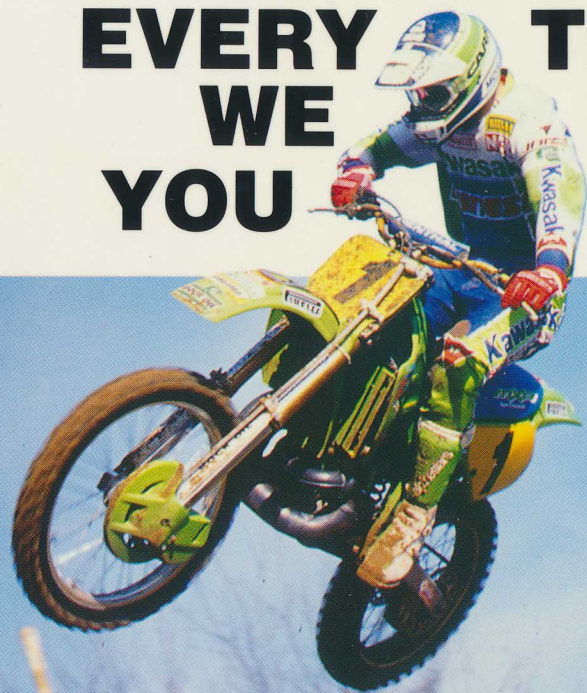




**EVERY TIME
WE RACE
YOU WIN**



Whether it's Team Kawasaki's David Thorpe and his Works SR500 or any production KX mounted Team Green rider out on the track, the result is always a win for you. The reason is simple. All the expertise and development that we gain from racing at EVERY level worldwide – from 500 Grand Prix to Schoolboy class events – is used to improve the machines that you buy and race yourself.

Team Green, racing to win



The products and services supplied by Team Green sponsors are used by Team Green Racing during competition. Kawasaki Motors (UK) Ltd can make no warranty as to their suitability or safety.

THE FARLEIGH CASTLE STORY



1938 — 1968 — 1990



**MOTO-CROSS & GRASS TRACK
MOTOR CYCLE RACING**

Southern FORMES

MANUFACTURERS OF CUTTING & CREASING FORMES

Thanks to Farleigh Castle
for all the
GREAT
times.

Unit 29 Wessex Trade Centre
Ringwood Road, Poole
Dorset BH12 3PF
Telephone: Parkstone (0272) 732627

Which colour printer would you rather talk to?

A printer who provides a wide range of work - from leaflets and brochures to fine art prints and calendars?

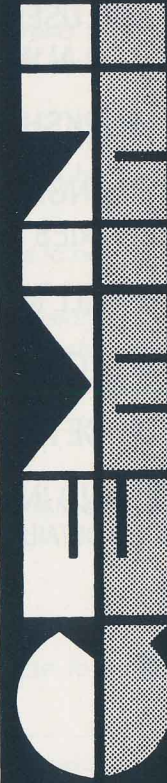
A printer who takes a great pride in personal service?

A printer who understands your requirements and talks them through in detail before work begins?

A printer who can provide a full range of additional services at competitive prices?

Answer - You need to talk to Gemini Graphics & Print . . . before you put it down on paper!

For more details contact Tony Usher on Bristol (0272) 556659



**GRAPHICS
& PRINT LTD**

DESIGN, ARTWORK, PHOTOGRAPHY, COLOUR SEPARATIONS, TYPESETTING, FINISHING

LITHOGRAPHIC COLOUR PRINTING SPECIALISTS

10-16 YORK STREET BRISTOL 556659
ST WERBURGH

SOVEREIGN MOTORCYCLES

42 CATHERINE STREET
FROME - SOMERSET
BA11 1DB

KAWASAKI

YAMAHA

ENFIELD

**EVERYTHING FOR THE MOTORCYCLIST FROM A
SPARK PLUG TO A SUPER BIKE**

ROAD and MOTO X SPECIALISTS

- NEW AND USED MACHINES
OVER 100 ALWAYS IN STOCK
- FULL WORKSHOP FACILITIES
- LARGE RANGE OF HELMETS, CLOTHING AND
ACCESSORIES – ALL LEADING BRANDS
- PARTS – ALL MAKES AND MODELS SUPPLIED
- MOTORCYCLE TYRE SPECIALISTS
- INSURANCE REPAIRS & ESTIMATES
- CREDIT AND INSURANCE FACILITIES
(WRITTEN DETAILS ON REQUEST)

**FOR ALL
YOUR NEEDS**

(0373) 72598

THE FARLEIGH CASTLE STORY

1938 – 1968 – 1990

In 1968 Cyril May produced the FARLEIGH CASTLE STORY. This book covered the years from 1938 to 1968 and proved to be a very popular collectors item.

Unfortunately Cyril May is no longer with us, and, as it has been decided to bring the book up-to-date, we have produced the original book exactly as it was originally printed. This represents the first section of the new book.

We are indebted to Mrs May who has agreed to us reproducing her late husbands book, and hope she will be pleased to read the story now extended to 1990.

Our thanks also go out to all those people too numerous to mention who have sponsored the production of this book; also the photographers without whose input the book would lack in pictorial content.

As you read the story you will see that there is to be no Grand Prix at Farleigh Castle in 1991, this is a disappointment, but we are confident that this will not be a permanent decision. Apart from this, the History that made Farleigh what it was, will ensure that it bounces back, and hopefully the next printing of the Farleigh Castle Story will take us to the year 2000 and beyond.

Long may Farleigh Castle reign as one of the World's Premier Moto Cross Circuits.

We wish to express our sincere thanks to the following people without whose help this book would not have been published.

MRS CONNIE MAY
RALPH MERRETT
ALEC WRIGHT

NICK NICHOLLS and the many people too numerous to mention we extend our gratitude.

Designed, printed and produced by:-

Gemini Graphics & Print Limited

10-16 York Street, St Werburghs, Bristol BS2 9XR, England. Telephone: (0272) 556659

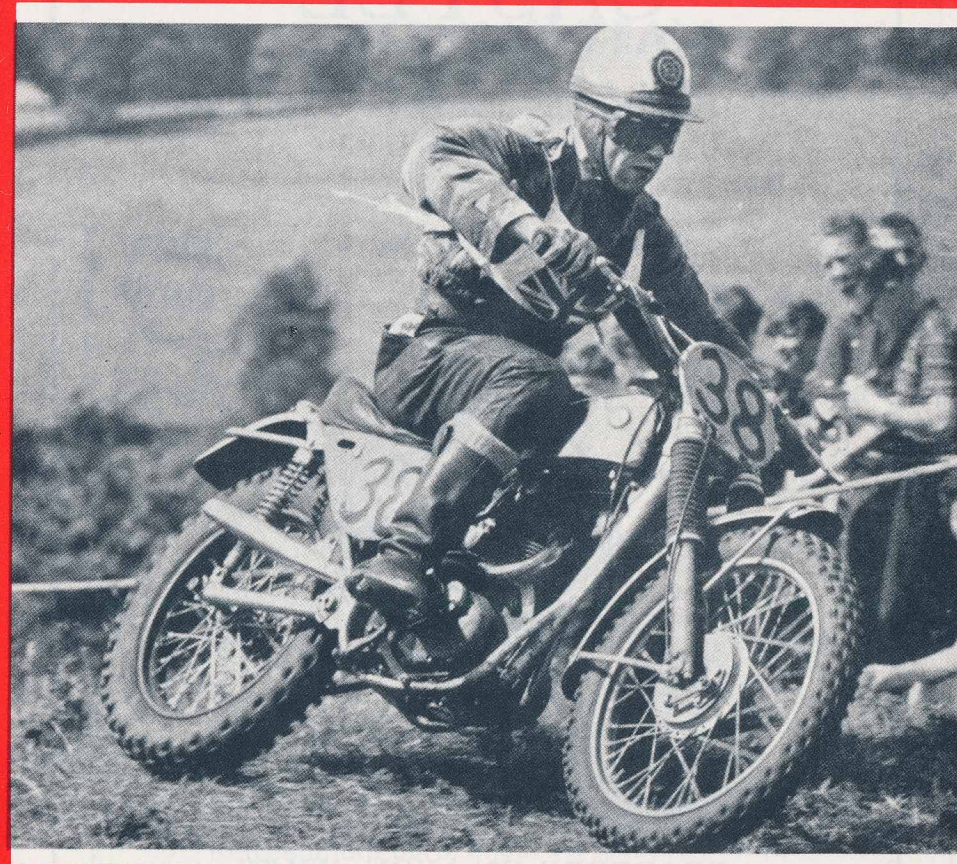


Messrs. Greenhill Brothers - 1936.



Miss Cartwright present owner of the circuit - under a different kind of horsepower.

THE FARLEIGH CASTLE STORY



MOTO-CROSS AND GRASS-TRACK

• A CYRIL MAY PUBLICATION

3/-

1938 — — 1968

FARLEIGH CASTLE

HOME OF THE BEST MOTOR CYCLE SPORT
IN THE COUNTRY

* * *

Organised by



For further details write:

Hon. Sec. R. F. JAMES,

27 DANE RISE, WINSLEY,
BRADFORD-ON-AVON, WILTS

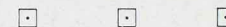
Telephone Limpley Stoke 3158

ABBEY STADIUM

BLUNSDON - NEAR SWINDON

The Home of the
SWINDON ROBINS
SPEEDWAY TEAM

Since 1949



Situated approximately three miles from
the centre of Swindon on the Cirencester
approach road

Racing most every Saturday evening
at 7.30 p.m.

(Stock car racing takes place when the Robins
ride away)

Fully Licensed Luxury Grandstand
Refreshment bars, ensure a pleasant evening

The Farleigh Castle Story

By Cyril May

FARLEIGH CASTLE. What magic in the very name! No, not the old Castle ruins, but Farleigh Castle's racing circuits, which have always captured the imagination of the public as no other track.

From whatever point of view you think of Farleigh it is unique in many ways, abounding in glorious tradition and legend. Through the years the racing "Knights" have come and gone, leaving behind another page for Farleigh's history book.

Other tracks have enjoyed fame for a short while, glowed brightly and then faded. But since that day, back in the late 'thirties, when the idea of developing it into a great centre of sport, first possessed the West Wilts. Motor Club, it has gone steadily ahead with the simple principle that, by providing the very best, Farleigh would become more and more attractive to a greater and greater number of people. Just to glance through its distinguished list of riders is to realise what a glittering cavalcade of visitors it has attracted during its racing life.

To list even its major races would far exceed the scope of these pages. Therefore one has to be content with a fair study.

Apart from one or two events, the Club responsible for Farleigh's race meetings has always been the West Wilts. In 1967 it enjoyed its most successful year and today, with a membership of over 300, enthusiasm runs at its highest-ever pitch.

But to get at the origin of the Club, one has to go very far back; much farther, in fact, than most people realise.

In the early 'thirties, there existed the Devizes, Trowbridge and Melksham motor-cycle Clubs, and Devizes having been formed as early as 1922, took the honour of being the oldest. Early in 1933 these three Clubs amalgamated under a new name of the West Wilts. Motor Club. Surprisingly, the combination did not last very long, and in less than two years it had finished through lack of support. However, it was not long before one or two of the older members attempted to re-start the Club. Consequently, I went along with about half-a-dozen others, to a meeting at the Elm Tree Hotel, in Devizes, on April 25th, 1935. We agreed to revive the old Club and to continue under the same name. From then on the West Wilts. organisation began its long and successful life.

Although the Club was re-established in 1935, three years were to elapse before the Farleigh circuit was open to the public. In the meantime the Club was staging grass-track racing, trials and scrambles, and quite successfully too.

Club member, Ken. Raymond from Trowbridge, was always on the look-out for a super grass circuit, and he found one at Farleigh. It was here that the Greenhill Brothers farmed many acres, just a few miles west of Trowbridge, on the borders of Wiltshire and Somerset. Cecil Greenhill was contacted and being an old motor-cycle enthusiast he was quite agreeable for a field to be used for racing.

Little did those Wiltshire Clubmen realise, when they bargained with Farmer Greenhill, the magnitude of the enterprise they were starting.

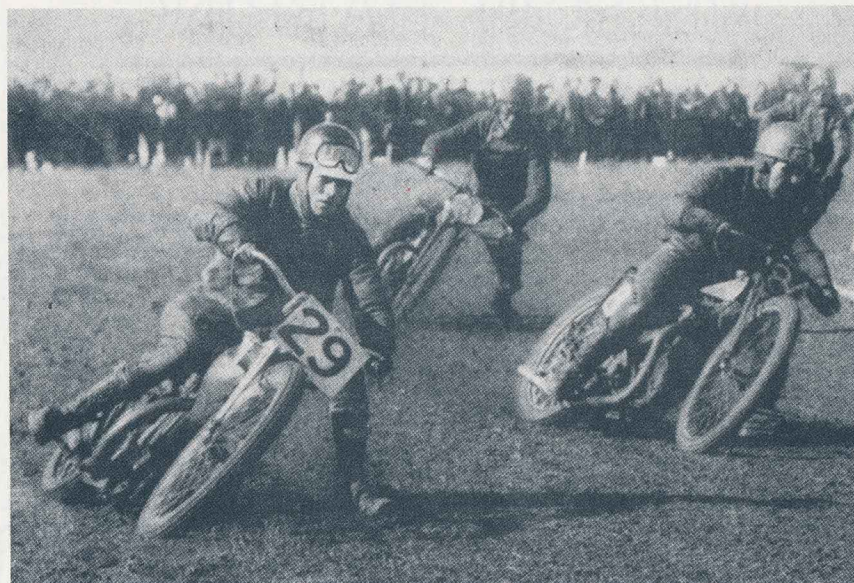
The designing of a track needed an expert, so Mike Erskine, the famous grass-tracker was called in. It was soon that the crackle of an open exhaust from an obviously highly-tuned motor, went echoing through the trees near the Tellisford road. Mike and Nelson Harring were planning the course. Exceptionally smooth, it was a third-of-a-mile and consisted of a downhill bend, a right and left turn on the flat, with



One of Farleigh's fastest fiends! Jack Leonard of Parkstone.

