

BARC North Western Centre report for BARC Magazine 2019 Spring Edition

The 2018 season ended or the 2019 season commenced with the North West Centre Dinner Dance the 'Real Night Out' held at our usual venue Park Hall, Charnock Richard. We welcomed David Wheadon and partner Nicole from Headquarters, our loyal and long standing sponsor from CNC Heads Ric Wood, plus the Chair person from BRSCC North Western Andy Holley and National Chair of BMMC Nadine Lewis.

Nearly all the drivers who had won a well-earned award attended so it was a packed throng in the Park Suite who enjoyed an excellent meal before the presentations commenced. All who had competed in 10 rounds or more received a trophy. This was followed by class awards to 3rd and 2nd in class then the class winners, Class F Clive Dix, Class D Garry Wardle and Class B Luke Armiger. Following these presentations the overall awards were made, 3rd overall and Class C Dave Harvey, 2nd overall and Class E Jamie Cryer and finally our overall and Class A winner Paul Rose. The Dave Simpson trophy and replica was re-presented to Paul Rose by Margaret Simpson and the Cam Forbes trophy and replica was picked up by Alastair Chilton.

Three award winners are announced on the night, the Newcomer of the Year, the Spirit of the Championship award and finally the David Gledhill Driver of the Year. The recipient of the newcomer's award was not present so this will be announced and presented at the first race meeting of the year. The Spirit of the Championship award was awarded to a team for the second time, this time it went to Team Cryer. The Driver of the Year went to Paul Woolfitt, unfortunately he could not be present and it will again be presented at the first race meeting.

It was then the turn of our stalwart marshals to step into the limelight, with the Jock Sinclair (Off Circuit) trophy going to James Elder, the Ladies went to mother and daughter Jilly and Susie McNeil and our New Year/ Dick Fraser Trophy (Up and coming Post Chief) going to Rob Lee.

The quick fire raffle with Andy Butler in charge followed and on completion it was over to new DJ who kept people entertained till early Sunday morning.

CNC Heads Championship enters its 36th Season.

How time flies, it is amazing that the CNC Heads Sports/Saloon Championship will be starting its 36th season when the cars lined up on the grid at Oulton Park at the end of March. When Peter Gorrie asked me to write a piece for the magazine I thought it would be more interesting to give a bit of championship history rather than simply list drivers coming out this year - so here goes!

It only seems like yesterday when Ken Mitchell, Dave Simpson and I were evaluating continuing with the trial in 1983 of running a catch-all series for sports and saloon cars. The initial idea was to find a home for mod sports cars and special saloons that were not competing in the National championships of the day. These championships seemed to be becoming ever more 'professional' and expensive (no change there then!) and less attractive to the true amateur and club driver of the day. Even though numbers were low there was a steady flow of interest and those competing wanted to continue so we decided to extend into a second season (interestingly HQ had started a very similar series nationally but stopped it after a couple of seasons). Production saloons were encouraged to enter in this second year and this together with extra more sophisticated cars saw the grid size almost double - it seemed we had a success on our hands!

Bearing in mind that we were new at this 'Championship organising' lark we wanted to make sure that we didn't kill the embryonic championship before it had true momentum. To hopefully ensure that this did not happen we agreed to have regular annual drivers meetings at the end of the season to learn from mistakes and to encourage discussion about the way forward. This was vital in the early days as it guided us forward. Over the first ten years of the championship we regularly adjusted the class structure to ensure the fairest competition across all drivers, difficult with the increasing variation of machinery. We kept the regulations as simple and stable as possible and never changed them such that competing cars were excluded. However, it was agreed from the start that one off specials, central seater cars and the more exotic Special GT's would not be permitted. This kept out cars that would potentially run away into the distance every time at the expense of the clubbie driver. At all times to the Centre every driver on the grid was equally important, I often reminded the 'stars' at the front that without the less

sophisticated cars nearer the back there would be no championship! In the early days (and in fact even now) there was always discussion as to how many rounds we should run each year and where they should take place.

As time moved on the obvious decision was taken to centre in the North West at Oulton and more recently Anglesey with a couple of 'away' rounds, even those should not be too far from our core area. We had experimented with Knockhill, Pembrey, Thruxton and even Jurby on the Isle of Man but the entries were never sufficient. This together with running double header rounds allowed competitor costs to be kept to a minimum. The success of this strategy was apparent after ten years as by 1993 we were averaging over 22 cars on every grid from an average of about 75 registered drivers.

to be continued.....

By the time you read this report the NW Centre will have run its first race meeting of 2019. This will be at Oulton Park and will include the first round of our CNC Heads championship. At the time of writing we have a full grid of 38 cars and are looking forward to another handful of new drivers and cars challenging the regulars on the circuit. Here's hoping that all centres have an enjoyable and successful season.
