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# EDITORIAL

## Young At Heart...

'By 'eck lad... that's a grand sounding bike.' The voice came from an old fellow out walking with his lady wife, who'd popped his head up from the other side of a dry stone wall. We were out testing the new Beta Alp and we'd stopped to admire the view over a splendid limestone escarpment, high up in the Yorkshire Dales. But on seeing the walkers we quickly switched off our engines and struck up a conversation with them. They were keen to chat.

Had we come far? Were the bikes special? How often did we come up here? We repaid the compliments of course, asking them where they were travelling to? Had they avoided the rain showers? And were they on holiday, or just locals out for a pleasant walk?

Despite our age differences (they were both long retired), and our different modes of transport, we shared a common love of the countryside. And in particular the splendid scenery high up on this vantage point.

We stood and chatted for ten or more minutes about all sorts of things. They showed us an old wooden fence post which they'd placed between



two large rocks jutting out of a dry stone wall and used as a makeshift bench seat for many years - as they often came up here to admire the view. We in turn showed them around our bikes and explained the differences between them. They told us that they saw plenty of walkers every time they were up here, but they very rarely came across trail riders.

Then with a cheery wave 'good-bye' we left them to enjoy their sandwiches alone, and headed on our way. And as we chugged off into the distance I can remember thinking to myself, I hope that when I get to their age that I'll be as open-minded, young at heart and easy-going as they were.

In fact wouldn't it be great if all countryside users were just as friendly. Because if they really valued our historic countryside - they'd want to share it with everybody...

SI MELBER

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**JULY 2003 NO.95**



## JOLLY GREEN GIANT KILLER?



Here are the first pics of Kawasaki's all-new 2004 mini-thumper, the KX250F. Initially only available in MX trim, the good news is that an enduro version is set to follow. Kawasaki are making bold claims about their new bike, for instance the press blurb states: 'Designed to be both more powerful and lighter than the leading 250 four-stroke, the DOHC 4-valve powerplant is absolutely loaded with light-weight materials and unconventional design techniques.'

I'm not sure about unconventional design techniques, but certainly the spec of the semi-dry-sumped 249cc, five-speed single seems pretty good. There's a new style of lightweight and narrow steel perimeter frame with a steep 26.5 degree steering angle and compact 7.5L tank. A completely redesigned Uni-Trak rear suspension set-up whereby the link pivots on the swingarm as opposed to the

frame (the net result of which is that the shock absorber now moves in an outward arc as it compresses, which Kawasaki claim makes for



a significant improvement in rear wheel traction under acceleration). And weight saving measures include the use of magnesium for the cam-box cover, clutch cover and generator cover. In addition the bike's single header pipe is constructed from titanium (with a stainless muffler), while the MXer even features new lightweight spokes, rims and tyres! It all adds up to a claimed dry weight of just 92.5kg which if true sounds remarkable.

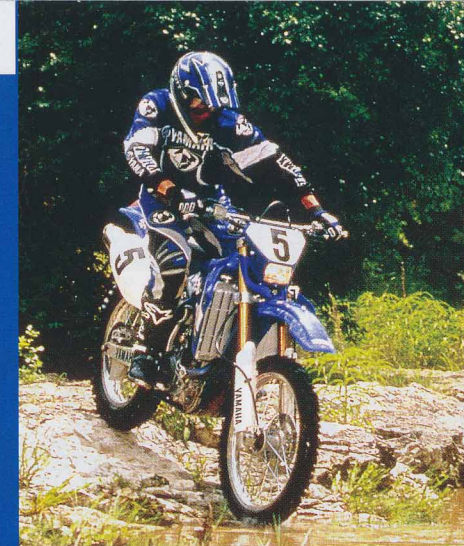
The 250F's engine is all new and developed in conjunction with engineers from Suzuki. Massively oversquare with a bore and stroke of 77 x 53.6mm (exactly the same as Yamaha's WR250F), it features a high 12.1:1 compression ratio (12.5:1 WR-F) and is fed by a 37mm Keihin flat-slide carb (same as the WR-F) with a throttle-position sensor. This, along with the use of light-weight titanium valves, should help it rev onto its (rev-limited) redline of 13,000rpm (max power arrives at 11,000rpm!). Although the MXer is kick-start only (with an auto-decompressor, hot-start lever and optional manual decompressor), the enduro bike will come fitted with an electric-start. Other points of interest include a neat alloy skid-plate and two plastic sideguards to protect the engine, a conventionally routed front brake hose (ie around the fork leg) instead of the under-fork leg routing of old KXs, a semi-floating 250mm front disc (and 240mm rear disc) and a seat height of 950mm.

The first shipments of KX-Fs should arrive before the end of the year, and the promise from Kawasaki is that the enduro version is not too far behind. Can't wait...

## NEW BLUE

Yamaha's line-up of off-roaders has just been extended to include the popular TT250R model and the Italian-built electric-start TT600RE (a replacement for the XT600E - which has become the latest victim of the new Single Vehicle Approval rules). The new bikes which are available immediately as 2003 models are being stocked by Yamaha road bike dealers and come with two years unlimited mileage warranty. Prices are £3999 (plus otr) and £4499 (plus otr) respectively.

Yamaha have also just released details of their 2004 models. For next year, Yamaha are planning on making just very minor modifications to their WR-F range

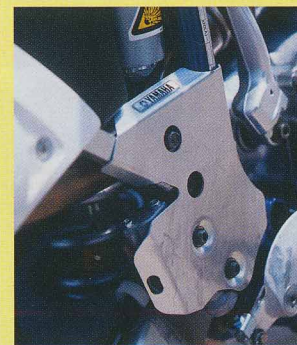


after both bikes received major changes for the 2003 model year. The mods (to both models) include a trick new forged aluminium sidestand which folds away 20 degrees higher than the current design (finally, no more trapped feet or getting stuck in ruts!), a redesigned rear wheel spacer (to make wheel changing easier), a special low-friction 'Kashima' coating on the fork tubes, a new gripper seat and a few other tiny detail changes.

Alterations to the engines include a newly designed low-friction cylinder (250F), new titanium header pipe (250F), new clutch housing (450F) and a remapped CDI (both). Both bikes have also received revised rear suspension settings and a slightly modified linkage assembly.

## BOLT-ON WONDERS

Yamaha have released a catalogue of official factory bolt-on goodies (and accessories) for their range of enduro bikes. We've had chance to



take a look at a number of them up close (attached to a WR-F450) and see for ourselves what they're really like. The kit is predominantly aimed at WR-F owners, and the comprehensive list of parts includes such goodies as an alloy wrap-around bashplate (£69.99), oversized tapered bars (£59.99), bar mounting kit (£36.99), alloy frame-guards (£54.99), alloy rad guards (£48.99), and 17" supermoto wheels (£359.99 rear, £329.99 front). And certainly the quality looks of the kit to be good with a decent standard of fit and finish, and sporting nice subtle Yamaha logos.

Also on offer is a range of Yamaha branded items including clothing, casual wear, gear bag, bike cover and what appears to be a well-priced hydration pack (at only £25.99!). But the item in the catalogue which really caught our eye (which we didn't see first hand) was the Yamaha work pad. This



thick foldaway plastic mat goes under your bike when you're working on it (so you don't lose any nuts and bolts), and also doubles up as a changing mat on wet grass etc. It's a snip at only £64.99!

We usually find that an unbranded tarpaulin from the local DIY store does the same job and costs under a tenner. Anyway, with the exception of the work pad the prices seem about right, the quality's good and of course everything comes with Yamaha's backing. For a copy of the catalogue, see your local Yamaha off-road dealer, or call Yamaha UK on 01932 358000.



## BUCK-A-ROO



Just what the hell is a car doing in the news section of TBM? Well we reckon the launch of this new pick-up from Proton is important enough to qualify as dirt bike news. Why? Because believe it or not this bike carrier comes in at just £5995 + VAT! That's cheaper than many secondhand vans - and actually cheaper than one or two dirt bikes we could name. For those who are interested, the Proton Jumbuck (it's an Aussie sheep, apparently), is powered by a front wheel drive, 1.5 litre petrol-engine and comes with a three year/60,000 mile warranty. For an extra £900 you can go for the GLS version which gets you cloth seats, CD player, alloy wheels, driving lamps, electric windows and mirrors, wheelarch and body side mouldings and two-tone metallic paint. Both models get a 635kg payload capacity, remote central locking and alarm, and power-steering. More details from your nearest Proton dealer and watch out for a brief test drive in TBM soon...

## FLOG IT

Dig out your scratched old spare plastics, torn riding jerseys, part-worn handgrips, toothless old sprockets and anything else dirt bike related that you want to get rid of, and bring 'em along to the first ever TBM/TBEC Endurojumble which is set to take place on Saturday 6 September in

Hertfordshire. Alternatively if you just want to sell your bike, this is the perfect opportunity to plonk it on a stand with a 'For Sale' notice and let the punters eyeball it. Each pitch costs a fiver (and is limited to two bikes and two people), and admission is only a quid (children under ten get in free when accompanied by an adult), so tell all your mates about it. The idea is to sell, swap, exchange, flog, vend, trade, shift or simply give away any old dirt bike

## SNIPPETS

★ Fools that we are we got the website wrong (again) for the TBM Dawn To Dusk 12 hour enduro (23 - 24 August). For the full information try logging onto [www.dawntodusk.info](http://www.dawntodusk.info). Er... sorry about that.

★ French rallyist and extreme-enduro rider Cyril Despres has had a good month wrapping up both the Erzberg Rodeo and the Rallye Orpi Maroc. For KTM mounted Despres it was his second win in a row at the extreme Austrian enduro event, while in the sand-dunes of Morocco he took the lead from day one and was never headed. In the Orpi he finished nearly six minutes ahead of second-placed rider Richard Sainet, and now leads the FIM World Rallye-Raid Championship. There's talk that he may even be at the TBM 12-hour, but that would be telling...

★ Mark your diaries for the 27 July, 'cos that's the date for the Cheltenham Home Guard MCC two-stage trial. This fun event is aimed at trail riders and non-expert competitors, and there are also classes for Ladies, Teams and trials bikes. It all takes place on private land and there's camping available, so for entry forms contact Steve Venn on 01242 697494.

★ STOP PRESS: KTM are believed to be equipping their four-stroke EXC models next year with digital fuel injection. More details as we get 'em.

related gubbins you've got kicking around in your shed, whilst at the same time buying the same old tat from everyone else's stall. The gig kicks off at 1pm and should last a few hours, with the promise of a bar, food and live music in the evening (starting at 6pm). There's free parking, free camping and the following day there's a TBEC enduro to watch (or ride in). For more details including venue etc, see next month's issue...

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# Black To The Future

**After a six-month factory shut-down and company takeover, VOR are steadily getting themselves back on their feet. TBM caught up with the Italian marque's WEC squad recently and put Roman Michalik's 450cc race bike through its paces...**

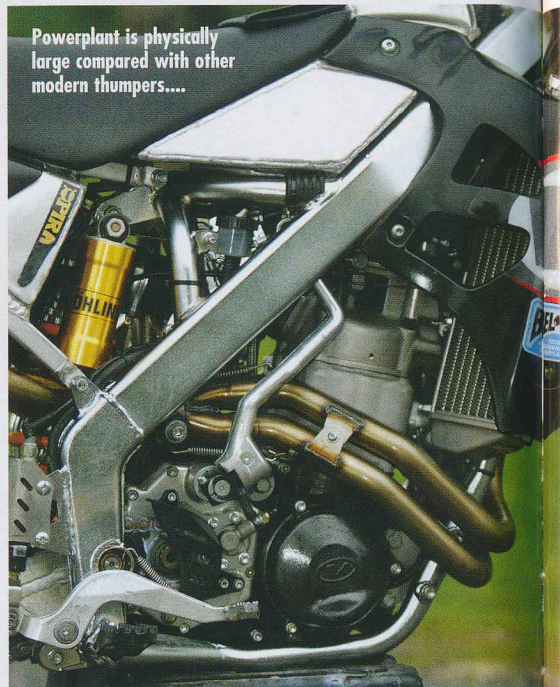
It could have ended so very differently for Roman Michalik in 2003. A rider of immense talent, yet with only one 125cc world title to his name, the tall Czech rider took the 450cc class of the WEC series by the scruff of the neck earlier this season with solid class-topping performances at both the Spanish and Greek rounds. Returning to his best after a couple of lacklustre seasons with TM, Roman became the man to beat in the 450cc class. Not even a day-two DNF at the opening round of the series in Portugal could stop him from closing to within a handful of points of eventual class winner Anders Eriksson at the close of round three.

Unfortunately rounds four, five and six saw Roman fail spectacularly in his bid to claim his second world title as he produced disappointingly low finishes in France, Italy and Finland. By the time the series had moved to Sweden, and Roman had regained his form, it was too late. He finished the year as runner-up in the class.

Things could also have been very different for VOR in 2003. Steadily establishing themselves as a four-stroke manufacturer to be reckoned with,



STYLING: JONNY BEWINDS; PICS: JONNY BEWINDS & GREGO CARRUBBA



Powerplant is physically large compared with other modern thumpers....



VOR try to keep their race bikes as close to the production models as possible. But there are some fairly obvious differences...



ambitious plans of becoming the first European-based manufacturer to produce a new-from-the-ground-up 250cc four-stroke left the company short on change at a time when their production bikes simply weren't selling in the numbers they hoped. From there things got worse. With more money going out than was coming in, and with their quarter-litre thumper project shelved, VOR shut its doors for half a year before finally being taken over by Mondial.

## Men In Black

When it comes to VOR's World Enduro Championship team quality, rather than quantity, is their approach to racing. Not having copious amounts of cash to entice riders onto the black and silver machines, just two official riders, Czech-born Roman Michalik and Finn Mika Ahola, make VOR's set-up the smallest 'official' team in the WEC paddock. (The team has also drafted 2001 250cc four-stroke world champion Mateo Rubin into the squad after the Italian badly broke his leg early last year and lost his KTM ride, but with little success so far). But that's not to say they are in any way inferior to the orange, yellow and blue squads they park

alongside. Far from it. Ruthlessly efficient, well organised and focused, with no two-stroke machinery in their line-up they simply put their 450cc eggs in Roman's basket and their Over-500cc eggs in Mika's. An approach the team has adopted for several seasons and one that has seen them claim two overall ISDE wins thanks to Mika and a healthy number of day wins in this year's WEC series.

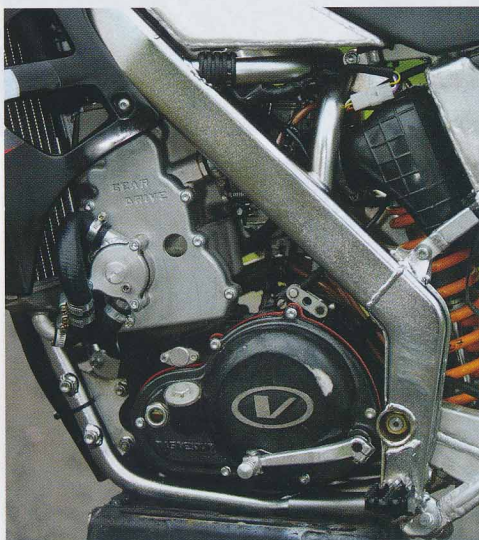
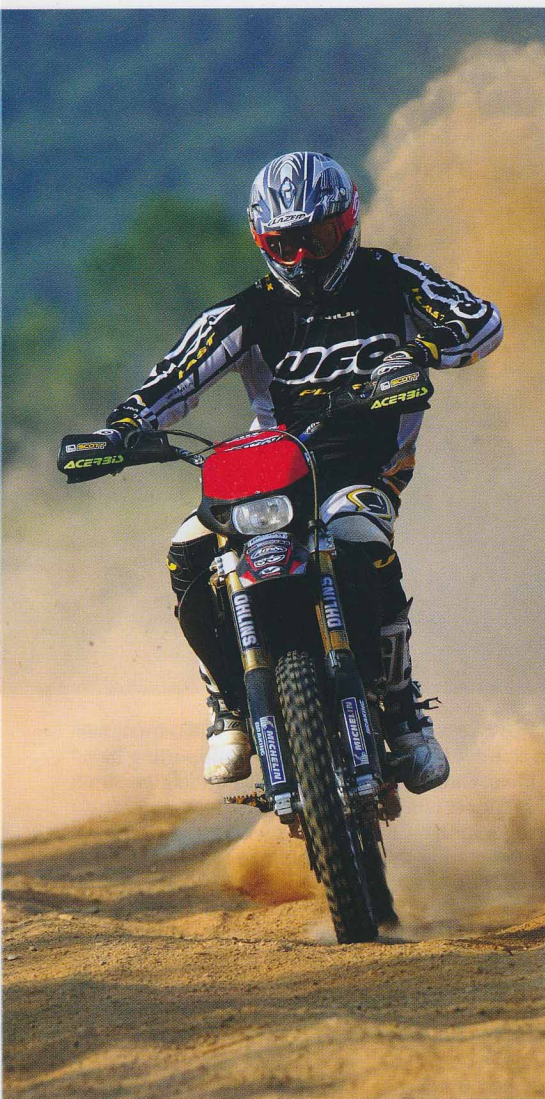
While Mika Ahola is the better known of the

two team riders, Roman has been with the VOR team since leaving TM at the end of 2001. Drafted into the squad to help develop their ill-fated reversed cylinder head 250cc thumper, the Czech rider is both the tallest and arguably the fastest grass test rider in the WEC series today. His major downfall, and one thing that has stopped him claiming more than just the one world title, is his lack of pace on cross-country tests. He's also not a great sand rider either.

Unlike certain WEC teams, the VOR squad has a sizeable and experienced team supporting its riders. Gini, or Stramigioli Giovanni to give him his correct name, is the key behind-the-scenes player in the team - the man who is responsible for preparing the team's bikes. A former TM Grand Prix motocross mechanic, Gini was the person accountable for 'modernising' the once bulky VOR, having only a few seasons earlier headed the team entrusted with doing the same at TM. He is also one of the most experienced and knowledgeable mechanics in the WEC pits, one that not only knows how to build a race winning bike, but can also design and manufacture chassis and swing arm components himself. Although not a direct employer of VOR, (the quiet, Marlboro-smoking Italian's preparation and R&D company also undertake other projects) 90 percent of his time is spent working on VOR's enduro and supermoto machines. Put simply, he who knows his way around a VOR blindfolded.

## Black Art

The bikes that both Roman and Mika raced during this year's World Enduro Championships are, despite featuring essentially standard chassis and



'So, whadda ya think..?'

only lightly modified engines, aesthetically quite different from the soon to be available 2003 models (they should be here in August). The first and most noticeable change is that both feature tiny 6.5 litre aluminium fuel tanks which are conventionally located (something likely to be seen on the 2005-model production bikes). Apparently, such small tanks are used because the bikes will happily run for two hours, and carrying extra fuel is just carrying extra weight. The other major

change is to the airbox set-up.

According to Gini, VOR like to keep their race bikes as close to the production units as possible. He also explained the importance of testing new parts under race conditions. 'There is only one place you get a really good feeling for new parts and that is in a race', he says candidly. Although the reliability of both the bikes has been good this year, the 'testing under race conditions' approach is one that caused Mika to DNF the second day's

competition in France when a pre-production swingarm failed.

The changes to the airbox have given the factory bikes an almost two-stroke look when it comes to induction, with the carb being connected to the airbox via a large rubber boot. Earlier in the season both bikes utilised a one-piece aluminium subframe/airbox unit which also featured an aluminium boot. However, both bikes now feature what will essentially be put into production for 2005 - an aluminium subframe with a plastic airbox and a rubber connecting boot. But why the need to improve the way in which the bike breathes you may ask? Well, according to Gini the 'tube between the airbox and the carb makes a big difference on a four-stroke'. It's as simple as that.

Interestingly, while talking about carburettor changes Gini touches upon the subject of fuel injection. 'It is something that we want and must test because it is the future. The problem we have is that the parts are too big in Italy; they are for cars and road bike. They are no good for off-road competition. The parts on Japanese bikes are not only small but they work well too.'

The second biggest change, and one that has been implemented by the team during the course of this year's WEC series, is the use of factory supplied Ohlins suspension both front and rear. Starting the season with an Ohlins shock, both Mika's and Roman's bike featured Paioli-Kayaba 48mm forks. Claiming that the Swedish dampers are a marked improvement over the early season Paioli/Ohlins package, the fact that Ohlins also provide a WEC race service doubtless helps.

When trying to find out what makes a VOR WEC team bike different in the motor department to a production machine, Gini answers simply, 'not much'. Going on to explain that finding additional bottom-to-mid range power isn't easy, he makes it clear that exhaust pipes, compression ratios and carburettor settings are key to the team bikes improved engine performance and is where he has focused most of his energies. 'An engine is like a puzzle', he says philosophically. 'You must put all the pieces together correctly in order for it to work.' With that he means there is no special bolt-on exhaust pipe or 'factory' cam and valve set-up that makes either bike special, instead an

understanding, his understanding, that to get the best from the motor you need to be both methodical and thorough in your preparation. Something he clearly is.

The remaining changes are those found on most world championship race bikes. Starting at the front, Roman's 450 is fitted with an over-sized 270mm floating wavy front disk while at the rear a solid disk is fitted should conditions get a little wetter. A higher seat is fitted to Roman's bike as well as an Ohlins steering damper, Acerbis hand guards, machined triple clamps and hubs and Michelin rubber. Other parts that are just a little different to standard equipment are the bike's linkage and the water pump. 'They work better', was all I was told.

## Black On Track

The most noticeable change when sitting on Roman's bike was his very personalised seating/handlebar set-up. At over six foot tall myself, a higher, more open cockpit area is something I normally welcome and feel more comfortable with, but Roman takes things to the extreme. With his high-rise Reikon bars rolled well forward in clamps that are also raised 25mm over standard, the position is an uncomfortable one. It is also one that after a few laps I had to change to a more conventional set-up. While great for feet-up trail riding, when trying to negotiate rough and rutted corners I felt uncomfortable and unable to place the front wheel exactly where I wanted. So far forward and raised were Roman's bars that they actually started to make my fore-arms ache!

The motor, despite having a noticeable but in no way detrimental tendency to vibrate a little more than other 450cc machines when stationary, was pretty much like the standard VOR - just with stronger power. Smooth, well spread out throughout the rev range and with no real hit, it was the bottom to mid range power that was most impressive. That said on the few occasions that I did hold a gear longer than was really necessary, the bike proved that it will just as happily produce strong power at high rpm but that over revving results in a noticeable drop off in power.

With world championship races now won and lost solely on special tests it came as little surprise to find that Roman's suspension was firmer rather than softer than stock. Despite the fact that Roman is the tallest WEC rider he is also the skinniest. Knowing this, and having actually used his suspension before and found it to be way too





was firm, smooth and responsive while the throttle light, and equally responsive thanks to the bike's jetting.

### Back In Black

The amalgamation of VOR's new slim-line chassis with Roman's aggressive motocross-like seating/handlebar set-up and the 'Euro style power' of the 450cc motor is one that certainly gives the bike a unique feel and takes a little getting used to. Producing power that is more commonly associated with the slow turning, heavy, European thumpers from before the 'four-stroke revolution', the fact that Roman's bike turns exceptionally well, is stable and isn't either heavy or bulky means that it has all the attributes of a great enduro bike.

Personally though, I feel that VOR's requirement to 'update' their machines in a relatively short period of time, and with only limited funds, have left them with a

few design glitches that they are still working to resolve. While the Japanese, KTM and Husqvarna have all minimised the size of their four-stroke engines (which in turn has let them use more compact two-stroke chassis), VOR have stuck with their existing power-plant and built a new chassis around it. While Roman's motor produces the type of power that is ideal for enduro use, there's no getting away from the fact that it is bigger than the new generation thumper motors that are starting to flood the market. And at times, it seems that VOR are almost trying to engineer their way out of a few corners which they've previously designed themselves into.

What is encouraging though is the fact that VOR are clearly on their way back. After a six-month factory shut-down, company take-over and subsequent relocation, the black and silver WEC team bikes are again showing signs that the factory are moving things forward with clear and definite goals. And if the same approach is adopted towards their production models, VOR (or should that be Mondial Off-Road) looks set to re-establish themselves as a genuine four-stroke player. And that can only be a good thing for the sport...

soft for my weight/liking, the fact that his VOR retained what felt like a reasonably high ride height came as a bit of a surprise. With the rear end of Roman's VOR pointing skyward even when riding along the flat or accelerating out of turns, when braking, the 'bum-up' feeling seemed to exaggerate the shortening of the bike's wheelbase as the forks compressed. Noticeably loading the front wheel into tighter turns the flat seat and narrow tank made it incredibly easy to move my body weight forward enabling me to place the front wheel with considerable accuracy.

