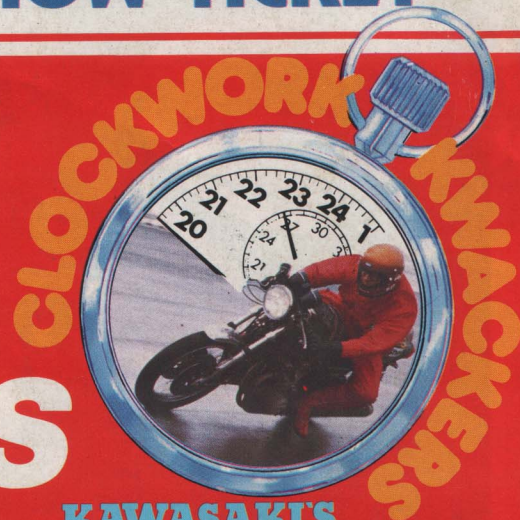


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MOTOR CYCLE MECHANICS

JANUARY 1977 35p



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AFTER the ups and downs of the first three exciting races, we take up the fourth round at Oulton Park with Tom Pemberton's 500 Kawasaki firmly ahead. The now-injured Martin Sharpe still had enough points to hold second place and the next two challengers, Holland and Prior had 16 and 14 points compared to Pemberton's 23.

For the first time in the series there were no scrutineering problems and the big Nortons looked set for something of a comeback. But the practice session was plagued with misfires, particularly on the four-stroke twins.

Keith Brown's RITA advanced itself out of existence, Tony Smith's Boyer unit was misfiring, as was Bill Marks' racing Norton. In fact he had a standard coil, a Lucas Rita and a Boyer system all wired into one fairing!

The Laverda Jotas were out in force for the first time, Peter Davies setting fastest time in practice. Another newcomer, Jim Wells, had his Le Mans Guzzi there fresh from a win at Snetterton the previous week. He was still sorting the bike out, having disconnected the coupled braking system and fitted Girling gas shocks.

The 500 class looked highly competitive, with Bill Smith's Honda and the very quick Loughridge Suzuki. Tom Pemberton, after some hard scratching at Snetterton, had fitted small crash bars around his Kawasaki's crankcases!



John Oldfield was given a works engine for his two-stroke Benelli

The ignition panics were getting serious, Keith Brown eventually had to borrow a Laverda to qualify and, first time out at Oulton, went round very gently looking very self-conscious. Bill Marks was also a first-timer at the circuit and after his run of bad luck in the first three rounds, badly needed practice if he was going to make up any ground.

In the second practice session Loughridge appeared to be keeping up with the big bikes pretty comfortably, until his Suzuki coasted in with a dead engine. There was more drama as Tony Smith crashed, injuring a knee and putting him out of racing for the remainder of the season.

The machines streamed away from the Le Mans start and as the leaders came round Jim Wells was carving his way to the front of the big class, the Guzzi looking promising until suddenly it slowed, did one more cautious lap and then pulled in. Jim explained later that the brakes had just disappeared and after one high-speed excursion he decided enough was enough, yet there was no sign of a leak or any other fault.

