

# Harewood — Johnstone in a class of his own

The sun shone constantly at the second round of the Guyson/BARC hillclimb Championship as if to repay the enthusiasm of the BARC's Yorkshire Centre, and 5000 spectators turned up to refill its coffers on a day blessed equally by a good-sized entry and some spirited competition. But, somehow, Harewood just missed producing a memorable weekend's hillclimbing over Easter. None of the big boys were there, for a start and, though half a dozen class winning BARC series regulars did make the trip, most went to Loton Park for the clashing RAC round on Easter Monday. Then the weather, good though it was, never quite managed to be perfect, so that when the Top Ten and Top Eight run-offs were held, few could improve on earlier times and no records could be approached.

It was that kind of a day on which Des Richardson could spin his Midget going gently downhill to the start — right in front of the spectators in the newly created and worthwhile Orchard enclosure. And it was that kind of a day on which Alan Newton, whose Huron had constituted a BTD threat on the first Top Eight runs, could go straight off at Country Corner on his last attempt and be beaten to the £50 second BTD cheque by Ian Curtis's fast finishing Mallock.

On such a day, though, there was little faulting the organisation of this, the BARC's most competent centre, and no faulting the driving of Jim Johnstone, whose different class was evidenced by the only four sub-42 sec runs of the meeting and an authoritative 41.01s BTD in the Johnstone Insulation Brabham BT30. On top of an excellent class win at last week's Prescott meeting, this result crowned an excellent start to the 1979 season for the popular Barnsley driver in front of his home crowd, putting him equal first in the BARC BTD Awards series with Prescott victor Roy Lane. Josh Sadler retained his overall lead of the Guyson series with another neat display of proper Porsche driving — but Ian Curtis (Mallock) and John Jordan (Imp) are both very close behind, and as the series moves to Doune in Scotland next weekend there are no foregone conclusions emerging yet.

The shape of the Top Eight which lined up under colder skies in the late afternoon bore testimony to the unusual nature of this National meeting. Four Clubmans cars, David Garnett's beautiful Chevron-BMW B19/36 and just three single-seaters came to the line, with Charles Wardle's green Mk 18 Mallock BDA first to go. His 44.16 was an improvement over his class time by 0.25 sec — and that margin was a clue to what was to come. Next came event sponsor David Garnett, enthusiast MD of Bearings (Non-Lube) Ltd. (what a name!) — his Chevron getting down to a neat 43.18 after start-line troubles had earlier reduced him to just one class run. Neither Joe Ward's remarkable self-built Ward WD6M Clubman's chassis nor Norrie Galbraith's ex-Franklin March 742/772 could beat Garnett's time, so it was Alan Newton who next stirred the interest of the cows in the farmyard (are they given sedatives for the day?) with a 42.36 that neither Ian Curtis (Mk 18) nor Bob Prest (Mk 20) could quite equal in their rapid Mallocks. But Jim Johnstone had gone quicker on both his class runs, and the experienced Brabham driver was not about to miss his chance of the cream in the absence of the bigger cars. 41.01 was his statement, and second runs became a formality as far as BTD was concerned.

On those second runs, the losers were Newton, his Huron approaching

Country just a little too quickly and losing 10 sec in the subsequent auto-cross moment, and Bob Prest, who had stayed ahead of fellow Mallock man Ian Curtis for three runs but had no answer to Curtis's excellent 42.24 last effort. Galbraith got into the 42 sec bracket too, with a 42.76 that reflected an increasing knowledge of his new acquisition but didn't yet reflect its true potential — this time just good enough to keep an improving Garnett back in fifth place and out of more of his own prize-money!

**Top Eight:** 1. Jim Johnstone (Brabham BT 30), 41.01s; 2. Ian Curtis (Mallock Mk 18C), 42.24s; 3. Alan Newton (Huron FA), 42.36s; 4. Norrie Galbraith (March 742/772), 42.76s; 5. David Garnett (Chevron B19), 42.84s; 6. Bob Prest (Mallock Mk 20B), 42.91s; 7. Charles Wardle (Mallock Mk 18), 43.09s; 8. Joe Ward (Ward WD6M), 44.19s.

By contrast, the Guyson/BARC Top Ten on class bogey improvement had a more familiar ring to it. Josh Sadler (Porsche 911) and John Jordan (Imp) both produced consistent improvements throughout the day to finish 1.25 sec outside their respective class records and to head the Top Ten lists (though Ian Curtis's Mallock registered the highest score of the day on his last Top Eight run). Other high scorers were Mini exponent Tony Baines and series backer Jim Thomson (Chevette) — the latter recovering from sickness and enjoying the handling and power of his effectively rebuilt car, if not the expected class battle with an absent Tony Drummond.

Not so consistent was BARC triple champion Charles Barter. Despite all his efforts, the Golden Springs Davrian went slower on every run, and was over 2sec off his own record. The urbane Barter was distinctly puzzled by the whole affair — as was Des Richardson, whose Midget suffered a mighty non-damaging 'off' at Farmhouse on its last run and was equally unable to improve on class times. Jim Robinson, in the Mallock he shares with Charles Wardle, was by contrast happier, improving to within 0.2 sec of his compatriot's Top Eight time by the close. This car, with

eight runs, certainly got value for money out of the meeting!

The big boys might have been absent, but the holiday crowd had plenty of interesting class battles to watch as the 130 strong entry fought for BARC and Dutton Forshaw/LDMC championship points. In Class 1, Bobby Fryers just edged out Graham Thompson's similar Mini-Cooper after the latter had led on first run times — the margin a scant 0.22 sec. Nicky Porter's five-year old Class 2 record was never in great danger, but William Pearson and John Foran had a good scrap 2 sec off record-breaking pace, with Foran's Cooper 'S' ahead on first runs only to be pipped by Pearson's at the close. Despite losing, Foran still qualified for the Top Ten run-off.

