

MSCC Techniques Speed Championship 2009

Harewood Hillclimb

Date: 7th June 2009

Weather: Artic but at least it wasn't raining.

A rather large field of Morgans dominated the paddock area for the Classic and Vintage event at Harewood, which was quite fitting considering it is the Centenary year. Suffice to say lots happened during the cold day with all sorts of wonderful machinery sailing or limping up the hill home, including those wonderful mammoth-sized Bentleys and the delightfully dinky Austin 7s (on my Christmas wish list, especially one in Noddy colours).

With so many of us to comment on, I'll hand over to the racing commentator Siegfried O'Sullivan for a full report:

“Well, it's a cool morning for first practice but the starter's coming across and he's given the signal and off they go down the hill but he's stopped 31 Carden in her 4/4 to check the scrutineer's sticker. Surprisingly Millie's got through with her wooden wheel but they're now down at the start and it's Maurice Dempsey that leads the way around, closely followed by a rejuvenated Clive Glass in his +8 with Roger Williams bringing the first of the 4/4s home. The first Martin in the form of father squirrels home in a comfortable 73.11s with Tim Harrison and Dave Simpson not far behind and Gavin Rintoul and Ray Eatock following on. Going at a canter is Steven McDonald and Simon Baines chasing in the Roadster and they'll be quicker as the day lengthens as Nigel Ledger-Lomas hoofs home with the teddies in tow. Millie's clearly on a tight rein as Roy Wilkinson and Nigel Housley finish at both ends of the eighties but Joe Phillips and Brian Lee overtake on the outside in the late seventies. Yet, it's Clive Hall that pushes the time back to just over 70 seconds and that car hasn't broken out into a sweat as Stuart Kellett comes home over 10 seconds behind but he's only trotting around. There's not much in it between Paul Bryan, Chris Bailey and David Gibson and they're all in different classes and Lizzie Stephens and Phillip Tisdall come home sweetly. There's a charge at the back of the field and it's Chris Martin going quicker than Dad with Jonathan Baines, Michele Bailey and John Stephens bringing up the rear.”

Second practice came and went and most Speedmoggers were quicker. Also, most had refreshed with a pastry or buttie of some description. It looked like there would be a timed run before lunch but the powers that be called for an early sandwich and so Morganeers took to picnics and burger bars to improve ballast for those tight corners. O'Sullivan picks up the runs:

“On course there's two Red Kites hovering over Farmhouse Bend looking for leftovers but they'll not find any now because the Morgans have been called under orders and away they go.

“Dempsey's taking a quick turn as Glass shaves off nearly a second. Williams is not far away yet Granville Martin is slower than before as Harrison records the same time with Simpson, Rintoul and Eatock all quicker. Fetlocks flying, McDonald removes inches as Simon Baines and Ledger-Lomas struggle out of the gates. The following four; Carden, Wilkinson, Housley and Phillips are all close in their class within six seconds as Lee passes by two seconds quicker. Hall shies from the time but there's a faster run for the next bunch of Bryan, Bailey, Gibson, Stephens and Tisdall, with Stephens stretching out at the finishing post more than two seconds faster. However, it's Chris Martin with a frisky charge that's quicker still with Jonathan Baines and Michele Bailey much better whereas John Stephens just creeps in for 0.01s improvement.”

The second run came and went with improvement for several Morganeers but it was young Jonathan that took to the gravel passing Quarry. Thankfully, both driver and Roadster were fine enough to continue, although much grunting and gnashing of teeth from the jockey could be heard. Perhaps the brakes could be applied for the final run? Siegfried O'Sullivan continues the tale:

“Well, it's still a cold day but the ground is good to firm and has held well throughout today's sport with many fine breeds being exhibited and partnered with great gusto but it's time for the Morgans and they've been given the signal to collect at the start, all 27 of them. There's the official in orange, he's looking at Bailey slightly fidgeting and waiting to race. Carden's mount is looking too calm but the lights are green and away they go.

“Dempsey takes the first corner and he's away with Glass following closely on his fetlocks, both quicker at the post and Williams finishing in a slower time. Not sure what's happened there as we watch Granville and Harrison take a slightly slower route through the course, nostrils flaring and where's Simpson? It's a charge now as Rintoul slices his time, pushing that steed on with Eatock galloping ahead in the final furlong. McDonald throws out the reins but it's a slower time as Simon Baines noses ahead by the slightest margin with Ledger-Lomas and those teddies sprinting home. By Jove, that Kite came close to nibbling the ears of the MG ted. Carden's following but it will take three years to get close and ...Wilkinson's off. He's diverted on to the field through Esses to Chippy's but it's all okay as he picks up the reins and carries on with Housley putting in a final quick gallop. Here's Phillips urging the 4/4 home finishing quickest in class with Lee and Kellett following. Hall's digging in those heels and he'll need to if he wants to reduce the time, which he does as Bryan finishes on a slower run than previous with Bailey and Gibson not far away. And it's a real push from Lizzie Stephens but there she goes at the final post, not sure which way she's going as Tisdall just manages to carve the time.

“So we're left with the final four and it's Chris Martin, clearly determined but not having a good run. He's shaking his head and it could be at the Kite who's got exceptionally close to the rear wheel but Baines is clearly trying to make amends with a careful time as Michele heads home a full two seconds quicker with John Stephens bringing the Morgan charge to an end a full two seconds slower. So, it's a win for Chris Martin who takes the ten points ahead of David Gibson in second and Granville Martin in third. A fine display of jockeying on this Sunday afternoon.”

Phew.

Karena Carden