

# two wheels

\$1.50\*

NZ \$1.75\*

AUGUST, 1980

**DIRT SHOOTOUT!**  
Honda XL, Yamaha XT  
& Kawasaki KL Thumpers

**TONY HATTON**  
Profile of an  
ever-cool maestro

**Bathurst Violence**  
Facts against  
the fantasy!



# two wheels

Volume 22, No. 6, AUGUST 1980

## NEWS & TESTS

- 10 **FOUR-STROKE FIREPOWER COMPARO**  
Kawasaki KL250A3 • Honda XL250SA • Yamaha XT250G
- 20 **YAMAHA XS850G**  
Life ain't easy as you get older!
- 58 **YAMAHA IT125G**  
Baby Blue joins the IT queue

## FEATURES

- 36 **HOPELESS & HELPLESS IN THE ARMS OF FATE**  
Lester Morris talks "Motorshow Mania"
- 39 **BYE BYE BMW — FOREVER**  
Kaleidoscope spreads an R90S over a long distance!
- 67 **THE NIGHT BATHURST "BLEW UP"**  
Facts to spoil the fiction

## TOURING

- 54 **FURTHER THAN BEFORE . . .**  
Portugal, Spain and Morocco under The Bear's paw
- 74 **HIGHWAY 31 TEN YEARS ON**  
A tough traveller in tougher territory!

## SPORT

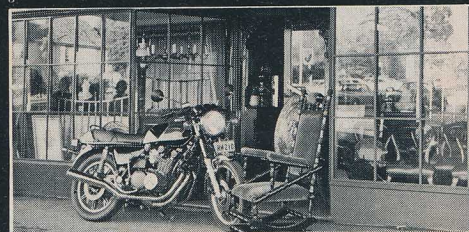
- 26 **TONY HATTON PROFILE**  
A true racer never sweats

## ODDS & SODS

- 46 **KEEP IT SPRUCE, BRUCE**  
Dirt bike hose-off!
- 50 **WAR BIKES**  
Dirt bikes for dirty tactics
- 64 **PRIDE AND PREJUDICE PREVAILS**  
Owner's report: BMW R90S
- 70 **QUASAR: AN EARTHLY ODDITY**  
Motorcycling of the future takes shape?
- 78 **ON THE WINGS OF ECONOMY**  
A 25-year commuter thingo

## DEPARTMENTS

- |                      |               |                  |
|----------------------|---------------|------------------|
| 5 It's All Happening | 44 Gizmo File | 86 Club Register |
| 32 Cruisin'          | 49 Socket     | 90 Wrap-On       |



*Remember when that strange, original XS750D was called "years ahead of its time". It might well have been true — then! Many models later it's bigger and still with us. Even innovators are allowed to trail the slip occasionally. . . on page 20.*

### Editor

Mac Douglas

### Assistant Editor

Mark Camm

### Back-up and Legwork

Julia Cullen

### South Of The Border

Kel Wearne

### Road Test Chief

Col Miller

### Leprechaun Still At Large

Lester Morris

### National Advertising Chief

Les Edwards

### Our Artist

Kerry Loss

### Production Chief

Bob Bowie with Steve Pickells

Freelance contributions are welcomed by this magazine and submissions should be addressed to The Editor, TWO WHEELS, 142 Clarence Street, Sydney, 2000. Submissions must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope for their return. The editor accepts no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts, photographs or transparencies. Annual subscription rate to addresses in Australia \$21.00. Other countries \$A22.20.

Back copies: 5th Floor, 168 Castlereagh St, Sydney, 2000.  
Advertising: National Advertising Manager, SHARON LIGHTNER, 142 Clarence St, Sydney, 2000. Phone 29-3761, 29-5606. Melbourne: 150 Lonsdale St, Melbourne, 3000. Phone 662-1222. Adelaide: THE ADMEDIA GROUP PTY LTD, 24 Kensington Road, Rose Park, 5067. Phone 332-8144. Brisbane: GEOFF HORNE, 57 O'Connell Terrace, Bowen Hills, 4006. Phone 52-8566. Perth: CLIFF THOMAS, ADREP Advertising Representatives, 62 Wickham St, East Perth, 6000. Phone 325-6395. New Zealand: ROSS QUAIID, 17-19 Fitzherbert St, Petone, Wellington. Phone 68-8974. London: PETER HOLLOWAY, Ludgate House, 107 Fleet St, London EC4A2AL.  
Printed in New Zealand by Comprint. Published by Murray Publishers Pty Ltd, 142 Clarence St, Sydney, 2000.  
\*Recommended Price.

