

The History of the South African TT *1920-1979*

by Ken MacLeod

The history of the South African TT can be divided into two parts, not only obviously in terms of time but in terms of the quality of the riders. During the first period, 1920-37, the races attracted South Africa's top riders, several of whom became South African legends as a result of these races. But it also attracted a rider who went on to become one of the sport's all-time legends. However, it has to be said that he hardly lived up to his reputation.

On the other hand the revived South African TT, 1970-79, attracted two of the sport's all time great legends as well as three who went on to achieve this status. The legends certainly did their reputation no harm, while the three legends-to-be also featured prominently and included a SATT winner. The visitors also included a famous British rider who had mixed fortunes.

A trio of legends. From left to right, Kork Ballington, Jock Leyden and Jim Redman, pictured outside the Control Tower at Roy Hesketh circuit before the 1979 (and last) South African TT. Jock's famous cartoons are on display in many parts of the world, including Buckingham Palace, while Jim and Kork are Southern Africa's most successful road racing motorcyclists with ten world championships between them. Image by Ken MacLeod.



The first races, organised by the Natal Motor Cycle and Car Club (NMCC) were held on July 31st and August 2nd 1920. The three races, the Junior TT for machines 225-500cc, the Intermediate TT for machines 501-750cc and the Senior TT for machines 751-unlimited were held over five laps of a 28.5 mile (45.6km) circuit covering Pietermaritzburg, Camperdown and Thornville totalling 142.5 miles (228kms). They were run on a handicap basis.

Nine riders were entered for the Junior TT on Saturday July 31, but this was reduced to eight when South Africa's undisputed top rider, Percy Flook, withdrew. But the Pretoria legend did add his name to the ranks of SATT winners in later years. Limit man Jack Booth (Triumph) lasted two and a half laps before falling and the second man, J.T. Ford (Royal Ruby) three laps before retiring with an overheating engine. The third man, local star Billy Mills, like Flook on a Douglas, put up what the Natal Witness described as the pluckiest performance of the race. From the start the rough going played "havoc" with the bike's frame, with Mills falling heavily twice. In the end sheer determination and a fair amount of iron wire saw him bring the "Duggie" home second. The next four: Pete Laurence, A.B. Morcom, F. Marie and J. van der Merwe all retired and scratch man Fletcher Owen (Indian) covered the five laps unscathed, except for a broken oil pipe. He described the race on the rough circuit as being tougher than the Johannesburg-Durban race.

Result:

1st F.Owen 500cc Indian 4 hrs 6 mins 30s at 34.60 mph, (55.36 kmph)

2nd W.A.F.Mills 348cc

3rd Douglas 4 hrs 46 mins at 29.89mph (47.82 kmph)

Six riders faced the starter in the Intermediate TT. This time Owen and Lawrence were the limit men, followed by Charlie Young and F.Daugherty, Tom Spargo and Len Shackelford. Young came through to win comfortably.

Result.:

1st C.H.Young 500cc Triumph 3hrs 37mins at 39.36 mph (62.97 kmph),

2nd F.Owen 500cm3 Indian 3hrs 55 mins at 36.36mph (58.17 kmph)

3rd L.Shackelford 500cc Indian 4 hrs 36 mins at 30.96mph (49.53 kmph).

Five riders lined up for Monday afternoon's Senior TT. This time Young led for the first two laps before parking his Triumph with a holed piston.

Bobby Blackburn (20), on a big Harley-Davidson, took over and romped away from the field to win by over an hour. Fowida jumped his Indian 27 feet across a tram crossing at Alexandra Road and the intrepid local favourite, Mills, the limit man on his little "Duggie", had completed only four laps when he was stopped by officials because of fading light. Daugherty fell heavily and broke a leg. Bobby Blackburn's comfortable win was not without incident. At Umlaas Road some spectators threw stones "of an uncomfortable size and velocity" at him, smashing his chain case. The Natal Witness described Blackburn as a future great racer. Sadly it was not to be.

Although he had won the Durban-Ladysmith-Durban race - regarded as tougher even than the D-J because it was held over one day and the Natal 100, and followed this win by winning the D-J race from scratch (the only person to do so) he was killed in a road accident at Inchanga while returning from a fun outing to the Natal capital in April 1922.

Result:

1st R.Blackburn 1000cc Harley-Davidson 3 hrs 15 mins 30 secs at 43.68 mph (69.88 kmph),

2nd D.Boyce 750cc Indian 4 hrs 17 mins at 33.24mph (53.18 kmph),

3rd J.Fowida 750cc Indian 4 hrs 25 mins at 32.22mph (51.55 kmph)

The 1921 races were staged over the same weekend (July 30 and August 1) on the same course. This time only two races were held: the junior for machines up to 500cm3 and the Intermediate for machines 501-unlimited cm3 two days later. The junior saw Young win by 23 minutes, but in the Intermediate he was harried throughout by Len Cohen until the latter's rear stand broke and he crashed. Nevertheless he was still only three minutes behind Young at the finish. Young won the trophy outright and Cohen, relatively unknown until then, made his mark. With two of South Africa's future legends ahead of him, Blackburn had to be content with third. Incidentally, the Young-Cohen battle was repeated in the 1930 Natal 100 - the last over open roads - with Cohen prevailing by two minutes.

Results: Junior TT.

1st C.H.Young 500cc Triumph 3 hrs 34 mins at 39.9 mph (63.84 kmph)

2nd W.A.F.Mills 348cm3 Douglas,

3rd George Taylor B.S.A.

Intermediate TT.

1st C.H.Young 500cc Triumph 3 hrs 32 mins at 40.3 mph (64.48 kmph)

2nd L.R.Cohen 500cc Triumph

3rd R.Blackburn 1000cc Harley-Davidson.

Even then it was realised that the circuit was just too tough a test of man and machine. Len Cohen told cartoon legend Jock Leyden that it was more suited to motocross than road racing. It was exceptionally rough and bumpy, with grass growing on the "middelmannetjie" and sand seven inches deep in places.

It was the enterprising Eastern Province Motor Cycle Club that staged the next South African TT races, on their Kragga Kamma circuit six miles (nine

kms) outside Port Elizabeth. They had staged several 100 mile races (160 kms) on the 20 mile (32 kms) circuit since it opened in 1921. The partly macadamised circuit was to be the home of the races for the next decade. The circuit began at the Hunters Retreat Hotel, then on the main Cape road. The first notable feature was a sharp left corner at Greenbushes 4 miles (seven kms) after the start, which was followed by a three mile stretch including a railway crossing to Cow corner, a sweeping left hand corner with an adverse camber. Further on there was another railway crossing before the riders approached the tricky Frames Drift, braking on a surface so coarse it was described as being "ball bearings". Then it was back to Cape road. New Years Day 1924 saw fine weather for the two races. Again they were run on a handicap basis, this time the sidevalve machines having a 20 minute start (about one lap) over the overhead valve entries in the Intermediate race for machines up to 650cc and a six minute start in the Senior unlimited cm3 race. In the 10 lap 650cc race the Cape rider, Lea Hamerton, who was to hold the South African motor cycle land speed record in later years, took over the lead ahead of Durban man Moore with early leader Eddie Bagley dropping to third. Bunny Loader, off scratch, set the fastest lap of the race on the opening lap of 18mins27secs (65.04 mph, 104.06 kmph), but was overtaken by fellow-scratch man Young before the latter suffered a broken gudgeon pin and pushed home for fourth. The vagaries of racing in those days can be gauged by the fact that Shearer firstly raced a small buck for half a mile before ramming it and then came second best in a similar incident involving a cow. Flook (plug trouble and burst tyre), Fritz Zurcher (piston trouble), Bagley (broken spokes) and Cohen (broken valve) were prominent retirements. Another vagary was that the officials employed gate boys to man the farm gates along the circuit. Result:

1st L.E.Hamerton 596cc s.v. Indian 3 hrs 31 mins at 55.29 m/h (88.46 kmph)
 2nd R.S.Moore 492cc s.v. Sunbeam 3 hrs 42 mins 40 secs at 53.89 mph (86.22 kmph)
 3rd H.B.Loader 490cc o.h.v. Norton 3 hrs 31 mins 26 secs at 56.75 mph (90.8 kmph)

4th C.H.Young 499cc o.h.v. Triumph 5 L. Shearer 348cc s.v. Douglas.

