

MGCC Race Report – Round 1 Mallory Park - 29th March 2015

With the long winter behind us, the MG Car Club made the welcome return to Mallory Park on 29th March, for a one day racing frenzy to kick start the new season. A breezy paddock saw seven of our championships set up camp for the opening round, spread over eight races.

MGCC Peter Best Insurance MG Cup

The Peter Best Insurance MG Cup kick started a new season perfectly, with the first of two races. A grid of 15 cars made for exciting viewing, as the five red lights diminished for the first time in 2015.

It was three wide on the run towards Gerard's Bend on the opening tour, with pole sitter Simon Cripps immediately able to seize the lead. Unchallenged by his pursuers, Cripps romped ahead, to an eventual cushion of 42 seconds.



Diment leads Halliwell in the battle for second place

Behind, Thomas Halliwell held second place, until the charging Jonnie Wheeler muscled his way ahead. With Cripps in his sights, Wheeler edged ahead to form his own race, as Halliwell fell into the clutches of Tom Diment.

Before long, Wheeler found himself immersed in problems, when he was forced to pull onto the rally cross circuit along the pit straight. In his absence, the Halliwell-Diment battle was elevated to second place, with Diment able to sneak ahead.

As the pair battled, Halliwell soon found himself back in second place, with the pair separated by just 0.3 seconds. However, with less than five minutes left on the clock, the red flag was thrown when David Strike was speared towards the barrier on the wet grass.

With limited time remaining the result was called, crowning Cripps as the victor over Halliwell and Diment. Class victories went the way of Cripps, Halliwell and Driver of the Race Nick Arden.

Combined with the remaining MG Trophy grid for race two, there was certainly some excitement on track. Halliwell was the main feature this time around, to lead the way from start to finish. Ed Davies held on for a second place finish, ahead of James Darby. Driver of the Race went the way of Ashley Cross this time around.

MG Trophy Championship

The MG Trophy Championship returned at Mallory Park with two non-championship races. However, a slim grid due to the 'non-championship' status of the event, didn't disappoint.

The opening lap saw Cody Hill romp ahead from pole position. However as he settled ahead, drama hit for Ray Ferguson, who found himself on the sidelines in a plume of smoke around the John Cooper Esses.



Motorsport

Hill remained unrivalled throughout the next 20 minutes, to claim victory over Jake Fraser-Burns, Christopher Boulton, Andrew Fraser-Burns and Jim Kennon. Hill teamed his victory with receiving Driver of the Race.

With just four cars remaining following earlier woes, the second MG Trophy race was combined with the final Peter Best MG Cup encounter. Hill again was the man to beat, as he led Jake and Andrew Fraser-Burns and Boulton across the finish line. Andrew Fraser-Burns was also voted as Driver of the Race.



Not only did Cody Hill win both races, he also took home the Driver of the Race award for Race 1

[MGCC Iconic 50s & Fiscar Flyers](#)

Mark Ellis scored an unchallenged victory in the sole Iconic 50s with Fiscar Flyers outing. After claiming pole position on a very wet track this morning, his MGA Twin Cam machine remained unfazed by the tricky conditions to double his success.

Peter Edney displayed his best efforts in tough conditions as he chased Ellis, however Edney and his MG TC secured second place, some six seconds adrift, and 34 seconds ahead of his nearest pursuer.



Mark Ellis fought off the challenge from the father and son duo of George and Peter Edney

The battle for third place was definitely closer, with George Edney in hot pursuit of Jeff Marsden for third place. Marsden had been challenging for second place, however after briefly missing a gear when chasing Peter, he was left to defend from the chasing George. Graham Coles collected fifth overall, ahead of Rod Begbie, who was doubling his race appearances today with an outing in the Equipe GTS race.

After a strong performance Jonathan Smare was deemed worthy of the Driver of the Race award.

[MGCC Cockshoot Cup](#)

Paul Clackett started his Cockshoot Cup season in perfect style, when pole position transferred effortlessly into race spoils.

A cushion of over 30 seconds protected the MG ZS driver from any form of challenge as he soared by the chequered flag.

Behind, the action was less reserved as positions changed hands on a number of occasions. Ian Winstanley initially settled in second place, as Philip Standish chassed profusely. However, after just seven laps, Winstanley's efforts were in vain when he found himself in the midst of retirement.

In his absence, Philip Standish made the best of an astounding start from 10th on the grid to settle in the top three. After an 18 month absence from the motor racing scene, and six years away from Mallory Park,



Returning to the championship after an 18 month break from racing, Peter Burchill secured second place, Drive of the Race and Overall Driver of the Day

Peter Burchill impressed on his return following a fierce battle with Standish for much of the outing. As the pair neared the chequered flag Burchill managed to wrestle his way into second place, leaving Standish to collect an impressive third. Burchill tripled his success by not only collecting the Driver of the Race award, but also Driver of the Day.

