

Grid Lines

The British Motorcycle Racing Club Newsletter
Spring– Summer 2009



The View from Essex

We are writing this having just finished our fourth meeting at Cadwell in May. So we are already a third of the way through the season and the Centenary Meeting is also behind us. With the store set out for this year at 12 meetings, slightly down on the 14 we did last year, we can still only hold our breath as far as rider numbers are concerned. Remember that as of May in 08 we saw the most dramatic down-turn many could remember. The financial plan for this season has built the same degree of downturn into projected numbers, none of us expect it to be any easier this year. We've been encouraged by numbers to date and a small surplus has been built up that will enable us to offset meeting losses that may occur later in the season.



The tyre rules were relaxed for 09, removing the insistence that riders buy from a specific supplier. We instead managed to get both Pirelli-Metzeler and Michelin to support various classes in some cases alongside each other in MRO Powerbikes and MRO Stocksport, perhaps a first! Tyre rules changed to ask riders to use a "designated tyre", meaning as long as they were on Michelin, Pirelli or Metzeler in certain classes, we had no problem regarding where they sourced their rubber from. This was just the top end of a sponsorship package that when put together added up to over £100,000 of cash and product support directly to our riders.

Here are the details of the whole package...

MRO StockSport 600

A joint prize fund of £4500 supported by Michelin & Pirelli, riders gain prizes based on the tyre they choose to use... £1000 cash from Michelin and £1500 from Pirelli for the Championship 1-2-3 at the year end.

Winner to go expenses paid, to Michelin HQ in France for tour and tyre testing.

Michelin will provide further cash prizes per round...First overall £125, Second overall £75.

Both will provide tyre prizes per round...

Rear to highest Michelin runner, rear to fastest lap, front for best improvement in Championship.

Pair to highest Pirelli runner, rear to 2nd, front to 3rd.

MRO Steve Jordan M/C Supersport 600

A Championship prize fund of £2000 cash from Steve Jordan Motorcycles. The winner will also receive Ohlins suspension advice, set up and kit worth £1500. The Jordan "Rider of the Day" will receive a trophy, with a bottle of Silkolene Comp 4 oil or a voucher for a pair of Bendix MCR race brake pads.

MRO Morello Powerbike

A Championship prize fund of £5000 cash from the Morello Roofing Company and £1500 cash from Pirelli for the Championship 1-2-3 at the year end.

Both Pirelli & Michelin will provide tyre prizes per round...(riders must use the products to qualify for prizes).

Pair to highest Pirelli runner, rear to 2nd, front to 3rd.

Rear to highest Michelin runner, rear to fastest lap, front for best improvement in Championship.

The Clubman Cup will also receive separate tyre prizes from Michelin... Rear to highest Michelin runner, rear to fastest lap, front for best improvement in Championship.

MRO Triumph Triple Challenge

Two championships will be operating within the Triumph Triple Challenge - the 'Michelin Cup' and the 'TDG Cup'.

Prizes for Michelin Cup Championship:

1st Place: A full season aboard a series bike in a European Championship.

Tyres, entry fees and the use of a bike will be included. Travel & accommodation is not.

You will also receive a once in a lifetime all expenses paid trip to Michelin's private test facility and track in France for a day, here you will be taught how to evaluate tyres on a range of bikes.

2nd Place: Inclusion in the above Michelin Tyre Evaluation Course + a one-off wildcard ride aboard the T3 Supersport bike at a mutually agreed round of MRO Supersport or equivalent. Tyres and entry fees supplied.

3rd Place: A voucher for £1000 of Teng Tools.

Prizes for TDG Cup Championship:

1st Place: £5000.00

You will also receive a once in a lifetime all expenses paid trip to Michelin's test track in France for a day, here you will be taught how to evaluate tyres on a range of bikes (to include your own).

2nd Place: Inclusion in the above Michelin Tyre Evaluation Course + a one-off wildcard ride aboard the T3 Supersport bike at a mutually agreed round of MRO Supersport or equivalent. Tyres and entry fees supplied.

3rd Place: A voucher for £1000 of Teng Tools.

MRO Superteen Championship

Supported by Berkshire Motorcycle Centre, Championship winner will receive an Aprilia Scooter, 2nd £750, 3rd £500.

The Superteens will also receive separate tyre prizes from Michelin... Rear to highest Michelin runner, rear to fastest lap, front for best improvement in Championship.

