

Race Report

Round 1&2

Snetterton

7th / 8th April 2012

BUSINESS AS USUAL AS STUART KESTENBAUM KICKS OFF 2012 WITH A WIN, BUT RETURNEE STEVE BELL SPOILS THE PARTY TAKING THE SECOND ROUND

Round One : A wet start to Saturday's proceedings and this resulted in a lot of adjustments being made to the cars that were in attendance for the practice session of our first race of the season. Colin's relaxed arrival was clearly masking his intentions and commitment to challenge for the championship with the car having been prepared and cared for during the winter by his appointed team support coach and manager PhACK ett Racing and we wish him well with that! Another unusual site that bestowed us was Stuart, running away from his car, and back to the paddock due to suffering from a sudden electrical fault, fortunately he finally entered the assembly area where the others were watching the reducing or lack of spray from the cars that were on track. This saw a variety of setting adjustments being made on the cars just qualifying. Whilst a few of the regulars were missing from this first event it was great to see that a number of them had made the effort to come and support the championship from trackside.

Even better, was the new drivers that were out on the track all of which were to put in very respectful times with the slippery conditions that were found out on the track. Pole position was to be occupied by a newcomer to the championship, Mike Gardner.

With the weather (wind rather than high temperatures) drying out the circuit the first race of the weekend was not going to disappoint. Off the line the competitiveness of all concerned was clear to see and the front two cars of Stuart and Mike started to break clear and to have a good battle with the lead changing a few times before a broken gear linkage and resulting engine buzz meant Mike struggled slowly back to the pits with a damaged engine (he would take no further part in the meeting as a result) leaving Stuart to a clear lead that was in no doubt for the rest of the race. Steve Bell steadily climbed from a lowly start position on the grid to finish in a stylish 2nd place (and to also claim the RSM brake pad award). Nigel Lingwood sealed his return to the championship in a beautifully refurbished car for the third podium position which was battled over for the entire race with Colin Williams and Steve Pearce. Andrew Smith set out at great pace from 6th on the grid, climbing consistently to 3rd and showed again that the FA73 is a very competitive and timeless machine when it's well prepared and driven to match, his final position reflected only his wise conduct negating a coming together and did not do justice to the station he held for most of the race.

The racing continued throughout the grid with Liam McShane steadfastly shunning the attentions of Alan Fincham throughout the race, who must have had his braces caught on Liam's exhaust, the racing really was that close. Chris Stuart proved to already have great pace in his first single seater race and as the highest placed novice was untroubled by the great spectacle and battle of the other new recruits Calum Frost in his MRE and Terry Durdin in the ex Walton Crossle 25F.



The New Boys : Calum Frost in his rare MRE



And Terry Durdin in the ex Walton 25F



And Chris Stuart in the immaculate ex Mike Fowler RF80



Steve Bell makes a successful weekend of it

Please be aware that Steve Hare and crew has a set up that will mean you need to get to the paddock early at Brands as space will be at a premium this year if we can't get Mr Palmer to move the fences !!

It was a great opening round for the club and showed the potential of the forthcoming season, and for the spectators delivered great entertainment everywhere you looked.

Ian Jeary

Round 2 : Sunday : The grids for the second race on these Double Headers will now be decided by the finishing position in race 1 – as was the majority vote at the AGM last October. So, Steve Bell found himself on the front row, despite his problems in qualifying.

The grid departed on a dry track, with Stuart holding a lead into Riches, followed by Steve B, Nigel ahead of Colin, then Andrew and Steve P. Over the line after the first lap of the 20 minute race, these 6 were already pulling out a gap to 7th placed Liam, with Alan in close attendance, with Chris similarly in Alan's wheeltracks, then Mark Turner (the only Pre 90 representative, given a guest entry for this Pre 82 race, starting from the back), then Calum and Terry.



The Banana Bunch



Andrew Smith took 2 Class wins

Thereafter, the lead changed hands between Stuart and Steve on various occasions, as these two pulled out a lead to the 'banana bunch' trio of Colin, Nigel and Steve P – so named of course due to all 3 cars being yellow – with a cherry somewhere amongst them in the form of Andrew. Steve P faded as the race went on, falling some 10 seconds off by race end. Liam, Alan and Chris formed the next trio, more or less repeating their first race, although Chris was certainly much quicker, and putting in a fabulous effort on his race debut – certainly on this performance the favourite for the novice title. Unfortunately Alan pitted on lap 10 with overheating issues, which hopefully can be remedied for Brands. Mark soldiered on in the immaculately prepared 1984 Jamun, although clutch problems hampered his progress. And Terry and Calum resumed their little battle at the back, this time Terry getting the better of Calum. It was nice to see the ex Championship winning Crossle 25F back on a Classic grid again – with a car of this history, great things are expected of you Terry !(not trying to put you under any pressure you understand...)



Stuart leading from Steve



A close midfield battle between Liam and Alan

Stuart led over the line onto lap 14, only for Steve to reclaim the position as the clock ticked towards the 20 minutes. They crossed the line at the end of lap 14 with 30 seconds to spare, and therefore onto the final lap. Stuart had somewhere made a slight error, allowing Steve to break the tow onto the final blast down the Revett Straight, and he took a jubilant victory by 6 tenths from an impressed Stuart, a man who always relishes a good battle, even when it doesn't go in his favour. Colin took third, only just fending off a recovering Nigel, who was 4th, with Andrew a couple of tenths adrift taking Class B honours for the second time this weekend, albeit on reduced points. Steve P was 6th, with Liam a further 15 seconds down the road, holding off Chris. Mark was the final unlapped runner, with Terry and Calum bringing up the rear.

So – a rather poor turnout for the first meeting, but nevertheless it is encouraging to see 3 new drivers in Classics, and more to follow at Brands. I remain confident that we will see a dramatic upturn in our grid size at Brands and beyond, having hit our pre Season target of 45 'names' on

the driver list for 2012 – all we need to do now is convert those names to drivers in a car sitting on a grid...

Pre 90 Series Race : Sadly, not a good start – with just Mark Turner being the only genuine Pre 90 car in the field, although all Classic runners bar Andrew Smith electing to qualify for what ended up being a free race (thanks



Mark Turner in his very smart Jamun T12

BARC !). We understand that there at least half a dozen cars being prepared for this 6 round series – well come on guys – Peter and Pat are working hard to get this off the ground, so please come out and support it for the remaining 5 races.

Qualifying was fairly predictable, although Steve took the pole from Stuart. In the event, with a downpour during the afternoon, several drivers elected not to take the start, so we started with 8 cars, with the only genuine Pre 90 car starting from the pits with a failed clutch !

Although it had stopped raining, and the Formula Renaults had done a reasonable job in clearing the surface water, the track remained greasy. Steve and Stuart went off into another race on their own, with Colin having to watch as they drew away from him in third. However, on this occasion, it was Steve who made a mistake, locking up on the approach into the Esses, and having to use the escape road. The resulting delay blew any chance of getting back in touch with Stuart, who crossed the line after 15 minutes some 7 seconds up the road. Steve P took 4th (with fuel in the tank !), and Nigel driving conservatively in the still-not-fully-set-up RF80, not wishing to do anything untoward in a non Championship race. Mark took 6th with no clutch, and Calum and Terry got some wet weather driving under their belts, although Terry spun out and failed to restart.

So, despite only 12 cars, some good racing this weekend, with all cars going home with all corners still attached, which is always a good sign... As has been said, we expect bigger and better things at Brands next month, so see you there. All the Classic and Pre 90 activity is on the Sunday, 13th May.

Andy Hodson