



Gerry Marshall presses on in his Shaw & Kilburn Viva on his way to helping the Viva DC towards overall victory.

Birkett Six Hours to VDC

By JUSTIN HALER

TO many the institutional Birkett Six Hours team relay is the epitome of Britain's abundance of club racing, and last Saturday the 750MC continued the trend for the 19th time, as ever on the Silverstone club circuit. This year's event can in no way be regarded as a classic, for the winning team, the Viva Driver's Club, led most of the way despite briefly being headed by the runners-up, the Historic Sports Car Club, who like the victors put on a really fine show. Epic or not, the stalwarts and enthusiasts, who formed the vast majority of the audience, went away well satisfied that tradition had not changed, and above all that, with the help of sponsorship from *Cars & Car Conversions*, the event had taken place at all.

The 6 Hours is undoubtedly an event for the fun of the competitor, and evidence of this was only too clearly shown as breathless drivers with sick mounts rushed about to save valuable seconds in getting their sash back to a team member, or as drivers and their helpers worked frantically in the paddock to get their

cars back in AI condition.

Just before 1 pm the 17 teams, made up of as strange a collection of machinery as one could possibly expect to see at one meeting, received their final instructions from the 17 would-be Ken Tyrrells and assembled in the damp conditions for the start.

So the flag dropped and away rocketed the *pot-pourri* with Gerry Marshall in the smaller Shaw & Kilburn Viva, the number 1 VDC entry, gamely pushing the fast twin-cam Milmor Mk 7 GT of John Gray (Odds & Sods). With 38 credit laps to their benefit, the Viva team manager Rodney Spokes was looking happy already.

Although Marshall, after flinging the Viva around the track and really setting the team up to cope with any time-wasting troubles, had used his maximum time allowance by the end of the first hour, the Viva DC were sitting pretty. In fact during the whole six hours, their major troubles were confined to a broken gearbox on Bob Beaumont's GT and a lack of revs on the Marshall/Heasell S & K

car, which was brought out, in fact, near the end for Eddie Heasell to do some brisk lappery. Undoubtedly the biggest worry to the Viva DC were the Historic Sports Car Club men, who had Mike McGrath's D-type, David Muirhead's Frazer Nash Targa Florio, Tony Imrie's Tojeiro-Bristol, Eric Hall's Healey Elliott and the Lotus-Bristol 10s of F500 Cooper man Chris Drake, and Ken Rogers (ex-Cliff Davis) on their strength. With three more handicap laps than the Viva DC, and with only the Davrian-Imp and the two 750 teams on greater allowances, they were the Viva DC's most serious challengers.

It took the Historic men over two and a half hours to get themselves up on terms with the Viva pedallers, and for an hour they pulled out a bit of a lead, until Jeremy Lawrence's highly modified 1300, and Bob Beaumont, Chris Coburn, Eddie Heasell and Peter Garratt in 2-litre GTs managed to retake them and pull away. McGrath's D-type was limited to 80 laps, thus the prime runners were the two old Lotuses, both of which went well, although Rogers stopped out on the circuit with a serious oil leak in the closing stages.

Before the event the scratch team, comprising the Mike Spence entries of Ted Bunce and Ken Bates in the ex-GLTL Europa 47, Peter Beaver (Lotus-SCA 23 GT) and Vivian Talfourd-Cook (Ginetta G12 t/c), with support from Chris Maltin in the G5 Faure Porsche 911, were favourites. However, their problems were numerous, starting off with engine seizure in the 911, which forced them to substitute Maltin's father's old road 356B, which did not lighten their handicap burden. However, all might have been well had not Bunce run into a succession of troubles starting off with a plug lead which jumped out, and progressing via a puncture to a broken exhaust, all of which were fixed, but lost them time. The final straw came when the 47 ground to a halt on the Straight, having run out of petrol. Luckily, the rapid Beaver 23 was quick to the rescue, and it ran well. Taking in account all their troubles, the Winsor CC team did very well to even make the finish, let alone in ninth place.

Another "big banger" team expected to do well was the Aston Martin Owners' Club, who appeared with a stunning array of four DB4GT Zagatos in the hands of Tom Leake, Bill Butcher, Nick Cussons and Bob Owen. However, they had their set-backs with Leake suffering a broken clutch, and others finding their brakes boiling. They hung on to their early fourth place, but ultimately dropped to fifth spot as the Austin-Healey Club, 23 laps behind their rivals of the *Cars & Car Conversions* team, drew in the magazine team.

