

# BEMSEE



# 1970

OCTOBER

# Bemsee

Journal of British Motor Cycle Racing Club  
PO Box 75 Kingston upon Thames Surrey

## NEXT SEASON'S PROGRAMME

AT the time of writing there are still four more meetings in the Club's 1970 programme. But such is the pace of things that the 'dates' for 1971 have already been applied for, the permit fees paid and the first draft regulations for the opening meeting in March sent to the ACU for approval.

At this stage certain general points have arisen. First, we shall continue for the time being to include races for 125 c.c. machines even though the fields are small. We hope by this statement to encourage this class to return to something like its old size even allowing for the absence of a variety of marques. Second, we acknowledge the performance difference between 500 and 1,000 c.c. machines, and are re-introducing races for machines of half litre capacity, although the unlimited class will still permit a choice of race.

The change affecting every Club meeting next season is in closing date for regulations. Comment upon the 'closing on the day' rules was made recently. Now the standard will be for a set closing date and **NO ENTRIES ON THE DAY**. The reason is to give more members the opportunity to race, which they cannot have if the majority of the entry in each class turns up to enter on race day.

More news will appear shortly.

## REAL MONEY—NOT START MONEY

IN the present climate of opinion about start money payments, the survival or otherwise of the Grand Prix Riders' Association, and the economics of promoting road race meetings, one important aspect has yet failed to reach through. Upon it hinges anything and everything to do with the sport of racing: with spiralling costs affecting everyone, how can we break through from an enthusiast's pastime to acceptability as a mass entertainment?

The physical limitation of financing all operations (that is start money, prize money, organisers' expenses, circuit maintenance and development) is directly related to the interest the sport arouses in people as a whole.

Motor cycle road racing is an entertainment. It competes against soccer, cricket, rugby, speedway, golf, the cinema, zoos, theatre, yachting and sailing, even, no doubt, bingo. It has neither the attraction of horse-racing with its fashion, support of royalty or betting; the pools and mass hysteria of soccer; the adulation of the Cowdrey's and Sobers's of cricket; the ooh, aah of Wimbledon.

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Therefore it is, from a marketing aspect, out in the cold. The nearest we ever got to breaking through was in the days of Duke, Surtees and Hailwood. These men by their very stature became national figures with their high level masculinity appeal.

Just look at Tony Jacklin and you will begin to understand what is meant. Jacklin overnight became the sensation of the golfing world gilded with the financial rewards of the top flight international sportsman. He had a base to work from—the acceptability of golf throughout the major part of the world—and put it to good use. But at the same time he had the knowledge and discipline to capitalise on his prowess.

There is no parallel today in road racing (Agostini apart). True there are many excellent riders with superb machinery.

But in really top rank class the number is few, and most of these haven't yet awakened to the fact that the men in the van of a sport are—or could be—highly successful marketable commodities with a vast earning potential. Surtees saw it. In his MV Agusta hey day he appeared all over the country on razor blade posters put out by J. Walter Thompson, a world wide advertising agency with a business turnover of around £20 million.

It is no good asking which comes first in the chicken or egg controversy. Racing will expand its appeal by effort from all directions of the people involved, and by involving others. Good organising ideas, slick presentation, competitive riding, colour and glamour, exciting machinery are part of the deal. But until a superb rider gets himself a promotional agent and sets a goal, the expansion of appeal will be slow. After all Billy Walker did well enough and he hardly won anything worthwhile as a boxer! And where is the chance? Look inwards at oil, fuel, tyre, plug and chain barons and you are wrong.

The basic lore is masculinity, and the link of masculine activity with the mass consumer good market. Yardley are doing it by sponsoring the three-man BRM Formula One team in the Player's Grand Prix in Quebec (that's right, it's the international set or nothing). Decrying the sex-sell approach that men buy goods like after shave lotion because it convinces them they would be successful with women, they argue that cosmetics for men have a masculine appeal—and motor racing is the acme of masculinity.

But if men like Stirling Moss and Graham Hill politely declined the offer to try a racing motor cycle, cannot we justify an even better standard of masculinity? We must convince other manufacturers who want to shift the scene from bedroom and cocktail bar to the he-man sphere that there is a lucrative haul in the two wheeled world?

Now which world champion shall we sign up?

THE EDITORS

## A DAY OUT OF EVERYONE'S LIFE

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IT was a night straight out of a ghost story—no moon and dark black clouds wiping out twinkling stars set in a sky only slightly less dark than the clouds themselves. The snarl and thunder of a terrific battle echoed and re-echoed around the woods of Linas-Montlhery and a lonely walker in those woods could suddenly be struck dumb with horror as a huge half-moon of concrete rose out of the earth to 120 feet before plummeting in a smooth arc back to earth.