**DISTRIBUTORS: GORDON & GOTCH (A/SIA) LTD, MELBOURNE. MURRAY PUBLISHERS PTY LTD, SYDNEY.**

# TONY HATTON

## A True Racer Never Sweats...

When the adrenalin is out to race, Tony Hatton can be found close by — but calm in every circumstance. When the best advice is needed, Hatton's same considered calm prevails. When the problems are mechanical, Hatton's view commands respect.

But lying just underneath the calm Hatton surface is an ambition to be the best, all perfectly matched to a near-obsession with perfection. In fact Hatton is the racer's racer — and hard to beat anywhere.

PAUL GOVER revisited the man who put him onto bikes to discover remote Razorback living has not dulled a quiet champion's keen razor's edge.

**A** QUIET, FIVE-ACRE block on the Razorback mountain overlooking the Sydney basin is a far cry from the 290 km/h straights of the Paul Ricard Raceway in southern France. But both are equally familiar to one of Australia's senior motorcycle racers, Tony Hatton — although "senior" is probably the wrong word to describe Tony; he seems ageless. He's an elfin-like man who began racing bikes in the early '60s and has been at the top in Australia for more than a decade.

Tony will only admit to being 21, while his wife, Hayley, accurately describes him simply as "young" (if not in years then certainly in outlook).

He is lively and intelligent, with intense bright eyes and a fit, trim body. He has raced in Europe, Japan and New Zealand, won five Australian road racing titles and was a guiding influence on the careers of several young racers.

And, despite persistent rumours to the contrary, he has not yet retired.

Rather, Tony has become dispirited with competing in what he regards as a half-baked fashion, and is attempting to put together a deal that will allow him to continue racing in a totally professional fashion.

"I am sick of staying here and running around like a C-grader," Tony says.

He has yet to make a definite decision about his racing future, but is considering a deal which could see him racing overseas. A

typically tight-lipped Hatton concedes that it could see him riding a top-class prototype in world-class endurance events.

"I still have my enthusiasm for racing... riding for Honda like I did in the Bol d'Or is the way to do it," he explained.

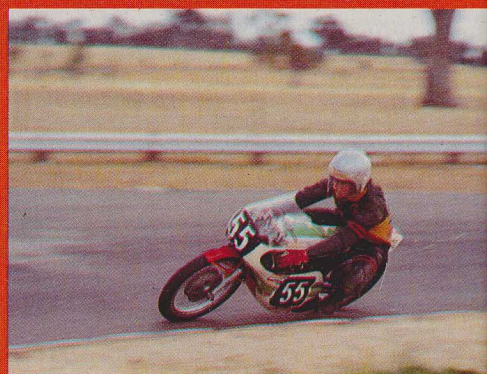
Although Tony has not raced since last November in New Zealand, he says it would not take him long to again get fit for competition.

In the meantime he has been busy preparing racing bikes for Honda. He also has a successful business, Tony Hatton Racing Developments.

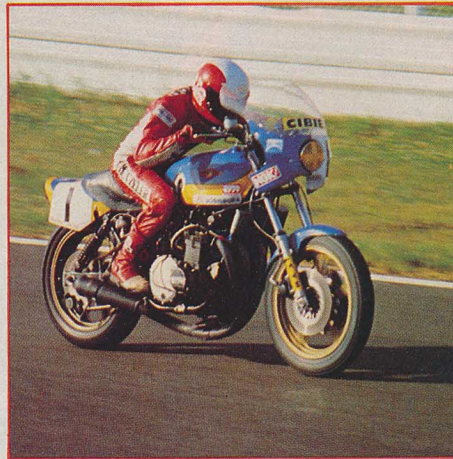
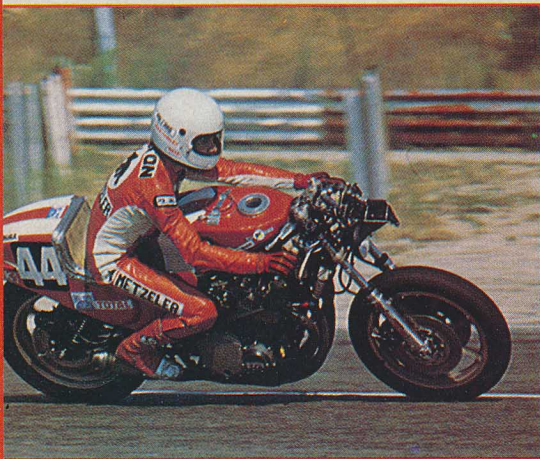
The Hatton-developed-and-prepared improved production Honda 900 has been at the forefront of Australian endurance racing this year with Ken Blake and Dennis Neill in the saddle.