Front Cover:
A fine action study of Jeff Smith on the Farleigh Castle Circuit, 1967, by ex-speedway rider, Cecil Bailey.

FARLEIGH CASTLE SPEEDWAY — JUNE 18th, 1939



A terrific race! Ivan Kessell (29) leads Reg Lambourne (8) and Vic. Warlock (5).

a gradual uphill rise to the finishing straight. The Club decided to spend £100 to make it even better.

Thirty years ago! Among the competitors struggling to get into the limelight at Farleigh's first meeting on Whit-Monday, 1938, were many novices which included W. Kelly of Melksham, the winner of the first-ever race. For a month previous, the gayly coloured posters had blazed, "FARLEIGH CASTLE SPEEDWAY: June 6th. Admission 1/-. Programme 2d."

The inimitable Reg. Wise was announcer and wisecracker-in-chief with Vic. Anstice as timekeeper. Consisting of six main events the programme terminated with a Grand Prix for the six fastest riders and this was won by Roger Wise. Fred. Philpotts came second and Colin Mead third. The track record of 42.4 mph. went to Roy Zeal. There were several falls and two machines were locked together for fifty yards, but with all its incidents the Farleigh track was well and truly off to a good start. And so, as the meeting came to a successful conclusion, the 4,170 paying customers and a swarm of gate-crashers, made their way home after advice by Reg. Wise to be ever so careful of the speed "cops" who lurked in the country lanes.

Nearly every spectator bought a programme and nearly everyone carried it away, a treasured souvenir of Farleigh Castle's first-ever event.

The success of the inaugural meeting — for a success it undoubtedly was — sent entry totals rocketing in the nine remaining pre-war events.

Two words, put into action, gave the Farleigh fans an additional interest. The words were "Supporters Club". It was a unique innovation, quite new to grass-track racing. In essence, like most good ideas, this one was very simple and the Supporters Club came into being. It grew rapidly.

A majestic castle on a red and blue background . . . the flag of Farleigh Castle Speedway. It was seen flying crisply on cars in some of the big cities; on motor-cycles roaring through the towns; flapping challengingly on the handlebars of cycles in the village streets . . . the proud symbol of the Farleigh Castle Supporters' Club.

A point to remember about these early days is that there was no shortage of riders, and any motor-cyclist who owned a "fastish" machine and fancied himself as

NELSON HARRING

OVER 30 YEARS EXPERIENCE

RACING ENGINE

DESIGN — MANUFACTURE — TUNING

“SILVER BIRCHES”,

STAPLES HILL,

FRESHFORD,

BATH, SOM.

A MAN OF POWER

Much has been written about the grass and scramble stars, but all too little about their tuners. That is rather unfair, because the latter play such a vital part in the success of the former. No tuner alone is responsible for any success. Similarly the rider cannot take all the credit. The accolade is jointly, and collectively, to the tuner and rider together.

NELSON HARRING is a tuner of racing engines and his reputation both among racing men and other tuners — the top ones — stands as high as anyone's and higher than most. He is one of the few specialists today who can lay claim to associations with the sport for well over thirty years with National, European and World successes.

Nelson's tuning establishment where the urge for so many ultra-fast machines is produced, is at Freshford, and from the top-most terrace of his residence one can plainly see the Farleigh Castle fields. It was Nelson and his brother Bob, who officiated as machine examiners in Farleigh's pre-war events.

The racing motor has a tremendous task in life. It must start readily, accelerate like a rocket, and be dead reliable. With the present high speed engines, races are virtually won and lost in the workshop. And Nelson's, crammed with various machinery, is always busy, often far into the early hours of many mornings. It is always a place of memories, anticipation and experiment. For he is really a motorcycle “scientist” with his own ideas.

Sincerity, veracity, enormous humility. These virtues are all his. Always shunning the limelight this engineering genius is pretty certain to be able to lift the power curve of any engine, simply by careful tuning. His skill and painstaking attention to tiring detail provide a tremendous fillip to the sport; his successes make opponents ride harder, cleverer, chasing always the elusive honour of defeating his highly-tuned motors.

Essentially an individualist, scramble and grass-track tuning to him is a job that he settles down to in a very conscientious manner and the thought of self-glorification is so very far away.

Thinking out new methods of gaining more power from his already powerful engines is an ever-present thought in his mind. His extremely large clientele comes from all parts of England and Wales. Now a qualified consultant engineer, his business makes deeper and deeper inroads into his time.

Scarcely a star has twinkled in the southern racing firmament that has not owed something to this man's mechanical mind.

Nelson Harring is a man whose knowledge of the racing motor few can surpass . . . the man who gives the novices' engine the same meticulous attention as the stars'. He is, without doubt, . . . “THE HIGH PRIEST OF TUNE”.

a rider, could be sure of having his entry accepted. And what a galaxy of machines there were. Velocettes, Ridges, Douglasses, and A.J.S.'s, to name but a few.

There were no sidecar events at Farleigh's first meeting, but they were introduced in the second and things began to move more briskly. Jack Surtees made his first appearance on a Norton . . . Brian Ducker won the Open event at 36.5 mph. while Tommy Bounds (Norton) took the honours in the handicap race. Colin Mead of Tewkesbury won the “350” Final on his Mead Special at 40.9 mph. and when he retired from the racing game, ten years later, the same machine with the same rider had won 462 grass-track awards! Throughout the afternoon, racing went on with unabated energy and when the final race was over it was not yet six o'clock. But enough had been seen to show that Farleigh Speedway had come to stay.

A record crowd, nearly 5,000, gathered for the Club's third meeting on July 31st. Once again Roy Zeal made the fastest time. The one and only Brands Hatch double star holder, Eric Oliver, made his first appearance at Farleigh and rode solo as well as sidecar! Reg. Stainer discovered that his leathers were only just about decent and contemplated replacing them with a suit containing less ventilators! Ken. Witts on his “old faithful”, a “348” Velocette, had quite a successful afternoon and a report quoted him as “riding as never before”.

THE GRAND FINALE

Except for the Gymkhana on September 25th, the West Wilts. Club finished its racing season with the September 11th meeting and as a conclusion it could aptly be termed as “finishing in a blaze of glory”. Ever aware of the necessity to bring variety into its meetings whenever possible, an inter-track contest created plenty of excitement. Farleigh Castle Speedway versus Wroughton Speedway and the six-man teams were captained by Mike Erskine and Roger Wise respectively. Farleigh won — 30 points to 24.

The Unlimited Solo Handicap was won by the late Arthur Pearce (Velocette) and only the most terrific of efforts by Bob Jones whose “Doggie” appeared to be cornering on its flywheel, gained him second place. Erskine made the fastest time; just under 43 mph. and Mike, the leg trailer really provided the thrills.

The history of Farleigh from that momentous year onwards is almost a history of the success of the West Wilts. Motor Club. And Farleigh went from strength to strength. Improvements were carried out regularly and early in 1939 a new hard road

FARLEIGH CASTLE: THE OLD TRACK — JUNE 5th, 1949



A memorable race: Archie Appleby (Norton) leads Reg. Lewis who is driving his 596 c.c. Velocette, the engine of which was the one and only ever made!



West Wilts. Motor Club members prepare the new circuit!

was constructed from the main road to the course. But the opening meeting on April 30th, was cancelled because of rain.

It was at Farleigh, with its long straights and big bends, that the crowd first saw real broadsiding when Mike Erskine demonstrated just how the corners should be taken. Laying his bike over at what appeared to be impossible angles with the rear wheel slewing crazily round the daring rider roared his way around. It was a performance that thrilled the watchers — 4,000 of them — on Whit-Sunday, and

it gave the other riders an object lesson which they took well to heart. A record entry of 66 was a Centre record too.

So firmly established were these meetings that Burrows R.A.C. Guide to Somerset gave the following lines under Farleigh Hungerford. "Monthly motor-cycle race meetings at the track opposite the Castle ruins. Admission 1/-."

On Whit-Monday, the Farleigh Team consisting of Mike Erskine (Captain), Roy Zeal, Colin Mead, Roger Wise, Reg. Lambourne and Ivan Kessell went to the Cannfield track in Dorset to contest a team event with the Blackmore Vale Club. The latter won by ten points, 23—13. Jack Leonard, skippering the B.V. team twice broke the track record, but the two falls of Zeal and Wise were really the downfall of the Farleigh side.

June 18th, saw the return match at Farleigh Castle and despite heavy storms the team match provided the most exciting racing. The final score: Blackmore Vale 19, Farleigh 17.

By now, Jack Difazio and Stan. Lanfear had gained their Silver Stars at Brands Hatch . . . and their top form still continued.

Farleigh Castle was undoubtedly attracting the aces of the game. It was the home of real grass-track racing, the place where the cream of the southern stars could be seen at their best. But the Club was not resting on its laurels and a Grand Championship Meeting, open to all England — the first of its kind — was arranged for July 9th. Roger Wise (Enfield) won the "350" Championship at 41.06 mph, followed by Colin Mead and Wilf. Sleightholme. Erskine (500 JAP) took the "500" Championship honours followed by Difazio and Lanfear, while Eric Oliver (Norton) was successful in the Sidecar Championship.

The final event of the day, the Individual Open Championship, really brought the crowd to its feet. Vic. Warlock tore round the track with a grin on his face, a crash helmet at an unusual angle, and a look on his face that could have been translated into, "Catch me if you can, you hounds!" Erskine too was really "motoring" in second berth followed by Jack Difazio. But nobody could catch anybody! Warlock won in the fastest time of 42.26 mph. It was a great race and Victor certainly deserved the wonderful ovation he received. But previously, and surprisingly too, Warlock had won the Experts barred event. Was Vic. really a novice?!

Man to man. The sight of two equally matched riders racing against each other for the honour of a match race victory was always exciting. And the eagerly awaited Challenge Race between Vic. Warlock and Mike Erskine was the highlight at Farleigh

on July 30th. It more than justified the interest it aroused. Even starting-marshal Jim Dyke had sported a new pair of brilliantly white overalls especially for the occasion! Comprising of three races, the first looked a certain victory for Warlock, until Erskine with a terrific burst of speed, got ahead and ripped down the straight to finish in a time which lowered the track record. The second race was a runaway win for Vic. The third was Mike's which gave him a 2—1 victory but it was rather spoiled by the fact that Warlock's motor was "missing" badly. Wilf Sleightholme won the "350" Final; easily the day's best race as well as a personal triumph for Erskine who established a new record of 43.48 mph.

When World War Two broke out, the Farleigh circuit was barely one-and-a-half years old, but, advertised as "the finest track in the west", it had certainly lived up to its title.

Farleigh's entry list of the late 'thirties abounded in riders who had already hit, or were shaping up for, world fame as speedmen. A random dip into the 1938 programme, for instance, brings up Eric Oliver, the man who was destined to become World Sidecar Champion four times.

Despite prevailing circumstances and the fact that the Club had cancelled its September meeting in 1939 it decided to go ahead with its fixture in May of the following year, and a crowd of 4,000 witnessed some superb racing mainly between Wise, Mead, Warlock, Lanfear and Sleightholme. And so, these happy days, at last came to an end. Riders, mechanics, Club members and supporters mobilised for the war effort.

Those who remember the pre-war Farleigh meetings must by now be middle aged or even older, but their recollections will assuredly be both happy and vivid.



Colin Mead — 462 grass-track awards!

FARLEIGH'S WESSEX NATIONAL SCRAMBLE, 1947

Scrambling was originally introduced to Farleigh in 1947 when, at the end of January the West Wilts. Club organised the Wessex National event. Two thousand people braved the bitterly cold weather to watch Jack Stocker (Ariel) win both



Just one of Farleigh's hazards — Devil's Dyke.

the Junior and Senior races, run over six and twelve laps respectively, of a tough two-mile course which included many hazards. And Farleigh had all of them! Swamps, brooks, deep ditches, watersplashes, narrow ledges of 1 in 10 gradients and hills in plenty. Ray Scovell ("348" B.S.A.) came second in the Senior race and won the only First Class award. He came back to Farleigh later in the year, but this time not as a scramble ace, but as a grass-tracker! George Welch of Bath rode a 24-year-old A.J.S. in the Junior event!

With hostilities over, the sport came back with a bang in 1946. Entertainment starved, released from the fears and worries of war, the people flocked in their thousands to see grass-track racing once again. Attendances reached record proportions. The great pulse of the crowds beat faster as they heard the wild music of impatient motors, whose song had been stifled for so long. Racing was back with a vengeance! But previous to this the West Wilts. Club had to be re-started. Ken Witts, Jim Dyke and myself were anxious to get the body going again. We contacted Farleigh's racing Secretary, "Tubby" Raymond and after a meeting at the Club's old H.Q. at the Crown Hotel, Devizes, in less than no time we were all exploring the Farleigh acres once more, in preparation for the first post-war meeting. It was now to be known as The Farleigh Castle Grass Track. The former title of Speedway had to be dropped owing to a new A.-C.U. rule. But in any case it had never been a speedway in the accepted sense of the word. Perhaps a grass speedway!

