



MAGAZINE

Winter 2015



Alan Bonner : Roy Tansley : Matthew Rees : Ivan Lintin
George Spence : The Siro Family : Craig Neve : The Seamen's Strike

www.ttsupportersclub.com

Editor's Line

Many thanks to all who have made a contribution to this issue; I hope you enjoy reading it. Plans are well advanced for the next one... two top line Irish solo riders, a family sidecar crew, a lady marshal hoping she doesn't have to assist her sons as they circulate at high speed... that's just for starters, there will be much more; hopefully, Paul Phillips will be answering our questions, particularly those revolving around the changes in the racing schedule, the demise of the TT World Series and the evolving management structure.

I'd like to welcome Chris Kinley onboard in the role of Vice President. Chris is a stalwart of IoM road racing, heard and seen by all of us as a broadcaster with Manx Radio.

In the not too distant future, John Newton will be sending you tickets for the National Raffle – prizes will be the same as in previous years... £350, £250, £150 & £50; please do your best to support the TT competitors by selling as many tickets as possible. Also, please involve yourself in the social media side of the Club – details are to be found on page 3.

Specific details as to how the Club will support competitors at the 2016 TT will be announced in the next issue of this magazine, but rest assured, those who are members of the Club will benefit to the tune of about £50. Although there is no longer a TTSC shop at the Grandstand, the Club still has a presence, continues to raise money, in so doing supports those who wish to pit their skills at high speeds against the IoM Mountain Course.

Please feel free to make contact with me if you'd like to be involved in the 'creation' of the Summer 2016 issue, the copy date for which is 10th march 2016.

Graham Bean



Glynn Lewis captures the concentration on the face of Conor Behan during the 2015 Lightweight TT in which he finished 9th.

Officials

Patron: Pauline Hailwood
President: Charlie Williams
Vice President: Chris Kinley

Chairman: Roy Hanks
50 Lyndhurst Road, Birmingham, B24 8QS. Tel:
0121 6863799.

Vice Chairman: Phil Harvey
2 Oak Villas, Rawcliffe Bridge, Nr Goole, East
Yorks, DN14 8NU. Tel: 01405 831070.
pharvey@timloc.co.uk

General Secretary: Rose Hanks
50 Lyndhurst Road, Birmingham, B24 8QS.
Tel: 0121 6863799.

Treasurers: Roy & Rose Hanks

Quartermasters: Paul & Julie Hanks-Elliott
44 Lyndhurst Road, Erdington, Birmingham, B24
8QS. Tel: 0121 373 1035, or 0121 6862390
after 6pm.

Membership Registrars:
Viv & Pete Oulton
13 Avondale Road, Buckley, Flintshire,
CH7 3BW. Tel: 01244 548584
ttsupportersclub@hotmail.co.uk

Magazine Editor: Graham Bean
Flat 10, Regency Court, 119 Cheadle Rd, Cheadle
Hulme, Cheadle, Cheshire, SK8 5DQ.
Tel: 0161 486 6197.
w.bean2@ntlworld.com

Assistant Editor/Advertising/ Minutes Sec.:
Michael Hammonds
Creg Ny Baa, 9 Clipper Close, Warsash, Southamp-
ton, SO31 9BJ. Tel: 01489 570 295.
mike.hammonds@hotmail.com

Web site Coordinator: Peter Oulton
e-mail: ttsupportersclub@hotmail.co.uk

National Raffle Coordinator:
John Newton. 21 Portman Rise, Guisborough,
Cleveland, TS14 7LW. Tel: 01287 636914.
johnniom@hotmail.com

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Cover: Alan Bonner taking to the air.
Courtesy Robin Hynes.

The views expressed in this magazine are
those of contributors and not necessarily
those of the TT Supporter's Club.

From **Freya Harvey** - Social Media
Administrator

TT Supporters' Club social media pages
have updates regarding racing events.
Anyone wanting to send us information can
contact us on these pages for us to share
with followers.

Facebook - TTsupportersclub
Twitter - @TTsupporters



The Highs and Lows of Road Racing: Alan Bonner

We all know about the highs and lows of road racing, but when you get to chat to Co Meath rider Alan Bonner about his career so far, you realise that he has had to battle through his fair share of the lows. It's a wonder he always seems to have a smile on his face.

This year was fast becoming Alan's big breakthrough year. During the off-season he secured a loan to purchase a "nearly new" Kawasaki ZX10 Superstock machine and was given the chance to come back and ride his second TT for "thepeoplesbike" outfit. His goals were to finish a race inside the top 30 and lap at 125 mph; he achieved the latter on

the third night of practice. "Yeah, I was honestly shocked by that," he says, "I was just going out and enjoying riding the bike!"

He left the Island with a bronze and two silver replicas having finished 18th in the Superstock TT, 16th in the opening Superbike race and a fine 15th in the Senior. This put him in 4th place overall in the Privateers' Championship behind Dan Cooper, Jamie Hamilton and Russ Mountford. On the second lap of the Senior, slowing for his pit-stop, he recorded a lap speed of 127.09 mph making him the fastest ever TT rider from the Republic of Ireland and breaking a record held for 10 years by the late, great Martin

Finnegan. "That was amazing, and a real honour," he says. "I wasn't forcing it. I just let the track come to me and didn't ever feel like I was sticking my neck out. I know where I could make up a lot of time in the future too, so I didn't think it was too bad for a lad who hasn't done much racing over the past few years," he laughs.

One week later Alan was standing on the top of the podium, having won the Grand Final at the Kells Road Races. This was undoubtedly his biggest road race win to date, and his second of the weekend. It seemed like all the hard work was paying off and things were falling into place.

His next outing was at Dundrod at the beginning of August. On the Thursday morning he was taking part in a Superstock practice session and takes up the story. "I don't remember an awful lot about that session to be honest. I remember being behind another rider and thinking that the front tyre might be dodgy as the front end wasn't han-

dling at all. I know I wasn't pushing hard as I was being deliberately cautious." In the final few minutes of the session Alan crashed at high speed at Dawson's Bend, exiting on to the start and finish straight. The red flags came out immediately and the session was stopped. What he describes as "getting fairly injured" included ending up in Intensive Care unconscious and with multiple fractures, a punctured lung and a ruptured spleen. He was in hospital for weeks with complications. In typical road racer fashion he also adds that "the bike was written off." I was at Dundrod that day and there was real concern that Alan might not make it.

Alan doesn't come from racing stock but he has been into bikes from a young age. "My granny's house in Gormanstown backed on to a motocross track, so any time there was racing on I was down there. I went to Skerries and other races and loved watching guys like Martin, Richard and Ryan. Then I took up motocross for a few years but gave



Mixing it with the best. Alan stalks Cameron Donald at Parliament Square. Courtesy Stuart Watson.

Alan Bonner at QB. Courtesy
Mike Hammonds.



it up when I was twenty one.” The itch never went away however, and in 2008 Alan bought a 600 Honda to try some track racing. “I loved it,” he says, “but second time out at Mondello Park I came off and broke my wrist, so that was the year over!”

Next year he started on the same bike and was regularly finishing in the top six at Clubman’s meetings. Thinking that a bigger bike might suit his height better, he upgraded to an R1 Yamaha and started winning races. “This got me noticed and I thought it would lead to some sponsorship, but that never happened, so I decided to try my hand on the roads.”

In 2010 he entered the Senior Support Championship, the first round of which was at Cookstown. “I remember going out in first practice on the 600 Yam and being shocked at how little grip there was compared to short circuits, with muck and various other things on the road. As the weekend went on the surface got better and I ended up third on the grid behind Shaun Anderson and David “Yomo” Yeomans. Before the race I

would have been very happy with a top three finish, but after a real ding-dong battle with those two I ended up winning it.” In that same year Dean Harrison started out on the roads and had some great battles with Alan, but it was the Irishman who finished the season as champion. Once again, however, the big ride that he had hoped for never materialised.

His first race of the 2011 season was at the Mondello Masters. “I was brimming with confidence, had trained hard all winter and had moved up to a big Honda. I had been finishing races in the top 5 on day one, but on the second day of the meeting I hit a false neutral exiting Turn 2. The bike jumped back into gear and I had a massive high-side. I shattered my wrist, broke my forearm and dislocated a shoulder and that was that. I came back far too early for Walderstown, wasn’t fit and was just wasting petrol. My arm played up the whole of 2012 too and my confidence was at an all-time low.”

Alan had been “mad keen” to do the TT for some time. During the 2013 season Stephen Thompson heard of his intentions

and, having himself ridden for the team in the past, helped sort out a ride with the people-bike. Around the same time Alan picked up another injury, this time to his back. “Again I wasn’t really fit but I played it down as I didn’t want to lose this opportunity. I carried the injury right through until December of last year until I finally needed surgery. They are a brilliant wee team and such nice people. They never put any pressure on you. But 2014 was just a disaster again! I had my own Fireblade and the thing just kept breaking down all year long. At the TT it wouldn’t go in a straight line and we ended up just parking it and didn’t race her.” He had a good run in the Supersport races though, achieving two bronze replicas on his debut and was the fastest newcomer in the 600 races lapping just shy of 120 mph.

Despite his big accident this year and previous bad luck, Alan also loves the “fast and flowing” Dundrod track. In 2013 he lapped at over 128 mph in practice, splitting Cam Donald and Bruce Anstey on the grid. But the bike blew up on the second lap of the first race! And it blew up again during practice for the 2014 UGP.

It’s obvious how committed Alan is to his racing, what’s more difficult to see is how he keeps managing to get back up after each knock. “I haven’t been able to do so many races recently due to the budget. I really only have a few sponsors and friends who help out, without them it would be impossible. We struggle to do the races as it is, but I still believe in myself and know what I’m capable of. It’s such a pity as I felt I was going places this year. As for the future, God knows. I still want to race, but I’m in no position as I’ll be paying off the ZX10 for a few years as it is. I’m just hoping a good team gets in contact.”

Philip Windrum

thepeoplebike.com ridden by Alan
Bonner, courtesy Mike Hammonds



A smooth line for Alan at the Creg. Courtesy Stuart Watson.



Matthew Rees makes a big impact in his first full season of road racing

33 year old Matthew Rees completed his first IoM TT in 2015 following a successful MGP the previous year. Matthew's TT debut came during a very busy road racing season which has seen him make his bow at many pure road racing events.

Matthew's first interest in motorcycles came at the age of six when he got his first bike; however, his road racing career started much later than many riders following an initial interest in Supermoto competition, his first race being just four years ago on a

Supermoto machine at Aberdare, the Welsh town in which he was born... he'd caught the road racing bug and so bought a Kawasaki ZX6R.

Matthew's baptism into road racing has been fast and furious with so many road circuits to learn so quickly as his racing career progresses. He currently rates his most memorable race as the Newcomers' at the 2014 MGP; having been asked to ride at number 1, Matthew finished the race in a very impressive sixth position with an average speed of 111.073mph and an

Continued on page 10...

Chairman & Secretary Report



This year's TT, 2015, was the first I can remember that we, the TTSC, didn't have a shop/outlet at the Grandstand; the reasons for this were covered in the last magazine. The Club, as in the past made arrangements to assist competitors who were paid up members, giving them £45 towards out of pocket expenses. The distribution of this money was undertaken in the Signing-on Office, although it would be true to say it was not as easy as we had originally thought; however, many competitors eventually caught up with Rose in the paddock later in the week.

Arrangements for 2016 are still being discussed and being put into place. The £1000 Riders' Draw will most likely be reinstated in 2016, hopefully taking place during a Radio TT programme. As many of you will know already the race programme has been revised, although the same classes remain; the main difference being the final day of race week (Friday) when the Senior and Sidecar Race 2 will be held. The main reason being put forward for this is that it would provide a Grand Finale as well as excellent TV coverage. The main problem as I see it would be the return boat bookings, as previously, most sidecar crews/teams returned on Thursday and Friday morning sailings. I am told that the promoters have spoken to the Steam Packet Company who have confirmed they will cope with the situation, already having contingency plans in place.

The aim of the TTSC continues to be that of supporting the event, in particular its competitors... it is very simple to do this... we require our members to renew their memberships... to this end, in this modern computer age we would ask you to log onto our website – www.ttsupportersclub.com and follow instructions. Alternatively, use the form enclosed with this magazine.