While the suspension was noticeably firm, it also did a good job of soaking up the smaller bumps around the circuit. With the bike feeling high, due in part to the raised seat height, it also felt at times a little unstable and nervous over bigger bumps when riding at speed. Which is the complete opposite to the stocker I should add.

When it came to the bike's controls, the Nissin/Brembo/Braking front brake set-up was both a powerful yet surprisingly easy one to use. Offering more than enough stopping power, especially on the dry, grippy test track, the action of the rear brake was also first class, albeit a little gentler and easier to use. The action of the clutch



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## First Time Trials



STORY & PICS: MIKE RABLEY

**Scorpa's TT-R125-powered trials bike is the first four-stroke trials machine for a generation. TBM checked it out...**

**F**our-stroke power in the feet-up world of trials has not played a significant part since the early-Eighties when Eddy Lejeune won the World Trials Championship for three years on the trot on a four-stroke Honda. But all that looks set to change if a recent FIM directive comes into force. The FIM, the governing body of world motorcycle sport, have decreed that from 2005 the World Trials Championship will be contested solely by machines using four-stroke engines. The decision is believed to be based on environmental reasons, but whether this actually happens depends entirely on the trials bike manufacturers having a four-stroke trialer in their model range.

However there is a bigger incentive than a World Championship for the manufacturers to get their act together, as there is a long-term worldwide requirement for all motorcycles to be four-stroke powered. And those first on the trials scene with a thumper, should in theory reap the benefits of less competition and more production experience.

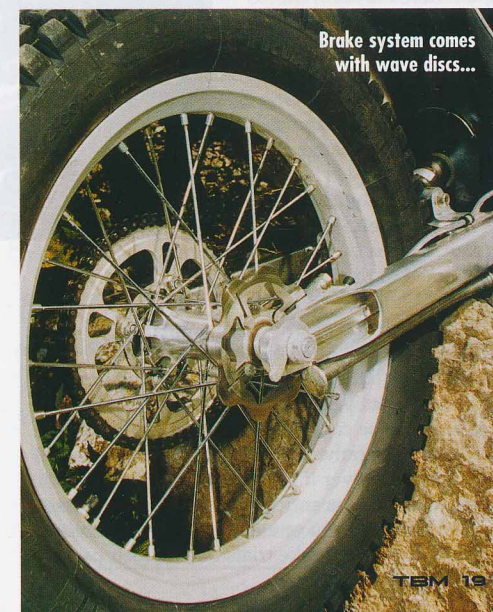
Montesa-Honda, Sherco and Gas Gas are known to be developing four-stroke trials bikes for public launch in the next 15 months or so, but Scorpa have beaten them all to it with the recent announcement of their 125 production trials bike. The bike which uses a Yamaha TT-R125 engine should be available in the UK come September, following a successful three bike debut in the tough Scottish Six Days Trial this year.

### Scottish Play

The bike that importer Martin Crosswaite rode to 21st place in the Scottish is the first production four-stroke trials bike since the 250 Honda RTL (monoshock) and 200/250 Honda TLR (twin-shock), machines that enjoyed limited popularity in the mid-Eighties, and which still regularly turn



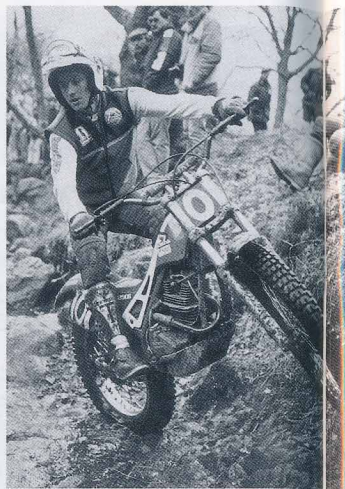
Production bikes are unlikely to feature the alloy tank or the weird exhaust...



Brake system comes with wave discs...



Right: The mid-'80s was the last time the trials world saw production four-strokes...



the Yamaha TY-Z250 trials engine housed in a light-weight chassis with Paioli forks, AJP brakes and a conventional monoshock system. And by adapting their existing chassis they've managed to make it accommodate the well-proven Yamaha TT-R engine. This in turn has meant savings both in terms of cost (not having to develop their own powerplant) and more importantly time, which has enabled Scorpa to produce a large batch of machines and satisfy a growing market currently devoid of an inexpensive trials playbike.



### Small is Beautiful

For those that don't already know, Yamaha's TT-R125 engine is an air-cooled, SOHC, two-valve inclined engine fitted with a 20mm Mikuni carburettor. It's got a 'square' configuration (of 54 x 54mm), wet sump lubrication and a five-speed gearbox.

Martin Crosswaite rode a standard 125 Scorpa in the SSDT while former Japanese Champion Takumi Narita rode a 140cc version, so we figure that a big bore conversion may be available at some point.

up in club trials. The 125 Scorpa is currently undergoing final evaluation in the UK before the French factory begins the production run that includes a guaranteed order from Japan of 2000 machines.

And TBM has managed to get the first competition test of a machine that could be the forerunner of the biggest change to happen in the world of trials for nearly 20 years.

For their four-stroke debut, Scorpa have sensibly aimed at the leisure market rather than the competition side, and the first machines will actually be marketed as trail bikes (rather than trials bikes). Expected to be broadly similar to the bike tested here (although with altered cosmetics), the differences between the trail bike and trials bike are likely to be confined to the styling and the final gearing, rather than any major mechanical changes. However if you want to wait, the dedicated trials bike is anticipated soon afterwards.

Scorpa already have a well established and competitive two-stroke trials bike, which uses

The choice of a 125cc engine may seem strange to some people but with trials it's more about light weight and manoeuvrability rather than power. And in fact a 125cc four-stroke provides more than enough performance for the majority of clubman riders.

We rode the machine in a North Western club evening trial with the club's Chairman doing two laps of the trial on the four-stroke, followed by two laps on his own Scorpa 250 two-stroke. Your correspondent did the opposite, two laps on the two-stroke followed by two laps on the test bike. (You want to know my result? Seven marks lost on the two-stroke, five on the four-stroke!)

First impressions of the 125 Scorpa were very favourable. The engine starts just like a two-stroke and is very smooth and quick to respond to the throttle. At no time whilst I was riding it did it cough, splutter, pop, bang, choke or misbehave, however my friend reckoned it cut out on him once but fired up again instantly.

Being lighter than a 250 two-stroke made it very easy to ride in tight sections, and turns leading up to gentle steps never taxed the bike to any degree. Having ridden a 125 Gas the previous evening whilst marking out the course, I think the Scorpa is a much more forgiving bike to ride in the sections, but slower and less powerful on the open stuff.

The relationship between footrests and handlebars is absolutely spot on and it's very easy to place the front wheel exactly where you want it. However, the rear brake pedal is totally out of reach on this particular machine, but I think Martin (the importer) has modified the pedal to suit his own boot size, which was obviously much bigger than my dinky size sevens!

Lofting the front end for steps is no problem, and judging by the antics of Martin Crosswaite both at our test and in the Scottish, hopping the bike from rock to rock as the kids all do these days, is actually easier on this machine than it is on the full 250.

This is not to say the 125 is a better bet than a 250 two-stroke. The two products are actually quite different. An ace rider is unlikely to swap his regular trials iron for this 125 four-stroke, but judging by the mass of ancient old bikes which turn out for club trials, I believe that the likely market for this type of machine is significant. Indeed, the market for a competitive, totally reliable, well-built play bike (which will barely need touching from one year to the next) must be bigger world-wide than it is for strictly trials bikes.

I would be loathed to ride any two-stroke trials bike down the local high street, but I reckon that the Scorpa (particularly in trailbike guise) is more likely to be accepted by the general public than a full-on trials iron. However, what you are unlikely to get when the production versions arrive is the hand-fabricated alloy tank that was built for the Scottish, nor the unusual exhaust system. The production plastics will be the regular offering from Acerbis, whilst the exhaust will be tailored to suit the ergonomics.

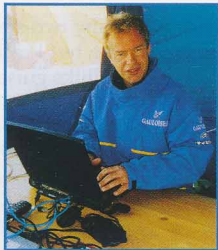
The demands of time meant that this could only be a brief evaluation of a machine that must be the first of many four-stroke trials irons in the future. The opinions of the two regular riders that competed on it can be summed up as: light in weight, very easy to handle, excellent suspension and neutral handling with an engine that is powerful enough for most small trials, but which some club riders would find insufficient for some of the bigger events.

I made this comment to the bike's importer and he retorted: 'So the Scottish is only a small event is it?' Obviously not, but then like all ace riders (and he was once Britain's number four), the really good lads can coax almost any bike almost anywhere, due to their ability to balance and find grip. Mere mortals like ourselves have to rely on wild and uncontrolled use of the throttle to get up lots of stuff, and that's the significant difference.

So would I buy one? Before I did, I would want to ride the bike in a decent 'centre' trial with a wide variety of hazards to finally make up my mind. But as a bike for the novice or young trials rider to get on and not find themselves too intimidated, it looks to be the perfect tool. More importantly I believe that there's probably a large market for a 'maintenance-free' play bike that can also be used in the one or two trials a year that so many riders seem to enjoy. Especially at such a competitive price...

## SCORPA 125

<b>Price:</b>	£2995
<b>Engine type:</b>	A/c, sohc, two-valve, single
<b>Bore &amp; stroke:</b>	54 x 54mm
<b>Displacement:</b>	123cc
<b>Transmission:</b>	5-speed
<b>Weight:</b>	72kg approx (Trials)
<b>Importer:</b>	Bingley Leisure, 01274 566122



## DIRTY

THE INK HAD BARELY DRIED ON THAT COLUMN WHEN MY RAGE-O-METER WAS SENT STRAIGHT BACK INTO THE RED ZONE...

**I**n last month's ramble I had a bit of a free-form rant about some of the issues that face us trail riders, and finished off with a plea to all of you to ride responsibly and ditch your 'noisy, trail-closing exhaust pipes'. The ink had barely dried on that column when my rage-ometer was sent straight back into the red zone by MCN's new dirt section. In their

## CHRIS EVANS TALKS ABOUT... WELL, ALL-SORTS!

clone of TBM's 'Used & Abused' feature (Be An Expert On...), focusing on Suzuki's venerable DR350, the author recommended fitting a less restrictive (read loud) aftermarket pipe to compensate for the bike's lack of power. I could have wept.

When Britain's biggest selling motorcycle publication starts encouraging its gatso-menaced roadbike readership to get its kicks on radar-free green lanes with open-pipes, you really know you are in trouble. Quite how people can be so short-sighted and irresponsible is totally and utterly beyond me. The fact that for years MCN completely ignored off-road riding and has only recently started covering it again in a cynical 'bandwagon' ploy to scrape together a few more readers, does nothing to lessen my rage.

Rage that quickly turned inwards with the realisation that my utterly ridiculous lifestyle meant that I would have to blow out what

should have been the highlight of my riding year - the Rand Auvergne enduro. This two day French 'classic' enduro is a real tough one - I know as I have entered twice before (but only finished once). For my first, successful participation, I was mega fit (relatively speaking), smoke-free and on top of my game, having just successfully completed the slightly easier, but nevertheless totally exhausting, three day Trefle Lozerien enduro.

My second attempt ended in ignominy just 20 kilometres from the end of the first day when, in a state of exhaustion, I fell off the wrong side of a goat track and lacked the strength to extricate either myself or my bike. Needless to say, that year I hadn't done the Trefle, wasn't entirely smoke-free or particularly fit. At the time I vowed that I would sort myself out and return triumphant. The MotoGP schedule made that impossible for 2002 but when I saw that there was no clash for 2003, I begged a place, made all sorts of rash resolutions - and then completely ignored them. Every time I looked at my schedule on my Palm Pilot and noted the Rand creeping inexorably closer I vowed that tomorrow I would get back on my mountain bike and sort myself out. A couple of weeks ago I did just that, only to realise that I was so unfit and my schedule so hectic that I'd never achieve the necessary finishing form in time. Now I have been forced to downsize my racing ambitions to a couple of one-day events later in the

year and the Rand in 2004 - and to do that I'm going to have to downsize my ridiculous work schedule a tad...

All of which has meant that this month I have had to get my motorcycle racing thrills vicariously. With the GP team I work for, having had a less than successful start to the season it has been left to 'my rider' Cyril Despres (Chris acts as his unpaid, unofficial manager - ed), to boost my morale by winning both the Erzberg Rodeo and the Orpi Rallye Maroc in convincing form. Unfortunately due to other commitments (my stupid lifestyle again) I couldn't be at either race in person to fuss around him like an ineffective mother hen, but I did get regular updates from him. And when he rang me from Morocco to say he'd won the Orpi, I felt almost as elated as if I'd been the one standing on the podium.

What made his Maroc win so impressive was that out of the event's seven specials, he won five and came second on the other two. And when I asked him how he'd managed to achieve such a feat, when in recent rallies nobody has been that dominant, he said he thought it was down to the new rule that allowed the first three riders to pick their starting position for the next day.

Regular readers of this column (hello Mum) will know that rallye-raid organisers have been looking at a number of ways of trying to stop the top riders from bunching up and simply tailing one another till the end of the day. And the Rallye Maroc organisers' new 'pick your own' start position rule (first choice to the winner of each day), seems to have done the trick.

Hopefully, encouraged by the success of this experiment, other rallye organisers will follow suit and we can all look forward to a real Dakar race in 2004 instead of the game of dangerously fast follow-my-leader that it has become since the introduction of GPS.

However fit I get between now and December I certainly won't be lining up for the Dakar, but with a UK 2004 Dakar presentation scheduled for the end of June we should have a good idea of how many mad Rosbifs are planning on chasing Despres and company across the desert next year! Good luck to 'em I say...



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# COMPLETELY RUTTED



**O**ne of the things that separates we small and doughty breed from the rest of the motorcycling fraternity is our need to constantly replenish essential componentry on our bikes. The precise details of which have been exercising me mightily as I counted the cost of recent trailrid-

## MARK WILLIAMS GETS ALL 'TYRED' AND EMOTIONAL OVER THE SUBJECT OF RUBBERWARE.....

ing Sundays, plus it must be said, the rigors of the Cambrian Rally. Whilst readying both my road and off-road bikes for their MoT tests.

Considering myself an average green-laner of average - oh alright - woefully below average ability, I find it fairly extraordinary that in order to continue enjoying my pastime I need to replace such basic items as tyres, oils, chains and sprockets at regular intervals. And pretty damn short intervals, they are too. Since the recent Cambrian Rally for instance, for which my bike was properly equipped with new rubberwear, drive train and all the rest of the gubbins, I've ridden less than a few hundred miles, much of it off-road. Yet already my rear tyre is nearing the end of its useful life. And as for the chain - an O-ring jobbie no less - the end of its adjustment.

As it happens, I wasn't wild about the Maxxis tyres I'd elected to use and was already debating suitable replacements, especially at the front-end. But the cost of re-shodding the beast (a humble XT350) stretches to a good hundred quid if, that is, cowardice dictates that you side-step skinned knuckles and pinched 'n' punctured inner tubes and get your local tyre dealer to change 'em for you. Of course I'm talking here about road-legal and FIM approved bootees which, naïve idiot that I am, I mistakenly thought were in fact a scrutineering requirement at the Cambrian - after all it did say so in the regs! Same goes for the Ryedale Rally which I toyed with entering but rejected at the last minute - not least because the already stiff cost of competing would be considerably exacerbated by the need for new road-legal rubber... Which presumably another myopic scrutineer would completely ignore anyway.

So I kept my Maxxises on just for the MoT, and then decided to revert to character and ignore legalities as far as my trailbike is concerned. Along with all my regular Sunday trailriding companions, I might add, and, I suspect, 90 percent of the rest of you. I then replaced the weedy front Maxxis with an umpteen year-old Metzeler moto-x tyre which I found - and I kid you not - in a rubbish tip. Hardly a state-of-the-art tread pattern and with a fairly unyielding sidewall,

# MARK WILLIAMS

but it provides a helluva' lot more directional control than its forebear.

Now for the rear. Well doubtless to the horror of the editor, I'm thinking of whipping the Trelleborg Army Special off TBM's long term KDX because it's such a helluva good, arguably dual purpose (and road legal) tyre, and I do many more road miles on the XT than on the Kidder. But one of these bikes'll have to get a moto-x cover, and this is where things get interesting. Or incredibly vexatious. See, I have another couple of ex-rubbish tip tyres with decent treads on 'em - a Barum Six Days and another Trelleborg - this time a BroadMaster MX. But they're a bit old and stiff too (bit like me, in fact), whereas for a paltry £19.95 I could buy myself a Duro-2000 18 x 4.10. Then again, I ask myself, is a brand of tyre I've never even heard of before likely to prove any better or more durable than summat I've hoiked out of a Welsh tip?

Well here's the rub. Unless you cough up the dosh, you'll never know and in any case, the subjectivity of tyre assessment is undeniable. Which, as you've probably noted from the editor's protracted responses to irked readers in the letters pages, is the main reason why this august organ hasn't yet come up with a meaningful tyre comparison test. And when I swap bikes with my mates, all of 'em differently shod, quite frankly I'm too concerned with matters of power delivery, weight and general lairiness to discern the incremental variability of tyre performance.

And just for good measure, this last week I had to re-fill the XT's forks, change the engine oil and filter and rear brake shoes and seriously contemplate a new chain. Which'll add up to another hundred quid or so for just a few hundred miles of off-roading pleasure.

And I don't even want to think about replacing all the bearings in the rear suspension, something which several of my friends and acquaintances seem to have to habitually undertake. And this on higher quality and/or more modern machinery. But then they all do seem to employ vicious pressure washers which are no friends of bearings, sealed or otherwise.

And then there's my roadbike. Not, admittedly, a rip-snorting repli-racer or full-on megabike, but a perfectly adequate and often amusing Kawasaki GPz500S. This is a bike which last had its rear tyre changed more than 6,000 miles ago and is, as far as I can tell from its previous owner, still on its original chain, sprockets and rear brake pad at 17,000+ miles. I tend to favour known brands - and certainly not out of a skip - for my high(ish)

speed tarmac activities, but then a new Bridgestone Exedra tubeless for the back end costs just £65, and I probably could've got it even cheaper if I'd shopped around. And failing some hideous mechanical failure, that'll be the sum total of consumables required for the next few thousand miles.

All of which prompts yet another complaint that a trailbike is now a rich man's plaything. And although this doubtless keeps specialist spares suppliers happy, and gives the rest of us something to do in the shed of an evening, it is rather off-putting to anyone toying with the idea of swapping their roadbike for a trailie, let alone taking up off-road competition. Or could it be that the real things that separates our small and doughty breed from other bikers is that we are all just chronically, financially, irresponsibly smitten?

You decide...

## QUITE FRANKLY I'M TOO CONCERNED WITH MATTERS OF POWER DELIVERY, WEIGHT AND GENERAL LAIRINESS TO DISCERN THE INCREMENTAL VARIABILITY OF TYRE PERFORMANCE

# LETTERS



**TBM**  
TRAIL BIKE & ENDURO MAGAZINE

**GOT AN  
OPINION?  
THEN WRITE TO:**  
TRAILBIKE  
MAGAZINE  
PO BOX 9845  
LONDON W13 9WP

## Looney Left

Dear TBM

Having been an avid reader of your magazine over the last couple of years I have at last been enticed into buying another bike. My preference would be a 250 two-stroke, such as the Gas Gas featured in issue 93. However, due to a leg injury I would like you to advise on which bike might suit me best. I have restricted movement in my right knee and ankle and therefore need a fairly tall peg-to-seat height. (I guess this can be quite easily adjusted with padding). More importantly, I struggle with the kickstart especially when not on level ground. Is there such a thing as an electric start two-stroke? This would be the ideal solu-

tion. The second option I have considered is a left-handed kick-start. Can you confirm what is available?

If you have any other suggestions or can recommend a specialist in bike alteration these will be most appreciated. Lastly in my list of questions, are you aware of anywhere that would let me test ride before buying so I can be sure my leg will not prohibit riding?

Simon Miles  
Crumlin, Caerphilly

There are a handful of electric start two-strokes out there, Simon, but mostly they're small capacity machines. Yamaha's DT230 Lanza is the only one we can think of that's a serious trailie - unfortunately it's only available as a grey import, and

pretty rare at that. We ran a test of it way back in issue 32 (of which we still have copies) and found it nice and torquey if a little heavy.

As for left-hand kickstarts, two bikes immediately spring to mind. Alfer's VR250 and the less popular Kramit GS250. Both used the

now obsolete Rotax two-stroke motor with the adjustable power-valve, though they feel very different indeed. The Italian-built Kramit feels much sharper in the way it delivers its power. But that isn't to say it's the better bike. In fact, out of the two we reckon you're better off going for the Alfer as it's a more forgiving ride.

Both bikes are no longer produced, so you'd be looking at a second-hand machine. The Kramit is the rarer of the two, though it did come with a beautiful alloy tank, and carbon panels and airbox. Alfer VR250s aren't exactly commonplace either, but they are about in reasonable numbers and do pop up in the classifieds from time to time. For more info on either bike contact Steve Plain Motorcycles on 01597 825817. Steve's the UK importer for both marques, and he may have one of these bikes in stock. He'd probably even let you test ride it before buying. Good luck.

## Trail Tax

Dear TBM

I've just read Mark Holland's Rant in the June issue, about legalised trail riding by way of a special licence, and in a lot of ways it sounds like a good idea. I also go green laning in my 4X4, so would I then have to pay twice, on top of two sets of road tax, insurance and MoTs? I pay to use the roads anyway, and my personal feeling is that it's not a question of money, walkers just don't want us on the lanes. After all, many 4X4 owners help with lane maintenance and repair but I've never seen that mentioned in a newspaper.

Four of us went trail riding last week, and instead of going at the weekend which would've been far more convenient, we all took the day off work so we'd see less people out on the lanes. I feel that we are being pushed into a corner, and in the not too distant future it will be more hassle than it's worth to use green lanes. Having said all that, if it meant that more lanes were opened I probably would pay for a licence. If this is the road to take (no pun intended) then let's go the whole hog.

Equally however, walkers would have to pay for using footpaths, bridleways, and byways. Horse riders

would have to pay for bridleways and byways, and we pay for using byways. If the walkers don't want to pay for all three then they can't walk all three!

Ashley Moule  
Bucks

## Trail Tax Two

Dear TBM

Regarding Mark Holland's ideas on a special licence for trail riding (Rant, TBM94), in a perfect world it may help. But as we don't live in a perfect world it would just be another tax with no benefit to trail riders.

As TBM rightly said, we already pay road tax and how much of that is spent on the roads? As with all forms of taxation, the government takes the lion's share, the next share goes on administration, and the few pence that are left are spent on bodging road repairs which last five minutes and are a waste of money.

We pay too much tax as it is, so why pay more? Whether it's government taxation or Council Tax most of it is wasted on administration and making a name for a politician or civil servant. Not only will they end up with a good pension, some will get a knighthood as well. And what do we get? Bigger tax bills!

As for the police, they can't control the use of motocross bikes on the Ridgeway because they are too busy filling in forms, catching people speeding or just drinking tea. So the easy way out is to ban every vehicle from the trail and allow it to become overgrown. And when the rambblers complain maybe ban them as well!

Keith Brooks  
Horspath, Oxford

## Lost and Found

Dear TBM

Now that we've got over our aches and sprains after the Cambrian Rally at Easter, I have been able to take stock of my experiences. Yet again I thoroughly enjoyed my weekend - green laning on the Saturday and three laps of the rally on the Sunday. Good weather, good scenery, good memories. Oh, and good company. Roll on next year.

I would also like to do my best to return the tools lost by some unfortunate soul. The cutters, pliers, chain tool, towing strap and can of Finilec were picked up on the second lap (I

think). So if the owner of these tools would care to give me a shout (weekdays) on 07831 378353 (And you'll need to prove that they're yours - Ed), I can arrange to get them back to you in time for the next emergency.

In reference to the owner of the KTM 250EXC in the letter titled 'Sick Stroker' (Letters, TBM 93), he should visit an MoT station or dyno operator who has a gas analyser to measure oxygen, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and hydrocarbon. An inlet manifold leak will show up as low carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide, with high oxygen and hydrocarbon. An exhaust leak will show up as low carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and hydrocarbon, but with high oxygen readings. If the analyser has carbon monoxide correction, either fault will show up as a difference between carbon monoxide and carbon monoxide correction.

