

Guards Trophy Championship Donington Race Report – 22nd June 2025

Qualifying:

Qualifying was once again close at the top between the same two contenders from round two at the Silverstone BRDC International Trophy. This time, it was Robert and Ben Tusting's Lenham P69 that claimed pole, narrowly ahead of the Chevron B16 of Dan Pickett and Dan Eagling. Both cars dipped into the 1'13s - nearly three seconds clear of the rest of the field. Best of the early cars was Andrew Hibberd, third quickest overall in his Lotus 23B.

Close behind came the Chevron B8s. Chris and Freddie Lillingston-Price qualified fourth, with Mark and Hugh Colman in fifth and both less than a second off Hibberd. Henry Stephenson, now paired with professional racer and driver coach Murray Shepherd, qualified sixth in the newly built GT40. Despite very limited mileage, the car was already showing its potential.

Seventh was Marcus Black in the thunderous McLaren M1B, a welcome addition to the grid, as everyone loves seeing the Can-Am cars out! Series organiser Nick Thompson and Sean McClurg placed their Chevron B6 eighth, ahead of the Merlyn Mk4 of Michael Richings and Dan Cox in ninth. Rounding out the top ten were the Peter and Sam Hamilton in their Lenham P70.



Race:

When the flag dropped on the rolling start, it was Andrew Hibberd who made the most of Turn 1, muscling his way into second before grabbing the lead a few corners later. Murray Shepherd had briefly taken the GT40 to the front, but two trips through the gravel before the end of the opening lap dropped him down the seventh!

The opening laps became a cat-and-mouse affair between the top three. Hibberd had the edge in a straight line, while Robert Tusting, in the Lenham, looked stronger under braking and through the corners. Despite the pressure, the little 23B held firm at the front, whilst Tusting juggled both attack and defence, as Daniel Pickett remained on the tails of the leading pair after benefitting from set-up tweaks and coaching from co-driver Dan Eagling.



After initially staying within close range of the front runners for the first few laps, Mark Colman began to fall back into the clutches of a fired-up Murray Shepherd. Having never raced the GT40 or driven the car with a full fuel tank, it took Murray a couple of laps to find the balance of the car but there, he began to work his way back up the order. Now more attune with the car, Murray made quick progress, overtaking Nick Thompson on lap three before picking off Chris Lillingston-Price at the chicane for fifth on lap four. Three laps later, the Historic Automobiles GT40 moved into fourth, dragging Lillingston-Price with him as the Chevron also passed Colman before the pit stops began.

As soon as the pit window opened, both Robert Tusting and Dan Pickett dived in to hand over to their rapid teammates, Robert to son Ben, Pickett to Eagling. In a game of strategy, Pickett had planned to pit at the same as Tusting so, when Tusting's team threw out the in-board, Pickett flashed his team to tell them that he was coming in too.

The Lenham rejoined the circuit with the majestic shape of the B16 glued to its bumper. Both drivers settled straight back into the rhythm, lapping three seconds quicker than anyone else. Tusting couldn't shake Lifetime Engineering boss Eagling, who remained locked to his tail through traffic. Eventually, the inevitable happened, a bold move around the outside at Redgate netted Eagling the lead once all of the pit stops had cycled through.



Out front on the road, Andrew Hibberd was still leading overall at this stage. With the Tusting and Pickett cars having already pitted, it was Murray Shepherd who moved forward, taking the on-track lead from Hibberd with a tidy move at the chicane. A few laps later, Shepherd brought the GT40 into the pits to hand over to owner Henry Stephenson, clearly having enjoyed himself after a busy weekend that also included racing at Thruxton the day before.

Murray Shepherd offered up a few comments immediately after his stint *"It was all good, that was the first time I've driven the car in a race, I've literally done a handful of laps, I didn't really realise what it was going to be like on full tanks, it's so different so I went off [twice] and then found my feet, but it took me a lap or two to find the balance of the car as it was a lot, lot heavier than I thought so I pushed wide a couple of times but once I found the groove, the car was just mega - really fast in a straight line and around the corners! I've got earplugs now but we were running the silencers for qualifying so we took them off which must weigh about 30 kilos which are behind the rear wheelbase, so it's improved the handling a lot and sounds a lot better too!"*



Hibberd and Mark Colman stayed out until the very end of the pit window, both pitting at the last possible moment. Hibberd rejoined in third, whilst Hugh Colman (taking over from Mark) came out further down the order, both nearly a lap behind the leading duo.

With the pit stops resolved, Dan Eagling led but couldn't shake Ben Tusting from his rear bumper. Despite the constant pressure, the pair continued to lap three to four seconds quicker than anyone else. By lap thirty, they had lapped the entire field, including a lonely third placed Hibberd.

Then, on the penultimate lap, came the drama. Heading into the chicane, Tusting made contact with the back of Eagling's Chevron. The contact caused the Chevron to spin, however, the Lenham came off far worse, sustaining front end damage and pulling off into retirement. A crushing end to what had been a brilliant battle!

With Tusting out of contention, Eagling comfortably brought the Chevron B16 home to win round three of the Guards Trophy.

Despite the Lotus 23B going light on tyres and with fading brakes in the closing stages, Andrew Hibberd held on to finish second overall and take the SRA class win. Rounding out the podium were Chris and Freddie Lillingston-Price, who claimed SRB honours with a strong late stint from Freddie - impressive considering he'd just stepped out of his Classic Formula Ford!

Fourth overall and second in SRB went to the Colman's B8, while Nick Thompson and Sean McClurg completed the SRB class podium in their B6. The SRD victory went to Murray Shepherd and Henry Stephenson, who brought the GT40 home seventh overall. Once again, the sole GT class finisher was Stephen Reece's Lotus Elan.



Following the race, we were able to get some great quotes from some of the drivers:

The winners Dan Eagling: *"Ben just out braked himself and hit me clean up the back but fortunately he got more damage than I did. There's also yellow flags down there so I was being a bit more cautious and I think he just got caught out."*

"[my stint was] hard. Ben is obviously quick and to get past him is one thing and to stay ahead was also difficult. Dan P did a really good job at the start of the race because when he pitted, he was right on the tail [of Tusting]. And Dan Pickett: "[I'm] ecstatic. Dan's such a good driver, it was good and we drove hard in both stints and that's what you need to do to win these [races]."

Second overall Andrew Hibberd - *"[I'm] extremely please, tired, but thrilled really. It's one of the older cars on the grid, it's got the skinny tyres, it's got everything working against it but it's still a lot of fun to race."*

The commentator also asked Andrew why his pace dropped off a bit in the second half - *"It was getting a bit lean on the tyres, and the brakes were getting a bit long, but you're just working it so hard plus, we cheap skated on the [brake] pads, we put some old pads in it today and it's all getting towards its end of life and it needs a new set of tyres, a new set of pads and then we'll have another go!"*

Third overall - Freddie Lillingston-Price - *"It was a lot of fun, I came straight off the back of a Formula Ford race so it was quite hot but yeah, we did well."* And co-driver and dad, Chris Lillingston-Price - *"It was great, managed to stay with the lead pack and sort of kept it in the*

game, the GT40 was a bit wayward so we kept up with him as well and then gave it to Freddie to finish it off.”

Words by Dan Morris & Ellie-May Taylor
Photos by Motorsport Classic Media

