Photo: Jerry Tatton, DialledinUK

Ros in the 'Ard Rock Enduro in the Dales

Ros exploring the Sibillini Mountains in Italy last year

Ros Harper's Trance

MODEL: Giant Trance Advanced 1 27.5"

FRAME AND FORK: carbon frame, slackish head angle, high bottom bracket (which means I rarely get pedal strikes but does mean I sometimes topple off in the carpark because the ground is a long way down). RockShox Pike 32 fork bought from a friend.

WHEELS: round and heavy. Schwalbe Hans Dampf up front for grip, Schwalbe Magic Mary on the rear.

GEARING: 1×11. I fitted a smaller chainring

BRAKES: Shimano XT except for one Tektro brake installed at Bike Park Wales when I sheared off the original in an over-the-bars incident.

STEERING & SEATING: RockShox Reverb dropper seatpost. Replaced the original seat with something less knife-shaped. Replaced original Giant Contact 60mm stem with Hope 50mm.

ACCESSORIES: Topeak handlebar mount for phone so I can use it as a GPS (I use Viewranger). Muckynuts front wheel guard. Stem Captain watch mounted on the top of the steerer… until it fell out at Swinley.

My Bike

ROS HARPER'S TRANCE

At 58, Ros began mountain biking. Now 63, she has ridden technical trails across Europe and regularly takes part in enduros, as **Dan Joyce** discovered

LIKE MANY CYCLING UK MEMBERS, Ros Harper doesn't own one bike. She has six, half of which are mountain bikes – quite a tally, given that she only became a 'serious' cyclist six years ago, after doing an off-road ride for charity.

'I organised a ride along the South Downs Way to raise funds for Maidstone Breast Cancer Unit, where I'd just had surgery,' she said. 'I'd only finished chemo and radiation therapy a few weeks before the ride, so I wasn't fit. It was a bit of a slog but I managed it in two and a half days with the support of a good friend.

'The following year I persuaded her to do a Scottish Highlands coast-to-coast ride with me. To prepare for it we booked a day of coaching, as we were told the route would be technical. We had no idea what technical meant, but after a day on the Surrey Hills trails I found out: I had discovered singletrack – and loved it! Six years later, I still enjoy the adrenalin rush, and I'm still pushing myself to

ride steeper, more challenging trails.'

Her favourite bike is her full-suspension, carbon-fibre Giant Trance Advanced 1. 'The manager at my local bike shop lent me his for a weekend and I fell in love with it, despite it being too big. I bought a small size men's model rather than a female-specific design as at the time the components on women's bikes were usually lower spec. I think that's improved now.

'The Trance is ideal for enduro events, where there are timed downhill sections but you have to pedal uphill a fair distance to get to the starts. I've taken it to Morzine, Châtel, the Pyrenees, and the Apennines (Italy), and it probably knows its way blindfolded to Bike Park Wales.

'Last year, I took it on a trip in the Sibillini mountains of central Italy, cramming it in the back of a Fiat 500. I had planned a series of rides in the 2016 earthquake zone around Norcia to show support for the locals by visiting and riding there. Military checkpoints

had been placed at the start of some trails to prevent entry because of unstable ground conditions, but there was enough high-altitude riding to test the bike to the full. It never missed a beat, which was a good job as there were no other riders or bike shops around.'

Ros has made some changes to the stock specification, fitting tougher tyres and buying a secondhand 160mm RockShox Pike from a friend. She also swapped the Giant dropper seatpost for a RockShox Reverb. 'Riding with a dropper has changed my riding style more than anything I've ever done,' she said, 'as my body position is now lower and I can move my hips around more easily to control the bike.

'One rather ugly mod I made to the bike early on was to wrap lengths of old innertube around the lower half of the down tube to protect the carbon frame from chips and scratches when rocks fly up under the bike.'

Next on the upgrade list are carbon wheels and a carbon handlebar: 'At 63, I need all the help I can get!'