Ingliston

McGarrity wet road ace

SCOTTISH Motor Racing Club celebrated the finish of their tenth season at Ingliston with a mixed-weather meeting on Sunday which provided more than its fair share of surprises. Patsy McGarrity brought his Formula Atlantic Chevron over from Belfast and gave everybody a real lesson in wet-road racing, Jim Dryden was the star of the meeting (although not, as it happened, the Man of the Meeting) in winning the special saloons final, while Andy Smith's super-special wet tyres gave him the laugh over everybody else in the sports and GT event, and Alan Cottam's Connaught was a fine winner of the traditional October Historic race.

MODSPORTS – 10 laps

John Absalom started racing at the first-ever Ingliston meeting in April 1965, and this one was to be his last before retiring. Despite a quiet spin at Lefthander in practice, he was on pole position as usual. At the start of the race itself, which was delayed a little while the army's Golden Lions team gave a free-fall parachuting display, the Ginetta was beaten off the line by a splendid start from Kenny Allen's Clan Crusader, with Bob Rollo's Midget, John Adamson's Ginetta and Ian Hall's Mini-Jem behind.

Absalom took the lead at the hairpin and cruised off to his customary win. Kenny Allen was second throughout, and Bob Rollo went very well for third. The main interest centred on the efforts of Eric Liddell, one of the Ingliston originals and out racing for the first time in several seasons, with the Jenscot Jensen-Healey. It took Eric some time to get back into the racing swing, but from eighth place on the fourth lap he began to try much harder and picked his way through the field to finish fourth, taking that place on lap nine by passing Adamson's Ginetta on the inside at Arena and really pouring on the power past the grandstand.

1, J. Absalom (1.8 Ginetta G4), 9m 16.0s (66.69 mph); 2, K. Allen (1.0 Clan Crusader); 3, R. Rollo (1.3 MG Midget); 4, E. Liddell (2.0 Jensen-Healey). Fastest lap under 1300 cc: Allen, 54.6s (67.91 mph). Fastest lap over 1300 cc: Absalom, 53.5s (69.31 mph).

SPECIALS SALOONS under 1000 cc – 10 laps

Sedric Bell's Allen Mini was not expected to have much trouble in this first Lombard North Central championship heat, and was indeed in with a very good chance of taking the overall saloon title. The place alongside him on the front row was vacant, Peter Pitman's Imp having to non-start. At the flag, Bell shot off into his usual unassailable lead, followed by Duncan Fisher's Imp, Bill Donald's Imp and Mike Morton's Cooper S, another car in the rapidly growing Team Zippo.

John Fyda had started well from the middle of the grid, and by the end of the first lap he had forced the Agra Imp into third place. Fyda got second place next time round, but lost a wheel at Southstand on lap six, ending an unfortunate season with yet another retirement. This left the order as Bell, Fisher and Forrest, who had not only fought his way clear of an earlier scrap but had made up ground quickly on Bill Donald, whom he passed on lap five. Morton was another who lose a wheel, having felt a vibration from the fourth lap, although the wheel itself stayed with him until Lefthander on lap eight. The Zippo Mini came to rest against a low concrete platform, which did its sump no good, and it was then discovered that another wheel was loose too! Sedric Bell knew he had to try for lap-record points if he wanted to win the championship (heats count for that purpose, although not for other points), and during his rocketing progress he managed to skim off 0.1s from his own class record.

1, S.Bell (1.0 Mini-Ford), 9m 17.7s (64.32 mph); 1, D. Fisher (Imp); 3, L. Forrest (Imp); 4, W. Donald (Imp). Fastest lap: Bell, 54.1s (68.54 mph) new class record.

FORMULA FORD – 10 laps

The final round of the Rothmans FF championship was for the Ninian Sanderson Trophy, put up by the ex-Ecurie Ecosse driver. It was a MacDonald Shand front row on the grid, Stuart Lawson having made fastest time ahead of Graham Hamilton.

