Motor Cycle News

WORLD'S TOP-SELLING MOTOR CYCLE NEWSPAPER

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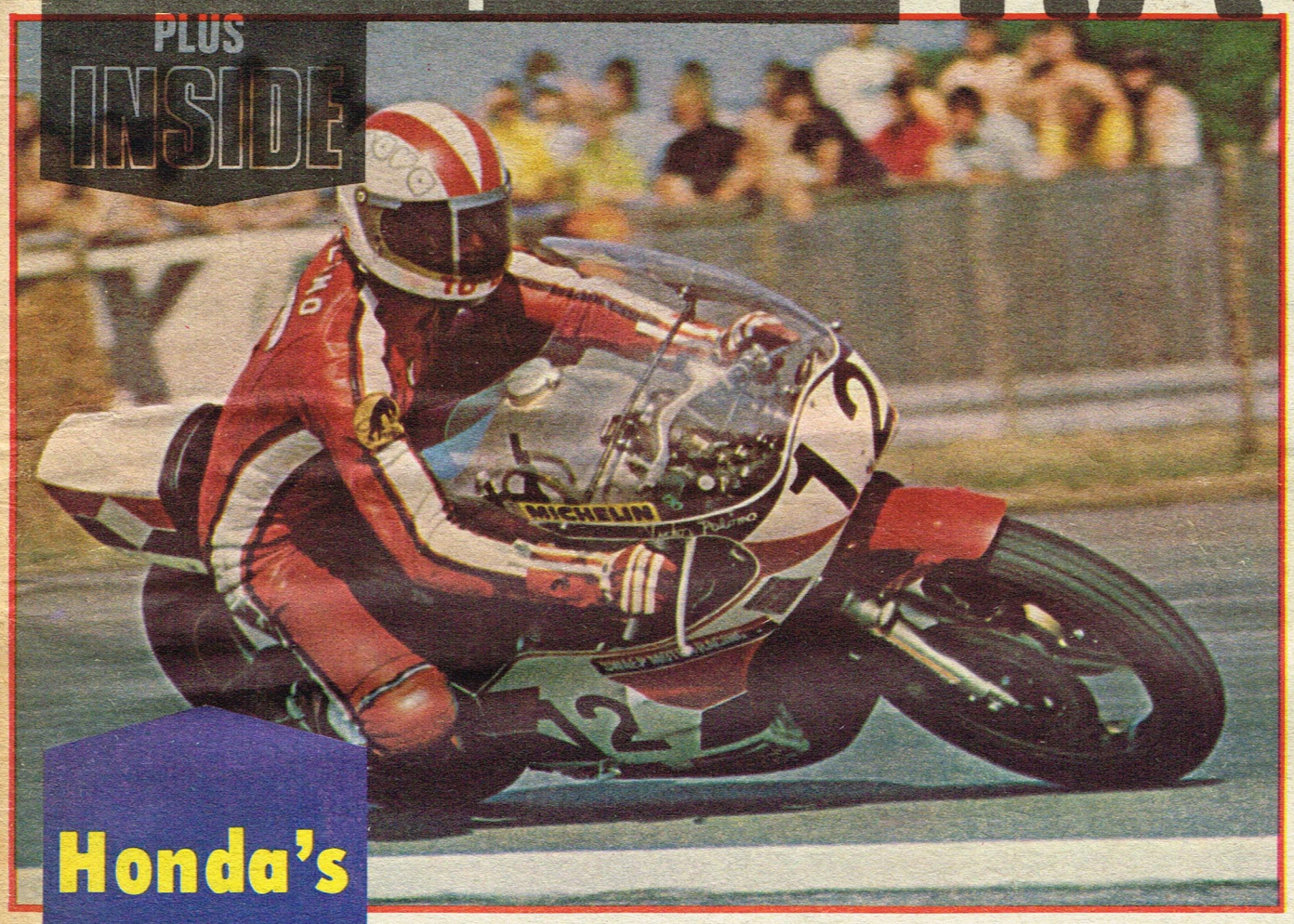
Palomo is champion but Nixon protests!

