

Issue #6

*RUST investigates rally, and yes this could be you!*



**RUST**



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Kin M, KTM







## CH-CH-CH.. CHANGES

BY JON BENTMAN,  
PHOTOS: J BENTMAN & VARIOUS

WELCOME TO RUST six, and the keen-eyed among you might just have noticed that the face on the editorial page has changed. The beard's gone because the man's gone – indeed, we've got a change of editorship. It's farewell to Si Melber, who you may have known for only six issues here at RUST but in fact has been directing the RUST editorial team since early in 2015 when we started in development. Many will probably have known Si for much much longer, for some 20 years with Trailbike and Enduro Magazine (TBM) that pre-dates RUST. Si's off on a new adventure – he says he'll be taking a break from the dirt bikes for a while, but none of us who know him can believe that. So even if he's not to be seen out there in the media, beware – you might find a certain beardy-weirdy barreling down on you as you push through the brambles, having missed that last course arrow...

It's also with some personal sadness that I succeed Si, for he was a good bloke and for me a very special editor. By chance, he and I hold very similar views on dirt biking and the written word – I say by chance because in many other ways we are very different creatures, with different tastes and personalities. But we were in accord on our stance on not dumbing-down, in fact we both champion the educated standpoint, we're trained to question everything and to look from all standpoints. And if a story needs many words to be cohesively explained then many words will be published, regardless of modern publishing trends. Si has done much to present recreational dirt











## JONNY B GOOD

In this issue we're reconnecting with Jonny Walker – now credited by most media outlets as the number one enduro extreme rider in the world, and that's probably based on his near-total domination of the headline extreme events of 2015. We'll be looking forward to 2016 – and he's already off to a winning start as seen here at the 24MX AlesTrem in France – and looking back too, to when he first made the transformation from trials to enduro, from jobbing builder's mate to full-time pro racer. And asking – can we learn even just a little of his skills?!







## GS HARDMEN

The biennial BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy this year takes place in Northern Thailand, from Feb 28 to March 5. Bigger with every edition, this year's fifth GS Trophy will feature 19 teams comprising 57 competitors and 19 embedded journalists coming from every continent (*bar Antarctica!*). And for the first time there'll be an international women's team. It's sure to be hot and steamy this year, Thailand being a tropical latitude. Our new editor JB again will be in the thick of it (*this being his fourth GS Trophy*) and he'll be sending out daily photo and video reports via our Facebook site [www.facebook.com/rustsports](http://www.facebook.com/rustsports), so please do tune in. With high temperatures expected the competitors will no doubt be hoping for a test something like this one that featured in the 2014 edition in Canada. And don't doubt for one minute that this isn't one super-tough competition...

**(photo-credit: Ramona Schwarz)**





# Here's Jonny!

Jonny Walker heads into 2016 as the top man in extreme enduro, having deposed The King, Graham Jarvis. It is the natural order of things, one day you're the Next Big Thing, then, with some luck and a lot of dedication, you are simply The Big Thing. But it doesn't come easy and you have to work hard if your time at the top is not to be all-too fleeting...

**Words: Jon Bentman**  
**Images: Jon Bentman, Red Bull Content Pool, KTM Images**








JONNY WALKER IS the kid from Keswick (a small town in the rural North East of England). He holds onto that, almost jealously. He's an international moto-star but in his heart he prefers still to be Jonny the window fitter and weekend dirt bike nut. Of course he's not that person anymore, hasn't been for a good three-four years, and with an exhausting annual international itinerary, a factory-racer's contract and a highish-level public profile afforded by the efforts of the Red Bull media team, he has to be something of an idol. At 25 he's not so much the kid anymore, either. But now, as then, he's not ashamed to say his mum does his laundry.

Jonny's background is in youth trials, he was a national champion by the age of nine, and remained top-three in each age category until age 18 when he transitioned to enduro. The swap was initially self-funded and not as focussed as you might think.

*"When I stopped trials and started racing I went straight into British championship enduro as a total privateer-amateur. I was working at the time – I worked until I was 21 (2012), fitting doors and windows – and I did my first year just racing the British championship because I couldn't afford to do anything else. When you're a privateer, it's just you and it's a real commitment, it really costs a fortune going racing!"*



Here's  
Jonny!







Here's  
Jonny!

The commitment nonetheless paid off. Jonny managed to place 5th in the national E2 class and caught the eye of enduro mechanic-manager Julian Stevens. It's Jonny's good fortune that Stevens was local to him (*Kendal is another Lake District market town*) while Stevens' own CV is impressive, having worked alongside both Paul Edmondson and David Knight in their world championship winning seasons. Stevens, also known as 'Smooth', was running a dirt bike shop at the time and was keen to promote this through a race team – Jonny was a shoe-in for one of the berths.

*"I went to ride for Smooth in 2011, doing the British and European enduro championships. I'd travel to the Europeans with Danny McCanney. Danny beat me to the European Junior title that year. In the middle of the year we went to ride Erzberg – it kind of made sense with my trials background. I'd looked into it before, of course, but didn't really know much about it. But on that first go I placed third. And that changed things, and I started to do more extreme races.*

*"But it wasn't all plain sailing. I was doing too much, I was trying to race the British championship, the European championship plus the extreme races and you couldn't really focus on the one thing so it made it really difficult. For 2012 I got my first deal with KTM, my first factory ride, and it listed the full range of events, from indoor, the extremes to British championship. It was too*





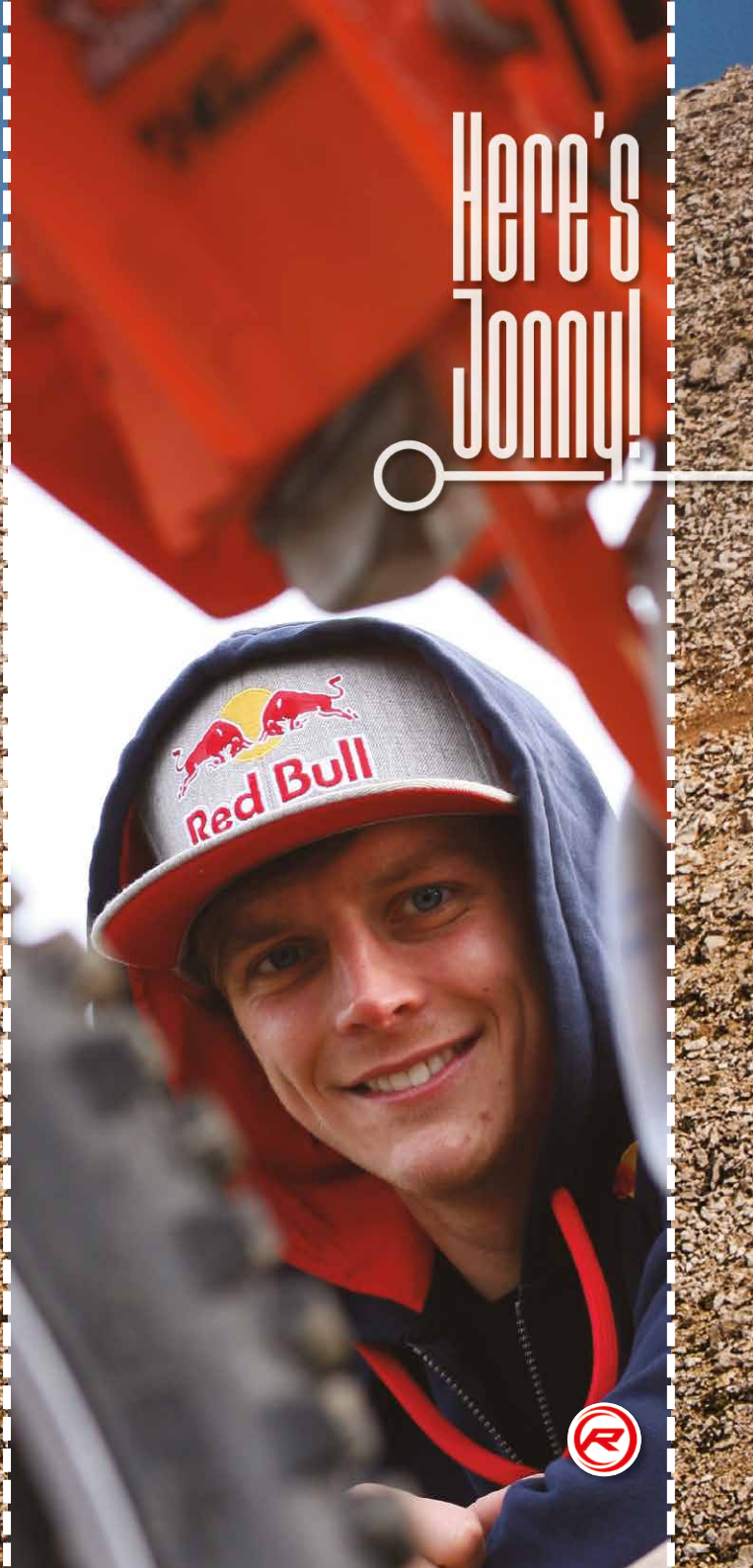
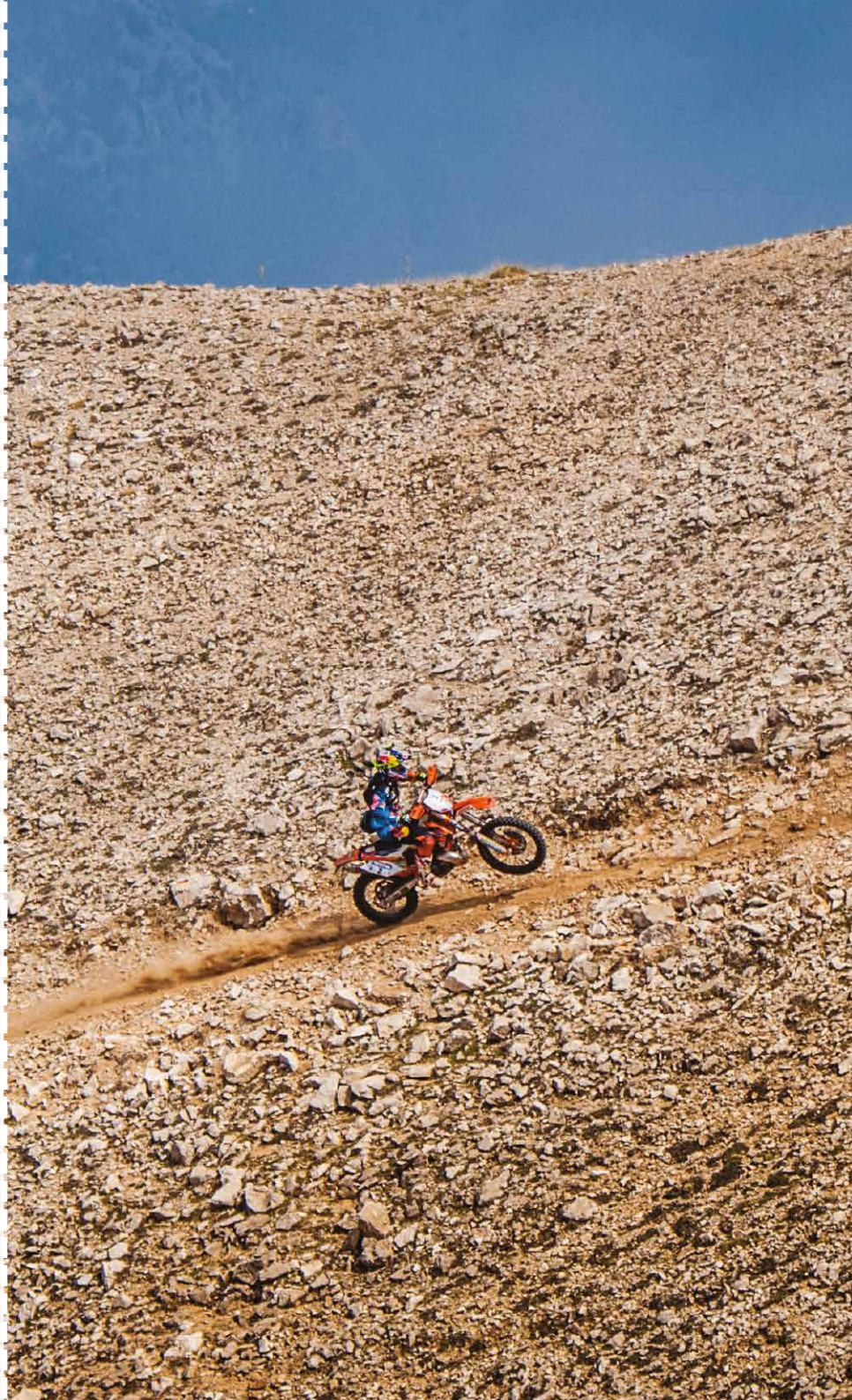


