

FROM PAGE 29

who ran a scrapyard in Otterbach. 'Many of the cars were big old American beasts as there were US Army and Air Force bases nearby,' he explained.

It was at this time that he became friends with some American servicemen.

'We used to go all over the place in these big Yankee cars or theirs. We had some fun and I stayed good friends with some of them. A couple came to the TT to watch me race, although I wasn't aware they were coming, and they tried to get me to go out New York, but I couldn't afford it. I'm still in touch with a couple of them.'

The Luthringshauser/Hughes partnership scored a podium finish in the 1968 Finnish GP at Imatra behind Helmut Fath and Wolfgang Kalauch.

They also had a second in the non-championship international in Sicily using Auerbacher's spare motor. 'We should have beaten them really, but Heinz thought it was the right thing to let Georg through for the win,' said Geoff.

They were back on the podium at the TT where they finished third behind Siegfried Schauzu/H. Schneider and Johan Attenberger/J. Schillinger after Auerbacher and Herman Hahn retired when leading on the final



Heinz Luthringshauser and Geoff Hughes round Quarter Bridge on the 500cc BMW flat-twin, probably during their last TT together in 1969

I slept outside the Vatican

lap. Fath and Kalauch were fourth.

'I don't remember an awful lot about the race, but I recall that Heinz left immediately afterwards to get back to Germany. I went to the presentation at the old Palace Lido to get my replica. I also recall winning a load of coins in a

slot machine at the Casino later. It was my lucky day. I went along with some of the Manx guys I knew, Artie Oates, Dave Skelly, Malcolm Sharrocks and Keith Griffin.'

In 1969, the pair were again expecting to be highly-placed at the TT, but a bit of over-exuberance at Union Mills led to them sliding across the road and colliding with the pavement, flattening the exhaust. This resulted in a non-finish.

Luthringshauser was often a close rival of Fath, Enders, Auerbacher and Schauzu on-track, but off it he was most friendly with Auerbacher and Otto Kolle of the leading drivers.

'The Germans were all tough guys, and they made me tougher too. We'd often travel to the big European races in convoy with Kolle/Nelson, Auerbacher and co, sometimes over the Alps. I got on well with Billie [Nelson].

'Georg and Heinz pronounced my name Joffrey. We'd get up to a few escapades, but it was all good-natured.

'On one occasion I remember sleeping outside the Vatican in a sleeping bag when we were en route

to Sicily from Monza.'

Hughes raced most of his career on the Continent. He also partnered Arsenius Butcher in a right-hand chair at few national and international races between GPs, including a couple in France.

He also became friendly with Ralf Englehardt and renewed that friendship when the latter raced at the Pre-TT Classic a number of times in latter years (driving, not passengering).

'I had a lot of friends in Germany, I would say that

I was better known there than I was in this country as far as racing goes.

'Heinz and I raced the Ulster Grand Prix in 1969, but he didn't like it there. The troubles in Northern Ireland at that time reminded him of his youth in Germany during the war.'

Geoff's last race was in Germany, with Luthringshauser, late in 1969. 'I'd had a bellyful of Heinz's attitude by then. He could be a bit arrogant.

'We stayed in touch and we did ride a parade lap together round the TT Course about 25 years ago on an old BM, which I really enjoyed.

After moving back to the UK he didn't race again, he wasn't keen on the modern era rear-entry outfits.

He moved across to the Isle of Man in 1974, first working as an electrician with Easthope and Cubbon in Douglas. Later Geoff worked as a gardener at Ballamona Hospital (where the new Noble's Hospital is now).

He still lives in Crosby, where he marshalled for many years, both in the village and at the top of Halfway House hill. 'I still like meeting people and enjoy watching the TT.'



Geoff Hughes (far right) with Heinz Luthringshauser and Georg Auerbacher (centre) and his passenger after a non-world championship race in Sicily in 1968

'The first thing he did was take me to a garden allotment where I practised sliding in and out of the outfit with him'