The membership fee has not changed in many years and hopefully, we won't need to increase it in the foreseeable future. The cost of postage and printing has nearly doubled in the past three years, however if our membership stays strong, we will be able to produce two excellent magazines a year, along with the continued support for the TT competitors.

Roy & Rose

Registrars' Report

First and foremost we would like to take this opportunity of congratulating all competitors who picked up awards and to those who finished in their respective races at this year's TT.

We would also like to thank members who renewed their membership from last year using the form from either the winter or summer magazines. We would also like to welcome all new members who have joined us, and take this opportunity to thank the individuals, both Life and Annual Members, who have made donations to the Club.

As most of you were aware who attended the TT, there was no Club shop this year. Despite this you still made the time to find Rose and renew your membership which means a lot to the Club. We would also like to thank Bill Selling (FoTtofinders) for all of his help during TT fortnight.

When you receive this year's membership card it will be pink as the TTSC is helping to

raise cancer awareness.

If you need a membership form at any time you can download it direct from the TTSC website at: www.ttsupportersclub.com

You can contact us with Membership queries at the following email address: ttsupportersclub@hotmail.co.uk

As we keep saying, we still need more members to ensure the future of the TTSC and maintain the Club's high standards and service to riders and members alike, so if you can introduce a friend to the TTSC, please do so.

Finally, we would like to remind you that in the summer magazine you will find another membership form. It is in there to remind you about renewing your membership for 2016 if you hadn't already done so.

Thank you for your support – have a good Xmas and New Year..

Viv and Pete Oulton



incredible 116mph lap to his credit. The Junior race saw him finish 17th, averaging a speed of 112.183mph.

His achievements have been very impressive in 2015 too, in a season when he has undertaken a remarkable calendar of road racing with debuts at the NW200, TT, Post-TT meeting at Billown, Southern 100, Oliver's Mount, Ulster Grand Prix and the Classic TT. Matthew describes his best racing achievement so far as his performance in his first TT



Matthew Rees at Cross Four Ways, Billown. Courtesy Mike Hammonds.

for which his preparations were dealt a severe blow with a crash at the NW200, causing him to suffer a broken collar bone and cracked ribs. With collarbone duly plated, Matthew set out to the IoM a week earlier than planned to spend valuable time in the Hyperbaric Oxygen Chamber and, thankfully with this much appreciated help, he was passed fit to ride.

Matthew was delighted in these difficult circumstances to finish all of the races he started with 48th and 42nd positions in the Supersport races on his Kawasaki ZX6R, averaging 112 and 114mph, and 44th in the Superstock and 48th in the Senior Race on his Kawasaki ZX10R, averaging 114 and 112 mph, very solid finishes considering the obvious pain he faced each time he rode the bikes.

He found that having really enjoyed the MGP, he discovered he learned more at his first TT with a greater amount of time on the bikes, more laps completed, and more classes and races to enter. In reality, he actually enjoyed the TT more than his initial Mountain Course meeting despite having to hold back a little and ride safely due to his injuries in order to remain comfortable on the bikes.

So who inspired Matthew to go road racing? He lists two riders... fellow Welshman, Paul Owen and past 'Spirit of the TT Award' winner, New Zealander Bruce Anstey. In a pleasant coincidence, Matthew was called up for this year's Classic TT by Paul Owen to ride one of the Team #98 Yamaha machines. Again, Matthew running number 46, following solid 100mph plus laps in practice, did

himself and the team proud with a 27th place in the TTF1 Race, gaining a bronze replica and averaging 106.791mph on his GT Superbikes supported machine.

Matthew loves the jumps, changes in surface and cambers of the roads in contrast to short circuits, no doubting his Supermoto experience giving him some advantage in these areas; also, loving the sensation of racing through 30mph speed limited zones on closed public roads means the roads are his racing future.

A very busy year saw Matthew record a 6th place on his ZX10R at the Billown Post-TT meeting, using this meeting to learn the course for his Southern 100 debut a few weeks later. Due to a mechanical issue between these two meetings, Matthew was unable to bring his 1000 bike to the Southern 100, so rode his stock ZX6R which was not as

competitive in the big bike events. However, undeterred he recorded a best finish of 13th being the third 600cc rider to cross the line in the main race.

At the UGP in, at times difficult weather conditions, our Welsh friend scored 19th, 27th and 31st positions in the two Superbike and Dundrod 150 Races. He has also secured promising results at Oliver's Mount with the best, a second place podium.

Matthew took on a lot this season... learning his way around so many pure road racing circuits in a very short space of time. He finds the best way to do this is by watching on board laps before arriving a few days early at the venue to do further homework on the course; he does admit though, that he has found it tough.

With all this hard work done in 2015, Matthew plans to form his own



On board his 750 Classic Yamaha at Cronk y Voddy. Courtesy Mike Hammonds.

Matthew Rees making his debut at Bilton, courtesy Mike Hammonds.



Susan Jenness Trophy

Congratulations to Fiona Baker-Milligan on regaining the Susan Jenness Trophy she last held in 2011. As partner to her dad, Tony, she took home two Bronze Replicas for finishing 11th and 10th in Sidecar Races 1 and 2 respectively, but more to the point, lap two in the former, was completed at a speed of 109.321mph, the fastest ever by a female sidecar passenger. Taking this honour from Sally Wilson, she is the worthy winner of the trophy presented annually in memory of Susan Jenness who tragically lost her life some years ago whilst marshalling an off-road motorcycle event in the UK. Coincidentally, Fiona was 11th in both races when she last held the trophy, which she was also awarded in 2005.

It was a double celebration for the family crew as Tony was this year's recipient of the Frank Cope Trophy awarded for the most meritorious performance with respect to the competitor's age. Tony's sidecar TT career began in 1985, having competed in one MGP meeting, 1972, as a solo competitor.



Two award winners captured by Mike Hammonds in one photo... Fiona Baker-Milligan, 2015 recipient of the Susan Jenness Trophy, along with dad, Tony who received the Frank Cope Trophy for the competitor adjudged to have made the best performance with respect to his age.

team in conjunction with Phil Morris for the 2016 season to avoid having to work and travel on his own as was the case at the Southern 100; he is hoping with the right backing he can build on his previous results and have an even better 2016 season. We, at the TT Supporters' Club have every confidence that this will indeed be the case and wish him well.

Matthew would like to thank those who have helped him come so far in road racing in such a remarkably short space of time... Philip Morris Racing, GT Superbikes, D+R Tiles, Derek Smith from Aberaman Motorcycle Club, Castlecare, George Morgan and Builders Bitz Limited.

Sally Bly



No job too small for Matt. Courtesy Mike Hammonds.



2014 winner of the Susan Jenness Trophy, Estelle Leblond seen here in action during practice for TT 2015. Courtesy Mike Hammonds

Estelle Leblond receives the Susan Jenness Trophy from TTSC Chairman, Roy Hanks for her remarkable achievements at TT 2014. Courtesy Mike Hammonds.



Fiona will be presented with the Susan Jenness Trophy at next year's TT. Receiving the trophy this June for her efforts at TT 2014 was French sidecar driver, Estelle Leblond, who, along with regular ballast, Sebastien Lavorel finished 18th in Race 1 at an average of 106.405mph, so continuing her excellent progress in the world of pure road racing.



What can you remember about TT 2015?

- 1 Who, riding his Superstock machine, finished 7th in the Senior had a fastest lap of 131.626mph which was comfortably inside the Superstock lap record of 131.220mph?
- 2 The top 10 finishes in the Lightweight class all rode Kawasaki machinery, with the exception of who on which make of machine?
- 3 John McGuinness had the fastest lap of the fortnight, but who had the second fastest, his 4th and last in the Senior?
- 4 Only one podium for Guy Martin – how many does he now have in total?
- 5 Six finishers in TT Zero, two of whom were Irish. Name them
- 6 Shaun Parker acted as passenger to which driver who had 6th and 8th finishing positions to his credit?
- 7 Name the only competitor originating from outside the British Isles to finish inside the top 10 in the sidecar races?
- 8 What was the maximum speed registered by James Hillier along Sulby Straight on the Ninja H2R Kawasaki during his demonstration lap?
- 9 Name the sidecar driver who lost his visor whilst climbing the Mountain, retiring in the Pits, being unable to clip a new one into place?
- 10 Keith Amor's TT ended as a result of a crash – where?
- 11 Jason O'Connor escaped injury when he crashed with regular driver Brian Kneale during practice, teamed up with which newcomer for the races?
- 12 Which podium finisher's previous best TT result was 23rd, at an average speed of

- just over 103mph?
- 13 At which corner did Ian Hutchinson over-brake himself during the Senior causing him to take the slip road, in doing so dropping seven or eight seconds on those riders in front of him?
 - 14 On being interviewed by Chris Kinley after his victory in the first Supersport Race, Ian Hutchinson said, "My bike's a dream to ride – I felt like I was _____" Doing what?
 - 15 ..."there was a huge bang as he hit the inside kerb on the right hand side, flicking him straight across towards the left side walls with his feet off the pegs. As he disappeared out of sight over the crest, his feet were still off the pegs but I could hear him rolling off the throttle above the gasps all around me..."... Road Racing Ireland Magazine's description involving which competitor at which vantage point?
 - 16 Name this solo competitor captured at speed by Mike Hammonds



Answers on Page 50.



Roy Tansley... a true inspiration

Roy has an incredible story to tell... paralysis from age 17-18 and the further huge blow of suffering a road accident resulting in the loss of his leg below the knee at the age of 24, just when he had started a promising solo race career. This lead, initially, to the loss of his race licence... Roy takes up the story...

"Like many young lads, I was going to set the world on fire as a solo rider because I felt I had something that others did not have, but while out on a fast ride around my native Derbyshire with Bill Lomas's son Mick, I had a front tyre puncture which pitched me at high speed into a road sign. This effectively snapped me in half, breaking my back at T7 & T8 – that was it... 17 years old, totally paralysed and, allegedly, I'd never walk again. I was young,

full of fire so I just worked and worked, eventually after three months managed to twitch my right big toe... this was the light at the end of the tunnel. It took 18 months but I eventually managed to walk unaided; it was never a perfect fix as the feeling I have is dull on my right hand side and the strength weak on the left, but it was a hell of a lot better than giving up and sitting in a wheelchair.

I eventually got my solo race licence and started racing a Yamaha RD350 YPVS with strong results. Unfortunately, another road accident took my left leg off just below the knee before I really got going; the ACU then pulled my licence as amputees then, in 1986, were not allowed to hold a race licence. I'm very proud that, after many years lobbying the ACU and with a massive



Roy Tansley & Dave Dean motor through Kirk Michael, courtesy Stuart Watson.

petition, they finally relented in 1993 giving me a licence to race sidecars. Barriers had been broken down, amputees were able to race... this gave me a very good feeling."

Roy made an immediate impact in the three wheel world with a third place in the 1994 British Championship using a prototype gear shifter system. He describes his amazing comeback and first impressions of sidecar racing..."I started racing again on F1 sidecars as a novice mid-93 season, but trying to do everything required with a leg missing was very difficult. I could, either, change gears and not be able to stop, or vice versa, so I came up with the idea of making a two way solenoid gear shifting system. We did very well with this and in 1994 competed in the British Clubmen's Championship, which was a very strong class with such notables as Sean Hegarty (multiple British Champion and GP rider), Tony Williams, who went on to win the European Championship, Mick Boddice Jnr (European Championship race winner), etc; we were leading the championship until a chain snapped on the line at Pembrey, so we finished a strong third. I then went on to race a carbon fibre Windle ADM F1 outfit in the British Championship and selected

European races."

In 2003 Roy became the fastest disabled racer ever at the IoM TT with an average speed over a three lap race of 100.31mph. He achieved a Bronze replica, also being part of the ACU Club winning team with team mates being no less than Dave Molyneux and Nick Crowe. Roy expands...

"I basically went bankrupt racing the ADM as we had little or no support, so eventually I sold it, bought a DMR F2 chassis into which we put an R6 engine so finally achieving our 100mph laps. Although down on speed it was a great bike and we figured a better way of holding me in over the TT bumps... it's not easy with one leg as you are naturally off balance and every bump throws you sideways. Getting a Bronze replica and winning the team prize meant a great 2003 TT for us, but by this time I was really struggling with the knee in my good leg and my gearshift company, Pro-Shift was taking so much of my time, that I had to stop racing.