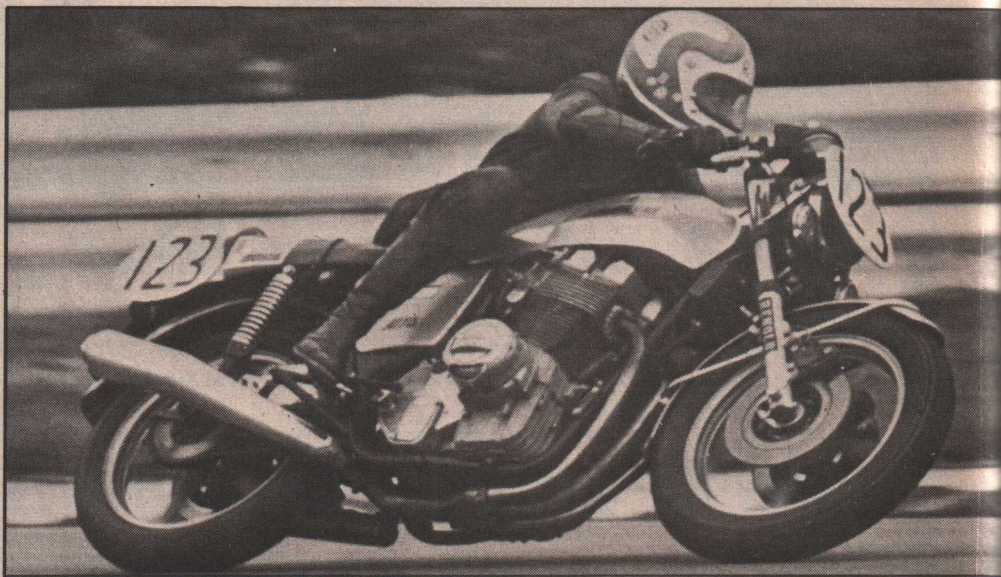
The handicappers had been kind to the 500s and once Pemberton had got past the 250s he only had to stay ahead of Gordon Russell to win quite comfortably, way ahead of Davies' Laverda. In the early stages Bill Smith was up with him but admitted he had to push the Honda too hard in the corners to

make up for the Kawasaki's sheer speed. Before long the Honda developed a misfire at high revs and Smith retired, suspecting a broken valve spring.

POSITIONS AFTER 4 ROUNDS

Pemberton.....	35	Prior	15
Holland	23	Stevens.....	14
Sharpe	20	Page/	
Davies/		Smith	12
Russell	18	Huggett.....	10

The organisers at Oulton had a Rolls Royce hardtop to drive the winners around — the crowd must have been really pleased to see



A late starter in the series, Peter Davies brought his Jota to 2nd overall, taking three lap records on the way.

a jumble of faces, helmets, cups and laurels inside a closed car. But the organisation at Mallory left that standing. Most of the riders weren't sent full regs and many first-timers turned up with moderately illegal machinery which they had to rush about to get changed.

MALLORY COCK-UP

Worse still, five first-timers were given entries while all the reserve riders had actually competed in the series and some had scored points. Tony Smith, riding the second Thruxton Motor Cycles Commando, currently eighth in the series with 12 points, was actually fifth reserve!

In fact Tony was still suffering from his Oulton injury and through no fault of the organisers all the other regular riders eventually got a ride.

Tony Rutter entered a blatantly illegal Honda and was allowed to race on the understanding that he couldn't figure in the results, which Tony was quite happy about, saying he just wanted a ride. John Oldfield's successes on the 250 Benelli hadn't gone unnoticed and Agrati, the UK concessionaire had given him the engine of the works bike which they ran in the TT.

The wet practice morning caused its problems. Tony Holland's Commando suffered water in the carburettors and Peter Davies, saying his Jota was going well, admitted, "But I'm so pathetic in the wet," to which Roger Slater replied, "That's the first sensible comment I've heard all day."

Pemberton was experimenting with tyres while Bill Marks was trying hard to be optimistic. At Oulton his fairing mounting

had broken and then a gudgeon pin had come adrift, scoring the bore.

The first lap of the race showed that the big bike riders were bent on beating the handicap this time. As they thundered through Devil's Elbow, Davies' Laverda stepped out in a short but vicious slide and for the next few laps Davies and Holland, really battling for the lead, were pulling away strongly from the rest of the 1000s.

Then a rider crashed at Gerards and the race was stopped, with some confusion, to get an ambulance to him. Bill Marks' Norton had broken a piston and he caught a lift back on one of the other bikes touring back to the start.

First time round the groups were more tightly bunched but Tony Holland was already forcing his Norton through the field, with Davies hard on his heels. Next lap Davies was in front and already past Pemberton, on the second 500. Rutter was holding a lead on his illegal Honda but the big bikes still had to catch up one more lap.

But the attention was on the scrap at the front of the big class as the bikes relentlessly overtook the smaller ones and Davies and Holland swapped places at least once a lap. The others were obviously trying to make up lost ground, Jim Wells came through the Elbow in an almighty wobble as he pushed the Guzzi harder than it wanted to go.

