



The *Unofficial* Race Series Newsletter

Championship Settled at Brands

The ninth round of the MMCC took place at Brands Hatch during a two day meeting arranged by the MG Car Club. Only fifteen Morgan drivers registered so our series was combined with the Peter Best BCV8 Championship, making a total of twenty one cars. Some of the MGs were on slicks, as their race series allows, so the battle for pole looked stacked against the Morgans. As the Morgans went out for practice in the sunny, Saturday, sunshine, Keith and Peter H were each determined to qualify in the best time possible as both were in contention for the overall championship.

During practice Rick was delighted to find that his car seemed to be handling well, while Keith had an uncharacteristic spin or two but was still managing to clock consistently good times. When the results were published Rick was found to have put in a storming lap and qualified on pole nearly half a second ahead of Keith and with an MG between them. Peter was the next Morgan, in fifth place, to head class B with his nearest class B rival in all senses, James P in seventh. The next Morgan was Paul B in ninth to head class C with Chas right behind in his 4/4. Kelvin in seventeenth place headed class D with David in twentieth leading himself and an MGC.

It seemed that the race the next day would be far from straightforward, complicated by the MGs and with Rick threatening to throw a spanner in the works of the

overall championship points. However, much more serious events occurred in the following Endurance race when both Peter and Rick's John Eales engines blew up, destroying any further attempts at racing, and their credit ratings, in ugly, oily puffs of smoke. It seemed that Keith would indeed prevail, but such things are never certain until the flag is lowered.

Rick retreated to his hotel while Peter, in an attempt to boost the Morgan numbers, returned home to coax his retired Moss box from the garage where it has been moth-balled for the last two years. Happily it started first time arriving at the track the next morning just as Rick returned sadly to take his mangled engine and car home from the track.

Peter joined a number of assorted cars in an extra practice session, which included Mary and Andy, to warm up the engine and everything else on the car. He was then allowed by the Clerk of The Course to join the end of the Morgan/ MG grid with Steve Williams, an extremely speedy MG driver, who had also had engine problems but of a repairable nature.

The flag was lowered and everyone set off. Keith and Peter had bad starts, Keith allowing two MGs to get away first, while other Morgan drivers had mixed fortunes. Paul surged forwards to James's front wing but could not see Simon OG his nearest rival for the class C championship right behind

him. Then Andy was going sideways across the track at Paddock Hill Bend with all those following desperately attempting to miss him. Chas who had been hit was also rather off course and he and Andy collected one another ending up in the gravel trap. In an unrelated incident an MG went off going up into Hailwood. The red flags began to wave furiously and those who could returned to the grid. Chas was pulled out first from the gravel, but drove very slowly around the track and into the pit lane where his lovely car was found to have a large hole in the shape of a tyre, in its front wing. Andy drove around much more quickly and after some hastily applied duck tape, and the removal of his bumper was allowed to rejoin the race from the pit lane exit.

The second start was more circumspect with Keith easing off the revs and maintaining second place rather than skidding. Peter too got a better start in a very unfamiliar car and quickly moved up seven places by out-braking class D into the corners to move up behind Leigh by the end of the first lap. Andy at the very back moved up three places while the MG of Steve Williams moved up fourteen places.

Paul B was seriously hassling James and the two had a real ding dong of a race with Paul getting ahead on the sixth lap and James setting up an overtaking manoeuvre about half a lap before managing to retake his position and earn his points as class winner on

