

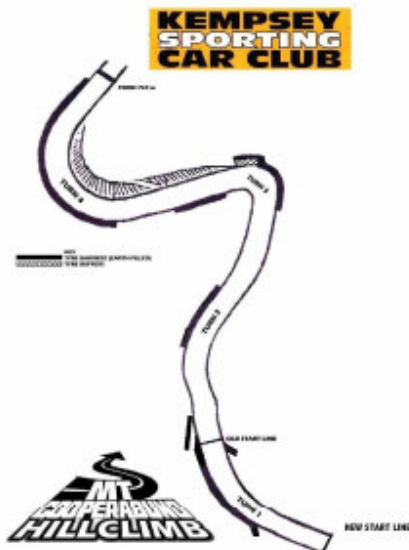
Kempsey - Round 4 Report

Report - Alan Barlow and Bill Revill - Photos - Eve Baldwin

A healthy list of entrants gathered at Mount Cooperabung on the mid north coast of NSW for round 4 of the NSW Championship. The course is a disused part of the Old Pacific Highway 743 metres in length and thanks to the hard work put in by Kempsey Sporting Car Club it has come roaring back to life for all of us to enjoy.

The track

Tight in places, yet fast in others it was a good learning exercise for most, only the regular Tri-Series competitors having some prior knowledge. Throw in some early showers on Sunday and an interesting day of motorsport was assured.



The course runs through a right hand bend just after the start, then uphill on an almost straight section with a chicane at the midpoint. A fast run meant getting the chicane right, as it limits the entry speed to the remainder of the straight. The course then enters a banked left hand 180 degree turn, surprisingly steeply banked for original Highway, then exits into a short straight and finishes with a challenging, quick multi – apex right hand turn before the traps. The surface was quite bumpy and very slick in the wet, but coping with this is all a part of the challenge and thrill of hillclimbing.

Things can go very wrong, as Phil Edwards in the Torana XU-1 discovered, inverting the car and heading for the trees just before the finish.



Phil was unhurt but the car was badly damaged. Recovery of the car was a spectacle in itself, with a skilled recovery truck driver avoiding the need for a mobile crane or helicopter!

The competition

Steve Moxon (Axtell Suzuki) sprang an early surprise, matching times with Championship leader, Tim Edmonson (Force PC) on the first run. Steve then charged to the lead (28.126s) on the second tour to

head series newcomer Doug Barry in his recently acquired ex Garry West, Aus#1 Lola (below).



Surprisingly Tim Edmondson slipped to third outright ahead of last round winner Tom Donovan (Pilbeam) and Mark Guyer in the AWD Nissan GTR, revelling in the slippery conditions.

As the track dried for run three Tim moved to the lead from Tom Donovan and Doug Barry. Steve

Moxon was finding himself outpowered in fourth spot just ahead of Ron Hay (RH Honda).

For run 4 Edmondson went ahead to a final record setting FTD of 23.455s while Doug Barry claimed a creditable second outright on a 24.371s in only his second outing in the car. Tom Donovan was a whisker behind at 24.493s while Steve

Moxon had to settle for fourth outright and a class win on 26.208s.



Ron Hay (Historic RH Honda, 26.400s, left) put in another vintage performance to claim fourth outright ahead of Michele Guyer (March) 27.427s, claiming bragging rights from husband Mark who nonetheless claimed Top Tin Top in the Nissan GTR. Top Junior was Andrew Frost.

Pleased with the outcome, (which cements his place at the top of the pointscore) Tim later commented “We haven’t been here before but it was great venue and we will definitely come back again. It’s good to see we have such a strong group of Formula Libre cars now vying for outright honours”.



In historic vees, Bill Revill was the only competitor. A loose carburettor jet meant a frustrating day of misfiring and poor running, but the hill was still a lot of fun.

More Historic Vee competitors are needed in hillclimbs to run and enjoy simple, friendly days of motorsport on entertaining tracks with the spice of competing in a State Championship.

Technical Report – An excellent repair job

Doug Barry suffered a rough introduction to the 2009 Hillclimb Championships, with his newly acquired Lola, the current Australian Championship winning car, slamming into Bathurst’s merciless concrete barriers on his first run.



At first glance the car looked badly damaged, both front and rear right hand suspension wiped out and extensive damage to the rear wing and diffuser. Fixing it may have needed to import many expensive spares from the UK and possibly shipping the tub back for work on the honeycomb sections.

Yet due to hard work, innovation and skilled engineering, the car was racing again at Bulahdelah in three short weeks! “We checked first and found that the gearbox, driveline and transmission housing were undamaged. So we could start work with what we had” said Doug.



The wing was straightened by cutting and replacing the strengthening rods through the middle, then patching the front with carbon – fibre sheeting. John Kitchen of Bathurst fabricated new wing mounts and suspension components (wisely making a few spares at the same time) and these were fitted in place of the originals (see photos).



But repairing the honeycomb undertray / diffuser structure (visible in the photos) was a real challenge. Although it didn't seem important at the time, Doug is now keen to thank the conscientious marshals at Bathurst who collected all the shattered remains of the diffuser. “They got every bit of it and left them in the car. We were then able to piece the whole component together again using stainless steel pins inserted into the honeycomb structure and bonding the broken components together. It was painstaking but given that we had all the fragments, it worked”.

The value of keeping accurate records was then apparent, as the team could set up the car with previous ride heights, wheel angles, cross weights etc so that the car handled correctly straight off the trailer. That at its next round of the championship it achieved an outright second place says a lot for both the driving and engineering skill and will to win of Doug Barry and his team.