



Moto Mujeres at the 100th Lands End Trial

This was the third time myself and my husband Kelvin have taken part in the MCC Lands End Trial, and this year certainly didn't disappoint. In fact, someone even managed to arrange some (mostly) dry weather, which was a complete surprise given the dismal weather forecast and the biblical rain that we'd had in the weeks leading up to the event, as well as the weather immediately after. Talk about being fortunate!

Kelvin and I first joined the MCC after an invite from our friends Andy and Mike to take part in one of the long distance trials (LDTs), which they'd done for many years. To be honest, the sound of riding a motorcycle overnight, navigating and negotiating green roads and offroad sections through private land (with land owners permission granted specifically for this event) in the dark didn't instill in me a deep desire to take part. In fact, I declined the invitation to take part initially, letting Kelvin test the water' so to speak at the Exeter Trial 2022. Long story short, he loved it, despite the freezing temperatures! With a bit of gentle persuasion from Kelvin and Andy, I entered the Lands End Trial 2022... the rest is history!

So, roll on the 100th Lands End Trial 2024, and by this time we'd met other competitors several times, we'd got our friends Mo, Rob and Steve involved in the craziness, and there were eight of us who were going to camp together near the start/finish in Cornwall, with seven competing. That made two teams plus a backup, as a 'team' is three competitors, or at least it is in the solo motorcycles. I personally feel the word 'competitor' is a bit of a misnomer for this type of event, or maybe that's just the way I see it!

"The MCC is unique too, in that competitors compete against the challenges set by the organisers, and not against a fellow competitor. There is a spirit of camaraderie within competitors that is often lost in other disciplines. Many are the stories of breakdowns where fellow competitors have stopped to assist or simply to offer a welcome chocolate bar..."

The majority of us were going to be Class B (single or multi cylinder solo motorcycles up to 450cc excluding the 411cc Enfield Himalayan), with Mike being in Class C (single or multi cylinder solo motorcycles over 450cc including 411cc Enfield Himalayan) on his larger Husqvarna 701. Between us we had an array of various sized motorcycles, from my little Scopra 7125 Longridge up to the Husky 701. Mo, Jenny and I decided to enter as a ladies team 'Moto Mujeres', with Steve as our honorary team member. I'm not sure if it was the first ladies solo motorcycle team to enter a Lands End LDT... who knows? Kelvin, Andy and Mike entered as their regular team 'Chicken Legs', and ran just behind us, so it'd mean we'd get to catch up at all of the stops over the next 24 hours, providing there were no major issues.