*much, trying to race all the different races meant every weekend you were kind of getting a shit result because you weren't able to specifically train for it, it made it too hard, so Smooth told me to concentrate on extreme races and that's what I've done ever since."*

IN FACT a move to France in 2014 would change everything. As early as 2011 the moto-press had been getting excited about his prospects, but the wins rarely came, initially perhaps because of his scattergun approach to racing, then perhaps simply struggling with the enormity of the the job. He had his fair share of big wins, like Erzberg in 2012 and Sea-to-Sky in 2013, but that's one win per year, barely enough to maintain a works contract.

*"Things changed when KTM offered me a two-year contract starting in 2014. I was nervous that they'd drop me altogether, but instead they came back with a bigger deal and a new arrangement. I was given a new mechanic, Sebastien Fortanier, who'd worked with Johnny Aubert and Cyril Despres, and I rented a place close by him near Toulouse in the south of France. Smooth wasn't in the deal, but he's remained my manager and he still negotiates all my deals.*

*"Seb is so much more than a mechanic, although that's his fundamental role. But it was his experience and direction that changed things around for me. I'd turn up at his place*



Here's  
Jonny!





ready to go riding and he'd ask me, 'why are you going riding today?' You look at some riders, they're riding every day but they don't get any better because they're simply riding too much. So Seb cut me down to riding just three days a week, and make that race-specific training – we'd look to my next race and if it was a three-hour race I'd do a three-hour moto as training. And I think that's what set me apart last year. I cut the number of races down too, to about 15, but by doing that I knew exactly what was coming up and knew what to train for. Seb's guidance made the biggest difference.

"This year will be different though. Seb's wife has become ill, so I've moved back to the UK. I didn't want to be there, I wanted him to be with her, not being distracted by coming training and racing with me."

So for now, Smooth is back working with Jonny, preparing his UK race bikes, and Jonny has returned to his privateer days by maintaining his practice bikes. He likes the discipline, suggests he might waste his spare time otherwise and, he says, it keeps him grounded – something he seems acutely aware of.

MENTAL STATE is a major part of sporting achievement. And it's not just during a race, but a 24-7 thing, a constant state of mind.

"Graham Jarvis is my strongest opponent. He is solid, and he's riding at the highest level. It's literally taken me three-to-four



Here's  
Jonny!



years to get to his level – he's definitely made it hard for me. But with Seb's input on training, with growing course knowledge and given my speed – I wanted to be a motocross rider when I was young, and so I often ride motocross for fun and I'll do speed events like Hare & Hounds to practice maintaining high speeds – the wins have started to come faster, last year was fantastic for me.

"I think the thing now is I'm confident. If I go to a race now and get a shit start I know that I can take it easy and still get to the front, I'll not rush the job like before. That's the biggest thing, the confidence now when I go to the races, I know I can do it. Before I'd go to a race and I thought Graham was



*better than me, and that was why he beat me. But once I'd got a few wins in I started to believe in myself more.*

*"The way it is now, everyone says it must be easy, my life, winning-weekends at the races and all. But the stress is still there, and it always will be. I'm not going to lie, I feel a lot of stress, but I put it on myself, no one puts it on me. And when you have to get up at 6am to go to the gym three times a week, the constant need to stay sharp on the bike, and now with my own bike to fix, it's like running your own business, you are constantly thinking. Sometimes I wish I was fitting windows again because I got up at eight, went to work and would be finished by half-four, go home and that was it for the day. Now it never stops, a day is a day, you literally work full-time."*

Holiday periods can be the hardest, says Jonny. When his mates will be partying he's got to be in bed getting solid sleep with a race the next day. With indoor events he's racing right up to Christmas and this year it started again on January 2. So Jonny's annual break comes instead when the indoor season finishes. He'll take a few weeks off, last big holiday was to Vegas "for a big blowout", but it didn't quite live up to expectations and so, sure enough, he was keen to get back to work – the racing.

*"The lifestyle is tough on relationships, too. There aren't many girls floating around the scene and it's difficult because you're travelling so*

Here's  
Jonny!







Sebastien Fortanier is Jonny's chief mechanic...

Here's  
Jonny!

*much. I'm seeing a girl at the moment but it's hard because she lives three hours south, so I have to arrange my training around visits (or visits around the training). But if the relationship got too hard I'd just flick it off, it wouldn't bother me, my bike racing comes first."*

THE FUTURE can never be far from the mind of a racer, for a pro-career isn't that long. In motocross it can be ten years, and not all those will be at the top, earning the good money. Fortunately for Jonny, despite the 'extreme' tag, extreme enduro does allow for some longevity.

*"I'll keep doing extreme as I'm enjoying it. I've got another 10 years maybe doing it, but there'll always be younger riders coming along – I try not to think about them, I just do my own thing because I know how I need to train. It's taken me a good four years to get this good and that's kind of my buffer against*

## JONNY: MY 300

*"My KTM 300EXC is very close to a stock bike, but I have it detuned. I have a lot less power than stock so I can hold it wide open and it'll not break traction. A stock motor is too powerful for extreme stuff, I'm looking for a smooth bike that doesn't break traction. Same goes with my 250EXC-F indoor bike. There, even my 300EXC is too powerful, but the 250 works just right, low power and plenty of traction!"*

*"My bike has pro-WP suspension, with Cone Valve forks and Trax shock, but you can ride extreme on standard suspension. My set-up barely changes. With Seb, we arrived at my preferred settings two years ago and since then we'll never change it by more than a few click here or there."*



*the next guy coming along. It's so easy to go fast in one part of the track, but it's stringing a race together and riding smart that's the biggest thing. But when all this is done – then I think I'd like a go at the Dakar, I'd love to have a go and that would be something like a new start.*

*"I'm mindful of career paths. I can see how it's gone with my greatest rival, and great friend, Graham Jarvis, two years ago he was unbeatable, but last season I took over from him. I don't doubt that he has the capacity to come back, for instance I know he's riding a lot more motocross to improve his speed, but being over 40 for him it can't be so easy, the body eventually wears out. But I never count him out, he has probably the highest skills of any rider in the paddock, a constant threat.*

*"I'm a big fan of David Knight, too. He is a legend, and he was the rider I followed as I*

## **JONNY: MY TRAINING**

*"I go to the gym three times a week typically Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. I'll ride on a Wednesday too. Mondays and Fridays are about bike preparation and travel. Saturdays and Sundays I'm riding, either racing or training."*





A young man, Jonny Barratt, is shown from the chest up, wearing a dark blue hoodie and a grey Red Bull baseball cap. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a blurred orange structure, likely part of a motorcycle or a track barrier. The text "Here's Jonny!" is written in a large, white, stylized font on the right side of the image, with a small white circle at the end of the line.

