

## Guards Trophy Race Report – Thruxton (22 June 2024)



Hi everyone,

Our third race of the season, the weather and track conditions were almost perfect (apart from the strong winds) but we suffered a much reduced grid compared to Donington just two weeks earlier, with just 13 cars entered including the two GTs of Paul Tooms (Elan 26R) and Graham Moss (Shelby Cobra). They say quality trumps quantity, and although we had the quality at Thruxton, we certainly need more quantity to ensure the long-term viability of the Guards Trophy Championship.

Upfront, a huge thank you to all the drivers who did make the journey down to Thruxton.

Qualifying saw the ever-rapid Lenham of father and son pairing Robert and Benjamin Tusting taking P1 with nearly a 0.6 second advantage over second-placed qualifiers Ted Pearson and Callum Grant (in Ted's Chevron B8). Next up was another father and son pairing, Ross and Charlie Hyett in the family Chevron B16, followed by the mighty McLaren of Andrew Wareing, dual driven by the ever-youthful Adam Sykes, just 1.5 seconds behind. According to Adam, it was rarely in a straight line! The next father and son pairing of Hugh and Mark Colman ran the McLaren mighty close, just under 0.2 seconds behind in P5.



*The mighty Daytona Cobra of Graham Moss photographed during qualifying. Sadly, a failed starter motor meant Graham had to sit out the race as a frustrated spectator.*

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Benn Tilley led the SRA class, qualifying P6 and comfortably ahead of the Chevron B6 driven by myself and Sean McClurg (in P7, cue our excuses, we are still running the B-spec engine after the blow-up at Snetterton...!) and the final father and son pairing of George and Neil Daws in their rapid and nimble Merlyn Mk 6A qualifying in P8. Behind the Daws, we saw Ashley Hudson (P9, Lotus 23B), Paul Tooms (P10, Lotus Elan 26R), Darren Wilson (P11, Lotus 23B), Graham Moss (P12, Shelby Cobra) and rounding off the grid, Charles Cook and Andrew Hibberd (P13, Merlyn Mk 4A). The first of our speeding (in the pit lane) penalties was issued after qualifying – resulting in an £80 fine (£10 per kph over the limit) and certainly took the pleasure out of the day for one of our drivers (and please see below).



*Benn Tilley  
drove  
another fine  
race to  
qualify P6  
and then  
finish an  
excellent P4  
in his family-  
run Lotus  
23B!*

Unfortunately, the Daytona Cobra decided to continue its unwanted record of DNF and DNSs by failing to restart after Parc Fermé and despite the best efforts to push-start the car, Graham was forced to declare defeat after the starter motor had destroyed the flywheel teeth. It was a sad sight seeing the Cobra being loaded back on the trailer so soon. As a footnote to this report, Graham is back with us at Brands Hatch after his team were able to sort this problem out – well done and fingers crossed for the next race Graham!



*Charles Cook  
and Andrew  
Hibberd in the  
beautifully  
prepared Merlyn  
Mk4A. The car  
sees Charles  
back racing with  
us after a long  
period away from  
the circuits and  
gaining  
confidence with  
every race!*

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With the remaining 12 cars lined up in the assembly area, the usual rolling start followed, and then an exciting first 'half' ensued as the McLaren piloted by Adam Sykes took an early lead and held on to this until pitting on lap 21. Behind Adam, Mark Colman (driving solo after Hugh had decided to "leave it to the boy") made great progress getting up to P2 by lap 8, with Ted Pearson holding off Robert Tusting until lap 11/12. Unfortunately, what happened during the ensuing pit stop period (lap 12 and beyond) caused real difficulties following the true race positions, suffice to say that in nearly 18 years of racing I have never seen a race result being changed twice after the result was first published. This obviously took the edge of the post-race celebrations as we were unsure of the final result until Sunday!

To avoid any further controversy, I can only report the race result as finally published after the second amendment, and Robert and Benjamin were crowned race winners (two in a row Gents, well done), with Ted Pearson and Callum Grant coming home ~5 seconds later in second, and Mark Colman delighted with his amended position of third overall. Its fair to say that Callum thought he had the win as he was shown the chequered flag, sadly incorrectly.

Benn Tilley was P4 at the end, a fantastic result for the lower-powered SRA car, ahead of the B16 of Ross and Charlie Hyett (who suffered a mid-race spin after an unfortunate collision with Charles Cook/Andrew Hibberd) who were declared P5 in the end.

Andrew Wareing did an excellent job of bringing the McLaren home a very respectable P6, George and Neil Daws finished P7, approximately 13 seconds ahead of the very rapid Lotus 26R of Paul Tooms, with Sean McClurg and yours truly home in P9, just pipping Darren Wilson to the line by 0.5 seconds. Charles Cook and Andrew Hibberd were the penultimate finishers (P11) and Ashley Hudson brought the 23B home in P12.

It's worth noting that several drivers were penalised for speeding in the pit lane during the pit stops, including yours truly despite our GPS speedo, resulting in drive-through penalties. The leniency of previous speeding infringements has now most definitely ceased – drivers be warned and get GPS speedos fitted and remember where the pit entry/exit lines really are!



*The Chevron B8 of eventual second placed Ted Pearson/Callum Grant being hounded by eventual winner(s) Robert and Benjamin Tusting, with Mark Colman driving solo in father Hugh's B8, completing the podium after the second amended results!*

Next up **Brands Hatch on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> July** and by the time you read this we will only have a few days to go. 18 cars signed up so far, and hopefully less controversy this time! See you there.

*PS – I am again reliant on the official photographer for photos of the race – please don't be offended if your car isn't featured!*

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