

CITTASLOW LIONS GOOLWA GOPHER GYMKHANA, 2011

The 2011 Cittaslow Lions Goolwa Gopher Gymkhana was run on Saturday 5th March 2011 from 11:00 to 3:00.

The weather was fine and warm (around 25C). About 250 people attended as spectators, although a number came and went during the day.

The day was organised by a dedicated team from Lions Goolwa and Cittaslow.

Peter Goers of the ABC compered the day, with Edward Booth calling some of the obstacle events. Glen Dix, the legendary Grand Prix Flagman added colour and spectacle, while Peter Cannon ran the music on equipment supplied by Roxy Sound of Victor.

There were 19 contestants, of whom most were local gopher users. There were enough to run every scheduled event, and two events ran to two heats.

The obstacle events were well contested, with nearly every entrant having a go. There was enough time for each of the contestants to do up to three runs to try to improve their performance. The older riders acquitted themselves well, and spectator interest was high, with cheering and high spirits. Hedley Freundt set a blistering time of 20.36 second to win the 75+ section, and also the fastest lap overall. He was up on two wheels a few times to do it. The crown was gasping. The fastest under 75 went to Christine Ingram with a lap of 22.30 seconds, which was the second fastest of the day.

The relay event had four teams of three, who competed to carry their bags of shopping around the circuit without bruising tomatoes or breaking eggs. The Team of Carol Coventry, C Sheriff and Patrick Kennedy won in 2 minutes 0.75 seconds, a full 31 seconds ahead of the runners up.

The flag race was taken out by Ted Bird in 31.76seconds for the 75+, and Patrick Kennedy won the under 75 with 29.60seconds

The drag demonstration was over a very short course of about 50m, and achieved 30kph as measured by the Police laser.

The final race was the F1 Gopher Grand Prix. There were 3 machines, a Fiori, a Renno and Merciless McLarry with appropriate colouring. The Renno driven by Bob Jennings came home in a blistering 59.82 seconds or an average of 26.3 kph! The Merciless came in several seconds later, but the Fiori suffered partial burn-out of its motor and Carol Coventry limped home. The Constructor's Prize went to Edward Booth.

The Hospitality tent was ably run by Jane and her team. It was particularly encouraging to see teenagers assisting. Likewise the Pit crew and Track Stewards performed very well, with no hitches.

Food for staff and contestants was supplied by the RFDS south Coast Support Group, while the Cittaslow Garden Group sizzled sausages, and RFDSSCG provided tea, coffee and cakes.

The Lions Club marshals kept the whole show ticking along with no hitches, and the crowd was good-natured and happy.

There were commercial stands displaying aids for the elderly, and a bouncy castle for the young. St Johns and SAPol came along.

Additional entertainment was provided by Auntie Mary and Uncle Harry, who arrived for the afternoon with their light-hearted antics.

The show came to a close at about 3:00pm, and Edward thanked all the sponsors and volunteers, plus the celebrities, participants and audience.

All in all, it was a relaxed, low-key event on a beautiful day in a perfect location. You can't ask for more than that.

Edward Booth