Motorcycle Sport

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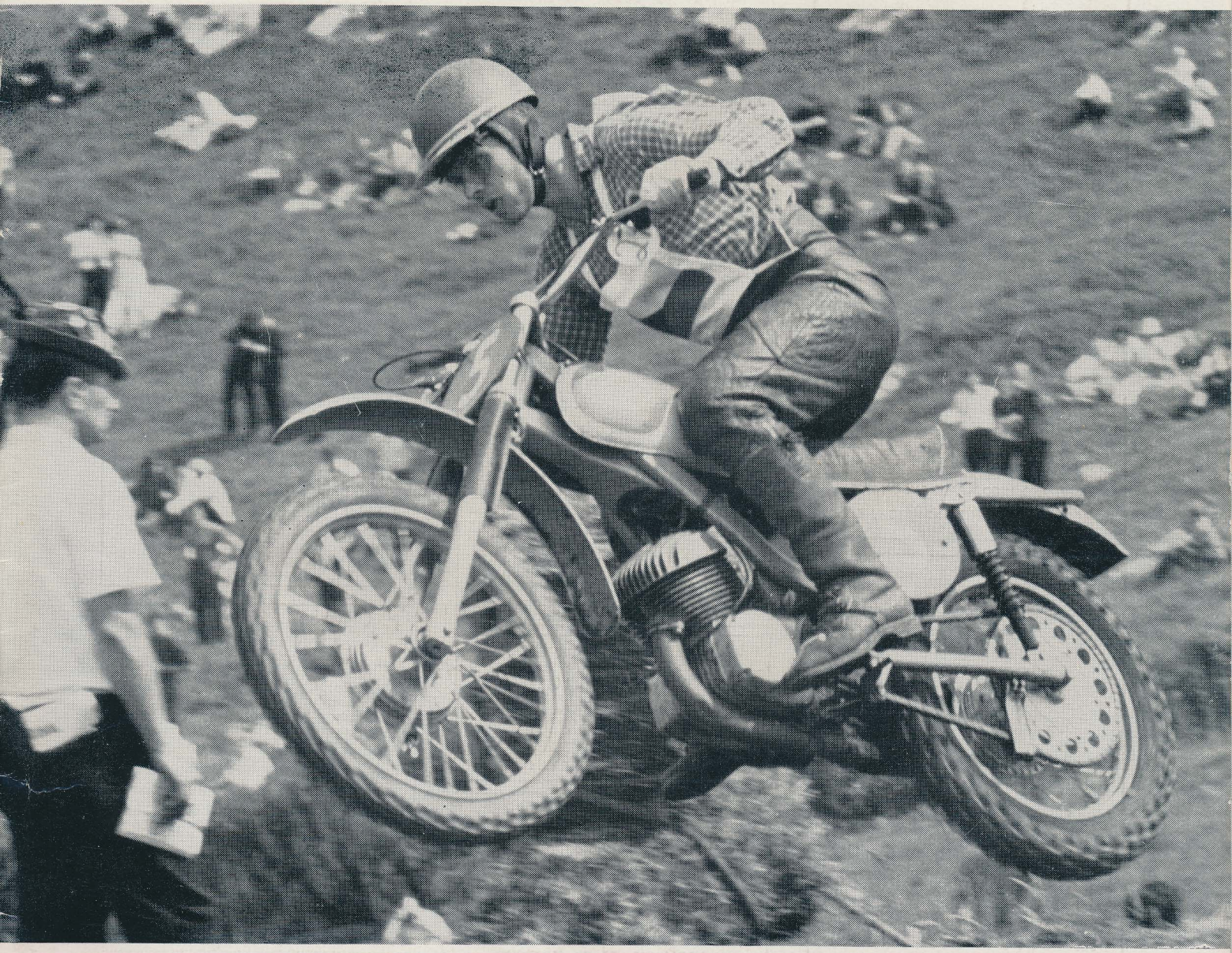

500-Mile Race ★ The Wooler Flat Four ★ AJS Impressions

Three Grands Prix ★ Moto-Cross ★ Two-Stroke or Four ?

