



THE OBSERVER

For the members of Castle Colchester MCC – **We still haven't found what we're looking for**

July 2015 Edition

This month's Observer has been saved from the ignominy of being another Post-it Note edition by the very welcome inclusion of Neil Kemp's report of his recent trip to the Isle of Man TT. You can read all about it as soon as you've finished with this waffle and then have a look at Rob Blackman's latest enduro adventures.

Report by Neil Kemp

Isle of Man TT 2015

With the Suzuki V-Strom 1000 panniers and top box packed to bursting the wife and I, accompanied by my brother-in-law and sister on a VFR750, set off for our first visit to the mecca of road racing - the Isle of Man TT. The journey to Liverpool was 250 miles-ish with stops planned at Cambridge services then on to the M6 toll road services. The weather did its best to blow us off the road and, on a number of occasions, it was very gusty and I could tell the wife was not too happy about the conditions - the loud screams over the intercom gave it away. We made Liverpool docks in good time, despite the weather, and parked up on the dock side with the 100's of other bikers all waiting to board the Manaman Seacat. The bikes were loaded and roped down by the orange coated, friendly crew.

The ferry crossing was very rough (force 6 to 7) and after a rough windy ride to the dock the wife wasn't looking forward to a rough and windy sea crossing. But very rough it was and she held out until coming into the port of Douglas then, unable to hold it back any more, the poor girl let rip big time. We helped her onto the bike and off the Seacat. Our digs were minutes from the port so with V-Strom and VFR parked up, the panniers in the room, the wife in bed still a little sea sick, the rest of us went down to the bar for a well-earned pint(s).

A sunny but still blowy morning greeted us and after a good breakfast, with Janice back to full fitness, we set off for a lap of the 37 miles of road - keeping to the speed limits (just). Lots of people warned us to watch our speed and on the way round I was telling Janice about the speed of the real racers at points of the course. "How fast?" she kept saying. Unable to believe it myself we got to the Ramsey hairpin, surprised how tight it was, and on to the one way mountain road. Now, I have heard that the mountain section of the TT course is fast, with sweeping bends, but nothing could prepare me or the wife what was going to happen on the mountain section.

Two corners in and an R1 comes flying past followed by 1, 2, 3 more - all on the pipe. The big V-Strom now at 90, 95, 100mph, the wife letting me know over the intercom that our speed is quite high and could I slow down NOW! More bikes fly past and they must be close to 150 mph. I brake for a bend to be greeted by people in the road waving frantically to slow riders down. I don't know what had happened but a bike lay on the road looking very secondhand, with bits of fairing and smashed bits of bike all over the place, and someone laying on the grass verge. We passed slowly, both of us in shock, and it all became very real and I thought 'best keep my speed in check' and rode the rest of the mountain road trying to keep out of everyone's way. We stopped for a coffee and talked about the 'looneys', as my wife called them, racing each other over the mountain. We heard later that there were 3 accidents on the mountain that day.

Nothing can prepare you for your first sights and sounds of the top boys on their race bikes. The first view point for us was Bray Hill. We rode through this section early in the day, at a whopping 35mph, but watching the racers take Bray Hill at over 160mph+ is breathtaking and quite scary - and this session was just practice!

The following day all racing was abandoned: the reason being that no hospital beds were available due to the high number of bike crash casualties. Racing kicked off the next day and we sat at Greg-ny-Baa, on the grass verge, no more than 2 foot from the race bikes as they screamed by. My god, these riders earn their money. We watched the sidecar race and my thoughts were about our lost ex-chairman, Paul Thomas, and how a slight mistake, your fault or not, can cost you your life. Our time at the TT was soon over. After riding miles round the TT course and miles round the island I got knocked off the V-Strom on the loading ramp of the Manaman Seacat when the guy behind me decided to nip by only to knock into my left pannier with his right pannier. I just stopped the big Strom from going over but he came off, trapping his leg under his bike, so the Manaman crew came to his aid. Roll on next year....

End of Neil's report. I'm sure Janice will be glad we got all the details.....

IMHO

I've never quite understood why but we all have a soft spot for a certain make of bike. Regular readers will probably have spotted that my soft spot is for Yamaha's as it just-so-happened that some of the most fun bikes I've owned have been made by Japan's finest. My FS1E, TY250B and RD350LC YPVS were just the business and some of the lesser models were pretty good too: witness the YB100 (!) and XJ600. One regret is that I never owned a TY250 Mono, as I wasn't riding trials at that time, but I have to concede that the water cooled TYZ was bit of a dog's breakfast to my eyes. Having returned to trials about 5 years ago there was no modern Yamaha trials bike to be bought so I've worked my way through a selection of Beta's and Gassers, like most of us probably do.

It was quite a surprise to see, in a recent edition of Trial Magazine, a new Yamaha trials bike. Well, I say Yamaha but in fact it's a fairly thinly disguised Sherco/Scorpa kind of thing, really. With the recent demise of Gas Gas there would seem to be a fairly big hole in the market place and it would be logical to assume that these 'generic' bikes are going to fill up that gap. From what I can gather the Sherco's have improved dramatically in the last couple of years and the new orange Scorpa proved to be very popular in the SSDT. If small factories like Scorpa and Sherco can do it why not a giant like Yamaha? (There's a four stroke Yamaha too but, being a 2-stroke guy, I can't get interested in 4-bangers).



