



Parkgate House
Victoria Road
Castletown
Isle of Man
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2015 International Southern 100 – A Newcomers View

What a great meeting, we headed into the 2015 S100 this year supporting a newcomer, Eric Lenser. We met Eric at last year's Manx Grand Prix where we assisted him over the fortnight and a friendship soon developed. As our 2015 season began to shape up we arrived at an agreement for Eric to make his S100 debut on board our I2V Sponsored Darvill 650 MiniTwin.

However it wasn't to be. Due to personal circumstances Eric had to withdraw at short notice so I picked up the phone and called Fozzy....



Here is his experience in his own words:

Well It's been over 9 months since I rode a motorbike at all in fact. If you don't count the 20 or so laps I did on the Agni bike in the final rounds of the MotoE last year then it's more like a year. So there you go Racer's Excuse No1 out of the way early doors!

Part of the reason for this late start to the season is that event sponsorship is getting trickier to find and the attitude of the old guard is still reticent when it comes to including electric racing in a full race day programme, however the MotoE organisers kept at and the season finalised. As well as our usual supporting partners (<http://darvillracing.co.uk/sponsors/>) our good friends at Insight 2 Value (I2V - <http://insight2value.co.uk/>) came up with an enhanced package which afforded us the

opportunity to commit to the 2015 MotoE championship, attend a number of marketing events and squeeze in some pure road races with one of them at the internationally recognised road events, based on the Isle of Man, The Southern 100.



I wasn't supposed to be taking up any racing duties for Darvill until MotoE 2015 starts in the first weekend of August so I was very surprised when the Boss, Alex, called me to say that



one of our riders had had to cancel his Southern 100 entry at the last minute (2 days prior) and, 'would you be able t.....'

"YES! Err, that is, yes of course, I'll see what I can do" :)

So, in time-honoured tradition I juggled work and family commitments and handed over a chest full of doubloons to the Seam Pirates...

Good news: Going road (real) racing again! First closed roads race since 2009, that's 6 years!

Bad news: It's absolutely hammering down.

Strong winds and heavy rain mean that the Southern 100 club had a pretty challenging few days ahead trying to fit in a full schedule including, newcomers, and this is all the more challenging these days given the very limited road closure orders they're awarded, due to local pressures.

As a newcomer, (yes you read right, a newcomer) to the circuit I was scheduled to have two sighting laps behind travelling marshals followed by a practice sessions on day one (of four) followed by further newcomer sighting laps on day two prior to a qualifying session. The conditions obliterated this schedule which meant I had the two rather sedate sighting laps in wet conditions then no other sessions until qualifying the next day. Even as a newcomer, qualifying cut-off was at 120% of the leading time, which was already a big ask for us with a 30bhp deficit to the leading machines but with no practice and heavy rain I was a bit unsure if this was going to be a short meeting for me...and as if it wasn't a tall enough order we didn't have any 'full' wet tyres! Continental don't make a wet tyre in the MinTwin sizes so I was out on the Race Attack 2 a dry weather race tyre.



With nerves jangling I took my place on the dummy grid noticing that that the Supertwins and other (supposed) MiniTwins were all wearing full wet tyres...so that didn't help my nerves much! We were waved away



<http://youtu.be/QE7cFgqubaw>), as you can see the conditions were awful but I was pretty confident in the Continental race Attack 2s and got stuck in learning the circuit. I was pretty relieved to get round in one piece but felt a bit more confident in which way the track went and actually really enjoyed it. I can't say enough about how good those dry tyres are in the wet, they absolutely brilliant!

To my surprise we qualified! I think the wet conditions worked to our advantage in the end but according to some of the spectators Ivan Lintin and James Cowton's times weren't an awful lot slower than their dry times! With that in mind we looked forward to the next day's race which was forecast to be dry and warm.



Race 1:

<https://youtu.be/t9qEvTMYagc>) As you'll see we were fighting an uphill battle against the more powerful Supertwins which was as we expected but we also seemed to be giving away quite a bit of speed to the other 'MiniTwins' too, which we weren't (maybe their idea of MiniTwin spec is something rather different), I did manage to have a nice little battle on the last lap with another MiniTwin newcomer which was immense fun and dialled me back in to some proper racing!

Race 2:

<https://youtu.be/bzey9B8brlo>) Unfortunately at the end of the first lap the rose-joint on the gear linkage started to jam. As I rolled down towards pit lane ready to retire I gave the linkage a firm kick and it loosened again allowing me to rejoin. (post-race investigation shows the joint had worn and was over rotating causing it to jam.) Unfortunately this meant I was out on my own with no-one to race with but at least that meant I could concentrate on lines and learning the course. I started to go faster into the turns and carry more speed through them as my braking points and turn in points improve. Another small issue we had to work round due to standing in for another rider we were



working with a different set-up. My great pal Keef McKay had been riding and setting the bike up around this course but he is 95kilos of Scottish cow pie and I'm a scrawny 72kilo drink of water. The bike was a little over sprung for me so I was finding it a bit of a bone shaker through the more bumpy sections. I was expecting to have much better lap times in this race particularly on the last lap after the leader passed me as it gave



an (albeit brief) marker to chase; I was hoping to get closer to the 90mph lap on the MiniTwin which I would have been really happy with, however despite feeling faster my speeds were actually down on the first race's times? It's possible that the continuing issues with the linkage throughout the race may have contributed but we also noticed when cleaning the bike after racing that there was a slight weep from the base gasket so it's also possible that we may have been even a little bit more down on power than we thought?



All-in a really enjoyable few days racing and a welcome surprise to the start of my season. I'm really looking forward to the start of the MotoE season next month where we'll be campaigning on an I2V Sponsored eBike for Darvill Racing who have a satellite deal with Zongshen and we are off to Nürburgring!

Well that's our road races now complete, now to convert from petrol to electric! This is a team effort and I can't thank everyone enough for their help and support, this includes our Sponsors and Darvill Devils Supporters club with a special thanks to Phil and John at Insight 2 Value without whom this couldn't be possible.

Photo credit to WPFotos, falconerfotos and Darvill Racing

Next stop Germany!

Yours Sincerely,

Alex Aitchison
Team Principal



Phone: +44(0)7624 433 594
Email: alex@darvillracing.co.uk
Web: <http://www.darvillracing.co.uk>

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