I needed operations to rescue my knee... an osteo-optomy, which meant breaking my femur, cutting a wedge in it in an attempt to realign my knee and then give me some fresh cartilage which would,

hopefully, enable me to walk, but this went wrong and I ended up in hospital for 5 ½ months, then spent another year in a wheelchair; a setback, but nothing to make me give in. In July 2013 I eventually got a complete replacement right knee and this was the start of my long road to recovery again, taking over 18 months until I could kneel, an obvious requirement for sidecar racing. My thoughts now went back to the return to the TT that I have always wanted, but obviously not been able to achieve previously."

During his forced lay off from racing Roy cleverly designed and developed the Pro-Shift system, the world's fastest commercially available semi-automatic gear shifting system. This is now used in competition at the very top level... how did his idea and invention become a designed and manufactured reality?

"Basically, necessity was the mother of invention and the business has now grown so we produce paddle gear shifting systems for a huge range of cars from Porsche GT3s to open wheeler cars including some older F1 ones; we recently did Michael Schumacher's old V10 Benneton for instance. We also make a wide range of shifters, semi-automatic, manual quick shifters, throttle blippers, even pit lane speed limit-

ers. I designed and patented the world's first closed loop gear shifting system combined with an auto-blip downshifter, which we debuted with Dave Molyneux and Patrick Farrance at the 2012 TT where I am immensely proud to say that they won both races at a canter. I was particularly pleased, as Patrick made his TT debut with me in 2002."

Other notable clients include Steve Abbott when winning the 2002 World Championship, Tim Reeves won the 2014 World Championship and is, at the time of writing, leading the 2015 World Championship with the closed loop gear shifter, Ben Birchall, who Roy is hopeful of signing up for next season and Steve Kershaw, who finished 3rd in the 2015 Brands Hatch World Championship round with the latest version of the closed loop up & down shifter. Roy's dear friend, the late Richard Britton used a semi-automatic system in the early noughties to lap at 125mph around the TT Course, at the time the fastest Irishman. Other known users are Ken Knapton, who has won 2 European Championships with a now 11 year old system that just keeps going and, of course, Kenny Howles who has used Roy's gear shifter for over ten years.

Roy, now able to walk again rewarded



Although they put every effort into qualification, Roy Tansley and passenger, Dave Dean didn't make the start line. Courtesy Mike Hammonds.



Courtesy Stuart Watson.

himself by building a new outfit to get back on the track, but there must have been many lows during recovery periods from various medical procedures. How did the ultimate dream and goal of racing again help him achieve so much, in so doing overcoming the difficulties he had to face? "I suppose people who know me would say I'm a somewhat stubborn, the thought of never racing again was not an option. However, as the years pass it got further and further away but I remained focused, working and training very hard as I always felt that I didn't achieve what I was capable of doing at the TT. As an engineer I wanted to build something different and I was always broke, so I said to myself I will not come back until I can at least have some kind of parity with horsepower and not run on second hand tyres. For many years, Pro-Shift was not in a position to afford it and as I have employees, my focus had to be on keeping them in work and me in business."

A very interesting machinery option was chosen by Roy for his 2015 TT comeback... a Triumph 675cc triple engine which, he anticipated would have extra power compared to his previous outfit. How did this come about? "The possibility of a return was there as the business had stabilised, my knee op had gone well, but then a couple of things happened which finally tipped the balance... first and most important was the sudden, unexpected death of a dear friend of mine and regular TT mechanic and ex-sidecar racer, Steve Hickman. Steve was always pestering me to go back, so I felt that

I owed him that at least and, of course, the sensible opening of the F2 Sidecar TT rules to follow Supersport, allowed us to build a fully British bike using the latest Triumph 675 engine combined with a Mike Richards MR Equipe chassis."

So long away from racing, meant Roy had to secure signatures from six meetings to compete around the Mountain Course; his return to the track was, as he says, "frantic to say the least as the bike was not finished until the morning of my first race in over twelve years; we had little practice, just three laps of Oulton Park before the race, so a bit daunting, however we managed a 9th place in the race which had the likes of Ben Birchall, Steve Ramsden and a number of top runners in, so I was relatively satisfied with that. As we had to get six meetings in before the TT, it gradually became less about racing and more about survival so I tried to hold back my competitive nature and just get finishes, which we duly did – just."

The Island awaited Roy and his passenger, newcomer Dave Dean... how did they get on? Best let the driver himself tell the story, "having a twelve year lay off from racing was difficult enough as the bike was all new and still being developed when we got there, so the first time down Bray Hill was an eye opener. I was a little rusty and found myself saying 'did I really take Ballagary flat out all those years ago?' It comes back with a few laps, but I found Sulby Straight much bumpier than before and not being in 'the know', I went my usual line down there and got into a bit of trouble. After a chat with some other drivers I found a safe way down it. The run to Ramsey was much as before, still bloody bumpy, but that's part of the nature of the TT, having to take non-classic lines in places to account for road cambers, surface changes, man-hole covers, etc is part of the beauty of the place; having to be so precise appeals to my OCD nature, I think."

Roy would probably agree that the TT didn't go as well as planned as they didn't get a lap until Thursday and Dave was struggling; they did two steady laps, then spent Friday modifying the chassis and handles to help the passenger out for the last practice session. Roy takes up the story, "Dave told me he was fine with the changes, however because of the weather affected practice, we had to get a time that Friday night, so we set off at a reasonable pace but Dave just simply couldn't manage the bumps and possibly the speed, so he felt he could no longer compete." That was the end for Roy's TT 2015, but as he continues, "I don't blame Dave as it is a pretty daunting thing to ride around the Mountain Circuit particularly on a sidecar with a one-legged mad man driving! That is in the past now and I wish Dave Dean all the best for the future."

Roy's season did, however, continue, for example with a couple of strong 2nd places at Darley Moor with his engineer and

ex Liam Abbott passenger, Chris Judge. Roy will not do the TT, however, with Chris Judge as... "although he is a top class passenger he is too valuable to me, so, as my manager puts it, I am 'not allowed to hurt him at the TT', so he'll take the role of chief mechanic for that meeting. I do have a verbal deal for TT 2016 with New Zealander, Darren Prentice, who raced on the Island with my old mate Chris Lawrence, also a Kiwi."

Roy aims to be on the Glencrutchery Road start line next year, hoping to fulfil his aim of being the driver of the fastest sidecar around the Mountain Course powered by an engine produced in Britain... if his determination, commitment and engineering qualities are anything to go by, he'll do it.

To contact Roy to discuss any of your racing requirements, please email info@proshift.com or visit his website which is www.proshift.com which offers a 10% discount to all ACU race licence holders.

Sally Bly

EQUIPE AJAX

MOTOR SPORT ACTION PHOTOGRAPHERS



Barry and Sheila would like to wish "Good Luck" to all T.T. riders and visitors.

UNIT 9. BROADWATER BOULEVARD. WORTHING. SUSSEX.
Tel. 01903219204 Fax. 01903541104. Mob. 07748593107
E.Mail equipeajax@lineone.net



TT DIGEST

- It was a bumper TT period for the IoM bus and rail services... a total of 217,560 passengers were carried on all three Heritage Railway and Bus Vannin services between June 1st and 12th, generating £427,000. Visitors seemed to embrace the new Go Smart travel cards with almost 5,000 sold in addition to pre-sales by tour operators and online. Busiest days were the Friday of Practice Week on all services and Thursday of Race Week when the Manx Electric Railway carried 2,000 people to Laxey, many of whom continued up to the Bungalow and 281 people boarded the late morning train to Port Erin.
- A record £16,212 for the Rob Vine Fund was raised on board IoM Steam Packet Company vessels during this year's TT Festival, making an overall total in excess of £220,000 since the first collection was organised by the company in the mid-

1990s. As many will recall, the Fund was established in memory of Rob Vine, a competitor who died after a crash at the Black Dub in the 1985 Senior TT. Rob's IoM racing career began with the 1977 MGP; he moved to the TT in 1982 securing many high finishing positions, the best of which was 6th in the 1983 Junior on his Yamaha in a race won by Phil Mellor. He came home 7th in the Formula 1 of 1985; his best Mountain Course result was 2nd behind Dave Pither in the 1984 Classic Senior MGP on a Matchless.

- A report on the BBC website in October revealed that John McGuinness underwent technology tests at the Spanish circuit, Montebancho whereby his bike and suit were fitted with a battery of biometric and mechanical sensors to record every aspect of man and machine in action. His results were compared with those of

motorcycle journalist, Adam Child. Fifty sensors measured everything from front and rear wheel velocities to throttle usage; banking angles to gear changes; acceleration and braking rates to suspension travel. The sensors in his suit even allowed them to analyse his position on the bike at different points of the course. Data analytics firm EMC, found McGuinness's heart rate to be much lower than might be expected, being only at 120 beats per minute - well within the aerobic range, even at very high speeds, thus meaning his oxygen intake was lower. Consequently, he is under less stress, calmer, and so more consistent in his performance, experiencing less fatigue than other riders. Mike Foley, senior director of data science at EMC, the company carrying out the tests said, "we applied machine learning techniques to the data analysis and discovered that only 14 variables really made a difference during the race. It is the interplay of those 14 variables at any point on the lap that explains why he is faster. In short, this means he braked a little later, accelerated a little longer, and banked over in the corners a little more than other riders. He also used some gears more than others. Of course, natural ability plays a big part too, as does experience."

- The IoM Met Office confirmed 2015 saw the driest June in the last twenty years with only 25.8mm of rain being recorded at Ronaldsway, less than half the average for that month. No consolation to campers when 10mm fell on the first day of the month with unseasonal storms causing havoc. The severe gales included the strongest winds ever recorded for the month, with one gust measuring 63mph. The Met Office described these winds as 'closer to the peak expected in December rather

than June'. Luckily, matters improved with 20% more sunshine than the normal 240.5 hours, the sunniest day, being during the Festival - June 11th - with 15.6 continuous hours being enjoyed. Should campers complain about the weather? Of course not... no frost was recorded!!

- John Newton tells us in this magazine that French sidecar parents, Didier and Helene, had no trouble excusing their children, Yann and Gwendolene from school so they could compete in the TT... not so, John McGuinness. As reported in the Manx press, the Morecambe Missile, who earned Senior TT victory earned him £18,000 had to pay a £120 fine for taking his five year old daughter, Maisie, out of school. Whilst accepting the fine, John was mystified as to why the money didn't go back into the school, instead, presumably being placed into the coffers of the Local Education Authority.
- The Festival of Motorcycling continues to develop its popularity, but not, according to figures released by the IoM Steam Packet Co, at the expense of the TT... there was a 4% increase for the number of motorcycles carried by the Company's ferries for the former in 2015, but one of over 14% for the latter.
- The IoM Post Office linked itself with the relationship between Norton and the TT, as celebrated at this year's Festival of Motorcycling by releasing a special stamp sheet. Depicted are Steve Hislop's 1992 victory on the Abus Norton, the 1935 Senior battle between Stanley Woods and Jimmy Guthrie, both of whom were mounted on the single cylinder machine, Freddie Frith's 1937 Senior victory and that of Mike Hailwood in 1961 in a race which saw eight of



the top ten places taken by Norton. The stamps also recall TT winner, Artie Bell, the success of the 748cc machine taken to the top of the rostrum by Peter Williams in 1973 and the recent return to the event by the manufacturer with machines ridden by Cameron Donald.

