

MSCC SPEED CHAMPIONSHIP

COLERNE SPRINT

25TH AUGUST 2008

The weathermen got it about right this time and we enjoyed a dry day overcast in the morning with sunny intervals in the afternoon. This popular event organised by the two Bristol Motor Clubs produced a large field of competitors including 7 Morgans, one being a double drive. After some particularly diligent scrutineering, with requests for logbooks, V5 docs, MOTs and stern reminders that road-going classes must have passenger seats fitted! practice got underway. Colerne, a University Squadron training airfield, has a fast sprint circuit of 1,094 yards with long high-speed straights, sweeping bends, a tricky chicane and apexes marked by large yellow cones.

On her first practice run Anne Benischek, in her well-turned out 4/4, decided to ignore the marker on the chicane and took a shortcut mowing the grass as she went along. Fortunately no damage was done but shortly afterwards Paul Clarke, who was trying out some bargain Chinese 1A tyres in place of his worn Khumos, over estimated grip levels and went agricultural also! Concerned that others may 'plough' through the chicane the organisers decided to mark the spot with a large straw bale which would be obvious to all. The rest of the Morgan pedallers were more circumspect and all kept to the tarmac without incident.

By afternoon the sun was starting to reveal itself and the track temperature began to rise. Paul Bryan, whilst preparing for his first competitive run was attacked by a rogue bee and stung on the chin. Brenda Bryan, our official timekeeper, agony aunt and now race medic rushed to his aid and treated his sting with an electronic device which she claims neutralises insect bites! Paul suitably repaired and recharged leapt into his 4/4 and set an impressive time 0.79 secs under target which would later win him 2nd place. Peter Turner in his smart Plus 4 was not at all overawed by the Colerne circuit and set about improving on his practice runs. Jonathan Edwards, a relative newcomer to motor-sport was also having a good day in his 4.6 Plus 8 eventually beating yours truly by 1.53 secs to achieve the 2nd fastest scratch time of the day in the Morgan group. David Simpson's mind must have been on his four legged horses that day and he struggled to make best use of his powerful ex Phil Eggington Plus 8. Nevertheless the gorgeous sound of this race bred V8 impressed and entertained the spectators.

Undeterred by his earlier mishap in practice Paul Clarke took to the track in his V6 four seater and set the fastest Morgan actual time of 88.50 secs. Unfortunately on his second timed run his tyres let him down again. Letting go at the chicane his car was stopped only by the very large straw bale strategically placed earlier to prevent such incidents! Wisely he has now decided to return to 1B tyres once he has straightened out the front of his car. With the track now quite warm Andrew Miller was feeling confident having been urged on by his well staffed pit crew - who incidentally outnumbered the rest of us! On his second timed run he really put his foot down and shaved 1.15 secs off his target time winning him a well-earned 1st place and setting a challenging time for future class 1 Colerne entrants.

It was nice to see Tim Ayres who paid us visit and was clearly missing the buzz of the Speed Championship since bending his very fast Plus 8. Tim's love of Morgans has proved so strong that he has decided to set up a garage business called New Elms which along with other quality cars will service and repair Morgans. We all wish this likely future Speed champion success in his new venture.

Greg Parnell