Finally, it's worth checking to make sure that the resistor in the plug cap has not gone open circuit or infinite. It should be 5000 Ohms, or 5K Ohms. This can cause a misfire when hot, leading to erratic starting and running.

Tim Gooderson  
Welling, Kent

Errr... Thanks Tim, we just about got our heads around that...

## A Touch of the DTs

Dear TBM

I have a couple of questions which I would be grateful if you could help me with. Firstly, I have recently bought a DT125R, which was supposed to be a full power French model. After the running in period I found that it is restricted as a UK bike. I have spoken to my local dealership, which did not supply the bike but told me that the exhaust was the only restriction. I have replaced this with a DEP system and there's a slight improvement, but nothing like the 30-plus bhp supposedly available from the FP model. It does have YPVS but is reluctant to rev past 7000rpm. In TBM 89 your 'Bike Buyer's Guide' that said late model DT-Rs (1996 onwards) were harder to derestrict. Any ideas?

My second question is can I replace the original spokes with stainless YZ items as I intend to replace the original steel rims with Excels whilst retaining the DT hubs.

I do hold a full licence and you're

probably thinking I should buy a bigger capacity machine and forget about the smaller bikes. But I get more fun from the smaller lighter machines with a lower seat height (I'm only 5'5"). And no, they haven't just let me out for the weekend!

Vincent Hawke  
St Leonards on Sea, East Sussex

There's nothing wrong with enjoying smaller capacity bikes, you'll often find yourself going quicker on something you can ride nearer the limit. Unfortunately, derestricting a late model DT-R is not a particularly straightforward task. Apparently it's the ignition which is holding the Yam back, but you can't simply change the CDI. The autolube oil pump isn't designed to run at higher than standard revs, and by raising the rev ceiling you risk damaging the motor. Alternatively, you can replace the CDI and junk the autolube, pre-mixing your petrol with two-stroke oil. There might be more to it than that, and I'm sure that if we're wrong we'll receive a barrage of letters telling us so. Of course, there's always the alternative of buying a 125cc enduro bike and lowering it. As for your wheels, have a word with your local Yamaha off-road dealer or give Talon Engineering a call on 01935 471508.

## Sporting Chance

Dear TBM

I assume that we all realise that our sport is under threat. We know who our opponents are, and that they are relentless in their pursuit. They want to stop us enjoying ourselves, whatever it takes. And they are winning.

In this type of situation we have to ensure that there aren't any threats from within. For example, riders who don't care and take a short-term view of their activities. When everything goes topsy-turvy they move on and do something else. They have no scruples about leaving those of us that care to try and sort the problem. Illegal riding is one such activity and is very difficult to control. But just warning people isn't the answer. We have to ask ourselves why they do this and try to rectify the situation. There are several possible reasons;

One relates to an attitude whereby some riders simply cannot be bothered to organise themselves to either compete in an event or join an organised trail activity. These riders are actually in the minority. Most illegal



# LETTERS

riding is by people who know better but cannot bring themselves to compete with others. Basically they are frightened that they will be shown up. This applies to enduros, rallies or trail riding. They fear that there will always be people who will be better riders, so they keep to their own group. In such a group there is a pecking order, one rider is recognised as best, one as rubbish and the others fall in between. They feel comfortable with each other and slink off to ride were they can.

So why am I getting on my 'high horse'? Well, there is evidence that this attitude also exists in enduro events, with both riders and organisers turning a blind eye to the situation. In the long term it can be as damaging as an outside threat by encouraging riders to avoid competition and by implication engage in illegal riding. Let me explain:

Many years ago enduro events were organised into two classes (apart from capacities and types). You had 'Expert' and 'Clubman' classes, and this situation worked very well for a long time. Gradually it became obvious that a higher and more difficult class was needed and a 'Championship' class was introduced. This was for the benefit of a minority of very skilled riders who needed to prepare themselves for international competition. At the time it was assumed that raising the top level would have the effect of taking some pressure off the bottom, 'Clubman' class. It was hoped that the situation would be easier for beginners and encourage many who weren't sure about competing. For many reasons this didn't happen, mainly because the organisers didn't take the opportunity of easing the 'Clubman' time schedule. We now know that if they had many riders would have stayed in that class anyway and not moved up to 'Expert'. Perhaps its worth mentioning here that moving up to the next class is mandatory when a good result is achieved, but this has always proved difficult to police.

So with much wisdom it was decided that an easier class should be introduced; the 'Sportsman' class. This was an excellent idea, and the

thinking at the time was that this class would be reserved for beginners and that there wouldn't be any awards. That meant that any newcomer could enter in the knowledge that there would be less pressure placed upon them. This class was designed to introduce new riders into our sport; it had no other purpose. Unfortunately, no special conditions were attached to entry into this class, there was no obligation to move up to 'Clubman' after some success or even after a fixed period of time. The rules even allow an expert motocrosser with no enduro record to take an easy option and compete with absolute beginners.

The situation has been allowed to deteriorate until the original concept of this class has been lost. Take the situation, for example, at the recent Powys Enduro where a third of the entry rode as 'Sportsmen'. Now if they were all genuine newcomers then a great success could be claimed, the class would have encouraged sixty-four new riders to join our sport. This was not the case, and as the ACU steward observed, many of the 'Sportsmen' would have put up a creditable performance in the ISDE. He wasn't joking. Some Sportsmen put up times that, on another occasion, could have won the event. In fact it's only a matter of time before this happens.

We have to get back to the original concept of the 'Sportsman' class so that those riders that ride illegally or are just beginning can try our sport. To achieve this we have to return to a situation where there are no 'Sportsman' awards. This will deter 'pot hunters' from looking for an easy triumph, compared to a 'no cup' ride in the 'Clubman' class. Also there has to be a limit to how many times a rider can compete in the class. Acknowledging the policing difficulty mentioned early, I would suggest that a box on the entry form could have the right effect. When entering the 'Sportsman' class the rider would have to tick a box that confirms he hasn't ridden in the class more than four times before. As in trials were you can never return to the 'Novice' class, an enduro rider should not be allowed to return to the 'Sportsman' class, even after a layoff. I realise that this may affect mature riders like me (okay, I'm old), but there are classes for us; the Over 40 or Over

50. Personally, I would enter an Over 60 class for dysfunctional riders.

It's down to the organisers, they can make it happen easily and the riders will fall into line. The other riders would be aware that these people are staying in the easier class. After all, the 'pot hunters' know who they are and why they want to compete with absolute beginners.

Jim Jones  
Oswestry, Wales

## Cub Class

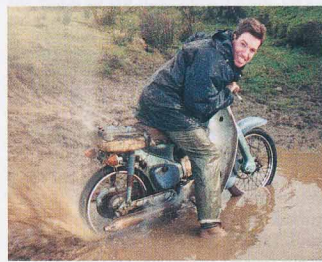
Dear TBM

Your magazine is great! I bought a copy a few weeks ago after I got my first bike, an old Honda 90 (P-reg from the first time around). It's great fun apart from it's a kick-start and cuts out every time you stop. But being 15 years old and not allowed to ride on the road (only on our farm) this isn't really a problem, other than being really annoying.

After looking through your mag almost all the bikes have TBM stickers on them. So I am writing to you to ask how I might be able to get these precious stickers, and make a very dated motorbike look a bit more colourful.

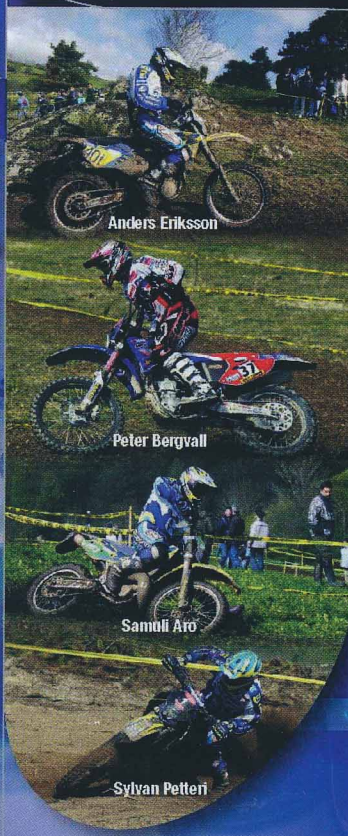
George Turner  
(deep in prime Welsh bog!)  
Llanwrda, Carmarthenshire

Good to hear you're getting into bikes, George. And there's nothing wrong with learning some of the basics on an old 90. But ideally, to hone your skills you should be looking to get yourself an off-roader. For as this picture shows, being exposed to Honda's popular step-through can lead to all sorts of complications in later life! Oh, and for TBM stickers send in an SAE and we'll stick you some in the post.



# ABSOLUTE PROTECTION

4 Enduro World Champions 2002



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4 Stroke 5X/MX Glide Plate



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4 Stroke Enduro Skid Plate



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**Beta's new big-bore Alp is powered by an electric-start motor borrowed from the old Suzuki DR350. TBM got the exclusive first test up in the Yorkshire Dales and discovered that this unusual looking bike has hidden talents...**

**T**here's something weird about nostalgia. Barely four years ago when the DR350 was coming to the end of its useful life you probably couldn't have got me interested in one even if you draped a half-naked Kylie across its flanks (though I reserve the right to change my mind on that one). Why? Because the new DR-Z model was on the horizon. This bike promised so much more. More power, more torque, liquid-cooling, better suspension and a fresh look at a styling nightmare.

So why was I feeling nostalgic when I first set eyes on Beta's all-new Alp 4.0? The answer lay in that classic engine. Fire up the Beta's air-cooled 350cc Suzuki lump and it responds with the most energising exhaust note you'll hear on a trailie. Pleasantly muted (it's not loud at all) but cobby-sounding all the same, with a sonorous back-beat and a promise of great things to come. Hop aboard the bike, out onto the road and the surprise continues. Torque. Loads of it. Grunt by the shovelful. If the Suzuki engine were an athlete it'd be a female Russian

shotputter: all testosterone and facial hair. If it were a movie star it'd be Arnie in T2: irrepres-sible, awesome and seemingly unstoppable. And if it were a trailbike it'd be a DR350 (obviously): all torque and no pretensions. Just for a moment I managed to forget all about the latest techno-missiles (whizzo KTMs and the like) and remembered what we did before they came along. We all rode bikes like the Beta Alp 4.0.

Well not exactly like the Beta Alp of course, because this is an all-new model. A DR350 dressed in a designer suit and Gucci loafers. Built by the small Italian concern

# THE BETA GENERATION







# THE BETA GENERATION

of Beta whose principal output is smart but unremarkable scooters along with the most deliciously styled trials bikes you'll ever see. The Alp 4.0 is a clever and stylish (if not particularly sophisticated) redrawing of what a genuine dual purpose trailie should be like.

I suppose I should start by saying something about its styling. In our minds it's fresh, individual, innovative, unique. In short we like it. Given that the air-chilled DR lump doesn't require the use of radiators to keep its cool, Beta have nevertheless managed to incorporate shapely pseudorad shrouds into their tank design without making it all look a bit pointless. The lower half of these tank extensions are fitted with a fine wire mesh which lets cooling air circulate to the head. While the central part of the tank is recessed to allow your knees to fit around it easily. The multiple swoops and complex curves of the design are refreshing indeed, and help endow the bike with a modern, almost futuristic look.

It's quirky I grant you, but it soon grows on you, and looks decidedly better in the plastic than perhaps the photos reveal. What's more the bike is actually incredibly solidly built. Built down to a price mind, but solidly constructed

all the same. Those shapely tank shrouds are not simply flimsy plastic just waiting to get broken. Not at all. In fact they're incredibly strong and besides which, they cover up the nylon fuel tank which extends behind them so they don't flex at all. Best of all they allow the bike to carry 10.5 litres of unleaded without looking gawky.

And while we're about it, look at the curvaceous line which blends the minimalist sidepanels into the rear fender. That could only have been penned by an Italian designer. Of course there are no competition number-plates to be incorporated, because quite clearly the Alp isn't a competition bike. The front headlight and surround picks up the same unusual theme and the low front mudguard doesn't look out of place on a bike of this type. In fact the whole bike has a homogenous feel about its design which was



Braided steel oil line shows attention to detail. And just check out that styling...



Sturdy grab rails are a neat touch, but mild steel exhaust looks cheap...



Front brake works well both on- and off-road...



strangely lacking on the engine's donor machine. Anyway, where is it written that you can't have practicalities and stylish design in a trail bike?

Before I move on to talk about other things I want to come back to that point about being built down to a price. You might as well know now that the importers are planning on marketing this bike at a price of £4265, which we reckon is about £500 top heavy. You've only got to look at the steel bars, steel swinger, mild-steel silencer and relatively basic equipment levels (though you do get a decent toolkit under the seat), to realise that as stylish as the Alp certainly is, it's not blessed with exotic componentry to justify that sort of wedge. And remember, this bike is powered by an engine which first saw service back in 1992 - albeit in kickstart guise.

All that said, don't get the impression that the Alp is in any way flimsy or shoddily built. It

isn't. In fact it's incredibly well screwed together. Nothing rattled, broke, squeaked or fell off during our 100+ mile test ride through the beautiful Yorkshire Dales - even the wing mirrors stayed resolutely in place throughout the entire day (both on- and off-road). As a matter of fact you get the impression of solidity from the moment you climb aboard the thing. An impression that's backed up by the scarily accurate TBM scales. We recorded a figure of 140kg, but the Alp wasn't quite full of fuel at the time. At the nearest petrol station we managed to slop another five litres on board so let's say about 145kg fully fuelled with ten kilos of that being petrol. Not exactly light, but about par for the course for a four-stroke trailie (and actually lighter than Beta claim).

The plus side of all that weight however is that the Alp feels absolutely planted on the road. And that's only the half of it. This is a bike which was

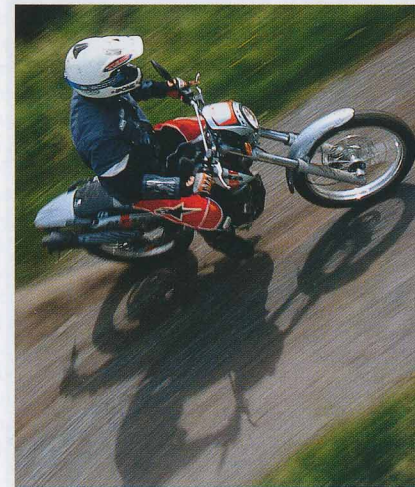


The Beta felt most at home on the rocky climbs...

## THE BETA GENERATION

made for swoopy B-roads. On tarmac the Beta is an absolute delight to ride. It's stable and sure-footed (thanks to a broad set of Metzeler Karoo tyres), and eminently forgiving. But by far its best asset is that engine. It's simply astounding. I don't know what Beta's engineers have done to the old DR lump, but I don't remember it ever being as torquey as this. And it pulls from absolutely nothing without any carburetion glitches whatsoever. Twist the throttle and the Alp responds instantly with a glorious thrum and a decent turn of speed. Gearing is perfect, the engine smooth, the power predictable and linear. And when it does run out of steam, you simply hook another gear from the Suzuki's inch-perfect six-speed 'box and begin the whole process all over again.

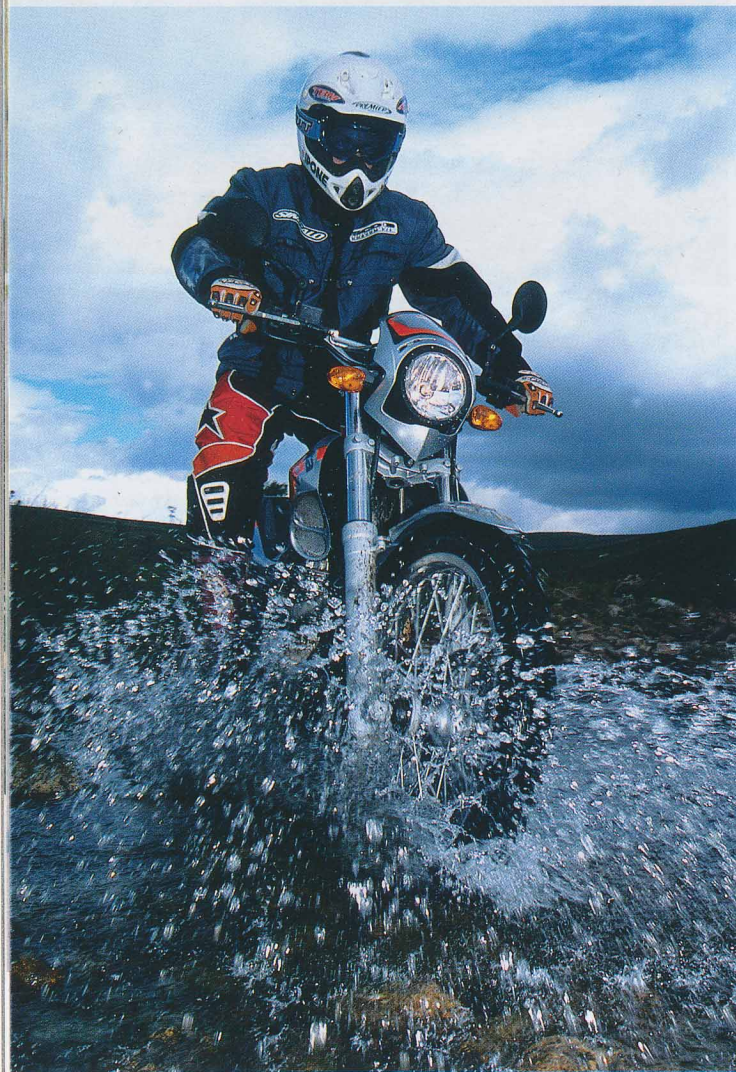
Riding in the company of two KTM 450EXCs (and swapping bikes occasionally), the marked



difference between them was astonishing. Where the KTMs felt rough and ready on the tarmac, the Beta was smooth as silk. Where they felt merely acceptable on the road, the Beta felt positively enjoyable. And where they were harsh, noisy, uncomfortable and a wee bit vibey at speed, the Beta was refined, quiet, comfortable and smooth. It's only foible a gentle 'pop-popping' sound on a closed throttle on downhills (but I kind of like that

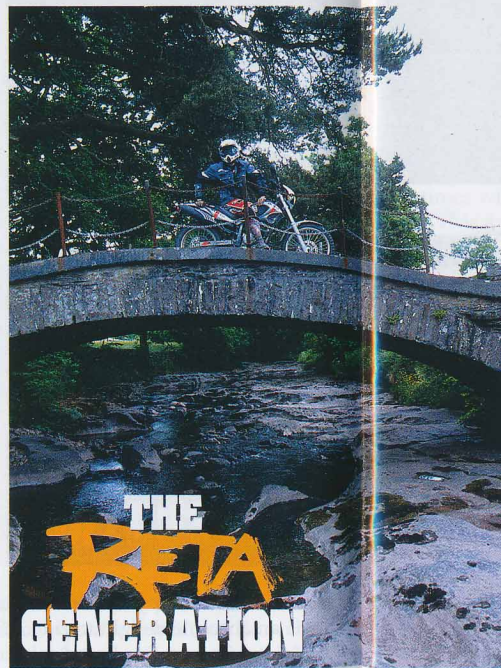
in an engine). Yes okay the KTMs obviously had more power, but the Beta never struggled to keep up. Why? Because on tarmac it could make best use of its quick, but stable handling, its super-torquey motor, its ideal gearing and its fantastic (well balanced) brakes and road-holding. As a daily ride to work trailie, I can think of no better.

Having completed about 12 miles on the road it was time to turn onto our first trail - a smoothish gravel track meandering gently uphill and littered with water-filled potholes. Here we pretty quickly discovered the Beta's limitations. Suddenly the suspension which had felt firm and well-damped on the road, would crash into the bumpstops, the quick-steering chassis needed careful handling (to avoid the front tucking under), and the tall gearing (though no real problem thanks to the engine's generous torque), was too lanky to enable a quick blip of the throttle to



lift the front wheel. We weren't riding all that fast, but keeping up a steady sensible pace. Obviously the sort of pace at which the KTMs feel comfortable is just too much for the Beta Alp. Shortly afterwards (following another extended stretch of tarmac), we turned onto the first of the day's proper trails. A short stretch of off-cambered hill led us through a gateway, across a shallow, stony stream and up a reasonably technical rocky trail. I've got to say I wasn't particularly looking forward to these climbs. Having already discovered the limitations of the Alp's suspension, I figured I might be in for a day of pushing and sweating. But in fact the Beta made short work of the climb - and all subsequent climbs

thereafter. All you needed do was plonk the bike in first gear (or second if you felt confident enough) and then pick a decent line to the top. The engine's torque would take care of the rest. Marvellous. Now obviously the Alp doesn't have the KTM's ground covering abilities, but as a matter of fact in this sort of terrain (dry, rocky going on a sunny day in June), the Beta was arguably the easier bike to ride. It was torquier and much more forgiving - and crucially a whole lot lower - which made getting your feet down for dabbing nice and easy. It loses out on ground clearance to the KTMs, but not by much and only once or twice during the day was this noticeable.



In many ways the Beta Alp 4.0 reminded me of a smaller version of the CCM. Great on the road (though the Alp is better), good on the rocks, low and easy to ride, but a bit weighty at times. I can't say we found much mud to test it in, though we came across one or two (baked hard) ruts and you had to be a bit careful in them since (like the CCM) the Alp places a lot of its weight on the front wheel. But on the whole it performed pretty well off-road provided you kept your speed down. This is certainly a trailbike for taking things easy on, and enjoying the breathtaking scenery around you. Which is just as well since here we were in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales - one of the most scenic places in the world.

There were plenty of long trails that day (all interspersed with numerous gates), but the one I enjoyed most of all was a climb which began by passing under one of the arches of a small viaduct, and which got gnarlier and more technical the further up it went. Washed away in places, the trail at times resembled a scree-slope (all loose rocks on the move), while the washouts meant that picking a good line was crucial if you wanted to avoid having to make a hill-start. Even when I was forced to stop because one section of trail had slumped away leaving a huge hole, the Beta didn't let me down - chugging away from a standstill without so much as spinning its tyre.

In fairness the reason I was enjoying myself was that in this sort of terrain the Beta was a decent performer, though I imagine that had it been

wet, things might've been a little different. The point is that the uphill let you exploit the bike's good points - grip, torque, low seat height - that sort of thing. Once on the flat, most other trail bikes would I suspect, be a good deal faster than the Alp - particularly when its bumpy.

I also found myself enjoying the beautiful back-country Dales roads more than I normally do with most test bikes. These well-surfaced lanes swooped in and out of chocolate-box hamlets with names like Cowgill, Stone House and Dent. Ultimately (as I discovered) the Beta Alp is the sort of bike which lets you take the rough with the smooth, but the smooth is definitely where it feels happiest...

## SECOND OPINION

**JAMES BARNICOAT**

The climb up from the gigantic Ribbleshead Viaduct is a pleasant trail which begins with a swoopy, almost sandy section. And it was on this easiest of trails that I got my first taste of the new Beta. As the orange machines disappeared from view I allowed myself a brief moment to familiarise myself with the bike. The step down from the KTM, and I don't mean that in a derogatory way, was immediately obvious. You get that feeling of sitting 'in' the 4.0, and the seat is a world away from the KTM's lofty, rock hard perch. A proper trail bike saddle. The bars, cheap and nasty steel, are actually a reasonable bend and once underway the relationship between seat, pegs and bars felt just about spot on.

Having caught up with my colleagues, we turned onto some far more technical going. Jutting out from the sandy soil were large chunks of stone, forming small steps and drop-offs. On the quicker going I'd noticed the Ed's restrained pace when he'd been riding the Beta, preventing the too soft front-end from crashing into the bumps. But here on a far tighter trail this was never an issue. We simply weren't carrying enough speed to trouble the suspension and the Beta's trials heritage shone through. This was further highlighted as the lane twisted uphill, and the dirt gave way to loose rock. The winding ascent was sufficiently steep and twisty to be a reasonable feet-up challenge (for a trail bike, anyway). But the Beta simply breezed up the hill. The weight was never an issue, and the trials-like steering lock made avoiding the larger rocks a doddle. Despite clearly being geared for the road, the torque of the DR motor hauled the bike to the top of the climb (at walking pace), with nary a dip of the clutch. I can imagine this bike being an ideal mount for Long Distance Trials, provided they weren't too muddy or technical.

