

Summer 2000

Issue No. 7

# *Still...Keeping Track*

**Penton Owners Group Newsletter \* \$5.00**



The "original Penton wrecking crew" of (L to R) - Al Born, Tom Penton, Leroy Winters, Cliff Chaffe, John Penton, and Ralph Haslage. This photo was taken in May of 1968 at the Berkshire 2 day international. Al, Tom, and Cliff competed in the event on the "new" Penton 125 Six Days bikes. John and Ralph both rode Husqvarnas (John was still the eastern distributor for Husky at the time).

Inside:

Latest news and upcoming events - page 4  
AMA Vintage Days at Mid-Ohio - schedule - page 3  
AMA Vintage Days at Sears Point - page 6  
Mail Box and From the Web - page 10  
Remarks for The Amherst Historical Society - page 11  
1st Annual "Ride with Paul Danik" - page 13  
Tech Tips - KTM Motor Cranks - page 14  
GNCC at Loretta Lynn's dude ranch - page 16  
Minutes of March, April, & May meetings - pages 18, 19, & 20





## ***STILL...KEEPING TRACK*** Newsletter of the **PENTON OWNERS GROUP**

The Penton Owners Group is a not for profit corporation chartered in the State of Ohio and an AMA chartered club. Our Federal tax I.D. number is 34-1860635.

The Penton Owners Group was formed to preserve and share the memories and the equipment of a very special time in motorcycle history. The first Penton motorcycle was manufactured in 1967 and the last in 1977. This was a time when the enthusiasm, ambition and creativity of the original Penton group helped shape a new industry and a new generation of dirt bike enthusiasts. Sport and competition motorcycles played a significant role in this motorcycle history. Our aim is to make the Penton Owners Group a source of information about the history of the Penton motorcycle, the Penton Company and it's many dealers, riders and extended family.

The mission of the Penton Owners Group is to enjoy and share all the memories from the past and the events of the future, as Penton motorcycle enthusiasts.

Club officer names and contact information  
have been removed from this document.



**PENTON OWNERS GROUP**

---

Still ...Keeping Track is published quarterly by the Penton Owners Group. Annual membership dues is \$20 per year for US residents (\$25 for foreign membership) and includes a subscription to the newsletter which is not available separately. Manuscripts, photos, drawings, etc. are welcome but no payment is made for material submitted, used, or retained. Please keep duplicates of your submissions, as we cannot be responsible for loss or damage.

Submission of material will be considered as assignment of all rights therein. Check out our web site at: [www.PENTONUSA.ORG](http://www.PENTONUSA.ORG)

Change of address: Give old and new address and notify us as least 6 weeks in advance.

Send address changes to: The PENTON OWNERS GROUP - P.O. Box 756 - Amherst, Ohio 44001

All information furnished herein is provided by and for the members of the Penton Owners Group.

---

### **PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

**By Alan Buehner**

They said that it couldn't be done. The Penton motorcycle is virtually unknown in this modern motorcycling world and obscure in the vintage motorcycling scene. They said that it should be a combined effort with other smaller brand dirt bikes from the early 70's era and that it should be called the "evolution of the dirt bike." We said no, Penton should be the vintage marque. We showed them photos of what we had been doing in the swap meet area of Mid-Ohio for the past two years and sent them

proposals of what we intended to do at both Sears Point and Mid-Ohio. We reluctantly agreed to do a shared exhibit in order to pay honor and tribute to John Penton while he is still living and healthy. Persistence paid off for us when we were officially declared feature marque last year. Much energy went into the planning and promotion of our display at Sears Point. John Penton summed it up best on the drive back home to Amherst as he thought about all that had transpired during the past 3 days. "We had the odds against us, with the long distance to travel, the time zone difference, the book being published in time, and yet we pulled it off!"

Every member should be proud of the display that we set up at Sears Point. We showed the AMA that even though we are a new club with a small number of members, we have the drive and enthusiasm to promote our brand loyalty by not only doing a display, but by doing it right. We also taught them, that like the vintage clubs before us, the clubs are capable of coming through where the manufacturers just come up short.

The Sears point exhibit was our testing ground for the upcoming Mid-Ohio event. The exhibit at Mid-Ohio will be 4 times as large which will allow us to display more bikes and show our story of the progression of the Penton story from



John's early riding career to 1977 the last year of the Penton motorcycle. If you can make the time available, make it a point to attend the Mid-Ohio event and be part of our history in the making. 2000 is "The year of the Penton", we are making it happen, and I do not foresee any future

event that will overshadow it. This could be the last chance to meet the people who were associated with John all gathered together at one event.

As a last minute note, we received word that this will be the last year for the running of the Jackpine Enduro in

Lansing, Michigan on July 29 & 30. This is the event that started John Penton's involvement in off-road riding. John and the Penton Owners Group will be attending to pay honor to this historic event.

## AMA VINTAGE DAYS at MID-OHIO

July 7, 8, & 9 is the big Vintage Days event at Mid-Ohio. Penton is the feature marque and John Penton is the Grand Marshal.

The price of admission is \$10 on Friday and \$20 on Saturday or Sunday for single day entry. A weekend pass is \$30 at the gate. Show them proof of AMA membership at the gate and save \$3. Weekend passes for the event are \$25 in advance for AMA members and must be purchased before June 30th.

The following is a day by listing of activities for our members to be aware of:

### Thursday July 6

Noon - Gates open - set up of the Penton display in the large "circus" tent located in the infield (across the bridge - immediately to the right). Bring your bikes or items to display directly to this area when you arrive.

Camping - for POG members only will be in the reserved area between the race track and swap meet area (where the trees are) near the showers. There is limited space and it will be on a first come basis. Please cooperate with us to park close, to get as many vehicles as possible parked in this area. No trailers will be allowed. We will direct you to the trailer drop off area for parking it (bring a lock and chain).

### Friday July 7

7 am - Gates open - the display tent will be open to the public. If you are bringing a bike or other items to display, bring them directly to the display tent.

1 pm - Seminar by Ed Youngblood: "John Penton and the Off -Road Revolution"

5 pm - AMA member dinner in Auction Tent (tickets must be purchased in advance from the AMA)

6 pm - AHRMA Vintage Dirt Track racing at Ashland County fairgrounds.

### Saturday July 8

7 am - Gates open - the display tent will be open to the public.

9:30 am - AHRMA trials competition begins.

Noon - John Penton lap on race track on a Penton motorcycle.

1 pm - Seminar by Ed Youngblood: "John Penton and the Off -Road Revolution"

4-5 pm - AHRMA Moto Cross registration & sign up for Penton Exhibition Ride.

5:30 pm - Tent closes. **POG cook-out** in the camping area (sponsored by Al Buehner). Food, beverages, and tall tales by some of the best riders in the world - for all POG members.

### Sunday July 9

7 am - Gates open. AHRMA Moto Cross registration opens & sign up for Penton Exhibition Ride. Moto Cross racers should move their vehicles from the camping area, pick up their bikes, and go to the "Penton pit area" at the Moto Cross track.

10 am - AHRMA Motocross practice begins.

10:30 am - AHRMA Motocross races begin.

12 pm - **Penton Exhibition Ride** - you must be an AMA member (bring your card), sign the release form, there is no entry fee, this is not a race, 3-4 laps around the track, any

size or year of Penton motorcycle is eligible.

1 pm - Seminar by Ed Youngblood: "John Penton and the Off -Road Revolution"

2:30 pm - John Penton lap on race track on a Penton motorcycle.

3:30 pm ?? - closing and dismantling of the Penton display.

For more information about the full agenda of activities - check the AMA web site.

### NOTE: Mid-Ohio rules & advice

No bicycles or pets are permitted. Motorcycles being ridden must have a valid license plate - drivers must have a valid drivers license - no children drivers will be allowed (they will stop you to check for compliance). Violators will be asked to leave the event (no warnings - no refunds).

