



Megaphone

Newsletter of the Pioneer Motorcycle Club

Spring 2017

Oceania

In September the New Zealand team of Carl Robson, Dylan Ball and Hannah Rushworth won the Oceania challenge in South Australia. Dylan was first in the Australian open junior grade (13 to under 16 years)



and Hannah won junior women. Carl finished 4th overall in the Masters grade.

The team also had success in the South Australian Championship which was held the weekend before. Dylan won the A grade, Carl was second in B grade, and Hannah won the junior women.

Roy and Sandra were there to watch the action. Roy's report is on p.11.

2018 Nationals

It's now confirmed that Pioneer will be running the 2018 NZ Moto Trials Championship and Derek Scott has volunteered to take the lead in organizing it. Planning is underway and the Club is looking for sponsors.

Dick France

Life member Dick France passed away on 14 October. Dick was club president in 1962 and 1963 and rode during the 1950s and 1960s

More new acquisitions

John Regan and Glenn Smith have upgraded to 2017 Betas, a 250 for John and a 300 with some factory parts for Glenn. Blake Fox has replaced his Sherco with a new TRS.

Pete meets Dougie

See page 12.



Megaphone is the newsletter of the Pioneer Motorcycle Club Inc.

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Prize giving – Sunday 26 November

This year the Club will be having a dinner and prize giving for the club championship on the evening of Sunday 26th. The Greybeards trial will also be held that day. The venue for the dinner will be advised shortly.



The photo above was taken at a Pioneer prize giving some years ago, probably in the 1930s before WWII. We're not sure who the young man collecting all the silverware is. If anyone recognizes him please let us know

Nelson/Marlborough news

From Dave Atwool : “We've had a good series of club trials this year, and have attracted a few new riders, partly thanks to a very successful "have a go" day we ran late last year to pick up on local interest generated by hosting the nationals. Now people are looking ahead to this year's nationals in Wellington, but above all we are looking forward to the re-opening of SH1 so that we can re-connect with the rest of the South Island and get down to more Pioneer events.”

Discounts for members

Budget Motorcycle Spares is offering Pioneer members a 10 % discount on anything in store that is used in trials or on trials bikes, i.e. all parts, accessories and gear except for tyres. They also have special pricing for Michelin X lites and X11s and will fit them free for any members who bring in rims. They currently have TCX boots for \$499 (less 10% for PMC members) and have FFM trials helmets arriving soon.

Kick Start

The Club participated in the Kick Start event on 1 October at the Canterbury Agricultural Park and put on riding demonstrations. TV3 news that evening showed John Regan riding one of the obstacles.

South Island Championship – rounds 5 and 6 (19-20 August 2017)

The final two rounds of the South Island Championship were held at Western Valley and Manderley in mid-August. On day 1 a new area higher up the Western Valley property was used and this provided some new and challenging sections. Overnight rain meant that the sections at Manderley had to be eased in the morning before the trial. On both days the slippery conditions tested the riders. We were fortunate to have a very good turnout of observers, some of whom observed both days. A special thanks to those who helped.

In the two articles below Phil Costello describes some of the expert action, and Tui gives a clubman's perspective.

The Jules and Josh show

Don't bother going to any of those X-Trial events to see bikes rocketing skywards with only a minder as a safety net. Instead just follow Jules around when he's got Josh minding. I came into section 4 wondering what the bloody hell Josh was doing several metres up a bank perched in an overhanging tree. The reason, as it happened, was on his bike on the other side of the stream revving the B-Jesus out of it, staring committedly at the bank, steadying himself before the assault. All Josh had to do, if things went pear shaped was to catch the machine – near 80 kgs of metal with wheels still spinning madly – before it plummeted back down to planet Earth.

Jules wound the throttle back, crossed the stream, shot up the greasy bank full of roots, teetered on the lip at the top, did everything he could to stop the rear wheel sliding backwards but back it went anyway. He bailed out somehow managing, almost cat-like to stay on his feet on the way back down ... but where the hell was

the bike? All eyes moved to from Jules to Josh and there he was, one hand on the tree, body outstretched well over the bank and the other hand on the back wheel of the machine dangling precariously over the edge! All too much for me ... I found myself wondering if I was still too young to take up lawn bowls. These two meantime sauntered off with a 'Meah, wot-evs, just another day at the office', look about them.

