



DONINGTON

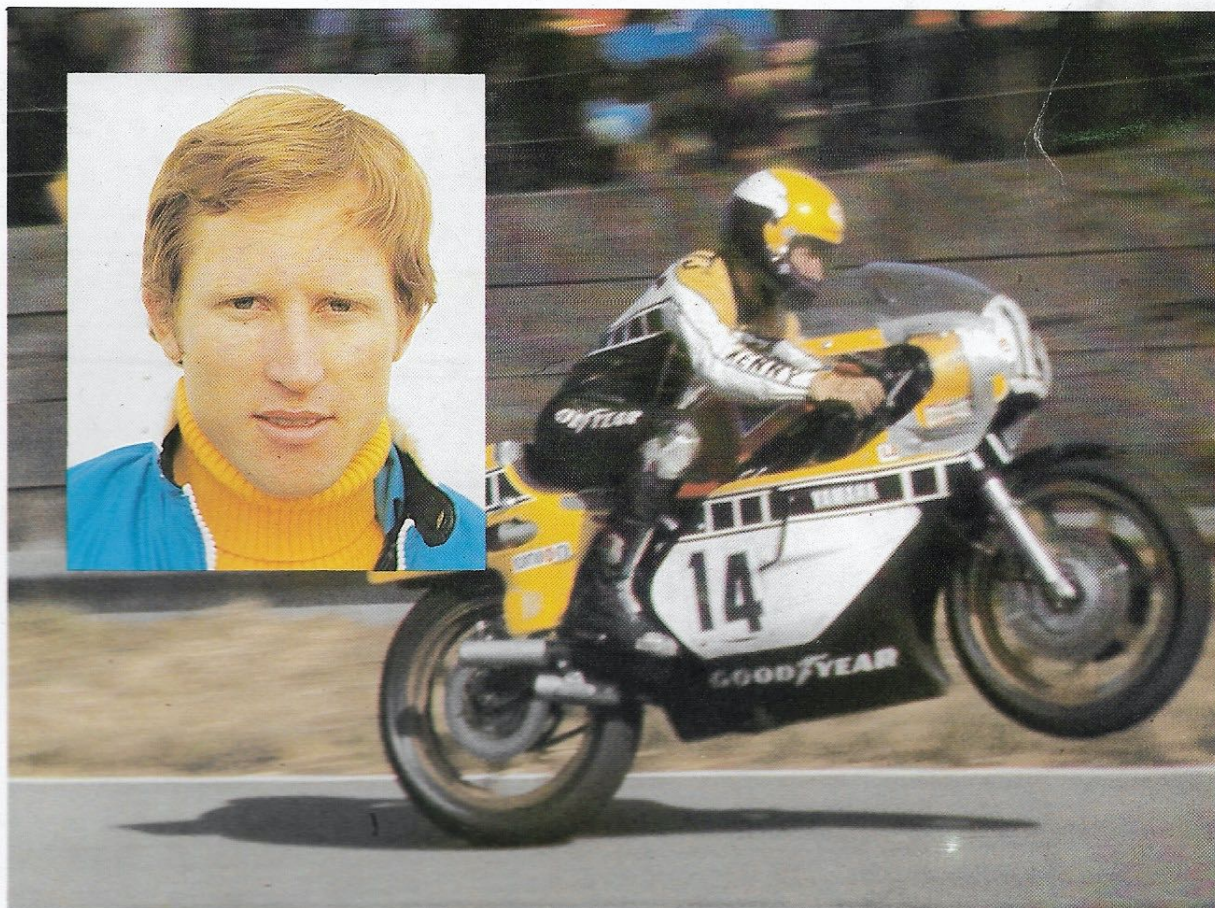
THE HEART OF BRITISH MOTOR SPORT

DAILY
Mirror

INTERNATIONAL ROAD RACE

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 24th

(Qualifying, Saturday September 23rd)



1978 WORLD CHAMPION KENNY ROBERTS

Organised by
The Pathfinders
& Derby Motor
Club



**Official
Programme 60p**

For conditions of admission see inside



**DAILY
Mirror**



A marriage of big names

The Daily Mirror's tie-up with Donington Park for the circuit's second international since its reopening, is a unique step for the newspaper and its 13,000,000 readers, a marriage of big names.

The Mirror recognizes motor cycle racing as a growth sport and its international coverage — Grand Prix events and prestige races like the TT, Daytona 200 and the Imola clashes as well as premier home fixtures — is unrivalled.

And through my regular weekly column I can keep a link open between the star names, the big factories and the important events and the many hundreds of thousands of fans who number among your readers.

It was, therefore, a natural move to join the paper with what I consider to be the country's finest circuit and to sponsor an event as worthy as this international meeting.

It's something new to the Mirror to be involved in motor cycle racing from the sponsorship side, though we have carried the sport's achievements to all corners of the country as a matter of course.

To see a Daily Mirror Trophy for the road race international gives me a particular thrill. For it ranks alongside The Daily Mirror Mike Hailwood Trophy for the TT Man of the Week as positive recognition on the widest possible scale of an extra special occasion, something to be savoured.

The fact that the world's finest riders will be battling for it gives an extra shine to the Trophy's prospects. Barry Sheene, the former World 500 cc Champion and Kenny Roberts, the man who took the title from him, front the challenge and there is a host of star speedmen in there to give the race more spice.

Donington is obviously destined to grow in parallel with the sport — and deservedly so. Tom Wheatcroft, the man and the money behind the venture, has put enormous effort and considerable cash into it, and it is marvellous to see his happy smile when the racing is fulfilling all his ambitions for the circuit and the crowd is getting full value.

There is more money yet to be spent on the place and that makes you wonder just how long it will be before Donington is awarded the British Grand Prix, certainly for motor cycles.

For I do not know a rider who does not like the place, its facilities, its track, its happy atmosphere and its general situation. The Mirror, being a family paper, is happy to be part of that atmosphere.

Kenny Roberts, the astute American with an eye for success told me: "I'm impressed by the place even before I get there. I've heard so much about it. All the guys on the Grand Prix scene who have raced the circuit reckon it really highly."

"And I'm delighted that your paper is linking with it and getting the sport's message home to so many people. Obviously, it's going to be a real success story."

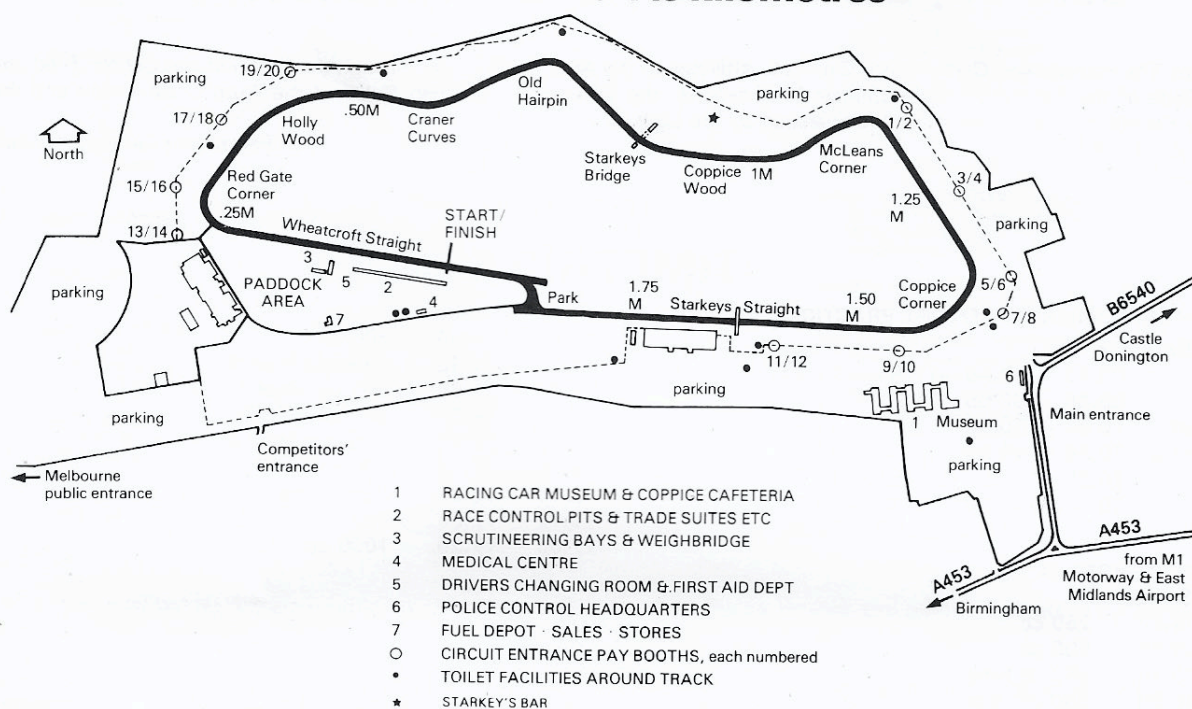
Ted Macauley

(Grand Prix Motor Cycling correspondent)

*Daily Mirror,
Manchester*



**Lap Distance: 1.957 miles
3.149 kilometres**



Quick Reference Lap Speed Table

1 m 05 s	108.40 mph	1 m 19 s	89.19 mph	1 m 33 s	75.77 mph
1 m 06 s	106.76 mph	1 m 20 s	88.08 mph	1 m 34 s	74.96 mph
1 m 07 s	105.17 mph	1 m 21 s	86.99 mph	1 m 35 s	74.17 mph
1 m 08 s	103.62 mph	1 m 22 s	85.93 mph	1 m 36 s	73.40 mph
1 m 09 s	102.12 mph	1 m 23 s	84.89 mph	1 m 37 s	72.64 mph
1 m 10 s	100.66 mph	1 m 24 s	83.88 mph	1 m 38 s	71.90 mph
1 m 11 s	99.24 mph	1 m 25 s	82.90 mph	1 m 39 s	71.17 mph
1 m 12 s	97.86 mph	1 m 26 s	81.93 mph	1 m 40 s	70.46 mph
1 m 13 s	96.52 mph	1 m 27 s	80.99 mph	1 m 41 s	69.77 mph
1 m 14 s	95.22 mph	1 m 28 s	80.07 mph	1 m 42 s	69.08 mph
1 m 15 s	93.95 mph	1 m 29 s	79.17 mph	1 m 43 s	68.41 mph
1 m 16 s	92.71 mph	1 m 30 s	78.29 mph	1 m 44 s	67.75 mph
1 m 17 s	91.51 mph	1 m 31 s	77.43 mph	1 m 45 s	67.11 mph
1 m 18 s	90.34 mph	1 m 32 s	76.59 mph		

CATERING FACILITIES

Breakfast bar and snacks in paddock (adjacent petrol station): Open 08.00 — 18.00.

Mobile sales at Redgate Corner, Starkey's Bridge, McLeans Corner and Coppice Corner: open 10.30 — 18.00.

Museum cafeteria, adjacent the main entrance car park. Full catering facilities (including restaurant): open from 10a.m.

Tobacconists/confectionery: Kiosks in the Paddock (adjacent to the scrutineering bay) and at the Old Hairpin.

LICENSED BARS

Paddock (adjacent petrol station): open 11.00 — 18.00

Starkey's Bridge and Coppice Corner: open Noon — 18.00

Museum, adjacent to main entrance car park

Opening times: Lunch, noon — 14.30. Evening, 17.30 — 22.30

Grand Prix Superstars come to Donington

By Andrew McKinnon, Motor Cycle News

Looking back over my short involvement in motor cycle racing journalism I find it difficult to find a more exciting and multi-national entry than the one which is put before you this weekend.

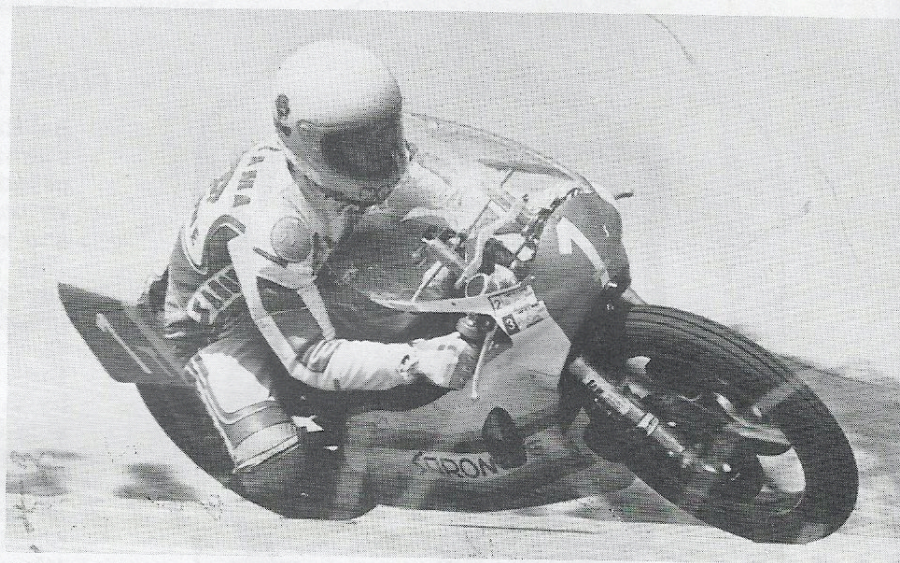
The Donington Park administrators realise that 1978 is a crucial year for them. It's a year which has marked their first dealings with the international racing scene and one in which they must set a standard to impress everybody.

And how they've done that! Their July international was a smash hit, drawing over 35,000 people, and working from that encouraging response they've studied the racing scene carefully since then and brought together a complete cross section of the most successful men in the racing world.

If their hard work is justly rewarded you will be standing in the biggest home international crowd this year as you watch Kenny Roberts, Barry Sheene, Mick Grant, Wil Hartog, Takazumi Katayama, Dave Potter, Barry Ditchburn, Tepi Lansivuori and many more doing battle today.

It's an entry which has cost over £50,000 to bring together — and that's a sure sign of how determined Donington Park, under their enthusi-

Mick Grant scored a brace of wins at Cadwell last Sunday and finished second to Sheene in the Superbike race.



Takazumi Katayama will be one of the stars in the Donington 350 cc race.

astic financier Tom Wheatcroft, are to establish themselves as the foremost racing circuit in Britain.

Certainly the motto of the circuit in the formative days of its rebirth, is that you've got to speculate to accumulate.

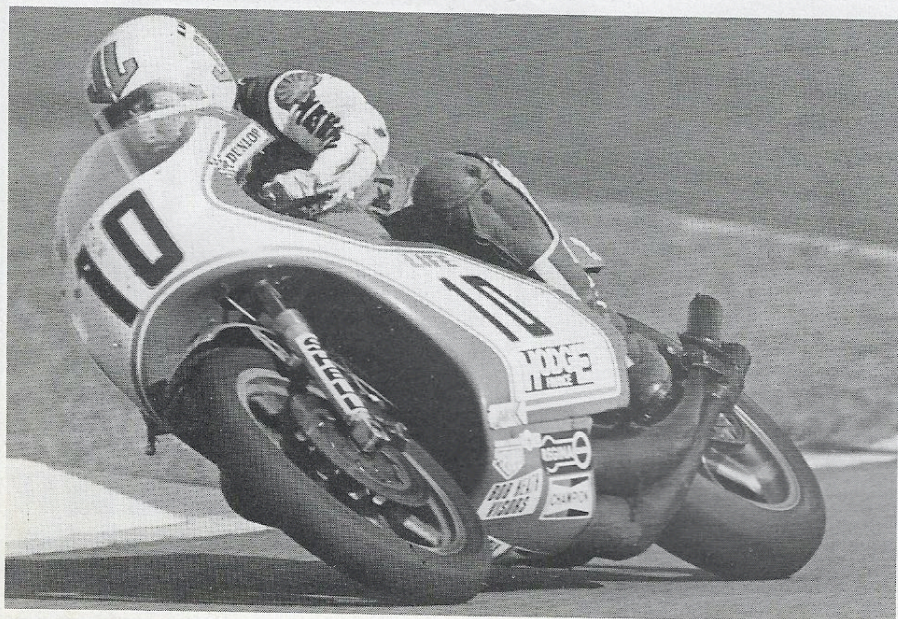
Back in May Mike Hailwood con-

tinued his amazing comeback at Donington and thrilled the crowds. Trying to follow a man like Mike as top of your bill is no mean feat but today we have Kenny Roberts heading a fantastic line-up.

Kenny has flown back from America specially to take part in the meeting. Two weeks ago he made his first Stateside appearance since he clinched the 500 cc world championship from Barry Sheene at the Nurburgring.

He rode in the penultimate round of the world Formula 750 championship at Laguna Seca in California and then last week journeyed on to Mosport in Canada for the final round of the series, a series in which he didn't have quite a successful time as in the Blue Riband 500 cc class.

Kenny is a home loving man. His wife Patti and two children flew home straight after the final round of the 500 cc series and he was anxious to stay with them after his two recent American outings. But he also likes the pace of the European scene coupled with the financial rewards and so he was straight back on a Trans-Atlantic flight for his final European appearances this season.



Many of you would feel that with the most prestigious title under his belt for the year, Kenny would ease the pace and not worry too much about how he performs during the lucrative end of season internationals. But you couldn't be further from the truth.

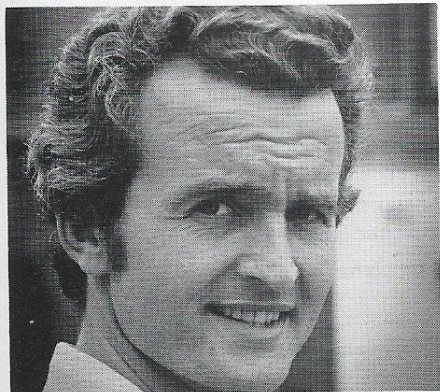
It's true that Kenny is the most expensive man in road racing for any promoter to hire but that doesn't mean he rests on his laurels and doesn't give value for money.

Kenny has a built in winning instinct. Beating Barry Sheene here today will be equally important as a world championship clash to the little Modesta hero.

