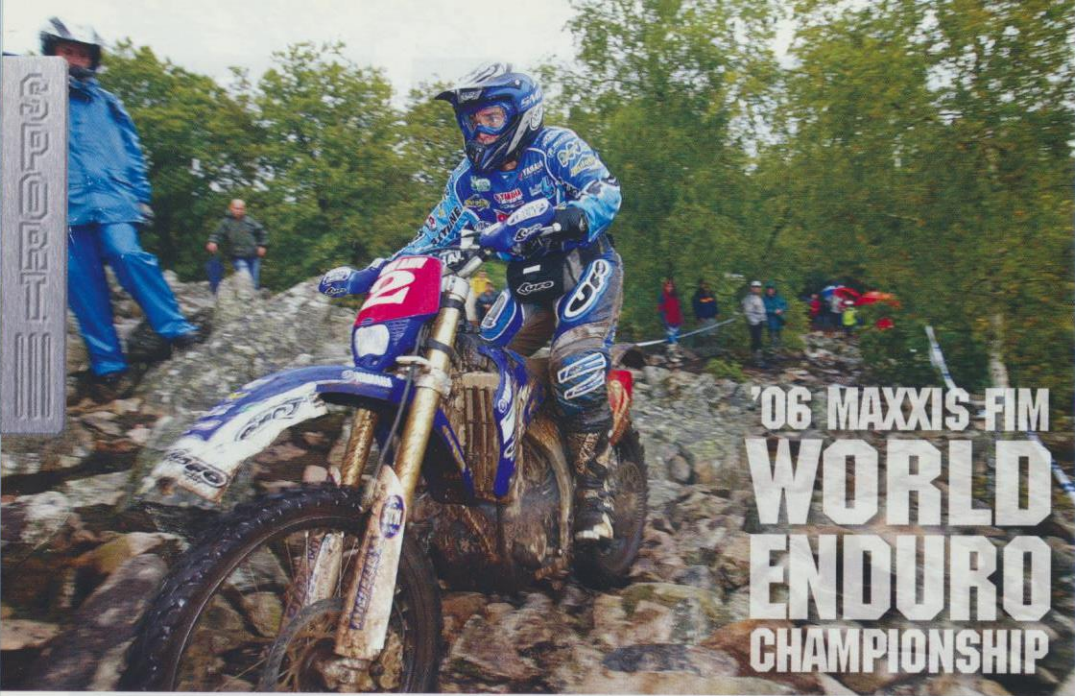
PADDOCK POINTERS

Seven-time World Enduro Champion Anders Eriksson started and finished his first WEC event of '06 having spent the past 12 months recovering from the near career ending accident he suffered at round seven of last season's world championship in Finland. Delighted to be back racing again Anders placed sixth in the E3 class on both days

ABC Communications and the FIM are close to signing a new three-year deal that'll see Frenchman Alain Blanchard and his team promote the WEC during '07, '08 and '09.

Freely given the promotional rights to the WEC for the past three years, ABC Communications now has to pay the FIM to promote the enduro world championship

It looks likely that the age limit for the Enduro Junior class in '07 will be set at 23, and not 21 as it is at present. If the age limit is revised then most factory teams will enter at least one 'officially backed' rider, which will strengthen the already popular class further



'06 MAXXIS FIM WORLD ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP

SAMULI ARO: 'I WAS EXTREMELY NERVOUS BEFORE THE START OF THE RACE IN FRANCE AND IT TOOK ME THREE OR FOUR SPECIAL TESTS TO REALLY GET GOING PROPERLY. IT'S BEEN A GOOD SEASON FOR ME BUT ALSO A HARD ONE. I'M GLAD IT IS OVER NOW.'

With Oblucki runner-up, Simone Albergoni saw his event come to a premature end on the enduro test when he lost more than 15 minutes. Portugal's Helder Rodrigues placed third and in doing so earned his first podium finish of the

The Brits...

Eight British riders started the eighth and final round of the '06 WEC series but due to the challenging conditions in France just four of them managed to finish. With David doing what he has done all season long and winning the Enduro 3 class, Enduro 2 class riders Paul Edmondson and Euan McConnell both made it home with good results and were joined at the finishing by Enduro 1 class Welshman Greg Evans.

Returning to WEC competition having opted not to travel to either North America or Slovakia Eddy finished in eighth position in the Enduro 2 class on day one before pulling out all the stops on day two and placing fourth. Clearly enjoying the wet conditions, and being on a two-stroke, Paul showed that while he may no longer have the out-and-out pace to finish at the sharp end of the E2 class result when it comes to thinking his way around a rutted and muddy special test there are still few riders in the world better at it than him.

For McConnell the final round of the WEC series brought with it some long overdue good results. Having struggled to compete at his best in many rounds of this year's championship in France he placed in 11th and seventh, to end the series on a positive note. Daryl Bolter, having crashed out of the GP of Slovakia earlier in the month, struggled on day one placing in 16th in the E2 class before crashing on day two and putting a hole in his elbow.

Taking part in his first ever world championship event, Greg Evans made it to the finish of both days and having dug deep to do so, scored points on both days having finished in 16th and 11th in the E1 class.

For Si Wakely, Tom Sagar and Lee Edmondson the WEC final proved to be a difficult event. Si called it a day early on day one due to sickness, Tom ran out of fuel twice on day one and wasn't allowed to start day two, while Lee - having placed 15th in the Enduro Junior class on day one - injured his foot and was forced to retire on day two.



You wouldn't think these guys are the world's best enduro riders would you...



Seb Guillaume brought his own barmy army of passionate fans

season. With the title in the bag, Ivan Cervantes came home a steady fifth.

Despite failing to finish day two, Albergoni placed as championship runner-up while Bartosz Oblucki finished third having moved ahead of Italian Alessandro Belometti who had a disappointing weekend having struggled in the mud.

Despite being extremely nervous before the start, Finn Samuli Aro claimed the E2 title in style by topping the class ahead of Frenchman Fabien Planet and fellow countryman Mika Ahola.

Third on the opening test

and looking extremely tense at first, Samuli soon settled into his rhythm and won two of the day's tests while placing no lower than fourth on any of the timed special stages. Pushed hard by his KTM team-mate Fabien Planet, Samuli - like Cervantes in the Enduro 1 class - was clearly relieved to have finally wrapped-up his title.

Now settled back on a two-stroke, Fabien Planet produced his best result of the season and proved that were it not for a late season injury he could've been a title contender. Winning three of the day's tests - one more than winner Aro - Planet

Paddock Pointers

Expected to move to the Enduro 2 class in '07 Spaniard Ivan Cervantes crashed while testing Samuli Aro's KTM 450EXC on the Monday after the French GP injuring his left thumb. Optimistic that the injury wasn't too serious Ivan headed straight to Spain to get the injury checked out ahead of the ISDE in November

Not for the first time this season Frenchman Johnny Aubert crashed out of a round of the WEC when he completed just one timed special test at the French GP. With thousands of spectators having travelled in part to see Aubert compete, his departure from the race was a huge disappointment for Johnny, the UFO Corse Yamaha team and his home supporters

A large number of riders failed to finish the final round of the '06 WEC series due to the difficult conditions. With heavy rain making both the course and the special tests challenging it seemed that when the going gets tough, several top riders are no longer capable of getting going



'06 MAXXIS FIM WORLD ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP

placed comfortably ahead of Honda mounted Finn Mika Ahola who expected a lot more of himself in conditions he usually likes. On day two Ahola got his act together - winning two tests and placing second on the remaining two - he comfortably put himself at

the top of the E2 class. More importantly having beaten Stefan Merriman on both days he claimed the runner-up spot in the 2006 E2 world championship behind Aro. Second on day two, Aussie Stefan Merriman ended the season in third place in the E2 cham-

RESULTS - DAY 1			
E1	1	BARTOSZ OBLUCKI (HUSQVARNA)	50:40.80
	2	SIMONE ALBERGONI (HONDA)	50:55.16
	3	MARC GERMAIN (YAMAHA)	51:50.99
	4	IVAN CERVANTES (KTM)	51:58.24
	5	ALESSANDRO BELOMETTI (KTM)	52:56.45
E2	1	SAMULI ARO (KTM)	48:12.91
	2	FABIEN PLANET (KTM)	48:21.21
	3	MIKA AHOLA (HONDA)	48:50.54
	4	STEFAN MERRIMAN (YAMAHA)	48:55.89
	5	ANDREA BELOTTI (KTM)	50:19.62
E3	1	DAVID KNIGHT (KTM)	48:19.29
	2	SEB GUILLAUME (GAS GAS)	49:19.16
	3	BJORNE CARLSSON (HUSABERG)	51:10.44
	4	MARKO TARKKALA (KTM)	51:21.56
	5	ALESSIO PAOLI (TM)	52:28.57
E JUNIOR	1	MARC BOURGEOIS (HUSQVARNA)	51:13.41
	2	ORIOLE MENA (GAS GAS)	53:14.65
	3	JOAKIM LJUNGGREN (HUSABERG)	54:02.65
	4	JAKE STAPLETON (TM)	54:20.30
	5	MICHAL SZUSTER (YAMAHA)	55:12.26