Phil Costello

Tui's weekend

It was an indifferent day weather wise when I rolled up late to Western Valley west for the 5th round of the South Island champs. Briefing over, we all got under way and after walking section three where clubman started, where getting to it was more challenging than the section itself, I was going to start moaning about it but as sods law often has it Paul Jackson who was first up cleaned it on his twin shock.

After nearly a full lap and getting a 5 for entering section 8 to turn my bike around for a better start my mood was a little less than chirpy, then we get to section 2, into a creek with boulders 1/2 metre in diameter, a turn at right angles up the creek for 6 metres, a turn at right angles and up a bank. Yeah right I thought this is a Tui poster and I was seriously considering when back at the car emailing the French government to ask if they would pull their agent Jules Huguenin as he had done enough damage with his section bombs.

Day two was at Manderley Station a few kms short of Little River, some drizzle on and off, but a day of good sections (I had something to do with them) mostly in the gully that the creek runs down where the surrounding ground stays surprisingly dry due to the bush cover. After a day of getting to know well the texture of the farm's mud between sections it was down to the pub for prize giving. A great weekend as my vast sum of points of day 1 was dropped in the final tally. I would like to thank all the people who were involved in making all the rounds a great success.

Tui Scott

Round 5 - Western Valley

Expert		
Jules Huguenin	135	1st
A grade		
Jason Baker	86	1st
Dylan Ball	106	2nd
Carl Robson	115	3rd
David Trewin	116	4th
Blake Fox	114	-
President		
Peter Osborne	50	1st
Ross Bristol	61	2nd
Malcolm Reid	80	3rd
Colin Kelland	111	4th
Alan Honeybone	79	-
Grant Anderson	107	-

Intermediate		
Neil Belvoir	67	1st
Brendon Wadsworth	72	2nd
Shane Brons	72	3rd
Glen Smith	75	4th
Gareth Wadsworth	81	5th
Josh Stones	93	6th
John Lawton	100	7th
Mark Sidebotham	100	8th
Derek Scott	107	9th
Phil Costello	124	10th
Bradley Hibbs	58	-
Jason Hibbs	101	-

Clubman		
Liam Falconer	42	1st
Peter Hosking	68	2nd
Greg Cox	85	3rd
Rob McKay	86	4th
Tui Scott	91	5th
Tim Bassett	92	6th
William Baker	185	7th
Gavin Fox	62	-

Twin shock		
Paul Jackson	51	1st
Russell Begley	53	2nd

Round 6 – Manderley

Expert		
Jules Huguenin	104	1st
A grade		
Jason Baker	73	1st
Dylan Ball	86	2nd
Carl Robson	95	3rd
David Trewin	107	4th
Blake Fox	DNF	-
President		
Peter Osborne	27	1st
Malcolm Reid	56	2nd
Colin Kelland	85	3rd
Ross Bristol	DNF	
Grant Anderson	45	-
Alan Honeybone	51	-

Intermediate		
Glenn Smith	39	1st
Brendon Wadsworth	43	2nd
Gareth Wadsworth	43	3rd
Neil Belvoir	51	4th
Shane Brons	66	5th
John Lawton	75	6th
Josh Stones	76	7th
Mark Sidebotham	96	8th
Derek Scott	108	9th
Phil Costello	119	10th
Bradley Hibbs	35	-
Jason Hibbs	70	-

Clubman		
Hamish Foster	13	1st
Peter Hosking	15	2nd
Liam Falconer	21	3rd
Tui Scott	26	4th
Tim Bassett	54	5th
William Baker	122	6th
Rob McKay	DNF	
Gavin Fox	7	-

