

Round 2. 4th May, Maylandsea. Pre 65 Club.

The May bank holiday has become the cast-in-stone date for the Pre 65 Clubs' Maylandsea event, where they run the annual Dave Bickers Memorial Scramble / East Anglian Grand National. If you are not familiar with the connection between Dave Bickers and the Greeves marque, or indeed East Anglia, then you probably won't be interested in the rest of this article, so stop here and go and do some research! Suffice to say, it's a special event for anyone with an interest in Greeves. The club pulled out all the stops, with a fine display of Bickers memorabilia, original photos, an invited VIP list including Daves' widow Sylvia and son Paul, a number of top riders from back in the day, and some unique scramblers with a Bickers connection. For me, pride of place in the display went to the immaculate replica of Daves' 1961 European Championship winning works bike. I know what you are thinking – replicas are never that



*Dave Bickers 1961 European Championship winning replica.
(pic Paul Hughes)*

accurate. But this one is, it is one of two built around 2010 by Dave himself with expert help from John Drayson. True to the original 1961 machine, it is a collection of the best bits from MCS & MDS models with some unique go-faster parts from the Greeves race department shelves that had been 'resting' in Daves' workshop. Now owned by regular DHGC rider and sponsor, Barry Keymer, he tells me he has never actually ridden it, despite owning it for 10 years! I think I would be happy just to sit and stare at it too.

After a fantastic first round of the DHGC at Marks Tey, we were again blessed with excellent weather, a great entry of 109 solo riders of which 27 were entered in the Greeves Class. This is a fantastic number – a quarter of the entire field being Greeves mounted – and a testament to the enduring and growing appeal of the Championship. For us, the sweet spot we are looking for is to provide a compelling and competitive race format for established riders, but also to encourage new and perhaps inexperienced riders to get involved. I am pleased to say we seem to be getting that balance point just about right. For this event we saw some more new faces and a couple of familiar ones returning. Charlie Berry, a fine rider whatever bike he chooses to ride, has taken some time out from racing but it was great to see him back, now married and with young family in tow.

At the other end of the age spectrum, the old trooper himself, Adrian Dickerson, has come out of retirement for one last blast. As always, he looked the part on his MDS, with open face helmet and face guard, original leather trousers and no body armour other than a kidney belt –

proper old school. We also welcomed new faces, Adrian Polley and Luke Mullander both on Hawkstones.

Luke was experiencing his first ever scrambles. He and the bike made it to the end of the day unscathed (you've got to recognise the 'little wins') and I know he can't wait to go again. That's what we want to hear, well ridden Luke.

Adie Howard, also new this season, had a less positive day to say the least. His challenger came to a sudden and catastrophic stop out on track, totally seized up, and Adie suspected crank bearing collapse. I thought it might be a broken ring wedged in a port, but whatever it was, the bike was going nowhere. He tells me after stripping down the motor he found a horror show. A (none standard) nut and bolt secures the airbox to the rear mudguard and the nut had come loose. Inevitably this bounced around in the airbox before eventually finding its way through the carb and into the cylinder. You've probably guessed, this is never going to be minor damage. A

new head, piston and cylinder were needed and meticulous cleaning to get the swarf and debris out of the bottom end. An expensive day out for Adie, but these are the joys of getting to know a new bike. The bike is unlikely to be ready for the next meeting at Mortimer but we should see him back for Foxborough.



Charlie Berry going well on his Hawkstone in the Pre 60 Class. He rode his Griffon in the DHGC.



Adrian Dickerson. He's not lost the old magic!



Adrian Polley getting to grips with his Hawkstone. Welcome to the Championship Adrian.

