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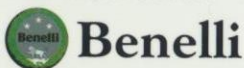
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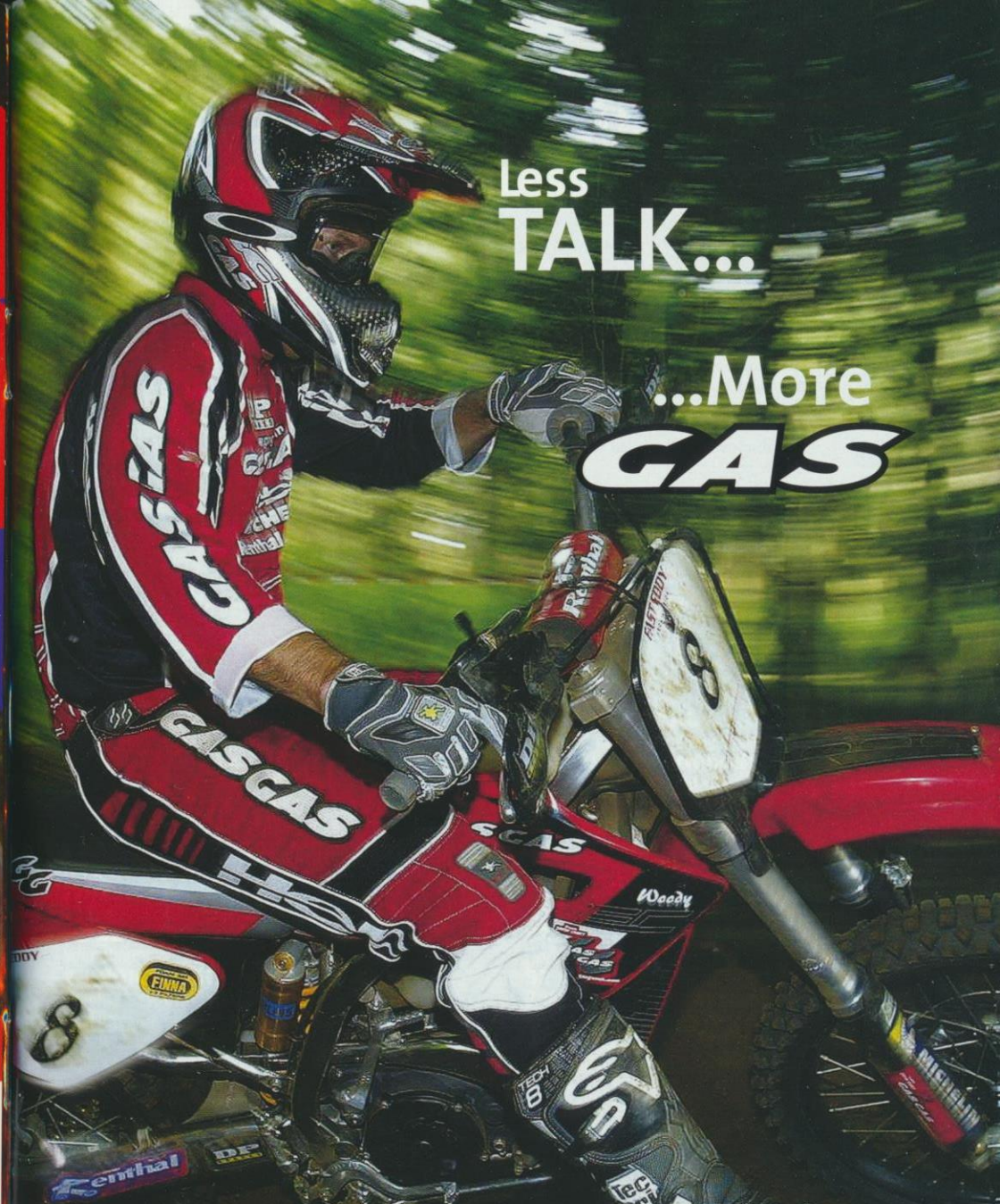


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The Game of Life

One of the worst things about the whole internet thing is the endless round of junk emails which arrive on a daily basis. Most of it is complete tosh of course, but just occasionally a comedy gem turns up which is worth repeating. One of these arrived on my computer the other day and while it didn't relate to dirt biking per se, it was obvious that the general principle could easily be applied to our own peculiar brand of enjoyment. So here is TBM's version of The Game of Life as it relates to dirt bike riders up and down the land.

Because in the world of dirt bikes and romance - only one thing matters. Her happiness. The way it works is this. Do something she likes and you score points - Brownie points. Do something she dislikes and Brownie points are subtracted. But if you do something she expects then you don't get any points. That's the nature of the game. Here's a guide to the points system.

Simple Duties

You offer to clear up the bedroom	+10 points
You clear up the bedroom by throwing out all her old clothes	-50 points
You offer to help the kids with their maths homework	+10 points
By taking them lap-scoring at your local enduro club	-20 points
You check out a suspicious noise at night coming from the garage	0 points
You check out a suspicious noise at night and it's nothing	0 points
You check out a suspicious noise at night and it is something	+5 points
You pummel it with an old fork leg	+10 points
It's her pet	-100 points

Social Engagements

You offer to take her out for dinner	+10 points
You take her out for dinner at the local pub	0 points
It's the local pub where your TRF group meets	-20 points
And it's their AGM and annual dinner and dance	-50 points
She sits next to a weirdy-beardy sidecar rider	-100 points
You sit next to the club chairman's daughter called Tiffany	-150 points
Tiffany is an exotic dancer and has implants	-250 points

Staying Home

You offer to help her in the garden	0 points
You offer to help her dig the garden	+10 points
With your KTM525	-50 points
In the evening you suggest a night in watching a video	5 points
You offer to go and get the video and a takeaway	8 points
You return with 'On Any Sunday' and a pack of 24 John Smiths	-100 points

Going Out

You offer to take her out for a drive in the countryside	+5 points
You drive to the countryside in your van	0 points
Your van just happens to have your dirt bike in the back of it	-20 points
And there's a local club enduro going on when you get there	-100 points

Your Physique

You develop a noticeable pot-belly	-10 points
You tell her that riding off road keeps you fit	0 points
Your pot belly stays so you resort to wearing baggy jeans and Hawaiian shirts	-20 points
You say 'it doesn't matter 'cos you have one too!'	-800 points

Okay now add together your score and grade yourself in the following way...

0 - 10 points: You're a new man. What on earth are you doing with a dirtbike?

-100 - 0 points: Okay, you're definitely a regular bloke - you're trying hard but failing completely!

-1000 points or more: You're a dirt junkie. So pull up a bike stand, grab yourself a beer and watch while she washes down your bike dressed only in a bikini...

SI MELBER

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Jim Jones traces the roots of the ISDE back one hundred years...



ALL WHEEL DRIVE

2x2 Yamaha promises to revolutionise off-roading



Yamaha's revolutionary two-wheel-drive dirt bike - the 2-Trac - is coming to the UK early next year. Yamaha chose the Paris show to debut the bike which is based on a 2004 WR450F, and was developed in conjunction with Swedish suspension manufacturer Ohlins.

The 2-Trac system first appeared a few years ago on a Yamaha prototype and utilises a fluid drive which provides power to the front hub via a pair of high-pressure hoses operated by a pump located just above the bike's output shaft. The 2-Trac's ingenious system is self-regulating inasmuch as power is only supplied to the front wheel once the rear wheel begins to spin and

lose traction. The amount of power available to the front wheel is constantly changing (up to a maximum of 15 percent) and the front wheel can never spin faster than the rear.

Yamaha's tests have revealed that the 2-Trac system works especially well in deep mud or sand where conventional bikes have a tendency to 'dig themselves in'. Cornering and stability are also improved as the 2-Trac tends to carve a much cleaner line around turns with less wheelspin and oversteer.

Yamaha have confirmed that a rally version and a supermoto version of the bike will also be available and that they will be bringing in limited numbers of



2-Tracs for the 2004 model year priced between £8000-9000 (which includes full Ohlins suspension front and rear).

There's still a question mark over whether the bikes will be homologated and registerable in the UK, though the thinking at Yamaha is that this won't prove to be a problem. Latest rumour we've heard is that they are also eligible for top-level enduro and supermoto competition.

Whatever the outcome, we can only imagine that the chance to own one of these revolutionary bikes for trail riding, general off-roading, or just for the sake of 'having one' will mean that demand will comfortably outstrip supply. Phone Yamaha and order yours today.

SNIPPETS

★ Husky Sport rider Euan McConnell has announced that he is taking a sabbatical from enduro competition. Despite being on-form, the Scottish rider claims that he simply isn't enjoying the sport anymore. His decision, he admits, has got a lot to do with the ACU's lack of support for the British ISDE team, but he also wants to get away from the back-biting and shenanigans surrounding the British Enduro Championship - with riders accusing each other of cheating and tests getting cancelled, etc. Euan confirmed that he intends getting himself a trials bike and taking up a new challenge, though he doesn't rule out a future return to the sport which has dominated his life since the age of 16.

★ Rumour has reached the TBM office that Honda world champions Valentino Rossi and Stefan Merriman will be swapping bikes later this year. Until now, Rossi's off-road aspirations have been on four wheels instead of two, having competed in the Rally of Great Britain last year. However, Merriman was an accomplished road racer before his move into enduros, though he never competed at anything like GP level. It's thought that the swap represents little more than a Honda PR-exercise, but could we see Rossi chopping in his RCV for a CRF-X and turning out at a few WEC enduros? Sadly, we somehow doubt it...

★ Prospective CCM owners living in south east England will shortly find a new dealer based in Burgess Hill, East Sussex where they can check out the new 404DS. Red Dog Motorcycles are opening

their second branch in the region at the end of November. The dealership which also stocks MVs, Benellis and Cagivas is based at Unit 3, Shedding Dean Industrial Estate, Burgess Hill, E Sussex, tel 01444 248848 or check out reddogmotorcycles.co.uk.

★ Australian enduro sensation Shane Watts won round 12 of the US GNCC series in Ohio recently, his first victory in the series for two years. With a career dogged by injury, the straight-talking Aussie was over the moon with the result. His joy was shortlived however, as he dislocated his shoulder at a National Hare Scramble the following weekend.

★ A new 10-round three-hour cross-country enduro series based in the south-west of the country has just been announced for next year. Ride-It are planning on putting on at least ten events in '04 using new venues and completely fresh land. With no restriction on tyres, an entry of 200 riders (max) and £30 entry fees, places are likely to fill up fast. Check out www.ride-it.org for the full details...

★ Britain's Paul Edmondson has confirmed that he'll be signing for Honda to ride a CR250R two-stroke in British and world championship enduros next year. Eddy who is expected to be joined by Rob Wrayford in British rounds, had hoped to become rider/manager of his own large WEC team, but when that failed to materialise he decided to concentrate all his efforts on his own WEC objectives and is delighted to be supported by a factory like Honda. Paul said he's: 'looking forward to the challenge.'

reason: the racing season is over
[now the party can really begin]

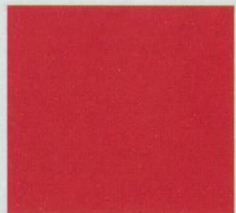
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FIRST CHECK HUSKY TE450

STORY: JAMES BARNICOAT; PICS: JB & SM



Light Speed

The Italian space program has never really taken off. Until now that is. With the launch of Husqvarna's rocketship TE450 the Italians have lit the blue touch paper. Let countdown commence.

Warp speed, Mr Sulu', came the command from the bridge of the Starship Enterprise, anytime Kirk and his space travelling buddies wanted to get anywhere fast. And it was those very same words that sprung to mind when tweaking the throttle on Husqvarna's



FIRST CHECK

latest middleweight thumper. Everything around me became a blur, and we very nearly ended up in the next galaxy. Yep, the TE450 sure can hustle.

With all the hooah surrounding Husky's financial situation and the small matter of a flooded factory, it's been pretty tricky keeping track of Husqvarna's latest models. Last year we managed to prise the first of a new generation of thumpers from the Italian company when UK importers Husky Sport managed to make a slight

'miscalculation' in the number of bikes required for the ISDE and lent us a 'spare' TE400. And we were mightily impressed. At the time there was no 450 class in the World Enduro Championships, yet the production 400 was so late appearing that it was virtually 'obsolete' before it

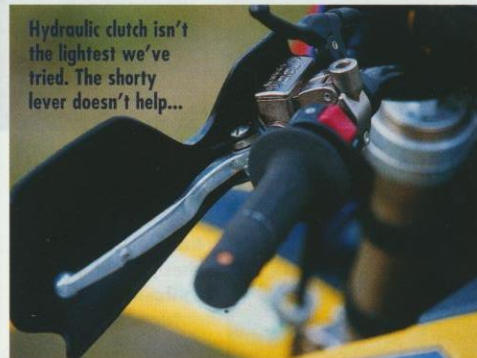
Light Speed



HUSKY



Husky's definitely got the looks to go with the performance...



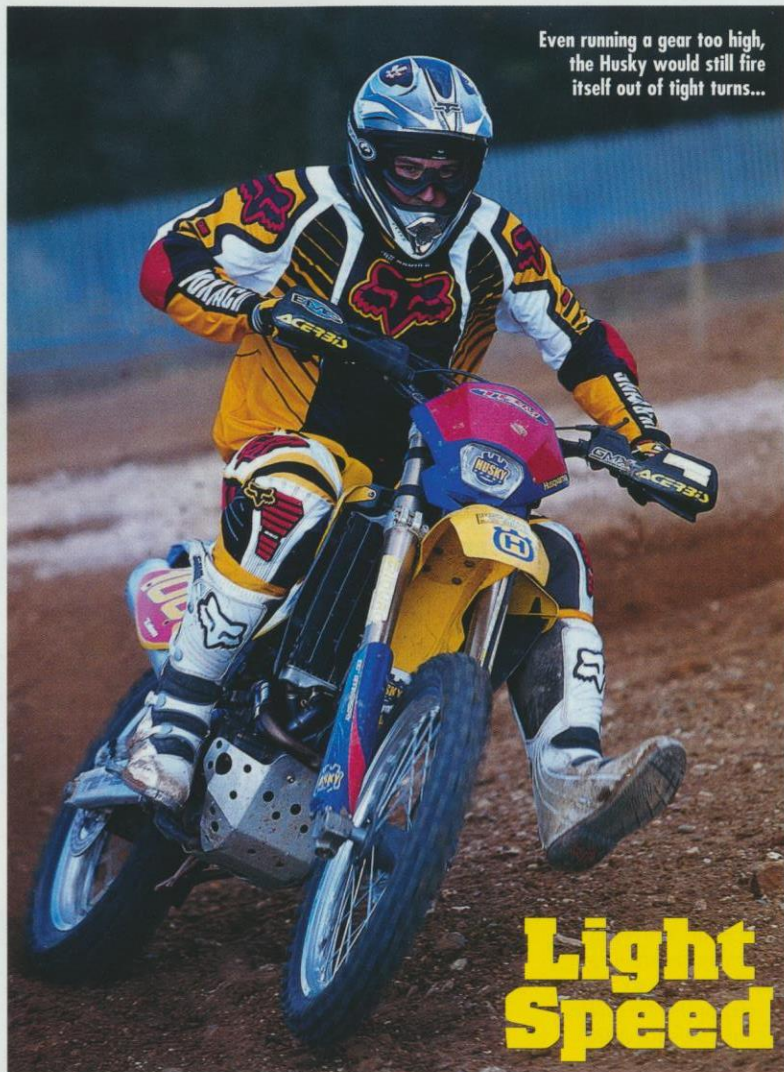
Hydraulic clutch isn't the lightest we've tried. The shorty lever doesn't help...



Awesome motor is protected by factory-fitted bashplate..

arrived. The 400 model was really only built for the Six Days and was deleted as soon as it appeared to make way for the 450. That was at the tail-end of 2002 - the start of the '03 model year. Now we're looking at models for 2004, and the 450 has only recently been available in significant numbers.

Centennial graphics aside, the 450 is visually identical to the 400. In fact, the rolling chassis is exactly the same. Built from cro-moly steel, the dark grey frame is a semi-double cradle affair with a detachable ally sub-frame, shrouded in the now familiar 'banana-shaped' plastics. Marzocchi supply the forks, a pair of 45mm Shivers, whilst the rear shock is a multi-adjustable Sachs unit. The brakes are Brembos front and rear, the front disc measuring 260mm, the rear 220mm. And quality switchgear graces the braced alloy bars,



Even running a gear too high, the Husky would still fire itself out of tight turns...

Light Speed

alongside the Magura hydraulic clutch.

The bike we were riding was actually Husky team rider Chris Hockey's race bike. And to that end had undergone one or two of Chris' personal modifications. Gone were the standard bars. To be honest, we don't much like the bars which Husky are using at present (they're too wide), and Chris had replaced them with Tag braceless items. Also missing was the original switchgear. Not requiring the road legal gubbins for racing, the headlight was operated via a simple 'on/off'



Going down; the landing ramp's only another 40 feet away..!

switch and the digital speedo had been removed. But the most critical change had been to the suspension.

Most riders will find the damping fine as the bike arrives from the Varese factory. We certainly did when testing the 400 (and the 450 uses the same components). But as a champi-

onship rider Mr Hockey is clearly faster than most, and has worked some changes into his bike. The forks were given harder springs and valving to suit, but are then run on the softest settings. Chris did baffle us with the effects of these mods (till our eyes began to glaze over), but basically it means his suspension is soft enough for enduro use but can be firmed up for motocross special tests.

The twin-cam motor is architecturally the same as the 400, though the bore has been increased to

push the displacement up to 449cc. At the same time the compression ratio was bumped up to 12:1. Now, the 400 wasn't exactly lacking in horsepower, at the top-end especially. And with those extra 50ccs of volume, things are now very interesting indeed. Late last year we took a spin on Husky's supermoto version of the bike (the SMR450) for our sister title, Supermoto Magazine. Having spun the bike up on our local dyno the result was a rather healthy 47hp at the rear wheel. Very impressive indeed. Now consider this; according to Husky, the TE motor is exactly the same as the one fitted in the SMR. No different cams, no altered ignition curve, no nothing. So, allowing for the odd horsepower given away by the knobbly rear tyre, the TE450 should be shoving out somewhere around 45hp. Lordy! A good CRF450 Honda isn't putting out much more! Okay, we never got the chance to dyno the TE, so this is purely speculation. But having piloted the thing around an MX track for half a day I reckon this figure isn't lightyears away.

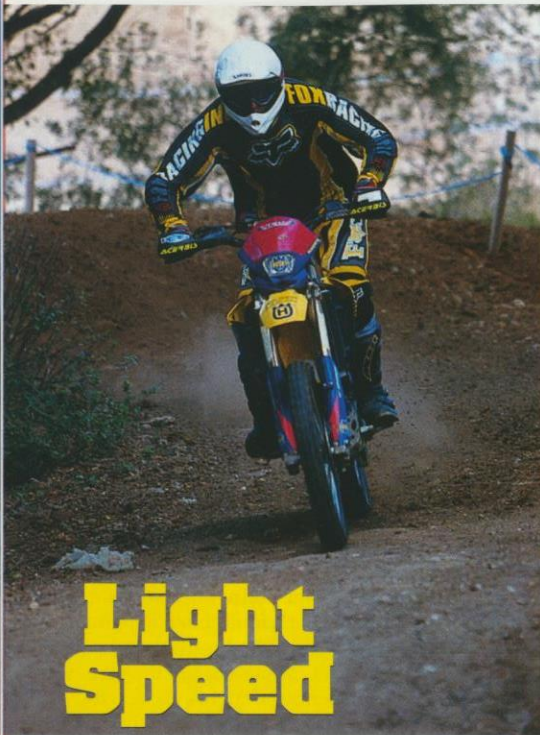
Yep, for a change of scenery (and with only a very short time-frame available to ride the bike) we headed up to Rockingham Motor Speedway to blast the Husky around their newly built motocross track (think of it as an enduro special

test). Some 60,000 tonnes of dirt had been moulded into a tight and twisty track, with a couple of fast flowing corners and the type of jumps that usually see TBM testers quivering in the back of the van! In-between the 70 foot tabletops the ground was predominantly hardpack, albeit with a couple of sandy corners just to catch you out. Nice.

The tank brimmed with gas, we headed out onto the dirt. First gear was all but unusable. Throttle response was immediate and sent the rear end slewing sideways, peppering those behind with roost. Second gear pretty much more of the same, and it was only when shifting into third that some semblance of traction was regained. And when the tyre did bite it would simply teleport you off down the track. One minute you'd be hitting a berm, the next you'd be 'warping' into the following corner. Were there really no straights on this track, or did the Husky just make it feel that way?

Short-shifting between the turns was the best way to make progress. Once into third gear it was entirely possible to ride the entire track without changing down. A little judicious clutch slipping was needed in the deepest rutted turns, but the motor would easily pull through to fire the bike down those ever shortening straights. In fact, the top two gears were completely redundant on our 'special test'. Fourth was the highest I got in the Husky's six-speed box and gave plenty of speed on the fastest parts of the track, staying on terms with big-bore MX bikes.

Husqvarna claim a wet weight of 118kg for their slimline 450 and that's probably pretty close to the mark. The bike certainly feels the lightest middleweight we've tried (Husky's own TE400 excepted), which makes for some pretty swift handling. Initially the bike seemed to be pushing the front-end into turns, the idle speed being set quite high, and it proved far more effective to back the bike into the loose flat corners. But chucking the TE into a berm saw the bike sling-shot through the corner and out the other side like a satellite round a planet. Thankfully, the handling wasn't marred by any stability woes. Throughout the day the track got rougher and rougher, the usual braking bumps appearing and the odd hole digging out. Yet despite its propensity for keeping the front-end light the Husky didn't once shake its head. The occasional waggle was to be expected, even making for a more enjoyable (if not intense) ride, but never did it get, quite literally, out of hand.



Light Speed

Despite having slightly harder springing, the forks still felt enduro plush and certainly not dialled-in for MX use. As you'd expect they couldn't quite cope with some of the bigger hits a motocross circuit demands (especially when you mis-time the jumps as badly as we do). However, provided you didn't get ham-fisted with the throttle, the suspension did return plenty of feedback on the loose surfaces.

How it would perform on a wet and grassy special test is another matter, and I suspect the average rider would want it set-up slightly softer. Even so, you'd probably need to have the bike upright before getting on the throttle. Likewise, deep mud could prove tricky, with all that power lighting up the rear wheel. I can also see the front climbing out of ruts fairly easily, and anything like technical terrain is likely to prove seriously hard work.

Out on the trail things may be slightly different. Okay, you certainly wouldn't want to encounter too much winter slop, or nadgery woodland, as you'd have to keep a tight leash on all that power. But the more flowing open trails

would be a joy to ride. And as you're not pushing that hard on the trails you're far less likely to grow tired trying to hang on (or should that be Kling-on?) to the bike. Unfortunately, with the tank holding a mere 7.7 litres of fuel and Husky's notoriously small reserve, the low tank range is likely to be a hindrance.

For most riders the TE450 is going to prove way too much of a handful. The old 400 was powerful enough, and that extra displacement has done nothing to make the 450 more easy going. Sure, there's more bottom- to mid-range grunt but it doesn't necessarily make the Husky more rideable. The power delivery is just a little too vicious and you have to use the taller gears to calm it down. Even so, unless you're built like the proverbial outhouse and a talented rider, you'll be constantly fighting the power. And on the majority of British enduros that's going to see the Husky beating you up. So it's clear to see the logic behind KTM's reinstatement of their 400EXC when some 450s can be so intimidating.

Lightweight, stable, sharp turning; the 450 should make for a great enduro bike. But I feel it's simply too powerful. There's definitely a load of fun to be had aboard the Starship TE450 - but in small doses. Never mind warp speed, 'Dawdle along, Mr Sulu'.

Thanks to Oakley UK and Rockingham Motor Speedway for the great day's riding...

HUSQVARNA TE450

Price:	£5699
Engine:	Electric start, liquid cooled, DOHC, four-valve
Displacement:	449cc
Bore & stroke:	97 x 60.76mm
Frame:	Cro-moly single double-cradle
Front susp:	45mm USD Marzocchi Shiver, 300mm travel
Rear susp:	Sachs, multi adjustable, 320mm travel
Front brake:	260mm disc, Brembo twin-pot caliper
Rear brake:	220mm disc, Brembo single-piston caliper
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DIRTY

'I ONCE SAW A STATISTIC STATING THAT FRENCH WOMEN SPENT FOUR TIMES AS MUCH ON LINGERIE AS THEIR UK COUNTERPARTS...'

Greetings from a very strange place - Japan. When you see first-hand what a design disaster the 'built environment' is here, you begin to understand why the Big Four's bikes aren't always as beautiful as their European rivals - CRF250 excepted of course. On the other hand the Japanese do possess one virtue that

CHRIS IS ON HIS ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE TO THE FAR EAST IN SEARCH OF SPRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT, AND POSSIBLY A MAIL-ORDER BRIDE...

I would happily export to the 'Old Continent' - zero street crime. Around here you can leave your 400 quid Arai helmet hanging off your handlebars with the absolute certainty that it will still be there when you return clutching your sushi kebab and chips.

Walking through the Grand Prix paddock yesterday a man came running up behind me and started tugging frantically at my sleeve. His other hand was pointing at the pavement 50 metres or so behind me where hordes of race fans were carefully picking their way round a wad of yen notes that were lying on the floor from where I'd just been standing! As someone who is forever losing things, I can't tell you what an appealing trait their honesty is. Though I can't help feeling sorry for the bloke who lost the money in the first place (joke).

Being 'overseas' means that I haven't done a lot of riding these last two weeks, but that hasn't stopped two events rocking my off-road world. The first was an e-mail from Paris-Dakar organiser Hubert Auriol announcing he was leaving the organisation and was no longer the 'boss' of the Dakar. In its 25 year history Auriol is one of only two men to have participated in every single event and the only one to have been victorious on both two and four wheels. To say that Hubert and the world's greatest off-road race were inextricably linked would be like stating that bangers go pretty well with mash. As a spotty teenager back in Blighty I used to pass hours in newsagents flicking through magazines (we know all about that compulsion - ed) looking for articles on rallye-raïd. The impression the scant UK coverage made on me, combined with the statistic I once saw stating that French women spent four times as much on lingerie as their UK counterparts, was instrumental in encouraging me to abandon London and try my luck in Paris. Never in a million years did I dream that I would end up working alongside one of my boyhood heroes.

At the time of writing, the question as to who will take over the reigns of the Dakar remains something of a mystery. The current 'Sporting Director' and man responsible for drawing up the competitors' road book, Patrick Zaniroli, is one possibility and nobody could argue that technically he is more than capable of fulfilling the role. The problem is that he is notoriously media

unfriendly and has none of Hubert's easy charm in front of a TV camera. Another possibility, mentioned in the French press, is also a previous Dakar winner - ex-F1 driver and current boss of the Rallye de Egypt, Jacky Ickx. One thing's for sure, whoever ends up replacing the Bel Hubert is going to have a hard time filling the great man's shoes. But as Auriol himself said in a letter to 2004 competitors, 'Today I am leaving, but the Dakar continues'.

The other question is what, if anything, will Auriol do now? One might reasonably assume that his career to date as competitor, rallye organiser and TV presenter, would allow him to slip off into comfortable retirement. Somehow though I can't imagine it - the man is just too energetic. Whether or not he still has the drive to start up another event is a different matter. The last sentence of his letter to competitors: 'the passion we have in common remains intact and our paths will certainly cross once again during other adventures.' leaves the question tantalisingly open.

World rocking event number two was an at-a-distance purchase of an almost new bike. There used to be a time when I would agonise over such a decision for weeks, months even. But sadly these days it has become a bit of a no-brainer. As I can only afford one enduro bike, and one that has to work hard for a living, it has to be a four-stroke. It also has to be capable of being trail ridden as well as raced, has to be fun to ride, and above all, it has to be reliable. The choice therefore, is pretty straightforward - KTM's funky 450 does it for me.

However if I could afford two bikes I'd opt for a Gas Gas 250 and a KTM525. If I only ever raced I'd take the Gasser, but if I only ever went trail riding I'd take the 525EXC. Then again, if I didn't care about low residuals and a little bit of extra spannering I'd probably opt for the Gas Gas 450 instead.

Over here, Far East religions teach their followers that change is inevitable and should be accepted without resistance. So I will just have to accept that yet another page of Dakar history has been turned and console myself with the thought that new models in the pipeline from Honda, Sherco, Beta and Aprilia will offer me far greater choice the next time I decide to swap bikes. Dirt biking - basically it's a yin and yang thang...



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COMPLETELY RUTTED



My apparently endless and arguably pointless quest to replace my aged XT350 come next Spring, has inevitably revealed the burgeoning, if somewhat peculiar market for used trail and enduro machines of Italian origin. Would that I were talking about an upsurge of Aprilias, Betas, Gileras, Cagivas etc snapping up a share of the UK market. But

MARK WILLIAMS GOES LOOKING FOR AN 'ITALIAN JOB'...

the reality is that these 'Italian imports' are mainly Japanese bikes. Not necessarily cheap Jap bikes, mind, but if you actually go and look at some of these four to ten year-old machines as I've just done, you'll find that relative to year of manufacture, they're in tip-top fettle.

