

# TR Register Track Day at Mallory Park

*Frederique Slezak, James Carruthers and Tim Bancroft on their day at the races*

Five or six Club members attended the recent Track day at Mallory recently, here are some of these experiences of the day:

## **James says:**

The night before the Track Day was spent clearing the car out and sorting it properly. What a load of rubbish I had in my boot, glove box and parcel shelf! I found the spring access plate wasn't secure and had fallen off – no wonder it was so noisy! I also put the gearbox tunnel in properly using gaffer tape to seal it all, much better than fiddling about with screws and it keeps out anything smelly. The car was really still in the same state it finished the RBRR in and I was rather embarrassed at the state I had entered it in! I can't believe Chris and I drove it as it was, the steering so vague and the cabin so noisy and smelly. I slept well knowing the car was ready, even if I did keep the neighbours awake until the early hours!

The day was split up in to three sessions of 20 minutes – road, fast road and race – each one rotating. We had missed our first road session and realising that we were next, we signed on. Tim had to fix his exhaust with a coke can so Fred and I went off for our first jolly.

I quickly settled in to a pattern: it wasn't half as difficult as I had imagined. It probably helped that my car wouldn't do more than about 80 mph so I didn't really have to brake for anything. I returned to the paddock buzzing, but a bit frustrated due to the total lack of speed. I was reasonably happy with my lines and my heel-toe technique was working well, the mod I had done to the pedal a few days before worked wonders! The car was really stable too. It's a lot easier when you're out there; the track is very wide and you have lots more space than it looks like from a spectator's point of view.

For the second session I took my friend Dawson out for a ride. It was good fun as I pushed a bit harder using my knowledge from before. There were some nice cars out there too and being overtaken by a chorus of six-pots was fabulous. It was now that I realised that the lovely (cheap) GT6 Mk 3 velour seats in my car are totally useless for this kind of thing. There is no support whatsoever, so half the time you're holding on to the wheel and bracing yourself as you go around corners. This is totally off-putting

and something that needs to be sorted before next time.

Lunch was next and Mallory does some good grub. We also had to go and get some petrol as I was running low: the circuit pump wasn't open so we had to go to the local BP. A dose of Millers CVL to the BP Ultimate 97 gave me some 100 octane fuel, but in the end it didn't do much!

TSSC racer Nigel Gibbins had offered to show me the lines, so he sat in the passenger seat as I guided my snail-like car around Mallory for my third session. Learning the line was good, if my car wasn't performing at least I could be getting the line right. I got everything nailed apart from Devil's Elbow, which I got right in a later session. I also realised that whilst I love my 15" steering wheel on the road, it's no good on the track, especially Shaw's hairpin. I'll have to think about a 14", maybe even get a nice standard Triumph 13" just for track days? Towards the end of my tutoring session the car decided to go a bit wrong. Heading towards Gerrard's it lost a load of power and we took it across the grass and parked up. Having been recovered it was a case of elimination: initially we thought it might be fuel. Having proven it wasn't that, Nigel spotted that the heel on the points had broken off. Having sourced a set of points from Richy the racer, everything was fixed.

For the fourth session, I took Ben out for a run. Knowing the lines, I started to practice and really get them sorted – it's amazing how you can feel the car being quicker so easily. Six or seven laps in I got given a black flag at Shaw's. Not knowing what this really meant I headed back to the paddock. I thought I had done something wrong, but it turned out my horn had fallen off. Obviously a critical component in any car!

It was soon time to leave, so Fred and Tim and I shot off with a session to go. I think we were all pretty happy. I was knackered. Deciding to avoid the M1 we took the long route and much fun ensued. First of all, Tim ran out of petrol so we drained some out of mine in to an empty oil bottle. At this moment the fuel tap I installed on my fuel line came in to its own. We quickly got Tim's car going and found the petrol station about 2 minutes' walk from where we broke down. With Fred's car topped up with yet more oil and

Tim's car filled up with petrol, we set off again. Fifty metres down the road my engine stopped, so I pulled in and lifted the bonnet. Hoping that it wasn't the points again I checked them out first – luckily it wasn't! It soon dawned on me to check the fuel tap: yup, it was still off, well done Bancroft! Sorted. After all that we decided some food and a de-brief of the day at The Plough was in order.

