




START



‘The Scene at the
start resembled
a miniature
Grand Prix.’

Belfast Newsletter

22nd April 1929

Organised by the City of Derry &
District Motor Club and originally
planned for the roads of Londonderry,
the first NW200 was relocated to the
North Coast and held on 20th April 1929.

1929 NW 200

W. J. McCracken wins the first North West 200, taking 3 hours 8 minutes and 35 seconds.

The 11 mile 'Triangle Circuit' takes 18 laps to cover the 200 mile race distance.

Of 31 bikes that start, only eight cross the finishing line, as the length of the course takes its toll.



The early 500cc races were dominated by Ernie Nott (right, winner 1929, 1930, 1931 & 1932) and Jimmy Guthrie (winner 1934, 1935, 1936 & 1937). Guthrie was killed at the German Grand Prix in 1938 and the City of Londonderry trophy was renamed in his honour.



Four riders missed the start of the first NW200 in 1929. One of them was J. McKane (pictured) from Dervock who collided with a car near Ballyreagh during the previous day's practise session. He suffered a fractured leg and head injuries. *Courtesy of Kevin McKane*

1930

The North of Ireland Motor Club take over the event and the start/finish moves from Magherabuoy to Portstewart. A rolling start with one minute intervals manages congestion. A car leads them along Portstewart Promenade before pulling off the road to allow the race to get underway.

1933

For the first time the roads close for the Official Practice at 5am on a Wednesday morning and the event was forced to take place on a Thursday.



1937, the original starting grid was at the York Hotel, Portstewart.



1934

Jimmy Guthrie wins the first of four successive 500cc races and sets the first ever 80mph+ lap in the process.

1936

In 1936 spectators were killed in a horrific accident at the TT Car Races, Newtownards and government now insisted on accident insurance for riders and spectators.

1937

The North West 200 became the race with the highest insurance cover in the world -

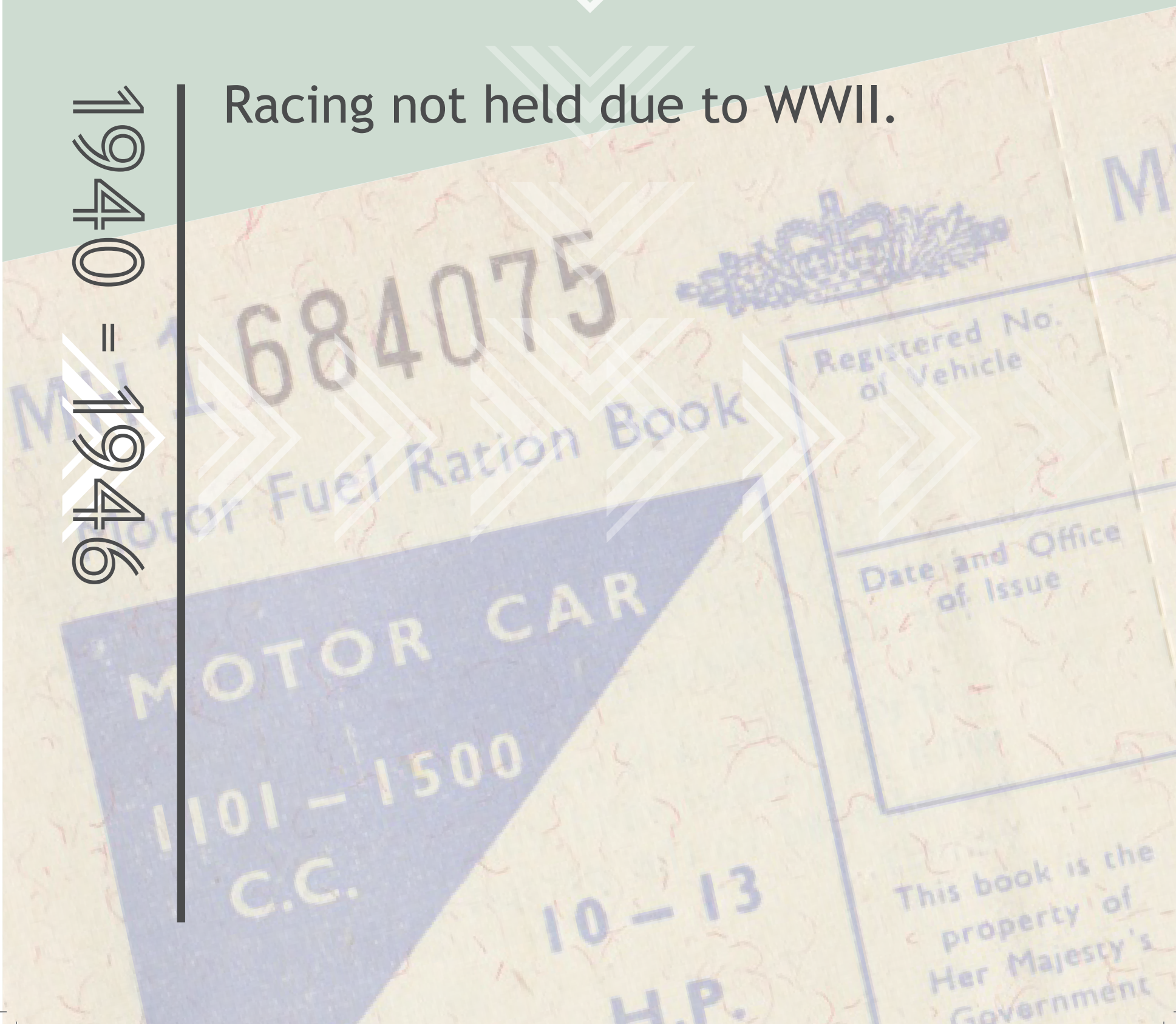
£8,250,000!

1939

The first recorded death at the NW200 was **Norman Wainwright** from Drumslade.

1940 = 1946

Racing not held due to WWII.



