

NIGEL ROEBUCK
VETTELS LINK TO CLARK & SCHUEY

MONTOYA'S INDYCAR COMEBACK



...and why the NASCAR dream turned sour

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MOTORSPORT

Exclusive interview

THE NOTORIOUS NELSON **PIQUET**

The Brazilian 'bad boy' who ruffled Senna, outraged Mansell – and didn't give a stuff!

PLUS
SINGAPORE
'CRASHGATE'

His "shock" at F1's race-fixing scandal

LOUDEST TRACK TEST EVER!

We drive the German monster that blitzed Brooklands...

"For Britain and the hell of it"

Lunch with speed record legend Richard Noble

50th birthday special
LAMBORGHINI

The Raging Bull that won't be tamed

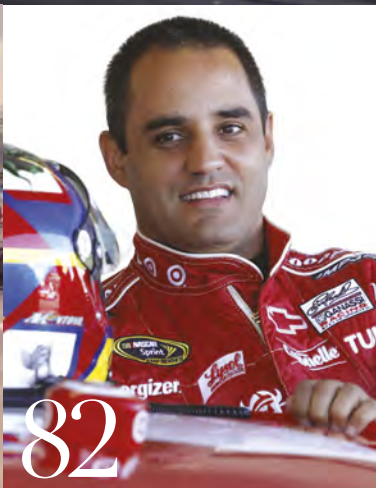
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AS THE AMERICAN LE MANS Series rolled into action on a sweltering afternoon in Austin, David Richards' eyes were glued to the hospitality suite's TV screen. But the images being relayed had nothing to do with the events unfolding outside. Instead, the Prodrive boss was captivated by another race, a wet one, fought between just two protagonists who were busy scything across each other with feet to spare in a tactical game of cat and mouse. It was, admittedly, mesmerising.

Richards is known to be a sailing fan, but his enthusiasm for the America's Cup has hit new heights, for a number of reasons. It helped that the race this September provided a sporting story of the highest order, Oracle Team USA pulling back an 8-1 deficit to Emirates Team New Zealand to secure what had once seemed an impossible victory.

It also helped that his friend, four-time Olympic champion Sir Ben Ainslie, was parachuted into the struggling US crew to become the architect of an amazing comeback that made him the first British sailor on board an America's Cup-winning vessel for 110 years.

Then there was the award-winning TV coverage, broadcast in the UK via the BBC, which explained a complex, and for many of us unfamiliar, sport quite superbly. A spectacle played out on a large scale and at sea can only be as good as its TV coverage, and the same is increasingly true in our world. Formula 1 is about to become more complicated than ever thanks to the new fuel efficiency/energy recovery rules in 2014. It might do well to take note from the America's Cup on how to make technically advanced sport accessible to a mass audience. F1 has its work cut out.

Reflecting on David Richards' enthusiasm for sailing's biggest race and Ainslie's subsequent declaration of his ambition to chase funding for a future British entry, it got me thinking: there's a potential technology crossover between motor sport and top-level sailing. Prodrive – one of Britain's most respected motor sport engineering specialists – is on the hunt for new projects. Could this be exactly what Richards is looking for?

"Not necessarily Prodrive, but personally I would like to be involved," said David when I asked him. "I make



DAMIEN SMITH
EDITOR

no secret of my interest in the America's Cup. I know Ben well and would like to help in any way I can.

"I've always been interested in sailing and I do some racing myself. The America's Cup this year was captivating. The TV coverage, the technology and how it is explained has made it accessible in a way it never was before. At times you almost feel a part of it. And we have the World Series now, with the 45-footers down at Plymouth drawing a crowd.

"Sailing will never be Formula 1, but it has certainly moved on and has become more commercially viable."

It occurred to me that events played out in the seas off San Francisco will also have caught the attention of the greatest racing car designer of the modern era. It's well documented that F1 almost lost Adrian Newey to the America's Cup when his motivation dipped during his McLaren years. Could an Ainslie project tempt Adrian away from the F1 coalface?

It's an intriguing question – but sadly we'll have to wait for an answer. Newey didn't travel to the Korean or Japanese Grands Prix, and has yet to respond to our email questions. Something to do with the trifling matter of Red Bull's 2014 RB10-Renault, I suspect. The monumental challenges of F1's new rules will surely be feeding his creative juices right now, so super-catamarans are probably not his priority. But in the future, perhaps with Red Bull backing? It's surely not inconceivable.

Then again, Eric Boullier, Martin Whitmarsh, Ross Brawn and Stefano Domenicali might think about clubbing together to finance a Newey America's Cup project themselves, right now. When it comes to beating Red Bull Racing, it might be their best hope.

Big Ben: British Olympian Ainslie helped the US fight back from an 8-1 deficit against New Zealand in the America's Cup



AS SOON AS NELSON PIQUET WAS confirmed as a guest of this year's Goodwood Festival of Speed, we knew we had to take this rare opportunity to land an interview with a vastly underrated triple World Champion. Mike Doodson, the British journalist closest to him in period, was the obvious choice for the assignment, and the engrossing result can be found on page 68.

The Earl of March described Piquet as "brilliantly aloof" during his visit, but as you might have heard in our podcast recording from the Festival he was certainly on good form.

Nelson has history at Goodwood – even if it isn't entirely official. Between the circuit's closure as a race venue in 1966 and the late 1980s, it was a popular testing ground for racing teams of all levels. In 1965 Jim Clark and Jackie Stewart left the F1 track record at 1min 20.4sec, but over the years that mark was quietly obliterated.

In 1980, prior to the British Grand Prix, Piquet set a best time of 63.6sec as he shook down his Brabham BT49-Cosworth at Goodwood. That was slower than Denny Hulme's unsanctioned record of 61sec at 144mph, set in a Can-Am McLaren in 1971. But then there's also a fabled Brabham test dated around '83, which our own Rob Widdows claims to have attended. It is said that Piquet managed a sub-minute lap on that day in the BMW turbo BT52, but it remains unsubstantiated – which of course makes it all the more intriguing.

"Nelson's done a hell of a lot of laps around Goodwood, from Formula 3 testing and so on," Lord March told me. "One forgets it was where they all tested, so they know it inside out. Kenny Bräck tells me he used to sleep on the floor of the Super Shell building when he first came to England..."

"They often used to turn up without telling anybody. Stefan Johansson told me in the Onyx days [in 1989] they turned up with a van and a trailer for a quick blast – which is of course why we ended up with a noise abatement order slapped on the track!" Incidentally, Johansson is said to have completed just one flying lap that day in the brand-new Onyx – in 62.5sec at nearly 142mph – as an interloper on a car club track day!

