

Editorial

2004 wouldn't appear to have started very well from the 'Land loss' point of view. Not only have we lost the use of the major part of the land at Frating but the Sudbury club have lost the use of Foxborough Quarry and the Southend club have lost the use of Royal Oak Pits.

We haven't lost all of the land at Frating but unfortunately we have lost the use of the land around the start area and of course all the sections in that vicinity including all of those along the retaining bank of the reservoir. Use of the remaining land has not been denied us but sadly there isn't enough scope or car parking facilities to enable the venue to be used. It must be appreciated that we haven't lost the use of the land due to our actions but instead have been out bid by the shooting and fishing fraternities who are able and willing to pay a much larger sum for large scale usage and sole rights than we can for the sensibly limited usage that we can give the land.

I don't know why Foxborough Quarry has become unavailable but it has been in use for several years, mainly by the Sudbury Club for some of their very enjoyable enduros but also by the Pre-65 MX Club for at least one scramble a year.

Seems that gravel extraction at Royal Oak Pits has once again become financially viable and current Health and Safety legislation makes it impossible to use the land for recreational use. Yes, it has been understood for some years that the long term future of Royal Oak was in doubt but 'the axe has fallen'. The Southend club are now without land for either trials and motocross. I hope that clubs within the centre will look favourably upon any requests made by the Southend club for the loan of a parcel of land so that they may take their place in the Fixture List. I feel confident that this will be a short term glitch in the life of the Southend club.

Did you realise that these Serow things were 'high off the ground'? Seems that our Presidente suffers from 'ducks disease' and is unable to undertake 'footing' which can be necessary when travelling down the rutted tracks laid on by Bob Drane for the geriatric riders. The story goes that our hero got himself really crossed up on one occasion and not content with just falling off as befits the

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The Match Plunkers

The Snaque Pit, Belchamp, Sudbury, Suffolk

Sunday 7th March 2004

Start: 10.30 am

A Trial for:

Pre 65 solos • Pre 65 sidecars • Twin Shocks

Youths/Juniors • Twin Shock sidecars

response of most of us, he hung on and hung on again and nearly ended up in the River Chelmer. No doubt somebody with a mobile phone would then have phoned for the lifeboat, ably coxed by Mark Wilson.

I offer no apologies for pushing the DEFRA consultation paper again this month as I along with a lot of others consider that it is very important to fight. Maybe you don't go trail riding but what must be appreciated is that this could well prove to be something to test the amount of resistance to motor sport in the



Edward J Smith 350 Royal Enfield

countryside. If we give in without a fight then we might be looked upon as an easy target when the massed ranks of the Ramblers etc join up again with their friends in the government. It really does appear to me that those who live and work in the British countryside are completely overlooked and the views of metropolitan Britain take precedence. Anyway, please read the letter from Neil Hellings and make sure that you write to your MP or the Minister for Rural Affairs (or both).

Wasn't able to get to the Snaque Pit trial as I might have overdone it a bit the previous evening at the Centre Annual Awards Presentation evening. Nothing to do with too much dancing or drinking but I suppose that's life. As an aside it was nice to see most of the Pre-65 award winners there to collect their trophies. Thankyou.

The Middy route at Snaque Pit, as you can see from the results printed elsewhere in this magazine, proved once again to be the most popular. Please, if you want the experiment to be continued and widened to cover more of our trials then please make your feelings felt to a member of the Revolutionary Council. Sadly I get the impression that some councillors do not accept the middy route as being a useful asset, instead argue that there are already too many colours used in route marking!

The March Plonkers will soon be with us. Snaque Pit is the venue and no doubt you are fully conversant with the rest. I understand from Mike Harden that the handicapping system has been reviewed and will now follow the format shown below:

Handicap Rating for Plonkers Trials - Solo Machines :

Age	Less than 75 years	+ 1 mark for each year below 75 (Maximum 15 marks)	
Ability	Expert	+ 20 marks	
	Novice	+ 10 marks	
	Newcomer	+ 0 marks	
Machine	Pre Unit and Unit	up to 340 cc	+ 20 marks
	Unit	over 340 cc	+ 10 marks
	Pre Unit	over 340 cc	+ 0 marks



Does anyone recognise this man striking a Harley Davidson pose?

