

Scottish Classic Motorcycle Racing Club

Round 7 Scratchmere Farm Penrith

Sunday 8th September 2019

Report by Chris Montignani

Without doubt it was another cracker of an event at Round 5 at Thornhill in early July although it seems so long ago since that meeting and for me it has been like a jail sentence when you have not been allowed to follow any classic racing for quite some time. Although time is moving on at an unprecedented pace in this year's championship and it's hard to imagine we are now just two rounds away from the close of another racing season.

It's been almost two months since I have had any contact with the Scottish Classic Motorcycle Racing Club and with such a huge break after the Thornhill event and I must admit it was good to be back covering our continuing 2019 championship again.

Of course to be fair I have only missed one round this season due to other commitments when round two at Lockerbie was being held, then our round three event scheduled for Drumclog was then subsequently cancelled, and to top it all another meeting was then terminated due to excess water lying around the track at our scheduled round six at Kirkness in Fife in August. So it's not been the best of racing years in that respect so naturally we all had our fingers crossed that this round seven meeting to be held here at Penrith was still good to go.

Once again Ian Ridley, Dougie Meek, Richard Winn and their band of track builders were hard at work throughout the week and laid out another superb course for our visit on this 8th September. Ian and his crew deserve a medal for the hard work they put in each and every year, but more importantly they give up their valuable time and resources to be there and lay out some kind of a racetrack in order that we can all just turn up on the Sunday at our leisure to just wheel our bikes out of the van, race and then head home.

I know first-hand what it is like to build these tracks as I of course have had experience “in this field” (if you’ll pardon the pun) with other off-road organisations in the past and it is a very un-appreciative endeavour to place your time and effort at the club’s disposal for these track construction day’s although from myself personally I would like to thank each and every one of you who helped out on the day.

During my pre-race paddock walkabout it was good to see Robert Kennedy Snr out and about taking in the ambience of our round 7 meeting here at Penrith, although this time Rab was watching what was going on from within the confines of a vehicle. Rab has been a club member and a racer for many years and has rarely missed a meeting with the classic club, and although Rab is not in the best of health right now myself and the rest of the Scottish Classic club members of course wish him well and hope he continues to grace our classic club paddocks for a visit whenever he feels the need. So all the best Rab to yourself and your family and try to keep positive mate as we are all here for you.

Anyhow there was another good turnout of riders for this Round 7 encounter and the paddock was buzzing once again as the preliminaries of signing-on and bike scrutineering were being completed. You could almost feel the anticipation around the paddock as the riders were so keen to get back to some form of normality after the long summer break with having no racing since Thornhill way back in early July.

The weather of course was much kinder to us this time round with superb sunny skies and no wind because as well you know last year’s Penrith event was pounded by horrendous rain on the Saturday which led to many thinking the event would be cancelled, although surprisingly the Sunday turned out to be as perfect a day as you could imagine for classic racing.

With regards to the current championship things could not be better as we have some epic battles to sort out before the end of the season. In the Pre 1968 class it’s a three way battle between Ian Ridley, Clifford Hardistay, and

Robert Kennedy with only a single point currently between all three riders. In the Pre 1975 Over 350cc class Stewart Roden has a decent lead at this

particular point and it looks like a major upset would have to happen to Stewart in order for him not to win the title again in 2019.

David Loudon is leading the Pre 1984 class by just 24 points from Jim Grieve so there is plenty action to come and it is all to play for in the run up to the end of our classic racing season. But of course these positions may change after the points are tallied after this round 7 event at Penrith.

The first race of the day was of course the combined Pre 1968 class and once again this class was a collection of these two classes Upto 350cc and Over 350cc although naturally they were scored separately.

In the Pre 68 Upto 350cc it was Clifford Hardistay who was the eventual winner on his BSA with Ian Ridley runner up. Both these riders are currently battling it out for the 2019 title and it looks like it is going to go right down to the last event of the year to decide the victor. Robert Kennedy Jnr brought his 250 Cotton Starmaker home to the third place position in this class with Ian Ward on the Villiers in fourth.

The fast flowing corners of the Scratchmere circuit also suited the riders in the Pre 68 Over 350cc class. Once again it was great to watch brothers Liston and Lewis Bell play at speedway riders as they slipped and slid their way around the circuit as they both battled for supremacy in the Penrith sunshine. Liston would be the eventual winner of the class although Lewis appeared to have had some mechanical issues with the big Jawa early on which unfortunately would make him end up in 6th position overall. Nevertheless it was Fergus Moodie who was the man who made the early running in this class and Fergus was very quick from the gate but would only fill the runner up spot for all his hard work when the points were tallied. Peter Dobinson was riding superbly throughout the day and fully deserved his 3rd place finish overall riding that very nice sounding Rickman Triumph. But for me personally another rider deserving of a mention in this class was Scott Remington who was the holeshot king on that big 500 BSA Goldstar. Scott was electrifying leaving the start line

and it was touch and go whether his big Goldie would stop in time to take the first turn such was the speed he was travelling at but it was still great stuff to watch.

