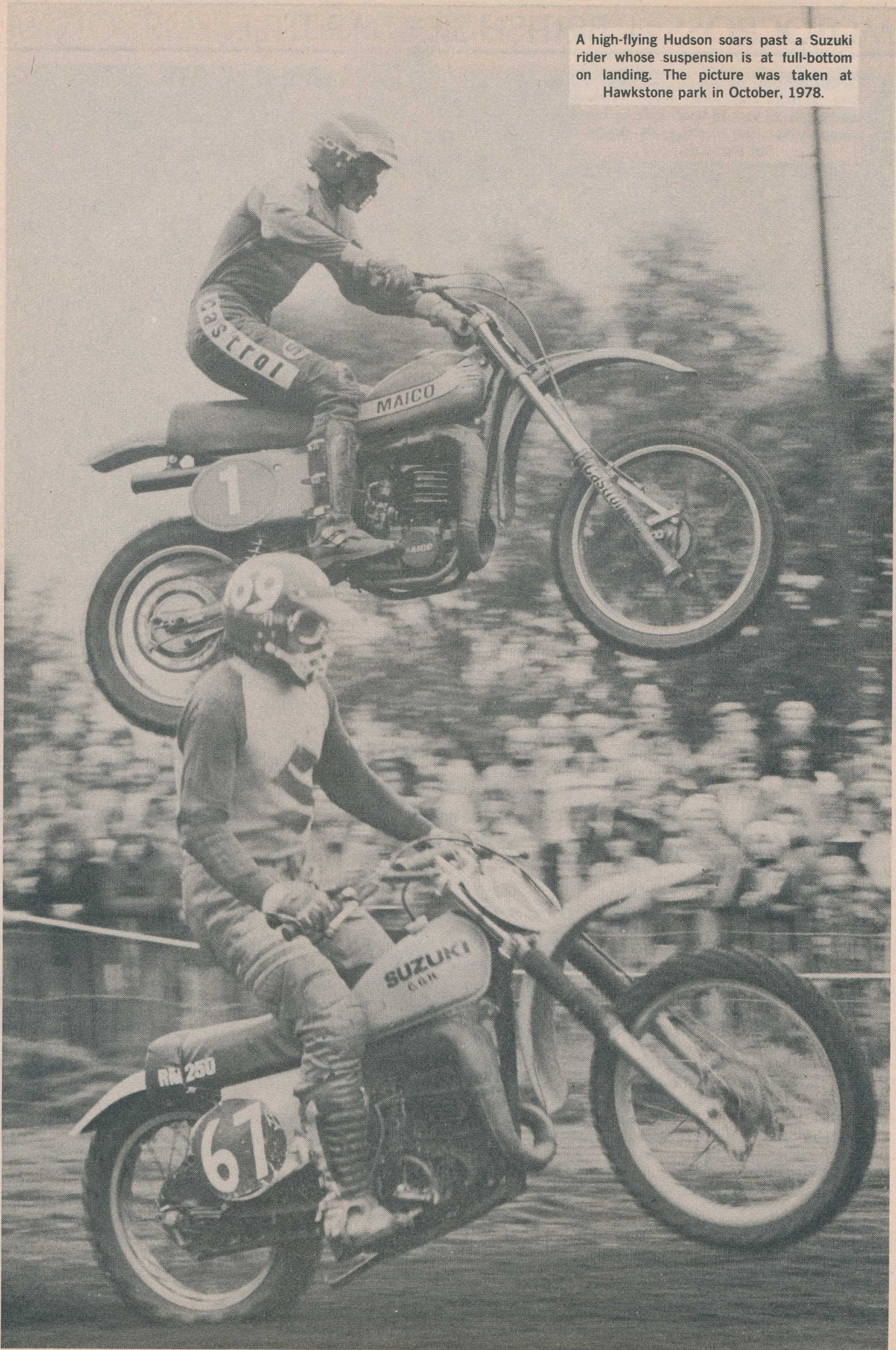
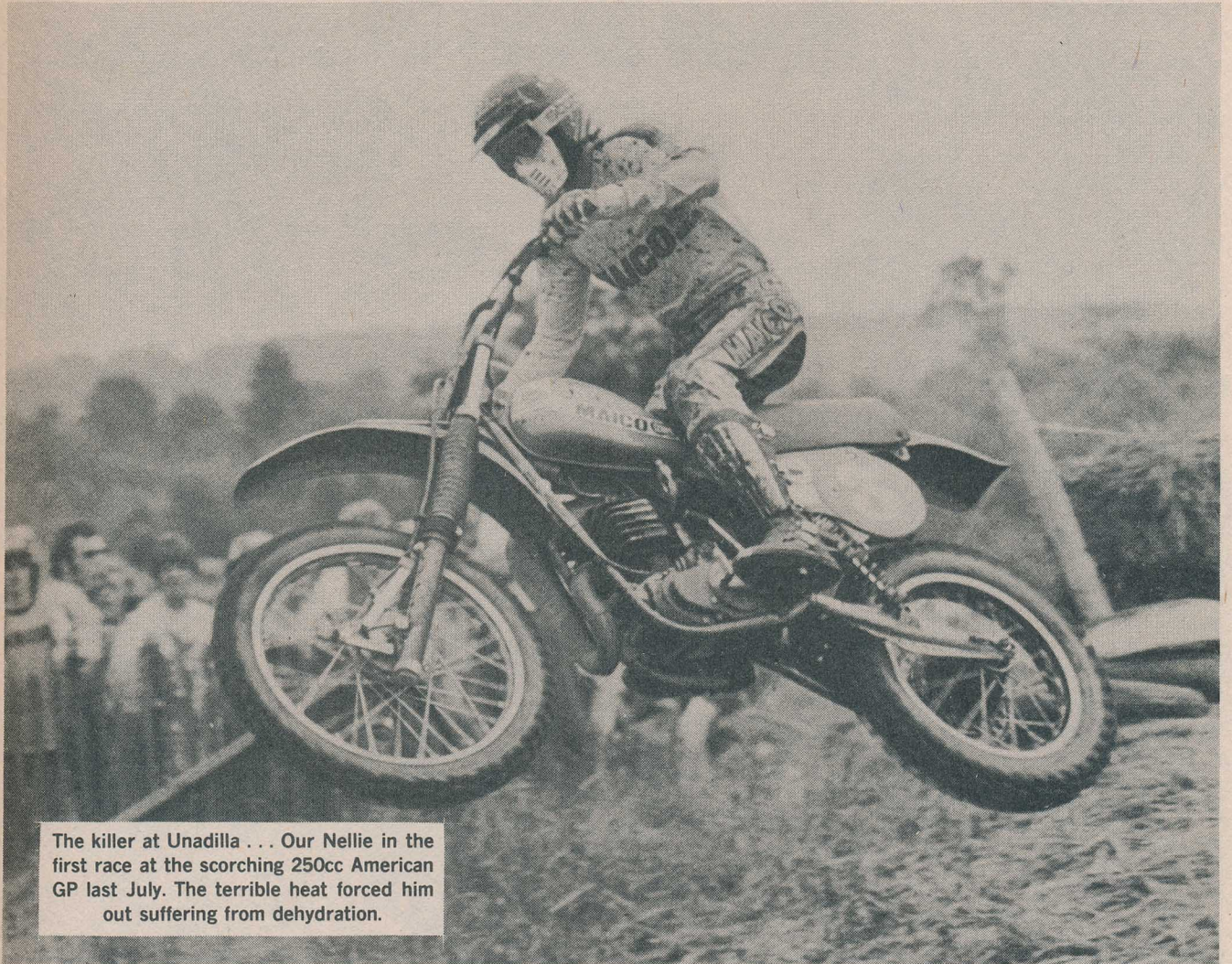


