



Darvill Racing
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 8th September 2013

2013 Festival of Motorcycling

FAN-TAS-TIC

Well what else was it going to be?

2013 saw the rebranding of the Manx Grand Prix when the Isle of Man Festival of Motorcycling was created to include the Grand Prix plus the inaugural Classic TT. WHAT a success this has proven to be. The crowds were as large as the regular TT races and the coverage was excellent with ITV4 broadcasting globally.

We at Darvill Racing have a fifty year history of racing on the legendary TT Mountain Course and have consistently created and developed unique machines to compete at this amazing event. From the original PJD Darvill bike (later confirmed to be the original Norvin) in the Fifties, to Darvill-designed Spondon-framed Works Honda RSC powered machines of the Seventies and Eighties. We took a hiatus to compete in the FIM World Endurance Championships throughout the Nineties, then came back to the Mountain circuit with a bang for our Golden Jubilee this year with our unique Suzuki SV650.



Our fortnight started with the first practice session cancelled due to the inclement weather so we geared ourselves up on Monday for evening practice and saw Keef set off down Bray Hill for the first time. This is the time I find most nervous. Watching the sectors waiting to see what times we are making and what we were seeing was not good! Times got slower until the dreaded phone call to say he had retired at Ballaugh. It turns out the bike and rider were ok, there was a fuelling issue so we called Slick Bass and booked the bike in for the Dyno on Tuesday morning. The trouble with getting to Ballaugh when the roads are shut is that you have to go via Ramsey and via the coast all the way, and in a van this took a very long time.



Tuesday morning bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, we headed to Slick's. The bike was placed on the Dyno, we ran every test and every scenario simulating loads applicable to those that the Mountain Course throws at you, and we found.... NOTHING, it didn't miss a beat, not one issue. So what to do? Slick talked us through his thoughts, suggestions, and we decided that the most likely cause was fuel starvation, this would only become known on this circuit, as there is nowhere else on this planet that you can be on full throttle for minutes at a time. We removed the fuel tap and replaced this with a dry brake system to reduce the possibility of and flow limiting factors,





rerouted the fuel feeds and used armouring to reduce the risk of any pipe kinking and then set off to Tuesday evening practice.

We were watching the sectors like hawks and began to relax when he made it to Ramsey averaging 106MPH, however this was short lived as he was reported as stopped at Mountain Box making adjustments???

Keef finally made it back to the Grandstand, we went through our post-race tasks, and when we were all ready we discussed what had happened. Keef reported that the bike was 100% until he began to climb the Mountain where the fuel starvation issue reoccurred; we reasoned that the vacuum fuel pump was clearly not capable of providing enough fuel to the carburettors. We had a private test day at Jurby booked on Wednesday to allow the team to have a play on the race bikes and as a contingency, we could use this for the SV if required.... And it was!

So what was the plan? Well we live in a sea-faring community and we have a shed load of boats, boat yards and marine component suppliers so we reasoned that they would have an electrical fuel pump and they did. We relocated with a huge (in comparison) electric marine fuel pump to Jurby and with wiring diagrams, new high pressure fuel pipes and box of cables we set about wiring in a new fuel pump. The Generation 1 SV650's were not designed to take an electric pump however after some relocation of various other components we made it fit and Keef set about testing this. The bike performed flawlessly so after 20 laps we packed up and relocated back to the Grandstand to try again.

What a difference, as Keef headed off down Bray Hill we watched the times hoping that this had cured the issue and as he came screaming past the Grandstand to finish his first lap we knew that we had sorted it... Phew!

In order to qualify you need to have 5 laps and be within 110% of the fastest time so we would have 5 more opportunities to complete laps and get a time in, we were in the game!

The rest of qualifying was uneventful so I won't bore you with the details however it was frustrating that due to delays and reschedules we never got the chance to get a0020flying lap in and therefore our qualifying time wasn't as good as it could have been. We qualified and were the fastest MiniTwin specification bike out there, crowing rights indeed.

The Festival of Jurby was a chance for us to take the race bikes and have some fun in the sun and wow the crowds were huge people and exotic machines everywhere, we have been invited every year since it started and I have never seen it this busy before. ITV4 took interest in our machines and we featured on their global documentary, unexpected but very pleased.



