



Glen English (Molnar Manx) storms to Senior Classic success at the 2000 Manx GP in August

ACE road racer, gifted artist, skilled craftsman, film extra – Glen English is a man of many talents. Essex-born Glen (34) lives in Hayle, Cornwall, where he creates limited edition pewter and bronze-resin sculptures with motorcycling themes. Glen also works with his father Terry, hand-making suits of armour and various outlandish costumes mainly for films and television.

Such a busy life doesn't always leave much time for racing, especially if Glen is away on a film location for months at a time. But this year he notched up his greatest track achievement to date in winning the world's most demanding road race for historic machines, the Manx Grand Prix Senior Classic.

Riding a 500cc short-stroke Molnar Manx Norton, Glen covered the four laps of the Isle of Man's 37.733 mile TT course at an average of 105.46mph, beating Bill Swallow, an acknowledged 'Master of the Mountain'.

"It was quite easy, really," says Glen with his impish grin. "Once I caught up with Bill, all I had to do was follow him to the flag to be seconds ahead on corrected time."

Like many MGP victors before him, Glen had one of the best machines on the grid, a 'works' Molnar Manx made by Manx Norton rights holder Andy Molnar, its short-stroke engine tweaked by Fred Walmsley Developments. Glen's various backers included IoM-based racing sponsors Colin Aldridge and Terry Teece, Morris Lubricants, racing fuel specialist Carless, and Banner's restaurant in Crouch End, north London.

It was a well-deserved victory, since Glen's bids for TT Course glory have often been frustrated. For example, he had a run of six non-finishes from six starts in the Manx.

August's glory was the fulfilment of a dream he had held since the age of five when he had made up his mind to compete on the Isle of Man.

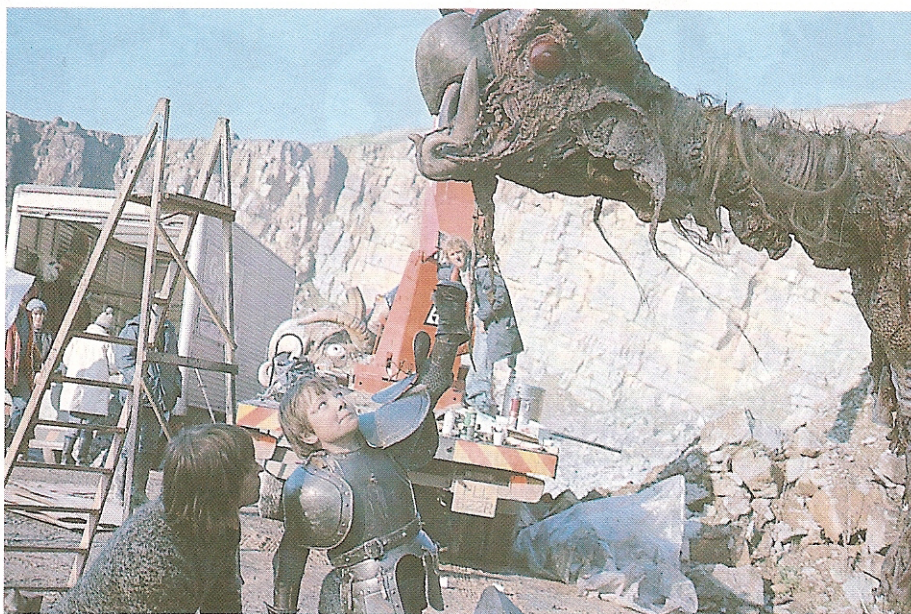
"My dad went off to the TT every year with my uncle Jim on his bike," Glen recalls. "I said I'd go one better and actually race there."

As a boy, he'd stuck a poster of his hero Giacomo Agostini on the bedroom wall and honed his craft skills on Protar racing bike model kits.

His first classic ride was at a Mallory Park CRMC meeting in 1990, on ex-speedway rider Vic Cross's Aermacchi. His first classic win was on Aldridge's 750cc BSA triple at the 1992 Billown TT meeting.

For the 1993 Classic Manx Junior, Glen borrowed local rider Derek Whalley's 350cc Ducati and was lying eighth when the chain broke. His performance was noted by George Beale, who offered a new Matchless G50 for the 1994 Manx Classic Senior. Glen was second until a condenser failed.

Such trivial problems were to dog him at the MGP for the next two years, both on the G50



Glen English as miniature knight with Terry Gilliam and the Jabberwocky on the film set



Armourer to the stars, Glen helps his father Terry to hand-make costumes for the screen

and the ex-Joey Dunlop Aermacchi lent to him by Terry Teece in 1995 and 1996.

Success came on Beale's bikes in Australia early in 1998, but Glen did little racing that year. He broke both wrists in Ireland and missed the Manx GP due to film commitments. Beale was too involved with his classic InCA series to enter the 1999 Manx Classic and Glen had grave doubts about real roads racing after the death of Gavin Lee in that year's Southern 100.

Fred Walmsley made his Manx available and persuaded Glen to at least enter and then decide whether or not to race once on Mona's Isle. A first session practice lap at 102mph plus had Glen fired up again after swapping his No6 for Bill Swallow's No2 so that he could start alongside No1, favourite Bob Heath. But a broken carburettor needle clip halted his progress on the line. "I think I led that race for about one yard," he laughs.

Engaged as Molnar's main rider for the 2000 season Glen has competed in most InCA

rounds, placing fourth in the points table.

He entered the Singles TT as a rehearsal for the Manx. "That was a disaster. We had to use unleaded fuel and I put in slow practice times because I kept stopping to adjust the carburettor... plus we had rain. They refused to let me qualify even though I've ridden there since 1990," growled Glen with annoyance.