A different field, one of 35 acres was now available at Farleigh; a hillside venue alongside the quiet waters of the River Frome with its old double bridge; its foaming weir; its delightful bathing stretch and, perched high above, the Castle ruins overlooking it all. What a picturesque setting for a race meeting. It appealed immediately to the inspecting contingent, as the most ideal of any of Farleigh's 170 acres. Wilf. Sleightholme exclaimed: "This will make a super circuit, probably the finest in England." And how right he was.

So, in preference to the grand old circuit over the hill, a completely new track was planned. The immediate issue was to get the course prepared; it was to be a large one with a down-hill finishing straight! At least for the solos. A high bank ran through the middle of the field and obstructed the top end of the track. With enthusiastic energy, several tons of earth were removed by Club members. Meanwhile the track was rolled and rolled. Then came Farleigh's Grand Opening Meeting on April 28th, 1946, and everyone was glowingly optimistic. Long before the meeting was scheduled to start, the ground was packed with enthusiasts from all parts of the country. But it was a day for umbrellas; it rained and rained. Out of an entry of 35 there were only four sidecars and the scarcity of these continued for several years. A host of new names appeared — Bill Hole, Eric Salmon, Gilbert Ross, "Bonny" Good, Eric Evans, and "Dink" Philpotts, to name but a few. New sidecar contestants were Jack Varlow and George Griffin.

FARLEIGH CASTLE'S TEAM, 1946



THE SIXTY-THRILL-A-MINUTE MEN!
Vic. Warlock (captain), Graham Parry, Jack Leonard, Stan Lanfear and Bob Jones.

Riding, as a novice on an all-red model, he gained a heat win. Obviously this 24-year-old boy had talent; equally obvious he was not afraid of high speed. I am referring, of course, to Lew Coffin, the same Lew who was destined to beat the best; to reach the highest of heights in the grass-track world and one who today, incredibly though it seems, is still bringing the crowds to their feet. Lew is the only remaining one, of that great band of original post-war Farleigh riders, who is still racing today . . . and remarkably successful too!

But let it be remembered that Farleigh's new half-mile circuit was not an easy one to ride. Far from it. It demanded everything of a rider; determination, daring and stamina. It was a tough track that wrecked many a motor; but at the same time it amply displayed the wonderful physical courage

of the men whose deeds have made the material for this racing history of Farleigh Castle.

To the spectator, for sheer heart-in-the-mouth thrills, Farleigh reigned supreme. But to the rider, when the course came inside the "Farleigh Tree" it was sometimes a menace and many preferred the old circuit which was shorter and smoother.

The return of such gallant riders as Vic. Warlock, Bob Jones, Eric Davis, Roy Zeal, Charlie Hayden, Jack Difazio, Stan. Lanfear, Roger Wise, Reg. Lambourne, Wilf. Sleightholme, and the sidecar drivers; Eric Oliver, Tommy Bounds, John Browne and Jack Surtees gave the sport a pre-war flavour which was sweetened by scores of new faces, both in riding and spectating capacities. Otherwise, it was the same old hustle and bustle, characteristic of grass-track racing at the start of a new season. There were other riders too: Jack Leonard, Colin Mead, Dick Reynolds, and the "chariot" men, Don Slate and George Taylor. The scene glistened with stars both potential and established. Speaking as one who did not miss a meeting that year, I retain many outstanding impressions of the 1946 season.

Roger Wise was the most successful man at the first meeting and in spite of a muddy track he gained three final wins and the fastest time. His signature was therefore the first to be inscribed on the new FARLEIGH CASTLE PLATE, a magnificent silver salver given to the Club by its President, the late Mr. C. Skinn. It was a perpetual "trophy" to be awarded to the rider clocking the fastest time at each meeting.

Attracted by the glamour of Farleigh, Bob Foster, the famous T.T. rider, made his one and only appearance in May. With his immaculate "600" Levis, the most powerful solo machine that ever raced there, he gave a polished exhibition of "feet-up" riding.

As the Club photographer in those days I saw Farleigh's racing from close quarters and from, perhaps, a privileged, but sometimes dangerous, viewpoint.

This second meeting was the most fantastic I have ever seen. Not only at Farleigh but anywhere else. Apart from the culminating incident when J. Squire's machine leapt the safety rope, flat-out, it was an afternoon tightly packed with excitement and nerve-tingling thrills for 8,000 fans. It was a full programme which provided a racing feast, sufficient in quantity to satisfy the most hungry enthusiast. And Farleigh set new standards of racing.

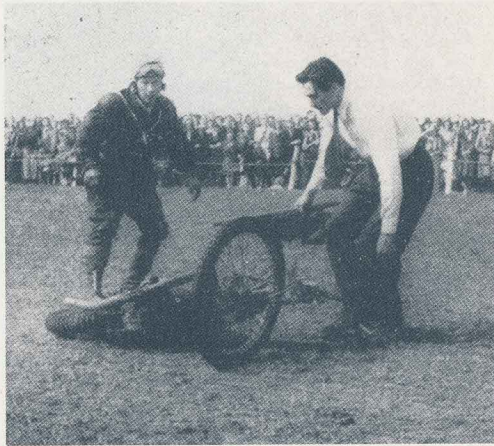
The cry had periodically gone up: "How much faster can they go?" They went faster on May 12th, and the track record soared to more amazing heights in race after race. Roger Wise started the merry game . . . then it stood still for a while so we were only too ready to have our palates tickled for more. Wilf. Sleightholme on his "350" pushed the figure to 62.9 mph, to give us an appetite for more. Stan. Lanfear didn't give us a big slice, just a fifth-of-a-second off Wilf's time at a 63 mph. average. Then, Vic. Warlock went even faster; four laps in 1 minute 53½ seconds. That was a thrill, but it wasn't good enough for the heroic veteran. He went out again and knocked more than three complete seconds off his own time. Those who like figures may like to know that Vic. had average a fantastic 65.1 mph! Needless to say . . . it remained unbeaten.

The Open Unlimited event was a costly one for Lew Coffin. Flashing past the winning post after a tremendous last-lap effort his cylinder burst with a terrific bang; the con-rod snapped, and the piston broke up in one big shower of hot metal! Many



Roger Wise: first-ever winner of the famous Farleigh Castle Silver Plate.

FARLEIGH'S PRE-WAR TRACK MAY 15th, 1949



Racing Secretary, Gilbert Ross, lends a helping hand to Lew Coffin who has just slid to earth. Note part of the fantastic crowd — 9,940!

hearts went out to the little chap with the lock of wavy hair who had saved so very hard to buy that treasured machine.

The crowd was fully aware that some of Farleigh's toughest and greatest battles were being fought . . . Sleightholme v. Wise . . . Sleightholme v. Jones . . . Sleightholme v. Warlock. And the incidents still continued, Vic. Warlock's tyre suddenly bursts as he surged into the lead in the Unlimited Open event. A flying but wobbling "500" JAP was brought to a successful halt by the steel wrists of the amazing Bristolian. Win or burst was certainly one of his mottos!

The FARLEIGH GRAND PRIX will long live in the memories of those who were there. Stan. Lanfear, flat-out, and obviously intent on winning, went off the course on lap one and hit the bank adjoining the cutting. Machine and rider were catapulted fifteen feet into the air but Stanley slumped over his "500" Rudge and Chief track marshal, Jim Dyke, ran over and dragged him to a standstill! And Lanfear had made, by mistake, the longest of long jumps and the highest of high jumps! Meanwhile in spite of all the drama Wilf. Sleightholme, Vic. Warlock and Graham Parry were having, on the sun-baked circuit, the tussle of their lives. It lasted for just two laps. Wilf. leads at the cutting by a mere yard . . . it's a "350" versus a "500" . . . that twist-grip of Warlock's comes right against the stop . . . now it's 70 mph. and he takes the lead, but only just. The crowd is yelling . . . in a second they are gasping . . . poor Victor hits the ground with a sickening thud. His machine, high in the air with a buckled front wheel, comes down nearly on top of him, and the rest of the pack screams by, missing only, by skilful efforts, a prostrate man and machine. The Farleigh idol lays on the track completely unconscious . . . the first-aid men remove him into their tent . . . and Sleightholme speeds on to win Farleigh's most fantastic race. Graham Parry comes second and Jack Difazio third. Miraculously Vic. Warlock is uninjured in that bizarre crash. A little while later as he walks, unaided, back to the pits, but still looking a little dazed, he is given a tremendous reception.

Top man of the day turned out to be Wilfred Sleightholme. He had won three main events and had beaten a host of five-hundreds with his "350" Rudge. And so concluded Farleigh's greatest-ever day . . . a day of drama . . . a day of thrills and spills, and above all . . . a day to remember.

There was no doubt that the Farleigh stars seemed to have a certain character about them. They created atmosphere; they made sure the public knew they were top men in a dangerous sport; they were clever and their names had a personality ring around them. These heroic men with an insatiable thirst for speed were certainly to be marvelled at.

By this time, tracks were being opened throughout the Centre. The old enthusiasm was spreading rapidly and the sport's following was growing faster and more furiously.

I keenly followed the rise of Farleigh Castle Grass-Track with some excitement and certainly with never-failing astonishment. Speeds continued to rise and crowds continued to grow.

Whit-Sunday; the day of the Grand Victory Meeting when Charlie Hayden won the Farleigh Grand Prix. Then came the August 4th meeting with the track a little

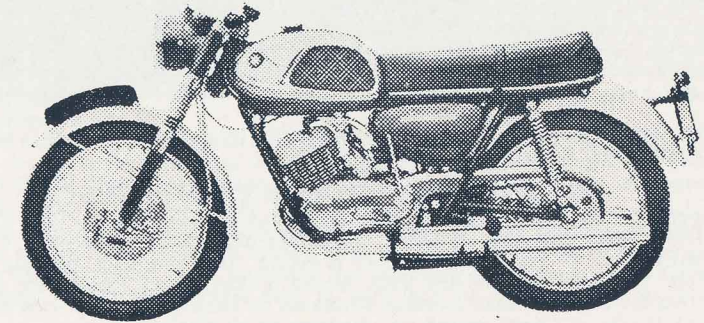
**We were riding motorcycles at the first meeting
at Farleigh Castle and are still doing so**

Times have changed and so have we

**B.S.A.
TRIUMPH
VESPA**

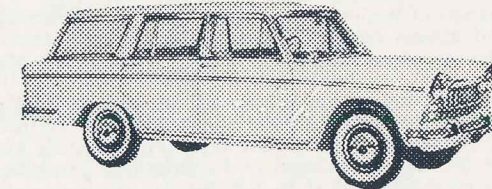
**RELIANT
LAMBRETTA**

**HONDA
SUZUKI
SCAMP**



**For the finest range of
Motor-Cycles, Scooters, Three-Wheelers,
and Fiat cars in Wiltshire**

FIAT



FIAT

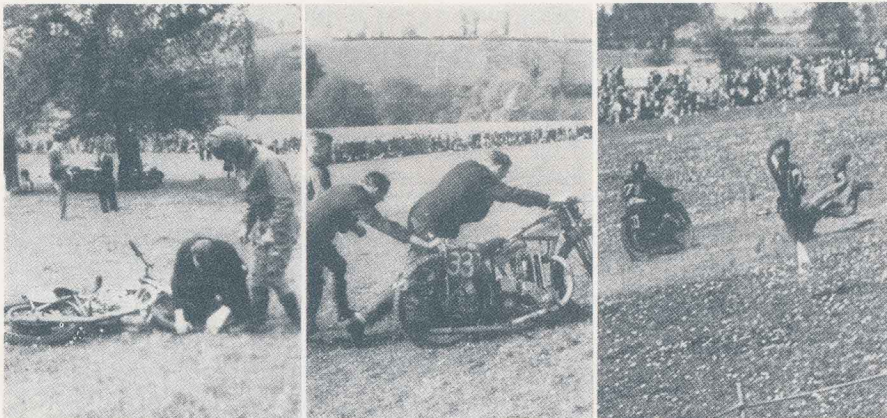
ROSS AND HAINES LTD.

OF

CHIPPENHAM

Telephone 2215

For ever Warlock!



Front tyre off!

Back tyre off!

Falling off!

smaller; now 4/10th of a mile. Chief interest lay in a match between Farleigh and Bournemouth and the latter won by two points.

THE WESSEX GRASS-TRACK CHAMPIONSHIP

Appropriately enough, the Farleigh track was selected for the 1946 Championships. It was really one great all-taking, all-roaring, all-winning masterpiece. Conditions were really ideal for fast racing. Frames breaking, forks snapping, bucking machines — all on "full bore" — and the track record broken twice! These were just a few ingredients for the September meeting, witnessed by Farleigh's biggest-ever grass-track crowd of 10,000. A Centre record too. Perhaps an all England one.

A feature of the racing was the almost complete absence of "rabbits". At least two-thirds of the field used "dirt" J.A.P.'s and in race after race the result was in doubt right up to the last few yards. Stan. Lanfear won the Unlimited Championship, Jack Leonard (Velocette) the "350" title and John Browne (Cotton-JAP) the Sidecar title.

A collection was made for one of Farleigh's favourites, Bingley Cree, who was temporarily out of racing with a broken leg. Crash-helmets full of money were emptied into a big milk bucket which was found to contain over £138!

The list of names of men who had made Farleigh their springboard to speedway-racing fame, read almost like a T.T. programme. Billy Hole, Dick Bradley, Eric Salmon, Frank Evans, Alan Chambers, Mike Beddoe, Jack Mountford, and many others.

