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FEATURING

**KTM 690 ENDURO R**  
LIGHT IS RIGHT

**HUSQVARNA FE701LR**  
BIG TANK = LONG RANGE



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NEW WP XPLOR PRO 8946 SHOCK ABSORBER



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# COMING SOON



It's been a difficult year, not just globally with this pandemic and all, but here at RUST we've been through one protracted period where we've been thinking, developing, shaping – looking for a new way ahead for RUST. So after this pandemic-enforced break – where actually we never took a break, we've been busy publishing on our website, selling Bell helmets, creating new commercial relationships and working on various side projects – we now have a path set for 2021.

Feedback we got on our digital magazines suggested they have been too big, too much to consume in one go, these days attention spans just don't last 120 pages, least not in

digital format. So rather than the old plan of six bi-monthly magazines we're going for 12 (monthly) smaller publications. That sounds old, not new, school. But rather than being full-on multi-story magazines, these will be instead super-sized features. Taking the one test or theme and allowing it space to breathe and the professional design to impress, with some aspects unpacked, or you might say deconstructed, to allow better, deeper understanding. Our testing and reporting outside of this special publication will instead tip into the continual publishing on our website.

This here Issue 46 of RUST was intended to be the first of the new type. Bit of a prototype

you might say, but we failed on that. With these two exceptional bikes there was simply too much to say, too much to report on, so it just kept expanding until it hit 60 pages and the publisher cried 'enough!' Hopefully our first edition in 2021 will be more on track!

We will also be working on improving our multi-media presentation. Video cannot be left out of any publishing equation, so we'll look to integrate these into the new-style publications, plus obviously be placing them in the various usual media channels. And we'd like very much to link this output better and more expansively within the social media world so it's easier found and even more widely read and viewed.

With the Coronavirus vaccines being rolled out, we are, like you, hoping 2021 can be a good year, or at least a better year. Certainly, looking at our collective calendars here at RUST, where we've optimistically penciled in a whole host of rides and races, we could be looking at a cool season of riding. We hope so.

In the meantime we hope you've been keeping well – not a given, by any means – and we look forward to communicating and sharing with you more.

**JB**

Safe riding

editor@rustsports.com





# HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT

**Q**uite possibly this is the adventure test of the year. Honestly, no adventure bike over the recent seasons has made quite the impact these two have on our little collective of RUST testers. We're talking eureka moments, or at least a string of little epiphanies: why hadn't we thought of these before?

Indeed the KTM 690 Enduro R and Husqvarna FE701 (LR) are quite possibly the adventure-lites we've all been searching for. Of course a bunch of people already know this – they've bought and love these bikes – but the rest of us somehow have either discounted or clean overlooked them. While the limelight has recently been stolen by the KTM 790s (and now 890s) and the Yamaha Ténéré 700, actually just one step below those admitted excellent middleweights, these two models could quite possibly be the better performers. Arguably these could be the best production-made adventure bikes on the market today, only we've not recognised them as such, for they have been hiding – as it were – in plain sight.





# KTM 690 ENDURO R

## MODEL INTRODUCTION

**K**TM stands guilty as charged. They've had this single-cylinder adventure bike thing going for more than two decades, this is their patch. Their story began back in 1997 with their LC4 620 Adventure – the model in which for the first time they brought together elements of rally, adventure and trail, although mostly rally. Taking inspiration from their Dakar Rally racers, they created a very defined high-end product. While you can see similarities with the Japanese trail bikes that predate it – like the Honda Dominator – this was a bike on an altogether different level. ▶





▷ Combining a race-derived motor in a race-spec chassis with race-inspired bodywork it was a bit of a connoisseurs' choice. For an expert rider/mechanic, a wonderful choice – for others, a little too demanding in every respect. Successive models brought more civility, but it was still a lumpy, vibey unit, very tall, very focused – not for beginners and so not a huge seller.

The 2008 690 Enduro (and slightly edgier Enduro R) redressed that expert-only issue. Kind of. A new rally-derived frame – now trellis type – came with shorter (250mm travel) suspension so the bike lost its loftiness, although still a fairly perky 910mm at the saddle. The new-generation LC4 engine – revamped again in 2012 with a twin-spark head and with fuel injection – was smoother running and had the added benefit of being more oil-tight, more reliable. Only KTM chose to dispense with the adventure aspect of the mix, losing the 28-litre fuel tank and fairing. An Adventure no more, the 690 reverted to being a trail bike. Fortunately, worldwide, the aftermarket suppliers rose to the challenge, providing tank and fairing kits for those who wanted to take their 690s further than the pea-sized 12-litre under-seat fuel tank allowed.