Shuttle buses are available during the day to transport people to the different activities going on (Penton display, Trials event, Motocross event, etc.) Find out where to find them and use them to save a lot of walking. Mid-Ohio is a large racetrack and everything is spread out.

Upon your arrival at Mid-Ohio go immediately to the display tent in the infield of the race track (over the bridge). Check in with us at the tent for further information and to schedule volunteering your help with handling the many activities. When you come to drop off your bikes or items to display, unload your items and immediately move your vehicle to make room for the next person (this is a very tight area and we will have someone to direct everyone on where to park.



## Latest News

ESPN aired a series of documentations on motorcycles. John Penton was a part of this and part of his life and accomplishments were profiled.

In the July issue of "Cycle World" magazine, the 1972 Penton 175 Jackpiner was their pick for the best enduro bike for the millennium.

Did anyone see the taped interview of **John Penton** and **Larry Meiers** who were at the GNCC race at Lorretta Lynns? Rumors are that it was shown on Speed Vision.

At Sears Point, **Dave Despane** was at the Penton display on Saturday morning and he did a filmed interview with John.

**Scott Sinclair** of California was kind enough to not only bring his bike to display at Sears Point, but allowed John Penton to ride it Saturday and Sunday around the paved race track. Thank you Scott!

While we were busy traveling to Sears Point and setting up the Penton Display, **Kip Kern** was busy traveling to Saudi Arabia on an all expense paid 2 week vacation. Kip is an "Admiral" in the Indiana Air National Guard and had to pull duty there. We are happy to hear that he is back home, well rested, and in good health.

In March, **Kip Kern** also made a trip to the AMA Museum where he left one of his steel tank Pentons on display and received a guided tour of the facilities.

Special thanks goes to Captain **Don Shultz** for his restoration work on the cut-a-way Sachs motor that was displayed in the booth at Sears Point. It is a beautiful thing to look

at and will be on display at the Mid-Ohio event. Don works for Richard Sanders in Texas and a big thank you goes to Richard for all of his help.

Special recognition goes to **Dane Leimbach** and **Ollie Martin**. Ollie built the dual purpose wooden shipping/ display stands for the Sachs and KTM cut-a-way motors. Dane fitted the motors to the stand with a device to allow the motors to be rotated for viewing on all sides. Good work guys!

The annual auction of bikes and memorabilia during the Mid-Ohio event is being moved this year back to Mid-Ohio. The auction tent will be in the infield part of the race track just a little past the "Penton Display" tent. One item that will be auctioned off will be a copy of the original manuscript of "John Penton and The Off-Road Motorcycle Revolution" There are only 5 of these. One will go to a lucky bidder in July.

Looking for a collectable T-shirt? We have a limited number of special made shirts that we will be selling in our display tent at Mid-Ohio.

The AMA will be selling a Penton shirt in their tent commemorating Vintage Motorcycle Days also at Mid-Ohio. The AMA will also be selling a commemorative poster featuring Penton as feature marque. These will be collector items in the near future.

Have you purchased your copy of Ed Youngblood's book - "John Penton and The Off-Road Motorcycle Revolution"? If not, or if you want to get another copy, we will be selling them in our display tent at Mid-Ohio. All books that we will be selling will be autographed by John Penton and Ed Youngblood.

Our members in Texas are keeping the "Penton" name in the

forefront in the Vintage MX races. The May issue of The Texas Vintage Racing Club newsletter has **Bobby Lucas** in first place so far in the Gran Prix I Master class. **Skip Miller** is in first place so far in the Gran Prix I Intermediate class.

This is the third year in a row that some of our Penton hero's and club members are being inducted into the AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame. This year's inductees include: **Tom Penton**, **Dave Mungenast Sr**, **Danny LaPorte** and **Carl Crank**. An induction ceremony will be held on Sat. July 8th at the AMA motorcycle museum.

Members of the Ohio Valley BSA Owners club were treated with a number of Penton articles in their March/April newsletter and it probably had them double checking the cover making sure it wasn't a POG newsletter. In "The President Talks" section, **Dave Kirk**, the President of the club, talked about John Penton and his brothers, Penton as feature marque, and **Paul Danik**. An article written by **Alan Buehner** was published talking about our upcoming Vintage Days display and the Penton tie-in with BSA. An article about **Bill Penton** winning the Jack Pine on his BSA was also printed along with a center fold photo of Bill and John on their BSAs holding their trophies. Another photo on the cover shows **Bill Penton** with his Jack Pine trophy and cow bell.

**Doug Wilford** has been temporarily reunited with his 1973 125 Six Days bike that he rode to win a Gold medal that year. This bike was profiled in the Oct. 1973 issue of Dirt Bike magazine where an article was printed on how to set up a bike to run an ISDT event. Doug and his bike were the subject matter for this article. This bike is currently owned by **Joe Barker** and



was loaned to the club for display at both AMA Vintage Days events.

John Penton's sister, Pat Leimbach, wrote an article about John's new book and talks about his motorcycle involvements that made him a hero. This article was printed in The Chronicle-Telegram on Sunday, April 30, 2000 in their "Farm and Garden" section. Pat is a published writer and a regular contributor to several newspapers.

### Upcoming Events

**Penton Feature Marque Display at Mid-Ohio July 7,8, & 9th.** John Penton will be grand marshal. Check out the AMA Vintage Days article in this newsletter for more details about this historic event. For tickets to the Mid-Ohio event, call 1-800-Mid-Ohio. Buy the weekend package for the best deal. If you are an AMA member you can save \$3 off of the ticket prices.

**Penton Only Exhibition Ride** Sunday July 9th at Mid-Ohio. Check out the article in this newsletter for more details.

**Ohio Valley BSA Owners Club** 19th British/ European rally - August 4,5,6th. This is a weekend of great bikes, nice friendly people, and a good time. Saturdays events include - a reliability (dual sport) run and AMA vintage trials. There will also be a swap meet all three days. The event is held at Cables's Creek Campground - County Road 56 - Toronto, Ohio (Just north of Steubenville off route 7). Admission is \$5 per adult each event day / \$8 per adult each event day with camping space. For more information call: Clark Francy at 740-544-5562.