One of the specialist importers involved in this trade is Howard Parrin of Conquest Motorcycles in Dorset. He explained to me that these machines have obviously never seen a British winter and most of 'em haven't even been used off-road, 'because in Italy they're bought for fashion'. So if you're in the market for a lightly-used off-roader at a bargain price, last decade's fashion-victim could be your salvation. Which is why I'm personally so interested - being known as a bit of a fashion-victim myself!

I could of course, have hoofed around Conquest Motorcycles and the several other dealers engaged in this pan-European trailbike trade, and let them furnish me with something suitable and warranted. But this was too easy, and far too sensible. And since I'd already booked a long weekend in Italy a few days after the Hafren Rally, a plan

emerged whereby I could combine pleasure with, er... pleasure and see if I could score myself a new set of wheels at bargain basement money.

A phonecall to the DVLA elicited the basics of registering a personally imported used vehicle which, if you've got the pukka registration document from its EU country of origin, isn't too onerous. You need to get it MoT'd and after completing a V55/5 form, present your paperwork to your nearest DVLA office, together with a cheque for the £25 registration fee, plus the relevant road tax. All being tickety-boo, you should get issued with an age-related registration number and can then go ahead with tax and insurance. So all that remained was the little matter of actually buying a bike in Italy, and I was at least realistic enough to know that this wouldn't necessarily be a breeze.

Firstly, and to my enduring shame, despite visiting the country some 20 or 30 times, my Italian is shocking. So sussing out if I was being sold a bow-wow and/or negotiating a demon price would leave me at a distinct disadvantage. In fact I'd look like a mug the first time I opened my mouth in a dealer's showroom. And secondly, since I was staying in a part of Italy I barely knew, even locating a showroom full of off-rovers might be a non-starter.

I did, however, have one card up my sleeve: me and 'the blonde' were due to stay with an old friend and ex-colleague (who goes by the name of Dick) from my days at Which Bike? magazine who keeps a couple of bikes kicking around his Umbrian farmhouse. And given Dick's limited inclinations towards spannering, this would surely mean he'd be on nodding terms with the local dealers. So despite testing patience already sorely stretched by sitting in a miserable wet

MARK WILLIAMS

paddock for the duration of the Hafren Rally, I managed to persuade the blonde that we might have a fun afternoon chasing round the local bike emporia.

The first of these turned out to be an anonymous repair-shop on the outskirts of Trestina, a tiny town in the Tiber Valley just 20 minutes from Dick's home-stand. And with a long row of knobbly-tyred motocicletti lined up outside, it certainly looked promising. Until closer inspection revealed that they all had vital bits missing or were seriously crumpled wrecks. But I suppose if you were in the business of righting insurance write-offs, a job-lot might've been a worthwhile buy. In fact the owner wasn't into retailing, just maintaining and repairing (and, it transpired, cannibalising for spares), but with his somewhat superior pigeon Italian, my friend Dick managed to elicit the locations of two off-road retailers, none of whom were anywhere nearby.

As a long-suffering Guzzi owner, Dick of course knew where his local Guzzi dealer was located, and he recalled that there was usually a Beta or two languishing (his words, not mine) around the showroom whenever he visited. So that's where we went next. And as well as a gleamy new 200 Alp (but tellingly, not an Alp 4.0) there was an early-ish, and rather well-worn 125cc two-stroke Alp that I could've bought for 1200 Euros - or £850.

Since I hadn't really contemplated an obscure Italian model, and still chastened by the memory of badly bending the last Beta I ever rode in anger, I demurred at this proposition. But sitting incongruously amidst the new Guzzi road bikes was a near immaculate 1997 Suzuki DR350 bearing just 13,000km and a 2000 Euro (circa £1400) price tag. This was more like it. I asked if I could start the bike, and I could, it sounded okay after a little splutter. But though Dick reckoned we could haggle a couple hundred Euros off the asking price, £1300 was rather more than I wanted to spend. Plus I still had to pay whatever it cost to get the bike back home.

So armed with a short hit-list of dealers located conveniently en route to our afternoon Ryanair flight, Monday morning found us in earnest buying mode. The first two of these turned out to be back street scooter shops who listened with bemused scepticism at my pigeon-Italian attempts to describe bikes with knobbly tyres. But third time lucky I found Steels Moto in the tiny hill-top town of Castilgion di Fiorentino. Steels are basically KTM and Yamaha off-road dealers specialising in motocross bikes, but when I managed the magic words

'di secondo mano' (secondhand) I was ushered out of their immaculate new bike showroom into an Aladdin's cave tightly-packed with used bikes, whilst the blonde waited truculently in the rentacar. Unfortunately for me, most of 'em were very sad old moto-crossers, though when I could - quite literally - prise them apart, I found a few potential buys.

Unfortunately none of these machines were of the 'road-use-only' variety which Howard had boasted of back in Blighty. In fact most of 'em looked like they'd suffered a lifetime of maintenance-free mud-plugging at the hands of Blez! One or two did catch my eye though. There was an XL600R with 24,700 clicks on its odo (at £1200) which didn't look too shabby. Neither did a well turned-out CRM250 with some 28,000km behind it, wearing an £1150 price tag. But as I have an inherent mistrust of old stokers I didn't succumb to temptation.

Funnily enough the best looker of the bunch, an XL500R also at £1150, had the highest number of kilometres recorded - all 57,000 of 'em. But I reasoned that at that figure and with the model's notori-

IF YOU'RE IN THE MARKET FOR A LIGHTLY-USED OFF-ROADER AT A BARGAIN PRICE, LAST DECADE'S FASHION VICTIM COULD WELL BE YOUR SALVATION...

ous appetite for top-ends, an engine rebuild was as inevitable as being cut-up on the way home by a Fiat Punto taxi. So I reluctantly said my 'Ciaos' and hit the road.

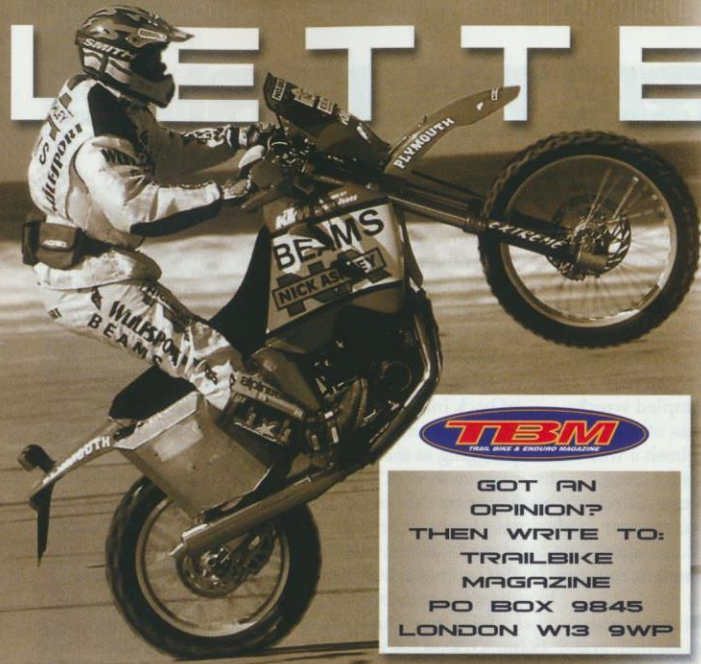
Stopping off for lunch at Empoli and at the risk of nearly missing the plane at Pisa, I did find another dealer who appeared to have an XT600 and a XR250R lurking in the back of his showroom with 'Per Vendati' (For Sale) signs on 'em. But being lunchtime in Italy, even the possibility of wrapping his fists around a large wodge of Euros couldn't tempt him away from mamma's pasta. And anyway, the blonde certainly wasn't having any more of this bike-buying nonsense, especially if it meant catching a later flight.

So the moral of this little tale, if indeed there is one, is that when it comes to importing a bargain bike, either give yourself as much time as it takes (not forgetting of course, that time is money), or leave it to the specialists.

And indeed when I got home that night the latest issue of TBM was waiting there to inform me that an Italian-imported Suzuki DR350 could be found at the local dealers for £1850, as could a choice of three XL600s from a mere £1595.

I thought it best not to mention this fact to the blonde whose Italian 'holiday' had consisted of nothing more than spending her entire time sitting in a hire car outside bike shops. Women can be so touchy, don't you find..?

LETTERS




**GOT AN
OPINION?
THEN WRITE TO:
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was in the middle vehicle of a convoy of three driving from the main road to the circuit along the Ridgeway. We had just passed a couple out walking their dogs when out of the blue came two bikes (a KTM and a Honda). Travelling at a ridiculous speed, the cloud of dust these bikes left was so thick we had to stop and wait for it to clear. What the people walking their dogs thought I can well imagine!

The reason for this letter is to say that with idiots like this riding on the Ridgeway, is it any wonder that people are campaigning to ban all vehicles from using it as a Right of Way. These two brain-dead riders did more to get the ban put in place a few seconds than the TRF have done all year to keep it open.

Keith Brooks
Oxford, Oxon

PS Yes, I am a trail rider and a fully paid-up member of the TRF.

Ridge Riders #2

Dear TBM

What chance have the good guys got when idiots blight our public image? Two of us were out riding the Ridgeway a couple of weeks ago when we came across a motocrosser (no 'plate, no lights etc) speeding up one of the connecting footpaths. He disappeared into the distance (we weren't going to chase him up a footpath), but a short while later we managed to block the young tearaway's path on the Ridgeway and have a friendly chat.

Having pointed out his misdemeanours and got back the usual 'I didn't realise I couldn't ride here' bull, it transpired that he and ten of his mates often ride along the Ridgeway on

MXers, and quite often come across the local Ridgeway-patrolling bobby in his Landrover. According to him the PC's attitude is (allegedly) 'better riding your bikes out here lads, than causing mischief in town!'

Now I don't suppose that these 11 bikers slow down for horses, rambblers and the like, and therefore I'm not surprised that when I come across the same they rarely wave back. But with a policing attitude such as this (even if it isn't entirely true) the good guys are getting increasing amounts of bad press thanks to a few rogue riders. My request to all those who ride the Ridgeway is that the next time you come across the PC in question you mention this story to him.

And another thing! Whilst out on the same Ridgeway ride, we came across the usual Sunday rave near the M40 underpass. Normally I'm not bothered by this sort of thing, but this time we were pushed around by fairly aggressive ravers and squirted with water pistols (petty I know, considering I was covered in sh!t already - but that's not the point). How the hell do Mr and Mrs Rambler and their little Thelwell Pony mounted daughter deal with these problems? Ah yes, I know, they write to their MP suggesting all Byways are closed to vehicular users, that'll do it.

We had a great day out (even with these issues) but my message is clear. I am a responsible rider, and so are those who I ride with in the TRF. There is plenty of bad press that majors on all bikers at present, and as usual the press follows the crowds and appease the many by barracking bikers. A balanced perspective of Byway misuse is needed to help clear our name, so next time you read propaganda in the broadsheet press write back and educate.

John Lidbetter
Buckingham, Bucks

Ridge Riders #3

Dear TBM

Hands up all those who went to the Ridgeway enquiry in Didcot last November and came away with a warm glow. I know I did. I came away probably like many others thinking that we had won the day and that everything would simply fall into place. The Friends of the Ridgeway and GLEAM (two spiteful little organisations if ever there was) would, bloody-nosed, scuttle back into their respective corners and sulk about what might have been.

Unfortunately, Didcot was only a battle and we have been somewhat fooled into thinking that we had won the war. As a user group, we have been caught with our pants down. Whilst we've been riding the lanes, the FoR and GLEAM have been busy undermining our legitimate position with some very influential people. For example, did you know that all six MPs along the Ridgeway corridor are vice-presidents for the FoR, along with countless other MPs, Lords and Ladies being members of GLEAM? Both organisations' membership lists read like a who's who. Make no mistake, the opposition is formidable.

In July this year, the House of Lords voted-in an amendment to the Railways and Transport Bill, which effectively gives the government authority to ban non-essential vehicles from The Ridgeway. In the meantime, the government has given the Countryside Agency 12 months to 'sort out the problems' or the government will 'consider promoting such a ban along the length of The Ridgeway'.

So there we have it. 60 years of mismanagement to be sorted in a 12-month period. In hindsight, all that Didcot appears to have achieved is a stay of execution. But is it really all that bad?

For the past 18 months in my local papers, I and many others

have been fighting a war of words with the 'ban it' brigade, whose total argument is if the vehicles disappear so will the problem.

Whilst it is easy to call for such a ban, realistically how could it possibly be enforced? The assumption by many walking groups is that a vehicular ban will simply be obeyed. Unfortunately for them, the evidence does not confirm this. In fact, it tells a completely different story. In recent months, the National Trails Office (via Paul Castle Consultancy) has been carrying out its own survey. It has set up 12 monitoring stations along The Ridgeway, so it will be able to gain a real grasp of the actual numbers and types of vehicles being used, when, where and by whom.

As an example, at Chinnor in Buckinghamshire The Ridgeway carries bridleway status and is clearly marked as such. Yet during a four-week period between May and June this year the NTO recorded 408 illegal vehicle movements. Would a vehicular ban on The Ridgeway stop this illegal use at Chinnor? Of course not! Banning legitimate users will have no effect on the rogue elements and, if anything, is likely to make the current situation even worse. These facts are something that the NTO are now having to consider, and something that is being fed back to the Ridgeway Management Group and ultimately the people with the money; the Countryside Agency.

So what can we do? Well, you could start by joining the TRF (if you haven't already) and you could write a letter on this subject to your MP. If you live anywhere adjacent to The Ridgeway you could find out the name of your local councillor (available from the library) and contact them, especially if they have anything to do with Highways.

Never forget that the Railways and Transport Bill was amended so it could be used as a big stick with which to beat

Unfinished Business

Dear TBM

Last month's TBM (issue 97) was excellent. Once I'd read about the CCM 404 I thought it was just what I'd been waiting for. The Suzuki DR-Z, good though it is, just looks too bland. The 404, on the other hand, looked excellent in the photos and I've always wanted a Brit-built bike.

I phoned a CCM dealer and they raved about the CCM. So I obtained the factory's address and arranged a visit.

All excited I found the reception and enquired about the 404 and whether I could view one. 'We haven't got any', came the reply, 'you can have a brochure, though, and they should be in the dealers in a couple of weeks'.

'Can't I even see a half-built one?' I asked.

'Nah, we haven't got any we'd want a customer to see'.

So, maybe the new Honda will be out soon?

Steve Donovan
Solihull, West Midlands

Did you really expect CCM to let you see an unfinished bike, Steve? And what would it achieve anyway? You can't sit on a bike without a seat. You can't twist the throttle of a bike without bars. Be patient. As CCM said, the bike will be in the dealers soon and we did make it clear that the bikes we rode were pre-production prototypes. In the meantime, perhaps you should fly out to Japan and ask Honda if you can see an unfinished CRF-X. I'm sure they'd be more than happy to give you the factory tour..!

Ridge Riders #1

Dear TBM

Whilst on my way to an enduro at Ashdown Farm recently (near the Ridgeway in Oxfordshire), I

LETTERS



vehicle users. If you sit back and say, 'it couldn't happen here' then it may just spring up again in the near future and visit a green lane near you.

Quite simply, doing nothing is not an option.

Paul Harrison
Marlborough, Wiltshire

Seven Year Itch

Dear TBM

I'm now 31 and since the age of 13 have had a love of bikes, especially off-road machines. I've had many motocross and road bikes but my latest bike seems to get the most interest out of all those I have owned. I purchased the bike as an unfinished project from a friend that had hoped he could build something out of nothing. The idea was there, but tools and capabilities were in short supply. I was not keen at first as there was not much to go on and, quite simply, the thing looked a bit odd.

Seven years later my project DR (or CDR as I call it) finally came to an end. (Except I would like to make an under-seat exhaust sometime next year.) The bike is a 1980 Suzuki DR400 with CR500 forks and a modified swing-arm from a 1984 model, changed to twin shock.

There's a Kawasaki heat-guard, a DR Big master cylinder and

front brake, and a Suzuki GN400 headlight unit modified to fit. There's also a homemade sump plate and a few other bits and bobs here and there. I would talk about the shocks but the company I got them from talked to me as if I were an idiot, and kept me waiting for months and months. The tailpipe is homemade, taken from another bike but it seemed to do the trick. The link pipe is from an old Escort, along with many other bits scavenged from the scrap heap.

Last year I took the bike to an event and at the ripe old age of 23 (the bike that is) it did its best to compete against 2002 machines. I'm proud to say it was the only bike to get halfway on a 100 mile green lane day without any assistance (ie to the top of a very hard section on my own), which made for a day that I will always remember.

I have rebuilt the engine so many times I've lost count, plus it's got a race head. This gives it so much compression that it

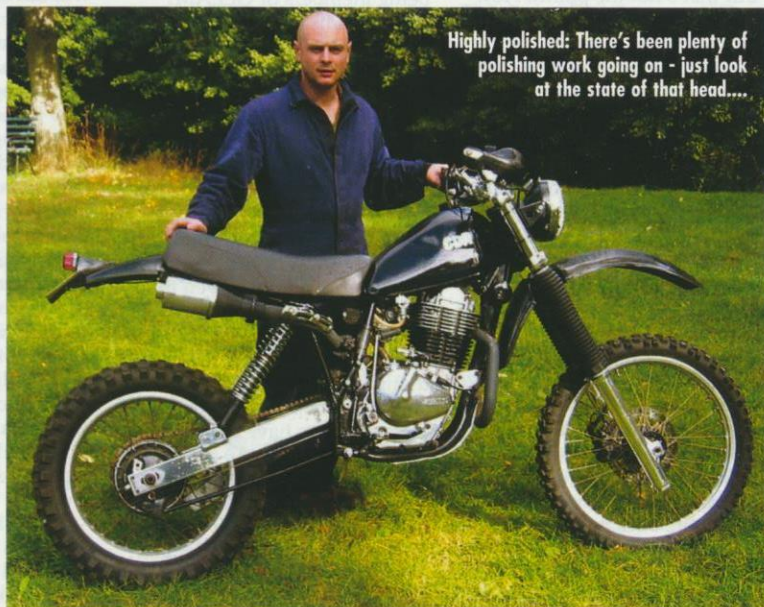
hardly turns over, but it has so much power. I hope you like it as I have been talked into sending you this letter and pictures. I get your mag each month and love the things you print.

Also, long live green laning. We should all be able to enjoy the English countryside in one way or another. And 'short live' all of those who do not care or don't slow up for others that are out on lanes at the same time. You know who you are. And when the lanes close where will you lot go?

Arthur Rudd
Passfield, Hampshire

Nice bike, Arthur. You've obviously put a whole heap of time and effort into it, not least with the polishing mop. Seven years is an awfully long time for a bike project, though.

Then again, there's probably an ongoing TBM project bike which pre-dates it. If only we could remember what it is and where we left it...



Highly polished: There's been plenty of polishing work going on - just look at the state of that head....

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HONDA	CR125	1990	£1299
HONDA	CR125	1995	£1499
HONDA	CR125	1996	£1599
HONDA	CR125	1997	£1699
HONDA	CR125	1999	£1999
HONDA	CR125	2000	£2199
HONDA	CR125	2001	£2399
HONDA	CR125	2002	£2699
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KAWASAKI	250 SHERPA	1995	£2299
KTM	EXC200-GS	2002	£3399
SUZUKI	RMX250	1992	£1599
SUZUKI	DR 350 E/S	1999	£2599
SUZUKI	DRZ400 S	2001	£3199
SUZUKI	DRZ400 S	2001	£3199
SUZUKI	DRZ400 EK	2000	£2899
YAMAHA	225 SEROW	1992	£1499
YAMAHA	225 SEROW	1996	£2199
YAMAHA	225 SEROW	1996	£2199
YAMAHA	225 SEROW	1996	£2399
YAMAHA	225 SEROW	1997	£2399
YAMAHA	TTR 250 RAID	1994	£2199
YAMAHA	TTR 250	1993	£2199
YAMAHA	TTR 250	1993	£2199
YAMAHA	TTR 250	1994	£2399
YAMAHA	TTR 250	1994	£2399
YAMAHA	WR 400F	1998	£2999
YAMAHA	TTR600 S/MOTO	2002	£4299



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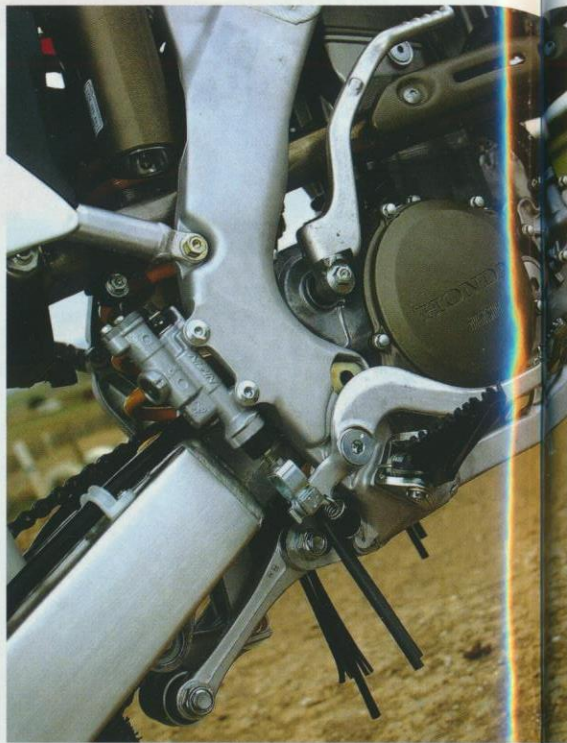
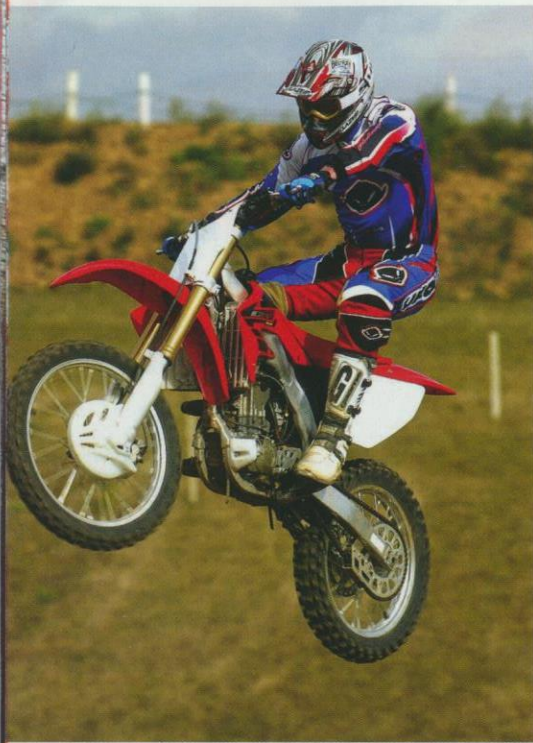
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Is **RED**
the New Orange?

KTM watch out. Honda has signalled its intention to enter the enduro market, and with the launch of its new CRF250R (albeit currently only available in MX trim), they've clearly got the tools to do it. TBM took a ride to find out whether KTM should be worried...



I had an interesting telephone conversation last week with one of the senior marketing bods at Honda UK. It seems that the world's largest bike manufacturer is beginning to look a little closer at the orange rash which has been slowly spreading across the ever-expanding body of the off-road world. Apparently the rise and rise of KTM-itis has not gone un-noticed in Japan at Honda HQ. And believe me when the giant Honda Corporation gets an itch - it scratches. Hard.

In recent years the sport of enduro has been regarded by the Japanese manufacturers as a more-or-less European 'condition', tended to by a whole host of small-scale Euro manufacturers able to supply enough 'medicine' in the form of competition bikes to comfortably satisfy the small but growing local demand. And while that situation has pertained for a number of years, it's the extraordinary growth of one of those suppliers in particular, which has caused Mr Honda to seek a second opinion.

That opinion has come from its importers in markets like the UK, France, Italy and Australia where the growth in off-road sport (and thus off-road bike sales) has significantly out-performed the motorcycle market as a whole. Thus Honda dealers, faced with flat-lining road bike

Top right: Honda have designed a completely new alloy frame to accommodate the little CRF lump.
Far right: And what an engine it is. Incredibly compact and distinctive in its appearance.
Right: Hot start lever lives on the left bar.
Note: clutch is adjustable on the fly...



sales and no Honda product capable of taking-on the Euro dirt bike industry head-to-head, have had to watch helplessly as first KTM reinvented itself, then emerged as not just market leader, but a significant manufacturer in its own right. More worrying for Honda still, is that KTM have ambitions well beyond the dirt bike industry.

The bottom line is that KTM have made a virtue (not to mention a thumping great profit) out of building enduro bikes. Big, small, two-



Is **RED** the New Orange?



stroke or four, there's currently a KTM off-roader to suit everyone's requirement, budget or lifestyle, and what models have Honda got to offer you by way of competition? XR250 anyone?

Which brings me neatly onto the new CRF250R. Yes I know it's a motocrosser, and thus far we've been discussing enduro bikes, but the importance of this new model goes far beyond the confines of any MX track. And for two good reasons. First of all the CRF250R presages a new range of enduro bikes designed to replace Honda's ageing XR line-up. That in itself is significant news which shows that Honda are taking the enduro market seriously. But the other important factor in all this is just how good this new machine really is...

Lookin' Good

One of the many things which distinguishes this magazine from other titles is the importance we attach to a bike's aesthetics as well as its market positioning. The design and general appearance of a dirt bike has much more significance in terms of sales figures than most people



imagine. And you can tell a lot just by looking at a machine whilst considering how and where it slots into the marketplace. For instance you can tell how much thought has gone into the building, riding, ownership and maintenance prospects, not to mention how important the

manufacturer considers a particular product or marketplace to be.

Honda obviously consider the CRF250R very important indeed - otherwise why bother developing a completely new engine, frame and product? They could easily have done what KTM did and sleeved down their bigger four-banger motor, stuck it in an existing frame and Bingo! A new model at a fraction of the cost.

They didn't. Not just because that isn't the Honda way of doing things, but because they didn't want to end up with an unremarkable bike like KTM's first little 250 four-stroke. No, when Honda decided to enter this marketplace they wanted to do it with a product which wasn't just capable of succeeding - it was capable of dominating. And I for one, reckon they may have achieved that.

EXPERT OPINION

For any Expert or Championship class rider serious about getting results in this year's 250cc four-stroke class there has really only been one bike of choice - Yamaha's YZ250F. Built to excel in the competitive '125cc' motocross arena, when fitted with an 18 inch rear wheel, an enduro silencer, lights and handguards, the bike's instant and strong power delivery, sure chassis and firm suspension offer an almost unfair advantage over any EXC, TE or WR. But now, with the arrival of Honda's CRF250R, there is a second purpose-built baby thumper to choose from.

Honda's CRF250R is a bike that the MX world has been waiting patiently for for some time now. Known to be competitive in pre-production form (it won the final round of the '02 Japanese motocross championship ahead of some seriously fast competition), the big question has always been 'how will it compare with the Yamaha?'

Rising Star, Burning Bright

Now I normally try and refrain from blurting out exactly what I think of a bike before I've explained what it is that I like, or don't like about it, and the reasons why. But this time I'll come right out and say it - Honda's CRF250R is stunning. The motor is awesome, the suspension fantastic, the carburetion faultless - in fact the whole bike is bloody brilliant.

With the test track offering a mixture of both high and low speed sections, big and small jumps, and a mixture of wet and dry surfaces,

So let's take a closer look at the CRF250R, beginning with that engine. Naturally it's liquid-cooled and take my word for it - absolutely tiny (and I reckon quite beautiful in its simplicity). More compact than any other four-stroke on the market (just look at the size of that barrel and head), it makes Yamaha's YZ/WR250 seem like a big 400 by comparison.

Honda have deliberately eschewed the bulky and more complex DOHC layout favoured by every other manufacturer of 250 four-strokes (except KTM whose new DOHC 250 is currently undergoing final testing), in favour of an ultra-compact and much simpler Unicam design (that's a SOHC to you and me). At first glance this might appear a bit of a backward step on Honda's part, especially since current thinking is that 250 four-bangers need all the revs they

it made a great track to test a new bike on. Okay, so you'll rarely find a tabletop in a British enduro, but with most of the corners offering little in the way of berms (like an enduro special test), the track's smaller double jumps were ideal for getting a feel for how well the bike found traction and how well it produced power from a virtual standstill.

The reason I was so impressed with the CRF was because it seemed impossible to find a weak area of the bike. The motor, the suspension, the handling and the ergonomics were all faultless. Because unlike European-built 250 four-strokes, and just like Yamaha's YZ-F, it's purpose built as a 250cc thumper. It isn't a sleeved down motor in a middleweight frame. Something which is obvious when looking at the bike on a stand, but even more so when riding it out on the track.

For a 250 four-stroke, the amount of power, and the way in which it's produced are arguably the most important factors when deciding just how good it is. With a single over-head cam four-valve design, (the Yam uses a double overhead cam, five-valve cylinder head), I can best describe the power as being two-thirds Yamaha YZ-F and one-third Husqvarna TE. The short-stroke motor produces instant, revvy power like a YZ-F, but that power is also surprisingly soft for a motocross machine. Hence it feels a little bit like a TE250 at times. But only a little bit.

