

## GURSTON DOWN SPEED SERIES ROUND 3 – Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2008

Eighteen Speed Series competitors turned up to try what is a well known hillclimb venue but which is new to the Speed Series. All but a few were new to the hill and for some it was their first event ever.

Unusually the hill starts with a sharp down hill section at the bottom of which is a deceptively fast left hander called Hollow. The corner gets its name from a dip on the exit which has been known to throw cars into the steep bank on the right. By now you are on the serious uphill section with 2 Right handers that make up the 180 degree plus Karousel. A nasty yump that can get the car airborne is just before Ashes a 90 degree left leading onto the finish straight which is anything but straight.

Saturday morning dawned with steady rain and a strong chilling wind which was enough to make it difficult to put up awnings. So much for the forecast of light showers!

The organisation was pretty slick and there were calls for Batch 1, which included all the Westfields, well before 9 o'clock. The start line was amazingly slippery and first run 64ft times of 4+ secs were common place. Further down the hill the grip was better but everyone, including those who had competed there before were being very cautious. With 2 practice runs and lunch under the belt it was time for the real business.

First runs saw Graham (Windy) Millar in setting the pace in his Escort a trend that was to going to continue into the second runs. Next up were Barry Slingsby sharing Matt Hillam's car, Brian Jones and Keith Adams. Matt's excuse was that he was getting use to his new sequential gearbox! Almost everyone improved on their morning times and some of the newcomers were really getting to grips with the conditions.

There was a brief respite from the rain before the second runs so at least the Marshals had a dry spell in which to recover a very badly bent Elise embedded in the trees about 150 meters after the start. Fortunately the driver walked away from what was a very big accident..

The rain returned for the Second runs which once again saw Windy fastest with Matt finally sorting out the gears and moving up to second place demoting his co-driver to third. Brian Jones and Keith Adams where next up with Peter Hayter sixth possibly suffering from an excess of power for the conditions. Well done to the Speed Series virgins, I think the FTD winner hit the right note his speech when he said "it was a day when everyone had their own personal challenges to meet".

Commiseration to ex-Speed Series competitors Rob and Colin Way whose newly acquired Jedi shed a sprocket which damaged the frame and punched a hole in the engine casing.

Despite the rain it was an enjoyable day and a super venue that deserves a place in the Speed Series Calendar next year.

Finally, a quote from the report on the BARC website:

"Bizarrely the big class of Westfield Cars was won by the invited Graham Miller driving his 2.0 Ford Escort Mk 2 with considerable gusto!"

Martin Hepworth