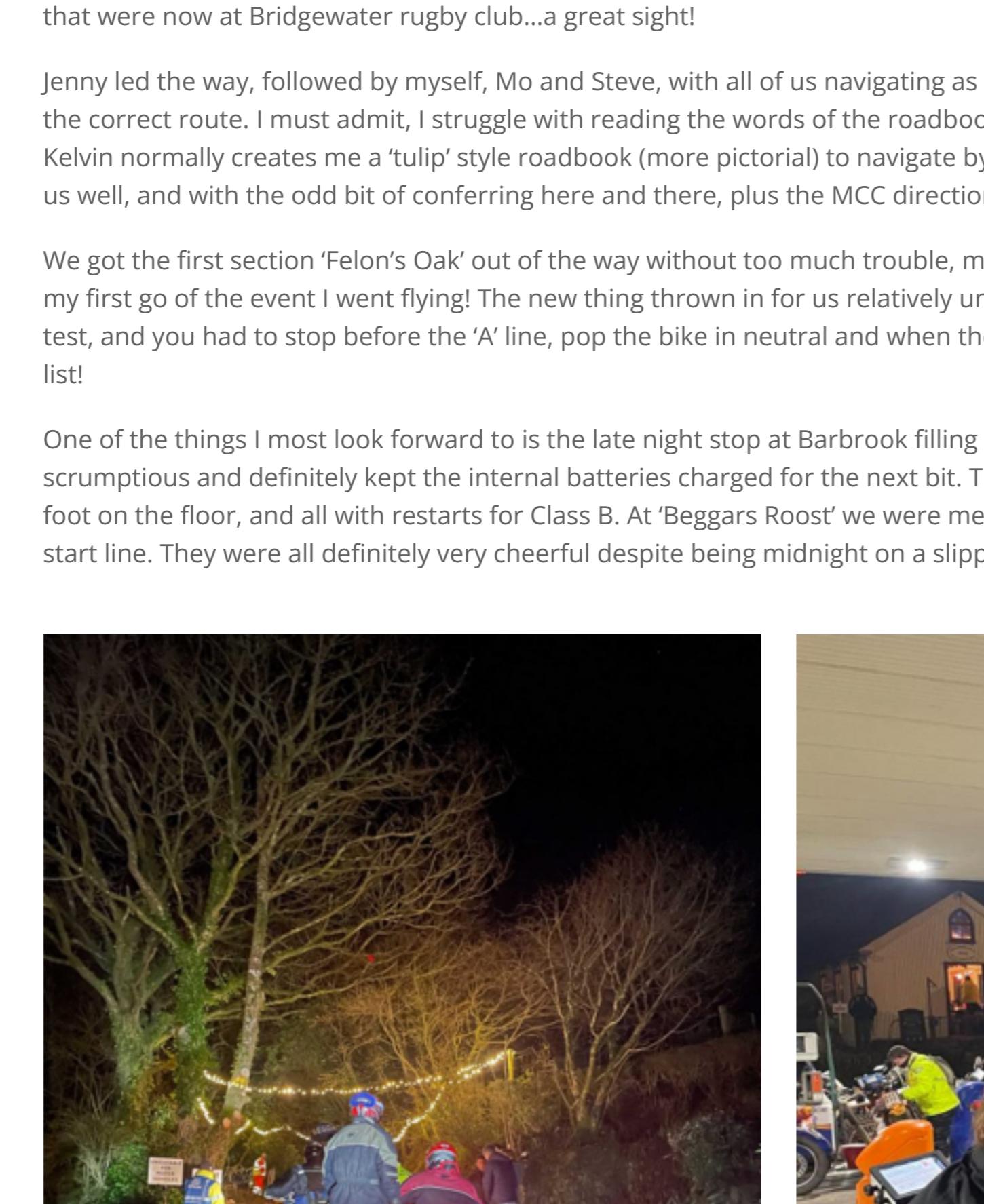