OFFICIAL SOUVENIR PROGRAMME

Price ONE SHILLING
and SIXPENCE



IRELAND'S North-West "200"

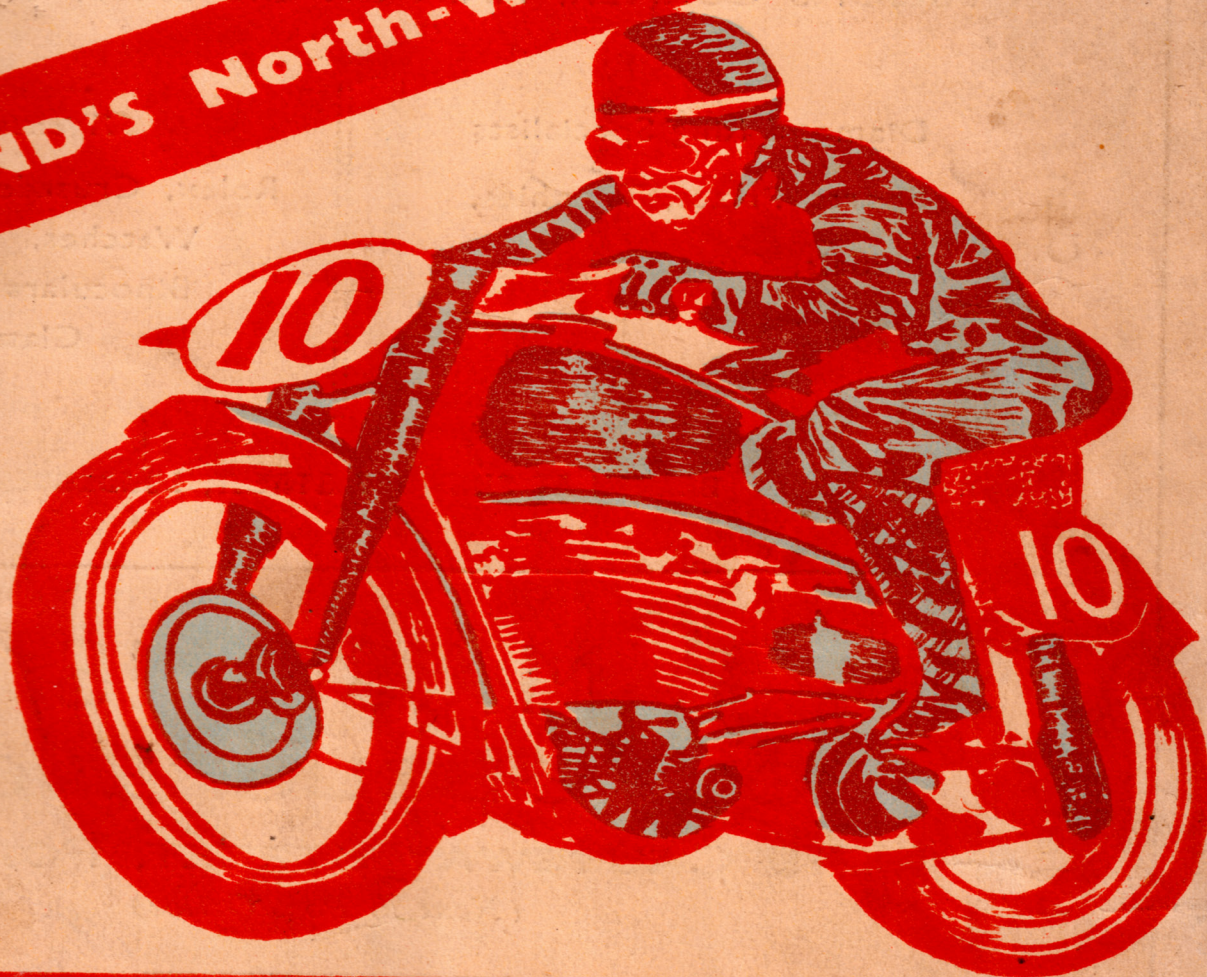
1947 Victory International Event

SATURDAY, 17th MAY

Portstewart, Coleraine, Portrush Circuit

Massed Start at 2 p.m.

ROADS CLOSED 1 p.m.



MOTOR CYCLING

FOR THE BEST

*Reports and
Photographs*



1947 NW200 programme cover



1947



1948

Special permission granted by the Ministry of fuel and power to allocate petrol for NW200 enabled it to return on 17 May 1947.

No event was possible in 1948 as the Government continued its strict fuel rationing.