Here's  
Jonny!

came up. He's an incredible all-rounder, big and strong in the indoors – never get in a fight with him on track, he can just push you aside. But a lovely bloke, it's a shame being outspoken seems to have cost him so dear, especially because the sport needs personalities like his. And this is a difficult stage in his career, he's won it all, he has nothing left to prove, yet the fight is still in him, he still wants to win.

"Ultimately, though, I think my career will always be measured against Graham's. He made the job so much harder for me and it's good – a relief – that I've been beaten him before he's retired. Back in 2014 he was winning everything, if he'd retired then people would have said 'yeah, Jonny would never have beaten him'. So it's been good to beat him!"

## JONNY: WHY BRITS DOMINATE EXTREME

"I think it's is because the riders here come from a trials background – and have to ride in the worst conditions. We get the sunshine from time to time, but it's usually rained the day before, so even when it's dry the ground is wet, muddy, slippery, so it's difficult terrain we ride in the UK. When I go to Spain it's typically on hardpack and so nice, so much easier to ride on. When you come here you've got wet grass and sloppy conditions – so it breeds extreme talent."



# IS THERE SAFETY IN NUMBERS?

*This is 'dispatches' where we throw the floor over to you, to voice your joys or your concerns. It might be about something you've read-in or seen-on RUST platforms. It might be something local to you that you'd like to share. Clean, reasoned debate, or fair observation. Essentially this a letters page, as we traditionally know from magazines, but with a little more direction.*



Image: TRF

## **The TRF. Are they the cure or the cause?**

*Following our article on the UK's Trail Riders' Fellowship (TRF) – see RUST #5 – one reader has questioned whether the rising popularity of the TRF and their strategy for the conservation of trails might lead to greater conflicts, not less.*

I have believed for many years that the TRF are in fact the problem not the solution. The larger they get and the more riders they attract, the bigger target they become. If there were no TRF then the 'nay sayers' would have no-one to complain to.

Here's an example; recently I rode a lane close to my house which was, shall we say, not 100% legal. The owner, a local dignitary, spotted me in the village and knowing I rode motorbikes told me of the mystery rider, I just said I had no idea who it was – and the matter died there and then, if she had been aware of the TRF she would have been banging on their door.

The TRF create another problem when they encouraging group riding, which I deplore. I have seen groups as large as 20 riding on what I know are sensitive legal trails. Riding legal trails just because you can is brainless. They also encourage route sharing which to mind is another cause of popular areas being over-used. On many occasions I have seen large groups from other areas riding around, often a little lost,

annoying the locals, who then vented the anger on the local riders.

In my experience (50 years of off-road riding) I have found that riding alone or with one other guy is by far the best way to explore the trails. No-one minds one bike riding past and disappearing down the trail, but 20? Yes, that would even get on my nerves every weekend.

Which leads me to another self-generated problem the TRF create. Because they encourage group riding this means that the majority of riding is done at the weekend when everyone is free – this is also when all the trails are used by walkers, horses and everyone else. I try never to ride at the weekend and so rarely meet anyone on the trails. I have ridden everywhere and anywhere in the UK and never had a problem because I ride alone. I also start and finish in different areas and never stop.

I really do think that the TRF have created a battle they cannot win.

*Chris Pascoe  
Cornwall, UK*

## **The TRF replies:**

### **Is the TRF the problem?**

First, a little bit of history, if we may. Long before the TRF arrived on the scene, motorcycle clubs organised a wide range of activities on green roads. These were predominantly hill



climbs and trials in the run up to WWI. The routes for these required local knowledge and exploration, referred to at the time as 'hill-hunting', a forerunner of trail riding. Trail riding became established prior to WWI, with motorcycle clubs organising regular group rides on an unregulated basis. Over a century later and groups of trail riders remain part of the traditional fabric of the countryside.

TRF membership is a relatively recent component of some of those groups, and groups of trail riders were around before the TRF. The TRF can't be the cause of a 'problem' that existed long before the TRF was established.

### Is group riding irresponsible?

Florian's strategy *vivons heureux, vivons cachés (in order to live happily, live hidden)* has much to say for it and the majority of TRF members may sympathise with your views. However, we don't expect others to ride as we do. Green roads are there for all responsible trail riders to enjoy (*during the week and at weekends*) and riding in a large group isn't inherently irresponsible. Riding like a knob is irresponsible and that can occur in large and small groups. Riding routes that aren't 100% legal is also irresponsible, and

that's best addressed by showing riders where they can ride legally.

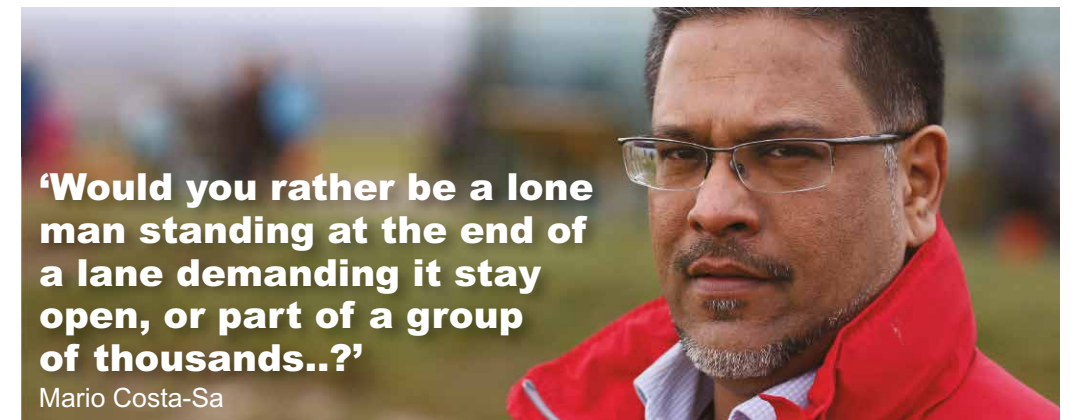
### A battle we can't win?

It sounds like you've ridden a lot of the lanes the UK has to offer, but surely you'd have enjoyed more of them if you'd had access to the knowledge of over four thousand trail riders and hundreds of Rights of Way Officers? And even if you're perfectly happy doing your own research and route planning, you must appreciate the work the TRF does to keep the lanes you love open? You say the TRF is becoming a bigger target as it grows, and you might be right. But with size comes power. Would you rather be a lone man standing at the end of a lane demanding it stay open, or part of a group of thousands? We know which we'd prefer.

John Vannuffel and Mario Costa-Sa  
The TRF

### SHARE YOUR VIEWS

If you've something on your mind that you'd like to share, feel free to write to us at [editorial@rustsports.com](mailto:editorial@rustsports.com). We can't guarantee we'll publish everything we receive and, as you see here, we may well offer interested parties a right of reply.





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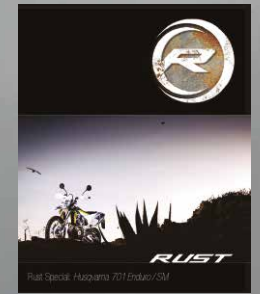
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Did the Dakar Rally get you juiced up? Have you been thinking, *'I want some of that!'* Fact is rallying is far more attainable than you may think. And if you're based in Europe there's a whole season of rallies you can access. So with the help of Patsy Quick, boss of rally assistance specialists Desert Rose Racing, we're taking a look at the scene...

# RALLYING CARRY







DAKAR IS THE tip of the iceberg. The £50,000 / \$100,000 tip, you might say, as it's not cheap to enter. There's the bike, yes the entry, then the support that's needed on the ground – not to mention the cost of qualifying through accredited events. Guys (*and girls*) mortgage their homes to have a go. But you can delve into lesser-known rallies, and live much of the experience, for a lot less, as a happy amateur. And you don't even have to be able to ride to the level of a local enduro hotshot, rally is a different skill-set and here at RUST we know of a few clubman level enduro riders who outshine many rivals given the long ride.

So we're taking a look at rally in this issue, addressing all our questions on the subject to Desert Rose Racing who run a comprehensive rally support service (*everything from bike transport, to checkpoint service and food*). And the more we've spoken to them, the more we fancy having a go ourselves. Who knows?!

**RUST:** So can we do it?

**Desert Rose:** *Absolutely, rallies are increasingly achievable. The European-based rallies as against African-based rallies (see our guide) are very achievable and logistically easy – given a service like ours, you can fly-in from anywhere in Europe or even the Americas (we do bike rentals!), ride the event and fly out again. You can ride whatever you like and they have adventure-bike classes too – it's only the Dakar where you are restricted to the 450cc machines.*

**RUST:** Say I'm an amateur rider with next to no race experience, can I still give it a go?

**Desert Rose:** *We try and be honest about the rallies because if you try and get somebody to an event that is*



## RALLYING CRY

This is where Patsy and Zippy come into their own, fixing broken bikes in the bivouac...