A few miles later the terrain changed again. The grassy trail littered with chunks of limestone, was open and undulating. Initially the soft suspension soaked up the bumps, but as the speed rose there was no disguising the lack of damping from the suspension. With the increase in pace I soon developed a rhythm. Smaller, sharper bumps were avoided altogether. But on the larger, woop-like undulations it was possible to compress the suspension on the way into the depression, allowing it to rebound on the way out. Whilst this certainly required a bit of forward planning and effort, it was far less physically

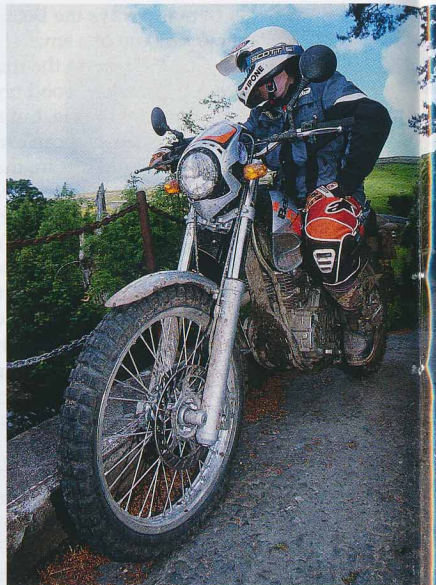


## THE BETA GENERATION

demanding than simply 'crashing' into every obstacle. As we reached the top of this gentle climb a spectacular view appeared to our right. At the head of the valley a 30-foot high escarpment bordered the most amazing limestone pavement, stretching a quarter of a mile across to the other ridge. Here we sat for a good 20 minutes, taking in the vista and chatting with an elderly couple enjoying a day out walking.

Having already discovered the Alp's climbing ability I was a little dismayed to find myself on one of the KTM enduro bikes for what proved to

be the trickiest lane of the day. A long climb over loose rocks had the front end deflecting off in every direction. Maintaining any sort of rhythm was particularly tricky on the constantly shifting surface and having stopped for photos, I longed to be riding the Alp as it disappeared into the distance. It doesn't always pay to be riding the latest enduro exocet, y'know. Thankfully, I pinched the Beta back for the rutted and rocky descent down to a car park (with a handy burger van) for a late afternoon cup of tea and bacon butty. Despite the Alp's tall gearing it was easy to pick a line down



Another early morning caffeine fix...



the narrow trail, and position the bike's front wheel where you wanted it to go.

Drawing the day to a close, we decided to head back on the tarmac. The fast, sweeping road saw us cruising along at 60mph, yet the Beta felt remarkably composed. Sure, the Metzeler tyres put a lot of rubber on the blacktop and with a set of proper knobbles some of that composure is going to be lost. But with such a quick steering front-end I'd have expected the bike to be just a little bit flighty. Every so often I'd try to provoke the bike into shaking its head, yet it remained resolutely stable with a gentle shimmy the bike's only protest.

After a brief stop for refuelling, Si asked which bike I'd like to ride back. And although I actually quite enjoy riding pukka enduro bikes on the road, I plumped for the Alp. It just encourages you to ride smoothly. No spinning the rear tyre or lofting the front end, just the kind of unhurried progress that makes the bike so rideable. Lagging behind was never an issue when it came to a quick overtake, though there were actually a few times when I deliberately dropped back from the KTM's just so I could run quicker through the bends. Having recently ridden a good few miles on under-gear five-speed bikes, the six-speed box of the Alp was an absolute joy. Reasonably slick shifting, it seemed that no matter what speed we were doing there was always another gear left in the box. We never had the bike tapped out, but I'd say that motorway speeds would be comfortably achieved at a cruising pace, with probably another 20-odd miles-an-hour in reserve.

Yep it's fair to say that I liked the Beta Alp 4.0, but I've just got one further question. What does the 'four-point-nought' in its name stand for? It can't be for four-stroke because the smaller 200cc Alp is also a four-stroke and that doesn't have the 4.0 title. So is it designed to make you think that the bike's got a 400cc motor? Or is it just a strange name thing? I've really no idea...

### CONCLUSION

Sometimes it's great to ride bikes which are slightly different from the norm - and the new Beta Alp 4.0 certainly fits that description. It's a bold move from Beta and we're not just talking about the styling, either. What they have done is to ignore the current trend of making trail bikes ever-more capable off-road (at the expense of their road manners), and opted instead to target a completely different customer. This bike then is a dual-purpose machine with a 60:40 split in favour of the road. It's for the rider who wants a bike which is more than just road legal, but actually a pleasure to ride on the journey to work. Off-road

the Alp is more than capable, but remember its limitations are easily reached - particularly in terms of speed.

There's no getting away from that price tag either. Despite the Beta Alp really growing on us during the day we spent testing it, at over four grand we can't help thinking that it's expensive. Yes we know it's individual and they'll probably be in quite short supply at first, but when you remember that bikes like the excellent little Gas Gas Pampera come in at under three grand, it seems a lot to ask.

Ultimately however it's you who has to decide whether it's worth it, and your purchasing decision should be based upon what sort of riding you do and how often you ride on- and off-road. If I were looking for a road-biased trailie it'd be right at the top of my shopping list, but as a pure off-roader it probably wouldn't make my top ten. What I can say is that the Suzuki DR-powered Beta Alp 4.0 is not just a great dual-purpose bike but it also brings back memories of the days when trail riding was a tad slower but twice as involving. As no-one ever says - Nostalgia: It's better than it used to be...

*Thanks to John Lampkin for the loan (at short notice) of the new Beta Alp 4.0. For more information about the bike including a brochure and spec sheet call 01535 655970 or [www.thetrialcompany.com](http://www.thetrialcompany.com).*

## BETA ALP 4.0

<b>Price:</b>	£4265
<b>Engine type:</b>	Air-cooled, SOHC, 4-valve, electric-start Suzuki DR350
<b>Bore &amp; stroke:</b>	79 x 71.2mm
<b>Displacement:</b>	349cc
<b>Comp ratio:</b>	9.5:1
<b>Carburation:</b>	Mikuni BST33
<b>Transmission:</b>	6-speed
<b>Frame:</b>	Steel semi double cradle with removable steel subframe
<b>Forks:</b>	Paioli conventional 46mm, 210mm travel
<b>Shock:</b>	Paioli shock with linkage, 200mm travel
<b>Front brake:</b>	260mm disc
<b>Rear brake:</b>	220mm disc
<b>Fuel capacity:</b>	10.5L (inc 3L reserve)
<b>Ground clear:</b>	300mm
<b>Seat height:</b>	865mm
<b>Wheelbase:</b>	1410mm
<b>Trail weight:</b>	145kg
<b>Contact:</b>	John Lampkin: 01535 655970

# EYES Right

**Your goggles do one of the toughest jobs going. Shot-blasted with crud, dust and water they protect your eyes from the elements and have to work whatever the conditions. Here's how to best look after 'em...**

Races have been won and lost by riders whose vision has been impaired. You can be the fastest rider in the world but if you can't see out of your goggles properly, you're going to get beaten by the bloke who can. It stands to reason therefore that goggles play an extremely important part in the finishing and winning of races.

What follows is a list of the best ways we know of looking after your goggles, making sure they work in all conditions and avoiding the mistakes most riders seem to make. Forget about buying bolt-on horsepower for your bike. Pound for pound the best money you can spend is making sure you can see properly for the entire race.

## Wash & Go

It stands to reason that you should start each and every ride with a clean pair of goggles. Simply wiping the dried-up mud off the lens of a spattered set, is going to compromise both you and your goggles. So first off you've got to make sure you clean them properly.

Whether you've been riding knee deep in mud or through choking dust always try and wash

WORDS AND PHOTOS: JONNY EDMUNDS

your goggles every time you get home. Not only is it much more pleasant putting on clean and fresh goggles, it also gives you a chance to give them a quick once over to check for any damage and wear.

Before cleaning your goggles always remove the lens. Get hold of your goggles by the nose and forehead area, and a firm pull will see the frame come away from the lens, allowing it to be washed separately. Like the rest of your riding kit, modern day goggles are washing machine

friendly, however we'd suggest you put them in the wash with soft items like socks and pants rather than muddy riding gear. Always remember to clean them on a cool wash and if you're washing them with your gloves make sure the velcro straps are closed - they have a tendency to stick to goggle straps.

Clean all your lenses with warm soapy water. Run the lens under a warm tap to remove any larger areas of mud, then place the lens in soapy water, wiping the surface with a soft cloth or

sponge. If the lens has a roll-off system fitted, remove the film before attempting to clean them. Don't, under any circumstances, be tempted to scrub the lens because this will scratch it, reducing both its useable life and probably yours.

Once you're happy that they're clean, place them on a tea towel or kitchen paper to dry. With the goggle frame, either air dry them, place them in an airing cupboard, or if you need them the next day put them on top of a warm (but not hot) radiator. When they're dry, check the face and



# EYES RIGHT

Only an idiot would wear  
hologram lenses. Isn't  
that right, Alex.?

sealing foam as well as the strap for damage.

## Life Through a Lens

Choosing the correct lens is vitally important. Of the many different lenses available, certain types are more popular than others. For enduro and trail riding it's hard to beat a vented lens. These have a series of holes drilled along the top which is usually backed by a thin layer of foam. Some of these lenses have an open/close button to shut the holes when necessary.

There are two types of vented lens available - single and double skin, the first time you use them you'll wonder how you ever managed without them. Available in clear, smoke and more often than not in a couple of other colours, when conditions get a little technical and the need to push and shove comes into play they really come into their own - particularly the double-glazed lenses. But remember, the double glazed ones have a very soft inner lens (which is the anti-fog part), and these get scratched incredibly easily. Don't even think about wiping the inner lens with anything other than a soft clean cloth, otherwise you'll ruin it instantly.



Prep your lenses for wet weather...

Both these types of lenses increase airflow, which helps to keep the lens clear in humid conditions. In our experience the single skin lens works best in rain, while the double-glazed lenses work best in the cold and when misting up is a big problem.

More common are the type of lenses that come fitted to new goggles - let's call them standard lenses. Not flashy, their simplicity, ready availability and low price is what makes them so popular. And if prepared well, they are all that is really needed for your average enduro and trail rider - for most of the year, anyway. The most common type of standard lens is of course the clear lens.

Fitted to the majority of goggles as standard, clear lenses offer maximum light transmission for all conditions including evening riding and poor visibility - something you often get when riding among tight trees in an enduro. Becoming increasingly popular are tinted lenses. While darkened and smoked lenses have long been featured in goggle manufacturers catalogues, today peach, yellow, pink and blue lenses are starting to be more widely used by both world championship and club riders.

So which of these 'tinted' lenses is best for

enduro/trail riding and what are the differences between them? Well, here's what the different coloured lenses are claimed to do:

Mirrored, grey or smoked lenses reduce eye-strain in bright, sunny conditions (but beware the mirror tint scratches off). Grey gradient lenses have a fading tint with the top of the lens being darker than the bottom, which relieves eye fatigue on long concentrated rides into direct sunlight. Peach coloured lenses are popular with skiers as the lens gives good depth perception, especially in cloudy or flat light conditions. Yellow, blue and rose coloured lenses (amplifier lenses) increase clarity in overcast or low light conditions and are good for general riding conditions, with rose lenses being designed for use in poor lighting conditions. And some goggles manufacturers make photochromatic lenses which change shade depending upon the amount of sunlight.

Finally holographic lenses... well they're just for poseurs!

## Protect and Survive

Before you fit a new lens to your goggles, there are a couple of things you can do that will make them last longer and leave you better prepared for a day's riding. Both sides of the lens should be 'prepared' before fitting, with the inside benefiting from anti-fog products while the outside should be treated with Rain X or furniture polish to prevent water from sticking.

Anti-fog products come in either a spray or, as is now more common, a cloth. Simply breathe onto the inside of the lens to create a mist, open the air-tight bag in which the no-fog cloth must be kept, and rub the cloth over the surface of the lens which will release the treatment onto the lens. Once you are no longer able to mist up the lens up by breathing onto its surface, they are ready for use. Reseal the cloth in its bag straight away because if it dries out you will need to get a new one. Cloths should last a club rider for some time and really do work.

A temporary fix to stop goggles steaming up, albeit leaving them next to useless in the summer months, is by removing the foam from around the outside of the frame. Although it increases airflow, it also allows muck and debris to fall into your face and eyes. If you are going to do this, only remove foam from the bottom of the goggles. But remember goggles steam up for one reason more than any other - unfit riders who sweat a lot. While the problem can be remedied with vented lenses and no-fog cloths, nearly all goggles will steam up on a cold day once airflow is restricted (when you slow down). To help prevent misting up try breathing out of the bottom

# LOOK SHARP

## Top Ten Goggles Tips

- Make sure you have more than one pair of goggles. Just like gloves, an extra couple of pairs will always come in handy during a day's riding. Also try and stick to just one make so that the lenses are interchangeable.
- Always try to use genuine lenses. Although often slightly more expensive than after-market items, most top brand lenses are made from Lexan, a plastic that is used in security and anti-vandal glazing products. It's really tough.
- A big padded bag (or large Tupperware box) is an excellent place in which to keep your goggles. Not only will it keep them dust-free and safe once prepped, it'll also swallow lenses, tear-offs, roll-off films, Rain X, etc together so you don't have to go hunting in the bottom of your kit bag to find them.
- Zip-lock or re-sealable freezer bags are great for placing prepped goggles in, if they are to be taken along to an out-check by your pit-crew.
- Always place your goggles lens side upwards over your handlebars when stationary. This way rain and dirt will fall on the outside of the lens and not on the inside.
- Stuff a small piece of rag or paper towel into your riding jacket or bum bag so that you can give your goggles a quick clean at a check.
- For beach races and muddy cross-country races, tape an old lens onto the end of your peak for extra shielding. Each time you put your head down you'll still be able to see through the peak extension while sheltering your goggles from the worst of the debris.
- Fitting a nose mask for events that have a lot of low hanging branches is a good idea as it greatly reduces the chance of suffering cuts to the nose. If you do use a 'half mask' fit it before fitting the lens.
- When cleaning your goggles at a check-point always clean the insides first. Then only use that cloth for cleaning the outsides after that.
- Try and prepare your goggles mid-week. Don't leave it until Sunday morning to find that you're out of roll-off film or that you need a new lens. Also buy a few spare lenses (of varying types) - conditions may change unexpectedly.

# EYES RIGHT

of your helmet (not straight into the mouth guard) and undo the top part of your jacket to let hot air vent out the front rather than the neck of your jacket.

Some goggles come with standard lenses which are pre-treated to prevent fogging, and for the most part these work very well indeed. Eventually however, the anti-fog coating wears off and then these lenses will need to be treated in the same way as any other. And we've even got (here at TBM) a standard set of goggles which have a tiny cooling fan mounted in the top part of the frame (with the batteries mounted on the strap), which at the push of a button blows cool air down the lens and demists it! Cool.

The toughest condition for goggles to cope with is heavy rain because the water simply collects on the outside, and distorts your vision. In these circumstances then you'll need to treat the outside of the lens with a water dispersant such as Rain X (available at most high street motor factors). Simply dampen the outside of your lens, pour a small amount of the clear solution onto it and polish it over the outer surface. It's incredible how well it works, especially when it's pouring down and you're trying to battle your way down a fire road. Making your goggles seemingly water repellent, rain falls from the lens almost the minute it lands upon it. It's a product that should be in every rider's goggle bag.

The other way in which to clear your vision when it's raining, and this might sound a little

odd, is to make sure you are wearing clean, dry gloves. Providing you have hand guards fitted to your bike which keep your hands clean, you effectively have five fresh cleaning digits. When you refuel during a wet event, don't just change your goggles, but also change your gloves.

Another trick, and a favourite of David Knight, is to stuff a piece of clean paper rag up under your peak. There it'll stay dry, and is only a few inches away from your goggles as and when you need it. Whatever you do don't take your goggles off unless you absolutely have to. With a little preparation and a few clean rags there should be no need to.

**Roll-offs are a great way to keep your vision clear in muddy conditions...**



## Dust Devils

There are only a few things that you can do to prevent dust from entering your goggles, and if your goggles were purchased within the past few seasons they

should do a pretty good job of keeping dust out, irrespective of make. Firstly, and I know it sounds obvious but I have seen people do it, don't use lenses with roll-off holes in them without the roll off system. If you have a newish, well-sealed set of goggles then you should be okay. You can however put a little bit of oil on the foam around the frame. Filter oil, baby oil, any type of oil really, just make sure it smells okay. And while you're at it a little bit of baby oil smeared on the face foam can help seal the goggles onto your face.

When it's dusty, and this is a habit all riders and their pit crews should try to get into, lightly wipe the inside of your goggles FIRST, before wiping the outside. The number of riders that get a rag, wipe off all the crud from the outside of a lens at a check, and then use the same piece of rag to clean the inside of their goggles is unbelievable. Look after your goggles during a race and they'll look after you.

## Roll Your Own

Take a look at a picture of any WEC front-runner and you'll notice one thing - none of them use roll-offs. Some might fit a couple of tear-offs as a precautionary measure but on the whole they don't use any kind of vision clearing system. The reason? Well, unlike in motocross or cross-country racing where you're racing amongst other riders, in enduros it's pretty much you against the elements. As a result you get less muck thrown in the direction of your pork pies. Oh, and you get chance to change your goggles each and every time you see your service crew.

But my guess is that you're probably not a WEC front runner, and the chances are that the events you will ride (in winter at least) will be horribly muddy, with crud flying everywhere. Even as a trail rider it pays to have a clearable vision system. Tear-offs are fine and although they have the benefit of clearing the whole of your vision, not just an inch-wide strip, you can only get about five or six on at one time. Plus, it must be said that throwing pieces of plastic down on the trail is not very environment-friendly.

The solution is to use roll-offs. These use a thin strip of replaceable clear tape which is held in a cartridge on one side of the goggles and stretches across your field of vision. Pulling a small toggle on the left side, pulls the tape from the 'new' cartridge into the 'old'. The tape costs anywhere

from about 60p to a quid or more (depending on how many you buy at a time) and should easily last you an entire muddy race. In dry conditions a tape will last for months.

They sound like the ideal solution, but the problem with roll-offs however is that heavy rain can play havoc with them if you don't spend a little time getting them prepped correctly. When preparing roll-offs for a day's riding there is one thing above all else that you are trying to do - prevent the film from sticking to the lens. If it does stick not only will they stop working, but you will likely either break the mechanism trying to clear your vision (it tends to jam), or throw your goggles away in anger.

Neither need happen. Making sure that you have a lens which is in good condition is the best starting point. There are two ways in which you can prevent the film from sticking. The most popular method is to raise it from the lens surface using fishing wire.

When mounting the roll-off system onto a lens run some fine fishing wire horizontally across the film area between the screws holding the canisters to the lens. Run one line of film between the top two screws and one between the bottom two. Then load the film into the canisters in the normal way. By doing this the fishing wire will act as tramlines, keeping the film a sufficient distance away from the lens.

## GETTING WIRED

Extreme enduros demand extreme goggles! What you see here are the type of goggles that competitors occasionally use in extreme events such as the infamous Gilles Lalay Classic. Using a stock frame and lens, the centre part of the lens has been cut away and a metal mesh stuck in its place. On top of that is a set of Smith roll-offs. The thinking behind the weird design is that in the ultra-physical conditions, these goggles will never mist up. The mesh screen (similar to that used for bodging car bodywork repairs) maintains the airflow along with a degree of protection, and doesn't hamper vision too much. The

roll-offs keep the view clear, preventing mud from getting stuck in the mesh behind. They may look a little weird, but they show that you mean business!





Most WEC racers don't use a vision clearing system. They simply don't need to...

Another way of preventing the film from sticking is to score the lens. By applying reasonable pressure and running a Stanley knife blade down the centre of a lens three times (about two millimetres apart each time) you will cause ridges to appear on the lens. Unlike the fishing wire trick which runs along the line of your vision, the scores are unnoticeable as they are in front of your nose. However Scott is one manufacturer that produces a lens with small notches on its surface, which lifts the film slightly.

When you are happy with the running of the film it is essential that you fit a 'mud flap' over the top to stop water from running between the film and the lens, never use roll-offs without one. While the purpose made strips are best, if you find yourself without one you can make one from duct tape. Firstly, take the lens out of the goggles, take a six to eight inch strip of the tape and fold/stick about five millimetres of it to itself. This should then be placed onto the lens so that it overlaps the film by about two millimetres. Then trim off the excess and refit the lens.

Don't be tempted to clean and re-use roll-off film. It's a false economy, and it doesn't work.

### Tearing Off A Strip

As an alternative to roll-offs, tear-offs remove dirt from the complete lens surface, and although they offer a reduced number of clearings, they don't decrease your vision, as some riders find roll-offs do.

Fitting tear-offs is relatively simple. Again making sure that the lens surface is completely

## EYES RIGHT

free from moisture, press each individual tear-off over the locating pins at each end of the lens. As you fit each tear-off, fold the end over and place it over the left side locating pin (right side as you look at your goggles) so that it is secured beneath the next tear-off. Remember, in wooded enduros it can get dark amongst the trees so don't mount too many in a single go - about four should be enough. That said, Oakley now offer laminated tear-offs, which allow you to place up to 14 on at a time without reducing visibility too much.

### Wear 'Em Out

Finally it may seem obvious, but when riding try and avoid removing your goggles at all costs. We've all been to races and seen riders that drop their goggles at the first sign of rain or mud. They're usually the same riders you see in the St John's Ambulance afterwards getting the eye-bath treatment. With the correct preparation there should be no need to remove your goggles at all during a race (except to swap them for a new pair). Prepare them properly beforehand and you won't go wrong...

# The start of something special

The little blue button on both of Yamaha's WR enduro models isn't the only good news for 2003!

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# BOXER REBELLION

Originality is a rare commodity in our little game... Or at least originality that works. Sure, we've seen oddball concepts like the Rokon Two-Wheel Drive and more recently, Cannondale's reverse-headed four-stroke with programmable engine management... But look what happened to them.

So what constitutes progress in the off-road business is generally of the incremental variety - evolution rather than revolution to plunder a well-used cliché - and quantum leaps have traditionally been thin on the ground. In fact when you consider how familiar we've become with the shaft-driven, horizontally-opposed 'boxer' twins that have long been the hallmark of Bayerische Motoren Werke GmbH - or BMW in its more familiar acronym - it's tempting to dismiss the

**BMW's R80G/S was much more than just a big soft-roader, it was truly revolutionary and an instant classic. Mark Williams charts the rise of the Boxer Rebellion...**

basic concept as routine rather radical.

But despite the fact that the German company has doggedly developed this configuration since 1923, and had occasionally employed it in off-road guises since the 1950s (including a spell of moderately successful ISDT entries in the 'Seventies in the hands of the legendary Herbert Schek), it wasn't until the 1980s that they produced it in a commercially viable off-road form.

At that point it certainly marked a major departure from the off-road norm, one that might not have been taken seriously were it not for BMW's track record in launching new models that were as technically proven as they were shrewdly conceived commercially.

Consider however that in 1980 when BMW unveiled the R80G/S, the growing vogue for dual-purpose bikes was best exemplified by the single-pot 500cc trailies produced by Honda and Yamaha. Certainly such machinery could be used primarily for trail and even enduro activities if suitably modded, but their genesis was a cunning marketing ruse based on looks rather than off-road ability. As such they were bought by the bucket-load for commuting, posing and even long distance touring - particularly when the roads got rough. Seeing this market developing in the 1970s, and well aware of the German nation's fondness for visiting other people's countries, BMW decided they wanted a piece of it.



In fact, and in accord with the development of Yamaha's XT500 - arguably the first commercially realised dual purpose model - the G/S (which stood for 'Gelände' [off-road] and 'Strasse' [road]) was actually based on an enduro machine. One of BMW's suspension designers, Rüdiger Gutsche built himself a purposeful-looking off-roader based on the R75/5 in 1975, and rode an enhanced version of it as a marshal in the 1979 ISDT which took place at Lager Stegskopf, West Germany. Around the same time, similar bikes were appearing in European rallies, but even these were the work of individual employees rather than official BMW prototypes.



speedo-only instrument console, and a fibre-glass seat pan also contributed to an all-up weight of 380lb, some 40lb lighter than the aforementioned R75/5 roadster, and with its long travel suspension (200/170mm - front/rear) the G/S was precisely what it set out to be, an able performer both on- and off-road. As far as the latter was concerned, the 8.2:1 compression engine's abundant low-down grunt meant a lot more in practical terms than the quoted maxima of 50bhp at 6500rpm.

