

Morgan Speed Championship

Hethel 3rd August 2008

This event has proved particularly difficult to enter due to its popularity. Both Simon & I were on the reserves list, me being at 7th position despite sending the entry off at the earliest opportunity. Being finally confirmed an entry in the last week or so before the event I was really looking forward to this event. Leaving home at 5.30am the weather augured well for a good days entertainment at the Lotus test track, our championships first ever visit, and the third of the year in the region.

However after only 40 miles the weather was doing its worst and called for a stop to raise the hood. Things had improved by the time I arrived at Hethel to find all the 4 other Speed Championship entrants in place having been in the area overnight, Simon Baines having made the long journey after posting a new record at Goodwood on Saturday. Non starter on the day was Tim Ayres who has apparently had an incident with a gate post at a non championship event at Wiscombe

The track is interesting and different from most other tracks in that there is a roundabout half way round the circuit around which we have to do one and a half laps, probably about 50 yards in diameter. This is approached by a long very windy but grippy track with a tight chicane immediately preceding it. It is followed by a snakelike road again with a chicane near the finish. It was clear even before the start that whoever managed to do the best at the roundabout was likely to come out on top.

Our first practice run was around 11am and this confirmed our opinions that (a) it is a fantastic track and (b) that the roundabout was the key to a good time. Second practice eventually finished after 1.30 with most runners improving their times. Lunchtime was therefore spent by Simon with the calculator working out the indexed times and showing that Smithy had around a 4 second buffer between him and second place Paul Bryan, despite an early battle with one of the cones on his first run (5 sec penalty). The event seemed to be running very slowly and we did not get into timed runs until well after 2pm with our first run being 3.30. Everyone improved significantly with Jonathan Edwards making big gains except for myself who did not manage to meet my first practice time due to trying a different tactic at the roundabout. Shortly after our run one of the cars managed to scatter a large amount of gravel all over the track causing a reasonable delay to clear it up. The organisers decided that this delay meant that there would be insufficient time for a second timed run meaning that our first run was in fact to give the results for the day. There were lots of disgruntled drivers in the paddock however since many of us had 3 plus hour drives to get home we were in fact grateful to get away a little earlier.

The final results were Smithy first, having improved yet again, Paul Bryan second with yours truly third. The high spot in the entertainment was still to come however with Smithy owning up to losing his glasses down the Portaloo!

This caused a good deal of amusement with lots of speculation as to what he was doing to lose them. We will never know!

I for one will look forward to a return visit next year but hope that they have a smaller entry to enable the event to run more to time.

Paul Clarke