continued on page 2

2002 Championship Class standings after 9 rounds

Class A	
Keith Ahlers	94
Rick Lloyd	54
Philip McKelvey	29
Peter Garland	25
James Edgerton	16
Christopher Williams	11
Matthew Wurr	8
Tim Bryan	7
Simon McDermott	6
Phil Brown	6
Adam Jones	2
Grahame Bryant	2
Barry Sumner	1
Class B	
Peter Horsman	72
James Paterson	66
Chris Acklam	43
Phil Hollins	28
Peter Sargeant	20
Chas Windridge	12
James Bellinger	7
Grahame Walker	4
Phil Brown	2
Class C	
Paul Burry	66
Simon Orebi Gann	63
Andy Green	44
Leigh Sebba	35
Paul Chauveau	28
Chris Dady	24
Class D	
Kelvin Laidlaw	73
Jack Bellinger	52
Mary Lindsay	46
Philip Goddard	34
Rob Wells	11
James Bellinger	11
Class E	
David James	51
Stephen Wheatley	17
Adrian van der Kroft	15
Matt Taylerson	11
Brian Jenkins	6

continued from page 1

lap nine. Sadly despite Peter's attempt to boast the class B numbers with his Moss box, Chas's demise meant that full points were not awarded. Still James took consolation in being awarded 'driver of the day' for the tactic.

Paul maintained his place behind James and so won his class and fastest lap. Others in his class eliminated each other when Simon's rear bumper came into contact with Chris D's front tyre which meant that he had to retire on lap five with a rather flat tyre. Simon continued for two more laps when he too experienced handling problems and found that a valve had come off his tyre in the incident.

By the end of the race the Moss box had proved itself again and Peter had moved up into overall eighth place with Andy behind him. Phil McK was in overall tenth place having spent the race dicing with Leigh whom he beat to the line after Leigh had a little spin after trying to re-take Phil one last time.

Further back Mary and Kelvin were engaging in very close, stock car type racing. Kelvin's car bore rather a lot of red paint at the end of the race having been hit from behind twice at Clearways nearly spinning around on the

second occasion. He took fastest lap, but Phil G pipped both Kelvin and Mary to the line to take his first class win.

David was delighted to win his class as although there were no other Morgans in his class, he beat an MGC GTS who was four laps behind the winner while David was only three.

The honours all went to Keith who won the Morgan part of the race which gave him enough points to win the overall championship (despite only having two runners in his class after Rick's demise). Phil McK, in tenth place overall, took second in the winner's class, so he too went home a proud man.

The first and second places in the race went to the MGs but as they were on slicks that was hardly surprising, but meant that the Morgans did not look as competitive as they might. It was fortunate that the second place Steve Williams had started from the back as otherwise the race would have been very short as he finished a whisker behind the overall winner, Peter Collis.

Other class positions remain unsettled so the championship is going right to the wire at Silverstone next week. See you there I hope.

Ruth Horsman

Le Mans Classic – it

No longer a dream – this was an obsession – driving at Le Mans had become an all enveloping pursuit of the most famous race of them all. Now we were here, how could it live up to expectations? how could it justify all the time off work? all the money spent? all the effort put in by the team? Well the Le Mans Classic did just that – it was simply the most awesome motoring event ever to be held.

Preparations started in earnest on a wet, cold, May evening with the Morgan 4-4's first shakedown at Bedford Autodrome after a meticulous ground-up rebuild by Techniques. A race at the British Empire Trophy Races at Donington Park in June confirmed the car's potential and three races at the Bentley Drivers Club meeting at Silverstone in August proved its reliability.

Now at Le Sarthe on a warm Thursday evening the Morgan 4-4 team assembled. Martin Phillips, Team Manager had arrived from Pembrokeshire is his newly restored AC Aceca together with Team Photographer, Mike Noott. John Bunch and Clive Pollard drove down from the Lake District in John's MGB – its first major run after a 3 year rebuild. The pit wall crew of Doug and Matt Taylerson had driven via Chartres in their historic Morgan +4 'VON 777' to pick up the motor home. Brian Gateson, the proprietor of Techniques and Rob Muller breezed up in the Techniques van filled to the brim with spares and tools and, finally, Chris Acklam and I delivered my diminutive Morgan 4-4.

8.00pm, the car was tucked away in its reserved enclosure in the paddock, tools were stored in the pit, the motor home was fully operational and the team had gelled – we all needed beer and lots of it!!!

