



A real classic at Silverstone brings Aston Club Racing's season to a spectacular finale

Under breezy autumnal skies the last race meeting of the 2015 season took place at Silverstone on Saturday 10th October, and was made particularly memorable by some very rare and fascinating cars on the season's final grids.

Aston Martin LM15 and LM16, which both raced as part of the original 1934 Le Mans team, brought much interest to both the St John Horsfall Cup and Pre-war Team Challenge. Another attention-grabber was the AMOC Intermarque Championship invitation class Aston Martin DBS V8, which originally raced in the 1970s and 80s with Gerry Marshall. The supercharged Aston Martin N24/GT4 project car of John Goldsmith and Mike Wilds added an extra dimension to the Aston Martin GT4/V8 Vantage Cup.

Dry conditions made for very predictable qualifying rounds, with the exception of the AMOC Intermarque Championship, where a loose wheel nut on the invited Aston Martin DBS V8 resulted in the wheel coming off. Thankfully, experienced driver Colin Elstrop controlled the car bringing it to a safe stop.

Qualifying rounds complete, the first race of the day was the eagerly awaited last AMOC Intermarque Championship of the season. With only a few points between the Individual Championship position leaders and all still to play for in the Team standings, there was an air of excitement and tension as the field took to the starting grid.

The usual suspects of David Tinn, Desmond Smail, Nicholas King, Steve Atkinson and the James Guest and James Hilliard partnership raced into the top five positions. Tinn assumed a lead he was to keep from the outset in an Aston Martin GT4, although under pressure from Desmond Smail. Atkinson in a Porsche 968 and Smail also in a Aston Martin GT4 waged a hard fought battle to come respectively 2nd and 3rd. Nicholas King had a great run in his 1959 Aston Martin DB4 in 4th.

The winners of the AMOC Intermarque Individual Championship and Team Championship will be announced at a special awards dinner in the New Year.

The Equipe GTS, specially designed for smaller-engined pre-1966 cars, has been dominated this season by relative newcomer Tom Smith in his 1963 MG B. Today was to be no different, as Smith held off competition to take 1st place from former winner Brian Arculus in an Lotus Elite in 2nd. Only a fraction of a second behind Arculus, Pete Foster in

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a Triumph TR4 took 3rd. Robert Cull also had a great race in a stunning 1963 silver TVR Grantura MkIII.

The Aston Martin GT4/V8 Vantage Cup saw the supercharged Aston Martin N24 of John Goldsmith making a return to racing after problems that hampered its debut at Snetterton in July. The project car was to take on the Aston Martin GT4s and V8 Vantages of Roger Bennington and his Stratton Motor Sport company and other talented competitors in a final showdown of the season.

The N24, with former Grand Prix driver Mike Wilds at the wheel, was off like a rocket and stormed into 1st place with a disgruntled David Tinn - not used to seeing any cars in front of him - chasing him down with the podium-winning vigor and determination that he has displayed all season. Tinn's patience was rewarded when he finally managed to squeeze past N24 to take a commanding lead which he held onto to take the chequered flag. Tinn said: "It was a really tough race. It took me several laps to catch Mike Wilds and get back in front, but it was good fun and excellent racing."

2nd place went to Desmond Smail in an Aston Martin GT4 and in 3rd place was Nicholas King in his iconic DB4. King said: "It was great to see the older cars can still pull their weight out there. It was really satisfying to see some GT4s in my wing mirrors!"

Exclusive to our meetings at Silverstone, the St John Horsfall Trophy is raced in memory of John 'Jock' Horsfall's death at the world-famous circuit in 1949. It was first won by an Aston Martin Speed Model in 1950. Since 1970, the trophy has gone to the AMOC member driving a pre-1940 Aston Martin in any trim winning on handicap.

It was great to see the race so eagerly supported by pre-war owners. A wonderful display of an Aston Martin Le Mans, Speed Model and Ulsters - including LM15 and LM16 - certainly attracted crowds of spectators, fascinated by the rich history of the cars.

Edward Bradley in the Aston Martin Ulster took an early lead with Paul Wright in LM16 in close 2nd. Christopher Scott-Mackirdy in the Aston Martin Le Mans held 3rd while Robert Blakemore in the Speed Model followed in 4th and John Briggs in 5th in LM15. Scott-Mackirdy worked his way through the field to take the lead around halfway through the race, but was under constant pressure from Robert Blakemore. Blakemore was also engaged in some great rivalry with Bradley, Briggs and Wright,. The superb race ended Scott-Mackirdy 1st, Blakemore 2nd and Briggs 3rd.

