

SURVIVAL OF THE LUMPIEST

The last British single is still kicking shit

London to Bolton via the M1, M6 and the Ms 61 through '3 is not the most picturesque of routes. Via the As isn't a whole lot better either. Even with the occasional bit of B deviation. I was on one of those roving reporter assignments you read about in the movies. Except unlike my celluloid counterparts I didn't have an unlimited expense account. In fact, being freelance I have to foot the bill myself, receiving remuneration on results. This sum is calculated per word. Which explains all this superfluous preamble that will ultimately net me approximately £4.20.

When I arrived at my destination I was informed by a middle-aged lady in a teenage body that if I came back in two days time they would have the new CCM Trials bike on display. That involved a lot of Ms and As, so I decided to stay. My appointment was with Alan Clews, from whence cometh the name, Clews Competition Machines. But he was proving as unobtainable as his bikes. Even his right-hand man, Martin Hemmingway, was nowhere to be found. So I drove into Bury and back. I would have gone further had I been paid by the mile.

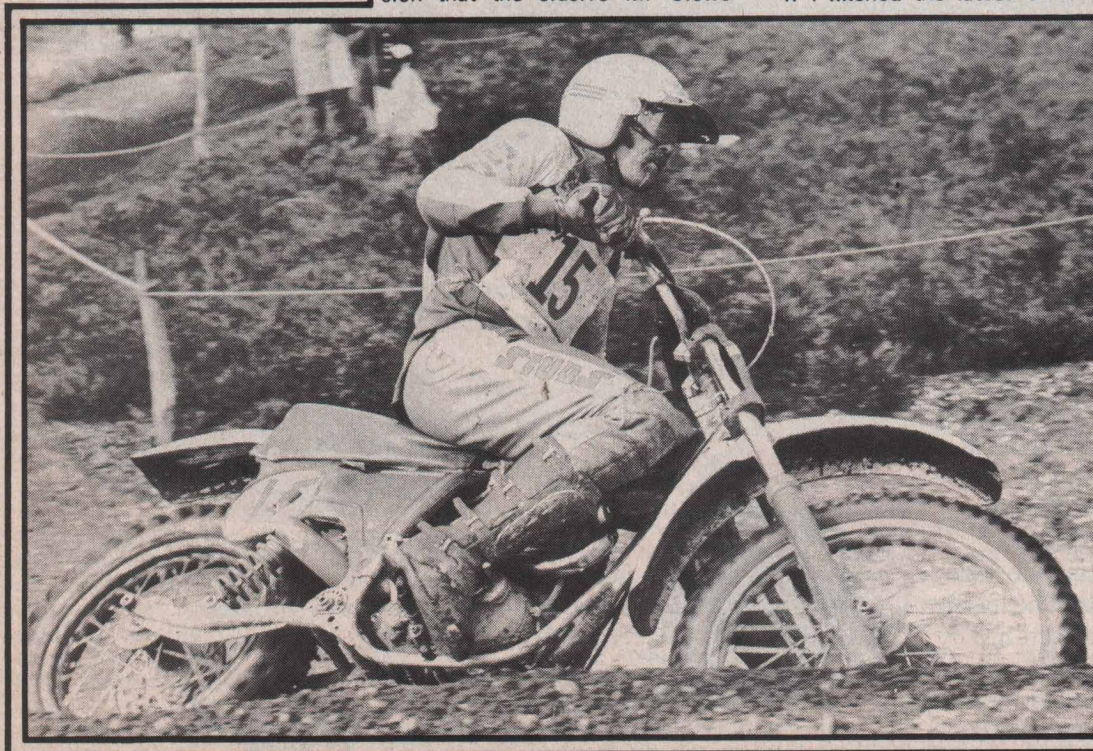
I eventually met up with Martin; but I left with the distinct impression that the elusive Mr Clews

was no more than a vanishing vapour trail. And even that's a generous assumption, as the only exhaust I witnessed during my visit was from an oxyacetylene torch. They wouldn't even start one of their brutes for me, let alone trust my rump to one.