Friday was bright and dry and after a good night's rest at the Hotel Chantecler the team assembled, resplendent in white overalls. The main task of the day was scrutineering to be held at the Place du Jacobins underneath the shadow of Le Mans Cathedral. Getting away from the circuit was not easy as interest in the Morgan was intense and it was late morning before Chris and I took to the streets of Le Mans. The sun was hot, the traffic busy and every light turned to red just as we approached. The temperature gauge soared and within yards of our destination we had to pull over to let the car cool down.

Le Place du Jacobins, in contrast, was an oasis of calm. The crowds were contained behind metal railings, a jazz band oozed dreamy rhythms and a large free buffet kept the drivers happy with copious amounts of beer and wine. After waiting patiently for an Alfa TZ1, Porsche 550RS and Maserati 300S to be passed, we pushed the Morgan into the scrutineering tent only for the scrutineer to call a halt for lunch – only in France!!!

At 8.00pm, the team reassembled at the beautiful Abbaye De L'Epau for the black tie Gala dinner – a stunning event in gorgeous surroundings, but only one thing was on my mind – gunning the Mog down Mulsanne. I couldn't wait!!!

Pre Race Preparations

Thursday evening gave ample demonstration of the fantastic Le Mans Classic organisation. Signing-on was a breeze bearing in mind that there were 305 cars entered and in excess of 600 drivers. By

Practice

At 8.30am on Saturday 21st September the wait was over, I took to the track for practice – THE track – all 8.48 miles – ghosts of the Bentleys, Jaguar D types, Ford GT40s and Porsche 917s, Lord Howe,

Circuit	Brands Hatch														
Date	22-Sep-02														
LAP CHART															
	Laps -->														
Pos	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84
2	29	29	29	29	29	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98
3	94	94	94	94	98	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29
4	1	98	98	98	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94
5	98	1	1	1	1	50	50	50	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
6	50	50	50	50	50	1	1	1	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
7	71	71	71	71	71	71	71	71	71	71	71	71	71	71	71
8	19	19	19	39	39	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54
9	39	39	39	19	54	39	55	55	55	45	45	45	45	45	45
10	55	55	55	54	55	55	39	45	45	55	55	55	55	55	55
11	31	31	31	55	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31
12	54	54	54	31	45	45	45	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	48
13	48	48	45	45	48	48	48	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
14	41	45	48	48	41	41	41	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
15	7	41	41	41	7	7	7	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
16	45	7	7	7	11	11	11	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74
17	11	11	11	11	74	74	74								
18	74	74	74	74											

(supplied by Jan Jones)

gets no better than this

Mike Hawthorn, Bruce McLaren, Richard Attwood – dreams are made of this.

With my visor misting up and foot flat to the floor, the Morgan accelerated through the traffic of 60 pre-war race cars up to the Dunlop Bridge. Taking note of the flattish curbs at the top of the hill, the Mog swooped down the esses of Tertre Rouge and through the ever widening corner onto Les Hunaudieres – or as I know it, the Mulsanne straight. The marshalls and crowds were waving madly as an eerie peace descended. Cocooned in my own dreams, the 1098cc Coventry Climax engine was buzzed up to 6,000rpm, an indicated 70mph before changing up into 4th. Then at 5,200rpm and the speedo looking confused, it was time to wake up as the first chicane rapidly approached. Braking far too early, we skipped through the right and left corners and then back to the serenity of Mulsanne. Time to concentrate and check the instruments. All too soon the second chicane loomed with a Riley Brooklands adding a distraction. Leaving the braking later, but still far too early, we dismissed the Riley, accelerated through the chicane and crept up to the tail of a large Bentley. I wonder if they can see us? Sure enough the Bentley waved us through (!) and we hurried onwards.

We later found that the first part of the Mulsanne Corner can be taken flat with hard braking required for the tight right hander. It is important to carry speed through this corner and a piece of tarmac off to the left of the track allows a broad sweep to be taken.