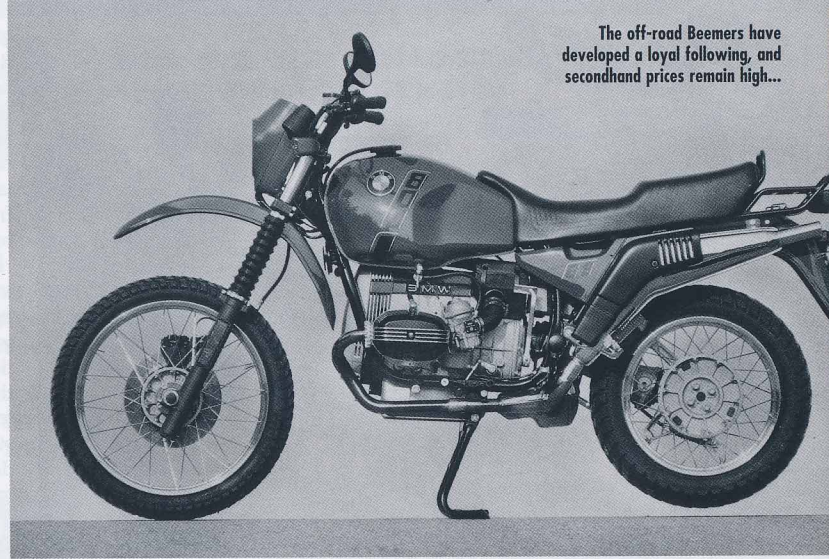
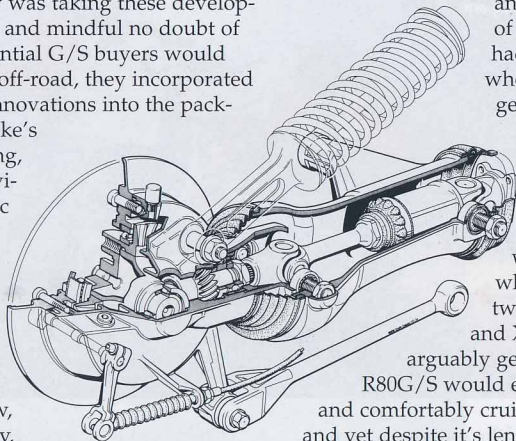
Fed by the reliable 32mm Bing CV carbs, the engine was rather thirsty, averaging about 40mpg, but easily managed and very biddable, and the inherent clunkiness of the traditional BM gearbox had been refined to the point where if you had to change gear - which was far less often than on a Japanese single - you simply got used to it.

At its UK launch in November 1980 the G/S wore a £2449 price tag, which was approximately twice the price of the XT500 and XL500, but then you were arguably getting twice the bike. The R80G/S would easily top the ton on tarmac and comfortably cruise all day at 70-80mph, and yet despite its lengthy 57.4inch wheelbase (when its big trailie contemporaries were some three inches shorter), with minimal modification it was surprisingly competent on the rough. In 1981 Frenchman Hubert Auriol won the Paris-Dakar Rallye on a works version of the bike (with a more conventional swing-arm), which along with subsequent Rallye success - most notably a double victory with Gaston Rahier and Auriol finishing first and second in '84 - encouraged the factory to offer a special P-D version that same year. This boasted a whopping seven gallon fuel tank, solo seat, stainless steel exhaust, bigger battery and an engine reworked

However the factory was taking these developments pretty seriously, and mindful no doubt of the fact that some potential G/S buyers would certainly ride the bike off-road, they incorporated a number of striking innovations into the package. In favour of the bike's suitability for dirt riding, weight-saving was obviously critical. The 797cc engine - a slightly bored-out version of the R75/5 motor - featured Galnical coated alloy cylinders, simplex (as opposed to duplex) timing chain and a new, smaller clutch assembly, which combined to lop 15lb off the older, smaller engine.

But the revolution, if you will, was the chassis. An otherwise conventional BMW duplex frame with oval top tubes bore an all-new Monolever rear-end. As its name implied, this contained the driveshaft in a sole, off-side strut suspended by a single shock absorber which not only cut weight compared to a conventional swingarm, but also maintained crucial structural rigidity and permitted a quick wheel removal via just three hub nuts.

A high-level two-into-one exhaust was fitted,



The off-road Beemers have developed a loyal following, and secondhand prices remain high...

to produced slightly more torque at lower revs. A wrap-around engine bashplate and dual front discs were optional extras.

Conversely there was already a slightly gentler version of the bike intended primarily for road use, the R80 ST introduced in 1982, which had a smaller, 19inch front wheel, revised steering geometry and suspension settings and more comprehensive instrumentation nicked off the R45/65 series roadbikes. Both the ST and the Paris-Dakar models are now quite rare and in the case of the latter at least, highly sought after, although some standard G/Ss were retro-fitted with an official P-D kit to make 'em look the part.

Unsurprisingly therefore, the G/S soon became the weapon of choice for long-distance adventure touring due to its sturdiness, reliability and relative comfort in the harshest conditions and on the

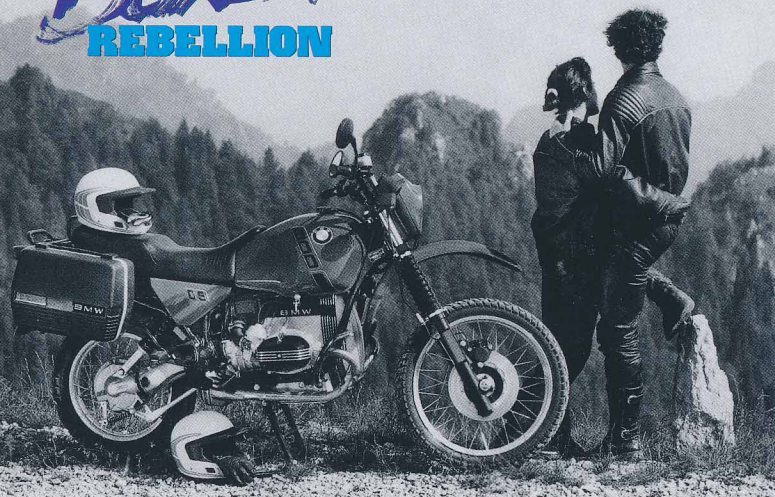
roughest roads. It was also eminently suitable for long distance road trials and rallies for much the same reasons and only the specially developed Metzeler tyres - forerunners of the tarmac-inclined 'dualies' now so commonplace - impaired progress on really muddy or loose terrain. Fitted with the largest possible enduro/moto-x covers, ie a 4.50x18 rear, and a 3.00x21 front, the G/S did however acquit itself

## MY ONE: STEVE MOORE

Steve Moore bought his R80GS from Church Stretton Motorcycles in Shropshire earlier this year, and a very nice example it is too. With a rather hefty ten owners behind it, this 1991 model nevertheless has a fairly conservative mileage of 49,000 and shows no evidence of serious mechanical work, although at some stage the exhaust system looks like it's been replaced with one from the freer-flowing G/S. Steve hasn't yet ridden the bike seriously off-road although the opportunities for doing so around his hometown of Newtown, Powys, are more than ample. But as he says, 'it's a great bike on country lanes and very comfortable on main roads. And having owned an R100RS I was amazed at how much lighter and easier it is to flick around.'



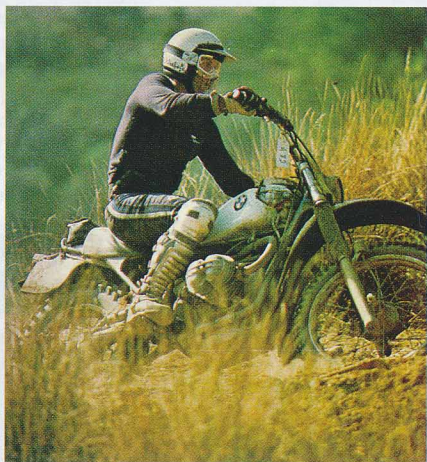
## BOXER REBELLION



well, although as a colleague David Minton discovered when he tested one on Mid-Wales' boggy uplands in 1984, the G/S demanded a riding technique hitherto alien to most trail-riders:

'The main danger lay in over-confidence' he remembers. For all its commendably low weight for a machine of its size, the G/S was too much to 'boss' in usual enduro fashion on the rough. A combination of good steering geometry and suspension, plus an engine with prodigious yet gentle torque persuaded any number of us who rode it to take foolish risks: weight is all very well until equilibrium is upset (and) there's no hope of recovering 3.5cwt of flying metal by any of the usual off-road methods. After some time I learned to ride by a different method - less scatty, more deliberate, maintaining wheel alignment, maintaining traction, using torque... allowing the machine to 'flow'. When it is used with respect for its peculiarities, the GS has some quite remarkable off-road qualities. And no, the pots don't catch on things!'

The latter comment may well remain open to



debate amongst those of us who've ridden in deeply rutted mud or moorland tracks, but by-and-large the pots are some fifteen inches off the ground on a laden bike. But even from my own much briefer experience of riding these bikes I know that the peculiarities David Minton wrote of, are, in addition to the gear selection, the power characteristics of a four-stroke twin and a tendency for the rear end to rise under power that's common to shaftdrive transmission driven by an engine with a longitudinal crankshaft. This is not what you want when you're trying to pull the bike out of claggy conditions, and precisely the opposite of what a chain driven rear end tends to do. So after building some 28,000 G/S, Dakar and ST versions of the bike, in 1987 BMW launched two new models which substantially reduced the problem.

Now subtly re-named as the R80GS (did you spot it?) and it's bigger brother, the R100GS, these bikes were equipped with the cast alloy Paralever swingarm BMW had originally developed for their 'K' range of multi-cylindered roadsters. By adding an extra joint in the shaft - just before the actual hub - this created a 'parallelogram-effect' in the drive-train which went a long way to cancelling out 'wheel lift' as power is engaged. And it had the additional benefit of avoiding rear wheel judder under hard braking. The new Paralever rear-end also offered an extra 10mm of travel.

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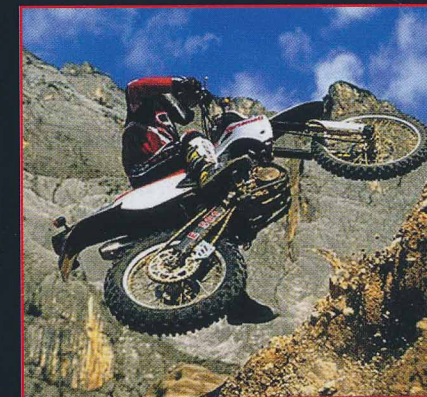
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# DIRT JUNKIES



**BOXER  
REBELLION**



the use of low-profile tubeless tyres and offering greater torsional strength. These patented 'cross-spoke' wheels did however severely limit the choice of tyres and encouraged 'creep' if they were run at low pressures, and this wasn't made any easier by the fact that the rear wheel was a 17-inch. Eventually however Metzeler did offer special motocross style covers for serious off-road use, otherwise

The company took the opportunity to substantially improve the way the front end behaved, too, by specifying an alloy fork brace and buying in specially developed Marzocchi forks with advanced anti-friction coatings, 40mm (as opposed to 36mm) diameter stanchions and an extra 25mm of travel - a direct legacy of the units specified for the works Paris-Dakar bikes. The frame itself incorporated stronger upper rails and rear sub-frame.

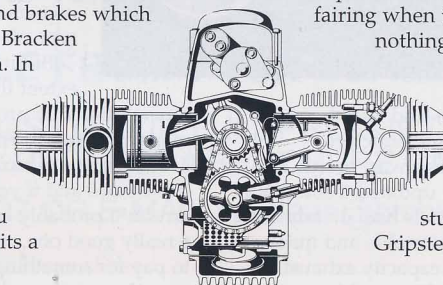
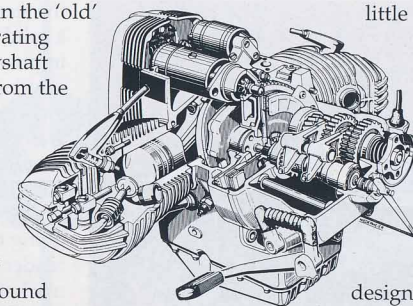
The second major innovation related to the wheels which now featured spokes laced to the outer edge of the alloy rims, thereby permitting

Continental's TwinDuro tyres make perhaps the best compromise.

The mechanics of the smaller bike were virtually unchanged, but the 94 x 70.6mm engine fitted to the bigger R100GS put out an extra 10bhp and 18Nm of torque, at 6500rpm and 3750rpm respectively. Although oil consumption and engine wear on a hard-riden R80G/S had been criticised in certain quarters, and BMW did improve the lubrication system for the new model, they chose to fit an external oil cooler only to the R100GS. Somehow or other though the quoted dry weights of both bikes were now

418lb, significantly porkier than the 'old' G/S, and this despite incorporating a much smaller and lighter layshaft starter motor, also borrowed from the K-series bikes.

One man who exploited the revised R80GS to the full was 36 year-old property developer Guy Greenway who bought a 1993 example in 2001 and spent two-and-a-half months riding down to and around Morroco and back on his own. Though he bought it privately, the bike needed some repair work to the electrics and brakes which was done by his local dealer, Bracken Motorcycles in South London. In fact the bike was virtually standard save for a sump guard ('absolutely vital in Southern Morroco where the bike spent a surprising amount of time in the air! You find yourself pushing the limits a



little more every day on a long trip.'). And a six-pot Billet-6 caliper on the front disc ('the standard caliper wasn't really up to it'). Guy is fulsome in his praise for the BMW: 'It's bullet-proof and I reckoned that if anything did go wrong, because it's such a simple and long-lived design, anyone anywhere could fix it. But in fact apart from snapping a speedo cable and shedding a bit of fairing when the tracks got really rough, nothing went wrong in over eight thousand miles.'

Having originally planned to buy a set of Metzeler Sahara tyres before catching the ferry in southern Spain, he even stuck with the original Avon Gripsters because they worked so

## FANCY THAT?

Rare as the proverbial hen's teeth, this immaculate 1987 Paris-Dakar R80G/S is currently for sale at Vines of Guildford. Owned for the last five years by a British Airways pilot who appears to've used it exclusively on tarmac, but who's spared no expense in keeping the bike up to snuff. This included regular servicing, a new timing chain, valve seals and vapour-blasting the entire engine to restore it to 'as new' appearance. The bike has a not unreasonable (for a BM) 31,000 miles on the clock and the asking price is £3000... if it's still there by the time you read this. Telephone Duncan Bell on 01483 207004 if you're interested.



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2002 KTM Adventure 640, 11 months old, only 2,600 miles £4799



well on the way down there, 'and lasted the whole trip without a single puncture.'

The new dual capacity range was, in true BMW-style, regularly and sensibly updated throughout its life-span, but the major goals had already been achieved. It was a more comfortable and quieter bike (due largely to a larger capacity exhaust system), with improved handling and longer legs - especially in the case of the R100GS which could cruise happily at 80-90mph and had a 118mph top whack. But although iron men still campaigned these newer models on the dirt, their extra bulk and weight favoured third-world touring and gentle trailriding rather than fighting through the nadgery stuff or full-on racing.

Perhaps to revive its rough-neck image, the factory re-introduced a Paris-Dakar model - with the 980cc engine - in 1990 and, once again, offered a kit which could be retro-fitted to earlier examples. At the same time BMW also hired the Dutch White Power outfit to develop an optional suspension kit with multi-adjustable rear shock and progressive fork springs. Newly standard on both models was a wider rear brake drum - 27.5 as opposed to 25mm.

And rather perversely perhaps, throughout the lifespan of the second series bikes, the company offered a 27bhp, R65-engined version of the 'old' G/S, although this was only available on the German market.

In 1993 of course the new generation of 1095cc boxers appeared with their four-valve heads, Motronic fuel injection, catalytic converter, ABS and, once again, a radical suspension departure, this time in the shape of the Telelever front end. Using a single suspension unit mounted behind

the steering head and connected to a solid front fork, this new design improved stability and sensitivity of steering input. The 1100GS featured a new chassis in which the engine was a load-bearing component, but despite this and other weight-paring efforts, the bike hit the scales at a chunky 536lbs. As such, it was never going to be a realistic off-road contender despite the fact that BMW market the bike as such (purely to make the sales figures look good, perhaps), although some brave owners do campaign them in rally-type off-road events.

But it's the first, and to a lesser extent the second series of Gelandestrasse BMs that provide the best prospect for the man (or woman) who wants to ride something a little different off-road. People tend to hang onto these bikes and if you can find one for sale nowadays it'll probably cost you upwards of £2000 for a really good one... Not in fact such a high price to pay for something that will go on and on forever if properly maintained, and a bike that in many ways remains revolutionary to this day.

## BMW R80G/S

<b>Price (1980):</b>	£2449
<b>Value now:</b>	£1500-3000
<b>Engine:</b>	Air-cooled, OHV, 2-valve, horizontally opposed 4-stroke twin, wet-sump lubrication, alloy barrels
<b>Bore &amp; Stroke:</b>	84.8 x 70.6mm
<b>Displacement:</b>	797cc
<b>Carburettor:</b>	2 x 32mm Bing Constant Velocity
<b>Transmission:</b>	5-speed, constant mesh, with shaft final-drive
<b>Chassis:</b>	Duplex, high tensile steel. Hydraulic front forks, Monolever swingarm with single shock absorber
<b>Brakes:</b>	Front 285mm disc, single caliper; Rear: 200mm 2LS drum
<b>Tyres front:</b>	Front 2.75 x 21ins
<b>Tyres rear:</b>	Rear 4.00 x 18ins
<b>Wheelbase:</b>	57.4ins
<b>Seat height:</b>	34.3ins
<b>Ground clear:</b>	9.5ins
<b>Fuel capacity:</b>	4.2gal
<b>Dry weight:</b>	380lbs (dry)

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## Thinking about buying a secondhand KTM 400EXC? Then you need to know this...

**A** 400cc four-stroke is one of the most versatile four-strokes you can buy; it has sufficient speed for the street with plenty of flickability for the dirt. It can be raced, rallied, trail ridden, supermotarded and overlanded. They've got enough power to make 'em fun without having too much to really scare the pants off you.'

So began our 400 shootout in the June 2000 issue of TBM - a test which the then-new KTM 400EXC went on to win against strong opposition from Honda, Yamaha and Suzuki. That was the first full year of the new-style KTM powered by its all-new four-stroke engine (and the first of two successive 400 shootouts that the KTM won), but it wasn't TBM's first encounter with the bike.

Back in September 1999 we were invited along to the launch of KTM's range of new thumpers over in Italy and were mightily impressed with the EXC's blend of light weight, high performance and easy starting. In truth the 400EXC didn't so much emerge into the growing 400cc class, as thunder in at full throttle, do a little pirouette and then charge off into the distance throwing roost over the faces of all its competitors. Truth is, it completely rewrote the rule-book in the middleweight sector and went on to dominate the class for the next three years. Even now (with the advent of a number of more powerful electric-start 450s from other manufacturers), the 400EXC

STORY & PICS: TBM

# KTM 400EXC

Fork seals: A KTM bugbear. Watch out for leaking seals particularly on the left hand fork leg - spilling oil onto the front brake...



Seats on the later models (2001/2) had a nasty habit of delaminating. Many owners went back to the simple black one...

**★ PLUS**  
Great package  
Well specced  
Versatile  
Built to last

**★ MINUS**  
Maintenance schedule  
Suspension harsh  
Prone to headshake

KTM recommend an engine inspection every 100hrs...

With only two wheelbearings in the rear wheel the 400EXC tends to wear them out pretty quickly. Check for play...

# USED & Abused!

can easily hold its own against later opposition.

Much of the reason behind this success is that with the new range of four-stroke EXCs, KTM as a manufacturer managed to put into metal the concept that we'd figured out for ourselves a few years earlier (after testing Yamaha's first WR400F) - that building good four-stroke dirt bikes is not just about ultimate power but more about light weight, ease of starting, decent reliability and general usability. Plenty of other manufacturer's dirt bikes could meet most of these criteria, but only the KTM matched them all.

It was an instant success. KTM UK immediately sold out of their allocation of 400EXCs in both 2000 and 2001 and the story was the same all across Europe. Which was a surprise given that the KTM cost more than five grand at a time when you could get a new WR4 for nearly a grand less and Suzuki's electric-start DR-Z400E was five hundred quid cheaper than that.

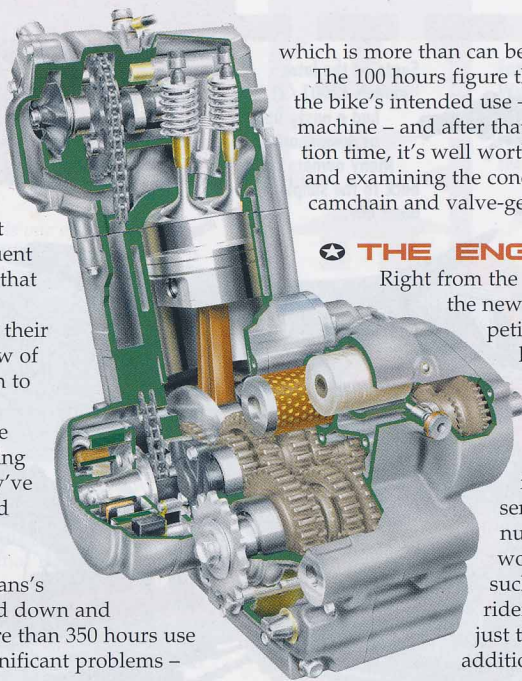
But the stark truth of the matter was that good

though the DR-Z and WR-F were, the KTM offered something which the Suzuki and Yamaha could never attain: pure desirability. It wasn't just that KTM were winning world championships with their bike, it was also that KTM as a brand were still perceived as being slightly 'exotic'. Ordinarily this is a description which has dirt riders running in fear of their wallet, but KTM had countered this by making their bikes accessible to all riders. 400EXCs came fully equipped for the road right outta' the crate, and had an electric-start which meant that you didn't have to be a world champion to ride the thing (dirt bikes always stall in the most inconvenient places), as well as a kick-start as back-up.

But cleverer than that, KTM were brutally honest and upfront about their new bike's reliability and service intervals. This was a bike which was designed to run competitively for 100 hours (approximately a season's use) before requiring a stripdown. And as if to underline this point, at

the launch in Italy, Mario Rinaldi's championship winning bike went 'bang' with precisely 103 hours on the clock. Eeek.

Now before you all start panicking about that 100 hours figure, subsequent experience has taught us that KTM were initially being extremely cautious about their service intervals. We know of bikes which have gone on to complete three, four and even five times that figure without so much as missing a beat, provided that they've been given regular oil and filter changes and been looked after properly. (In fact TBM's own Chris Evans's 400EXC has been stripped down and inspected by us after more than 350 hours use and found to have no significant problems –



which is more than can be said for the owner).

The 100 hours figure then, is an indication of the bike's intended use – as a competition machine – and after that amount of competition time, it's well worth pulling off the head and examining the condition of the piston, camchain and valve-gear etc.

### ★ THE ENGINE

Right from the outset KTM designed the new EXC engine as a competition motor (did you know for instance that the underside of the engine was specially shaped and strengthened to shrug off hits from rocks etc), though sensibly they included a number of features which would help make the bike such a success with trail riders. These included not just the electric-start, but the addition of a counter-balancer

### ★ WHAT TO PAY?

KTM resale values appear to be rock-solid. Owners are currently asking strong money for what are after all secondhand competition bikes – albeit many of them have never seen race numbers. A flick through the classifieds at the back of the mag will confirm that there's always a few 400s on the market and prices remain commendably high once the initial depreciation has taken place.

As always condition is more important than age and mileage, so ask about maintenance schedules and frequency of servicing. To help you identify the different models, remember that the original 2000 bikes had a black seat, silver rear fender and broad silver tank graphics. In 2001 KTM switched to an orange and black seat, retained the silver rear fender and changed the graphics to a small oval logo (predominantly orange, with a silver border and black lettering). Then finally in 2002 the orange and black seat was retained, the rear fender went to black and the small oval logo went to predominantly silver (with black lettering). But watch out for the old trick of sticking newer plastics on an older bike.

In terms of value the figures below are the sort of prices we'd expect to pay for a 400EXC from a private ad in the classifieds. Owners may ask more, but this is what we'd expect to settle on. You'll pay more (for an equivalent bike) from a dealer because the dealer can offer you more in terms of the overall package (trade-in, finance, warranty etc). But remember that old adage. You get what you pay for.

- 400EXC 2002: £3850-4100
- 400EXC 2001: £3500-3800
- 400EXC 2000: £3200-3500



2002



2001



2000



USED & Abused!

Stripped down the KTM reveals its sturdy steel backbone and easily accessible mechanics...

(to help smooth out the vibes), twin oil pumps and a sensible layout which made maintenance relatively easy.

