

Motorcycle RACING

**'Works' bike
beater**



Herron: GP facts of life

Our new hope?

Grant's nightmare

Plus amazing shots
of racing spills



Motorcycle RACING

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**COVER: Tom Herron on the Mococheck
Honda at this year's TT and Clive Padgett
on his 250cc Yamaha.**

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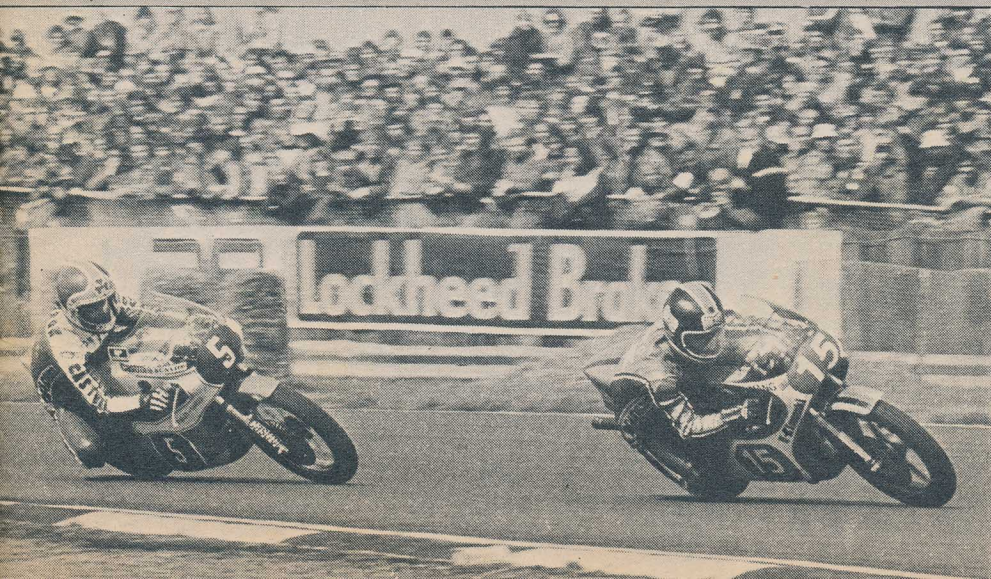
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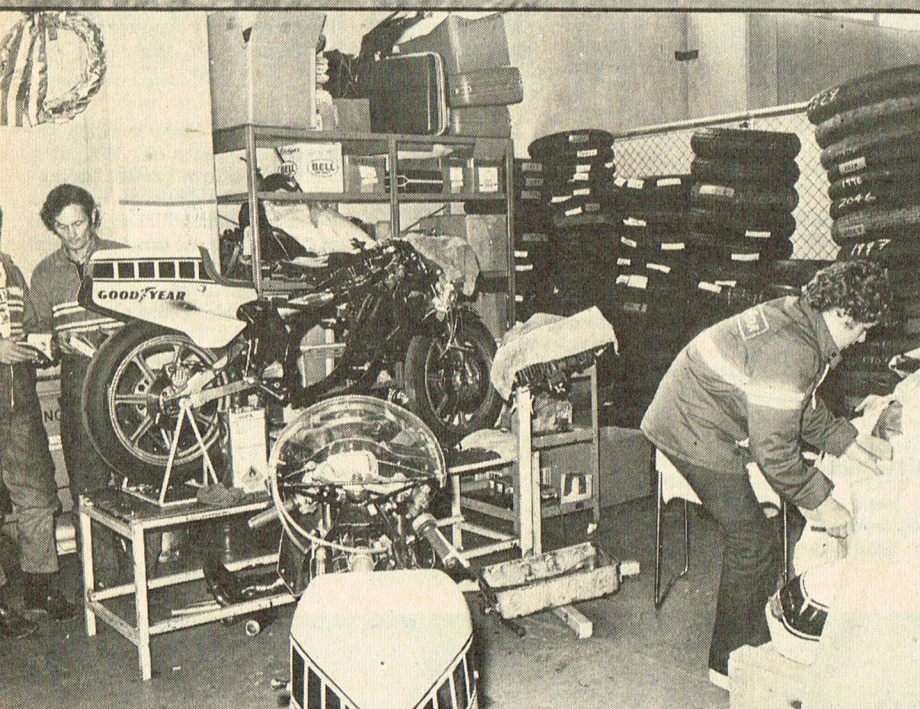
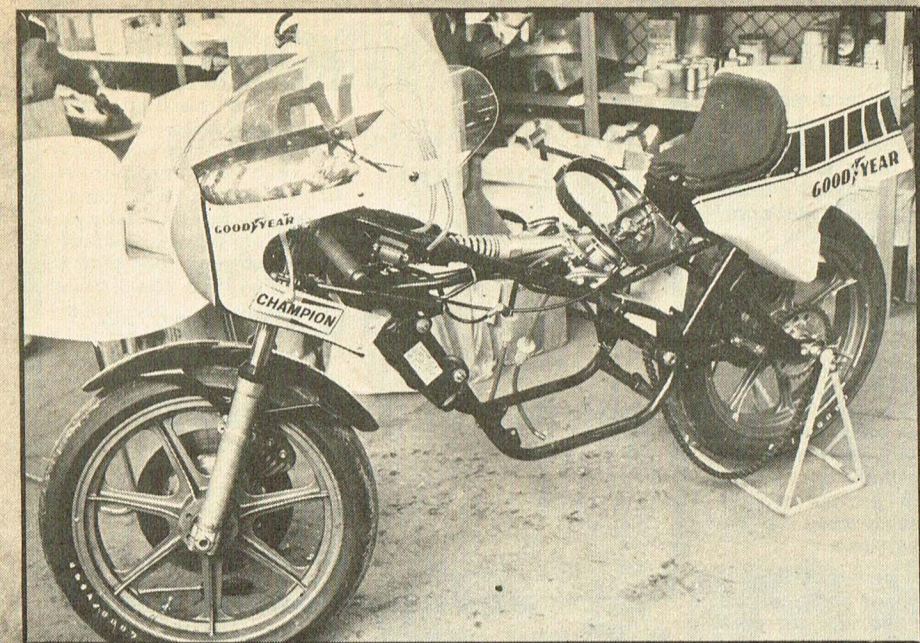
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Above left: The frame that Kenny Roberts used in this year's 250cc world championship. It was built in the States to Kel Carruthers' specification and was lighter than the factory unit.

