



CUTTINGS

BRITISH LAWN MOWER RACING ASSOCIATION

As seems to have become very much the norm, I'll start with an apology, both for the lateness of this issue and for the absence of one at all in August or September; I did have an August Cuttings drafted, but with meetings coming thick and fast in late August and Early September, there was always an event sheet or something else to put together instead, and to be perfectly honest my mind has been elsewhere of late.

In my last draft I'd included here the usual musings about the British weather, the closeness of the Championships and the excitement over the races yet to run. Unfortunately as November has now pounced, most of that is now behind us (looking out the window, the weather is definitely still with us!) and we find ourselves looking forward to the 2022 season, hopefully with more of the normality that certainly seemed to creep into all but a few of the 2021 meetings.

With that out of the way, please take this as a warning that in this issue I've blown my self imposed two page limit out of the water. I believe the kids would say: #sorrynotsorry!

Graham

Five Oaks

Less than a week from our Early August event planned for Blindley Heath, we received a call from the landowner letting us know that due to inclement weather they had not yet been able to make hay from the field we were due to use. Although alarm bells did ring, rather than cancelling or postponing, we chose to move the event to Five Oaks. This was our fourth meeting under the shadow of a very poor forecast and so far we'd been lucky every time.

What's the worst that could happen?

Well, I'm no stranger to being towed into a race field (my van just needs to sniff a little moisture in the grass and it gets stuck), but as I became the second and by no means the last person to have their rig sink to the axles, it became clear that we may be in for a tough weekend.

Following more rain on Friday night, the ground felt soft underfoot, and as practice got underway we quickly discovered that beneath the soft skin lay even softer slush. Practice was paused and the track substantially rearranged to try to avoid the worst of it, ultimately resulting in the decision to cut short practice and just proceed with racing - so that at the very least Group 2 would have chance to complete one race!

The first round of heats were a bit of a challenge, but relatively uneventful, so the decision was taken to launch straight into the first championship rounds to get one of these in the bag. By this time the surface was starting to break, leading to a number of hero to zero moments as racers went from win-



Mark Robinson proves that he still has it at the 555.

ning to wading (something that we would be seeing a lot more of!).

There was then a short break whilst we considered how to proceed. This led to more track alterations and a move to a clockwise direction, swapping the relatively fast downhill section into marshy uphill struggle for a marshy downhill slog to a drier uphill crawl, also removing the outside blocks from this section, since it was proving impossible to reuse racing lines.

Another round of heats preceded another championship round, again attempting to make hay whilst the sun shined (and it did shine! The surface started to dry a little, but it was too little too late).

With only four races completed by

continued overleaf

555

Now appropriately a battle to win the Matt Cable cup, several BLMRA teams made the trip West to race with the WMLMRA at their annual 555 event near Tenbury Wells, which, following a committee to committee chat, took place on the weekend we had set aside for a 12 hour.

Ultimately BLMRA teams took First and Third spot, with Going Commando taking the win from WMLMRA locals AR Racing by just one lap with 262 & 261 a piece. Not far behind was Who's Tanswell Racing who similarly took third from The Chirotractor, turning 256 & 255 laps respectively.

As far as we know Mark Robinson has not yet come down off the back wheels...



Action at the Double Four on the August Bank Holiday

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each group to this point, numbers were already starting to dwindle – more from despondency than from anything technical. Two further rounds of heats were completed, which saw offs for Scott Farrar and Les Pantry as humps and tram lines started to form that caused mowers kick and buck.

Following a quick surprise party buffet to celebrate Abigail Clegg's 18th birthday, a 15 minute endurance race was run to ensure that box was ticked. This saw 12 entrants and 9 finishers; Christian Belcher (243) was the only finisher in Group 2, Pete Sque (32) took Group 3 from Kev Edden (96) and Les Pantry (12) with no other finishers, and Alfie Smith (27) beat Karl Selby (44) by less than a second with Algirdas Mocijunas (5) taking the third spot in Group 4.

Once the rain had subsided a little, a member's open forum was held and this led into a frank discussion about Sunday's forecast and the viability of racing. On the realisation that our biggest challenge was going to be leaving the field, and with a full day of rain promised commencing mid-morning, members were consulted and the decision was taken to cancel Sunday all together.

