

News Release

FEARSOME ENGINES

KRC UK ENDURANCE CHAMPIOSHIP

ROUND 4 – PEMBREY SUNDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER 2003

The waking hours of Saturdays sunlight fused into early evening, low clouds backlit by the slowly hemorrhaging sun as the flying K sonic boomed down the M4, towards the realm of the red dragon. The gaping arches of the Severn bridge welcoming me in and spitting me out on the other side of the mighty river. Next the black belching fumish spires and skyline of Port Talbot and onto Llanelli for a good nights kip before Sundays penultimate 4th round KRC Endurance meeting at the flat and exposed Pembrey motor circuit.

Assembled at the circuit were all manner and hue of large and powerful motorcycles ready for their pilots to do battle against one another in the mercifully balmy weather. I was invited along (well actually I invited myself).to hang out with Ward 12 racing on this the occasion of their fourth competitive endurance race in their maiden season and perhaps to chronicle the days events.

Bringing with them the status of current championship leaders were Team 'Hottrax' with 50 points after 3 rounds, hoping to gain a trio of wins, the only glitch for these guys was a desultory 41st place finish at the inaugural round at Snetterton. Snapping at their heels were team 'Twilight' with 42 points after three rounds with a podium 2nd place at Bishops court and two steady fifth place finishes in rounds one and three. Third on the championship leaderboard Team Psychlo 1 were hoping to make up a bit of ground from their third place with 39 points. At their helm Mick Godfrey with three 24 hour world endurance events under his belt, Jeff Claridge and James Bowden. Mick riding with the team in the absence of Team 'Alfs Endurance' in 2003, who are taking a break before immersing themselves in the 2004 World Endurance series rumoured to be possibly running a new ZX10R if the bits in the puzzle fit together. Mick Godfrey with team mate Mike 'Spike' Edwards blitzed this event last year taking a fastest lap with a record aggregate lap total.

'Spike' was attending this event as part of the 'Red Kite' team on their R7 with Ben Brown, and .Jon Wright which was a first in 2003 domestic series,also having competed in the world endurance series this year, they had to be considered one of the hot favourites, Spike is considered to be king of set up and is also blindingly fast on the black top.

Most teams had enjoyed the extra time for set up with an ACU practice day on Saturday to compliment the short stint of practice for the race. I asked Team 'Ward 12' s novice rider Phil White to gave me a brief insight into the circuit and race from his perspective with the post race pint (I was looking for a classic quote to sum up). Riding the ex-Cliff Ormerod R1 himself runner up novice 2002 season with Trackdaze team mate Hugh Brasher. Ward 12's reserve rider the enthusiastic 'Frosty Bollox' managed to knock himself out for half an hour on the Saturday, nearly collecting Mick Godfrey in the process braking for Hatchets hairpin.

10 :10 - 2nd timed practice for no 2 riders by 10:40 riders practice was over and the grid formation announced. 11:00 riders briefing. Red Kite had blown the motor on the second practice session which allowed the championship leader board to sigh a collective one of relief. Their race was over

before it had even started. It just has to rain later so Pembrey would gather more riders before the race was over. Ward 12 racing grid position is a lowly 34th

The midday start saw GB Moto, Hottrax and suprisingly Kaos racing on the R6 line up first to third on the grid with Calanpoint pipping Psyclo 1 for fourth with a time of 1.01.83 on lap six in the third session.

The riders lined up for the Le Mans start ready to burn some gasoline and they were off scurrying across the track as the flag chopped the air. First man round was a blur of speed and colour, closely followed by the chasing pack splitting the afternoon with the cacophany of highly stressed motors, straining to deliver the sought after horsepower to the greedy riders

