

Fun in the Sun at Barbon – Club Motorsport as it should be!

Wandering round the paddock under a clear blue sky and serenaded by the peel of bells from the village church took me back to the 1980s when it never seemed to rain at Barbon Manor hillclimb. A cracking entry boded well for the days sport and conditions couldn't have been better.

Getting proceedings underway for the competitive runs were the two classes of two litre standard cars. In the Saloon class David Goodlad in the Clio had the upper hand all afternoon whilst Mike Lawson in the Suzuki Swift slowly closed the gap in second. In the Sports Car class there were two Mazda MX5s. John Wadsworth took the class win after Peter Messer retired his car after just one timed run.

Into the road legal Modified classes next and it was a Harewood 1-2 in Class 1A as Mike Geen (Peugeot 205) and Richard Derrick (Mini Clubman) led home Michael Huddleston (Mini). Class 1B was frenetic with another tin top battle. Gordon Riley in the Toyota Starlet and Will Roberts in the Clio posted identical times on their first timed runs. Riley then eased ahead as Roberts failed to improve. Ian Butcher in the Integra managed only one run before the car expired but it was good enough for third place. Russell Thorpe in his faithful Renault 5 was fourth chasing home the Harewood regulars. In 1C Jonathan Mounsey (Mitsubishi Evo 6) totally dominated on his Barbon debut leaving David Exton in the Audi S6 Avant trailing by over 4 seconds. In 1D there were a plethora of MX5s against two Honda S2000s. Michael Thomson in one of the Hondas took the class win but Adam Riley in his MX5 clung onto second place throughout despite Ray Worrall's best efforts in the second Honda. Paul Collier (BMW Z4) took a solo win in 1E before we moved into Kit Car territory.

Class 2A saw a dominant win for Michael Bellerby (Sylva Striker) whilst the battle for the minor places was intriguing. Anthony Middleton and Martin Walker (Westfields) and Leon Franks (Striker) scrapped for second over all three runs. Middleton actually held the place throughout but was under pressure each time he was on track. Franks was third initially but then relegated to fourth before a third run charge took him back into third place. Walker spent a lot of time sideways but his second run took him to third but he was pushed to fourth despite setting his best time of the day on the third run. In fact, second to fourth places were covered by just 0.70 seconds. In Class 2B Nigel Fox and Les Golding both pushed their Caterhams hard and were first and second respectfully throughout. Simon Nicholson took third in his Westfield whilst the pretty Westfield Eleven Sport of Chris Hodgson was fourth. Rob Holt (Elise) took a solo win in 2D before we moved into Mod-Prod territory.

A late entry for John Willis in his Rover Metro provide fruitful as he took the 3A Class win from Colin Duncalf (Mini). In 3B Geoff Harkness took the win in his Rally prepared Vauxhall Corsa with Harry Moody (Honda Civic) second and Paul Barker (Toyota MR2) third. Richard Hargreaves only took one timed run in Class 3C with his immaculate Mk 2 Escort and took the solo win. Class 3H for the Kit Cars saw a 'riotous' assembly at the head of the field. Bob Bellerby led initially in his Sylva Riot Yamaha R1 with Chris Boyd's Hayabusa powered Riot second and Paul Bowness third in his MK Indy. Boyd struck back taking the lead on the second timed run and held onto the class win. Bellerby closed to within 0.18 to make it a blanket finish.

In the single Sports libre Class (4A) we had three very different cars. Ian Medcalf in the gorgeous Fiat 500 BMC which started life as a Special Saloon, David MacFarlane in an

OMS SC1 which is a purpose built hillclimb libre car and Brian Beverley in his Westfield XTR 2 which was designed as a road-legal track-day car. Medcalf took just the one timed run in the Fiat before calling it a day with a damaged wheel. Beverley was the quickest on both the first and second runs and didn't take his third run whilst MacFarlane took all three runs but posted his best time on run one to finish second.

We then moved into the Racing Car classes. In Class 5A for the upto 1100cc cars, the shared OMS of Craig Powers and Eve Whitehead finished 1-2 thanks to its one litre Kawasaki engine whilst Peter Brogden was third in his Jedi Mk 1 with just 600cc of Honda to propel him up the hill. Whitehead had led initially but Powers managed to be a tad less cautious off the line on his subsequent runs and took the class win by just over two tenths! In the Formula Ford 1600 Class 5B Graham Curwen posted two 29.27 second runs in his Van Diemen RF91 to lead the class but on his third run Phil Perks in his venerable Royale RP26 matched Curwen's time exactly. On this occasion, the organisers decided not to use the old count-back system and awarded each driver a first in class trophy.

Next to the line were the 1600 Racing Cars in Class 5C. Jim MacDiarmid kept the nose of his Force PC ahead and not only won the class but also set FTD. Chris Taylor finished in second with the Hi-Tech even with a DNF on his third run. Chris Spencer's pretty Scarab Formula Vee trailed in third.

In the first of the Classic classes, 6A for road going cars, Martin McHugh rumbled to the win in his Morgan Plus 8. Wigton Motor Club members battled over the minor placings, Peter Garforth's Skoda Estelle in a rather lurid green was second, in third it was Jim Wright in his neat ex-factory demonstrator Vauxhall Chevette and fourth went to the purple Alfa Romeo 33 of Paul Eastwood. The Classic Racing class saw a solo win for Angus Buchan in the ex-Chris Cramer Terrapin SR two-seater.

An excellent entry of nine Bert Hadley Championship cars were next and the little Austin Sevens put on a fine display. The Road and Track cars were combined and it was Terry Griffin's pretty Monoposto racer that took first place. Paul Geering's tiny 'Pigsty Special' was second with Alan Fairless's Ulster in third.

Finally, Class 6D for Pre-1962 Road Going Cars brought the meeting to a close. Graham Curwen, who had already jointly won the FF1600 class, made it a second win when he brought the 1953 Buckler Mk 5 back to Barbon Manor for its first outing since restoration. Keith Thomas made it a Buckler Mk 5 1-2 with his supercharged version. John Hunter was third in his superb Riley TT Sprite.

Thankfully all the drainage works completed over the close season were not tested. A big "THANK YOU" has to go to the two organising clubs Kirkby Lonsdale MC and Liverpool MC, the superb marshals (particularly the start line crew of just two who did a fantastic job of lining up cars all day in unrelenting tropical heat) and the 82 drivers who took part so that the very appreciative crowd of over 700 spectators, including many 'locals', were again treated to a taste of the Eighties.

Let's hope that the weather is just as pleasant for the next event at Barbon on 7th July, an event which includes not only many local and regional competitors, but also sees the return of the MSA British Hillclimb Championship to this picturesque yet challenging venue.

Steve Wilkinson