Goodwood's rough-around-the-edges test heritage will be marked at the

72nd Members Meeting on March 29-30 next year, an addition discussed further by Rob on page 35. We're intrigued by the plan for high-speed demonstrations of 1980s F1 cars, including those powered by turbos. If you've seen Bräck's wheel-sawing in-car footage aboard Adrian Newey's GT40 from the Revival, you'll know Goodwood is as tough to negotiate as ever it was. For F1 cars with at least twice the power, Lord March and his team will insist that discipline must be maintained.

So how quickly will they run? "As fast as we can go!" replied the earl. Sub-minute laps should not be anticipated... but it's a spectacle we can't wait to see.



AS WE CLOSED FOR press, Toro Rosso confirmed that teenage Red Bull junior Daniil Kvyat had won promotion to a 2014 F1 race seat alongside Jean-Eric Vergne. With a Sochi GP on the calendar next year (at least for now), his Russian nationality doesn't hurt, but his big chance

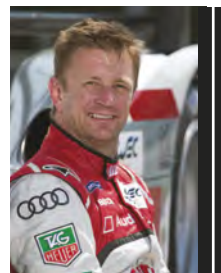
has been handed to him on merit after a strong season in GP3 and a promising F1 test with the team at Silverstone. The decision is bad news for highly rated Antonio Felix da Costa. He had been considered the most likely successor for Red Bull-bound Daniel Ricciardo, but has endured a disappointing season in Formula Renault 3.5. Thus for young Kvyat, opportunity knocks.



CONTRIBUTORS

Hooked on racing since Stirling's Aintree win, **Mike Doodson** has been Team Lotus press officer and part of the BBC F1 commentary team, while earning renown as a racing journalist. It's his friendship with Nelson Piquet

that gives us real insight into the contrary Brazilian's psyche. Writer **Chas Parker** started out in astronomy before diverting to motor racing, but alongside both careers he's been a long-time admirer of artist Michael Turner, and especially his Christmas cards. Our website is expanding so fast we've had to divert **Ed Foster** on a full-time basis, but we let him out to inspect Lamborghini's factory. In the firm's 50th year **Simon Arron** talks Lambos this month, too, and also covered Singapore and Japan for mag and website – among his top choices when we're doling out GP tickets.



IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE
Guest editor Allan McNish calls the shots
ON SALE NOVEMBER 29

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IN THE SPIRIT OF BOD AND JENKS



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THE MOTOR SPORT MONTH

IN PICTURES

OCTOBER 20, 2013

DTM finale

HOCKENHEIM, GERMANY

Former Toyota and Marussia F1 racer Timo Glock clinched his maiden DTM success in a pyrotechnically charged season finale at Hockenheim. The BMW driver finished almost three seconds clear of Mercedes rival Roberto Merhi at the end of a rain-affected race. Champion Mike Rockenfeller (Audi) was a lowly 16th.



SUTTON

OCTOBER 6, 2013

Rallye de France

WISSEMBOURG, FRANCE

Sébastien Loeb hoped to end his illustrious WRC career on a high, rather than his roof, but it all went wrong for the Citroën star on the final leg of his home event. Namesake Ogier won for VW to clinch the 2013 title.



PETERSINGHOFF

SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2013

Klausenrennen hill climb

LINTHAL, SWITZERLAND

A Swiss classic returned to competitive life for the first time since 1934, when Rudolf Caracciola won in his Mercedes W25. Roland Asch was at the same car's helm on this occasion.



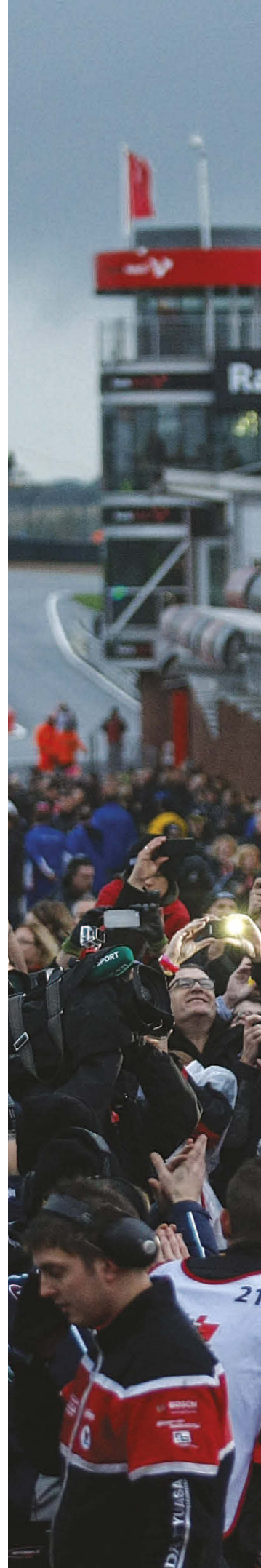
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OCTOBER 20, 2013

Formula Renault 3.5

BARCELONA, SPAIN

Kevin Magnussen is already out of shot as his rivals become entangled. The Dane went on to win – and take the title – in the first of the weekend's two races, while Marco Sørensen flipped in his compatriot's slipstream.





THE MOTOR SPORT MONTH IN PICTURES

OCTOBER 13, 2013

BTCC showdown

BRANDS HATCH, ENGLAND

It was a topsy-turvy day for Andrew Jordan – who recorded his first retirement of the year in race two – but the 24-year-old Honda Civic driver finally came through to clinch his maiden BTCC title, beating old hands Jason Plato (MG), Matt Neal (Honda), Gordon Shedden (Honda) and Colin Turkington (BMW).

To buy classic motor racing shots from LAT's huge library, visit: photos.motorsportmagazine.co.uk

THE ISSUE OF FORMULA 1 DRIVER weight has been brought sharply into focus in recent weeks, as teams have come to realise that their 2014 powertrain packages will be heavier than expected – thus potentially handing an advantage to shorter, lighter drivers.

The FIA long ago attempted to avoid that sort of discrimination by defining the weight of an F1 car as including “the driver, wearing his complete racing apparel”. However, teams have traditionally built their cars light to allow them to use ballast to reach the minimum weight, and inevitably lighter drivers still had a marginal advantage because there was more to be moved around. While front/rear weight distribution is now limited by the FIA, there is still much to be gained by having that weight as low as possible.

The importance of driver weight really came to the fore in 2009, the first year of KERS. The new technology reduced the scope for ballast, and in the case of BMW left Robert Kubica regularly starting races over the weight limit while team-mate Nick Heidfeld’s car was still below. That scenario forced bigger but already ultra-lean drivers to undertake punishing training regimes aimed at shedding kilos they could ill afford to spare.

The teams and the FIA knew that the



Weights and measures: some F1 stars think the 2014 rules will be unfair

Boost for light drivers?