The engine was in fact originally derived from a Husaberg motor (KTM had bought Husaberg the previous year), though the only component which remains of the original Berg mill is the clutch assembly. But by basing the initial design of their new engine on an existing unit (albeit with plenty of differences), KTM were able to speed-up the traditional development and production period. Thus the liquid-cooled 398cc KTM lump utilises a simple chain-driven SOHC which operates four valves within the head by means of rocker arms (via progressively wound valve-springs). There's a six-speed gearbox, hydraulic clutch and right-side kicker.

In terms of power delivery, the 400EXC makes as much (if not more) power than all contemporary 400s (with the possible exception of the Yamaha WR-F). In one of our 400 shootouts we drag raced the bikes across a field and the KTM was consistently the fastest. Where it loses out to some of the other 400s however is in terms of torque.

Though not exactly lacking in torque (there's still a decent amount of bottom end available), the KTM's motor really loves to rev and does its best work in the midrange and top end.

### ★ ERGOS

One of the nice things about the 400EXC is that it was one of the first KTM models to wear braceless alloy Magura bars which came complete with adjustable top-clamps.

There's a four-way adjustment available thanks to alternative mounting holes and asymmetrically-shaped clamps.

And this means that there should be a riding position set-up to suit almost everyone. That said the 400EXC is not really a bike for short (or timid) riders. It's got a tall seat and quite a spacious riding position and the bars are relatively high and upright. But if you're over about five-eight, you should be fine.

Sensibly the standard nine litre tank is nice and slim, the seat (though firm) is well padded and the riding position as a whole just about spot on. We can't really fault the 400EXC's ergos except to say that if you spend a lot of time riding sitting down, you may find the bars quite high and the seat pretty firm. Oh and thanks to the USD forks, the steering lock available (lock-to-lock) is slightly limited.

### ★ HANDLING & SUSPENSION

All modern KTMs are renowned as being swift handling machines with fairly firm and (in some cases) unforgiving suspension, and







Child's play on a good 400...

so it's well worth opening up the cam-cover and replacing it.

While you're doing that (or getting your dealer to do it for you), check that the valve-clearances are correct. These will need doing about once a year for the average rider. Obviously KTM's 100 hour stripdown interval should ideally be adhered to, though for the most part this is more of an inspection than a rebuild. Camchains will eventually wear out, as will piston rings and pistons, but on the whole you should be able to tell a reasonable amount about the health of your bike's motor by the noises it makes, how much oil it burns and its day-to-day performance.

Talking of noises, we know of at least one bike which wore the hard facing off one tooth of the balancer-weight gear. This showed up as a 'tick-ticking' sound and required replacement of both that gear and the one which drives it off the crankshaft.

We've also heard of very occasional gearbox problems (broken selector forks etc), and although the clutches never seem to give problems, the clutch fluid (in the hydraulic line) should be replaced periodically - especially if the clutch feels spongy. Make sure you use proper clutch fluid (not brake fluid) and for £16 KTM will sell you an official factory syringe kit which makes the job a lot easier.

Keep a close eye on the output shaft oil seal (behind the front sprocket), these occasionally fail leading to a loss of all the oil. If there's a drip on yours, don't wait for it to go, but change it immediately. Replacement is relatively straight-forward and can be done from the outside.

Another oil-related problem we've heard about concerns one of the bike's oil filter screens. Aside from the two paper oil filters there's also two mesh oil screens - one of which bolts onto the underside of the engine. This has an allen-headed tapered bolt and because of the bolt's taper it's easy to overtighten it and jam the thing solid, with the inevitable consequence that the bolt-head rounds off when you next try and undo it. The solution is to either braise an eight or ten

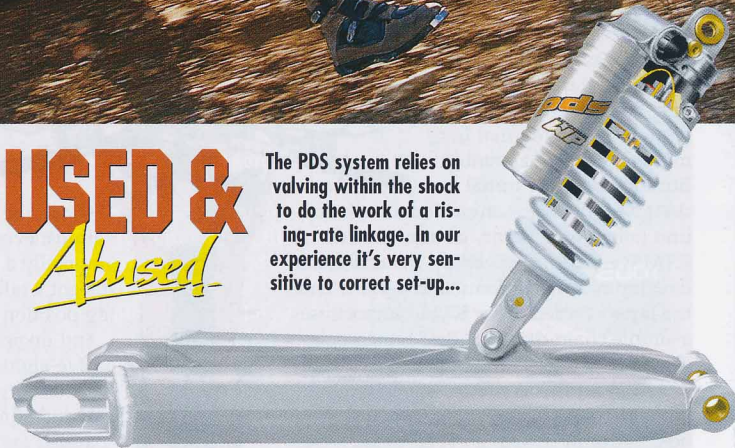
the 400s are typical of the breed. If you've never ridden a KTM before, then you'll find the bike steers very quickly, is prone to headshake (at times) but carves a line through a turn beautifully.

Suspension-wise the 400s all came equipped with USD 46mm WP forks, and a linkless PDS rear end fitted with a WP shock. These are decent units, but as with all KTM's they tend to come set-up on the firmer side, and require a bit of dialling in. Depending upon the sort of riding you are doing (and your weight and speed), you may find that getting the suspension revalved to a softer set-up will make the bike more enjoyable (certainly for trail riding purposes). But if you intend racing your 400 then the stock settings will probably suffice.

When it comes to riding, the 400EXC is a spirited performer. With its blend of fast handling, firm suspension and dynamic motor, this is a bike which you'll want to get on and ride fast.

## USED & Abused!

The PDS system relies on valving within the shock to do the work of a rising-rate linkage. In our experience it's very sensitive to correct set-up...



And although you can trickle along at times, really the 400 is better suited to those who like to make rapid progress.

### ★ EQUIPMENT

All EXC's come fully equipped for the road, so expect to find a bike with a working digital speedo/odo, horn and all the other road equipment. Check the lights thoroughly because rear light problems are not uncommon. Just occasionally motocross versions (SXC's) get converted into enduro bikes - though these are unlikely to have

the digital speedo fitted. All the bikes originally came with plastic frame guards and braceless alloy bars fitted as standard, and all 400EXC's had broad pegs and clear fuel tanks. In fact when it comes to standard equipment, we can't think of a better bike. Remember that the earliest bikes will now need an MoT so check that everything works, and if there's an aftermarket exhaust fitted, insist on having the original silencer as well, which will help you get your 'ticket'.

### ★ WHAT GOES WRONG?

Fortunately for owners three and four years down the line, the 400EXC has few faults of which to speak. There are no major specific or inherent problems with any of the model years (over and above a few well-known minor faults), but there are still a few things worth knowing. Perhaps the most worrying thing is that many 2002 models suffered from the failure of a small bolt (and locknut) which attached to the centrifugal auto decompressor located on the cam. If this bolt fails it can cause all sorts of expensive damage to the valvetrain and top-end. It's a known fault and a stronger replacement bolt is available,

At the launch in Italy (back in Sept '99) we were mightily impressed. Now nearly four years on, the 400EXC continues to give good service. Can't say fairer than that...



## USED & Abused

Talking of jet-washing, we've also heard of one or two bikes which mysteriously spark into life on their own, if water manages to penetrate the starter solenoid. This occurs because unlike most other makes of bike, KTM's don't have a circuit breaker switch to isolate the ignition, but rather the ignition is effectively live at all times. This can also cause problems when the bike is being transported in a van or on a trailer if a tie-down inadvertently presses the starter button. The answer is of course to remove a battery lead.

KTM supplied the bikes (new) with two rear tail lamp units - one for the road and a smaller lighter one for the trail. Chances are that the smaller one has already been fitted, but it's important that you fit this because the heavier standard light (and rear indicators) are too weighty to put up with the punishment on the dirt, and will simply end up damaging your rear fender. The smaller rear tail lamp housings have a tendency to fill up with mud however, and this causes the rear lights to fail. Use plenty of silicone around the lens, and clean it out regularly if you want to avoid replacing rusty bulb holders.

And finally, in general the standard of KTM's factory fitted bolts is not all that good. Find a supplier of flange-headed bolts and keep a ready supply in your toolbox.

### ★ AFTERMARKET STUFF

One of the best things about the popularity of KTMs right now is that a whole industry has grown up around them supplying aftermarket goodies. Bashplates, handguards, case savers, rear disc guards, aftermarket discs, sprockets, caliper pins, triple clamps with different offsets etc, you name it, and there is a bolt-on goodie available to fit. Not only that but KTM themselves market a range of aftermarket parts such as handguards and bigger tanks etc. We reckon that the least you should do is fit a bashplate, a case-saver and some handguards, while we like the sound of the US made metal gauze filters which are washable and re-usable rather than having to throw away (and replace) two paper filters every time you change the oil.

### ★ RACE OR TRAIL?

Is the 400EXC a genuine dual purpose bike? We think so. It's certainly a competent racer, and as

a trailie it's ideal, providing you like your trail bikes on the sporting side. So who will the bike appeal to and who should avoid them? Well we wouldn't recommend the 400EXC to a complete novice or newcomer - there are much better starter bikes out there. Likewise I think it's fair to say that if you use your bike for commuting to and from the office every day with the occasional play at weekends, then a DR-ZS will probably be a better bet. Same goes if you're particularly short. But for the average trail rider looking for a quick and modern dirt bike, that he or she can trail ride or race, then the EXC fits the bill perfectly in every respect.

When they were first launched the 400EXCs were pricey and powerful in equal measure, and some questioned whether they'd stay the distance. Well the proof is here that KTM's design and build quality was as good as promised. Considering that even the earliest bikes are still making in excess of three grand, we reckon the 400EXC must be considered as sound a financial investment as you can make in a dirt bike...

*Thanks to Tim at Redline Racing (01509 816177), Mark at Eurotek (01765 608209), Chris Evans and Jim Jones for their help in compiling this feature.*

### ★ MY ONES: CHRIS EVANS

I have run two KTM 400EXCs for the last two years, one a 2001 model that now has about 17,000km on it and a 2000 example with approximately 10,000km under its tyres. Like everybody else I was a little concerned about KTM's insistence on top-end rebuilds every 100 hours, but each bike has only had its engine overhauled once, and each time they only needed new timing chains. According to Paris KTM specialists Challenge 75, this is the reward for very regular oil changes. In fact, apart from eating wheel bearings, rear brake pads, side stands bolts and fork seals they have proved almost 100 percent reliable. I say almost 'cos the one my faithful sweeper Dominique uses, got stuck in second gear when a return spring broke in the gearbox earlier on this year. Apart from that apparently, fluke incident they have never let us down on the trail in a sum total of 27,000km. As an added bonus they are so well finished that, despite their high mileage, they clean up a treat. In summary, while I'd have to say that there are one or two bikes on the market that I'd rather ride, there are none that I'd rather own...

millimetre nut onto the outside of the bolt, or at any rate always carry a spare in your toolbox.

Look out for bent or repaired radiators as these often get damaged in a crash and are pricey to replace. And if you're looking at purchasing a very late 2002 model be aware that there was a factory recall on triple clamps which affected a batch of UK-bound 400s. KTM tried to contact all owners, but some slipped through the net, so if you're not sure - take the bike to a dealer and ask him to check it out for you.

KTMs are well-known for having dodgy sidestand bolts which break without warning and dump the bike on its side (often breaking clutch levers as a result). The problem is that the early bikes had bolts with a broad shoulder area, but a small M6 thread - and it's this bit which breaks. We've known owners to go out on a trail ride

with a pocketful of spare bolts because they expect to break more than one in a day. Later bikes had a modified design of bolt, but if you simply replace the soft bolts with a strong one the sidestand lugs tend to break!

When it comes to consumables, thanks to the EXC's wavy-cut discs, brake pads don't tend to last very long - particularly the rears - and in our experience aftermarket pads outlast the factory-fitted originals. Fork seals only seem to have a limited life-span, and likewise rear wheel bearings don't tend to survive too well. The problem is that the 400's rear wheel uses just two wheel bearings rather than three - with only a single bearing on the drive side. Front wheel bearings are better but will still only last about six months on average, and head bearings should be greased regularly if you jet-wash the bike on its side.



## FOX TROT

Oooh, new boots! And very shiny ones at that. These are the latest footwear from Fox Racing, the 2003 model Forma Pro. Made in Italy, they come with all the features you'd expect from a pair of £199.99 boots. Dual locking ally buckles, large areas of plastic protecting shins and ankles, high impact heel armour, it's all here. Combined with a soft lining, suede heatshields on the calves and a sole which is grippy where it needs to be - and slippery where it doesn't, they look to be a great boot for enduro and trail riders alike. Developed in conjunction with US MX hot-shot James 'Bubba' Stewart, they should provide all the protection your feet'll ever need. Our only gripe is that some of the stitching around the edge of the sole is a little untidy compared to the competition. As for the styling, if white is a little too bright for you, the Forma Pros also come in black. But for those who demand in-your-face glitz from their dirt bike kit, check out the Stewart Replicas with metallic red buckles and silver coloured leather. Supercross chic at its best. Available through Fox stockists everywhere, for the full SP check out [www.foxeurope.com](http://www.foxeurope.com) or phone 0191 487 6100.



## LONE RANGER

According to the press blurb, the Kiwi K50 Ranger is the Italian manufacturer's first off-road helmet in over ten years. Yet they've come back to the market with an up-to-the-minute, design. The plastic helmet comes EC homologated and with a gold ACU sticker. There's a plush removable lining, plenty of venting, seatbelt-style fastening and a (strange) goggle-strap clip on the back of the helmet. Weighing in at a claimed 1300 grams, it's not particularly light for a plastic lid, but then it does cost a mere £69.99. If you own an Armstrong (or tend to do a lot of your riding in Iraq) you'll probably appreciate the matt olive finish. Alternatively, you can choose from matt grey or glossy black/white/blue, black/red/orange or white/blue/grey. Fowlers are the people with all the information. You'll find them on 0117 977 0466.

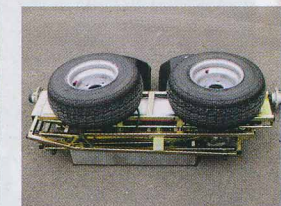
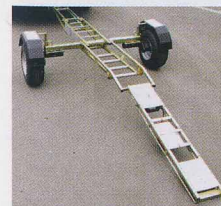
## SOFT CORE

New British company CORE (Combined Off Road Enterprise) are based in Wales, where they know a thing or two about inclement weather. So it's fitting that their latest product - the Aqua Over Jacket - is a wet weather riding top. Cordura construction should give the Aqua excellent durability, whilst a layer of hi-tech Reissa ensures it's both breathable and waterproof. A half length zip means the jacket is easy to put on in a hurry, though the elasticated hem prevents it from riding up whilst you're wearing it. The neoprene cuffs are secured with velcro, and, along with the tight fastening collar, should keep out the elements whilst remaining comfortable. Storage space comes in the form of a large zipped pocket in the front of the jacket, easily big enough for gloves, goggles and some choccoy bars. Available in sizes L to XXL and in black only, it's worth noting that the sizing comes up very small (two sizes under). To fit over body armour most people will require an XXL. You certainly wouldn't want to wear the Aqua in anything but the worst conditions however, because despite its advanced fabrics, we reckon you'd soon overheat. But to keep the elements at bay £64.95 isn't a huge price to pay for what looks to be a very well made piece of kit. Give CORE a ring on 01686 412157 or email them on [corej@ntlworld.com](mailto:corej@ntlworld.com) and tell 'em we sent you.



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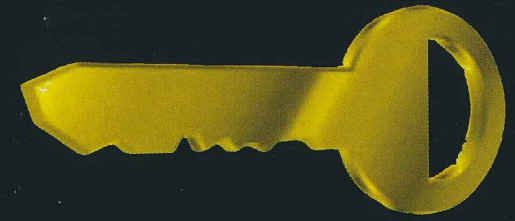
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Still leading the 125 class, Petri Pohjamo had an 'ok' result at his home round...



### Northern Light

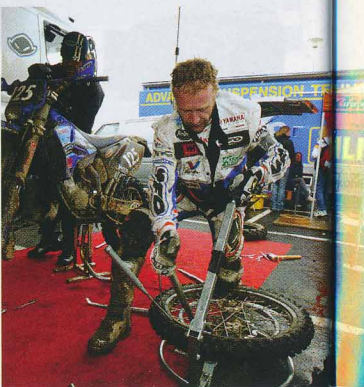
With 250cc two-stroke class leader Stefan Merriman interested only in maintaining his position at the top of the quarter-litre championship, and not in grabbing 'Finn beating' headlines, it came as little surprise that Samuli Aro comfortably topped the 250cc class on both days. For Aro, whose disappointing day two DNF from round five in Italy had effectively handed the title to his Honda-mounted rival, a double event topping performance was his way of saying 'if only'. Riding at his absolute best on day one the fun-loving Finn not only topped the 250cc class but also the Scratch, ahead of VOR mounted countryman Mika Ahola. On day two Samuli again finished ahead of Merriman in the 250cc class, but second behind Juha Salminen in the Scratch having 'made a few mistakes' he admitted afterwards.

For Merriman two 'points scoring finishes' were all the pint-sized Aussie was really after, but having spent much of his off-season training riding in sand in New Zealand, two second place finishes were just

reward for his efforts. Clearly riding at nine tenths, the two-time world champion proved that despite having seen more than one world championship derailed in Scandinavia, he had learnt that Finland is no place for heroics. Looking comfortable around the whooped-out and continuously changing special tests, Stefan kept Samuli within sight on both days, but was unable (and unwilling) to try and match his speed. Finishing 37 seconds behind on day one and 22 on day two, Stefan's runner-up positions were never challenged as the third place finishers - Portuguese rider Helder Rodrigues on day one and French rider Freddy Blanc on day two were, as they have been at most rounds this year, a considerable distance behind.

### The Usual Suspects

With just 11 rider finishing in the 250cc four-stroke class on day one in Finland, and 12 on day two, it was Peter Bergvall that again put his name at the top of the results as he extended his championship lead over Italian Giovanni Sala. Despite



# WORLD ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP

## 2 0 0 3

ROUND SIX, JAMSA, FINLAND 7-8 JUNE

The quiet Finnish town of Jamsa, 200km north of Helsinki, played host to the penultimate round of the 2003 World Enduro Championship in early June with the sixth round of the series proving to be the toughest event yet. Breaking away from the 'new style' enduro format that has generated mixed feelings amongst riders, the Finnish event was a 'proper enduro'. Long special tests, no extreme test and lengthy, challenging checks with reasonably tight time schedules made sure of that. It also saw the first world champion of '03 crowned as Husqvarna's Anders Eriksson became the first ever 450cc four-stroke title winner, making it an incredible seven WEC titles for the likeable Swede.

## Paddock Pointers

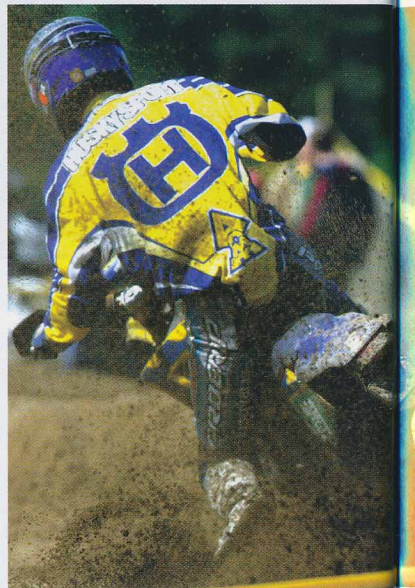
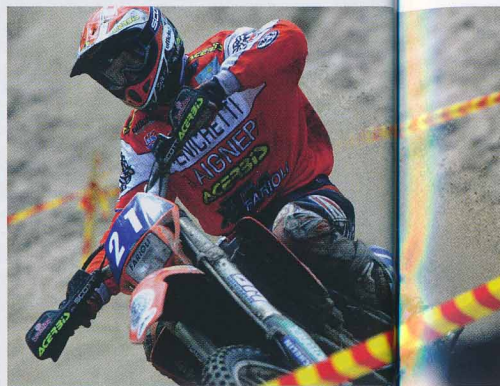
➔ Finn Petteri Silvan well and truly turned his 125cc title campaign around in Finland by topping the eighth-litre class on both days. Not surprising really as the event was held in his home town of Jamsa.

➔ After being described as a 'road-race' by many riders last year, this year's Finnish round was a true enduro. With little of the course using public roads, the challenging Finnish forests and long sandy tests made for a much tougher event.

➔ KTM's competition boss Kurt Nicoll took part in his first ever world championship enduro in Finland having been invited by KTM Racing team-manager Kari Tiainen. With a 14th and 12th place in class, it was an impressive debut for the talented Brit, as the event was easily the toughest of '03.

➔ Juha Salminen suffered his first mechanical DNF since the 2001 French ISDE, when the gearbox on his 525cc KTM cried enough on day one. Fitting his bike with different sized

Cervantes finished 2-2, marking one year in WEC competition...



crashing hard on day two and landing heavily on the collarbone that he broke in Greece earlier in the year, Bergvall fought back to claim his third double class-topping ride this year.

Claiming that he was braking later and pushing harder than was almost humanly possible on each and every special test in an attempt to keep on terms with Bergvall, Sala also found himself comfortably outpaced by Yamaha mounted countryman Giuseppe Gallino on both days. Needing to stay as close to Bergvall as possible in the hope of claiming his sixth world title, Gio now has his work cut out if he is to beat Peter at his home race. And with Gallino in a position to have a serious effect on the outcome of the championship, the final round could see team orders play an important part in deciding who walks away with the title.

### Changing Fortunes

Ever since the opening round of this year's WEC series where he topped the first day's competition in the 125cc class, KTM Racing rider Petteri Silvan has struggled to look anything like the world title winner he was in '02. In Finland all that changed. Having completely revised the suspension set-up on his KTM, and now happy that he is heading in the right direction with it, Silvan claimed two class wins in Finland. More importantly he lifted himself from fourth in class to second as class leader Petri Pohjamo only had an 'ok' weekend and Frenchman Marc Germain had a shocker.

With more home riders than any other class it was little surprise that the eighth-litre category saw Finns fill the podium positions on both days. With Petteri claiming 50 points, Husqvarna's

Mika Saarenkoski placed second on day one with little known Valtteri Salonen finishing as runner-up on day two. Third on day one was Mikko Pihlajavesi, a rider who's has been drafted into factory teams for his home race in years past due to his speed in Finland, while on day two Petri Pohjamo claimed third.

Worryingly for the southern European nations, many of the Finnish riders that placed highly in the 125cc class were youngsters. As has been proved time and again, once Finnish riders master the harder surfaces like in Spain and Italy they often become world title contenders. Judging by the number of fast young Finns in Jamsa, Finland has a huge reserve of future world champions that should keep them at the top of the enduro ladder for years to come.

### Lucky Seven

One of the biggest surprises in Finland was that riders from southern Europe topped the 450cc four-stroke class. A Spaniard and an Italian to be exact. With Anders Eriksson knowing that he was within striking distance of yet another world title, the Finnish event took its toll on his nearest championship rival Roman Michalik, allowing Anders to use two runner-up finishes to claim the title. Finishing eight seconds behind Xevi Puigdemont on day one and less than a second behind Alessandro Botturi on day two, Anders now sits level with Finland's Kari Tiainen as a seven-time world enduro champion. He also says he has no intention of calling it a day.

Winning the 450cc class on day one, Xavi Puigdemont proved many things. Firstly, that his talents had been wasted at Gas Gas and that he'd been right to leave. Secondly, that had he joined the KTM Racing team earlier and been able to prepare for the '03 season

properly, he'd have been a solid title contender. And thirdly, that had he not suffered two mechanical DNF's earlier this year he would have been in a good podium finishing position. As it is was Xavi's result showed that with a little help from his Finnish team mates he can win on pretty much any surface. Disappointingly for him he missed out on his first ever overall class win when he placed in fourth on day two.

Also showing that he could produce the goods in Scandinavia, and that his double class topping ride in Italy hadn't simply been a case of home advantage, Alessandro Botturi took a huge leap forward in the 450 championship to now sit just five points behind VOR's Roman Michalik. Claiming the third podium position on day two was Belgian Thierry Klutz aboard his Gas Gas.

### Home Rule

One thing that was more or less certain in Finland was that a home rider would win in the 500cc four-stroke class. The only question was, which one: Juha Salminen or Mika Ahola? With Mika having hit a career low at the series' fifth round in Italy, Juha was expected to be the man to beat. Unfortunately for the quiet KTM pilot, a terminally ill gearbox on day one meant the loss of a possible 25 points in both the half-litre and Scratch championships.

Day one in Finland thus saw three-times ISDE winner Ahola return to his best form as he placed 46 seconds up on Spaniard Ivan Cervantes and another minute ahead of David Knight. But with Salminen's bike fixed in time for day two and after an early crash, Ahola could only manage third on day two.

