Manston 22/23 August

What a cracking weekend of racing! The weather stayed fine and there were many new pb's and class records.

Our weekend got off to an auspicious start when, whilst trundling along the M4 on Friday, we passed a van and box trailer that looked 'interesting'. Once we had passed them, they flashed their lights to us and it turned out to be 'Crazy' Chris Hartnell and the Backdraft team on their way, presumably, to Santa Pod for the Greenlight Nationals, we waved back!

A good reasonable out of just under 40 pre entries and 10 or so day entries and taster runners took to the track on Saturday.
It was quite warm, the sun was out but there was a unpredictable ¾ side wind which pushed towards the left.
As usual the track surface was smooth but didn't seem to be giving much grip, it did improve slightly in the afternoon once it had warmed a bit but many folk were spinning up off the line all day, and a gentle hand on the clutch was the way to a decent time.

Anyway, off we go:

In Juniors Rhianne Braine was on her GPZ500 and was quickest with 15.33s, sadly no speed, and was going well until on her 3rd or 4th run she got a bit of a tank slapper off the line and tucked the front wheel just after the 60ft mark and took a nasty looking tumble.
She was shaken but otherwise ok. The bike slid along on its side and ground through the water pump cover allowing all the fluid out but apart from a snapped brake lever and the obvious scrapes on the exhaust etc the bike seemed pretty unscathed.
Overnight the hole was repaired with strategically placed JB Weld (other liquid metal fillers are available!) and with a new lever fitted, Rhianne was back out on Sunday and improved to 14.76s (no speed).
Jorja Cleall was riding her 250 Kawasaki and got down to 16.19s@80.7 mph on Saturday and improved to 16.06s@80.9 mph on Sunday.

Just to add, Sunday was an even better day, warm and sunny with virtually no wind although there still didn't seem to be a lot of grip.

In 500cc Racing, Kerry Phillips was quickest on Saturday, getting the KH500 down to 11.6s@114.3 mph, and running quicker on Sunday, 11.41s@114.5 mph.
Liam Harper was next up, pushing the boundaries of engineering possibilities, with his methanol powered, turbo charged GPZ250, putting in 3 runs on Saturday with a best of 12.2s@106.4 mph before saving the bike until Sunday when a single run at 14.9s signalled the end of yet another head gasket and the idea of going up to a 500cc bike might be on the cards.
Stuart Buchanan on the NSR250 was next, putting in plenty of runs with a best of 12.95s@99.8 mph on Saturday and a slightly quicker 12.73@95 mph on Sunday.
Adrian Licence was running two machines, a best of 13.7s@97.8 mph on his Suzuki T500 and 14.6s@95.8 mph on his H1 Kawasaki.
Paul Cleall had been wrestling with his 350 Yamaha most of the morning in the pits, it would start, sometimes, but not run. In the end he called it a day and 'borrowed' Jorjas 250 for a couple of runs, with a best of 16.26s@76.5 mph.

In 750cc Racing, Bob Hancox was quickest, racing a Suzuki 750 SRAD exactly the same as the one I used to run, with a best of 11.11s@123.9 mph on Saturday, and a 10.98s@125.2 mph on Sunday.
It was good to see Tim Howell on track again, running his very potent, blown and nitro methanol

fuelled BSA 750. Putting in runs on both days, as Tim said he needs some more 'seat time'. With the bike drinking a fairly conservative 30% nitro load it sounded fantastic and ran really well, what a treat for the ears! With a best of 11.81s@113.7 mph on Saturday and a somewhat slower 13.5s on Sunday Tim was pleased with the weekend. He was a also running his smartly turned out, normally aspirated, BSA, sadly I don't have any times etc for those runs.

