

Rowan races home

THE third round of the Guyson USA British Hillclimb Championship at Harewood on Sunday May 10th produced a superb grand final to one of the best events witnessed for a long while. The championship section proved a nail biter as Martyn Griffiths only just failed on a last run charge to deprive Ray Rowan and David Render's sports racing Pilbeam of the honours. Any of six drivers could have taken victory, for little over a quarter of a second separated the next four home, even the sixth placed man being less than 0.6s down on Rowan's winning effort.

The first category of the day at this BARC (Yorkshire) organised event produced two sub 40s climbers, Rob Welch who achieved the target for the first time at Harewood with the Battle, Hayward and Bower Vision and the similar machine of Peter Harper. Harper always held the upper hand, finally taking victory with a full second to spare, having produced a run in the 38s range which only just failed to qualify for the Guyson run-off.

Only four up to 1600cc Sports Racing cars appeared of which the Team Scottish Farm/Essport Mallock BDA of Alex Graham proved quickest despite coming under close scrutiny from Barry Goode's Power Tools Mallock. The unlimited capacity class car brought forth the only two Pilbeam MP43s in captivity, local man John Lambert fielding his Cosworth DFL machine which had taken second FTD at the Easter Harewood event and Ray Wowan at the wheel of David Render's Hart powered version. Lambert did not enjoy a good day, his first run bringing a false start, his "banker effort" only bringing him fourth place. Rowan, in contrast, was flying on the hill he loves, the

current outright record holder taking half a second off the class mark on his opening climb and then bursting through the 37s barrier on his second to take a clear-cut win and lay challenge to the single seater racing cars which were to follow. Local exponent David Grace recovered well from a first run fail in the Jim Robinson Mallock Hart to take second from Peter Blankstone's version by 0.15s. Despite a bout of flu, Margaret Blankstone posted two 39s runs in the Worsfield Garage Mallock Hart to follow home Jim Robinson. It is believed that the two runs were the first sub 40s climbs by a lady driver and not surprisingly netted the Hillclimb and Sprint Association "Man of the Meeting" Award!

The up to 500cc racing car class was again dominated by the Trakstar Rotax, Phil Jefferies putting in a superb run to pip co-driver Dick Foden by three quarters of a second and retain joint leadership of the Bratt British Leaders Hillclimb Championship. The Trakstar left the rest of the class breathless, although Steve Owen went well on his home hill to snatch third with his OMS, 0.4s ahead of John Corby's Jedi. A close battle in the 1100cc racing car

class finally went the way of Richard Homer's Delta, chased all the way by Tony Tewson. The unique turbocharged Brabham BT28 remains a difficult car to drive due to the very small power band, but Phil Kidsley showed that it is still a force to be reckoned with, taking third place, a second clear of co-driver Paul Squires.

The 1600cc racing car class marked a welcome return to the fray by Allan Staniforth, sharing the wheel of Clare's modified Van Diemen FF car and he showed that he had lost none of his old flair by ensuring his offspring knew her place! A fine collection of Formula Fords was also on hand, class record holder Tim Mason's Merlyn holding off concerted challenges from Jon Collinge and Roger Kilty. At the head of the class the first runs saw the Minwall Design GRD of Phil Ducker and Adrian Hopkins' Becktronics Sark neck and neck, with Chris Seaman just a further 0.03s in arrears with the Brabham BT30 FVA. Hopkins found a fair chunk on the second run, but so too did Seaman, the two finishing the day in that order, but the class fell to Ducker who again looked extremely neat and tidy as he powered his GRD to victory with a fifth of a second to spare.

Although Harewood is not his favourite hill, Martyn Griffiths set the pace with the Chase Web Offset Pilbeam when the unlimited capacity single seaters took to the hill, leading on both runs. Second fell to a travel-weary Charles Wardle, the Broadshot Pilbeam Repco improving in leaps and bounds, beating the 37s barrier and only failing to match the reigning Champion by 0.03s. Roy Lane claimed third, 0.15s ahead of the very comfortable looking David Gould and a fifth of a

second astern of the hard-trying Wardle. Current Championship leader Max Harvey claimed fifth, a half second clear of local man Tim Thomson whose Guyson Pilbeam only just fended off the Ralt Hart of Chris Knapman who retook the lead in the RACMSA British "Award of Merit" Hillclimb Championship.

