

Scottish Classic Grand National

Drumlanrig Castle Thornhill

Saturday/Sunday 15th 16th July

Report by Chris Montignani

Scotland only recently were witness to one of the best Classic and Twinshock race events they have encountered for quite some time. This superb vintage two-day racing encounter brought back some great memories of when Scotland was host for the legendary 250cc Motocross Grand Prix that was held at the historic Kilmartin racetrack in Argyll way back in 1978.

The grounds of Drumlanrig Castle near Thornhill was the chosen historical monument that was to be the location for the two-days of vintage motocross hosted by the Scottish Classic Motorcycle Club. This chosen location for the classic gathering was the brainchild of local rider Willie Brown and local business man AMD Contract Services owner Fraser Dykes. Naturally many other local businesses also helped out with generous sponsorship for this fantastic weekend of nostalgic scrambling which had attracted riders from all over the UK and beyond.

Competitors came from Australia, USA, Northern Ireland and a good contingent of riders crossed the channel from Europe including Belgium, France, and even Russia. Not only that when you have 1979 World Motocross Champion Graham Noyce as your guest of honour you immediately knew that it was going to be a very special event indeed.

On the Saturday the weather was not the best with some heavy showers throughout the day and the track was very slippery underfoot, although there was still some superb racing served up by the many classes that had entered for the two-day extravaganza. There were over 40 races to get through over the two days and commentators Rob Kinsey and Richard Winn kept everyone informed as to whom was doing what on the track as the laps counted down.

Sunday's weather was much kinder on the riders with blue skies and warm temperatures which soon sent the crowds flocking to the Drumlanrig grounds within the Buccleuch estate to witness all the action.

In the Pre 68 Unlimited class it was Irishman Adrian Lappin on the Cecil Pearson sponsored vintage J. A.P who led the chasing pack a merry dance over the course of the four moto's to take the overall win from fellow Irishman

Harry Stitt. James Thomson filled the final podium spot in third from Liston Bell in fourth.

In the Pre 75 and Pre 68 Individual races over the two-days it was Jonathon Bethel on the big CCM who was very quick over the course of the weekend with a clean sweep of wins and the No1 spot for his hard weekend graft. Steve Dent also put in a gritty performance to bring his Faber BSA home to the runner up position overall and a nice piece of silverware for his troubles. Ex works CCM rider Jimmy Aird was also very quick but suffered a few off-track excursions on his new BSA during the wet and slippery conditions on Saturday. Jimmy changed to his old faithful CCM for the Sunday races and fared much better although a third place overall still had to be a decent result for him considering the tricky conditions he encountered on the Saturday.

The Pre 75 Unlimited class was yet another superb win for Jonathon Bethell on his lightening quick John Bethel Racing CCM, Scott Maxwell was lightening quick over the two days and could have been the eventual winner of this class overall had it not been for a no points score in race three on Sunday afternoon. Derek McAulay put in a heroic effort on his Bultaco Pursang to take the third place overall from Keith Barnes on the Clews Stroka in fourth.

In the Twinshock 60+ Chancers class it was a full weekend sweep of wins for Sammy Doble on the 490 Maico who swept all aside to take the overall victory from Stuart Miller second and Davie Robb in third. Mike Dobie put in one of his best performances of the year to bring his CR 250 Honda home to a well-earned fourth place finish overall.

Some of the best racing of the weekend was supplied by the big hitters in the Twinshock Over 50's class. It was certainly a treat for the ears and for the eyes to watch Mark Fulton on the 480 Honda and Irishman Willie Burgess on the 490 Maico slug it out over the course of the two-days. Fulton was frighteningly quick on the big Honda and immediately took moto one on the Saturday, in race two it was Fulton again who sprung from the gate with Burgess hot on his tail, it looked like win No2 was on the cards for Fulton until he dropped his machine right at the finish line with one lap remaining. Burgess naturally went on to secure the moto and the win. On the Sunday Fulton would take the first race of the day from Burgess in second, and in the final moto Fulton's relentless pace over the two-days was beginning to show as he took a tumble from his machine leaving Burgess to then take the chequered flag. Chris

Woodward filled the bottom step of the podium in third just ahead of Pete Mathia in fourth.

In the Twinshock Under 50's class Michael Smith secured the silverware and the overall win for his two-day's of hard work and was well worthy of the title. Of course things could have been different if Gavin Robertson had not stalled his Bill Brown supplied 490 Maico in turn three, by the time Robertson got the big German machine fired up again he was already a couple of laps down. Nevertheless over the course of the weekend Robertson's pace was still electric and considering he normally rides Evolution bikes it was his first time ever riding an older Twinshock machine. Ryan Glendinning was the third place finisher in this class leaving Craig Smith to pick up the lesser placings in fourth.

The last and final race of the day was the Grand National event where all riders of any age or class were free to enter. Gavin Robertson made up for his disappointment of not winning the Under 50's class by decimating the chasing pack and crossing the line ahead of runner up Michael Smith on the 490 Maico. David Huston took third overall riding the legendary Tony Caig's 480 Honda.

Of course you can get more intricate details of individual riders and their overall finishing positions by logging on to the "My Lap's" website where you can scour individual lap times at your leisure although the top six are listed below.

Summing up this was a classic racing weekend spectacle of the highest order set amongst the beautiful backdrop of Drumlanrig Castle. Hopefully this event will move onto bigger and better things as the club have now placed their bid to hold the 2019 Classic MXDN at this very same venue.

Results

Pre 68 Unlimited

- 1 Aidrian Lappin
- 2 Harry Stitt
- 3 James Thomson
- 4 Liston Bell

5 John Griffiths

6 Peter Hollinshead

Pre 75 Unlimited

1 Johnathon Bethel

2 Scott Maxwell

3 Derek McAulay

4 Keith Barnes

5 John Fleming

6 David Wilson

Twinshock 60+ Chancers

1 Sammy Doble

2 Stuart Miller

3 David Robb

4 Mike Dobie

5 Steve Mower

6 Peter Lightfoot

Twinshock Over 50's

1 Mark Fulton

2 Willie Burgess

3 Chris Woodward

4 Pete Mathia

5 Paul Chiappa

6 Alan Bott

Twinshock Under 50's

1 Michael Smith

2 Gavin Robertson

3 Ryan Glendinning

4 Craig Smith

5 David Houston

6 Gary Sowerby