

SPOKEN

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF MTB GUISBOROUGH

RACE SPECIAL



Dear members...

“

Looks like it's time to get those lights back on... Pretty much the only positive thing I can find to say about the sun going down before I finish work is it leaves more time for night rides. It's always great to get out on the trails after dark, with even those time-honoured favourites you know like the back of your hand feeling like a new adventure lit up by a few hundred lumens of LED goodness...

The dark nights also signal it must be AGM time again, this year the date for your diary is Thursday the 27th of November. After feedback from members we've decided to go for a weekday evening instead of a Sunday afternoon - the venue has also changed: upstairs at the Sports Hall complex at Laurence Jackson School.

As always we encourage as many of you to attend as possible, as a club we're at the service of our members and this is your chance hear what we've been up to, ask questions and most importantly to influence what we do in the future. This year it's particularly important we've got some big decisions to make on the trailbuilding front - see Dan's article elsewhere in this newsletter for details.

On a similar note please keep an eye out for our first member survey which will be winging its way to your inbox in the next week or so. Again the idea is to give us a better understanding of our members view, ideas and opinions prior to the AGM; so it would be much appreciated if you could take 5 minutes to fill it in.

Finally you'll notice we've devoted much of this issue to MTBG racer Jason Hynd's account of his ride at the world 24hr championships - it's a bit of an epic in itself but well worth the read I promise.

I was lucky (stupid?) enough to be there in a support capacity and would like to put on record my utmost admiration as to the courage of the man. He plays it down, but going blind during an event is quite a big setback, both physically and psychologically! It's an overused term but his mental strength to get back out there and resume the race, let alone fight back to a medal was truly inspirational (or 'borderline nuts' according to the race Doctor).

Forget Jens Voigt's 'shut up legs!', 'shup up eyes!' is where it's at...

Happy riding!

Nick

”



Photo by No Fuss Events | WEMBO 2014 | Fort William

CHASING RAINBOWS

AT THE WORLD 24 SOLO CHAMPIONSHIPS

by Jason Hynd



Lochaber sunrise

"A dispersive prism can be used to break light up into its constituent spectral colours (the colours of the rainbow). Furthermore, prisms can be used to reflect light, or to split light into components with different polarisations."

It all began on Easter Sunday 2012. I had just finished 1st rookie, and 2nd vet at the British and European 24h solo mountainbike championships in Newcastle, Scotland. This was my first attempt at 24h solo. Despite the result, I had experienced blindness in the right eye for 10h+ and compartment syndrome in the left leg, so had the stop at 21h. A lack of conditioning was a logical cause. One month later the World Endurance Mountainbike Organisation (WEMBO) staged their first World 24h solo championships in Finale Ligure, Italy. I was inspired to see British riders Jason Miles and Craig Bowles finish 2nd & 3rd respectively in the elite men's category and Ricki Cotter 2nd in the elite women's category.

It was evident that the standard of endurance MTB in the UK was world class. Subsequently, the world 24h solo championships were announced as being Fort William, Scotland on October 11th 2014. It would be the first time the event would be in the UK. I'm Scottish, and conditioned to technical trails and adverse

weather, the event organiser's, No Fuss are well known for tough technical trails. I decided to focus on preparing for this event from January 2013. From May 2013-August 2014 I competed in 10 events, ranging from 7h-24h solo, 4x 1st place and 6x 2nd place positions in my age category gave an indication of progress and consistency.

Competing in solo endurance events requires experience and conditioning to eliminate numerous symptoms. These include hand, neck, back, knee and foot pain, cramp, headaches, saddle sores, and muscle fatigue. Other considerations are pacing, psychological strategies, nutrition, hydration, sponsorship, reliable equipment, and pit crew selection. Essentially, balance between work, family and life is often overlooked. Get this part wrong and you can cancel all aspirations. This year my employment as senior lecturer in Sports Therapy, clinical director of a sports clinic and the final year of an MSc in Strength and Conditioning created a fine balance between effective training and fatigue. Nevertheless, knowledge gained from

teaching, clinical practice, and presenting cycling research at the World Congress for Cycling Science all assisted knowledge and preparation for the event. A good friend Gary Henderson provided leg massage and sound advice on all aspects of athlete management. My wife Paula, and seven year old daughter Olivia also helped me keep a sense of perspective. When life was busy "it was just a race", when I had more energy and time available "it's the world championships!". Olivia competed in 3 road and 3 mountainbike events this year, her advice to me prior to the world championships stayed with me. "Dad, don't go off too fast at the start" and "Have fun".