The 12 lap unlimited race included the Stellenbosch star Big Bill du Toit, who was held in the same regard as Bobby Blackburn had been in Natal and who had featured prominently in the Cape-Saldanha Bay-back race, J.E. Gill of Bloemfontein and Loader, all on big Harley-Davidsons, and local hero Wally Wilson on a 998cm3 Indian, all four on sidevalve machines. Loader had won the Port Elizabeth-East London race on this bike while Wilson had won some 100 mile races on this circuit. Wilson, Du Toit and Gill fought out the lead on the opening lap, but Loader climbed from fourth to first at the start of lap two and led for the next five laps. On lap seven he stopped with several problems and Gill and Du Toit took over in front, with Loader (broken chain) retiring two laps later. Wilson (broken frame spring) had also retired and the two leaders fought on, with Du Toit ahead and Gill closing the gap on the straights but losing out on the corners.

Result:

1st J.W. du Toit 989cc s.v. Harley-Davidson 3 hrs 54 mins 38secs at 61.37 mph (98.19 kmph)
 2nd J.E.Gill 989cc s.v. Harley-Davidson 3hrs 55 mins 13 secs at 61.21 mph (97.93 kmph)
 3rd W.Paton 998cc s.v. Indian 4 hrs 18mins 41 secs at 55.66 mph (89.5 kmph)
 4th F.Zurcher 348cc ohv Douglas.
 Fastest lap: W.Wilson 18mins 56 secs (63.38 mph/ 101.40 kmph) on lap one.

The 1925 races were historic in more than one respect. Firstly they were the first to feature mass starts on a scratch basis. Secondly they were run

in a howling gale that whipped the dust to such an extent that the only way spectators became aware of approaching machines was through engine noise. The cancellation of the junior race for 350cc machines the previous year meant that this year's race, with 13 starters in three rows, was the first to be staged for this capacity. The field included two of the three South Africans to ride in the Isle of Man TT in 1924, achieving impressive results. Ian "China" Scott and Charlie Young were both on 348cc A.J.S. Yet it was three relatively unknown riders who took the early lead, W.Morgan leading from Don Hall and E.Lilienfeld. Morgan retired with a broken rocker arm on lap three, Ian Scott climbed to second, but a lap later Du Toit led and Hall was fifth after a pit stop. Hall and Lilienfeld swapped the lead before the latter had to make an extra pit stop for oil and Du Toit lost a minute in the pits. Although he closed the gap on Hall the Durban man pulled out all the stops to win.

Result:

- 1st Don Hall A.J.S. 3 hrs 36 mins 53 secs, at 55.55 mph (88.88 kmph)
- 2nd J.W.du Toit A.J.S. 3hrs 37 mins 8 secs, at 55.26 m/h (88.41 km/h)
- 3rd I.H.R.Scott A.J.S.
- 4th C.W.Scott A.J.S.
- 5th E.Lilienfeld A.J.S.
- 6th C.Germon Rudge,
- 7th W.Wilson Indian.



Although times were only given for the first two, the top five were covered by eight minutes. Despite his arduous ride in the junior, Du Toit was out again in the next race, this time on his big Harley. He led from the start, but on the penultimate lap the bike lost a cylinder and Ted Murray, some 11 minutes in arrears, overhauled him to win by five minutes. E.P.Rider, which sounds suspiciously like a nom-de-plume, kept going steadily for the sake of the crowd.

Results:

- 1st E.G.Murray 989cc Harley-Davidson 3 hrs 26 mins 14 secs at 58.25 mph (93.20 kmph)
- 2nd J.W.du Toit 989cc Harley-Davidson 3 hrs 31 mins 21 secs at 56.87 mph (90.99 kmph)
- 3rd E.P.Rider 989cc Harley-Davidson 3 hrs 41 mins 36 secs at 54.15 mph (86.64 kmph)

Overnight rain laid the dust and the second day of racing dawned pleasant with a slight breeze. Percy Flook, still looking for a SATT win for his glittering CV, started favourite on his 596cm³ Douglas and took an immediate lead, which he increased steadily by almost a minute a lap. Despite having to stop to dislodge a wedged carburettor slide on lap four he quickly regained the lead from Loader and continued until he led by almost five minutes when a broken frame led to his retirement on lap eight. Loader and Young had fought out second neck and neck from the start, but Young managed to pull out a slight lead. Ian Scott and Hamerton fought a similar battle for third, which the former settled in his favour.

Result:

- 1st C.H.Young 498cc Triumph 3 hrs 22 mins 40 secs at 59.21 m/h (94.73 km/h)
- 2nd H.B.Loader 588cc Norton 3 hrs 25 mins 29 secs at 58.39 m/h (93.42 km/h)

3rd I.H.R.Scott 348cc A.J.S.
4th L.E.Hamerton 596cc s.v. Indian,
5th R.S.Moore 493cc Sunbeam.

For 1926 an Ultralightweight (175cc) race over 120 miles was introduced, attracting six entries. Five were on Villiers-powered machines; the sixth was A.R.Biggs on a four-stroke Cotton-Blackburne. Biggs and Baby Scott fought out the lead before Scott appeared to take control. But on the last lap Biggs powered past and with a lap in 23 mins 4 secs won easily. Percy Flook hung on for third, despite constant plug trouble.

Result:

1st A.R.Biggs 174cc Cotton-Blackburne 2 hrs 41 min 12secs at 44.66 mph (71.45 kmph),
2nd B.E.Scott 172cc Francis-Barnett 2 hrs 43 mins 39 secs, at 43.99 mph (70.38 kmph)
3rd P.P.Flook 172cc Sun 2 hrs 58 mins 50 secs at 40.26 mph (64.41 kmph)

The junior (350cc) TT attracted 28 starters, with Hall, as the previous year's winner on pole position in front of the field. But Young took the lead as soon as they were on the Cape road and that was that. He won by almost six minutes, breaking the race record by 14 mins 4 secs.

Result:

1st C.H.Young 344cc Royal Enfield 3 hrs 22 mins 29 secs at 59.26 mph (94.81 kmph)
2nd D.A.Scott 348cc Chater-Lea 3 hrs 28 mins at 57.69 mph (92.30 kmph)
3rd R.F.Bacon 348cc A.J.S. 3hrs 29 mins 14 secs. At 57.32 mph (91.71 kmph)
4th C.W.Scott 348cc A.J.S.
5th L.R. Cohen 348cc A.J.S.

Fastest lap: Young 19 mins 15 secs at 62.33 mph (99.72 kmph) on lap one.

The 600cc race early the following morning saw Flook (490cc Norton) scorch round the course in 18mins 13 secs at 65.3 mph (104.48 kmph) for a new lap record But on lap three he dropped eight places to replace a broken chain and Young took over a lead he never relinquished. Du Toit had worked his way through the field from last into second place, but suffered a loss of oil and while crawling to his pit to replenish was passed by Lievaart. Young broke his own race record by four minutes.

Result:

1st C.H.Young 344cc Royal Enfield 3 hrs 18 mins 34 secs at 60.43 mph (96.68 kmph)
2nd P.Lievaart 498cc A.J.S. 3 hrs 30 mins 27 secs at 57.02 mph (91.23 kmph)
3rd J.W.du Toit 498cc A.J.S. 3 hrs 30 mins 37 secs at 56.97 mph (91.15 kmph)
4th L.E.Hamerton 596cc Indian
5th V.Paton 349cc B.S.A.

Young's second double win led to him being dubbed the Wal Handley of South African racing. Flook, so unlucky in previous races, took an immediate lead in the unlimited race with a lap in 18 mins 29 secs at 64.92 mph with Alf Long (998cc Indian) of D-J fame second three seconds slower. This time Flook's luck held and he was never headed while the field behind him was decimated. Joe Sarkis (348cc Raleigh) and Germon fought out second place after Long's retirement before the former also retired and in the latter stages Kerr came up to challenge Germon but was unable to close the gap sufficiently to get ahead. Du Toit survived a horrific crash when his rear wheel rim buckled when he hit a ridge as he joined the macadamised section,

the tyre came off and bike and rider cannoned into a bank. He suffered bruising. Flook took 16 minutes off the previous race record.

