

Snetterton 300 Spring Meeting, 1st April 2017
A report on Race 1 by Greg Parnell

There was a good turnout of Morgans for the pre race test session on a cool but sunny Norfolk Friday morning. As usual, after a long winter lay up, there was plenty of activity dealing with unexpected issues discovered once cars had been dusted off, engines started and wheels turned. The two factory cars, resplendent in their bright new University of Wolverhampton livery, sadly did not make it on track as the team of students worked frantically to overcome ecu and coolant issues revealed after an initial warm up. Nevertheless most Morgans made it out on track and enjoyed almost perfect track and weather conditions to help blow out the cobwebs!

Come Saturday morning (April Fools Day) all 25 entrants made it to the early qualifying session. Again the weather was good with a little light cloud enabling some very good times to be set. In particular Elliott Paterson, now driving the black ARV6, set a class B record breaking time giving him 3rd place on the grid. Keith made pole with Phillip Goddard in 2nd place.

Following qualifying we attended the mandatory drivers briefing the highlight of which was discussion on the new "virtual safety car rule" Code 60 which is designed to get back to racing quicker without the need for a safety car following a serious incident. I think all drivers consider this to be a good move although like me wondered how to get down to 60kph and hold it there particularly if you have no speedo. However I am sure we will figure it out.

The first Morgan Challenge race was at 2.00pm with all 25 cars making the start. As is usual on the 300 circuit it was a rolling start which was well managed by Keith Ahlers in pole position. It is important that all cars hold their grid position close together to avoid cars from being "left behind" and from where I was it seemed to work well.

Once the red lights went out there was a furious charge to the first corner with much jostling for position. At the following hairpin there was something of a scrum to get the best line to enable a good exit out of this slow but challenging corner. Thereafter the race started to settle down with the faster cars pulling away. It is difficult to report on what was happening with others after that as I spent the rest of the race battling with Tony Hirst in his revived ARV6 (not the Babydoll listed in the official results) and Tim Parsons in his super fast Super Sport.

An excellent win by Keith Ahlers was followed by Phillip Goddard in second with the final place on the podium going to Elliot Paterson.

Special mention should be made of Dominic House' drive which earned him Driver of The Day for this race and commiserations go to the returning Tony Rivers and James Carter who swapped paint mid race and did not finish. Another mention in dispatches goes to John Milbank who has returned in his re- engined rocket ship 4/4 and had a good race.

Special thanks go to Katy Thompson who, after a difficult winter, has managed to put on a great opening meeting in the Morgan Challenge calendar.

nb. After 5 years racing with the hard top on my Aero I decided to remove it and the result has been positive. In the past other drivers have been aware that my rearward and side vision has been very restricted but I am now pleased to report that full peripheral vision has been restored.

I will now hand over to Michelle Bailey who has been tasked with penning the report on the second race in which I will leave to her to mention the class records which were broken.

Greg Parnell