

Vintage Happenings at Silverstone on 21st April - A true account from one who was there.

By Bob Bull

Having launched the 2018 Morgan Aero Challenge at a somewhat moist Snetterton earlier in the month, it was a pleasure to find wall-to-wall sunshine at Silverstone, as two more rounds of the competition loomed.

Before we get to the actual racing it is worth noting that the entry listed a number of names not seen before or at least for some considerable time, including Peter Garland , Steve Lockett, Mike Higgs, Helen Thorne, Simon Rotheron, and David Wenman. Three names that had been missing in 2017 also reappeared, Stuart Anderson, Jerry Knight, and Phillip Goddard. however, there was no sign of Messrs Higgs or Anderson on track . Another newcomer to the series was Iain Leviston now the Press Guru for the series who stoutly and steadfastly manned a table full of items for sale. No it was not a jumble sale but a selection of MSCC goodies to tempt the crowds to spend their money. MOG Magazine had also provided a number of free copies of the latest edition to help raise funds for the club. How sophisticated the series is becoming!

Once qualifying had finished details of which I have been quite unable to find, the field for race one composed themselves on the grid in readiness for their twenty minutes of racing. Well some did, as Simon Rotheron completed just a single slow lap before retiring to the pits with a mechanical malady.

Once proceedings got underway it was Philip Goddard that took charge at the front, his familiar black V8 far too fast for Roger Whiteside's similar 'Class 'A' model, although Roger had only an eight second deficit at the end. I have noticed that our 'Shop Keeper' is beginning to get the hang of the car, and steadily improving with each outing. Tony Lees took third spot and Class 'J', outpaced by the bigger cars, but easily outpacing Andrew Thompson in fourth. Andrew taking Class 'G' in the process was well clear of the squabbling, Jerry Knight, and Andy Green who had barely a sneeze between them on the timing sheet – 0.42 seconds to be exact. Dominic House, Simon Baines, Phil Thomas, and John Milbank filled out the top ten. Next up were Tim Parsons, and Phil Tisdall claiming Class 'R', and Class 'C' honours respectively. Greg Parnell, Tony Rivers, Peter Garland and Alex Laidlaw enjoyed a close battle with less than 2.0 seconds between them as the chequered flag was waved. Peter Garland drove a feisty race to win Class 'H', scaring at least one other driver with his hard charging style. Serial Class 'D' maestro Brett Syndercombe racked up another one in 17th. place, and David Wenman took Class 'E' on his debut. Apart from the previously mentioned Steve Rotheron, the only retiree was Craig Hamilton-Smith whose Club Sport cried enough on lap 13, but only after giving his team mate, Tony Hirst a very hard time in the closest fight of the race, deservedly being adjudged 'Driver of The Race' for his efforts.

Well done to Helen Thorne making her first appearance in the Challenge, for while some 5 laps in arrears drove a sensible race keeping well clear of the rougher types in the field. Let us hope that the experience has not scarred her for life. Come back Helen, you are a most welcome addition to the ranks.

..... and so to Race 2.

Once again it was Phillip who dominated affairs with Roger next up after the allocated time, however, with Tony Lees and Andy Green agreeing to stop on lap 8 (for reasons unknown) Andrew Thompson, Dominic House, Simon Baines and Phil Thomas all moved up a place in the pecking order, Tim Parsons overcame John Milbank, to finish 7th. right on Phil's boot lid (does he have a boot lid?), and Peter Garland improved to 9th place ahead of Tony Rivers in 10th.

Phil Tisdall took his second Class victory, 11th. clear of Alex Laidlaw 12th with Peter Cole fending off Greg Parnell in another fantastic scrap, 0.24 seconds being the gap as they finished 13th and 14th. Brett Syndercombe dutifully claimed 'D' again, Tony Hirst 'S', David Wenman 'E'. Chris Springall only just managed to cross the finishing line before Steve Lockett. Whatever problems had afflicted Steve in race one were not apparent in number two as he lacked a mere 0.52 seconds to Chris. Chris who returned to the series last year informed me that he is thoroughly enjoying his racing even more than in his previous incarnation.

Last to end matters was John 'Mr Classic Tracks' Bevan whose writing skills more than made up for his lack of mileage.

Fine weather, some close racing, friendly atmosphere, and a free snap courtesy of the VSCC, thanks no doubt to having influential people embedded in the appropriate committees. Thanks Jen.

Prize giving was the usual jolly affair with Jamie Thompson displaying a comprehensive knowledge of who got what, despite Mark Evans constant interference. It should be noted that Dominic House was voted Driver of The Race two. No doubt they had their reasons.

The destination of the Peter Collins tray is looking harder to predict, something that can only add to the attraction of the competition.

Sadly with the next two outings being in foreign countries, Cheshire and Belgium, my lack of a passport (amongst many good reasons) means the I will be unable to bring you my usual scintillating account of the races, however, as long as someone lets me have a results sheet