

CLASSICAL GAS

July 2005

About Classic Trials and Falcon Motor Club Events and Personalities

Neil's Racing

Podcasting

The latest Internet phenomena, Podcasting allows anyone to set up a radio station from their living room. Broadcasters record and upload audio files to a special web page that has an RSS Feed. Users "subscribe" to a feed to receive new files automatically. It became popular in late 2004, intended largely for downloading audio files onto a portable audio player. However, listening to podcasts does not require a portable device and it is not traditional "broadcasting" to a mass audience at a fixed time.

The big breakthrough has just occurred with Apple adding the facility to subscribe and download Podcasts to its latest version of iTunes. This makes receiving Podcasts an absolute no-brainer for anyone with an iPod. iTunes 4.9 adds a Podcast playlist to its Source Menu. There is a link to a Podcast Directory where the nice people from Apple maintain a list of a whole host of Podcast stations. Subscribing is as simple as clicking a mouse. After that iTunes automatically looks for and downloads new broadcasts which you can either listen to on your PC or on your iPod after a synch.

Like everything on the Internet the quality is variable, ranging from some excellent stuff from the BBC to pretty gruesome DITY efforts. And to answer your question there will be a Classical Gas Podcast in the near future!



Falcon's Neil Bray tailing Stephen Primett out of the Mallory Hairpin. Neil is competing in the Classic Touring car Club's Post Historic Championship in his 3 litre Capri. After five rounds he is second overall behind Primett so no pressure then!



Here is this months picture of a bent Escort! Neil managed to avoid the carnage but there were a lot of bent motors at Brands. Read more on page 2



What is it? All may be revealed at Classics on the Common on 27 July.

Bray's Brands

What do triallers do in the summer? Some head for the beaches, some attend to the vegetable plot. Not Neil Bray, he goes circuit racing.

Falcon Vice-President Neil Bray has competed in many forms of Motorsport over the years. Back in the 70's Neil was a keen Autocrosser in a Mini. Then the Stock Car bug bit and Neil drove a Formula 2 machine until he had the accident where he lost his arm at Ipswich. Apart from an interlude autocrossing an Escort Neil has concentrated on trialling, with the ex-Derek Fleming Primrose and a number of Skoda's.

Then a couple of years ago Neil's son Chris started racing an Escort in the Classic Touring Car Racing Clubs Group 1 championship. His appetite wetted by Chris's exploits, and a couple of outings in the car, Neil decided to go racing with his own machine and acquired a 3 litre Mk 1 Capri that had been prepared for Historic Saloon Car Racing.

The car arrived during the autumn of last year and over the winter, it was tidied up after 5 years of storage, but otherwise was mechanically left pretty much as it was apart from a re-spray.

The original plan had been to sort it out at a track day at Silverstone, but the designated one was cancelled, so the first time Neil drive the car was at practice at Thruxton on Easter Monday. The car went well and Neil was fifth on the grid of 21 cars.

Neil got away well and was fourth at the end of the first lap. Tony Crudgington got by Neil in his Triumph Dolomite Sprint but disappeared after a couple more circuits. The rest of the race was pretty uneventful. David Howard won in his Jaguar XJ12, just in front of Nick Dann in a similar Capri to Neil's and Stephen Primett in his 2 litre Escort. Neil was around 15 seconds behind this leading group, a long way in front of the rest of the field. This was a



Neil rounding Shaws hairpin at Mallory Park in his 3 litre Capri ahead of David Hall in his Vauxhall Firenza.

pretty good result for the first event, especially considering Neil had arrived "fresh" from The Lands End Trial in Primrose.

There was quite a wait until the next event. A double header at the CSMA Brands Festival. The twisty nature of the Brands Indy circuit didn't suit the Capri quite as much as Thruxton's wide open spaces and Neil qualified 12th on a grid of 30, close behind last years champion, Nick Dann in his class leading Capri.

There was carnage on the start when five of the cars eliminated themselves in a pile up, including Nick Dann. After an agonising wait the restarted race got away cleanly, with Neil in the middle of the pack. He had several duels but managed to keep it on the Island to finish 11th overall and first in Class B.

Three of the cars in Neil's class had been eliminated in the first lap pile

up. Two of them were irreparable but Neil and his team helped Peter Holton repair his Rover P6 for Sundays race. This was important as if he didn't make the grid there would only be two starters in Neil's class and maximum point's wouldn't be available. Things weren't so eventful at the Sunday race and Neil finished 11th overall and first in class again which together with fastest lap put Neil 2nd overall in the championship.

Early June saw the championship circus travel north to Oulton Park. Quite a few of the regular drivers didn't make the journey, including last years champion Nick Dann in his Capri. So with only two starters in class D maximum points weren't available. Neil's rival was Peter Holton in his Rover P6, now fully repaired after the Brands Hatch incident. Neil didn't do too well in practice and qualified 12th on the grid, some six

seconds slower than pole sitter Tim Fish in his Chevrolet Camaro, but ahead of Peter Holton. After the usual melee into the first corner Neil had an uneventful race, coming home comfortably ahead of Peter Holton in seventh place after no less than six other competitors retired with mechanical problems.

