

Scottish Classic Motorcycle Racing Club

Round 5 Merrylees Farm Whitekirk

Sunday 3rd October 2021

Well we've finally made it to the end of another racing season, and although it's been a challenging one at that we still managed a five round championship which is quite remarkable because back at the start of April when our first round at Forfar was cancelled it was doubtful if we'd even get started at all.

Although we did eventually get up and running in June at Strathaven and after another three cracking events one at Thornhill and two at Lockerbie it eventually brought us to this our last and final round five race here at Merrylees Farm in Whitekirk.

Now it has to be said that this track at Merrylees is not my personal favourite on our Scottish calendar but of course I'm only speaking from a filming point of view you understand, but it's just the way that the landscape is situated here at Whitekirk as there is a lot of the track that you just can't see once the bikes disappear to the back of the course but it's not a criticism just an observation and the tracks probably fine from a riders point of view.

Now as far as I'm led to believe it was Dougie Meek, Tom Forsyth, Jake Whitelaw and a few others who laid out this particular track so its thanks to Dougie and of course all the other club members who pitched in to help out before race day because as your all well aware if somebody doesn't put the track together then we'd have nothing to race on. So it's a big thank you from me for all of your hard work over the course of the racing year and I don't know exactly who does what at each race event but I'm very grateful that you all give up your time when required.

The track at Merrylees Farm was in great condition for our last wee "swaree" and it looked like there was another decent turnout of riders as I walked around the paddock although maybe not as many as in previous years which seems to have been a theme for our race meetings this year although we hope that we see some brand new members and the return of many of our regulars when we get back to racing in 2022.

The weather at the beginning of the week was forecast to be torrential rain for Whitekirk for Sunday and things looked pretty bleak for our last event although thankfully it was then changed later to be dry and windy which indeed it was and it was just perfect for our final Round 5 race of 2021.

Firstly I couldn't start my race report ramblings before first mentioning Lewis Bell who as you all know has now secured the Pre 65 class in the British Championship for 2021 so a very well done to Lewis for his efforts, and thankfully all of his hard work of trekking up and down the motorways of the UK over the past year has finally paid off for him. Although I can't help wondering that if this is a British Championship event then why don't they have at least one round here in Scotland because the last time I looked I'm pretty sure that we were all still part of the UK. But this is just another observation on my part because if our guys like Lewis and Liston have to make the long trek to the very south of the country on a regular basis then why can't others make the journey north in exchange. . it doesn't seem right to me somehow.

Anyhow back to the plot . . .

Now normally I usually compile these race reports after running through my video footage of the event although this time round I decided not to film at Whitekirk not because I couldn't be bothered or any other trivial reason it was mainly due to the landscape at this Whitekirk track as you I can't see enough of the course to justify the time to film it and any clips I could have filmed would have been much too short to be useable.

There were still a few championships still to be decided at this final round and as far as I know the only one that was already confirmed before we went to Whitekirk was Mike McLurty who had already secured our brand new Pre 1989 125 championship, although many of the others were still to be fought for and battled out at this final round of the year so we were looking forward to some good racing.

First to the start line for race one were the combined Pre 68 's Upto and Over 350cc class and it was deemed that four laps of the Whitekirk track would be adequate for the classic bikes although no sooner had the bikes left the line the race was done and dusted in the blink of an eye. But it is surprising how quickly some of the riders can get around some of our racetracks and maybe this is something to think about when the annual AGM is held at the end of the year.

Anyhow the initial four laps for the classics was upgraded to five soon after and in the Pre 68 under 350cc class it was the young gun himself Andrew King who showed a clean pair of heels to the chasing pack as he flew around the tight but short Whitekirk racetrack on his hybrid Husqvarna/AJS racer. Ian Ward yet again filled the runner up spot on his antique Villiers in second and it was Tom Lewis who put himself on the last step of the winners podium in third on his ultra- reliable Rickman 350 BSA machine.

The Pre 68 Over 350cc class saw Liston Bell take the winning laurels and Liston again put in another fine and very quick performance over the three legs to take the win. Fergus Moody throughout this year's championship has been one of the most consistent riders and was always a front runner in this highly competitive vintage class and a runner up spot for this final race of the season was a fitting ending to another successful season campaign. Lewis Bell would take the eventual third place finish at Whitekirk in this formula so another good ending to the day for Lewis's hard graft and of course not forgetting that young Lewis secured the Pre 68 British Championship for 2021 so well done to that man for putting Scotland on the vintage racing map.

