



# Bemsee

THE JOURNAL OF THE  
BRITISH MOTOR CYCLE RACING CLUB

Vol. 10. No. 3. MARCH, 1957 ONE SHILLING



Not quite *the* race of the year! A good one nevertheless. (See note inside.)

[Photo: G. E. Hicken]

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## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

MOTOR CYCLING'S "SILVERSTONE SATURDAY"

SILVERSTONE — APRIL 13th, 1957

**I**N VIEW of the present fuel situation, the General Committee of the British Motor Cycle Racing Club regret to announce the cancellation of the International Road-Race Meeting known as Motor Cycling's "Silverstone Saturday", to have been held on April 13th, 1957.

The Committee anticipate that it will be possible to fulfil the remainder of the Club's racing programme for 1957, and will make every endeavour to do so.

W. G. TREMLETT,

Secretary.

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# Bemsee

Vol. 10. No. 3. MARCH, 1957

EDITOR :  
P. F. WRIGHT

**THE BRITISH MOTOR CYCLE RACING CLUB**

PRESIDENT : The Marquis Camden, J.P.

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CHAIRMAN : N. B. Pope      VICE-CHAIRMAN : A. H. Taylor

SECRETARY : W. C. Tremlett, 34 Paradise Road, Richmond, Surrey

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## TAKE IT EASY!

**O**UR correspondence columns in the magazine of late, have become quite lively, covering the interesting and controversial subjects that have been under literary discussion. One might say justly, that these are rather heated times for the motor-cycling fraternity and we realise that sometimes feelings run high on the various subjects we have dealt with. We would, however, ask our correspondents when replying to letters or articles, not to place any note of bitterness or personal attack into their letters and to keep their comments only to the matters in question.

Editors do not particularly like to cut or alter readers' letters in any way, and we would like our readers to kindly omit in future, any personal attacks in their letters; a point which will make the magazine far more interesting and a lot more worthy of our Club. Don't you agree?

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## A VIEW FROM THE STAND

*(We received from Mr. Joseph Bayley a long letter, which we reproduce below in the form of an article. It must be made clear that the views expressed are those only of its writer.—Ed.)*

FIRST, I must point out that I have absolutely no trade connections of any kind and have no axe to grind in this "Petrol Only v. Free Choice of Fuel" controversy. I am merely an onlooker with a liking for the machines of my youth, and having become some twenty-five years ago, a member of a profession whose advance is dependent upon completely unfettered research, I remain unable to understand how a restriction such as one limiting choice of fuel can be accepted, even under the cloak of expediency, and thus allowed to prevent full research in the development of the racing motor-cycle. Thus my interest in this matter is mostly academic, but my sense of fairness is aroused by the actions of the "Petrol Boys" when their policy of denying free choice of fuel is based upon conclusions drawn from biased and grossly inaccurate assumptions. Be that as it may, such a literally burning question as fuel for racing invites heated argument, so I suggest we examine it in some detail.

The object of motor-cycle racing is to produce machines of certain fixed engine sizes which are the fastest that can be built, and in order to fulfil this principle it should be apparent to us all that the designer must be given a free hand, and should we impose, as indeed we have for over thirty years, the limitation of using fuel of more or less ordinary type, then the whole scope of design is handicapped and made more costly and we fail to obtain the full benefit of research. How then, one may well ask, did this "petrol only" regulation originate? It is simply nothing more than the outcome of an arrangement made between the A.-C.U. and the petrol barons in 1925. Technically, it is without value, and the widespread belief that it best benefits engine development is an indication of the ignorance and gullibility of those who advocate and accept it.

I was told by the late F. W. Barnes (I still have one of his big-twin Brooklands Zeniths) that following the 1925 T.T. Races the A.-C.U. was faced with financial difficulties and the future of the series was in jeopardy. The Isle of Man authorities were unwilling to advance further aid and there was actually much

talk of attempting to hold the races in the Isle of Wight. However, the petrol barons, hearing of the Union's dilemma and fully aware of the advertising potential of the T.T., offered to foot the bill provided their fuel was the official brew. It was to the credit of the A.-C.U. members of the time that 50/50 petrol-benzole was finally agreed to, a compromise that held good until 1939. Since the war, big business has triumphed and it has been petrol only. Thus alcohol and then benzole were out for the simple reason that the petrol barons did not control their production in this country, and the racing motor-cyclist was to remain in ignorance of their value as fuels and petrol additives.