The weather had been exceptional but a front was moving in and as our race day approached, it was looking bleak. Waking up on Friday morning there was a heavy mist rolling across the Island with outbreaks of light drizzle. The Met office were promising of a break before the commencement of racing so we went through prep and got the bike through technical inspection (clean sheet all week), got the tyre warmers on and grabbed a coffee and... waited, and waited and waited.



Delays meant we did not get away until after 12pm and with the weather unsettled tyre choice was a concern and race strategy would be crucial. Tension was building as the 30 minute warning was sounded and we began to make our way up on to Glencrutchery Road. With 5 minutes to go the team got the bike ready and Keef and I made our way to the start, all the preparation was done, 12 months of planning behind us, nothing more to check, nothing more to do it was now down to Keef and lady luck.

We relocated to the pits and awaited our fuel stop, this is the worst time, you have limited access to information and rely mainly on watching the antique scoreboard clock that shows with sector your rider is in. As Keef entered his second lap the fog rolled back in and we began to receive reports of Red Flags being shown around the course, shortly afterwards the Clerk of the Course announced that the race had been stopped due to safety reasons and the riders would be brought back to Parc Ferme.

After a considerable time all the bikes were brought back and we were advised that the race would restart at 15:15hrs and would be cut to 2 laps so we refuelled and took the opportunity to use an Intermediate front tyre as the weather still looked changeable.

As the restart commenced the fog and rain began to roll back in from the Irish Sea with the track conditions becoming tricky, quite a few competitors were caught out with both the lack of visibility and the slippery conditions, arguably the weather was worse than when it was stopped earlier. As Keef went past the Grandstand for his second and final lap the rain became much stronger and a finish was the aim of the game.



I am pleased to say that both Keef and the machine returned home safely and whilst we could not challenge the SuperTwin in this instance, we retained the status of the fastest MiniTwin which is something to be incredibly proud of.





Summary

We did it, we managed a finish on the 50th anniversary of Peter Darvill's win, we believe we are the oldest actively participating race team on the Mountain Circuit having had Darvill machinery hurtling around the 37¾ mile circuit since the fifties. All of this is possible due to our Sponsors and Supporters without whom this would not have been possible. We have had some fantastic exposure for us and our Sponsors and we will be back next year competing in the following events:



- ARA Championship – 2 bikes
- Pre TT Classic - Bilown Circuit with our Project WildFowl bike (more details on this in due course)
- Southern 100 – Darvill SV650
- Festival of Motorcycling
 - Classic TT - F1 Race with the Project WildFowl bike
 - Manx Grand Prix – SuperTwin Race with the Darvill SV650
- 4hr Endurance Race – Bike TBD

We have two rounds of the ARA Championship left plus the 4hr Endurance race before we wrap up for the year, and what an amazing year it has been.

Thank you again for your support!.

Yours Sincerely,

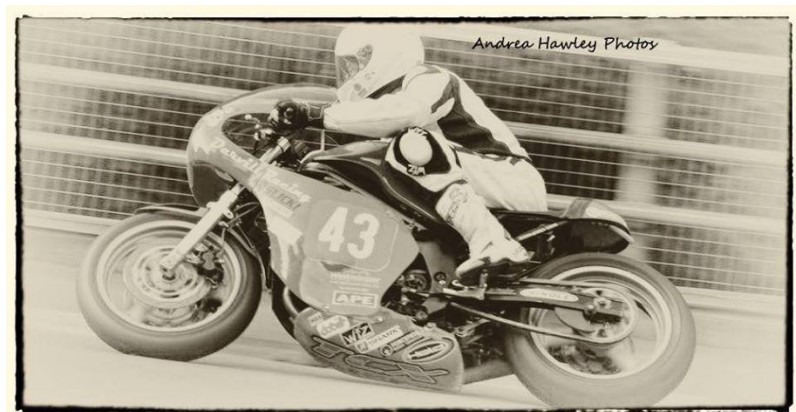
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Andrea Hawley Photos

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