Due to the low number of races undertaken, there were joint prizes awarded

in each group, which this time were engraved glass tankards (unfortunately prepared before the venue was changed). As a rare treat, a very deserving Dave Jackman (65) won Group 2, Jenson Cresswell (158) beat his dad to second and Mike Cresswell (58) & Christian Belcher (243) shared third. In Group 3, Pete Sque (32) & Sean Tanswell (18) shared the win, Stu Johnson (8) took second and Dean Fuller (43) third. Alfie Smith (27) once again won Group 4, with Gary Botting (9) & Dan Godden (139) sharing second and Karl Selby (44) taking the third spot.

Several campers opted to cut their weekend short and leave right away, which created work for Sean Tanswell and Les Pantry, the former burying his Land Rover to its axles trying to extract Scott Farrar's van from the bog and the latter taking a few thousand miles off his clutch extracting Sean.

Sunday morning saw much of the same, but having seen the successes and failures of the previous evening, everyone eventually got out safely. A massive thanks to all those who offered a push, or put their four wheel drive to use getting everyone in and out of the field. For those who didn't break down on the way home, it really could have been a lot worse. I envy you :)

Channel Islands

Some of you may have seen Karl Selby's posts on Facebook from the Channel Islands, including his very impressive crash following a stub axle failure.

Somewhat isolated from the shores of Blighty and its tax laws, the Channel Islands have developed quite a motorsport scene, hosting rallies, road races, hill climbs, and even the Jersey International Motoring Festival.

On the lighter side of motorsport, Banger Racing events used to be held in St. Sampson's harbour, Guernsey, during low tide, and most importantly there is now a mower racing club, who's members we have seen at various events, including our own 12 hour, Red Bull and the Finnish ice race.

Famously, cars are banned from the 2.1 square mile island of Sark, so where better to race mowers?! The annual event involves an endurance race and hill climb.

We wish Karl a speedy recovery and look forward to seeing more from CILMRA events and to seeing them on these shores again soon!

Double Four

Unfortunately I didn't attend the Double Four and nobody has volunteered to write a report, so apologies for this being a bit brief!

Endurance fans really lucked out in the change of venues, which proved to be an ideal location for the event.

This was our first visit to Blindley Heath, which is the home of the Cowpie Show and was to be our season opener in 2020.

Possibly owing to the cancellation of this year's 12 hour, entries were stronger than in recent years, with 17 in total, three in Groups 2 & 3, nine in Group 4 and two Tourists.

The track was a little under half a mile in length and made full use of the space not occupied by campers.

All mowers recorded finishes on both days with 225 laps covered by the winners on Saturday and 273 on the Sunday.

Saturday winners were tourists "Who's Going Commando", with a little over 25 seconds separating them from Group 4 winners "Balls Out Racing". "Who's Tanswell Racing" took the win for Group 3 and "CP Racing" Group 2.

On Sunday "Balls Out Racing" managed to take both the overall win and Group 4, with "Mower With Attitude" winning Group 3, "CP Racing" Group 2 and "Who's Going Commando" Tourist, though much further down the pack overall.

Thankfully feedback from racers and the landowner has been very positive, so hopefully this venue will become a regular feature on the calendar!

Final results for the weekend:

Group 4:

498 laps—Balls Out Racing

487 laps—Get Set Mow

470 laps—Snail Speed Racing

Group 3:

488 laps—Mower With Attitude

475 laps—Who's Tanswell Racing

458 laps—Mow Fear Racing

Group 2:

363 laps—CP Racing

296 laps—Funrat Racing

159 laps—The Lost Boys

Tourist:

422 laps—Who's Going Commando

239 laps—Cranium Racing

Codicote

With so many shows cancelled over the last couple of years, Codicote came as something of welcomed return to the norm, particularly in the sense that we had public on the other side of the rope and access to all the attractions (and distractions) that come with a show.

Usually a July fixture, the village day committee elected to postpone to September to give the best chance of dodging COVID restrictions.

As usual Codicote village day is a one day affair, starting around midday with a parade (this year without the floats) and ending with live music in the beer tent until late. On Saturday we're relegated to our little corner, but on Sunday we get to make full use of the lower half of the field—something that was sadly lacking on our last visit, as running the World Championships precluded making any major changes to the track.