In 1000cc Racing, Paul Houghton topped the times, running consistent high nines on his GSXR1000, with a best of 9.75s@142.6 mph on Saturday and beating his own class record on Sunday, (9.61s) with a fine 9.50s@147.5 mph on Sunday.
Liam Harper was next, spending most of the day running his VTR1000 to a best of 11.1s@121.5 mph on Saturday and improving to 11.04s@123.1 mph on Sunday despite using every ounce of rubber on the rear tyre and resorting to the rev it flat out and dump the clutch start method, it'll stop spinning eventually!
Kerry Herrington on her GSXR1000 got quicker as the day went on, to a best of 11.13s@129.5 mph on Saturday and improving to an excellent 10.95s@134.8 mph on Sunday.

In Unlimited Racing, Simon Hvercroft was quickest, fine tuning the new nitrous injection system on the Blackjack Suzuki GSXR1000 and running a best of 9.68s@147.3 mph on Saturday, and a slightly slower 9.7s on Sunday, this despite a moment returning after a run when the nitrous bottle unexpectedly parted company with the bike, much to the consternation of Mike Pacey who was following closely behind!
Next was Steve Everett on his big 'Busa, with a best of 9.78s@141.5 mph on Saturday. On Sunday the tables were reversed with Steve quickest, taking his own class record (9.59s) with a fine 9.55s@144.5 mph. Simon was next with the 9.7s.
Pete Herrington was next, just putting in a couple of runs on his stretched 'Busa before deciding all was not quite right with the bike at high revs, with a best of 10.69s@135 mph. A suspected clogged fuel filter was removed and cleaned ready for Sunday but there was no improvement so after a couple of slower runs Pete parked up for the rest of the day rather than risk something catastrophic happening until the cause had been pinpointed.
Steve Mayes on his drag style GSXR1100 was making the most of the day, lots of runs with a best of 10.9s@136.1 mph on Saturday and a slightly better 10.85s@136.4 mph on Sunday although Steve was a bit suspicious of a strange 'snatching' of the chain as if there was a stone caught in a link, paddock advice suggested maybe a gear might be failing and a subsequent strip down back at base has confirmed second gear is damaged.
Then, making quite a trek from Porthmadog, it was Bleddyn Ireland, getting his GSX750 framed but 1260cc fuel injected engined machine to a best of 11.3s@117.9 mph on Saturday and a much better 10.86s@121.4 mph on Sunday.

Vintage Unlimited saw Noah Harrison back on his 1934, Levis JAP 500 single, which his competitor notes describe as “very engaging” to ride! He got a best of 14.6s@88.6 mph on Saturday and a slightly quicker 14.4s@87.6 mph on Sunday before a suspected magneto failure removed all the sparks and sidelined him for the rest of the day.
The only other runner was on Saturday when John Daly ran his smart Triumph 500 to a best of 16.88s@74.3 mph.

The Scooter classes were all action!
In Classic, Jamie Lawn got his 180 Vespa to a best of 13.86s@94.3 mph on Saturday and was by himself on Sunday going quicker, 13.63s@95.5 mph.
Scott Wilson was the other runner in the class, getting his Vespa to 16.3s@78.4 mph on Saturday.

In the Open class, Eric Cope and Paul Gurney traded new class records all weekend. On Saturday both riders recording times around 12.6s, first one was quickest then the other would go quicker

until Eric got his noisy orange peril Lambretta GP252 to a new record of 12.617s@101.8 mph, Paul was close behind on his Lambretta GP265, which produces around 60 bhp apparently, with 12.655s@99.47 mph.
Sadly a repeat on Sunday was scuppered when, just off the line, Eric pulled off and had to push back. A stone had gone through the engine damaging the piston and head and even dislodging the crank so that was it unfortunately.
Mike Pacey, with a new, lighter, seating design on his Rotax335 powered Lambretta was next, 13.28s@97.6 mph and Adie Horrocks Vespa V90 with 13.56s@95.1 mph.
So on Sunday Paul was trying hard and got down to a new pb, and a new class record of 12.59s@101.9 mph which is also a new record for a scooter on an unprepared track!

