

HOT OFF THE PRESS!



Robbie's Axial 2.2 with 4WS gets amongst the Supers and causes quite a stir

Just like R/C Drifting, Bikes and Micro's, the R/C Crawler scene has grown from a bunch of dedicated enthusiasts into a major competition and who knows, maybe even a BRCA section followed by a European or even World Championship one day, wouldn't that be amazing!

After working on several rock crawling kit reviews in RRCi we had got a taste for this unique sport, so when we heard about the 2008 Crawler Nationals we just had to get involved. Bracken Rocks is a venue in Derbyshire, where the course was laid out on a hillside, over a selection of rocks usually accommodating motorcycle trials. The rocks are varied, closely packed and the ultimate line needs to be judged carefully, as much a challenge for the drivers to stand on as for the trucks to drive over!

R/C Rock Crawling is completely different; not about cutting fine lines or carving the last tenth of a second from a lap, but a challenge for man and machine against the terrain. There is no marshalling to do, which is a bonus, but the event is spread over a very long day with only two 5 minute runs per driver, and you don't get to see the all the best drivers in action because there are several sections in use at any one time. There's no A-Final shootout to enjoy, but at least that leaves plenty of time for socialising and sniffing around the pits for new ideas, option parts and modifications.

The main sponsor was CML, incorporating Axial, Pro-Line and Novak generously donated a range of prizes from whole Axial kits to tyres, wheels and even a Novak Goat brushless crawler system, so the trophy presentation and raffle draw, including donations from 'The Crawler Store' and 'RC Nut', meant the proceedings were well attended! Having the local 'GB Shop' on site meant everyone could find spares and option parts to keep them happy, and Rob even 'volunteered' to judge Concours, lucky chap. He fell for the green and red flame job on the Axial Scorpion of young



'Mad Pete' was the first to get a clear run of section 2, with the upgrade review kit, coming next month!



The only difference between a '2.2' and a 'Tuber' is a lexan shell or a tubular rollcage



Johnathan Crabtree ran a TCS 'Stick' chassis which is literally just that...



...and can climb far more extreme obstacles than a '2.2'

Bethan Wasley, who also claimed the Best under 12 prize for herself. (A chip of the old block hey John?)

With an entry bursting at the seams, booking-in was closed a couple of weeks before the closing date, so the organisers were kind enough to open another half dozen slots and even give up their second entries to accommodate other people. Amazingly generous and it just goes to show how keen they are to see as many people enjoying their sport as possible. For those that didn't get their paperwork completed in time, you can but watch on the day or read about it here in your favourite monthly magazine. You'll be quicker off the mark next year for sure! A bunch of RRCi regulars took the trip north to join in festivities, sure to provide a source of much joviality as we were totally at the mercy of the Crawler regulars. Talk about a steep learning curve!

CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON

You have to decide whether your truck fits in the '2.2' category, for regular 1/10th machines with 2.2 inch wide wheels and two wheel steering, or instead go all out and enter the 'Super' category where 4-wheel steering is the norm, typically operating via channel mixing on Spektrum DX6 transmitters. Most Supers feature 'Stick' frames, multiple motors and batteries, huge wheels and tyres offering massive ground clearance and hence their climbing ability is way beyond anything you could expect from the 2.2 class.

'Digger' units that lock the rear axle whilst allowing the front to pull round was made legal for the 2.2 class and proved invaluable when making tight turns through some gates, rather than suffer penalties for reversing during a three (or even thirteen!) point turn.

DA' RULES!

It sounds simple; the lowest score wins! But judging and marking each competitor is complicated and requires concentration and skill, plus a caller and a marker to follow each competitor around the course. As you traverse each section, you aim to pass through 10 'Gate' markers and you collect points for failing to get all four wheels within the

marked gates (10), requesting a reposition (10) or repair (5). You also gain points for failing to complete a section within the time limits (10), or for a rollover that needs intervention to get it back on its wheels (5) or reversing to get a better position (1).

However, points are knocked off for passing through a gate successfully (-1) and completing a section within the time limit (-10) to hopefully put you back in the negative before the end of the day. With two sections to complete throughout the day, the first to go are at a disadvantage as everyone else gets to watch you attempt the course and can make course corrections and mental notes, learning by your mistakes. The last to go can suffer a messy course, as mud gets spread around, grass ripped up etc. and the available grip can change throughout the day, hence on the second section the start order is reversed to make it fair. It's a simple as that, or is it?

THE SECTIONS

Despite some practise sessions at the beautiful Burton Dassett hills, where a disused quarry offers plenty of challenges, nothing could prepare us for what the course setters had laid out for us all to tackle at Bracken Rocks! At first glance you just shake your head, the word 'impossible' slips from your lips. No one has driven the selected course, not even the judges (if they are taking part in the event). There are no practise sessions; it's just head first into the deep end for everyone.

Course setters 'Peo', John Wosley, Wayne and Dean Sibley did all the hard work on Saturday then joined the other judges and helpers including the main man, Richard Armstrong, Adrian Jones, Andy 'Twinset' Moore, and Jason Barrett to keep the event moving along smoothly.