Before Oulton Neil had been three points behind championship leader Stephen Primett but pulled back two points when Stephen only came second to Tony Crudgington's Dolomite Sprint. Neither Stephen nor Neil got fastest lap. So Stephen got 7 points (one for starting and six for coming second). Neil got 9 points (one for starting and eight for coming second in a class with two starters). So Neil was now only one point away from the championship lead. No pressure!

Chris Bray had his first outing of the season at Oulton and it didn't go very well. There were fuel problems in practice, which he had to curtail when his exhaust came adrift. Then in the race itself something horrible happened inside the engine and he retired.

Mallory Park came just a couple of weeks later, on what must have been the hottest day of the year. Again there was no Nick Dann, but the class was back to three starters with the addition of former champion David Thomas in his blue Capri, who was also driving in the Group One event.

The writing was on the wall when David Thomas planted the Capri firmly on pole, but Neil qualified well in ninth place out of 22, only a couple of seconds behind. Peter Holton was right at the back having arrived late and only did a couple of laps, putting him right at the back of the grid. This was a good result for Neil as he had to come in early when first the Capri went on to five cylinders and then had a small fire when Neil opened the bonnet. The reason for the fire remained a mystery but the engine problem was soon traced to a plug lead coming detached.

Back in the paddock Simon Groves had arrived and helped with the old banger racing trick of cable tying the plug caps in place. Chris had

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Neil working on the Capri during the winter.



The field streams around Graham Hill bend at Brands on the restart following the startline shunt.



There's a strong social side. Here a Lotus Cortina tries to make friends!



Neil and Alistair after the Brands Class Win.

The Classic Touring Car Racing Club

The Classic Touring Car Racing Club runs, in conjunction with the British Automobile Racing Club, four separate Championships:-

Classic Saloons and Historic Touring Cars

"Road going saloon cars marketed before 1st January 1960. Historic Touring Cars are road going saloon cars marketed before 1st January 1966..."

Post Historic Touring Cars

"Saloon cars marketed before 1st January 1974..."

Classic Group One Touring Cars

"Saloon cars marketed before 1st January 1983..."

Classic Thunder

"4 seater saloon cars based on a standard steel production shell which were marketed before 1st January 1990 or were homologated by F.I.A. for competition in Group N, Group A, Group 1 or Group 2 category before 1st January 1990..."

The Post Historic and Classic Group 1 Championships run on Dunlop Formula R treaded race tyres and to Group 1 specification, while the Classic Thunder Championship incorporates more highly modified cars from Gp2, Gp5 and GpA. Pre 90 Gp N saloons are also eligible to compete in this championship.

Each Championship is between 8 to 11 rounds at circuits throughout Britain and is split into classes depending upon engine size. The races themselves are organised by the BARC.

The racing is pretty competitive but excessive "pushing and shoving" is frowned upon. Having said this when 22 saloon cars are funnelled at high speed into Druids at Brands or Shaws at Mallory panel damage is inevitable.

There is a strong social side. The club have a hospitality vehicle that they bring to races and organise barbeques for drivers, and friends at many meetings.

Michael's Musings

It's been a very different summer for me this year. No cars to tinker with and lots changes to cope with.

Mike Hayward and I have been to quite a few of Neil's races and really enjoyed ourselves.

The highlight was the breakfast Nashy cooked at Oulton Park. The low all the bent cars in the Brands paddock after the startline shunt.

Oh! Lets not forget Neil. The boy's doing well although he better watch out as David Heale was in the Mallory paddock under the cars with a tape measure!

I won't be driving again this year which was going to mean missing The Edinburgh which I have done every year since I started Classic's. Simon Groves has very kindly offered me the bouncers seat in his Escort which means Mike Hayward is available to passenger. Does anyone have a ride for Mike?

As usual news, pictures etc, always welcome - mleete24@hotmail.com

Michael Leete



(Bray's Brands — Continued from page 3)

inserted a substitute engine from a Rally Car but once again hit problems in practice when the Escort lost all its water after one of the hoses became detached.

In Neil's race David Thomas disappeared into the distance in his very fast Capri, which has about 60 brake more than Neil's machine. Behind there was a real battle in class C and after a couple of laps Stephen Primett was back in third place, struggling to stay in front of a hard charging Jason Christie. Unfortunately Jason started to drop back and Tony Crudgington had to retire his Dolomite Sprint when the rear suspension came adrift. This gave

both Neil and Stephen Primett seven points, as neither got fastest lap, so Neil is still one point behind in the championship with 44 points, one behind Stephen and four ahead of Steve Young from class E in his Mini.

Chris had more bad luck when after a lengthy wait, because of a bad accident in the previous race, his clutch disintegrated on the start line and he hurt his finger quite badly when it got trapped in the adjusting mechanism.

The next race is at Cadwell Park on 17 July and the plan is for the Capri to go faster and handle better after some very special attention before its next outing!



Neil lining up behind David Thomas in the Mallory collecting area waiting to go out for practice.

Peter Holton was involved in the Brands start line shunt but with help from Neil and Chris made the grid on Sunday.



Simon Groves and Mike Hayward cable tying the plug leads in place after the Capri went onto five cylinders at Mallory.

Long Vehicle! Neil took his caravan to Oulton Park.