PLUS INSIDE

Honda's works racers

The story behind their endurance bikes — the first works Hondas for nine years



VICTOR Palomo (above) has been crowned Formula 750 champion after winning Saturday's final round at Hockenheim. His claim to the title, though, is being strongly opposed by American Gary Nixon who says he is the winner of the second round in Venezuela, not Steve Baker. If the FIM uphold his protest next month he will move one point ahead of Palomo. Full report pages 19, 20, 21.

INSIDE YOUR SUPERB MCN

- ★ We go to Morocco by BMW
- ★ **The Honda story — exclusive extracts from a new book**
- ★ International moto cross from Ireland

BUDGET RACING!

Low costs, big rewards for Honda's 125 series

A LOW-COST road racing formula with a prize fund of over £10,000 could revolutionise the British scene in 1977.

Plans are currently being laid at Honda UK's Chiswick headquarters to back a 12-meeting series exclusively for their new CR 125 two stroke racer, which last week underwent successful tests at Cadwell Park and Thruxton.

The aircooled, single cylinder bike is likely to cost as little as £800 ready to race and would be available through selected dealers.

Most of the prize fund would be sunk into prizemoney at the meetings, with just a small portion of the total figure held back for the overall positions at the end of the season.

With 125cc racing at a low ebb in this country and with the sport becoming more and more expensive, the plan is seen as an opportunity to revitalise the 125cc class and put racing within the reach of many more privateers.

The bikes are built by Honda Racing Service Centre in Japan and the factory are keen to assist importers and dealers with this type of involvement in racing, in preference to entering the world championships with a works team.

Honda's 125cc hope: See page six. Opinion: page four.

■ **A NEW £17,500 prize, linking the 200-mile road races at Daytona, Imola and Paul Ricard, will be introduced in 1977. See page seven.**

Britain fourth

BRITAIN took fourth place in last week's World Trophy team contest at the International Six Days Trial, in Austria, behind West Germany, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany.

Mick Bowers was our best performer.

Only three of the 22 Britons retired, the remaining survivors bringing home eight silver and one bronze medal.

It was West Germany's second successive Trophy success but the Czechs beat them in the secondary Silver Vase competition in which Britain was last.

● Peter Howdle's report, pages 13-16.

Hudson rides Husqvarna

NINETEEN-year-old Neil Hudson is to try Husqvarna's new moto cross bikes next week with a view to becoming the factory's number one 250cc grand prix rider next season.

● See Moto Cross Talk, page 32.

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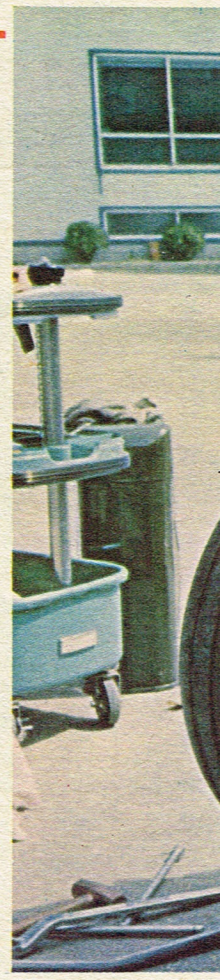
FINAL FORMULA 750 ROUND FROM HOCKENHEIM

VICTOR PALOMO WINS — SEE PAGES 20 AND 21

Honda work wonders



TEN THOUSAND spectators, almost three times as many as usual, turned up at Sunday's Thruxton 400-mile road race, Britain's round of the Coupe d'Endurance championship.

They saw the fastest race in the 22-year history of the Southampton & DMCC marathon — 7m 14.4s faster than last year's record-breaking run by the Kawasaki pair of Jacques Luc and Alain Vial.

They saw the 16-valve, four cylinder 941cc Hondas end their Coupe d'Endurance mission by scoring their fith win in five rounds.

They saw Frenchman Roger Ruiz and Christian Huguet win by 1m 8.2s after 170laps from another works Honda, ridden by Coupe d'Endurance champion Jean-Claude Chemarin and American Pat Evans.

