

Out of the Mist. Christmas 2007

Chairman's Report: Jim Hunter

I was browsing through one of Wainright's guides to walking the Lakeland Fells where I came across a route he describes which starts from the north side of Derwent Water and makes it's way up Cat Bells. "Silence is always more profound in places where there was once noise" is how he describes the quiet of the route as it takes you through disused mine workings. It made me think about that eerie stillness that seems to descend on the Island once the last visitors have left after race week. I should imagine that there were a good few riders going home this year feeling very disappointed that for the first time ever a MGP race had been cancelled. I do actually know exactly how you feel because I was down to ride in the 1987 Production TT, which to this day remains the only TT race ever to be cancelled. All that time, effort, expense and then having to live with all the 'what might of beens' until you get the chance to have a go again.

For me, there were lots of positives to come out of this year's event. Bright new stars like Olie Lindsdell who rode with such precision and maturity to take victories in the Newcomers (by a record 13-and-a-half minutes) and Ultra Lightweight. The great sportsmanship that was evident between Keith Costello and Joe Phillips as organisers changed their mind about who had actually claimed the last podium spot in the Ultra Lightweight class. We had some big accidents, but no fatal ones and it's been a few years since we have been able to say that. It was great to see Chairman of the Manx Motorcycle Club, Bill Bennett at our AGM and for members to have the opportunity to quiz him first hand about organisational aspects of the races. We welcomed two new members to the Committee of the Association in Neil Kent and Hew Huws both of whom are very much involved in what's going on in the paddock so I am delighted to have them on board. A big thank you to Keith Heckles for all his support over the years. Keith has decided to stand down from the committee, his position of Vice Chairman being taken by John McBride. Thanks mainly to the efforts of Barry and Barbara Wood, Bob Simmons got some most well deserved recognition for becoming the first person to compete in the MGP for forty consecutive years - a story which was featured by the BBC as part of their 'North West Tonight' programme. The lasting image for me from this year's Manx will be Chris Swallow rounding Sulby Bridge on his Ducati Desmo. Chris is the first person I have ever seen turn up for scrutineering on a skateboard and somehow, when he did, I failed to make the association between him and his dad, Bill. Out on the track however, there was no mistaking he is a Swallow. Not only did he look identical to his dad (with the exception of the full face helmet), he seemed to sit on his bike in exactly the same way, take the same line, brake just as late and get down behind the fairing just the same. Uncanny! Sadly for us Travelling Marshals, Brett Gaites decided to hang up his leathers at the end of this year's Manx after supporting the Manx, TT, Southern 100 and Jurby Road races for the last 30 odd years. I am sure all members (especially all those who have benefited from his expertise) would like to join me in saying a big thank you to Brett and hope that we continue to see him involved in the races in some capacity.

Change of eligibility

I think the changes that the Manx Motorcycle Club have made to the eligibility of the Lightweight and Ultra Lightweight races are excellent and will hopefully do something to address the worrying decline in the number of starters we have seen in these classes over recent years. I wish I could feel as positive about the changes to the TT race programme. The biggest criticism from the people who support the races by coming to the Island to watch them seems to have been that all the races are the same to watch - the same riders on the same four cylinder machines. So why put on another Junior race for 600 machines? What is the point anyway? Left up to me I would put a Classic TT race on to replace the parade lap and have a similar rule to the newly introduced eligibility for the Lightweight Manx, preventing recent TT replica winners competing in the Classic Manx. This would also address the concerns of a lot of Classic Manx riders I spoke to who were unhappy about the amount of money some TT 'stars' were being paid to ride in the classic races and how this was affecting the replica winning time. As for Lightweight TT races on the Billown Circuit?? As much as I enjoy going down South to watch the races, there is no denying you get some pretty big accidents down there, which go relatively unreported in stark contrast to the public outcry that follows any incident on the Mountain Circuit. So why jepordise road racing on the Island for the sake of re labeling the Steam Packet races as a TT race? What do you think?

Spirit of the Manx

Who will follow in the footsteps of Spooner, Cudworth and Hickey? As you know, the 'Spirit of the Manx' award is all about recognising sportsmanship, endeavour and commitment. It's up to you as a member of the Association to make your nomination (just fill in the attached slip) - you can nominate any rider who intends to ride in the 2008 MGP.

Spirit of the Manx

Sportsmanship, endeavour, commitment

An award for 2008, to be presented by the MGPPRA during the 2008 races.

