

MSCC Techniques Speed Championship 2024

Venue: Loton Park Hill Climb

Date: 14th July

Loton Park on the Shropshire Wales border is one of the most scenic venues in the Speedmog calendar. The 1350 metre track runs through mature woodland, swathes of bracken line the course and near the top, yellow Ragworts are in abundance amongst cropped grass which is grazed by the resident deer. Eight Morgans made it to this, the fourteenth round of the Championship. With two double drives we had ten drivers competing. Unfortunately debutant Andrew Cole had to withdraw at the last minute, Clive Glass also had to pull out, his place taken by current Champion Paul Clarke in his Lightweight Roadster.



Bright sunshine cleared the early morning mist and the Morgan paddock was busy as cars were set up for the day. Any surplus weight was removed, windscreens were changed to aeroscreens and the all important timing struts fitted. There was time for some of us to walk the track and try and work out the right lines through the corners and the latest braking points. The track had dried out after Saturday's rain so fast times could be expected. Back in the paddock the scrutineers gave the drivers' gear and cars a clean bill of health and then it was time for the first of two practice runs.

Some of us took the first run slowly, as we tried to remember those apexes and braking points from the track walk. Others went for it straight away. A lunch break followed the second practice and then the main business of the day began.

We queued up in number order in the starting area and in turn we were called forward to the line by the Marshalls. On the Green light it's a short blast to left



hand Hall corner and then a downhill stretch through Loggerheads which the brave take without braking; suddenly it's the ninety degrees right hander at Triangle before which you have to decide your braking point. Is it at 50 or 25? A flowing exit should set the car up for the esses at Keepers and then it's full throttle up Cedar straight which is the fastest sector of the course. The marker boards for braking come up fast at Fallow, scene of many an 'off', thankfully into a wide open space: then up to Museum, probably unique in that you

take it blind relying on your nerve to turn the wheel hard right before you actually see the exit. A sprint to the finish, a hard brake, a look for your time and then we join the queue waiting to return down the hill. While we wait we have a great view of the approach to Museum and as it is the Caterhams that follow the Morgans we are treated to the sound of screeching tyres and clouds of smoke as brakes are locked. The bikes also provide an interesting view of their technique for cornering as the riders lay the bike over and put down their right foot to get round the bend. Something to try in a Morgan?



The Red Flags came out on several occasions but perhaps only at Loton for 'Deer on the track'. We were joined in the Paddock by longtime MSCC members Peter and Michelle Chapman. It's always a pleasure to explain to fellow Morgan enthusiasts how the Speedmog Championship works and details of the cars and drivers competing.



After the first timed run it was Simon Baines who had set the fastest time in his Lightweight Roadster followed by Paul Clarke and then Chris Bailey in the +4 which he double drives with his wife Michele. Father and daughter, David and Ella Frow were quickly learning their way around in their +4 Supersports and Paul Bryan racing this year in his highly modified 4/4 was steadily improving.

So for the second and final timed run it was Chris Bailey who was leading on handicap with Simon close behind. To catch Chris Simon needed to find another two seconds. As it was he shaved off one and a half so Chris's fastest time from T1 meant he was the winner by 0.4 seconds or 9 metres! George Proudfoot had a storming final run in his 1939 4/4 taking more than two seconds off. Paul Clarke came fourth and Ella Frow in her first season came in fifth much to the delight of her travelling fan club. Phil Cowpland in his mighty +8 was sixth, David Frow seventh, Michele Bailey eighth, Paul Bryan ninth and Howard Burton tenth in his 4/4.



As always a great day at Loton with the sun out, a dry track and close competition amongst a bunch of Morgan enthusiasts.

Howard Burton

Photos in order

- 1 The all important track walk. L to R : Ella Frow, David Frow, Paul Clarke and Simon Baines
- 2 The Scutineer gives Phil Cowpland a clean bill of health
- 3 Ella Frow is having a great debut season, share driving with her Dad, David, in the Supersports
- 4 Michele Bailey makes her way to the start line in the +4 she double drives with husband Chris.
- 5 We shared the day with bikes
- 6 Paul Clarke, left, and Chris Bailey relax after their final run. Chris won the day