

Gilberto Parlotti

Complete name: Gilberto Parlotti

Birth date: 17.Sep.1940

Birth Place: Zero Branco, TV, Italy

Death date: 09.Jun.1972

Death Place: The Verandah, Isle of Man, United Kingdom

Nationality: Italy

Gender: male

Age at death: 31

Event date: 09.Jun.1972

Series: World Motorcycle Championship - 125 cm³

Race: British Grand Prix - Isle of Man Tourist Trophy, Ultra-lightweight race

Event type: race

Country: United Kingdom

Venue: Isle of Man Mountain Circuit

Variant: 60.707-kilometer road course (1923-present)

Role: rider

Vehicle type: motorcycle

Vehicle sub-type: sports bike - from 51 cm³ up to 125 cm³

Vehicle brand/model: Morbidelli 125

Vehicle number: 12

Notes:

While leading the 125 cm³ Isle of Man Lightweight Tourist Trophy, at his debut on the Snaefell Mountain Course, Gilberto Parlotti lost control of his bike and crashed into an unprotected pole at the Verandah, on the second lap of the race. The works rider of the Italian make Morbidelli was killed almost instantly, suffering severe head injuries. He was vainly taken by helicopter to Douglas hospital. The race was held in bad weather conditions and restricted visibility due to heavy rain, low clouds and mist.

The Verandah series of four right hand bends which were usually taken in one flat out sweep by the fastest riders, was situated between the 29th and 30th Milestone on the Mountain Circuit. The general theory was that Parlotti miscounted the bends and crashed into the outside fence. In 1972 there was no run off area at the Verandah, the wire fence was at the edge of the road and the fence posts were concrete. Later (possibly in 1973) several changes were made to improve riders' safety in this section of the circuit. The Verandah was re-built, keeping the road the same but making a flat grass verge as a run-off area around the four bends and moving the fence down to the bottom of the five metre drop outside the bends. In addition, since 1973 racing is postponed when weather conditions prevent the helicopter to take off.

Following Parlotti's accident Giacomo Agostini, who had been already critical against the Tourist Trophy race, was ready to boycott the Senior race in the afternoon. In the end the weather conditions improved and Agostini went on to win the race, however after the 1972 edition of the event, he never returned to the Mountain Circuit as also did most of the European star riders of the time.

A memorial to remember Gilberto Parlotti was erected halfway down the bank at the Verandah, it is a simple wooden cross which has a faded ribbon with an inscription in Italian and a photograph. Unfortunately the small monument has been attacked by the rain and it is presently in poor conditions.

Gilberto Parlotti was born at Zero Branco, a small village in province of Treviso, Italy, but he grow up at Trieste, where his family moved soon, managing his father a motorcycle workshop. He rode his first motorcycle, a Ducati 125, at the age of twelve, taking part in a local gimkana (obstacle run), but the organizers did not allow him to start!

Parlotti began his racing career six years later, riding a Gilera 175, in which he scored a 2nd place at Portoroz circuit in Yugoslavia (now Slovenia). He raced in gimkanas, winning the Italian title in 1960. In 1961 he bought a Morini 175 and was third of class in the Trento-Bondone hillclimb, behind a young rider named Giacomo Agostini, who became one of his great friends. In 1962 he made his first start in the World Motorcycle Championship riding a works Tomos 50 cm³, a motorcycle built in Yugoslavia by the "Tovarna Motornih koles Sežana". Unfortunately, he suffered injuries in a road accident during the season, which required a long convalescence until a complete recovery. In 1964 Parlotti was signed up by team Moto Morini, taking part as works rider in only four races, with a 2nd place in the 350 cm³ class at Preluk circuit of Abbazia (Opatija, Yugoslavia, now Croatia). Then he came back to a private Ducati 125, owned by his friend Luigi Rinaudo. In 1967

he finished 3rd at Rimini Grand Prix in a Ducati 350 cm³, behind the winner **Renzo Pasolini** and **Mike Hailwood**, and scored outright wins in Yugoslavian races at Zenica (now Bosnia-Herzegovina), and at Kamnik and Murska Sobota (now Slovenia). In 1969 Parlotti won his first National title, in the 50 cm³ class, riding a Tomos, and near the end of the season he was hired by team Benelli of Pesaro, Italy, to race a 4-cylinder 250 cm³ in two World Championship Grands Prix, alongside the factory rider Kel Carruthers who was dicing for the title against Kent Andersson's Yamaha. Replacing the reigning World Champion Phil Read who had refused the invitation by Benelli, Parlotti scored an impressive 2nd place in the Yugoslavian Grand Prix at Opatija, just behind Carruthers who eventually won the World Championship.

Subsequently Gilberto Parlotti won once again the Italian 50 cm³ title with the Tomos in 1970, and was signed up by team Morbidelli, the other make of Pesaro, Italy. He scored a World Championship victory in the 125 cm³ class at the Czechoslovakian Grand Prix held at Brno. In 1971 he won the Italian Championships, 125 cm³ class on a Morbidelli, also riding his old Tomos in the 50 cm³ class. In the World Championship, he won his class in the Grand Prix des Nations at Monza, riding the Morbidelli 125 cm³. During the year he also rode for Derbi and Ducati.

Parlotti went on with team Morbidelli also in 1972. The season started with three impressive wins, in a national race at Modena, then in the German Grand Prix at the Nürburgring and in the French Grand Prix at Clermont-Ferrand. A 2nd place in the Austrian Grand Prix at the Salzburgring followed, and a 3rd place in the Grand Prix des Nations at Imola. Despite Giancarlo Morbidelli, founder of the make and father of future Formula 1 Grand Prix driver Gianni Morbidelli, disagreed, Gilberto Parlotti decided to enter the next round of the World Championship, the Isle of Man Tourist Trophy. At the moment he was leading the 125 cm³ class standings with 52 points, ahead of Chas Mortimer's Yamaha and Börje Jansson's Maico with 36. He planned to score much points than his best opponent Ángel Nieto, who didn't participate in the Mountain Circuit event where his country fellow and longtime friend **Santiago Herrero** had lost his life on 08 June 1970.

During the Lightweight race, Gilberto Parlotti was chasing Mortimer who had started just before him. Sadly he did not finish the race but crashed and lost his life. Parlotti was reported to be the 99th victim of the race since the first edition in 1907. In the following months Ángel Nieto on a Derbi won three of the subsequent eight races and won the title.

Gilberto Parlotti was survived by his wife Rossana and their eight-year-old son, Paolo. Parlotti lived in Trieste, Italy, where he had opened a repair shop for motorcycles and powerboats. Thirty-five years after Gilberto Parlotti's death, a road of the town of Pesaro was named after him.

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