

Loton Park 19 & 20 April 2025

Mixed Fortunes

Tony Quinn

The entry list looked promising with the largest number of Morgans since COVID - 14 on Saturday and 12 on Sunday, reduced to 11 as Dave Pitt had unresolved engine issues arising from the Hereford Speed Trials Tour a few weeks beforehand.

Saturday

It was the first Challenge Series event of the year for everyone. Inevitably some teething troubles would surface, but surprisingly these came from experienced competitors. In first practice Chas Reynolds' gearbox tightened up. Then, the rear wheel on Tim Giddens' Super Aero seized on the exit from Fallow. Thirdly, Keith Cook locked up the front wheels and went straight n into the tyre wall at Museum. Ouch! This resulted in quite some delay and the Morgans lost the opportunity of a second practice run.

On returning to the paddock, Alistair Rew was concerned that outside flywheel on his JTOR Aero had slipped on its taper and resolved to do just one gentle timed run.

The other Morgan crews had uneventful practice and timed runs with the track drying out as the day progressed. Of particular note were the Speed Trials Tour organisers Colin Bromley with Lucy Hawker in the yellow ex-Clutterbuck Safari and Stephen Kay with a delightfully original F4 complete with ford 8hp engine.

Danny Hodgson had experienced a lack of oil pressure in his 100E engine so had brought his Buckland B3 racer to do battle with the Morgans. This left Tony Pearson with no direct rival in the Pump Fuel category of the Racing Class. However, Tom Cowley in the 1296cc MX2 two speeder would now have competition from both Dez Shotton and Danny who was clearly fired up to do battle with the twins.

The occasional drizzle died out by late morning and the afternoon runs took place on a drying track. All the Morgans completed their climbs without incident. Best Morgan time fell to Bill Tuer as expected. There was a close fight for second place with Tom Cowley coming out on top pipping Danny and Dez respectively.

Sunday

Sunday dawned dry and became sunnier in the afternoon, so conditions were near perfect. Hamish Bibby in the driving seat of Bill Tuer's racer recorded an outstanding time of 64.91. As previously the contest for second place was tight. On his second run Danny Hodgson improved to record 70.14 as against Tom Cowley's 70.44. Tom felt that his second run was slower than his first, but was please to see that he's just scraped under the 70-second barrier at 69.97.

Tony and Charlene Pearson improved on the previous day's best time by a second to record 75.69 while the Touring Modifieds of father Tony and daughter Cathy Quinn had uneventful if unspectacular runs.

The sole Standard Class entry was that of Iain and Graca Stewart in their lovely M type

Super Aero. Despite changing sprockets for the hill and his ever so neat and tidy driving, Iain was unable to match Steve Lister and Ruth's time in the Blackburne Aero the previous day.

Reflections on Loton

All the issues on Saturday affected Racing Class cars. The Touring Mods and Standard Class Morgans all had a relatively trouble-free weekend. There's a moral there somewhere.

Catching up with Chas Reynolds post event:

My gearbox is apart and after the 1¾ climbs at Loton with a dry gearbox. There is surprisingly little to show for it at first glance other than slight heat evident on the worm. BUT it was, as suspected, the blind bush that caused the drag on the transmission, made it hard to push the Mog even downhill and would stall the engine even in neutral! A ream out of the bush and it's back together.

Of course I expect to be the source of derision and piss-taking for some time to come. I do recommend, to avoid such harassment, it's easier to MAKE SURE YOU'VE FILLED THE GEARBOX.

Just let me add, as I am sure others will, that it was marvellous to see so many new faces mingled with the more familiar. I sincerely hope everyone for whom it was a first time out, was encouraged by the event to at least do it again and even better to book themselves NOW into the Club's Curborough day.

Update from Alistair Rew:

I am hoping to get my Mog back together again this weekend – leaving me next weekend as a backstop if there are problems before Wiscombe.

My Mog wasn't running well on the first practice run – it was firing on both but something was up... I suspected ignition timing.

My ignition timing marks are on my outside flywheel. On inspection, I found 2 issues

- *The outside flywheel TDC mark no longer lined up with TDC – the flywheel had shifted; and*
- *There seemed to be an inconsistent amount of advance between cylinders*

A trial re-set of the timing helped a bit for the my only timed run, but I chose to retire after that in case I damaged the mainshaft.

From the Speed Trials Tours duo. Firstly Stephen Kay:

For a variety of reasons, the last time I did a hillclimb was on four wheels, in Scotland and about thirty years ago. Oh what excitement I have missed, the adrenalin, keeping a perfect line, feeling lucky that ear plugs and the helmet stops any worries about hearing valves bouncing, and that crucial competing decision making; can I change up from first! Ooops, back down to first. I know the machine left Pickersleigh Road with that engine, but maybe the hour fast approacheth for another engine, maybe two more horse power might get times to under two minutes. What a cheerful, helpful and tolerant gang MTWC are, can I turn up again and try for STD at Curborough?

...and Colin Bromley:

The day dawned very wet in Herefordshire, Safari was fired up & put in the trailer, I was soaked just from doing this, we set off for Loton.

As we progressed the weather improved & by the time we arrived it was not raining, but the track was wet. Our first (and only) practice run was very slow, a nearly worn out rear tyre made getting off the line difficult & we crept round triangle & through the top complex.

After lunch our first competitive run was on a dry track, so we shaved around ten seconds off the mornings time.

I know I'm not really brave enough for hillclimbing, those who know Loton are able to keep at full throttle up the straight (which isn't) and brake after the crest into the left hander, I find this very difficult, as I can't see the corner until I'm over the crest, but on both runs in the afternoon I convinced my foot to remain on the floor, I still found it bloody frightening.

So the two afternoon runs were in the 85s, with the second being slightly faster, as ever we are slow in class, as are running on petrol, where as all the surviving twins were on methanol.

As ever fun was had, we don't do much competition, as have many other commitments, so the couple of events a year we manage are a highlight.

More work to be done before Curborough, including some better tyres, maybe this will be the year when Safari completes Curborough, as it's failed to do so both times we've entered.

Finally, from Steve Lister:

The highlight of the Loton Park weekend for Ruth and me was meeting up with great friends again after the winter break.

Closely followed by the excitement of the band brake on the Blackburne Aero actually slowing the Morgan down – quite important when you don't have a free hand to use the front brakes. It worked so well that on the final run we locked up the rear wheel going into the left hander at the top of Cedar Straight – Bill Tuer and Tom Cowley commented that it improved the line we took around the corner. Praise indeed!

Detailed results here: [Resultsman Live Timing](#)

Hillclimb.TV on Youtube for Saturday: [Midland Championship Hillclimb LIVE from Loton Park - Saturday](#)

Hillclimb.TV on Youtube for Sunday: [Midland Championship Hillclimb LIVE from Loton Park - Sunday](#)



Photos by Dennis Rushton

Steve Lister and Ruth in their lovely drop chassis Blackburne Aero taking best Standard Class time.



Danny Hodgson in the Buckland B3 exits Keepers. You too can own a lovely road-going Buckland B3 with competition history. Speak to Steve Lister, contact details in the Bulletin under club officers.



Keith Cook keeping it on the black stuff..... for the time being. Cathy Quinn takes cover.



Colin Bromley & Lucy Hawker in the Safari.



