

B is for Barbon

The Westmorland Motor Club's National B event which took place on the 19th June has quickly become one of the North's most popular events. So much so that the meeting was oversubscribed and some fifteen competitors were unlucky. The meeting was a round of the Longton Championship, the BOC Gases Northern Championship and the Morgan Speed Championship.

Dry weather had blessed the days before the event, but Friday saw plenty of rain and as the event got underway there was a bit of drizzle about. Spirits would be dampened later in the day however.

Towards the close of practice Eve Whitehead sharing the Megapin of Craig Powers climbed the bank at Crabtree, the first corner after the start and ended up going well off to the right. Eve was unhurt and the car was recovered during the lunch break by a monster JCB. Craig was quite upbeat and said the car should be out again soon. Another practice incident saw Simon Bainbridge take out the timing gear creating more work for timekeeper David Clay.

The afternoon's timed runs were punctuated by two spells of heavy rain. Some competitors had a fairly dry run, others on a drying track, but some unfortunates had to plough through quite a torrent of water.

Up to 1400cc Road Mods opened the proceedings and Mike Geen added to the trophy cupboard and maintained his lead in the Longton Championship taking the class from Steve Murphy's Cooper S with the Citroen AX GT of Martin Rowe 3rd.

Road Mods 1400 to 2000cc saw Nicholas Peacock take the class in his Lotus Elan with 32.10. Bobby Fryers Lotus Elise took second just ahead of John Moxham's Peugeot 205.

The "long arm of the law" took the over 2 litre Road Mods in the shape of Cockerthorpe Police Officer Peter Garforth's Renault Alpine GTA V6 Turbo. The Dieppe Express humbled the products of Zuffenhausen with the Porsche 911's of David Agnew and Graham Booth in 2nd and 3rd.

Robert Bellerby's Longton ambitions were helped as he won the first Road Modified Kit class in 31.70 seconds from George Hardman's Westfield, the Lancashire quantity surveyor unable to match his last years Barbon time of 31.73.

Geoff Ward's Westfield took the over 1700cc kit class just four hundredths clear of Roger Fish in the Carcraft Cyclone.

The small Mod Road class went the way of Ford World Rally Team sporting adviser Phil Short. Phil's Cooper S repeating last years win. James Clark's Rover Mini Cooper took second.

Graham Oates much campaigned Lotus Europa took the intermediate Mod Prod class in a time of 32.24, a long way off his class record of last year of 27.24. Graham must have been amongst those who ran in the heavy rain.

Mod Prods over 2 litres went to the first man to break 30 seconds in the timed runs. Despite clutch problems which caused him to turn the boost down some 100 bhp, Simon Bainbridge's Audi Quattro clocked a best of 29.45 seconds. Richard Hargreaves whose commentator sheet said he was "only here for a bit of fun, not competing seriously" took second in his Cosworth engined Mark II Escort on his first run. He carried a little too much speed into Lafone on his second run and slid gracefully on to the bank.

The Modified Road car engined kit class saw a tie on the first runs between Mark Hemingway and Dave Kilcoyne, both with 28.42, so joint first place was awarded despite Dave's second run being 0.18 quicker than class record holder Mark's.

WMC committee member Andrew Forsyth took second in his Dunnell Zetec engined Caterham with a best of 29.80 which also gave him an award for best time by a WMC member.

Tony Allinson's Hyabusa engined Radical took the bike engined class, the current BOC Gases Northern Champion clocking 27.71 giving him 3rd FTD. With some 400cc's less in his Kawasaki engine, Graham MacTavish came second with the Locost in 28.25.

Some of the Morgans ran with hoods up! What would H. F.S. have thought? Norman Wheat's 1500cc 4/4 came out victorious in 31.58 vanquishing the Plus 8s of Hexham's Steve McDonald in 2nd, this being his first time at Barbon, and the 3900cc version of Simon Baines.

Philip Major's Mallock Mk24B held off Stuart Nelson's Haggispeed to take the Sports Libre class despite scraping the Lafone hairpin Armco on his second run.

Racing Cars up to 1100cc saw the OMS Kawasaki ZZR of John Chacksfield take the win. His "Mr Consistency" performance clocked 26.52 on both runs and gave him FTD. Second in class and second FTD went to John Halstead in another of Steve Owen's creations.

Phil Nelson was the only Formula Ford under 30 seconds and took the class from Frazer Graham, both in Van Diemens.

A special mention must be made of Allan Staniforth, competitor no. 80, the competition number reserved for Allan by the WMC to celebrate his 80th birthday four days earlier. Despite the octogenarian status Allan recorded a sub 30 second time at Barbon in his Megapin. One of Allan's designs was also competing, Chris Taylor's Terrapin in Class 7C.

Racing and Sports Racing Cars pre 1959 saw Andrew Smith's Frazer Nash Supersports quickest in 33.52 seconds. Andrew should have been racing his ex Jack Brabham Cooper at Zolder, but chose to come to his local event instead. Keith Beningfield's MG TC was second.

Keith Schellenberg brought along the eight litre Bentley engined Barnato Hassan special, a car which held the Brooklands Outer Circuit lap record for a time in 1935 at 143 mph. The car is hardly suited to speed hillclimbing and Keith was fighting for control as the big car came out of the Lafone hairpin in the wet.

Another Keith, Keith Thomas, brought along his Buckler of 1938 vintage. The car ran at Barbon 50 years ago driven by Norman Hammond. Malcolm Buckler, son of constructor Derek Buckler, was present to see the car run again.

A shame about the heavy rain, but the WMC put on an excellent event and FTD man John Chacksfield paid tribute to the hard work done by the organisers and marshals in his prize acceptance speech.

Barbon Manor 19th June 2004

Westmorland Motor Club

FTD John Chacksfield (1.1 OMS Kawasaki) 26.52

Class Winners:

Mike Geen	(1.4 Peugeot 205)	33.96
Nicholas Peacock	(1.6 Lotus Elan)	32.10
Peter Garforth	(2.5 T Renault Alpine GTA)	33.85
Robert Bellerby	(1.6 Sylva Striker)	31.70
Geoff Ward	(2.0 Westfield SEi)	33.05
Phil Short	(1.4 Mini Cooper S)	31.48
Graham Oates	(1.8 Lotus Europa)	32.24
Simon Bainbridge	(2.2 T Audi Quattro)	29.45
John Howson	(1.7 Westfield)	33.57
Dave Kilcoyne and Mark Hemmingway	(2.0 Caterham)	28.42
Tony Allinson	(1.3 Radical Suzuki)	27.71
Norman Wheat	(1.5 Morgan 4/4)	31.58
Philip Major	(1.7 Mallock)	29.32
John Chacksfield	(1.1 OMS/Kawasaki)	26.52
Phil Nelson	(1.6 Van Diemen)	29.70
Andrew Smith	(Frazer Nash)	33.52