RESULTS - DAY 2			
E1	1	MARC GERMAIN (YAMAHA)	33:57.61
	2	BARTOSZ OBLUCKI (HUSQVARNA)	34:03.32
	3	HELDER RODRIGUES (YAMAHA)	35:11.22
	4	MAURIZIO MICHELZU (YAMAHA)	35:29.18
	5	IVAN CERVANTES (KTM)	35:59.97
E2	1	MIKA AHOLA (HONDA)	32:20.25
	2	STEFAN MERRIMAN (YAMAHA)	32:53.12
	3	SAMULI ARO (KTM)	33:18.70
	4	PAUL EDMONDSON (HONDA)	33:24.71
	5	NICOLAS PAGANON (HUSQVARNA)	33:27.31
E3	1	DAVID KNIGHT (KTM)	32:30.94
	2	SEB GUILLAUME (GAS GAS)	32:57.62
	3	MARKO TARKKALA (KTM)	33:23.65
	4	BJORNE CARLSSON (HUSABERG)	34:33.78
	5	MARCUS KEHR (KTM)	34:55.06
E JUNIOR	1	MARC BOURGEOIS (HUSQVARNA)	33:50.12
	2	JACOB STAPLETON (TM)	34:16.79
	3	YANNICK BOSSI (HUSQVARNA)	35:03.87
	4	ORIOLE MENA (GAS GAS)	36:13.99
	5	MICHAL SZUSTER (YAMAHA)	36:47.41

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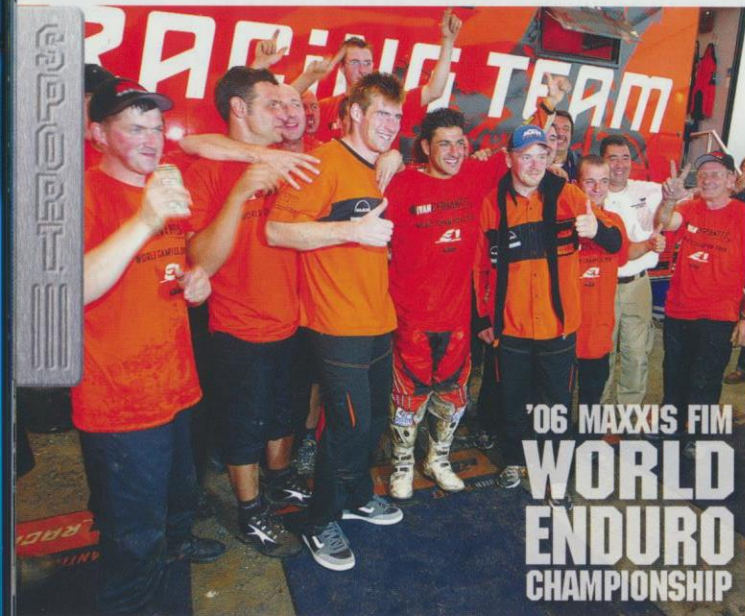
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'06 MAXXIS FIM
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IVAN CERVANTES: 'THIS YEAR HAS DEFINITELY BEEN HARDER FOR ME BECAUSE THE OTHER RIDERS IN THE E1 CLASS HAVE BEEN FASTER AND STRONGER THIS SEASON, SO TO BE WORLD CHAMPION AGAIN IS A GREAT FEELING.'

championship. Having had a disappointing season by his standards, Merriman was simply glad to see the back of the '06 series.

Meanwhile UFO Corse Yamaha rider Johnny Aubert crashed out of the GP of France early on day one, much to the disappointment of the French spectators. Having impressed with his speed in his first WEC season, Aubert will have to calm his riding down a little if he is to become a serious title contender next season.

Already crowned as '06 Enduro 3 world champion, David Knight wanted to win the E3 class on both days in France to complete his perfect, unbeaten season. Having topped the E3 class at each and every round of the series leading up to the series final in France, Knight did what he has done all season and claimed two more day wins making it 16 wins from 16 starts.

But it was the battle for the runner-up spot in the E3 class which focused most people's attention. With French Gas Gas rider Seb Guillaume having got himself ahead of KTM's Marko Tarkkala the muddy home round of the series played right into the hands of Guillaume as he claimed two runner-up finishes to place behind Knight in the E3 championship.

Joining David Knight as the only rider to claim a double class win in France, Marc Bourgeois comfortably outpaced his Enduro Junior rivals on both days to end his season on a high. Finishing a massive two minutes ahead of Spaniard Oriol Mena on day one, after Aussie Jake Stapleton received a one-minute penalty for arriving late at the event's penultimate checkpoint, Bourgeois also netted himself the runner-up spot in the EJ championship behind winner Joakim Ljunggren.

With many of the junior class riders struggling to stay on time in the wet and muddy conditions Bourgeois had no such problems and despite failing to beat Stapleton on either of the

second day's motocross tests, he placed 26 seconds clear at the front with Jake second and Frenchman Yannick Bossi third.

2006 WEC FINAL STANDINGS

E1		(KTM)	372
1	IVAN CERVANTES	(KTM)	372
2	SIMONE ALBERGONI	(HONDA)	318
3	BARTOSZ OBLUCKI	(HUSQVARNA)	291
4	ALESSANDRO BELOMETTI	(KTM)	284
5	MAURIZIO MICHELIZ	(YAMAHA)	255

E2		(KTM)	360
1	SAMULI ARO	(KTM)	360
2	MIKA AHOLA	(HONDA)	328
3	STEFAN MERRIMAN	(YAMAHA)	318
4	JOHNNY AUBERT	(YAMAHA)	277
5	FABIEN PLANET	(KTM)	239
12	EUAN MCCONNELL	(TM)	108
13	PAUL EDMONDSON	(HONDA)	105

E3		(KTM)	400
1	DAVID KNIGHT	(KTM)	400
2	SEB GUILLAUME	(GAS GAS)	319
3	MARKO TARKKALA	(KTM)	296
4	BJORNE CARLSSON	(HUSABERG)	294
5	MARCUS KEHR	(KTM)	239

E JUNIOR		(HUSABERG)	280
1	JOAKIM LJUNGGREN	(HUSABERG)	280
2	MARC BOURGEOIS	(HUSQVARNA)	272
3	JAKE STAPLETON	(TM)	257
4	ORIOLE MENA	(GAS GAS)	240
5	RICARD WRESSEL	(HUSABERG)	238

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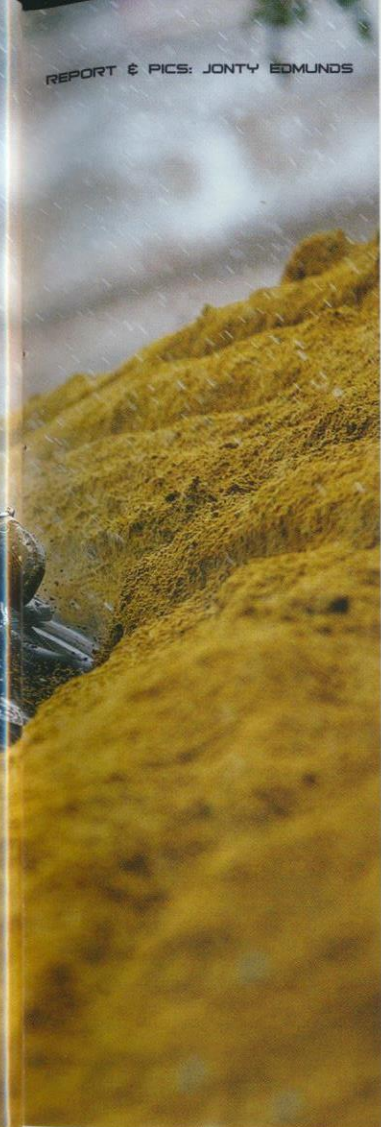
'06 MOTUL BRITISH ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP

ROUND 5,
NATTERJACK ENDURO,
30 SEPT/1 OCT

The '06 Motul backed British Enduro Championship drew to a close in early October when the REME organised Bike It Dixon sponsored Natterjack Enduro brought the five round series to a highly competitive, but extremely wet, close. Having started way back in late February with the one-day Brandon Park Enduro, the four two-day events that followed saw the series arrive at the Natterjack having travelled firstly to Scotland before heading to west Wales and then mid Wales. But with the overall, Enduro 2 and Enduro 3 Championship class titles already decided, only the Enduro 1 class was still to be settled. And with David Knight

already crowned 2006 BEC champion, the factory KTM rider opted not to compete as he prepared himself for a round of the US GNCC series. With Knight not competing, a handful of riders fancied their chances of winning the final round of the '06 BEC series, among them Honda mounted Edmondson and TM riders Jake Stapleton and Euan McConnell. With youngsters Tom Sagar, Daryl Bolter and Si Wakely all keen to end their domestic season on a high note - and these six riders would fill the top half dozen positions on day one. With the opening day proving very physical - especially the power-sapping sandy motocross test and the tight and technical enduro test -

REPORT & PICS: JONTY EDMUNDS



Soldiering on: The 2006 Natterjack proved to be a tough event thanks to horrendous weather conditions...