Peter Bramble's MGB Roadster featured once again towards the prominent end of the grid, to collect fourth place and fourth in Class C. Meanwhile, Nick Ashman and David Coulthard battled their way towards the chequered flag to finish fifth and sixth, respectively. A close encounter for the pair for the duration saw the chequered flag separate them by just 1.8 seconds.

Equipe GTS

The short Mallory Park circuit presented some thrilling action in the newly formed Equipe GTS race, but with a grid of 21 cars the action certainly wasn't in short supply. Dominance struck in the form of Tom Smith, as he immediately returned to winning ways in his MGB Roadster.

As the grid completed the formation laps, the heavy rain returned with a vengeance, adding to the spectacle somewhat. As the race began, Smith launched towards Gerard's Bend, to claim top spot instantaneously.



Race winner Tom Smith

With Smith clear, the battle for second saw four cars vying for position, but it was Rod Begbie who was first to claim the advantage. Begbie's position soon came under threat when Pete Foster made clear ground on his fifth place start to edge ahead.

Second place certainly became the hot spot, as it changed hands once again, this time to be passed onto Brian Arculus. Despite immense pressure from those behind, Arculus held his ground for much of the race, until David Beresford found a suitably sized gap for his MGB FIA Roadster.

With over 30 minutes of racing behind them, the Equipe GTS field were welcomed home by the chequered flag. As Smith romped ahead to collect his spoils, second place eventually went the way of Beresford, one lap adrift from Smith.

Some 10 seconds behind, Jonathan Ostle swapped his ninth place grid slot for an impressive third place, ahead of Pete Foster and Arculus. Following a spell at the sharp end of the grid, Begbie settled in sixth place, ahead of Paul Latimer. After starting 16th on the grid, Rob Cull made his way as high as sixth place before taking the chequered flag in seventh. After much deliberation Ostle was voted as Driver of the Race.

[Lackford Engineering MG Midget & Sprite Challenge](#)

A drying track was a welcome sight for the delayed MG Midget and Sprite Challenge grid. With sunshine finally upon us, it was Sibley who triumphed in his familiar blue MG Midget.

Untouchable from the off, Sibley staked his claim to victory very early on to lead a commanding drive. Behind, James Dunkley made second place his own, a position he retained for the duration.

A somewhat tame outing from the front of the field saw Edward Reeve steal a third place finish, and third place in Class A, despite the best intentions of Paul Campfield and his Austin Healey Frogeye Sprite. As the chequered flag fell just 0.7 seconds separated the pair, also handing Class E honours to Campfield.

After a sterling performance, Edward Reeve was awarded Driver of the Race by our commentary team.



Paul Sibley leads James Dunkley

[MGCC Drayton Manor Park MG metro Cup](#)



Rushworth takes an early lead ahead of Sanderson and Williams

A brand new season saw Mike Williams claim the opening MG Metro Cup victory, as he and Tom Sanderson resumed their on track battle.

As the sole MG Metro Cup race began, Ben Rushworth, returning for his second season, seized the lead. However, with Sanderson and Williams in hot pursuit, Rushworth's advantage was soon swallowed, as the pair muscled by.

After a gamble with the set-up of his MG Metro machine, Williams was relieved to see his efforts were not in vain, as he swept by the chequered flag first in line. Despite trailing Williams lap after lap, Sanderson was unable to distract his rival, to finish second behind him. Oli Hood stormed to a third place finish, ahead of Richard Garrard, Driver of the Race Jack Ashton and original leader Rushworth.

It certainly has been an eventful start to the 2015 season for MG Car Club. Luckily, everyone managed to stay anchored to the ground and overcome the tricky conditions with smiles on their faces. Now we look ahead to the second round of the season and our first double header, as we get set for Brands Hatch. The Brands Hatch weekend will take place during 2nd-3rd May, and we very much look forward to seeing you all there, hopefully in the sunshine we've come to expect from the Kent venue.

Words by [Leanne Fahy](#)

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Driver of the Race and Day Awards.

Race 1. Peter Best Insurance MG Cup. Race 1: **Nick Arden (36). MG Maestro EFI**

Race 2. College Motors MG Trophy Championship. Race 1: **Cody Hill (22).MG ZR 190.**

Race 3. MGCC Iconic 50's with Fiscar Flyers: **Jonathan Smare (139). Lotus Elite.**

Race 4. MGCC Cockshoot Cup: **Peter Burchill (13). MG ZS**

Race 5. FAIRFX Equipe GTS: **Jonathan Ostle. (47) MGB Roaster FIA.**

Race 6. Lackford Engineering MG Midget & Sprite Challenge Race 4. **Edward Reeve (2). MG Midget.**

Race 7. Drayton Manor Park MG Metro Cup: **Jack Ashton (98).Rover Metro GTi.**

Race 8 and 9 Combined;

Peter Best Insurance MG Cup. Race 2: **Ashley Cross (22) MG ZS 180.**

College Motors MG Trophy Championship. Race 2: **Andrew Fraser-Burns.(117). MG ZR 170.**

DRIVER OF THE DAY:

Peter Burchill. (His first race after an 18 month absence).