

Trail Riding Jawa/CZ Style

Living in Sheffield has some good points. As well as the world class sports facilities, shopping centres, arts and cultural facilities. There is also the Sheffield Tigers Speedway team who have just about won everything there is to win in speedway this year and we all know who make the best speedway bikes don't we.

As if this wasn't enough there is the beautiful Peak District national park on the door step. It has stunning scenery and it has to be appreciated as often as is possible. You could go for a long walk or visit some of its wonderful and numerous attractions but I like to combine it with my passion for motorbikes. I could go for a ride on my Jawa 500R along its pretty, winding country lanes but that doesn't give you the whole picture. Trail riding on the more remote tracks does.

So with this in mind, myself and John Blackburn have been out on our bikes to take in some of the fantastic scenery and try out some of the trails. Testing both bikes and riders.

We met, one evening, at The Ladybower Inn at the start of The Snake Pass. John was on his CZ Enduro. A bike which has successfully taken him on many trails events. I was on my Jawa 500R which I have converted into a trail bike. The road along Snake Pass is great to ride and is well known. It is often used by bikers out for a thrilling ride and has some good bends and twists to test the best rider. We set off up the pass.

About two miles down the road we turned left off the road and headed off up a trail which took us up Blackley Hey. The trail started off easily but rapidly deteriorated into a rocky trail, which was very difficult and tired us out very quickly.

Over the last few years there has been a lot of erosion, probably as a result of the heavy rains, and this made going very tough. There were a lot of rocks and I was glad I had made a sump guard for my 500R. It was getting a thorough testing and I could hear it ringing every time something hit it.

By the time we got to the top we were ready for a break and we stopped by an old stone road marker at Hope Cross which showed the distances to Sheffield and Manchester. I took the opportunity to take a couple of photos. The view at the top was well worth it you could see clearly over the moors for some way. All the way up Hope Valley.



By an old road distance marker on Blackley Moor



Looking out over Hope Valley

We were soon back under way and carried on down the old roman road dropping down the side of Win Hill looking over Edale. On the top of the hill the trail had been much easier and was very pleasant but as we went down it the trail became rocky and rutted again. We soon arrived at the other end of the trail. About three and a half miles. We hadn't seen any walkers the only people we had seen were other trail riders.

We were now back on tarmac and I for one was glad for something a little easier to ride on and welcomed the rest it provided.

We followed the road into Hope village and took the road out past the cement works. It was beginning to get darker so we decided to take a small trail then retire for the rest of the evening to the nearest watering hole.

We headed off up Pin Dale, which took us through some old quarry workings. This trail was only a half a mile long and shouldn't present us with any difficulties.

Or so we thought.

The going was rocky again but not as bad as before. I was leading and was making reasonable progress but the sump guard was taking some punishment again. Right at the end of the trail it was quite steep and had to be ridden very hard to get up the last hundred yards.



Note the back wheel has dug itself in up to the frame

It was on me before I knew it and I just went for it. Thankfully I made it up the steep incline without too much trouble. John was close behind but he hit a large rock and he had to stop. Ordinarily this wouldn't be a problem but the trail had been repaired with loose hard core and when he tried to set off again the back wheel just dug itself into the ground. We had to lift the bike out so it could grip and John was able to successfully ride up the very steep incline up the track.



John makes it up the steep track

The light was now fading fast so we headed into Castleton for some neck oil and a deserved rest.

Both bikes had coped with everything we had asked of them. I had tried John's Enduro and found it felt more natural to ride than my converted 500R. But then again it is the proper tool for the job. My 500R has its limitations but the engine just pulls from nothing and this makes up for the chassis faults. Perhaps with some carefully thought out mods I can improve on the feel of the bike off road. At the moment I'm not a good enough rider for this to give me many problems but I'm hoping to be able to get out into Derbyshire more next year to get more

practice. I might even try to organise some trail riding weekends for anyone to try it out for themselves. It really is great fun and you don't have to have the latest state of the art giant trail bike to enjoy yourself. In fact there are some trails which you quite easily go on with an ordinary road bike.

I thoroughly enjoy it and it's a great way to see some country side you don't see from the tarmac. It just goes to show what our Jawas and CZs are capable of.

See you on a remote trail some time,
Ian Bridges, Sheffield.