



CUTTINGS

BRITISH LAWN MOWER RACING ASSOCIATION

Welcome to the mid-season issue of Cuttings! With what should have been six meetings behind us and five in front, we really should be about halfway. Unfortunately though, things have conspired against us (again) and we find ourselves with five behind and just three ahead; don't despair though—you've got a bit of extra time to get yourself and your machine into race winning form before we get back to it... or of course you could head to the pub and worry about the mower the Thursday before the next meeting. We're not judgy.

This issue of Cuttings is another big one I'm afraid, containing reports from all five meetings peppered with summaries of some of the other issues that the committee has been working on and some bits from the archives. Regarding the reports, I would like to apologise in advance for any lack of substance—I struggle to pay attention at the best of times and this year's dabble in Group 4 is only making things worse! Thus far I've not managed to entice anyone else to have a go, but if anyone fancies contributing anything to Cuttings, please do get in touch!

Graham

More Venue Woes

As I'm sure you're aware, the mid-season break we find ourselves in is 100% down to a lack of venues. The cancellation of our first meeting at Ardingly really embodied the struggles that we face, as essentially our appearance at Spring Live was cancelled due to the promoter's concerns over noise and the mess we'd leave the ground in. The former threatening to cut our weekend short at a moment's notice and the latter risking a hefty reinstatement fee.

Cowpie identified a third factor—dust! Indeed we had to put in a number of measures to limit dust on the Sunday, which naturally limited racing too. To add insult to injury, the land owner ultimately imposed a reinstatement fee on Cowpie show, which they duly passed part of down to us.

To a certain extent reinstatement fees can be factored into the cost of putting on an event, but the other things risk the success of the weekend and all can, and have been, deciding factors in our continued use of a venue. Newdigate being a notable example of a venue lost recently due to the damage left behind and the National Hot Rod Show in Peterborough one lost due to dust.

By way of mitigation, this year we've insisted everyone brings a rake, aiming for many hands making light work, rather than being limited by the handful of rakes in the trailer. This seems to be working to an extent and at the very least this shows the landowner that we care enough to try. There is very little we can do about dust, buying a bowser is an obvious option, but this would be yet another item we'd have to bring



Groups 3 & 4 join forces at The Dip to create maximum dust (John Airey)

along, and we already struggle to find people to tow everything we need.

We have been unable to secure a venue for the meeting on July 16th & 17th which in recent years would have seen us at Codicote village day. An inspection of the old 12 hour field in Five Oaks identified that it was unusable, both because of the mess we'd made the year before and the risk of it happening again, and unfortunately this was a weekend when our usual fall back, The Dip, was not available.

The 12 hour was a slightly different story, in that we had previously been told that we would have a field this year, but farming being a business and we not being a financial priority, naturally saw our field ploughed for crops to offset a poor yield the year before. Again, despite trying, we were unable to secure a suitable alternative.

Moving around meetings is not as easy as it sounds, as planning is involved both on our part and on yours—whenever possible we try not to move

meetings as we're conscious that a number of you have to book leave well in advance to allow you to travel or compete. The issue here is twofold—it can disadvantage people in the Championships and it can affect the number of entrants, which has the knock on effect of making meetings struggle to break even financially.

We did discuss holding an alternative meeting on the 12 hour date, but it seems a large number of people had instantly booked various things as soon as the announcement was made to cancel it—in particular ALL of our IT gurus will be unavailable during this weekend, meaning that we'd be carrying a massive risk if the lap scoring computer threw a wobbly (which it does from time to time). So we just don't see this as viable either.

So on the back of that tale of woe, we once again request that you keep an eye out for potential venues and continue to let us know if you think of something!

Cowpie Show

What a great start to the season! As much as I'd love to include a photo of the racing, instead I've included a photo of the crowd – the likes of which we haven't seen since Heddington and Stockley in 2019, nearly three years ago! Whilst Cowpie show only took place on Sunday and did require us to take it a little easier than normal due to worries over dust, the oohs, aahhs, cheers and applause certainly helped add to the atmosphere of the meeting and we've already had a few expressions of interest from those that have never seen us before!

