

## Castle Combe or was it Brigadoon?

Castle Combe 14<sup>th</sup> September - a report by Bob Bull

After an extensive search on Google, and similar technologies I was able to locate Wiltshire on a map of the UK, and did eventually discover the whereabouts of 'Castle Combe Race Circuit'. I was, however, spared the need to fit an extra fuel tank to the Corsa as I was able to arrange transport to the nether regions of the British Isles with a local celebrity racing driver, who resided within hailing distance of Luton.

After a long and arduous journey we arrived at a picturesque village that delighted in the name of Kents Bottom, the last vestige of civilisation before the track. The sun shone and all was well in the Paddock with Morgan cars and folk scattered around about, and once proceeding got underway it was a familiar car at the head of affairs. A black V8 that had seen Phillip Goddard to a number of victories over the years now had a certain Bill Lancashire at the wheel, and sitting on pole position for race one a second clear of Roger Whiteside in his black V8, and looking well in spite of his recent broken shoulder. Naturally Andrew Thompson was well in the thick of the action lining up in third place looking across at Phill Thomas his companion on the second row. A motley crew completed the grid that included a few less familiar names, Henry Williams making a welcome return in a much improved 4/4, Robert Gilmore conducting the ex-John Bevan Roadster 3000, and Sam Butterworth in Bumble a car he would share with Dad Mark.

When the red lights were extinguished Phill Thomas made the best start leading Roger Whiteside for what he described as 'a millisecond' before deciding it was better to avoid contact as Roger moved across. Upon completion of lap one it was the familiar car unfamiliar driver combination that led with the irrepressible Andrew Thompson holding down second with Roger in close attendance and Tony Lees ahead of Phill T. Unfortunately for Bill Lancashire, but fortunately for the rest a dodgy relay brought the Class 'A' car to an undignified halt, allowing Andrew to have the glory for a lap before Roger used his superior speed to surge past. Although in front Mr Whiteside could not relax for a moment as a certain silver ARV6 refused to go away, and indeed reclaimed the lead for three laps. The duo swapped places until the end when Andrew finally saw the chequered flag first. Tony was untroubled in third, and Simon Orebi Gann similarly worry free in fourth as was Phill fifth, however, that was the end of peace as war raged behind. Henry Williams and Tony Hirst found it hard to decide who should be next while Craig Hamilton-Smith also wanted a piece of the action, they finally crossed the line in that order separated by a mere 1.3 seconds. Brett Syndercombe came along next as Greg Parnell and Sam Butterworth squabbled over 10<sup>th</sup> place. James Sumner, Jack Bellinger (in a hastily prepared 4/4 to replace his hors du combat V8), Tom Richards, and Steve Lockett, split by a fraction of nothing much, were the last un-lapped runners. Phillip Goddard, now in Class 'H' was followed home by Peter Sargeant, while Kelvin Laidlaw, Robert Gilmore, and Peter Cole made it a Class 'R' exclusive. Next up. Sharlie Goddard and John Bevan brought up the rear. Ian Sumner was the only other retiree, his demise caused by a leaky hose that put a halt to his participation in race 2. Lots of people won their class and many recorded fastest lap in class, but I haven't time for such trivia. That's what the internet is for.

Race two held a bit of extra interest as with Bill Lancashire starting from dead last, and having proved to have the fastest car, could he catch the front runners before the end was reached? That was the question.

One person who was determined to make it as hard as possible for the intrepid Bill was, of course, Katy's husband, Andrew. He took an immediate lead that he held on to until .....!

In the meantime there was plenty of excitement throughout the field, as Our 'enry and that actor chap were rarely further than a coat of paint apart, providing a value-for-money battle that spectators loved. Even more excitement was to come as Phill Thomas had dropped to the very back of the pack on lap one. Why he did so is a mystery as we write, however, it is possible that he had dawdled to admire the scenery, or perhaps chosen to cut the grass somewhere, either way his comeback drive through the lass speedy types brought him to the rear of Mr Parnell's rapid Aero 8. Catching and passing are, of course, two entirely different things, for while obviously quicker on the twiddly bits, the BabyDoll plainly lacked the sheer grunt to overtake - not that our bold Phill didn't try. Oh no. Lap after lap, watching at Quarry, one could see a wide variety of lines taken as he went one way and then the other desperate to continue his progress up the order. Despite the pressure Greg held firm and was able to use the power of the Aero to keep Phill I at bay. A wild sideways moment across the grass, eventually left Greg clear to the flag.

While all this was going on Andrew continued to lead until lap 10 when he finally succumbed to the big V8, hanging on for a lap or two before finishing just over two seconds in arrears, Come the chequered table cloth coming out the order was Lancashire, Thompson, Whiteside, with Tony Lees close behind, Simon OG. Henry Williams, Tony Hirst, Brett Syndercombe, James Sumner, Greg and Phill, Tom Richards a squeak ahead of Steve Lockett. Phillip Goddard, Kelvin Laidlaw, Robert Gilmore, Sarge, Old Man Butterworth, Pete Cole, Sharlie and John Bevan.

Jack Bellinger and Craig Hamilton-Smith were missing in action when the results were given out. Hopefully they are not still stuck in rural Wiltshire, not a fate you would wish on anybody ...well maybe ..... best not I suppose.

A lack of blue boxes to dole out meant an early get away, after a great day featuring fine racing and very fine company all in wall-to-wall sunshine. Perhaps Wiltshire is not all bad.

**Bob Bull.**