

The Walsingham Trial 2022

by Stephen Barnes

The 750 Motor Club put on the Walsingham sporting trial on Sunday 6th March at their now regular venue of Buriton, near Petersfield on Hampshire / West Sussex border. This was a round of the 750MC, MSUK, BTRDA and ASWMC Championships, so as you might imagine it collected a good entry of 36 starters from all corners of the country, the best entry of the season so far. The site is in a country park, popular with mountain bikers and walkers, and made up of open mature woodland on one gently sloping bank, plenty of overwintered leaf mould and in places young wild garlic plants poking through the chalky soil. Eight hills had been laid out to be tackled three times and 6psi was the tyre pressure decided upon.

Round One saw Andy Wilks (Crossle) drop 3 points, Thomas Bricknell (Crossle) 4, George Watson (Hamilton) 7, Richard Sharp (Cartwright) and Stuart Beare (Sherpa Indy) 8, Josh Veale (Sherpa IRS), Matt Sharp (Sherpa) and Paul Price (CAP V) 9 apiece. Ten more drivers squeezed into the next 5 point band – lots of low scores, and with plenty of competition and mistakes to come, some of the leaders were going to change places. The heavy rain of the day before whilst setting out not having any effect at all.

Round Two saw some minor changes made to most of the hills. Some of the leaf mould was forming into large berms on the corners, and the wild garlic was starting to release some moisture, but most obviously the drivers were getting used to the conditions and the scores remained low. Paul Price went round on 1, Thomas Bricknell and Darren Underwood (Crossle) 2, George Watson and Andy Wilks on 4 for the round. When the scores are so low by many drivers it is very difficult to pick out individual climbs of brilliance, every hill was cleaned by at least one person in the second round. At lunch, Thomas was leading on 6, Andy second on 7, Paul third on 10, George on 11 and Stuart Beare (Sherpa Indy) on 13. Next up, and leading live axle driver was Matt Sharp on 14.

Round Three saw some hills remain unchanged and some to have subtle tweaks, but Seven and Eight were totally reworked on the wild garlic surface making for some larger scores for the unwary. Thomas and Matt went round on clear, Darren, Josh and Ian Veale (Sherpa IRS) finding some form for a round of 1. A costly four for George and an unexplainable ten for Stuart on Hill 8 cost them both a podium place. An awkward turn near the 6 marker on this hill cost over half of the field a high score, thus putting them out of contention. Whilst all the hills were cleanable, they weren't necessarily easy, and a huge range of scores were taken by a lot of drivers which kept the day entertaining and challenging knowing the inevitable could happen at any moment.

After 24 hills, Thomas took the win on 6 from Andy on 9. Drive of the day must surely go to Matt Sharp on 14 (1st Blue and 1st Live axle). Darren (after a shaky start) improved all day for 4th on 16, next were Josh and George on 17, and Simon and Ian on 19. Stuart and Paul made up the top ten on 23 (expensive last rounds!). A very consistent Bob Packham (Kincraft) held a desperate Arthur Carroll (Sherpa) at bay for the Red live class by one point 28 and 29. Dave Overy (Sherpa) came in a very commendable 15th on 33 points dropped to take the 750 Class A win. Mike Readings (Sherpa Indy) took the Blue independent class on 35 and 17th place. Tim Mann (WillKlym) took the 750B class on 105 just ahead of 1st Rookie Paul Goodyear (Kincraft) on 109.