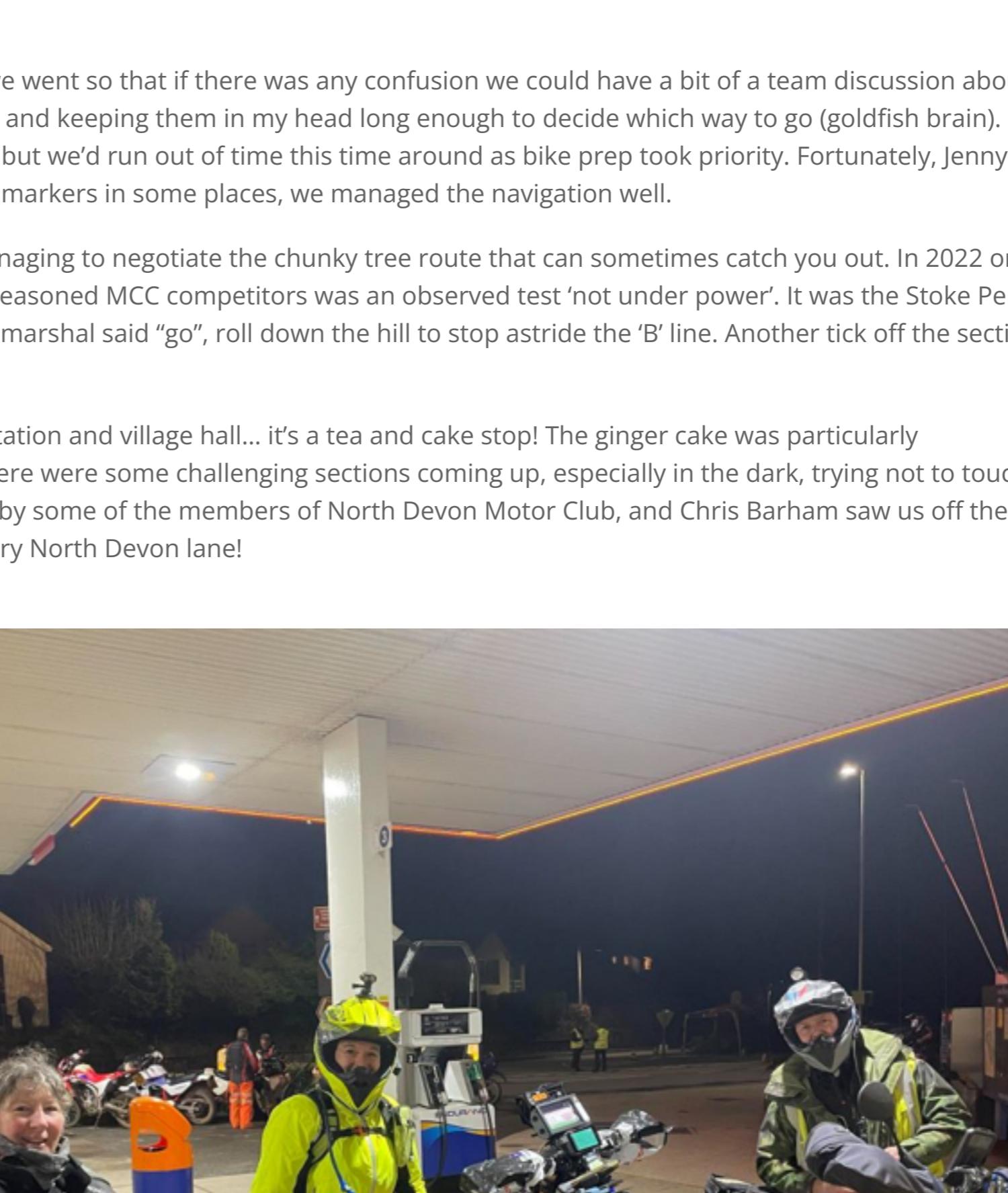