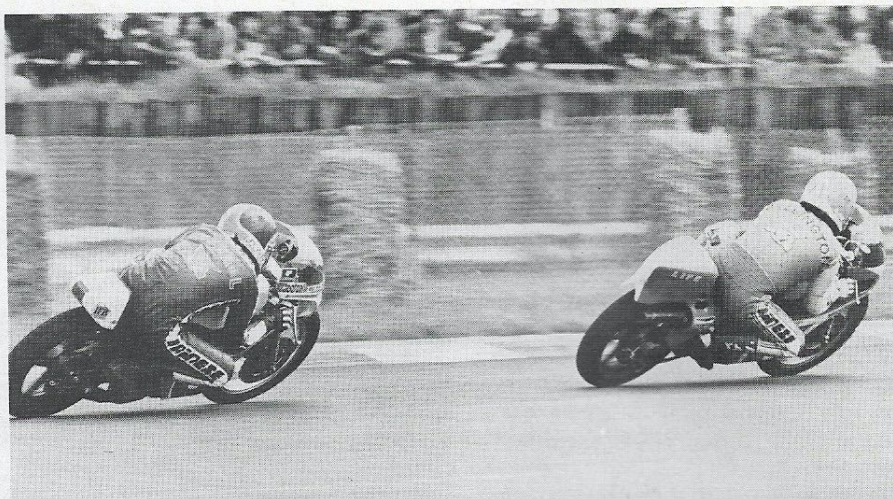
Before arriving at the Midlands circuit he'd only heard the enthusiastic descriptions of fellow competitors. But lack of circuit knowledge has not proved a problem on his hectic world championship programme so far this year. And so it wouldn't be too optimistic to say that he'll leave here with an absolute lap record under his belt!

Unfortunately Kenny will not be appearing on his world beating 500 cc machine. It's common practice for the Japanese factory to retrieve their machines as soon as the vital action is over.

The same goes for Japanese ace Takazumi Katayama who rode in the 500 cc class for the European branch of the Yamaha factory, Yamaha NV of Holland. He too is restricted to the Superbike class this weekend, with a supporting 350 cc ride.



Grand Prix stars Hartog (above) and Katayama (below) are welcome newcomers to Donington.

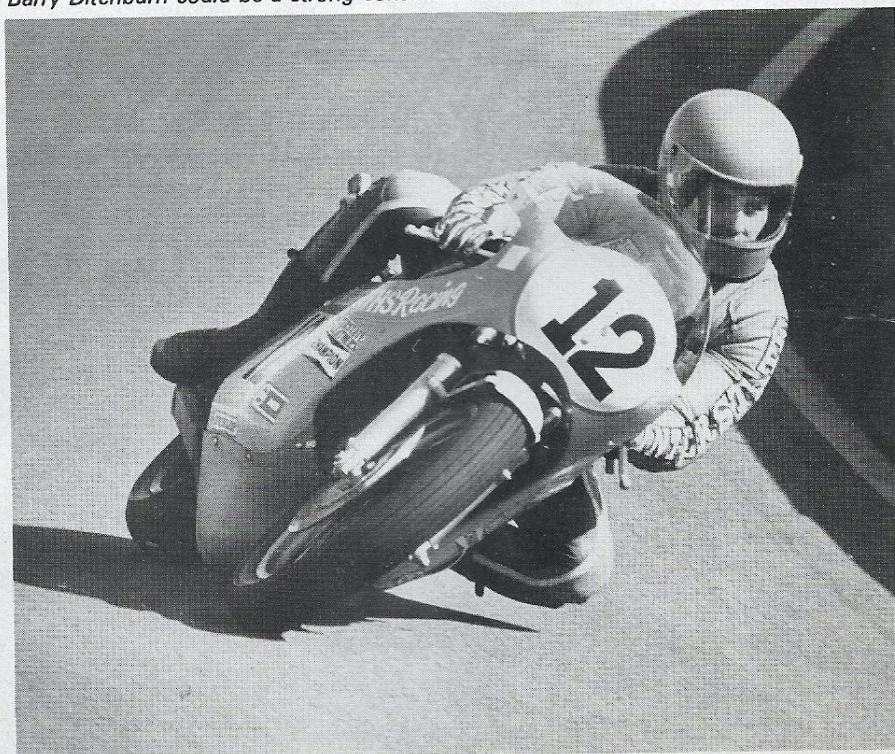


Ballington leads Herron — they face each other in both the 250 cc and 350 cc races. In Yugoslavia last weekend, Herron failed to finish either Grand Prix while Ballington clinched the 250 title.



Wil Hartog, winner of the 500 cc race at Cadwell last Sunday, fends off Kenny Roberts in the Finnish GP.

Barry Ditchburn could be a strong contender in the main race.



With the world championship series now over one would think that the whole attitude towards racing among the stars would alter. But that's not the case — there's still a feud going on between Roberts and Sheene.

Barry wants more than anything else to beat Kenny during the closing internationals and he has Donington Park and Mallory Park, scene of next week's Race of the Year, to re-establish his superiority.

Sheene likes the Donington track, having won the 500 cc race here during the July international — albeit by a faction from former works team mate Steve Parrish.

It seems that every topic of conversation in racing circles revolves around B.S. one of the most brilliant riders of all time. Understandably the Surrey-based superstar really savours his moments of solitude in his recently acquired Tudor mansion away from the prying questions of the outside world.

But that doesn't mean to say he's lost the will to win. Many expected him to go out and beat Roberts at the Nurburgring but he didn't try. He had his own reasons for that, but there is something to prove in the current series of home internationals — and I think we'll see him having a real go at bringing home the point.

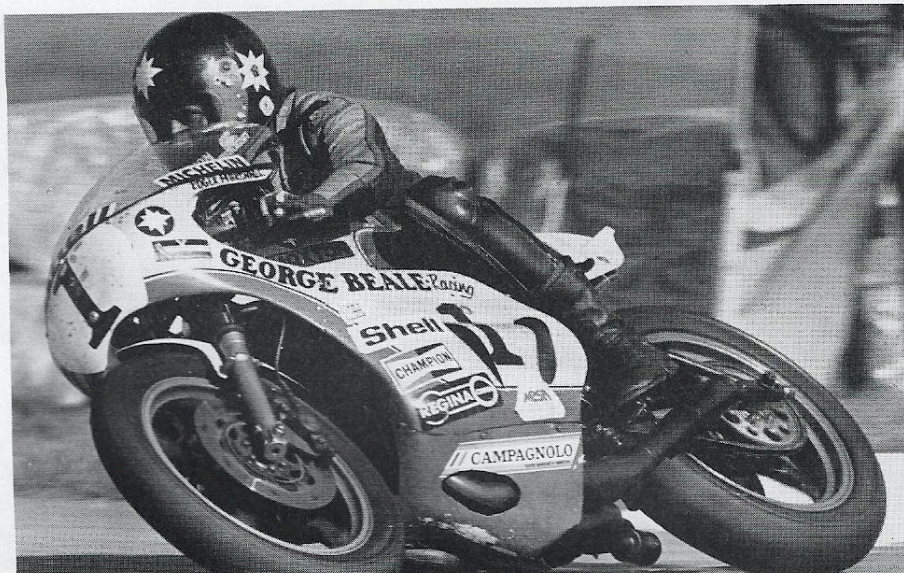
Barry makes his first appearance of the day, in the 500 cc event but it is the 1,000 cc race which provides us with that much awaited Sheene v Roberts battle. But the height of the day's entertainment will not revolve around the winner and runner up in this year's world championship.

Dutchman Wil Hartog, the 30 year old partner in a grass drying business in the lowlands just north of Amsterdam, was the revelation of the Grand Prix season.

After the tragic Isle of Man incident involving Pat Hennen, Wil was given the use of Pat's machines, starting at the Dutch TT in June and went on to astound everyone with his transformation in form.

He was given the 500 cc Suzuki for the Dutch round in the knowledge that he was the best privateer around the course having beaten Sheene there the year before. But just a week later he found the super-fast works machine at his disposal again for the Belgian Grand Prix and with team orders out of the window, because Roberts separated he and Sheene on the last lap, he went on to win only the second Grand Prix of his career.

It was a fairy-tale start for a rider out to impress the factory and his service since then has found him with the opportunity to ride the potent 653



British Champion Roger Marshall contests the Daily Mirror event.

cc Suzukis in the remaining British internationals — starting two weeks ago at Oliver's Mount, Scarborough.

During the last rounds of the world championship series Hartog was bound by team orders from his Texaco Heron Suzuki GB sponsors. Whether he could have won more than the two Grands Prix he did is open to conjecture but what happens now will give us the true picture of his capabilities.

There is no need now for Wil to help safeguard Barry's world crown — it's every man for himself and with a works Suzuki contract at his finger tips for next year Hartog will want to shine at his brightest during these all important final meetings of the season.

There are two other interesting newcomers to the British international scene this year. Takazumi Katayama makes his first non-championship event showing in England this season as does popular Finn Tepi Lansivuori.

Former 350 world champion

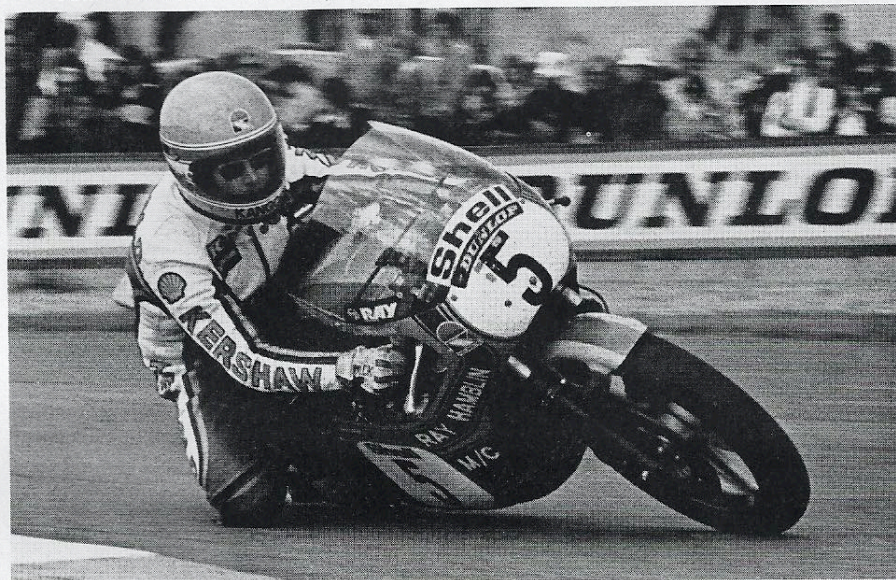
Katayama has ridden the highly competitive 500 cc class this season on the world championship front as well as trying to retain his world title in the smaller class which he lost to all-conquering Kork Ballington.

But not only are his talents strong in the smaller capacities for it was only a couple of weeks ago that I remember watching Katayama win a leg of the world Formula 750 championship at Assen in Holland.

Today he concentrates on the 750 class and will be a real threat to the likes of Roberts, Sheene, Hartog and our own talented group of superbike runners.

Lansivuori's presence has a somewhat different purpose. Sadly this will be the last year we will see the Finnish star who has such an illustrious career behind him. He is retiring to return home to Scandinavia and run the family undertaking business — as someone once commented a move

John Newbold's knee scrapes the ground on cornering at McLeans corner in July.



from two to four wheels, but not the sort we normally expect!

Tepi rides in the 500 class here at Donington. It's an appearance which comes in the middle of a final fling on the British circuits for him before the end of his career. He's already appeared at Scarborough, and Cadwell and goes on to finish off with the Race of the Year next week.

It's a strong indication of how respected the British standard of competition is overseas.

Another rider we don't see much of during the course of the English season is Tom Herron, the busiest of our British privateers. Tom has contested every round of the 250 and 350 world championships this year, starting in Venezuela and finishing in Yugoslavia last weekend.

It's been a successful year for Tom with good overall placings in both championship tables. But today the Ulsterman will show you that he's by no means a 250 and 350 specialist for he's also down to ride his 500 Suzuki and 750 Yamaha in the feature events.

Tom scored points in the 500 world championship table and of course won the Senior TT in June. He won the North West 200 and Ulster Grand Prix on his 750 Yamaha so expect fireworks from him. The only thing which might subdue him is that he is contracted to ride in four classes so he may be a little bit tired by the end of the afternoon!

While all the shouting always goes on about the 500 cc world championship the lighter classes somehow unjustly seem to get a little forgotten. And this year, for me, it's at 250 and 350 level that we've seen the emergence of one of the world's most professional performers — Kork Ballington.

Donington regulars will remember the ease in which the South African won both his events last time here in July. Since then he's gone on to win the 350 and 250 world titles.

It's his first year as a works rider, having campaigned on Sid Griffith's Yamaha last season and it's been the sort of fairytale debut that every rider hopes and prays for. It's hard to imagine anyone upsetting the form book here today and beating him.

But enough about the newcomers for most of the action this weekend is sure to centre on the British stars, several of whom are bang on form and out to make the most of the final internationals.

Ask any rider which is the most

crucial section of the season, championships aside, and he'll tell you the final month when prospective sponsors are eyeing the talent for the following year and the promoters are pencilling in the names of the men they are to favour during the following season.

Dave Potter has by far been the most successful British privateer this season. He won here back in July and is going better than any privateer has done before in the Motor Cycle News Superbike series.

Can he pull off a fairy-tale victory in the presence of Roberts, Sheene and Hartog? It seems a tall order but it's not impossible and another man in whom I've been most impressed in recent weeks is Barry Ditchburn riding Sid Griffiths' 750 Yamaha.

Barry was put out of action at the July Race of Aces at Snetterton, puncturing a lung and breaking ribs in a horrific looking spill at Russell's bend. But he came back with a bang finishing third at Oulton Park in his comeback ride and the following week leading the way for the British in the Formula 750 meeting at Assen until his chain snapped in the second leg.

For Mick Grant it's been a disappointing year. But he still remains "Mr Popularity" with the crowds. Apart from his comfortable win in the Classic TT Mick has had little in the way of success but is using these final internationals to prove that he is still a force to be reckoned with.

He finished second here to Dave Potter in July and found the circuit ideally suited to the three cylinder Kawasaki, with which Bernard Fau, the hard riding Frenchman, also got a top three placings. Fau returns this

weekend in the hope of repeating the fine form he showed last time.

Then come the rest of the British superbike set. Steve Parrish excited us last time with a wheel to wheel finish in the 500 cc race to Barry Sheene and his 750 form is equally as impressive, finishing fourth in a leg of the Formula 750 event in Assen recently. Roger Marshall had that memorable scrap in the TT Formula I race last time with Mike Hailwood, taking victory after Mike had over-cooked it two laps from home.

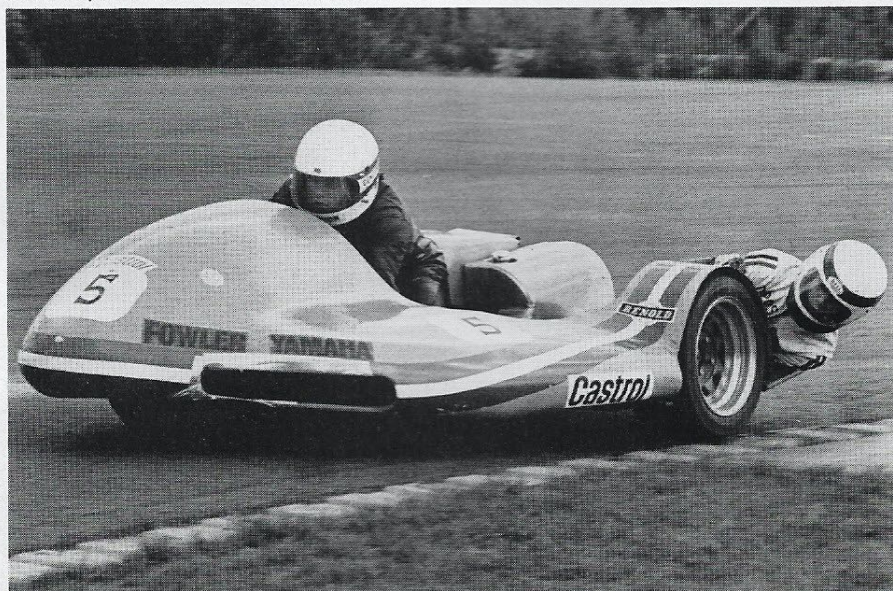
Add to these the talents of youngsters like Kevin Stowe and local hero Ron Haslam and you have the ingredients for superb racing right down the field.

Anyone who discounts the sidecar events at today's meetings as just something to fill in the time should take a good look at this weekend's three Wheeler action instead of making a run for the car as soon as the solo action has finished.

The organisers have brought together a really impressive sidecar grid for your entertainment. There's Alain Michel, winner of two Grand Prix this season, and second overall in the world championship, George O'Dell, the former title holder and Dick Greasley, Britain's most successful driver on the Grand Prix scene this year, finishing fifth overall.

Then there's the Scottish wonderboy Jock Taylor who has made such an impact on Europe this season with superb Grand Prix placings and seventh overall in his first year on the Continent. Swiss driver Jean-Francois Monnin is here as are other British stars Bill Hodgkins, Brian Webb, Mick Boddice and Derek Jones.

Jock Taylor's Yamaha at Park chicane, with James Neil "chairing".

