

MSSC Techniques Speed Championship

Venue: Curborough
Date: 11th September 2011
Weather: Overcast, windy but mainly dry

Curborough 2011 was the race that nearly wasn't, possibly due to an unusually high number of track incidents this season. Applications were down and it took a chaser and a notable double entry from David Simpson to guarantee the event happened. David wanted to take out his +8, for possibly the last time, something that Simon was happy to agree to as he was the one who rumbled it down to the start line on each run as David took his first run in his Roadster.

The weather had been devilish the previous couple of days and we were all expecting the forecast of heavy rain to materialise. Luckily enough from early dawn the clouds threatened to dampen the day but there seemed to be a force-field above Curborough keeping the rain from getting to us, wave after wave of cloud came over but only a few drops fell during the day.

In the paddock the regulars were out in force with the note from Simon having tempted out a few more of the special machinery, including the Class 12 +8 of Mike Hall, Class 10 cars of Chas Windridge and Tim Harrison. Greg Dixon-Smith had managed to persuade the factory to let him compete the development +4 Super Sport – something we were all keen to see, yet were not so sure it was going to be doing us any favours.

Julie Baines and Brenda Bryan co-opted the help of Tim Ayres as paddock marshal, and I have to say he did an excellent job. Mike Hughes brought along his son and both dutifully manned the start line, a welcome face when getting ready to launch. If you managed to look on the way round Graham was there as a track marshal, ready to rescue us if we needed it. Many others also helped make the day a real success.

Due to the low numbers and the super-efficient organisation we knew we were going to be rewarded with more than the regular 2 practice and 2 main runs. In the end we had six runs instead of the usual four.

Practice saw everyone rattle through returning very competitive times, most putting a stake in the ground around five or six seconds off target. I always find Curborough a difficult track, I've nearly had a few major moments trying to get round under target. This time I vowed to get round under 70 seconds, no danger of the target falling but a personal target none the less. Anne was out to catch me trying hard to get a time down that would keep me in check.

Over lunch Michele broke out the sticky brownies, a familiar treat, which were very gooey but lip smackingly moreish. I definitely saw both Baines Jr's digging in to finish off the tub later in the day. In our camp, it was my parents Brian & Ann's Ruby wedding anniversary, so full regalia and cake were set out and duly shared.

For the afternoon's run we needed a commentator, luckily Rob Toon took up the mantle and from the comments I heard from the audience, he is an absolute star on the mike. DJ Tooney really made the runs interesting, giving insight into the drives and drivers, based on his experience as well as a super wit – absolutely fantastic.

First of the timed runs were before lunch... the earlier groups benefitting from the best of the weather and track conditions, as a shower dampened the track just before lunch. The remaining three runs after lunch saw times tumble with all runners looking to trim time and take the honours on home turf.

The run-off finalists were Richard Smith, Clive Hall, Chris Martin, Chris Bailey, Greg Dixon Smith, Simon Baines, Tim Harrison and Mike Meredith. Unfortunately the threatened rain was coming down by this time which meant everyone was trying to get round with a decent show, but knowing that cutting time off a dry time in the wet on such a technical track was going to be unlikely. Richard Smith took the honours but everyone ended up slower than their previous best.

Overall winner on the day and the only person to cut time off the handicap was Gregor Dixon-smith closely followed by Simon Baines and Christopher Martin.

Andrew Miller