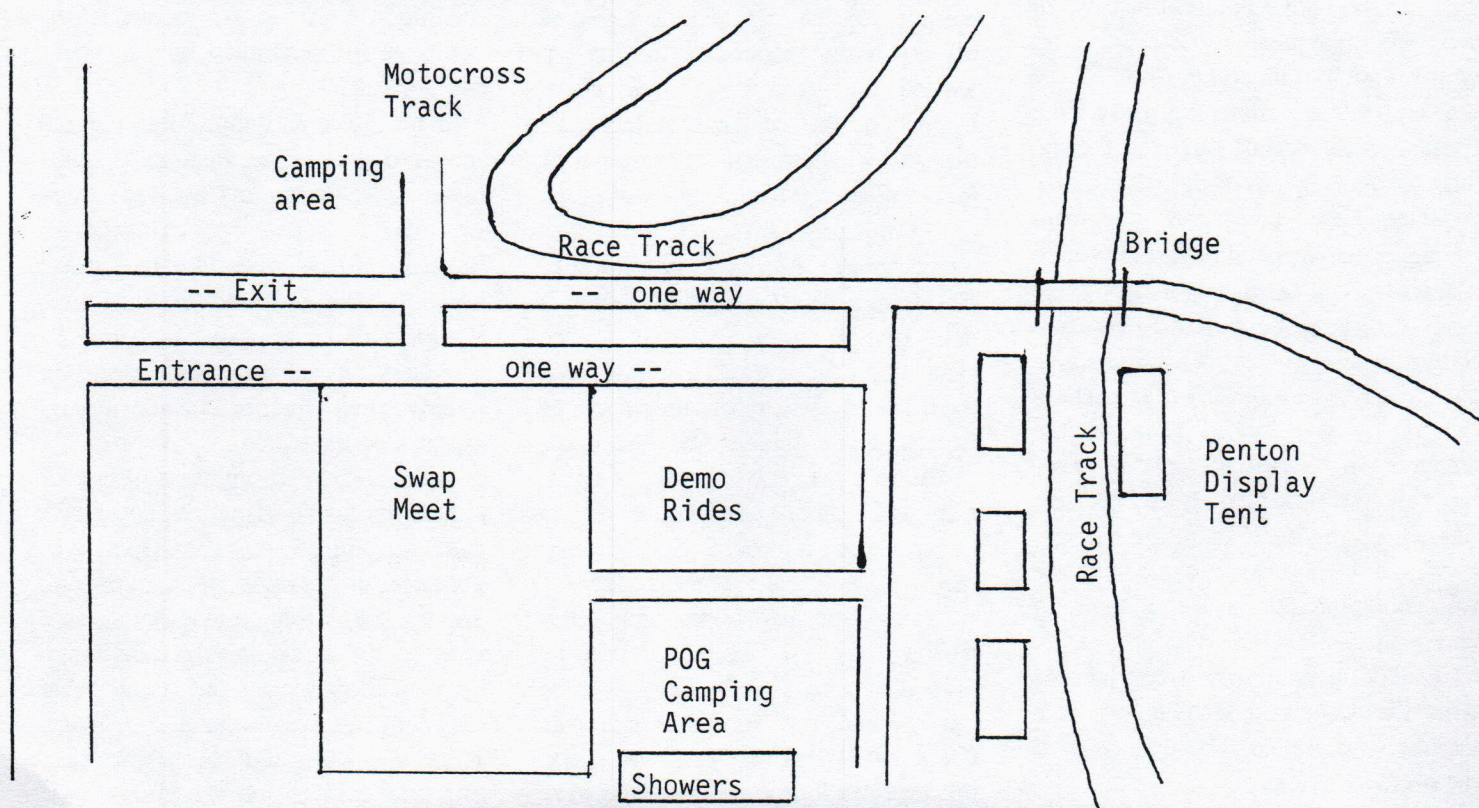
**ISDT Reunion - Sat. Sept. 30 - Sun. Oct. 1, 2000.** Byrd's Campground - Ozark, Arkansas. Bring your Penton bikes to ride or

show. This event is 2 days of ISDT riding in the Ozark National Forest, a Saturday evening banquet, and an unofficial "Penton Reunion". This event is being organized by the Razorback Riders Motorcycle Club. Brochures about this event will be at the Mid-Ohio display tent. Byrd's is off state route 23, north of I-40 and the city of Ozark.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** This year's event will not be an AMA sanctioned event.

**Jackpine Enduro - July 29-30.** This is the last year for this historic event! We will be setting up the Penton display at this event and encourage all members to attend to spectate or ride. Saturday will be an easy 12 mph - 40 mile run. Sunday will be a tough 24 mph - 150 mile run. It is being held near Lansing, Michigan Call Paul Danik for information at: 1-724-625-9166.

### MAP OF MID-OHIO RACETRACK LAYOUT FOR THE AMA VINTAGE DAYS EVENT





## AMA Vintage Days at Sears Point by Alan Buehner

A new standard was set by the Penton Owners Group with our display at Sears Point. It was professionally done to allow easy traffic flow inside the tent, enough items on display to keep one's attention, and plenty of written material to explain what the significance is of what was being displayed.

Members of the team met on Friday morning as the Penton trailer arrived on time at the display area. All of the morning was spent unloading the truck and trailer and working on setting up everything inside the tent. The afternoon was spent fine tuning everything to make it just right. Experience has taught me to always be prepared for unexpected problems to happen and how to deal with them. The Sears Point display was no exception. The size and placement of the tent was as we requested, however the parking spot for John's truck and trailer behind the tent and the bike coral next to the tent were not provided. We did have an empty spot on the other side of the tent and this is where we parked the trailer which worked out well for us. The extra tent walling which we requested to cover up the open front of the tent was unavailable which meant that our display would be wide open during the night. On Friday and Saturday after the event wound down for the day, we took down everything on display and locked it up in the trailer. On Saturday and Sunday morning we unloaded the trailer and put everything back up in the display. It was a lot of extra work that we were not planning on but everything was secure.

Friday morning we were blessed with the uncertain arrival of Tom Penton who stayed all three days at the event.

Saturday afternoon we were met by the late arrival of Carl Cranke. Carl has been away from the motorcycling scene for many years and he got caught up in a time warp since this was his first exposure to vintage motorcycling. He spent all morning checking out all of the old bikes that he not only rode but used to race against.

On Saturday morning we had an unexpected surprise just outside the tent as Scott Sinclair of California brought in a 1971 Steel tank 125 enduro to display and offered it to John Penton to ride around the paved race track for his "lap of the track" as Grand Marshall. Someone started it up and John climbed up on the bike and took a ride to see if he would be comfortable riding it for the parade lap. When he came back, the bike shift lever was adjusted for John. A little later, Tom Penton was talked into taking a ride on it and he showed everyone that even though he has been away from bikes for many years, he still had the riding skills that made him an international champion.

At 2:30 on Saturday, it was John Penton's appointment with destiny as he mounted the 125 Penton and sped off down the race track for his lap around the course. As luck would have it, he missed the first left hand turn and went straight which serves as a 1/4 mile drag strip. At the end of the drag strip he made a right hand turn which hooked him back onto the race course and resulted in him setting a new record for the classic 125cc class. John did a track side interview over the PA system and then rode the Penton back to the display. The owner of the bike came by to take it for a ride and came back within a few minutes with a broken clutch cable. God was smiling on John that day.

Later Saturday afternoon, after packing up the display, everyone headed over to a city park in Novato for a cook out provided by Fred Cameron. It was nice to sit back and relax after a long day to eat and have

a cool drink. It wasn't long after the last hamburger was cooked that the temperature started dropping and everyone was standing around the grill to warm up. I had planned on doing a short itinerary of a round of introductions, some short speeches and a round of story telling, but the cool weather and other events were thinning out our gathering. Before Carl Cranke bowed out we made him tell a couple of stories about his Penton experience. (This was a great story that will be printed in an upcoming newsletter). After hearing Carl's stories, everyone called it a night and headed back to the hotel.

Sunday morning was a slow time in the tent with very little foot traffic. Tom Penton entertained everyone by replacing the broken clutch cable on the 125 with a transplant operation he made on "number one."

The planned Penton Exhibition Ride at the MX track was canceled when an AHRMA rider collapsed and died from a heart attack after finishing one of his first motos. This tragedy stalled the race for over 45 minutes as the situation was dealt with. Because of the backlog, the exhibition ride was canceled to complete the scheduled race program before dark.

At 2:30 pm, John Penton again mounted the 125cc Penton to make his parade lap around the race track and did a repeat performance of Saturday's run by cutting the course down the drag strip. At the finish line, the officials waved him on to run the complete course, which he did and set a new course record for the longest lap around the track.

John's ride brought a wave of spectators to the display which didn't die down until 5 pm. The display was completely dismantled, packed up, and loaded by 6 pm and everyone said their good byes and hit the road home.