Euan McConnell grabbing third - despite beginning the day as the fastest rider on the opening MX test.

The three 250cc two-stroke mounted youngsters Tom Sagar, Si Wakely and Daryl Bolter claimed fourth, fifth and sixth places respectively in both E2 and the overall results with the newly crowned European Enduro Champ Sagar finishing 11 seconds ahead of Wakely who in turn placed 10 seconds ahead of Bolter. These three riders make up three quarters of the British Junior Trophy team heading to New Zealand in mid November and though they each performed well, they failed to place as close to Eddy and Jake as they had at the Rhyader Enduro. Finishing seventh overall,

Edmondson began by getting the upper hand over his Aussie rival on the MX tests while Jake proved the faster of the two on the three enduro tests. Come the end of the day, having traded test wins all day long, it was Edmondson who emerged as winner, five seconds ahead of Stapleton. With Eddy and Jake pushing each other every step of the way, the pair edged comfortably ahead of the rest of the Championship class with Scott

Paddock Pointers

- ☑ MPS Husqvarna rider Ricky Mair produced his best ever BEC result on day one of the Natterjack when the Scott topped the Enduro 1 class and placed seventh overall. Disappointingly he failed to finish day two
- ☑ Enduro tyres replaced the usual trials rubber on the rear of all bikes at this year's Natterjack Enduro, something that seemingly all riders were more than pleased about

'06 MOTUL BRITISH ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP

Scott Ricky Mair claimed his first ever Enduro 1 BEC class win, placing 11 seconds ahead of Andrew Edwards. And just as they did in the E2 class, two strokes claimed the top two spots in the Enduro 1 category. Third went to Edward Jones with fellow E1 class riders Richard Hay, Chris Hockey, Robert Jones and Dylan Jones all placing behind.

The event...

Bringing this year's British Enduro Championship to a close as it has done for many years, the sandy, (and heavily whooped) Natterjack Enduro proved to be every bit as challenging as ever. Once again situated in the MOD forestry either side of the A3 near Bordon in Hampshire, the start and finish of each lap together with the refuelling area and the enduro test were within spitting distance of one another, with the motocross test a short walk away, making for an uncomplicated event for riders and their support crews.

Every bit as rough as it always is, day one started at 10.00am and saw the Championship class complete one of the 'fullest' day's of riding this year. With the

course reversed on day two an earlier 9.00am start ensured the event got underway just before the heavens opened.

With Knighter not competing, Suzuki mounted Gavin Hockey placed as the first and only finisher in the E3 class. The second day's results at the Natterjack didn't give a true reflection of riders' abilities as a torrential thunderstorm flooded the motocross test on the start of the second lap, which disadvantaged some and helped others. But at the head of the results it was the same two riders, in the same order as on day one, who claimed the top two positions - Paul Edmondson and Jake Stapleton. Jake desperately wanted to beat the former world champion (like he did at the Rhayader Enduro) but despite his best efforts Paul Edmondson posted an impres-

sive opening test time, eight seconds quicker than the TM rider, which pretty much decided the second day's results there and then. Third place went to Si Wakely some way behind. Horrendous weather conditions during the final test turned the day's results on its head as riders both dropped

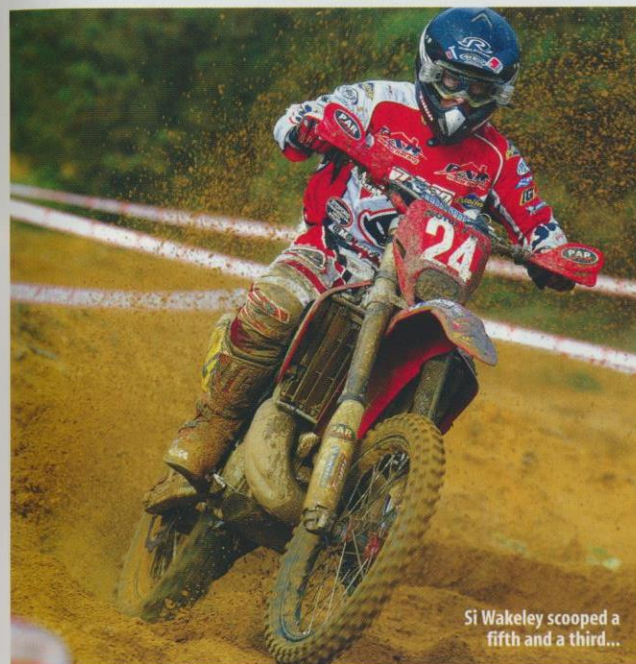
Paddock Pointers

☒ A thunderstorm parked itself above the sandy motocross special test and paddock area mid-way through day two bringing the Natterjack to a premature end. Flooding the tests, paddock, work area and parc ferme, the organisers were forced to scrap all tests and check penalties from that point onwards

☒ Expert rider Ian Mundell crashed on day one, hitting a tree at high speed and fracturing his leg in several places as well as suffering internal injuries



Here comes the rain again...



Si Wakely scooped a fifth and a third...

RESULTS - DAY 1

CHAMPIONSHIP CLASS (OVERALL)

- 1 PAUL EDMONDSON 1909.81
- 2 JAKE STAPLETON 1914.53
- 3 EUAN MCCONNELL 1975.5
- 4 TOM SAGAR 1994.54
- 5 SIMON WAKELY 2005.26

RESULTS - DAY 2

CHAMPIONSHIP CLASS (OVERALL)

- 1 PAUL EDMONDSON 949.29
- 2 JAKE STAPLETON 959.26
- 3 SIMON WAKELY 1003.64
- 4 ANDREW FROST 1006.68
- 5 DYLAN JONES 1007.05



'06 MOTUL BRITISH ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP



Richard Hay secured third overall in the E1 champs...

Topping the Enduro 1 class Dylan Jones claimed fifth overall benefiting from being one of the earlier Championship riders through the final, washed out, test. Finishing less than a second ahead of his cousin Ed Jones aboard his KTM. In finishing as third placed E1 rider on day one and runner-up on day two, Ed Jones claimed the Enduro 1 BEC title, successfully defending the championship he won in 2005 and placing ahead of brother Robert in second, with class newcomer Richard Hay third. Despite missing the Tywi Enduro with a broken foot, Ed still managed to place comfortably ahead of his class-mates and despite riding a four-stroke at the Natterjack claimed another predominantly two-stroke powered title.

Summing up the season then, in the Overall Open British Championship David Knight did what everyone expected, winning each of the seven days he entered and taking the championship outright. The KTM mounted Manxman

was followed home by 2005 series winner Paul Edmondson on his 250cc two-stroke Honda CR, with TM250 mounted Jake Stapleton third. With Knight unlikely to compete in the full BEC series next year due to racing commitments in the USA, it looks likely that it will be a battle of experience versus youth as Edmondson tries to keep himself ahead of the growing army of youngsters in the Championship class.

2006 FINAL CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS

OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP CLASS

1	DAVID KNIGHT	(KTM)	140 POINTS
2	PAUL EDMONDSON	(HONDA)	125
3	JAKE STAPLETON	(TM)	111
4	EUAN MCCONNELL	(TM)	99
5	SIMON WAKELY	(HONDA)	85

E1

1	EDWARD JONES	(KTM)	121 POINTS
2	ROBERT JONES	(YAMAHA)	102
3	RICHARD HAY	(KTM)	101
4	ANDREW EDWARDS	(KTM)	89
5	ROWAN JONES	(YAMAHA)	84

E2

1	PAUL EDMONDSON	(HONDA)	140 POINTS
2	EUAN MCCONNELL	(TM)	123
3	SIMON WAKELY	(HONDA)	111
4	TOM SAGAR	(HONDA)	93
5	ANDREW FROST	(KTM)	69

