

Gwent Classic Trial Nov 24th 2013

The Gwent Classic Trials and Motocross club put on a trial at Clydach Dingle Brynmawr and a decent turn out of both classic twin shocks and mono's of over thirty riders of all ages shows the demand for this type of event.

The venue was on the side of the valley with a view of the dual carriageway on one side and the sweeping valley floor on the other. With ice still visible on the muddy tracks at the start the vans slipped in around the stacked logs and builders bags of firewood – a veritable sweet shop for anyone with a log burner - but the temptation was resisted.

Caerphilly Club representation came in the form of one or two experienced trailers plus a complete novice riding his first trial on a bike not actually ridden before the day of the event.

Chairman Mark Evans brought along newbie Ian Craig for his first ever trial. Also spotted was club Ivor Morkott champion Nibbs Adams and former club member Phil John.

The riders were split up by the organisers into groups matching ability and machines but by the 10.30am start the groups were forgotten and everyone rode with their mates.

The format for these classic trials works well, along the lines of a group of golfers, each group observes their mates as they ride through each section then punch each other's cards at the end.

The club had laid out 15 sections and two laps for a total of 30. The groups were started at various sections in order to avoid queuing.

Mark and his group of 7 riders started at section 1, a flat area laid out between piles of logs proved to be an early test of riding tight turns. A small pile of logs to exit the section required nerves of steel and a loft of the front wheel. Ian Craig decided not to walk the section and just watch the first riders through. That was a lesson learned as he picked up a five for missing a gate half way through the section – he walked the other 29 from start to finish! Mark and his mate Stuart were on the classic twinshocks which added some complexity but both were off to a flyer with a clean. A stranger in the group on a Suzuki Beamish twin shock turned out to be the Gwent Classic club Chairman – probably wanting to keep an eye on proceedings – dodgy looking lot this Caerphilly crowd! Despite the temperatures on the day barely getting above freezing, the boys started to warm up quickly as the race face came out. The sections were tight in places with some mud and some reasonable climbs and downhills thrown in. Slippery rather than difficult and technical for the novices and the twinshocks, it soon became apparent that tyre pressures on the low side were the order of the day. Section 5 defeated most everyone with a short grassy run up to a muddy rutted climb with a step at the top and a turn along the fenceline. The combination of no grip and turns produced plenty of 5's with bikes dropped and riders dismounted and pushing. By section 15 the group was lapped by some other riders and after a quick sandwich they were on to lap two. This lap was a little more rushed than the first, partly because the organisers were picking up the marker flags behind us. By around 2 o'clock we'd completed 30 sections. Plenty of cleans for the twinshock boys and even a few for the newbies – Stuart took the honours on the day, a good day had by all. Highly recommended if you own a trials bike, the event was laid back and not too challenging but very enjoyable.

Ride report: Ian Craig.