

CLASSICAL GAS

September 2005

About Classic Trials and Falcon Motor Club Events and Personalities

Surprising Scamp



Roger Dudley set FTD at an excellent September Surprise Autotest organised by Owen Turner and Julie Fleet at a new venue for Falcon.

There was a tremendous entry of 24 for the last Autotest of the season. Three non-started on the day, but 21 drivers came to the line to do battle with Owen Turner's tests. There were a couple of well-known rally names from the past taking part. Graham Raeburn, who was sharing a Metro with Fiona Duncan, is the son of Nigel Raeburn who navigated Will Sparrow to tremendous success in the Motoring News Championship. I can remember competing against Rover driver Peter Valentine who was one of the most successful navigators in the local LCAMC championship in the early 70's but, unlike me, Peter went on to compete at international level in the RAC rally.

We had some familiar drivers in unfamiliar cars. David Manning's Mini was fine but Peter's Subaru towcar wasn't feeling so great, so they had to use David's road going Peugeot, which David enjoyed as much as the Mini! Ed Nickel definitely won the prize for most interesting car, a newly acquired Anglia Estate which Ed went up to Warrington to buy after seeing it on Ebay. At the moment it has a 1500 lump installed but a 1200 is also available.

Roger Dudley was taking part in his first Falcon Autotest of the year and bought along his Scamp to do battle with the Mini's. For the first round Owen ran three tests, some of which were quite tight. With the big entry some professional organisation was required to keep things moving and Owen employed two timekeepers on each test to save time.

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Neil has been racing at Donington and Snetterton since last month. They were both exciting races and the championship position is now Primett 81, Bray 71, Young 67 so there's everything to shoot for at Pembrey at the double header that ends the year. Dave Thomas will not be there so there's everything to shoot for. Read the race reports on pages 2 and 3.

Neil's Racing

Donington - Great result for Neil, finishing a strong 2nd in a class of six, behind David Thomas of course, but in front of the rest, including last years champion Nick Dann. This puts Neil within four points of championship leader Stephen Primett but Steven Young is doing well and has the same number of points.

As expected there was a good entry at Donington, with six cars in Neil's class. Stalwart Peter Holton in his Rover P6 and five Capri's; Neil, the excellent David Thomas, Nick Dann (who hadn't raced since his shunt at Brands), Ian Clark who hadn't raced since Brands either and Phil Rhodes who had been away since his coming together with the tyre wall at Silverstone last year.

A new water pump and a high torque starter motor were the only changes to Neil's car since Lydden and we were all hoping the new pump would make the car run a bit cooler. Qualifying was uneventful for Neil who qualified third quickest in class B, three seconds slower than David Thomas and one second slower than Nick Dann. This put him 11th on the grid, beside arch rival Peter Holton and immediately behind Ken Clarke who had sold Neil the Capri! Ken was driving a Dolomite, one of four in the race. We were hoping that the very fast Dolomites of Mark Osborne and Tony Crudgington, and Jason Christie's Escort, would give Stephen Primett a run for his money and push

Tony Crudgington was lucky to survive a coming together with Paul Conboy whose Vauxhall came out of gear when Tony was immediately behind him and Tony ran into the Firenza, so Neil's Porta Power was in action again to straighten out some body panels. There wasn't a great deal of time after practice as the Post Historic race was before lunch.

Come the race Neil made a great start. In front of Neil Ken Clarke was slow away and Neil was able to find a

gap between him and Nick Dann to get in a really good position on the first lap. Up in front David Thomas was battling with the big boys in their Camero's, Mustangs, V12 Jaguars etc. Behind them were the battles we were interested in. Mark Osborne was ahead of Stephen Primett who had Tony Crudgington only just behind. Neil was battling with Peter Holton and they were both some way ahead of the slow starting Nick Dann.

On the third lap Tony Crudgington had a moment and dropped back behind Neil, who got mixed up in a battle between him and Ken Clarke (who sold Neil the Capri) who had recovered from his slow start. Nick Dann was also getting his act together and closing on Neil. By lap five Neil had let the two battling Dolomites by and was having to fend off Nick Dann who got by him at McLeans but couldn't stay in front when Neil responded and re-passed. Ken Clarke had a moment somewhere and for a while got between the two Capri's allowing Neil to build a small gap between him and Nick Dann.