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£1750

Sam Archer 01252 651684

Frating or should I say Thorrington will soon be with us. Er indoors is getting entries through but we need a lot more to make the event as successful as it was when run at Frating.

Towards the end of the month we shall be going to Chattisham and I have it on good authority that lessons have been learned from the events of the past couple of years and we are promised that these problems will be overcome.

Don't forget the Triangle trial at Raydon. An entry form is included for you with this Trials & Tribs. I gather that Eddie Hood and the Triangle Tribe are intending to give you a good days sport. Once again like the Southend trial at Broomfield there should be no modern two strokes to contend with.

Have you taken out a subscription to the Classic Competition News? If not have a talk to Mustapha Brown who is acting as the agent for this part of the country.

I commented earlier that our Presidente is struggling with ruts and footing ability etc. Is it true that Pompous is being left behind when the going gets a bit rutted?

You will see that Sam Archer is getting rid of the Beeza. He tells me that the time has come as it is a bit of a struggle at the age of 70 and is thinking of getting something lighter.

Best wishes,

Jim

Secretarys Scribblings



Wot happened to you at the Snaque Pit? A lot of you seemed to have sawdust between the ears when it came to following your route through the section I was observing on, resulting in a lot of careless fives. Hope you weren't the same on all the sections - must be the Snaque Pit Spell.

Thanks to Graham and the Team for putting on another good event, hope you all had fun even if you weren't happy with your results.

Don't forget to renew your Club Subs. As mentioned last month it's £8 for Club Membership + Newsletter or £15.50 for Club Membership, Newsletter and Eastern Centre Gazette.

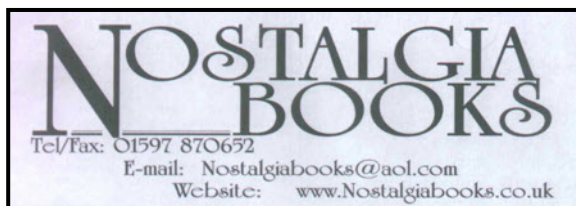
Have you written to your MP and/or Alun Michael, Minister for Rural Affairs about the DEFRA Consultation Document regarding our Rights of Way. Time is running out now with 19th March 2004 coming up fast So please don't put it off any longer.



If all goes according to plan the Pre-65 Motocross Club should be running their first event. of 2004 on Sunday so you can forget all about following those coloured bits of card and blow the cobwebs away at Marks Tey.

Then it's back to the technical stuff at Thorrington on Sunday 14th March. Eddie Hood and the Gang have a Pre65 and Twinshock only event with three routes for you to choose from on Sunday 21st March. Think that one's at Raydon and then we're at Chattisham on Sunday 28th March. Could be a busy old month.

Heather



Nostalgia Books, PO Box 4, Llandrindod Wells LD6 5WF



Charity

A man was walking down the street when he was accosted by a particularly dirty and shabby-looking homeless man who asked him for a couple of dollars for a Christmas dinner.

The man took out his wallet, extracted ten dollars and asked, "If I give you this money, will you buy some beer with it instead?"

"No, I had to stop drinking years ago," the homeless man replied.

"Will you use it to gamble instead of buying food?" the man asked.

"No, I don't gamble," the homeless man said. "I need everything I can get just to stay alive."

"Will you spend the money on greens fees at a golf course instead of food?" the man asked.

"Are you NUTS!" replied the homeless man. "I haven't played golf in 20 years!"

"Will you spend the money on a woman in the red light district instead of food?" the man asked.

"What disease would I get for ten lousy bucks?!" exclaimed the homeless man.

