



## What a difference one year on!

Time for the summer holiday in the south of our tropical island once again. Awaiting the arrival of both this year's passenger Karl Schofield and the exhaust. I decided after the TT to get the exhaust fixed or replaced at TT as it was falling apart and not getting its potential use. Things never seem to be easy for this tiny team and preparations lead to a quiet stressful set up day on the Sunday. Much tension was taken out on the swing ball in the hospitality area and laughter was heard well above the generators.

The Southern 100 is always a hugely support event with F2 Sidecar road racers and this year saw 26 units start this event. After the first practice session we appeared to not be even close to hooking up into top gear in our normal location. We had left the gearing on from TT and this was to give us a start point which way to go. Then some eagle eyed person in the Team asked the question "What gearing were you two pulling up the mountain" and they were sharply told! Then the front gearing was handed to me.....oh no it wasn't was the cry. Poor little Oscar no wonder he was only getting near his top at the end of the sulby straight and was gasping for oxygen going up the mountain mile. After much scratching of heads the blame went to the packaging department in Ireland. With a valuable lesson learnt to count the teeth first.

Tuesday nights practice the pressure was on "Pull the Pin Driver". As only the top 18 crews out of the 26 would race in Wednesday night's F2Sidecar Race. (6 Laps) The demons of 2013 finally put to rest.

With the race being 6 laps in the setting sun it was a dash from the start with three or four of us in close proximity. The Alan Warden /Dave Mahon Passed us when I thought I'd missed second gearing. Then on lap 5 Alan end can of the exhaust parted company and flew off into the middle of the road coming out of Williams on the approach to the bomb hole, frantic Dave was hammering Alan to warn him, We took avoiding action of the exhaust and then pulled up sharply as Alan had slowed in the bomb hole but was still unaware of Dave's problem. Out over the top of the bomb hole was very interesting and then on the gas to the line in the setting sun. (Great coverage on the S100 DVD 2014 by the way). 15<sup>th</sup> /16 finishers and two DNF 18.

Thursday morning Sidecar Consolation race – The last 6 in the Wednesday evenings race and all other sidecar crews who did not qualify for race A took part in this race.

This is the race that we really enjoyed: From 6<sup>th</sup> on the grid to 3<sup>rd</sup> by the first corner "Go Oscar go was the cry from the Grandstand and hedge into Ballakaighen with a fluttering butterfly watching over us. We battled with two other units for a lap or so. The at cross four ways an opening arose an Oscar tried a cheeky manoeuvre going to the far left outside and then there was three units trying to squeeze into the tight right hand corner the marshals breathed in, "Frank" sector marshal shout some words at us and John Chandler's passenger our good friend Dickie Gale kept his elbows in and squeezed passed us and Nigel Smith Chris Maghon popped in front of

us. Three into one corner in side cars does work sometimes! Battle ensued but then a finally over take when we could not select 2<sup>nd</sup> gear coming out of Ballabeg. Give up was not in Karlos or my hearts when Jim Noble/ Shaun Chandler overtook little Oscar we pulled them back every time going into late breaking but coming out of the four corners was no good and the work would start all over again. Then a glimmer of hope lap 5 they drifted wide at Castletown corner well who wouldn't with the fire breathing Oscar down your neck. This was logged in the blonde brain lap 6 if no other chance arose then Castletown corner was where we needed to mark our attack. All over them like a rash coming out of stadium do we nip up the inside no late break stay wide go to the inside and wring, his neck Debs. OOOps they drifted wide hit the curb mounted it come on Oscar hook it up ... come on come on....crowd on their feet, screaming Jim & Shaun off the curb and the two units side by side headed for the line.....pipped at the post.

#### Thursday afternoon race

Lunch and check Oscar all over after his morning exploits. Confirmation that it was the top 5 plus fastest one other of the morning race that was to start at the back of the top 10 of the Wednesday nights race. Oscar was going to race again. Quick refuel and discussions on how to short shift second gear, and out again we went. Not a great race as you can imagine for us. Eventually after a quick tap from Karl I moved over at crossfours ways and Dave Molyneaux and Ben Binns nipped up the inside. Well we had practiced that manoeuvre in the morning hadn't we? Staying off the racing line for Conrad and Jason to also pass it was then on entering Castletown bridge the "Red flag popped out". An incident involving Darren Hope and Lenny Bumfrey along with Dwight and Noel Beare. However I can report that everyone was reasonably well but Darren's beloved sidecar was like a mecano set. 12th/12 finishers four DNF's and one DQ.

With it being the potentially the last time the team would be together in 2014 it was time to let the hair down with family and friends and sponsors and head for food and the annual presentation in the square. Then a tired but extremely happy walk back to camp with myself and Karl receiving finishers award once again at this tremendous event and myself collection an hour as best performance of a female.

The night finished with stig and Susanne sharing a cream & jam scone but not in the sensible people share one..... Stig your cards marked fella.

Three starts three finishes, new friends made, fabulous photo's posted from all around the course. What will the future hold for this tiny team of the paddock only time and finances will tell.

