



THE OBSERVER

For the members of Castle Colchester MCC – **We did it our way**

March 2015 Edition

OK, lot's going on in this Edition – which makes a nice change – so no beating around the bush: let's get stuck in.....

Many thanks go out to Rob Blackman for some enduro news with an update from his first event of the season.

So. The Phil King Trial 2015. How did it go? How did the Castle riders get on? What happened? Read on, brethren, as The Observer tries to enlighten you.

Phil King Trial 2015

As you know, and as I keep banging on about, a whole load of hard work went into getting our show on the road and those members who contributed know who they are and deserve all the congratulations that they are probably never going to get. A quick look at the Comments from the ACU Steward's report (see below) gives an indication of how well it went.

STEWARDS COMMENTS:

A good traditional trial which made use of small pieces of land joined by minor roads and off road going. The course was planned so as the route returned to the start area and avoided the need to transport fuel around. The sections were well planned and ideal for this championship. All the riders were very enthusiastic about the event at the final section.

One important factor was that we were blessed with good weather with it being sunny all day, if a little cold. This meant that the going stayed fairly constant all day providing a relatively even playing field for the riders.

Organisationally the event was a spot on, too, with all the officials, observers etc in the right places at the right times. The chat among the other competitors during, and after, the trial produced a great amount of positive feedback and it's fair to say that just about everyone had a good day out. Put that little lot together and we've got ourselves a success – but it's going to be hard to even match it in 2016!

As far as the rider's performances go we'll concentrate on the Eastern Centre guys here but, if you'd like to check on those from further afield you can all follow the link on the Castle website.

It seems sensible to work our way through the classes in alphabetical order so let's look at Class A, the pre '75 machines. A slightly disappointing field of 8 rider started and Gary Baker finished 2nd on 24 marks. A bit back in 5th was Chris Collins, on 31, followed by Andy Barrell in 6th losing 42.

Mark Banham was the leading light amongst the Class B Twin Shock machines. Mark came home in 2nd place on a score of 13. James Williams piloted his fab little Honda into 3rd losing 29 and Clive Dopson took his, somewhat bigger, Honda to 6th on 46.

A big surprise to me was the lack of Class C machines: the air cooled mono's. I thought these would be 'the next big thing', but that shows what I know. There were only two entries, one of whom non started, and this (not to belittle a very solid ride) left Nigel Allan to take the win losing 36 dabs in the process.

The largest group are the Over 50's on modern bikes, riding Class D, with 34 riders. Top Eastern Centre dog was our own

Richard Norman losing 34 marks and taking 11th position. Three places further back was an all-Braintree scrap with Roy Palmer edging Steve Butcher 38 marks to 40. 19th place was occupied by Neil Kemp, dropping 44, and a bit further back in 24th was Chris Eley on 66 dabs.

E Class next, the Over 60's, and only 7 riders in this group. Adrian Parker dropped 96 and finished 6th and, rather surprisingly, Allen Collier was a late retiree suffering from front mudguard clearance problems.

Continued on next page.....



We move onto the hard route, now, and the second largest group in the trial. Class F consists of the Over 40's, on modern bikes, and you have to look a little way down to pick up Paul Whitehead in 20th on a score of 47. Paul Nash ended up 26th having 75 points on the scoreboard.

Lastly, we have the five non-championship entrants in Class G. Wes Butcher had a good ride to pick up 2nd place on 42. Battle of the day has to be between our own Tom Norman and Chris Ryland, for 3rd and 4th places, with Tom winning out by one mark on 60 marks to 61.

Richard Norman's TMX Report

An early frost soon thawed away to reveal a beautiful February day with blue skies to cheer the hundred plus competitors who made their way to the Colne valley in Essex for the Phil King East Anglian National. Once again this was part of the ACU Traditional trials series, this time the second round following hot on the heels of the previous days event at Nene Valley. A single lap of 40 sections was to be faced with 5 groups of sections linked with plenty of off road tracks and country lanes.