It was in 1947 that the people in the northern area of Devizes, heard the revving screams of what some took to be a Scott machine. But on further investigation it was found to be Ted Summers — on Roundway Hill — testing his racing motor-boat-engined sidecar outfit. The fascination of Farleigh had attracted him and so a weird and wonderful combination, called an S.F. Special, made its debut at Farleigh's first meeting in 1947. Powered by a 4-cylinder two stroke, water cooled motor-boat engine it had a rotary induction valve and a flywheel magneto. But Ted's new machine only completed one lap . . . so experiments still continued. In the end the model had some success.

To have known Ted Summers as I did, was to have caught a glimpse of one of those rugged Elizabethan characters, whose endless search for something different made him a remarkable Clubman.

Jovial, wisecracker Ted, the man with the broadest grin, could be described as more of a comedian, rather than a serious grass-tracker. Eventually his efforts bore fruit and he later won the Wessex Sidecar Championship but not with the motor-boat engined model.

Chasing Eric Oliver at one meeting, Ted's outfit capsized in a terrific cloud of dust. His wife's first enquiry at the First-Aid tent: "How's the bike?!"



Being carried off!

The Club introduced a new competition in 1947. Based on points scored throughout the season in the Unlimited event; top prize was a Silver Trophy and £50; second, £25; third, £10. Ever-popular, and a gentleman of the track, "Dink" Philpotts became the first winner after a six-round contest.

The July meeting saw a day of almost tropical heat and the Trowbridge Fire Brigade was called to Farleigh to deal with the dust menace, much to the annoyance of Jack Surtees. Young John was there too, watching the exploits of his father on the big Vincent-H.R.D. Who would have thought that the smiling lad in the blue school

And now the trials riders invade Farleigh Castle. Some observed sections at Farleigh were included in the National Kickham Trial and many famous trials riders, including Geoff Duke bounced their way up the many terraces, which originally formed the grandstand of the natural arena, in which the Knights in armour held their jousting contests . . . several centuries ago.

My readers who were early supporters of Farleigh will not need reminding of the fun we had, especially when Gilbert Ross and Graham Parry completely fooled the crowd in their novel and I must add, colourful, "strip-tease" motorcycle act! Of the huge "gates" that cheered appreciation when the sidecar stars all roared into action; of the antics the riders got up to in an effort to ride different machines in the same event; of the solo men who gave us sixty-thrills-a-minute especially on that last down-hill swoop. Yes, they were great days. And grass-track's boom still continued.

POOLE SPEEDWAY

THE STADIUM, WIMBORNE ROAD

Phone: Poole 3020

Follow the "Pirates" in 1968
every Wednesday at 7.45 p.m.

A GREAT TEAM



Odd Fossengen — Geoff Mudge — Bill Andrews
Pete Smith — Tim Bungay — Bruce Cribb — Ted Laessing



A MAGNIFICENT STADIUM

THE BEST OF THE SPORT

A MILLION THRILLS

IN THE SUPER BRITISH LEAGUE

cap was destined to become the first and only World Champion on two and four wheels!

Wilf. Sleightholme, as everyone knew, was wringing a fantastic number of revs. from his "350" highly-tuned Rudge. The number kept rising . . . it was beating some of the five-hundreds . . . something had to happen. Wilf. must have known he had to give me a picture that day; his engine just blew to pieces!

A 5,000 crowd saw a newcomer to Farleigh on August 3rd. Ray Scovell won the "350" Final on his B.S.A. Later at the final meeting, this time before 9,000, he caused quite a sensation with his "500" model.

Ralph Merrett (Velocette), undoubtedly one of Farleigh's greatest triers and winner of the Novice Trophy the year before, won the "350" Open event. The meeting's profit of £216 was divided between the British Legion branches of Devizes, Trowbridge, Melksham and Bradford-on-Avon.

Despite hazards inseparable from the sport, remarkable few fatal accidents have occurred in its history. But, sad to say, a true Farleigh favourite, Eric Evans, died from injuries received in a spill at Frome. And so the profits of the Grand Finale Meeting amounting to £651 was handed over to Mrs. Evans and her two children with the assurance that the name of Eric Evans would never be forgotten in the grass-track world.

After the West Wilts. Club had made its customary donations to the local V.A.D. and other similar organisations, the Farleigh Castle Grass-Track had contributed over £1,000 to charities during 1947. Truly a wonderful effort of which the Club was justifiably proud.

Farleigh's 35-year-old-star, Tommy Crutcher was missing from the 1948 line-up. He died as the result of a road accident in the previous December.

FIRST MEETING. 1948

It was perfect weather and Dick Bradley gained the Farleigh Plate for the first time. Two riders collided in one race and crashed into the trip fence. But one of the supporting posts snapped and flew through the air some fifty feet, to "crack" a spectator sitting on the top of his car. The net result? The Club received an account for a new set of false teeth!

For this meeting an "S" bend was included in the track, but it produced poor racing and was abolished in the end.

The famous team of Sidcup Club riders came to Farleigh's second meeting for a Challenge Match. It won, 36—24. The outstanding differences in style and machines presented plenty of variety and Wally Lock and Co., demonstrated the "feet-on-the-rests" technique of riding Farleigh — and quite successfully too!

It was left to the Wessex ace, Graham Parry, to gain the famous Farleigh Plate for the fifth time. A record, destined to stand for ever.

Riders at Farleigh, were not backward in risking their limbs in an effort to win. Many a man had crashed, been injured and insisted on riding again. I remember a notable display of sheer pluck at the Club's Final meeting of 1948. Parry came off near the "Farleigh Tree", was hurled into the air and landed 46 yards further down the course. After being "patched-up" Graham resumed racing in spite of a severely strained back and a badly sprained ankle. Ten sidecars made



Vic. Warlock.



"Bonny" Good.



Wally Lock.



Jack Surtees.



The Victors: Bryan Goss (42), the late Jerry Scott (39), Don Rickman (38), Arthur Lambert (Team Manager), Ivor England (41), and Derek Rickman (40).

a record number, and Frank Sparkes who overturned was not alone in his escapade.

For Farleigh, 1949 was the most successful of all grass-track years and we were favoured with one of the finest summers in living memory. The Club's Saturday evening event in August had to be cancelled due to the hard nature of the track. The three previous meetings had been held on the old, pre-war kidney-shaped track and the 520-yard circuit came back with a bang! The gate marshals dealt with a near-on 10,000 crowd for the first meeting on May 15th. The track was marked by lengths of firemen's hose, painted white and filled with sand. A fine idea. It was another spectacular record of 76 entries; 14 sidecars too. Roger Wise appeared in the "chair" events with brother Ken as passenger and versatile Roger was top solo man.

Farleigh's Saturday evening event in July inevitably meant a drop in the attendance. Nevertheless 2,000 turned up to see, surprisingly, the fastest time recorded in a Novices heat! Jack Brown clocked 1 minute 42½ seconds and this with his chain dragging the ground for the last forty yards!

For the Club's final meeting in September it reverted to the track by the river and the Brands Hatch stars gave brilliant displays. Norman Eyres, with his full blooded leg-trailing style was one of the most improved lads of the season. "Pop" Appleby won the Veterans' Trophy presented to him by Mrs. J. Dyke and Farleigh beat London by 11 points.

These, of course, were halcyon days the like of which will never recur, but wherever enthusiasts gather, the riders and races that had made them famous will inevitably occupy a large part of the conversation.

Grass-track racing was still enjoying a boom period. For the immense crowds it was another diversion from the monotonous routine of everyday life. Hard times lay ahead for the sport, which only its strongest adherents were to survive.

Unaware of the troubles to come, like all other sporting Clubs, the West Wilts. prepared for its eighth season. A well-known rider at Farleigh was Gilbert Ross and he succeeded Ken. Raymond as racing Secretary in 1950. In an entry of 62, there were many newcomers. Brothers John and George Gould were riding as novices. Vic. Warlock had now retired from racing, taking with him the record number of Farleigh appearances with a top-score of 28.

The Farleigh Grand Prix was won by "Bonny" Good. But for "Bonny" it was his last race. A brilliant racing career came to an abrupt end on June 8th, when he was involved in a road accident in which he received severe head injuries, a fractured jaw and a broken arm, the use of which he was never to regain.

Although the April 30th meeting at Farleigh had produced a 5,500 crowd it was a serious drop. The boom was over and grass-track headed towards its lowest ebb. Thus terminated a fantastic Farleigh era. With the track being assessed at an even higher figure for rates plus the high rate of entertainment tax, racing was made impossible. The scheduled meeting for July 23rd, 1950, was therefore cancelled and the Farleigh acres lay in quiet solitude again.

With the serious decrease in public interest it was now quite obvious that it was a big gamble for the Club to stage further meetings. However, in spite of this, for the third time the Wessex Centre chose Farleigh for its Championship event. But previous to the day, it rained and rained. The track became waterlogged and the meeting was cancelled with the Centre £100 out-of-pocket.

The West Wilts. Club held only one meeting in 1951. This was the Grand Festival event in August when Austin Cresswell made his first and only Farleigh appearance, as also did Ray Lambourne. Ray is still racing today but minus the sight of one eye, the result of a racing crash a few years ago. But he remains as one of the sport's most pluckiest riders.

Included in that meeting was a team event. S.E.R.A. versus Farleigh. But the "gate" was down and the Club lost £154.

1952 saw the new Enfield Club link up with the Frome United Club. They staged a Farleigh meeting on September 14th. Many "big" names appeared and Dick Tolley had his first taste of the Somerset circuit. A "Rob Walker Challenge" event was instituted.

SHEFFIELD SPEEDWAY

EVERY THURSDAY
at 7.45 p.m.

MAIN ENCLOSURE 5/-
(Children Half-Price)

POPULAR ENCLOSURE 4/-
(Children Half-Price)

COVERED ACCOMMODATION for 10,000

In 1953, on its own, the Enfield Club made a great effort to attract the bigger crowds to Farleigh once again. It organised three meetings the first of which attracted 3,250 which was excellent under the circumstances. Winner of the newly introduced competition, the Enfield Challenge Trophy event, was John Gould.

A further three events were staged in the following year by the same Club and Farleigh was still attracting new riders of high calibre . . . Len Bayliss, the late Ray Beaumont, Bill Bridgett and Chris Boss, etc.

John Gould, the Southern Champion, retained the Enfield Trophy in the final meeting of the season watched by some 2,000. And, alas, this was the very last of Farleigh's grass-track meetings. Its twelve years of life had unfortunately come to an end.

The same Enfield Club staged a scramble at Farleigh in the following October and another in 1956 after which the course lay idle once again. But, while the sensitively patriotic lamented the passing of Farleigh Castle Grass-Track, there was plenty to excite and enthuse the sporting fan just a few years hence.

In 1960, the combined Enfield and Wilts. Border Clubs held a further scramble and another one in the following year.

SCRAMBLING AND MOTO-CROSS

MOTO-CROSS, the toughest of all two-wheel racing. Continentally adopted in the first instance, the term Moto-Cross is a descriptive name derived from the French word, "Moto", meaning motor-cycle and the English word "cross" from cross-country. There are no essential differences between Moto-Cross and Scrambling; they are alternative terms for a high speed motor-cycle race over rough country. The difference lies only in the method of calculating the results.

It was on March 29th, 1924, that the Camberley Club staged a South Country Scott Scramble. Eighty or so competitors took part for the first event of its kind and exactly half the entry retired. The winner was Arthur Sparks ("486" Scott) who covered the fifty-mile course in two hours.

So scrambling was born and for many years it constituted one long grueling race, lasting for, perhaps, half the afternoon. Take for instance the Wessex Scramble, held for three successive years from 1929 on Red Hone Hill, near Devizes. It took Jack Williams (Rudge) the 1929 winner just over one hour to complete the 25 miles of rough grassland, plentifully bestrewn with craters, and with variations in the form of precipices and wooded dells. It was just one race of five laps and open to machines of any capacity. 38 started. 14 finished.

The 1930 event was won by Len Heath (Ariel) but in the following year two separate events were held. The Light-weight race was won by Graham Goodman (O.K. Supreme) and the Senior race by Ron Heatt (Norton). This was the last of the Wessex Scrambles on Red Hone Hill. But in 1932, the Devizes Club held a Good Friday Scramble over the old Wessex course and nearly 1,000 people turned up. Admission free! Graham Goodman (Norton) completed the course in one hour, six minutes. Second man

NEW PARK STREET SERVICE STATION DEVIZES

Telephone 3662

Treble Green Shield Stamps

25% off Tyres

Do-it-yourself Car Wash

also

Major Repairs

and

Servicing

New Engine Tune Service

Proprietor: E. F. BAMBER

FARLEIGH'S HIGH FLYER!



Don Rickman. 1966.

let's go back a little; to 1962, when racing on the "rough-stuff" had become one of motor-cycling's greatest sports. The West Wilts. Club, after suffering a number of vicissitudes, every one of which would have destroyed the body had its heart not been sound, re-organised itself to enter the world of scrambling. And so, on May 12th, 1963, the Farleigh acres once again heard the crackle of racing motor-cycles when the Club staged an open-to-centre event entitled the "Maybug" Scramble. It attracted over 100 entries and eight main events were successfully staged which included three sidecar races. The sidecar class was dominated by Mick Guilford but, solowise, John Giles and Ken Messenger kept the crowd — swelled by several hundred who had come up from the cancelled Frome Valley Club's event — on their toes throughout the three main solo events.

Scrambling at Farleigh was an immediate success. Attendances had exceeded all expectation and the whole policy of the Club was adjusted to meet the ever-increasing demand for events of this nature. This was the real foundation of the Farleigh scramble organisation as it is known today.

