

Scottish Classic Motorcycle Racing Club

Round 8 Whitekirk

Sunday 30th September 2018

Report by Chris Montignani

The penultimate round of our current classic racing year was held on the very windy but superb grassy slopes of Merrylees Farm at Whitekirk in East Linton last weekend.

As I mentioned in my last report from Kirkness I was hoping for an improvement in rider numbers at our last two events for this year and it appears that it had the desired effect because the paddock had a good variety of machines and some new friendly faces to look upon as I conducted my usual venue walkabout.

Weather wise the forecast was good for the day with dry sunny conditions predicted although there was that biting cold wind blowing across the moors just to keep you aware that autumn was on its way. At times it felt like it was strong enough to blow more than your hat off, although if that was all we had to worry about on the day then this was surely a plus.

Many of the 2018 championship classes were still up for grabs at this Round 8 meeting and at the time of writing this report several were still not decided. Although with only two rounds remaining the pressure was now on for all club members if you wanted to reserve your place on the winner's rostrum when you book your place at the end of year presentation.

Before this event got underway it was currently very tight at the top in the Pre 1975 Over 300cc class with a three way fight between Lewis Bell, Stewart Roden, and Les Calderwood with only 3 miniscule

points separating all of these riders for the Pre 75 title. Also in the Pre 1984 class it looks like being a two way fight for the championship between Neil Glendinning and Davie Loudon with only five points between them so we were expecting some good racing and individual battles when these guys took to the track on the day.

While on my pre racing paddock ramble a complete stranger introduced himself to me and appeared to know who I was almost immediately, although I must say I was kind of taken aback as I had never met the man in my life before. Anyhow it transpires that Kevin Brown is a born and bred Australian who was over here on vacation and races classic dirt bikes in Oz and he decided to pay a visit to our event to sample our Scottish racing atmosphere. But the surprising thing for me was that he knew me through the videos on my YouTube Channel and was an ardent watcher of what goes on over here in our little part of the world. But of course that's the power of this modern day internet we can all communicate with like-minded people anywhere on the planet at any given time almost immediately.

Anyhow back to the story . . .

Now I have to admit that this Whitekirk track is not my favourite with regards to filming the meeting. There is just not enough scope to follow the riders when they are racing, and this is mainly because much of the track is obscured by the deep gully and those large bramble bushes at the far side of the track. It is very difficult to capture all the action as I am unable to follow what goes on.

Furthermore with those howling gale force winds on the day I was very tempted to just leave the cameras tucked up safe and sound in my car and just watch the action from the sidelines. But of course I have a discerning internet audience now to serve and they

continually cry out for their vintage dirt bike fix so we still have to get on with it and do what we can . . . and besides you would never find me complaining about such trivial things as bitterly cold howling winds . . . *yeah not much!*

With all the preliminaries of scrutineering and signing-on all completed it was down to racing business as the combined Pre 68 classes lined up for their first race of the day.

Clifford Hardistay was in fine form and I must say riding as good as I have ever seen him go in the Pre 68 Under 350 class because his recent turn of speed was enough to win him the class overall. Jim McQuillian was also thumping round good style on his old BSA and looked like he had half of the track tapes wrapped around his back wheel at one point but nevertheless he deserved his runner up spot with a very gritty performance over the three legs. My top man Ian Ridley again was consistent and filled the final podium spot on his very reliable BSA, and of course what is more important is that more valuable championship points were added to his years tally to take to the final round at Penrith on the 14th October .

There's just no stopping Fergus Moodie this year and yet again he dominated the Pre 68 Over 350cc class at this round at Whitekirk with three very convincing wins on his very quick BSA. With the holeshot in race one Moodie was off and running and led the chasing pack a merry dance around the windy East Linton landscape. Stewart Riddell and Brian Aird had a good scrap over the three races and there was nothing much to choose between either rider, although Riddell's very quick CZ would eventually secure the runner up spot leaving wee Airdy to fill the bottom step on the winners podium this time round.

In the Pre 1975 Under 300cc class and freshly returned from racing from his European exploits Ian Robertson has been the man to beat in the small capacity class this year. Having built that little Yamaha DT during the winter from a bunch of old spare parts he had lying about the workshop he has turned the little hybrid motorcycle into a championship winning rocket. Of course the little bike has had its teething problems this year but mostly it has kept Ian at the sharp end of the leader board when it came to results, so it just goes to show what you can build when you put your mind to it. Robertson had some good battles with Derek McAulay over the course of the day but still managed the win overall leaving Derek with the runner up spot. Craig Dickson was also very quick on that little CZ and he was well worthy of the efforts he put in over the three moto's, so it was a fully deserved third place finish for him for what I think may have been his first time out at this Whitekirk track.