The track layout at Maylandsea doesn't alter significantly from meeting to meeting, but it remains a favourite with riders. The long fast straight with three jumps offers something for those that like to get some air, and the sweeping corner to the finish line invites a bit of grass track style sideways action for

those that have the skill and the minerals to really attack it. Coupled with a tight cornered section of dips and rises, it has great variety. The curve ball today however was the covering of lush and extremely slippery grass. It improved quickly as the meeting progressed, but a number of riders hit the deck in practice and into the first few races. On the whole these were just slow speed flop overs as the back end kicked out when accelerating from a corner, or the front end went under braking. Mostly nothing was hurt except a bit of pride, but not everyone got away with it. In race 1, Steven (Stan) Bowles went down at slow speed but unfortunately got his foot

stuck under the bike. Thinking it was likely just a painful sprain, he dug in and completed his races, finishing a strong 3rd in race 2. Back in the paddock at the end of the day he was struggling to walk and getting his boot off was excruciating. The medics were called and a trip to A&E for an x ray recommended. The upshot was two broken bones in his foot and the prospect of a month or so in a cast. We are all gutted for Stan, he would have been right at the sharp end of the championship and was also having a crack at the 'Nationals' this year. Go easy Stan and speedy recovery.



Dave Akehurst making a great start to the season and leading the Challenger Class.

will be right up there at the end of the season. Also on hand to pick up points were Mark (Ronseal) Larter and Clive Stevens in 2nd and 3rd, both on 380 Griffons, with Dave Akehurst in 4th and the highest placed Challenger on his 360MX4. Next Challenger over the line was Andy (Stan) Green in 9th overall, picking up healthy points in his class. A note in despatches must go to new boy Ollie Shanks, just behind in 10th, but a great ride for only his 2nd meeting on his 380 Griffon. As he gets more dialled in with the bike, he will no doubt go from strength to strength.



413 Ollie Shanks just keeping ahead of 321 Stan Green.

Adrian Dickerson showed he's not lost the old magic and was first Hawkstone over the line, with your correspondent next finisher in the class.

Race two produced a more expected result. Dave Watson taking the win with Jordan in second and the battling Stan Bowles riding through the pain to take a gritty 3rd place. Mark Larter, Charlie and Clive rounded up the top 6, all on Griffons. Again, Dave Akehurst was first Challenger home in 7th, consolidating his place at the top of that class. Adrian sat out race two allowing me to take max points and extend my lead in the Hawkstone class. It doesn't show in the results, but my highlight wasn't healthy points in the Hawkstone class, but on the track, fighting it out down the field with Mark Pickess on his Challenger. He had me for straight line

speed, but I seemed to have him in the corners, and this made for brilliant nip and tuck racing all day. Race 2 had us swapping positions throughout, but I had the lead on the last corner with just the long finish straight to go. I was sure he had the grunt to take me but I got on the power early and despite Marks' front wheel getting closer and closer in my peripheral vision, I just held on by the thickness of a tyre. Over the line and onto the runoff lane it was huge smiles and fist pumps all round – for me that's what the DHGC is all about, hard fought competitive racing throughout the field, but with great camaraderie amongst all the riders. Mark got payback in the age related race though, besting me on his BSA B40.



959 Roger Digby and 154 John Radford both went well in race 1, but suffered mechanicals and didn't get to the line in race 2.

All classes lost their 3rd outing of the day to make space in the schedule to run the Grand National races. So for the DHGC, an aggregate of rider finish positions in races 1 and 2 was taken and Championship points awarded accordingly. (We should have all bike details from riders by the next meeting so will have a full breakdown of Championship positions and bonus points in the next report.) Inevitably this led to winners and losers on the day, with those that struggled on track or had machine issues in the morning earning lower aggregated points. Conversely, those that had a good morning session were rewarded for their hard work and/or good fortune with a healthy points award. Swings and roundabouts I suppose. We still got plenty of track time though, with age related and Grand National none finalist races available in the afternoon session. For the record, Dave Watson was best placed Greeves rider in the Grand National final, finishing 5th against some very strong competition, and picking up a classy award presented by Silvia Bickers.

Apologies to the photographer(s) in this article. I'm pretty sure these are either Chris Carter or Dave Lewis, but I can't seem to find the online posts to confirm this.

So after a 6-day turnaround, just time to hose the bikes down and pick the grass out of our teeth, we go again at Mortimer for Round 3 on 10th & 11th May. This is another big one with two days of racing starting with the infamous 100 miler relay race on Saturday, followed by regular class racing on the Sunday. Exhausting but exhilarating and not to be missed. See you all trackside, *Paul Hughes*.

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