Rob Blackman's June Enduro Update

Little Hadham Eastern Centre Round.

The penultimate round of the championships was held at Little Hadham, the course was awesome as it had rained in the week leading up to the event making it really slippery in the woods. I had 2 good tests although I dropped it on one which cost a few valuable seconds. After the special tests I was 3rd, I managed to stay clean on time so finished the day 3rd Expert, a good result. I think the expert championship has been wrapped up by Will Hughes, he's riding really well at the moment so good on him, he also has just had a good result at the Welsh where he finished 3rd Clubman e2. Hadham was an excellent day though as I had my good friend Chris Hart on my minute so was fun to ride with him again.

Welsh 2 Day Enduro.

Myself and Craig Roper and a few other Sudbury MCC members headed over to Llandrindod Wells for the Welsh. This year the organisers had altered the course to include a long check that went across open moorland and had less road work in. There was also a new special test at Saints Well which is probably the best test I have ever ridden. It included a motocross track and the standard off camber grassy corners that the Welsh love, there was just so much grip! Day 1 went well apart from a disastrous first test at Crossgates where I crashed twice! I stayed clean on time and finished the first day in 9th Clubman e1. Day 2 was more successful I had 3 good tests and improved on my first day result to finish 6th on the day and 7th overall. I have been to the Welsh for most of my life and this was the only one I can remember to be completely dry all week long. This made the fire roads extremely dangerous due to the dust and the going was not as tight on time as it usually is. Will be back next year hopefully with loads of mates on my minute to make it a more sociable affair!

June Trials Round Up

Ipswich – Bramford – 6th June

This trial was the first of the three summer trials that Ipswich are going to run and, for my money, they got off to a good start. It was a shame that the turnout was quite small – but the regs only appeared a few days before the event so probably no great surprise, really.. Eight sections were laid out in the main pit area to be ridden 4 times – and we stayed out of the mud! As yet I haven't seen any results published which is a shame coz the riders like to see how they've done – and it kind of makes it a waste of the observer's valuable time.

Bury St. Edmunds – Hawkendon – 7th June

No Club entrants for this particular event, unfortunately, so let's move onto the next one.

Continued on next page.....

Norwich Vikings – Lyng – 14th June

No Club entrants for this particular event either, so let's move onto the next one, again.

Norfolk & Suffolk Group – Corton – 21st June

This must be the fourth (?) year that this trial has been run and it appears to be a success again, although some of last year's big names were missing – which is a shame. From memory I don't think we usually have Castle riders entered but this year there were 4 members in the entry list. All the Castle action happened on the red/blue route....

Red/Blue: From a field of 28, and a mix of Expert B, Inter and Novices, Paul Whitehead topped the Castle shootout finishing 5th in Class on a score of 5 marks lost. The usual close battle between Messrs Kemp and Rogers was won by Neil, in 9th position on 11 marks, with Buck two places and eight marks behind. Richard Chamley rode his Beta into 16th spot on 26 dabs.

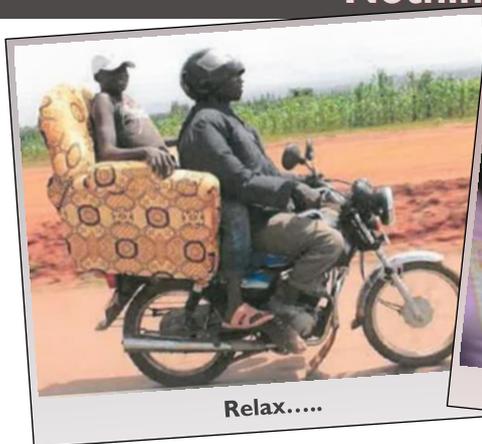
Braintree – Beazley End – 27th June

I think it's fair to say that Braintree aren't the quickest when it comes to publishing their results so we'll have to wait until next month's Observer for these. All I do know is that it was a very hot Saturday evening and quite a few of the Club faithful were there. More news in the August Edition.

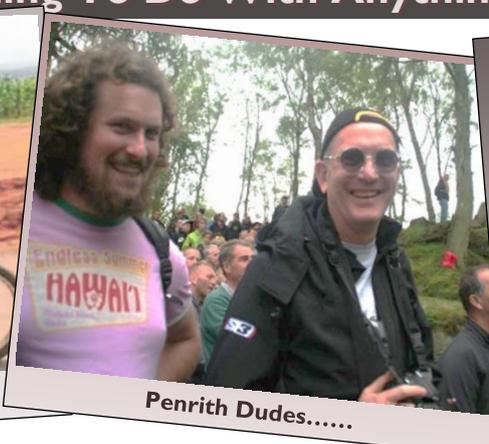
N&SJMCC – Rendham – 28th June

It's the same situation with this event. No results have been published, that I can find at least, so they'll be included in the August Edition.

Nothing To Do With Anything Much



Relax.....



Penrith Dudes.....



8 litre V10 – why?

Club Night

Club Night Diary:

July Club Night – Tuesday 21st – At Raydon.

August Club Night – Tuesday 11th (probably)

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