From the outset, those of us who could foresee the consequences of this piece of sterile legislation deplored its introduction. Those manufacturers misguided enough to race machines under such an initial handicap as this were compelled to make use of highly expensive alloys and steels in order to obtain some degree of reliability and improved performance. Later, multi-cylinder engines with four, and recently eight cylinders, were developed, not only for their higher r.p.m. and b.h.p. when compared with the single, but equally because their cooler running made them less critical of inferior fuel. Because motor-cycle racing is a sport based upon financial considerations, the steady annual disappearance of those firms supporting road-racing was mainly due to the additional high cost involved in designing, building, and maintaining machines to race on petrol. Naturally, these firms had to ask a high price for their production machines in order to offset their racing expenses, and one-by-one they were forced to abandon the sport or become insolvent. Today, and to our everlasting shame, this country is without official works' representation in international road-racing. Big business has strangled what was once a sport, each meeting is a promoter's benefit, and whether we like it or not, the riders are merely the performing animals at every money-spinning circus. And, as more than one has found to his cost, it's six months in the 'sin-bin' if you bite the hand that starves you.

It is said that the spectator who knows something of the game sees more of what goes on than do the players. Six years ago I wrote: "T.T. history exemplifies perfectly the prejudiced idiocy of fuel restriction in racing. Since the introduction of that rule, entries from British manufacturers have dropped from around twenty-five to the present farcical four, and the time is not far distant when we shall see the last of the official teams abandoning the sport". Being a nonentity, I was shot down in flames by those bogus patriots who would never have lifted a finger to help their own country and would let British names disappear from the list of competing machines rather than admit the truth of my statement. The British manufacturers, of whom a little might justly have been expected, applied no ounce of prevention and later lacked the courage to use the pound of cure. Instead, they have shut themselves up in a high tower, deliberately excluding the real view and preferring a blurred, jaundiced outlook of what is happening in their own world. Their isolation is self-imposed, and continuing will be disastrous. Without their support it is doubtful whether the T.T. will survive. Equally doubtful is the further production of the "over-the-counter" racing machine, and when that ceases, the T.T. as we know it today, will cease too. I can see no good reason why they should not descend to earth, firmly insist upon the resignation of those august dignitaries who have mismanaged racing for the past thirty years, and build the machines to reinstate Britain in its old position. They have the men and the material, and the money would be well spent. The brains are there to design what is required, for no strange or secret gadgets have revolutionised Gilera, Guzzi and M.V. and made all competition a waste of time.

International prestige is of the greatest moment to the industry, and any country that does not exert every fibre in its being to uphold its own, is guilty of unpardonable stupidity. No man or group of men has the right to erect artificial boundaries to research and progress, and because this has been permitted the *raison d'être* for motor-cycle racing has been lamentably ignored by all concerned, and no one will awake to its importance except those of us who continually emphasise it. Motor-cycle racing needs a "new look" and I believe the whole future of the sport depends upon the lead given by the right people. The British Motor Cycle Racing Club is the premier motor cycling club in the world, and I am confident that the people I refer to are among its members. The "specials" one sees in the paddock, some, real masterpieces of engineering genius, are evidence enough that we have our Chapmans, Clarkes, and Coopers who, given a free hand, might well achieve a like measure of success.

It may well be that petrol rationing could prove to be a blessing in disguise. To show, unlike apparently, the A.-C.U. and the Isle of Man authorities, that it fully appreciates the gravity of the fuel crisis, the Club could frame its race regulations so that, for the time being, home-produced fuels will be permitted. I feel sure that those die-hards who have never raced on anything but pump fuel will be kicking themselves for a long time once they have experienced the benefits of, for instance, a 50/50 methanol-benzole mixture, and perhaps when it is all over, it will be realised that the banning of free choice of fuel is about as British as vodka. Engine capacity—and engine capacity only—is all that matters and is all that is required in the regulations to make motor-cycle racing once again the sport, spectacle, and research laboratory some of us believe it to be.

J.B.

