

MAC NEWS



MIDLAND AUTOMOBILE CLUB



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DRIVING SCHOOL NEWS

Following a good season of schools, thanks to our wonderful team of helpers, the main news was the departure of Tim Daniel from our team of instructors; his quick, dry remarks will be sadly missed as he could always put the pupils at ease with his humour, which sometimes washed over the less quick witted! However, it was with great delight that we welcomed his successor, Chris Merrick, who now has a little more time since he is no longer helping to uphold the law of the land. It would also be very remiss not to mention our sponsors, Paul Matty Sports Cars and Caterham Midlands, without whom the project would be less viable and attractive.

The driving school at Curborough will continue in 2007 as before and in much the same format, which has proved successful over the last nine seasons. However, we shall be only running two events at this venue, one on 24th April and the other on 4th September. We have had through the gates many pupils trying the sport as a taster, then taking it up with considerable success, several of whom are now household names in sprinting and hill climbing.

Not wanting to stand still, we have resisted the many requests to run events at Shelsley Walsh up to now on the grounds that (a) one needs a relatively powerful production car to make the course challenging and therefore enjoyable; (b) anyone can drive the right lines in a basic underpowered road car but won't learn a lot on or give instructors much to comment on or see who is responding to the instruction given; (c) we did not have the freedom of the venue that we now enjoy under our new lease; (d) a far larger marshalling staff is required to run such an event at Shelsley Walsh.

All these reasons can now be overcome and we feel that we can run a School at the venue, so we are foregoing our June date at Curborough, our least patronized date, to run an inaugural Shelsley School on Tuesday 26th June.

Application forms are available. So

apply if you want to be a part of it, to Jim Robinson, on 01509 852253 or e-mail jim.@cravirgin.net. The cost will be slightly more at £155 for the day and we will run to a very similar format with an entry restricted to thirty five. Morning coffee, lunch, tea and cake at the end of the day, will be supplied. Entry will be by selection, as we will not be accepting what we consider are unsuitable cars with low power to weight ratios, but all cars have to be road legal i.e. taxed, MOT'd and insured. The criteria will be a minimum power to weight ratio of 200 b.h.p. per ton, but there will probably have to be a little leeway on this.

We arguably have the best team of instructors available anywhere, in the form of Martin Groves, the present hill record holder; Simon Durling and Chris Merrick, both of whom have ascended the hill in under 25 seconds – who better to learn from.

Come and hone your skills.

J.R.

SPRINT SCHOOL – CHRIS MERRICK'S BAPTISM

After watching the weather forecast, there seemed no certainty that the man controlling the skies was going to oblige. In the event, we had no need to worry since it stayed fine all day, with no hint of rain.

Having had warning from Curborough that they had experienced yet another break-in, resulting in the gents loos being trashed for just twelve feet of copper pipe, it makes you wonder how desperate some lower forms of life can be and what makes their mentality work! We arrived to find a large deposit of engine oil in the middle of the entrance gateway and we wondered what the next treat was in store for us; fortunately none!

After the customary introductions and Chris Merrick's first participation in the school, it was patently obvious that he was going to take to the job the proverbial 'duck to water'.

There was the usual spread of widely varying machinery, from the diminutive Sylva Mojo to the mighty TVR Griffith, together with a mix of Caterhams, Westfields, MGs, Lotus Elises and production saloons, some potentially quicker than others. We also had no less than four lady drivers out of the twenty three entrants. It is indeed pleasing to report that they showed up many of their male counterparts because they, as always, come with no aspirations and act on whatever advice they are given in their quest for improvement.

The day went without any dramatic problems, there were a couple of spins and one overzealous attack of the Molehill by the perpetually videoing husband and wife entry, the Dewsbury family in their Vauxhall VX220, fortunately with no damage.