BMCRC Minitwins

A joint prize fund of £4500 supported by Michelin & Pirelli, riders gain prizes based on the tyre they choose to use... £1000 cash from Michelin and £1500 from Pirelli for the Championship 1-2-3 at the year end.

Winner to go expenses paid, to Michelin HQ in France for tour and tyre testing.

Michelin will provide further cash prizes per round...First overall £125, Second overall £75.*

Both will provide tyre prizes per round...

Rear to highest Michelin runner, rear to fastest lap, front for best improvement in Championship.**

Pair to highest Pirelli runner, rear to 2nd, front to 3rd.

Stamford Superbikes of Peterborough will supply a new SV650 as a Championship prize.

They will also give a new back protector away per round and will be announcing further prizes in association with Putolene Oil and Ixon kit in January.

MHP Exhausts will provide cash prizes per round to a value of £2000 over the season, for most improved Championship positions, £100, £60. £40 on Saturday and for riders choosing to use the MHP products, £50 for the highest placed on Sunday.

BCL Racing will support the Rookie Minitwins with an end of year prize fund of £2000, with a watch to the best aggregate performance by a Rookie at each round. Sponsorship will be under the name BCL Racing Academy. The BCL team will be supporting two Rookie riders during the season.

Norfolkline Yamaha Past Masters

Norfolkline continues its support of the YPM class. Three spot prizes of £25 each to randomly selected finishing positions, second race on Saturday, for each round. £750 prize fund for year end.

EDIasia Formula 400

EDIasia continues its support of the 400's. As in '08 the prize structure will be announced as the season progresses, a total allocation planned of £8000. More details to follow in the New Year.

Bumpstop.co.uk Thunderbike Uk

Bumpstop is supporting the Thunderbike series in '09 with the award of a "Bumpstop" to a deserving rider at each meeting who best demonstrates the "Thunderbike Spirit" over the weekend.

BMCRC Rookie Open (600's & 1000's)

The Rookies will also receive separate tyre prizes from Michelin... Rear to highest Michelin runner, rear to fastest lap, front for best improvement in Championship.

BMCRC Open Sidecars

Cash prizes totalling £500, distributed per round from a mystery benefactor.

BMZRC 250 MZ

Cash prizes totalling £1000 for the King of Zed's event, from a mystery benefactor.

Rookie of the Day & Rider of the Day

Tina Hill of Lifestyle Transformation supports Rookie of the Day with a £50 voucher towards her products and services including Herbalife nutrition products and massage.

Alan Russell of A&R Racing supports Rookie of the Day with a £50 redeemable voucher.

Rod Harwin Racing supports Rider of the Day with a £100 redeemable voucher.

So the plan was to invest the support we got from sponsors and benefactors directly back to riders. There was an expectation that this would provide important help in difficult economic times. Time will tell if it's a good strategy.

The circuits selected for this season focussed on the Club favorites at Brands, Snetterton and Cadwell adding a one day at Thruxton that we were fortunate to be able to negotiate and a 2-day visit to Oulton again as it proved popular last year. We also took the step of booking an end of season date to resurrect the "Lord of Lydden" and "Sidecar BurnUp" meeting at our old home. The old place has undergone a transformation since we moved out that's cost many tens of thousands, we thought it right to return.



So to the season so far...

The first meeting at Brands proved its usual big start to the season with over 280 riders turning out for the season opener. The Friday testday had rivers of rainwater flowing past the office and down into the lower paddock. Fortunately this didn't prove to be the forecast for the rest of the weekend.

Almost the same numbers came to the Snetterton meeting at the end of March continuing a good start to the season.

Then came the Centenary Meeting at Brands...

This meeting had the biggest build up and planning task many of us can remember at the Club. Certainly it proved to be the biggest thing to date that the "new team" had organised. Decisions had been made many months ago as to the ideal format for the celebration and it was decided that a mix of really old, old-ish and new was what was called for. That called for a mix of original 1920-30's bikes, post war Classics and modern machinery. We involved friends from the Classic Club, British Historic, VMCC and Morgan Clubs, Lansdowne and the Brooklands Museum to get entries out to as many riders that might be interested as possible. Lansdowne bought an entire Championship

round to the event and many Classic riders entered the open classes. Parades were run, something we'd not done in recent memory, which attracted over 100 wonderful old machines. Brooklands bought machines from the Museum and we also had a dozen or so owners groups in the paddock ranging from Sunbeam and Velocette to BSA and Indian! The atmosphere was amazing and the Club has received nothing but complements since the event.

