

Devizes Hospital Week 1922

Redhorn Hillclimb

9th September

In 1922, for the first time, the annual Devizes Hospital Week, a week-long program of activities and sports events raising fund for Devizes Cottage Hospital, featured motoring events, a Hillclimb and a Reliability Trial.

The hillclimb, on Saturday 9th September, was held about four miles south-east of Devizes on the old Devizes to Salisbury road at Redhorn Hill, just outside Urchfont, and was said at the time to be the first competitive event for motorists in the district.

The course used approximately a half-a-mile stretch of the road leading steeply to the top of Redhorn hill, with two bends, the second, about 100 yards from the finish, being "*a particularly nasty one*".

The event comprised 21 classes for motor-cycles, sidecars and cars, with the 'bike and sidecar classes being very well supported, the cars' less so. The starter was Mr W de Leighton Brooke and other principal officials were chiefly members of the Bath & West of England Motor Club.

During the event the second corner proved to be difficult for some to negotiate, with several competitors colliding with the bank, but without sustaining any serious injuries. Most dramatic was Vic Anstice on a Douglas, 'bike and rider turning a complete somersault, but Anstice escaped injury and later continued in the event. After the class runs Anstice (from Bristol) was tied for best time of the day with EW Spencer, the owner of Castle Street Garage, Trowbridge, similarly on a 3½ hp Douglas, Spencer winning the run-off by ²/₅ths of a second.

The car classes were dominated by Miss Winifred Pink from Taunton, running in four classes in her Horstman Super Sports, whose best time was 55 seconds. Miss Pink was a well-known amateur racing motorist, and a frequent competitor at Brooklands and elsewhere in her Horstman cars built by Sidney Horstmann at his works in Bath.

Results

BTD Motorcycles: EW Spencer, 3½ hp Douglas, 40¹/₅ sec

BTD Sidecars: Vic Anstice, Douglas, 47⁴/₅ sec

BTD Cars: Miss Winifred Pink, Horstman, 55 sec

Car Classes:

Class 16, 1100cc cars (amateurs)

1. FG Summerton (Devizes) on a GN, 87³/₅ sec (the only competitor to finish)

Class 18, 1500cc cars (amateurs)

1. Miss Winifred Pink, Horstman, 58²/₅ sec
2. AC Hutton, Crouch, 68³/₅ sec
3. -----, Whistler, 72²/₅ sec

Class 19, 1500cc cars (open)

1. Miss Winifred Pink, Horstman, 55 sec
2. AC Hutton, Crouch, 66³/₅ sec
3. E Willis (Devizes), Belsize-Bradshaw, 69 sec

Class 20, (unlimited) cars (amateur)

1. Miss Winifred Pink, Horstman, 56²/₅ sec
2. Capt. Theyre, AC, 64⁴/₅ sec
3. AC Hutton, Crouch, 65 sec

Class 21, unlimited cars (open)

1. Miss Winifred Pink, Horstman, 57 sec
2. Capt. Theyre, AC, 59 sec
3. AC Hutton, Crouch, 65²/₅ sec
4. E Willis (Devizes), Belsize-Bradshaw, 68²/₅ sec

* Officials from the Bath & West of England Motor Club: Fred R Collins, R Gunning, AWH Taylor, B Allen, and Messrs. Abrahams, Austin, Batchelor and Speed.

Red Horn hill Location:

Coordinates: 51.295 N 1.917 W

Devizes Motor Reliability Trial

Spencer was also successful in the Hospital Week reliability trials, completing the event without penalty and receiving the motor-cycle gold medal. Winner of the Silver Trophy for cars, with the loss of just one point, was the Mayor of Devizes, T. H. S. Ferris, the other car medal winners being Hon. Victor Bruce, Dr. L. Raby, Dr. C. S. Rivington, Mr. E. Willis and Mr. A. E. Millard.

Within a fortnight of these successful motoring events, the press reported the formation of a motor club at Devizes, with the mayor as its first President.

In subsequent years the Devizes & District Motor Club continued to run a hillclimb as part of the Devizes Hospital week, however, these events took place at Market Lavington Hill, and were for motorcycles only. The 1922 event appears to have been the only one to have used Redhorn hill.

Pete Stowe 2020

Sources:

Western Daily Press, Wiltshire Times and Trowbridge Advertiser, Bath Chronicle.

Westcountry Motorsport History

Website <https://bpmc.org.uk/petestowe/wmh.htm>

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