

Round 1. 13th April 2025 Marks Tey.

We are finally up and running for another season. It seemed a long time in coming – because it has been a long time in coming. You may be aware that the Northampton Club unfortunately shut it's doors last year, so we have lost our normal mid March meeting, and the Pre 65 Club decided to drop their traditional late March meeting as a response to the sometimes disappointing entry numbers last season. This turned out to be a blessing in disguise, as we were treated to brilliant weather, excellent track conditions and an extremely positive entry number. With 15 sidecars, 125 solo's of which 23 were booked on for the Greeves racing class, and another four Greeves riders in other classes, all was set for a superb day's classic scrambling. As an added bonus, it was great to see four new riders on the line in the Greeves



New rider Ollie Shanks going well on his 380 Griffon (pic Chris Carter)

Class, so a warm welcome to Tim Francis, Wayne Stone, Adrian Howard and Ollie Shanks.

I'm sure you'll have a blast riding with us. We must be doing something right in getting the DHGC message out there. Unfortunately, on the flip side, regular riders Mark Moss Robins and Alan Graves are both out for at least the start of the season but were both there to cheer us on.

Nothing ever goes quite to plan though, and it soon became clear (or not so clear) that dust was going to be a problem. The ground was surprisingly dry and hard for this early in the year, and by the time the first Greeves race came around at race 7, visibility was a real issue. The first corner off the starting gate is always a bit of a tussle, and with 23 mad keen riders, zero visibility and a hard and bumpy corner exit, the inevitable happened. A touch of handlebars took two riders down and two more got caught up in the chaos. Red flags were out immediately and the ambulance quick to the scene. Andy (Stan) Green and Barry Keymer were scraped up and taken for checks, thankfully just bumps and bruises, and given the all clear. The bikes didn't get off so lightly; Stans Challenger suffered bent bars, broken lever, and a bent exhaust which may have knackered a rear spring. Not too serious but the bike was unrideable. Barrys Griffon was totalled though. Banana forks are perfectly acceptable, but not when they are meant to be telescopic! The filler cap was ripped off his tank, probably unfixable, and with the usual mudguards, levers etc that will also need replacing, it will be an expensive repair job. Both riders were out on track later, Barry on Alan Graves' 250 Griffon, and Stan on his own Tribsa in the Pre 60 class, so their days were not a right-off. I talked to them both the day after and once the adrenaline had worn off, they were both feeling it but will be ok for round 2 at Maylandsea.

The race was re-started and at the front Dave Watson and Jordan Ansell got straight down to business picking up where they left off from last season. Dave got the best of it and despite his relaxed riding style, he had to ride hard and show his racing smarts to hold off Jordan snapping at his heels. Race two produced the same result, but in race three Jordan was really on one.

Dave held him off for most of the race but with only half a lap to go, Dave had a cheeky and costly look over his shoulder which pushed him a little wide in the corner. Jordan saw his chance and nipped down the inside line to get his nose in front. Somehow Jordan on his 250 held Daves more powerful 380 at bay for the rest of the lap to secure an excellent and deserved victory. If the season continues like this, we could be in for a cracker.



Jordan Ansell (388) giving Dave Watson (9) some friendly hints and tips...or something. (pic Chris Carter)

Behind them, Steven Bowles came in a comfortable 3rd and repeated this result in race 2 and 3, for a very successful and consistent day of racing. All three were on Griffons so Obviously they head the Griffon class at this early stage. Incidentally, I've just found out that Steven is known as Stan to his friends, so we have two riders with the same, and not exactly common nickname. What are the odds! I suppose it makes it easier for James Wood when on the mic for his excellent commentaries. I can almost hear him now....'and it's Stan just ahead with Stan coming up on the inside, but Stan is holding his ground despite pressure from Stan....'



Steven (Stan) Bowles (861) battles for position with Clive (Sicknote) Stevens (349) (pic Chris Carter)

I would have expected the Challenger class to be dominated by Dave Akehurst on his very nice 360. In race 1, after the pause to clear up the accident, he noticed his carb had vibrated loose, annoyingly forcing him back to the pits, so he recorded a DNS. Race 2 was better, with a storming 4th place, but he was also DNS for race 3. A disappointing day but I suspect Dave will be a strong contender later in the season. On the other hand, even though Mike Bell on his 250 Challenger finished down the field behind the Griffons, he mopped up a good haul of points in all 3 races to comfortably lead the Challenger class. It goes to show, championship racing can be about consistency of performance and mechanical reliability, rather than thrashing your bike for podium glory.

The Hawkstone class was a bit of a weird one. Even though six Hawkstones were at the meeting. I was the only one who decided to ride in the Greeves races. Unfortunately for us, the Greeves racing and Pre 60 classes (where most Hawkstone riders also compete) were scheduled back-to-back, making riding in both a bit of a problem. I don't mind dashing straight from the finish line of one race to the start of the next, but it's not for everyone. So, while the other Hawkstone riders chose the Pre 60 class only, I rode both and mopped up maximum points in the class. We are unlikely to get a scheduling clash like this again – and we certainly won't for the two rounds where I am Secretary of the Meeting and setting the race order (a perk of the job), so I look forward to having some better competition in future rounds.

Beyond the racing, we had the Wetherby Trophy for best Competition Bike to award. As Alan wasn't racing, he took the role of judge alongside 'The Gearbox Whisperer' himself, Geoff Nunn. Similar to last year it was a Challenger that caught the eye. This time the very well presented 250MX3 of Adrian Howard. Adrian is one of the new riders to the DHGC, so was surprised and absolutely delighted to pick up this award. He only managed one race of the three due to a couple of minor mechanical niggles, but as he told me he had a great day and being presented with the trophy made it extra special.



Adrian Howard, very pleased to receive this years' Wetherby Trophy for Best Competition Machine. (pic Rachel Cooper)

A few bits of 'housekeeping'. If you are intending to compete in the Championship, please crack on and see Nikki Graves to pay your tenner and sign on at the Graves' paddock area. If you sign on AFTER round 3 at Mortimer you WILL NOT receive one of our Championship t-shirts. These are NOT part of your Championship tenner, but are effectively a free gift, sponsored by our good friend Craig at BluMarine. So once we have everyone's details, Rachel Cooper will be putting in the order for shirts, and we will not be making a second order. You snooze, you loose, as they say.

Which brings me neatly to the next two rounds which run on consecutive weekends. First up is the Pre 65 Clubs' Dave Bickers Memorial / East Anglia Grand National at Maylandsea on 4th May. This is a 'must attend' for any Greeves fans. If previous years are anything to go by, there will be a marquee full of Greeves memorabilia, Bickers family members to chat to and top-class riders from back in the day, as well as some unique and rare Greeves bikes on display. Oh, and some top level classic scrambling as well – not a bad Sunday out in my opinion.



Sean Goodwin looking neat on his 250 Griffon. The officials in the background don't seem too impressed. (pic Chris Carter.

The following weekend of 10th & 11th May at Ameys Copse near Reading, hosted by the Mortimer Club, is also not to be missed. Saturday sees the infamous 100mile relay race, a chaotic (in a good way) marathon for teams of four riders over (you've guessed it), 100 miles. It's great fun to ride, brilliantly organised on a superb track by the Mortimer Club and is a real spectacle for the crowd. We have three predominantly Greeves based teams riding this

year, so we will be doing the marquee proud. If this wasn't exhausting enough for the riders, we go again on the Sunday with a day of traditional class scrambling including round 3 of the DHGC.

So after a brilliant start to the season, we have a frantic but very enjoyable couple of weeks ahead. I can't wait.

See you all trackside,

Paul Hughes.

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