

MSCC Speed Championship 2008

Curborough Club Sprint

Event Report

Venue: Curborough

Date: 14th September 2008

Weather: Dry, warm

Sunday the 14th September dawned fine but foggy and many of the eclectic mix of racers and spectators appearing through the mist at Curborough had endured autumnal weather in order to pitch up at one of the key events in the Morgan Motorsport calendar.

A few hardy souls had chosen to camp the night before while others had located local hostelries. The remainder had left the warmth of their beds at unearthly hours in order to compete. Some had come a long way. Joe Philips had travelled from the south coast while “toady” of the meeting Colin McLatchie had come all the way from Edinburgh in his V Tec powered 4/4. Our friends in the three wheeler club added variety and colour to the entry list as well as a fair degree of bravery and style with their alternative driving techniques that kept the spectators entertained all day!

Signing on was manned by Julie Baines and Brenda Bryan and from my perspective scrutineering was both thorough and speedy. The wind-ups had started early in the Paddock and the talk consisted mainly of what tyre pressures might be advisable on such a day. Interestingly enough if you asked the question to four different people you got four different answers so naturally I tried a different pressure on each corner.....perfect!

Throughout the day there was a hive of activity, from mechanical and electrical repairs to polishing, picnics and in the Lees camp multi coloured speed knitting was much in evidence between runs! Nigel Housley confided that a change from Ogden's Walnut twist to St Bruno would probably shave half a second off his times and Smithy had graciously offered to share his 4/4 with the septic grill with Tim Ayres whose own plus 8 is out of commission. The appearance of the Aeromax as course car was a terrific bonus, and for those of us who had never seen it in the flesh it was everything and more that we had been led to believe.

Marshalls briefed, practice commenced more or less on time with the start line being manned by the dubious crew of Dixon Smith, “Clipboard Heapy” (you can't park there son its more than my jobs worth!!) and Dave Bright who had been released from Yorkshire for the day! The happy smiling faces on those returning to the pits indicated that we were all in for a cracking event. Early to show his hand was Clive Hall in the very rapid Kent engined 4/4 who posted quick times all day eventually winning class three with a time of 66.75secs. The Stephens car sharers were also off the mark with Liz keeping father John on his toes throughout the day.

Second practice saw some untoward activity with varying degrees of blue smoke being seen at the end of the back straight. Some of us indulged in pirouettes and ploughing (no names no pack drill!!) Philip Tisdall was pushing the ever smooth Simon Baines and was only 0.22 adrift. Joe Philips had a nasty moment when the throttle jammed wide open as he crossed the line giving cause for concern that something nasty might have happened in the depths of the engine. Happily that did not prove to be the case and he was able to continue his battle with Andrew Miller.

In class six Michelle Bailey was showing huge improvements every time she took to the circuit with her second run being 4.5 seconds faster with more to come! In class ten Lees and Clarke were weighing each other up with only 0.11 separating them after run one. Unfortunately Tony coasted to a silent halt on run two but was soon fixed and back in the fray.

Lunch came and went with the usual excellent artery blocking door stops being served thick and fast from the catering van and it was a joy to see Lord Unstone having a comforting cup of hot chocolate prior to his little nap which preceded his graceful spin during the first timed run of the afternoon!

The weather looked dubious at this point with slight spots of rain causing some concern. However the Gods were with us, and the clouds passed with even a little sunshine appearing at times. The organization was slick and each successive group was called in plenty of time minimalizing holding time and keeping the event flowing smoothly.

On run one Roy Wilkinson scythed a massive 5.51 seconds off his first practice time and made a further improvement at the end of the day. After a great fight Andrew Miller won the Class 1 by just 0.15 sec from the ever-smooth Joe Philips with Jim Mountain filling third spot.

Class two was always going to be busy as both cars had double drivers. John Stephens threw his 4/4 round with a fastest time of 69.65 being one of only two competitors to beat bogey all day. Lord Unstone took second spot from Tim Ayres by 0.59 sec having the benefit of having his tyres and seat nicely warmed up by Tim before each run! Class five for modified TR engined +4's was taken by Chris Martin with David Frow being the second driver to beat bogey on the day and in the process carving a 2.48sec margin to take class six.

Class seven saw the 1A shod modified 4/4 of Simon Moore take the honours, chased home by Paul Bryan who consistently improved throughout the day being 2.38 secs quicker from first practice to last run.

The scribe was enjoying his first event in his ex Sharlie Goddard +8 and learning fast. I now have a list of mods to complete over the winter months before an attack on next season.

Classes eight and nine were very tight with Mr Baines taking the honours from Philip Tisdall who over cooked it on the final run in his attempt to catch Simon who won by just 0.14 of a second!! In class ten and eleven Tony Lees not only won the class but also posted FTD at 63.58 with Paul Clarke just 0.09 of a second adrift. It doesn't get tighter than that.

At the prize-winning ceremony Vice Chairman Brian Lee said a few words and wished Tim and Jane Hill all the best for their move to New Zealand where Tim has taken up a three year posting. Jane then presented the awards to the worthy winners. I know that all the competitors would like to thank the organisers and marshals for their hard work and commitment. We are extremely aware that these events would not, and could not take place without them generously donating their time and energy. It is much appreciated.

Yet again the club sprint proved to be a huge success with more spectators this year than ever before. The day remained dry, no one did any damage, the competition was close and the sound of laughter in the paddock was the noisiest thing after the engines. Brilliant.

Rob Toon