

Hogg's late charge snatches Donnington victory in frantic Jade battle.

Tony Sinclair put in an astonishing performance at round 5 of the Opensports series to finish over 4 seconds ahead of his rivals in a rain soaked Donington qualifying session. But it was the late charge of Londoner Alan Hogg that snatched victory in the dry race that followed, to give Hogg his second OSS victory on the bounce. Equally notable was the classy drive of Chevron pilot Richard Evans who stole class B victory from the Gunn TS6 of Mike Jenvey who had featured so prominently in the wet qualifying. Ake Borneshusch in the PR6 Radical meanwhile put up a classic fightback drive to recover & seal class C victory after an early race spin.

Qualifying: Sinclair stars in the wet

Donington Park is never the easiest place to drive when it rains, covered as it usually is by unspeakable material dropped from the occupants of East Midlands Airport. And rain it did, with heavy rain lasting well into mid afternoon ensuring that a drenched track greeted competitors for the Saturday OSS round. Nevertheless, Tony Sinclair, fresh from recent test sessions and modifications to the latest Jade 3 Chrysler made light of the conditions, leaving his rivals in his wake with a 1:20:07 time which easily clinched pole.

Alan Hogg meanwhile elected for a steadier approach taking second a fraction ahead of Peter Hobday's Chiron but promising top secret suspension changes for the late afternoon race. The immaculate V8 Chiron represented Chiron's best chance of victory on the day with Hobday, along with most other qualifiers, doing well to simply stay on the road – such were the conditions. It is for that reason that the performance of Gunn TS6 driver Mike Jenvey was also very credit worthy with Jenvey becoming top Class B qualifier in 4th overall (!) Mike who also competes in S2000 was getting in some in-car fitness practice, taking in both series' back to back over the weekend and managing to qualify just under a second ahead of the Bi-Turbo Jade of Steve Griffiths. Griffiths was bemoaning the front end grip (lack of) on his Jade and having his attempt at passing around the outside of Redgate thwarted by the lively Westfield of fellow Welshman Graham Cole during the session.

Tragically, the excellent 6th qualifying position secured by the Class B Jade of Northerner Jeff Wilson was to prove futile as a mid session spin at Redgate and a tangle with the ADR of Irishman Bob Scanlon was to put both pilots out of the running. Scanlon is better known as one of the organisers of the Northern Ireland Sportscar series and to his credit was stepping into the ADR for the first ever at a track he has never driven before in monsoon conditions. Brave man indeed! Bob and Jeff could regard themselves as unlucky to encounter such awful conditions in which to meet on the same patch of Redgate tarmac. Both drivers sportingly concluding "that's racing", but doubtless both will be rueing their luck and burning the midnight oil to have their cars ready for Rockingham.

Gaius Ghinn reported a trouble free run in the Norma M20 in 7th, finding the times of the 2.0L car reducing by almost second for every lap on track. Creditable indeed given this was the first time Gaius had driven the car in the wet. Another first timer was Shane Marshal in 8th, although this time first time referred to his racing at

Donnington, Shane using a circuit guide to familiarise himself with the track – another to do really well to keep it pointing in the right direction.

9th place was occupied by the 1300 PR6 of Ake Bornebusch just taking the Class C top qualifying slot from the 14th qualifying SR4 of Wayne Hill, and the 18th placed ADR of Verity Banks.

Ginger Marshall in the Bowlby rounded off the top 10, just 0.4 seconds behind Ake and 0.1 seconds ahead of Simon Tate's Nemesis. Eventual Class B winner Richard Evans meanwhile was .01seconds behind in 12th. Close times indeed! Richard was driving by far the oldest car in the field in the form of a beautiful 1971 Chevron B19 historic, driven as it was by a 2.0L BDG complete with mechanical fuel injection ! Mike Luck in 13th was debuting the new Zeus challenger in OSS, engined as it was by a unique turbo charged 1500cc unit, which was always going to be a challenge in the wet conditions. While Wayne Hill was taking 14th spot, Leigh Parkes in the Nemesis and Nick Bass's Jade were taking 15th and 16th respectively. Class C man Wayne was going particularly well on his first visit to Donington along with fellow Donington debutant Nick. Lee though was grateful not to bend the car as he couldn't see for most of the race (!) courtesy of the gallons of spray thrown up. As a result he was able to put in a complete clean lap.

Graham Cole occupied 17th driving the ex-Steve Broughton Westfield SE for Cardiff mate Richard McVein who is also threatening to make his OSS debut in the next round at Donington. Graham reporting the Westfield's rear tyres as almost bald making the tail somewhat lively!

Verity Banks in 18th was another to do well to recover her composure in the awful conditions following a first corner revolution at Redgate, while John Church in the Bicknell was content to bring the lovely Bicknell RE98 home unscathed. John was actually carrying an in-car camera for this round – which should make for some interesting footage....more on that later.

The Race 1 (Saturday) – Hogg takes the laurels while Chevron and Radical prove Class acts.

To describe this race a classic tussle is probably to understate how good the spectator entertainment was for this OSS round, with the lead being exchanged several times between pole-man Tony Sinclair, 5th qualifying Steve Griffiths, and of course eventual winner Alan Hogg.

The battles in the classes proved no less entertaining either, with Richard Evans in the Chevron gaining eight places (!) to see off the challenge of high qualifying Mike Jenvey in the Gunn TS6. Similarly, the class C battle was ignited when Ake Bornebusch spun his PR6 on the opening corner of the lap !

