

The Club is to hold another of its popular introductory days, designed for any members who want to find out more about speed events – what they are like, what's needed to compete and, of course, whether they might like to take part. Here, we look at what's on offer. Pictures by Chris Davies.

Sprinting and hillclimbing: Beginners' Introduction Day at Curborough sprint course

Saturday 24th March 2012

SPEED EVENTS—SPRINTING AND HILLCLIMBING—are some of the oldest forms of motorsport and the Lotus Seven Club have been holding such events now for over twenty years. Sprinting is held on a more-or-less flat course (or sometimes a race circuit) whilst a hillclimb goes, well, uphill (again, more or less). The sport involves getting from A to B as fast as possible, against the clock from a standing start and with a flying finish. Courses are a series of straights (which tend not to give people much problem) interspersed with a number of bends (which do). The *TopGear* 'Star in a reasonably-priced car' feature is a sprint.

The Autoglym Lotus Seven Club Speed Championship typically has about eighty enrolled competitors and visits fourteen venues during a period from April to October each year. As well as an overall title to be won, the series includes a Ladies' Championship, a Novices' Championship, various classes. The overall champion is determined by relative performances within the classes (divided by car performance) so you don't need to be in the quickest class to win.

Your Seven is built for sprinting and hill-climbing and if it's just sitting in the garage it's probably getting a bit bored! So we are hosting a day at Curborough to introduce the sport to more members.

Now you may be thinking that entering into motorsport is a bit daunting; but we aim to make it as easy as possible for you. You may also be thinking that it will wear out the Seven. Well, a full season of sprinting is only as much as two standard trackday sessions.

So if you've ever thought 'I could go faster than he is' when spectating, come along and find out how to prove that (or not!).

THE INTRODUCTION WILL COVER:

- an explanation of the Club's Speed Championship;
- how to enter;
- licences;
- the venues;
- what equipment you need – in addition, of course, to the Seven;
- car preparation and scrutineering;
- signing-on and walking the course;
- start-line drill: lights, camera, action;
- driving the course
- demonstration runs;
- and, most important of all... how much fun can be had (as explained by both experienced and slightly slower sprinters!)

At the end of the Introduction Day we hope you will feel able to enter your first event without anxiety and trepidation. And it doesn't stop there: our 'buddy' system will

Using all the road, and then some: Michael Calvert in action, 'attacking the kerbs' at Curborough. The Calverts' Seven is a good example of a car used routinely for both competition and road touring – in the original tradition of the Seven; and still sports a Ford Crossflow engine. You don't need a dedicated track-only machine to have fun or to be competitive.

ensure that an experienced sprinter is also on hand at your first event to guide you through.

SO, WHAT'S THE DOWNSIDE?

Two key things here. Sprinting is addictive. Not only do you compete against the clock and against others but also against yourself: the sense of achievement when you cross the finish line and see a better time displayed is enormous. You will just keep coming back for more.

The second one is upgrade-itis. You will end up desiring more power, better suspension – you know the sort of thing. However, for the first couple of seasons the best upgrade is the driver's skills, knowledge and experience. And that's actually what the sport is all about – your development as a driver and really getting to know your Seven.

BOOKING

There is a charge of **£40** per person.

Booking is via the Membership Secretary, Sam Pearce, (please see the form printed on page 27 of this issue) or for further information on the event itself you can contact the Competition Secretary, Simon Rogers, by email at simon.rogers@lotus7club.com

The day will be conducted at Curborough Sprint Course – a permanent sprint venue – located just off the A38, near Lichfield.

You can find out more about the venue at www.curborough.co.uk



Whilst the Club's Introduction Day will answer your questions about our own championship and the class structure, the principles you'll see and talk about will be the same for most speed events arenas.

We are MSA-affiliated and all proper safety standards and marshalling practices are followed. A number of drivers have moved on to compete in bigger championships or in more specialized machinery – or compete in other events alongside the Club championship. For example, Chris Alston, seen above in the white and blue Seven, recently won his class at the famous Brighton Speed Trials. But our series is a fully-fledged one with plenty of fun, camaraderie, support and competition whatever your level and whether you're driven to win or driving for fun.

Many of our championship rounds form a part of a wider meeting, so not only do you get to see and compare the performances and styles of other types of car – from classics to purpose-built hillclimb single-seaters and sports-racers, but get to compete at some glorious and prestigious venues such as Wiscombe Park and Shelsley Walsh – one of the very oldest extant motorsport venues in the world – see left, in the paddock and leaving the 'top esse' on the way to the final climb to the finish. **Tony**