

Guards Trophy Race Report – Brands Hatch (14 July 2024)



Hi Everyone,

Our fourth race of the season, the weather and track conditions were ideal this time – bright and dry – its almost like the summer arrived!

We had 16 cars take to the track for qualifying, including a guest driver from New Zealand (Tracey Barrett) in her lovely Lotus 23C. Sadly no GT cars amongst us this time, but plenty of regulars and a return of the B16 of Dan Pickett after his oil starvation issues earlier in the season.

The ever-rapid Lenham of Robert and Ben Tusting took pole, Ross and Charlie Hyett just 0.3s behind in P2 (B16), with the two Dans (Pickett and Eagling) in P3 in the second B16 a further second behind. The rest of the field qualifying as follows: Ted Pearson/Callum Grant (B8) in P4, Mark Dwyer/Neil Fowler (Lenham) in P5, Nick Fennell/Mike O'Brien (23B) in P6, soloist Charlie Allison (B8) in P7, Adam Sykes/Andrew Wareing (McLaren) in P8, second soloist Benn Tilley (23B) in P9, Hugh & Mark Colman (B8) in P10, Charles Cook/Andrew Hibberd (Merlyn) in P11, Sean McClurg/Nick Thompson (B6) is P12, third soloist Simon Garrard (B8) in his first race with the Chevron B8 in P13, George & Neil Daws (Merlyn) in P14, fourth soloist Darren Wilson (23B) in P15 and our guest driver, Tracey Barrett, a first-timer at Brands Hatch in P15 in the Lotus 23C.



What a view out of the windscreen of the Thompson / McClurg B6 on the opening lap - a fantastic grid of stunning sports racing cars from the mid/late 1960s. Nothing better!

The usual rolling start and busy first lap saw the lead change almost immediately, with Robert T dropping back to P5, and the #33 car of Mark Dwyer/Neil Fowler taking the lead early and staying there until lap 14! The two B16s had a great early race, the first 11 laps looked very closely matched

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with the Ross/Charlie car finally getting the better of the Dan/Dan car on lap 4. The #29 car (Fennell/O'Brien) also had a great start and held P4 until lap 6, dropping back to P5 after Adam (in the McLaren and driving solo in the race) climbed up to P4 by lap 7, then P2 during the pit stops, eventually dropping back to P7 at the flag.



A great battle up front, with the B16 of Dan Pickett leading the Lenham P69 of Robert and Ben Tusting, the B16 of Ross and Charlie Hyett, the Lenham of Mark Dwyer and Ted Pearson's B8 at the back!

The pit stops saw the order mixed up as usual until everyone had stopped. Charlie Hyett took over from his father on lap 12, slowly rising through the order until taking the lead on lap 18. Ben Tusting had also taken over from his father on lap 9 and had his work cut out to make it back through the field, climbing from P14 after their stop, back to P3 by lap 18. The Fowler/Dwyer Lotus was ahead, but not for long as Ben climbed to P2 on lap 20, ultimately finishing just 4.3 seconds behind the B16 and lapping nearly a second quicker. Oh for another 4 laps Ben....!?

Sadly, the race was red flagged on lap 24 (for the leaders) after Mark Colman tried to avoid Darren Wilson's 23B after Darren had selected 3rd gear instead of 5th on the climb up the hill from Surtees, effectively putting the brakes on at the fastest part of the track. Mark's resultant spin led him directly to the barriers just before the bridge, resulting in significant damage to the family B8, the end of their race and ultimately THE race.



This must have been within the first 3 laps, as Ross (#70) overtook Dan (#72) on lap 4 and went on to take the flag with Charlie Hyett at the wheel! FVC versus M10 – not much in it!

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The Thompson / McClurg B6 just ahead of Hugh and Mark Colman's B8, with Clive Cook / Andrew Hibberd in hot pursuit. Sadly, a late race incident would see the B8 buried in the barriers bringing out the red flag.

The shortened race meant the final positions were awarded as follows: Ross & Charlie (B16) in P1, Robert & Ben (Lenham) in P2, Mark & Neil (Lenham) in P3, Dan & Dan (B16) in P4, Nick & Mike (23B) in P5, Ted and Callum (B8) in P6, Adam (McLaren) in P7, Charlie (B8) in P8, Benn (23B) in P9, Simon (B8) in P10, Nick & Sean (B6) in P11, Neil and George (Merlyn) in P12, Charles and Andrew (Merlyn) in P13, Darren (23B) in P14 and Tracey (23C) in P15.



David and Goliath! Adam Sykes in Andrew Wareing's 'enormous' McLaren being hustled by Benn Tilley in the immaculate Lotus 23B. I bet Benn's ears were ringing after a lap behind the big white beast!

In other news, we had to make the difficult decision to cancel our planned trip to Mondello in August, we have simply lost too many regular cars/drivers this season due to several unfortunate incidents. But we have managed to secure a race slot at the **Croft Historic Festival on Sunday 11th August!** We still need more entries; the cut-off will be Tuesday 6th August so please support us if you can. Thanks to all the entrants signed up so far. 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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