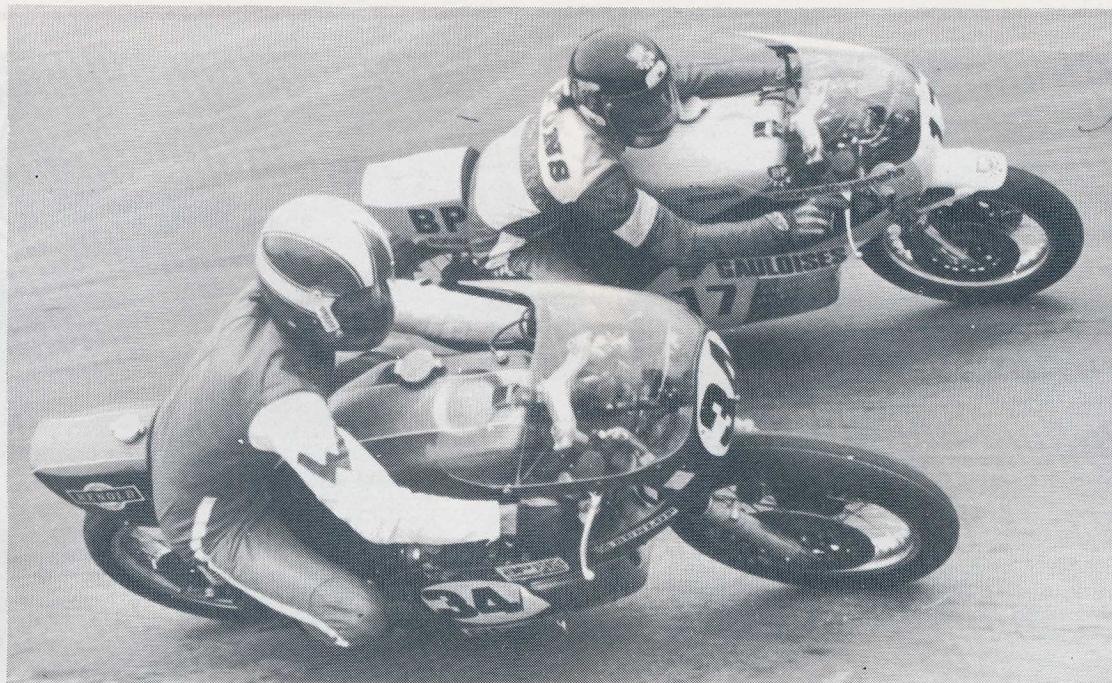


Race of the Year

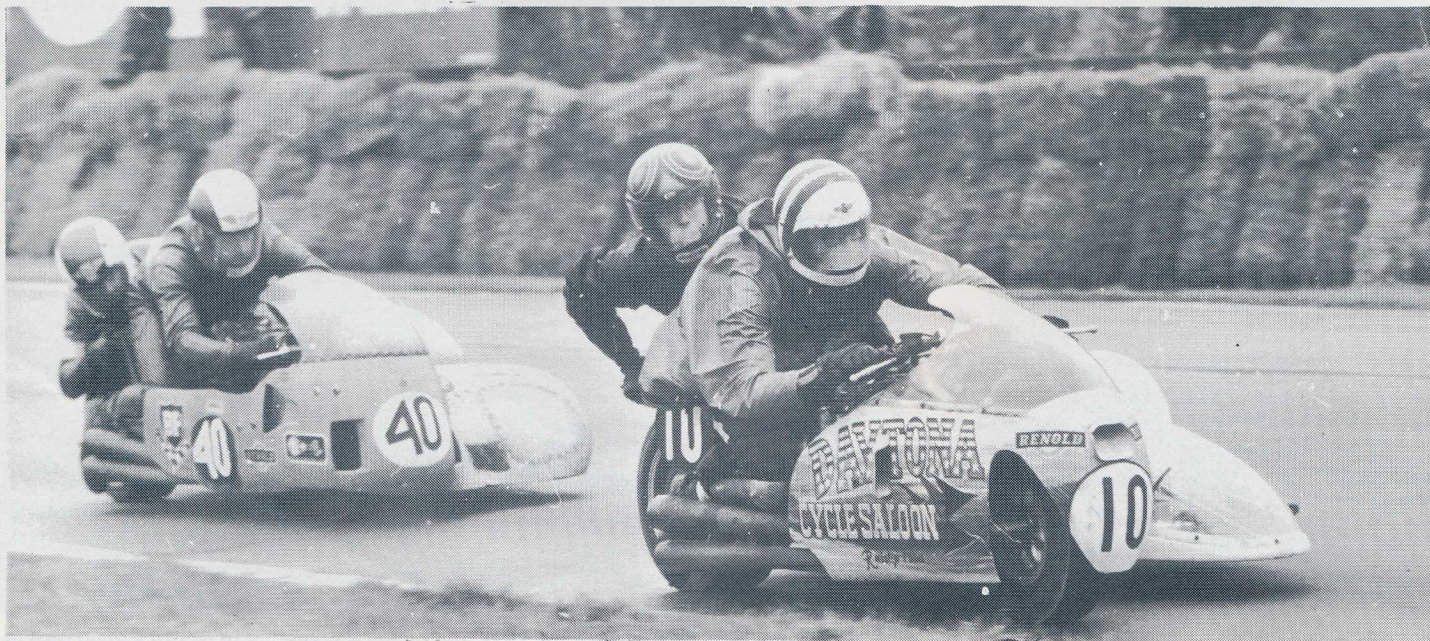


MALLORY PARK

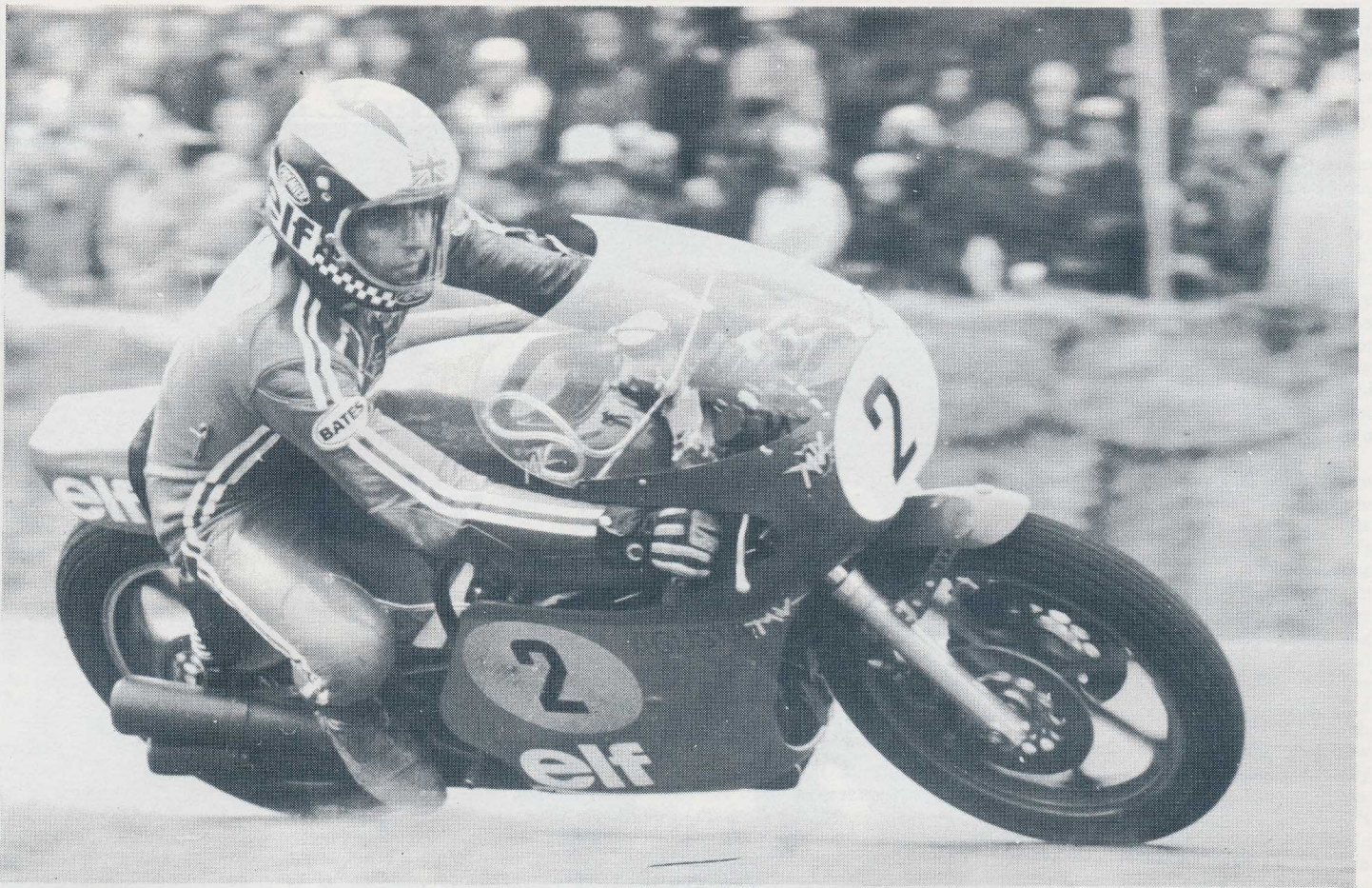
John Williams, who finished fourth, on the inside, with Patrick Pons, fifth. Both rode Yamahas in this September 14 meeting.