A high-flying Hudson soars past a Suzuki rider whose suspension is at full-bottom on landing. The picture was taken at Hawkstone park in October, 1978.



MOTOCROSS PROFILE — NEIL HUDSON



The killer at Unadilla . . . Our Nellie in the first race at the scorching 250cc American GP last July. The terrible heat forced him out suffering from dehydration.

FROM a thirty-bob Bantam to second in the world. That's the success story so far for Pensford's Neil Hudson. It was inevitable that Neil and younger brother Gary should want to ride themselves after seeing father starring in local Wessex County scrambles.

Gary, in fact, was the first to get a bike but Neil's Bantam, rescued from a barn after the Hudson family had followed up an advert in the local press, was acquired only a few weeks later.

The Bantam, through continual modification, provided several years of enjoyment for Neil from the age of ten and it was only exchanged in the latter stages of his schoolboy career for a Zundapp and finally a Maico.

The final season with the schoolboy ranks was the only time that Neil contested the national championships and he finished second, not to his great friend and rival Graham Noyce (who was third) but to Anthony Edwards, a future Welsh champion.

Within six months of graduating to the adult ranks Neil was an expert and for 1974 he was sponsored by local star Rob Taylor, still on a Maico.

Neil wasn't chosen for the championship class of the inaugural one-class British championship in 1975, and his chances of promotion from the Support Class looked

'NELLIE' HUDSON— GOING FOR GOLD

bleak when he broke a bone in his ankle at the very first meeting at Matchams Park.

Neil was head and shoulders above his rivals in this class, however, and won five of the six races at the end of the year to join the aces for 1976. From that moment he has never looked back. He scored two fourth places in his first championship meeting at Nantwich, won the round at Tenby in August and finished third over the season as well as scoring several major successes in national scrambles such as the 'Patchquick.'

Neil's first GP was the last British 125 round at Hawkstone Park in 1976, but this was strictly a one-off ride on a Carabella which proved to be uncompetitive.

Neil's true ability was to shine through in that year's 250 GP at Newbury where he finished an astonishing third in the first race before being put out of the second in a multiple crash which also claimed world champion Heikki Mikkola.

The Maico connection continued in 1977 with another British championship win at Brighton and amazing consistency in the 250 world championships which saw him finish the season 13th after scoring in all but the first

and final rounds.

His best result was in Sweden with eighth and fourth places, and the same country in 1978 marked a significant point in Neil's career. Battling for second place in the championship Neil scored his first GP victory, the first by a British rider for nine years and the first in the 250 class for 13 years. Only misfortune in the final two rounds put Neil down to fifth in the world title chase.

1978 was also a good year in the home championship. With a double victory at Tenby and a tremendous from-the-back win over Graham Noyce in County Durham, the battle for Britain's number one plate went to the very last race of the series before Neil had to settle for second.

Despite a British championship win at Brighton and three successive world 250 wins in Italy, Belgium and Yugoslavia, Neil has again had to be content with second place to Graham Noyce and Hakan Carlqvist at home and abroad.

Perhaps 1980 will be Neil's year to make number one. If it is there couldn't be a more popular winner with the fans or his fellow riders.