

NEOTT MotoTrials

Find Your Edge...

NEOTTNews - Special Edition - Scottish Six Day Trials (SSDT)



Special Edition – SSDT – May 7, 2018

With the start of the 2018 SSDT we thought we'd create a special edition of NEOTTNews and capture Mike McCabe's story as the first American to ride in the SSDT. If you don't already know, Mike is the founder of the North Eastern Oklahoma Trials Team ([NEOTT](#)). Mike's background and the origins of NEOTT can be found in the January 2018 edition of NEOTTNews [here](#).

Email feedback, future articles and ideas to neottnews@fastmail.com

Mike McCabe - 1st American rider to compete in the Scottish Six Days Trial (SSDT)

The most fun, but maybe the most scary thing I've ever done!!

The road to Scotland

In the late 60's and early 70's, the Spanish factories that made trials bikes were sending their sponsored riders to the USA to put on trials schools and promote trials as well as their bikes. In 1968 the first trials school I knew about was Sammy Miller's, for Bultaco, in St. Louis. I managed to get an entry, and went with one of my riding friends, "Doober" (not a typo!) Dotson. I rode a Greeves and Doober rode a Penton.

The school was on Saturday, and then there was a trials event on Sunday. For some reason, we had to be back in Tulsa Sunday and couldn't stay for the trial. After the school, I asked Sammy Miller what I could do to improve my riding – "Get a Bultaco" he said. So, just as soon as I could, I bought my first Sherpa T!

In 1969, I heard about another school/trial being put on by Mick Andrews for Ossa in Columbia, Missouri. So off we went – same deal, school Saturday, trial Sunday. I lucked out and won the trial, and got a trophy from Mick, which I still have. Fast forward to 1970 and Mick's back for another school. Again, I won the trial, and also became better acquainted with Mick. We started communicating by mail and the occasional phone call.

In 1971 the North Eastern Oklahoma Trials Team ([NEOTT](#)) decided to have Mick do a school here in Tulsa. Everything got arranged and while Mick was in New England getting ready to compete in the SSDT he broke his shoulder. They called to say he couldn't do our school, as he was looking for someone to operate on his shoulder. Well, I had just had my first knee surgery and suggested my doctor. After talking to Dr. Myra Peters, she agreed to see Mick. The Ossa factory rep, Roy Weaver, drove Mick and his wife, Jill, down to Tulsa where his shoulder was repaired. He couldn't travel for a few weeks, so he stayed with us in Tulsa and it was during this stay that he first suggested that I might like to ride the SSDT – see, all that long winded story did lead to my going to the 1972 SSDT!

Logistics

My wife, Carroll, as usual, was super supportive and we began to try to figure how to do it. I had to get an entry and an International competition license, both which were difficult to do – another story there. Then, how to pay for the trip, how

to get a bike, etc. etc. Sammy Miller agreed to rent me a Bultaco for about \$90.00 for the week, and it turned out to be the bike he had just won the British National Championship on, tag number COT 6K.

At that time, you had to arrange for your own fuel and support for the event. At the time, one of my riding buddies was Kirk Mayfield and I talked his Dad into letting Kirk go with me to Scotland. The plan was for Kirk to chase the trial in a car with gas and supplies for me. (btw, these days an entry includes all your fuel, and the fuel stops are manned by the British Army)

So off we went to London where my friend, Tony Bentley who was also the subscription manager for the English motorcycle newspaper I subscribed to, met us at the airport and kindly put us up for a couple of nights. Tony also arranged for a rental car – a Hillman Hunter station wagon. The first couple of days in London, Tony took us around to all the motorcycle shops we'd heard of and read about.

One of the shops was the official Bultaco imported for England, Comerfords Cycle. This is where I really got lucky. We met Jock Wilson, their shop manager, who was also going to manage their SSDT team. Their team was sponsored by Castrol Oils, who were doing all their gas stops and support. So Jock got me sponsored by Castrol, which enabled me to get fuel etc. at all their stops. So that let Kirk Mayfield skip every other fueling stop, and made it way easier for us to stay on time. (Note: You are allowed to be one hour late/per day – more than an hour late and you are excluded, so staying on the route, and assigned time is a big deal.)

We then went down to the South coast of England to Sammy Miller's shop to prepare the bike. We took it apart, stuffed it in the back of the little station wagon, and drove ten hours up to Scotland. Considering that we were driving on the wrong side of the road, completely lost most of the time, it was fairly uneventful except for the time in the middle of the night when Kirk fell asleep while driving – I was asleep in the back, with the motorcycle, when things started flying around – we both woke up in the center median going the right way, so we just went on – how do we survive our youth?