Don and Derek Rickman were the stars in the Club's second scramble in September, the Wessex Centre Team Scramble, and the Metisse quartet — the Rickman brothers, Ken Messenger and Brian Curtis, gained the Frome Club a victory over West Wilts. by 12 points.

home on an Ariel was Jim Dyke, of whom you will read later. He collected the Salisbury Plain Trophy not only for a meritorious ride but for a calm and collected effort. Always the favourite part of the course and always a "terror", a large shell hole called the "Wells of Loneliness" contained an exit gradient of 1 in 2, and a ledge half way up! Even today, it compares on level terms with any scramble hill.

Mainly through admission charges not being practicable to obtain, scrambles, as the years went by, were run entirely on private land. They grew shorter. Instead of just one long race it was a programme of several short races, which catered for different classes of machine and rider. This still remains the general pattern of most of today's scrambles.

The FARLEIGH SCRAMBLE CIRCUIT is one of the few permanent tracks in the country. It is a premier circuit. But

The following month saw a magnificent entry for the Club's final meeting. This time it formed the second of the winter BBC-TV "Grandstand" series. Fine dry weather combined with exceptionally slick organisation and a fast and exciting course in the delightful Farleigh countryside, made a memorable day for over 5,000 scramble fans, and one that provided exciting viewing for millions of fireside spectators throughout Britain.

Jeff Smith, always wearing the emblem of the Red Rose of Lancashire on his helmet, made his first-ever appearance at Farleigh. On his B.S.A. he won the Grandstand Trophy while Dave Bickers (Husqvarna) gained the same honour in the "250" class. But it was not an easy ride for either. Both fought titanic struggles with Don Rickman and the tussles provided some of television's finest pictures.

The Club's superb circuit in the shadow of the historic Farleigh Castle, was a fast sporting course — as it still is — that drew the highest praise from everyone.

For its second "Maybug" event the Club raised the prize money to £300 and there were now two magnificent "Maybug" trophies for the winners of the "250" and over "350" finals. The course was slightly modified and a deep muddy ditch at the beginning of the home straight, halted the efforts of Ken Messenger. The spill prevented him from being the first rider to win the new over "350" trophy.

FARLEIGH'S NATIONAL SCRAMBLE

After an open-to-centre event in June the Farleigh circuit was selected for the National Inter-Centre Team Scramble in October. Could Jeff Smith, Britain's new World Champion, lead the Midlands Team to victory? That was the question. The event was the eleventh of an annual series; in the last ten, the Midlanders had won three times but the Southerners — with four wins — topped the chart and started favourites. There were no less than sixty riders from fifteen centres. The course; 1½ miles round. The Rickman brothers gained three wins and a second place and thus led the Southern Centre Team, managed by Arthur Lambert, to its fifth success in the contest. Jerry Scott (B.S.A.) and Ivor England (Metisse) completed that formidable team.

NEW-TYPE STARTING GATE

Not only had there been false starts, but unfair ones. The elastic start had superseded the original flag start, but this, although an improvement, was not good enough, at least for one man. It was Jim Dyke who had, for quite a time, believed in the possibility of even better race-starting. Far-sighted as to scrambling's future he realised that the attainment of this would do much to enhance the prestige of his Club. With this end in view, plus a fertile brain, he not only designed but constructed an entirely new type of starting gate. It was through his initiative that the Club for their sixth scramble had perfect starts. His sagacity was repaid. The single piece of white nylon, that went up and away from the riders at a 45-degree angle, accommodated an incredible number of starters — 40 in all. As the ingenious system worked the opposite to the usual starting gate method, it provided a fool-proof start. When the electric was turned off, up went the gate!

The West Wilts. Club's chairman, of 25 years standing, with his brilliant invention had provided Farleigh with one of its greatest assets.

Now of National status, in 1965, and with £360 prize money at stake, the "Maybug" not un-naturally attracted a big entry of illustrious names, in the 90 solos and 20 sidecars. Included in a six-main-event-programme was one of the qualifying events for the newly-introduced A.-C.U. Sidecar Scramble Star. This 10-lap race was won by Derek Jones.

The BBC-TV event in October, followed the Club's annual open-to-centre scramble in June and its Castle Moto-Cross in September. The "Grandstand" series exploded with a bigger-than-ever bang on to an estimated 12,000,000 television screens. During the week the complete T.V. staff of 30 men had taken their stand in the Farleigh valley. They even brought a night-watchman, but not surprisingly, when one considers that £250,000 worth of equipment was lying around, which included a scanner unit costing £120,000! A change of format by the BBC and the A.-C.U. had hoisted the series into the International bracket and the contest, Great Britain v. Czechoslovakia was to be the highlight of the afternoon. But the Czechs' plane at Prague was grounded by

fog, and the visitors failed to arrive. An impromptu substitute for the disappointed 6,000 fans, was a four-cornered team contest, and led by Jeff Smith, the Northern team were the winners. A huge entry of 102 riders including eight official works entries formed one of the finest collections of star riders ever seen. Real scramble dicing featured in the "250" event. Throughout Bryan Goss and Dave Bickers led the field. First one and then the other would snatch the lead for a fleeting moment. It was a great race with Goss the winner by a mere yard. Thus, the meeting came to an exciting climax and Farleigh's festival of speed and noise came to an end on a cold, but sunny afternoon.

FARLEIGH'S FIRST INTERNATIONAL MOTO-CROSS GRAND PRIX

After the "Maybug" National event came the Club's first-ever International Moto-Cross event in July, 1966. It was Don Rickman's first-ever Grand Prix win too, and he accomplished what he set out to do. He clashed in both legs with Jeff Smith. Each won one race, but Don was declared the winner on overall time.

Therefore the new World Champion was Paul Friedrichs, the 25-year-old East German. He gained the Title because of Rickman's victory, for Smith had to win the last five rounds to keep the title.

Unfortunately, to the disappointment of thousands, Friedrichs failed to turn up. And so it became Britain's day. Don Rickman (Metisse) first, Jeff Smith (B.S.A.) second, Chris Horsfield (CZ) third. Dave Bickers (CZ) beat Vic Eastwood (B.S.A.) for fourth position. The first foreigner was the Lindstrom-mounted, Swedish star, Jan Johansson.

And so Don Rickman received his garland. His lap of honour produced a great ovation from a record crowd of 21,000, which still stands today.

These Moto-Cross performances are really something to marvel at. Just think for a moment of the frightful punishment that the Farleigh bumps give tyres, frames and forks, and the rider of a machine travelling at anything up to 70 mph. on the faster stretches of the course. Think how the piston of an engine revving at over 5,000 rpm. must be a grey blur within the cylinder — yet it is still being decelerated to a standstill at each end of the stroke! Think of the scorching gasses whirling past valves that are being slammed upon their seating by a pressure of 100 pound, two-and-a-half-thousand times a minute! If we cannot admire the thought and skill that produces such machinery as this, and the brain and muscle that manages it, we must be dull indeed.

Preparations for the Club's first International began, of course, many weeks before. Forty members formed the working party and in their tedious tasks nothing was left to chance. It was evident that Farleigh's two entrances would not suffice. The old grass-track entrance on the Tellisford road was opened and a Bailey Bridge, hired from, and erected by the Territorial Army was slung across the river at the Stowford end of Farleigh. This made a total of four entrances, all in tele-communication with each other, which coped with a fantastic volume of traffic estimated at 8,000 cars. Grass-track's old and rather steep exit at the bottom of Farleigh Hill was now of a concrete nature and none of the Greenhill Brothers were required to haul a host of cars through the mud on to the road as was the case in many a wet grass meeting!

Space precludes the enumeration of the many jobs entailed in promoting such a big event and also of all the specific names of those who are ultimately responsible for the smooth running organisation. But I feel I must mention just a few.

Over the years Ken. Lywood's remarkable capacity for work and fine organising powers have been amply displayed. He is Farleigh's Clerk of the Course. His wife is the Secretary of the Meetings, while "Buster" James and his wife, the Secretary and Assistant Secretary, are the pair who so skilfully "entice" the riders to the line. And there's no delay at Farleigh! Miss Gigli takes the interesting role of Publicity Secretary. All these, of course, are strongly supported by a large number of Club members. It is undoubtedly a team effort.

The ladies too have played a great part in making Farleigh what it is today. This particular sphere of physical activity by the fair sex, is a wonderful tribute to their enthusiasm.

All the while there are people of this calibre behind the sport, scrambling must inevitably flourish, and while the West Wilts. Club exists, it will continue to uphold the prestige of Farleigh Castle, as well as serving as a lasting reminder of what

FARLEIGH'S "MAYBUG" SCRAMBLE, 1966



Out of the sky they come! A magnificent tussle for first place in the "500" moto-cross event between Dave Bickers (CZ) left, and the late Jerry Scott (B.S.A.).

moto cross talk

FOR THE NEWS
& VIEWS BEHIND THE SCENES
edited every week

by GAVIN TRIPPE



**Motor
Cycle
News**

EVERY WEDNESDAY

**FOR THE
RACING
ENTHUSIAST**

9d

Place an order with your newsagent

grass-track and scrambling really does owe to the Greenhill Brothers.

But back to that International.

From early morning the coaches converge on Farleigh from every part of the country, disgorging fans to meet those who have come by car, motor-cycle and even walking. The human streams move quickly and certainly to their places. Every eye is on the track itself; everyone knows the event will be near-on perfect, but even so, for "first-timers", Farleigh's attractive setting is often a surprise. Marshals and officials get their last-minute instructions and everyone is soon in their places. The first competitors in the initial race take their positions; the tape goes up and another great event has begun.

Some three or four hours later all roads lead from the course, and the Farleigh acres become empty again.

After the Club's traditional "Maybug" meeting, came the second International Grand Prix at Farleigh on July 30th, 1967. The bridge used the previous year was not available, but Ken. Lywood, organiser-in-chief, a man whose character is admirably suited to meeting and surmounting difficulties, had soon been in touch with a northern firm. Another bridge was hired, and this was actually erected, and, — after the meeting — dismantled by Club members. This time, Paul Friedrichs, the Erfurt policeman, did turn up and he became the "500" World Moto-Cross Champion for the second time. The event could certainly be described as fast and furious and he clinched the title on his works "380" CZ machine. Gaining his sixth win of the series Friedrichs stirred up a big argument by allowing Bickers to win the 20-lap second leg and ensure a tactical victory for CZ.

In spite of the trouble the meeting was one of the finest Grand Prixes ever seen in Britain and a tremendous crowd — not so many as the previous year — was treated to some terrific racing.

But the crowd knew little of the row. They all went home evidently dazzled by the magnificent and determined Paul Friedrichs and the courageous Don Rickman who was beaten by sheer exhaustion.

The West Wilts. certainly looks after its riders. There is a shower bath in the pits at any International event and tea and refreshments are provided to all competitors without charge. Indeed, this latter facility is provided at every Farleigh event.



— at Farleigh's International moto-cross Grand Prix, 1967. Paul Friedrichs wins the World Championship.

The public came to understand that if they paid a visit to Farleigh Castle they would see sport of the highest possible standard, and that is why the meetings attract such a huge number of enthusiasts.

Today, all of Farleigh's original grass-track aces have long since retired from the racing scene and now indulge in hobbies of a much quieter and less strenuous nature. Take for instance, Stan. Lanfear, or "Fearless Stan" as he was better known. Now, as a keen fisherman he's often seen alongside the "Farleigh" river . . . quietly and enthusiastically fishing. One cannot really imagine the jovial, forceful and determined character as Stanley enjoying a hobby such as this, but, nevertheless, it is true.

Several of Farleigh's stars, have, alas, passed on. Jerry Scott and Cliff. Hazell are the latest. Clifford died suddenly in January, 1968 and those with long memories will certainly remember that gleaming Douglas combination, with the ever-cheerful Dick Bradley as passenger.

Without the unflinching co-operation of the Greenhill Brothers in allowing the use of their land the West Wilts. Club could have achieved nothing and Farleigh would have been famous only for its glorious Castle ruin of past ages, standing there on a hill, a silent and wondering monument to the Club's many tournaments of speed and daring.

The annals of Farleigh's infancy draw attention to a long-service medal, earned by one of our more durable pillars of the sport. For instance when the last meeting of 1967 — the Third Castle Moto-Cross — was run off, the evergreen Jim Dyke had officiated at over sixty "Farleighs", and in many capacities too. In fact he hasn't missed a single meeting from the first-ever event in 1938! How is that for a record?

As this book is the Story of Farleigh, the stars that perform, its tracks and its great occasions, it is clear that I cannot tell of all the races I have seen or even all the dramatic moments when fame has been won or lost by a slip on the turf. But there have undoubtedly been some superb events that have carried the name of FARLEIGH CASTLE throughout the country, which will inevitably crop up for many years in the sporting reminiscences of those who were present to see the racing.

The Story of Farleigh is, in short, the story of a remarkable development of sport in modern England. The winners, the times, and the distances are on the records. So this has been the Story of Farleigh from the point of those who have witnessed its various events, rather than from the aspect of view of those who have been to Farleigh as competitors to enjoy their hours of limelight. It is largely the men who are never in that limelight who have made Farleigh possible.

Yet it is a fitting tribute to the ability, skill and courage of these riders that in an ultra-sophisticated age, Farleigh can draw crowds of over twenty-thousand.

The trail was not blazed in vain. In spite of some of us who bemoan the passing of Farleigh Castle Grass-Track, the sport of Moto-Cross or Scrambling — call it what you like — is still very much alive today. With the passing of time and the development of technical "know-how" and riding skill, FARLEIGH CASTLE offers a spectacle of excitement and thrills which previous generations of enthusiasts could hardly have contemplated.



Copyright: All material in this publication is copyright and must not be reproduced, in whole or in part, without the written permission of the publisher.

