

BRITAIN'S ONLY WEEKLY BIKING MAGAZINE

ON SALE WEDNESDAY
WEEK ENDING 30th JULY 1983 50p

MOTOR CYCLE WEEK



Silverstone Showdown: GP preview inside
REPORTS: British Motocross GP, Race of Aces
ROADTEST: Bitten by Hesketh's Vampire

MOTOR CYCLE WEEKLY

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ON SALE WEDNESDAY
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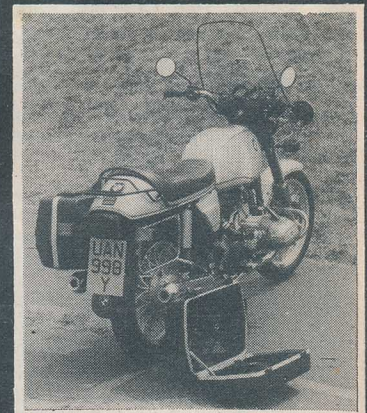
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- 4 NEWS: The week's shock, horror, drama, sensations rounded up by our foot-in-the-door News Editor Chris Myers.
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- 7 BRITISH 500cc MOTOCROSS GRAND PRIX: The Hakan Carlqvist-Andre Malherbe duel for the world championship continued at Farleigh Castle on Saturday before thousands of fans and millions of TV viewers. Relive the excitement by reading Jack Burnicle's account of what promised to be the most thrilling motocross encounters for years.
- 12 RACE GOSSIP: Sports Editor Nick Harris and Brendan Quirk reflect the tension in the road racing world in the build-up to Silverstone this weekend.
- 14 RACE OF ACES: They would have been cracking a few tubes at Snetterton on Sunday if Australian sensation Paul Lewis repeated his recent success at Donington on his British road racing debut. Fellow antipodean Brendan Quirk was at the Norfolk circuit to see if it was another 'beaut' occasion for the boy wonder.
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- 21 HESKETH VAMPIRE ROAD TEST: Stewart Boroughs sinks his own teeth into his Lordship's updated £6,000 superbike. Read his views before you do the same.
- 25 SILVERSTONE SHOWDOWN: Nick Harris likens the Freddie Spencer-Kenny Roberts clash in the British Grand Prix on Sunday to a world championship confrontation of a very different kind and himself boxes clever in a bid to pick the winners in our six-page Silverstone preview, which also includes an insight by Peter Clifford into the Roberts 'training camp'.
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- 65 KICKSTART ARENA TRIAL: Alan Wright reports this tailored-for-TV spectacular at Lord Hesketh's Easton Neston (sounds like a yoghurt, doesn't it!) estate last Friday and Saturday and the rest of the trials news.
- 66 SPEEDWAY: Stewart Boroughs reports on world champion Bruce Penhall's decision to make a comeback. Plus all the results and fixtures.



IN COLOUR

COVER: Rivals on and off the track . . . Freddie Spencer and Kenny Roberts indulge in a little lighthearted pre-British GP arm 'wrestling'—but they'll be fighting for real on the track at Silverstone this weekend. LEFT: Graham Noyce leads Hakan Carlqvist in an early-season 500cc motocross GP and was looking to do likewise at his 'home' world championship round at Farleigh Castle last Sunday.

At the sound of the bell...

Nick Harris previews the bout of the year

LORDS, Ladies and Gentlemen . . . Silverstone Promotions are proud to present the heavyweight contest of the year on Sunday.

In the blue Honda corner, from Shreveport, Louisiana, stands fresh-faced 'Fast Freddie' Spencer; in the red Yamaha corner is 'King Kenny' Roberts, the former world champion from California.

The championship bout is over 28 rounds of the 2.93-mile Northamptonshire circuit for the Marlboro British Grand Prix title.

After nine hard-fought meetings so far, 21-year-old Spencer just leads 31-year-old Roberts on points with only three more nail-biting bouts to go.

With the supporting bill including Randy Mamola, Boet van Dulmen, Takazumi Katayama, Ron Haslam, Marco Lucchinelli, Eddie Lawson, Jack Middelburg, Barry Sheene, Raymond Roche, Keith Huewen and Marc Fontan I think you'll agree we have an afternoon of incident-packed excitement for your enjoyment.

Both major contestants have been tuning up for the contest at their own private training camps back home in the States and they arrive in Britain in great shape for the battle that lies ahead.

Kenny has outpointed his opponent in their last two contests in Belgium and Holland while Freddie has seen his massive 26-point lead gradually reduced by the former champion, who's desperate to win back his crown before he retires next season.

In last year's contest 'King Kenny' was knocked out on the very first bend while 'Fast Freddie' finished a worthy runner-up to Italian Franco Uncini, but from his Californian training camp the man in the Yamaha corner explained he will not be caught cold in the first round this time.

"Even though last year's race is a bad memory after I got on to the painted line at Copse and fell off it has not changed my opinion of the circuit", he said after a sparring session at Laguna Seca last week.