Britons Gary Green and Dave Croxford snatched third place on their works 941 Honda Powered Japauto ahead of the Alf Briggs British works raced by Stan Woods and Tony Rutter.

At this Honda sponsored meeting, they saw Honda finish first, second and fourth after their initial Honda leaders Rene Guili and Hubert Rigal threw away a lap advantage at 1h 58m when Rigel crashed without injury at Seagrave. The Honda was retired as it couldn't be refettled in time.

And, perhaps most of all, the British fans oggled at the speed at which the foreign endurance men lapped the little-used 2.356-mile circuit near Andover, Hants.

As he pulled out his first stint lap lead, Guili circulated in 1m 28.2s, an outright record on a circuit he saw for the first time the day before.

They also saw Honda riders complete the series in the first four individual positions, with Chemarin finishing ahead of the injured Christian Leon, Huguet and Woods.

If this really sounds like a Honda cakewalk, that just what it was, as has been the whole series. With a first year budget reported to be over £1m, the rest of the teams struggle and the few genuine privateers still around can only hope for a Japanese gold tooth smile.

Once again, tyre wear was a major concern. The fastest teams each changed the rear Dunlop hand cut slicks three times and some also changed the fronts.

The main problem is caused by the circuit being so abrasive and having a predominence of fast right-handers. A softer compound Dunlop with a similar pattern was used for over 16 hours at the Bol d'Or the week before.

Dunlop have tyres which would "go the distance" but the riders prefer the hand-cut slicks and the extra changes.

The two leading Hondas never missed a beat in the race, but there were a few hectic moments in the first practice when Evans fell on his fourth lap. The bike was returned to the paddock and back in tip-top fettle in time for practice to restart after the local church service ended.

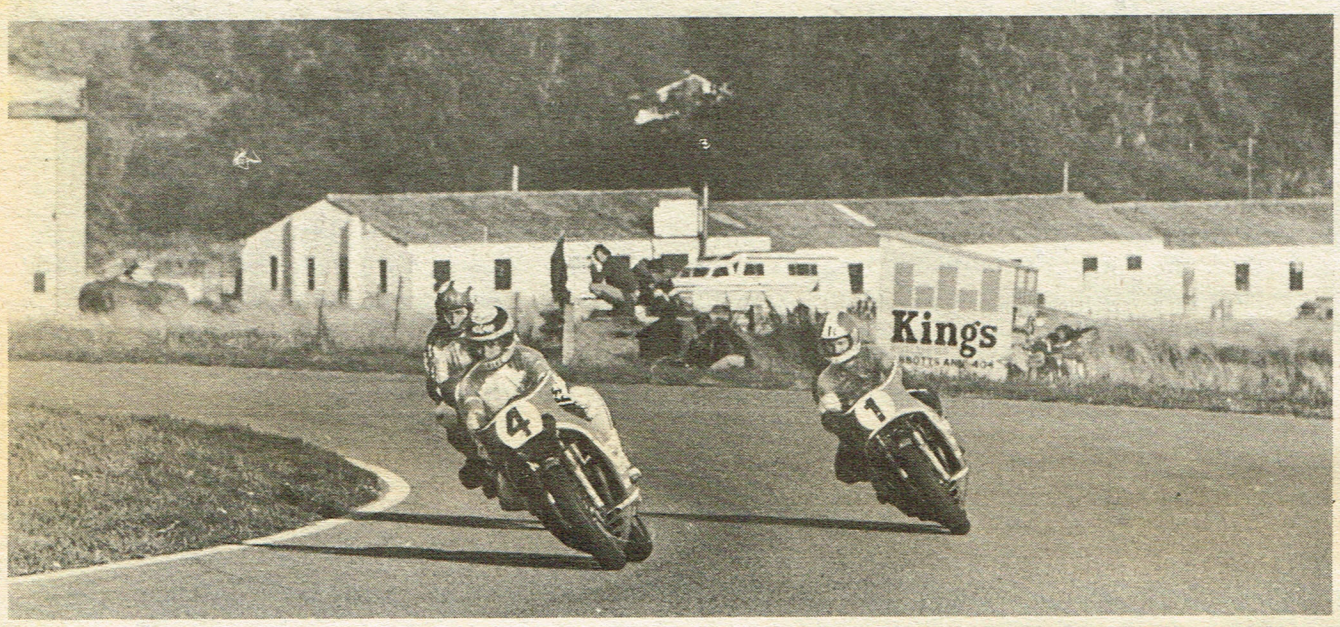
Croxford was the first to be affected by the tyre wear, but after three hours he and Green — riding with a broken bone in his foot as a result of his Le Mans crash — were the official leaders.