"Well," said the man, "I'm not going to give you the money. Instead, I'm going to take you home for a terrific Christmas dinner cooked by my wife."

The homeless man was astounded. "Won't your wife be furious with you for doing that? I know I'm dirty, and I probably smell pretty disgusting."

The man replied, "That's okay. I want her to see what a man looks like who's given up beer, gambling, golf, and sex."

VERY IMPORTANT AGAIN!

DEFRA Consultation Document PB8923

Please read the following letter from Neil Hellings, the ACU CEO and let's all get together and express our concern for the current threat. After all, we won the 14/28 Rule threat back in 2002, let's see if we can win and overcome this threat.

To do so though, we ALL have to do our bit and we can do that by writing to our MPs and the Minister. We ONLY have until 19th March 2004 so it is becoming increasingly important that we all do our bit to minimise the threat. Certainly the T+MX are doing their bit as it seems they are publishing a full page every week in an attempt to get motorcyclists to do their bit.

I know I'm labouring this point rather heavily, but I feel obliged to do so otherwise we may finish up losing several bits of land in the centre that we can ill afford to lose simply because we've lost access rights to the land and this is really what this is all about. Many venues are reached by bye-ways which are under threat of being downgraded (not upgraded as I said last time) hence losing vehicular rights on the bye-ways or whatever that are used to reach the venue.

Letter from Neil Hellings,
ACU Ltd CEO

Dear Centre/Club member

I write to request that you take action in defending the long term future of our sport. Many of you will have read or heard about yet another Government proposal that threatens legitimate motorcycle activity, well that threat is very real and also very close from becoming a reality.

I am a realist and accept that whilst from time to time, we have all been encouraged to write to our MP, few if any of us ever have. This latest Government proposal is so threatening that I ask, no plead, that for once we all take 10 minutes out of our busy lives to make a stand. We either unite NOW and ACT, or sit back and accept that access for motorcycling in the Countryside, our Countryside, will be significantly reduced. And as ever, there is the real worry this will only be the start of our problems. This e-mail is copied to all the Directors of the ACU and its various Committee

Please Note:

The closing date by which all articles and adverts to be included in the April issue of Trials & Tribulations should reach the editorial office is Wednesday 24th March.

Material for inclusion in the magazine may be supplied in the following forms:

handwritten • typed • computer hard copy • fax • email • floppy disc

If providing computer hard copy, a font size of 12pt minimum is preferred whilst articles supplied on floppy disc should be saved in text format.

members, but they alone cannot deliver the necessary impact and it is now up to you, the grass root member, to stand up for what you believe in.

In a nutshell, Alun Michael the Minister responsible, has been misled by non-motorsport friendly pressure groups and we MUST now let him, and our own individual MPs, know that this is the case. Put simply, if we don't, the use of non-tarmac Rights of Way will be lost forever and will see many trials and enduros become impossible to organise. What will be next? Motocross?? Given the rising issues over noise from fourstrokes, many venues are already having Noise Abatement Notices served upon them.

You must write to your MP NOW.

Please take 10 minutes to read the attached document and actually write to your MP and to Alun Michael and unlike before, don't leave it to others to do as this proposed legislation really is that serious a threat to your sport. The attached outlines the sort of things you should mention and the questions that need to be posed and is intended to make the task of writing the letters that much easier.

If you do not know the name of your MP, you can address it to: "The MP for (insert your constituency)" Thank you for taking the time to fight for what we believe in.

Herewith a template letter to your MP and another to the Minister, Alun Michael. If you wish to contribute to the Consultation itself, a more detailed summary is available on the website www.laragb.org.

