CHRIS DOWSON charged up to fifth place in his Pilbeam-Repco.

HILLCLIMB

Sprinter's surprise

CAN anyone stop Ray Rowan? Following his tremendous successes on the sprint scene of late the GKN Technology / MTS Automotive Testing Toleman driver returned to contest the ninth round of the British Hillclimb Championship at Harewood last Sunday. It was only his second visit to the hill, but at the end of the day, which was marred by intermittent inclement weather, Rowan had not only taken another memorable win, but equalled Martin Bolsover's course record with an effort which for the second weekend in succession won him the HSA Man of the Meeting award.

Several of the classes provided some close finishes, none more so than the 1300 cc special saloons. Having led quite handsomely on the first runs Mervyn Brake spun his Maguire Imp at Orchard in the afternoon, leaving the door open for Leaders Championship challenger Dave Whitehead to make his attack. The Midlander did it well, coming from behind to snatch victory by just 0.05s. The over 1300 cc special saloon car class also saw a change of lead on the second runs, sprinter Bob Claxton turning in an excellent climb with his Firenza to head home the Martin Sutton Hydraulics Chevette of Chris Johnson by just under half a second, the latter delighted as he slipped ahead of the touring car guise Mobil Chevette of Mike Kerr by 0.05s. A well controlled climb saw Geoff McAuley well in command of the Jowett class ahead of Mike Smailes, in the process setting new best figures for the division.

Amongst the small mod sports cars, status quo reigned. Bob Dayson's Cougar Developments Caterham over half a second clear of Paul Turner's Clan, which was relatively untroubled despite a fine burst through the field and into third place by the Lotus 7 of Bob Campbell. Desperate for Leaders points Ken Snailham charged the hill on his second climb, the Lotus 7 driver doing enough to head home the Porsche Turbo of Tony Bancroft by a 10th of a second. The Clubmans record changed hands yet again at Harewood, David Grace reclaiming the mark by 0.07s as he powered ahead of the former holder Peter Harper with 0.4s to spare, although things may have been different had Harper not suffered problems on his second ascent. Excellent climbs from John Istead and Allan Warburton saw them absolutely level and only just outside a sub-40s ascent, Istead finally taking the third position on aggregate.

The 1600 cc sports racing car class saw Bill Wood under 40s on his second climb and over a second clear of a titanic three way battle for the runner-up spot. Barry Groombridge, Roger Gregory and Bob Prest were separated by 0.03s only at the end of the day, finishing in that order after a superb battle. The large sports racing car class saw Peter Kaye back in the fold at the wheel of John Lambert's Pilbeam and he rapidly carried on where he had left off a few years ago, his spirited climb proving even too much for the ever forceful Charles Wardle whose Mallock U2 Hart trailed by 0.14s. A superb first run from the Jedi of John Corbyn nearly eclipsed Peter Voigt's 500 cc single seater record, giving him victory by over a second and a half from John Perkin's JW4.

Another totally on the limit climb from Russ Ward's Saracen saw him well in control of the 1100cc single seater class. His efforts gave him over a second in hand over the Pilbeam of Eryl Davies, whilst maintaining the lead in the Aston Martin Leaders series, and saw him leaving the Yorkshire hill with a comprehensive new class record, just 0.02s short of a sub 40s climb, a tremendous effort indeed. The 1600cc class was also a clear cut affair, this time for the Gym and Tonic Chevron of Chris Knapman, the only sub 40s climber in the class. Barrie Dutnall chased hard with his ever-improving Ralt to take second place, but was not too far ahead of Peter Varley who turned in a very well conducted climb with his Ensign to clip the 41s barrier.

Unfortunately an inopportune rain shower determined that all the winning times in the large capacity single seater class came from the first runs. It was Tim Thomson who howled the Guyson Pilbeam up the hill in fine style, closing to within three quarters of a second of the hill record as he headed home the Glissade Pilbeam of Alister Douglas Osborn by half a second. A fair three way battle raged for third place, Ray Rowan just getting ahead of current championship leader Martyn Griffiths (by 0.04s) whilst the latter's co-driver was only a further 0.07s down. The class was unfortunately decimated by non-starters, the exciting Unidraw Gould of Chris Cramer and David Gould sidelined with suspected crankshaft problems, Roy Lane despite changing a faulty clutch still could not run, the replacement unit giving problems, whilst Jim Thomson's Guyson Pilbeam would not rev. Alan Payne was sidelined due to an eye problem and Dave Harris it appears decided not to make the trip.

A fine two way battle for the honours in the AC Class was finally decided by just 0.07s, Gerard Oates 300ME just getting the upper hand over Eric Gates version on the first and vital runs.