When the safety car pulled off, for the now traditional OSS rolling start, the track was bone dry following the mornings' monsoon, and it seemed like pre-race predictions would be fulfilled as clear pole-man Tony Sinclair shot off into the lead with Alan Hogg comfortably holding second. The jokers in the pack though were to appear from fifth and eighth place on the grid from where Steve Griffith's Jade flew past Hobday and Jenvey to snatch 3rd by the end of the first lap, followed by an equally hard charging Shane Marshall in the Jade 2. Shane had spotted a gap down the left side of the track as the lights went out and duly filled it to jump from 8th to 4th just ahead of the Peter Hobday Chiron!

Despite their lower power engines Mike Jenvey and Gaius Ghinn were gamely hanging on to sixth and seventh respectively while the PR6 of Ake Bornebusch was stirring things up in mid-field with a lurid spin at Redgate. The remaining field darted left and right to avoid the stranded Radical allowing Graham Cole and Verity Banks in Westfield and ADR respectively to skip past the delayed in action Lee Parks Nemesis and SR4 of Wayne Hill. It took less than a lap though for Parkes to regain the positions in the Nemesis though with a decisive two car pass up the inside at McLeans. Hill soon regained his position past Banks while Cole in the Westfield was holding position only to park up on the third lap with throttle cable failure. On the same lap, at the front, Griffiths by now had muscled his way into second place whilst lapping backmarkers and by lap four had snatched the lead from Sinclair but now with a squabbling gaggle of Sinclair, Hogg, and Marshall all within a second of him, ready to take it back! This duly happened on lap 5 when Sinclair dived into P1. Sinclair again held off his pursuers but with less than two seconds separating the top five another change was on the cards with Griffiths again diving into the lead at Redgate on lap eight and Sinclair taking it back again on lap thirteen when Griffiths drifted wide at the same corner.

Sadly, it was race over for Peter Hobday who was just in touch with the leaders when the Chiron pilot skidded off-track on its own oil at the old hairpin when something let go in the engine bay. "I've no idea what it was" declared Peter "but when flames started licking around inside the engine bay, I had no choice other than to set off the extinguishers" A bit messy but hopefully the damage is minimal. Another challenger for the lead, Shane Marshall also departed the fry on lap 13 the Jade driver sensibly taking note of the high oil temperature warning light on his dash and pitting.

While the front pair duelled a cunning Alan Hogg was waiting his moment and on a dive down into Old Hairpin Hogg grabbed a lead he was to hold until the finish, pulling away to end the race thirteen seconds ahead of Sinclair. "Alan's Jade seemed stronger than mine in the later laps" moaned a crestfallen Griffiths, while for Jade engineer Sinclair the race provided another valuable step in the evolution of the new Michelin shod Jade 3. It is testament to the driving quality in the new series that despite such a nip and tuck race-long struggle there was virtually no contact to speak of.

The struggle for Class B honours realistically became a race long tussle between Mike Jenvey, Richard Evans, Simon Tate and Gaius Ghinn, following the delay of Lee Parkes, Patrick Sherrington, Nick Bass at the SR6 Redgate incident.

Ginger Marshall had already pitted after the first lap incident with unexplained problems, re-emerging on lap eleven for some late race testing – 9 laps down. John Church was another delayed, but John also struggled with the rubber on his Bicknell better suited to endurance races, hence too hard for the shorter 20 minute OSS format. At the finish it was Evans who eventually took the class honours, proving that age is no barrier when you're built well – as Evans' Chevron B19 proved! The classic sportscar stretching out a lead of over eleven seconds ahead of Mike Jenvey by the flag, having made decisive moves to take Ghinn on lap 2 and Jenvey for the lead on lap 5. Jenvey was nevertheless pleased with his fitness training drive and actually

drove exceptionally well to clinch second against cars with far more regulatory freedom than his Gunn TS6.

In a very close tussle, Simon Tate snatched the final class podium position on lap 9 from Ghinn, the Nemesis and Norma driver's lapping within a second of each-other all the way to the flag.

In class C Verity Banks was putting in her usual reliable performance but along with fellow class C competitor Wayne Hill, they had no answer to the pace of class winner Ake Bornebusch in his PR6 despite his first corner spin. Bornebusch re-taking the class lead from Hill's SR4 on lap 4 and progressing to 11th overall at the flag.

So, in a race full of incident and dramas it was left to the clerk of the course to provide even more dramas as a number of drivers were interviewed over alleged yellow flag incidents, delaying publication of the final results for half an hour.

Still, at the end it was left to Alan Jenkins to present the winners laurels to Alan Hogg for Class A, Richard Evans for Class B, and Ake Bornebusch for Class C.

Looking back at the monsoon qualifying and bone dry race, Donnington had provided a real test; and for sheer spectacle, this one will take a lot of beating. With a double header at Rockingham coming up on the 18th / 19th July though there are sure to be a few drivers looking to put in a challenge so there could well be more drama to come – don't blink or you'll miss it !

See you in July, and keep an eye out for our delayed "Featured Driver" article on the website, and some in-car footage of the race from the Bicknell of John Church.

A delighted Alan Hogg accepting the laurels from rivals Tony Sinclair (2nd – right), and Steve Griffiths (3rd - Left) following their terrific all-Jade tussle.



Class Act: Chevron's Richard Evans accepts the Class B winners award from Alan Jenkins



Class Winner: Radical PR6 pilot Ake Bornebusch accepting the Class C winners award from Alan Jenkins after a fine fightback drive.



OSS Links:

- Race pics from the weekend... <http://www.gridshots.com/events/index.html>
- Timing and Official Results.... <http://www.tsl-timing.com/>
- OSS Website... . <http://www.brsc.co.uk/open.html>
- Online Racecars Magazine...look for us under "Sportscars" ... <http://racecars.co.uk/>