

Motorcycling with John Savage

Charlie Boorman lecture

Charley Boorman will be delivering a lecture at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Cultra, on Thursday, February 26.

Last year, Charley set off on a new, solo adventure, 'By Any Means'. Starting from Wicklow, the journey took him by steam train, motorcycle sidecar, dugout canoe, cargo boat, horse and tuk-tuk to Sydney, Australia.

It all started when Charley took time out to join his friend and fellow actor Ewan McGregor in an epic motorcycle trip from London to New York, via Europe and Asia. The 19,000 miles journey, on specially adapted BMW motorcycles, included visits to UNICEF projects and monuments like the Mask of Sorrow in Magadan. It turned into their first hit series, 'Long Way Round'.

Charley and Ewan's next adventure was 'Long Way Down', from John O'Groats to Cape Town in South Africa.

Charley will talk about his journeys, the obstacles he encountered and some of the characters he met along the way.

The lecture is part of the Ulster Museum Northern Bank Lecture Series, and tickets are £7 or £4.50 for group discount.

KJRSC prize winners

Winners of the recent Kirk Jamison Racing Supporters' Club quiz sheet draw were: 1, Finlay Boal; 2, Stephanie Campbell.

The club thanks everyone for their support.

Ballymoney Motorcycle Show

Davy Loudon will be staging his annual Ballymoney Motorcycle Show in the town's Joey Dunlop Leisure Centre on Friday/Saturday, February 27/28.

Joey Dunlop's widow, Linda, is making available a number of her late husband's machine for display, including a Honda SP1, Honda RC30, Honda 600 and a 250 Honda.

A number of well known racers, both past and present, will be guesting at the show, including: Ray McCullough, Adrian Craig, Michael and William Dunlop, Paul Robinson, Barry Davidson, Jeff Shaw and Andrew Neill.

The show will feature the usual range of modern and classic racing machinery, plus an autajumble and some of the proceeds will be donated to the inaugural Army road races, which will be staged on August 7/8.

Steve Baker Motorcycles

Easter trophy Millisle-based Steve Baker Motorcycles are hoping to present a trophy, plus £50, to the top Supersport Cup rider in the Irish Superbike Championship meeting at Bishopscourt on Good Friday/Easter Saturday.

The event, to be promoted by the Motorcycle Road Racing Club of Ireland and Killinchy and District Motorcycle Club, will offer a prize fund in the region of £19,000, and the feature race will be the Enkalon Trophy for the fastest qualifiers from the Superbike and Supersport classes.

It's the first time the clubs have organised a two day Easter meeting and admission for both days will be excellent value at £15.

There will be practice, qualifying and one race per class on Good Friday, April 10, with two races per class on Easter Saturday.

Steve Baker Motorcycles sponsor Irish Supersport Championship rider Kevin Briggs, from Bangor, and presented trophies at Belfast and District Motor Club's Easter Monday meeting at Kirkistown last year.

However, after Steve and Lorna Baker were unable to reach agreement with the B&D for this year, they decided to support the Bishopscourt fixture instead.

Jamison to captain Six Nations squad

Ardsmen Kirk Jamison will captain the Northern Ireland team in the inaugural MotoSix, Six Nations Road Race Championship, at Donington Park on Saturday/Sunday, March 28/29.

Local riders figure prominently in the Ulster team, with Jamison joined in the solo team by Ballygowan's Michael Pearson, the 2007 Irish Superbike champion, while Newtownards sidecar crews Alex Johnston/Kyle Young, the reigning Irish champions, and George Kennedy/Colin Smyth form half of the sidecar team.

Donington Park has joined forces with the governing body of motorcycle sport in England and Wales, the Auto Cycle Union (ACU), to host the MotoSix challenge, which will feature solo and sidecar teams representing Northern Ireland, England, Irish Republic, Isle of Man, Scotland and Wales.

Each nation will select six Superbike and six Supersport riders, plus four sidecar crews, and the Ulster team is:

Superbike: Carrickfergus man Alastair Seeley, Michael Pearson, Portadown's Marshall Neill, Denver Robb from Ballymena, Ballymoney's Gerard Kingham and Mark Johnston from Coleraine;

Supersport: Kirk Jamison, Marty Nutt from Castlerock, Dromara's Alastair Kirk, Lee Johnston from Fermanagh, Belfastman Nikki Coates and Gary Jeffers from Cookstown;

Sidecar: Alex Johnston/Kyle Young, Belfast pair Scobie Killough/Paddy Marley, Banbridge crew John Clarke/Stuart Graham and George Kennedy/Colin Smyth.

