

Team *Motor Cycling's* third enduro didn't get off to a very lucky start. Pre-race excitement was dampened by black sheets of water thrown against rattling windows all night long. At dawn the only thing that changed was the colour.

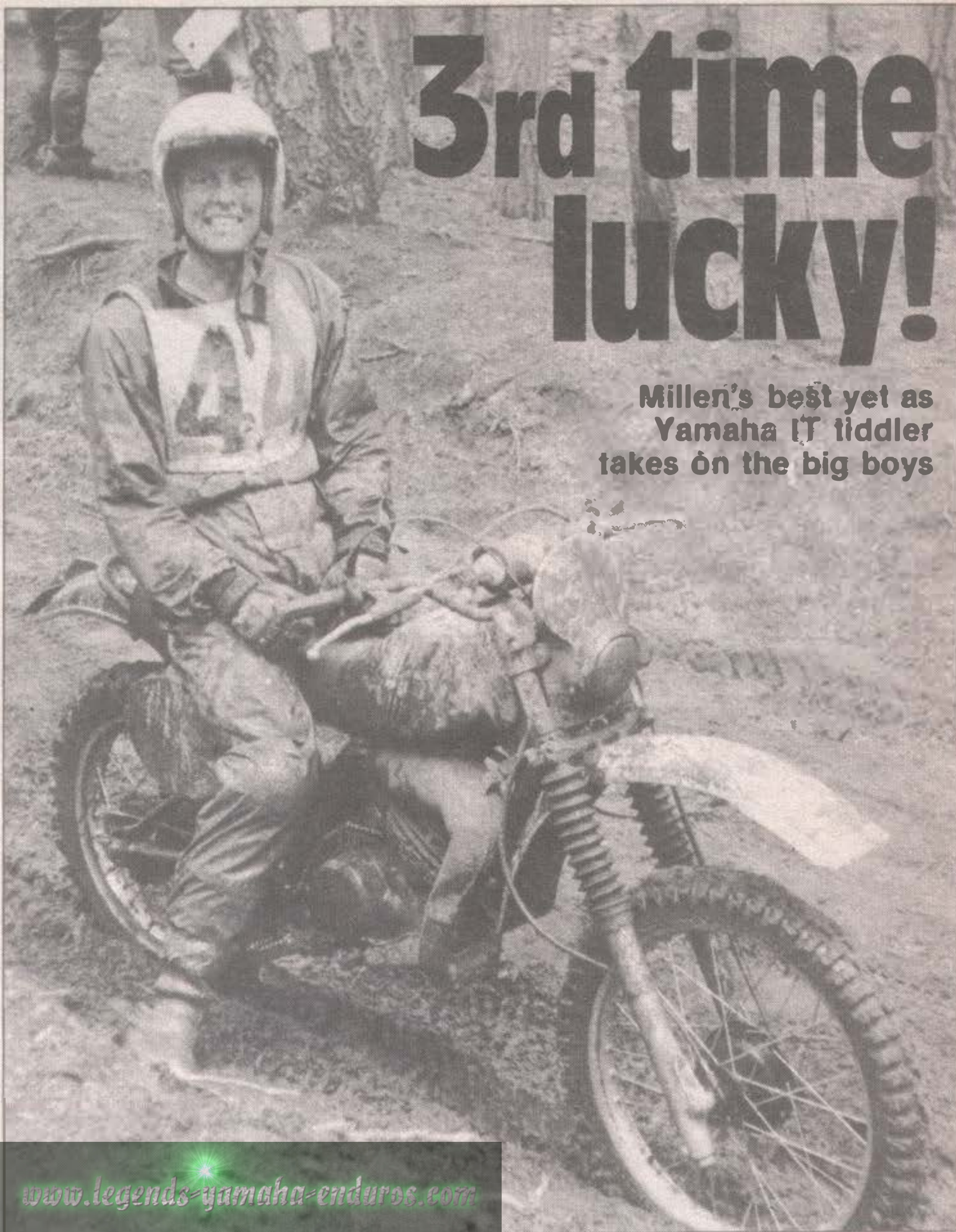
Editor and team leader Charles Deane, his judgement backed up by years of experience, looked out of his window at 06.00 and made an executive decision to go back to bed. Some time later, miles away, the other two members of the team ducked their heads into their anoraks, clutched rolls of duct tape to their chests, made a dash for the hired Transit and sloshed off in the direction of Longmoore, near Bordon, in Hampshire.