## **Fred says:**

I hadn't planned to take my 1300 to Mallory, however a little 'incident' back in February involving my once beautiful 2.5 Mk 1 GT6 convertible, a wet M25 and the central reservation put paid to me using OWOF's 180 bhp for this particular outing. Keen to take advantage of the track time, I decided I'd take my only other transport, my 1300 Mk 3 Spitfire.

Unfortunately, the Mk 3 1300 is not a pretty sight at the moment, by any stretch of the imagination, so apologies in advance. She is very much in between purposes and awaiting attention, but I was still pleased to have a Triumph to use for the day and as it turns out, wasn't at all disappointed.

The circuit at Mallory is short, relatively straight-forward and I would encourage anyone that wants to find out how his or her road car really behaves to go and test it on the circuit. It's a great way to learn your particular car's limitations!

For a 1300, or at least mine, I spent the majority of the circuit flat out in 4th gear (or as flat out as the misfire that developed would allow). I did find my 1300 well balanced around the corners, which was confidence inspiring, but the hairpin slowed things down a bit too much, and having only a three synchro gearbox, I found it hard



to select first. Also lacking full power meant I couldn't get back up to speed as quickly afterwards as I'd have liked.

That being said, after each session I completed, I felt I had learnt something new and even had the benefit of a passenger for my last circuit, thanks Nigel and sorry about the seatbelt! I was extremely surprised and pleased with the car, which I don't think had been on a motorway, let alone a circuit for at least the last six years! Even more so, as it appeared to be suffering from a horrendous oil leak, of Exxon Valdez proportions (perhaps not quite that bad) and a questionable head gasket.

It was a genuinely enjoyable day and I very much appreciated the assistance of James Shackford, Doug Foreman and Tim who stepped in when the car started to play up, proving that CT members are always around when you need a helping hand. Thank you very much!



**Tim says:**

This was the second TR Track Day for me and it was embarrassing to miss the first session of this one as my exhaust had holed on the way to Mallory – coke cans and clips are wonderful things! For my first session I had the pleasure of fellow GT6 owner Doug Foreman as company, he's a big guy is Doug and I'm not sure how he gets in and out of his GT6! I think he enjoyed the session and was surprised at some of my unconventional lines, his witty comments kept me amused whilst driving around. My second session was better as I was more confident and found that I could take all the road going cars, however one had to keep a sharp look-out for some race cars that were out in our session. My third session was taken with Keith Bennett as passenger, I had overtaken him in his TR4A on the second session and he was surprised how nimble my GT6 seemed, I therefore had to prove this to him. I did as well, whilst keeping those pesky Spitfire pilots James and Fred at bay. I was quicker down the straight than them, but in the corners they were catching up. Unfortunately we only managed five laps as the GT6 was drinking fuel at an alarming rate so we decided to pull off back into the pits before she conked out – it would be embarrassing to be recovered by the Mallory tender! Again, I think Keith enjoyed the laps and thought the

handling was good for a GT6. It's got to be said that both Keith and Doug are very brave getting in a car on a race track with me!

We left after this session and I promptly ran out of fuel in Hinckley! Thanks to J and F for their patience. We had a good drive back south, exploring A- and B-roads. Gotta admit I was knackered, but as we had decided to head back to The Plough at Crews Hill, all I could think about was the reward of a pint (very nice too)!

It was very good to see amongst other CT members, Chris Swan in his big-braked TR7 DHC and Malcolm Paris in his monster V8-engined TR7 FHC. In fact, the only road-going cars to overtake me during my sessions were a nice wedgewood blue TR5 and Chris' TR7 – much to my chagrin – it's the brakes you see, he could brake later!

So there you go, the brief story of three round-tail cars at Mallory. It would be great to see more CT members out next year. Of course, Fred and James will have more power next time so should leave Tim eating their dust in his lumbering six!

Overall, it was a great day, mainly thanks to being with super friends.

