

MAIDEN TRIUMPH FOR TRIUMPH AND A WELL-DESERVED FIRST WIN FOR WILLIS



(Kevin Jones' mighty Triumph TR8 Le Mans and Myles Castaldini's Davrian-Ford Mk8 lead the field to the line for the start of Race Two. Credit - SPC Photography & Media)

The CHASE Equipment Historic Modsports and Special Saloons series contested their first of four events in 2025 at Snetterton across two days on the 26th and 27th April. The meeting marked the opening of the HSCC's season and the high-speed '200' version of the former airfield venue would be in use, the layout that most resembles the long-time circuit footprint before its major revamp for 2011. Series coordinator Steve Watton has worked hard to persuade the owners of the crowd-pleasing machines to get them out again and a select field of twelve entries was his reward.

Steve Barnard's low-slung Mk1 Escort first joined the series at Croft last August after being restored from a 'barn find' state bought on eBay. The BDG-powered machine was involved in a great battle for the lead with a Sports 2000 Tiga during the HSCC Closed Wheel Allcomers race at the Walter Hayes Trophy meeting last November and the device will likely be at or near the front in Norfolk. Andrew Willis' Ford V8-powered Austin A30 was sure to turn heads again and the rumbling beast would be able to stretch its legs on the long straights of Snetterton. Another V8-engined machine would be the Chevrolet Corvette of Steven Anderson, the weekend would mark the first outing for the American coupe in the HSCC series after overheating issues stymied the car's debut in September 2024. A brace of Ford-engined Davrians were scheduled to compete in the hands of Myles Castaldini, who is a likely podium finisher at least, along with Iain McBay's similar Mk8. Ex-British Hillclimb champion Ray Rowan will show a great turn of speed with the Delta-based Sunbeam Stiletto clone, whilst newcomer Paul Brooks has bought the Maguire-chassised Sunbeam Stiletto previously driven in the series by Paul Knapton during the offseason and his progress with the former Castle Combe Special GT championship winner will be one to watch. The nimble MG Midget of David Morrison has shown plenty of pace on the more sinuous circuits but may be found wanting in the power stakes on the wide expanses of the Norfolk venue. Another entry utilising a BMC power unit was the curvaceous Mini Marcos of Charles Colledge, who was a regular in the series during 2024. Paul Bowers made the long journey down from Scotland to compete with his smart Fiat 128 Coupe, the Dundee native wanted to try the car on some new circuits having owned the car since 2020.

The guest entry at the weekend belonged to Kevin Jones in the brawny twin-turbo TR8 Le Mans project, as in 2024. The Janspeed-built Triumph once failed to qualify for the 24 Hours of Le Mans and also failed to race last year after various issues struck in qualifying so it was hoped that the 600bhp British Racing Green machine could make the races this time.

Unfortunately, medical advice after recent surgery kept Joe Ward and the famous 'Baby Bertha' Vauxhall Firenza V8 supersaloon away but Gerry Johnstone was in attendance to help celebrate its 50th birthday, the man who led

the build of the all-conquering beast. Some of the regular entrants also missed the meeting with their cars 'in the works'. Series coordinator Steve Watton's Rover P6 is undergoing major surgery to reduce its weight and sort out its handling, with Watton taking inspiration from Gerry Johnstone's work on the design of 'Baby Bertha'. Andy Wilson's Demon Tweaks DAF 55 and Andy Robinson's Ford Falcon V8 engines were both having rebuilds, whilst Tony Davies is going even further and is rebuilding his Transpeed Firenza back to the specification of when he first raced the car in 1978.



