



The stirring sight of Bob Wright giving battle on his CCM. The occasion was the Inter-Centre team scramble at Cadders Hill, Lyng, in 1978.

MOTOCROSS PROFILE — BOB WRIGHT



Bob goes berm-bashing in a big way — at the Hants Grand International at Matcham's Park in April last year.

THE SABDEN WARRIOR...

WHEN it comes to spectacle there isn't anyone quite like Bob Wright. Even if the younger warriors like Noyce and Hudson are riding in a motocross meeting it's a safe bet that the name of Bob Wright in an advert will add significantly to the attendance of any event.

Neither his christian name nor his surname are exactly rare but if you overhear avid motocross fans talking about 'Bob' or 'Wrighty' you know straight away who they mean.

The rugged Lancastrian's individual style and the determination to win which is evident in every movement on the track mark him as a man apart.

Bob wasn't one of the instant successes of motocross. Unlike many of today's younger stars he never rode as a schoolboy; in fact his first ride came when he was 18.

Neither was he an overnight sensation. For four or five years he was a top centre runner with occasional placings in northern Nationals on AJS and Husqvarna supplied by Colin Shutt, a local dealer.

The big breakthrough came in 1973 when the name of Bob Wright and Alan Clews' booming CCM four-strokes first came together. Success was immediate, as Bob began to clean-up national meetings and gain significant results in the British championships.

As the first new name at the top of British motocross for several years, Bob was grabbing the headlines for his results and his extrovert style which was gaining major

honours for the thumpers at a time when only John Banks had continued the fight in the higher echelon against the two-strokes.

He even impressed the Motocross des Nations selectors sufficiently to be chosen to represent his country, and he didn't let his country down. America got their first sight of him that winter in the Trans-AMA series and thrilled to the sight.

Alan Clews' Bolton concern was still growing at this time and Bob, newly married, was tempted by a lucrative contract to change to Montesa for the next two seasons.

A broken left arm in April and another in his first race back, six weeks later, took a big chunk out of 1974, and 1975 was little better as the Spanish mounts couldn't stand up to Bob's riding style. Ironically, it was in the closing weeks of his contract, when a change to Maico with Badger Goss had been lined up for 1976, that Montesa produced a new Cappa which lasted long enough for Bob to start scoring good results again.

Bob was right up there again, starting the new association with two wins at Hawkstone Park on New Year's Day, and was consistently among the winners all year. Bad luck was destined to hit his British championship campaign, however, and he was only placed eighth, far lower than his ability demanded.

The chance of a crack at the Grands Prix was the incentive Bob needed to go back to CCM in 1977, much to the delight of four-stroke fanatics worldwide.

The misfortune in the British championships continued but it was success all the

way elsewhere. Top ten placings in the Grands Prix, wins in nearly every major national and the start of an incredible run of success in Ireland attended his efforts.

A magnificent sixth in the first race at the Farleigh GP was taken from Bob after an unsavoury incident where he was the innocent victim of a 'political' protest. After an unjustified suspension, however, he bounced right back with wins galore.

Apart from another spell on the injured list in 1978 Bob has continued to delight fans without ever getting the success at the very top which he so richly deserves.

No matter where he rides, no matter what his results, Bob Wright is the centre of attraction. In the stifling heat of California he amazed the American fans in last year's United States GP.

Thoroughly exhausted towards the end of the second moto he dropped the CCM a hundred yards from the line. By the time he had dragged himself, bleary eyed and suffering from dehydration, to his feet all chance of championship points were gone but, encouraged by the fans, he eventually summoned up enough energy from those seemingly boundless reserves to kick the bike back to life and finish before collapsing yards after taking the flag.

That's the sort of gutsy display which makes Bob one of the sport's great personalities. He may never win a major championship but the name of Bob Wright will live for ever in the minds of those who have seen him ride.