Motorcycle Sport

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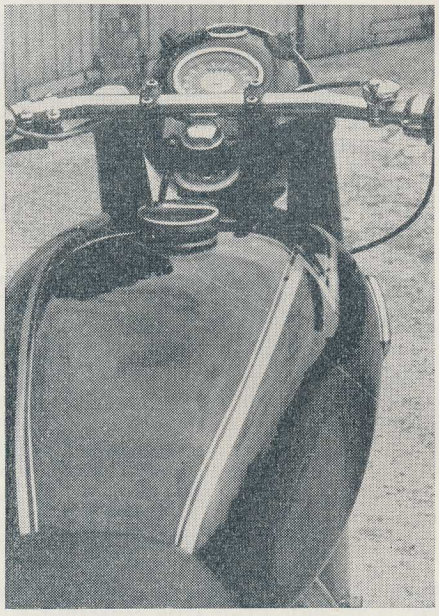
FRONT-COVER PICTURE shows the Czech moto-cross rider, Vlastimil Valek, riding the latest Jawa at the British 250 c.c. Moto-Cross Grand Prix at Glastonbury. He displayed plenty of style and speed but fell back to fifth place; and at the moment is ranked sixth in the world championship



Beauty by repute residing in the eye of the beholder, we should be cautious in condemning the zig-zag styling on the tanks of the latest A.M.C. singles. Nevertheless we must go on record as deploring it : and invite you to turn to page 345 for our impressions of the 1965 model 16

Another debt to the USA

HUMMING with activity, British factories are building bigger bangers for our American cousins as fast as they can while we have to wait for delivery. Frustrating for people with money burning holes in their pockets, but a good thing for the future of the industry and the country's economy. Without the export market there would soon be no big sports machines anyway; it would just not be economic to make them. Design would stagnate, factories wilt and fade away and in time the big machine would become as extinct as the Dodo. Which is what happened in America between the wars. They pioneered really big machines; in the early 20s the Harley, Indian and Henderson were technically superior to anything else in their class. In a land of vast distances and cheap petrol the motor car finally triumphed and the once-proud makes of motorcycles withered and died. You can blame the motor car but it could also be that the motorcycle became extinct in America for the same reason that the dinosaur became extinct . . . it just grew too big and clumsy. It is to be hoped that with the Americans calling the designer's tune in this country we shall not make the same mistake and produce dinosaurs on two wheels. The danger is real. Remember that the American motorcycle boom started when they discovered our speedy, agile three-fifties and five hundreds but with their " bigger and better " complex they soon talked us into six-fifties and now the seven-fifties.

Just why a country which has a two or three car per family economy should want motorcycles at all is a problem for psychologists. The motorcycle has perhaps become a symbol of virility. After you have made your pile and got two Pontiacs in the driveway you need something to demonstrate to yourself and others that you are still a young man at heart. . . .

British factory entries in road racing

TWO, closely connected, factors were the most significant features of this year's 500 Miles Race at Castle Combe. For the first time British manufacturers officially entered the meeting . . . Cottons and Royal Enfields. Having put their head in the noose, so to speak, Cottons then provided the sensation of the meeting when Derek Minter and his co-rider, Peter Inchley, circulated at indecent speed to finish third overall, in the process winning the 250 c.c. class.

Enfields were not so impressive; their pair, Gordon Keith and John Rudge, finished fourth in their class, beaten by a 175 c.c. factory-entered Montesa and the privately owned and splendidly managed CB72 Honda of Brian Davis and Bill Scott. This can only make Enfields keener than ever to avenge defeat—and to salvage their slogan of " Britain's fastest 250."