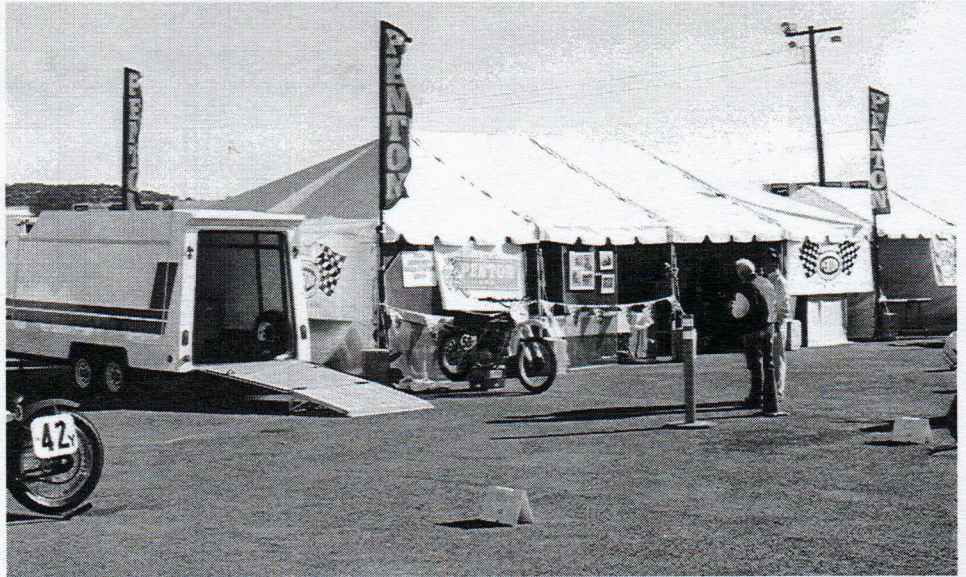
Special thanks go out to our West Coast members - Blair Beck, Bruce Krell, John Nieland, Jerry Erickson, and Joe Barker for displaying their



**AMA Vintage Days at  
Sears Point, Cal.  
April 2000**

Outside view of the "Penton" display  
on Sunday morning.

*photo by Paul Danik*



*standing left to right:*

Alan Buehner, POG President

Carl Cranke

Tom Penton

John Penton

Dave Duarte, warehouse manager for  
Penton west coast distribution

Matt Weisman, worked for John -  
was the guy who did all of the  
print and advertising

*photo by John Maginnis*



Tom Penton pointing to his autograph  
on the Penton "world champions"  
banner.

*photo by Paul Danik*





bikes in the tent, Brad Teegarden of Motorcycle Performance Center (a KTM dealer) for bringing out his 250cc Penton short tracker, 2 new KTM motorcycles and the 1997 200cc limited edition KTM.

We are again thankful for Norm Miller's foresight to acquire and making available "number one" to display.

A big "thank you" go to John Penton for the use of his truck and trailer to haul the items needed for the display and to Paul Danik and Al Born for helping drive out with John.

Special recognition goes to Barbara and Matt Weisman for their all out effort which went above and beyond the call of duty to lay out the display, build props and set it up to the professional level that will be hard to beat by any of the future feature marques.

Photo - right

Tom Penton standing at the City park in Navato during our Saturday evening cook-out.

*photo by John Maginnis*

Photo - bottom

Al Born pointing to his autograph on the Penton "world champions" banner outside the display tent at Sear Point.

*photo by Paul Danik*





**AMA Vintage Days at  
Sears Point, Cal.  
April 2000**

Some of the people who were at the cook-out put on by Dave Cameron at a Navato city park.

*photo by John Maginnis*



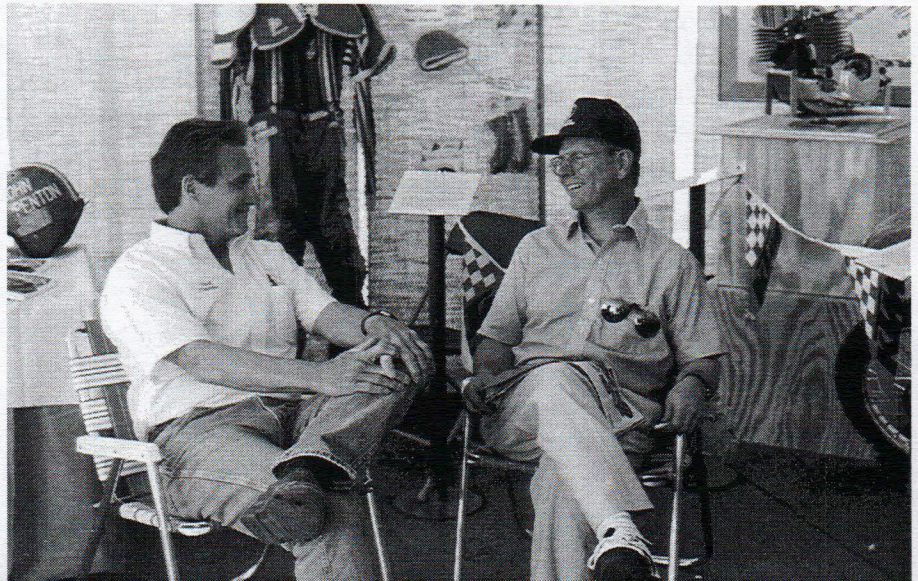
John Penton being interviewed by the race track announcer after his parade lap of the race track on at steel tank Penton 125.

*photo by Paul Danik*



Carl Cranke (left) reliving old times with Tom Penton (right) in the "Penton" display tent.

*photo by Paul Danik*





## Mail box and Web Page

Thanks for the issues of "still ... Keeping Track." The info in the fall 1999 issue will be most helpful in determining the years of my Pentons. I was intending to finish restoring my old hillclimber ('84 KDX200) and then start on getting my #1 Berkshire into a good running order - but, what with the Vintage Days 2000 featuring Pentons, the Kawie might get shuffled back. I have a copy of the '73 Six-Day book, one of my most prized possessions. I'd like to get as many of the people in the book's signature as possible (I was fortunate to meet Al Eames at the AMA Congress and become friends, and already have his signature, as well as Ron LaMastus, a Rokon rider from Indiana). If I were to ship the book to you, could I get you to gather the Penton's signatures? (This is assuming I can't make vintage Days.)

Tim Weaver - member from Indianapolis

To whom it may concern,

My first dirt bike was a 1974 125 Six day. My first new motocross bike was a 250 MC5. My first off road hero was Carl Cranke. My first motocross hero was Frank Stacy. My favorite MX de Nations team (after the U.S.) was the team of Moiseev, Kavinov, Korneev, and Khudiakov. My first choice of boots, jerseys, etc. came from Hi-Point racing.

Does this seem to indicate that I liked the Penton/KTM brand? You bet it does!! That is why when I saw in Racer X magazine that a book about John Penton was available, I knew I had to get it. Seeing that announcement made me feel almost like the way I used to feel the day before I raced - totally excited! Please let me know how I can purchase the book. Also, if you're interested, I'd

like to tell you a little about my love for Pentons.

During the 1973 gas crisis, I was a college student at the U. of Hawaii. The crisis prompted me to get a motorcycle for economic reasons. It was a Yamaha enduro that my friend said could be taken off road. It took a while but when I finally took it on the dirt, I was hooked. I spent many happy hours riding off road on that DT3. I wasn't able to afford a true dirt bike at the time so when the old Yamaha was ready for the junk pile I bought a DT250C.

A year later I had a good job and enough money to buy a truck so I bought a 1974 Penton 125 Six Day - my first dirt bike. I was still quite new to dirt biking so all I did was ride trails in open areas and at the motorcycle park where guys like John DeSoto used to race. At that time I didn't have any friends who liked dirt biking. They thought I was crazy.

One day in 1976 I walked into my Penton dealer's shop and saw the most beautiful motorcycle I had ever seen. It had an orange tank and olive greenish forks. It was a Penton 250 MC5, the first pure MX bike from the Penton brand and I wanted it badly. Unfortunately, I had just bought a windsurfing board and didn't have the \$1,750.00 to buy it. The dealer brought in six of them and I knew that they would all be sold by the time I had enough money.

Fortunately for me, most people didn't want to buy a Penton when they could get a Japanese bike for about \$500 less. Almost a year later, the dealer sold me his last Penton at a discount. I used that bike for everything - MX, Hare & Hounds, trail riding, and even trials. I then took an interest in everything having to do with the Penton brand. I was even able to purchase from Hi-Point Racing the same kind of jersey that

Frank Stacy used when he raced in the Nationals. It was a time of "Dirt Biking Heaven" for me so I'm sure you understand why I need to have the book. Please send me information on how I can purchase one. Thank you.