Further in front Mark Osborne was comfortably ahead of Stephen Primett, who then fell into the clutches of a hard charging Jason Christie who went by, putting Primett back to third in class. Then a recovering Tony Crudgington came through to briefly put Stephen Primett back to fourth in his class but then Tony had a moment and spun and Primett regained third spot.

Behind them it looked as if Nick Dann had given up trying to get by Neil who come home tenth overall and an all important 2nd in class.



Above - Donington battles ended with Peter retiring and Neil heading Nick Dann.

Below - Snetterton was wet and Neil could only finish 3rd. Got a new gearbox though!



Snetterton - First wet race of the year and boy was it wet. The track was flooded in places. Racing was delayed and for a while it looked as if it would be called off. When the cars finally went out all looked well for a while but then Neil spun and that gave Peter Holton the chance to close and later get by when Neil had a moment and went on the grass.

Practice took place a drying track. Neil spun a couple of times trying to find the limit of grip but did well to be seventh on a grid of 19. Neil had a fastest lap of 1.30.43. This was more than a second quicker than class rival Peter Holton in the P6 but to put things in perspective the experienced David Thomas qualified with 1.26.89 in his Capri!

Championship contender Steven Young had engine problems and only completed four laps. Steven and his crew took the head off and found signs of water in the inlet manifold. The head gasket was intact but when they put the motor back together things hadn't improved and they retired with a suspected porous head. David Thomas had his Capri jacked in the air, checking his diff, as there seemed to be excess backlash in the drive train.

The rain became very heavy during the lunch break and the track was totally flooded in parts. Racing was delayed and only re-started just before 4 pm. Neil's post-historic race was first away, the first two being postponed until Sunday as they were both double headers and the competitors would be there again the next day.

It was still raining when the Post Historics came to the line, minus quite a few who decided not to race under the conditions. Paul Conboy wanted to run but couldn't when he found his wipers weren't working. Interestingly Neil never used his wipers, relying on Rainex which worked well kept the screen clear.

Here is a lap-by-lap report of a very exciting race.

Lap 1 - David Howard (Jaguar XJ12) was just ahead of David Thomas (Capri), Stephen Primett (Escort), Jim Utting (Ford Mustang), Jason Christie (Ford Escort), Tony Crudgington (Dolomite). Then a group headed by Neil Bray (Capri), consisting of Keith

Calver (Mini) who had worked his way up from last on the grid), Mark Osborne (Dolomite), David Hall (Lotus Cortina Mk1), Peter Holton (Rover P6), Peter St Barbe (Lotus Cortina Mk 2), who pulled into pits and retired at the end of the lap, then a big gap before the tail enders came by.

Lap 2 - David Thomas had passed David Howard who was close behind, then came Primett and Jason Christie who had passed the big Mustang. He was followed by the Mini who had overtaken Neil, who was just in front of the Osborne Dolomite. We had already lost Tony Crudgington, who pulled off after something fell off the car. Tony had been having problems and the Dolomite had needed push starting all day.

Lap 3 - It was still David Thomas, David Howard, then a gap before Stephen Primett who was building a gap over Jason Christie. Then the Mustang followed by Keith Calvers rapid Mini and Mark Osborne who had squeezed his Dolomite past Neil. Then there was a gap before David Hall's Lotus with Peter Holton in close attendance.

Lap 4 - The two David's maintained their position in front of Stephen Primett, a gap, then Jason Christie. Then came the Mini who had overtaken the Mustang, Osborne, Neil, the Lotus, Peter in the P6 and the tail enders.

Lap 5 - David Howard was very close to David Thomas and Stephen Primett was closing on the pair. They had all better watch out as Keith Calver was revelling in the conditions and got past Jason Christie at the Russells chicane. Next came the Mustang and Mark Osborne who clearly didn't like the wet. Neil, the Lotus, Peter in the P6 and the tail-enders followed them

Lap 6 - David Thomas had pulled out a noticeable lead on David Howard. The others maintained position apart

from Keith Calver who had a moment in the Mini, letting back Christie past.

Lap 7 - David Thomas came round a long way ahead of David Howard. Stephen Primett had given up the chase and seeing he was well ahead of his nearest class rival eased off in the interest of his championship position. The Mini had re-taken Jason Christie's Escort. Then Osborne, the Mustang and Neil. It had been obvious that Peter Holton was being held up by David Hall's Lotus and he finally out braked him at Russell's. The Lotus fought back but Peter stayed ahead and set of in pursuit of Neil.

