

(Results from Triple - Issue 49 - January 1991)

testing trial

THE FOURTH TESTING TRIAL

by Alan Foster

If you want a good trial, give the job to a successful team. Fortunately, we don't have to 'give' the job of organising the M.C.C.'s youngest event to a team; they get together of their own accord and give a hundred or so competitors a good day's light-hearted fun in - this year - pleasant September sunshine. So once again, our thanks to John Aley, John Hayes, Dick Peachey, Alan Low, Pat Worsfold, John and Jenny West and the host of other helpers, marshals, friends and relations who made the whole day such a pleasant experience.

For those who have not ventured to Charnage Down near Mere, take seven of the sort of special tests which feature in the three main trials, put them together on a sloping downland site, and you have the picture. Give each competitor three attempts - all to count - of falling off their mount, going the wrong way, hitting cones, not stopping astride lines - all against the clock - and an event is born.

In this year's dry conditions, traction was not a problem, although early on there was less of it than first impressions indicated. The challenge of the day was to drive consistently, accurately, economically in terms of distance travelled, but still quickly enough to stay ahead of the pack. Ron Butcher was heard to say that he could drive accurately and drive quickly - but not at the same time. A number of well-known names experienced the same problem ...!

A feature of this year's gathering was the emergence of yet another generation of trialists. John Hayes had son Tony riding shotgun on the 920cc Wasp Norton, but had to give pride of place to the more experienced family pairing of Neil and Arthur Brown, who, after the application of the demon Aley handicap formula, won the event overall for the second year running on their 840cc Wasp RT 17. Will the formula change next year? In the open car class, young James Mountain was trying hard to stay in touch with father, Peter, in the flat rad +4 Morgan. The same challenge was being addressed in the GT Beetle with Hilary being enthusiastically encouraged by a number of regular trialists-cum-marshals-for-the-day, to give your scribe a hard time. All credit to the car for surviving the day ahead of the other tin-tops. Pam Jobling was going well enough in her Dyane to keep son Guy in his place, despite having nearly two and a half times the swept volume in his Riley 1.5. A number of other private family competitions were evident as the day progressed and mistakes occurred. On two wheels, Steve Jackson proved that 185cc was all that was necessary to win the class quite convincingly, making

up for his disappointment last year when a puncture slowed his progress in the last round. But after all, he is a third generation M.C.C. competitor!

Having said that the day was light-hearted fun, competition was deadly serious in the open car class. At the end of over seven elapsed minutes of competitive motoring, less than 8 seconds covered the first four places with Steve Strutt and the Dellow Mk I displacing Philip Winnel's Troll into second spot by the closest of margins. Peter Chandler proved that a well-driven Mini can still finish ahead of other front-wheel drive cars.

A new award this year was for the most senior driver and vehicle combination. Reuben Welch appears regularly at this event in his Lea Francis, and with a total of around 140 years, was a most popular winner. A certain Jack Pouncy and wife were seen on an outfit after the event a 1991 challenge?

Same place, same weekend next year. How about a few more lady competitors?