The bike Tony developed and raced last year took pole position for both the Coca-Cola 800 and Arai 500 races, but a crash in

*The Hatton kaleidoscope. The large shot is the BMW blasting Bitupave, but the Six-Hour remains the one race Tony just can't win, regardless of mount. The other shots are (from top) warming up the MT125R Honda racer for tester Morris at Oran Park, aboard Honda's 750 in Castrol Six-Hour action, out in the fields at Symmons Plains, Tassie, with the dual title-winning TA125 Yamaha and Tony samping a beast of a different breed — Gregory H's H2-R.*







the wet at Oran Park and an engine failure at Bathurst put an abrupt end to the hard-won promise at the grid.

However, Neill and Roger Heyes took a pair of Hatton-prepared 900s to third and fourth positions in the production event at Bathurst, finishing side-by-side.

Tony also prepares Honda motocross machines, including those used last year by Mark Pace.

He has not, however, been able to come to terms with Bennett Honda, either as a rider or mechanic, for any future involvement.

Although reluctant to discuss the subject, he probably could have had the Kawasaki ride accepted by Jim Budd, partnering Gregg Hansford on the prototype Z1000 SR endurance racer.

### “Settling down . . .”

At present, he is concentrating on his own business, which he operates from his Razor-back property, in a workshop he built himself.

Tony built all the buildings on the block, but when I first met him only his A-frame house was underway.

At the time he was a partner in Tony Hatton Motorcycles, a Honda dealership in Campbelltown, just outside Sydney and it was through him that I first became interested in road bikes.

**“I still have my enthusiasm for racing but I am sick of staying here and running around like a C-grader. Riding for Honda like I did at the Bol d’Or is the way to do it”.**

At the time I owned a Honda S800 sports-car, a fun but frustrating machine which suffered a long succession of mechanical failures. One day I decided that it had stopped for the last time and went to Tony to consider a replacement. He came and took it away to work some of the Hatton magic and it was soon replaced by a Honda 550 four. That doesn’t mean the S800 never went again, it’s just that being with Tony it seemed natural to progress to a motorcycle — it still seems natural.

Like most eager young motorcyclists in the days before capacity limits for learners I had wanted the biggest, but Tony talked some commonsense into me. Looking back, it was probably that advice and some tuition in safe, yet quick road-riding which kept me alive.

*Much of Hatton’s prowess of late has been seen by crowds overseas. Top and bottom shots show Hatton and Croz during the Suzuka Eight-Hour in ’78, riding Mark Moriwaki’s Kawasaki superbike cum endurance racer for Team Hannan. After miscalculation in fuel consumption (which caused Hatton to push for a mile in above-century temperatures) they finished second to Wes Cooley and Dave Emde aboard Pops Yoshimura’s Suzuki. Centre shots show Hatton racing during the event, and (on the red bike) in his second try at the Bol d’Or, this time at Circuit Paul Ricard. The Australian-framed bike was sadly inadequate for the job, and was greatly modified by Tony on-site to stay in the race.*

I wish there were more people around like him.

We often rode from the Campbelltown shop to his Razorback home and no matter how good I thought I was, Tony was always comfortably better. It was Tony, too, who introduced me to motorcycle journalism by providing test bikes for the country paper which I worked on at the time.

His motorcycle shop was a never-ending source of interest, ranging from exotic road and race machines to Tony's racing mates and characters, such as Peter Ledger, best known for his outlandish posters like the Mr Motocross gladiator.

Apart from bikes, Tony and Hayley owned an early SAAB 96 and an ancient Morris truck, although after some repair work my turncoat Honda S800 found a place in Hayley's heart.

It was the truck, however, which saw the most use and it came in handy for moving both bikes and building supplies to the block.

