

Watkins Glen International



September 4-7, 2014

Bulletin

Focus Event and Collier Cup Report

The Collier Brothers Memorial Trophy Race 60th Anniversary Focus Event and Collier Cup Races are history-what an event! Here's my report:

It all started Wednesday in the paddock. With around 100 MG vintage racers expected the committee (Richard Powers, Dave Smith, Greg Prehodka, Chris Meyers (me)) spent considerable upfront time working with SVRA and Watkins Glen to lay out a well-defined, well-marked paddock, with Dave Smith taking on paddock responsibilities. The result was a fairly positive paddock experience with plenty of room in both the main and spill-over paddocks for everyone. Many thanks to the racers who took Dave's treatise on paddock etiquette to heart and parked their trailers in the MGVR trailer parking area. Adding to the paddock experience were three tents located in the Watkins Glen "Hospitality" area where MMM Register, NAMGAR, and BARC participants and friends planned to gather for their own MG hijinks.

Thursday was a combination move in, car tech, test day and practice day for many. The weather was sunny and warm as many drivers took to the Watkins Glen circuit for the first time. At MGVR Central plans were coming together for our traditional Focus Event Meet and Greet planned for later that night. Racers were busy getting teched, turning in their Reenactment forms, securing their paddock spots and saying 'hi' to friends they haven't seen in some time. The Meet and Greet began in earnest at around 6 pm with some early birds bringing their munchies and liquid nourishment to MGVR Central to the smell of three hot grills and Lou the Chef set to cooking steaks and chicken (***Thank You Sponsors!***) By 7 pm the party was in full-swing with an estimated crowd of 70-80 MGVRs eating, drinking, laughing and telling the usual, and some unusual lies about their cars and expectations for the weekend. Somewhere around 8 pm MG aficionado Tony Giordano showed up with a rather large photograph of the 1960's MG works racing gang and an original BMC windbreaker-something was going on here! With little warning Tony called out for Ralph Zbarsky-who purchased a Sebring MGB from Tony a few years ago-and presented him with the photograph and the windbreaker. Needless to say Ralph was surprised by this act of generosity. The party continued for at least another hour as racers came and went. By around 9 things settled down (sort of) and partiers went on their way, having had their fill of steak, snacks, drinks, and stories. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this grand affair. A special thanks to Lou who dedicated his evening to cooking our food to perfection!

Friday began with sunny skies and warmish temperatures AND as with every morning freshly brewed coffee and snacks at MGVR Central. Thanks to everyone who contributed various donuts, baked goods, fresh fruit and other snacks to our morning treat buffet. A special THANK YOU to Ken Williamson who contributed two cases of World Famous Grilled Sticky Buns from Ye Olde College Diner in State College, PA. Those of you who passed on this delectable treat are probably healthier for it but missed a treat! Friday's on-track activities included qualifying and practice/qualifying for Collier Cup Races A and B. With so many MGs participating this year SVRA scheduled two Collier Cup races with PreWar making up Kimber Cup/Collier Group A and all other MGs in Thornley/Collier Group B. Off track activities included an early morning Historical Tech Inspection Reenactment at Smalley's Garage and a memorial service at the stone marking where Sam Collier perished in his Ferrari in the 1950 Watkins Glen Grand Prix. Bob Schoeplein and IMMRC Historian Bill Green performed this year's service. At around 3:30 drivers started lining up for the Downtown Festival and Old Course Reenactment-one of the most anticipated and beloved features of this event! At 4:30 drivers left the track under Sheriff's escort and arrived in downtown Watkins Glen to the roar of another record crowd. There are always surprises in store for this event and this year was no different! The aforementioned Tony Giordano, with girlfriend in tow, proposed marriage to her in front of 40,000 witnesses at the Reenactment Start-Finish. Good luck to Tony and his new fiancée Lois! At around 7 pm the first reenactors started rolling into the paddock with many racers and nearly all passengers covered in road grime and MG soot-looking much like the racers from the early days!

