

Lane's Harewood

NINETEEN-SEVENTY-TWO is the Diamond Jubilee of the Yorkshire Centre of the British Automobile Racing Club. The first Harewood Hill Climb of this auspicious year, on April 23, will long be remembered as one of the coldest meetings of the 46 so far held. Fortunately the battles for FTD and for points in the Castrol/BARC Hill Climb Championship were sufficiently lively to keep the hardy crowd happy.

With FTD to his credit on every 1972 appearance, Richard Thwaites looked set to make it six on the trot when his second ascent in the Top Ten run off stopped the clocks at 40.81s. Mike MacDowel couldn't match it, David Hepworth failed by only 0.06s to match it, but then the current hill record holder, Roy Lane, put in a storming 40.57s effort to settle the issue.

The 1150cc touring class produced a very close finish with Graham Brooks (Escort) heading Roy Greenwood (Cooper), and Ian Hardy also BL mounted, a respectable third. The 1500cc class was Cooper S 1, 2, 3 — Nicky Porter, Mike Flather and John Casey, the winning margin this time being stretched to 0.96s. The over 1500cc class saw the first of the class records as Richard White (Escort RS1600) reduced the Jim Thomson/Blydenstein Viva GT figure of 46.59s to 46.10s.

Alex Boyle's journey up from London proved worthwhile as he took the special saloon class up to 1000cc in his Cooper S at 49.18s (well down on the Chris Abram record of 46.26s). Dave Abram provided variety in second spot with his Sunbeam Imp Sport (50.03s) closely followed by a gaggle of hot Minis led by Peter Beadman at 50.13s. The special saloons over 1000cc contained the current Castrol/BARC champ Jim Thomson in his impressive looking "hot" Firenza. Not surprisingly Chris Cramer's record of 45.18s remained intact, the battle up front finished up in the "47" bracket — John Davies (Cooper S) beating Jim Thomson, 47.31s to 47.58s.

There are many less entries in the marque sports car classes nowadays, indeed only 15 between the three classes. However, there was plenty of excitement in the 1300cc section with the shared Kenyon/Hopkinson Sprite, male honour being upheld as Brian not only won the class but set a new record.

John Ashcroft (Elan) and Richard Shardlow (911S) made

the running in the 2600cc section, the Elan stopping the clocks at 49.25s to the Porsche's 49.33s. Charles Dracup added variety in third spot at 51.53s in his TVR Vixen.

And so to the mod and limited production sports car classes. The 1300cc section saw Chris Seaman in record breaking form in his Midget (47.54s to John Northcroft's old time of 47.82s, similarly mounted). Tim Hayton (Mini Marcos) impressed in second spot at 48.43s, whilst the striking looking BL-powered Biota of John Houghton followed at 49.24s — none of the rest were below 50s.

George Whittingham (DMW Ford) continued his successful way by taking the Clubmans class at 46.29s. The class was not quite as closely fought as anticipated with Jim Robinson's U2 back at 47.46s and Mervyn Bartram's Chevron B2 at 48.23s.

The GT and sports/racing classes provided variety and excitement. The 1300cc section was a gift for Chris Cramer making good progress with his BL-powered U2 with a time of 46.64s. By the end of the season he should be able to tackle Frank Aston record for the class of 45.34s. The 1600cc section had only one entrant and the class was combined with the unlimited section. The sole entrant was the class record holder Trevor Smith, but the Daren was in far from record-breaking form.

The class and the "moment" of the day went to Reg Phillips in his immaculate Chevron B19 FVC. After tying up the class at 43.25s from Phil Scragg's equally immaculate Lola 212 FVC (44.41s) Reg started to lose it at the beginning of Quarry Straight. He managed to avoid going over the edge (left), looked certain to smite the bank (right) but continued to spin through 360 degrees, sort himself out, and still clock 59.32s.

By far the largest class of the day was the 1100cc racing car section with 22 starters. Although

he only reached the top once Bob Prest in his Dulon LD4 had no difficulty in taking the class at 46.98s, whilst George Valente was pleased with his performance in the Mamba (47.93s) ahead of Don Robinson's Lotus 69 at 47.94s. Chrysler (Imp) power was quite prominent in this class, the best effort being fifth place in 48.70s by Richard Courtney's Vixen V81.

The 1600cc class was a Mickel 1-2 — Gray taking the honours at 44.62s. Agnes was close behind at 45.32s, the new Brabham BT35 (with ex-Mike Hawley twin cam by Brian Hart) forsaking the usual Mickel red for white with blue (a scheme also favoured by John McCartney and Mike MacDowel). The said John McCartney, 4wd TechCraft BRM, finished third in the class at 46.68s. It was interesting to see Jimmy Johnstone's old Lotus 18 on the hills again, although Oxford-based Bob Dover and Phil Cheek didn't have a very happy day.

And so to the top brass. On the first runs David Hepworth headed matters at 41.88s, from Mike MacDowel 42.28s, Richard Thwaites 42.37s, Richard Shardlow 42.38s and Roy Lane 42.40s. There was frantic activity in the paddock after these runs, the result of the labours being that MacDowel headed the bunch after run 2 at 31.40s, Roy Lane 41.42s, David Hepworth 41.56s, Richard Thwaites 42.23s, with Richard Shardlow not improving at 42.51s. Alex Brown, sharing the David Fyfe Brabham BT30X Buick, headed the rest with a best effort at 43.78s from Malcolm Dungworth in the substantial looking Harris at 44.19s.

As usual Harewood closed with the Top Ten run offs, although this time there was the usual fastest "irrespective" batch and the ten Castrol/BARC competitors who had gained the most points during the class runs. During the Castrol runs Chris Seaman and Brian Kenyon both further improved on their class records, and only Nicky Porter and Richard White failed to improve on their class times.

In the fastest Top Ten it was Roy Lane all the way. Mike MacDowel, Richard Shardlow and David Fyfe all failed to match their class times. The full list of best times in the run off is listed below.

K.H.

Phi: R. Lane (5.7 McLaren-Chevrolet M14D), 40.57s.