Only Marshall Neill and sidecar crew Killough/Marley

were unable to attend the official launch of the team last Saturday afternoon at the Northern Ireland Motorcycle Festival in Belfast's King's Hall, when Jamison was announced as team captain.

Kirk enthused: "I was already excited to be part of the Northern Ireland team, so to be named as captain is a real bonus. Our team is very strong throughout and everyone gets along as well, so it should be a great weekend. It is hoped the event will become a permanent fixture and I really hope it does. The fact that 17 of the 20 guys in the team travelled here for the launch shows just how enthusiastic everyone is about it. The guys who couldn't make it unfortunately had work commitments, otherwise it would have been a full house."

He added: "The event has already attracted a lot of media coverage and with it set to be televised as well, it is a great bonus for everyone's sponsors. Personally it is a great development to be able to provide television coverage for people like Feckin Spiced, as we struggle to obtain that here in Ireland."

Kirk grinned: "Even though none of the other teams has officially been released, I feel they will all struggle to put together a team with as much talent as us and I have high hopes that we will be bringing the trophy home."

The Moto Six, Six Nations Championship will be staged over the Donington grand prix circuit and qualifying and race positions will count towards the team scores. During qualifying on the Saturday, the team with the lowest aggregate qualifying time, taken from the combined times of the six team riders, will get first choice of grid positions, the second team getting second choice etc, until the grid is complete.

During Sunday's two races,



The Northern Ireland team for Moto Six, the Six Nations Road Race Championship, was officially launched at the Northern Ireland Motorcycle Festival in Belfast's King's Hall last Saturday, when Kirk Jamison (centre front) was announced as team captain.

Photo by Derek Clegg

points will be awarded for race positions: one point for a win, two for second, three for third, down to 36 points for the last finisher, and the MotoSix crown will go to the team with the lowest points.

Ulster team manager, Newtownards man Ivan Davidson, was unable to attend the team launch due to family commitments, however, he commented: "The MCUI Ulster Centre are delighted to be

afforded an opportunity to participate in such an event, which provides a valuable chance for our talented team to display their skills on a major stage in a prestigious event.

"We are confident our team will be a force to reckon with, littered with Irish champions, a British champion, a North West 200 winner and riders who have vast experience of racing at home and at British Championship level. We are

sure we can be a match for any of the other nations."

Robert Fearnell, Operations Director at Donington Park, attended the Ulster team launch and commended the Motor Cycle Union of Ireland (Ulster Centre) on selecting such a strong team.

Adding his hope that the event would become an annual series, he enthused: "This event will be a real festival of motorcycle racing. We plan to

make MotoSix not only about the sport, but also the spirit of the sport, harnessing the massive enthusiasm and passion that makes motorcycle sport special. We are sure this will be an event to remember."

Well known race commentator George McCann interviewed all the Northern Irish team members on the King's Hall stage and Kirk Jamison praised Ivan Davidson for putting the team together,

thanked the Ulster Centre for its financial support and paid tribute to the JMF Millsport and Raceways team for releasing their bikes to allow Alastair Seeley, Lee Johnston and Nikki Coates to compete.

Proposals for MotoSix also include television coverage, with a programme planned to cover both days of the event, including rider and team interviews, together with full race coverage.

Knockhill to host Ulster Championship round

Knockhill in Scotland is to host a round of this year's re-introduced Ulster Short Circuit Championships, after the Southern Centre of the Motor Cycle Union of Ireland thwarted a bid to stage an Irish Superbike Championship round at the Fife track.

The Ulster Road Race and Short Circuit Championships make a welcome return for the first time since 1988 and will be staged in tandem with the Irish Road Race and Short Circuit Championships.

Newtownards man Ivan Davidson, convenor and press officer of the Ulster Centre Tarmac Committee, explained: "The Ulster Championships have been revived in response to feedback from a number of riders, who suggested to us that with the current credit crunch it is likely that a number of riders will find it difficult to travel to all the rounds of the Irish Championships in 2009."

After a round of the Irish Superbike Championship was staged outside Ireland for the first time at Anglesey last year, ISB will return to the superb Welsh circuit in September, however, an invitation to stage an ISB round at Knockhill was rejected by the Southern Centre of the MCUI, but the Ulster Centre has decided to stage an Ulster Championship round at Knockhill on the final weekend of August.