The up to 1300cc Special Saloons had Harry Simpson always in control, securing maximum Bratt Leaders points. A fine second run from John Tucket-Good brought the Imp Californian driver to within a second of the Flying Scotsman, an effort good enough to hold off Andrew Parffrey (who pipped Bobby Fryer's Solo Stiletto by a whisker) by fifth of a second to claim second place. Once again the unlimited capacity Special Saloons were thin on the ground, there being no real challenge to Mike Kerr who cantered the Mobil Tiga Skoda to victory, retaining joint first place in the Bratt Championship with Phil Jeffries as he headed home Roger Jones' Scirocco by well over five seconds.

Bob Dayson dominated the 1600cc Modified class in the Cougar Developments Caterham. A fine scrap raged for second place between Dayson's co-driver Tim Barrington and the Seba Developments Caterham of Leon Bachelier, the latter snatching the position by under half a second as the former came under pressure from Paul Turner's Clan.

The final class of the day saw Paul Tankard fielding his mighty TVR Tuscan, now with modified suspension, and getting to within 0.32s of the non-starting Tony Bancroft's class record for over 1600cc Mod. Sports cars. The Jaguar E brigade chased bravely and posted some of

the best times seen on the hill by a "Big Cat", especially John Smith who crashed through the 44s barrier to take second from co-driver Charlie Saunders.

For the second Guyson USA event in succession, Peter Blankstone made the top twelve run off cut, but the Worfield Garage Mallock Hart was destined for twelfth despite a mid 38s climb. Chris Knapman could have so easily been fourth with his Ralt, for he completely missed out the 37s range on his final climb, only to see the time disallowed as he was not fully on the tarmac over the finish line and was thus left in 11th.

David Grace, in contrast, enjoyed a happier championship section, hammering Jim Robinson's Mallock Hart through the 38s barrier on both occasions to take less than a fifth of a second astern of John Hunt who professed himself a little disappointed at only having made ninth with the AWS Pilbeam, but at least he had broken the "Harewood bogey" which had afflicted him in the past couple of years. There were several close battles during the run-off, Chris Dowson finding a touch on the second climb to annex Hunt by just 0.02s, but he in turn only failed by a whisker to match Tim Thomson's opening climb in the Guyson Pilbeam, the local driver being robbed of a second bite of the cherry due to a broken gear.

Max Harvey beavered away well but could not quite break the 37s

barrier and was destined for sixth, in the process dropping to equal second place in the overall table. The battle for the next three places involved Charles Wardle, Roy Lane and David Gould. It was Gould who finally claimed third with his opening run at 36.84s, his second attempt being slightly slower due to a marginal mistake at Quarry Corner. Wardle and Lane were separated by just 0.05s after the opening climb and both improved on the second, the former finding just a little more than the Steel King man, but it was not enough to deny Lane fourth place, Harewood's most prolific winner hanging on by 0.02s and trailing Gould by a mere 0.12s. Having qualified in third, Ray Rowan literally hurled the sports racing Pilbeam at the hill on his opening ascent, producing the FTD mark at the point 36.55s. In contrast Martyn Griffiths exactly equalled his qualifying time (the fastest in the class runs) to hold third astern of Gould by 0.06s. Rowan again gave everything on his final ascent, but like Gould failed to improve and so the meeting closed in the best possible way, with a Martyn Griffiths last run charge. It was a great effort from the champion but as he flashed over the line he had required just 0.04s longer than Rowan who held on to take victory also inherit the lead in the championship by just one point from the tieing Harvey and Gould.

R.K.B.

Guyson USA British Hillclimb Championship Round Three - Harewood

1, Ray Rowan (2.5 Pilbeam MP43 Hart) 36.55s, 2, Martyn Griffiths (2.8 Pilbeam MP53/04 Hart) 36.59s, 3, David Gould (2.8 Gould 840 Hart) 36.84s, 4, Roy Lane (4.0 Pilbeam MP58 Cosworth DFL) 36.96s, 5, Charles Wardle (5.0 Pilbeam MP47RB Repco) 36.98s, 6, Max Harvey (2.8 Pilbeam MP53/04 Hart) 37.13s, 7, Tim Thomson (2.8 Pilbeam MP50 Hart) 37.57s, 8, Chris Dowson (5.0 Pilbeam MP47RB Repco) 37.62s, 9, John Hunt (2.7 Pilbeam MP57 Hart) 37.64s, 10, David Grace (2.2 Mallock U2 Mk27S Hart) 37.85s, 11, Chris Knapman (2.6 Ralt RT4 HCS Hart) 38.06s, 12, Peter Blankstone (2.0 Mallock U2 Mk27S Hart) 38.47s. HSA Man of the Meeting: Margaret Blankstone.