

Race report rounds 11 & 12

17–18 September 2011

Friday practice for NG Road Racing's second 2012 visit to Pembrey finished for the day following unexpected sunshine at the South Wales circuit. The race weekend however wasn't to be so fine, breaking the remarkable run of luck the NG paddock has enjoyed so far.

Saturday 17th September, round 11

Race 3, round 11 qualifier for the *Pirelli UK GP45 Championship and Performance Red mini-twins* lined up on the grid in sunny conditions but the track was quickly drying from a previous shower. Pembrey circuit is renowned for its grip in the wet so the competitors were all hoping they could make progress in the tricky conditions. Chris Harrison astride the *Motobits* Aprilia GP45 Super Twin eyed the front row from back in his 24th grid slot, looking to make the an early charge towards the front. His usual Super Twin rival, Martin Thrower, was riding the *NG Road Racing* GP45 Super Single for this weekend and keen to make his mark against the regular challengers. Yet again some new faces were welcomed with Karl Rhodes and James Stacey making their debut on board the Super Singles.

First time past the start/finish line and Chris Harrison's Aprilia shot through in 7th position overall, several battles later Harrison had reached 4th place on-the-road and was looking at a front row grid slot for the final. The final lap saw Harrison lose a place by fractions of a second, relegating him to the second row for the next race.

The battle of the Singles enjoyed another new victor with Martin Thrower relishing the damp conditions. Thrower pipped Championship leader Matt Andrew by just 0.01 and setting a fastest lap of 1:09.36. The #96 *Wedds and Co/ Utiliscan* Suzuki RMZ of Andrew exchanged places with Thrower race long in an exciting contest that witnessed one of the closest finishes of the Championship. James Stacey enjoyed taking the *Bluebell Lakes* Honda GP45 on their maiden race and managed a strong 3rd Super Single finish followed by Robbie Robson's *Trevor Pope Racing* KTM and Karl Rhodes on the *GP45.co.uk* Kawasaki. Tony Bridgefoot had been making excellent progress in recent rounds but crashed out early on at the Old Hairpin cutting short his Super Single qualifier challenge.

Weather conditions for the final were similar to the qualifier with several showers throughout the day keeping the track damp and changeable. The grid was now reshuffled dispersing GP45s amongst the mini-twins. Chris Harrison's unusual 2nd row grid slot meant he was ultra focussed on getting to the front as soon as possible and itching to start challenging for the overall win. Harrison's *Motobits* Aprilia showed the mini-twins he meant business by taking the lead from the off, dominating the race and taking the flag some 20 seconds ahead of the 2nd place finisher.

Matt Andrew was back in control of the Super Singles but lost transponder signal during the race, he managed to take an impressive Super Single victory but a now confident James Stacey was hot on his heels on the *Bluebell Lakes* Honda, trailing Andrew by just 0.25 across the line in another close battle to be first single cylinder machine home. *Bluebell Lakes* team leader, Tony Bridgefoot had to settle for third Single spot behind nephew Stacey with Robbie Robson and Karl Rhodes rounding out the finishers. Qualifier winner Martin Thrower found himself without a start when the NG Road Racing bike refused to fire-up.

Sunday 18th September, round 12

With it all to do again from the 6th row Chris Harrison pulled to the line in light rain and a wet track to contend with. Again the blue Super Twin was on a charge getting through to 3rd by the first trip past the timing beacon, 2nd time around and he was in the lead fending off the mini-twin of Ben Cole. Harrison took the chequered flag with the fastest overall lap of 1:09:86 and another on-the-road victory. ›





UK GP45 CHAMPIONSHIP

SUPER SINGLES | SUPER TWINS

Continued. Race report rounds 11 & 12

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Bluebell Lakes' newest GP45 recruit James Stacey was really starting to shine on the well equipped Honda, putting in a fastest Super Single lap of 1:14.66, taking the win for the Singles and achieving a top ten overall finish. Robbie Robson took the 2nd Single cylinder position with Tony Bridgefoot and Karl Rhodes in 3rd and 4th respectively.

As the day progressed more cloud bursts ensued meaning most races were either wet or damp and patchy. The Pirelli UK GP45 final was no exception and the competitors headed out to tackle a wet circuit in the persistent rain. From a pole position start Chris Harrison again proved his confidence in the rain battling hard for position, eventually emerging the winner in a close finish rounding out a very successful but wet weekend. James Stacey was another man looking to round out the weekend on a high, crossing the line the clear winner amongst the Singles. Robbie Robson provided Trevor Pope Racing with another 2nd place Super Single finish with Karl Rhodes finishing 3rd.

A special mention to Tony Bridgefoot who lined up for the April Newcomers 500 race looking for a win to be crowned NG Road Racing 500 newcomer champion for 2012. He rose to the challenge in fine style leading a gaggle of three riders across the line covered by just half a second between them. At 57 years old, Tony is one of the club's most senior competitors, he does admit to previous race experience prior to this season but his last outing was in the late 1970s!



Left: Chris Harrison on the GP45 Aprilia Super Twin battles his way past Karl Rhodes on the Kawasaki Super Single.

Right: Matt Andrew on the Suzuki Super Single followed closely by James Stacey on the Honda Super Single **Credit:** www.EDPphoto.co.uk

Pirelli UK GP45 Championship standings: Super Twins: Chris Harrison 275, Martin Thrower 132, Brad Davey 85
Super Singles: Matthew Andrew 240, Robbie Robson 155, Gary Moran 118.

Next round: Thruxton 15th October 2011 **Trophies awarded for both classes.**