New rules provoke fear of unfair weight penalties | BY ADAM COOPER

much heavier 2014 powertrains would require a substantial weight increase, and to that end the minimum was initially raised from the current 642kg to 685kg. In June that was further revised to 690kg after the FIA learned from teams that the new technology would be heavier than expected.

It has now emerged that the June increase may not have been enough, and that heavier drivers could be going to the grid over the 690kg limit. Not only will they have to carry any excess weight for the duration of the event, they also have no scope for juggling ballast, whereas lighter drivers will.

The key issue is whether a driver’s size counts against him when a team is

choosing drivers, and while no one will admit to that, it is clearly a concern for those in the higher range.

“I’m sure all the heavier drivers are in agreement that something should change,” said Jenson Button. “It’s a crazy situation to be in. For a driver to have to worry about his weight that much is wrong. It should not stop people looking at heavier drivers, especially if they’re tall. It’s not such a problem for us, but for younger drivers coming up through the ranks, it’s really going to hurt.”

Inevitably there are differing opinions on what the FIA should do. We hear that another minimum weight increase is seriously being considered, to ensure

“It’s a crazy situation to be in. For a driver to have to worry about his weight that much is wrong. It should not stop people looking at heavier drivers, especially if they’re tall.”
Jenson Button

parity, but all teams need to agree – and those with lighter drivers might not.

There’s also a debate about how the three powertrain manufacturers compare, and the consensus is that the overall weight of the Mercedes package compares favourably with that of its rivals. Intriguingly Ross Brawn is one of those downplaying the issue.

“Being lighter has always been an advantage,” Brawn says, “whatever people think. If you’re 60kg, then you’ve got 15kg on the floor of the car that we don’t have with our drivers. If we reach a situation where people clearly can’t make the overall weight limit with let’s say normal drivers, then we should have a look at it. But I don’t think that’s the case. I don’t think there are many drivers massively heavier than ours, and we’re planning on making the weight limits next year.”



McLaren's aero coup

McLAREN HAS convinced Red Bull Racing’s head of aerodynamics Peter Prodromou to return to Woking.

Prodromou worked for McLaren from 1991

to 2006 before following Adrian Newey to RBR, where he has been a major player through the team’s championship years. Although he is still contractually tied to his current employer, and in theory cannot rejoin McLaren until 2015, the knowledge that he is leaving is a huge blow to Red Bull.

McLaren has made it clear that Prodromou is one of several key appointments. “He’s a great guy, and very competitive,” said McLaren Racing MD Jonathan Neale. “But no one person makes a difference in a team like this. It’s how they fit in, how we play to their strengths and who else we put around them. I’m confident Peter can make a good contribution, but the guys we have internally are equally exciting.

“There are other things that we are doing to strengthen our team, so it’s a series of moves as we head towards 2015 with Honda. We need to make sure this team stays at the forefront of F1 and is set for winning ways.”

F1 dates still in doubt

THE FIA WORLD MOTOR SPORTS Council has approved a 22-race calendar for 2014 – despite the governing body's own sporting regulations stating that the maximum number of events can only be 20.

The schedule includes three races marked as provisional, and teams expect it to change by the time of the year's final WMSC gathering in December.

As previously announced India is missing, ostensibly because it is skipping a year before returning for an early-season date in 2015. New (or revived) next year are events in Austria, Russia, Mexico and New Jersey. The last two are listed as provisional 'subject to circuit approval,' while Russia is not, despite still being a construction site. Korea, which has been moved from October to April, is also provisional.

Momentum is building behind the Mexico City event and Hermann Tilke will be responsible for updating the track, last used for F1 in 1992.

The biggest anomaly is a triple-header in Monaco, New Jersey and Canada. Bernie Ecclestone has never previously scheduled three races together, and there has never been a flyaway immediately after a European event.

Teams agree that the logistical challenge of getting from Monaco to the USA is almost insurmountable, thanks to the complications of packing the freight after the street race while meeting strict customs requirements. Most assume that the race has been scheduled for contractual reasons, and that it will subsequently be dropped.

Meanwhile pre-season testing details have been confirmed, with an opening session at Jerez, Spain, followed by two in Bahrain.

2014 Calendar

Mar 16 Australia	Jul 27 Hungary
Mar 30 Malaysia	Aug 24 Belgium
Apr 6 Bahrain	Sep 7 Italy
Apr 20 China	Sep 21 Singapore
Apr 27 Korea*	Oct 5 Russia
May 11 Spain	Oct 12 Japan
May 25 Monaco	Oct 26 Abu Dhabi
Jun 1 USA* New Jersey	Nov 9 USA Austin
Jun 8 Canada	Nov 16 Mexico*
Jun 22 Austria	Nov 30 Brazil
Jul 6 Britain	
Jul 20 Germany	<i>* Provisional</i>



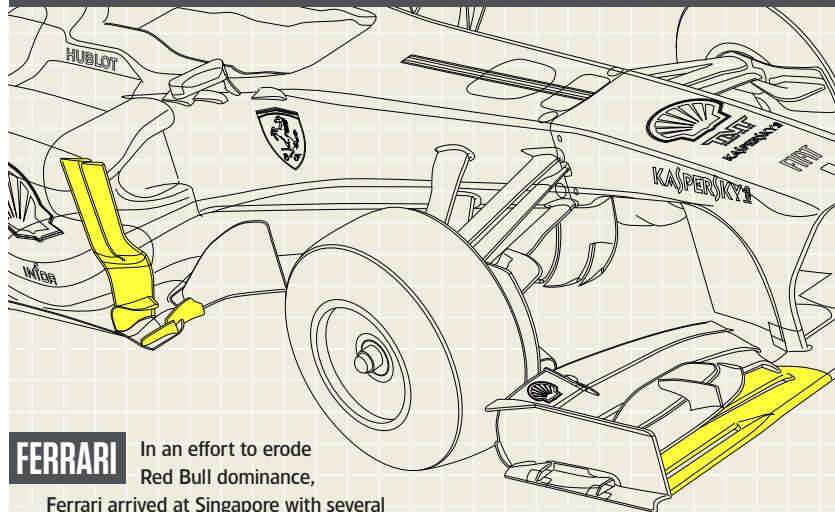
— OBITUARY —

Maria de Villota

Maria de Villota passed away on October 12, aged 33. A post-mortem found she died of natural causes, although her family believes these were linked to an F1 testing accident at Duxford Aerodrome 15 months earlier. The Spaniard had recently completed a book about the incident and its aftermath. The daughter of 1970s F1 privateer and Aurora series front-runner Emilio, Maria competed in Spanish F3, GTs and touring cars before gaining experience of powerful single-seaters in the Superleague Formula in 2009-11. An outing in a two-year-old Renault at Paul Ricard in 2011 led to a testing deal with Marussia the following year. Sadly she lost her right eye and suffered skull fractures after she struck the open tailgate of a catering truck while conducting her first straight-line aero test for the team. Since the accident she had worked with the FIA as a road safety ambassador and had served on the Women in Motor Sport Commission.

