



It's hard to muster much enthusiasm for anything on a drizzly December morning, let alone for something you've never done before, but after spending just a few hours with the Bemsee members, I - a complete motorcycle racing novice - am beginning to think that taking up racing would be a great idea!

The British Motorcycle Racing Club (more



race series are competed on a level playing field."

One such race series is the National Junior Cup. Open to kids between the ages of 13-18, it is one of the most exciting race series that Bemsee run - not least because the prize for next year's winner is a fully-paid ride in every round of the 2013 European Junior Cup. On top of that, the winner of each round will



fondly known as Bemsee) boasts some pretty illustrious alumni. The likes of Casey Stoner, James Toseland, Tommy Hill, Cal Crutchlow and Bradley Smith have all been - and still are in some cases - fully paid up members. But the open day I visited was focused on a slightly less experienced class of rider - the rookies.

The purpose of the open day was get rookie riders booked in to the February Race School and to offer them the chance to speak



the whole season." Prior to the event there were about 10 confirmed orders for the 250, but John is supremely confident in the series format and the machine. "This bike is definitely the one to have - nothing is as easy to ride and everyone in the series will be on it, so we're going to see an exciting but fair battle to see who the best rider really is."

One youngster who has already signed up is 16-year-old Mason Law. After a successful year of off-road racing, Mason has decided



people on the subject, I'm reliably informed that the scariest but most useful part of the day is the mock start grid. "The race start is a huge part of the day," Jeremy said. "It gives rookies that unique and terrifying experience but in a controlled environment, before they have to do it for real at the start of the season - and we're seeing a huge reduction in the number of accidents as a result. Last season



plan on hanging up his leathers anytime soon. "I'll go on until I get too badly smashed up, run out of money or find something more interesting to do," he said. "And I doubt that I'll find anything more interesting than this!"

One thing that Bemsee is particularly proud of is the rider development programme, which sees riders partner up and share their experience in order to enhance their skills. Jeremy Hill, director of rider development, explains more: "we take



» THE BEMSEE OPEN DAY 2011 BRANDS HATCH



be offered a paid wildcard ride in the next available 2012 European Junior Cup event, run at World Superbike, to give more riders the chance to taste world-level racing.

The series has also secured the new Kawasaki Ninja 250 R for the 2012 season. It's a 4-stroke which, in the opinion of Chief Technical Official John Wilson, far outstrips its predecessor, the two-stroke Aprilia 125. "We needed a new bike for 2012 and the likes of Honda weren't interested, so we

to club officials and existing members about racing. Bemsee's Tim Brown explains: "it's geared around simply giving the rookies as much information as possible, so they can make a proper informed decision about where, and in what class, they want to race next season. Speaking to people face-to-face for just a few minutes can save hours of messing around on the phone and with email."

Tim is very proud of Bemsee and he's not shy in telling potential members how good the club is! "We've got more FIM qualified stewards than most clubs, I think we might even have the same as they do in BSB. We also have our own dyno, which we rigorously test every bike on, so we know that all of our



were delighted when Kawasaki stepped in with the 250 R. The four-stroke engine is excellent. The old Aprilia would need to be stripped down every two meetings but this new Kawasaki should go pretty much



to try his hand on the tarmac - and he sees Bemsee as the ideal place to do so. "I always thought that life was measured on achievements and racing in this series gives me a chance to achieve massively," said a determined Mason. "That prize of the European Cup ride is such a big reward if you win - I'm just going to give it my all. It's going to be a real learning curve coming from off-road, but I just hope to be up there come the end of the season." With the Junior Cup producing some real prospects for the future, it might seem like Bemsee is all about finding the next Casey, James or Tommy, but that's not the case. Right at the other end of the spectrum is 65-year-old rider, and Bemsee member, John Hall. "I started riding

» MOST OF THE RACING WORLD IS IN HIBERNATION FOR THE WINTER, BUT THERE WAS A BUZZING ATMOSPHERE AT THE BEMSEE OPEN DAY. RACER'S PETER IANTORNO WENT DOWN TO BRANDS HATCH TO SEE WHAT ALL THE FUSS WAS ABOUT...

