

SCOTTISH SIX-DAY TRIAL: FULL COLOUR REPORT

DIRT BIKE RIDER

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KMX125 RIDE IMPRESSION

**We ride
Andy Nicholls'
YZ250**

GEORGES JOBE
The Counter-attack



**Plus your chance
to win one!**

Luscombe/Leek
Fantic Trials
Outfit Tested

**MAKING
A KX80
QUICKER!**

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Georges
JOBE

Counter Attack

Profile and photographs by Jack Burnicle.

GEORGES Jobe holds a special niche in the history of motocross. In 1980, at 19 years of age, he became the sport's youngest World Champion. Then for a further three eventful years he remained the enigmatic dominant figure of the 250cc grand prix scene, twice demoted to "vice campione" before regaining his title in 1983.

The following year Georges joined Team Green Kawasaki and the 500cc class, and blazed a spectacular trail into the hearts of British fans with his fantastic arc over Andre Malherbe and the Hawkstone Park double jump. No-one who witnessed that remarkable moment will forget it.

Jobe took Malherbe to the last grand prix moto of 1984 before giving best to his more experienced compatriot and friend. Second place in his maiden season was no disgrace. Nineteen eighty-five beckoned the stylish young Belgian. But far from building on the achievements of the preceding 12 months, his year opened disastrously and never recovered. By the end of the grand prix season Jobe was disgruntled, demoralised and out of sorts.

His 1986 team set-up is, however, vitally different from last year. "Georges rode 50 or 60 meetings during 1985," explains Team Green boss Alec Wright. "Saturdays, Sundays, blooming Wednesdays, everything everywhere – and *all* on the works bikes! This year, his factory machinery is being used for just 20 selected races – pre-season internationals, all the GPs, and the Belgian Championship."

Also, the previously total involvement of George's dedicated family has been greatly diluted. His factory tackle is now kept at the workshop of his new mechanic, Johan Luyten.

The relative peace and quiet of his caravan at April's ill-fated Swiss 500 Grand Prix seemed a good time to find out first-hand what had gone so terribly astray for this outstanding entertainer in 1985. And to discover what sort of shape he was in for 1986. The answers to these apparently diverse questions proved uncannily closely related...

"Everything went wrong!" Georges gave that characteristic shrug of the shoulders. "At the beginning of the year my house burned down. Then at the first major international at Beaucaire I crashed and landed on my head. This cracked a nerve in the back of my neck and my left arm



Georges and Fabienne Jobe; and left, Georges at the 1985 Spanish GP.

was 45 per cent paralysed. The doctor said after two weeks it was a bad dream and I could start practising again."

It was too soon. Almost inevitably a similar accident hurt the neck again Jobe couldn't even turn his head. He was desperate. "I went to see a specialist in France. 'I fix it in two minutes,' he said. Then he pushed downwards so hard on my head that he made it worse. The nerve was almost destroyed."

At that time Georges was unaware of the full medical implication of his injury. "I discovered that once destroyed a nerve can never grow back. All year my arm was painful and I had no power in my left hand. I still have to work my left arm a lot to keep the muscle strong."

Jobe went to the opening grand prix ill-prepared. "I had to fix my bike *and* my body in Austria. It was too late. I had problems with a puncture and bike mechanics and got a bad result."

The tone of the year was set. But the

final analysis proves that even the most severe string of setbacks can produce something positive. "All that happened during 1985 has made me feel stronger. My mind is more experienced. From my home burning down to a flat tyre at the last GP, I can accept anything happening now. It is no longer impossible."

Jobe even prepares differently to guard against injury. "Motocross is a very hard job. First, you must have good technique. Second, you must be in good shape. Third, you must have a good bike. And fourth, you must be able to set up that bike. There are so many things. Ills and injuries must be avoided. You must organise your travelling – planes, cars, hotels – and you must be a businessman to take care of contracts. The complete job, from A to Z."

"Look how a footballer is with a club. The manager makes reservations, everything is done for him. We are alone, on our bike and in our lives." He grins.