Through the woods up the long straight to Indianapolis, the Mog was in its element. Taking note that there was no need to brake for the blind crest half way through the

woods we swooped through the banked curves of Indianapolis and accelerated down to Arnage. Arnage is an evil corner, sharp right, quite slow with no run off. It is a good spot for spectators as they can get really close to the cars and see the drivers fight with the resultant oversteer from an over enthusiastic right foot. The corner was too slow for 3rd gear of the Meadows box and too quick for 2nd hence it was the most frustrating part of the track. Bugged down out of Arnage, it seemed an age for the engine to come back on the cam.

The first of the Porsche curves is a banked right hander and braking could be left deep into the corner. The track seems to narrow after the following left hander perhaps an optical illusion created by the tall wire fences. A brief blast down to the Ford chicane where the curbs could be straightlined and back onto the pit straight. We had completed a lap of Le Mans – the world could stop turning now for all I cared.

My 2nd and 3rd laps concentrated on getting the braking right and carrying more speed through the corners before coming into the pits to hand over to Chris. Some 40 seconds had been wiped off that initial lap and there was more still to come. Chris completed two further laps and the Mog was classified in 49th place at an average speed of 63mph. We lay 4th out of 9 cars competing with engines under 1100cc.

24 Hours Racing

Pinch yourself, the grandstands are full, the clock is ticking towards 4.00pm and I am standing on the pit straight ready for the Le Mans dash. The crowd is cheering, the starter raises his flag and we're off. This is for real. I could have beaten Colin Jackson to-day.

Depress the clutch and pull

the starter the engine fires and the Mog moves off in one fluid motion. We're really in amongst it. A Stutz Blackhawk towers above us, Astons nibble at our heels, the scream of a Bentley blower, Invictas, Alfas and Talbots surge forward. Rileys, Bugattis, Delehayes and Altas, MGs and Lagondas all fight for the same inch of tarmac. This is Le Mans.

Out on to the Les Hunaudieres, the marshalls try to slow the cars down and regroup them for a rolling start. Pandemonium sets in, the old cars begin to boil, the Mog's temperature is up to 120°C, I am going to have to withdraw. At last the Marshalls see sense and the cars are allowed to continue in any order albeit behind a pace car. Thankfully, the temperature starts to fall.

Back onto the pit straight, the pace car pulls in and we're racing. The Mog runs magnificently and overhauls Rileys, Bugattis and even four Bentleys. By the end of 30 minutes racing, we take the chequered flag moving up to 39th overall and 2nd in class. Only a very rapid Riley Brooklands is ahead of us. My best lap is just shy of 65mph.

Brian has the car domiciled in the pits for post race checks and for fitting our powerful spot light. The beam given off is tremendous and negates use of the standard headlights.

At dusk, racing is suspended to allow cars to practice in the dark. Chris does a single lap before handing over to me. The central spotlight works a treat and racing at night becomes less daunting. I was struck by how the marker boards reflect in blue and how all the corners are well lit. The biggest issue seemed to be differentiating between the powerful track lights and the faster cars spotlights in the rear view mirror and plunging from well lit corners into unlit

straights. Amazingly, some of the pre war cars are carrying no rear lights at all!!!

Just after midnight, Chris took to the track for the 2nd race, retaining the position of the car from the previous race. Starting behind the pace car, Chris took off into the gloom. We now had an agonising 8 minute wait for the car to reappear. Spotting the car from the pit wall was no problem – the central spotlight saw to that. It was by far the brightest light on the track!! After 30 minutes racing, Chris had improved our position to 38th overall but now 3rd in class. Lap times had understandably dropped to 62mph.

Following a debrief and post race check, the team grabbed an hours sleep only to wake to find our 3rd race delayed due to problems on the track.

At 6.30am, with the moon still bright I took off behind the pace car for the 3rd race in 38th place. Coming around the Ford chicane, I noticed what looked like cement dust being kicked up by the Mog into the Bentleys headlights behind. Mmmm, time to concentrate on the start.