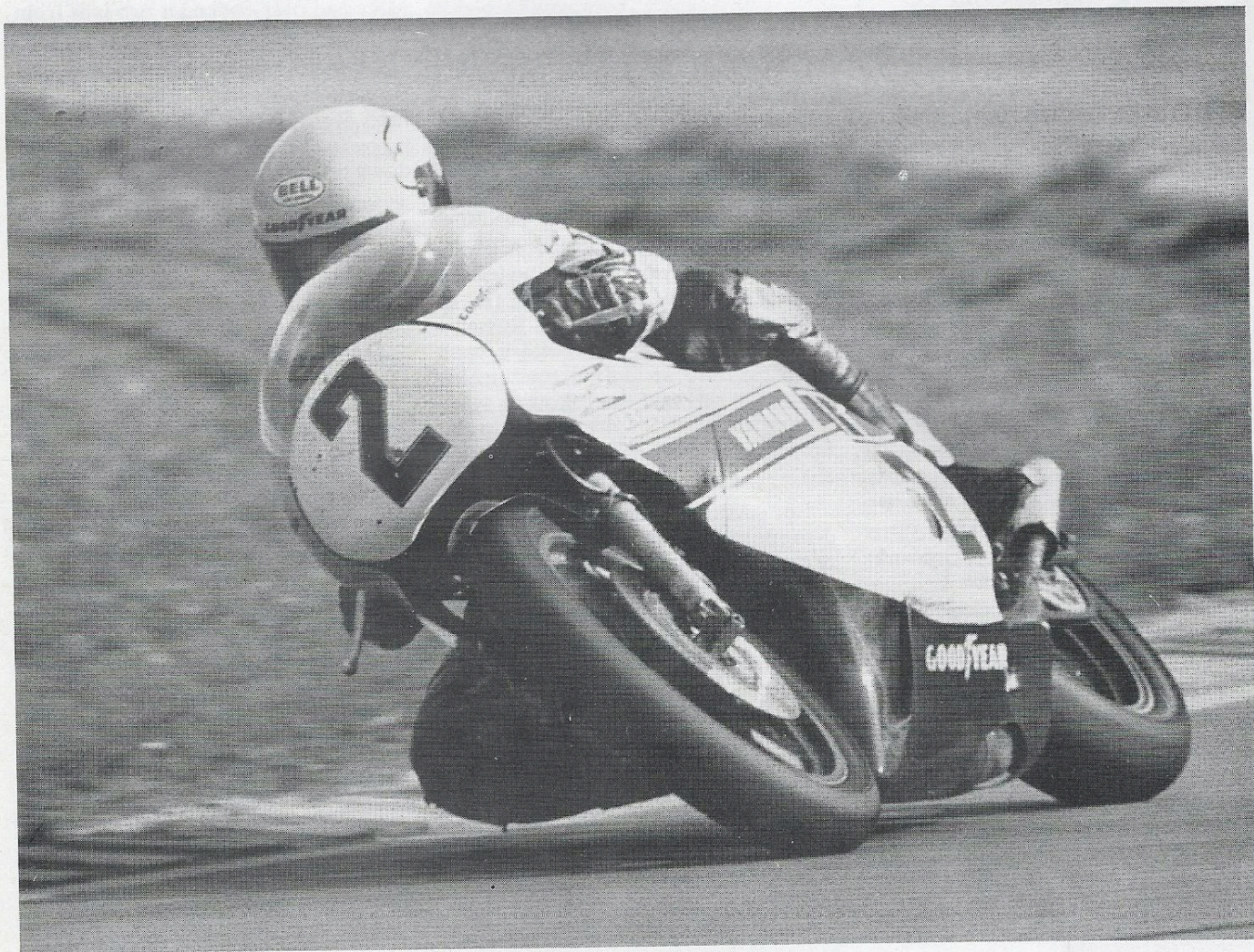


EXCLUSIVE

Kenny Roberts

**The 1978 500 cc World Championship-winning year
— his past career and plans for the future**

By JOHN BROWN, Motorcycle Racing Magazine



Apart from winning the 500 cc World Championship, Kenny finished second in the 750 cc series after winning at Laguna Seca on September 10th and finishing second last Sunday at Mosport.

Kenny Roberts did not reckon he would win a world championship — let alone the premier 500 cc crown — when he entered the arena of Grand Prix racing for the first time at the start of the year.

"We set out on a two year programme that we certainly hoped would end with a title but a champion at the first attempt — wow that's even more that's even more than I ever dreamed of," said the confident and very talented Californian after becoming the first American — other than 1977 Formula 750 champ Steve Baker — to win a title in the 29 year history of Grand Prix racing.

Twenty-six-year-old Kenny who grew up in the Los Angeles area of the States, had become the accepted top

road racer in America before he finally made up his mind to hit out for Europe this year.

But in the States you have to be more than just a road racer to get the coveted AMA number one plate and that's where the tough, level headed Roberts really scored.

Living, and breathing motor cycles ever since he first rode one at the age of 14 Kenny quickly became a natural under any conditions. At the age of 16 he won his first title — the Oregon 100 cc short track State championship —

and then became a professional rider two years later and won the American novice championship.

His all round ability to conquer one mile, half mile short track and tourist trophy as well as road events attracted the attention of the Yamaha scouts and as an official rider he collected America's national Junior title for them in 1972.

The inevitable happened a year later when he became the AMA number one with a record points tally but he even managed to improve the margin over

the second placed rider when he retained the plate in 1974.

His inability to retain the number one spot in the States was down to the Yamaha dirt bike being capped by the opposition rather than any lack of Roberts' skill so it was not too surprising when the young American started turning further and further in the direction of road racing.

In 1974 he made his first impact on this side of the Atlantic when at the Easter Match races he clocked three wins and three seconds in his six rides in the Anglo American series. For good measure he added another second place when he took on the best riders in Europe at the Imola 200.

Kenny in characteristic style plugged away at the AMA series despite being on a losing wicket, because of its varied span of race events, but still managed third in 1976 and fourth last year.

But 1977 was when Kenny really started to show his paces in Europe with three devastating visits.

He beat Barry Sheene in the Transatlantic series when he notched four wins from six rides, won both the 250 and 750 races at Imola, won the 250 race at the Paul Ricard 750 cc championship round in France and finished second to Baker in the main title race.

"I guess I seem to be getting the hang of this European road stuff," he quipped when he arrived back in the States.

His obvious ability and real chance of winning a major world championship prompted Yamaha America to provide machines for a crack at the 1978 series.

As they got the 500 cc four cylinder machine ready, Kenny got himself in to the right frame of mind by winning the Daytona 200 on a 750 Yamaha. "Boy that was one I have been trying to win for some time," said Kenny who had seen victory snatched from his grasp by machine troubles on more than one previous occasion.

At the prize presentation after this year's Daytona it was obvious that the once almost shy and quiet spoken Roberts had grown in confidence.

To the cheers of his home crowd he announced in forceful manner "Now I've won this one I'm out to bring the 500 world championship home to America."

At the time he was far from certain that he could actually do that because he realised there was a lot of learning to do as well as confronting the apparently unbeatable champ of two years, Barry Sheene with his works Suzuki.

"I had to get to know all the circuits

and get used to racing a brand new bike," he said. "Then there was the Sheene Suzuki I had no idea at all how that was going to perform. From what information I could glean it seemed that a lot of development work had been carried out on the machine that was already good enough to take the title two years in a row. So it was with all this in mind that I took careful stock and came to the conclusion that I would have to embark on a two year title winning campaign."

Before he came to Europe Kenny was looking to Barry as his only real competition. He came to the conclusion from reading the magazines and it was from these that he also realised other possibles could be Johnny Cecotto and Takazumi Katayama.

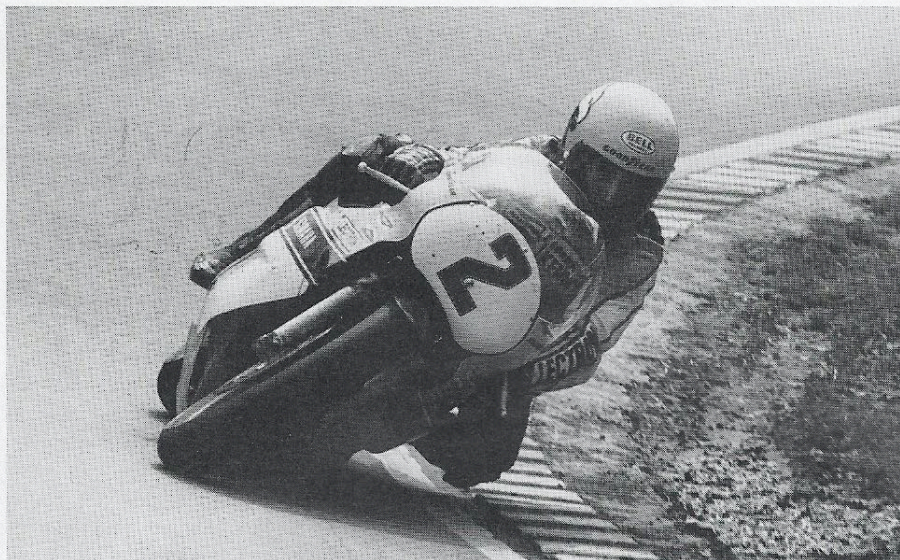
"Now I've been fortunate to win the championship I guess it's going to be a very hard job to hang on to it," he said.

"There are certainly other challengers to consider like Wil Hartog and Michel Rougerie especially now that they are in line for works Suzukis. Then there is the young Italian Virginio Ferrari — give him the right iron and he'll be after my spot that's for sure. Cecotto will be there again and Barry is not going to take the defeat this year lying down. Yeh I reckon the intruding American is going to have a lot of Europeans after him next year."

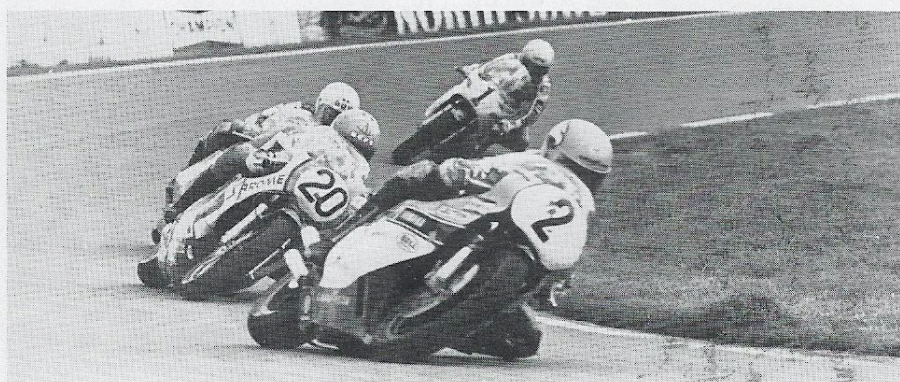
Kenny got the idea before the start of this Grand Prix year that the 500 Suzuki would have a speed and braking advantage over the Yamaha he was going to race. "Yamaha only brought out what they described as the good bike at the start of the year so I could see no chance of if being a winner," said Kenny who quickly admits that it turned out to be a far better machine than he expected.

There is no doubt that Kenny's Grand Prix debut was helped along its





Roberts in winning style (above) and leading Katayama at Assen (below).



successful way by 1969 250 world champion Kel Carruthers who ran the show as team manager and did a lion's share of the work on the machines with Nobby Clark and Trevor Tilbury.

"Kel and I have been together some time, we have built up a real understanding and that mean's a lot," said Kenny of the former Benelli, Aermacchi and Yamaha rider from Australia.

ROBERTS:

"I want to show the British fans why I am World Champion"

Kel also provided Kenny with a 250 Yamaha that seemed destined to have the beating of the Kawasaki machines that took over the class this year but after a couple of disappointing results the five and a half foot American quit the class — although still in contention — to concentrate on the 500 class.

"There was plenty of pressure there and I reckoned I should put all my efforts in that direction, after all it is the most important class," he reasoned.

Yamaha are busy building Kenny a new 250 Yamaha for the 1979 season but the rider is far from enthusiastic. "I just don't see when I am going to get time to race it," he points out. "I am going to have enough on my plate in the 500 cc class and to be honest I do not think it is possible to combine the 500 cc class with any other races at

Grand Prix level at the present time with all the racing on one day."

He is not all that enthusiastic about the 750 class either and does not intend to contest the full championship season for this class.

"Some of the meetings in the series are really bad and for a couple of good ones like Imola and Assen you get five bad ones. I really don't want to race the 750 while the 500 championships are being run but I shall bring it for the better internationals."

Kenny admits that he would have been quite happy to pack-up and go home this year as soon as he had clinched the 500 title in West Germany last month.

"I had been a long hard season that seemed to get longer as the time went on," he said. "My wife and two children have been living in a motor home with me and although it is an easy way to get about Europe it does have the effect of cutting me off rather a lot. Back home the longest we are in the motorhome is three weeks which acts a bit like a vacation but over here it has been months. I sure have got a lot of catching up to do and that is why I would like to have headed straight off back to the States."

There is no doubt that if Kenny had been operating on his own he would have gone home for a spell even if he had come back to England for the internationals like Donington Park.

"I simply wanted to make base with the Press in the States and catch up on the business side of my operations first hand," he said. "But the thing is I owe a lot of my sponsors like Goodyear, Bell and Yamaha America so I was duty bound to stay on and take in the remaining 750 rounds. I was lucky enough to get back for the Laguna Seca and Mosport rounds so I was able to put my mind at rest a little before coming back here for a hectic three meetings in three weekends period that takes me not only to Donington but to Mallory and Imola as well."

To help ease the tension Kenny could make a European base next year from which to carry out operations. "To be honest I don't know how we operate yet but I'll be back," he says in his more acknowledged carefree manner.

I am keenly looking forward to racing at Donington because I have heard many good things about the track. I particularly like competing in England because the fans understand the racing.

The organisers too do a good job. You would be amazed at Grands Prix — the way the organisers treat you as if they have to put up with you. You can't go anywhere without a pass even dressed in your leathers. But at British meetings I have found that the riders are welcome.

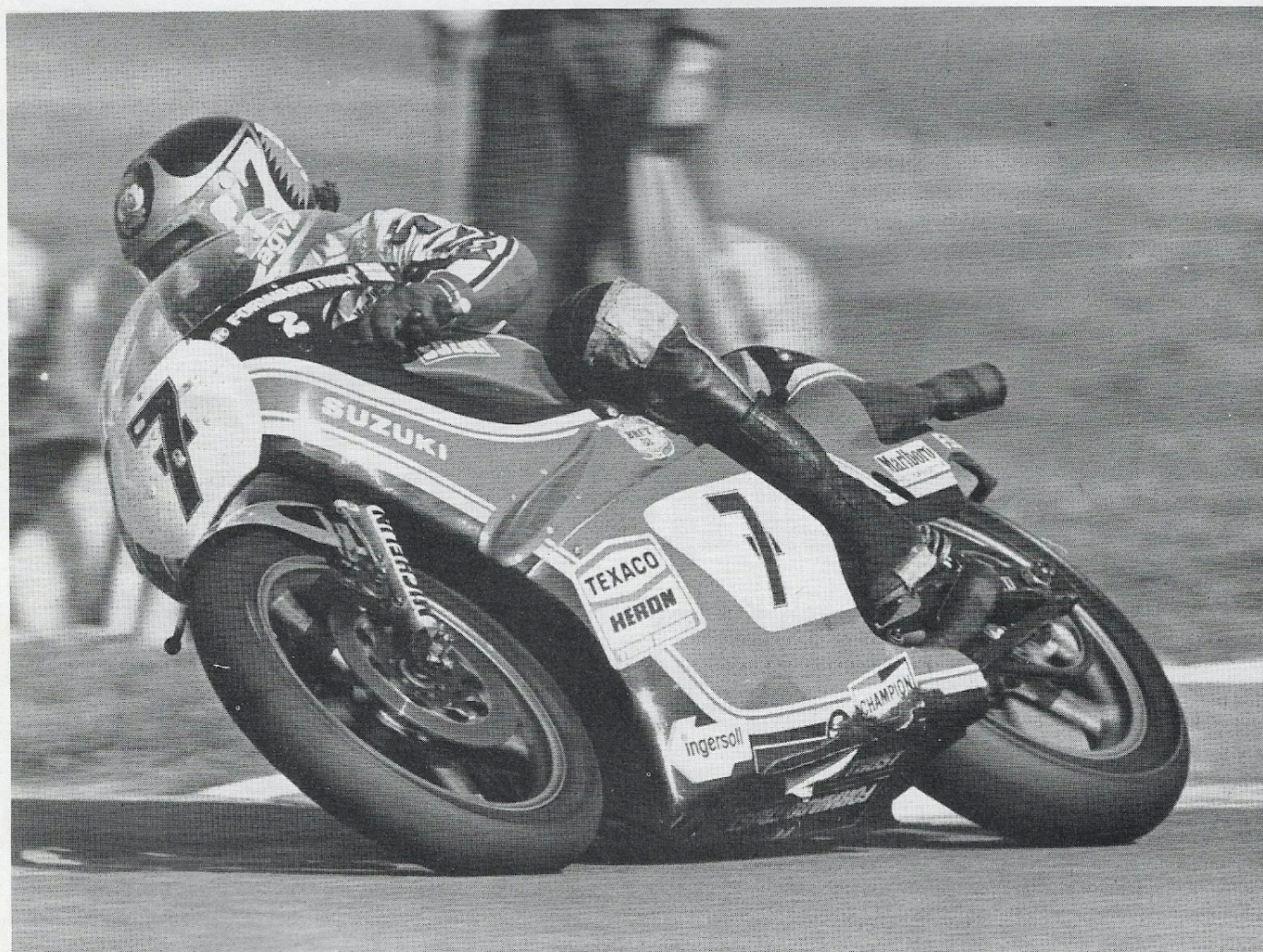
After the problems in the Grand Prix I want to show the British fans why I am World Champion. I am coming to Donington to win and beat Barry Sheene. Of course when I arrive for practice it will be the first time that I'll see the circuit but I don't think that will be a big problem. The Donington people have been very good to me and I hope that this will be the first of many visits.

Sheene's Donington Spectaculars

by Andrew Marriott

I am going to remember it for years to come. Standing in the pits at Donington with microphone at the ready waiting to interview the winner of the MCN Brut 33 championship race. Dave Potter is in the lead on the big Ted Broad prepared Yamaha TZ but Barry Sheene is desperately trying to make up ground after one of his now traditional slow starts.

The No. 7 Suzuki accelerates out of the chicane, Sheene squirts on the power of the 700 Suzuki, all four cylinders chime in and the back wheel becomes the only contact with mother earth. This is the wheelie to end all wheelies. A Dave Taylor special but at three times the speed. Sheene finally drops the front wheel to the deck just before the braking area for Red Gate corner.



A hat-trick at Donington? With Superbike wins at Scarborough and Cadwell scored in the last two weeks, Sheene hopes for his third successive victory — this time against Kenny Roberts.

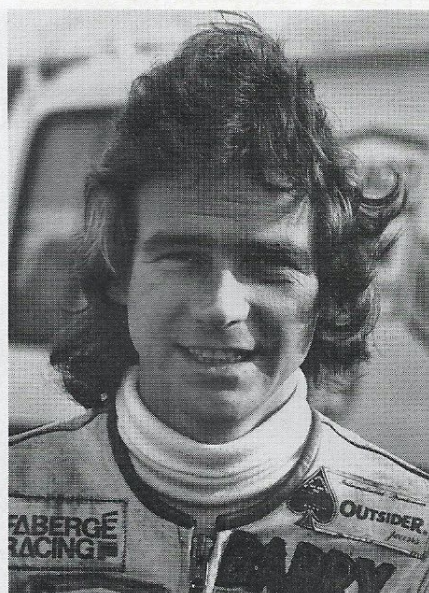
A few minutes later I am talking to Donington Park Circuit Director Peter Gaydon. He is grinning from ear to ear. Peter used to be a very useful racing driver himself and graduated to Formula Two level at car racing. He has plenty of trophies on his mantelpiece to remind one of that. But when he worked in London his regular mode of transport was a bike — he knows the two wheel world. "I've just

come from the Craner Curves" he tells me "Fantastic. I thought it was only possible to do wheelies in a straight line. I have just seen Barry Sheene banked over and before he straightened it up, the front wheel was off the ground."