1949

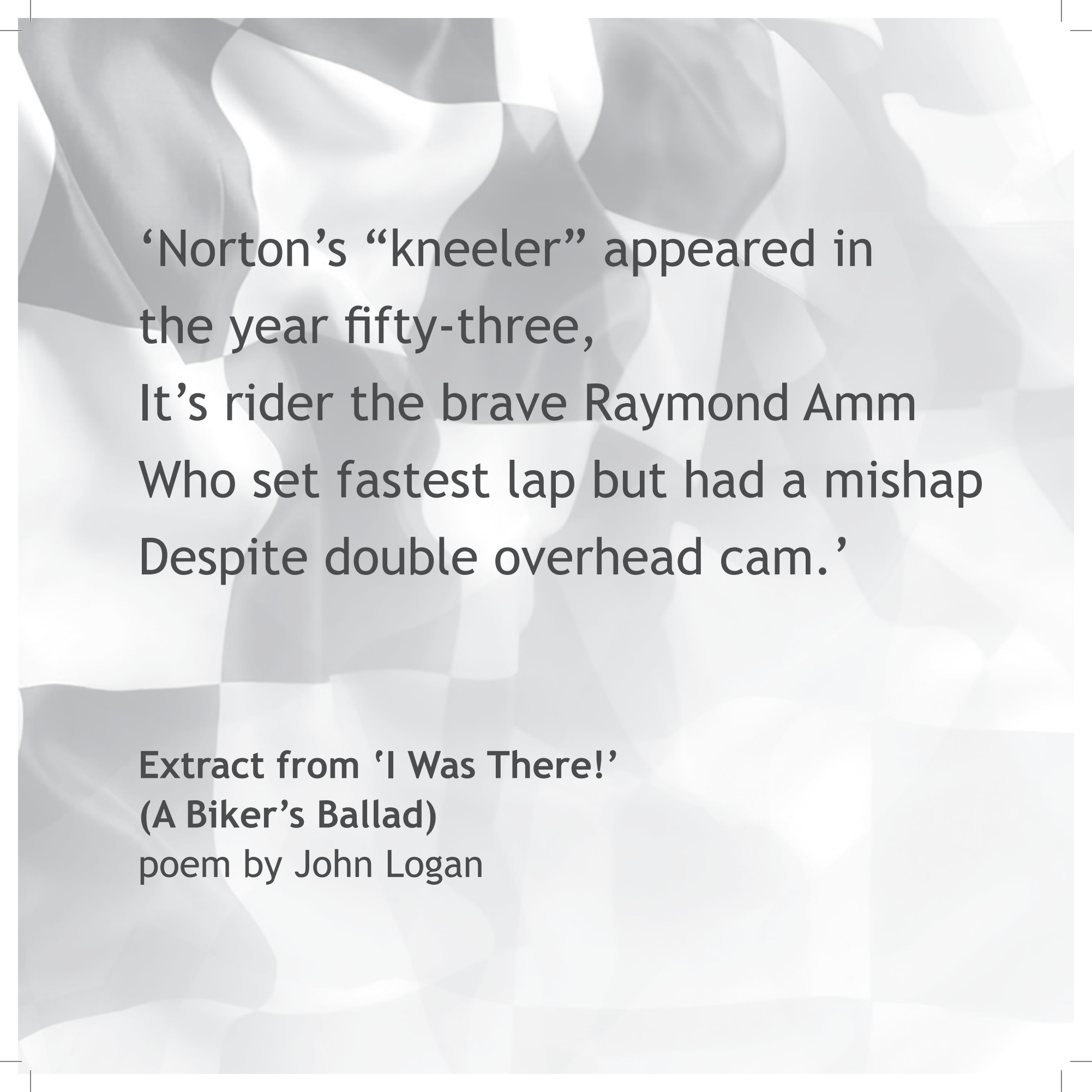


Racing resumes with 126 competitors and 18 timekeepers, the highest timekeeping staff ever deployed at any major cycle race in Ireland.

P. L. Phillips dies at the NW200.

1950

Artie Bell gave the legendary featherbed Norton its first International victory when he won the 500cc race.



‘Norton’s “kneeler” appeared in
the year fifty-three,
It’s rider the brave Raymond Amm
Who set fastest lap but had a mishap
Despite double overhead cam.’

Extract from ‘I Was There!’
(A Biker’s Ballad)
poem by John Logan

1951

William Bennison dies during the lightweight 350cc race.



1953

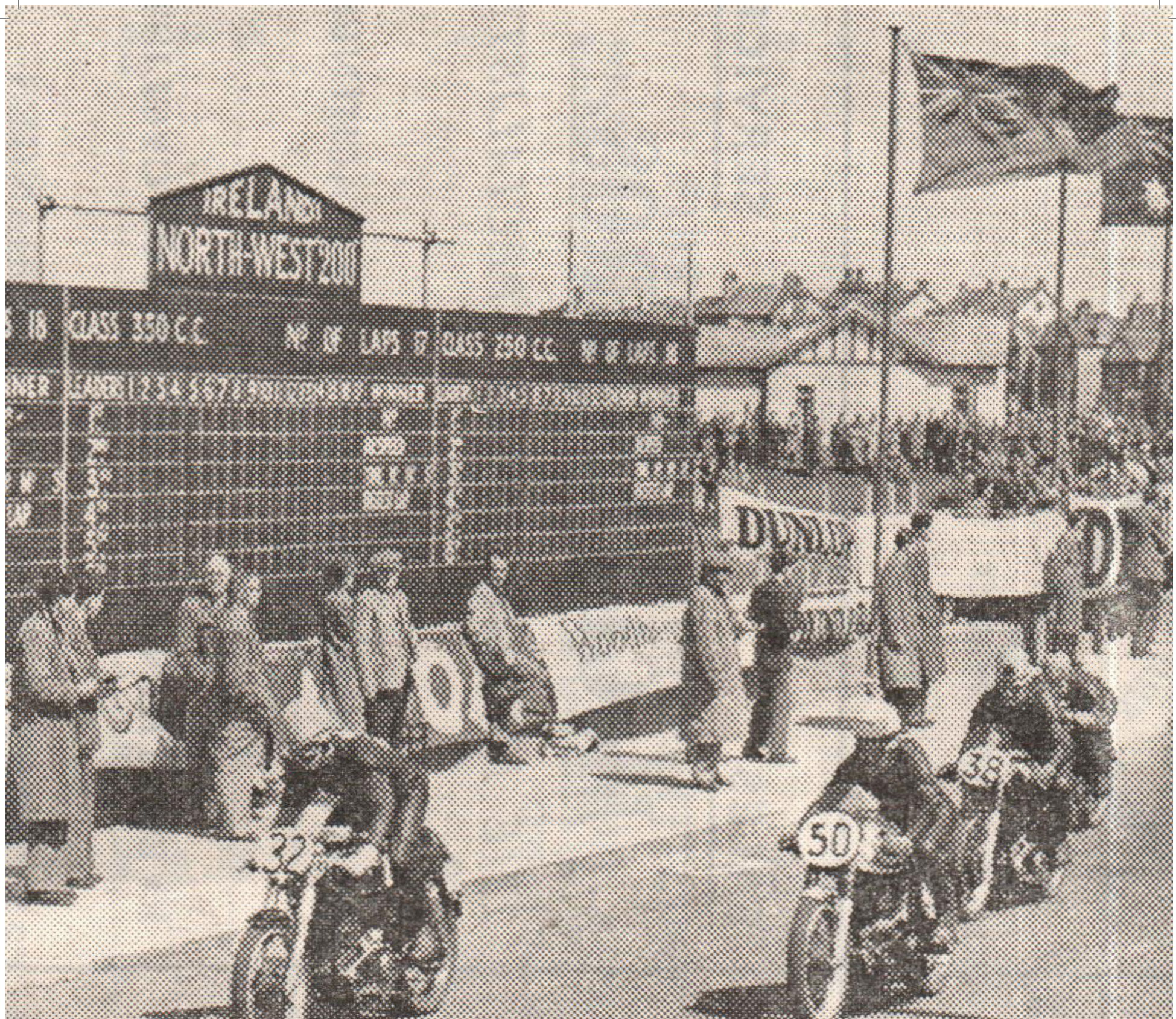
Gilera make their debut at the NW200 ridden by **Dickie Dale** and **Reg Armstrong**.

