

# Scottish Classic Motorcycle Racing Club

## Round 1 Finavon Forfar

Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019  
Report by Chris Montignani

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It was all change for the Scottish Classic Motorcycle Racing Club as they headed north to the picturesque hillside landscape of Finavon in Forfar for their inaugural round of their brand new 2019 racing championship.

When I say it was all change I was directing my remarks to the new management team taking charge and heading the club into a brand new racing year to continue on with the excellent foundations laid down by outgoing chairman Tom Forsyth who has been at the helm of our organisation for many years.

Creena Bell is our new club chairman for 2019 while Linda Riddell will take over the secretary's duties which over the previous two years were performed excellently by Brian Hamilton. Brian stood in to do the secretary's job and take all the entries when at the time no one was interested in the post, so we are forever indebted to Tom and Brian for keeping the club afloat and functioning flawlessly during their time in charge.

After what was a fantastic year for the club in 2018 the paddock was buzzing for this first encounter of the racing year. It was also good to see many new faces turning up at the event to race their classic dirt bikes so we welcome you all with open arms and we hope your time spent with us will be extremely memorable.

The week leading up to this first event of the year was as good as we could expect weather wise and the track looked absolutely superb as the first riders and spectators began making their way through the gates of the Finavon racetrack. Thanks first of course go to the track builders who gave up their very valuable time to layout the course in order we could all enjoy the fruits of their hard labours, so thanks to Derek McAulay and the rest of his team for a job well done.

It was a beautiful spring morning in the Finavon hills with the sun beating down, although when the low cloud cover then spoiled our view of the lovely blue Forfar skies it was back on with the woolly jumpers and beanie hats as the temperature began to drop.

On a personal note I managed to secure myself some sponsorship with Bill Brown at Wulfsport who has supplied all my paddock gear including hats, jacket's, and every other conceivable bit of protection I need to survive all manner of weather conditions while covering classic events in 2019, so a big thanks to Marion and Bill for their very generous donation.

My usual pre-race paddock walkabout turned up a few of those winter bike projects that have been painstakingly nurtured over the winter in order to have them ready to be displayed at this first round of the year. You could almost smell the freshly painted frames and newly rebuilt motors as the machines were wheeled out from their various transporters onto the virgin grass of the Finavon hills.

Ian Robertson had two new bikes on show in the shape of a 1972 360 and a 1975 400 Yamaha, so it looks like Ian means business in this year's 2019 championship. Kenny Harper was also showcasing his new mount in the shape of a very nice looking twin-port 360 CZ with that two into one exhaust system and the radical slick shifter on the gearbox. Kenny said he still has his Bultaco Pursang's but just fancied a change for the 2019 racing season. The Bell family of Mike, Liston and Lewis also turned up fully booted with a nice collection of big 500 Jawa's as they decided to leave their CCM's and BSA Goldstar's at home for this first round encounter.

Anyhow enough of the small talk back to what went down on the day . . .

In the Pre 68 Under 350cc Class it was Robert Kennedy on that very quick little 250 Cotton Starmaker who was the star of the show and rode superbly to take the overall win on the day. Ian Ridley put in another consistent ride on his immaculate BSA to take the runner up spot from another sterling shift from Clifford Hardistay in third.

The Pre 1968 Over 350cc class was won not surprisingly by Liston Bell who was riding a 500 Jawa this time at Finavon and was extremely fast over the course

of the three legs and seemed to enjoy the sharp turns and wide open expanses that allowed him to get the best from that big four-strokes power-plant. Fergus Moodie was also quick on the day but could not get on terms with the outright speed of Bell on what was undoubtedly the faster machine nevertheless Moodie rode well enough to secure the runner up position. Bryan Aird was riding the best I've seen him in recent times and absolutely loved the layout of the Forfar track although a third place finish was still a decent result for him considering the company he was racing against.

Daryl Wylie was the victor in the Pre 75 Under 300cc class and brought his hybrid Honda home to a top podium spot for his efforts on the day. Second place man Derek McAulay managed to bring his Bultaco Pursang across the line in the runner spot although it always appeared to me that Derek was much quicker over the course of the three races and he surely deserved more praise for his hard graft.