Stuart Lawson made the best of the start, with Hamilton seeming to lag behind and Jim Sherry, another of the Ulster visitors, slotting into second place ahead of Peter Morrison. Sherry pounced into first place, and came round at the end of lap 1 with a three-length lead from Lawson. It was then announced over the PA that the two leaders had been done 10 seconds for jumping the start! As they tore round very close together, it seemed as if they might overcome that handicap, being 4s ahead of third man George Franchitti by the fourth lap.

Hamilton was making up ground, and passed Franchitti to be third on the road and leader in fact. Then, on lap six, Lawson and Sherry touched as they accelerated out of the hairpin. Sherry's Crosslé spun off onto the grass, while Lawson's Van Dieman left the road, hit a dip and damaged the nearside rear corner badly enough to retire at the pits. Sherry also abandoned the race, leaving Hamilton to win from Kenny Gray, who'd made up enough ground after a middle-of-the-field start to win the Rothmans series, and Norman Dickson, who pased George Franchitti on lap eight.

1, G. Hamilton (1.6 Van Diemen RF74), 9m 15.6s (66.74 mph); 2, K. Gray (1.6 Van Diemen Scholar); 3, N. Dickson (1.6 Van Diemen RF74); 4, G. Franchitti (1.6 Hawke DL11). Fastest lap: Dickson, 54.1s (68.54 mph).

SPECIAL SALOONS over 1000 cc – 10 laps

Heat Two of the Lombard saloon battle was for the Army in Scotland Trophy. With the Border Reivers Escort still out of commission, Douglas Niven was not racing and the event looked like a good thing for Bill Dryden in the SMT Firenza.

The SMT car led from the line until the end of the race. John Calvert's Escort and Eric Smith's Cooper S were next away, Smith being the current Lombard championship leader and likely to end the day in a great points battle with Sedric Bell. Indeed, Smith just nosed alongside the Escort at the hairpin on lap three, although Calvert was able to hold him off till the end. Jim Dryden was fourth throughout. Walter Robertson had an upsetting moment when his Capri broke its propshaft, which snapped through the tunnel and hit the driver's seat. Spinning off was a fairly mild result, all things considered! The Firenza, which had broken its limited-slip diff, took Bill Dryden to only a 2.5s win, the alternator warning light shining all the way through.

1, W. Dryden (2.3 Vauxhall Firenza), 9m 19.9s (66.23 mph); 2, J. Calvert (1.8 Ford Escort); 3, E. Smith (1.3 Mini); 4, J. Dryden (Longman Mini). Fastest lap under 1300 cc: Smith, 54.6s (67.91 mph). Fastest lap over 1300 cc: W. Dryden, 54.1s (68.54 mph).

SPORTS AND SPECIAL GT – 10 laps

After Richard Scott had demonstrated the Formula 1 Hesketh, with his lordship in attendance to make some self-effacing remarks over the PA, there was a delay while the drivers for the Hannah Trophy race, final round of the Hartley Whyte championship, buzzed about in the paddock deciding whether or not to fit rain tyres. The circuit was now wet and greasy, and the outlook was not good.

Usually this event is a Tony Charnell benefit. The Mogil Motors Lola, fitted with the larger spare engine from the Brabham, was indeed on pole position; but its starter ring gear had gone, which meant that Tony was unable to switch off on the dummy grid, for the clutch was on the way out too. A 10s penalty was announced for this, but did not materialise in the official results. Tony was so flustered that once he did get out he spun at Clock on his way to the dummy grid. During the race itself, his glasses slipped off. The word, I think, is disaster.

Charnell led from the line, with Absalom's Ginetta second and Eddie Labinjoh in the Fisher Spyder nipping into the Esses ahead of Kenny Allen's Clan. The dark horse, however, was to be Andy Smith, whose Elan was fitted with some very special Goodyear tyres, originally made up for the F2 Marches, bought from his East Ayrshire team-mate Norrie Galbraith. Very soft, but with gripping characteristics like Velcro, these tyres gave the Elan unbeatable traction and road-holding. Smith came through the field, outbraking Absalom and Labinjoh into the hairpin on lap two, closed on Charnell then took the Lola out of the hairpin on lap five and disappeared over the horizon at the rate, at one stage, of 4s per lap. Allen recovered to take second place ahead of Charnell with Labinjoh and Absalom next along. There were several bemused drivers at the end of it all, but it looks unofficially as if Tony Charnell has held on to win the championship.