Yes Barry Sheene does revel in the joys of racing at Donington. In his two visits to date he has failed to leave without tossing one of those coveted

Donington winners hats into the back of his Rolls Royce.

It is just a year ago almost to the day that the twice World Champion first raced at our track situated here on the Leicester/Derbyshire county line. A hail-lashed meeting, it might have been one of national status with no championship points at stake, but there was plenty of racing for Barry and he was giving of his best. Two 32



lap parts made up the main event with Sheene winning by over half a minute from Dave Potter and Ron Haslam with the rest all at least a lap behind.

At the July meeting this year with full international status Sheene not only demonstrated his status as king of the wheelies but also staged an exciting last lap defeat over his friend and former team mate Steve Parrish in the 500 cc race.

But today at Donington the chips are really down. This isn't just an opportunity to demonstrate his obvious skill as Britain's best rider. It is the vital chance to show that toe to toe, no holds barred Sheene can beat Kenny Roberts, the man who has robbed him of his world title. A great deal has been said and reams written about this year's world championship tussle.

Sheene himself has had a good deal to say and some of his critics have argued strongly that illness or not,

Suzuki mechanic error or no, Roberts has the beating of Barry — anywhere — anytime — any circuit.

If those critics are to be silenced Sheene must do it here today in the most demonstrable way possible. If you call it a grudge match that maybe a little strong for both men admire and respect the others ability. But needle match it most certainly is.

I personally would not be too keen to be on it either way. Sheene has to be the favourite but only marginally. The big engined Suzuki certainly seems to be working well and as Sheene showed a couple of weeks ago at Olivers Mount he is riding superbly at the moment. He followed this with another MCN/Brut Superbike win at Cadwell last Sunday.

And, of course, Sheene has the advantage of track knowledge. Roberts did not arrive here at the Parkland Circuit until two days ago, but Roberts is a quick learner of new circuits so the quirks and pitfalls of Donington's

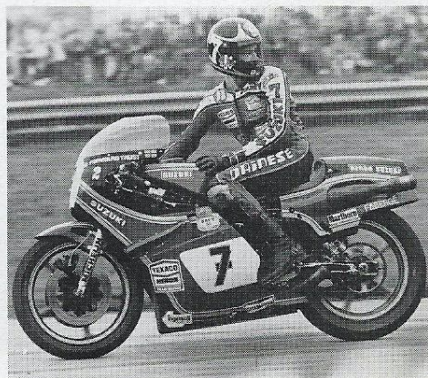
tricky two miles should come easy.

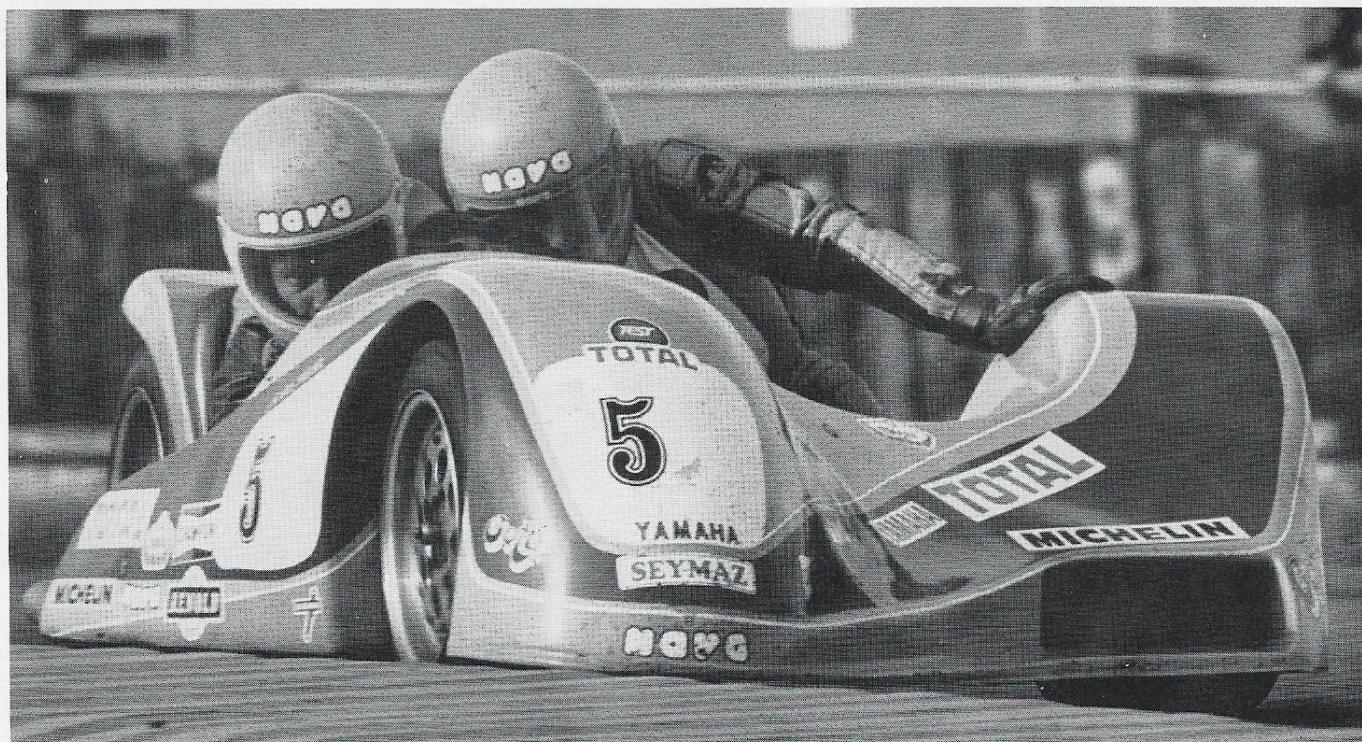
If there is one deciding factor it might just be the crowd. British crowds tend to be fair minded people who will show their appreciation of a rider whether he is English, American or from the moon. Indeed the booing that greeted Kenny Roberts on the victory rostrum at the oh so confusing British Grand Prix is not typical.

I certainly would not advocate a repeat of that but Barry Sheene does appreciate his audience, the louder they roar the faster he goes. Football crowds have pushed their teams on to greater things on many occasions, you just have to look at the difference between Derby County, Leicester City of Forest's home and away results to see that.

All you fans out there can help show that Britain doesn't always have to play the under dog to the USA. But to win or lose one thing is certain Barry Sheene will be putting everything into today's race and that includes the best wheelies in the business.

Tailpiece . . . where have all my rivals gone?





The French ace Alain Michel is rated as the fastest sidecar racer in the world.

British hopes in Sidecar International

By CHRIS CARTER, Motor Cycle

When George O'Dell won the sidecar world championship last season it was the first time that an Englishman had won the crown since the days of Eric Oliver in the early 'fifties. But though the title had eluded our three wheeler racers for so long Britain has always had its share of top class sidecar competitors, and this season is no exception.

Scotsman Jock Taylor, the 24 year old racer from Haddington, East Lothian ignored the advice of many experienced Grand Prix observers at the start of the year, and set out on an attack on the world championship trail.

Now at the end of a long season Jock has lost one passenger and partner, found another, picked up some exciting sponsorship help from Dennis Trollope of Fowlers of Bristol, and grabbed seventh place in the final championship results.

Jock found his advisors were right. The opposition was tough, well prepared and sponsored, while the financial returns of Grand Prix racing was a joke.

But the Scotsman, his teenaged passenger James Neil and hard working mechanic Charlie Swanson have the self same quality that carried George O'Dell to the title that shocked the sidecar world—determination.

There have been times when the going has been unbearable and the tension has shown itself. After the West German Grand Prix at the Nurburgring when a loose exhaust pipe cost Jock and James an almost certain second place, a heat-of-the-moment discussion after the race saw Charlie ready to quit.

He didn't and the Taylor team went on to grab fourth place in the Czech Grand Prix the following weekend, and then a sensational international win at the F750 meeting at Assen a couple of weeks ago.

Sidecar builder Terry Windle has made some modifications to the new outfit after the lessons learned at the Grand Prix, and Jock never one to be overconfident about results till the race is over, is determined to beat the opposition here at Donington Park.

While Jock has been battling away abroad Mick Boddice, the 30 year old Birmingham racer has been making hay on the British short circuits, particularly Donington.

Since Donington reopened Mick, the famous son of an equally famous sidecar racing father has won all but one of the three wheeler races at the track. Last year his efforts earned him the BP Trophy here, and already his Donington results this year look likely to help him retain the award.

Mick, with Charlie Birks in the chair has been making his presence felt on other British circuits and his recent Scarborough victory in atrocious conditions was particularly impressive.

Mick Boddice has the same quality as O'Dell and Taylor determination. Like many riders financial commit-

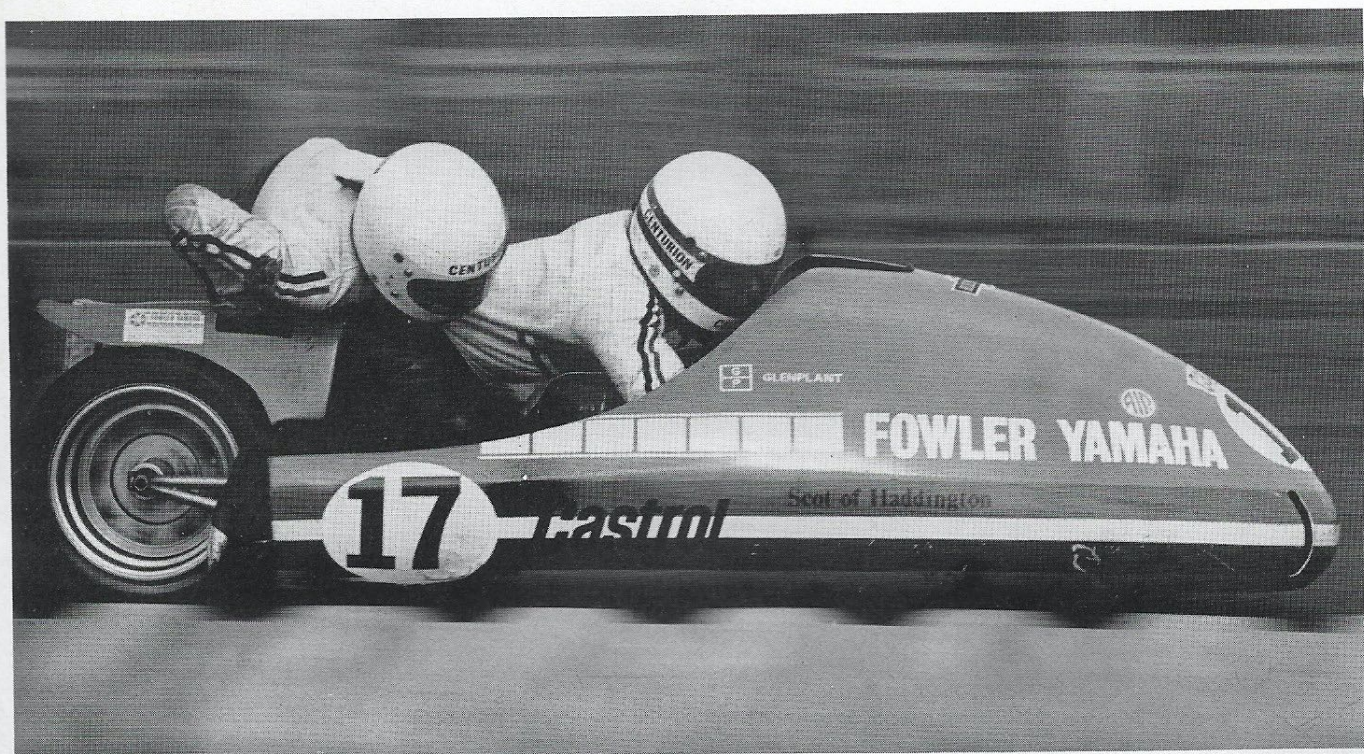
ments can make or break a racing career and Mick has battled on bravely when lesser men would have called it a day.

His sister Julie Boddice has chipped in some cash to keep Mick out on the tracks, and so too have the Woodhouse brothers, themselves top line sidecar racers, who have generously given up their racing career to help the Boddice team.

Mick had some atrocious luck during his world championship outings in the past few seasons, but his ability is still recognised by some Grand Prix organisers. This season, for example, his name has been listed in the French, Belgian and West German Grands Prix to race in the sidecar event, yet Mick had not even written in for the regulations! That's fame.

Since George O'Dell won the sidecar title in 1977 his luck has turned sour. Last Autumn he was one of the group of sidecar racers invited to compete in a demonstration race in the Formula 750 world championship round at Laguna Seca.

In practice however George flipped the outfit and though the cause of the crash is still a mystery, the end result is not. His passenger Cliff Holland escaped unhurt, but George broke his leg badly.



Jock Taylor/James Neil have shown considerable promise this season — winning at Assen recently.

But George does not give up. For the start of this season he had two outfits, one the Seymaz he has used to help him to the title, and a new Hermann Schmid built device. He had won help from Mitsui, the Yamaha importers for the UK, and the German based Wurth company who produce millions of nuts and bolts for industry.

Though results were not as good as George might have wished he was always a serious contender in the early championship rounds, and looked set to win the British title for the first time.

But at the Spring Bank Holiday Monday meeting at Brands Hatch before the start of the sidecar race, Cliff missed his hand hold on the outfit slid off the tray and watched by thousands at the track, and millions more fireside viewers on the television he was hit by several other outfits.

Fortunately his injuries were not as serious as was at first feared, but they were bad enough, and George had to leave for the Isle of Man TT races very despondent, concerned, and short of an experienced and trustworthy passenger for the toughest circuit in the world!

By George's misfortunes were not over. A standby passenger stood in for one evening practice, and though he was unhurt when the chair turned over on the mountain, George broke his other leg.

It was an injury that would have put lesser mortals out for a year. Not O'Dell. He was back racing again at the July Donington Park international, and he won.

Since then George has still found very little to smile about. Week after week his engines have blown up costing thousands of pounds, and to make things worse the leg broken at the TT refused to knit together.

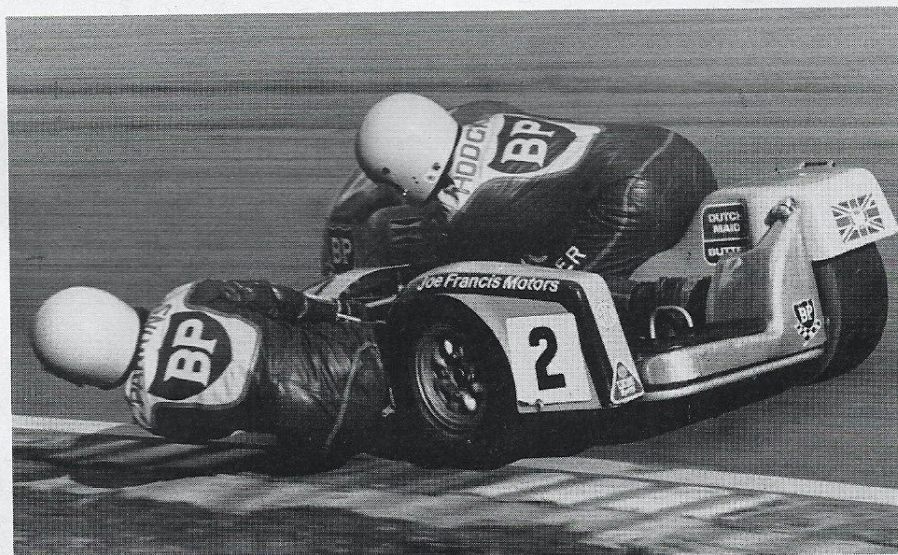
But George is stubborn and brave. Nothing comes between him and his racing, that's why he won the world title, and it would be a very foolish man who wrote off the Hemel Hempstead ace.

Former British champion Dick Greasley had one of his worst seasons ever in 1977. Results at home and abroad were disappointing but since he bought a Dieter Busch built chassis in the close season Dick, backed by Shropshire dealer Cyril Chell has bounced back into winning ways.

He was third in both the West German and Czech Grand Prix and his short circuit outings in Britain have been more impressive, too. Sadly financial problems have caused a split between him and passenger Gordon Russell, but if the replacement ballast is good enough Dick, who is 32 years old, looks certain to be a major threat in the end of season meetings in Britain.

That's just four of Britain's top sidecar men. There are others of course like Brian Webb, Derek Jones, Alan May and Trevor Ireson to name just a few.

All have ambitions. Many would like to be world champions, and this weekend's sidecar action at Donington Park will give them, and spectators an



Bill Hodgkins finished 4th in the British Grand Prix.

insight as to what they need to reach the top of the sidecar racing world.

One yardstick they can use will be Frenchman Alain Michel who came within three points this season of world champion Rolf Biland, and there are many experts who feel that Michel, since the British Grand Prix at Silverstone where he won the rainsoaked race, has proved himself the fastest sidecar racer in the world.