That 690 was discontinued in 2016 amid talk of emissions restrictions making singles unviable. But three seasons later, in 2019, the 690 was back, with a revised motor – again even smoother (thanks to two balance shafts) – now Euro5 compliant, with traction control, cornering ABS and a quickshifter – oh, and now boasting a whopping 74hp. RUST tested this bike at the world launch in Spain and came away super-impressed. The bike was smooth and civil like a typical road bike, but it rode trail like an enduro. Lovely. Only still no big tank, no fairing. 🚩



## KTM 690 ENDURO R TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

**ENGINE:** 693cc, single cylinder, liquid-cooled four-stroke

**BORE AND STROKE:** 105 x 80mm

**POWER AND TORQUE:** 74hp/73.5ft-lb (claimed)

**GEARBOX:** Six-speed

**FRAME:** chromoly tubular steel trellis

**DRY WEIGHT:** 146kg

**SEAT HEIGHT:** 910mm

**SUSPENSION:** 48mm USD WP Xplor forks, WP Xplor linkage shock, 250mm travel

**GROUND CLEARANCE:** 270mm

**FUEL CAPACITY:** 13.5 litres

**TESTED RANGE:** 191 miles





# HUSQVARNA FE701

MODEL INTRODUCTION ▷





## HUSQVARNA 701LR TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

**ENGINE:** 693cc, single cylinder, liquid-cooled, four-stroke

**BORE AND STROKE:** 105mm x 80mm

**POWER AND TORQUE:** 74hp/73.5ft-lb (claimed)

**GEARBOX:** Six-speed

**FRAME:** chromoly tubular steel trellis

**DRY WEIGHT:** 155kg

**SEAT HEIGHT:** 925mm

**SUSPENSION:** 48mm, USD WP Xplor forks, WP Xplor linkage shock, 250mm travel

**GROUND CLEARANCE:** 270mm

**FUEL CAPACITY:** 25 litres

**TESTED RANGE:** 300+ miles



When KTM bugged-out of their own 690 market in 2016, Husky stepped-in, with their 690-derived FE701. It might be called (another) white KTM, but the Husky guys did rework the formula. Unusually, they softened the design: softer engine mapping, softer suspension, even a softer seat. Although conversely, on the early examples, they fitted longer (275mm travel) WP 4CS forks. The idea was to make the bike more accessible, certainly more comfortable. Even the brakes were downgraded with a twin-piston caliper replacing the four-pot unit on the KTM.

The latest 701s match the 2019 690 for spec, including the 250mm suspension travel front and rear (we're talking WP XPLOR-spec suspension) and the latest 74hp Euro5-beating engine. However, Husky has taken one step into the past (and the spirit of 640 Adventures) by creating a variation on the standard 701. Fitting a 12-litre forward tank to create a combined 25-litres of fuel capacity, enough for 500km (or thereabouts) at a go, they've put (some of) the adventure back into the mix. And this bike, is of course the FE701 LR (for long range) you see here. Still no fairing as such, but with that doubling of the fuel capacity its closer to the 640 Adventure of old in terms of adventure suitability. 🇬🇧





# A DAY IN THE LINCOLNSHIRE LANES





▷

**W**e started our test up at Craig's stamping ground in Lincolnshire. After driving/riding up from the South East, the first time we (Warren and myself, JB) saw the KTM and Husky was in Craig's yard (he'd been over to KTM HQ in Silverstone to collect them). There were, as you can imagine, some instant reactions.

And it was the Husky taking the blows. That new forward tank is pretty bulbous, not what you would call immediately attractive. The tank and associated gubbins add 10 kilos to the 701 mix even before you add fuel, and you can add another 12 kilos or there about for that, so the Husky LR not only looks aesthetically challenged but it's 'fat' too. Even pushing the bikes around you could feel that extra weight, 20+ kilos is a big penalty to carry in a bike of this size. Meanwhile the lithe KTM, in its EXC-inspired bodywork and colours got all the love. Warren, who's idea of a grand tourer is a 500 EXC with saddle bags, was clearly smitten by the orange wonder and equally clearly wasn't going to have a bar of the hefty Husky – and that was just fine by me as having already tested the 690 I was keen to see if the Husky would perform like a 650-single should even with all that extra weight.

Craig, and his wingman Del, guided us out into the Lincolnshire lanes – and very nice they were too. Longer and more flowing than those we have in the South East. Immediately the 690 and 701 impressed as this new Euro



5 spec motor is a strong one. On the KTM, Warren was finding this translated into wheelies, even when rolling-on in fourth gear – it's that torque. With an extra 12-litres up front and a softer engine map the Husky was less vertically inclined, but nonetheless plenty punchy.

