



Welcome!



On behalf of us all at Manchester 17 MCC Ltd welcome to Trials, the friendliest and most social motorsport there is!

Thanks to everyone who helped bring this guide together.

The Manchester 17 Motorcycle Club began in 1935 when two groups of bike enthusiasts in suburban Manchester got together and decided to form a club. The Club name comes from the number of riders at that first meeting.

Since then, we've been involved in most forms of mainstream motorcycle activity from road runs and training to televised scrambles, from speedway to touring, rallies and road-racing. John Hartle from Chapel-en-le-frith - the 2nd guy to lap the TT Course at over 100 mph - was a club member, riding trials as well as racing at International level.

We now run over a dozen trials every year, ranging from the ever-popular Dead Easy Trials to the national Dave Rowland Trophy and Northern Experts Trials as well as the ever popular Fisher Trophy Trial and Hipwell/Hartle Trial.

Trials is a great sport for everyone. We get riders from 6 to into their 80s and from total beginners up to National level with many variations in between - Youth classes and other age groups, Clubman, Twinshocks, Sidecars and so on. We have locals and those who travel long distances for our trials

But they can't do anything without those who run the trial and another set of vital helpers - the Observers. Maybe they're riders (or ex-riders) themselves, putting something back into the sport. Or maybe they've come with a family member or friend and find themselves with a clipboard in their hands.

Some will know exactly what they're doing but others - perhaps you - will need all the help they can get. The purpose of this guide is to just give a gentle nudge in the right direction and help you get started the right way.

And remember! The idea of it all is to have fun and make new friends - and trials is great for both of those. So come on, let's dive in and get you started!

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People and other animals ...

Dogs are great!

We love dogs and a trials venue can be a great place for them to have a bit of a run around. Trouble is, sheep and other livestock may not be so keen on them and nor will some of the local wildlife like ground-nesting birds.



If you bring a dog with you to a trial, make sure it's under control. No! Properly, really, really under control. On a lead if needs be.

Don't let it be your dog that causes trouble and maybe costs us the use of the land.



Horses are great too!

This area is used a lot by trekking groups and some folk you'll see in those groups only sat on a horse the first time maybe half an hour ago. Horses ain't daft and they know when their rider is nervous. Think about that.



You've probably noticed this, but horses are bigger than you, stronger than you, probably faster than you and have the equivalent of a steel lump hammer at each corner. Plus teeth. Big teeth.

Some of them are OK with bikes but there's many that aren't. They don't understand what bikes are and can easily be spooked. Think about being on one when that happens.

If horses come near, stop! Stop moving and stop your engine. Acknowledge the Group Leader and the riders. Wait until they're well clear before starting up again. If you have to pass them, then do so slowly, well away and quietly.

Other users

There's a chance that, somewhere around the trial route, you'll come across other people, nothing to do with the trial.



Whoever they are and whatever they're doing - family groups, dog-walkers, Sunday strollers, hardened hikers, birdwatchers, mountain bikers, local residents etc. - **be friendly and show them respect. It's their leisure time too!**



If you get the opportunity and they're interested, maybe explain a bit about what a trial is and isn't - it's not a race, there's hardly any noise and most of the time you'd never know we've been running trials around here for nigh on 100 years!

AN EXPERT'S GUIDE TO TRIALS OBSERVING



Observing at a Motorcycle Trial can be very enjoyable. It can also be a mysterious, sometimes challenging (and occasionally comical) task, especially if you're new at it.

These are a few hints & tips gathered from those who've stood out in all conditions on many occasions, marking everyone from beginners to top riders.



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TRIALS OBSERVING



GETTING READY

- ✓ Take a spare pencil (or two) and a rubber. And something to sharpen them with. Often provided on the Observer Board.
- ✓ Take weatherproof kit appropriate for the season: jacket, overtrousers, boots & thick socks, hat and gloves (that you can write in). Observe just once in bad weather and the wrong gear and you'll understand.
- ✓ Carry the extra kit to your section rather than wearing it on the walk in. There's nowt worse than being all hot & sticky and then freezing in sweaty clothes. Put it on before the riders get there, though - you might not get a chance later and it's a lot easier to keep warm than get warm once you're cold!
- ✓ In summer, take suncream and something to keep the bugs away. Use it! And something to stop the itching if the bugs do get through.
- ✓ Take food & drink: hot, cold or whatever you want. The club may even provide something. Take it with you - your section could be half a mile away and it's no use in the car!
- ✓ Check the marking/scoring system. Man17 always use Stop Allowed but some clubs or trials prefer No-Stop.
- ✓ Check what route markers are being used for each Class. Man17 use Red (right) & Blue (left) for the hardest route and usually White (right) Yellow (left), but it can be pairs of gates of the same colour.

✓ Get to your section early. Walk through the section and check that all the markers are in place (or have the sheep eaten them?) Which route goes where - and does it make sense? Any other issues?

