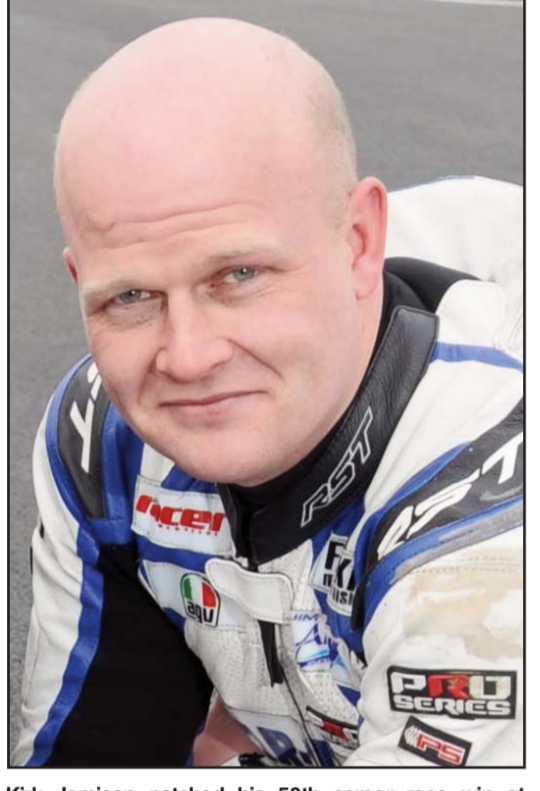


Motorcycling with John Savage

'Masterful' Kirk hits half century

Kirk Jamison is something of an all round sportsman. In addition to motorcycle racing, football, rugby and clay pigeon shooting could all be featured on his CV, albeit with varying degrees of competence! However, I'd never heard of his reputation as a cricketer, until he scored his 50 on Sunday!

The Ardsman makes no bones about the fact that his target this term is to emulate his dad, Norman, and his uncles, David and Brian Jamison, by claiming an Irish Championship title, and he started the season in fine style with a non-championship victory at Bishopscoort last month. Last weekend, when the four round 650,000 Adelaide Masters Series kicked off at Mondello Park, Jamison notched his 50th race win and left the Co Kildare circuit as leader of the Masters Superbike Championship, after a valuable shakedown for the commencement of the Irish Superbike Championship (ISB) at Bishopscoort on Good Friday and Easter Saturday, continuing with the second round of the series at Kirkistown on Easter Monday. Kirk, commercial manager with H&J Martin, beamed: "Very uncharacteristic of me to have a good start to the season, so hopefully we can keep the momentum going now, heading to Easter and the start of the ISB Championship."



Kirk Jamison notched his 50th career race win at Mondello Park on Sunday. Stephen Davison/Pacemaker Press International

Despite having to retire from Sunday's Leinster 200 Grand Final race at Mondello, Jamison's win, together with third and fourth place finishes, left the Greyabbey-based rider top of the Adelaide Masters points standings. This season, Jamison has switched from a Honda Fireblade CBR1000RR to the BMW S1000RR raced with distinction last term by Scots ace Keith Amor, and following a full day of testing at Mondello last Friday, his dad, Norman, had the bike working well. Jamison qualified the Jim Angus Contracts BMW third fastest for last Saturday's first Superbike race, behind talented young Dubliner Mark Pollock and defending Masters champ, Portadown man Marshall Neill, who last season rode Gerry Kingsbury's KP Suzuki GSX-R1000, which Pollock is campaigning this time around, while Neill has switched to a factory backed Aprilia RSV4, astride which he will contest the British National Superstock 1000 Championship, which kicksstarts at Brands Hatch over the Easter weekend. After 15 laps of the 1.85km Mondello national circuit, Neill comfortably won the opening Superbike race by 5.5 seconds from Pollock, with Jamison a similar distance back in third, safely ahead of former Irish Superbike champion, Dubliner Derek Shiels, on his

