

MSCC Techniques Speed Championship 2014 Event Report

Venue: Harewood Hillclimb

Date: 7th June 2014

Weather: WET, WET, WET!!

What a welcome to Yorkshire! Having discussed the inclement weather forecast with daughter Hilary the previous evening, Murphy's Law intervened and I set off from Sheffield, hood up (a rarity!) in most pleasant early morning conditions.

Still dry on arrival at Harewood to be greeted with the best Morgan turn out of the year - 10 starters. It was good to see that Gavin Rintoul, after a year or so off, had renewed his passport and come across from North Wales with his +4 - welcome back Gavin. Robin Wright and Martin McHugh, having survived their first sprint at Croft, were now champing at the bit to compete in their first hillclimb in +8s - welcome both.

At this stage I was feeling a bit of a wimp with the hood up but reality and rain descended as we all set off to the start line for first practice. Chris Bailey put in the fastest time of the day by anyone in his first run, just as the track was beginning to get damp. By the time the rest of us were on the tarmac the scene was set for the day - anyone who could get within 10 seconds of their target time would be doing very well. But it is the same for everyone and a great leveller as power becomes more of an embarrassment than a help, although Simon Baines at the helm of his Roadster was consistently quick, despite the wet and the thoughts of the Donington Race Meeting on Sunday.

Marshals, bless them, stayed at their posts, despite water seeping through their kit and even stood over open cars on the start line with welcome umbrellas. However, there were some lighter weather periods before the next spell of rain dampened spirits.

The first time runs were completed before lunch. A number of us had 'moments' as we investigated the sides of the track and the coefficient of friction of wet grass, but thankfully without damage. Clive Glass and Rob Stones clocked up times that indicated some sight-seeing en route. Clive reminded himself he needed the car for Donington the following day and introduced a note of caution for the afternoon. Rob, on the other hand, gradually lowered his times while Julia got out of the rain and explored the arts in Harewood House.

Harewood's layout, despite being the longest hillclimb in the country, allows for a rapid throughput of cars and up to 4 timed runs, the last one in these conditions being discretionary, but to count. Gavin and Nigel Housley decided they were unlikely to improve on their times and concluded that an early pack-up was the best decision in the prevailing conditions. Michele, inspired by her improved third run, thought that the more track time the better in preparation for her first race meeting the following day, but could not improve, an outcome I shared.

As the meeting ended, so the weather improved! Another 100 points for Chris, followed by Simon and yours truly. A well organised and marshalled event - enjoyable in that it improves car control and overcame Robin's and Martin's understandable apprehension about competing in the wet. Whilst three went on to race at Donington, I stayed on to do the Harewood Classic meeting and enjoyed a delightful sunny day and a class win for Morgan.

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