



With the clocks going back a day later, it certainly felt like winter was firmly on its way as drivers, teams and fans gathered at HRP Lochgelly Raceway this past Friday on a cold but dry evening for the penultimate stock car event of the 2017 season at Scotland's most-modern short oval.

There were four formulas on hand with some coveted titles on the line. The 2.0 Hot Rods were on track first for their final domestic meeting of a season that has seen all four major titles (World, European, British and National) won by HRP Lochgelly Raceway drivers plus a myriad of other championships. William Hardie and Gordon Alexander have won the majority of titles between them and deserve huge credit for the fantastic job they have done in raising the profile of Scotland in the 2.0 Hot Rods. These two would line up at the back of a fairly small field of cars but it was pleasing to see Gerry Hendry (Dunfermline) and Colin Seath (Kingseat) back on track. The first heat saw the formula's top two drivers make quick work of slicing their way through the field but neither Alexander or Hardie could stop a flying Kevin Stewart (Carnoustie) as he took full advantage of his yellow grade start to lead virtually the full length of the race with Hardie and Alexander having to settle for second and third respectively. The second heat saw Stewart make another good start, but fellow yellow-top Andrew Denholm had also made a good start and he was the one who would go on to take the win with Hardie again in second and Stewart taking a fine third ahead of Alexander. The feature final saw the flying duo of Stewart and Denholm make their getaway and they built up enough of a lead that the championship duo of Alexander and Hardie were unable to get on terms with them as Stewart took his second win of the night ahead of Denholm and Hardie to complete a memorable 2017 2.0 Hot Rod Season.

The CC Rods were back on track just six days after their last event but managed to muster up twenty cars for their final event of the season which was, as always, for the highly coveted Bill and Ciaran

Hawkes Memorial Trophy. The meeting also saw a return to the tracks for former ProStocks multi-champion Jazz Moore (Halbeath) in the borrowed Bob Cairns machine. The first heat was punctuated by a big crash for Darren McDonald and Brandon Gourlay – with McDonald spun on the back straight, Gourlay had nowhere to go and hit the McDonald car with a huge amount of force. However, both drivers were ok and able to leave the track under their own power to watch the resumption of the race which eventually saw long-time leader Tony Wright overhauled by Scottish Champion Stewart Aitken for the win with Wright holding on for second ahead of National Points Champion Ian Donaldson who successfully defended the silver roof in 2017. Wright made a similar leap to the front in heat two but this time it was Craig Watson who came through for the win with Graham Osborne (who had a huge crash last week) taking second and Wright holding on for third. The feature final was for the Bill and Ciaran Hawkes Memorial Trophy and, the friends and family of Bill and Ciaran on hand would have enjoyed another thrilling race, as lower graders Wright, Daniel McDonald and Pete Honeyman sped off into the distance while a battle royal took place behind them and the trio managed to hold on all the way to the chequered flag meaning Wright was the proud holder of the 2017 Bill and Ciaran Hawkes Memorial Trophy for 2017 with Daniel McDonald second and Pete Honeyman third to conclude a fantastic season for the low budget CC Rod class.

The 1300 Stock Cars were also on track for one of their most highly prized trophies as Bedfordshire's Adam O'Dell made the long trip north to defend the Mr. Gunn Trophy (Sponsored by Hair by Clare and The Taxi Centre plus friends and members of the Gunn family). O'Dell has concentrated on National Saloons this year but is no stranger to victory at HRP Lochgelly Raceway having won numerous events here in the past. Heat One came on track and it was also great to see David Anderson make his first appearance of 2017 in this race but his lead quickly evaporated as a flying Dean McGill made rapid progress through the field to take the win with O'Dell in a lowly eighth place. The eyes of many were on the track championship battle between Craig Haxton and Andrew Mathieson with Mathieson leading by just one point after heat one. The second heat saw the two protagonists use their bumpers to full effect to find themselves in first and second by the end of the race with Haxton taking the win to draw level on points with Mathieson going into the Mr. Gunn Trophy Final. The cars were lined up in graded order but with no gaps meaning that the first bend would be very interesting and, so it proved as the bumpers flew in as the drivers did their utmost to claim their piece of the enhanced prize fund! The battle between the drivers was brilliant with places being swapped at every turn as the likes of Haxton, Mathieson, O'Dell, Jock Whyte and Billy Wilson treated the fans to an epic race but, using all his experience, it was Adam O'Dell who was in the right place at the right time as he took the chequered flag to successfully defend the Mr. Gunn Trophy with track championship contenders Haxton and Mathieson second and third. This result means that Haxton and Mathieson go into the final event of the season on Saturday November 4th separated by just one point – it should be interesting!!!

The final formula on show were the Ministox who have been consistently outstanding throughout 2017 at HRP Lochgelly Raceway and a huge visiting entry of ten cars from south of the border added to the thrills and spills on track. The first spill came from the car of Ciaran Adams as he hit the kerb on turn one leaving a large pile of oil. After this was cleared, the youngsters treated fans to a thrilling race with plenty of bumper-work as the star drivers made their way through the field and it was one of the visiting stars who took the win as Warren Darby claimed victory ahead of Steven Burgoyne in his final Ministox meeting at HRP Lochgelly Raceway and Harley Soper. The second heat was another brilliant race and it was difficult to know where to look as things were happening all over the HRP tarmac!!! England's

Harrison Bryant (also in his final meeting at HRP) took home a win in this one with Burgoyne again having to settle for second ahead of heat one winner Darby – fourth went to Charlie Folan for the second time in what was also his final event. The feature final was an incredible race with no quarter asked and none given by drivers throughout the grid as they produced a thrilling conclusion to the evening and their season. Blue graded Harley Soper managed to hold on at the front, despite pressure from several star drivers, to take England's third victory of the night ahead of Burgoyne and National Points Champion Sean Naismith to bring an end to a brilliant season of Ministox racing at HRP Lochgelly Raceway.

A fantastic meeting which certainly warmed the hearts of those who braved the cold to enjoy the event. HRP Lochgelly Raceway's next slice of stock car action comes your way this Saturday November 4th from 5pm and features Back to Basics Bangers, 1300 Stock Cars, Stock Rods, National Hot Rods and the Superstox (including the first sighting of 2017 World Champion Barry Stephen) while a fireworks display will also entertain those in attendance. The action gets underway at the earlier than usual time of 5pm on Saturday November 4th.