Honda Fireblade. Jamison conceded: "I got a terrible start and was about 10th on lap one. I picked my way through the pack though and by about two thirds distance I was up to third. Marshall was away, but I thought I was catching Pollock and I could get second. My brake faded badly though and Pollock got through backmarkers well, so I just eased off to take a podium." Kirk quipped: "I needed SBS pads for the bike, to stop the brake fade, but, of course, the supplier is Bike Bits in Bangor. I had people running all over Northern Ireland for me on Saturday night, whilst I sat in my caravan, resulting in my pads being delivered first thing on Sunday morning." Conditions were wet and slippery for Sunday's first Superbike race, which set the scene for a thrilling and frenetic 10 lapper; at the conclusion of which Kirk ran out the victor by four seconds, ahead of another ex-Irish Superbike champion, Brian McCormack from Waterford, who didn't have the best of weekends on his TAG Honda, with Lisburn's Davy Haire a distant third aboard his Fireblade. Reflecting on his maiden Masters win, Kirk related: "Another woeful start meant having to fight through the field again, but I did it anyway. I had to be aggressive though and the first lap was really eventful. Someone tried to go round me at turn one, so I held my ground, which resulted in two riders' race being over before it started. Then I tried to go round the outside of Davy Haire at turn two, but he got a moment and ran wide, leaving me to take an alternative route from turns two to three on the grass — that was a bit of a clencher moment!" "I got up to fourth and easily closed the gap to the leading trio of Neill, McCormack and Pollock. I was just figuring where I could make my passes, when it all went a bit mad. Coming out of turn one, McCormack had a big moment, but got away with it. Pollock also had one, but landed on his head. I just about managed not to get collected by Pollock and as I made my way round him I could see Marshall [Neill] rolling through the grass at turn three. Like the parting of the Red Sea, I was now in second. "I closed back onto McCormack and I made the penultimate lap on my move to take the lead. I set about disengaging my brain, making the traction control work overtime and ensuring my pit crew aged 10 years in one day. I set the fastest lap of the race on the last lap by over a second to take my second win of the year and my 50th career win." The second Superbike race began in dry conditions, however, when it began to rain the race was halted and re-run over five laps, at the conclusion of which Neill out-sprinted Pollock to the chequered flag to win by less than half-a-second, while Shiels held off Jamison for third in a photo finish, with Manxman Gavin Hunt, the son of former Isle of Man TT favourite Paul, not far behind in fifth on his BMW. Kirk recounted: "Just for a change, I got a crap start. I picked my way through quite quickly and was in third after a couple of laps and catching the leading duo. I thought a win was on again, but my visor got covered in fluid and I thought a hose had burst. I didn't want to pull in, so thought 'I'll keep an eye on the temperature gauge and see if I get away with it.' "A few corners later I had a massive highside and I would like to say talent saved the day, but I had already closed my eyes and prepared for the sirens — it was just luck that threw me back into the saddle. Then I thought something was



Kirk Jamison heads for victory on the Jim Angus Contracts BMW. Gordon Williams

leaking onto my back wheel, so I was looking round for smoke or some sign that something was wrong. The red flags came out and I headed back to the grid to get my crew to investigate the problem for me. "I have to say they were very efficient. Brother Cliff had the answer in seconds: it was raining! In my defence, the rain only hit my visor at one point of the track and it was very fine rain, so I couldn't see it until I took my helmet off."

Jamison made another of his characteristic copybook getaways in the re-run: "The restart was over five laps which, when you are in the mood for selecting reverse gear off the line, is not good. I fought my way through, again with the fastest lap of the race, but ran out of time and finished fourth. Not impressive, but enough to leave Mondello leading the series."

Analysing his performance, Kirk smiled: "All in all a great weekend. I know the reason for the bad starts, but couldn't risk making a change heading into a race. Mondello is also usually my worst circuit, so I am really looking forward to going to Bishopscoort, which is my favourite."

He added: "Thank you to all my team for their hard work over the weekend and to my loyal band of supporters — it's always great to have you cheering me on. Hopefully I'll get to see lots more of Jim Angus on top of the pit wall celebrating wins!"

