



ANDREW DALTON, ABR'S LEGAL EAGLE, SHOWED NOMAD ADV OF HOLLAND THE RAREST OF THINGS (THE INSIDE OF A SOLICITOR'S WALLET) WHEN HE PAID FOR THE CONVERSION OF HIS STOCK HUSQVARNA 701 ENDURO INTO AN ADVENTURE TOURER. A LAWYER AND HIS MONEY ARE HARD TO PART, BUT HERE'S WHAT HE FOUND WHEN HE STUCK HIS HEAD INTO THE SHED OF NOMAD ADV

HEAD IN THE SHED

I make no bones about it. I love my Husqvarna 701 Enduro, and I have never been one for pimping bikes up. Mine usually remain bog standard, but the faux Nordic charms of the 701 had me thinking differently. That bike does something to men of a certain age, and one or two very long-legged ladies. My, ahem, relationship with the Husky has made me want to turn that bike into my ride for life, so out came the wallet and the intentions to turn it from an infatuation to a long-term, close to monogamous relationship.

I use my big ol' GS for big ol' motorway miles, my 350 Enduro for the more difficult stuff when I expect to fall off, but if you told me I could only have one bike, the 701 would be the one shackled down in my garage. But the bike is not perfect in its stock form, in fact, the stock model is a beautiful and mad single-cylinder bike wrapped in some fundamental issues that I struggled to live with.

I then made the fatal error of looking at ways to trick the 701 up, which becomes a hideous wallet bleed. Bearing in mind that the most 'trick' part I have ever fitted to any other bike is a Scottoiler, this was a brand-new world of sado-masochistic wallet abuse. I fell into a motorcycle money pit slowly but surely and, y'know what, I don't care. I just love the bike.

It is a really competent ride out on the trails, and whilst I have an enduro bike, the 701 is my first choice. I don't race, so the 701 with her rather more forgiving suspension, less savage (but still bonkers) throttle response, and sewing machine quietness became my go-to bike for easier trails. And as these routes in the UK are broken up by plenty of tarmac miles, the polite road manners were a major bonus.

It started with an extra pair of wheels from Talon, in glorious bright blue. Money well spent. My stock wheels have enduro tyres and mousses, and the Talons have 50/50 Heidenau K66 mud and snow tyres, which are excellent until the roads



PUTTING THE 701 TO THE TEST...



IT APPEARS TO CRASH WELL!

get damp or the lanes get really muddy.

As I started putting more miles on the bike, I changed the God-awful seat for a Seat Concepts saddle, which was potentially the best money I spent on the bike.

I then went for a Rekluse clutch and read the manual, twigged how to switch off the ABS, and found the bike very manageable in some fairly testing terrain. But, I realised how limited the stock bike actually was. Traveling at 80mph on the open road was horrible, the Peruna rack was good value and well-engineered, but the minimal subframe meant any weight was carried on my back. I also wanted to take the bike into London regularly as my work is often in the High Court. Carrying court papers, big law books and the occasional Harry Potter gown was becoming impractical in a backpack.

Then it happened. I was idly browsing the internet for pannier frames for the 701, when I stumbled upon Nomad ADV (www.nomad-adv.com). The website showed lots of stylish pictures of an 'adventurised' 701, with a rally screen and neat, strong looking pannier frames. The costs seemed fairly reasonable, so I picked up the phone and spoke to Mike, the son in the father and son outfit.

Mike Schram, and his father Aad Schram, had set up a company specialising in the transformation of the Husky 701 into a rugged middleweight adventure bike. Mike is a qualified motor engineer, while his dad learnt engineering when he was working on an isolated cattle station 280 miles away from the nearest town in Tasmania, which is remote even for Australia. Aad and Mike worked for many years in this environment, and they have learnt the art of robust mechanics.

When Mike finished college, instead of saddling himself up with student debt, he and his father sold up in Tasmania and rode around the world, starting in New Zealand and taking in Canada, Alaska, Mexico (which they especially loved despite apparently high tensions at the US border), India, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia and Pakistan amongst numerous other countries.

Mike was riding an XT660R, while Aad was on a bike which does not immediately spring to mind as an adventure bike, a Triumph Bonneville. Aad freely accepts that the Bonneville is not the classic choice for a round the world bike, but it handled the route well, with only relatively minor adjustments including Triumph Scrambler twin shocks and an extra 20mm travel in the front. Aad has done 100,000 miles on that Bonnie, and it has been through some extreme terrain. Both the Yamaha and Bonnie are in the workshop, and the Bonnie looks a whole lot healthier than the Yammie!

In completing his journey, Mike set the record for becoming the youngest rider to complete a circumnavigation of the globe of nearly 80,000 miles and, just to make life a bit more interesting, the father and son team intentionally took as many gravel and dirt roads as they could find. That experience, combined with engineering and mechanical skills, was the seed corn for Nomad ADV.

