

# **Trialst Motocross News**



**1980**

**OFF-ROAD REVIEW**

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# OFF-ROAD REVIEW

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*By the staff, correspondents and photographers of T + MX*

This book is dedicated to the organisers, observers, marshals, course-layers, stake-bashers, scrutineers, lap-scorers, odd-job bods and amiable landowners who endure much for love of the sport.



Trials and Motocross News — or T + MX to more than 100,000 faithful readers — was the first UK newspaper to identify the strength and needs of the off-road market.

This book is a logical follow-on. The team which gave you your first off-road newspaper now presents your first off-road review. We hope you have as much pleasure reading it as we did producing it.

Many people have contributed to this book — so many, in fact, that a full credit list would be well-nigh impossible. Many of our usual outside photographers and correspondents have been involved, together with the editorial and advertisement staff of T + MX — either directly, or by undertaking extra work while their colleagues got on with the book.

And although it is probably fairer to mention no-one, we will take a risk and single out four lads for special thanks.

T + MX motocross boffin Alex

Hodgkinson made a huge contribution, while foreman compositor Keith Simpson's assistance with production was invaluable. Freelance photographers Eric Kitchen (trials) and Jack Burnicle (motocross) confirmed their reputations as the best in the business.

Having said that, I would like collectively to thank every single person whose contribution appears in these pages.

It has been a huge task to produce this book, and we hope that your interest confirms that the effort was worthwhile.

**BILL LAWLESS,**  
*Editor, January, 1980.*

*Bill Lawless*



Like many another competitor, I have watched the progress of Trials and Motocross News with interest during the last couple of years.

No-one had ever attempted to run an off-road newspaper before, presumably because they thought there wouldn't be enough people to read it.

But T + MX proved them wrong by quickly getting established and then going from strength to strength. This Off-Road Review is further evidence that our sport is big enough and virile enough to support its own voice — and who better to speak for us than T + MX?

I hope the annual enjoys as much success as the weekly.

**MALCOLM RATHMELL**  
*British Solo Trials Champion*

*Malcolm Rathmell*



Sussex aces Roger Martin and Arthur Jefford make a fine study in concentration on their works Beamish Suzuki outfit in the Red Rose national championship classic last year.







Midlanders John Gaskell and Harry Wood had a great 1979, with their first European chair championship and third place in the British title race. They are shown here in the 1978 British Experts trial.





Adrian Clarke and Mick Bailey dominated the British sidecar trials scene and cruised to the title with two rounds still to go.

## 1979—YEAR OF THE ONE-HORSE RACE...

**THE final round of the 1978 British Sidecar Trials Championship proved a cliff-hanger of a battle at the Southern trial, when three crews — Adrian Clarke/Mick Bailey, Colin Dommatt/Eric Chamberlain and Roger Martin/Arthur Jefford — were all in with a chance of taking the crown.**

The title went unexpectedly to Dommatt and Chamberlain for the third successive year, after the expected victors Clarke and Bailey slumped to a disappointing sixth place. Clarke was happy to accept that he and Mick had been fairly beaten, but in his own mind he knew that with their abilities the title should have been theirs. For half the season the press had boosted their capabilities, and if they couldn't be the '78 champs, then in '79 nobody was going to get close to them.

And so it proved. In the ten-round series which stretched from Yorkshire via Mid Wales to the South, Clarke and Bailey won five rounds, were third in three and had a fourth and fifth, never once finishing outside the top five.

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A consistent and impressive record which gave them the title by the eighth round and eventually allowed them to finish the series with a 32 point advantage. Not for them a repeat of '78, and having won the title they promptly announced their retirement.

But that was in November and the series started in March with the D. K. Mansell held in glorious weather. A class entry attended but none could match Clarke's superiority as he and Mick took an eleven mark win over John Turner and Reg Miller, who, tied with third placed Colin Dommatt and new passenger Rob Clift. Colin not only had the problem of training a new passenger but also had changed from the championship-winning Suzuki to a Comerfords supported Bultaco.