Eligibility: Any rider still competing in the Manx, likely to be competing in the 2008 races.

NOMINATION FORM

I wish to nominate the following rider for the "Spirit of the Manx" award

Name: _____

He/she deserves the award because: _____

My Name: _____

Return this nomination form to:

Jim Hunter,
5 King Orry Place,
Glen Vine,
Marown
Isle of Man
IM4 4EP

By the end of April 2008

To try and raise a bit of cash for the Association last year we launched a 'Standing order' scheme to allow members to make a small contribution to the Association funds on a regular basis. The response was pretty awful with only myself and one other member subscribing. We discussed the idea at the AGM and decided to give it another go. Any money raised will be ploughed straight back into trying to raise the profile of the Association, support the costs associated with the newsletter, subsidising the cost of injured riders attending any of our social functions etc. If you would like to contribute in some way the standing order form is attached to the reverse of the last page. It will only take you a second to fill in, then just hand it in at your bank or building society. It was also suggested that a small percentage of any money raised would go into a draw to be made at our annual 'get together in the beer tent' held during Manx week, so will give that a go this year.

I had a very enjoyable conversation with Scottish member, Roy Mitchell during this year's Manx while I was on duty down at Douglas Road corner. I asked him where he had been watching on previous days and he said he had been to Gorseleigh after reading Jim Hunter's article in the TT edition of 'Out of the Mist'. "Jim Hunter", I said, "that's me". Even more bizarrely Roy went on to explain how earlier in the day when he was at the start line he had been talking to a gentleman who goes around with his wife and a long haired Jack Russell on the back of his Ariel Huntmaster. "Oh" I said, "that'll be my Dad, Jim Hunter senior!".

Have a great Christmas and wishing you a safe, successful and prosperous new year.

Hopefully see you out and about at some point,

Jim

Secretary's Report: Keith Trubshaw

The Manx was a good meeting but unfortunately spoilt by the weather, that's nothing new you may say !! The Senior Race had to be cancelled because of poor weather conditions on the Mountain. After the event there was quite a large amount of controversy as to whether (excuse the pun) the Race could have been run on the Saturday. I am on the Committee of the TT Marshals Association and I know that there was a great amount of effort to try to run the event but it was known that many marshals were booked on the boat for Friday evening or Saturday and so there would have been huge shortfalls in various sections of the Course meaning that the Race would not have started anyway. This was a big disappointment for everybody but especially for the ones who only had one ride !!!

Since the Manx you may have heard of the latest "problem". For reasons known only to some (and not me), the Manx Motorcycle Club will not be running the TT in 2008. It will be run by ACU Events, I only hope that this is a good thing for the TT, let's hope that they are enthusiastic and we have a good TT2008.

We have quite a few new members :- Simon Perkin from France, Steve Green from Denbigh, Jimmy Aspinall from Rhyl, Peter Symes from Tamworth, Neil Wood from Ramsey and Clifford Baker from the USA. With a Rider's usual meticulous organisation, Neil saw me before the AGM (that's 26th August 2007), rushed back to his impeccable filing system (the dash board of his van) and retrieved his application form for the MGPR (dated 12th February 2007) saying "I've been meaning to send you this, Keith".

Well, welcome Neil and I hope you enjoy being a member !!!!!

"The powers that be" proposed a dramatic modification to Governors Bridge. The new road would have a more gentle curve at The Nook and then head off to Governors on a wider, straighter road than the present one. At first I understood that this would form a sort of dual carriageway, TT Course up and new road down but then I believe that the idea was to replace the old road with the new, even for Racing !! Luckily the plan was rejected by Tynwald and so it is unlikely to be completed by TT2008. The other change should be complete though. This is Braddan Bridge, which will be converted, for normal traffic, into two roundabouts. Hopefully the TT Course will not be affected too much.

Well I always wish you a Happy Christmas and I do so this year. I usually comment about Christmas presents in the form of Motor Bikes but this year I need more DIY tools !! My son has bought a house in Douglas which needs rather a lot of work !!! Never mind, the position is good, just off Bray Hill.

All The Best

Keith Trubshaw

Spirit of the Manx: Ian Hickey

JUST A QUICK NOTE TO SAY HOW PROUD I FELT WHEN I HEARD I HAD WON THE SPIRIT OF THE MANX AWARD, THE MGP HAS BEEN A MAJOR PART OF MY LIFE FOR THE LAST EIGHTEEN YEARS, IT IS WITHOUT A DOUBT THE BEST MOTORCYCLE RACE MEETING IN THE WORLD.