E3

1	DAVID KNIGHT	(KTM)	140 POINTS
2	CHRIS TETT	(HONDA)	66
3	GAVIN HOCKEY	(HUSOVARNA)	55
4	JUAN KNIGHT	(GAS GAS)	34

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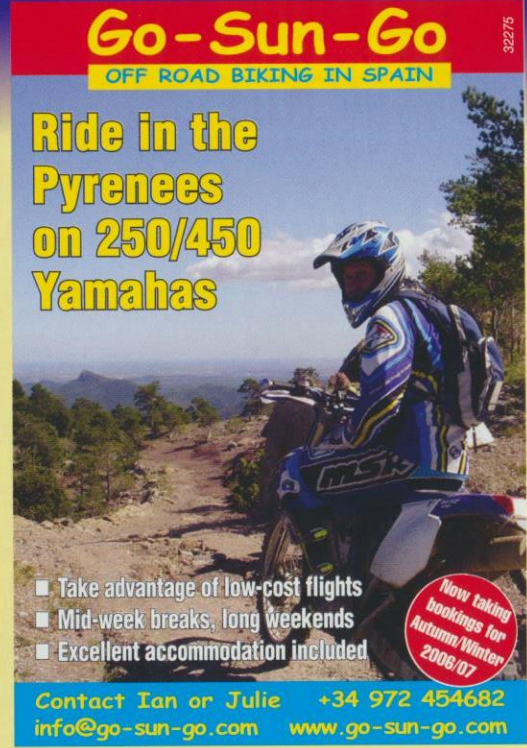
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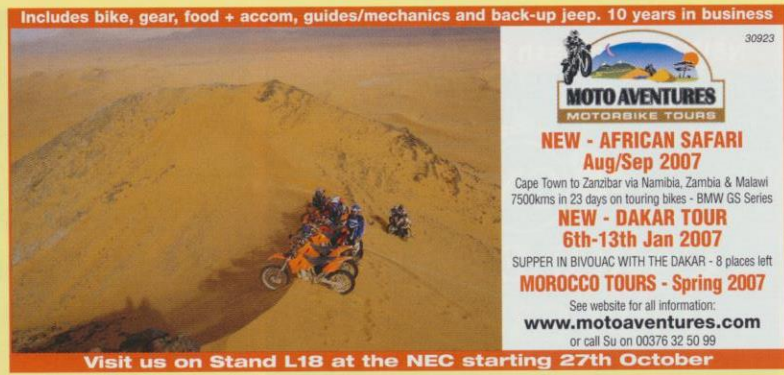


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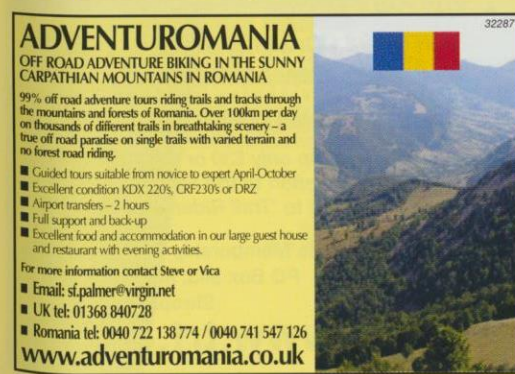
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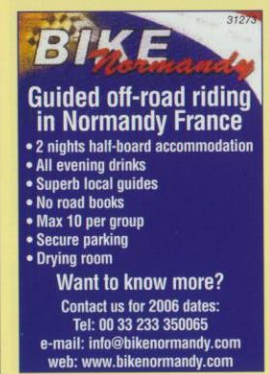
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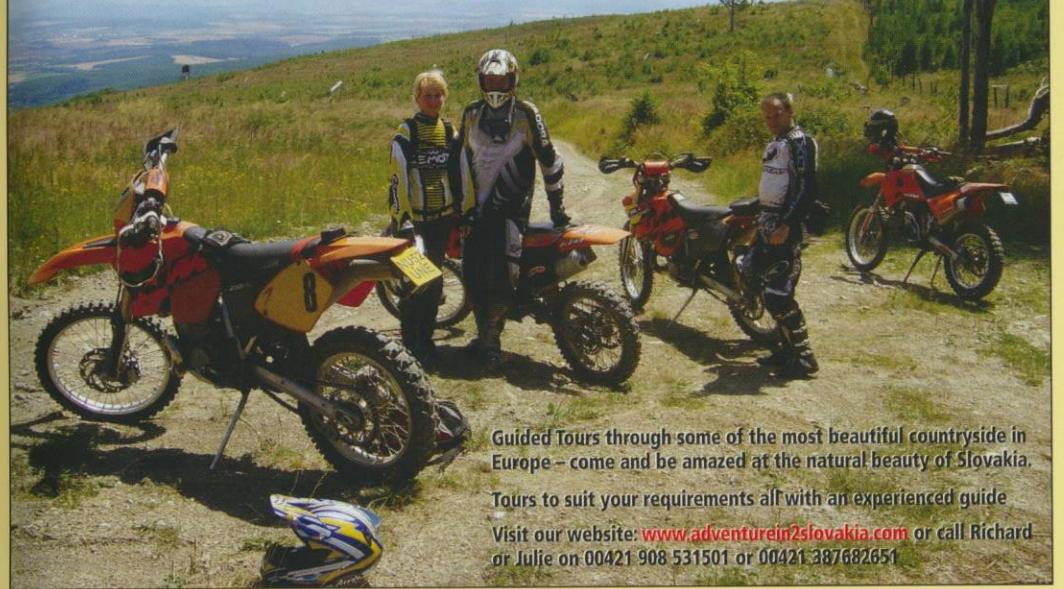
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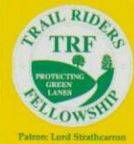
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Ashdown Farm

Where: Nr Blewbury, approximately four miles south-east of Didcot, Oxon. (Near the Berks/Oxon border).

What's it like: A natural MX practice track which is almost more of a short enduro loop. The track is sunken into the terrain as it winds its way through woods (with a couple of massively bermed corners) before breaking out at the top of a valley. You then dive down and straight back up the steep hillside - launching out the top of the hill if you dare... This is the track's best-known feature and really makes it a memorable ride!

The loop then runs back into the woods towards the paddock, with a lap taking approximately three minutes or so. Being on the North Downs means the track is a mix of chalk and clay, and

therefore can be baked hard or super-sticky (and occasionally a mix of both!), with its fair share of bumps and loose flints through the trees.

What it isn't: A supercross track. Other than a medium-sized tabletop the few jumps are all relatively small and there's nothing you can't roll over if you're not confident in the air. Because of this it doesn't seem to attract too many nutters...

Extra info: There's also a kids track and an 'intermediate' track. The South Reading MCC run enduros there in the summer, with courses from 5-8 miles (which includes parts of the MX track).

Facilities: Burger van, portaloos, jetwash, spares van. Opening times: Every Sunday 10am-4pm throughout year. Cost: £15 solo, £20 sidecar/quad, £7.50 kids track, £12 intermediate track.

Directions: From J12 of the M4 head south-west on the A4 before turning north onto the A340 (slow through the camera-infested villages). Road merges with A329 heading towards Goring, and at Strealy you fork left onto the A417 (signed to Wantage). The entrance is approx two miles on the left marked 'The Downs' (a few hundred yards up the hill after a sweeping left-hand bend and opposite the junction to Cholsey). Head slowly up the long bumpy track until you reach the big metal gate on your right.

If you're coming from the A34 turn onto the A4185 and then the A417 (towards Harwell/Upton) at the roundabout with the Spar garage. You'll then approach the track from the opposite direction.

Contact: 01235 850108 / 850144 or 07889 430023 and ask to speak to Pete.

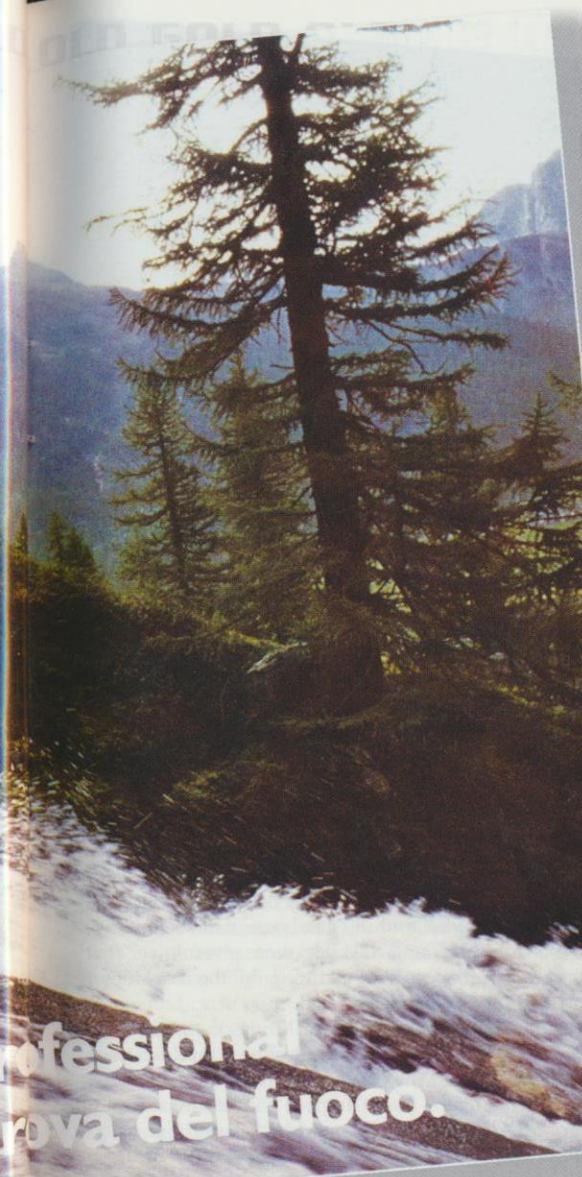
A great image on the Fantic 200 brochure from 1980 shows the bike being ridden up a waterfall...