Result:

- 1st P.P.Flook 490cc Norton 3 hrs 10 mins 11 secs at 63.09 mph (100.94 kmph)
- 2nd C.Germon 490cc Norton 3 hrs 25 mins 53 secs, at 58.28 mph (93.24 kmph)
- 3rd W.J.Kerr 596cc Douglas 3 hrs 26 mins 5 secs. At 58.22 mph (93.15 kmph)

In 1927 the first British rider to appear on South African circuits, Harvey Sangster, took part in the 600cc race. But the South African TT was almost cancelled. In terms of an order by the Cape Provincial Council divisional councils were empowered to ban racing on open roads and if permission was granted, the Administrator could overrule this. The P.E. divisional council approved the meeting by a majority of one vote. The administrator overruled this, but a deputation prevailed on him to change his mind. As a result entries were down and both the 175cc and unlimited races were cancelled. The junior race for 350cc machines on New Year's Day saw Young in pole position. Cohen led from the start and steadily increased his lead, winning by eight minutes. But second position changed hands regularly, Long, Young, Hall and Doug Scott holding it at various times. Cohen broke the race record by almost two minutes.



Len Cohen, Circa 1927

Result:

- 1st L.R.Cohen 348cc A.J.S. 3 hrs 20 mins 35 secs at 59.82 mph (95.71 kmph)
- 2nd D.A.Scott 348cc Rex-Acme 3 hrs 29 mins 18 secs at 57.33 mph (91.72 kmph)
- 3rd D.Hall 349cc B.S.A. 3 hrs 31 mins 48 secs at 56.65 m/h (90.64 km/h)
- 4th L.E.Hamerton 348cc Indian Prince,
- 5th B.E.Scott 348cc Chater-Lea.

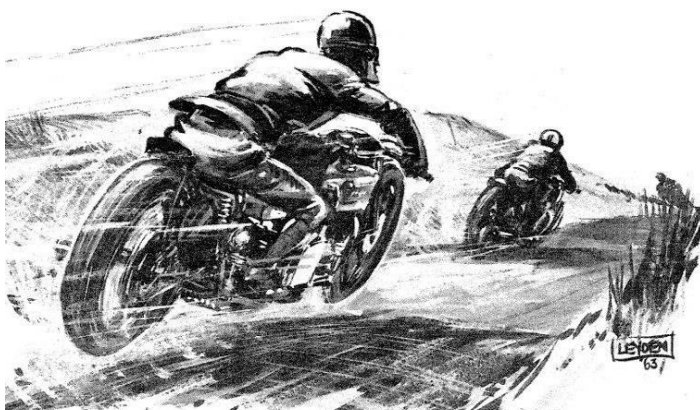
Fastest lap:

Cohen 19mins 28secs at 61.64 mph (98.62 kmph)

The 600cc race two days after New Year included our first British rider, so let's look at his performance first. He had raced at the Motordrome, Johannesburg a couple of weeks before and apparently hardly had the local stars shaking in their boots. At Kragga Kamma circuit he got as far as Greenbushes when he became confused and continued down a side road. Realising his mistake he braked hard, buckling his back wheel. He returned to the pits against the flow of traffic and was disqualified. He was on a PR tour of South Africa for Ariel. Maybe that went better. Flook led from the start ahead of Cohen, but the latter got ahead on the second lap in which he broke the outright lap record in 18 mins 5 secs at 66.35 mph. But Flook was right on his tail and repassed on lap four. Cohen lost four minutes repairing a burnt clutch two laps later, while Flook fell, continuing at unabated speed despite his back wheel being out of alignment.

Result:

- 1st P.P.Flook 490cc Norton 3 hrs 10 mins 29 secs at 62.99 mph (100.78 kmph)
- 2nd L.R.Cohen 498cc A.J.S. 3 hrs 18 mins 58 secs at 60.31 mph (96.49 kmph)



"AFTER HIM!" An impression of Charlie chasing Len Cohen in the 1930 "Natal 100"

3rd C.H.Young 344cc Royal Enfield 3 hrs 27 mins 47 secs at 57.75 mph (92.40 kmph)

4th D.Hall 349cc B.S.A.

5th F.A.R.Zurcher 496cm3 Douglas.

The following year South African motor cycling again hosted two British riders; although this time they were far more illustrious. Jimmy Simpson brought out a pair of works A.J.S. machines and Wal Handley a works Rex-Acme. Simpson arrived in South Africa in the wake of probably his best season, which would have seen him the World 350cc champion had there been one. But Handley arrived with a thumb injured in the Brooklands Grand Prix in October when he crashed challenging eventual winner Simpson for the lead. Handley took part in practice but his thumb gave him so much pain that he withdrew, to the disappointment of the huge crowd the two stars had attracted, His bike was loaned to Bunny Loader. While on the subject of Handley's thumb, during his stay in South Africa he went to a doctor to see if he could get treatment for it as the thumbnail was taking a long time to grow back. The doctor's recommended treatment was to have the thumb amputated.

The 12 lap 350cc race was held on the first Monday in January and as was the custom, Cohen, the previous year's winner, was given pole position just ahead of the rest. Doug Scott took the lead at the start with Cohen chasing hard. But it was Cohen who led at the end of the opening lap which he completed in a sensational 17 mins 23 secs at 69.03 mph (110.44 kmph). Simpson was 22 seconds behind with Sarkis third and Hall fourth, all within the previous lap record. But the Leicester flyer as he was known retired on the second lap with a buckled back wheel letting Sarkis into second, a position he held to the end.

Hall retired on lap five letting Loader into third until a pushrod broke shortly afterwards. In the end Cohen lapped everyone bar Sarkis.

Results:

1st L.R.Cohen 348cc A.J.S. 3 hrs 41 mins 49 secs at 64.19 mph (102.70 kmph)

2nd J.A.Sarkis 348cc Velocette 3 hrs 57 mins 35 secs at 60.60 mph (96.96 kmph),

3rd D.A.Scott 348cc Chater-Lea 4 hrs 43 mins 35 secs at 50.77 mph (81.23 kmph)



In the 600cc race the following day it was Murray (498cc A.J.S.) who led at the start chased by Flook and Du Toit on 490cc Nortons. But Simpson (498cc

A.J.S.) was in bullish mood and went ahead....and ahead. He led by half a mile when he tried to take Frames Drift corner too fast and crashed, breaking his handlebars. So it was Du Toit who led at the end of the first lap after another sensational lap in 16 mins 40 secs at 72.0 mph (115.20 kmph), this despite conditions being worse than previously. Cohen was one minute 16 seconds behind him with Flook third a further 50 seconds in arrears. Cohen took the lead on the third lap and pulled steadily away. Thereafter the race was enlivened by Du Toit's efforts to regain the lead. After his FIFTH crash even he had to give up because of a badly buckled back wheel. Cohen continued unchallenged, but on the last lap, while Loader and Baby Scott were working feverishly on their bikes in the pits, Cohen

took a corner too fast, struck sand and went down, blowing a tyre. So the pair set off, fighting out the lead and locked together until the final corner when Scott skidded and Loader shot ahead to win.

Result:

1st H.B.Loader 493cc B.S.A. 4 hrs 5 mins 55 secs at 58.73 mph (93.96 kmph)
2nd B.E.Scott 348cc Chater-Lea 4 hrs 6 mins 6 secs at 58.53 mph (93.64 kmph)
3rd W.Gardner 493cc A.J.S. 5 hrs 15 mins 22 secs at 45.66 mph (73.05 kmph).

The 1929 races saw a revival of the 175cc class and the introduction of an unlimited handicap. The former, held on the first day over 140 miles, saw two water-cooled two stroke DKWs pitted against the best of British. Except for the second lap when H.C.Kirkland (Excelsior) led the way it was one or other of the DKW riders: Dave Brink or Archie Browne who were at the front of the field. Brink led for most of the closing stages with Browne fourth when the former suffered a broken connecting rod on the last lap, just six miles from the finish and a trio of James's took the honours.

Result:

1st J.Unwin 172cc James at 48.40 mph (77.44 kmph),
2nd C.W.Scott 172cc James
3rd C.Kannemeyer 172cc James,
4th A.B.Browne 175cc D.K.W.