1955

Alan Lyons wins the 250cc race.
Alan & Ernie Lyons are the first
brothers to win races at the NW200.

1956

L.G. Aislabie dies during the NW200.



1954, Junior race start.

1957

Jack Brett becomes the first to break the 100 mph lap speed, winning the 500cc race on his Norton. Other riders soon followed as their lap times got shorter and quicker.

Bikes are becoming better and faster as technology advances.

1959

The North of Ireland Motor Club faces financial difficulties.

Coleraine and District Motor Club takes over, switches the event from a mass start 200 mile race, to three individual races - 125cc, 250cc and a joint 350cc/500cc. The NW200 became a 200 mile event in name only.

1960

1961

1963

The North of Ireland Motor Club
back in control, retaining the
new format.

Further improvement to the circuit
had straightened out the approach
to Millburn and removed the more
severe kinks from the Coast road.

No racing due to logistical and
financial constraints.

1964

The Coleraine and District Motor Club return as organisers.

Ralph Bryans won 350cc and 250cc races for Honda, the first NW200 win for a Japanese manufacturer.

Dick Creith, from Bushmills, wins the 500cc race on his Ryan Norton, a feat he repeats in 1965.



NW200 1964, Ralph Bryans, Richard Creith & Jack Findlay are presented with their trophies.

Courtesy of Mrs HP Maxwell.

1965

Treble Irish victory by **Dick Creith** (500cc), **Tommy Robb** (250cc) and **Ian McGregor** (350cc).

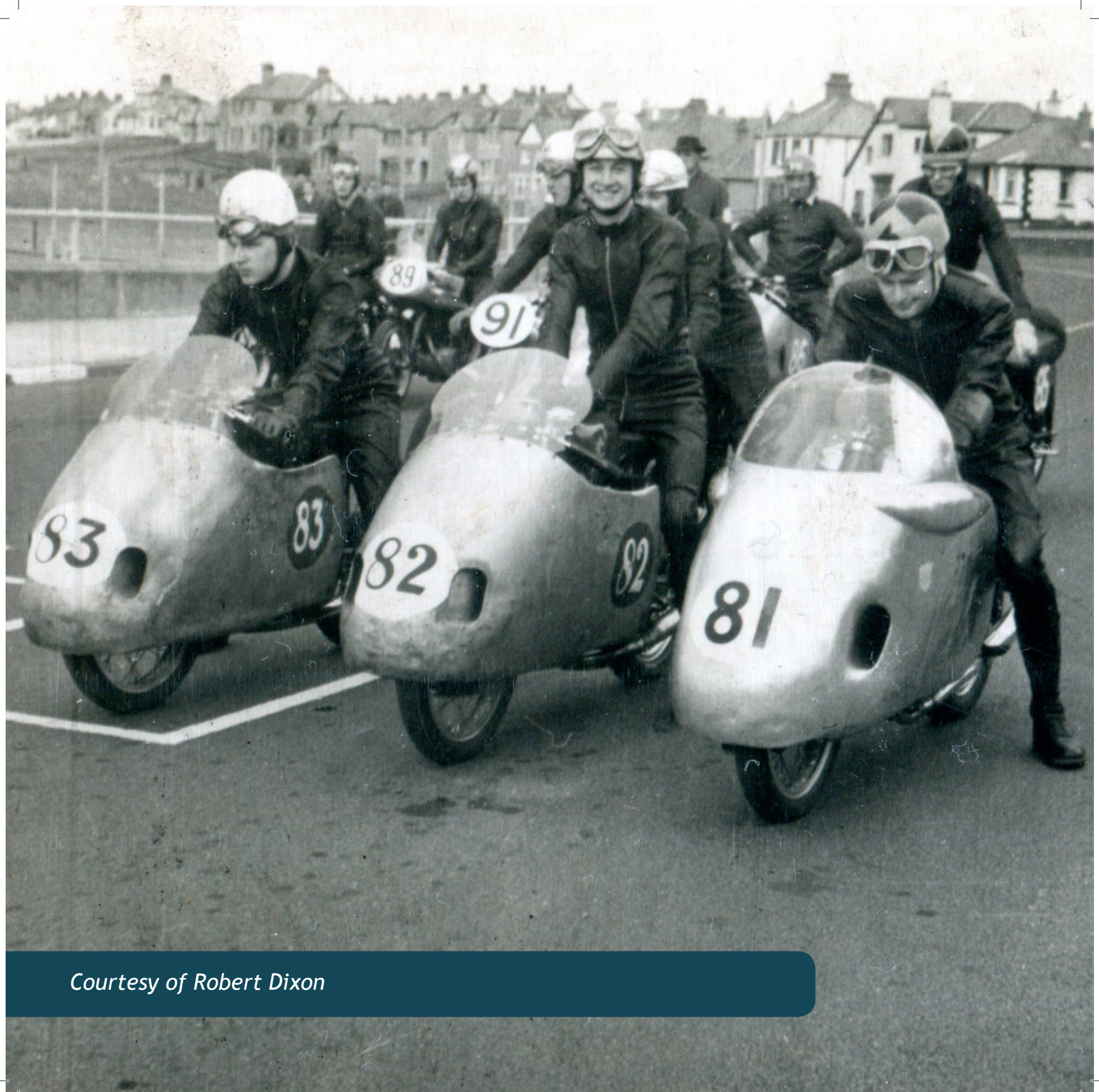
1968

The 1968 races would prove to be a classic in NW200's distinguished history with **Ralph Bryans** smashing the course record at 109.23mh, only to miss victory through mechanical problems.

