

SOUTHERN STUFF 2 2012

LOTON PARK HILLCLIMB

Loton is not strictly a Southern event but has 'joint event' status in our Championship which sort of gives me licence to write a report. Loton, in my opinion, is one of the best hillclimbs in the country. The lower part up to Keepers Corner is quite technical, and then an uphill blast to Fallow, followed by a tight right hander at Museum. We had a bumper entry of 30 MG's, all the usual suspects plus a few new faces. Conditions were dry and a strange yellow thing appeared in the sky which was later identified as the Sun. One of the minus points of Sprints and Hillclimbs is the waiting around and Loton is no exception, our first practise commenced at approx. 10.30 and all of the 'MG Cars up to 2000cc' completed their runs before the mandatory 'Church Service' break, which is situated close to the venue. The MG cars over 2000cc had to wait until noon for their first practise, Andy Kitson in his supercharged MGF and Andy Walker were set to do battle in this class but the outcome was decided prematurely as Andy Kitson broke a driveshaft in second practise.

The afternoon event runs started at 2.45pm, during our batch the course car went out and came back soon after, with no message from the start line marshals I set off. When I got to the exit of Triangle corner I found out why the course car went out, there was a small river (slight exaggeration) flowing across the track, I ignored it and crossed it with no loss of grip. After our batch there was a 20 minute break to deal with the overflowing drain that was causing the problem. Some of us were muttering about the time the event was taking to run and the Commentator said organisers had until 10.00pm to conclude the event, this prompted a few of us to consider checking if our headlamps were working! At least this hiccup in proceedings gave us a chance to watch Andy Walker negotiating Triangle corner leaving impressive black tyre tracks much to the delight of the crowd. We eventually had our second run and quite a few new Luffield records were set, notably Paul Batho – Midget 76.78; Martin Price – TA 82.33; Martin Woolacott – MGA 74.83; Keith Beningfield – TC 69.38; Mike Cole – MGB 64.71; Keith Egar – Midget 62.16 and myself MGA 63.59. Richard Withers also broke the record with a 65.00 but was pipped by Mike Cole. Andy Walker wasn't content with setting a new Luffield record but also a new Loton Class record with a 59.62, this time would have given him overall win in the Ferrari Class! As always thanks to the Marshals and Organisers. I think I'm correct in saying we all had a great day albeit a long one!!

Terry Drinkwater