Race of the Year . . . everybody was changing tyres; Olivier Chevallier taking full advantage of Gauloise sponsorship; at the finish – Dave Aldana, left, who finished second, with Barry Sheene, the winner, and Mick Grant, third.



Derek Jones/Brian Ayres (850 Daytona, 10) and Alan May/Mick Gray (841 Weslake).



Above: Phil Read (MV Agusta) in the 500 Race. Below: Mallory began with a wet 350 final. The only seeded rider, Pons, leads the field into Gerards.



SPORT COMMENTARY

Race of the Year, and the "International"

YOU CAN'T win 'em all. But to stop Barry Sheene doing so it would seem a broken leg is necessary. As good a racing cert as there ever was likely to be, Sheene duly obliged his fans with a win at the Race of the Year at Mallory Park but who, if indeed any, gave the American Dave Aldana any chance – but he confirmed his Easter match races form with a brilliant second place, having at one stage had the temerity to overtake Sheene and lead the race. Both he and Sheene had problems with their bikes but while Sheene's cured itself there was no way Aldana's clutch was going to improve, so he had to give best to his team-mate.

There are always "ifs" to the result of any event, and our ifs are based on what might have happened had Barry Ditchburn not crashed in practice, and if Aldana's clutch had not played up. But ifs do not affect the record book, and so, for the record, Sheene won from Aldana with Mick Grant third on the Kawasaki.

Although he did not know it at the time, as he popped the champagne cork and most of the contents of the bottle on those around him, there was already the makings of quite a cloud enveloping Sheene's silver lining for it was at Mallory that he hit his knee at the Esses, and that in turn led one week later to his famous and very painful wheelie. The publicity he earned must

have made Dave Taylor green with envy. The resultant broken leg cost him his F750 title not to mention a lot of start money and denies him the chance of defending his Superbike title at the final Brands meeting that will be reported here next month.

It could well be argued that for the second time this year tyres had led to his breaking a leg for it must be the super grip that enabled him to be so far over that his knee clouted the ground. Which all very conveniently leads us to the question of tyre development, and the curious path down which it is going at present. We have long thought that the four-wheeled Formula 1 monstrosities were doing little for the everyday motorist, for whom we see little future in fitting aerofoils and ft-wide tyres. Little do we think that the wet, dry and intermediate tyre problem would inflict itself upon the bike world, but with hindsight it had to happen. As a result, at Assan anxious eyes scanned the cloudy sky trying to decide what tyres to use. Elsewhere the police had made up minds by refusing to allow racing with slicks, and one finds that people are ill-advised on the Continent to argue with the local constabulary whose lo, contrary to Gilbertian beliefs, is a happy one making that of ordinary folks not such a happy one!

There was no such decision in Holland; in fact,

indecision reigned as officialdom made it known that those using slicks would be noted and, if it rained, they would be called in for a tyre change. So riders were then left to make up their own mind for if they fitted rain tyres and it stayed dry, the tyres would not last the race distance.

It introduces a gambling element into races which we find both unnecessary and dangerous. Some idea of what can happen when using the wrong tyres for wet weather was there for many to see at the four-wheeled grand prix at Silverstone. Racing is costly enough, with a pair of tyres around £50, without making it necessary to have *three* sets. At Mallory, for example, riders used slicks for practice on Saturday, "wets" for practice on Sunday, and back to the dry type for racing. Changing a tyre is time-consuming and time, like money, is something that racers do not have a lot of – which is one reason we hope a one-tyre rule will soon be applied.

If it does not come in, then road-racers will no doubt wish to attend ISDT practice sessions to get their tyre-changing up to scratch, for there seemed to be a lot of it going on at this year's event in the Isle of Man. It even led to the downfall of the redoubtable Czech Trophy team; for their contingent this year, when they were hoping for a record six wins in a row, nothing went right. One lucky fellow (or incompetent) changed his tube but must have nipped the new one, which would not inflate, so he set off with it flat to try and keep time. At the Press welcome, Stanley Basnett, who had planned the route, drew attention to the fact that the distance covered by the trial over the past three years had got less, which underlined the difficulties each country is having in being able to put on the trial at all. He had been given only a year to prepare it all and to those uninitiated folk we assure you that is hardly



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ISDT: A warning to competitors about reckless riding on the road

enough time. But do it he did, and very well too, though we think he would agree with us that there was not enough rough-going. Indeed, it was not until the pouring rain of Tuesday night that the trial took on the severity that it needs to sort the men from the boys.

It has already been written that the golden jubilee of the event could be the last and those who saw the riding on the first day in the Island would agree that with the sort of exhibition riders put on then it is probably best for our image if it is buried right now. That such an obvious dyed-in-the-wool enthusiast as Mr Basnett would be compelled to address the team managers reflects the anxiety of responsible people, and for that reason it is worth quoting in full the text as issued for those who were not there. It read as follows:

"You were spoken to last night but you did not listen. We have had enough - your riders are riding like lunatics.