TechnoFile

A glance at developments from the Formula 1 pitlane



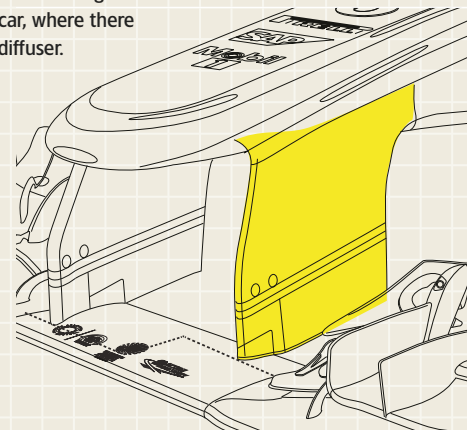
FERRARI

In an effort to erode Red Bull dominance,

Ferrari arrived at Singapore with several revisions. A new front wing featured a steeper main plane with slot gap widened to full width, creating higher downforce. Airflow around the sidepods was tidied up with a simpler vertical vane and new small turning vanes to redirect the airflow back along the car, where there were minor revisions to the rear wing/diffuser.

MCLAREN

McLaren has repeatedly revised the aero surfaces attached to the nose. In Japan, the front wing pillars were shifted back by 10cm, placing them closer to the floor's leading edge, which aids underfloor downforce. Also, the shape of the inner wingspan was altered to further optimise airflow to the underfloor.



MERCEDES-BENZ

Mercedes featured a

new floor section around the rear wheels. All season this section has been machined from metal, with a single slot taking high-pressure air from above the floor and directing it at the tyre's inner sidewall. This negates tyre turbulence, called 'tyre squirt', that would otherwise wreck diffuser performance. In Japan this section featured three slots for a stronger effect to counter tyre squirt.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY CRAIG SCARBOROUGH



ZEOD made its first public appearance at Fuji, but didn't tackle a full lap

Nissan targets top class

As new Le Mans hybrid makes public debut at Fuji | BY GARY WATKINS

NISSAN HAS TAKEN THE FIRST steps towards building a hybrid Le Mans 24 Hours challenger to next year's LMP1 rulebook to take on Audi, Toyota and Porsche from 2015.

The Japanese manufacturer is committed to entering the P1 division as a condition of its 'Garage 56' entry with the ZEOD RC racer at next year's 24 Hours. Nissan had wanted to join the top division with a more avant-garde racer, possibly an all-electric car, but it has been told by the Automobile Club de l'Ouest at Le Mans that it must compete within the framework of the new rules.

Nissan global motor sport boss Darren Cox said: "What we wanted to do was probably a step too far. We completely understand the ACO's position, because trying to balance petrol and diesel cars is difficult enough."

The ACO said it is open to new fuels and technologies in LMP1, but has stated that 2015 would be too early by some margin to extend the scope of the new category.

Cox explained that "seed funding"

was already in place to start conceptual work on the P1, but stressed that the programme had not been given the final go-ahead despite its obligation to the ACO. "Until the budget is locked in, we cannot be sure that it will happen," he said. "Our normal budget cycle begins in December, so we could expect a decision then."

No decisions have been made regarding "where to build it and who will run it", according to Cox. "The first step is to look at the different concepts to see what is needed in terms of the powertrain."

The ZEOD was launched in Japan in October ahead of its first public appearance at the Fuji round of the WEC. Nissan abandoned plans to run the car around a full lap on only electric power and instead demonstrated it on the main straight. Cox explained that the electric drivetrain was not yet able to run on full power.

"The different parts – the battery, the motors and the management systems – are not allowing each other to do their jobs," he said.

"All the bits work perfectly well on their various dynos, but when you get to put them together, they aren't talking to each other properly."

Early reports that the internal-combustion part of the ZEOD's powertrain is a supercharged three-cylinder engine are "almost correct", according to Cox.

Franchitti in recovery

DARIO FRANCHITTI IS SLOWLY ON the mend after a terrible accident during the last lap of this year's penultimate IndyCar race, which took place on the streets of Houston, Texas.

Ganassi racer Franchitti suffered concussion, two broken vertebrae and a broken right ankle in the accident. He underwent two operations, the first to his back in Houston and the second in Indianapolis a week later to repair the talus bone in his ankle.

"Dr Tim Weber repaired Dario's ankle and the surgery went perfectly, just as planned," said renowned orthopedic surgeon Dr Terry Trammell. "His post-operation X-rays looked great. Everything is positive at this point as Dario continues his recovery."

Chip Ganassi's general manager Mike Hull hopes Franchitti will be ready to drive again at some stage this winter. "I spent a little time with Dario and he's in a great frame of mind," Hull said. "He's full of energy and raring to go. I think Dario will always be part of motor racing but I don't think he's stopped driving race cars yet. We haven't talked about it, but I think he believes he's still got a lot to achieve in motor racing."

"I don't know about the prognosis for how long his rehabilitation will take," Hull added. "We plan to have a car ready for him whenever he's ready to drive. It will be a little while before we know when that is, but I'm sure it will come sooner rather than later."



■ Romain Dumas became the first Le Mans 24 Hours winner to score World Rally Championship points, on the Rallye de France in October. The Porsche driver, who won the 24 Hours with Audi in 2010, finished 10th in an M-Sport-run Ford Fiesta RS WRC together with Denis Giraudet, Didier Aurio's former co-driver.

Porsche eyes new blood

PORSCHE IS CLOSE TO FINALISING its driver line-up for its return to top-flight sports car racing for the first time since 1998.

The German manufacturer has revealed that long-time Porsche factory driver Marc Lieb and former Red Bull Junior driver Brendon Hartley are the prime candidates for the vacant seats in

its two-car line up for next year's Le Mans 24 Hours and the full World Endurance Championship. Both were due to test the new Porsche LMP1 petrol-electric hybrid and look likely to be announced before the end of the year.

Porsche has revealed the first technical details of its 2014 Le Mans challenger. One of the two hybrid systems allowed on the car will be driven off the turbocharger in a similar way to the Motor Generator Unit-Heat system mandated in Formula 1 next year.

This confirms speculation that the car will be powered by a turbocharged engine, which is believed to be a four-cylinder unit.

Le Mans safety measures

THE CIRCUIT DE LA SARTHE AT Le Mans will undergo a raft of safety improvements in time for next year's 24 Hours race.

The Automobile Club de l'Ouest, which runs the circuit and organises the 24 Hours, has revealed that it is undertaking a far-reaching safety study, which was only partially motivated by the death of Danish Aston Martin racer Allan Simonsen during this year's race. But the organisation has stressed that the 8.47-mile circuit will not change.