As our last sprint event of the season it hosted the final four rounds of the British Championship for each Group and also the last chance to score points in the Endurance Championship. It therefore boasted a good turnout, with six in Group 2, eleven Group 3s, nineteen Group 4s and following several expressions of interest from further afield, one tourist entry.

The ground at this venue tends to be rock solid and is quite flinty, but the recent weather made conditions slightly unusual in that it was a tiny bit softer and a lot more grippy. One who may well disagree with this is Kevin Edden, who after 7 laps of practice, lost verticality and hit the ground with a thud. Unfortunately he broke his collar bone and spent most of Saturday in hospital, before an evening's recuperation in the beer tent and an early morning trip to the train station. Thanks to all who helped pack Kev up and to the Johnsons for taking his van back West!

Saturday's track saw anti-clockwise racing and had a layout similar to previous years, with a left right chicane at the end of the start finish straight into a left handed hairpin. Up a slight slope to a right hander and then a sweeping left decreasing into a very tight left at the crowd line, a short straight ending with a right and another left-handed hairpin led back onto the start finish straight.

The track was tight and the racing was close, favouring those capable of better

Rules and Regs

We're not proposing to make any major changes to the rule book for 2022, but as usual at this time of year, our November Committee meeting will see us poring through it line by line to make sure it's still relevant, clear and any observations made during the 2021 season are captured.

If there is a rule you think we're missing, or one you think needs a coat of looking at, please speak to one of us or drop us an email on committee@blmra.co.uk.



Group 2 showing how it's done at Codicote

cornering than flat out speed. Saturday consisted five heats, two sets of championship rounds and the final 30 minute round of the endurance championship. Later rounds began to suffer somewhat from dust (which was unfortunately blown Easterly into the show), but certainly not to levels we've experienced previously.

Sunday's track was similar in the main, except for a change of direction and the addition of a long downhill loop which took the place of Saturday's tightening left, swept right around a telegraph pole before heading back up hill and joining at Saturday's first hairpin. This configuration added around 10 seconds to lap times and changed the dynamic somewhat to the benefit of those with straight line speed.

The plan had been to run the horn race over the course of this weekend, which is usually an event we hold only at The Great Maze in Essex, which didn't feature on our calendar this year, it happened however that the horn was only sounded on the Sunday. Consequently racing on Sunday consisted two rounds of heats, two sets of championship rounds, six and seven minute horn races, and concluded with a free-for-all session allowing racers to swap machines.

The cementing of the Championship positions went right down to the wire,

which was made slightly more exciting by a shower before the final round, which really did mix things up, the ground remaining very grippy, but gaining an extra bit of slip in places—some gambling on a gear change, others agonising over an “if it ain't broke” stance.

Ultimately the first place trophies went to (123) Graham Tibbenham, (18) Sean Tanswell & (27) Alfie Smith for Groups 2, 3 & 4 respectively. (70) Roger Knowlson, (43) Dean Fuller & (63) Richard Atherton scored seconds and (58) Mike Cresswell, (8) Stuart Johnson & (139) Dan Godden took the remaining spots on the podium. Unfortunately our guests had a very frustrating weekend and so there were no race finishes recorded in the Tourist class.

We were also visited by Reuben Owen of Channel Five's “Our Yorkshire Farm” (yes Ian!) on Sunday. He took a real shine to Carl Williams' Group 4 (and turned down the chance to try a Group 2, so doesn't know what he's missing), racing alongside our members and being schooled by Pugs on camera.

This aired as part of “This Week on the Farm” on October 13th and no doubt will be available ‘On Demand’ for some time.

As I say, he really enjoyed his day and is keen to give the 12 hour a go, so we hope to see him again very soon!

October Event

I realise at this point there is no sense in bolting the stable door, as the horse has already escaped, hitch hiked its way out of the county and set up a new life under an alternative identity; but our October event, that was to host the World Championships, has been cancelled.

Obviously the date we had pencilled in has come and gone, but I just wanted to confirm what has become somewhat obvious: that this is a cancellation and not a postponement, and also give you a little background.

