



Jones The Racer

Words & Pics: Glen Williams

Gareth Jones, you are an Australian but the surname suggests an English heritage?

Well sort of, my dad's side of the family is English and they are based in Warrington (Manchester). It's quite good as it gives me a base to work from when in the UK and I can hold a British passport which helps with border control when travelling around the EU.

When did you start road racing?

I mucked about at home on a trail bike but never raced that. You have to be fourteen before you can go road racing in Australia so when I turned 14 I went and tried some 250cc/4-stroke class racing.

How did you go in that class? - And where did you progress to from there?

The 250's were in 2001/2002 where I finished first twice, then it was onto the 250 2-stroke class on an Aprilia in 2003 where I finished 2nd, then 2004 I moved up to the 600 Superstock class finishing 2nd behind Brendan Roberts followed by 600 Supersport in 2005, '06 and '07 where my best result was 5th

Was it in 2007 that you first met Brian Bernard?

My team mate in 2007 during the Australian series was Chris Seaton and Brian came over to assist Chris and myself in the team. We met at a few rounds and then he invited me to

“Brian has been a real strong believer in me and my riding has improved substantially since I have met Brian.”



fill a seat in his team here in NZ which was a real jumpstart in my career.

Has the Bernard racing team and the man himself been a good team to work with?

Brian has been a real strong believer in me and my riding has improved substantially since I have met Brian. I am really pleased to be here and riding for Brian's team again.

How do you like the street racing concept (Wanganui and Paeroa)?

It was just a matter of getting out there and doing it – turns out we went really well and I am quite looking forward to giving it another go.

Are you looking forward to riding both classes (Superbike and

Supersport) in this years NZ Nationals? - How's your fitness?

I am really looking forward to it and getting the job done this time. For the past year when in Europe I have been working really hard on my fitness and basically when I haven't been racing a bike, I have been in the gym.

You rode on Pirelli tyres in Europe and New Zealand last year – is it to be the same again?

Yes, I really like the way that the Yamaha R6 and R1 handle on the Pirellis and am very pleased to be running them on the bikes this year. The feel and feedback make it easier to find a good setup.

You have been riding a Suzuki GSXR1000 in the off-season in the European Superstock Cup – how does the big Suzuki compare to the Yamaha?

The Suzuki and the Yamaha deliver their power quite differently however, I do find the front end feel and the turn-in of the Yamaha suits my style. I feel very comfortable on the Yamaha.

Does all the travelling affect your riding at all?

No not at all, I quite enjoy it – and it doesn't seem to bother me much which is good.

Is it a financial strain to race in Europe or have you managed to cover your costs?

Absolutely, it is a huge strain and our family live and breathe racing to keep me on the track. Each year I'm on the track is another massive debt I owe them.....(laughs)

Any scary moments on the Superbike whilst riding in Europe?

Probably the most memorable is riding at Brands Hatch – it is real bumpy and

QUICK FACTS

Age: 21
First bike: Suzuki RM80
Occupation: Tipper Truck driver (now full time racer)
Location: Gold Coast, Queensland
Favourite track: Bruno Czech Republic
First road bike: Never owned one
Favourite Band: Matchbox 20
Favourite movie: No time to watch them!
Other hobbies: Boating, and fast cars
Most respected rider: Dan Stauffer
Dream Dolly Brolly: Steph, my girlfriend
Dream job: Doing it!

has lots of blind corners. I thought I had crashed the bike so many times.....

If you had to pick a career highlight – what would it be?

Kicking Craig Shirriffs' arse around the streets of Paeroa in 2008... (cheeky smile)

This interview is taking place prior to both Wanganui and the NZ Nationals, give your thoughts on where you think the competition for this year will be coming from?

I'll be looking out for Robbie (Bugden), Andrew (Stroud), Craig (Shirriffs) in the Superbike class and Dennis Charlette, James Smith and Sam Smith in the 600 class.

What does the future hold for Gareth Jones after the 2009 New Zealand season?

I have a new ride set with a Superbike team based in Holland and will be doing the Dutch (OMK) superbike Championship on a Yamaha. I also have a wildcard entry into the FIM Superstock 1000 and the IDM German Superbike championship. My medium term goal is to compete in the World Superbike paddock. **BRM**

