

Speed Championship

Paul Rodman

Known by all in recent years as “the Luffield”, the origins of probably the largest single marque Speed Championship can be directly traced back to the Cheshire Natter at the Plough and Flail pub near Alderly Edge during 1988.

At that time Jim Garvey, Hamish Cruickshank, and myself were all driving Midgets on the road and competing, with various levels of modification.

The Brown and Gammons Speed Championship was running, being run by the Hayters, this was a country wide championship but the rules were a little loose regarding car modification relying on event organisers rules. In the NW this approach was not working, so we started considering a North West based championship with events 100 miles from Manchester to keep the travelling costs reasonable.

The NW Centre at this time was running the Baitings Dam Hill Climb, Scammondern Dam Hill Climb, and had also run some excellent sprints at Oulton Park and were also running the Cockshoot Cup Race Championship which the competitors were required to compete in one of our NW Centre Hill Climbs.

We pitched our idea to the MGCC NW Centre Committee and Mike Entwisle, David Rainsbury and Paul Goodman supported us unamously. The Norwester Trophy for rallying was dusted off for re using to the overall winner.

So we just had to sort the regs, points system and the calendar of events! No pressure then!

Jim acted as scribe and Championship Co-ordinator whilst Hamish and I handled the technical end, checking that the regs were fair but clearly defined, unambiguous and could be policed on a wet Yorkshire hillside!

The underlying aim of the Championship was to allow any MG from any era to compete evenly in five levels of modification, meaning that a Standard Midget, well driven could win the Norwester Cup outright and have great fun whilst doing it.

Keeping the cost of competing low was important to us, so for example in the Standard Class the car was showroom standard except a few clearly defined period modifications likely to be found on most third hand MGs, i.e. tubular exhaust manifold, aftermarket steering wheel / seat, uprated shock absorbers / air filters, and that was about it.

The Cockshoot Standard class racers neatly provided the next class up. Our road going modified class was based on my developing 1500cc Midget (Webbers, big valve head, rally cam with suspension and brakes to match). The Cockshoot Modified class provided the next stage with slick shod lean race MGs without windscreens.

Finally Specials classes for all the mad MGs out there with other engines / huge modifications split as Road going / Racing Specials.

Jim worked up a solid points system which worked for many years.

The First calendar of 12 Events included Harewood Hill, MG Midlands Curborough, Baitings Dam, Scammonden Dam, Aintree etc. The first regulations were published on the 16th January 1989

In that first season the 12 events attracted 36 Competitors. The season opener at Harewood attracted 8 MGs the following MG Curborough saw 11 MGs and by the mid season Aintree over 20 MG drivers maxed their cars on the railway straight!

The following years saw the championship grow and develop. We realised that a championship sponsor would allow us to provide proper end of season prizes and “Quick” Rick Hockney of Barry Stafford MG (latterly Moss MG) a regular competitor and go fast parts supplier came up trumps and supported us for many years. The Shirley Stafford Rose Bowl (for Fastest Lady) is still awarded today at the NW Centre Dinner.

As the years went by interest grew from both competitors and event organisers, Hand cut glass trophies using Jim’s excellent photos as a guide were a hit with the 60+ competitors and being able to provide up to 25 cars at an event meant that we were being invited to the first class historic venues including Prescott, Shelsley Walsh, Loton Park as well as the new Ty-Croes circuit on Anglesey. We still attended the nursery slopes of Scammonden and Baitings to help the novices learn the craft.

By 1995 with over 60 registered competitors the Moss Norwester was beginning to overshadow the Brown & Gammons Championship.

For 1996 we became a national championship and numbers grew towards 100 registered competitors, the calendar also expanded, but with a huge choice of events on offer, the number of folk attending individual events started to dwindle, losing the fun local championship feel we had aimed for at the start. Urgent action was required and a proper rethink.

For 1998 the Championship was re-launched as the MG Car Club Moss International Speed Championship. The calendar was divided up into North and South, with four joint events in the Midlands. Each series has its own points system and class awards and the highest points scorer is the overall National Champion.

In 2000 Piper Cams sponsored the championship providing knobbly cams at cost to the competitors,

In 2001 David Wood’s “Luffield MG” came aboard as our title sponsor providing a huge crystal glass trophy in 2003 to the Overall Championship winner, and is still with us in 2014.

Jim Garvey passed on the co-ordinator’s role to Lawrie Brown who brought with him excellent negotiating skills to get us into the best venues in the country. The baton has now been handed on to John Wilman a long seasoned competitor who is building on Lawrie’s good work.

The age of excel spread sheets, a borrowed Nottingham SCC scoring system and Helen Waddington hitting the keys gives us an excellent results service. John Thomas’s Website keeps us all connected.

The Co-ordinator/Speed Committee reporting to MGCC NW, runs the championship. Hamish stepping down as a Steward in 2013 with our grateful thanks, along with Mike Littler and Rolland Berry who were with us from the early days.

Looking forward, we are always looking at refining and improving the regulations and championship, getting up to speed with the latest turbo diesel MGs which were unheard of when we started, as well as welcoming `T Types` to the championship in the last few years.

We have learned much in the last 25 years and look forward to providing fun low cost MG Motorsport for the next 25years.

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