- ✦ Spanish TT racer Antonio Maeso has moved forward to the next step of his recovery after his crash at the IoM in 2013. The Spaniard, who severely injured his leg, has been battling ever since to get it back in working order, particularly with respect to the bending angle needed to ride a racing motorbike. Having lost any possibility of continuing with the physiotherapist, Maeso has built himself a physiotherapy bench to keep stretching his leg at home this winter, thus looking forward to being able to start riding on track by the beginning of next year. He has made a video of

the new machine that can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/7MhWLLs0auU>

- ✦ 2016 will see two very big anniversaries celebrated at Oliver's Mount, 70 years of racing and the 50th Anniversary of the Auto 66 Club...and all meetings will be two day affairs. First up is the Spring National, now re-titled, The Spring Cup Bob Smith Trophy Road Races to be held on Saturday & Sunday 16th & 17th April. Next will be The Cock O' the North Continental Road Races on Saturday & Sunday 25th & 26th June. The following month will see The Barry Sheene Road Races on Saturday & Sunday 23rd & 24th July. The Auto 66 Club is also hoping to organise two bike rallies at the Cock O' the North and the Barry Sheene meetings, the former for European machines and the latter for Japanese. Invitations have been sent to owners' clubs who hopefully will bring some of the best

classic & vintage bikes around. Finally, the last meeting of the year will be the 66th Steve Henshaw International Gold Cup Road Races on Saturday & Sunday 17th & 18th September. As well as the Club and circuit celebrations there will also be one for Steve Henshaw, who was unfortunately lost to us 27 years ago. As Steve rode number 27, the Club is looking for ways to celebrate 27 years of the Steve Henshaw Trophy. Tickets for the individual meetings can, of course, be purchased in advance, but for 2016 a special Christmas offer is available - £150 covering all four meetings, a saving of £30. This offer ends 18th December – contact, 01723 373000.

- ✦ In a similar vein, racing around the 4.25 mile Billown Circuit is scheduled: Pre-TT Classic Friday 27th to Monday 30th May inclusive, Post-TT meeting, Saturday 11th

June and the Southern 100 International Road Races, Monday 11th to Thursday 14th July.

- ✦ Two, three and now four wheels for Michael Dunlop on Manx roads... 11 times TT winner had a sidecar demonstration lap this year and then, in September, drove a Vauxhall-engined Escort Mk11 in Rally IoM. An impressive debut with local navigator, Rob Hogg saw him finish 8th overall, winning his class and being the best newcomer in the entire event.
- ✦ Two new books worthy of a mention on this page, both from Veloce Publishing, are 'Chris Carter at Large' by Chris Carter & Richard Skelton and 'Racing Line' by Bob Guntrip. The former is a collection of anecdotes, some tragic, but mostly humorous, documenting the fascinating and unique life spent as a journalist, broadcaster and



On the road action with Gary Johnson and Ryan Farquhar during the Lightweight TT; sadly both retired. Courtesy Glynne Lewis.

commentator at the heart of motorcycle sport by Chris Carter. 'Racing Line' is the story of big-bike racing in Britain during the 1960s when the British racing single reached its peak – exciting racing unfolded at circuits across the land every summer, a period during which Britain took its great generation of riding talent and engineering skill to the world.

- Former race commentator, Charlie Lambert eulogised about some of our heroes in his post-TT blog... Ian Hutchinson: "redefined the possibilities of sports rehab..." John McGuinness: "class, consistency, longevity; time to revive that campaign for a royal honour, but then, he's 'King of the Mountain' already..." the Birchalls: "like Klaffi a few years ago, massive reward for putting their short circuit reputations on the line..." James Hillier: "speed, control, dignity, modesty. TT titles await..." Dave Molyneux: "a special lap to break a special record..." Gary Thompson: "the Clerk

of the Course came up with so many correct answers an appearance on University Challenge must only be a matter of time..." Bruce Anstey: "specialist subject – making the horrendously difficult look ridiculously easy..." Peter Hickman: "second year at the TT and he's beating Anstey, Martin and McGuinness – you cannot be serious?"

- Results from a visitor survey undertaken during the 2015 TT reveal that that on Monday June 8th there were 30,000+ visitors on the Island. Questionnaires were handed out at the airport and sea terminal with visitors also completing face-to-face interviews – on average, visitors stayed for seven nights and spent more than £740, a total expenditure of £31.4million; there has been a 7.4% increase on the number of visitors to the event since 2013, with more than 42,000 bike fans travelling over this year. It's thought the TT and Festival of Motorcycling generated more than £28 million for the Manx economy in 2015.



A successful TT for the Matt Dix / Shaun Parker partnership, finishing 6th in the sidecar championship table. Courtesy Robin Hynes.

Dod at speed on the Mountain, courtesy Mike Hammonds.



George 'Dod' Spence... Epitomising the Spirit of the TT

Who has achieved the most TT race finishes by a Scotsman? The answer, by some considerable distance is George Spence, a true privateer who embraces the event, year after year with his determination, mechanical skills along with his team of dedicated helpers.

His start finish ratio of 58 – 52 stands with the best... George, probably better known as Dod tells how his motorcycle journey got under way... "after doing a track day at Knockhill on a 750 Yamaha in 1995, I decided that I could have a lot of fun actually racing so traded in the 750 and bought an Aprilia RS 250, prepping it for the Scottish 250 Production Championship." Obviously, it was too early then to consider taking on the vagaries of the Mountain Course? "Erm, no... I first went to the TT as an 18 year old in 1978 on a Suzuki GS550 and was bitten by the bug so hard that I've been every year since. So, for twenty years I did so many laps round the TT course on Mad Sundays and early mornings that I thought racing there would be easy!"

Evidently, then the idea was firmly in his head? "Yes," Dod adding "get my licence and do the TT once, just so I could say I'd raced on the Isle of Man."... a turn of phrase surely uttered by many! Dod quickly added another machine to his stable, building a bike for the Singles class, a Suzuki RGV 250 chassis with a Yamaha XT 600 engine. After three years of competitions at Knockhill, East Fortune and trips to Croft and Cadwell, he secured his international licence.

So, it all became a reality in 1998 after the newcomers' briefing lap on the bus, when Dod set off on his first practice very early one morning. All those unofficial practice laps over the years, surely he'd take to the course like a duck to water? "Not quite, I headed down Bray Hill on the Single RGV XT, got to Quarter Bridge and thought that I didn't have a clue where I was going! I got to Ballacraigne, turned right and then broke down at Ballig Bridge. That was my first practice over as I had to sit out the rest of the session and wait for my two friends, who knew even less than me, to come and pick up me and the bike."

A broken wire proved the source of the problem, this then duly sorted, he managed to complete two laps that evening and then go out on the Yamaha R1 he'd bought at the start of that year as a proper bike on which to compete in the Production TT. Practice week continued as planned with qualification for both races being achieved, but a potential prob-



lem loomed...“I knew it would be difficult to start the single after the pit stop, but luckily for me the race was cut to three laps and I could manage that non-stop with a full tank which held 21 litres.”

The Suzuki 620 brought him home in 11th position at an average of 92.75mph, this achievement being supplemented by 46th in the Production, being the second newcomer to cross the line. He was hooked!... but there was a downside as Dod explains, “my wife, Lorna, who had been to several TTs in the early 1990s, came over for race week, found it completely nerve-racking and hasn’t been back since. She

has however done pit crew duty for a friend at the 2013 MGP, apparently it’s okay as long as I’m not on the bike!”

Moving on... like many privateers, Dod’s racing season revolves around the TT as he explains, “I used to try to do all the Scottish rounds, but now you lose out on a lot of points as the dates of some meetings clash. I started doing the Ulster GP in 2014 as something else to tick off the bucket list, enjoyed it, so went back this year, improving my lap times, even on a bike with a faulty gearbox.”

... and what of this year’s TT, bearing in mind our Scottish friend had a fine finishing record to maintain? “I was a bit short of track time before the TT due to bikes not being ready and various other hindrances. I had sold my R6 to Chris Richal at the end of the 2014 season, but borrowed it back for this year, refreshing the engine with a tuned head and cams and did one test day at Knockhill to run it in. My Honda CBR 1000 was also refreshed over the winter in attempt to cure a few gremlins; I took it to a two day meeting at East Fortune before leaving for the Isle of Man.” Actually, this was more preparation than in 2009 when his Aprilia RSV4 arrived the night before leaving, but still not content Dod rode it down to the ferry to get some miles on it, completing the rest of the prep on the Island!

No place in Paddock A with its matting and rectilinear layout for George, instead he could be found in the corner position normally occupied by Paul Owen and his entourage. Nonetheless he was well organised with the race truck, loaned by Chris Richal, his own van for transporting the bikes around and an old Thundercat as a run around. No privateer can exist in isolation, especially at the TT as Dod explains, “my team consisted of Chris, his first TT crew experience, Grant Dalglish, who’s been a crew member for a few years and Dougie Davidson, my mechanic since 2000 and one of the main reasons I’ve been able to finish so many races around the demanding Mountain Course.”

The first few days of TT 2015 were a bit wild, weather-wise with strong winds and heavy rain destroying a few awnings in the paddock, but luckily Dod and his team had all flappables well tied and weighted down, so full attention could be given to the machines. So, how did time on the track go? “Practice week actually went quite well with both bikes – a 2013 CBR Honda 1000RR and a 2010 Yamaha YZF-R6, entered for five races between them – behaving themselves, my lap times improving on previous years.”

Seventy-two competitors lined up on the grid for the Superbike TT, forty-five completing the distance with Dod circulating consistently in what he considered an uneventful, but gremlin-free race to take 32nd position. Not such good fortune for the next two races as Dod explains, “the first Supersport race started well with a couple of good laps but the bike began playing up after the pit stop and I retired after lap 3. The Superstock was a similar story, breaking down at Sulby Bridge on lap 3 after the pit stop. After stripping down both bikes we think the fuel was contaminated.”



Dod on his way to 28th position in the 2014 Lightweight TT on his Kawasaki, courtesy Equijp Ajax.

The second Supersport race was much better, the R6, as Dod put it was ‘singing’ with its rider recording his fastest ever lap on a 600 machine, finishing 32nd at an average of 116.365mph. What of the final race of the 2015 meeting? “The Honda had a trip to Ramsey to go on the dyno before the Senior TT and we decided to remove the quick shifter as it seemed to be causing intermittent problems. I had also changed the suspension settings, but it was terrible and managed to change it back when the race was red flagged after the first lap. The restart was much better and I finished 36th. My lap times improved on both bikes this year, this being 118.8mph on the R6 and 121.4mph on the Honda.”

One race Dod didn’t enter this year was the Zero TT... a strange point to make, perhaps, as very few machines did actually start the race, we’ll, let Dod explain: “I’ve actually started in six TT Zero races, all for Kingston University. Paul Brandon, who originally ran the university project, contacted me after I put my name forward the first year it was to be run. The zero bikes are great fun to ride and I think there is a future for them, but the money required to fund these projects is very high. Now that a few very big companies have become involved, which is great for technological advancement, it seems to eclipse smaller, university-type projects and will limit the number of bikes on the grid.” Few entries over the years, perhaps, but let that not detract from one of Dod’s proudest moments in his road racing career, standing on the TT rostrum in 2011 along with Michael Rutter and Mark Miller when finishing third behind the MotoCzysz E1 PC riders on his ION HORSE 2011 at



Riding through the streets of Ramsey, courtesy Stuart Watson.

an average of 88.435mph

Now a TT veteran, the steel fabrication company director from Fife will have seen many changes at the TT... "I certainly have... on the downside, it gets more expensive every year with privateers like myself finding it harder to fund, especially as the travel allowance doesn't even cover half the ferry costs. However, I run a fund raising night to which a lot of local supporters come and I sell some team shirts. A few local businesses help out and local bike dealers usually give me a good deal.

Like the majority of long-term TT competitors, Dod considers the changes are largely for the better, for example, newcomers now receive a lot more attention and with greater TV coverage, the TT has a much higher profile, the event reaching a wider audience. Dod continues... "generally the organisation of this huge event is really good with continuing improvements in safety, information and the smooth running every year. The main complaint in the paddock, every year, is the shower/toilet facilities, especially by the second week, but, I appreciate this is not an easy problem to solve with such a high number of people to be accommodated."

Dod is realistic about the world's greatest pure road races, as he says, "it's always going to be about the big names and teams, but it has to be kept in mind how many people are needed to make up a full grid and every rider will be trying their hardest to achieve their own goals"... a sentiment shared surely by all members of the TT Supporters' Club. What of the future? A philosophical response, "I'm not sure how much longer I will continue to race, but I still enjoy being involved and beating a few riders who are a lot younger than me, so the bowling green can wait a while longer!"