It was Hall who shot into a lead at the start he was only to relinquish briefly when he refuelled and he quickly repassed Cohen. But Cohen ran out of petrol, allowing Bill Kerr into second where he remained for the rest of the race. Arthur Killerby finished 15 minutes behind him. Norman Brockwell left the road and hit a tree, being seriously injured. .Hall set a new race record.

Result:

1st D.Hall 348cc Velocette 3 hrs 7 mins 40 secs at 63.94 mph (102.30 kmph)
2nd W.Kerr 348cc Velocette 3 hrs 11 mins 1 secs at 62.82 mph (100.51 kmph),
3rd A.Killerby 349cc B.S.A. 3 hrs 26 mins at 58.25 mph (93.20 kmph)

Loader (498cc A.J.S.) led at the start of the 600cc race followed by Hall on his 348cc Velocette. But when Loader went out on lap two Hall took over the lead, which he held until the fifth lap before retiring with magneto problems. Behind the Durban man however, Du Toit lapped in 16 mins 55 secs at 70.93 mph to move into third place. Then Sarkis, plagued by carburettor trouble and trailing well behind as a result, put in a sensational lap in 16 mins 17 secs at 73.69 mph (117.90 kmph) for fifth place. Kerr took over the lead when Hall retired but Du Toit got ahead, only to crash heavily at Greenbushes and do his chin no good at all. Sarkis passed Kerr for second behind Beadon, but the leader suffered a broken primary chain halfway round the lap for Sarkis to score his first but by no means his last SATT win.

Result:

1st J.A.Sarkis 499cc Rudge-Whitworth 3 hrs 10 mins 39 secs at 62.94 mph (100.70 kmph)
2nd W.J.Kerr 490cc Norton 3 hrs 18 mins at 60.60 mph (96.96 kmph)
3rd E. Davis 498cc A.J.S.

Four months later Du Toit was breaking South African speed records at Verneuk Pan.

In 1930 much of the crowd's interest would have been focused on popular Joe Sarkis. The Pretorian had won the Visitors Cup at the Isle of Man TT before going on to become the first South African to race in Europe. In doing so he had also become the first to win an international motor cycle race. But before his appearances there was the little matter of the 175cc race. Clarrie Scott led away from the start, hotly pursued by the DKWs of W.Paton

and Browne. A lap later the pair had demoted Scott to third. Paton retired with a broken primary chain but Browne held on for a popular win.

Result:

1st A.B.Browne 175cc D.K.W. 2 hrs 42 mins 53 secs at 51.62 mph (82.59 kmph)
2nd C.W.Scott 172cc James 2 hrs 43 mins 41 secs at 51.31 mph (82.09 kmph)
3rd A.R.Biggs 174cc Cotton-Blackburne 2 hrs 43 mins 55 secs at 51.24 mph (81.98 kmph).

The 350cc race saw a different line up than that used previously. This time the machines and riders were lined up diagonally alongside the road, with Hall in pole position in front of the field. Hall take an immediate lead with Cohen into second. And there the pair of them stayed. Nobby Clark survived the struggles for third.

Result:

1st D.Hall 348cc Velocette 2 hrs 52 mins 23 secs at 69.61 mph (111.37 kmph),
2nd L.R.Cohen 348cc A.J.S. 2 hrs 57 mins 48 secs at 67.49 mph (107.98 kmph),
3rd J.M.Clark 348cc Velocette 3 hrs 3 mins 15 secs at 65.48 mph (104.76 kmph).

Sarkis had retired in that race, but it was a different matter the next day. He was in pole position for the 600cc race and was in determined mood. He shattered his own lap record from a standing start in 15 mins 26 secs, (77.75 mph (124.40 kmph) then lowered it to 15 mins 18 secs 78.42 mph (125.47 kmph) on the next lap and to 15 mins 16 secs (78.60 mph (125.76 kmph) on the third lap One-eyed Jimmy Lind, who had acquired fame by not only by scoring a cord win in the previous year's D-J but by surviving a very close encounter with a train at a level crossing, was showing all the hallmarks of a true racer, riding in lurid style and scaring the spectators on one corner. He was passed by Cohen and Clark while making adjustments in the pits, but repassed them into second on the same lap. But he retired with no oil in his motor, allowing Cohen and Clark into second and third. Hall, in fourth, retired with a broken driving chain. Sarkis not only shattered the lap record but the race record as well.

Result:

1st J.A.Sarkis 499cc Rudge-Whitworth 2 hrs 41 mins 50 secs at 74.15 mph (118.64 kmph),
2nd L.R.Cohen 498cc A.J.S. 2 hrs 50 mins 39 secs at 70.31 mph (112.49 kmph)
3rd J.M.Clark 348cc Velocette.

Lind had been included in the South African team for the 1930 Isle of Man TT following his D-J win. The A.J.S. succeeded in changing his approach to racing and he was a model of consistency. Originally down to ride works A.J.S. in the Junior and 250cc TTs, he agreed to replace the injured Freddie Hicks in the Senior as well, thus becoming the first man ever to ride in three TTs in one week. The fact that he earned replicas in all three races added to his stature. It was a feat not matched until the 1950s. The 250cc race, the first to be held at this meeting, proved another Sarkis benefit. He lapped at 18 mins 15 secs (65.75 mph (105.20 kmph) from a standing start, opening up a lead of one minute 30 seconds. Beadon held second throughout but Sarkis was effectively on a different planet, finishing almost a full lap ahead of him.

Result:

1st J.A.Sarkis O.K. Supreme-Jap 2 hrs 15 min 30 secs at 61.99 mph (99.18 kmph)
2nd G.Beadon Excelsior-Jap 2 hrs 28 mins 2 secs at 56.74 mph (90.78 kmph),
3rd P.du Bruin D.K.W. 2 hrs 31 mins 40 secs. at 55.38 mph.

Sarkis thus joined Young as the only SATT double winners. Up until now, with the exception of the 1925 races, the South African TT had been blessed with in most cases perfect weather. But light drizzle on New Year's morning in 1931 meant that the concurrent 250cc and 175cc races were held in muddy conditions. With only four starters in the former race both races were reduced to 100 miles (160 kms) the former starting 15 minutes before the smaller machines. In the 250cc class it was Sarkis who led after an opening lap in 18mins 46 secs with Baby Scott on his back wheel. Sarkis treated the slippery conditions at the Deviation past the pits with great respect, but Scott didn't and shot past Sarkis in a shower of muddy water. But Sarkis repassed Scott and opened a gap of three minutes on him. Sarkis lapped Kerr at the start of his final lap but Scott, who had been gaining seconds on Sarkis with every lap, slid violently at the Deviation and scattered the crowd. He set off after the leader but the canny Sarkis still finished over a minute ahead of Scott despite the latter taking 32 seconds off the leader on that lap.

Result:

1st J.A.Sarkis O.K. Supreme Jap 1 hr 32 mins 42 secs at 64.72 mph (103.52 kmph),

2nd B.E.Scott A.J.S. 1 hr 33 mins 55 secs at 63.88 mph (102.20 kmph)

3rd W.J.Kerr Moto Guzzi 1 hr 56 mins at 51.72 mph (82.72 kmph).

At the same time Davis led the 175cc class from start to finish ahead of Riddell and Clarrie Scott.

Result:

1st E.Davis 173cc Excelsior 1 hr 55 mins 32 secs at 51.93 mph (83.08 kmph),

2nd J.M.Riddell 172cc James,

3rd C.W.Scott 172cc James.

The afternoon sun had dried out the course and made for excellent conditions. The field for the 10-lap 350cc race included Rhodesians for the first time, among them Archie Downing and Mick Gammon, the latter one of the early Rhodesian legends. Hall was in pole position at the head of the field but lost half a minute at the start while trying to coax his recalcitrant machine into life. While he was doing so Cohen shot away in the lead. But it was Lind who led at the end of the opening lap in 16 mins 14 secs (73.92 mph). Then came Sarkis with Cohen on his back tyre. Hall had climbed to fifth when the shock absorber on the engine shaft broke at Frames Drift corner. A lap later and Cohen, after a 350cm³ lap record of 16 mins 7 secs (74.45mph (119.12 km/h) led from Lind and Sarkis. Lind took the lead while Cohen was refuelling but the latter regained the lead in what was a desperate battle. While Lind indulged in lurid cornering Cohen's bike was faster on the straights. They swapped places a couple of times and Cohen led by about a minute when Lind retired with broken front forks three miles from the finish. Sarkis had lost ground and retired so third place was up for grabs.

