

MSCC Speed Championship at Three Sisters, 5th August 2012

After some heavy overnight rain, the eight competitors in the Morgan class prepared their cars in the dry with an occasional appearance of the sun.



Number 114, Chris Bailey, lined up with a secret weapon – a new car, we thought. But no, the first number 1 was actually an air duct in the yellow Radical parked next to the Morgans.

After scrutineering, Clive was seen with a biro, making some badges to go with his arrows. He'd written "TOW" but when asked if this was short for "TOWIE" he denied ever using fake tan.

The first practice runs revealed the track to have a little less grip than expected and saw John Stephens being closest to bogey at just over 90 seconds. Nigel Ledger-Lomas was having trouble with his alternator mountings and the drive belt coming off. The toolbox was opened (not for the last time this day).

We were then treated to a very sharp rain shower. Once it passed, the umbrellas came down and the drivers proceeded to wipe down their cars. All of a sudden, Ray's cloth seemed to be mopping up red fluid. He had a deep, flappy cut to a finger on his right hand, caused by a sharp edge on the number-plate light. A trip to the first-aid people and he came back with his pinkie bandaged, underneath a protective glove and instructions to sit out second practice and take it easy. Well, the sign says "Motorsport can be dangerous" but we have now seen that "Concours can be dangerous" as well!!



The track was still wet for second practice and only Gavin Rintoul managed to improve on the first run times. Back into the paddock and Nigel's bonnet was open again. This time the dipstick had been pushed up, allowing oil to spill onto the exhaust manifold, creating smoke. Quickly sorted with a few cable ties – what else, we were at Three Sisters, the renowned cable-tie graveyard.



Former competitor Roy Wilkinson came along to chat and spectate. First timed runs were taken after lunch. As the Morgan class was called, it started spitting with rain, just enough to add uncertainty about the available grip. John Stephens went into the lead, less than a second off bogey. Nigel's bonnet was open again, this time with the alternator casing bolt coming loose, repairs were made in time for the second run.

With one or two delays and a good number of competitors, it was announced that there would be only two timed runs. We were called for our second runs but there was a delay as a car had taken out the finish-line timing equipment. Typically, it started to spit with rain but this time it wasn't enough to affect the track. Game on, resulting in a lot of smiles inside the helmets of returning competitors, the whole class was under 83 seconds. To be accurate, the finish line read-out was stuck on 82.18 from an earlier car but nevertheless, nearly everyone had improved their time.

First place went to Chris Bailey, just over a second under bogey, with John Stephens second, also below bogey. The accurately renamed Ray Bloody Eatock was a brave third. If there had been a "Keep Calm and Carry On" award, then it would have been Nigel's.