Then, a few laps from the end, the Norton started to slow and Davies ploughed on alone, finally passing Pemberton on the last lap and taking the flag a couple of seconds behind Rutter who had "won" to no avail.

GRIM TONY

Back in the paddock, a grim Tony Holland was limping along, sporting a boot with a black hole from which blood was dripping. When his motor refused to pull peak revs he'd scratched to keep up with the Laverda hard enough to go through his boot and wear his foot away. The irony was that had the race not been stopped after four laps, his motor would have gone the full distance quite healthily.

POSITIONS AFTER 5 ROUNDS

Pemberton.....	42	Prior	15
Davies	30	Page	14
Holland	29	Oldfield/	
Stevens/		Smith	12
Russell	22	Benson/	
Sharpe	20	Huggett.....	10

So we get to the final round at Brands Hatch to find Pemberton in a strong position. Only Peter Davies could equal his 42 points and all Pemberton had to do was finish in the first ten to be certain of winning.

After his 830 blow-up at Mallory Bill Marks was out on a 750 Norton and still grinning as optimistically as ever. Jim Wells, who practised on a slick rear tyre was looking less happy — he'd been up the road twice in one week and was looking a bit battered.

Ray Knight was there on a borrowed Honda, the oil smears around the cylinder fins betraying the illegal big-bore kit but Ray, like several other riders of illegal machinery wasn't trying to cheat anyone and had

Bill Marks, out of luck yet again in this race, took his proddie 750 out in the BRC F750 event and finished 13th against the full blown racers!

On the whole we feel the series has been a success and has certainly brought some stiff competition and entertainment to the Production class. It hasn't been without snags and hitches, mainly caused by a lack

using this system were to give an overall winner with no need to divide the prize money into three classes and, with staggered starts, more riders are allowed on to the grid.

But what we've learnt from this championship we'll be putting into next season's racing to bring an even better, more exciting MCM Production Championship.

FINAL REPORT

MOTOR CYCLE MECHANICS PRODUCTION CHAMPIONSHIP

merely turned up for a ride if there was room on the grid.

The 500s got away first in the race followed by the 250s who had one lap credit and then the 1000s. Rutter was leading the 500s, chased by Pemberton and once again, Davies and Holland were fighting it out in front of the 1000s, the Norton hopping and skipping over the ripples on South Bank.

Richard Stevens was leading the 250s on his Yamaha, and leading the race with the 500s of Frost, Pemberton, Rutter and Randall in a tight bunch rapidly closing on him, and Davies and Holland chasing the whole lot.