#### OUR COVER PHOTO

AS ITS caption states, "Not *the* race of the year!", the 350 c.c. final at our "Hutch" meeting last September. No, not this one, but a well-fought Heat 2 of the preliminary rounds. Two-thirds of the trio on our cover figured in that wonderful final scrap which ended a grand day's sport, but this picture was taken at Copse Corner by our good friend Gordon Hicken with his home-built and

designed camera. Bob McIntyre leads John Hartle in echelon-to-starboard formation, with Alistair King taking it wide, all heading for full-bore Maggotts. May it not be very long before we again have our wonderful days at Silverstone and the other circuits; bags of noise, Castrol 'R' and the like. I would not grumble at the moment if I could hear just one racing-bike warming-up, even if it was the lunch-break!



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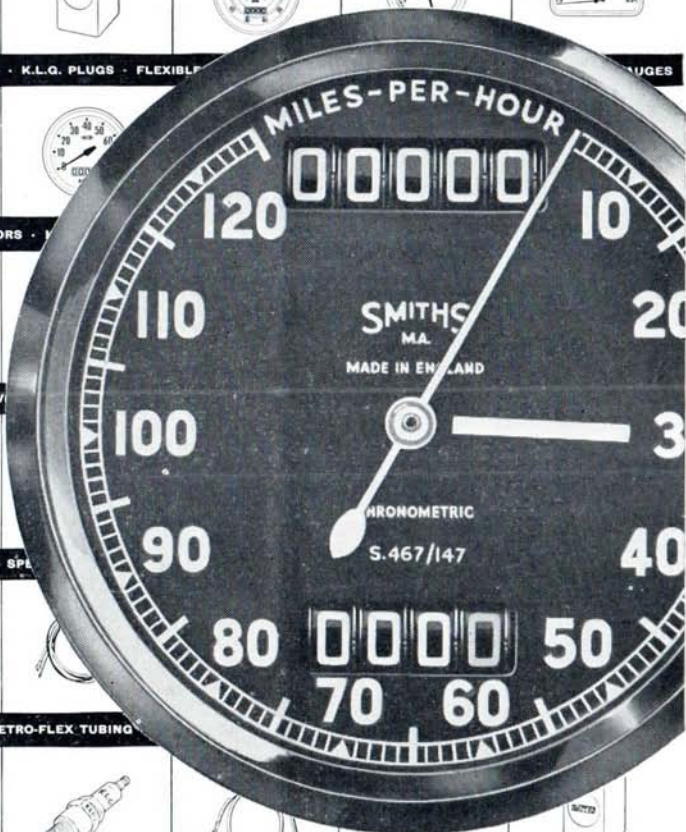
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# MARSHAL'S MUSINGS

W. G. BILL JARMAN

AT THE 1956 A.G.M. it was agreed that the only way to hold the annual sub. at two guineas would be by means of a greater membership. The position for 1957 is similar, so why not propose a new member or two? He, or she, can be active or passive, but it's up to you. More members and/or more subs. ! (Double meaning here.)

\* \* \*

The "B" in Bemsee stands for British, and our International racing colour is known in the paint trade as "B.R.G." Personally I favour the superb polychromatic green, but anyway this is our colour and I hope our members will bear it in mind when thinking about spraying their streamliners for the forthcoming season. Finish the job with the crossed Union Jacks back and front, because it is the best kind of badge in the world. Good show, chaps!

\* \* \*

Whilst on the subject of badges, have you ever thought of buying one of the lady's brooches for mum, wife or girlfriend? These are pretty miniatures of our lapel-badges and our loyal supporters should know more about this little emblem, it all helps the Club funds in any case. This is the only badge available to non-members who are friends of ours. They cost 5s. 6d.

\* \* \*

This issue may not reach you in time for the 1957 A.G.M. which is fixed for March 1st at the R.A.C. Anyway, I hope you attended and took an active part in the proceedings. The outlook is not very bright at the moment but we have no intention of being inactive whilst things are difficult. Some of our dates may have to be altered until we can be certain that spectators can get to the venue. We cannot risk putting on a meeting without a good "gate" which means care with the geographical location in relation to trains and buses, etc.

\* \* \*

One of the most interesting letters for a long time, reached me recently. The writer adds a few suggestions to those which I have already penned about the 125 "basic baby" and its multiplication.

Briefly he suggests the inlet should be designed at an angle, so that the gas is aimed at the plug in a swirl, in a spherical head. The exhaust should be as straight as possible and both valves must be worked on the desmodromic principle. All fine and dandy, but I should like to see the poppet valve eliminated. Why waste more time and money on this amazing, but foul, method of metal-bashing? Mr. Correspondent asks me not to mention his name, for professional reasons, but he concludes by mentioning a well-known member of this Club who has developed a fuel-injector which has a fine future. Details, please!