There are still copies of the event programme available for any member who would like one, please get in touch.



In the meantime, here are a few pictorial memories of the weekend.....



**BROOKLANDS
MUSEUM**



Jottings from the Chair...



Hands up all who saw our Centenary celebrated on BBC's "One Show" on Friday, 22nd May. Prime time TV gave a brief tribute to Motorcycle Racing and how it all started with Bemsee at Brooklands 100 years ago. Presenter Dominic Littlewood, a biker himself, took little persuasion to Chequer a race and showed much interest in the Club as it is today. Lots of clips of racing in the early days with shots of bikes in our Paddock plus Sarah Jordan showing that Ladies are very much part of the racing scene today. The whole weekend went really well, masterminded by Mike Dommert and Tracey Ringrow who worked tirelessly to ensure we all had a good time. Generous Bar prices on Saturday night in the Kentagon showed Jonathan Palmer's enthusiasm for the Club along with mementos for all provided by long time supporter John Sanders. Many of us will have put the Souvenir Programme away in a safe place but if you have misplaced yours, a quick call to the Office might provide a replacement for a nominal cost. That memorable front cover was designed by MD so you can see we have a man of many talents.

Onto to other Club matters, your Board of Directors meet every 6 weeks to discuss all things relating to Bemsee and how it can remain in Premier position as a true Club in an ever changing world. Our aim is to provide competitive racing at a variety of circuits for classes that our members can afford and we always seek feed back from members. In the current financial climate it is essential that we run with full grids to spread the ever increasing costs as thinly as possible because there is no share of "gate money" and everything you value has to be paid for by the Competitor.

Fortunately Bemsee has a vast number of very willing volunteers who join together at race meetings to ensure the sport we love continues as safely as possible. We pride ourselves on the number of Marshals, Medics and other Race Officials who turn out at their own expense. Just look at that sea of "orange" as you ride around the track, trained Marshals everywhere and highly qualified Medics too. But there is a problem and I appeal to all Racing Members to take heed. A couple of years back we had a Marshal seriously hurt by a bike with a failed front brake. There have been other incidents where Marshals have been extremely lucky to escape injury when picking up fallen riders and their bikes, whilst guys race past ignoring Yellow Flags.

Now there are a number of ways with dealing with this. One is to stop all racing when guys fall off, remove bike, rider and carry on. We would lose time and run only a fraction of planned races resulting in a very substantial increase in entry fees as every race has to hire that expensive piece of tarmac. Another way and one your Clerks of the Course prefer is to act when Yellow Flags are ignored. The ACU Handbook is quite clear in stating that "Overtaking is forbidden". "Infringement during a race WILL result in a time penalty". We owe it to our Marshals to keep them safe whilst they pick up fallen riders and a "walk of shame" to the Clerk of the Course or his Deputy will result, when flags are ignored. This may seem heavy but safety is paramount in our Club. Finally please remember a waved Yellow Flag means Slow Down and be prepared to STOP.

Now to brighter things, we plan to hold a Members' Forum later in the season to discuss Classes, Circuits and other Club matters. The newsletter "Grid Lines" is designed to bring out people ideas and encourage an exchange of views. A large Club like ours wants to communicate with its members and obtain feed-back but it is not easy and I anticipate many sit at home and say "why don't the Club try this or that". Your Directors are very approachable and will always listen and try to assist. We also have Riders' reps in each class and I suggest a way to ensure we get the message and remain the best, is to discuss ideas with your Riders' Rep. We will have regular meetings with them to ensure ideas get heard and where possible acted on and you get an answer.

Wishing you all safe racing now and in years to come.

Yours Eddie Bellars

E-mail: eddie@bellarsa.freemove.co.uk

Superteens at BSB...

Once again we have been able to negotiate the MRO Superteens Class as a support to a BSB event in 2009. This year it was early and was for the class its second outing of the year, this time at Brands Hatch in front of large crowds. Their billing was elevated to main support, so the class was featured on the two key race days, Sunday 12th and Monday 13th of April. On Monday they were run as first main race in the morning in front of the main BSB race one.

A great vote of thanks too from the Club to Caroline & Shaun Knox who gave of their whole weekend to be around the paddock for the class and oversee their technical inspections.

We also had Sylvain Guintoli present medals to the winners in the first race on Sunday, Sylvain went onto a great weekend at this meeting.

