

Aintree Sprint

Saturday 2 September 2023

Report by Ben Eastick, Competitions Captain

Club members in cars representing each era of the esteemed Bentley marque took the unique opportunity in competing in a sprint organised by the Liverpool Motor Club held on part of the famous Aintree circuit which held the British Grand Prix in 1955, 1957, 1959, 1961 and 1962.

Sir Stirling Moss won the first Grand Prix held at Aintree and won again in 1957 famously sharing with Tony Brooks in the Vanwall, the first time British drivers had won in a British car at the British Grand Prix in a Formula One race. Jack Brabham took the last win at the Aintree Grand Prix in 1962.

BDC team members assembled on the Friday night at the club's temporary HQ, the Premier Inn, and enjoyed a hearty evening meal at the adjoining Beefeater Inn, in true Bentley style!

The Saturday was a beautiful late summer's day with the temperature reaching 23°C, perfect for getting grip into those tyres around the very fast Aintree corners. The sprint course is located at the southern tip the original 3 miles Grand Prix circuit and is 1.14 miles in length, consisting of three fast corners Country, Village and Bechers, two short straights and two very long straights, Valentines Way and Railway Straight. Bechers the last corner is deceptively fast with a double apex leading onto the Railway Straight where cars reached their maximum speed, so the Bentleys were driven very close to their limit for half the sprint course.

Competitors were given two practice runs, followed by four timed runs that counted for awards and some competitors chose to run a further two-timed runs as the Liverpool Motor Club's very efficient organisation allowed for three cars to be running simultaneously at the same time.

The club's North-West Region member David Stubbings kindly manned the BDC stand with promotional material. Stephen Moseley of Actuaris Art took some wonderful pictures and Paul Andrew who had recommend this event to the competitions committee, very kindly provided a gazebo to shield the team from the sun's rays and kept us refreshed with breakfast, tea, coffee, lunch followed by post competition beer!

Competitions Captain Ben Eastick was fastest in the BDC class in his T Type single seater with a time of 53.89 seconds (with a best terminal speed of 116 mph), followed by Adam Stacy Marks in his Continental GT sprint conversion with a time of 56.60 seconds (with a best terminal speed of 111 mph).

Jock Mackinnon drove all the way down from Edinburgh and his 3/4½ Litre took fastest time in the Cricklewood group with a time of 63.67 seconds (with a best terminal speed of 85 mph), beating arch rival club President Duncan Wiltshire in his 3 Litre who managed a time of 69.01 seconds (with best terminal speed of 74 mph).

The Mk VI brigade was represented by local member Paul Andrew who set a fastest time of 59.44 seconds (with a best terminal speed of 101 mph) and Nigel Angus who drove all the way up from Dorking and competed in 'sports touring configuration' setting a fastest time of 73.20 seconds (with a best terminal speed of 76 mph).

Jock Mackinnon won the Liverpool Motor Club class award which club competitors deciding the winner would be based on the last run and go to the person who achieved the closest time to their nominated time.

There is a fantastic opportunity to get more BDC competitors involved in this event for 2024, where the appeal to drive flat out on a historic Grand Prix circuit is not to be missed.