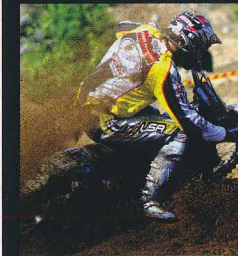
For Ivan Cervantes Finland marked a year of WEC competition. Having competed in 2002 as an unknown motocross rider, Ivan has proved throughout '03 that he has what it takes to make it as a top-flight enduro rider - speed, skill

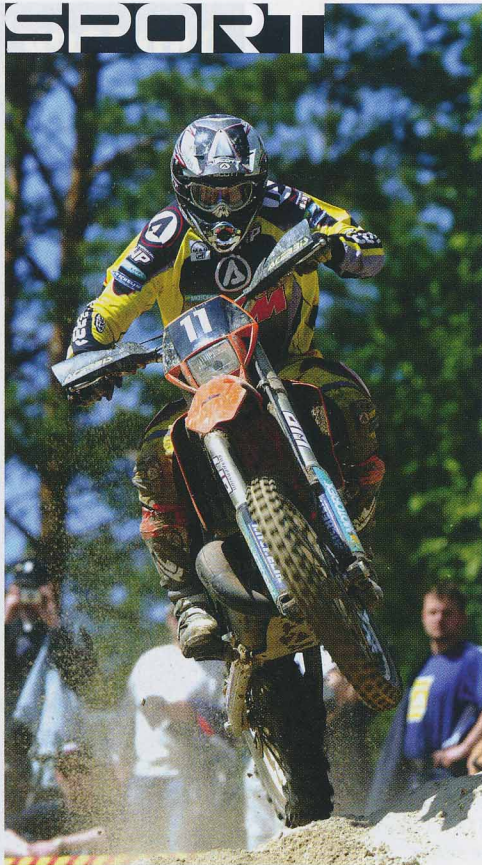
## Paddock Pointers

sprockets during the day in an attempt to overcome the loss of second and fourth gear, Juha made up for his disappointments by winning day two outright!

➤ A number of riders again commented that they didn't like the starting order used this year as it made it hard for riders from the same class to compete on level terms. While the 500cc class sees most of its front runners start within the first 30, the 125cc class has just Petri Pohjamo starting at the front.

➤ Finnish rider Marko Tarkkala failed to start his home round of the '03 WEC series when the factory Husaberg rider broke a bone in his wrist. Fourth in the 450cc class going into the event, the fact that Marko didn't even crash when he injured himself made it an even harder pill to swallow.





and a brain. Never really expected to win on either day, the flamboyant Spaniard finished with two solid runner-up spots - quite an achievement considering he was up against the fastest of Finnish riders. Third on day one, and fourth on day two, David Knight battled with Husaberg's Bjorne Carlsson through out the weekend getting the upper hand on the Swede by just three seconds on day two.

### The Brits

If there's one round of the WEC calendar that you can't just turn up to and expect to do well, it's Finland. Being competitive in the land of a thousand lakes is about much more than just being able to ride fast in sand; it's something that takes months of practice and a little something extra. For the eight British riders competing in Jamsa it was always going to be a tough call, even with several riders from southern Europe deciding not to travel to Scandinavia.

For Paul Edmondson Finland was nothing short of a disaster. Hopeful and confident of

placing near the front of the 125cc class, eighth on day one and ninth on day two were results that left the former world champ scratching his head after the race and heading back to the special tests to try and work out where it all went wrong. Why was he so far down the results sheet? Because like all the other Brits, he turned up and raced having done no real practice or testing specially for Finland.

For David Knight Finland was an event the burly Manxman had been looking forward to for some time. A sand rider of the highest calibre, DK was also put in his place in Jamsa as Finns Mika Ahola and Juha Salminen stole the show in the 500cc class. Despite claiming a podium position on day one with third, Knight was beaten on both days by Spaniard Ivan Cervantes and Finn Mika Ahola. Something that means a runner-up finish in the 500cc class is now pretty much out of the question, and he will now have to fight hard to finish third.

With both Paul and David finding it hard to be competitive it was little surprise that the remaining British competitors also found the going tough. KTM UK's Edward Jones posted a solid tenth in the 250cc two-stroke class on day one, his highest class finish of the year so far. Dropping three places on day two, both Ed and Husqvarna's Euan McConnell found conditions difficult, with McConnell finishing with two 12th places. 250cc four-stroke rider Rowan Jones finished in eighth and ninth, but like Ed and McConnell failed to make any impression on the class leaders. Losing a minute on day two when he tried to find a quicker line around a bog and got stuck, Rowan, a rider who normally goes well in mud and ruts, commented after the race on just how hard the Finnish forest going was. Littered with rocks, and then covered in swampy black mud, even the world's best found themselves stuck and having to push at some point during the weekend.

Finishing in 14th place on day one, WEC first timer (and ex GP motocrosser) Kurt Nicoll, was getting his first ever taste of WEC conditions, and what an event he chose to do it at. Initially reluctant to start day two (because of exhaustion), he was persuaded to try and finish by KTM team manager Kari Tiainen and a solid 12th place was a great reward for all his effort. He eventually finished just ahead of Yamaha's Richard Hay and Husky mounted Chris Hockey (15th and 16th in the 450 class on day one, 14th and 15th on day two, respectively).

So with just one round remaining in Sweden (see the following report), with the exception of the already decided 450 class, there's everything to play for...



# WORLD ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP

## 2 0 0 3

ROUND SEVEN, SKOVDE,  
SWEDEN, JUNE 14-15

## Paddock Pointers

➔ The fact that the overall Scratch WEC went down to the last test of the last day of the last event made the 2003 series final a real thriller. Generating a massive buzz within the WEC paddock, the tension before the final test of the series was incredible. Although Juha Salminen walked away with the title, the real winner was the WEC series, which produced some great racing during each of its seven rounds.

➔ Based close to a Swedish military base, the event in Skovde was both well organised and a challenging and enjoyable ride for the riders. With four tests per lap, of which there were four on day one and three on day two, the racing, prize-giving ceremony, and post-race party all helped make it a memorable event.

The 2003 World Enduro Championship came to nail-biting climax in Skovde, Sweden in mid June with KTM Racing's Juha Salminen claiming the overall 'Scratch' world title after a thrilling final test showdown with Honda-mounted Aussie Stefan Merriman.

With Juha having already taken this year's 500cc title with class victory the day before, and Stefan having done the same in the 250s by topping the quarter-litre class on the same day, the pair were separated by just three seconds going into the very final test of the series. That's when the heavens opened.

Both were hoping to lay claim to the most prized of WEC trophies (the overall title), but it was Salminen who eventually emerged victorious





Chris Hockey finished in the points on both days...

after Merriman made an uncharacteristic mistake - possibly the most costly of his career. After seven rounds, countless hours of special test action and more ups and downs than a Blackpool roller-coaster, a simple error of judgement caused the Aussie to crash mid-test and handed the title to Salminen.

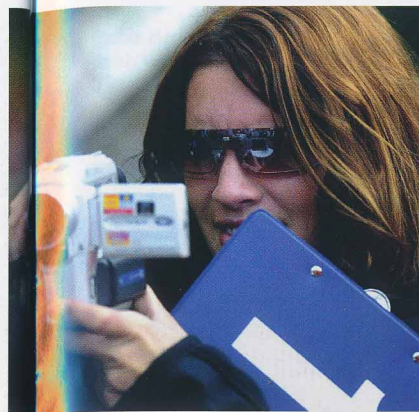
The Swedish event was always going to be an exciting one. With four world titles to be decided, as well as the overall champion to be crowned, whatever the outcome of the weekend's racing, the event was assured to be full of drama. And it certainly didn't disappoint. Proving to be a worthy host of the final round of the series, two other riders joined Juha and Stefan as world champions - Petri Pohjamo in the 125cc class and Peter Bergvall aboard his 250cc four-stroke.

In the 125cc class KTM rider Petteri Silvan continued his winning ways after topping both days of the series in Finland, to win the 125cc class on day one in Sweden. But only just. Finishing four seconds ahead of countryman and series leader Petri Pohjamo, the KTM Racing rider moved another five points nearer the top of the class' standings in the process, making Sunday a day that his Gas Gas mounted rival simply had to win. And that was exactly what he did.

Moving in front of Silvan to top the class on day two by 16 seconds, Pohjamo claimed his first ever world title - much to his and Gas Gas' delight, with yet another solid performance. Winning the final day's competition, the once hard-charging, hard-crashing Finn demonstrated that consistent and determined riding wins championships, and finally proved himself as a worthy world champion.

With the Pohjamo/Silvan battle focusing people's attentions at the head of the 125cc class, the final podium positions were shared by Yamaha rider Marc Germain and TM's Rickard Larsson on days one and two respectively.

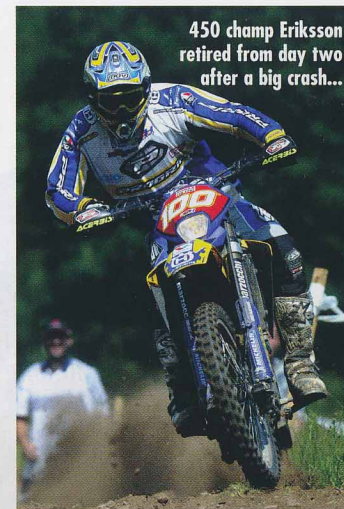
The 250cc two-strokes just seemed to go through the motions, with one rider all but assured the title - Stefan Merriman. Needing only a handful of points to top the class, the determined Aussie made sure of victory by taking the win on day one ahead of a de-motivated Samuli Aro. Some 46 seconds up and winner of both the day and the championship on Saturday, Merriman saw the KTM rider close to within four seconds on Sunday having failed to 'get going' on day one. Finishing with two runner-up places, Samuli was clearly struggling to get fired up for the event as a result of having little to fight for.



Just as in the 125cc class, and as has been the case in the 250cc class all year, the third place finishers failed to make any real impression on the leading duo. French riders Sebastien Guillaume and Freddy Blanc shared the third place honours, with Guillaume getting the final podium position on day one and Blanc on day two.

The Swedish round of the championship was always going to be an important one for UFO Corse Yamaha rider Peter Bergvall, not least because it was his home round of the series. Carrying a comfortable points lead into the event, Peter as expected, finished ahead of his closest championship rival Giovanni Sala on both days, to lift his second consecutive quarter-litre thumper title.

Feeling the pressure of having to perform in front of his home crowd, Peter was also riding in some discomfort having landed heavily on his recently plated



450 champ Eriksson retired from day two after a big crash...



collarbone in Finland a week earlier. Despite having to grin and bear it, the Swede topped the class on day one, 33 seconds ahead of Sala and comfortably ahead of TM rider Bartosz Oblucki. Day two however was a different story. Knowing that mistakes were not an option, Peter placed a cautious third, but importantly ahead of Sala.

Topping day two was Roberto Bazzurri. Having stamped his mark on the class in Greece with a double class-winning ride, the Husky mounted Italian posted a solid ride, albeit a little too late in the season - having failed to consistently place near the front of the class since Greece. Finishing second on day two to claim only his third double finish of the year was Bartosz Oblucki, just five seconds behind

A win, a crash and a bloody good knees-up best explains the weekend had by CH Racing Husqvarna rider Anders Eriksson, as the already-crowned 450cc

➔ Spaniard Ivan Cervantes

became an instant crowd favourite on day two with his aerial antics. Performing a different trick on the cross-country test's huge concrete jump on each of day two's three laps, the 21-year-old is now the most sought after WEC rider behind Juha Salminen and Stefan Merriman.

➔ Mid-June, and the '03 WEC series is all over. With seven rounds having been squashed into just three months, many riders that either started the season with an injury, or picked one up during the series, have struggled to return to form. A more spread out series has been proposed for 2004.

➔ Anders Eriksson's hopes of an end-of-season double 450cc class win went out the window on day two in Sweden when the already crowned class champion crashed exiting a high-speed corner. Having looked more at home on the 450cc Husqvarna than at any other event this season, the seven-time world champion confirmed that he wanted to return to the 500cc class for '04.

➔ With the exception of light rain on Saturday night the weather in Sweden stayed fairly fine during the event - right up until 15 minutes before the start of the final test. With a thunder cloud emptying itself over the test and paddock, the end of the 2003 series turned out to be an extremely wet one.



Bergvall took his second consecutive 250 4-T title at his home round...

champion posted his best overall result on day one before crashing out of the event on Sunday. With massive home support Anders topped the class by 25 seconds on Saturday from VOR rider Roman Michalik as well as placing fifth in the Scratch having seemingly finally got the hang of racing the 450cc Husky. On day two though Anders found himself landing shoulder first after high-siding from his Husky while exiting a high-speed corner on one of the event's four tests. Deciding that there was little point in continuing, he called it a day with title number seven already in the bag.

Moving forward one position on day two after finishing as runner-up to Anders on day one, Roman Michalik did what he had to do to claim second in the 450cc championship. Having seen his promising early season form fade during the second half of the series, he returned to his best, proving that had he not gone off the boil in both France and Italy he would have made Anders work a lot harder for the title.

Also ending his season on a high was Belgian Thierry Klutz. Finishing third on day one, albeit a fair way behind Michalik, the Gas Gas rider moved to second on Sunday, just 15 seconds

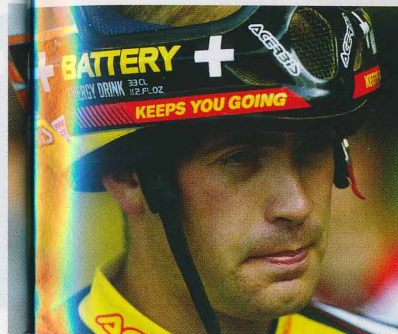
behind the bouncing Czech. Third on day two was Farioli KTM rider Niklas Gustafsson.

Juha Salminen knew exactly what he had to do in Sweden - get the 500cc title wrapped up on day one so that he could concentrate on trying to win the Scratch title on day two. And that was exactly what he did. With his closest championship rival Ivan Cervantes finishing third on day one, and with Juha comfortably out-pacing his class-mates once again, the Finn added 500cc victory to his 400cc, 250cc and 125cc titles - not that you'd have known it judging by his post race celebrations. Thinking only of the bigger prize on offer on day two, Juha's fifth world title was marked with little more than a few pats on the back and a hug from his girlfriend.

The real battle in the 500cc class was for the third place spot, as Farioli KTM rider Ivan Cervantes did enough to claim the championship runner-up spot on day one by finishing in third. Crucially, VOR's Mika Ahola took second on the Saturday having begun the event just a handful of points behind David Knight (third in the championship). With DK being squeezed into sixth on day one by the usual suspects; Salminen, Cervantes, Ahola as well as Husaberg team-mates



Stefan Merriman on his way to the 250 title...



Far left: You can smile now, Juha. You've won the championship...

Bjorne Carlsson and Andreas Toresson, Mika held the upper hand going into the second day's competition. And finishing fourth, one place ahead of Knighter, the three-times ISDE winner got the bronze - much to his delight and David's obvious disappointment.

### The Brits

Sweden wasn't a great event for the seven competing Brits although it did see Husky Sport rider Euan McConnell claim his best ever World Championship result with sixth in the 250cc two-stroke class on day one. Unfortunately for Euan, day two wasn't quite so good and he ended up tenth.

For Paul Edmondson the Swedish round marked the end of a season ruined by injury. Placing fourth and fifth, results that would have read third and

fourth had he not subtly helped his team-mate Marc Germain secure third in the eighth-litre championship, Paul was a little over half a minute behind day one winner Silvan but almost one and a half minutes behind on day two. In the 250cc class Edward Jones claimed two 12th place finishes, making sure that both he and McConnell finished the final round of the series in the points while Rowan Jones finished in eighth and 10th in the 250cc four-stroke class. 450cc class competitors Richard Hay and Chris Hockey also claimed World Championship points with Chris finishing 14th on both days and Richard 15th on day one.

So that's it. Another season over and done with. Now there's a break of a few months until the ISDE in Brazil in November. As usual, TBM will be there, covering all the action...

2003 WORLD ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS	
<b>SCRATCH</b>	
1	JUHA SALMINEN
2	STEFAN MERRIMAN
3	SAMULI ARO
<b>125CC</b>	
1	PETRI POHJAMO
2	PETTERI SILVAN
3	MARC GERMAIN
<b>250CC 4T</b>	
1	PETER BEGVALL
2	GIOVANNI SALA
3	GUISEPPE GALLINO
<b>250CC</b>	
1	STEFAN MERRIMAN
2	SAMULI ARO
3	JANI LAAKSONEN
<b>450CC</b>	
1	ANDERS ERIKSSON
2	ROMAN MICHALIK
3	A. BOTTURI
<b>500CC</b>	
1	JUHA SALMINEN
2	IVAN CERVANTES
3	MIKA AHOLA

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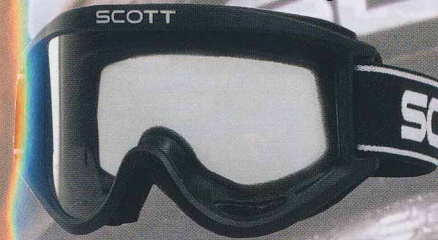


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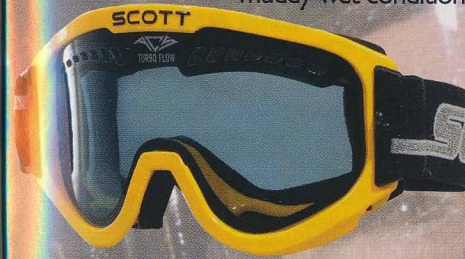
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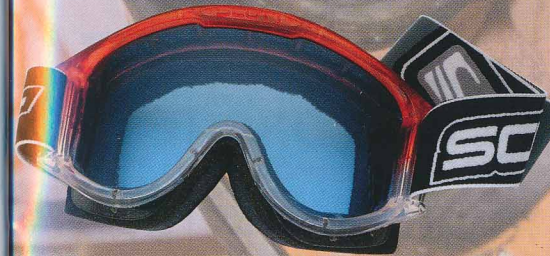
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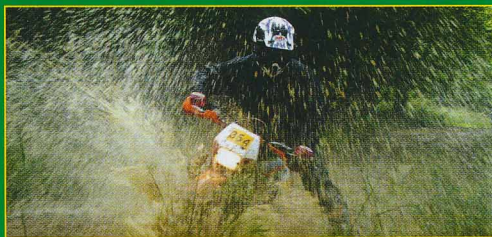
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# GOOD KNIGHT

**BRITAIN'S TOP ENDURO RIDER WRITES EXCLUSIVELY FOR TBM...**



**W**ell, despite the fact that it's still only June, and with the exception of a few remaining Italian championship rounds and the ISDE, 2003 is pretty much done and dusted for me in terms of overseas races. Unfortunately though, the last two rounds of the World Enduro Championships didn't go exactly to plan, and as a result I've ended up fourth in my first season in the Over-500cc four-stroke class.

Just like last year, the final two rounds of the WEC series clashed with the Isle of Man TT week, meaning that I again missed a lot of what was going on back on the Island. Thankfully, I was able to get a couple of races under my belt before I left though - one being the beach race and the other the opening round of the British Supermoto Championship. The beach race was a weird one this year because of the death of David Jefferies only hours earlier. Despite the masses of people that always come and watch the race, and the fact that I won, it just felt really strange racing so soon

after hearing the sad news. What made it even stranger was the fact that it was a year to the day since I first really spoke to DJ, in a chip shop after last year's beach race. There I was tucking into a pie and chips when someone started shouting 'you shouldn't be eating that sh\*t, Knighter, you're supposed to be a professional.' Turning around I saw DJ with a big bag of chips in his hand laughing about the fact that we were both having 'high carbohydrate' suppers.

Having won the beach race I decided that I might as well give the supermoto race on the

Sunday a go. Originally I'd not planned on riding, as it was only a week before the penultimate round of the WEC in Finland. But as I'd enjoyed my riding on the Thursday I thought 'what the hell', washed the bike, changed the wheels, and guessed on some gearing. I'm glad I did now because I earned a few quid too!

The event was pretty good for me as I won the 450cc class and did okay in the Open class as well. Although I've

done some supermoto races before, I didn't really know what to expect and wasn't really prepared for the race. Not compared with most of the riders anyway. The 450cc race was really good. After the first qualifying race was red-flagged following someone hitting me from behind going around the first corner, I managed to go on and win the re-start to get pole for the final. To cut a long race short, I won by around eight seconds, which surprised me. The Open class race was an entirely different story though.

Only riding a 450 meant that no matter how late I was on the brakes or how early I got on the power I had no chance of keeping with the likes of Ady Smith and Warren Steele down the straights. Starting from third or fourth on the grid I got fourth at the finish, which I was pretty happy about considering my bike's relative lack of power. What made me laugh was the fact that a few of the riders were annoyed that I'd ridden and taken points from them. Complaining that I wasn't going to be riding the whole championship and that I shouldn't be allowed to score points, I now feel like dropping in on the championship again later this year, probably at the last race of the season just to mix things up again!

After the Manx tarmac the Finnish sand took a bit of getting used to, especially as the home riders were just so fast. I might not be the world's fastest sand rider but I know that I'm pretty quick in the soft stuff, but in Finland the Finns pretty much took the mick out of everybody. Having never raced in Jamsa before I now know why so many riders arrived two weeks before the race - it's unlike any place on earth and easily one of the toughest terrains to master. That, and the fact that the tests were so long it was like trying to memorise the tight check at the Breckland, made it a challenging but enjoyable weekend. As well as the tests being long and tiring, the checks were some of the best this year, with one of them

being full of bogs littered with rocks.

The only thing that wasn't great was the course marking. Finding myself riding around in circles with Samuli Aro at one stage on day one, we eventually picked up the course markings only to find that we were in serious danger of losing time. With no option but to revert back to supermoto mode I came closer than ever before to losing the front end at what felt like about 100mph. With the 500 absolutely flat out I grabbed a little too much front brake, which made the front-end tuck under - almost sending me down the road chin first. Never before have I been so glad to have size 13 feet. Thankfully though I made the check on time.

In terms of my result Finland wasn't great but it wasn't that bad either. Juha was on top of his game as usual on day two having DNFed day one. And Ahola and Cervantes were both also riding really well. What was weird was how I was able to catch and pass Mika on one cross-country test in Italy, yet not be able to match him for pace in Finland. Guess it just goes to show the importance of a home race.

Sweden was another good event, although there wasn't anything especially difficult. The course was very similar to a fresh Natterjack course with only a little bit of sand. Unfortunately at the one race of the season that I needed to do well at I had more silly problems than at all the other rounds put together. Something which in no way helped my efforts to get third in the championship.

With what I was told was a new mousse fitted ready for day one, I struggled on Saturday with what felt like puncture from the end of the first lap onwards. Also having my silencer break internally and needing to swap my rear shock at the end of the day it was a bit of a disaster really. With a new mousse fitted for day two (as well as a standard shock and a new silencer) my first test of the day was three or four seconds faster than it had been at the end of day one. Battling with Cervantes and Bjorne Carlsson early on something then broke in my forks, which didn't make things easy for me. By the time I'd changed them, Mika had got back in front of me and, well, that was that.

Am I disappointed? Of course! I'd have liked to have finished within the top three because my original aim was to try and win the championship. Although I ended up off the podium in fourth I think Mika has only beaten me on a handful of occasions this year. It's just that when he has he's either been top three or won those days. I've certainly enjoyed the year as the close racing has kept all of us on our toes. It's been close for me at the end of the last couple of seasons but I've always come out on top. This year I guess it just didn't go my way. Like they say you can't win 'em all...

# Dougie Lampkin

# **ACTION**

# Day Experience

**Fancy the chance of being taught how to ride feet-up by the six-time World Trials Champion, Dougie Lampkin? TBM checked out his new schools...**

STORY: JAMES BARNICOAT; PICS: RAY ARCHER

**W**hen I was at school it was drummed into me that you should always be open minded about things. 'Don't knock it 'til you've tried it' was the phrase the teachers bandied about. But, of course, if I spent all my time trying out new things I'd never have enough time to do the things I enjoy. And I barely have enough time for those as it is. So I've build up preconceptions about things and work out what should be experienced, and what shouldn't. And for me, one of the latter was trials riding.

