

# 55 Newsletter

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## Track Day, Ron Haslam Racing, Donington Park, 23/9/08

A day was organised between six riders one club night down the pub after I expressed my concern about the power of my 2002 Fireblade and the talk of a trip abroad. I wanted to gain riding experience with some track time, plus have a bit of a laugh. So a track day was organised by Steve Shury riding CBR600's at Donington Park. Steve had organised not only the event but also an over night stay at a local pub close to the circuit. My accommodation ended up being a four-poster bed, a fancy bathroom and room number Barry Sheene would have been happy with – 7. The night before the track day I sensed an air of competition with the six of us drinking very little and the teasing gained newfound depths. During the evening myself and Glen (Endo) agreed the most talented rider would be Steve with his vast riding abilities, for example riding Nuremberg race track and giving me a pep talk on how good his BMW GS is and that he had run rings around me on the May Day run this year, which he didn't. The morning broke early and, surprisingly I was the first one down to breakfast - clearly there were no hangovers and the lads were looking bushy tailed and ready for action. We headed out to the circuit and when we arrived we were split into three groups: 1) James & Graham 2) Glen & Steve 3) Nigel & Me. It was interesting to note James had not ridden any bike for over two years; Glen has limited mileage riding his RSV like myself on my Blade. Nigel was an ex road racer some 25 years ago (he used to race the Suzuki RG500). Graham likes his Goldwing... so much so the kill switch has a special meaning to him; and Steve with his Mick Doohan world class riding abilities.

The morning started with a rider a briefing, and then we were split into the three groups as above. Glen expressed his view to me that he would be left behind trying to stay with Steve and if I were honest I felt the same. There were to be three sessions with rider briefings between each and then an end of day de-brief. The first session was to gauge your riding style and understand your abilities. I found it difficult having never ridden on a track, riding an alien bike and there being no traffic, diesel - even speed camera's crossed my mind (what am I like). I managed to stay up with the instructor and Nigel and although I wasn't riding outside my comfort zone I needed to make some big mental adjustments. The swooping corners and weird lines the instructor was using didn't make sense. Our instructor Chris, appeared happy with our riding after our first 15 minute ride, and showed us in the pits how to hang off a bike to get your knee down. Chris said I should try not using the rear brake!!! (I'm a trials rider what does he expect!) I was also told in the rider briefing to stop cutting the corners. The second session came and we were out as I took all the points on board Chris had said, the pace was still not pushing me that hard and I opted to not change gear instead riding the whole track in third gear hanging off the bike, learning the lines, learning the bike. Even keeping the bike in third gear our pace was fast enough for us to over take quite a few other groups until some 'unfortunate' crashed and the red flags came out. After the rider and bike were removed we were out to finish our second session and this time I started to use the gearbox. My technique had changed and both Nigel and I wanted to over take our instructor Chris, but if we did we'd be kicked off the circuit. On our second de-brief Chris said to get my corner speed higher, but like Nigel if we both did this we would have crashed into him or over taken him at worse. My confidence for the third lap was high as we set off, I made of point of redlining my bike down the back straight and locking the rear wheel at the hair pin by down shifting three gears (gotta get me monies worth!). Nigel was all over the instructor and we were both being held up hanging back and I was getting frustrated and I think Nigel was as well. Another red flag came out for another rider but this time the bike was upside down some 30 feet through the kitty litter against the barrier. Again we returned to the pits and when we finally came out my corner speed was noticeable quicker and I wanted to push it but couldn't have gone any faster because of Chris. I did notice as we passed the other

two groups, after the first session that Glen was out alone, had Steve crashed? No. Steve was holding Glen up!! Glen said he managed to get his knee down and so did James and Nigel, but I didn't. Graham was struggling to stay with James and he too like Steve rode alone. So what happened to Steve? At the riders end of day de-brief our instructors had written down how we had ridden giving us a points score during the day and this was read out to all the other riders (about 20 in the total group) and Steve's ride was described as 'brown stuff'. Out of us six Double 5 riders he Steve scored the lowest mark but not to dwell too much on this as Steve seemed to know he should have gone faster, it was painful to listen to the debrief comments but great FUN. Glen scored the highest mark but I felt James was the best rider, or even Nigel. James got a raving thumbs up in the de-brief and Nigel did too. Glen is a fast rider and although I did pass him when he was riding with Steve I felt he was better than me. Nigel is seriously quick and scoring the same marks as Nigel was flattering for me. Graham looked good leaning the bike further in the corners than me but I was out braking him when I over took him. Steve, the owner of scaffolding BMW knows he was the slowest and most disappointing ride out of all us I'm not picking on Steve but he was slow and the excuses will follow I just hope I don't fall asleep.

I had a great day and the bug to go racing has really bitten. If we do another track day it will be next year and if you're interested or have any ideas let Steve know as he does the organising, or if you see me then I'll pass on your interest.

**Cliff**

### **Club Night at the Pied Bull – 4th November**

The first Tuesday night of each month we go to the Pied Bull in Farningham Village. This is a bike friendly pub so you can turn up in your car or on your road bike. The Triumph club also uses it sometimes on a Tue so it can be full of like minded people. We are usually there from 8.30pm and in the summer nights probably in the garden and it is not committee stuff just a chance to talk to other club members.

### **Help needed to set out trials**

As some of you may be aware I have crocked my right ankle and have had to pull out of trials riding until it is better. Unfortunately this injury will prevent me from setting out full trials events as I cannot easily cope with slopes, which is what we mostly ride on. I would like to put on at least one of the dates that I have listed below but before I make enquiries I need to have at least two other helpers who are confident to do the 3 routes and can spend the Saturday before at the event from 10am. All you need to provide is your time, food & drink. Please give me a call or email me.

**Steve 01959 575732 – [stephenwestley@ntlworld.com](mailto:stephenwestley@ntlworld.com)**

### **What's on for remainder of 2008? Directions follow at the end.**

**Sun 2nd Nov NKTC trial Sidcup club at Canada Heights round 9**

**Tue 4th Nov Club Night at Pied Bull**

**Sun 9th Nov – Remembrance Sunday – no events permitted**

**Sun 16th Nov invite to Bexleyheath Club trial at Ash**

**Sun 16th Nov Sidcup club B&W trial at Canada Heights**

**Sun 30th Nov 55 Club trial to be confirmed**

**Tue 2nd Dec Club Night at Pied Bull**

**Sun 7th Dec 55 Club trial to be confirmed**

**Sun 14th Dec NKTC trial Kent Youth at Whitepost Farm, Cowden round 10**

**Sun 21st Dec invite to Bexleyheath Club trial at Wainscott**

**Sun 28th Dec Thames Trial, Centre round includes Novice and Over 50 class – full detail in Nov TSM**

That is it for the moment so hope to see you at a trial or down the pub.

**CLIFF**