

Are You Sure That Was The Spring National Meeting?

David Coulthard

Apparently, it was true. The unsung hero's of Harewood, who prepare the venue during the preceding day, did reckon it had been colder the day prior to the opening round of the Harewood Speed Hillclimb Championship, the so called 'Spring' meeting. That seemed impossible to believe, as an icy wind blew straight up the Wharfe Valley and persisted until the hail and rain took over in the late afternoon. Undaunted, over 100 cars took to the hill, in this Golden Jubilee season. Three runs were on offer, but that rain and hail started just as a the third run got underway. Naturally, those who took that run were miles off the pace.

First to take to the track were the Standard cars from the MG Car Club's Speed Championship. The MGF of Darren Porter took a second off his run 1 time on his second climb, and taking third in class in the process. Bill Sharpe's first run of 73.14 in the TF160 was just enough to take second place, but only 0.02 separated Darren and Bill. I had a healthy one second margin over both of them, to win the class in Helen's faithful ZR160 with a 71.94.

The Modified MGs were next, from where the MGB GT of Konrad Kench bagged second place, but almost two and a half seconds behind the beautiful MGA of Terry Drinkwater on a 69.52. Finally, the 'MG Specials' had a go. Run 2 was full of drama – Nick Walker planted the family MGB V8 in the gravel at Farmhouse, whilst the K-Series engined Midget of Keith Egar went straight on at Clarks. The much modified MGF of Andy Kitson set a time of 64.26, which was never bettered, despite the best efforts of the 4.6 litre MGB V8 of Andy Walker, back in second place.

Two classes for TVR cars followed. In the 'Old' TVR class, the double-driven Vixen S4 of Stewart Lobley netted first and second places, with Geoff Stallard doing the decent thing to finish around 1.6 seconds behind the owner's best time of 67.10. In the 'New' TVR class, the mighty Cerbera of Ian Horsfell had to rely on his first run time of 69.72, after a fail on run 2 and the hail of run 3. Just beating Ian was the Chimaera of TreVoR (how appropriate!) McMaster on a 69.15. But out front was the Cerbera of Alistair Holloway, who's 67.51 was way ahead of the rest.

So, to the Harewood classes. Class 1A used to be the hunting ground of the small French hatchback, but could the humble Mini be making a comeback? The Austin and Morris Mini Cooper's of Pete Barlow and David Taylor certainly think so, as they netted second and first respectively. David's best, a 71.93. Class 1B for 1400 to 2000cc cars, was the biggest of the day. The Honda Integra R of Daniel Hollis sneaked under the 70s barrier to take fifth in class, less than half a second behind the Pug 106GTi of David West. A second up the road was Fred Currell in the VW Golf, on a 67.94, in third place. Another Honda Integra, that of Mike Geen, recorded a first timed run of 67.70 to be placed second, just 0.05s behind the class winning Pug 205 GTi of James Kerr. Maybe Mike needs to get co-driver Karl Jackson back in the car, to warm his tyres for him? Warm tyres have got to be worth 0.05 of a second! In the Harewood Championship James' time was good enough to give him the lead, with Mike just behind in second place. In Class 1C, the Porsche 944 S2 of Peter Sherratt was almost

three seconds adrift of the Mitsubishi Evo VII of Paul Anderson, with a class winning 67.75 climb.

Class 2A is for Road Modified Kits and Replicas. Henry Moorhouse had an untroubled run to first place with an ascent of 61.23, some three seconds quicker than second placed Richard Abraham, who also drove a Westfield SE, like Henry. The Over 1700cc class was won by Richard Paterson in the Raw Striker RS500, on a 62.46. Class 2D sweeps up anything roadgoing which doesn't fit else where. The Vauxhall VX220 of Quin Evans had an easy win. Class 2E is pure Elise, and is suitably sponsored by Pure Lotus. The Elise S1 of Chris Brooke was beaten back into third place by the similar car of Sarah Bosworth. But Sarah's 65.10 time wasn't good enough to beat Ben Lovell, who's first timed run of 64.23 was good enough for the class win. After this first round, Ben now lies third in the Harewood Championship

The Mod Prods then came out to play. The Ford Anglia of Ivan Russell posted a 67.28 to win Class 3A and 3B was won by Tony Hart, in the much more modern Renault 5 GT Turbo on 63.64. In Class 3C, for over 2000cc cars, Paul Martin in his Mitsubishi Evo VI was just beaten by the Subaru Impreza of Steve Darley, who bucked the trend by setting his fastest time on the third run! Steve dipped under 60 seconds to post a remarkable time, considering the conditions, of 59.95. Amazing consistency too – all three of Steve's runs were within half a second of each other. Maybe someone forgot to tell him it was hailing...

The Fisher Fury of Nigel Cresswell had an unopposed win in class 3F (62.34), whilst the Westfield of Mike Tate had an easy win in Class 3G, on 60.78. Class 4A saw Dale Cordingley in the Radical Prosport win on a 58.83.

Graham Smith in the Class 5A OMS 2000M got to within 0.19s of the class winning OMS CF of Alex Summers, who's best effort was a 57.16. The Formula Ford class saw Peter Whittle in the Swift FB 91 finish a second in arrears to the similar car of Ben Tranter, on 65.20.

History lovers (erm, that'll be me then...) were drawn to Class 5C for 1100 to 1600cc single seaters. Here was to be found the ex-Vittorio Brambilla ("Brambilla The Gorilla") Brabham BT30 F2 car. Not sure about the very original drab green livery, however! Up at the sharp end, the OMS 25 is very popular in this class. Lee Griffiths' example took third place with a 55.83. Second was Steve Owen in the works car, on 53.73. But beating them both was Richard Spedding in the Force PC on a time of 53.36. To cheer Steve up, he now leads the Harewood FTD Championship.

John Chacksfield was all alone in Class 5B. His best, a 55.08. Finally, Class 5E for the biggest race cars, and Alistair Crawford's Gould GR55 just couldn't catch the 3.2 litre OMS 25 of Trevor Willis, who set FTD on an impressive 51.93.

If this edition of the Yorkshire Times is delayed, it probably because the Editor hasn't thawed out yet, after a witheringly cold day. I'm sure everyone would want to give the organisers and especially the marshals a massive vote of thanks for sticking with it. The May weekend meeting has to better! Doesn't it???