12:30 half hour into the race a grey eiderdown spread across the sky. Team Calenpoint early chargers on there CBR600 the first faller having completed 16 laps. Already virgin endurance TTS on their CBR600 were pushing hard in the top 5 already one place up on their grid position. Bruce Ansty of recent Junior TT winning fame (aboard the Triumph Daytona 600) teaming up with Ian Holt and Jim Stock. 12:35 First pit stop in around half an hour, the pit lane gets hectic with shouted commands windy guns and the hefting of fuel dispensers at around 12:50 Number 32 team CSE is one of the first to pit. Ward 12 move to 24th at this point with rider Kevin Jebb at the helm. Mick Godfrey in the Psyclo 1 outfit encamped next door was biding his time in 4th hoping for a repeat success of last year when he and Spike Edwards shared the laurels for Team Alfs Endurance Racing . No 7 the S & D racing R6 whines past me out into pit lane to join battle. Psyclo 1 pit after 1 hour and Psyclo 2 five minutes later as they are serviced by the same back up team all proudly wearing the t-shirt. Number 60 Humbug Racings GSXR1000 roars past on the hour, sure enough the pit lane is streaming with pitting bikes, the first ominous pitter-patter of rain makes a sneaky entrance into proceedings.

Well it just had to rain the fat clouds were looking to spill their guts all day, it is obvious it is going to persist and the track would be wet from this point on. Kevin Jebb pits and I stand as out of the way as possible while the boys do their stuff . Phil White in the novice jacket went out as the rain started becoming more persistent. The team had not changed the tyres hoping upon hope the rain would be mercifully brief, it was soon evident that Phil would have to re-pit for some full wets, the conditions were becoming mildly atrocious. The lap times dropped noticeably, Understandably. In this period Mechanical Velvet on the R1 moved to second place, Team Psyclo 1 in 7th Place roar out with 4 hours and 55 minutes to go. Hottrax, Mechanical Velvet and GB Moto legends all on the heinously puissant class C missiles are by this time scrapping it out at the front. No 86 Uprite Racing are the next victims the 750 Kawasaki being pushed into pit lane entry with a sorely mashed pipe and sorry looking carapace. The evil whine of race exhausts was somewhat muted whilst the rain kept falling, the ambient damp sucking some of the sound out of the sky which was the colour of wood -smoke whose pall had settled over the whole area. 34 laps completed, 4 hours and 47 minutes to look forward to.

At a quarter past the hour the TTS team sweep in past the Team Psyclo pit. The 'wet race' board is out. It is sluicing down now, Phil White indeed comes in for a full wet tyre change. Soaking wet but wearing a large grin. It is now really sluicing it down, the rain drops dancing on the ground like spent silver bullets. 1:20 Billy in the saddle for Team Psyclo 1 is amphibious his times are dropping as he puts in some blinding almost underwater laps whilst all around him were floundering with their times. 1:50 the rain has abated somewhat but Team Twilight on their - is it a Kawasaki? no its a green liveried Yamaha! are down and the pace car is out shortly followed by the incident car and the travelling marshal with ambulance in attendance. White flag in evidence for the medical team on circuit The roar of the machines cycled up to near crescendo again as the weather lulled us all with a brief hiatus. Though no one was giving up it was developing into a serious test of endurance in a variety of conditions.

After two hours Psycho 1 had crept up to fourth and their team two into an excellent 9th, really pushing. There was a discernible line appearing on the track though it was difficult to establish if any of the circuit was actually dry but the next pit stop would possibly bring the inters back into play. To be frank it must be a bloody nightmare trying to second guess Mother Nature and make a correct tyre choice. This is when the more experienced teams can gain a slight advantage or a breathing space and /or you need your luck to kick in

2:30 there is another incident again at Hatchets involving no 51 Moores Racing on their. R1 again requiring the ambulance car. The pit crew busy themselves with the removal of some welsh sod from the right hand flanks of the stricken Yam , obviously the rider had fallen and glissaded on the wet grass before coming to rest. 128 laps completed, 3 hours and 23 minutes remaining. 2:45 and the pace car is still circulating with its impatient tail winding behind it, 2:55 and the pace car is still out coming up to the third full hour.