Georges JOBÉ Counter Attack

"But it is a very *interesting* job!"

One good thing *did* occur to Jobe in 1985. And it was an important one. "After the last GP, me and Andre (Malherbe) and Faby and Sabine went on holiday for three weeks to Monaco and then Spain. We had a good time and forgot about bikes. It had been a bad season for both of us. He was disappointed too."

On their return home, Faby gave birth to their first child, a baby daughter called Maite. It was September 30. Georges was overjoyed. "She really has made a new life for me," he enthuses. "She gives me another point of view and a lot of motivation to fight and race again. And she makes me and the whole family very happy! I practice hard, I am stronger, I have better reflexes and have been taking no risks. I have won eight out of 10 races and enjoyed every one. *Last year I lost that enjoyment and thought I'd lost it for good...*"

Georges had two months of 1985 left to start life afresh. "I began to prepare myself slowly," he explains. "And from late December until now we have tested a lot. I feel good. When I raced the 250 GPs I always worked very hard to win and make good races. But I never felt like this. I take time to prepare myself and I feel very relaxed. I don't know why."

Perhaps the word is experience. It is hard to resist comparison with Jobe's direct contemporary, Dave Watson. Both 25-years-old in January of this year, both troubled by injury during the past two seasons, both working harder and getting fitter than ever before, yet both calmer, more positive, more mature and seemingly better able to control their volatile temperaments. Certainly it would have been quite inconceivable in previous years to sit down and enjoy an informative conversation with such a gregarious Georges relaxed during the hour *immediately* preceding the *first* practice session of the *first* GP of the season...

Besides his native Belgian national championship, Jobe is also contesting the Italian Championship on production Kawasakis prepared down in Italy. The reason is plain. "I had a good offer from M.Robert and the Kawasaki importer. I needed to be released to obtain an Italian licence. I told the Belgian federation that at 25 I was not so young. I had to consider the future. In Belgium, I cannot make money for my family. If I cannot ride in Italy I will stop racing."

The Belgian federation had been suffering. Malherbe had quit for Monaco. Harry Everts and Alain Lejeune have also moved on. The federation was understandably reluctant to lose Jobe. But they agreed his acquiring an Italian licence as long as he also contested the Belgian series. "So we made a deal. I appreciate that a lot. I make many races in Belgium in reciprocation."

Georges is leading the Italian Championship after two rounds, from his

team-mates Michele Margarotto and Corrado Maddii, but he does not hold much store by early season results. "Until now, I have raced with Andre and Erik Geboers and the Kawasaki feels good. Power is excellent, handling much better and the weight lower. We have had a good technical suspension guy over here from Japan. Last year we had the bad experiences, so we know how to make things better. But races before GPs are not GPs. Winning eight races means I have prepared myself well, but it doesn't mean I am better than the other guys."

The "other guys", predictably, remain the strong men of the 500 class. Georges smiles. "There are no danger men, but a lot! David – the World Champion – and Malherbe and Geboers and Carlqvist. All are very good riders. You never know until five races. Then you can say *this* is the man.

"Everyone has had a winter time, a rest, a new preparation. Last year we could say that Thorpe and Malherbe could be the men. This year it is different for me –



Above, 1985: All the angst, tension and turmoil of a wretched season are evident during final round at Wohlen. Jobe picked up yet another puncture and lost third place in the title chase.

Top, 1985: The Spanish GP – the only time all season that Jobe matched Malherbe and beat Thorpe.

and for Carla, and Nicoll, and Kini and van der Ven. We are all good riders on good bikes. We *cannot* see it like last year!

"Both Thorpe and Malherbe had the same bike, the same chance to win. The difference was in preparation. Andre lost the championship in the States. He was as strong as David. He won more heats. Their strength is their consistency. They are always at the front.

"I hope I am the same. I am not, for example, faster on one track by five seconds, then five seconds slower on another track the next week. I am always there, therefore I have a good chance to be on the final podium. We'll see!"

