

NG Road Racing... Castle Combe Race Report.



Rounds 8 and 9 | Castle Combe | 8th and 9th July 2017

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A record breaking Day as Josh is crowned the new King of Combe.

2 | Josh Day

The Castle Combe Grand National meeting has been anticipated for so long, since in fact the day it was announced that Guy Martin would be doing laps of the 1.86mile circuit on the iconic Honda-6. Also that the weekend would be a celebration of Mike Hailwood who rode his first Combe race on a 125 MV some 60 years ago.

The weekend lived up to all the hype with stars such as Freddie Spencer, John McGuinness, Bruce Ansty, Steve Plater, Glen Richards, Stan Woods and Stuart Graham all riding some classic Hailwood machinery in the presence on David and Pauline Hailwood. Mike's 1978 TT comeback bike, the 900 Ducati was also on site with Steve Wynne of Sports Motorcycles. There was something for everyone in the massive BSB rivalling crowd that there were barely any gaps in the spectator areas that encircle the whole circuit....

This mouth-watering celebration added to the regular NG programme and the 2017 King of Combe race where Dan Cooper was going for his fourth title on the Ruby Site Services CBR600. It was billed as a battle between two men, Dan and Josh Day. That is exactly how it panned out, but in a twist of fate Day fell from his Kendrick and Spalding ZX10 in the session that would determine the grid for the King of Combe race. So Cooper was on pole....and Day was on spot 44 on the eighth row. Day has been the man-to-beat in 2017 but surely this task would be too great even for the ex

British Superstock champion. Cooper himself a former British champ some 11 years ago on a 125 set off like the proverbial scalded cat, but within half a lap Day had scythed his way to 11th, and by the end of lap one was in 8th. Day picked off his rivals one by one and by three-quarters race distance he had Cooper in his sights. Josh swept though with two laps to go, Cooper stayed with him finishing just half a second adrift at the flag, but he had no answer saying ".....Josh was on it today, there was no staying with him...." Sam Thompson took third after a race long dice with Jonathan Railton. Peter Carr grabbed a fine fifth holding back the rest of the NG regulars. Day set a new outright bike record on his way to the win to set a time of 1min 09.764seconds 96.23mph bettering the figures set by James Buckingham back in 2005 when he was on the works Rizla Suzuki.

"King Josh" also took both Powerbike finals over Peter Carr and Chris Pope, and both 600 finals, each time over Gloucestershire rival Dan Cooper, with Sam Thompson and Max Symonds each taking a visit to the podium. Reigning Powerbike champion Roo Cotton ruefully watched all the big bike action from the sidelines as the talented rider and multi NG champion has been left without a bike after his early budget busting season crash. The proven winner is currently touting his talents around the paddock hoping that a ride can be found for 2018.

250GP and 125GP ACU National Championship.

4 | Ant Hodson

Castle Combe saw the return of defending champion Philip Atkinson, but by his own admission it looks like his 2017 hoped for championship hat-trick is pretty much over. Phil has missed the last two meetings through injury, and Ant Hodson the 2011 champ has grasped his chance with both hands. Ant is no stranger to injury, but this year is fit and fast. Daniel Cooper was wild-carding at this round as he prepares for the Isle of Man and took a nail-biting close win on his Turner Racing TZ over Atkinson and Dan Jackson on Saturday, with Ant off the Podium and surprisingly off the pace in fourth. Come Sunday though the National runners now have two races the first of which is a sprint race and Hodson was in no mood to let any more points slip away as he held off Atkinson and Jackson in a close duel. Race three was the long feature race and most thought that Atkinson's shoulder injury would cause him some grief, but he set off at pace from the lights to lead the first 11 laps of the 12 lapper. Going into the last lap although Hodson was close Atkinson looked like he could cover any attack, but as they approached Bybrook for the final time there were three backmarkers. They each chose their path through, but Hodson chose well and the gaps opened up for him and he grabbed his chance to take the win and increase his series lead on the FCL Racing TZ.

Phil Stead and Simon Hunt shared the NG Cup wins with Hunt putting himself in a very commanding lead on his 1992 spec Pork Pie Racing TZ. Hunt now heads to the Isle of Man for the Classic TT on his old TZ. James Hind took a win, a runner-up spot and a small tumble at Combe, but still holds the series lead in the 125GP National series on his NLC RS125 Honda over Derek Clarke, but Clarke did nick a few points back.



The NG championship races.

There was ever the full gamut of NG championship races, and we will look at the F125 class first. Usually the domain of the teenage tearaways making a name for themselves, but 31 year old Mike Wilson took both finals on his CLV/Graham File RS Aprilia ahead of 13 year old James Bull. After Aaron Ridewood blow up his ZXR400 for the third time this year (!!!) it was left between racing brothers Ben and Tom Harrison to fight it out for the wins in the F400's. Big brother Ben took both wins on his JHS Racing/Cheers Stuart ZXR, but Tom had the consolation of setting a new lap record. Will Bryant and Nick Brown headed up the rest. Dave Hampton took Saturdays 500cc final on his 450 Single Cell Tigcraft over Elwyn Fryer, but Hampton had the cam chain snap on his bike on Sunday and Fryer took his first class win on the Anya Bridal Couture ZXR over Nick Brown. Hampton leads the Supermono championship but this weekend had to watch Welshman Jay Bellars-Smith hack into his series lead as JB-S took two win on the distinctive RW Engineering Smith Bros KTM 717.



