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4 NEW ROUTE MAPS INSIDE

BRITAIN'S BEST-SELLING MOUNTAIN BIKING MAGAZINE

Mountain Biking UK

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**FOOT OUT,
FLAT OUT!**
15 FLAT PEDALS RATED,
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SANTA DROPS
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SEASONAL SKILLS
- RAIL RUTS LIKE JOE BARNES
- FETTLE YOUR BIKE FOR WINTER
- GET RAD ON A RESI RAMP

**WOODWORK
LESSONS**
WE GET SCHOOLLED BY
FREERIDE LEGENDS

**THRASH
FOR LESS CASH!**

THE £500 BIKES THAT LEFT OUR TESTERS GRINNING

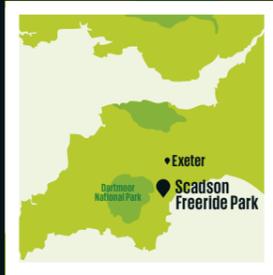
SLOVAK ATTACK
BIKE PARK THRILLS
FOR FEWER BILLS

**IMMEDIATE
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WHERE ARE WE?

SCADSON FREERIDE PARK,
SOUTH DEVON



TRAIL STATS

Distance 7 downhill trails, each approximately 0.5km long

Climbing Surfaced fireroad pedal/push up

Time 1-2mins

Grading Blue, red, black

WHY RIDE HERE?

It's the perfect escape from a family holiday in Devon

RAD...

- ⚡ Jumps and berms are well-built and predictable
- ⚡ Park rides surprisingly well in damp or wet conditions
- ⚡ Club has permission to develop lots of new trails

BAD...

- ⚡ It's a tiny hill, but that does mean you can lap out loads of runs
- ⚡ There's not yet enough here for a full weekend, but the park is constantly expanding



SCADSON FREERIDE PARK, DEVON

A feature-packed South West trail heaven, within spitting distance of the beach

Words Ed Thomsett, Pics Ian Lean



Frequent fliers will enjoy Scadson's well-built and predictable jumps

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Locals do...

Pay for a yearly pass or a day ticket before riding

Always remain courteous to other woodland users

Abide by the park's rules

Locals don't...

Dig or change stuff

Walk up the tracks (always use the push-up route)

Block entrances or rights of way with their vehicles

We've been riding with BMX pro turned MTBer Matt Roe twice now and both times he's been plagued by bad luck. The first time, we rocked up at Wiltshire's Wind Hill Bikepark together, only for Matt to snap a stem bolt almost immediately. Today, he's only just managed to make it to Scadson Freeride Park, with billowing black smoke and grinding noises issuing from the bonnet of his van. "I thought it was going to blow up on me," he laughs, still shaking a little.

The breakdown truck he's called isn't far away, so Matt only has a short time window to ride in. This in mind, we forgo the warm-up and dive straight in with a descent of J-Line, one of the park's four black trails. Within seconds we're being sent skywards off a series of rhythmmed doubles. This is alright for Matt, of course, who can ride this stuff with his eyes closed, as can Cornish slopestyler Tom Isted, who we've dragged across the border to ride today. Tom's mission from the get-go seems to be to find lines that no one's ridden before – or even considered riding, for that matter. Off a rooty drop into a short, steep downslope, he ignores the scrub option and instead veers right, pulls up and launches towards a huge tree. Narrowly avoiding the overhanging branches, Tom hips the bike and lands into a small patch of dirt between the splaying roots. He stays aboard, but the thud of bike bottoming out on timber and tyres bottoming out on rims



doesn't exactly encourage anyone else to try and emulate his line.

Trail blazers

It's not hard to find something else to ride though. The woods where the park is built are packed with trails, or the remnants of old ones. Devonshire MTBers have been putting tyres to dirt here for years, but it wasn't until 2016, when Rob Lister and a bunch of other keen locals formed the club and made Scadson into an official riding spot, that any structured trail building took place. Since then, the guys have shifted some serious dirt. There are currently seven different routes down the hill, but much more is planned, including a full-scale 4X track, a skills area and hopefully – Rob notes with crossed fingers – there's the potential to expand into the adjacent portion of woodland.

Dan Grant is one of the main builders and he guides us around, enthusiastically pointing out the club's handiwork. An impressive example is his wooden roll-in ramp, rigged up with an intricate system of tarps and guttering to provide a water source for the trails. We particularly enjoy the



MEET THE CREW



ED THOMSETT

Yorkshire lad Ed was a long way from home but soon settled in at Scadson



MATT ROE

Matt's BMX roots mean he tweaks stuff higher and more sideways than anyone else



TOM ISTED

GT's Cornish slopestyler found new lines to launch all day – many of them pretty sketchy!

