

MSCC Parc Ferme Speed Championship 2008 Event Report

Venue: C-C-C-C-Croft

Date: 24th March 2008

Weather: Anyone seen a welder???.

Given the weather through the Easter Weekend, most of the hardy souls who ventured to the North East for the first sprint of the season had expected a snowman building competition rather than a day's racing. Friendships renewed, whispered comments concerning Simon Baines' weight gain in the closed season were soon quashed as it soon emerged how many layers of clothing he had on underneath his race suit.

Things started off positively enough – locals in T-shirts and shorts and yes, even an ice cream van!!!! Lord Unstone must have Geordie blood in him as the only person to stop and buy one, presumably as a way of topping up his blue blood credentials. We were fortunate to have our own elevated early weather warning system, in the shape of Chris Baines (if that boy grows any more he'll need oxygen...), but even his radar wasn't sensitive enough to predict the snow storm that started half-way through the groups' second practice; my own couple of agricultural moments were well surpassed by Dave Frow who managed to beach his car at the surely ironically named "Sunny". Spare a thought for John Stephens though – just for future reference John, snow tends to come off a windscreen easier if you leave the wipers on.

Lunch was a communal affair - It's amazing how many people you can get into a two man tent when the weather deteriorates. Michelle Bailey set out her credentials for this year's Apron Award with a fine display of chocolate cookies, whilst Jon Baines was busily snapping a number of highly incriminating photos in preparation for next year's Speedmog Calendar.

The first timed runs were led off by Karena Carden who continued to add to her reputation of constantly chipping time off from every earlier run. Pete Rafter's day started badly when his right rear tyre decided to commit Hari-Kari on the way to the circuit, but his times fell steadily throughout the day. The run was halted when a bloody fool decided to go straight on at the first bed and play in the gravel trap, but after I got back to the pits thankfully the car was undamaged.

At the end of the run there was disappointment as the timing equipment was found to be running to Jamaican-time, taking around 80 seconds to count to 60 seconds. Nice to know it wasn't just the drivers who were chilled.

Everyone managed to get round for the second run, with Simon Baines posting fastest, though indeterminate, time of the day, Dave Frow pipping Chris Bailey to the Plus 4 crown, and Brian Lee and Lord Unstone resuming their 4/4 battle. As usual John Stephens just went quietly about his business and beat the bogey, and I learnt a valuable lesson that if you want to keep a car on the road in the freezing cold remember to deflate your tyres to a level where there is some hope of getting heat into them for the first few bends.

Finally, special thanks to Roger Carden for letting us witness Bumble's christening. Not an event without difficulty but surely worth the wait!!!!