The undoubted 'Stars of the Day' were our regular 'medic', Dr. David Gidden in his Elise, which he had allowed one of his nurses, Lyn Luxton, to taste for the day and Land Rover

suspension guru, Neil Everett, in his beautifully set up Sylva Mojo; which was so stable, it beggared belief. The last one we had at an earlier event looked positively unsuitable. It has to be noted that Dr David and his competent nurse Lyn have appeared at every school this year and just keep coming back for more. Not only did Dr David and Neil score the highest marks of the day, but also happened to be the best scorers of the year. To make an even bigger coincidence, they came out with exactly the same score as our tied winners of last year, which was again achieved at the September event.

Everybody departed the event with big smiles on their faces and, judging by the feedback, several have plans to return for more.

Watch your magazine for next year's dates and maybe a different venue for the June school, if plans come to fruition. More news later.

J.S.R.

2007 VISITS

Subject to the interest expressed and the approval of the organisations concerned, we propose to make arrangements for visits to:-

- **The Morgan Factory**, on a weekday afternoon
- **MIRA**, on a weekday evening in April
- **Walter Somers (John Fowkes) Forge**, an evening
- **Prodrive, Banbury**, on a weekday evening

Contact Jeremy Nightingale - 58, Stratford Road, Bromsgrove, B60 1AU or telephone 01527 874565 or Fax 01527 870925

I.....am interested in the following visits

and wish to book places.

Please tick

Morgan
Malvern

MIRA
Hinckley

Somers
Halesowen

Prodrive
Banbury

ANDY PRIAULX, MAC MEMBER AND TWICE WORLD TOURING CAR CHAMPION!

1995 British Hill Climb Champion Andy Priaulx clinched the 2006 FIA World Touring Car Championship title in a tight, nail-biting finale to the series round the tortuous street circuit of Macau in mainland China. The BMW Team UK driver won race one and came fifth in race two to emerge ahead of the other eight title aspirants, beating fellow BMW driver, Joerg Muller, by just one point. It was only as he crossed the finish line for the second race that he knew the title was his, making it a historical three in a row for the Guernsey driver who won the European title in 2004 and the World title in 2005.

A jubilant and very emotional Priaulx said after the race: "A race is never easy, but the first one went according to plan. I was on pole, got a good start and led from start to finish. However, race two was a different kettle of fish. Although I had gone from one point behind series leader, Augusto Farfus, to five in front, the pressure was there and, of course, I was starting from eighth on the grid with a 45 kilo load of ballast. I reckon this was one of my best and at the same time hardest races ever."

Priaulx's explanation of what this win means to him was: "This one is special as every year you win a championship it means a lot more than the one before. Winning consecutive titles is very, very hard and the pressure on this one was massive. In 2004 I went to Dubai trailing by 12 points, so I was sort of discounted from being a serious challenger. Last year it was just three of us in with a chance, I was leading the series and the title was sown up after race one. Lots of factors have come into play this season and I can't forget that in the race meeting before this in Valencia I came from almost last to score a single point – how important that proved to be today. It has been a long season as we started racing in March, but even before that we were testing in January. I don't think

I need tell anyone what I am going to do tonight and for the next few days!"

Drivers' Championship Points

1. Andy Priaulx 73
2. Joerg Muller 72
3. Augusto Farfus 64
4. Yvan Muller 62
5. Gabriele Tarquini 57
6. Dirk Mueller 54

Manufacturers' Championship Points

1. BMW 254
2. SEAT 235
3. Alfa Romeo 154
4. Chevrolet 128

CURBOROUGH SPRINT – 10th OCTOBER

A smaller than usual field of sixty seven out of the seventy two entrants commenced the first timed run, after a generally well behaved morning practice session, in the MAC's final speed event of the year on a generally dry but overcast Sunday at this most demanding of sprint courses. However, there was a far from end-of-season atmosphere about the place as several battles were yet to be settled and there was still another HSA championship event to be run at the same venue the following weekend.

The diminutive amalgamated class for road going saloon and sports cars was blitzed by Roy Standley driving his indecently fast Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 5, nearly nine seconds clear of his nearest rival.