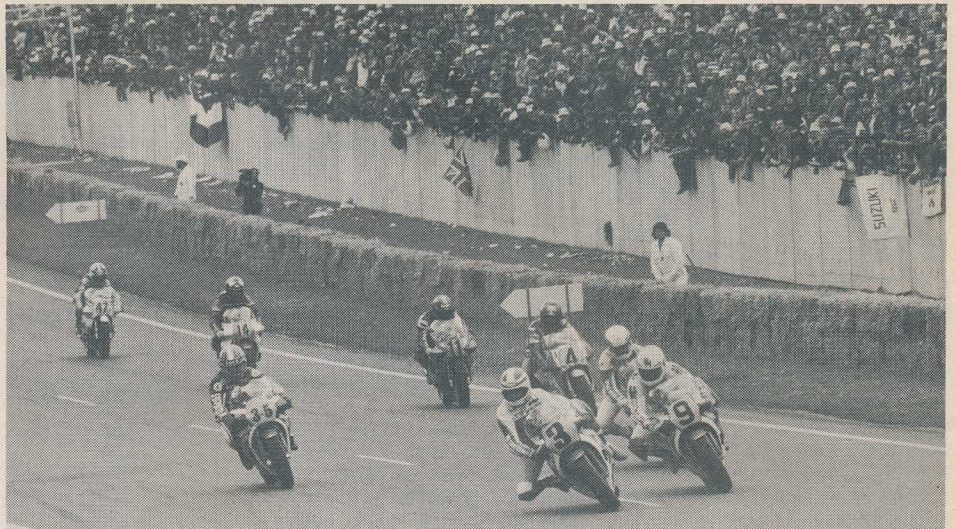
"Silverstone is one of my favourite tracks. There's a lot of fourth, fifth and sixth gear work and our bikes work real well on the high-speed stuff, and I think I can win there."

While the two American heavyweights are bound to be slogging it out at the front, is there any chance of anybody else joining them to make it a three or four-cornered scrap?

Two years ago Dutchman Jack Middelburg really upset the form book by beating the works men on his private Yamaha, but the chance of a privateer repeating his performance this year is as remote as a return to the ring by Mohammed Ali.

It's to the likes of works Suzuki men Randy Mamola and Dutchman Boet van Dulmen, the Honda trio of Ron Haslam, Takazumi Katayama and Marco Lucchinelli and Roberts's Yamaha team-mate Eddie Lawson we must look to ruin the Spencer/Roberts party.

The real dark horse could be the Langley Mill battler Haslam on the works Honda, who will have the backing of the partisan ringside crowd. In his first season of grand prix racing the 27-year-old started brilliantly by finishing third in South Africa and France but from that moment



Typical 500cc grand prix action with Freddie Spencer leading Honda team-mates Ron Haslam and Marco Lucchinelli, closely followed by Kenny Roberts (Yamaha) and Virginio Ferrari (Cagiva) while Raymond Roche (Honda) races up the inside.

on his fortunes took a downward turn. He broke his left arm fighting a tank-slapper in Yugoslavia but typically discarded the plaster to finish eighth in Belgium.

"This one really matters. I love racing before a British crowd and contesting a full grand prix season for the first time means I have not been able to ride at home internationals", he explained. "Silverstone is the tops and I will be fit for it."

His Honda team-mate Katayama, the former 350cc world champion, has been in brilliant form this season, finishing second to Roberts on a couple of occasions while Mamola, who's struggled manfully on the disappointing works RG500 Suzuki, had added a new-found grit to his undoubted ability to hold down third place in the championship.

The other works men are certain to be milling about fighting for the leaderboard places without a real chance of ultimate success, and they will be coming under plenty of pressure from the leading privateers seeking glory and world championship points.

The RS500 Hondas have proved the most successful production machines and that experienced grand prix duo of Middelburg and Roche are joined by British-based Australian Wayne Gardner, who will never forget his grand prix debut at Assen when he was involved in Franco

Uncini's crash, and the popular Roger Marshall on the three-cylinder two-strokes.

Swiss ace Sergio Pellandini heads the RG500 Suzuki brigade which includes a bevy of Brits desperate to do well at home. We all know of Barry Sheene's problems and he knows that to the disappointment of everybody in Britain he will be battling for a lower leaderboard position together with Heron team-mate Keith Huewen while Mark Salle, who's impressed experts this season, will be looking to improve on the championship point he earned in Belgium.

Chris Guy will be looking for a change of luck on his Suzuki together with Gary Lingham, New Zealander Stu Avant, TT winner Con Law, Kiwi Dennis Ireland, Norman Brown, Simon Buckmaster, Dave Dean and midlander Steve Henshaw on similar machinery. The British contingent is completed by the experienced Steve Parrish and Welshman Steve Williams.

Then there's young Australian newcomer Paul Lewis, who shocked the international contingent at Donington three weeks ago with his performance on a MKVII RG500 Suzuki and could well be up with the fastest privateers.

It all adds up to a magnificent race, but just watch those two Yanks slogging it out at the front—it will take a brave man to forecast who will be delivering that Frank Bruno style left hand knock out punch at the finish.



LEFT: Jack Middelburg leads Boet van Dulmen and Marc Fontan at the Dutch TT, but van Dulmen will be the focus of attention at Silverstone as he boards the works Suzuki of injured Italian Franco Uncini.

250, 125 AND
SIDE CAR GPs
PREVIEWED
ON NEXT
PAGE

Silverstone showdown



Lavado to the fore

VENEZUELAN Carlos Lavado could be celebrating his first world championship title after the 24-lap 250cc race. He leads Belgian Didier de Radigues by 19 points and with only one round remaining, a win or second place would clinch the title for the 27-year-old Yamaha star.

De Radigues, riding the impressive Chevallier Yamaha, is the only man who can catch the flying South American but he needs to win on Sunday, with Carlos finishing third or below if the final round in Sweden is not just of academic interest.

