

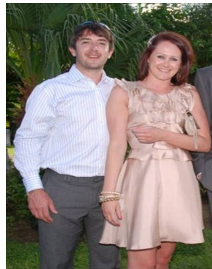


NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome 3 new members. Nigel Marshall is aiming to join the band of Club trials riders, while Kevin and Michael Bond (who I presume to be related) have an interest in both trials and enduro. When we see these lads in action hopefully a few more details on them will come out.

AWARDS EVENING

Well done to John Yearley and Chris Cook for all the behind-the-scenes work to make this event the success it most certainly was. It was good to see the younger members Jack Peal, James Page and Tim Rooney there to receive their trophies - maybe next year some new names will join them - plenty of cups to go for over the year. The local paper printed our report and picture, and Daniel our Webmaster has put a selection of the evening's photos on the Club website - just click on "gallery" from the Home page and select any picture to enlarge for viewing.



WEDDING BELLS FOR THE PUNY BOMB!

Many Congratulations to Wes Butcher and Gemma on the announcement of their wedding, to take place on 16 April. Actually, if it hadn't been for Sam Cook grabbing the mike from MC Stuart Penfold on Awards Night and telling the world (well the Onley Arms anyway) the happy news, we may never have known! Perhaps once settled down to married life Gemma will be able to build up the slightly-built Wesley so he's able to tackle a real machine one day - something like one of those big old British bikes...

MYSTERY OF THE PHIL READ TROPHY WINNER...

This year's apparently worthy winner of the prestigious award for outstanding technical achievement, John Yearley, was somewhat reticent about how he came to be nominated for it. Some mumbled words were uttered about the creative use of a piece of dirty old rag as an air cleaner but nothing sufficient to be able to pass on the tip to a member in need.

WATCH OUT FOR TEAM PEAL!

Former Club trials man Tim Peal has returned to the Club to mentor son Jack, who as a Youth B can now ride a 125. This means Tim and Jack can ride the sections on a more equal footing (or should that be feet-opping?). Should make the Club Championship in this category interesting this year (Tim and James watch out!).

G&B FINCH / GAVIN HOCKEY HUSKY FOR JAMES!

Just as James Yearley thought about taking things quieter on the Enduro front, up comes an offer he just couldn't refuse. The new 450 Husqvarna Enduro is about to hit the Eastern Centre and, generously supported by the above, James will do the Championship Class, riding the big machine over the EC rounds. Good luck JY.

WHEN IS A BROKEN LEG NOT A BROKEN LEG?

Poor old Steve Butcher paid heavily for his Phil King Trial injury. The leg was put in plaster (apparently broken), then found it wasn't after all. But he got plenty of fuss and TLC - and a fortnight (?) off work. Bet he knew it wasn't broken all along but enjoyed going along with all that attention from the nurses....

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Trustees of the Club: Bob Drane, Tony Parkin, Richard Sillett

By the time you read this, the Spansey's Wood, Gosfield trial will have come and gone and Mark's Long Distance Trial from Tumbler's Green on Sunday 3 April will be the Club's main preoccupation. But just to keep your Motocross juices on the boil for 29 May I would like to mention something new I am trying this year for local advertising of the event - and it involves **ALL MEMBERS!!** I am getting 2000 A5 size flyers printed (at less cost than the Essex Chronicle advert, and which I believe will be more productive). It is an attempt at inducing the interest of locals who would never look at a newspaper advert for a MX meeting. We don't need to worry about the regular enthusiasts - they know already from the EC Fixture List. 680 will go via the Crossing Village Magazine, for a modest fee, the majority of the rest will be sent in bundles of a dozen or so with May's Tail Light for you good people to post up on notice boards at work, school or anywhere else, display in your car, and stuff through your neighbours' letter boxes. 2000 won't exactly flood the area but it is a low cost experiment that might tell us something for future events. So keep this in mind when your May Tail Light arrives - don't leave them in the envelope, get them staring in people's faces!
RJS

COMING CLUB EVENTS

Sunday 3 April: Long Distance Trial (LDT), starting from Tumblers Green, Stisted. Chief Organiser Mark Hughes is the man to contact for details if you are helping.

Sunday 29 May: Our annual Jack Hubbard Trophy Motocross at Stisted. Working party and on-the-day details from Richard Sillett and in next month's Tail Light. Remember this is a big event to get off the ground and we need all members to make an appearance, if only once. Many hands make light work and a lot more fun.

Saturday Evening 4 June: First Summer trial, venue to be announced next month.

MARK'S MORROCCAN DIARY (TRANSCONTINENTAL RALLY ADVENTURES)

28.01.11 Left home and collected Steve after he had finished clearing the blocked drains. Reckons he'll have a shower when we get there now! Got the ferry on time and Steve and Gavin are on the beer already!

29.01.11 Had breakfast 200K from Madrid and it's proper snowing with literally 100's of snow ploughs on standby beside the roads! Arrived at the campsite 17:00 and headed straight for the bar for something to eat! Apparently we left the bar at 3am. Steve managed to break his ribs ... or rather I broke Steve's ribs(they turned out to be bruised)! Erecting the tents must have been a spectacle as apparently we were checking that they did "pop up" by throwing them as high as we could at 3am in the morning and laughing like hell, other campers were not amused.

