



Trialed Out

All the top stunters practice on trials bikes. We sent Polish for a go

If you read April's issue of Fast Bikes you probably came across our Vertical Brits feature where Jay and I took on the UK's top stunt crew. Before then, as far as stand up wheelies are concerned, I used to regard myself as pretty handy. But thanks to the Vertical Brits I was very quickly cured of my delusion, realising that I'm about as handy as ear-muffs in the desert. From that moment on I decided that I wouldn't have sex until I'd learnt how to slow-wheelie any bike I

riding in trials competitions. Before he tries any trick on a road bike he masters it on his trial machine first.

It was obvious that if I wanted to master bike control, I needed a trials stunt school, and I needed it fast.

So it was perfect timing when the big man Moby mentioned that he'd just been speaking to someone about a trials school in Kent. The school is called 'Tricks in the Sticks' and offers 'Trial Day' and 'Trick Day'

NO SEX UNTIL I'D LEARNED HOW TO SLOW WHEELIE. I NEEDED A SCHOOL, AND FAST

want. That dedication quickly died, along with some other New Year's resolutions, the pivotal point being the confusion about whether wanking and blow jobs actually qualify as sex. Nevertheless the desire to learn remained intact.

If you want to be good at something you need to follow the best, and as far as stunting is concerned Christian Pfeiffer is the man. That guy should be crowned as the Valentino Rossi of stunt riding. While all the American riders perform their motorcycle brake-dance (sic) shows, Christian is in a league of his own, the Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake of delicate bike control. If you've watched his DVD you'll know what I mean, and if you haven't then make sure you do. The first thing that becomes apparent is Christian's riding style. He can make any bike dance, and it's blatantly obvious that his skills were developed by

Two caramel lattes, a strawberry frappacino for me, and a couple of sticky buns. Shop's two miles that way pal



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CHRISTIAN PFEIFFER

INTERVIEW

I caught up with Chris minutes before he began a freezing show in Belgium. I asked him why trials riding is such an important base for stunting road bikes.

'As you know, trials riding is my background, and I think that it's the best kind of training preparing you for riding any bike at later stage whether it's going to be road racing or motocross. This is the best school of coordination when you're on the bike, because you're always on the limit of balance and you need total control at all times.

If you're 5-10 years old and you

start with motocross, you don't really have to be very precise when riding and you can get away with going too hot, but with trials you have to be very precise at all times, and you have to coordinate your body with your brakes and throttle control.

You can easily see the difference between me and the American stunt riders. When they are losing control they slam the bike into the ground, and I'm always trying to shift my body more radically in order to save it. Trials gives you that additional ability.'



Not your typical German BMW owner, Christian Pfeiffer goes nuts on his pre-production F800S

courses. I'd found exactly what I was looking for in order to get myself one step higher in the game of throttle, clutch, brake, and body control - and I booked in right away.

The man behind this project is Jason Pearce, an accomplished trials and stunt rider who's performed in stunt shows all over the world.

Just like Christian Pfeiffer he perfected his skills on trials bikes, transferring them to road bikes for performances. Having enjoyed teaching friends for fun, a natural progression was to open a school teaching tricks on trials bikes in the relative safety of fields and woodland.

Jason's playground is located on his parents' farm in Kent, and it seems like it's got the perfect combination of terrains to practice trials riding and stunting at all levels. I met him there on one of those chilly February mornings when you're praying for it not to rain. Then, just as I finished my Hail Marys, the heavens opened and it lashed down so hard that I was expecting to see Noah float past.

The bike Jason had for me to practice on was a British trials competition level 270cc Beta Rev 3, punching



Have you seen American Pie? Apparently, trials bike petrol tanks deliver an even better thrill



Jason, left, obviously about to piss himself laughing at Pete's get-up



Pete's Polish Army 'survive and evade' training comes in handy at the most surprising times

out 40bhp at the back wheel via its quick-action throttle. I didn't know you could squeeze so much power into something that weighs less than a Russian bicycle, so I asked Jason if I could have a wobble around just to get the feeling for it. I took it out for a practice in the paddock, and within a few seconds I'd suffered more scares than watching *The Ring* with the lights off. I'd guessed that it would wheelie off the gas in second, and expected some mono action in third too, but when it hooked up vertical off the throttle in fourth, I knew I was in for some serious fun.

If you're used to a road bike you'll find the characteristics of a trials bike quite bizarre at first. I mean, you can pull away fast in any gear you want. You can put the bike in fourth and go for a wobble without ever shifting up or down. And where's the fucking seat gone? When I decided to rest a bit I had to shift my body so far back that as my arms stretched I accidentally twisted the throttle, and almost flipped the bloody thing.