The 250 class has been a magnificent spectacle this season with as many as ten riders vying for the lead on many occasions, and British fans are in for a real treat when the likes of Herve Guilleux (Kawasaki), Christian Sarron (Yamaha), Thierry Espie, Jean Francois Balde (if he's recovered from his Assen crash), Manfred Herweh (Rotax) and the Yamaha trio of Martin Wimmer, Jacques Cornu and Ivan Palazzese battle for honours round the ultra-fast Northamptonshire circuit.

All British eyes will be focused on 18-year-old Alan Carter whose luck and morale hit rock bottom when he failed to qualify for the Belgian Grand Prix three weeks ago.

Just three months earlier he became Britain's only grand prix victor this season when in only his second world championship race he was the surprised winner of the French Grand Prix at Le Mans. Since then nothing has gone right, with crashes caused by over-exuberance preventing him from gaining another point. Two weeks ago Carter won

the international 250cc race at Donington and the confidence is flowing through his veins.

"Maybe I've been trying to achieve too much too soon", he explained. "But I'm certain of one thing—it's going to give me a lot more confidence racing before a British Grand Prix crowd."

Other British riders returning from their grand prix travels include Tony Head (Armstrong), Graham Young (Waddon), Donnie McLeod (Yamaha), TT star Con Law (EMC), Steve Williams (Yamaha) Australian Graeme McGregor, riding Dr Joe Ehrlich's EMC, and young Paul Tinker on the injured Donnie Robinson's Mitsui Yamaha.

Tiny Spaniard Angel Nieto may have to wait a little longer before he dons his 12th world championship crown although he's a clear favourite to win the 20-lap 125cc race on his works Garelli. He leads teammate Eugenio Lazzarini by 20 points in the championship race, with two rounds to run after Silverstone. Despite his big lead there have been some superb battles in the championship this year, with the Garelli duo having to call upon their vast reserves of experience to fight off the likes of Bruno Kneubuhler (MBA), former 50cc world champion Ricardo Tormo, Johnny Wickstrom, and former champion Pier Paolo Bianchi (Sanvenero).

The sidecar race at Silverstone always provides magnificent racing and this year's 20-lap race should be no exception, with a horde of Britons taking on the top continentals led by championship leaders

MCW SPEED TRAP

MCW will be putting an end to all the speculation about how quick the GP bikes are on Silverstone's straights. As usual our radar gun will be in operation down Hangar Straight during official practice on Friday and Saturday.

Commentator Fred Clarke will tell the viewing public the latest figures after each morning and afternoon practice session. But for more detailed speed information about whether the previous best recorded speeds have been beaten, read next week's extensive Silverstone report.

Just to whet the appetite the fastest machines in each class recorded during practice for the past three British GPs have been: 125s, Ricardo Tormo (Sanvenero), Pier Paolo Bianchi (MBA), Guy Bertin (Motobecane) all 129mph; 250s, Roland Freymond (MBA), Anton Mang (Kawasaki) 139mph; 500s, Takazumi Katayama (Honda) 152mph; sidecars, J. Taylor/B Johansson (Yamaha), R. Biland/K. Waltisperg (LCR), A. Michel/M. Burkard (Seymaz) 138mph.

TIMETABLE

FRIDAY

0900-0940	Practice for 125cc Grand Prix
0955-1035	Practice for 250cc Grand Prix
1050-1130	Practice for 500cc Grand Prix
1145-1225	Practice for Sidecar Grand Prix

Lunchbreak

1400-1440	Practice for 125cc Grand Prix
1455-1535	Practice for 250cc Grand Prix
1550-1630	Practice for 500cc Grand Prix
1645-1725	Practice for Sidecar Grand Prix

SATURDAY

0900-0935	Practice for 125cc Grand Prix
0950-1025	Practice for 250cc Grand Prix
1040-1115	Practice for 500cc Grand Prix
1130-1205	Practice for Sidecar Grand Prix
1220-1245	Practice TT Formula I ACU Championship

Lunchbreak

1400-1435	Practice for 125cc Grand Prix
1450-1525	Practice for 250cc Grand Prix
1540-1615	Practice for 500cc Grand Prix
1630-1705	Practice for Sidecar Grand Prix
1720-1745	Practice TT Formula I ACU Championship

SUNDAY

0630-1045	Coach rides around the circuit
0900-1045	Pit road walk-about for holders of Paddock Transfers
1100	Pernod Parachute Display
1130	Parade of flags of competing nations
1145	Grand Prix practice periods (untimed)
1320	MARLBORO BRITISH GRAND PRIX 125cc 20 laps
1420	MARLBORO BRITISH GRAND PRIX 250cc 24 laps
1505-1515	Marlboro Aerobatic Team Display
1530	MARLBORO BRITISH GRAND PRIX 500cc 28 laps
1640	DAILY EXPRESS BRITISH GRAND PRIX SIDECARS 20 laps
1740	SHELL OILS TT FORMULA 1 RACE 15 laps

Rolf Biland and Kurt Waltisperg on their immaculate LCR Yamaha.

So confident of success are the Swiss pair that they are planning to stop in the race to change tyres, and together with world champions Werner Schwarzel and Andreas Huber (Seymaz Yamaha), last year's winners Egbert Streuer and Bernard Schneiders (LCR Yamaha), Frenchmen Alain Michel and Claude Monchaud (LCR Yamaha) and Japanese aces Masato Kumano and Kunio Takashima (LCR Yamaha) will give the Brits a hard time.