After he scored a popular win in the Leinster 200 Grand Final, Mark Pollock was presented with one of Irish racing's most famous trophies, the solid silver Hutchinson Trophy, which dates back to 1923 and has been received in the past by such luminaries as G. W. Walker, father of legendary commentator Murray (in 1928), together with Eddie Laycock, Gary Cowan, Jeremy McWilliams, Tommy Robb, Ralph Bryans and Joey Dunlop — the recipient of the trophy on four occasions during the 1970s and '80s. Pollock won the 12 laps race by half-a-second from Marshall Neill, with Dubliner Jack Kennedy an excellent third on the C o l d i n A p p l e y a r d / M a c a d a m Yamaha R6 he will campaign in the British S u p e r s p o r t Championship, in which he placed fourth overall last year. 23 year old Kennedy, who impressed the previous weekend during his 'wild card' outing in the World Supersport Championship race at Donington Park in L e i c e s t e r s h i r e, predictably dominated the Supersport races, when he scored three wins from three starts. The former Irish National and Irish Clubmans' Supersport champion opened his account with an impressive victory in last Saturday's first race, when he completed the 15 laps with four seconds in hand over Dunadry's

Johnston (Honda). 3rd race: 1, Neill; 2, Pollock; 3, Shiels; 4, Jamison; 5, G. Hunt (BMW); 6, Johnston; 7, Byrne; 8, O'Connell; 9, Swords; 10, Delaney. Supersport, 1st race: 1, J. Kennedy (Yamaha); 2, J. Buckley (Yamaha); 3, G. Jeffers (Yamaha); 4, R. Ryan (Triumph); 5, K. Farmer (Yamaha); 6, A. Kirk (Yamaha); 7, C. Thompson (Triumph); 8, R. Lanigan (Yamaha); 9, J. Bonar; 10, C. Elkin (Triumph). 2nd race: 1, Kennedy; 2, Jeffers; 3, T. Bradley (Yamaha); 4, D. Hoey (Yamaha); 5, S. Hurley (Yamaha); 6, A. Courtney; 7, J. Patterson (Yamaha); 8, B. Merrigan (Yamaha); 9, Farmer; 10, Elkin. 3rd race: 1, Kennedy; 2, Jeffers; 3, Farmer; 4, Kirk; 5, Ryan; 6, Lanigan; 7, Thompson; 8, Elkin; 9, J. Fuller (Yamaha); 10, Bonar. Two-stroke, 1st race: 1, R. Shanahan (250 Honda); 2, T. Lawlor (250 Honda); 3, K. McGreevy (125 Honda); 4, M. Kelly (250 Honda); 5, L. Johnston (125 Honda); 6, K. Hadden (125 Honda); 7, S. Wright (250 Honda); 8, J. Lynn (125 Honda); 9, J. Johnston (125 Honda); 10, R. Patterson (125 Honda). 2nd race: 1, Shanahan; 2, Kelly; 3, S. Wilson (125 Honda); 4, N. Percy (125 Honda); 5, Lawlor; 6, J. Johnston; 7, S. McAdoo (250 Honda); 8, Wright; 9, L. Johnston; 10, Patterson. 3rd race: 1, Lawlor; 2, Shanahan; 3, Kelly; 4, Percy; 5, McGreevy; 6, C. Donnelly (250 Honda); 7, Lynn; 8, L. Johnston; 9, Wright; 10, Hadden. Supertwins/Pre-97, 1st race: 1, J. Ralph (600 Honda); 2, M. Hollingsworth (600 Honda); 3, M. Sweeney (650 Suzuki); 4, A. Farrell (600 Honda); 5, R. Pentony (650 Suzuki); 6, L. Kavanagh (600 Honda); 7, T. Whitmore (600 Honda); 8, G. McGovern (600 Kawasaki); 9, B. McCaughey (650 Suzuki); 10, P. Tobin (650 Kawasaki). 2nd race: 1, Ralph; 2, Whitmore; 3, Sweeney; 4, Pentony; 5, M. McKinney (650 Suzuki); 6, B. Glover (650 Suzuki); 7, Kavanagh; 8, G. George (650 Suzuki); 9, T. Heapy (650 Suzuki); 10, Tobin. 3rd race: 1, Ralph; 2, Sweeney; 3, Farrell; 4, Pentony; 5, Hollingsworth; 6, Whitmore; 7, Kavanagh; 8, D. Lee (600 Honda); 9, McCaughey; 10, Glover. Supersport 400, 1st race: 1, J. Floody (Ireson Yamaha); 4, M. Donovan/C. Smyth (Ireson); 5, A. Johnston/P. Carville (LCR Suzuki); 6, S. Killough/B. Butler (Baker Yamaha). 2nd race: 1, Young/Russell; 2, Johnston/Carville; 3, Lynch/Lynch; 4, Mullen/Galligan; 5, Killough/Butler; 6, J. & J. Newton (Equipe Yamaha). 3rd race: 1, Donovan/Smyth; 2, Mullen/Galligan; 3, Johnston/Carville; 4, T. O'Reilly/D. Shild (OMD Suzuki); 5, P. Gilkenane/G. Moly (Yamaha); 6, Newton/Newton.

