

Snetterton Saturday 9 April 2016 – a fish-eye view

By John Bevan

Prior to commencing my report I would like to point out that of the three ace reporters at Snet for our first race meeting that:

- One had written his report prior to the event and inserted names as he saw fit.
- One appears to have taken powerful hallucinogens prior to writing his report.
- One of us has made up reports from TSL timing (well it's hard to drive and make notes at the same time)
- All three are clearly not entirely in touch with reality since spending eight hours in the rain at a windswept ex-airfield is not usually used as an indicator of mental stability by clinical psychologists.

Anyway, Snetterton was built in 1942 as Snetterton Heath airfield, and inhabited by the 96th Bomb group of the USAAF. They flew B17 Flying Fortresses and the observant will have noted the poignant monument to these young men as they drive in to the circuit (it's on the left before the gatehouse!). Waiting by the side of the circuit during qualifying reminded me of the anxious wait for the planes to return after a mission, as in the wet it seemed to take aeons for the cars to come round after each lap. Who would return, and who would disappear forever into the wet air as a result of a spin?

Qualifying produced an exciting grid for the first race, with Elliot on pole, his Dad in second and Andrew Bentley 3rd. Tony Lees somehow piloted his yellow Plus 8 class B car through the drizzle to take 4th and Tim Ayres announced that as he was 5th Darren (his mechanic) would have to eat his hat. With a grid now effectively reversed (or at least well jumbled) we looked forward to an exciting rolling start for the 20 minute race. Since I was watching from the sidelines, I was able to wander around the collecting area before the off, and contented myself by asking if any of the competitors had wet tyres (no), traction control (no), ABS (no) or Heads up displays (a definite no). Luckily it turns out that Morgans do have a wooden chassis and gearbox, so would float down the straight and brake at the end using their steam anchor. Michele Bailey's glasses were steaming up- I am not sure why, although who can tell? Did I mention it was raining?

Others have reported the actual race, but suffice it to say that Elliot, Andrew Bentley, Russell Paterson, Tim Ayres and Tony Lees all appear to flourish in the wet. Elliot in particular gave a masterclass in how to drive a Class B car smoothly and rapidly in the wet. Jerry Knight decided that discretion was the better part of valour and retired to the comfort of his dry trailer box.

Results:

- 1) Elliot (class B)
- 2) Russell (Class A)
- 3) Andrew Bentley (Class D)
- 4) Tony Lees (Class B)
- 5) Tim Ayres (Class C)

Race 2 was equally exciting although by then my programme had dissolved and my feet were so wet that I feared they might dissolve. It was great fun to watch Tony holding off the ever present Andrew Bentley, and to see Phil Goddard working his way through the pack from 13th on the grid. Commiserations go to Paul Bryan who fell off the damp track and bent both ends of his car- we hope it is better soon.

Results:

- 1) Elliot
- 2) Russell
- 3) Tony
- 4) Andrew Bentley
- 5) Philip Goddard

The fun continues at VSCC Silverstone on the 23rd of April.
Please let it be dry!