in 1965 and I've had a fair few accidents since then, let me tell you," John recalled. "The great thing about Bemsee is the family atmosphere. Even if, like me, you're at the back of most of the races, there are always four or five people around you that you can have a good hard race with, and once you've crossed that finishing line you're all the best of mates again." And the veteran doesn't

there was only one small crash in the first meeting, which is a massive improvement on seasons gone by." Gerrard Spear was one of many who benefitted from the February Race School. He finished fourth in the Rookie 1000s in his second season racing with Bemsee, and has now formed Team V-Speed Racing with fellow racer, Dan Couzens. "No other club



the programme very seriously. It's not just for rookies - we've got seasoned riders who will still come and ask us if we can take a look at their line through a particular corner - we're really proud of it and we're constantly trying to improve."

Bemsee's February Race School weekend is where the rookies go to learn the basics, and it is an important part of the sign-up procedure. After speaking to quite a few



does this,” Gerrard said. “The weekend in February gave me so much confidence when I was starting out – from the atmosphere in the paddock, to the practice grid starts – everything I experienced just made it so easy for me to get involved. And although it is competitive – you wouldn’t want it any other way – winning is not the be-all-and-end-all. We’ve got a few guys who’ve never been out of the bottom five and just race for the love of it and they get no less respect than the people on the podium every weekend.”

Talking of being on the podium every weekend, there’s a certain Bemsee member who has become very accustomed to the top step. Scott Hudson, in his rookie season of 2011, won - take a deep breath - The Rookie 600, The MRO Clubman 600 Trophy, The Champion of Brands and the Mellano Trophy, which is awarded to the Bemsee rider of the year. After such a stunning debut season, the 24-year-old is looking to step up to the British Superstock 600 class next year and he’s already got his media-friendly head on as he was insistent on thanking his already growing

entourage. “Ben Hudson, Aaron Daniels, the Bemsee officials and marshals, Seton Tuning, Old Heath Garage, T.K. Cora Moto and Go Racing Developments.” With his obvious talent and professionalism he’s clearly got a lot going for him!

In terms of next season, “I’m thinking top ten or hopefully top five – I’ve already done way more than I’d expected, so I’m just going to play it by ear and see how I go on,” said a down-to-earth Scott. And everyone at Bemsee is pretty excited about their new hot prospect, Tim Brown especially: “someone that good doesn’t come along every day,” said Tim. “If he keeps on going like he is then only God knows how far he will get – the sky is the limit.”

With such a vast array of different riders racing at different levels, Bemsee must take some serious management. And much of that responsibility falls upon their Chief Executive, Mike Domett, who as you’d expect, is very passionate about Bemsee and the season ahead. “The turn out today seems even better than we expected. You never really

know about numbers until you get the sign-up forms back in, but it certainly feels right.”

“It’s just such a friendly club. We always make sure to pair each new rider with another more seasoned member, which makes the whole experience safer and generally more enjoyable – and we’re seeing riders stay loyal to Bemsee for longer and longer because of it.”

It seems that the beauty of a club like this is the mix of people, and that’s a view that Mike certainly supports: “we have lots of co-operation with BSB, so it’s a great stepping stone if you’re looking to rise up the ranks in racing. However, we’ve also got loads of people who ride purely for fun and have no aspirations of getting high up in the sport.” Club racing gives people the chance to become acquainted and get involved with people of all walks of life, and Bemsee is a club which has that in spades. If you fancy joining the fun then check them out at www.bemsee.net - I might even see you on the grid! **racer**

» GETTING STARTED: COMPETITOR TRAINING

» THE ACU’S GARY THOMPSON GIVES HIS ADVICE:

“Given the inherent dangers surrounding Road Racing, it is important that any competitor taking to the track is aware of basic safety and organisational requirements to help keep himself and his fellow competitors as safe as possible.