Image: Jenny Huntley



L-R: Suzie, Jenny, Mo – plus honorary lady Steve Plain Image: Rob Williams

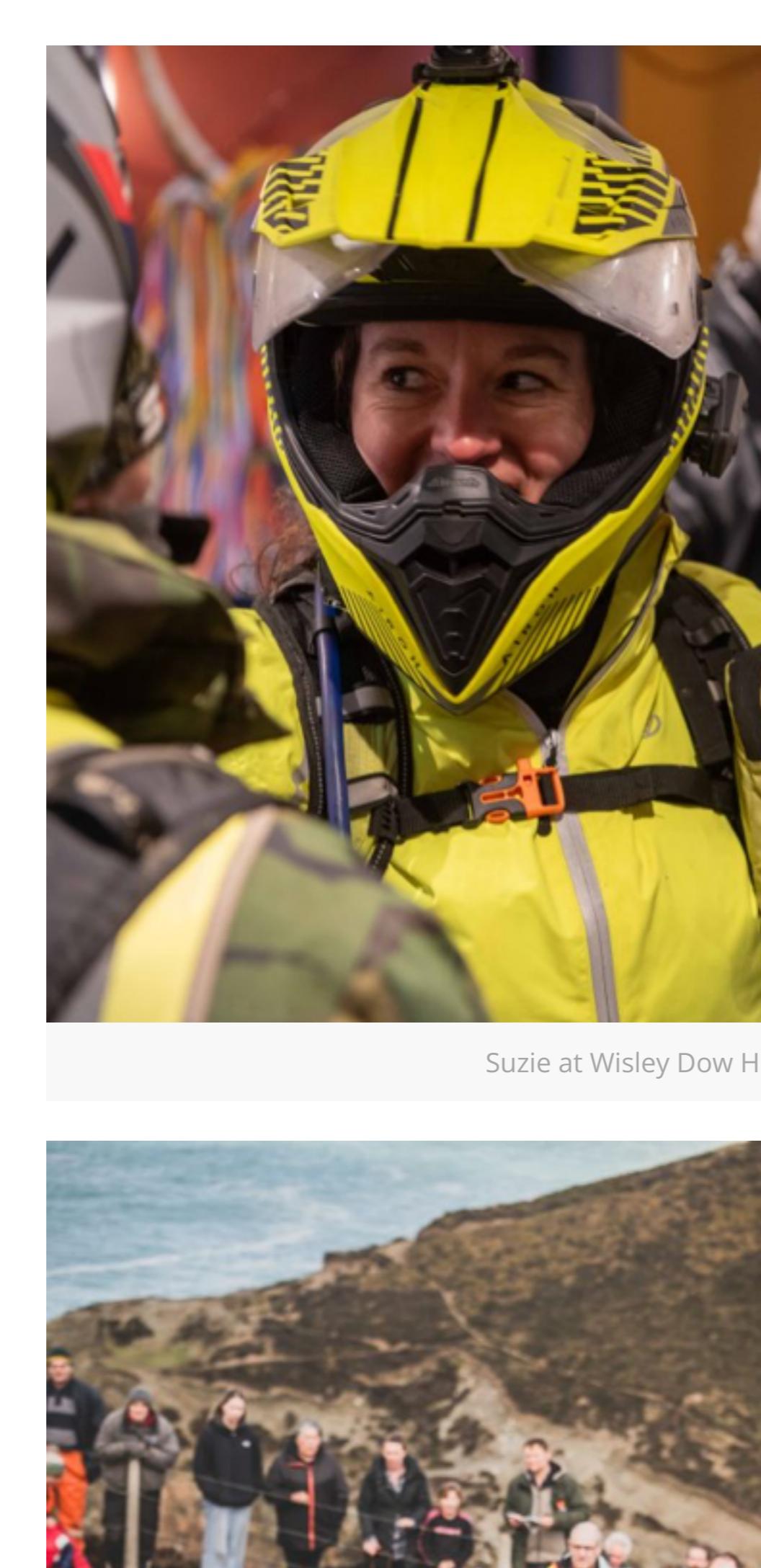
Leaving the campsite at around 1pm we headed to our start venue at Launceston rugby club, where we went through scrutineering, signed on, and fixed any little issues. Jenny had failed scrutineering initially due to her rear light not working, however on close inspection the wire had come a little loose. Fortunately, this meant a quick fix and scrutineering round two was a success! Phew!