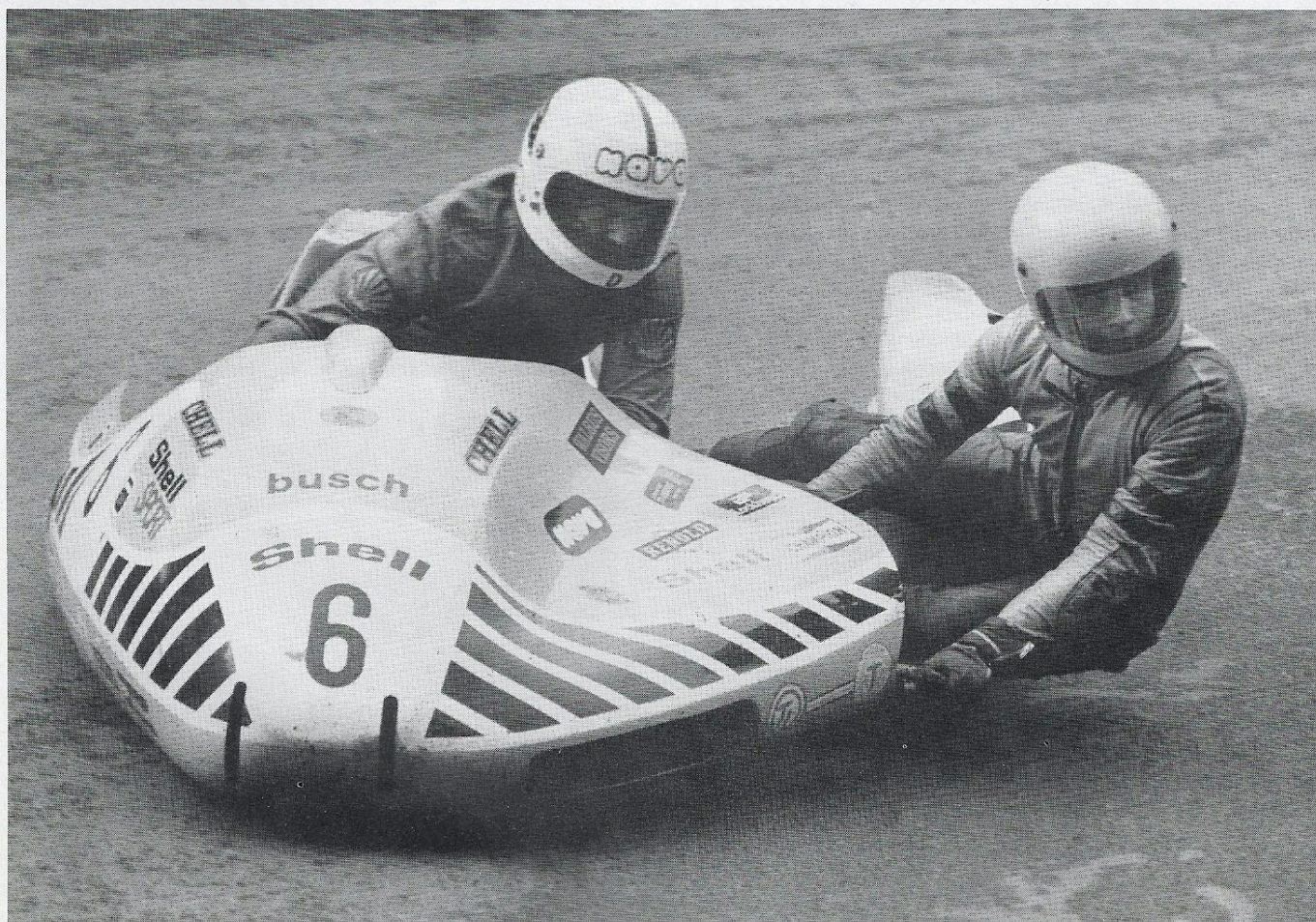
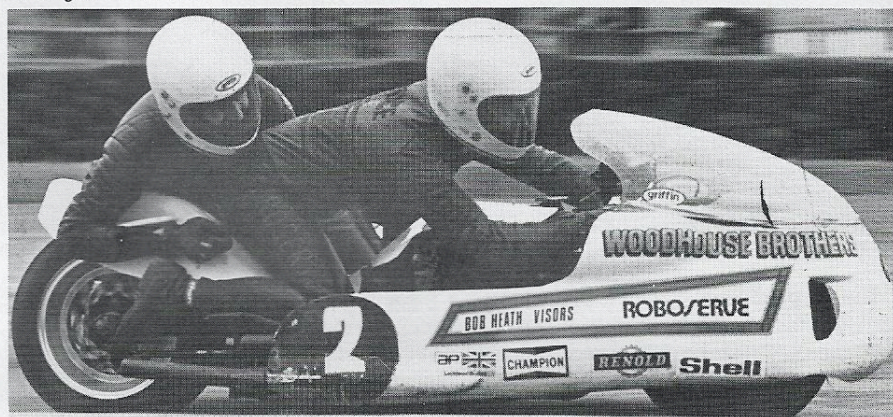
Certainly at the West German Grand Prix at Nurburgring and the Czech Grand Prix at Brno a week later Alain was in superb form. In the former Alain had to stop to change plugs. It cost him the race, and, as things turned out the title. But once back in the race he lapped 12 seconds a lap faster than anyone else, and then went on to win in Brno.

Just a year ago Alain was set to quit. He couldn't find a good passenger, and the effort of racing, travelling and preparation was too much for him.

Then along came British passenger Stu Collins and Alain regained his interest in the sport. He still would like to be a top car racing driver, but that is for the future. First he wants to win the sidecar world title, and British fans will have a chance to see the sort of talent that could just do that.



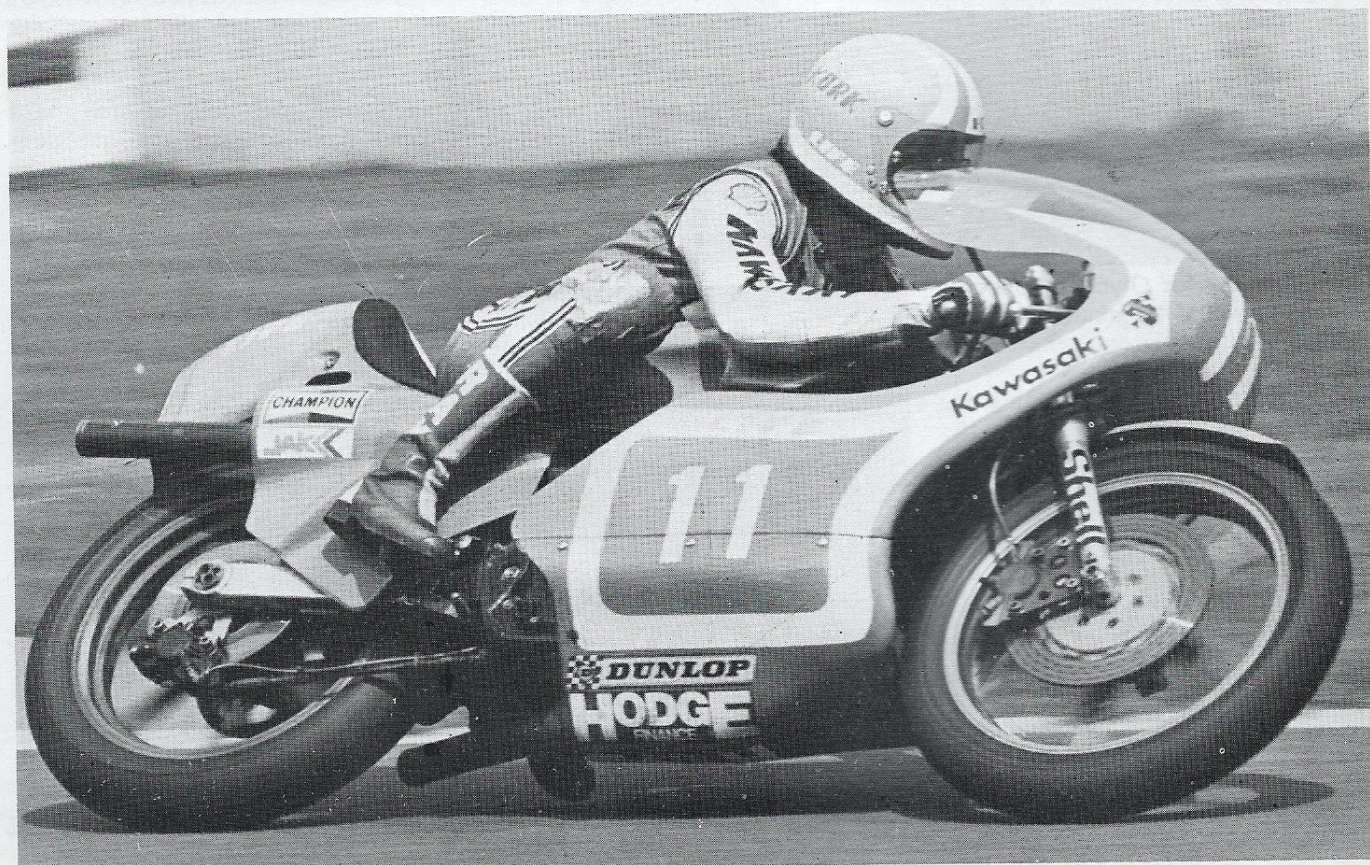
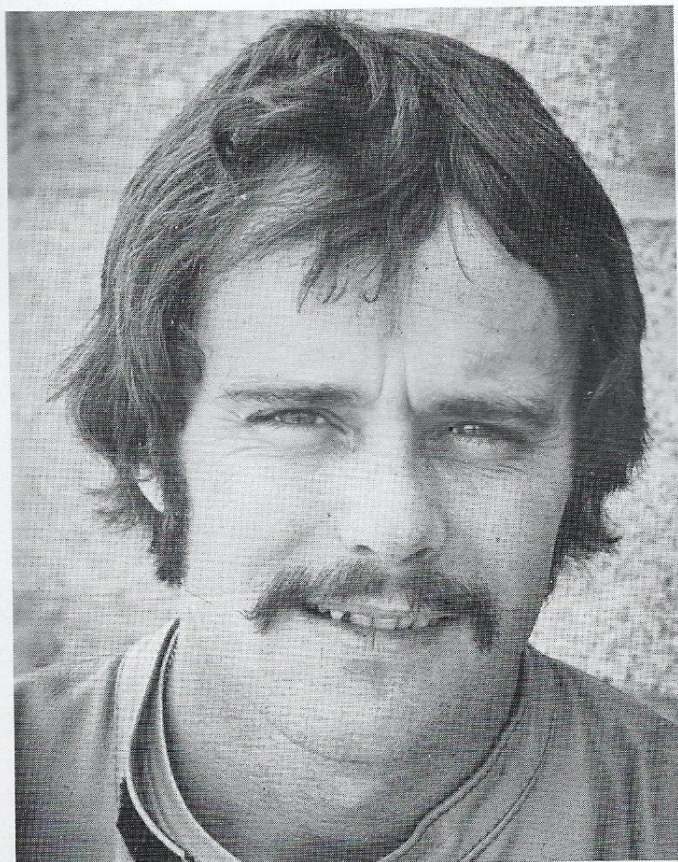
George O'Dell's passenger Cliff Holland seems perilously close to the tarmac, en route to their win at Donington in July (above). Mick Boddice is a consistent sidecar victor at Donington (below).



Dick Greasley finished 5th in the 1978 World Championships — the highest placed British driver.

KORK BALLINGTON

A salute to the 1978 250 cc and 350 cc World Champion



Donington just has to be one of my favourite tracks

says **STEVE PARRISH**



I rode there first a year ago and was very happy to win. Then back in July at the first international I had a fabulous battle with Barry Sheene and he just beat me in the final dash to the line.

So Donington definitely is one of my good tracks. After a lot of problems with my Makaha Yamaha we finally found a problem recently which appeared to have upset the handling all season. Now the 'bike is going real good and I'm looking to at least win the Piers Forester Trophy for the best non-works rider. I had some hilarious times bob-sleighting with Piers a couple of years ago, with Prince Michael as our Team manager. He seemed to be under the illusion that Piers and I were in the running for Olympic honours! Anyway it would be great to win the trophy because of the crazy times I had with Piers.

But what about a lap of Donington. On a flying lap I take fifth gear past the pits, it is fairly fast here and I use the end of the barrier as my braking point for Red Gate corner. It's a wide double apex corner and there are two ways of taking it. You can go in very wide but the problem there is rivals can come up down the inside then cut you off as you exit the corner. This is the fastest line but if you are dicing with someone then I tend to use less of the road so they can't dive down the inside.

It is a second gear corner leading to the down hill section of Craner Curves — that's a pretty tricky section because if you don't get the first part of it right

you are in trouble. Mess up the start of this section and you finish up all wrong for the right hander at the bottom of the hill, known as the Old Hairpin — although it isn't really a hairpin at all. It's very hard braking into it, but nothing too tricky. It is possible in third gear but I prefer to take it in second so that I have the revs to gas it out of there towards Starkey's Bridge. I believe in the old days the track actually went through the arches. By the bridge can be very slippery, particularly if it has rained earlier. It is always the last place to dry-out, yes it is easy to step the back out there.

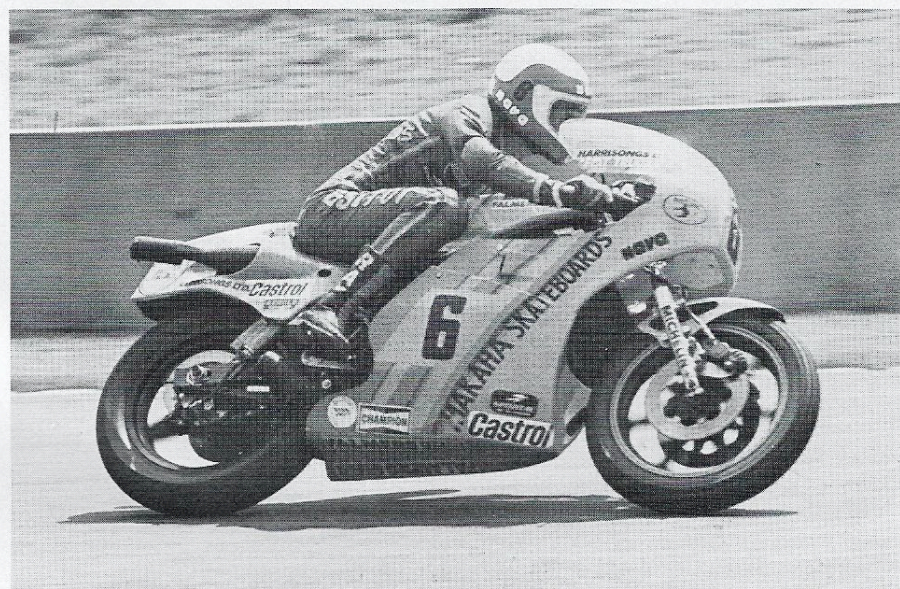
Then it is on the gas through Holly Wood and up towards McLeans Corner. Again this is a double corner and there is the option of taking the fast racing line with the possibility of someone coming up on the inside. I really like the corner and it is a good place to overtake by diving down the inside. On the inside it has just been resurfaced and it is slippery so it is best to keep off that. McLeans is a second gear corner.

Accelerating out, there is a very slippery kerb which has to be watched so it's best to stay about a foot to the inside to get maximum traction for the next burst of speed into Coppice Corner. Here you come over the brow of a hill and it is very important to get on the brakes before you crest that rise — otherwise you will go in too deep and

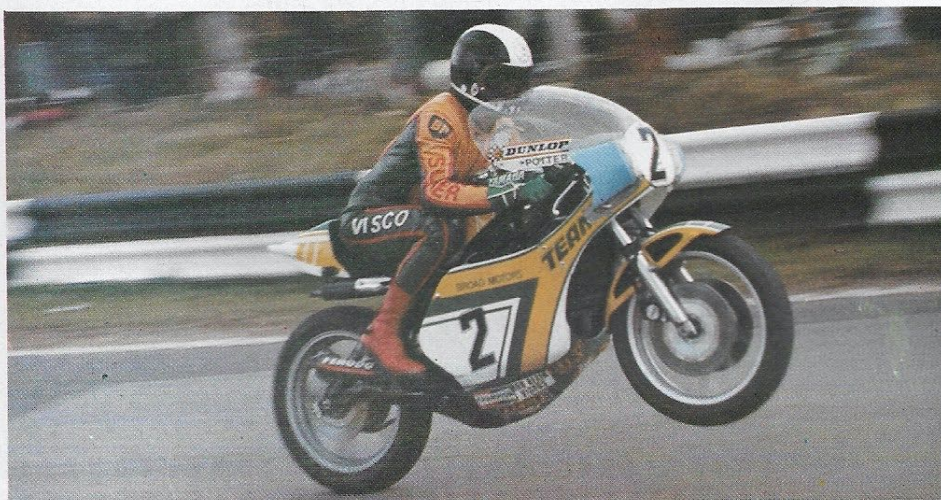
wide. It is important to know the corner because you actually have to be all lined up at Coppice and you can lose 10-15 mph down the straight and perhaps a couple of positions.

The main straight is surprisingly bumpy. I think Tom Wheatcroft ought to get his road rollers out. But it is good for the fans because you can pull a couple of wheelies. At the second of these rises I am in top gear. As soon as the front wheel comes up I know it is time to hit the brakes when the Yamaha's front comes down again. Braking into the chicane is important because that's where a certain Barry Sheene seems to be able to leave it later than anyone else. It's important not to let a rival get down your inside there because they can take your line completely away from you. It is a first gear corner but it is important to line up for the exit. A lot of time can be lost here if you screw up the entry to the corner or the exit. It is hard work to get through there fast and neatly because it is so tight. There is a kerb on the outside coming out of the chicane but this isn't so slippery. You can pop a wheelie out of this one in first and second but you also have to keep an eye out for the pit boards. Only two miles but pretty hard work. My final verdict is that Donington with all its facilities and the professionalism is quite simply the best circuit in the country. None better.