Saturday looked to be the least favorable day for on-track activities with clouds looming on the horizon and cool temps. On-track activities included Collier Cup Groups A and B Qualifying 2 races and group sprint races. Luckily the worst of the weather arrived in the form of drizzle followed by rain in the afternoon-a few of the open wheel races were postponed but the weather had no effect on the MG racing activities, or the MGVR group photo. In the paddock anticipation was building for the upcoming Saturday



MGVR Banquet. At 5:45 the line formed at the Watkins Glen Media Center as some 220 banqueteers lined up to check in with the door checkers (thank you Powers Family!), get their two drink tickets (*Thank You Sponsors!*) and make their way to the drink and snack bars. By 7 pm the slower drink/snack lines were replaced by a faster-moving buffet line where diners could select from a menu of salad, vegetable medley, Jack Daniels Chicken (yum) and Roast Beef (again, yum). Many diners commented that this was one of the best buffet dinners ever! Following dinner we thanked the many volunteers and donors who made this year's focus event possible. Kudos to the committee (Powers, D. Smith, Prehodka, Meyers) and VIP host Bob Schoeplein and our VERY BUSY treasurer Larry Smith. This emcee forgot to recognize two additional members of the team—one who secured the complimentary coffee cups and dragged oodles of regalia to Watkins Glen, and another who dedicated considerable personal time to updating MGVR's web site with Focus Event information and bulletins. Let me now give a big THANK You to Regalia Coordinator Dan Leonard and Web Master Chris Kintner! With so many MGVR racing families joining us for this year's event Greg P and I thought it was high time we recognize those among us who believe that 'the family who races together ..well...races together. Next to take the podium was MGVR Rob Bork, to thank Hazlitt Winery for their generous donation of several cases of wine to our banquet. Next, Special Guest Brian Woodhams, MG Car Club UK Overseas Manager, took to the podium and talked about his role in the club and his impression of the Watkins Glen event and MGVR's role in this event. Many thanks to Brian for his kind expression of appreciation for the fun-loving attitude of the MGVR gang! Greg Prehodka took the microphone next to share his unique perspective as MG Vintage Racer Newsletter Founder with 37 years of vintage racing behind him. Next to take the podium was Don Munoz to introduce the newest Collier Cup Trophy, the John Targett 612 Trophy for the winning 4 cylinder MGB in the Collier Cup race. With Dana Moreland and the Matthew family in attendance Don talked about the bond John had with so many vintage racers. You could hear a pin drop as he shared the vision of a perpetual trophy dedicated John's love for MG vintage racing and the Collier Cup event. We would have to wait until Sunday to find out who would win this beautiful trophy in the Collier Cup B/Thornley Cup race!

And now onto our awards and trophies. Our Focus Events are all about fun, bench racing, actual wheel-to-wheel stuff, and recognition of those who hold and share the MG vintage racing spirit. This year we recognized the Collier Cup winners from 2004-2013 by handing out Collier Cup keeper trophies to each and every one of them. Next award was the Doff of the Cap Cup, rededicated this year as the John Targett *Doff of the Cap* Cup to be presented annually to honor the MGB racer and car capturing the look and character of the period. This year's winner was Alan Tosler, who brought his period-looking Powder Blue MGB to the Glen. Next award was the Bill Parish "*Master of Speed Deception*" Award to be presented annually to the "*MG vintage racer who is having the most fun, and being the master of speed deception while being unconcerned about winning*". This year the Parish Award went to Ralph Zbarsky, who immediately contemplated using the steering wheel as part of his next restoration. With the room falling into silence everyone anticipated the presenting of the MGVR Spirit Award, which is awarded annually by vote of his/her peers to the MG vintage racer who best represents The Spirit Of MG Vintage Racing. To the roar of the crowd, this year's winner Bob Watkin stepped to the podium to accept "The Big Copper Bucket". As cameras flashed and racers wished each other a good evening we brought the festivities to a close.