“You can't win?”

of course you can if you have
the right “tool” for the job

**WE HAVE ANOTHER WINNER
in**

VOLKSWAGEN

at

**F. SLEIGHTHOLME & SONS LTD.
TROWBRIDGE**

Telephone 2019

Telephone 3291

DIFAZIO MOTORCYCLES

of

FROME and BATH

* * * * *

Motor Cycle Specialists

* * * * *

*Spares, Accessories
and Repairs*

* * * * *

Telephone Frome 2913 and Bath 2550 5

“ALWAYS AT YOUR SERVICE”

**RALPH MERRETT
MOTOR**

AND

GENERAL ENGINEER

**LOWER WHARF, NORTHGATE STREET,
DEVIZES**

REPAIRS

★ ★

WELDING

★ ★

**PANEL
BEATING**

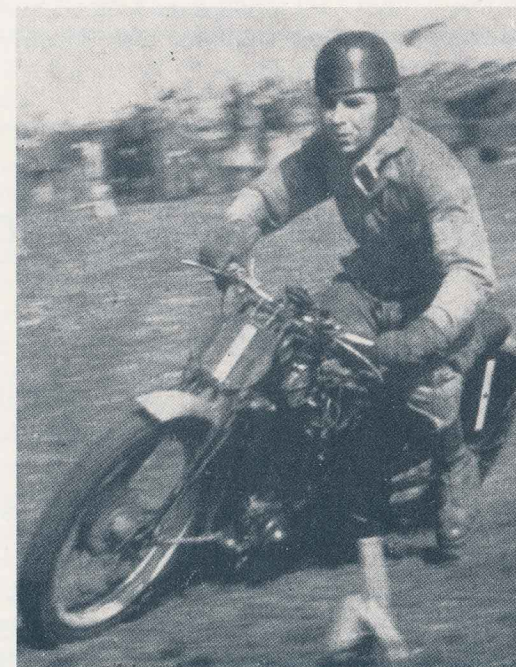
★ ★

SPRAYING

★ ★

**M.O.T.
STATION**

★ ★



Tel: Devizes 2641

Happy Days! Farleigh Castle 1946

C. N. Chequer & Son Ltd.

LOWDEN GARAGE, CHIPPENHAM, WILTS
Telephone 2194

MAIN AGENTS FOR—BULTACO, METISSE, A.J.S.,
MATCHLESS, YAMAHA and

Greaves MOTORCYCLES

Good used second-hand Trials and Scrambles machines
always in stock

A.M.C. spares stockist. Good stock of Villiers spares.

Also at:

WILTSHIRE GARAGES, BRISTOL ROAD, CHIPPENHAM
Telephone 3479

It will be worth your while to visit

Richmond Park Motors

Bournemouth

For your Motor-Cycle, Scooter
Three-Wheeler or Car. New or Used



H.P. and Part Exchange a pleasure



The biggest and best stock at . . .

**RICHMOND PARK MOTORS,
378 HOLDENHURST ROAD, BOURNEMOUTH**

Telephone 35956

Written, compiled and published by Cyril May, "Maylands", Nursteed Road, Devizes, Wilts.

FOREWORD

Farleigh Castle has seen heroes ride and fall. This, one of the most infamous motocross circuits in the world has seen careers begin and end. From Jeff Smith to Jeff Leisk. 250, 500, side-cars and of course the cream of the motocross world in the Motocross Des Nations, Farleigh Castle has seen them all within its 18 World Championship events and numerous National Meetings.

Farleigh Castle has played host to the best. Throughout the world the circuit has built itself a reputation for being hard, fast, demanding and highly technical. It has all the ingredients needed to enhance our sport, though over the years the track has remained virtually unchanged. Right from the very first meeting, riders were forced to race not only against each other, but also to face the tracks gnarly uphill and terrifyingly fast down hill straights, and here the circuit wound itself around trees and undergrowth, riders put into practice their less subtle passing manoeuvres.

Throughout the latter half of the sixties, British heroes such as Vic Eastwood, the Rickman Brothers, and Jeff Smith dominated GP Racing, though in the 1969 Motocross Des Nations, the British team could only manage third spot behind the flying Belgians.

The seventies saw the likes of Bengt Aberg, Roger De Coster, Gerrit Wolsink, Hakan Anderson, Heikki Mikkola, Brad Lackey and our own blonde bomber, Graham Noyce come to the fore, four of whom went on to win the World Championships in later years.

Farleigh Castle has seen its fair share of controversy. In 1971, a broken brake cable cost BSA mounted, John Banks the race and just a few days after the meeting, the BSA factory went out of business. In 1972, overall winner Roger De Coster was almost disqualified for having outside assistance after his Suzuki had thrown a chain in Race Two. Andy Robertons mechanic, Tony Worthington had held Rogers bike for him while he replaced the chain, but then his assistance could not be proved, so the resulting third place stood. In 1973, a change in landowner and the lack of a British 500cc Grand Prix, halted the circuits progress, though the West Wilts Club still ran several national meetings with success and in 1977, the track had its come back Grand Prix with still more controversy. Bob Wright, who finished sixth in Race One was disqualified after the Bolton based factory refused to have his bike measured at the request of Honda. The bike was thought to be 580cc's. In 1978, Brad Lackey won overall from a last to third charge from Mikkola and the following year De Costers battle to the front of the field almost overshadowed Graham Noyces fine win in front of the thirty-five thousand crowd.

In 1980, the Belgian Motocross Des Nations team were once again victorious, with only Dave Watson making any impression on the proceedings for Britain. 1981 was a Hakan Carlqvist benefit with Noyce a distant second.

In 1982 Andre Vromans should have won, but the overall was awarded to Brad Lackey after his 3/1 score. Second was David Thorpe, also with a 1/3 score although Vromans 2/2 should have given him the overall honours by FIM ruling.

In 1983, the Farleigh Castle 500cc GP will always be remembered for Laurence Spences shove to the finish line for sixth spot after a seizure on the last lap of the race. Carlqvist won both races, but as I stood at the chequered flag and watched Laurence heave that solid bike more than fifty yards to the finish in front of the thousands of screaming fans, I was touched with tinges of both emotion and excitement.

1985 saw David Thorpes stunning ride from last place to first in Race Two after winning the opening leg in a breathtaking battle with Andre Malherbe. DT had done too much though and Malherbe regained the lead and went on to win the race and take the overall. George Jobe finished in third spot, though he was nearly two minutes away from the leading pair. In 1987, I witnessed my own team rider, Kurt Nicoll, claim his first ever Grand Prix Moto. We were all delighted with his performance, but the overall win went to Jobe, even after a personal request for the spectators to stop throwing beer into his face while he was racing.

What a way to go out??? Although at that time the circuits life was not in question, 1989 was to be probably the last Grand Prix at the Castle. Dave Thorpe scorched to two electrifying wins in front of thirty-five thousand, sun soaked fans. Kurt Nicoll took third overall and Jeff Leisk separated the two British riders and for the eighteenth time in motocross history, the fans left the track still excited and totally satisfied, but sadly for the last time.

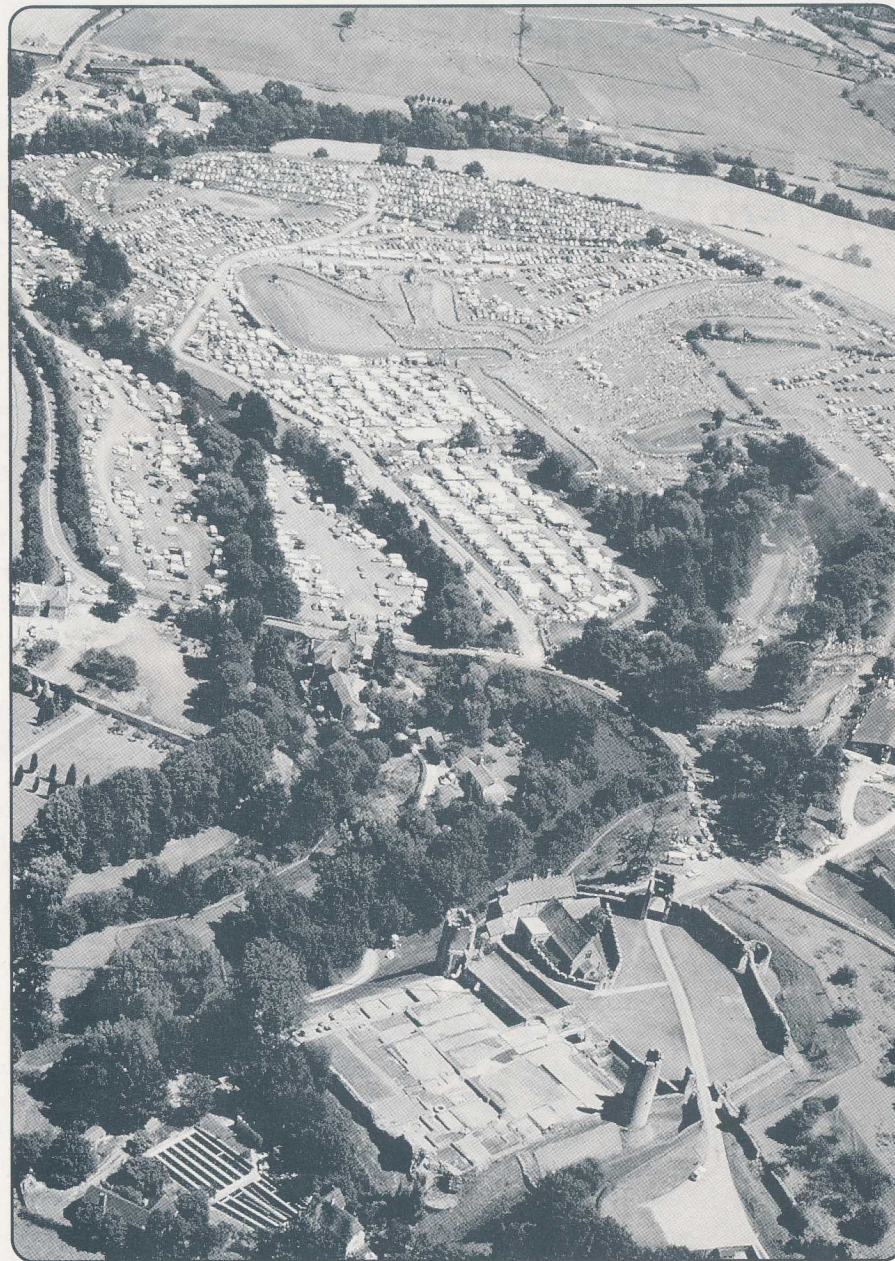
Politics have brought the end of the era. The fate of one of the best tracks in the world has been decided around a table and a deal has been struck between the Auto Cycle Union and another organising club, to promote the 500cc Grand Prix for the next five years and as this particular premier Grand Prix class is the largest and most reliable money spinner, there is no opportunity or incentive for another club to accommodate Grand Prix teams at another circuit, regardless of past history. If the venue for this Grand Prix could have been shared as it has been in the past, then there was still hope, but now all is lost for Farleigh Castle, and when that famous name is mentioned only memories can spring to mind, the circuit will once again become just a field within the English countryside. No more the spectator filled, sunsoaked viewing point, no more deafening cheers as our own home hero storms to victory, no more cooling dips in the trackside river and no more the destination of motocross pilgrims.

I have been most fortunate to attend many GP circuits throughout the world, and for me there is nothing to match Farleigh Castle, not only for the superb motocross action, but for the enthusiasm, professionalism, and friendship shown by the West Wilts Club and their willing band of helpers.

To be part of this publication leaves me with mixed emotions, anger, sadness and lasting pleasurable memories.

Thank you for the privilege.

ALEC WRIGHT.



Farleigh Castle and Circuit - one of the most picturesque and spectacular venues in the world.

1968 ON ...

The motocross season of 1968 at Farleigh Castle looked to be good and many enthusiasts were expected at the rapidly developing circuit. The West Wilts club had scheduled the National Maybug which was a Players No.6 British Championship event on 2nd June, the 500cc British Grand Prix on the 7th July and the Castle Trophy meeting on 22nd September. The Maybug and Castle meeting although first class meetings, attracting all the works BSAs, Husqvarnas, CZs, Metisse etc., were bound to be overshadowed by the Grand Prix. And what a Grand Prix!! The first two G.P's had been blessed with perfect weather, hot and sunny, but not this one. This was certainly no third time lucky. The rains came - it was raining hard when we woke in the morning and it stopped as the finish flag dropped for the end of the last race. But the thousands of spectators were happy. They had seen Vic Eastwood win his first ever Grand Prix on the works Husqvarna despite riding most of the second race on a flat rear tyre. In the pouring rain Vic had finished 1st in the first race and 2nd in the second. As Vic crossed the finish line his father, Vic senior, threw his cap into the air which was promptly run over by Peter Dobry the third place man. A truly memorable day.

ANOTHER NEW TYPE START GATE

There were no world championship Grand Prix in England for the next two years, but nevertheless international racing came to the circuit in 1969 when the Moto Cross des Nations was run on 7th September. As well as this the usual Maybug meeting was held earlier in the season.

