

Britain's Top Selling Off-Road Magazine

DIRT BIKE RIDER

October '84 85p US \$2.75

'85 MODELS

TESTS FOUR BIG THUMPERS

MUGEN CR250

SHOCK SERVICING

D.I.Y. TY175

SPENCE POSTER INSIDE



SUZUKI RM250



HONDA CR80



YAMAHA YZ125

SCOOP
PLUS

'85 KX250
IMPRESSION

KTM250





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THE DBR ORGANISATION: **Managing Editor** Dave Calderwood, **Editor** Peter Donaldson, **Contributing Editors** Colin Taylor, Jack Burnicle. **Editorial Assistant** Jane Leech, **Ad Controller** Peter Crew, **Ad Manager** Dave Campling, **Tele-Sales** Triss Burbage, Joy Davies, **Ad Production:** Audrey Wright, **Staff Photographers** Martyn Barnwell, Patrick Gosling, **Design** Patrick Smith, Tony Baskeyfield, **Contributors** James Moorhouse, Peter Howdle, Chris Maindonald and Worldwide Moles. **Editorial and advertising office:** Dirt Bike Rider, EMAP, Bushfield House, Orton Centre, Peterborough PE2 0UW (Tel: 0733 237111; Classified advertising: 0733 236644), Telex No: 32157.

Subscription: UK & Eire £10.80 for 12 issues (post free). Overseas surface mail £15, airmail Europe £21. Payment by cheque, postal order, international money order, sterling draft, credit card, payable to Dirt Bike Rider. Send to Dirt Bike Rider, Competition House, Farndon Road, Market Harborough, Leicestershire. **US subs** \$33 for 12 issues from Lee Cowie, Motorsport, RR1 Box 200D, Jonesburg, MO, 63351. **USA. Printed** by EMLP, Oundle Road, Peterborough. **Originated** by Arty Type, Whittlesey, Cambs. **Colour separations** by David Bruce Graphics, Sewell St, London E7. ©EMAP 1984.

HOME ADVANTAGE

No way, says
Jobe

By JACK BURNICLE

THE Belgian 500cc Grand Prix, penultimate round of the 1984 World Championship, had found a temporary new home this year. Marche en Famenne, deep in the wooded Ardennes, lay only half an hour away from Retinne, home of twice World 250 Champion Georges Jobe. And appropriately it represented Jobe's last stand. For if the lone Kawasaki campaigner was to halt Honda's red tide, this was where the deed had to be done.

At least he could relax at his home on Friday and Saturday evenings – a rare pleasure indeed for such a widely travelled professional sportsman. "It is nice to be able to stay here and relax," agreed Georges. "But you still have to race the same as ever on the day!"

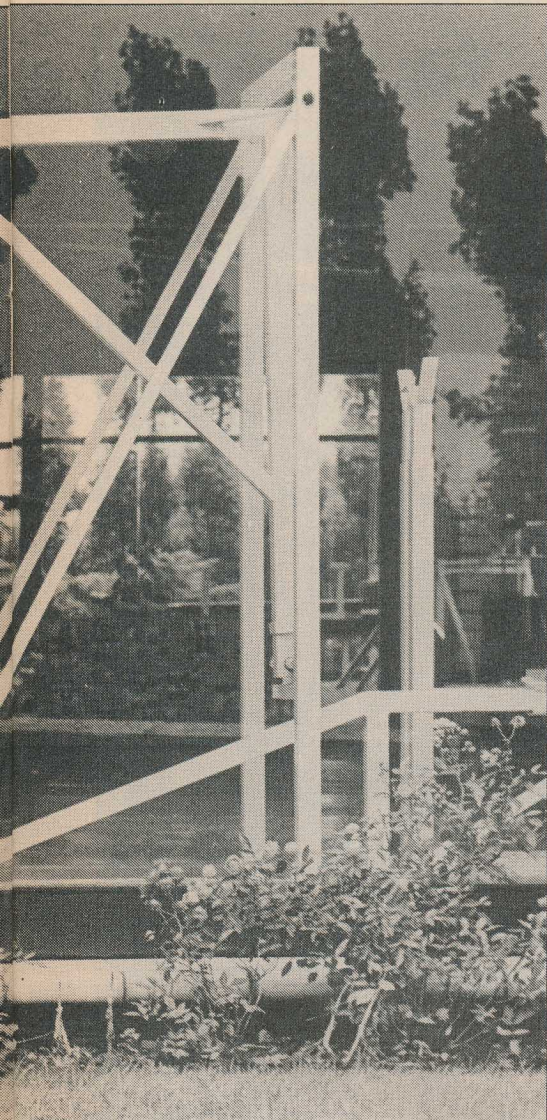
Jobe knew Marche en Famenne well. He'd won a 250 grand prix there in 1980 as a 19-year-old en route to his first world title. Then it was wet and deeply rutted. After weeks without rain, 1984 was bound to be different.