For many, the weekend started on Friday night, which was the usual start of season social and also saw a free preview of the Wall of Death for those who wandered over to the show proper.

Relatively long grass and a downpour in the night made practice entertaining for many; whether new, rusty or just getting to grips with unfamiliar machines.

Speaking of new starters, we were joined in group 4 by Ollie & Joshua Brimecombe, as well as Aaron Monger & Callum McIntyre who only made the final meeting of 2021.

Saturday took a relatively standard format in the shape of two rounds of heats, then the first Championship round of 2022, two more heats, another Championship round then more heats to close out the day.

In Group 2 Christian Belcher reaped rewards from the work he'd put in over the winter, taking a second in the first race of the day. Jenson Cresswell in his last meeting as a junior and fellow young'un Charlie Thurston also put in very respectable performances. A shock to all was the decision of 21 time British Champion Mike Cresswell not to contest the 2022 title, which did unfortunately make the Championship rounds a tad lacklustre.

In Group 3 defending champion Dean Fuller got off to a poor start with carb problems, allowing the competition to get a leg up both on meeting points and the Championship; though he was back on form by the afternoon. After their two year break, James Weaver and R&M boys Ross Challinor and Pete Ayres put in very strong performances.

Group 4 almost instantly started to show why the tides have turned to-

wards the Murray WideBody with Alfie Smith, Richard Atherton and Gary Botting each placing very well. Karl Selby, taking a slightly different tack with his new Craftsman mower (featuring power steering!) also performed very well. The afternoon session was marred slightly by Scott Farrar's tumble that took himself and Carl Covey out of action for the weekend, though neither with serious injuries.

Despite a brief downpour, the greasy conditions of the morning gave way to clouds of dust, which really set the tone for Sunday following a visit from the show organisers. Finding that the dust was settling all over those attractions already set up for the Sunday show, concerns were raised that they may be forced to pull the plug if we continued to redistribute our corner of the field.

Consequently organisers Ian Tanswell and Les Pantry formulated a plan to

engine cutting out on the very last corner having commanded a convincing lead—allowing Jenson take the flag.

Likewise Group 3 picked up where it left off, with very close battles between much of the field, making the podium positions anyone's game—something that is quite well reflected in the initial Championship standings which saw very tight gaps between the top five positions and just 21 points separating the bunch.

Group 4 certainly started off bringing the show to the crowd as Gary Botting suffered a steering failure in the first race of the day, seeing him take out the timing loop and use up all the runoff space that we design in for just such an occasion. Thankfully Gary and everyone involved were unscathed, but this did necessitate switching to the spare loop and a bit of a rethink of block positioning on this corner. Rick Peacock joined the pack for the day, further making the



Bumper crowds for our opening event at Cowpie Show (Vikki)

minimise dust and ensure that all requisite Championship rounds were completed. This saw a very brief practice on a largely virgin track, which had been raked and watered, followed by the two sets of Championship rounds separated by a lengthy break, track adjustments and re-watering. The afternoon was then peppered by further watering and track adjustment breaks, both to let the dust settle and to try to mitigate any further clouds.

Group 2 followed much the same story as on the preceding day, but did see a well-deserved maiden win for Christian after making his mower as wide as he possibly could. Later on it also saw Charlie go from hero to zero, with his

case for the Murray by having a very good day.

Once racing was brought to a close everyone was expected to rake the course, and sure enough many helped, which in this case was very important due to our want to return, despite the landowner's concerns over the condition of the ground in our wake. Fingers crossed.

Our thanks to everyone who helped make the weekend a success on and off the track, particularly to Ian Tanswell, who (once the rust cleared) did a sterling job over the weekend, particularly on the Sunday when keeping the show happy was so important; both the organisers and the crowd!