The move has been welcomed by Newtownards racer Kirk Jamison, who will again launch a two-pronged championship assault this season, with his Jim Angus Contracts Honda Fireblade CBR1000RR in the Irish and Ulster Superbike

Championships and his Yamaha R6 in the Irish and Ulster Supersport Championships.

He said: "Knockhill is a fantastic venue and a very welcome late addition to my calendar. It is also a much sought after August date for us short circuit guys."

Kirk applauded: "I have to say that Ivan Davidson and the rest of the Ulster Centre deserve one hell of a pat on the back for their recent efforts. They have had the foresight to re-introduce the Ulster Championships at a time when the economic climate could result in riders abstaining from the Southern rounds of ISB, snapped up the opportunity to hold an extra round at Knockhill when our southern counterparts turned down its inclusion in the ISB calendar and, of course, given their consent, support and financial assistance to the Northern Ireland team competing in the Six Nations at Donington Park."

"Ivan personally is also heavily involved in the Motor Cycle Road Racing Club of Ireland, who promote the Easter meeting at Bishopscourt, which has expanded this year into a two day meeting with bumper prize money. Credit where it is due and it is definitely due here."

Kirk added: "It results in us having a seven round Ulster Championship and ten round Irish Championship and six of the ten Irish rounds will also be two day meetings. Given that I have both Supersport and Superbike machinery for this year, I obviously now have four titles to aim for, which will keep me more than busy."

However, Kirk's enthusiasm is tinged with a degree of disappointment that he will not be able to defend the Ken Redfern Trophy he won last year at Croft in north

Yorkshire.

The recent much publicised court hearings, in which the circuit lost a case brought by three local residents, who won substantial damages after they successfully claimed their quality of life had been adversely affected by noise emanating from the track, means the North East Motor Cycle Racing Club has cancelled its Ken Redfern and Laird of Croft meeting at Croft in June, and the club will now stage its last ever meeting at the excellent facility in April.

Kirk rued: "It was obviously on the cards for this meeting to be cancelled, ever since the news of the court case emerged, but it still comes as a blow to have it confirmed."

He recalled: "I have been competing at the event since 2005 and have notched up eight wins in that time, including one Laird of Croft title and twice winning the coveted Ken Redfern Trophy. Unfortunately I will be unable to defend the Redfern Trophy this year, as it will now be run in April. I will be at Mondello and Donington the two weeks previous and Bishopscourt and Kirkistown the week after. Four weekends in a row is not a possibility, due to family commitments."

He continued: "I hope to be in a position to race with the North East Motor Cycle Racing Club again sometime in the future. Sharon Taylor and the rest of the club have looked after me well in the four years I have been there and it has always been one of the highlights of my season."

Jamison concluded: "There is no point going on about the reasons behind this. It is, however, a good job that reason is not with a stones throw of my house though, that is for sure. I don't now how they sleep at night."

Kelly tags new backing for Thundersport campaign

Comber's Scott Kelly has secured a new backer for his campaign in this year's Thundersport GB Championship, in which the 20 year old will be aiming to improve on last season's third position in the premier GP1 series.

Astride his ex-John Donnan Honda Fireblade CBR1000RR, Scott will concentrate on the nine rounds Thundersport series, with selected outings in the British Superbike Cup, the series for privateer riders within the British Superbike Championship, which was won last year by John Laverty from Toomebridge on the Buildbase NW200 Ducati.

Kelly, who will have his first outing of the season at a Kirkistown track day on March 8, is backed by Holeshot Racing; Eddie Kelly of Dunboyne; Eddie Spratt Auto Repairs, Moneyreagh; and Maximuscle. Bangor man Glenn Thompson, a field manager with English company Dixon Bike-It, has been monitoring Kelly's progress and has stepped in to supply the local lad with leathers

to promote UTAG, for which the Southampton company is exclusive distributors.

The state-of-the-art riders' digital dogtag utilises the latest technology to give electronic data storage in a style that mimics a traditional dogtag.

The creator of UTAG developed a product that can easily be seen and identified as containing emergency information. It carries all the information a rider considers necessary to help in an emergency situation, letting emergency services know who to contact on their behalf and pass on any medical information they want to make available.