Preparing for the event often goes unnoticed. However, as many experienced 24h racers will advise, it is how you deal with inevitable setbacks throughout the event which will determine the outcome. Preparation is key, fail to prepare, prepare to fail. I spent several months refining equipment selection with the support of sponsors Bikescene in Guisborough. This included help with a second Specialized

Epic to cover any potential mechanical issues. MTB Guisborough donated financial support for race entry, and a storm proof gazebo for the pit area. Altura clothing supplied last minute team clothing for myself and the pit crew. Use/Exposure lights provided the essential lighting and charging required to endure 13h of darkness at the event. Nutrition products and advice from Torq were tried and tested throughout previous races and training.

Approaching the final week of the race I was packed and ready with all equipment tested. Shimano technical rep Rich Wilson had confirmed as my pit mechanic. Rich had previously supported me at Relentless 24h last year, and some of the world's top athletes at international events. Nick Piper, teammate, experienced endurance racer, level 2 British Cycling coach, with a rare level of composure and reliability was responsible for timing, lighting and logistics. My wife Paula is a sports dietitian, with numerous Scottish MTB championship medals she arranged nutrition, hydration and clothing. It was the ideal pit crew, giving me further confidence in covering all eventualities.

The week before the race I had sent a friend a text explaining that I was off to chase rainbows in Fort William. Coincidentally, and later the same day radio 6 presenter Shaun Keavney divulged a story about a boy in his school class named Jason Rainbows. Olivia and I looked at one another and laughed out loud at the coincidence. I suggested to Olivia that

perhaps the rainbow I'm chasing will be an illusion.....always moving away. Further coincidence followed when Craig Bowles and his wife Jo were sharing the same hotel in Fort William prior to the event. Craig was the 2013 European 24h champion and 3rd placed elite at the 2012 24h World Championships in Italy. After a pre-race curry we arranged to pit alongside one another. This would allow sharing of any resource should the need arise. It was also ideal for me to discuss strategy with a very positive, relaxed, experienced and successful 24h racer. The day before the race Craig and I went for a pre-ride of the course in pouring rain. It was tough, but fun, mainly consisting of the former world championship cross country course, with 450m of climbing and fast technical descents over a 13km distance.

I estimated that 24 laps was possible, I planned to take a fresh bottle and energy gels when passing through the pit area each lap. Lights would be changed approx. every 3 laps from 5.30pm, with a bike change every 6 laps. At least that was the plan. At the pre-race brief Frazer from No Fuss was asked a question from a participant. He asked "lights must be added by 5.30pm, but when should we switch them on?" Frazer's reply was with typical Scottish wit "well if you've eaten your carrots, it might be later".

Race day involved briefing Rich and Nick when they arrived, filling bottles and a warmup. With 23 nationalities represented there was a real international

feel to the event. It was evident that some racers were affected by the occasion. I was more concerned about the process, and following Olivia's advice not to go too fast at the start. The race organiser's decided to separate the elite male /female/ age group categories. I had entered my age group 40-44 which meant being behind a 3rd motorbike and the Lochaber pipe band.

The 12pm start was chaotic with a fast pace up a 10 min climb before the descending began. I held back in a queue ensuring I was relaxed, so much so I decided to make a nature stop! Coming through the pit area for the first time my pit team were a little concerned that I was off the pace. This changed on the following few laps where I progressively worked through the field to lead my category by 30 minutes, and move amongst the top 10 elite riders. During this time I had passed numerous riders who I hold in very high regard. This was despite holding back on the climbs and having fun on the descents. For a time I rode with unmistakable Tasmanian legend Brett Bellchambers. He was riding in the singlespeed category with rigid forks, short sleeves and very short shorts. He also has a very long beard. Brett eventually finished 7th overall, an incredible achievement with one gear. A nice touch was the national flag and surname of each participant on competitor numberplates. Course marshalls often shouted "Go Scotland!" or "well done Mr Hynd" as I passed.



Descents were fast



Preparing for battle!