In the Pre 1984 class we were all looking forward to a climatic skirmish between Davie Loudon and Neil Glendinning as they were both about to do battle for supremacy and claim the bragging rights for top dog in the 2018 championship. Glendinning's machine was looking good during practise and everything looked hunky dory as he lined up at the start gate for Race 1. Although when the gate dropped Neil banged the big Honda into gear and then dropped the clutch but the bike just sat stationary on the line with a broken gearbox.

To say Neil was gutted was an understatement and very quickly he went over to Loudon and congratulated him on winning the championship as he knew his year was now finished and that he would not have the bike repaired in time for our final round in two weeks. Davie Loudon to be fair to him even offered Neil his spare YZ Yamaha to race but Neil declined the offer and then left the venue

post haste. These two guys have entertained us well this season so I'd like to think Neil can sort something out for our final bash at Penrith, and if not hopefully we will see him back bigger and better in 2019.

Also in race two in the Pre 84 class it was youngster Daniel McNally who shot from the gate into an early lead on his very quick Husqvarna, regrettably though his initial excitement and exuberance of hitting the front soon turned to despair as he entered the turn into the home straight when he was then unceremoniously chucked from his Swedish steed and onto the Whitekirk landscape. But despite a few bruises for his troubles he still re-mounted to take the chequered flag and finish overall in the runner up spot. The eventual winner of this class was big "Zippy" or Graham Smith as he is known to us locals. Smith was very quick on that RM 400 Suzuki and took wins in races two and three. Daniel McNally was the runner up due to his class win in race one although he still had to fight fiercely for that place as he locked horns with angus man Andy Malloch who was extremely "fest" again on that 1983 500 Armstrong and who eventually crossed the line in third.

There was some fantastic racing served up in the Pre 1975 Over 300cc class and the long awaited three way tie for the title between Lewis Bell, Stewart Roden, and Les Calderwood was about to unfold. Naturally Lewis was not in attendance at this event as I assume he was racing at the last round of the British Championship in the south of the country although we still had the CCM's of Stewart Roden and big Les Calderwood to entertain us.

In race one it was Roden with the advantage from the gate although as they neared turn three Michael McNiven on the CZ went into the corner with no rear brakes and subsequently could not stop and ran

into the rear of Derek McAulay's Bultaco and hit the deck. Roden had nowhere to go and also collided with the CZ man and both bikes hit the Whitekirk turf in a mash of riders and metal motorcycles.

McNiven took a blow to his shoulder and would not make the re-start although after Roden eventually managed to extricate his bike from the entangled CZ he made some quick re-adjustments to the big CCM and lined up for the new race start.

On the re-start it was Roden once again who shot from the gate into an early lead but was soon overhauled by John Fleming on the CZ who would go on to take the win leaving Roden in second spot. In race two Roden again took the holeshot until Les Calderwood hit the front and tried to make a break from the chasing pack. Unfortunately though the Calderwood CCM gremlins would once again strike down the Clackmannanshire rider's aspirations as the Clews motor died a slow death and left him pushing his bike back to the paddock. Les has been very quick this year and has put a lot of effort into pre-season preparation and he surely deserves a bit more luck. Although it still remains to be seen if he will make the necessary repairs and have the bike back for our last round at Penrith, but let's hope he has some better fortune before the season ends. Nevertheless when the dust had finally settled the overall positions stood with Stewart Roden 1st, John Fleming on the CZ second and what was a titanic effort from Robert Kennedy on the CCM in third.

When it got down to the age related races after the lunch break Fergus Moodie shot from the gate in the Over 60's class and was virtually never seen again until he crossed the line for the chequered flag after leg 3 and three straight wins. Brian Hamilton had a decent days racing in this class and took the runner up spot from John Fleming in third.

I must say it was great to see Stewart Riddell back racing again at this penultimate round of the year and of course he showed us all what we were missing before he took his short sabbatical break at the start of the season. Riddell would win the Pre 1975 Over 65 class in fine style with Clifford Hardistay second and Tom Forsyth on that immaculate BSA in third.

