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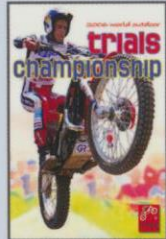


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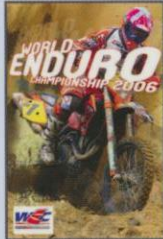
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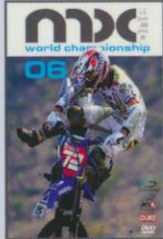
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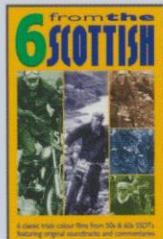
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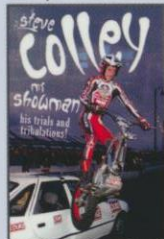
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EDITORIAL

Please Give Generously...

One of the things that sustains me in this job throughout all the hard times - you know, the sort of times when the braking bumps of life threaten to spit you off into the hedge of self-pity - are the incredible TBM readers.

Because somehow you guys and girls have a way of tempering my cynicism, of making me laugh when I'm tired, and of brightening my spirits when I'm down. Take the recent Dirt Bike Show for instance. We'd gone up there in a bit of a daze. Our stand was only organised at the last minute because of a few problems we'd encountered. And having recently parted company with our ad sales person, we figured we were in for a bit of a lean time. Soon after that we discovered that Mel, our news editor, required surgery for a tumour.

Set against the background, not to mention the problems the government have caused us this year, you can imagine that the spirit in the ol' TBM camp was somewhat damper than an Indonesian beach party. But of course we'd reckoned without the inimitable TBM readers.

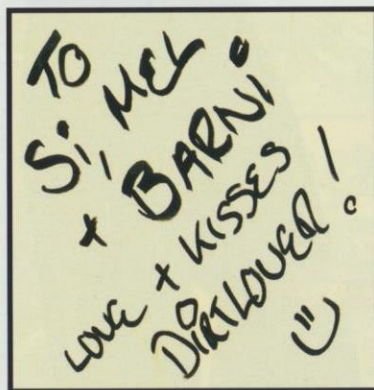
Because although there were the inevitable one or two people who came to our stand to complain that we published pictures of riders standing up (oh yes!), or that they received one of their subs copies late (no, really?), for every one of those doom-mongers and whingers there were a dozen who came up and told us we were doing a fantastic job. Even if they *were* just being kind.

What's more, when news of our faltering spirits filtered through to the guys and girls on the TBM forum, a bunch of them brought us up a whole load of goodies: cakes, biscuits, chocolates (they know our appetite for sweet things), car polish (our Chevy truck was on the stand) and

one person (who shall remain nameless) emptied out the contents of the drawer in his garage where he keeps all the old-tat he doesn't know what to do with, and passed a load of worthless freebies onto us, along with a packet of Hob-Nobs. Not *chocolate* Hob-Nobs mind - just the ordinary ones!

Anyway, certain people aside, we'd like to take this opportunity to publicly thank you guys, and I'm going to keep this editorial short and sweet because it's already getting a bit schmaltzy. I'll just end by saying that Mel is currently at home recuperating after a successful operation to remove her tumour. And in truth we're really missing her...

Because we're buried under a huge mountain of washing-up and there's a stack of riding kit which needs ironing..! Get well soon Mel and Merry Christmas everyone.



SI MELBER

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News Editor: Mel Falconer
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PEP SPECTIVE

Viva Las Vegas: It's all a blur as World E3 Champ David Knight blasts off the line at the final of the Las Vegas Endurocross. DK eventually finished third... Pic: Jonty Edmunds



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Jones Full Steam: Dylan Jones fires his Yamaha WR250 around the picturesque NZ countryside at this year's ISDE. Full report on the Brits and the event begins on p92.... Pic: Jonty Edmunds

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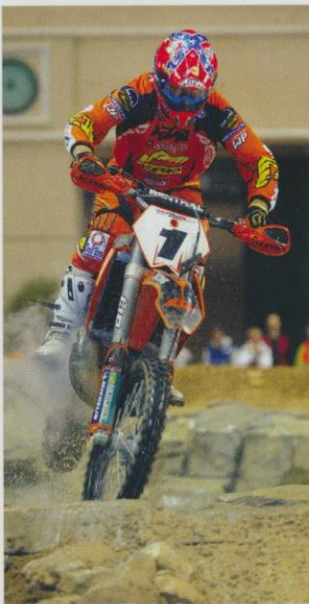
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PERSPECTIVE

Dusty Spring Field: You can almost feel the warmth of the spring sunshine in this shot. Now that winter's arrived we're all looking forward to next spring! Pic: Doll & Obermeier



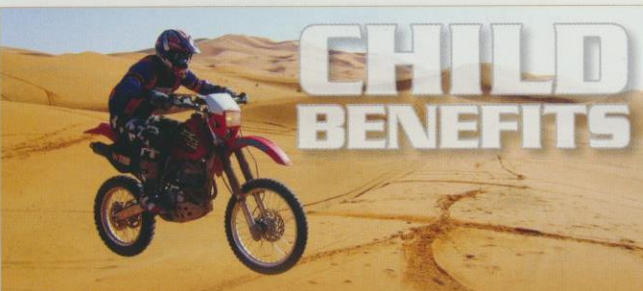
INSIDE TRACK



World E3 enduro champion David Knight finished third at the recent Endurocross indoor enduro in Las Vegas, despite doctors advising him not to travel after he blacked-out at home on the Isle of Man just days before the event.

After suffering bike set-up problems in qualifying and unable to get his usual blistering starts, David won his heat, but a crash in the Superfinal meant he was forced to fight his way through the pack and was unable to catch eventual winner John Dowd and second placed Nathan Woods.

Back in Europe the following weekend, Knight dominated the Barcelona Indoor Enduro. Despite competing against big names such as Aro, Cervantes, Ahola and Tarkkala, DK set the fastest time in qualifying (by four seconds), won all of his heats and finished the Superfinal five seconds ahead of fellow KTM pilot Cervantes. Xevi Gallindo was a further ten seconds back in third...



CHILD BENEFITS

Fancy an awesome trail riding holiday whilst doing your bit for charity? Then sign up for one of 7fifty's SOS trips. Raising money for the world-wide 'SOS Children' charity, the first ride is a tour through Ecuador on 12-24 May 2007. Aboard XR250/400s you'll spend nine days crossing the Amazon, climbing the Andes, and playing on Pacific beaches, and at night the accommodation is five star.

Alternatively, you can head to North Africa for their Morocco tour. The trip runs from 27 October to 5 November 2007, with eight days of riding XR Hondas on dusty rural plains, deserted Moroccan beaches and the sand dunes of the Sahara.

To join the tours riders need to raise £3000 for Ecuador and £2750 for Morocco, with 25 percent of this going to SOS Children. These prices includes flights, bikes, accommodation, guides, support and most meals. The riding isn't technical, so you don't need to be an off-road god, and you can even take a pillion to Ecuador! For more information on the trips and the charity check out 7fifty.cc or contact Charlie Limon on 07968 727209 or charlie@7fifty.cc.

BLUE MOVERS



Fowlers of Bristol are currently running some blinding deals on 2005 Yamaha WR250Fs. The racers amongst you can pick-up an enduro-spec 250 for an unbelievable £3369 (plus road tax and registration) whilst trail riders can get a fully homologated WR-F for just £3499 (again, plus tax and registration). These homologated machines come complete with full road kit (speedo, indicators, road legal head- and tail-light etc) and all of the bikes are official Yamaha UK machines. Fowlers are on 0117 915 1502 or online at fowlers.co.uk.

KRUSTY KOMPETITION

No not the Demons of Dirt, rather that loveable rogue from The Simpsons. Somewhere in this issue of TBM you'll find the spitting image of the fuzzy-haired cartoon clown, and if you can spot the lookalike you could win yourself a long-sleeved TBM T-shirt. All you have to do is email us at krusty@trailbikemag.com with the number of the page he's on and where he is in the photo. And just to give you a clue, he's not wearing over-size shoes or a revolving bowtie, but he is in some pretty laughable garb. The first name out of a glitter-filled bucket gets the shirt (don't forget to tell us your size). Happy hunting...



Image © Simpsons/Google Images

SNIPPETS

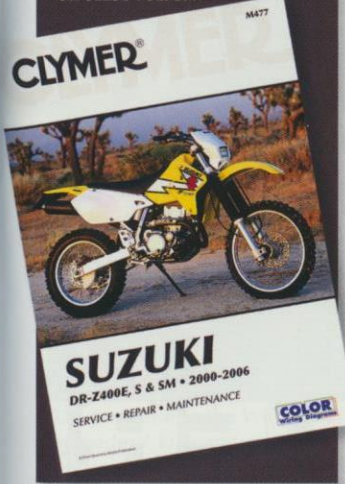
STAY LOOSE

Those of you following the African exploits of world traveller Lois Pryce after her 'Lois on the Loose' series in TBM 130-132 will be pleased to hear we've received word on Lois' current location. News on the bush telegraph is that the intrepid explorer and her trusty TT-R250 are currently in Djanet, southern Algeria, en route to Cape Town, and Lois has described the trip so far as 'rocking'. Click onto loisontheloose.com to read more about Lois' exploits.



MANUAL LABOUR

US company Clymer have just released one of their comprehensive repair manuals for Suzuki's popular DR-Z400 range. Covering both the E and S models, along with the SM variant, the 331-page manual should provide you with enough information to carry out almost any repair or service, and features wiring diagrams along with hundreds of pictures and illustrations. Costing £22.99, the book is available now through bike dealers or bookshops (quote ISBN 1-59969-072-1). For your local stockist contact Motohaus on 01256 704909.



STANDING PROUD

The latest addition to 'Team TBM' is none other than British Enduro Championship regular, trials ace and extreme enduro specialist Wayne Braybrook. Okay, so Wayne's not joined the editorial team as such, but we're sponsoring the likeable northerner for his trip out to the Red Bull Last Man Standing extreme enduro in Texas, where he'll be riding a specially prepared Gas Gas. Read all about the event next month...

FACTS & FIGURES

There's good news and bad in the motorcycle sales charts this month. For the year to date, overall sales have risen by two percent, with registrations for the month a whopping 13 percent up on 2005's figures. However, sales of Trail/Enduro machines are still nine percent down on last year and despite a four percent increase in sales over the same month last year, the Adventure Sport category is still ten percent down overall.

In the Trail/Enduro and Adventure Sport categories positions have remained static, with the exception of one newcomer - the Chinese Lifan LF125 GY-3 Magellan(!) has knocked the enduring Yamaha DT125R out of the Trail/Enduro fifth spot, with 256 registrations so far this year. BMW's R1200GS still leads the way in Advent/Sport registrations, making the big trailie the tenth highest selling bike in the UK overall.



ADVENTURE SPORT

1	BMW R1200GS	1287
2	BMW R1200GS ADV	723
3	Honda XL125V	555
4	Suzuki DR-Z 400SM	415
5	Suzuki 650 V-Strom	350

TRAIL/ENDURO

1	Honda XR125L	717
2	Suzuki RV125	323
3	Yamaha XT125R	292
4	Yamaha WR250F	270

100 Club...

Burn off those Christmas calories at Dirtbike-Traxs' Catterick 100 H&H on 30 Dec. For the first time in years a bike club's been granted access to the military training area at Catterick, North Yorks, and the

course will comprise 17km of 'flowing open grassland tracks, forestry and gravel roads' suitable for all riders.

With no restriction on bikes or tyres the winner will be the first rider to complete 100km. Entry is £40 (plus £5 day licence) and regs are available at dirtbike-traxs.com or by phoning 07914 777534.



Ben Zsolnay

Fin G. Schoenberger

Poppy Davey

Torran Penrice

Tommy Westwood

Tula Robinson

Angus Yule

Todd Buchanan

Mili Langford

Elizabeth Morris

Holly Willis

Finlay Bridge

Emily Duckett

Aidan Lacey

Joe Ashworth

Kian Thomas

Tula Robinson & Gracie Knight

Lewis Brockle

Isobelle Brooman

Aaron Finney

Curtis Hook

Ned Baker

Aaron Finney

Cody Mooring

Adam Thomas

Talia Seren

Tom Barker

Jack Altoft

David Bingham

Isaac Jago

Christina Palmer

Ben Zsolnay

WIN A KIDDIMOTO SCRAMBLER!



The response to the Win a Kiddimoto competition has been huge. Here's a selection of the best photos of readers' kids and congratulations go to (from left above) 2yr old Tula Robinson, 20 month old Oscar Butler, and Ruby & Maisie Benniman (6 & 2yrs old). Your Kiddimotos are on their way for Christmas...

RIGHT TO RIDE

Mark Williams brings us up to date on current affairs...

Is the impact of the NERC Bill already having a negative impact on the motorcycle trade? Well if last month's Dirt Bike Show was anything to go by, the answer may well be 'yes'. Attendance figures were a couple of thousand down on 2005's record of 21,000 punters according to the organisers, and although the number of exhibitors was up, that's probably more a reflection of the fact that there weren't two shows competing for the same trade this year.

However to this writer there was the added significance of far fewer actual trailbikes on the show stands, notable absentees being the Suzuki DR-Zs, Kawasaki's promised KLX450, anything from CCM (save for some retro flat-trackers and a dismal example of Chinese badge-engineering) and the Gas Gas Hobby, although it was good to see BMW exhibiting there for the first time. Instead the emphasis seemed to be on closed circuit competition bikes which, the way things are going, might soon embrace the various pukka enduro bikes shown by Yamaha, Honda and of course KTM.

This gloomy portent was further supported by bike sales figures for October 2006 which are six percent down year-on-year, with overall annual figures having declined by nine percent. And when you consider that the top five best selling 'trail' machines include the decidedly un-dirtbikey Suzuki RV125 and the Chinese Lifan LF125, the picture looks even more dismal.

Wales - 0, Isle of Man - 1

However whether or not NERC is to blame for this is indeed a moot point, but the fall-out continues. After a five month hiatus whilst the legislation went through the Welsh Assembly, as of 15 October it's illegal to ride RuPPs in the

principality, although that's unlikely to deter increasing numbers of riders displaced from other areas. And in another, smaller but no less important outpost of the trailriding world, a new threat has emerged. Apparently the Tynwald, the island's own parliament, is considering banning dirtbikes from the many picturesque trails that exist in its mountain areas. Which is pretty ironic given that the local economy depends hugely on motorcycle tourism with the annual TT Races, and also that the IoM has hosted some of the most memorable ISDT/E events in the past.

Recording The Past, Claiming The Future

However, if the recent stern advice from the TRF about recording usage of NERC-downgraded Restricted Byways (RBs) by mechanically propelled vehicles has left you a bit cold, there's practical help available from something called The Wayfinder Project. Whether or not they are TRF members, TBM readers may recall that post-NERC there is still some chance of recovering vehicular status for RBs if sufficient evidence of such use can be proven over a five year period. This is an onerous business, but Wayfinder seeks to 'bring together information about Public Rights of Way in England, Wales and Scotland. All users of Wayfinder must agree with recording all such rights at the highest defensible level for the use and enjoyment by all.'

Notice the emphasis on

'enjoyment by all', and by registering with the scheme on their website (www.way-finder.co.uk) individual or groups of users can submit details of their usage which will accrue to a larger databank that may then ultimately be raised in legal challenges to downgrades. This could prove highly valuable in cases where, say, a local TRF group cannot muster sufficient evidence and cannot easily draw in historical evidence from non-members or riders living outside the area. The Wayfinder Project already has already recorded a whopping 13,000 greenlanes. And interested parties, which ought to include you, are strongly advised to check it out.

All's Not Lost (Maybe)

Meantime as a contributor to the TBM Online Forum recently noted, the implementation of NERC doesn't necessarily mean that RuPPs have automatically become RBs. Citing Pembrokeshire as an example, 'T140V' as he mysteriously calls himself, points out that some county

The Wayfinder Project already has already recorded a whopping 13,000 greenlanes. And interested parties, which ought to include you, are strongly advised to check it out

local council... Although frankly one imagines that once most RoW and highways departments got a whiff of what DEFRA's original proposals had in mind back in 2003, they quickly stalled any moves they were making under CROW.

T140V also mentions the case of Ceredigion CC, which is currently also exercising local TRF groups having - largely in response to the increased traffic along its greenlanes in recent years - applied for diversion orders on RBs before they actually existed in Wales!

councils were, and still are in the process of reclassifying RuPPs as either bridleways or BOATs, as they were obliged under the CROW Act of 2000. And once that process has been embarked on, NERC cannot apparently contradict its eventual outcome. So it might well be instructive to check if this process has been going on with your



RIGHT TO RIDE

The Devil and the Detail

My earlier (admittedly cynical) mention of the likelihood of enduros becoming exclusively closed circuit events prompts news of successful legal battles against one particular council who've been trying to shut down a local motocross circuit.

Alex Madden, a lawyer with West Country solicitors Thring Townsend explains that he managed to successfully defend injunctions imposed by Hart District Council on a farmer who uses some of his land for 'recreational motorsports'. After DEFRA backtracked on its hugely controversial attempts to restrict and tax off-road motorsports last year, landowners can still allow up to fourteen days-worth of trials, motocross or enduros on their land per year without any hindrance. However in the case of practice (ie non-competitive) activities, the ceiling is 28 days and the council tried to limit such use of the farmer's land to the aforementioned 14 days of actual racing.

The case went to the High Court in February this year and was ruled against in March, but the council seem determined to close down Farmer Benford's perfectly legitimate utilisation of his land - which is turned over to crops or grazing for much of the year anyway. Over the past couple of years they've issued various 'abatement' and 'enforcement' notices, including one on grounds of noise constituting a 'statutory nuisance' and even another which deemed that the temporarily landscaped jumps were 'visually intrusive'!

Alex Madden offered expert evidence confirming that sound levels were not a statutory nuisance (and, uncoincidentally were within the 96dB specified by the ACU) and that Benford and the relevant motocross organisers had put into place various 'sound attenuation measures' - straw bales to you and me - in order to ensure that these levels were adhered to. In the event, his legal appeal inevitably prevailed when the council's lawyers agreed to drop their case outside the courtroom

on the day of the hearing!

Madden does note, however, that 'a lot of (motorsport) organisers give up rather than appeal' such injunctions, although with more and more pressures on land and the relentless growth of NIMBY-ism, there'll soon come a time when they don't have anywhere else to go. In which case the rightfully indignant Farmer Benford and his equally determined lawyer could prove a lesson to us all... including enduro and hare 'n' hounds organisers.

Rearguard Action

But back to trailriding for a moment and in the October issue's Right To Ride I mentioned the forthcoming questionnaire being sent out to all TRF members which would help shape the future of the organisation and its fight against lane closures and downgrades. Chairman Andy Gerrard reports that despite dwindling membership, the response was 'considerable and generally positive' with most members approving of the proposed change of constitutional status from charity to limited company.

This is vital if the TRF is to avoid hugely expensive legal action from its local ride-out leaders or indeed any other members who face prosecution for illegally using RBs in the wake of NERC. Equally important of course is that limited company status would largely remove the threat of personal bankruptcy against its executive members should the organisation lose any costly high court battles when fighting future legislation, such as DEFRA's Evidence & Innovation Strategy Programme which now looms ominously over the horizon.

For more details, contact or join the TRF via their website, www.trf.org.uk



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STORY & PICS: BARNI

Water, water, everywhere...

Barni spends a wet and wild day on the lanes of Hampshire...

Hampshire has got to be one of the most beautiful counties in the south of England. Relatively unpopulated compared to neighbouring Surrey, the chalky South Downs roll their way across the east of the county, their relative bleakness contrasting with

the dense woodland of the New Forest in the west. So it came as a bit of a shock when researching the area for this piece, that the most interesting thing on the Hampshire County Council website was a poll asking how much water its residents put in their kettles!

Now I'm sure you don't care about the capacity of Mrs Miggins' teapot, so I'll quickly move on to say that the best thing about the area has to be that post-NERC there are still plenty of legal trails winding around the Hants countryside. And I know this because my 'guide' for this particular 'Rounds is something of a self-confessed 'map nerd'.

Although hailing from nearby Sussex, Jenny Morgan reckoned a day out in Hampshire would

provide plenty of enjoyable riding and she could call upon a merry band of riders to come along and play. Jenny suggested meeting up at Husqvarna importers Husky Sport in Cheriton, which worked out just fine for me as our long-term TE250 was already in their workshop having its valve clearances adjusted!

Rocking up in the quiet village fashionably late wasn't quite so good, and with most of the group already suited 'n' booted and warming up

DOING THE ROUNDS

A magnificent view across Hampshire's rolling Downs...

Water, water, everywhere...

their bikes it was something of a mad rush to get kitted up. The Husky was ready to rock, looking good in its 2007 plastics and Husky Sport had fitted some of their new rad-braces (£69.99 and available for all 250/450/510 TE, TC and SMR machines) and renewed the trashed grips. Cheers guys.

In the mad rush to get muddy we initially dispensed with the formal introductions though now seems like a good time to conduct a roll call. Ordinarily when 'Doing the Rounds', the group of riders featured are all members of the local TRF group or have formed their own off-road troop (with a natty little acronym to match). Not this time tho', for this particular band of merry trail riders have actually been brought together by P&H Motorcycles in Crawley.

Marcus Blackburn is Assistant Sales Manager at the aforementioned dealership and, unsurprisingly, everyone in the group has bought a bike from him (or the shop at least) at some point. With a background in roadbikes (and road racing) Marcus has been riding off-road for around four years, his first dirtbike being a DR-Z400. He's subsequently owned various bits of kit, and now rides a 2006 KTM 250EXC stroker and a Sherco trialler, though this is just the tip of his biking iceberg. Despite being

just 33 years of age, last week Marcus acquired his 99th motorcycle!

Richard Kirwan also started off-roading aboard a DR-Z and it was this purchase which prompted Marcus to take to the dirt. Richard's now moved on to riding a 2006 525 KTM which Marcus, perhaps a little unkindly, described in his best salesman terms as 'having a high drop-to-mileage ratio'. Richard runs his own business as an inventory clerk, providing inventories for rented properties in London, which must come in handy for keeping stock of his own burgeoning bike collection.

At 23 Lloyd Watling is the youngest member of the group and works as parts adviser at P&H. Having been riding bikes since he was 16, Lloyd's another 525 pilot, and rides off-road around once a month. The rest of the time his KTM can usually be found wearing supermoto rims - balanced on the back wheel or thrapping past sportsbikes on trackdays.

Group guide Jenny Morgan is a freelance journalist, writing for travel magazines and Land Rover Monthly. In her capacity as 'map nerd' Jenny takes a keen interest in Rights of Way issues, citing 'exploration' as her reason for trail riding. When out on the lanes, a 'Piglet' stuffed toy accompanies her (tucked into the front of her jacket), acting as a friendly face of



Left to Right: John, Jenny, Robin, Lloyd, Marcus & Richard

green laning in a group masked by full-face helmets. Having initially started riding bikes 'with my older brother when I was 11' Jenny now rides a lightly-modded XR400R and is also active in the Ducati Monster Owners Club (having acquired a Monster through P&H!).

Robin Haskell-Thomas met Jenny through the DMOC and has only been riding off-road since August. After working in IT for 20 years, Robin jacked-in the computers and bought a farm in Wiltshire, complete with what he described as a particularly nasty mobile home. Thankfully, the land came with planning permission for Robin to build himself a farmhouse! Previously the owner of a DT175MX, albeit many moons ago, he now rides a CRF250X.

Finally we have John Clifford, a gas fitter from Crawley. John's another KTM rider, his 250 stroker being an '04 model. After family commitments forced him to give up bikes, John got back onto two-wheels five years ago and now races local enduros and, along with Marcus and Richard, the Track 'n' Trail hare and hounds. John's also the somewhat disturbingly proud owner of a road registered pit bike, which he reckons is great fun on the trails..!

Running Late

Just a little behind schedule (sorry guys) we left Cheriton and headed south before picking up the first lane of the day. Sodden with the previous days' rain, the track was littered with puddles and occasional converging ruts just to add a little spice. Five minutes in, these brought about Richard's downfall as he claimed 'First Off Of The Day' after getting cross-rutted in the slippery goop.

No damage done, we pressed on towards Warnford, briefly stopping for a photo on an



DOING THE ROUNDS

Hampshire County Council
Countryside Service

... is the subject of a
TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER
Public use with a motorised vehicle
having
FOUR OR MORE WHEELS
is a **CRIMINAL OFFENCE**

Water, water, everywhere...

undulating, leaf-strewn lane. The tarmac then took us east, past West Meon and on to one of the longest stretches of trail. Running just inside a small wood, the byway was carpeted in golden leaves which kicked up from our rear wheels and swirled in the air as we wound through the trees. Coming out from under the trees, the lane started its ascent up onto the downs before being punctuated with a tarmac road at Coombe Cross. Here a sign declared the trail TRO'd to four-wheeled vehicles (though not bikes) and Jenny mentioned that the local council do seem to be quite good at assessing the individual requirements of TROs and the user groups they'll affect. Indeed across the road the trail stretched further up the hill, a bollard slap bang in the middle of the byway reiterating the TRO, though curiously also citing a ban on three-wheelers too.

With spectacular views across the downs unfolding to our right, we pressed on along the grassy trail before descending down alongside an old MoD establishment, the sign on the gates warning of 'Police dogs in training' amongst the abandoned buildings. A left turn onto the tarmac took us past the eco-friendly Sustainability Centre and a little way down the road a wide, flat and particularly 'puddley' trail ran alongside Hayden Wood. It was perfect for soaking your riding buddies and so the guys quite literally filled their boots, reaching the end of the trail

dripping with muddy water. Here we turned north down a gentle grassy rutted lane where we came across the only two walkers of the day. The group really only ride-out in the week as it means they encounter less people on the trail, though Jenny mentioned that as we were very close to the South Downs Way it wasn't unusual to find people out mid-week.

Emerging on the south-east side of East Meon, another small section of road work took us to a particularly snotty loop of trails. Overhanging willow trees hinted at the high water table and the ground proved particular soft under tyre. After slithering through the mud a handy fallen tree halfway along the first lane provided an ideal resting point, though with dark clouds looming above, after a group photo we soon moved on to the first technical lane of the day. Barely visible in a roadside hedgerow, an opening in the bushes revealed a narrow sunken lane just wide enough to get a bike along. Small rock steps and roots criss-crossed the bottom of the gully and proved to be of little concern until a succession of chunky tree roots brought our train to a standstill. Spaced wheelbase length apart, the roots hung across deep puddles making clambering over the small 'section' particularly tricky. With nothing in the way of run-up, the options were either ride the side of the gully wall-of-death style or paddle your way over



There are still plenty of enjoyable lanes to explore in Hants...

the roots and it took a couple of minutes to haul our way over the obstacle. At least the canopy of the surrounding trees provided a modicum of cover from the cloud burst.

A few hundred yards down the lane we came across a root step which dropped down into a puddle of indeterminate depth. A cautious approach risked grounding out on the edge of the step, and so, with my camera trained on them, most of the group hopped off the lip with a quick blip of the throttle.

Splash and Dash

Onto the A272, a quick detour took us under the A3 and into the outskirts of Petersfield for a refuel. As we'd probably covered less than 20 miles only the fact that some of the bikes weren't brimmed at the start of the day necessitated the stop and after a quick top-up we headed back the way we came on the 272. Into Stroud, we hooked a right towards Ridge Common and then left, past a couple of farms and onto a

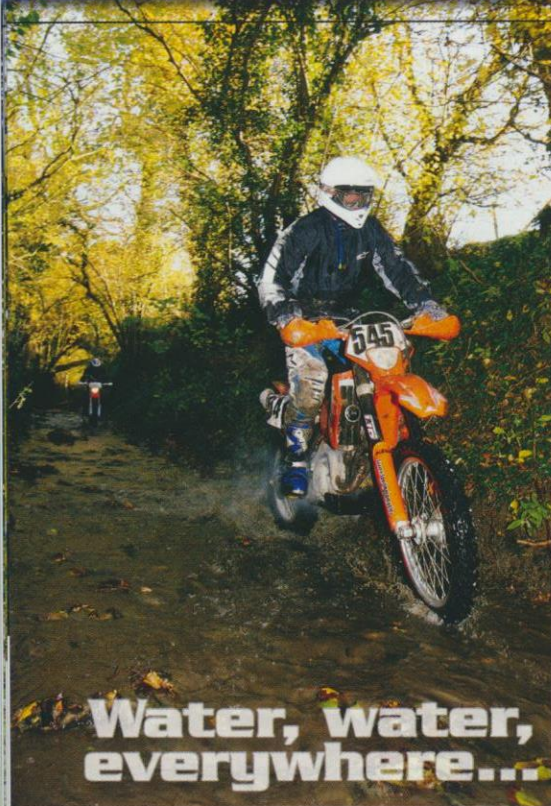
slippery chalk climb. Winding its way up through the trees, the trail featured a number of small gullies and steps as the water had washed away sections of the chalk. At the top we found a 4x4er out in his little Suzuki jeep. He looked poised for a descent down the hill so Jenny warned him about the rest of the group following on behind.