Twin shock		
Paul Jackson	9	1st
Russell Begley	27	2nd

2017 SOUTH ISLAND MOTOTRIALS CHAMPIONSHIPS							BEST	
CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS							5	
ROUND							TOTAL RANK	
SWAN RESULTS								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	TOTAL	RANK
Jules HUGUENIN	25	25			25	25	100	1
Jason BAKER	20	25	25	25	25	25	125	1
Dylan BALL	22	22	20	20	22	22	108	2
David TREWIN	25	18	22	22	18	18	105	3
Carl ROBSON	18	20	18	18	20	20	96	4
Neil BELVOIR	25	25	20	25	25	18	120	1
Glenn SMITH	22	20	25	22	18	25	114	2
Brendon WADSWORTH	20	18	18	18	22	22	100	3
Gareth WADSWORTH	18	22	14	16	16	20	92	4
Shane BRONS	14	16	10	15	20	16	81	5
Josh STONES	15	15	11		15	14	70	6
Derek SCOTT	16	14	13	13	12	12	68	7
John LAWTON			16	14	14	15	59	8
Malcolm REID	22	22	25	25	20	22	116	1
Colin KELLAND	20	20	22	22	18	20	104	2
Ross BRISTOL	25	25			22	-	72	3
Peter OSBORNE					25	25	50	4
Liam FALCONER	20	25	20	25	25	20	115	1
Tui SCOTT	25	20	25	20	16	18	108	2
Donald MCKAY	22	22	22	22	18	-	106	3
William BAKER	16	16	13	13	14	15	74	4
Shirley McDONALD	18	18	14	14			64	5
Gregory COX			15	16	20		51	6
Dylan BALL	25	25	25	25	25	25	125	1
William BAKER	22	22	22	22	22	20	110	2
Hamish FOSTER						22	22	3
Stephanie DOWNES			25	25			50	1
Shirley McDONALD			22	22			44	2
Paul JACKSON	25	25		25	25	25	125	1
Russell BEGLEY	20	22	22	20	22	22	108	2
Brent DOWNES	22	-	25	22			69	3
Stephen REIJ			20				20	4

2017 South Island Championship

The absence of Nick and Peter Oliver, and Jason Baker's decision to drop down to A grade so he could assist his 10 year old son William meant that Jules was the only expert competitor this year. In A grade, Jason won five of the six rounds and although he had some strong competition from Dylan Ball, David Trewin and Carl Robson he comfortably won the series. Paul Jackson also won five rounds on his way to winning another twin shock title. Stef Downes only rode two rounds but it was enough to retain the women's title for another year. In Intermediate, President and Clubman there were three first time winners:

Neil Belvoir – Intermediate

Neil has only been riding in New Zealand for a couple of years but he has a lot of trials experience as he explains:

“The first trial I remember was riding on the back of my dad's trial bike to the event when I was growing up in England. In 1964 we moved to California and joined the trial movement of the late 60s. My first trial bike was a 1972 Yamaha mini enduro where I rode the kids class for 2 years before getting a 1974 Montesa 123. After the military I got back into trials in 1982 riding with my brother Clive and friend Kip Webb (father of Cody Webb and KTM hard enduro fame) We rode all the local and national events and my brother and I entered 2 world events. No one remembers my name from the world events but I did make it onto television for a spectacular crash and my 15 minutes of fame.



I continued riding at the local level in California and actively in the PITS motorcycle club. Between my dad, brother and me we put on the British American Club trial which is the longest running trial in California. My dad started it with Lane Leavitt who was a national champ and stuntman with his wife Debbie. Now that I have moved to NZ the trial has been taken over by Lewisport motorcycles. I ended up in NZ due to the help of Brendon Wadsworth of Marlborough Motorcycles. Brendon found me a job and has supported me a lot in making it possible to ride here. I am now on a 2016 Scorpa 250 and loving riding with my new friends. We are off to the nationals in October and I am hoping I do well enough that someone remembers my name and not a spectacular crash. If you see me at an event come up and say cheers, I will be the Englishman with an American (not Canadian accent) permanently living in NZ. I am 59 years old and probably have some stories to tell (my wife Barbara has heard them before).”

Malcolm Reid - President

Malcolm began riding trials in Dunedin 1983 and rode for a couple of years. He returned to the sport in 1995 and rode in all the South Island rounds from 2000 to 2009. After winning the clubman grade in 2001, he stepped up to presidents. He decided to take a year off in 2010 to reassess his commitment to riding after a couple of crashes at 2009 nationals in Wellington. One year off turned into six but late last year he bought a new Scorpa and resumed riding. Malcolm says that “2017 was a familiar story of being beaten by Ross (and Alan H) but I won the series due to them missing a weekend.”

Liam Falconer - Clubman

This year's clubman winner Liam Falconer has come a long way in a short time since he rode in his first major trial - the NZ Championship last October. Before this he had been involved in mountain biking and ridden some enduros. Liam is from Marlborough and rides a Sherco. He's been trying the yellow line at club events lately so will be a rider to watch next year.

Dylan Ball - Junior



Dylan who is also the North Island junior champ, added the South Island title to his growing list of achievements.

Runner up in the juniors was 10 year old William Baker who gamely rode all six rounds on his 80 cc Shergas (a Gas Gas with Sherco stickers). He also finished 4th overall in the clubman class. Not bad for his first year in trials.



