

Back of the Grid Report by Michele Bailey Donington Park 12 July 2020

It was all rather different, I seemed to require extra concentration and not just because it was over 11 months since my last race. We had remote signing on and scrutineering, and lots more paper to deal with. I have no doubt Katy had lots more enquiries about it all, but as usual kept us all organised with her usual efficiency and charm.

As hotels were now open we decided to travel down Saturday afternoon, and dropped Gromit off at the circuit. Some work had been undertaken over the close season to remove the 'Cadwell wing' and "carbon fibre eye patch". There were hardly any Morganeers around but we had a quick chat with Simon and Kathy Sherry. Then it was to our hotel room for our indoor picnic and F1 qualifying.

After a terrible night's sleep (due to me being rather anxious) we arrived to find the paddock full. I laughed to see that Peter Rafter's hair was longer than mine, apparently he wasn't prepared to wear his daughter's pink alice band; think James May and add a few years and you will be able to imagine him.

No signing on and no scrutineering meant plenty of time for fettling Gromit, and a bit of socially distance catching up meant the time passed rapidly. There were new faces and new cars in the paddock, and of course a new class system to contend with. John Emberson was now in a Baby Doll and Philip Goddard in a red Plus 8; this was going to take some getting used to.

We lined up in assembly, and I thought John Bevan was next to me, but no it was the Roadster he used to own, now driven by newcomer Rob Gilmore. Off we went for qualifying, and I began to relax a bit. I was baffled when the red 4 seater formerly owned by John Bevan and now owned by Andrew Thompson went passed me; John was in a 4/4 competition and Andrew was in his silver ARV6!

Pole for Race 1 went to Roger Whiteside with Andrew Thompson alongside. Behind them were Simon OG and John Emberson, followed by Brett and John Milbank. The back of the grid comprised Tony Kilby (newcomer) in his grey Club Sport, John (of the Dastardly laugh) Bevan and me.

I don't remember seeing so many yellow flags in a Challenge Race. Richard Fearn departed on lap 4, resulting in waved yellows. Peter Cole departed on lap 9, and John Richards went straight on at Coppice (in front of me) into the gravel. Rob Gilmore then did the same at Redgates. Dastardly Bevan and I were battling at the back; he passed me going into the chicane at Roberts by hiding in amongst the faster cars, but I passed him at Redgates by sneaking up the inside.

Results for Race 1 (Class 5) were:

- 1 Me
- 2 Dastardly

The front of the grid results were:

- 1 Andrew Thompson
- 2 John Emberson
- 3 Brett Syndercombe

There were number of DQs as a result of yellow flag infringements, which did have an impact on the FotG results.

I couldn't work out how John and Tom Richards were both in the results so wandered over to find out. Tom now has his own Club Sport, being the Craig HS car from last season. Another family battle.

The grid for Race 2 was interesting to say the least; I was in 12th and suffering from a lack of oxygen being so high up; this was due to the number of DNF's and DQs in Race 1. I had no doubt that I wouldn't stay there long once we got going, with so many faster cars behind me, and Roger was passed me long before Redgates. The rest of the faster cars had passed by the Old Hairpin, and Dastardly and I were back into battle mode, at the back of the grid.

Philip Goddard overtook me during the race, closely pursued by Sharlie; that looked interesting! Simon King and Phil Tisdall also seemed to be having a very close race. There were no offs and we finished without any yellow flags, thankfully.

Results for Race 2 (Class 5) were:

- 1 Me
- 2 Dastardly

The front of the grid results were:

- 1 Roger Whiteside
- 2 Andrew Thompson
- 3 John Emberson

Katy had organised a more understated presentation than we have been used to, but included some chocolate cars for us all which I have to say went down a treat.

Winners garlands to Andrew and Roger, DoD bottles of fizz to Roger andme.

Michele Bailey
16 July 2020