

Loton Park Saturday 8 April 2023

Championship round 1, Wally Cuff round 1

It was nice to get out on track again after the five-month winter break. Fortunately the weather was fine and dry, all-be-it rather cold at night. The course was in excellent condition, with several areas of fresh tarmac. Turnout was a little disappointing with only six drivers in the singles and three for the larger engined class, the meeting also having fewer entries than usual.

Before first practice a couple of gremlins put in an appearance, Charles found the oil feed pipe to the valves had come adrift and Russell and Marks' engine refused to fire, the coil had failed and two plugs were suspect. Fortunately all problems were fixed without too much trouble. Everyone had a successful climb, although Hamish's engine was miss-firing a little towards the end. He had lost a valve cap.

Practice two delivered improvements for all except Hamish whose engine must have bent a valve, causing him to abandon the run at Triangle. The family then carried out a quick engine change over lunch in time for the competition runs in the afternoon.

Meanwhile in the larger cars, all were running well after the issues were sorted, the Elva beginning to make the most of the replacement rear tyres for this season.

Timed run 1

Fin, Richard and John all found a little time but Hamish abandoned the run at Triangle as the engine would not pull properly, subsequently found to be a carb blockage. Mike missed his braking at Triangle, hitting a marker cone, whilst Alistair also had a moment, so both knew they could do better.

Charles held a small lead over Russell, possibly due to the latter not able to take first practice.

Timed run 2

As the double driver, Mark was first away but found his time had faded away. However, Charles managed to find quite a chunk of time to record his best time in years at the hill, and hold off a fast charging Russell. Meanwhile, in the singles all except John found time, Fin edging ever closer to the record he set in 2021. Uncharacteristically John had a moment towards the end of his climb, losing a second. Hamish was at last able to put in a trouble free run on what was only his second ever complete climb of the hill.

And so the day came to a close, everyone content with the results but always wanting more. Day two of the meeting was to see only John, Alistair and Mike stay over. Alistair and Mike found some gains but John, who had adjusted his gearing, could not.

The next round is at Wiscombe on 20 May.

