



BMZAC SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

» Since we last heard from Dennis the MZ racing guys have been out in the mud at Cadwell Park celebrating their 25th year of racing.

HER MAJESTY HAS HAD HER JUBILEE, but this was our time; on June 23-24th it was time to celebrate 25 years of British MZ Racing, to celebrate the fact that at Cadwell Park in June 1987 ten brave souls leathered up, saddled up, and formed the first British MZ grid. Visors closed, heads down, lights on, lights off; the racing began.

THIS JUBILEE WEEKEND, HELD AS PART OF THE BEMSEE CADWELL MEETING, saw the fullest grid I have ever raced amongst, with 13 rows of MZs prepped and pumping blue/grey two-stroke exhaust into the atmosphere. Every race on the weekend was fully enlisted, with 38 riders ready to race including former champions from seasons past; Adrian Hutchison (1993), Chris Rogers (2007-08), Dean Stimpson (2009), and Andy Saunders (2010-11). There was wide age demographic too – from 16 year old Lee Wainwright who grabbed his first two podiums on Sunday to Dave Higgins who celebrated his 70th birthday over the weekend.

THOSE WHO REMEMBER MY FIRST DIARY ENTRY may understand what I mean when I say that being 'ready to race' is a relative concept. Dean Stimpson, who broke the

MZ lap record on his way to winning all six races of the weekend (both Silver Jubilee races and the four championship races) was clearly ready to race, as was Andy Saunders who pushed him all the way throughout the weekend.

I, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS 'READY' because I had remembered to put my bike in my van, to fill my jerry cans with petrol, and to bring some wood to wedge between the paddock stands and grass as the weather promised a great deal of slippery fun.

I HADN'T THOUGHT ENOUGH ABOUT JET SIZE to compensate for my re-tuned engine, or about checking my chain tension and alignment; for which I would pay heavily with both positions and paintwork.

Friday practice was very wet, but gave me the perfect opportunity to run in the engine and new clutch. It didn't personally end very well, but I don't really want to talk about that. Let's just say elastic waisted waterproof trousers were never designed with racers in mind!

SATURDAY CONTINUED MUCH AS FRIDAY HAD ENDED - except that the sun came out to play. Because I finished the last round at Pembrey with two podium places, I was third in this year's Championship and that

meant I started from the front row of the grid. But I struggled with power throughout the race due to jet size. I hadn't noticed it on Friday, because of the rain (basically, I admit I wasn't going very quickly when I fell in testing!) This led to a requirement to carry more corner speed than those around me to maintain position, which led to me refusing to give up position at Hall Bends on the last lap, which subsequently led to me eating grass and not finishing the race.

ALTHOUGH WE WERE ABLE TO STRAIGHTEN THE CLIP-ONS, bleed the brakes, and shorten the chain (removing the bent links) in time for the Jubilee race, it was all perhaps a little rushed, as the jetting continued to be a problem; my race ended prematurely when the chain jumped the sprockets going around Barn, luckily allowing me to coast into the pit lane.

I OUGHT TO HAVE TAKEN THIS AS A SIGN of something being wrong but, needless to say, I didn't. Chain back on, and I got myself a wobbly fifth place finish on the last race of Saturday from the back of the grid and, believe me, it's quite a feat trying to overtake at Cadwell!

SUNDAY MORNING, Barn came to bite again; I was running away with the race (well, OK, I was in third place, but I'm excluding the race which was going on for first between speed demons Dean and Andy). But then I lost the front, low-sided and went hurtling across the tarmac and grass into the tyre wall. Whether the chain jumped again and loaded the front, or whether I should've invested in new wets will be the subject of years of debate, but thankfully it clearly wasn't a case of rider error! In any case, it was back to fighting from the back of the grid for the last two races, getting an eighth and seventh to close off my weekend. Chris Rogers kindly pointed out - at the end of proceedings - that I ought to check my swing arm and frame, as they may be causing my chain problems. Lo and behold, both were significantly bent (explaining much of the sensation of riding a bucking donkey!) and have now been replaced.

MY PERSONAL PROBLEMS ASIDE, the club has gone from strength to strength and the weekend was a spectacular success, thanks primarily to the hard work of Sarah Vincent, who arranged £500 of prize money donated by Bridge MacFarland Solicitors, along with other prizes donated by former Bemsee Riders; Tommy Hill, James Toseland, Steve Parrish and James Whitham. She also helped bring new riders in for the weekend, pulled former MZ riders out of retirement and ensured that all us Jubilee racers went home with a limited edition commemorative Freshdrop BMZRC Silver Jubilee medal. We have to be pretty happy to have been a part of that!"

FOR MORE DETAILS on the British MZ Racing Club and the MZ Experience which gives you the opportunity to try out an MZ race bike, go to www.bmzrc.org.uk. **rocer**