

## JB TAYLOR EVENT REPORT

Just eight days after the frosty Championship finals in Gloucestershire, 20 crews entered the first round of the 2023 season, the JB Taylor hosted by Kentish Border Car Club. The plan was to hold the event at the brilliant grassy banks of Otham near Maidstone, however after a wet January the landowner at the last minute expressed concerns over our ability to park in the field, and pulled the site. With many having already committed to making the long journey to the south east, there was little desire to cancel the event, so Stu kindly offered the use of the Tulleys site.

In comparison to the 'Battle of the Somme' like conditions experienced at the Tulleys Trial in November (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4mIOI8-yD8> in case you missed it - the trial came second in the "Trial of the season awards"), the woods were quite dry with no rainfall in the days before the event. For those that haven't experienced the Tulleys site, it's different to anything else on the calendar, with sections darting in and out of bomb holes in woods. Typically high revs are required, quite the opposite style of driving is required to the delicacy of last weekend on the ice.

Stephen Barnes, Ian Wright, Sam and Stuart Beare (and some kind Tulleys farm workers) had laid out six sections, with an attempt to spice things up a little to keep things interesting for those that trial at the farm often. Hills one and two straddled the stream by Marion's house, hill three was in the bomb hole, hill four the gulley in the outlet of the bomb hole, and hills five and six down at the very bottom.

Round one saw crews head out on 4psi. Our host for the day somehow dropped just one point on the first lap, however November's winner Ian Wright was hot on his heels on two, and five others three, so there was no margin for error. All these points were dropped on hill three, where getting out of the bomb hole seemed too much of a challenge.

As well as being a challenge, getting out of the bomb hole on hill three had become a little spicy on round one thanks to a rogue tree root, so Clerk Chris Alexander wisely altered the ending. This change was enough for man of the moment 'Golden Balls' Thomas Bricknell to drive out of the top on his next attempt, and find himself tied on points with Stu at lunchtime. The other front runner of the first round, Ian, was to have a less lucrative round, dropping a six on hill six by carelessly driving into a tree stump on a downhill section. The good news is that the uncharacteristic error (and resulting cursing) was caught on video for us all to have a chuckle at. The less good news is that the filmer was an employee of Ian's (who had kindly volunteered to marshal) who refused to share the video (despite cash bribes) out of fear for her career. Maybe we all chip in a bit more so it can be shown at next years Gold Star award ceremony?

Over lunch Chris made some tweaks to the hills, as did Richard Flanagan who

was marshalling hill four. Despite my earlier comments about the site being "dry", it's fair to say it was actually pretty muddy and drivers weren't holding back to get up the hills. Mistakes were easy to make as a result, as the chasing pack soon found out with Peter Fensom doubling his score clipping a four gate on hill one, and Matt Sharp failed to make it past the eight gate down at the bottom.

Thomas had had a late night the night before at Pall Mall collecting yet another wheelbarrow full of trophies, and perhaps he had had one too many fruit shoots or an hour less sleep than usual, because the afternoon saw him drop a four on Richard Flanagan's hill as well as a couple of ones here and there. These mistakes combined with a perfect afternoon from Stu meant that it had finally happened... 15 years since the first Championship round at Tulleys and countless second places later, he and passenger Dean Brooker had won a trial on home turf, dropping just three for the day.

Behind Stu was Thomas on 10, Peter Fensom 14, Richard Sharp 17 and then Sam Beare on 18. Sam won best live axle in his newly modified Sherpa, a fantastic score considering a clumsy seven on hill 2 as a result of hitting a post. Just to top off the day for the hosts, Stu's brother-in-law Chris Burton steered his Sherpa home to take the Rookie class win on 102 points, making it a clean sweep for the hosts in their classes.

Thanks must go to KBCC for putting on the event, Chris Alexander for Clerking, the marshals that volunteered and finally to all those that made the long journey to the south east to take part. Your support is much appreciated.

Highlights of the day can be viewed here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4mIOI8-yD8>

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Report by George Barnes