(Iain McBay's Davrian-Ford Mk8 rests in the paddock. Credit - SPC Photography & Media)

Qualifying: The guest entry TR8 Turbo of Kevin Jones stormed to pole position by a healthy 3.217 seconds from Myles Castaldini's Ford-powered Davrian, the musclebound polesitting machine had pulled in excess of 140mph down the Bentley Straight in the process. Just 0.166 down from Castaldini was Andrew Willis' yellow peril Austin 'A302' V8 in third, with series newcomer Martin Reynolds joining the self-built machine in the second row in his smart Holbay-equipped Mk1 Escort. Another 0.243 seconds back came David Morrison's MG Midget modsport at the head of the third row and he would have former British Hillclimb champion Ray Rowan starting from alongside with his Sunbeam Stiletto, which developed a misfire during the session. The second Ford-engined Davrian of Iain McBay was next in seventh and he was a little under half-a-second quicker than debutant Paul Brooks' diminutive Maguire Stiletto in eighth. The top ten was completed by well-travelled Scotsman Anthony Bower in ninth and the pretty Fiat 128 Coupe would be dwarfed by the Chevrolet Corvette of Steven Anderson next to it in tenth. The shapely Mini Marcos of Charles Colledge completed the eleven qualifiers after electrical issues prevented the ground-hugging Mk1 Escort of Steve Barnard from taking part.



(Polesitter and Race One victor Kevin Jones lifts a wheel at Murrys. Credit - SPC Photography & Media)

Race One: The first race of the weekend took place in the late afternoon of Saturday. The eleven starters were led away by Kevin Jones' polesitting TR8 Le Mans Turbo and the Welshman raced away from the pack until the Group 5 machine's brake pedal went long. After Andrew Willis bellowed past the Davrian at the rolling start, Myles Castaldini drove around the outside of the 'A302' Coram on lap one to reclaim second and a topsy-turvy battle began. As soon as the Welsh sportscar got in front into a corner then Willis' V8 power would carry his 1950s saloon back ahead on the following straight, with the pair trading places four times on lap two alone. Their tussling allowed the Mk1 Escort of Martin Reynolds to join them and the local man would snatch third place from Castaldini as they went onto lap three. The trio lapped in close company until Reynolds' tyres began to lose their edge and Castaldini mounted another attack on third place. As with his battle with Willis, Castaldini would make up bucketloads of time in the corners before losing out again up the next straight. The Davrian was finally able to hold onto third place after Castaldini repassed the Escort around the outside of Coram yet again at halfway and lapped traffic blocked Reynolds' efforts to retaliate. Once in clear air, the Davrian started to close the 2.454-second gap to Willis. The deficit was reduced to nothing inside two laps and the pair indulged in another tête-à-tête after Castaldini took second place as six minutes remained with his favoured outside move through Coram. The Austin of Willis blasted back ahead as they raced past the pits before the Davrian outbraked the A30 V8 into Wilson. Castaldini got a break down the following Bentley Straight when they encountered a white flag covering Ray Rowan's struggling Sunbeam Stiletto, with Willis lifting to allow the Davrian to stay ahead into the Brundle/Nelson complex before Castaldini extended the gap through his stronger Bombhole and Coram section. Having been just over five-and-a-half seconds down when he made second place his own, Castaldini was suddenly almost within touching distance of the leading TR with three-and-a-half minutes left to run as the beastly Le Mans car's brakes got hot. Jones flexed the Triumph's muscles over the following couple of circulations and led by 4.250 seconds heading onto the final tour but Castaldini closed right in again during the course of the lap. However, the ADA/Janspeed twin-turbo machine opened the taps once more on the run to the flag to prevail by just 0.600 seconds from Castaldini, with Willis only another 3.657 seconds back in third. The victory was the tyre-shredding Triumph's first race finish in 45 years of trying! Willis' third-place result was helped by some wieldy use of an angle grinder pre-race to prevent his foot from fouling on the clutch pedal under braking. Reynolds came home fourth with his gripless Mk1 Escort some 27 seconds further back, with David Morrison taking a Class B-winning fifth overall after early place holder Ray Rowan's misfiring issues from qualifying returned. Iain McBay's Davrian was the first lapped car across the line in sixth, with Anthony Bowers' Fiat a further lap back in seventh. The diminutive Mini Marcos of Charles Colledge finished three laps down in eighth, with the hamstrung Sunbeam Stiletto of Rowan completing the classified runners in ninth. Two competitors wouldn't see the chequered flag as Steven Anderson's Chevrolet Corvette retired with a broken gear lever, whilst Paul Brooks' Maguire Stiletto came back on a flatbed having broken a halfshaft in the late stages.