The manufacturers believe the lightweight aluminium UTAG is also something a rider would want to wear and is a worthwhile, fashionable accessory, which comes with an additional blank dogtag to personalise. The UTAG displays the international medical symbol, the snake and sceptre, and the letters 'ICE', which emergency services use to denote 'In Case



Glenn Thompson and Scott Kelly with the leathers which the Comber rider will wear this season to promote the 'digital dogtag' UTAG.

of Emergency'. The unique software, which can be displayed in seven European languages, has been developed to be easy to use and can include emergency phone contacts, photo ID, GP and medical information.

Kelly's racing season begins with the opening round of the Thundersport GB Championships, the Spring Cup National at Mallory Park in Leicestershire from March 13—

15. Other Thundersport dates are: King of the Mountain, Cadwell Park, April 12/13; Celtic Cup, Pembrey, May 9/10; Earl of Oulton, June 5/6; Snetterton Race for Aces, July 11/12; British Grand Prix, Donington Park, July 23—26; Brands Hatch Race of the South, August 29/30; Anglesey, Copper Island Trophy, September 12/13; Rockingham, October 10/11.

Farquhar launches KMR Kawasaki team

Dungannon's Ryan Farquhar will ride under the KMR Kawasaki banner this year, as he embarks upon another season of international and national road racing.

The 33 year old enjoyed one of his most successful seasons last year, when he won both the Irish Superbike and Supersport Road Race Championships and the Duke Road Race Rankings, whilst also impressing at the Isle of Man TT, with five top six finishes from his five rides, the only rider to achieve such a feat at last year's TT Festival.

With over 20 national race wins and another success at the Manx Grand Prix, it was a highly satisfying season for Ryan, which he hopes to repeat this year.

Ryan's KMR Kawasaki team will again contest all Irish national road races, together with the Isle of Man TT, North West 200 and Ulster Grand Prix.

As a Kawasaki Motors UK supported rider, Ryan will also have the continued support of faithful sponsor Kenny Harker, plus Dunlop tyres, Q8 Oils, Beta Tools, Winfield Gears, Shark Helmets, Roger Winfield, Sunoco Race Fuel, MSS Colchester Kawasaki and the 77 Supporters Club, and will once more campaign a Supersport Kawasaki Ninja ZX-6R and a Ninja ZX-10R Superstock machine in the Superbike class.

He is currently in advanced discussions with a team about a Superbike ride for the TT and hopes to make an imminent announcement.

Ryan will also contest the Southern 100 in July in the Isle of Man, plus the Manx Grand Prix in September and selected meetings at Oliver's Mount, Scarborough.

Farquhar is also delighted to have secured a deal with Rockstar Energy Drinks and will be the first UK rider to receive official sponsorship from the American company.

Ryan enthused: "I'm really excited about the new season ahead. Last year was a tremendous season for everyone connected with the team and thanks to the continued support of my loyal sponsors, we have everything in place to

challenge for more race wins in 2009. I've got a great team behind me and success at the international races will be our main aim, whilst also defending my two national road race titles."

Kawasaki Motors UK Sales and Marketing Manager, Michael Johnstone, commented: "Ryan has worked hard to reach his current status and achieve success in one of the most demanding motorcycle disciplines in the world. We are sure that as a supported Kawasaki rider on Ninja machinery he will be on the podium regularly in the coming season."

On behalf of Dunlop tyres, Patrick Walsh added: "Obviously Dunlop are delighted to continue their association with Ryan Farquhar during the 2009 race season. We have every reason to believe that Ryan can have another successful year: Ryan's undoubted ability, along with improved machinery and the latest Dunlop N-TEC tyres, should prove to be a winning formula."

The KMR Kawasaki team will run in association with: NGK, Pazzo Racing, GMC Signage, Shark Helmets, Hein Gericke, Scott Leathers, Daytona Boots, Gym XV, Nice Bike Paint Shop, R&G Race Products, GPR Stablisers, Skidmarx, Goodridge, Sanco Sport, Forcefield Body Armour, Ferodo, Speedycum, Alth Brake Discs, Bonamici Racing, DID Chains, Tallon Sprockets, Maxton, Jtec Sports, Garden World Complex, Clive Richardson, Graeme Thompson Farm Supplies, A&J Groundworks and John & Ruth Tasker.

Michael Pearson Supporters' Club

The Michael Pearson Supporters' Club will be holding a fund-raising evening in Comber Rec FC on Saturday, February 28. The evening will include a Night at the Races, from 8pm, with well known race commentator Derek Mason (Big D) in charge, followed by a ballot and late bar.



Ryan Farquhar has much to smile about as he looks forward to the forthcoming season. Photo by Stephen Davison, Pacemaker Press International