Group 2: Graham Tibbenham (188), Mike Cresswell (163), Christian Belcher (137)

Group 3: Sean Tanswell (165), Stu Johnson (141), James Weaver (133)

Group 4: Alfie Smith (161), Rich Atherton (145), Karl Selby (126)

Full results are available at speedhive.mylaps.com/Events/1978540



Michael Lee turning the air blue at The Dip with a rarely seen and very retro 2 stroke Clio (John Airey)

Email

In the Spring issue of Cuttings I mentioned that Google would imminently start charging us for each of our Email addresses. Whilst we did start looking at alternatives, it seems that the big G have had a change of heart, so it'll be business as usual for the foreseeable.

Website

You'll notice that event entry now has three options: Race only, Camping only and Race with Camping. We understand that this is confusing and a little messy from your point of view; however the reason for this is to cut down on the number of refunds—this costs us both money and time, and causes headaches when trying to balance the books.

Ultimately this comes down to the code behind our website not doing exactly what we need and our inability to put this right now that the platform is unsupported. On this front, we have engaged one of the web design companies we've been in touch with to do some initial prototyping of our new site in order to understand if their proposal is viable. Again; watch this space!

TeeSpring

Our TeeSpring site is now live (my-store-c936f6-2.creator-spring.com) and has replaced the shop on our website.

A decent selection of designs has been put together already and we anticipate adding more as time allows. Unfortunately there is no easy way to offer personalised items, but these can be created manually—so please get in touch if you have something special in mind and we'll see what we can do!

Reservoir Dip

At the end of May we took our annual Reservoir Dip, which has been almost mandatory since our first meeting there in 1998. Some, OK most, would say that 24 years of (ab)use have taken their toll on the field and consequently it is not as smooth as it once was – and this may have contributed to a relatively poor turnout in all Groups and to the attrition seen throughout the weekend.

Group 2 had just four entries on Saturday, but were joined on Sunday by newcomers Michael Lee & Ian Martin sharing one of the lesser spotted two-stroke Clios, once a staple of the class—though unfortunately due to clutch issues with this mower, and Dave Jackman's attempt to out-smoke it as his engine wheezed its last breaths, meant that Sunday was down to just three in most races. Similarly Group 3 fell from six to four on the Sunday. Group 4 was the best attended, but even this saw a number of last minute withdrawals leaving eight on Saturday, and Sunday did not top five entrants in any race. Consequently Groups 3 & 4 were merged for several of the heats on the Sunday.

The track was initially long and sweeping, taking up around two thirds of the available field, though twisty sections were added to ensure that speeds were kept at bay and not handing the advantage to the faster machine. Despite downpours in the week, only the

top corner of the track remained damp and this had dried by midway through Saturday since the weather Gods smiled on us throughout the weekend. This did however give rise to some dust at the tail end of the session, although not as bad as we have seen.

Racing followed the familiar pattern of two heats, Championship, break, heat, Championship, then heats to round out the day, followed by the first round of the Animal Endurance Championship, which was conspicuously absent from our event at Blindley Heath.

Predictably the reigning champions in all Groups largely dominated the results, a notable exception being in Group 3 where James Weaver gamely kept his elbows out to take two wins, Ross Challinor also taking good finishes via similar means.

As the first round of the season, the Animal race set the scene for the Championship going forwards, with Alfie Smith taking the early lead, Dean Fuller second place and Pete Sque (who narrowly missed out on the win last season) taking the third.

Sunday saw a reversal of direction, but largely not of fortunes, with results following a similar pattern to the day before. One notable exception to this was Charlie Thurston – having had a frustrating day trying to remedy the engine problems that had been carried over from the last meeting, Sunday saw him putting forward a real challenge that threatened to turn the tables in Group 2, also proving that he is very definitely one to watch!

