

# Trials Tales

## Hopping Mad

By Greg Cramond



Oh, to be able to show off.

I am also impressed by the nose wheelie, which takes cool to a higher level. Watching a well-executed nose wheelie turn followed by a couple of set-up hops has me looking on green with envy. Now, envy is one of the seven deadly sins, but that is not enough to stop me (*an archetype sinner*) trying to emulate much younger, much fitter and eminently more skilful riders.

Sadly, the nose wheelie eludes me as well. My attempts at pulling the big stoppy are feeble at best on most occasions, but frequently end up with me dusting myself off and muttering “by golly these new brake pads are jolly effective” or some such. Trips over the handlebars, sore knees and bruised ego haven’t yet stopped me trying, but I have to sometimes ask myself... To hop or not to hop?

In most instances I have no need for it, as I’ll never be riding the red line. So why care? Why when my efforts to emulate a Graceful Tree Frog always end up closer to emulating a three-legged Cane Toad?

No, I will continue to doggedly practice the hop, risk the derision, the tut-tuts and all, because I want to look like a “real” trials rider.

Simply put, I want to show off. Who cares if the simplest red line eludes me if I can pull stoppies and hop around the carpark!

*Bend the knees, weight central, bounce, don't pull back on the bars.....*

One of the great spectacles in trials is the skill and poise shown by riders who can hop their bikes into position, then pause, before charging up some monster step or massive log. It has become so part and parcel of our sport that modern bikes have reactive suspenders that lend themselves to bouncing and bunny hopping. So much so that any collection of trials experts can look like march hares on a warm spring morning.

The ability to hop is a badge of honour worn only by “real” trials riders and demarks the line between B graders up and the rest of us also-rans.

What makes me madder than a march hare, you may ask?

I can’t do it! So not only does this place me firmly in the also-rans, but as much as I practice (*.....Ok, not that much*) I still can’t do it!

Worst of all, any practice must of course be done away from prying eyes and smirking countenances. Any attempt by me to hop in public is bound to dismal failure. Much to the amusement of onlookers my efforts look suspiciously like someone learning to pogo stick. That is, two or three hops before falling to one side or the other. As being one of those fellows stupid enough to play footy in my youth, my crook knees don’t take kindly to the jarring of being slammed to earth in this kind of ant-stamping that always results from my failed bike hops.



Even the youngsters are doing it now!