

Trials Tales

The venerable TY

In my quest to find new big words to include in Trials Tales to make it and therefore myself sound more intellectual, I came upon the word ubiquitous. Hunting out the meaning in the Macquarie I found it to be: *Ubiquitous [yoo-bik-wi-tubs] - Existing or being everywhere, omnipresent.* In other words like electric light switches or the Yamaha TY.

In thousands of suburban garages across the country there are TY's or bits of TY's. Occasionally there are shrines to the TY, with a lovingly and painstakingly restored bike not to be ridden, of course, but only to be fired up on special occasions like Christmas morning or at a daughter's wedding. The rest of the time they are to be admired, reminisced about, over more than a few ambers, such as at a daughter's wedding.

Even more ubiquitous is the presence of TY's on Australian farms. Usually quietly gathering dust and leaning on the back wall of some tumble down shed, with hand grips perished away and side panels held on by 12gauge fencing wire. Some TY's are still giving good agrarian service; out rounding up the sheep after all these years.

Just what made the TY so popular in the trials world isn't hard to see. Compared to the Spanish and English bikes of the day, the TY offered all sorts of novelties. The novelty of reliability, for one. Ignition that was invulnerable to trips through wet grass. Brakes that actually made some difference to your forward momentum *and even in wet grass!* The gear change, foot bake and kickstart where all right they're supposed to be. Build quality...

Why the TY was so popular with farmers is a bit harder to fathom. Especially when the TY had to match it with the mighty Ag100, also a Yamaha product. Not much room for old Rover on the back of the TY. I suppose it had a nice low first gear, but then so did the Aggie. Maybe the TY's low seat height was a bonus. Certainly this factor made the TY popular with orchardists who used the TY for checking irrigation lines. Farmers also quickly found that the "trials universal" tyre was actually better for on-farm use than the knobby. Anyone who thinks they'll go further on a steep hill just because they're running a knobby is kidding himself or herself. Also, the trials tyre doesn't rip up the ground like the "look at me" knobby.

Yes, I believe the TY has achieved its very ubiquitousness (*not sure if this is actually a word but by golly it's big!*) because it's like the trials universal tyre; unassuming, but gets the job done. Reliable and sturdy, even if the "no on-farm maintenance for motorbikes" policy has so many of them gathering dust.

So three cheers for the Yamaha TY, Australia's most ubiquitous bike (...*except for the red postie bike, but that's another story*).