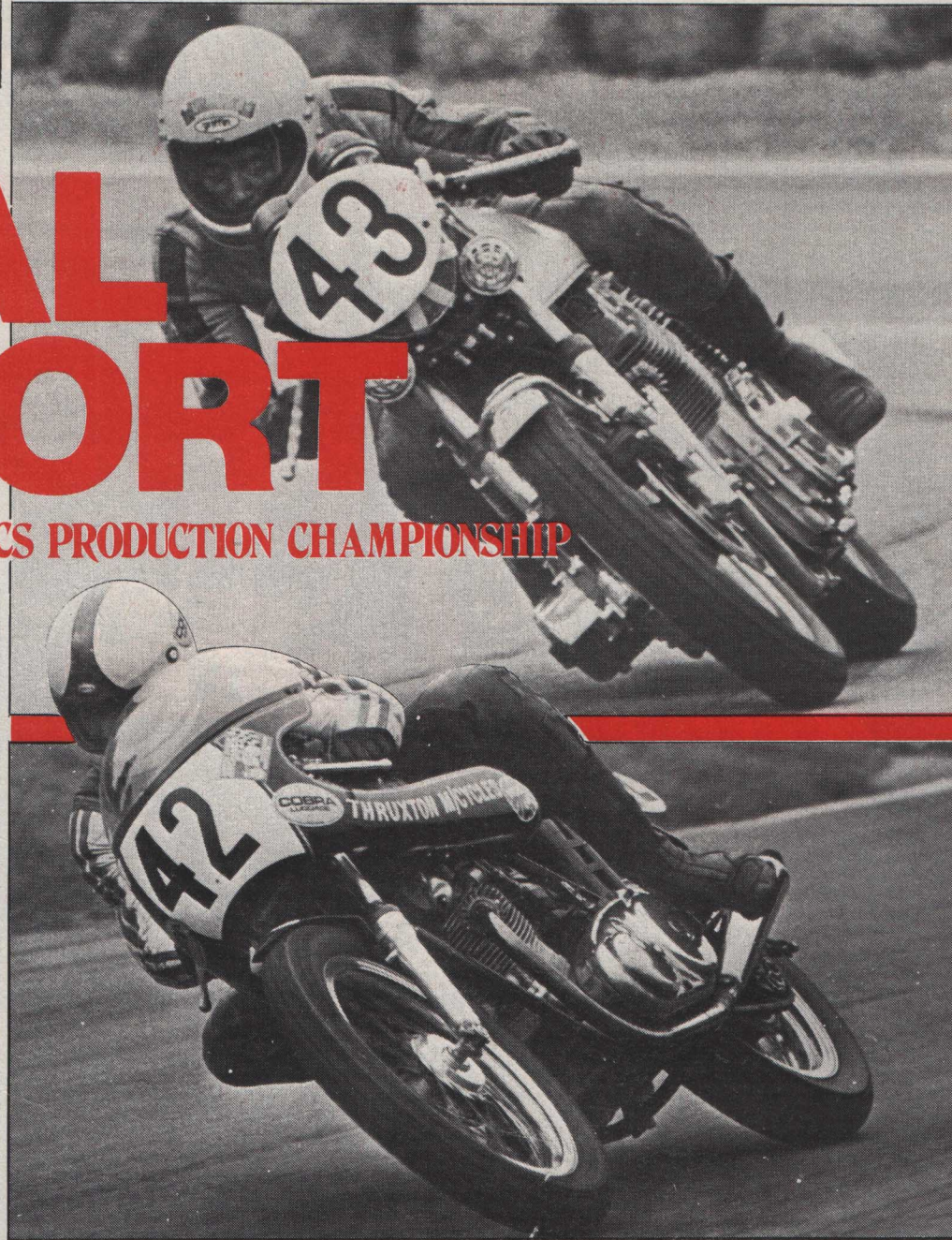
As they came through Clearways to start the last lap Davies squeezed past the 500s and had Stevens in sight — then the flag marshal dropped the chequered flag on Stevens giving him victory with one lap still to go!

Davies took second place but Pemberton, in fourth position, had enough points to win the series, taking a total of £840 in prize money, including his £200 bonus from Kawasaki.

The rider most sorely affected by the flag marshal's inability to count was probably Holland. Separated from Davies by the four 500s he got only 4 points for his 7th place, a frustrating result after supporting the series all the way through, both for Tony and for his sponsor, Thruxton Motor Cycles.

FINAL RESULTS

Tom Pemberton	(500 Kawasaki)	49 points
Peter Davies	(980 Laverda)	40 points
Richard Stevens	(247 Yamaha)	34 points
Tony Holland	(830 Norton)	32 points
Gordon Russell	(498 Honda)	22 points
Martin Sharpe	(980 BMW)	20 points
Fred Huggett	(498 Honda)	16 points
Rob Prior	(498 Kawasaki)	15 points
Greg Page	(500 Honda)	14 points
Tony Smith	(830 Norton)	12 points
William Benson	(248 Yamaha)	12 points
John Oldfield	(231 Benelli)	12 points



Above: Tony Holland taking the Thruxton Motor Cycles Commando to its limits. Right: Mick Grant and John Norman of Kawasaki UK congratulate Tom Pemberton.

of co-operation by the organisers.

One problem has been the handicap system which was less than popular with the riders, except the 250 pilots who seemed to have no difficulty understanding it. It was confusing for the spectators too.

That the handicappers did their job pretty well is shown by the mixture of machine sizes in the final results. The reasons for

