



#87 Dwight Calkins, 1972 Lynx B; #43 Nick Palgrave, 1977 Caldwell D13; #56 Doane Harrison, 1965 Zink C4.

# CVAR Thunder on the Cimarron Hallett Motor Racing Circuit, OK

October 10-12, 2014

— story by *Don Gwynne*

— photos courtesy of *Tim Turner*

Through no fault of anyone (other than perhaps Bernie Ecclestone's Formula 1 circus), an unfortunate schedule clash resulted in some CVAR drivers spending the weekend racing with SVRA at the Circuit of the Americas (COTA) in Austin, and some of them enjoying Connie's freshly repaved Hallett Motor Racing Circuit. Although the schedule conflict definitely hurt CVAR attendance at Thunder on the Cimarron XIII, it was as not bad as some expected, and everyone that attended had a



#49 Kevin Bell, 1969 Camaro.

grand time. The Friday Test/Tune/Practice (TTP) session was alternately very damp and never quite dry. The weather was cool all weekend; for sure, jackets were in order, except maybe on Sunday afternoon.

The smooth new racing surface made for some low elapsed times, in spite of the "never quite dry" conditions on Friday and Saturday. One segment that was not repaved is the turn

prior to Hallett's famous "The Bitch" corner. Especially in damp conditions, it was clear that the old and polished track section didn't provide near as much grip as the smooth new paving.

Saturday afternoon's Fourth Annual **FORMULA FORD FEATURE** race was originally slated for 30 minutes, but many of the FF drivers were not sure their fuel supply would last that long. By consensus, the race was shortened to 25 minutes. Nobody wanted to risk running out and missing a shot at ex-President Art Summerville's unique trophies. The biggest trophy was won by Jeff Norris driving his black #44 Crossle 35F. In a "Phoenix risen from the ashes" story, Jeff Norris' freshly repaired and re-bodied Crossle posted the best open wheel fast time of 1:22.835. Jeff's car was the only FF2 in the field. It was almost destroyed by a carburetor fire in an April 2014 incident that was compounded by an immovably corroded activation mechanism of his onboard fire extinguisher system. Fittingly, Jeff's victory was also a come from behind story. He started next to last, and rocketed through the field to move into the overall lead by the sixth lap and was never seriously challenged. Dave Salls started on the pole, but ran into trouble after the third lap and faded. After briefly leading when Salls faded, Mitchell Hibbs claimed the second overall spot in his green and gold #5 Merlyn Mk11a, as the fastest of all the FF1 drivers. Greg Hibbs came up from eighth on the grid to finish third overall and second in FF1, but was subsequently disqualified, moving Gerry Tussing up into the position.

Sunday morning's "mandatory" drivers meeting successfully surprised Connie

Stephens with a big celebration of her family owning and operating the Hallett Motor Racing Circuit for 25 years to the day! HMRC was originally developed by the legendary Anatoly Arutunoff, who sold it to the Stephens family back in 1989. Connie was very appreciative of the thoughtfulness of her many CVAR friends. She later wrote "Hello, my Hallett CVAR enthusiasts. Thank you for being at Hallett last weekend for Thunder on the Cimarron XIII. I especially want to say how much I appreciated your recognition of my 25 years with Hallett. The hugs and the chocolate cakes were as sweet as you all are. See you April 2015!"

Sunday afternoon's CVAR Championship points races were held in dry but windy track conditions. The first points race was for Group 6. Somewhat disappointingly, of 15 entries, only four cars reported to the grid and came under the starter's orders. Apparently, several drivers attended only for the Saturday afternoon FF feature race and didn't stay through Sunday. After starting on the outside of the front row, Gerry Tussing finished the 15 minute race in first overall to win the FF1 class in his silver and red #72 Titan Mk6. After starting on pole, Fred Haynie kept Gerry honest, nipping at the Titan's exhaust for the entire eleven laps. Haynie's red #08 Royale RP18 finished second overall, winning the FA class, just over three seconds behind Tussing.



#02 Dan Hilton, 1971 MG Midget.

A combination of **GROUP 1 AND 7** cars formed the second grid. Of ten entrants, half didn't stay until Sunday afternoon. Kevin Ford, of CVAR's February 2014 student class, turned the "big thunder" fast time of 1:24.982 in his #49 Sunoco Blue A Sedan Camaro. That performance was enough to bring him the overall win. Jim Sharp finished second overall and second in A Sedan class, less than four seconds back in his yellow and black #85 Camaro. CVAR President Herb Hilton recently stepped up from a little red Group 2 Spridget to a big yellow #17 A Sedan notchback Mustang. Hilton got within a second of Sharp's bowtie at the finish, but had to settle for third overall and third in A Sedan. There were at least eight lead changes between the three A Sedans between



laps two to nine, so it was a battle all the way, not a parade. Greg Reynolds took an unopposed B Production class win with a fourth overall finish in his white and blue #89 Shelby GT-350. A lonely silver and red #4 C Production Datsun 240Z took the green flag, but ran into problems on the first lap, so Berkeley Merrill was DNF.