The largest touring-car class is normally the presence of local driver Kevin Tate — but paddock dramas as his crew battled to change a BDA head gasket in the morning saw Peter Lewis's well-driven Mexico take an early lead from Fred Gornall's immaculate and rapid Mazda RX-2. Much was expected by the crowd from Palmer Hewardine's mighty Mustang, but an off at Country on the first runs made them wait until the afternoon for an attempt just 0.07 sec better than Lewis's second effort. Still, times were over 5 sec off Tate's hill record, and just before 2pm the rebuilt RS1600 cackled into life. With only one run for Tate and co-driver Stuart Jones to come, it had to run perfectly first time. It didn't, and the best Tate could manage was a 52.59 for fourth — out of the prize-money for the first time in ages.

Plenty of cars appeared, too, in the Special Saloon entry. Ken Knott's Imp ran sliding skirts à la F1 — but even this demon tweak couldn't get him close to jovial New Milton butcher John Jowan, whose times were only narrowly slower than those of Jim Thomson, whose Guyson Chevette took the large class. The middleweights produced a good scrap between the 1300 Minis of Tony Baines (who led with a 47.98 first time up) and John Casey (whose 47.60 was just good enough to take the class at the second attempt). Thomson's large class opposition came from Brian Walker's immaculate Dalgely Crossfields Escort Turbo, less than 1 sec adrift but never able to quite close on the wily Chevette driver.

Marque sports cars next, and here



Above: Jim Johnstone took his Brabham to BTD. Below: It was a day of problems for Kevin Tate and his RS1600.



Des Richardson took his customary by the not-so-customary margin of 0.7; sec from John Gornall's Midget in the 1300cc class. An excellent entry of 11 middle class marque cars produced an excellent three-cornered scrap between the Elans of Alan Clennell and Tom Marshall and the leading Morgan o Deryck Wright. All got under 50 sec a Marshall's Halfway Garage entry just held the others off, with Wright doing well to split the Elans just 0.42 sec behind.

After Phil Prince's Tuscan had annexed the larger class without difficulty, it was the turn of Modspore master Charles Barter to pit his Davria against local character Chris Seaman. Freedom Lubricants Midget. Seaman was just over 1 sec slower than Barter which seemed a poor reward for his efforts in fixing said Davrian after it developed an oil leak early on! Not only this, but there was no second-in-class award, and Seaman qualified as first reserve for the Top Ten run off behind among others, Charles Barter. There's no justice . . .

Josh Sadler's Porsche went on its invincible way in the larger Modspore category, but the fun lay in watching Brixham's Nick Lambert hurling his beautifully prepared Lotus Seven a "Spotty Smith's" second place. Tony Bancroft doesn't need to hide behind his soubriquet yet though, as he survived the onslaught by just 0.13 sec.

Lots of clubmans cars produced some extremely slow times in the absence of the regulars, but Joe Ward's self-built Ward WD6M put them all to shame with a rapid second run that left early leader Martin Curtis (Mallock Mk 17) too much to do, and qualified the Ward for a deserved Top Eight place.

Nick Bridge's Mallock had no trouble with a small 1300 Sports-Racing class, but Bob Prest had all sorts of trouble beating Ian Curtis's older Roadie machine in the 1600 class (and, as recounted, even more trouble in the Top Eight!). Both drivers tried very hard, with Prest just 0.07 sec up and both within 2 sec of the six-year old record held by Morris's Mk II Mallock-FVA (there's a blow against progress!). David Garnett's beautiful B19 Chevron took the large class without difficulty.

Russ Ward's Chevron was elsewhere, so someone else got a chance at the 1100 Racing Car class this week. That someone was John Corbyn in the Terrapin IG, capping an excellent family weekend in which Mrs Corbyn won the raffle too! Some way behind came Eryl Davis and John Bevan in their effective Submax Anson SA1 Cosworth, just ahead of the man who brought Terrapins out of the ocean and still makes them go faster than most — Allan Staniforth.

Among the racing cars, only Johnstone, Newton and Galbraith went well — and even then, the last two were considerably slower than the Mallocks of Prest and Curtis! Larry Hughes took a distant third in the 1600 Ensign-FUA to Johnstone and Newton, while Galbraith's Clydesdale Retreads March was the only class 17 car present and picked up a fairly obvious class win in consequence. At the next Harewood meeting, the RAC round on May 13, things may be a little harder than on Sunday — as they will be for a commentator who needs to learn a little more before he's let loose on an unsuspecting public!

IAN CRAMMOND

BTD: Jim Johnstone (Brabham BT30), 41.01s. Class winners: Bobby Fryers (Mini), 52.23s; William Pearson (Cooper 'S'), 49.14s; Palmer Hewardine (Mustang), 51.14s; John Jordan (Imp), 46.90s; John Casey (Mini), 47.60s; Jim Thomson (Chevette HS), 46.09s; Des Richardson (Midget), 50.18s; Tony Marshall (Elan), 49.25s; Phil Prince (TVR Tuscan), 49.85s; Charles Barter (Davrian), 45.67s; Josh Sadler (911), 45.48s; Joe Ward (Ward), 44.09s; Nick Bridge (Mallock Mk 18), 45.81s; Bob Prest (Mallock Mk 20B), 42.83s; John Corbyn (Terrapin IG), 45.45s; Jim Johnstone (Brabham BT 30), 41.79s; Norrie Galbraith (March 742/772), 44.06s.