The Honda motor isn't aggressive, punchy or in any way hard to use like its bigger brother, the CRF450R. Instead the little-H produces

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can get, in order to generate every last drop of power. But once you ride it, you soon discover the logic behind Honda's argument.

This powerplant is first and foremost phenomenally light, contributing to the bike's wet weight of around 102kg. That's about the same weight as a 125 two-stroke (against which this bike is pitched of course), and considerably lighter than all of the current 250 four-strokes on the market - though obviously at the moment this bike doesn't possess lights etc.

But it's the power delivery of this remarkable little engine which is the really impressive thing. Not so much in terms of quantity - but quality. It's just so damn responsive at all rpm. The longer I've had to think about how to describe the Honda's power characteristics, the harder it's been to come up with adequate phraseology. The best way I can describe it is 'instant power - available immediately'. It does this by having what feels like a super-light flywheel which helps the bike gather revs instantaneously. That's not to say that the power delivery is switch-like or in any way hard to handle. It isn't. It's just always there when you need it,

and it seems to be delivered constantly throughout every one of its five gears.

There's not what you'd describe as oodles of power (it's great rather than awe-inspiring) or any sort of power-band as such, in fact bikes like the 250 Yamaha arguably feel more peppy at the top end. But what the Honda manages to do is deliver seamless force and tractability at all engine speeds. There's no step in the power-curve, just a continuous linear curve from bottom to top. Moreover the power always seems instantly available because the engine is so fond of picking up revs.

Unlike a lot of engines this revviness isn't just to be found at the top-end once the bike comes 'on cam'. Somehow Honda have managed to find a way of making their small CRF addictively revvy all the way through the rev range - even from way down low. And that means that energy is always available for propelling the bike forwards. Fortunately the lack of flywheel doesn't seem to make the bike prone to stalling, either. Time and again I back-braked the bike into corners, leaving my downchange till the very last minute and it didn't stall on me once. Awesome.

The Frame Game

As you might imagine it would be entirely out of character for Honda to build a jewel of an engine and then go slot it into an existing chassis. No, for the CRF250R they've created a unique new chassis which when you look at it up-close is actually quite different to any of their existing frames. Oh sure it starts with the same basic parameters - an alloy beam frame with a single downtube splitting into a double cradle to support the motor - but it uses smaller and more slender frame rails than either of their existing CRF/CR chassis, which makes it lighter and much more compact.

Attached to either end of this frame is the most sublime set of suspension I've come across on a production bike. For sure we were testing the bike on a motocross track because it was an MX launch, but I've no doubt in my mind that this

suspension set-up would work equally as well off the track as on it. It feels both plush, yet firm and highly resistant to bottoming out, and unlike most modern motocross set-ups, doesn't feel over-sprung.

For all its light weight, and incredibly compact dimensions the CRF manages one clever trick which KTM have yet to master with any of their bikes. Rock-solid stability. Despite possessing what feels like extremely quick-steering geometry, the Honda is steady as a rock across braking and acceleration bumps, allowing you to keep the throttled nailed much more of the time.

The final significance of the CRF's compact frame is felt once you swing a leg over the bike. It's physically tiny. No lower than a conventional dirt bike of course, but incredibly slender - it

EXPERT OPINION (CONTINUED)

a somewhat deceptive mix of sharp, revvy power, that is extremely usable yet surprisingly mellow. Initially it felt a little average, almost weak, and there certainly wasn't any sort of 'wow' factor. There was no top-end hit, yet it didn't feel overly strong anywhere else within its rev range. But all the time it was putting power to the ground in an eminently controllable manner. The motor could be revved out in second or short shifted to third, where it would happily come onto the cam having driven (rather than fired) itself around a turn. In fact, riding it hard but not revving it too far past the mid-range saw the best results. Affording the rider the luxury of being able to pull high gears, the motor never once bogged, hesitated or failed to rev out when asked. Something else that scores the bike serious brownie points.

More than just Motor

But the motor wasn't the only impressive area of the Honda CRF250R. Just like the external dimensions of the engine, the bike felt tiny out on the track with ergonomics that were also pretty much faultless. Slim, well proportioned, and with an 'open' cockpit, the bike felt at worst like a nimble 125 and at best like it was on rails. It changed direction without question, and hugged the inside of any flat turn without refusal. That, coupled with the fact that the bike's Showa suspension was somehow supple, firm and resisted bottoming, helped make for a very special package. The suspension is rumoured to be the same as the factory units used in GP competition two years ago, and I'd

go as far as to say that it's the best MX suspension in production today. And for the heavier or faster rider, well I bet it'll probably make very nice woods suspension too.

With the motor being exceptionally good, and the chassis everything that certain European thumpers aren't - light, manoeuvrable, predictable and incredibly stable - there are certain other areas of the bike that put it even further out of reach of its Euro competitors. Little things like the lightness of the cable operated clutch make this bike so much more enjoyable (and easier to ride) than the Yamaha, or even some bikes fitted with a hydraulic unit. And as for the Nissin brakes, well they're exactly as you'd expect - responsive, firm and powerful. Another plus point that leaves the Euro manufacturers trailing in its wake.

It's All Good

So what negative points does Honda's CRF250R have? Well, with the possible exception that fitting a quieter enduro silencer might suffocate the motor resulting in a slightly weaker power, I can think of only one - that the bike has put 250cc four-stroke development firmly out of reach of the European manufacturers. Still unable to produce a bike which is as competitive as Yamaha's WR250F (let-alone their YZ250F), KTM, Husqvarna and TM, now more than ever before, have a real problem on their hands. Compared with this bike their 250 thumpers feel like old-fashioned trail bikes to ride. Honda I salute you on getting it oh so right first time. Europe pull your finger out... JONTY EDMUNDS

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Track Time

Out onto the track then to sample the delights of a slippery Wiltshire motocross course on a completely new model. I always love heading out for the first time with a whole new machine because there's no point of reference, no baggage attached. The only conclusions you can draw are from seat of the pants testing. And the only way you can do that is to pound in the laps. So that's exactly what I did. I didn't ride any other model apart from the 250 four-stroke that day because I wanted as much time as possible in the saddle in order to galvanise my thoughts.

The first thing you notice about the bike is how easy it is to start - hot or cold - providing it has stayed upright. Pull the choke, kick the starter and it fires, simple as that. If it's hot, you simply pull (and hold) the hot start lever on the left bar, give it a single kick (there's an auto decompressor which means you don't have to hunt for TDC), and again it fires first time. Splendid.

If however the bike's been on its side (as mine did twice) - well, you may have to give it a good few kicks to get it going again. Roll on the easy starter model coming in March!

feels just like a 125 two-stroke again. Matter of fact I thought it actually felt smaller than Honda's own CR125 which was on display.

Despite its small size, the CRF possesses an 'open' cockpit - in other words there's plenty of room to move about and position yourself where you need to be without getting tangled up with the bars for instance. Oh and a word about the bars. From 2004 onwards Hondas come with Renthal alloy bars. Goodbye, crummy old steel items which had a tendency to snap in a serious getoff. This is real progress.

The next thing which springs to mind is how lively this little critter feels. It's far more sprightly and energetic than a 250 thumper has any right to be. Each twist of the throttle promotes an immediate response with the bike leaping forwards and driving briskly. And on the pre-production bikes we rode, there was absolutely perfect carburetion from tickover to full-throttle. No hiccups or flat-spots of any kind to spoil your riding enjoyment, just seamless power the whole way through the rev range - unlike for instance the Husky TE250

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which constantly required a downchange before hard acceleration.

Into the turns then and you need to get your weight a good way forwards to peg the front wheel down, before balancing the bike (through the turn) on the throttle. If you don't then the CRF can have a slight tendency to understeer (or at least it could on our slippery track), because unlike more powerful machines it tends to 'drive' around the corner rather than slide the whole time. Don't misunderstand me,

you can easily provoke the bike into rear-wheel sliding with a simple tweak of the throttle, and that's how I rode most corners - but this works best when your weight is forward and you can leave the back end to do its own thing.

In other words I'm saying that just because the bike is small, light and manoeuvrable, doesn't mean you can get away with sloppy technique. As with bigger dirt bikes it responds best to being ridden properly. And when you do that, it's truly awesome for such a small capacity four-banger.



All the time you ride it you notice how light it feels - in the turns, braking, in the air, accelerating out of corners - it feels so light that you gain the confidence to chuck it around at every opportunity. Moreover

I'll confess to being no great shakes on a motocross track - I'm a typical enduro rider, I prefer slippery technical terrain to tabletops any day. Nevertheless I just didn't want to get off the bike, and no matter how hard I rode it, it didn't seem to tire me out like bigger bikes can.

That of course is the whole point behind bikes like the CRF250 - they're small and easily manageable like a 125, but much easier to ride fast thanks to their broader, more accessible power delivery.

And a word or two here about the suspension. The CRF-R comes with the most amazing suspension which just seems to soak up the hits without bottoming. I wasn't clearing the tabletops, so I was coming up just short and landing the bike

flat, yet the suspension absolutely refused to bottom out. nevertheless around the rest of the bumpy course it felt supple enough to 'stroke' its way over bumps without deflection and yet still maintain good tyre contact with the ground. My only hope now is that Honda decides to stick with the same suspension on the enduro bikes when they arrive in March. It really is that good.

The Future?

So what kind of conclusions can an enduro magazine draw from testing a motocross bike around an MX course? Well for those who fail to see the relevance of this test just watch out at the first hare & hounds enduro you attend next year that's all. This is a bike which applies equally as well

in our environment as it does on the MX track. I've deliberately kept my test short and sweet to simply give you a taster of the new CRF, with a view to a longer, more varied test (over different terrain) when the X-model appears in spring. Until then, the CRF250R is likely to tempt a fair few riders I reckon (particularly hare & hounds riders) if only to familiarise themselves with the bike with a view to purchasing an X-model at a later date.

Obviously with the recent change in law regarding registrations, getting a CRF-R registered for the road is likely to be extremely difficult (though probably not impossible). That doesn't matter - that's what the CRF-X is for. In the meantime, this is an incredibly competent dirt bike which raises the bar so high in the 250 thumper class, you wonder whether some of the other manufacturers won't choose to give this class a wide birth in future.

Criticisms? Well it's clear we liked the bike right from the start, not because it's so much better than any of the other 250s in terms of handling, power or useability. It isn't. It's just that it's as good as the very best on offer in this class in all these features, and to find all that in one bike is simply staggering. Sure, it might be a teeny bit noisy for enduro use but I can't say

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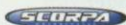


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Race weight:	102kg

I found it excessively loud. Nevertheless the X-model is likely to be quieter and let's hope it doesn't cost the bike too much in the way of performance eh?

In fact the best thing Honda could do is to stick lights, a quiet exhaust and an electric-starter on the R-model and be done with it (maybe that's what they've planned, I don't know). As things stand an R-model (which will be available in January) is going to set you back £4695, which for a new four-stroke model with a Honda badge on it, seems pretty fair.

So maybe the orange tide is turning after all. Honda have set their sights on competing in the (non-MX) off-road environment and on the strength of this first ride, well I for one wouldn't bet against them making serious inroads into KTM's stranglehold. The 250X arrives in March, the 450X at the end of next year. In the meantime put your name down for an R-version and prepare to be amazed.

With apologies to Private Eye's 'The Neophiliacs'..!



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81 Motorhispania Furia 50, Doing the Rounds: Cornwall, CCM 644 DS, Rolling Thunder - CCM History, Product review - kit bags, Cambrian Rally, World Enduro Champs rd2, David Knight, Used and Abused: XR250.

82 Suzuki DR-Z400S, Doing the Rounds: John Deacon memorial, 250 4T Shootout: KTM v WR-F v TM, Product review - gloves, Rally of Discovery, Trail riding in New Zealand, World Enduro Champs rd3&4, David Knight.

83 KTM 450EXC - launch test, Rant, Doing the Rounds: Lincoln, Past Present and Pesto - '75 KTM v '02 WR-F, Master Class - Positioning, 2T v 4T - Husaberg 400 v Gas Gas 250, Product review - braceless bars, Staff Bikes: KDX220, World Enduro Champs rd5/6&7, David Knight.

84 Glera Apache, Erzberg Iron Road Rodeo, Product review - crash helmets (pt 1), Master Class - Cambers/hills, After/Yamaha 250 prototype, Trail riding in Andorra. Used and Abused: XT225 Serow, Welsh Two Day Enduro, British Enduro Champs - Hafren, David Knight.

85 KTM 450EXC trail test, Rant, Extreme Lumezzane, Product review - crash helmets (pt 2), Master Class - Ruts, Cannondale E440 - launch test, Coast to Coast - across Scotland, Used and Abused: KTM 200EXC/EGS, British Enduro Champs - Catterick & Eppynt, David Knight.

86 Munich Show, Rant, Dawn Till Dusk - 12hr enduro, Husqvarna TE400, Master Class - Bogs, Australia by XT500, Product review - boots, Spanish Sala profile, Used and Abused: WR400F, British Enduro Champs - Natterjack, David Knight.

87 Bracken & Hafren Rally, Yamaha WR450F - first UK test, Master Class - Water, Product review - enduro jackets, Jawa 653, Staff Bikes: KDX220, Five, Used and Abused - RMX250, ISDE, David Knight.

88 End of year review, Rant, Reader's Special: DR-Z436 Rally, Master class - Ditches/fogs, Product review - air filters, Dictionary of Dirt, Trail riding in Australia, Used and Abused: Gas Gas Pampera, Five, Scott Trial, Indoor enduro, David Knight.

90 Rant, First Check: e-start XR400R, First Check: 2003 Varadero, Dakar Rallye, 300 Shootout: KTM v Gas Gas, Buying Power, Spanish trail riding, Eriksson profile, Sheffield Trial, David Knight.

91 First Check: Knight's WEC WR500F, 250cc 4-T Shootout: KTM v Yam v TM v Husky, 125 2-T v 250 4-T: KTM v Yam, Product review - headlights, Alto Turia Ride, Staff Bikes: KDX220R, Triumph Twins, Carry On; Mitsubishi L200, Five, Six hour enduro.

92 First Check: AJP PR4, First Check: Merriman's WEC HM CRE250, KTM 950 Adventure - launch test, Unreliable Memoirs, From the Archives; Honda XL250 Motospport, Yamaha WR450F v Gas Gas EC450FSE, British Enduro Champs - Breckland, World Enduro Champs rd1&2, David Knight.

93 First Check: GNCC Racers, First Check: Beta Alp 200. Rant, 250 2-T Shootout: Gas Gas v KTM v Husky v Kawasaki KXE, Geraint Jones Off-road Experience, From the Archives; Suzuki PE, Staff Bikes: CRM/CR, First Love; Villa 125, WEC rd3, David Knight, Readers' Rides; Honda CR250.

94 First Check: YZ250/Provinci Governor, First Check: Factory Gas EC125, Rant, Veremat! E450E v KTM 450EXC, DT125, Montesa 250 Enduro H6/ Cambrian Rally, Cambrian Rally, Readers' Rides; KTM/XT350, WEC rd4&5, David Knight, Scottish Six Days Trial.

95 First Check: Factory VOR 450, First Check: Scorpa 125 4-T, Beta Alp 4.0 - first test, Goggle prep, From the Archives; BMW R80G/S, Used and Abused - KTM 400EXC, WEC rd6&7, David Knight, Dougie Lampkin trials school.

96 First check: Yamaha TT600R, First Check: WEC winning Works KTM500, Gas Gas EC200, IoW Off-Road Festival, From the Archives; BSA Bantam Bushman, Shane Watts, BEC - Hafren, David Knight, 200 Club/Welsh Two day.

97 First Check: Honda CRF450XC, First Check; Husky TE250E, CCM 404DS/Enduro - exclusive first test, Used and Abused - Husaberg FE501, From the Archives; Ducati Street Scrambler, Extreme Lumezzane, BEC - Eppynt, David Knight, Five, Carry On; Proton Jumbuck.

98 First check; Honda XR125L v Moto-Roma MRX125, Rant, 2004 KTM 250EXC 2-T, Works KTM 250EXC 2-T, Dawn to Dusk, CCM 404DS/Dawn to Dusk, From the Archives; Husqvarna 360C, BEC - Natterjack, UK XC - rd4, David Knight, Moto Gori retrospective.

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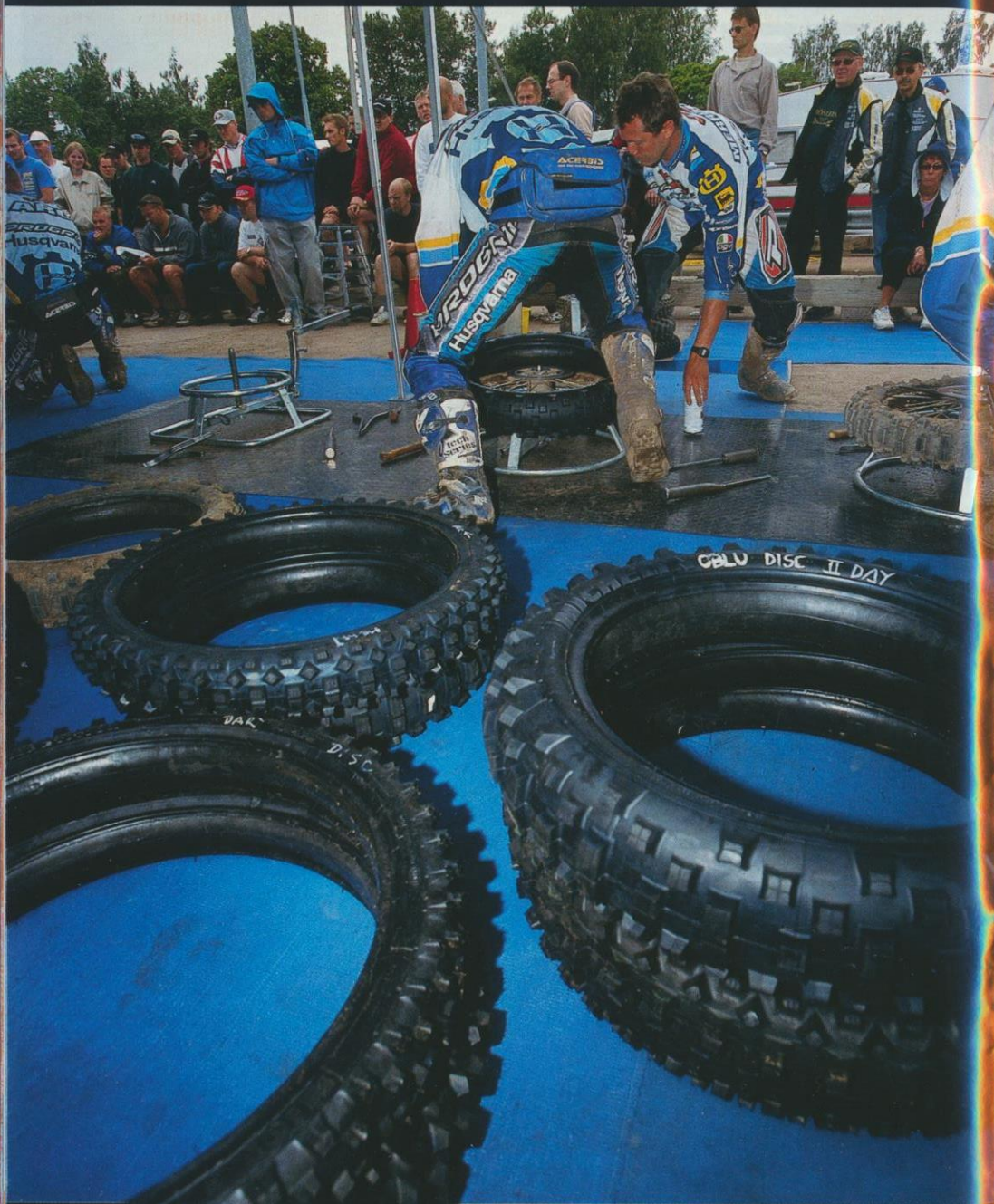
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HOW TO CHANGE A MOUSSE

CHUCKLE at Mousses..!

It's no laughing matter fitting a set of mousses to your bike. But if you take your riding seriously and want to avoid getting punctures then sooner or later you'll need to know how to fit and maintain them. Here's our guide...

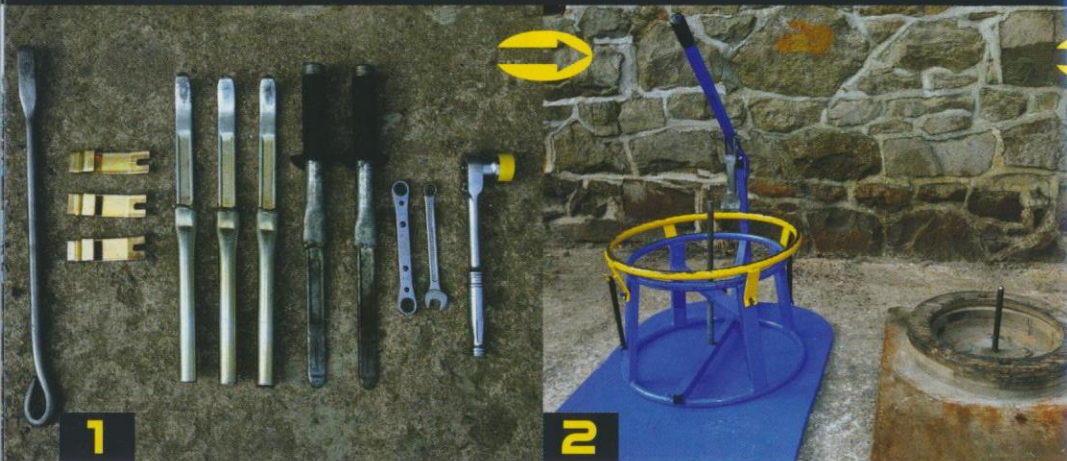
Punctures. Everyone hates 'em. At best they spoil your day's riding, at worst they can cost you a result, a race or even a championship. Even if you only ever trail ride, punctures can be a pain. If you ride on tubes you've got to be able to fix them out on the trail, and that means carrying spare tubes, all the tools necessary to effect the repair, as well as a device for reinflating the tyre afterwards. Most canny trail riders know a thing or two about fixing punctures. For instance they know that a 21inch tube can be persuaded to fit an 18inch tyre (so they need only carry one spare tube), they use small carbon-dioxide bottles for reinflation and they pare their toolkit down to the absolute minimum. But there is another way of avoiding punctures altogether. Fit a set of mousses.

Mousses (for those that don't already know) are solid foam inserts which replace the inner-tube. And because they're solid they can't be punctured. But fitting a set (without knowing the correct technique) can be likened to trying

to wrestle a fully-grown alligator in a bathtub full of mayonnaise!

There are a few other things you should know about mousses. First of all they're costly, you can expect to pay anywhere between £60-90 per mousse. They're often in short supply (especially at the beginning of a racing season), and are generally only available from serious off-road outlets. They need to be stored correctly when not in use, and fitting and removal requires the correct technique.

But I guarantee that the first time you fit mousses it will change the way you ride. You can hit obstacles (rocks, edges, stumps) without worrying about it, and consequently you will ride faster. And then there's the argument about false economy. By the time you've fettled your bike for a ride, paid the entry fee to a race, stuck diesel in the van and fuel in the jerrys, perhaps shelled out on overnight accommodation, food, drinks, spares and all the other costs involved, it makes no sense at all for your ride to be cur-

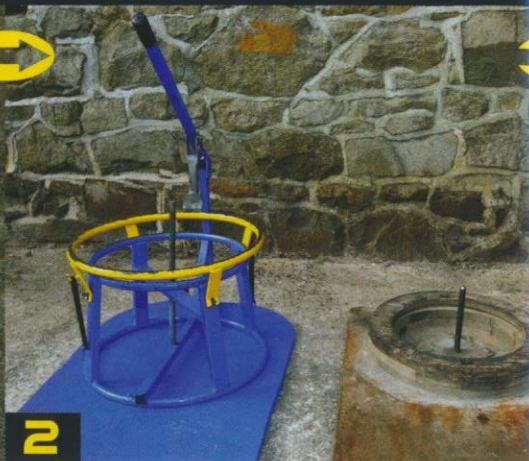


1

tailed or halted altogether by endless punctures. Even more so if you're riding abroad or a long way from home. Think of it as an insurance policy against puncturing and you probably won't go too far wrong.

Okay so now you're convinced of the merits of mousses, here's a few more nuggets of information to digest. Most mousses have a sell-by-date (I'm not making this stuff up). But once you've bought them and put 'em into your tyres, they should last you the whole year (or often much longer). I've known mousses last two or three years (and longer) without a problem, but it depends on how you treat them. You can abuse the hell out of them once they're safely in your tyres, but each time you change tyres you need to be a little careful with the way you handle them. Basically mousses don't take too kindly to extremes of temperature. Heat and friction will cause the mousse to break up (which is why they need to be well lubricated once in the tyre), whilst extreme cold can cause them to shrink slightly. That doesn't mean you can't ride through the summer or winter on them - of course you can - but be sure to pay attention to the manufacturer's recommendations on fitting and storage.

The other thing that's worth knowing is that mousses come in fixed sizes for certain tyre dimensions, and unlike an inner-tube they can't be adjusted to fit a larger or smaller tyre. Okay you can get away with fitting a slightly smaller



2

mousse into a bigger tyre (say a 120 size into a 130 or even 140 tyre), but you'll seriously struggle fitting a 140 mousse into a 120 tyre! With time you'll get used to the sizing and come to know what will and won't fit what tyre size. And the more you practice at mousse-changing, the easier it becomes. Promise. Most top enduro riders much prefer changing mousses than inner-tubes, and the best can change a set of mousses in well under ten minutes. Here at TBM however, well let's just say we're a teeny bit slower than that...

Nevertheless knowing the right technique is the key and practice makes perfect. And before you say well I've no intention of riding on mousses, consider this fact. The last four bikes we've sold have all gone with mousses in the tyres, so knowing how to at least remove them is a worthwhile exercise. For that reason we'll start with the removal process and then move onto fitting. Good luck...

MOUSSE REMOVAL

Before you remove a wheel from your bike there are a few tricks that can be done to quicken and simplify re-fitting. Firstly, when removing either wheel push the brake caliper towards the wheel with your knee so as to push the piston back inside the caliper, opening the pads. With the pads now open, aligning the disk and wheel will be much simpler and removes the need to use a screwdriver to prize the pads apart.

Next, before you remove the wheel undo the



3

security bolt. Although there's nothing stopping you from undoing it when you have the wheel out of the bike, many riders find it easier to loosen and tighten a security bolt when the wheel is vertical rather than horizontal. By tightening the security bolt when the wheel is in the bike you can, if time is tight, ride the bike through a check and tighten it up immediately afterwards.

With the wheel out of your bike, the first thing you need do is to hold it firm so that you don't spend half an hour chasing it around your garage as you try and get the tyre levers in. For most people this means placing the wheel on a purpose-built mousse board. Arguably the most important piece of equipment you'll ever own (along with a good set of levers), mousse boards can be little more than an old car rim fixed to a desk-top sized piece of wood with a spindle in the middle, or an all-singing all-dancing light weight, raised metal framework like those used by WEC competitors. The principal is the same - to stop the wheel from moving around while you apply lots of leverage on the tyre irons.

Unless you are as strong as seven-times world champ Anders Eriksson, who prefers to change



4

- 1 These are the tools you'll need to be able to change a set of mousses. The bigger the tyre levers the better.
- 2 A mousse changing board makes the job so much easier.
- 3 Stick the axle and spacers somewhere safe.
- 4 use your knee to push back the caliper.
- 5 The first lever's the hardest



5

his tyres on a work mat, buying or preferably making your own mousse board will not only make things a lot easier for you it will also save you money in the long run. How so? Well, with a mousse board you greatly reduce the chance of sticking a tyre lever straight through your new mousse. The easiest way of making a mousse board is to go to a British Championship enduro and take a few photos of the type of boards the competitors are using.

Okay, with your wheel placed sprocket side down on the board - so you don't skin your knuckles - you're ready to start putting the levers in. The big difference with changing a mousse

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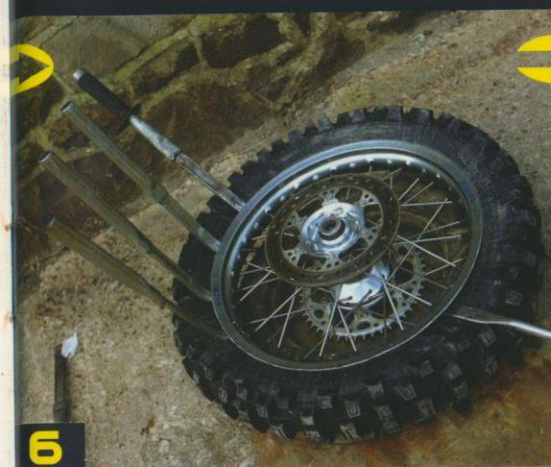
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HOW TO CHANGE A MOUSSE



6

compared with a tube, is that rather than using two or three levers initially and then the same lever to remove the rest of the tyre, with mousses you have to start by inserting four or five levers into a section of the tyre and then one big lever directly opposite these (I'll explain why in a moment). However, getting your levers in position in the first place can be difficult. Some people hammer them in, others manage to simply push them into position (or of course you could always use the mechanical arm if you've bought one of the professional mousse changing boards). One tip is to use some sort of lubricant - a washing up liquid/water solution or even penetrating oil - to help the levers slide against the sidewalls of the tyre and into position. With a little bit of lubrication and the correct angle on the levers (about 45degrees) they should go in without too much trouble.