George 'Dod' Spence epitomises the spirit of the TT, an event which cannot do without the true privateer who battles, often on a shoe string budget relying on dedicated friends, to achieve his goal whether it be an improved lap speed, a replica or just the satisfaction of completing the race distance. Dod is not a front runner, but has stood on a TT rostrum and is the leading rider from Scotland in terms of finishes... we must not forget the role played by Dod and his like in the annals of TT history... indeed, Dod, keep off that bowling green!



Dod rounds QB, courtesy Mike Hammonds.

French Tricolours fly high

Many a French tricolour could be seen fluttering in the paddock last summer... in all probability 2015 saw the largest contingent of competitors from our nearest continental neighbour – four 'soloists' along with eight sidecar crews. The 'highs and lows' of TT racing were certainly experienced, with debutant, Franck Petricola tragically losing his life in a practice accident at Sulby; despite his accident at the 2014 NW200 when he received serious injuries, Franck was determined to compete on the Mountain Course. The other side of the coin, however, saw Lionel Marsuy receive the Peter Chapman Trophy as the highest placed newcomer driver in the sidecar races... with Melanie Farnie as his passenger, he came home in 24th position in the second race, which followed on from 29th in the first.

Best finish by a French crew was last year's Susan Jenness Trophy winner Estelle Leblond with Sebastien Lavorel, 18th in Race 1 at 106.405mph, but alas, a first lap retirement a couple of days later. Dad, Francois, with Anne Garnish in the chair, retired in Race 1, but finished 30th in the second. Sadly, as covered elsewhere, the Siros – Didier and Helene failed to start but Claude Montagnier, assisted by Maxime Vasseur with 28th and 25th positions maintained his fantastic record – starts, 28, finishes, 26.

Franck Barbier / Emmanuel Debroise [30th & 21st] and Pascal Gassmann / Chabloz Olivier [32nd & 28th] all performed with credit and will be pleased with their performances. Remy Guignard and Frederique Poux performed so well during practice they set off 29th



Glynn Lewis captures the stylish Fabrice Miguet at Braddan Bridge



The remarkably consistent Claude Montagnier seen at Ginger Hall with his passenger, Maxime Vasseur. Courtesy Stuart Watson. Below: Xavier Denis – five starts, five finishes in 2105. Courtesy Stuart Watson.



despite being originally allocated number 71... 19th and a DNF being the eventual outcome.

Back to the solos... seasoned competitor, the stylish Fabrice Miguet presumably was disappointed with his results as he was beset by mechanical problems... two retirements along with 49th and last in the Senior during which gremlins also struck as he only managed to average 109mph.

Consistent riding by Tomothee Monot on his superpsort, a three year old Honda, brought about 41st & 38th positions; sadly there was a retirement in the Lightweight. The outstanding Frenchman on two wheels was Xavier Denis... five starts, five finishes, all in the 40s except 21st out of the 37 who completed the distance in the Lightweight.



Joey Dunlop Team

Planning for the future

Summer season, 2015, is now over, but the JDF team is still working hard and is very proud to announce that its plans to extend the facilities at Braddan Bridge are looking achievable for the 2016 season.

The hardworking volunteers received invites to attend motorcycle events and shows which resulted in an increase in merchandise sales and for the first time ever, all 30,000 tombola tickets have been sold.

Significant support has been received from Malcolm Wheeler (Mortons), Peter Hillaby (Auto 66), Eddie Nelson (Darley Moor), Clive Padgett, Mervyn Whyte (NW200), the Dunlop family, Arai & the Visorshop teams, the UGP team, Brian Convery (IOMSP), Jim (Manx Ices) plus of course, Graham Bean of the TTSC. Without this level of support, the Foundation would not be close to achieving its dream.

The holiday apartments which have been operating for five years continue to attract guests of all ages and with a wide range of special requirements.

Occupancy levels in 2015 grew by 20% to 80 % (virtually 100% in June, July & August) with guests continuing to advise the team that facilities are simply the best in the British Isles and with this comment in mind, the Foundation is determined to design and equip the new apartments to the highest standards.

Kevin Quirk of JDF said "Our DAS grading is exceptional, something of which we are extremely proud; demand continues to increase and by extending two apartments and creating a new one, we will increase our occupancy level by 8 to 20. With building work due to start in January 2016, I am busy encouraging Joey fans and local businesses to have a fund raiser for Joey's charity. With the extension costing in excess of £250,000, I have to congratulate my small team of volunteers for their hard work and commitment, especially during the IoM Motorcycle Festivals when long hours are worked and by race week we are all running on adrenalin."

If you would like to make a reservation at the Lodge, then please search Joey Dunlop Foundation at www.visitisleofman.com or via our ardent supporters www.steampacketholidays.com.

Kevin Quirk

Chairman, Joey Dunlop Foundation

ITALIANS AT 2015 TT

Two Italian riders competed at TT 2015, the veteran Stefano Bonetti, a regular since 2004, and the fast newcomer from the previous year's MGP, Marco Pagani. Both decided to concentrate their efforts on the big bikes, Stefano on his Kawasaki ZX10R and Marco on the BMW S1000R.

After both experienced problems during practices week, they started the first race, the Superbike, hoping to achieve good results. Stefano, after not a particularly brilliant start, eventually made good progress to finish 19th; Marco, on his BMW had a first taste of the top class of road racing achieving an excellent 37th place and, for both of them, it is important to remember that their bikes were of stock standards, so they would probably have their best chances in the Superstock class later in the week.

Unfortunately, this proved not to be the case, as Stefano was forced to withdraw due to an electrical problem that afflicted his Kawasaki and Marco's machine developed serious brake issues, forcing a retirement. Sadly, bad luck followed both into the Senior, Stefano retiring due to clutch failure and Marco with a broken gearbox.

The Italian Paton company, after many victories in the MGP with its 8 valve 500 twin, decided to enter the Lightweight TT with a brand new street bike, the S1 with Michael Rutter aboard. Riding as a member of the Ian Lougher Racing Team, he achieved a magnificent third place.

We really hope that Stefano and Marco will have more luck next year; when, hopefully, they will be joined on the start line by Alessandro Polita, multi Italian Superbike and 2006 FIM Superstock Cup Champion along with 2015 Hill Climb Champion, Francesco Curinga. If he is able to get a competitive machine, Tommaso Totti is interested in moving from the MGP to the TT. Much progress has been made by Tommaso during the 2015 IoM road race season on the Daryl Blake Construction's Kawasaki ZX6R with fine results at the Post-TT and Southern 100 meetings along with a 17th position in the Senior MGP.

We hope other Italian pilots will take part in future TTs; TT Supporters' Club of Italy is always available to assist those who want to realise their dream of racing around the Mountain Course.

Pier Ortalda



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Craig Neve

Craig's plan for 2015 was to leave the British Championship, having had little success, and a financial battle with uncompetitive machinery, deciding instead to ride Thundersport GB in the Superstock Championship on a Kawasaki ZX10-R. This move should give him TV coverage, thus pleasing his sponsors and prepare him for his main priority, 'between the hedges' – the NW200 and MGP beckoned.

Riding Dave McKenzie's, Callmac Scaffolding Kawasaki he came away from the first Thundersport round, held at Brands, with 1st and 3rd - second in the championship, brilliant. On to Donington, with a superstar in the field; Craig explains, "Michael Dunlop was testing the Yamaha R1M. I was involved in a four man breakaway, myself on the only superstock, the others on super-

bikes using slicks and, as I was on the control superstock tyre, it was important to save my rear until the last three laps. I was having a great time, Dunlop's bike was the quickest thing I've seen but every single lap he would park it mid corner and I would nearly run into him having to stop the bike so much so, I kept losing all my exit speed. In second place on lap 11 going into Coppice, I lined up the rider in front, hoping to get a good drive and pass him on the brakes into Roberts' Chicane. Unfortunately, he missed a gear, I ran straight into the back of him, flat out in 5th gear which forced me off the bike, the result being that I went all the way down the straight on my backside. Badly burnt, battered and with an arm injury which troubled me for several months, it was a visit to Grimsby Hospital."

Snetterton for the third round and needing to claw back some championship points, Craig suffered with pins and needles in the fingers of his clutch hand... so he did well to claim two runner-up spots.

It was now time to make his first journey to Ireland for his NW200 debut... Craig continues, "my aim was to learn the circuit, have a good time, so setting me up for next year. I got to ride the circuit in wet and dry conditions which helped the learning process – the place was mind boggling! My bikes were absolutely faultless enabling me to finish 21st in the Superstock and 20th in the Supersport on my CBR600, excellent preparation for 2016."

Back home to Cadwell, but disappointingly Craig found himself two seconds off the pace after qualifying. He did get a reasonable start in Race 1, had the leaders in sight, when, as the man himself describes, "I passed another rider on the exit of the chicane, tipped into the left of the bottom of the Mountain and he hit me from behind on my rear exhaust, bending it 90 degrees to the right. This forced me to run on; I then had to crash on the wet grass to avoid hitting the tyres. On stripping the bike down in the paddock and starting it up, there was a rattling sound so my dad dropped the link pipe off... we found the other rider's clutch lever which had been snapped clean in half – he must have hit me with some force as it went straight down my exhaust pipe!" Sadly, an old problem resurfaced in Craig's second outing, the wrist letting him down with the dreaded pins and needles and dead fingers coming into play, but he did roll home in 3rd place.

Physiotherapy and acupuncture in his wrist was the order of day prior to Oulton, in the hope of establishing the cause of the

problem, fixing it or at least preventing its reoccurrence again before the end of the season. Sadly, this didn't prove to be the case, "I was up with the leaders until lap 10 of 14, feeling I had a good chance of victory, but then I struggled to grip the bar properly, so settled for 3rd. I decided to go down a different route and see some other doctors before Rockingham."

Craig continues... "before the weekend, I saw my GP who gave me a cortisone injection, hopefully to reduce the swelling and inflammation. Basically, if I still had a problem, then it wasn't carpal tunnel syndrome and if the injection made the pain less, then it was – I could have an operation to fix this. No problem during qualifying, but if it's going to rear its ugly head it would be in the race. After 3 laps of the race, I got into 2nd place, feeling really strong, starting to make inroads, but then I tipped into a left hander, losing the front, destroying the bike as it went end over end – frame, forks, wheels, pretty much the lot! The Manx was just around the corner and also, I was no further on knowing about my wrist."

Craig actually fancied having a go at the UGP, but this was put on hold to build

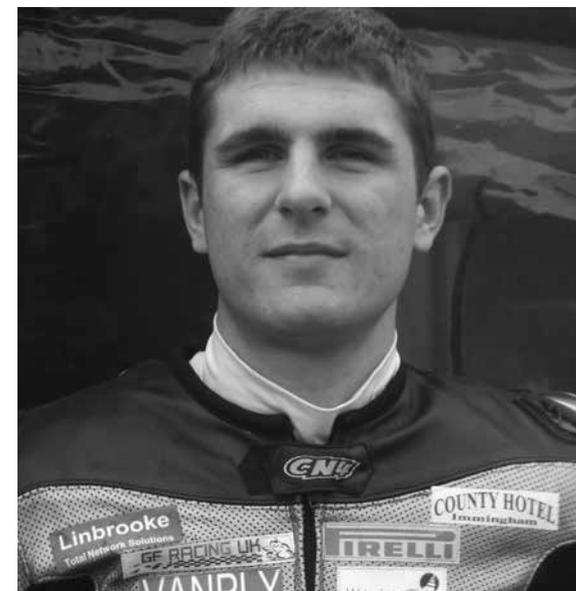


Photo courtesy Sally Bly.

a 750 for the Classic TT... so it was for both elements of the Festival of Motorcycling he would set off to the Island with the basic aim of completing as many laps as possible. The plan was to race his trusty CBR600 in the Junior and Senior, a loaned Honda VFR400 NC30, totally standard with some Maxton suspension for the Lightweight and the Classic 750. Craig continues, "my dad, former MGP racer, Andy and myself were meticulously prepping three bikes, but several promised parts didn't materialise particularly for the 750; we were running out of time but, finally the day before departure we ran the Classic on the dyno only for it to make a hell of a whining noise, so after a few hours attempting to diagnose the problem, we decided to leave it behind as we still had bits to complete on the 400 and 600, pack the truck up and make it to Heysham,"

Obviously, disappointing, but the Neve family was actually cheered by the news that close friend, Lee McKenzie had secured some extra financial help with IoM business, Ferncroft Environmental and Rob Creese from Central Windows, Grimsby, becoming involved with Rob also being able to assist for the two weeks on the Island... without all this, they might have had to cancel the whole trip.