CCM are really getting it together as far as their production's concerned, but their expertise in public relations could result in a trial separation. This is where the foreign competition leaves us cold. Bribing journos with fat lunches and three course aperitifs ensures the right words, even if slightly illegible. All of which is a devious way of giving genuine praise to a winning machine. And won they have. Eight firsts in the 1975 British Motocross Championship, second overall in the '77 Championship, 1st and 2nd in the Irish Gallagher Scrambles. That's not taking in their victories abroad, in the USA, the Continent, and outright winner of the South Australian Championship.

It is success in racing that sells bikes, it is the riders who take the bikes to those successes. CCM have had them all. Vic Eastwood, John Banks, Vic Allen. Currently Bob Wright and Jim Aird are spreading the word.

If I likened the latest CCM to



the Triumph Terrier of 25 years ago you would think I was being vindictively insulting. But that is where it started. It was a development of that engine, through BSA's B50, that has evolved the single pot four stroke that's the driving force of the latest CCM motocross machine.

At the time Alan Clews was hand building individual machines in his driveway, BSA were in their death throes. Their competition shop was the first to succumb. Clews bought it. With this supply of engines, and Eatough frames, CCM came into being as a bona fide motorcycle production company.

In 1974 he acquired the BSA tooling and machinery outright, which pushed his output up to 150 bikes a year by 1976. He is still able to supply parts for those last Beezers, but his emphasis today is on developing his own range, all of which he designs himself. In fact 90 per cent of a CCM is made in-house, including engines and gear boxes.

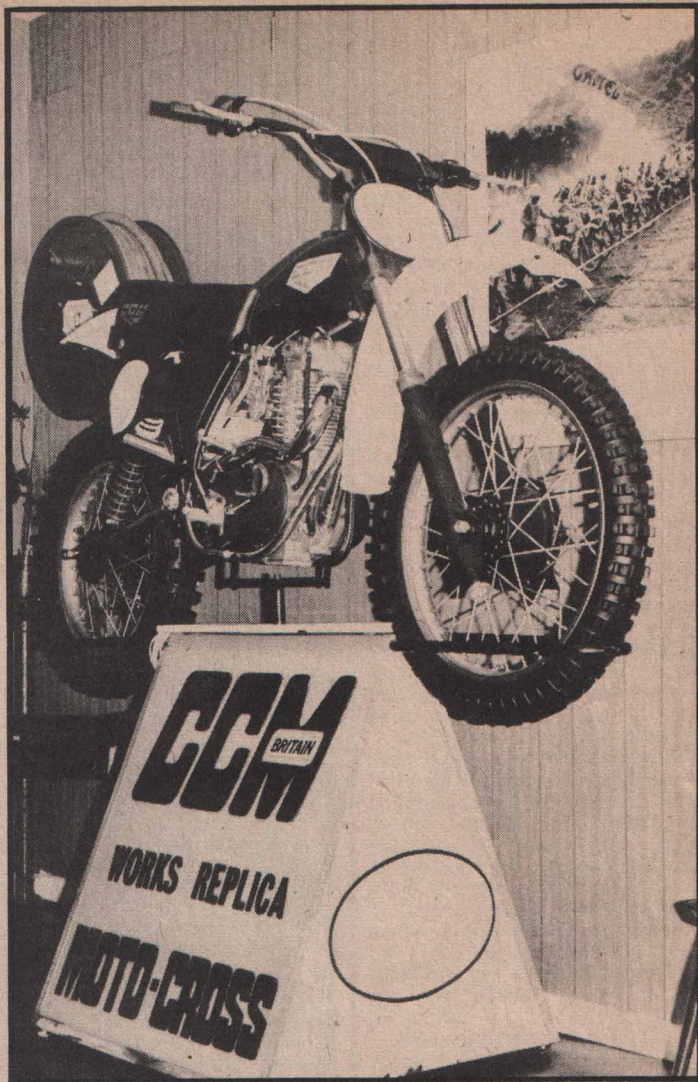
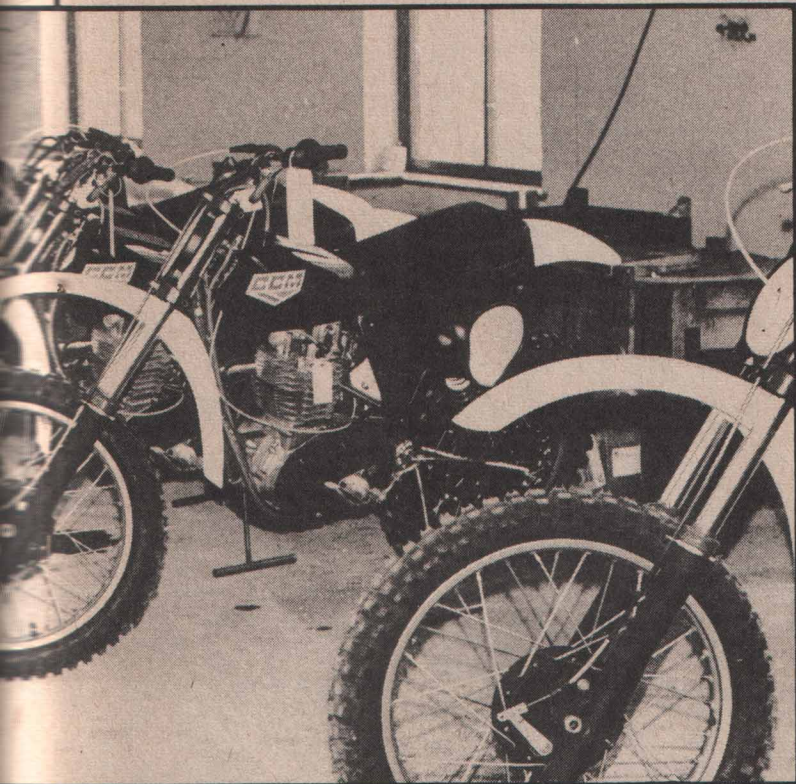
Unlike their predecessors, CCM are planning on a long and profitable future. Already the blueprints for the '80s have been drawn up.