In the green lanes Warren was impressed by the KTM's impression of an enduro bike, it can kick along real easy and a fair deal faster than your regular adventure bike. On the Husky, either through preference or through structural limitation the pace was just that little more cautious, but even then a lot swifter and easier than on a regular adventure bike. The extra fuel of course doesn't unbalance

the bike as it's carried in the position of a conventional fuel tank, but the weight combined with the softer suspension does suggest riding with a little more caution than on the KTM (as you'd expect).

The ride took us to an old WWII airfield, RAF Wickenby, which was home to the Wellington then Lancaster-flying 12 and 626 Bomber squadrons. The airfield still has so many of the buildings that were hastily erected in those war years and there's a museum on the first floor of the clubhouse – that used to be the control tower. Then there were the memorial plaques found in an avenue of trees dedicated to the lost crews as well as the Icarus Memorial which pays tribute to all 1080 ▷





▷ airmen who lost their lives through those war years. As ever with these things, it's all quite evocative.

Adjacent to the airfield we found what Craig terms his supercross track, although Eli Tomac might not quite agree with that description. But indeed, created by the landowner, we found tabletop type mounds and banked horseshoe turns specifically made for motorcycle playtime, so supercross in a Lincolnshire trail rider's stylee. Fun to

charge the KTM and Husky around, and again playing racers on these bikes over these mounds is not what you'd do on a bigger adventure bikes.

Between jumping around on the 'supercross' track and then lobbing both bikes off a three-foot high loading bay (flat-landing on concrete) – purely for photographic purposes, you understand – illustrated the scope these two have in terms of extreme riding. Some 150 kilos may be heavy in enduro terms, but

compared to riding a 250-kilo super ADV, they make technical riding a lot easier and so a lot more fun.

At the end of the ride we needed to load up with our Giant Loop Coyote saddle bags, tank bags and ruck sacks and head across to the west coast to rendezvous with the Rally Moto crew for the following day's Coast to Coast Roadbook Challenge. Loading up the bags highlighted one particular aspect to these bikes – carrying gear is not their forté.

Both bikes come with smooth bodywork and not much in the way of tie points. As well, the giant mufflers, which house the catalytic converters, sit right where a saddlebag should rest. And when those mufflers get super hot – as they do – this will lead to melt downs, even fires. Yes, with both bikes you do need a frame to mount your luggage – or as in this case push the saddlebags far forward, which was okay for seated travel but prevents standing-riding. 🚫



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RIDE REPORT

# KTM 690 ENDURO R

Words: Warren M. & Images: JB





## ON ROAD

The on-road and touring ride quality of the 690 Enduro R was way better than I had expected from this EXC lookalike. I had expected it to ride well off-road being as narrow and naked as it is but had been dreading the longer motorway and tarmac cruising.

Most moto journos would pah-pah the idea that any single was suitable for adventure riding, especially one with no fairing, a long flat seat and little or no creature comforts. Here you don't have the makings of a good modern adventure bike, or least not one with the kind of ride-cosseting gizmos that's becoming standard fare in the adventure sector.

Surprisingly, the hard, flat seat was comfortable over the entire 260km from Lincolnshire to Morecambe; the riding position is upright and the cockpit pretty roomy although the rear tank does jut-out enough to make sliding backwards to adjust your riding position a little awkward. The wind buffeting was not an issue below 70mph and in general the cruising capability was surprisingly good, the motor purring along on both motorway and byway.

Where the on-road fun factor really did come into its own was along the B6255 past the Ribbleshead Viaduct, between Ingleton and Hawes in North-Yorkshire. The road is undulating and twisty and it's here that the Enduro R shone. Despite being shod with the Mitas E07 dual sport tyres

the 690 Enduro R behaved like its supermoto cousin and I had a hard time remembering that this was a road-book rally event and not a track day.

The torque comes in strong and smooth down low and into the mid-range and combined with the quickshifter and counter shaft balancers the power is delivered softly and without fuss. The ABS and traction control work brilliantly on the road and provide a good deal of confidence through the twisty bits and even when getting on the brakes hard. The Brembo's are awesome and the actuation provides good feedback on an easy pull lever. There was none of the customary diving under braking which meant that you could brake into corners without the unsettling transition as the fork unloads when you get on the power and drive toward the exit.



**THE CRUISING  
CAPABILITY WAS  
SURPRISINGLY GOOD,  
THE MOTOR PURRING  
ALONG ON BOTH  
MOTORWAY AND  
BYWAY**







## OFF ROAD

The 690 batted down green lanes and single track with surefootedness and the forks and the shock felt well balanced with none of the softness often found with trail machines. And that meant that hidden single-track holes, small rocks and hard rut edges would not deflect the front end violently. The 690 is all about business.