Georges and Honda's championship leader Andre Malherbe had practised at the circuit the previous Wednesday. "It is too easy when it is dry," snorted Jobe. "Many people will be able to go fast round it."

He'd also trained as always on his own home-made, privately-owned track, joined by potential ally Haken Carlqvist. "I showed Carla my new stadium practice track as well. He tried one lap, said 'That's enough', and went back to the normal course!"

David Thorpe, double victor in England two weeks earlier, was kinder to Marche en Famenne. "The track's good except for that rocky uphill. It could cause many





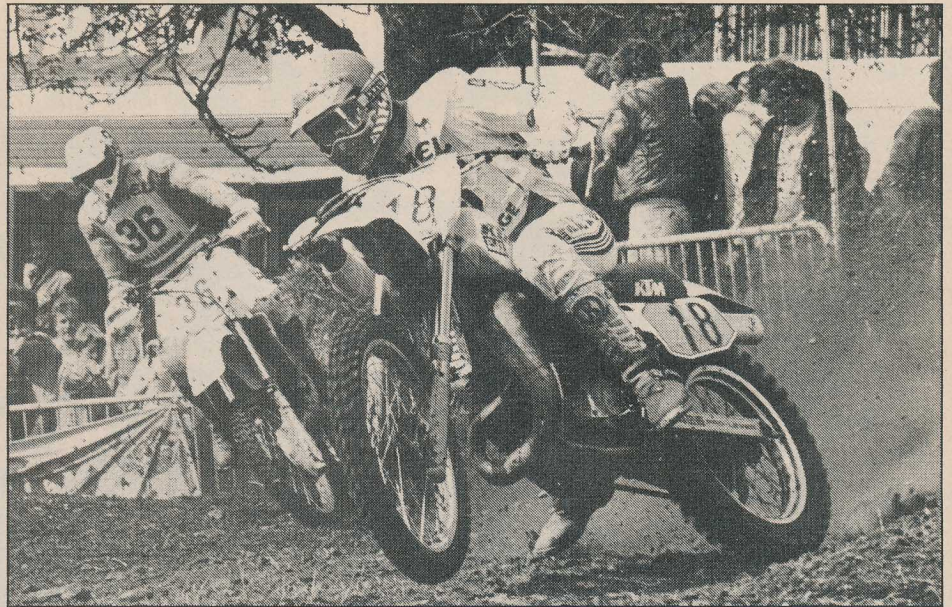
Above: Relaxing at home: Georges Jobe outside his house in Retinne. All the gym equipment – with the exception of the actual weights – was built by his mechanic, Jean-Marie. Incidentally, there's a swimming pool beneath the floor!

Left: The Belgian Frenzy. There's no such thing as the home advantage for a Belgian. The crowds didn't leave Jobe – or his belongings – alone all weekend.

punctures." A solid bank of sharp, splintered slate, the sheer climb out of a tight left-hand turn certainly looked menacing. The rest of the track contained many adverse cambers and swoops and long, swerving declines. Dust might be a problem.