It was good to see Blake Fox riding in the Otago and Christchurch rounds this year in A grade. Blake didn't have the appropriate licence so he wasn't included in the official results, but he showed that he hasn't lost any of his skills.

We asked Blake a couple of questions:

You've been away from trials for a while, what have you been doing?

Working hard on my apprenticeship.

Are you planning to get back into trials a bit more now?

Not sure, I want to have a good crack at the nationals this year then I will see what I feel like doing. I'm doing a bit of mountain biking and enduro riding as I find it a bit more social as there are more people local to ride with.

The times bikes and riders have changed! Peter McDonald looks back

For the young, history all happened to someone else. The older generation have had a firsthand experience of a small part of it - and forgotten a lot of it.

Random memories of my first times in the Pioneer Motor Club (yep, the 'cycle' bit came later) are of the trials starting from the club rooms on the Oxford Terrace/ Gloucester Street corner, leather ski caps, no crash helmets, all bikes were standard models modified a little, some with alloy guards, no lights and a four inch trials tyre on the rear probably half worn out by riding the bike to work during the week. Long distances on the road were the order of the day, hard work on the slower small two strokes, most with the daylight warrants of fitness available in those times but running out of light and arriving home in darkness a common occurrence. Frames, mostly rigid or plunger sprung at the rear and not much better in the front made the miles even longer. No special two-stroke oils meant whiskered plugs were always going to be with you, so a pocket full of fresh ones, not new just wirebrushed at home and a means of flicking the slag from the points was required. The bigger four strokes coped with the miles better but were more of a handful in the sections. The usual way of running a trial was to have three or four cars leapfrogging ahead pegging sections anywhere they saw a likely spot.

Seemed to work alright but pass the first car and you were on your own. Only two classes, Novice and Expert when I started, the Intermediate class came later.



These were the days of the 'moaners', there were a number who would criticise a section solely because they could not ride it themselves, usually after losing points on it! I remember one older rider, no names, falling off, getting up irate and proclaiming the section dangerous, and then me being frowned at for putting up a hand and asking for go at it when the organiser wanted to pull the pegs. The kids of that day could be cheeky, ask Shakespeare, he reckoned the kids were bad even in his time.



Bob Harris gets airborne on his Sunbeam.

But changes were on the way, a new generation of riders was emerging who had a more sportsmanlike attitude and wanted sections to be challenging. Bikes on trailers and trials on farms and other off road venues were more common. The days of trials being endurance events were numbered, almost, ten laps of ten sections was still going to require fitness and concentration but you would be warm even on cold days, not hypothermic as hitherto. The points system was simplified, no more was a dismount going to cost 15 points and a deficit almost impossible to overcome.

The number of classes of today is a discussion point, a class for everyone, well not quite but still more than necessary in my view. Who knows, a class for balding octogenarian sausage sizzlers may just get another competitor riding if the sections are flat and the prizes tempting enough!

Recent club trials

Teddington, 27 August (Section setters: Shane, Tui, Roy & Peter H)

A week after the South Island Champs we were back into it again with a club trial at the Teddington end of the Living Springs property.

The ground was a bit damp on the first lap but it soon dried out and as a result there were some low scores. Stand out performer was Al Honeybone who had his best ever result in Intermediate to tie on 11 pts with Glenn. Both riders had the same number of cleans, dabs, twos and threes so shared the win. Third place was a three way tie between Shane, Willie and Rob Alexander. Willie is getting better with every outing on his factory Gas Gas and Rob is also looking good on the Repsol. John Regan gave his new Beta a run to get familiar with it.

In clubman James Blanchard had his first ride in a trial since 2014 on a newly acquired 1995 Honda TLR26. He and his mate, Simon Hopkins who was on a Sherco rode around with Ashley and the enduro experience that the three have showed on section 8 which required momentum to get up through the rocks. Tui was on his twin shock after a mudguard mishap with the 4RT and he also rode well on the blue line. In Clubman B, Kahu and Steve found the sections easy going.

Thanks to Shane who set the yellow and red lines, Tui who helped with the clubman sections and Roy who dragged the trailer to the venue on Saturday and Sunday. And to the officials: Mike, Ross, Sandra & Glenn.



