

MSCC Techniques Speed Championship

Date: 12th September 2021
Venue: Curborough – Club Sprint (Figure of Eight).
Weather: Hmm.....

It was a slightly different format for the annual club sprint this year as the changing Covid situation meant it would have been financial suicide to commit earlier in the year to running a whole day Morgan-only event. We took the opportunity instead to run as an invited club under an event organised by the Midland Automobile Club, and ended up with a good turnout of 14 competitors.

The normal arrangement of 2 practice runs was curtailed to 1 by a bad accident involving a classic saloon car driver, Bruce Atkinson, which involved the need for him to be taken to hospital by air ambulance. It's times like these that hit home why it's important to have fully trained medics and marshals at all our events. An update on Bruce's condition wasn't available at the time of writing this report, but our best wishes go to him and his family at what must be a very difficult time for all concerned.

A subdued first practice concluded and lunch was taken at 1.00. I was surprised to find myself heading the time sheet with a 65.66, ahead of the Class 10 and 11 cars of Baines Senior and Junior and Mike Meredith. The 6' 4" Baby Baines (Chris) was, as he insisted, tyre warming for dad in their Roadster, having arrived in his bright orange Porsche 944; he's never going to lose that in the local Sainsbury's car park (other supermarkets are available....).

Special mention to Howard Burton who missed practice as his car wouldn't 'fire'. Mechanic Chris Bailey spent a while trying to fettle it, but to no avail, until someone suggested putting some petrol in it might help...

First timed runs saw most things return to normal. I had to back off coming out of the Fradley hairpin and could only set a 66.41, whilst Mike Meredith improved his time to score a 65.43. Baby Baines went out first to set a 64.94, before Daddy Baines set what turned out to be FTD with a 64.90. Paddock muttering of '...only .04 ahead after I reduced his fuel load and warmed his tyres' was heard, but far be it from me to say who was responsible... Paul Clarke was close behind me in Class 9, with Paul Bryan suffering from 'classification curse' in his modified 4. In Class 6 Michele and Chris Bailey were having their usual ding-dong, with Andrew Hatch in attendance in his lovely Dove Grey Plus 4 driving Curborough in anger for the first time. Pa Housley was spurred on by his son and grandkids to improve by almost 2 seconds over his practice time, whilst John Stephens was quietly going about his business, setting a 73.34, and Howard Burton recovered to set a respectable 81, after having spun at the Mole Hill in practice. Surprise of the day was 'Poundofruit' Proudfoot, who only managed a 91, having an uncharacteristic spin at the Flagpole hairpin. Maybe he is human after all!!!

So, to Round 2, and although we set off in expectation, the spots of rain that escorted us to the line were soon joined by a load of their mates, meaning runs got worse as time progressed. Michele and Andy both improved (by over a second) to finish on a 76.80 and 77.43 respectively, and 'Poundofruit' improved by 11 seconds to finish on a 79.26.

At a somewhat subdued awards ceremony, John Stephens took the combined Class 1-3 award, with Michele taking Female Driver of the Day. Chris Bailey took the Class 6 honours, with Andy Hatch taking the award for second place. I took the Class 9 award, with Paul Clarke second, and Mike Meredith took the combined Class 10 and 11 award, and Simon Baines the FTD award. Despite his cracking time, as a non-championship runner, Baby Baines didn't win an award but was insistent that, next time, he was going out second...

Overall then, a sad day but one shared in good company and one to be remembered for both good and bad reasons.

Clive Glass