### Down the road

For Hampshire Constabulary Motor Cycle Club, organisers of the Fifth Chairman's Enduro (no chairmen involved, as far as I could tell), things were much worse. Clerk of the Course PC Jones, having completed a long-distance road trial in the early hours of the same morning, arrived at Longmoore to find that the planned venue couldn't be used. The event had to move a few miles down the road.

Consequently, Clerk and marshalls were trudging round the soggy heath and woodland stapling markers to trees when the 10.00 start time came and went. Some competitors, like Charles, had probably stayed in bed. Others, I suspect, searched in vain for the new venue before going home. Fifty percent of Team *Motor Cycling's* support crew (her name's Susan) suffered the same fate. Starting on time would have disqualified most of the remainder. Could our luck be changing?

Miraculously, the rain stopped. Sullen mutterings about going home changed to the rattling of machines being unloaded and the zipping of duct tape as it left the rolls to encase the riders. The sun came out. Cheerful scrutineers mingled their way down the line dispensing gaily-coloured, sticky-tape 'passed' markers. It occurred to me that policemen could be people, out of uniform.



# 3rd time lucky!

Millen's best yet as Yamaha IT tiddler takes on the big boys

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I had an extra bit of luck. The delayed start gave me time to fettle a few neglected items on our ex-Marathon test Honda XL500S, but I wasn't looking forward to riding. Good though it may be on fairly open green lanes, it is a large and heavy lump to manhandle through tricky bits. And the Metzeler trials tyre that Sammy Miller had given us for the rear wheel was never intended for wading through the mud of this waterlogged enduro. So, when it seemed certain that Charles was a no-show I put the Honda back in the van and unstrapped the Yamaha IT125 that should have been his ride.

Being the smallest machine in Yamaha's IT range, the 125 is built to full enduro spec. The main features are Yamaha monocross rear suspension, of course, and leading axle front forks. The compact motor sits nearly 12 inches off the ground, its cradle well protected by a sump guard. It also has knobbles as standard. A wise enduro rider never leaves home without knobbles.

The suspension of the bike we borrowed had been modified by D and A Rayner Motorcycles, 1185 High Road, Chadwell Heath, Essex, who look after the machine

for Mitsui, the Yamaha importers. Travel had been stretched by one inch at the front and two inches at the rear, to give about eight and nine inches respectively. Rayner can do this on your own machine for about £15 front, £25 rear.

Given the nature of the Fifth Chairman's Enduro, which was mostly narrow tracks with frequent tight twists and awkward obstacles, not to mention deep sand and mud. I think I would have preferred to sacrifice the extra suspension travel for the extra low-speed control that comes from having the ground within easier reach of your boots when a prod is needed. But the IT125 isn't exceptionally lofty by enduro machine standards and the extra bump-absorbing travel could be welcome on a more typical, more open, faster event.

Not that the Chairman's Enduro was all that slow for the experts. Local hero Jim Titt managed to go fast enough to completely loop in front of me, landing on his collar bone and thus giving others a chance to win for a few months. Get well soon, Jim.

Lacking the bottle to go flat out I much prefer this type of event where every section is a struggle of skill, control and determination. More like trials than moto-cross. Going faster would have turned the IT125's weakest point, very little rear damping, into a serious disadvantage.

In the ten-lap morning session, I only came to a halt about four times. One stop came early in the event, before I'd sussed out that a mud-filled rut had to be approached fast enough for momentum to carry me through. The next was to re-connect the drive cable when it unscrewed itself from the speedo/odometer head, my own fault for not checking over the machine beforehand.

The remaining stops were to wait in the queue that built up behind the most difficult obstacle on the course, a tree stump and log that got higher every lap as spinning knobbles dug ditches on either side. My technique here was to lay the bike on the stump and use it as a pivot while sliding the rear around. This dented the otherwise invulnerable exhaust system.

As with any modern competition



Muddy millen wears a weary finisher's grin

machine, the IT125 had more than enough power for my modest novice needs. There wasn't the low-down clout of bigger competition two-strokes but, mercifully, the engine usually kept going until I got organised enough to change down and get back to the biting performance in the powerband. There's no tacho but keeping the motor buzzing was easy by ear.

But it's the little things that make an enduro bike good, especially when physical exhaustion and the accompanying mental despair exaggerate every fault. The IT125 had all of its little things well sorted.