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Ask any trials rider of a certain age about the pretty Fantic Trial 200 and they'll go all misty-eyed on you. Kevin Hulme digs out his brochures and reveals all...

WORDS & BROCHURES: KEVIN HULME



OLD GOLD

Rewind back to August 1977 and the Earls Court Show in London, where the UK Fantic importer (who went under the rather incongruous name of Barron Eurotrade which was headed up by enthusiastic businessman Roy Carey), debuted a 125cc trials machine. But it would be another 18 months before the universally renowned Fantic 200 model made its debut.

It was at the Spanish world championship round in March 1979 with Italian rider Almir Bodno at the helm. The factory machine sported a rumoured engine capacity of around 185cc and he took the bike to a steady 31st place. Then in May, Roy Carey entered three of the machines in the tough Scottish Six Days Trial as this is always a true test of any new bike. Sensibly Roy avoided the star riders but entered three steady centre standard riders instead. One of these was a young Welshman called Ady Morrison who had begun to make a name for

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TRIAL 200

One of the best things about the little Fantic 200 was that it didn't change at all from one model year to the next, so that the 1979 model (above) was virtually identical to the ones that followed...

himself on a smaller 125cc Fantic. Despite its 200 moniker the new bikes sported a true capacity of just 156cc and were based on the 125's cycle parts. They each featured a silver frame with a red aluminium fuel tank, but the gearboxes had seen many modifications to make gear selection easier and the bikes were given lower first and second gears so the rear sprocket size could be reduced. All the machines finished the week in Scotland with no problems reported.

Wasting no time at all a new machine was released for Morrison to ride in the August of that year. This time the bike featured a host of new modifications including a heavier flywheel to smooth out the power and make it more tractable. A modified frame featuring a new (more angled) pair of the latest five-position Marzocchi rear shocks helped with the machine's handling.

The front forks were Fantic branded but also came from Marzocchi. The front and rear wheels featured Akront rims laced to the very popular Grimeca hubs which were by now fitted to all the Italian trials machines. All this was finished off with a beautiful red plastic fuel tank reputedly made by car manufacturer Porsche. And which with the new red painted frame gave the machine the Ferrari look! The bike was priced at a very competitive £1085, making it a very attractive purchase. The most confusing part of all this, which even to this day I struggle to get my head around, was that the machine was sold as the Trial 200 but the model number given was the TX350 while the engine capacity was 156!

For 1980 the Fantic factory in Italy signed top Spanish rider Jamie Subira to contest all the world championship rounds as well as the SSDT. Most importantly at the time there was a clause in his contract which stated that he had to ride the 200 model and was only allowed to make minor modifications to the machine - which he accepted as he said that the machine was easy to ride



thanks to its modest 87 kilos.

His results in the world championship were slow, but by mid season he had started picking up points. In the prestigious SSDT he had a superb ride, finishing in fifth place and winning the up to 200cc cup. By now the Fantic brand in England was becoming very strong and the machines were selling extremely well. And by late 1980 ex-Beamish Suzuki competition manager Brian Fowler was in charge of the Fantic team under Roy Carey.

For 1981 Fowler decided he needed a top English rider to give the Fantic name more presence at British championship level and signed up his good friend from his Suzuki days - Cumbrian Nigel Birkett - to lead the team. Birkett agreed to start doing trials schools for the Fantic dealer network and these proved a big hit with the dealers. At this point the machines were selling really well - proving popular due to their reliability and low running costs.

Crucially the Fantic factory elected to leave the model unchanged from year to year which suited the buying public as they weren't constantly chasing the new model. This is where the Fantic really scored with consumers. The bikes may not have been cutting edge models, but the quality, price, reliability and sheer rideability of the Fantic 200 made it a clubman favourite.

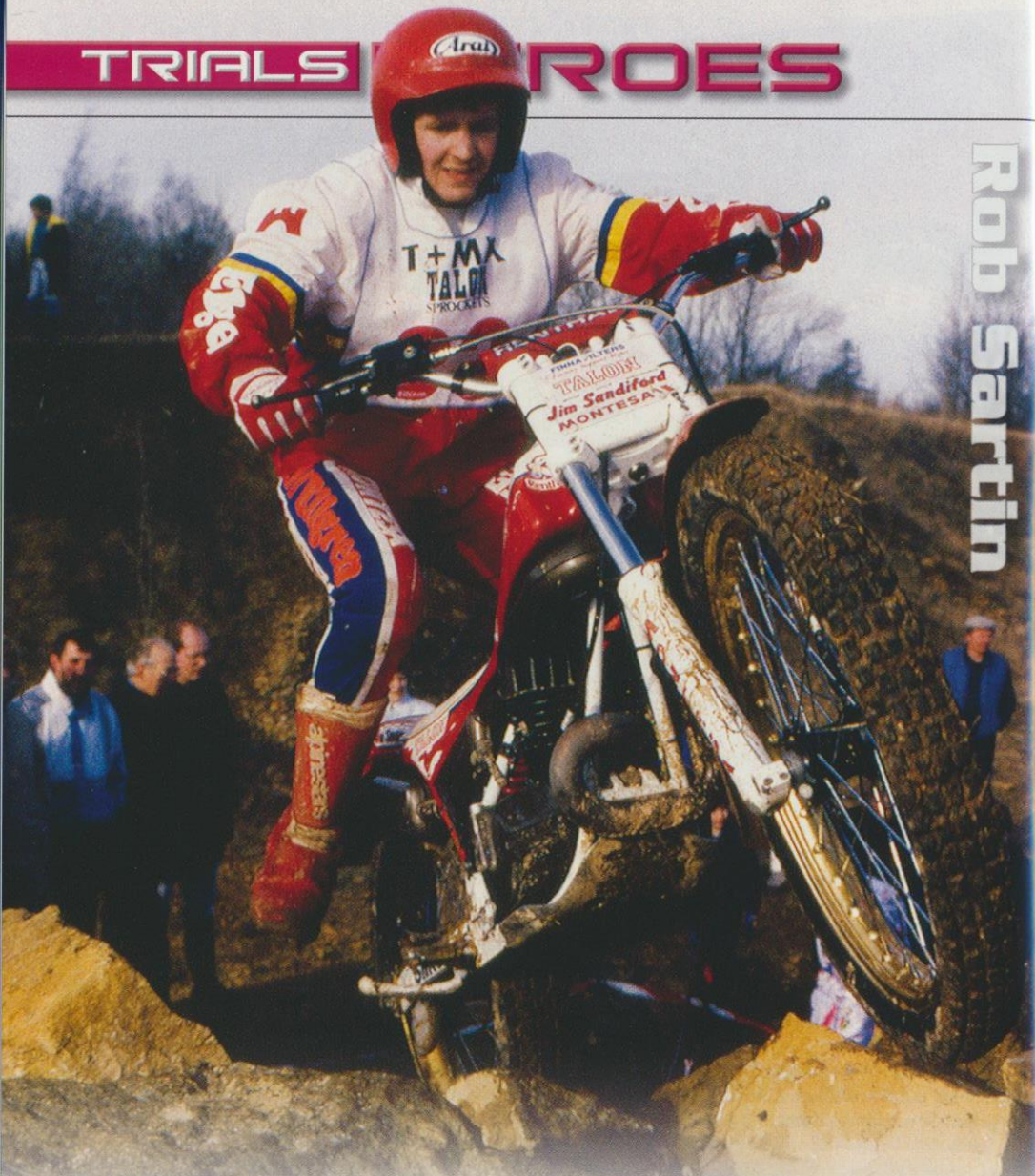
From having only three machines entered in the SSDT in 1978, by 1981 there was 35 and by 1982 the red devils were everywhere with more than 50 machines entered though some of these were the new 240 model.

Because in February 1981 Subira debuted the new prototype 240 which was a big change from the 200 as it featured a host of new designs including a totally new engine featuring a forward operating kickstart and totally new frame and cycle parts. This really got the public talking and despite continuing good results for the 200 on the UK club scene, sales began to dwindle. And with the arrival of the 240cc production bikes in the September of that year, everybody wanted this new machine. The factory continued to build 200s but its era was over.

Nowadays many riders remember their little Fantic 200s with fondness and there are plenty of them still running and competing in club trials up and down the country...



Rob Sartin



Riders who have featured in this series have generally been over 40, but we make no apologies for including a rider who is still very much an active member of the industry and who has been a British Champion within the past ten years.

Still only 36 years old, the name Rob Sartin is synonymous with the world of enduro for most readers of this magazine, for Robert, who hails from Yeovil in Somerset was the British Enduro Champion in 1995 and 1997. However Rob started

his motorcycling career in trials, principally in the South West, taking the Youth B class national championship in 1983 and the Youth A title for the following two years.