The pit and garages appear to have settled, the rhythmic throb throb of generators providing the background noise, the bikes at half throttle growling around slowly, a brief window of sunshine was evident in the south, blue sky, there was hope (cruelly dashed) soon all would be furious activity once more as the field would start to demand more fuel, and tyre changes (inters again? Its a tricky one to call). The sound of windy guns and compressors would fill the air once more. Just on the hour the pace car peels back in and the race proper is resumed. Nothing really separates the top three. Mechanical Velvet's superbly turned out R1 hold a slender advantage of one lap over Hottrax and Psycho 1 on the big class C Gixers. No 7, S & D racing were doing a superb job on their class B 600 R6 moving from 9th after 1 hour to 7th after two and were ahead of Team Jock 2 on their class D GSXR750 after 3, by two laps.

The infernal pace car came out again slowing the hungry riders. Hatchets claims another victim to its treachery. the pace car remains until 3:45 and they are off again. Team Psycho personnel learn of a stop/go penalty of 5 minutes handed to them, and the resultant uproar and protestations leave me holding the pit timing board as Sam Godfrey looking after her hubbie on the pit wall went to remonstrate with a hapless official, 6 laps later the contingent returned happy that justice had been done and the penalty dropped, I handed the board back to Sammy and waited for the next pit stop which would be very soon.

Meanwhile Mechanical Velvet's hard work was all for nothing as the rider desperately tried to push the bike back to pit lane on the sodden and no doubt marshy grass against the oncoming traffic, its times like this that your lightweight exotic race bike becomes a bastard mountain of lead. Members of their team rushed to help but to no avail, their race was over eventually completely excluded for 'breaking the rules' probably the one that says words to the effect that you have to push your machine in unaided.

Hottrax pit, and the rider jumps off, the bike is caught by the crew who immediately plug up the bike from their dump tank, a brief visual check and the new rider blasts off, a pit stop of about 30-40 seconds. Gary Southam is now onboard the Psycho 2 machine, the tyres look good and the bike is sent off packing more fuel and 'the Doc' on board. 4:20 spots of rain start falling, the blue sky has disappeared, just as the track looked like it might dry up a little in the steady breeze, the clouds underbelly is black .4:35 and Kevin Jebb of Ward 12 pits, hands over to Phil White 'stick with the inters' more fuel and Phil is back out, these lads in their maiden season were mid table and getting their heads round their first wet race. 4:40 Team GB Moto no 66 gracing their Yamaha land in the pits opting for full wet tyres, a wise choice even though it lost them valuable seconds against Hottrax currently ahead and holding fast, very fast in fact. Just over 30 competitors left from a starting grid of 41.

There is another incident, this time at Woodlands halfway to the Honda curve, out goes the pace car, it was no 65's Yamaha with Phil White onboard, there bike was silent and parked and the ambulance crew were busying themselves with the prone rider, the next twenty minutes the team and I waited anxiously for news of Phil's condition, the ambulance guy grinned and informed us that he was winded and had a broken collarbone, the race was over but Phil would soon live to fight another day, though naturally he was a bit dazed, vainly trying to piece together the course of events, which vied with the rumour of foul play and a tumble by default. Paul Stephen of the Fireworks Kawasaki team sharing the combined shelter of Ward 12's fabric roof said that he thought he had been clipped by a rider behind, but there appeared to be no credence for this, leaving a thoroughly shaken and dejected looking Phil to puzzle it out for himself over a cup of tea and under a warm coat.

Another faller, this time a major get off for no 30 Team Minky, the bike a sorry sight propped against the infield tyre wall, tank off and sprouting green turf, the rider is down and is attended to, a rainbow graces the southern sky marking a day of differences it, itself manifests by its very appearance. Next to go is David Summerson aboard the Kaos wrecking no 19 class 'B' R6 going down inexplicably in the pack at Spitfires whilst the pace car was still out, losing a gritty 7th place after the 5 hour times, so close yet so far with 29 minutes to go .

GPG racing's R1 were in the pits, no doubt a quick splash and dash manoeuvre, this was a two man team lying in 12th place after 5 hours, but hold on it looked like a new chain was being fitted or re-riveted, disaster for any team at this stage as precious seconds haemorrhaged away in the closing stages of the race. With about 10 minutes remaining no 59 pits seeking fuel. The big black and silver liveried Honda twin of the Drayton Croft posse guzzling the gas, and in fine baritone style boomed back out hopping to keep and desperately improve on their 19th position after the five hour mark.

