

Sphinx LDT April 27th 2014

The first round of the British Trailbike Championship kicked off in the beautiful Cotswolds with a healthy CMC&LCC entry of 9 riders. With the inaugural Interclub Trailbike Championship also kicking off the tension was mounting.

Just 4 of the boys opted to camp the night before with the others preferring not to sit in a field, eating pig, talking Boll***s and freezing their nuts off! Ian, Jase and Little Nige sparked up the Barbie under the gazebo and Big Nige arrived in time for a Sausage Sandwich before the rain came in. We were off to bed by midnight and managed about 15 minutes sleep before the sound of two strokes signalled time to get up. The skies were grey and there was a stiff breeze. By 8am the 'pro riders' had turned up (these were the serious ones for silver ware) 'Spread' in his pimped van brought James along, Paul Morgan in his ~~pimped~~ van brought Andy Morgan along who was vanless having had a smokey experience the day before. Rich Smith completed the Caerphilly entry. We kitted up in wet weather gear and headed for the start at the village hall just up the road. 'Spread' stopped after 50 yards worried that his rear mousse had exploded, he thought about fitting his spare tube then realised that Ian was running it in his bike. He wobbled off to the Village hall hoping his day wasn't over before it started.

Signed on, bacon roll and cup of tea and we were ready for the off. We left the gardens of the Village Hall and re-grouped around the corner. Front man Jase led the way with the roadbook, Big Nige played 'Charlie'. We set off across country amongst fields of golden rape seed stretching as far as the eye could see. A bit of roadwork through the showers took us to Section 1. Big Nige felt it necessary to give the observer a man hug before riding the section but whether it helped in the results is debatable. We watched the group in front of us on purpose-built bikes pick up fives and a panic ensued where lots of Psi was removed from rear tyres. One by one each rider picked up a five although 'Spread' managed a three on his busted mousse with the Husky on the rev limiter. Big Nige used a bit of ballast to also manage a three. Little Nige posted a clean in the results but was actually seen flipping the KTM and pushing and shoving it out of the section having dropped it in the ditch!

The surface was slick and the showers kept coming between the drizzling rain. It was tough not to dab on the enduro bikes and that was on the road! With some road work and some nice green lanes we reached section 5 where Andy Morgan went straight in and shouting at some 'numpty' to get out of the way, realised that he'd followed the championship route instead of the clubman, oops! Section 6 was a different story. A ride through the woods and the Bluebells and wild garlic took us to a small section littered with fallen branches and a tight turn through the trees into a ditch and up the bank. Thanks to the rain and the undergrowth the woods became almost un-rideable on the trials tyres. Richard Smith flipped the KTM for a five, Ian and 'Spread' failed on the climb and fived then spent ten minutes trying to get out of the ditch without wrecking the section. Little Nige pushed and shoved then fived, managed to get out of the section and just sat and laughed. The air was full of the smell of burning bikes, sweat and the sound of honking horns. We slipped our way out of the woodland and along a rutted lane reminiscent of a Welsh forest, not ideal on trials tyres. The weather seemed to improve a little and we travelled along some lovely lanes, one nice resident even cut the grass for us around their lovely lawn, providing a nice bowling green surface perfect for power sliding! Some more lanes and after around 3 hours of riding Little Nige ran out of fuel, Rich Smith came to the rescue with a pint in a plastic bag. Within 20 minutes the pint ran out and Rich

was the hero again. 10 minutes later we were at the garage, perfectly navigated by Jase as 2 minutes later it chucked it down. A 25 minute stop was fine as the rain continued to pour. We eventually set off when the rain eased but by now the damage was done. If you can imagine what it's like riding a 100kg+ bike with slicks in a field of butter, then you're somewhere near to the conditions for the afternoon. Some Welsh Enduros aren't this tough and at least you'd be on chunkies! Section 16 was memorable, a nice easy clean through a small climb a few whoops and a twist around the trees. Paul Morgan decided the small climb looked like a jump, he and Richard discussed it at length and Paul went for it, and while everyone else laughed and watched as he flew sideways off the short climb and sent the husky into the stingies, Richard realised he had to do the same. The result was the same, not exactly X riders more X rated.

By the time we reached the Special test and the last few sections we were beginning to suffer. Andy Morgan posted a fast special and Little Nige came close. Jase managed to stop his bike in the box but promptly flew over the bars and landed outside the box – that'll be a fail then! Rich Smith in a repeat of last years special managed a stall and a time that was double that of everyone else - ooof!

Three more sections behind the campsite finished the trial and they proved just as tough as the rest.

30 sections all day, almost 8 hours of riding. The weather certainly played its part but all in all a great days riding. We had more laughs per mile than should be legal. The results would show that Mr consistent, Big Nige, took the honours, although man hugging the observers is probably not allowed in the rules. Jase wasn't far behind, everyone else lost count but hey, it was fun.

Congrats to Big Nige who picked up the Best Big Bike – and congrats to everyone else who picked up their own bikes – all day!

Ride report Ian Craig.