30.01.11 Unloaded bikes and did technical inspection, medical checks etc not feeling fighting fit today, in fact i feel like crap!! We met the Danish riders that we are looking after last night, don't know what they thought but apparently the only conversation they understood was the word F—K!! The service crew arrived midday from the airport, so we all headed back to the bar ... again. Briefing at 21:15 and minefields were discussed. Apparently all the burnt out cars are from exploded mines. Steve wants it to be known that mark drank coca-cola instead of beer.

31.01.11 Up at 5:30 and the atmosphere is ... miserable & cold! Broke down the tents and packed up, then started the rally at 7:00am in the dark and all got lost straight out of the gate!! Mark and Gavin recovered the situation but Steve took the 100 point penalty and looked a bit waspie in the port after a long spin around the town, in fact the service crew spotted him when looking for a supermarket to buy beer. Ferry ride was ok (Moroccan music was crap). Got off at the other side and the procedure had changed yet again, officials love to make the Europeans queue and wait. There was then a miserable and cold 65k ride to a beach for the 1st bivouac. James knocked up a great chilli and then we had to suffer pouring rain and an electrical storm! It would appear that Gavin took our advice about buying a cheap tent literally and bought one from a toy shop. He got wet.

01.02.11 Started raining again an hour before we had to get up and the temperature was bitterly cold. Started on the beach in the dark then had to take a 65km detour due to police road blocks which wouldn't let us through. Rode the 1st 200k on the road then went over the Atlas Mountains off road, had to cross a plain 4,500ft above sea level for 35k in the clouds and snow! Not what we expected and also not what was wanted when wearing summer riding gear!! We got split up at the end of the day as Steve sneaked off for the win.

Bivouacked on the Algerian border (bleak). James then cooked us corn beef hash and beans.

02.02.11 200k on the road in freezing cold weather, to start off on road sections, not good fun! As Merzouga came into sight Mark got a bit excited and crashed rather hard. Camped on the edge of the dunes with a herd of camels, and everyone managed to finish on time. James cooked pasta with tuna and sweetcorn.

03.02.11 Another cold start in the dark! And we got split up by mid-morning. Mark rode on

his own whereas Steve and Gavin came in together. Everyone finished on time although everyone got lost at times. Mark had GPS problems. Lovely campsite under the palm trees. Most of the day was off road and a camel nearly got hit when crossing the road! The going varied from dried out salt lakes, fesh fesh (or as Gavin called it "Felching"), small dunes and very rocky going through river beds, a lot of riding like Strata Florida (Wales) without the rain and about 100k in length. James cooked Chorizo, Chilli and Tomato with couscous. Also the temperature is rising as we head South.

04.02.11 Everyone rode together today. Very fast riding across dry lake beds, managed to record 148kph across one of the lakes. The latter part of the day was fairly technical riding over rocky tracks which pushed us a little and caused me to take 2 minutes of penalty points, Steve and Gavin just made it in time, not bad after 8 hours. A lot of the other competitors complained about the going, but we thoroughly enjoyed it. Hot dogs and beans for dinner on the concrete campsite.

05.02.11 The best riding today, technical river beds in canyons which were nothing less than spectacular, lost Gav and Steve early on, as they decided to ride ahead and get lost! I caught up and raced with the lead cars most of the day. Finished on the beach, on the Atlantic coast and had 3 minutes to spare, Gavin and Steve took 1 hour 40 minutes of penalty points due to Steve crashing quite heavily and navigation difficulties. We camped on the beach after refusing to camp beside the campsite toilet emptying hole and had chilli con carne again.

06.02.11 600 km today with 550km off road, all of us were shell shocked at the end. Can't believe we did the equivalent of a day at the welsh 2 day with riding there and back from Essex aswell (maybe this year at the Welsh we should just come home each evening). The highlight of the day was a 65km blast along the beach, downside however was bashing through vegetation and rocky terrain with no tracks so having to follow a compass bearing for over 150k and then finding ourselves on the wrong side of a canyon, and then having to retrace our tracks. I don't mind admitting that at this point I was mentally exhausted with another 150k to go. Steve was trying to convince us to ride down the side of the canyon, it was a 100 foot drop i wouldn't of considered on a trials bike let alone on a rally bike. We ate in the campsite restaurant tonight and had camel and date tagine!

07.02.11 Last day today, only 100k off road and then 580k on tarmac across western Sahara (Bandit Country). Road blocks becoming more frequent. Although we were on the road this was the hardest day due to the monotony. Prize giving: 1st was Mark, 2nd was Gav and 3rd was Steve, never won an event before and went to bed with a very big smile. A lot of beer was consumed by the camp fire & there was an attempt at blending. Chorizo Tomato Chilli and CousCous for dinner.

All that's left now is the 6 day, 2950 mile journey home but that's another story on its own. In brief we got stopped by bandits in Western Sahara. We dropped Gavin, Steve and Graham at Agadir to fly home. Myself, James and Paul went onto Marrakesh for 24 hrs of R&R, white sheets and 45 minute hot showers that don't stink of the toilets!!!! We had a night in FEZ which was strange and then punched on home.

I would like to say thanks to the service team Graham Smith, Paul Aldridge and James Yearley, it was strange having pep talks from James in the mornings on the start line, after so long of doing it with him. Thanks to Steve for keeping us entertained and not making a big fuss over his ribs, although I did have to give up my bed in the van with a proper mattress for the week. Special thanks to Kathryn for organising all the food and being patient with me (she says she loses me for 3 months when we do one of these trips, as my mind is on nothing else).

Mark Hughes