STANTHORPE "BIG CHILL" 2011

A weekend of great racing, great weather & time with great friends. The 2011 Stanthorpe Big Chill was for me a great weekend both from a race organizers point of view & also from a personal racing perspective.

Things however did not get off to a great start with delays caused by the late arrival of some necessary paperwork & then when the ambulance was late arriving I was beginning to think it was not going to be a good weekend. After the practice sessions got underway only 10 minutes late the weekend ran extremely well from then on. Many thanks must firstly go to the many volunteers, Flag Marshalls, Scrutineers (Gary Baker, Ray Clacher & Doug Aitchison), our head officials, Race Steward Ralph Freeman, Race Secretary Paul Borowinski, Club Treasurer & race Starter Glynn Leitch & Clerk of the Course Bryan Tricklebank. Also special thanks to one of our newer recruits Assistant Clerk of the Course Chrissy Lewis. Chrissy did a great job of organizing the flaggies right down to ordering their lunches as well as filling in for Glynn as race starter while he was competing in the Regularity event. Also Stanthorpe local Rusty Pierini who swept the track on Sunday morning with the tractor sweeper (which made him late for scrutineering !!!) which gave us a much cleaner & safer surface for the weekends racing. Another important volunteer was new member Rex Dell who I conned into standing guard almost all day on Sunday to control traffic & pedestrians on pit lane.

One of the main highlights of this years event was certainly the Regularity event with a capacity field of 20 machines. Machines from 1939 right up to 1980 were represented with several active racing club members, members who don't normally race & many new to the club able to give their prized machines a run on a great racetrack. Long time member & current Club treasurer Glynn Leitch was the driving force behind the success of this years event as was recently departed club stalwart Ted Hayes. Ted brought up the idea of re-introducing this event to a QEMSC race meeting prior to last years event & did a lot ground work trying to promote its return. The prize for this event was therefore named the "Ted Hayes Golden Finger Award" & was won by Neil Hughes on his 1962 250 Aermacchi.

Within the Period 4 solo's we welcomed two new members to their first experience of racing at "Stany". Carl Heeremans on his 1972 500 Ducati & Donald Radke on a 1972 GT 250 Suzuki. This swelled our P4 entries from six last year to nine this time around. The combination of P4, P5 & the new P6 class gave as a full grid of 20 machines on Saturday which is the first time I can ever recall this happening. If this growth trend continues we will have to split up P4 & P5 in separate races!!!!!. Period 3 entries were also up with the addition of John Herbert on his 1960 G80 Matchless & the return of Fred Van Loenen with a 1962 250 Benelli & a 1955 500 BSA.

For me personally my “in the past” not so reliable 350 Honda went really well all weekend. I missed the very first round with a stuck throttle cable & do not contest the restart of the last round choosing instead to race the Historic up to 400cc event. Little did I know that all I had to do was finish the restarted race I would have beaten (well accumulated more points is a bit more accurate!!!) the winner of my class Russell (I fell off on the same corner as Dave) Bentley. Anyway, I had a fantastic weekend & my thanks go out to all the QEMSC members for their wonderful support & to all the volunteers that make it all possible. Webmaster Dave.

Note: The raffle for the custom fitted leather jacket kindly donate by Ricondi Leathers was won by Bruce Marston.