Lap 8 - David Howard closed the gap on David Thomas as they lapped James Christie's Avenger. It was then Primett, Keith Calver (Mini), Jason Christie, Osborne and Neil who was about 10 seconds ahead of class rival Peter Holton in the P6. Then came the Lotus and Andrew Clarson in his DTV liveried Firenza who took a trip across the grass at Russells.

Lap 9 - Neil spun all the way round at the flooded Riches, allowing Peter to close. Other than that every one stayed in the same positions.

Lap 10 - David Howard made a serious attempt to get past David Thomas at Russells but Thomas is very experienced and wouldn't let him by. Behind everything was the same apart from the fact that Peter Holton was worryingly close to Neil.

Lap 11 - The leaders maintained position but behind Peter Holton was stuck to Neil's boot lid and made a serious attempt to get by at Russells. He didn't make it but was right behind as they crossed the line to start the last lap.

Lap 12 - Neil got right out of shape at Riches, strayed out onto the grass and Peter went by. Try as he may Neil could not respond and came home third in class.

Michael's Musings

Went to F1 testing at Silverstone. First time I have been there, or seen F1, since around 1970. Back then it was called "Grand Prix", Doris Day was still a virgin and some of the participants seemed to be enjoying themselves! Anyway I went with a crowd of great buddies, one of whom had organised access to the inner sanctum of the pit lane and garage complex. Lots of hush, hush, wink, wink about this but we were able to get onto the pit lane right outside Toyota and Red Bull and go inside one of their garages.

First impression was the noise. Wow! Then the understanding of how these guys are spending mega-bucks. I think every Toyota mechanics assistant had an assistant.

They seemed to be spending all their time testing different tyres and fiddling with computer settings. They could fire up the cars and blip the throttle without the driver in the car or without any one touching them.

As usual news, pictures etc, always welcome - mletee24@hotmail.com

Michael Leete



(September Surprise Autotest—Continued from page 1)

Roger used his skill and the Scamps manoeuvrability to good effect and set fastest time on the tight first test. However test two was a different story and Keith Pettit, Arnold Lane and Martin Cheshire were all quicker in their Mini's, as was CSMA organiser Mike Bliss in his Holden Barina, which looked like a Vauxhall Corsa to me! Roger put things right on the third test and had a healthy lead over Arnold Lane after the first round. The larger cars in class B were having a ding-dong battle. The lead was constantly changing, but it was Adrian Gladwin who led after the first round.

By the second round the tests were more open. The saloons weren't letting Roger have things all his own way, and Keith Pettit set the fastest time on test 5 but Roger maintained his lead into lunch. In class B Adrian Gladwin extended his lead. In the production class Jonny Tovey had a narrow lead over Laureen Pettit, both driving Keith's hard working Mini.

Owen and his team had a lot of work to do over lunch as some of the tests had cut up quite badly in the dry conditions and he wanted to minimise damage to the field. This meant cutting back to three tests in the afternoon with a round of two and a round of one.

Roger Dudley took an excellent FTD ahead of Arnold Lane who was the fastest in class A. It was nice to see a non-Mini figuring in the results and Mike Biss was 2nd in his Holden just a second quicker than Keith Pettit.

Adrian Gladwin maintained his lead over Richard Atherton and Peter Valentine in the closely fought class B and David Smoley bought his Westfield home just in front of Jonathan Baggott in class D. Mark Tompkins recovered from a double penalty on test one to narrowly win the production class from Jonny Tovey.

An excellent conclusion to Falcon's Autotesting year, with a new venue, new organisers and a new winner. Roll on next summer.



Left - David and Peter Manning left their Mini at home. Right - Adrian Gladwin won a closely fought class B



Left - Ed Nikel had the most interesting car, Right - David Smoley just held off Jonathan Baggott to win class D

FTD	Roger Dudley (Scamp)	1st Class B	Adrian Gladwin (Maestro)
Best Novice	Fiona Duncan (Metro)	1st Class C/D	David Smoley (Westfield)
1st Class A	Arnold Lane (Mini)	1st Class P	Mark Tompkins (Renault)
2nd Class A	Mike Biss (Holden)	2nd Class P	Jonny Tovey (Mini)
3rd Class A	Keith Pettit (Mini)		