All first time Road Race license applicants are required to complete a classroom based Competitor Training Course (CTC) and riders and sidecar drivers are also required to prove their competency at riding a motorcycle before a licence can be issued. The course is designed to make applicants aware of some important aspects to prepare them for their introduction to Road Racing - some of the elements are: entering your first event, race day organisation, safety, track conduct, competitor legal responsibilities, insurance, background to our sport and an end of Course test.

Competitor Training Courses for new Road Race Licence Applicants are held at ACU House, Wood Street, Rugby, Warks, CV21 2YX on alternate Mondays throughout the year.

Dates until the end of April are **January 9th, January 23rd, February 6th, February 20th, March 5th, March 19th, April 2nd, April 16th and April 30th.**

The courses begin at 11.00am. To book a place contact the Licence Department on 01788 566400. The cost of the course to each applicant is £30.00 if 17 years or over and free if 16 and under. For those wishing to attend a course closer to home or would like to attend a course held on a weekend, the following dates are available:

North East Motorcycle Racing Club will be holding a CTC Course for Road Race Licence

applicants on **Saturday 25th February.**

The Course will be held at Tyneside Motor Club, North Shields, commencing at 10.00am. To book a place and for further details including the cost, please contact Matt Barkess on 0191 5200621 or email mattbarkess@yahoo.co.uk

Darley Moor Motorcycle Club will also hold a CTC Course on **Saturday 25th February** commencing at 9.30am.

A riding ability test will take place from 2.00pm for riders with their own motorcycles. The cost of the classroom based CTC course will be £30. The riding ability test will be charged at £50. Riders who are 16 years of age or younger on the day of the course will not pay for the CTC Course. Further details can be found from www.darley Moor.co.uk/motorcycle_competitor_training.php or by contacting Sandra or Eddie Nelson on 01246 866537 any evening. Courses are held at Darley Moor throughout the year including one on Sunday 25th March and another on Saturday 14th April.

British Motorcycle Racing Club (BEMSEE) will be hosting a classroom course on **Saturday 25th February** at 1.30pm with an on track session on **Sunday 26th February** commencing at 9.00am. Both days will be at Brands Hatch, Kent. For further details and prices please contact the club on 01708 720305.

Club MSV have a number of dates for CTC courses, all of which take place at Track Day events. The Course is £150 or £99 if booked in conjunction with a track day on the same day. The dates are as follows: **Wednesday Nov 9th** - Brands Hatch Indy Circuit, **Tuesday Nov 22nd** - Oulton Park Full Circuit, **Saturday Dec 3rd** - Snetterton 300, **Sunday Jan 22nd** - Snetterton 300, **Thursday Jan 26th** - Brands

Hatch Indy Circuit, **Sunday Jan 29th** - Cadwell Park Full Circuit, **Friday Feb 10th** - Brands Hatch Indy Circuit, **Saturday Feb 18th** - Cadwell Park Full Circuit.

For further information or to book a place call 0843 453 3000 or visit: www.clubmsv.co.uk/acu

Wirral Hundred is holding a CTC Course on **Sunday 5th February**. The course will be held at a hotel near the M6 & M56. The cost of the course will be £40 for adults and £10 for juniors (including coffee and lunch). Further details and booking forms can be obtained from Margaret Dewsnap on 01244 813127.

» IMPORTANT TO NOTE:

From the 1st January a pass in the CBT Course will not be acceptable as a means of proving an applicant’s ability to ride a motorcycle and with effect from the same date only the following will be acceptable as proof of riding ability:

- A certificate of competence from an ACU Registered Track-based Training School/Race School or ACU Road Race Club Training Day issued within the previous 12 months. (Attach a copy of the certificate to your licence application form)

- A valid DVLA Class A driving licence. (Attach a copy of this to your licence application form)

- Have competed at a competitive multiple start motorcycle event on a motorcycle with a manual clutch and gearbox. This must be supported by the following:

1. Result sheets from at least two races issued within the previous 12 months
2. At least two photographs of the rider taking part in competition on the motorcycle.”

racer