(Handwritten and personalised letters are known to be the most effective. Ensure that you put your own name and address on the letter somewhere, either at the beginning or at the end. Your MP will reply to you. If you don't like his reply then write again, or arrange to go to see him at one of the regular surgeries that all MPs hold in their constituencies)

Don't delay, write today - PLEASE

Regards,

Neil Hellings
Chief Executive, ACU Ltd
13 February 2004

Letter to your MP:

Mr/Miss XXXXX
The House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Mr/Miss

Re: The use of mechanically propelled vehicles on rights of way

The Countryside Minister, Mr Alun Michael, has issued a consultation paper about new laws and regulations that will affect the use of 'byways open to all traffic' and other minor highways by mechanically propelled vehicles. Clearly Mr Michael is concerned about the level of 'cowboy' activity that goes on, with illegal and annoying driving and motorcycling on wasteland, open country, footpaths and bridleways, and rightly so – but the consultation paper seems to propose measures that will directly and seriously affect me, and I am not a 'cowboy' in any way.

• I have been riding my road-legal motorcycle, on 'byways' and unclassified roads for XX years. I am a member of YY club which is Affiliated to the Auto Cycle Union.

(ACU), my sport's National Governing Body. I take pride in being careful and considerate to all other users of Rights of Way whenever and where ever I ride. I/we organise work groups to repair and clear rights of way.

- Ramblers already enjoy access to around 120,000 miles of footpath and bridleway where they can be assured of not meeting other members of the public in vehicles. We have just 5,000 miles, and we are happy to share that with other users. Ramblers will also soon have thousands of square miles of 'right to roam' land as well. I note Mr Michael's hope that responsible users of mechanically propelled vehicles will welcome the intention, and I agree that the basic principles underlying these proposals have merit. However, the representations made to Mr Michael that have prompted the detail in the paper have misinformed and consequently misled the Minister.

- Can you therefore please speak to the minister to inform him that he has been misled and to obtain his reassurance that the interests of ordinary people like myself will not be unjustifiably prejudiced, and that he will insist on being better informed by fact-based evidence from those with the relevant expertise and knowledge, before taking further action?

- I am extremely concerned that my legitimate and responsible use of our countryside is being threatened by proposed legislation that will in effect make me a criminal. The proposal is unnecessary and will lead to legislation that will do nothing to reduce the irresponsible and illicit use of vehicles and motorcycles. I accept that this is a problem, but one which can be addressed by better use of existing legislation.

Yours

QUICKIE:

Two bored casino dealers are waiting at the crap table.

A very attractive blonde woman arrived and bet \$20,000 on a single roll of the dice.

She said, "I hope you don't mind, but I feel much luckier when I'm completely nude."

With that, she stripped from the neck down, rolled the dice and yelled, "Come on, baby, Mama needs new clothes!"

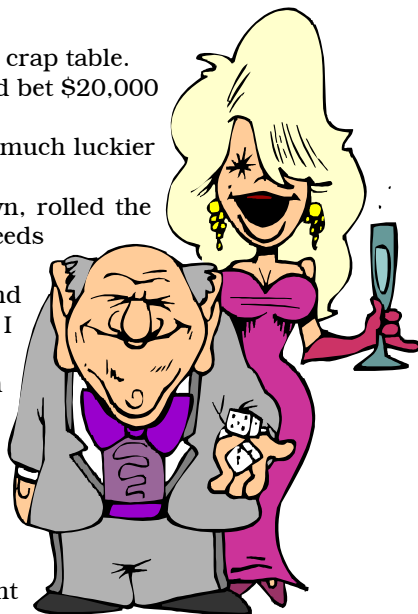
As the dice came to a stop she jumped up and down and squealed... "YES! YES! I WON, I WON!"

She hugged each of the dealers and then picked up her winnings and her clothes and quickly departed.

The dealers stared at each other dumfounded.

Finally, one of them asked, "What did she roll?"

The other answered, "I don't know - I thought you were watching."



MORAL: Not all blondes are dumb, but all men are men.