Highland forest trails



In the first 6 hours the descents were fast



Berms became more of a challenge without vision

As I rolled again I went straight off the course. As riders approached from behind I could only see their light beam, and the mist reflecting off my lights. I was effectively blind, unable to walk I rolled downhill with one leg out. I fell off a drop-off and sprained my ankle. The remainder of the lap was the most dangerous situation I have ever experienced.

On returning to the pit sometime after 2am I explained to Nick I was blind. He reached to take my arm as I fell forward. I could see 3 lights in the pit, but couldn't see Nick's face. He guided me to the campervan. After tripping over some bags I was relieved to meet my wife at the van door, but could not see her face. I immediately felt safe after the trauma and isolation of the last lap. Paula helped me change into dry clothes, made tea, porridge and muesli whilst I sat with my eyes closed hoping to open them with full restored vision.



Heading towards total darkness

At 5.30pm Exposure MaxxD and Diablo lights were added in anticipation of sunset. Reaching the highest point of the course, the sun was setting, trees and mountains were coloured dark orange. Opposite the sun was a vertical rainbow, it looked like a massive flare. I almost stopped, I was leading my category by 30min in the world championships, in my home country, my thoughts were "it doesn't get better than this", I beamed a large smile before diving downwards towards the darkness of the trees.

As the sun set, I noticed a slight blurring of my right eye. I was wearing clear lensed glasses which were beginning to steam up as the temperature dropped and mist began to form. After removing the glasses I started climbing which was fine, however despite not feeling fatigued I started making mistakes on the descents. I normally perform better descending in the dark, however I was being caught by riders I had passed hours previously. My pit team asked if everything was ok, in denial, I asked for more food and pressed harder on the climbs.

At midnight I was descending when fireworks and flares celebrating the half-way point were released, I was struggling to see from both eyes and had to descend at half my usual speed. Back at pit I was informed that I was now leading my category by 20 minutes. I admitted that I could hardly see, I was struggling with any camera lights or passing lights causing halos in both eyes. The course marshalls had large bonfires at various points, I was now averting my vision to avoid light halos which affected balance. Nick added a higher powered Exposure six pack bike light and diablo helmet light to assist my vision. There were concerned looks, I pressed on. After reaching the top of the course I started the first descent of approximately 250m. I went straight into a rock and ditch.

Nick reported my situation to the race organisers to avoid a search party callout, he also brought a medic. I couldn't see the medics face but she declared after inspection that both my eyes were cloudy. Blood pressure and glucose levels were normal, apparently other riders were affected. My dream was slowly slipping away, as a mixture of emotions developed I had an image of a prism in my mind, white light causing a distorted rainbow.

Around 4am I received a call from my brother in law Mark, a professional psychologist. Along with many friends and family Mark had been following the race via a live feed. He explained that despite now slipping to 4th place in category that it was possible to regain 3rd place and a medal at the world championships. It was now around 3 hours until daylight. My eyesight had slightly improved, I could see my wife's face, although she did look a lot younger! If I could start riding as soon as possible all was not lost. I had rested for more than 3 hours and decided I was going to race as hard as possible for another 7 hours. I asked Rich to set up my bike and lights. Shortly afterwards I was off and attacking climbs with new vigour.

Passing lots of riders increased confidence, although with 50% vision and still being dark I descended with caution. Feedback from the pits was encouraging, I was matching the top 5 elite riders lap times, I then moved into 3rd place in my category. As the remaining laps continued and after sunrise I pressed hard, I had fun on the descents, and the sun came out. Despite the duration, there were peaceful moments of bliss where the pedal cadence and breathing pattern were synchronised, the mountain air was crisp, the trails dappled with sunlight and dew. Many



riders I passed at this time were stopped slumped over their handlebars or walking slowly on climbs. The brightness helped my vision, although it remained around 50%. At 11.55am I had the option to begin a final lap. I had narrowed the gap to 30 minutes for 2nd placed Richard Lilly, but it was too far to reach. I decided to stop with 3rd place and 21 laps, satisfied that I had salvaged a result.