Kahu in section 6

Intermediate		Clubman A	
Alan Honeybone	11	James Blanchard	14
Glen Smith	11	Rob McKay	23
Shane Brons	15	Simon Hopkins	24
Will Ahomiro	15	Mike Elliott	26
Rob Alexander	15	Ashley Duncan	29
Ross Bristol	23	Peter Barnett	40
Derek Scott	23	Matthew Stockman	51
John Regan	25	Murray Dalzell	65
Brandon Alexander	64	John Phillips	81
Clubman B		Twin shock	
Kahu Jones	1	Tui Scott	17
Steve Fisher	5	Simon Jones	27
President			
Dick Gardner	32		

McQueens Valley 17 September (Section setters: Kendall, Ashley)

When you have a hand full of pegs, picking rider transition points from “let’s do this” to “enough- it’s time for change” is an art, and when some crystal ball rubbing talent for weather forecasting is also required there was plenty for Kendall to think about. Ashley bought along his Stihl and with this, loppers and a spade a few tight spots opened up nicely. Then some stock work made sure the pegs wouldn’t be dinner by the morning. Surface water from rain early on Saturday had mostly dried by Sunday, setting the scene for an enjoyable ride.



Willy Ahomiro lifts over a drop off in section 3

Expert		Intermediate	
David Trewin	15	John Regan	7
Josh Stones	33	Glenn Smith	14
Shane Brons	71	Willy Ahomiro	14
		Ross Bristol	17
Clubman A		Kendall McDonald	23
Peter Hosking	2	Rob Alexander	24
Tui Scott	5	Derek Scott	29
Ashley Duncan	15	Alan Honeybone	36
Tim Bassett	26	Brandon Alexander	52
Peter Barnett	43	Hamish Barnett	69
John Phillips	62		
Jacob Hermans	63	Clubman B	
Twin shock		Steve Fisher	32
Simon Jones	30	Kahu Jones	DNF

This prime spot has rolling hill terrain with the occasional under runner and few rocks, so it was pleasing to still have a tidy bike after diving into an under runner between sections and then throwing it away again a couple more times on a section. Soft landings, too. But you're not learning when you're not coming off. Also spotted some distance from his bike was Alan H, while Jacob Hermens put it to good use in Clubman A. The weather held out long enough for a dry seat home. Thanks to Ashley for the use of his property.

John Phillips

Graylees Road, 15 October (Section setters Alan, Ross and Shane)

What a great venue if you want tough sections, but a bit of a challenge to peg an easy club trial and even tougher when the sky dumps an inch of rain overnight. Ross, Shane and I arrived at Graylees expecting to peg the dry volcanic rocks at the front of the property and were offered the chance to use our favourite back of the farm with the amazing creek and hillsides as it had dried out amazingly well during the week. Woohoo. We jumped at the chance and headed out back with work tools to clear the sections.

We each pegged three sections and combined to peg section 8 in a clay slip which looked like a real doddle. And it was a real doddle until the sky dumped an inch of rain over night. Ross put in number one section which had a huge rock at the start for experts and proceeded on to a huge hill climb for the rest of us. This was my favourite section as it was a real challenge and gave you the chance to open the throttle, and being so long you felt like you got your money's worth. I got to peg my most unfavourite area on the farm, section three, with slippery rocks on a flattish paddock. Shane put in a couple of crackers in the creek and also the horrible section nine, which I actually enjoyed, probably because it was a really slippery beast.



Scotty taking a long dab in one of the creek sections

A grade		Intermediate	
Glenn Smith	83	Ross Bristol	41
Josh Stones	111	Alan Honeybone	57
Derek Scott	117	Willie Amihiro	DNF
Shane Brons	121	Kendall McDonald	DNF
		Hamish Barnett	DNF
Clubman A		Twin shock	
Peter Hosking	31	Paul Jackson	35
Rob McKay	66	Simon Jones	127
Peter Barnett	124		
Clubman B			
Nigel Bunny	55		
Kahu Jones	DNF		

We finished off with my section ten which was a fairly long and challenging rocky creek section which challenged all grades. Overall the trial turned out harder than we had intended. The level was more like championship grade than club trial and too hard for Clubman B, so apologies to the B class. Good ride by Kahu and also Derek who tells me he would have won if Smithy hadn't been unfair on his marking. Thanks to team Hallie for all their work on the day.

