

Smeatharpe/Dakota Raceway 22/03/25

Welcome to the first meeting of the 2025 season with some 30 riders making the trek to darkest Devon to blow out the Winter cobwebs over the new 1/8 mile course.

After some late night rain had cleared through, Saturday started slightly overcast but dry and continued to defy the somewhat dire forecasts with even some sun at times, the wind remained more or less a side or slightly head on breeze.

Pete Smith and Mark Richards were both intending to ride, in Marks' case a vital engine part failed to materialise, despite being ordered weeks ago, in Petes' case the bike simply refused to start so was left back in the garage in disgrace, but they both turned up to spectate and say hi.

Just to note before we dive into the classes, as this was the first time over the 1/8 mile, the quickest times establish the class records.

Three Juniors took part.

In 125 GP / 250 4 stroke single unrestricted 13 years, Max Curtis on his CBF250 was quickest, 10.56s@62.9 mph, from Jorja Cleall on her Kawasaki 250, 12.57s@59.95 mph.

In 500 4 stroke twin production based 15 years, Libby Curtis was the only entrant, getting her GPZ500 to a best of 9.16s@76.1 mph.

In 250 Racing, Stuart Buchanan was experimenting with a set of wheelie bars for the first time and enjoying the extra confidence, getting his Honda 250 to a best of 8.2s@82.5 mph, from Lyndon Davies on his RD250, 10.3s@71.7 mph.

In 500 Racing, Kerry Phillips was the only entrant, getting the luminous KH500 down to a best of 7.1s@97.3 mph.

In 750 Racing, Pete Ford was on good form, running a string of 6 second runs on his supercharged Suzuki 750 'Jaberwocky', with a best of 6.04s@120.2 mph which was also quickest ET of the day but not top speed.

Next was Conrad Sinclair-Peek on a 600cc Bandit, with a best of 8.08s@87.2 mph, and Jason Winterson, who had entered but was somehow missing from the initial entry list, riding an ex Rob Broome XS750 engined special for the first time and got a couple of runs with a best of 8.5s@78 mph. Although Rob hasn't been able to compete for a couple of seasons, he was a surprise visitor dropping in to see how it was all going.

In 1000cc Racing, Paul Houghton was the sole entrant, another 6 second runner, getting his GSXR to a best of 6.7s@114.5 mph.

In Unlimited Racing, Simon Havercroft also ran a string of 6 second runs on his Blackjack Suzuki 1000, with a best of 6.34s@121.5 mph to take top speed honours.

Next up was Steve Everett on his 1300 'Busa, again running 6 second passes with a best of 6.4s@111.3 mph and Steve Mayes on his drag style Suzuki 1100, 7.07s@104.5 mph.

In the Vintage classes, in the up to 350cc, Richard Morgan was quickest on the smaller of his two Rudges, 10.0s@65.8 mph from Doug Kenyon on his Velocette MAC, 10.86s@62.1 mph.

In the Unlimited class, Richard was the only entrant, taking his bigger 500cc Rudge to a best of

8.89s@73.8 mph.

The scooter classes were well represented and seemed to have brought something of a supporters club with them!

In Classic Scooter, Nigel Howard came out on top, getting his Vespa 210 to 8.54s@79.25 mph, from Jamie Lawn, Vespa 180, 9.37s@68.8 mph, Paul Leonard, Lambretta 246, 9.59s@70.1 mph and Julian Skinner, Lambretta 240, 10.72s@61.7 mph.

In the mad world of Open Scooter, Eric Cope was quickest on his Lambretta 249, 8.07s@83.59 mph, from Paul Gurney on his Lambretta 265, 8.38s@81.38 mph and Mike Pacey who was sorting out another Rotax 335 powered Lambretta, 8.94s@72.7 mph.

In Classic Open up to 1500, Steve Mundy was the sole entrant on his Foale Z1 replica, with a best of 7.64s@91.49 mph.

In 750 Road Bike, I (Neil Jenkinson) on my 675cc Triumph Street Triple was quickest, 7.38s@97.6 mph, from Gill Pacey on her smart CBR500 road bike, 9.13s@72.49 mph.

Finally, in Unlimited Road Bike, Andy 'V-max' Waterson was still running his Bandit 1200, with a best of 6.95s@104 mph. The damaged engine from the V-max is still being rebuilt, apparently engine spares are now virtually impossible to find but the engine is now back together and sitting in pride of place on his dining table, hopefully the mighty V-Max could be out again by the end of this season.

There were 3 day entries, including Tony Davidge trying out his, I assume, Suzuki 1500cc drag bike. Despite possibly hearing some unhappy noises from the engine, nothing materialised and he was very pleased to get 5 decent runs sorting out teething problems and getting a best of 7.19s@103.8 mph.

Also Sam Taylor, trying out his new Junior bike which is ingeniously based around a narrow pipe with a wheel at each end. It certainly worked, Sam getting down to 11.77s@54.2 mph.

We ran the first round of the NSA knockout challenge with 12 riders signing up to have a go.

I got through the first round against a red light but got soundly beaten in the second round. I'm certainly never going to be a very good drag racer, giving away over half a second in reaction time to the fast charging Steve Everett was only going to end one way! In the final Steve was against Kerry Phillips, Kerry got to the finish first but broke out by 0.004 second giving the win to Steve.

Libby and Max Curtis ran a 'best of three' competition with Max winning the first two but breaking out on the last round.

A black cloud drifting across the track mid afternoon made most folk decide to call it a day.

A great opening meeting, come and support the next one!