There wasn't a big turnout of Pre 1977 bikes at Whitekirk and were hoping that this trend will improve as we look forward to 2022 although on the day it was Brian Hamilton who secured the points and the Pre 77 class for 2021 so again well done to Brian who was riding his old fourstroke Yamaha.

In the big bike Pre 1984 Over 250cc class it was once again the now familiar Mark Kenny Show and Mark this year has been outstanding on his big Fourstroke Honda's, occasionally Mark's been racing his C&J 600 and at other times as at this Whitekirk event he was on his equally quick H.P.F 500 Honda and basically he's blown away all opposition this year and has also secured the Pre 1984 Championship for his efforts. Mark had a healthy lead after round four at Lockerbie and led Davie Loudon by 41 points going into this final round so it's probably fair to say that Davie had a lot to do if he was going to steal the crown from Kenny. Although suffice to say Davie gave it his best shot and was badgering away at Mark over the course of the three legs although it appears his 490 YZ Yamaha was not enough of a match for the brute power of Kenny's Honda and at the end of the day it would finish with Mark Kenny the overall victor with John Stokes in second and Graham Smith on the RM400 Suzuki in third.

In the Pre 1975 Over 300cc class it was always going to be a last ditch title fight between class leader Stewart Roden who going into this final round had a slight advantage over second place contender Archie Baird as just two points separated the both of them from overall championship victory. Baird was in top form at Whitekirk and I have to say this was probably the best and quickest I've seen Archie ride in quite some time on his Norrie Pattie 3L CZ bike. Once the gate dropped the sparks began to fly and Baird was quick from the gate in all three legs and did much of the early running with Stewart Roden and the rest of the pack in hot pursuit. Now as I recall Archie Baird secured races one and three while Stewart Roden took race two on his big CCM so it would finish at the end of the day with Baird taking the overall and the Pre 75 Over 300 championship crown for 2021. Although on the track on the day it was Stewart Roden in second and Liston Bell in third but there were some titanic battles over the course of the three legs from all three of these very quick riders.

Daryl Wylie once more had been going about his business at Whitekirk and has been consistent and quick all season and he turned up at this final round with a healthy 28 point lead over second placed rider Colin Nelson so as long as Daryl could keep his head in front of Colin for this last and final event of the year he would secure the Pre 1975 Under 300cc class which is exactly what he achieved with room to spare. Andy Farr still managed to take the winners title on the track on the day although it was still hard work with Liam Lamb on the old Maico in second and the new champion Daryl Wylie coming home in third.

This year we had the brand new Pre 1989 125 class which we introduced for the new season and it's been a revelation when we discovered the racing talents of Mike McLurty. Mike has been simply awesome this year and to be fair he's not had a lot of competition to contend with in his class although when he was racing in the age related races he was still giving the big engine machines a run for their money. But it was another three wins from three starts for Mike at Whitekirk and he fully deserved the overall win and of course the 125 championship for 2021. Christopher Kirkbride took the runner up position at Whitekirk on his little watercooled Yamaha 125 and the championship runner up title while his travelling and racing pal John Kennon put his name on the last step of the podium in third on the day. But this has been good stuff from the 125 racers this year and we hope this class improves numbers wise in 2022, but this of course will all be discussed at the AGM near the end of the year.

The pre 1984 Upto 300cc class has yet again been another good formula to watch this season and we've seen some decent performances from the guys on these slightly smaller engine machines. But for me personally Andy Malloch has been the outstanding talent on his Montesa this year and watching him keep up with and sometimes passing some of the bigger bikes in the age related races in the second part of the days programme was a joy to watch. But it was another full house for Andy at Whitekirk as he secured another three class wins in this racing class. Stuart Muirhead was also quick on the day and his equally fast bike seemed to be well suited to the tight and twisty Merrylees Farm racetrack and he would take the runner up spot in this highly competitive class.

In the age related races after the lunch break it was Andrew King again who showed the pack a clean pair of heels in the Pre 1977 Under 40's class and young Andrew was again flying on his AJS Stormer machine, Liam Lamb would go on to secure the runner up spot in second on that very quick 1970's Maico Twinshocker although in joint third Liston Bell and Craig Dickson would have to share the points as they both tied for that third and final step on the podium. In the Pre 1977's Over 40's class Bryan Aird was the man to beat riding his BSA and he would finish just ahead of Colin Nelson on the Husqvarna in second with Ian Marr in third.

