

Tim's first run win

THE weather played a major part in deciding the outcome of Harewood Hillclimb on May 20, rain spoiling the meeting somewhat. On his first run, young Tim Thomson managed to set a 38.45s time with his Pilbeam MP50 to lead the entry for the second round of the Shell / Guyson Championship, but few realised that this would in fact stand as FTD at the close of the meeting.

As the second runs got under way, the battles commenced for class honours. David Grace had already made history by being the first Clubmans driver to get up the hill in under 40s and mere 100ths of a second separated the leaders in a number of classes. As the skies began to threaten rain, Mike Kerr pulled a real quickie out of the bag to lower the class record for Class three in his Chevette HSR but minutes later, a halt was suddenly called to any further record breaking runs as light drizzle turned the track into a skating rink.

Unluckiest man must have been Tony Bancroft. Only 0.26s behind Paul Tankard's TVR, Bancroft threw the turbocharged Porsche up the hill whilst the track was still dry, heading for what looked like a very quick time indeed, only for the clock to fail and a re-run deemed necessary. Then the heavens opened and, sadly for Tony, it just wasn't worth him going out again — his challenge for the day failed.

There were a number of notable non-starters from the prescribed entry list. Roy Lane was one, whilst Martin Bolsover too failed to appear after over-revving the engine on his Pilbeam at Barbon the previous day.

Of the classes that had the benefit of two runs in the dry, Bobby Fryers (Cooper S), Geoff Howarth, Alastair Cobb, Brian Walker and John Gornall won their respective classes and Graham Oates was no match for anyone in class seven as he powered his Lotus Europa to first place. The class 8 entry was almost entirely Ferraris, with Frank Bott's well driven 308GT4 just pipping Bruce Ropner's GTS. Bob Dayson took the well subscribed GT and Mod Sports Class (up to 1600cc), Tankard the big capacity class, and Grace class 11A following that record breaking first run. Class 11B went to Chris Hart from Peter Green in their shared Centaur 84B.

Destined to cause a real stir in the top ten, Bill Wood netted class 12 but by now the rain was falling

steadily and there was to be no further improvements in the times, the remaining class winners being Charles Wardle, Simon Clark (by one hundredth of a second from Alan Stringer), Richard Homer, Alan Newton and Lynn Craven. Despite the rain, the run-offs actually generated plenty of excitement as the Clubmans cars proved the quicker in the tricky conditions. Three Mallocks, headed by Wood, led the Pilbeams of the Thomson family after the first run-off, with both Alan Warburton and Ray Harper failing to make it to the top of the hill. No problems for anyone in the final run-off as Wood and Grace went even quicker and Peter Harper got into the top four to present the Pilbeam drivers with a very difficult task indeed. Jim Thomson improved on his time but was going to have to settle for fifth fastest, so now it was all up to FTD man Tim Thomson. Sure enough, with the rain getting heavier and nicely washing the track clear of all the slippery stuff, Tim found enough power and grip from the Pilbeam to better Wood's time by five-tenths of a second to sew up the meeting. Winner of Saturday's Shell Novice meeting at Harewood was Pat Donnelly (U2) with John Burrell second from Dudley Mason-Styron, who also broke his own Ferrari Owners Club class record in the Dino 246.