

Rooney's Farm Trial Sat 26th Oct

By Clive Gracey

Last year's event at this site had turned into an endurance test as we were hit by a snowstorm and cold winds so it was hoped that this year we would escape the harsher weather elements, alas it was not to be, but back to the beginning and the Graceys had spent a lovely sunny Friday helped by Duggie Parkinson in setting up 5 Hills on this huge site which at its highest is past the 1000ft contour. The view from the top is breathtaking with the Cave Hill at Belfast clearly visible, turning clockwise from that one could see Scrabo Tower at Newtownards and following round the whole of the Mourne mountain range some 26 miles in length was clearly seen.

Duggie and Jackie had made the crossing over early Friday morning and headed straight to the site to give assistance which was much appreciated.

The Hills were really laid out as before with the exception of number 2 which after a roll last year was not reused.

Hill 1 set up in fresh ground by Duggie turned out to be the toughest climb only cleaned by one driver all day. It wandered ever upwards over steep mounds past deep depressions and many boulders.

Hill 2 similar to last year with a twisty start and a difficult cross camber ending ever upwards.

Hill 3 again a cross camber start with a finish which became harder as the event progressed.

Hill 4 conquered by nearly all before the end but set much as last year and this is the problem with this site-super views but limited climbs due to its rock strewn nature.

Hill 5 a good climb with results from zero to 11.

This trial on the day of the Clubs annual Dinner and Prize giving is an all day event starting at 10-30 am and by 10 o'clock 14 drivers and cars had made it up the long lane from the road to the parking area this was a trial in itself but all made it successfully.

John Keatley was off at the Ulster Vintage Clubs winter trial in his Dellow but would join us at the Dinner; Al Booth was missing as was Michael McBratney, but like Master Keatley Michael would join us for the dinner his Sherpa still requiring work.

Up to now the weather was fine, dry and breezy the ground just right for trialling, not too wet so trickles were on the cards and where power was needed high gears could be used.

It was good to see Trevor Turkington out with his GPS, nephew David was not present-who would be driving, we had not long to wait for an answer as the Chair of Tandragees Thursday Club stepped forward and took the controls." When was that arranged" asked David W "just another secret" said Trevor.

And so to the Hills, round 1 saw both Mervyn and son Peter on 4 lost,Peter had come over for the weekend and is a member of our Club so the Kincraft Trophy would not be his ,this goes to the best placed English visitor so Duggie was in with a good chance provided he finished. Brian Edgar was on 10 as were Andrew and John McKinney but Simon Gracey was ahead on 9.In Class B Harry Barr had at this time the lead over Geoff McKay, however his last round and a 10 on Hill 4 cost him any possibility of a win.

Round 2 and Simon Gracey posted the best score of the day with a super 2 lost this to Champion Trevor Astons and Brian Edgars 3's.Where was the Turkington GPS with its arrive and drive triallist well after scoring fairly well in the first round lap 2 was not going so well and inboard fiddle brakes would feature in the excuses later at the bar, this is fair enough as only Ian Wright seems to be able to cope with brakes either in or outboard.

Into the 3rd round and a few spots of rain started to fall, however from our super vantage point 1000ft above sea level we could see the heavy rain approaching, ground conditions immediately started to deteriorate. The CoC then cancelled the lunch break-“trial on” was the instruction and trial on we did but the weather closed in with torrential rain and strong winds so again the CoC made the decision to cut down from 5 rounds to 4 and also to cancel hill 1 on the last lap as getting off the hill was becoming dangerous.

The final round in very wet conditions brought the best out in Brian Edgar with a super 3 lost, Mervyn McKinney was on 4 for the lap the rest followed, John McKinney had a diff or gearbox problem and took 12's at hills 2, 4 and 5 so was out of the running, 1 point separated Peter McKinney and Simon Gracey as it did with Andrew McKinney and Trevor Aston. In Class B Geoff McKay did the business followed by Peter Frost and Gerard Currid won Class C. Ground was raked in and posts were lifted, it was pelting down by now so the main aim was to pack up and get to the Burrendale Hotel asap.

A nice meal was followed by the Chairman's speech and then Michael Martin and wife Noreen, guest's of the Club handed out the Trophies. Michael the manufacture of Concord trials cars has been made an honorary member of our club and this was welcomed by all. The Burrendale Hotel has recently built on an extension and this is where we were with a private room and bar which was very comfortable. The night was rounded off with 'Tombola 'conducted as usual by Tandragees Thursday Club Chair although this time some very clever picture editing had him squirming with embarrassment at the end of the night,"whats Clive going to do with Toms picture" asked Peter Flack, 'hang it in his loo" said Trevor. The Bar stayed open until David Webster was finished with it and all went to bed.

Results 1st Class A	Mervyn McKinney	23
2 nd	Brian Edgar	24
3 rd	Andrew McKinney	25

1 st Class B	Geoff McKay	80
2 nd	Harry Barr	93
3 rd	Peter Frost	103

Duggie came 7th overall and won the Kincraft Trophy which Jack Pearce had presented to the Club in the mid 70's.