Okay so starting with the one big lever opposite all the other levers, the object of this beastie is not to lever the tyre off, but to squash the tyre's sidewall in towards the well of the wheel (the lowpoint in the centre of the inner part of the wheel rim). Once you manage to break the bead and squirt some lube in here the edge of the tyre should be ready to slip inwards towards the well.



7

6 You need to get at least four big levers in place before you can start levering off the tyre. 7 Using your knee, push down on the long lever in order to squash the tyre into the well. 8 Pull the other levers one by one



8

It's at this point that you grab one or two of the levers opposite and, working them gently, pull one then another then another until the tyre is on its way off (see pics 6, 7 & 8 above).

One of the most important things to remember when taking off a tyre is not to be too greedy - don't try and leave too big a space between each of your levers. As you pull each lever over, tuck it in under the disk. With a quarter of the tyre off continue removing the tyre (preferably using a flat 'spoon' style lever), in three to six inch bites.

With one side of the tyre free there are two ways in which to remove the tyre and mousse from the wheel. Firstly, stand on the wheel, bend



9

your knees, squat down and grab a hold of the tyre (at the ten-to-two position - pic 9 above). Then keeping your back straight, try and straighten your legs whilst pulling up on the tyre at the same time (as if you were weight lifting). Alternatively as is the preferred choice of Juha Salminen, remove the wheel from the board, invert it, put it back onto the board and push the tyre down. With a raised board you'll



10

be able to push the tyre completely off the wheel. If you're using the pulling up method then once the mousse has slipped free of the wheel (you'll know when, because it'll suddenly come up sending you off-balance), then it's just a matter of inserting a tyre lever across the rim, under the edge of the tyre and levering it all the way over in a big arc until the tyre comes off the rim (the same as you would with a tube).

MOUSSE FITTING

Okay, the first thing you've got to do is to get the mousse into your new tyre. The easiest way to do this is to stand the tyre upright, straddle it and then sit down on the tyre so it distorts at the bottom. What this'll do is to open up sufficient gap for you to press the new mousse into the bottom of the tyre (which you've already lubricated, right?). Now roll the tyre forwards a little and press the mousse in again. Repeat until the

SECURITY BOLTS/RIMLOCKS

Some people don't bother fitting security bolts to their tyres when using mousses because of the slight extra difficulty involved and because they don't believe that a tyre with a mousse in it can spin. Don't you believe them. We've had tyres spin on the mousse completely wrecking it. Although it's much less important on the front wheel - always fit one on the rear wheel.

HOW TO CHANGE A MOUSSE



A

mousse is completely inserted in the tyre. Right now comes the hard part - getting the tyre and mousse back onto the rim. When fitting a new tyre with a mousse, again make sure that the

wheel is sprocket side down with the security bolt at the closest point to you (6 o'clock as you look at the wheel). Place the tyre over the wheel, hooking the security bolt inside the tyre. Then push the tyre down with your knee to get the first side of it over the rim. With kneepads and a little adrenaline you should be able to get the first side of the tyre on without levers. If not simply use a lever or two to finish the first side.

One tip if you're struggling to get the first side of the tyre on, is to hook it over the security bolt then put pressure on it by trying to lever the tyre over at the furthest point. Maintaining the pressure keeps the tyre still and allows you to use other levers to fit the tyre little by little. Always fit the tyre with the mousse inside, don't try and fit one side of the tyre first and then put the mousse inside that. Believe us when we say it really won't work.

Okay, with one side of the tyre on, push



B

9 Squat down on the wheel, grab the tyre and pull up to release the mousse. 10 Lever off the old tyre in the normal way. A Begin by placing the new tyre over the rimlock. B Lever the first side of the tyre into place. C Push down onto the tyre to ensure that the mousse drops into the well of the wheel, then begin levering on the second side. Secure with mousse cleats...



C

down (or stamp) on the tyre so as to lower the first side into the well of the rim as far as possible. If the second side of the tyre (which is still to be levered on) is raised more than an inch above the rim you will struggle to fit the tyre. Now with the security bolt at 11 o'clock put the first two levers in place and lever a small section of tyre onto the rim - and hold it there. Now you can either insert a tyre cleat (those strange shaped items in the picture of all the levers) or use a set of mole grips. Either way the intention is to secure the first bit of the levered-on tyre so it doesn't keep slipping off.

With the cleat in place (they make less of a

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HOW TO CHANGE A MOUSSE



mess of your rims) start fitting the second side of the tyre in one- to two-inch bites. Providing that the mousse is not too big you shouldn't encounter any problems. But remember - always keep an eye on the side of the tyre opposite where you are fitting. If it starts to rise, and the likelihood is that it will at some stage, you need to push it back down or you will struggle to finish off fitting the mousse.

D Work your way slowly around the tyre securing with cleats as you go.
E **F** Don't try to take too big a 'bite' of the tyre each time, use two levers and always work towards the rimlock. Once you reach the rimlock the tyre will feel very tight...

When you have around one quarter of the tyre still to fit, you'll need to push the opposite side of the tyre down into the well (just like we did with the big lever when we began the removal process). This will ease pressure on the tyre's

bead and reduce the likelihood of you snapping it (or snapping a lever - very common). It can be done simply by inserting either two blunt chisels about six to eight inches apart that will guide the tyre down into the well, or simply by pushing on it with you knee depending on the condition of the mousse.

With the tyre pushed down slightly into the well opposite the security bolt, take small bites as you fit the final quarter of the tyre. If you find it difficult to insert the levers, pull the last lever back towards you, insert the next and then push them over one at a time. Repeat this until you arrive at the security bolt. Fitting the tyre

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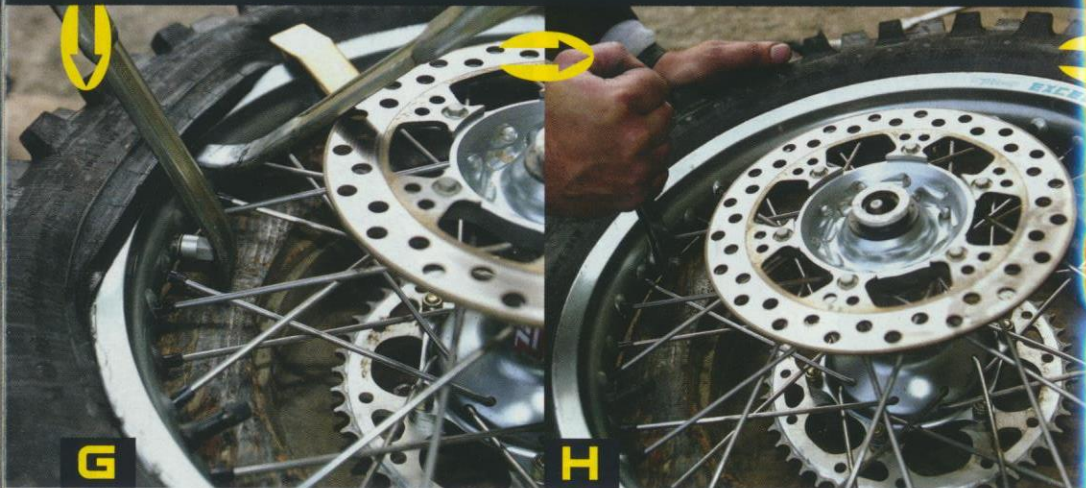


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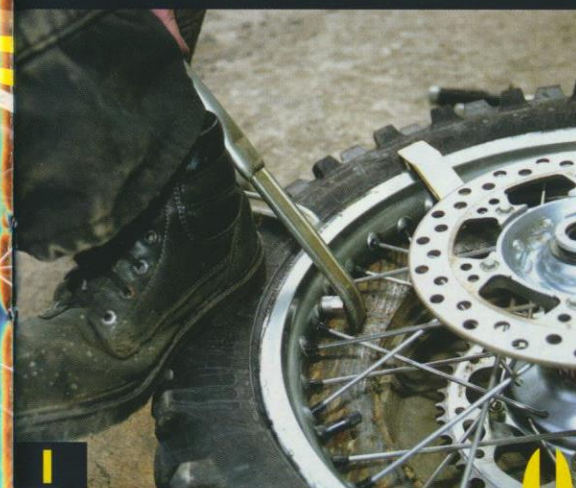
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G around the security bolt is simply a case of fitting one lever each side of it and while the bolt is pushed back up into the tyre these two levers are lifted over finishing the fitment of the tyre. Couldn't be any more simple.

H When changing tyre either at home or during competition try and get into a routine so that when you undo your wheel nut or remove a spindle you place it somewhere that you will find it again when you need it.



G & H Push the rimlock up using a tyre lever located in a hole in the mousse board. **I** Stamp the tyre onto the final part of the rim whilst holding the rimlock up, then release the rimlock and ensure that the tyre is seated. **J & K** Finally refit the wheel and tighten the rimlock. A spanner allows for some chain slack!

MOUSSE MAINTENANCE

Buying a set of mousses is an investment. And just like any other investment they need looking after. Mistreat these small black donuts and you might find yourself having to fork out for replacements halfway through a season.

Lubrication is the key to mousse longevity as friction and the subsequent heat build-up causes them to blister, greatly reducing their lifespan. The silicone-based lubricant supplied with a new mousse is the stuff that works best, and should be used each and every time the mousse is fitted into a tyre. Use a whole tube in the rear tyre and a half tube in the front tyre. I say in the tyre and not on the mousse because placing the lube on the mousse will see most of it scraped off on the tyre walls when it's pushed inside the tyre. The lube should be smeared around the inside crown of the tyre and not, under any circumstances, used to lubricate the bead of the tyre. Doing so will simply result in serious tyre slipping.

While the white lube that comes with a new Michelin mousse is the best lubricant, and is

available separately, many people use washing up liquid - especially championship class riders who remove their mousses after each and every competition. Fairy Liquid seems to do the job better than most washing up liquids, but remember it's water-soluble so won't last as long as the proper stuff.

It's a good idea to replace the rim-tape found inside your bike's wheels with a couple of layers of (half width) duct tape. By doing so any broken spokes won't hole the mousse and it'll help stop water working its way into the tyre/mousse area.

If you do tear or split a mousse while either using or changing it, simply clean it thoroughly and then wrap the 'wound' in duct tape to prevent it from worsening. Keeping the mousses cool and out of direct sunlight also makes them last longer and makes them easier to fit.

Finally, try and avoid leaving mousses in your tyres for too long. All that happens is that the lubricant dries up and the mousse deteriorates rapidly. Plus they're much harder to remove once they've been in the bike for aeons.

MOUSSE HISTORY

Initially designed for security purposes to equip vehicles transporting VIPs, the concept of a punctureless tyre filled with a multi-cellular elastic material dates back to the 1960s when a team of government researchers came up with the idea. However because the materials were heavy and unstable the life span of the products was restricted to only a few kilometres use.

In the 70s the process of manufacturing underwent further development but mousses were still restricted to vehicles travelling at slow speeds. The next step came when Michelin started working on solutions for Minister's cars. For motorcycles, the first tests date back to 1982 when 'Bib Mousses' (as the French call them) were used in the French off-road endurance championship. The first person to use Mousses in an African rally was Hubert Auriol, who won the Paris-Dakar in 1983. The following year all motorcycle teams adopted the Michelin solution. Since then the Bib Mousse has become crucial for victory in all forms of off-road competition.

However the Bib Mousse quickly fell victim to its own success, with demand significantly outstripping supply every year. Back then mousses were still a hand-made product with a low production capacity and a number of chemical processes that were difficult to master. And thus the product was a luxury that only top teams could afford to use. To ensure that its dimensional characteristics were maintained during storage, the Bib Mousse had to be stored in a refrigerated chamber and removed as late as possible before being sent to the customer. All of these constraints lead to Michelin rethinking their manufacturing process, which has led to a product that these days not only lasts a lot longer, but is more stable and easier to produce in sizeable quantities...

THANKS TO STEVE PLAIN AT STEVE PLAIN MOTORCYCLES FOR HIS HELP WITH THIS FEATURE. THEY STOCK A RANGE OF MOUSSES AND CAN HELP WITH FITTING THE THINGS. TEL 01597 825817.

Smell those

TUAREG

camp fires...



If you are considering a desert rally for the first time, then the Tuareg Rally of Morocco is the obvious choice. It is early in the season, inexpensive and will give you the chance to develop your skills at your own pace. There is even an amateur class, with less ambitious routes to follow. Darren Duesbury reckons it is the pre-season desert training event and the best value for money of any of the desert rallies. This is his story of how a group of Brits tackled this year's event, and the lessons they learned along the way...

A little murmur of dread circled the cluster of British riders gathered for the evening briefing. Ahead of them stretched a full day completely in the dunes! The famous Erg Chebbi beckoned - a spectacular and beautiful sea of Moroccan sand right on the edge of the Sahara.

I began to think that this was certainly not a jolly. All day, and 200km in pure sand dunes! Rainer the German organiser reassured us. In a carefully thought out strategy, we would criss-cross the contained expanse of sand (about 60

by 40km), using GPS checkpoints, but taking a different route every time. Thus we were never too far away from safety, assistance, first aid and always in mobile phone coverage! Anyone could stop when they'd had enough, or by 4pm, ride back around on the perimeter road. Simple but clever, and a safe and testing Desert Rally for riders of all abilities.

Anyway Team Optic Reunion consisting of Tom Beckett, Yoshi Adams, Annette Kratzer, Jon Russell and I (Darren Duesbury), had all made it by different means to the start at Mojacar, a pleas-

ant Moorish seaside resort just north of Almeria, in SE Spain. The weather was foul, cold windy and raining. After a night in the hotel, there was an optional 150km off-road morning across the hills down to the ferry. Meanwhile I 'fiddled' with last minute preparations and gave my KTM 525MXC a run down the road.

The second night was on board the ferry with overnight cabins, and after a pleasant crossing we arrived in Nador, North Africa. There was a long queue for customs, Moroccan vans loaded to the hilt with secondhand bicycles, bric-a-brac, kitchen sinks, and even a motorcycle in parts, on their way to some grateful new owner. Each vehicle had to be searched and examined. One van was full of Arab style carpets made in France for sale to tourists: 'Monsieur, you buy genuine Berber carpet, my friend?'

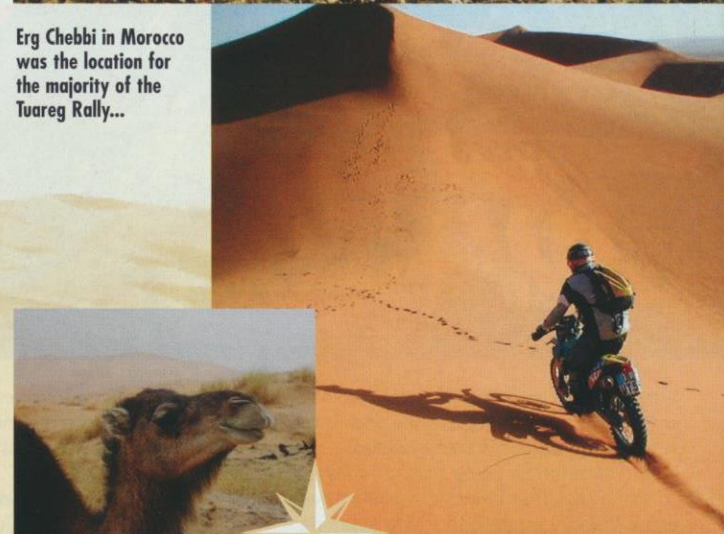
A combination of tarmac and off-road took the 60 competitors including a small number of four-wheelers and quads to a decent hotel in the town of Missor, our overnight stop and break in the 800km trek south to the Desert. Half way through the day, we had a short special test up a technical and tricky riverbed, and the clock began ticking the moment we handed in our timecards to be stamped.

Setting off in a panic, we all got lost and all ended the first day at the back of the field! Strangely all the times were to the nearest minute. Lesson; Not every rally is run to the same rules. Assume nothing. And don't panic Mr Mainwaring!

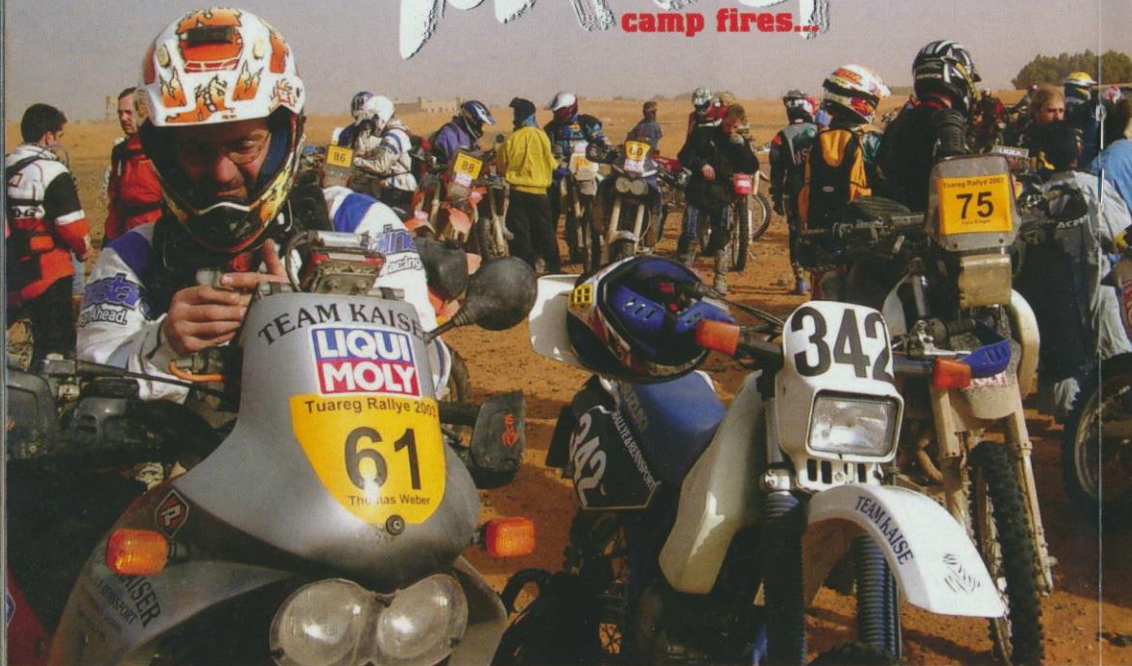
Next morning a longer special, included another tricky riverbed section, but



Erg Chebbi in Morocco was the location for the majority of the Tuareg Rally...



Smell those TUAREG camp fires...



a picnic of salami, cheese and energy bars, and just soaked up the view - the rolling sandscape, the town of Erfoud just visible in the background. Earlier on, a German rider had had a massive off, and broken his leg. Witnessed by Yoshi, the organisers quickly and efficiently recovered the injured rider and his big KTM. One of five or so who ended up hospitalised that week!

With four checkpoints on every lap of the four laps (and a potential six hours of penalties by missing just one checkpoint), I realised that an odd minute here and there would make no difference to the overall result. The winner's time was measured in hours, not just minutes. Lesson; try and work out where time will be made up, and pace yourself accordingly.

On the third and final day in the sand, we did a shorter route (only 70km) between three points, consisting of three laps, the perfect dune finale with a twist at the end - a hillclimb to the top of the very biggest dune. 300 feet up and steeper than one-in-two at the top. It is hardly possible to walk up the last few metres as I had

to, to get my timecard stamped! Only half a dozen made it to the summit, including one BMW 1150 (after five attempts) as well as the Japanese female enduro champion Yuki Tanaka, a diminutive figure barely able to reach the ground on her KTM 520EXC.

For me on this day something suddenly clicked - I found a certain rhythm to my riding. When you get to the top of the dune in third, take a quick dab on the front brake, a quick tug on the clutch, and hesitate briefly at the top (just in case you don't like what's on the other side!), but without losing momentum. Then let the clutch out, and power down the face of the dune. I also learnt that I didn't need full gas on a 100ft dune descent, just apply the throttle if the front starts to bog or tuck under. Except for at the bottom, I gave it a big handful there. Marvellous! So much more confident, I finished only eight minutes behind the stage winner. Now, I love surfing the side of the dunes, up down around, over at will. Lesson; you must get some proper sand practice, when you have mastered it, you will love it.

The day ended with a photo session at the

top of the dunes, the local children being treated to bios and photos before we bided a sad farewell to the sand, and beat a path along the hard stony pistes to Missor again. We calculated we just had enough time to make a slight detour and a short visit to the cave people. On our arrival the two young girls and a boy excitedly appeared, followed by mother and a more reserved grandma.

Appreciative of our gifts, they invited us in for tea. Regretfully we were worried about being late for the special so we declined. I wondered what their cave homes would look like inside.

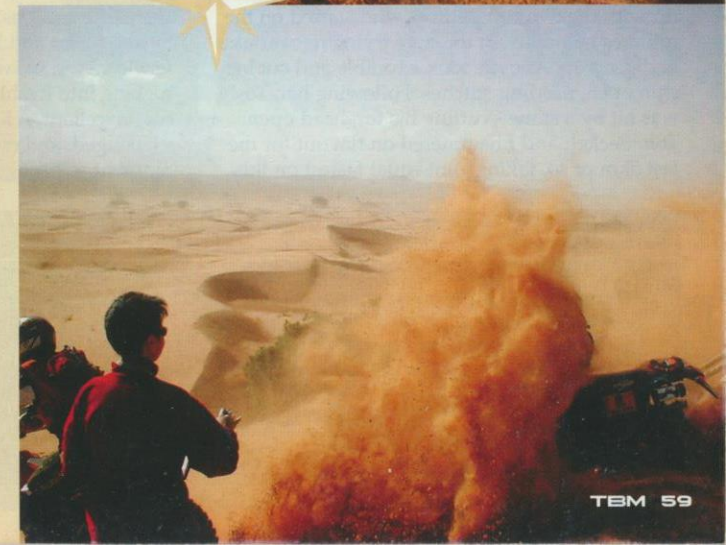
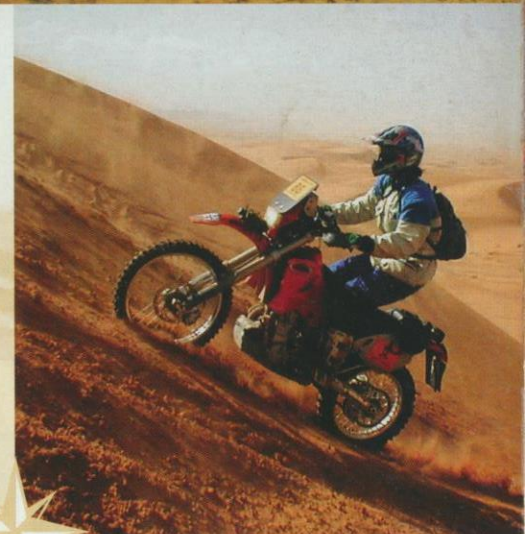
The special was a fast path with many washouts and a number of small dried riverbeds (Oueds) to cross, which all offered a degree of danger. As usual at the end, the field congregated, controlled by the organisers so the riders were not strung out over a large area. We then had a straight forward run into Missor, for the first of two nights. About 30km out in the wilderness I was again shocked to see a couple of children collecting rain water from a dirty puddle on the track, filling up all manner of plastic containers. Out here you've got to get your water whatever way you can.

From Missor, we headed back along the previous route, which was supposed to be a 25km special, but once again, no CP at the end. Thank God! At the 4km mark, everyone ahead (and including me) got lost. Lesson; run your own race, navigate for yourself, ignore what everyone else is doing, very often they are wrong. Make your own decisions.

A pleasant and not too fast second special was a little safer and an easier run. Once

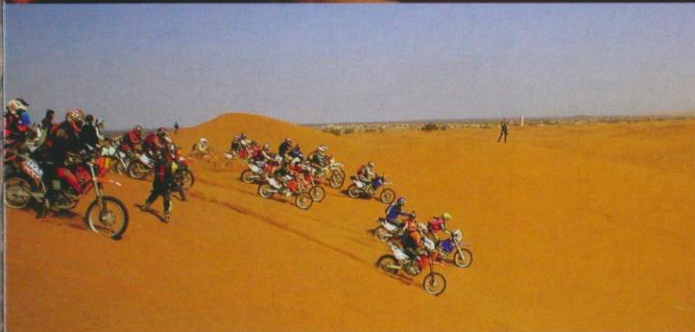


Above: The traditional Berber tents provide shelter from the heat of the day's sun...
Right: Riding in dunes just has to be experienced to be believed...





TUAREG



stage. Tom was so fast through the final check (120kmh), he scattered the timekeepers who ran like hell for cover!

The last day, was a run up to the ferry, with no more specials, just a leisurely trail ride. We were three of only eight riders in total who opted to ride off-road back to the boat.

We stopped for an hour at a town for coffee and cream cakes. North from there the terrain became much more green and lush, due to irrigation. We rode the last 40kilometers to the boat alongside a canal, reminding me of the victorious Transdanubia ride of 2001 with

again, I managed a short-cut near the very end by taking the old abandoned route across a big dry river and again set the equal fastest time.

Finally up onto a plateau for a 42km special. Team Optic Reunion set off together, I agree to lead and navigate. After a few miles we caught up with the two competitors who started on the minutes before us. In the dust trying to overtake and keep up, Annette took a tumble and cut her chin open, needing stitches. Following her, Yoshi was hit by a stone - cutting his forehead open. Tom Beckett and I hammered on flat out for the last 5km or so, taking joint equal fastest on this

Team Optic Reunion (see TBM October 2001 issue for the feature).

Tom and Annette pulled up to donate their energy rations to some locals who had a stone-built shack, next to a Bedouin tent by the waterway. The children (with the mandatory pet goat) rushed to greet us. Soon we were invited to tea. Sitting down and looking out across the green fertile valley, we were soon sipping mint tea and tucking into freshly made bread with olive oil dip! Excellent. A little (but not much) French was exchanged, and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the moment. A fitting end to a fantastic adventure.

DOING IT...

If you fancy taking part in next year's Touareg Rally of Morocco, then you'll need a well maintained bike (with extra fuel capacity), a small number of spares and the ability to fit them, and most of all a sense of adventure. Here's the other details...

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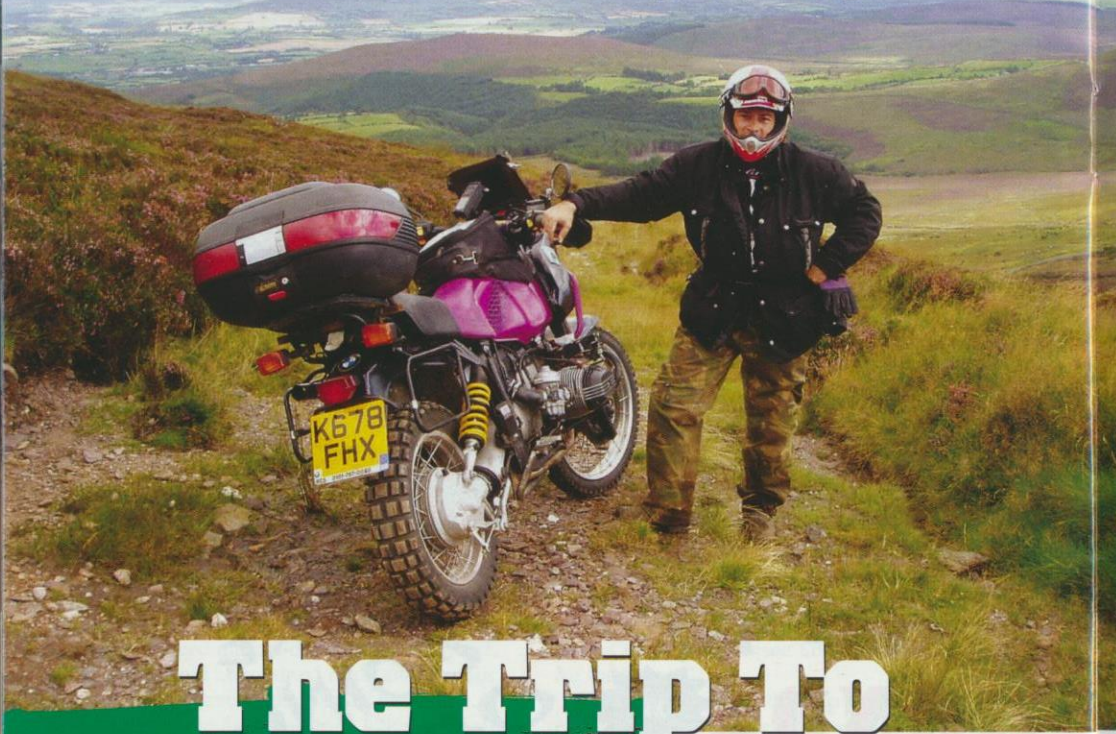
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It's a long way to Tipperary, it's a long way to go...just to tip... your bike into a river! Paul Blez returned to Eire on his trusty Beemer for his annual fix of 'The Craic' in a newly re-vamped Rally of Discovery. This year it ran for the first time in County Tipperary.



The Trip To



TIPP...