COMING IN AT FULL SPEED, HE YANKS UP HARD, SOARS WAY OVER THE BLIND LIP OF THE LANDER AND IS STILL 10FT UP IN THE AIR GOING PAST THE SWEET SPOT



descriptive names for the various trail features too: A & E, Coffin Drop, Butt Clencher, Devil's Double and Wash Out Corner, named because... well you can guess why. By far the biggest earth-moving job on the hill has been the reshaping of three large jumps at the bottom called 'Dirty Burger'. Promising the biggest airtime potential, we stop for a play-around, and it doesn't take long for Matt to stamp his authority on them. He carves a tabletopped whip off the first step-down, before using the steep face of the second jump to launch upwards towards the tree canopy, dropping a foot, extending the leg and tipping the bar flat. Matt's BMX days may be in the past, but he's very much still got that ultra-slick 20in style.

Knock out runs

With limited elevation on offer here at Scadson, the club have had to be clever in the way that they use the terrain. The name of their only blue trail, Training Wheels, may not conjure up images of adrenaline-fuelled berm blasting, but it's actually one of the park's highlights – a switchbacking descent of well-sculpted turns, which ekes out far more from the small hill than you might expect. We ride it in a train, following Dan and Matt from the club as they bounce from one berm to the next, sliding a foot-off inside on one corner and then popping up onto the outside banking around the



It takes a dedicated crew to get somewhere like Scadson up and running. Good work lads!

next. Threading it around a tree, Matt leans in so far it looks as though he's about to K.O. himself, but then, milliseconds before impact, he contorts his shoulder, whistles around the trunk and drops back into the main rut, carrying crazy speed. We know we've got our work cut out on the next run when he offers to guide us down one of the park's natural lines – a steeper and more direct route down the hill, with tricky off-cambers and two-wheeled drifts through a carpet of leaves.

Good air day

Step Up is the other of Scadson's steeper downhills, and just before the jump that gives the

WRECKING CREW WISDOM

TOM ISTD
PRO RIDER FOR
GT BICYCLES

"Having never been to Scadson before, I didn't know what to expect, but after our day riding there I'd highly recommend it. The tracks are full of fun jumps, step-downs and turns, and there's something for everyone, from beginners to advanced riders. There are a few cheeky gaps to be had too, including a 25ft step-down off a blind lip that I spotted. It was pretty wild to ride, but thankfully it worked out!"



The hill may be small, but there's still big air potential at Scadson



A SWITCHBACKING DESCENT EKES OUT SO MUCH MORE FROM THE SMALL HILL THAN YOU'D EXPECT

trail its name is a bombhole. The line here is to pump in and keep it low over the crest out. Well, that's unless you're Tom, who rides it once before announcing confidently: "I reckon I could jump out of that." The retort from everyone else is, "Jump to where?" Tom points off to one side at a near-vertical banking of grass and ferns. "Down there." Dan looks at us and shakes his head, and we agree, happy to sit this one out too.

Unperturbed, Tom takes a couple of test runs, before lining up for it properly. Coming in at full speed, he yanks up hard, soars way over the blind lip of the lander and is still 10ft up in the air going past the sweet spot. Touching down on the last few feet of downslope, he slides and wrestles the bike back into line with the trail. For most people, that would be enough, but before we can even suggest moving on, Tom's already turned tail and is running back up for another go. Three more times he hits it, getting higher and more sideways with each attempt, but never making the run-out look less terrifying. It's only when he lands almost into the face of the next jump, flips over the bars and sends Gareth – who's filming it all – diving for cover, that he decides he's happy to stop. Whoever said southerners were soft clearly hasn't met Tom.

We're just over the border in Devon right now though, where they put cream on their scones before jam. They're also partial to a beer by the beach after a day's riding, so while we reluctantly pack up the van and Matt prepares for a lift home in the tow truck, the rest of the crew head off to the beach to take in the hops and sea air. If this is just another day in Devon, then life is good here. ⚙️

THE MBLUK DIRECTORY

Everything you need to know about Scadson Freeride Park

GET THERE

Scadson is equidistant between Paignton and Torquay in South Devon. The postcode for the bike park is TQ3 1RW, but parking is at Ocombe Farm (TQ3 1RN). From there, it's a 1.2km roll down Cockington Road to the bike park.

FACILITIES

Car park, toilets

NEARBY BIKE SHOPS

Dialled in Bikes (www.dialledinbikes.com) is a six-minute drive into the centre of Paignton and Fish

Bikes (www.fishbikes.co.uk) is 12 minutes away, towards Torquay.

CONTACT

www.scadsonfreeride.com

WHAT ELSE IS NEARBY?

Haldon Forest Park
Just 25 minutes away, with everything from family loops to black downhill runs. www.forestryengland.uk

Gawton Gravity Hub
An hour west of Scadson is Devon's premier DH venue. www.gawtongravityhub.co.uk

VERDICT

It's great to see a band of dedicated riders like Scadson Freeride form a club and put in some serious effort. What they've achieved on such a small hill is impressive, and while you always reach the bottom feeling like you want more, the pedal up is so quick that you're back at the top before you know it. The trails definitely err towards downhill and freeride though, so a love of getting airborne helps, but isn't essential

