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Four Times British Superbike Champion Shane 'Shakey' Byrne awarded the coveted Royal Automobile Club Torrens Trophy



British Kawasaki rider Shane 'Shakey' Byrne has been awarded the coveted Torrens Trophy on January 27 at the Royal Automobile Club, Pall Mall, London. The trophy has only been awarded eight times since its inception in 1978. Upon receipt Shakey said 'It's a great achievement to win the Torrens Trophy and be recognised by such an established and respected organisation as the Royal Automobile Club'. He continued, 'Its been a fantastic year for me and the Rapid Solicitors Kawasaki team. I have won three of my four titles with Paul Bird Motorsport, and our aim is get the fifth title for 2015!'.

The Torrens Trophy recognises an individual or organisation considered to have made an outstanding contribution to the cause of safe and skilful motorcycling in the United Kingdom OR to have made an outstanding contribution of technical excellence to further the cause of motor cycling in the UK OR to have shown outstanding skill in international motor cycling sporting events in the United Kingdom. The Trophy was first awarded in 1978 in memory of Arthur Bourne, a motor cycling journalist and Vice Chairman of the Royal Automobile Club who wrote a column under the name Torrens. It has only been awarded eight times in its history and only when the club feels that the achievement justifies it.

In 2014, there was a strong crop of potential worthy recipients, the Club's Torrens Trophy Nominations Committee - consisting of Motoring Committee Chairman Ben Cussons, Torrens Nomination Committee Chairman, Club member and ex-bike racer Barrie Baxter, well-respected motorcycle journalist Mat Oxley, former racer and commentator Steve Parrish and Arthur Bourne's son Richard Bourne - debated long and hard. It was decided that 'Shakey' would be awarded the trophy for his unique achievement of securing a fourth British Superbike Championship.

As Barrie Baxter, Chairman of the Torrens Committee said, 'Motorcycle racing can be a very punishing discipline, which makes 'Shakey' Byrne's career all the more remarkable. In October the Kawasaki rider secured his fourth British Superbike title at the age of 38, 11 years after he won his first BSB crown. The British series is now the world's most competitive national championship, with top competition from across the globe. Byrne won the 2014 title in brilliant style, out-pointing three-time champion Ryuichi Kiyonari and became the first man in history to take the MCE Insurance British Superbike Championship on four occasions when he clinched the 2014 crown'.

Former motorcycle commentator and enthusiast Murray Walker said to 'Shakey' 'as a great admirer of your skill and personality, you are a credit to yourself, your team and, most of all, the sport we all love. Well done, all the best for the same again in 2015 - you know you can!'

Former racer and current BSB commentator James Whitham commented 'I'd like to congratulate Shakey on his achievement of winning four BSB titles, the only man to do so, impressive enough on its own. But for me the real gauge of this chaps ability is the manner in which he won these championships. Across more than a decade, on both twin and four cylinder bikes, with full electronics or controlled ECU's, using different makes of tyres, on circuits of varying character and in any conditions he has established himself as the man to beat. And above all he's done it wearing the smile of a man who genuinely loves riding his bike of a weekend!. Being awarded the Torrens Trophy caps off what by my reckoning is one of his most impressive seasons to date . . . he may have slightly less hair than when he took the first BSB title in 2003 . . . but I reckon he's got a few good seasons left in him yet. . just stay out of TV, there's a good fella!

The Torrens Trophy

The Royal Automobile Club has always had a close association with the motor cycling world. The Club formed the Auto Cycle Club in 1903, which went on to become the Auto Cycle Union in 1947. The first Tourist Trophy race was held on the Isle of Man in 1905 for cars - two years before the first TT for motorcycles.

The Torrens Trophy was first awarded in 1978 in memory of Arthur Bourne, a motor cycling journalist who wrote a column under the name Torrens. Arthur Bourne was also a Vice-Chairman of the RAC.

Previous winners of the Torrens Trophy include BMW in 1989 in recognition for their contribution to motor cycle safety through their development of their anti-lock braking system and in 1998 to Ian Kerr of the Metropolitan Police for 20-years of tireless work in promoting safe and responsible motorcycling. In 2008 World Superbike Champion James Toseland was awarded the Trophy for his immense contribution to raising the profile of motorcycle racing in this country and more recently Tom Sykes for being crowned the fifteenth World Superbike Champion, the fourth from Great Britain and only the second rider to win for Kawasaki in the series for twenty years.

The Royal Automobile Club

The Royal Automobile Club was founded in 1897 and its distinguished history mirrors that of motoring itself. In 1907, the Club was awarded its Royal title by King Edward VII, sealing the Club's status as Britain's oldest and most influential motoring organisation.

The Club's early years were focused on promoting the motor car and its place in society, which developed into motoring events such as the 1000 Mile Trial, first held in 1900. In 1905, the Club held the first Tourist Trophy, which remains the oldest continuously competed for motor sports event. The Club promoted the first pre-war and post-war Grands Prix at Brooklands in 1926 and Silverstone in 1948 respectively, whilst continuing to campaign for the rights of the motorist and motorcyclist, including introducing the first driving licenses.

Today, the Club continues to develop and support automobilism through representation on the Motor Sport Association (MSA), Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) and RAC Foundation, while continuing to promote its own motoring events, such as the free-to-attend Regent Street Motor Show and the Bonhams London to Brighton Veteran Car Run held on Saturday 31 October and Sunday 1 November 2015.

The Royal Automobile Club also awards a series of historic trophies and medals celebrating motoring achievements. These include the Segrave Trophy, the Tourist Trophy, the Simms Medal, the Dewar Trophy and the Torrens Trophy.



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