The Mini Twins saw "occasional racer" Nigel Reed pull on the leathers and wheel out his SV650 for this Combe outing. Although surely race rusty he took both wins one over William Holland and one over teamster and family member Justin Garrett. Holland though was in no mood to be second best in the Super Twins on his JHS Racing SFV650 Gladius and he dominated both finals heading Mark Dangerfield and Alan Russell. His win on Sunday saw the 19-year-old pull 34 seconds clear of the pursuers. Jonathan Railton was almost as dominant in the Sound of Thunder as he took the Boast Plumbing 959 Panigale to a maximum points haul. He bested David Irons, Jonathan Stenning, and Paul Willis who joined the fun on Sunday coming through from the back row of the grid to take a fine podium on his KTM RC8.

The Desmo Due championship now has just one point between defending champion Andy Blomfield on the BB Racing Duke and Matt Lawson. Blomfield took Saturdays win over Peter Pritchard, but it was a defining race for Pritchard as he finally looks to have clicked with the Bay Studio/LGM 620 A class Ducati. The confidence he gained saw him take Sundays win in fine style eeking out a 3-second lead at the flag. The B class was another demonstration how to do it by Jack Younge on his Chase Timber 600cc Desmo to extend his unbeaten 2017 run. James McHardy clicked with the Combe circuit immediately, to take all three points scoring races in the Suzuki Bandit Challenge on his European Vacuum Drainage GSF Suzuki. It was also another triple-header for Phil Webber who is seemingly unstoppable on his GSXR 750 in the pre'87 Production class.

Streetstock racing is usually a close fought affair with evenly matched standard road bike but Simon Bastable blew the other 700cc class runners into the Castle Combe weeds with a stunning double on his R6. Leif Williams looked pleased though to grab a pair of trophies for runner-up to consolidated his championship position behind the all-conquering Bastable. In the 1300 Streetstock R1 Yamaha man Ciaran Bligh had to work hard but his efforts were rewarded with a maximum points haul over rival Paul Jeffery and Mark Dangerfield.

Defending 700 Pre injection champ Jon Wright took another step closer to the 2017 title on his 20-year-old steel frame CBR Honda heading home Daniel Jones and Liam Turberfield on Saturday. Jones again trailed race winner Wright on Sunday but third went to Grant Payne after Turberfield's R6 suffered a flat battery. Multiple F400 champ Tim Bradley has moved into the pre injections this year on a CBR600 and it is safe to say that he is struggling to make it work for him but he had his best weekend here with two fourth placings.

Finally there were the 1300 Pre injections where Castle Combe track day instructor wheeled out his immaculate Steve Henley ZX9R. He took on and beat all of the series regulars and took both wins leaving current series leader Thomas Payne to settle for a pair of runner-up positions on his BAS Assessors/AFB R1. Payne would have loved the maximum points he was happy that he kept title rival Paul Harlington behind him all weekend, as Harlington is still searching for a remedy for his R1's gearbox problems.

Due to all the extra on track action with the Special parades there were no Sidecars or newcomers races, but they will return at Anglesey next time out....phew...what a great weekend.

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The Lansdowne Classic Series.

Lansdowne series features the "Bonhams British Historic Championship" and is a full blown British championship. These stunning older Grand Prix bikes from the 1960's joined NG this weekend and after timed qualifying and three of the most hard fought closest races of the weekend Dean Stimpson left with an increased series lead after racking up three wins, each time over reigning champion Chris Firmin. Glen English set pole but had to settle for two lower step podiums and one dnf to put a big dent in hit title aspirations.

For the full story on this round.... www.lansdowneclassic.co.uk

78 Dean Stimpson | 1 Chris Firmin



Re-writing the record books.

After two track days and almost perfect racing conditions it is then not surprising that 15 new class lap records were set but some were broken three or four times over the weekend. As I have already said Josh Day set a new outright circuit two wheel record with his stunning lap but he also set new fastest times in the 600 and Powerbikes. Jonathan Railton smashed the Sound of Thunder lowering it four laps in succession on Sunday. But there were also lap records for Phil Stead in the 250 NG Cup... Jay Bellars-Smith on the Supermono... Simon Bastable, 700 Streetstock... Jon Wright, 700 pre-injection... Neil Sutton, 1300 pre-injection... Nigel Reed, Mini Twins... Tom Harrison, F400... And Blomfield and Jack Younge in Desmo classes A and B... James McHardy, on the Bandit... and Phil Webber in the Post Classic. To make it a truly record-breaking day.



The stars wow the crowds at Castle Combe.

See the official full Castle Combe report in their own words and pictures at...

www.castlecombecircuit.co.uk/news/stars-wow-the-crowds-at-castle-combe80

Every picture tells a story, through the lens of EDP Photo News



Guy Martin | Relaxed before taking to the track on the iconic Honda-6



Team Dayo Racing | The people behind The Dayo Race Team needed to make Josh King of Combe



Peter Pritchard | The Clive and Pam Flood Performance of the meeting winner



John McGuinness | TT Legend didn't want to miss out on the atmosphere despite his injuries.



Freddie Spencer | The GP Legend made the trip to ride a 500-4 Hailwood Honda and his own NS500



William Holland | A four race winner at just 19 years old was named winner of the inaugural #46 Ollie Bridewell Young Rider award.

Next Round: Anglesey | 12th and 13th August.