I had mixed emotions knowing what was, and could have been. However, the beauty of bike racing, in particular 24h MTB solo is the uncertainty of the outcome, the adversity, physical and mental fatigue. Speaking to lots of friends at the awards ceremony made me appreciate what I had been part of. In every category there was elation, drama, trauma and stories to tell. Some riders reported the sleepmonsters, where imaginary animals appear caused by sleep deprivation and light shadows during dark. In the neighbouring pit Craig

Bowles was leading his category (35-39) by 2.5 hours and 3rd overall, before developing severe health issues at 5am and being taken to hospital for surveillance. He still won his category though, and was 3rd overall in the British Championship. Keith Forsyth snapped 4 spokes and the same chain 4 times, he still won the 45-49 category. Mark Spratt almost finished 3rd overall despite being blind in one eye for 9 hours. However, he was passed by a flying Richard Dunnett in his final lap, who gained 7 places in the last 4 hours. Many riders experienced blindness in one eye, including Julian Rider the winner of my category. Elite professional endurance racer Matt Page had to stop for a nap and eat some tiramisu. Multiple 24 solo winner Jason Miles had gastrointestinal problems and numerous mechanicals, he still finished 6th place overall. Ant White finished 2nd overall despite a snapped chain and numb hands causing a 15 minute delay. Martin Graham and Gareth Hayes had to withdraw due to back and hamstring muscle tears respectively. Rich Rothwell recovered from a mid-season fracture of the clavicle to take 5th place overall. Newcomer to 24h racing Kim Hirst was the new female elite world champion finishing 12th overall with a very impressive 24 laps. WEMBO describe the World 24 solo MTB championships as the pinnacle of endurance racing. Competing at this level and duration on a course of high technical difficulty is a true test of human endeavor. The overall male winner and now 5 time world champion Australian Jason English described the event as the toughest 24h he has experienced. He then promptly jumped on a plane and returned to his job as a teacher in Sydney the next day!



At this stage I was phoning a friend



Back on track with a vision

My eyesight was restored shortly after racing, which was similar to 2012. I have researched the topic and corresponded with a number of other racers and specialists since. Hydration, nutrient, micronutrient and electrolyte balance, low blood pressure with corresponding eye strain may be factors. Descending 450m/lap without eye protection in mist during 13h of darkness is fairly unique circumstances. Nevertheless, overcoming these factors is part of the process. I'm not certain if the rainbow will take me to the 2015 WEMBO 24h worlds in California. However, I will take Frazer's advice, and eat more carrots.

As previously mentioned competing in 24h MTB racing requires extensive support. I would like to thank the following: MTB Guisborough, BikeScene, Altura, USE/Exposure, MC Creative Designs, MT ZOOM, TORQ, Nick Piper, Rich Wilson, Gary Henderson, Mark Keane, Craig Bowles and his pit crew Jo, Chris and Matt, No Fuss and all crew including the medics. My wife Paula, daughter Olivia, and everyone who has provided me with advice and support.