Heading the Brits' challenge on

his conventional outfit is Swindon-based Trevor Ireson with Liverpoolian Donnie Williams in the chair, who lie sixth in the championship. Frank Wrathall and Phil Spendlove (Seymaz Yamaha) are only two places behind them with Mick Barton and Simon Birchall (Yamaha) only one point behind.

Don't rule out Jones and Ayres while Steve Abbott and Shaun Smith (Yamaha), Dennis and Julia Bingham (Yamaha) and Suzuki-powered Mick Boddice and Chas Birks are determined to keep the Union Jack flying in face of the considerable continental challenge.

Formula One—Suzuki benefit?

THE Formula One race will almost certainly be a Suzuki benefit for Rob McElnea and Mick Grant.

Honda men Roger Marshall and Wayne Gardner will be on their relatively heavy steel-framed, wet clutch V-four 850s as opposed to the much lighter, more powerful aluminium-framed versions of the same bike they used in the Isle of Man and at Assen.

While the aluminium-framed bikes, at least Joey Dunlop's machine, were competitive at Assen, the heavier versions the pair will use at Silverstone will be hard-pressed to keep up with the bigger F1 Suzukis.

However, there could well be two privateer cats among the works pigeons. Joey Dun-

lop, riding a 999cc Honda, has been improving his short circuit form with every race and he should not be ruled out. In addition Trevor Nation, having his best ever season, has been harassing the works teams on his Oxford Fairings Suzuki.

On several occasions he has been hard on Marshall's heels and Silverstone, with its long straights, could see him toppling a works rider or two from the first four placings.

Another rider who is certain to do well is Geoff Johnson. He too is Suzuki-mounted and if his bike is in tip-top condition for the race he will be giving the likes of Jimmy Wells, Asa Moyce, Mark Salle and Mick Hunt a hard time for down-the-field placings.

CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

500cc

1 F. Spencer (Honda)	105pts
2 K. Roberts (Yamaha)	100
3 R. Mamola (Suzuki)	69
4 T. Katayama (Honda)	62
5 E. Lawson (Yamaha)	54
6 M. Fontan (Yamaha)	45
7 M. Lucchinelli (Honda)	35
8 F. Uncini (Suzuki)	31
9 R. Haslam (Honda)	23
10 R. Roche (Honda)	15
11 J. Middleburg (Honda) 12; 12 S. Pellandini (Suzuki) and B. van Dulmen (Suzuki) 11; 14 B. Sheene (Suzuki) and K. Huewen (Suzuki) 7; 16 G. Pacci (Honda) and G. Pelletier (Honda) 3; 18 M. Salle (Suzuki) 1.	

250cc

1 C. Lavado (Yamaha)	82pts
2 D de Radigues (Yamaha)	63
3 H. G. Guilleux (Kawasaki)	51
4 C. Sarron (Yamaha)	48
5 T. Espie (Chevallier)	43
6 M. Herweh (Rotax)	40
7 M. Wimmer (Yamaha)	38
8 J. Cornu (Yamaha)	32
J. F. Balde (Yamaha)	26
10 P. Fernandez (Bartol)	26
11 I. Palazzese (Yamaha) 20; 12 T. Rapicault (Yamaha) 16; 13 A. Carter (Yamaha) 15; 14 J. L. Guignabodet (Yamaha) 14; 15 A. Pons (Kobas) 10; 16 R. Roth (Yamaha) and J. Bolle (BGD) 9; 18 B. Luscher (Yamaha) 8; 19 G. Bertin (MBA) 7; 20 T. Head (Armstrong) 6; 21 J. M. Toffolo (Rotax) and R. Freymond (Armstrong) 5; 23 H. Eckl (Yamaha), D. Robinson (Yamaha) and C. Estrosi (Pernod) 3; 26 C. Cardus (Rotax) and M. Matteoni (Yamaha) 2; 28 D. McLeod (Yamaha) and B. Fau (Yamaha) 1.	

125cc

1 A. Nieto (Garelli)	87pts
2 E. Lazzarini (Garelli)	67
3 B. Kneubuhler (MBA)	49
4 R. Tormo (MBA)	46
5 J. Wickstrom (MBA)	44

6 M. Vitali (MBA)	41
7 P. P. Bianchi (Sanvenero)	30
8 F. Gresini (MBA)	20
9 S. Caracchi (MBA)	19
10 G. Waibel (MBA)	17
11 H. Muller (MBA), P. Aldrovandi (MBA), J. C. Selini (MBA) and L. Petroniro (MBA) 16; 15 E. Gianola (MBA) 10; 16 T. M. Pedersen (MBA) and A. Auinger (MBA) 6; 18 J. Jaakola (MBA), L. Piccirillo (MBA) and H. van Kessel (MBA) 5; 21 E. Klein (MBA) 4; 22 S. Dorfinger (MBA), G. Ascareggi (MBA) and W. Perez (MBA) 3; 25 H. Vignetti (MBA) 2; 26 J. Hutteau (MBA) and P. Lagrive (Morbidiello) 1.	