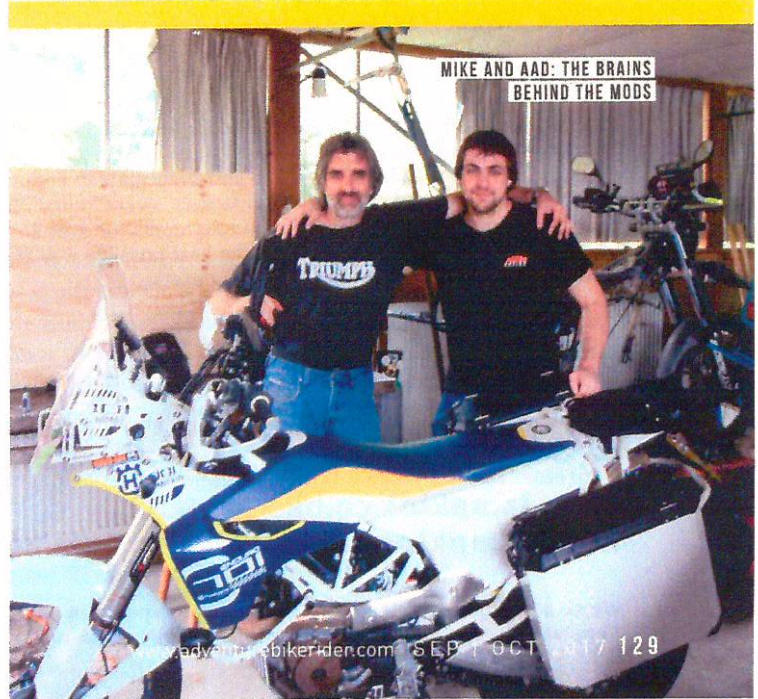
When Mike and Aad landed back in Holland, they set up their company and Mike got to designing the 701 conversion. Both he and his dad are of the opinion that the 701 has all the basics for it to be an excellent RTW single-cylinder bike, being based on the 690 but with a stronger frame. The Husky is also easier to lower than the 690 (which is so important as I, at just a smidge under six-foot, find it tall) and it's Euro 4 compliant, and will be around for a long time. The engine and fuelling needed no tweaking, and Mike is of the opinion that the 2017



model's engine can't really be tweaked anyway.

That said, while the basic necessities are there, the 701 is far from the perfect middleweight adventurer. It is a dual sport bike, and Mike and Aad both describe the stock seat as 'shockingly uncomfortable'. The seat was clearly designed by a Swedish sadist who took design cues from medieval torture instruments. As I mentioned, the stock seat was the first thing I replaced on mine, even before I brought it to Nomad ADV, and the Seat Concepts replacement is a fine 250-mile a day perch.

Aad isn't too keen on the plastic fuel tanks which form part of the 701's frame. Getting around these for robustness and luggage carrying capabilities required a lot of engineering thought, but the general consensus amongst the duo was that, while the 701 had problems, none of them were too difficult to address, especially with Husqvarna Holland on hand to help with any queries. In fact, they even assisted them with the design of the pannier mountings, which effectively give an aftermarket subframe with the weight of the luggage being





WHO'S WRITING

Andrew Dalton is an ex-despatch rider turned solicitor and barrister with over 20 years experience in the field of motorcycle law. He is a regular motorcyclist running an R1200GS and an AJP240 green laner, and is an experienced European and UK rider with well recognised expertise in both British and European motorcycle law.

diverted to the rear footpegs.

Despite the improved luggage carrying capabilities of Nomad ADV's modifications, Aad rightly points out, if you really need to carry huge amounts of gear, buy a bigger bike!

The guys were also unimpressed with the standard bash plate, which leaves an awful lot of the engine vulnerable, and when the base bike is built for lightness, engine parts are light magnesium alloy, so protection is essential.

For long-distance work, the lack of wind protection makes the ride tiring, and the fuel cap is a dirt magnet and awkward



to access when loaded. Both Mike and Aad also think that the preload adjustment on the standard suspension is a faff.

All things considered though, as a lightweight working platform, they regard the 701 as a brilliant machine. It's quick, light and narrow, with reliable mechanicals and lots of parts are interchangeable with the 690 KTM. The worldwide supply of KTM parts is, as Mike and Aad are quick to point out, good.

So, when setting out to make the excellent platform of the 701 into a world-beating adventure tourer, Mike's design brief was to make it field repairable, with anything made by Nomad ADV being possible to repair locally by any fabricator or blacksmith - something that's crucially important if you happen to break down in the arse end of nowhere.

It was interesting to see that all Nomad ADV parts are hand designed the old-fashioned way, using models and mock-ups. Having ridden around the world, they know first-hand about the demands on bikes which are pushed to the extremes, and Aad describes his guiding factors in order of importance as 'simplicity, strength and then weight'.