1, A. Smith (1.6 Lotus Elan), 10m 49.2s (57.12 mph); 2, K. Allen (1.0 Clan Crusader); 3, A. Charnell (2.0 Lola-Ford); 3, E. Labinjoh (1.6 Fisher Spyder). Fastest lap under 1300 cc: Allen, 63.6s (58.30 mph). Fastest lap over 1300 cc: Smith 62.4s (59.42 mph).

PRODUCTION SALOONS – 10 laps

Eddie Labinjoh led off the line in the Ziebart championship final round, with Graham Birrell right behind. They had the usual chicken match into the Esses, but this time, despite an easing to the left by the Fisher's Garage Alfa Romeo 2000GTV, it was the Halesfield Motors Hunter GLS which came off best, as Birrell refused to be frightened off line, even though he was tearing along the grass. However, track conditions were still bad, and the Hunter's Avons were not suited to them. Labinjoh took the Alfa into the lead at Clock on the first lap, and was never headed again. Birrell was in embarrassing trouble with poor traction, which is not great with this car even in the dry, and he fell back to be passed by Jennifer's SMT Magnum on lap four, before the rush into Arena. Then it was Alec Poole's turn to pass in the other Halesfield Hunter, this one running on Klebers. The Magnum closed on the Alfa, trying the outside-at-Arena manoeuvre which looks good but never succeeds against well driven opposition, and Eddie Labinjoh stayed comfortably ahead to win the race and possibly share the Ziebart championship with Ian Smith's Team Zippo Simca, although Philadelphia lawyers may be called in to settle that one.

1, E. Labinjoh (Alfa Romeo 2000GTV), 12m 13.2s (50.57 mph); 2, Mrs. J. Birrell (Vauxhall Magnum); 3, A. Poole (Hillman Hunter GLS); 4, G. Birrell (Hillman Hunter GLS). Under £1249 class: R. Knowles (Mexico). Fastest lap under £1249: R. Leckie (Avenger GT), 74.6s (49.71 mph). Fastest lap over £1249: Labinjoh and Mrs. J. Birrell, 71.2s (52.08 mph).

HISTORIC RACING CARS – 12 laps

Alan Cottam's Connaught shared the front row of the grid with Alan Brownlee's Lotus 11 for the Historic race, which was run in the rain. At the start the Lotus moved first, but Cottam was soon into a race-long lead, at first from Terry Harrison, whose Lotus 11 had passed Brownlee's similar car. Andrew Fletcher couldn't find oil pressure in his 1951 F2 Alta, and historic parallels were taken to extremes when the car had to retire on the first lap.

Keith Schellenberg, fresh from fighting Moray and Nairn as a Liberal candidate, turned to fighting the vast Barnato-Hassan Bentley, which won the struggle by spinning gracefully right in front of the main grandstand at the end of lap two. Marshals rushed up and pushed the great beast away again, no doubt regretting their haste when they realised its weight. Keith was not put out, and began to go more and more enthusiastically, giving it stabs of throttle and holding massive slide after massive slide, to the crowd's great delight.

Harrison held second place till lap five, when he dropped behind Brownlee and Walton's Connaught, which had earlier been having a fine scrap with Pat Lindsay's ERA. Walton went on to take second place to make it a Connaught one-two for the Dobsons of Edinburgh Trophy. Lindsay's was best of the pre-war cars to take the Doune Cup, heading Simon Phillips's Frazer-Nash Mille Miglia in the overall race.

1, A. Cottam (1.9 F2 Connaught), 14m 31.6s (51.05 mph); 2, G. Walton (1.9 F2 Connaught); 3, A. Brownlee (1.1 Lotus 11); 4, Hon. P. Lindsay (1.5 ERA B-type S/C). Fastest lap pre war: R. Footitt, 71.6s (51.79 mph). Fastest lap post-war: Brownlee, 70.6s (52.52 mph).