As mentioned above, Groups 3 and 4 were combined later in the day, which did mix things up and provide a little more sport, but as had been the case for the remainder of the weekend, it did see Alfie pull a substantial lead, leaving the remainder of the field to battle each other.

Thanks again to everyone who helped out on and off track. It's also worth pointing out that considering this was just a 'normal' sprint meeting, we did have a fairly impressive crowd, both public and professional, which is always great to see – thanks to anyone who interacted with these people and helped to spread the good word.

Group 2: Graham Tibbenham (179), Reg Funnell (152), Charlie Thurston (85)

Group 3: Dean Fuller (164), Stu Johnson (141), Pete Sque (107)

Group 4: Alfie Smith (193), Karl Selby (148), Graham Tibbenham (117)

Full results are available at speedhive.mylaps.com/Events/1985974

Double 4

Early June saw our second meeting at the World Famous Matterley Basin near Winchester, this time the venue for our Double 4 hour endurance event.

Despite the poor forecast and the wind that this exposed venue gives little shelter from, the weather was extremely kind to us (though James Waters and his soggy sleeping bag may disagree) with no rain whatsoever over the entire 8 hours of racing.

Three Group 2 teams entered including the second outing this season for the 2-stroke Clio of team 'Tangoed' (which was a relief, as Group 2 came perilously close to having an average age of less than 40!), Group 3 had just two entrants, Group 4 nine and we welcomed four Tourist entries, although one of these did not hit the track.

Saturday kicked off with a 90minute practice and qualifying session allowing all teams to vie for pole position and get a feel for the nearly 1km track which once again took in part of the motocross track as well as the service tunnel. Due to worries over safety and mower damage on the concrete surface, Group 2 elected to take a plunge off the side of the berm that the tunnel cut through, exactly as they had done the previous year, which also resulted in Group 2 lap times not being significantly longer than the other Groups.

The fastest lap was taken by Tourist and Iron Man entry Mow-a-saki, with CP Racing taking pole for Group 2, MWA Group 3 and Who's Going Commando Group 4.

Saturday's race was an anticlockwise affair, which saw the lion's share of the drop in altitude taken by the tunnel with this reclaimed up the motocross start finish straight. Group 2 instead were greeted by a steep drop at the end of the start finish straight which caused a couple of 'interesting' moments as 'Don't know at the Mow' suffered brake fade at one point and CP racing broke a chain—both incidents causing a last minute change of plan and a change of underwear. In Group 4, Who's Going Commando took a spill, which redesigned the lines of the bon-

Last Laps

As mentioned previously, there are three events left on our 2022 calendar:

First up is Cheddar on the August Bank Holiday. This is a venue we've been visiting since 2012 in various guises, including the "Lawn Mower Racing and Family Festival" and Red Bull Cut It. We have been the only constant in any of these events and have thankfully maintained a good relationship with the landowner. This year it is once again just us, but rest assured, local cider is but a short drive away...

The very next weekend we'll be visiting Blacklands Farm, which is another fantastic new venue only a short commute from the club's spiritual home.

The season will then be rounded out at Capel, where we intend to hold the 2022 award ceremony while engines are still warm. Who knows, maybe a small party is in order too?!

August

27-29th Cheddar, BS26 2JB

September

3-4th Blacklands Farm, RH19 4HP

17-18th Capel RH5 5HG



Cleared for takeoff—Group 2 team 'No Idea At The Mow' trade their Atco for a Flymo (Ian Martin)

net of Karl's new Craftsman for the remainder of the day.

Ultimately Tourist Mow-a-saki, without those pesky driver changes, managed to turn the most laps at 179, 'Balls out racing' not far behind with 172 laps for Group 4, 'R&M Racing OB+' for Group 3 at 153 laps and 'No Idea At The Mow' for Group 2 at 117. Of particular note was the plucky 2-smoke of Group 2 team 'Tangoed' who although ultimately did not finish, turned 45 screaming laps; and at quite an impressive speed I might add once they managed to get it on song.