The big boys in the Pre 1984 class did us all proud and turned up in big numbers to support us at this event at Penrith, and at one point I counted at least 25 bikes on the line which was certainly one of the best attendances we have had this year in this class.

Naturally the racing on the track was every bit as good as we also had ex British Supersport champion John Crawford who used to race in the British Superbike series a few years back signed-on to race and he would be slinging his leg over a big 500 Honda. Another big name from British superbikes was Stewart Bland who was a spanner man for the Paul Bird Ducati race team and he would be racing an almost identical 500 Twinshock Honda in this class.

When it came to the Pre 1984 racing it was a ding dong battle between the two superbike riders throughout the three legs as both took their turn to lead from the front. Crawford was quick off the line in race one and took the win from Bland in second. Although Bland had a stormer of a start in race two leaving Crawford mid pack after just one lap. Nevertheless Crawford soon picked his way through the pack and was closing in on Bland on the final lap but could not get close enough to Bland to make the challenge for the win, although almost certainly the result could have been different if Crawford had not run out of laps. So when the points were tallied it would be a very deserving win for Stuart Bland overall with John Crawford in the runner up spot. David Loudon did superbly to bring his YZ 490 home to the third place finish with Chris Cannon and Nigel Sowerby in 4th and 5th respectively.

When it came to the Pre 1975 under 300cc Derek McAulay from Arbroath was the man to beat and was riding the socks of that little Spanish 250 Bultaco. Derek was hounded by relative newcomer to the Scottish classic club racing events Clark Davidson who was riding a similar machine to McAulay's which I think was a borrowed 250 Bultaco from Keith Mason . . but of course I stand to be corrected on that fact, although nevertheless Clark rode well to take the second place position overall. Tommy Anderson was another rider using a

borrowed bike and he would of course not be riding his usual Husqvarna but another Spanish Bultaco bike borrowed from Kenny Harper which would take him to an eventual third overall.

The big Over 300cc class in the Pre 1975's was eventually won by John Fleming on his very tricked up CZ. John hardly put a wheel out of place the entire afternoon and fully deserved his top step on the podium. Gary Colonel was also flying on that little 125 RM Suzuki and Gary had the little two smoker screaming in protest as he tried to keep in touch with John Fleming and although lacking in engine horsepower still took a fantastic second overall in the class. Jim Alison was back up to speed at this round 7 event and Jim had his Alan Clews CCM hooked into the Penrith soil like it was on rails and he would take the third place overall from Keith Barnes on the Clews Stroka in fourth.

There were only two riders listed in the Pre 1977 class for this round 7 meeting and it was an emphatic win for Sam Sibbald on the TT 500 Yamaha with Brian Hamilton in second.

After the lunch break it was again down to the dirty business of the age related races and in the Pre 1975 Over 65 class Brian "Hammy" Hamilton was the eventual victor. Stewart Riddell was again Mr consistent on the day with a runner up spot finish and Stewart is certainly a force to be reckoned with when he is riding his Twin- Port CZ and virtually almost never has any issues while riding this old bike. Stephen Shaw always brings a spare machine along to these classic bashes and his CZ twin-porter and was also very quick on the day to take him to a third place overall result. Clifford Hardistay also did well on the day although I'm sure I heard Richard Winn say that Cliff had the frame break on his BSA which would push him down to a lowly 5th place finish overall.

The Veteran's in the Pre 75 Over 60's class enjoyed the fast flowing lines of this well laid out course at Scratchmere Farm and John Fleming once again dominated the day on his CZ. It was three wins from three starts for John and once he hit the front there was no stopping him in all three moto's. Jim Alison was in there again with another fine result in this class finishing in 2nd spot

overall on the big CCM. Fergus Moodie again rode well in this class and he would cross the finish line in 3rd overall just ahead of Peter Dobinson in 4th.

The relative youngsters in the Pre 75 Over 50's class were all excellent on the day and it was a walk in the park this time round for Sam Sibbald aboard that very quick TT500 Yamaha. Sam was certainly one of the quicker riders at this

round on the day and it was going to take something very special to catch him once he hit the front at each moto. Derek McAulay was the runner up in this class although Derek was struggling to match the horsepower of Sibbald's big Yamaha but nevertheless it was still a good result for Derek considering he is only on a little 250 Bultaco. The two Whitham brothers of Philip and Mark finished 3rd and 4th respectively with Philip riding his Bultaco while Mark was on his 360 CZ.