When the pace car peeled off, I floored the Mog and had the radiator dump its water all over me. Struggling to comprehend what was happening, I drew into the far end of the pit lane and switched off. The Marshalls pushed me back to the paddock entrance and I collared an unsuspecting spectator to help push the car back round to the rear of the pit garage. Imagine the team's surprise when I tapped on Brian's shoulder!! In a crisis like this, our teamwork was exemplary. A missing core plug was quickly diagnosed and a 2 EURO piece hastily hammered in place. In the mean time, the radiator had been refilled, the bonnet

continued on the back page

Circuit		Brands Hatch			Length		1.2262 miles					
Date		21-Sep-02			Weather/track		Sunny/Dry					
PRACTICE												
					Time		Behind					
Pos	No	Class	Driver	Car	(mins: secs)	Laps	(secs)	kph	mph			
1	2	A	Rick Lloyd	+8	51.832	15		137.06	85.16			
2	84	BD	Peter Collis	BV8	52.070	11	0.238	136.43	84.77			
3	29	A	Keith Ahlers	+8	52.296	17	0.464	135.84	84.41			
4	94	BD	John Wilson	BV8	53.068	22	1.236	133.86	83.18			
5	54	B	Peter Horsman	+8	54.411	16	2.579	130.56	81.12			
6	78	BC	Joe Parrington	BV8	54.746	21	2.914	129.76	80.63			
7	1	B	James Paterson	+8	55.022	15	3.190	129.11	80.22			
8	71	BC	Geoff Pyke	BV8	55.146	21	3.314	128.82	80.04			
9	50	C	Paul Burry	+8	55.266	22	3.434	128.54	79.87			
10	4	B	Chas Windridge	4/4	55.499	14	3.667	128.00	79.53			
11	73	BC	Piers Townsend	BV8	55.919	21	4.087	127.04	78.94			
12	45	C	Andy Green	+8	56.086	21	4.254	126.66	78.70			
13	39	C	Simon Orebi Gann	+8	56.210	21	4.378	126.38	78.53			
14	65	A	Philip McKelvey	+8	57.195	15	5.363	124.20	77.18			
15	19	C	Chris Dady	+8	57.276	20	5.444	124.03	77.07			
16	31	C	Leigh Sebba	+8	58.042	20	6.210	122.39	76.05			
17	41	D	Kelvin Laidlaw	+8	59.514	20	7.682	119.36	74.17			
18	48	D	Philip Goddard	+8	59.956	20	8.124	118.48	73.62			
19	7	D	Mary Lindsay	+8	1:00.958	19	9.126	116.54	72.41			
20	11	E	David James	+8	1:01.744	19	9.912	115.05	71.49			
21	74	BC	Alan Hunt	CGT	1:08.501	12	16.669	103.70	64.44			
RACE												
					Race time		Behind			Best		
Pos	No	Class	Driver	Car	(mins: secs)	Laps	(secs)	kph	mph	lap	kph	mph
1	84	BD	Peter Collis	BV8	13:12.212	15		134.51	83.58	51.992	136.63	84.90
2	98	BD	Steve Williams	BV8	13:12.841	15	0.629	134.40	83.51	51.429	138.13	85.83
3	29	A	Keith Ahlers	+8	13:24.689	15	12.477	132.42	82.28	52.586	135.09	83.94
4	94	BD	John Wilson	3GT V8	13:39.541	15	27.329	130.02	80.79	52.972	134.11	83.33
5	1	B	James Paterson	+8	14:06.023	15	53.811	125.95	78.26	55.091	128.95	80.12
6	50	C	Paul Burry	+8	14:06.932	15	54.720	125.82	78.18	55.211	128.67	79.95
7	71	BC	Geoff Pyke	BV8	13:12.881	14	1 lap	125.43	77.94	55.269	128.53	79.86
8	54	B	Peter Horsman	+8	13:37.198	14	1 lap	121.70	75.62	56.874	124.91	77.61
9	45	C	Andy Green	+8	13:44.000	14	1 lap	120.70	75.00	56.498	125.74	78.13
10	55	A	Philip McKelvey	+8	13:44.992	14	1 lap	120.55	74.91	57.140	124.32	77.25
11	31	C	Leigh Sebba	+8	13:59.923	14	1 lap	118.41	73.57	57.043	124.54	77.38
12	48	D	Philip Goddard	+8	13:23.211	13	2 laps	114.98	71.44	1:00.411	117.59	73.07
13	41	D	Kelvin Laidlaw	+8	13:23.363	13	2 laps	114.95	71.43	59.873	118.65	73.72
14	7	D	Mary Lindsay	+8	13:26.075	13	2 laps	114.57	71.19	1:00.111	118.18	73.43
15	11	E	David James	+4	13:14.564	12	3 laps	107.29	66.66	1:03.281	112.26	69.75
16	74	BC	Alan Hunt	C GT	13:26.205	11	4 laps	96.93	60.22	1:08.396	103.86	64.54
Not classified					(mins: secs)		kph			mph		
	39	C	Simon Orebi Gann	+8	6:59.285	7		118.60	73.69	57.736		
	19	C	Chris Dady	+8	4:01.749	4		117.54	73.03	57.526		
Fastest laps					(mins: secs)		kph			mph		
	A	Keith Ahlers			52.586			135.10	83.94	New lap record		
	B	James Paterson			55.091			128.95	80.13			
	C	Paul Burry			55.211			128.67	79.95	New lap record		
	D	Kelvin Laidlaw			59.873			118.65	73.73			
	E	David James			1:03.281			112.26	69.76			
Old Lap Records					(secs)		kph			mph		
3-May-99	A	Matthew Wurr			52.72			134.75	83.73			
3-May-99	B	Rick Lloyd			53.76			132.15	82.11			
7-May-00	C	James Paterson			55.61			127.75	79.38			
3-May-99	D	Peter Horsman			57.55			123.44	76.70			
25-Mar-01	E	Alan Wickenden			58.57			121.29	75.37			

