

## Castle Combe 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2016

### A report by John Bevan

Twenty cars made the trip to Castle Combe circuit in Wiltshire. Being an ex-RAF airfield it is predictably cold and windy or hot and shadeless. Nevertheless, it is a great circuit to drive, despite the bumpiness of the surface. Qualifying was dry, allowing Keith Ahlers to put himself on pole, being the sole Class A car present. Second, third and fourth on the grid were taken up respectively by Elliot Paterson, Tony Hirst and Andrew Thompson in his silver ARV6. Having qualified at 8.30 we were free until our race at 11.40, which allowed us to watch some of the other racing, including Renault Clios (of which more later!), BMWs and Formula Ford.

As the first race of the day's schedule, we were lucky to have 15 minutes of dry racing, with Keith taking pole, with Andrew Thompson coming in second in his ARV6 ahead of Tony in third and Elliot in fourth, who was handicapped by HT leads coming loose half way through the race. Phil Thomas came home 5<sup>th</sup> in his Babydoll (the car, not the nightwear!) with Henry Williams an excellent 6<sup>th</sup> in his Class D 4/4 Sport.

The finishing positions gave the starting grid for the non-championship afternoon race, with Tim Parsons heading up class R and Tim Ayres a depleted Class C.

By the time we were on grid at 4 o'clock, the heavens had opened and the track was very wet, although with a semi-dry line developing. After 2 laps behind the safety car we were off for a 10 minute race, the race shortened due to a Clio demolishing the tyre wall at Tower earlier in the day. On lap three myself and Andrew Thompson decided that discretion was the better part of valour, and pulled off to watch from the pit wall.

It was extremely exciting to see Andrew Bentley in a Class D TR engined Plus 4 relishing the slippery conditions, and chasing Keith throughout the race, indeed even overtaking him at one point and setting the fastest lap of the whole race in the process! Keith fought back to retake the lead, but in the greasy conditions it looked very tricky, with newcomer James Carter pirouetting on the pit straight and elsewhere around the track as he tried to put down the power of his Class B Plus 8. Kelvin Laidlaw was not intimidated by

the wet, and drove a cracking race to come home first in Class R. Despite the conditions everyone survived intact, which is more than can be said for later races, with the last race red-flagged due to a car punting off another driver head on into the Armco. The clerk of the course was unamused.

So we look forward to Donington Park, and wouldn't it be nice if the weather was warm and sunny for the Peter Morgan Memorial race? I have just finished drying out the Morgan, so do not wish to have the bucket seats re-filled with water!

Race 2 Class Winners:

Class A Keith Ahlers

Class B Elliot Paterson (HT leads fixed!)

Class C Tim Ayres

Class R Kelvin Laidlaw

Class D Andrew Bentley

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