The Snaque Pit Trial

SUNDAY 15th February 2004
Sudbury, Essex

A view from the saddle by Mick Brown

I heard a lot about 'The Snaque' pit when I first arrived in Essex about ten years ago. Much sucking of teeth and description of near vertical long hills, precipitous and even dangerous were used in describing the venue to me. Having moved here from the Southern Centre, I thought nah! Can't be as steep as Buriton Pits. I was wrong it is as steep as Buriton but luckily not as slippery as the chalk of the South Downs. The main pit has several full throttle climb or descents that can catch both the over confident and the over cautious. Around this area are several smaller pits and banks, which makes this event one not to miss! Sited in beautiful countryside on the Essex/Suffolk borders near to Sudbury, I am reliably informed that this venue impressed riders from 'up North' when it was used as part of national events, one of them being Dougie's dad!

Morning showers over and the sun out we sixty one riders were raring to go, four laps of ten sections, promised a good days sport. We were not disappointed, three of the famous steep climbs, four tricky steep banks, one long tricky decent over tree roots and two new twisty sections with adverse cambers to deal with.

The Hard route riders found section seven the hardest, Graham Braybrook being the only one to clean it on lap three. This class was won, however, by Mark Fletcher on his 500 Royal Enfield, losing 8, he was followed by Roger Finch, losing 10 on an immaculate 500 Jaspas (Just Aload of Spares Parts And Rubbish).

The Middy route boys lost marks all around the course except for John Beasley (250Greeves) who lost a single mark on section five, he was followed by Jeff Fincham, three marks lost riding a 500 Rariefield (have you noticed, these eastern boys love their specials). The rest of us on this route were in double figures, and I was happy to finish sixth, losing 16 marks, and no fives!

The Gentlemen's route was won by young Daniel Cranfield (350 Triumph), time he was riding the Midi route, followed by our club president Ian Preedy riding his 500 Arsfield, another special! Don't ask me what that stands for!

The Youth class attracted three riders and was won by Luke Gray on his 80 Yamaha losing 13 marks on the Gentleman's route, well done!

Vintage or Classic Motorcycle wanted by enthusiast
any condition and all makes considered from Rudge to Velocette
Please phone: Caspar Killick on 01787 282032

Harder Route

No.	Name	Machine	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Tot
51	Mark Fletcher	500 RoyalEnfield	0000	0000	0000	0000	0000	0000	1115	0000	0000	0000	8
55	Roger Finch	500 Jasper	0000	0000	0000	0000	0000	1010	2222	0000	0000	0000	10
85	Graham Braybrook	350 RoyalEnfield	0000	0000	0000	0000	0000	1300	1105	0000	0000	0000	11
52	Dave Spurgeon	246 Greeves	0000	0000	0000	0000	0000	1000	3125	0000	0000	0000	12
15	Kevin Plummer	343 B.S.A.	0150	0000	0000	0100	0000	1100	5211	0000	1050	0000	24
56	Terry Sewell	246 Greeves	0000	5000	0005	2000	2101	0321	1523	0100	1011	0000	37
50	Brian Fletcher	500 RoyalEnfield	0000	5030	0000	1000	1200	5151	3125	0020	0100	0000	38
47	Peter Teager	250 B.S.A.	0021	5500	0200	0000	1000	3232	2223	0000	1011	0000	38
58	Colin Sadler	199 Triumph	5500	0000	0003	1010	1000	3552	3151	1201	1020	0000	48
41	Alan Farmer	350 RoyalEnfield	1155	3000	1000	1100	1105	3313	3323	0151	1000	5000	59
24	Steven Weedon	200 Triumph	0201	1000	5050	3133	0315	5033	2323	0000	0532	2110	68
40	Chris Mace	500 RoyalEnfield	2501	5150	0501	5510	0231	5312	3353	1505	5001	0010	85
46	Kevin Teager	175 B.S.A.	1110	5555	5553	3000	1313	3323	3333	5520	1023	0203	98
44	Jason Sigournay	250 B.S.A.	0502	5500	3510	3300	1215	5533	3332	5053	5555	0000	101
8	A Robinson	350 B.S.A.	3510	530	205	23	21	33	33	35	05	310	ret

