

MID CHESHIRE MOTOR RACING CLUB CURBOROUGH SPRINT 14/08/2011

Difficult financial times lead to a smallish entry, but as always, in support of grass roots motor sport Mid Cheshire Motor Racing Club's August Curborough sprint went ahead, providing competitors with an enjoyable day's sport. Small classes meant that some drivers found themselves looking outside their own class for competition, or simply trying to improve on personal best times. Nothing wrong with this, especially with the sun shining!

Nearly half the field was comprised of competitors in the Bert Hadley Memorial Championship for Austin Sevens. The entry resonated with names from the past, 'Chummy', 'Speedex', 'Special' and of course 'Ulster'. I never fail to be amazed by the times these old cars produce – and I mean old, pre World War II – Terry Griffin's 74.58 (Austin 7 Special) and John Skeavington's 75.78 (Ulster) comparing very favourably with more modern machinery travelling the two laps of Curborough. Look at it this way: I can imagine one of these drivers getting into a hot hatch and producing a similar time, but a hot hatch driver getting into one a Seven and doing the same, imagine that? I don't think so. The field was divided into 'road' and 'track' cars. The road cars were not to be outdone, both Daniel Cowley and A Frayling Cork getting under the 80 seconds 'barrier' – with little or no springs, skinny tyres, hard seating and the words 'roll bar' or "seat belts" not in the vocabulary.

F.T.D. went to Les Proctor in his 1600cc OMS, with his only timed run of the day in an excellent 56.25 secs. I understand that Les designed and built this car; all round, some feat. Gareth Cutts's space-framed 4200cc Lowcost (like the name) emerged 2nd F.T.D in 62.71 secs. Congratulations to Gareth for showing that going quickly is not just the prerogative of Caterhams and Westfields.

The pre 1994 Formula Ford class was perhaps the most competitive of the day, with Darrell Woods (Crossle) pipping Stewart Arklay in the same car with 64.65 secs against 65.66. Jamie King was 3rd in class with the Quest FF, but was fastest MCMRC member on the day with a time of 66.43 secs.

Having purchased some List 1B (sport derivative) tyres in line with this year's MSA regulations, I was pleased to produce a personal best in the road going Megane R26 with a time of 69.25 secs. A '68' would have been nice, in line with the times I used to get in a road modified Clio Williams, but not to be, next time, perhaps? Had my eye on Graham Probyn's 2 litre road modified Seat, in class 5, but couldn't match his 67.53 secs. Paul MacGillivray came all the way from Scotland to win the rally car class in 74.4 secs.

Space-framed cars up to 1700cc (car-derived engines) was won by Alan Worsley in his Westfield in 73.6s. A later run however left Alan with a badly sprained wrist following an incident at the far end of the track. His 80's, narrow bodied Westfield left him with very little space around the pedals for his feet to work, so when he depressed the brake he depressed the throttle as well resulting in an un-scheduled stop in the grass bank rather than heading back down the return straight, pride and car both slightly hurt. David Macbean's GTM coupe, running in this class, was, to my eyes, the prettiest car on view. In the class for larger space-framed cars, James Wilkinson produced an excellent 64.69s.

Thank you to all the competitors who travelled from all over the country to attend and special thanks to all the organisers, marshals and officials from MCMRC who, as always selflessly gave up their time to ensure the event's smooth and excellent running.

Martin Domleo