'Hutchy' set for NW200 return

Following the career threatening injuries he sustained during a British Supersport Championship race at Silverstone last September, Yorkshire star Ian Hutchinson made a welcome visit to Northern Ireland last night (Wednesday) to confirm his return to the North West 200, next month.

'Hutchy', who scored an unprecedented five wins from five starts at last year's Isle of Man TT, won a Supersport race at the North West last May, and also triumphed at the Ulster Grand Prix last August, has been battling hard to overcome the serious injuries he sustained when he fell from his Padgett's Honda CBR600RR and was unavoidably hit by following machines at the Northamptonshire circuit. The 31 year old's career seemed to have been prematurely ended, while he was at the peak of his powers, however, his dogged determination should put him back on track when the new season kickstarts. Having switched to Shaun Muir's Swan Yamaha team for this term, the Bingley rider, who was in the province last night for a NW200 press conference, hosted by Coleraine Borough Council, revealed: "Training and physio sessions are currently going extremely well and I'm feeling very good and have regained weight. "I'm working out in the gym three times a week and using the cross trainer and cycling machines and am also receiving regular physiotherapy on my legs. The metal frames are still protecting my legs, but I'm certainly not in any pain and the doctors are really

delighted with my recovery progress." Ian, who has been working hard since early January, following a number of pre-Christmas operations, continued: "I'm also out on the roads cycling, as well as using a quad bike on off-road trails near my home and all these activities are helping me regain strength and fitness in preparation for the metal cages coming off around Easter time." Hutchinson, who has ruled out a racing return at the opening round of the British Superbike Championship at Brands Hatch in Kent at Easter, admitted: "I'll be going along to Brands to sample the atmosphere and see everyone. In addition, Shaun Muir Racing and the Swan Yamaha team plan to unveil my new superbikes and by that stage I should be able to walk 'cage free'. I must admit, I'm really looking forward to it." Prior to the North West, where he aims to compete in the Superbike, Superstock and Supersport races, Hutchinson hopes to test at the Croft circuit in north Yorkshire. He outlined: "Whilst race day at the North West is hard work, the track is not a busy one and the two practice sessions, especially Thursday daytime, will give me the chance to ease back into competitive racing."



Ian Hutchinson with the Yamaha R1 on which he aims to return to action at the North West 200. Tim Keeton/Impact Images

Sam Martin Memorial ride-out

Friends of Sam Martin are organising a ride-out to mark the first anniversary of his untimely death, as the result of a race crash at Kirkistown.