Sunday saw the customary reverse of direction, which caused some issues with Group 2; realising that the orange Clio was not competing and the side of the berm was no steeper than the shipping container ramp installed by Red Bull a few years previously, the

only sensible way forwards was to turn Saturday's berm-top drop off into a launch ramp, making for some interesting photos!

On the second day 'Balls out racing' took the win from 'Who's Going Commando' by just 1.678 seconds, both turning 186 laps. This made for an exciting last few laps of bumper to bumper racing, both teams turning their fastest lap on 185.

This time 'Gash It And Bash It' won the tourist class with 178 laps, 'Mower With Attitude' took Group 3 at 171 laps and 'No Idea At The Mow' once again took Group 2 at 133 laps, having taken a strategic tea break due to the risk of finishing in the top ten overall.

Trophies for the weekend were sponsored by STA-BIL, but unfortunately manufacturing holdups meant that chocolates were substituted, complementing a STA-BIL goody bag.

A special mention again for Mow-a-saki who went Iron Man and amazingly turned only two laps fewer than the overall winners!

Group 2: No Idea At The Mow (281), CP Racing (210), Tangoed (45)

Group 3: Mower With Attitude (326), R & M Racing OB+ (319)

Group 4: Balls Out Racing (358), Who's Going Commando (347), Bullsrap Racing (346)

Tourist: Mow-a-saki (356), Gash It And Bash It (352), The Punter (218)

Full results are available at speedhive.mylaps.com/Events/1993441

Godstone Farm

This venue was a much welcomed new entry on the calendar, taking place at the family friendly Godstone Farm. Unfortunately the race area was smaller than we'd anticipated due to construction works which had taken around a quarter of the field, but we still made the most of what turned out to be quite an uneven surface.

The track was roughly hour glass shaped and around ¼ of a mile long. To add a little more interest it included the first joker lap of the year, which allowed racers to repeat the half of the track nearest the crowd line, shortening one lap of each race considerably (for those who remembered to take it!).

Turnout was excellent in Groups 2 & 4, with 8 and 13 mowers hitting the track in each and Jenson Cresswell in his first meeting as an adult in the former. The slightly worrying trend however continued in Group 3 with only 4 entrants.

The forecast was a little troubling, but Saturday remained largely dry, to the

point that dust became an issue. Luckily however, most blew straight into race control rather than towards the crowd line or into the camping area.

Saturday started off in a clockwise direction, but several incidents on the very bumpy off camber bend at the lower end of the track necessitated a change of direction. The most serious of which saw Pete Sque part company with his mower in the first Group 3 heat requiring a trip to A&E to have his wrist looked at. Fortunately the damage was relatively light, but this did end his weekend in its infancy bringing the number of entrants down to just three.

The large numbers in Group 4 on such a small track caused their first heat to be rather hectic (it reminded me of my banger racing days—I thought it was brilliant!) and so it was decided to split the Group into two and run things as we would at the World Championships with the bottom two finishers moving down into the 'B' group and the top two from 'B' moving up to 'A'.

Five rounds of heats were run, alongside the two British Championship rounds.

A very impressive lightning storm and quite heavy rain on Saturday night did little to dampen the track and next to nothing to bring the dust under control.

Dave Jackman's rattily engine having gone critical reduced numbers in Group 2 to seven and the loss of James Weaver, having only entered for one day saw Group 3 fall to just two entrants. Due to the latter, Dean and Stu joined Group 4 'B' group from this point on; although naturally the Championship rounds saw the two Groups part ways, allowing Stu the perfect opportunity to showcase his wheelie skills, much to his own frustration!

Racing continued in an anticlockwise direction and saw a further 4 rounds of heats and the remaining two Championship rounds of the weekend.