Result:

1st L.R.Cohen A.J.S. 2 hrs 45 mins 44 secs at 72.40 mph (115.84 kmph),

2nd E.Schegar A.J.S. 3 hrs 2 mins 0 secs at 65.93 mph (105.48 kmph)

3rd A.E.Muller Velocette 3 hrs 17 mins 48 secs at 60.66 mph (97.05 kmph)

Conditions were perfect the following day for the 500cc race in which Sarkis sat in the customary pole position five yards ahead of the rest. Not that he really needed it. He leapt away from the start and broke his own lap record from a standing start by almost a minute in 14 mins 22 secs (83.52 mph (133.63 kmph) with Lind seconds behind. Interestingly pioneer visiting speedway rider Charlie Hornby, who rode in South Africa as Chris for reasons that shall remain "classified", was tenth when he retired on

lap four. Sarkis was stretching his lead over Lind on every lap, despite the latter trying all he knew, but the machine raced by Graham Walker the previous year was just too quick. But even it could not take the punishment and a rocker broke on lap seven. Lind thus went into a huge lead but continued at undiminished pace to the finish to win by almost 11 minutes with a race record.

Result:

- 1st J.G.Lind A.J.S. 2 hrs 33 mins 49 secs at 78.01 mph (124.81 kmph)
- 2nd D.Hall 348 cm3 Velocette 2 hrs 44 mins 16secs at 73.05 mph (116.88 kmph)
- 3rd Alf Bertenshaw A.J.S. 2 hrs 50 mins 24 secs at 70.42 mph (112.67 kmph).

If the 1931 races began in wet conditions, they had nothing on the following year's series. Rain fell for a week and Port Elizabeth and the surrounding areas were awash. On New Year's Day the riders in the 350cc race stood at the Deviation and in the quagmire voted on whether to start the race over seven laps. Sarkis went straight into the lead and lapped at 18 mins 4 seconds despite the conditions. Just seconds behind were Eddie Schegar and Denny Hawes. Sarkis blasted round in 17 mins 9 secs on lap three and then 17 mins 2 secs (70.44 mph) on the fourth lap. Watts passed Schegar on lap three and the leading positions remained unchanged.

Result:

- 1st J.A.Sarkis O.K. Supreme Jap 2 hrs 9 mins 39 secs at 64.78 mph (103.64 kmph)
- 2nd C.E.Watts Rudge 2 hrs 15 mins 14 secs at 62.11 mph (99.37 kmph)
- 3rd E.Schegar A.J.S. 2 hrs 18 mins 32 secs at 60.63 mph (97.00 kmph)

Conditions had improved for the 500cc race, except for a strong wind along the Greenbushes straight. Once again Sarkis took the lead with Hall second on a Rudge and young Capetonian George Anderson, in his first big race, on a similar machine third. Sarkis had set the quickest lap of the race in 15 minutes exactly and steadily reeled off the laps ahead of Hall. Anderson crashed out of the race at the Willows on the fourth lap but had shown us the future: South African speed records at Verneuk Pan in 1949 and a hat trick of South African 500cc titles 1951-53. Bertenshaw took over third but collided with a cow at Frames Drift corner on the last lap and broke an arm.

Result:

- 1st J.A.Sarkis Sunbeam 2 hrs 35 mins 3 secs at 77.39 mph (123.82 kmph)
- 2nd D.Hall Rudge 2 hrs 38 mins 52 secs at 75.53 mph (120.84 kmph).

Local star Johnny Strydom scored his first notable win in the 100 miles (160 kms) handicap with Hall setting fastest race time.

Result:

- 1st J.T.Strydom 348cc Velocette 1 hr 40 mins 13 secs at 59.87 mph (95.79 kmph)
- 2nd J.A.Sarkis 248cc O.K. Supreme Jap 1 hr 32 mins 17 secs at 65.01 mph (104.01 kmph)
- 3rd D.Hall 348cc Velocette 1 hr 25 mins 34 secs at 70.12 mph (112.19 kmph)
- 4th A.Batteson 172cc James 2 hrs 2 mins 59 secs at 48.78 mph (78.04 kmph).

The 1933 South African TT was cancelled through lack of entries; well this was the period of the Great Depression. But they were back in 1934 and so was Sarkis. The races were the first in South Africa to be held over officially closed public roads. Sarkis took an immediate lead in the 350cc race ahead of Baby Scott (James-Python). These two filled the first two places for most of the race, with Johnny Galway harrying Scott occasionally and Strydom holding a steady fourth. But Scott, expecting a pit signal to refuel and not getting one had continued, only to run out of fuel on the

ninth lap. Strydom retired on the last lap with a broken connecting rod, leaving only two finishers. The riders were drenched by heavy rain for a lap, but conditions soon dried out.

Result:

1st J.A.Sarkis O.K. Supreme Jap 2 hrs 41 mins 34 secs at 74.27 mph (118.83 kmph),

2nd J.C.Galway Norton 2 hrs 51 mins 9 secs at 70.11 mph (112.12 kmph).

It was George Long (Ariel), a member of the famous racing family, who took an immediate lead in the 250cc race. But he crashed at the Willows while following Wally Wilson who crashed. Long also fell, being flung about 20 feet and landing on Wilson's machine, suffering arm and rib injuries. Instead it was Sarkis who lead after a class lap record in 16 mins 30 secs at 72.72 mph (116.35 kmph) breaking his own lap record by over one and a half minutes. Strydom (Rudge) and Bill Wegner (Moto Guzzi) followed, both below the previous class lap record. Sarkis lowered his own new record to 16 mins 18 secs (73.61 mph (117.77 kmph) and steadily increased his lead over Strydom. But Strydom seized his engine at Greenbushes on lap five and Wegner suffered a disintegrated magneto at the same place on the last lap. This let Wilson, whom Sarkis had lapped during his last lap into second with Cumming in third two laps behind. Sarkis had broken his own race record by over 11 minutes.

Result:

1st J.A. Sarkis O.K. Supreme-Jap 2 hrs 0 mins 56 secs. At 69.45 mph (111.12 kmph)

2nd W.Wilson A.J.S. 2 hrs 22 mins 8 secs at 59.09 mph (94.54 kmph),

3rd C.J. Cumming Rudge 3 hrs 5 mins 0 secs at 45.40 mph (72.64 kmph).

A famous name of the future, Vic Proctor, was a non-starter in the 500cc race on the second day after wrecking his engine in practice. Baby Scott (499cc James) took the lead at the start, chased by Mick Gammon (494cc Douglas). Unusually Sarkis was last away, but he was up to third at the end of the lap and on Gammon's tail, with Scott just ahead. Sarkis took the lead at the end of lap two, with Anderson (B.S.A.Special) and Doug van Riet - later of car racing fame - next. A lap later and Van Riet was in second. Scott had retired with carburettor problems and Anderson with no compression. Piggy Hayward came into third but up front Van Riet was closing the gap on Sarkis through the bends, while the latter had too much power on the straights. Sarkis eventually won his ninth SATT race from Van Riet. Hayward still had two laps to go, but was disqualified after refilling from Scott's tank along the route. Sarkis had taken two minutes off Lind's race record.

Result:

1st J.A.Sarkis Sunbeam 2 hrs 31 mins 25 secs at 79.25 mph (126.80 kmph)

2nd D.van Riet 493cm3 B.S.A. Special 2 hrs 33 mins 55 secs at 77.96 mph (124.73 kmph)

Sarkis took the lead on lap two of the 100 mile (160 kms) handicap and was never headed as he completed a remarkable quadruple of wins.

Result:

1st J.A.Sarkis 248cc O.K. Supreme-Jap 1 hr 23 mins 12 secs at 72.28 mph (115.64 kmph)

2nd C.J.Cumming 248cc Ariel 1 hr 53 mins 26 secs at 52.89 mph (84.62 kmph)

3rd George Young 249cc Rudge 2 hrs 2 mins 42 secs at 48.89 mph (78.22 kmph).

