

Gedinne 2017 Race Report

The IHRO competitors and helpers arrived at Gedinne in the Belgian Ardennes for the Belgian Classic Club Classic Trophy meeting. As usual a great deal of work had been done by Club members and volunteers to prepare the circuit to a high standard. However, the weather had not co-operated and the crowded paddock was very wet and muddy.

Qualifying 1 was run in very wet conditions and the British wet weather specialists very soon showing the fastest timings. Ian Steltner on the Seeley Matchless G50 leading with Gary Thwaites on another G50 and Rich Hawkins on his Ducati Mk3 350 next. Bavarian Reinhard Neumar, Tickle Manx Norton was next fastest, but at the end of the session Belgian rider Herman Verboven on his Paton spoilt the party finishing second fastest.

Q2 was better with dry roads and soon the fast riders were showing the way. Belgian Alain Vandriessche was fastest on the Paton twin ahead of similarly mounted Herman Verboven. Gary Thwaites on his Matchless G50 was third fastest and first IHRO1. Dutchman Ton Groot on his rebuilt Tickle Manx was fifth and 5 seconds down on the Patons – a good effort. Fastest 350 was Rich Hawkins on the Ducati.

Race1 grid of 32 riders formed up with the weather cold, a stiff breeze blowing, the sky overcast but, crucially dry roads. Alain Vandriessche was on pole, Herman Verboven and Gary Thwaites making up the front row on the narrow road. At the drop of the national flag the grid roared away with Alain Vandriessche having a good start. On lap 1 Thwaites was leading the two Patons. Marc Beltman on the BMW was 4th ahead of the three British riders Ling, Steltner and Rich Hawkins. By lap2 Thwaites was showing his class and leading the Patons. Lap 3 showed Gary well ahead. Vandriessche did not appear having slid off on the north section of the circuit. The race was then red-flagged because of oil on the track. The 4 lap rerun started with threatening rain. As the depleted grid raced away the rain started. The race developed into a 4 way scrap between Steltner, Beltman Thwaites and Verboven, Thwaites finishing first but the Beltman BMW was closing fast and finished second on a drying road. Ian Steltner was third and second IHRO1. Reinhard Neumar finishes third in IHRO1. Herman Verboven was 2nd in IHRO2 ahead of German Singer Lothar on his BMW Kaczor. IHRO 350 was won by Rich Hawkins ahead of Jack Scriveners Aermacchi followed by Belgian Willem Depraetere on the ex Eddy DeKeyser Mk 3 Ducati.

Race 2 was run in dry, bright sunny conditions. The grid formed up with some riders missing due to technical problems. Gary Thwaites was ready to repeat his race1 win. Drama at the start as Alain Vandriessche stalled his Paton and finally roared away last. At lap1 Herman Verboven was leading Clive Ling on Dick Lintons 476 Aermacchi Ala d'Oro.. followed by Steltner and Gary Thwaites. By lap2 Verboven was still ahead, Thwaites had passed Clive Ling. Rich Hawkins was 5th on his 350 Ducati and Alain Vandriessche had forced his way from last to 9th place. The race developed with Gary Thwaites forging steadily ahead and Vandriessche finally finishing 6th. Herman Verboven and Ling were in an epic battle, Paton twin versus Aermacchi single. The final finish overall was Thwaites easily first from Verboven. Clive Ling was third from Marc Beltman BMW. IHRO2 first three were Herman Verboven Paton, Marc Beltman BMW and Alain Vandriessche Paton. IHRO1 saw Gary Thwaites first on the G50 Matchless followed by Clive Ling Aermacchi and Ian Steltner Seeley G50. A consistent Reinhard Neumair was fourth on his Tickle Norton. IHRO1 350 podiums were Rich Hawkins first, Jack Skrivener second and Bruno Buzinkay third on his Manx Norton. IHRO is now preparing to travel to Hockenheim in Germany for the final race of the season.