Left: In the Yamaha America compound Trevor Tilbury (left) and Nobby Clark — both at the rear of the picture — check their records for what stock of parts is needed on the next trip. On the work bench is the Roberts 500 Yamaha. The picture also shows the vast stock of Goodyear tyres that are on hand.

Above: Time for some serious thinking! Kenny Roberts (left) and Kel Carruthers take stock of the situation.



Putting it all to the test — Roberts gets that knee right down.

John Brown ventures into the race-shop where the championship bikes are fettle

A SMALL BUT rapidly expanding corner of a very ordinary factory unit on a light industrial estate on the outskirts of Amsterdam is fast becoming the nerve-centre for Yamaha's European racing effort.

Works teams and private riders all make regular visits to the workshop area to take full advantage of the facilities that range from washing machines to dynos and a rolling road.

The exclusive Yamaha racers' club took off almost as soon as Yamaha NV moved in to the workshop at Uithorne early in 1973. Although the primary function of the unit was not road racing but for testing bikes for homologation in Europe, testing machines before they went on the market and to handle outboard boat engines, it did not take long for an area to be set aside for the racers.

Now it is the recognised base for the three teams operated under the Yamaha banner and it is also the accepted stopping off point for privateers as they move round Europe from one grand prix to another.

Spares and motorcycles are not stocked at Uithorne but anything required by the racing fraternity is shipped there direct from the factory in Japan.