It's nine years now since Phil Gunn ran his first, week-long Rally of Discovery all over Eire. Since then, he's run an RoD in Crete and other people have picked up the baton and run with his highly successful formula for a GPS-based navigation 'scatter rally'. Last year Welshman Bob Jeffries ran the first Rally of Discovery in Wales and this summer the Green Dragon rally took place in the Pennines.

At the end of August Seamus Sorohan and Mick Hogan, organised the first Irish RoD to be run without Phil Gunn at the helm. They gave it the catchy title of 'The Trip to Tipp' and soon had over 40 sign-ups from all over the British Isles.

My own long weekend started on the Thursday afternoon in horribly predictable fashion with me missing my rendez-vous with Pat Keenan and his amazing seven tonne Mobitech truck. I then had



STORY & PICS: PAUL BLEZ

to chase him 40 miles down the M4 to Newbury services, getting soaked to the skin in the process. My feet were still squelching wet when we got on the overnight boat to Cork at Swansea, where we joined several more rally-goers for a convivial session in the bar.

The rally HQ was at Knocklofty House, a country hotel situated five miles west of Clonmel in acres of grounds and backing spectacularly onto the River Suir. With an irresistible quirky charm, it could maybe do with an upgrade to the plumbing and various other facilities. Pat Creagh pithily summed it up as 'Fawlty Towers with great food'.

When we arrived, Seamus and Mick were busy checking people in and there were plenty of familiar faces I recognised from previous RoDs, with the addition of a few new ones. The bikes included an ancient twin-shock Yamaha DT360, a trusty old CCM and several sparkling BMW GS1150s.

Bob Jeffries and his wife Jill turned up with a revolutionary new off-roader boasting unheard-of creature comforts, in deference to the injuries he suffered almost a year ago in the crash which destroyed

his GS1150 and very nearly sent him to his maker. Pat Creagh christened it the 'Y-front' but it actually said Yaris on the back and he took it to places Toyota never intended...

The two-storey library made an atmospheric briefing room and, as is now the custom, Mick and Seamus gave us a preview of all of the next day's choice of 38 checkpoints and I predictably fell asleep before they even got half way through.

Saturday dawned bright and sunny which was perfect for the group photo and I even got away more or less on time (two riders per minute, in classic competition style).

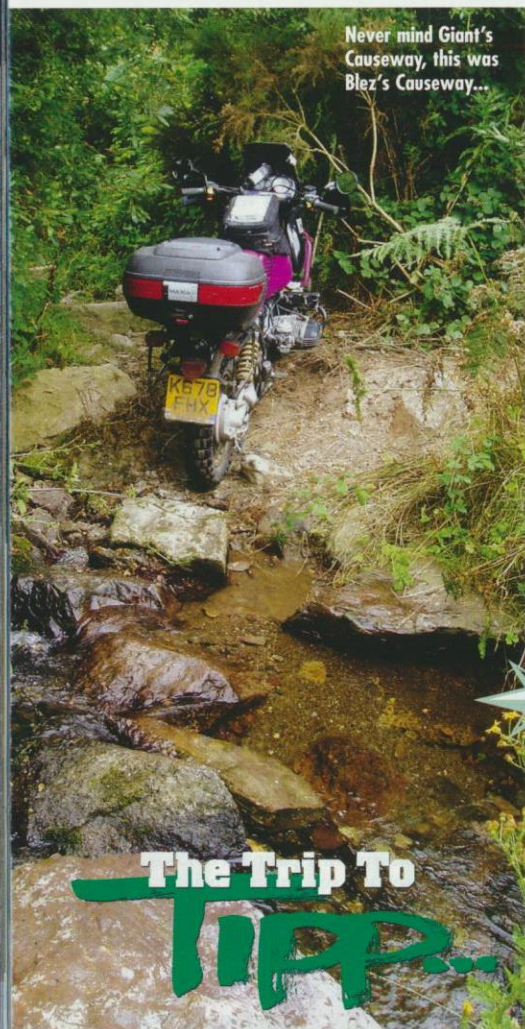
There's no set route on a 'scatter rally' event of this kind - you can do the checks in any order you like, but like a lot of people, I started with check number one, simply because it was the nearest to Knocklofty. We were straight in at the deep end, since we had to ride a narrow footpath around a classic Irish 'pole gate' across the dirt access road. I managed that okay on the big twin, but I walked the last 200 yards up to the check itself, since it was located up a steep and very narrow path which would have been a major effort on the GS. To avoid the serious risk of getting it stuck when I attempted to turn it round to come back down, I took the scenic, off-road route back to the main road. Well worthwhile since it took me past the beautiful ruins of Glenabbey, buried deep in the forest.

Check 13 was actually the closest to number one and turned out to be a tree with the words 'I love you' carved in huge letters on a forest trail. I managed to miss a turn off the East Munster Way en route to the next check, so my old sparring partner Pat Keenan, who'd set off a few minutes behind me, caught me up on his GS1150 shortly after I reached it. The check was a sheep shearing

'crush' made up entirely of old gates, so the correct answer to the check question, 'How many gates here?' was actually 19!

Pat's GS1150 was already sporting a broken number plate, which he'd sustained while foolishly trying to ride around the pole gate mentioned earlier. He'd nearly given himself a hernia extracting his mighty beast from the shrubbery after getting it stuck so you can imagine how he felt when Bob Jeffries turned up in his little Toyota Yaris, calmly pulled the pole back out of the way and drove straight through on the road! Like the rest of us, Pat hadn't bothered to check whether the gate was padlocked.

The narrow tarmac road to check 26 had deteriorated so much that it was practically a green lane with far more gravel than asphalt, complete with some hairy turns and cambers. Several of us spent quite a long time walking down a footpath to a stream and looking for an oil drum which, we found out later, was a clue that had got misplaced on the question sheet - we were supposed to be counting the bars on a stile!



Never mind Giant's Causeway, this was Blez's Causeway...

The Trip To TIPP..

Ain't No Mountain High Enough

The last check Pat and I did before lunch was a major challenge. We literally had to ride straight up the side of a mountain to get to it. Pat made the first attempt but ground to a halt and was about to give up when he saw me take a parallel track with success so he gave it another go - and made it! It was one of those climbs where you have to keep your momentum going and never stop until you get to the top because you know you'll never manage a re-start if you do. We both felt a great sense of achievement and the view from the top was absolutely stunning.

Our lunch stop was at the Pilgrim's Rest in Mount Melleray, just around the corner from the massive monastery of the same name. When I handed my GPS over to Seamus for the compulsory one hour 'quarantine' it was placed in a 'GPS parc

Eventual winner Pat Tighe, heading in the opposite direction to Blez..!



fermé' consisting of a board with GPS-sized holes in it - another neat new touch.

After lunch Pat and I did three checks in the bottom right hand corner of OS map 74 on which all of the day's clues were located. The fact that we didn't have the adjoining map 81 made things a little bit tricky at this point because although the checkpoints themselves were on map 74, the roads we needed to take to get to them weren't.

The first was a curious stone memorial to the Glenshane scout camp a couple of miles up a twisty gravel road and was easy to find. But for the next,

we took the wrong road out of Cappoquin and even with the GPS, it took a while to find the way back onto the map and the check. It was a flag on a tree, buried deep in forestry, and I had been-and-gone before Pat got to it. I then missed the turn to the next check and got stuck behind a herd of sheep, so Pat got his own back and was sitting smirking on his GS by the time I got there.

I recognised the fast road to Lismore from previous visits here and had a great blast up the twisting R668 and quickly found check 24, a metal foot-bridge alongside a ford.

We had hoped to take a short cut to the next check via a track, but other riders on much lighter machinery came back telling us there was no way through, so we had to take the long way round by road. The check was a classic RoD one: an abandoned car a mile up a green road sitting on top of a hedge!

Take Me to the River

Check 19 was a nice challenge on the big twins, since it was a sign on the edge of the river Araglin which could only be accessed via a tricky ford a couple of miles up a rocky, twisty green lane. Pat took the GS1150 across the rocky ford like a Dakar veteran while I damn near dropped the much lighter 'air-head'.

Several other RoD-ists on enduro bikes were already on the far side of the river when we got there, trying to find the right track on the far side without success. They eventually found a way through but by that time we'd decided that discretion was the better part of valour with our monster trailies, so retraced our steps across the ford.

While riding back down the rocky trail, I hit a dip that completely bottomed out the rear suspension and there was a loud bang as my rear brake cable bust for the second time this year. Great! There was nothing for it but to continue with the front brake only which, thankfully, was working better than it had for ages thanks to a bit of TLC from Phil Gunn before the start.

As if that wasn't enough, Pat noticed that my Beemer had sprouted an oil leak when we had to stop and wait for some horses on a forest trail.

Fortunately it was nothing worse than a loose pipe connection, quickly remedied with a spanner from the excellent toolkit.

Check six was a pain - a classic case of the GPS arrow sending you up a dead alley when, in fact, the only way to get to it was to go in a huge circle a mile past it and come in from the opposite direction. Pat and I both nearly got stuck trying more direct routes. We would never have found it if we hadn't bumped into an old farmer who knew exactly which old oil drum we were looking for and how to get to it!

My third mechanical problem of the day occurred, fortunately, as I was bumbling through Clogheen

at about 15mph stuck behind a truck. The gear lever suddenly went all sloppy and I stopped to find it was about to drop off. All it required was a tightening of the allen bolt using that trusty toolkit again. My last three checks of the day were all on the nearby River Tar. I very nearly dropped the old Boxer down the weir at the slippery ford with its depth-gauge at check 16.

When I got to check 23 Pat was standing alongside his GS1150 by the riverside with steam coming out of his ears and very wet feet. He'd failed to notice the footbridge hidden behind a tree around the corner, where the actual clue was located, and had very foolishly launched his machine into the old ford, only to find that it was about four feet deep! He dropped the bike trying to turn it around and drowned it completely. He couldn't even take the plugs out because he had no tools with him and my plug spanner was a different size. I told him to calm down and get on the back of my trusty steed and 20 minutes later we were back at the Knocklofty House base. Pat got a lift back to his stricken beast taking fresh oil, plugs and an air filter with him.

Less than an hour later there was a roar from the Remus as he rode triumphantly back up the drive on the 1150, having given it a quick riverside service. Apparently the sump oil resembled a nicely mixed mayonnaise...

For once, we weren't the last ones back. Nobody had got to all 38 checkpoints and with all our trials and tribulations, Pat and I had only managed 21. Bob Jefferies and his wife managed 14 checks in their car, despite destroying a tyre while off-roading it and having to go miles out of their way to find a replacement.

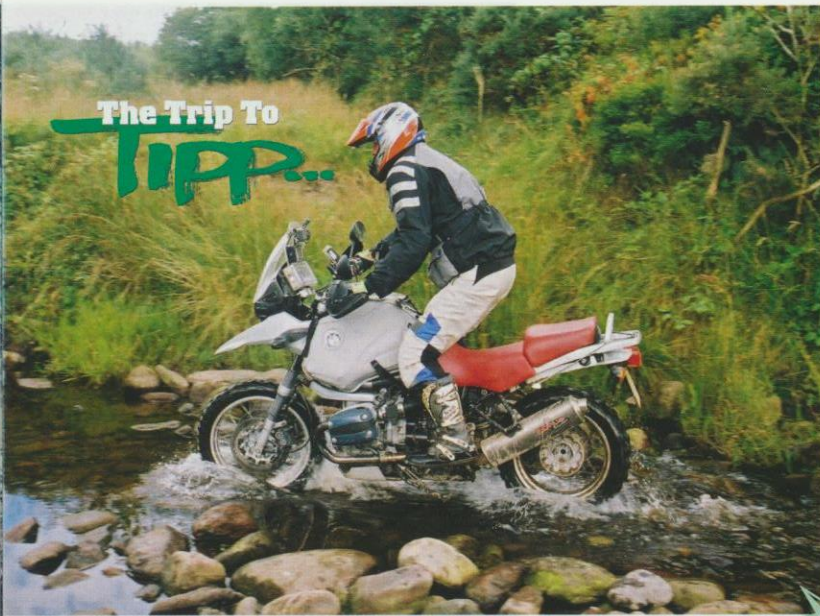
The evening briefing included a digital 'slide-show' of pics taken during the day as well as shots of the checkpoints we'd be trying to find on the morrow. As is usually the case, I fell asleep half way through...

Sunday, Muddy Sunday

As is traditional on the RoD, we started in reverse order the following day which meant Pat K was a few minutes ahead of me. He really had the bit between his teeth and I barely saw him all day.

My own day started with an excellent thrash up the fast flowing R665 to Clonmel where I caught and passed Phil Gunn on his G/S 80 BMW accompanied by driving instructor Brendan Power on an XT600. Five minutes later they overtook me as I stopped to check my bearings...

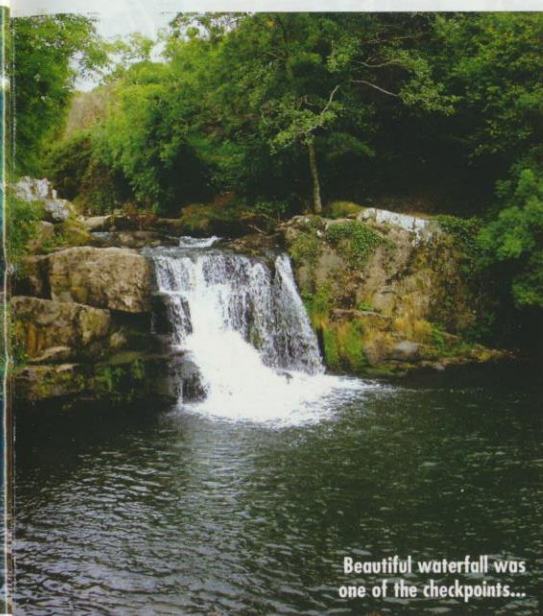
My first check was on a scenic dirt road at the foot of the Comeragh mountains and I quickly ticked off a couple more located nearby before my first near-disaster of the day. I took completely the wrong track into some dense undergrowth and then had to turn the GS around and go back, uphill, amongst hidden tree stumps in deep grass. Turned out the scenic check, at a wooden foot-bridge, was down the dirt road I'd first looked at which required a tricky squeeze past a definitely padlocked pole-gate.



The Trip To TIPP...



Beautiful waterfall was one of the checkpoints...



Don't 'say cheese', Blez will only think it's lunchtime...

I continued on through Kilsheelan to the derelict castle at Kiltash and on along the north edge of OS map 75, to a succession of six checks in as many miles. Four of them were straightforward, on dirt tracks or tarmac back roads, but the other two weren't so easy. Number 14 was at the top of a hill in the middle of some forestry and I'd been all around the houses and up a muddy dead end before I finally found a way in, squeezing the Beemer past another locked pole gate. Once more the GPS led me a merry dance up a dead end track, until I finally found my way to what turned out to be an old quarry, having ridden almost a complete circle of forest tracks to get to it.

The sun was beating down and I stopped for a breather to tighten my loose left hand mirror. Riding on to the next check, as sod's law would have it, the Beemer fell over when I left it on its

sidestand to shut a gate, breaking the mirror that I'd tightened only five minutes before! Aargh!

Magic Moments

Check six was at an amazing megalithic grave right on top of a hill with a great trail leading most of the way. I nearly got the Beemer stuck on a stone wall, only to find an easy way through just the other side of a hedge. We had to walk the last hundred yards or so to what looked like a sacrificial altar surrounded by standing stones and the remains of the tomb.

The standing stones at check 15 were even more impressive - two massive slabs of slate, twice the height of a man, with a third precariously balanced at 45 degrees on top of them. How on earth did the pre-historic inhabitants of Ireland shift them about?!

When I got to the lunch stop at Mullinavat I discovered that Pat had already been to several more

checks than me as he roared off with a grin.

I continued south to a check near Waterford before backtracking up the fast N9 to the waterfall check I'd missed before lunch, which cost me a lot of time and extra miles.

Shortly after finding the name of a campaigner for temperance and sobriety (!) I was stopped by a gard (policeman) at Fiddown for a routine check - insurance and tax discs must both be displayed in Ireland, and there are plenty of police checks. Once he'd seen my UK plate I was waved on with a cheery 'enjoy your holiday'.

Sticks and Stones...

Checkpoint five, in the forestry just south of Portlaw, was nearly the end of me. Or rather, the false trail I took in an attempt to get to it was. I don't know what possessed me to take the BMW across the stepping stones over the stream without doing a recce first, but as soon as I got it to the far side I realised I'd made a big mistake. There was a massive rock step blocking the way and getting back was a major headache. It would have been no problem to continue on a lightweight, but with the GS the rock step was just too much of a hurdle, literally, to risk alone. Just turning the bike around was an achievement and that was easy compared to getting the beast back across the stream. I had to build a little causeway to do it, to enable me to get up the side of the step I'd just come down. After much fiddling about with rocks and stones I finally managed to walk the bike over, with the engine running, and breathed an enormous sigh of relief when I got it back up to terra firma, with half an hour wasted.

By the time I found my way to the plaque on the wall at the Knockaderry reservoir dam it was about

time to start heading back to base, taking in a few last checks in along the way.

I headed North west to the check at the viewing point below the famous Mahon falls which tumble spectacularly over the edge of the Comeragh mountain plateau.

A few miles south, check 32 was an extraordinary graveyard with three holy wells or 'Tobair' (as they're called in Gaelic). It was only after I'd hiked all the way to the wells and back that I realised that the sign opposite the entrance on the main road contained the answers to the checkpoint question!

My penultimate check was at the end of a long stony track into the foothills of the Monavullagh mountains and the last one I did was up a lovely green lane at the back of Scartnadrinny - I just wish I'd had time to ride its whole length.

I had a fantastic blast up the R672 back to the outskirts of Clonmel before turning west for the last five miles back to Knocklofty. I was nearly an hour late which meant heavy time penalties on my scoresheet.

If I'd had the previous day's OS map with me, or even my road map of Ireland, I would have realised that I could have saved myself ten miles and at least ten minutes by taking the back road from Kilmanahan to Knocklofty at half the speed. Hey ho. More haste less speed.

Pat got nearly as many checks as the overall winner on the Sunday, a great comeback after his torrid time in the water on Saturday, and he deservedly got the 'Spirit of the Rally award'.

As for me, I was just pleased to get to more checkpoints than Bob and Jill Jeffries, who got 21 on Sunday alone, beating many a lazy biker in their humble Yaris. Bob said to me later, 'Jill and I had a fantastic time, as I'm sure did everyone else, and it's certainly given me the urge to get back on a bike as soon as possible'.

After the prize-giving everything gets a bit hazy in my memory. I remember some poetry reading by candlelight, some frenetic disco dancing and a long interlude in the smallest room, but I felt remarkably well the next morning, all things considered.

It had been another great RoD, superbly organised by Mick Hogan, Seamus Sorohan and their small band of helpers from the Southern Motorcycle Adventure Club. Roll on RoD 2004 which, if all goes according to plan, will be in Southern Spain. Olé!

RESULTS

OVERALL WINNER: PAT TIGHE
 SPIRIT OF THE RALLY: PAT KEENAN
 BEST LADY: SOPHIE CLARK
 OVER 60: ALAN BOLTON
 OVER 50: BERNARD GARBE
 BEST OVERSEAS: JEREMY SAGAR
 AGAINST ALL ODDS: DONAL LYNCH
 BEST TEAM: PAUL MORAN, VINCENT O'SULLIVAN, PAUL O BRIEN
 BEST TWO-UP: ALAN AND TERESA OGDEN

VICTOR

Ludorum

Mark Williams tells the tale of that forerunner to the modern big-bore dirt thumper, the BSA Victor...

Most of you who ride big off-road singles these days won't be aware of the debt you owe to a crude British four-stroke that started life nearly 45 years ago, and maybe that's not surprising. After all, the days are long gone when Britain manufactured any single-pot engines, let alone four-strokes. And, in the last 25 years, it's fallen to the continentals, the Japanese and, to a lesser extent, the Canadians to develop such powerplants, whether for road or dirt.

But, back in the Fifties, it was a totally different ballgame, with several British companies building - and successfully exporting - a variety of such engines. With the exception of Velocette, who parlayed a gear driven OHC design, all of them were push-rod jobs with just a lowly pair of valves. Yawn. And, in fact, the little C15 Star which BSA launched for the 1959 model year was only a humble 250cc, whose roots went back to the even smaller 149cc Terrier, which BSA cribbed from their wholly-owned subsidiary, Triumph. But compared to the legendary Gold Star, which at the time was the

weapon of choice in the scrambles world, it was a modern design, with its gearbox in unit with the engine (yes, they used to be separate in those days) and compact flywheel magneto ignition.

The C15 was essentially a commuter, and with little public (or, indeed, competitive) interest in lightweight scrambling, seemed destined to remain so but for the shrewd foresight of Brian Martin in BSA's competition department. Martin realised that the Goldie's days were numbered and that what the C15 lacked in brute power, it made up for in its low weight and compact dimensions. He altered the stock roadster frame to accept a wider swinging arm and thus a four-inch section trials tyre, and upped the wheel sizes, all of which naturally offered more traction

BSA
VICTOR Grand Prix
441 SCRAMBLES MODEL

Winner 1964 and 1965
500 cc. Moto-Cross
World Championship

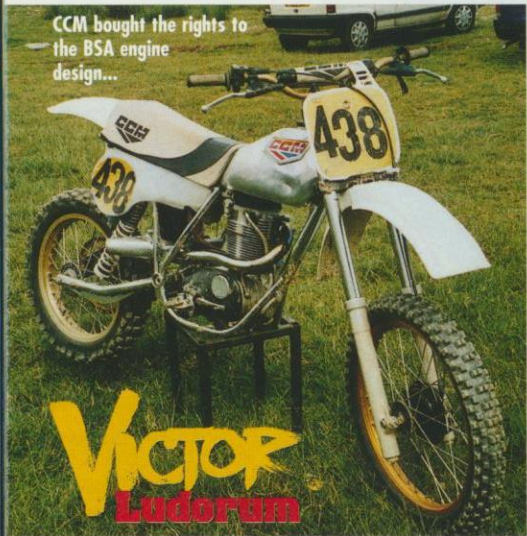


and increased ground clearance.

By the standards of the day, the almost square (67 x 70mm bore and stroke) was a revvy little thing, so he then reduced engine compression from 8 to 7:1 and stuck a set of wide ratio cogs into the gearbox. Hey presto, he then had the making of a wieldy little trials bike, codenamed C15T, which acquitted itself well with factory riders in its 1960 debut season.

By the following year BSA's comp shop had developed the C15S, which you won't be surprised to learn was a scrambler, this time rather more substantially modded, featuring a hotter

camshaft, bigger valves, a reverse-cone megaphone exhaust and a 8.5:1 compression ratio. In its very first season, factory rider Jeff Smith managed second place in the European 250cc Championship, a damascene moment which put the writing on the wall for the venerable, but lardy Gold Star. Martin bored out the engine to 343cc and he himself won both the 350 and unlimited classes at the Red Marley Hillclimb in 1962... and thus the BSA B40 was born. With even larger valves and a chunkier Amal carburettor, Jeff Smith started trouncing the opposition in almost every 500cc race he entered, not



because his engine produced more power than the Gold Stars and Matchless that hitherto ruled the roost, but because in its lightweight frame, the B40 was nimbler and more responsive on a tight scrambles circuit.

To be confident of cracking the World 500cc Championship, even Martin knew this wouldn't be enough. So, he bored and stroked the engine to 70mm x 86mm - still almost square to make 420cc. But this meant using a relatively short con-rod which, in turn, meant flywheel diameter had to be sliced to the bare minimum. Low flywheel mass put a strain on the crank, and also the gearbox, if the rider didn't curb its tendency to over-rev, so the factory concentrated on beefing up the internals rather than going for more power.

A stiffer crankcase enclosing roller main bearings (as opposed to plain bushes!) and stronger, stub-toothed gearbox pinions were part of the effort. This provided enough confidence for engine designers Bert Curry and Ernie Webster to replace the cast-iron barrel with a light alloy job and up the compression ratio from 10:1 to 11.4:1. A chrome-plated bore optimised cooling, although this remained a perennial problem as the engine continued to get bigger and work harder throughout its model life.

The thoroughly spiffed-up 420cc bike did indeed provide BSA with the 500cc World MX Championship in 1964, Jeff Smith having won seven of the 14 rounds outright, and taking

BSA

Victor Grand Prix

Model B44 GP.

Price £349

(including £56.16.0 PT)

Manufacturers recommended retail price

second place in six more. Which is where our story really begins, because on the back of that achievement, BSA could truly justify christening the bike 'Victor' for 1965. But messrs. Martin, Curry and Webster weren't done with it yet, increasing the bore by a further 3mm to produce a capacity of 441cc and enclosing it in a new 'squared-fin' alloy barrel.

As far as motorcycle frames were concerned, Reynolds '531' chrome-moly steel was a hot number in those days. With four and a quarter pints of engine oil contained mainly within its upper backbone, the lightweight chassis helped the Victor scale-in at just 250lbs. And that was with steel-wheelrims! Not only was this some 100lbs

skinnier than most other motocrossers in its class, but the Victor Enduro - announced the same year and just five pounds heavier - was actually 20lbs lighter than the roadgoing 250cc Star on which it was loosely based, even though the first few machines didn't have the oil bearing frame.

Although Smith went on to win the world championship again in 1966, as a callow youth in my late teens with a fledgling interest in off-roading, it was the Victor Special Enduro, at just £275, that rocked my boat (and possibly even, my BOAT. Ouch!).

With its funky yellow over-polished alloy tank, rudimentary silencer exiting from a sensuous, upswept exhaust pipe and its generally spare, lean

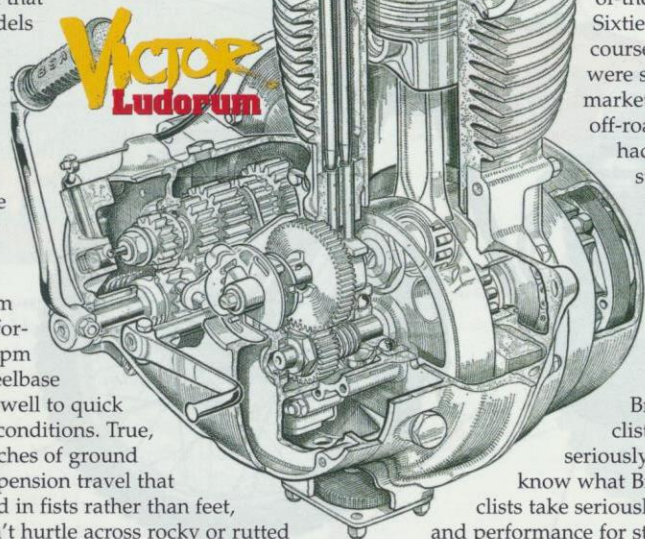
looks, I wanted one immediately. But in those days I could only afford very secondhand machinery, a dreadful old Greeves trials bike at the time, and it would be four or five years before I managed to own one. Which may've been just as well, for despite all its considerable virtues, the early Victor Specials had one major fault - their electrics. To simplify and lighten the electrical system, Lucas had developed, or rather not very well developed, the 'Energy Transfer Ignition'. This fed current direct to the 12-volt ignition coil via a capacitor arrangement, instead of a battery. Unfortunately, the system was erratic and coupled with alternator (fly-wheel) coils that were prone to cracking from

the big single vibes, the engine proved a sod to start and often sparked-out after an hour or two's constant running. As a result, the entire British Trophy team failed to finish the 1965 ISDT directly as a consequence of Joe Lucas' inept electricians... or the Prince of Darkness as his company was thenceforth mockingly known.

It took some time for Victor Special sales to take off after this debacle and with the malign reputation that ensued, some models were actually fitted with 8 A/h batteries before the public warmed to the bike again. For those that took the plunge, the Victor was a very handy off-roader, with 29bhp Birmingham ponies galloping forward at just 5750rpm and a 52 inch wheelbase which responded well to quick input in nadgery conditions. True, with just seven inches of ground clearance and suspension travel that could be measured in fists rather than feet, the Victor wouldn't hurtle across rocky or rutted terrain with the carefree abandon we're used to today. But, within its limitations, it had great directional stability.

The Amal Concentric carburettor was a great improvement on the ancient Monoblocs fitted to the company's Gold Stars, but although it didn't suffer the vaporising even modern carbs do when fitted to hot-running big singles, it was prone to lose its tune pretty quickly. Regular adjustment was the order of the day and the main jets wore out pretty quickly too, especially as the Victor engine was likely to see duty in dirty'n'dusty conditions.

Compared to most modern bikes, the gearbox was pretty notchy, and with only four ratios available, it was often necessary to play around with different gearbox and rear wheel sprockets to get the ratios absolutely right for seriously dirty riding. Dropping the former from 17 to 16 or even 15-teeth was favoured by many, and some riders even opted for the wider-range motocross gearset.



The brakes - seven inch single leading shoes at both ends - were okay until you had to use them repeatedly or went swimming with them, but that was commonplace in those days. All-in-all, I guess the Victor Special could be thought of as 'state-of-the-art' in the late Sixties. By then of course, the Japanese were starting to spot a market for recreational off-roading that BSA had only really stumbled on by default, and typical of the British industry, they regarded oriental two-strokes as snotty little up-starts that British motorcyclists wouldn't take seriously. Well, we all know what British motorcyclists take seriously - reliability and performance for starters - and just four years after its official launch, Victor sales had dwindled to almost nothing, even in the American market where they'd established a decent reputation as desert and enduro racers. By 1970, it was dead.

