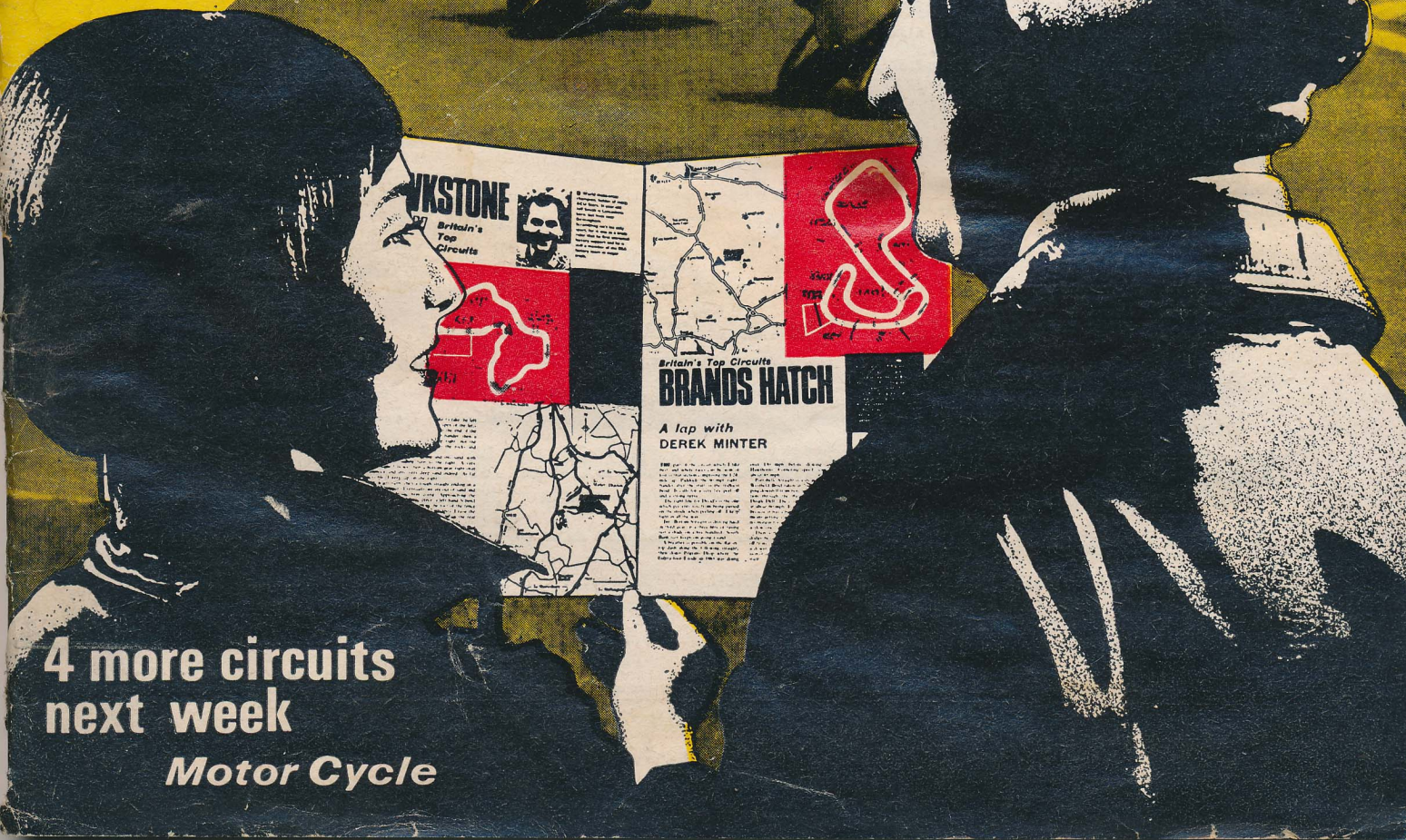
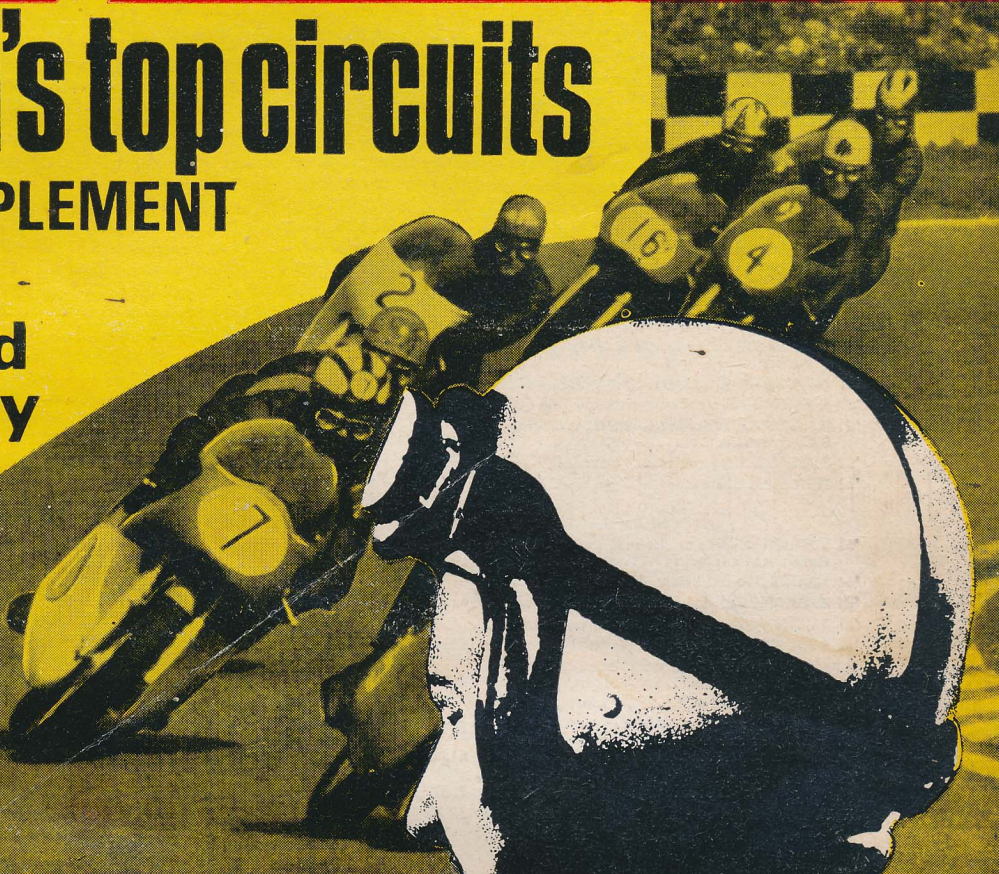