At the start of the banking of concrete it looked as though all the concentration of light in the world had been thrown on to a straw bale chicane. Riders in the 24-hour race at Montlhery wove their lightning-fast way through the straw bales and the track twisted under their wheels to pitch them through 90° so that they were riding as though in a wall of death cannister with the speed of their machine, its weight and their own weight, being flung up ever higher towards the unfenced perimeter and disaster.

Bright headlights—special quartz iodine from Cibia, Bosch, Hallogen, Marchal, Kokousan and Lucas—threw long white spearheads of light in front of the machine so that what could be seen on the banking was a long streak of light, arrow-headed at intervals, until the light source of the machine itself which flickered as the concrete changed colour under its flying wheels.

It is night which makes any 24-hour race what it is—but night with a bit of Brooklands thrown in, tip-top organisation under the direction of the magazine 'Moto Revue' who were also sponsoring the event, ensured that the excitement mounted every second of the whole racing period that seemed a lifetime to some and a tireless thankless task to riders. The story of the race has already been told. But the riders could not have operated without the teams behind them and as they battled with the greasy corners, the straw bales and the flickering deceptive shadows thrown by their machines' lighting that projected miniature racing machines as brightly as a well-lit cinema screen on to the inside of a fairing, shattering concentration and destroying morale, that a signalling point, a wave from the pit and the confident knowledge that someone somewhere was waiting with a warm drink and a warmer blanket to ease aching limbs, kept the people who did the real work running. And no one ever tells that side of the story.



Everyone was determined to win but none more determined than Bill Smith, the Honda dealer who had battled his way into the Works team. He and his partner John Williams were riding brilliantly but their crankshaft, a piston and the electrics were to sideline them after 18½ bitter hours. Percy Tait's strapped wrists, hobbling walk, blistered palms and fingers told their own story of the Triumph Works No. 2 machine shared with Steve Jolley. Jolley's lanky 6 feet plus form had more kinks in it than a mule-teers whip but every time his turn came round to ride again for his 1 hour 40 minute stint the kinks were shaken out and the blue leather-clad figure vanished with a speed that belied the growing weariness.

Out in front were Paul Smart and Tom Dickie and in the pits Jack Wilding, Triumph's Export Manager, and Margaret Sheene, Paul's girl friend, kept the lap scoring going and prayers and bad language that flowed backwards and forwards mattered not for both had their own keen reasons to see their machine and man win the event. Tom Dickie was riding for the honour of his new daughter, just three days old when the flag dropped, and expecting every moment that the good fortune of wife and daughter doing well would be broken when the machine failed.

Elsewhere in the race, Laverdas, with their gigantic CB72 looking machines were preparing for the big production race business which lies in front of them next year with their three-cylinder, double overhead camshaft machines still in the development stage. Their big twins were reliable enough but the speed and the riding ability could not match the professionalism of their pit work under the control of Managing Director Laverda himself. Some people pushed in. One or two fell off—fortunately none with anything more serious than a broken ankle.

New Zealander, Keith Turner, who rode so well at the Bemsee Bank Holiday Meeting, was wandering disconsolately up and down the pits swearing in a strange language which he assured everyone was Maori, as mechanics tried to mend the machine dropped and nearly wrecked by his partner Erich Offenstadt. Turner had nearly sixteen hours to wait while they completed the rebuild and then, because Kawasaki machines were leading the 500 c.c. class as a team, he brought his refurbished and renewed machine out in the closing hour to take the lap record, which pleased the practical French crowd and absolutely amazed everyone else.

The Dresda Triumph with Martyn Ashwood aboard, had fallen completely apart before the race was four hours old. The Norton Commando that Peter Williams and Charlie Sanby rode had a crankshaft that looked like a broken shop window when a main bearing punched out through the side. Vince Davey, who captained an immaculate Gus Kuhn pit and team, was appalled when the entire team including the French entry trailed their exhaust systems on the ground and then, after hectic jury rigging, were stopped completely by gearbox failures.

It was a shame that the Enfield Metisse machines, so immaculate and so British, could not take the pounding and their gearboxes gave up the ghost sidelining active Bemsee riders John Hedger, Gordon Pantall, Brian Adams and Vincent Chivers.

Ken Buckmaster fell off his machine, wrecking the fairing and the ignition casing mounted on it, but somewhere down the line a strange 950 c.c., four-cylinder Honda, modified by its French owners and watched with passionate interest by two Japanese mechanics, was running like a train.