However, the game wasn't quite up. For, buoyed by the success of a 500cc version of the aged pushrod engine in a Cheney-derived motocross chassis, BSA/Triumph launched cooking versions of what was now designated the B50T, or Victor Trail. The 'new' Victors actually looked even better than the old ones, but they were quite a bit heavier and used a chassis designed and equipped essentially for a roadster version, the B50SS, or Street Scrambler. As such, the forks weren't up to it, the brakes were arguably worse than those of the earlier model and, worst of all was the engine, which allegedly made 34bhp at 6200rpm (the 'crosser claimed a further four bhp). Though sharing the same 84 x 89mm bore and stroke and 32mm Amal carb as the competition engines, it didn't have the same

heavy-duty bottom end or valve-gear. The result was a catalogue of crankshaft and top-end failures, coupled with the bigger motor which was, as ever, a sod to start. Even though blessed with a soft-ish 8:1 piston, the thing was prone to a fairly vicious kick-back unless you managed to manoeuvre it - without a de-compressor! - just over TDC beforehand, and even then, the ignition was a little on the weedy side.

There were also 250cc versions - truly the last gasp of the C15 - in both Triumph (Adventurer) and BSA (Victor Trail) guises, with a motor that was at least easier to coax into action, but considerably more gutless for a bike of almost equal weight. I know, as it was my first ever brand new machine, bought with the spoils of launching Bike magazine, and in very short order I wished I hadn't. Word got around that most other owners clearly felt the same way and the 'new' Victors never

An early, American export Victor...



sold well, contributing to the demise of the range and, indeed, the marque, just two years later in 1972. But the Victor had already become the commercial inspiration for Yamaha's XT500 and, to a lesser extent, similar if later offerings from the

PETER BROWN'S COLLECTION

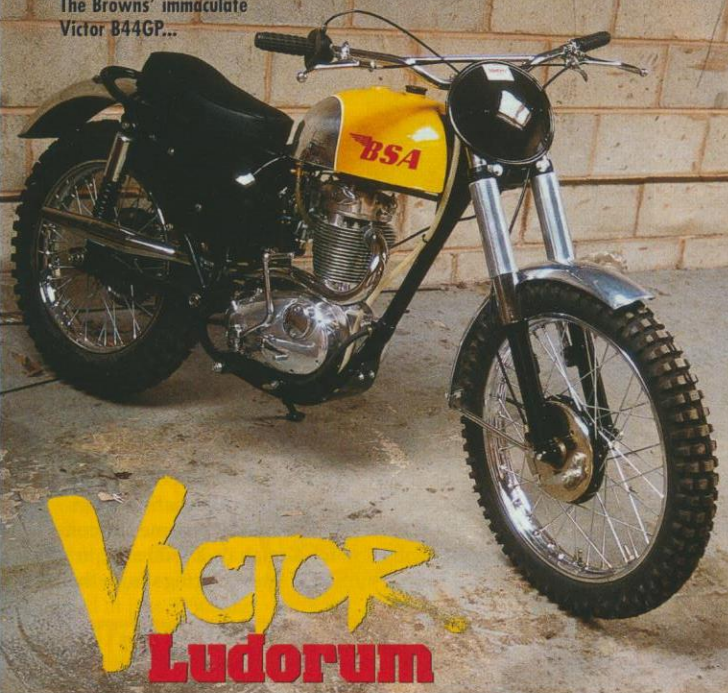
The very early, non-oil bearing frame Victor is one of three owned by Peter Brown of MCA Ltd, a Brit bike spares specialist from Birmingham. Originally an American export model, the bike had found its way to Denmark where Peter and his son David bought it, along with one of the last, square-tanked B50S MX bikes, also shown here. Both are original and will soon be restored by the Browns, presumably to the same amazing condition as their 1966 Victor B44GP, a Jeff Smith Replica. The Brown's barely used, grey-framed B25T (not shown) completes this unique family of Victors.



The square-tanked B50S is a beautiful looking bike. This one was purchased in Denmark...

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Browns' immaculate Victor B44GP...



reputation as a force to be reckoned with, both in motocross and enduros. But compared to the all-conquering oriental opposition, they were expensive and still push-rod crude. Not many people were likely to buy a £2012 CCM Enduro in 1979 when a Honda XR500 cost £1195, and even a hot-shot Maico 400GS could be bought for under £1500.

Eventually of course, CCM were obliged to buy in OHC Rotax engines and by the early 1980s, the last vestiges of what was once a fine example of engineering ingenuity was simply ancient history. But, if you can cop a ride on one of those 441cc Victors that have been lovingly maintained over the years by a doughty band of believers, you might be pleasantly surprised at just how good it feels.

other Japanese manufacturers. They could see the evocative imagery of a big, grunty engine in a trailbike rig, even if BSA had chosen to squander it. And, as such, its legacy lives on in virtually every four-stroke off-roader you can name.

Despite the corners cut trying to keep production afloat, the basis of the Victor - its engine - was worthy of resurrection and for this we must thank Alan Clews and his CCM operation. Clews acquired the rights to the engine's design and, I gather, quite a lot of unused internals. They then proceeded to manufacture a range of motocross, enduro and trail bikes (the latter mainly to order), but with high quality componentry as opposed to the cheapo items employed by BSA in its last gasp. A four-valve head sat atop of a new wide-finned barrel, and a trick electronic advance/retard mechanism overcame the vicious kick-back frequently encountered with the B50T. Oh, and it had solid-state electronic ignition, too.

The CCM engine developed in the region of 35bhp at 6700rpm, and more if you wanted to pay for it. It came with the highest quality frames and cycle parts, contributing to the bike's

BSA VICTOR SPECIAL

Price (1966):	£275
Value now:	£1000-2500
Engine:	OHV, air-cooled, push-rod four-stroke, with dry sump lubrication
Bore & stroke:	79 x 90mm
Displacement:	441cc
Comp ratio:	9:1
Carburettor:	32mm Amal Concentric
Transmission:	Four-speed, constant mesh, with chain final-drive
Chassis:	Duplex, chrome-moly steel. Hydraulic front forks and rear shocks
Brakes:	7-ins SLS Drum, front and rear
Wheels/Tyres:	Front 3.25 x 19ins; Rear 4.00 x 18ins, Dunlop Trials Universal tyres, steel rims
Wheelbase:	52ins
Seat height:	32ins
Ground clear:	7ins
Fuel capacity:	1.5gal
Dry weight:	250lbs

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MARK WILLIAMS
KAWASAKI KDX220R
RALLIES ROUND THE HAFREN

BIKES

STAFF



Sure, it's been a while. But those of you following the life of our long-term KDX may remember that like a young evacuee, it left its London home to live here in deepest Wales. His Melbership had decreed that the bike would be far better off under my care than trying to survive any further blitz of performance modifications or motocross outings.

So he packed its satchel with pre-mix and piston rings, said a tearful goodbye, and waved it off from the station.

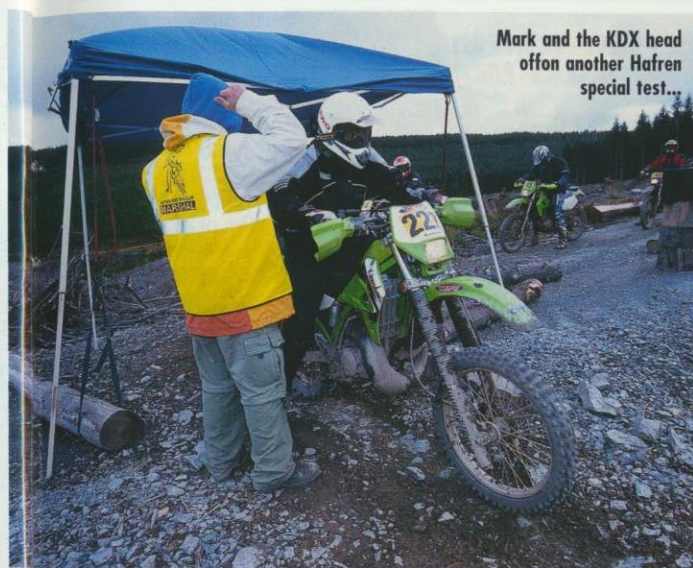
Unfortunately, the rigours of day-to-day life sidelined the bike during the latter half of the summer, but this has been more than made up for since.

20003

STORY: MARK WILLIAMS; PICS: JONNY EDMUNDS & OLI TENNENT

BIKES

STAFF



Mark and the KDX head off on another Hafren special test...

First off was my acquisition of a kit to make it road legal (tsk tsk, had I been riding around all this time in law-breaking mode?), which was another opportunity to get vexed electrically (just call me Sparky Mark).

In fact the kit, assembled at Kwacker's behest by Corby Kawasaki (tel 01536 401010), is a fairly straightforward affair involving a switchblock which goes on the left bar, a twin filament headlamp bulb, 'lectric horn, rear brake light switch, and a resistor which runs in parallel with the otherwise constantly glowing rear lamp. Oh yes, and a surprisingly high quality and accurate speedometer which replaces the stock trip-meter.

Only problem was that the switch unit is clearly designed for a road bike and as such trails a plethora of multi-coloured wires for indicators, running lights etc. Working from Corby Kawasaki's hand-drawn wiring diagram was an exercise in problem-solving too.

Soldering leads to the resistor after you've found somewhere to pop-rivet it (upside of the rear mudguard, actually) was a bit of a faff too, as was bending the speedo bracket to fit the upper triple-clamp, ditto the stoplight switch around the rear sub-frame to connect to the pedal. The latter ultimately required me to wrap some nylon trunking around its nether regions in order to obviate metal-to-metal wear. Clumsy.

But it all works well now it's done and is clear-

ly worth the £80 (+ VAT) if you want to keep Mr Plod at bay.

Legality also ensured my entry into the Hafren Rally, which I rather whimsically mooted as 'A Good Idea' amongst my regular trail-riding pals (AKA the Radnorshire Unreliables). With the doctor giving me the OK for off-road wrestling only two weeks before the event (thanks to a recent shoulder operation - no, I'm fine now, thank you for your concern), there was a rush to a) get an team entry in, b) prep the somewhat neglected KDX, and c) go trailriding at least once to see how strong my shoulder was.

All of this was accomplished in a typical flurry of near-panic, not least of which involved getting a pair of matching, road-legal tyres as I wasn't going to suffer the same slitheriness as I did in the Cambrian

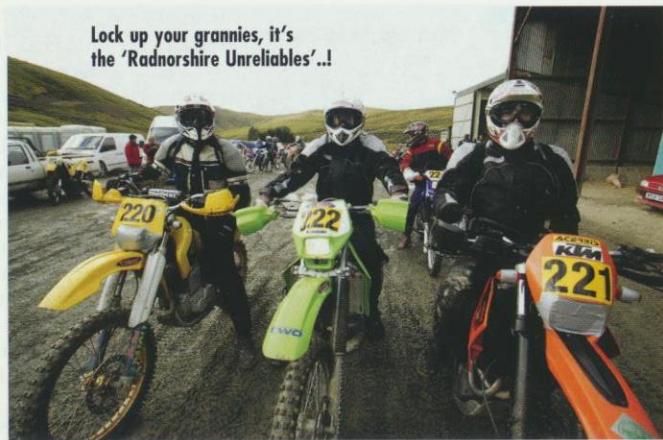
Rally back at Easter. What I ended up getting were a brace of Bridgestones, an ED660 (rear) and ED661 (front), which look and perform like stiffly-walled moto-x covers but are MoT legal and E-marked. Wossmore, the compound seems remarkably resilient to tarmac. More on this later, but when wearily re-fitting the front wheel at 10pm two nights before the rally, I overtightened one of the nuts that holds the axle retaining cap, thus snapping the stud. You can imagine the language.

A firmly applied mole wrench eventually outed the broken stud, and a de-headed 6mm bolt Loctited in place remedied the sitch shortly before we loaded the van and headed for scrutineering at Sweet Lamb Rally Centre, near Tragarron. Phew. Considering we'd just had the driest September since Noah beached his ark, we were ominously greeted by a muddy morass of a paddock and heavy showers assailing us after we breezed through scrutineering (apart from Roy's stock CCM 604 exhaust system, which only just made it). This suggested greasy rather than muddy going the following day, just about my least favourite riding conditions, and thus it turned out to be.

The Hafren was the usual - well usual for mid-Wales - mix of stony fire and access roads interspersed with some very nadgery, root-strewn forest and moorland tracks and these

WORLD OF BIKES

WORLD OF BIKES



Lock up your grannies, it's the 'Radnorshire Unreliables'..!

seemed a lot more demanding than those of the Cambrian Rally - my last competitive(ish) outing. Just as well, then, that I was aboard the KDX rather than my XT which I doubt would've finished the event... or rather I probably wouldn't have finished the event on it.

The Kay-Dee-Exx's biggest attribute is its powerband which, for a smallish stroker is deceptively wide: third gear and even fourth are favourite for bopping along some of the smeary, loamy forest switchbacks and dropping down no further than second enabled confident clambering up greasy, rocky inclines that might've taxed even a clubman trials rider. The well oversquare power-valved engine somehow produces supplies of grunt where they really have no right to be, although the alleged peak of 37bhp seems massively optimistic and arrives much higher up the range when you're wishing top gear could be a little higher.

The light front end meant I could easily squirt my way over many of the hillocks and yumps, and the new front tyre seemed to rid the otherwise superbly steering bike of the slight tendency toward skittishness effected by the stock Dunlop K490. Anticipating that drought-baked surfaces would characterise the event, I ultimately cursed myself for opting for the harder of the two compounds offered by Bridgestone. Even running on 12psi the stiff carcass didn't

depress enough to make full use of the side treads in often critical circumstances. I also never managed to get the right combination of spring rate and damping, the often rocky, bumpy Hafren revealing that I could've wound off the spring compression by perhaps another half inch

and given myself an easier ride. The front forks, however, were exemplary with the 16-way (!) compression damping calibrated somewhere in the middle, and they never bottomed out once.

But I suppose an easy ride is not what the Hafren is all about, and it certainly struck me that there were a lot more serious enduro riders, and serious enduro tackle, competing in this event than in the Cambrian. Indeed although it's many years since I rode in a 'proper' enduro, the Hafren seemed like one to me, with much less forgiveness between (albeit, non-critical) time checks which didn't help the exhaustion factor. In such company the KDX acquitted itself well, as befits the 'clubman' enduro rider, Kawasaki are aiming it at. Not so its rider, however, although I did at least manage to finish and might've done so rather earlier if, noble chap that I am, I hadn't stopped, along with my fellow team-mate, Paul, to help Roy (the third member of our team) replace a punctured inner tube.

In truth, I was pretty shagged-out, and my shoulder protested painfully by the start of the third, 45 mile lap (the Cambrian's were 'just' 38m), and come the final, rather gruelling nine, count 'em, nine mile long special test, whilst I just tried to keep brain sufficiently engaged to avert major mistakes, the KDX pretty much rode itself.

So I suppose there can't be much finer testimony than that to a somewhat underrated machine, especially as at £3683 (including a spares kit), the KDX220R is something of a bargain if you're a serious trail rider with enduro ambitions. Unsurprisingly then, that there were eight KDXs entered in the Hafren... and all of 'em finished...

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GREAT BRITONS...

NOT EVEN AN ELEVENTH HOUR CHANGE OF RIDER COULD STOP GREAT BRITAIN FROM WINNING THIS YEAR'S TRIAL DES NATIONS IN ITALY. TBM WAS THERE TO WITNESS A TRULY GRITTY BRITISH PERFORMANCE...

It seems that in any sport things can have an uncanny knack of not turning out the way they were planned. And more often than not, the bigger the occasion, the more untimely the setback. It doesn't seem to matter how well prepared a team is, how well organised their support crews are, or even how fired up and focused the competitors concerned are, sometimes things just don't go the way they're supposed to. And that's exactly what happened to Britain's Trial des Nations team in Italy at the end of September.

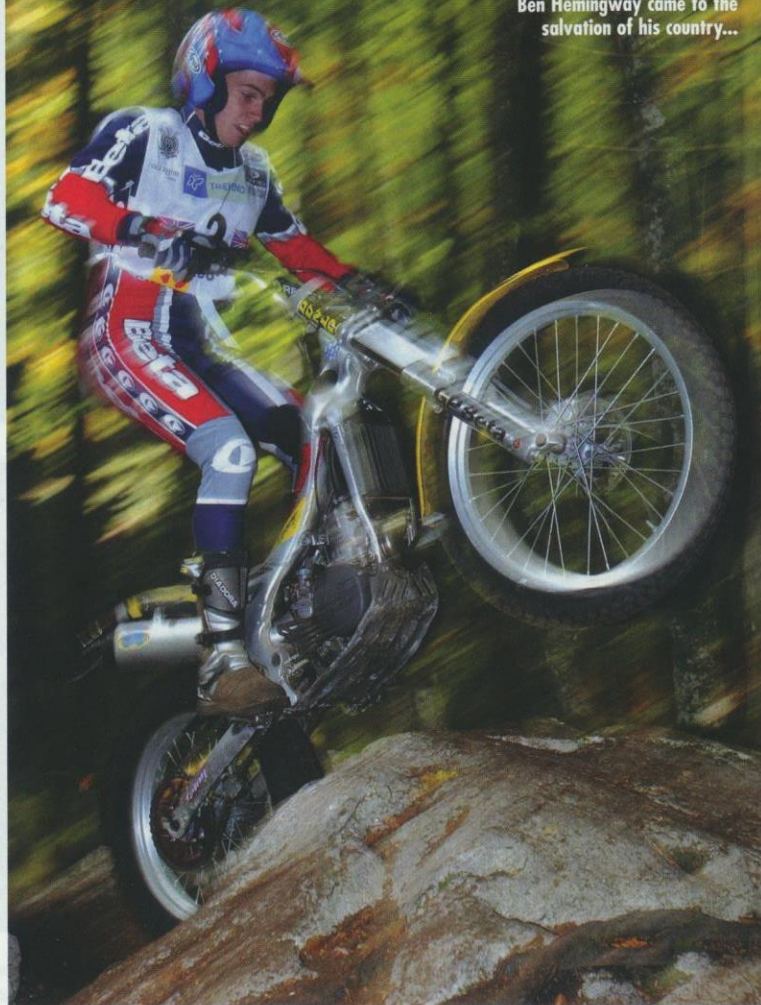
After beating Spain by a single point 12 months ago in Portugal at last year's TdN, Britain's four-man team of Dougie Lampkin, Graham Jarvis, Sam Connor and Steve Colley knew all too well that Spain would start as

favourites, as they had a higher number of top ten World Trials Championship finishers in their squad. Beating them again certainly wouldn't be easy. To do so, each rider would have to produce a near perfect performance, while hoping that the Spaniards would somehow slip up in their quest to top the podium. It needed to be a day in which everything went right for the British team - and it most certainly didn't.

Morning Sickness

The start of the Trial des Nations is really no different to the start of any trials or enduro event - it's incredibly laid back considering the seriousness of the competition. It seems to get underway more when everyone is ready, rather than when any timetable says so. But for the British team,

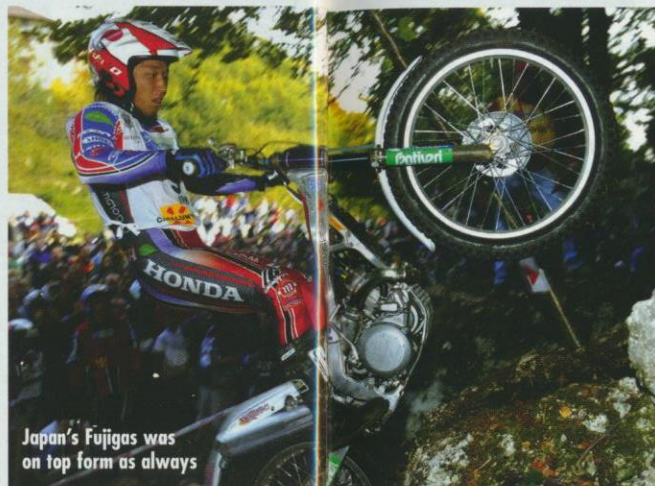
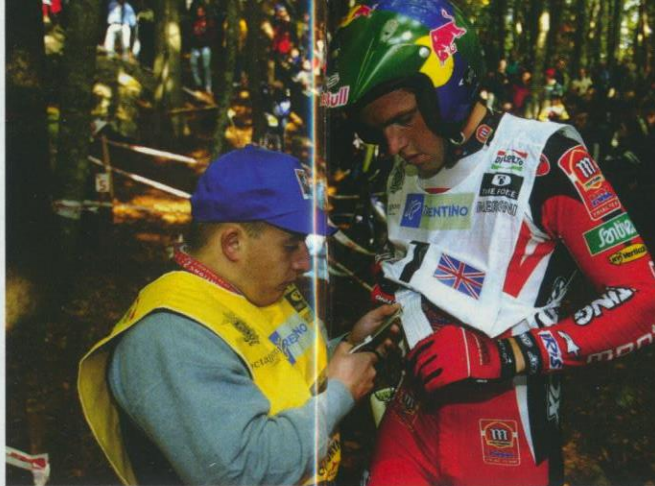
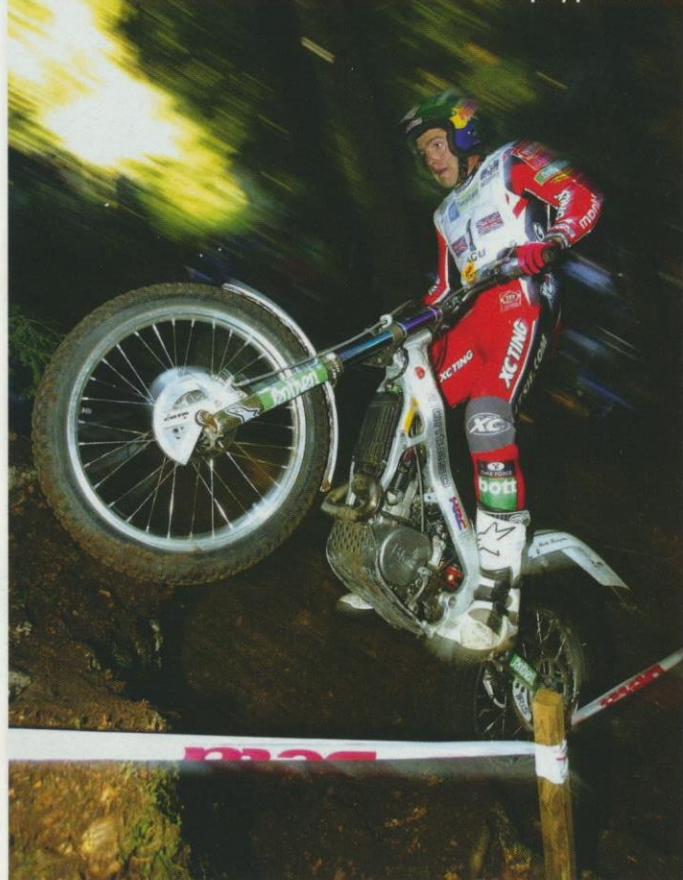
Ben Hemingway came to the salvation of his country...



the morning of this year's TdN was to be a character building and downright disappointing one. Manx rider and long time TdN team member Steve Colley was forced to withdraw from the competition with severe sickness. Having bravely made an appearance at the start area on Saturday afternoon for the opening ceremony, by Sunday morning Colley was in no fit state to compete. As a result, a substitute rider had to be found. Step forward Ben Hemingway.

Losing a rider from any international team the morning of a competition is always going to be a bitter disappointment to the remaining members, but finding a replacement has got to be even more difficult. Luckily for the Brits, Yorkshire trials ace Ben Hemingway and his brother/minder Dan were both in Italy on holi-

Dougie puts in another exemplary performance



Japan's Fujigas was on top form as always



day to support 'the boys'. With no idea that he'd be doing anything other than what he'd planned - supporting the Brits by day and drinking beer by night - Ben's few quiet drinks on the Friday evening turned into a 'proper night out'. A proper night out that arguably saved team GB's bacon and helped them top the TdN for the second year running.

How so? Well, because having had a 'right shed full' on Friday night - Ben's words not mine - he was in no fit state to get back on the beer on Saturday. Still feeling a little worse for wear, he decided to get his head down early and sleep off the remainder of his hangover. Come seven o'clock Sunday morning, a refreshed Ben awoke to find he was now the fourth member of Britain's Trial des Nations team!

As you've probably already worked out, by virtue of the fact that Ben was asked to represent Britain, he's a pretty handy trials rider - one

that has already represented Britain at this level. However, despite being extremely talented and competent, Ben, and I'm sure he won't mind me saying this, certainly isn't world championship material. Well not yet, anyway. While at home he ranks near the top of the food-chain, internationally he is just, er... plankton.

Without any preparation and with no time to spanner his bike, Ben and the British team headed off to the event's training area to ready themselves for the start of the competition. With Ben having not ridden a trials bike for a few weeks, let's just say that he was a little rusty to start with. Britain, it seemed, didn't have a hope in hell of winning anything.

Luckily for Ben TdN sections are never as tough as World Trials Championship ones, nevertheless the Italian rockery still offered some serious challenges and ensured that all riders would need to remain focused from start to finish. With

the sections split into two main parts - the first a group of six sections, the second a group of ten - then a further two sections finished the lap. Each team would need to complete two laps.

Just a Perfect Day

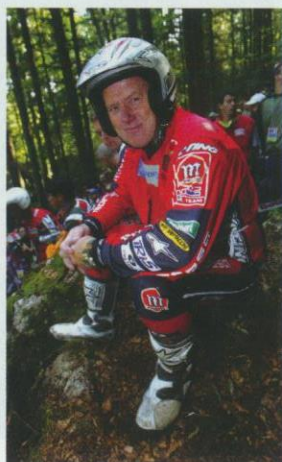
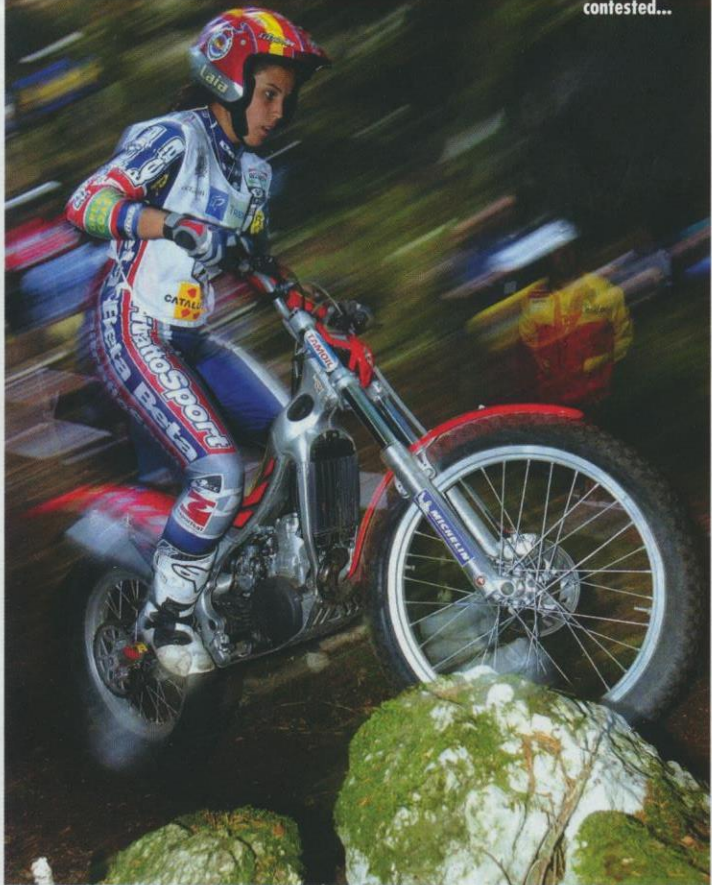
What followed for the four British riders was a truly unforgettable day. Finishing one point ahead of Spain - who protested the result after one of their riders was given a penalty (after his minder interfered with a section), a second win over the Spaniards clearly meant a lot to the British riders. With Graham Jarvis losing only one mark during the whole trial to finish as joint best performer, and Dougie Lampkin losing just two marks and going clean on the second lap, Sam Conner performed, according to Dougie, better than he had all year. Losing just six marks on the opening lap was a truly impressive performance for the Gas Gas mounted Southerner. As for Ben,

let's just say that he probably had the most eventful day he'll ever have on a bike.

As if being drafted into the team wasn't challenging enough, Ben, nearing the end of the opening lap, started to suffer the effects of a migraine. Whether it was due to the pressure of being a squad member, or because like all the other riders he had to concentrate intensely to see his lines within the darkened sections, wasn't apparent. Whatever it was he didn't think he'd be able to finish the event due to his sight starting to deteriorate.

Entering several sections looking white as a ghost, Ben began losing his peripheral vision, but was determined to finish the event - albeit thanks to some medication. Unless you have ever suffered from a migraine you'll not know just how deep Ben needed to dig, in order to keep himself in the event. Take it from me: it was one hell of a gutsy thing to do, especially

The Ladies' Class was also hotly contested...



when you consider the severity of some of the sections.