Team Moto Mujeres set off at around 15:39 with Steve in tow. It'd started to rain, however this didn't last for long, and soon we were riding along in the dry, heading along the route to Bridgewater, where all competitors would converge to start the main trial complete with the 'sections'. There was also another scrutineering to get through, but we all passed with flying colours. Following some grub to top up our fuel tanks, it was time to get going again. We ventured out and found our bikes among the sea of bikes that were now at Bridgewater rugby club...a great sight!

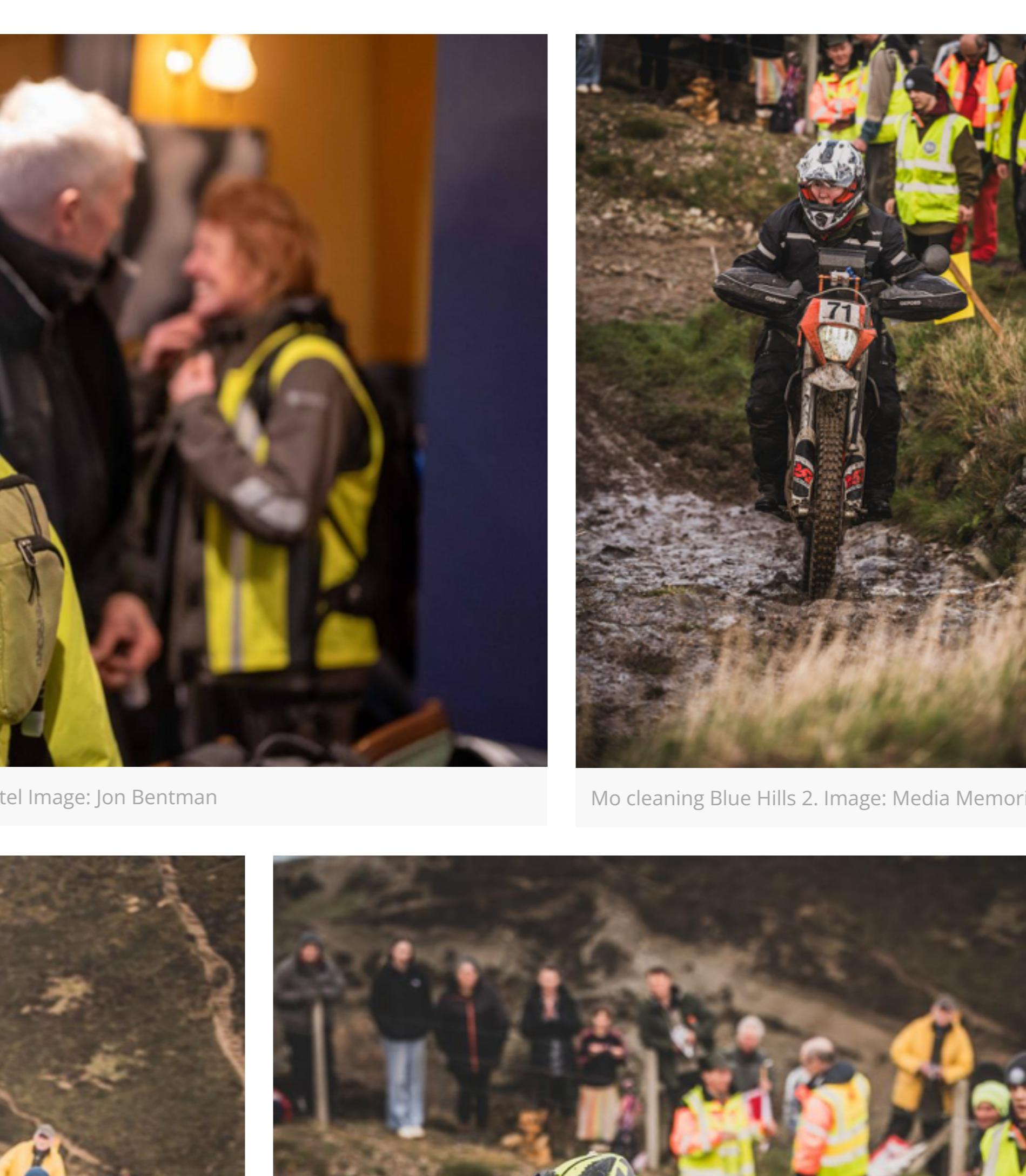
Jenny led the way, followed by myself, Mo and Steve, with all of us navigating as we went so that if there was any confusion we could have a bit of a team discussion about the correct route. I must admit, I struggle with reading the words of the roadbook and keeping them in my head long enough to decide which way to go (goldfish brain). Kelvin normally creates me a 'tulip' style roadbook (more pictorial) to navigate by, but we'd run out of time this time around as bike prep took priority. Fortunately, Jenny led us well, and with the odd bit of conferring here and there, plus the MCC direction markers in some places, we managed the navigation well.

We got the first section 'Felon's Oak' out of the way without too much trouble, managing to negotiate the chunky tree route that can sometimes catch you out. In 2022 on my first go of the event I went flying! The new thing thrown in for us relatively unseasoned MCC competitors was an observed test 'not under power'. It was the Stole Pero test, and you had to stop before the 'A' line, pop the bike in neutral and when the marshals said 'go', roll down the hill to stop astride the 'B' line. Another tick off the sections list!

One of the things I most look forward to is the late night stop at Barbrook filling station and village hall... it's a tea and cake stop! The ginger cake was particularly scrumptious and definitely kept the winter batteries charged for the next bit. There were some challenging sections coming up, especially in the dark, trying not to touch a foot on the floor, and all with restarts for Class B. At 'Beggars Roost' we were met by some of the members of North Devon Motor Club, and Chris Barham saw us off the start line. They were all definitely very cheerful despite being midnight on a slippery North Devon lane!



Beggars Roost Image: Jenny Huntley



Mo, Suzuki and Steve at Barbrook Image: Jenny Huntley

Annoyingly, not long after my side stand sprung went pop; I stopped after hearing a repetitive clinking on the road. After kicking the stand up, and starting off again I realised the issue. I always have zip ties fastened to the top of my forks, so I whipped a few out and Steve zip tied it up so it wouldn't cause any bother, other than when I needed to get off the bike. A relatively small issue in the grand scheme of LDT issues!

