

Morgan Sports Car Club Parc Ferme Speed Championship

Goodwood 4th August 2007

Ah! Glorious Goodwood, and for once in what is turning out to be a very damp season of motor sport, the weather was glorious. Not a cloud in the sky, 14 Morgans turned out to do 'battle' at this historic circuit. Some had had quite a battle to get there, Peter Rafter had been happily 'bowling' down the M1 the previous afternoon only to be confronted with its closure. He diverted to the M40 only for that to be closed also and having spent 2 hours sat on a roundabout just outside Leamington Spa (many many miles to the north of Goodwood), he like the rest of us was keen to show some real speed around Goodwood's sweeping curves.

Unusually for our championship, at this event the Morgans have to 'mix it' with the 'lesser' marques. This in turn does mean that the Plus 8s can get to view the 4/4s and vice-versa. It is quite unusual for us Morgan drivers to actually get to see another Morgan run, but here it can be done from a vantage point on the Grandstand or grassy knoll.

Anyway, to practice which is also unusual, in the fact that we only get one go at it here and that go is two laps long. The first lap is timed and the second flying lap is used to remind ourselves of where we went wrong the first time around! I for one, have to admit finding this circuit quite hard to acclimatise to. Compared to most venues we spend a high proportion of the lap at a very high speed and it is easy to become disorientated, as the circuit is devoid of many of the usual reference points that we are used to seeing. Well that's my excuse for being too slow in practice and baulking Paul Bennet in his Plus 8, Paul having the 'misfortune' of lining up behind myself. As it turned out Paul was quite happy with this as the clerk of the course granted him another go. Having familiarised himself with the circuit following my 4/4 he went on to post a very respectable time of 100.57 seconds. Simon Baines and Tim Ayres were similarly compromised in practice and had the 'luxury' of another go at it.

To the serious stuff! Seconds were falling off our times, with many going a full 5 seconds or more quicker than in practice. Well all but Tim Ayres who had been trying a little too hard in Lavant and took a 38 second excursion to the infield. At his first sprint David Leach had knocked some 6+ seconds of his first attempt, taking the 'Moss box' Plus 8 to a time of 123.96 seconds. But star of the show was John Stephens, who was the only driver to beat his bogey time and as such lead the field of Morgans after round one.

So what would the second runs hold? Well the pace of improvement slowed as we all tried to find that little bit extra that might put us on the podium. Whilst some of us found a little bit, Tim found a car in his path, baulked again a re-run would be required, would he be able to shatter his bogey time and dislodge John from the top step of the podium?! A good time, but not good enough this time, as once the dust had settled the scores revealed that John had done it again, coming first, the only driver to beat his bogey time, and by some 2.3 seconds! Simon Baines came in second at 0.12 seconds over his bogey time and Paul Bryan taking the third step on the podium with a time 2.09 seconds over his bogey. A great days sport was had by us all.

Clive Hall