

Galloping Gilberts

BARRIE DUTNALL overcame numerous obstacles — including fuel feed problems and appalling weather — to take the first victory in the **Harewood Hillclimb Championship** on March 31.

The treacherous conditions certainly suited the road going cars if not the race prepared machinery, a point proved by the galloping Gilberts of Nigel Ellis and Bev Fawkes which not only dominated the large capacity touring car class, but also took the FTD Awards top 10 run-off at the expense of many more potent machines.

After Bobby Fryers, the lone runner in the first Touring Car class had stormed the hill with his Cooper S to set the meeting under way, Nigel Clegg repeated the performance with his version to take the 1500 cc division with three seconds in hand over David Farrer's model. The Gilberts ran amok in the over 1500 cc touring car category, Nigel Ellis and Bev Fawkes enjoying a fair second run scrap, the former emerging ahead by a third of a second as they powered away from the ex Paul Simson Chevette of Robert Ladley.

The opening run for Scottish speed exponent Harry Simpson not only put the result of the up to 1300 cc special saloon car class beyond doubt but also proved to be the third fastest climb of the day. Although the Scot slipped off the road at Farmhouse Corner on his second climb, he remained unchallenged, despite a great effort from Paul Frankland which saw his well driven Mini Cooper S closing to within a couple of seconds.

The Marque sports car classes then followed with Ian Carpenter in



BEV FAWKES and one of the pair of Gilberts that charged hard all day.

command of the small capacity division, his Midget proving too fleet for the similar version of David Gornall by two seconds. There was little in the way of surprises in the next class, Graham Oates, the reigning BARC Hillclimb Champion and his Lotus Europa nearly five seconds clear of Colin Elstrop's Triumph GT6. Despite a second run challenge from John Yardley's Marcos, the final marquee sports car class fell to the Morgan Plus Eight of George Whittaker.

The first of the modified sports car classes also produced a clear winner, Nigel Roscoe's efforts with the Spridget gave him well over two seconds over John MacDonald's Midas MkII, which in turn held a one second advantage over the Mini Marcos of Mike Bastiana. Having led the unlimited capacity modified sports cars at the end of the first run, Porsche Turbo exponent Tony Bancroft left to take his practice runs at Loton Park in preparation for the opening round of the British Championship.

Despite a fine second effort from Arthur Mallock, Mike McDermott, the first run leader in the Clubmans B class, emerged with a slim advantage.

His final climb saw an earlier substantial buffer reduced to just a quarter of a second as the track improved marginally. Having been third in the Clubmans A class at the end of the first run, Michael Radigan also took the slightly improving track conditions well and produced a very well controlled climb with his Mallock, which gave him victory with over a second and a half in hand over the home built car of first run leader Joe Wood.

With Bob Prest retiring because of no suitable wet weather tyres and Bill Wood unusually running out of road on both climbs, the 1600 cc sports racing car class was a formality for the Scottish Farm Mallock BDA of Alex Graham.

Using a limited slip differential for the first time, he produced two

Throughout the weekend Barrie Duttall was plagued with fuel pump problems, but strove to improve his 1600 cc BDA powered ex Roy Lane Pilbeam. Although the engine was not performing, Barrie fought tooth and nail, on the second run, when he hurred the car to the finish to set the fastest climb of the day, leaving his Championship run-off of the year,

excellent runs, taking the lead in the race for overall FTD on both occasions. The slightly better second run conditions certainly left George Tatham with a marginally better chance of using the brute power developed by his McLaren M12C Chevrolet and he coped well. The only runner in the unlimited sports racing car class just failing to beat the elusive 50 second mark.

It was the Merlyn of Colin Wheeler which led the Formula Ford class at luncheon, but although he improved in the afternoon, he was unable to lend off the challenge from Bob Cartledge. The Hawke driver produced a well controlled climb to take the honours by a little over half a second, whilst Wheeler also came under fire from the Merlyn of former Porsche hiltimber Tim Mason which trailed by only a further 0.27 sec.

Having held third place in the 1100 cc single-seater class at luncheon, Mike Bambridge attacked the hill in the afternoon with his Terrapin, setting a time which even the beautifully presented OMS Mk 1 Kawasaki of Steve Owen was unable to match by a tenth of a second. Having led the way at the break, the Sidewinder of David Smith only improved marginally in the afternoon and this cost him dearly as he slipped to a slightly distant third place.

Only other class opposition, Alan Barger's Royale, a little behind.

The first Harewood FTD Awards

due mainly to the weather, featured a most unusual selection of motor cars, but was reduced to nine runners when Harry Simpson non-started. As on the second class runs it was Barrie Duttall who best mastered what were by now deteriorating conditions, taking maximum points by a second from Alex Graham who was troubled by a missing up vizor as he rocketed through the Farmyard.

An excellent climb by Charlie Saunders saw the Jaguar E type driver joining the sub-50s club on the day, his one and only run netting a well earned third place, ahead of George Tatham who again handled the McLaren well. Michael Radigan climbed strongly with his Mallock, although was unable to match the McLaren by 0.18s and he took fifth place, half a second ahead of Graham Oates who recovered well after a poor first run with the Lotus Europa.

Having taken the championship run-off, the Gilberts again proved entertaining and remarkably rapid, Nigel Ellis challenging the Lotus extremely hard as he emerged ahead of Bev Fawkes, the latter recovering from a first run mistake in style to trail his compatriot by only 0.18s at the end of the day.

Despite atrocious weather, an excellent showing by everyone and it was surely an event which the large and highly enthusiastic crowd enjoyed, for many stayed to the end.

R.K.B.