

VSCC Silverstone 21st and 22nd April 2018

Morgan Challenge rounds 3 and 4

A report by John Bevan

The VSCC Formula Vintage, Round 1 runs over two days on the Silverstone National circuit. This was extended to three days for those of the Morgan fraternity who had come along to test, set up camp or sign on and scrutineer on the Friday.

The Morgans were spread along several garages, some sharing with some truly spectacular historic cars such as Dino Ferraris Frazer-Nashes, and Maserati 250fs. Morgan interest started on Saturday with race 2, the Fox and Nicholl trophy for Standard and Modified pre-war sports cars, in which Simon King was competing in his 4/4 Le Mans.

Since this race immediately preceded the first Morgan Challenge race we were unable to watch as we were in the collecting area.

With Philip Goddard on pole, and Roger Whiteside second, both in Class A plus 8s, the third and fourth places were made up by Tony Lees in his trusty yellow Plus 8 (now in the new class J) and Andrew Thompson, also in a new class (G) in his rapid ARV6. The new Club Sports were also out in the hands of Craig Hamilton-Smith and Tony Hirst. Craig did not finish the race due to technical issues, but Tony put in a very creditable lap of 1 minute 10.83, setting a benchmark for the new factory racer.

It was good to see new entrants David Wenman (Class E 1959 Plus 4) and Steve Lockett (Class C Plus 8) out for their first Challenge race. In addition, former Challenge competitors Peter Garland, Chris Springall, Helen Thorne and Simon Rethon had made a welcome return. Simon did not finish the race due to his throttle sticking open, wisely deciding discretion was the better part of valour. This was also the first race I can remember with three class H Moss box Plus 8s out, in the hands of Sharlie Goddard, Peter Garland and Kelvin Laidlaw. Class E was very well supported, with Alan House, David Wenman, John Bevan and Helen Thorne piloting a variety of cars. Sadly Michele Bailey was not able to take part in the fun as husband Chris had put his back out.

Classic Tracks Classic drive of the day went to Craig Hamilton-Smith for a terrific tussle with Tony Hirst. As more Club Sports come out throughout the season it will be interesting to see how the new class develops.

Sharlie had come in after race three, and changed Bruce (her Moss Box) for her 4/4 Le Mans special. Sharlie was racing in the Allcomers handicap for pre-war cars and put in a very impressive performance amongst some much faster cars.

The second Morgan race started with the finishing positions from our first race. Philip Goddard managed to hold off Roger Whiteside, with the two class A cars finishing in their grid positions. With Tony Lees having elected to forgo the race so that he could compete in the Cognac Special, Andrew Thompson steamed round to take third place on the podium and first place in class G. It was very exciting to see the Club Sports engaged in a race-long battle for supremacy, with Tony Hirst finishing only half a second ahead of Craig.

The Classic drive of the day was awarded to Dominic House in his bright blue Class G Roadster for a charge from 7th on the grid to 4th overall.

For those of us who stayed for the fun on Sunday, we were able to watch Mark Shears and Alan House out in their Plus 4s (cars not trousers) in the Tom Cole trophy race, amongst some very exotic machinery including a Maserati 300s.

Driving the 4/4 Sport Competition home it was a pleasure to see the number of classic cars out on the road, it being Drive it Day.

We now look forward to the next Morgan Challenge race at Oulton Park on the 19th May.