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St Cross Electronics Mono Championship

14 June 2014, Round 7, Classic and 2000

Thruxton - Textbook Thruxton Thrills

Don't say I didn't predict it. In last Wednesday's piece I said "I'm particularly intrigued by the new Nick Edginton run F398." Sure enough Lee Cunningham headed the qualifying times and went on to win the race without ever being led. The whole race seemed full of textbook examples of doing it right - it was a pleasure to watch. Even if the paddock was "tight".

Qualifying

Qualifying was almost as exciting as some races, with much jostling for position. David Gambling started the excitement with a spin in the chicane, caused by a bit of over-enthusiasm and a change of tyre spec. Peter Venn initially led, ahead of Kevan McLurg and Lee Cunningham. Lee edged up to pole by the end but the big surprise was Daniel Hands in second, free from his Rockingham electrical gremlins. "We changed everything we could think of and we've got new tyres," he said. "I'm being annoying in an 1800!" Peter ended third, ahead of Ben Cater and Kevan McLurg. "Top gear was too low for Church. This is a quick circuit - it's all about how big your bravery is" Kevan didn't actually say bravery, but that was the jist.



Harmless Q rotation from David Gambling



It all worked out well



Jeremy Goodman retires from Qualifying



The Van Diemen of Terry Clark

Dave Gillett looked comfortable in 6th and Magic Motorsport associates, Neil Harrison and Russ Giles were ready to pounce in 7th and 8th. Russ told us that he'd not gone for the



Tony Bishop suffered fuel rail maladies

strong aero adjustments he knew some had done - even going as far as changing the rear wing - so knew the speed was a bit down. Malcolm Scott and Robbie Watts were unusually low down the field, Robbie commenting that the flat out blasts of Thruxton definitely didn't suit his Zetec's characteristics - it's much more at home on the twisty ones. It was, however, great to watch in the chicane with a lovely exhaust flame on the over-run. Tony Bishop had a misfire caused by the fuel rail dislodging itself. Mark Smith was happy to be amongst such Mono Royalty in 10th. "I had a target of 1.20, I've done a 1.19 so I'm happy".

With Daniel Hands dominating Classics, second man Kevin Otway was 12th overall, with returnee Henry Fryer in his Wiltshire College FR Tatuus edging out Shane Kelly in the other college car, the Northbrook FR Van Diemen. It was good to see Alistair Bell's 883 not only back to its immaculate looks but also lusted over by the circuit commentator ("as though it had just left the factory"). The latter was not only a man of great taste, but also somebody who had researched the Mono championship despite this being our only venture outside MSVR. Thank you sir!

We were pleased to welcome Andrew Barron in a semi-classic Lotus liveried FVL, and to see Terry Clark out in his new spotty Van Diemen which completed practice but didn't make the race. As Terry was a displaced person with a paddock slot just outside Mogadishu (it might as well have been for the chances I had of finding him) I didn't find out why he didn't race. Jeremy Goodman, however, was his usual happy self, despite being the unluckiest person around - he cured his misfire ("electrical"), could have fixed a problematic clutch, but just couldn't cure a gearbox casing that developed a split.

Race



Cunningham, McLurg, Hands, Cater, Venn and Harrison head in an orderly line for Campbell on lap 1.

With some hard racers at the front, I considered how much my own F300 would be worth broken up as spares and started rubbing my hands. Happily, I was proven wrong and as I watched into the complex, the racing was absolutely superb - dicing, a bit of jostling, but nothing too tight, intelligent space given within tight competitiveness. Well done gentlemen (even if that puts me back on Lidl Baked Beans for a week). Lee Cunningham had a good start and set out to establish a comfortable lead which never looked under threat. Behind him, Kevan McLurg moved up 3 places and looked to be in pursuit. The commentary said that Daniel Hands had a poor start, which seemed a bit odd as he passed me in third. Peter Venn was in fourth but was edged out by Ben Cater on the approach to Campbell. Neil Harrison was by this time up to 6th.



Here's some more, with Dave Gillett doing a demon/daring move down the left



And still more



First race for the car, first race in a Dallara for the driver. Result: first.



Kevan has a slight lock up. You won't need a chock with the tyre that shape.