BEFORE THE RIDERS ARRIVE

- ✓ Work out where you're best positioning yourself so you can see it all. Can you see the Begins & Ends cards and any likely trouble-spots? Flat ground is best but make sure you've not chosen the likely landing spot for those who try it flat out in 3rd gear ... and fail big-time!
- ✗ Please do **NOT** change the section or move the markers unless you absolutely have to e.g. for safety reasons or if they've clearly been pulled out. That's the job of the Clerk of the Course and their team and they see the whole route, not just one section. Your section may look too easy or hard to you, but it could be that way for a reason.

✓ When riders first arrive at your section they will often try to "adjust" it slightly. It's OK to allow some limited kicking of the ground and polishing of the surface before anyone has attempted the section but, once the section has been ridden, then it simply can't happen. Try to stop riders moving rocks, filling holes and ruts. Moving markers is plain cheating and must be dealt with firmly - stop observing and re position any marker you believe has been moved back to where it was originally. A marker moved just a few inches can make an impossible section easy and that's not fair to those who have already ridden it.

THE MARKING SYSTEM - 0, 1, 2, 3 & 5

Scoring begins when the front axle passes the "Start" gates and ends when it passes the "End" gates.

- 1 mark is for putting a foot down (dabbing) once. 2 marks are for putting a foot down twice. If the foot slides, you decide, but pivoting on one foot is OK - just a 1!
- 3 marks are for footing 3 or more times.
- 5 is given for leaving their route, missing a flag, moving backwards or falling off. If the rider puts both feet on the same side of the motorcycle or dismounts and remounts, that's a 5. They're not allowed to cross their own tracks, either!
- In a Stop Allowed trial they can stop, feet up. If they stop, have a foot down **and** take a hand off the handlebars, that's 5. If they put a foot down whilst stopped, that's 1 for once, 2 for twice etc. as if they were moving.
- And if they get through the Section without losing any marks that's a Clean, so put a 0 down.
- The bike must remain within the intended limits of the section, or it's a 5.

✗ The only parts of the machine which can touch the terrain without penalty are tyres, footrests, engine casings and the skid plate. Strictly speaking, anything else (handlebars, elbows, boots, knees, helmet, face etc.) and it's marks lost. But was it intentional or accidental and did they benefit from it? Be strict but fair and give the rider the benefit of any doubt.

✓ Where possible, make sure you can see the rider's number before they enter the section. Write the score down immediately they finish, before anything - or anyone - else distracts you.

✗ Try not to let anyone argue with you against the mark you gave. Just mark what you observe - did you actually, definitely see it? Misbehaviour can be recorded with a 10 if needs be. Above all be consistent for everyone.

✗ Don't let them rush you. Wave them in when **you** are ready or hold your hand up to say STOP! Don't be afraid to call "Mind your backs/Clear the Section", especially if someone is blocking your view.

WHAT IF ...?

IF you think they're taking too long watching other riders before trying it themselves, you can call them through. Start with the lowest numbers. Remember, you're doing them a favour by Observing, not the other way around!

IF a rider is uncertain about their ability to ride the Section they can ask for a 5. Encourage them to try but not if they feel unsafe. It's their neck so it's their call.

IF a rider dislodges or moves something in the section and that makes the section unsafe, you're OK to move it as you think best. If a section marker gets moved, do your best to put it back where it was, if possible.

IF they ride on or over marking tape (or break it) or a flag, it's a five as is missing/riding outside a marker altogether.

IF something happens that blocks a rider while in the section and it's not their fault, it's called a baulk and they're entitled to another attempt as long as they ask - don't offer it! Any marks dropped up to the point in the section where the baulk happened still apply and those are added to any further marks on the second attempt after that point.

IF the engine stalls, it's not a 5 if the rider can get the bike out of the section without footing. Same if they can re start the engine without footing or letting go of the handlebar with either hand. If the engine stops and they simply roll out of the section feet up past the Ends cards it's OK - give whatever their score was to that point.

GRADED HILLCLIMBS

Numbered cards will be alongside the section, starting with 5, then 3, 2, 1, and finally 0 which is the 'End' marker. Give 5 for not getting to the 3 marker, 3 for passing the 3 but not getting to the 2 marker, 2 for passing the 2 but not getting to the 1 and 1 for passing the 1 but not the 0. Of course a 0 for passing the 0. The rider can foot as much as they wish, only the last score marker passed by the front wheel spindle counts.

SIDECARS

Only the driver is allowed to foot - if the passenger touches the ground then it's 5. Try to stand on the bike side of the section. They can't dab on the sidecar side and 2 people and a bike & sidecar tend to block the crafty blind side dab!

PUNCHCARDS

Man17 don't usually use punchcards but some clubs or events do. Make sure you punch the score only on the line for your section. If it looks like they've missed a section - or even a whole group - let them know so they can go back (carefully - they may meet oncoming riders) and sort it.

If you mistakenly punch the wrong score, just punch out all the other wrong scores leaving just the right one.

REMEMBER! YOU'RE THE BOSS, JUDGE AND JURY

Rule 1 - The Observer's decision is final and unchallengeable.

Rule 2 - In the event of a dispute, refer to Rule 1.