When riders and mechanics move in anywhere they are inclined to take over and the man in charge, workshop man-

ager Jerry Wood, has a pretty tough time making sure this does not happen at Uithorne.

"I have to insist the regular work goes on because we have a full programme of testing, development and research on the road bike side to carry out," he said. "Racing people are inclined to think that the world revolves round them so I have to keep a pretty tight rein on them while they are here so that the normal running of the place is not upset."

But when the racers descend Jerry can't help but get involved in their problems. "I seem to do everything from organising hospital visits for treatment for sick children to making the machine room available for repairs to be carried out," he said.

"We have also had washing machines installed so that the wives can catch up on all the washing that has piled up."

Currently using Uithorne as a base are Johnny Cecotto who rides for the official Japanese factory team, Kenny Roberts backed by Yamaha America and Takazumi Katayama who has works bikes and operates under Team Sarome. In addition riders controlled by Yamaha importers in Europe and overseas can use the facilities.

"I really is a great benefit for a team to come here," said Jerry. "They have all the tools and machines they need to hand and they can get on with machine preparation in peaceful surroundings."

Although there always seems to be someone in the racing area, it is obviously busier during the grand prix season and especially when the events are in that corner of Europe.

In typical Japanese fashion the teams are kept well apart when they are there to retain what seems to be the all important air of secrecy.

Each team is in a compound and work is carried out on the Cecotto machine behind closed doors. "Strictly no admittance" reads the notice and it does mean everyone. Not even Kel Carruthers working on the Roberts bike in an adjoining

Inside Yamaha's nerve-centre

wired off area is allowed to have a peep. In the early days there was a slight mix-up between the racing and the road bikes but now things are getting well organised. One section of the 2,300 square metre area devoted to motorcycles is kept strictly for the racers and Jerry hopes to improve things even more in the future.

"The situation was relieved a bit when the moto cross department moved out to Zolder," he said, "and we are getting a little bit more room to move about in now."

No parts are actually made at Uithorne and there is not a drawing board but a certain amount of development work has been carried out there.

The current project is the three cylinder 350 that Takazumi Katayama raced last year but at the moment things are quiet. "Development is low key on the three at the moment but the project has not been shelved," said Yamaha NV's Rod Gould. "It is not as far advanced as we hoped at the start of the season, but we are still testing at Zolder from time to time."

Development started in 1974 with the 125cc machine that Kent Andersson raced. He was working in partnership with Trevor Tilbury who now spends the race season with the Roberts team, and is

Inside Yamaha's nerve-centre

therefore more involved with his rider's 500-4 than the experimental three.

After the 125 a three cylinder 500cc machine was developed but this was never raced and a switch was made to convert it to a 350cc machine.

Gradually the parts were designed and brought together with the crankshaft and barrels being made specially in Germany, while the rest of the engine was made from standard Yamaha parts.

When Kent left Yamaha and went back to work in Sweden Trevor carried on with the project and is still in charge of it. "It really is thanks to Trevor that Katayama won the world championship last year," said Rod. "He is an excellent mechanic and designer. Although he has joined forces with Kel in the Roberts team he still works here quite a lot with Nobby Clarke, another member of the Carruthers set-up."