Michael Tong - Hawaii

---

3/12/00 Enclosed is a check for one of the "Penton" shirts. I would like to work at Mid-Ohio this year, preferably in the morning. Please send a size "16" with the name "Greg" to the enclosed address. Thanks.

Gregory Johnson - member from Ohio

3-14-00 Enclosed, please find my check for the new Penton working members shirt. I will be at Mid-Ohio on Sunday July 9th and would be happy to lend a hand. Shirt size XL or 16 neck. Name on shirt: Bill.

Bill Smith - member from Michigan

*Thanks for both offers to help out at the display for Mid-Ohio. I have your names marked on our duty roster and we are looking forward to seeing you there. - Al*

---

4-06-00 Thank you for letting me become a member of your group. I really enjoyed the Spring 2000 newsletter with its great pictures and informative articles. That cover picture is really something! Are your past newsletters this good? I'd like to know if they are still available to buy if you have any. Thanks again.

Marlon Sellen, New York

5-30-00 I have found a paint that matches the Penton silver grey used on the 1972+ frames. It is a polyurethane called "Wheel Paint" made by Dupli-Color. It is available in spray cans and is very durable.

Rick Beyer, Minnesota

## AMA VINTAGE DAYS EVENT - JULY 7-9

Bring your Penton motorcycles with you to Mid-Ohio to display in the bike corral outside the display tent. Any make, model, or condition (running or dead - restored or rough) is welcome.



**Remarks for The Amherst  
Historical Society  
by Ed Youngblood**

*The following speech was presented at the meeting of the Amherst Historical Society on May 24, 2000 by Ed Youngblood.*

It is an honor to have the opportunity to speak to the Amherst Historical Society about a man and a family who have contributed so much to your local history.

For me, this represents a kind of closure of a rather large, career-long circle.

My wife Margaret and I lived briefly in Amherst, where I came to take a job as editor of a motorcycle publication called "Cycle News East." That was in the Spring of 1968, only about 60 days after John Penton introduced his Penton motorcycle to the American market. I met John that spring, and during the ensuing three decades, John and I have had an opportunity to work together on many occasions. I went on to become President of the American Motorcyclist Association, and John went on to become one of the great influences in the American motorcycle industry.

When I left the AMA in February, 1999 to take up writing and consulting, one of the first jobs I accepted was a magazine feature about John Penton. I came to interview John on April 13, which was surely one of the significant days of my life. As I spoke to John that day I realized several things:

1) John and I had been contemporaries through one of the most revolutionary and exciting periods in the history of the American motorcycle industry. I realized that I had enjoyed a front row seat on history during some very exciting times.

2) John Penton had influenced almost every aspect of that revolution, including changing fundamental motorcycle design, improving the product, modernizing communication, internationalizing the motorcycle sport and industry, raising the standards of customer service, popularizing motorcycling within our culture, and changing the politics of racing.

3) It was almost absurd to try to do justice to the career of John Penton with a magazine article.

I knew that a book would be required. I had never written a book, but thanks to lot of support from a lot of people - including my wife and family, John and his family, and the Penton Owners Group - John and I and Amherst resident Doug Wilford found ourselves on April 14, 2000 - just 366 days after my initial interview with John - on our way to Tennessee with boxes of books for our first autographing party of "John Penton and the Off-Road Motorcycle Revolution."

So, as you can see, John still influences everything he touches. All I ever intended to do just 13 months ago was write a simple magazine article! Instead, I am back in Amherst, not far from the apartment in which Margaret and I lived 30 years ago, speaking to you as the biographer of a man whom members of his own family call an American hero.

I can't pretend to speak to you about the full influence of the Penton; and the Leimbachs, and the Kovaches. This is a clan that has influenced Amherst and Lorain County in many ways. Unfortunately, the only thing I know about is motorcycles, so my sticking to that topic tonight is not intended to ignore or diminish other aspects of Amherst history and the greater role played by the Pentons.

The Pentons in America can be traced back to 12th century Hampshire, Great Britain. The Amherst Pentons, however, did not immigrate direct from England to America. Rather, they come first to Canada, where John Penton's grandfather Henry was born in 1863 in Owen Sound, Ontario. Henry moved first to Detroit, where he knew and worked with Henry Ford, then to Cleveland, where he became a maritime engineer.

Henry's son Harold - John's father - studied horticulture at Ohio State University, and upon his graduation and marriage to Nina Musselman in 1917, Henry gave Harold 80 acres of land along North Ridge Road. Thus was founded the Amherst Pentons, the second generation of which included Ike, Ted, Henry, Mary, John, Patricia, and Bill - born between 1918 and 1929.

It is important to understand that prior to 1920, the motorcycle was not just a sporting or recreational vehicle. It was a transportational vehicle, and for many it was a necessity. For example, Harold purchased a 1914 Harley-Davidson as basic transportation during his years at college. His children grew up around that motorcycle, and long after it had been abandoned by Harold, Ike - a talented natural fixer and tinkerer - got it running. It was a fateful event that their mother Nina blamed for the direction of their lives. Most of the Penton kids fell in love with motorcycles, and several of the boys learned critical mechanical and engineering skills by maintaining that old Harley.

John began his career as a competitive motorcyclist in 1948 when he and brother Bill entered the legendary Jack Pine Enduro in Michigan. The Jack Pine was a two day, off road endurance event where competitors rode their motorcycles through woods, water, sand, and all manner of punishing terrain. John did not finish in 1948, but he came in second in 1949. In 1954 Bill won the event, and 1958 John got his first of four Jack Pine victories.

In this era there was no such thing as an off-road motorcycle. Motorcycles were large and heavy and built to be used on the road. Those who wanted to compete in off-road events found it necessary to extensively modify their road bikes to make them more suitable for riding through mud and water and rough terrain. Like the other riders of the day, John Penton modified a series of road bikes to compete in off-road championships, and he became good enough that in 1962 he was sponsored by the BMW brand to ride the International Six Days Trial in Germany. This is the most important off-road competition in the world, and it was a turning point in John's life.

Most major changes in our history are the result of diverse influences coming together. These are usually the collision of a technological development, the right economic conditions, and a creative and visionary personality who sees problems in terms of opportunities. I believe this is what happened with John Penton in Germany in 1962.

First, between 1958 and 1961 there was a major breakthrough in two-stroke



engine technology achieved by an East German engineer named Walter Kaaden. Kaaden figured out how to get greater power from a simple, less-expensive, easy to manufacture, light-weight two-stroke engine. John saw prototype racing bikes at the Six Days in 1962 that were superior to anything he had ever ridden in off-road competition. His concept of the perfect purpose-built off-road motorcycle began to take shape.

What John wanted was a low-cost, mass produced motorcycle that could be taken off the show room floor and perform as reliably as these prototypes and limited production bikes he had seen in Germany. John believed that there was a potentially huge, untapped market for such a motorcycle. By this time the American motorcycle market was booming, led primarily by good quality, low cost Japanese imports, but most of these were still not suitable for off-road competition.

John continued to compete in the Six Days Trial each year in Europe, and in 1967 he met a young engineer named Siegfried Stuhlberger who worked for the Austrian firm, KTM. KTM was a small company that mostly built bicycles and some scooters for the European market. They had their eye on the booming American market, but were fearful of the competitive Japanese and the well established British, and had no idea how to enter the market.

Historically, they were perfectly positioned to meet an energetic, enthusiastic, animated, dynamic, excitable, persuasive, unpretentious little man from Amherst. When they did, things started happening - rapidly! KTM CEO, Erik Trukenpolz met John Penton in September, 1967. By December 1967, the Penton brothers had sitting in their machine shop on North Ridge Road a prototype of the first Penton motorcycle. It's KTM fabricated frame contained a German built Sachs two stroke engine, and its other components were hand picked by John from the best suppliers from all over Europe.

