

The Autosport Three-Hour Race

by Paul Lawrence

The HSCC returns to Snetterton to celebrate the 8th running of its Autosport 3 Hour Race revival. This weekend's headline race celebrates the heritage of one of Snetterton's most popular races of the late 1950s and early 1960s.

The Autosport 3 Hour Race was first held in 1957, six years after racing started on the former United States Air Force base at Snetterton Heath. In the early years of the race, one of the longest in Britain at the time, it was won by smaller-engined cars. The inaugural victory was claimed by the Ruddspeed AC Ace of Ken Rudd and for the next two seasons the diminutive and fragile but very rapid Coventry Climax-engined Lotus Elite took control. John Lawry won for the soon-to-be local manufacturer in 1958, but a year later a promising young Scott called Jim Clark won for Colin Chapman's team.

Dickie Stoop was victorious for Porsche in 1960 with his 356B, but the more powerful cars then took over with wins for Mike Salmon's Jaguar D-Type and Mike Parkes' Ferrari 250 GTO before Clark won again in '63, this time at the wheel of a Lotus 23B sports-racer.

In 1964 the race was actually only a two and three-quarter hour race, as thick fog descended at the end of the late September afternoon. With drivers struggling to find their way around, the chequered flag was waved with 15 minutes of the race still to run. That race was won by local hero Jack Sears, who has been a keen spectator at the races since they were started by the HSCC in 2007.

In 2007 the HSCC restarted the 3 Hour race as a non Championship event for its Guards Trophy cars, which are pre-'66 GT cars and Pre 68 Sports Racing cars up to 2 Litres. Between the years 2007 and 2013, the Chevron marque dominated with Nick Fleming scoring a hat trick of wins. In 2014 to refresh the format the HSCC and in association with the GT & Sports Car cup, ran the race primarily for Pre-'66 GT Cars ending the domination of the Chevron marque producing a first ever win for the Jaguar E-Type at this event. With a varied entry the only thing certain is that we will see another new winner in 2015.

Winners of the original Autosport three-hours

1957	Ken Rudd	(AC Ace)
1958	John Lawry	(Lotus Elite)
1959	Jim Clark	(Lotus Elite)
1960	Dickie Stoop	(Porsche 356B)
1961	Mike Salmon	(Jaguar D-Type)
1962	Mike Parkes	(Ferrari 250 GTO)
1963	Jim Clark	(Lotus 23B)
1964	Jack Sears	(AC Cobra)

Winners of the Modern Era

2007	Simon Hadfield & Michael Schryver	(Chevron B6)
2008	Simon Hadfield & Michael Schryver	(Chevron B6)
2009	Jeremy Cottingham & James Cottingham	(Chevron B8)
2010	Gareth Burnett & Alex Ames	(Chevron B8)
2011	Nick Fleming & Luke Stevens	(Chevron B8)
2012	Nick Fleming	(Chevron B8)
2013	Nick Fleming	(Chevron B8)
2014	Chris Ward & Alex Buncombe	(Jaguar E-Type)

The Peter Swinger Memorial Trophy

The award has been presented for several years by Peter's widow Kay for the driver of the race who best displays the competitive spirit of her late husband. This year Kay has transferred the presentation of the award to Peter's friends in the Oily Rag Club.



Jim Clark winner of the 1959 and 1963 Autosport 3 Hour