At Stoner Hill a similar lane carved its way down through the woods, and whilst the surface was the exact same slippery chalk, the trail was easily wide enough to get a truck down, never mind a few trailers or a little Jeep. Halfway down the hill the lane ended and a small road traversed the hillside. Under the trees the tarmac was slick with water, leaves and a stream of diesel, and, after passing through a bizarre pair of large gates we found the source of the fuel oil river. A gang of tree surgeons were blocking the road, with all manner of mulching machines churning away, firing chippings into open-backed trucks. The road, it seems, was closed.

I later asked Marcus as to the reason for the metal gates and the spikey metal fence which bordered them. A section of the road had apparently fallen down the hillside (though you could still get past on a bike) and it was going to take some major engineering work to reinstate it. It seems like the roads could be closed for some time, which is a shame as it leads to what everyone reckoned is a particularly fine tricky descent which could've proved great fun in the slick conditions. As it was, we skirted around the closure on the backroads before picking up our intended route on the east side of Oakshott and a very wet and muddy sunken lane. Deep ruts forced you to ride right up to the banks which lined the trail, and which thanks to the inclement weather earlier in the week, was partially flooded. The water was freezing cold, muddy, and pretty deep in places though this didn't stop Lloyd from taking a quick dip!

Into the woods and over a sandbag bridge crossing Oakshott Stream (the trail previously ran through the babbling brook) we pressed on up a short rocky climb and out into the small village of Hawkey. Turning right at the church - with its beautiful Norman-esque spire which in reality only dates from 1865 - another short section of road work led onto one of the most scenic trails of the day. Barely a quarter-mile in length, it swept across an open field which, with its baize-like emerald green grass, looked more like a country park than a farmer's field. (The

DOING THE ROUNDS



Water, water, everywhere...

lane also featured the only gates we'd have to open all day!

After the village of Empshott a gently climb led up to a far shorter, sharper ascent which necessitated making a 120-degree turn across a country lane to get any kind of run-up. After the initial climb, the gradient began to ease, so it was down to a few strategically placed roots to cause some excitement, especially as the low sun was turned into a giant strobe light through the leaves of the trees. Another road closure forced us to skirt west around Selborne Common as we headed north towards Alton and the aptly named Water Lane. Quite literally a sunken lane, a stream runs along its rocky bottom making for an enjoyable, if slightly damp, ride.

And so it was with wet feet that we rode into Alton for a bite to eat at the regular biker haunt - the Station Café. Even though they were about to close, the 'girls' behind the counter still rustled up a mountain of sausage butties and barely batted an eyelid at the mud and water we dripped across their floor! So far it'd been a great ride,

Sated, we traded the warmth of the café for windblast on the A31 dual carriageway. A mile or two later we turned across the road and under the 'Bluebell Line' railway. Here a wide, rutted, and particularly snotty trail ran parallel with the main road and provided a few close calls as we slithered through the sticky mud.

Emerging onto a quiet residential road, it was back onto the A31 at Four Marks before turning south onto a short section of very wet trail. Two ruts stretched ahead of us, though they soon disappeared under water and with a fence to the left and trees to the right their was little option but to head into the 50 yard long puddle.

Jenny lead on what she reckoned to be the deeper left-hand-side, while I followed on the right. With the water lapping around the tops of the wheels all was going well until, three-quarters of the way through, the Husky coughed and stopped dead. Richard behind me was forced to take avoiding action or add another crash to his tally (he reckoned he was up to four at this point) and the group parked up on dry land as I pushed the stricken TE out of the water.

As the kickstart simply refused to budge things didn't look good, and once everyone discovered the bike wasn't going anywhere it was all hands to the pumps. Robin supplied a plug spanner and, with the 'plug out of the 250, it was given a good kick-over. The bike had indeed taken in some water and so it was up-ended (to ensure their was no water in the exhaust) and Marcus dried off the sparkplug with his lighter while I wrung-out the air filter.

Once the bike was reassembled it took a while to fire-up, though once it was running it seemed to be going okay. Phew! Unfortunately this unscheduled stop meant we were running out of light, and could barely see our way through the slippery woodland tracks.

And so taking in just one more trail, we made our way back to Cheriton on the blacktop as twilight turned to darkness.

Van heaters were soon cranked to the max as we changed into warm clothes. All except Robin, who opted to ride the 40-or-so miles home to Wiltshire instead!

All-in-all the day proved great fun and Richard proclaimed it one of the best day's riding he's had in a long while. Though I've gotta say that if the people of Hampshire could only fill their kettles a bit higher then there wouldn't be so much water around to drown bikes or fall off into...

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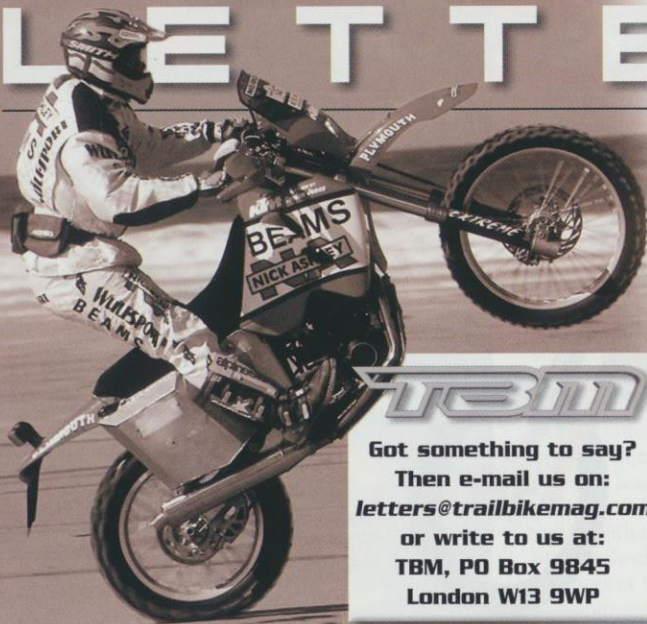
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Dirty Foul

Dear TBM

Having just received a letter 'to get in contact' from the Environment Agency concerning vehicle washing (CRF450X), has there been a previous letter concerning this matter in TBM before? And what section of the Water Resources Act 1991 can I quote to them so that I am able to wash my bike to prevent soiling the highway - which would be an offence!

Karl Stamper
Via website

This was raised with me once when I washed my car on the road in London. It's one of those things that you're not supposed to do, but everyone does. They're worried about the amount of detergent getting into the water-course. This is what the Environment Agency has to say on the matter. 'In most areas there are two forms of drainage: surface water and foul water. The surface water drain carries rain water from road surfaces and rooftops into the local rivers and streams. Any discharge into this drain flows into the river untreated. This water should be relatively clean and have no negative effect on the water course. The foul water drain carries waste water from toilets, sinks, baths and household appliances to the local sewage treatment works. This water is treated prior to being discharged and again should not negatively affect a water course.'

The secret is to either wash your bike at a garage jet-wash which goes into a foul water drain or at least use fully bio-degradable bike wash at home...

Comic Relief

Dear TBM

Firstly, I must congratulate all at TBM for a fantastic magazine. It gets read from cover to cover every month and Patman always gives me plenty to giggle at.

I have just one question. Would the 'Perspective' in issue 134 of the TBM Chevy with the KTM 950 and the BMW HP2 not have been better if you'd

used a picture without someone relieving themselves up the side of Bowen Motors Van? Keep up the good work!

Al Cook, REME Yamaha
Enduro Team
Via email

Al, he assures us he was merely reaching inside his pocket to extract a small tool... Kinda amounts to the same thing really!

Fully Covered

Dear TBM

I'd just like to quickly follow up to my letter in TBM 134 about the Trans Am trail and my insurance problems. One of TBM's advertisers - David at HC Travel - has sorted it all out for me, as well as my flights and hotel on the first night. I'm now ready to go!

Paul Howey
Via email

See, advertising in the mag really works!



Foul Play: Make sure all your waste water goes into a foul drain - especially when washing something foul...

Summer Fun

Dear TBM

Having recently passed my bike test and part exchanged my motocrosser for a KTM 450 enduro bike I am just trying to work out where I can ride legally. I've just subscribed to your magazine as my riding instructor recommended it.

I'm told there are quite a few byways in and around Cambridgeshire but I'm struggling to find them, can you advise me please? How are they indicated on a map and am I right in thinking you can only ride on these during summer months?

Glenn Coombe
Via website

Welcome aboard Glenn. Green lanes are open all the year round provided they don't have a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) on them limiting their use. There are actually still plenty of green lanes open in your area. The people to contact would be the Trail Riders Fellowship (TRF) they advertise in TBM. Best of luck

Brace Yourself

Dear TBM

Just wondering if you could give me some help with a problem I have. I've recently

had a cartilage operation on my left knee and am now unable to work for a few months. I'm looking for a knee brace/guard to help protect me (and my job) from further misery. I'm unaware if you've ever run an article on this subject though any help on this matter would be greatly appreciated as I don't want to give up the sport I love.

David Tayler
South Wales

David, we did run an article about knee braces in a previous issue of the mag (TBM 36), but as we're about to run another one, I'd say watch this space...

Rock Step

Dear TBM

I have just bought a Honda CRF450X and it's great. However I only have 29in legs, and have great difficulty getting on and off the bike. In fact, when I stop I have to park up against a large rock! My question is, do you know of anybody who makes a lowering link that will drop the seat height by about a couple of inches?

Kevin Perkins
Via website

'Fraid not Kevin, though we do know someone who sells large rocks. Maybe you could

fit a rack and carry one around on the back so that whenever you need to put a foot down..! Okay, seriously try XR Stuff on 07732 944110. They should be able to supply you with a Kouba lowering link which'll drop the back-end around 1.75in. Alternatively, you could get your shock/forks shortened by a suspension specialist...

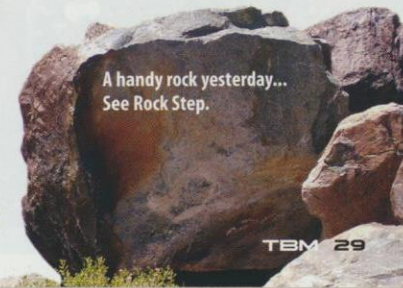
Norfolk 'n' Good #1

Dear Si

I didn't like your moan about the race series you entered [edito 135]. You had a very valid point about the organisation and the 'extra' round and as for the fact that this didn't affect the top three - so what! Put your bikes in the van and depart never to enter again.

But were they your bikes or 'on loan' kit again? To be able to ride bang-up-to-date tackle must be great, especially when it's not yours, and the majority of your readership doesn't have the luxury of the latest kit - so to us it's irrelevant. Did you not think to have a right 'flamer' with the geezer there and then rather than shuffle off with your bag of sour grapes?

The first half of the mag is good but the back half is not for me nor many people I know. I'm just not interested in who came where in something racing I don't follow. I'm sure many others do but then they can check results elsewhere. TBM used to simply stand for



A handy rock yesterday...
See Rock Step.

LETTERS



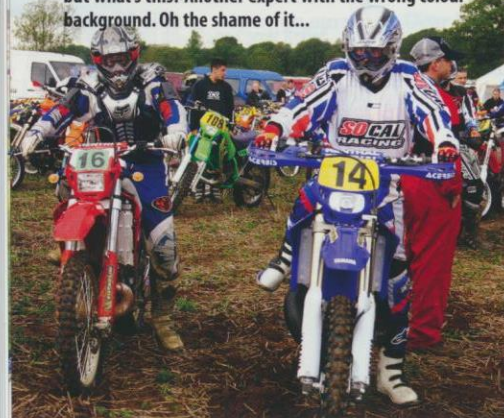
TRAIL Bike Mag - I'd like more of that and less track/race bikes. The forum is still brilliant though.

Gary
Via email

I'm not quite sure what point you're trying to make, Gary. You seem to be agreeing with me about the series, but then complaining that we only test new bikes! Well we're a consumer magazine mate. We get most of our bikes off the importers who only import new bikes. And it's our job to test 'em! If you can only afford to run secondhand stuff (and my own bikes have mostly been bought secondhand), then may I suggest you hide away your copies of TBM and read them in a few years time!

You assume (wrongly as it turns out) that I didn't bring the issue of the missing 'round' to the attention of the organisers. In fact I raised it with them three times on the day, but they chose not to do anything about

It's the start of the expert class and... oh look, TBM's got the correct green background (albeit with black numbers) but what's this? Another expert with the wrong colour background. Oh the shame of it...



it. As for the balance of the mag? Well we're pretty happy with it right now. We learned a long time ago Gary that you can't please everyone all the time. Glad you like the Forum...

Norfolk 'n' Good #2

Dear Si

Re your editorial outburst in issue 135, remember that these clubs that make up the Eastern Centre are all run voluntarily and not for profit. It's all spare time stuff and far from being just one club it's a group of six.

That means they have the constraints of working in their own time and, as you know, at some meetings the organiser is on his bike ten minutes after scrutineering and then clearing up at the end! I think you're getting your professional life muddled with the average man.

They work for free to help you make your living and supply 'us' with affordable racing. Once they've gone, you watch the costs spiral.

My background is road racing and once the 'clubs' are squeezed out you just watch what happens! We need these people.

That same scrutineer asked you and asked you again to get yellow backgrounds but still let you race! And that is the correct approach - to be warned and allowed to ride - but you don't see it as being let off at all do you?

I turned up for a Butley event on what was advertised as Sunday August

28th but they meant MONDAY the 28th. I wouldn't mind but they did the same thing years ago! They also warned me (on the Monday!) about no yellow background but it was just that, a warning.

So thank the volunteers and work for a proper structure. It's the cheating you should fight (experts riding as clubmen etc). We need a national sport, classes that reflect our needs, clear rules and a chance to win our class without the cheats.

Taffy
Via email

Well Taffy, I don't share your pessimism that volunteers can't organise a championship properly. And what's more I think you're doing them a gross dis-service by suggesting such a thing, you're wrong to assume I should've been riding with yellow backgrounds by the way - according to the ACU handbook the expert class ride with green backgrounds. But as the accompanying photograph proves (left), not everyone sticks to the rules eh? I agree wholeheartedly with your point about cheating. We can all do without cheats, but do you think you're really in a position to hand out advice given that you haven't yet mastered how to read a calendar properly...

Let's Stick Together

Dear TBM

During a ride-out today in the north of England aboard my Transalp, I had stopped for a brew when a group of KTM and WR-F riders turned up. Making conversation, and genuinely interested, I asked 'how have the new laws affected you lads?' The reply from one of the group was 'do

you speed in a 30 limit?' At first I didn't understand what he meant but he repeated it and I realised he'd objected to the question. Or maybe he saw it as an accusation. A simple 'we are very limited now' would've sufficed.

I obviously wrongly saw myself as having something in common with these people, what with us all riding bikes (whether it be on- or off-road) and as the owner of two trailies and a TBM subscriber.

I do a lot of walking in this particular area, so I know it fairly well, and firmly believe that the countryside should be free to be used by everyone - whether they be trail riders, walkers, cyclists or horse riders. I disagree with the government restrictions being imposed on the countryside but if off-road riders want to alienate themselves by being defensive and suspicious of everybody they'll breed distrust and play into the hands of those who wish to ban the sport.

If I ever find the time (outside my six day working week) I'd like to join a group and do some trail riding but if I have to be defensive and evasive maybe I should stick to road riding, where other riders' first instinct isn't distrust.

Jim (full name supplied)
The North

Breaking Cover!

Dear TBM

Er, I don't quite know how to bring up the subject (I feel like a teenager buying his first packet of condoms from a grinning but understanding pharmacist), but if one of us dirtbikers is unlucky enough to take a tumble serious enough to stop us working, how is the mortgage etc paid? Insurance is clearly the answer, but what a minefield! As soon as you mention enduro or even off-road riding the sales person on the other end of the phone short circuits or comes back with an alarming quote.

How about you guys run an article on this? I know it's boring, I know it's grown up, but I have a few friends who've had a difficult time after breaking collar-bones and arms, and being self-employed have had no income for a month or so.

I hate to bring these thoughts to the surface, but I'm hoping that someone out there will know of an insurance company willing to give a reasonable quote.

Pete Jago
Via website

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LETTERS



Pete, there are one or two out there. I personally use the CICA, but this is something we're looking into, and will bring you an update just as soon as we find out more...

Brilliant!

Dear TBM

At the age of 16 I got my first bike on the road. It was a 1997 50cc Derbi Senda (which I adore). Ever since then I've been hooked on motorcycles. A couple of months before I was 17 (knowing I could legally have a bigger bike after passing my test) I was looking at bikes like the Honda XR250. But I didn't just want to ride it on the road...

This is where TBM came in. On a summer holiday in Newquay I was wobbling around a newsagents only to see TBM and the 'Dirt Junkies' strap line. 'Ace!' I thought, 'I'll buy that.'

After spending a week in a caravan reading the magazine (the issue with the new 2007 KTM 250), laughing out loud at it while on the bog, and enjoying the amount of information in the magazine, I was pretty sure on what I wanted to do and what make of bike I wanted.

Oh, and that issue had a write-up about trail riding in Leicestershire and a ride on the 'Coalville Loop'. I go to college in Coalville, where is this loop?

So, thanks to TBM for generally informing me and giving me a right laugh! I'm now the proud owner of a 2004 KTM 125EXC, which I plan on using for hare and hound events and general green laning (hopefully to and from college)!

Thanks again, and keep producing this fantastic magazine.

Mitch Bailey
Via website

Cheers Mitch

Well said Chris

Dear TBM

I have just read Chris Evans' article in the November issue and agree wholeheartedly with him. Noisy pipes are a significant concern to many people outside the 'motorcycling fraternity' and it doesn't matter which type of bike they are fitted to. The stance Chris is taking is a start (and should be commended) but I think it should be rolled out to cover all trail riding trips and even sporting events. If all bikes at an enduro or similar event are fitted with road legal exhausts no competitor has an advantage over another.

I had the idea some time ago that in order to remove 'race cans' from the sportsbike market, they should make it necessary for exhausts on race bikes to be road legal. Illegal race cans would be off the market straight away. I know people will say there is a reduction in power, so engineers and engine designers will have to design the power back in with a quiet exhaust fitted. Might be tricky but it would remove 'illegal' pipes on road bikes. Ask yourselves, would you prefer slightly less power and still be able to ride, or keep noisy exhausts and lose the freedom to ride. It might sound extreme but it could come about.

I sometimes wonder if motorcyclists will ever learn that annoying other sectors of society will only ultimately

result in more restrictions being placed on our pastime. At the same time as doing something about noise, I think we will have to be more careful about how we describe our pastime. Trail riding (and organised tours) surely are not a sport. They are not competitive, or shouldn't be, so please let us be careful about the language we use. Of course this might mean Chris will have to rename his business Adventure though!

John Wright
Via email

Check out the feature on P86 of this issue John...

Chain Tension

Dear TBM

I have just read the article about the TM EN250 in issue 132 of your magazine and am a little disturbed at some of your comments, ie have you really run the bike and done several practices and not changed the gear oil? Gear oil should be changed at least every other time out, it is good engine maintenance. If this had been done you would not have been looking at such dirty oil and you would have known that the thread was probably not gone - if brushed with a wire brush the swarf would have come out and you would not have had a DNS. It is also good practice to prep your bike at least two days before a meeting just in case you need anything.

We have been riding and racing a TM for the last ten years and have never had a problem with any of these bolts. And as for your last comment saying 'I've always hated those guys who lock up their exotic machines and don't give 'em the use they deserve. Though now I

understand why', perhaps if you maintained your bike, or rather TM UK's bike, it would not let you down. This is the general problem with breakdowns; poor maintenance or pilot error.

As a small retailer I was also disturbed that you appear to be promoting on-line shopping. At the moment the small retailer needs all the support that they can get. If people are encouraged to use shops like us we can not only provide them with all their needs but will endeavour to give them a service that they cannot possibly get from a computer and it'll keep us all in business.

Your comments would be appreciated.

PE Milward
In Chains, Hampshire

I'll wager they won't be..! We'd be the first to admit that two-stroke transmission oil should be changed frequently, however it seems a bit obsessive to change it after just a couple of rides, and I'm at a loss to understand how this could have affected our DNS. However this has the square route of naff-all to do with the state of the sump-plug in our bike, and I cannot see how a small amount of swarf on the magnet could've stripped the thread off the bolt. The metal had simply peeled away (and this was the first time we'd removed it). You can't deny that TM's use of lightweight alloy bolts means that some of the fasteners aren't quite as robust as they could be (front brake caliper bolts, for instance). And were this 250 my own bike (and not TM UK's) I'd go through it and replace a number of bolts with Ti or stainless parts because in my opinion they're simply not up to the job - and detract from what is otherwise a fabulous machine.

Ideally the bike *would've* been prepped mid-week and while I agree this is good practise, it's not always possible since the majority of our readers (like us) work during the week and have busy lives outside of their biking commitments. As it happens the bike *was* briefly worked on during that week and all that was left to change was the oil - because I didn't envisage having any trouble dropping the trans fluid!

Lastly, if you're so against on-line shopping... why have you got an on-line store on your own website?



The TBM TM stripped the thread from its sump bolt

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TALKING

Chris Evans
discovers it
only takes
two strokes...

DIRTY

Since 1993 I have trail ridden an absolute minimum of 70 days a year and hardly ever done less than 150 kilometres per day. Even by the most conservative estimates that works out at 10,500 kilometres per annum. That's a lot of hours in the saddle.

Every time I get a new bike I know I will have to live with it for at least 20,000km, so you can imagine it is not a purchasing decision I make lightly. It has to be very reliable, reasonably comfortable, easy to live with and a bit of fun.

Over the years I've owned a DR350 trail bike (difficult to start, not great handling, crap suspension and too heavy), a DR350 enduro bike (difficult to start, but overall much better than the trail version), a WR200 (light, comfortable, reliable, easy to ride, fun), three 200EXCs (light,

'If you take a look at the list of bikes I have previously owned you will notice something that I took rather longer to work out - my favourites were all the two-strokes...'

reliable, fun, but a little frantic) one 400EXC and two 450EXCs (reliable, quite fun, reasonably comfortable, but too heavy).

During the last 15 years I have also ridden pretty much every enduro bike on the market, so I have a good idea of what's available and a reasonable idea of what I want. So what have I chosen to replace my 25,000km EXC450 I hear you all ask? Well a KTM250 two-stroke of course - and after six days of riding I am absolutely thrilled, and somewhat relieved by my choice.

Now before we go any further I think I should come clean and admit that the KTM is a freebie - though not directly from KTM I hasten to add (and nothing to do with TBM). It is a favour for a favour through other work I do, but not one I am remotely beholden to. If I fancied something else I could chop in the KTM for pretty much anything else without too much hassle.

So why a 250 two-stroke then? Well, if you look again at the list of bikes I have previously owned you will probably notice something that I took rather longer to work out - my favourites were all the two-strokes. My absolute favourite was the little Yam WR, simply 'cos it allied all the traditional advantages of a stinker (light weight and good handling) with the easy manners of a trailbike. I tried to replicate the experience with His Melbership's CRM-engined CR (which I all-too briefly owned), and if it

had been better bolted together it could have easily topped the WR. As it was it missed the most important criteria - 'reliability' - and by a substantial margin...

The 200EXCs were also light and reliable. At the time I owned them I was also doing quite a lot of racing, and so could live with their narrow focus, but for trail riding they were just a little too 'all or nothing'. Brief spins on other two-strokes more or less confirmed my belief that purpose-built two-stroke enduro bikes were all alike and not until this summer when, after five years of four-stroke ownership, did my preconceptions get turned upside down after an extended two-stroke 'test'.

I think two circumstantial factors were crucial in me revising my opinions. Firstly the riding was incredibly hard and involved some big climbs, some tight going and a lot of machine man-handling. Under these circumstances the lighter weight made a huge difference.

The second factor that swung it was that rather than a brief spin, my acquaintance was an all-day affair. It meant that I had a chance to get used to the very different power characteristics, the vibration and the lack of engine braking. 'Cos make no mistake, if you have never ridden a two-stroke before you are in for reasonably long period of adaptation. By the end of my revelatory day however, the only aspect of the four-stroke experience I was still missing was the electric-start.

Which is why what I was really holding out for was the new 'leccy start 300EXC. Unfortunately that isn't available 'til the beginning of next year, and with my sweeper's 450 stuck in the bike shop with a jammed gearbox, and mine fast approaching 600hours use, beggars couldn't be choosers.

Whether my new bike will prove to be as longaevous as the old one I have no idea, but the confidence a two-strokes' handling gives you, their light weight and fun factor, more than makes up for the uncertainty - plus they are cheap and easy to rebuild.

Obviously KTM aren't the only people making two-strokes and combining previous brief spins on other manufacturers' bikes with what I now know leaves me reasonably sure that any one of them would do - especially the Gas Gas which always feels so reassuring to ride. Of course nothing is perfect. Apart from the lack of an electric-start there's the hassle of premix and they are hell to ride for any distance on the road.

But when did practical considerations ever come into choosing a dirt bike? I mean if we were remotely concerned with such considerations we'd stick to riding on tarmac!



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Lozere 23/24/25 April
Pyrenees 6/7/8/ June
Pyrenees 11/12/13 June
Pyrenees 10/11/12 Sept
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COMPLETELY

Mark Williams
wants organisers
to Rally Round
The Old Lag...

ROUTED

Once again my subject matter is prompted by something I read in this mighty organ, although at least this time I got beyond reading just the adverts. A small item about the Hafren Rally in TBM's News section last month caught my attention, not least because the event is almost on my own doorstep, or at least just 25 miles west along the A44, and because every year for the last five I've told myself that I should enter it. And then of course promptly boasted to my then girlfriend and impressionable drinking pals that I damn well will. So far of course the tally is Empty Promises - 4, Brutal Reality - 1. And if truth be told, the thing that really clinched it the one time I actually signed up and handed over the cheque was when AN Other motorcycle magazine was paying me to write about it.

And truth be told again (which is getting to be a nasty habit), I can't say I really enjoyed the experience, well certainly not as much as I did competing in the Cambrian Rally the previous

'Anecdotal as well as personal evidence suggests that in the aftermath of NERC, more and more people are switching from trailriding-proper to closed circuit off-road-experience mudpluggery where the danger of being spat at by Helly Hansen garbed pensioners is significantly reduced...'

year, and on a vastly inferior XT350. Which only goes to show either that the Cambrian is an easier event, that the KDX220R I rode was just a bit too much of a handful for an old whinger like me, that my level of fitness had declined woefully in the course of a year or that I'm just a crap rider at even a moderately competitive level. Oh alright then, it's probably all four. But at least I finished.

Never mind, with the overarching sense of self-deception that is a characteristic of the ageing process, particularly as it affects those who were once reasonably fit and competent amateur sportsmen [Who's that then? - Ed], I keep telling myself that this year I will enter the Hafren or the Cambrian again. And now it's this year already and the Cambrian was held two long months ago, the regs for which I'd assiduously managed not to get a copy of, but like the monkey on the shoulder of a crack fiend, here's a wee item in TBM advising me that there's still time to enter the Hafren. Better, or perhaps worse still, there's going to be a 'Special Beginners' class' which I suppose by dint of massive deception or backhanders, I might be able to insinuate

myself into. Or at least look into. So I dutifully downloaded a set of regs off the digital hard-shoulder and this is what I learnt:

'In an effort to attract more newcomers to the sport, we have this year incorporated a new Beginners class, this will cater for riders on both trialbikes and sportsbikes. Riders will have to cover shorter mileage, two laps instead of the three for the other classes, so ideal for those who don't feel capable or want to cover the full distance.'

Now this looks like a pretty good idea, and for all sorts of reasons. Anecdotal as well as personal evidence suggests that in the aftermath of NERC, more and more people are switching from trailriding proper to closed circuit off-road-experience mudpluggery where the danger of being spat at by Helly Hansen-garbed pensioners is significantly reduced. I may, in the recent past, have cited this sort of victimisation - justified as it is by a law which is Bad And Discriminatory (BAD) - as reason enough to give up green-laning and take up needlepoint. But I am, after all, a journalist completely without convictions or moral spine so I've changed my mind, Okay?

