

Scottish Classic Motorcycle Club

Round 1 Finavon Forfar

Sunday 1st April 2018

Report by Chris Montignani (Monty)

With the last of the late winter weather thankfully now past into oblivion (well hopefully) it was now time to remove the dust covers from those vintage steeds and get them prepped for the first classic scramble of the new season. Finavon Hill Forfar was the chosen venue to hold the 2018 Scottish Classic inaugural race event and with a good forecast of dry and bright conditions the stage appeared set for this Round 1 encounter amidst the picturesque Forfar hills.

Track builders had been hard at it the week previous and laid out a fast flowing racetrack with some challenging uphill and downhill elevation changes to add to the superb setting of this hillside venue and we take this opportunity to thank them for all their hard efforts on the day.

During my Pre-race paddock walkabout it was great to see all the shiny blinged-up winter bike projects being prepped for their first competitive encounter of the season. A couple that stood out for me personally were Ian Robertson's little DT based 350 Yamaha he built through the winter from the many bits and pieces he had lying around in his workshop. There was also a very nice 1979 Curtis Honda which was ridden by I think his name was Dave Harrow . . (Hopefully got your name right although apologies if it is incorrect).

The entry numbers on the day appeared to be somewhat down on previous years whether this was due to the Easter holiday break or other uncontrollable factors who knows but the riders who did make the effort certainly picked a superb day as the weather was as near perfect as you could get for this first event of the season. Richard Winn appeared to have exorcised the gremlins that dogged his P.A system at the last round of 2017 at Whitekirk and it was great to hear his dulcet tones once again informing everyone as to what was happening out on the track.

In the Pre 1968 Over 350's class it was a battle royal between Liston Bell on the big Jawa four banger and Andrew King on the very light and equally quick AJS Stormer. Although these two were racing in the same race they were being scored in different classes but it was still a great spectacle to witness Andrew King on the old AJS giving a good account of himself hounding down the Jawa mounted Bell. Nevertheless Liston was extremely quick from the gate and hole shotted races one and two with Andrew King getting the ace in race three. Nevertheless Liston would go on to take the overall result in the Over 350's from father Mike second on the big BSA Goldstar. Brian Aird was also very consistent throughout the day and he would fill the final podium spot in third when the eventual point's calculations were completed.

In the Pre 68 Under 350's class no one was going to beat the flying AJS Stormer rider Andrew King as he bombed his way around the hilly slopes of the Finavon hills to take the class win. It was a joy to watch the very talented youngster strut his stuff on this ancient machine and show how quick these bikes once were back in the day. Runner up in this class was Clifford Hardistay who rode superbly over the three moto's to bring his machine home to a well-deserved second spot from Ian Ward on the 250 Villier's in third.

In the Pre 1975 Over 350 class it was great to see Stewart Roden back to full speed again after his horrendous accident at the Nostalgia scramble a while back as he whipped his big CCM to within an inch of its life as he thundered round the Finavon hillside. Stewart told me his previously damaged right wrist was getting stronger by the day although after a few laps it can be a bit of a nightmare to try and hold onto the bike "he said", but nevertheless he is still enjoying being back out on the track. Roden started very quick from the gate in all three races but could not hold off the equally quick Lewis Bell who would go on to take the class win on the day. Stewart Roden would take the runner up spot for his very hard day's graft while Brian Hamilton would bring his CZ home to cross the chequered flag in third.

Derek McAulay was the man to beat in the Pre 75 Under 350cc class as his old Bultaco Pursang had no mechanical issues to trouble him at this first round for a change and he showed his delight by winning the class from Tommy Anderson second and Ian Robertson on the DT Yamaha in third.

The new and now slimmed down Les Calderwood was also pumped up and looking forward to the start of a new racing year although an unforeseen problem with his CCM 's ignition/battery meant he could not get the bike to fire-up and would not take part in this round 1 event but says he will be back bigger and better to kick everyone's ass at round two at Lockerbie.

