

Patience Reigns – by James Kerr

Yorkshire Speed Meeting

Two near capacity entry lists took to the hill this weekend, the weather looked set to influence proceedings but many who persevered with the elements found their patience richly rewarded!

Practice conditions were pretty awful, with the sum total of about 10 minutes rain taking all morning to fall out of the sky, by the time the meeting got underway at around 1pm the skies were still fairly leaden, with track conditions best described as greasy. It wasn't until the start of the 2nd timed runs that the track came good, it's no surprise at this time of year that the combination of 10 mins reasonable sunshine and a Wharfe Valley Westerly can turn a skid pan into a record breaker, and so it proved.

The first of our guest classes (Austin Healy Cars) got the meeting underway, with Tom Walker maintaining his advantage in both class runs to lead Richard Mason home into 2nd place.

A cornucopia of Caterhams followed with championship co-ordinator Mark Durrant bringing his merry band of "Blatchatters" to contest the Lotus 7 Clubs speed championships, five classes (23 A-E in Harewood parlance) make up the championship ranging from up to 125bhp on MSA list 1A tyres through to the imaginatively titled "anything goes" (one assumes it must still be Caterham badged/shaped?). The Saturday runners took full advantage of the smaller turnout to accustom themselves to the challenge, Ian Keen led the 23A duo home with a time of 76.08, Paul Collins had a comfortable win in 23B, gapping Andrew Bramhall by over 3 seconds. 23C was a Hickey benefit, Malcolm leading Judith home with a 65.44. The largest 23 class of the day, (D), had a good close finish with the top three under half a second apart, Shaun Ewell took the honours with 62.91, from Chris Howard Harris and Mike Sankey. Mr Durrant did the business in 2E although David Nelson was hot on his heels just 0.17 down in 2nd place.

The regular Harewood classes began with 1a, a three horse race that didn't quite require a photo finish, Pershore pilote Michael Andrews bringing his Peugeot 106 home in first. Class 1b again proved its popularity with 18 competitors, modesty does not permit me to name the winner, suffice to say that if Mr Blakeston had put a little more effort into his "raindance" I fear it may have been a somewhat different result, Dan Hollis taking 3rd place with John Gallagher 4th.

The result in class 1c was another to turn with the weather, with Kenny Brookes making the most of his power advantage on the dry track to post a 2nd run winning time that gapped the leader after the 1st run (and now runner up) Paul Anderson by nearly four seconds.

Finding a trustworthy individual to share your competition car can be a struggle in itself, having found that co-driver it would be nice to think that they would embrace the opportunity and yet have the good grace to defer the win to the owner... Mike Smith had to settle for 3rd place in class without complaint as his guest driver topped the podium, Robert Bellerby took class 2a with a 61.52, with Henry Moorhouse 2nd on 61.90 and the aforementioned Mr Smith on 63.39.

The unlimited road going kits slugged it out to establish the finish positions on the 2nd timed run and Simon Green was a convincing winner this time, gapping Karl Jackson by nearly a second and Richard Paterson bringing the brightly coloured Sylva home in third.

Class 2d was an eclectic trio representing some great british manufacturers, Robert Pallets Ginetta G33 had the legs in the final reckoning topping the Kingsman DB6 and the Thurgar-Dawson TVR.

The "lotus products" class was as close as ever and Ben Lovells elise ran recent Driving School graduate John Graham very close to take 2nd place just a third of a second shy of the 2-11 driver, hairdresser on fire (Sarah B) completed the podium amid tales of derring do, continental mercy missions and midnight engine salvage.

Stripped shells and sticky rubber begins with 3a (up to 1400cc) which was a two horse race where the pretty mini of Richard Casey took the win by over 3 seconds. 3b saw Nottinghams David Marshall continue his roadgoing exile and enjoy the extra grip of his Kuhmos V70's whilst besting the 205 of Chris Flavell by a little over 4 tenths.

Relative newcomer to speed events and Harewood in particular, Steven Darley made light work of peddling his "lateral Banana" (Subaru impreza) to a class 3c winning time of 59.09 - this was a new record, nearly a quarter of a second quicker than Simon Bainbridge's 2004 ascent which sealed the championship for him that year - Can Mr Darley do the same?

Class 3f was a battle of attrition with Paul Pocklington taking an early bath after a scary looking practice run off on Quarry straight, a further mechanical retirement from Eric Morrey's Clan left Mark Paterson taking the win uncontested in his Ginetta.

Karl Jackson was out again in class 3g and put in his quickest run of the day, 60.36, Brian Newton took runner-up spot in his snarling v8 westy.

With Dale currently sidelined recuperating from recent surgery, Sarah capitalised on having the car to herself and took the victory from the menacing "Proctormobile", a good time was also had by Allan McDonald who brought his very "libre"

homebrewed 4x4 down from scotland, "the wolf" is suzuki powered, Subaru driven and Mini shelled, it took a creditable 3rd in class.

Big Libre was a solo affair but for rally fans it was worth the entry alone to see a Wise man do battle with the legendary Stockton farm climb in his 6R4, hats off to Chris!

Into the 1100cc Racing cars, and an OMS podium. Graham Smith continued his strong showing, taking the class win by nearly 2 seconds and consolidating his 2nd position in the Harewood FTD championship, Simon Andrews 2nd and Fergus Duncan 3rd.

Formula Ford continues to be dominated by Andrew Henson and today was no exception, Peter Whittle gave chase but had to settle for 2nd place nearly two seconds adrift.

The Force was definately with Peter Newton as he showed the 1600cc racing car class a clean pair of heels, his 54.70 was enough to give him 2nd FTD of the meeting, Ed Carter and Stephen Elliot rounded out the top 3.

Up to 2000cc was as big as the racing cars got today and the competiton was fierce, John Chacksfield taking the class and FTD win from Jason Mourant who had made the long trip across the water from Jersey to get to grips with the Harewood hill, Jason ended up only 0.38s off JCs pace and his 3rd FTD was a strong performance at a challenging and unfamiliar venue.