The only improvements so far confirmed are an increase in the size of the gravel trap on the right-hand entry to the Porsche Curves and a new run-off area at the Chevrolet left-hander, towards the end of the circuit's sweeping bends sequence in the final third of the lap.

Bentley fixes return date

BENTLEY WILL MAKE ITS RETURN to international sports car racing this December, in the Gulf 12 Hours at Abu Dhabi's Yas Marina circuit.

The event, made up of two six-hour races, has been set for the debut of the new Bentley Continental GT3 race car developed in conjunction with rally specialist M-Sport.

The event will be the first international sports car start for a Bentley since its 2003 Le Mans 24 Hours victory with the Speed 8 coupé.

The race will be a prelude to a full campaign in the 2014 Blancpain Endurance Series in Europe, as the new racer is developed for sale to customers.



— OBITUARIES —

Sean Edwards

British motor sport was stunned to learn of the death of 26-year-old Porsche Supercup star Sean Edwards, who was killed during a private race tuition session on October 15. Edwards, the son of former F1 driver Guy, was passenger in Australian Porsche racer Will Holzheimer's car when it crashed at Queensland Raceway. Holzheimer survived, but was seriously injured. The 2013 season had been a high point of Edwards's career - he shared the winning Mercedes in this year's Nürburgring 24 Hours and was favourite to win the Porsche Supercup, which he led with only two races remaining.

Joginder Singh

We regret to report the recent death of former rally star Joginder Singh, aged 81. The Kenyan was a leading contender in endurance events during the 1960s and '70s, taking Safari Rally wins with Volvo (1965) and Mitsubishi (1974, 1976). Singh had a remarkable record on the ultra-punishing Safari, taking part 22 times and failing to finish on only three occasions.



GORDON KIRBY

BIG SHOES TO FILL

MORE AND MORE YOUNG DRIVERS HAVE been making the grade in NASCAR in recent years. The latest young talent to earn a top ride in the Sprint Cup series is 21-year-old Kyle Larson, who will replace Juan Pablo Montoya next year in Chip Ganassi's Target Chevrolet. Larson is stepping into big shoes, but few drivers have shown so much raw talent so quickly in NASCAR.

Larson's mother was born in Japan but raised in California and her husband Mike encouraged their son's interest in karts. Kyle started racing regularly when he was seven and three years later told his father he was going to race in NASCAR one day. By the time he was 14, Kyle had won more than 130 kart races and 10 championships.

Larson graduated to midgets, sprint cars and modified stock cars and caught the attention of many people in 2011, when he won three races in one night at the famed Eldora Speedway dirt track in Ohio. Larson signed for Chip Ganassi last year, immediately won NASCAR's K&N East championship and was placed with Turner Motorsports for this year's Nationwide series.

In the Daytona season-opener, Larson was running in the lead pack only to become an innocent victim as drivers jostled for position on the run to the chequered flag. He was hit by another driver and crashed into the retaining fence. His car's engine was torn off by the impact and debris flew into the grandstands, injuring more than 20 spectators.

Neither hurt nor fazed by the accident, Larson raced with the leaders in the next two Nationwide races at Phoenix and Las Vegas before making his mark with a superb performance at the demanding half-mile Bristol Speedway in March. In only his fourth Nationwide start, Larson caught and

challenged race winner Kyle Busch in the closing laps, banging fenders in time-honoured NASCAR style as he tried to pass for the lead on the final lap. They crossed the finish line side by side with Busch declared the winner by just 0.023sec.

"I'm 27 and getting old," Busch said with a grin after holding off Larson. "A young kid like that, he's got a lot of talent. He's obviously made a name for himself. He was running hard, that's for sure. He brought a lot to the table today and gave the fans a show."

Larson's view? "On the last lap, I was pretty happy he went to the bottom to block or whatever. It gave me one more shot to try to get around him and he left me just enough room to squeeze the outside. I missed it by a couple of feet, but it was a lot of fun."

Busch complimented his rival on his aggressive but clean driving. "Larson played it smart," he said. "That was good from his end. I think a lot of people have been looking at him to try to see whether he's going to be a wrecker or a chequer. Today he didn't get the chequer, but that will come."

Four-time Sprint Cup champion Jeff Gordon arrived in NASCAR's top league in 1993 when he was only 21 and won his first championship at 24. He believes Larson has a big future in NASCAR. "I have heard of Kyle for years and, now that we've seen what he can do, I am blown away by this kid," Gordon said. "He makes me look like nothing."

Powerful words of praise for an exceptional young talent: it will be intriguing to watch Larson's progress in the coming years.

"He's an impressive young man," Ganassi said. "He's shown talent and maturity on and off the track. We helped him get started in NASCAR and then put him in one of our Cup cars. He did very well so we have high hopes."

GEORGE BIGNOTTI, one of American racing's greatest chief mechanics, has died at the age of 97. Bignotti's cars won seven Indy 500s between 1961 and 1983 and a total of 85 Indycar events.

Born in San Francisco, Bignotti became a major force in California midget racing immediately after WWII. Fred Agabashian took Bignotti's cars to three straight Bay Cities Racing Association midget championships in 1946, '47 and '48 and Johnny Boyd added another BCRA title to Bignotti's collection in 1951.

As midget racing faded in popularity, Bignotti worked for a few years as a florist. In 1954, however, Agabashian requested his help in trying to qualify for the Indy 500. Two years later Bignotti formed Bignotti-Bowes Racing and scored his first USAC Championship victory, with Jud Larson driving his car on the one-mile Phoenix dirt track at the end of 1958.

Bignotti hired promising young Texan AJ Foyt in 1960 and over the next five years the pair established themselves as the men to beat in Indycar racing. Foyt won the USAC Championship in 1960, '61, '63 and '64 and scored the first two of his four Indy 500 wins in 1961 and '64. Foyt won 27 races during this time, including a record 10 in 1964.

Foyt and Bignotti parted following the 1965 Indy 500 and Bignotti joined Texas oil man John Mecom's team. Mecom was Lola's US importer at the time: Parnelli Jones raced Mecom's Bignotti-prepared Lola T70 Can-Am car and Graham Hill won the 1966 Indianapolis 500 aboard a Bignotti-prepared Lola T90.

After Jones retired from driving he started Vel's Parnelli Jones Racing and Bignotti went to work for VPJ, winning the Indy 500 with Al Unser in 1970 and '71 and USAC titles with Unser in 1970 and Joe Leonard in 1971 and '72. Between 1968 and 1971 Unser won 25 races in Bignotti-prepared cars,



George Bignotti

1916 - 2013



Bignotti (kneeling) with Al Unser and the VPJ team in 1970. Above, George takes the wheel of AJ Foyt's 1961 Indy 500 winner as his driver looks on

equalling Foyt's record of 10 wins in 1970. "George Bignotti was the guy who made our team work in those days," Parnelli said. "He did beautiful work and made our cars reliable."