(Martin Reynolds rides the exit kerb at Murrays with his Holbay-engined Mk1 Escort on his way to fourth place in Race One. Credit - SPC Photography & Media)



(HSCC Historic Modsports and Special Saloons' coordinator and competitor Steve Watton with Race One overall winner Kevin Jones. The invitation entry TR made it to the end and recorded its first race finish in 45 years! Credit - SPC Photography & Media)

Race Two: The second outing for the ten-car Historic Modsports and Special Saloons field was held on Sunday afternoon, the lack of a spare halfshaft precluding Paul Brooks' former Castle Combe Special GT Championship-winning Maguire Stiletto from starting. After storming into the lead at the start of the twenty-minute encounter, Kevin Jones led convincingly until nine minutes had elapsed and the Group 5 Triumph TR8 pitted after its oil

pressure took a dive. The Welshman quipped afterwards that he had 'thrashed it until it broke!'. In the green machine's wake, there was an early four-way dice for second place. Andrew Willis had thumped into second place at lights out and led a squabbling Myles Castaldini and Martin Reynolds, with David Morrison's MG Midget hanging onto their coat tails. Castaldini's Davrian and Reynolds' Escort Mk1 waged war for the first few laps until Reynolds' tyres began to fall away again, releasing the Welsh machine to chase down Willis. It took until half-distance for Castaldini to catch the A30 V8 and a cat and mouse battle for what was by now the race lead ensued, with the Davrian holding the advantage in the twisting sections and the Austin romping away on the straights. The pair surpassed themselves from Saturday's scrap with thirteen position changes during their classic power vs handling tussle, having passed each other ten times in the opener. Time and again, Castaldini would get in front at Coram and Wilson before Willis would thunder back ahead but a personal best laptime from the Austin on the penultimate tour gave the 'A302' a slight lead. Castaldini couldn't bridge the gap last time around so an emotional Willis took a maiden overall victory for the self-built V8 bolide by 1.086 seconds. Runner-up Castaldini secured the 'Bomb Hole Trophy' on aggregate after taking the least amount of time to complete the two races, beating Race Two winner Willis to the crystal vase by 2.571 seconds. Reynolds came home a distant third with his Holbay-engined Escort, whilst a last-lap fight for fourth through the Bombhole and Coram between Ray Rowan and Morrison went the way of the MG Midget after the misfiring Sunbeam Stiletto spluttered over the line 0.316 seconds ahead but was penalised five seconds for track limit offences. Iain McBay's Davrian-Ford Mk8 took its second sixth-place finish in as many days, with Class A winner Anthony Bowers and Charles Colledge also matching their Saturday result in seventh and eighth. In addition to the exit of Saturday's overall race winner, only one other car wouldn't last the distance after Steven Anderson's Chevrolet Corvette started to run a little hot after a lap two spin.



(Myles Castaldini's Davrian chases Andrew Willis' Austin A30 V8 through the Bombhole during Race Two and the rumbling saloon would take an emotional first overall victory. Credit - SPC Photography & Media)



(Double Class A winner Anthony Bowers speeds past pits with his beautiful little Fiat 128 Coupe. Credit - SPC Photography & Media)

The second outing for the CHASE Equipment Historic Modsports and Special Saloons will be at Cadwell Park's 'Wolds Trophy' meeting over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend, the 24th and 25th of May.

Words and pictures - Stephen Carpenter/SPC Photography & Media



(Race Two winner Andrew Willis poses with the spoils of victory, including a bottle of Black Shuck Rum. Credit - SPC Photography & Media)



(Left to right: Steve Watton, David Morrison, Myles Castaldini, Martin Reynolds and Anthony Bowers flank Race Two victor Andrew Willis. Credit - SPC Photography & Media)



(Inaugural 'Bombhole Trophy' winner Myles Castaldini receives his crystal vase from Steve Watton after completing the pair of races in the fastest combined time. Credit - SPC Photography & Media)