Sideways

1 R. Biland/K. Waltisberg (LCR)	60pts
2 W. Schwarzl/A. Huber (LCR)	42
3 E. Streuer/B. Schneiders (LCR)	37
4 A. Michel/C. Monchaud (Seymaz)	27
5 M. Kumano/I. Takashima (LCR)	26
6 T. Ireson/A. Wooller and D. Williams (Ireson)	20
7 T. van Kempen/G. de Haas (LCR)	16
8 F. Wrathall/P. Spendlove (Seymaz)	14
9 M. Barton/S. Birchall (Windle)	13
A. Zurbrugg/M. Zurbrugg (Seymaz)	13
11 H. Huber/W. Mockel (LCR) 11; 12 D. Jones/B. Ayres (LCR) 10; 13 E. Schons/E. Rosinger (Busch) and T. Niinavaara/W. Kalauch (Yamaha) 7; 15 H. van Drie/W. van Dis (LCR), S. Berger/E. Berger (Yamaha) and M. Kooij/R. Van der Groep (Yamaha) 4; 18 A. Zini/C. Sonaglia (LCR), W. Stroppek/H. P. Demling (LCR Bartol) and D & J. Bingham (Yamaha) 3; 21 H. Hugli/P. Gonin (Seymaz) and J. Madder/E. de Groot (LCR Yamaha) 2; 23 J. Monnin/P. Paul (Seymaz) and S. Abbott/D. Williams (Ham Yam) 1.	

9 B. Kneubuhler (Switzerland, MBA)	
10 W. Perez (Argentina, MBA)	
250cc	
1 M. Wimmer (Germany, Yamaha)	38m 38.89s 109.44mph
2 A. Mang (Germany, Kawasaki)	
3 J. L. Tournadre (France, Yamaha)	
4 F. Freymond (Switzerland, MBA)	
5 J. L. Guignabodet (France, Yamaha)	
6 T. Espie (France, Pernod)	
7 P. Ferretti (Italy, MBA)	
8 C. Lavado (Yugoslavia, Yamaha)	
9 C. Estrosi (France, Pernod)	
10 D. de Radigues (Belgium, Yamaha)	

500cc

1 F. Uncini (Italy, Suzuki)	42m 49.64s 114.62mph
2 F. Spencer (USA, Honda)	
3 Graeme Crosby (New Zealand, Yamaha)	
4 L. Reggiani (Italy, Suzuki)	
5 R. Mamola (USA, Suzuki)	
6 V. Ferrari (Italy, Suzuki)	
7 K. Ballington (S. Africa, Kawasaki)	
8 M. Fontan (France, Yamaha)	
9 L. Becheroni (Italy, Suzuki)	
10 C. Guy (GB, Suzuki)	

Sideways

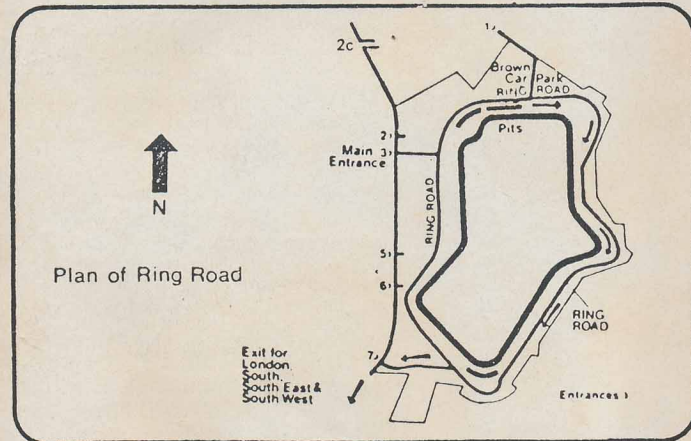
1 E. Streuer/B. Schneiders (Holland, Yamaha)	31m 57.43s 109.91mph
2 W. Schwarzl/A. Huber (Germany, Yamaha)	
3 S. Abbott/S. Smith (GB, Yamaha)	
4 M. Barton/N. Cutmore (GB, Yamaha)	
5 G. Nottingham/S. Johnson (GB, Yamaha)	
6 D. Bingham/J. Bingham (GB, Yamaha)	
7 G. Corbaz/Y. Hunziker (Switzerland, Yamaha)	
8 D. Bayley/B. Bryson (GB, Yamaha)	
9 M. Boddice/C. Birks (GB, Yamaha)	
10 M. Kumano/K. Takashima (Japan, Yamaha)	

1982 SILVERSTONE RESULTS

125cc

1 A. Nieto (Spain, Garelli)	33m 30.90s 105.94mph
2 R. Tormo (Spain, Sanvenero)	
3 P. P. Bianchi (Italy, Sanvenero)	
4 E. Lazzarini (Italy, Garelli)	
5 I. Palazzese (Yugoslavia, MBA)	
6 P. L. Aldrovandi (Italy, MBA)	
7 H. Muller (Switzerland, MBA)	
8 A. Auinger (Austria, MBA)	

GP traffic arrangements



RING ROAD

The main object is to alleviate the congestion at the northern end of the circuit in brown, yellow and purple parking areas by encouraging traffic in this area wishing to travel towards London, the South, South-East and South-West to leave by gate 7. The road will be one-way in a clockwise direction. There may, however, be selected parts which are two-way.