While simplicity and strength are vitally important to ensure that the bike can cope with the rigours of tough riding, the guys acknowledge that weight makes adventure touring hard work, and so they've tried to keep the end result as lightweight as possible. They can attach auxiliary fuel tanks, massive aluminium boxes and lots of steel crash protection if you want them too, but Aad and Mike really try to down sell you in the interests of your on-trail enjoyment. It's not the best business practice, but it leaves happy customers with relatively light and nimble bikes. The additional fuel tanks can, of course, be vital when touring through isolated regions, but when I told the men where I was intending to ride (mostly in mainland Europe), Aad rolled his eyes and told me not to bother! I felt gently put in my place for trying to be unnecessarily rugged! ▶



THE FINISHED PRODUCT

At the core of the Adventure Tower design are wind protection and a home for your GPS. The construction is of aircraft grade aluminium, and the entire nose cone is bolted together rather than welded. The reasoning for this? If anything breaks it can be replaced using a spanner and socket.

Mike and Aad are 21st Century boys, and the tower has Ram Mounts and USB electricrickerly throughout, drawing on an ignition feed that's wired via the rear light to avoid straining the adequate, but not magnificent 300w alternator of the 701. A cornucopia of power sources can be attached to the Adventure Tower, and so I decided upon the standard Ram Mount, two USB sockets and four switches (for headlights, which replace the adequate but not fantastic stock lights, auxiliary lights, and a heated jacket - and I kept the fourth for, well, symmetry. Three would look silly.). For tech junkies and YouTube heroes, there's room for five Ram Mounts.

So, with the addition of the rally screen, a big old nose cone and some superior luggage, has the long-lost Holy Grail of a

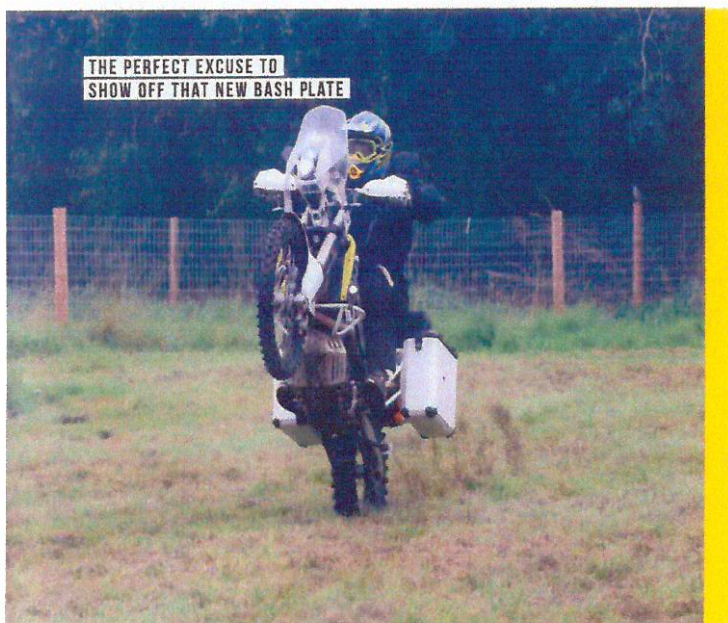
sub-150kg off-road capable adventure bike, that can cruise at 80mph without pulling your head off, been found?

In my opinion, yes. I have spent a lot of money on the Husky (£2,152.55 for the Nomad-Adv mods and \$289 on the seat!), but I genuinely don't feel as though I have wasted any. The only modicum of consumer regret I have is directed at the alloy boxes - they are smart and strong, but they add so much width even though I went for the smallest set.

I used the bike on two 100-mile days of predominantly off-road riding with a mix of single-track, gravel roads and sand in a dry British August, carrying 20kg of camping gear in my Kriega Overlander soft panniers, and I had room to spare. The bike is happy at fast A road speeds, comfortable on the motorways at 70mph plus, but put her onto a moderately demanding trail and she is in her spiritual home. She performed tasks with ease - single-track, long, wet grass and rocky hill climbs were all taken in the bike's stride. With the ABS switched off (that is an absolute must on this bike coming downhill as it just lets go on slimy ground, biting again at far too inconsistent intervals) and a Rekluse, a ham-fisted amateur like me can make some fairly steep and tricky descents look easy.

With my frankly limited talents and limited experience, the modified bike was excellent and so much more versatile than the standard one that sat in my garage when I bought it. The only downside for me was the lighter nose doesn't handle as well with 20kg of luggage on the back, especially on the sketchier rutted lanes in the UK.

In conclusion, Mike and Aad took an excellent but ultimately flawed bike, and made it simply excellent. You are still left with a buzzy single-cylinder, but all the other gripes have been removed or reduced. The Seat Concepts seat, for me, was essential and I now have a genuinely go-anywhere, do anything lightweight adventure bike. It looks the mutts nuts, too. It was love at first sight for me with the 701, but our relationship has moved to a solid and loving respect for a bike which may well not be everyone's cup of tea, but for me she's a two-wheeled keeper. **ABR**



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