

MSSC Techniques Speed Championship

Event: Gurston Down
Date: 21st June 2015
Weather: Dry

It may have been the longest day but it certainly did not feel much like summer high up on the Wiltshire Downs. But it was dry so we all settled for that!

Gone are the days when a dozen or more eager Morgan drivers enjoyed the country's fastest hillclimb - 150mph over the finish for the National cars and even 130mph within 6 seconds of the downhill start - not that any Morgan achieved that but over 80mph is possible in a standard +8.

It was a delight to welcome 4 newcomers to this year's Championship. Andrew Farr brought along his recently acquired Class One 4 seater 4/4 for his first ever hillclimb whilst parents-in-law Simon and Tracey Ashby shared their Lotus Twin Cam 4/4. Simon competed at Ty Croes and is not new to hillclimbs as he remembers Gurston prior to the paddock being tarmacked but has been away from the sport for some years. Tracey decided that helping entertain their 14 month old granddaughter in the camper van was more fun than coping with the very peaky Twin Cam in the tight corners of Gurston and withdrew. Alan Johnson's ex-racing 4/4 was having a bad mood and kept cutting out which was disappointing as he was interested in seeing how close he could get to his previous Gurston times in his Locatafield. Thankfully Gurston is a far more pleasant setting than Alan's introduction to the Championship at MIRA. Unfortunately Clive Hall was a non-starter so that left just the 4 of us to chase target times.

Having competed on the Saturday I was hoping to start where I had finished the day before but that was not to be and we were all well short of our respective target times. Second practice saw Andrew lop a very commendable 4+ seconds off his first practice time and Alan doing his best climb of the day, despite the troublesome engine. Simon and I went slightly backwards.

Brighter weather in the afternoon saw Simon cut nearly 3 seconds off his time and I managed to get into the 39s, but still nearly 2 seconds adrift from Tim Ayres' record. The final runs saw Andrew cut off more time and get into the 49s but neither Simon nor I could improve. Alan's engine refused to fire up so unfortunately had to forfeit his fourth run.

And so ended our annual Gurston visit. Just a pity we can't attract more southerners to our sport or persuade others to travel south. I'll enjoy the northern air at Harewood!

Alan Foster