\* \* \*

Did you hear about our racing film-show last month? A large crowd turned up, and at zero hour we found out the pub was a D.C. house. We filled up half-an-hour with an impromptu quiz whilst the scouts found a place nearby on A.C. The bright boys who saved the evening were Messrs. "Barry", Clare, Cooper, Lewis, McBain, Monty, Rose and Tanner (in alphabetical order). The lads tell me my pale face behind the beard was something they had not seen before. Anyway, on behalf of the London Area—sincere thanks to everyone, including the members and friends who proved to be a jolly good audience.

\* \* \*

We have had many, many requests to lay-on another Racing Quiz, so Bill Rose and I are again forming a "two man committee" to meet your wishes. Last time it was "T.T. and G.P.", but this time it will be all kinds of racing and as you seem to like "Mr. Walker, Sir." in the chair, I've asked him to preside again, over a tip-top panel of speedmen as before. The date and details are given in the Surrey and Middlesex News, but the invitation is open to all the Metropolitan Area. One member one guest, as usual.

\* \* \*

As expected, Erwin Tragatsch wrote a charming letter about sundry aspects of the racing game and said he had enjoyed the argument about the various "strokes" and alcohol, etc. He finished his letter by



asking for introductions to any lady who understands racing and good time-keeping. He has ideas of fair company at this year's T.T., but if he likes to help at Ramsey, he's welcome. He will not have much luck if he sticks around the Grand-Stand for the T.T. proper.

Have you noticed how the correspondence section of our mag. is improving? There were five good letters last month and I'm hoping that Editor Peter Wright will be able to expand this feature. It can only be done with your help, so if you feel like a written argument, have a go. (See Editorial—Ed.). It all helps to keep up an interesting standard for our little book, which goes to quite a few countries overseas. I know, because many of the letters which reach me provide a small boy with foreign stamps and improve my geography at the same time.

I should like to see the written comments of members on the "four by two-stroke" engine developed by Sapak in North London. Messrs. Rose and Tragatsch can now really get together on this problem. Jarolin Sapak has married-up both principles and made them work in one unit. When one really thinks about a "four by two" engine, a little bird whispers, "Why didn't I think of it first?" What does worry me is the possibility that the F.I.M. might call it a super-charged job. Another queer aspect is the fuel consumption, but if a 250 "four by two" can be made as good as a normal 500, we can go on scheming. Maybe someone will ask the "Racing Princes" for their views on March 26th. I can imagine what "Barry" might say; he surprised quite a few people at the recent meeting. So did "Cabby" Cooper for that matter!



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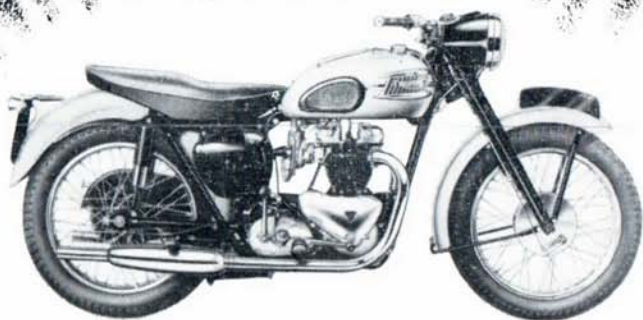
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## AREA NEWS

### SURREY AND MIDDLESEX

W. G. Jarman,

153 Reigate Avenue, Sutton, Surrey.

**S**INCE we found a venue in the heart of London, we have been able to lay-on some really successful evenings, and match the epic affairs held by "Tot" in the Wirral Peninsula. During the 1956/57 winter, the following engagements have been carried through: Two Film Shows, two Quizzes and a Debate. Our last fixture is due to be held on Tuesday, March 26th, at 7 for 7.30 p.m., "Prince of Wales Tavern", Drury Lane, Long Acre, W.C.2. Nearest Tube Stations—Covent Garden or Holborn. Parking nearby if you've any juice. Bill Rose and I have had many requests for another Racing Quiz, so your wishes are our command. The panel will be chosen from some of the most famous names in this part of the world. One member, one guest, as usual. This is our last meeting until the Autumn.