"A mate bought it for \$40, then we put a new engine in it and it went well," the practical Hatton said to my raised "Only \$40?" eyebrows.

The Morris still lives on the block, but it's been put out to pasture.

Returning to Tony's hilltop home I was surprised at how much it had changed since my last visit several years before.

The perspex sign at the front gate, on which Ledger had painted simply *Hatton; Lot I*, was still there though a little faded, but the entrance was more stylish than the old single paddock gate.

Where before there had only been a nearly-complete A-frame house facing out over the side of the mountain toward Sydney, there was now alongside a garage and large workshop.

In the garage was a small Citroen and outside the workshop was the racing transporter, really just a converted truck with a



dual-seat cab with bike storage tacked on the rear end.

While Tony and I sat down to talk, Hayley, and the Hatton's 18-months-old daughter, Peta, a copy-book bundle of Dad's nerves, continued with the child's bath and preparations for dinner.

Tony and Hayley have been married for seven years, and have lived on Razorback for five. Later, over dinner, Tony talked of his career and explained the mushroom of buildings.

"Building has turned into a real hobby," he explained. "I built everything here."

He has plans to move on soon, for what was once a quiet and almost deserted area has now become by Tony's standards overpopulated.

Later this year he intends buying a bigger block of land in the remote Burrorangang Valley, which is now much like Razorback was when they first moved in.

Hayley brought out several thick scrap books and the personal reminiscences ended

*Hatton preparing the 1979 Bathurst production race-winning Honda at his Picton workshop, prior to leaving for Japan to sort the RSC-engined superbike's run at Bathurst that year.*

as Tony and I talked about his life with motorcycles and his racing career.

### Memories and moments

Trying to remember his first bike was a real problem, but eventually he settled for a single-cylinder Acme road bike.

"It was just a hack thing I bought to ride around the dirt when I was a kid," he says, and a few years later, in the early '60s, he began competing in short circuit events on a BSA.

"There was no such thing as road racing then, or very little of it," he says.

Progressing to A grade level fairly quickly, winning a lot of races, "but nothing startling", he competed in his first road race meeting in '61 or '62; he's not really sure.

"I rode the first meeting at Oran Park; but Bathurst before that." Even then he was aiming high. "When I was a kid I always fancied being 500 champion; in Australia it is Unlimited, but overseas 500 is everything."

Tony still believes that dirt racing is the best way to get into competition because it instils the basics of control very quickly. Most of the best racers started out that way, and he quoted Gregg Hansford as one of many examples.

A qualified mechanic, Tony did most of his own preparation right from the start, with help from mates.

"The dear part, then, was travelling and entries," he says.

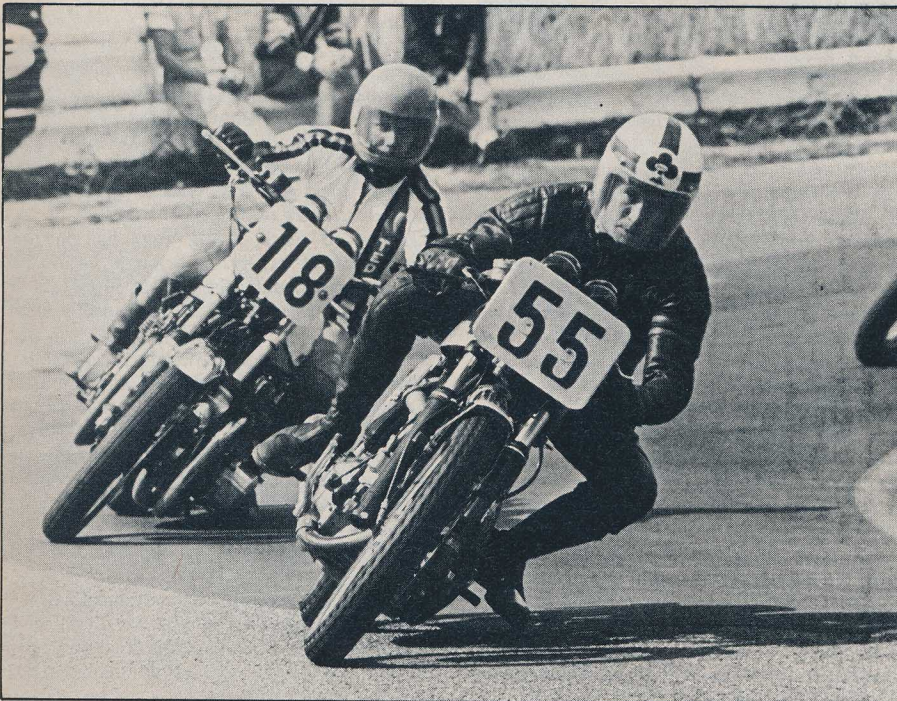
He continued using BSAs in road races, but his first big win came on a Honda 750.