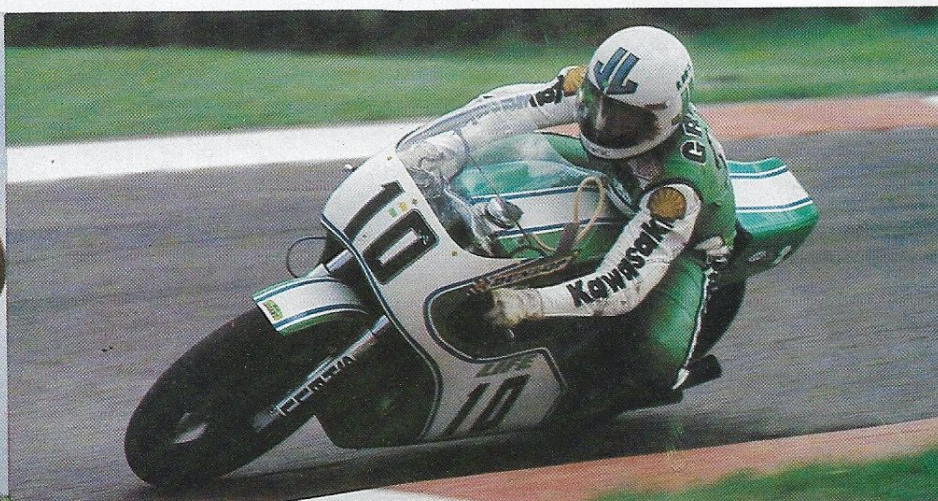
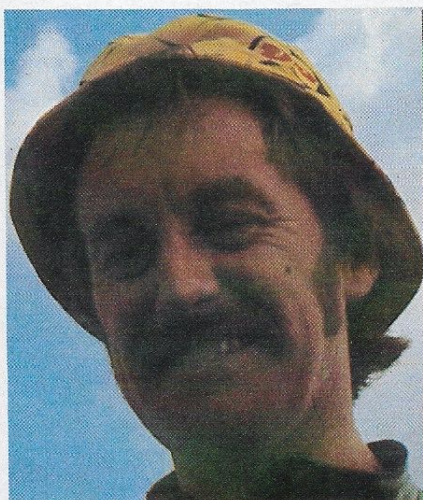
Parrish exits the Chicane on his lap of Donington



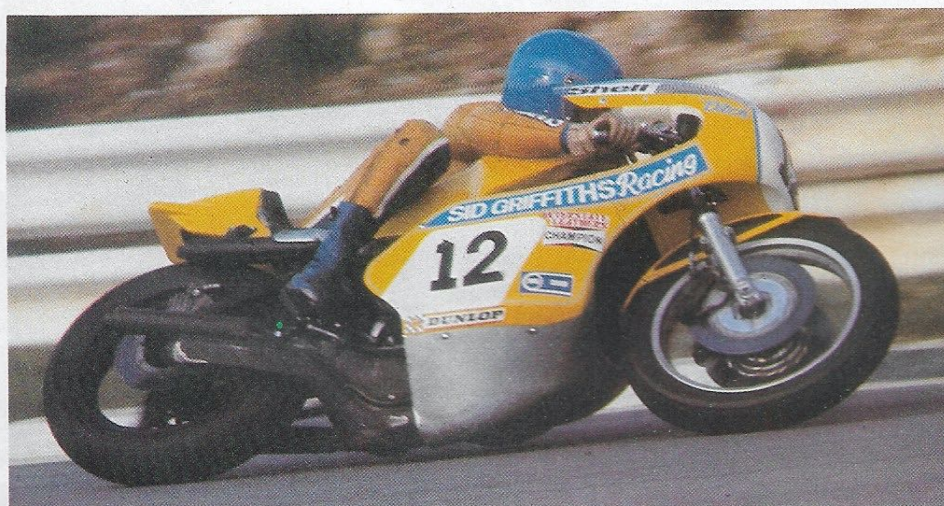
DONINGTON
THE HEART OF BRITISH MOTOR SPORT



DAVE POTTER



MICK GRANT



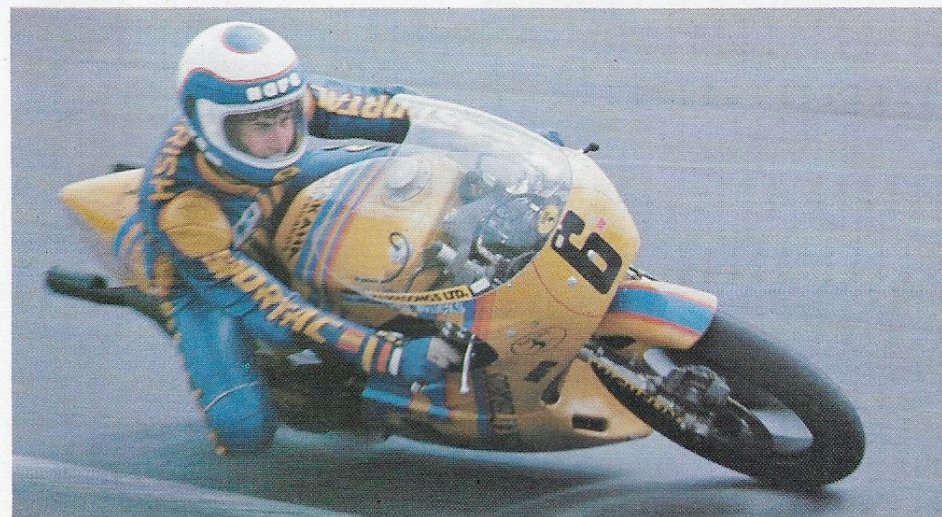
BARRY DITCHBURN



RON HASLAM



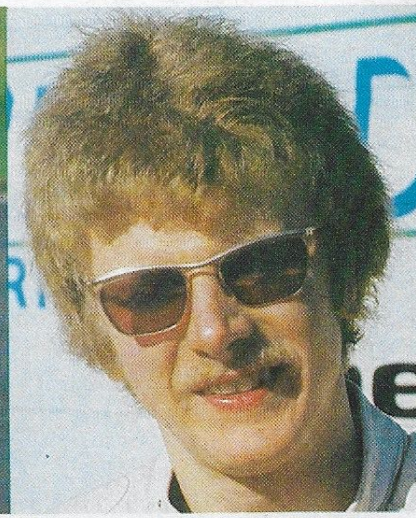
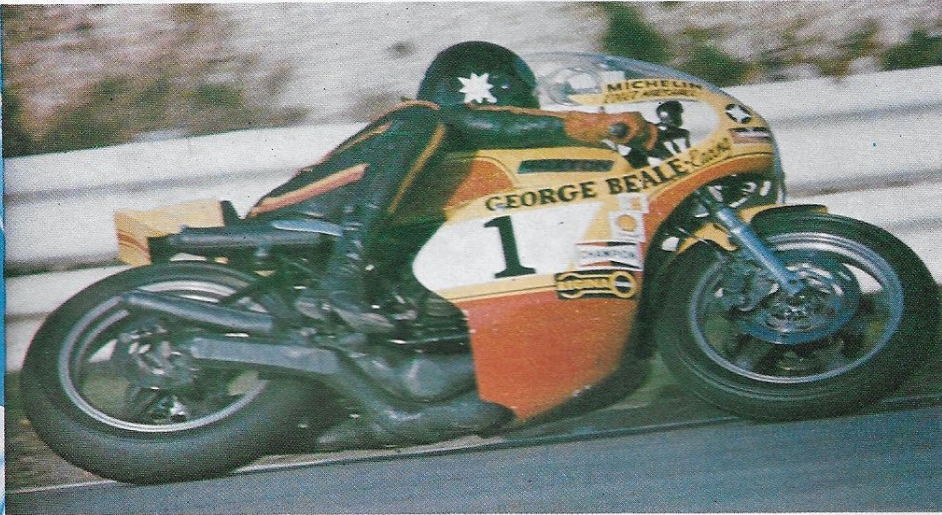
STEVE MANSHIP



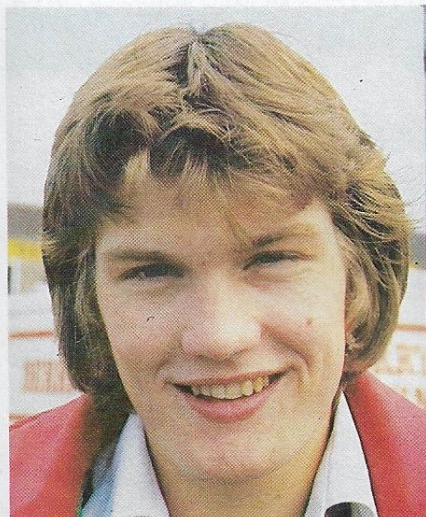
STEVE PARRISH



ROGER MARSHALL

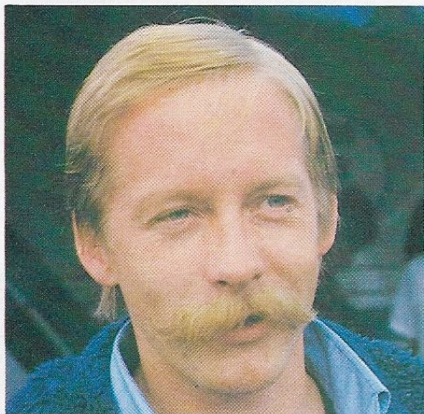


JOHN NEWBOLD

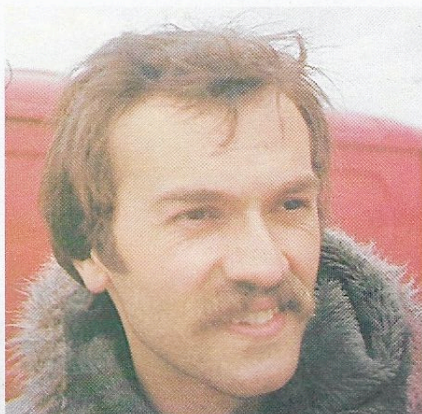


KEVIN STOWE

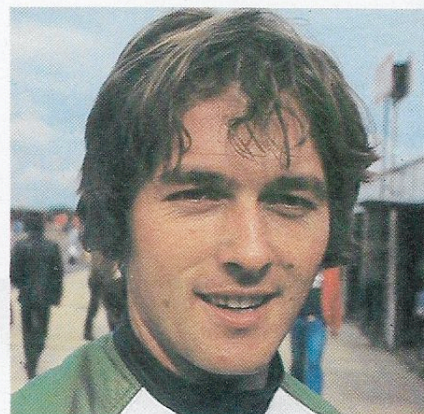




TEUVO LÄNSIVUORI

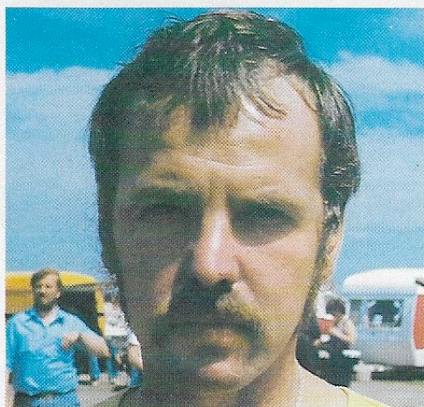


BERNARD FAU

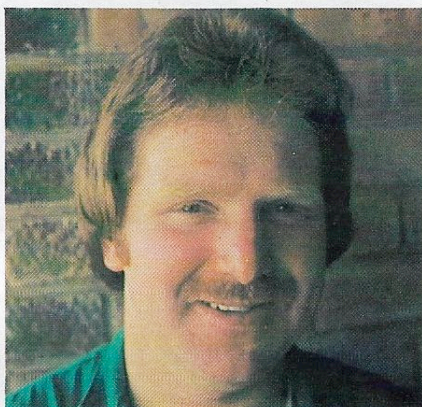


DENNIS IRELAND

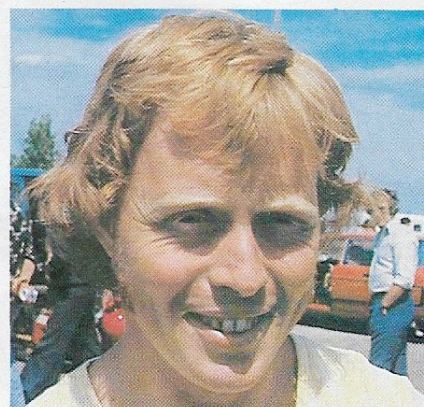
SIDECAR STARS



DICK GREASLEY



BILL HODGKINS



MICK BODDICE



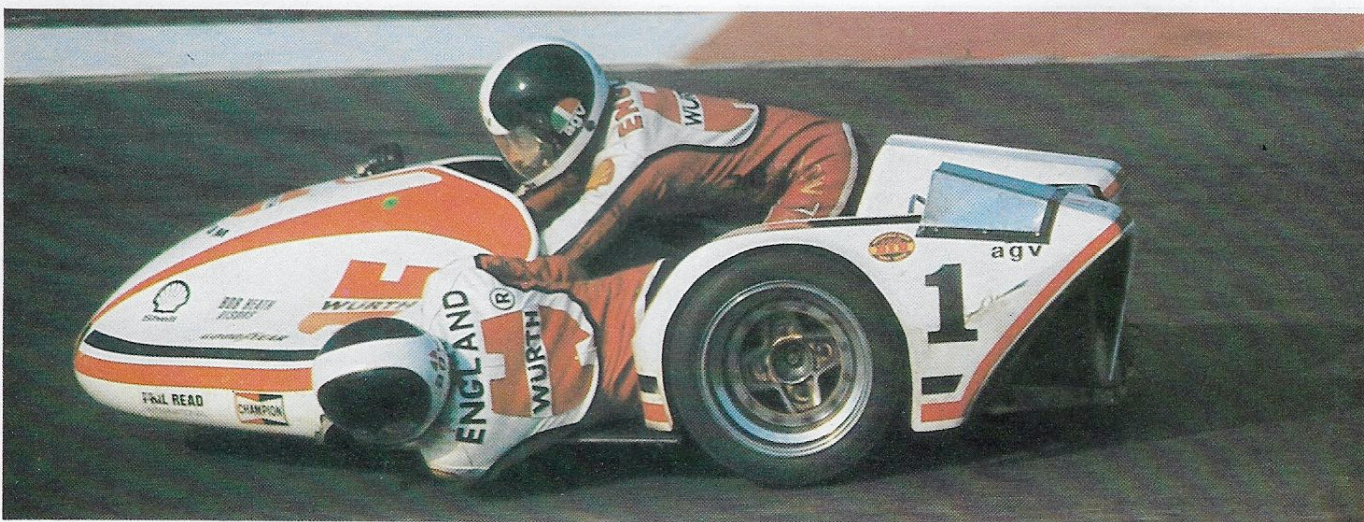
JAMES NEIL

JOCK TAYLOR



CLIFF HOLLAND

GEORGE O'DELL



GEORGE O'DELL

DAVE POTTER

Donington's Outright Record Holder

by Chris Carter,
Motor Cycle



Potter's record-breaking ride at Donington in July.

Dick Whittington was the man who came from Yorkshire to London to find his fame and fortune. Dave Potter is the road racer who did the same!



Dave left his home in the quiet Yorkshire village of Hovingham to become a top line road racer, but there was no lucky cat to cross his path. Instead after a lot of hard work Dave hit the headlines when he won the Lord of Lydden title back in 1971 on a self prepared Norton Commando, and to rub it in for his Southern rivals Dave did it again in 1972.

Now, seven years later Dave rides the beautifully prepared bikes of Ilford motor cycle dealer Ted Broad, and his 750 Yamaha backed with help from Mitsui is one of the quickest machines on the race tracks of Europe.

But Dave did not switch to competitive two strokes until the end of the 1974 season. Up until that time he had been mounted on some very useful four strokes. It was his own machine that carried him to victory at the Kent circuit, and during the week Dave worked hard at Paul Dunstall's factory to pay for his racing.

Then along came Vincent Davey of the Gus Kuhn concern in London and on the Kuhn Norton Dave won the 1972 British 750 cc championship. The following season Dave was picked for the British team in the Anglo American Match Races, and Dave won a race at Brands Hatch before going on to become Britain's second highest points scorer in the series.

By the start of 1974 though the Norton was becoming uncompetitive, and Dave had to pick his meetings carefully, while at the same time he was helping Willie Ryan develop the 500 cc Crescent two stroke.

The bike had potential, but the opposition, armed with already competitive machinery, had a head start, and Mr Ryan generously coughed up for Dave to try a 350 TZ Yamaha at the end of the season.

When Barry Ditchburn joined the Kawasaki team in 1975 Ted Broad wanted a replacement, and with the approval and help of Willie Ryan Dave switched to the Broad camp.

His first race, at the Yuletide Brands Hatch meeting was not a staggering success. He fell off at Clearways on a patch of petrol, but he was unhurt, the bike barely damaged, and Ted Broad unconcerned.

But from then on Dave began to click on the 700 Yamaha. He was fourth at Rouen, and then fourth overall at the Imola 200 despite a streaming cold which turned to something much worse after Dave had swallowed the cotton wool he had put up his nose to stop his nose streaming.

At Mettet Dave grabbed victory in the second leg of the Formula 750 meeting to make his mark on the international scene, and give the ever en-

thusiastic Ted Broad his first major international success.

That season Dave was also riding in endurance racing on the 900 Penthouse BMW. Partnering Gary Green he was second at Le Mans and fifth overall in the Barcelona 24 hour race, winning the sports production class.

But for the 1976 season Dave decided to stick exclusively to the Broad bikes. It has been a winning combination since that time, and Dave since 1975 has taken the privateer award in the MCN Brut Superbike championship.

In the '76 season Dave was fourth in the MCN Brut competition and finished fifth overall in the FIM Formula 750 championship. But to take on the factory teams, and occasionally beat them, the aim of both Dave and Ted, is expensive.

More sponsorship was wanted and it came in the shape of more financial backing from BP who have been linked with Ted all the years he had been in sponsorship. Armed with an RG500 Suzuki and a 750TZ Yamaha painted in the yellow and green BP livery Dave had another fine season.

But this year beats all that. Joining BP in the sponsorship stakes Mitsui, the UK Yamaha importers have provided some welcome support, and the results have been rewarding for everyone.

At both Brands Hatch and Donington Park this season Dave has scored some impressive 750 victories over top class entries including Barry Sheene, Pat Hennen and Mick Grant. On his day Dave has the measure of anyone in Britain on the big bikes, but lack of realistic start money has limited his appearances abroad this year.

