

## **MSCC Techniques Speed Championship - MIRA**

22<sup>nd</sup> August 2009

Weather: Fabulous – hot, dry, sunny, cloudless

By Andrew Miller

The MIRA event got off to a slightly later start than expected as we all sat in the morning sun queuing to get into the venue – the organisers, having decided to convoy all competitors into the paddock at the same time. This did however give the Ferrari boys (also out in force) a good chance to polish their cars in the paddock before the event, they must have had an internal competition for best turned out car on the day.

It was nice to see two very early Morgans at the event, the 1267cc 4/4 Series 1 of Jen Lees as well as a modified version run by Tim Harrison running a 2000cc engine.

Once in, the 24 Morgan competitors rushed to strip the cars into racing mode as the late entry had compressed the Scrutineering, Track Walk, Briefing, and Signing-on time allocations. Once through scrutineering, a track walk was instigated with many of the Morganeers commenting on the grippiness of the tarmac based on previous years' experience.

For the 1<sup>st</sup> timers at MIRA the track presented a set of sweeping bends along with two flat out straights. With plenty of run-off in all but one of the bends, it was clearly going to be a fast event. A hurried return to the paddock ensued with pit stops made for bacon butties and cups of tea on the way.

We all lined up for our first runs, having taken note of the lines off the start from the early runners. The first runs gave times for everyone, with most putting down a good time against their handicaps, a couple of bogey times were broken, John Stephens and my good self were under from the off.

Practice 2 soon followed with times being cut throughout the field; only Greg Parnell bucked the trend by adding on a few tenths and Ian Hargrave having a "moment" which left him without a time for the second run and revising initial approaches on where to cut time.

Lunch was a very hot affair with the sun out in full, so the track was clearly going to be hot for the runs in the afternoon. There was also some observation of the Ferrari time tracking method, a 4ft tall giant clipboard with all the times of the day being recorded (who's going to sponsor one of those for Brenda?). In addition, it hadn't escaped anyone's attention that the Speed Trap speeds were a secondary competition to be contested.... hhmhhh... opportunities for the afternoon.

After lunch the first timed runs started, the majority of competitors cutting at least a few tenths off their practice runs, however this was not universal, just under half the field added on time and in an unusual state of affairs this included John Stephens having spun whilst putting in a hot lap. Ian Hargrave, having recollected over lunch the morning events, managed to continue cutting 3 seconds off his earlier time, a real achievement. Dave Gibson put in a great run slicing just over half a second off his practice times and getting under class 5 bogey as did Anne Benischek and yours truly. Greg Parnell also found a new approach and sliced just over half a second off his best morning run.

This left most competitors down to their final run to get the time down, John Stephens kept traction on his side to get a hot lap down on paper beating Class 2 bogey by just under a second, however didn't manage to match his best run of the day from the second practice. Several competitors unfortunately ended up adding on time against their first timed runs and had to settle for what was in the bag already. Ian Hargrave continued to slice time off his previous runs as confidence increased. Tim Ayres continued to ease back into the championship and had to settle with retaining the record for the course for Class 9 for another year. There were several re-runs as "Baines the Senior" was investigating the right line and had scooped a spread of stones onto the circuit on his run, which provided several of the subsequent competitors with a plausible excuse for replacement runs. The Baines family competition found Simon defending the honour managing to keep ahead of Jonathan, and Jonathan almost matching Simon's first practice run time, undoubtedly this will heat up as next season rolls around.

As far as the Speed Trap goes – the quickest Morgans were hitting over 110mph, which no doubt surprised the Ferrari 360 and the 348 Challenge cars! Final results meant my good self scraping nearly 4 seconds off the bogey time, being closely followed by David Gibson, Anne Benischek and John Stephens all beating their bogeys. Congrats to all as well as to Challenge visitor Tony Lees, who came away with the fastest time of the day of 52.98 seconds by 2/10<sup>ths</sup> of a second.