Paul said this on the FB page:

24 runs 19 all @100mph +
It's taking me 4 years to reach my goal only possible by the 10 years + development and tuning by Darrell Taylor and Eric
Thanks for the continued support from
Shaw-Fire Lambretta Spares
Taylor Tuning
Eric Cope
Charlotte Gurney
And my teammates Stuart J Mcvicker and Danny Gurney
Thanks to the National Sprint Association Ltd for putting on a brilliant event and the best value for money.

Mike Pacey just did a single, slightly slower, run on Sunday before sitting out the rest of the day.

In Classic Open, on Saturday Mark Taylor was putting in some nice runs on his GSX1300, with a best of 9.78s@140.4 mph to set the class record.
Steve Mundy, on his ZZR1100, (which I kept saying was a 1400 for some reason, sorry!) was next 10.62s@126.2 mph.
On Sunday Mark went quicker, setting a new class record at 9.7s@139.2 mph, Steve also went quicker, 10.55s@126.5 mph.

Just two Road classes to report.
In 750cc, Ben London was quickest on his ZXR6, despite some clutch issues, running a best of 10.85s@130 mph on Saturday and a quicker 10.59s@132.9 mph on Sunday, just outside his class record 10.56s..
Next it was Mick Perry on his Triumph Trident, 12.23s@107.2 mph on Saturday and a much quicker 10.72s@136.9 mph on Sunday.
Then it was Amanda Taylor on her very standard Ducati 750SS, running 14.31s@95.5 mph, and Gill Pacey on her smart CBR500, 14.61s@88.6 mph.
On Sunday, after Ben and Mick, Tim Taylor had taken over on the Ducati with a best of 13.0s@99 mph and Gill Pacey 14.32s@89.3 mph.

In Unlimited, Zac Holt on his 1216 Bandit was quickest, 10.18s@137.5 mph, next was Will Lubbe, despite turning up quite late managed to get some runs in on his ZX12R, with a best of 10.52s@135.9 mph. Steve Walton was having a troubled weekend, his rare GSXR1000 K6 Phantom loosing power at high revs. With the fuel filter removed there was no improvement so a search for new plugs commenced. A trip into Canterbury managed to source just two from Halfords and a trip out on Sunday morning to Broadstairs sourced two more. Sadly these made no difference and a defective fuel pump was the likely cause, apparently a known weak point on these bikes,

anyway Steve got down to 10.61s@127.6 mph on Saturday and a couple of slower test runs on Sunday before trailering for the day.
Dunk Rose was next up, not on his usual Panigale but a pretty stock GSXR1000, running 10.70s@136.9 mph on Saturday and a very consistent 10.72s@140.6 mph on Sunday.
Just behind it was Matthew Braine on his MT10 with a best of 10.71s@129.9 mph and David Herridge who managed to get 2.2L of finest American Harley Davidson Fatbob Iron off the line pretty smartly to a best of 11.64s@120.8 mph.
On Sunday Zac was again quickest, 10.28s@135.3 mph, Matthew was next 10.56s@131.3 mph from Dunk, 10.72s@140.6 mph, Steve Walton 11.01s@117.9 mph and Roy Cole on a Triumph 900 Speed Triple, 12.1s@110 mph.

There was a wide selection of day entries, mostly local, with a fine mixture of machines from CBR 600s to turbo GSXRs.
A quick shout out to Tom Gilbert on a GSXR1100 turbo who had a previous pb of 9.5s@156 mph, he managed to run a storming 9.36s@161.9 mph on Saturday, which I believe is the quickest ever at Manston, sadly it will remain unofficial as Tom was a day entry.

I don't have the full details of the Ruler of the ¼ Elimination. Suffice to say several of the usual suspects got knocked out, or knocked themselves out by red lighting or breaking out.
On Saturday Bob Hancox made his way through the chaos to take the win against Adie on his scooter, on Sunday it was Steve Mundy taking a narrow win against Ben London.

Just a quick note to say I hope you are enjoying the new live commentary, it looks like it might be a permanent thing?

Finally, well done to everyone who raced, huge thanks to everyone who helped set up and take down, did a stint on the gate or just came and supported us!
See you at the next meeting, at Manston again for the big finale, that's 19th/20th September, don't miss it!