Dave Gillett fights with Ben Cater, which I think Ben won on this occasion



Robbie Watts ahead of Daniel Hands - finish order would be reversed

By the end of the first lap, Daniel had dropped to 5th and then Dave Gillett moved up to 5th, a real "stalking horse". At the end of lap 3, Ben Cater took advantage of Kevan McLurg being a bit slow in the chicane, and a bit sideways, and took second. Kevan locked into the Complex and by lap 4 was behind Dave Gillett, who in turn had passed Peter Venn under braking. Spectacular locking on this lap indicated a major problem, and sure enough the Brighton car connoisseur pulled off with a shredded right rear, shades of Villeneuve, Zandvoort 1979. With Lee Cunningham having disappeared into the distance, the fight for second was stunning. Barely a couple of cars lengths covered Ben, Dave and Peter, and I lost count of the number of side-by-side approaches to Campbell, one of the few overtaking spots, which were usually cleanly blocked, occasionally stuck, but never dirty. Dave took second on lap 7 and held it to the end. Which would have left Ben and Peter to fight for third, except..... from 9th on the grid, Malcolm Scott had quietly been picking off the places and all of a sudden joined the fight. Lapping added to the complications, but it looked as though Peter was in a safe third, ready to push Dave for second. 2 laps from the end, Peter had a scavenge problem, and dropped back out of Church. Both Malcolm and Ben took him, and they were left to scrap over 3rd. One of Malcolm's moves eventually stuck, and with Ben doing a fairly slow last lap (by his standards) Malcolm got 3rd.



Andrew Barron, FVL



Peter Venn and Ben Cater



Ben Cater and Malcolm Scott, close and personal



Lee Cunningham passes Lou Watts



Lee Cunningham passes Mike Hatton



Peter Whitmore and Lou Watts



Peter Venn takes to the kerbs to lap Mat Jordan



Broken front plane slowed Henry Fryer

Only mechanical woes would have prevented Daniel Hands from winning Classic, 6th overall and ahead of Robbie Watts. Neil Harrison and Russ Giles auditioned for the Red Arrows display pair, circulating in perfect high speed formation for 7th and 8th in class, well ahead of Bryn Tootell. David Gambling seemed to have the dice with Mark Smith tied up until something went wrong on the last lap and Mark nipped by. Nonetheless, David won Driver of the

Day.

Just as Daniel Hands was aloof from the hoards of Classics, so was second man Kevin Otway, spending much of his time in the company of Mark and David, with Bryn in the distance to aim for. Alistair Bell was somebody else I never saw in the paddock, so I couldn't ask why despite an apparent untroubled run to third, not far behind Mark Smith in the 2000 F395, he came in on the end of a tow rope. Probably a clever fuel saving strategy.



Neil Harrison



Russ Giles



Bryn Tootell

Mike Hatton and Henry Fryer seemed welded together for the first 8 laps, but something happened in the chicane, delaying Henry with a broken front wing, which donated its flap in one of the later laps to a surprised follower. Mike finished ahead of Peter Whitmore, who seems to have found a big box with "reliability" stamped on the outside, and then another stamped "faster each time". He and Lou Watts certainly had a good battle, which is what it's all about. Mat Jordan and Andrew Barron were 7th and 8th, while the enthusiastic and courteous Kevin Couling was last finisher.

Tony Bishop and Shane Kelly dropped out on lap 2, reasons unknown.

Lee Cunningham: "I'm delighted. You have to have a lot of faith that the aero's going to work on the Dallara, but it does. It helps a lot to know that Nick's put the car together - I know it's going to be right and nothing will break."

Dave Gillett: "I love this circuit. We're off to celebrate."

A great race to watch on a lovely summers day. We'll have a few more back stories in a separate piece next week.

Tony Cotton

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St Cross Electronics Mono Championship 15 June 2014, Round 8 Thruxton

Monoposto 2000 & 2000 Classics – Sunday Qualifying

On a much cooler day than Saturday the cars streamed out on to a grey sky covered circuit. Pole position was closely fought for the first few laps between Peter Venn, Malcolm Scott, Dave Gillett and Robbie Watts with each taking bite at the lead however it was a stunningly quick time of 1.14.026 from Peter Venn who took pole position for Sundays race in his attractive looking Dallara F399.