Even during Saturday training the crowds, unruly as usual in Belgium, swarmed everywhere through the pits. Jobe, emerging briefly from his huge awning, shook his head. "Too many people," he muttered darkly. "You need a map to find your van," added his exasperated mechanic, Jean-Marie.

Malherbe seemed unusually nervous, falling three times and collecting yards of course marking from unscheduled excursions. Team-mate Thorpe was



Kurt Nicoll enjoyed the Belgian GP; his best results all year although he eventually lost this scrap to KTM team-mate Jaak van Velthoven (36).

surprised. "Did you see me run over Andre? At the top of the steep drop I went to square it inside him and he fell. I couldn't avoid going over him and he was trapped under my bike.

"Second session Andre fell again at the bottom of the hill and I only just missed him. Later on he seemed to sit back suddenly on his bike, lose his balance and swerve through the ropes, just like a novice!"

Thorpe also completed several fast laps in convoy with KTM's Kurt Nicoll. "He always underestimates himself," insists Thorpe. "Saying he can only go that fast for a short time. I think he should be able to do it for a full race now."

Kurt's response was typical. "I told Thorpey he was holding me back, sucking me in. Always getting in my way, that boy." But the point had been taken. "We're aiming for fifth place tomorrow..."

Nicoll also seriously assaulted juryman Albert Carter at the trackside, the KTM finding so much grip that it reared violently and dug a huge trench. "You're loading up now then, Bill?" asked mischievous Mr Carter of Kurt's customarily joyful spannerman Bill Aldridge. "You've heard that Kurt's been banned for filling me in..."

The teenager reacted swiftly. Firecrackers began exploding round the adjacent camps of Carlqvist and Willie Simpson. Father Dave frantically tried to stamp out the smouldering burn marks on Willie's tent. Who set them off? Kurt grinned. "Dunno who let them off. I only bought 'em." Attacks continued throughout the weekend, one scattering Carlqvist, Leif Persson and Jean-Jacques Bruno as it exploded at Carla's heels. Georges had chosen a good weekend to stay at home...

"It's a nice track but they've made it very one line through all these swerves," Carla said. "It is good fun to ride on your own against the clock. The dust will be bad unless they water well tonight."

Carter assured the British contingent the parched track would be watered. Obviously dictionary definitions of this verb vary radically from language to language. Come sunset, as Carla and Persson walked round, two inadequate bowsers had lightly sprinkled about 200 yards of track. Carla snarled his disapproval. Dust was to be a problem on race day.

During timed training Malherbe would further reams of Camel tape round his rear hub as he forced through 19 unavailing laps. "That was a complete moto he ran," gasped disbelieving Team Green manager Alec Wright.

The gathering hordes of spectators were already criss-crossing the track at will. Police with muzzled alsatian dogs and CS gas canisters seemed to concentrate their bludgeoning attentions entirely on luckless passholders. Wright himself missed the first half of race one, confined under police supervision. Meanwhile busy old grans, fat cigar-smoking ruins and skinny little kids roamed the track at random. "There's a line of people, a line of deckchairs and then the trackside tape," observed Alec wryly.

And his No 1 was hating every minute. Whoever claims the home territory is always an advantage has never endured partisan Belgian spectators in a frenzy. "Super Jobe, Super Jobe," howled the commentator. But it took Georges half the first race to pass Nicoll, Michael Heutz and Perry Leask, by which time Malherbe, Thorpe and Vromans were long gone.

"Not so good," said a despondent Jobe. "Someone stole my gloves just before the race. I go to start the bike and go to line and they've gone. Jean-Marie had to run back for a new pair. It made me nervous and I missed the start and had to come back through the dust. The track is only one line so I lost much time passing second class riders and it was too late."