1966

Phil Read appeared on the Weslake 500cc twin, with fans anticipating a world beating performance only to be disappointed when oil pressure problems brought the bike to a halt at Henry's corner during practice.

Organisers made further changes to the course to take out the slow left handed turn at Metropole.



Courtesy of Robert Dixon

1970

Suzuki claim their first victory with **Stuart Graham** winning the 500cc Production race. **Andrew Manship** loses his life during a practice race.

1971

The last time the NW200 runs along the length of Portstewart's Promenade and the Boulevard, Coleraine.

1972

Civil unrest spreads due to The Troubles, and as a result, the 1972 NW200 is cancelled.

1973

The revised circuit is two miles shorter and the start/finish moves from York Hotel to its present location between Portrush and Portstewart.

Graham Fish loses his life after crashing in practice.

1974

John Williams wins the 350cc, 500cc and 750cc races - the first to claim a hat trick of victories in one day.

‘Back to 1975 ... we actually got the Works Kawasaki team to come over. That was a well-known rider at the North West, **Mick Grant** and another Londoner, **Garry Ditchburn**, who came over on their three cylinder, two stroke Kawasaki machines. Fantastic machines they were. But this was really the first time we saw the slick tires coming on - where there was no tread. The tires have to be warmed up before riders went out. At that time there was no sighting lap; the flag was dropped and they were away in the race. And I can remember that the riders actually had to put the front wheel against the kerb and then almost do what we would call now a burnout, to heat the tire up - to get it to a working temperature - and the crowd were absolutely in awe because they’d never seen anything like this before.’

Victor Freeman

1975

Mick Grant records the first ever 120mph+ lap on his 500cc Kawasaki, setting a new lap record of 122mph.



1976

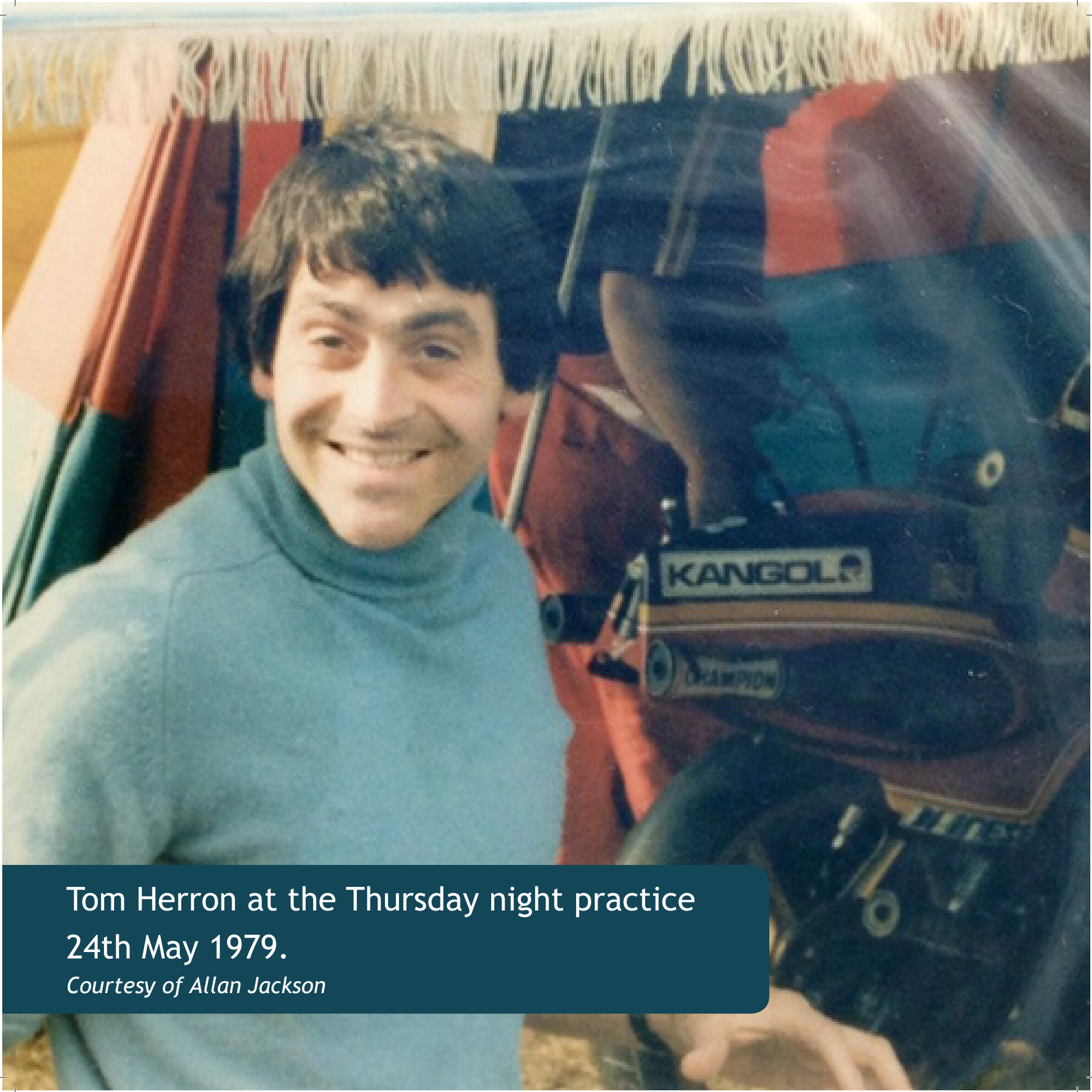
New chicane is introduced on Coleraine - Portrush section to negotiate a new roundabout at Ballysally.