Motor Cycle

FREE Britain's top circuits

PULL-OUT ART SUPPLEMENT

plans, routes and
star commentary
on four famous
circuits



4 more circuits
next week

Motor Cycle

IF you want to swim, jump in at the deep end. That I can't swim and only want to paddle, falls on deaf ears, but I realize this to my horror only when the first corner looms up and the maniac—sorry, driver—at my right elbow never even eases his foot on the accelerator. As we hurtle into the right-hander, I frantically throw myself across behind him in an effort, I hope, to keep the vehicle on an even keel. All I do is rock the boat and give myself an even more horrible shock as a bank on the apex of the corner whips past, only inches from my head.

A short straight, a sharp blast of noise under my left ear followed almost immediately by a rasping, tearing sound as the driver lifts his foot, momentarily, off the accelerator and jabs the brakes. As he boots the accelerator again I hide my head behind his back, grasp anything I can to counteract centrifugal force as we screech around another right-hander.

I slide back into a reclining position, bobbing up and down on the unfurnished floor and stare into the gaping mouths of a twin-choke Weber carburettor sticking up from the bonnet in front of me. As top gear is notched, we drift round a left-hander and tear down a long, wide straight with a 118-mph gale whipping at our faces and leathers.

Yellow signs on the left—300, 200, 100—followed by a sudden jab on the brakes, a rapid blip of throttle for a downward gear change fol-

lowed by that delightful rasp on the overrun and we are turning sharply into a right-handed hairpin.