Plus I was spat at by a couple of bobble-hats whilst out riding the other Sunday and it wasn't very nice. (Oh alright, I made that up, but they did scowl at me and it was raining, so what's the difference? I still felt like a Muslim in a synagogue). Anyway, if more event organisers embraced the needs of those (ex-)trailriders who haven't yet abandoned their bikes, our little game might go on for a few more years yet and Mr Editor Melber might still be able to afford to hire me to scribble prescient proposals such as this.

Having said which, the Hafren, or at least the Hafren I last rode three years ago, is a fairly taxing event featuring some particularly nadgery (and relentless) forestry sections, treacherous (and relentless) boulder-strewn descents and treacherous (and relentless) boulder-strewn ascents. And I haven't even mentioned the special tests though they were, um, pretty relentless. As components of a day's trail riding one might expect all of the above, but ridden against the clock, well that's a different jar of tadpoles and that's of course why it's a competitive event and why it costs £55, plus 15 quid for the ACU one-day licence, to enter... Which is actually little more than some of us are willing to pay for a day's organised trailriding led by a bloke who isn't a member of the TRF on a motocross bike with a strap-on bicycle torch, doesn't give a stuff about BAD law and doesn't mind being spat at even if you do.

So I applaud the Hafren organisers, one or two of whom I should admit I actually know quite well, for their enterprise in trying to embrace a wider trailriding constituency for an event which, albeit nominally, is now rather tellingly called a 'Trail Bike (Rally) Enduro', even if their stated aim is, as outlined above, to 'attract more

newcomers to the sport', rather than as I'm thinking, give trailriders somewhere to ride without being spat at. If this initiative does indeed result in several dozen chaps like myself, or rather chaps like me but younger and fitter and better at it, then to hell with their actual motivation, but there is still the little matter of what constitutes a 'Beginner'?

The regs explain that 'all those that group themselves between 8-10 on the entry form grading scale will be put into the beginners class.'

Now the italics are mine but they are vital, for upon checking the aforementioned entry form, I discovered that skill levels are entirely down to self-assessment, and no matter how much opprobrium (which means 'sniggering behind your back' in common parlance) one might attract by calling oneself a 'beginner' after a couple of decades - on-and-off - of trailriding, I could actually enter as one and save myself a third lap, a third lap which in the 2003 Hafren was what comprehensively knackered me and which I managed to complete only because the KDX was such a good tool that it virtually rode itself. More specifically, the regs invite you to determine which of the following you think you are: 1 = Good Expert, 2 = Expert, 3 = Good Clubmen, 4 = Clubman, 5 = Good Sportsmen, 6 = Sportsmen, 7 = Good Novice, 8 = Novice, 9 = Good Beginner, 10 = Beginner, which then determines the starting order.

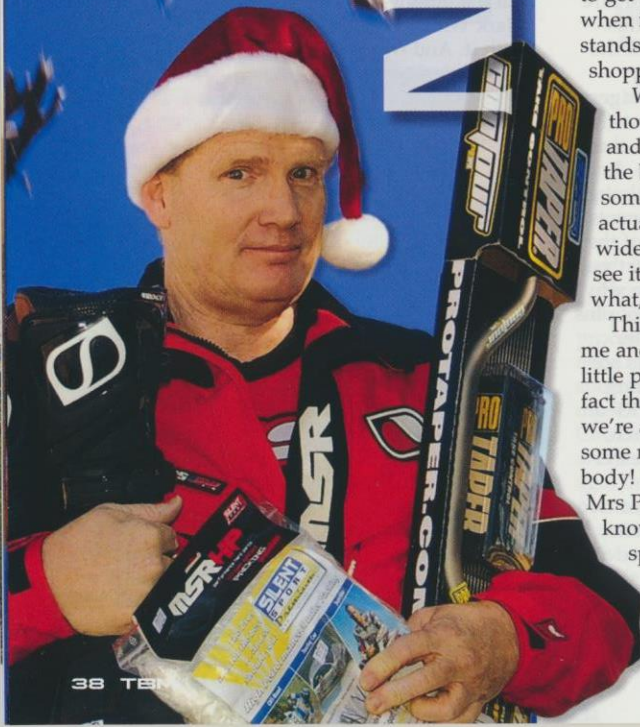
Now it's unlikely that, say, Dave Knight would circle '7' because the jig would be up if he did, but the organisers are happy for the likes of Mark Williams to circle '9' or '10' and get away with it. And whilst this is jolly nice of them and is actually inclining me to cough up the 70 quid just so's I can impress my new girlfriend that it's worth spending the day shivering in the parking lot whilst I make a prat of myself and enable me to broadcast my heroics in The Dukes Arms the following Monday night, it's given me an even better idea.

In this new age of off-road egalitarianism (and desperation), why not take things a stage further? Why not, in fact, allow us everyone to establish their own class in events like this? How about one for Lousy Old Cocks on Blood Pressure Medication Riding Bikes That Are Too Good For Them (one lap only and a free Air Ambulance token), or a Disenchanted ex-TRF Members On BMW Funduros With Open Face Helmets and Waxed Cotton Suits or, with an earnest nod towards our fossil fuel-free future (run for the hills, it's an alliteration alert), an Electric Mountain-Bike Class (half a lap, as long as you carry your own spare battery packs and wear spandex riding suits)? With a little more lateral thinking along these lines, the future of off-road riding is assured, even if it turns some of us into laughing stock. After all, wouldn't you rather be laughed at, than spat at...?



Patman sends a little Christmas cheer...

THE PATMAN



Well, have ya started getting 'em yet? You know what I mean - the Christmas catalogues. The flyers. The direct marketing adverts from the motorcycle accessory houses, jewelers, and toy stores? Yes it's certainly that time of year again, and ya know what, it's always a welcome occurrence. Christmas marks the beginning of the end of the year, with a fresh new season just around the corner. And you know what *that* means, holidays... days off work to go ride! But moreover, the burning of the Yule Log signals a prime time to get some new bits for the ol' chicken chaser!

Now before ya even start with me, I know of course what the season is really about...

It's about *giving* right? But in order to give, somebody's gotta receive, don't you agree? And yes, I understand it's really all about the spirit of the season, but I gotta tell ya, my spirits are so much higher with a brand new enduro computer sittin' on the bars!

Ya see living here in Texas, the Christmas spirit is often diminished due to the climate. I mean, I grew up hearing the marvelous stories of Christmases past in turn-of-the-century London, with gentlemen in top hats walking their lady friends down a snow-covered street, while the bells from a passing horse-drawn carriage chimed merrily in the background. You know what I mean, right? Like the tales of ol' Mr Scrooge and all that stuff. So, it's kinda hard to get excited about the whole Christmas thing when it's 85 degrees outside, and traffic is at a standstill anywhere within 20 miles of a shopping mall!

We enjoy the holidays in our own way though. We have a Christmas tree, and lights, and even now as I type this, Mrs Patman and the boy are out on the front lawn putting up some goofy looking papier-mache reindeer. It actually looks more like a small cow with its wide low antlers and fat belly. Ya can't actually see its legs for the fake cotton 'snow'. But so what, it's decoration. Ho. Ho. Ho.

This year Christmas falls on a Monday, so me and the guys have planned to head out for a little post-prandial ride that afternoon due to the fact that the warm Texas climate allows it, and we're all assuming of course that there will be some new trinkets to try out, either for bike or body! Now of course ya gotta understand that Mrs Patman and the other womenfolk can't know about this little plan lest the trip be spoiled by their own plans for family gatherings, gift exchanges, and other such holiday nuisances.

But even with just a small amount of planning and a dash of Christmas magic,

we'll be able to get away in the afternoon for what has historically been an epic ride. Yes, a magical Christmas afternoon ride. What could be better (except maybe some snow), I mean think about it, the mood is terrific! Everybody's had a great morning, a fantastic noontime meal, and almost always there's some new gadget, gizmo, or do-hickey to flaunt in front of the others during the ride. And as we all know, there's nothing like some shiny new motorbike gadgetry to put a smile on your face, a spring in your step, and to bring a 'butt-kicking' to your mates!

It's this new gadgetry that I need to speak about today. It's still a few days before Christmas, so some of you have a chance to learn from ol' Patman.

I've seen over 30 Christmases since I started riding motorcycles, and I can't think of one single year where there wasn't some type of motorcycle paraphernalia resting under the tree on Christmas day.

Prior to my riding days as a child it was the usual train set, candy canes, and pyjamas. But since I've started riding dirt bikes I would think that Christmas buying for the Patman has been a breeze.

'Cause while you and I pour over jewellery, fuzzy sweaters, and vacuum cleaners for days on end, not really knowing what she'd like, simply being a rider gives the missus an easy alternative from the mundane gifts of red and gold banded ties, and six-packs of men's underwear. Yes being a rider opens up a whole new world of gift giving to those around us, while we on the other hand have to continue to struggle with the absence of creativity in our holiday shopping.

The problem is, with such a wide variety of gifts for our loved ones to choose from, it can be hard for the non-rider to make the right choice. Undoubtedly, they wish to do the right thing for us, and certainly we'd all like to find some new muffler packing, or a shiny new X-ring chain in our Christmas stockings, but with just a bit of coaxing and the proper application of hints the whole Christmas spirit thing can be raised considerably.

As most of you know, there's an art to proper hinting. Sure you can always leave the catalogue open at the page where your favourite goggles are displayed, or more effective still, drop the sly

little verbal hints like: 'Yep, sure is cold out today, I wish I had a set of MSR Cold Pro waterproof gloves... in blue... size eleven. Understand? You must be specific in your hints. Don't just strut into the living room, bend over pointing at your bum and ask, 'Is there a tear in the seat of these pants, 'cause if there is, I'll probably need to get some new ones'.

She may get the hint, and you may get some new riding pants all right, but you know how women are... Ever see the lycra stuff the trials guys are wearing these days? Do ya like pink? You must be careful with your hints, or you may spend the year walking around like one of the goofballs off WWF.

My son found a unique way to urge us in the right direction for his own holiday cheer. He used spray adhesive to glue all the pages of my PC magazine together except two. The two with the X-Box 360 on them. So no matter who came

into contact with the publication, it only opened to one page.

Clever boy.

Now here's another tip, and sadly, some of you have already seen this in action this season. There's no doubt that all the vendors are discounting last year's goods, and putting the new stuff on sale for the holidays. And some-

times you may be tempted to spend some of your holiday budget on yourself. I mean, after all, only *you* really know what you want, right? And the bargains available to a smart, suave shopper like yourself are superior this time of year. So when the urge arises... go ahead, you can spend just a bit less on everyone else!

But be on your guard, there can be problems with this strategy. For instance, what if the little lady saw the same great deal, and due to your advanced hinting skills, has purchased the same thing already? How would you know? How could you avoid a Christmas morning tragedy? Well, I tell ya how. Ya gotta snoop around a bit that's how.

Now I know what you're thinking, and don't get me wrong here, the Patman would never condone any activity that would 'cause trouble around the houses of our loyal readers. No, this is an action designed to create harmony from what would otherwise be disorder. Just think about it for a second and you'll soon see the logic of it all.

Now most of you, if you're old enough to

'As we all know there's nothing like some shiny new motorbike gadgetry to put a smile on your face, a spring in your step, and to bring a 'butt-kicking' to your mates...!'

read, are fully aware of how to ensure there has been no... uh... 'duplicate purchases'.

There are the tell-tale credit card receipts of course, and we all learned as kids to check the 'pre-wrapped areas' like under the bed and in the wardrobe. But that was then, and this is now. And I'll be the first to say that things have gotten more sophisticated these days... at least at Casa Del Patman.

Ya see, after some 20 odd years of marital bliss, the wife has gotten to know my strategies pretty well. Sometimes it's hard to discern what awaits me under the tree. In fact Mrs Patman has become quite shrewd at hiding gifts from the ol' Patman. Very shrewd indeed.

In the early years it was a piece of cake. If I, in a moment of weakness had committed a slight indiscretion and picked

up that new enduro jacket at half price ('cause it was the last one in my size) just a few days before Christmas, I'd simply scan over my packages when she wasn't around, and with judicious use of a razor and clear tape, I could discover in a moment or two if a duplicate purchase had been made. See? Now I won't lie to ya and say that this technique is always perfect, I mean sometimes you may stumble upon discoveries that you hadn't foreseen. But that's just a bonus right?

At any rate even with the perfect application of razor and tape the wife soon became wise to my activities under the tree, and changed her tactics. Without a word, and with neither of us acknowledging the fact that the duel of wits was even taking place, she would quit putting nametags on the wrapped boxes to thwart my efforts to be stealthy. So of course I had to sample a wider margin of wrapped goodies in order to assure myself of their contents. It didn't take long for her to switch to a more complex pattern of wrapping paper, so that getting it wrapped in its original configuration was nearly impossible. Not to be denied, I switched to using a tiny razor slit in the package and slipping in a boroscope (a sort of fibre-optic camera) I'd brought back from work, negating the necessity for unwrapping at all.

Once again she switched tactics and now things are getting difficult. And I hope you're

learning from all of this. Two years ago she started getting particularly devious. After a large green holly wreath, with a bright red bow had sat on the mantelpiece of the fireplace for over three weeks, she handed it to me on Christmas day and told me to 'open it'. It was heavier than one would think... 'cause it was a Dunlop sand tyre! I'd been deceived! And the great big 'fake' box in the front foyer... the one she said was 'just decorative'? An Arai helmet. And the ones under the tree? Empty. Decoys!

But last year was the worst. Whilst on one of my reconnoiter missions, I spied a particularly large and succulent looking package sitting by the fireplace... in gold leaf paper with a silver bow. Like James Bond, I nonchalantly strolled over to the hearth and took a seat next to the large box. Looking right to left, scanning my environment to be sure it was clear, I began to study the golden container. The metal foil wrapping ruled out the use of the metal detector, and its smooth surface and placement in the open would limit the use of some of my intrusive devices. So I carefully picked it up to judge its weight. But just at that moment someone came up the back driveway of my house. I know this 'cause I installed a wireless motion sensor out there for just such moments as this. Any motion in the driveway sets off a buzzer in the kitchen. Quickly I reseated the package in it's exact same depression in the carpet, and headed out the back door. I looked about, and saw nobody in the drive. 'Hmmm, a driver musta' been turning around and set off the sensor', I thought.

When I got back in the house my spouse had arrived with the groceries, and there would be no more recon on that day. Or any other day for that matter, 'cause as luck would have it, every time I started to investigate that attractive gold package, someone would always intrude on my activities, most often some errant driver or cyclist in the driveway - setting off the buzzer.

It wasn't until Christmas day, as I sat there staring in disbelief into that very box, that I realized that I hadn't actually *seen* the driveway motion sensor for some weeks now... instead it was alone in the box sitting on a little spring, wobbling about and causing the kitchen buzzer to sound its alarm almost continuously. My wife and all of our friends were in tears laughing. I gotta admit, it was pretty funny.

This year everybody knows I'd like to have a new 50cc pit bike to cruise around on. And I'm beginning to have my suspicions about that goofy looking reindeer on the front lawn! Matter of fact I wonder if I could feed the boroscope into its rear end and take a look without arousing suspicion... Merry Christmas everyone.



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ADVENTURE in store...

YEARLY REPORT

END OF THE YEAR 2006

**James 'Barni' Barnicoat:
Maximum Overdrive**

In last year's end of year round-up I gloated that wielding the camera for most TBM tests meant that my graceless dismounts were never actually caught on film. Oh how that statement's now come back to bite me on the ass! This year it seems that whenever I've, ahem, misjudged a footing there's been someone on hand to capture the moment. And so on these pages you'll find me sprawled on the floor in more interesting positions than , well I'm sure you can fill in the blank...

But thankfully this year hasn't *just* been about crashing (honest!) because despite our Orwellian government and legions of whinging greenies constantly haranguing us about global warming and carbon something-or-other, for this particular TBMer 2006 was all about big motors and big horsepower. Wahey!

Okay, so the year may have started a little sedately with a trip to Switzerland to slide silently around a slippery indoor course on the whisper quiet, 'environmentally smug' Quantya electric off-roader before jetting back to the UK for more slippin' and a slidin' - this time in the gloop of Worcestershire for our 250 thumper shoot-out. But then the power trip kicked in, with the launch of KTM's 990 Adventure. Already one of my fave machines, thrapping the Adventure around a Canary Islands' beach is now indelibly etched into my memory (as is the comedy of errors played out by the Spanish airport workers which saw us very nearly miss our connecting flight, but that's a different story).

Next up was BMW's own Adventure, the monstrous R1200GS, though piloting this behemoth around the fire trails of northern Spain paled into insignificance compared to what came next: the inaugural Snow Speedhill. What an event! Take one ski slope, a bunch of nutters on open class dirtbikes, and let 'em drag race to the top. Simple, and so much fun. Of course, trying to extricate an upside-down HP2 from a snowdrift whilst a few hundred lagered-up Germans shouted and heckled wouldn't usually be my idea of a good time, but on this occasion... well it's one of the best races I've ever entered.

Similarly good fun was taking a couple of blasts up the hill at the Red Marley Hill

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'In June it was off to Erzberg for the launch of the KTM 950 Super Enduro R'

It's the 250 thumper shootout in January, and Barni starts the year as he means to go on...



It is big and it is clever and best of all Ken Livingstone hates it...

recuperating after a big crash whilst racing on the continent so I'd like to say a big 'get well soon' from all at TBM Towers.

But the big hills didn't stop with Red Marley, oh no, for the following month it was off to Erzberg for the launch of the KTM 950 Super Enduro. It takes the likes of Sala and Knight around nine

minutes to fire the monster V-twin along the dirt roads to the top of Austria's infamous mountain, and whilst I was never gonna get anywhere near that it didn't stop me spending from dawn till dusk trying.

At a slightly reduced pace, the tighter confines of a CHEC club hare 'n' hounds saw me back out on a 950SE, testing it against BMW's barking HP2. With plenty of woodland going and block pattern trail tyres I was at a distinct disadvan-

Climb aboard reader Vic Vaughan's beautiful, methanol-guzzling Matchless. Although this particular hill was lacking in hecklers (and drunken Germans) getting to the summit still wasn't a straight-forward affair as the flame-spitting machine came with a right-side gearchange and controls on the solid side of stiff. However, watching the way Vic blasted up the hill to earn himself the 'Best Matchless' award really put my feeble attempts into perspective. Vic's currently

YEARLY REPORT

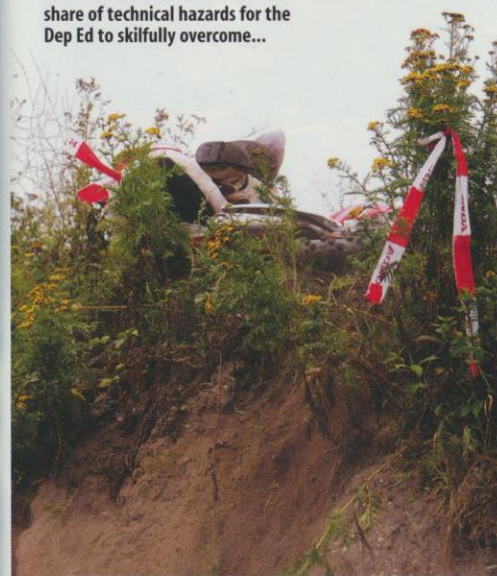
END OF THE YEAR 2006

Barni was one of the first people to ride... push... and fall off the new twin-cam 250EXC-F...

Barni swiftly got to grips with the long-term TM250... Mind that tree...



The '07 Honda launch had its fair share of technical hazards for the Dep Ed to skilfully overcome...



tage against nimble single-cylinder tackle but hey, if you can't beat 'em, roost 'em!

Finally we get to what must be the only awards ceremony nowadays which isn't hosted by a second-rate 'celebrity' in the conference room of a low-rent provincial hotel - yep, it's

Barni's Machine of the Year. And, as if you couldn't have guessed, it's straight back to the big horsepower for all three award winners. So in third place it's my long-termer from this year, the TM EN250. It may need a stronger front brake and I'd prefer it if some of the fasteners weren't made of dolcelatte, but the way it delivers its prodigious power never failed to put a smile on my face. Plus it looks beautiful! A great and much under-rated enduro bike.

Second place goes to KTM's aforementioned 950 Super Enduro. If a 200 kilo, 90hp dirtbike is so wrong then why does it feel so right?

Which just leaves what has to be the most powerful machine we've ever featured in TBM - the Dodge Ram SRT-10! I may have a worrying fetish for overpowered American automobiles but if I really need to explain what's so good about a 500hp pick-up truck that'll both haul dirtbikes and waste sportscars then you're not a true petrolhead. The fact that it *really* annoys environmentalists and would probably give Ken Livingstone an embolism is merely a nice little aside. The *only* downside is that the Dodge costs £44,000. Anyone want to buy a kidney?

So here's to another power-packed year for 2007. And if the Government are to be believed and all these big motors are causing the sea levels to rise then at least we'll be that bit nearer the beach. Dig out the sand tyres and the CR500, I'll race you to the dunes...

YEARLY REPORT

END OF THE YEAR 2006

Going... going...



As I write this, it's 8.30pm at night and I've just got four hours to go until I have to be 'Nil By Mouth'. And just 12 hours before having to go into hospital to have a rather pesky tumour removed from the deepest darkest recesses of my body.

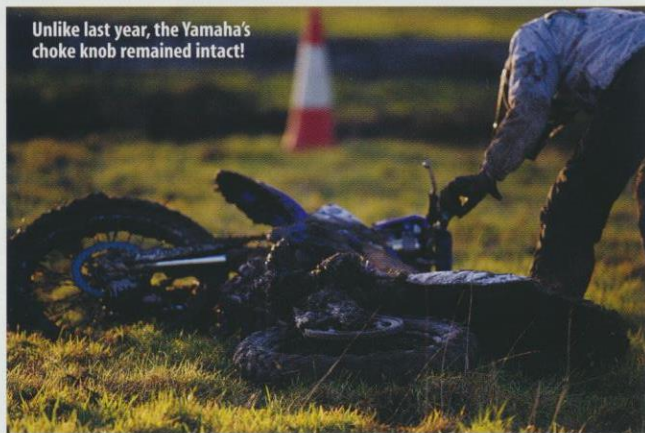
Plus by the time you read this, I'll have a proper scar, one worthy of a 'God, that handlebar really hurt when it ripped into me' type story which I've decided I'll be telling instead of the rather boring truth.

But enough of all that... I've had an entertaining 2006, certainly not how I expected the year to pan out at the start, that's for sure. The highlight early on has to be posing around town in the Dodge Ram SRT-10, with the ICE system on full blast and nearly losing the back end on a roundabout in the driving rain... me, juvenile? Never.

Ah yes, which brings me neatly to another pick-up that I shared my life with for ten



Unlike last year, the Yamaha's choke knob remained intact!

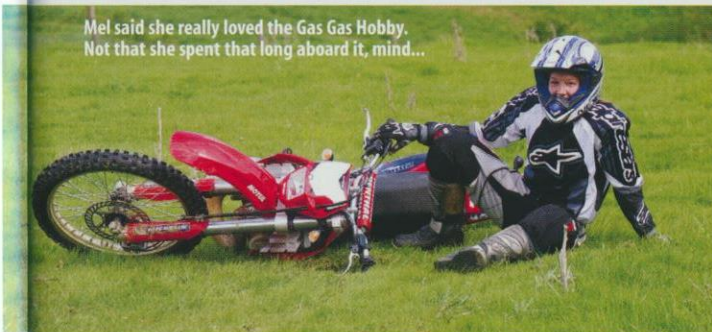


Mel Falconer: Hospital Pass

.....Gone!



Mel said she really loved the Gas Gas Hobby. Not that she spent that long aboard it, mind...



months - the Proton Jumbuck, or rather as my friend Laura tastefully put it, the pussy wagon. Despite its various niggles I quite liked it, and you can't really argue with a dirt-bike hauler that costs less than six grand. And free transport for almost a year of course.

But the love of my life this year has to be my long-term test bike, the Husky TE250.

We've been through a lot together, but unlike every other normal relationship, I got all the grief at the beginning! But once the starting

issues had been ironed out the TE really has been a fantastic little thumper to ride, with easily the best mid-range of the '06 250s and fantastic handling to match. So much so that I'm hoping to keep it for next year and plan to supermoto it, but we'll have to wait and see...

But the other bike I really liked this year was the Gas Gas EC200 Hobby. Having ridden the full-fat EC200 back in 2005 I loved it but didn't really have the experience then to fully appreciate the delights of a two-stroke. This time around

I did. With the Gasser being that much smaller and lighter than my TE I found I had more confidence in chucking it around and after having a few of my inevitable 'offs', it was certainly easier to pick up. I also really gelled with the no-engine braking feel, and found it easier to get hard on the brakes than I do with my TE - just one of those psychological weird female things I guess.

But just when things were going swimmingly on the riding front, I went and broke my ankle playing squash.

So as you can imagine, I've got heartily sick of people saying 'you want to stick to riding dirtbikes, far less dangerous sport love' over the last couple of months.

All in all, I've had a great time but if I'm honest, I just want to see the end of this year pretty quickly now so I can get fit and well again for '07 and all the lovely riding it will bring along with it - see you all at the races soon!

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**Si Melber:
It Shouldn't Happen To A Vet...**

Look closely at Si's shoulder blade and you should be able to make out the pattern of a knobbly tyre. A Michelin I think... Comp IV... part worn... fitted with a mousse! Ouch!

This year began in fine style for the TBM wrecking crew with what turned out to be one of our muddiest tests ever, when in the middle of January we took a bunch of 250 thumpers over to Little London enduro park in Worcestershire. Despite sunny weather we arrived to find deep mud, and even deeper puddles lining a very slippery course. Needless to say the crashes came thick and fast and by the end of the day we'd used up every single one of the official road-tester's excuses for bailing off - and invented a few new ones along the way.

That same month we watched in awe as gutsy lady Patsy Quick finally finished the Dakar Rally at her fourth attempt - becoming the first British woman to make Dakar on two wheels. Not forgetting the support she got from her Team Desert Rose team-mate (Clive Town) who was very much the quiet man in the background (along with Patsy's husband Clive Dredge). Both of whom helped make it happen. Sadly the Dakar once again courted tragedy and it was to be the end of the road for one of Rally Raiding's most popular competitors - Australia's Andy Caldecott - killed in a crash halfway through the event.

No-one really expected 'media dahlings' Charley Boorman to get to Dakar - and in that respect he didn't disappoint. The lank-haired luvvie failed to make his appointment with the Pimms o'clock man on the fourth day in the Moroccan desert and that was that. But the show must go on, and

despite (or perhaps because of) their epic British failure, sales of the DVD have been going quicker than Charley's rally bike.

A couple of months earlier - at the very end of last year - two important things happened. First of all TBM picked a winner out of the crash-hat in our Ultimate Garage Giveaway, offering the biggest and most popular prize we've ever awarded - a whole garage load of workshop equipment. And secondly and most importantly, Patman joined the TBM team as a columnist. Patman's preposterous pitfalls and tall tales of motorcycling misfortune have kept us laughing all year and somehow seem even bigger than the Texas state from whence he hails.

Just as soon as we realised what sort of bloke Patman was, we knew he'd fit right in with the rest of the TBM wrecking crew. Welcome aboard mate.

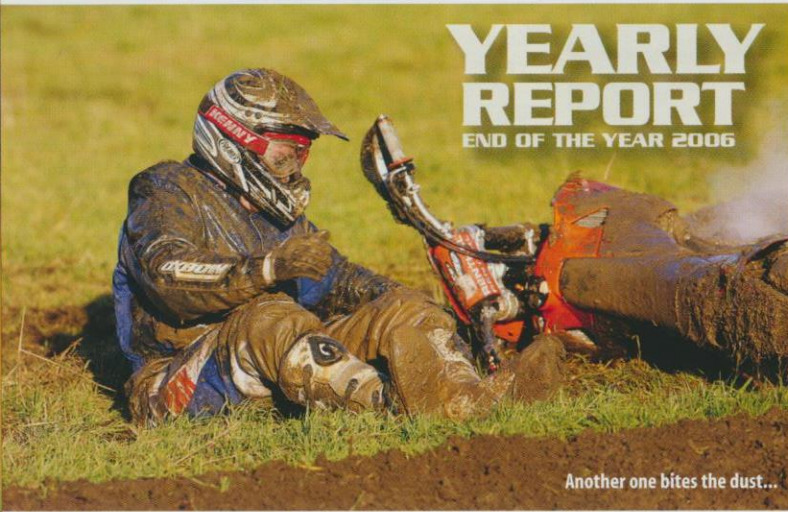
Also in December (but appearing in the January issue), Jonty's test of the three British Enduro Championship winning machines from 2005 was not only beautifully photographed, but it was literally an ice-breaker at the beginning of the year, as the front cover of the January issue testified.