'2.2' SECTION 1

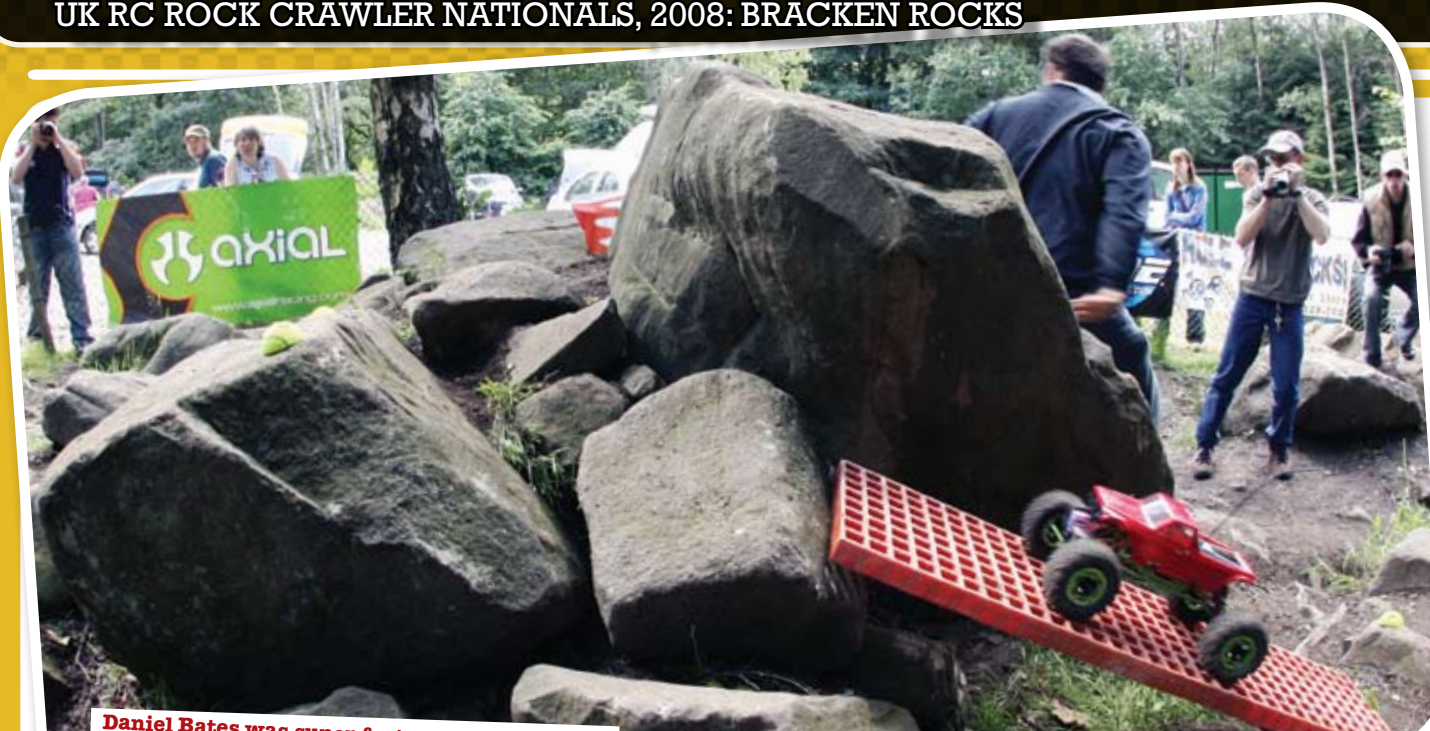
This was right near the car park, so the most popular spectator area by far, over a series of large, dusty rocks surrounded by damp mud to catch out the unwary. The first real obstacle was gate 3 which offered a tight turn into a very high step which few could negotiate, but failure to



The 'Main Man', organiser Rich Armstrong gets his 'Big Ugly' 2.2 around section 1

LIFE ON THE ROCKS

UK RC ROCK CRAWLER NATIONALS, 2008: BRACKEN ROCKS



Daniel Bates was super fast over Section One, here approaching the sticky gate 6



Mike Sager had a handful of lead shot in each of his Losi Rock Claw tyres, and no top plate on his unstoppable Axial

climb it meant side slipping into a gully that jammed many a wheel and snapped a few snap axles/propshafts in the process. Gate 6 was also tricky, with a V-shaped gully to force a few over the side or towards the wall and a dead end. The rest of the course flowed with a mixture of short climbs, sensible rocks to traverse and medium turns, until the very last gate 10, which needed a step up onto a steep climb, then a gap before you get over a lip to a downhill finish. Very tricky indeed, demanding grip, control and nerve.

'2.2' SECTION 2

This was almost as far away from the car park as you could get, leaving many people out of breath from the climb, but it was worth it.