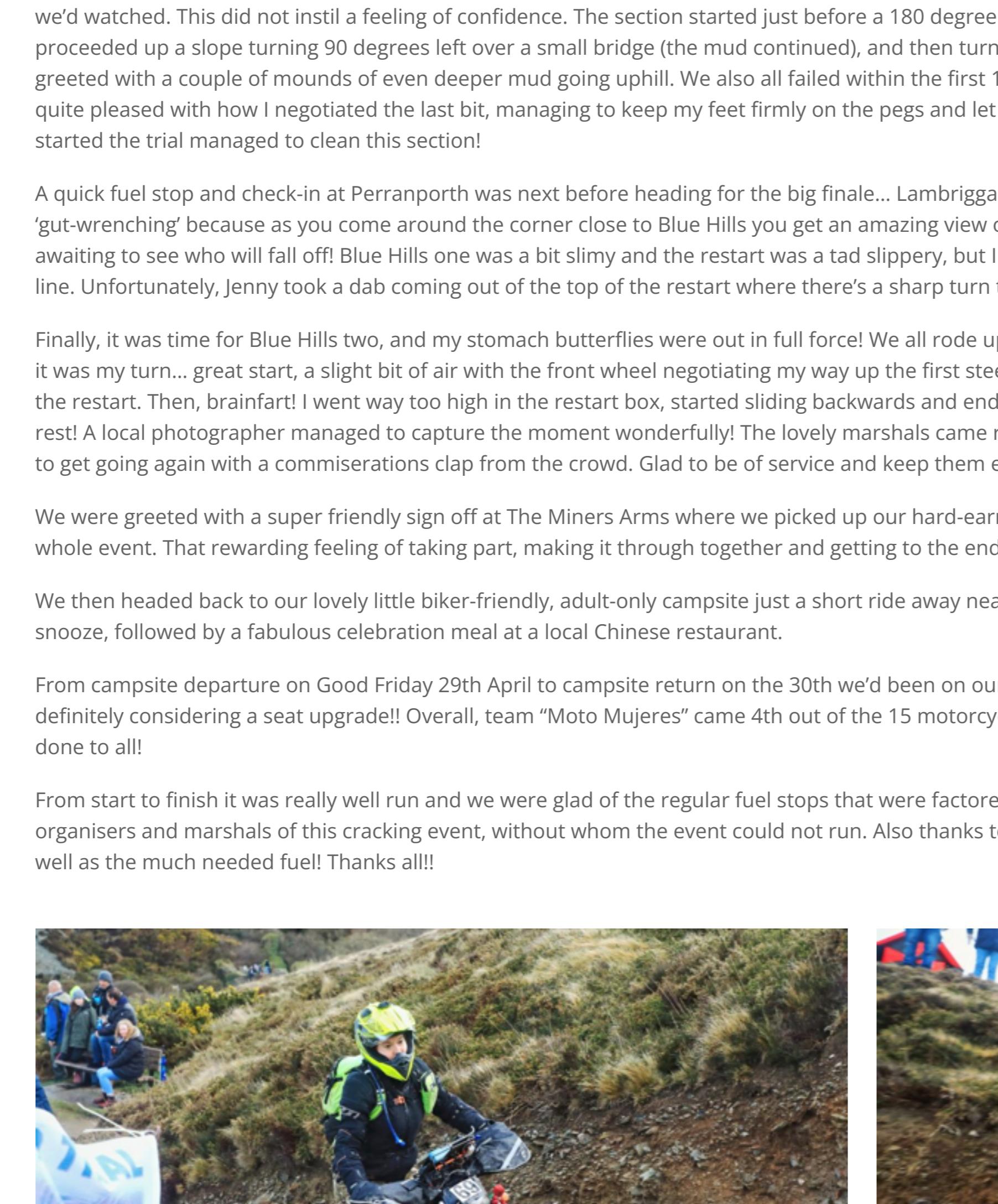
Next up was Barton Steep and then on to Riverton, with a lovely bit of dirt track leading across to the start. The lane had definitely got a lot muddier following all of the rainfall, but it was another one completed successfully for the whole team. Then was Sutcombe with its small river crossing and slippery restart, which fortunately we'd all managed to negotiate without error. We were rewarded by another cake and bacon buttie stop at the top. Luckily Kelvin was already there, so I used his bike to lean mine on. Thanks love!

Bradworthy fuel stop was next, and Steve needed to tighten his chain. Thankfully mine was still looking in good shape, and I found another wall to lean the bike up against whilst we had a quick chat to the attendants who were happily dishing out the fuel to wary competitors all night. Amazing job!