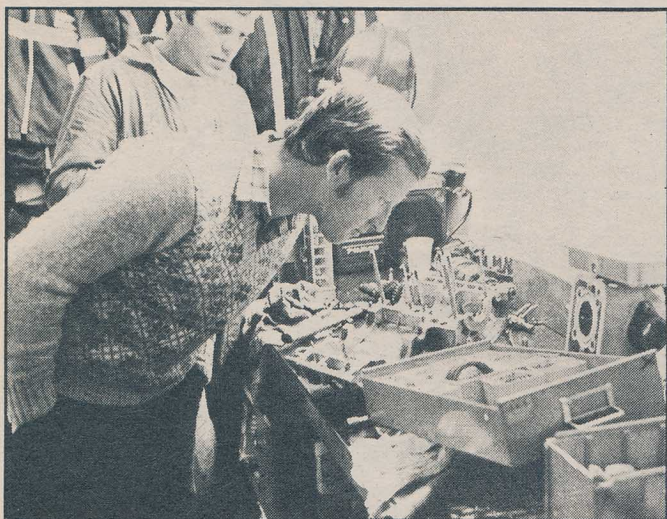
The special exhaust valves that have

been fitted to the 500cc machines this year to improve acceleration were sent to Uithorne for fitting. "Like so many things they were developed in Japan and slotted on over here," said Rod.

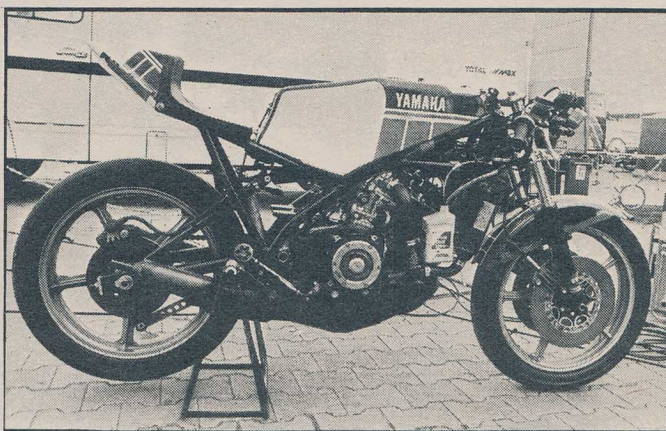
With the exception of the triple, the Amsterdam set-up is not a recognised area for race machine development although an engine or machine may occasionally arrive for testing.

The great thing about the set-up is that it is an ideal base or meeting place for Yamaha riders. Direct contact can be made with Japan and if spares are required it is far better to send them to a central point like this, rather than have them following riders round Europe for months.

The workshops are situated within easy reach of Yamaha NV's headquarters where the whole European operation of the company is controlled, so communications world wide presents no problem.



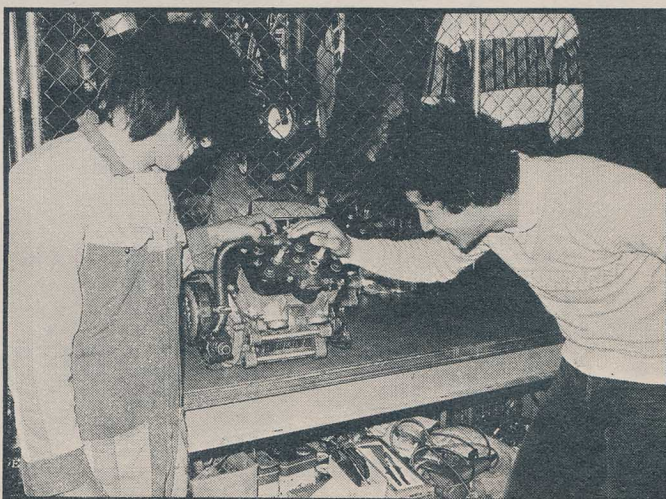
Kenny Roberts checks on the spares situation during a two-day break at the Dutch race headquarters. At the rear, working on a 500 crankcase, is Trevor Tilbury.



Although the Dutch Yamaha race shops are not directly involved in development or production, this three cylinder 350 machine that took Takazumi Katayama to the world title last year, was the work of Yamaha NV. The man closely associated with development was Trevor Tilbury.



Out in the workshop Kel Carruthers gets down to the task of welding a damaged exhaust pipe. The race team have the use of the machine shop that is regularly used by normal staff.



Takazumi Katayama (right) takes a look at his re-built 250 Yamaha motor. Although he runs works machines his sponsorship comes from Sarome. He is one of many Yamaha riders who makes regular visits to Uithorne.