Jobe does not anticipate any hidden challengers bursting unexpectedly to the forefront. "I don't see any new faces. A young guy of 18 or 19 would have to be so good. In the 125 and 250 GPs it is possible, but not in the 500s. You need to be an experienced, consistent guy."

As long as racing remains a pleasure, the moustachioed Belgian intends to compete. But he does not plan his career in advance. It is another lesson learned in 1985! "If, one day, I have no more pleasure or motivation, I will stop. Right now, I enjoy myself on the bike learning new things. As long as I can do that, I'll continue. If the bike drives me, if I have pain and crash because it goes too fast, I'll retire. I don't think it will be tomorrow, but I cannot say in two or three or even 10 years.

"I had a lot of respect for Magoo. I am sad he is injured. He could have raced 10 years more, but unfortunately motocross is a dangerous sport." Georges leans forward and lays a hand deliberately on the wooden table in his caravan. "I hope it never happens, but you must expect anything. I mustn't be too optimistic or think too much about the future. I take things year after year, month after month, almost day after day.

"But I would like to stay involved in sport. It may even be car racing. To sit behind a desk in an office and start working eight hours a day would be difficult. I am lucky till now. In the beginning I didn't expect to make this my job. It started as a pastime, then progressed and I became a young world champion. I didn't choose this career. I was very lucky to do the job I really wanted to do, and I will be lucky to have that carry on..."

Jobe is still a keen advocate of supercross. "In the stadium stuff I can learn a lot. There is not a lot which is new outdoors. I have come here to race in Payerne since 1980. Same bumps, same lines. But I can learn a lot in stadium and that helps me in the outdoors also. I cannot race only outdoors and world championships like some riders. That doesn't make me so happy. It doesn't provide the stimulation and the challenge I require."

Georges also relishes the task of



1982: Jobe soars through the fir trees during an epic last-to-third ride in the final race of the 250 title chase in Sweden - to no avail.

testing and refining his motor cycle. It is a skill in which he received excellent grounding. "At Suzuki, every rider contracted with them had to go to Japan and test their own bikes. When I became World Champion in 1980 I had a good bike and went to Japan testing. I had so many new things to test from Suzuki that I was completely lost at first! But we had experienced riders in Roger de Coster and Sylvain Geboers, the race manager. Good technical riders. They gave us ideas about what they thought good or bad. Brad Lackey was also very helpful. I learned a lot from Suzuki. I liked the testing, making the bike good for me. That does not necessarily mean good for others. Everyone has a different style.

"Back in '84 I didn't know the Kawasaki. I tried to make a Suzuki out of it. That's why I lost the championship that year. I didn't know the bike well enough and lost a lot of time setting it up at the GP tracks."

In December last year Georges went to the States to test with Kawasaki's National 250 and Supercross Champion, Jeff Ward. "We had the same points of view on the bike, the same feelings and ideas. That's good."

Refreshed, re-invigorated and prepared for anything. That's the 1986 Georges Jobe. His only sorrow is not being

allowed to tackle that stupendous Hawkstone double again this year. Twice victorious at Hawkstone Park during his 250 GP career, he has always liked the circuit. "The double jump was a really good feature of the track. For the people who were there in '84 it will always be my jump. I was the only rider to jump it in the race. I was proud of that. I did it easily and looked forward to doing it again. It saved a lot of time!"

Not surprisingly, Jobe disagrees with the ACU's decision to do away with double jumps on championship tracks. He draws a strong case for the retention of such spectacular obstacles. "A double is dangerous only when a rider has no practise at it. He tries, he crashes, and people say the jump is dangerous. It is not. It is the rider who is dangerous. It is up to him to see if he can jump or not. He must be sure. Nobody asks you to do it. If one rider doesn't like it, he can lose the time. It is his decision. Don't jump!"

Double jump or not, Jobe intends to be right back in contention at Hawkstone Park this season. "I hope they have made a difficult tabletop," he grins, "so not so many people can jump it!"

"And tell all my English fans I hope they will see a better Georges Jobe again in 1986."