POTTER: "On his day Dave has the measure of anyone in Britain"

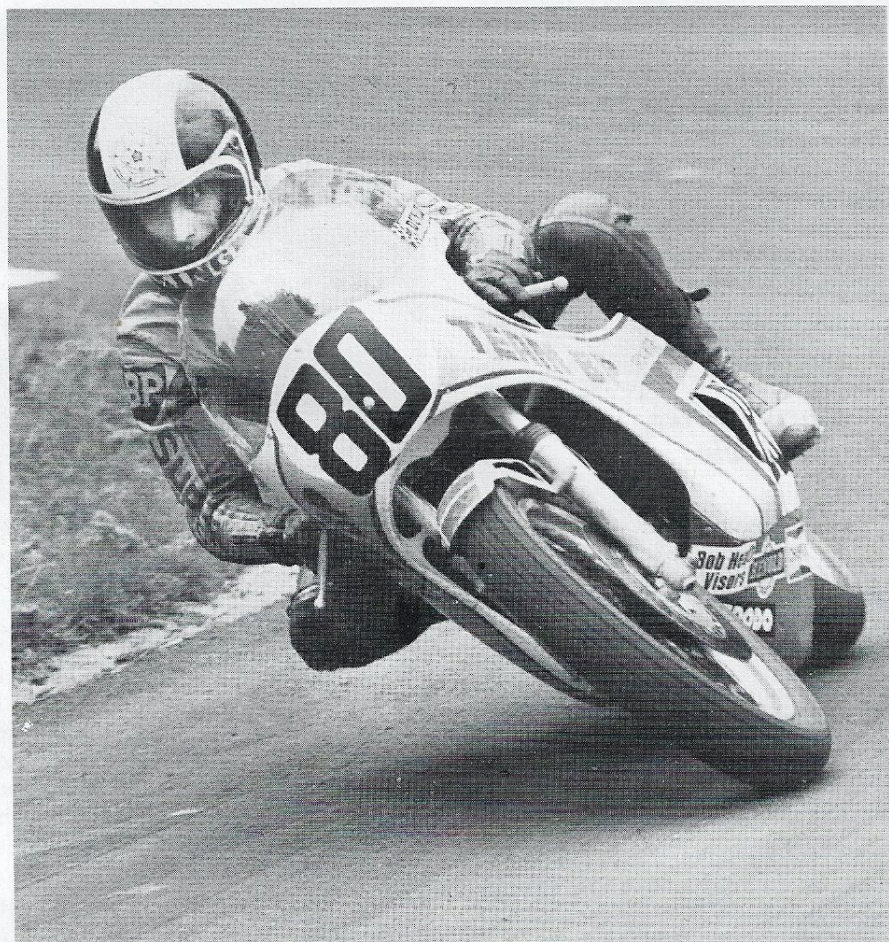
That has been Europe's loss and to some extent Britain's gain, for Dave like every racer just wants to ride his bikes, and if the foreign meetings are not coming up, he rides more in Britain.

If Formula 750 outings abroad have been rare, the Grand Prix outings have been even scarcer! With a wife and family to keep, Dave as a professional rider cannot lose money when he races, and Grand Prix start money is a well known sick joke.

But this year he went to the Dutch TT at Assen, and qualified fifth fastest, despite a tumble and the fact that he had to borrow a machine off Steve Parrish to do it.

Soon after the end of practice though his ankle had begun to swell up from the crash, and Dave had to drive back to England without racing.

Dave took disappointment with a shrug, but a cool, relaxed outlook is essential if a rider is going to reach the top. And Dave Potter at the age of 28 is such a rider.



TRY

A. GAGG and SONS (EST. 1900)

OF
NOTTINGHAM

If it's spares you require to suit all British machines old and new for your

TRIUMPH — NORTON — BSA

ALSO

HONDA — YAMAHA — SUZUKI
SPARES AVAILABLE

20% OFF DUNLOP & AVON TYRES

ALL AT — 106 ALFRETON ROAD, NOTTINGHAM
TEL. 76288

GEORGE O'DELL

Aged 32. Hemel Hempstead.
 1977 World Sidecar Champion
 1978 World Championship Results:
 Austrian GP 4th
 French GP 4th
 Italian GP 10th
 British GP 5th

JOCK TAYLOR

Aged 24. Pencaitland, East Lothian
 1978 Results:
 French GP 7th
 Italian GP 8th
 T.T. 2nd + 3rd
 Belgian GP 6th
 British GP 3rd
 Czechoslovakian GP 4th
 Assen Race 1st

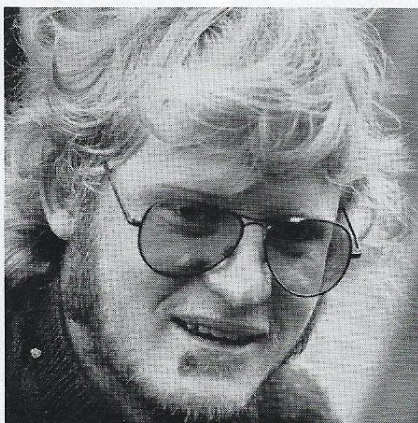
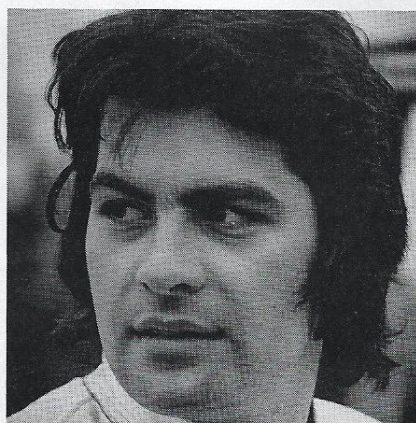
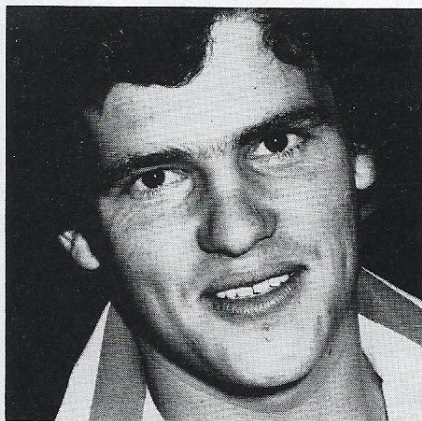
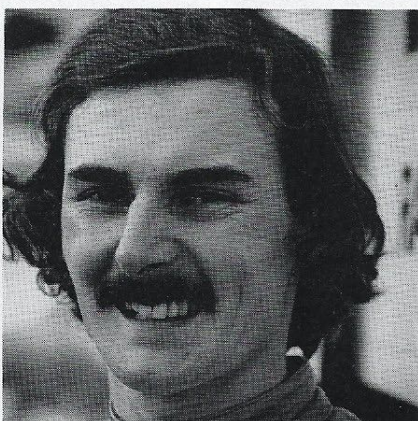
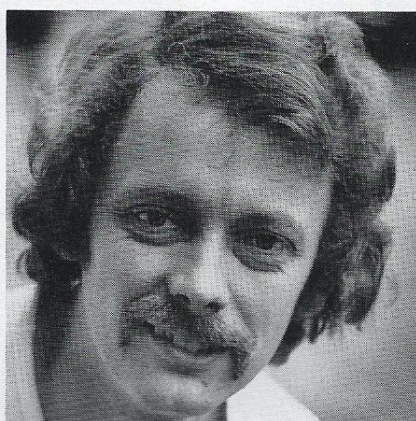
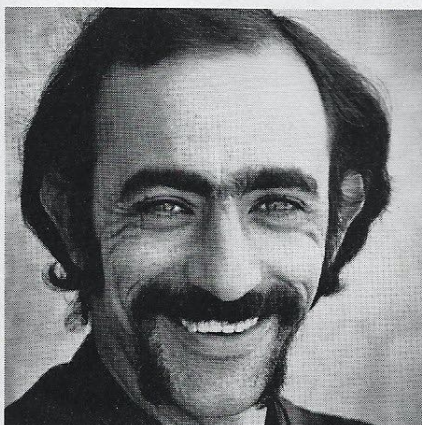
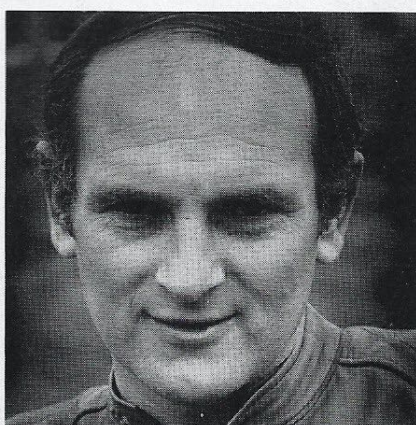
BILL HODGKINS

Aged 30. Bromley.
 1978 World Championship Results:
 French GP 9th
 Dutch GP 10th
 Belgian GP 5th
 British GP 4th
 German GP 8th

MICK BODDICE

Aged 28. Kidderminster.
 1978 Results:
 T.T. 2nd
 British GP 6th
 Ulster GP 1st

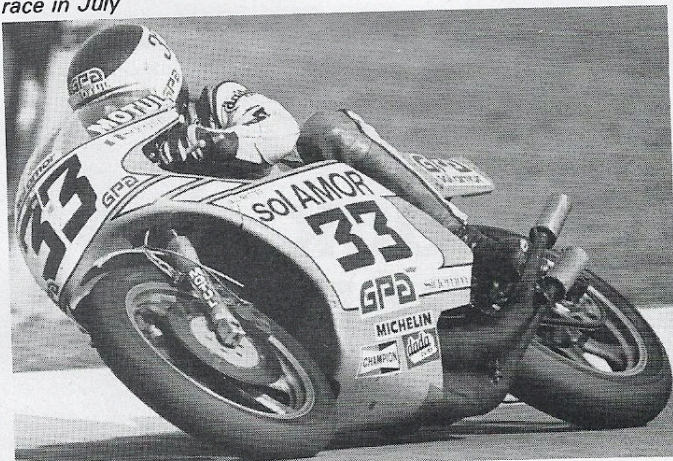
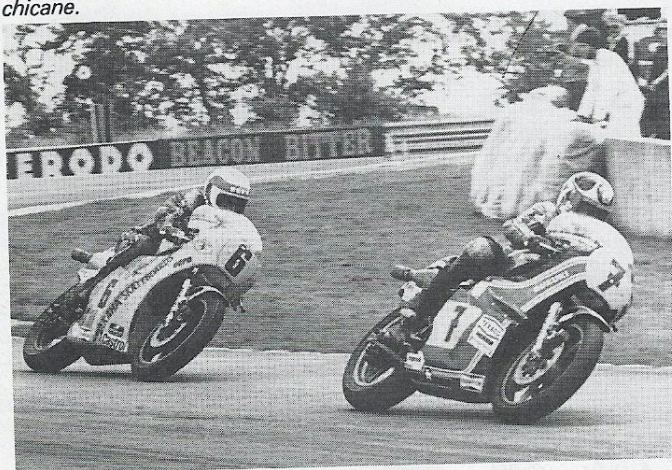
PADDOCK PORTRAITS

*Dudley Cramond**Asa Moyce**Jeff Sayle**Clive Horton**Rod Scivyer**Victor Soussan**Derek Chatterton**Tony Rutter*



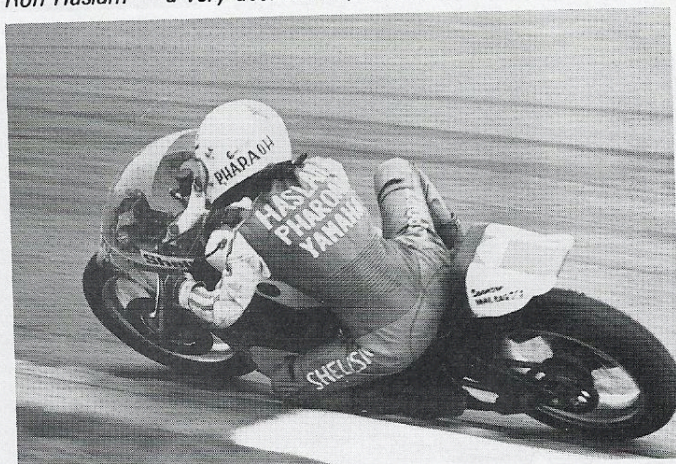
Senior battle between Barry Sheene and Steve Parrish at Park chicane.

Bernard Fau finished third in Donington's MCN/Brut Superbike race in July



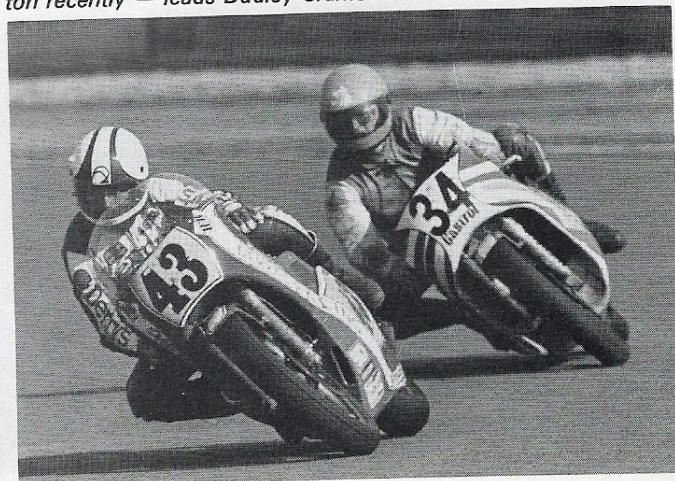
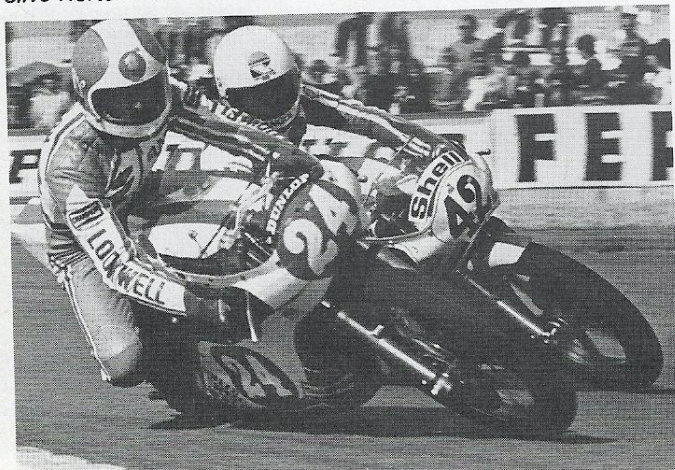
Graham Wood's British 750 cc Phoenix.

Ron Haslam — a very determined, local contender.



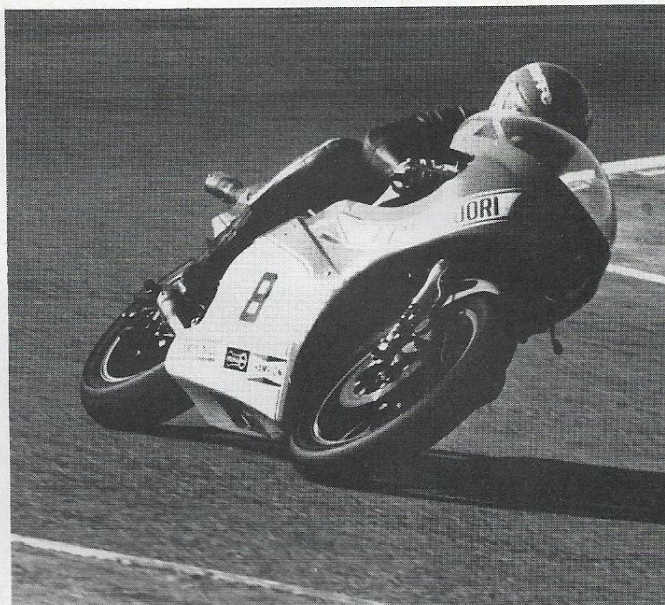
Clive Horton and Steve Kibble battle at McLean's corner.

Dennis Ireland — winner of the ShellSport 500 cc race at Snetterton recently — leads Dudley Cramond at Red Gate.

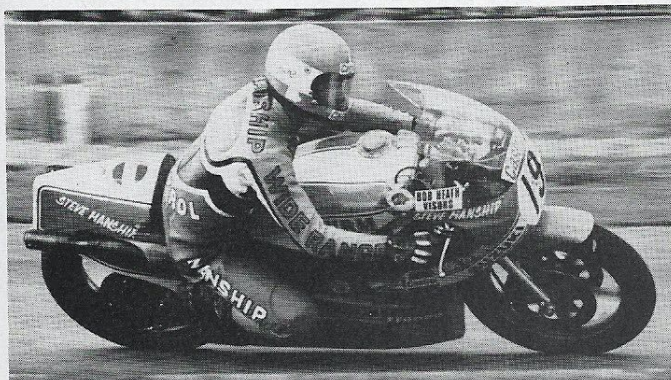




Mick Grant — winner of this year's Classic TT.



Tepi Lansivuori is having his final season.

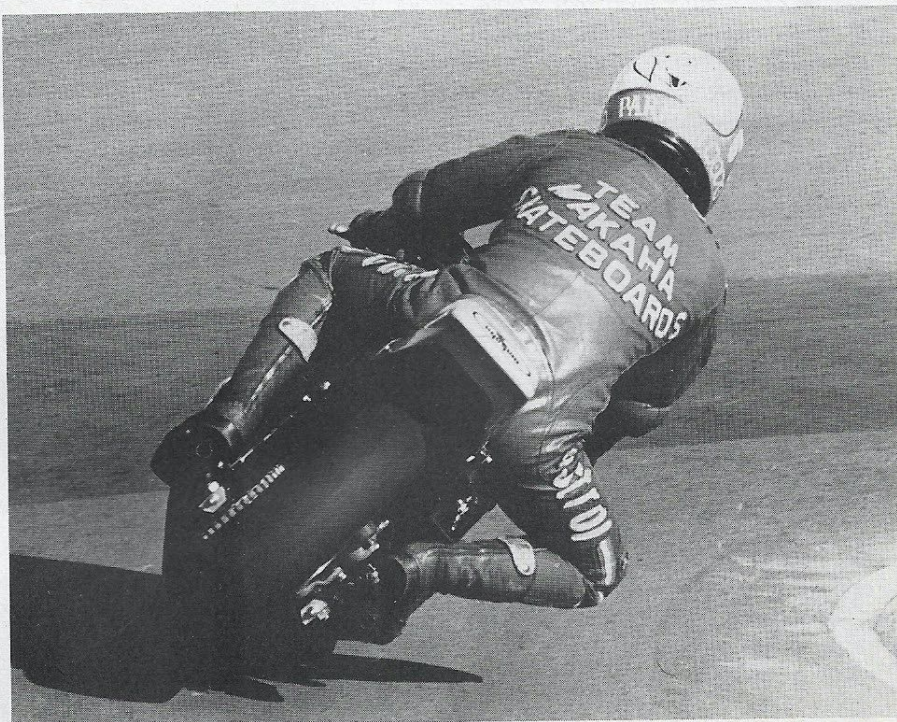


Leicester's Steve Manship — hero of the British GP.