Out in front Paul Smart, riding with none of his well-known flamboyance—just sitting steadily and pushing the big three along—was handing the bike over to Tom Dickie in the dawn light with the words "It's got no brakes, the tyres are going bald, but it goes like hell—just stay on", before staggering to the minute motor caravan base for two hours' shut-eye.

Waking riders up was a problem and at one point two Triumph mechanics, Percy Tait and Tom Dickie were sharing what looked to be a communal bed with Margaret Sheene! But a quick shout and shake and whoever's turn it was to do duty out on the track was awake and rolling.

Everyone deserved a gold cup. As it became obvious that the Triumph three-cylinder win was in the bag the delight of the crowd grew because it was certain they had expected Honda to take the honours and their joy in the British win was unbounded. When the flag did fall after 1,838 miles, at an average speed of 76.50 m.p.h., part of the 70,000-strong crowd broke ranks and surged across the track to the utter dismay of riders still diving into the finish on their thoroughly worn out and brakeless machines.

Triumph had done it — but only by the efforts of the mechanics and the men and individuals who had given their time without thought of the consequences. There was no comfort, no official works transport, no official works accommodation and no official Competition Manager. Every one had given a day out of their lives but had you asked any one of those men or the fair-haired girl who sat through that tough twenty-four hours that won Triumph the glinting Bol D'Or trophy, had it been worthwhile, they would have replied a quiet 'yes'.

Allan Robinson

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## **BOARD REPORT**

THE Board of Directors met at the Club Offices on August 11 and September 7. This is a summary of those two meetings.

### **1971 DATES**

Application had been made for dates in 1971 similar to those for 1970 with the exception of the Club meeting at Brands Hatch scheduled for late August. The circuit owners had agreed to moving this meeting to an earlier date in 1971, namely June 26. Application had also been made to the GLC for the Bank Holiday date in 1971.

### **HUTCHINSON 100**

A report by the Clerk of the Course was discussed. Numerous details in the organisation was recorded for the 1971 meeting. Attendance had fallen over the 1969 event, and this was noted with regret. Favourable reports of The Hutchinson 100 appeared in many technical and non-technical journals. Letters of congratulations were received from the President, Sir Geoffrey Tuttle, and from riders and trade personalities. The Clerk of the Course made suggestions for altering and improving the race format.

### **METROPOLITAN MEETING**

In his report on this meeting the Clerk of the Course reported that the Sponsors Team Match Race had proved to be an unqualified success. The race itself had been staged with commendable smoothness. Throughout the meeting many records fell. Again crowd attendance was low, despite a massive promotional campaign which included a demonstration before the press in the week prior to the meeting.

### **TEAM MATCH RACING**

Ideas for extending this form of racing in 1971 were discussed. It was hoped to make an announcement regarding plans later this year.

## **REGULATIONS**

Application for a permit for the first meeting in the new season (March 8, 1971) was approved. Certain adjustments would be made to the format and a firm closing date for entries would be set.

## **ANNUAL DINNER**

Confirmation of arrangements had arrived from the management of the Hanover Grand Hotel. First reservations had also arrived and further announcements would appear in the October and November issues of the Club magazine.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Finance Sub-Committee gave the information that they had completed an exhaustive cost analysis of 1970 meetings to date with the object of finding out how meetings could be structured to meet the changing patterns of entry and attendance. Caution in the expenditure of money was of paramount importance in these difficult times, but the Club was on the right side at this stage in the year. Sanction was given for the replacement of the franking machine after 12 years' service for a new decimal model for delivery in November.

## **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Investigations had shown that the mailings of regulations and magazines was an accurate reflection of membership. With renewals permitted up to March in any year careful checking would ensure that no benefits of membership were possible after that time to those who did not renew.

## **STEWARDS**

The panel of Stewards as presently constituted was deemed to be too restrictive. Accordingly all members of the Board were appointed to the panel for whom Gordon Cobbold would liaise on stand-in stewards for each meeting.

## **SPONSORS ASSOCIATION**

Resulting from the satisfactory relations enjoyed during the season the Board decided to approach the Association with a view to discussing further co-operation.

## REFLECTIONS ON TWO MEETINGS

RAIN but not ruination was the headline for the report on the Ace of Clubs August 22 affair in last month's issue. The event one week later might well have rejoiced in the sub-title of sun=ruination, since the morning weather was such that it probably frightened people away. Pity, because Crystal Palace was a day of scintillating racing and record breaking.

