

NAT'L MX OPENER / WHAT'S WORKS FOR '77

DIRT BIKE

JULY 1977

34355

\$1.00
UK60p

175cc ENDUROS

YAMAHA CAN-AM PENTON

WHICH IS KING?

CAN-AM 250 MX3 - WONDER IN ELLIS LAND?



DIRT BIKE

JULY 1977 VOLUME SEVEN NUMBER SEVEN

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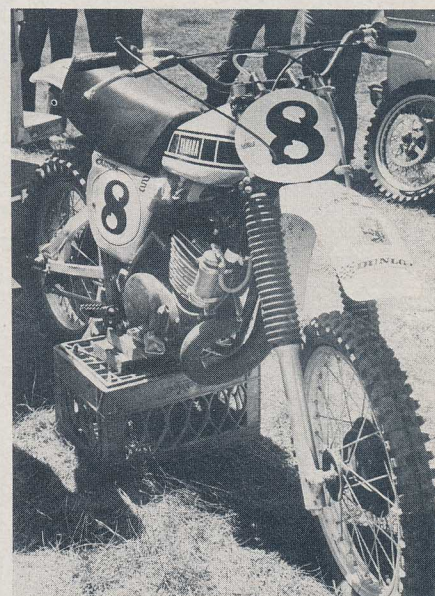
The misfortune of our friends does not displease us ...



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ON THE COVER:

Pomeroy is back! Wegner shot the Hangtown photo.

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BERNIE SCHREIBER

Europe gets Schreiberized

Everybody here is pleased as punch about Bernie becoming the first American trialster to score championship points overseas. And he did it with a DB sticker affixed to his number plate.

Bernie has been a test rider for DIRT BIKE for a couple of years now. You've seen him doing things like wheeling a TT500 through a rock pile and pulling off rear wheel U-turns on a Sherpa. From what we've seen he could probably tackle the big-bucks motocross circuit, but he's a dedicated trials man. King Kong Jump indeed. Try riding off the top of a six-foot-tall rock ledge sometime. Or up it. We've been watching him for a few years, quietly but assertively developing the skills and confidence to take on the best in the world. And take them on he did, underscoring every top trapster in the world at least once during his four rides in Europe.

We've seen him evolve from local star to national round winner to potential world champion, all the while behaving in a manner becoming the gentlemanly heritage of the sport.

Pressing duties prevented a staff interview, so we asked a distinguished visitor from the land where it all began, motocross and trials, to lend a hand with the following profile.



... which reminds me of the time at Bongham's Alley. Or was it Keenan's Clanger. Back in '37 ... huh ... what ... oh ... Hello, America. James Chatterton Riddle Heath-Robinson, Long Coat Brigade, here. I've been asked by the Yank publication to interview the surprise packet of world trials this year, Americano supremo Bernie Schreiber. Let me take this opportunity to say good show, laddie. Hut, hut. I expect you're right chuffed with your top-of-the-tree showing.

My taco is missing.

What's that? Someone's stolen your Bultaco?

No, my taco. I ordered a burger, fries, Coke and a taco.

Perhaps you'd like some digestive biscuits and creams with your chips.

Fries. I ordered french fries.

You mean chips.

No, chips are crisps, aren't they?

Yes, yes, of course. I keep forgetting your quaint colonialisms ... But let us be about our chat. You started tweaking the throttle at ten, on a Kawasaki 90. Then a Bultaco Lobito, 125cc. Transferred to Amateur at age 12. Aboard a 250 Sherpa T at 13, transferred, and made number four Expert by the end of the year. Up to number two Master in 1973, then SoCal numero uno in 1974 and 1975 and just pipped last year, losing the needle match on cleans. Something of a flap, wasn't there, when you rode the first American world round at Saddleback back in '74?

Yes, sir. I was 14. They let me ride, but I wasn't officially entered. I would have finished seventh overall out of a dozen finishers.

Inconsiderate blighters. Let the lads have a chance, I say. Seems

hardly cricket, what?

I felt I was ready for world competition experience when I was 16, but that stupid FIM rule ...

What about your Yank solo championships?

I never have ridden a full national schedule. I was ninth in '74, tenth in '75 and sixth in '76. I did win two of my four rides last year.

And two on the trot for the El Trial de Espana, right?

Right. The ATA Trial de Espana funds made it possible for me to see what was happening in world competition. I watched the Spanish world rounds in '74 and '75 and the Scottish Six Days last year. After seeing that first round in Spain I knew what I had to train for. That's why I felt I was ready to get some world experience at 16.

And you really got the taste last year, when you borrowed Coutard's



1972. An Expert at age 13.



West Germany. Photo by Dave Wilcock.



1973. Carrying the number four Expert plate earned in 1972.

bike at Ben Nevis and rode eight sections.

Marland and I should have been allowed to ride last year at 17 like the British riders. Our entries were accepted. It was the FIM rule again.

You've chalked up enough points in four rides to be ranked number five in the world at the halfway point. A real hats-off show, I'd say.

Well, I just turned 18 the end of January and was finishing up high school. It would have been tight coming over any earlier for the two British rounds.

You certainly were an image of unflappability in Belgium.

I was riding to win.

And you finished fifth, just 14 points behind top man Rathmell. Jolly good show, I say. I bet you were happy as a sand boy.