Clive 'Zippy' Town



outside their capability and they hurt themselves then nobody wins. So what we like to do is see what the customer wants their end-goal to be. If somebody comes to me and says, look I can only afford to do one event this year but I'd like it to be a desert rally then we'd explain the rallies they could ride: 'this is the Tuareg, this is Libya, this is Merzouga, these are the good points with each, these are the things that you might need to consider'. I am a firm believer in enjoying the process, so for any big African race you have to do your time and it's important to enjoy that, and so we can tune a program to suit the rider and his end-goal. So if it is that African desert rally then after basic training in the UK we'd recommend coming for a training week in Morocco which covers roadbook navigation and those elements about dune riding.

**RUST:** Is there a limit to what you can achieve?

**Desert Rose:** No! We took two riders to the Dakar Rally in 2012 having spent two years training them. One of them, Toby Younger made the finish. This year we've taken Andrew Newland, who's a 40-something businessman, from being a non-racing trail rider to second place overall in the Africa Eco Rally.

**RUST:** Wow, we're talking Africa and Dakar already, let's not get too excited, those European ones look better for us mortals, what do you say?

**Desert Rose:** Fair comment! If you take the average person that rides a dirt bike who's done a few enduros and enjoyed some great riding say in Wales, if you then want to take that to another level then European rallies are a great next step. The riding is similar, you'll be able to follow the terrain well and should be able to



cope with course. But what I think rallying in somewhere like Greece really brings is the closeness you'll get to the country and the culture. You are there for the competition, but you also get to experience the nature and the culture much more intimately than a tourist. I feel I got a much better view on the Greek people and likewise with the people in Turkey through rallying, it gives you a very good view of what the country is like, you meet wonderful people and its all very down to earth. But don't discount the African option, some people say it's not safe to go even to Morocco but I'd prefer to go to Morocco then I would London, because I feel I have really got to know the people there.

**RUST:** So how do we deal with the logistics of actually getting there?

**Desert Rose:** That's not easy to answer because every event is different, so at Desert Rose we tailor our logistics to every event. We have an 18-ton MAN truck with living accommodation (for our staff, not the riders), workshop facilities and awnings to put on the side for when race service begins. It's purposely converted to become a rally assistance truck. For each rider we'll transport their bike, they get an allocation of a box with their essential kit, the contents of which we can advise on, and we'll help with all aspects including the race registration etc. During the event each rider is treated equally, I think it's very important if you're in a team that you feel that there is equality, no one is getting preferential treatment. You might have your bike worked on second but it doesn't mean you're in second



Patsy and Zippy ride to the finish of the 2006 Dakar





# RALLYING CORY



Rallying is all about getting lost in the desert, you can get lost in Wales too...

*place it just means we will work longer into the night. I wouldn't say there are a lot of assistance teams that work by such values, we treat our riders as we would expect to be treated ourselves – because we have been riders ourselves. But we look to make it a true fly-and-ride service.*

**RUST:** What about accommodation and all that?

**Desert Rose:** As a race service we attend these events every year, so we've got to know the organisers, the locals, we can help with your communications with them, getting your entry, your accommodation and such. There's so much information on the internet as well, organisers have understood the hobby-racer market and as a consequence it's a lot more accessible than you might first think.

**RUST:** Do we need race licences?

**Desert Rose:** If you go to an FIM-sanctioned event then yes, and it is money, it's your bike, your license, your insurance, they have many things that put it that much more out there in monetary terms, but taking nothing away from the safety element because the the FIM events are very good such facilities and safety aspects. But for many of the other events, just a normal driving licence is enough.

**RUST:** Do you recommend any particular make of bike for the job?

**Desert Rose:** Riders can take any bike they like, we're not prescriptive. But if you're not riding a KTM you've got to expect to be pretty self-contained when it comes to spares and service items. There is a practical reason to ride a KTM being that probably 85% of the



riders in any given bivouac are riding KTM – so if you suddenly need something you’ve got a good chance that if you’ve not got it yourself then someone else might. We’re not a KTM team but for that same reason of popularity we keep KTM spares too, our own hire bikes are KTMs – 450/500EXCs and an RR – so we have a good stock of parts for those, we typically take a whole spare bike as that can make a difference as well. So we don’t say you must ride KTM but you can see there are practicalities you’ll need to shoulder if you ride something else.

**RUST:** Well thanks Patsy, Zippy, we’re ready to have a go. Anything else you want to add?

**Desert Rose:** Desert Rose Racing is a business in effect, but we’re in this game because we love it. We’re enthusiasts, our riders pay to be at the races, but equally so do some of our mechanics – there’s just not that much money in it – and it’s because of the love for the sport that we’re doing what we do. We have an example from a recent desert rally – we had a problem where one of our riders had a breakdown and his bike wasn’t picked up by the sweep truck until late, getting back to the bivouac at 4am. Well, our mechanics kept watch for that bike and when it finally arrived they were straight onto it and had it ready for the next day’s stage which started just three hours after they got the bike, they made sure that rider’s rally wasn’t over. There’s actually a buzz in making that happen and moments like that are probably why we’re in it.



Desert Rose Racing is headed by Patsy Quick, who made her name in international rally. For a while a motorcycle despatch rider, she took up enduro becoming British Womens’ champion in 2000 and European Women’s champion in 2001. She rode her first Dakar Rally in 2003 and made British newspaper headlines when she crashed heavily and needed to be medivac’d out then given immediate life-saving surgery having sustained a ruptured spleen. She was back the next year, intent on finishing. Teamed with pal Clive ‘Zippy’ Town, she tried again in 2004, 2005 and then at last made the finish in 2006. Patsy retired then, but came back for a fun-ride in the 2012 Heroes Legend Rally, which follows the old African Dakar rally routes, riding a KTM 690RR, and won the event outright! Desert Rose Racing – the rally assistance team – was a natural progression (says Patsy) of hers and Zippy’s experience as racers... Find Desert Rose Racing at [www.desertroseracing.com](http://www.desertroseracing.com)





## YOU WANT TO RALLY?

So you fancy a go at rallying. How and where do you start? That's hard to detail here especially when projecting on a global basis. But we can generalise – start local! For instance, in the UK a team of enthusiasts have organised a local series called the All-Terrain Rally Championship (ATRC), that creates rally events with a range of classes that allows for all budgets and speeds. In the past these have followed arrowed courses, like enduro, but lately they've been developing roadbook-guided categories, too, to give riders the fullest rally experience.

**Patsy:** *"I would say the ATRC has done a huge amount to educate and to bring rallying home to the UK at very much an affordable and friendly amateur level. Their work with the ACU and with the Forestry Commission has been fantastic, I give them a 100% mark for that. The problem – and this can be a problem in other countries too – is we don't have the land access over here, you are having to fight constantly with the Forestry Commission for access so you can only take roadbook up to a certain point, but certainly on the the technical aspects of how it works you can get it done here."*

*"That's enough preparation to take on any of the European rallies, but it is then another stepping stone to be able to go out to the desert and successfully follow a road book there. To learn that you have to do it in the right environment, which is actually in the desert, which means coming out with Zippy and myself and our instructors, to Morocco on one of our training camps, and learn not just the road book but learning the desert and Africa and all its idiosyncrasies, everything about it really. Stuff that if we'd known when we went to Africa all those years ago might have helped us make it to the finish the first time!"*



Back in 2012 amateur enduro mates Gavin Hockey and Steve Finch decided they'd have a go at a serious African rally, so along with some other local enduro pals they entered the Intercontinental Rally a 14-day race following the old Dakar Routes. They did it DIY (do-it-yourself), bagged an experience of a lifetime, and Steve even ended up on the podium...

## GAVIN'S STORY

*"It was easier than you might think to get started," remembers Gavin. "It helped that we had an organised group, there were a group of us older Eastern Centre enduro riders from which my mates Mark Hughes and Steve Finch had prior experience with riding rallies like the Tuareg. So under the leadership of Mark we came together on the organisation."*

Gavin explained how having five bike riders and one car driver in the rally they could split the logistics between them, sharing a van to deliver the bikes to the start, sharing the van as their service truck during the rally and coming together on things like meals. Being that the van was a Mercedes Sprinter each rider was allocated space just enough for his bike plus two 65-litre plastic containers for kit – a logistics exercise in itself.

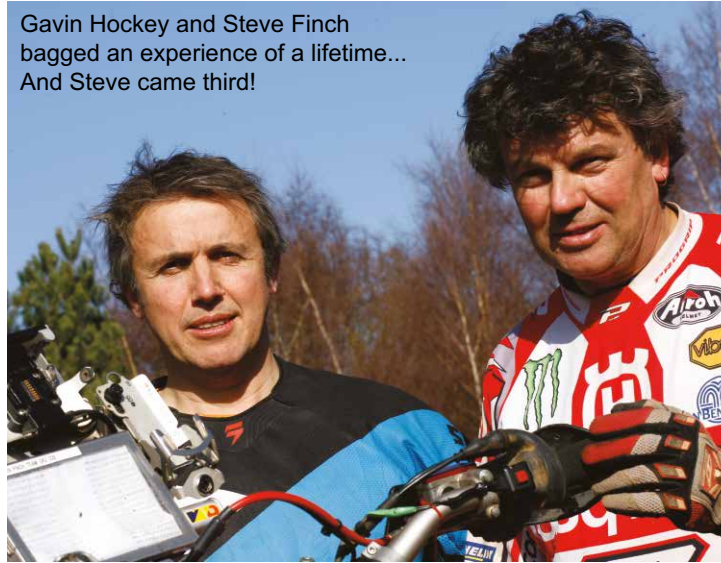
*"Food was not included in the entry, so we had to think what we were going to do for meals for those 14 days. So one of our wives organised all our food,*







Gavin Hockey and Steve Finch bagged an experience of a lifetime... And Steve came third!



including the purchasing and creating a menu to follow for each day.”