January also saw Dep Ed Barni flying out to Switzerland to test the *second* electric dirtbike appearing within the pages of TBM - although he was as surprised as anyone to discover that the riding launch was actually... indoors! The following month Sicily was the destination for the launch of the stunning new Aprilia V-twin RXV. Set against the backdrop of Mt Etna, the RXV launch could have been one of the very best we've ever attended - had the drivers laid on to take us from hotel to test track, not got lost along the way. As it was we spent three quarters of the day couped up in a minibus (feeling very queasy indeed) and only a fraction of the time we needed on the bikes. Mamma-Mia!

Fuerta Ventura in the Canary Isles was the location chosen for the launch of the mighty KTM 990 Adventure and February saw Barni once again jet off to sunnier climbs(!) while Mel got to grips with her long-term Husky at a rather cooler Borden test track. April's highlights included a wonderfully sunny spring ride up in the Yorkshire Dales (partly in the snow) on a pleasant little Beta Alp 4.0, as well as TBM's epic test of the world's fastest bike hauler - the monstrous 10 cylinder, 8300cc Dodge Ram SRT. I'll never forget the look on the face of the old boy who delivered it. When he arrived he said: 'I've just stuck 60 litres of fuel in it'. 'How far have you come?' I enquired. 'Only 62 miles.' was his reply. I did a quick mental calculation and then piped up, 'Blimey that works out at

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Another one bites the dust...

less than five miles per gallon.' He didn't say a word, but the smile on his face spoke volumes...

With Barni dashing off to Northern Spain in mid April for the launch of the BMW R1200GS Adventure, then up an Alp to race a bunch of Germans... on HP2s... on snow! there was barely time to wave a rather casual goodbye to our long-term Proton Jumbuck as it disappeared on the back of a recovery truck. The Jumby had the dubious distinction of having the stiffest suspension ever fitted to a commercial vehicle and gave everyone who drove it a severe case of double vision. We duly reported our findings in the mag, but that couldn't detract from the fact that with a three-year, 60,000 mile warranty and at not much more than six grand brand new, it did offer amazing value for money.

May's mag saw the return of the 'nifty fifty' to the pages of TBM in the form of the delightful Derbi Senda DRD Pro. And while a host of nations' battled it out on the football pitch, TBM's own 450 world cup saw the 450EXC's balls firmly stamped on by the underdog Sherco 4.5i. That test was memorable for a particularly smelly and boggy section of the course we'd chosen to ride. It was only afterwards having roosted through this bog numerous times that landowner Richard Bott revealed to us that it was a 'bog' in more ways than one - as it was where his septic tank had sprung a leak. Euuuurgh!

Easter Monday saw Barni throw himself uphill once again - though this time on an old British nail - at the annual Red Marley Freak Hill Climb. That feature gave rise to one of my favourite headlines of the year: 'Red Marley and the Scalers', though we never quite worked out

whether the term 'Freak' referred to the bikes... or the riders (get well soon Vic).

The budget-priced Gas Gas Hobby which graced the front cover of the June issue turned out to be our most crashed bike of the year when Mel decided to use it to practise her brake-sliding technique.

And while her braking technique definitely improved... her sliding went right off the scale! May saw the start of the two-man enduro season for

Team TBM when team-mate Zippy and I rode a selection of test bikes to a never-ending succession of last-place finishes in class. Let me tell you that competing with a mate as part of a team is so much more fun than racing against him, and when I got myself run over at the second round of the year, well I had someone to compare scars with. June was also the month when we began the serialisation of Lois Pryce's forthcoming book: Lois on the Loose.

Lois is one of those real characters in life who come along every so often and blow you away with their personality. As bubbly and 'infectious' in real life as her incredible stories suggest, she brings not just humour and pathos to her tales of life on the road, but also an incredible desire to learn more about her adventures.

She's currently away riding in Africa but will be returning to grace the pages of TBM once again with her exclusive report next spring.

Meanwhile Dep Ed Barni barely had time to squeeze in a quick trip to Erzberg in Austria for the launch of the 950 Super Enduro R before flying back out there a couple of weeks later for the launch of the 2007 KTMs. Poor boy!

July's issue was memorable for me for all the wrong reasons. Having agreed to ride to the Welsh Two Day Enduro (and back in the same day) on a couple of big 600 trailies, I realised almost immediately that this was a big mistake. These bikes were not meant for travelling any distance on - at least not with this editor on board - and the highlight of the trip for me was an extended lunch stop at a fabulous cheese shop we discovered in Moreton-in-Marsh (barely 60 miles after setting out) which I managed to drag-out to nearly an hour.

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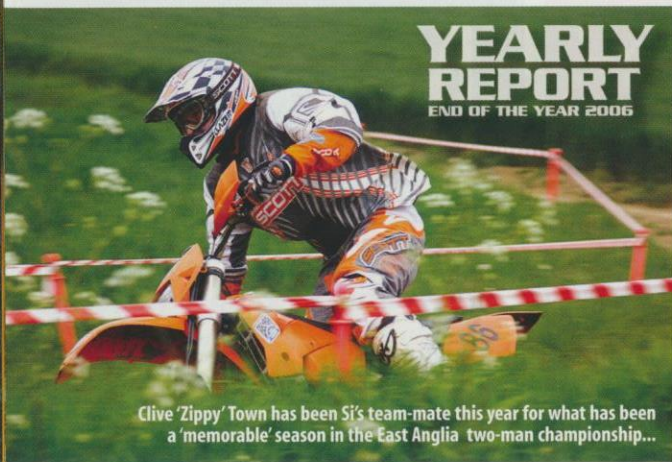


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YEARLY REPORT

END OF THE YEAR 2006

Clive 'Zippy' Town has been Si's team-mate this year for what has been a 'memorable' season in the East Anglia two-man championship...

Equally as memorable was the first ride on a new Fantic Caballero - a name I fondly recalled from my youth - only this time it was writ large on the side of a fully-specced 50cc enduro racer (rather than a tame trailie with pedals). The Fantic reminded me not only how much fun you can have racing something quite preposterous, but also that even today you can still buy a bike capable of giving you vibration-white-finger.

Fabulous bike, great memories of a hot day's racing at a friendly club, and with the added bonus that my self-winding watch won't need touching till the middle of next summer.

August was the month when we organised the first ever TBM tyre test - a task delegated to James as he had no foreign jollies to go on. And as we sweltered in the baking temperatures trying to remove mousses without a mousse board and cursing James for leaving half the tools behind, I had one of those feelings that everything was going to go pear-shaped. In fact after three day's testing including a fabulously fast 'blind test' of seven sets of tyres, riding with landowner Richard Bott (which saw each of us keep bettering the other's times), the two-part feature turned into one of the most informative we've ever run. And looks set to be repeated...

For a long time I've harboured a desire to learn how to jump a dirt bike properly (over big MX tabletops) and the chance finally came in late July. We'd lined up some coaching from the likeable Dan Beamish - an accomplished MX rider and proprietor of the Golding Barn MX track on the South Downs. And on a day best described as 'Scorchio' the TBM team waited nervously in the sunshine for the start of the frightening fun.

'Right,' said Dan, 'I want to begin by seeing what you already know about tackling jumps',

pointing us towards the MX track.

Ever keen to impress, I lined up the little KTM 125 for one of the smaller but steeper jumps and was just about to give it a little 'blip' when the throttle stuck wide open.

The resulting photograph published on page 67 of the August issue shows the moment just before I came into land just short of the down ramp - only just managing to avoid going over the bars. When I finally stopped shaking I looked up to see Dan who was standing there head-in-hands and appeared to be stifling a fit of the giggles. He must've thought we were a right bunch of muppets.

Into the September issue and

we'd lined up a whole bunch of easy riding secondhand trailies for an epic five-way test - two of which had been lent to us by one of the characters we'd met off the TBM Forum - a bloke by the name of Dunkman. On what turned out to be one of the wettest days of the year, a whole bunch of us (including Mel, Mark Williams and friend-of-TBM Kylie Maebus, but excluding Barni who had cleared off to Belgium for the launch of the '07 Hondas!) headed off in the pouring rain. Well it didn't take long for things to unwind.

Within about a mile of setting off, Kylie collected Dunkman at a T-junction and the resultant spill broke the SL's clutch lever. After making running repairs we were off again only for the SL to lose all its drive - traced to an over-tightened clutch cable. Then the CRF230 conked out with a mysterious fault which took an hour to fix. A few miles further on and the crashes were becoming ever more spectacular as we attempted to bludgeon our way up Lime Kiln Woods in the pouring rain. By the time the sun came out in the early afternoon we'd spent as long pushing and fixing the bikes as we had riding them.

Still recovering from a really nasty bout of Flu, I really hadn't felt much like riding when in September I had to test the gorgeous 'reader's special' WR200/YZ125 which appeared on the front cover of the October issue. The beautifully balanced wheelie photo which opened that feature was in reality little more than a 'pop-it-up-in-the-air' and grab the shot. Sorry, but I really was off colour that day. Sadly, another round of the infamous two-man enduro series stopped me taking part in the outrageous shootout Barni had arranged between the BMW HP2 and KTM 950R that month, but I can lay claim to coming up with the Schnell's Bells

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The Ed shows us how it's done on the TBM tyre test...



Which tyres were these? Well that'd be telling...



YEARLY REPORT
END OF THE YEAR 2006

headline, of which I'm particularly proud...

With Mel breaking her ankle in (of all things), a game of squash, it was left to Barni, Zippy and I to test the Gasser 450 that appeared in the November issue. Let me assure you that discovering that the brand new test bike you've just ragged round a very fast enduro course has no oil in it, is frankly no fun at all. Of course Barni just had time to fit in one more foreign launch to Italy for the revised Aprilia RXV before we were off for the annual Dirt Bike Show.

This year our show stand featured our newly sorted '57 Chevy pick-up truck. With an all-new front-end grafted on and a fresh MoT test certificate in the glovebox, it was really no surprise to me when the headlights went out as I hurtled

home down a dark and wet M40!

And that wasn't the only car related incident to afflict us this year. A month earlier we'd been working away in our office on the first floor when we heard a hell of a crash outside. We opened the window to discover a car had driven right into the front of the kebab shop next door, after the driver had set off without first removing his Krooklok! Once the pandemonium died down we went back to work, and it was only when we came to go home we realised that we were stuck in our office. The accident had wedged our doors shut, and it took us till midnight to cut our way out of the office using an angle grinder!

Believe it or not, just a few months earlier we'd been forced to abandon TBM Towers in a hurry by jumping over the back fence when the same kebab shop burnt down in a fire!

And so we finally come to the present and the run up to Christmas as we desperately try and get the January issue finished in time. It's been a memorable year, and not always for the right reasons. But as always it's the people I've met and worked with that have made it happen for me. So I want to take this opportunity to publicly thank James and Mel for all their hard work throughout the year and to say to Mel, get well soon. Contrary to popular belief, working at TBM Towers alongside me, is not the dream job you might expect it to be! So thanks guys and don't forget... come 1 Jan, I expect you back in the office at 7:00am fit and ready to start another tough year...

To all our contributors - Jonty, Chris, Mark, Rappers, Patman, Kevin and Andy our designer I say thanks for turning in great work always on time. And to David Knight I've got to add our hearty congratulations for another world championship. To the Forumites I say thanks for making the TBM forum not just the biggest and best off-road community in the UK, but also such an amusing read. To our readers and advertisers I want to thank you for supporting us for another year and to encourage you to keep supporting us next year.

After 12 years of producing the mag I've still got no idea why TBM works... But I'm sure glad it does!

thor

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RAZOR LIGHTS

STYLING: SIMONE MELBERG; PICS: BRIAN



The latest crop of 125cc enduro bikes are better than ever. TBM pits the 2007 models from Husqvarna, KTM and Gas Gas against each other in a winter 125 shootout...

Having campaigned a 125 for the past season I can attest to the fact that the smaller the engine, the bigger the fun! But for some bizarre reason 125s are still generally considered the preserve of younger riders. That's okay because we youngsters (ahem) don't want too many old fogies

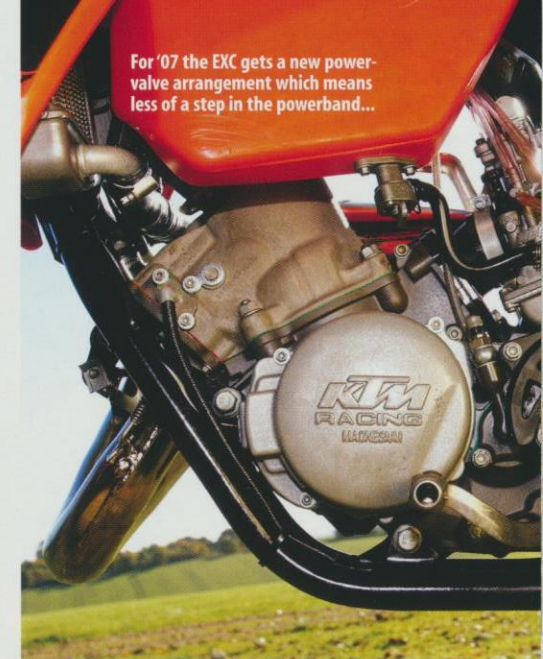
discovering how easy it is to go very quick on something which feels supremely small, light and controllable - do we?

In fairness 125 two-strokes are something of a throwback to a bygone age. Riders used to cut their teeth on the smaller capacity machines before progressing onto a 250 or a full-blown

RAZOR LIGHTS



60 TBM



For '07 the EXC gets a new power-valve arrangement which means less of a step in the powerband...

500. But times have changed. The 500 class has all but disappeared, and even 250 two-strokes are a bit of a dying breed. According to all the manufacturers, the future has camshafts...

And in the E1 class of the World Enduro Championship where 125s compete against 250cc thumpers, it's the four-strokes which dominate. Of course there's a number of sound reasons behind this. Putting aside their 'double capacity' advantage for a minute (and many people have questioned why four-strokes should be allowed *any* sort of capacity advantage), you've only got to look at the R&D budget which gets spent on making today's thumpers some of the most complicated and outrageously powerful machines for their specific capacity, compared with the budget for developing 125s (virtually nil), and you begin to see why thumpers are dominant right now.

And manufacturers have a vested interest in ensuring that their money isn't wasted, so they hire the best riders in the world to compete on their highly developed four-strokes. And guess what...? Those riders win championships. But here's an interesting fact: in the two rounds of this year's WEC which were held in really atrocious conditions - the ones where the rain was coming down in stair rods, the ruts were axle-deep and the mud was thick and claggy (in other words traditional British weather), it wasn't the highly paid stars on their super-trick thumpers which did the winning, but in fact a good second-string rider on a humble 125 two-

stroke. Hats off to Bartosz Oblucki who took his Husky WR125 to victory in both the GP of USA in Vermont and in the mud, rocks and rain of France at the end of the year - and in doing so proved not only that there's life in the humble two-stroke yet, but also that when conditions are difficult, a two-stroke makes things easier.

Now David Knight aside, I suspect that the majority of TBM's readers are not highly-paid factory riders, but in fact weekend warriors who like me, just love to ride their bikes no matter

KTM 125EXC

Price:	£4245
Engine:	Liquid-cooled, single cylinder two-stroke with power-valve. Kick start
Bore & stroke:	54 x 54.5mm
Displacement:	124.8cc
Transmission:	6-speed
Frame:	Cro-Mo steel, semi-double cradle
Brakes:	Brembo 260mm disc
Front susp: (t)	WP USD 48mm (300mm)
Rear susp: (t)	WP PDS (335mm)
Wheelbase:	1471mm
Ground clear:	390mm
Seat height:	935mm (925mm claimed)
Fuel capacity:	8.5L
Race weight:	103.4kg

TBM 61

RAZOR LIGHTS



'As a package the KTM EXC holds virtually all the aces. It's got the power, the performance and the lightness of touch that you expect from a 125...'

The proportions are just right... that's one good looking motorcycle...



what the conditions. In fact I suspect that the conditions don't have to be all that terrible for the majority of us to struggle, especially on a weighty four-stroke... Most of us would go far better on something lighter and less aggressive. Do you see where I'm going with this..?

So just how light is the latest crop of 2007 125cc two-strokes? Well to find out, we stuck our Husky, Gas Gas and KTM 125s on the 'anatomically' calibrated TBM digital scales and noted down the results. And boy were we amazed at the numbers... are you sitting down?

OK, remember we weigh all our test bikes with a full tank of fuel because we reckon that that's how you start the day's riding. If you bear in mind that a litre of fuel weighs approximately 0.75kg - you'll see that as you use up the fuel load the bike will become lighter than our measured figure. On the other hand manufacturers' dry weight stats are a bit misleading because we've never yet figured out how you ride a bike without fuel in the tank - so it'll always be heavier than the manufacturer claims, except when it's standing in the showroom!

So starting with the heaviest first - the new Gas Gas EC125 depressed our scales to the tune of 107kg, which makes it (as far as I can remember) the lightest Gasser enduro bike we've ever tested (bar the 80cc!). Let me tell you that that is exceptionally light for a fully fuelled enduro bike - complete with lights, speedo, switchgear etc, but it gets better... Because the Husky WR125 eclipsed the Gasser's figure by half a kilo to record a fuelled-up weight of 106.5kg. When you see the size of the monstrous

fuel tank fitted to the Husky it's easy to see where a little bit of weight saving can be made by using a smaller tank (perhaps from the MXer, or maybe by getting a small aluminium one made - more about which later).

But good though that figure is, it can't compare with the KTM. Ladies and gentlemen the KTM 125EXC recorded a jaw-dropping figure of just 103.4kg... that's full of fuel and ready to race, or in other words about 98kg dry! It wasn't so long ago that sub-100kilo bikes were the preserve of 125MXers, well now the enduro bikes are right there. You wanna' know what light means? It means a 125cc two-stroke!

High Balls

While we had our measuring hats on we thought we'd dig out the TBM tape measure and record the actual seat heights (measured at the lowest point - without a rider on board, obviously) to see how they compare. Okay once again it's highest first, so step forward the Husky WR with a seat height of 955mm (claimed 980mm). Combine this with a broader seat than both of the others and you can see that touching down on the Husky is a slightly more voice-wavering affair for the shorter rider.

Next comes the KTM which at 935mm high (925mm claimed) is more or less standard for an enduro bike. But winner in this particular category, is the Gas Gas EC which sports a relatively modest 920mm seat height (claimed 945mm). That means that as well as being lighter than virtually all thumpers, you can expect to get your feet down more easily. Good stuff.

RAZOR LIGHTS



Gas Gas engine was the most tractable (but vibriest) on test...

Look Sharp

I know we don't buy dirt bikes purely on looks alone, but there's no doubt that sometimes the heart rules the head. So you could buy any one of these three and happily spend hours simply staring at it sat in your garage. There's the new sharper looking Gasser with its angular styling and Ferrari red colourscheme, the gorgeous white, red and black Husky with its outlandish bodywork, or the achingly beautiful KTM which with its black rims set against burnt-orange panels looks good from any angle.

But up close and personal it's the KTM which gets our vote. While both the Husky and the Gas Gas have a number of nice details (quick detach seat and axle pullers on the Husky, Nissin brakes and Ohlins shock on the Gasser) neither of them can quite match the quality feel of the Austrian bike - a feeling which pervades the whole machine. For instance the Husky lacks frame guards and its braced bars look and feel cheaper than the braceless Nekens found on the EXC.

The Gasser sports both frameguards and braceless bars, but its fuel tank bears casting scars which look like stretch-marks and its switchgear's positively old-fashioned. Oh and neither the Gasser's rev-counter nor kill switch worked. The Husky's headlight wiring rubbed on its regulator/rectifier and the forks hit the tank on full lock - that's not just *annoying*, it's an MoT failure in three years time.

The KTM on the other hand has none of these silly traits. It works straight outta' the box and nothing rubs, jars or clonks. Hell even the

graphics last longer on the orange bikes. KTM's star may well be in the ascendancy right now, but the Austrian firm has spent plenty of years in the wilderness working out not just what works, but what sells! And one thing that punters love about the Austrians is that they consistently get the basic stuff right: using proper (matched) fasteners to hold them together, the electrical kit always functions correctly (and generally stays functioning), and when things go wrong, spares are affordable. It's a pretty simple equation.

GAS GAS EC125

Price:
Engine:

Bore & stroke:
Displacement:
Transmission:
Frame:

Brakes:
Front susp: (t)
Rear susp: (t)
Wheelbase:
Ground clear:
Seat height:
Fuel capacity:
Race weight:

£4241(Sachs), £4451(Ohlins)
Liquid-cooled, single cylinder two-stroke with power-valve. Kick start
54 x 54.5mm
124.8cc
6-speed
Cro-Mo steel, Deltabox perimeter
Nissin 260mm disc
Marzocchi USD 48mm (295mm)
Ohlins with linkage (310mm)
1460mm
N/A
920mm (945mm claimed)
9.5L
107kg

RAZOR LIGHTS

'The Gas Gas is so much easier to ride. It feels stronger lower down and the brakes and suspension are nothing short of amazing...'



The '07 Gassers look sooooo much better than previous offerings...

Motor-Vation

Obviously the powerplant is vitally important in any dirt bike, but never more so than with a 125 where every drop of power's needed. That said when we stuck these three on the dyno we recorded a top figure of 28hp which believe it or not is the same amount of peak power as we recorded for a fairly well used Gas Gas EC250 two-stroke about six years ago - and beats all the 250 four-strokes from a couple of years back (bar the Yam). And these things are quite a bit lighter. That's progress.

All three bikes use an identical 54x54.5mm bore and stroke and 124.8cc displacement to realise their output. And while the Husky motor is virtually unchanged from last year's engine, both the Gasser and the KTM have received new powervalve arrangements for 2007.

And what a difference it's made. Because in both cases the bikes have changed considerably from the previous models, both now offering incredible low-down torque - especially the Gasser. And while the dyno charts show this up to some extent, they don't really reveal the true nature of these three engines.

Because the Gasser is the torque-monster among them. And despite the fact that it was on slightly shorter gearing (a 52T rear sprocket which tends to exaggerate this effect), the Gas Gas bottom-end felt simply incredible for a 125. It could grunt its way up climbs in second gear where the Husky in particular required a diet of revs. Now the words, grunt and 125 don't generally appear in the same sentence together, but the Gasser is the exception, its bottom-end is

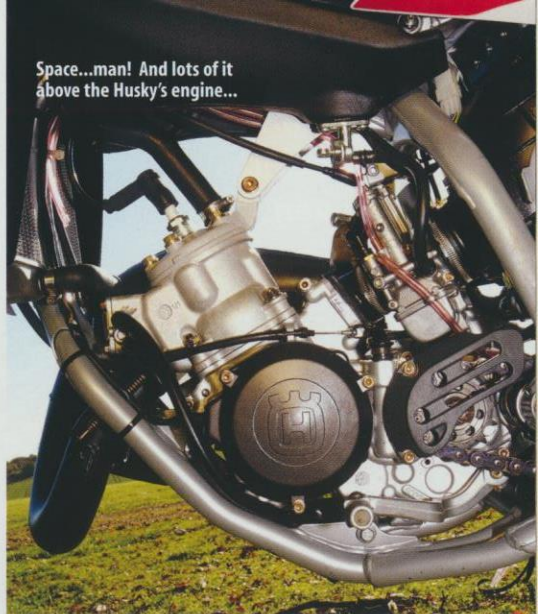
full to bursting and although the dyno chart reveals that it's actually bettered at the low end by the KTM (though its torque curve is flattest overall), it really doesn't feel like that when you ride it. It feels quite a bit grunter than the Katosh which in turn feels far better lower down than the Husky.

The result of KTM's development throughout this year, is a 125 with a completely different personality to the '06 bike. Although the 2006 machine felt fairly torquey for a 125, there was always a distinct step in the power as the powervalve opened and the revs took off, so that you got not-a-lot, and then a sudden 'waaaaaaaaa' as it came on the pipe. Well that effect has been dampened by the new p/v so that the bike develops more bottom-end, more mid-range and the transition to a screaming top end is much less marked.

I'm not sure I like it quite as much as the old one as it feels a bit less frenetic, a bit less addictive. On the other hand I suspect a lot of riders *will* consider it an improvement. Because rather than a 125 the EXC now feels more like a 150 or 175 - a sort of halfway house between the 125 and the 200. And although you still get the best out of it by dropping two gears in the corners, unlike with most 125s you can actually get away with only dropping one. It isn't quite as fast like that, but it will work.

That won't, however, work on the Husky. No Sireeee. Because for reasons we couldn't really fathom on the day (though we suspected it was a jetting problem), the Husky had a huge flat-spot right at the point where it needed to have

RAZOR LIGHTS



Space...man! And lots of it above the Husky's engine...

power (the dyno shows this up clearly as a big dip in the torque curve between 5000-6500rpm), so unless you had some serious revs dialled in you ended up going nowhere fast. Sure once you got over this mid-range weakness the Husky took off like the proverbial scalded cat, and felt good doing it, but that made it trickier to ride than either of the others.

I don't want to make too much of this point in case it can be remedied simply by a change of jets, except to say that at some point it would always catch you napping. Because on our test loop there would always be one or two corners where you were forced to fully close the throttle and let the revs drop and the resultant corner exit speed was always very slow. Bizarrely enough the Husky went on to register the highest torque figure of all three bikes on the dyno run - albeit at 9500rpm - followed by the Gasser and then the KTM.

In terms of pure power there wasn't heaps in it - all three power curves were virtually identical, all the way up to the very top-end where the KTM ran out winner with 28.1hp @ 12000rpm, the Gasser was second with 26.78hp @ 11000rpm and the Husky came third recording 25.24hp @ 10500rpm.

A couple of other things worth mentioning about these motors was their smoothness and volume - which are undoubtedly linked. None of them was particularly vibey or noisy, but in the smoothness stakes it was the KTM which came top followed by the Husky and then finally the Gasser last. And that exactly mirrored our findings on noise - it was the Gas Gas which

was the loudest (by quite some way, though it has easily the smallest silencer of all three - 122dB) followed by the Husky (119dB) and then the KTM (118dB). These volumes being recorded inside the dyno room at maximum revs. Details like this may or may not, influence your buying decision but they're worth knowing all the same.

Riding impressions

Three great bikes each with their own distinctive character and personality. On the one hand you've got the super-supple-stable Gasser with its brilliant suspension and brakes, at the other

HUSQVARNA WR125

Price:	£4199
Engine:	Liquid-cooled, single cylinder two-stroke with power-valve. Kick start
Bore & stroke:	54 x 54.5mm
Displacement:	124.8cc
Transmission:	6-speed
Frame:	Cro-Mo steel, semi-double cradle
Brakes:	Brembo 260mm disc
Front susp: (t)	Marzocchi USD 45mm (300mm)
Rear susp: (t)	Sachs with linkage (320mm)
Wheelbase:	1465mm
Ground clear:	360mm
Seat height:	955mm (980mm claimed)
Fuel capacity:	9.5L
Race weight:	106.5kg

'The Husky has got pedigree coming out of its ears and it's a proven winner...'



RAZOR LIGHTS

Incredibly stylish and solidly built the Husky's a looker that's for sure...



end of the spectrum lies the KTM - taut to the point of firmness and with brakes which while they're very efficient, offer the least amount of feel and feedback. In between lies the Husky, neutral, easy and effective.

The Gasser just has to get a special mention here, though it depends on how you like your meat, because the KTM turns quicker and despite a slightly taller seat height, feels a fair bit smaller than the Gasser. And in fairness to the KTM suspension, it does get noticeably better the faster you ride it.

But ride the EXC *too* quickly over big bumps and get the front-end airborne and you'd better watch out, 'cause she'll shake her head like a dog getting out of a pond. It's seriously scary the first time it happens to you. No such problems on either the Husky or the Gasser though which could both be ridden flat-out over certain bumps without any problems. Having ridden a KTM all year I know it's something you get used to and can ride around, but I still don't like it.

