

SHELL 'RAC CHAMPIONSHIP

HEPWORTH'S CHALLENGE TO BARONET

DAVID HEPWORTH powered his 1969 Shell/RAC Championship winning Hephworth 4-w-4 to another win in the top-ten run-off for the Championship at the end of the day at Harewood on Sunday. The track was soaking wet for the Championship runs, but this didn't change the form much from that which has become established towards the end of one of the most fast and furious seasons to far in British hill-climbing. The scoring now leaves David Hephworth one point ahead of Sir Nick Williamson from his best six scores so far, with just two rounds to go. The position is that he must now score nine points or more at one meeting and beat the Baronet at the other if he is to take this year's Championship from Williamson whose M10B McLaren has led so long.

The class runs commences with the class lowering but it wasn't until the second run that it wasn't through that the rain started and did was set up by Hephworth on his first class run, within 0.25% of the record shared jointly by him and Sir Nick.

First of the classes up the hill were as usual the well-packed touring car classes and the up to 1000 cc class went to Peter Standaige's blown 998 cc Cooper by just 0.4s from Ian Hardy on the second run. Standaige having improved by close on a second on his first run time. The 1301 cc and over class was full of Continas of which Richard White's was convincingly the fastest at 50.52s. The class for Special Series Touring cars was won by Nick Porter in two cars! He went up on the first run in 48.47s in his own 1330 cc Cooper 5 but broke a rocker on the last bend. For the second run he borrowed Steve Harrison's similar car and was just a little bit faster, only John Pancer getting within a second of his first run time with 48.58s. Thus it is arguable that he won twice, or he came first and second!

Sandy Hutchison didn't pose any such problem in the smaller special saloon car class and rounded up as the only sub-50s time to win comfortably in his Cooper 5. Chris Cramer, who also comes from Gloucestershire, repeated the form which took him to a brilliant Gold Cup victory the week before in his howling fuel injected Cooper 5 and won the class by two seconds, the sole consolation for the locals being that at least the engine was saved by BVRT, but even then Littleborough's on the other side of the Pennines!

Chris Seaman was even more impressive in the small capacity touring sports car class, winning by three seconds and lowering his own record in immaculate style in his crisp little Midget. In the 1301-1600 cc class Mike Benn's dark blue Marcos won by almost the same margin, which is unusual for these usually very competitive categories. John Lambert turned out for the first time with his mighty TVR Tuscan and effectively demolished both Malcolm Daugherty and Sporty Smith in TVR Griffith and Tuscan respectively — later Smith was seen wandering dejectedly

lowering his own record. This he repeated with great clarity, reducing his best elapsed time to 45.93s, better than many of the racing cars. Joe Ward got down to 46.26s, within 0.25s of the old class record followed by Malcolm Smith's U2 (46.35s). In the sports racing car class, brothers David and Bill Morris dominated with a 1.2 in their shared twin-cars powered U2. David setting up a new record of 45.18s on his second run with Bill behind at 46.67s and Tony Lambert's IRS Ginetta G4 T-C third with 47.56s. Gearing seemed to count a good deal in this class and it was noticed also that some visitors were wrongly geared for the pull from Farmhouse bend to the last bend.

Phil Scragg again turned out in the Lola T70 with original shape body and is seeming to find his old form again. He won the big sports racing car class easily on his second run, taking first place from George Tatham's Brabham which had held it on the first run.

The smaller single-seaters were dominated by the large figure of Doc Willoughby crammed into his latest mount, the Brabham used by Jimmy Johnsons who was a very useful Deputy Clerk for the Course at this event. Willoughby goes splendidly in this device but the class record holder disappointingly retired. Peter Vogt's Ginetta Imp having gearbox problems which manifested themselves at Brighton the day before and which had not apparently been solved. Richard Blackmore's Mamba has give up steering and taken on a wing instead, steering becoming the prerogative

of Allan Starforth who couldn't get the Terrapin down to a decent time and finished up in the paddock with steam coming from both car and driver! Blackmore's aerodynamics got him second place ahead of Mike Allan's sensible Ecoc Imp.

Spencer Elson dominated the 1500 cc class in his Brabham and took the class record on his first run despite his habit of "blipping" the throttle all the time which seems to be a legacy from his Cooper-JAP days. In the big racing car class, David Hephworth's first class run of 49.98s was effectively flat, Mike MacDowel being exactly a second slower in second place.

The Championship runs were run in really wet and miserable conditions, but nevertheless were as always the high spot of the day's entertainment. Although David Hephworth again dominated the class on both runs, Sir Nick struck out from third position in the running order to be the only other runner within a second of the 4-w-4 car in the wet, on the first runs. Hephworth got the message, with the track drying very slightly and pulled out the stops still further on the second run so that the water in 46.27s which was fabulous on the conditions. Sir Nicholas then screwed the big yellow M10B McLaren up the hill on its big fat Goodyear wet compound tyres in 46.48s to retain second place despite an improvement by Mike MacDowel in the immaculate Climax powered Brabham to 47.12s which grabbed third place ahead of Peter Blankstone's 4-w-4 Brabham.

Kenneth Mays presented the prizes after the event in the afternoon, and it was obvious that the man who dominated hill-climbing for so long between and after the two World Wars was pleased with what he had seen during the day's sport.

R.R.

TOP TEN RUN-OFF

1. D. HEPWORTH	46.27
(4.8 Hephworth 4-w-4)	
2. SIR N. WILLIAMSON	46.48
(5.0 McLaren M10B)	
3. M. MACDOWEL	47.12
(2.0 Brabham BT20)	
4. P. BLANKSTONE	47.12
(4.8 Brabham Quatro 4-w-4)	47.76
5. A. GRIFFITHS	48.06
(1.8 Brabham BT20-FVC)	
6. D. GIBSON	48.33
(5.0 McLaren M10B)	
7. R. HOUAITE	48.45
(4.5 Brabham BT10-Buck)	
8. S. ELTON	50.16
(1.8 Brabham BT11 95)	
9. R. MICKELL	50.95
(1.8 Brabham BT23)	
(Class)	
10. R. JENNINGS	54.36
(2.0 Brabham BT30)	
(Class)	

Class winners: P. Standaige (1.0 Cooper), 53.66s; R. White (1.0 Ford Cortina GT), 50.58s; N. Porter (1.0 Cooper 5), 49.41s; A. Hutchison (1.0 Cooper 5), 49.47s; C. Cramer (1.0 Cooper 5), 49.77s; C. Bennett (1.0 MG Midget), 49.86s; M. Benn (1.6 Marcos Ford), 48.81s; J. Lambert (4.7 TVR Tuscan), 47.41s; R. Struss (1.0 Lotus Elvan), 47.22s; J. Boney (1.3 Marcos Mini G), 47.12s; R. Phillips (2.0 Chevron B6), 46.40s; M. Barrett (1.0 Chevron-Ford), 45.91s; D. Morris (1.0 Mallock U2), 45.18s; P. Scragg (1.0 Lola T70), 44.82s; R. Willoughby (1.1 Brabham-Ford), 46.26s; S. Elton (5.0 Brabham T2), 45.48s; D. Good (5.0 McLaren M10B), 45.22s.



SIR NICK WILLIAMSON now holds a slender two-point Championship, after being beaten in the rain by David Hephworth.