In 1973 Bignotti moved to Pat Patrick's STP team and Gordon Johncock won the Indy 500. Bignotti continued to run Patrick's team through the '70s, with Johncock winning the USAC championship in 1976. Bignotti left Patrick at the end of 1980 to start his own team, running Tom Sneva, and the American went on to win the 1983 Indy 500 in Bignotti's March 83C.

At the end of that year Bignotti sold his team to Dan Cotter, but continued as chief mechanic with Roberto Guerrero driving. Guerrero finished second to Rick Mears at Indianapolis in 1984 and was co-rookie of the year with Michael Andretti. After retiring, Bignotti continued to do research work and act as a spokesman for Mobil. He remained a regular visitor to the Indy 500 and other races for many years.

Bignotti lived his final years in Las Vegas with his second wife Kay, the daughter of three-time Indy 500 winner Louis Meyer. He is survived by Kay, daughter Mary and two grandsons. *Gordon Kirby*

McLaren - 50 Years of Racing

Maurice Hamilton & Paul Fearnley

Given our sport's all-consuming obsession with lightness, it's ironic that so much associated literature weighs more than a Lotus Seven. In this instance, though, it's worth jarring your back to raise it from the coffee table and drag it to the closest armchair. First, though, we suggest you pour a suitable accompaniment – a 12-year-old Macallan, perhaps.

Covering the first half-century of the company Bruce McLaren founded, the prose is as polished as you would expect from the accomplished quills of Messrs Hamilton and Fearnley – authoritative, but with a light touch whenever appropriate – and much of the photography is sublime.

For lovers of all things collectible, a limited edition run of 1963 copies – signed by Jenson Button, Martin Whitmarsh and Sergio Pérez, and featuring an individual "chassis" plate – is available from the eStore at www.mclaren.com for £150.

The only curiosity is the choice of cover subject: given McLaren's pedigree and countless touchstones, a soft-focus shot of Peter Gethin driving an M14 in the rain seems a trifle odd as an introductory image (although the car is at least Kiwi Racing Orange), but everything beyond makes perfect sense. **SA**

Published by Prestel,

ISBN 978-3-7913-4813-1, £99.95

If you have come second you have lost

Winning the World Championship with Jim Clark and other stories

Cedric Selzer

Cedric Selzer is one of the guys we go to when we want to confirm tales about Lotus, Jim Clark or the racing Sixties, so his memoir has to be an important arrival. Somehow Inserting himself into Team Lotus straight from South Africa, Selzer soon became mechanic to the Scottish ace. His memories of seeing the '62 title lost (he explains that Clark's engine failure in South Africa was not for the reason normally given) and the '63 championship triumphantly won give another side of the picture – how it was in the pits.

The long hours, the travel, the euphoria of victory and the frequent blame for failures – Selzer was twice sacked by an irate Chapman – were just part of the deal. Stories of carrying suitcases full of cash through Customs and Innes Ireland crushing a hire car roof by jumping on it are fun, but there are insights too – who knew Jimmy needed two alarm

clocks in order to make an early start.

More surprisingly, contrary to the standard picture of Clark and Chapman having only unvarying respect and affection for each other, Cedric describes winning as the Lotus boss gave Jim a very public and embarrassing dressing-down after a signals mix-up lost them a race. And yet he gave the mechanics a Cortina GT each for winning the 1963 title... **GC** selzeruk.com or motoring bookshops, £10

The cars of Vel Miletich and Parnelli Jones

Jimmy Dilamarter & Ren Wicks Jr

Parnelli Jones is one of those drivers who very nearly did it all during his career but, because he never competed in Formula 1, often gets unfairly overlooked. Add his achievements as a team owner and car builder with Vel Miletich and his was a racing life very well spent.

Pictures are the main draw of this book – the photography is stunning. With cars ranging from his 1963 Indy 500-winning Watson, the Johnny Lightning Colts which propelled Al Unser to success in the early '70s, to the Baja 1000-winning Ford Bronco and Danny Ongais's Mustang funny car, his record is all here in minute detail.

Even though the eye is drawn elsewhere, the accompanying words paint a good picture of what really went into building and racing these cars in a time of great change and innovation in American racing. **ACH**

Published by Dalton Watson Fine Books,

ISBN 978-185443262-9, \$69

McRae

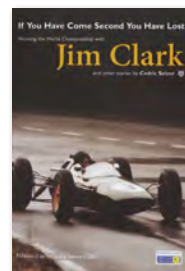
Just Colin

Colin McMaster & David Evans

As a 12-year-old schoolboy in 1995 I was allowed one poster on the dormitory wall. There were quite a few featuring supercars (scantily clad women weren't allowed), but there was only one of Colin McRae – mine. Everyone knew who he was, though, such was his fame after winning the World Rally Championship that year.

It's not often that reading a book such as this makes you heavy-hearted, but this one does. That's no reflection on its quality; it's just a very touching and well compiled memorial to the gifted Scot. It reiterates what a talent and character the world lost that sad September afternoon in 2007.

There are some wonderful images – including those of McRae several metres in the air, on the way to another WRC win or retirement – and plenty of moving notes from the likes of his brother Alister, co-driver Nicky



Grist and his Subaru boss David Richards.

Both McMaster and Evans knew McRae well and offer a welcome personal touch. **EF** Published by McKlein Publishing, ISBN 978-3-927458-64-2, €49.90

Racing Demons Porsche and the Targa Florio

Michael Keyser, Mark Koense & Enzo Manzo

If you weren't already keen on the subject, you'll be hooked by this book's stunning opening shot, a full page of a Steyr on opposite lock scrabbling out of a ditch in the 1924 Targa Florio. It sets the tone: technically a history of Porsche on the legendary road race, this work is anything but blinkered, giving generous space to the German firm's rivals. Author Keyser is well qualified: not only did he drive a 911 to 10th place in 1972, he also made a documentary film on the race, filming from another Porsche during practice.