**GROUP 2** (EP, FP and C Sedan) provided the biggest starting grid of the afternoon. Over half of the 21 entrants started the Sunday afternoon G2 points race. Dave Williams took the overall and FP class win in his silver #23 Bugeyed Sprite. Mark Corey came second overall and second in FP in his white #160 Bugeyed Sprite. Third overall and the C Sedan win went to David Patton driving his white and black #35 Mini. The E Production win went to Stan Bell. He finished fifth overall in his yellow #33 Fiat 124 Spider.

**FORMULA FORD**

**PL CL DRIVER/CAR**

- 1 FF2 J. Norris/1978 Crossle 35F 1:22.921
- 1 FF1 M. Hibbs/1969 Merlyn Mk 11a 1:25.327
- 2 FF1 G. Tussing/1972 Titan Mk 6
- 3 FF1 J. Westervelt/1969 Titan Mk 5
- 4 FF1 P. Adams/1972 Titan Mk 6B
- 5 FF1 A. Lemon/1969 Merlyn Mk 11a
- 6 FF1 P. Hardsteen/1968 Lotus 51
- 7 FF1 D. Salls/1968 Lotus 51

**GROUP 6**

**PL CL DRIVER/CAR**

- 1 FF1 G. Tussing/1972 Titan 1:27.377

Seven Formula Vees started the **GROUP 3** points race. Nick Palgrave took the win driving his red #43 Caldwell D13, leading every lap. It wasn't easy, however. Dr. Greg Byrne charged up from fourth to second by the fourth lap, and was less than a half-second behind at the checkered flag, driving his red Zink. Bigger Hammer's Bill Griffith came third in his silver and black #33 Warrior.

CVAR's most historic class, **GROUP 4**, finished up the weekend. CVAR's long-serving newsletter editor Jim Yule took the overall lead on lap three and went on to win in his green #59 front engined Elva 100 Formula Junior. Forrest Tindall placed second overall and won the C Modified class in his blue and white #17 Mk1 Lola. The silver #36a MGA driven by Hank



**#17 Forrest Tindall, 1960 Lola Mk I, #36a Hank Noble, 1962 MGA Mk II, #91 Gary McFarlane, 1960 H-Mod Thundermug.**

Noble won the VB class in third overall, and Gary McFarlane's white Thundermug won the VC class in fourth overall.

CVAR's next race at the Hallett Motor Racing Circuit will be the 7th Annual Mike Stephens Classic on April 17-19, 2015. CVAR extends the entire Stephens family our sincere thanks and congratulations for 25 wonderful years of great vintage racing.

- 1 FA F. Haynie/1975 Royale 1:27.831
- 2 FF1 P. Adams/1972 Titan Mk 6B
- 3 FF1 B. Johnson/1972 Merlyn 20A

**GROUP 1**

**PL CL DRIVER/CAR**

- 1 AS K. Ford/1969 Camaro 1:24.982
- 2 AS J. Sharp/1971 Camaro
- 3 AS H. Hilton/1967 Ford Mustang
- 1 BP G. Reynolds/1967 Shelby Mustang GT 350 1:28.956

**GROUP 2**

**PL CL DRIVER/CAR**

- 1 FP D. Williams/1959 AH Bugeye 1:33.412

- 2 FP M. Cory/1960 Austin Healey Sprite
- 1 CS D. Patton/1962 Morris Mini 1:35.050
- 3 FP R. Riney/1966 Austin Healey Sprite

**GROUP 3**

- 1 EP S. Bell/1972 FIAT 124 1:34.384
- 2 EP G. Perser/1966 MGB
- 4 FP S. Knight/1968 MG Midget
- 5 FP D. Hilton/1971 MG Midget
- 6 FP D. Littlefield/1974 MG Midget
- 3 EP J. Jones/1972 MGB
- 4 EP K. Barstead/1965 MGB Roadster

**GROUP 2**

**PL CL DRIVER/CAR**

- 1 FP V. N. Palgrave/1977 Caldwell D13 1:34.928

- 2 FV G. Byrne/1971 Zink FV
- 3 FV B. Griffith/1969 Warrior
- 4 FV D. Calkins/1972 Lynx B
- 5 FV W. Wolff/1965 Zink C-4
- 6 FV S. Smith/1968 Zink FV

**GROUP 4**

**PL CL DRIVER/CAR**

- 1 FF Jr J. Yule/1959 Elva 100 1:36.092
- 1 CM F. Tindall/1960 Lola Mk I 1:40.213
- 1 VB H. Noble/1962 MGA MK II 1:40.258
- 1 VC G. McFarlane/1960 H-Mod Thundermug 1:46.390
- 2 VB B. Heuer/1958 Jabro Mk I



virtuoso performance

510.887.7223  
SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

www.VPRACE.COM  
INFO@VPRACE.COM