

## **Back of the Grid report**

### **Donington Park Peter Morgan Memorial Meeting**

### **15 July 2018**

It felt good to be back in the mix with fellow racers at Donington Park. I had 'watched' the Snetterton races earlier in the year on TSL timing; not good for the blood pressure nor recommended as a method of watching motorsport.

We arrived in the paddock on Saturday evening in time to fettle the car and join in the BBQ, which was excellent, being provided by the Chef to the MMC race team Neil Frost. I had driven Gromit to DP so he needed quite a bit of fettling (watch this space).

I don't think anyone had a late night as we had an early start on Sunday, with signing on at 7.15. All was going smoothly until the scrutineer pointed that part of the harness was out of date! Kathy kindly offered the harness out of her car but in the end Richard Thorne saved the day for us – thank you Richard. Clearly the fettling was not quite as good as it could have been.

Qualifying seemed to go well, with the only noteworthy incident being Peter Rafter's transponder not working. Andrew was on pole, followed by Phil Goddard and Simon Baines. Ian was leading the back of the grid club, followed by Malcolm, and Alan. I was somewhat off the pace, but tried to console myself with the fact that I hadn't been out since Bentley Drivers last August, and it takes time for my head to get back in the groove!

Chris qualified with the Iconic 50's, which was a much smaller grid, and he only had to do 3 laps. Our first race was before lunch. This was more like it! I hung on to Alan until the Speedy Ones at the front came to lap me, at which point I had realised I would not be able to catch Alan so settled in to enjoy myself, get the lines and hands right, and keep out of the way of everyone else. James was throwing his yellow peril round in usual Sumner style; I think they should now be called the 'Ragged Edge Raceteam', as that's how it looks like those Sumners are racing! Most impressive from where I was.

Andrew was off in front with Phil G behind. Simon and Dominic appeared to be having a right old scrap for 3<sup>rd</sup>. Tim A, Brett and Philip T were in a three way battle behind Tim P and Phill T. There was also good racing between Jack, Tony, Kelvin and Craig; when they all caught me at the hairpin, I almost stopped just to keep out of the way. Further down the field Ian was harrying Sharlie, and Malcolm was dicing with Peter R.

So it went throughout the race until the end when results were:

- 1 Andrew (also class win)
- 2 Phil Goddard (also class win)
- 3 Simon Baines (with his first podium placing).

Class winners were: Tim Parsons, Phill Thomas, Tim Ayres, Brett, Tony, and Ian

Onto the second race, which was 30 minutes, and I had volunteered Chris for that. Jerry didn't start due to brake failure n race 1. Stephen Lockett, James and Chris Springall were all at the back for reasons unknown to me. It was another exciting race right through the field.

Alan came in at one point, as the result of contact with Malcolm at the start (I believe), but was soon back out. I don't know what had happened to Phil G at the start, but he was carving his way through the field in true Lewis style. At the half way point I moved from the grandstand down to the pit wall - to get closer to the action. It was really impressive racing from everyone.

It then dawned on me that Chris wasn't there; I assumed that I had not been paying sufficient attention due to watching all the exciting racing. I then paid close attention for a couple of laps, but

after Alan had gone past me twice and I still hadn't spotted Chris I knew he was missing in action. There obviously hadn't been a major incident because Jono Baines in the commentary box was still waffling on about the exciting racing. As Ian came off he informed me 'Conked Out' and Chris is fine; I liked the technical term!

When the race finished results were:

- 1 Phil Goddard (also first in class)
- 2 Andrew (also first in class)
- 3 Simon Baines (second podium of his 'racing career')

Class wins went to Tim Parsons, Phill Thomas, Tony , Jack, Tim Ayres, Sharlie and Ian

Well done all, a real credit to Morgan racing.

Post script to the day: Gromit finally appeared in the paddock behind one of the tow trucks. After a couple of hours and assistance from pretty much everyone in the paddock (particularly the Techniques boys James and Matt, the Baines boys Simon and Jono, and Iain Leviston and Peter & Chery Gilbert (spectators and MSSC members)) the options were:

- 1 towing me to the services and calling the RAC to tow/trailer me home; and
- 2 leaving Gromit and all the gear in Andrew's lock up until Chris returned at the end of the week to sort it all out, and me going home on the train.

I voted for option 1 – and then Simon 'Baron' Baines said 'you can drive my car' and offered to trailer Gromit. I suspect I looked somewhat aghast at the thought of driving a 'proper' race car, but after a tentative test round the paddock and 3 cushions to ensure I could reach the pedals I agreed. I promised not to break the speed limit and off we went in convoy.

I thought I was sticking to 60 mph, but the Baines ensemble went passed me at one point (although he was going downhill) so I went a bit quicker. Changing into 6<sup>th</sup> gear in that car is not something I will forget in a hurry!

We made it to Wakefield incident free (thank goodness!), managed to push Gromit into the garage and get Simon's car on the trailer, and off he went. At that point I had an extra extra large GnT!!

I am so very grateful to Simon for getting me and my car home (and I think Chris is too)! It was a generous and noble action on his part, as it was out of his way and will have probably added an hour or two to his journey home.

My 'co driver' and I will be having stern words with the 'spanner man' about the fettling – when he gets home!!

Michele Bailey  
17 July 2018