The top 12 run-off was reduced to 10 as the Lambert / Kaye Pilbeam sports racing car retired due to lack of wet weather tyres, although the second runs saw most of the single seaters back on slicks. Tenth place fell to the nicely presented Pilbeam MP40 of Brian Walker, the former saloon car driver coping with his ex-Tony Brown machine well and only losing ninth place on aggregate to David Grace. A full blooded climb from Charles Wardle still saw the Mallock Hart driver trailing Peter Harper, who produced a magnificent ascent with his Clubmans car to secure a remarkable seventh place overall. Max Harvey could not quite repeat his sub 38s qualifying time and slipped a place to sixth with the Chase Web Pilbeam, nearly a second down on Chris Dowson who charged hard with his Pilbeam Repco to produce a mid 37s run and take fifth place. There was no doubt that Alister Douglas Osborn was trying on the second run, but the Glissade Pilbeam just got away from him and he spun at Orchard, being forced to accept his earlier effort and fourth place. A typical Martyn Griffiths last run charge saw the championship leader ahead of Ray Rowan, (the fastest man on the first runs), but not for long as Rowan produced a super-smooth ascent with the Toleman, a tremendous effort in the still slightly slippery conditions which equalled Martin Bolsover's course record.

With ADO spinning it was all up to Tim Thomson. The Guyson driver fought back well, carving 1.4s off his first run time, but even this could not usurp Rowan who held on to take a well earned victory and the HSA Man of the Meeting award with 0.24s to spare, but Thomson's effort had proved enough to head home Griffiths, albeit by just 0.04s. Another driver adds his name to the growing list of British Championship round winners, the series is still wide open and there are still seven rounds to go.

R.K.B.

DAVID GRACE set a new Clubmans record, at 38.86s.

British Hillclimb Championship Round 9

FTD, Ray Rowan	(2.5 Toleman TG280H Hart)	36.12s
	Equals course record	
1, Ray Rowan	(2.5 Toleman TG280H Hart)	36.12s
2, Tim Thomson	(2.8 Pilbeam MP50/07J Hart)	36.36s
3, Martyn Griffiths	(2.8 Pilbeam MP53/04 Hart)	36.40s
4, Alistair Douglas-Osborn	(2.7 Pilbeam MP54 Hart)	37.23s
5, Chris Dowson	(5.0 Pilbeam MP47RB Repco)	37.50s
6, Max Harvey	(2.8 Pilbeam MP53/04 Hart)	38.43s
7, Peter Harper	(1.7 Mallock U2 Mk21/24 Ford)	38.52s
8, Charles Wardle	(2.2 Mallock U2 Mk21 Hart)	38.69s
9, David Grace	(1.7 Mallock U2 Mk14/25 Ford)	39.54s
10, Brian Walker	(2.8 Pilbeam MP40 Hart)	39.54s
Peter Kaye	(2.5 Pilbeam MP43 Hart)	Non Start
John Lambert	(2.5 Pilbeam MP43 Hart)	Non Start

Class Winners: D. Whitehead (1.3 Chrysler Stiletto BDH), 43.39s; B. Claxton (2.6 Vauxhall Firenza), 44.29s; G. McAuley (1.5 Jowett Jupiter), 56.38s record; B. Dayson (1.6 Caterham Super 7 Ford TC), 43.02s; K. Snailham (1.7 Lotus 7 Ford TC), 41.68s; D. Grace (1.7 Mallock U2 Mk14/25 Ford), 38.86s record; B. Wood (1.6 Mallock U2 Mk18 BDA), 39.93s; P. Kaye (2.5 Pilbeam MP43 Hart), 38.25s; J. Corbyn (0.5 Jedi Mk1 Suzuki), 45.02s; R. Ward (1.1 Saracen MR5 BDJ), 40.01s record; C. Knapman (1.6 Chevron B47/49 BDA), 39.79s; T. Thomson (2.8 Pilbeam MP50/07J Hart), 36.88s; G. Oates (3.0 AC 3000ME), 55.93s.

Current Championship positions British Hillclimb Championship

1, Martyn Griffiths, 70 pts; 2, T=- Thomson, 61; 3, Chris Cramer, 60; 4, Alister Douglas-Osborn, 54; 5, Dave Harris, 45; 6, Roy Lane, 41; 7, Ray Rowan 38; 8, Max Harvey, 30; 9, Chris Dowson, 29; 10, John Hunt, 17.

Aston Martin Leaders Hillclimb Championship

1, Russ Ward, 72 pts; 2, Dave Whitehead, 69; 3, Ken Snailham, 66; 4, Bob Dayson, 60; 5, Chris Knapman, 46; 6, John Istead, 45; 7, Chris Johnson, 40; 8, John Corbyn, 39; 9, Barry Groombridge, 33; 10= Jerry Sturman and Ian Fidw, 30.

Guyson International "Award of Merit" Hillclimb Championship

1, Chris Cramer 78 pts; 2, David Gould 58; 3, John Hunt, 54; 4, Charles Wardle, 51; 5, David Grace, 25; 6= Richard Brown and Adrian Hopkins, 20; 8, Jim Robinson, 18; 9= Peter Blankstone and Kenny Allen, 16.