



## CHASE Equipment Historic Modsports & Special Saloons

Supported by Black Shuck Distillery

### 2024 Season Review - Part 2

Croft Historic Festival 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> August



Croft is steeped in Modsports & Special Saloon history and it was fitting that the circuit was the venue for our 50 years appreciation of the genre, and the place to present the Peter Baldwin Trophy for Special Saloons and the Jon Fletcher Trophy for Modsports to the winners in the first race.

It was also the place where I feel our series really started to see the fruits of all of our labours with 22 cars from the 60's and 70's completing a wonderful grid.

With it being a 50 years celebration later cars were invited and it just goes to show that car development really does make a difference, when the two invitees of Jack Harper in the family Triumph Spitfire, but now with a modern Honda engine in it and the fantastic ACME 3000 of Ron Cumming, which is based on a March F2 car and now with a modern Duratec engine were the quickest cars. Neither was eligible for the main trophies but gave a clear indication of why we are maintaining our 1980 cut off date for our series, keeping the performance envelope of the cars tight.

Qualifying then saw Ron and Jack at the front although Ron couldn't start due to a clutch problem. The rest of the field was filled with both familiar names and those of new cars coming out. Myles Castaldini, David Morrison and Ray Rowan were next up with Andy Robinson in his monster Ford Falcon next, this car one of the original cars which started on the very first Special Saloon grid with Andy Wilson's DAF 55, these two only separated on the grid 50 years later by Connor Kay in the TVR Tuscan V6 which was driven to 1970 STP Modsports Championship victory by Dr Rod Longton, beautifully now restored by Nigel Reuben.

Next up were Paul Knapton in his lovely original Maguire Imp originally raced by Brian Cutting along side Tony Davies in the Transpeed Firenza that he has been racing since 1978! Andy Willis was next in his very popular Austin A302 as its known, because of its Ford 5 litre engine with another new car on the grid, that of Steve Barnard, this was a 'E-Bay' barn-find that Steve bought and has restored back to a fantastic condition, complete with its BDG, spitting flame under braking at the end of the start finish straight it was a site the spectators were well happy with, bringing back memories of Croft during the 70's. Steve is still trying to find out the history of the car from back in period. Unfortunately though some teething problems prevented him from taking the start of either race.



**Steve Barnard – Escort Mk1**

Steve Watkins in his Midget and Joe Ward in Baby Bertha, unusually a long way from the front were on row 7, just in front of another crowd favourite Craig Percy in his V8 powered Morris Minor, a fantastic creation, with Chris Livesey in another famous original, the TVR GEM Grantura of Tommy Entwistle again beautifully restored and a real credit to the Livesey's. Iain McBay in his Davrian, lovely to see another of these cars which are making more and more appearances on the grids was on the inside of row 9 and next to Iain was Roy Davis, all the way from Australia in his rather unique Triumph 2000 Mk1 PI, lovely to see him coming and joining us.

Row 10 had Steve Watton bringing his newly acquired Rover P6 out for its debut, a car built 20 years ago as a homage to the original works cars, which hadn't been raced for 10 years or more, and next to Steve was Charles Colledge in the Gulf liveried Mini Marcos a car which Charles races with such enthusiasm. The final 2 on the grid were typical Imp engine cars so prevalent in period, David Brewis in his Ginetta G15 and Peter Richards in his Clan Crusader; both of these cars are running in the smallest Class 'A', which meant we had representatives on the grid from all classes.

Over the lunch break the cars were assembled on the grid and a 'grid walk' was arranged for spectators to come on and view the cars close up and chat with the drivers, this was well received and there were many of the old guard there celebrating seeing the cars back at Croft.