In February 1968, the first crate of ten serial production Pentons arrived in Amherst, and two days later six of them appeared in national championship competition in Georgia and Florida. By May, 1968, they won the manufacturer's championship at the prestigious Berkshire International Trial. By

September - less than a year after the meeting between John Penton and Erik Trukenpolz - both Americans and Europeans were riding Pentons at the International Six Days.

Over the next decade, approximately 70,000 vehicles were built by KTM to the specifications of Penton Imports. These bikes were so successful that KTM sold them also throughout Europe under their own brand name.

Fulfilling his dream for a better off-road motorcycle is not where John Penton's influence ended. His company - Penton Imports - developed many of the marketing techniques that have become standard in the industry today. They invented new parts that are now standard fare on all off-road motorcycles. They created a line of off-road riding clothing. They trained and developed some of the best off-road teams that America has ever seen, the core of which were John's sons, their cousins, and other Penton Imports employees. And they even built a better trailer for hauling an off-road motorcycle.

Penton Imports also set new standards for customer service. The family name on the gas tank meant that things had to be done right. Ted Penton and other members of the family traveled long distances to provide personal service and technical support to their dealers throughout the nation. They created a program of awards and incentives for their customers and made a lot of young riders feel good about owning Pentons. Those people are still out there today, now middle-aged, rescuing, restoring, and collecting old Pentons.

In 1988, upon being inducted into the Amherst Schools Distinguished Alumni Gallery of Success, John Penton said:

*"Success does not come from setting records, accumulating wealth, establishing business, or erecting monuments. People are the name of the game. To have success you must build upon the immortal mind with love: without prejudice or greed."*

I think the values expressed in this quote are the key to the remarkable achievements of John Penton. John has set many records. He set a transcontinental record aboard a motorcycle in 1959, and in 1969 he was

America's Grand National Enduro Champion. He has established several businesses, including a successful motorcycle dealership and import company. He accumulated wealth on the international market, and saw much of it evaporate with the disastrous decline of the dollar in the 1970s. He has built monuments, both tangible and intangible.

But his success was always based on identifying, mentoring, and investing in quality people. I have put forward in my book the theory that John's dealings with people were based on the rock-solid Penton concept of family. If John chose to bring you onto his team, he treated you like family. But he also expected you to respond like family, with honesty, devotion, and loyalty. His businesses were based on a team attitude and mutual respect among those he employed.

John's success was based also on an almost inhuman work ethic. His brother Ted once said, "John is part man and part machine, and the closest thing to perpetual motion I have ever seen."

His leadership qualities and his penchant for hard work were the result of an agrarian upbringing during hard economic times, a stern and demanding father, then the untimely death of that father when John was only 12. These circumstances resulted in early acceptance of responsibility, but a reliance upon the support and good will for those close to him. These are traits that made him a strong leader and big achiever throughout his life.

But what I find most interesting and captivating about John Penton is that - in spite of having had a big hand in revolutionizing an international industry - John, in my opinion, has never really left Amherst, either physically or culturally. He lives within a few hundred yards of where he was born, and he has never outgrown the wonder of a boy growing up on the farm.

I have spent hours interviewing John about the exciting events of a life of international business and competition, but I am delighted by the fact that he becomes as excited about describing the yield of his tomato patch as he does about having built one of the world's best off-road motorcycle. This, I believe, is also a basis for his success. In spite of years of international travel, John



remained grounded in the Amherst culture. He never became jaded or cynical, and he never deviated from his agrarian family's values.

John sold the distribution and marketing rights for his motorcycle to the KTM factory in 1977. With the 1978 model year the same motorcycle appeared with KTM on the gas tank, as it still does today. Less than a quarter mile from where we stand this evening, you'll find the corporate headquarters of KTM USA, still playing an important role in the economy of Amherst and Lorain County. The company that John founded, still managed by some of the people he trained and nurtured, continues on, holding its own against

huge Japanese competitors in the ever changing high tech, high pressure market of international motorcycle competition.

There is no doubt that John Penton has been a huge influence on practically everything he has touched, but it is only recently that his peers and colleagues have begun to really appreciate the impact of his life and his works. This has been evidenced by the formation of a non-profit Penton Owners Group in 1998, John's introduction into the Motorcycle Hall of Fame in 1999, and the naming of Penton as the commemorative marque by the American Motorcyclist Association for its year 2000 Vintage Motorcycle Days

celebrations. John Penton has set more records, accumulated more wealth, and erected more monuments than he even realizes.

It has been my pleasure to try to chronicle his life in "John Penton and the Off-Road Motorcycle Revolution." Tonight John and I would like to donate copies of this book to the Amherst Historical Society, and the Amherst Public Library. I hope that as the years go by, these books will help new generations of Amherst residents understand and appreciate the treasure they have in John Penton and the Penton family.

## **The First Annual Ride with Paul Danik**

**Held on March 25, 2000**

**by Paul Danik**

I had heard of the off road poker run that is held each year in Cochran, Pa for many years. A group of volunteers lays out a trail ride each spring as a fund raiser. Motorcycles run on the first Saturday and quads run the next Saturday. All of the entry fees go to local charities and the locals all pitch in to make the run a success. Most of the farmers allow the trail to run over their property and the ride is anywhere from 35 to 50 miles.

One day last year a bunch of us were telling lies at John Rupert's motorcycle shop when John mentioned that the ride was coming up. A group of us went to the ride and had a great time. The trails were fairly easy and were connected together by gravel roads and farm lanes.

We had been talking about getting a ride together for the POG and the idea of hooking up with the Cochran ride seemed like a winner. We wouldn't have to do any real work, just show up and ride. The plan was set.

On the Saturday of the ride we arrived plenty early and hung out the Penton banner to attract all of the many vintage riders that would surely want to ride... all 7 of us! Actually there were 6 of us on vintage machines, my son Chad was on his CR 125. Doug Wilford had his Puch, Paul Busick was on a Husky, John Borer, Brett Watson and

John Rupert were on 250 Pentons, and I was on my Berkshire. Did I mention about the rain that poured during the night? The large puddle in the parking area should have been a warning to us but we were too busy trying to get into our vintage riding gear that seemed to have shrunk.

The ride turned into a mudrun and was a bit of a challenge to say the least. We had a couple of minor breakdowns and a couple of riders used the shuttle service to get them and their machines back to the start. Some of the man made bridges on the trail didn't hold up and the mud sure got deep in a few spots. It sure was something when we would get into a nasty section, modern machines with at least 2 feet of travel were strewn all about, and the old Pentons would show their stuff.

We would like to make this ride an annual POG event and hope that mother nature cooperates a little better in the future. Watch the newsletter for the date of next year's ride and plan on attending if you can. For this old rider, any time I can follow Doug Wilford down the trail, and be surrounded by good friends on some classic machines, it's a great ride!

*The 2nd annual "Ride with Paul Danik" will be held in March next year. It will be advertised in an upcoming newsletter and posted on our web site as soon as we receive the information on it.*

**Visit the Penton Web Site - [www.pentonusa.org](http://www.pentonusa.org)**

**Check out our bulletin board for information, and comments.**

**Need an order form for the John Penton book or an application form for a friend to join?**

**You'll find these forms on our web site to print out and mail to our P.O. box.**

**Looking to buy or sell a Penton motorcycle or hard to find items? Check out our shoppers site:**

**<http://communities.msn.com/PentonMotorcycleOwnersGroup>**

**This site will allow you to post items to sell and allow you to remove them or make changes.**



**Tech Tips**  
**KTM Motor Cranks**  
by Bobby Lucas

The following information is for the type 51 (125), 52 (175), 54 (250), and 55 (400) motors. Special care should be taken to clean the motor thoroughly of any dirt and grease before attempting to pull it apart.

The KTM powered Penton motorcycles are without doubt one of the most reliable if not the most reliable 2 stroke engines of all time. Restoration of these engines is going to be either very easy or very difficult based on the condition of the project motor.