AFTER 18 YEARS AND 21 SILVER REPLICAS LATER I WAS FULLY PREPARED TO RETIRE FROM RACING (MAINLY DUE TO ACU LICENCE LAWS) AS I HAD REACHED MY PERSONAL GOAL OF 20 REPS, BUT AFTER RECEIVING THE AWARD I AM NOW STRONGLY RE-THINKING MY OPTIONS, AND FEEL QUITE STRONGLY ABOUT RETURNING ON ANOTHER 400 OR CLASSIC RIDE (IF I CAN FIND ONE "HINT HINT").

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK EVERYONE INVOLVED IN THE SET UP AND RUNNING OF THE EVENT, WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO ROGER HURST AND ALL THE MARSHALLS WHO WERE UNDER EXTREME PRESSURE AND WORRIES AFTER THE TT, THEY ARE ONE OF THE MAIN INGREDIENTS IN THE RUNNING OF THE MANX AND SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED.

AFTER SPEAKING WITH ROGER ON THE FRIDAY IT WAS CLEAR THAT HE WAS UNDER GREAT PRESSURE, AND WAS VERY SAD THAT HE COULD NOT RUN THE SENIOR RACE ON THE SATURDAY, THANKS AGAIN ROGER FOR ALL THE WORK YOU PUT INTO THE MGP. I WILL BE TRYING TO RECRUTE SOME MARSHALLS FROM THE BEMSSEE RACE CLUB BY SPREADING LEAFLETS AROUND TO AS MANY AS I CAN.

THANKS FOR A GREAT 18 YEARS
IAN HICKEY

NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS

Five times TT winner **Robert Dunlop** is set to make a Mountain Course return next year in the Junior Classic race. Micro will ride the same Terry Teece owned 350 Aermacchi that Joey rode in his only MGP appearance back in 1994. The bike is currently undergoing modifications to enable Robert to use a thumb operated front brake. Apparently the bike is now turning out 44bhp (compared to the 38bhp it was kicking out when Joey rode it to second behind Bob Heath back in 1994) and is also considerably lighter. World Classic Motorcycle Champion, Glen English will be part of the team in an advisory and technical capacity.

Robert's last MGP appearance was in 1983 when he famously led home Steve Hislop and Ian Lougher in the 350 Newcomers race.

Neil Cudworth who was injured in a practice crash at Alpine Cottage this year is now back at work and planning a fund raising 'Skittles Night' on 2nd February. All money raised will go to charities which support motorcycle racing. Further details from George Ridgeon: george.ridgeon.bowls@blueyonder.co.uk

We remember:

Geoff Cannell

Geoff died suddenly following in a stroke on Monday 24th September. He is probably best remembered by MGPRAs members for his expert commentary of the races from Ballacraine, Ballaugh and the start line.

Geoff's fascination with motorcycling was probably inspired by his father Jack who rode in the MGP. Geoff was an accomplished rider himself competing in motocross, enduro and winning the Isle of Man centre trials championship. Along with the late Peter Kneale, his knowledge of the TT and MGP was the stuff of legend. In the event of race delays, the two could fill whatever time there was with interesting and entertaining chat, covering every aspect of racing around the mountain circuit. Geoff leaves a wife, Lynda, and a daughter, Zoe.

Allan Robinson

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Allan Robinson. Allan was of course a great supporter of racing on the mountain circuit and instrumental in organising the TT parade laps. Allan was a past president of the MGPRAs and chairman for two years.

Russ Evans

Russ rode in the Manx during the 1970's and 80's. Russ promoted motorcycling in South Wales, where he was chairman off the Port Talbot MCC, race secretary for the Llandow circuit and played a big part in setting up Pembrey as a race circuit.

Dear Jim, I think that people who have done the TT should be allowed back in the MGP provided they are not top riders i.e. riders who have finished in the top 25 places say. If they are in the top 25 at the TT then they can't return to the MGP that year. If a year on, they can't get top 25 or don't do the TT then let them back in the MGP.

I also think that past winners should be allowed in. Let's face it there is no 125cc, 400cc, 250cc TT and the chance are the Junior and Senior winners will be fast riders who want to move on anyway. Then after the next few years after winning it they become slower they will fall out of the top 25 and should be allowed back in the Manx.

Neil Kent. Lightweight MGP runner up. MGPRAs Committee member.

