

Venue: Ty Croes

Date: 3rd & 4th September 2011

Weather: well, there's a story.....

The now 'traditional' Morgan September sprint weekend at the fast and exciting Ty Croes national circuit got off to a let's just say a 'dampish' start. There's a saying in Wales that if you can look out to sea and see the horizon the weather will remain dry. On Saturday it would be fair to say it was pushing it to see the end of the paddock...!!

The Saturday run was a non-championship sprint which involves a two lap single practice followed usually by three or even 4 times runs on a dry day. However practice was drizzly on an already wet track and the rest of the Saturday just got worse. Against bogey times around the 125-135 second range across the classes, the best that could be managed was almost 150-175 seconds. Not an auspicious start but at least the conditions were equally bad for everyone and left Lord Unstone 18.83 over, yours truly at 20.64 in second and Chris Bailey on 24.03 in third.

For the first timed run it was raining heavily although most improved their times; For the first time ever yours truly was 1st, closely followed by Simon Baines and Richard Smith in third.

As lunch drew to a close and the heavens opened the organisers canvassed whether to abandon the meeting as the weather was so bad. There's no truth in the rumour I could be seen doing a rain dance outside Tim's trailer....

The rain dance clearly failed as the organisers tried the course for size and felt it was safe to continue. However the conditions for the second run were simply diabolical with rain literally pushing in horizontally on a strong wind. But did we complain?? Not a bit. Tim Harrison's covered trailer was a haven of warmth and conviviality, and having been fortified by Michele Bailey's mulberry brownies, a great day's racing was had by all. Well, I would say that because in the end I won and joined that illustrious band of people who've now bettered Simon Baines at the circuit. Well, the 'band' apparently involves me and Jonathan Baines and if Jonno say's it's a club that's OK by me. Wonder where we get t-shirts printed.....???

Gold stars for the day have to go to Gavin Rintoul who volunteered to be a start marshal (yes, he was very wet by the end...), Julie Baines for providing post-race tea and sympathy in the 'Bainemobile', and a special mention to Judy who when I set off to the Circuit in the morning, decided she was still up for her now traditional walk of eight miles to the circuit, and yes, she was very, VERY wet when she arrived..!!!!

Overnight the weather improved and Sunday started with a damp track and a blustery wind. Those who had opted only to run the Championship sprint had their practice session with Paul Clarke, Simon Moore, Gavin Rintoul and Jonathan Baines all sensibly being cautious. Mike Hughes had to scratch as his car wasn't quite ready to run but we hope he can make it to Curborough.

The timed runs then got underway and, on an almost dry track, straight from the off Simon decided he wasn't having any 'whippersnappers' bettering him again and on his first timed run smashed his bogey with a time of 126.13, with Jonathan also under

bogey a very close second at 126.27. Richard Smith set an impressive Class 2 time of just 0.39 over bogey, and Simon Moore set an equally impressive Class 7 time of just 2.14 seconds over bogey. Gavin had swapped his souwester for racing suit and set a time almost 2 seconds better than practice, Michele was 2 seconds under her previous best time at the circuit and Barry Bartlett was having a great time, but thin tyres on a fast Class 3 car was proving something of a challenge. Even so, he managed to knock an impressive 5.4 seconds off between practice and his first timed run.

After lunch the organisers managed to fit in a further two timed runs. On the first run after lunch almost everyone improved on their times, Simon in particular knocking almost another second from the Class 9 bogey, Brian Lee moving to just over a second over and Simon Moore just 0.36 over. Entertainment for the round was provided by the pirouetting Richard Smith and Jono came in complaining of a loss of power only to find out the car was running low on fuel (Simon.....!!!).

Yours truly was also having a great time but no match for the Baines Boys 'bogey busting' times in Class 9. The Class 10 boys, Paul Clarke and Tim Harrison were feeling the ire of the Simon Baines 2010 Class 10 record as their low 120's bogey was proving a difficult challenge to master. Strangely, the normally super smooth Chris Bailey was having a bit of an 'off day' for him and even Michele's pep talk at lunch failed to rouse him. Funny, but being told 'unless you get your 'a---' in gear it's a long walk home' usually does it for me.....!!!!

So at the end of the day it was a Baines 1-2 with Simon setting an even quicker time and posting a magnificent 3.01 seconds below bogey, Jonathan recovering from fuel starvation to finish second 1.84 under bogey, Richard Smith third, bettering the previous Class 2 record, held by John Stephens, by 1.47 seconds, and Simon Moore fourth, just 0.36 over. Tim Harrison sadly had an off on the last timed run and his Duratec rocket will require a significant amount of TLC to put right – thankfully Tim was OK, and here's hoping the car's damage is only skin deep.

And so, onwards to Curborough.....!!!!

Clive Glass