### NOTTS AND LEICESTER

W. B. Martin,

"Ivy Cottage," 55 Kneeton Road,  
East Bridgford, Notts.

**A** GATHERING somewhat smaller than usual (due to petrol shortage) assembled at the "Dolphin Inn", North Church Street, Nottingham, on Monday, February 11th, 1957, but nevertheless, we enjoyed a pleasant gossip, and discussed plans for the forthcoming season.

T. H. Saunderson is on the look-out for a reasonable G45 or 7R; members please note. A. S. Williamson has purchased a Formula III Racer; we are now in the process of encouraging him to flog it and to carry on with two wheels, and I think we will succeed. Another member, J. E. Simpkin, was unfortunate enough to seize his motor on the way to the meeting, but proceeded undaunted on a bus, complete with crash helmet and protective clothing. We wish to congratulate, although somewhat belatedly, A. E. Evans on becoming a father, and we trust this will not affect his racing activities.

J. Starbuck submitted our local Balance Sheet, and was happy to show a credit of one bob on the year. We will probably invest it (in the bar).

The next meeting will be held as usual, second Monday of the month, at the same place.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

**ARE YOU** one of those guilty members who has not paid his £2 2s. 0d. for 1957? If you are, you should be squirming by this time. It is now March and subscriptions are well overdue. You have been told more than once—if you do not believe me then read the relevant section in the Director's Report for 1956—that the Club cannot continue to operate without a very large number of members, all of whom naturally, must have paid their subs. In the past, every member has, in various ways, got some benefit out of the Club. The magazine is one obvious such benefit. Temporarily the Club may have to curtail its activities due to circumstances well known to you all. However, the time will come when things will be back to normal. It is not too much, therefore, to ask you to send that £2 2s. 0d. to me at once. Surely you are prepared to support the Club during this temporary lull just as you have supported it when everything was in full swing? Remember, too, that considerable extra work and expense will be caused if you do not pay. Therefore, gentlemen, and ladies too, if such there be amongst our members, your £2 2s. 0d. by return please. If not, shame upon you!

—SECRETARY.

### 1956 B.M.C.R.C. CHAMPIONSHIPS

**WE** REGRET to announce that two omissions were made from the final placings in the 1956 B.M.C.R.C. Championships. Bob Anderson, who you will remember rode A.J.S. and Nortons in the "350" and "500" classes, scored 2 and 9 points respectively in these two categories. He is placed, therefore, 10th in the "350" Championship and 4th in the "500". Everyone below these positions moves down one place. Similarly, George Arnold with the help of his "125" M.V. Agusta, scored 3 points in the "125" Championship, being placed 9th. Our sincere apologies to these two gentlemen.

### A-C.U. NOTES

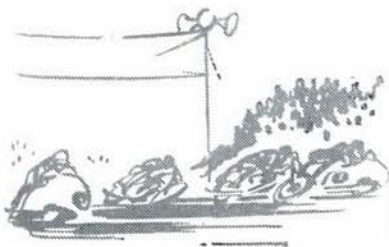
**1957 International Road Race Meeting.** The Southampton and D.M.C.C. will organise this event on behalf of the A-C.U., at Thruxton Aerodrome on August Bank Holiday, Monday, August 5th, 1957.



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## DOUBLE KNOCKER SAYS . . .

**Theresa Wallach.** Had a long and very interesting letter the other day from our enthusiastic head of the United States group. She gave some details of an event called the "Big Bear Run" which takes place on the eastern fringe of California and covers deserts and mountains, not to mention less formidable natural obstacles. I suppose the nearest British equivalent would be the Scott Trial but even that would be tame by comparison. This year there were 720 entries, which makes a "Silverstone Saturday" entry of 450-odd look rather small. Just imagine worthy members who are regular officials, dealing with 750 runners. I have no doubt however, that, being Bemsee, we could cope easily enough if the occasion ever arose. Incidentally, only 159 finished and British machines were completely successful. Theresa had some very interesting things to say about the A.M.A. annual meeting. The A.M.A. is the same as our own A.C.U. and seems to be faced with problems very similar to our own. At this last meeting they discussed, amongst other things, stricter control on the issue of competition licences, crash helmets, medical certificates, unofficial (i.e. non-A.M.A.) sanctioned events, revised competition rules and more thorough inspections of circuits. All of which serves to ring a familiar bell, doesn't it? Apparently motor-cycling more or less ceases in the winter in a large part of the States, but a local chap has the idea of starting ice-racing. No new idea, of course, for they have been doing it in Norway, Sweden and Germany for years. Reading her letter one gets the general impression that motor-cycling in the U.S.A., though confined to a minority, is pursued with enormous keenness, which is a good thing. Finally Theresa sends all her friends in Bemsee very best wishes for 1957. So do Norman Millar and Bill Tuman, fellow members of her "cell". I am sure we all heartily reciprocate the good wishes.