Sunday morning was an optimist's morning with bountiful sunshine. The paddock was thick with anticipation of two competitive Collier Cup Races, with the Collier Cup A/Kimber Cup Race for PreWar and T Series MGs scheduled to begin at 11:35, followed by a lunch and a Collier Cup Fan Walk. Collier Cup B/Thornley Cup Race for MGAs, Midgets, and MGBs was scheduled for 2 PM. The Collier Cup A race was a runaway for Steve Konsin in his Lester bodied TD until he pulled into the pits to address what sounded like a misfire. Manley Ford assumed 1st position with Kurt Byrnes taking a firm grip on second place. Third place looked to be a battle between Dan Leonard (TC Special), Frank Filangeri (TD) and Ed Cronin (TD) until Frank dropped back, while Ed took command of third place. Steve Konsin found and fixed his bug and returned to the battle some 3 laps down. With a mix of Prewar and T Series there was plenty of action throughout the grid. Notable drives included Frank Mount (first Prewar finisher), Robert O'Meara (TD Cisitalia), Reed Yates (N), Michael Bartell (PA), and Peter Ross (J2). Rachel Prehodka-Spindel piloted Ol' 53 in this year's Collier Cup race—her father drove the same MGTD in the first Collier Cup race in 1985!

Collier Cup B was a well-fought battle for 1st with Alan Tosler and Jonathan Lane trading places until Alan found a hole and slipped by Jonathan with about three laps left. As the race continued Alan slowly worked on his lead until the checker. In the end Tosler finished first, with Lane coming in second and Dick Luening finishing 3rd. There was plenty of action throughout the grid with A's B's and Midgets dicing for position. One notable drive was MGA 189 with Dawn Myers at the helm. Dawn appeared to be on her game as she sliced her way through to grid to finish first among MGAs. Peter Uzdavinis fought his way to first place among Midgets early in the race and held off all comers. Returning to the Collier Cup race after a two-year absence was Jake's Stable member David Smith, driving his familiar MGA #49. Another race car of note was the Hugh Burrese Sebring MGA, driven by Larry Smith. Never to be forgotten were the two Sebring MGB-GTs piloted by the father/son team of



Ralph and Michael Zbarsky. The Collier Cup B feature was a great race by anyone's standards-not soon to be forgotten!

Trophies and awards Collier Cup A/B combined:

SVRA Kimber Cup trophies for 1st (Manley Ford), 2nd (Kurt Byrnes) and 3rd (Ed Cronin) finishers in Collier Cup A Race

SVRA Thornley Cup trophies for 1st (Alan Tosler), 2nd (Jonathan Lane) and 3rd (Dick Luening) finishers in the Collier Cup B Race

Jack Archibald T Cup for first T Series MG to finish Collier Cup Race- Manley Ford

Bucher Decker Trophy for first MGA to finish the Collier Cup Race- Dawn Myers
-- presented by Mark Bucher (Bob Bucher's son) and Joan Decker(Sherm Decker's wife)

Glanville Trophy for first Midget to finish the Collier Cup Race- Peter Uzdavinis
--presented by Julie Glanville (Bill Glanville's daughter)

John Targett 612 Trophy for first 4 cylinder MGB to finish the Collier Cup Race Alan Tosler
--presented by Don Munoz with help from Dana Moreland and Matthews Family

Denver Cornett Trophy for first overall in Collier Cup race Alan Tosler
--presented by Denny Cornett (Denver's son)

MG-V-8 Trophy for first overall in MGVR Focus Event *All MG* Race Alan Tosler

Collier Cup presented to the Collier Cup racer who is selected by vote Alan Costich
of his racing peers.

I look forward to seeing all of you at next year's Focus Event in April with VDCA at VIR!

Safety Fast!

Chris Meyers
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www.mgvr.org