

Southern Stuff 1 2012

Abingdon Sprint

This is my first report the year as due to one thing and another I haven't competed at any solely Southern events. I'll start with the now customary weather report, after ten days of summer in late May, June started pretty wet but amazingly Abingdon was a dry day sandwiched between two wet days as per last year, albeit a bit breezy, but we weren't complaining. We had 18 MGs representing the Luffield Championship, as usual all sorts ranging from T Type to ZT, there was even a new MG6 entered although not in our Championship. Abingdon is a busy day for organisers and competitors as it is two events rolled into one. For those of you unfamiliar with the set-up there are two courses, the entry is split and you drive one course in the morning and the other in the afternoons so there two 'events' going on at the same time. The majority of the Luffield competitors were on the Abingdon course in the morning, practise started with the timing system not working so we were flagged away, this was all sorted out before second practice so we had times to compare. Sadly Martyn Phillis broke a halfshaft at the start line on his second practise run and was out for the day. We were soon into the competition runs which went quite smoothly although some of us had spins (me included) or slight excursion onto the long grass, judging by amount of grass it brought back to the paddock the MG6 tried a bit of mowing but damaged his front under tray, obviously a bit more development work is required before it qualifies as a robust mowing machine, maybe a new additional market for the MG6?

After a quick lunch break we were lining up on the Bentley course for our practice and competition runs, things ran very smoothly and we finished at approximately at 3.30. How the Sutton & Cheam and Farnborough clubs get 135 cars through two events so quickly is amazing, all credit to them. The fastest times from both courses are added together to give a total time to decide the results, two new Luffield class records were set by Ashley Woodward and myself. Fastest MG, needless to say but I will was Stuart Gilbert in his monster MGB GT V8, with a combined time of 100.23 seconds, Ashley Woodward was top points scorer with a creditable 99.07. Another very enjoyable day at Abingdon Airfield, once again a vote of thanks to Sutton & Cheam and Farnborough Clubs for their hard work making this event a great success

Gurston Down Hillclimb

Gurston Down Speed Hillclimb must be one of the most popular Southern venues attracting some 150 entrants at this year's event including motorbikes. Heavy overnight rain made the hill very slippery for first practice, some of the front wheel drive cars were struggling to get off of the start line. The track dried out during the morning and second practice was much better, by lunch time the sun was out and things looked good for the afternoon competition. The Luffield contingent was 17 strong with the usual mix of old and modern MGs, we are all put in the same class at this venue which doesn't affect our Championship points but class awards will go to the fastest cars, usually the V8s.

Conditions were almost perfect and this was reflected our times, quite a few drivers improved on their previous best Luffield class times, these being Howard Harman PA 51.29, Anthony Smith TA 47.79, Dave Butler TD 46.32, Andrew Till ZR 44.59, Rob Orford MGB 41.45, Mike Cole MGB 41.23 and myself MGA 38.86 (Apologies if I've left anyone out) Four new Luffield class records were set by; Andrew Till, Howard Harman, Stuart Gilbert and myself. There were two battles going on in our class between the MGB's. Rob Orford, Mike Cole and Richard Withers (Group 3) were separated by only 0.22 seconds after their final run, the fastest time being posted by Mike. Stuart Gilbert and Andy Walker (Group 4 Racing Specials) were battling for the fastest time which went to Stuart with a superb time of 35.82 seconds, Andy wasn't far behind with a 36.28, and both of these times beat Terry Pigott's hill record of 36.47 which is no mean feat, also they were the only Gurston class records set that day, not bad methinks! Top points scorer was Howard Harman MG PA with a 102, well done to him. Class awards went to Stuart Andy and me, 1st, 2nd and 3rd in class respectively. Thanks to the BARC organisers and the ever efficient team of Marshalls for a great day at Gurston Speed Hillclimb - Terry Drinkwater