**T.T. Topic.** In rather a drab period as far as motor-cycle sport is concerned, it was cheering to hear that petrol has been guaranteed for the "Golden Jubilee T.T.". What struck me as an even more magnanimous gesture

on the part of the Isle of Man authorities, was the granting of petrol to visitors for the races, though the reasons for this step are obvious. One only hopes that the entry is what it should be for so important an occasion, the weather is right and the crowds turn up as never before. There are certain aspects of this year's races with which I would quarrel but, generally speaking, I believe they ought to be the best. However, while 1957 is to all intents and purposes well settled, what of the future? This is by no means so sure, or so it seems to me. A major problem is that vexed matter of the Clubman's races. The A.C.U. at present are seeking suggestions as to how these events can be brought back to the original spirit. I have not time or space to enter into lengthy discussions of the matter, but I would make a few points to provide a little food for thought. Machines must be ordinary roadsters and riders ought certainly to be ordinary Clubmen starting out on their racing careers or just having a race on their own ordinary 'bike. I do not mean to imply by this that complete novices should be allowed to enter willy-nilly. Some previous racing experience is obviously necessary. You will never eliminate the "born" youngster, of course, so there will always be a chance of an easy win. This though, is one of the purposes of the races. However, I do consider that pseudo-sports machines, which have road equipment, but are not really suitable for every-day and every condition road use, should be barred, as pukka racing machines are at the moment. But how is that to be done, without taking the rather dangerous step of including in the regulations a list of forbidden bicycles. Here again you must bear in mind the financial side of things. Racing, even with ordinary machines, is not cheap. There you are then! I do not propose to go further than that, at least at present. If you have any suggestions which you think might be of use, please do not keep them to yourself. Send them along to the office or the A.C.U. They will be welcome.



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## THE EDITOR'S CORRESPONDENCE

(Views expressed in readers' letters are those only of their writers and are not necessarily endorsed by the Club or the Editor.)

**WHO** is the greatest road-racer the world has ever seen? It is a question I have never seen discussed in "Bemsee", so perhaps if Erwin Tragatsch was to give his opinions we might get another battle as good as the one he started by "Racing Two-strokes—I hate them."

Perhaps it would be easier, in view of the changed conditions now, to give the best rider before the 1939/45 War and the best since then, or again, perhaps the best six, in order, in these periods—it is just an idea!

For myself, I have no doubt that Stanley Woods was the greatest racer of the pre-1940 period and *certainly* the greatest competition rider of all time or, for that part, the greatest motor-cyclist of all times, past, present and most likely in future, too! It is a "great spake", as they say in Ireland, but in my opinion, very true.

I cannot make up my mind, in view of the conditions now, whether Stanley or Geoff Duke is the "greatest ever" of road-racing; I would say that Stanley was the most successful rider of all, although of course he was longer at the game than Geoff.

After short consideration, here is my choice of the greatest riders. I stick to my first choice, however, in each group against all-comers.

### Pre-1940 :

Stanley Woods  
Harold Daniell  
Wal Handley  
George Meier  
Percy Hunt  
Jimmy Guthrie

### Post-War :

Geoff Duke  
Artie Bell  
Fred Frith  
Les Graham  
Reg Armstrong  
John Hartle

In making my choice I lay much emphasis on safe riding, hence many great men do not appear in my lists. I would love to hear Tragatsch's opinions, as he has probably seen most of the great road-racers, British and Continental, in action over a long period and over many different courses.

Re the two-stroke v. four-stroke controversy, taking number of entries into account, in races of the past two years, I would not think the four-stroke victories so decisive if, as so often happened, the two-strokes finish in the first

six, while dozens of "works" o.h.c. and very expensive four-strokes finish behind them. Höbl, Cama and company are not the pick of the field as riders either.

Let's hope at any rate that you can get plenty of material to keep "Bemsee" interesting during the coming years.