Assistance crew numbered three, again family and friends, including centre expert James Yearley as chef/mechanic, a mate Graham as chief mechanic and Mark’s son William as another mechanic/chef.

“We’re a group that do a lot together, such as local events, and big fun events like the the Welsh Two Day. Mark’s our leader, by consensus; he’s good at it and he keeps a sense of humour. He also makes us laugh because at local enduro he’s a real clubman – in fact I can’t remember when he last finished an enduro. But get him into Africa and he really hauls on his KTM 525, I struggle to keep with him!”

Taking the costs of transportation, accommodation, food and support and then splitting that six ways made the event much more affordable and, as Gavin confirms, enjoyable. The entry fees come in at an astonishingly low €1,000, but there were some on-costs – neatly broken down and paid at different times to ease the burden. Gavin suggested entry, travel, food, flights back, shipping for the bike – everything – came to around £4,000 (€5700).

Gavin’s had a low-cost solution for his bike too – a low-mileage 2010 WR450F bought for £3,500 (€5000). The conversion to rally-spec wasn’t that intense.

“I wasn’t sure I wanted to get massively involved with rallying so I kept the job to a minimum. I bought a safari tank and a rear tank second-hand for £200 (€285). And that was pretty much it on the spend, after that I borrowed a steering damper, the GPS and road book holders and I got my brother, who’s a suspension tuner, to rally-spec the suspension for me.”



## STEVE'S STORY

*"This rally was long distance, adventure and mind over matter – it's like nothing I've ever experienced on a motorbike. You saw so many things in a day and so many of those things you'll never ever speak about because there were just so many, you can't recall the half of it.*

*"It was a completely awesome experience right from beginning. You put in your entry and you had nine months to prepare things – you're doing paperwork, sorting visas, insurance, injections, then your kit, the bike, the van.*

*"I remember at the start guys going off like it was a motocross, but they didn't last, they'd crash or blow their bikes up, it needs a long-distance strategy, picking a good pace and staying good on the navigation.*

*"It's not a young man's sport, they would kill themselves; too many times there's too much that could hurt you, like sometimes you'd be riding a trail with a sheer 3–400-foot drop off, or you'd find something really nasty around the next bend or over the next crest.*

*"If one place lodged in my memory it was the border crossing from Morocco to Mauritania. There's a no-man's land between the two borders littered with wrecked cars that have hit land mines, and there are people there who have fallen foul of the border checks, who can't go forward, can't go back. It's like nothing on earth. Given a choice I'd go nowhere near the place.*

*"To have finished third was a bonus. There's no financial reward because that's not what the rally is about, but I'm proud of the big trophy they gave me."*





# RUST'S GUIDE TO THE EUROPEAN & AFRICAN RALLIES

RALLYING  
CORY

Image: KTM

So if you fancy a go, here's our guide to the pick of the rallies in 2016. We should add, Desert Rose Racing offers rally assistance for all these events...

**WHAT IS IT: ATRC Tour of Portugal Rally****WHERE DOES IT TAKE PLACE:** Across Portugal**WHAT ARE THE DATES:** March 4-6, 2016**BEST FOR:** Brits who want to try rallying on a limited budget.**DO THIS IF YOU ENJOY:** Making the absolute most of your short breaks**DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY:** 3/10**EXPENSE (€, €, €, OR €€€):** €**DURATION + TRAVEL:** 3-Day**TYPE OF SCENERY:** Arid, scrub and mixed, terrain of the Iberian Peninsular**KNOW THIS:** Organised by the British All Terrain Rally Championship, this is a new event for 2016**WEBSITE:** [www.allterrainrallychallenge.co.uk](http://www.allterrainrallychallenge.co.uk)**WHAT IS IT: Tuareg Rally****WHERE DOES IT TAKE PLACE:** Morocco**WHAT ARE THE DATES:** March 5-12, 2016**BEST FOR:** Good value for a true desert rally, hotel accommodation available**DO THIS IF YOU ENJOY:** Riding a well-established desert rally early in the year**DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY:** 7/10**EXPENSE (€, €, €, OR €€€):** €€**DURATION + TRAVEL:** 7-Day**TYPE OF SCENERY:** Mix of Moroccan desert and scrub**KNOW THIS:** Efficient German organisers, no FIM race licence needed, easy to get to**WEBSITE:** [www.tuareg-rallye.com](http://www.tuareg-rallye.com)**WHAT IS IT: Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge****WHERE DOES IT TAKE PLACE:** Centred around Abu Dhabi in the Middle East**WHAT ARE THE DATES:** April 1-7, 2016**BEST FOR:** The true desert experience and a really friendly atmosphere**DO THIS IF YOU ENJOY:** Dune riding in heat. It's all sand. And mixed cars/bikes**DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY:** 8/10**EXPENSE (€, €, €, OR €€€):** €€€**DURATION + TRAVEL:** 5-Day**TYPE OF SCENERY:** Sandy desert as far as the eye can see.**KNOW THIS:** It's an FIM event so you can qualify for Dakar, yet quite low key and friendly.**WEBSITE:** [www.abudhabidesertchallenge.com](http://www.abudhabidesertchallenge.com)**WHAT IS IT: Hellas Rally****WHERE DOES IT TAKE PLACE:** Greece**WHAT ARE THE DATES:** May 8-16, 2016**BEST FOR:** Value for money, scenery, good riding, logistically quite easy**DO THIS IF YOU ENJOY:** Rallying as a social event as much as pure racing**DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY:** 5/10**EXPENSE (€, €, €, OR €€€):** €**DURATION + TRAVEL:** 7-Day, fly in and fly out**TYPE OF SCENERY:** Incredibly varied and beautiful**KNOW THIS:** This is the one to bring your partner along to – they holiday while you rally. No FIM licence required**WEBSITE:** [www.hellasrally.org](http://www.hellasrally.org)**WHAT IS IT: Merzouga Rally****WHERE DOES IT TAKE PLACE:** Moroccan Desert**WHAT ARE THE DATES:** May 21-27, 2016**BEST FOR:** A great roadbook, and discovering Morocco**DO THIS IF YOU ENJOY:** Riding dunes using Dakar-style GPS**DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY:** 8.5/10**EXPENSE (€, €, €, OR €€€):** €€**DURATION + TRAVEL:** 5-Day**TYPE OF SCENERY:** Typically Moroccan, dunes, desert, scrub and a 'cloverleaf layout'**KNOW THIS:** Run by an experienced Italian ex-Dakar rider, it qualifies you for Dakar**WEBSITE:** [www.merzougarally.com](http://www.merzougarally.com)



## WHAT IS IT: Libya Rally

**WHERE DOES IT TAKE PLACE:** Despite the name it takes place in Morocco

**WHAT ARE THE DATES:** April 14-21, 2016

**BEST FOR:** Adventure. It has a moving bivouac, great food and a Dakar-style GPS

**DO THIS IF YOU ENJOY:** A very professional event but with a family feel, and a chance to experience racing along with cars

**DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY:** 7.5/10

**EXPENSE (€, €, €, OR €€€):** €€

**DURATION + TRAVEL:** 6-Day

**TYPE OF SCENERY:** Desert, mix of dunes and scrub

**KNOW THIS:** It's a Belgian-run private rally

(no FIM licence needed), very friendly

**WEBSITE:** [www.libya-rally.com](http://www.libya-rally.com)

## WHAT IS IT: Red Bull Romaniacs - Hard Rally/Enduro

**WHERE DOES IT TAKE PLACE:** Amongst the Carpathian Mountains in Romania

**WHAT ARE THE DATES:** July 12-16, 2016

**BEST FOR:** Extreme enduro riding and the personal challenge

**DO THIS IF YOU ENJOY:** Sweating a lot and pushing yourself to your limits

**DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY:** 10/10

**EXPENSE (€, €, €, OR €€€):** €€

**DURATION + TRAVEL:** 5-Day

**TYPE OF SCENERY:** Chocolate box scenery, wooded mountainsides plus open terrain

**KNOW THIS:** Pre-ride training is a must

**WEBSITE:** [www.redbullromaniacs.com](http://www.redbullromaniacs.com)

## WHAT IS IT: Serres Rally

**WHERE DOES IT TAKE PLACE:** Greece - on Six Days (ISDE) type of territory

**WHAT ARE THE DATES:** Aug 28 - Sept 3, 2016

**BEST FOR:** Introduction to rallying (*it's an enduro-rally*), friendly organisation, cloverleaf layout, families can watch

**DO THIS IF YOU ENJOY:** Mixing a good rally with a great place to holiday afterwards

**DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY:** 7/10

**EXPENSE (€, €, €, OR €€€):** €€

**DURATION + TRAVEL:** 6-Day

**TYPE OF SCENERY:** Utterly fantastic and mixed

**KNOW THIS:** Don't let your guard down... it's quite technical in places

**WEBSITE:** [www.serresrally.com](http://www.serresrally.com)

## WHAT IS IT: Illyria Raid

**WHERE DOES IT TAKE PLACE:** Five countries across Eastern Europe

**WHAT ARE THE DATES:** May 18-26, 2016

**BEST FOR:** Using a roadbook outside of the pressures of racing conditions

**DO THIS IF YOU ENJOY:** Seeing varied countries and cultures without time pressure

**DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY:** 4/10

**EXPENSE (€, €, €, OR €€€):** €€

**DURATION + TRAVEL:** 9-Day

**TYPE OF SCENERY:** Mixed, European

**KNOW THIS:** Run by the experienced organiser of the Albania Rally, 2016 is its first year. It is safe and easy to ride