Team Effort

Despite nobody knowing exactly what position team GB were in as the team started the second lap, rumour had it that they were a mark or two clear of the Spaniards. It was time to get serious. With Dougie and Graham rising to the occasion, it seemed that whatever section Sam struggled in, Ben didn't. Managing to

Altogether now: 'R-U-L-E B-R-I-T-A-N-N-I-A'



keep their composure, and with things seemingly going to plan, all eyes were on the British team as they made their way through each of the sections.

By the time the team arrived at the third from last section, it was clear that virtually nothing was separating team GB from the Spaniards. Any mistakes now would result in Spain claiming the win. And Spain very nearly did. Sam Connor failed to get past the opening seven-foot step of section 32. The British team held their breath.

Ben nervously took the start of the section. Asking Dougie where and how hard he should attack the section, Ben seemed about as confident of reaching the end as he was of learning Italian before nightfall. Somehow, he managed to get himself and his Beta up on top of the seven-foot step with a loss of only two marks before riding through the remainder of the section feet up. The gods were well and truly smiling on the British team.

The remaining two sections were more a test of nerves for the British riders than anything else, as with victory in sight, they knew they could still easily fail. Thankfully they didn't. Managing to keep themselves one point ahead of a dejected and thoroughly hacked off Spanish team, team GB claimed a well-deserved victory for the second consecutive year.

Being there to witness Britain's success at TdN 2003 was a very proud moment for all involved. Watching the lads work together for the benefit of the team, I'd not realised just how 'Spanish' the international trials scene is. With the TdN and WTC promoters Octagon all being Spanish, the efforts of the British riders were truly remarkable. As for Ben Hemingway's performance? Well, it just goes to show what riding for your country can do for you.

Hats off to all four of you...

RESULTS

TRIAL DES NATIONS 2003

1. GREAT BRITAIN - DOUGIE LAMPKIN, GRAHAM JARVIS, SAM CONNOR, BEN HEMMINGWAY 15; 2. SPAIN - MARC COLOMER, MARC FREXIA, ADAM RAGA, ALBERT CABESTANY 16; 3. JAPAN - TAKAHISA FUJINAMI, KENICHI KUROYAMA, FUMITAKA NOZAKI, TAICHI TANAKA 24; 4. ITALY - DIEGO BOSIS, FABIO LENZI, MICHELE ORIZIO, DARIO GANDINE 42; 5. FRANCE - CHRISTOPHE BRUAND, JEROME BETHUNE, BRUNO CAMOZZI, CHRISTOPHE CAMOZZI 46; 6. CZECH REPUBLIC - PAVEL BALAS, MILAN VEPREK, MARTIN KROUSTEK, JIRI SVOBODA 117; 7. GERMANY - ANDREAS LETTENBICHLER, CARSTEN STRANGHOVER, FLORIAN SCHUMACHER, CHRISTIAN WASSERMANN 189; 8. SWEDEN - TOMMY BORJESSON, ANDERS NILSSON, JONA RIEDEL, ADAM THIGER 190; 9. NORWAY - ERIK FREMSTAD, KENNETH LARSEN, STEFFAN SOLHEIM, ANDRE SCENDSEN 251

LADIES' CLASS

1. GERMANY - IRIS KRAMER, UTE KRAMER, ROSITA LEOTTA 21; 2. GREAT BRITAIN - MARIA CONWAY, DONNA FOX, KATHY SUNTER 24; 3. SPAIN - LAIA SANZ, MERCE RIBERA, DOLORES SANCHEZ 26; 4. NORWAY - KJESTY FLA, LINDA MEYER, LENE DYRKORN 27; 5. FRANCE - CLAIRE BERTRAND, BLANDINE GUILLAUD, MARLENE STAGE 31; 6. CANADA - CHRISTY WILLIAMS, KERRY WILLIAMS 53; 7. USA - NICOLE BRADFORD, KERRIE BROKAW, ANDREA DAVIS 76; 8. ITALY - SIMONA CHAUVIE, ALESSANDRA SBRANA, SARA RIVERA 85; 9. JAPAN - TSURUYO BAN, KAZUE INAGAKI 159; 10. PORTUGAL - FATIMA SILVA, SUZANA SIMOES 165

CHINESE WHISPERS... TRIALS STYLE

The highly accurate game of Chinese Whispers that was conducted by the British squad's minds as the day neared a close almost certainly contributed to their win. In charge of roughly a quarter of each of the sections, on this particular occasion the rugged Italian countryside made it impossible for the minders to see one another, making shouting loudly the only viable form of communication.

Dougie Lampkin decided that he needed to relay a message to Graham Jarvis, who was waiting to start the section. Unable to reach or speak to Graham himself, Dougie passed the relevant information onto his dad, Martin, before moving on to look at the next section. With Martin realising that he too couldn't

get the message accurately to Graham for two minutes, all that could be heard in the Alpine valley were thick British accents moving the message through the section. It went something like this:

'Dad?'
'Dad?'
'DAAAAD!'
'What, Dougie?'
'Tell Graham them roots near the end of the section are bloody slippery.'
'Right oh.'
'Dan?'
'Dan?'
'DAAAAN!'
'What, Martin?'
'Tell Sandy to tell Malc to tell Graham that Dougie said them roots near the end of the section are bloody slippery.'
'Will do.'
'Sandy?'

'Sandy?'
'SAANDY!'
'What Dan?'
'Tell Malc to tell Graham that Dougie said them roots near the end of the section are bloody slippery.'
'Aye, no bother.'
'Malc?'
'Malc?'
'MAALCOLM!'
'What Sandy?'
'Tell Graham that Dougie said them roots near the end of the section are bloody slippery.'
'OK.'

'Graham, Dougie said them roots near the end of the section are bloody slippery.'

The message had passed from one rider to another, through four minders, and hadn't changed a word.

Teamwork at its very best...

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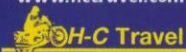


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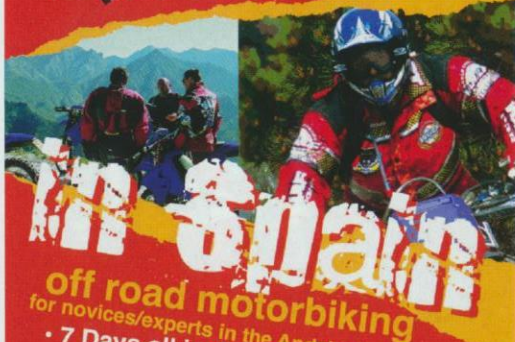
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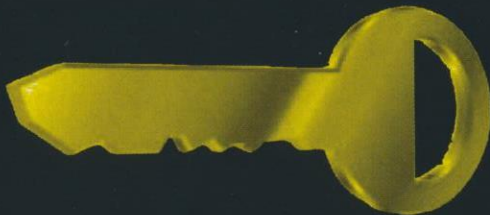
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GOOD KNIGHT

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

Without wanting to go back over the many reasons why the ACU's recent (and I believe unjust) decision to not send a Trophy Team to this year's ISDE has thoroughly hacked me off, I have realised one thing during the past four weeks: that a huge hole has been

left in my 2003 season by not going to Brazil. I know there are still a few good events to be run in the UK before we reach the start of 2004. And I know that the Barcelona Indoor Enduro will, as always, bring Europe's best enduro riders together for one last clash before Christmas. But by not allowing riders like myself to go to the one event which is talked about more than any other, it seems to me as if 2003 ended back in June at the final round of the world championship in Sweden. Since then the rest of the year has lacked any real purpose other than giving me a chance to try my hand at a few other off-road motorcycle disciplines whilst waiting for my Yamaha contract to expire and the new KTM one to begin.

One question that several people have asked me since the ACU made their decision, is why I didn't try and enter a Club Team? The simple answer to that is... France 2001. That was the year that Paul Edmondson and my brother Juan and me decided to try and have a serious go at winning the Club Team competition. However we all quickly realised that the ISDE is a very different and much harder event when you're not riding at the front of the field. Having failed to finish that event due to injuring my foot whilst riding in someone's dust, I realised then and there that to



ride several hundred places behind the people I'm used to competing against, and still try and beat them, simply wasn't possible.

Okay so we were trying to win the Club Team competition and in theory what the guys at the front of the field were doing shouldn't have been of any concern to us. But it was of concern to me. I know who I am capable of beating, but when you start an event anything up to two hours behind those riders it simply isn't a level playing field and that's when you can get hurt. Like I did. Besides, finishing on the second or third page of the results sheet just because of a change in the weather (for instance) isn't something folks at home take into account. It does nothing for your self-confidence and doesn't send out the right signals to your competitors with the start of another world championship season looming.

Despite not having enough time to get things organised for a trip to the US to compete in the final few rounds of the US GNCC series, I have been able to get one overseas event in since last month - the penultimate round of the German cross-country championship. Not an event that I'd normally think of doing I admit, but having been asked to go by Belgarda Yamaha I figured it might be a good laugh. And it was. I was there to promote the '04 WR450 and to make a short programme/advert for German TV company DSF the day before the race.

Having never really done TV work before I wasn't sure exactly what I'd be asked to do. Thankfully it was what I'm good at - hooning around on an enduro bike. Simply having to ride

around an enduro loop, a motocross track and then do some trials stuff before blasting up and down a gravel road, the day's filming went pretty quickly. Although I've not actually seen the finished article, DSF seemed pretty happy with the way it had all gone.

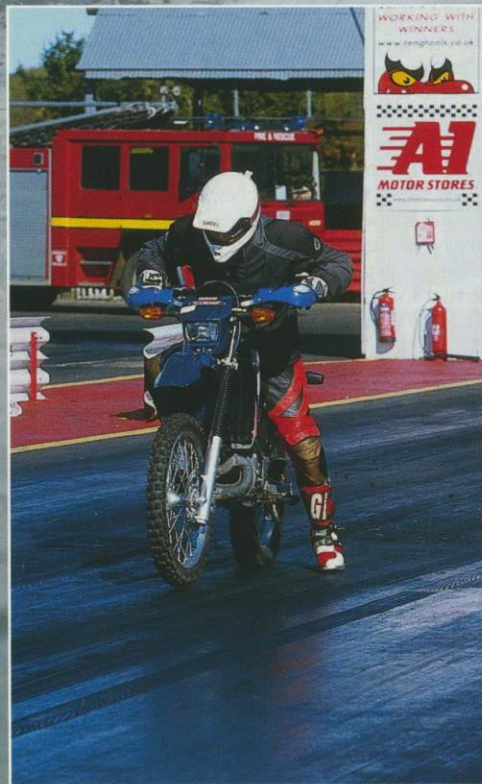
With a little race footage needed to complete the project, I rode the exact same bike as I had during filming (complete with steel handlebars, speedo cable and all), for the three hour race. Asked just to 'show off the bike for the camera' I was only really interested in one thing - winning the race. That's why I sneaked a set of mousses into my luggage and fitted them on Sunday morning to make sure that a flatty wouldn't spoil my chances!

Arriving late at the race, and not realising that I'd missed the allotted 'engine warm up time' everything was very well organised if not a little, well, German I guess. I had to try and perform a Le Mans style start before coaxing a cold WR450 into life with the electric start. Needless to say the bike didn't fire into life as quickly as some of the machines I was lined up next to and I exited the first turn about 20th. Taking about half of the six minute lap to get into the lead, the rest of the race went pretty much to plan. Despite dust being a bit of a problem, and with 32 degree heat resulting in a few riders wishing they hadn't drunk quite so much beer the night before, I was able to win the race quite comfortably. In fact the only scary moment during the three hours was when I had to fight my way past a few kamikaze LC8 riders on the faster parts of the course.

As far as next year is concerned things are taking shape nicely although I'll not be able to throw my leg over a KTM until my Yamaha contract has expired at the end of the year. The plan is that I will again be competing in the Over-500cc WEC class and as yet that's just about all I can reveal. My last official event for the UFO Corse Yamaha team will be the Barcelona Indoor Enduro in mid November, which I can't wait for.

Before that I'm going to be competing in the British round of the European Supermoto Championship. Having faired quite well at the opening rounds of the British championship here on the Isle of Man, I figured I might as well take advantage of the fact that I no longer have any bags to pack for Brazil by doing something constructive. I know that there's going to be one hell of a difference in the level of competition between the Euro championship event and the British races I did, but as I'm not expected to produce any sort of a result I'm just hoping to have an enjoyable weekend's racing. Providing I don't bin it in practice I'll let you know how I get on next month...

DIRTY STRIPPER...



How fast is your dirt bike? We wanted to find out so we decided to take one drag racing...

With the crisp rasp of the Pro Skill end-can ringing inside my helmet I crept forward in first gear. A little yellow bulb glowed ahead to my right. A little further and another bulb joined the first. Apparently I was now 'staged'. Barely a second later three large orange lights flashed up on the 'tree', extinguishing almost as soon as they appeared. I didn't hang around for long enough to see the green light; the clutch was dumped and we were off down the 'strip.

Yep, that's right. You're reading about drag racing in your favourite monthly slice of dirt. What were we thinking? Well, we just happened to be at a 'run what ya brung' meeting at Santa Pod dragstrip in the wilds of north Bedfordshire. And we just

happened to have a trailie in the back of the van. So it didn't take too long for someone to proffer that oldest of schoolboy questions, 'what'll it do, mister?' Hmmm, that got us thinking, how long would it actually take a regular trail bike to run the quarter-mile?

So out came the trailie. The dirt was scraped from the underside and we joined the gaggle of bikes next to the 'staging lanes'. Lowered, turbo'd, nitroused 'Busas, a couple of R1s, more than a few beat up GSX-Rs; the 'competition' was altogether more serious machinery. More serious than our DT230 Lanza, that's for sure.

After the long line of street rods, muscle cars, and boy racer hatchbacks had passed through, we were signalled to get ready. The marshal took a long hard look at the Lanza's Pirelli trials rear tyre, before waving me to the line. Meanwhile, the guy in the other lane did his best to psyche me out with a monstrous burnout on his slick-shod GSX-R.

We may have left the startline pretty much together, but it didn't stay that way for long. Thanks to its shortish gearing (rather than any abundance of power), the Lanza's front-end lifted sharply and I rolled-off the throttle for a split second. Not that this had any bearing on the end result you understand. The guy on the Suzuki was long gone, probably back at his van with a cup of tea before I hit third gear.

So the little Yam plodded onwards, gathering pace with every red-line gearchange. The finish line grew ever nearer and we (eventually) trotted through the timing beams at an earth-shattering 76mph. The heavily modded GSX-R had been doing double the speed... and in nearly half the time!

Okay, so the fluffed launch didn't help. But the Lanza covered the quarter-mile in 16.5 seconds. Or to put it another way, only 0.5sec quicker than two tonnes of 1957 commercial vehicle in the form of the TBM 'truck. But then the Yamaha is pretty weighty for a 230cc stroker and isn't exactly the fastest dirt bike going. Oh and our truck does happen to have a V8 lump in it! Had we had the inclination (we only did one run) I'm sure we could've knocked a good second from our time. And had we had a WR450 or a 525EXC in the van we'd have gone far quicker. But at least we beat most of the boy racers in their body kitted Novas!

The truth is that a 16.5 second 'quarter' might not be the fastest of times (it's nearly seven seconds slower than a good sports bike), but on the other hand it's quick enough to see off the majority of hot-hatches - off the line.

So we were happy with that. Though it did tempt us to return with a knobby-shod 650 Husaberg to see if we could upset a few of the regulars! We're fully aware that drag racing is just about as far removed from trail and enduro as you can possibly get. But hey, racing is racing after all, and if you don't enjoy yourself thoroughly on the strip you can always head out on one of the trails which run right past Santa Pod. See you out there...

Full test of the Lanza next issue. For more details on Run What Ya Brung call Santa Pod on 01234 782828 or try santapod.com.

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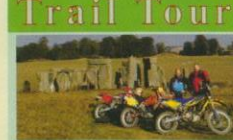
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CRIME OF THE CENTURY!

The 78th International Six Days Enduro, which will be held at Fortaleza in Brazil later on this month is officially described as the 90th anniversary of an event which was first run back in 1913. But few people are aware that the ISDE can actually trace its history back a full 100 years, to the time when motorcycling was still in its infancy...

The story begins in 1903, the year that the ACU was formed, when a new event was inaugurated called the ACU Six Days Reliability Trial. This event was a true test of stamina and endurance with more than 150 competitors meeting up in Carlisle to follow a route which would take them the best part of 1000 miles over 'roads and rough terrain'. The format of the event continued right up till 1913 when it was decided that foreign competitors should be invited to enter, and a separate class was introduced for them.

The following year the event attained full international status, the name was changed and the International Six Days Trial was born. The ISDT as it was more commonly known continued right up until 1981 when the word 'trial' was altered to 'enduro' to reflect the changing nature of the event.

In between there have been some years when the event wasn't held; this was caused by the two world wars which also took their toll on competitor numbers. Immediately after WW1 for example the numbers fell to just 15 starters mainly due to the loss of young men's lives in the conflict. It took another decade before the numbers rose again to the 1913 level.

Those early events followed a pattern that would have been familiar to today's competitors. The route had to be covered at a scheduled speed and special tests were held daily and competitors could only use the spare parts they carried on the machine. One big difference in those days however was that marks could be deducted for dirty or untidy machines!

Recently there was a vague attempt at FIM level to make a further name change and the title 'Six Days Enduro des Nations' was briefly considered. However as things stand it's still the International Six Days Enduro (or ISDE).

From the very beginning the event was important to motorcycle manufacturers as a testing and proving ground. Because bikes were in their infancy it was often the case that reliability was more important to potential buyers than performance. A good result in the ISDT would lead to increased sales and this didn't only apply to complete machines. Tyres, magnetos, oils and other component and accessory manufacturers used the event for publicity purposes. This is the reason that most manufacturers continue to enter teams. Some years the entry list contained more than 30 different makes of bike while today it would be more common for less

CRIME OF THE CENTURY!



than ten manufacturers to be represented.

Over the years the rules have changed from the original idea that the teams competing for the International Trophy had to use motorcycles manufactured in their own country. This rule obviously excluded countries which didn't have a motorcycle industry and in 1924 the 'Silver Vase' competition was introduced for teams using machines that were made in countries other than their own. The British teams clung to their familiar, heavy machines for as long as possible and in 1952 BSA had a promotion when three standard 500cc Star Twins were picked at random from the production line at Small Heath. Without any special preparation they were ridden to the start in Austria, used in the event and then ridden back home. The machines covered more than 5000 miles without mechanical problems and all three riders won

gold medals. Official observers had monitored this achievement and BSA was presented with the Maude Trophy for meritorious performance. Despite what BSA achieved - it was becoming clear that by the late Fifties, the time when heavy road machines could dominate the event was over. This point had been illustrated the previous year when a competitor riding a 125cc Lambretta scooter had won a gold medal!

By 1970 the manufacturing and design capability of some countries had reached a level that made their models the preferred machines of most competitors. The national manufacturing requirement was dropped completely and the premier competition was for teams of six riders competing for the World Trophy. Thus began the domination by makers from Italy, Germany and some Eastern European countries with manufacturers such as Zundapp, NSU, MZ and Jawa claiming numerous victories.

When the event is considered 'decade by decade' a pattern emerges which illustrates



how the ISDT/ISDE has evolved over the century. During the second decade (from 1913 onwards) the ISDT (as it had become) was only run on five occasions due to the intervention of war and as a consequence changed very little. The third decade began with the 1923 event held in Sweden which was considered to be too hard. This was an indication that the machines had become more robust and that the organisers felt they could make the course more severe. That year it was the host nation who won the International Trophy!

The ISDT entered its fourth decade with the 1933 event starting at Llandrindod Wells and a course using tracks and small roads in the area. The final day's speed trial was run at Donington Park where competitors faced a one-hour speed test. By this time reliability was being taken for granted and a trend was emerging where the rider was pushed hard in order that machine reliability could be measured. Entry to the fifth decade was cancelled due to Europe being at war again.

The sixth decade was to see the end of British domination. The 1953 event was held in Czechoslovakia and this was the last time the British team brought home the International Trophy. Even before this the Czechs were starting to take control and the ISDT was entering a period of Eastern European domination. Reliable light-weight machines ridden by some very skilled riders brought about this change. Czechoslovakia

was the venue for the 1963 event at the start of the seventh decade and this event was regarded as very difficult, even off-road ace Sammy Millar commented on its severity.

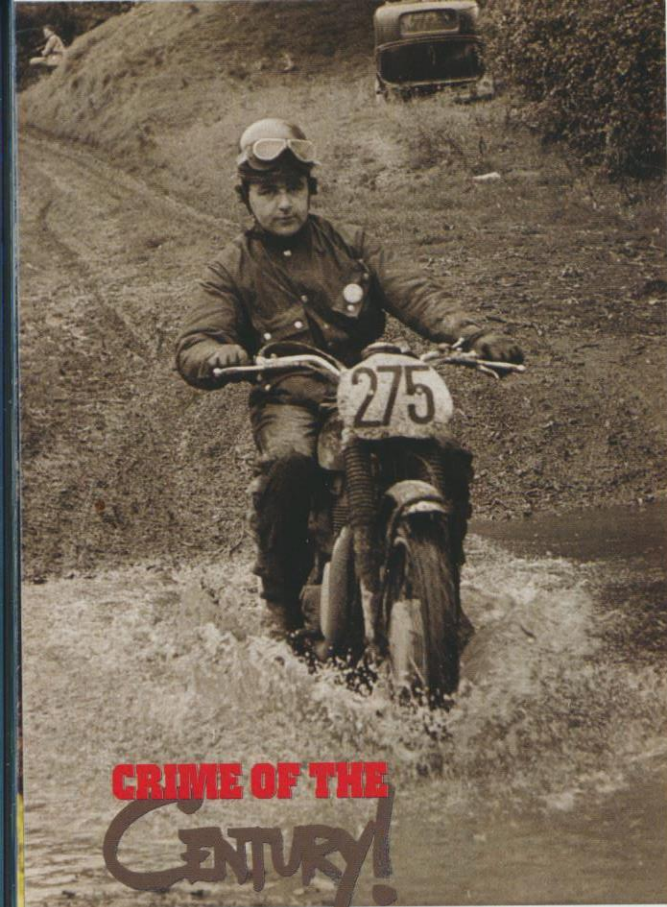
When the ISDT crossed the Atlantic for the first time in 1973 many felt it had become truly international, this was the year that Britain almost won the World Trophy. For the start of the ninth decade the event returned to Wales, the ninth time it had been held there, almost certainly 1983 is remembered as the year when cheating reached epidemic proportions. Another major change took place in 1985 to encourage national teams of younger riders to compete for the World Junior Trophy and the Silver Vase competition ceased.

As the tenth decade approached another milestone was passed as the event was run in the Southern Hemisphere for the first time. Cessnock in New South Wales was the location, Australia staging an excellent event that helped to intro-

duce the European way of riding to a whole new audience. World involvement was becoming a possibility with many considering South America, South Africa and even China as venues. China may be some way off yet, but as the event enters its eleventh decade it will be staged in South America for the first time. 2003 is the year that the ACU Six Days Trial, the International Six Days Trial and the International Six Days Enduro goes forward into its second century.

Back in the early years, the first International event was won by Great Britain, but in 1920 France won for the first time and it would be 1925 before Great Britain won again, the start of the 'glory years'. During the period up to 1953, Great Britain won one or both of the two major awards, the International Trophy or the Silver Vase, 27 times. But if the first half of the event's history was dominated by our riders, the second half from 1954 until the present day certainly hasn't been. We haven't managed to win either of those awards since 1953!

So what have we been doing wrong during the last 50 years? Theories abound to account for our lack of success. Some blame our choice of machines, others our organisation and some even blame our riders. The truth is probably a combination of all three. The last decade has seen a major change as all competitors whatever country they represent, are now on comparable



CRIME OF THE CENTURY!

machinery and with many of today's riders taking part in World and European championships, all riders can boast experience of riding in many different conditions. When looking at the organisation during the last 50 years it is virtually impossible to single out any of the hard working team managers as being better than the rest, however there have been a few who have ridden in the event and then gone on to use their experience to manage our teams.

Probably the most successful of these former rider/managers was Ken Heanes, whose name was synonymous with that of Triumph. His first ride in 1950 was on a Royal Enfield when he failed to finish after crashing into a wall. Ken went on to earn ten gold and two silver medals but was never part of a winning trophy or vase team. His two 'silvers' would have been 'gold's' under the present rulings; he was penalised on each occasion for not starting within his minute. From 1951 until his last ride in 1971 he rode factory Triumph twin cylinder models, with the exception of 1956 when the factory provided a special 175cc Tiger Cub. He tells the tale of how

his clutch failed soon after the start. His solution was to hammer a hole in the primary chain case and fill it full of mud. It certainly worked as he went on to finish the event and take his first gold medal. Would today's riders show the same resourcefulness and determination? During his last ride in 1971 he also acted as team manager and went on to manage the British teams for another four years. Under his management we were nearly successful in 1973 when our Trophy team finished in a close second place in the USA.

There were several non-rider/managers that followed Ken's reign but the next rider was Jock Wilson who held the manager's post for a record 16 years. Jock first rode the event in 1961 on an AJS 500; three other rides followed soon afterwards. In 1966 and 1969 he rode Triumph 500s. In between these, in 1968, he rode in the British Trophy team on a Greeves 250cc. There then followed the long association with the ACU as team manager from 1978 to 1997, with a two-year break in 1982 and 1983. There were several promising years but the decades of drought continued and after Jock moved on his place was taken by Phil Wilkinson who although a good enduro rider never attempted the ISDE himself.

The responsibility now rests with popular Scotsman Euan Syme, the current rider/manager who has already demonstrated his determination to handle officialdom ruthlessly. With him lies the chance to prove that we are still capable of beating the world's best riders. At first glance the conditions in Brazil will suit the Southern European riders, but certain nations who prefer cold weather won't let a little heat deter them. The Swedish and the Finnish contingent will start as favourites, but the ISDE can produce many surprises. Our riders need Ken Heane's determination, Jock Wilson's doggedness and Euan Syme's ruthlessness to succeed. They might just have it. Our chance of winning a major trophy is now in the hands of the team of junior riders. Sadly in this milestone year, Great Britain won't be entering a 'World Trophy' team.

After 50 years of disappointment, the ACU appear to have thrown in the towel. One thing's for certain, the event will enter its second century with or without major British involvement. Despite inventing the 'Six Days' a century ago, like so many other sports, we no longer have a starring role in its continuation...

