



American world trials champion Bernie Schreiber casually flicks his Bultaco off a fearsome waterfall during a practice session last year. And no — it isn't Yorkshire! It took place in Bernie's native California.

Big Bernie—the inevitable champ

BERNIE SCHREIBER, the tall kid from California, was inevitably destined to become the first American to break the traditional European stranglehold and win a world trials championship.

It was really just a question of when? Because on his day Bernie is just plain unbeatable, and his range of riding skills include a repertoire of dazzling stunts which make him probably the finest trick rider around.

His first world title in 1979 was a perfectly natural progression, but for all that the lad had to overcome some pretty awesome problems on his way to the crown.

Bernie is a product of a nation which, however active and exalted in motocross, still regards trials as pretty small potatoes. Sponsors are few because interest is small — and riders have to travel many hundreds of miles to national championship rounds. There are probably more trials in a single busy winter weekend in the UK than there are in the States in a full year.

The lad started riding as an 18-carat natural in 1969 on a modified Kawasaki 90 in youth trials. He was a winner from the start, and the

following year switched to Bultaco, a marque he has remained faithful to ever since.

He had his first taste of European trials in 1974 when a club raffle in California raised enough cash to send him to view the Spanish world round. This system gave him a second trip to Spain the following year and in 1976 helped him fly to the UK to watch the Scottish Six Days.

Bernie continued steadily to learn his trade. Lane Leavitt and Marland Whaley ruled the US national roost and as recently as 1977 Bernie was still behind Whaley, then on a factory Honda, in the national series. The previous year he had finished sixth in a series dominated by Whaley who took four wins and some consistent places. Bernie, in fact, was no more than third in the States - side hierarchy.

For all that, 1977 was the year that Bernie first displayed his class in the world rounds. He missed the two openers in Ireland and Wales because he wasn't old enough to have an FIM licence, then reeled off some consistent rides which left him seventh in the world standings.

The following year saw Bernie back in



Europe again. In that March he won a killer of a French round to become the first American to win a world series trial. Then he took further wins in Spain, America and Italy to finish the season a world third.

What happened last year is history — and described elsewhere in this magazine.

Meanwhile, the year of grace 1980 sees Bernie Schreiber still only 21-years-old, and many people can see him ruling the roost for a long time to come.



The natural tackles the artificial . . . Bernie pictured winning the BBC Kickstart television trial at Donington Park last summer.