In 1934 the story of the South African TT took a dramatic twist. For reasons which raise more questions than answers the races were awarded to the East London club and the Port Elizabeth enthusiasts had lost "their" race,

apparently because their neighbours had got in first with their application for a date for the meeting. Having said that, the good burghers of Port Elizabeth then organised what became Southern Africa's premier road race, again over the Kragga Kamma circuit, following the demise of the Durban-Johannesburg race in 1936. This was the Port Elizabeth 200, first held in January that year. And this circuit still had more history to make. In the 1939 P.E. 200, Galway lapped a fully macadamised circuit at 94.6 mph (151.36 kmph) with Sarkis just 0.1 mph slower, the fastest motorcycle laps of a South African circuit until 1950. Nathan Smith lapped at 91 mph (145.6 kmph), all three on 490cc Norton's. The date changed as well, to Easter, the 350cc race being on Saturday April 20 and the 500cc and 100 mile (160 kms) handicap races two days later. The organisers had reduced the length of the circuit used for the first South African Grand Prix car race to 11 miles (17.6 kms) and renamed it the Prince George circuit in honour of the Duke of Kent who had visited South Africa shortly before. The Daily Dispatch report definitely calls the circuit by this name, making it the first race on the new circuit and not the second South African GP car race on New Year's Day 1936. The junior race began in ideal conditions. As had been the norm, Sarkis was in pole position ahead of the rest. But it was Burton Kinsey, making a rare appearance in a big race other than "his" race (the D-J) who led initially ahead of Galway and local star Freddie Meyer, a member of a well known East London racing family, who had got passed Hall and Sarkis in some style. On the third lap Hall put in a magnificent effort to lap at 80.55 mph (128.88 kmph) the fastest 350cc lap in South Africa until then and obviously the first outright lap record of the new circuit. Then the heavens opened and the circuit turned slippery. Hall and Meyer were among those caught out but although the latter retired his Norton, Hall resumed and rode magnificently to make up ground. Galway had got ahead of Kinsey who retired soon afterwards and Hall worked his way back up the field.

Result:

1st J.C. Galway Norton at 73.5 mph (117.60 kmph),

2nd D. Hall Norton,

3rd J.A. Sarkis O.K. Supreme Jap.

The rain continued for the weekend and Monday's races were cancelled.

The 1936 races began with the junior on Saturday April 11th. Galway was in pole position and led for two laps until passed by Hall, who led until lap nine when he refuelled and Harold Brook took the lead. But Brook refuelled at the end of that lap and Hall repassed him. Galway was hanging on to Hall grimly until lap 13 when he lost his oil filler cap and gradually slowed through loss of oil before retiring on the penultimate lap. Hall led until lap 16 when he refuelled for a second time. Apparently he had changed the carburettor jet and was unsure of his consumption. It allowed Brook, Roy Hesketh and Strydom to get passed but although Hall tried hard, breaking his own lap record at 81.48 mph (130.36 kmph) on the last lap he had to content with fourth in the 213 mile (341 kms) race.

Result:

1st H.J. Brook Velocette

2nd R.O. Hesketh Excelsior Manxman

3rd J.T. Strydom Norton,

4th D. Hall Norton.

Sarkis, as winner of the previous Senior TT, was in pole position but when the smoke had cleared after the field got away Hall was still trying to get his machine going. He had to change a plug at the side of the track, losing two minutes. Proctor led at the end of the first lap with Sarkis down to fourth. A lap later Hawes was at the head of the field and Hall had set his first lap record. Hawes, Proctor and Bertenshaw fought out the lead before

Hall worked his way into second. Local rider J. Dallas was third. But on lap 12 Hawes's footrest came loose and he had to pit, allowing Hall into the lead. Hall had set a blistering pace in pursuit of the lead, with a new lap record at 85.0 mph (136 kmph), but eased off thereafter.

Result:

1st D.Hall 2 hrs 35 mins 0 secs at 81.0 mph (129.60 kmph).

2nd D.E.Hawes Norton,

3rd J.Dallas Norton.

The 100 miles (160 kms) handicap saw Brook and Hesketh resume their junior battle and they were going like the clappers. Despite setting a new lap record at 85.27 mph (136.43 kmph) Galway, who started from scratch was unable to catch them.

Result:

1st H.J.Brook 348cc Velocette,

2nd R.O.Hesketh 348cc Excelsior Manxman,

3rd J.C.Galway 490cc Norton.

Just over a month later Hesketh put up what proved to be a record for the Durban-Johannesburg race in finishing second. Brook was on top form. He had won the P.E. 200 earlier and coupled with these two wins was clearly one of the top 350cc riders in the country. Sadly, practising on open roads for the Durban Grand Prix on the Bluff circuit, he was killed when he collided with a car being reversed out of a driveway.

In 1937 Don Hall and Johnny Galway faced the starter as proud holders of the first ever awards of Springbok colours, for their exploits in the previous year's Isle of Man TT. The awards were made by the then governing body of motorcycle racing in South Africa: the Motor Cycle Union of South Africa (MCUSA). Both races were held on Monday March 29th. The junior race in the morning saw Rhodesian H.G.Welsh at the front of the field from Hall and Galway. But Husked lost two minutes with plug trouble. Hall and Galway passed the visitor and by lap five led the rest by over one and a half minutes. But at this point Galway retired with engine trouble. Hall had opened up a two minute lead over the rest, with Welsh and Alan Reeve fighting out second place. The leader refuelled on lap eleven but retired with engine trouble shortly after resuming and the Reeve-Welsh battle became one for the lead. Reeve held onto his position but was harried constantly by the Bulawayo rider who led briefly on lap 16 with a lap at over 81 mph. Reeve had a lead of 200 yards when Welsh ran out of petrol. He freewheeled down Potters Pass and then pushed the remaining distance to the finish. But he wasn't under any threat because Bertenshaw in third place was one and a half laps behind.

Result:

1st A.G.Reeve Norton 77.923 mph (124.67 kmph),

2nd H.G.Welsh Norton 76.911 mph (123.05 kmph),

3rd A.Bertenshaw Norton 71.153 mph (113.84 kmph).

This was Alan Reeve's biggest win. It was also his last. The pioneer speedway rider, who rode in a test match against England in December 1930 after spending six months racing in Britain, was returning home after a meeting at Earl Howe circuit when he was involved in a head-on collision with a car being driven on the wrong side of the road and succumbed to his injuries an hour later. Three circuits in his



hometown area of Pretoria were named in his honour.

In the senior that afternoon Galway led from the start, but Hawes passed him to lead at the end of the first lap. Galway repassed him and led for the next four laps before retiring with engine trouble with Hall on his tail. From then on it was a fight to the finish between Hall and Hawes as they swapped the lead with Hall breaking the lap record at 87.800 mph (140.48 kmph) on lap six. Hesketh struggled initially before settling into third four minutes behind the battling duo. Arthur Taylor, a top rider in Rhodesia and one time holder of the Rhodesian motor cycle speed record, was about two and a half laps behind. Hall broke his own race record comfortably.

Result:

- 1st D.Hall Norton 83.651 mph (133.84 kmph),
- 2nd D.E.Hawes Norton 83.545 mph (133.66 kmph)
- 3rd R.O.Hesketh Norton 81.081 mph (129.72 kmph)
- 4th A.R.Taylor Vincent HRD.

Later that year the MCUSA decided to scrap the South African TT on the grounds that they had "served their purpose". They were replaced by national and provincial championships introduced in 1938. It was not until 1970 that the series was revived. Unlike previously this time the South African TT was held as one race for all classes, the holder being the winner of the race. There were curtain raisers in three classes for the Dickie Dale Trophy commemorating a popular and very successful visiting British rider who raced in South Africa in the summers of 1959-60 and 1960-61. The first Daily News South African TT was held at Roy Hesketh circuit outside Pietermaritzburg and its 1.8 miles (2.88 kms) was very popular with visiting and local riders alike following its opening on December 26, 1953. Some legendary figures and other top riders turned wheels in anger over its undulating, twisty tarmac: Geoff Duke, Dave Chadwick, Mike Hailwood, Dale, Bob Anderson and Luigi Taveri among motorcyclists as well as former Formula One star Peter Whitehead. Among South African and Rhodesian riders who raced on the circuit and then made names for themselves internationally were Eddie Grant, Jim Redman, Gary Hocking, Paddy Driver, Jannie Stander, Errol Cowan, Ian Burne, Alan Harris, Bruce Beale, John Smith and Martin Watson as well as car drivers Tony Maggs, Bob Olthoff, John Love, Bruce Johnstone and Peter de Klerk.

