

MSCC Techniques Speed Championship 2024

Venue: Wiscombe Park hill climb

Date: 11th May 2024

Wiscombe Park, in south Devon is the beautiful parkland of a nineteenth century Gothic mansion. In Spring the trees are in full leaf and the Rhododendrons are just beginning to flower. The hill climb of some thousand yards starts across a stone bridge at the foot of a valley, blasts across open grassland before plunging into woodland with two tricky hairpins and finishing at the breast of what becomes a steep north east facing hill. The climb was inaugurated in the 1950s and still retains a feeling of that era with straw bales and railway sleepers protecting the trees from any incursions from over enthusiastic drivers.

There were over one hundred cars and thirty five motor cycles at the meeting, organised by the 500 Owners Association. As well as thirty of these iconic motor cycle engined single seaters from the 1950s there were pre-war Rileys, Allards and other classics.

The Morgan contingent were Philip Cowpland +8, Jim Andrews and Howard Burton in their 4/4s and newcomers to Speedmog, father and son Alan and Howard Clark sharing their newly acquired Roadster.

This was a glorious Spring day as drivers and helpers prepared cars and bikes in the grass paddock, waiting for a clean bill of health from the scrutineers. Those of us who had time walked the hill, looking for the best lines through corners, noting any patches of damp patches under the trees that had yet to dry out and cause embarrassment with overuse of brake or accelerator. By the time we had reached the finish we could truly say this was a climb.

We all took our first practice carefully after which there was time to compare notes and swap ideas on how to get up the hill quicker. This worked as we all improved on our second practice, Alan and Jim by some five seconds. It was apparent that Howard Clark was fast. It was good to have visits from other Morgan owners in the paddock. Phil had time to explain how Speedmog works to John and Janet Winn of Wessex Centre who had driven down from Bristol in their Plus Six.

During the lunch break there was more discussion about lines through corners, braking points and whether to take the steep hairpins in first or second gear. It was now getting serious. The first timed run saw Howard C break fifty seconds, Phil clocked 50.16, Jim and Howard B managed slower times than their best in practice with Alan equaling his. On handicap Phil was in the lead from Howard C.

By the final run in the late afternoon the track was bone dry, all set for fastest times of the day. Alan took two seconds off his previous best, Jim a few hundredths, Howard B a couple and Howard C another 0.6. Phil's time was slower, but his first timed run of 50.16 meant that he maintained his lead on handicap and was the winner. Howard C was second and Howard B third.



Alan and Howard Clark, newcomers to Speedmog this season

Prizes for First and Second were really useful pint and half pint glasses. No doubt already put to good use.



Howard Burton