



Rod Birley in action

GRANT WOOLWAY

Morris Trophy victory for racer Birley

THE special saloon and modified sports car series made its only visit of the year to Brands Hatch on Sunday.

The meeting was promoted as the 'Britannia Day' with a huge variety of British vehicles on display at the circuit.

The racing took place in warm conditions under a sunny sky and produced some good competition.

Qualifying for the saloon/modsports races saw West Kingsdown driver Rod Birley put his BMW into third spot.

Pole position went to the mighty six litre V8 Aston Martin driven by Sam Wilson and Ricki Cann from Suffolk.

Arthur Thurtle should have been second on the started grid, but he had to withdraw due to a technical problem.

From the rolling start it was Wilson in the Aston Martin who headed the field. Birley quickly settled into second, pursued by Jack Gadd in his Ford Escort.

The Kent racer fended off the challenge, until Gadd spun and dropped back. A second spin by Gadd left his car stranded on the edge of the circuit, so the race was stopped a couple of laps early. Birley was classified second and won the saloon car class.

For the second race it was Ricki Cann driving the Aston Martin and he had to start from tenth position, which is the handicap for winning the first race.

Birley was therefore promoted to pole position. Rod took advantage of this to lead away, but he soon had Adrian Bradley filling his mirrors in another BMW. These two set a cracking pace, as they edged clear of the next trio comprising Cann, Martin Reynolds (Ford Escort) and Gadd.

The chequered flag fell to a delighted Birley, who won the Ricky Morris memorial trophy - named after a racer who fell victim to Covid a couple of years ago.

Birley's win tally now increases to 722.