

John Reynolds shows brilliant control as he takes the 325 Beamish Suzuki through a tough section in the 1979 Lakes Two-Day trial.



Reynolds — a star of the up-and-comers

AFTER nine years of careful nurturing by the go-ahead Wetherby club, who themselves organise a national and an international trial, young John Reynolds can truthfully be said to be at the head of the next generation of superstar trials riders.

And it couldn't happen to a nicer lad. Ever since John began riding trials at the ripe old age of twelve, he has taken great pains to make sure that nobody misunderstands him. He's a modest lad who, despite some setbacks taken in his stride, has continued to give of his best and make a determined effort for the top.

And his best is brilliant. Having already finished third in the Scottish while only twenty with some great British and World Championship results behind him, John has achieved success while still serving his apprenticeship.

It seems as if every youngster in the world started off with a BSA Bantam, and John, too, had one of the little machines for thrashing around a field. But for trials riding proper his dad bought him a 125 Puch Dalesman. The interest was there before the bike and John and his dad had already watched the Scottish and the Scott before the first trial was ever entered.

The first trial, a Harrogate club event, ended in failure, with a carb full of mud and water. But the second trial — on the same land and run by the same club — was a success. John won the under-16 class and continued on the Dalesman for a further two years until a local dealer, Gordon Johnson, supplied the fourteen-year-old with an Ossa at the right price.

John's first national win came on the Ossa when he won the first-ever schoolboy national trial run on Rob Shepherd's farm at Pateley Bridge. And to prove it wasn't a fluke, he did the same again the following year on the same Ossa.

Gordon Johnson could see talent and supplied another Ossa for John to ride until he became of age, and then, when John was nearly seventeen, Gordon contacted Cliff Holden of Ossa UK who gave John his first works ride.

John stayed with the Ossa marque for some time and his first full-blooded national was the 1976 Lomax. But it was almost another year before he won his first adult national, the '77 Beggars Roost held the day before the Lomax.

While the rest of the leading contenders for British Championship honours were generally either Bulter or Montesa-mounted, John remained faithful to the Ossa and learned his trade as he tackled the Nationals. Success varied from the good rides when he had a second place in the opening World Trials round in Ireland back in 1977 to lowly placings that are best forgotten.

But perseverance with the Ossa paid off



Reynolds at the Peak Trial in November, 1978, during one of his last rides for SWM importer Cliff Holden before joining the Beamish Suzuki equipe.

Destined for greatness? If so, it couldn't happen to a nicer lad...

when Cliff Holden brought in the first of the Italian SWM range and John was the first two to make a debut on the red machines.

Almost certainly John's best ride on the SWM was in the 1978 SSDT when he finished a magnificent third after a brilliant last-day charge up the leader board. It was unexpected and certainly did John a power of good by improving his morale. He had proved that he had the ability to challenge the top men and now it was down to making the gradual transition from an average runner into the top line.

A change of machine is reckoned to do wonders for a rider although it has been known to have just the opposite effect. So when John went Suzuki in early '79, Rathmell having just left, the trials world

waited with bated breath to see how he would get on. John didn't disappoint them and in his first ride on the Japanese/British machine (Rathmell's old bike in fact), he finished second in the Vic Brittain national, tying on marks lost with Rob Shepherd and beating Malcolm Rathmell.

Further successes with a win in a Dutch indoor trial, and another second in the Irish world round, led to a third place in the East Anglian national, the second round of the 1979 British Championship.

Disappointing positions in subsequent World rounds meant experience but no points, but the apprenticeship was still taking place so John wasn't too bothered.

As the year progressed results got better but John's ability seemed to level off a bit, as he drew a series of bad numbers and suffered some harsh marking situations. But John is not one to argue and intends to ride in all the 1980 World rounds in an attempt to finish high up the world league.

Another year or so and young Reynolds will have matured into a top flight rider. Whether he makes the top spot as world champion is anybody's guess, but the ability is there and together with the determination he deserves to make it.

If he does, it couldn't happen to a nicer lad.