Magnesium is a product that is very light and very strong, however, once exposed to the outside elements for a long period of time, moisture can cause corrosion inside your engine crank housing. Tolerances on KTMs are so close that many engines that I start to rebuild are locked up and the crank and piston are frozen in the cylinder and cases. If I come across one with a frozen crank and or piston, this is what I do: Remove the clutch case cover. The KTM engines have a crank case drain plug which I use along with a parts washer to flush out the crankcase. Soak the engine and use a socket on the pinion nut to rotate the crank. Usually only a small amount of movement can be achieved. Work slowly and you may free the

crank. Your piston may also be stuck in the cylinder. *My trick here is to remove the head then the case studs. Rotate the cylinder in a clockwise counterclockwise motion, again easy does it and with time you can usually work the piston free from the cylinder. (If the piston is rusted solid to the cylinder, split the cases and remove the crank assembly with the piston still in the cylinder. The piston can then be removed with a press.)*

Follow the Penton Service Manual for all the proper steps in your engine overhaul. Care should always be taken when disassembling an engine and use of proper techniques and special tools should be the standard to follow.

Special tools are required to work on this engine type and using other tools and methods should only be done by someone who has lots of experience or spare parts to replace the ones you may destroy.

A 40 ton press is required to work on the crank and special holders for clutch basket and pinion gears are needed in disassembly and reassembly.

One tool that is required is the bearing puller for the crank bearings M20 and M25 and the bearing extractor for the pinion shaft bearing.

Split the cases once you have freed the crank. You may split the cases with the crank still frozen, but be very careful. One item which hinders case splitting is the driving shaft. It has a

spacer which is between the sprocket and bearing. On most occasions tapping on the shaft will free the spacer and splitting the cases is much easier.

Once your engine is apart, check all case castings in the crank areas for corrosion and the two small port holes. These two holes are for lubricating the crank bearings. Make sure that they are not blocked with sludge or corrosion.

If your scope of work is not a total rebuild of your engine and only the crank demands work, there is no need to proceed any further into the transmission or clutch.

Measure your crank width before pressing it apart. In the case of a 400, measure the weights then remove them. Measure the crank journals and record all measurements. This is your target when reassembled.

Follow the directions in the Penton manual for KW axial play and record this information also. For correct dimensions always measure several times to insure accuracy.

*Bobby Lucas is our member expert on KTM motors who has been rebuilding and racing them for over 10 years. If you have a question about this or any KTM motor problem, you can talk about it with Bobby (New Penton Central) at his home phone number (817) 483-7346.*

---

**NOTE:** This only applies to the crankshaft 400 cc starting with motor no. 2809.

Starting with the above mentioned motor number, a crankshaft is installed in the 400 cc motor to which two damper rings are fastened by screwing. In case of such motors with this crankshaft, the motor casing is altered, too.

For spare part purposes, all 400 cc crankshafts are delivered with the threaded holes for the damper rings (Spare Part No. 55.30.018.001).

Such crankshaft can be installed as usual in the old casings. For motors starting with motor No. 2809 this

---

crankshaft has to be completed with the damper rings (Spare Part No. 55.30.032.000) and the respective countersunk screws M6x12 DIN 7971.

It is however necessary to glue the damper rings with OMNIFIT Type green 150 M and the countersunk screws with OMNIFIT type red 80 M. It is also possible to apply the corresponding equivalent products of LOCTITE.

After the glueing process the crankshaft needs a resting time of about 24 hours enabling the adhesive to harden.

The ready crankshaft may be ordered under spare part number 55.30.018.101.



## Crankcase pre-assembly

**Remarks:** As previously mentioned the ball race rings and ball cages of the main bearings must under no circumstances be mixed together.

Main bearings should only be renewed as sets, never singly.

### Measuring of KW axial play

If you renew the crankcase or the main bearings, the axial play of the crankshaft is to be measured. This must also be done if only removing the outer ring from the casing.

Place the engine casing halves with the inside facing upwards and place the ball cages with inner race rings in appropriate outer race rings in the casing. With the depth gauge, measure the distance from the casing joint face to the bearing inner race surface.

Make a note of measurement results and measure the second crankcase half. Add together both measurements and add to this 0.2 mm for the gasket.

Measure the crankshaft at the bearing contact surfaces and also make a note of those measurements.

THE axial play, through different thickness of compensating shims between the crank web and the bearing inner race rings should be so arranged that there remains an axial play of about 0.03 - 0.05 mm.

#### Example:

Left crankcase half	27.48 mm	(1.0818)
Right crankcase half	+27.45 mm	(1.0807)
Gasket	<u>+ 0.20 mm</u>	(.0078)
Measurement in Crankcase	55.13 mm	(2.1703)
Measurement of Crankshaft	<u>- 54.50 mm</u>	(2.1456)
Existing axial play	0.63 mm	(.0247)
Permitted axial play	<u>- 0.03 mm</u>	(.0011)
Equalizing difference	0.60 mm	(.0236)

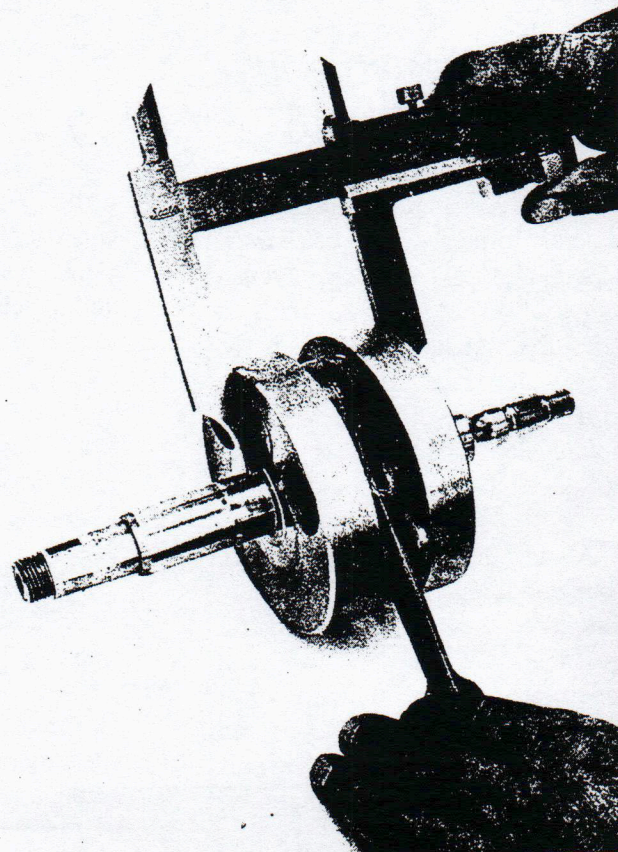
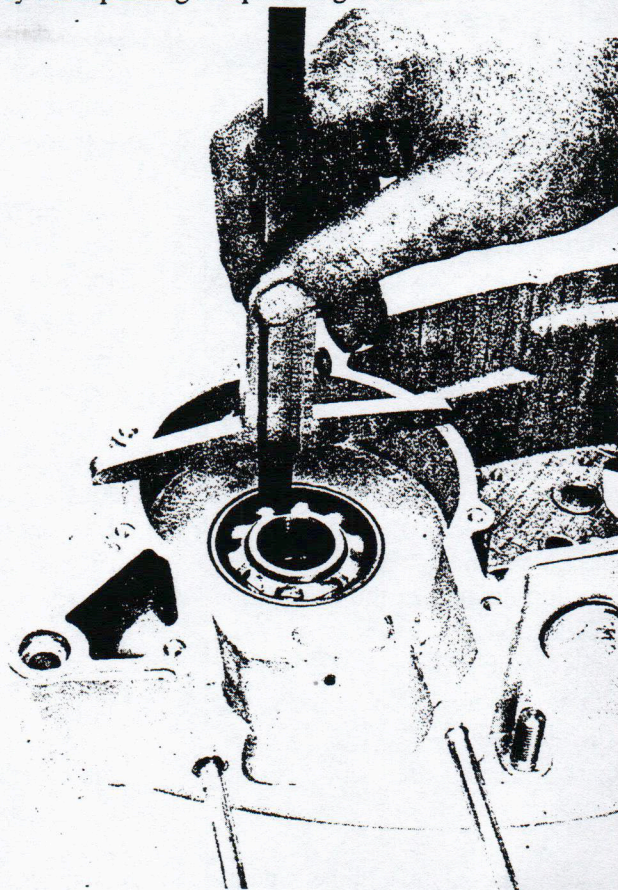
This difference on both sides of the crankshaft is adjusted by the compensating shims. If the axial play cannot be corrected with the same number (thickness) of compensating shims on both sides, then the larger number should be fitted on the clutch side. Press ball cages from the inner rings.