"It was at Bathurst in 1969 on the Honda

---

**"The best rider around at the moment, without a doubt, is Graeme Crosby. I know what he can do and it's not what I can do. I think you will see Croz win a world title. He can do anything!"**

---



four, the first race a Honda four won in Australia," Tony told me — with a hint of pride in his voice.

At that stage the rider who most influenced his career was Kel Carruthers, who has now gone on to much bigger things.

"He really impressed me," Tony says in a brief but sincere tribute. "The next man who helped me was Toombsie, both as a rider and to show me what I was doing wrong."

Tony was deeply upset by Ron Toombs' death at Bathurst last year, which he believes was probably a result of not being familiar with the limits of slick racing tyres.

"The best rider around at the moment, without a doubt, is Graeme Crosby," Tony says. Over the years he has made countless friends through racing and last Cracker night (do you all know what that is?) about 150 people turned up to celebrate at a bonfire on Razorback.

There are hundreds of funny stories, too. Like the time a riding companion lost his luggage in the middle of the Hay plain. Tony

tried to catch up to tell him but it developed into a race, and it was not until the next town that he could explain the problem. Then they had to go back and pick up what was left of the mess.

His favourite road bike is BMW, although he says a rider must cover a lot of miles on one to fully appreciate the marque. It is also one of the many brands he has raced. Others include Honda, Yamaha, Ducati and an abortive involvement with Harley Davidson, as well as single outings on many different types, including Kawasaki.

For many years Tony's racing number has been 55, and it is as well known to his friends and fans as the helmet with the symbol of a club at the centre of three stripes on it.

### "... And a lot we nearly won"

Not surprisingly for a man of his build, many of Tony's successes have been on small-capacity machines.

In the mid-'70s he was virtually unbeatable in the 125 class. His best year was 1974, when he won both the 250 and 125 Australian titles, as well as the Duke of Edinburgh Trophy for the country's most successful motorcycle racer. Winning that year brought special enjoyment for Tony, as it was achieved with the help of a good friend, wheelchair-bound Geoff Wiseman.

Three of his titles have been won on 125s and the other two on 250s — 1974 also brought one of his most embarrassing moments, when he fell off on the warm-up lap at a wet Sandown meeting. Undaunted, he picked himself up and went out and won the race.

**"The ideal motorbike licensing system is one similar to Japan, where the test is so strict that only a small percentage pass. It should also involve tuition at a racetrack on which a rider must turn a set lap time in safety to pass the test".**

In more recent years Tony has made his name in the saddle of Production and Improved Production machines, mostly Hondas. He has yet to win that elusive Castrol Six-Hour, but has been *oh-so-close* several times.

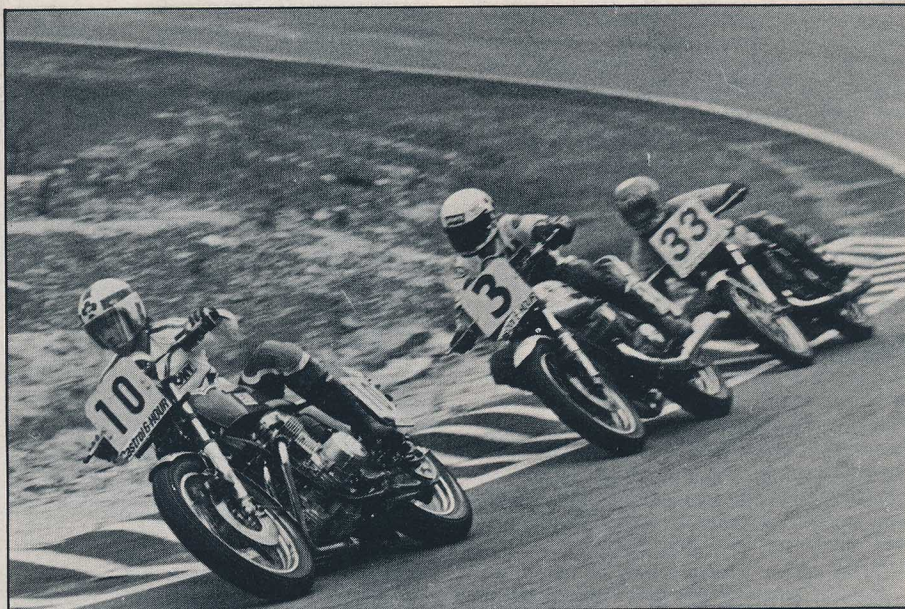
"We missed a couple of Six Hours we should have won on the BMW," Tony says. "The bike wasn't a winner, but we sure had a lot of near misses."

