

Grace with pace

Having struggled to master the new long course at Harewood when the BARC staged their first Hillclimb Championship event at the venue in 1992, David Grace returned on June 13th and showed that the lessons learned in the previous year had been put to good use, his opening Gulf Oil RAC Hillclimb Championship climb proving enough to take a very valuable top point.

The local heroes did not fare too well on the opening climbs, 1400cc Touring Car record holder Michael Holroyd taking the Mini for an unplanned excursion at Farmhouse Corner. He recovered well in the afternoon to restore the status quo, bursting through to take the expected win by over two seconds from the similar machine of first run leader David Radlock.

It was the last corner which caught Escorter Paul Nutter out in the morning, but like Holroyd, the two litre Touring Car record holder righted the wrong in the afternoon, coming from nowhere to snatch the win from the grasp of Geoff Peters by half a second.

The amalgamated over two litre Touring, Marque and ModPro classes always looked like being a Jaguar E Type bonfire, and was. Ron Lea taking the honours, but only by a fifth of a second from Hayden Spedding, who closed the gap on the second runs.

Yet another favourite was in trouble in the 1400cc Marque class, record holder Martin Bretyn departing from the straight and narrow at Quarry on his opening run. He steered himself in the afternoon and came through for the win, just under a second clear of the similar Midget of a very hard trying Paul Greaves who edges ever closer to the current class leader.

With the record holding Europa of Keith Wilford non-starting after practice, the evergreen Ellen of Brian Lee posted the only 7th climb by a 2 litre Marque Sports car to take that category by nearly two seconds from Mark Richards' TR7.

There were a few surprises in the pre-1989 Formula Ford 1600 class. Current Harewood Championship leader Ken Bailey was expected to again set the pace, but could not quite find a response to Colin Wright, who snatched the win by 0.3s in his Van Dieman.

There was never any doubt that the Hutchinson Midget would take the first of the ModPro classes, the only question was "Which of the two drivers would lead at the end of the day?" After a great scrap, which saw the lead constantly changing, the honours finally went to David by all of 0.23s from Tim.

It was almost war in the two litre ModPro class as Bill Bristow and Darren Southill again came face to face. Bristow opened by putting his Caterham through the minute barrier for the first time by a car of that category, but a well fired up Southill responded with a run, which trimmed the new record by a further 0.08s. Darren, with a totally committed final run went even quicker, by a tenth of a second, but Bristow, aided by new tyres from his latest sponsor, Supersprint Cars of Salisbury, produced a slightly smoother and even quicker run to claim the spoils by 0.18s.

Alan Warburton became the first Clubman driver through the one minute barrier, but the Mallock driver's lead lasted only a few seconds as Peter Needham went one better and into the 5th to lead by a third of a second. Warburton found a little extra on the second climb, but it was the Splinter, which had even more in hand, improving further to take the win with 0.16s to spare.

The OMS Sports Libre Cars get better by the week as designer/constructor Steve Owen proved with two record shattering runs. Just to complete the family joy, wife Lynn was also in great form, eclipsing Bobby Fryers' Solo Stiletto, which had pulled a rose joint out of the suspension on the first climb, by over half a second to complete the 1-2 in the class.

As in 1992, Christian Minceif revved on the long course, the Pilbeam MP43 dominating the over 1600cc Sports Libre class, to win by nearly a second and a half.

Having lain third after the morning runs, Mark Covey really cut loose with the Jedi, carving two seconds off his first time to take the 500cc single seater class by a full second from first run leader David Bancroft.

Alex Tyson will win one of the regular Harewood pacemakers not to wilt under pressure on the opening runs, the Royale ART 921, although a little shy of its class record, well in command of the 1100cc racing car category. Iao, the class winner's family co-driver, proved just how well developed the Royale has become, taking second place.

On his first ever visit to Harewood, Roger Moran who set the early pace in a closely contested 1600cc racing car class. The Pilbeam Vanthal did not improve on the second climb however and this was to cost the Ludlow garage owner dear. Another totally on the limit challenge from Chris Seaman,

who was again working wonders with the Brabham BT30, saw his slip ahead of the Pilbeam by 0.15s. However, Peter Harper had the last say, finding a vital half second improvement in his "Red 5" Vision to win by 0.18s.

Having shocked everyone with a great performance at Shelsley in the March Abarth, Alan Newton did it again at Harewood, exactly matching the best efforts of Simon Durling, the fourth placed man in the Gulf Oil Championship, with his second. Th more consistent Newton won on aggregate by just 0.05s.

Having led the unlimited racing car class at the lunch break, David Grace powered the Pilbeam DFR to the top and trimmed his opening time by 0.6s to ensure his win; in fact his first effort would have proved good enough, but this was very nearly matched by prolific Harewood winner and Gulf Oil Championship leader Roy Lane, whose second climb consolidated the runner-up position ahead of Shelsley winner, Mark Colton, who revolved the Roman Judd at Orthard on his second climb.