In the Pre 1984 class it was an almost clean sweep of wins for recent returnee to racing Walter Bickmore as he stamped his authority on this class by leading every race from start line to chequered flag. Bickmore was electric from the start-line and was duly elected holeshot king with pole positions in all three legs *and* the Pre84 age class races after the break. Although while in a commanding lead in the last race of the day he either dropped his machine or had some mechanical trouble at the far side of the track where he could not be seen by myself which left Davie Loudon to take the final race win and the chequered flag on his very quick 420 Kawasaki. Loudon hounded Bickmore throughout the day but could not make up the ground to make the pass on Bickmore's very quick 490 Maico. Neil Glendinning was also very quick on the big 480 Honda and showed a good turn of speed as he ran at the front all day with the big boys of Bickmore and Loudon although a third place finish was surely justifiable rewards for his massive efforts over the three legs.

Also in the Pre 1984 class race five there was a bit of a coming together with Graham Smith, Andy Malloch and Neil Glendinning when they all collided into turn one and went down in a heap of bodies and pieces of motorcycle. Andy Malloch appeared to come off the worst although he was seen very quickly by the excellent medical staff and later was soon on his feet again but would not take part in the final moto of the day.

In the age related classes after the lunch break it was Ian Ridley who took the title in the Over 60's class riding Helen Cahill's immaculate BSA, while in the Pre 75 Over 65's it was Clifford Hardistay who secured the win from Tom Forsyth second and Tom Lewis on the Rickman BSA third. In the Pre 75 Over 50's it was that man again Derek McAulay who was once again very quick over the three races on his little Bultaco and he would take the title from Stewart Roden on the CCM second and Ian Robertson third.

Tommy Anderson was flying on the two-stroke Husqvarna at Forfar and he went on to secure the overall win in the Pre 75 Over 40's class from Brian Aird on the BSA in second.

The young pup's in the Pre 75 Under 40's class laid on some mouth-watering classic motocross as the Bell brothers of Liston and Lewis circumnavigated the picturesque Finavon hillside broadsliding and roostering their big Jawa classic's as they fought for family supremacy. Neither rider was going to let the other spoil their day as they banged bars, took turns at hitting the front and in general had a good old fashioned family scrap for the win. Andrew King was also in the mix and screaming the head of his old but extremely fast AJS Stormer and was never far from the battle of the Bell's at the front of the pack. In the end it would be Liston Bell with the overall victory from sibling Lewis in the runner up spot and Andrew King in third, although that does not take anything away from the two Bell brothers as both these riders deserved huge applause just for their sheer tenacity and entertainment value on the track.

The Pre 1984 Over 60's class was secured for the day by Brian Hamilton on the very quick CZ, John Porteous hounded the front runners throughout the three legs on his flying YZ 465 Yamaha and was duly rewarded with a runner up spot in the class. The Pre1984 Over 50's winner was no surprise as Walter Bickmore had another very dominating classic club debut at Forfar, and if it was not for his slight hiccup in the final race of the day he would have went home with the match ball for winning all races in his class. David Loudon took the runner up spot from Graham Smith on the I.T Yamaha in third. The Pre 1984 Under 50's was eventually won by Billy Pentland on the YZ Yamaha from Neil Glendinning on the big Honda in second spot.

All in all it was another cracking season opener for our Scottish Classic club and there was some fantastic racing served up by all the associated classes at this Round 1 event despite the limited numbers.

By the time you read this all the paddock bikes and the video footage from the racing on the day should now be posted on my You Tube Channel, so if your into your classic dirt bikes and classic racing then why not give it a look as there are more than 2000 videos of classic/twinshock bikes and on-track racing for you to view. I have currently over 3,500 subscribers from around the world

looking at what we do for classic dirt bike racing here in Scotland and I continually receive many comments from subscribers across the globe saying how much they love the variety of classic bikes we have here in Scotland and the natural grassy racetracks we race on. So although you may not have been aware of it your little part of the planet and our organisation in particular is getting some serious coverage from around the world.

So up next up is our Round 2 meeting at Cumstone Farm Lockerbie on the 22nd of April where last year's event was unfortunately cut short due to the shitty cold and wet weather we experienced on the day, so hopefully there will be a noticeable improvement in that department when we turn up for this season's encounter.

So see you all at Lockerbie on the 22nd and stay safe until we meet up for yet more Scottish classic racing adventures.

Chris Montignani (Monty)