Winners were:



Sylvain Guintoli

Sunday 12th April:

MRO Superteens...

1. Reece Baldwin
2. Jordan Wainwright
3. Daniel Booth

1. Alex Vella
2. Reece Baldwin
3. Jordan Wainwright

MRO Rookie Superteens...

1. Tarran MacKenzie
2. Tom Ward
3. Jordan Simpkin

1. Tom Ward
2. Tarran MacKenzie
3. Chris Threadgill

Monday 13th April:

MRO Superteens...

1. Alex Vella
2. Reece Baldwin
3. Jordan Wainwright

1. Reece Baldwin
2. Alex Vella
3. Daniel Booth

MRO Rookie Superteens...

1. Tom Ward
2. Tarran MacKenzie
3. Chris Threadgill

1. Tarran MacKenzie
2. Tom Ward
3. James Gale



Special Feature: The Musings of a Madman II

The second of our occasional series of musings from Directors past or present... most of whom should now be committed.



Jeremy Hill - My First race:

My novice jacket was new and fresh with the symmetrical crease lines from its extraction from the ACU plastic bag. It was bright enough to be seen from space. New gloves, boots, helmet and the thinnest, but affordable, Fieldsheer leathers adorned my nervously shaking body. I had been through scrutineering and my Yamaha YPVS350, complete with nose fairing, had passed with flying colours! I say "my" YPVS350 but actually it was a joint owned bike that I had bought with a good friend of mine so we could go racing together and share the cost. We had to be good friends as at some point one of us was going to come back in the recovery van and the other one wouldn't get a ride over the weekend!

We had tossed a coin to see who had the first race of the weekend and I had won, or had I? It was the Open1300 race on a cold March morning at Snetterton, and back in 1991 it was a dead engine start. You picked numbered pegs out of a hat to give you your grid position and I had picked one on row 4! I had been practicing starting the bike in the paddock with the kick start, clutch in and in gear. All had gone well and it always started first or second kick. The call came out for my first ever race and I had to do the last emergency toilet run before going to the collecting area.

My mate excitedly wished me good luck as the tuned stroker engine burst into life. In the collecting area I was surrounded by, what looked like, a bunch of scruffy, oily axe murderers on GSXR1000's, Z1's, GPZ's and a few other strokers like LC's and RGV's. What was I doing there?! Before I had time to question my sanity we were being waved onto the track. At this point I realised most of the bikes, barring the LC's and RGV's were electric start so I needed to be a bit ninja-like on the kickstart to equal the button pressers when the lights went green.

The warm-up lap didn't require dead engine starting so we all went away together into Riches. I realised how slow, and tiny, my race bike was compared to these massive four stroke beasts that surrounded was. They had engines and handlebars as wide as a car and smoked almost as much as mine! Before I got to the first corner on the warm-up lap I thought the bike had got a problem as it wasn't going any faster. I then realised I was in the redline and needed to change gear. It was all getting a bit scary!

Coming round and lining up on the grid I could hear the wave of silence as the engines were stopped. I pulled up in first gear and turned mine off. Time to checklist and prepare for lift off.... Kick-start out, Clutch in, in gear, leg on kick-start at the top of its angle and eyes glued on the lights. I thought I was going to dent the tank with my heart it was beating in my body so loud. My breathing was like I was running an Olympic 100m and I was crapping it at the front of another 30 odd bikes behind me. I could vaguely hear someone shouting but it wasn't my concern as the lights had to be my only focus.

GREEN. The silence was shattered by starter motors and the frightening roar of 40 odd bikes leaping into chaotic screams. I jumped up and put all my effort into the kick-start.... Nothing! Bikes were beginning to fly past me left and right. I jumped again and again and again and the bike just wouldn't start as the rest of the pack disappeared across the start line. As the start line marshals ran across to give me assistance I suddenly heard the shouting voice again....."turn the f*****g ignition on". It was my mate who had noticed that as I rolled up to the start I had turned the ignition off from the key and in my nervous state had forgotten to turn it back on again. Despite his vain attempts to tell me at the time my focus had blanked his voice of assistance out rendering a quick getaway an impossibility!

I hurriedly turned the key and leapt once more on the kick-start turning the silent Yamaha into a racer at last. I revved it and dumped the clutch in my excitement forgetting the inbound helpful marshals. The bike launched itself uncontrollably into the air with me hanging from the handlebars, just enough to pull the clutch in. As the front wheel dropped I say the marshals had now turned from running to assist to running for their lives as I duly revved and dumped the clutch once more repeating the "scatter the marshal" manoeuvre.