After a lavish history of Vincenzo Florio and his race, then a tour around the Piccolo Madonie, Keyser dives into 1953, Stuttgart's first entry, and details each year from there to the race's extinction. The text is entertaining and there is a run of striking Targa posters plus an index of all Porsche entries, but it's the wonderful photos that grab you – Parkes dragging his deranged Dino 206 back to the pits, van Lennep sliding a 908/2 along the Armco like a Scalextric car, Redman giving a mechanic a lift with a huge fuel can. Costly, but captivating. **GC**

Published by Autosports Marketing Associates Ltd, ISBN 978-0-615-80440-8, \$150

Autocourse App

Grand Prix Annual

As many of our readers will be able to testify, motor racing looks rather good on the screen of an iPad. Now joining the digital ranks is *Autocourse*, the essential annual compendium of the world's major championships. Instead of lugging around heavy books, this free preview features beautifully reproduced articles with full 'pinch and zoom' capability. Enthusiasts will know exactly what they're getting here but it's great to be able to read what some of the sport's best writers had to say about each season in the context of the time, as well as the drivers themselves. The text is clear and the interactivity of the app brings the images to life in a way that the books can't. If you've yet to embrace digital publications, *Autocourse* has provided another reason to jump in. **ACH** Published by Icon Publishing, free preview available via the App Store

Charging into the future

Zytek is a great British success story. The University of Sheffield has recognised that fact with an honorary degree for company founder Bill Gibson | BY ED FOSTER

THE UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD has awarded Zytek founder Bill Gibson an honorary degree. The Doctor of Engineering title acknowledges not only his passion for innovation, but also the work that has been carried out by Zytek in electric and hybrid technology over the past 30 years.

Gibson founded Zytek in 1982, after a spell as an electronics engineer at Lucas, and has always held a firm belief that electric and hybrid systems would form a large part of the future of road cars and motor sport. The company's work broke onto the world stage in 1984 when its digital engine management system was used on that year's F1 Toleman. Since then, it has undertaken projects such as the 1998 Lotus Elise EV, Gordon Murray's T27 city car, electronic gearshift mechanisms, complete LMP2 cars and F1 KERS systems.

"It's interesting," says managing director Neil Heslington of the KERS systems. "People used to talk about F1 technology transferring across to road cars and it was quite tenuous, but F1 KERS is a good example – we are now moving towards the performance we got on those early F1 systems in a more cost-effective way. We're now using those on road cars and in other racing disciplines."

Zytek, in partnership with Nissan


Motorsport, currently provides its 4.5-litre V8 for various LMP2 cars – three of which took a 1-2-3 class clean sweep in this year's Le Mans 24 Hours – as well as full KERS systems for Japan's Super GT series and engines for Formula Renault 3.5 and Auto GP. While regulations for next year's American United Sports Car Championship aren't yet finalised, Zytek will no doubt be high on the list for LMP2 teams that are preparing to face Grand-Am's Daytona Prototypes under a Balance of Performance formula.

The Zytek Group is split into three different entities – Automotive, Engineering and Motorsport, 50 per cent of the former being owned by German company Continental AG (the tyre/auto parts company). "Motorola bought 19 per cent of our shares in 2000," says Heslington. "They were doing ECUs for road car manufacturers, but didn't have their own software algorithms. We did, so they bought in. Continental acquired Motorola's road car division [in 2006] and they suddenly had a share in this little company back in the UK. Eventually someone got to the bottom of the paperwork and they actually paid a visit. They ended up increasing their share."

The company turnover is split 70 per cent Automotive and 30 per cent

Engineering (with Motorsport taking up a share of each), but Zytek is now looking into various defence projects. It can't talk about any of those – or much of its work, for that matter – but hybrid technology for the defence industry and military transport applications becomes extremely interesting when you consider that to transport a gallon of fuel into operational areas can cost \$400. Not to mention how you might use a quiet electric motor for certain periods.

A problem with all contemporary battery technology is the length of time it takes to charge. Zytek is currently working on a new electric taxi for London, however – one which will be able to charge to 80 per cent in 20 minutes. "The motor sport activities that we've done on KERS systems have given us the confidence in the cells and the battery management systems to know what is achievable on that front," says Heslington. "That's why we've set ourselves the target of an 80 per cent charge on a 20-minute taxi break." It's a huge target and one, if successful, that could change the face of London taxi travel.

Due to the confidential nature of Zytek's work it can't shout about many projects. Gibson's honorary degree at least goes some way towards rectifying that situation. 



Bill Gibson founded Zytek, and has always held a firm belief that electric and hybrid systems would form a large part of the future of road cars and motor sport



WEB SPIN

Podcast extract TONY BROOKS ON HOW RACING IN THE 1950s DIFFERED FROM TODAY

“It’s a question we get asked very frequently. I think people expect you to talk about the cars because all they have in common are five wheels – four road wheels and a steering wheel. I’m not sure whether it’s a wheel or an instrument today...

“The real difference, though, is the psychological challenge. We were driving on what were in effect ordinary roads and therefore any mistake could be your last. Whether you finished in a ditch, against a telegraph pole or a house was in the lap of the gods. Any one mistake could be serious and possibly fatal. Today, because of the strength of the cars and the design of the circuits, the chances of hurting yourself are minimal. You can go quite a way off the circuit and when you do hit something it has absorption. And with the cars of today, because of the carbon capsule, you can have a 175mph accident and walk away. You saw it with Webber who got out and briskly walked off to have a shower! It’s a case of ‘where’s

What we’re all talking about
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my second car’ not ‘when’s the funeral...’
“It had to get safer, but when you’re trying to go faster than your competitors and any one mistake could be your last, it’s a totally different psychological challenge compared to knowing you’re safe. It’s one of many reasons why, in my opinion, you can’t compare different eras.
“It had to get safer, but in doing so it became a different sport. The analogy I give is this: would mountaineering be the same sport if you wore a harness attached to the top of the climb? I suggest it wouldn’t be mountaineering.”

TOP TWEETS

@matoxley So Pons says he crashed after getting rammed: “I noticed a strong blow to the back and have flown away...” Thanks, Google Translate.

@PaulPunter Stopped by French customs this morning. Anything to declare? Yes, 150 Niki Lauda autographs to be FedExed to Alastair Caldwell #confusedlook

@Andrew_Frankel What’s the most evocative race track name ever - I’ll open the bidding with Solitude but I am sure you can do better.

@matoxley Yes, Stoner is doing a parade lap with Doohan & Gardner at Phillip Island, I believe. They should stick ‘em all on NSR500s. I’d jump on a plane right now...



@AnotherEdFoster Can Formula 1 drivers please stop changing their helmet design? If you need inspiration, use this:

@LeeMcKenzieF1 Sean Edwards. What an incredibly sad loss. And what an incredibly tough week it’s been in motor sport.

LATEST POLL

They’ve won the most races, but which of the following do you consider the best driver?

Ayrton Senna	47%
Alain Prost	25%
Michael Schumacher	12%
Fernando Alonso	11%
Sebastian Vettel	5%

ONLINE WITH OUR WRITERS

Mat Oxley

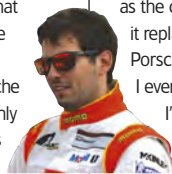
Lorenzo vs Márquez

Lorenzo’s Sepang complaint was farcical considering his earlier treatment of Márquez. When we asked Lorenzo during the post-race media conference if he had indeed touched Márquez – even though we knew damn well that he had – Lorenzo said, “I don’t know... I don’t remember, but I don’t think we touched”

Johnny Mowlem

The highs and lows of motor sport

I watched in awe this year as Sean Edwards won the Dubai 24 Hours and then the Nürburgring 24 Hours, proving, without a doubt, that he is one of the stars of the future. The fact that he is currently leading the Porsche Supercup standings with only one race left just reinforces that view.