The meeting was staged on January 25th and thanks to behind the scenes work by ex-Grand Prix star Frank Perris attracted four overseas riders: Phil Read, Giacomo Agostini, Jack Findlay and Alberto Pagani. For Phil at least it must have created mixed feelings. You will have noticed the absence of his name among the stars listed above. That is because during practice for the December 1961 meeting at this circuit he went sliding down the road when his Tom Arter 7R A.J.S. seized at 100 mph (160 kmpsph) through Henry's Knee and he had to miss the meeting. When I caught up with him at Westmead circuit outside Pinetown a week later to ask for his autograph he still had an angry "roastie" on the side of his face. So for Phil the circuit must have been a sore point in more ways than one and he obviously had a point to prove. As we will see, he did so in style, not only in terms of results but his splendid yellow leathers.

The race over 35-laps equalling 63 miles (100.8 kms) was the climax to the meeting. It was Peter Aitken who took the lead at the start and held on to it for four laps before Read then Ago found a way past. On lap 11 Ago took over the lead chased by Read and Aitken. Aitken called into the pits on lap 15 and dropped to the back of the field and two laps later Ago's bike began misfiring until he retired on lap 24 with electrical problems. Read took

over the lead but all eyes were on Aitken making rapid progress back up through the field to third behind Kelvin Thomas.

Result:

1st P.W.Read 350cc Yamaha 47 mins 35.1 secs at 79.43 mph (127.08 kmph)

2nd K.J.Thomas 350cc Yamaha

3rd P.Aitken 350cc Yamaha,

4th F.E.van Niekerk 350cc Yamaha

5th R.Borain 250cc Yamaha 6

6th G.Cruse 500cc Suzuki,

7th L.J.Klawer 250cc Yamaha

8th M.Grant 750cc Honda.

Class winners:

250cc R.Borain 49mins 1.6 secs at 77.11 mph (123.37 kmph)

350cm3 P.W.Read 1000cc G.Cruse 49 mins 16 secs at 76.72 mph (122.75 kmph).

The meeting opened with the 250cc race. Aitken took the lead at the start followed by Keith Zeeman. Read decided play time was over and took the lead on lap six. Aitken fell at Quarry corner a lap later and Zeeman retired two laps later letting Richard Borain into second ahead of Ophie Howard. Aitken set up a new outright circuit lap record of one minute 19.1 secs. (81.92 mph (131.07 kmph). The 350cc race saw Aitken again in the lead with Read taking over on lap four. Aitken chased hard and Thomas was third.

Read lapped at one minute 20.1 secs. (80.89 mph (129.42 kmph). Ago and Gillie Cruse fought out the lead in the 1000cc race, or rather Cruse fought while Ago played until lap 14 when the Italian decided to get serious, setting a new lap record of one minute 19.2 secs. (81.81 mph (130.89 kmph) Behind this duo there was a battle for third between Pagani, Mike Grant and Keith Crawford until the last-named retired.

Results:

250cc race:

1st P.W.Read Yamaha 25 mins 00.1 secs at 77.76 mph (124.41 kmph)

2nd R.Borain Yamaha

3rd O.Howard Yamaha

4th L.J.Klawer Yamaha

5th J.Ekerold Yamaha.

350cc race:

1st P.W.Read Yamaha 24 mins 26.5 secs at 79.56 mph (127.29 kmph)

2nd P.Aitken Yamaha 24 mins 37.5 secs at 78.97 mph (126.35 kmph)

3rd K.J.Thomas Yamaha

4th O.Howard Yamaha

5th F.E.van Niekerk Yamaha.

1000cc race:

1st G.Agostini M.V.Agusta 25 mins 19.2 secs at 75.83 m/h (121.32 km/h)

2nd G.Cruse Suzuki

3rd A.Pagani Linto

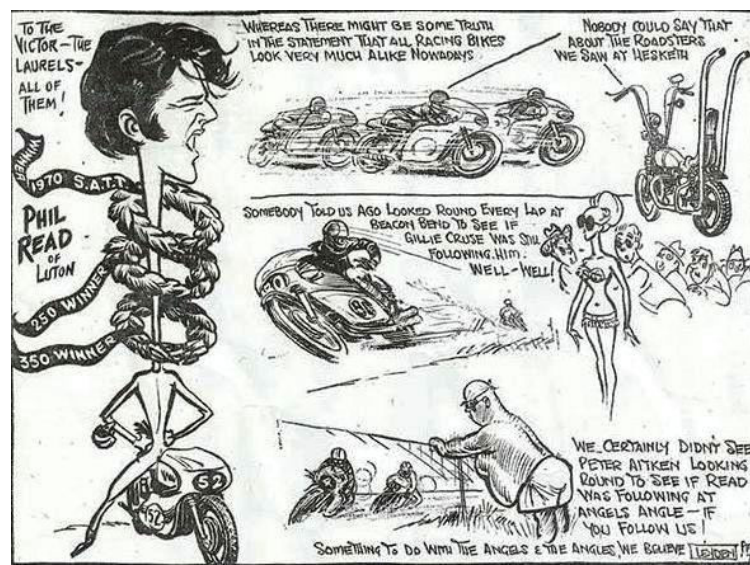
4th M.Grant Honda

5th P.Aitken Dunstall

Norton.

Dickie Dale Trophy winner:
P.W.Read. All races over 18 laps or 32.4 miles (51.84 kms)

The meeting also counted as the last of the 1969 South African championships. Howard clinched the 250cc title, Freddie van Niekerk the 350cc title and Aitken,



the 1000cc championship. Read made it four wins in four starts when he took the honours at Kyalami a week later, but Zeeman didn't make it easy for him.

For 1971 Ago returned and was joined by Rod Gould, Ray Pickrell and Paul Smart. There was a farm next to the circuit and in a throwback to "the good old days" Pickrell rounded Quarry corner on his first exploratory lap during unofficial practice to find further progress blocked by a cow standing in the middle of the track The Second Daily News South African TT Grant (750cc race-kitted Honda) made a sensational start to lead most of the way round the back section until Gould (250cc Yamaha) got ahead. On lap two Smart used his superior power to take over the lead until lap nine. But Ago was pushing hard and the Englishman broke Aitken's lap record at one minute 18.8 secs (82.23 mph (131.56 kmph)). Ago took the lead and was never headed but had Smart doing all he could to get on even terms. Grant repassed Gould and Pickrell. On lap 16 Ago reduced the lap record further to one minute 18.0 secs (83.07 mph (132.91 kmph)). The positions were unchanged until lap 27 when Gould went off at The Sweep, Pickrell broke a chain and Grant refuelled. Ago broke the race record by over one minute.

Result:

1st G.Agostini 500cc M.V.Agusta 46 mins 24.9 secs at 81.46 mph (130.33 kmph)

2nd P.Smart 750cc Triumph Trident 46 mins 31.4 secs at 81.26 mph (130.01 kmph),

3rd R.Borain 350cc Yamaha one lap behind.

In contrast the Dickie Dale Trophy races in the morning were contested in rain, which made conditions treacherous. Gould took the 250cc race at a canter, Howard took the 350cc race and in the 1000cc race Grant led initially until Ago took over to win.

Results:

250cm3 race:

1st R.Gould Yamaha 26 mins 29.3 secs at 72.49 mph (115.98 kmph)

2nd P.Aitken Yamaha 26 mins 34.9 secs at 72.27 mph (115.63 kmph)

3rd J.Boshoff Yamaha 26 mins 45.5 secs at 71.77 mph (114.83 kmph)

350cc race:

1st O.P.H. Howard Yamaha 26 mins 50.1 secs at 71.55 mph (114.48 kmph),

2nd J.Boshoff Yamaha 26 mins 52.0 secs at 71.46 mph (114.33 kmph)

3rd K. Zeeman Yamaha 26 mins 55.4 secs at 71.33 mph (114.12 kmph).

