

MSCC TECHNIQUES SPEED CHAMPIONSHIP

Venue: Wiscombe Park.

Date: 10th May 2025

Wiscombe Park is situated near the town of Colton in Devon just south of the A303. The venue is set in the picturesque valley of a large country estate and this time of year there is a proliferation of Rhododendrons and bluebells in amongst the tall (and very solid looking) Redwoods. Speed hillclimbs started here back in 1958 and today has been extended to 1000 yds on a fairly narrow and undulating track with generally a well conditioned tarmac surface. Importantly the hill has 3 notable corners that require a modicum of respect if good times are to be consistently achieved. The first is the notorious 'The Gate', a sharp right hander that requires a proper slow-in-fast-out approach before opening up into the 'Esses', a very satisfying and sweeping set of gentle undulations with many late apex's. The second is 'Sawbench', a tight right hand climbing hairpin with plenty of camber change that requires a thoughtful line and plenty of momentum if the subsequent climb up 'Castle Straight' is to be mastered in good time. And the third is 'Martini', similar to 'Sawbench' but left hand before the uphill dash to the line.

Our Speedmog event was run as part of the 500 Owners Association and included many vintage classics including Allard's, TR's, Rileys, Austin 7's, Mog 3 wheelers and the Cooper 500's, a collection you'd be hard pressed to see elsewhere, especially when you consider that these machines were there to race, and not just to be polished and displayed!

Our troop of Morgan 4 wheelers consisted of Phil Cowpland and Alan Foster in their Plus 8's, the Plus 4's of Andy Hatch and James Walter, and the trio of 4/4's of James Andrews, Howard Burton and Neil Duncanson. Although this was Neil's first season Speedmoggling, he has been a seasoned competitor in a classic Audi Quattro competing up many of the infamous sprint hillclimbs in the country. And as with all Speedmog events, performance was normalised by power to weight so it was open to all with the final result dictated more by the expertise and tact of the driver rather than HP delivered at the rear wheels

The first practice saw Phil set the pace just ahead of Alan at a very respectable 53.4 seconds on a damp track with the rest of the pack starting off at a more leisurely pace. Second practice before lunch saw times start to come down with Howard knocking over 6 seconds off his first run followed by both Neil and Andy reducing their first runs by just less than 3 seconds. However, Phil still maintained the lead.

After a delayed lunch, primarily due to the aging Coopers shedding various engine components on the track during the morning, we set off on the first of our two competition runs. Whilst James A found it difficult to shift his morning pace of just over 60 seconds in his 4 seater, the rest of the pack turned in reduced times, with James W shaving off over 2 seconds, Andy just less than 3 seconds, Phil just over 2 seconds, Howard and Alan another 1.5 seconds and Neil 0.25 seconds.

And so it was all to play for for the final run up the hill with Phil ahead of Neil by a smidge over 2 seconds on corrected time closely followed by Andy just over another second adrift. However, Alan was not far behind and chasing hard. After further Cooper clearance operations from the track, we finally made our fourth and final run with Phil managing to shave off another tenth of a second and both Andy and Alan another half a second each which left Phil top dog at Wiscombe for a third year in succession - he's obviously getting far too much practice but a job well done! Second came Neil, third Andy, fourth Alan, fifth James W, sixth Howard and last but not least James A in seventh.

And for those that didn't need to escape the departing rush up the hill, a welcome pint from the beer tent in the sunshine rounded off another excellent days Speedmog entertainment - it certainly doesn't get much better than this!

Andy Hatch