In the 1950s, 60s and 70s the Moto Cross des Nations held a very special place in the world of motocross and being a team event much national pride was at stake. In 1968 Ken Lywood had been appointed team manager of the British teams and the West Wilts officials were only too well aware that everything possible had to be done to make sure the Farleigh meeting lived up to the events' fine reputation. Consequently a number of them went to the 1968 event and from the ideas they brought back with them was one for a new style starting gate. This was not to say that the present one had not been very successful, it had, but the keenness of the riders for this event and the subsequent 'enthusiasm' on the start line made people like 'Buster' James, Maurice Andrews and Gordon Lloyd realise that it could be time for a change. Of steel fold down construction the new gate was designed and built by club members. Many hours were spent cutting up angle iron and tubes and then welding the whole lot together to enable up to 45 riders to start in one line. The design allows the gate to fold away from the rider, falling flat onto the ground. Because of the scissor type release mechanism it



Vic Eastwood on his muddy Husqvarna in 1968.



A 'Farleigh battle' with No 14 Paul Frerichs (380 CZ), No 27 John Banks (441 BSA) and No 28 Dave Bickers (400 CZ).

cannot move until released by the starter even if all 45 riders are pushing hard against it. This was the first gate of its type in England and was soon being copied by other clubs. West Wilts club officials realised that they were able, with this gate, to stop the practice of 'jumping the start'. All that was necessary was to place a row of sleepers at a set distance behind the gate and the riders movements were restricted sufficiently to ensure fair starts. It was not long before this arrangement became the norm for British Championship events and eventually was made a rule by the F.I.M for all World Championships. The gate proved 100 percent perfect in operation making false starts a thing of the past and it is still in use today. Once again the West Wilts had led the way in being in the forefront of new ideas in its efforts to improve the sport of motocross.

As for the Moto Cross des Nations itself, everyone was hoping the home team could win the 'Peter Chamberlain Trophy' once again. But it was not to be. The Belgium and Swedish teams were much too strong and we could only manage third place. We were entering a period when the older riders in England were coming to the end of their careers and the new squad of youngsters had not quite arrived. It would be another four or five years before the "schoolboys" such as Neil Hudson and Graham Noyce became a force to be reckoned with on the Grand Prix tracks of the world. One thing that was learned that weekend was that given the right, or wrong, conditions dust could become a major problem and from that day on the club was determined to overcome this problem.

NEW LANDOWNER - GREENHILL BROS. SELL CIRCUIT

The Farleigh Castle area, not just the circuit, had a big change for 1970 when the Greenhill Bros. decided to sell their farm and retire. You will remember that from the very early days the four brothers had been really cooperative and enthusiastic about the racing on their land. The new landowner, Miss E.A. Cartwright, was aware of the sport which had been run on the land and when approached by the club readily agreed to the continued running of the events.

Miss Cartwright was, and still is, a keen horsewoman and drives carriages in competition but one of her first priorities was to see what motocross was all about. This she did at the first opportunity and she has subsequently attended many meetings, and on at least one occasion being accompanied by some American visitors who cheered Brad Lackey to a win. Incidentally a petition carried out at the time of the sale got 38 signatures out of 40 residents of the village in favour of the racing.

So it was all systems go and with no world championship in 1970 a 'home' international carrying the title of British 500 Grand Prix followed the Maybug. The club chose the August Bank Holiday Monday and attracted all the top continental riders who took five of the top six places. The winner was Bent Aberg with in second place Rob Taylor from Bristol. For most people at the circuit it was the appearance of Bent Aberg, Roger De Coster and Joel Robert that was the big attraction. Two World Champions Aberg (500cc) and Robert (250cc) together with the most brilliant Belgian, De Coster had to be a great reason for being at Farleigh that day.

1971 saw the return of the 500cc Championships - in fact both British and World. The National Maybug was once again a part of the 500cc British Championship and held on the 30th May whilst the 500cc World Championship was on the 11th July.

For some years the 500 G.P. at Farleigh had produced drama and 1971 was no exception. It was to be the last appearance of the B.S.A. works team as the race shop was to be closed in a few days time.

To make things worse, on the day, a broken rear brake cable probably cost John Banks the race which was won by Ake Jonsson. Both the 1966 and the 1967 events had decided the individual riders world championship in which the B.S.A. machines had been very involved and it was a sad ending to many years of great racing. But things never stand still, and we had already seen the first of the Japanese, Suzuki, racing since 1970 with the best possible pilots Messrs. De Coster, Geboers and Robert.

But onto 1972 when once again the Farleigh gremlin was hard at work. As usual the Maybug was run at the end of May followed some six weeks later by the 500 G.P. When the 'circus' arrived at Farleigh, Roger De Coster and Heikki Mikkola were neck and neck and either could establish a good lead in the world championship. As things turned out Mikkola could only manage a 5th place in the first race and crashed heavily in the second. Roger De Coster and Ake Jonsson tied for first place on points but Roger was just one second faster on total time for the two races and was declared the winner. Then the gremlin struck. Maico immediately protested that De Coster had received outside assistance to replace a chain. The International Jury of stewards needed proof but none was forthcoming therefore the protest was turned down. However three days later a front page photo in the technical press revealed that Tony Worthington, Andy Robertsons' mechanic, had held the bike whilst the chain was replaced.

INTERVAL AIR DISPLAYS

For several years the club had been pursuing a policy of continuing development towards providing the spectators with the best possible days entertainment. From the earliest days of the grass tracks there had always been trackside car parking to help encourage the family to come to the meetings. This was carried on even with the largest international motocross meeting but of course more and more cars came as the years went by and soon it was only the early arrivals that managed to get a place in the front row. Not that this matters too much at Farleigh because even those parked two or three rows back can still see everything that happens because of the lie of the land. The lunch interval was also developed so that there were majorette marching displays, rider presentations and interviews etc., etc.

The most popular innovation was the introduction of flying displays. The first of these was at the Moto Cross des Nations meeting in 1969 when the R.A.F. appeared with the Macaws Formation Aerobatic Team. Consisting of four Jet Provost aircraft all flown by Qualified Flying Instructors the team gave a fifteen minutes display of formation drill whilst flying steep turns within the display area. An R.A.F. commentator was used to inform everyone what to expect next and the aircraft were flown in such a way that many of the people at the top of the hill felt they were looking down on the planes. Yes, definitely a great attraction and one to be repeated, as indeed it was in 1971 and 1972 at the G.P.'s. The arrangements with the R.A.F. were handled by one of the ladies of the club and a couple of weeks before the event she had a phone call from the adjutant to find out where exactly Farleigh Castle was, as they would like to come down to look at the venue. It didn't occur to her they were miles away and would be flying!! He was told to follow the A36 out of Bath towards Frome and when he came to Balls Garage turn left and it's a mile down the road. It took a long time to live that one down but she is still with the club so no names no pack drill as they say!!

There was no 500 G.P. in Britain in 1973 and the only event at Farleigh was the Maybug on 27th May. This was notable for the first appearance at the circuit of both Neil Hudson and Graham Noyce. Neil won £3 prize money and Graham £9. This event was the last run for some three years. The change of ownership, previously referred to, resulted in West Wilts vacating for a while. The new manager 'Bill' Douglas, once he had settled in, was talked to and the club returned with the running of the Maybug in 1976. Much had changed in the three years. Motocross at Grand Prix level was changing rapidly - some people thought not for the better. The Japanese were well and truly in control with their machines and the demand for the raising of standards was heard from several quarters. This was fine and just the sort of challenge to bring out the best



The pits for the Moto-Cross Des Nations.



The spectacular Don Rickman (BSA Métisse).



Roger De Coster (360 CZ).



The irrepressible Joel Robert (360 Suzuki).

in the West Wilts club members. During the early sixties the club had run a lot of winter motocross for B.B.C. T/V at its course at Naish Hill as well as at Farleigh and they were very hopeful of getting live coverage of future meetings via the contacts they had made. This in fact was done and there was coverage on all the G.P's run at Farleigh until the mid 80s.

Before leaving this period of motocross development at Farleigh Castle it would be appropriate to say something of the Maybug meetings which were really the basis of all the hard work put into the sport by the club. All eleven meetings had been run at this circuit and from the very beginning it attracted the top riders in the country. This in turn meant that the crowds attending were always well entertained. Many people will remember the 250 and 500 Trophy races which were always very hard and close fought. In those days there were a number of really good riders who never raced abroad, and when they met the Grand Prix riders and other who did, then the racing was sure to be really cut and thrust. The Rickman Bros., Ivor England, Joe Johnson, Jerry Scott, Brian Curtis, "Badger" Goss and Frank Underwood to mention just a few, were always there, and the likes of Jeff Smith, Dave Bickers, Arthur Lampkin, Malcolm Davis, Vic Eastwood and John Banks ensured that the National Maybugs were amongst the best events in the country. Normally being run six to eight weeks before the Grand Prix the meeting often served as a proving ground for new ideas especially for things on the course itself. At one stage riders were suffering damage when hitting their hands on wooden stakes and the club successfully experimented with flexible rubber hoses slid onto small short stakes in front of the rope-holding stakes, thereby eliminating the trouble. Needless to say it was used for the following Grand Prix. The normal crowd for these meetings was initially 3-4000 but this soon increased to 6-8000 as its reputation grew.

But back to the racing story and a great day for British motocross with the return to one of the country's most famous and respected courses. July 25th 1976 and the "Motor Cycle" sponsored British Championship was back at Farleigh. The star of the day was once again Graham Noyce who won both races leaving Neil Hudson and Rob Hooper to fight over the places.

The comeback to the Grand Prix scene on 3rd July 1977 pre-empted major circuit changes and of course it was the first big meeting with which Bill Douglas would be involved. But the new management didn't stop the jinx of Farleigh. Brad Lackey won with Hakan Andersson second but the controversy did not involve either rider. For most of the season there had been threatening noises in the pits to the effect that some machines may be running with 580cc engines in place of the maximum 500cc allowed. The protest was officially lodged and the International

Jury ruled that any 4stroke machine finishing in the first five in either race should be stripped and measured. This involved Bent Aberg (Yamaha), John Banks (CCM) and Bob Wright (CCM). The first two were measured and found to be within the limits, but CCM refused to allow the other machine to be stripped. The unfortunate Wright was disqualified from the event.

REDESIGNED COURSE

For 1978 the circuit was extensively changed in the start area. Instead of the first bend being right handed it became the present left handed 180deg. turn. The West Wilts club were looking ahead - an application to run the Moto Cross des Nations again in 1980 had already been made to the ACU and FIM. The new layout would give extra room for the teams, slow down the circuit which was becoming too fast and allow further development of the start and finish area. This included the introduction of grandstands and separate sponsors 'guest' facilities. The grandstands have now become part of the permanent arrangements on the course to make a spectators day more comfortable and have proved very popular - they are normally full by nine o'clock on the morning of race day. But one thing no one could have foreseen was how the new changes would produce even more remarkable racing than had already been witnessed.

One of these amazing solo performances happened in the first Grand Prix held on the new course. Heikki Mikkola won the first race with Brad Lackey second, but at the beginning of the second race we saw Lackey away and clear with Mikkola in last place. Lackey went on to win whilst Mikkola forced his way up to third by the finish of the race. This was the first of several similar recoveries we were to see in the years ahead. The next one came the following year but this time by a different rider, Roger De Coster. Suddenly he found himself with a fight through from the back of the field but De Coster was on his favourite Grand Prix circuit and quickly settled down to the job in hand. He managed to climb to third place but couldn't catch Brad Lackey in second, and neither of them could catch Graham Noyce who won his home Grand Prix on his way to winning the World Championship.

Interval attractions in '78 and '79 included flying displays again, in the first case by a solo aerobatics aircraft, a Pitts Special, and in the second by the R.A.F. Historic Flight consisting of Lancaster, Hurricane and Spitfire.

INTO THE EIGHTIES

The Moto Cross des Nations came to Farleigh again in 1980 with an entry of 14 teams, making it necessary to run four races. The Belgium team won as they had last time here and were followed home by Holland with West Germany third. The entire British first choice team was unavailable to race due to injury resulting in only fourth place. This was the last year that a European country won this supreme team event. Although the Americans had entered teams in the event previously, from 1981 onwards they took the job more seriously, and have won it every year since. The event, first run in 1947 has never seen such consistency. Great Britain has won the event more times than any other country but never more than five years consecutively. One of the more unlikely aspects of the American triumphs has been the use of riders who are almost unknown in Europe because, with very few exceptions, they have never ridden here. A really remarkable effort even though they have been managed by the great Roger De Coster himself.

The crowd were entertained during the interval by the Royal Marines Band. The original booking had envisaged the band playing in front of the grandstands. As it turned out they assembled in front of the castle, marched down the hill on the road into the main gates, along the side of the pits and guest areas, entering the course between the grandstands, then counter-marched the full length of the start straight for half an hour, playing all the time. Once again the West Wilts club had shown the way to organise the day's entertainment.

A new and unique thing was about to happen at Farleigh. Hakan Carlqvist came to ride in the 1981 Grand Prix and no-one saw which way he went. No-one that is, except the spectators who were both amazed and delighted with such a dominating display of riding. He had ridden in the qualifying race on the Saturday in the previous years team event and won. He obviously liked the circuit. He took the lead in both races and went further and further ahead as each race progressed. Before the racing he admitted he couldn't expect to catch Malherbe or Noyce but he would still try his best - he certainly did that and no mistake. Graham Noyce was second with Gerard Rond third, both a long way back. The following season, 1982 and Lackey was back in winning form. He didn't have it all his own way though with David Thorpe managing to equal him in the number of points scored. Andre Vromans was in third place. Yet again controversy, the club was not happy with the English version of the F.I.M. (the international governing body) rule with regards to the overall winner of a Grand Prix. It had therefore written its own interpretation and issued a supplementary regulation to the riders which was accepted. At least the discussion drew attention to the anomaly and the F.I.M. changed the rule as a result.