The relative young gun's in the Pre 75 Over 40's class supplied some good entertainment for the assembled Penrith spectators and it was Robert Kennedy riding his dad's 1975 CCM who took the overall win in this class. Clark Davidson was again running with the front runners and scored an eventual 2nd place finish on his Keith Mason Bultaco. This event must have been the day for borrowed bikes as Tommy Anderson was also riding a 250 Bultaco Pursang which was donated for him to race by Kenny Harper and Tommy appeared to like the little Spanish made machine as it brought him to a 3rd place finish at the end of the day. Brian Aird also raced well in this class finishing in 4th just ahead of Colin Flockhart on that lovely Cheney BSA in 5th.

In the Pre 1975 Under 40's the young bairns were again jacked up and ready to race and it was another battle royal for them around this superbly laid out Penrith circuit. Liston Bell hardly did a thing wrong the entire day and well deserved his top place on the podium and the overall win and was running at the front of the pack often alone in many of the day's races. Gary Colonel was runner up in this class and his little RM 125 Suzuki was no match for the 500cc grunt of Bell's Jawa but nevertheless it was good result for Gary and he should be well pleased with his final place finishing. Lewis Bell was always quick on the day although he had to change machines halfway through the programme and

would campaign the big Tribsa for the latter part of the afternoon which would take him to an eventual 3rd place overall.

The old guy's in the Pre 1984 Over 60's class still showed their past experience on a motocross track and it was Martin Reid who took the spoils in this class riding his 1980 YZ250 G Yamaha to a fine overall win. Steve Mower did exceptionally well even although he had a fall in one of the races but there was

no damage done and he remounted to cross the line and a 2nd place finish in class. John Porteous was another rider who hit the deck in the Pre 1984 class right after the start of race two in the first part of the day's proceedings but again no damage done and he got back on and finished the race. Nevertheless he would still take the 3rd place overall for his persistence and hard work come points tally time.

Another superb racing encounter ensued between the two big runners in the Pre 1984 Over 50's class on the day John Crawford and Stuart Bland who were both mounted on those very quick CR500 Honda's. The racing was fast and furious in this class but it would still finish with Stuart Bland the winner with John Crawford second and our 2018 Pre 1984 champion David Loudon in 3rd. Mike Van Der Mer is also worth a mention here as he brought his 490 Maico home to a superb 4th place finish overall.

Finally there were just a few riders signed up in the Pre 1984 Under 50's class and it was David Bateman who was the master of ceremonies in this class riding his German made Maico. Gary Sowerby also did superbly also mounted on a Maico and he would fill the second spot on the podium just ahead of Gary Colonel in 3rd.

Summing up it was another fantastic Scottish Classic racing affair albeit at this south of the Scottish border location at Scratchmere Farm, and once again Ian Ridley and his band of merry men (and ladies of course) did us all proud with a great track layout under almost perfect racing conditions.

Thanks to everyone for your support when tuning into my You Tube channel to watch yourselves in action after yet another Scottish classic encounter, your encouragement is much appreciated and it also helps to keep many other

classic dirt bike fans from around the world up to speed about how we conduct our particular events here in our little corner of the planet. We are now almost certainly global now with over 6500 subscribers signed up to my You Tube Channel. Furthermore I recently received some kind comments recently from the USA, Canada and even feedback from a viewer in New Zealand who watches our progress almost daily on You Tube, so it's great to know through the power of the internet you can reach likeminded people all over the planet.

This internet venture takes up many hours of my time and of course is completely free to all who view it although I do from time to time receive a small payment from Google when viewers click on the ads at the beginning of the clips, so please if you view these video's help me out by clicking on the ads.

Also thanks again to Peter Dobinson and the staff at Hillcroft Caravan Park for their generous donations towards my expenses and other costs as most of this video work is many hours of toil for little or virtually no reward. So thank you to Peter and everyone at Hillcroft Caravan Park for your kindness and your contributions were happily received.

Next up of course is our final trek of the season as we head to Merrylees Farm Whitekirk near East Linton on the 6th October for our last race event of 2019 (*did I just say LAST event of 2019 !!*) where all the championship winners and unfortunately loser's will then be decided.

So I hope to see you all there as we will of course bring down the curtain on the final and last race meeting of 2019 and hopefully do it in fine style.

See you soon.

Chris Monty