The more mature riders in the Pre 77 Over 50's class still don't seem to have lost much of the speed they enjoyed as younger racers and they put that experience to good use at Whitekirk as it was Andy Farr once again who was top dog with Ian Ward in second and Neil Chalmers romping home to take the coveted third place finish on the day. Archie Baird was the king of the hill again in the age related Pre 1977 Over 65's class and Archie powered his way to another classic win just ahead of his pal and best mate John Fleming in second position. Once more though it was another tie for that final third place finish between Stewart Roden and Fergus Moodie who both completed their days hard work by securing 24 points each on the day.

Peter Dobinson was the man of the hour at Whitekirk and Peter was in total control of the Pre 1977's Over 65's class and he would take three wins from three starts just ahead of Brian Hamilton in second and Tom Forsyth in third. As you can guess it was a walk in the park for Stuart Muirhead in the Pre 1984 Under 40's formula because as far as I was aware he was the only competitor taking part in this class so Stuart wasn't too stressed out with other riders chasing him to steal his title . . . but it sounds like my kind of race and something I think I could do very well in.

Mark Kenny was top dog in the Pre 1984 Over 50's class and as you'd expect there was some good scraps once more between himself, Davie Loudon and Graham Smith who were all battling for a piece of the action, but suffice to say Mark was unbeatable on that HPF Honda fourbanger and he would take another three race wins with Davie Loudon second and Graham Smith on the RM400 Suzuki coming across the line in third. Finally in the Pre 1984 Over 60's formula it was Mike Foster who won all three races on the day and he would take the Over 60's overall result for his hard work on the day just ahead of Steve Mower in second and John Porteous on that big Curtis Honda in third.

Summing up though it's been a very quick racing year and quite challenging early on as of course we couldn't allow any spectators to our events because of the Covid restrictions, but with still managing to fit in a five round championship it's been our shortest racing year on record and hopefully we'll be up and ready to go for a bumper return to normal at the start of spring 2022.

As usual thanks to all the marshals and their helpers, all the track builders, and of course to our scrambles secretary Linda Riddell for doing the admin and for her lap scoring prowess and of course to her hubby Stewart for doing the race starts during this year and hopefully we'll see Stewart back on his bike in 2022. Again thanks to Creena Bell for being our quite charming Club Chairman for 2021 and also to Richard Winn who kept us informed Murray Walker style on the PA at each and every event with his excellent commentary.

Naturally if you want all of the race results from our five round racing season and the overall championship positions from this year's 2021 campaign these are now all available on the [classicscrambles.com](https://www.classicscrambles.com) website where you can find all the information you require about these statistics and of course anything connected with our fantastic organisation.

Don't forget there is plenty to see and do through the long winter months by tuning into my Classic Dirt Bike TV Channel on You Tube where of course you can relive part of this year's Scottish championship and watch yourselves on the big screen telly or your tablet or mobile phone at home. There are of course many other things to see if you tune in to my channel as I like to think I supply the very best content with regards these rare old vintage dirt bikes. So don't forget to leave a comment after watching a video and hit that "like" button when you've watched a video that you like, or better still be a subscriber because that way every time I upload a new video you will be notified almost immediately, and of course the best bit of all is that it's all completely free and gratis and won't cost you a single dime.

I know a few of the older members of our club are not computer literate and are missing out on quite a lot of our content with regards watching the bikes racing on the track and other archive Scottish Classic Scramble Club stuff but if the young guns could just help them out and show them what their missing it would help keep them busy through the long winter months.

Although just before I go and I'm not sure your all aware . . I received the sad news just last week of the sudden passing of Twinshock racer Stuart Baird who of course is the brother of our club member Archie Baird. Stuart occasionally raced with the classic club but to be fair did most of his racing with the Scottish Twinshock Scramble Club although I knew Stuart quite well and he was such a cheerful colourful character and he will be very sorely missed by all who knew him and my thoughts go out to all of Stuarts family and his Ayrshire friends at this sad time.

But another racing year completed and once more thanks to everybody involved, and if I've not mentioned your name in this newsletter then I apologise because as you know it takes everybody's help and endeavour's to make any kind of organisation work and we all know there are many who help out behind the scenes so to speak and give up their time for free to make sure that it all comes together on the day.

So everyone behave yourselves through the closed season downtime and keep safe and well and I'll look forward to seeing all your smiley faces and those winter projects when we get started in the spring next year. So until we all get back together for another season of classic racing with the club keep safe and well and hopefully next year's championship will turn out to be our best yet.

Chris Montignani (Monty)