Middy Route

No.	Name	Machine	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Tot
57	John Beasley	250 Greeves	0000	0000	0000	0000	0010	0000	0000	0000	0000	0000	1
29	Jeff Fincham	350 Rariefield	0000	0000	2000	1000	0000	0000	0000	0000	0000	0000	3
38	Geoff Challis	500 Ariel	0000	0500	0000	0000	0010	0000	0000	0000	0051	0000	12
17	Barrie Clarke	250 Sprite	0000	0000	0002	1001	1000	1101	0000	0000	3210	0000	14
21	Trevor Andrews	350 Triumph	1000	1000	1100	0000	1010	1010	0000	0500	1100	0000	15
53	Mick Brown	199 Triumph	1000	0000	0030	3300	1000	0001	0000	0000	1300	0000	16
2	Dave Kenward	350 B.S.A.	1000	5000	5000	5010	0110	2111	0000	0000	0000	0000	24
59	Eddie Hood	175 B.S.A.	0000	0500	5030	5000	5010	0010	0000	0000	0000	0000	25
31	Roy Bannister	250 B.S.A.	0000	0051	5100	0310	0000	1100	0000	0000	3203	0000	26
10	Roy Phypers	350 Triumph	0000	2000	3151	3010	5000	0000	0000	0000	5100	0000	27
9	Les Fox	250 Greeves	1000	5100	1300	0030	0510	0000	0000	0000	5011	0000	27
35	Colin Rose	199 Triumph	5110	5201	0001	1000	2000	0000	5000	0000	0210	0000	27
33	Paul Gray	350 Triumph	5010	5000	1005	5000	2000	0002	0100	0000	0330	0000	33
7	Chris Byford-Smith	250 Matchless	0000	0000	0000	3305	5210	0000	2000	5000	3301	0000	33
60	Bob Spencer	250 Greeves	1105	0500	5550	0010	0010	0000	0000	0000	5021	0000	37
19	Trevor Cain	250 Sprite	0205	1500	5211	0500	1001	0000	0010	0000	1101	0005	38
27	Steve Page	350 B.S.A.	2150	2500	2131	1012	3105	1005	5000	5000	3001	0000	55
18	John Ives	250 Firefly	1500	0011	5555	0353	0200	3251	0000	0000	1222	0110	61
28	Kevin Goldsmith	350 B.S.A.	2100	0051	0221	3100	5012	1101	5202	0005	5555	0000	63

Twin Shocks (Middy Route)

No.	Name	Machine	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Tot
20	Jim Mason	250 Suzuki	0000	2000	3010	0000	0000	0000	0000	0000	0000	0500	11
61	Gordon Blackburn	325 Bultaco	0000	0300	1301	2300	2000	0055	0000	0000	1005	0050	36

Twin Shocks (Gentleman Route)

No.	Name	Machine	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Tot
37	Jim Shepherd	250 Yamaha	0000	0000	0000	0000	0000	2000	5000	0000	0000	0000	7
16	Ian Bennett	247 Montesa	1100	0000	5010	1000	1003	1210	5505	3333	1000	0000	45
23	Brian Cook	250 Ossa	0000	5550	0000	0000	5011	1120	5503	0255	1355	0000	65

Youth (Gentleman Route)

No.	Name	Machine	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Tot
34	Luke Gray	80 Yamaha	0000	1000	0000	0000	0000	1000	0000	3102	0050	0000	13
5	Joseph Jacobs	80 Yamaha	55	5			0000	0000	55	5			ret
49	Elliott Smith	80 Yamaha				5110	551						ret

