Harewood's hallowed startline and the run to Clark's. Note the surface change.

Hard on the power and move right up the rise to Country.

The long pull through Clark's, hug the right kerb

As the car settles on the brow, brake hard then turn in to Country.

Thompson straight. Even a 1400cc Westfield feels quick down here

The approach to Willow. A bend quicker than it looks.

The Esses braking area, with lots of safe run-off for the brain-dead.

Balance car on throttle through Willow, then flat up to Orchard.

Right/left at the Esses. Neatness is rewarded.

Tricky, blind approach to Orchard - Keep right - cut across to clip left kerb - brake straight - turn in right.

The entrance to Chippy's. Keep off the high, right kerb!

Distinctive Harewood scenery on the run up to Farmhouse Bend

Increase the power smoothly to take you neatly through Chippy's. Watch out for standing water in the wet.

Allow me to say it before you do. Who is this no-hopfer from the cheap end of the paddock dispensing advice on how to drive one of the country's premier hillclimbs?

Well quite simply I'm a motorsport nut who enjoys dressing up as a racing driver, hanging out with like-minded individuals and being surrounded by racing cars in wonderful places. What I'm about to impart is how to tackle the 1448.5 metre Yorkshire course, the longest on the British mainland, at the wheel of my Modified Production Class A/150 bhp/1380cc/Feef pushrod powered/forward speed gearwheel/alloy rear axle/Avon slick shod Westfield SE.

My technique works for me and may be of interest to those visiting Stockton Farm for the first time, particularly in similarly conventional cars. However should Roy Lane consider what follows to be a load of old coppers, I wouldn't disagree...

Descending to the startline from the hilltop paddock via the well surfaced access road, I warm up the brakes with my left foot, then wait outside the tyre warm-up area until the car ahead begins its run. I see no point in indulging in burnouts until the last moment as the rubber will be allowed to cool, particularly if there is a delay, though many in their eagerness make this mistake.

Once choke centrally and
aligned with the timing beam, green light to the left, I go thru my ritual. Scan the oil and water gauges, a last tug on the harness shoulder straps, flip down the visor, into first gear and carefully build up the revs to half and a half. The start pad is concrete and has its frictional properties to the surface that follows, but it is not known as a transmission breaker — even though I once broke the forward break. So as the marshals duck behind their stout timber barrier and mutter that I need to stop, I hold the car flat on second. Lift a little, then feed the power back in through the bend to blast up the rising straight towards Orchard.

Orchard is an tricky left-hand that requires the driver to take a blind, fast left and then a very sharp, uphill right. With so much to do, my approach is to hold second despite peaking to the right then cut access to the left hand kerb while lifting slightly. Braking hard in a straight line I turn in sharply to the righthander with an early application of power. This is the only part of the course where I actually encourage the tail to slide a little, as the wheels grip, keeps my diminutive screamer on can.

Now begins the steepest part of the climb. Maintaining momentum is everything for a competitive time. From Orchard another straight and an excellent sweeping bend between solid stone farm buildings, leads to the long, open, climbing left hand Farmhouse Bend. I stay hard on the throttle in second for as long as possible, dab the brakes, then turn on in to a straight wide and smooth through the key corner. My aim is to hold the steering wheel in a constant position while feeding in more power, emerging on to Quarry straight with foot flat on the floor. Too much acceleration too early means a tail wag, a lift, and time lost. Sensitivity to what the car is doing here is vital.

Up the power-sapping Quarry Straight I give it death, changing up to third as I pass the old paddock exit road. The finish is fast approaching, but first one of hillclimbing's great challenges must be met — Quarry Bend.

Actually it's two bends; a fast right, a tiny straight and a tight right, the road climbing all the while. Nobody wins from the paddock's lofty heights, has observed the surprising length of time required to complete the distance between the Quarry Straight digital clock and the corner exit. Some drivers claim Vauxhall is the key to this final section. A little commitment here can make all the difference between winning and coming second.

My way is to take the first part of the corner fast, or as near flat as I dare. Hit the brakes and grab second in as straight a line as I can muster, turn into the final right and scrub across the line. I've never got Quarry absolutely right, and I suspect few have. The important thing is to savour it and get across the finish beam even if the car is completely sideways or travelling backwards. Most of us have landed in the gravel trap at some time or other — ask Graham Proudfoot or better still, Chris Sommerville (whose signature appears heavily in Quarry's visitors' book).

Now all that remains is a generous slowing down straight and a return to the paddock. If I have put my Westfield where my mouth is the clock will have stopped at 3:20 point something — much as I won't have... But there is always next time to aim for that elusive perfect run.