



A master in action—Brian Stonebridge (Matchless)

Moto-Cross Grand Prix

B. G. Stonebridge (Matchless) Wins Cotswold International Scramble :
Big Crowds See Sparkling Racing in Bright Weather

THE prevalence of foot and mouth disease made it necessary for this year's Stroud Valley Club's Cotswold Scramble to be postponed from June 28 to last Saturday, September 13. This fact had unfortunate repercussions. The Cotswold meeting was selected to stage the British event to rank as the Grand Prix to count in the European Moto-Cross Championship. The postponement meant that the British race became the sixth and last of the Grand Prix meetings instead of the second. In effect, the title was won a week earlier by Victor Leloup (F.N.) of Belgium, who, first home in the Grand Prix de France, placed himself in an unassailable position. Thus the keen competitive edge was absent from the British race and, indeed many famous scramblers whose names were in the list, including four Belgians, did not put in an appearance. Nevertheless, the standard of riding during the afternoon was exceptionally high, and the large crowds gathered at the 2½-mile Nymphsfield (Gloucestershire) circuit had little reason for disappointment.

An unofficial computation of the final result of the European Championship, in which the best four performances count, gives Leloup the winner, as mentioned earlier, with 28

points. Second is the famous Belgian, A. Mingels (Matchless), with 20 points scored in three events. Had the British rider J. C. M. Avery (B.S.A.) won the Cotswold race on Saturday, he would have achieved 20 points also, but unfortunately he retired and had to be content with third position in the Championship on a score of 12 points from two events. Brian Stonebridge (Matchless) who won the race on Saturday, annexed fourth place with eight points obtained for that single success!

At Nymphsfield, the hillsides form a natural arena for the circuit. Colourfully clad spectators packed the slopes and waited expectantly in the bright sunshine for 3 p.m. and the start of the international event. The circuit was similar to that employed for previous "Cotswolds"; it embraces first-class scramble terrain—severe ups and downs, twists and turns, a modicum of mud, a dash of shallow water, a few slightly rocky patches, and plenty of bumps guaranteed to keep even the best suspension systems and the brawniest muscles fully occupied. For the most part, the surface is grassland.

Bilowy clouds were threatening to obliterate the sun (more than that—threatening rain, though it did not materialize) as the

much-reduced field of 19 starters came to the line for the big race. They were set off in two flagged lanes which merged into the circuit proper, and all got away well. Right from the beginning, G. H. Ward (A.J.S.), P. A. Nex (B.S.A.) and B. G. Stonebridge (Matchless) were well to the fore; Victor Leloup, too, was well placed, though he is capable of much more purposeful riding than he showed during the first lap. Ward kept in front for the lap, but howling at his heels were Stonebridge and Nex; there was no more than a yard or so between each machine. All three held a clear 200-yard advantage over the rest led by Leloup.

So fast were the leaders going—unofficial timing showed 3m 38s for the lap—that they caught and overtook the last straggler, H. Veevers (197 Dot), on Lap 2. W. Barugh, also mounted on a 197 c.c. Dot, was showing just what can be done with a small-capacity two-stroke in mighty four-stroke company, by holding 10th place just behind the charming young American rider on holiday in England, Bud Ekins (498 Matchless). Only about 50 yards behind Barugh came another rider of a two-stroke Dot—T. Cheshire.

Misfortune eliminated L. R. Archer (499 Norton) who fell and bruised his hip slightly, and J. C. M. Avery (B.S.A.) whose front mudguard was jammed down on the tyre.

Stonebridge got ahead of Ward and they tussled in thrilling style every yard of the way. Nex had lost a few yards, but was within striking distance. Then, early on during the sixth lap, Ward overbraked on a short downhill section and dropped his A.J.S. across the track. Aided by marshals he was away again, fairly quickly, but Nex was unavoidably baulked. This left Stonebridge comfortably out in front where he remained without challenge till the end.

Ekins—Barugh Battle

During the seventh lap, Nex had passed and gained a 7s-lead over Ward who had bent his handlebar controls in the fall and was obviously uncomfortable. Later he retired. Leloup circled in easy and, apparently, unhurried style in fourth place with Derek Rickman (B.S.A.) between him and Nex.