But his Manx success really was a fairytale win. At the instigation of girlfriend Jo the Molnar Manx was taken to the Island's fabled Fairy Bridge during practice week to seek good luck.

Glen says his one regret was that he didn't get to race against 11 times winner Bob Heath who has now retired.

"I really wanted to beat Bob and when I finally got the bike to do it, he wasn't there."

Glen's future plans are to maintain his preferred mix of modern 125s and classics and ride the Molnar Manx again next season.

"Classic racing today is just as competitive as the 125 class and the Molnar-Walmsley Manx is the best bike available," he says.

Practising for this year's Manx wasn't much fun for Glen. He found it difficult to deal with pressure from Andy Molnar to go faster and suffered piston breakage and further trouble when the new piston didn't get enough running-in time. With only three laps completed the team had to apply for an exemption to the five-lap qualification rule and a substitute Molnar 95-bore engine (last used by Barry Sheene at the British GP InCA race) lent by Fred Walmsley. It was installed for one wet practice and the race.

"It was raining at the start of the race, and at that point I thought there was no way I was going to beat Bill Swallow," says Glen.

"I lost time to Bill on the Mountain Mile. I was over-revving in fifth but couldn't pull ▶

◁top, but I knew I would catch him between Greeba Castle and Ramsey – I really love that section. I find the Mountain a bit boring, although Fred’s engine felt really powerful on the climb.

“Bill (who set fastest lap at 106.41mph) said I’d been the better rider on the day, going harder in the damp from the start.

“I was a few seconds outside Heath’s lap record (106.74mph), but I think if I’d revved higher I could have lapped 20 seconds faster, especially if it had been dry all the way.

“But I didn’t set out to break records, just to win. And we found that the steering damper and one fork damper rod were broken. I had felt a shake in the bars at White Gates, but the bike corrected itself. The handling of the Featherbed frame is absolutely brilliant.”

Turning to Glen’s involvement with the world of celluloid, he made his cinema screen debut in 1977 when he was ten years old.

His father Terry was working on Terry Gilliam’s medieval fantasy *Jabberwocky* and a small actor was needed to play a Black Knight in a fight scene with the winged Jabberwocky monster. The idea was to make the crane-operated creature appear as big as possible. Glen was clad in a scaled-down costume and duly fought the monster.

Terry English had trained with a theatrical costumier in London. He then set up ‘English Arms and Armour’ manufacturing for the antiques trade before his *Jabberwocky* break.

His skills were then called on in the making of the film *Excalibur* in which son Glen appears as an extra. Since then Terry has been involved in countless productions including *Alien 3*, *Batman and Robin*, and *Gladiator*. Glen worked with him on *Swords of the Valiant* with Sean Connery and *First Knight* with Connery and Richard Gere. His most recent film jobs were *Joan of Arc* and *The Visitors*.

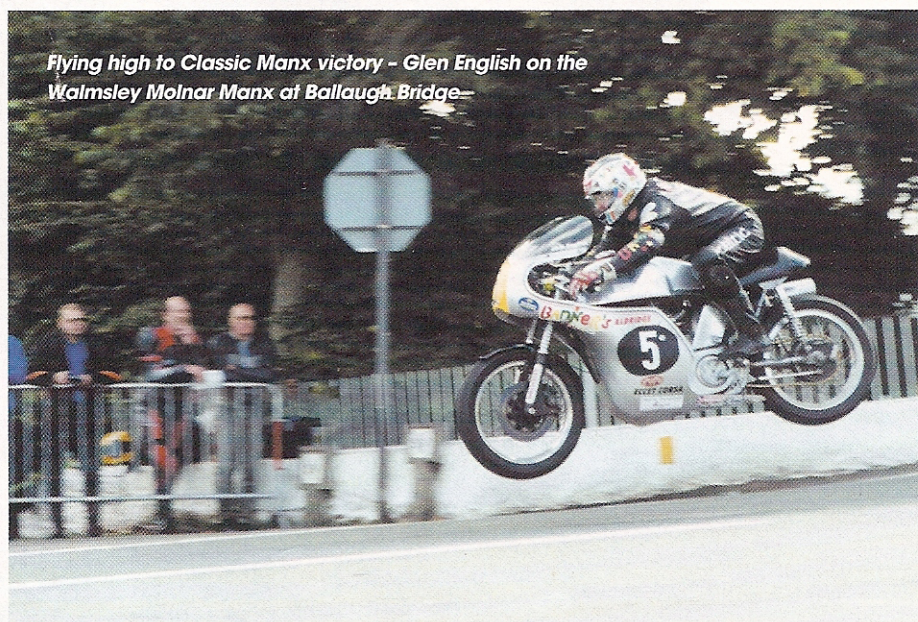
The idea of making and selling sculptures to help fund racing came to Glen in the Nineties when he took up residence in Cornwall.

His first work was a miniature statue of Mike Hailwood, an edition of 750 in resin-bound bronze, followed by bike-mounted figures of Mike on his TT-winning Ducati (100 made), Bob McIntyre on a Gilera-4 and Carl Fogarty on a Ducati.

Glen’s pewter castings are of Hailwood on a Honda-6, Bill Ivy on a 125 Yamaha, another Fogarty sculpture and George Formby on the Shuttleworth Special from the film comedy *No Limit*. He also offers a white metal model of Ducati’s Quattro Desmo superbike engine.

“I like being able to do something involving the sport that I love,” says Glen who sells to customers all over the world and meets many of them through his racing. His current project is a Joey Dunlop sculpture started before the Irish TT hero’s death in July ■

Glen English, Hailwood Ducati owner, armourer and sculptor



Flying high to Classic Manx victory - Glen English on the Walmsley Molnar Manx at Ballaugh Bridge