PLAYING DIRTY

Work has also commenced on the research and development of a new powerhouse. Twelve months ago they purchased a larger factory to house this steady expansion. Profits have been ploughed back into the business to purchase the latest computerised machinery. In the past year production has more than doubled, and is continuing to grow at a like rate.

Those early motocross bikes were very much plagiarised from

Their latest baby was conceived in November '77, a prototype was produced in January '78, and full production commenced in August. Just nine months from conception to birth of the CCM 350 Trials bike. By the time of its baptism at the National Dirt Bike Show in Bristol on 13-18 December, half the annual 200 bikes will have already rolled off the assembly line and been swallowed up in pre-sales.



the BSAs they superseded. But experience on the track has evolved a very different machine that is the current 500 CCM. The very nature of the sport for which they were designed dictated the need to give detailed attention to the suspension. Each year this has improved. Movement in the '72 model was a very limited three inches. Today both front and rear travel a full 11 inches. The cantilevers developed during this evolution have now been adopted as standard on all road racing machines.

While the Japanese and others were shifting into a five speed box, CCM dropped down to three. A direct result of the incredible spread of power these engines push out. From 0-6000 it's pure power, wound up by the very latest Amal carbs.

The Eatough frames have now been replaced by their own light-weight design. Just 18lb of hollow tube, pumped full of oil for additional cooling.

There is nothing about these bikes that has been overlooked or scrimped. They are pure thorough-breds, from the lay down dampers to the knobblies. Having achieved superiority in under six years they are now expanding the production line. Already the American class motocross has resulted in a 600cc version of the basic CCM, if anything so precision built can be labelled basic.

Demand for all CCM machines is high, with the peak hitting just prior to the motocross season which runs from November through April. The earth's rotating axis taking account of the rest of the year in exports; 60 per cent of CCM's output finds its way to the start lines of Europe, America and Australia. The Gulf State of Oman snared a further 54, specially built for a police display team upon the recommendation of our own White Helmets, who had chosen CCM to supply machines after the Ministry of Defence conducted exhaustive comparisons with 47 other bikes from Germany and Japan. Eddie Kidd, that well known bus jumper, is another of this elitist band of CCM owners.

Next on the agenda is the winter production of two stroke scrambles, powered by 250 and 125 Italian Hiro engines. One hundred Enduros are made to order annually. Even a road bike is not a total improbability. The technology and expertise is there. Turnover is nudging the half million mark, and the factory floor is open for expansion. But the pride of the fleet will remain the CCM 500 works replica motocross. At around 1600 smackers it is not beyond the realms of competitive superbikers. But to obtain one you will have to join the queue; it is already trailing back to junction nine on the M62. **Tim Purcell**