Early practice was limited – Saturday cancelled, Monday one circuit then the red flags came out as Craig was approaching QB on his 600, then another cancella-

tion on Tuesday. Craig continues... "On Wednesday I got one lap on each bike, the 600 was mint, the 400 sweet but slow, or it felt it anyway after the 600; I felt myself getting more comfy with the circuit – I just needed more laps!" Between then and his first race, Craig managed seven more laps, felt happy and was eager to race.

Craig, away at number 33 in Junior made a smooth, fast start in perfect weather conditions reaching Crosby flat in 6th; he continues the lap in his own words... "I felt really good, having a great run through out the Laurel Bank and Glen Helen sections; I remember thinking, I'm really looking forward to Cronk-y-Voddy, one of my favourite bits... but, I tipped into Sarah's Cottage losing the front on a white line, still damp from the rain which had fallen before the race. I picked it up on my knee, ran straight into the barrier, the bike getting wedged in between two trees – I went down an embankment. I couldn't believe what happened, but felt very lucky not to be hurt, but gutted to have wasted the opportunity to do 4 laps... and 4 laps of learning."

Craig was checked over by medics at the scene, but sent to hospital by helicopter as a precaution; the examination by nurses at Nobles was completed within half an hour – Craig continues... "I wasn't sure where the hospital and the circuit were in relation to each other; I needed to get back to the Grandstand asap to practise on the

little bike. When I came out of Nobles, a woman stopped and kindly offered me a lift as she said she was local and knew the way back. I borrowed her phone, contacted my dad, asking him to get the 400 ready. We got as close as we could to the Grandstand, from where I ran, fully kitted and helmet in hand just in time to have a drink, compose myself and enjoy the next two laps of the best track on the planet, making sure I did a better job than on my last lap and learn from my mistakes!"

Friday arrived with the Lightweight first, an event Craig was really looking forward to as the bike had never missed a beat. It had a lot of torque from low down in the revs, making it a real pleasure to ride, plus he believed it helped him learn the circuit at a slower speed. What of his expectations? "I had always been in the top 10 in practice and although we were 15mph down on the Sulby speed trap, I wasn't going to let that bother me."

...and so to the race – "Fantastic! After lap one I was 8th; my lads did a really good pit stop, getting me away smoothly. I'd had a really good run, learning more every lap and I didn't want to see the chequered flag! I finished 5th with a speed of 104.7mph but was certain it could have been faster as I was held up so much by the 650s which were so difficult to pass. I headed down the return road with a big smile on my face and was really looking forward to the Senior, putting Wednesday's troubles behind me and doing a good job to end the fortnight."

The Senior started after only a short break from the end of the Lightweight – but Craig couldn't wait to get going as there's nothing like holding the 600, which had been fully repaired after its practice excursion at Sarah's Cottage... so, it was flat



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10 Years Ago

out all the way down Bray Hill. Craig takes up the story of the race: "Conditions were perfect; I kept thinking, enjoy it as these are your last four laps until next year! I made a really good start again, the lads having done a brilliant job in preparing the machine. I caught the rider who started 20 seconds in front of me at Ginger Hall, but couldn't get past him until we got to Joey's on the Mountain as I just didn't see a safe opportunity to do so.

I was now chasing down the next guy – this was brilliant; I got to the end of lap one, wonderful, another lap with my favourite section – from the Start to Greeba Castle.. I mean, what's not to like... its just flat out!

I remember looking at my dash at Crosby jump, checking the temp and making sure all was ok and it was, the little CBR felt like it was flying! I was about to roll for Greeba Castle when I lost about 3000 Revs, the power just went... I couldn't believe it, the thing just felt so flat, gutless in fact. I rolled through the Laurel Bank section thinking that I'll have to pull over as the temperature was at 112 degrees... then water started spewing out all over me. Ironically, I pulled in at Sarah's Cottage which, jokingly a marshal renamed 'Craig's Cottage'. I could see the funny side, but we now had to strip the bike and understand what occurred and why. That was my MGP over for another year!

Craig achieved a standing start lap 115.7mph, an improvement on his 112mph in 2014, so who knows what that lap two could have been! He achieved a goal by going faster, completing more laps than the previous year, although, realistically he could have done more, knowing that one or two errors put paid to this. Another posi-

tive was that he didn't have a problem with his wrist in the IoM, which, much like the NW200 is a different kind of riding; anyway, attention will be given to it during the winter so he'll be able to return fully 100% fit next season.

Craig would now like to move to the TT as there is more opportunity for track time and he'll be in the company of experienced riders from whom he can learn so much more. The man himself is quite realistic, "I appreciate that I'll need some decent financial backing as it is a big step up and bigger financial commitment than my 2015 season, but I feel there's so much more to come from me. I also plan on doing the Classic TT on my own Kawasaki ZXR750; I've unfinished business as I was unable to ride this bike in 2015 and this should also mean I double up on my laps around the course and so hurry up my progression. I am going to put my entry in for the TT and even if I can't raise the funds to do short circuits as well as the TT next year, I will just do the TT.

Craig would like to thank the following people and businesses for their very valued assistance: Callmac Scaffolding, Flexi Hydraulic Services, Lee Mckenzie, Central Windows Grimsby, Apache Paintwork, Glyn Hinsley, who travelled over from his home in Spain to assist him for the two weeks at the Manx, Wide Range Services (WRS), Beeson Plumbing and Heating, Ideal Boilers and Ferncroft Environmental.

If you would like to support Craig in realising his dream of competing at the TT in 2016 please contact: 07841 837813. We look forward to hearing from Craig in our next issue when he will reveal his 2016 racing plans.

Sally Bly

Let's drift back 10 years and look at what we covered in the Winter 2005 edition of the magazine... well, the two principle 'victims' of competitor based articles actually entered TT 2015. First up was a young Guy Martin, featured in a Q&A sequence...

At what point did you realise you'd achieved your first TT podium position? "I didn't know I'd got in the first three until the marshal pointed me into the Winners' Enclosure, saying P3 + 0. Best feeling in my racing career up to now, not just for me but for the team. It was their first international podium – massive thanks to Johnny, Gareth Robinson, Dad and Uel Duncan." Then addressing the future... **By this time next year, TT 2006 will be over – what are your aims for that event? What about a works contract?** "Got two works contracts in the pot at the moment, but I'll have to sacrifice my engine building for one of them, so I don't think I'll be taking either as I need to build my own engine. That's what it's all about for me, especially at the TT. You need to know what makes a bike tick to get through the six laps. The only results I'm looking for at TT 2006 are wins – you've got to have high hopes and ambition." So, it was an early TT podium for Guy, but, alas, he is still trying to make that 'big step up', having now secured more second and third places combined in the history of TT racing without ever tasting a victory.

In an article entitled 'TT For Tony Thirkill', the now veteran sidecar driver told us of his first practice session in his debut year, 1998, "I thought what the bloody hell am I doing here, we'll never do the qualifying time, as three weeks before I had blown my race engine at Scarborough and I'd gone to a breakers to buy another motor for £200. We put the motor into the chassis, didn't have any time to get it tuned, so we just fitted the race carbs and away we went. Much to my amazement we did the newcomers' time in the first practice. After that we just did all the practice sessions and tried to get faster and then completed the race, all on a £200 motor from a scrap yard." Tony's 2015 TT, alas didn't go to plan as a 'big off' resulted in some quite serious injuries... nevertheless, he intends returning to the saddle – here's hoping we see him at the TT again.

In a Q&A article with David Cretney MHK, Minister of Tourism & Leisure, we addressed a crucial issue concerning the development of the TT... **The TT still clashes with major UK meetings – will the MMCC be negotiating with UK organisers / ACU in an attempt to avoid such clashes in future years?** "We are talking to Stuart Higgs at the MCRCB and Neil Tuxworth has been very helpful in negotiations. We are now in a situation where Mr Higgs realises that the date clash doesn't help anyone, and despite not being a TT fan as such, we are confident that he will work with us going into the future." Discussions were obviously fruitful as we all know where the TT lies in the racing calendar today.

22 year old Manxman, Kevin Brown, in his article, 'Irish Road Meetings – Highly Recommended', described events at the UGP, as a spectator, after a night out in the music bars of Belfast... "The next morning was grim, hung over in a wet tent with no pillow isn't much fun. On cleaning my teeth, courtesy of an outside tap somewhere in the paddock, I was literally 3 foot away from Adrian Archibald's bike as it was being scrutineered – a strange experience!"

That's all for now about 2005, but the Summer 2016 issue should see the return of our long term IoM Correspondent, Derek Clague, who is reactivating his computer to relive the life and times on the IoM in the pre-war years.



Stuart Watson captures Tony Thirkill and passenger, Dean Kilkenny in action at this year's TT.

An unsung hero of the 1966 TT, Chris Conn took third place in both the Junior and Senior. Courtesy FoTtofinders.



The Seamen's Strike

Ian Huntly recalls the events of 1966... I booked as usual to go to the TT but the unthinkable happened...

A strike caused the TT to be postponed from its usual dates to late August, just before the MGP. So when June arrived, the bodyclock, finely tuned after years of going to the Island, still woke me up early each morning as if for practice. We wandered round in circles, totally lost. However we rebooked for the new dates, aiming for two glorious weeks of practice and racing, food and drink. I was enamoured of a nurse at the time and was trying to get her to come over with our group to the romantic Island...I, er, refrained from mentioning the motorbikes of course! We all worked at the same hospital, but most of our hurriedly formed TT party belonged to different departments.

However, as we neared August my boss's wife announced that the imminent birth of her first baby could be slap-bang in the middle of the newly dated TT period, so we decided to go for practice week but, in turn, promised to be ready to return at short notice so the boss could be present at the birth if this darned woman produced. I would also have to be in charge of the lab in his absence. On a glorious Sunday morning, we took off from Newcastle Airport and had a lovely flight during which we could see the Irish Sea far below. Well, for a Dakota it was "far below" in 1966... and it was through the gaps in the floorboards, if I remember correctly!

I had booked our group into a super sea front hotel with a view across the bay and good food. We had actually taken over the whole hotel in other years so our host, Mrs Gawne, was pleased to have us again. We went to every practice and every function that first week and then

the girlfriend, a nurse, had to return for night duty. We flew back on the Saturday and made a phone call to be told that there was no sign of the stork---yet !

I was sitting in the flat alone after delivering my girlfriend to her ward duty, when two friends called in to see if we had enjoyed the practice week. They stated that they were packed and were going over for a "long weekend" to see Mad Sunday and some racing - did I want to go with them? I grabbed some clean underwear and leapt into their car. Over to Carlisle then down to Liverpool, and I arrived back on the Island for a second time before most of my pals had missed me. Luckily the hotel could allocate us a room where we could shower and change, but it was a bit small for three blokes! We returned after the Monday's racing and I was back to work on the Tuesday. The girl friend had been on nights and had not missed me either!

Still no sign of a baby so I put five days work into three because I had been notified that the local Motorcycle Club, which was running a bus trip had had two last minute cancellations. We would set out on the Thursday night to go and see the Friday's races and would return after the racing to be back on Saturday in time for breakfast. So on Thursday at 7pm on the dot, I, and a friend who I had drafted in at the last minute, one who had never seen a motorcycle race ever, boarded the hired coach. I was on my way again, this time across the moors and down to Liverpool, to catch the midnight boat, for the third visit to the TT in a fortnight.

We watched the 50cc and 500cc races from the top of Bray Hill and returned home during the night, arriving home for breakfast, a soak in a hot bath and then take a short but welcome kip before being dragged out to help with the weekend shopping!

We all went out to a big evening 'do' on the Saturday and it was a real struggle to stay awake! The friend I had persuaded was a drummer in the band which was playing at the club. The baby eventually arrived on the following Tuesday, so it was quite a close call

1966 will forever be remembered as the year of the Seamen's Strike, but I bet there were very few people who made the trip three times in one year.



Swiss favourite, Luigi Taveri at Governor's Bridge, 1966 TT. Courtesy FoTtofinders.



Ivan Lintin... was told to "make the dream happen" ... and he did just that, winning the 2015 Lightweight TT.