They are exceeding the legal speed limits in towns and villages, passing traffic on both sides, cornering too fast and going wide on corners, even taking to the pavement.

We have had complaints from the public and the police. If your riders continue to act in this manner we shall stop the Trial.

You are doing nothing to improve the image of motorcycling - please ride sensibly on public roads and be courteous in towns and villages. The future of the trial depends on your conduct here in 1975.

The Chief Constable of the Isle of Man - Mr Frank Weedon - is a keen sportsman and a very tolerant man - but there is a limit beyond which he is not prepared to go. The Chief Constable requires me to inform you that he expects from now on improved behaviour from your riders. Unless this happens the police will be forced by the pressures from the public and the ordinary road user to take steps to stop your riders and penalise them.

MAKE SURE YOUR RIDERS ARE AWARE OF THIS INSTRUCTION. IT IS YOUR DUTY AS TEAM MANAGERS TO ADVISE THEM."

It was then pointed out that the FIM Code meant any rider convicted of an offence against the Road Traffic Acts would be excluded without appeal.

Riding exuberance did tone down somewhat after that salutary warning but the dangers consequent upon using a lot of road going were there for all to see. For our part we were glad that the trial was not being held on the mainland.

The new scoring system for the trial meant that most journalists were in a fairly confused state of mind as to who might or might not get a gold medal at the end of it all. When the final count was made 71 had achieved that honour while 25 got their silvers and 71 a bronze.

So in 1975 it could be said that silver winners were a more select band of men. Out of 307 starters, 140 retired or were excluded. Jeff Smith rode as only he can with that oh so deceptive relaxed and slow looking style, quipping at weigh-in that he was "just a starter, not a finisher". If one looked far enough then there must have been many rides that qualified for special mention, but for us the finest was by Dick Mann, still only 41, who was riding for the first time just because he wanted to finish in an International Six Days. His record makes him what we call a real sporting motorcyclist.

Technically, it was one event that was starved of interest for enthusiasts as the only four-stroke, apart from the three Triumphs, was a Yamaha single. Of the rest, the Hercules Wankel sounded beautiful and a couple of Rokon automatics lasted the week, the prototype having first been seen, though not entered, at the 1971 event. All the rest were conventional two-strokes looking very much the same one to another, which only served to underline the character and beauty of the 1951 ISDT AJS twin being ridden round by an enthusiast.

It will be sad if the ISDT dies, but it surely will if surfaced roads have to be used to the extent they were this year, but what makes us even more sad is that we missed the Scott Trial because of the clash of dates. And that underlines the difficulty of holding the event, for the FIM decrees it shall be held in September but they were prepared to waive the rule so that it could be held in this its jubilee year in October instead. The ISDT and Scott have one thing in common. They need land and lots of it. How long they both last is very much in the hands of both competitors and spectators.

ITEMS

DUAL-PURPOSE SAFETY JACKET

A REVERSIBLE reflective safety jacket for both day and night use has been introduced by Cowling Signs and Displays. Called the model RR, one side is highly fluorescent for daytime visibility and the reverse side has retro-reflective sealed glass beaded panels for maximum night-time safety. The term "retro-reflective" describes what is in effect an advance on the cats-eye principle. Light is reflected back from the beads, which due to their spherical surface make the jacket highly visible to approaching traffic from any angle. The glass beads are hermetically sealed under a clear UV-resistant p.v.c., ensuring that reflectivity is permanent.

The jacket is made from non-flammable unlaminate p.v.c. and is plastic welded, making it "virtually indestructible". It is light, and easy to slip on, with one loop catch button. Two colours are available - blood-orange and lime yellow. Price is £1.98 with discounts for quantity.

BIG KAWASAKI MOVES AHEAD

SOARING SALES figures of the Z1 900 c.c. model for the January to August period this year have given Kawasaki 14 per cent of the over-700 c.c. prestige sector of the UK market, making them number one Japanese company in this category and putting them ahead of rivals.

For the month of August, in the 500 c.c. and over category, Kawasaki took a 15.9 per cent share, thereby overhauling the sales of Honda, the overall market leader.

Kawasaki UK sales and marketing director John Norman said: "In line with our specialist marketing policy, the remarkable efforts of our dealers this year prove the point that we don't need a dealership on every street corner in order to make a positive impact on the market and to satisfy increasing demands of our very discerning customers.

"Despite the meteoric rise in total two-wheel sales during 1975 and continuing high demand for our popular range, Kawasaki are on target with the share of the market at which we were aiming.

"In line with Kawasaki moving into number two position in the all-important US market, Kawasaki UK's future plans are aimed at continuing growth and expansion."

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