The sixth hour is sealed with victory for the ballistic Hottrax team who never really left the top three positions throughout the race, followed home by GB Moto 47 seconds down and Psyco 1 2 laps down in third. Mick Godfrey revealed that Billy their wet weather man had incurred a 1 min stop go penalty during the race which had been served, thus dropping the down by at least 1 lap, by the final flag. The following pack streamed through seeking the chequered flag and duly were rewarded by this no doubt welcome sight.

The parc ferme performance over, the long process of packing, stowing and strapping down all the equipment begins, it always reminds me of the Pink Floyd Umma Gumma album cover, a large truck with open doors and huge amounts of equipment that will never all fit in spread before it. The endurance does not end with the end of the race , on my voyage back to Worthing, I passed many a van and truck also back on the black stuff home. True men of grit and spirit.

EPILOGUE :- Phil White went to see the 'Bonewelder' in Ipswich and was seen contemplating Oulton Park in a month. The quote I was searching for from Phil was not what I expected but summed up his day and feelings 'F***ing Bollox !!!'

The championship standings after four rounds are Hottrax with 75 points, Team Psyco move into second place with 55 points and S&D racing moVE from fourth to third place. Bring it on at Oulton Park in October.

Doby Trutcenden 9.09.03

Donnington Park 6 hour KRC UK Endurance Championship - Alf's finish in 3rd place, with 16 points and lying 3rd in the championship with 39 points!

Words by Mick Godfrey
Ghost writing Doby Trutcenden

Once more into the melee, the hurly-burly of high speed activity beckoned once more. this months field of glory was to be Donnington Park, the circuit that hosts the blue riband class of two wheel action; Moto GP.

Once more my fellow protagonists and I were going to try for that elusive set of winners laurels. The team were all set ready to support this intended triumphal march into the parc ferme at 6.0clock Sunday evening.

Both Jeff and Billy were fortunate enough to get a track day under their belts on the Friday and although time as ever was limited the general expression voiced was that the previous weeks MotoGP had left the track quite slick, Jeff had more confidence in the 206 Dunlops, than he had in full slick tyres. Because of this we decided to race with them, this also meant that if the weather took any wrong turns for us, we should be able to continue with no extra interruptions for tyre changes, other than a deluge.

Our main sponsors Andrew and Eric had pulled out a few stops for this event, procuring an hospitality suite for the rest of our guests and sponsors. Close to forty people turned up and they were all promptly given an official T-Shirt, red and white Team Pscyclo shirts were everywhere you looked throughout the day.

The practice session was me first, and I have got to come clean, I felt a tad rusty and lost, out on the circuit, clipping kerbs here and there and just felt so unsmooth, not good. Donnington's a fast flowing track and smooth is what you need to be, especially in this sort of race.

Jeff took first qualifying with me next and Billy third. In my session I was scrabbling for a tow but just managed to get tangled in traffic instead. The only good clear lap I got resulted in a 1min 17 which placed us 9th on the grid. A bit of chin rubbing and ear tugging later Jeff was elected to start the race, (my previous two starts had been pretty disastrous, undoing all the hard work gaining grid positions). the bike was lined up for the usual Le-Mans start, I was feeling a little sorry for Jeff, because it had just started to spit with rain. The clock struck 12 and once more we were live, Jeff legged it across the track, mashed the button to be confronted with a cold and impudent motor that just did not want to fire, leaving him stranded, only the muffled curses and the frantic body language of the diminutive one animating this lonely scene. Finally the motor responded and team ·lucky start· fled hell for leather after the disappearing throng, and it was still spitting. The Americans have a saying for this very scenario, ·Shit happens· but BOLLOX !! sums it up better. An hour later Jeff had made steady progress to around 14th place by the time he entered the pit. Billy jumped aboard after a splash of the vital benzina and roared off, when he came in he was voluble in his excitement and personal progress, describing that session as his best ride all season, pushing hard he had clawed us back to a well fought fourth place what a ride. Only four hours to go!