With a clear track, the marshals safe, my mate laughing uncontrollably at the super smooth race start and the superman impression firmly out the way, I actually managed to get going to start and finish what was to be my first of many races. I was a racer! The pristine novice jacket lasted about 5 races along with the YPVS engine but my enthusiasm and excitement for every race would remain intact to the present day.



Happy racing!

Jeremy.





The Eagle...having landed

Marshals' Training Day

By Mick Eagle

(with comments by Karen Higgens)

This years training day was different to previous years for a number of reasons.

First of all, it was on a Saturday and planned to coincide with the race school where the riders were doing their classroom work on the Saturday, to be followed by Sunday on track which meant that our marshals, especially the new ones, could put into practice what they had been taught.

[Karen: I thought this was a really good idea, it allowed new and experienced marshals to put into practice any new theory that had penetrated beyond our ear holes whilst it was still fresh in our minds... the first one of the year is always a little daunting and it somehow seemed less daunting after a training day.]

Secondly, our training was not only approved by the ACU but was also given their accreditation, making all of the marshals who attended this years training, ACU accredited marshals.

[Karen: About bloody time!]

Another change was to the format: instead of dividing into small groups and proceeding round from one session to the next, all the theory was conducted in one large group in the morning.

[Karen: Which also meant us trainers got to be trained 😊]

The scene for the day was set when I asked everybody to either turn off their mobile phones or put them on silent. Having just started my presentation a phone rang, it was Peter Bartlett who had to somewhat sheepishly, quickly leave the room.

[Karen: No surprise there!]

The morning started with a session on the theory side of fire fighting by myself. The 110 marshals in attendance were also joined for this session by our Technical Officials. This was followed by Peter Bartlett giving a presentation on personal safety. After a break we had a presentation by Mike Hodgins on bike handling. This was originally going to be given by Steve Pratt but due to circumstances beyond his control he was unable to attend, so Mike gave this presentation literally having been given it the night before, and he did an amazing job. We then moved on to the flagging presentation which was given by Karen Higgens and Mary Downey which was well received, although I did have to employ a hook to drag them off as they were overrunning.

[Karen: Excuse me – we only have your word for it that we were overrunning and you didn't use a hook... you passed me a note whilst I was speaking (rather profoundly I may add) which said "get off!"]

At this stage the new marshals left us to receive first aid training from Paul and Bob and the remainder were treated to a general session conducted by myself, Karen and Mary.

[Karen: I thought this went rather well and if time is permitting in following years it would be nice to include an open session like this again.]

After lunch we moved outside to Stirlings where a series of practical scenarios were carried out. This included use of an extinguisher for our new marshals and gave me the opportunity of showing my skills as a professional fire officer, firstly not being able to set light to the fire tray, then at the end being unable to put the fire out. I hasten to add that due to my inability to set fire to the tray I asked the new marshals not to totally extinguish the fire. This resulted in my concoction of petrol, diesel and used engine oil being alight for about 15 minutes causing the tray to get red hot. Add to that a near empty dry powder extinguisher with very low pressure and you can imagine the hilarity at my failed attempt to extinguish the fire.

[Karen: I'm saying nothing!]

This year the club had managed to obtain a bike for us to practice our skills on. The new marshals all took turns in finding out just how difficult it is to move a bike through gravel, especially when I first of all locked one wheel and then later on locked both wheels.

We then simulated several larger incidents which included flagging and casualty stabilising and removal with the help of Frasier as the injured rider. It also involved the attendance of our medics Paul and Bob. We were able to let the new marshals witness and take part in several aspects of an incident.

[Karen: Now I know this is hard to believe, but this is where I'm going to talk almost as much as HIM...]

[Still Karen... I was really impressed with the new intake of marshals and the practical session was particularly beneficial – it gave Mary and I the opportunity to cover the flags with the newbies in smaller groups with practical scenarios. They were all very keen and whilst doing the practical session I became aware of just how hard it is to really get the important points across in a class room. It was great – they were full of questions and they were able to put the theory into practice and understand why things were being done in the way they were – an important lesson that is not always easy to put across and something, dare I say it, our more experienced marshals (including myself) could do with a reminder about sometimes.