Martin Kowalski made a 'Digger Unit' to lock the rear axle for tight turns

Up amongst the trees were mainly sensible rocks and climbs, but gate 4 was a real tricky, steep ledge to climb onto a big flat rock, which saw many 'max out' from failed attempts and rollovers. After the drop down through 5, the short stretch to gate 6 left many stranded and out of time, wheel spinning the vital seconds away as the front or rear diff cases hung up on rocks. The spectacular log ladder from gate 9 downwards, left you a tight turn and some roots to scramble over for the finish at gate 10.

Of the 41 entrants in the '2.2' class, just 10 cleared the first section and 13 cleared the second section, showing what a tough course it was, but also that it was possible. Just 7 people managed to clear both sections within the 5-minute time limit, easily deciding the winners by the accumulated points and any tie-breakers decided on the joint finishing time of both sections. As it turned out, time wasn't the issue as the clear winner with -7 points was Mathew Brookes, a stunning display indeed considering I had witnessed good, fast, clean runs from people who didn't make it onto the podium. Daniel Bates was rapid yet clean through section one, and Mad Pete was first to clear section two, while I saw Mike Sanger complete both sections well within the time limit matching Matts winning time and points score, by utilising lead shot filled Losi Crawler 'Claws' which performed more like tank tracks than tyres.

A special mention goes to Mark and son Een Jackson, and fellow Tamiya enthusiast John Davie who travelled all the way up to Bracken Rocks to tackle the event with Tamiya CR-01's, proving that even stock crawlers can turn in a great performance in completely stock form, with their high centre of gravity and limited articulation.

SUPER SECTIONS

Set amongst the wildest fauna and flora that the hills had to offer, I think the designers really stretched themselves as hardly anyone managed to get further than halfway round either section. An added factor was the mud thrown about by previous competitors, which



Section two saw many trucks max out on this ledge climb

SPECIAL TRACKSIDE REPORT



Between gates 9 and 10 of Section 2 you had this tricky wooden bridge to negotiate

'2.2' Podium

	NAME	CHASSIS	TYRES	INSERTS	MOTOR	ESC	CELLS
1st	Matt Brookes	Top Banana TLT	Panther Cougar	Panther Memory	Integy SST	"Moped"	8.4V NiMh
2nd	Neil Clee	AX10 Scorpion	Proline Hammer M2	Cut Axial Foams	Integy SST	CC Sidewinder	9.2V NiMh
3rd	Mark Barker	AX10 "Edge"	Losi Claws	Losi	Novak Goat	Novak Brushless	7.2V NiMh

Super Podium

	NAME	CHASSIS	TYRES	INSERTS	MOTOR	ESC	CELLS
1st	John Wasley	TCS Stick	Proline Moab	Cut Foam	65T x 2	Mtroniks Viper SSR	11.1V 3S Lipo
2nd	Johnathan Crabtree	TCS Stick	Proline Moab	Cut Foam	Novak 55T x2	Silverstar Ultra	9.2V NiMh
3rd	Paul Landy	Home Made Stick	Proline Moab	Cut Foam	55T Axial x 2	CC Sidewinder x2	11.1V 3S Lipo

Winner: Under 18's

	NAME	CHASSIS	TYRES	INSERTS	MOTOR	ESC	CELLS
	Max Cupit	SW3/TLT axles	Proline Badlands	Badlands	50T Integy	Novak Rooster	7.2V NiMh

Winner: Under 12's

	NAME	CHASSIS	TYRES	INSERTS	MOTOR	ESC	CELLS
	Bethan Wasley	AX10 Scorpion	Axial Kit	Axial Kit	55T	Mtroniks Viper SSR	7.2V NiMh



With BB Pellets in his kit Axial tyres, Steve Prince got his 2.2 Defender up this climb to Gate 10, oh yes!

could ruin the drive for the next guy along. The number of spectators scrambling among the rocks also left a trail of destruction, not to mention obstruction, which will be better controlled next year for the benefit of all concerned.

Of the 10 entrants in Super class, just 3 drivers cleared the first section including overall winner Jon Wasley with his 'TSC Stick 18' chassis. Only Johnathan Crabtree cleared the second section with another TSC Stick 18" chassis to secure second overall from John Landy in third. No one cleared both sections and the high points scores gained by all the Supers showed just how tough their courses were; set out by men for men, but attempted by ladies too, so well done to the only lady to give it a go in 'Super' class, whilst also taking millions of photos for the UKRCRC website, take a bow Erica Blackburn. Also a special mention must go to Robbie Prendergast who took an Axial AX10

Scorpion with 4WS (hence ineligible for the 2.2 class) to a great result in Super, running Pro-Line 'Bad Lands' tyres he reached places and cleared gates half the 'Super' field couldn't.

Thanks to Richard Armstrong for pulling such a great team together and putting on a spectacular event. We'll be back next year (after some practise!) can we book in now to avoid the queues please?

For more info, crawling rules, details, events, results, pics and videos, visit www.ukrcrc.com

Be sure to check out Mark Jackson's review of the Tamiya CR-01 'Rock Star' in this issue and how Mad Pete set about improving the Axial RTR 'Rock Racer' by using all the upgrades available from GML, in next month's RRCi! RRCi