Knitting the suspension and ride quality package together on the 690 is the now legendary chromoly trellis frame which, being I think torsionally more rigid than a conventional trail bike frame, really aided getting the power of the 74bhp engine to the ground. There's no appreciable flex in the frame and I like that feeling of precision in the handling as a result.

The steering on the 690 is surprising neutral and the Mitas E07s impressed as much off road as they did on, and I preferred these to the TKC80s that were on the 701LR which felt vague and came across as having a softer side wall which would roll a little more than the Mitas tyres.

The 690 features ABS and traction control (MTC) with lean angle sensors (which help control cornering through the ABS and rear wheel traction), and a

quickshifter-equipped gearbox. The on-off switch for the ABS system is mounted next to the odometer. However, a KTM dongle is available from the PowerParts catalogue that allows for a single channel ABS function to be active on the front wheel only, leaving the rear system off; it's not lean angle sensitive and doesn't detect front wheel lofting.

The problem there is that I'm not sure the dongle turns off the traction control along with the rear wheel ABS and I can't vouch that it turns off the anti-wheelie having not been able to test it and that is more the problem than the ABS in my opinion. Apparently, the dongle also remembers your settings so the electronics will not reset to default each time you turn the bike off (which is a constant annoyance with the standard setup). Why this is an aftermarket part is beyond me.

The 690 comes with the standard KTM two map settings: Map 1 according to KTM is a more aggressive road-oriented map for street riding and engages more of the electronic aids while Map 2 softens the power and loosens







▷ the traction control to allow slides and wheelies. On road the aids were a welcome addition but off road they are too invasive and I would have preferred to have the bike under my own control rather than being 'assisted'.

One neat little extra – the 690 comes with a very welcome USB charging port which I loved, the convenience of having this as factory spec is awesome. It's housed very neatly on the left side of the headlight shroud for ease of access.

### THE VERDICT

Being the antithesis of the big ADVs, can the 690 gain the traction it deserves in the 'adventure' market? One thing's for sure the 690 allows you a far greater freedom to go anywhere the mood takes you. Get yourself down a 'road to nowhere' and there is no getting out of it on a big ADV. They are very difficult to turn around in narrow spaces and even more so on a narrow incline or downhill. No bother to these middleweights given their weight and nimbleness. Is that not the true nature of adventure, going into the unknown? And if it is then simplicity, reliability and ruggedness would all be high on the list of wants. And on that basis the 690 would be my adventure machine of choice.



But is the 690 an adventure bike in standard form? No, honestly it's more a true dual-sport weekend fun bike – that you can take touring if you wanted to. However, I could build my own bespoke ADV bike from a 690 base for no more than the retail price of a big off the showroom floor alternative. Its key selling points are that it looks and behaves like an EXC, which I love, has a fuel range of nigh on 200 miles (191 as

tested with a little room to spare), which coupled with the reliable and powerful, single cylinder engine makes this bike a real joy to ride.

I liked that we rode to the Coast-to-Coast event, did the rally and then rode home, with no van, no trailer required. This is a truly a versatile go-anywhere bike that is a great choice for multidisciplinary riding without having to own various speciality machines. 🇬🇧





# 2021 KTM 690 ENDURO R

KTM have obviously come to the same conclusions as the rest of us – the whole ABS / ride modes matter needed tidying up. Here's what the 2021 edition of the 690 Enduro R will bring:

- Improved ride mode functionality through the handlebar switch: STREET mode enables two channels of ABS both on the front and rear of the bike. The OFFROAD setting disengages rear wheel ABS for that important rear braking feel for low-traction terrain.
- The ABS itself benefits from a new modulator unit to better regulate the force and application of the braking power required, which also means it can be activated 'on the fly' and there is no longer a need for a 'dongle'.
- The new dashboard has an ABS 'button' to provide a rapid way to switch off the rider aid for the full flow offroad setting. The same display now shows indicators for RPM and gear selection.
- And of course no new year model can be complete without some BNG. In KTM speak: When it comes to the aesthetic of the motorcycle then a fetching 2021 graphics and color revision is an eye-catching addition.







