

Imp 2017 National Weekend – Autotest report (or learning to be a cowhand!)

Hole Park, near Rolvenden, Kent, 3rd-7th August 2017
Simon Benoy, Stevenage, Hertfordshire

Imp 2017 Lead Organiser Colin Foster asked myself, Chris and Mark Ibbotson if we would run an autotest or autosolo at the National for those wishing to try out their Imps against the clock and away from public roads. He had arranged an area of Hole Park on the opposite side of the houses. On the day, a number of us went along with some cones, sticks and tape to see what we could arrange. What we found was a lot of cows which were to be moved to another field at 2 p.m. – it was now mid-morning. In the meantime, as they were some distance away from the area assigned to us, we started to think how we could use the space, where we could site the spectators and ensure that all was as safe as possible. There was a concrete drive through a field with a number of trees to be avoided.

We decided that the paddock and start/finish lines would be at the furthest point from the campsite and started to set up a course, the aim being that it would be quite flowing but without the speed getting too high. After a short blast up the drive, we put in a chicane to the left on the grass, back onto the path for a short way and then onto the grass turning tight right, across the field, 90° left, up to a chicane and then on around a large island, back through the chicane and then reverse the remainder of the course back to the start. We also marked out an area further up the field for spectators, a safe distance from the competitors but still with a decent view of most of the course and most importantly, where they could watch from their cars in case of rain!

Alex (Chris Benoy's girlfriend) shows the cows who's boss but Roger Swift looks bemoosed!

Photo: Simon Benoy



Blacked out glass proved no hindrance to Graham Compton who came second in Class A
Photo: Luke Soanes

Of course, as soon as we had finished setting up the course, the cows, being inquisitive by nature, came over to see what was going on and proceeded to start pulling down our tape and we still had over an hour before the cows were to be moved. Until then, all we could do was shoo them away and they would wander off, munch on some grass, but then they would try to sneak back to cause more

havoc. Four of us stayed to try to preserve the course and stop the cows from eating the tape while Mark and the other helpers went back for lunch and to organise competitors for the 3 p.m. start.

Sure enough, at around 2 p.m., a farm vehicle came over and started to encourage the cows towards a gate at the far side of the field where they were to be temporarily housed. We tried to help with the herding



Scott Clements' Clan won Class B
Photo: Matt Way

but were outflanked a few times by a couple of wilful beasts that led the rest of the herd in the opposite direction, so a second professional was summoned and we eventually got the herd into the next field.

Mark returned after lunch with a mass of cars following him –

Dutch member Rob Immers came third in Class B with his Stiletto

Photo: Matt Way



James Ibbotson no stranger to motorsport and achieved third place in Class A

Photo: Luke Soanes



Winner in Class A was Oli Dennington-Price

Photo: Luke Soanes



Dom Smith's BMW engine powered his Imp to a resounding second place in Class B

Photo: Luke Soanes



just as the heavens opened with a short, sharp shower. Those who were out in it, such as marshalls, got drenched before we had even started and conditions were now even more slippery than they had been when we set up the course in the morning. But it was warm and windy, so the grass would dry quickly.

After sorting competitors and spectators, and moving the latter to the safety of the top of the field, we got the former signed on and showed them around the course on foot. We ended up with eight drivers in three classes and nine cars. Classes were A – up to 930 cc Imps, B – any other Imp

or Imp-based and C – non-Imp. The plan was to give all competitors four runs with their best two times to count.

The first runs allowed people to get an idea of what to do and where to go. Inevitably there were a few wrong slots and bashed cones. By the second runs the course was drier and people had learnt where to go so the times came down a lot. Further improvements were made on the third runs in most cases, though a couple of people lost time with over-exuberant driving! Then we got another short shower before the last run which meant that most people were unable to better their previous fastest runs.



Edmund Hill was on a roll with his charming Citroën Ami!

Photo: Matt Way

Results

Class A	1st	Oli Dennington-Price	Imp	2 minutes, 35 seconds
	2nd	Graham Compton	Imp	2 minutes, 38 seconds
	3rd	James Ibbotson	Imp	2 minutes, 55 seconds
Class B	1st	Scott Clements	Clan	2 minutes, 32 seconds
	2nd	Dom Smith	Imp (BMW)	2 minutes, 39 seconds
	3rd	Rob Immers	Stiletto (998)	2 minutes, 46 seconds
	4th	Stu Foster	Clan	2 minutes, 48 seconds
Class C	1st	Scott Clements	Skoda (4WD)	2 minutes, 46 seconds
	2nd	Edmund Hill	Citroën Ami	2 minutes, 57 seconds

Edmund easily achieved the greatest roll angles with the smallest engine, while James went around the island the most times, getting full value for money from the event!

Many thanks to all the competitors who did extremely well in very difficult conditions and also to those who helped to run the event – for all of us it was a first attempt so I hope that all who took part or spectated enjoyed themselves.