Things initially started going downhill when we found ourselves struggling for a venue, and although this wasn't entirely insurmountable, we knew that a mis-step here could seriously affect the event's ability to be successful both in terms of racing and to break even financially—the World Championships already being one of our less popular events— and like it or lump it, the bottom line is something we kept a very careful eye on this season.

This meeting is also a more difficult one to organise, with the non-stop nature of the racing requiring a larger team of helpers than a normal sprint meeting. With various things clashing or threatening to clash with this meeting, the committee was already looking to be short on numbers.

Then there is the spectre of the weather, which is always a worry at this point in the year and is something that makes venue choice critical, but could ultimately cause us to cancel at the last minute and lose everything.

In hindsight, maybe you'll agree that it was the right decision to have made, both because of the weather and the madness that swept forecourts of the country, which I don't think any of us could have foreseen. It's certainly something that would have seriously hit numbers and put non-locals at a major disadvantage!

Testing Testing

Conscious that options are still limited, both in terms of which approved engines are available and what engines are available to approve, the committee intends to run another dyno session in the near future.

Our intention is to retest the current crop of engines in this session to ensure that we are comparing apples with apples and being as scientific as we possibly can. We have also considered renting a professional dyno session for this very reason, but are struggling to find someone with vertical capability, as most are set up for kart engines.

We are not looking to approve any engine with more power than those already approved, but if there is an engine you'd like to supply for testing, or you know of a test house that could help us out, please get in touch.

As you know, earlier this year we purchased a batch of the elusive Loncin 413 to ensure a ready supply, keep your costs down and ensure that any profits go straight back into the club.

Many of you have taken advantage of this, with several already pressed into service. We have very nearly sold this batch so please get in quick by contacting engines@blmra.co.uk.

2022 Calendar

You'll be pleased to hear that work is already underway to secure venues for the 2022 season.

Whilst there isn't a lot to report just yet, we've already had a number of landowner confirmations including the Cowpie Show at Blindley Heath on 8th May and Heddington & Stockley in Wiltshire on 2nd and 3rd of July. Cowpie is a one day show and we had previously agreed the use of the field on the remainder of the weekend, much as we would at Codicote and we're hopeful that this is still the case.

Speaking of Codicote, unfortunately for the first time since 2014 we will not be part of their event in 2022. We've not been given a reason at this time, so can't tell you why, or whether this is permanent!

As always, we'll keep you posted.

AGM

We've pencilled in our 2021 AGM for early in the New Year and fully intend this to be a physical meeting incorporating the Championship trophy presentations.

We will let you know details as soon as they are settled.

2021 Championships

As we entered into the final sprint meeting of the season, the British Championships were tantalisingly close in all Groups, with 18, 39 & 23 separating the top two in 2, 3 & 4 respectively meaning that it was still anyone's game.

After some very tense moments at Codicote where the top three positions in each group really could have gone to anyone, the scores have now been cemented and are shown below. As is the norm, each racer's four lowest scoring finishes over the season have been dropped, noting that rounds 15 & 16, which would have been raced at Five Oaks, were void and are not included in this drop.

With only two breaks since the British Championship's 1979 inception, due to COVID and Foot & Mouth, it's great to see another year in the bag and fantastic to see two first time winners—something we haven't seen since 2008!

This year we 'rebooted' the endurance championship, using a series of longer animal races as the main point scoring vehicle. Again, this Championship was all to play for going in to Codicote, Les taking the overall win by tactically borrowing a Group 2 for the final round and ensuring maximum points were scored! All, as they say, is fair in love and war...

A massive congratulations to all our Champions!

Group 2 (British Championship)

1. Graham Tibbenham (377)
2. Mike Cresswell (366)
3. Roger Knowlson (315)

Group 3 (British Championship)

1. Dean Fuller (364)
2. Sean Tanswell (335)
3. Stuart Johnson (334)

Group 4 (British Championship)

1. Alfie Smith (398)
2. Gary Botting (306)
3. Kenny Goodesmith (239)

Endurance Championship

1. Les Pantry (44)
2. Pete Sque (42)
3. Alfie Smith (36)
4. Gary Botting (34)
5. Karl Selby (28)
6. Charlie Thurston (24)
7. Christian Belcher (24)
8. Kenny Goodesmith (18)
9. Graham Tibbenham (18)
10. Roger Knowlson (18)