On the other hand with the KTM you get used to going quickly in other places. The EXC turns incredibly swiftly so you can make up time on all the tight corners and get on the power early. But both the Gasser and the Husky were no slouches in this respect either, and to be honest there wasn't really a whole load of difference between them. Fine handling is the basic key to a 125's success and believe me all three of these bikes handled brilliantly.

If you're currently lumbering around on a 450 wondering whether you'd go faster on something smaller and lighter, well take it from me - you will.

Second Opinion: Tom Wilkes

Tom Wilkes is a 20 year old Winter Sports instructor based in Morzine during the winter. A good clubman-level rider, he owns a KTM 200 and a fur-lined Land Rover with the entire Barry White back catalogue for those Apres Ski moments...

KTM 125EXC

'The KTM felt good from the off. With the usual 125 feeling of small size and super light weight. A nice powerful motor with a slick gearbox means it's probably the one to buy...'

Gas Gas EC125

'The Gasser had a surprisingly torquey engine with a wheel-lifting hit higher up. Excellent brakes and suspension. Dimensionally larger with a hard seat, also the exhaust got in the way of my right foot, and it was hard to start in gear. Nonetheless it's my favourite. 125s have never felt this good before.'

Husqvarna WR125

'Sorry but the Husky was a turkey. The engine felt flat as a kipper. This was so annoying that it was hard to find anything else to enjoy. Hopefully it was due to a poor carburation set-up but why should a proud new owner be expected to rectify this in 2007? Looked nice tho'...'

RAZOR LIGHTS

Ergos and other stuff

Once again it's mostly all good in this respect (as you'd expect of a 125 where packaging isn't a problem), but still there's noticeable differences between them. The KTM's easily the narrowest of the bunch, and the Husky's the widest because of its strange tank design, which although it doesn't really get in the way, seems at odds with the rest of the bike's minimalist design. Take a look at the side profile of the WR and you'll see there's loads of room just above the tiny motor. Okay it means that even David Blunkett could change a spark plug with his eyes closed - but this is space we reckon would be far better utilised for the storage of fuel as both Gas Gas and KTM have done, and maybe the Husky could have been a lot narrower and lower as a result.

And while we're in the naughty corner we've just got to mention the Husky's appallingly notchy gearchange - so bad that on occasions we struggled to engage the next gear. Maybe it'll loosen up with time, but frankly you shouldn't have to wait. Oh and a floppy side-stand which needed a firmer spring.

We should just mention that the Gasser had the previously reported problem with the right-side footpeg - which we found on the 450 - in that it doesn't fold up far enough before the brake lever stops it, and we'd much rather to see a Dzus fastener holding on the seat (like the Husky) rather than the out of place cross-head bolt which is awkward to use.

On the other hand we're still not convinced that the KTM design is right in this respect - because it uses an 8mm bolt (head) but it's located on the underside of the rear fender. Which apart from being a lot more awkward to use, forcing you to bend down to access it, is also frequently clattered in mud.

And So

But there can only be one winner in this class and this is how it stacks up as far as we're concerned. Top of the class comes the KTM EXC because frankly, as a package, it holds virtually all the aces. It's got the power, the performance and the weight advantage. It's got the details right and it's got the most coherent build quality which reflects in the secondhand

'Perhaps the biggest winners are the bike-buying public... Because if nothing else, these machines prove that the 125 class is alive and kicking...'



residuals. Don't just take our word for it, this year the KTM 125 outsold its nearest rival (the Husky) by a factor of four-to-one.

In a surprise (and very close) second place comes the Gas Gas EC.

Massively improved for 2007 the EC125 feels every bit as good as an EC200 from just a few years ago - only now it's lighter and looks better. Why would you buy a Gas Gas over the KTM? Put simply because it's that much easier to ride. It feels stronger lower down than the EXC and its suspension and brakes are a revelation.

The redesign for 2007 has done a good job and the lower more torquey Gas Gas will suit the novice rider far better than the sharper KTM.

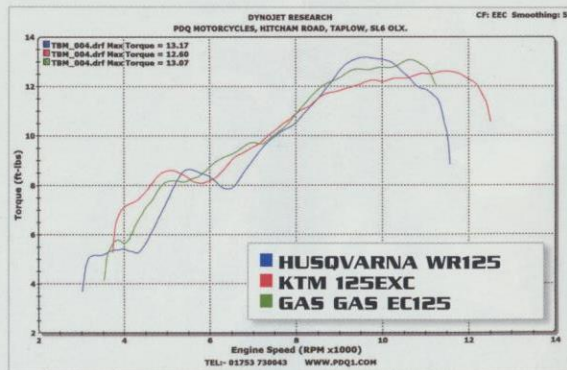
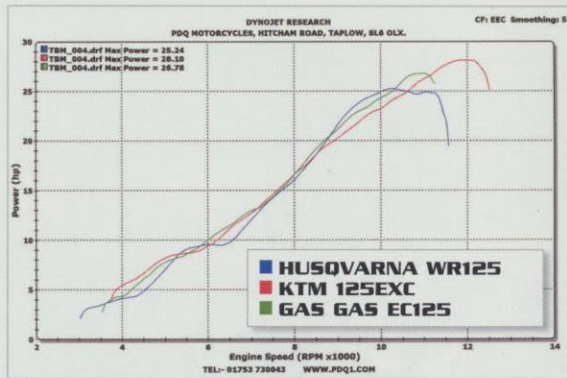
Finally comes the Husky WR. A bike with a fabulous pedigree, and a proven winner, but not in our test. It handles brilliantly and looks amazing, but the details and some of the elements of design let it down. And, there's no getting away from the fact that ours made the least power, had an annoying flat-spot and a notchy gearchange which worked against it round our test loop. Chances are you could overcome some of these problems with a little time spent working on the bike, and I know having raced against a couple of very quick Husky 125s this year that the WR is clearly a competent and reliable machine. But on the day, in our test it just didn't cut it...

Perhaps the biggest winners however are the bike-buying public. Because if nothing else, these three Euro enduros show that the 125 class is still alive and kicking. The bikes are getting better: they're lighter than ever before and develop more power. But best of all, in two out of three cases they're now even easier to ride.

If you're even half-thinking about trying out a 125 for the first time, I urge you to stop prevaricating and go and do it. Because there's nothing like riding a really lightweight and flickable bike



through the woods while all your mates are sweating buckets on their heavyweight 450s, for truly putting a smile on your face...



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How to...

...replace a chain & sprockets

STORY: BARNI; PICS: TBM

Sooner or later your bike's chain and sprockets are going to need replacing.

A relatively high wear rate (compared with a shaft- or belt-drive system) is the price you pay for their light weight and the ease with which you can vary your bike's gearing.

A knackered chain doesn't just sap power it can potentially wreck your bike if it snaps! Just occasionally a broken chain will simply fire itself out of the rear sprocket and onto the ground. But more commonly they bunch up around the front sprocket and smash engine cases, clutch slave cylinders and anything in the vicinity, whilst taking a bite out of your leg for good measure..!

You may also want to change the sprockets to

alter your bike's gearing. For instance, if your dirtbike doubles-up as a commuter machine or you spend most of your time on open trails you'll want taller gearing than you'd run for racing enduros. And if you only ever race H&H you'll probably be looking to swap cogs to maximise gearing for individual courses.

Different machines will come with different final drive gearing (a 525EXC comes with 14/50 for race use or 15/45 for trail, whereas a Husky WR125 runs 13/50) so there's really no definitive combination for all off-roaders. The more teeth on the front sprocket - the taller the gearing, whilst the opposite is true for the rear cog. Work on the premise that adding one tooth to the front

is the equivalent of dropping three from the rear and with a bit of experimentation you should be able to find gearing to suit most circumstances.

Whilst going *too* small on the front sprocket can speed up wear on the chain (and too big can see it rub on the cases), while clearance on the rear hub can be a problem using small rear sprockets. It has to be said that if you're getting towards these extremes on your dirtbike then you've incorrectly matched the sprockets.

If you are changing sprocket sizes then you need to ascertain whether your chain will still fit. This very much depends upon where your rear wheel is positioned in the swingarm chain adjusters (and of course whether you're fitting a

bigger or smaller sprocket) but adding more than two or three teeth to the rear will probably mean using a longer chain.

Tooth Decay

Checking for wear on the sprockets is easy. If the teeth appear 'hooked' and the gaps between the teeth have opened out or lost their shape, or if the chain isn't following the profile of the sprocket properly, then it's time for replacement.

Chain wear is similarly obvious, though a chain can be knackered in various ways: If it's stretched to the point that there's no adjustment left on the swingarm; if the rollers are seized solid and slide over the sprocket rather than rolling; if it exhibits 'tight spots' as you revolve the rear wheel; if (when properly adjusted) you can pull the chain away from the 'three o'clock position' on the rear sprocket; if there's sideways play in the links or if it is rustier than the Titanic then it's time for a new one.

Replacing a chain and sprockets is a straightforward task though it's obviously key that you get it right and that you order the correct parts in the correct sizes. If the sprockets require an offset then ensure the replacements come with it, and get the correct length chain in the correct size. Most aftermarket manufacturers will offer a chain and sprocket *kit* to suit your bike whilst a main dealer will also offer OE parts. Whatever you choose, don't use a lower spec chain than originally came on the bike and don't forget to order it in the correct pitch (see 'Chain Gang' box-out).

In Gear

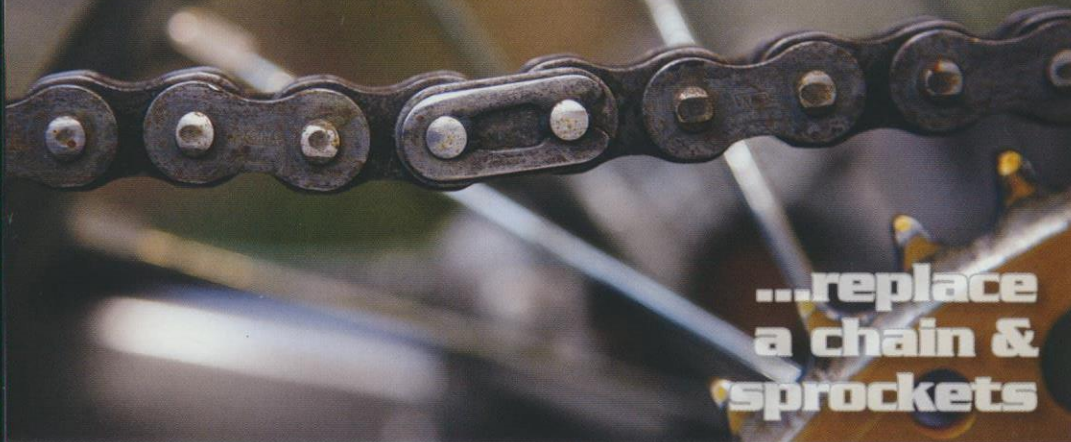
The first thing to do is crack the nut on the rear wheel loose and get the bike onto a stand so that you can work at a comfortable height. Then break out the chain breaker! Don't mess around with piddly little tools as a decent chain will simply destroy 'em. Get yourself a proper HD chain splitter.

Most dirtbikes run with a spring clip securing the split-link, though if your chain is held together with a rivet link you'll need to file the heads off the rivets first (we generally find a careful few seconds with an angle grinder sorts this, before pushing the pins out with the chain breaker). The rivet link is easy to spot as the heads of the rivets will be a different colour to those on the other links. If you're running a spring clip then carefully prise it off the chain with snipe-nosed pliers and



How to...

If you run a split-link, watch out for it rubbing on the bike's metal chain guide, and wearing thin to the point that it breaks off...



...replace a chain & sprockets

a screwdriver, remove the sideplate and pull the link apart or, if it's really stiff, use the chain breaker to push out the pins which hold the link in place and split the chain. Don't throw it away just yet tho', it'll come in handy later... While the chain's off check that the plastic slider on the swingarm isn't excessively worn as it can wear through to the swingarm if it goes un-noticed.

Replacing the front sprocket should be a straightforward affair once the sprocket guard has been removed. Some manufacturers use a circlip to keep the sprocket in place while others bolt them on, with a tab washer for security. While the sprocket's off give the area a good clean with some degreaser or paraffin - working on a clean bike is that bit nicer - and check the output shaft seal for leaks or tears and the condition of the splines. Assuming all's well then fit the new sprocket and if the circlip/bolt/washer appears worn or damaged then replace it. (If the sprocket is bolted in place then don't forget to use thread-lock on the bolt. This is crucial.)

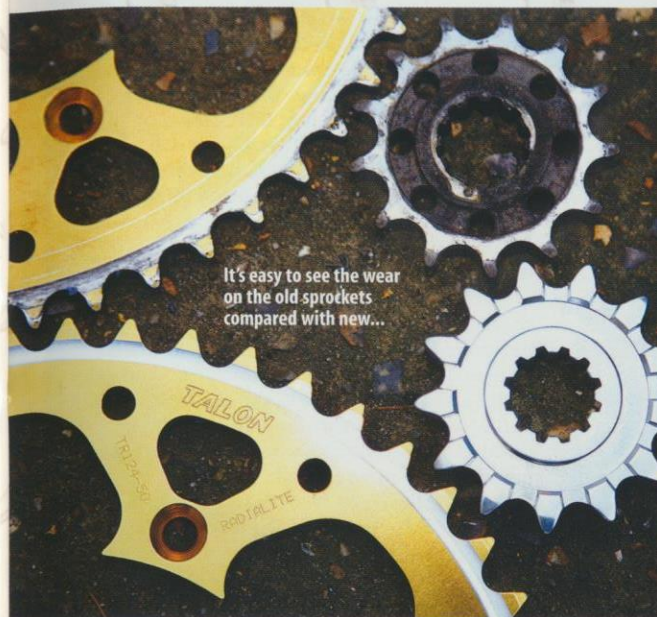
Rear sprocket removal is simply a case of



Remember to undo the sprocket bolts in a star pattern and re-attach the new ones in a similar manner...

slipping out the back wheel and undoing the sprocket bolts - without skinning your knuckles on the teeth of the sprocket. Initially you should undo the nuts on the sprocket bolts as they'll be super-tight and the Allen-headed bolts can round-off easily, though once you've cracked the nut you'll find it much easier to undo the bolt whilst holding the nut with a ring spanner.

Junk the old part and fit the new sprocket (the right way round) using new nyloc nuts and/or a good dollop of threadlock. Again this is crucial as a loose sprocket can easily wreck a hub. Job done, refit the rear wheel though run it forward on the adjusters to make the next step easier.



It's easy to see the wear on the old sprocket compared with new...

Wheels of Steel

Steel rear sprockets are cheap and heavy but seem to last forever whereas alloy parts are super-light and generally wear out quicker. Most riders (and manufacturers) opt for an alloy rear sprocket, though for riding in sand, steel is really the way to go - the sand can wreck an alloy sprocket in very short order. There are products on the market which are a mix of an alloy sprocket face with a ring of steel teeth attached. These are generally more expensive and weightier than alloy sprockets, though offer a compromise between light-weight and longevity.

Goldie Lookin' Chain

It's well worth investing in a top quality chain and sprockets. They're far stronger than economy parts and should last a whole lot longer too. Ideally you should replace the parts as a complete kit since an old (or sub-standard) chain can wreck new sprockets, and vice versa. So we opted for an RK XW-ring chain and a pair of sprockets from Talon Engineering.

The RK chain is produced by Takasago (they of Excel wheels fame) so you know it's gonna be super-strong. The rubber XW-rings in the links create pockets of lubricant adding to its longevity, whilst snazzy gold plating

prevents corrosion and keeps everything looking good. Top stuff.

Talon's front sprockets are produced from case hardened steel, while the lightweight rears are top spec 7075 T6 alloy. The Somerset company produce the rears in gold or silver for just about any machine, whilst Yamaha, Honda and KTM parts are available in their respective corporate colours.

The RK XW-ring chain costs £65, with the sprockets retailing at approximately £6-7 for a front, and £18 for a rear. Talon also stock a non o-ring MX chain (the RK MX Z3) and RK chain breakers. For more information call Talon on 01935 471508 or go to talon-eng.co.uk.



How to...

Compare the length of the old and new chains before cutting the new one...



...replace a chain & sprockets

The Missing Link

Now fit the chain. As most chains come with a set number of links (which is rarely the exact number you need) you often have to shorten the chain before you fit it. And the easiest way to find out how many links to remove is hold

up the two chains next to each other and get a helper to mark where to 'make the break'. Alternatively lay out the new chain (somewhere clean) next to the old one. You don't want to have the chain so long that there's no room for adjustment, nor so short that it's immediately too tight. The old adage 'measure twice, cut once' is worth adhering to here and remember that you need to leave the end of the chain with the inner part of the link exposed in order to fit the split link over it.

Once you've identified where to split the chain you need to carefully grind the head off the pin in order to push it out with the chain breaker. If you don't have a suitable powertool to do this then it's possible, though hard work, to file the edges off the pin with a good flat metal file. Use your chain breaker to push out the pin and remove the link.

Once it's the correct length run the chain over and around the sprockets, not forgetting to route it through the chain guide on the underside of the swingarm. Bring the two ends together and attach using the supplied link. Whether you use the spring clip or rivet the chain together really depends on how often you're going to be changing the chain (if you regularly swap gearing). Ordinarily we'd simply use the spring clip though for extra peace of mind on a powerful bike or big trailie it's worth riveting the chain.



Loctite (or the equivalent) is your best friend when it comes to securing rear sprocket bolts...

Chain Reaction

How you maintain your bike's chain has a real bearing on how long it lasts. A good quality, correctly tensioned, clean and well-lubed chain should give good service for many hundreds (sometimes even thousands) of off-road miles.

Chain tension really depends on the machine, though as a rule of thumb you should run it looser than normal in mud (to allow for the build up of mud on the bike) and sand (where the grains collect around the sprocket and 'pad it out').

For cleaning bike chains we tend to use paraffin as it's cheap, widely available and does a good job. A dedicated chain cleaning

brush is also worth having in your wash bucket.

When it comes to chain lube opinions vary massively. Some people swear by 'hi-tech' chain lubes whilst others insist old engine oil works best. And some people just run their dirtbike's chain 'dry'.

Sticky lube is great at picking up sand, so in these conditions we'd run the chain dry. At other times we tend to use a chain lube designed for off-road use though as an o-ring/x-ring type chain relies on the lube trapped within the links a light oil is considered the best lubricant. Whichever method you use, a chain needs to be kept 'supple' and free from corrosion.

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How to...

A good quality chain-breaker makes the job of link removal that much easier...



...replace a chain & sprockets

If you're using the spring clip then attach the sideplate over the pins (not forgetting any little rubber O- or X-rings) and push it firmly into place using a pair of molegrips or similar. This should take a fair bit of effort but you'll know when it's in place as it'll be seated straight with the grooves for the spring clip showing on the pins. Carefully slide and prise the clip into place with the closed end pointing in the direction the chain travels. This is another important point as fitting it the wrong way round can result in the clip opening up or getting knocked off!

To rivet your chain in place you ideally need the correct rivet tool though you can improvise.

Essentially, once the rivet link and sideplate are in place you need to flatten off the end of the soft rivet, which can be done using a hammer with a block behind it. With the link away from the sprockets get a helper to hold a lump hammer (or similarly weighty device) against the back of the chain and carefully 'dress' the edges of the rivet over with another hammer. You're looking to flatten the rivet enough so that it holds the sideplate in place and keeps your chain together, so take your time with this.

With the chain safely joined all that's left to do is tension it and double-check you've tightened everything. Job done.

Chain Gang

There's a variety of different types of chain on the market, and at the very bottom of the range is the basic non O-ring chain that'll cost just a few quid. Ignore these. As a minimum you'd want to fit a good quality, known brand heavy duty MX chain. These are still non O-ring parts but built to a far higher spec than a 'basic' chain.

Next up is the O-ring chain. These have small rubber O-rings between the sideplates and 'linkplates' which trap lubricant to help the chain to move freely and give it a longer

life. X-ring and XW-ring chains are essentially a refinement of this principle, with a design that holds more grease.

Chains also come in a number of different sizes, or pitches, the most common on dirt-bikes is 520. Virtually all enduro bikes will use a 520 chain with small capacity trailies (such as learner 125s) often running a 428 pitch chain (though it's a common modification to upgrade to 520-size chain and sprockets). Whichever chain you fit, carrying a spare split link and spring clip is good insurance against a DNF or a call to the AA...

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TRICK BITS

PICTURE PERFECT

While we don't usually feature MX stuff we couldn't resist showing you this awesome new hardback photo-annual from one of the UK's top MX snappers, Ray Archer. A pictorial look-back at this year's MX GP series, the book starts with a foreword by Stefan Everts (whoever he is..!) and the early pages concentrate on paddock images of the riders and teams, before moving on to some beautiful studio shots of the bikes (complete with close-ups of those money-can't-buy-parts).

Attention then switches to the race action, with round-by-round pictorial coverage and a short event report penned by MX journo Adam Wheeler. At the end of the season comes the MX of Nations and the book ends with some classic Everts shots and full results tables for the 2006 MX GP series. At £25 MX-GP 2006 is ideal for every dirtbikers' coffee table and you can get hold of yours from either mx-gp.com or from Race FX (racefx.co.uk) on 0845 450 1448.

FAST TRACK

A decent set of wide, grippy footpegs is a must on any dirtbike. Which is why we like the look of these new Evolution F4 pegs from US company Fastway.

Not only are the F4s one of the largest pegs on the market, they also feature gnarly little pins to grip your boots and can be adjusted to give a greater seat-to-peg distance - ideal for taller riders. Fastway's 'Fast Kamber Mounting System' means you can alter the tilt of the pegs up or down and by fitting alternative mounting pins they can be transferred to different machines. Neat.

The F4s come in a durable semi-polished finished and are available to fit KTM's, Honda CRFs, Yamaha WR-Fs and also to replace the particularly narrow parts found on BMW's GS machines. Eighty quid, including UK delivery, well spent in our opinion. To order, call P1autotech on 0845 838 0706 or visit p1autotech.com.

TWIN SHOCK TREATMENT

If grand prix motocross is a little too fast-paced, then put your feet up (and keep 'em up!) this Christmas with volume two of John Hulme's book, 20 Years of Twin Shock Trials. The mainly black and white images in this second instalment cover international events along with British classics such as the Scott Trial and the Scottish Six Days, whilst fans of our Old Gold series will be pleased to see bike brochures reproduced in colour. Compared to volume one (see TBM 131) there's more text accompanying the pictures, many of which have never been published before.

Volume two is available now from Yoomie Ltd and costs £19.99 plus £2.99 p&p (or three quid more for overseas). Call Yoomie on 01663 733137 or email them at postmaster@yoomie.co.uk for more information.

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SOUNDING OFF 5 (Part 1)

Can an aftermarket exhaust 'snorkel' help in the fight to rid our sport of excessive noise. TBM investigates...



STORY: SI MELBERG; PICS: BARRINI

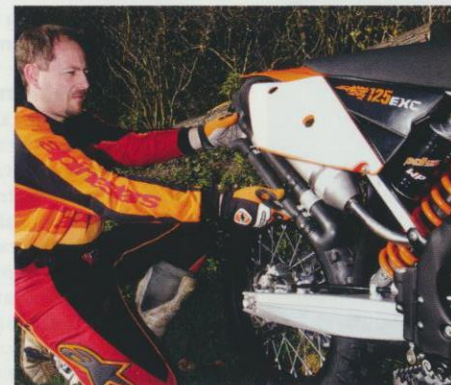
We got our hands on some fairly shocking figures the other day. These were the sales statistics for the total number of enduro bikes which were registered in the UK up to the end of September. Remember we're talking pure race bikes here - removing trail bikes, adventure sport bikes, commuters and Chinese look-alikes out of the equation. And on the face of it they make for fairly depressing reading. Current year-to-date sales (to Sept) are down a whopping 29.2 percent compared with last year!

But before we all reach for the bottle of Scotch and pearl-handled revolver, it's worth delving a little deeper into these figures. First of all they are a snapshot in time and like all such samples they don't necessarily reveal the whole picture. Secondly, and this is important, there are obviously a fair number of enduro bikes which get sold but never registered. Indeed these days unless you specifically *want* to use your enduro bike on the road (trail) it's probably far better to leave it unregistered and avoid having to sort out your SORN forms, insurance, road tax, MoT bills etc. The vast majority of bikes we see at Hare & Hounds races don't appear to be sporting any sort of reg plate. And thirdly... well thirdly it's clear that the market is going through one of its periodic sales slumps. In my experience these revolve around ten year cycles with peaks in the intervening five years.

Okay what's also clear is that NERC, DEFRA and the general malaise surrounding the economy (and in particular our sector of the industry) has bitten hard into our market this year. But before we simply point the finger of blame the



The dB Snorkel. Assembled and ready to be fitted to our test bike...



government's way (though clearly they have a lot to answer for), I think we need look a little closer to home - at the manufacturers among others - for a lack of foresight. Because what these figures *do* reveal is that the only sector of the market enjoying *any* sort of growth right now is the sale of two-strokes. And why should that be I wonder?

Final Answer?

In fairness it's not that hard to find answers to this particular puzzle. Whether it's the simplicity, the lightness or the sheer fun that comes with riding a two-stroke that's attracting buyers right now, or maybe the fact that having sampled the delights of modern thumpers, experienced riders are returning to what they know and love, I don't think you can pin it down to a single reason. But if I'm honest I think that there are a couple of even more obvious reasons for the unusual market conditions we're seeing right now...

Forget what racers win on because racers don't buy their own bikes, what really matters to the average clubman punter is value-for-money. And value-for-money is exactly what the trade

Top: This is how the dB Snorkel comes...
Below: Assembly takes only a few minutes...

SOUNDING OFF (Part 1)

has *not* been offering recently. Because when it comes down to it, price has got to be the main determining factor. The purchase price of the bike in the first place, the resale value of the machine when they come to chop it in, and of course the price of any spares or rebuilds along the way, are all taken into account (to some degree or other) by the owner. And remember nobody *needs* a dirt bike, it's a non-essential purchase. Nothing more than a toy.

The problem is that dirt bikes aren't like road bikes. Back in the Sixties and Seventies when two-stroke roadsters were plentiful, the advent of the modern four-cylinder four-stroke roadbike meant improved performance, greater efficiency and range, quieter running, and of course you didn't end up smelling like a mechanic's hanky after every ride.

But competition dirt bikes are very different to pure roadbikes. Not least because they're designed to do a very different job. That job is to operate in harsh conditions for short periods of time. No-one cares what you smell like afterwards 'cause you're covered in cow-sh!t anyway, all they care about is that the bike is fun to ride, quick and easy to manage, and relatively

inexpensive to maintain. Now thumpers can be all those things but the real benefits of four-stroke technology - extended running time, high rpm power, better economy - are all negated when it comes to dirt bikes. That's because thumpers are heavier and more complex - and thus more costly to buy and run. A heavier bike requires more fuel to propel it along, is harder to ride and slower to accelerate and decelerate (than a lighter equivalent) and enduro bikes rarely run at high speeds for long periods of time. In order to save weight and space, manufacturers design engines with very little oil capacity - this oil needs to be changed frequently and if it isn't, this can quickly lead to lubrication failure and an expensive rebuild.

Dealers were quick to cotton onto the expense of an unscheduled rebuild on a secondhand bike returned under warranty, and trade-in values dropped accordingly. So faced with suffering a greater loss than expected on their one- or two-year old machines, owners have been forced to hang onto them for longer, and have been buying fewer bikes as a result.

Sound of Silence

The second reason for the thumpers' decline right now may well be related to noise. In order to make the equivalent amount of power to a similar capacity two-stroke, manufacturers have been forced to build thumpers with high rev-ceilings - for instance Yamaha claim their WR-F spins to 13,000rpm (though it's actually a bit lower than this), and other manufacturers claim likewise. But the greater the revs, the higher the noise levels. Now I'm not certain I've ever met someone who says they bought a two-stroke because it was quieter, but I know plenty of people who frequently complain about four-stroke noise.

Then again... a few years ago people used to complain about noisy two-strokes. Effective silencing is the answer and although we have far quieter bikes than we had a decade ago, the truth is that as long as it remains intrusive, noise will always be an issue in our sport.

