

Chain Link

BAM Newsletter *Registered Charity no: 1118230*

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**Advanced
Motorcyclists**



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The view from the Side by Anne Garnish

After the debacle of Cadwell we were both feeling pretty down: we weren't racing as we wanted to be, instead struggling too far down the field and suffering ongoing mechanical issues. The bike was returned to Lumley Engineering for front end changes, in time for our outing at Pembrey in early May. Pembrey is a circuit we know well and with two race weekends there within a fortnight we had a good opportunity to work on the outfit set-up.



The first weekend was with Bemsee, the first time we'd raced with them. Bemsee offer two 'full' races each day, as opposed to the 'qualifying then race' format of North Glos, giving two opportunities for points and signatures. The size of the field was disappointingly small compared to North Glos, but with a big meeting at Cadwell on the same weekend it was understandable. Lots of our friends made the long journey over from Bristol to watch us on the Saturday, including BAM members Joanne Wingate (having a weekend off from racing but showing off her gorgeous new CBR) and Pauline Woodhall. We spent the day working on suspension set-up changes, gradually reducing our lap times, and placing 4th in both races.

On the Sunday we changed the tow-in on the chair wheel to try to give better grip. I made a bit of a twit of myself when I exited the outfit stage left just after Dibeni: the first time I'd fallen out. Notice how I chose the day when none of our friends were there to see my mistake? That was deliberate. Honest! Fortunately the paramedics saw the funny side and scored me a perfect 6.0 across the board for style – then applied icepacks to my various bumps and bruises. I even got a "I've been a brave bunny" sticker which was applied with pride to the bike! We were unable to improve on our 4th place result from the previous day, so the bike went back to Lumley Engineering again.

Ten days later we went out to Mallory for a test day: the front end had been set up to replicate other bikes, instead of the new design we'd been struggling with. What a difference! I also learned a new technique: how to actively straddle the back of the bike on right-handers. It leaves unexpected bruises on my legs and is vaguely reminiscent of Dr Strangelove, but is a remarkably effective technique.

Next outing was back at Pembrey, this time with North Glos. Again a small-ish field, this time due to the large number of teams competing at the TT who'd wrapped up their testing already. The new set-up, along with new tyres, was a super combination. Fresh, grippy rubber made a big difference: wish we could afford them for every weekend! We were leading a qualifying session when an F1 lost control down the start-finish straight, one of many red-flag sessions which blighted the day for all classes.

We were held on the circuit while the debris was cleared, then released. Running well, to our dismay the bike sputtered to a halt after 8 laps: we'd run out of fuel due to the extended session.

During the race we were chasing a colleague when our rear sprocket sheared away from the hub on the fastest part of the circuit: the kink down the back straight. Dean's quick reflexes kept us safe, but our day was over. Have you ever tried to find welding equipment in the middle of nowhere on a Saturday at the end of the day? We didn't even try to look, instead there were three trips back to Highbridge throughout the night to fix the sprocket and also a failed weld on the oil tank. Fantastic team work, but not a lot of sleep.

On Sunday we were sleep-deprived but posted a best race time of 1:07.85, bringing us home as 2nd F2 and with a lovely shiny trophy to add to our growing collection. The bike was, at last, working as we needed it to so our confidence could now grow.

I took a break after Pembrey, Pauline and I heading over to the TT for a week (chronicled in her excellent article in the last Chain Link). I spent all my free time dragging the poor girl round the sidecar paddock: she has the patience of a saint. Whilst I was away, Dean took Paul 'Scrote' Skinner as his passenger to the North Glos Mallory meeting. Unfortunately they came away with a nil result after being deliberately rammed off the circuit by an F1, causing considerable damage to our bike.

A complaint was made to the North Glos organisers.



Next outing, a fortnight later in blazing June, saw us heading for Silverstone to race with Bemsee. When I said blazing June, the only thing blazing was the TTXGP electric bike which caught fire in the collecting area: how to burn £250k in one easy move! We had torrential rain and hail instead of sunshine but a good chance to try out our wet tyres. Try them we did: blasting off the line after qualifying 6th we moved up to 3rd place after the first lap, were passed by our friends the flying Belgians (and clear championship leaders) Marc and Rik Vannieuwenhuysse, but in zero visibility we passed them back on lap 3. The circuit was very slippery, true Slitherstone, with the bike not pointing anywhere we needed it to be even down the straights, but when the chequered flag came out we were 3rd overall, and 1st F2 – our maiden win.

Our epic battle with the Belgians continued in the second wet race of the day, with most of the circuit commentary focussed on us, but our opponents had learned from the morning and try as we might we couldn't pip them again. It was an odd feeling to be disappointed with 2nd position, but also so pleased.

The Sunday was dry and we were front row following Saturday's successes. Despite a good start, the Belgians came past us and we were unable to do anything other than hold 2nd place again, with a best lap of 1:08. Gridded 6th for the final race of the day (with a number of F1s ahead of us) we were baulked a number of times as F1s spun, broke down or generally got in the way. The Belgians nipped through the chaos with years of experience while we struggled. We came 5th overall and 2nd F2 again having improved our lap time to a 1:07.565.

A haul of four trophies – and jumping us instantly into 4th place in the Bemsee championship.



We have a new facebook page if you'd like to follow us, see all the new flavours of jam, plus how to order the new black t-shirts: <http://www.facebook.com/TeamLickRacing>

In the next edition: How to write off a sidecar on the first lap of a race, resulting in NotRacingAtSnetterton, testing at Mallory with the new paint scheme, Anglesey and (if all goes to plan as I type this) our first International meeting at Mondello.

Fancy supporting a race team? You can follow our progress on Facebook (Team Lick Racing) and support the team by buying t-shirts or making a donation at <http://www.lickracing.com>