# RIDE REPORT HUSQVARNA FE701

Words & Images: JB ▶





## THE HUSKY WOULD PUSH ALONG EASILY HOLDING AN INDICATED 90MPH CRUISE WITH NO SIGN OF STRESS

### ON ROAD

Loading up the Husky for the Rally Moto Coast-to-Coast was not easy. I'd elected to camp the two nights of the event (Warren went B&B) and that meant I needed to mount a bunch of camping equipment beside the usual camera gear. The lump on the top of the front fuel tank meant my Touratech camera tank bag wouldn't fit so I had to abandon a bunch of camera kit and revert to a modest, but excellent, Giant Loop mini tank bag. And while the Giant Loop Coyote saddlebag was a fair fit across the back of the LR the presence of the super-hot cat-containing exhaust muffler meant this bag had to be fitted well forwards – fine when seated, but you couldn't stand on the bike as the bag sat too snug up against your calves.

Once on the road – a combination of B-roads, then A-roads, then motorway for the 160 miles from Market Rasen to Morecambe – I was pleasantly

surprised as to just how comfortable the Husky was. The ride position is trail bike upright, but the seat is a little more generous than that on the KTM and somehow I think the combination of the little enduro light board and fat forward fuel tank did a fair job of spilling the windblast away from the rider. Warren, at our one and only stop, commented on the windblast as we went over the top of the Pennines, but I honestly hadn't felt a thing. This combined with impressive smoothness of the motor – honestly, sometimes you'd think it was a multi – made for a surprisingly relaxed ride.

Equally the frugality of the motor – ridden gently you'll probably get 70mpg – combined with the 25-litre capacity meant there were no nervous mental







## OFF ROAD

The 701's soft setup meant for a more careful off-road riding experience. On his brief ride on the 701, Warren immediately hit a rock hidden in long grass in a lane and after nearly going to the floor he complained bitterly about the fork. Yes it is soft and adding extra preload immediately helps, but its no deal-breaker. You see, the KTM 690 is an all-action quasi-racer off-road and it has the light-footed stance and dependable accuracy of a competition machine. But in their redesign to make the 701 (and particularly this LR variant) more of an all-rounder Husky has definitely shifted the bias to make this a comfortable long-distance trail machine first and foremost. This one's for the adventure rider who's going deep into the outback, but at a considered pace not like some wannabe Dakar racer.



calculations comparing fuel station intervals with remaining mileages, as you might on many a trail bike.

Being, as usual, we'd left late and not accounted for the shorter daylight hours the second half of the ride to Morecambe got faster and faster. And here again I was impressed. The Husky, like the KTM, would push along easily holding an indicated 90mph cruise with no sign of stress, it even had a bit of punch in reserve should it be needed. And again, I wasn't feeling the windblast.

The big tanks meant I could ride the 350km of the Coast-to-Coast without a fuel stop, which was nice. So while I could have ignored the compulsory fuel stop at mid-distance actually I didn't, but the fuel from there saw me out the entire tour back to Craig's and I got to do the entire 900km tour on just two fuel stops. By the way there's a handlebar switch by which you swap from one

tank to the other, which means you can keep swapping between them if you want to maintain a balanced depletion of the tanks. Alternatively when one tank goes dry and the motor dies – as it did – a quick flick of the switch gets the fuel into the injectors again and with barely a cough you're going again.

The intentional suspension softness of the set-up on the 701 did make it less racy on the road than the KTM, but alternatively plusher for a comfortable ride. Personally I might have preferred the KTM's front brake. That's a four-piston caliper where the Husky has a two-piston unit and this felt a little stressed when it came to braking hard with the combination of a near 100-kilo rider plus 25-litres of fuel plus a good 25-kilos of baggage.

In all, though, I was delighted by the 701's on-road capability and I'd certainly have no reservations about taking it for a long-long ride.







So it's less suitable to British green lanes with all their 4x4 ruts, overgrown hedgerows and slippery clay cambers etc. Yet it's still way more suitable for these than any big ADV. So that said, say I was going to take on a ride down to Morocco, spend a week down there in the High Atlas etc before plodding all the way back again – well, yes I'm taking this one, not the orange racer Warren's favouring.

And while it's bigger and bulkier than the 690, the curved shape of the front

tank – that, yes, makes it a touch ugly – does at least mean that bulk doesn't impinge on your riding off road, it's narrow enough where it needs to be and the handling is conventional enough. Maybe you can't quite boss the front end in a tight corner the way you would the 690, but then that's not the style of this machine. I found I adapted to its stature very quickly and still found a lot more confidence to ride technical stuff than I would on a big ADV.

And while some might want for a fairing – like those KTM 640 Adventures

of old – for off-roading not having a screen is no bad thing, making for a clear view ahead. And while rally types will be searching for aftermarket options – and full-house road book options – for the touring rider you're just going to want to clamp on a simple GPS and for that the 701 is just fine.