The final class of the day could not have been much closer. Alpine Renault exponent Nigel Dodsworth was expected to take the win in the first special class for models of the marque to be staged at Harewood and true to form the A110 emerged ahead, but no-one expected the GTA of Richard Tomlinson to challenge the Alpinemeter quite so hard, a pair separated by a fifteenth of a second.

The seventh Gulf Oil RAC Hillclimb Championship run-off of the year saw Peter Blanktonne hampered with a recurrence of the midfire which has plagued the Worfield Pilbeam MP2 of late and he completed the twelve, well down on Christian Minceif, who recovered well from an indifferent opening climb.

Pavel Gerling was another first timer at Harewood, and despite a little suspension damage after kerb hopping the Anson in practice again fared really well, just annexing Minceif for the final point, and only just failing to match the Vision of the ever cheerful Tim Barrington. As in the class runs, Barrington could not quite match the pace of co-driver Peter Harper, who slipped ahead by a quarter of a second and might have been higher than eighth but for gear selection problems on his second climb. An improvement of over a second and a half on his qualifying time ensured Simon Dar-

ling another excellent points scoring finish in the two litre Pilbeam MP2, but even he could not match the 1600cc version of Roger Moran, who completed an amazing debut at the hill with a brilliant sub 5th climb for sixth place.

Having struggled a little with his recently acquired turbocharged Pilbeam, Harewood Hillclimb Champion John Garnett came good on the first run, storming his home hill in superb style to score his first ever Gulf Oil points, sixth of them no less, for fifth place overall; even he was ahead of Moran's 1600cc machine by only a fifth of a second. After the first climbs, Graham Hickman had some work to do for the Pilbeam Hart DFR driver had slipped to sixth. With his back up against the wall he attacked to produce a 0.7s improvement, which was enough to catapult him to fourth, one tenth of a second clear of Garnett who failed to better his opening climb.

At the end of the first championship climbs, the class order reigned as Grace led from Lane and Colton. Mark attacked hard on his final ascent in the Roman Judd, but although he broke the 55s barrier, he failed to oust Roy by a fraction. The Steel King Pilbeam then cut loose, aiming for Grace's opening time of 54.41s, which was still a second away from his hill record. Roy gave everything, but could not quite match Grace's opening effort, falling by 0.15 secs.

In the knowledge that he had won the run-off Grace, still went to the line. Not only did he take the run, but he gave it 100% to produce the fastest time of the weekend with the only sub 54s climb.

R.K.B.

FTD David Grace (2.6 Pilbeam MP28 DR) 54.94
 55s. Gulf Oil RAC Hillclimb Championship.
 Round 75. David Grace (3.5 Pilbeam MP28 DFR)
 55.8s; 2. Roy Lane (4.8 Pilbeam MP28 DR) 56.11;
 56.8s; 3. Mark Colton (3.5 Roman J2) 56.85;
 56.8s; 4. Graham Hickman (5.7 Pilbeam MP28
 Hart DFR) 57.56; 5. John Garnett (2.8 Pilbeam
 MP24 Hart) 58.4s; 6. Roger Moran (1.6 Pilbeam
 MP20 Vanthal) 58.7s; 7. Simon Durling (2.8
 Pilbeam MP28 Vanthal) 59.6s; 8. Peter Harper
 (2.6 Vision V18) 59.7s; 9. Tim Barrington
 (1.6 Vision V18 DR) 59.9s; 10. Pavel Gerling (3.5
 Anson MP88) 60.0s; 11. Christian Minceif
 (2.6 Pilbeam MP24 Hart) 60.1s; 12. Peter
 Blanktonne (2.8 Pilbeam MP28 DR) 60.3s.

Class Winners: Michael Holroyd (1.3 Austin
 Cooper 5) 67.8s; Paul Nutter (2.7 Ford Escort)
 68.1s; Ron Lee (4.2 Jaguar E Type) 68.4s; Martin
 Redden (1.3 MG Midget) 68.22s; Brad Lee (1.6
 Lotus Elan) 69.6s; Colin Wright (1.6 Van Diemen
 FF30 Ford) 69.7s; David Hutchinson (1.4 MG
 Midget) 69.8s; Bob Brown (2.6 Caterham Ford
 7) 70.8s (class record); Peter Needham (2.8 Super
 Vanthal) 70.8s; (class record); Steve Owen
 (1.2 OMS SC) 80.4s; (class record); Christian
 Minceif (2.6 Pilbeam MP24 Hart) 80.6s; Mark
 Richards (1.3 MG Midget) 80.7s; Tony (2.8 Brabham
 BT1) 81.7s; Peter Harper (1.6 Vision V18
 DR) 82.4s; Alan Newton (3.8 March TR7
 DFR) 87.5s; Nigel Dodsworth (1.6 Alpine Renault
 A110) 75.8s; (unofficial class record).