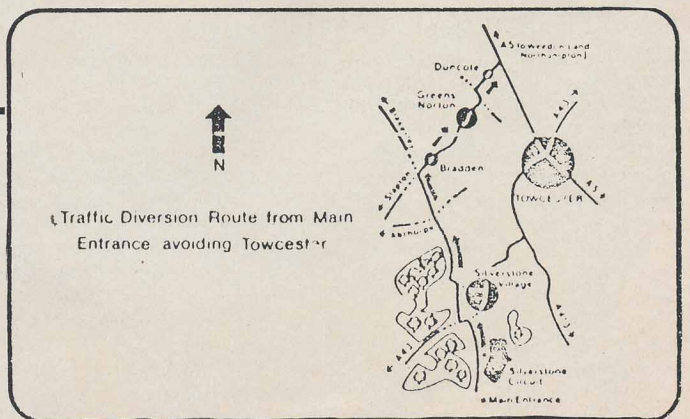
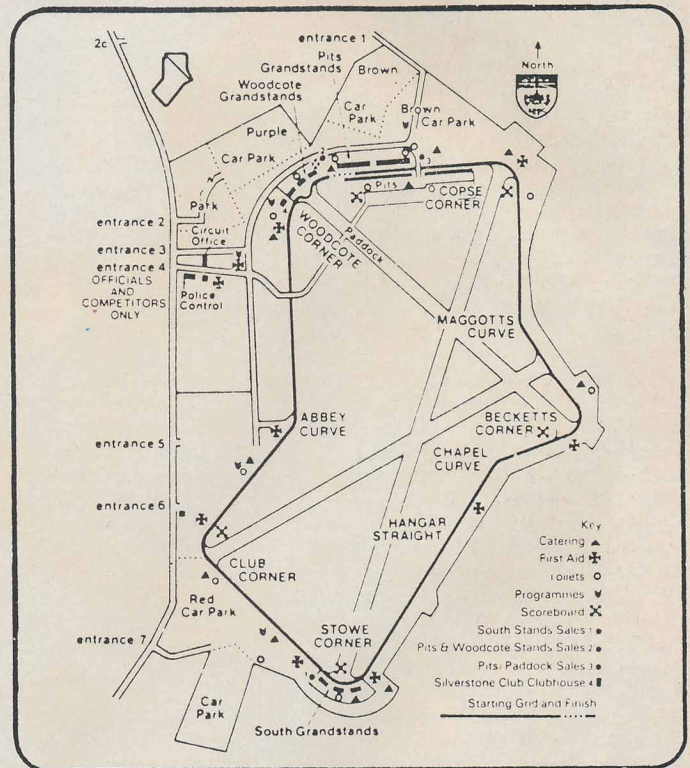
MAIN ENTRANCE

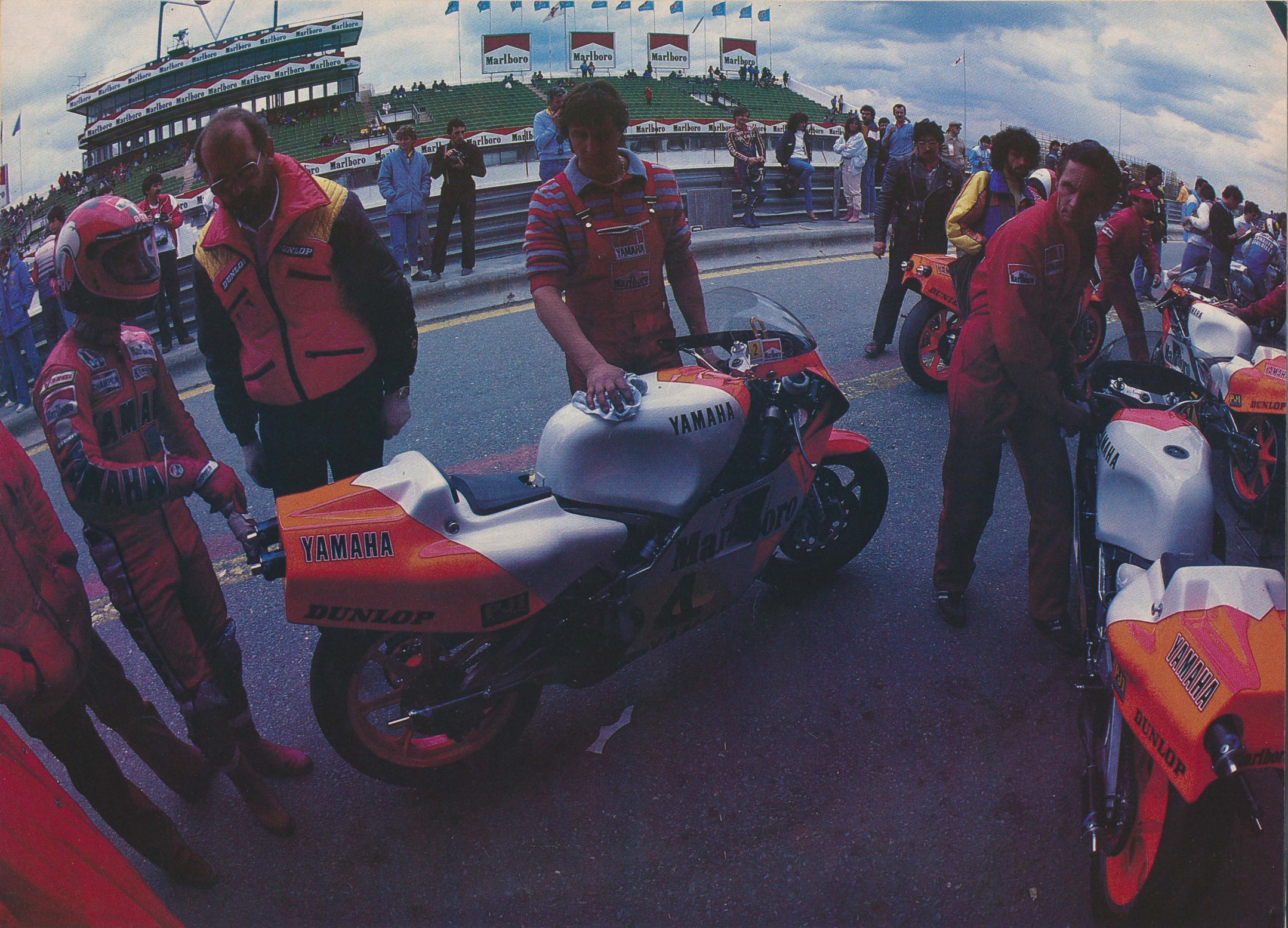
The second important feature for outgoing traffic is the diversions for traffic leaving from the main entrance. It may entail travelling an extra few miles on your route home, but police believe it works effectively. The diversions will be signposted. And traffic may now turn left out of the main entrance from the left hand lanes. Both the diversions and the ring road will be policed and marshalled. With such a vast number of motor cycles and cars delays are inevitable.