**The Jon Fletcher Trophy and The Peter Baldwin Trophy**

The ground shook as the 22 cars swept down the straight, Andy Robinson using all the power of the Ford Falcon to get into Clervaux first, closely followed by Jack Harper, Myles Castaldini, Andy Wilson and David Morrison. From his 14<sup>th</sup> starting point on the grid Joe Ward had already made up three places, indicating his intentions for the race along with Andy Willis, who was displaying the same attitude and had come from 11<sup>th</sup> up to 7<sup>th</sup>. Myles usurped them all and slipped into the lead on lap 6, but was out a lap later. Andy Wilson in the DAF had climbed to 3<sup>rd</sup> by lap 8, but then the DAF retired a couple of laps later indicating the inherent temperamental nature of these cars, all built to run 'close to the edge'. By now Willis had got past Ward in their inexorable charge towards the front, but Jack Harper in the Spitfire had constantly been on the tail of the Falcon

and when Andy spun on lap 9 Jack Harper moved his Triumph Spitfire ahead. David Morrison in the Midget now started to come into the picture having been consistently matching and beating the big Class 'D' runners lap times in his Midget and was up to 4<sup>th</sup> and the first of the Modsports cars eligible for the Jon Fletcher Trophy. It was however the Willis-Ward train that now seemed unstoppable and on lap 9 they moved into 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> behind Jack Harper in the Spitfire. On lap 11 Joe got past Andy and held 2<sup>nd</sup> to the finish securing the Peter Baldwin Trophy for the first Special Saloon home, Andy Willis was third, David Morrison kept his 4<sup>th</sup> place, winning the Jon Fletcher Trophy with Andy Robinson recovering to 5<sup>th</sup>. Next up and as yet not mentioned was Connor Kay in the 1970 STP Modsports Championship winning TVR Tuscan. Connor slipped down the field initially but then steadily made his way back up finishing an excellent 6<sup>th</sup>. Steve Watkins, Paul Knapton, Iain McBay and Roy Davis completed the top 10. Steve Watton wrestled throughout with the Rover P6 on its debut, bringing it home a rather disappointing 11<sup>th</sup>. Charles Colledge, as consistent as ever brought the Mini Marcos home next.



**Andy Robinson leads Jack Harper and the rest into Clervaux at the start.**



**Joe Ward, David Morrison, Andy Wilson, Stephen Watkins, Connor Kay and Paul Knapton.**

Final Results for Croft Race 1.

Place	Name	Car
1	Jack Harper	Triumph Spitfire - (Guest not eligible for awards)
2	Joe Ward	Vauxhall Firenza (Baby Bertha) - Winner Peter Baldwin Trophy
3	Andrew Willis	Austin A302
4	David Morrison	MG Midget - Winner Jon Fletcher Trophy
5	Andy Robinson	Ford Falcon
6	Connor Kay	TVR Tuscan



**June Baldwin Presenting the Peter Baldwin Trophy to Joe Ward (left)  
And the Jon Fletcher Trophy to David Morrison (right)**

The Croft Historic Festival is more than just on track action and there were lots of live music, steam engines, merry go rounds as well as numerous classic car displays taking place. On the Saturday evening Myles Castaldini, ably assisted by Oscar, along with Andy Wilson took control of the hospitality area with some lovely food and beverages that everyone enjoyed. Setting us up for race 2 the next day.



**Saturday evening festivities**

Sunday morning again dawned with bright sunshine and Ron Cumming brought his AC 3000ME back into racing after a long gap, bringing back many memories of local hero Andy Barton, Ron showed the speed of this later version of the modified category, also competing on an invitation basis and was able to pull clear for a nostalgic victory. Joe Ward took another second place but this time it was Steve Watkins in another Midget who took third ahead of Willis in the A302. Paul Knapton in the lovely ex-Brian Cutting Maguire Stiletto came home 5<sup>th</sup> with Connor Kay repeating his race 1 performance in 6<sup>th</sup>.



**Ron Cumming in his ACME 3000**

Final Results for Croft Race 2.

Place	Name	Car
1	Ron Cumming	ACME 3000 – (Guest not eligible for awards)
2	Joe Ward	Vauxhall Firenza (Baby Bertha)
3	Stephen Watkins	MG Midget
4	Andrew Willis	Austin A302
5	Paul Knapton	Maguire Imp
7	Connor Kay	TVR Tuscan

So this rounded up a shortened calendar of track activities for 2024 and I have to thank every one of you that has been on the track hopefully we will see you again in 2025 when we have 4 meeting already lined up.

Before the racing begins though we have the Awards Dinner at the 'Aviator' at Syston Aerodrome on the 18<sup>th</sup> January and then we will be taking a stand at the Race Retro Show on 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> February. Please contact the office for details about attending both.

Until then, please have a lovely festive season and an enjoyable New Year.

Kind regards,

Steve.