Woods and Rutter also changed three tyres and they lost an extra three laps stopping an oil leak from the oil pressure gauge. There was a gap of four laps between the fourth team and the fifth, the French team of Jean-Bernard Peyre and Maurice Maingret on a 900 Kawasaki.

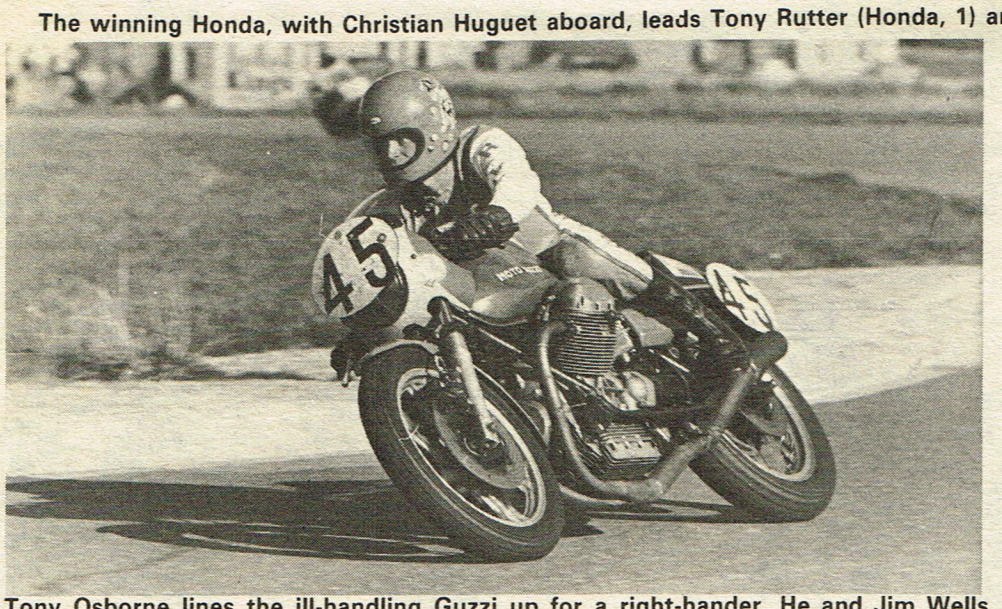
Another three laps down came the sixth finishers, Jim Wells and Tony Osborne and a bog-standard 850 Guzzi, which averaged 34mpg and which was more than a handful even in a straight line.

The Anglo-French pairing of Dave Degens and Bernard Sailler were seventh on the 1,000cc