Highlight of the last few laps was the battle between Bud Ekins and the irrepresible Barugh. They were within feet of each other on the last lap, and they were so close as they swept over the finishing line that only the judges could decide who had gained fifth place; the American got the verdict, and both riders got a warm, and well deserved, ovation.

For the Lightweight Race (machines up to 250 c.c.), L. R. Archer brought his very peppy 249 c.c. Velocette to the line and showed how to get in front and stay there throughout four laps. On the second lap, T. Cheshire (197 Dot) overtook G. Davis (249 Triumph) for second position and he, too, held his place to the end. As in the Grand Prix, there was a very close finish for a place—the fourth—in which J. C. M. Avery (249 B.S.A.) just pipped Davis.

After his Grand Prix win, B. G. Stonebridge decided he had had enough exercise for one day, and he did not turn out for the Junior and Senior Races. Hence it was not surprising that G. H. Ward (A.J.S.) was soon in command of the Junior (350 c.c.) event. He led all the way and finally won by a margin of over half a minute.

During the first two laps, inspiringly close racing was provided by J. C. M. Avery (B.S.A.), G. J. Draper (Norton) and P. A. Nex (B.S.A.), who were disputing second place. All three appeared to be riding much faster than Ward, yet, in fact, he was slightly increasing his lead all the time.

On Lap 3, Nex dropped back about 75 yards; Avery and Draper continued their tussle. Two laps later, Avery overdid it on

a slippery bend; he slid down, and the stirring battle was over. Nex also passed Avery. No further change occurred in the first four positions. At six laps, Ward had a 24s lead which he increased in the remaining two laps.

It was approaching 6.30 p.m. as the 23 starters—including Barugh on his Dot—got ready for the Senior (500 c.c.) Race. As Ward's 500 c.c. A.J.S. was out of commission, he borrowed Bud Ekins' Matchless and lent his three-fifty A.J.S. to Ekins. However, Ward's luck was out because after three laps he retired with gear box trouble.

Draper and Avery then "got down to business." Seldom has more tigerish scrambling been seen. Feet only separated them. They leaped, slid and wriggled their machines along to lap repeatedly in under 3½ minutes. They were 5s ahead of Archer in third place after two laps; 24s after three; 33s after five. It seemed impossible that they could keep going without mishap.

Meanwhile, Cheney was fourth, Rickman fifth and W. Nicholson (B.S.A.) had come through to sixth; the American, Bud Ekins, was seventh and enjoying a duel with W. A. Bell (B.S.A.).

Archer suffered from water in the carburettor and retired on Lap 7. Cheney was delayed by sliding down on a greasy climb. Avery established a two-yard lead over Draper, and he held it during the first half of the last lap. Then Draper got ahead again but had a moment or two of both in a muddy section. Avery slipped into the lead to win a magnificent race by a few yards.

International Moto-Cross Grand Prix (10 laps).—1. B. G. Stonebridge (498 Matchless); 2. P. A. Nex (499 B.S.A.); 3. Derek Rickman (499 B.S.A.); 4. V. Leloup (498 F.N.); 5. Bud Ekins (498 Matchless); 6. W. Barugh (197 Dot).

Lightweight Race (4 laps).—1. L. R. Archer (249 Velocette); 2. T. Cheshire (197 Dot); 3. A. W. Lee (197 Francis-Barnett). **Best** 175 c.c.—T. Sharp (123 B.S.A.). **Junior Race** (8 laps).—1. G. H. Ward (347 A.J.S.); 2. G. J. Draper (348 Norton); 3. P. A. Nex (348 B.S.A.). **Senior Race** (8 laps).—1. J. C. M. Avery (499 B.S.A.); 2. G. J. Draper (499 Norton); 3. Derek Rickman (499 B.S.A.).



Winner of the Junior Race, Geoff Ward (A.J.S.). Following is P. A. Nex (B.S.A.), who was third



There was a spirited tussle in the Grand Prix between Bud Ekins (Matchless) of the United States, nearer the camera, and W. Barugh, riding a 197 c.c. Dot. They are shown crossing the finishing line. Ekins finished fifth, Barugh sixth