The engine and brakes worked faultlessly in and out of water and the wide flap at the leading edge of the front mudguard was particularly effective at keeping the thin brown slurry out of my face and neck. The seat tapered nicely to form a slim waist where it blended with the tank and all other parts were well-shaped and tucked away. This made the bike very easy to grip while standing on the pegs, kept the ground within prodding distance and let my leg slide back unhurt when my boot snagged on a rut or rock. The clean lines also saved the bike from serious damage.

Excess slack in the chain was kept in check by a spring-loaded tensioner and mid-day chain adjustment was quick, easy and accurate, thanks to snail cams on the

rear axle. Tucked away lights and a bulb horn make the IT125 road legal, depending on what policemen think of knobbly tyres. But security outside Tesco's is up to you because there is only a cut-out button on the left bar to 'switch off' the engine and there's no steering lock.

The only tool supplied is a combination spanner clipped to the front downtube of the frame. A well-equipped tool pouch behind the seat might seem like a good idea, but they get in the way as you try to scabble off and on the bike in a mess.

Tool pouches also cover up the rear section of the frame loop that supports the seat, so often a useful hand hold. In the IT's case, however, the loop was too close to the mudguard to be useful. In the ten-lap afternoon session, the stump and log were too high to be ridden across which meant a slippery, slow diversion for the other riders. The IT125's low weight and slim shape made it easy for me to wedge the front wheel between the end of the log and a tree, hop off, lift the back end round and ride through a narrow gap. The raw edge of the mudguard was my only hand hold and it cut into my hand. But at least I had one little advantage over the experts on the bigger, heavier bikes.

Unfortunately, I threw it all away. Five riders were slower than me in the morning, but the generous time allowance meant that nobody who finished lost any points. Less time was allowed in the afternoon session and, while everyone else either retired or speeded up, I got slower. Exhaustion led to a casual approach that included stopping to chat to retired Team *Motor Cycling* guest member Dave Andrews about the photos he was taking. So, although there were a few people slower than me through the Special Test, I had picked up enough time penalty points to come 12th overall. There weren't enough of the 27 starters left for a 13th.

So I settled for the pleasure of being among the finishers. After the disaster of Broadhembury (June issue) and the flat-out boredom of Exercise Centurion (July issue) the Fifth Chairman's Enduro gave this novice his most satisfying challenge to date. And the IT125 made it third time lucky.

"Mudguards were effective, keeping the slurry out of my face and neck."



## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

*Dave Rayner modifications not included.*

### Engine

**Type:** Air-cooled, single-cylinder, reed valve two-stroke  
**Bore x stroke:** 56.0 x 50.0mm  
**Displacement:** 123cc  
**Compression ratio:** 8.1:1  
**Carburettor:** 30mm slide type  
**Max. bhp:** 19.5bhp @ 9000rpm  
**Max. torque:** 1.59kg m @ 8500rpm

### Transmission

**Overall gear ratios:** 1st 38.22, 2nd 25.55, 3rd 18.55, 4th 14.72, 5th (top) 10.39:1  
**Clutch:** Wet, multi-plate

### Frame and Forks

**Frame:** Tubular, single downtube, double cradle  
**Front suspension:** Telescopic forks  
 Coil springs with oil damping  
**Rear suspension:** Monocross swinging fork, gas/oil-damped adjustable spring pre-load and fixed damping  
**Front travel:** 180mm (7.1in.)

**Rear travel:** 200mm (7.9in.)  
**Trail length:** 120mm (4.7in.)  
**Castor angle:** 61 degrees, 30 minutes.

### Wheels and Brakes

**Front tyre size:** 3.00 x 21  
**Rear tyre size:** 4.10 x 18  
**Front brake:** SLS drum, 110mm (4.3in.) diameter  
**Rear brake:** SLS drum 130mm (5.1in.) diameter

### Electrics

**Ignition:** Flywheel magneto, CDI and coil  
**Headlight:** 6V, 25/25W  
**Tail/stop lamp:** 5.3W

### Dimensions

**Seat height:** 850mm (33.5in.)  
**Length:** 2105mm (82.9in.)  
**Width:** 890mm (35.0in.)  
**Height:** 1130mm (44.5in.)  
**Wheelbase:** 1365mm (53.7in.)  
**Ground clearance:** 300mm (11.8in.)  
**Dry weight:** 91.5kg (202lb.)  
**Fuel tank:** 8.5 litres (1.9 gallons) including reserve.