Since the Honda 900 was introduced in Australia Tony has been associated with it, doing both the development and riding. He scored a good win in last year's Arai Three-Hour at Bathurst on one, after a titanic battle with Gary Thomas.

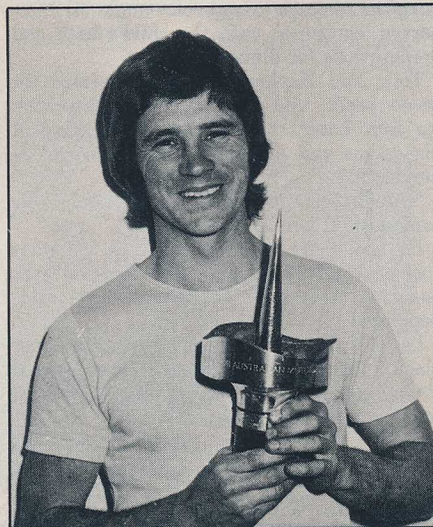
According to Tony the modified version is a different kettle of fish to the production machine.

"They are a real beast, very hard to ride," he says.

His Honda connections have brought Tony several rides overseas on the factory RCB machines, including a ride at the Bol d'Or. When he arrived at the Paul Ricard circuit for that race he was surprised to be given several reflective diamonds for the rear of his helmet.



*Above: Honda-mounted for the 1975 Six-Hour, Tony and Garry Thomas mowed down much of the field during an hour of rain. Short-circuit experience helps! "Red Rocket" Warren Willing tails the 750 F1 on his Mach IV Kwaka.*



*Left: Hatton with the Duke Of Edinburgh Trophy. His lightweight machinery went faster and held together longer!*

"But when you get on the straight you see why they have them."

They are to help pick up slower riders, and serve that purpose well.

Tony also won the prestigious Eight-hour race at Suzuka, a win he feels he really earned. While the other riders were out late partying, and sleeping in late recovering, he ran around the circuit to acclimatise to the thin air.

It paid off when he was able to outrun his opposition late in the event. That was another example of Tony's thoroughness and dedication to succeeding in racing.

In the past couple of years Tony has often been paired with his friend Graeme Crosby, now a works rider with Suzuki. The pairing has worked well, with Tony's experience, coolness and mechanical ability complementing the fiery natural skill of Crosby.

"For most people he is shocking to team with, but he doesn't worry me, I know what he can do and it's not what I can do, so I just let it roll off — other guys fall off," Tony says, recalling several times that Crosby's co-riders have dropped bikes trying to match Croz' times.

Both men have been associated with Ross Hannan, Tony for many years.

It was Hannan who built the high-barred Yoshimura Kwaka superbike which Crosby made one of the most popular bikes in Australian racing history.

However, Tony believes that Crosby will adapt easily to grand prix bikes, recalling the time at Oran Park when he rode borrowed machines as they had never been ridden before.

"I think you will see Croz win a world title," Tony says. "He can do anything."

It was the Bol d'Or which brought Tony's biggest racing disappointment, "although I've had thousands of them."

The gearbox broke at 23½ hours, just half an hour from the end, with a definite third place in the bag on the RCB Honda.

In his 20 years' racing Tony has had his fair share of crashes, although he by no means keeps count. In the first few years of his career there was an insurance system operating.

"I had a few maximum claims," he admits.

He has broken many bones, and like a lot of racers, cold weather sometimes brings problems.

There have been funny incidents too, like the time Tony ran straight up the rear of another rider who had had trouble starting his bike.