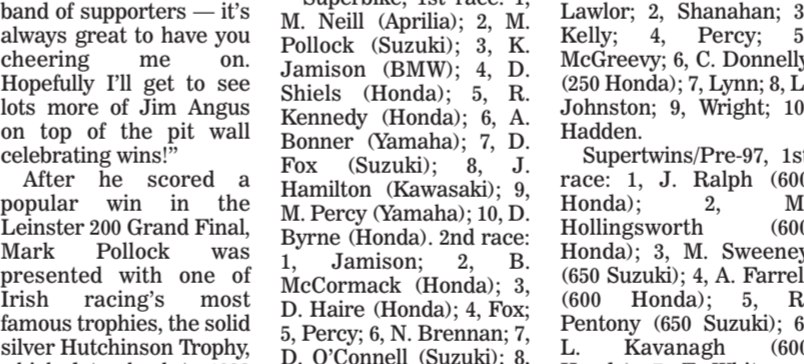
The ride-out will leave Carrickfergus Castle car park at 10am, and will travel along the coast road to Portrush, Sam's favourite motorcycle ride. The ride-out will take place on Sunday, May 1, from his home town of Carrickfergus.

participants. Everyone is welcome to participate and proceeds will go to the medical team of the Motor Cycle Union of Ireland (Ulster Centre). Sam's mother, Betty, will be at the car park to see off all the

Scarborough start for local duo

Ballygowan's Michael Pearson and Saintfield's Davy Morgan will get their road racing season underway at the Ian Watson Spring Cup meeting in Scarborough on Sunday, April 17.

The event will also witness the return to the Oliver's Mount parkland circuit of 68 times Scarborough winner, Dungannon man Ryan Farquhar, the defending Ian Watson Cup champion, and Ballymoney's Adrian Archibald, who will have his first outing as Farquhar's team-mate in the Supertwins class, in which the pair will race KMR Kawasaki ER6 machines. Also returning to the popular north Yorkshire seaside venue will be the circuit's most successful ever competitor, Dromara-based Welshman Ian Lougher, who has amassed a remarkable 128 wins there. Other entrants include Ballymoney's William Dunlop, Dubliner Derek Shiels, Hillsborough's David Guiney and Lisburn man Darren Gilpin, plus Irish road race regulars, Manx-based Carlisle man Chris Palmer, a 81 times Scarborough victor, as well as Daley Mathison and Keith Pringle.



Davy Morgan

American ace to make Irish debut

Californian Jeremy Toye will make his Irish debut at next month's North West 200, at which he will race in both Superbike races, alongside Steve Mercer from Kent, in English father and son John and Yonny Weeden's Sondel Sport Kawasaki team.

35 year old Toye, who has also announced his return to this summer's Isle of Man TT, after a five years absence, finished third aboard a BMW S1000RR in last November's Macau Grand Prix, over the daunting Guia street circuit, when he became the third fastest rider in the history of the famous event, during a race won for the third successive year by Scotsman Stuart Easton, ahead of another former Macau kingpin, Midlander Michael Rutter. Last year, Maidstone man Mercer competed in selected rounds of the British Superbike and British National Superstock Championships, and both riders will be under the patronage of John Weeden, a former North West 200 and Ulster Grand Prix front-runner in the Formula One and Formula Two World Championship back in the 1980s, including finishing runner-up to Banbridge man Brian Reid in the Formula Two TT in both 1985 and '86, and fourth in the Formula One TT in 1986. Last month, Toye, from San Diego, figured prominently in the opening round of this year's American Superbike Championship at the world famous Daytona International Speedway in Florida, at which Suzuki's Blake Young scored back to back wins. Toye began racing at the age of 14 and back home in the 'States' he has competed in a variety of motorcycle sports, including supercross, motocross, flat track and, of course, road racing. Astride a Martin Bullock Suzuki GSX-R1000, Toye was fastest newcomer at the 2006 Isle of Man TT, with a best finish of 20th in the premier Senior race, and he returned across the Atlantic with three prized bronze TT replicas, while his team-mate Mercer was second fastest TT newcomer in 2009, when he lapped the 37.73 miles Snaefell Mountain Course at over 121mph in the Senior race, and last year Mercer finished 17th in the Senior TT, with a best lap at over 124mph.



Jeremy Toye flirts with the Guai circuit armo, as he heads for third position in last November's Macau Grand Prix. Stephen Davison/Pacemaker Press International



Steve Mercer rounds The Gooseneck during last year's Isle of Man TT. Stephen Davison/Pacemaker Press International