**WEBSITE:** [www.illyriaraid.com](http://www.illyriaraid.com)

## WHAT IS IT: Albania Rally

**WHERE DOES IT TAKE PLACE:** Albania (opposite Italy across the Adriatic)

**WHAT ARE THE DATES:** June 11-18, 2016

**BEST FOR:** Scenery and technical going. It's an enduro/rally rather than a pure rally

**DO THIS IF YOU ENJOY:** Riding enduros but want a taste of real rallying

**DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY:** 7/10

**EXPENSE (€, €, €, OR €€€):** €€

**DURATION + TRAVEL:** 6-Day

**TYPE OF SCENERY:** Fantastic, semi-arid, southern European

**KNOW THIS:** See the real Albania which is really worth seeing

**WEBSITE:** [www.rallyalbania.org](http://www.rallyalbania.org)

## WHAT IS IT: Africa Race (Eco Race)

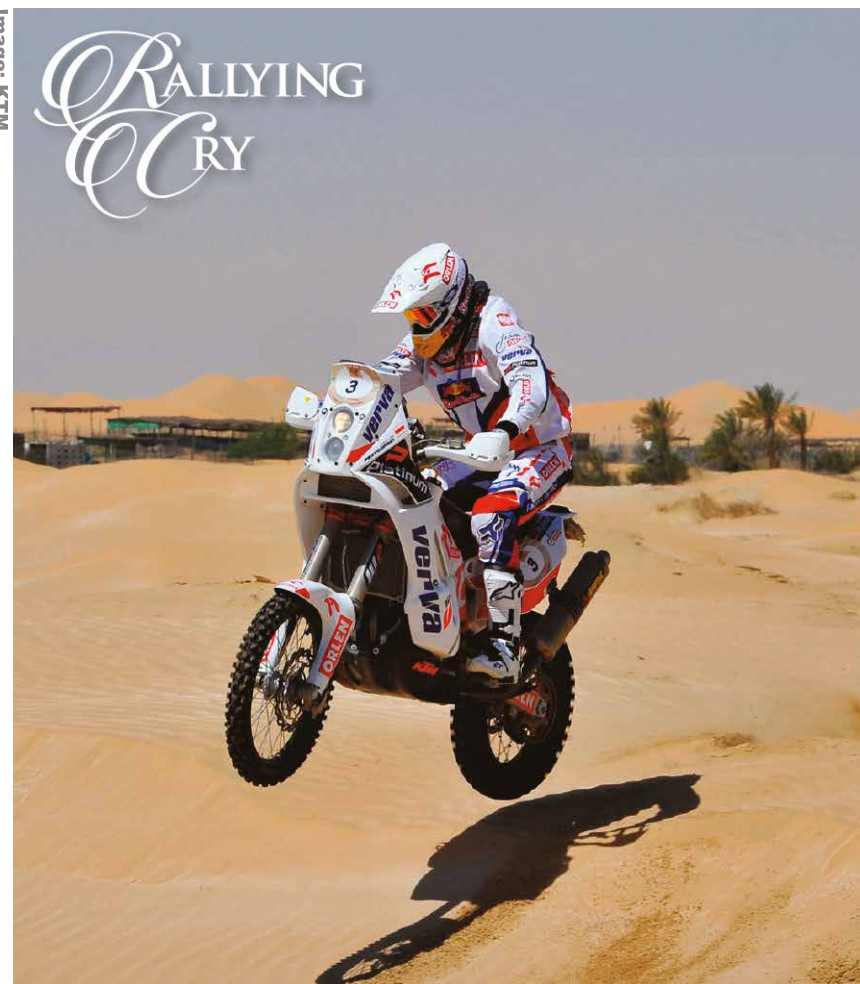
**WHERE DOES IT TAKE PLACE:** Monaco to Senegal, the original route to Dakar

**WHAT ARE THE DATES:** 2017 dates tbc

**BEST FOR:** The 'real Dakar' experience - in Africa.

**DO THIS IF YOU ENJOY:** A true African adventure that ends at Lac Rose in Dakar

Image: KTM



**DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY:** 9.5/10

**EXPENSE (€, €, €, OR €€€):** €€€

**DURATION + TRAVEL:** 12-Day

**TYPE OF SCENERY:** Desert in the north to savannah in the south and all types of terrain in between

**KNOW THIS:** You will have achieved a lifetime's goal to get to the finish. This event follows the original route of the Dakar Rally and has extremely well organised safety in place, including helicopter evacuation

**WEBSITE:** [www.africarace.com](http://www.africarace.com)

**Words: Si Melber**



KTM have been producing production rally racers – identified by the suffix RR – for many years now. But the recent change to the 450cc limit, plus speed and fuel restrictions, made for a rethink and an all-new machine in 2015. Desert Rose brought a few of the latest 2016 models into the UK and here we have Patsy explaining just what they're about...

## **SMALL BIKE**

*"With the 450 ruling KTM have worked to create a small bike that the factory racers can race very quickly. So what we have now is the trellis frame with more or less a 450EXC engine in it given a few different parts, so that the bikes are very stable at speed which they have to be in the desert."*

## **SLIM BIKE**

*"It has the fuel capacity of 30-litres. If you compare it to models before it, such as the 690, and the 660RR before that, this really is a very slimline bike that is capable of being raced at high-speed yet remains good handling whether it has 30 or 5 litres of fuel."*

## **THE RIGHT BIKE**

*"If you take an EXC, we can build a very capable rally racer from that – but as it doesn't have this trellis frame it doesn't quite have the same stability. We can make the fairing we can make the long-range fuel tanks too,*

# KTM's PRODUCTION RALLY RACER

RALLYING  
CORY





but everything has to be adapted and at the end it won't be that far off the price of this factory built rally bike, depending on the euro at the time. So if you were going to do the Dakar I would say best option is the 450RR because you have the tool for the job – and as importantly KTM there, fully equipped with their assistance.”

## THE RIGHT PRICE

“We bought this bike for €24,000 - and that really is a great price, especially given the exchange rate between the Pound and the Euro. As I said, after you've paid the best part of £8000 for an EXC then factored in all the modifications there's not much saving to be made and you don't have the spec of this bike.”

## THE RIGHT PREP

“You might think it's a get-on and ride proposition, but at Desert Rose we've learnt that if you're going to spend another €20,000 doing the Dakar then that bike really does have to be race ready. KTM has produced this bike to a cost, so it's brilliant but it's not perfect, so what you need to do is to eliminate as many possible problems that might arise, stuff like cabling and trying to work out where the stress and the fatigue might happen. It's not often the mechanicals, it's things rubbing together, like electricals, which generally causes problems.

“The fuel injection we have these days is great we just change the bolts so that it is more user-friendly for fixing on the go. Then there's putting the regulated



safety equipment on the bike as it doesn't come with that. Then stuff like adding a second tripmeter, different road book possibly. And if you have got money to spend then we always say that money is best spent on getting the suspension set up, it is very very important.

“Of course this spend is quite hard to contemplate if you just spent €24,000 plus tax on a bike, but this is important if you are to eliminate problems and ensure the longevity of the bike. We take apart every electrical connector and component, greasing and protecting so many parts. Of the three bikes we had in the Africa Eco race this year, we had zero problems and I would like to think that was because of the preparation we putting in in the workshop so the riders had the best chance of not having a mechanical.”

## KTM 450RR

- More than just an EXC with a big tank
- Trellis frame – for stability
- Two pannier tanks up front
- Rear fuel tank is also the subframe
- EXC-based engine, upgraded to give 10,000km (Dakar-length) longevity between rebuilds
- 3-litre water container in sump plate
- Large single radiator with electric fans
- Carbon-fibre instrument tower
- Oversize brakes
- Steering damper
- Rally-spec suspension
- Stiffer, stronger rally-spec swingarm
- Cush drive rear wheel
- Oversize rally-spec footpegs





Long Termers



# THE ETERNAL FETTLE

Here at RUST we're like you – enthusiastic. Sometimes too enthusiastic for our own good, although we'd level that observation at Warren before the rest of us (*as you'll soon read...*). And, again like you, we like setting goals and making plans.

And for us, being located here in the UK, one of our ultimate rides is the mighty Welsh Two Day Enduro – this year running for the 64th year (*it started in 1951*). This is a big-lap enduro with multiple checkpoints and special tests, plus remote refuels – and a whopping 500 rider entry. It's enduro like the old days. So we're gearing up for that, making our strategies, escalating rivalries – and like most W2D entrants, we've already started praying it doesn't rain.

First job (*given that entries don't even open until April – the event runs in mid-June*) has been to select our weapons. And first job +1-minute has been making the list of mods we'll make to ensure we're front of the pack come the second our minute ticks over. We'll have a three-man team at the Welsh, and here, given their level of eagerness, we're introducing the first two – JB and Warren, and their rides. And heck, already there's a sense things might get out of hand for Warren's listing not one but two bikes...