'Ivan Lintin Moves into the Top Paddock' was the title of the article in our summer issue, so what was life like there? "It's where everyone wants to be, only the top 20-25 teams are there, it's far busier with people walking around, but being amongst the top riders and professional set ups was a fantastic feeling for me having risen through the ranks from the MGP. From working out of a van and caravan all those years ago to now having the RC Express team behind me is an amazing change; it's also a lot nearer the holding area so there's less walking up and down the paddock! However, I still stayed in the paddock in my lorry I used in previous years, so had the normal paddock life before and after each session."

Ivan made the 'top paddock', but would he make the top of the podium? The NW200, as well as being a high class meeting in its own right, it's often regarded as a preparation for the TT. However, RC Express was conspicuous by its absence...

Ivan expands, "there was a disagreement with the organisers which was a shame, but again the weather wasn't brilliant although it would have been nice to get some super fast 190 mph plus set up out of the way before the TT. We did, however, manage three track days that week to help set up for the Island."

In comparison to previous years, less time was spent on machine prep by Ivan with RC Express having its own mechanics working on the bikes from week to week; Danny Horne has been chief mechanic at every meeting with Adam Nowell and Jon Dixon working at various meetings throughout season.

Four machines... a busy practice week loomed... "it went reasonably well, losing some time due to weather, something you always expect at TT, but it was tough to first, get every bike qualified, then get a good set up." He ended up with only two laps on each of the 600 and stocker, then three on the superbike at start of race

week. Thursday evening presented its problems, "we had a gearbox fault on the twin at the end of Cronk-y-Voddy, meaning I had to ride back on open roads to get back out on the stocker, only for its fuel pump to fail by Ballacraigne. No completed laps, a lot of time spent on the Manx roads, but not the right ones."

The Superbike TT was first up, sporting allocated number 22, Ivan actually started 23rd with Jamie Hamilton and Ryan Kneen of the non-seeded riders recording faster practice times and so setting off before him. However, there wasn't a successful outcome as Ivan explains, "because of the limited practice and, to be honest, the limited time I've had on a full blown superbike, I went into the race with a very open mind... just feel my way into the race and go from there. I can't exactly remember where I was running after the first lap, but then the clutch started to slip in very odd places so I stopped at Ballaugh Bridge to make adjustments, but it didn't cure it. When I came into the Pits I told the team, so we retired there and then. On closer inspection, it was actually the brass bush in the clutch lever that had tightened up, causing the lever not to return each time I pulled it in. We had fitted a new one

for the race and that was the part that failed. A two minute strip down and clean up and it will probably be ok for the next 10 TTs!

Remarkable consistency in the two races for supersport machines, with 12th positions in each, the second being completed fifteen seconds quicker than the first at an average of 121.699mph. The 600cc machine was a new venture for the team and was tuned for reliability rather than outright speed, so, as Ivan continues, "I was very pleased to finish both races and in 12th place, but they were boring affairs, particularly Race 1 as I saw absolutely no one; in the second race I really tried my hardest to get hooked onto the back of Dave Johnson who started 10 seconds in front of me but it was not to be, having another lonely race seeing only Michael Rutter who started 14, passing him on the Mountain on lap three."

Another solid performance in the Superstock Race, 14th at 124.773mph, in what was probably his best run on the bigger bikes; Ivan analyses, "I did my fastest lap ever of just over 127mph, feeling I could go faster as I got more used to the bike. I had to start a lot deeper in the pack than I had hoped - 29th - after not posting a brilliant time in practice, so did meet some people throughout the race. That's



Ivan at Brandywell aboard his superbike,
courtesy Mike Hammonds.



Ivan and his dad, Raymond prepare the raceware, courtesy Mike Hammonds.

the nature of not being a seeded rider on the big bikes and concentrating more on other machines during practice... rules are rules and proves that if I don't get seeded again I need to push on in practice to get in that special lap."

Friday 12th June 2015 will be a day to remember in the life of Ivan Lintin... the Lightweight TT. Starting one of the favourites, did he think he could better the record speeds of last year's winner, Dean Harrison? "Yes, I knew I could run at least at Dean's 2014 pace, but I thought it would

be down to how much faster the others wanted to go. So, when the flag dropped it was head down. I was getting signals from Tom Parish at Sulby Bridge and a sponsor of mine, Ian Moffitt at the Gooseneck so I could tell how the race was developing. On last lap I got a couple more, some lads out for senior boarding giving a helping hand. I think every board had P1, but it was never a massive gap. +2 then +4 back down to +3; it was close."

Ryan Farquhar was Ivan's main rival, the pair starting ten seconds apart at numbers 5 and 6 respectively. Ivan would know that the Irishman was in contention... "I had worked out that Ryan was going well because he started 10 seconds in front of me and if I was P1 and hadn't seen him, he was in the mix. I caught him by Glen Helen on lap 2 and was behind him when his bike stopped so I knew that was one rival gone. From then on I didn't know who I was racing with, so just kept plugging away, keeping an eye on pit boards. Not many times in your life will you get chance

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Ivan at Castletown Corner, Billown during the pre-TT Classic, courtesy Mike Hammonds.

to win a TT so I need to make it happen... and I did. My chief mechanic Danny Horne said to me before the off 'make the dream happen'.

The dream did, in fact, become reality... after following the traditional route via the MGP, Ivan Lintin had won a TT race. What was it like being directed into the Winner's Enclosure? "Being signalled into P1 was a great feeling, the team was going mental, but I was more relieved. I turned off the engine and started to celebrate; it was more overwhelming than anything, but a good feeling. Now I obviously want to win another but, if I'm never fortunate enough to do so, I won't be bothered, as my name is on the trophy and that's a great feeling." He added, "36 seconds off the race record, impressive for a shopping bike you can buy for £5000 – we turn them into racing monsters and do what we do on them"

An hour or so later, Ivan was back on the start line... the Senior TT. He had just experienced a 'high' of racing on the Mountain Course, he was now about to witness a 'low'. Ivan explains, "I went through Jamie Hamilton's crash I would say 20/30 seconds after it had happened. It was carnage and because of where it was situated, no one had reached him. I am a fireman

with trauma training, so thought if he really needed me I could have been some help to him. However, by the time I had stopped and found somewhere to lean bike marshals were there, so I decided to ride on as you never really want to see the nasty side to your sport if you can help it. I would help anyone if I could." With others, Ivan was stuck out on circuit until travelling marshals came to collect them. On his return to the Grandstand, he told the RC Express team what had happen and that he wasn't really keen on restarting as his head wasn't in it. The team was fine with his decision, believing it good to admit his feelings.

The Ulster GP didn't go to plan. Qualifying went well, fastest ever times being posted on the big bikes; Thursday's Dundrod Superbike race saw an 8th with a lap of 131+mph, so he was really looking forward to Saturday. First up was the Superstock – good start, away with the pack, moving his way up to 5th. However as Ivan continues, "what I didn't know was a pin prick hole had developed in my oil filter, causing a fine mist to cover the rear of the bike. Supposedly the marshals were trying to black flag me but I didn't see them and then, at Island Bend on the last lap I crashed because of the oil. I was initially

knocked out, so after a few hours in Belfast Royal Hospital it was the long ride home in the van."

Ivan finally joined the club of TT riders who make the second IoM visit in a year to race in the Classic TT, riding a ZXR 750 for Dave Dean and a special 4 valve G50 of Brain Richards. Ivan considers the ZXR very similar to the 600 he rides at the TT with respect to speed and weight, brilliant to ride, but as they operate on carburettors instead of fuel injection there are always mapping issues.

Good times in practice were achieved, an extra couple of mph could be found come race day, but it wasn't to be as Ivan explains, "as I set off the bike was missing and clearly wasn't running right. I was going to retire at end of lap 1 but Gary Johnson came past so I stuck with him, thinking to myself that I could have a fun time racing him on the road, but at Kerrow-moor on lap 2 the bike stopped completely, the problem revolving around plugs and coil sticks"

The G50 was the first proper classic bike Ivan had ridden and that for only one day's testing at Cadwell Park prior to the

IoM meeting. Practice presented its problems – limited time and a blown engine. Come race day, he just wanted to get the bike home for a finish which if it did, would be double the amount of laps completed than in practice. How did it go? "I set off steadily, felt good, learning with every mile, but I knew it would be a race of attrition so I just kept plodding on. I think at the end of the first lap it was P20 then lap 2, 17th. By the end I was 8th, getting a replica. A mega result for the new project with both the team and me being very happy."

Although he just failed to retain the Scarborough Gold Cup, Ivan again had a tremendous Oliver's Mount season, reckoning a win on the superbike is on the cards for next season. At the time of writing, preparations are being made for a trip to Macau – so to what extent does he consider himself a professional rider? "I am still far from a professional bike racer; by default I'm probably semi-professional because I am not amateur. I still hold down two full time jobs, the main one being a maintenance fitter and I am also a retained fireman." Ivan has not lost touch with his grass root supporters, hosting three events

It's now a Time Trial

"Can you beat John McGuinness's Lap Record?" Well, the answer is, "yes, you can!" As you know the TT Races have been simulated in board game format – invented and patented by Ian Huntly as long ago as 1978, it has been updated to cope with the current ultra-fast speeds!

What you possibly don't know is that Ian has been forced to change the name of the game... yes, that's correct – the TT is now a registered brand name and subject to copyright, so Ian's game has been renamed "Time Trial".

The game is obtainable from e-bay or direct from Ian on 0118 926 5748. Ian donates a proportion of the profits from the game to the TTSC, the rest is used to assist riders fulfil their road racing dreams.

Ian's chosen rider for 2015 was Sandor Bitter, who sadly died from natural causes at home in his native Hungary. Injuries received at the NW200 caused Sandor to miss this year's TT.



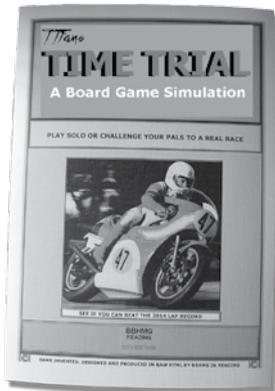
Mounted on his supersport machine leaving Kirk Michael, courtesy Stuart Watson.

in his local, the Nags Heads in Bardney – this has gone up from two last season to three this as many followers don't get the chance to see him on the track as he now doesn't compete in so many short circuit meetings.

On to 2016... more of the same with the RC Express squad, probably early season testing in Spain with the Scarborough Spring Cup soon coming around followed by the now, traditional season of pure road racing... Ivan's final thoughts: "I have really enjoyed my first season with RC Express and feel in a very strong place

going into next year, really looking forward to the challenges ahead. I made a big leap forward in my pace during this season so hopefully that will continue and I'll be fighting for more wins and podiums in all classes, and I should gel more with the big bikes and not be known so much as a small bike rider."

The dream really did happen – a TT win; congratulations to Ivan on a wonderful season. Good luck for the challenges which lie ahead in 2016, particularly those in the 'big bike' classes.