Vic Soussan — a regular Grand Prix points scorer this year.

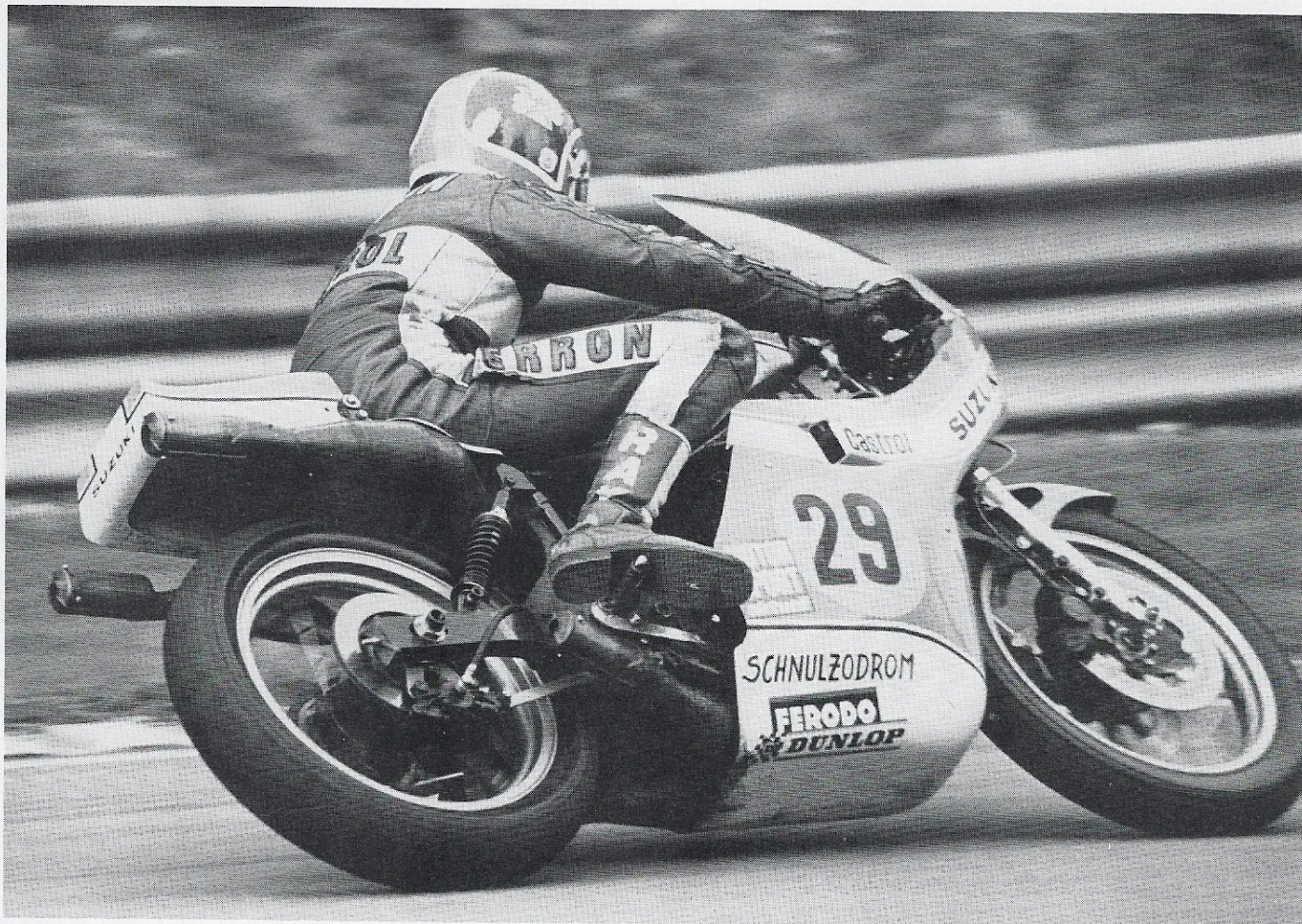
Steve Parrish — a leading British hope in Grands Prix.



TOM HERRON

— Ulster's top Grand Prix contender

By Motor Cycle's PETER SIMCOCK



Tom Herron appears in the 250 cc, 350 cc, 500 cc and 1000 cc races today, riding the Suzuki in the 500 event.

"Racing is in my blood. I like the sport, I like the life and I like the people. I have always been determined to race, and will race as long as is possible."

Sounds like a club racer setting off for his first meeting, bubbling over with enthusiasm, but your guess would be wrong. It's the voice of Tom Herron, the quietly spoken Ulsterman who must rate as one of the most popular men on the Grand Prix circuit at the moment and for the past few years.

When it comes to talking about racing with Tom, and it is his living so he has some pretty strong views on what goes on both on and off the tracks, you realise he has an advantage over many other riders that has probably helped to boost him to the top of the privateers tree on the Continent this summer . . . and that is his wife Andrea.

You can bet that where Tom is

Andrea is not too far away along with their two young children. And even if she has to stay at home in Lisburn near Belfast, there is always the 'phone to keep in touch with what's happening to Tom.

That's not surprising really. Before Tom and Andrea were married, Andrea was better known as Andrea 'Blossom' Williams, sister of Peter Williams, the Norton development rider and one of this country's brightest stars until his crash at Oulton Park, and daughter of Jack Williams, another famous development man.

So with that kind of motorcycling blood flowing in her veins it's not surprising that Andrea — who raced very successfully as well in both ladies and mixed events — should be behind

Tom all the way and the Herron's family life is dedicated to racing.

Tom's family tree isn't without motorcycling connections either. His uncle is Wilf Herron, a very well known Irish road racer in his day, and Irish Champion back in the middle fifties. Wilf was still racing at the beginning of the seventies.

Tom would agree that this year has probably been his best ever. Results from the Grands Prix show that. The full works Kawasakis and Yamaha have been at the front of course, but leading the rest of the field home — normally in about fourth place, has been Tom.

And he is one of those men who can always be relied on to pull something special out of the bag when it counts.

There was a good example of that at Silverstone earlier this year. Riding his Yamahas Tom thrilled the crowd in both the 250 and 350 races by nearly pulling off the double. In the 250 event he diced with Kawasaki star Kork Ballington for most of the race, and in the 350 was only just beaten over the line by Anton Mang.

That certainly had the crowd on their toes — and Tom's performances at the Ulster Grand Prix was another to whet the appetite.

Riding in front of his own crowd you can imagine the reaction when he won the 250, Formula One and 750 cc races over the 7 mile Dundrod circuit.

"The people are so fantastic" said Tom after completing a lap of honour following his 750 win. "They have been waving to me all the way around, incredible."

Racing for the 28 year old began, funnily enough not on a road machine, but on grass track. Tom needed something to quench his competitive

instincts and the grass provided the initial boost.

However something else was quickly needed and so Tom turned to road racing when he was still only in his early twenties . . . with immediate success.

Ireland is the natural breeding ground of proper road racing riders and Tom took to the twisty, narrow and rough circuits that form the majority of race tracks in the Emerald Isle like a duck takes to water.

His progress was remarkable. Several good results in the Irish races brought him to the notice of sponsors this side of the water.

But a setback came in 1970 when Tom crashed in the TT at Ballacraigne, breaking his thigh, badly, and also — though it was not discovered until much later — breaking the fifth vertebrae in his back.

That broken thigh stayed with Tom for eighteen months. When he was fit enough to ride in 1971 he was still walking with a pronounced limp, but

the injury was put to the back of his mind with the offer of Yamaha machines from Five Star Speed Equipe for the '71 season.

The year started well with good performances in the British Championship opening meetings, but came to an abrupt end with a crash at the North West 200 when Tom badly hurt his elbow, and severed many of the nerves in his left arm, partially paralysing it.

That put him out of operation for several months, and meant that he also missed the Ulster Grand Prix, which would have been his first appearance in the Irish Classic.

At the beginning of '72 Tom — still walking with a limp because of the TT crash — had a bone graft to rectify the disability and spent the first three months of the year flat on his back while the leg mended properly.

However he was fit enough to ride later in the season, with some more impressive results, which continues in '73, when he first began to travel onto the Continent to try his hand at some of the International events.

The try-out in Europe was followed up in 1974 when Tom turned professional and became a full time member of the continental circus, with some very good results.

For 1975 Co. Antrim haulage contractor John Rea — who now sponsors another Ulster star Joey Dunlop — took Tom under his wing and provided him with 250 and 350 Yamahas. It proved a good year, Tom's best to date, he was voted man of the meeting several times, and in the TT rode the famous Tom Arter G.50 Matchless, which had been ridden in the past by brother in law Peter.

He finished second in the Ulster 250 behind Tony Rutter and in the 500 cc class raced a 375 Yamaha, which he built himself using pistons from a 750 engine.

John also provided £400 which meant that Tom could travel to Daytona in early 1976 with a 750 Yamaha supplied by Steve Ellis, the English road racer.

With sponsorship from several sources 1976 was another good year for Tom. He competed in the world championship rounds — as he has done this season with some impressive performances.

So today at Donington we can expect great things from the tiny Irishman. He has always reacted well to the atmosphere at truly International meetings, which is what we have today, and one thing is for sure he will be pressing the works stars for all they are worth.





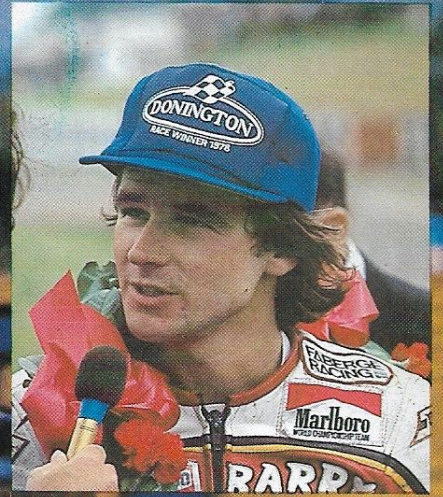
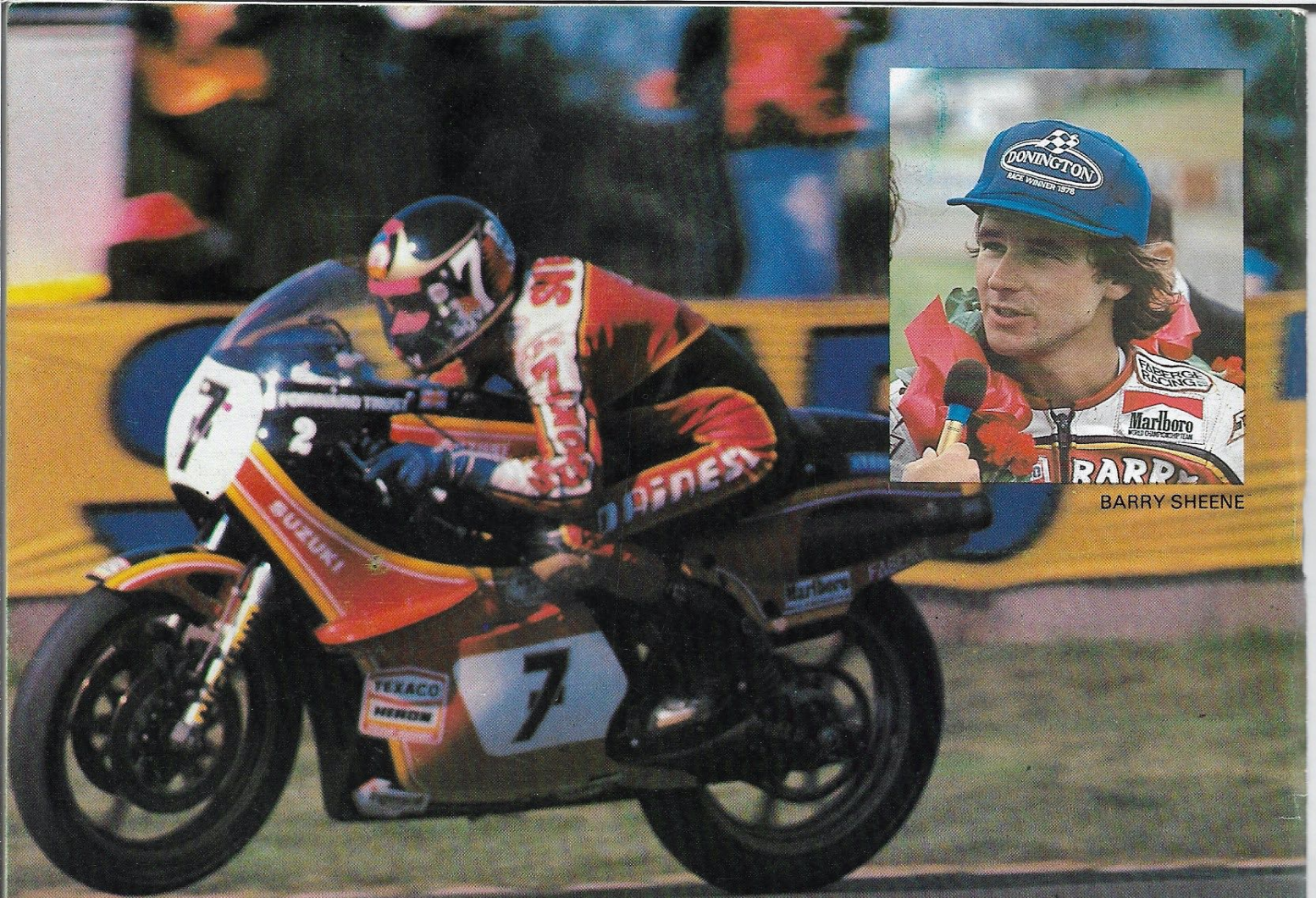
TAKAZUMI KATAYAMA

WIL HARTOG

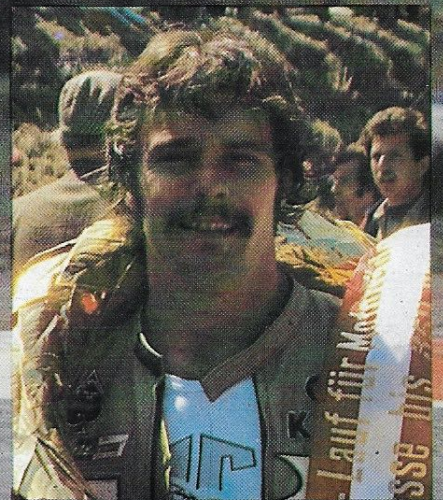
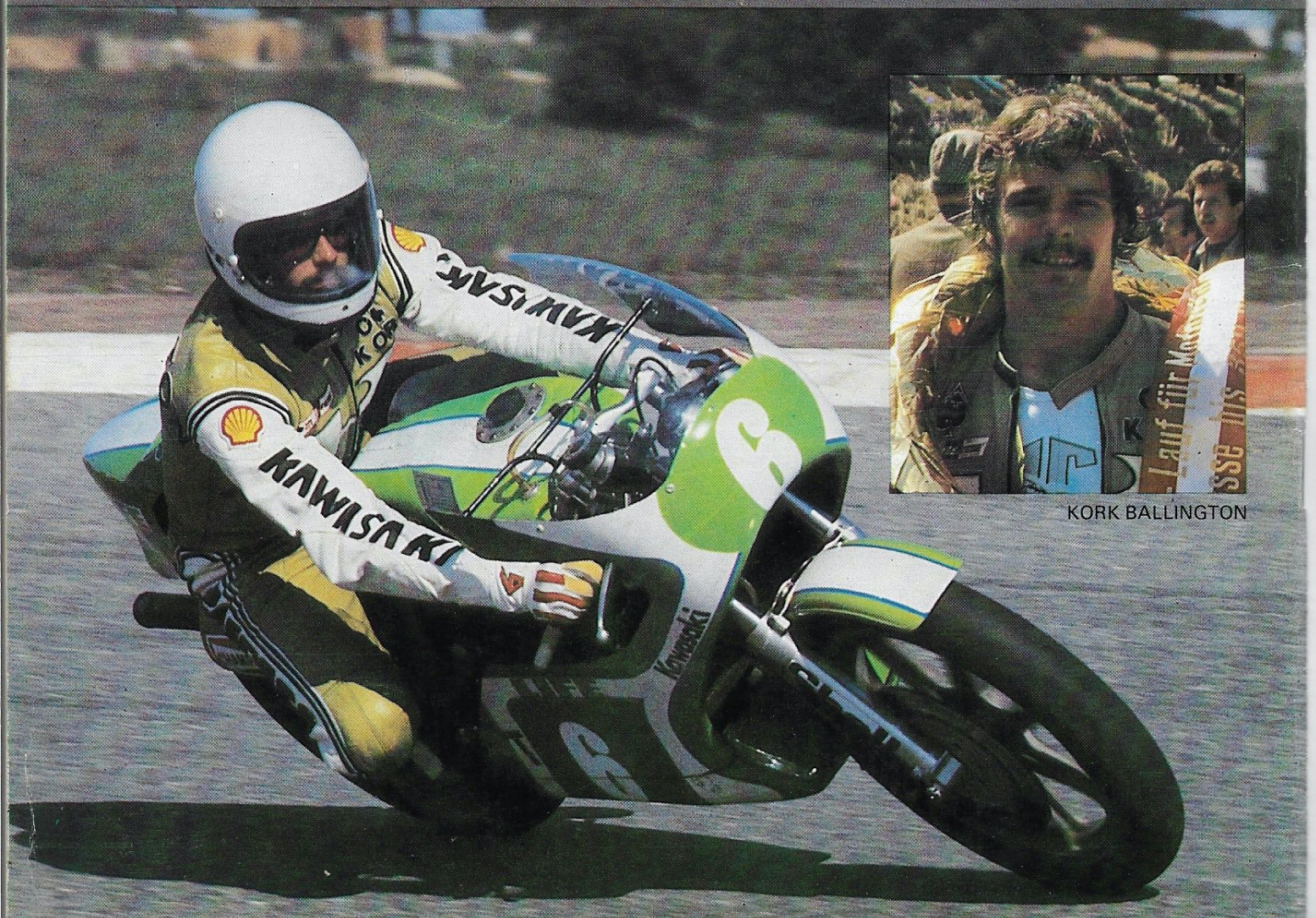
TOM HERRON

ALAIN MICHEL





BARRY SHEENE



KORK BALLINGTON