Following racing, several Group 4 racers took part in a short race for a crew filming for GBNews' "Challenge Christys" segment. This sees Patrick Christys take part in various odd activities suggested by his viewers with little to no notice. As such, he turned up following a night out in Soho in smart clothes and some rather nice brown leather shoes—which soon became browner due to practicing in a field occupied by cows. After a couple of laps getting a feel for the track and the machine (kindly lent by Barrie Thomas) he found the limit of his talent and rolled the mower in the bottom bend, leaving him with a hole in trouser and knee. Thankfully he was otherwise unhurt, in good spirits and the video makes for amusing watching (see <https://youtu.be/s-fBhT1rUf8>). Later he was found wandering the car park having been deserted by his film crew; he was offered a lift to the nearest station, but opted to go to the nearest pub instead – he should fit in well!

Group 2: Graham Tibbenham (165), Jenson Cresswell (152), Roger Knowlson (116)

Group 3: Dean Fuller (201), Stuart Johnson (160), James Weaver (101)

Group 4: Karl Selby (76), Alfie Smith (74), Gary Botting (74)

Full results are available at speedhive.mylaps.com/Events/2002361



A great showing of Group 25 at Godstone Farm (Barrie Thomas)

2022 Championship Top 10

Group 2 British

1. Graham Tibbenham (286)
2. Charlie Thurston (127)
3. Roger Knowlson (124)
4. Jenson Cresswell (87)
5. David Jackman (81)
6. Christian Belcher (63)
7. Paul Johnson (48)
8. Reg Funnell (25)

Group 3 British

1. Dean Fuller (251)
2. Stuart Johnson (215)
3. Peter Sque (120)
4. Ross Challinor (99)
5. James Weaver (68)
6. Sean Tanswell (63)
7. Peter Ayres (56)
8. Callum McIntyre (12)
9. Richard Johnson (8)

Group 4 British

1. Alfie Smith (286)
2. Karl Selby (197)
3. Graham Tibbenham (132)
4. Gary Botting (112)
5. Matthew Nettleton (56)
6. Les Pantry (56)
7. Darren Tebbutt (52)
8. Rick Peacock (47)
9. Richard Atherton (46)
10. Algirdas Mociejunas (40)

Endurance Championship

1. Alfie Smith (10)
2. Peter Sque (10)
3. Charlie Thurston (10)
4. Dean Fuller (8)
5. Ross Challinor (8)
6. Les Pantry (6)
7. Stuart Johnson (6)

World Champs

This year saw the return of the World Championships to the ever popular Heddington & Stockley Steam Fair in Wiltshire.

Despite expressions of interest, unfortunately we saw no entrants from other clubs, however the event did attract a healthy entry of six Group 2s, eight Group 3s (the best entry so far this year) and ten Group 4s.

Having been restrained by a lack of space in previous years, and owing to the gravitas of the Worlds, the show gifted us a large area in the back field that we haven't used for a number of years. This was something of a blessing and a curse in that we had lots of space to use, but we did feel obliged to use all of it, which made the track far longer than we would usually aim for. This did affect the closeness of racing somewhat and may have made it less of a spectacle for the crowd – particularly when attrition resulted in races of only one or two competitors.

Following several years of ploughing matches, the field was bumpy. Very bumpy! So bumpy in fact that Les managed to secure the services of a steam roller to even it out a little. This was fine for around half a lap (though hairpin bends were an issue!) until it came to the slightly boggier area around the start line, where the roller ploughed two narrow furrows before grinding to a halt and had to be towed out.

So we forged on anyway with a track that was a bit of a boneshaker. As is customary, the first rounds of the day were for equal points and decided which heat racers would join for the subsequent round. Group 2, always wishing to be different, opted instead to create another lane for the sixth entrant rather than splitting up.

The first few rounds found the track to be challenging due to tight corners, unexpected bumps and slightly stodgy ground. Early retirees were Les Pantry in Group 3 with a failed stub axle and Pete Moore in Group 4. Otherwise early leaders started to emerge in all Groups.

And then things took a major turn.

