

Records fall despite the weather

25th April 2015

Report by Steve Wilkinson

Aintree Spring Sprint

Liverpool Motor Club

145 Starters

During a day of changing conditions Liverpool Motor Club provided the entrants with 2 practice and 4 timed runs which amounted to 832 starts off the line. Once again slick organisation coupled with excellent marshalling meant despite several off course incidents it was only bank balances that were drained.

The Standard classes led the way and in the 1400 Division Chris Smith broke the class record twice in his MG ZR. In the 2000 Division Paul Gorge got to within half a second of his father's record despite a second run rotation in their jointly driven Clio. There was no 1400 Roadgoing entries so it was the two litres next. Deryk Jones (Peugeot 205GTi), on his first visit led initially until the two R5 Turbo GTs got into their stride. Ian Butcher took the win with Russell Thorpe snapping at his heels. In the Over 2000 Division the Kearsleys (Impreza Sti) pulled out with gearbox problems during practice which should have left the door open for class record holder Daniel Hollis but the Nissan GTR driver had an expensive off which sidelined the car and Bob Jones snatched the win in his turbo-diesel Mazda 3.

In the 2000 Sportscar class the three Honda S2000s dominated. Roger Fish took the win with Martin Rowe half a second in arrears and Robin Grimwood third. Fish established the class record for this new for 2015 class. In the Over 2000 Sportscar class Paul Beddow blasted to victory in his Chevvie Corvette. Rob Holt took the Elise class before we moved into Kit Car territory. In the Up to 1700 class Martin Walker in his recently acquired Toyota powered Westfield took the win ahead of Andy Taylor (Caterham) and the Stevensons in their recently rebuilt Westfield. The Over 1700 class went to Stephen Herbert (Westfield) with Nigel Fox (Caterham) second and Best Novice Lee Smith (Westfield) third. Kevin Jones (Westfield R1) took the motorbike powered division from co-driver Graham Ware whilst Sam Binfield mopped up the final Roadgoing Kit Car class in his Ariel Atom.

A very healthy 2 litre Mod Prod class was next with 13 runners. Andy Larton (Peugeot 106) again dominated with Richard Hargreaves (Escort Mk2) an under geared second ahead of John Moxham (Peugeot 205).

After a series of poorly supported classes the next well supported class was the Up to 1700 Sports libre class. Robbie Birrell, who was making his debut in the Radical, not only took a comfortable win but also broke Matt Carter's record from September last year. Paul Morris (Radical) was second ahead of co-driver Steve Brennan and the rest. In the Over 1700 class Ian Rowland in the mighty Metro 6R4 took the win ahead of the rapid Z Cars-Mini of Paul Woolfit.

In the first of the single seater classes Bradley Dickerson was the top 1100 driver in his Jedi finishing well clear of Glyn Sketchley (Megapin) and Eve Whitehead (RBS8). Adding a bit of variety was Michael Tomlinson in his off-road AFE Mk1 buggy. The Formula Fords once again provided a hectic battle. Jonathan Baines led initially in his Merlyn Mk 20 before Geoff Ward slipped past in his Swift SC93F. On the third runs

Ward failed to improve and Baines swept through posting the only sub-49 second run in the class. Jonathan Townsley held third place throughout with Graham Curwen fourth and Peter Ibbotson fifth – the latter setting two PBs. After a solo win for Gary Thomas (Force) in the up to 1600cc Racing Car class the two litres were up to the line. Nick Algar, now driving the ex-Alex Summers methanol fuelled DJ Firehawk, annexed the class with a new record on his first run; in fact his second and fourth runs were also inside the old record but were no improvement on his first. Second place went to James Wilkinson in his Reynard Formula Vauxhall Lotus with Emma Williams third in the family Ralt. John Graham (Gould GR55B) took a solo win the over 2 litre class and setting FTD into the bargain.

The Classics were next and with Target Time calculations deciding the results there were wins for Phil Cheek in his MGB and Malcolm Evans in the Mallock. Jeff Allan then established the record for Electrically Powered cars which excludes hybrids taking his Mitsubishi round in 73.16.

The Aston Martin Owners Club runners were next and it was the brutish 4.7 litre GT4 Vantage of Tom Whittaker which took the win from perennial Aintree competitor Colin Kingsman in his DB6. In the Reliant Sabre & Scimitar class Trevor Shortt's Scimitar GT took the win from the SS1s of Steve Cork and the Oakes'.

The two Caterham Academy classes were the finale. In the "Green Group" Rui Ferreira took the win despite a third run expedition to hunt out straw bales at Village. Rob Yates took second and David Bevan third – in fact the first 8 were all within a second in a highly competitive class. In the "White Group" top spot went to Andy Perry who got to within a couple of tenths of the record. Russ Olivant and Lee Collins completed the Top Three - only the Top Four got within the same second and there was a far greater spread of times in this group.

With the rain showers sweeping in from time to time the marshals again did a great job in adverse conditions which at times bordered on the Arctic.

Fingers crossed for better conditions for the June sprint.