1977

Ray McCullough and **Tony Rutter** cross the finishing line of the 350cc race together- the only recorded dead heat at the NW200 to date.

1978

Tom Herron records a lap record of 127.63mph. This record remained unbeaten on any British race circuit until **Adrian Archibald** at the Dundrod 150 in 2003.



Tom Herron at the Thursday night practice
24th May 1979.

Courtesy of Allan Jackson

1979

Jubilee 'Black Saturday'

In a series of crashes, **Tom Herron** and **Brian Hamilton** lose their lives, **Frank Kennedy** dies from his injuries. **Kevin Stowe** and **Warren Walling** would recover but never race again.

Joey Dunlop has his first victories at the NW200 winning the superbike races.



Frank Kennedy at the Grid.

1980

Circuit shortened to 8.9 miles to improve safety with the removal of the Shell Hill Bridge Section.

Mervyn Robinson is fatally injured at Mather's Cross.

1982

New Zealander, **Stu Avant**, becomes the first overseas rider to win a race at the NW200, taking victory in the 500cc race.

John Newbold dies at Juniper Hill during the Superbike Race.

1983

A chicane is introduced at Juniper Hill, the fastest corner in the race.



1986

Robert Dunlop beats Gene McDonnell in the 350cc race to take his first NW200 victory.

Pat McLaughlin loses his life at Mather's Cross.



Joey & Robert Dunlop.

1987



1988

Joey Dunlop achieves a famous hat-trick winning the 750cc and both Superbike races, a category for high modified production motorcycles.

Steve Bull loses his life at Mather's Cross.

A chicane is added at the start and finish.


Joey Dunlop takes his last ever NW200 victory, winning the 750cc Production race.

1986

Steve Hislop wins his only races at the NW200, the 750cc King of the Roads race and the Superbike race.

1990

Robert Dunlop scores a hat trick of victories - two Superbike races on a JPS Norton and a 125cc race win. He repeats this in 1991, 1993 and 1994.



‘When Philip McCallen
won the five on the
one day... it was such
a good day, such a
cracking day.’

Colin & Sinead Lemon

1992

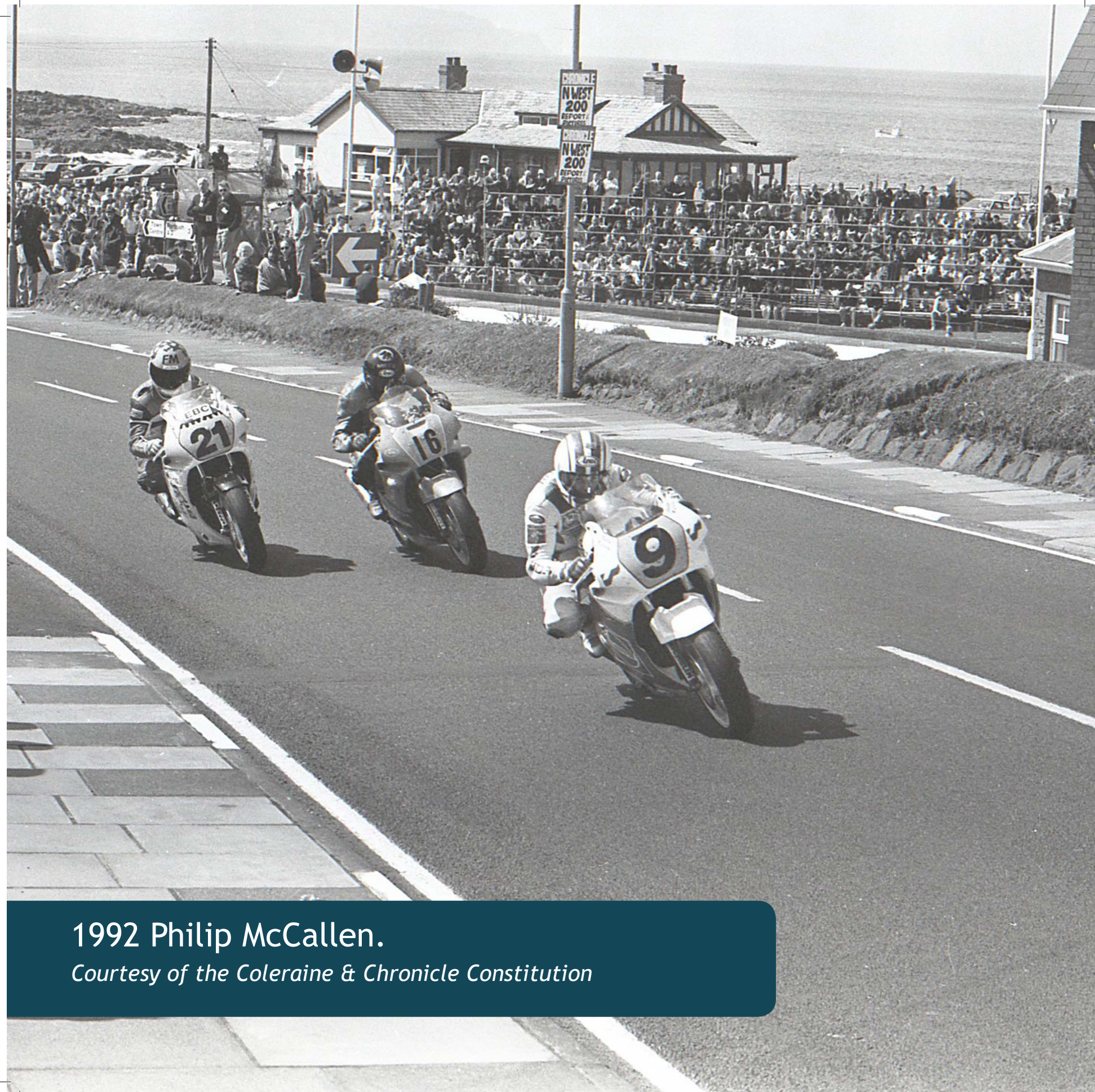
Philip McCallen wins an unprecedented five races in a day - 400cc, 600cc, 250cc and both Superbike races.

