

# The DirtGirls summer comes to a close

By SheCycles September 2006



The first summer of DirtGirls has officially come to an end with the finish of the last camp and a week later the closure of the lifts in the Portes du Soleil.

Sixteen lucky graduates have gone on to a new and expanded world of biking. Lorna Eccleston who attended the first week had only been riding for 5 weeks and made an amazing improvement to her riding. She found "Riding with women makes me more relaxed and I feel more comfortable trying new things. I don't have to prove myself; I try it because I feel confident and because the other women are doing it. Plus I felt I could talk about what scares me more easily than when I ride with men, I wouldn't have come here with a group of men because I would find it intimidating."



Emily coaches cornering

Others attending had been riding for years, but wanted to improve the way they tackled steep sections and technical sections of trail. Jennifer Cady from Wiltshire who came on the August week has been riding for 4 years and races XC for Evans Cycles. She commented 'I'm really chuffed with how much my riding has come on, you'd think that riding in the UK I'd have been a better rider in mud, but I've come on leaps and bounds. I even hope my next race is muddy so I can see how much I've improved. And I can jump! I can't wait to show off my new puddle splashing skills!' Claire Buckley from Aberdeen has been riding for a couple of years and came out to gain new skills to help her tackle 'harder stuff'. She 'learnt that speed is my friend, phat air is cool, and that my cooking skills seriously need brushing up. I'll let you know when I crack \*that\* bit of local singletrack that I've never done yet, thanks to my new skills.'



Tracey Lawton

The July week was featured on SheCycles - where six DirtGirls had a week of sunshine, stunning trails and some amazing riding. But what about the August camp....

Sadly, the weather wasn't quite so kind. Bikes were assembled in a little rain, but by the time we hit the trails it had cleared up. The first day saw some practice in mud and also how to cope with ruts in trails. For the afternoon a session by the river on manualing and bunny hops saw everyone getting wheels off the ground in preparation for tackling the drainage ditches on many of the trails out here. The day was rounded off nicely with a few Mutzigs in the sunshine at Bar Robinsons then dinner back at the

chalet.

On a bright but chilly Monday morning half the DirtGirls went with coach Emily to look at rocky trails and how to

tackle them while the others had a ride round some of the area tackling some precarious descents and taking in some amazing views. After meeting up for lunch the groups swapped over. Muddy but happy we rolled down to tea and cake. Tuesday dawned a little colder and wetter, but undeterred we all headed out. While one group looked at roots and mud skills, the others tested their new rock riding skills on the famous puncture alley. Unfortunately the day was cut short by a nasty tumble from Yvonne resulting in a broken nose and trip to the doctors. All the girls rallied round to help get her down to where a helpful local lad could pick us up and drive to the doctors. As the rain set in the other girls opted for an afternoon by the fire in the chalet.

At last Wednesday was sunny! Some of the DirtGirls took the day off, whilst others headed to Avoriaz to make up for a lost afternoon. Emily gave up her afternoon off to do a quick session on cornering and then another on drops. There were girls hucking off the raised kerbs of Avoriaz everywhere you looked! The rest of the week stayed sunny and trails slowly dried out. Thursday saw sessions on cornering and line choice on the Les Gets 1 DH track and 2 different XC rides, taking in climbing, both smooth and rocky, rooty descents, stream crossings and some awesome views of Mont Blanc. For Friday we all headed off further afield to Chatel along a route with technical rocky climbs and the longest rocky singletrack descent possible! After a relaxing lunch in the sun by the lake we headed back over with a quick stop to cover jumping! Oh, and of course we then had a few Mutzigs in Bar Robinson.



Tracey and Bex on the Plenay side of Morzine

Friday night's dinner was peppered with stories of accomplishments and trails to be tackled back home. After dinner, certificates were presented as well as t-shirts kindly given to every DirtGirl by Minx! One lucky lady even won a pink Minx race jersey. So what was her accomplishment; the rocks, the steep descents, the mud? Nope on the last night, after a week of trying and a few beers she made it up the steep drive successfully, apparently 'it's all in the technique!' Well done Mandy!

So summer's now over for the DirtGirls. Those of us still in Morzine will carry on riding till the snow comes, but sadly all the uphill will now be under our own steam. As for next year we'll be running camps again, taking in all the feedback from this summer. The women's only DirtGirls camps will again be based around improving riding and technique and will be coached by UK DH racer Emily Horridge. Also look out for a new week focused simply on DirtGirls enjoying the riding in Les Get and Morzine, which will follow one of the coaching weeks. Dates will be released soon and if you want us to let you know once they're confirmed just get in touch: [sara@mountainbikeholidays.co.uk](mailto:sara@mountainbikeholidays.co.uk).



A handy bench