

# FOREWORD

**by Carl Fogarty**

*Four-times World Superbike Champion*

The first time I bumped into James Whitham – almost literally – was at the Manx Grand Prix of 1985. We were both trying to figure out which way the TT Mountain course went and how we survived that lap I will never know. I would catch and pass him, glance over as if to say ‘Take that, Tyke,’ and then he would do exactly the same to me a bit further on. We introduced ourselves afterwards and I remember thinking: ‘I’m going to have to watch out for this lad – he’s pretty fast and fearless.’

At the end of the race – which I won, of course! – I asked where that Whitham guy had finished, only to learn that he had crashed going over the Mountain section during the final qualifying session and broken his collarbone. And that pretty much sums James Whitham up!

James was a racer who never gave anything less than 110 per cent, who always rode on the edge. That style made him a big crowd favourite but also probably prevented him from winning more than he did. But it wasn’t just his style that made him so popular. James always had a friendly word, a smile and a joke for everyone, especially the fans. He lived for racing and enjoyed the whole scene much more than I did, because I only ever enjoyed winning. For that reason, unlike James, I didn’t make many friends in the paddock but he is the one true friend that I have made through racing and our families remain very close.

I have learnt a lot from him as nothing ever seems to get him down, not even the cancer that he battled successfully. His attitude was: this

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has happened for a reason, so let's just get on with it. During his chemotherapy treatment we went out for a Chinese meal one night and he threw up before we even entered the restaurant, although he was determined to carry on and not to let it spoil his chow mein. He is also one of the most intelligent people that I know – you certainly don't want to get into an argument with him, because you will never win! That intelligence also comes across in his non-stop humour, although I sometimes think that people don't take him as seriously as they should.

But it's only fitting that any book by James should focus on the fun of racing – and that's exactly what this one does. Enjoy!

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