[Still Karen... There was one racer who is having a go at a bit of marshalling this year and he was being a bit 'unenthusiastic' with the flag and I pointed out to him that us marshals can be pretty passionate about our sport too and to use the flag with passion and purpose... he got the drift 😊]

The day was completed with a talk by Eddie Bellars on the ACU and clubs insurance and then a final Q&A session.

From the questionnaires that were completed it seems that the new format was very well received with only two of the many responses preferring the smaller group format.

Several people at the back of the room said they had trouble hearing some of the quieter presenters, although strangely enough everybody could hear me. (Yes I know I am a loud mouth). We will get a sound system in for next year.

[Karen: Could I respectfully ask that YOU not be given use of the sound system... thank you.]

One person wrote "Mick Eagle needs to wear a hat for the practical sessions as the sun shining off of his head was distracting". Strangely enough this form also claimed that Karen Higgins was by far the best looking and friendly instructor.

[Karen: Oh that's nice 😊]

Generally the day seemed to go well and I would like to thank my fellow presenters, Karen Higgins, Mary Downey, Mike Hodgins and Peter Bartlett.

[Karen: And we would like to thank you Mick... without your input and hard work behind the scenes the day would not have been so successful... I can honestly say this was the best marshal training day I've experienced for some time... more please!]

Also a big thank you to our medics Paul and Bob for their input to the new marshals and their involvement in the practical scenarios.

The biggest thanks however go to the marshals who attended and took part so enthusiastically in everything we threw at them, especially my progressively more difficult and involved scenarios in the gravel at Stirlings.

Mick [and Karen 😊]

[Karen: p.s. I used blue text to let Mick know there was faster marshal coming up from behind]



Rookie Schoolday February at Brands

By Garry Budgen

Bemsee's commitment to our future racers proved to be well worth the effort if our February "Rookie Weekend" was anything to go by.

The seeds were sown back in December when we put on an open evening at Brands Hatch for anyone thinking about becoming a motorcycle racer with us. We felt that most people considering racing usually have loads of questions but never know who to ask, so who better to answer all those questions than our racers who have been there & done it?

We had quite a few volunteers to help out & an enormous response from potential "Rookies" thinking about the 2009 season which sometimes meant they were queuing up to speak to the people they wanted to. The biggest queue all night was for the eye test that had been organized by our fantastic medical crew.

The next step was to attend our training weekend which was held over the weekend of the 23rd & 24th February. The Saturday was a classroom session which as well as giving some useful insights into what happens over a race weekend also helped our new recruits to get the information they needed to get them through the ACU CTC exam.

On Sunday it was time to get out on track & do what we all want to do, ride our bikes!

We had eighty riders raring to go who were split into small groups. Each group had an experienced rider to take them round the track, assess their riding & help them where they could.

The standard of riding from our "rookies" seems to get better & better every year & this year was no exception. Even after the first session you could see that everyone was not only on a good pace but also keen to learn & gain as much as they could from their respective rider.

As well as the track sessions everyone got to try out what is probably the most nerve racking part of a race weekend.

The race start.

We had everyone lined up in the collecting area in their grid spot & then onto the grid where they were lead away line by line on their warm up lap. Then it was line up for real for the practice start. So we didn't get anyone into too much trouble the grid was started line by line using the lights as you would in a race start.



Some people were a bit keen & went as soon as the red lights came on but most got the hang of it even if there were the odd wheelie or two, but then I can't talk too much about that, ahem...

The comments we had & the big grins you could see all around the pit lane meant the day was a huge success, we even had one of the younger lads say it was "the best day of my life!" How good is that?

By the time you read this most of our rookies would have had their first race & if you are one of them take a minute & say to yourself:

I'm a motorcycle racer!

Well done to everyone who took part, it really was a good day.



Under the Instructors watchful eye

It's an ill wind...

By Mick Eagle

Was that a leaf blower I saw the marshals using or were they just pleased to see me?

If this is your question, then you have probably already seen the new piece of trackside equipment that has been purchased by the club for use by the marshals.



The purpose of the blower is to speedily remove gravel that often gets spread over the track during an incident, especially with sidecars. It is hoped that the use of the blower will remove the need for several marshals, sometimes requiring help from adjoining corners as well, having to spend several minutes sweeping the gravel off the track. Each swept section has to be re-swept several times to clear the gravel. The leaf blower should be able to clear vast sections in a matter of seconds without the need to re-sweep.