Star of the day has to be Martin Wilmore who whipped round to lose just 5 marks on a bike previously used for Pizza delivery, proving just how competitive home specials can be. Martin took the class B honours for best twinshock and was also the best ride on the main red and blue route.

As usual the pre65 riders in class A were the first group away with 3 Eastern Centre riders topping the results but James Newstead on his 175 Bantam used his head to avoid any 5's taking the class win on 17 marks.

Next away were the 7 riders in the over 60's class with Stephen Farrall on 25 marks taking the class win over regular Phil King competitor Dave Thorpe who continues to defy his years to lose just 44 marks

The trial got under way along across the fields to an old favourite near the lake, it proved to be a steady opening section before more field crossings and into the Overhall group where the steep banks were put to good use and very quickly deteriorated. They proved to be a real test for the later numbers which included the ultra competitive Class F for over 40's riders, however both class winner Dave Clinkard and second placed Kev Nolan both remained clean until they got to Colne Park where the Clerk of the course put the abundance of roots and climbs to good use.

As usual the early riders had the best of the grip in the muddy groups but were stopped in their tracks by the sandy sections at Alphamstone that really favoured the later riders. In fact this group was proved to be a little easier than in previous years with an unusual amount of grip to be had, except perhaps on section 31 where observer David Cordle only recorded a handful of cleans and the rooty climbs at section 33.

Class D had the biggest entry with 34 riders over 50 years old and was topped by Barry Roads on 14 marks. When the scores are analysed he had less cleans than the second and third placed riders but by not picking up any 5's it was enough to take the class win.

Thanks to the many riders that travel East and to the 40 or so observers and officials that volunteer to help, and to the dozen or so land owners that generously allow us access to their land ensuring that this event was once again a worthy inclusion in the Traditional Trials Championship.

How was YOUR Phil King Trial?

The day after the event, just for fun, I asked anyone I could think of to sum up their PKT experience in a mere four words. To my surprise most people sent back a reply so it would be rude not to include them, wouldn't it.....

Dave Tye: Sunny, dry, fun, friendly.

Jim Cammack: Looking forward to next one.

Chris Eley: Overhall ridden badly, again.

Caroline Mann: Got a sun tan + Made my legs ache.

Chris Ryland: Early number was needed + I enjoyed the moistness.

Rich Eley: Wish I had ridden + Almost worth the effort

Andrea (score compiler): Stuck inside a shed

Dick: Lots of hard work + Good fun with mates + They all loved it

+ We all did well + Fantastically generous landowners + Good report from Steward.

Keith Nicholls: Good observing The Gallops.

Gary Wakely: Sorry I was grumpy + I got stressed out + My club mates rock

(the rest of Gary's submissions were very funny, but unrepeatable).

Neil Kemp: Dropped too many marks + Cupcake at last section + Castle members worked hard.

WANTED

Trials Trousers

34" waist

In useable condition
(preferably washed!)

Have you got a pre-used,
serviceable, pair of trials
trousers gathering dust?

Please donate them to a good
cause – which will be
revealed shortly after the
trews have been donated.

Please contact:

castleobserver@gmail.com

Rob Blackman's Enduro News

First race of the season was last weekend (22 Feb) at Thetford forest. I was the only one riding as dad has got a dodgy hip and Andrew forgot to enter! Dad was opening the course so he got a bit of bike time. The day went well, my first test was a bit slow as I was a bit nervous and didn't want to drop it. Second test was much better and it bumped me up a few places in the results which was good. As it normally is in enduros the day is decided on the final 'tight' lap, and this year it was tight. I pushed hard but unfortunately lost 2 minutes. I ended up finishing 7th on the day, which I'm happy with as there were a few fast Welsh lads and expert motocross riders that turned up. Good solid start to the season and with a bit more training hopefully I will be able to clean the last lap! Next race is Butley on the 22nd March, which all the Blackman family are riding in (except mum!).

February Round Up

Ipswich – Newbourne – 1st February

We had 6 Castle riders at what is, I believe, a new trials venue. Various described as Telly Tubby Land or grassy banks it certainly got a good turnout, although the day was very cold and wet – and muddy.

