**‘Formula Ford Fest - News from Gurston Down Hillclimb – 2017 – No.3’**

**Veloce author retains Veloce Publishing-supported Gurston Down *FF Fest* title!**

The second *Hillclimb FF Fest* for pre-1994 ‘Kent’ engine Formula Ford cars at Gurston Down on Sunday July 23rd saw Veloce author and freelance motorsport writer Simon McBeath from Sturminster Newton in Dorset successfully defend his 2016 title and once again take victory in his 1.6 Swift SC92F after a close-fought battle in ever-changing conditions. Unseasonably unsettled weather meant that no two runs in Saturday practice or in Sunday’s official timed runs were alike in terms of track conditions, and there were three different leaders during the four practice runs. Come the competition runs on Sunday though McBeath led each time up, though by very small margins, the gap to second placed man, former record-holder Andrew Henson from Rochdale (left in attached photo) in his Van Diemen RF91, being just 0.34 seconds at the end of a terrific competition. Third placed driver Nev Rollason (right in photo) from Craven Arms (Jamun M90) was just another 0.21 seconds behind.

Another Veloce author, Ed McDonough from Wootton ran his Dulon MP15 in the event, finishing in 20th place after unfortunately recording a ‘Fail’ on his second competition run in what were faster conditions.

ITV4 BTCC commentator and former British Touring Car Championship winner Paul O’Neill from Merseyside led the field on the fourth practice run in the Swift FB91 he shared Mark Alley from Wells, and O’Neill ultimately finished in eighth place, 0.59 seconds behind the car’s owner.

24 drivers from all over the country started the event, which looks set to grow further and become a ‘must-do’ fixture on the Formula Ford hillclimb schedule. This year’s excellent gathering was a fitting way to celebrate 50 years of both Gurston Down Speed Hillclimb and Formula Ford itself.

Further information on the venue can be found at [www.gurstondown.org](http://www.gurstondown.org).

Notes for editors

1. Formula Ford came into being in 1967. It has gone through various metamorphoses during that time, but the 1600cc ‘Kent’ engine variant has been the most enduring version having been adopted shortly after the formula was originally instigated and it persists today in local, regional and National championships around the world.
2. The ‘Kent’ engine originally powered the Ford Anglia from 1959 in ‘pre-crossflow- form, but the later ‘crossflow engine’ (that is, the carburettor and inlet manifold are on one side of the cylinder head and the exhaust manifold is on the other side) as used in the Ford Cortina GT was and is the basis for ‘Kent’ engine Formula Ford racecars.
3. The cars utilise Hewland racing gearboxes and Avon ‘ACB10’ or ‘ACB 9’ treaded racing tyre which were designed for Formula Ford championships around the world.
4. Formula Ford has been one of the first steps on the career ladder for many famous racing drivers and Formula 1 World Champions including Brazil’s Ayrton Senna and Britain’s Jenson Button progressed through Formula Ford in their early careers.

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**PTO for Full results**

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