The **Ginger Hall Hotel**, Sulby, has been put up for sale. The pub's name dates back to the 1790s when the licensee apparently brewed his own ginger brew on the premises. The present building replaced the original one, which was gutted by fire in 1888.

White lines are paddock's hot topic. The unanimous opinion of riders interviewed on Manx Radio after completing their races was that the white line road markings were lethal. Vastly experienced Jimmy Creer said 'The newly painted white lines on the mountain are absolutely treacherous in the wet. I had a number of worrying slides and just about everyone else I have spoken to did too.' Dave Sells added 'You have no option but to cross the white lines in places. I was lucky to stay on at the 33rd - lock to lock with both feet off the pegs. Early leader in the Lightweight race, Brian Spooner, revealed some hair raising moments and suggested it was the worst he had seen in 14 years of racing on the course. Eventual Lightweight runner up Neil Kent had a huge slide at the Les Graham Memorial and admitted to frightening himself witless.

Manx Grand Prix 2007 gave Island tourism a boost by attracting approximately 9,000 visitors over the two-week festival. This year's event proved to be the most successful in recent years with a 25% increase on last year including almost 3,500 bikes. The success of the MGP follows the hugely successful centenary TT races in June of this year.

Change of eligibility for Lightweight and Ultra Lightweight races 2008. The Manx Motor Cycle Club Ltd is pleased to announce that previous winners of Newcomers, Classic, Lightweight and Ultra Lightweight MGP Races and riders who have previously competed in the TT races will be eligible to enter the Lightweight and Ultra Lightweight Races in 2008 provided they have not qualified to start in any TT solo race on the TT Mountain Course in the last 3 years and have not won a silver replica in any TT solo race on the TT Mountain Course in the last 6 years.

Riders who have qualified to start in any round of any road racing world championship will not be eligible for any Manx Grand Prix race except for the Classic races. Previous winners of Junior and Senior Manx Grand Prix Races will not be eligible. Previous winners of Newcomers, Classic, Lightweight, and Ultra Lightweight will be eligible to enter the Junior and Senior Manx Grand Prix Races in 2008.

The Ultra Lightweight Race and Newcomers C class in 2008 will also include 4 stroke 2 cylinder machines up to 650cc in addition to the 125cc and 400cc machines that have been eligible in the past.

Riders otherwise eligible for the Manx Grand Prix will not be excluded solely by reason of having competed in the TT Races on the Billown Circuit.

Flying Scotsman. Dromoak's Ewan Hamilton won a second Lightweight Classic Manx in three years when he rode his 250 Suzuki to victory. Having rebuilt the engine and clutch of his machine overnight, he suffered no problems on the day and finished 1 minute 3.9 seconds in front of Blackpool's Peter Richardson, the 63-year-old father of Roy Richardson who won the 350cc Class of the same race.

Blackpool Rock. Roy Richardson from Blackpool won his fifth Manx Grand Prix 10 years to the day after his first when he stormed to take the laurels in the Junior Classic. Riding a 350 Honda for Isle of Man sponsor Martin Bullock, he beat Ulsterman Ryan Farquhar on a similar machine by 41 seconds with Chris McGahan completing a Honda 1-2-3 another 27 seconds down.

Message from The TTMA Chairman, Roger Hurst, following this year's MGP

The premature end to the Manx Grand Prix was disappointing, but congratulations to all the Chief Sector Marshals and their Deputies for the huge effort they put into moving marshals around to achieve minimum manning levels throughout the entire meeting. During this years events we have had 356 Novice marshals sign on, 138 during TT 2007 of which 50 still have novice status, 255 during MGP 2007 of which 151 are still novices. Of these 151 we have yet to receive their record cards. Many more will have completed the necessary sessions to loose the novice status as well.

Message from The Clerk of the Course, Neil Hanson, following this year's MGP

While we knew that retirements after the Centenary TT would make it difficult to achieve full marshalling cover for the MGP, we did not know of the problems that the Police investigation would cause. This meant a massive effort to fill the gaps, and I want to thank and congratulate Roger, Janet, Nicki and all who worked so hard to achieve minimum manning levels as well as all the Sector Marshals, Deputies and Marshals for their efforts during a difficult fortnight when foot and mouth precautions and weather added to our difficulties. While the cancellation of the Senior Race was a big disappointment, particularly to riders, we have to be thankful that the MGP took place at all. Thank you all for making it possible.