Fortunately when it comes to silencing, two-strokes are much easier to quieten down than four-strokes. And not only are they easier, but they suffer less in terms of performance drop-off than do thumpers. So we were intrigued when a reader pointed us in the direction of a relatively unknown product in the US marketplace called the dB Snorkel. The American manufacturers of the dB Snorkel (2-cycle exhaust stealth kit), claim

that it will 'fit and further quiet your existing silencer from 3 to 8 dB(A) in the 20" test (SAE J1287)' and furthermore their website shows that it manages this without a serious loss of power. This we had to try.

We contacted thedbsnorkel.com and within a week they'd UPS'd a pair of them over to us to try out (good service indeed). Now I'm firmly of the opinion that anything which cuts down on the amount of noise your bike makes just has to be a good thing and we were keen to see if these things achieved what the makers claimed.

New Build

But before we could try it, first we had to build it. Now the dB Snorkel comes in the form of a kit which you must assemble from its constituent components which numbers an assortment of tubes and fasteners along with a huge (poster-sized) set of assembly instructions. It's all fairly straightforward for anyone with a modicum of mechanical ability, but if you have trouble working the remote control for your digi-box then don't bother starting out on this project.

It took about 45mins to assemble the first dB Snorkel, but having done one I reckon I could put the second together in about ten minutes flat. Once you know how it's supposed to look and fit, it all makes perfect sense - albeit there is a certain amount of fiddling to be done on the bike to make it sit clear of the rear caliper when the suspension's on full compression.

Now I've got to say the bloke who came up with this idea didn't waste any of his cents on making the thing look presentable. Oh no... to describe it as 'functional' is being kind - Heath Robinson would be more accurate. On the other hand as the website explains: 'what you see is pure function, adding a covering would add weight and cost'. And as it retails for only 85 bucks in the States (about 50 quid), well you can't really complain.

So what is it?

The dB Snorkel is very simply a series of rubber pipes, tubes and clamps (or as they put it 'high temperature elastomers that absorb exhaust noise') all joined together in an S-shaped line. There's no packing material or baffles inside and frankly very little to go wrong or break, though all the components are available to purchase online separately (and quite cheaply) should you manage to damage it. It weighs less than a kilo and essentially what it does is to fit a big snug rubber hose over the end of your two-stroke's silencer (though there's a small slot cut into the end of that rubber hose) and then re-route most of the sound along a pipe to the main outlet

about 10cm away.

First off I want to make one thing clear, the dB Snorkel is designed to fit two-strokes only. Four-stroke pipes get much hotter, are much larger and the sound pulses are completely different so don't try. That said, although the rubber hose is designed as a universal fit for round and oval two-stroke silencers, it was too small to fit over the can on our TM250 and too large for the very small silencer on the Gas Gas EC125 we had on test this month. We did however manage to coax it onto the exhausts of both the KTM and Husky 125s and this is what our testing was based on.

So what happened?

Okay, what we did was to try the snorkel on two different bikes at two separate locations. First of all we attached it to the KTM 125EXC while it was at the dyno being tested so as to measure

Sound Practise...

The decibel (dB) is the unit used to measure the magnitude or intensity of sound. Decibel means one tenth of a Bel (Named after Alexander Graham Bell - the bloke credited with inventing the telephone). The decibel uses a logarithmic scale to cover the very large range of sound pressures which can be heard by the human ear. Under the decibel unit of measure, a 10dB increase will be perceived by most people to be a doubling in loudness, ie 80db sounds twice as loud as 70db.

The A-weighted decibel (dBA) is the most common unit used for measuring environmental sound levels. It adjusts, or weights, the frequency components of sound to conform with the normal response of the human ear at conversational levels. dBA is an international metric that is used for assessing environmental noise exposure of all noise sources.



SOUNDING OFF (Part 1)



1dB is all that significant, though every bit helps.

In terms of power our KTM lost less than 1hp with the snorkel fitted, recording 28.1hp uncorked and 27.3hp with it fitted, so at least the claims of minimal power losses turned out to be accurate.

What I will say is that the bloke behind the dB Snorkel in the States appears genuinely keen to seek to reduce the impact of dirt bikes in order to preserve and maintain existing riding areas. And since they claim that 'the louder your existing aluminium silencer the more dramatic the noise reduction using the dB Snorkel', I must assume it works better with older noisier bikes.

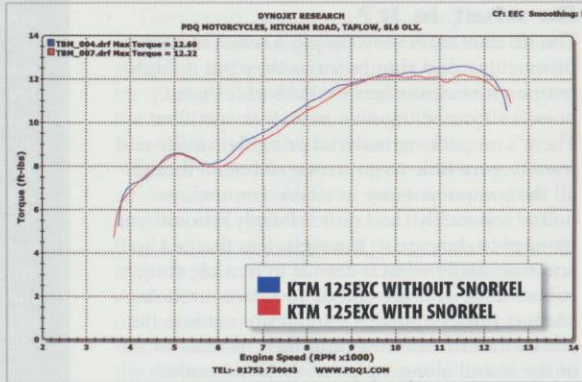
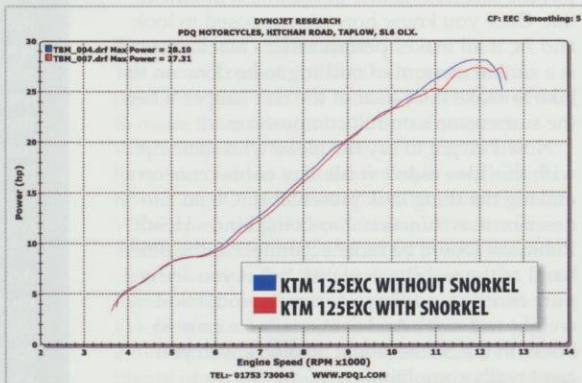
In the end it was disappointing to find that we could only manage a very small reduction in sound as I think that despite the dB Snorkel's ungainly looks, a number of readers might still be tempted to try something which reduces the sound footprint left by their dirt bike.

And I can't claim that our test is by any means conclusive. In the end it just depends how noisy your bike is to start with and how much you want to do something about it.

This is not the end of TBM's search for a cure to dirtbike noise... Merely the start of something much bigger!

exactly any decrease in power (as well as sound) as a result of fitting. Then we attached it to the Husky WR125 for a ride-by test on the road. Now I should make it clear that our findings are by no means scientific, and we don't use either the ACU nor the American guidelines for measuring noise - preferring to take an ambient reading with our noise meter because that's more typical of what you actually hear. On the other hand we're careful to try and ensure that our findings are as accurate and consistent as possible and a number of readings were taken and then averaged out.

So then, the results..... Well disappointingly we weren't able to replicate the claims on the website of a reduction of between three and eight dB. In fact we could only manage a peak reduction of just 1dB in both our tests - the KTM dropped from measuring a peak volume of 119.1dB at the dyno to 118.2dB (though it is inside) and the Husky dropped from 100dB to 99.2dB on the ride-by outside. And although the decibel scale is logarithmic so that a 3dB reduction gives a perceived reduction in audible sound of around 19percent, I'm not going to claim that



TRADE SECRETS

You know how it is... You're working away on your bike getting stuck into a job on a winter's afternoon when the phone rings. So you go into the kitchen, make a cup of char and answer the phone. But by the time you've finished the call, all the light's disappeared and you decide to call it a day. Tomorrow's a work day and the next opportunity you're going to get to work on your bike is at least two weeks from now. By which time you'll have forgotten exactly what you've done - and crucially what *needs* doing. The classic example is draining out the oil and then forgetting to refill it!

So here's what you do. Before you start working on your bike, tear off a strip of gaffa tape and stick it on the bar pad. Then make a note of whatever jobs need doing and tick them off when they're completed. That way they won't



get forgotten about. At the very least if you have to put the bike away unfinished, make a note of the items which still need doing by writing them down on the bar pad.

Then when you next pull the bike out of the shed, you know exactly what work requires finishing off before you go for a ride. Could save you a lot of money, this tip...

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2006 FIM INTERNATIONAL SIX DAYS ENDURO

Everyone's talking about...

Long before the first competitors arrived in the host town of Taupo eager to sample the delights of off-road riding in the adventure sports capital of the world, the 81st International Six Days Enduro was being eagerly anticipated. Despite no international enduro competitions having previously taken place in New Zealand, and with very few riders knowing what to expect, record breaking numbers of entries were drawn to the event. For most that meant travelling to the other side of the world.

The days leading up to the race were spent walking tests, preparing bikes and trying to adjust to messed up body clocks. For some though the long trip to New Zealand started in the worst possible way as crashes on the practice track came close to ruling more than one rider out of the competition. With just a few days to go before the start of the event British Trophy

team rider Richard Hay and Spanish Trophy team rider Ivan Cervantes crashed in two separate incidents. With Cervantes destroying his bike but luckily not breaking any bones, Hay fractured several bones in his hands. For both riders it was far from the ideal way to start a six-day long event.

With all competitors and supporters warmly welcomed by the town of Taupo the first riders set off from the start at 7.00am on Tuesday morning starting what would be a challenging event for all.

And the winners are...

Finland were clear favourites to win the 81st running of the ISDE. With a Trophy team consisting of world champions, former world champions, experienced WEC competitors and a former overall ISDE winner, no other team really stood a chance of beating them - barring disas-

ters. And with each of their riders finishing the event without major problems the fact that Finnish Trophy team riders won the Enduro 1, Enduro 2 and Enduro 3 classes says pretty much everything about the performances of the six-rider squad. Finland were dominant.

Behind them in the Trophy team competition came France (as runners-up), Spain were third, Italy fourth, Sweden fifth and Australia sixth.

In the Junior Trophy team class the US squad took the overall. The French team had a little more enduro experience but were unable to stop the States from claiming only their third ever JT class win. Behind the US and France, Australia claimed the third place slot ahead of Germany, Italy and GB.

In the individual Enduro 1 class Juha Salminen returned to the ISDE after a two-year break with devastating effect. Although French rider Marc Germain placed his Yamaha ahead of



TAUPO, NEW ZEALAND, 14-19 NOVEMBER 2006

Daryl Bolter let's it all hang out in fine style on his 250 Husky, but in the end the GB juniors could only manage sixth place...

2006 FIM INTERNATIONAL SIX DAYS ENDURO



Not-so-speedy Gonzales... Mexico's Trophy team finished well outside the top ten... But they had fun doing it!

Juha on day one, the cool and collected Finn dominated the rest of the week to comfortably top the class and claim his first ever overall win.

With Italy's Simone Albergoni claiming the runner-up spot at the end of the six-day event he never looked like seriously challenging for the class win. Meanwhile Ivan Cervantes - hampered by his pre-event crash, and riding with heavily strapped up hands - improved his daily performances as the days rolled by to claim third in class. Meanwhile Germain, riding with the number one on his bike and the first competitor to enter each and every special test during the event, was never able to repeat his day one win and in finishing 17th on day five placed fourth in class.

The battle to top the Enduro 2 class was

always going to be a close fought one - with more 'named' riders in that class than any other. Samuli Aro naturally ensured that Finland and KTM claimed their second class win. Despite only winning two days, Samuli did pretty much exactly what he has done all season in the WEC series - win some, finish second and third in some, but most importantly remained consistent all week.

If Mika Ahola had performed better on day one, things would have been a lot closer at the top of the E2 class come the end of the week. 20 seconds behind Aro on day one, there were just 26 seconds separating the two Finns at the finish. Continuing to perform well, as he did in the WEC, Mika played an important role in helping Finland's Trophy team dominate the event.

Winning day one having switched from his usual 450cc four-stroke to a 250cc two-stroke for the event, Stefan Merriman just wasn't quite fast enough to beat either of the two Finns ahead of him. Clearly enjoying being back on a two-stroke Merriman looked extremely fast on the motocross tests but with conditions on the enduro tests playing right into the hands of Scandinavian riders he was unable to improve his result.

KTM looked assured of topping the Enduro 3 class in Taupo, despite their reigning ISDE class champion David Knight opting not to compete. Early on in the week it looked as if French Trophy team rider Fabien Planet would be the rider that would win (525EXC), but Finn Marko Tarkkala would eventually top the class.

Winning three of the first four days Planet and his 300cc two-stroke KTM seemed to have things pretty well wrapped up but injuring his hand on the fourth day curtailed his advances towards class victory and he would drop to third after a 15th place finish on day five.

Winning the E3 class in New Zealand brought a disappointing season to a positive end for Marko Tarkkala. Only winning one day and the class by just under one-minute Marko, like Aro, rode consistently to secure victory - something the Finn has on occasions failed to do.

Filling the final podium position in the E3 class Spain's, '05 Enduro Junior World Champion Cristobal Guerrero impressed many with his speed, consistency and ability to adjust to a 300cc bike after a season on a 250. Finishing

The NZ scenery was very impressive...



2006 FIM INTERNATIONAL SIX DAYS ENDURO

third on each of the first five days, Cristobal claimed a well deserved result.

Surprise, Surprise...

There were few real surprise performances, either individual or team, in Taupo despite a number of competitors punching slightly above their weight. The one thing that did get people talking was the dominant return to international enduro competition of Juha Salminen. After two years earning his living racing through forests on the east coast of the 'States, Juha, mounted on a 250cc four-stroke, placed second on day one in the E1 class before winning days two, three, four and five. Reminding folk just how good he really is, Juha amazingly also claimed his first ISDE overall win. Just as Shane Watts did in Australia several years ago, the ISDE was topped by a bike from the smallest capacity class.

With established WEC riders finishing at the top of the E1 class results Finn Eero Remes and US rider Ricky Dietrich showed by placing in fifth and sixth respectively that you don't have

to be an experienced enduro rider to get your head around special test riding and produce good results. Both riders performed well and would make welcome additions to the world championship series.

In the E2 class the highest finishing non enduro rider was '96 500cc world motocross champion Shayne King. A member of the New Zealand Trophy team, Shayne rode a consistent week to finish ahead of several established WEC and ISDE competitors.

In the E3 class there were no surprise results, although young Spaniard Cristobal Guerrero's runner-up finish first time out on a 300cc two-stroke was impressive.

The manufacturers' race...

With KTM riders Juha Salminen winning the Enduro 1 class, Samuli Aro the Enduro 2 class and Marko Tarkkala the Enduro 3 class, KTM well and truly stamped their mark on the event as the most dominant manufacturer. In fact thanks to the efforts of Ivan Cervantes, Kurt

Caselli and Fabien Planet they also claimed the runner-up spot in the Trophy team classification. Winning just about all there was to win, KTM simply extended their domination of the WEC series, even without David Knight in attendance.

But KTM didn't just steal the show with their

Better luck next time...

Stefan Merriman and Fabien Planet had to be the two most disappointed riders come the end of the 81st ISDE. With Merriman wanting to win his home event outright the pint-sized Aussie Trophy team rider ended up third, beaten by the same two riders that finished ahead of him in the '06 WEC series. Winning the opening day before being beaten by either Samuli Aro or Mika Ahola, Stefan did little wrong, he just wasn't quite able to match the pace of the two Finns.

While over in the E3 class French Trophy team rider Fabien Planet looked a good bet to



Euan McConnell was by far the best of the British competitors



officially supported riders, they also had more Club team riders on their bikes than any other brand. With 18 of the 22 Trophy teams having at least one KTM mounted rider, of the 635 pre-entered competitors in Taupo, 258 chose orange.

Claiming third in the Manufacturer's class

produce a class winning result. Winning the first two days, he faltered slightly on day three by placing as runner-up he then topped day four. Picking up a finger injury along the way Fabien then slumped to 15th in class on day five, which essentially ended his hopes of the E3 class win.

In the Enduro 1 class Kiwi Trophy team riders Darryl King looked like he was going to comfortably place within the top 10 after finishing in ninth on day one and seventh on day two. But on day three he was forced to retire after an elbow infection he picked up before the event caused him problems.



2006 FIM INTERNATIONAL SIX DAYS ENDURO

was the UFO Corse Yamaha team of Stefan Merriman, Johnny Aubert and Marc Germain with the Honda HM team of Simone Albergoni, Mika Ahola and Jari Mattila third. Filling the fourth to eighth positions were Husaberg, TM, Husqvarna and Gas Gas.

The event...

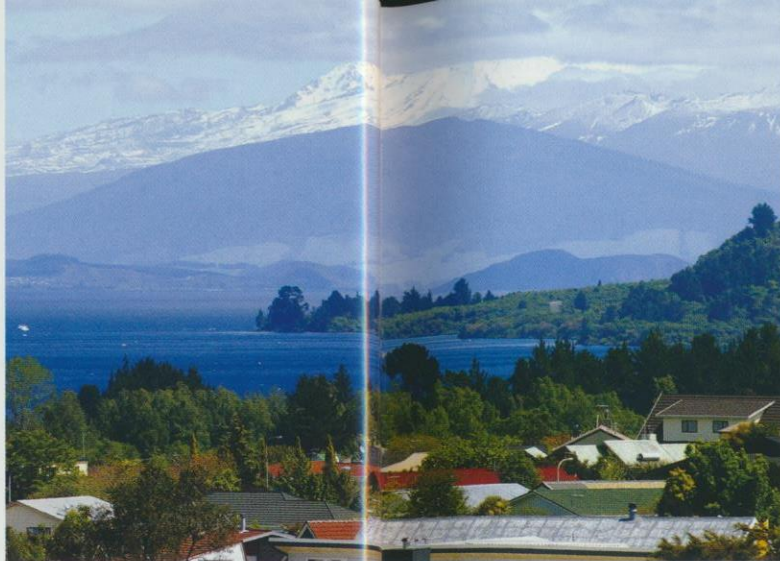
While there's no such thing as an easy Six Days, this year's 'Olympics of motorcycling' was anything but painless for most competitors. It didn't start out that way, but thanks largely to rain on days four and five, it got tougher as the week progressed.

As has become common practice in recent Six Days, the Taupo event used four different

courses during the week. With two fresh courses laid on for days one and six, days two and three ran over the same forest based loop while days four and five used another new course. Due to the soft nature of the sandy/muddy soil it didn't take long for the forest based tracks to start cutting up, which caused problems for Club team riders at the rear of the entry from day two onwards.

Although days one, two and three were all run on a relaxed B schedule, the unforgiving nature of the terrain meant that they were still physically, and mentally demanding. But what was to follow on day four and five certainly separated the men from the boys.

The predicted bad weather arrived during the



afternoon of day four. Dull from the get go following overnight rain, due to several sections of the course being very narrow, bottlenecks started to appear, which resulted in many Club team riders losing time with some failing to finish the day.

Making things harder was the fact that day four was run on A schedule. Catching out a number of Trophy team riders including Brits

Chris Hockey, Richard Hay and Andrew Edwards who all lost time, even the best of the best found themselves having to get a serious move on or face time penalties. With day four already difficult, a torrential and sudden downpour at around 11.00am left all riders after number 200 unable to climb a hill before the day's third special test. At that point the event was stopped with all riders heading back to parc

The Brits...

Sixth in the Junior Trophy team competition and ninth in the Trophy team class, Britain didn't do quite as well as hoped in New Zealand - having fielded what was, on paper at least, our strongest JT team for many years. Up against strong opposition Britain's junior team rode well but were simply not able to match the pace of the teams ahead of them.

For the most part it was a pretty uneventful, but challenging week for the four Under 23 riders. With three riders entered into the E2 class European Enduro Championship winner Tom Sagar produced the best result placing in 23rd, while Si Wakely came home in 30th position with Darryl Bolter 32nd. The team's one and only E1 class rider Jason Thomas failed to finish the week after being withdrawn from the event by the ACU. Crashing on day one and hurting his thumb, Jason was pulled from the event having been advised by medical professionals not to compete, because his ACU insurance wouldn't cover him! From day three onwards the British Junior Trophy

team was down to three riders.

With all Trophy team riders finishing, Euan McConnell's performance in the E3 class was by far the brightest. Finishing inside the top 10 on every day apart from day five, Euan placed a creditable fourth on day four to finish eighth in class. Mounted aboard a 530cc TM thumper McConnell clearly enjoyed his week aboard his open class four-stroke, placing just 19 seconds behind TM's E3 class factory supported rider Alessio Paoli.

In the Enduro 1 class KTM rider Edward Jones produced Britain's highest E1 class result finishing in 24th. With both Trophy team riders Andrew Edwards and Richard Hay finishing the event on their 125cc Katooms without too many incidents, Richard's performance was more creditable having broken bones in his hand before the start. Crashing while giving his bike the once over, the tough Scot battled on to finish 75th with Andrew 33rd. Placing in 48th in his first ISDE, youngster Ashley Woods finished as the best placed E1 Club team rider.



ferme. On their way home many got so cold and wet that they almost caught hypothermia.

With few Trophy and Junior Trophy team riders dropping time during the event the eight special tests decided the eventual finishing orders in the three capacity classes, and ultimately the Trophy, Junior Trophy, Club and manufacturer classes. Each of the first four days started and finished with visits to the Maroa motocross test and Pumice Quarry test. Each of the motocross tests were laid out over grass paddocks while all the enduro tests ran through pine forests. To the disappointment of many competitors none of the tests used the undulating, rugged countryside that lined the road out of Taupo.

81ST ISDE - RESULTS

TROPHY TEAM COMPETITION

- 1 FINLAND - MIKA AHOLA (HONDA) E2; SAMULI ARO (KTM) E2; JARI MATTILA (HONDA) E2; PETRI POHJAMO (TM) E1; JUHA SALMINEN (KTM) E1; MARKO TARKKALA (KTM) E3
 2 FRANCE - EMMANUEL ALBEPART (HONDA) E2; JOHNNY AUBERT (YAMAHA) E2; DAVID FRETIGNE (YAMAHA) E1; MARC GERMAIN (YAMAHA) E1; SEB GUILLAUME (GAS GAS) E3; FABRIEN PLANET (KTM) E3
 3 SPAIN - IVAN CERVANTES (KTM) E1; XACOB AGRA (YAMAHA) E2; JOAN JOU (YAMAHA) E2; ORIOL MENA GAS GAS E3; CRISTOBAL GUERRERO (GAS GAS) E3; XAVIER GALINDO (KTM) E3
 4 ITALY - SIMONE ALBERGONI (HONDA) E1; MAURIZIO MICHELUZ (YAMAHA) E1; ROBERTO BAZZURRI (HUSQVARNA) E2; FABRIZIO DINI (YAMAHA) E2; ALESSIO PAOLI (TM) E3; ALESSANDRO ZANNI (APRILIA) E3
 5 SWEDEN - BJORNE CARLSSON (HUSABERG) E3; JOAKIM LJUNGGREN (HUSABERG) E2; ANDREAS TORESSON (HUSABERG) E2; DANIEL PERSSON (HUSABERG) E3; FREDRIK GEORSSON (KTM) E1; NIKLAS GUSTAFSSON (KTM) E1
 6 AUSTRALIA - DAMIAN SMITH (HUSQVARNA) E1; 2. GLENN KEARNEY (SUZUKI) E2; STEFAN MERRIMAN (YAMAHA) E2; ANTHONY ROBERTS (YAMAHA) E1; BRADLEY WILLISROFT (KTM) E3; JAKE STAPLETON (TM) E2
 7 NEW ZEALAND - PAUL WHIBLEY (HONDA) E2; SHAYNE KING (HONDA) E2; DARRYL KING (YAMAHA) E1; SCOTT COLUMB (SUZUKI) E2; CAMERON NEGAS (YAMAHA) E2; CHRIS BIRCH (KTM) E3
 8 SLOVAKIA - JAROSLAV KATRINAK (KTM) E2; STEFAN SVITCO (KTM) E3; IVAN JAKES (GAS GAS) E3; RADEK MATOSKA (KTM) E2; ROBERT KAPAJCIK (YAMAHA) E1; ZLATKO NOVOSAD (GAS GAS)
 9 GREAT BRITAIN - RICHARD HAY (KTM) E1; EDWARD JONES (KTM) E1; CHRIS HOCKEY (HUSQVARNA) E2; DYLAN JONES (YAMAHA) E1; ANDREW EDWARDS (KTM) E1; EIJAN MCCONNELL (TM) E3
 10 USA - RON SCHMELZLE (YAMAHA) E1; FRED HOESS (GAS GAS) E2; AARON KOPP (KTM) E1; PAUL NEFF (KTM) E3; ERIC BAILEY (GAS GAS) E3; JIMMY JARRETT (SUZUKI) E2

JUNIOR TROPHY TEAM COMPETITION

- 1 USA - KURT CASELLI (KTM) E2; RICKY DIETRICH (KAWASAKI) E1; DAVID PEARSON (KTM) E3; RUSSELL BOBBITT (KTM) E2
 2 FRANCE - MARC BOURGEOIS (HUSQVARNA) E1; JULIEN GAUTHIER (HONDA) E1; JULIEN DUBAC (KTM) E1; CHRISTOPHE NAMBOTIN (HUSQVARNA) E3
 3 AUSTRALIA - CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS (YAMAHA) E1;

- BLAKE HORE (YAMAHA) E2; JOSHUA STRANG (KAWASAKI) E2; DARREN LLOYD (TM) E3
 4 GERMANY - MIKE HARTMAN (KTM) E1; ANDREAS BEIER (KTM) E1; BERT MEYER (KTM) E3; MARCUS KEHR (KTM) E3
 5 ITALY - THOMAS OLDRAIT (HUSQVARNA) E1; CARLO CONFORTI (HONDA) E2; OSCAR BALLETTI (HONDA) E2; VANNI COMINOTO (KAWASAKI) E1
 6 GREAT BRITAIN - SIMON WAKELY (HONDA) E2; DARYL BOLTER (HUSQVARNA) E2; TOM SAGAR (HONDA) E2; JASON THOMAS (HONDA) E1

MANUFACTURER CLASS

- 1 KTM FACTORY 1 - JUHA SALMINEN, SAMULI ARO, MARKO TARKKALA
 2 KTM FACTORY 2 - IVAN CERVANTES, KURT CASELLI, FABRIEN PLANET
 3 YAMAHA UFO COURSE A - STEFAN MERRIMAN, JOHNNY AUBERT, MARC GERMAIN
 4 HONDA HM 1 - SIMONE ALBERGONI, MIKA AHOLA, JARI MATTILA
 5 HUSABERG 1 - JOAKIM LJUNGGREN, BJORNE CARLSSON, VALTTERI SALONEN
 6 TM RACING 1 - PETRI POHJAMO, JAKE STAPLETON, ALESSIO PAOLI
 7 HUSQVARNA 1 - MARC BOURGEOIS, THOMAS OLDRAIT, ROBERTO BAZZURI
 8 GAS GAS - CRISTOBAL GUERRERO, ORIOL MENA, SEB GUILLAUME
 9 HONDA HM 2 - EERO REMES, OSCAR BALLETTI, CARLO CONFORTI
 10 YAMAHA UFO COURSE B - MAURIZIO MICHELUZ, FABRIZIO DINI, ROBERT KAPAJCIK

ENDURO 1 CLASS

- 1 JUHA SALMINEN (KTM) 2.31:19.08;
 2 SIMONE ALBERGONI (HONDA) 2.34:16.59
 3 IVAN CERVANTES (KTM) 2.34:56.99
 4 MARC GERMAIN (YAMAHA) 2.35:37.88
 5 EERO REMES (HONDA) 2.36:49.19

ENDURO 2 CLASS

- 1 SAMULI ARO (KTM) 2.34:15.10
 2 MIKA AHOLA (HONDA) 2.34:41.34
 3 STEFAN MERRIMAN (YAMAHA) 2.34:51.99
 4 KURT CASELLI (KTM) 2.35:01.54
 5 JOHNNY AUBERT (YAMAHA) 2.35:19.92

ENDURO 3 CLASS

- 1 MARKO TARKKALA (KTM) 2.37:24.63
 2 CRISTOBAL GUERRERO (GAS GAS) 2.38:20.35
 3 FABRIEN PLANET (KTM) 2.38:34.26
 4 BJORNE CARLSSON (HUSABERG) 2.39:23.02
 5 XAVIER GALINDO (KTM) 2.39:33.72



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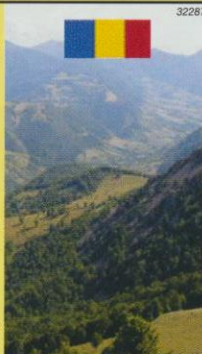
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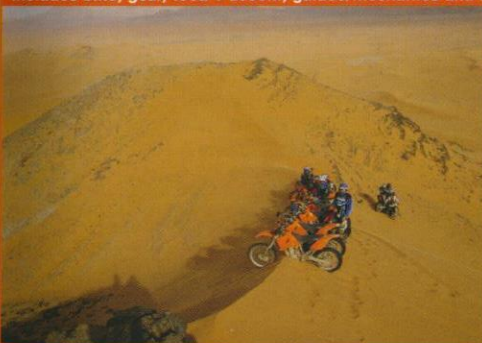
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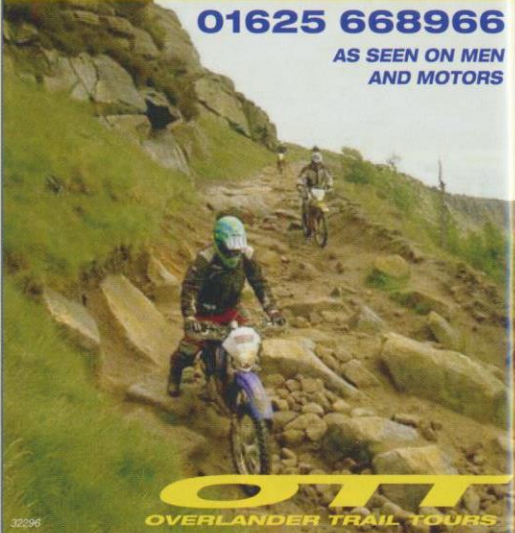
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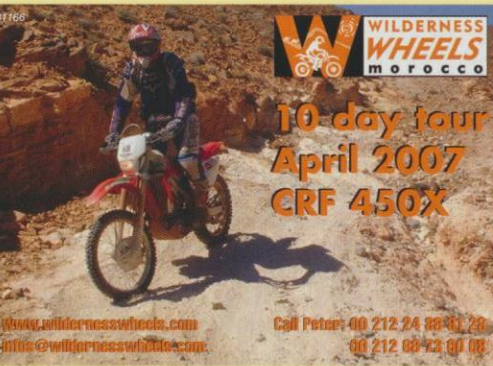
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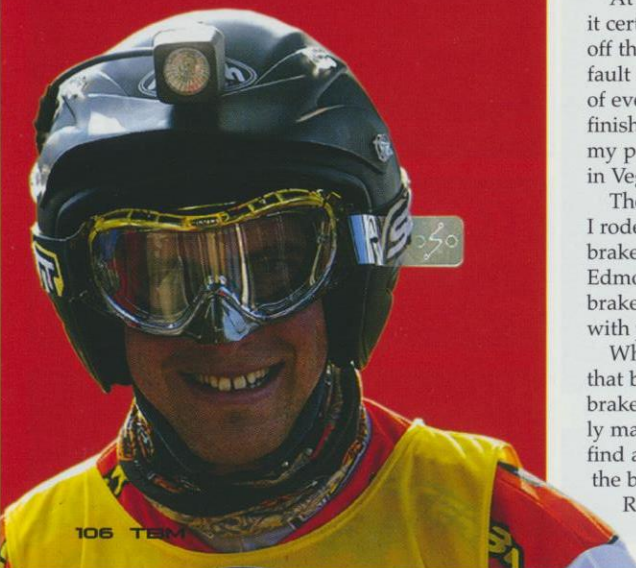
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KNIGHT

Knighter's coming to the end of a long hard season...