The merged Classes 2A and 2B saw a group of road going kit, replica and spaceframe cars being dominated by Ray Lohr, Caterham 7 Supersprint, who ended the day over a second ahead of John Bradshaw, Sylva Striker. Curborough Sprint School winner, Neil Everett, was thoroughly enjoying his sprint entry prize, recording a highly creditable best time of 38.05 sec. in his Caterham 7 Academy, to record third fastest in class.

A great selection of machinery was found in the merged class for modified production cars, which included

Porsches, an Impreza, a Westfield, an Audi Quattro, a Lancer Evo 7, amongst several others. However a fantastic second run performance of 33.89 sec. by seasoned campaigner Kim Johnson, driving his super little 1380cc MG Midget, just managed to snatch the class victory from Paul Perkin, driving a very quick Peugeot 205, who had led at the halfway point. Paul was a mere 0.04 sec. adrift at close of play but he remained over 0.5 sec. quicker than third placed Robert Harriman in his Subaru Impreza.

Four contested the Sports Libre and Hillclimb Super Sports Cars class which was dominated throughout by Les Procter in his OMS SC3. Adrian Britnell was second in a Force SR4, ahead of Bob Dayson in his Ward Mk. 8D. In the class for racing cars up to 1100cc, a great battle developed between Phil Nuthall and Brian Sanders who were sharing a Jedi Catpol. Only 0.06 sec. split them at the end of the first run, but Phil widened the gap on his second attempt, as he recorded 31.33 sec. to clinch the class win.

The class for racing cars over 1100cc was destined to provide the Fastest Time of the Day award as there was a very impressive line up of quick cars and drivers. Immediately a close battle began between Simon Durling, Sue Young and Deryk Young. At the end of the opening run Deryk had the advantage but it was extremely close between Sue and Simon with only 0.09 sec. between them. In the second round, Deryk locked up going into the hairpin and lost precious fractions of a second. Unfortunately, Sue was unable to improve on her first run time and this gave Simon the golden opportunity to grasp both the class and overall victories. However, as he charged out of the Molehill, it was clear he was trying extremely hard but as he threw the red Gould into the righthanded Fradley Hairpin, he span out of contention.

The Largest Class of the day was for competitors in the Austin Healey Club's 'Healey Sport' Speed Challenge. This brought together a superb cross section

of Healeys from Frogeyes to rally-prepared 3000's. On the day, the ultra competitive yellow Mark 1 Sprite, as seen on television, of Stuart Bullas and Robin Johnson set the pace for the rest to try and match. At the end of the first round, Stuart was ahead, having posted a great 37.14 sec. which was three tenths quicker than Robin. Richard Mason posted a very competitive 37.31 sec. in his 3000 Mk. 11 to move into third place. In the second run, it was a pitch battle between these three. Possibly trying a little too hard, Stuart was unable to better his opening run time, which in the end was only good enough to claim third spot. An absolute storming performance from Robin shot him into the class lead as he recorded 36.99 sec. This set the challenge for Richard who chucked the big Healey round with tremendous skill and only just failed to match Robin by a mere 0.03 sec.

Roger Burstow took the honours in a small, but very quick class for GT40's, driving his 6.8 litre example. There was a very interesting group of cars in the Post War Classic Cars class which saw a fastest time of 34.80 sec. by Martin Jones driving a pretty Ginetta G17. However, this class was run on a handicap basis and the gorgeous little Nike FF Mk6, driven by Edward Tyack took the honours with another Formula Ford in second place, this time it was Peter Whyte, in a Lotus 22.

Finally, the fastest Pre-war Sports and Racing Car class time of 39.64 sec. recorded by Paul Richardson, Delage Special, was not enough to claim the class honours on handicap, this delight fell to Rupert Whyte driving an absolutely beautiful Wolseley Hornet Special.

The C. R. Instone Trophy for FTD went to Deryk Young, Gould GR51 and the MAC Challenge Trophy was won by Simon Durling, Gould GR55B, and Sue Young was the fastest lady by a country mile. Thus ended a well fought and very enjoyable sprint, closing the Club's speed season.