Long Termers

## JB'S 2015 YAMAHA WR250F

I RODE THE 2013 W2D on the previous model WR250F and had a ball. The bike was effortless to ride and right on the money for a deliberate old clubman like me. So for this year it was an automatic choice to go blue again, with their new WR250F – a bike I rated Bike of the Year when launched in late 2014. It's a different animal to the old WR, with more race than trail, but I like the fact it makes me ride faster, it wants to dance and it inspires you to do that too. And to my thinking it's near perfection as it is, I'm just making comfort adjustments – there's speed and agility enough already.

The bars will be located in the forward mount to give me more room (I'm 6'0"/1.82m) and I may well change to my favourite Renthal bars (996s). I'll add soft grips, flexi-levers and light hand guards (*nothing radical*).

The suspension is race-fit and Kayaba quality. I'm just going to check the check the sag to see if my 90kg bulk works with the stock springs (*forks and shock*), if not I'll change to heavier springs, but the action is fine for me, so I'll leave the valving stock

I'd like a high seat, I would. We'll see...

At the launch in 2014 I much preferred the way the bike responded with the Akrapovic race exhaust fitted – odd, given I'm a touring-speed kind of rider. So the Akra is going on – sounds nice too!

I've not yet chosen tyres – they'll be to regulation FIM spec – but I won't automatically be running mousses. Mousses are not best when left for long periods – and my season will be more off than on – so HD tubes will be the more practical choice.

The new WR's motor often gets criticised for being too abrupt off the bottom yet with not enough plonk – I'll be looking to remap the fueling and ignition to make this more clubman friendly.

### SECRET WEAPON

I have at my disposal the most cunning of secret weapons, which won't exactly transform the WR, but will make it quite possibly the best in the paddock – which I'll reveal in our next installment...



# YAMAHA WR250F





# Long Termers

## WARREN'S 2015 HUSQVARNATE300

And now the fun begins... The stock bike is a good all rounder, however for me the suspension needs serious work. This is my indulgence and my secret weapon, I have enlisted WP and Stillwell Performance in the USA to tune my suspension for me. My plan is to ride the Grappe deCyrano and the Trefle Lozerien, both in France between the end of April and mid May before doing the Welsh with JB in June. Over the coming issues we'll be updating you with images and videos on the progress of the builds. The ultimate goal for me is to share the experience of testing the bikes and each of the parts fitted individually so that you, our readers get real life action reviews of the goodies before you consider buying any of them...

Controls and bars: Flexx -14 degree enduro bars, high – black with black pad, G2 aluminium throttle tubes with throttle cams, Ariette grips – Extreme 115mm – black soft, ARC composite lever set, Cycra or Acerbis handguards - tbc, Ohlins 2.1 steering stabiliser.

Suspension: Stillwell Performance A-Kit tuned.  
Wheels: Haan wheels and hubs with GT 216AA and GT mousse. Brakes: MotoMaster" 270mm disc and matching Brembo pads with Pro Carbon disc protector.

Husky power parts aluminium radiator braces.  
RUST custom graphics kit.

Seat Concepts, Husky Super Grip tall seat.

Stock pipe with Akropovic silencer

WP factory Trax custom rear shock. Haan wheels and hubs with GoldenTyre 216HB and GT 120 mousse with 3 Motion Pro low profile rim locks. *(spare GT 216X rear tyre with GT 216X mousse for muddy/ extreme conditions)* with Motion Pro low profile rim locks x3

Braking wave disc with matching pads. Dirt Trix black SE rear sprocket, Regina GPZN chain, Bullet Proof designs – Shark-fin - rear rotor guard, BPD swing arm guard (blue) with TM designs "slide and glide" kit.

Engine and lever mods: A few sneaky engine mods to be revealed later – no giving JB a heads up now. P3 carbon skid plate, Dirt Trix front sprocket, TORC1 aluminium brake pedal with blue and black step plate or stock lever with bolt on Husky step plate - tbc, TORC1 reaction shift lever blue with extension tip, Raptor RX001 extreme titanium foot pegs with back and down set-up kits.



# HUSQVARNATE300





## WARREN'S 2016 KTM 200EXC

Considering that I love my 300s this is going to be a voyage of discovery for me. I rode the 200 at the 2016 model launch and loved it. Since I've left the wide open spaces of Australia and South Africa behind and moved to a tighter (*and considerably wetter*) riding environment in the UK, I'm hoping this little baby will be just the ticket for the Welsh. I've never quite mastered the 'slow and steady' approach, intellect over the wild right hand, so wish me luck, this is my first attempt. Oh, and about JB's jibe about me being competitive - see my comments above. I've not commented on my mods like JB, I'll give you my views and why I chose the parts I have over the coming issues...

Controls and bars: Black Renthal 996 Windham with orange & black pad, G2 aluminium throttle tubes with throttle cams, Ariette Extreme 115mm black grips, Pro taper XPS flex levers, EE Moto roost defelectors and Fastway steering stabiliser

Stillwell Performance A-Kit tuned suspension, Haan wheels and hubs with GT 216AA and GT mousses. Braking Batfly 270mm disc and matching Braking pads with Pro Carbon or Acerbis disc protector.

Engine mods: FMF pipe with titanium core 2 silencer, Moose Racing carbon skid plate, Rekluse core (manual) clutch. Factory cylinder head or SP modified (tbc) with matching jetting, barrel porting and tuning by Stillwell Performance

Aluminium radiator braces and RUST custom graphics kit

Seat Concepts KTM – high – Super Grip complete seat.

WP factory Trax custom rear shock

Braking wave disc with matching pads, Dirt Trix black SE rear sprocket, Regina GPZN chain, Bullet Proof designs – Sharkfin - rear rotor guard BPD swing arm guard (orange) with TM designs "slide and glide" kit

Haan wheels and hubs with GoldenTyre 216HB and GT 120 mousse with 3 Motion Pro low profile rim locks.

Dirt Trix front sprocket, TORC1 aluminium brake pedal with KTM orange and black step plate, TORC1 reaction shift lever orange with orange extension tip and Fastway Evo foot pegs.

# KTM 200EXC







Since introduced in 2012, Honda has sold thousands of CRF250Ls worldwide. The spec reads like a basic trail bike (*made in Thailand*), but the engine uses up-to-the-minute tech and overall the sum is massively greater than the parts. It's an international solid gold dual-sport-lite.



# READYING THE HONDA CRF250L FOR THE TRAIL

IN 2014, THEN AS TBM, we celebrated the CRF-Ls capability by riding it coast-to-coast across England and Wales using as much off-road as possible. Direct, the trip is about 270 miles (430km) and takes six hours. On the trails we laboured for four days and over 630 miles (1000km)! But the CRF-L made the journey in style, never faltering.

We did a little prep beforehand though, to make sure we minimised our risk of failure – and to make the trip a little more comfortable. Here's what we used...

Words & images: Jon Bentman







## KRIEGA OVERLANDER 30 BAGS

Supplied by [www.kriega.com](http://www.kriega.com)

The Overlander 30s are – as the name implies – a pair of saddlebags offering a combined capacity of 30-litres. Enough capacity, just, for our JB for a weekend in Wales, or if you're RTW adventurer Steph Jeavons enough for 14 months riding non-stop (*go figure*). There are no frames within the bags but sturdy, long straps mean you can get them to seriously hug your bike.

Steph's have already gone 12 months of her trip –



Kriega offer a massive range of bags for both on and off-road bikes

even to Antarctica – while JB's have been to Wales and back twice! They are indeed sturdy items and the velcro'd-in liner has proven (*in JB's case, can't speak for Steph*) properly waterproof – and that lining was severely tested in what was a rain-lashed coast-to-coast ride.

They are deceptively simple devices: just Cordura outers, waterproof liners, a roll-closure top and a bundle of straps, but the value is in the quality, ruggedness and long life. At first you may think 30-litres isn't enough, and if you're used to giant touring panniers on RT/LT BMWs then maybe it isn't, but for trailbike tours this is the correct amount if you want to still have a good handling bike. You can always add a 10 or 20-litre tail pack to the combo if you really insist.

Do we like them? You betcha we do. And they'll stay in the kit store ready for plenty more trips to come, solid useful kit like this you treasure!

## PRO TAPER HANDLEBARS PRO TAPER FULL DIAMOND GRIPS PRO TAPER GRIP GLUE POLISPORT HANDGUARDS

Supplied by [www.apico.co.uk](http://www.apico.co.uk)

When it came to sorting out the controls on our Honda CRF250L we were looking for two things: precision-quality and budget price point. The standard Honda equipment is pretty good, but we wanted enduro-spec kit, anticipating some extreme conditions in the long coast-to-coast ride and for the Long Distance Trial that followed.

The Pro Taper SE handlebars fitted the bill perfectly. Strong, light, well-made yet at a modest price point.

We chose the CR Mid bend Pro Taper SEs (7/8") for the CRF







We chose the 7/8" SEs (*Seven-Eighths, get it?*) in CR Mid bend and they were perfect for the Honda. As we were fitting them to a road bike we needed to drill a couple of holes, just as appear in the OE bars, for the tabs on the switchgear, but this wasn't an issue – and we remembered to chamfer those holes so as to not make stress points.

To these we added Pro Taper's soft grips and these again were just perfect. These are slim grips, grippy, as you'll need on wet or muddy days, but the comfort is surprisingly high. So far they've lasted well, but at only just over £8 (€11) a time they're cheap enough to



The Pro Taper soft grips are well, grippy, even on the wettest of days but surprisingly comfy too...



The basic Polisport hand guards do the job of fending off the brambles perfectly

not worry about frequent replacement if necessary. We stuck them on with Pro Taper's own grip glue and this was a wise choice. The glue gives ample time to locate the grips in position, but since the glue has set they've not budged so much as a millimetre, despite repeated soakings. We were going to safety lock-wire the grips, but never got around to it, the glue has been more than good enough.