Story: Norrie Whyte
Pictures: Cecil Bailey

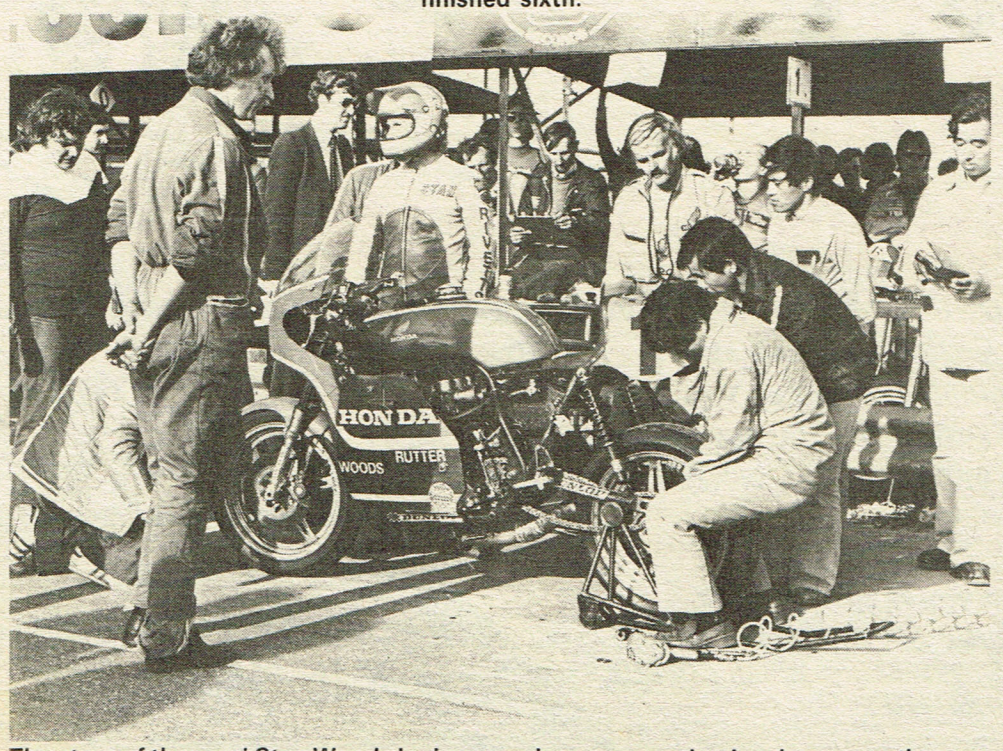


The winning Honda, with Christian Huguet aboard, leads Tony Rutter (Honda, 1) and Richard Peckett (BMW).



Tony Osborne lines the ill-handling Guzzi up for a right-hander. He and Jim Wells finished sixth.

Ruiz, Huguet smash '400' race record



The story of the race! Stan Woods looks on as Japanese mechanics change another rear tyre on the works Honda.

