

MSCC Techniques Speed Championship 2023

Venue: Isle of Man Manx Classic
Date: 27th – 29th April

Although three very distinct hillclimbs, the Manx Classic is now run, like our own Championship, as one event with competitors' best times on each hill amalgamated for class and other awards. Not being part of the UK, the Manx Government can authorise the closure of public roads for motorsport and the Classic currently uses two excellently maintained stretches of the TT course and one on an equally good surface on the West coast.

Scrutineering took place on the Wednesday afternoon, our own Ian Patton being the Chief, followed by a compulsory briefing by the CoC. The class structure is unique to this event which put Alan in the pre '81 Classic cars over 3001cc along with an E Type, TR8s and a replica Porsche 911 Carrera. Tom was in the post '81 over 2001cc class with a gaggle of Porsches for company, a Subaru Impreza R and a Mitsubishi Evo . . . not quite a level playing field! The Cameron family were out in force with Tracey in her recently acquired ex-circuit +8 (ex Peter Rafter?), Ewan with a just completed customer's Cobra MK 1, Finley in a very quick 1932 Three-wheeler and Hamish in a 500. Unfortunately Charles Morgan in his early +8 was a non-starter.



Photo by Tom Purves

Thursday morning was cloudy with thick mist on the upper part of the Sloc, which thankfully soon cleared, but the day remained more than a little on the cold side. The course is just over a mile long with three right hand bends, one left hand bend linked by straights and curves, rising by nearly 130 metres. Alan was red flagged on his practice run and the Regs didn't allow for practice re-runs. Tom's confidence grew as the day went on taking some 7 seconds off from practice to final run. Alan's times remained annoyingly consistent and slower than in previous years. A hill to enjoy but courage required as most of the curves and bends are blind but can be taken much faster than the right foot thinks appropriate!

Creg Willeys welcomed us on a much milder and brighter Friday morning. The course is about 1.4 miles, rising by about 100 metres and consists of left and right hand curves before an 80 degree left turn on a steep climb and then a straight to the finish. We were told that the Mitsubishi reached 145mph over the finish and the best of the Porsches about 125mph. Tom wasn't far behind pulling 5,500 revs in 5th, about 120mph. Being part of the TT course the curves have large advance signs showing their severity which the Sloc lacks. Tom managed a 4 second improvement between first and final runs but Alan couldn't match this improvement and was starting to 'blame the tools' by this stage. He knows he is slower as age gallops on but more than 10% slower than with the previous engine? Its still good fun, regardless!



Photo by Denise Moore

Weather forecast for Saturday afternoon did not look encouraging. Lhergy Frissell, is the wonderful nearly 1.5 mile climb out of Ramsey on the TT course to beyond the Gooseneck. The course includes a left hand hairpin (nice line by Tom, below) and two 90 degree right hand bends and rises over 170 metres. Thankfully we achieved two timed runs before the lunch break as a heavy shower then meant that no times would improve during the afternoon. The event was then abandoned (for the second year running) as it was considered too dangerous to continue, a sound decision in the circumstances.



Photo by Denise Moore

Tom is getting more and more familiar with his Roadster Lightweight and was consistently faster than Alan on all three hills to achieve a well earned win.

We both feel that hillclimbing on relatively long stretches of closed public roads is the highlight of the year. If five or more Morgans drivers could be persuaded to enter then the MMRC would consider a class of our own, as has happened on two occasions in the past. Cost is a major consideration but there is the opportunity to consider these three hillclimbs as separate events as they are in entirely different locations with their own character. The weekend at Ty Croes is not treated as one event. Perhaps there could be a discussion at the drivers' meeting at the end of the year.

Tom Purves & Alan Foster