Nicoll was a lot happier. He'd led the opening four laps and hung in to secure that promised fifth spot.

A better start set up a tense second moto, transformed suddenly just after half distance by a lethal deluge. Thorpe, clouting his foot painfully against a trackside post, welcomed the rain as it slowed the pace drastically. But his rivals were also in trouble...

"I bent my gearshift lever after I passed Georges," explained Malherbe. "It was so dangerous in the wet stuck in second gear. He and Thorpe were faster on the straights and I caught them through the turns, but eventually I had to let them go."

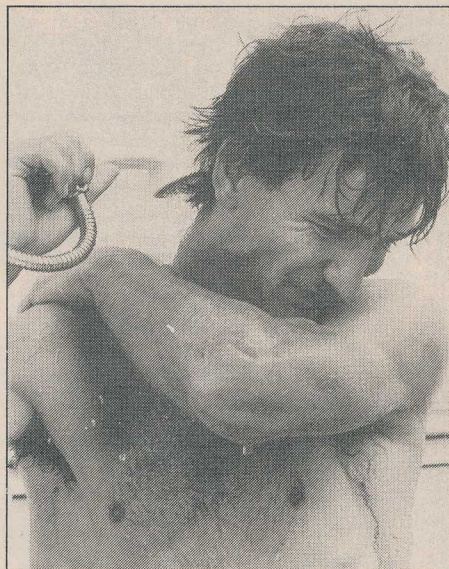
Jobe's attack had also been blunted. "I got a better start and was riding well. I came back on David fast and tried to pass him. Andre was behind me, I made a mistake and he passed. I passed him back, then I got a front wheel puncture. I still tried to pass David but it was too one line and so slippery everywhere. There was no way with a flat tyre!"

Andre had crept two vital points further ahead. Georges shook his head. "I fight very hard today. But for me I like better to be alone, in the USA or Canada, where no-one is around. So many people here, so many questions being asked and always the same questions. Sometimes there are so many people hanging over the tapes that I cannot see my line."

"When I came on Wednesday with Malherbe we said they have to put down water. They say 'yes'. We came back Thursday. No water. They don't care. Organisation is very bad in Belgium.

Above: "Hey, man." American Phil Larson wonders why his Honda lacks drive. Perry Leask knows but he's not saying as he comes around the outside.

Below: Washing off the dirt and grime. The expression on Georges Jobe's face tells the story of the Belgian GP - his titles hopes slipped away.



They think they can get away with everything because they have such good riders. And they are quick to make shit for everyone."

(This latter remark was a reference to luckless American duo Phil Larson and Eric Eaton, both points scorers in the first moto, who were not allowed to start race two because they were five minutes

late reaching the parc germe).

"Andre was lucky to have good starts. It was important with the track so easy and one line. I much prefer Hawkstone Park. It is very hard and very technical with many lines. You can pass anywhere. Here to pass you must push a guy or ram him. I do not like to do that."

Even now, late in the damp afternoon, hordes of eager kids with shining, expectant faces were pushing and clawing at the only surviving entrance to Jobe's awning. The other zip fastenings were already broken and taped up. "All this has happened today," said Georges, waving a weary arm at the hastily repaired damage. "After the first heat there were maybe 50 people in here. If you say 'get out' they say 'Oh, Jobe, he is bad'. They come for pleasure and want to speak to everyone. But I have a job to do. My job is to race, not to be a clone."

His friend Malherbe, a third world title almost assured, planned a gentle run in to his likely final triumph. "I go home to Monaco. I need to rest and enjoy some sunshine on the beach for a week. Then I will start practising for the last GP."

Meanwhile two saturated, mud-plastered and happy British boys slithered homewards, leaning unsteadily on one another for mutual support. The crisp evening air echoed to their raucous song as, with rather more delight than accuracy, they rang the praises of their motocrossing hero. "WE ALL AGREE... THAT DA-VID THO-ORPE IS MAGIC..."



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