

MSCC Techniques Speed Championship 2022

Event Report

Event: Gurston Down – 2

Date: 19 June 2022

Weather: Fine, but for two cunningly timed light showers!

The day sadly commenced with a minute's silence for James Goddard, one of the competitors in the Auto Cycle Union event the previous day, who had collapsed in the top paddock, after completing his timed run. Paddock marshals, the onsite doctor and paramedics dealt with the incident until ambulances, an NHS doctor and the Air Ambulance arrived. James was taken to Salisbury hospital where sadly he died later on Saturday evening. Thoughts and prayers go out to his family, friends and fellow competitors.

A strong field of 11 Speedmoggers were entered for the championship's second visit to Gurston Down. Several including James Walter, Andy Hatch, Simon Baines, Clive Hall and the father and daughter team of James and Georgina Dean returning to hopefully better the times set back in April.

The field had basked in glorious sunshine on that April day. Unfortunately, the clouds had gathered on this summer's day, yet all remained optimistic that the track would remain dry, even if the temperatures would not rival those experienced during the hottest day of the year so far, which had passed only two days prior....flaming June!

The aforementioned returners were joined by Howard Burton, Jim Mountain, Paul Bryan, Alan Foster and Tom Purves.

Practice underway and it was notable that the speeds being attained in Hollow by the returners were a few mph down on those achieved in April. Lack of sunshine and a breeze could well have been affecting the track temperatures, but was this having a big influence on overall times? At the top of the running order following practice was Simon Baines' Roadster with a time of 37.63 posted, approximately two tenths of a second up on his April debut. Running (rather like the egg in the bap that he'd devoured for Breakfast had, down his front) second on the track was Clive, with 39.82 in his crossflow engined 4/4. Also in the hunt were Tom and James D running in the 41's. Returning to the 'light side', hillclimbing, from racing, Jim had started to get to grips with the fact that the track doesn't go in a loop, and was also running in the 41's.

As the 11 lined up for the competitive runs, a shower arrived.. Flaming June...then parted almost as soon as it came, but was it enough to have impacted on times? Not enough rain to turn the track surface black, or for puddles to form but was the grip there?? Whether it was the track, or the damp setting in, in the minds of most drivers, the times did slow by a second or so for most. Well for all but Georgina, who's time was now only a second away from Dad's in their shared Plus 8, and Clive who had now pipped Simon to the top spot, on handicap, with a time of 39.53.

All to play for in the final runs and again as we sat waiting for the batch to start, another light shower arrived, then parted....just to prove that it was flaming June... but what impact would this have on grip? Simon improved on his first run, but didn't quite match his practice pace, finishing the day on 38.44, similarly James W improved to 45.34 shy of his 4.61 practice time, Howard had to settle for 45.33 from his first run, half a second away from the best he had achieved in practice. Jim was also 0.4 away from his practice best at 42.29, similarly Andy finished the day on a 44.54 that bit of a second off practice and Paul matched his practice time in his final run at 42.86. Alan ran a 42.17

in his plus 8, Tom 41.83 in the Roadster and Georgeana improved to end the day on a 44.12. James D improved to 41.89, just shy of his practice best and Clive failed to better his first run despite giving it ‘all the beans’ (presumably to go with that runny breakfast egg!) off the start! Had Simon done enough to capture the top spot? Computations done and the order of the day was 1st Clive, a close 2nd Simon and James D taking the 3rd step on the podium.

PS Interesting to see the impact of the conditions on speeds, front runners Simon, Clive and James were posting speeds in Hollow (at the bottom of the high-speed run off the start) of 96mph, 81mph and 82mph respectively in April, in June those speeds were 90mph, 77mph and 78mph. Speeds over the finish line were 89mph, 82mph and 83mph for these three in April and 96mph, 81mph and 85mph in June. It’s probably the case that speeds in the hollow were constrained by grip as a result of lower track temperatures and a little dampness (?), speed over the line being governed, in the main, by the gradient of the climb, well except for Simon who had clearly found a better line out of Ashes and onto the finish ‘straight’ to making a 6mph gain over his April finishing speed with the V6 power in his Roadster.

Clive Hall