

The sun shone over Little Clandeboye Forest, Conlig on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2008. This was the first venue for the newly founded John Hagan Youth Trials Academy.

There are to be six training events scheduled throughout the forthcoming motorcycle trials season. The aims of the John Hagan Youth Trials Academy are to use the skills of past and present adult Ulster & Irish Champions to coach, and develop riding ability for all boys and girls eligible to ride Grade A and Grade B aged 13 to 18 years.

Local Newtownards businessman John Hagan together with his committee founded the John Hagan Youth Trials Academy to enable youth riders to improve their riding ability through structured training events. Some of the country's top riders past and present volunteered their time and expertise to enable these coaching sessions to develop.

The event was very well supported by ALL youth riders in the two respective grades. In attendance was Sasha Turkington from Moneyreagh who is a previous European Ladies Champion. Also local youth riders young Ryan Dempster from Newtownards who is the current Ulster Youth Grade B Champion along with Ryan Sailes from Bangor who is the current Irish Youth Grade B Champion.

The day started with the scrutineering of the bikes by our technical control expert, Mr Andy Higgins. Andy is very well known within the motorcycle trials sport as he has previously scrutineered the machinery of all the tops world riders when they came to grace our shores at the World Round previously held in Bangor.

After the bikes passed scrutineering the training took the format of six designated areas which were set up, each area covered by an experienced Ulster & Irish past and present Champion including a guest appearance by our local trials superstar, Mr Robert Crawford from Bangor. All youth riders were split into 6 groups ranging in ability and experience. Thirty minutes was spent with each coach in each section breaking for lunch to refuel machinery and refuel riders.

During the lunch break Andy Higgins also introduced his bike maintenance tuition designed to help all the youth riders understand how their machinery works and hopefully help them diagnose problems when they occur in the future.

Both parents and youth riders commented on how much they enjoyed the light hearted format and are looking forward to the next event which is to be held at Barbican Forest near Newcastle on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2008. Also in forthcoming events there will be surprise guest appearances by World Level Riders. At the end of the six events the riders who show the best improvements will be treated to a special weekend of activities, which has only been possible with the donations submitted by our sponsors.

Our thanks go to our sponsors John Hagan Pre Cast Concrete & Building Supplies, Newtownards, Hugh Drennan & Sons Kitchen & Cabinet Makers, Donaghadee, Leslie Wright & Sons Wright Skips, Newtownards, Mr S Shields Landscape Supplies, Bangor Road Newtownards, JC Lightbody Haulage Contractors, Newtownards, Sign Lines and Mr B Anderson of Anderson Construction, Newtownards. Also to Mr

Cecil Pearson for the use of his land on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2008. All of which contributed the making a very successful event.