### THE VERDICT

I fell in love with the 701 LR over the four days of this test. Yes, the brakes could be a little sharper and the suspension maybe could be a little firmer while remaining plush, but I like the direction Husqvarna has pushed this machine.

I'm still struggling to find the funds and time to go on a 'big ride' and frankly it may/will probably never happen, but I'd still love a 701 LR just for the immediate potential it offers. Add bags, GPS and go...

Actually, I'd make one modification before pushing off. I'd shed that Euro5 necessary muffler and fit a non-cat alternatively, maybe with a little protective frame around it, so I could push the saddlebags back to where they should be and know they won't melt! Oh yes, I forgot, I'd also spec some bigger 'rally' footpegs, these ones – as on the KTM – are just a little too modest for all day comfort. But that's it. Not 'ready to race', instead 'ready to adventure' – and that does it for me! 🇬🇧







Words & Images: JB

# RALLY MOTO COAST-TO-COAST





like Rally Moto's events. Boss man Robert 'Burt' Hughes knows his audience, and also understands that for some people all this off-road malarkey is new territory. He therefore hand picks his routes, not as some ego-and bike-busting test of manhood, but as an enjoyable scenic day's ride out suitable for heavy and expensive adventure motorcycles. It's his express wish that you reach the finish with all your bike's bodywork in place – and with a broad smile of satisfaction spread across your face. But the rides are not without their challenges, as in this case completing the full 350km in ten hours does take some application, if not to say endurance.

Consequently guys do turn up on 1250 GSs, V-Strom 1050XTs and the like. And if there's a tricky section that might cause you grief Burt will call it at the beginning – then it's your choice to ride that section or not. For this ride, turning up on the lithesome 690 and slightly less lithesome 701LR, we couldn't help but feel like we were cheating. These two bikes are very nearly enduro capable so would breeze this course.

Only this being a roadbook event we didn't actually know the course. And given we gave the roadbooks back at the end (and dutifully didn't track the event on a GPS) we still don't know the route even after riding it. We do know that we rode vast expanses of the Yorkshire Dales and North Yorkshire

**IT'S BURT'S EXPRESS  
WISH THAT YOU REACH  
THE FINISH WITH  
ALL YOUR BIKE'S  
BODYWORK IN PLACE**



**KTM 690** Enduro R and **HUSQVARNA FE701** (LR)

Moors national parks and I'm pretty sure that was Rudland Rigg, the famous near 10-mile drovers' road that crosses the top of the Yorkshire moors, that we rode later in the day.

Equally, this route isn't just about byways, it makes the most of the back roads too, which makes the choice of proper adventure bikes, over enduro type models, the correct choice. There was a point where we crossed paths with about 20 enduro bikes up on the moors and, call me a snob, or judgmental, but I couldn't see the point in what those guys were doing. They were chasing each other's tails over a trail that a kid on a tricycle could master. So they necessarily picked a faster pace to find their thrills – and missed out on seeing the impressively expansive views we found up there. Big bikes slow you down, and ridden in such a manner you get to look around – hey you can even stop and look – and so you find a better appreciation of the nature. And you're





▷ less likely to upset the walking/cycling folk, thereby keeping these sensitive trails open for the future. And boy, that's important. It's about mutual respect, eh?

And if I had a visitor over from America or Europe and wanted to show them England, I could think of no better way to do it than this ride. The whole 'it's grim up north' thing is a myth. It's perpetuated by northerners who (rightly) want to keep southerners away. The whole ride from coast to coast was just one 10-hour movie of some of the finest scenery you'll find in the UK. Beautiful centuries old, studiously maintained villages abound, while all around the landmarks again speak of history centuries old (the 19th century Ribbleshead Viaduct now being the



most world famous of all, only not for real history but the fantasy fiction of the Harry Potter films). By the way, if the northerners want to keep telling us about the north-south poverty divide then they might want to refrain from riding their new MV Brutales and Ducati Monsters across the Dales of a Sunday afternoon – in their hundreds!

In all the Coast-to-Coast was less of a challenge than the Tour of Wales – for one thing we didn't finish at 10pm! But was certainly authentic adventuring and well worth a second go – and more. Yes, we'll be back. Credit to the Rally Moto team as well, they run a tight ship, nothing goes unnoticed, whether it

was Warren's speeding (bad man!) or my navigational errors (yeah, I made a couple, dammit) and given the GPS trackers they supply if you do find yourself totally lost (ahem) you can call them and they'll guide you back to the trail. There is, by the way, another way to get yourself back on track, involving a GPS and geographic coordinates, but we can leave that for another time/story.

