

Ferguson's Trial, Stewartstown - 9th November 2013

S.T.C.C

by C of C Harry Barr

This was STCC's 4th round of the 2013/14 season and the annual return to the site kindly provided by Norman Ferguson. The excellent concrete yard facilities provided a good opportunity to do a spot of scrutineering so in addition to the usual checks, differential tests and wheel base were also on the agenda.

Five hills had been set up by Harry Barr the previous day with the help of daughter Emma and Gerard Currid. Although there had been some overnight rain, the forecast was for a dry sunny day and ground conditions were drier than they had been for a number of years. The COC duly declared tyre pressures for the day of 5 psi' (4 psi for Class C).

This compact site basically consists of a fairly steep gradient stretching right across the field with slopes of varying length but always leading to the top hedge. The hills were set up with trickling in mind and so by necessity had to be twisty and technical.

Hill 1 was in lush grass and although the long trickle and chicane at the finish caught out a few people it was zeros for most and the lowest scoring hill for the 4 rounds.

Hill 2 was a serpentine with good grass covering that again finished just short of the hedge allowing competitors to drive right through the finish gate.

Hill 3 used the 3 large trees with a novel 180 degree loop back between the trees making it a good diff test on its own! The finish was probably the steepest of the hills and needed good trickling skills for a zero.

Hills 4 and 5 were almost mirror images of each other and involved a loop up, then down and back up again to a chicane finish. The tight left hander on hill 5 at the 10 gate proved trickier than the COC had anticipated and turned out to be quite significant.

After the first round, hill 4 was altered to eliminate a particularly tricky cross camber. At this stage Andrew Mc Kinney was in the lead on 1, followed by Trevor Aston and Simon Gracey on 2. Brian Edgar was on 9 having slipped up at the aforementioned 10 gate on hill 9. New Class A competitor David Webster unfortunately had to retire with a broken differential. In Class B, Geoff McKay was leading on 15 followed by Peter Frost on 22. Gerard Currid in Class C was on 31 and showing his potential with some good climbs.

After round 2, the COC (ably assisted by assistant COC Alastair Booth) tweaked most of the hills, in some cases to give fresh ground and in others, to tighten the finishes. At this stage Andrew McKinney had dropped just one more point and his 2 gave him the lead over Trevor Aston's 4. Mervyn McKinney again was showing his recent good form and was on 8 with Brian Edgar adding 9 zeros to his big 9! Simon Gracey also dented his chances of an overall

win with a 9 at hill 5. In round 3, Andrew's lead was cut to 1 point so all to play for in the final round.

Hills 3 and 5 were the only ones that could not be cleaned by the top crews but when Andrew also dropped a point on hill 4, he was now sharing the lead with Trevor Aston. Fortunately for Trevor, the zeros count back favoured him and he and son Andrew were the overall winners on the day. Brian Edgar and Simon Gracey were left reflecting on 'what ifs'. If they had not incurred their 9 pointers they would have finished 1st and 2nd – but that's motor sport! Just console yourselves that fellow Class A driver Tom McKinney driving Trevor Turkington's GPS didn't get round that hill 5 corner all day! Geoff McKay comfortably won Class B from Peter Frost while lone Class C competitor Gerard Currid finished to take the honours.

The enjoyable day was rounded off by proceeding to Tommy's Tavern at Sandholes where Trevor and Pamela Turkington provided food and drinks while results were compiled. Thanks again to Norman Ferguson for the use of his field and facilities and to the Turkington's for their generous hospitality.

1 st	Class A	T Aston/A Aston	7
2 nd		A McKinney/C Millar	7
3 rd		B Edgar/P Flack	12
4 th		S Gracey/A Flack	14
1 st	Class B	G McKay/A Mackay	59
2 nd		P Frost/L Knox	87
1 st	Class C	G Currid/G Doherty	124