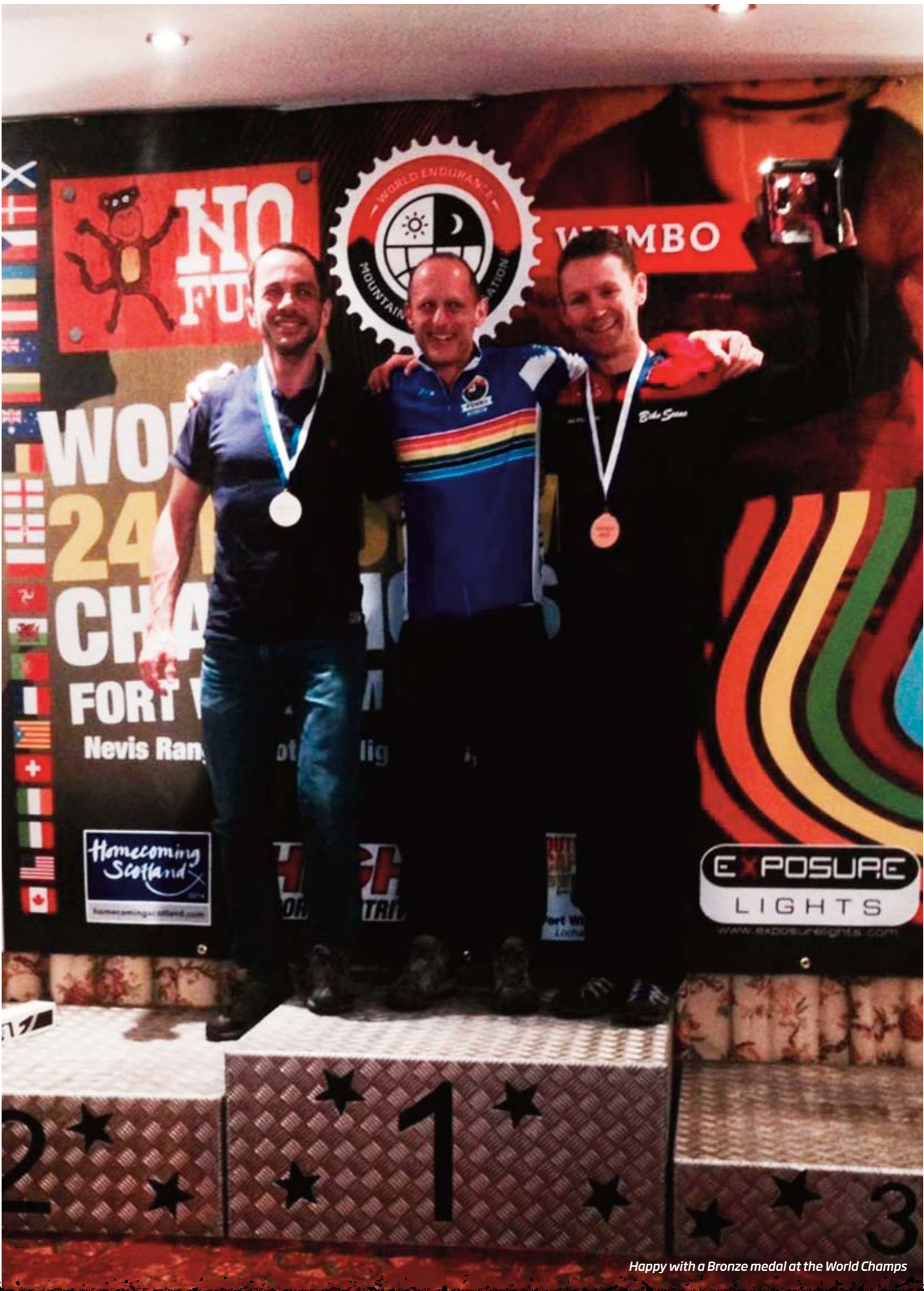
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Still pulling shapes at sunrise, after 20 hours



Support team: Nick Piper, Rich Wilson, Paula Hynd



Happy with a Bronze medal at the World Champs

TRAIL BUILDING UPDATE



It's been a turbulent few months on the trail building front. The fantastic news came through that after pushing the FC all year about the drainage at the top of Les's 1, trailbuilding contractors Clixby's would be coming to do the work. Not only would they be doing the drainage, but they would be working the whole trail. A huge amount of work taken out of our hands. Unfortunately they were very limited on time as they were literally squeezing us in between jobs, and once getting stuck into the trail they uncovered a large amount of felling debris under the existing trail. This slowed progress down, and soon they had to leave the job unfinished. This has left us with a much improved trail, but still with much work to do. The new berms need capping with hardcore, some tweaks to the drainage, and a section of the trail towards the bottom needs building from scratch.

A small team of volunteers headed up at the beginning of October to start the work. After some discussion and laying out ideas we settled on what we thought was the 'right' line. We spent a good few hours working on the line and left at the end of the day, still with lots to do. Unfortunately after a few members rode the new line they came to the conclusion that it wasn't right at all. Then less than a week later some unknown person took it upon themselves to pull apart what we had done. So now we are left with a messy unfinished trail, right back where we started.



Not to be totally defeated we are planning on getting back onto Les' with the FC to continue work. We are hoping to armour the existing line and improve drainage to make it a little less slippery. We also hope to get some material moved up to cap the berms.

What has become apparent this year is that the current trailbuilding situation is unsustainable going forward. Although we have been held up in the past for a number of reasons, primarily red-tape and a lack of funds, the primary problem we are now facing is simply a lack of volunteers.

The reasons for this are much debated, but a number of factors seem to have contributed:

- A focus on maintenance rather than new trails (as limited by FC permissions)
- A lack of access to the appropriate machinery e.g powered barrows, strimmers etc (Health and Safety)
- Inconvenient dig days
- Requirement for Singletraction membership
- A perceived lack of vision on the part of the FC for the development of new trails

What is clear is that we need to find a better way forward, as with the best will in the world 3-4 regular volunteers aren't going to achieve a great deal.