That man Carlqvist was back with a vengeance in 1983 and once again won both races. The event was changed to Saturday at the request of the club who had once again arranged live TV coverage on BBC Grandstand. When they came to Farleigh, Malherbe had a three point lead on Carlqvist but he couldn't do anything about the 'King of Farleigh Castle'. Harry Everts managed to split the pair in the first race, so it ended Carlqvist, Malherbe and Everts. Another rider came into the limelight and once again made good T/V viewing. Laurence Spence was the man who had everyone 'rooting' for him in the second Grand Prix race. He had finished a very good, and some would say unexpected, 4th place in the first race and was running through into 5th place in the second. Then on the very last corner the gearbox seized solid. He picked up the back end and pushed and dragged the bike over the line. The crowd gave him as big an ovation as the winner.

The 500 Grand Prix went to Hawkstone in 1984 whilst at Farleigh we saw two British Championship meetings - a sidecar event on 1st July and a 500cc solo on 12th August. These events were a bit of a surprise since the normal crowds simply didn't turn up to either event. The sidecars attracted less than 1500 and the solos not many more.

The more important thing to happen was the introduction of a new clerk of course. The new man was Barry Horsey who had served as chief marshal for several years. His wife Kay had taken over as Secretary of the meetings from Barbara Gigli a couple of years before and it was expected the new team would carry on with the expansion of the Farleigh Castle circuit, as indeed has happened. Barry has the practical knowledge of a motocross rider which has meant the introduction of new ideas to the course.

The 500 Grand Prix returned to Farleigh in 1985 and this produced the most fantastic racing seen for many years. David Thorpe was on his way to his first world championship, consequentially there was a very large crowd and most of them hoping to see David win. Thorpe and Malherbe were never more than a second apart for thirteen of the fifteen lap first race and Thorpe won, but behind these two the most unbelievable things were happening. The other British riders were not just fighting each other for places but showing most of the foreigners a clean pair of heels too. Kurt Nicoll, Dave Watson and Mervyn Anstie battled throughout the race and finished 4th, 5th and 6th. The spectators could barely contain themselves at the start of the second race when Thorpe crashed at the first corner and Malherbe was away in second place to Dave Watson. No-one who was there, or probably the millions watching on TV, will ever forget the next 20 minutes when Thorpe went from last to first. A couple of laps from the end Malherbe squeezed past and managed to stay there to the end, thereby winning overall with Thorpe second and Nicoll third.

Three events came to the course in 1986, one a Junior event for non-expert riders, the 250 Grand Prix and the final round of the British 500cc Championship. The Grand Prix was won by Jacky Vimond with Jeremy Whatley second and Anders Eriksson third. As in the previous year the public showed that at the time they were not very interested in the event by staying away.

This situation had also applied to the Sidecar Grand Prix and the organising clubs were talking to each other and the A.C.U. to find an answer to the problem. One result of this was that we would see the 500 Grand Prix back at Farleigh in 1987 with the Sidecar Grand Prix in 1988. The 500cc Grand Prix in 1987 marked a further step forward in the progress of the circuit.

The number of spectators had been gradually increasing and as a result this year saw an extension of the safety precautions by the use of chestnut paling around the whole course. This helps in two ways, 1 - the better safety factor and, 2 - extra room for more people close to the track. During the first race Kurt Nicoll, Georges Jobe and Dave Thorpe were close together and finished in that order whilst in the second Jobe turned the tables on Nicoll therefore taking the overall win. Dave Thorpe meanwhile could only manage eleventh spot but Laurence Spence finished with two fifth places giving him the third place. He was delighted as this was his first appearance on the winners rostrum.

The Hussar twins clinched the World Championship at the course in 1988 but the sidecar drivers were not happy with the course even though it had been changed from the solos to suit their needs. For years it has been an unwritten rule that the sidecars cut up the track too much for solo racing. This time the complaint was that the solos were making it too rough for the sidecars! Probably if the truth were known the sidecar Grand Prix drivers were piqued that a solo British championship event was being run at the same meeting. This had been arranged to try to attract more spectators to the Grand Prix, but it failed miserably with only some 4-5000 turning up to watch. Once again a Junior meeting was arranged on a smaller track to one side of the Grand Prix course on 3rd July. For two or three years the West Wilts club had been running trials for youth (schoolboy) riders and with Bill Douglas co-operation they were holding a couple of these each season in the orchard area. This has gradually built up with now adult trials being run also. The trials side of the club has been rejuvenated by Brian Shuttleworth and several willing helpers and its good to see this facet of motor cycle sport return to Farleigh again.

FARLEIGH ON TOP OF THE WORLD

Motocross has been the really big thing at Farleigh Castle.

To become the premier circuit in Great Britain is a wonderful achievement but in many people's eyes the next Grand Prix held on 23rd July 1989 put it second to none in the world. Many riders over the years have praised the course - De Coster 'My favourite G.P. course', Van Velthoven 'It requires great technical skill and is rough but very good', Van Den Brock 'Farleigh has everything. Big hills, fast sections, stony corners and bumpy sections - a very good track' and the man who has won every race he has ridden in, Carlqvist 'It's very good for me. A technical course, makes you think, a very good course'. The International Jury at this 1989 event were especially keen to praise the club for a really first class show, and the ACU jury member Albert Carter gave his personal acclaim to Barry Horsey 'There is no other club in England that could put on a show as good as this and the atmosphere here is as good as Namur'.

This tremendous success did not come easily. For many years organisers had received a lot of help from Camel but this was not available any longer in England and TV coverage was now in the hands of the ACU. The club realised that something must be done quickly to overcome these two losses. Southern Formes, Kawasaki and Robert had been supporting the club for many years and they all agreed to do so again together with Gemini Graphics and Print and Canon (South West) Ltd. The M.C.A. (Motor Cycle Assc.) were asked, and agreed, to help and together with publicity also operated a helicopter service to and from the circuit for visiting journalists and guests. The Canon Company had been involved at Farleigh for four years with the supply of typewriters, photocopiers and fax machines and these together with other office facilities produced the best working conditions for the press ever seen at motocross in England.

The usual grandstands were there for the public and guest facility sites (some with further grandstand accommodation) had been taken by four or five companies. New type toilet and shower units were used which were of the very highest standard with hot and cold water on tap.

The nett result was the best 500cc British Moto Cross Grand Prix ever run. A very large crowd, 25,000, saw the event and what was even better, they saw a British winner.

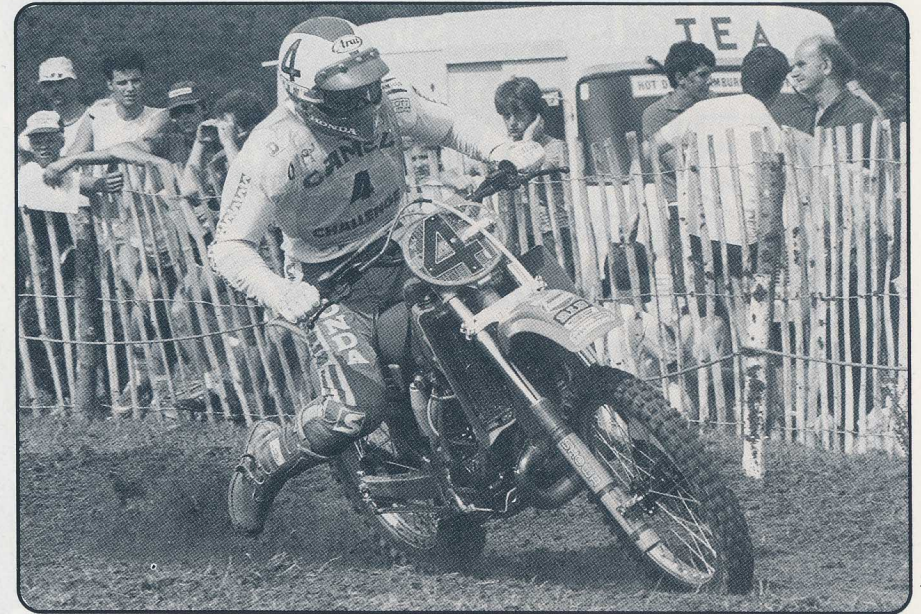
It had always been everybody's hope that Dave Thorpe could win at Farleigh and indeed he did so and also went on to win the world championship. Racing was close and it was never to be a runaway

victory although Dave won both races. The Australian Jeff Leisk was never more than a few seconds away and proved a popular second place man with Kurt Nicoll taking third.

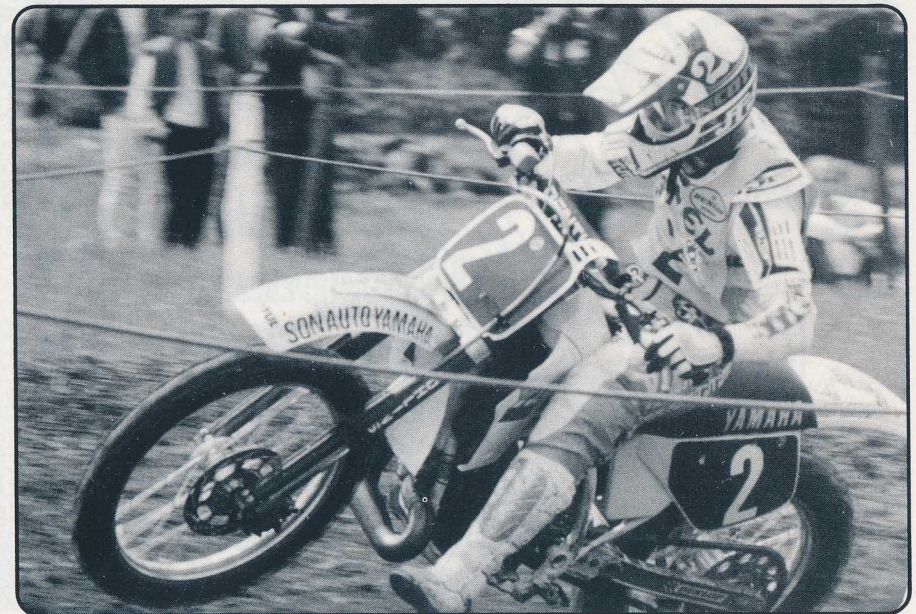


The supreme racer Hakan Carlqvist (Yamaha).

But this seems to have been the last major motocross of the era - nothing is to run in 1990. Not that it means the end of the Farleigh Castle story. Fifty two years of running motor cycle sport on the various circuits are not quickly forgotten and we can be sure to see many more exciting days racing there in the years ahead. The West Wilts Motor Club is as strong as ever and I'm sure its enthusiasts will want to be back in 1991 on the circuit they regard as their own.



Britain's World Champion Graham Noyce (Honda).



The 1986 250cc World Champion Jackie Vimond on his Sonauto Yamaha.

Transporter Graphics

Labels

Signs for
the Clubman
& the Pro

for the:
Sportsman
& the Trade

**CITAGLEN
SIGNCENTRE**

Pens
Logos
Fascias
Banners
Magnetics
Site Boards
Windspinnners
Window Visors
Pavement Signs
Window Graphics
Promotion Stickers
PVC Business Cards

Avonside Enterprise Park
Melksham Wilts - 0225 700100

"WE'RE STILL HERE IN 1990"

RALPH MERRETT

MOTOR

AND

GENERAL ENGINEER

LOWER WHARF, NORTHGATE STREET,

DEVIZES

Tel: Devizes 2641

SLEIGHTHOLMES

OF

TEL: 752019 **TROWBRIDGE** TEL: 753291

1904 - 1990

NISSAN AGENTS

Congratulate

West Wilts Motor Cycle Club

on their

55th Anniversary



'Britain's Favourite' - David Thorp World 500cc Champion 1985 - 1987 - 1989.

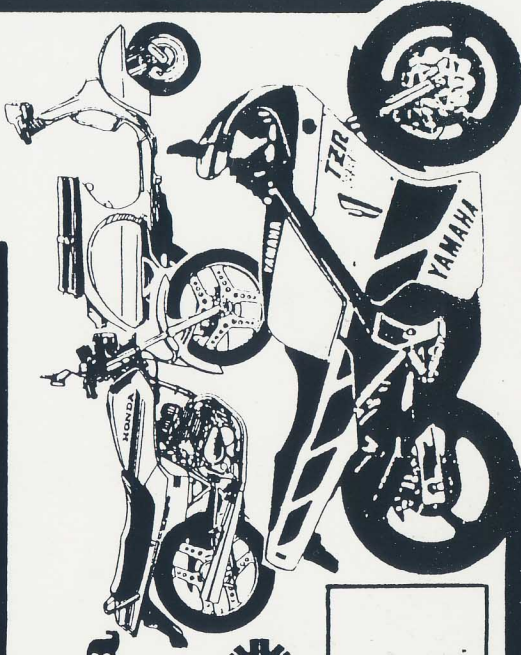
*We are pleased to have been associated with Farleigh Castle
and The West Wilts Motor Club from 1933 - 1990*

**FROM MOPEDS TO
SUPERBIKES**

**CHEQUERS OF
CHIPPENHAM**

'SERVICE SECOND TO NONE'

**"FROM MOPEDS TO SUPERBIKES
WE HAVE SIXTY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE"**



vespa



- * QUALITY USED BIKES ALWAYS AVAILABLE
- * PART EXCHANGE WELCOME
- * MOT'S & MOT PREP
- * FREE MOTORCYCLE TRAINING
- * LARGE RANGE OF HELMETS
- * LEATHERS & ACCESSORIES
- * CREDIT FACILITIES
- * TRAINED MECHANICS

(WRITTEN DETAILS ON REQUEST)



(0249) 655225

LOWDEN GARAGE, CHIPPENHAM, WILTS.