TV, radio coverage

THE BBC will be televising the 250cc and 500cc GPs live on Sunday. A Grandstand programme spokesman said the BBC will also show other races, although a decision as to which and when has yet to be made.

RADIO TWO will be broadcasting a two-hour grand prix special on Sunday afternoon starting at 3pm. The programme will be presented by disc jockey Andy Peebles and will include commentary on the 500cc race by MCW's Sports Editor Nick Harris. Throughout the week Radio Two will be carrying reports by Nick on practice.





The Kel and Kenny show

THE warning hooter sounds and down the pit road comes Kenny Roberts on the day-low red and white Marlboro Yamaha. The pit road is crowded with machines, mechanics, riders, photographers, journalists and hangers-on.

It could be practice at any grand prix in any of 12 countries through the hectic season. At each GP there are four practice sessions, usually of 40 minutes' duration, and there is always more to try than time allows.

by Peter Clifford

The works 500s are now so complex and critical of suspension, tyres, carburation and steering geometry that Yamaha for instance must work flat out with two riders, four machines, seven mechanics, a tyre engineer and a suspension expert all through practice to try to put Kenny Roberts and Eddie Lawson on the grid with the best possible machine.

Kel Carruthers, who won the 250 world championship in 1969 on a four-cylinder Benelli, has the responsibility of seeing that the machines are potential race winners. Carruthers has been working with Roberts since before the Californian came to Europe and won the 500cc title in 1978, '79 and '80. The wily Aussie has been involved in racing long enough to look casual as he oversees all operations during practice and race days but that doesn't mean that he is free of worry.

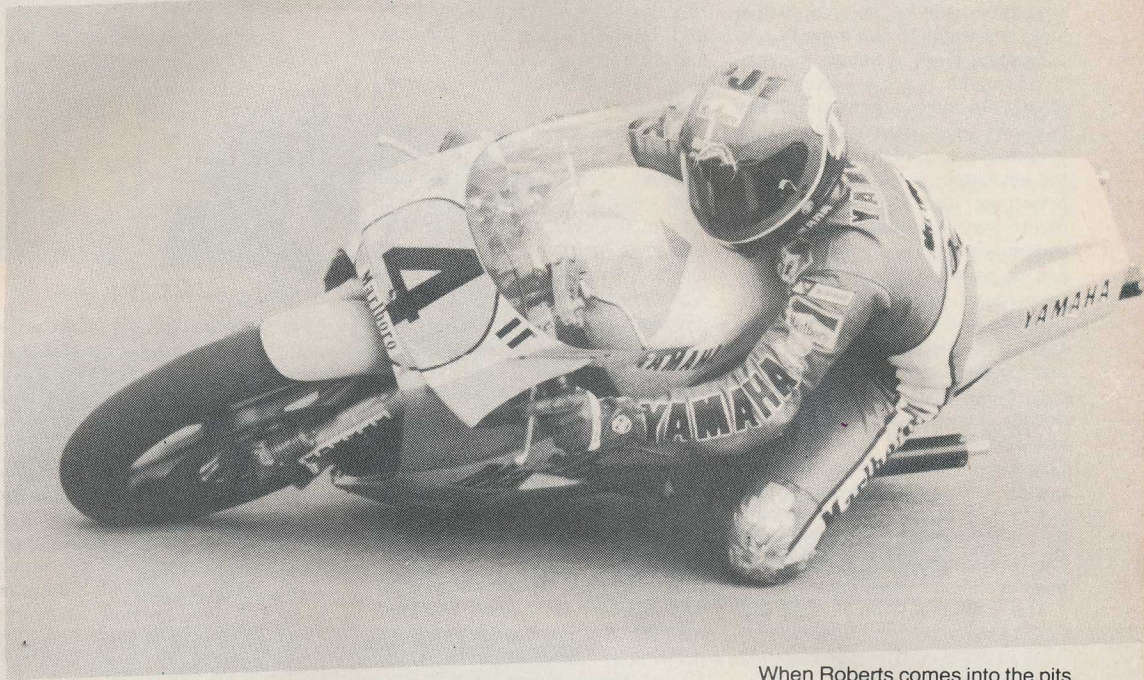
"I worry about whether we have done enough work," says Kel.

"It has got to the point where we work so hard at trying to give the rider the fastest, best-handling machine that we want to give him the bike that will win the race without him having to ride it hard. We can forget that we've got two of the best riders in the world and that they are

IN COLOUR LEFT: Decisions, decisions . . . Kenny Roberts and Peter Ingley decide on the plan of action while Firenze Fanali and Knobby Clarke (right) hold the machines. One machine 'belongs' to each mechanic and it is a matter of some personal pride as to which is used for the race.

