

The view from the back – Snetterton 9 April 2016
By Michele Bailey

Saturday morning dawned cold, and wet. Yet again I asked myself what was I doing? I was somewhat relieved when Phill Thomas told me he was also terrified, and Brenda Bryan assured me that everyone was! Have I mentioned that it was wet? The rain varied from pouring down to just raining hard.

We gathered under umbrellas in the assembly area. You'll be fine Chris said; really? I took a deep breath and followed Peter Rafter out onto the circuit. I was beginning to feel better, and tentatively put my foot down. After the first hairpin, the faster cars which had started behind me came passed. I took another deep breath and went passed Peter R; his car did not look an easy drive in the wet.

I continued to breathe, and began to relax and concentrate. I had to as the visibility wasn't good. I should tell you that it was raining. It was a wet 20 minutes. Towards the end of qualifying the other class E car zoomed passed me near the end of the start/finish straight. He managed to get round the first bend and the hairpin without braking, and disappeared into the gloom. Now that's how to drive a class E car I thought – how do I do that?

The outcome of qualifying (in the rain) was that both Patersons were on the front row, Russell behind Elliot, followed by Andrew Bentley in his class E car (I was only a lot jealous!) and then Tony Lees. Leigh and I at the back of the grid were joined by Peter R and Barry; either Barry thought we were having more fun or he had a problem.

Did I mention it was raining? Well our first race was even wetter than qualifying. All morning I had been consoling myself that it couldn't be as wet as Brands Hatch last year. Silly girl – it was at least as wet. There was no visibility on either straight. Malcolm Dearnley in front of me just disappeared, although I could make out Paul Bryan's roof. I could do with one of those I thought wistfully. I took a deep breath and kept my foot down, hoping that no-one had stopped in front with a waterlogged engine. I couldn't even see any rain lights.

What I could see were Leigh's headlights behind me; right I thought concentrate on staying ahead of him. He was gradually catching me, and then on the penultimate lap I tried to sneak a bit too close to the inside of Bomb Hole, and I was off. Fortunately there was a lot of grass, and it was relatively high ground, so I didn't hit anything nor get stuck in a bog. I couldn't find a darkened room in which to lie down to recover, so I had a snooze in the van.

The result was the top 3 remained the same, and class wins went to each of those 3 (although Andrew B had mysteriously moved into class D), Tim Ayres in C and Tim Parsons in R.

The rain finally began to ease, and eventually stopped. By the time we assembled for race 2 things were looking better, well not so wet. This time Leigh and I were honoured to be joined at the back by John Emberson, Dominic and Roger. Unfortunately Andrew T didn't make it through race 1 unscathed, and Jerry decided a cup of tea was more appealing than another wet lap!

Race 2 was much more like it! Both Malcom and Leigh snuk passed Craig at the start. I didn't see either John or Dominic go passed me, but I could see the acid green gloves of Craig in front. They disappeared on the straight bits, but came closer on the bendy bits. I had a great time, and felt like a 'proper' racing driver for the first time. What fun!

Another win for Elliot, followed by Russell and Andrew B. Tim A took class C again, and Simon Scott won class R.

Despite the weather (have I mentioned the rain?) it turned out to be a most enjoyable day. Well done everyone for some great driving in extreme conditions. Particularly well done to Elliot for winning both races, and to Leigh for taking the back of the grid glory. It could have been worse you know, we could have been spectators! Thanks to all those who (insanely) came along to watch.

Michele Bailey