Provisional results

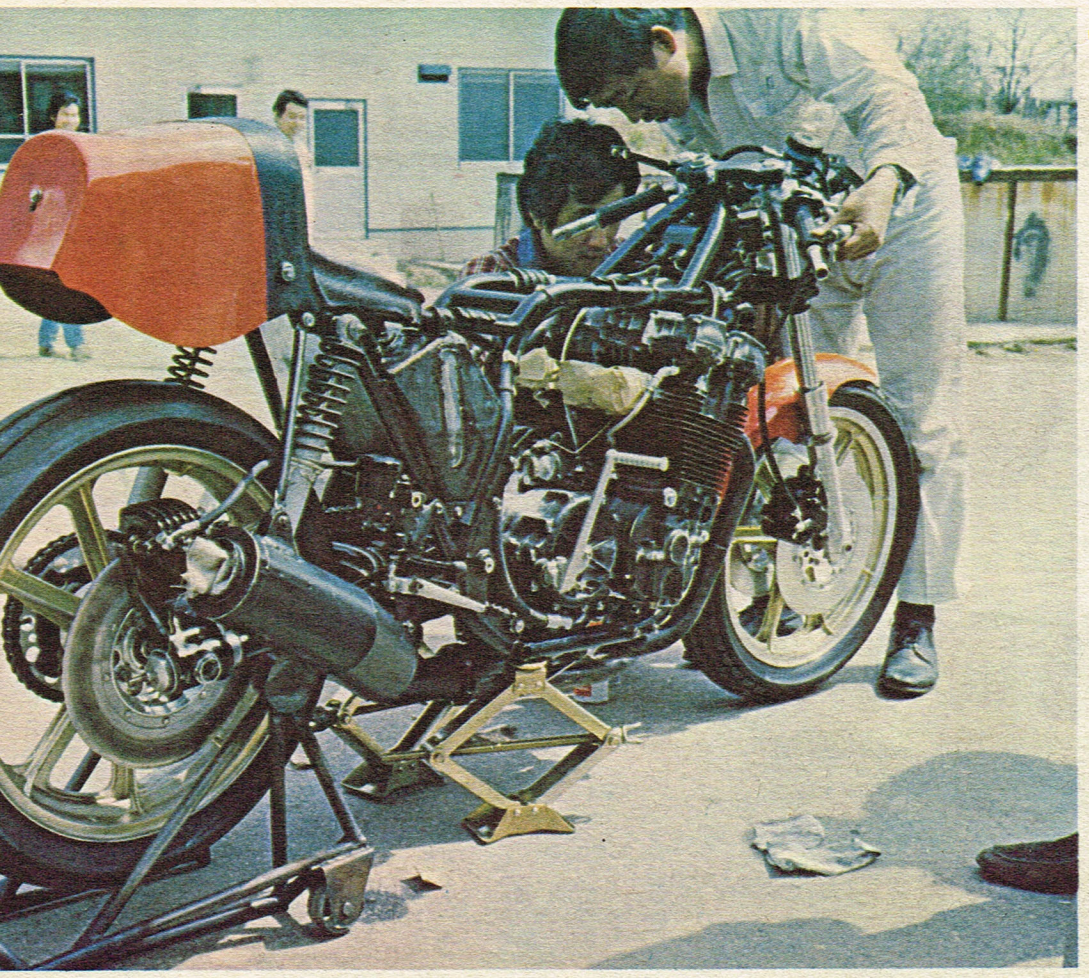
		laps	ave speed
1	C Huguet/R Ruiz, France (941 Honda)	170	89.95
2	J-C Chemarin/P Evans, France-USA (941 Honda)	170	89.57
3	D Croxford/G Green, GB (941 Japauto)	169	89.41
4	S Woods/T Rutter, GB (941 Honda)	168	88.50
5	J-B Peyre/M Maingret, France (900 Kawasaki)	164	86.40
6	J Wells/T Osborne, GB (850 Guzzi)	161	85.14
7	D Degans/B Sailler, GB-France (1,000 Japauto	159	83.90
8	R Laver/J-I Persson, Sweden (900 BMW)	159	83.90
9	D Randall/J Lavender, GB (812 Honda)	159	83.70
10	R Keen/A Lee, GB (350 Yamaha)	156	82.50
11	C Revett/J Revett, GB (350 Yamaha)	156	82.40
12	A Goldsmith/P Hitchcock, GB (1,000 Kawasaki)	156	82.35
13	J Buyaert/P Wybo, Belgium (900 Dholda)	155	82.30
14	R Cope/J Chappell, GB (750 Ducati)	153	80.60
15	A Sutton/R Winfield, GB (750 Dresda Honda)	149	78.70
16	J Soper/D Bexley, GB (888 Hadleigh Honda)	148	78.10
17	H Evans/D Casement, GB (400 Honda)	145	76.40
18	D Pendlebury/R Hordelalay, GB-France (998 Kawas')	144	75.40
19	S Eldridge/A Copland, GB (810 Honda)	142	74.70
20	T Dickie/N Rollason, GB (750 Honda)	138	72.50
21	B Fulton/T Carlton, GB (750 BSA)	120	63.60
22	P Hogervorst/H Looman, Holland (900 Kawasaki)	107	56.40

Winners' time: 4h 27m 9.2s

Coupe d'Endurance championship — final points: J-C Chemarin 45 net (69 gross), C Leon 42, C Huguet 35, S Woods 31, G Green 24, R Ruiz 23, J Luc and A Vial 20, A George 15, C Estrosi, P Korhonen, G Fougeray, D Rouge, C Sarron, D Boulom, P Evans and D Croxford all 12, J Buytaert and P Wybo 11.