At around lunch time it started to rain very heavily and although there was some lessening in intensity and some dry spells over the afternoon, the track never really dried out. This saw fortunes change, as now the conditions



The slowest lap of the weekend - just before getting stuck (Graham Tibbenham)

How It Works

For those unfamiliar with the World Championships; this meeting differs slightly from a normal sprint meeting, in that racers are lined up abreast in randomly selected positions rather than in the usual grid. Races are fewer laps than normal, the course generally shorter and held strictly back to back, leaving no room for lollygagging and ensuring that as many rounds as possible are completed.

Due to the space needed for the start line, race entry is limited to five, with each Group split accordingly into 'A' & 'B' heats – the two highest placers in heat 'B' moving up to 'A' and the slowest in that heat moving down. Importantly point scoring is docked in heat B—a win being worth 10 points in A, but only 9 in B.

tended to favour different racers and different machines, which really did serve to mix things up. However, whilst it did significantly slow racing and affect crowd numbers, it did serve to smooth the track somewhat as mud was smeared about!

At the end of the first day, Paul Johnson was 5 points ahead in Group 2, Sean Tanswell had a convincing 8 point lead of Group 3 and Kenny Goodsmith was pulling away in Group 4 having managed to stretch his lead to 4 points.

As is usual for the World Championships, Sunday continued in a Clockwise direction due to the starting arrangements. The track was mostly moved onto fresh grass and the back straight and tight double hairpin were shortcut entirely by a new straight. This brought lap times down and kept racers out of the boggy areas, but did mean a return to the washboard!

The track started off a little slick, but once the grass was taken care of, mud

displaced and the sun shone, it quickly became a very grippy surface, which was only threatened by a very mild shower. Accordingly, fortunes turned again, but with a wet day in the bag, those better suited to the dry had their work cut out.

In Group 2 Paul Johnson continued to lead until round 17 of 21 when Graham Tibbenham managed to pull back level, then tragically in round 18 Paul (who had been flying all weekend) suffered a clutch shaft failure. This allowed Graham to continue clawing back the points lost to the rain and also saw Mike Cresswell move up the Podium.

Having only lost the lead in Group 3 once (to James Weaver) over the weekend, Sean Tanswell had another excellent day, though having to work for it at every turn as Stu Johnson and Ross Challinor snapped at his heels. The early loss of Les and James Weaver after day 1 did result in a number of races with only one entrant; this did raise a few eyebrows, but it was deemed that changing the format so late into proceedings would skew the results.

Kenny continued to lead in Group 4, stretching his lead from a low of 2 points to a peak of 13, Alfie and Karl Selby never giving up the chase and the latter's experience really having shone through in the wet the day before.

Having been reduced to a single round due to the weather, the annual Too-woomba relay race was then held, allowing Colin time to calculate results and the start order for the next races. This event sees teams made up of one Group 2 and one Group 3 or 4 racer swapping batters on each lap until the chequered flag drops in the hope of winning the coveted boomerang trophy, all the way from the Australian town of Toowoomba. The Le Mans start caused issues for some, but soon all teams were off in the organised chaos

continued overleaf



World Champions: Graham Tibbenham, Sean Tanswell & Kenny Goodesmith (Ian Ratcliff)

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inherent in any BLMRA relay race! Kenny Goodesmith bravely opted to use this as his first opportunity to race a Group 2 and promptly planted Rodge's machine on its handlebars. Charlie Thurston's machine suffered from another chain failure, taking out his team. Ultimately Graham Tibbenham and Ross Challinor took the win – Ross having been part of the previous winning team in 2019 alongside Mike Cresswell.

The annual European Tractor Cup race took the form of 36 laps with starting position and time determined by World Championship results and saw Kenny run away with a 25 second lead over

the 20 minute duration, despite having started at the back. Rick Peacock took a firm second position 4 seconds ahead of Karl Selby, and Matt Nettleton and Les Pantry were the only other finishers, Carl Covey having only lasted 9 laps.