Another push in the back and we are accelerating rapidly away, into top along another straight and aiming for a bridge at the end.

A jolt, blip, rasp and I push my nose over the left side as we cut close in round the blind left-hander under the bridge, shooting into view of an empty grandstand and a blind right-hander in a dip.

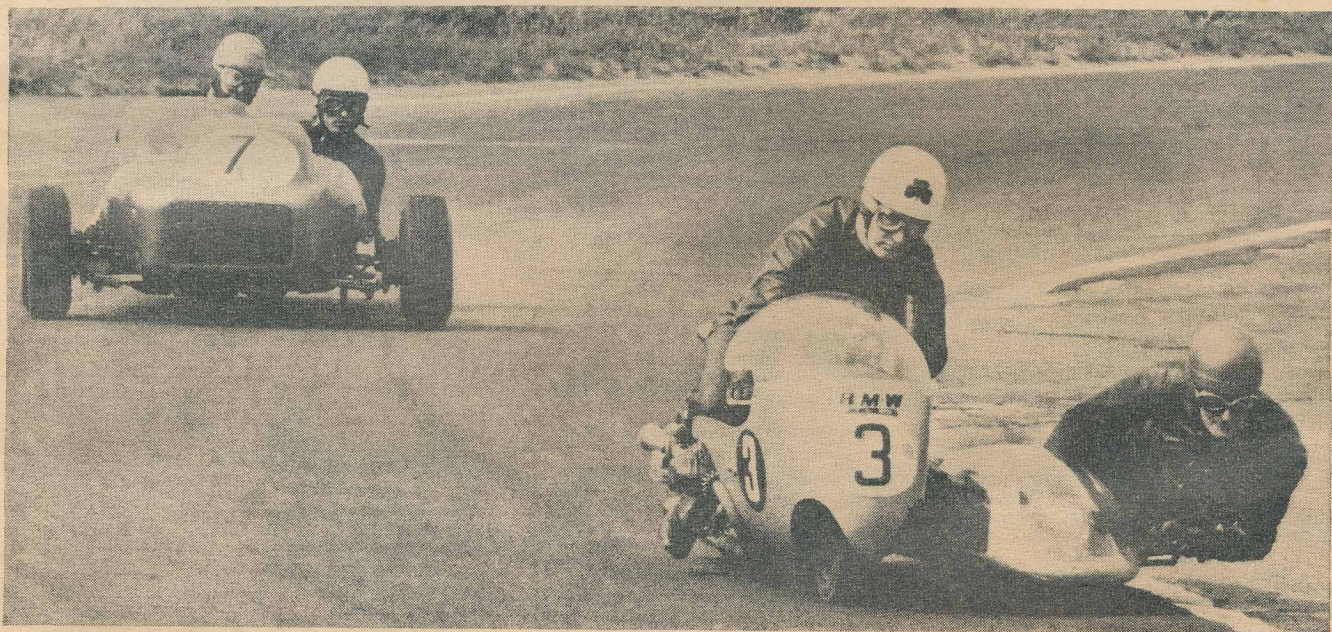
A blast of noise echoing be-

Owen Greenwood hurls the Mini into the Esses; there is no real need for David Dixon to hang overboard—he just feels safer that way!



by David Dixon

IN AT THE DEEP



Colin Seeley, passenger in the Mini, gets a view of his BMW outfit from the rear—and hates every moment of it as David Dixon and Terry Fairbrother wheel it gently through the Esses. They were trying to have some respect for Colin's feelings.



nately, the revmeter had broken but Owen gave me the facts.

Only for the very sharp Russell Hairpin, taken at about 25 mph, was it necessary to drop below third.

The four-speed gear box has wider ratios than are normally found in a motor cycle and this, together with the wide power band, is one of the Mini's greatest virtues, for it saves valuable seconds by cutting out time-wasting gear changes.

Due to cramped foot space, it was impossible for me to heel-and-toe for changing down, that is, blip the accelerator with the heel while keeping the toes on the brake pedal.