My turn, (ulp), had to ask Bill about the tyres, he reckoned they were good to go, but moving about a bit, after a quick visual inspection, I hopped onboard and off I sped, after two laps it was obvious to me that the tyres were well on their way to perdition, they appeared to be sliding all over the place, Bollox!! Pit or carry on? A pit stop would take valuable time, but would be safer, whereas if I stayed out and took it a bit steadier, I could circulate only two or three seconds off the pace. I stayed out, though its difficult to describe the session as enjoyable, muscling the bike through Craners was

an experience with its fast downhill direction change sequence. Amazingly despite this we were in a miraculous third position when I pitted.

The ensuing wheel change took a little while and dropped us off the immediate leaders board. Ready to rock again and it was round two for Jeff, we saw him quicker than expected after only three laps, the new wheel and tyre were out of balance and shaking the bike to bits, alas another lengthy pit stop followed. Jeff finally boomed out of the pits again steadily recovering some of the lost ground, really looking sharp and enjoying this challenge, finally pitting to hand over to Billy for his next stint, more gas and Billy was off, charging hard, whilst this was going on the team deliberated about a tyre change to alleviate the problems I encountered in my first session, as the last rider in the cycle you can't expect perfect tyres, but we wanted to regain time not haemorrhage more. I decided that if I could see tread on the hoops I was going to go for it, Billy pitted, we were eighth, 1 lap adrift from 4th and there was tread on the tyres.

Briefly I forgot about the pit lane speed limit and a timely reminder from a madly gesticulating official warned me soon enough, past him and onto the track, big handfuls and I'm wheeling toward the first corner, the bike feels great and the tyres feel good, I'm soon up to speed and scything through the traffic, this is it after all, the last session, after about thirty minutes I notice a swarm of red and white t-shirts on the pit wall looking excited (my brain probably evaluates a dozen reasons/situations in the brief seconds it takes to flash past the pit wall) I just thought keep your head down, the bike is ·kin fast but its just starting to slide again, but it was a real buzz, my guts said you're on the case dude, and my head let me go with the proviso of staying upright, I keep overtaking people, I knew there was a race still to be won, points to picked up. On my way into Redgate I briefly notice our hospitality suite crammed with red and white shirts going bonkers, inside the next lap I just glimpse Doc Bush about half a lap ahead, I knew he was up there close to the top of the leaderboard and wanted it off him. I focus on the back of their machine and push, the tyres are deterioraying, but I reel him in closer and closer I finally catch him entering Coppice, the tyres are trying to hang in there but I can't get the power down to make it stick and I can see him pulling away from me, this would not be a good time to lob the bike, but if he thinks i-m beat perhaps this will allow me to sneak a manouvere on him somewhere in the dying minute of the race, I wring the throttle out dry and catch him again at the little hump under the Dunlop bridge, he wheelies and I almost flip the thing, neck and neck we enter the last two corners, I'm not going to brake until he does (he's probably thinking the same thing). I brake later marginally, the bike is weaving so much and the brakes are on so hard the back wheel feels about two feet off the floor, by this time I've passed my turn in point, so I have no option but to back off the brakes and pitch it in, it runs a bit wide, but I point the big gixer at the last turn with as much power on board as I dare, shes bucking and weaving like a demented animal but I pip Doc Bush out of the turn to cross the line in third place by 0.6 of a second. PHEW!!!

Lump in throat I conjoured up a stoating wheelie around Mcleans, it was only third place, but it felt almost as good as winning. Our main sponsors wife Karen even had tears in her eyes. Its hard to describe the emotion and excitement generated at these events, but believe me its a buzz.

The cheers at the trophy presentations drown everything else out, especially when we were awarded the ·Mike Lewis· trophy for our efforts, a real team effort by everyone, including the supporters who travelled up to cheer us on. You know who you are and from me and I'm sure on behalf of the whole team. A BIG THANKS TO YOU ALL. See you at Pembrey in September.

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