Last year's Pre 1975 championship over 300cc class was a battle royal right until the last round of the year, and as the riders left the start gate for their first race of the day it looked like we were in for yet another bar bashing contest in 2019. Ian Robertson was absolutely flying on that little 1975 YZ400 Yamaha that he put together in his workshop during the winter and the bike repaid him handsomely by taking Ian to the overall win. Last year's champion Stewart Roden was again very quick on the CCM and always gave the front runners a fright when that big British fourstroke came alongside for the pass although the runner up place would have to suffice for Stewart this time round as he was under immense pressure from the nimble and quicker two-stroker of Robertson. Les Calderwood had been prepping the big CCM all through the winter for his comeback tour in 2019 although a minor mechanical issue with the newly built bike hours before the start of our first event meant he had to borrow a machine from Alistair Aird to which end he took valuable championship points and a third place finish on Alistair's very quick little BSA. Nevertheless unfortunately Les would then have to share his third place finish prize with Jim Alison as they both tied equal on points in the class.

There was a decent turnout of Pre 77 bikes for our inaugural meeting of the year and it was great to see this class flourish at last for the start of a brand new season. Another new and immensely experienced rider Sam Sibbald

brought along his old TT500 Yamaha to race and did exceptionally well to take the overall win in this class. I have watched Sam racing from way back when he used to race at schoolboy level and I always enjoyed him racing against the likes of Paul Chiappa when they both raced BSA Bantam's with the Scottish formula Bantam Club back in the 1970's. Anyhow Brian Hamilton was again on fine form at Finavon and brought his fiery little CZ home to the runner up spot just ahead of John Fullerton in third.

The Pre 1984 class turned into the Jim Grieve show as the experienced Mount Everest climber took three wins from three starts with a very dominant display of speed on his 1981 490 Maico. Last year's club champion Davie Loudon was also on top form but he was going to have to up his game and ride the wheels off his YZ Yamaha if he was going to do anything about catching the flying Grieve. Loudon was riding out of his skin over the three races but could still not get close enough to Grieve to make any sort of challenge for the lead although a second place finish and more importantly valuable championship points were still decent reward for his heroic efforts on the day. Andy Malloch and Graham Smith were at it all day banging bars and taking turns at swapping track position over the course of the day, but Smith was the faster man on the day on the RM400 Suzuki and he would take the last step on the podium at the chequered flag.

In the age related races after the lunchbreak it was first the turn of the Pre 75 Over 65 class to strut their stuff on the lovely sun soaked Forfar hillside racetrack. Stewart Riddell was the man to beat and he appeared to take to the grassy Finavon track like the proverbial duck to water as he took the class win overall on his 360 CZ twinpiper. Jim McQuillian was never far from the quick pace of Riddell's CZ and he would be very content with a second place finish and a bag of 2019 championship points. Brian Hamilton once again rode well enough in this class to take the third spot overall on the day.

The Pre 75 Over 60's class supplied some of the best racing of the day as we witnessed a good old fashioned classic racing scrap between Fergus Moodie on the Faber BSA and Jim Alison on the 1974 CCM. In race one it was Jim Alison who shot from the gate and secured the holeshot from Moodie in second. Alison kept Moodie at arm's length for most of the race although Moodie was never far from the rear wheel of Alison and momentarily made the pass for

the lead. As they headed to the chequered flag on lap number four it was still Alison leading with Moodie close behind although going into the final turn they were both side by side and the final corner would decide the winner of the race. Moodie got a decent run into the final turn and was tight on the inside leaving Alison to take the wider run round giving Moodie the race win and the overall result. Alison still put in a decent run in this race and would finish the class second overall on the day. Mike Bell was also very quick at this round 1 event and was equally quick in the previous class races but nevertheless a third place finish overall was still as good a result as he could ever have wished for riding his big 500 Jawa.

The Pre 1975 Over 50's class saw Neil Chalmers take the overall result riding that very quick Yamaha 400. Ian Robertson also mounted on a 400 Yamaha surprisingly only finished in the runner up spot this time round despite his early speed in the class races in the first half of the race programme. It would also be a two-way tie for third spot between Ian Ward and Derek McAulay as these two riders could not be separated on points when the arithmetic was eventually calculated.