Before forcing on the inner race rings, in each case there is to be placed an intermediate plate between both crank webs. This intermediate plate must be large enough for support of both sides and thus the crank shaft clearly rests upon it (press on inner rings with inscription outside).

Never tighten the crankshaft with a crank shaft pin or on the frame in the vice and try to hit the bearing inner rings. In such a case the crank webs are squeezed together and the connecting rod bearing is damaged which means the crankshaft cannot be used. After pressing on the inner rings fit the ball cage on the crankshaft.

Fix left half casing in the clamping frame; oil the retaining rings and introduce the crankshaft. Fit the gasket and fix the right half casing with screws. Rotate the crankshaft. Check with dial gauge for lateral wobble at crankshaft ends. This must not exceed 0.05 mm on the driving as well as the magneto side. Measure the axial clearance of the crankshaft, holding a dial gauge against a crankshaft end. By pushing the crankshaft backwards and forwards several times it can be ascertained that it is free. If the axial play does not lie between 0.03 mm and 0.05 mm then the crankshaft must be dismantled and an inner

ring is taken out by means of the inner ring extractor. Add or take away corresponding compensating washers.





## **Penton Book Debuts at Loretta Lynn's by Ed Youngblood**

John Penton, Doug Wilford, and Ed Youngblood traveled to the AMA Grand National Cross Country Championship at Loretta Lynn's Dude Ranch over the weekend of April 16th and 16th for the debut of "John Penton and the Off-Road Motorcycle Revolution." As part of the book announcement, GNCC participants were invited to bring their vintage Pentons for display at the Penton Owners Group pavilion. Penton owners who participated in the celebration included Marty Dalbert of Erie, Pennsylvania; Patrick Golten of Atlanta, Georgia; David James of Murfreesboro, Tennessee; and Spencer Balentine of Murray, Kentucky.

John Penton stayed busy signing autographs for many of the more than 1,000 participants in both motorcycle and ATV classes who competed during the weekend. Many talked about how their fathers and grandfathers had ridden Pentons. On Sunday afternoon announcer John Ayres conducted a lengthy interview with Penton, Wilford, Youngblood, and Larry Maiers, former CEO of Penton Imports. Many of the young audience were learning for the first time that their modern KTM motorcycles trace their engineering lineage direct to the Penton motorcycle that was first introduced in March, 1968.

About the event, author Ed Youngblood says, "We are very grateful to the Coombs family for providing this wonderful opportunity for the announcement of 'John Penton and the Off-Road Motorcycle Revolution.' This is exactly the audience to whom we

want to tell the story of the evolution of off-road motorcycling in America, and the tremendous influence John Penton and Penton Imports had on how off-road motorcycling evolved."

The importance of a series like the GNCC was demonstrated when the victory podium for Sunday's championship was shared by riders from three different nations on three different continents. Especially fitting for the debut of "John Penton and the Off-Road Motorcycle Revolution" was the fact that the race was won by KTM rider Shane Watts after a hard-fought battle with series leader Paul Edmondson. John Penton was especially excited that Watts had won the grueling three-hour race on a 125cc motorcycle, reminiscent of the light and agile small displacement Pentons upon which the marque's reputation was established during its early years.

## **The Real Meaning of KTM by Ed Youngblood**

Since "John Penton and the Off-Road Revolution" appeared in early April, I've had many opportunities to talk with people about the history of the Penton motorcycle. One thing that has surprised me is the number of people who do not understand the historical connection between the Penton and KTM. Many of the younger riders who own modern KTMs do not realize that there is a direct historical, cultural, and technological link between their bikes and the Pentons of thirty years ago.

One of my most interesting encounters occurred at the Grand National Cross Country

Championship at Loretta Lynn's Dude Ranch on April 15th. A number of Penton owners had brought their bikes for display, and I noticed two young men studying and discussing a beautifully restored Penton Mint 400. Finally one said to me, "Is that a Penton, or a KTM?" He was clearly confused by the fact that it carried "Penton" on the gas tank and "KTM" on the engine case. I responded, "It's a Penton," then I proceeded to give them the short version of Penton/KTM history, explaining how KTM began to manufacture its own engines for Pentons in 1972.

Then one of the young men asked, "What does KTM stand for?" Ahah! Seeing my big chance to become my most learned and boring professional self, I replied, "The family that founded the company is named Trunkenpolz. That's where the 'T' comes from. The company has changed its name several times over the years, but in the modern version the 'K' stands for Kronreif, who became a partner in the company in the 1980s. The KTM factory is in Mattighofen, Austria, which is where the 'M' comes from. So it's name is 'Kronreif, Trunkenpolz of Mattighofen.' Since no one wants to say all that, they just call it 'KTM.'"

The young men stood silent. Obviously, they figured they could have gotten through life easily enough without such a load of useless information. Then one said, "I just always figured it meant Kentucky Trail Machine."

I concluded their explanation made more sense than mine.





**Penton Display at GNCC  
Lorretta Lynn's  
April 2000**

John Penton, center  
Larry Maiers, left  
in a talk with a Kawasaki rep. after  
a filmed interview with John.



An outside view of the Penton  
display used for the book signing.



John Penton standing in front of the  
Penton display, checking out some  
of the "Penton" motorcycles that  
were on display.

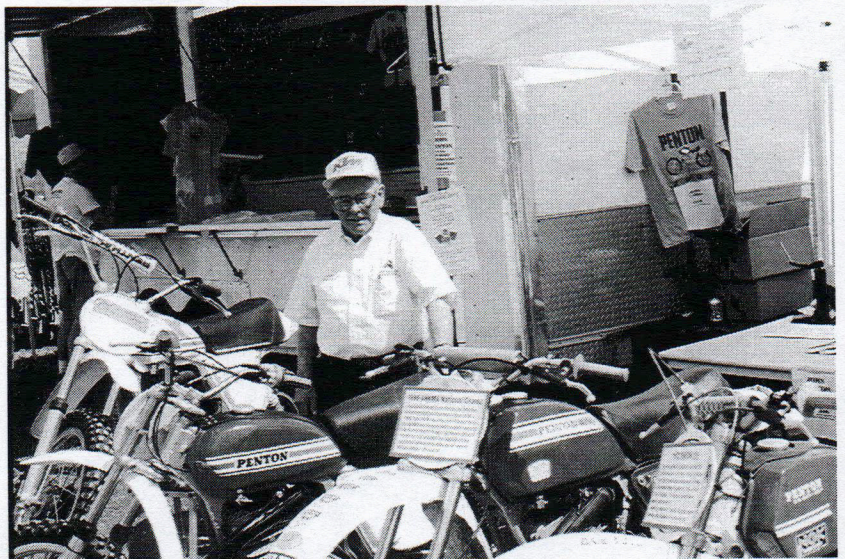
1974 Mint 400 MX

1975 Hare Scrambler 250 MX

1975 Hare Scrambler 250 Enduro

1974 Six Days 125 MX

*photos by Ed Youngblood*





Meeting minutes have been removed from this document.

