



Newsletter – 13/03/2012

Successful Start to the Season!

Firstly, I would like to welcome support for the coming season from Grant Wagstaff Building Contractors, Kent Holiday Cottages, HEL Performance and GB Racing which is much appreciated.

Grant (Wag) Wagstaff has provided a spare ZX10r which is being prepared for him to ride at the TT. Wag had an extremely successful Manx Grand prix in 2011 where he finished 2nd in the Senior race only 3 seconds behind the winner and was leading comfortably the Junior race when cruelly the generator packed up.

Kent Holiday Cottages (www.kentholidaycottages.co.uk) offer an extensive range of Beautiful Country Cottages, Barn Conversions, Oast Houses, Farm Houses, Seaside Apartments and more. Tim Bourne who owns and manages Kent Holiday Cottages was a very successful racer in the eighties and nineties riding factory Kawasaki's and the Norton Roton.



HEL Performance (www.helperformance.com) manufacture high quality motorcycle and automotive stainless steel brake lines and hoses.

GB Racing (www.gbracing.eu) are specialist manufacturers of secondary engine covers, frame sliders/crash mushrooms, paddock stand bobbins and lower chain guards. Their products are the best looking on the market and offer protection that works.

I couldn't wait to get back out on the ZX10R having not ridden since the end of November at Jerez. The bike had been fully prepared for the first round of the Hottrax Motorsport Championship at Brands Hatch. This would be a good opportunity to test the new MCT prepared Öhlins TTX gas fork internals and shock, and to fine tune it to suit the Brands Hatch Indy circuit in preparation for the first round of the National Superstock Championship.

I spent the first two sessions on Friday getting back up to speed after the winter break and I felt comfortable on the bike after only a few laps. Once I was up to speed and setting some respectable lap times it was time to start making changes. I made a few adjustments to the riding position and to the bikes geometry. This made it steer better which is important around the 1.2 mile Indy circuit, where on a big bike you are always on the side of the tyre! As the day progressed my lap times were constantly improving which was encouraging. I continued to make changes to the set-up including the shock preload to again improve the bikes turning ability. I noticed an improvement so continued to move in that direction with the set-up until no further improvement was felt. By the end of the day I was happy with the settings and lap times considering it was my first outing of 2012.



I qualified second behind Steve Mercer who was on good form riding his well sorted slick shod Superbike Honda Fireblade. Brands is a good place to practice starts, especially from the front row, as the start is uphill so you have to be strong off the line. I got a good start and stayed in second around Paddock Hill. I tried to stay with Steve but he and the Honda were too fast so I used him as a tow for as long as possible and paced myself trying to improve every lap. My times were consistently faster than any session before so I was moving in the right direction and I finished the race in second. I felt that the gearing was slightly too long, which affected the drive and engine braking into and out of most corners.

South London Kawasaki

Ducks Cross Racing



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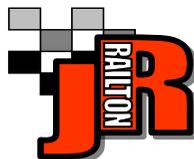
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The gearing was changed for the second race. It was a similar start to the first race as I followed the Honda into Druids. The gearing felt better and I could hold much better lines. I went quicker again and I was closing in on my fastest time around the Indy circuit.

The weather had been good all weekend and Sunday was the best of all. I went out in qualifying with the tyres I used on Saturday and posted a good time early on. This was good enough for pole position, as Steve had not entered the races on Sunday. With a new set of tyres fitted for the first race I was determined to post a fast lap time. I got away well but got passed on the run to Paddock Hill bend. I made my move at the end of the first lap to take the lead and I set about setting some good times. I strung a couple of fast laps together before I posted my fastest ever time around the Indy circuit. I went on to consistently post fast times and crossed the line in first place. I was pleased with this performance at this early stage of the season. I was looking forward to the second race to continue this pace. I was happy with the settings and the bike was performing well. I got a good start this time round and I led the pack into the first turn. I felt the tyre moving straight away but I pressed on in an attempt to close in on my time from the first race. I couldn't match the time but I was again setting consistently fast times. I won the race bringing to an end a successful weekends racing.

The overall performance that weekend is really encouraging and a test day at Silverstone on Sunday confirmed my speed. I can't wait for round 1 of the National Superstock 1000 Championship at Brands Hatch, which will take place over the Easter weekend.

Jon



Next events:

- Brands Hatch Indy – BSB National Superstock 1000 Round 1 – 6th - 9th April 2012
- Thruxton – BSB National Superstock 1000 Round 2 – 13th - 15th April 2012

www.jonrailton.com

Jon Railton #77



Photos courteous of Nick Railton and Alan Lygo

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Huntingdon Business Centre
Tel No: 01480 458600



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