Alan Honeybone

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Oceania Challenge – South Australia, 30 Sept -1 October

A great deal of debate was had in our house over a proposed holiday in Oz this year to attend a 60th Birthday in Byron Bay and on to Sydney to catch up with friends then home, but then the possibility of the Aussie champs loomed and after a great deal of emailing and phone calls and wrangling with Australian Trials officials the end result was a three-week stint instead covering Byron Bay, Melbourne and the Barossa Valley. We arrived in Tanunda a bit unsure of our location but it couldn't have been better being the closest town to the venue on Menglers Hill. A day was spent scouting the area then an afternoon at the free practice at a separate venue before the event. The same evening saw over 150 people at a meet and greet at a great venue in Angaston, a chance to catch up with competitors old and new and talk a bit of bullshit.

Day 1 dawned fine and we were blown away at the scale of the event, these guys know how to run a trial. There were 15 sections x 2 to split competition grades and non-competition grades with 2 to 3 observers on each (80 a day). The venue was in rolling hill country with rocky outcrops with a good range of challenges, some big scary stuff for the top riders and enough challenge for the under 10 grades on their Ossets who joined with everyone for the weekend. The day went well for our Oceania team with all our riders leading their grades. Our non-Oceania junior Daniel Herbert also put up a good effort coming in 4th in open junior.

Day 2 started with a drama for the NZ contingent with a flat tyre on their truck and they arrived only just in time for riders briefing, and they were still required to have their bikes scrutineered for the day with possibility of losing a point a minute until their bikes were done. Some very upset riders, but after serious talking between our Commissioner and the Australian officials they were allowed to continue without penalty.

At the end of the weekend the team succeeded in taking the Oceania cup. Dylan won the Australian open junior grade (13 to under 16 years) and Hannah won junior women. Carl finished 4th overall in the Masters grade and Daniel Herbert our non-Oceania member achieved a very creditable 4th place in his first international event, Dylan didn't lose any points over the two days but he had strong competition from his Australian rival David McDonald who was only one point behind. Hannah had a more comfortable win but she had an anxious time beforehand. The Beta 125 that she was riding seized during the mid week trial on Wednesday and couldn't be repaired in time. Fortunately, her elder sister Hazel was able to arrange the loan of a Gas Gas 125 for Hannah to ride. The team also rode in the South Australian Championship the weekend before the nationals and Dylan won A grade, Carl was second in B grade, and Hannah won junior women. The event ended with a very well run formal dinner and prize giving at the Valley Inn (major sponsor) who also donated \$1000 to the Black Dog Ride organisation a very worthwhile charity who provided support for event.



Points of interest for the weekend.

- A huge investment of time and effort in Junior riders,
- The event cost in excess of 65 k to set up.
- 206 competitors including minders, 30 + female riders, 40+ juniors
- Score cards not double checked at result input time (the score on the card stands)
- Only one section with a creek crossing allowed - a growing sign of resistance to bikes in waterways.
- The Aussies will be stuffed if they come to NZ as they won't have dry grippy sections to ride!

Roy Hallie

FIM WORLD GP TRIALS 2017 - SOKOLOV ROUND 7

I was asked to write a couple of articles for the Megaphone based on my experiences while at the FIM 2017 world rounds 7 and 8. The first is published in this edition and Round 8's article will be in the next edition of the Megaphone.

To set the scene, and I digress for a moment, we travelled via Shanghai a city of 24 million people all trying to sell you something, onto Munich to pick up the car, and then we travelled around southern Germany to visit some great places such as the black forest, magnificent castles at Heidelberg and Wurzburg, the Porsche and Mercedes-Benz museums at Stuttgart. One special museum I have to mention was in Einbeck the P.S. Speicher motorcycle and motor museum, five floors of motorcycle history which included an E-Motion Trials bike, and finally for all you history buffs a guided tour of Colditz Castle, of WWII POW fame.



Friday - OK back to Round 7 at **Sokolov**, we crossed the Czech Republic border Friday morning, at a place call Bozi Dar, and arrived at **Sokolov** in time to see some of the world riders, namely Toni Bou, Adam Raga, Jamie Busto, and Takahisa Fujinami examining some of the sections. Sections 13 and 14 were in the river, 2, 3, 4, and 5 up the side of the valley, 6, 7, 8, and 9 again in the trees along the same side of the valley and finally 10, 11, and 12 on the other side of the same valley. All the valley sections were under pine trees with lots of loose pine needles and small rocks, and to make things even more difficult all the larger rocks were covered in moss. The final two sections 1 and 15 were back at the competitor's paddock where the winner's podium was also placed. I must mention that while watching the riders on the valley side, someone dislodged a 10cm rock which tumbled past us on its way down the hill, across the road, and missed our parked car by a few meters.



