

Didja know you can get hub deep in mud no more than half an hour's ride from the Great Metropolis? Bill Haylock and Pete Furlong go exploring with Laverda 2T and Kawasaki KT250 dirt irons.

ROM HIS cramped lock-up in the darkest depths of south east London, Pete Furlong's voice crackled over the phone: "Can't really spare the time to go to Wales", ... how about doing it down here? There's plenty of good green lanes in

And so yet another Bite project followed the familiar pattern of hasty last minute re-jigs and changes of plans. Originally we'd decided on a long weekend on the dirt with a Laverda 7T 250 trailbike and a KT253 Kwaswaki trails blike that had been extensively modified and ridden in the Welsh Two-Day Trail under the Kawasaki had been developed for, and besides, we up here on the state of the project of the state of the project of the state of the project of the state of

Nome
When Pete suggested Kent I was mildly incredulous. Could any good green lanes still be found among the ribbons of motorway engulfing the south east corner of England?

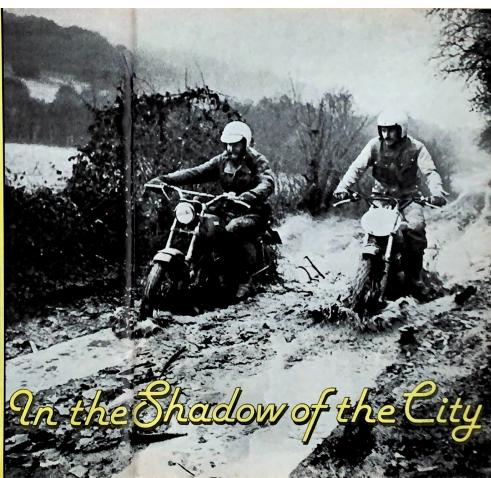
Still, Pete should know. I presupaded myself. After all, we'd decided to recruit him for his wealth of the should know. I presupaded myself. After all, we'd decided to recruit him for his wealth of the should know. I presupade myself, after all, we'd decided to recruit him for his wealth of the should know. I have should be the should know. I he done it in the dirt in places and there as the Welsh mountains and the Shink Around He should have and he has quite a bit of endure competition experience too. And besides, he is described by the shinked he was the should be sho

Heavy rain was turning the snow that had fallen overnight into a foul set slush as we left Pete Blackbath flat with the two bikes in the back of a sman the aded towards Maidstone. Out on the A20 a grey, rain-filled sky engulfed the drab winter landscape as the road rose up towards the chalk downs. Photography in these conditions was going to be futile, so we adjourned to the nearest truckers' call for a cup of greaty tea. When the gloom became marginally less oppressive we set out again, stopping briefly to look at a death-deving gradient in the woods beside the road with the conditions of the stopping briefly to look at a death-deving gradient in it looked a near vertical precipies that the towards the plant of the stopping briefly to gradient in those of the stopping the stopping that the conditions of the stopping the stopping that the conditions of the stopping that the conditions of the stopping that the stoppin

Finally we turned off one of those narrow high-banked Kent lanes onto an unsurfaced track A couple of hundred yards down here was an area of waste land on the sloping side of the downs. It had been an Army firing range at one time, but now the steep banks are grooved by the tyres of

Now that the prospect of riding through all this rain and slush and mud was imminent. I wondered who the hell would want to do this for fun, as we unloaded the bikes and got into our gear. First we had to set up some photography before the bikes got covered in mud. The weather was so bad that colour photography of moving bikes was out of the question, so we had to be







content with a few static poses of the bikes, and then we got on with the riding.

The Laverda's exotic magnesium alloy mot fired up easily as a couple of prods on t kickstart spun the piston over rapidly with I help of the decompressor lever. After that t

help of the decompressor lever. After that the starting got progressively more difficult, be more of that later. We started to ride circuits of the wasteland trying to make things look impressive for the camera. But with mud that stuck better than yo. know. what to a blanket, it was a pretty full attempt. With the 2T's traits pattern tyres offer

attempt. With the 2T's trials pattern tyres offer ing minimal off-road grip, any attempt at raps riding just resulted in a fountain of muck frothe rear wheel and no appreciable increase is forward velocity. Pete effectively demonstrate his superior riding skill by taking over the Laverda and storming up a steep bank, manag

the porridge-like mud.