This year **Bob Simmons** became the first rider ever to compete in the Manx Grand Prix for forty consecutive years. He first competed on the TT Mountain course in 1968 and I has not missed a year since. Bob said "I work hard on my fitness over the year and keep my bike in good condition but the most important thing is concentration. You have to stay very focused to do well in qualification and ultimately the races. From a classic racing point of view, I would say that slight changes to the course and the road surface have made the course slightly quicker over the years, but it still takes the same level of determination to compete. The best part of the MGP is undoubtedly the friendly atmosphere. The more experienced riders will always help out the new comers, offering advise on where they are going wrong or improvements they can make. It's a bug that gets into you and it is with you for the rest of your life. My ultimate goal is to enjoy the challenge and to achieve the perfect lap".

Posted on the BBC web site:

Chris Block. Well done. I will pass on your info to my neighbour Ron Gray of Snodland, who this year enjoyed his 5th visit. He is unwell and this will bring him pleasure.

Donny. A fantastic achievement bob all the best for the future

Vernon. Bob is a fantastic rider who rode as well as he could on a bike that was far inferior to today's machinery.

Jim Hunter. Congratulations Bob. Wishing you an enjoyable and successful race.

Martin Crooks. Wow Bob, I knew you had been at the Manx for a few years, but 40 years running is a brilliant record. Well done and have a great time this year.

Bob Peck. I thought I had done well with 26 Consecutive TT Lap Honours/Classic lap. (TOP MAN) See you in the beer Tent. Good Luck Bob

Haz. 40 years is a long time. Good luck this year Bob.

Sarah. Just to make it round once is an achievement. 40 years running is bonkers.

Jane Yates. Brilliant. 40 Years that is incredible, all the best for this year.

Local Rider. That is an amazing achievement Bob. Congratulations and good luck this year.

George Ridgeon. My 1st ride was 1971 and agree let the speed come it has been great have been part mof the Manx with you Bob well done.

New organisational structure for the TT. The new structure has been created by the Isle of Man Government Department of Tourism and Leisure with the aim of bringing together the main bodies with a role in the event to ensure the long-term success and security of the TT. The TT Races Co-ordinating Committee will have overall responsibility for the successful delivery of the TT festival, with the racing organised by ACU Events Ltd. The new Co-ordinating Committee will include the DTL, the Isle of Man Department of Home Affairs, the Isle of Man Constabulary, the Isle of Man Department of Transport, the Isle of Man TT Marshals Association and senior race officials. As part of the new organisation, and following the Manx Motor Cycle Club's resignation on September 27th, the DTL has appointed ACU Events Ltd as race organiser. ACU Events Ltd will work with experienced officials from across the Island's motorcycling clubs to assemble a team to organise and co-ordinate the race organisation.

TT veteran John Barton has joined the Isle of Man Government's Department of Tourism and Leisure as a Rider Liaison Officer. He will work alongside TT winner Richard 'Milky' Quayle as part of the DTL's TT team. John's job will be to act as a liaison between teams, riders, race officials and promoters. The liaison officers also work closely with TT newcomers, helping them to understand the course and race conditions. In addition, John, 38, will assist in promoting the TT at relevant events around the world, including PR work. John made his TT debut in the 1989 125cc race. During his Isle of Man racing career he scored two podium finishes - second in 1997 Singles TT and third in 2000 Singles TT.

Support the Riders' Association Support the Riders' Association Support the Riders'

Any money raised will be ploughed straight back into trying to raise the profile of the Association, support the costs associated with the newsletter, subsidising the cost of injured riders attending any of our social functions etc. If you would like to contribute in some way just complete the form below and take to your bank or building society.
 A small percentage of any money raised would go into a draw to be made at our annual 'get together in the beer tent' during Manx Grand Prix week

Manx Grand Prix Riders Association: Standing Order Form				
To: <i>(insert your bank's name)</i>				
Please set up the following Standing Order and debit my/ our account accordingly				
Account Details: <i>(insert your account details)</i>				
Account Name				
Branch holding account				
Sort Code:				
Account Number:				
Payee details:				
Name of Account:	Manx Grand Prix Riders Association			
Payment Reference:	Donation			
Sort Code:	55-91-00			
Account Number:	10819827			
About the payment:				
	Weekly	Monthly	Half yearly	Annually
How often the payments are to be made: <i>(tick box)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Date and amount of first payment				£
Date and amount of ongoing payment <i>(if different from first payment)</i>				£
Choose one of the following options:				
1. Date and amount of final payment, or				£
2. Until further notice <i>(tick box)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Confirmation				Date
Customer's Signature				