The Big Event



85	J. Ballantyne	C.S.M.A.	Greeves	169
86	K. & A. Rowbothan (K. J. Rowbothan)	Wolverley M.C.C.	Bultaco	244
87	J. McCabe	Loch Lomond M.C.	Montesa	249
88				
89	Montesa Permanyer S.A. (G. Galloway)	Middlesbrough & Dist. M.C.	Montesa	247
90	J. A. Loneragan	Castle Colchester M.C.C.	Montesa	247
91	R. B. Ward	Antelope M.C.C.	Cotton H'der	170
92	M. Rapley	Otter Vale M.C.	U.B.M. Bul'co	244
93	D. J. Hobbs	Metropolitan Police M.C.	Ch'y Triumph	650
94	J. G. Swaffield	Isle of Wight M.C.	Bultaco	244
95	P. W. Hooley	Manchester Eagle M.C.	Bultaco	250
96	M. Wm. McCabe	U.S.A.	Bultaco	250
97	K. Fleming	Lochaber	Montesa	247
98	B. Shuttleworth	Bath & West of England	Bultaco	244
99	C. R. Worley	Thirsk & Dist. M.C.	Bultaco	250
100	R. Forbes	New Brighton M.C.C. N.Z.	Bultaco	244

In 1972 the trial started in Edinburgh and then was centered for the rest of the week in Fort Williams. So we got to Edinburgh, went through tech inspection and found the hotel Mick Andrews had arranged for us and got ready for the big adventure!!



Monday morning, and off I go, riding through the huge city of Edinburgh, in traffic, on the wrong side of the road, over a toll bridge and out into the country side – finally getting to ride some sections.

The weather was dry and lucky for me the trial that week was mostly good weather. The first days route was 160 miles and 24 sections, mostly road riding and fairly easy sections.

But that didn't last very long – the rest of the week was much harder and the whole trial comprised of 749 miles and 161 sections.

By Thursday morning when I got ready to go out my clothes and boots were soaking wet and I was tired and sore and I thought "*What have I gotten myself into?*" But, knowing that I was also the first American to compete in the SSDT, I was determined NOT to be the first American to DNF!! Thursday evening the City of Fort Williams puts on a street party for the riders and fans – really great fun and a break from the almost constant riding and working on the bike.



Finally, the last day and the long ride back to Edinburgh, with sections all along the way – and to the finish: probably the most anti-climactic part of the whole trial. Just ride in to the finish, they check your bike to see if all the marked parts are still there, and it's over.

Kirk and I drove back down the whole length of England, returned the bike to Sammy's shop, Tony took us to the airport and we flew home. A few weeks later my finishers award came in the mail.



1973 - Do it again - bring some friends



After a year of rest and lots of fun memories I decided to do it again in 1973.

This time Kirk was old enough to get an International license, another friend, Rodger Bickham from Kansas wanted to ride, so off we went – we were actually officially listed in the program as the North Eastern Oklahoma Trials Team, so we finally got to live up to our name as a "Trials Team". Also, in 1973 there were seven Americans entered – but that's another story...

Note: Mick Andrews' autograph on Mike's 1973 program – click the image to see the full pic

6 B. Snell	64 A. R. C. Lampkin
45 G. Brindle	94 H. M. Lampkin
190 R. J. Clears	141 M. C. Rathmell
BASSENTHWAITE & DISTRICT M.C.	
55 N. Birkett	35 M. L. Whitlow
90 R. Nixon	50 F. McMullen
116 T. Braithwaite	208 J. Burdon
NORTH EASTERN OKLAHOMA TRIALS TEAM	
136 K. Mayfield	49 R. Moor
143 M. McCabe	71 W. E. Breffitt
148 R. Bickham	213 B. Melville
BIRMINGHAM M.C.C.	
18 M. R. Winwood	C.S.M.A.
39 S. Wilson	A. E. Rushton



NEOTT Team Listing in the 1973 SSDT Program

Rodger Bickham, Kirk Mayfield and Mike McCabe at the Castrol support vehicle

99 - Bobby Hopkins	Michigan
118 - Bob Hatfield	Michigan
136 - Kirk Mayfield	OK
143 - Mike McCabe	OK
148 - Rodger Bickham	OK
202 - Lane Leavitt	CA
Late Entry - Maryland Whaley CA	



1973 US riders

Lane Leavitt seated in the red and Mike standing next to him.

Great story Mike thanks for taking the time to write-up this important piece of American Trials history.

2018 SSDT

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BTW, there are six riders representing the USA for 2018:

#127 – Jon Berlin

#128 – Bert Casten

#148 – Travis Fox

#149 – Joshua Metzger

#201 – Dennis Sweeten (also riding the Pre-65 trials on Friday and Saturday prior to SSDT)

#202 – Kylee Sweeten

The complete 2018 rider entry list is [here](#).

During the event from May 7 – May 12 – daily results are being posted [here](#).

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