Following this, the Race of Champions was held, pitting the newly crowned Champions against each other in a 5 lap dash. Due to the speed differences

Group 2: Graham Tibbenham (194), Mike Cresswell (169), Paul Johnson (154)

Group 3: Sean Tanswell (197), Stu Johnson (185), Ross Challenor (182)

Group 4: Kenny Goodesmith (195), Karl Selby (184), Alfie Smith (179)

Full results are available at speedhive.mylaps.com/Events/2009143

Air Zimbabwe

Here's a gem from the archives relating to the first World Championships in 1986 as Brian Smith, recounts the story of the Air Zimbabwe mower racing team:

"When Jim Gavin says 'I've got an idea!'. You can see the colour drain from the faces of his friends and family.

"How about a World Lawn Mower Racing Championships?". I pointed out that teams from Hampshire, Surrey and Sussex could hardly qualify as WORLD. I quickly explained that as much as I would love to take part I was about to take a holiday in Zimbabwe.

Hardly pausing for breath, Jim's reply: "Excellent and don't come back without a team from Zimbabwe!".

Off I went on holiday.

Over a sundowner one evening with the cargo manager of Air Zimbabwe, I told him of Jim's idea. He looked over his specs and said "He ought to be locked up, you too"

The next day he phoned to say he had hand picked the team to take part in the World Championships and could I

provide a racing mower for them?

Air Zimbabwe were operating B707's between Gatwick and Harare arriving on Friday into Gatwick and leaving Sunday evening. Plenty of time to go lawn mower racing!

I painted my Group 2 in zebra stripes and affixed a notice to the grass box: On lease to Air Zimbabwe. I was very proud of it.

The great day arrived. Cecilia drove our mini to Billingshurst station to pick up the crew: Two Captains, one Flight Engineer and one Stewardess. A tight squeeze and even tighter returning them to the station.

They raced all day, immaculate in their white overalls. Amanda, the stewardess proved to be a natural. Celebrations took place in The Cricketers Arms in Wisborough Green. It was getting late when we threw them on the last train to Gatwick. Phew!

The next day I had a call from Roy, one of the Captains: "Hi, Brian - we want one!", I timidly replied "One what!". "A racing lawn mower of course"

Then the fun really started. The team would arrive on Air Zimbabwe with

between Groups, a start delay for each competitor is determined by average lap times over the weekend and consequently saw Graham Tibbenham given a 27 second head start. This proved to be enough to narrowly take the win, with Sean Tanswell managing to erode the lead to 1.271 seconds and Kenny Finishing just a quarter of a second behind him, despite having turned the fastest lap – a full 6.185 seconds faster than the leader.

Prizes were sponsored by U&I Entertainment (who along with Curve Games have created a Lawn Mowing Simulator) which included a box of goodies and a copy of the game for the winners, and tankards for all podium finishers.

As an added bonus, some of Dave Painter's footage from Saturday morning was picked up by the BBC and I have it on good authority that this was seen as far afield as the USA, which really is some going! Dave's footage can be found on Youtube at: <https://youtu.be/LEG7Pn6IV5U>

their own mower in the hold, spend the weekend racing and take all the bits back on Sunday evening.

I remember well their first 12hour race. Their pit area was made in the style of an African hut, with a canvas wash bowl, a bottle of sherry and glasses! Well, you've got to look after the drivers!

What a wonderful bunch they were. Many happy memories."

Toowoomba Trophy

In case you'd ever wondered, I'll give the final words of this edition to the late, great Jim Gavin:

"It came from Toowoomba, a town in Queensland, Australia.

About 30 years ago I had a phone call from there. It was the Dad of the Quinn (Quill? not sure!) family who were coming to England and wanted to see lawnmower racing.

They also wanted to buy, and give us, a cup. I suggested something more 'Australian' and thus they brought the trophy made from Eucalyptus wood and supposedly representing a boomerang".