

## Cobham Austin 7 Trial

Brooklands Centre, Sunday 28th April

words Nigel Coulter    photographs Don Stringer

After last year's appalling conditions it was a real treat this year to return to the top of the plateau overlooking the big house in Cobham Park to set up our base of operations - secretary's tent, scrutineering bay, paddock for vintage cars, and moderns/trailer parking.

With the use of the excellent equipment kindly lent to us by the 750MC Sporting Trials section, we laid out 10 sections. Competitors attempted one round of 10 hills in the morning and another round on the same hills but 'adjusted' in the afternoon, giving them 20 hills to attempt. Cars in all classes attempted all the same hills. There were five sections facing the big house, grassy slopes with a steep finish, two in the woods, and three in the 'Warren', lush green slopes with sandy subsoil.

On Sunday morning Ian Nelson arrived early to man the gate to welcome entrants and direct them to the parking/paddock area and from the organisers' point of view, things went smoothly from there on.

There were 36 entries with two non-starters leaving 34 competing entries. We had 6 standard production A7s in class 1 this year, four Chummies, an RP and an



RN saloon. Also there were three production sports in class 2, Martin Eyre's Grasshopper replica, Martin Baker's Speedy and Martin Whittaker's Ulster. (This class was dominated by Martins!) The biggest class (as usual) was the Modified Sports and Specials, class 4, with 21 entrants with two non-starters. The modified Saloons/Tourers (class 3) comprised four Chummies and Robin Hanauer's SWB Box.

There were nine 750MC entries, nineteen VSCC entries, and six PWA7C entries, and these gain points towards the PWA7C Grasshopper Challenge. It was gratifying to see that there were 11 newcomers to the Cobham Trial.

Entrants came from near and far including newcomers Ian, Gill and Chris Webb from Ellesmere, Shropshire, regulars Don and Helen Skelton from Yorkshire, and Alistair Bramwell from Whitworth, Lancashire.



Above: Wendy Coulter (winner class 3) and Barbara Longhurst double entering 'Skanky'; left: overall winner Don Skelton with Helen with the wind in their hair



A notable first this year was that there were three generations of one family taking part in the Trial. Terry and Jenny Gosling's grandson George, now 12, was bouncing for his dad Stuart. He has been ultra keen for years and is looking forward to driving in the Trial in two year's time.

Three cars retired, Derek Brown's unfortunately suffered a broken half shaft, Andy Joyce's Speedex burst a core plug and he sustained a scalded ankle and wisely retired after speedily fixing the core plug, and Alistair Bramwell retired.

A big thank you to all our marshals; first-aider Karen Bawden; my Humber friend and vintage trials expert Philip Longhurst from Ringmer who acted as Clerk of the Course this year; Scrutineers David Cochrane and Roger Horsfield (David and Ilke Cochrane came down from Rugby to help for the weekend); Robin Gray who lent his EasiUp tent for the

event; Tony Tickle who was steward and helped to marshal; and of course Dominic Combe for the use of such a fantastic venue. I am grateful to the setting out team who came on Saturday - Centre members Bev Keable; Sue and Richard Perkins; and Colin Shaw; as well as Philip and Barbara Longhurst; and David and Ilke Cochrane.

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*Above: Stuart Gosling with son George taking part in his first Trial; left: Nigel Glover in his standard Chummy on his way to winning class 1*

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**Results:**

**Production Saloon/Tourer class:**

1st Nigel Glover in a 1928 Chummy, 2nd Emma Whitfield in a 1927 Chummy, 3rd Colin Shaw, 1929 Chummy.

**Production Sports class:**

1st Martin Eyre in the Grasshopper, 2nd Martin Whittaker in a 1931 Sports, 3rd Martin Baker, Speedy.

**Modified Saloons/Tourers class:**

1st Wendy Coulter in a 1929 Chummy, 2nd Bob Thompson in a 1928 Chummy, 3rd Barbara Longhurst, 1929 Chummy.

**Modified Sports and Specials class:**

1st in class and 1st overall Don Skelton in his 1930 special, 2nd Stuart Gosling, 1930 Sports, 3rd Peter Kite, 1930 Ulster replica.

**Best Newcomer** was Jim Wood in Peter Kite's 1930 Ulster replica.