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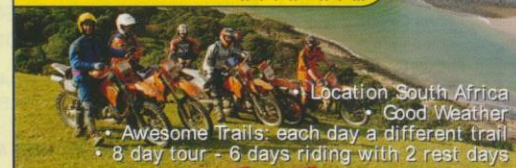
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Suzuki DR350, 1991, MoT, CRD exhaust, frame-guards, Renthals, MX tyres, some spares, ready to trail, £1295. Tel (mobile) 07960 162065 or 01604 671215 (Northants)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, year old, FMF pipe, new graphics/seat cover, brushguards, vgc, £2950. Tel (mobile) 07855 474064 or 01633 601366 (Gwent)

Honda CRM250AR, P-reg, great runner, exc cond, £2800 ono. Tel 01702 546436 (Essex)

Kawasaki KLV250, 1994, T&T, spare exhaust/cables etc, good cond, £1095 ono. Tel (mobile) 07729 911512 or 01536 398267 (Northants)

CCM 604DS, 2001, 2700 easy miles, light trail/road use, pillion pegs, mature owner, £3500. Tel 01844 214075 (Oxon)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, 2000, taxed, very clean, vgc, £2500 ovno. Tel (mobile) 07866 107133 or 01495 773723 (Gwent)

Yamaha TTR250, 1997, T&T, vgc, £1650 ono or poss p/x trailie under 250cc. Tel (mobile) 07939 477785 or 01495 773723 (Gwent)

Suzuki DR-Z400S, 2003, 550 miles, never green laned, DR-Z number plate, as new, £3800. Tel 01249 891268 (Wilts)

KTM 640 LC4, 2001, light green lane/road use, X-ring chain, Talon sprockets, as standard, great cond, £3650 ono. Tel 01579 349217 (Cornwall)

CCM 604, V-reg, T&T, lots of money spent, exc cond, new bike forces sale, £3300 ono. Tel 0161 430 0341 (Stockport)

KTM 200EXC (GS), 2002, 800km, autolube, new FMF front pipe, hardly used, mint cond, £3150. Tel 01386 710263 (Worcs)

Husqvarna TE410E, 2000, W-reg, T&T, 3500 miles, new c+s, exc cond, £2350 ono. Tel 07970 781929 (Leics)

Aprilia Pegaso 650, 1999, T&T, 11000 miles, Datatagged, all original, A1 cond, £2495 ono. Tel 01952 617940 (Shrops)

Gas Gas Pampera mkIII, new c+s, chromed exhaust, handguards, Renthals, O-ring chain, bashplate, extra fuel bottle, little use, immaculate cond, needs nothing, £2150. Tel 07990 623945 (Mid Glam)

Husqvarna TE610E, 2001, Y-reg black, MoT, new plastics, good cond, £2950. Also Kawasaki KDX200, 1989, MoT, spare engine, good cond for year, £800. Tel (mobile) 07976 568467 or 01823 669765 (Somerset)

Kawasaki KDX250, 1994, T&T, new plastics/FMF system, showroom cond, £2250 ovno. Tel (mobile) 07976 568467 or 01823 669765 (Somerset)

Beta Rev-3, 200cc, 2000, little use, ready to trial, first to see will buy, photos available, £1585 ono. Tel 01327 353192 (Northants)

Honda XR600R supermoto, 1996, 3000 miles, one owner, GSXR wheels, c/w all standard parts, never seen mud, reluctant sale, £2750 ovno. Tel 07956 590365 (Herts)

Jawa Wasp enduro sidecar outfit, British Championship winner in 1979, restored to ride, photos and history available, £3250. Tel 01793 644724 (Wilts)

Honda XR650R SM, 2000, W-reg, 830 miles, Talon wheels, Fatbars, CRD skidplate, carbon handguards, two sets of wheels, too many extras to list, absolutely mint, £4450 or p/x for very clean WR450F. Tel (mobile) 07900 902818 or 01366 727310 (Norfolk)

Yamaha WR426F, 2002, Renthals, new tyres, green lane use only, mint bike, £3200. Tel 01782 644103 (Staffs)

KTM 200EXC, 2000 model, T&T, little use, green laned only, superb cond, £2650 no offers. Tel 07788 553070 (Gwent)

Honda XR400R, 2001, lowered, bashplate, frame-guards, green laned only, exc cond, £2750. Tel 01455 618480 (Leics)

Suzuki PE175, completely original mono-shock model, MoT, new c+s, good tyres, re-advertised due to timewaster, £550 ono. Tel (mobile) 0788 408937 or 01229 826933 (Cumbria)

Suzuki DR-Z400S, 2002, less than 400 miles, Renthals, MT21s, as new, total loss of interest forces sale, £3300 ovno. Tel 07973 208827 (Kent)

Suzuki DR250, 1997, blue/white, T&T, 3000 miles, elec start, regularly serviced, £1500. Tel 07976 508749 (N Yorks)

Yamaha YZ426F, road reg'd, never raced, HM supermoto suspension, can supply supermoto running gear, good cond, £2000. Tel 07931 379129 (Lancs)

Suzuki DR750S, 1989, 15000 miles, powder coated frame, lots of new parts this year, good cond, £850. Tel 01983 402611 (IoW)

Suzuki DR200 Djebel, MoT, elec start trailie, low seat height, very clean lightweight machine, £1100. Tel 0118 946 2133 (Berks)

Kawasaki KX250, 2000 model, green/black, vgc, £1750 no timewasters. Tel 01763 222164 (Herts)

Suzuki DR350S, 1991, T&T, CRD exhaust, frame/hand/disc guards, loads of money spent, runs like new, £1495 ono. Tel (mobile) 07876 081691 or 01453 834582 (Gloucs)

Suzuki DR250, G-reg, yellow, T&T, knobby tyres, good cond, £950. Tel 01785 606451 (Staffs)

Honda XR400R, 2000 model, V-reg, Werx graphics, sump/handguards, standard wheels plus Talon/Excel supermoto wheels, £2900 ono. Tel Russ on 07976 725974 (Herts)

KTM 625SXC, 2003, three hours use, as new, £4000. Tel (mobile) 07788 455954 or 020 6719244 (London)

Bultaco 250 trials bike, 1971, in perfect working order, good cond. Tel Margherita on 00 33 335 607 5426 (Italy)

Suzuki DR250, 1991, T&T, 6500 miles, USD forks, ride height control, low seat means great trailie, £1395. Tel 02392 632418 (Hants)

Yamaha WR250F, 2003, elec start, road reg'd, taxed, Q-pipe, radguards/braces, hand/sumpguards, horn/speedo etc, £4700, Tel (eves) 01639 620711 (W Glam)

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FREE CLASSIFIEDS

Suzuki PE250, 1980, 90% complete, great project bike, £250. Tel (mobile) 07947 820709 or 01634 843335 (Kent)

Honda Africa Twin 650, T&T, centre stand, crash-bars, manual, serviced, new consumables, superb example, £2300 or exchange late model XR600. Also Kawasaki KMX200, T&T, new KIPS/rings/c+s, 17" and 18" rear wheels, Goodrich tyres, manual, £800. Tel 020 8643 1244 (Surrey)

KTM 380SX, 2001, Y-reg, taxed, professionally converted to enduro, handguards, carbon pipeguard, new tyre, exc cond, £2695 ono or may p/x cheap 'crosser up to £1000. Tel (mobile) 07971 677685 or 01568 760147 (Hereford)

Suzuki DR200, 1994, T&T, elec start, low miles, great green laner, mature owner, nice cond, £1300 or p/x 125 enduro. Tel 07980 545920 (Yorks)

Husaberg FE400, 2002, taxed, 1300 miles, elec start, new c+s, Acerbis handguards, trail use only, exc cond, £3300 ono. Tel 01302 768232 (S Yorks)

Aprilia Pegaso 650 cube, 2002, carb model, silver, 220km, garaged, as new, £2900. Tel 01473 833386 (Suffolk)

Kawasaki KLX250 enduro, low miles, well maintained, USD forks, all the right bits, trail or race, exc cond, £1595 ono. Tel 01702 216127 (Essex)

KTM 200EXC (GS), 2002, autolube, clutchsaver, FMF handguards, one owner, vgc, lively, lightweight and fun. Tel 01323 832696 (E Sussex)

CCM 604E DS, 2001, Y-reg, good cond, £2300. Also KTM 520EXC, 2001, Y-reg, £3500. Tel (mobile) 07739 568401 or 0161 773 4769 (Lancs)

TM 250E, 1999, road reg'd, new tyres/c+s, exc handling enduro bike, £1950. Tel 07952 186716 (Bucks)
CCM 604DS, 2001, Rotax motor, 3000km, light green lane use, some spares, vgc, £3495. Tel 07778 376241 (Devon)

Honda XR400R, 2000, W-reg, T&T, 4800km, Renthals, barkbusters, sumpguard, new rear tyre, exc cond, £2600. Tel 07979 540688 (Northants)

KTM 400EXC, 2002, fsh, sumpguard, Rally Pro handguards, good cond, £3650 ovno. Tel 01634 575090 (Kent)

Husaberg 470 enduro, 2001, T&T, blue/yellow, very little use, exc cond, £3300 ono. Tel (mobile) 07989 435786 or 01634 251515 (Kent)

Yamaha XT225 Serow, 1990, MoT, 5000 miles, exc cond, £1200. Tel 01273 890366 (Sussex)

Kawasaki KLX300R, 2001, only 650 miles, road legal, never used off-road, new bars, genuine reason for sale, £2800 ono. Tel (mobile) 07931 104201 or 01282 708615 (Lancs)

KTM 200EGS, 1999, T-reg, new tyres/FMF system/c+s/pads, good cond, £2200. Tel 07952 269115 (Yorks)

Honda XR650R, 2003, 2000 miles, never been off-road, as new cond, £3650 ono. Tel 07890 961191 (Berks)

Honda CRM250 mkl, F-reg, full lighting kit, chrome DEP pipe, Mugen silencer, sumpguard, new wheel/suspension bearings, exc cond, £1295 ovno.

Tel 01932 240150 (Surrey)

Honda CR250, handguards, enduro bashplate, well looked after, ridden in clubman enduro, perfect cond, injury forces sale, £2900 ovno. Tel (mobile) 07905 388429 or 01953 688346 (Norfolk)

Yamaha WR250Z, 1998, T&T, phone for full spec, £2200. Also Yamaha TTR250, 1997, white/purple, T&T, 7500km, £2100. Tel Andy on 01235 767036 (Oxon)

Husaberg FE400, 2003, superb machine, lightweight, elec start, hydraulic clutch, Brembos, moushes, worth seeing, £3850. Tel 01384 393347 (W Mids)

Yamaha TTR250, 1996, T&T, elec start, Acerbis headlight, CRD Power pipe, handguards, exc cond, £1850 ono. Tel (mobile) 07905 364694 or 01332 554883 (Derbys)

Honda XL600R, 1985, Italian import, not road reg'd, new rear tyre, smokes but runs well. Tel Steve (mobile/days) on 07710 0236685 (Leics)

KTM 300EXC, 2003, UK bike, 1000km, 11L tank, Talons/Excels, bashplate, FMF pipe, maintained regardless of cost, exc cond. Tel 07811 335894 (Cheshire)

Triumph Tiger 955i, 2001, insurance write-off, mostly front-end damage, phone for details, £1600 ono. Tel 01727 872297 (Herts)

Honda CRM250 mkII, 1993, K-reg, T&T, 15000 miles, Castrol graphics, handguards, bashplate, DEP system, new tyres, must be seen, £1750. Tel 01993 880326 (Oxon)

Yamaha WR400E, Y-reg, only 260 miles, no tax, stored for last year, as new, family commitments force sale, £3000. Tel 01462 834354 (Beds)

Honda XR400R, 1998, R-reg, good cond, £2150. Tel (mobile) 07812 014690 or 01384 349691 (W Mids)

KTM 300EXC, 2002 model, road reg'd, Renthals, handguards, bashplate, Pro Circuit exhaust, clutch saver, good cond, only £2595. Tel (mobile) 07771 648706 or 01308 488120 (Dorset)

Yamaha WR400E, 1999, W-reg, T&T, new tyres/c+s, exc cond, £2650 ono. Tel (mobile) 07970 019983 or 01535 657649 (W Yorks)

Husqvarna TE570, 2002, taxed, supermoto and trail wheels, Arrow exhaust, Endurance speedo, Acerbis lights, brushguards, vgc, £4100. Tel 01493 301604 (Norfolk)

Honda CRM250 mkIII, M-reg, T&T, 16500km, standard bike, new tyres/c+s, exc cond, c/w unused FMF system, £1850. Tel 01489 589985 (Hants)

Suzuki DR-Z400S, 2000, X-reg, elec start, Renthals, brushguards, other extras, mainly used on road but some light green lane use, £2600. Tel (after 6pm) 01524 822947 (Lancs)

Suzuki SP370, 1979, T&T, recent tyres, seat recovered, in daily use, some spares, needs TLC, £525 ovno. Tel 01524 822154 (Lancs)

Cagiva E750 Elefant, 1997, P-reg, Lucky Explorer model, T&T, 10000km, Datatagged, exc cond, £1950. Tel 01782 658412 (Staffs)

Honda XR650R, 2001, new c+s, very reliable, green lane use only, immaculate cond, £3000 ono. Tel 07789

933164 (Notts)

Yamaha WR450F, 2003, taxed, road legal lighting kit plus enduro parts, sumpguard, Renthals, new tyres, £4500. Tel 07979 498889 (Lancs)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, 2003, 800 miles, CRD exhaust, frame/sumpguards, 909 bars, Acerbis handguards, immaculate cond, baby forces sale, £3990 ono. Tel 07802 956182 (London)

Gas Gas EC250, 2001, taxed, road legal, hardly used, vgc, £2400. Tel Joe or Oz on 0114 266 0486 (S Yorks)

KTM 540SXC, 1999, MoT, little use, good cond, c/w supermoto wheels, £3000 ovno. Tel 01827 282085 (W Mids)

Suzuki DR350, 1993, white/blue, Acerbis tank, CRD exhaust/bashplate, Renthals, many new parts plus originals, £1350. Tel (mobile) 07939 035065 or 020 8319 1046 (London)

Cagiva Elefant 650, 1987, Lucky Explorer model, Baines service, £1150 ono. Also WR250 (?), 1991, MoT, great runner, reliable, £950 ono. Tel (mobile) 07710 133888 or 01604 846356 (Northants)

KTM 400EXC, 2002, bashplate, Arrow exhaust, £3600. Also Husaberg FX650E, 2002, exc cond, make great supermoto, £3200. Tel 0113 229 9174 (Yorks)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, 2001, 3600 miles, CRD system, frame/brushguards, FMF graphics, Renthals, road and light green lane use, £2900 ono. Tel 01773 828420 (Derbys)

Honda XR400, S-reg, unused aftermarket exhaust/bashplate/bars, very clean, £2000. Also Honda XR600, 1990, 8000km, MoT, all standard, very clean, £1350. Tel 07813 849686 (Surrey)

Honda XR250, 1991, USD forks, Acerbis handguards, frameguards, very smart bike, light use only, £995. Tel 01235 817712 (Oxon)

Suzuki DR-Z400S, 2003, blue/white, 1400 miles, exc standard cond, £3500 ono. Tel (mobile) 07788 975651 or 01452 612815 (Gloucs)

Yamaha XT600, green lane bike, loads of money spent on engine, £900. Tel 01263 587188 (Norfolk)

Kawasaki KDX250SR, 1992, not ridden for a year, needs MoT, good runner, ideal first bike, injury forces sale, £795. Tel 01844 202457 (Bucks)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, 2002, road reg'd, 1500 miles, all the usual extras, vgc, £3300 ono. Tel 07803 521854 (Bristol)

Honda XR250, 1996, 280cc conversion, elec start, T&T, sump/handguards, green lane use only, exc cond, £1600 ono. Tel 07880 703427 (Northants)

KTM 450EXC, 2003, sump/handguards, very little use only on green lanes, immaculate cond, £4300. Tel (mobile) 07980 689407 or 01452 559761 (Gloucs)

Honda XR750 Africa Twin, 2002, blue/red/white, 6200 miles, Scottoiler, desert bars, service history, mint cond, £4500 ono. Tel 01482 833564 (E Yorks)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, 2003, road reg'd, only 400 miles, sump/frame/handguards, CRD exhaust, exc cond, £3295. Tel 01942 521426 (Lancs)

Yamaha XT225 Serow, 1994, M-reg, disc brakes model, T&T, elec start, new tyres/c+s, Renthals, light green lane use only, £1500. Tel 07876 032372 (Gwent)

Yamaha WR450F, 2003, taxed, elec start, Renthals, green lane use, good cond, £4550. Tel 07989 147512 (Surrey)

CCM 604E, 1999, T-reg, T&T, only 3000 miles, exc cond., must sell hence £2200. Tel 01488 638357 (Berks)

Husqvarna TE410E dual sport, 2000, W-reg, 5100 miles, Renthals, Acerbis handguards, Husky bashplate, good cond, starts first time, reluctant sale, £2200 ono. Tel 07980 851924 (Herts)

Suzuki DR-Z400, 2000 model, T&T, elec start, White Bros exhaust, oversize disc, 909 bars, frame/handguards, vgc, £2950. Tel 01544 370639 (Powys)

TM 250 MX, 2001, very low hours, Ohlins, HGS pipe, very clean, standard cond, £1950 or may p/x. Tel 01452 790319 (Gloucs)

Gas Gas EC300, 2000, taxed, new c+s/pads, £1950. Tel (mobile) 07976 740247 or 01535 637537 (W Yorks)

KTM 250EXC, 2002, 1100 miles, light trail use only, c/w armour, boots, helmet, and other riding gear, £3750 ono. Tel 07775 853633 (Mid Glam)

Honda CRM250 mkII, T&T, never been off-road, original graphics, new c+s, Renthals, FMF pipe, outstanding cond, must be seen, £1650. Tel 0161 339 2417 (Cheshire)

Suzuki RM125, 1989, rebuilt engine, plastic-coated frame, new plastics, used as trail bike, £750 or p/x four-stroke plus cash. Tel 01733 750906 (Camps)

Gas Gas EC300, 2002, 1500 miles, recent full service, mint cond, injury forces sale, £2750 ono. Tel Lee on (mobile) 07733 094488 or 01952 432087 (W Mids)

Yamaha WR250E, 2003 reg'd, taxed, elec start, Yamaha road legal kit, sump/handguards, lady owner, mint cond, £4500. Tel (mobile) 07986 885608 or 01457 855465 (Manchester)

Suzuki DR350, 1996, T&T, off-road spec, 15L tank, Renthals, £1100 ono. Tel 01372 722577 (Surrey)

BMW GS1150, 18 months old, 18000 miles, standard bike, £5995. Also BMW F650GS, Dakar blue/one year old, 4000 miles, £4200. Tel 01785 243805 (Staffs)

Yamaha XTZ660 Tenere, V-reg, T&T, recent c+s, superb bike, used daily, £2400 ono or swap for XT600E or DR650. Tel Geoff on 07779 011197 (Ceredigion)

Honda XR400R, 2000 model, V-reg, T&T, Renthals, vgc, £2500. Tel 01929 550924 (Dorset)

Gas Gas EC300, 2001, Y-reg, new c+s/kickstart, good cond, reluctant sale, £2300. Tel 01761 452606 (Avon)

Honda CRM250, 1989, MoT, loads of bills/history, fantastic cond, £1250 or £1375 with three-bike trailer. Tel 01242 603723 (Gloucs)

Honda TLR200, four-stroke, twin-shock, road reg'd, one previous owner, immaculate original cond, must be seen, baby forces sale, £1200. Tel 020 8330 4817 (Surrey)

Kawasaki KDX250SR, 1993, T&T, IMS tank, Doma pipe, Hammond motor, Fatbars, K+S suspension, spares, bills, scruffy but sound, £1000. Tel Dave on 020 8308 1360 (Kent)

Honda XLR200, 1993, elec start, vgc, £1650. Tel 01375 643572 (Essex)

Honda XR650L, 2003, Acerbis 22L tank, White Bros system, Datatagged, full cost £5400, sell for £4300. Tel Andy on 07905 264193 (Essex)

Yamaha TT600 Belgarda, N-reg, T&T, USD forks, Ohlins, Arrow pipe plus original, good all-rounder, £1900. Tel (mobile) 07779 802067 or 020 8241 8558 (Surrey)

Yamaha WR250F, 2001, road reg'd, taxed, well maintained, good original cond, mature owner retiring, £3050 ovno. Tel 07966 594486 (Warks)

Gas Gas EC300, 2002, barkbusters, Fatbars, frameguards, skidplate, new tyres, some spares, exceptional bike, very reluctant sale, £2800 ono. Tel 01458 210413 (Somerset)

Honda XR250R, 2003 model, under 500 miles, Acerbis handguards, sumpguard, MX tyres, show-room cond, £3595 ono. Tel 01495 305767 (Gwent)

KTM 250EXC 4-T, new in 2002, handguards, skidplate, very well maintained, exc cond, £3150 or p/x KTM 125. Tel 07966 469583 (Gloucs)

Yamaha TTR250, 1996, T&T, ideal trailie, great bike to ride, vgc, £1600. Tel 01691 650370 (Shrops)

Yamaha WR400F, 1999, T-reg, T&T, Renthals, frame/handguards, well maintained, vgc, £2750 ono. Tel 07811 662234 (Wilts)

CCM R30 604, 2002, only 900 miles, like new, £3195 ono. Tel 01788 547647 (Warks)

KTM 400EXC, 2002, taxed, serviced, new barkbusters/seat, Technosel graphics, road kit, manuals, very little use, exc cond, £4100. Tel 01325 488292 (Durham)

Suzuki DR650, 1998, black, lightweight model, 14500 miles, two owners, service history, tarmac use only, vgc, genuine reason for sale, £1950. Tel 01332 670605 (Derbys)

Yamaha YZ426F, 2003, road legal, tapered bars, brush/frame/sumpguards, large fuel tank, A1 cond, £3000 ovno. Tel 01985 850141 (Wilts)

Suzuki PE175, 1982, monoshock, T&T, road reg'd, 500 miles, fully restored to immaculate original cond, new MT21s, offers around £1295 poss p/x. Tel 01702 555625 (Essex)

Honda XR250R, 2001, Y-reg, red, 3000km, supeb original cond, £2595 ono or may p/x XR, TTR90/125, Dirtmonkey, TLR, classic, WHY. Tel 01724 872640 (Lincs)

KTM LC2 125, 2002, elec start, 2400 miles, new c+s/S12s, sump/exhaust/handguards, new orange bodywork plus original white panels, exc cond, £2150 ono. Tel 01873 880110 (S Wales)

Yamaha WR400F, 2002, Renthals, bashplate, new fork seals, regular oil changes, easy starter, green lane use only, good cond, £3100. Tel 07870 245640 (Wilts)

Suzuki DR-Z400S, 2000, 5000 miles, Renthals, brushguards, £2800. Tel 01386 831005 (Worcs)

Gas Gas Pampera mkIII, new Excel rims/tyres/O-ring chain, brushguards, superb bike in super cond, £2100 ono. Tel 01202 892600 (Dorset)

Honda NX650 Dominator, 2003, taxed, 3800 dry miles, absolutely immaculate cond, £2995 ono. Tel

01642 491099 (Cleveland)

Honda XR250R, 2000, W-reg, T&T, red, 2800 miles, Renthals, frameguards, green lane use only, exc cond, £2250. Tel 01865 730571 (Oxon)

Aprilia RX125, 1995, M-reg, T&T, chrome power pipe, Kayaba suspension, Renthals, Brembos, outstanding cond, must be seen, £1795 ono. Tel 01865 331942 (Oxon)

Gas Gas EC300, 2002 model, bashplate, handguards, no expense spared, exc cond, £2850 ono. Tel (mobile) 07976 423475 or 01789 720848 (Warks)

Gas Gas EC400FSE, 2002, low miles, green lane use only, SM wheels available, vgc, £3250. Tel (mobile) 07870 667037 or 01621 857330 (Essex)

Suzuki PE175 enduro, 1984, monoshock, owned nine years, logged rebuild, running order, complete spare engine, average cond, good cheap all-rounder, £600. Tel 01702 308541 (Essex)

Alfer VR250, 2002, 1000km, Rotax EBS engine, 50mm Marzocchi Magnums, new tyres/chain, plus spares, £2900. Tel 01344 450788 (Berks)

Suzuki DR-Z400S, 2000, W-reg, T&T, new tyres, bashplate, Acerbis handguards, spare sprockets for trail, vgc, first to see will buy, £2450. Tel 01924 235294 (W Yorks)

Gas Gas EC200, W-reg, T&T, new tyres, sump/handguards, £2000. Tel 07971 692670 (Devon)

KTM 200EXC (GS), 2000, W-reg, UK model, T&T, 2500 miles, autolube, flywheel weight, softer seat, mature owner, trail use only, vgc, £2500. Tel 07747 186346 (Notts)

Honda XR600R, 1996, 3000 miles, FHSH, road use only, immaculate cond, re-advertised due to time-waster, £2200 ono. Tel (days) 07850 384530 or 01380 723030 (Wilts)

Suzuki DR-Z400E, 2002, taxed, CRD pipe, sump/frameguards, UFO barkbusters, Renthals, £3200. Tel 07980 776204 (Devon)

Yamaha XT500, X-reg, needs tidying and MoT, good cond for year, £600. Tel (days) 07855 954241 or (after 6pm) 01430 441960 (E Yorks)

WANTED

Wanted for 2003 KTM Adventure 640, rally tanks, low exhaust, rally seat and front screen. Tel 0151 677 4924 (Wirral)

Wanted moto wheels, exhaust, forks, electrics, lights for Kawasaki KLX650, will travel. Tel 07779 361112 (Notts)

Wanted complete engine with loom for XR125, plus other bits. Tel Wayne on 07786 474312 (Wilts)

Wanted supermoto wheels to fit Kawasaki KLR250. Or 18" blue or gold rims, plus KX125 USD forks. Tel 07799 663363 (Notts)

Wanted BMW R80GS wheels, bashplate, consider non-runner. Tel 07952 186716 (Bucks)

Wanted Kawasaki KLX650R frame with V5. Also plastics, l/h rad and other spares, consider complete

bike. Tel 01663 732025 (Cumbria)

Wanted aftermarket or standard exhaust system for XL600R, 1983 model. Also plastics and airbox parts required, cheap if possible. Tel 01623 634117 (Notts)

Wanted Yamaha XT500. Tel 01228 560913 (Cumbria)

Wanted for R80/GS, windshield and fittings, panniers and frames, any make considered. Tel 01708 736155 (Essex)

Wanted Cagiva 125cc MX/enduro, 1983 or '84, any cond considered. Tel 07779 281771 (Powys)

Wanted XR400R red fuel tank, will swap for white one or willing to pay reasonable price. Tel (mobile) 07930 315075 or 02380 410807 (Hants)

Wanted rear wheel for Suzuki DR350SE. Tel (any-time) 0115 930 2616 (Derbys)

Wanted DR-ZE standard plastic tank, cash waiting or have 12L IMS tank to swap. Tel 01279 302468 (Essex)

Wanted 21" front wheel for Husqvarna TE610E, 2000 model. Tel 07790 851743 (Notts)

Wanted Honda CR125 ally frame, any cond, 2002 model if poss, must be reasonable price. Tel 01189 670791 (Berks)

Wanted four-stroke enduro bike, 250cc upwards, must be reasonably priced, road reg'd and in good cond. Tel Richard on (mobile) 07980 480032 or 01295 750665 (Oxon)

Wanted for Yamaha DT175MX, rear suspension hop-up/extension kit. Also tail pipe. Tel (mobile) 07967 988737 or 01932 223431 (Surrey)

SPARES

µBraking 320mm disc for 2000-03 XR650R, c/w Talon caliper bracket, hardly used, ready to bolt straight on, £115. Tel 07768 405222 (Yorks)

KTM 12L tank and rad panels to fit up to 2002 2-T, £75. Also assorted air-cooled YZ125 spares. Tel 01451 860381 (Gloucs)

XT350 c+s kit, new, plus new suspension bushes, alloy bashplate, clutch cable, oil filters, £45 the lot. Tel 02476 396550 (Warks)

Genuine KTM supermoto wheels to fit almost all models, 320mm disc, Pirelli tyres, cost £1200, accept £700 ono. Tel 07780 686767 (Cheshire)

Alloy sumpguard to fit Husqvarna TE410/610 trailie, plus handguards and fork protectors, all brand new, £50. Tel 01473 833386 (Suffolk)

Garmin GPS 3 Plus, built-in maps of Europe and Africa, Touratech rally 'bar mounting, can download maps from PC, only £100. Tel 01256 861759 (Hants)

KMX125/200 tank, seat, front pipe and rear wheel, £70 the lot. Tel (mobile) 07903 580755 or 01507 608938 (Lincs)

Alpinestar Tech 6, blue/white, size 9, hardly used, exc cond, £100. Tel 01932 240150 (Surrey)

Pirelli MT21, 120/90-17, brand new, £25 inc p&p. Tel ince on 020 8429 8587 (Middx)

KTM LC4 Remus race can, £60. DR-Z sumpguard,

new rad shrouds with graphics, all brand new, £50. Tel (mobile) 07855 954241 or 01430 441960 (E Yorks)

IMS 16L fuel tank for KX500, £100. FMF Gnarly pipe, like new, £100. C500 (CR?) 1999 front pipe, £40. Tel (mobile) 07944 279803 or 01795 661911 (Kent)

Enduro reg plate, EN03 URO, on retention, best offer over £500. Tel Richard on 01273 730725 (E Sussex)

Africa Twin bits, Remus exhaust, £150. Touratech seat, £125. Crash bars, £50. Tank cover, £50. Tank bag, £50. Will sell separately. Tel 01939 290289 (Shrops)

CRD Absolute Power exhaust system for DR-Z400E, one month old, £200. Seat, £60. Frameguards, £20. Tel 01279 302468 (Essex)

Givi pannier racks and top plate for 1993-onwards Africa Twin. Also breaking KTM 250, most engine parts available inc good barrel and piston, offers. Tel 07710 133888 (Northants)

Hebo boots, size 6, £75. Action boots, size 7, £50. Tel 01420 549150 (Hants)

Standard exhaust system for KTM 125SX, 2003 model, as new, bargain at £85. Tel 01254 388699 (Lancs)

Honda XR250R rolling chassis, 1991, J-reg, new suspension bushes/chain/cables, good tyres, spares or repair, £450. Tel 01189 815216 (Hants)

DR-Z400S original exhaust system, lowering links, indicators, rear lights, offers. Tel 01544 370639 (Powys)

CRD bashplate for Yamaha WR250F, 2001-'02, little use, £40. Tel 01242 697494 (Gloucs)

Remus exhaust for GS1150, inc Y-piece, £300. Also for F650GS Dakar, £199, phone for details. Tel 01785 243805 (Staffs)

Mikuni pumper carb for XR400R, complete kit with cables, as new, make your XR start and run fantastically, cost £360, sell for £250 ono. Tel 07966 914641 (Northants)

Suzuki DR-ZS parts, CRD Absolute Power stainless exhaust system, 100 miles use, £100. CRD polished sumpguard, new, £25. Suzuki workshop manual, new, £15. Pair of unused Goodridge stainless hoses with stainless fittings, £25. Tel 01243 536231 (Sussex)

Original Yamaha workshop manual for WR400/426F, £20. Tel 01634 812827 (Kent)

Supermoto wheels for KX/KLX/KDX, brand new gold Talons, Metzeler tyres, disc and sprocket, £500. Tel (mobile) 07816 604132 or 0117 904 3133 (Avon)

Sinialo enduro jacket and trousers, used once. Tel 01375 643572 (Essex)

IMS 13L tank to fit 1996-'01 two-stroke Yamaha, hardly used, ideal for hare & hounds etc, £100. Tel Shane on 01202 682601 (Dorset)

RSR gore-tex trousers, black, size36/38, worn twice, cost £120, sell for £60. Also Devol radguards for KDX220, £30. Tel 01302 709510 (S Yorks)

Axo RC2 boots, size 9/43, black, exc cond, six months use, youth rider outgrowth, cost £150, sell for £75 ono. Tel 01873 880110 (S Wales)

Honda XL125R petrol tank, immaculate, £25. Tel 01285 720921 (Gloucs)