Qualifying

& Race Results: Race 9

Le Mans Classic - cont from p3

straps refitted and I was back out on track. Time in the pits – 3 minutes!!! The teamwork was awesome.

The next two laps were very special. The sun rose gently bathing the circuit in a warm light. The Morgan sped on trying desperately to make up lost time. We flew through the corners and down the straights but were placed 49th and 6th in class. Our lap times were back up to 64mph.

Our final race was just after mid-day but the race time was curtailed by 5 minutes as the organisers tried to make up for time lost during the nights incidents. Now in 49th place, Chris had a lot of work to do to put the Morgan back up to the field. With perfect weather conditions and the team cheering him on, Chris cranked up the pace setting the car's fastest laps of the day. With a final lap just shy of 67mph, Chris hauled the car up to 35th place and 3rd in class.

On aggregate, we were eventually placed 42nd overall, 38th on index of performance and 3rd in class out of a total of 61 cars.

It felt so close to a real 24 hour race, what with minimal sleep, day and night racing and a fantastic team performance. All the cost, effort and worry had been vindicated. This was the best day of my life – well, very close!!!!

My heartfelt thanks goes to the Morgan 4-4 team, Techniques, the MSCC and my family for this huge indulgence. Live a dream – what more can I say.

John Clarke

Photo by Rick Wilson



Morgan Motor Company Challenge

Any information, stories, photos or anything remotely interesting to participants in the Race Series to Chris Acklam at The Old Vicarage, Sellindge, Ashford, Kent TN25 6EH.

Tel: +44 (0)1303 813803 Fax: +44 (0)1303 813737 email: chris@acklam.co.uk

See also www.mogsport.net and www.brakehorsepower.net for the latest opinions