

# THE GODFATHER OF PHOTOGRAPHY

WORDS: JON URRY PICS: DON MORLEY

**Don Morley has been photographing the world's top sporting events for the last fifty years but his real passion has always been motorcycles. He has seen everything from terrorists attacks to Muhammad Ali naked and captured everything on film, apart from Ali's manhood...**

**W**hen I was about twelve or thirteen I cycled to a motorcycle road race in Derbyshire with a mate at a place called Osmaston Manor. It was the 1950s and at that time road races happened in the grounds of country estates. To be honest, I had no interest in going but my mate was very keen. I can't describe the atmosphere when we got there, the smell of fuel and Castrol R oil, the noises and the sights. I was hooked and from that moment onwards I what I wanted to be a motorcycle racer."

Don Morley's eyes light up as he recounts his first sight of a motorcycle race. Despite being well into retirement age, Don's memory and enthusiasm remains as keen as ever. His isn't a name that many outside his profession will have ever heard of, but within photography circles Don is quite simply a legend. He was top of his game when photographing bikes was all done by hand, auto focus didn't exist, and you shot onto film with magazine editors monitoring your hit rate as film development costs were sky high. Only the very best had the skills to capture the likes of Sheene and Roberts at the frighteningly fast and treacherous circuits of the 1970s, and Don was the best in the business, driven by his memories of that first motorcycle race.

"Well before the age we could ride, myself and a mate bought a 1928 BSA Sloper with the plan of entering the TT. That was our dream. Unfortunately I got caught on the road by the police and ended up in court. I was possibly 15, and my dad didn't even know we had it. As I was a juvenile he was called to court rather than me and I got one hell of a good hiding, lost the licence I wasn't old enough to have and the bike was scrapped. Dad was always anti bikes and also anti me becoming a photographer. Anyway, when I was old

