

BANANA BOY NEWTONS CYCLE ADVENTURE

» SATURDAY NIGHT AT ROCKINGHAM MOTOR SPEEDWAY SAW THE FIRST OF WHAT WE HOPE TO MAKE INTO AN ANNUAL RUNNING OF A CHARITY CYCLE RACE. THIS YEAR OUR CHOSEN CHARITY WAS MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT.

The spectacle started even before the racers had assembled on the line and there were mass female swoonings in pit lane as Ian Newton stepped out of his garage in his figure hugging lycra suit. Myra had told him that it would be best if he dropped a banana

down his lycra shorts before he stepped out in public, as she didn't want everyone to think that she'd married him for his money.

Being an obedient husband, he followed her advice but he didn't realise that he'd got it all wrong until Ray Simpson shouted to him "It's supposed to go down the front Newt!"

Well Newt quickly did a 180 degree lycra-panty shuffle to put everything in the right place and that was when the ladies started to drop like flies. The medics eventually managed to resuscitate them all and once they had applied suitable restraints to stop the frenzied females from interfering with the Burscough Banana Boy, we got all the contestants lined up on the grid for the start of the race.

Phil Crowe (the Beast from the East) and John Ingram (the Ram) were the star attractions, given a temporary release from their contracts at the Bolshoi Ballet Ensemble (Wigan branch), and they were to be first away. Crowe had been in intensive training for a period of about 45 seconds and it must have been the adrenalin pumping

that caused him to bolt away from the start before the signal was given. A finely tuned athlete of that calibre can't be stopped once started, so he was already peeling into turn one before the Ram set off in pursuit. By the exit of turn one Crowe had been caught, but he had a plan. As the mass of pursuers were released from the startline, Crowe jumped off his bike and with all the grace of (a slightly overweight) gazelle, he leapt over the inner retaining wall and set off across the infield like a charging rhino. The Ram was still pumping the pedals for all he was worth around the oval and only spotted his cheating rival as he approached the final turn of lap one as they were on a converging course. Too late, Ingram realised that a 3.5 kilo racing bike loaded with nearly 150 kilos of Lincolnshires finest was coming in from his right like an exocet missile.....disaster seemed inevitable. Fortunately, the Wigan branch of the Bolshoi Ballet have more than their fair share of generously proportioned ballerinas and the Ram is used to catching them safely - although you may have noticed



Stuart thinks the smoke was coming from the back end... Ohh err!

that ballerinas are usually caught at the balance point (in the general region of the crotch.....!!). I think it may be best to draw a discreet veil over the next part and just suffice to say that the Ram set off on his second lap with Banana Boy and his Aprilia Army in hot pursuit. The Beast from the East was left lying on the track needing some soothing balm applied to those areas of 'delicate skin' they refer to on after shave bottles... if you've ever taken Henry Coopers advice of "Splash it all over" too literally you'll know exactly what I mean! (trust me, nobody looks good lying upside down under a cold tap with their family jewels on fire...)

Crowe is tough though and he didn't give up. Oh no, he took his dastardly cheating to renewed heights by crossing the line and diving straight into the pit lane before looping around the garage block to reappear as our race leader at turn four again.

Meanwhile in the real race, Ingram had

been caught and Banana Boys Aprilia Army were leading the peloton. The razor sharp racing saddle hadn't been kind to the banana though and our hero was fast beginning to look like a poster boy for Tena-for-Men. On the final lap two of his team, Dean Court and Rhodri Owen, were so fed up with the sound of squelching banana that they made a break for it and finished in that order some 30 seconds ahead of the field. Next up were Banana Boy and his gang of Barry Teasdale, Matt Davies, Brad Jones, Milo Ward and David Allingham.

As they crossed the line they passed a stranded Phil Crowe, who had been stopped by Race Direction just yards from the finish line to investigate the smoke reported to be coming from his machine. Nothing was found, but it just goes to show that the Technical Team know how to apply a suitable penalty.

The best was yet to come though. As the

riders finished the race and entered the podium area, one determined little fella had escaped to go onto his third lap. Eight year old George Burkitt wasn't settling for a two lap result and he was now alone out on the fastest race circuit in Europe. Race Direction sent the course car out to rescue him, but despite offers of a lift he was adamant that he was going to do his three laps and earn his medal.

Some three minutes after the last adult had finished the race, George entered the finish straight alone and still pumping the pedals. He was greeted by a packed pit wall of supporters cheering him on and echoing off of the grandstands.

Just shy of £1,500 was raised and Thundersport GB have matched that amount, meaning that MacMillan Cancer Support will receive almost £3,000 thanks to your efforts. We also raised nearly £1,600 for Sarah and Amy whose fights against cancer inspired the race in the first place. Special mention has to go to Scot Adam, who won the £500 Bike Insurer Lap record prize and without a second thought donated it to Sarah and Amy - a true gentleman.

There are some things you just have to be a part of to truly appreciate and just standing at the back of the crowd whilst little George stood on the podium was one of those. This was an absolutely fantastic event and I'd like to thank everyone for being a part of it, especially Phil, John and Newt for being such good sports.



This is what it's all about!

Two finely tuned thoroughbreds quivering and ready for action...