It was more winning accolades for Ian Robertson with his lovely and very quick Yamaha as he added to his previous success by securing the overall win in the Pre 1975 Over 50's class. Gary Smith on the AMD CZ battled throughout the afternoon to put himself as high up the podium as possible although his second place position was still a fine effort considering the speed of Robertson on the Yamaha up front over the three legs. Derek McAulay's Pursang Bultaco is definitely more reliable this year and it show's in the results at the end of the day as he filled the final step on the podium in this class in third.

The relative young-un's in the Pre 1975 Over 40's class appeared to like the very windy but bumpy Whitekirk racetrack although Tommy Anderson seemed to like it more as brought his old Husqvarna home to the overall win in this class at the end of the day. Brian Aird was in there once again and with another good solid performance on his BSA he took the runner up position when the points were calculated. Robert Kennedy Jnr had a decent days racing again with a good third place finish earlier on in the Pre 75 Over 300cc class and a third place finish in this Over 40's class riding that superbly quick 1975 CCM.

The bairns in the Under 40's class showed the older club members how it was done and CZ mounted Michael McNiven who despite receiving a small shoulder injury in his spill earlier on in the day's proceedings took the overall win in fine style. CZ mounted Craig

Dickson was continually clicking at the heels of the front runner's over the course of the three legs but could not match the pace of McNiven's bike on the day. Daryl Wylie is starting to get back up to speed after his recent injury and it appears that it won't be long now before he is challenging for the prime positions hopefully at our last race event of the year.

The Pre 1984 class has been superb this year and we have witnessed some good and very fast racing from these guys over the course of our thus far eight round championship. In the Over 50's class it was a fine win for John Stokes as he rode superbly throughout the day to take the win overall on his 81 490 Maico. Nevertheless look out for Andy Malloch at the last round of the year as I feel he is getting "fester and fester" as this year's championship goes on, and who knows we may yet see the big man take the top spot before this year is out. Graham "Zippy" Smith had another decent result in this class with a third place overall on his RM 400 Suzuki although Graham did have a couple of misdemeanours during racing this time which sent him down the pecking order when the points were calculated at the end of the day.

Summing up . . for me it was another grand event for our second last race meeting of 2018 and with only one round remaining it looks like it will have all the makings of a grand day out as we all head south to Penrith in Cumbria to Ian Ridley's new track at Scarfoot Farm near Plumpton on the 14th of October.

As usual by the time you read this you will already be able to see yourself performing on the telly thanks to all the racing footage from my You Tube Channel which is increasing in its popularity each year. There appears to be a huge inspiring upsurge in interest in these old classic dirt bikes and the vintage racing in general with new

subscribers joining me each and every week, and there has been at least 30 new members to my video channel in the last three weeks alone.

Although all this talk about websites and You Tube led me to thinking about the many of our club members and other interested parties in our classic racing organisation who do not own computers and are not up to speed and missing out on what goes on in our organisation from day to day. Although thanks to Agnes she is producing a regular newsletter for SCMRC members to try and keep them informed of what's going on with regards to the road racing, trials and scrambling side of our club.

After our final round at Penrith I will use the winter break to take stock and evaluate my commitments to which organisations I will help out in 2019. No decisions by me have been made as yet about my plans although there is plenty time to discuss and chew the fat about this subject as the winter goes on. This kind of thing takes up a huge spell of my time and it is becoming an increasingly big responsibility having to make myself available at each and every classic race event and then having to complete the following correspondence after each and every championship round.

Anyhow it is usually a long winter so I will have plenty time to consider each and every alternative.

Meantime I have been in talks with Ken Smith who is the editor at the classic dirt bike VMX Magazine with a view to using them as a new sponsor for 2019 and linking me and my You Tube video's to their quarterly publication. As yet nothing has been decided but it could be more exposure and yet more valuable association's to help us promote our classic organisation throughout the world and not just locally.

But finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank Les Calderwood and his lovely partner Debra for their very generous sponsorship in 2018. I know Les has now moved on to bigger and better things from my initial agreement with him at “Calderwood Catering Maintenance” although it’s the fact that he actually took the opportunity and made the commitment to involve me in his business for 2018 speaks volumes for the man, so I sincerely say thank you to you both.

So enough rabble from me for the moment and its forever onward and upward and let’s all look forward to our last classic bash of the racing year and I will see you all at Penrith on the 14th October, so until then be safe, ride safe and I will speak to you soon.

Chris Montignani (Monty)