Therefore, gear-changing is a three-stage operation—jab the brake pedal to get the speed down, move the foot to blip the accelerator while the left hand moves the stubby gear lever to a lower notch as the clutch pedal is depressed with the left foot, then right foot off accelerator and on to the brake pedal.

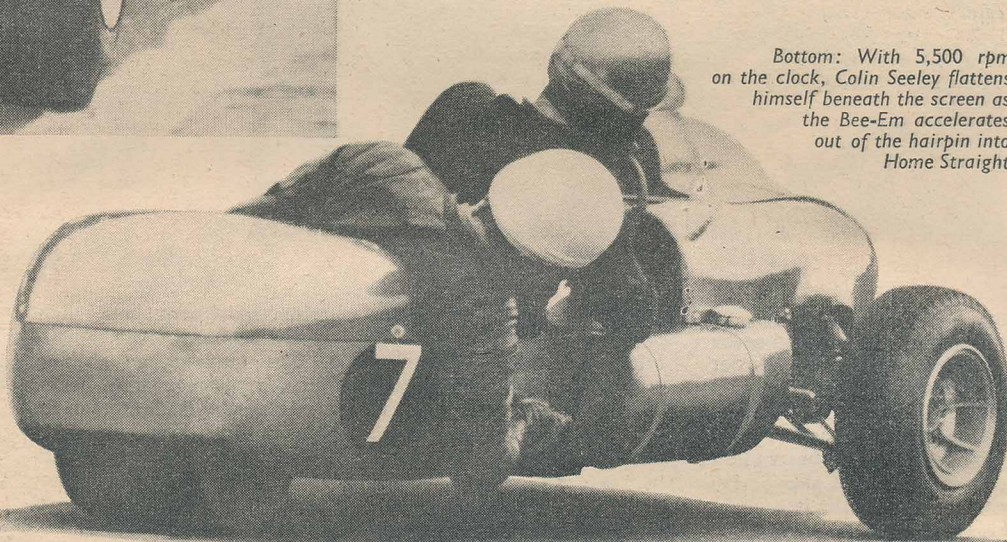
The steering is surprisingly direct and light, but the big thing with front-wheel drive is that it literally drags you around a corner. Apply more power and the front end comes in on a tighter radius.

Ease off and it drifts out a shade—but the change is subtle.

There is no difference on left-handers, unlike an orthodox chair which must be constantly powered round a left-hander with the rear end drifting outward. Only when the Mini is really rushing a corner does the rear end tend to drift out a shade under centrifugal force.

Wedged in a seat, with very limited room to move, there is no opportunity, or necessity, for acrobatics from the driver. But it definitely helps if the passenger throws his weight around on corners, hence the gap behind the driver's seat to allow Terry Fairbrother, Owen's passenger for many years—to hang overboard on right-handers.

He also gets his weight over



Bottom: With 5,500 rpm on the clock, Colin Seeley flattens himself beneath the screen as the Bee-Em accelerates out of the hairpin into Home Straight

END

Out of the Esses, Greenwood whams the Mini into the straight before Coram Curve as Dixon throws his weight to the right. The petrol tank is now mounted on the side—it used to be behind the driver

tween the high banks lining the road and we are rocketing into another straight.

Notch top, over to the left side of the road for a very late peel-off for a never-ending right-hander and, as we clip the apex, the bend opens out into view of the start area.

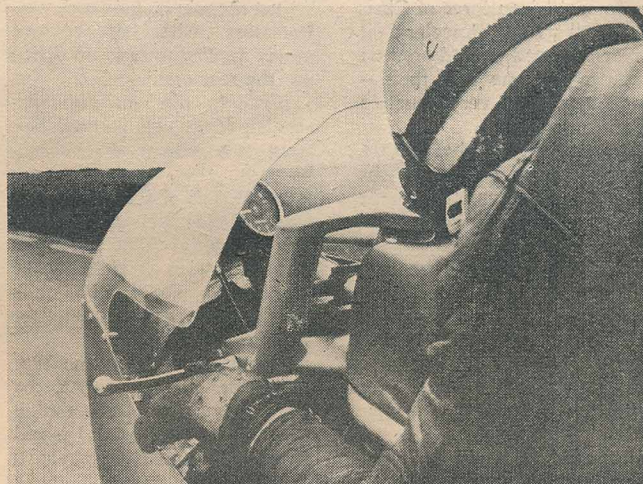
But not so fast—there's a very sharp left-hand hairpin taken at a comparative crawl in second and calling for a very rapid change of direction. A blast of exhaust as we accelerate out of the bend and into the pits.