1994

Robert Dunlop has six superbike wins in five years.

1996

A chicane is introduced at Magherabuoy.



1992 Philip McCallen.

Courtesy of the Coleraine & Chronicle Constitution

1997

Philip McCallen wins his 11th and final NW200 race. **Michael Rutter** opens his NW200 account with wins in the 600cc and Superbike races.

1999

Donny Robinson, a local rider and past NW200 winner, loses his life at Mill Road Roundabout during Practice Night.

Owen McNally from Coleraine loses his life after crashing at the Ulster Grand Prix.

Simon Beck loses his life at the Isle of Man TT.

2000

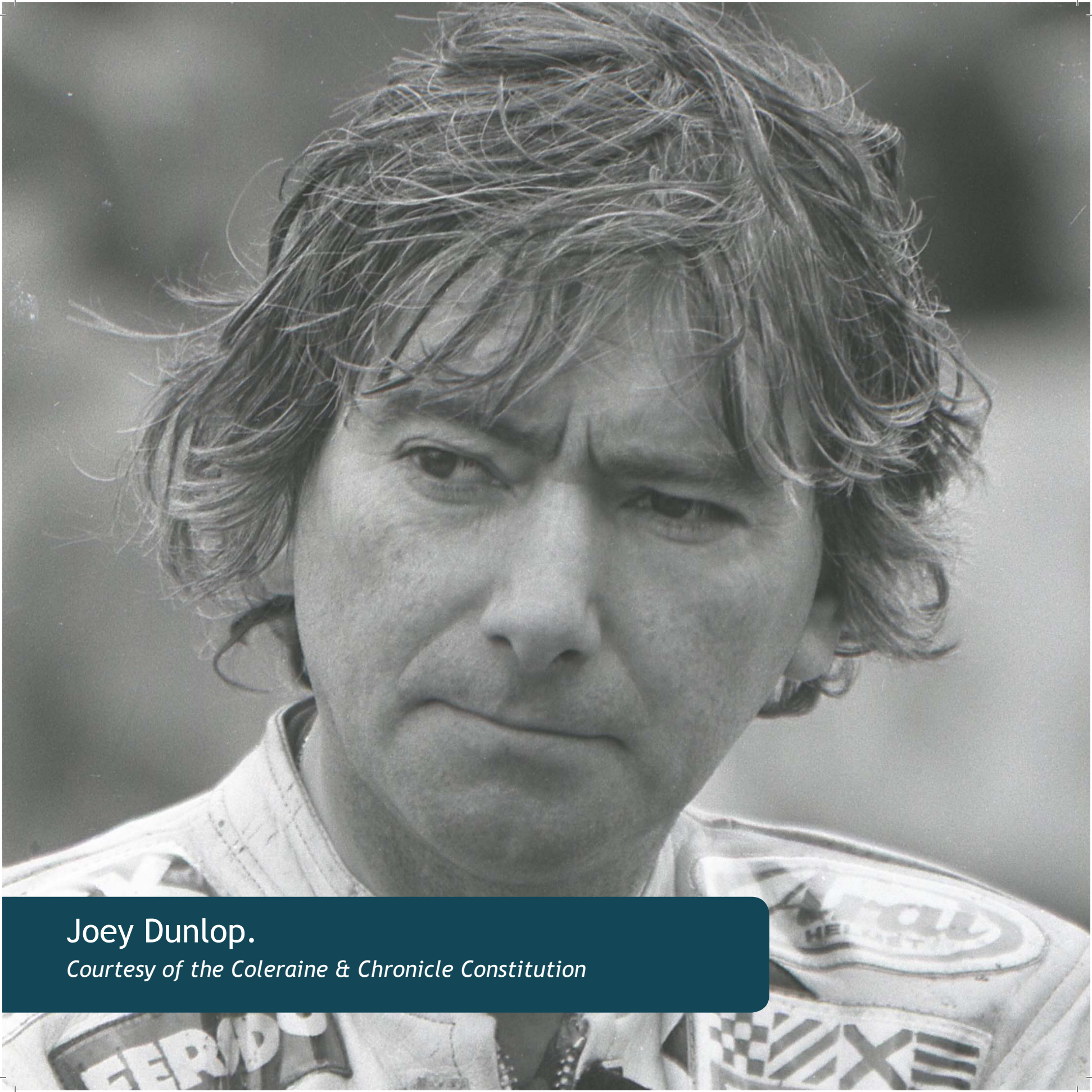
Joey Dunlop starts what would be his last NW200. He would lose his life in a crash in Estonia on 2nd July.

Coleraine's Andrew McLean loses his life at the Monaghan races.

2001

NW200 is cancelled due to the Foot and Mouth crisis.





Joey Dunlop.

Courtesy of the Coleraine & Chronicle Constitution

2002

Racing returns with a new Clerk of Course, **Mervyn White**.

Bruce Anstey made his debut, setting pole position and then winning the production race.