Donegal, Eire.

**W. J. McGowan.**

**WE NOW** have petrol for the T.T. and practising, but how are we to get our machines to the Island—by train?

I enclose a photograph taken at Brands Hatch in 1955, as it will most likely be useful or the Bemsee collection. (Thanks for the start.—Ed.). Best wishes to all members for the coming season.

Brixton, S.W.9.

**J. W. Dakin.**

**AS** the financial position of the Club appears to need a "boost" during 1957, I am diligently looking around for new members. Perhaps new recruits could be obtained by starting a scheme such as Cooper's have started in the 500 c.c. Formula 3 field, by supplying a small pool of racing machinery for the use of the novice rider who otherwise would not be able to finance his own machine.

This might also create a useful training ground for those members interested in the "Marshalling" ride of the Club's activities. A majority of people who appeared to be interested in joining the Club were put-off by the financial cost of supplying their own machinery, but seemed perfectly willing to cover extras, such as leathers, insurance, entrance fees, etc.

This scheme has quite a few snags, the main drawback as I see it, is getting a financial return on any circuit hired out to provide training facilities for the new member. The public would be extremely unwilling to pay hard cash to see novices trying themselves out at such a venue as Thruxton or Snetterton; anyway the scheme may be worth discussing even if it appears to be financially impossible at the present time. All the best for the '57 season.

**A. Hayton.**

(Continued overpage)

AFTER reading the correspondence in the February issue of "Bemsee" I feel compelled to protest at one or two points, and would like to answer one or two more.

First of all, I don't think it is right to allow correspondents to become so bitterly personal, or to be allowed to make personal accusations against those with whom they disagree—it savours too much of "Marble Arch" orators who shout the loudest when treading on the thinnest ice. "Bemsee" should keep its dignity even if some of its readers cannot.

Secondly, Mr. Editor, if you wish to encourage people to write in to our magazine, don't allow them to be the butt of biased vituperation.

Now so far as the letters are concerned, the matter of British manufacturers and racing is of course a difficult subject. So far as national prestige is concerned, there is no doubt that a win in foreign Grands Prix or the T.T. is a great thing, but so far as personal prestige of the successful manufacturer is concerned, the record of the most successful British and German makers show that sales of their normal products are not chained to racing successes, in fact it might be nearer the truth to say that the opposite applies.

However enthusiastic staff or management may be, the hard facts of economics must be faced, the costs of continual development work that is necessary to all competition work, cannot be recovered from the competition awards or from the sale of Replica type machines, but must be spread over sales of all models; thus the manufacturer who spends most on development must, unless he sells an awful lot of machines a year, increase the cost of his products, thus making it even more difficult to sell them.

The motor-cycling public too must take a portion of the blame for the present situation in British motor-cycling; how many (or should it be how few?) have gone out and bought a model of the make that won the previous T.T., just for that reason? Precious few, I can tell you. The go-to-work motor-cyclist who is interested in a bike just for transport, cannot be expected to be influenced by competition results; first-cost and suitability for his purpose dictate his choice. The clubman enthusiast is the

one to blame; he wants to see Britain first, he might even go as far as buying a make of machine that races, but not a new one, oh dear no, more likely a three or four years old one, followed at a short interval by a car. He wants success but will not forego his smokes or cinema in order to help obtain it; now don't misunderstand me, I don't mind if some people prefer beer and fags to motor-cycling, but I do object to them "belly-aching" about what the manufacturers should do.

The evolution of motor-cycle racing as we know it, has followed an interesting pattern, parts of this pattern represented what some of us thought to be the "Golden Age" of the sport. For example, take the early '30s, when the push-rod Ridges battled with the single-cam Nortons and Velos, all of them basically similar to their standard counterparts.

I think it was this nostalgic memory that helped inspire the so-called "Clubman's" races, which have, of course, demonstrated the peculiar talent the British have for making racers out of more-or-less standard designs; it is possible that, had the rules allowed the "star" riders to use the same machines in a sort of standard-machine T.T., for a few years at least, something like a revival may have been staged.

However, I believe that it is impossible to turn back the pages of history; we have to either accept the era of "V8's" or even "16's" or face-up to further legislation, in the same way as when fuel was limited to commercial petroleum or when superchargers were banned.