Huh? Oh, yes. I guess it was a surprise for many, but I had been

training for that ride for years.

Clock up a cricket score, 130.4, and still wind up on the leader board. A footing contest, was it?

I didn't like it that much. It was too difficult. World champions just paddling along. There were sections where every rider got a five. I only had nine cleans for the day. And it had a muddy sameness about it.

A real slog, eh? How about the other rounds?

I liked the next one in Spain best. It had the hardest loop, the other three rounds didn't have difficult loops. Spain was the closest to what I'm used to in Southern California. Big rocks and loose dirt.

And you slotted home third, a jumbo day out.

Vesterinen won it with a 62.9 and I had an 89.4. France was good. Karlson won it with an 88.1, I had a 97.3 to finish fifth.

But you led France after the first circuit and were only a mark behind after two go-rounds. And then a spate of engine trouble.

I seized because of mud in the engine and it never ran right after that.

And then you punched home a brilliant second in Germany, just two marks behind Lampkin on observation. What phlegm!

Germany was dangerous, bad on the bikes. You could break your frame easily. There were jumps and drops. It was easier than Belgium, though. Martin had 136.3, I scored 143.7. The time schedules were so tight on all the rounds that we just had to race around with no time to inspect the sections after the first loop.

You certainly caught quite a few on the hop. I expect Bultaco is over the moon.



West Germany. Photo by Dave Wilcock.



West Germany. Photo by Dave Wilcock.

They sure let me know they appreciated it. They don't treat you like you're just a rider. I'll be contesting the rest of the world rounds and have full support for the nationals this year.

I say, this double chili cheese dog is quite tasty. Care for afters?

No thanks.

How about the mud and guts show on home ground?

Whaley and I have been trading wins for four years now going for SoCal Number One. I don't think Southern California terrain is a good training ground for world competition, there's no mud, but having to practice so hard just to win a local ATA trial has been good for both Marland and me.

A couple of snippets in the weeklies said Sammy Miller offered you a ride with Honda before the German round.

Yes, he did, but I told him I was happy with Bultaco.

I understand Dave Thorpe gave you a nickname. Barging Bernie.

Ah . . . yes, he did.

Well, you certainly do like to clamber the nests. And some of those turns in practice had the chaps talking.

I had to change my riding style some for the world rounds. When I first started practicing in the mud in Belgium I couldn't do anything, but I felt confident by the day of the trial. I had to use second gear a lot and learn to blip the throttle in the mud. There's much more turning the throttle on and off to get grip over there. It's necessary to learn to ride very tight sections in second because you need the taller gears for the climbs. With all the mud you have to jump up and down on the pegs to help get traction sometimes and you

learn to take very wide dabs. I'm riding with my legs wide apart now, like Vesterinen. I moved the handlebars back. That's good for the hills, helps to keep the weight back more. We run them more forward for the tight turns at home. The turns in Europe were actually easier than those in our local trials.

You rode a bog standard bike?

Yes.

You did get a spot of practice on the factory bikes, though.

I rode the 348s. The motor is really smooth, as smooth as the 326. It would be really great for the Scottish and Northern England, but the extra power in some of the mud sections can cause it to spin a little sooner. Bultaco is still doing development work on the engine to get it just right. They're trying a new frame with Lampkin. It raises ground clearance an inch by



Practice at the Big Tujunga rockpile.



Some of the French mud that threw a spanner in the works.

removing the bottom frame tubes. And they have a new air box that breathes up front and a new Bing for even better bottom end.

How about your stateside solo series?

I think the national rounds need to be alot more difficult. The winner's score should be 60 at least. Last year that was the highest of the winning scores and I understand they want to make rounds easier this year. The riders over in Europe didn't complain about the sections being too difficult. They feel it's a privilege to start a world event. If we beefed up the support series or added qualifiers we could make the nationals tougher. The top local riders should set up the sections and be allowed to ride. Whaley and Eggar helped set up the San Diego national and it probably got more complaints than any other event last

year, but it was a good test.

I've heard of something called Murderer's Gulch, bloody massacre, what?

No, it was a national Lane Leavitt set up in 1975. He wanted to give the national riders a taste of what they could expect overseas. Mark Eggar won with over 100 points. I really enjoyed it. I think all the top riders did. Some of the sections were close in toughness, but the time wasn't as tight as the rounds I rode overseas. I also enjoyed the Texas and Oklahoma nationals the last couple of years and the Colorado round at Fairplay.

I hear tell that interest is on the blink stateside, that trials doesn't get a fair crack of the whip.

I think that trials could get bigger in the U.S. It needs more publicity. We need more beginner schools and trials and better, more interesting

events with longer loops in different areas. We could use more week-long trials schools by national riders, like Lane has done at Donner Ski Ranch, in different parts of the country. I'm doing one at Donner this summer.

Needs more of the top plug attack, eh? What's up the road for you now?

I've said if I didn't win the world championship by the time I'm 22, I never will. I'll probably retire in four years if I don't and go to college. Right now I work some for my dad. He's a precision machinist.

That about wraps it up on this end. I must say I find your Yank cuisine quite invigorating. If only the beer wasn't so cold. So, as I was saying, Bernie, maybe it was Rannoch Moor in '36 ... regardless, I loved that Ariel. Bit heavy, but ... still have it, you know ... ah, no taint of commercialism ... yes, yes ...