Starting out on a Whitehawk, progressing to Majesties and then TY250 Yamahas, Rob had brief interludes on a Honda TLM250 (on which he won a British Championship round), a French-built JCM and for less than half a year, a 242 Montesa from importer Jim Sandiford. And it's on the 242 Monty that he's been captured in the 1988 Colmore Cup

What's the Story?

Trial with the photo taken in Chips Quarry which regularly featured in this traditionally muddy trial.

Rob suggested we use a different picture than the one of him on the Montesa, but it has lovely winter lighting and illustrates so well the clothing and style of machine used 18 years ago. Although his Montesa spell wasn't the happiest one for him, but that happens to many riders - they pick a quality machine that simply doesn't suit them. But perhaps it was not so much the bike as the way trials were heading at the time.

'I wasn't really enjoying trials very much for a few years' said Rob recently, 'I was frustrated by the way the rules were changing, the rules for World Champs were different to those for British Championships, and I was excluded from a British round in Wales for failing a noise test. It just wasn't happening for me and in 1991 I rode my first enduro.'

Rob tackled the '91 Beacons, riding the Expert class and won the first day despite dislocating a finger which he caught on a protruding branch.

'I went to Carmarthen hospital that night, had my finger bandaged up and rode on Sunday, only to have the bike's chain break!'

But pretty soon he was hooked on enduros and took up the sport full time from 1992 until his retirement in 1998. Six ISDEs resulted in two Silver medals and four Golds coming his way (not forgetting two respectable tenth place finishes in the formidable Gilles Lalay Classic), but perhaps the three years which are the most memorable are 1995, 1996 and 1997. Rob took the British Enduro Championship outright in 1995, and in 1996 he finished fifth in the World 250cc Championship at a time when most of his competitors were full-time enduro riders, whereas he was working in the family business.

Then of course came *the accident!* On 13 October in the 1996 Beacons, Sartin crashed heavily on the special test. He knew immediately he was seriously injured and had the foresight to tell everybody he

was not to be moved. It probably saved him long-term injury, for though he had to undergo neck and back surgery with a real risk of long-term damage, he recovered well through the winter months and was able to return for the 1997 enduro season during which he - incredibly - clinched his second British Enduro Championship.

'The injury has left me with a loss of feeling in the backs of my hands and around my neck, and I definitely don't have the same level of strength and fitness that I was able to achieve before the accident, but I have to be thankful that I recovered so well' he says philosophically. At the time, there was great concern for Rob amongst his many friends in the industry and the sport.

The family business is Talon Engineering and Rob's father George can take much of the credit for steering Rob through his successful trials and enduro career. Talon, once a general engineering concern began branching out into the world of motorcycle components and is now one of the big industry players. Best known for their range of sprockets and wheels, Rob bought the company from his father when he decided

to retire and as the MD is now steering the company towards a bright future.

Rob no longer rides competitively though he still tests machines belonging to rising British enduro star Si Wakely whom he assists. 'I did pre-ride the Lossiemough and Rhyader enduro courses this year' said Rob, 'and thoroughly enjoyed the experience, but that's about all I do.'

Still a young man, still very fit (he competes in marathons competitively and has taken part in Iron-Man triathlons), and totally committed to the sport and his business, Rob could yet make a return in the future, if only to enjoy being on a bike. If he does, he'll be made very welcome for he's a nice guy with his feet firmly planted. He's been there, taken the risks, come through them and thoroughly deserved the accolades...

'The injury has left me with a loss of feeling in the backs of my hands and around my neck, but I have to be thankful I recovered so well...'

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Honda XR400, 2001, Q-plate, black plastics, red tank, noise reducer, vgc, phone for details, £1400 ono. Tel 07852 125911 (Lincs)

CCM 6440S, T&T, 5000 mile, vgc, £1750. Tel 07759 187500 (London)

Honda XR400R2, 2002, T&T, 4000 miles, one owner, well maintained, light green lane use only, sump/frameguards, £2100 ono. Tel 01256 781946 (Hants)

Gas Gas EC450FSE, 2003, T&T, just had valve clearances checked, all the extras, new Supersprox/DID chain/tyres, exc cond, £2500. Tel (mobile) 07725 722556 or 01233 646168 (Kent)

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Honda CRF250X, 2005, fully road legal, speedo, bashplate, handguards, rad braces, £3000. Tel 01524 423417 (Lancs)

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Honda XR200, don't spend £999 on any trail bike until you've heard the spec on this one. Tel 01202 778186 (Dorset)

Honda XR400, 1998, T&T, new c+s, sump/discguards, vgc, £1700 ono. Tel 01455 271648 (Leics)

Gas Gas EC400FSE, 2002, T&T, 6500km, regularly serviced, not raced, all original inc graphics etc, good cond, £2100 ono. Tel 01235 555216 (Oxon)

Yamaha WR250F, 18 months old, road reg'd, taxed, full fork service, new plastics/Renthals/barpad/grips, recent c+s, rad braces, £2400. Tel 0161 905 2737 (Manchester)

Suzuki DR-Z400SK2, 52-reg, blue, wave discs, Arrow silencer, original parts available, CRD sumpguard, just serviced, new battery, £2250. Tel 02392 751063 (Hants)

Honda CRM250 AR, P-reg, 12200km, DEP pipe, sumpguard, otherwise standard, exc cond, pics/details at sleddon.com/honda.htm, £1850 ono. Tel 07989 571753 (London)

Honda XR400, 2002, T&T, only used for gentle green laning, regular oil changes, new c+s, sumpguard. Tel 01449 737522 (Suffolk)

Gas Gas EC200, 2004, road reg'd, taxed, mature rider, rigorously maintained, loads of extras, lovely cond, £2200. Tel 07771 947487 (W Sussex)

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FREE CLASSIFIEDS

Yamaha WR450F, 04 model, ex demo bike, electric start, very very clean bike, owner going back to road bikes, £3200. Supermoto wheels available at extra cost. Tel (mobile) 07957 489673 or 01389 601577 (Dunbartonshire)

KTM 400EXC, 2004, light trail use only, recent dealer service, exc cond, £2995. Tel (mobile) 07763 043473 or 01689 827088 (Kent)

Honda XR250R, 1994, new tyres/c+s/plastics/DEP tailpipe, regularly serviced, 200 mile oil/filter changes, exc cond, £950 ovno. Tel 01189 507575 or 01252 394895 (Berks)

KTM 250EXC 2T, 2006 model, only 300 easy miles, FSH, unused spares kit, absolutely pristine cond, £2999 ovno. Tel 01189 507575 or 01252 394895 (Berks)

Gas Gas Pampera, 2003, T&T, very low mileage, unused for last year, Renthals, sump/handguards, nice clean easy to ride bike, £1495. Tel 01622 692528 (Kent)

KTM 200EXC, 2005, 593 miles/27.5 hours, seven extras, vgc, ring for spec, £3200 ono or poss p/x for modern XR250 in vgc. Tel (mobile) 07742 954570 or 01235 862933 (Oxon)

Gas Gas EC200, 52-reg, over 40s rider, Renthals, FMF system, Ohlins, bashplate, handguards, Trailtech, new piston/c+s, spares, service, receipts, £1695 ono. Tel 01789 765336 (Warks)

Yamaha XT350, 1992, J-reg, T&T, 23000 miles, road/green lane use only, tidy and reliable, £1200 ono. Tel 0116 270 2200 (Leics)

Honda XR250R, 2004, 3000km, green lane use by one sensible owner, good cond, £2400. Tel 0116 270 2200 (Leics)

KTM 525EXC, 06-reg, five months old, maintained beyond reason, big spec, please call for further details, £4195 ono. Tel 01625 529106 (Cheshire)

KTM 400EXC, 2005 model, taxed, loads of extras/new parts, exc cond throughout, ready to go, £3100. Tel 01773 531252 (Notts)

Honda CRF450X, 2005, UK bike, road reg'd, extras, little use, ultra reliable awesome fun machine, vgc, £3150. Tel (mobile) 07983 592759 or 01924 477877 (W Yorks)

Honda CRF250X, 2004, one mature owner, little use, sump/handguards, FMF Q-pipe, braceless bars, Trailtech computer, heated grips, reluctant sale, £2800. Tel 01924 863982 (W Yorks)

Suzuki DR350, 1995, T&T, 8000 miles, Renthals, handguards, Swona exhaust, spare tyres, commuter use only, good cond, £1600 ono. Tel 01786 464879 (Stirling)

TM 250E 4T, 51-reg, USD forks, Ohlins shock, Brembos, Excel rims, new rings/o-ring chain/Renthal sprockets, spares and manuals, £2200. Tel 07967 048790 (London)

Honda XR400R, 1998, S-reg, new MT21s/Iris o-ring chain, Renthal/Talon sprockets, manual and spares, good cond, £1800. Tel (mobile) 07967 048790 or 01782 398589 (London)

Husqvarna TE250, 2004 model, 05-reg, 1500km, only raced once, 909 handguards, exc cond, £2695 or may p/x for KTM 250/300EXC. Tel 01626 835501 (Devon)