Further factory support was evident in the very efficiently prepared Triumph Bonnevilles, one of which—entered by Syd Lawton—won outright. At least five, perhaps six, of these Bonnevilles were specially prepared by the factory in an all-out bid to win the event and then were entered through selected dealers. The same applies to a couple of B.S.A. Lightnings. Officially the B.S.A-Triumph group does not support racing but next year the position may alter. Certainly, these Bonnevilles were the fastest machines present and the steering problems of recent years were, mercifully, a relic of the past—thanks to intensive work by development engineer Doug Hele. It was he who was in charge of racing in the last years of Norton's participation in racing, and he has transferred something of Norton's legendary roadholding to Triumphs—not a bad thing, either! The speed and reliability of the Bonnevilles were most impressive. The only one which failed through breakage was the other

Continued on page 333

British Moto-Cross Grand Prix

At the British round of the 250 c.c. championship held at Glastonbury on July 18 Dave Bickers (Greeves) finished first overall, with a win and second place in the day. Ake Jonsson (Husqvarna) of Sweden was fourth in both events

British 250 Moto-Cross GP

ROBERT'S MISJUDGEMENT AT GLASTONBURY

IF Joel Robert had changed his rear-wheel sprocket after the Russian 250 c.c. Moto Cross he might still have been 250 c.c. world moto-cross champion. He did not and after his chain had jumped off the damaged sprocket at the British 250 c.c. moto-cross G.P. at Glastonbury, Somerset, on July 18, Dave Bickers was left to notch a win that could give him runner-up place in this year's world title chase behind the victorious Russian, Victor Arbekov. Robert's calamity happened early in the first 16-lap race at the superb West Country circuit. A six-strong dice among Vlastimil Valek (Jawa), Torsten Hallman (Husqvarna), Don Rickman (Bultaco-Metisse), Bickers (Greeves), Bryan Goss (Husqvarna) and Robert on his CZ lost the world champion barely after the first lap had ended. His enthusiasm gone, he joined in later for a couple of laps, pulled into the pits for a long session, and then joined in once more, but it was a hopeless task.

Bickers' win could not have been more popular, with perhaps a slight tinge of regret from the locals that their own " Badger " Goss had not been blessed with luck. Clutch slip in the second leg coupled with a first-race spill robbed him of the chance of championship points. But far from settling a controversy that has raged throughout the country since Goss had been missed out from the Trophée des Nations team, in preference to Don Rickman, Jeff Smith, Arthur Lampkin, Bickers and Alan Clough, Goss' misfortune merely heaped coal on the fire.

Don Rickman's second place overall silenced *his* critics, at least partially. But what happened to Clough, inquired irate Goss fans ? And when did Smith and Lampkin last ride two-fifties ? Clough's chain had, in fact, snapped in the first race when he was lying sixth with only a lap to go. His disappearance let another Greeves teamster, Malcolm Davis, into sixth place after losing it to Clough only a few laps previously. Clough did not bother to come out in the second race, but it was Davis' turn to hit trouble when in 10th place. Griffiths, too, only turned out in one race, till engine trouble reduced him to the rank of spectator. Poor Griffiths. His knee, always suspect, never troubled him at all during practice or racing, but it was for that very reason that the English selectors had not picked him. Last year he had to stand down from the team through his shoulder injury; now, although he is fit and well, the selectors have passed him over.

Ernie Greer, that effervescent Birmingham builder, seems fated in the international meetings in England. His latest " secret " device from Dots, looking suspiciously like a Husqvarna barrel, went like a rocket in practice, and for the first race, as he diced it out with Griffiths and Davis. But his rear wheel collapsed in the first outing and his second race met an equally swift fate when his magneto gave up the ghost.

