



Jeff Smith Trophy

Jeff Smith – who is he?



Feb. 20, 2011, C. Garver



Jeffrey Vincent Smith was born 1934 in Colne, Lancashire, England. His father was a trial rider and he brought home an old 2-stroke Triumph to Jeff when he was nine.

This happened during the 2:nd World war, so gas was rationed. From time to time his father gave him a pint of gas, and Jeff rode around the field in the back of the house from coming home from school about 4 o'clock until it got dark. This is how it all began. After the war, Jeff got a 125cc 2-stroke BSA Bantam of his father, and Jeff began riding in local trial events.

His father also had a Norton trial bike which Jeff occasionally could ride. One noted incident is when Jeff's father let him ride through a particularly tough Trial section. "Ride it in 3:rd gear" his father said. Jeff cleared the section without problems, but in second gear, which his father noticed. "Look at me" he said and jumped on the bike. He drove away in 3:rd, but no longer than to a difficult part of the section, where he fell off the bike and broke his little finger. Jeff ran up to him and he said "You can have my Norton now, because you obviously know how to handle a bike, and I will quit riding"!

The successes continued, in 1952 Jeff got an offer to be factory rider for Norton. The year after, 1953, he signed up for BSA, not only as a factory rider, but also to work for the BSA-development department. Jeff started his career on the big Pré Unit 4-strokes, but he also became very successful in the 250cc BSA factory team, where he in the European Championship finished on 2:nd place 1960, and 3:rd 1961. In 1962 the 250cc class was upgraded to World Championship, where Jeff finished on the 2:nd place after Torsten Hallman!



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That's the way it continued. In the 500cc World Championship 1963 Jeff finished on 3:rd place, 1964-65: on the 1:st, 1966: on the 3:rd and 1967: on the 2:nd place. During his carrier Jeff also represented England in the Motocross des Nations resulting in four Gold Medals!

The biggest attention/publicity Jeff got in the 1964 Motocross World Championship when “everybody” followed his fight against Rolf Tibblin, on his white Hedlund machine. Throughout the season Jeff never once finished off the podium. He won on 56 points, Tibblin second on 54!

Jeff was active in competitions from 1951 to 1967. When he left the racing scene it also was the end for the “heavy 4-stroke era” in the Motocross 500cc class, than it was 2-stroke dominance for around 30 years onwards.

After his racing career Jeff moved to Canada and worked for Can-Am Motorcycles in various leadership positions to develop their motocross and off-road bikes. In 1970 Jeff was awarded the title of Member of the British Empire. In 1990 Jeff became executive director of the American Historic Racing Motorcycles Association (AHRMA), and in 2000 he was inducted to AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame. After that Jeff and his wife, Irene (sister of another famous British racer, John Draper) retired and currently they live in Wausau, Wisconsin, USA. Their son and daughter also became vintage motocross racing champs.

Conclusion: It was Jeffrey Vincent Smith, together with BSA who introduced the “light weight bikes” with the ”Small block engines” to the Motocross 500cc class! **Jeff Smith Trophy** is an unpretentious attempt to honor Jeff for his unforgettable achievements!



Jeff Smith