Suzuki DR350, 1998, T&T, elec start, CRD exhaust, Mikuni carb, new rear tyre/c+s, £1200 ono. Tel 01242 698322 (Gloucs)

Yamaha WR400F, 1998, road reg'd, SORN, was used for green laning, well looked after, mature owner, £1695. Tel (mobile) 07811 385741 or 0151 625 7803 (Wivral)

KTM 450EXC, 53-reg, 826 miles/38 hours, green lane use, FSH, sumpguard, various spares, vgc. Tel 07899 060553 (Shrops)

Honda XLR250, 1994, low miles, well maintained, lovely original bike, email pics available, £1150. Tel 01562 637628 (Worcs)

Honda XR400, 2002, low miles, CRD system, Werx graphics, CRD bashplate, well maintained, vgc, pics available by email, £2200. Tel 01562 637628 (Worcs)

Honda XR250R, 2003, UK model, T&T, low mileage, kept original by mature owner, exc cond, £2450 ono. Tel 01803 812940 (Devon)

Yamaha DT250 twin-shock, 1976, T&T, new paintjob, classic bike, ready to ride, can email pics, £650. Tel 07859 374047 (Staffs)

Yamaha Serow, 1994, T&T, low miles, new shock/tyre/c+s/disc, Scottolier, handguards, lots of spares, workshop manual, vgc, £1200 ono. Tel 01252 714574 (Surrey)

KTM 450EXC, 2003, T&T, 98 hours' use, rear mousse, case saver, hand/sumppguards, good cond, £2350 or may p/x. Tel Chris on 07791 504718 (Cumbria)

Honda XR400, 51-reg, low miles, spare plastics, green lane use, lots of spares, good cond, £1900 ovno or p/x for KTM 250. Tel 07887 510445 (Bucks)

Honda XR650R, 54-reg, taxed, only 2300km, standard, good cond, £3700 ono. Tel 01664 434690 (Leics)

Honda XR650R, 2002, 12600km, road legal tyres and lighting kit, regular oil/filter, CRD bashplate, good cond, £2400 ono. Tel 07731 809640 (Derbys)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, 2002, T&T, well maintained, CRD pipe, little use, vgc, ready to enjoy, £1850. Tel (mobile) 07734 385986 or 0115 989 9363 (Notts)

Beta RR 400, May '05, proven 400 KTM lump in well suspended and spec'd chassis, nice clean tidy bike, £3250 ono. Tel (mobile) 07818 410842 or 01789 488538 (Warks)

KTM 525EXC, 2003 model, 02-reg, MoT, good cond, £1800. Tel 07771 800095 (Northants)

Honda CRM250 mkII, MoT, low mileage, recent brakes/c+s/balancer shaft, few spares inc genuine workshop manual, £1450. Tel 07910 050242 (Kent)

Gas Gas EC400FSE, red, taxed, Arrow exhaust, Ohlins shock, Renthal sprocket, Acerbis handguards, good cond, great bike on- or off-road, £2200. Tel 07751 866384 (S Yorks)

KTM 250EXC 4T, 2005, 350cc upgrade kit, factory replica, orange/black, only 370 miles/17 hours, never raced, £3750 ono. Tel 01803 607019 (Devon)

Honda Transalp, T&T, MoT, only 9900 miles, Scottolier, heated grips, Givi topbox and sideracks, £2495 ono. Tel 07970 164976 (Gloucs)

Honda CRF450X, 2005, 55-reg, bashplate, hand/radguards, ignition key, switchgear, stop/tail lights, indicators, Sigma speedo, £3400. Tel 01344 482375 (Berks)

Yamaha YZ250F, 2003 model, road reg'd, well maintained, exc cond, £1850 or poss p/x for 400cc elec start enduro bike. Tel 0117 961 3901 (Gloucs)

Honda CRF250X, 2004, well maintained, new Honda plastics, Works Connection case savers, radguards, hand sumpguard, this bike is like new, £3000 ovno. Tel 01625 427923 (Cheshire)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, 03-reg, T&T, fully road legal, 2500 miles, mainly green lane use, enthals, brushguards, CRD bashplate, exc cond, £2600 ono. Tel (mobile) 07769 927564 or 01189 834829 (Berks)

Yamaha YZ125, 2001, complete top-end rebuild inc barrel, enduo taper bars, enduro suspension, brushguards, well maintained H&H racer, exc cond, £1550 ono. Tel (mobile) 07769 927564 or 01189 834829 (Berks)

Honda XR400, 2001, low mileage, many extras, hardly used so must sell, £1650. Tel 01778 344144 (Camps)

Yamaha WR250F, 2003, fully road legal, bashplate, frameguards, rad braces, exc green laner, vgc, £2600 ono. Tel 01594 563021 (Gloucs)

KTM 450EXC, 2004 model, T&T, green lane use only,

handguards and usual extras, new fork seals, regularly serviced, spares, exc cond, £3450. Tel 07850 715305 (Beds)

CCM 4040S, August '05, 1200 miles, trail use only by mature owner, hand/sump/caseguards, exc cond, £2950. Tel 01706 219971 (Lancs)

KTM 450EXC, 2003, green lane use only, new tyres/brakes/bearings etc, lower and standard seats, all manuals, vgc, owner emigrating, £2900. Tel 07841 166578 (London)

Honda XLV750R, 1987, T&T, 18000 miles, V-twin, elec start, shaft-drive, just serviced, runs perfectly, £1650 ono. Tel 01672 871809 (Wilts)

Husaberg FE400, 2001, all usual extras, recent full engine rebuild, all receipts, clean reliable bike, £1400 ovno or p/x Africa Twin or similar. Tel 07711 104214 (Derbys)

KTM 250EXC 2T, 2004, lots of spares/extras, maintained regardless of cost, exc cond, first to see will buy, £2850 ovno. Tel (mobile) 07967 591933 or 01629 813127 (Derbys)

Yamaha XT225 Serow, 2004, new bars, various spare sprockets, good clean bike, ideal green lane or LDT, £1850 ono. Tel 07973 479274 (Staffs)

Yamaha Serow, 1999, T&T, 8300miles, new disc/pads, recent Michelin AC10s, £1550. Tel (mobile) 07969 701250 or 0117 960 9660 (Bristol)

Suzuki DR-Z400S, 53-reg, yellow, T&T, Ego Barkbusters, never been off-road, exc cond. Tel 07763 742182 (London)

Honda XR400, 55-reg, 1800km, green lane use only, vgc, £2850 Tel (mobile) 07966 579903 or 01929 471343 (Dorset)

Gas Gas EC200, 2005, road reg'd, taxed, 20 hours' use max, bashplate, radguards, exceptional barely used cond, £2600 ono. Tel 07737 709405 (W Sussex)

Beta RR450, 2005, Fatbars, handguards, mousses, new tyres/padcs+s, exc cond, £2950 ono. Tel (mobile) 07701 000036 or 01678 530206 (Denbighshire)

Yamaha TTR125 big wheel, 2003 model, kickstart only, well maintained, tidy cond, £1100 ono. Tel 02476 455191 (W Mids)

KTM 450EXC, 2004, taxed, road legal, low mileage, all the extras, original KTM briefcase, manuals etc, regularly serviced, fantastic cond, £3750. Tel (mobile) 07917 873548 or 01722 741103 (Wilts)

SUPERMOTO

KTM 625SMC, 2005, 5500 miles, FKTMSh, loads of extras, fully sorted bike, mint, can email pics, £3900 ono. Tel 07792 111759 (N Yorks)

CCM R30, 2003, stunning blue, hardly used, immaculate cond, bargain at £2300 ono. Tel 01824 707190 (Denbighshire)

KTM Duke II, 2001, bronze, MoT, 7000 miles, summer use only, garaged, all stock, new tyres, exc cond. Tel 01484 845120 (W Yorks)

KTM LC4 640SM Prestige, 2006, three months old, 1000 miles, totally standard, as new, £4200 ovno. Tel (mobile) 07742 954570 or 01235 862933 (Oxon)

Honda CR500 SM, 1991, road reg'd, SM and MX wheels, over £1000 worth of new parts this year, loads of spares, exc cond, £1850. Tel 07919 126012 (Cumbria)

WANTED

Wanted Suzuki DR-Z400E, have a limited allowance from my wife, needs to be road legal with indicators if poss, cash waiting for right bike. Tel 07816 917875 (Derbys)

Wanted 20-30L fuel tank to fit 1986 Yamaha TT600. Tel 07957 725634 (Surrey)

Wanted petrol tank for 2004 Yamaha TTR600, blue model, or swap for 22L Acerbis tank for the same bike. Tel 07834 316024 (London)

Wanted any digital speedo unit, ICO, IMO, KTM or Sherco, prefer with thumb switch but without okay, not Trailtech. Also wanted CRF230 wheels, or any that will fit. Tel 01594 564163 (Gloucs)

Wanted tank for 54-reg XR125.