1000cc race:

1st G.Agostini 500cc M.V.Agusta 25 mins 3.4 secs at 76.64 mph (122.62 kmph)

2nd R.Pickrell 750cc B.S.A. Rocket3 25 mins 35.6secs at 75.04 mph (120.06 kmph)

3rd K.Crawford 750cc Rickman. 26 mins 10.4 secs at 73.37 mph (117.39 kmph).

Dickie Dale Trophy winner: G. Agostini.

The meeting did attract another South African legend. Martin Watson, in his first rides since his exploits on British circuits in 1965-66, was riding a Honda in the Natal production machine championship.

For 1972 Ago, Pickrell and Smart all returned, accompanied this time by Barry Sheene and John "Mooneyes" Cooper, who had a pair of Yamsels. Kork Ballington led the early laps of the third Daily News South African TT until passed by Ago who went on to win unmolested. Ballington and Sheen had a hard fight for second which ended in the Londoner's favour when he nipped past the local man at Quarry. The race was robbed of considerable interest by the absence of Smart and Pickrell who had crashed in a curtainraiser



race.

Result:
 1st G.Agostini 500cc
 M.V.Agusta 46 mins 8.2
 secs at 81.93 mph
 (131.08 kmph)
 2nd B.Sheene 500cc Suzuki
 46 mins 48.3 secs at
 80.76 mph (129.21 kmph)
 3rd K.Ballington Kawasaki
 46 mins 51.6 secs at
 80.68 mph (129.08 kmph).
 Class winners:
 350cc Steve Thompson
 Yamaha.
 250cc Jon Ekerold
 Yamaha.

Earlier the 250cc race saw Ekerold and Sheene fighting out the lead until lap 10 when Grant, who had come through from midfield, streaked passed them into the lead. He held off Ekerold's best efforts to win. Cooper led initially in the 350cm3 race before being struck by the fuel problems he suffered throughout his visit and Mike Fogg and Grant took over. Smart and Pickrell led the 1000cm3 race until lap 15 when both fell coming out of Quarry corner. Pickrell suffered a broken collarbone and both machines were badly damaged. Ago led, but fell on oil on the same spot a lap later allowing Ballington and Les van Breda into the top placings while he remounted for third - then refused to join them on the podium.

Results: 250cc
 race:

1st M.Grant Yamaha
 24 mins 3.5 secs
 at 79.83 mph
 (127.72 kmph)
 2nd J.Ekerold
 Yamaha 24 mins 9.3
 secs at 79.50 mph
 (127.20 kmph)
 3rd B.Sheene Yamaha
 24 mins 9.9 secs
 at 79.44 mph
 (127.10 kmph)

Mike Grant (40)(Honda) leads Barry Sheene (102)(Suzuki) through Quarry Corner,1972



(Image courtesy of Keith Edwards)

350cc race:

1st M.Fogg Yamaha 23 mins 43.7 secs at 80.95 mph (129.52 kmph),
 2nd M.Grant Yamaha 23 mins 46.4 secs at 80.78 mph (129.24 kmph)
 3rd P.Aitken Yamaha 24 mins 24 secs at 78.68 mph (125.88 kmph)

1000cc race

1 K.Ballington Kawasaki 24 mins 16.6 secs at 79.12 mph (126.59 kmph)
 2 L.van Breda 500cc Suzuki 24 mins 23. 2 secs at 78.74 mph (125.98 kmph)
 3 G.Agostini M.V.Agusta 24 mins 32.9 secs at 78.20 mph (125.12 kmph)

Dickie Dale Trophy winner: M.Fogg.

But the meeting ended on a tragic note. Veteran British rider Frank Cope(76), having a fun outing on Rod Gray's 200cc Yamaha in the Castrol production machine race, came down just before the start/finish line at the end of the first lap while at the back of the field. He sustained head injuries to which he succumbed on his birthday ten months later.

Mike Grant went overseas, the first top-line South African rider to campaign full time overseas in four years. But after a good start at Brands Hatch his career hopes ended with a broken leg at Tubbergen. For 1973 Ago and Cooper returned, the latter a last-minute replacement for Peter Williams on a John Player Special Norton. They were joined by Mick Grant (not to be confused with Pietermaritzburg's Mike who had enjoyed such success in previous races) and Derek Chatterton. It was left to the latter two to provide much of the excitement, Ago suffering ignition problems and Cooper gearbox maladies. In the Fourth Daily News South African TT Grant and Chatterton fought out the lead after Ago's retirement after two laps until Van Breda surprised them by coming from midfield to pass Chatterton ten laps from the end and spend the rest of the race hounding Grant.

Result:

- 1st MGrant 350cc Yamaha 46 mins 39 secs at 81.02 mph (129.63 kmph),
- 2nd L.van Breda 500cc Suzuki 46 mins 44 secs at 80.88 mph (129.40 kmph),
- 3rd D.Chatterton 350cc Yamaha 46 mins 45 secs at 80.85 m/'h (129.36 km/),
- 4th A.North 350cm3 Yamaha
- 5th E.James 750cc Ducati
- 6th J.Boshoff 250cc Yamaha.

In the curtain raiser Dickie Dale Trophy the 250cc class again produced honours for a home rider, Johan Boshoff, Chatterton the 350cc race chased by Alan North and Steve Thompson and the Formula 750cc race also provided home honours for Van Breda. Cooper almost got a good placing until the Norton's gearbox pulled another trick out of its gearbox hat and Ekerold pipped him at the post.

Results: 250cc race:

- 1st J.Boshoff Yamaha 24 mins 12 secs at 79.33 mph (126.92 kmph)
- 2nd K.Ballington Yamaha 24 mins 16 secs at 79.12 mph (126.59 kmph),
- 3rd M.Grant Yamaha 24 mins 20.1 secs at 78.90 mph (126.24 kmph).

350cc race:

- 1st D.Chatterton Yamaha 23 mins 57 secs at 80.16 mph (128.25 kmph),
- 2nd A.North Yamaha 24 mins 21.0 secs at 78.85 mph (126.16 kmph)
- 3rd S.Thompson Yamaha 24 mins 21.8 secs. At 78.79 mph (126.06 kmph)

Formula 750cc race

- 1st L.van Breda 500cc Suzuki 24 mins 17.4 secs at 79.06 mph (126.49 kmph)
- 2nd J.Ekerold 500cc Suzuki 24 mins 19.4 secs at 78.93 mph (126.28 kmph)
- 3rd J.Cooper 750cc JPS Norton 24 mins 19.6 secs. At 78.92 mph. (126.27 kmph).

Dickie Dale Trophy winner: D. Chatterton.

It was to be six years before another South African TT was held, thanks at least in part to the 1974 oil crisis. Let's face it, the Fifth Castrol South African TT was arranged largely to give Natal enthusiasts an opportunity to salute and celebrate the achievements of the province's own hero who, like his uncle, legendary ultra marathon runner Hardy Ballington, had rewritten the pages of history as the first South African rider to win a world championship Grand Prix; the first to win a double championship Grand Prix; the first to win a world championship and the first to win a double world championship.

The proceedings began with a procession of a huge number of motorcyclists from Church Street to the circuit, followed by a parade of honour by Kork in the company of Jim Redman.

Kork, representing Team Kawasaki Great Britain was joined by Tony Mang, representing Team Kawasaki Germany, Dutch rider Boet van Dulman and British rider Eddie Roberts.



The race was decided over two heats, the combined times giving the final positions. In both heats Ballington and Mang took their 250cm3 tandem twins to the front but Peter Ekerold and Mike Crawford harried the German throughout. Ekerold, younger brother of then international star Jon, upheld family honour with third in the first heat ahead of Crawford and they reversed the positions in the second heat. Ballington was lapping at one minute 14-15 seconds, with a final lap record of one minute 13.96 seconds (87.61 mph (140.17 kmph)).

Result:

Heat one:

- 1st K.Ballington 250 cm3 Kawasaki,
- 2nd A.Mang 250cm3 Kawasaki,
- 3rd P.Ekerold 250 cm3 Yamaha
- 4th M.Crawford 250 cm3 Yamaha.

Heat two:

- 1st K.Ballington,
- 2nd A.Mang
- 3rd M.Crawford
- 4th P.Ekerold.

Overall:

- 1st K.Ballington,
- 2nd A.Mang
- 3rd P.Ekerold
- 4th M.Crawford.