"I was in third gear at the time," he explains.

Although many spills have been his own fault, there were those that were not, such as the time at Adelaide when a slower rider moved across at the end of the straight, causing Tony to crash and slide for several

hundred metres, luckily without breaking any bones, but he was in bandages for several weeks.

### Safety — a personal view

He is concerned about safety, but surprisingly has only just switched from jet-style helmets. He believes that they offer better vision than a full-face type, particularly for the road. He really appreciates the value of helmets, and has little time for road riders who decide not to wear them.

"I fell off on my head once, with a helmet

"Still, despite the great wins of his career, including last year's Arai Three-Hour at Bathurst and the prestigious eight-hour race at Suzuka, Japan, he ponders the elusive Castrol Six-Hour: 'We should have won on the BMW. The bike wasn't really a winner, but we sure had some great near-misses'".

on — I was cross-eyed for weeks afterwards," Tony says.

He is also a strong believer in strict riding standards, such as those he passed on to me. His idea of an ideal licensing system for Australia is the Japanese one, where the licence test is so strict that only a very small percentage of those attempting it pass. It also involves tuition at a race circuit, on which a rider must turn a set lap time in safety to pass the test.

Tony is also in favour of the 74.4 kW limit for road bikes, which is now being imposed in several countries.

On the road Tony rides much as he does on racetracks — smoothly yet quickly.

One of the few road accidents he has had in recent years was caused, predictably, by

*With motocross star Mark Paice at last year's Six-Hour. Originally paired with Blake as a "big-chance" team, Tony broke fingers in a qualifying crash and was unable to race.*



an out-of-control motorist.

In the time that I have known Tony he has always been on hand with good, sensible advice, to anyone prepared to ask. That, perhaps, is the secret of the success of his business, in spite of its unusual location.

He is a meticulous worker, who knows what he wants and how to get it. His attitudes are reflected in the immaculate racing bikes he prepares and the high-quality road machines he tends.

One bike sitting in his workshop which he hopes one day to have time to develop is a

Moriwaki water-cooled 125 racer. But for all his success, Tony's home is not plastered with reminders of how good he is. Certainly, the refrigerator is covered with racing stickers, but there is no gaudy display of countless trophies in the living room.

This is typical of Tony Hatton, a top wrench and top rider who seems more concerned with racing success and competing to the best of his ability than advertising the fact. He'll probably just go on being one of the best in the business — whatever that is at the time.



## CHOOSE A CHAMPION

# PIRELLI

The tyre that's backed by more than just good looks



### 1979 Castrol Six Hour Race — Amaro Park

1st Hales/Chivas — Suzuki — Pirelli  
2nd Pretty/Budd — Yamaha — Pirelli  
3rd Attee/Coleman — Yamaha — Pirelli  
\*new race record time — Hales/Chivas — Suzuki — Pirelli  
\*five of the six fastest qualifiers — Pirelli

### 1979 New Zealand Castrol Six Hour Race — Manfield

1st Hiscock/Chivas — Suzuki — Pirelli  
2nd Freeth/McLachlan — Suzuki — Pirelli  
3rd Turner/Delautour — Honda — Pirelli

### 1980 Adelaide Advertiser Three Hour Race — A.I.R.

1st Hiscock — Suzuki — Pirelli  
2nd Phillis — Suzuki — Pirelli

### 1980 Castrol Four Hour — Wanneroo Park — W.A.

1st Hiscock/Chivas — Suzuki — Pirelli  
2nd Phillis/Watt — Suzuki — Pirelli  
3rd Cartwright/Gill — Honda — Pirelli

## MAVICH

390 Eastern Valley Way, Roseville-2069  
Phone: 406 5533

S.A./N.T. Dist: Heads & Treads, 224 Main North Rd., Prospect. (08) 44 8681. VIC. Dist: P.S. Wholesale Pty. Ltd., 337 Elizabeth St., Melbourne. (03) 602 3804. QLD. Dist: Annand and Thompson Pty. Ltd., Banya St., Bulimba, Brisbane. (07) 399 2611. W.A. Dist: Two Wheel Wholesale, 109 Cambridge St., Leederville. (09) 381 7507. N.Z. Dist: South Pacific Accessories, Auckland, Christchurch, Wanganui. 317 86, 690 42, 589 99.

Pirelli Phantoms available in 16" 17" 18" and 19"