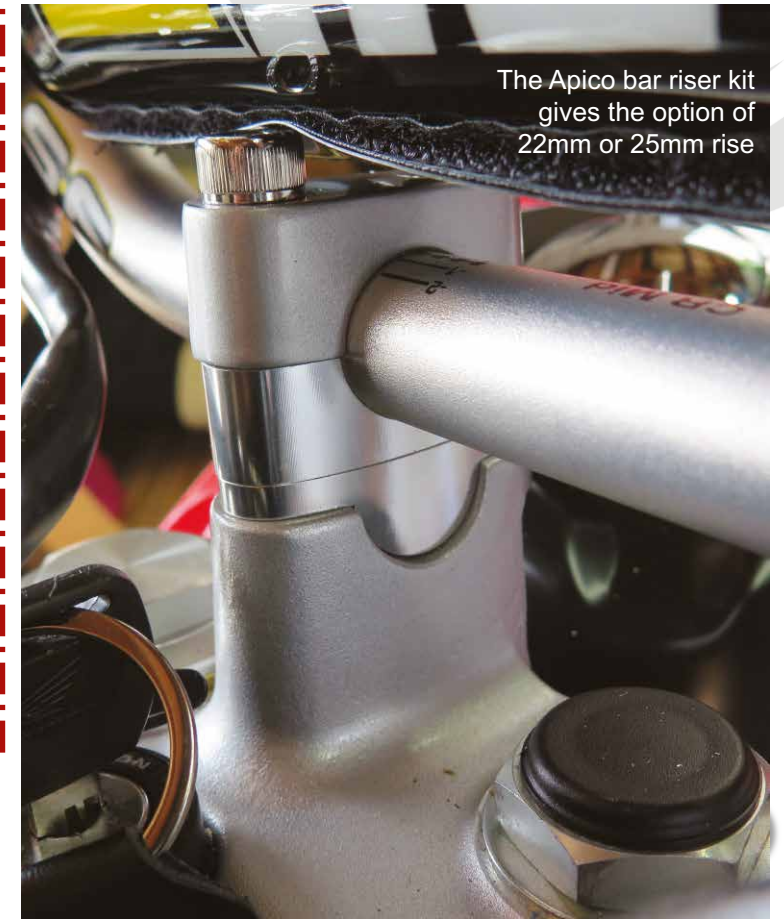
We finished off the controls with protection from a pair of bum-basic Polisport hand guards. Nothing fancy about these, there are no inner aluminium bars, just the plastic, but they bolted on sweetly and have done the job ever since. We've not tested them in a big fall, but set against mile after mile of thick brambles down in the green lanes they've been invaluable. They look smart too.

## APICO BAR RISER KIT

Supplied by [www.apico.co.uk](http://www.apico.co.uk)

These bar risers deserve their own appraisal. The price is just a little above '*budget*' but the quality is very good. They've been designed and manufactured with pride – and intelligence, with the range of spacers provided you can customise to the exact bar height you want.

This worked so well on the Honda CRF250L. For all-day standing on the pegs slow-speed trail-use a height of 25mm (1-in) is perfect. But for days when you anticipate riding faster, using primarily standing attack and then sitting, then dropping out one spacer



The Apico bar riser kit gives the option of 22mm or 25mm rise





**Tested**

and riding at 22mm (3/4-in) is a nice compromise. If you're going to commute on the bike for a solid week, then set them at the lowest – no spacers – is perfect for maximum-comfort sitting. It's that added flexibility that adds value and makes these a better choice than just using one-height risers. The finish is top notch and there are two lengths of bolts supplied, which set you use depends on the height you choose. Seriously intelligent kit.



protecting not just the frame rails and sump, but the water pump too. And the plate's even been drilled for easy sump plug access. The guard has now been tested on countless rocks and roots and not been found wanting. Adtek customer service was also spot-on with overnight delivery.

## **ADTEK BASH PLATE**

Supplied by [www.ad-tekproducts.co.uk](http://www.ad-tekproducts.co.uk)

The CRF250L needs a proper sump guard, no question. This British-made guard by Adtek is a proper guard. The quality is top notch, solid 4mm thick alloy, and bent, welded and drilled to perfection. It slips into place like OE kit, there's no levering, no sweating, no skinned knuckles. And there's even a small tube of thread-lock included to ensure the bolts don't vibrate free. And the protection is comprehensive, properly



The Adtek sump guard gives way more protection than the flimsy plastic Honda item shown top right...







## MICHELIN AC10 TYRES

Supplied by [www.endurotyres.com](http://www.endurotyres.com)

After nearly 2000 miles (3250km) these are almost worn down to needing replacement. They've been excellent though. After the performance of the standard tyres on the CRF250L these have felt like riding on velcro when riding off-road. They were good for the coast-to-coast as hoped, but they properly proved themselves in the Eastbourne Long Distance Trial, when despite running at road pressures of 30psi they still gave enough grip to clean but all of two of the 15 sections (*just two dabs surrendered*) for a second class finisher's award. You do however need to

exercise caution on the road for the front will skid if you crash-brake, particularly on dampish smooth tarmac. Just ride with that in mind and you're okay, and they're reasonably comfortable even over extended road riding. The price point is very reasonable too. And just as importantly – especially when it comes to insurance – they're road legal.

We had ours supplied by Enduro Tyres (*headed by the enthusiastic Al Ranger*) in the UK and they're another outfit offering excellent service. And Al is utterly dedicated to enduro as a rider and a sponsor – we love to support those who support our sport.

After nearly 2000 miles the confidence-inspiring Michelin AC10s are looking a bit worse for wear, but did the job admirably...

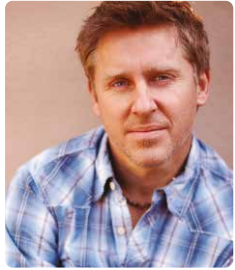


## TELL US ABOUT YOUR HONDA CRF250L

How do you rate our preparations? What works for you on your CRF250L? If you feel inspired to share your knowledge, please feel free to post your thoughts and images on our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/rustsports](http://www.facebook.com/rustsports). We're keen to hear from you!







## BEING GERRY FREIDMAN

WORDS AND PHOTO BY GARY FREEMAN

“Hey man”

“Oh hey Ricky. How’s it going? Oh yeah? Good. Cool. Yeah. So you just arrived from USA? OK nice, good. And you’re all ready to race? Fantastic man. Great. Alright. Well I guess I’ll see you on the track.”

OK, I may have said “on the track”, but I meant at the track.

And what’s the difference!? At, on, in. They’re all insignificant prepositions (*I think*). And frankly – who I am in the foyer of the Holiday Inn Express (*Zolder*) is my business. Just like those dreams where someone asks you if you can land the plane and you step up, but haven’t a clue. I stepped forward not as Gary Freeman (*little known nobody*), but Gerry Freidman, motocross Grand Prix racer – representing (*yes I said representing*) Great Britain at the 2003 Motocross des Nations, Zolder Belgium. (*Smug turn to camera, followed by fake modesty*).

Yes, in essence I’d just walked into the foyer of the Holiday Inn Express (*Zolder*) to check-in ahead of the 2003 Motocross des Nations – with a Fox bag. Ricky Carmichael, the US GOAT (*greatest of all time*) [and by the way I believe that Stefan Everts was also the GOAT, albeit on the other side of the Atlantic. And although Ricky beat Stefan that day, a) the track builders put in a ridiculous whoop section that gave RC an advantage and b) the Belgium team beat the Americans to the overall]. Where was I? Yep – I’d walked into the foyer, looked to my left and there was Ricky Carmichael, alone and chilling on one of the reception sofas.

I said ‘hi’ before I’d realised who he was. He said ‘hey’ back and we had a little chat – based loosely around the assumption that I was racing in the event and we’d ‘cross swords’ (*as it were*) later. (*OK, I could have just said clashed, but I went for the cheap ‘sword’ laugh.*)



So why didn’t I explain to him who I was? Well...

- a) I had a Fox ‘wheelie bag’ with me and that made me look (*to RC*) like a pro-MX racer
- b) I liked the idea of being a pro-MX racer, so rode the ambiguity wave right up to the point where I had to ‘*land the plane*’.
- c) Look it’s hard when you’re in a situation like this, and Ricky has a strong will you know!

He wanted me to be a racer and I want to be one! I wanted to be the person he thought I was! Can we move on now!? Leave it! Leave! It!

Anyway, here’s a snap of Ricky in the holding area before the A-final.

He’d seen me with a camera earlier that day (*when I was supposed to be in his qualifying race*) and subsequently wandered around the paddock looking lost and empty – refusing to look at me. The charade was over. My reputation in tatters, I’ve lived under a bridge ever since. BUT (*and this is a very real point!*) – I may live under a bridge, but I do know how to land a plane: Top of the glide-slope, reduce ground speed, throttle back, flaps, air brakes, disengage auto-pilot, gear down (*three green lights*), auto-throttle, runway apron, flare-out, reverse thrust, wheel brakes, retract flaps, park, engine stop, tea and medals.

Happy now!?

Only some of the above is true. You choose.





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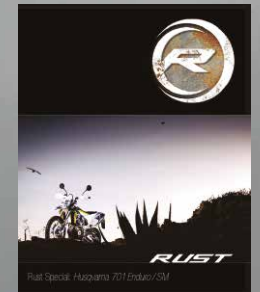
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