2016 Isle of Man TT

Provisional Qualifying & Race Schedule

Saturday 28th May:	18.20	Solo Newcomers' Speed Controlled lap
	18.25	Sidecar Newcomers' Speed Controlled lap
	18.40	Lightweight & Supersport + Newcomers (All Classes)
Monday 30th May:	18.20 - 19.50	Superbike/ Superstock/ Supersport + Newcomers (All Classes except Lightweight)
	19.55 - 20.50	Sidecars
Tuesday 31st May:	18.20 - 19.25	Superbike/ Superstock/ Supersport + Newcomers (All Classes except Lightweight)
	19.25 - 19.55	Lightweight & Supersport + Newcomers (All Classes)
	20.00 - 20.50	Sidecars
Wednesday 1st June:	18.20 - 19.50	Superbike/ Superstock/ Supersport + Newcomers (All Classes except Lightweight)
	19.55 - 20.50	Sidecars
Thursday 2nd June:	18.20 - 19.25	Superbike/Superstock/Supersport (Newcomers All Classes except Lightweight)
	19.25 - 19.55	Lightweight & Supersport + Newcomers (All Classes)
	20.00 - 20.50	Sidecars
Friday 3rd June:	18.20 - 19.45	Superbike/Superstock/Supersport + Newcomers (All Classes except Lightweight)
	19.50 - 20.35	Sidecars
	20.40	TT Zero 1 lap qualifying
Saturday 4th June:	11.00	RST Superbike TT Race (6 laps)
	14.00	Sure Sidecar TT Race 1 (3 laps)
	15.30	Superstock/ Supersport/ Lightweight practice (2 laps)
Monday 6th June:	10.45	Monster Energy Supersport TT Race 1 (4 laps)
	12.25	Sidecar qualifying (2 laps)
	14.15	RL360 Superstock TT Race (4 laps)
	16.05	Lightweight qualifying (1 lap)
	16.25	TT Zero qualifying (1 lap)
Wednesday 8th June:	10.45	Monster Energy Supersport TT Race 2 (4 laps)
	12.25	Sidecar qualifying (1 lap)
	14.00	Bennett's Lightweight TT Race (4 laps)
	15.45	Senior TT qualifying (1 lap)
	16.20	TT Zero Race (1 lap)
Friday 10th June:	10.15	Sure Sidecar TT Race 2 (3 laps)
	12.30	PokerStars Senior TT Race (6 laps)



A FAMILY AFFAIR

You may recall that two years ago, this magazine carried an article on the French sidecar racing team consisting of Didier Siro, wife and passenger H el ene, mechanic Eric, and last but not least, their children, Yann, now 14 and Gwendoline 10. It centred on their frustrating practice week, their challenge to qualify and their eventual successful race week with a pair of finishers' plaques apiece as their reward. They did say they'd return to the TT, but the cost for a family being away for the best part of three weeks meant no TT in 2014, but this year...

With the finance aspect in mind, it was time to meet up again and discuss exactly how and what they plan for their foreign adventure. First of all, the racing side... both Didier and H el ene need six signatures to get their Mountain License. No problem – they contest the French

Championship which has seven rounds, two of which are in April and May, so that's box number one ticked! Three engines are 'prepped' for the season so, hopefully, the two early meetings will sort out any obvious problems.

From their Ploermel home in Brittany, it's a fair trek to any of the three southern France tracks, so loading up the box van trailer for a long racing weekend is a smooth and well-practised operation. But when it comes to food for five, for 19 days, that's a different matter! And so, at least two dozen sealed, airtight containers are brought: curries, chillies, stews, p ate, beef and chicken dishes, etc with pancakes, cr epes, omelettes often on the lunch menu. Fresh fruit and veg is only 10-15 minutes walk away, and they bring their own wine with them!

And now, the 'kids'. Like many



Courtesy Stuart Watson.

British sidecar racing teams, the kids come too! They grow up in the racing paddocks and over the years have contributed much to the unique 'family' atmosphere amongst the sidecar teams. But isn't there a school issue? In this country, parents in many areas are fined if they take their children out of school during term time. Fortunately for the Siro family, the French government is a little more open-minded. Just inform the school in advance when you're going away and they provide workbooks with basic, and some not-so-basic numeracy and literacy exercises. When I visited, Gwendoline was doing long division by two-digit numbers, with no calculator! The other requirement was to complete a diary, so she had already written up

her visits to Peel, Port St Mary, Castle-town and The Sound where she'd particularly enjoyed the seals! Yann being older, now helps dad with the bike, he has his own MX bike at home! Bring their modern scooters with them, point out the skateboard park behind the paddock, definitely bring their iPads and you've got it sorted!

And now to some racing! As we'll all recall, the start of the week for the sidecars was a washout, so come Wednesday, nice blue skies, every one was fired up, although it was decidedly chilly at Creg by 8.15. Two laps for Team Siro, the faster one at 94.60mph better than their best 2013 speed, so a promising start. Thursday was similar weather-wise, but again very cold once

A real family affair, courtesy Michael Hammonds.



the powers-that-be let the chairs out. It was noticeable at Brandywell how hard the passengers work, the drivers only having to select the right line! But all was not well with our pair. H el ene was finding the Ballaugh to Ramsey section particularly difficult, bumpy in places, very tiring on the arms. Just the one lap, at 92+ but three laps in the bag, qualification 99% certain. Some physio on Friday, and off we go again... but alas, only as far as Glentramman. H el ene 'tapped' Didier and they stopped – her arms aching to the extent she feared losing her hold completely.

Back in the paddock, much discussion and a decision to make. Not one they wanted to make but ultimately an easy one. They would withdraw from the races, family responsibilities coming first. They will continue to race – and were back on track at Magny-Cours at

the end of June – but their TT adventures were over.

So, not the usual ending for an article in this magazine but one that gives an insight into an aspect of the TT which is usually ignored. Many thanks to the Siros for allowing me a glimpse of their paddock life. For years to come, they can look with pride at their TT Finishers' Awards, something most of us can only dream about.

John Newton



The Siros fly at Ballaugh; sadly, they didn't make the start line.

Ian Hutchinson regained the TT Supporters' Club Trophy – a silver tray on its plinth for his sterling efforts in the Supersport Races. Awarded for the best aggregate time across the two races which compose this class, Hutchinson won both, each time with Bruce Anstey his closest rival with a combined time of 21.74 seconds in arrears. Race average speeds for our friend from Yorkshire were remarkably consistent – 125.45mph followed by 125.80mph.

Information about the other silverware 'sponsored' by the Club – the Susan Jenness Trophy – is covered elsewhere in this magazine along with news about the Frank Cope Trophy... but it's well worth looking at the other Special Awards presented at TT 2015...

...so, it's back to **Ian Hutchinson** who was a most worthy winner of the Joey Dunlop TT Solo Championship Trophy [plus an award of £10,000] with 111 points, a fair way ahead of Bruce Anstey, 80, and James Hillier, 72. **Daniel Cooper** took the Privateers' Cup [97 points] ahead of Jamie Hamilton, 70, and Russ Mountford, 53. With two wins, the **Birchall brothers** were presented with the Sidecar Championship [plus £2000] ahead of the Holden / Sayle and Harrison / Aylott combinations. Although not a winner, **Dave Molyneux** together with his passenger, **Ben Binns** received the Jock Taylor Trophy for the fastest lap of the meeting, 116.785mph – a new record.

Moving onto newcomers... **Derek McGee** received the Vernon Cooper Trophy as the solo newcomer with the highest placed finish - 11th in the Lightweight. The equivalent to a sidecar driver – the Peter Chapman Trophy – went to **Lionel Mansuy**, 24th in Race 2, and that for a passenger – the Dave Wells Trophy – was gratefully received by **Matty Ramsden**, 8th also in Race 2.

Although **Guy Martin** has yet to taste victory at the TT, he did receive the Joe Craig Trophy for the best performance by a British competitor on a solo motorcycle of British manufacture being adjudged as a percentage of the winner's time (excluding the TT Zero Race). Guy was 3rd on a Triumph in Supersport 2.

The Martin Finnegan Trophy [plus £1000] went to **Michael Dunlop** as the solo competitor from Ireland attaining the fastest overall lap speed during the races and the Gavin Lee Trophy was presented to **Conor Cummins** as the competitor, resident in the Isle of Man, with the best finish in the Senior TT.

Regional Representatives

MIDLANDS (Shropshire, Staffs., & W Midlands):

Aston Social Club. First Thursday of the month, (Not June!). See Mrs Rose Hanks, 50 Lyndhurst Road, Birmingham, B24 6QS. Tel: 0121 6863799.

N. WEST (Cumbria, Lancs):

See Dave Davies, 26 St. Marys Avenue, Walton-le-Dale, Preston, PR5 4UE. Tel: 01772 322241.

SCOTLAND:

Leadburn Inn, A701, 12 miles South of Edinburgh. See Mose Hutchinson, 15 Castlelaw Court, Penicuik, Midlothian, EH26 8BS. Tel: 01968 678337.

YORKSHIRE:

Michelle and Phil Harvey, 2 Oak Villas, Rawcliffe Bridge, Near Goole, East Yorkshire, DN14 8NU. Tel 01405 831070. E-mail: pharvey@timloc.co.uk

N. YORKSHIRE:

Stuart Watson. 4 Wood Hill Close, Marton-Cum-Grafton, Boroughbridge, York. YO51 9QP.

ISLE OF MAN:

Brian Rostrom, Gulls Way, Croit-e-Quill Rd, Laxey. Tel: 01624 862011.

BELGIUM:

Clive Burrow. Sint-Catharinastrass, 25 Bus 0002, Kortenberg, Belgium, 3070. Tel 0032 0 27594348. E-Mail: bikerclive@msn.com

FRANCE:

Jean-Michel Prudon, 18 Allee des Saugeys, 71000 Sance, France. Tel. 03 85 29 07 13, e-mail jmprudon@wanadoo.fr.

CANADA:

Harold & Mary Cosgrove, PO Box 793, Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada, L2E 6V6. Tel: 1-905-356-6865. Email: halmar@niagara.com

GERMANY:

Gerti Eppert. Rodelbahn 4, 85614 Kirchseeow, Germany. Tel: 0049 15202031510. E-mail: Gerti.Eppert@gmx.de.

ITALY:

Pier G. Ortalda. Via Colombaro 31, S Sebastiano, Po (Torino) 011 9191516. e-mail ortalda@iveco.com

JAPAN:

Yuki Kobayashi, Yokohama City, Tsuzuki-ku, Fujimigaoka 4-5, 2240051. Tel 81 45 948 0677. E-mail: yukky-rt@nifty.com

NETHERLANDS:

Gert Meulman, Neuheede-Siedlung 22, 26892 Heede, Germany. Tel: 0049 4963906463, E-mail: gert.meulman@gmail.com.

NORTHERN IRELAND:

Eric Olliver, 7 Grange Lodge, Antrim, County Antrim, BT41 1BQ. Tel: 028 94 466393. Mobile: 07977 167680.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND:

Myles Lally, 43 Selskar Avenue Skerries, Co Dublin. Tel: 00353 868232295. E-mail: myles@realroadracing.com

SPAIN:

Peter Flores, Crta de la Costa, 62. Esc B, 1º 4ª. 43840 Salou (Tarragona) Spain. Tel: 00 34 609 346 845 email: peterblue5@hotmail.com

NEW ZEALAND:

Wayne Paul, 12 Atiawa Street, Fitzroy, New Plymouth, New Zealand.

U.S.A.:

Jody Heintzman, 10310 SW 280th Street, Vashon, WA 98070, USA. CF: Wade Boyd, 267 Allison St. S. Francisco, California 94112. Tel: 415 - 239 - 0933. Andy Austin, 10023 Belle Rive Blvd., #606, Jacksonville FL, 32256.

USED POSTAGE STAMPS

We continue to receive many packages of used postage stamps from Club members – your efforts in assisting us to raise money for research into a cure into multiple sclerosis have been amazing...many thanks to all of you; please accept our apologies for not sending individual replies.

... would those sending packages for the first time, please include their names and addresses ...please leave a little bit of the envelope around the stamp thus ensuring that the perforated edge is not damaged

...there have been occasions when the Post Office has not delivered envelopes containing the stamps to us as insufficient postage has been paid; the charge now depends on size as well as weight – anything in excess of 5mm [3/16th"] needs to have a Large Letter 2nd class stamp [there is no need to use First Class Postage]. If the required amount is not paid by the sender, then we have to pay the postage due, PLUS £1...so, please check at the Post Office when sending your packages – thanks.

Once again, thanks ever so much for your help in supporting this worthwhile cause.

Mr and Mrs G W Scott: 40 Bateman Rd, Hellaby, Rotherham, United Kingdom, S66 8HA.

Answers - What can you remember about TT 2015?

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Peter Hickman | 9 Gary Bryan |
| 2 Michael Rutter [3rd], Paton | 10 Stella Maris |
| 3 Michael Dunlop – 132.515mph | 11 Peter Founds |
| 4 16 | 12 Ben Binns – passenger to Dave Molyneux |
| 5 Lee Johnston & Michael Sweeney | 13 Signpost |
| 6 Matt Dix | 14 Delivering pizzas |
| 7 Aki Aalto [passenger to Robert Handcock; 9th position in both races] | 15 Bruce Anstey at the top of Bray Hill, first lap, Supersport Race 1 |
| 8 206mph | 16 Ben Wylie |

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Contact - Glynne Lewis on glynnelewis@sandlands.co.uk