

DDMC - 23/24 SEPT 2007

The weekend of 22nd/23rd September saw various championships venture to Croft for a weekend of racing and off track fun, as the Darlington and District Motor Club (DDMC) held their annual championship racing event. Saturday's activities culminated in the usual barbeque event, with all members of the DDMC and their families welcome.

With the Northern Saloon & Sports Car Championship (NSSCC) being present for this meeting, Paul Luti was obviously there, and aiming to impress the crowds.

Saturday started off reasonably well for Paul, when he put in a respectable best qualifying time of 1:37.622; a time that would earn him fifth on the starting grid for race one. Returning to the notion of 'aiming to impress the crowds', Paul definitely sufficed as he managed to fight his way through to finish third after a few battles here and there, although second was the preferable choice. "I was heading for 2nd overall, but a late braking attempt from Andy Robinson put him and myself onto the grass, dropping me down to 4th. I did get back to 3rd but 2nd place was out of reach." Said a resilient Paul.

After a good result on Saturday, Sunday was hopefully going to bring even better results. Paul had an amazing start, to work his way from fourth on the grid to be leading the field into the first corner. However, despite leading the race for most of the first lap he lost out towards the end of lap one to come around the hairpin in second. After appearing to be struggling during the second lap, he came into the pits at the end of lap two to call it a day. "Race two was a disaster" said Paul. "An unfortunate miss-reading of the engine oil dipstick meant I had 2 litres of oil missing, bringing on the oil light as I turned left or right. Desperate not to damage the engine, I trundled around on lap two and headed straight for the pits." Bringing an early closure to his second race of the day.

The final race of the day was the Allcomers Team Challenge, which saw 16 teams of two compete in a 40 minute relay style race. Each team was allocated a letter of the alphabet between A and R. Paul, competing in his MG ZT 520, completed the first 20 minutes of the race, with his team mate Mike Williamson, in his BMW 325 Sport, completing the final 20 minutes. This pairing made up Team K and finished overall in 10th place.

Commenting on the first two races, Paul said "Two great starts, I couldn't be happier! If only the tyres didn't go off. This car really needs to go on a diet." He said "There's not a tyre on this planet that can cope with the abuse this heavy beast gives them." Despite the weight of the car and the problems he encountered in race two, Paul had a good weekend. Maybe one day he'll be able to find a lighter car that will be kinder to its tyres. Then there'll be no stopping him!

Leanne Fahy