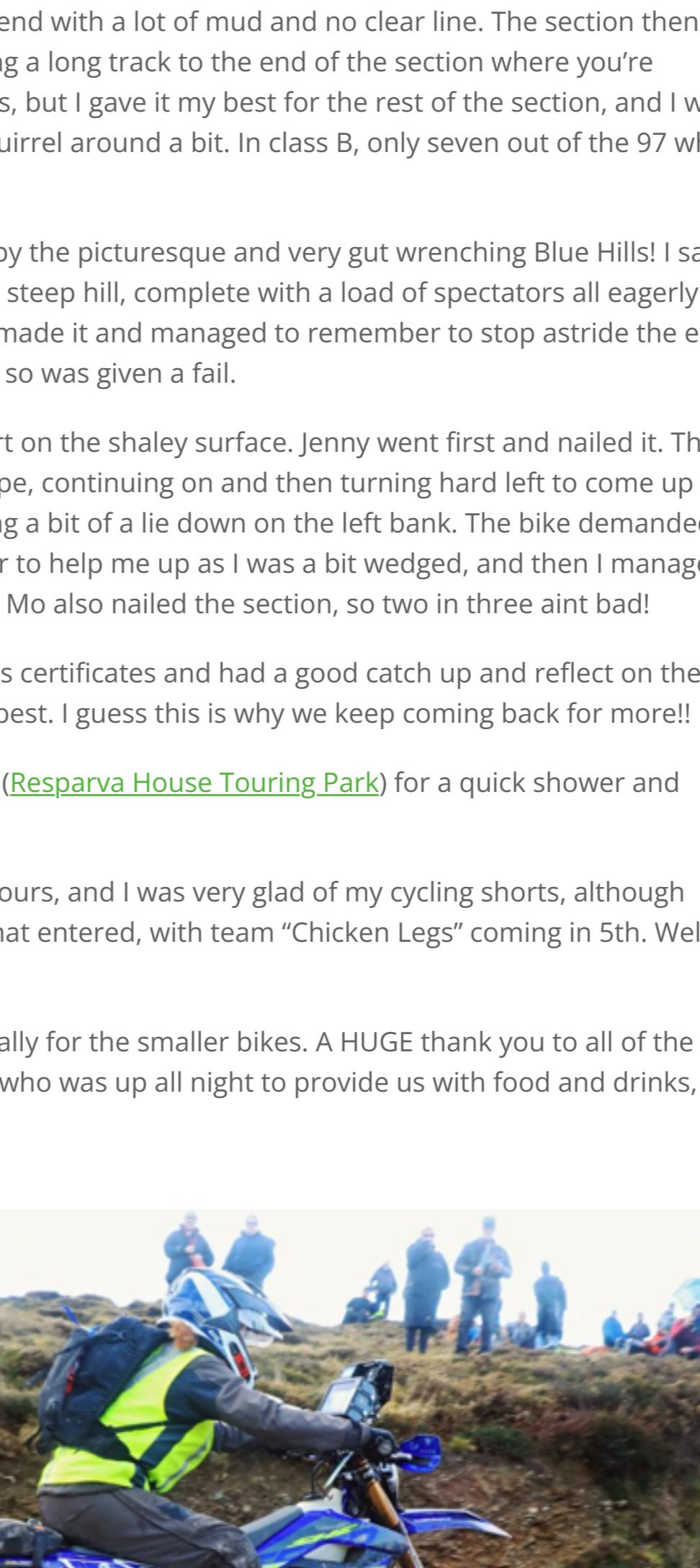
I was quite happy that Darracott didn't have a restart this year, as last year I almost messed up the restart, but managed it just about... it had been close! We took Wargery wood in our stride, before heading to the route check point at Widemouth Bay. Dawn was just about breaking and the moon was still out. Absolutely stunning! I could think of way worse places to have to stop for seven minutes at that time on a Saturday morning!

Crackington was the next challenge, and one of those lanes which I always find a challenge. It was our first section of the trial in the light of day. No restart, but what a ride! Again, we all made it successfully, but I thought I maybe went out at one point. It was quite bouncy, very muddy and I almost lost my momentum at one point. Fortunately, I managed to just let the bike go where it wanted, which was kind of everywhere, and made it to the top without a dab! Happy days!

There was just one observed test before breakfast at Wisley Down Hotel, and I was glad of the break. We'd been running a little bit behind schedule, but it was a compulsory one hour stop, so we'd be leaving after our scheduled time. No penalty for this fortunately. A nice hot cuppa was definitely on the cards, plus a scrummy egg samie. It was also a great opportunity to catch up with each other off the bikes, and with other competitors. It seemed that all of us from Moto Mujeres and Team Chicken Legs were running 'clean' at that point. However, there was plenty more to come and that would all change!