The prize for the best triers of the day must surely go to the Surrey Sporting MC who arrived with Ken and Clive Dart in their 1.3 Mini-Cooper S, Phil Austen in a similar car and brave Paul Syrett with an ancient Sprute-engined A35, which spent much of its racing time dicing with CCC man Jim Gavin in his Marathon Escort. That they made the finish, albeit in 11th place, is remarkable, for their problems included the spectacular loss of Ken Dart who rolled his Mini out of existence at Woodcote. The second Mini relieved him, and although he looked as if he was all set to join his team-mate in the bank, he managed to keep the sash circulating.

Early star John Gray with the Milmor was having twin-cam and fuel pump difficulties, although the old Elva Courier s/c of the team ran surprisingly well, as did Mike Fulford, the other Odds & Sods man with his AC Ace. Apart from Beaumont's gearbox dramas with the leading team's Viva, and the ensuing attack of both the Historic SCC for the lead, and the attack of the Austin-Healey men (Richard Budd, production Le Mans coupé, Arthur Appleby, ex-Targa '66 Sprite coupé, and former works driver John Harris in his Seb-ring), against the *Cars & Car Conversions* men, this year's Six Hours was no classic.

The Davrian team—with one 1-litre race and one 875 road-going car—had their problems; with clutch and throttle cable problems already hindering them, they dropped well out of the running when the faster version hit the bank at Cope after its brakes had failed. Luckily there was no damage, but the other Davrian was having some difficulty in keeping the pace as it was running only a standard gearbox.

The MG CC Spridgets started off number seven seed with a surprisingly few 19 credit laps, but some sterling work by the pair of ex-Dick Jacobs Midget coupés of Malcolm and Sid Beer, Maurice Wiggins' Sprite and Brian Hancock's Midget saw them fight their way through into the top ten. They seemed doomed to eighth place or so as the final couple of hours rolled up, but then Malcolm Beer really started to get his Midget moving, until he rolled it at Becketts, losing very little time, and incurring very little damage as it happened. The other MG team, the T Register men, with Glynn Giusti in his TB and Ron Gammons, Chris Jones, Gerry Brown and Paddy Wilmer in their TCs, ran smoothly and quietly throughout to take a fine sixth overall.

Peter St Barbe was in the WEV-Reliant 750 Special, one of the cars which had featured in the winner's circle in 1964 with Stan Goldthorpe at the wheel, but his North Herts 750 Centre team could not muster the speed of the 750 Special Builders who fielded a very strong six car team for Jon Wingrove (Jomo), Bryan Clayton (Vitesse Mk 3), Nick and Chris Conrad (DC-Reliant), David Newman (DNC Mk 2) and David Coombs (Special); they finished eighth just behind the leading Formula 1200 team of Colin Bishop (Dison), Jeff Ward (Rejo), Bill Mallett (Milmor Mk 3), Wally Hayward (Scorpion) and Fred Burbury (FTB), who were very well up considering that they were second from scratch.

1. Viva Drivers' Club (G. D. R. Marshall, J. N. Lawrence, R. J. Beaumont, C. J. M. Coburn, P. Garratt and E. Heasell), 318 laps; 2. Historic Sports Car Club (C. W. Drake, D. Muirhead, A. D. Imrie, K. Rogers, M. D. B. McGrath and E. Hall), 313 laps; 3. Cars & Car Conversions (C. Hine, A. Noble, C. Tickey and J. Gavin), 304; 4. Austin-Healey Club (R. H. Budd, A. Appleby and J. Harris), 304; 5. Aston Martin Owners' Club (T. G. Leake, W. G. Butcher, N. Cussons and R. T. Owen), 303; 6. MG CC T Register (R. A. Gammons, G. Giusti, C. Jones, G. P. Brown and A. P. Wilmer), 298; 7. Special Builders 1200 (C. J. Bishop, J. G. Ward, W. Mallett, W. F. Hayward and F. T. Burbury), 293; 8. 750 Special Builders (J. Wingrove, B. Clayton, N. C. Conrad, D. Coombs, D. Newman and C. J. Conrad), 293; 9. Windsor Car Club (E. Bunce, K. G. Bates, V. Talfourd-Cook, C. M. A. Maltin and P. Beaver), 292; 10. MG CC Spridgets (M. Beer, S. F. Beer, M. E. Wiggins and B. Hancock), 292; 11. Surrey Sporting Motor Club (K. W. Dart, C. Dart, P. Syrett and P. Austen), 291; 12. Sporting BMC (R. V. Bryant, J. Daykin, J. A. Teasdale, G. Maycock and A. Pearce), 288; 13. Odds and Sods (J. Gray, J. Trace, M. Gates and M. Fulford), 288; 14. Formula 1200 (D. Bowley, F. Bush, N. Manning and W. J. Morel), 283; 15. East Surrey Clubman's (B. D. Rowe, G. Diver, K. Storey and A. J. Brunning), 280; 16. Davrian Cars (A. Godfrey, A. W. Betts and A. R. B. Evans), 275; North Herts 750 Centre (P. St Barbe, K. B. R. Card, P. Griffin and J. Mansfield-Clarke), 237.

