

Bentley Drivers' Club race meeting at Silverstone on 22nd August 2020

Morgan Challenge rounds 3 and 4 and the Techniques Trophy race.

A report by John Bevan

It was a very different BDC meeting this year with Covid-19 restrictions meaning no spectators were allowed resulting in far fewer Bentleys on display in the paddock and no hog roast for drivers on the night before.

Having driven up on the Friday I was tempted to remove windscreen, side-screens and roof before driving up to my hotel in Towcester. Luckily I didn't as the heavens opened as soon as I was on the A43, although this being a Morgan the windscreen wipers had stopped working so I had to drive faster and faster to clear the windscreen!

Luckily by Saturday the track had dried and the rain stayed away. We were missing several regular drivers because of shielding, although there was still a great turnout of twenty-eight cars for the Morgan Challenge races and twenty Morgans in the TT Race. It was good to see the Andrews back racing in their historic Plus 4 recently repatriated FROM America, and Jim Mountain back with his 4/4 resplendent in the blue and yellow colours of Siam. Prince Bira would have been pleased!

Morgan Challenge Race 1

Qualifying was pleasingly incident free, apart from a puncture for Bill Lancashire's Plus 8 late in the session. Ollie Bryant put his Plus 8 on pole with Bill Lancashire's Plus 8 second and Roger Whiteside's third. Will Plant was on P4 with his quick 4/4 Turbo and Andrew Thompson on p5 in his ARV6.

The race was more eventful with engine misfires, a puncture, an overly excited catalyst disintegrating and a trip into the gravel accounting for five DNFs and an interestingly re-arranged grid for race 2. Bill Lancashire won the race with Will Plant a close second and taking fastest lap in pursuit of Bill. Roger Whiteside came in third with Andrew Thompson in fourth. The new class winners were Bill Class 1, Andrew T class 2, Mark Butterworth in Bumblebee class 3, Stephen Lockett class 4 and Tom Andrew Class 5. Peter Sargeant won driver of the day having driven to the circuit and had a great battle with James Sumner in the yellow peril.

Morgan Challenge Race 2

This time Ollie Bryant stormed to a commanding victory, having stormed through the field from the back of the grid, with Will Plant second, and Roger Whiteside third

but first home of the Morgan Challenge eligible entrants. Sharlie Goddard deservedly won driver of the race for whizzing from the back of the grid to finish in twelfth place having overcome her misfire in practice. (On reflection it was the car misfiring). Brett Syndercombe also drove brilliantly from the back of the grid to win class 3 in his 4/4. At the back of the grid Chris Bailey zipped up to second in class 5 (damn it!) setting some great times in the Plus 4. Chris has suggested that we all use tractor tyres in class 5 from now on which is fine by me!

Techniques Trophy and BDC Classic Challenge

Another great race, thank you to Brian, Tracy and James Gateson for organising this. Along with the 4-cylinder TT entrants we were joined by Jack Bellinger in his newly built and very shiny Moss Box Plus 8, and the Moss boxes of Richard Plant, Kelvin Laidlaw and Philip Tisdall. Bill Bellinger has brought along his beautiful 4/4 pre-crossflow that he has just completed, looking fabulous in purple. As Billy was qualifying Simon Orebi-Gann's SLR at Brands Hatch in the morning he missed practice and was starting from the back of the grid. The race was fantastic with fast and fair racing and some interesting entrants including a Jaguar D-type, some feisty MGAs and a very smoky Arkley which gave up the ghost after 3 laps.

Richard Plant drove a faultless race to win overall, with James Sumner winning the TT Trophy for a second time and Billy taking the fastest pushrod 4-cylinder having managed to get up to eight place and almost catch his Dad! Paul Bryan won driver of the day for racing up the field having qualified with an unhappy car running on three cylinders.

Another great TT race- I can't wait until next year!