

VSCC Silverstone Spring Start

A report on the Morgan Challenge races on 23rd April 2017 by John Bevan

The VSCC is the start of the vintage and classic car racing year. This year it has been re-branded as Formula Vintage, and those of those who had elected to be there on Friday evening for scrutineering were invited to the presentation on the rationale behind the change. As well as free drinks and food, this also offered the site of Tony Lees being grilled by the cream of the motoring press (and Bob Bull!) on various questions, including whether Tony prefers vintage or Morgan motoring. Tony made some very diplomatic answer, whereas he could well have chosen to annoy everyone present by saying that all old cars are terribly unreliable, noisy and smell and that he would rather drive Jen's Alfa 4C any day of the week.....

The selection of cars present on Saturday was outstanding, with D-types, Bugattis, three ERA's and various expensive Maseratis and Ferraris. Leigh Sebba had brought his pre-war Le Mans 4/4 and Philip Goddard was out in his ex-John Clarke 4/4 in the same race. More Morganistes arrived on Saturday afternoon for signing on and scrutineering, and to set up the Morgan encampment. Many of the more exotic vintage cars arrive in long articulated lorries with attendant motorhomes for the drivers. Unfortunately I had forgotten to bring my artic, so had to slum it by driving to and from the circuit. Alas my motorhome was too large to access the paddock so I slept in what I believe is called a "tent". Interesting.

On Sunday there were two races for the Morgan Challenge, with an early qualifying and a morning and afternoon race.

Practice session one produced a grid of :

Ahlers (Class A Plus 8), Whiteside (Class A Plus 8), Paterson (Class B ARV6 Roadster), Green (Class B Plus 8), Lees (Class B Plus 8).

Brett Syndercombe qualified his Class D 4/4 well up the list, ahead of 5 Roadsters and 5 Plus 8s.

The standing start for our race was enlivened by Peter Rafter pulling off from the grid just prior to the start. No surprises for guessing the winner, with Keith being chased to the end by Elliot in the ARV6, with Roger Whiteside 3rd and Andy Green 4th. DNF's included Tony Lees with a left rear puncture to a new tyre (a nail) and Simon Baines who decided that discretion was the better part of valour when he experienced a front wheel judder and the car pulling to one side under braking. All these events produced an exciting grid for our second race with Messrs Lees, Baines and Rafter keen to make their way through the field as quickly as possible.

The afternoon race gave Keith another pole, with Elliot again second but Andrew Thompson working his way up to an excellent third in the silver ARV6. For the record, Tony worked his way up to 6th and Simon to 10th, which must have made for an exciting 20 minutes for them!

This was my last race in FTT (honest Phil!) so prior to packing up I recorded the event for posterity. I hope that Phil Egginton will enjoy using it as much as I have.

The next round is the MSCC Peter Morgan memorial race at Brands Hatch, where we hope for dry weather this year!

John Bevan

(was FTT222V now S6 LWT)