SPEED



One thing I'm a firm believer in is that there is a direct link between what you put into something and what you get out of it in return. When talking about motorcycle racing, any type of motorcycle racing, the results you get are certainly linked to the amount of effort, preparation and planning you put in. Most people have heard the saying 'fail to prepare, prepare to fail' and I'd agree with that. Preparation is key to good results but one thing I've realised in recent weeks is that no matter how well prepared you are there are certain races where luck, or good fortune, is also equally important.

Every rider needs good luck. Yes, there are a load of other things you need to succeed before you can benefit from luck, things like talent, ambition, well prepared machinery, fitness and determination, but occasionally luck is the final ingredient needed. It won't win you championships but on the odd occasion it will help you win races. Some people believe you make your own luck, and to a certain extent I'd agree with that. But at races like Weston Beach Race and the Las Vegas Endurocross luck has to be on your side to win.

'Winning against riders like Everts, Edmondson and Steve Ramon was going to be difficult, especially with no front brake from lap four...'

At Weston luck was with me, while in Vegas... it certainly wasn't. I could have won or finished off the podium at either race through no real fault of my own, that's just the way those kinds of events go. Although I hoped to win both and finish the year with a little spending money in my pocket I won at Weston and finished third in Vegas, which I guess isn't too bad.

The reason I was lucky at Weston is because I rode pretty much the whole race with no front brake. Up against riders like Stefan Everts, Paul Edmondson, Steve Ramon etc winning with both brakes was always going to be difficult. To win with just one brake was, well, pretty lucky.

While most riders finish Weston with brakes that barely work having absolutely no front brake from about the fourth lap onwards certainly made things interesting. Cresting a dune to find a rider stopped on the downside I ran into the back of him and wrecked my front disk.

Relying on just my rear brake, and the bike's

gearbox, I managed to keep plugging away lap after lap despite a few hairy moments.

I could have stopped and fitted a new wheel but I didn't want to risk anything going wrong, or finding that having spent five minutes in the pits my front brake still didn't work. Thankfully, I didn't have too many other dramas but I *didn't* enjoy the race because of only having my rear brake.

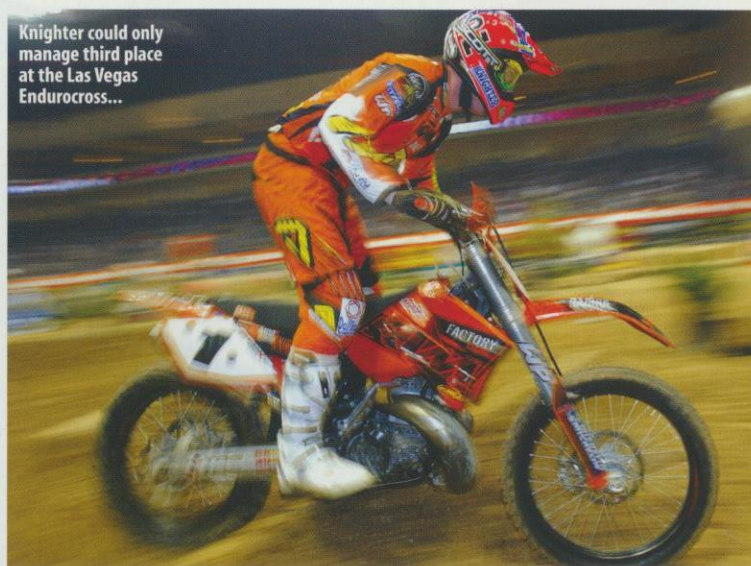
Beating Everts was something I really wanted to do, mainly because I'd read on a few internet chat rooms that he was going to spank me. I'm sure he wasn't going to try and win at all costs but beating him felt good nonetheless. The only thing I wish I'd done differently was put a lap on everyone. I stopped and waited at the finish for the three hours to be up rather than do another lap. Looking back it would have been nice to have completed one whole lap more than everyone else. Either way I won, which was the main thing.

Although I've won lots of extreme, indoor and beach races during the past few seasons winning non-championship races at the end of the year certainly isn't easy.

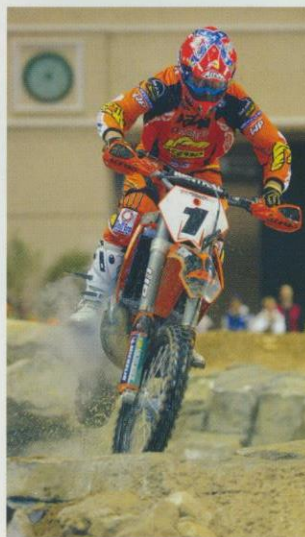
At the beginning of the season it's fine because I'm well rested and motivated to start the new season. With several weeks to rest and prepare between WEC events it's not too difficult to keep things rolling throughout the year either. But at the end of the season events come thick and fast, leaving barely enough time to wash my riding gear before heading to the next race.

Added to that I often ride a different bike at each event, which makes things harder. Flying from the Isle of Man to the UK, into Europe or to the States also takes it out of you and when you have a limited amount of time to set-up a new bike, well, that makes it hard too.

Not winning in Vegas pissed me off. Not because I missed out on ten grand but because



Knighter could only manage third place at the Las Vegas Endurocross...



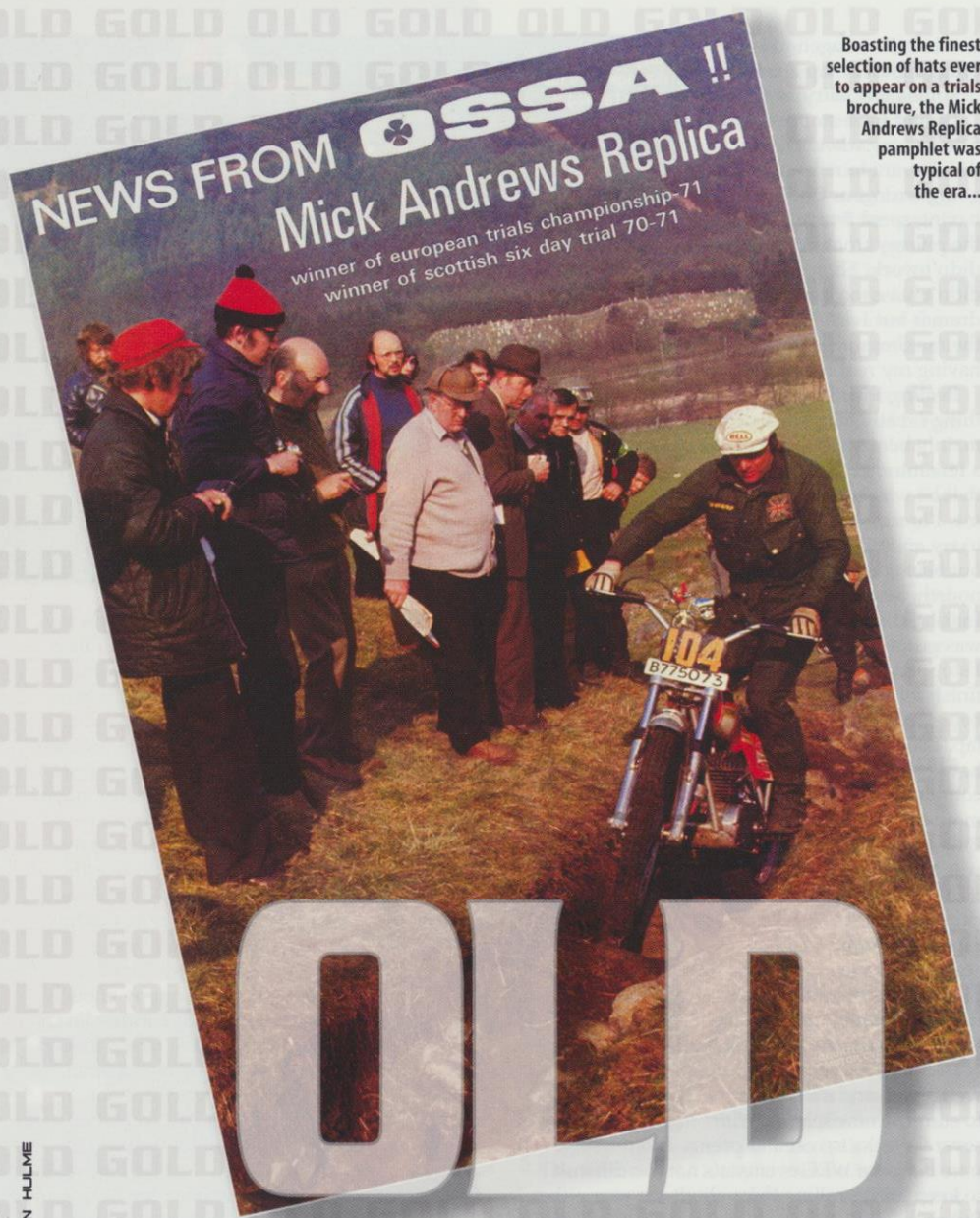
I really wanted to win. I won my heat race easily enough but then got taken out in the first corner of the main event. With the race basically won or lost depending on what position you got around the first turn I got bumped from behind and that was pretty much that. Each of the heat races were won by the rider that exited the first turn ahead, and so was the final. I didn't really do anything wrong, I guess things just didn't go my way. See what I mean about needing a little luck?

But I should be happy enough with third in Vegas because just a few days before the race it looked like I might not be racing at all.

I'm not sure why, and nor are the doctors that I've seen since, but I passed out for a short while

at home in my kitchen. I don't really remember too much about it, apart from my dog licking my face as I woke up, but I was advised not to race and will need a few more tests when I'm home.

I'm not sure if it was just a long season catching up with me, but looking back I hadn't felt 100 percent for a few weeks. I've been told that there's nothing serious wrong, which is good, and with just a couple of races left to go before I can take some time off I'll be getting myself fully checked out ready for '07. In the meantime I have two more one-off races to compete in before I can put my feet up for a while...



Boasting the finest selection of hats ever to appear on a trials brochure, the Mick Andrews Replica pamphlet was typical of the era...

The now defunct Ossa marque was once a force in world trials. In the first of a two-part article, Kevin Hulme reveals the story behind the Ossa Mk1 (1967-71) and the much-loved Spanish motorcycles...

WORDS & BROCHURES: KEVIN HULME



OLD GOLD

The Spanish manufacturing company Ossa was originally famous for the production of cinema projectors. The founder of the company - an ex-naval officer by the name of Manuel Giro - had fought in the Spanish Civil War and had no real interest in motorcycles until his son Eduardo designed and built a small working two-stroke engine during his summer vacation from school. With the young son showing particular interest in this area, Manuel took the bold decision to encourage Eduardo by giving him space in the factory to begin development and production of a prototype motorcycle. The result of that forward-thinking was a tidy little 125 two-stroke machine

In 1971 and a-half you could choose from either the Ossa Plonker or the Ossa Dick Mann Special!

The 1971 1/2 Plonker



Not available before July, 1971

designated the 'Model A' which eventually saw decent success on the road-racing front.

The production version of the Model A was launched in 1951 to a war-ravaged Spain desperate for personal transport and during the next few years the Model A and its replacement (the Model B which arrived in the mid-Fifties) sold in the region of 80,000 units.

By the early Sixties, motocross and general off-road riding was beginning to take off, especially in the United States where Ossa realised the potential for a complete off-road motorcycle range.

In 1966 Giro visited various off-road meetings in Europe and decided to follow rival manufacturers Bultaco and Montesa in signing a talented young rider who could help the company

with its development in off-road machines.

In January 1967 Ossa signed the young Mick Andrews - originally to ride in motocross but at the same time, to help them develop a trials machine as well. Andrews debuted his new prototype trials machine in February at a Midlands based centre event and finished runner up to European Champion Don Smith.

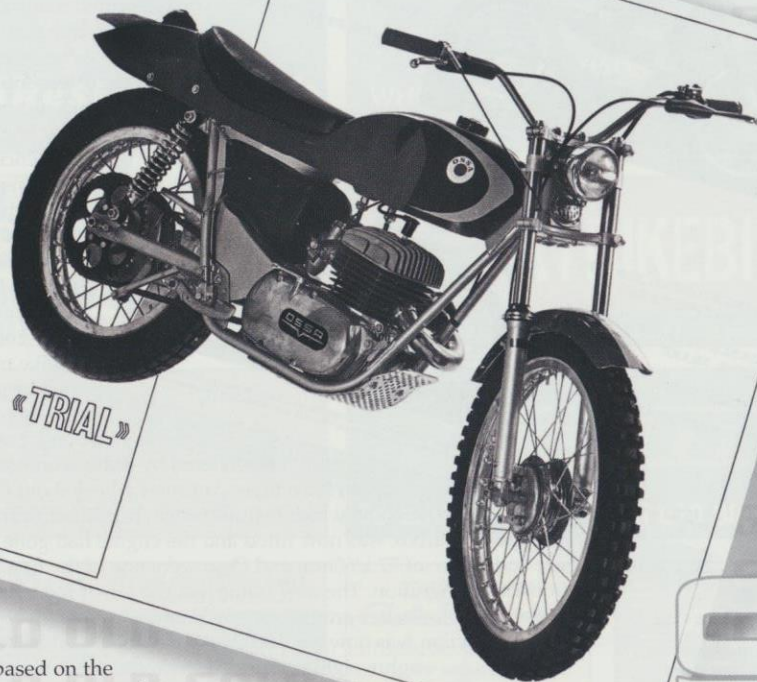
Although a bit ambitious at the time, Ossa entered a three man team for the Scottish Six Days Trial in the May of that year, but with the SSDT rapidly approaching they realised that the new machine wouldn't be ready for the event and the three team members rode what were basically converted trail machines. All the bikes retired with mechanical problems and the new machine - named the 'Plonker' - got off to a very poor start. The first season was not all bad though with Andrews taking wins in his native Derbyshire based national Bemrose trial and sixth place in the British Trials Championship. For 1968 the name was changed from the 'Plonker' to the 'Pennine'. This machine featured a much detuned



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TRIAL



«TRIAL»

250 cc.

The 1968 trials, enduro and motocross bikes all used the same basic engine and chassis combination but with detail differences!

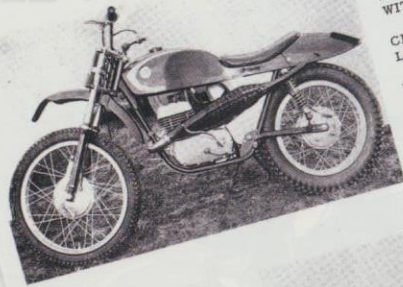
engine of 230cc based on the Barcelona 24 hour winning road-race machine. The bike was in some people's opinion the ugliest trials machine ever built. It was still very loosely based on their trail machine and even featured a high front mudguard giving it an odd appearance. Priced at £295.00 only 40 of the machines were imported into the UK.

Mick Andrews at this point was also pursuing a motocross career and so very little was seen of the early trials machines. But 1968 was not a complete waste of time on the trials front, as Andrews took a fine second place in the SSDT showing that the machine did have plenty of potential. Later in the year a few minor modifications had begun to appear on the works machines: much of the ugly fibreglass was removed giving the bike a slimmer and smaller appearance, and a new cylinder head and barrel were also fitted to make the power more suited to a trials machine.

1969 saw Andrews once again finish runner up at the SSDT and on the sales front Ossa had a major breakthrough. The proprietor of the 'Windsor Comp Shop' Colin Moram, made an approach to the Ossa importer to sell him all his remaining stock of trials machines at a cut price. This was agreed and Moram set about making the machines more attractive to the UK market. He removed all the ugly fibreglass bodywork and replaced it with alloy mudguards and petrol tank and also included other modifications of his own design. The price was the same as before despite all the modifications and the new bikes were an instant hit - selling out very quickly.

For 1970 Ossa told Andrews to concentrate on trials as they needed to win

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the SSDT. Never one to duck a challenge, Mick won the Spanish European Championship trial and took a fantastic first win in the Scottish. His winning machine looked very similar to the Moram converted machines but actually featured many modifications. The frame was shortened by two inches, the steering head angle was much steeper and the exhaust pipe now went over the engine with the main silencer under the seat. The engine capacity had risen from 230cc up to 240cc and the carburettor size went from 24mm to 26mm. This gave the machine plenty of top-end power. The bike retained its four-speed gearbox but a five-speed box was already in development to match the ones offered by Bultaco and Montesa.

In November Andrews wheeled out the pre-production machine which featured even more modifications. The new five-speed gearbox was now fitted and the engine had gone up to 250cc with a bore and stroke of 72 x 60mm and Ossa were one of the first manufacturers to fit electronic ignition. The new frame had the lower frame tubes removed which allowed for better ground clearance and a lower seat height. The engine protection was now a sump shield manufactured from a very strong lightweight plastic type material. With new lightweight alloy hubs and wheelrims the bike weighed in at a very competitive 200lbs.

OLD GOLD

ENGINE SPECIFICATIONS
PENNINE 230cc TRIALS

SINGLE CYLINDER:
BORE AND STROKE:
DISPLACEMENT CC/CENT:
COMPRESSION RATIO:
B.H.P.
CYLINDER:
CYLINDER HEAD:
CONNECTING ROD:
CRANKSHAFT:
CARBURETTOR:
IGNITION:
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SEAT:
FOOTREST HEIGHT:
WHEELBASE:
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12 INCHES
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230 cc
8-1
16 @ 6,000 r.p.m.
LIGHT ALLOY WITH IRON LINER
STEEL, WITH DOUBLE-ROW ROLLER BEARING
BALL BEARING MOUNTED
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Ossa had also orchestrated a deal whereby the machines were fitted with alloy handlebars manufactured by Renthal. With ex trials rider Peter Fletcher becoming the new importer for 1971, things began to look very promising on the sales front. The new machines arrived in the January and were launched to the British public as the Mick Andrews Replica MKI. Needless to say they became an instant hit with the public. Mick went on to take another win in the SSDT (on his prototype) making it two in a row and the machine proved a huge success on the sales front. And based on the sales of this machine, work began on the MKII model which we'll deal with next month...

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MIKE RAPLEY



Mark Hicken

Virtually throughout his career as a top class trials rider, from his days as a Youth B Championship star, until he retired from regular competition, Mark Hicken rode for Fantic-Motor. That added up to a grand total of almost 17 years, effectively the entire time that Fantic existed as a popular trials bike manufacturer.

Midlander Mark, now a car dealer at Bidford on Avon, in Warwickshire earned his first sponsored ride way back in 1980, when disc jockey Dave Lee Travis was hosting Junior Kickstart (a TV series pioneering the early days of arena trials outdoors). Roy Cary had just

taken on the Fantic franchise and recognised that he needed a good presentation of his bike if it was to succeed.

Mark, very much an up and coming youth rider, naturally accepted the offer, and for the next 17 years he rode nothing else. Kids grow up quickly when they are in their teens and at a time that saw some of the fastest development of trials bikes, Fantic quickly became *the* bike of the era.

The other popular bikes of the time were Bultacos and Montesas from Spain, comparatively big and heavy machines and the advent of the smaller and much lighter Fantics, originally in

What's the Story?

The air-cooled bikes were incredibly popular, beginning with the 125, then the 200, then the 240 (212cc), followed by the 300 (250cc), all with conventional twin-shocks. Yamaha had introduced the TY Mono in 1984 which necessitated Fantic having a monoshock machine and they developed the 301, which was fairly successful and the less successful 302 which was a totally new design.

Hicken rode Fantic throughout this time, with Cary as the importer, but Roy also had his finger in other pies - notably Beta - and he needed faces to become the importers of these two machines. Mark Hicken was offered the Fantic agency and later, John Lampkin the Beta agency.

Mark took on the Fantics from 1991, with the first of the water-cooled models, the Fantic K-Roo. Fantic had been incredibly successful in the past, but due to the economic climate of the time, and competition from other makes, the days of selling hundreds of bikes a year were over, and though Mark continued to import Fantics for six more years, the best times had already gone.

Mark doesn't regret those days as he still had lots of success with the marque, both as a rider and importer. As he said recently: 'I learned and earned a lot from Fantic, and I can owe my current success to those days'. He rode trials, he imported bikes, he lectured and demonstrated with the Star Rider safety scheme, and he achieved good results as a top Midland Centre rider.

Even today he rides through the winter, a Montesa 4RT is his current weapon of choice, but the garage business is his mainstay these days. 'I can't turn the clock back, and probably don't want to. Fantic was good to me, and people remember them fondly. There is even rumours of a new bike still to come, but whether it happens or not, only time will tell.'

'I learned and earned a lot from Fantic, and I can owe my current success to those days...'

125cc form then 200 (156cc) capacity, revolutionised the sport (see last month's Old Gold). From little acorns big oaks grow and it wasn't long before Fantic were selling up to 1500 bikes a year in the UK, figures that now an importer can only dream about.

Hicken and Cary had a very good relationship and if anybody was known as the Fantic rider, it was Mark and our picture this month was taken at the British Experts Trial at Lypiatt Park near Stroud (a venue now used to display works of modern art). The year is probably 1986 - though we can't be sure, and Mark is riding the first monoshock model that Fantic produced, the 301.

Whether you're an off-road racing ace or just starting out, everybody needs somewhere to hone their technique - which is where practice tracks come in. Each month TBM features a different track which, in our opinion, offers an enjoyable day's riding in an interesting area...

Elsworth Moto Parc

Where: Near the village of Elsworth, roughly eight miles west of Cambridge.

What's it like: Elsworth is one of East Anglia's most popular MX venues. Set in a small valley, the technical 1.2 mile track has a vast array of jumps varying in size, length and speed - giving it a real 'supercross' feeling. Don't let

this put you off though, if you're half-way handy in the air or want to practise your MX technique it's a great place to hone your skills. The surface is clay, and when conditions are right it's possibly the grippiest dirt you'll ever ride, with the consistency of plasticene. Conversely, it can also be as hard as concrete!

There's generally a good mix of abilities present, though

the standard generally leans towards experienced riders so you do have to be aware of the quick guys and employ some 'track sense'.

What it isn't: A gentle bimble. Although the surface is kept in excellent condition the number of jumps (and turns) makes it a good workout - especially if you're not hitting all the landing ramps.

Extra info: The track isn't

used in bad weather so you *must* phone the 'track line' to check it's open. They also close in the depths of winter and re-open in late February (or as soon as the weather permits) having carried out repairs, refaced the jumps etc. Due to its popularity, days are normally run in sessions from 11am onwards - grouping two- and four-strokes separately to ensure the noise from the thumpers is concentrated into relatively short bursts and not constant throughout the day!

Yep, despite Elsworth being well established (the track's been there for over a quarter-of-a-century) it now suffers

complaints from the nearby village and therefore runs to the 96dB MX noise limit.

There's also a separate small circuit for kids, though the 'schoolboys' get sessions on the main track. Oh, and sidecars aren't allowed...

Facilities: Burger and spares vans on Sundays, clean portaloos (with separate ones for ladies!).

Opening Times: 10am-4pm Wednesdays, Sundays, some Saturdays and bank holidays.

Cost: £25 over 100cc, £23 up to 100cc, £12 kids' track.

Directions: Whichever direction you're coming from you need to access the Moto

Parc from the A428 - *do not* use the back roads through Elsworth village. Turn off the A428 dual carriageway at the Cambourne junction and take the exit from the roundabout signed for Elsworth. The road runs alongside the 428 before curving sharp right, followed by a long straight. At the end of the straight the road then turns sharp left and the entrance to the track is on the right-hand side, on the outside of the corner. If you run through a set of esses you've gone too far..!

Contact: Track line 01480 831152 / elsworthmotoparc.co.uk

Pic: Marc Tucker

WORDS & PICS: BARRI

ACCESS ALL AREAS

FREE CLASSIFIEDS BIKES

Yamaha YZ250 2T, 2003, French enduro spec model, 130 hours, road legal, Clarke tank, 18in rear wheel, well maintained, £2350. Tel 07774 103111 (Devon)

Beta Alp 4.0, 53-reg, T&T, low mileage, Renthals, handguards, light road use only, as new cond, £2150. Tel 01276 472522 (Surrey)

Yamaha WR450F, 2003, T&T, light green lane use, well maintained regardless of cost, lovely cond, £2450 ono. Tel 01472 590904 (Lincs)

KTM 620 Supercomp, 1997, T&T, 4000km, two owners, recent full service, new tyres, headlight, handguards, braided hoses, WP, £1650. Tel 01488 72252 (Berks)

Suzuki DR-Z400S, blue, T&T, new pads/discs/output shaft seal, good green lane bike, £1950. Tel 07814 826610 (Hants)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, 2004, 55-reg, 500 miles, sump/frameguards, case protectors, like new, £2850. Tel 01302 709510 (S Yorks)

Honda XR250R, 2002, T&T, only 1900 miles, must be seen, £1850. Tel 01302 787286 (S Yorks)

Honda CRM250 mkIII, 1997, sump/hand/frameguards, good tyres/c+s/pads, very reliable, very little use, kept as spare bike, £1500 ono. Tel 01368 840728 (Edinburgh)

Yamaha WR426F, T&T, under 700 miles, mature owner from new, never raced, mint cond, £2600. Tel 01959 573332 (Kent)

Husaberg FE501e, 2003, MoT, low hours, well maintained, £1850. Tel 07789 838007 (Yorks)

Honda CRF250X, 2005, road reg'd, new tyres/c+s, sale due to injury. Tel 07701 014021 (W Mids)

Honda CRM250, 1992, MoT, owned for six years, well maintained with receipts and manual, can email further details/pics. Tel (mobile) 07886 610212 or 01626 365109 (Devon)

Gas Gas EC200, Jan '04, road reg'd, Renthals, sump/handguards, FMF Gnarly pipe, good cond, must be seen. Tel (mobile) 07971 031543 or 01271 378472 (Devon)

BMW R1200GS, March 2006, blue, 2900 miles, FSH, warranty, heated grips, ABS, immaculate cond, £8500. Tel 07802 644483 (Notts)

Suzuki DR-Z400S, 2000, W-reg, T&T, 7000 miles, light green lane use, reliable, exc cond, £1850. Tel 07789 776810 (Essex)

Yamaha WR450F, 2004, make good supermoto, £2600. Also Yamaha WR250F, 2005, £2750. Please call for details. Tel 07881 585590 (W Yorks)

KTM 200EXC, 2004, 54-reg, 36 hours/865 miles, this bike is almost like new, must be seen, £2550 ono. Tel (mobile) 07743 961944 or 01489 699208 (Hants)

KTM 300EXC, 2004, 53-reg, FMF pipe, new bearings top to bottom, handguards, bashplate, good cond, £2450 ono. Tel (mobile) 07743 961944 or 01489 699208 (Hants)

KTM 450EXC, 2004, road reg'd, only 1100 miles, green lane use, exc cond, £2995 ono. Tel (mobile) 07920 495099 or 01327 702001 (Northants)

Yamaha YZ250F, 2001, road reg'd, T&T, standard bike, same owner from new, good cond. Tel 01752 695590 (Devon)

Beta 270 Rev3, 2002, unused for two-and-a-half years, still on original tyres, never used in competition, some spares, immaculate, £1275 ono or p/x 2T enduro bike. Tel (mobile) 07773 748308 or 01780 752146 (Lincs)

Honda CRF250X, 2004, road legal, rad braces, bashplate, Trailtech, handguards, top-end rebuilt as precaution, new discs/fork seals/front wheel bearings, excellent, £2550.