Before long the bikes were getting caked with

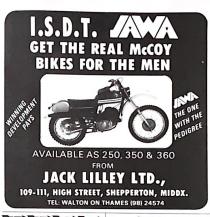
the sticky grey slime. Both the Laverda and the Kawasaki suffered from the same failing of close fitting front mudguards, and eventually the mudgot wedged so firmly between tyre and guart that the wheels stopped revolving. You can possibly imagine the consequences of this when the bike is still moving fairly rapidly on a

shippery surface. By this time! was feeling pretty well sha tered. The Laverda was slithering around rathe more unconstrollably than the Kawasaki, which was shod with moto-cross knobblies, and it wab beginning to feel mighty heavy. In fact it is heavy bike, compared with pukka endur machinery But then, the Laverda and a puke endur oble — more a deluxe, high qualit green laner built to give a degree of rate.

I must admit though, it was my riding techn que as much as anything that was to blame for my state of total exhaustion after no more than infestyle). My mistake was trying to fight the bike's slithering antics on the mud and attempting to keep both wheels tracking in a straight line.

When I stopped fighting and let the bike go where it wanted, life became far easier — the 2T's handling is good enough to look after itself. All you need to do is point it in the general direction you intend to go and keep the throttle open, for the handling is more suited to hard charring than sedute recording.

Getting pretty bored with grovelling around in our mud bowl, we moved on to some green lare nding. Only it wasn't so green — the puddles were more than a foot deep and sprinkled with the odd car tyre, oil drum and fallen branch, just to make things more interesting. Here the Laverda's electronic ignition system, which fires two plugs simultaneously, proved to be pretty waterproof — but not the brakes. Those single leading shoe drums look beety for a raral bix.









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but at the best of times they're not effective enough for town or fast road riding, and when wet their retarding effect all but disappears.

I was getting to such a stage of exhaustion that when the bike stalled and refused to fire on the kickstart Pete had to come to the rescue — I didn't have the energy to bump-start the bike by myself. Much to my relief we called it a day, planning to do the serious riding the following

ask worked the needs to perform to the same care fragments of the old Pilgrams' Way, which ran from Winchester to Canterbury, and various unsurfaced roads which enservors it, making it possible to put together interesting circular tours with a minimum of metalled road riding. The wind a minimum of metalled road riding, The wind a minimum of metalled road riding. The wind a minimum of metalled road riding. The slope of the North Downs—the survival of so much of the ancient road system is largely due to the terrain and the poor soil which mean that large tracts of land have been left almost

The second day brought weather that was hardly any better, and the machinery showed as much reluctance to get moving as I felt. The Laverda was becoming increasingly difficult to start, and we discovered that the Kawasaki

First on our itnerary was that stretch of lane with the foot deep puddles we'd been splashing about in the previous day. Pete was complaining about the Kawasaki's lack of urge — but I was stitl having trouble keeping up with him over the slimy mud and the ruts. After a short section of metalled road Pete suddenly vanished down a barely distinguishable track leading into a spacious forcet of tall beech trees, typical of the

woodland of this area With the gradient steepening as we climbed the side of the vearylack of traction became a serious problem on the Laverda Seeing that no security boils were fitted, we were reluctant to let air out the these for lear of the serious control of the laverda serious of the serious control of the laverda serious control of the serious control serious to gradient serious control of the serious to gradient serious control of the serious to gradient serious control of the serious contr

the kind of exercise I a rather to without.

The lanes got progressively natrower and more difficult to distinguish until in places they were no more than a series of deep puddles strung together by a muddy path. And in places the hedgerows blotted out the sky above our heads and brushed the handlebars on either

I was feeling more confident — despite careeing off in the undergrowth with Prefer Is was just down the steep, bumpy descents when was included to blane the Laverda's suspender was a considered to blane the blane

The last lane of the day was a narrow, steepbanked path that headed straight down the hillside. It was one of those heart-stopping

but you're afraid to slam on the brakes in case that makes the bike even more uncontrollable than it already feels. Just to make things even more exciting, a deep groove worn by running water snaked along the bottom of the track conspiring to deflect me into the bushes that

Having reached the bottom with man and machine still until — much to my suprise. —
Pete turned around and charged back up the state of the state of