### CRYSTAL PALACE

Featuring our new Match Team Race, and won convincingly by Paul Smart, with team-mate Ron Chandler third to take the team prize, it also brought the first record. Smart and Ashwood shared this at 81.50 m.p.h. to take the 1,000 c.c. record. Notable was the superb team riding of Nixon and Butler resplendent in the new Boyer Racing colours; they were second team home. Then Pat Mahoney scooped the 500 record held by Joe Dunphy since 1963, and equalled by Ron Chandler in 1969. This now stands at 81.50, the same as the 1,000 c.c. figure. Smart went on to collect the 350 with an increase of 2.2 m.p.h. to 79.94 m.p.h., added the 250 a few races later at 80.71 and, incredibly, the same figure of 81.50 appeared under his name again in the last 1,000 c.c. race (so he and Mahoney share the absolute course record for solo machines). Ray Pickrell, back on form, started the day well with a win and the lap record for Production machines bringing this class into the 80 plus figure for the first time at 80.19 m.p.h.

Production machines featured in both first and last races of the day in which the efforts of Ron Wittich were fully rewarded with a convincing win over Dave Nixon. Earlier Paul Smart nearly came unstuck in the 350 when near the end he found Rex Butcher so close behind on the Ivy Yamaha that the shock almost delayed recovery. It was all he could do to squeeze over the line ahead of the skilful Rex.



## SILVER TROPHY

From the warmth of Crystal Palace to the dismal weather at Brands on September 12 was quite a jump. Almost continuous rain, so heavy at times that practice overran into the race time, it brought the usual crop of spills at Paddock plus plenty of power slides downhill out of Druids, through Clearways and in front of the main grandstand. Despite the hazards and slow lap times the racing was highly competitive. Race Two for 1,000's saw some brilliant wet weather techniques notably by Peter Cockram (Triumph) and Ken Stanford (Triton) especially at South Bank culminating in a side by side dash over the line to start the last lap with skilful passing of back markers on the back straight. Victory went to Cockram in the end by three lengths.

An easy looking ride by Nixon also nearly proved fatal in the Production class as a determined Brian Walker forced the Bonneville closer and closer, whilst a ferocious scrap for fourth place was won successfully by Leonard Phelps. Alan Dunscombe had a poor day with two spills and a compensation win in the first 350. Dropping it after leading in the second 350 affair gave wet weather exponent Derek Head the hard task of trying to displace Martin Read from the lead position. Much effort was rewarded with a neat bit of pipping the leader on the line.

Notable in the sidecar class was Roger Edwards and passenger Mike Abbott. Their beautifully prepared HRD outfit started as the clutch bit home. The crew literally bull-dozed a path through to enter Paddock first and from then on steadily accelerated away to take the chequered flag even though Edwards disdained goggles in the difficult conditions. With the light steadily failing the Stephens/Inch, Triumph-engined outfit, fought well and hard to stave off the Beard/Richards crew in the final sidecar event. So close were they that Beard's Triumph almost rode up the exhaust of Stephens. Beard survived an unwitting shunt at Clearways, but that apart could not dislodge the leader, and Stephens went on to win at 57.56 m.p.h.

## Red Plates — they're out!

WE introduced the idea of red plates for marking production machines many years ago. Today production machines are recognised by their equivalent racing class capacities—our regulations say so—and their plates should be appropriately coloured. But the old association of ideas lingers on and still machines with wrongly coloured plates turn out. To some stewards it is rather like a red rag to a bull. So please **SCRAP YOUR RED NUMBER PLATES ON YOUR PRODUCTION MACHINE**, and use the correct capacity class numbers.

## So are bare legs

YOU 'shorty' boot fanatics showing an expanse of bare leg are going to find it tough in future. The fashion is fine if you have longer leathers to cover the gap, otherwise you are not legal.

Neither is adhesive tape sticking leathers, boot top and flesh together.

Protective gear is the rule for everyone, it is a good rule protecting you from direct contact with unyielding surfaces, hot engines and exhaust pipes. Properly clothed you are also protected by insurance.

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**The Second Road Racers' Reunion**

Dear Editor,

Following the successful gathering last year, the Club is inviting all former Ansty Competitors and Officials, together with any pre-war Road Racers and as many local post-war and present day Road Racers as we can contact to a Re-union on November 7 this year.

We hope that you will be with us, as last year, there will be no formalities other than to welcome all guests. It would be appreciated if you would pass this invitation on to anyone you know, who we have not been able to contact.

I look forward to meeting you again on Saturday November 7, after 8 p.m. in the Club's Headquarters, where the bars will have a late closing, and light refreshments will be available.

Look for the Dunlop Arrows to the car park.

Yours sincerely,

JIM OLIVER

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