Brian Aird was again on the classic club's scoresheet in the Pre 75 Over 40's class with a win overall on his ultra-reliable BSA. Colin Flockhart on his immaculate Cheney BSA was also riding the best I've ever seen him and appeared to be enjoying himself immensely riding the turns and hills of this picturesque hillside race track as he would take the second step on the classic podium. Robert Kennedy having now parked up his Cotton Starmaker was blowing the winter cobwebs off his 1975 CCM and doing it in fine style with a third place overall on the day.

When the Bell brothers come out to play in the same race you know there are going to be fireworks and there is certainly plenty of brotherly rivalry between these two riders once their bikes leave the start gate. Mounted on almost identical Jawa 500's it was a joy to watch them slip and slide under each other lap after lap, although Liston would eventually be the victor and take the overall win due I think to Lewis having some kind of mechanical issue in one of the moto's. Daryll Wylie would be the runner up rider on his Hybrid Honda with Lewis eventually filling the final spot in third.

The Veterans in the Pre 1984 Over 60's class showed no signs of their advancing years and Steve Mower on the 81 490 Maico put in a superb shift over the three legs to secure the overall win. Alistair Aitken always makes the long journey from his hometown in Oban on the west coast to race here at Finavon each year and he was rewarded handsomely with a second place finish for his gallant efforts and his dedication to classic racing. Dougie Harrow enjoyed all his six races at this round 1 event at Forfar and he brought his very tidy Curtis Honda home to a third place finish on the day.

Jim Grieve for me was the man of the match and my rider of the day at Finavon mainly due to his outright speed and pure domination of the class. With the overall win from the Pre 1984's already safely in his pocket he then went on to dominate the 1984 Over 50's class in fine style by winning this formula also. David Loudon despite his best efforts on the day would be the first to admit he was beaten by the better man, and although he could not match the speed of Grieve's Maico he was never far from him should the flying Maico man either suffer a mechanical issue or some other stroke of bad luck. Graham Smith again was quick on the day and although he could not get onto terms with the front runners of Grieve and Loudon he still put in a decent shift on his RM Suzuki to take the third place finish.

Summing up it was another cracking opening encounter for us all and this Finavon hillside racetrack very rarely disappoints us and somehow this venue always seems to be just perfect when we turn up on the day. Of course by the time you read this you will already be able to see yourselves in action on the racetrack from this Round 1 event courtesy of my ever popular You Tube Channel which currently is nearing 6,000 subscribers and increasing almost daily. I still receive many comments from enthusiastic bike racers around the world who love to watch all these old motorcycles and their riders in action on our lush green Scottish pastures, and when you consider you have an audience that includes fans from Canada, USA, Brazil, Russia, Australia, Japan, the Caribbean and many more countries within Europe it gives you an idea of just what an appeal Scottish classic racing has on the planet. These countries just don't seem to have the variety of machines or lush green racetracks we are fortunate to race on here in Scotland.

Thanks finally go to everyone who helped out with the track building and to all the marshals and club members who helped out on the day. Thanks also to Richard Winn who made a four hour drive just to be at Finavon and we do appreciate his commitment and that he keeps us all informed on the day about what's happening on the track. And of course thank you to every other person who helps out with the organisation of this wonderful club.

Anyhow our next round on the calendar of course will be Round 2 from Cumstone Farm Lockerbie on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April of which unfortunately for me (and maybe fortunate for you) I cannot attend due to having a family commitment on that day. So hopefully someone will take over the race report duties for this event and fill you all in on what went down on the day, so if you fancy being our intrepid Clark Kent for a day then just contact Creena.

Nevertheless as big Arnie would say "I'll Be Back" on the 12<sup>th</sup> of May for our Round 3 event which I see has yet to be confirmed although we could do a lot worse than go back to Finavon for the third round although that decision is of course up to the SCMRC committee.

So hope you all enjoyed all the coverage from our Round 1 meeting at Finavon it was a superb day and a great days racing so until next time be safe at Round two Lockerbie and I'll see you all at Round 3.

Chris Montignani