I congratulated myself on the superb skill and control and speed of my accent — but I couldn't cally delude myself. If Pete had been on a bike hat hadn't had a clapped motor I wouldn't have seen him for the mud he'd have been kicking up in my face, as he had been doing most of the day. Anyway, I consoled myself, trail riding ani t a competitive sport— it's something you do for the sheer pleasure of riding those facenating historie roads.

built for. It's not a serious enduro racer — Laverda build another version for that market, the 2TR, which is not imported to Britain. Nor is the 2T a street orientated machine merely dressed up in off-road guise as most Japanese trail bikes are. Its small but reasonably efficient tights, tyres and instruments all make the 2T a practical short-haul road bike, but the low gearing, the neat way everything is tucked out of harm's way and nice detail points, like the full chain enclosure, demonstrate that it is a bike

from ally in the British market that is beaud to limit its appeal, where most trail bides are not in the state of the stat

For anyone who's really serious about their trail riding the 2T offers much the same attractions as the factory's 1,000cc Jota does to the road rider — a superb combination of functionality, performance and quality.

Bill Haylock



It's sensible extras, like full chain enclosure, that make the Laverda a serious off-road rather than a pretention plaything.

The Laverda's motor looks good and performs even better — but starting can





Tetals On The Trail



WHY SHOULD the distributors of Kawasaki off-road competition bikes, namely Kawasport, try to convert a perfectly adequate one-day trials bike into a highly competitive enduro machine, when there are already a number of purpose-built enduro bikes on the market?

The answer is that the subject of this test, the kawasalik IZZ90, is the product of a boom which never materialised. This none-existent market was supposed to emerge in America a souple of years ago, when all the pundits reducted an upsurge in so-called. English Irials. The one-day trials bike was going to be the large, and the Big Four manufacturers in appan tooled up to produce such machines in the product of the produce such machines in the product of the produce such machines in the product of the product of the product the product

However, someone had read their tea-leav through mud-spashed goggles, it seems, for it boom never happened. Serious trials rider both in the US and in Europe preferred to be from the more experienced Spanish factories and most of the Jap trials bikes were actual bought as play-bixes — especially when the L importers offered large discounts to clear the stocks. It was in an effort to capitalise on this trend that Kawasport enduro-sied three stock KT's in order to publicise the versatility of their product. The idea was to make the KT's faster and better handling, mount three top-class jockeys and aim for the team awards at mapper endures. And worked they did with the state of the team awards at mapper endures. And worked they did within the past two years.

years. However, the very success of the muchines, and the hard work to which they have been subjected, proved to be the main stumblings block to an objective test on them. We trend two of the Kwackers, and both were mechanically the worse for wear, indeed one wouldn't even pull to gear! Significantly, the cylinder head still bore the official walls from list June's Welch', and obviously had not been touched.

The ensuing lack of power made it difficult to assess the worth of the suspension mods, which were designed to function at higher speeds that the present engines were capable of. Fortunatel, I have been overtaken enough times in enduro

bike (





ground. The KT3 trials heritage does result in one major sing, however, in that the gear lever is out of reach of even the largest left boot, due to the rearward positioning of the footrests. The extra work involved in each gearshift may be minimal but would surely accumulate during a Riding the KT 'enduro' — both on the road and the rough — tends towards a love-hate relationship, with the bike's many good points

Checkout







DIMENSIONS
Wheelbase
Seat height
Ground clearance
Weight
Oil capacity
Fuel capacity
Tyres (front)
(rear)

Kawasaki KT250 (in standard trim) Single cyl 2-stroke 69.5 x 64.9mm 246cc 65.1 26mm Mikuni Gear/wet multiplate CDI ignition system Laverda 2T Single cyl 2-stroke 68 x 68mm 247cc 10:1 32mm Dell'Orto Gear/wet multiplate Bosch electronic ign 25:1 petroil mix 2.6 gal Metzeler 3.00 x 21 Metzeler 4.00 x 18 £840 inc VAT Terms of Sale Of Goods Act Slater Bros, Collington, Nr Bromyard, Hereford-ehire.

£615 inc VAT No written guarantee Kawasport Ltd, 135a Hatfield Rd, St Albans Herts.

Haynes Workshop Manuals £2.50 each

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Helmets

By measuring your head with a tape measure your size may be determined from the following chart.

INCHES 2014/2114/2114/22 22 2213/2214/2314/2314/2414

SIZE CODE 0 1 1 2 2 3 3 4 5





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