Now don't get me wrong, I've always had a huge amount of respect for the guys you see

scaling vertical rock faces or clambering over a 20 foot high packet of fags. But I've never really thought, 'I'd like to give that trials lark a go'. Instead it's been, 'Hmm, looks a little too sedate for my liking'. And so unlike the rest of the TBM Wrecking Crew I'd resisted the urge to try my hand at the feet-up game. Until, that was, organisers Promoto invited us to the press launch of the Dougie Lampkin Action Day Experience. Designed to cater for the trials novice, the all inclusive (bike, kit, insurance etc) one-day course doesn't promise to have you hopping over head-height boulders by the end of the day, but it does



guarantee top class tuition from multi-world champion Dougie Lampkin, or British Expert Champion (Dougie's cousin) James Lampkin. And if you can't get fired up after that then you need to check your pulse.

## **Northern Rocks**

As the saying goes, 'it's grim up North', and this particular day demonstrated perfectly how that phrase came about. We arrived at the aptly named village of Coniston Cold under ominous skies. The ground was wet after the previous night's rain, and the heavens threatened. A vari-

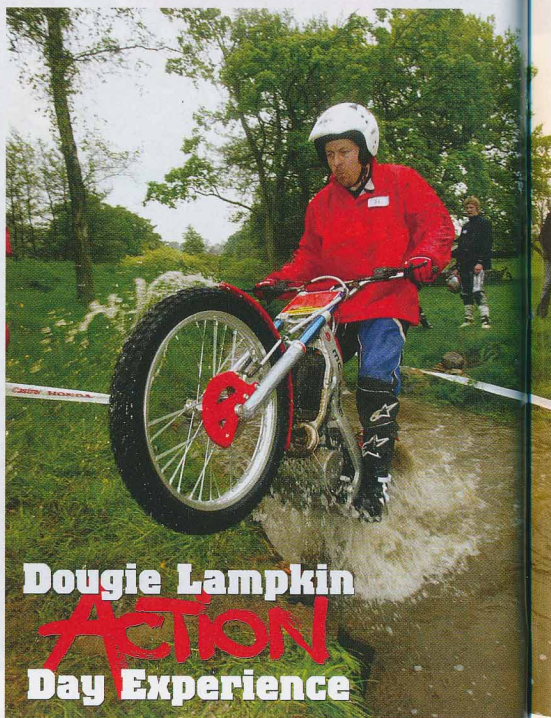
ety of sections had been laid out around the wonderful lake-side setting, utilising a steep hill, two streams and some of the slipperiest most treacherous logs I've ever seen.

The other riders (a motley crew of biking journos, misfits and blaggards) had already kitted up and were walking the day's sections. Promoter Jake Miller ushered us under the awnings and set about digging out some trials gear. Thankfully, there wasn't even a hint of lycra. Open-faced helmets, grippy trials gloves and the obligatory trials boots (MX boots are apparently a little too cumbersome), were all provided whilst





Both TBM testers cleaned the 'plate' section..



**Dougie Lampkin**  
**ACTION**  
**Day Experience**

we wore our own jerseys and pants simply because we had them to hand.

By the time we'd got dressed, the rest of the pupils were on the bikes (Montesa 315Rs) and whizzing up the first section, a slippery grassy hill-climb, under the watchful eye of Dougie and his father, Martin. On Jake's advice, I went for a ride around to get acclimatised with the way the bike felt. Si had prepared me for the alien riding position, though frankly it felt just like my old BMX bicycle - only with a motor.

Trying to shake the five hour van journey out of my tired body, I approached the first section. 'First gear, stay wide out to the tapes, get it turned and feel your way up the hill' advised Jake, not normally one of the instructors but a decent trials rider nonetheless. And so up the hill I went. The trials tyres gave an unbelievable amount of grip on the slippery grass and it was simply a matter of feeling whether the rear was slipping - or gripping.

Moving on from the straight-forward hill climb, I joined the others on a more technical section. This time we had to climb part way

up the hill, turn back down the hill, then negotiate an off-camber turn back up. Once again the section was to be tackled in first gear. Sure, the motor was revving high on the way up, but not using the gearbox meant that there was nothing else to think about other than getting the bike turned and negotiating the downhill. Staying wide through all of the corners was, again, the key. It gave far more space to get the bike turned, requiring far less effort and balance. First gear gave plenty of engine braking, and the brakes

Feeling for grip on the slippery grass...



kept the speed in check whilst negotiating the descent. Dougie watched as we made the off-camber turn, advising on the correct line, when to get off the brakes and on the power, and generally observing our skill, or lack of!

Having been through the section once, Martin Lampkin pulled me to one side. 'Try to keep just one finger on the levers, it'll give you far more grip on the bars', he explained. And so off I went for another attempt. Although I wasn't particularly comfortable with this at first, it did seem a far more effective way to ride and nowhere near as strange as Dougie's next piece of advice. As I made my way around the off-camber turn he suggested I 'leave the clutch alone'. Now this was weird. I was virtually stationary and was supposed to let the clutch out entirely. But of course, the bike didn't stall. Dougie knew it wouldn't, and you may have known that too. But boy, did it feel odd. The motor refused to

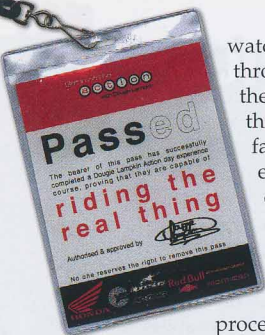
die, and picked up as soon as I opened the throttle for the climb. Again Martin had some advice for me. 'Move around on the bike a bit more, really feel for the grip'. And the next time around everything felt so much easier.

As if the stream ride we were to tackle next wasn't going to get us wet enough, the heavens opened and it began to hose it down. The task ahead of us was to jump across the stream at its narrowest point, before turning back into it and riding upstream and out. Martin Lampkin talked us through how to 'jump' the gap, suggesting that we should simply 'float' the front wheel over the stream, rather than pulling a wheelie. Apparently this is a common mistake to make when starting out in trials, and often leads to nothing more than hitting the sumpguard against the obstacle and stopping dead. Martin went on to explain exactly how to land correctly, as the rear wheel would be taking quite a hit on the bank, and to ensure we didn't inadvertently nail the throttle on landing.

One after another we 'floated' our way over the stream crossing, with the occasional hard landing or excursion into the undergrowth. The transition from bank to stream wasn't entirely without incident, either. The initial drop was followed by a climb over a ledge in the water. Neither were very high, yet caused more than a few steadying dabs as the bikes sumped out on the ledge. Thankfully, instructors were ready to grab any bikes (or riders) which took the plunge. Each and every time we went through the section we learnt a little more on the correct body positioning to tackle each obstacle, learning both from the Lampkins and from our own mistakes. There's nothing like a boot-full of freezing water to help concentrate the mind!

'Floating' the front wheel was also the key to negotiating the logs which were laid at right angles across the penultimate section. Already slippery, the logs became even more slick as the bikes covered them in wet mud, and as each rider went through the conditions changed. The ground grew slick, and Martin pointed out that a change of line would prove beneficial, to maintain the momentum once over the first log. When he explained the reasoning for this it was immediately obvious, yet no-one had spotted it before. The new approach definitely helped on what was a deceptively tricky obstacle.

The fifth and final section consisted of a gentle stream ride (complete with a couple of small rock steps) before turning out up a two foot wooden ledge. The biggest problem was attacking the ledge straight on, as the space to turn was limited. Despite clear instructions, we all failed miserably and it was decided that we should first



watch Dougie run through, before trying the ledge from across the stream. With a far easier approach everyone eventually cleaned the ledge. Overjoyed at having achieved this, one of the road bike jourmos then

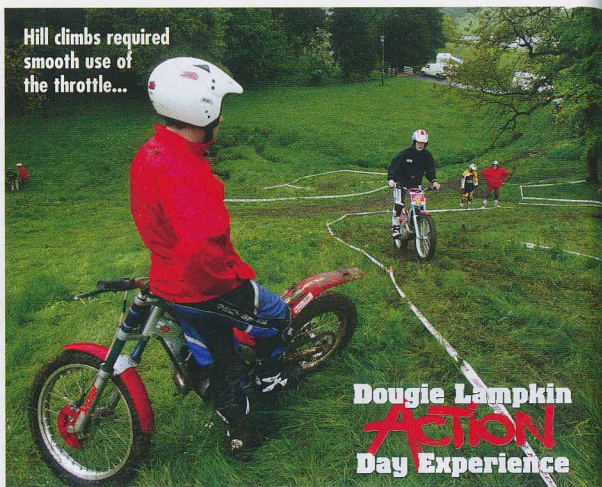
proceeded, much to everyone's amusement, to launch his mount full throttle at the fence in front of him. Thankfully, both bike and rider survived this momentary lapse of reason, but he certainly didn't live it down!

### Posh Nosh

Having finished splashing about in the water, we sat down under the awnings to enjoy the superb barbecue that'd been prepared for us. Let's face it, you won't be attending the school because of the cuisine, but suffice to say it was top-notch nosh, and there was plenty to go around. Having stuffed our faces, it was all the instructors could do to coax us from our seats, let alone onto the bikes and up a hill. And now it was time for a little healthy competition. Back through the sections we'd just ridden, though this time it was a best-out-of-three trial. No-one was taking this particularly seriously, especially as the conditions were becoming slicker by the minute, but the Lampkins still dished out plenty of advice on both line and technique. Whenever anyone took a dab, they'd ride back 'round to the start of the section to give it another go. Third attempts were met with much oohing and aahing, jovially increasing the pressure on the rider to clean the section (eh, Si?).

As we reached the final section, it was obvious that Team TBM weren't going to be taking home the bubbly. Despite not being able to read the scores on his sodden notepad, Jake had already worked out who was in line for the win and it certainly wasn't us. Retreating back to the cover of the awnings, we stood and watched open mouthed as Dougie hopped, jumped and wheeled around, leaping over fences and showing the kind of skill which makes you a multi-time world champion. Having changed out of our sopping wet kit, we sat down for the prize presentation, where everyone was presented with a pit-pass style certificate of their achievements.

So what did I learn from my time at the 'Action



Day? Well, obviously I learnt some of the basics of trials technique. I can also see how quite a few of the skills can be applied to other disciplines. It certainly helps hone your sense of balance and also helps with both body positioning and searching for grip. But most of all I learnt that despite my preconceptions, I actually enjoyed riding trials. It's a completely different buzz to riding

enduros, there's far less of an adrenaline rush, more the determination to achieve something you initially might have thought impossible.

Or in my case, improbable...

*Dougie Lampkin Action Day Experiences will be running throughout the summer (July, August, September). The intention is to have a central base in the Midlands at Donington Park, with courses also held in the south and north of the country. You can sign up for either a 'gold' or a 'silver' day, tutored by Dougie or James Lampkin respectively. Going for gold will cost you £199.95, whilst the silver days are £149.95. For more information, or to book a place, telephone 0161 763 6660.*

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**Yamaha XT350**, 1991, T&T, new rear tyre/c+s, Renthals, brushguards, exc cond, £1300. el 01509 880090 (Leics)

**Honda CRF450R**, 2003, black, road reg'd, taxed, lights, Renthals, Pro Circuit exhaust, original tyres, loads of extras, used twice, forced sale, £4995. Tel 01604 705034 (Northants)

**Honda XR440R**, very trick, Ohlins, Marzocchis, 440 kit and full White Bros exhaust, Talons, new plastics, black frame, reliable, £2400. Tel Joe (eves) on 01689 848921 (Surrey)

**Kawasaki KLR250**, 1986, C-reg, T&T, only 5000 miles with MoTs to prove, trail use only, £775 ono or may p/x larger bike or project. Tel 01733 324662 (Camps)

**Sherco 250 trials bike**, 2003, as new, £2600. Tel 01242 697494 (Gloucs)

**Suzuki DR-Z400SY**, 2002, UK bike, 3500 miles, warranty until March 2004, well maintained, trail trim, original parts inc, £2950. Tel 01246 297166 (Derbys)

**Yamaha XT225 Serow**, 1998, T&T, new Michelins/c+s/mousses, Renthals, spare clutch/brake cables, well maintained, much loved trailie, £2100. Tel 020 8873 1757 (Surrey)

**Husqvarna WRE125**, 2000, 2500km, T&T, derestricted, Renthals, new Trailwings, mainly road use, sore bum forces sale, £1750. Tel 07967 654272 (Herts)

**Honda XR650R**, 2002, 1500km, full FMF system, CRD bashplate, new tyres, showroom cond, must be seen to be appreciated, £3200. Tel 01642 511804 (Cleveland)

**Yamaha YZ250**, 1998, fun use, £500 recently spent, very clean and tidy, bike speaks for itself. Tel 0191 386 1455 (Durham)

**Yamaha YZ426F**, 2002, full Boost graphics, gripper seat, Tag bars, hand/frameguards, titanium header/polished can, well maintained, £3495. Tel 07739 805818 (Cheshire)

**Honda XR750 Africa Twin**, 1997, Scotttoiler, reluctant sale, £2200. Tel (mobile) 07786 332203 or 01623 846813 (Notts)

**Yamaha WR250 2B**, 1991, road legal with proper

# FREE CLASSIFIEDS

lights, extensive engine/chassis/fork rebuild, new o-ring c+s, £1095. Tel 01754 820965 (Lincs)  
**Honda XR400R**, 2000, taxed, braided hose, brushguards, £2400. Tel 01400 230205 (Lincs)  
**Suzuki DR350S**, 1998, T&T, 6900 miles, frame/disc/forkguards, light trail use, vgc, genuine reason for sale, £2100. Tel 01473 830700 (Suffolk)  
**Honda XR400R**, 2000, V-reg, red, T&T, low miles, hi-rise Renthals, bashplate, hardly used, good runner, exc cond, £2600. Tel 01628 829477 (Berks)  
**Suzuki DR350**, enduro model, 1992, white, MoT, new rings/big end/mains/brakes/c+s, rebuilt rear shock, tidy bike, £1495. Tel 01926 632880 (Warks)  
**KTM 200EXC**, 2000, new pads/c+s/rear tyre, Doma race system, barkbusters, well maintained, exc cond, £2750 ono. Tel 01409 241573 (Devon)  
**Honda CRM250 mkIII**, Renthals, brushguards, FMF gold exhaust, rear rack, exc cond, absolute bargain, £1725 ono. Tel (mobile) 07624 491155 or 01624 853446 (IoM)  
**Suzuki DR-Z400S**, X-reg, 2500 miles, £400 worth of off-road extras, all original items boxed, little use, mint bike, £3100. Tel 07815 498504 (Derbys)  
**Yamaha DT100**, 1978, 13000 miles, well maintained, road use only, nice low trail bike, £400. Tel 01473 830700 (Suffolk)

## WANTED

**Wanted Honda CRM250 mkIII**, prefer 1996/97, must be a good one, fair price paid. Tel Richard on (mobile) 07900 206634 or 01438 869407 (Hants)  
**Wanted 1985 KTM 250 MX engine/exhaust**, plastics etc, good price paid but no silly money. Tel Ian on 01908 504424 (Bucks)  
**Wanted DR-Z400E**, must be elec start and road reg'd, approx 2000 model, swap or p/x for BMW 318i, 1991, H-reg, MoT, mint cond for year, cash either way. Tel (mobile) 07979 962679 or 01686 420549 (Powys)  
**Wanted Honda XR250/400**, 1998 onwards, must be in exc cond, pay up to £2500. Tel 07855 216530 (Derbys)  
**Wanted supermoto wheels to fit DR-Z400**, prefer with tyres, money waiting for right set, will collect. Tel Trev on 07769 516510 (W Mids)  
**Wanted Yamaha TY175 trial bike**, required urgently. Tel 01829 781605 (Cheshire)  
**Wanted Transalp wheels**, for 1985-86 model, must be in good cond. Also wanted centre stand and lower seat. Tel 01754 767453 (Lincs)  
**Wanted Kawasaki KLX250 twin-shock enduro**, prefer in running order, anything considered. Tel 0161 881 8300 (Lancs)  
**Wanted full trail wheel kit and performance parts**

for 2001 CCM 604E supermoto, cash waiting. Tel 01942 879585 (Manchester)  
**Wanted 2-Trax paddock stand**, new or s/h, or info on where to get one. Tel (mobile) 07812 373498 or 020 8850 4622 (Kent)  
**Wanted dirt bike**, any cond, in exchange for Roland desktop signmaker, model CM-24 camm-1, c/w vinyls/boards/instructions, can do bike decals. Tel 01495 792769 (Gwent)  
**Wanted Yamaha TTR250 Raid**, dual start model. Tel 01953 883735 (Norfolk)  
**Wanted Yamaha DT175 MX standard exhaust**. Also sales brochures for Yamaha DT/IT series. Tel Martyn on 07979 921980 (Leics)  
**Wanted Honda XR400R frame**, rear shock, tank, oil cooler, exhaust system, or rolling chassis for project, any age/cond. Tel 01926 817183 (Warks)  
**Wanted Kawasaki KMX200 parts**, fuel tap, pair of wheels, clutch cover, exhaust system, tyres, might consider complete bike. Tel 07860 568149 (Hereford)  
**Wanted CDI unit for Honda CRM mkII**, no jokers, must work. Tel 01535 647997 (W Yorks)  
**Wanted Suzuki DR370 enduro**, sister bike to the SP370, approx 1977-80 era, or any info on this model please. Tel 01506 834503 (W Lothian)  
**Wanted KTM 200EXC**, 2003 model, swap for 2002 Yamaha WR426F. Tel 01931 714393 (Cumbria)  
**Wanted non-standard/large plastic tank** to fit 1985 XT600. Tel 07796 365630 (Warks)  
**Wanted for Honda Dominator 1992-94**, workshop manual, sidestand, stainless exhausts, clutch cover. Tel (mobile) 07712 512107 or 0141 564 1726 (Glasgow)  
**Wanted for 2001 YZ250**, enduro silencer and large fuel tank. Tel 0151 625 2119 (Wirral)

## SPARES

**TBM back issues**, all the way back to issue four. Also four years worth of TRF's Trail mag, emigration forces sale. Tel 07860 214406 (Herts)  
**Talon wheels to fit 2002 KTM 400EXC**, black rims, nickel hubs, £450. Tel Jake on (mobile) 07787 564563 or 0161 763 6660 (Lancs)  
**Honda CRM mkII spares**, rad scoops, sidepanels, headlamp surround, front pipe, rear foot pegs, indicators, rally levers. Tel John on (work) 01332 632689 (Derbys)  
**Yamaha XT350 complete bike partially dismantled**, all parts plus extras, sell complete or may break. Tel (mobile) 07890 713002 or 01404 47652 (Devon)  
**XR600R large plastic tank**, good cond, £90. Tel (mobile) 07884 163765 or 01432 341791 (Hereford)  
**KTM 13L tank**, fits LC4 640 1998-02, with sidepanels, as new, £85. Also new XT600E clutch cover, £75.

Tel 01634 251707 (Kent)  
**Supermoto wheels to fit WR/YZ**, gold Talons, black rims, new Braking wave disc, stainless spokes, tyres, c+s, mint cond, £650. Tel (mobile) 07970 531001 or 0151 639 0999 (Wirral)  
**Acerbis plastic tank for DR650SE**, c/w fittings, cost £185, sell for £90 or trade for rear wheel/hub or rack for DR650SE. Tel 0118 962 9307 (Berkshire)  
**Honda CRM-AR DEP front pipe**, metal finish, good cond, £120. Tel 01279 834957 (Essex)  
**WP 50mm Extreme forks and yokes**, fitted with Aprilia 17" wheel and disc, £300 ono. Tel 01522 567365 (Lincs)  
**Yamaha TTR250 CRD stainless silencer**, CRD bashplate, Twinair air filter, £150 the lot. Tel 01229 889149 (Cumbria)  
**Supermoto wheels for KTM 450/525**, new gold Talons/black Excels, gold sprocket, wave discs, used twice, immaculate cond. Tel (mobile) 07771 733927 or 01920 693228 (Cardiff)  
**Dave Cooper single-bike trailer**, c/w ramp and light board, little use, needs paint, £100. Tel (mobile) 07802 216098 or 020 8947 2243 (London)  
**XR400R wheels**, with sprocket, £285 ono. Also XR400R sump/handguards, levers, air filter, gear lever, £75 ono the lot. Tel (mobile) 07775 820092 or 020 8660 2971 (Surrey)  
**Honda CRM RSV tailpipe**, £20. DR350 original silencer, £20. Will post. Tel (mobile) 07761285263 or 01422 824623 (W Yorks)  
**Three-bike trailer**, ramp, jockey wheel, lights, spare wheels, £225. Tel 01782 642235 (Staffs)  
**Honda XR400R alloy bashplate**, unused, £35. K&N filter, as new, £20. Kickstart lever, new, £35. Tel 01395 224736 (Devon)  
**Mugen head for Honda CRM AR**, £80. DEP front pipe, deep chrome finish, exc cond, £110. Tel (mobile) 07776 421287 or 01707 324086 (Herts)  
**DR-Z400 metal tank protectors**, white, like new, £20. Tel (mobile) 07815 498504 or 01629 733072 (Derbys)  
**Honda XR400R spares**, glass headlamp, standard exhaust insert, master cylinder with new lever, front springs, rear shock. Yamaha DT125LC II spares, forks, wheel, yokes, drum rear wheel, seat, red tank, electrical bits. Tel Tim on 020 8303 5616 (Kent)  
**Three-bike trailer**, used twice, as new cond, sell for good price. Tel Peter on 07889 842324 (London)  
**Honda XL600LMF non-runner**, complete bike, will split, £300. Tel 07761 360288 (Staffs)  
**Yamaha TTR250 wheels**, c/w M12 tyres, £250. Rack, £40. Tel (mobile) 07960 42523 or 01527 456095 (Worcs)  
**Fifty issues of TBM**, some early, bargain at £50 no offers. Can post in UK for £8.75. Tel 0115 926 2481 (Notts)

**Suzuki TS125 engine**, 90 percent there, £7.50. TS50 engine, 50 percent there, £4. Plastics for DTs and KX250, £3 a piece. Must go. Tel 01279 731333 (Essex)  
**Large clear tank for Yamaha 426/250F**, £100. Ohlins shock for 426F. Both in good cond. Tel (mobile) 07973 775332 or 0117 377 5815 (Bristol)  
**Clymer workshop manual for Yamaha XT/TT350**, as new, £10. Tel 02380 693692 (Hants)  
**Honda CRM125 frame**, engine, tank and wheels, phone for details. Tel 01747 861395 (Wilts)  
**KTM LC4 swinging arm**. Also supermoto wheels, fair cond, offers. Tel 07903 645018 (Beds)  
**Husaberg off-road wheels**, new and unused, with Michelin tyres, £450 ono. Tel 01977 679199 (W Yorks)  
**Yamaha WR/YZ400 wheels**, c/w discs and sprocket but no tyres, good cond, £200. Tel 01708 752696 (Essex)  
**KLX650 Acebis 18L tank**, vgc, £100. Wheels with discs and tyres, £100 each or £180 the pair. Tel (mobile) 07810 644897 or (eves) 01225 471178 (Avon)  
**Two pairs of Wind MX trousers**, one red, one black, size 32" waist. Also four MX jerseys, size large, £60 the lot. Tel 01531 650433 (Hereford)  
**Honda SLR650 tank**, both end cans, mudguards, footrests and mountings, good cond, £35 ono the lot. Tel (mobile) 07889 933869 or 01242 583079 (Gloucs)  
**Suzuki DR350 rear carrier rack**, brand new, genuine Suzuki part, charcoal black, £50. Tel 01506 834503 (W Lothian)  
**Front end from 70s/80s Gilera two-stroke enduro**. Also airbox, centre stand and swing arm for same. Offers or swap for size ten boots or WHY. Tel Greg on (mobile) 07976 561825 or (after 6pm) on 01483 773766 (Surrey)  
**Yamaha XT225 Serow breaking for spares**, elec start rear drum brake model, all parts available except rear wheel/forks/seat. Tel 01568 615675 (Hereford)  
**Supermoto wheels for XR250/400/600/CRM**, gold Talons, silver Morads, Dunlop GPR80s, 320mm disc with caliper bracket, talon sprocket, £600. Tel 07973 852113 (Bristol)  
**Supermoto wheels**, Excel rims, good tyres/discs, no rear sprocket, cost approx £1000, £350. Tel (after 4pm) 07742 689468 (Kent)  
**Fly MX pants**, black/grey, size 34-36", Kevlar/Teflon, cost £100, accept £40 plus postage. Tel Kris on 0161 678 6749 (Lancs)  
**Honda XR250R 1989 Showa front-end**, full brake system, yokes, needs rim, £100 no offers. Tel 07739 805818 (Cheshire)  
**IMS 16L fuel tank for XR250/400**, good cond, £75. Tel 01787 281904 (Suffolk)