. . . And when they stopped

S Wynne/M Hunt (860 Ducati) 8 laps, damaged front wheel; D Camier/F Huggett (998 Piper Smart Honda) 10 laps, oil leak; P Blosser/G Rolland (860 Honda) 27 laps, seized; R Corbett/D Grant (750 Triumph) 29 laps, gearbox; F Broadbent/B Robertson (500 Suzuki) 37 laps, big end; G Corbett/M Read (350 Yamaha) 42 laps, ignition; P Davies/M Russell (981 Laverda) 45 laps, electrical; B Hill/G Bentman (750 Honda) 51 laps, piston; J Cowie/C Offer (980 BMW) 53 laps, valve spring; J Witt-Mann/D Cash (350 Ducati) 63 laps, broken frame; R Guili/H Rigal (941 Honda) 68 laps, Rigal crashed; T Holland/B Marks (830 Norton) 69 laps, split crankcase; T Loughridge/L Trotter (500 Suzuki) 71 laps; D Mason/R Peabody (460 Morini) 72 laps, "strange engine noises;" M Thorpe/C Wall (430 Honda) 86 laps, Thorpe crashed; S Hurst/R Rott (888 Egli Honda) 110 laps, oil leak; M Taylor/J Kirby (750 Ducati) 111 laps; M Lunde/B Smith (812 Honda) 112 laps, rear tyre problems; D McMillan/R Peckett (980 BMW) clutch; J Heath/A Rogers (500 Raceway) completed 96 laps and were non-finishers.



Japauto, only ahead of Swedes Robert Laver and Jan-Inge Persson on a standard 900 BMW which was fitted with a Continental road tyre.

Doug Randall and John Lavender brought Keith Manning's 812 Honda-4 into ninth place after changing three Michelin rear tyres, each in 45s.

Roger Keen and Alan Lee finished their third trouble-free Thruxton marathon in succession in tenth place, only a few seconds ahead of brothers Chris and Jerry Revett on another 350 Yamaha which lost three laps in the first hour when the clutch cable came out, then the throttle slides jammed and going into the last lap Jerry's gear change pedal flew off going past the pits.

In 12th place, Andy Goldsmith and Pete Hitchcox finished their sixth endurance race of the season, but their Kawasaki finished with a broken frame. Said Goldsmith: "I thought the tyres were wearing and causing the bad handling, then when we finished, we found a broken downtube."

Belgians Jack Buytaert and Phillip Wybo were 13th, two laps ahead of Roger Cope and John Chappell on Oxford Fairing's vee-twin Ducati which finished without a trace of oil leak and with only a few flies spoiling the "showroom condition."

Daryl Pendlebury and Frenchman Rene Hordelaley only just made the start with their 998 Kawasaki after replacing pistons between the end of practice and the race, but despite a misfire throughout, they were lying fifth going into the last hour when the chain broke. Repairs took 33m and they dropped to 18th.

Steve Eldridge and Alastair Copland had trouble in the opposite direction. They lost 29m in the first hour when the advance and retard unit came loose, but after that their Honda went OK and they finished 19th.

HONDA'S CONQUEROR

Top Endurance monster bike in the flesh

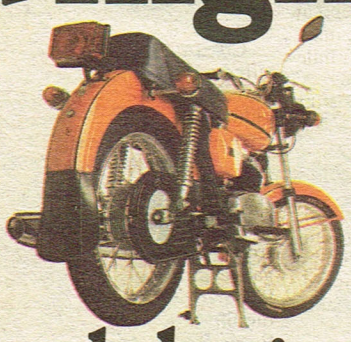
HONDA'S all conquering Endurance machine in the flesh! The 115 bhp monsters have finished first in every round of this year's FIM Coupe d' Endurance, combining speed and superreliability.

The bikes which are 941cc are based on Honda's 750cc road machine and the crankcases are actually identical to standard with the bigger barrels and four valve heads grafted on.

MCN Editor Peter Strong went to the Bol d'Or to spend 24 hours with the Honda team and his story plus the full specification of the bike are on pages 37-39.

TAKE THAT! Coupe d'Endurance champion Jean-Claude Chemarin squirts champagne into the face of Thruxton winnner Roger Ruiz. And Roger seems to be enjoying it!

What price a highspirited 125cc Roadster?



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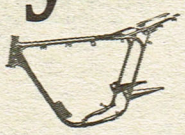
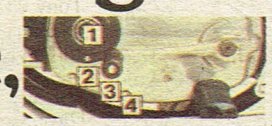


sturdy sports frame,



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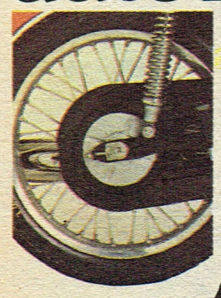

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