Anyway, Burt and his team are planning their 2021 fixtures now so it would be as well to check them out at the website [www.rallymoto.co.uk](http://www.rallymoto.co.uk)

And lets hope all these stories of vaccine breakthroughs holds true. Can't wait to get out there for some more.... 🇬🇧





# SECOND OPINION

## CRAIG'S THOUGHTS ON THE 690 & 701

I quite fancy a 701, and I love the look of the 690, so I was excited to open the van doors and see exactly how much fun was squeezed into the back of a SWB T5. Our battered 'bumper' van (every panel has a decent ding or dent) was on collection duty, and the guys at KTM/Husky had clearly formed an opinion that Rob the driver had done all of the damage on the way there as there was a spider's web of straps holding both bikes, which were rather snugly squeezed between the wonky sides. Rob's ex traffic police (bikes and cars) and has no mechanical sympathy, so they're not far wrong to be fair. First impressions and all that...

We pop the bikes out and are presented with a sleek, bright orange mass of angry-looking fun, and the bike equivalent of the elephant man. Let's get it over and done with; the 701 Long Range is UGLY. I could go on, and indeed I did most of the day, but we'll slip over it here as once onboard I couldn't see the bike underneath me. The tanks don't get in the way and aside from the feel of the additional mass, you'd not tell. It's just that you have to stop eventually.

Contrary to the rest of the Husky range, which is, in a rather brutal summary, slightly posher, slightly racier KTM, this Husky feels like it's set up for a

more leisurely ride. It wasn't appreciated here. Both bikes were firmly wedged in safety police mode. On account they were still sub 600km (not yet run in – Covid restrictions having struck again) we couldn't switch off the traction control, and the ABS seemingly also. Also not appreciated. JB and Warren had a weekend's fun scheduled, but I had other arrangements, so my session was a 60km green lane and short twisty tarmac sections in a loop that took in my secret practice location. It has a bit of everything (except dunes unfortunately) and some good open rally mode blasts, so both bikes were on the money for this sort of terrain.

The KTM was slick, pokey and felt significantly lighter and more lithe than the Husky. Neither lack power, and if I could wheelie properly, I'm sure the grunt would be fabulous for it, instead I used that grunt to try and kick the back out and drift about. Except the traction police would step in and spoil the fun (both needed more miles / a first service before it can be switched off). There's power though, enough and in long, silky strings which meant even bouncing the TC on and off you could hold it on the gas and let it fly. As with many things, I'd love one on proper tyres and with all the electronic faff







removed and I think it'd be a belter – a serious rally weapon.

Given the choice it's the KTM for me, a bit stiffer, a bit more aggressive and a bit too orange, but the Husky just felt too soft - like an XR sort of waft. I don't see the benefit of the tank of the LR, I'd much rather have the slimmer bike, and carry an extra can somewhere if I was going off into the desert. Probably on the rear, but having spent a day like a broken record, JB noted on his return from the Coast-to-Coast event that there were no less than four of them there. Point to note, Warren never ran out of fuel on the KTM, and I know he enjoyed the stiffer fashion victim more. I'd liked to have kept it a bit longer too...



## OFF-ROAD MODE

It does work, honest!

As these bikes came to us virtually brand new, and the KTM was certainly still waiting on its first service, the bikes were electronically restricted from being ridden in full off-road mode. That only comes when this mode is fully released via the bike's computer once that first 600km service has been done, but as well partly you'll need KTM's plug-in dongle to access the proper off-road ABS.

As you'll have read from the comments of both Warren and Craig this did impinge on the enjoyment and the results of this test. For my part, having ridden the 690 with the dongle and in the correct off-road riding mode I can attest these bikes do perform properly-conventionally off-road.

The off-road ABS dongle keeps ABS on the front – sensitized to the off-road environment – while allowing the rear brake to be locked. Similarly in the off-road rider mode you get plenty of throttle action and wheelies unimpeded. I actually liked the traction control that's offered in the off-road mode as it allowed power slides in a nicely controlled manner. You can turn the traction control off but with 74hp on tap the power slides could get, well, overpowering! That said, in sand, for me, TC has to be off, no questions. **JB**



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The new Carlsbad line from KLIM is made for those short, intense adventures that inspire us – the kind of rides that could get spoiled only by inadequate gear. Breathable and guaranteed waterproof, unrestricted mobility, comprehensive ventilation, premium protection. Trust KLIM!





# DRESSING THE PART

## USWE OUTLANDER 4 / EXPLORER 26

Warren gets real thirsty when he rides, but he doesn't like carrying big packs. The Outlander 4 suits him then as it's small pack yet can carry up to a 3-litre bladder. Equally, being super-fussy about how things work, he's sold on the 'bounce free' fitting of USWE backpacks thanks to the four-point harness. This pack has just enough additional space to carry an energy bar and credit card. Job done.