Positions at 1 hour: 1. Viva DC; 2. Cars & Car Conversions; 3. Odds & Sods; 4. MG CC T Register; 5. Aston Martin OC; 6. Special Builders 1200 and Austin-Healey CC; 7. Sporting BMC and Historic SCC; 8. East Surrey Clubman's; 9. 750 Special Builders; 10. Formula 1200; 11. Viva DC and Historic SCC; 12. Cars & Car Conversions; 13. Aston Martin OC and MG CC T Register; 14. Austin-Healey CC; 15. Surrey SMC; 16. MG CC Spridgets; 17. 750 Special Builders; 18. Formula 1200; 19. 3 Hours; 20. Viva DC and Historic SCC; 21. Cars & Car Conversions; 22. Aston Martin OC; 23. Austin-Healey CC; 24. MG CC T Register; 25. MG CC Spridgets and Surrey SMC; 26. Special Builders 1200; 27. Formula 1200; 28. 4 Hours; 29. Viva DC; 30. Historic SCC; 31. Cars & Car Conversions; 32. Austin-Healey Club; 33. Aston Martin OC and MG CC T Register; 34. Surrey Sporting MC and 750 G. Special Builders; 35. 5 Hours; 36. Viva DC; 37. Historic SCC; 38. Cars & Car Conversions; 39. Austin-Healey CC; 40. Aston Martin OC; 41. MG CC T Register; 42. Surrey Sporting MC; 43. Special Builders 1200; 44. 750 Special Builders; 45. Windsor CC.



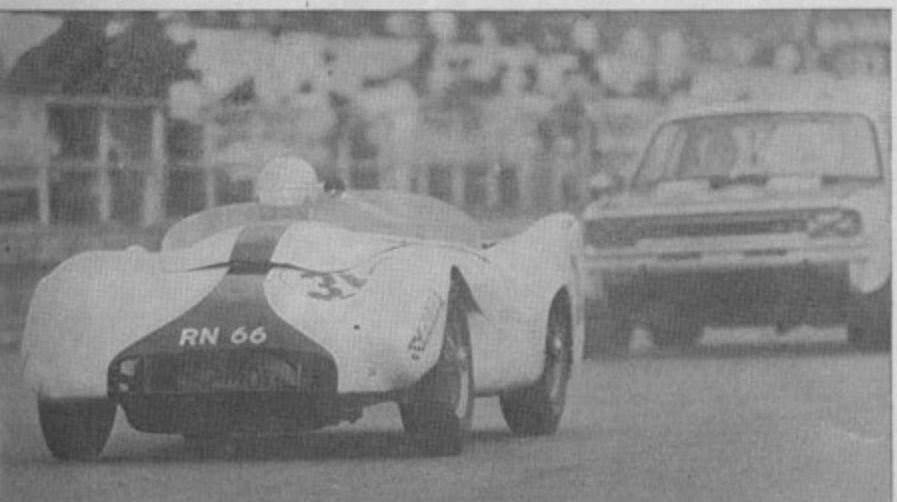
Mike Fulford's AC Ace pits to hand over to fellow Odds and Sods man, John Gray (Milmor Mk 7 t/c), who is just being given the sash by his team manager.



Tom Leake went well for the Aston Martin OC in his DB4GT Zagato until his clutch expired. Windsor CC Lotus 47 driver Ted Bunce shadows him.



Pits scene with Alan Daykin preparing to relieve a team-mate with his Midget. The Sporting BMC man on the circuit is about to be signalled.



Chris Warwick Drake's Lotus-Bristol 10, a member of the second-placed Historic Sports Car Club team, heads Eddie Heasell in the S & K Viva.