Ben Cater jumped up the order to start 5th on the grid after a quick last lap to start just ahead of Kevan McLurg and Russ Giles. Daniel Hands was right up with the 2000's in his Mono Classic Van Diemen taking pole for his class by 2 seconds from second place Kevin Otway. Further down in the pack Shane Kelly was third followed by Nigel Davies who was driving Team Fern Racing's 2000 Classic, driven by Matt Jordan on Saturday, following blowing up his new Mono Moto in Saturdays qualifying. Not a good weekend for Nigel as he also blew Geoff Fern's van up whilst driving to the circuit on Friday, not someone to trust with your car keys!

Monoposto 2000 & 2000 Classics – Sunday Race

Under the still looming skies the Monopostos headed to the circuit with Alistair Bell in his Van Diemen FR taking up last position on the grid after failing to qualify in the morning.

Robbie Watts, in his rare Lola had a great start from 4th on the grid to challenge Peter Venn into Campbell however Peter managed to hold on to the lead with the remaining pack of Malcolm Scott, Russ Giles, Ben Cater and Kevan McLurg all nose to tail behind. Bryn Tootal and David Gambling were in a constant fight through out the race ending only 1 second apart for 8th and 9th.

After a tight battle at the front with Russ Giles, Robbie dropped back down the order allowing the ever-quick Dave Gillett to push his way up through the pack. Finally Dave passed Peter for the lead and went on to take his first Monoposto win. Ben Cater put the pressure on Peter Venn right down to the chequered flag ending up second and third respectively.

Further back down the field Dan Hands was leading the classics from Nigel Davies who ended the race with a damaged floor due to a slight excursion over the kerbs at the chicane, and was continued to battle with Shane Kelly. After a great start, Alistair Bell had made his way up through the pack to put Louis Watts under pressure lap after lap finally passing him on lap 7 to take 5th in the classics. Henry Fryer, Peter Whitmore, Andrew Barron and Kevin Couling rounded out the Mono Classics field.

Monoposto Mono Moto, 1600, 1800 & Dtec – Sunday Qualifying

With a cool breeze and grey skies the qualifying began with the quick Adrian Wright setting the initial pole lap time only to be beaten on lap 7 by a stunning 1.14.202 by Jeremy Timms in the Speads RM03. The Mono Moto grid was rounded out by ongoing rivals Jason Timms and Geoff Fern. Team Wingnuts, Waring and Reed start 5th and 6th ahead of Graham Read.

Andrew Colebrooke took a great 1600 pole position starting ahead of the 1800's of Paul Britten and Marcus Sheard and the Dtecs of John Whitbourn and Doug McLay.

Monoposto Moto, 1600, 1800 & Dtec – Sunday Race

It was not a great weekend for Team Fern Racing after Geoff also blew up his JKS's engine in qualifying leaving a noticeable Fern shaped gap in the assembly area. Geoff is going to be busy over the next few weeks!!

Adrian Wright managed to stall his car on the grid and so Jeremy Timms managed to pull out a big lead down into the first corner. After finally getting going, Adrian's race came to an abrupt end when he spun onto the grass at the bottom of the circuit where he remained until the chequered flag. The two cousins, Jeremy and Jason Timms, pulled out a lead from the beginning with Jason desperate to chase down Jeremy for the win but was never quite able to get close enough and had to settle for second place.

After a 10 second penalty for an out of position start Graham Read, in his bike engine Dallara, set off chasing down the Timms' however once the penalty was added he finished 4th overall behind the quick yellow Jedi of Kevin Waring. His team owner Jon Reed was unable to finish the race after a leaky headgasket left him with no power and forced him to retire.

The 1800's were few and far between this weekend with the very quick Paul Britten taking the win over Marcus Sheard. Also with a 10 second penalty was the 1600 winner Andrew Colebrook bringing home the silverware for TFR followed by Jim Timms and Eddie Guest after a great battle for 2nd place.

Dtec was another low number class with John Whitbourn taking the win from Doug McLay. Bringing up the rear, and determined to collect some needed points, was our very own David Parkinson who after clutch problems throughout the weekend limped around to finish 4th in the 1600's.

Sara Catanzaro

Disclaimer: The above represents only the unofficial view of the writer and not of the Monoposto Racing Club in



Kevin Couling rotates



First lap jostling



Malcolm Scott



*Dave Gillett ahead of Peter Venn -
Dave acknowledges the marshalls*



John Whitbourn's DTec

*All pics thanks to Andrew
Cliffe/Norwich Photo*

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Jon Reed



*A determined looking Eddie Guest
disturbs the Timms family reunion*



Jason Timms