JB operates like a mobile media centre, so the 26-litre capacity of the Explorer means he can carry all the pocket cameras, memory cards and smart phones he needs. Plus maps, notebooks, spare gloves, goggles, the odd novel etc. Plus, if you must, yes a laptop. All held by some pretty smart internal pocketing. Plus you can fit a hydration bladder into the front. And again, there's that four-point harness for zero-bounce. And a rain cover.



## BELL MOTO 9 FLEX / BELL MX9 ADVENTURE

Warren wore a motocross helmet, a Bell Moto 9 Flex. It's a range topper, featuring a composite carbon shell combined with a three-layer impact liner designed to provide a 'progressive energy management system' that's capable of dealing equally well with low, medium and high impacts. It also comes with an emergency release system, and a good ventilation system. And a five-year warranty. Warren wrote off his previous Moto 9 Flex in a speedy head-into-a-rock crash, but suffered no concussion, no

head injury. A good reason to buy quality.

JB wore a Bell MX9 Adventure. Not as flash as the mx lid, this is polymer composite shell (polycarbonate we used to call them) and comes at a modest price point. But it's a winner. The visor is excellent and has resisted life-ending scratches or crazing for more than two years. Comfort is very good given the moisture-wicking comfort liner and the aerodynamics work well. It's bulkier and heavier than the mx helmet (1450g) but nonetheless feels like quality lid through and through. Quiet on the road and with a big enough aperture for goggles off-road.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

<https://rustsports.com/bell-mx-9-adventure-mips/>

<https://rustsports.com/bell-moto9-flex/>

## SCOTT DUALRAID DP

These Scott suits are perfect for the rider who would really like to ride in mx/enduro gear but knows that's not good for road work. The Dualraid DP has the same light feel of regular dirt gear but with the extra strength and functionality of an adventure suit. There's plenty of ventilation so you don't melt on hot days and it's pretty okay through to about autumn for cool weather use. After that, and when it rains, you can match it with Scott's Ergo Pro waterproof over-jacket and pants for four-season use. Oh, and the Dualraids look very snappy too – nice design.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

<https://rustsports.com/scott-dualraid-dp/>







# THE TYRES

## CONTINENTAL TKC80

The Husky came with a set of Continental TKC80s fitted, quite a popular OE fitting on adventure bikes. It's also quite possibly one of the oldest tyres on the adventure market. I was editing review copy about TKC80s back in 2001 and it wasn't a new tyre even then. So it's at least 20 years old, this design.

It's lasted that long because it works. The original design was apparently influenced by German enduro champion and former rally racer Richard Schalber who looked to the TKC80 as a competition tyre for his BMW works rally team. So at the outset this tyre was designed for the toughest environment and this explains why it works so well off-road – even though today it's considered a 50:50 tyre.

The block pattern is quite widely spaced, good for clearing mud, but the broadish blocks, which are not overly tall, mean the TKC80s wear reasonably well – typically reaching 3500 to 5000 miles – although with careful riding some get more. They're good on the highway, too, I've ridden with them on a race circuit, maxed-out on a BMW R1150 GS Adventure (at about 200km/h) and they hold up well – but don't try that at home, they're only rated to 160km/h. On the Husky they were fine, I was confident riding on them on road and dirt. A good solid choice of a tyre.

NB. If thrift is your thing do also check out Shinko's knock-off of the TKC80 – the E804/805. We rode on these in the USA, mounted on a pair of 1200GS/As when we rode the Lockhart Basin in Utah. Great on road, even in the wet, and good grip off-road too. And a little more durability than the TKCs.



## MITAS E-07

The KTM came fitted with a pair of Mitas E-07s. These are about as long serving as the TKC80s – again as long ago as 2001 they were standard adventure fitment. The E-07s come with something of a long distance rating, known for going those few extra thousand kilometres, which can be a make or break on long trips.

The pattern is quite different to the TKCs, the tyre sits taller and squarer (and looks narrower) with a diagonal block pattern. The look doesn't immediately inspire confidence but they work plenty well enough. Warren, who can be real sniffy about tyre performance, rated them highly for off-road and was quite happy to push them hard on the road too, preferring them to the TKCs – but that might be an opinion influenced by the soft suspension setup and sheer weight of the Husky.

Newer tyres are coming into the adventure market every year but these old stagers seem able to hold their own still – there are not many 20 year old products you can say that about...



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701  
Enduro



74 hp

Lean angle traction control

2 ride modes

21"/18" wheels

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