Said Scott-Mackirdy: "I've come second twice, so coming first was a real treat for me. Robert overtook me a couple times, so I had to work really hard for it and I was glad about that. It was great fun, the cars ran beautifully and it was a huge success all round."

The AMOC '50s Sports Cars for the Jack Fairman Cup (incorporating the Vredestein JEC Jaguar XK Challenge) was one of the great races of the day with top-class close,

competitive and fun racing of wonderful 1950s Jaguars, Lotus, MG As, Austin-Healeys and a Cooper Bobtail amongst others.

The highlight of the race was the battle for 2nd and 3rd place between Jaguar drivers Robert Newell in the XK120 and Andrew Moore who was celebrating 30 years of ownership of his XK150. The pair overtook each other numerous times in an entertaining dual that had everyone on the edge of their seats. Meanwhile, race series dominator Stephen Bond in the Lister Jaguar lost all drive midway through the race and had to retire with Laurence Jacobsen in his Lotus Elven emerging as race leader and eventual winner. He said: "This is just wonderful, because I've spent the season traveling from my home in Scotland to race circuits around the country and the car has never finished a single race! And now, we come here today for the last race of the season and not only has it finished, but it's won!"

2nd place Robert Newell said: "All credit to Andrew, every time I got him he came back. It was great racing." 3rd place Andrew Moore added: "It was a great battle, good clean motor racing as it should be. I've been racing XKs for eight years and this was my first time in this particular car, and so I'm really pleased with the result."

A world-class grid of pre-war Aston Martins, Bentleys, Rileys, Lagondas and more graced the starting line for the final Pre-war Team Challenge of the year. The Bentley team was first at Donington in June, but in September it was Lagonda that took the lead. So, there was all to play for in the final race. The winners will be announced in early 2016 at the Aston Club Racing annual awards dinner.

Christopher Scott-Mackirdy took his second 1st place of the day in the Aston Martin Le Mans that also won the St John Horsfall Trophy. 2nd was Duward Lawson in a Riley Special and 3rd Richard Reay-Smith in a Lagonda LG45 Fox & Nicholl Team Car. Said Scott-Mackirdy: "I've never won before and now twice in one day! I've thoroughly enjoyed the racing. Coming through the field to take the lead is incredibly exciting and it's just been a really lovely day."

Last race of the day was the hotly contested Innes Ireland Cup, and it didn't fail to deliver a spectacular end to an amazing season. Jeremy Cooke and Mike Dowd in their Lotus 26R were determined to make amends for the disaster they had at Brands Hatch with the gear lever coming off, and led the race start to finish. Mogridge, in only his second race in his new Jaguar E-type, took 2nd place with Robert Rawe in his Aston Martin DP214 Replica in 3rd. Mike Thorne and Sarah Bennett-Baggs had a great race in their Austin Healey 100M. Previous Innes Ireland podium contender Nicholas King had to retire early due to a transmission problem with the Ford Mustang he was driving stuck in 4th gear.

By the end of the race, the Cooke/Dowd partnership had lapped everyone, except Mogridge, in an outstanding performance to take 1st place on the podium. Mike said: "It was an absolute joy, the car was faultless, it was the race we'd hoped for and wanted so much. It's been a wonderful season."

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2nd place Mogridge said: "Jeremy and Mike drove a cracking race. Clean, fair, great racing. I'm really pleased with this result, especially being only my second race in the new car." 3rd place Rawe added: "It was an absolute dream race, I loved it. Fantastic racing."

A lunch time track parade lead by an Aston Martin Vanquish, kindly supplied by Aston Martin, was very well supported by AMOC members.

Robert Rawe, a director of Aston Club Racing Ltd, said: "The 2015 season has seen some very close and exciting racing from the first meeting at Outlon Park in May, through the summer at Donnington, Snetterton and Brands Hatch, to the final event at Silverstone this month. Competitors and spectators have experienced and enjoyed top-class motor sport racing and we look forward to much more in 2016."

Robert added: "Our thanks go to staff, volunteers, drivers and their family and friends, spectators, marshals and everyone else involved in making this such a successful season."

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Editors notes:

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Aston Club Racing has run the Club's racing programme since 2011 to ensure it remains viable in today's highly competitive racing world.

It is part owned by the Aston Martin Owners Club with the balance being owned by drivers, Prodrive, entrants and enthusiasts. It is truly a racing organisation run 'for the members by the members'.

Aston Club Racing is one of the most prestigious racing organisations in the world attracting some of the most rare and valuable racing cars from pre-war classics through to brand new factory built GT4s - and every type of Aston Martin in between.

The friendly and welcoming nature of the Club also means it is the home of Club Level Racing for complementary marques such as Ferrari, Porsche, Jaguar, Bentley and Lagonda plus historic GT, sports and saloons.

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