Yellow: Tom took 5th spot losing 47 marks.

Red/Blue: All the rest of the Club action took place on red/blue with Buck taking the Inter Class overall win on 43. Neil was mightily close behind in 2nd on 44. Richard Norman was a bit further back, on 55, and George finished 14th losing 67. Jason came in 17th clocking up 74.

Novice: No Castle riders.

Castle – Phil King Trial – 8th February

You've read all about this, already, so no need for any more.

Invaders – Aldeby – 15th February

Lowestoft's annual Aldeby trial drew seven of the faithful and here's how they got on.

Yellow: Chris Ryland was the sole Castle rider on yellow finishing 7th on 79.

Red/Blue: Buck's good form continued with a 2nd overall losing 14 marks. Paul Whitehead was two places, and two marks, further back followed by Neil, in 6th, on a score of 21. Paul Lonergan came home on 40 marks and in 14th place. George and Jason battled over the later positions, for 19th and 20th, losing 58 and 83 respectively.

White: No Castle riders.

Cambridge Matchless Brian Stonebridge Trial – Linton – 22nd February

Cambridge Matchless have much the same issues as we do running the PKT, really, with the event being in some doubt right up to the wire. However, despite the recent bad weather, run it they did and a fine trial it was, too. The long cross country routes between sections are part of the attraction and these were very sticky in most places and anyone without a raised mudguard was going to be in trouble. From what I could gather the sections held up pretty well and most riders seemed to have had a good day out. Let's see how the Eastern Centre riders got on...

Expert: Tom battled through the adversity of breaking both mudguards to finish 15th on a tough old route.

Inter: Dick had a good day finishing 4th on 32 marks. The Palmer brothers are next with Graham, Roy and Kevin in 9th, 13th and 18th respectively. The next three places were occupied by Allan Collier, Nigel Allan and Steve Butcher.

Clubman: Jim topped the Eastern boys with a 4th place ride and 16 marks lost. Chris Eley was 18th, losing 39 and Adrian Parker came home 21st on 56 points.

Novice: George particularly enjoyed the cross country and finished 11th in class dropping 56 dabs. Jason was a non-starter, staying tucked up bed with the flu.

Three Go Mud in Sussex

A little while back Buck, Neil and I found ourselves driving through the early February snow on the way to a trials coaching session down in the murky depths of East Sussex. As the snow got heavier Buck posed the question 'Are we hardy? Or just idiots?' and Neil and I spent a moment or two in contemplation before we came up with the obvious answer. The seeds for this little expedition were sown earlier the previous year when I decided to try and be a bit less rubbish at trials riding and started looking around for some coaching. I guess the first places to look were the Steve Saunders and Doug Lampkin schools but I was put off by the travelling, the large pupil numbers, and that great unknown – who are the other people in the group going to be?

Some more internet research came up with the Freestyle Bikes website and a page devoted to enduro and trials coaching. The trials coaching bit wasn't overly informative but it showed promise and I resolved to give them a ring.



Simon, tells us how it's done - before losing the will to live.

As it happened I more or less bumped into the Freestyle guys at a Crowborough trial in October. They parked right behind me so I had a chat with Simon Bird, who does the coaching, to find out how it works. It all sounded good: they had the advantage of being not too far away and a maximum of four riders in the group, so I had a chat with some of the Castle guys, roped Buck and Neil in, and booked it up. And so we drove off into the snow.....

The day started at the Freestyle shop at 8.30am where we met Simon, had a cuppa, and a look round the shop. Upstairs they had one each Beta, Sherco and JGas trials bikes and a good spread of gear all at top-dollar prices! Downstairs there was a variety of impressive Husqvarna enduro bikes - and a very nice selection of grass cutting machinery. It's a shame we don't have a bike shop like this in our area. After the bike perusing we hopped back in the van and followed Simon to the nearby practice area, set in a nice woodland, which was kind of a cross between Rowhedge and Crowborough.