Tel 01344 776057 (Berks)

Honda CRF250X, 2004, road reg'd, taxed, hardly used, alloy sumpguard, Lynx Trailtech, new boxed spare plastics, exc cond, £2995 ono. Tel (mobile) 07734 049889 or 01784 245956 (Middx)

KTM 525EXC, 2003, T&T, fully maintained, 150 hours' green lane use only, extras, many new parts, £2750, supermoto wheels available. Tel (mobile) 07788 937529 or 01572 755944 (Rutland)

Suzuki DR-Z400S, 2000, W-reg, black/silver, T&T, 7000 miles gentle green lane use, some spares, good cond, given up off-road so don't use it, £1750. Tel 01598 753743 (Devon)

Honda XR400R, 2003, unused last 18 months due to travelling, superb cond, must be seen, £2750. Tel Tom on 07812 042605 (Cheshire)

KTM 125EXC, 2003, road reg'd, new tyres, well maintained, rider upgrading, exc cond, exc first enduro bike, £1950. Tel (mobile) 07979 258649 or 01884 242386 (Devon)

Honda XR400, 2003 reg, currently SORN, vgc as very little use, £1700 no offers. Tel 01373 463253 (Somerset)

Beta Rev3 250, 2003, not road reg'd, very little use, full lighting kit, exc cond all round, £1850 ono. Tel (mobile) 07967 583441 or 01420 477318 (Hants)

BMW R1200GS, 2004, 04-reg, red, ABS, heated grips, hand/cylinder protectors, tankbag, topbox, large screen plus original, exc cond, £7300. Tel 07956 480735 (France)

Kawasaki KLX300, 2000, road reg'd, 5000 miles, currently SORN, standard bike, good cond, £1250. Tel 01206 845567 (Essex)

Honda CRF450F, 2005, 05-reg, road reg'd, T&T, mature owner, lots of carbon extras, Honda maintenance manual, immaculate, £3250 ono. Tel 01472 319129 (Lincs)

KTM 450EXC, 2003, bashplate, handguards, never raced or rallied, owned by pensioner needing easier ride, exc cond, £2500. Tel 01280 850741 (Northants)

Honda XR200, 1982, with lots of spares, call for details. Tel 01344 428098 (Berks)

Husaberg FC470, 03-reg, T&T, £800 rebuild by main dealer, new plastics/battery/rubber, very nice cond, £1900. Tel 01392 811715 (Devon)

Beta RR250, 2005, 55-reg, taxed, 1100km, 350 power-up kit fitted, new spare plastics plus more, £2995. Tel 07747 864294 (W Yorks)

Honda XR250R, 2002, only 1600 miles, MoT, DEP pipe, Renthals, handguards, exc cond, £2250 ono. Tel 01409 241158 (Devon)

Honda CRM250 mkII, 1993, white/blue, Pro Skill and RSV pipes, recent c+s/tyre/rings/wheel bearings, flatslide carb, very reliable, sale due to kids, £1050 ono. Tel 07785 928637 (N Yorks)

Beta Rev3, 2003, 270cc trials bike, good cond, reason for sale rider changing sport, £1250. Tel 01709 326066 (S Yorks)

Honda CRF450R, 2002, T&T, trail use only, engine rebuild, recent c+s, digital clocks, sidestand, handguards, AC10s, £2000 ono. Tel 01455 823964 (Leics)

Yamaha TTR250, 2005, 3600 miles, factory lowered suspension so ideal for smaller riders, never seen rain or winter, immaculate, £2250. Tel 07799 144163 (S Yorks)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, 2001, T&T, 2400 miles, fully road legal, quiet, Renthals, sump/hand/frameguards, gentle use, never raced, £2000 ono. Tel (mobile) 07929 335446 or 01594 842557 (Gloucs)

Gas Gas EC250, 2005, new in April '06, taxed, 600km on clock, Renthals, handguards, Acerbis tail-light unit, new rear tyre, mint bike, £2800. Tel 01380 729982 (Wilts)

Honda CRM250 mki, F-reg, white/red, o-ring chain, exc runner but noisy balancer shaft bearings, £695. Tel 01903 785330 (W Sussex)

KTM 400EXC, Sept' 04, 54-reg, 70 hours' use, just

serviced, KTM bashplate, great bike, exc cond, £3000. Tel 01926 743398 (Warks)

Honda XR250R, 1999, white, T-reg, MoT, black powder-coated frame, XR2 graphic kit, CRD sumpguard, uprated headlight, Acerbis extras, well cared for and maintained. Tel 07834 279106 (Devon)

KTM 250EXC 4T, 2005, UK bike, taxed, low hours, well maintained, many extras, works graphics, green lane use only, superb, bargain at £2495 ono. Tel 01451 831174 (Gloucs)

Gas Gas EC450FSE, T&T, one owner, 800 miles, low seat height, rad braces, hand/sumpguards, Renthals, green lane use, mint, £1995 ono. Tel 07970 716613 (Manchester)

Honda XR400, 1998, Ohlins, White Bros, Pro Tapers, £1850. Honda CRM250 mkII, re-ringed, new XR wheels, £1675. BSA 250 B25, 1968, trials trim, exc cond, £1050. Tel 07989 103220 (W Yorks)

Yamaha YZ125, 1998, Rental Fatbars, good cond, also 18 and 19in rear wheels, £995. Tel (mobile) 07880 947080 or 01822 840542 (Devon)

Kawasaki KX80 small wheel, 1999, well maintained, exc cond, £795. Tel (mobile) 07880 947080 or 01822 840542 (Devon)

Yamaha WR250F, 2003, 03-reg, blue with Wex sticker kit, MoT, 5000km, road legal, green lane use, Fatbars, hand/sumpguards, spare plastics, £2450 ono. Tel (mobile) 07867 807877 or 01625 535399 (Cheshire)

Gas Gas EC250, 2006, approx 30 hours' trail/H&H use, new plastics/graphics, converted back to road trim, maintained regardless of cost, on display at original dealer's showroom but being sold by owner. Tel 02476 714609 or 0121 380 3801 (W Mids)

Suzuki DR-Z400S, 2000, W-reg, 5800 miles, green lane use only, Renthals, Acerbis handguards, also some spares available, £1400 ono. Tel 01440 783020 (Suffolk)

Honda XR400R2, T&T, 3500 miles, Renthals, frame/sumpguards, Trailtech speedo, good c+s/tyres, immaculate cond, £2100 ono. Tel 01929 550924 (Dorset)

Gas Gas EC250, 1998, new rings, spare plastics/levers/bearings, good cond, lack of use forces sale, £1050. Tel (mobile) 07779 342773 or 01562 633331 (Worcs)

Honda XR400R, 2000, red, MoT, currently SORN, 6100km, Renthals, frame/sump/fork/discguards, green laned, well maintained, £1875 ono. Tel (mobile) 07802 323232 or 01245 360235 (Essex)

Honda XR400, 2003, MoT, 5600km, green lane use only, new c+s, indicators, lowering link, bashplate, handbook, workshop manual, £1900. Tel 07766 725086 (Leics)

KTM 125SX, done four H&H only, 18in rear, Fatbars, spare HGS system, o-ring chain, new sprockets/pads, mint cond, £2750. Tel (mobile) 07843 461148 or 01237 422399 (Devon)

Yamaha WR250F, 2003, fully road legal, bashplate, frameguards, rad braces, exc green laner, can email pics, £2400 ono. Tel 01594 563021 (Gloucs)

Suzuki DR-Z400S, 51-reg, 5400 miles, enduro and SM wheels, bashplate, handguards, nice looking bike, exc cond, £2100 ono. Tel 07920 251218 (Kent)

Montesa Cota 314R, road reg'd 1997, T&T, white/purple, gold wheels, not trialled much, good cond, some spares available, £800 ono. Tel (mobile) 07790 230654 or 01506 494997 (W Lothian)

Husaberg FE450, 2004, 1300 miles, light trail use only, mature owner, honest standard bike in exc cond, £2500. Tel 01666 860992 (Wilts)

KTM 450EXC, 2005, new Michelins/pads/plastics/graphics/handguards/oil/filters, green laned only, stunning, £3300. Tel 01443 688271 (Mid Glam)

KTM 525EXC, 2005, 05-reg, well maintained, hand/sumpguards, good cond, £3150. Tel 01732 842809 (Kent)

Honda CRF250X, 2004, road reg'd, elec start, new clutch/plastics, great green laner, swap for KTM 125EXC or

£2400 ono. Tel 07919 535228 (Herts)

Honda XR400, Y-reg, T&T, low miles, lots of extras/spares, great bike, good cond, £2000. Tel 020 8883 4748 (London)

Yamaha TTR250 Open Enduro, 1993, currently SORN, no MoT, white powder-coated frame, new starter motor/valve oil seals, brushguards, reliable fun, £1100 ono. Tel 01525 717460 (Beds)

Gas Gas EC250, 2004, road reg'd, maintained regardless of cost, loads of extras/spares, full guards, FMF pipe, very clean example, £2725. Tel 07723 004671 (Derbys)

Honda CRM250 mkII, T&T, new tyres, FMF exhaust, good cond, lack of use forces sale, £1150 ono. Tel 01793 430193 (Wilts)

Honda XR250, 2003 model, T&T, one owner, low miles, CRD sumpguard, alloy bars, barkbusters, exc cond, £2450. Tel 01803 812940 (Devon)

KTM 250EXC 2T, 2005, road reg'd, 67 hours' use, road kit, handguards, bashplate, Datatag, exc cond, £2795. Tel (mobile) 07968 083795 or 01462 453433 (Herts)

KTM 525EXC, 2004, 04-reg, taxed, new c+s/tyre/brakes, vgc, £2700 ono. Tel 01495 272451 (Gwent)

KTM 250EXC 2T, 2002, 02-reg, sump/hand/clutchguards, standard bike with some spares/usual books, good cond, £1895 ono. Tel 01353 776336 (Camps)

Gas Gas TXT200 trials bike, yellow, 04-reg, little use, over 40s rider, mint cond, £1785 ono, can deliver. Tel 07767 674008 (Leics)

Honda CRF450R, 53-reg, hardly used, light use only, new FMF pipe, lack of use forces sale, £2250 ono. Tel 07929 841531 (Essex)

Honda XR650L, 2003, MoT, hundreds of pounds worth of spares, good cond, can email pics, £1800 ono or p/x something smaller. Tel 01284 752352 (Suffolk)

KTM 525EXC, 2005, 54-reg, 2500 miles, sump/handguards, spare plastics, large IMS tank, supermoto wheels, many extras, maintained regardless of cost, £3700 ono. Tel 07967 585223 (Staffs)

Yamaha YZ125, brand new and unused, all UK documents. Spares kit, first to see will buy, £2800. Tel 07770 938273 (Kent)

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

Honda XLR200, T-reg, 16000km, MoT, elec start, new DID o-ring c+s, suspension serviced, spare tyres, £890. Tel 01271 326653 (Devon)

KTM 450EXC, 2003, 03-reg, T&T, 98 hours' use, case saver, sump/handguards, rear mousse, all manuals, good cond, £2300 ono. Tel 07791 504718 (Cumbria)

Honda XR650R, 2002, 3000 road miles, FSH, dry use only, immaculate cond, £2300 ono. Tel 01428 727134 (Hants)

Suzuki DR-Z400S, 2003, yellow/white, T&T, 7500 miles, green lane use, looks tatty but runs very well, £995 ono. Tel 0114 286 3125 (S Yorks)

Suzuki DR350SE, 1998, T&T, one owner, many extras, well maintained, £1250. Tel 0114 231 4543 (S Yorks)

Yamaha WR450F, 2005, road reg'd, serviced by Yamaha dealer, green lane use, lots of extras, Akrapovic pipe, spare wheels, vgc, £3250. Tel 07920 494301 (Hants)

Gas Gas Pampera mkIII, 2002, T&T, low mileage, Renthals, hand/sumpguards, unused last 12 months, good cond, £1450. Tel 07802 151220 (Oxon)

KTM 525EXC, 2003, T&T, rad/sump/handguards, elec fan, rotary steering damper, big tank, supermoto wheels, exc cond, £4850. Tel 07802 151220 (Oxon)

Suzuki DR650RS, road oriented trailie, classic blue/white, MoT, 39000km, all original, ideal winter bike, £750. Tel 01963 441055 (Somerset)

KTM 200EXC, 2005, 28 hours/600 miles, various extras plus standard parts, exc cond, £3200 ono. Tel (mobile) 07742 954570 or 01235 862933 (Oxon)

Honda XR400R, 1998, R-reg, white, T&T, low mileage,

FREE CLASSIFIEDS

many extras, green lane use only, exc cond, £1650 ono. Tel 01455 271648 (Leics)

KTM 300EXC, 2006, road reg'd, light use, old owner, genuine reason for reluctant sale, superb cond, save a fortune compared to new, £3495. Tel 07957 328494 (Surrey)

Honda CRF250X, 2004, used for gentle green laning only by one mature owner, all the usual extras, outstanding cond, £2800. Tel (mobile) 07885 278928 or 01924 863982 (W Yorks)

Honda XR400, 2001, T&T, 6000 miles, Acerbis fork/discguards, CRD bashplate/frame protectors, spare tyres, manuals, exc original condition, £2100. Tel 07799 252946 (E Sussex)

Honda XR650R, 2002, 3000 road miles, dry use only, FSH, immaculate cond, £2300 ono. Tel (mobile) 07989 981355 or 01428 727134 (Hants)

Husqvarna TE250, 2004, engine upgraded to '05 spec, CRD sumpguard, handguards, heelguards, green lane use only, £2300 ono. Tel 01403 786743 (W Sussex)

Husqvarna TE250, 2006 model, 56-reg, new and unused, UK bike, phone for details, £3950. Tel 01928 788342 (Cheshire)

KTM 525EXC, 2003 reg, time for a change, will swap or p/x for two-stroke of same value or WHY, call for details. Tel Steve on 01491 573587 (Oxon)

KTM 250EXC Racing, 2005, with 350cc upgrade, black/orange race rep, only 15 hours/300 miles, never raced, £3550. Tel 01803 607019 (Devon)

Kawasaki KX85 big wheel, 2000, full engine rebuild, new barrel, not raced, daughter moving on to new bike, £850 ono. Tel 01841 540876 (Cornwall)

Suzuki DR-Z400S, 2002, blue/white, 3500 road miles, DEP exhaust, Renthals, handguards, exc cond, phone for details, £2100 ono. Tel 01624 626742 (IoM)

Yamaha TT350, white, 1991/2, personally imported from Italy but never reg'd, good runner, fair cond, £695 ovno. Tel 07970 852117 (Herts)

Honda XR400, 1997, white, road reg'd but used mainly off-road so good mechanical cond with usual scuffs, regular oil/filter changes, AC10s, £1550. Tel 01458 831387 (Somerset)

Honda CRF250X, 2004 model, road reg'd, dual start, new Hinson clutch/graphics/battery/plastics/seat cover, looks and goes great, £2400 or p/x KTM 125. Tel 07919 535228 (Herts)

Gas Gas EC400FSE, 2003, red, taxed, Arrow exhaust, Ohlins shock, Acerbis handguards, good tyres, 100 percent reliable and well serviced, £2150 ono. Tel 07751 866384 (S Yorks)

Honda XR400, Y-reg, T&T, lots of extras/spares, good starter, great cond. Tel 020 8883 4748 (London)

CCM 404DS, many extras, reluctant sale, exc cond, £2150 ono. Tel (mobile) 07976 237221 or 01706 829042 (Lancs)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, 2003, T&T, only 1200 miles, hand/sumpguards, 909 bars, enduro and trail tyres, exc cond, as new, £2250 ono. Tel (mobile) 07736 878106 or 01458 259197 (Somerset)

Honda XR400, 1999, T-reg, red, Gadget sumpguard, Renthals, bar risers, headlamp guard, good tyres/c+s, well maintained, £1595 ono. Tel 07769 692443 (S Yorks)

Yamoto PW80, 2005, blue, 3-speed semi-auto, drum brakes, mono-shock, reliable fun kids machine, also size 3 Ikon boots, £350. Tel 01280 701799 (Northants)

Sherco 4.5i, 2005/06, T&T, electric start, exc handling and very smooth power, with spare plastics/complete wheels, £2800 ono. Tel 01245 463221 (Essex)

Honda XR600R, 1984, stored for 15 years, recommissioned, lots of new parts, great runner, good all-rounder, £1000. Tel (mobile) 07763 884210

or 01978 842507 (Cheshire)

KTM 125SX, 2002, black plastics and rims, VHM Gold head, lady owner, ring for more details. Tel 07799 254262 (N Wales)

Kawasaki KLR250, reg'd 1996, MoT, 11000 miles, new c+s/battery, vgc, bargain at £525. Tel 01483 306437 (Surrey)

Yamaha XTZ750 Super Tenere, 2000, W-reg, blue/white, T&T, 18000 miles, stainless exhaust, tall screen, engine bars, vgc, £1795. Tel (mobile) 07904 297531 or 0113 294 6890 (W Yorks)

KTM 250EXC, 2006, well maintained, good cond. Tel Heinrich on 07887 645756 (London)

Yamaha YZ250, new 18in wheel, Renthals, needs slight attention hence £1200 ono. Tel 07759 140828 (Shrops)

KTM 200EGS, 2000, road reg'd, T&T, autolube, exhaust/handguards, great cond, rider retiring, £1450. Tel (mobile) 07971 259401 or 01799 540346 (Essex)

KTM 525EXC, 2003, road reg'd, sump/clutchguards, light use, vgc, rider retiring, £2400 ono. Tel (mobile) 07971 259401 or 01799 540346 (Essex)

Scorpa 5Y250 Long Ride trials bike, 2003, T&T, not trialled, makes great trailie plus original tank etc included to return to full trials spec, exc cond, £1950 ono. Tel 07921 335338 (Highlands)

Yamaha Serow, 1994, T&T, 18000km, elec start, new shock/disc/tyre/c+s, Scottolier, handguards, manual, toolkit, lots of spares, £1050 ovno. Tel 01252 714574 (Surrey)

KTM 640 Adventure, 2002, 5000 miles, Marsh Performance tuned, WRP exhaust, bashplate, pannier racks and panniers, tools, exc cond, £3000. Tel 01543 372227 (W Mids)

SUPERMOTO

KTM LC4 5M, 2005, 3500 miles, warranty, Datatag, recent service, new Continental tyres, exc cond, £3750. Tel 07772 107574 (Essex)

Honda XR650R supermoto, 2002, FMF seat/graphics, Renthals, Talons/Excels, reliable and clean, good cond, £3000 ono. Tel 07828 490451 (W Yorks)

Honda XR600R supermoto, T&T, Supertrapp exhaust, Excel rims, twin headlights, good cond, £1600 or £1200 with trail instead of SM wheels. Tel Dave on 01432 341791 (Hereford)

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

CCM R30, 2001, Rotax motor, runs really well, good cond, bargain at £1950 or p/x four-stroke green laner. Tel 07956 534035 (Wirral)

Suzuki DR-Z400S supermoto, 3000 miles, extra set of off-road wheels, exc cond, £3495. Tel (mobile) 07974 799438 or 01993 771159 (Oxon)

CCM R30, 04-reg, burgundy red, only 2200 miles, Datatag, bashplate, rear hugger, rear footrest kit, as new, £3200 ono. Tel 01752 847214 (Cornwall)

WANTED

Wanted Honda CRF230 or XR250, may p/x with sportsbike. Tel (mobile) 07850 219007 or 01902 679241 (W Mids)

Wanted purple air scoops for Yamaha Serow. Tel (mobile) 07702 956194 or 01726 64911 (Cornwall)

Wanted CDI unit to fit 1988 Yamaha XT350.

Tel 01842 860129 (Suffolk)

Wanted Honda CRM250, mkII onwards, any cond. Tel 07961 343754 (Herts)

Wanted complete rear wheel for 2006 KTM 525EXC, with or w/o tyre, if front's available as well then great. Tel (mobile) 07917 475837 or 01384 442325 (W Mids)

Wanted CDI unit for Honda CRM250 mkII. Tel Mike on 01978 840124 (N Wales)

Wanted Ohlins shock for XR400R, must be good cond, cash waiting. Tel 07974 723776 (Surrey)

Wanted TBM issue two. Also loads of back issues of TBM for sale. Tel 0121 249 0862 (W Mids)

Wanted USD forks for KDX220, plus sumpguard and CDI. Consider any parts 1999-onwards. Tel 07810 391866 (Hants)

Wanted plastics for 1981 KTM, sidepanels and rear fender. Also sidepanels, seat and other accessories for 1984 KTM 495. Tel 01189 670791 (Berks)

Wanted Yamaha XT500 and/or DT400 twin-shock, looking for original or restored example of each. Tel (mobile) 07980 274657 or 01544 267972 (Powys)

Wanted front-end for 1981 KTM, forks, yokes and wheel. Also 13.5in Ohlins, Fox or Works Performance etc shock. Tel 07759 140828 (Shrops)

Wanted large IMS clear or large ally tank for 2004 KTM 300EXC. Also FMF silencer and wide pegs. Tel 07759 140828 (Shrops)

SPARES

Budget brake upgrade or SM conversion, Nissin CBR600 twin-pot caliper with recent pistons/seals/EBC HH pads, a few scuffs, braided hose, Brembo master cylinder, 320mm floating disc 6-bolt Honda CR fitment, can email pics, £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)

Supermoto wheels to fit BMW F650G6S, 3.5x17 and 4.25x17 Morad rims, Pirelli front tyre, 160-section Continental rear, £450 ono. Tel 01403 823924 (W Sussex)

CRD exhaust to fit Suzuki DR-Z400, header in perfect cond, small dints/scratches on silencer, perfect working order, £120. Tel 01302 709510 (S Yorks)

Piston and rings for 2003-2006 Yamaha WR/YZ450F, genuine parts, bought in error, unopened, rings sealed in box, £80. Tel 01472 590904 (Lincs)

Supermoto wheels to fit Honda XR650R, gold Talon hubs, Excel rims, Talon sprocket, oversize disc, Goldspeed tyres, almost new, £650. Tel 01829 751514 (Cheshire)

Motori Minarelli air-cooled engine, NOS, unused cylinder head, barrel, crank cases, case sides. Tel (eves) 01773 834137 (Derbys)

Large capacity tank to fit Gas Gas EC200/250/300, fits up to 2006 model, £80. Tel (mobile) 07971 300336 or 01246 450772 (Derbys)

Full standard exhaust for Suzuki DR-Z400S, good cond, £100 ono. Also Gadget sumpguard, £35. Tel 07976 181898 (Derbys)

FMF Gnarly exhaust for Gas Gas EC250/300. CRD sumpguard for EC200-300. Airoh helmet, 59-60cm. Wind W2 boots, size 8. Sinisalo body armour. Moose shirt/jeans. Phone for prices. Tel 01280 729982 (Wilts)

Kawasaki KLR600 parts, frame with logbook, swinging arm, seat, front wheel with disc, £40 the lot. Tel 0121 249 0862 (W Mids)

Marzocchi Magnum complete front-end, off Husky but fits XRs. Ohlins shock to fit XR600. Also loads of stuff for Pegaso 650, KLR250, XT600, 650 Dominator and

Cagiva WMX250. Tel 07989 103220 (W Yorks)

Gold Talon wheels to fit XR400, £325 ono. A-Loop tank/seat, £275 ono. White Bros E2 exhaust, £150 ono. IMS pegs, £25. All in immaculate cond, will post. Tel 01929 550924 (Dorset)

Two Brothers exhaust to fit CRF450, 2004-06, almost brand new, definite power gain, £90. Tel 07976 392719 (N Yorks)

Dainese leathers, two-piece zip together, red/silver/black, fit 36in waist/42in chest, slight scuff on elbow, £120 with gloves. Tel 0121 707 1615 (W Mids)

DEP exhaust to fit Suzuki DR350, only used for 100 miles, like new, £120 ono. Tel 01691 648808 (Powys)

Set of Tireballs for 18in rear, unused, still in packaging, complete with lube kit, £120 ono. Tel 01495 272451 (Gwent)

Parts for KTM 620 LC4, forks, yokes, swingarm, shock, rads, plastics. Also Acerbis 23L tank to fit Honda, red, twin taps. Tel 01495 272451 (Gwent)

Sumpguard to fit Yamaha WR250F, new, £40. Stainless steel GYTR silencer with removable quiet insert, £80, can post. Tel 01803 812940 (Devon)

Axo RCS boots, size 42, good quality with waterproof gaiter, four buckles, MX style sole, used 4/5 times, £180 new, haggle around £90 plus postage. Tel 07767 785589 (Herts)

Suzuki DR-Z400S engine, 2002, bought off ebay for spare, not needed, good cond, save pounds on spares, £300, buyer must collect. Tel 01432 273046 (Hereford)

Long distance tank for Honda XR400, white, no graphics, £80 plus postage. Tel 01458 831387 (Somerset)

Supermoto wheels to fit DR-Z400, gold Talon hubs, black rims, £400. Tel (mobile) 07863 350072 or 01903 248243 (W Sussex)

Pair of rads for Suzuki DR-Z400E, no leaks, good cond, £75 plus p&p. Tel (mobile) 07967 585223 or 01543 274358 (Staffs)

Pair of black supermoto rims, used but as new, £50. Tel 01928 788342 (Cheshire)

Sinisalo Enduro Trailride winter gloves, red/black, large, as new, £15. Tel 0121 707 1615 (W Mids)

Oakley O-frame goggles, tribal, vgc, £10. Same but in lemon, £10. Alpinestars jersey, red, XL, vgc, £15. A-Stars SMX gloves, large, £20 ono. Scott 89XI goggles, black, tear-offs, £15. Tel 01732 363515 (Kent)

Alpinestars Tech 6 boots, red, size 11, £80 ono. Scott Voltage goggles, red, tear-offs, case, vgc, £30. No Fear combat pants, freeride style with zip-off lower legs, grey, size 34, £30. Tel 01732 363515 (Kent)

O'Neal jersey and pants, 2006, unused, large top, 32in pants, vgc, £60. Tel 01732 363515 (Kent)

STOLEN

Stolen KTM 250EXC 4T, '02 model, reg KP02 KUY, frame no VBKRC440X2M127668, engine no 02598836009, Acerbis handguards, stolen from Folkestone College on Friday 3 November. Tel 01797 363307 (Kent)

Stolen KTM 250EXC 2T, 2005 model, reg NK05 UCN, frame no VBKGS2025M301539, engine no 0554859102, Farioli graphics, handguards, taken with one set of used and one set of new plastics, stolen from Darlington in Co Durham around 2am on Monday 6 November. Tel Darlington Police on 0845 60 60 365 (Co Durham)

