

Yorkshire Centre



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So here we are welcoming in April already. Racing drivers and teams are dusting off their cars that have been hidden away in garages for the last few months, marshals are digging out their favourite orange accessories and spectators are eager to get back out at the track.

Having had a look at various race dates my calendar is quickly filling up and it's looking like 2011 is going to be another good season of thrills and spills trackside – hopefully more thrills than spills.

Here at Harewood Hillclimb we've ticked one date off of the calendar already, with Practice Day dusting off the hill ready for the first official event. Practice Day took place on Sunday 28th March and was a successful day, with the sun beating down on us all day long.

For me the day started very early, as I'm sure it did for many people. Occurring on the same day as the Australian Grand Prix, Harewood wasn't the only motorsport venue to kick start its season that weekend. Although the race appeared rather tame in comparison to previous years, it was just the ticket to fire everyone up for the coming season of motorsport – whether it's hill climbing, circuit racing or rallying.

As Practice Day began it was unclear whether we would see the sun or if it would be another year of praying the sun shines. Luckily, as the day progressed, the sun made an appearance in what turned out to be a rather warm day.

In terms of the track action, we had 60 cars out to do battle, each taking advantage of

the exclusive 'members only' day to air out their machinery. An array of familiar faces made it to the BARC Yorkshire Centre and it had that 'new season reunion' feel about it.

Donning my orange overalls, which is a rare occurrence for me these days, I was able to catch up with a lot of my marshal counterparts. Having missed the Harewood Training Day just two weeks previously, due to being away with work, it was a good opportunity to put those, slightly rusty, marshalling skills into action. Although I've been marshalling at Harewood since 2006, I actually had a brand new experience on Practice Day – the view from Willow.

The view from Willow is one of the best I've sampled at Harewood; it's a great view of the rest of the hill, whilst also providing a sharp angle of the oncoming cars at high speed. What more could you want? Oh and a fly over teamed with what we thought was going to be a potential landing from the Air Ambulance, made for an additional spectacle to the day.

Despite the purpose of the day being to ensure everyone was able to familiarise themselves with the hill, times were recorded to give each competitor an idea of where they might stand compared to their rivals.

Iain Davidson stood out on top of the timing sheet with a best time of 56.46 seconds. Jolyon Harrison posted the second quickest time, dashing up the hill in 62.78 seconds, whilst Stephen Elliot was next up with a personal quickest time of 62.86 seconds.

Unlike regular events, Practice Day provides each competitor with an unlimited number of runs up the hill, much to their delight. The

highest number of runs was a total of 10 timed runs throughout the day. In terms of how smoothly the day ran it was definitely one of the better ones, with no accidents to report, bar one runaway wheel at the end of the day.

In terms of the familiar faces in and around the Hillclimb it was good to see the usual suspects back with their ever popular machines. For starters, Henry Moorhouse was in action in his memorable yellow Westfield. Elsewhere Chris Brooks was back with a revitalised Lotus Elise, ready to take on the hill for another season. Aside from that we had the usual selection of road going tin tops, single-seater race cars, Caterhams, Westfields and Radicals, providing us with a good all round selection.

We are now awaiting that secondary roar of engines that signifies the official start of the season here at Harewood Hillclimb. Our first competitive event takes place Sunday 17th April with the Spring National setting things off. The entry list is already out and we are pleased to have a total of 83 competitors already signed up.

Fingers crossed the Practice Day sunshine was a sign of weather to come this season; everyone start digging out your sun cream in anticipation, it might spur on the sun to come out and play with us.

So that's all we have for you from Harewood Hillclimb at the moment but we'll have lots of news in the next issue with event reports taking primary focus.

Take care, enjoy the start of your season and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Leanne Fahy