Come the second round three weeks later and the weather conditions were the complete opposite, with torrential rain hammering the Kickham course near Frome.

With the day proving to be nothing but mud, mud and even more mud, Midland mud masters Joe and Paul Howells came into their

own and wiped up the trial from a back-to-form Roger Martin and Arthur Jefford. Third came Turner and Miller, and already the Eastern pair were showing some consistency, something which would prove most necessary during the season.

After leading the trial in the early stages Clarke and Bailey had five fives in the penultimate group of sections and literally blew their chances of a win, but still led the title chase by one point from Turner and Miller.

The Mitchell in May was a real corker, and with rocks predominant, Clarke was predominant, and he took an easy win over a much improved John Gaskell and Harry Wood.

The most unlucky crew of the day were Dave Pallas and Paul Croome. Paul caught his leg in the spinning rear wheel and broke his leg and ankle while they were holding third place. Dave completed the trial on his own, just nudging into a section to be recorded the maximum, hopeful of winning championship points, but despite other crews promising not





Colchester-based John Turner and Reg Miller took their Beamish Suzuki outfit to second place by virtue of consistent finishing throughout the series.



Malcolm Ellis and Allen Guest, both teachers at the same college, finished second in the Red Rose and third in the Greensmith in their best season to date.



## TRIALS — SIDECAR CHAMPIONSHIPS



Dick Ramplee plants a deliberate dab while passenger Alan Bungay looks a little concerned as the Suzuki outfit tops a climb in the Allan Jefferies trial last year.

to protest, the organisers regretfully had to exclude Dave from the results.

Dommett and Clift were still getting used to each other, while Malcolm Ellis and Allen Guest scored their first points. Barry Watson and Ronnie Suttill, the Howells and Turner/Miller again all scored points.

A two-month break brought all the contenders into July and North to Yorkshire for the Allan Jefferies which proved to be one of the best events of the series.

On virtually his home territory, Mick Wilkinson looked good for a repeat win, but Clarke and Bailey were on quite unbeatable form and rushed home to a 31-mark win that defied belief.

If they had put together a brilliant ride in the Jefferies, then their attack on the Red Rose some eight weeks later brought gasps of amazement. Adrian and Mick took just six dabs around the forty section course, which was brilliant. Malcolm Ellis and Allen Guest had a good ride on 22 while the rest trailed in from 39 lost onwards, the points scorers happy to finish under 55. But that six mark ride

was terrific., Even Clarke reckoned he had gone well!

With the season half way through, Clarke had a 32-point lead over Martin and Jefford with Turner and Miller and Watson and Suttill close behind.

To a certain extent the lead took the pressure off Clarke as he and Mick went to the Sam Seston and finished a poor trial in third place, an event won by eventual European Champion John Gaskell and Harry Wood.

The Presidents in Devon heralded a return to form of Colin Dommett and Rob Clift who put it all together and won their first Championship round as a pair. Having broken his ribs practising on a solo a few days earlier, Clarke had his worst ride of the series with fifth place. Turner finished second, the Howells were third and Gaskell was fourth. Pallas and Croome were well and truly back with tenth place and the final championship point after their Mitchell accident.

So great was Clarke's 25-point advantage that he and Mick were able to clinch the title at the eighth round, the Greensmith on the

Welsh border. For the first time Clarke looked really serious and really tried. Often he had been accused of not struggling when in trouble but this accusation could not be levelled at him during the Greensmith.

They did the job properly with a good steady ride which culminated in a nine-mark win over Barry Watson, clinching the championship and leaving the others to battle for second place.

With just two rounds left, Turner on 63 points and Gaskell on 56 were left to decide the runner-up spot between them. Gaskell opened up with a win at the Perce Simon with Turner finishing second, John closing the gap by three points. But then at the Knut, Gaskell dropped right out of contention with fifth place when Turner came in second. Consistency was the secret of success for John and Reg, never winning a round but four seconds and a score in each trial was enough for the Colchester-based lads.

It had proved a good series and with Clarke declaring his intention to have a year's break, the 1980 series should be even better.