Anyway I decided that I wanted to start my day with wheelie practice. I was hoping to improve my back brake control during

40BHP IN A BICYCLE? AS YOU CAN IMAGINE, I LOBBED IT STRAIGHT AWAY

seated wheelies, but unfortunately constant heavy rain turned our grass training ground into a paddy field. It was such a bog that even Jason had trouble getting the back tyre to grip.

We decided to move on to stand-up wheelie practice. When stood on the pegs you can use far more body balance and lower revs, which reduces wheelspin. My goal was to mono as slow as possible, from a near standstill.

Trials bikes make you realise more than ever how much you can do with just body balance and loading and unloading the suspension. With every attempt I was using less throttle and more body movement. After a few attempts I realised that all it takes to launch the front off the ground is to rock the bike forward, compressing the fork, then give it a blip of throttle and a tug on the bars as the fork rebounds. The bike went vertical every time, the only problem then was me, and my lack of control.

As you can imagine I pretty much lobbed

it straight away. Fortunately, I was only hoisting it up at walking pace, and as my feet hit the ground I managed to hold on to the bars and run with it, bringing it back down safely. (*Shame you can't do that every time you flip a bike - Ed*)

Making it go up was one thing, but maintaining your balance was a whole different story. It was now that the right combination of throttle, body weight, and back brake came into play. It was amazing watching Jason going at a steady, low speed, shouting out tips as he went by. That massively sensitive quick action throttle was making me feel about as confident as a homosexual immigrant caught up in a BNP rally. But I knew that if I could learn to control it, I could master any road bike.

Sadly the resultant display of 'Carry On Wheelying' was a pathetic combination of flips, slides, and mud munching (*is that prison lingo for something else? - Ed*). Nevertheless, I was gradually gaining more control over the bike. Finally, shaky legs and arm pump put a halt to the whole

Luke, I am your father. Join me, and together we can rule the galaxy.



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experience, and we moved onto some trails sections in the woods to practice balance and bike control.

The mud, rain, hills, trees, and streams were sending me a very clear message: I was the wrong little Polish hobbit, in the wrong woodland, at the wrong time. Looking at the steepest drop I figured the only way up or down would be with ropes and a harness. However, watching Jason riding up the banks with all the grace of a mountain goat, I figured it couldn't be that hard.

The technique hinges on an instinctive connection with the bike, deft throttle and brake control, and

as I could. Halfway down I pinned the throttle to gain enough speed to climb the other side. I splashed through the stream, shifted my body forward, and do you know what? I didn't crash. The bike took me all the way up.

That pumped me up so much that I turned the bike around to do it again. I dived down the gully with all the conviction of a suicide bomber, and predictably crashed and burned like one too. I lost the front, landing face down in the

'See here Pete, For the best wheelies, you have to get your knob all the way in the tank.'

[[I LANDED FACE FIRST IN THE STREAM, THE BIKE ON TOP OF ME]]

perfect balance. Additionally, you had to know when you could give it some beans and when to exercise restraint.

Needless to say I was a bit short in most of those requirements, but it wasn't gonna stop me having a go. My task was to ride down a near vertical drop, get through a stream, and climb up the other side. When Jason did it, the bike looked like a natural extension of his limbs.

After a few more tips, I just decided to go for it. Head down, cursing the mud, rain, and the fact that I hadn't worn waders. I launched myself off the bank, shifting my body as far back

stream with the bike on top of me. Well, you can't win them all.

Trials riding turned out to be a priceless experience, reminding me how important finesse and delicacy are when riding motorbikes. It's the school of subtle bike control, showing you techniques you never thought existed. You learn so much about using body weight in the fight for balance, and if you don't believe me, just ask the raft of racers who use trials to improve their skills, not to mention the best stunt rider in the world. I definitely want to do more. Above all else, I really gotta get me some sex, and soon.



After several hours, Jason and Polish conceded that two-up trials wasn't that great an idea



'Ohmygod, he's not gonna make it. Save the bike!' Jason knows his priorities



TRICKS IN THE STICKS

INFORMATION

If you want to learn real trials skills, including riding up and down banks, through streams and over logs, you need the Trials Day course. At the end of the day you can face the challenge of a trials section to test those newly learned skills.

If practising improving your

wheelies, stoppies, rolling burn-outs, and controlled skids, you need to book yourself on the Tricks Day.

Courses run from 10.00am-4.00pm, seven days a week from March to November.

Contact Jason Pearce at: **Tricks In The Sticks Trials School, Bell Farm, Rye Road, Sandhurst, Kent, TN18 5JB 07743 949107, info@wheellie-good.co.uk**

	1 day	2 day
Trials Day	£195	£340
Tricks Day	£225	£400