FORMULE LIBRE – 15 laps

The only man who really enjoyed the Kirkpatrick of Scotland Trophy race, final round of the BP Super Visco Scottish Formule Libre championship, was Patsy McGarrity, a former Irish 250 cc and 350 cc motor-cycle champion who actually prefers racing in the rain to racing on dry roads. Nelson Todd also did well, Tommy Reid survived a poor race to win the championship, and another contribution to the Ulster domination came when Plum Tyndall took over from Jimmy McInnes and Graham Birrell to add a smooth commentary.

A hillclimber struck again at the start, as Iain McLaren shot off in the lead from Tommy Reid, whose Irish Racing Cars Brabham had damaged a corner during private practice on the Saturday and was not in the best of trim. Patsy McGarrity's Formula Atlantic Chevron was next from Nelson Todd's similar car and Andy Barton's Lotus 69. As the field disappeared in a cloud of spray through the Esses, it looked as if something was bound to go. It turned out to be Iain McLaren's Rondel Motul which, still in the lead, spun off at the hairpin on lap two and restarted in 11th place.

In front, McGarrity was running away with the race, with Todd keeping station respectfully behind but well out of the reach of Andy Barton.

Reid dropped back and back, being passed by John Barr and Iain McLaren on lap eight. Barr was having one of his best races, but was passed by McLaren out of the hairpin on lap 11; by the end he had closed up again, and it was a fairly close-run thing for fourth place among McLaren, Barr and Ronnie Mackay, who had been having several midfield adventures and some ignition trouble in Derek Palmer's March.

1, P. McGarrity (F/At Chevron), 15m 03.6s (61.55 mph); 2, N. Todd (F/At Chevron); 3, A. Barton (1.6 Lotus 69); 4, I. McLaren (F2 Rondel Motul M1). Fastest lap: McGarrity, 58.8s (61.55 mph).

SPECIAL SALOONS – 15 laps

With the various delays, it was dusk when the saloons came out to resolve the struggle for the Lombard North Central championship. The battle was between Eric Smith and Sedric Bell, and there was no chance at all in the conditions of anybody picking up an extra mark for taking a new class record. Bell, the dry-heat winner, was on pole alongside Bill Dryden. The Firenza went into the lead from the start, followed by Bell, Calvert, Smith and Jim Dryden, with Ian Forrest's Imp getting itself a good place into the Esses thanks to charging up the grass on the inside.

Like Patsy McGarrity in the previous race, there was one man who really revelled in the wet-road conditions: Jim Dryden. He passed Smith and Calvert on lap one, Bell on lap two, and closed right up on namesake Bill, who has never been keen on driving in the wet. Jim had a go on the outside of the hairpin on lap six, but had to drop back. There were only two or three lengths in it until lap 12, when Jim made the classic dart inside into the hairpin, and came out in the lead, his car absolutely floodlit by the Firenza's lights immediately behind.

The crowd didn't like this dazzling, and weren't slow to show their disapproval. Jim pulled away, however, and Bill soon gave up the chase, dousing his lights after another lap or so. Bell finished third and Jim McClements fourth ahead of Calvert and Smith. Jim Dryden's splendid drive not only made it clear that the organisers should have waited until after the last race before awarding the Jon Nicholson Trophy to the Man of the Meeting (it went to Keith Schellenberg), but also indirectly gave the championship to Sedric Bell, because both Dryden and Jim McClements had denied Eric Smith the class win he needed.

R.F.

1, J. Dryden (1.3 Mini), 15m 37.0s (59.36 mph); 2, W. Dryden (2.3 Vauxhall Firenza); 3, S. Bell (1.0 Mini-Ford); 4, J. McClements (1.3 Mini). Fastest lap under 1000 cc: Bell, 61.60s (60.19 mph). Fastest lap over 1000 cc: J. Dryden, 60.4s (61.39 mph).