Engine off, coast to a standstill and the maniac steps out, grinning fiendishly—or could

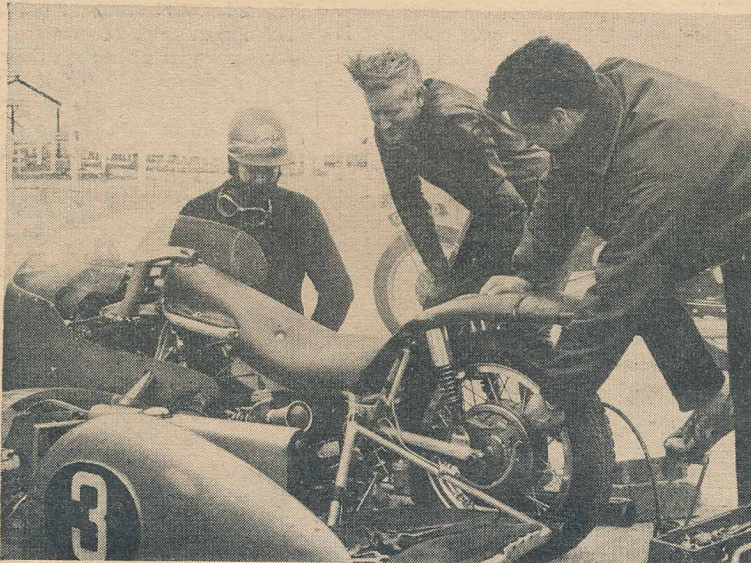
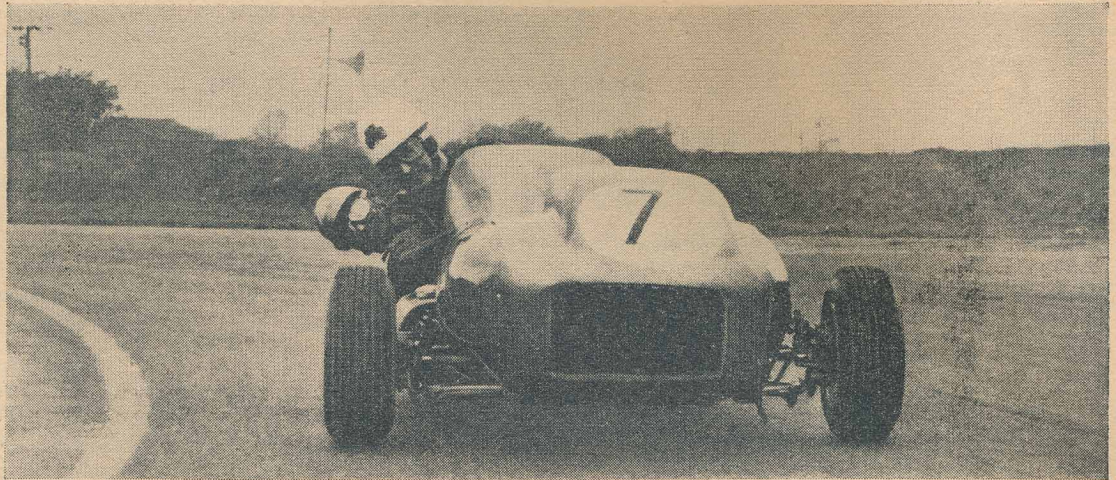
it perhaps be amiably?—as he helps me on to blessed earth again. "That should have scrubbed in the new tyres," muttered Owen Greenwood as he unbuckled his helmet and surveyed his 1,071 cc Mini three-wheeler.