ABOVE: Kenny Roberts hard at work on the 500 Yamaha. The two flashes to the top right of the number plate distinguish this as the number two machine.

RIGHT: Kel Carruthers and Peter Ingley discuss a problem with Kenny Roberts.



quite capable of doing well on the bikes even if they aren't perfect."

Throughout practice the riders circulate, returning to the pits at intervals making adjustments, swapping bikes and going out for more practice. It looks like chaos but is all done with machine im-

provement in mind. Learning the circuit has no part of it and for Eddie Lawson, who has not seen many of the circuits before, it has been a difficult year as he has had to get to grips with the tracks in double-quick time and then get on with the machine development.



When Roberts comes into the pits during practice, Carruthers is there to hear his comments. Ideally only one thing—a new tyre, a change to the suspension or carburation—should be tried at a time but there isn't always enough practice to work like that. For instance, although changing carburation may alter handling and tyre performance in the way the machine accelerates out of corners, several changes may have to be made at once for expediency. Carruthers and Roberts decide what is to be done and Carruthers then tells the mechanics.

Tyres are the single most important item on the motor cycle and Dunlop are now working with Yamaha virtually exclusively as the other works teams in the 500 class, Suzuki and Honda, both use Michelin. Peter Ingley spends almost all his time working with Roberts and Carruthers. Roberts reports on the tyres' performance, Ingley records the information and decides on the next tyre to try, Carruthers tells the mechanics to change wheels or the three decide that a suspension change might affect the tyre performance in the desired manner.

Carruthers must keep track of how much practice time remains and make sure that the most important things have all been sorted out before the end of practice. Watching the final practice session at Rijeka for the Yugoslav GP I saw the team make a final decision between two suspension set-ups. So critical was the difference that the same rear wheel and tyre had to be used in each.

After testing one bike, Roberts

Silverstone showdown

waited while the wheel was put in the other bike. This gave him direct, back-to-back comparison with the added advantage that he didn't have to wait for the tyre to warm up before riding flat out. Roberts then had to go out with new tyres, of the type to be used for the race, to give them a few laps to bed them in.

Bedding tyres in before the race is preferable but not essential. At most GPs there are now untimed sessions on the morning of the race to allow this sort of thing to be done. It's advisable, as apart from being better for the riders' peace of mind—they fear that a new tyre is slippery—it does ensure that the tyre is correctly balanced and perfectly round.

At the end of each practice session Carruthers, Ingley, Lawson and Roberts have a debriefing to go over the various things they tried, decide what to do in the next session and what work has to be done. Carruthers then draws up a list to be posted so the mechanics can see what has to be done. Kel is certainly not above getting his hands dirty and takes personal responsibility for any machining or welding.

The Yamaha team is well prepared to keep the machines in good fettle at the circuit. A huge truck with an awning on two sides provides room for the four machines. In the truck is the small lathe and welding gear. Carruthers is so well trusted by Yamaha that he is allowed to make his own alterations to the machines if deemed necessary. This is rare, as the Japanese tend to do all their work in Japan and expect the men in Europe merely to fit new parts. If the compression needs raising or lowering, then that

is down to Carruthers.

It may be hard work, toiling with motor cycles in midsummer heat in Yugoslavia, but while the mechanics work the riders and Carruthers can rest in their huge motorhomes. Team manager Giacomo Agostini has the Marlboro bus in which he and brother Felice can entertain friends and the long string of girls who still chase the ex-world champion.

Carruthers is blessed with a team of reliable mechanics, like Dave "Radar" Cullen who worked last year for Graeme Crosby and is now one of the two men looking after Lawson's machines, and Knobby Clarke, who has worked for more world champions than anyone else, including Hailwood and Ago before joining Roberts for his debut year in Europe.

Kel keeps an eye on everything, occasionally asking a mechanic about a job he has performed but usually trusting his men completely. Carruthers is a fiend for organisation and keeps the team running smoothly; there are others who could organise work but no one else could replicate the special relationship between Carruthers and Roberts. Kel and Kenny are not close personal friends, but the Aussie helped make Roberts the rider he is today. After winning the 250 world title Kel went to ride for Yamaha in the States and before retiring schooled Roberts in the art of road racing.

Roberts' trust in Carruthers is complete and that is at the centre of the team's operation. Roberts is very descriptive when it comes to machine performance but it is Kel who has to decide what alterations



to make to the machine.

For the team members there is no such thing as a nine-to-five regime. Working hours are dictated by the amount to be done, and if that means working until two or three in the morning or even right through the night then that will be done. Between races there is no time for holidays. Driving from one circuit to the next can take several days, then there are machines to be rebuilt before practice can start. If there is no race to drive to immediately the team will return to their base in Bergamo, Italy, or to a circuit for testing. A day off is rare, and even in the off season Kel must spend time in Japan finding out about the new machines and then testing with Roberts and Lawson, either in Japan or California.

Inside the Yamaha awning, where probing eyes are not allowed.

As Carruthers says, the fascination and the frustration of his job is that it is impossible to produce the perfect machine.

"When we tested both the Daytona square fours and the grand prix V-four 500s at Laguna Seca, both riders said the Daytona bikes were best—we want GP bikes like those—but after a few world championship rounds they were faced with riding the Daytona bikes again at the match races and suddenly those bikes were awful, nowhere near as good as the 500s.

"No matter how much you improve the machine, all you do is allow the rider to go faster until he finds another fault and you must then improve again".



Team manager Giacomo Agostini (left) discussing tactics with Kel Carruthers.

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