Now let's talk gardening, just the right time of year to get those bedding plants in, whoops not that type of gardening rather the blatant cleaning, rearranging of rocks, cleaning various rock surfaces, and generally blazing a trail through the section. Still when you see the height of some of the rocks, I kept on saying to Peter, "surely they are not going to ride up that!" the video of these events do no justice to the actual sheer height of some of the jumps. Rain is forecast for Sunday so making the conditions even more difficult for the riders. While looking at



the bikes I had an opportunity to look at the minders bikes, while similar in model and look, they each had the riders name on it and each had a complete spare set of new handle bars with throttle, brake, and clutch fitted, taped to it. The other interesting thing about these bikes is they don't have kill switch lanyards, rather each has a key installed just behind the cylinder head which switches the motor off and also deters anyone from taking the bike.

One thing I can say is that all of the riders were young, very fit, dedicated to winning, and mostly Spanish, German, Italian, with a scattering of English. I could not mention English without also mentioning our meeting with Dougie Lampkin, and Peter's selfie. We had a great chat and found out that he had already completed his test run on the speed section earlier that day, what a great ambassador for the sport!

Saturday – Despite the threat of rain the day remained dry, we arrived about 9am and spent an hour looking around the paddock. Needless to say the Honda, Gas Gas, and Sherco tents, with attached lorry and full kitchen, were the largest setups. Great to watch the mechanics working on the bikes. One thing that did surprise me was the lack of any merchandising, with only two suppliers selling any trials related items. On the other hand one thing that did impress me was Honda's setup, Toni, Fujinami, and Jaime all had their own logo, which appeared on the side of the container sized lorry, it also appeared on their bikes, each a thing of



Repsol beauty, the bike stands and I left the best for last on the carpets, yes that's right on the carpets the bikes were sitting on!



The paddock consisted of a car park largely filled with factory teams complete with designer tents and full mechanic and catering staff and then there were the privateers, living in motor homes and working out the back of an attached trailer. When we arrived most were sitting around eating breakfast surrounded by bikes on stands, bikes in pieces, and mum frying the bacon.

The day was laid out as follows: 11:00 to 13:00 Qualification practice, 14:30 Autograph session, 15:00 to 16:30 Qualification, and rider warm up before

each of the two qualification sessions.

One of the interesting activities we watched was the bike and helmet scrutinizing, which all riders had to attend. Every bike was checked for sound level, weighed, components examined, this included a detailed look at the helmet, and finally each bike was marked with an official seal. There were 62 riders in total, 17 TrialGP riders, including of course Toni Bou, Fujinami Takahisa, Adam Raga, and Jaime Busto, 15 TrialGP Woman riders, with Emma Bristow and Ina Wilde, 24 Trial2 riders, and finally 16 Trial2 Woman riders.



The qualification event was set over a single man-made section consisting of sandstone rocks of various sizes and a final 2m stack of square concrete beams. Riding this section at speed was great to watch, with riding style and finesse just as important as strength. All four groups fought hard to get good times. In the TrialGP ground the top 6 riders were within a 10th of a second from each other. Toni Bou was just pushed into second place by Miguel Gelabert by a 10th of a second, with a time of 15.56 seconds.



Just as the last riders were completing the section the rain started, however it was still the end to a great day with lots to look forward to tomorrow. I took nearly 400 photos and videos, only a fraction of which have been included here.



Sunday – The big day, today we find out if Toni Bou becomes world trial champion for the 11th time or if the completion goes onto Arco in Italy.

The day started very wet, we arrived early so we could park near to sections 6, 7, 8, and 9 before they closed the access road to this area. We walked down to sections 3, 4, and 5, all of which were on the side of steeply wooded, pine needle covered, inclines. Most of the rocks were moss covered and very wet, so wet that they closed sections 3 and 5 to all woman grades, none of the top riders finished section 5 most taking a 5. This was also the case for section 10 with one element a 2m rock jump with a knife edge which none of the riders overcame.



The days format was: start of the trial 9am first rider, 10am last rider, end of lap 1 first rider 11:45, 12:45 last rider. Start of lap 2, first rider 12:05, last rider 13:05, end of lap 2, first rider 14:20, last rider 15:20 with results at 15:45, each lap consisting of 15 sections. This year only minders wore numbered bibs, the riders had stick on numbers, some of which came off due to the rain. Like all trials it's the detail that often makes the day, like watching the very best in the world walking a section, the banter between minders and riders, often a minder is shouting at the rider, most often encouragement, however sometimes telling them to take a moment during a section to prepare for the next element.