A howl of rage was heard—I heard it !—in the press and club room at the news that the young Cambridge star, Freddie Mayes, had been passed over in the invited British riders. His performance on the day ably endorsed the views of his supporters. Last away in the first race, he rode like a demon to take his Greeves Challenger through into 10th spot in the first leg, and added an 11th in the second race to clinch seventh place overall. But had the shouting been of value ? True, Mayes had at least been given a ride, but what of youngsters such as Roger Snoad, John Done, Arthur Browning and the rest ? When do they get their chance to shine ? Without a factory behind you, it seems your chances of riding not only in the ordinary grand prix, but also in the Trophée des Nations or Moto-Cross des Nations team, are not just slender. They are non-existent !

Surely 10 British riders, plus a couple from Scotland, would not be an excessive number to have in a home country G.P. ? And, please, let's try some fresh blood in the two teams !

Scottish scrambles enthusiasts would have been delighted with the riding of Vic Allan. The 19-year-old Aberdeen apprentice electrician at present leads both 250 and 500 c.c. scrambles championships. He made Willie Edwards, one of the finest scramblers produced by haggis land, seem poor alongside him. Inspired perhaps by the occasion he rode superbly, and only physical and mechanical tiredness robbed him of causing the shock of the meeting. Allan was tired in the first race but still managed an 11th, but in the second race it was his Fernaux-Dot that became tired. It seized early on, with Allan riding superbly. If Allan is a sample of Scottish scrambling promise, then that forgotten nation could pull a few surprises. As it did for Gerry Scarlett, the Irish rider, a season on the Continent could be the making of Allan. Surely one of the factories could help ? How could Robert have let the golden chance of closing the gap on Arbekov go ? The Russian, at home nursing a dislocated thumb, could afford missing the meeting, but Bickers' win was enough to shatter the slender chance that Robert then had of pulling off a surprise win. For Bickers, and Britain, the result was a boost. At the time of writing it is still possible for Bickers to take runner-up position from under the Belgian's nose. With luck all three rivals will be 250 c.c. mounted next year. A. A.

OK FOR SOME . . . *From page* 336

steering and braking were quite outstanding. So positive was the steering and so long and easy the action of the friction-damped girder fork, that I asked myself again the question that cropped up when, a few years back, I tried a just pre-war ex-works Manx Norton . . . why on earth should any one want telescopics when girders can be as good as this ? Along with this question, of course, there has to go another : why are most girder forks so awful when some can be so good ? Answer to that, I think, is that the forks on the two ex-works racers were not worn out.

Both brakes were light, progressive and powerful—though I did not go far enough to find if they were fade-free—and the pre-Girling rear-suspension units seemed to afford a reasonable range of movement with adequate damping. The gear change was light and the ratios seemingly ultra close, but the gearbox was almost certainly a later fitting unless a box very similar to the 1953-pattern Burman was made for some special jobs before the war.

In short, while its engine will not, at the moment, perform too cleverly, the rest of the O.K. is very good indeed. What it wants, and what Jim Haddock assures me it will get, is a complete strip and rebuild—a rebuild to as near original specification as possible, though retaining the rear springing. Then —when it should have a maximum of well over the ton—it should be both a very valuable historic racer and a practicable machine for club events.

THE BEST ENGINE ? *From page* 336

could be worked up to 55-60, while on long downhill stretches the only limit was really rider's nerve.

Truly, riding these two super-light, superbly prepared outfits was marvellous fun. And that after all, unless you are simply a " pot hunter," is what most trials enthusiasts are after. What a pity, as Alec Wright said, that there are not more trials of " Welsh " type, where this sort of outfit is unsurpassable. At the end of the day I had a lot of food for thought. R. T. M.

TOUGHEST HILL CLIMB ? *From page* 348

Hepolite Scar, thus named after the Hepworth brothers who " discovered " it in 1925, has not been used now for over 30 years. For my money (one-and-sixpence of it : a shilling to enter the castle grounds and sixpence for a Bunbury Fete/Hill-Climb programme) Beeston is the toughest climb in the country. If you would rather form your own opinion, why not be like Oscar Wilde's Algernon Moncrieff and " go a'Bunburying " on Bank Holiday ? G. T. S.