Gentlemen

No.	Name	Machine	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Tot
36	Daniel Cranfield	350 Triumph	0000	0000	0000	0000	0100	0000	0000	1111	0000	0000	5
42	Ian Preedy	500 Arsfield	0000	0000	0000	0000	0000	0000	0000	2501	0000	0000	8
22	Geoff Daw	175 B.S.A.	0000	5000	0000	0000	0000	0000	0000	0110	0000	0500	12
13	Doug Barrel	175 B.S.A.	0000	0000	0000	0000	0000	1000	5000	3120	0000	0000	12
43	Peter Sigournay	275 B.S.A.	0000	0000	0000	0000	3000	2000	5001	0211	0000	0000	15
45	Ted Smith	350 RoyalEnfield	1000	0000	0500	0000	1000	0000	5000	2010	1000	0000	16
26	Mark Gibb	350 RoyalEnfield	0000	0050	0000	0000	5000	0000	0000	2320	0000	0000	17
32	Tony Wright	175 B.S.A.	0000	0000	0000	0000	2000	0000	5100	3231	0000	0000	17
25	Ray Gibb	600 B.S.A.	0000	0000	5000	0000	1000	0500	5010	0100	0000	0000	18
14	Robert Bond	175 B.S.A.	1020	5000	0000	0000	0000	1000	0000	3321	0000	0000	18
4	Brian Jacobs	197 FrancesBarnet	0000	5100	0000	0000	0000	1000	2000	3111	0000	0500	20
39	Albert Dove	350 D.O.T.	0000	5005	0000	0000	0020	0000	0000	3321	0000	0000	21
54	Chris Bater	500 B.S.A.	1000	5050	0000	2000	1000	0000	1000	1221	0000	0000	21
3	Keith Fitzjohn	250 A.J.S.	5000	0500	0000	0000	1100	1100	1500	1301	0100	0000	26
6	Roy Ayres	350 RoyalEnfield	0010	0550	0000	0000	5010	1101	5003	0300	0000	0000	31
30	Roger Gulliver	500 Triumph	5555	0105	0500	0000	1555	5555	5355	3321	3555	0000	112
12	Caspar Killick	200 Triumph	5			053					5	0000	ret
48	Phill Smith	350 B.S.A.			000	000	0		50	01	00	000	ret
62	Kevin Harris	350 B.S.A.	10		0	0	0	0	1	3	0	5	ret

Why Condoms Come in Packets of 3, 6, or 12

A man walks into a chemists shop with his 13-year old son. They happen to walk by the condom display, and the boy asks, "What are these, Dad?"

To which the man matter-of-factly replies, "Those are called condoms, son . . . Men use them to have safe sex."

"Oh I see," replied the boys pensively. "Yes, I've heard of that in health class at school."

He looks over the display and picks up a package of 3 and asks, Why are there 3 in this package."

The Dad replies, "Those are for high school boys. One for Friday, one for Saturday, and one for Sunday."

"Cool!" says the boy. He notices a 6 pack and asks, "Then who are these for?"

Those are for college boys," the dad answers, "TWO for Friday, TWO for Saturday, and TWO for Sunday."

"WOW!" exclaimed the boy, "then who uses THESE?" He asks, picking up a 12 pack.

With a sigh, the dad replied, "Those are for married men. One for January, one for February, one for March".

Ruthys Racing Revival

Part Four



By mid day it was time to do it all again

This time in the briefing it was the turn of the quick boys to come under scrutiny who were told to cool it a bit by the powers that be. But you don't become a world champion if you're not competitive and single-minded and most felt this request somewhat fell on deaf ears.

This proved to be the case. For as we set off on our warming up lap the pace seemed a lot quicker than the previous day to the extent that I began to wonder if I had miscalculated and the race had already started.

Arriving back at the chicane though the yellow flags were waving so I took my position fully fired up and ready to roll.

This time I was determined to make a flyer of a start and make it up to Madgwick on the inside which went according to plan only to get hung out to dry by a slow starting all singing all dancing 65 bhp Manx replica half way through Fordwater which left the little Aermacchi trailing in its wake as it disappeared into the distance to wards St Marys.



Damon Hill - 500cc Manx Norton

I managed to claw back a little of this by the time we exited Lavant by way of a bit of late breaking and scratching only for the same disappearing act to happen again as we hit the faster parts of the circuit.

