

Venue: Loton Park

Date: 11th July 2021

Weather: Overcast, occasional sun.

I've provided a pen picture of Loton Park's scenic splendour in the past, but it never fails to impress. Even the journey down on the Chester/Oswestry route is great – I've never seen so many buzzards out before, but sadly quite a lot of dead badgers and baby hedgehogs as well...

On-line signing-on must surely be the way forward in future, but I hope we return to proper scrutineering again soon; you can't put a price on personal safety, and it's an essential part of the motorsport experience.

So, to the day itself. Simon Baines and John 'B' Stevens had been busy the previous day going round in circles at the MOG 21 auto-solo, whilst the Crafty Geordie (AKA Steve MacDonald) and 'Poundofruit' Proudfoot (henceforth to be known as 陛下 – look it up....) had been getting in some sneaky practice at Loton... (Now why didn't I think of that....).

First practice was uneventful. Well, uneventful for some.... Pa Housley decided he'd like to be a farmer but then changed his mind and realised staying on tarmac is infinitely safer, and Paul Clarke was misfiring. After ferreting about under the bonnet he eventually pulled out something which resembled a squashed tin can, but which had been his air intake, so that was that problem solved!! Simon B and I had both lined Blackpool Tony's palm with silver and were running-in new rubber, so we both spent practice runs trying to get some grip from them. Stevey Mac was getting his eye in...

Loton has separate classes for under and over 2-litre Morgans, and in the underclass (*Ed; Do you think I'll get away with that?*) Paul Bryan was a couple of seconds ahead of John B, then 陛下, with Howard Burton, Pa Housley, and James Walter all within a second of one another. Howard was a bit miffed as he had previously always been within 3 seconds of John B, until I explained (a) John has been sprinting since before Pampers were invented, and (b) he's a previous worthy champion, so I think he felt better after that...I didn't tell him we'd all been trying to nobble John's car for years, without success, because we all struggle to beat him. I'll save that for next time...

So, to the event itself. Using the new Power to Weight formula, or Objectively Measured Geometry (OMG!!!) first timed runs saw John B Stevens ahead of Paul Clarke. Paul Bryan was physically 2½ seconds up on John, but his target time is lower than mine, so effectively he was doomed!!!! Plus, hold the front page, Simon Baines made not one but TWO bad gear changes!!! Pa Housley did a stormer, to go ahead of Howard and James, and 陛下 was arranging a gambling scam with the local Welsh Triad syndicate...

So, to the business end of the day. Things were clouding over and the air felt damp, but we're made of hardy stuff us Morgan drivers...

Both Howard and James improved by over 2 seconds each, Pa took a further second off, and 陛下 also improved by a second to finish on 75.38. Paul B took over a second off to finish on 66.09. whilst John B, rarely for him, failed to improve and ended up with a 68.45. My tyres started to kick in, and I managed a 62.56, but Stevey Mac pipped me with a 62.51. Funnily enough, that was exactly the same difference between Paul C and Simon B's times in the end. Paul stormed to a 61 seconds dead, and Simon Baines finally managed to work out where to

put the gear lever and ended up with the Morgan FTD of 60.95. Once the machinations of the OMG system were concluded, it meant winner overall on the day was John B Stephens, second Paul Clarke, and third 陛下. See, I told Howard not to worry!!!

So, a good day was had by all. It was lovely be able to meet up with everyone again, and to see our inimitable timekeeperesses (*is that actually a word???*) Brenda Bryan and Julie Baines again; it reinforced the social and practical benefits of hill-climbing. Where else can you meet a master artificer, have discussions on gender reassignment surgery, discover the effects of superheated steam and aviation fuel on human tissue, revel in the intricacies of Chinese betting culture, and still get a fried egg barm for under £3.

Roll on next year. Just be sure to address George as 'wansui' three times when you next meet...

Clive Glass

If your Mandarin isn't up to much, then 陛下 means Emperor, and wansui is the traditional ancient Chinese operatic greeting meaning 'ten thousand years old'. As the living condition was poor in ancient times, to live a long life was the greatest wish for all people.

George is big with the Chinese. He'll explain...