Tel 01752 786500 (Devon)

Wanted 6v CDI and coils for 1979 Honda XL250. Tel 01623 620815 (Notts)

Wanted old Honda XR or Yamaha TY for restoration project, would consider any early 80s trials/MX bike, as complete and as cheap as poss, even basketcase, cash buyer and enthusiast.

Tel (mobile) 07906 226570 or 01482 707353 (Humberside)

Wanted supermoto wheels to fit 2005 KTM 250EXC, distance no object. Tel 01765 689923 (N Yorks)

Wanted 125cc or above MXer, in good/fair cond, £300 max. Tel (mobile) 07904 377872 or 01282 436401 (Lancs)

Wanted CDI for 1983/84 Honda XL600LM. Non-runner also considered. Tel 01305 826670 (Dorset)

Wanted 11L tank to fit KTM 200EXC.

Tel 01642 476463 (Cleveland)

Wanted exhaust for late model Gas Gas EC250, FMF Gnarly preferred though anything considered front or rear, for spare so must be reasonably priced. Tel (mobile) 07706 163776 or 0151 201 5547 (Wirral)

Wanted wheels for Gas Gas EC, standard or trick, must fit '07 bike, must be reasonably priced. Tel (mobile) 07706 163776 or 0151 201 5547 (Wirral)

Wanted parts for Honda XL250S restoration, rear silencer heat shield part no 18355-428-000. Plus receiver clutch cable guide bracket, part no 50355-428-000, either new or used parts. Tel 01904 490764 (Yorks)

Wanted African Twin or similar big trail bike, any cond considered. Tel 07711 104214 (Derbys)

Wanted FMF pipe for 1991 Yamaha WR200.

Tel 01299 271421 (Worcs)

Wanted silencer for '85 Honda XL400R import trailer, XL500 will probably fit or might try one from a XR400, WHY? Tel (mobile) 07718 899600 or 01929 471561 (Dorset)

SPARES

Budget brake upgrade or 5M 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, £50 plus postage.

Tel James at TBM on 020 8840 4760 (London)

Ohlins shock to fit Yamaha WR250Z/YZ125, hardly used, £175 plus postage, no offers. Tel Si at TBM on 020 8840 4760 (London)

Genuine chain/sprocket set for KTM 525EXC, cost £90, sell for £40. Also rear enduro fender and light shell, £10. Tel (mobile) 07711 209540 or 01948 880161 (Shrops)

KTM 525EXC Six Days 13L tank and seat, cost £320 new, sell for £150. Tel (mobile) 07711 209540 or 01948 880161 (Shrops)

FMF exhaust for Yamaha WR450F, £125. DEP pipe to fit Suzuki DR-Z400S, £80. Tel 01495 772829 (S Wales)

KTM wheels to fit 2007 125EXC, black Excels, complete with tyres, front disc and rear sprocket, will fit 2003-07 KTM's, £395. Tel 01481 239611 (Guernsey)

FREE CLASSIFIEDS

Single-bike trailer, fully galvanised, ten inch wheels, full tail lighting, anchor points, detachable loading ramp, light use, cost £300, accept £150. Tel 01629 581072 (Derbys)

WRP supermoto wheels to fit Husqvarna TE250/450/510, with tyres/discs/c+s and front fender, as new, £550. Tel 0161 427 3448 (Cheshire)

Gaerne 5610 MX boots, red, size 12, brand new, £100. Tel 02392 413222 (Hants)

Leo Vince Ti exhaust to fit DR-Z400S, with link pipe, exc cond, £150. Tel 02392 610776 (Hants)

FMF Q-pipe to fit 2003-05 Yamaha YZ450F, Ti/alloy construction, new and unused, boxed, can post, £200. Tel 07979 892236 (Norfolk)

Gas Gas EC enduro parts, FMF Gnarly pipe, new, £160. CRD sumpguard, £35. Airoh helmet, blue, size L, £70. W2 boots, £45. Bum bag, £20. Tel 01380 729982 (Wilts)

Parts for Yamaha XT250, wheels with tyres, forks, clocks, switches, mirror, all good, all cheap. Tel Mike on (work) 0115 909 8007 (Derbys)

Supermoto wheels, black Excels/gold Talons, gorgeous, inc new tyres, £650. Tel (mobile) 07976 528690 or 01799 500921 (Essex)

Gaerne Balance trials boots, brand new, size 41, teal green hide, quality boot, £60 plus p&p. Tel 01851 840297 (Scotland)

Dave Cooper bike rack, used twice, exc cond, £40. Tel 01908 562837 (Bucks)

FMF Powercore IV system to fit Suzuki DR-Z400, with removable quiet insert, as new, £180 ono. Tel 0121 707 1615 (W Mids)

Supermoto wheels to fit Suzuki DR-Z400, black rims, red Talons, wave discs, brake spacer, c+s, all you need, exc cond, £695. Tel 0121 707 1615 (W Mids)

Standard wheels for 2003 Yamaha TT600R, only done 500 miles, vgc, £220 ono. Tel 0115 9536871 (Notts)

DEP front and rear pipe for Yamaha WR250F, from 2003/04 model, good cond, £70. Tel 07980 311581 (Lancs)

New fuel tank for 2004 Yamaha TT600RE, cost £350, sell for £200. New Staintune performance silencer, cost £300, sell for £200. Tel 01776 704166 (Scotland)

Kliponoff three-bike trailer, galvanized, 10in wheels plus spare, 2000 miles max, needs new lighting board, £150 ono Tel 07747 805569 (Berks)

DEP silencer and front pipe for 2003-05 Yamaha WR250F, both also fit YZ250F, £220 for both or may split. Tel 01803 812940 (Devon)

FMF Q-pipe silencer to fit 2003-05 Yamaha WR250F, vgc, £140. Powerbomb header to match, exc cond, can post, £80. Tel 01803 812940 (Devon)

Gaerne 561 MX boots, size 11, exc cond, can post, £60. Tel 01803 812940 (Devon)

Parts for Yamaha TT350, wheels, forks, shock, lots of bits. Also swingarm and linkage for mkI Honda CRM250. Tel 07859 374047 (Staffs)

TBM back issues, 32-120, all mint but missing 33, 35, 42, 44, 45, 52 and 117, offers. Also Bridgestone Trailwings, 4.60-18 and 90/90-21, done under 90 miles, £40. Tel Dave on 07859 374047 (Staffs)

White Bros E-series exhaust to fit Honda XR250 1995-on, cost £300, sell for £180. Also NZI trials helmet, size XL/60-61, blue with graphics, cost £70, worn five times, sell for £30. Tel 07859 374047 (Staffs)

CDI unit to fit 1997-99 Yamaha WR250Z, also for 1989-92 YZ250, brand new and unused, £50. Tel 01235 765453 (Oxon)

IMS Pro pegs to fit Suzuki DR-Z400, extra wide, look really smart, £30. Get rid of your pillion pegs exhaust mount bracket, £6. Tel 0121 707 1615 (W Mids)

Pattern KTM clutch and brake levers, new, £15 inc post for the pair. Tel 07811 689597 (Gloucs)

Alloy sumpguard for Gas Gas Pampera mkIII, no welding - uses four bolt-on brackets, oil drain hole, £60 plus postage. Tel (mobile) 07815 062021 or 01935 825234 (Somerset)

GPR V2 steering damper to fit all KTM EXCs, 2006 model, eight settings, anodised black, fits neatly under the bars, £250. Tel 01482 820541 (E Yorks)

Enduro wheels for CCM 640E, complete with discs, sprockets, spacers and Trelleborg MX tyres, used twice, vgc, cost over £700, will accept £400. Tel 02380 333955 (Hants)

Big-bore kit to fit Honda MTX80, takes it to 100cc, brand new, includes barrel, piston and carb, £50 ono. Tel 07970 164976 (Gloucs)

Two-bike trailer, one year old, lights and ramp, £230. Tel 07976 981551 (London)

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STOLEN

Stolen 2005 Honda CR250 5M and 2004 KTM 5255MR, Honda frame no JH2NE03A35M901183, engine no 670335, Hot Wheels decals, silver rims/red hubs, 320mm disc, lowered suspension with lowering link on rear, taken with MX suspension and wheels so may be sold on as MXer. KTM frame no VBKMXM4334M427324, eng no 0459082913, bike in bits when taken, black frame with extra lugs for catchtank, two-piece carbon clutch cover, Akrapovic system with stainless headers, gold Scotts damper, Cycra Pro-Bend handguards, black/black Talons, gold/gold Talons with 320mm disc, gold Beringer six-pot, WP shock with yellow spring, rock-solidracing.com on plastics, stolen 18 August between 14:30 and 17:00 from Teddington, Middlesex, substantial reward for info leading to recovery or conviction, all info treated as confidential. Tel 07866 434680 (Middx)

Stolen Kawasaki KLR650, green with champagne frame, reg GX02 NTD, VIN no jkaki650ccda00225, eng no klr650ae052524, taken from Crawley area on 26 Sept. Tel 01293 888923 (Sussex)

