

Monday."

Taking another abrupt change of course, I asked Rich about his sponsorship in the desert races. Turns out that he actually has two sponsorships. Steer's, the Rickman distributors, have supplied him with three bikes. None of them were new. He uses the best one as his regular racing bike, keeps one as a spare and cannibalizes the third one for parts when necessary. Usually it isn't necessary, because Steen's gives him all the new parts that he needs. Steens also lets him have the other items that they sell, such as the Endura leathers, boots, goggles and such. Rich says he uses everything, except their helmets. He's partial to his Bell helmet and won't use any other.

His other sponsorship is C-B Motors, where he works. They give him the run of the shop to fix his personal bikes and let him use all their machinery and tools. My feeling was that Rich appreciates this very much, and that is more on the order of a personal favor to him. They won't stand to gain very much from his successes.

Rich does all of his own work; it usually takes him the better part of three evenings to prepare his bikes and he has to do it after his regular 8-hour stint at C-B Motors. He says that on the whole his Rickmans have proved remarkably reliable and his maintenance chores have been lighter on these bikes than on others that he has owned. Steens does not deliver parts, so Patricia, his wife, is the chief gopher, a

role she is hoping to abdicate as soon as Rich wins Number One and can negotiate a better deal. Rich, who can remember the days when he had to buy parts as well as go after them, seemed a little exasperated by his wife's complaint. Rich also pays his own expenses, such as gas and food on his trips to the desert.

Thorwaldson was somewhat annoyed by Maureen Lee's articles which suggested that there were professionals racing in the sportsman ranks out on the desert who were doing it for the money and risking the necks of the true-blue sportsman (read not-good-enough-to-get-paid) in the process. "Even most of the class 'C' riders can't even make a living racing," he said. "I wish she'd talked to some of us before writing that stuff."

I didn't want to put him in the possibly embarrassing position of denying (or confirming) that he received money from Steens for winning so I didn't ask him directly if he did. But he volunteered, "I feel that I'm doing well if I finish well in one out of every three races. But it costs me \$45.00 per weekend to race and I can't even break even unless I win every third race." By a brilliant bit of mathematical deduction you might figure out that Rich gets about \$125.00 for winning a race which is comparable to what is received by the other top 30 desert riders. But don't say I said so — it's a secret.

To Be Concluded Next Week

Puch-BMW To Build New Bike

Special from MOTOR CYCLE, England

First details of new machines in the BMW-Puch link have been announced. The machines are to be built by Austrian Puch factory in Graz to complement the bigger BMW models. There will be two near identical models, both 250cc and 350cc vertical twins with single overhead camshafts. The 250 gives 26 BHP at 9000 and has a top speed of 89 MPH. The bigger machine (same engine with bigger bore) gives 32 BHP at 9000; top speed 94 MPH. Both have six speed gearboxes and electric starters and weigh 353 lbs. Production is to start early in 1972. They plan to build 25,000 of the first year.

The FIM has banned any type of aerofoil spiler on racing machines. That 750cc Suzuki three-cylinder, new machine produces 70 BHP.

scene

speedway
australian

By Peter White
Photo by Speedway Photo Service

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA, Nov. 19, 1970 — One of Australia's greatest solo riders, Gordon Guasco, died from injuries sustained in a crash at the Liverpool Speedway, near Sydney on Sunday, November 8.

Guasco, a champion dirt track racer, was one of several big name internationals signed for the 1970-71 summer season at the track.

He had arrived home from England after a two year stint in the tough British League First Division only a week before and was making his debut at the meeting.

Crash occurred in his fourth race when a rider in front over-slid and knocked Guasco off his bike. As Guasco fell to the track he was hit by another rider who was traveling close behind.

He suffered severe head and chest injuries and had actually stopped breathing when ambulance officers reached him. With the aid of emergency oxygen they were able to get his heart pumping again and he was rushed to the hospital unconscious and in a critical condition.

He remained in a coma until his death some eight days later.

The accident and its tragic consequences has literally stunned Australian speedway.

Guasco was one of the country's best riders, a Test match necessity and a man of world class on the international scene. Perhaps the best of our current generation of competitors on ability, if not results. And certainly a fine man. Always willing to help a junior or assist anyone in anyway.

A former champion short circuit rider, he took to the speedway in 1962 and was an instant success. He rose to stardom rapidly and in 1964 he set sail for England.

Initially he rode for Sunderland, then for Wolverhampton.

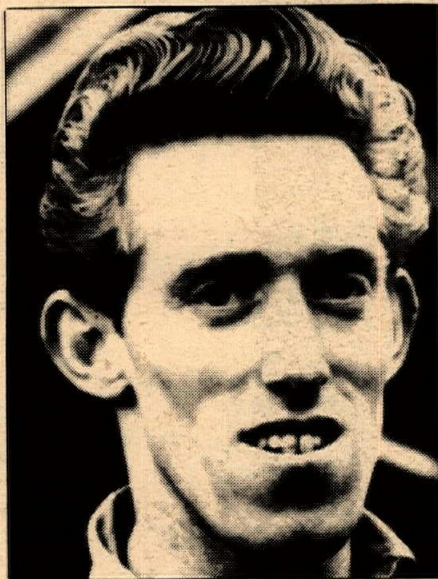
In 1965 he missed qualifying for the Speedway Championship of the World Final at Wembley Stadium, London, by a mere point.

He returned to Aussie in 1967 and swept all before him at the Liverpool circuit. Included in his list of victims was world champ Ivan Mauger and Americans Rick Woods and DeWayne Keeter.

Guasco went back to England in 1969 under contract to the Poole team and assisted them to the league championship that year. He then toured Poland, the toughest speedway nation in the world, and set the track alight with his devastating style.

Undoubtedly Guasco was a genius with a motorcycle and it is a shattering blow that he has fallen foul of the grim reaper.

Gordon, aged 29, leaves a widow and a two year old daughter. His loss is a disaster for Australian speedway.



The French critic Louis Dellue wrote in 1923: "I think that Rio Jim [as William S. Hart was known in the first real figure established by the cinema ... and his life the first myth."

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