The place was Snetterton a week or two ago and Owen was demonstrating gently—the man's a comic—how the Mini goes before it was my turn to drive it.

By far the most dominant impression was the incredible power spread. Though the engine peaks at 8,000 rpm, it gives really beefy punch from around 3,000 or so—unfortu-



Out of the hairpin and passenger Owen Greenwood takes a peep at the on-coming scenery. Seeing exposed front wheels helps the driver to place the machine accurately on line



"Wish we had this for the TT," murmurs Owen Greenwood (left) to Terry Fairbrother, as Colin Seeley (right) pumps some air into the rear tyre of his FCS-BMW

the side on lefts, though he admits that the cramped space makes passengering harder work than with a conventional chair.

One man who has lost some prize gold by being beaten into second place is Colin Seeley and he very sportingly brought his 492 cc FCS-BMW to Snetterton for comparison.

Having driven three of Chris Vincent's BSA kneelers, I never expected to find another outfit to compare with them—but Seeley's is very much a goer.

So smooth is the engine, that a careful eye has to be kept on the revmeter needle to avoid exceeding 9,000 rpm; above 4,000 rpm, the flow of power is so rapid that road speed builds up deceptively quickly.

I went whistling round Riches—first right-hander after the start—with the rear end hanging out and passenger Terry Fairbrother wondering whether he ought to be some-

where—anywhere—but in the chair.

However, the handling was so precise, that the outfit could be placed to a fraction of an inch. A very delicate touch was needed. My initial tendency was to turn the wheel too sharply, which caused sudden clutching from Terry as direction of travel violently altered.

Just the merest guidance was necessary with, of course, power applied to assist in drifting the rear end.

Without my making any special effort, or getting beneath the screen—I couldn't because the position was tailored for Colin and too cramped for me—the needle was showing 8,200 in fifth down Norwich Straight. Colin was getting about 9,400 rpm on the same gear at the first meeting of the year.

Colin had warned me that the gear change might be tricky, requiring precise timing to avoid crunching but I found it very pleasant with short,

crisp movement and light clutch action.

The outfit is an absolute gem, requiring more finesse and delicate handling than the Mini. Both would require a lot of practice to get the ultimate. The owners admit they are still learning and are nowhere near the limit yet.

Owen and Terry Fairbrother were quite enraptured after driving the Bee-Em. "It's one of the biggest regrets with the Mini that it is over the 500 cc limit and we cannot drive it in the Island," remarked Owen.

"If we'd had an outfit like Colin's a couple of years ago, we could have gone places with it," continued Terry. "It's so much quicker than any of our old Triumph outfits. In fact, it's the first outfit we've ever driven that's not ours."

Seeley was equally impressed with the Mini, though he thought it would take some getting used to after racing an

orthodox outfit. The spread of beefy power impressed him, too, but I don't think he would abandon his precious BMW in favour of the Mini, though that cost £500 less!

Owen's Mini has aroused more violent controversy in recent months than anything I can remember and the behaviour of certain elements at the recent Florian Camathias and Mallory Park meetings filled me with disgust. Curious they were so quiet before Greenwood began winning.

If I can just ask them a few questions. Do you object to a car engine, three wheels (within the ACU definition) or the shape of the outfit?

Would it make you any happier if it had a motor-cycle engine at the front, or looked like a sidecar outfit but with a car engine in the rear?

Well, you'd better make up your minds smartish, because Chris Vincent's new three-wheeler has a BMW engine driving front wheels while Alan Baker's Ford Cosworth engine is alongside the rear wheel in his new outfit.

Some people have it firmly in their minds that because the Mini looks like a car, it is one. In fact, it might even handle better with a single rear wheel.

Until Eric Oliver and Chris Vincent pioneered kneelers, the sidecar class was stagnant. Kneelers have never been practicable for ordinary road use and, anyway, road-going sidecars are dying the death of obsolescence.

In an adaptation of Greenwood's Mini idea, I foresee a new class of exciting sporting three-wheelers which will offer far greater performance, safety, comfort and economy than any comparable sidecar outfit of today.