It's no use Dr. Bayley or Mr. Hartley ranting and raving about stopping progress; this progress is a forward and continuous process, and rather than fight it, we may as well accept it in the way that suits our sport at the present time; no one who attended the last few meetings run by our Club at Silverstone or Crystal Palace, can deny that we saw some of the best racing of the present decade; if we are to attempt to maintain this standard, I think we shall have to accept more restrictive (or levelling) legislation, not less.

The inference that by removing the present ban on alcohol would improve racing and make it possible to use old-fashioned, iron-engined, converted touring machines as successful racers, will not stand up to reasoned argument.



Firstly, if fuel restrictions were removed, Mr. Hartley would not find a queue outside his shop waiting to buy methanol or any mixtures commonly used by the pre-war Brooklands boys and record holders; very soon they would all discover what a lot of people already know, that is, that with the modern nitro-benzine and nitro-methane blends they would get more power on lower compression-ratios, which in turn leads to even better filling, due to improved gas-flow during the overlap period, and the possibility of using even fiercer cams than would be possible with the 12-14:1 ratios favoured by the erstwhile racers, with, of course, better chance of reliability. The ease with which valves can touch a piston when using super high ratios, may not be remembered by the present generation. Of course, the wealthier manufacturers and riders would still be a jump or two ahead of the ordinary private owner, even if he could afford to buy the expensive and dangerous fuels; neither should we assume that we have a monopoly of knowledge of tuning engines by means of super fuels, the U.S.A. could probably teach us a lot about these fuels. Then, of course, the better the engine the better it would be able to exploit the situation. In other words, I believe that the average member of Bemsee would be a lot worse off, and the works' people certainly on no better terms, to meet the foreign challenge. Of course, another popular misconception is, that the machine with the most powerful engine will always win the race; this was demonstrated to be untrue on several occasions when "1000 c.c." H.R.D.s raced on equal (?) terms with "500" and "350" racing machines, and again at Silverstone, when Surtees and Duke had their memorable scrap, and so on right back into history.

Due to a number of factors perhaps not too well understood, it has been proved that an identical machine fitted with an engine giving more power and known to be faster (timed at M.I.R.A.) will be outpaced in a straight run by an engine with a more suitable torque-curve. This test at least takes away the difference of two riders and probably of road-holding.

No, Mr. Hartley, you are living in the past; road-racing today requires a bit more than brute force and blinding ignorance, the successful racer has to have lightness, which one doesn't get with an iron head and barrel, or with a bottom-half designed for super fuels and Diesel compression ratios. I think that perhaps another bit of useful legislation would be to forbid megaphone exhaust systems, they only make a lot of noise and play into the hands of the maker with most facilities for testing. During the period of the use in the Clubman's T.T., of straight-through pipes, it was found that the big majority of riders could lap faster on the straight pipe, only the experts could really make use of the megaphone when fitted.

To close on a personal note, I don't care tuppence what fuel is used as I haven't got shares in Texas, or a farm to grow rye. I have demonstrated this by competing on "Pool" petrol against many competitors using all sorts of magic brews (even some of Mr. Hartley's, used in engines tuned by himself; no excuses!) during the years just after the war, when any fuel was allowed. I seem to recollect winning quite a few races during this period, and when in second place, it was mostly to Guzzi's, also on "Pool".

Please let us look to the future and frame the rules carefully to give us the best racing for the majority of people.

Olton, Warwicks.

**Roland H. Pike.**

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## NEED ANY HELP?

**T**HE SECRETARY recently had a letter from C. A. Pereira, a new member, who is currently working for Arthur Taylor. However, he is very desirous of doing the "Continental Circus", being free for that purpose from March to October. He is prepared to act in any capacity; relief rider, passenger, mechanic

or cook and even bottle-washer. He will be prepared, as he puts it, "to pull his weight on the financial side". He has a National Licence and is 23 years of age. If any member would like to take advantage of his offer, they should get in touch with the Office or write direct to Mr. Pereira at the following address: c/o "The Steps", Church Street, Shipston-on-Stour, Warwicks.



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## *Bemsee's 1957 dates*

(PROVISIONAL)

JULY 6th	—	“TROPHY DAY”
AUGUST 3rd	—	OULTON PARK
AUGUST 17th	—	CRYSTAL PALACE
AUGUST 31st	—	SHELSLEY WALSH
SEPTEMBER 21st	—	“HUTCHINSON 100”

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