Approaching Woodcote I would gain two bike lengths on him again glueing myself to his rear wheel by the exit of the chicane then tucking in behind in his slipstream only to be blown of again by the end of the straight.

And so it went on for five laps much to the delight of the 40,000 spectators who lined the circuit until a sideways moment by me exiting Woodcote 3 allowed him to finally get away.

But it was far from over yet for as I was sorting myself out I was given a rude awakening by Jochum Faulch on his 500cc Paton who had, unbeknown to me been stalking us from behind and now came by approaching St Mary's.



500cc Paton

Jochum and I are old sparring partners from the 1980s when we had many a good race together in the classic grand prix classes both here and abroad. I was responsible at this time for setting up his two identical Matchless G50s prior to



The Wit of Tommy Cooper R.I.P.

Tommy Cooperisms. to brighten up the day.

You know, somebody actually complimented me
on my driving today.

They left a little note on the windscreen. It said,
'Parking Fine.' So that was nice.

new passenger ...

A taxi passenger tapped the driver on the shoulder to ask him a question.

The driver screamed, lost control of the car, nearly hit a bus, went up on the pavement, and stopped inches from a shop window.

For a second everything went quiet in the cab, then the driver said,

"Look mate, don't ever do that again. You scared the hell out of me!"

The passenger apologized and said, "I didn't realize that a little tap would scare you so much."

The driver replied, "Sorry, it's not really your fault. Today is my first day as a cab driver - I've been driving a funeral hearse for the last 25 years.

his rides in England The deal being that he would ride whichever one proved the quickest and I would ride the other.

This worked OK the first couple of times but led to some real last ditch scratching around the outside moves on him during practice on my part in the hope of persuading him to pick the slow one for the main race.

This I managed to achieve more than once so I knew I could expect no quarter from him this time as he had already reminded me earlier in the day that he had finished in front of me the day before.

The 500cc Paton came by again in a blaze of sound approaching St Mary's so I tucked in behind his slipstream for a tow up the Lavant straight which nearly blew my eardrums apart as the dohc twin came on the megga.

In the late sixties the Italian Paton twin, conceived and built by Guiseppi Patoni was pretty much the next best thing to Agostini's MV in the 500cc grand prix class with a host of stars riding the quick but temperamental machine to a string of second places.

No reliability problems this time though as we circulated together with Jochums extra 150cc coming into play up the straights only to be attacked again from the rear by the more nimble Aermacchi around the scratchy bits.

Only too quickly it was the last lap so it was know or never and as we approached the Lavant complex for the last time I was within two bikes lengths and scratching hard to the extent that the Aermacchi's screen gave Jochums rear a nudge on the exit.

As we blasted up the straight locked together for the last time like one big green four wheeler you could hear the crowd shouting above the sound of the two bikes as we approached Woodcote for the last time.

My braking point was arriving quickly and Jochum was still showing no signs of sitting up to brake as I pulled out of his slip stream to make my move still flat out in top.

As I drew level he at last sat up and braked as I stamped down two gears and hit the brakes just managing to get in front as I stamped down to third for the final right hander leading into the chicane.

It was all a bit hectic though as we exited the chicane and headed towards the chequered flag with both of us giving everything we had got, with me not daring to take a sideways look as I kept my head down and the throttle flat.

But he did not come by and patted me on the shoulder in a cheery wave as we made our way around the circuit for the last time .



That final lap along with the response from the spectators on our slowing down lap will live with me for ever and we were all feeling more than a little emotional as we relived it all again in the post race paddock afterwards.

All too soon though it was over and with a feeling of anti-climax, time to de-camp and head back through that tunnel to the real world again.

So after making all our last farewells we headed home to jolly Essex.

Over the next couple of weeks we had time to reflect and take it all in with the coverage on television prompting us to relive it all over again.

Will we be back next year! You bet I will - Lord March permitting of course.

End Thought . . .

My wife and I always compromise. I admit I'm wrong, and she agrees with me. .