Riders on the other hand come in all shapes and sizes, from tiny ladies to tall and lanky guys. Now some important health and safety tips, number 1, if you are on the side of a hill and directly above you is a rocky section watch out

for falling rocks as they roll down, directly towards the spectators at regular intervals. Tip number 2, again on side of the hill don't get behind a rider trying to get up a soft muddy ravine, you will get covered in mud and small rocks. Tip number 3, watch out for grumpy riders, who have failed a section, as they hop out a section anywhere, sometimes directly towards you. Finally don't expect to hear the best of language from the riders, you soon get to know how to swear fluently in German, Spanish, and French.



Back to the event, a very close battle between Adam Raga and Toni Bou, Adam Raga winning with 36 to Toni Bou's 53. The Woman's GP was won by Emma Bristow on 5 points, with Sandra Gomez on 31, and a great effort from Ina Wilde coming 3rd with 40. On the podium Adam Raga celebrated his win, but ultimately it was Toni Bou's day as he celebrated with the crowd the winning of the 2017 FIM World Trials, for the 11th time.

When watching the best in the world media attention is always and invariably focused on the rider. However every rider is in fact a team, we are not talking about the backup team of catering, mechanics, and many others they are of course part of the larger team, no rather the riders minder that unsung hero that stays with the rider all through the days event, helping, guiding, time keeping, providing water and food, and the many other activities that support the rider. Take for example time keeping, forever looking at his watch the minder must keep the rider aware of time. The first lap must be completed in 2 hours 45 minutes, while the second lap must be completed in

2 hours 15 minutes, any longer and penalty points are added at the rate of 1 point per minute over the time. The minders next task is to help and guide the rider through the sections and where necessary specially for the top riders is to be here when it all goes wrong and rider or bike or both need to be caught before either is seriously hurt or damaged, this often requires hanging from a rope over a 3m cliff, or scrambling up a sheer rock face to stand on its very edge. There is also the confidence and security the minder provides to the rider and when this is removed for example during the qualification time runs it has a big effect on the riders confidence, the caliber of the audience watching the rider can also have a big effect!



Watching a minder at work you see the trust between rider and minder in action where for example the minder uses his hand to indicate the landing position the rider should use when the rider cannot see the actual landing point due to the nature of the obstacle. As the minder is not allowed in the section until the rider either walks or rides the section they have to think ahead of the rider determining where to offer encouragement, where to stand to provide protection for the rider, where to position their hand for landing and aiming points for the rider, and finally be as agile as a goat when running and climbing over steep, muddy, root covered terrain without twisting an ankle or falling head long into the nearest bush or river.



In order to provide this level of support the minder has to be an accomplished rider themselves, have a good understanding of human nature, be able to shout above the noise of the crowd, believe in the rider, push the rider throughout the event to get the best result for the rider, and finally never give up on the rider, positive always even if the rider is having a bad day. All of the above the minder has to accomplish whilst his bike carries a host of spare bike parts including a complete spare handle bar and he also carries a back pack full of water and food to keep the rider fed and watered.

To conclude, it takes a great deal of devotion to the sport, not just in the cost but also in the skills required to even make it onto the world stage and be part of the FIM trials scene. I take my hat off to those competitors, especially the privately funded one's who go to make up the numbers, with little if any hope of even getting on the podium. Still these same people will pack up their bikes, get in their motor homes and travel the 1200km to Arco for round 8 of this year's championship which is what we must do although a stop in Venice and Verona will make pleasant distractions.

Christine Thompson



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Upcoming events:

Club Champs - Manderley 12 November

Cup holders: *please return your cup to Derek before the prize giving on the 26th.*

Greybeards – Weedons Ross Road 26 November

The Greybeards is our last trial for the year and anyone can ride in it. If you are over 60 you could even win it. It's also a chance to see Kendall riding a two stroke, and to hear what an old British trials bike sounds like if Peter Barnett brings his Greeves.

Latest news: congratulations to PMC member Karl Clark on winning the experts grade at the NZ Moto Trials Championship. It's the first time in 25 years that a South Islander has won it. And Jules Huguenin was 3rd in expert; Blake Fox won A grade; Glenn Smith was 3rd in intermediate; and Stef Downes 1st in women.

Acknowledgements

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