Neil drops off

We'd asked Simon if we could concentrate on technique for turns and riding logs as this is standard Eastern Centre fare. Simon set out a tight turn on an incline, showed us the correct way to ride it and made it look very easy, of course. We had a try and made it look very hard. With a few more goes, and some more guidance, we started to get a feel for it managing not to wash-out the front or spin-up the rear. After this Simon added a turn down the bank followed by a tight turn to come up, but leaving no room to get a run at it. He then demonstrated that it's possible to make the turn, not wash-out, not spin-up, and then go up the bank on minimum revs and in total control. As you can imagine the results were very different when we tried but, with persistence, we got there in the end. At this point it occurred to us that we'd forgotten all about making it round the original turn because we were thinking about the bank - maybe we were making progress?

After the turns and the bank we had a crack at the technique for overcoming logs. Simon's ability really showed here as he made it look sooo easy. Simon then broke the process down and demonstrated its component parts. The first of these was to 'pop' the front wheel up and so we spent a few minutes riding around, on the flat, trying to get the hang of it. I'm glad no one else was watching because we must've looked ridiculous. After this we had a go at the log proper and set about demolishing it with our lack of technique. At the end I reckon Buck was doing best, followed by Neil and me a distant third - I just couldn't coordinate the front wheel 'pop' and was 'over-thinking' to make matters worse. By now we'd been riding pretty much non-stop for four hours, had run out of time, and so headed back to the van and loaded up the bikes. Amongst the usual banter we said our goodbyes to Simon, Buck got the van on the road and pointed it towards Essex. Naturally, the post-match analysis started straight away and the successes and failures of the day were put under the microscope. The consensus was that it'd been a very worthwhile trip and we'd learned a lot of useful stuff - obviously the problem would be putting it into practice. My own view on it is that I had a great day out, got some bike-time with some mates and enjoyed myself a whole lot - so it doesn't get much better than that, really. Whether this old dog can learn some new tricks remains to be seen (and judging by the Phil King and Stonebridge trials the answer to that is 'no he can't') but I think I'll be heading back to Freestyle in a few months for another go.

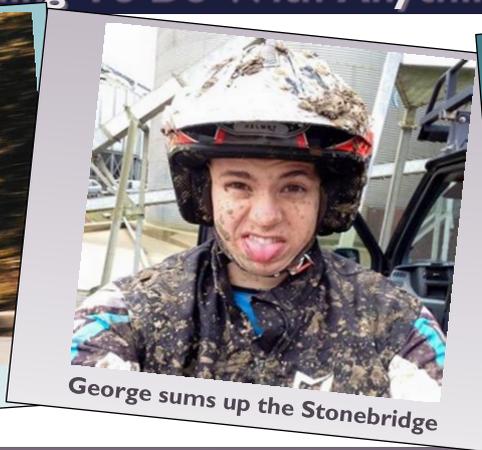


Castle's Johnny Cash?

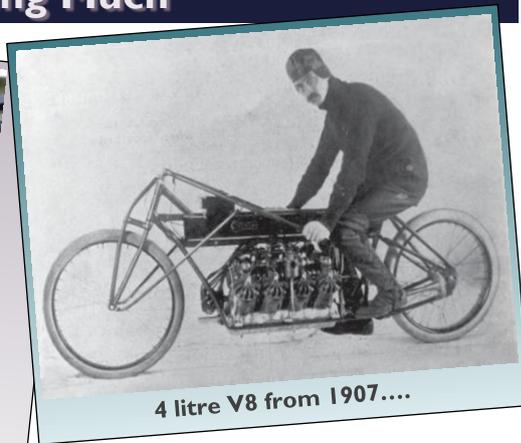
Nothing To Do With Anything Much



Feet up....



George sums up the Stonebridge



4 litre V8 from 1907....

Club Night

Club Night Diary:

March Club Night - Tuesday 10th.

April Club Night - Tuesday 14th.

The Bar, Stanway Rovers FC, New Farm Road, Colchester CO3 0PG