Suzie at Wisley Dow Hotel Image: Jon Bentman



Mo cleaning Blue Hills 2. Image: Media Memories

Following our brekkie stop, we got Ruses Mill observed section and then the Observed Test under our belts, before heading off to Warleggan. Unfortunately, this road was absolutely awful, and the marshals had to stop the race at the info point. Only a few hundred metres away, the road was smooth and well-drained, but looking forward to this, Team Chicken Legs were running ahead of us and we watched all three of them fall the section within the first 10-15 metres, like most other people we'd watched. This did not instill a feeling of confidence. The section started just before a 180 degree left hand bend with a lot of mud and no clear line. The section then proceeded up a slope turning 90 degrees left over a small bridge (the mud continued), and then turning left along a long track to the end of the section where you're greeted with a couple of mounds of even deeper mud going uphill. We also all failed within the first 10-15 metres, but I gave it my best for the rest of the section, and I was quite pleased with how I negotiated the last bit, managing to keep my feet firmly on the pegs and let the bike squirrel around a bit. In class B, only seven out of the 97 who started the trial managed to clean this section!

A quick fuel stop and check-in at Perranporth was next before heading off for the big finale... Lambridge followed by the picturesque and very gut wrenching Blue Hills! I say 'gut-wrenching' because as you come around the corner close to Blue Hills you get an amazing view of the super steep hill, complete with a load of spectators all eagerly awaiting to see who will fall off. Blue Hills was a bit slimy and the restart was a tad slippery, but just about made it through and then I managed to remember to stop astride the line. Unfortunately, Jenny took a dab and coming out of the top of the restart where there's a sharp turn to the right, so was given a fall.

Finally, it was time for Blue Hills two, and we all rode up to the start on the shale surface. Jenny went first and nailed it. Then it was my turn... great start, a great start, a great start with the front wheel negotiating my way up the first steep bit of slope, and then turning hard left to come up to the restart, then, brainfart! I went way too high in the restart box, started sliding backwards and ended up hitting a bit of a lie down on the left bank. The bike demanded a rest! A local photographer managed to capture the moment wonderfully! The lovely marshals came running over to help me up as I was a bit wedged, and then I managed to get going again with a commiserations clapping from the crowd. Glad to be of service and keep them entertained! Mo also nailed the section, so two in three ain't bad!

We were greeted with a super friendly sign off at The Miners Arms where we picked up our hard-earned finishers certificates and had a good catch up and reflect on the whole event. That rewarding feeling of taking part, making it through to the end is just the best. I guess this is why we keep coming back for more!

We then headed back to our lovely little biker-friendly, adult-only campsite just a short distance away from Newquay (Reserva House Touring Park) for a quick shower and snooze, followed by a fabulous celebration meal at a local Chinese restaurant.

From campsite departure on Good Friday 29th April to campsite return on the 30th we'd been on our bikes 24 hours, and I was very glad of my cycling shorts, although definitely considering a seat upgrade! Overall, team 'Moto Mujeres' came 4th out of the 15 motorcycle teams that entered, with team 'Chicken Legs' coming in 5th. Well done to all the much needed ue!! Thanks all!!

From start to finish it was really well run and we were glad of the regular fuel stops that were factored in, especially for the smaller bikes. A HUGE thank you to all of the organisers and marshals of this cracking event, without whom the event could not run. Also thanks to everyone who was up all night to provide us with food and drinks, as well as the much needed ue!! Thanks all!!

If you're interested in an MCC event and want some tips on bike prep then check out the MCC's 'Motorcycle Advice' here:

<https://www.themotorcyclingclub.org.uk/motorcycle-advice/>

Team Members: Full House of TRF Members!

Suzie Prevett (Lifetime TRF Member)

Jenny Huntley (Lifetime TRF Member)

Mo Rapley (TRF Member and set up South West Wales TRF group with husband Rob Williams)

+ Steve Plain (TRF Member and honorary Moto Mujeres team member)

Team Chicken Legs

Andy Craig (Lifetime TRF Member)

Mike Green

Wales TRF group – team with support Mo...Rapley TRF member and set up South West Wales TRF group with husband Rob Williams

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