

Frost finds form in the forest.

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Pictures: Imageconsortium.co.uk



It's always good when an event has high drama and even higher emotions.

Game-plans are set and each and every individual is focussed on victory.

Surely that's got to be the perfect recipe for *any* event, hasn't it?

Well, the first round of the 2007 Southern Counties Enduro Club Championship contained all of the above before the event had

even got underway!

The venue was Moreton Forest near Affpuddle in Dorset which a few local residents were strongly objecting to. Apparently, one resident in particular had put the fear of god up the others portraying a picture of noise and chaos straight out of Mad Max and promises of fellow walkers blocking the route when the Enduro was underway were pledged.

I've been a member of the Southern Counties Enduro Club for some 9 years and this is the first time I have ridden at Moreton Forest and obviously for some residents it was also a new experience. Now, fear of the un-known can make emotions run high when the only experience of two-wheels is one of illegal riding that can plague forest, so I can understand how some might feel when they see thoughtless and un-lawful riding in progress and then contemplate an event with 140 competitors.

Thankfully, the blockades didn't appear but Environmental Health officers were present to make sure the event didn't breach the noise regulations and which in the end reinforced the responsible nature of both the club and competitors.

Tests were carried out at various parts of the course and a figure of 52db was recorded at the forest edge, with 72db trackside. Now, my CSE in Physics doesn't cut the mustard with regard to noise levels, so I "Googled" the average figure and found it equivalent to a Zanussi Tumble Dryer (£228.99 plus delivery and available from all good retailers). It just goes to show how important it is to bin that noisy exhaust and fit a "Q" pipe instead.

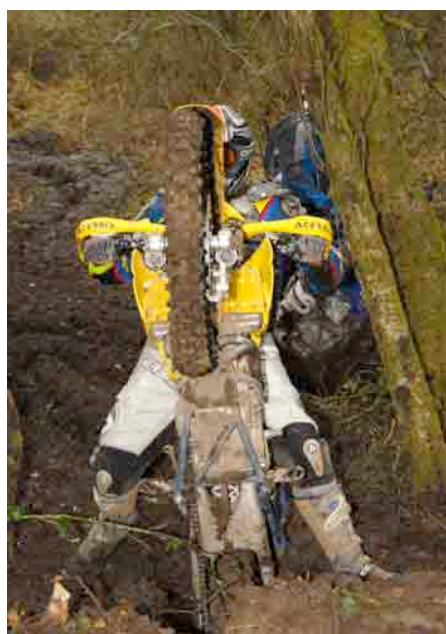
Anyhow, moving on the *real* drama of the day – the Enduro itself.

SCEC have recently introduced a difficulty rating for each event, with 1 for easy and 5 for difficult - Moreton was originally pigeon-holed as a 2. To ease possible tension, the course had 2 miles removed from its lap and the adjustments upped the rating to a 3 (possibly a 4), but with a dry, bright day conditions were perfect and with ten riders away at one minute intervals, bunching over the trickier sections was kept to a minimum.

At the end of the first lap Andy Frost was leading with Stan Watt in second and Bradley King in third. Nick Life then passed King and Watt to take second place, and with just a 4 second deficit began to challenge Frost for the lead. Sadly for Life, his race was over after an hour which handed Frost a comfortable lead. At the half-way mark the leading pack has completed 6 laps and it was all-change from here. Bradley King had a disastrous lap which handed Andy Scudamore third place behind Stan Watt, but this was relatively short-lived as Gary Holland took third a couple of laps later. At the chequered flag, Andy Frost took a convincing win finishing one lap ahead of second placed Stan Watt. Although Gary Holland was third to cross the line, it was Mark Cornick who claimed the final podium spot due to starting 2 minutes behind the leading pack and beating Holland on aggregate time.



A special mention has to go the marshals who tirelessly pulled bikes from the deeper parts of the bog and also to one lady who could be seen lap after lap, pointing to the best line through the soft-stuff. I caught up with her at the end to say thanks where she explained (while wiping the mud from her glasses) that this was the first Enduro she had ever attended and would be back for more. That's the spirit!



But, I'll leave you all with this thought. While clearing the course, event organiser Gary Warr was asked a question by an 86 year old lady whilst walking her dog. She enquired "Did the bikes make these grooves in the boggy parts?" to which Gary replied "Yes" she then went on to ask " but why did they all ride into that when they could have gone on this part here?" pointing her walking stick to the 3 foot solid gap between the ruts.

I've booked myself an eye test.

Full results of this event and details of the 2007 events be found at: www.enduro.org.uk

SCEC Moreton Forest results:

Championship: 1st Andy Frost, 2nd Stan Watt, 3rd

Gary Holland.

Expert: 1st Mark Cornick, 2nd Chris Honeywill, 3rd Gary McCoy.

E1 Clubman (up-to 125cc 2-stroke or 250cc 4-stroke): 1st Ian Shuttleworth, 2nd Gareth Thurgood 3rd Sean Renvoize.

E2 Clubman (over 125cc 2-stroke, or 250cc 4-stroke): 1st Marcus Dodd, 2nd Steve Whetman, 3rd Tyson Mayton-Jones.

Over 40: 1st Peter Archer, 2nd Patrick Wills, 3rd Michael Hughes.

Sportsman: 1st Mark Goddard, 2nd Kevin Pippard, 3rd Richard Swaffield,