In addition Dan has indicated he intends to step down as Trail building co-ordinator at the end of the year. The club sincerely appreciates his hard work over the last 12 months and fully understands his reasons for stepping down - primarily the fact that despite his efforts he feels he's fighting a losing battle under the current circumstances.

With that in mind we intend to put forward two options to be voted on at the AGM:

1. The club desists all trailbuilding activity and focuses our limited resources on activities where we can have more of an impact. Club members wishing to continue volunteering would be able to do so under the umbrella of Singletraction. This is not our preferred option!
2. The club pauses trailbuilding activity on the ground. In the meantime we engage with the FC to try and establish a more progressive vision for the future of MTB trails in Guisborough Forest and a resolution to the issues identified above (to this end we hope to arrange a meeting that club members can attend to express their views).

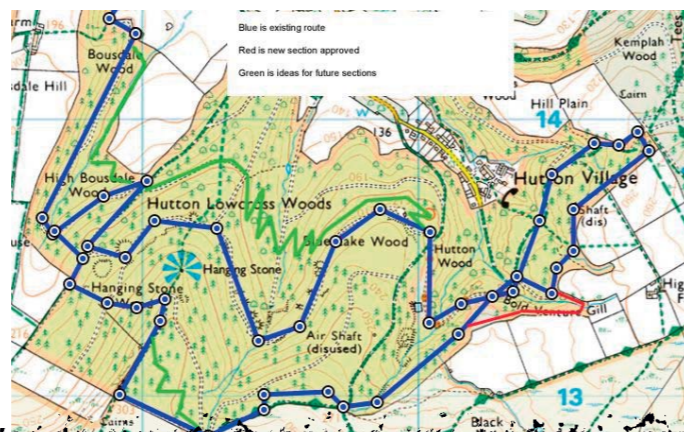
This may involve focussing the club's activities more on fundraising for trails rather than being actively engaged on the ground. If we can establish a clear and positive plan then hopefully we can be more successful in recruiting volunteers.

We are very interested to hear your views on this subject as trailbuilding is one of the key aims of the club.

If you have any questions or suggestions please direct them to trailbuilding@mtbguisborough.com and we will endeavour to answer them as best we can.

We are also very open to further options being suggested to be voted upon at the AGM.

If anybody feels they would like to come forward as a volunteer to contribute towards our trailbuilding activities, either from an organisational perspective or as a dig-day volunteer then now is a good time!



FOREST FESTIVAL 2014



An enthusiastic committee and group of MTB Guisborough members formed a team to promote the club, trail building and mountain biking in Guisborough Forest at the 2014 Forest Festival on 14th. September, at Pinchinthorpe Visitors Centre.

Armed with the club's new "easy-up", roller banner, leaflets and posters, the team was set up and raring to go by 10.00 am.

Due to superb weather and first class promoting from the organisers, the footfall was incredible, deeming the whole event a great success for all.

To add a little attraction and entertainment, the club ran a "Puncture Repair Challenge" on the stand, for those, not too embarrassed to expose their mechanical prowess. This was won by Kevin Cooper who was rewarded with a years free membership and a MTB Guisborough Freeride Jersey. Well done Kev!

Since the event, club membership has risen to 132, contributed to the interest generated on the stand, making this event a "no brainier" for the club to participate in next year.

Thanks to Nick Piper, Mark Bland, Martin Coleby, Dan Pattinson, Jason Hynd, Rory Spence, Stuart Percival and Troy for their contributions to the event's success for MTB Guisborough.



Image courtesy of the Evening Gazette

2014 AGM

Thursday 27th November
19.30 - 21.00
Laurence Jackson School Sports Centre
Church Lane, Guisborough. TS14 6RD



Lots of parking in the main car park at back of school. We'll be set up in one of the upstairs rooms at the sports complex (behind the main school).

Draft agenda:

- Update on key achievements and activities over the last 12 months
- Summary of current finances including breakdown of spending in last financial year
- Plans for the future including:
 - Programme of club activities including guided rides and coaching
 - Volunteer training & recruitment
 - Trailbuilding
 - Funding
 - Social and fundraising events
 - Competitive events
 - Racing
 - Rationalisation of web presence
 - Vote on committee positions for 2015

We try to keep the format as informal as possible and members will have the opportunity to ask questions, propose new ideas and vote on all the plans put forward.

If you would like to add anything to the agenda please email: secretary@mtbguisborough.com.

We hope to see you there.

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