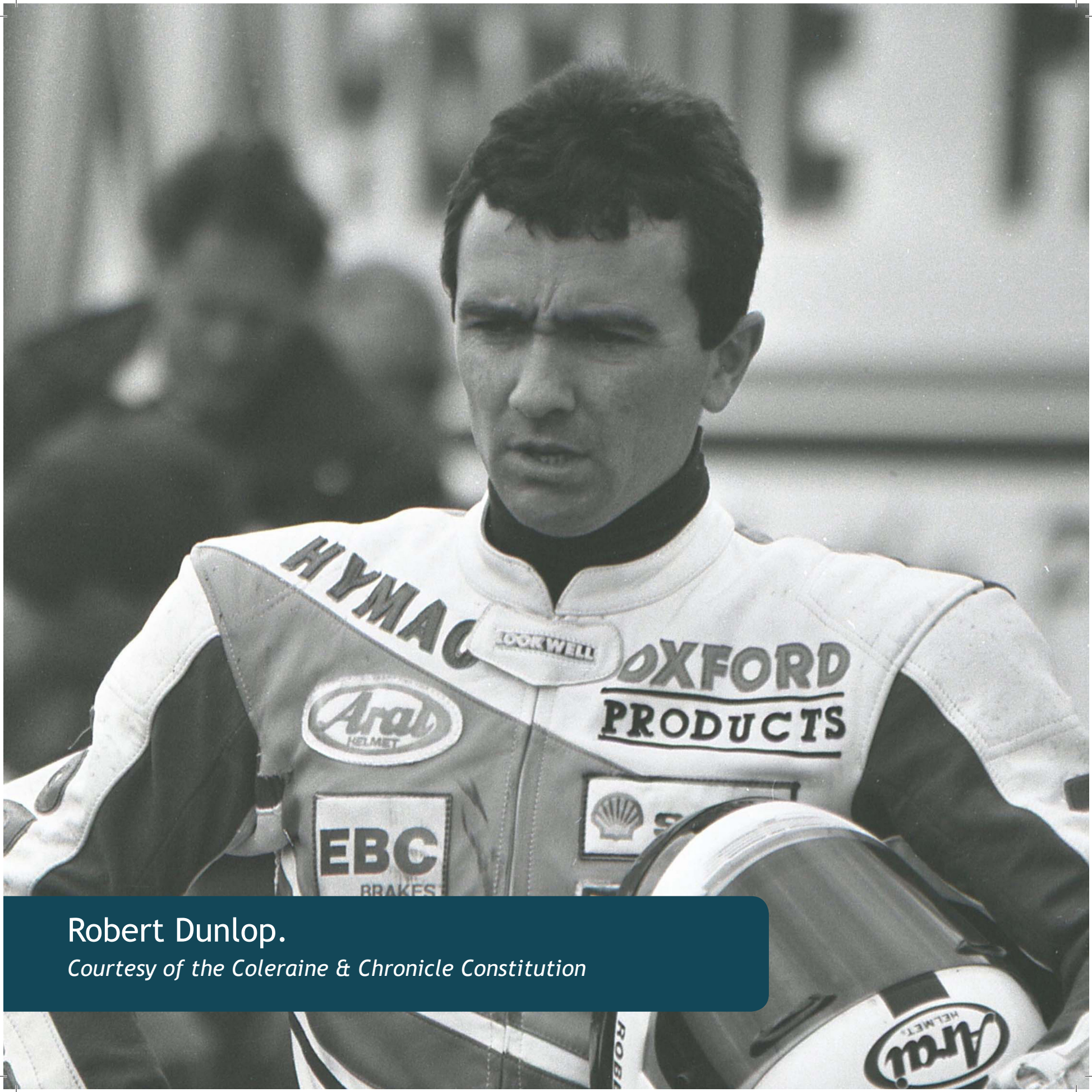
2003

Ryan Farquhar takes both Supersport 600cc wins for Kawasaki.

2004

Michael Rutter makes history - the first rider in the British Isles to record a straight line speed of over 200 mph.

Ian Lougher takes the 125cc win for the fifth successive year.



Robert Dunlop.

Courtesy of the Coleraine & Chronicle Constitution

2006

Robert Dunlop records his fifteenth and last victory at the NW200, for 125cc race.

Steve Plater takes his first wins, taking victory in both Superbike races, eleven years after making his debut in 1995.

Nigel Beattie becomes the first and only rider from the Isle of Man to win a race, taking victory in the 250cc race.



Michael Dunlop deep in contemplation before the start of Saturday racing, wearing a wrist band in honour of his father in 2017.

Courtesy Gordon Leith



2007 2008

Bruce Anstey takes a hat-trick of wins.


Robert Dunlop loses his life after crashing at Mather's Cross in practice. Less than two days later his son **Michael** went on to win the 250cc race amidst unprecedented highly emotional scenes.

Alastair Seeley takes his first NW200 win.

2009

Mark Young loses his life crashing at Mather' Cross during his first time at the NW200.





‘It was awfully
sad when Robert
Dunlop was killed,
but incredible what
Michael did the
day after.’

Neil Spencer & Terry Peate

2010

Mather's Cross chicane is introduced to improve race safety. **Paul Robinson** bags his first win at the NW200 in the 125cc race, following in the footsteps of his father **Mervyn Robinson**.

Daytime practice is held for the first time and the racing programme extended to include two races on the Thursday evening. **Alastair Seeley** takes his first hat trick.

2011

An extensive oil spill on the track, a bomb threat and poor weather causes racing to be cancelled after the completion of only one race.

2012

Martin Jessopp records the fastest ever speed at 208mph during Tuesday's practice.

Mark Buckley suffers a fatal crash during the Superstock race.



Church Corner, Jessop, Irwin and Rutter.

Copyright Gianluca Domenicali

2014

Simon Andrews dies from his injuries after suffering a serious crash during the second Superstock race.

2015

Alastair Seeley takes another hat-trick and equals **Robert Dunlop's** record of 15 wins at the NW200.



York Corner, Hutchinson, Seeley, Johnston, Dunlop M.

Copyright Gianluca Domenicali

2016

Alastair Seeley records his 16th and 17th race wins.

Average lap record is broken by **Michael Dunlop** at 123.207mph.

Malachi Mitchell-Thomas dies as a result of a crash on the third lap of the Supertwins race.

2017



Alistair Seeley secures another four wins at the NW200, the second highest at a single meeting, to move onto 31 wins, also bettering **Philip McCallen's** long-standing record number of podiums.

Martin Jessopp achieves a double by winning both the Supersport and Supertwins events.



William Dunlop in the Mar-Train Yamaha pit garage following the first day practice for the North West 200 in 2017.

Courtesy Neil Anderson

2018

Glenn Irwin wins the Feature Superbike race, the first for Ducati since 2008.

Irwin takes both Superbike race wins whilst another hat-trick sees **Seeley** move onto 24 wins and 36 podiums.

William Dunlop loses his life during a practice race at the Skerries 100.

2019

90 years of the NW200.