Obviously the saving in time will be a bonus not only to the club but to the riders waiting in the collecting area and it will also make the marshals life a little bit easier.

This procedure was used successfully last year at BSB and, as they say, "imitation is the sincerest form of flattery", the club has decided to follow their lead. Incidentally, Formula One has also adopted the use of these blowers in the coming season having seen them in use on TV.

The blower can also be used with oil slicks in blowing the surplus cement dust away or if water and detergent have been used, can remove excess water and assist with the drying process. They could even be used at somewhere like Hall Bends at Cadwell for what they were intended for: removing leaves!

The blower will be available at all meetings on request by the Corner Commander and will be transported to the incident by the recovery van. At certain circuits, the blower will be situated at a specific location where it is likely to be needed. Paddock Bend at Brands Hatch is an obvious choice where gravel is often scattered all the way down the hill causing lengthy stoppages while it is swept. Should it be required elsewhere, the recovery van will collect the blower from this corner and transport it to where it is needed.

All Corner Commanders will be instructed in the use of the blower and they in turn can then instruct their marshals. No specific training is needed, however the operative is required to wear the supplied ear defenders and goggles. It is recommended that other marshals do not stand too near to the blower while it is in use due to the noise, and do not stand in front of the nozzle to avoid dust or other debris being blown into their eyes.

The blower will be demonstrated to the marshals at the first few meetings (before bikes go on circuit) and the time and place will be advised at Marshals' sign on.

If this proves successful, it is hoped to buy a second blower later in the year.

The Last Word...

From a new marshal

AN ORANGE ADDICTION - ITS ALL JT'S FAULT!!!

It all started with an invite to the WSB at Brands in summer 2007 when James Toseland did the double - that was it I was hooked on bike racing! Since then I've been to loads of meets but at the end of last season I wanted to get more involved, I'd seen what the marshals do on track and though, yes thats for me and after reading Karen's article on the Bemsee site I contacted Ron and 'signed up'.

Saturday was training day, I'd arranged to meet a couple of people who I knew through Facebook outside Brands. One was fellow rookie Cindy and the other was vastly experienced marshal Michael. First it was coffee in the MSV building, (wow what a place, can that be my marshalling post please, fab view of the track, its dry and warm and I can stay near the bar?) then into the lecture room to learn all about what marshalling involves, theory of how to deal with fires, incidents, flagging, personal safety etc. Later in the morning it was first aid - you know when you stand in a circle and the word 'role play' is mentioned, do you take at least 3 steps backwards??? I did and I managed to hide from Bob and didn't get picked on to practice on the casualty (more about my casualty handling later). After lunch it was outside for mock up incident management, fire management and casualty handling. Fire fighting was good, removing a bike was interesting (I did the spotting - concentration etched on my forehead whilst watching for the bikes and walking sideways in the gravel trap in new DM's) then casualty handling. It was going fine until Bob said "1 2 3 lift", at which point my new boots dug themselves into the gravel and I lost my balance almost headbutting Fraser who was our 'casualty' - how embarrassing, thank god Michael had moved on to take another pic! The rest of the day was quite uneventful after that but in the great tradition of marshalling we did adjourn to the pub after the session.

Sunday they let me loose trackside. I drove up to Brands with a mixture of fear and excitement, changed into my borrowed overalls, put on 4 pairs of socks so my boots fitted and went off to sign in. I was a bit concerned that the CM and DCM both knew my name - do I have a reputation after yesterday?? Anyway onto track with the legendary Karen Higgins as my corner commander, I was on with another rookie Danielle and 3 very experienced marshals. Wow what a day! There were exciting moments, scary moments, quiet moments, funny moments and I can now feel my feet again (by midday they were slightly numb, by the end of racing they were frozen). Flagging was great I've yet to learn the art of keeping the flag stationary when the wind is blowing a small gale along cooper straight, I was hanging on with both hands, leaning across the tyre wall and trying to ignore the fact that I was getting cramp! I had a brilliant day, everyone is really friendly and helpful. Thank you to all the marshals on my corner for putting up with my continual stream of questions (bribery by jelly beans helped), and thank you to Michael for the loan of overalls, jacket, gloves etc (yes I will be doing a Marshals curry night). My first proper meet is the March one at Brands and I can't wait.

I hope you all have a safe and successful season, but should we end up meeting on a wet and windy corner I will do my best not to trip over in the gravel trap, otherwise see you in the bar!

*Sandra May
February 2009*

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