Andrew Frankel

Things ain’t what they used to be

I have never driven a car with electric steering that was as pleasant to guide through a corner as the car with hydraulic steering it replaced, not even in the new Porsche 911 GT3. Neither have I ever driven a car with paddles I’ve preferred to the manual transmission in its predecessor.

Alex Harmer

Mike Conway on the Indianapolis 500

“Being on that track on your own, you almost wonder if you’ll come back. You’re in line for qualifying, watching them file out, saying, ‘Four cars to go...’ You’re strapped in, ready to go, Brian Barnhart gives you a handshake; from then you just can’t wait to see everyone again. It’s only minutes but it feels like you’re coming back from somewhere.”

Paul Fearnley

Paul Radisich’s first World Cup

Radisich – “A petrol pump attendant!” – qualified on pole. Behind him were more than a dozen ex-F1 drivers and a swathe of touring car aces: Andy Rouse, Steve Soper, John Cleland, Roberto Ravaglia, Fabrizio Giovanardi and Frank Biela. The only big name missing from the 40-plus field was the injured Alain Menu.



AUDI TRADITION

MAT OXLEY

THE OTHER GERMAN BIKE MAKER

THE APPEARANCE OF A REPLICA OF A TT-winning DKW at the recent Classic TT came about thanks to the Audi Tradition team, which promotes the history of Audi's former parent Auto Union, of which DKW was also a part. The bike that turned up on the Isle of Man was a replica of the 250 ULD 'Ladepumpe', a kind of supercharged two-stroke that won the 1938 Lightweight TT.

Before WWII DKW was the world's largest motorcycle manufacturer, with an R&D department that spewed out ingenious engine designs with a frequency that must have bewildered the more slothful British industry. The company's racetrack successes of the 1930s were based on its perfection of the split-single format, supercharged by a third piston (the Ladepumpe).

Inspired DKW engineer Ing Zoller arranged two tandem cylinder bores in a single casting with a common combustion chamber, rotary-valve intake, articulated connecting rods and a third piston in a separate cylinder that supercharged the gases through the main crankcase (this was a two-stroke, remember). At the same time the rear piston had a permanent lead over the front piston to drastically improve cylinder filling. The result was a huge hike in horsepower and fuel consumption, as well as paralysing noise.

Legend has it that when Ewald Kluge roared down Bray Hill during his winning ride the DKW's howl could be heard on the Lancashire coast. In spite of shocking fuel consumption that required an extra pitstop despite the bike's enormous five-gallon tank, Kluge beat Ginger Wood's Excelsior by more than 11 minutes.

A member of Hitler's Nationalsozialistische Kraftfahrkorps (National Socialist Motorised Transport Corps), Kluge took the podium wearing a swastika on his leathers. Unlike compatriot Georg Meier, winner of the 1939 Senior TT for BMW, he didn't perform a Nazi salute during prize giving. Nevertheless, Kluge was denounced as a

Nazi at the end of the war and spent five years in a Russian prison camp. On release he rode DKWs once again, until his career was cut short by injury.

The war changed everything for DKW. The factory found itself behind the Iron Curtain, so the company started again in Ingolstadt, West Germany, where Audi still resides. And because supercharging had been banned when racing resumed, DKW's surviving engineers couldn't continue with the split single. Yet their ability to create brilliant engines remained undimmed.

In 1951 Germany was readmitted to international racing after a six-year ban and it didn't take long for DKW to prove that they didn't need supercharging to win races. Their most brilliant design – a three-cylinder 350 – soon became the fastest 350 in Grand Prix racing, storming past factory Nortons like they were stood still. Only the fact that DKW failed to procure the best riders prevented the company from taking the 350 world title from the dominant Moto Guzzis.

The triple – with two upright outer cylinders and horizontal middle cylinder – was another clever design but in fact originated as a parallel 250 twin. The 250 wasn't competitive, so engineers added the extra prone cylinder. With a little development work, the beautifully compact engine produced 45 horsepower and could carry its rider to 140mph. The triple might yet have won the 350 title, but for poor management by DKW bosses who, as a result, shut down their racing department at the end of 1956.

Three decades later, soon after the DKW marque disappeared for good, the world was reminded of the company's genius engineers when Honda unleashed its superb NS500 Grand Prix bike. The three-cylinder two-stroke unashamedly copied the layout of the DKW and in 1982 secured Honda's first world title in motorcycling's premier class, beating Yamaha's faster but more unwieldy four-cylinder machine.



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www.holden.co.uk



BENTLEY DRIVING GOGGLES £115
www.bentleymotors.com



Can Mallory survive?

Circuit future further clouded as BARC quits talks | BY PAUL LAWRENCE

THE FUTURE OF THE MALLORY Park circuit in Leicestershire has been thrown further into doubt after the British Automobile Racing Club, the organisation running the venue, announced that it was walking away from negotiations with the land owner, Titan Properties Ltd.

The track, which opened in 1956, has been battling against noise and planning issues with the local authority after complaints from nearby residents in the village of Earl Shilton. This culminated in a court hearing at which the track was found to be in breach of the 1985 noise notice.

Following the court hearing in August, all track days at the circuit were cancelled and Mallory Park Motorsport Ltd started incurring significant losses that left the company in an unsustainable situation. Hopes for a solution were pinned on landlord Titan Properties, owned by former racer Chris Meek, agreeing to a reduced rent. However, when no agreement could be reached, there was no option but to put the company into administration. Now the BARC has left the negotiating table,



■ Historic racer Leo Voyazides and preparer/driver Simon Hadfield won the inaugural FIA Masters Historic Sports Car Championship in Voyazides' Lola T70 Mk3B. The duo took seven wins during the season, including the final round at Jerez, and could afford to skip one event and still claim the title.

saying that it is unable to pursue any future involvement with the circuit.

A BARC statement said: "The BARC announces with considerable regret that it believes it has now exhausted all discussions with the administrator in respect of Mallory Park. The BARC has been informed that the landlord, Titan Properties, will not reduce the rent by half as widely previously publicised and in fact will only offer terms for the next 12 months without any commitment towards necessary capital expenditure on track works moving forward.

"Clearly the BARC is committed, as it has been over the previous months, to continue operating motor sport at Mallory Park, but is not in a position to do so with continuing uncertainty in respect of contractual arrangements with Titan Properties and HBBC.

"Therefore the BARC has come to the conclusion it is unable to pursue any future involvement with Mallory Park."

Prior to this, the administrator, Ian Robert of Kingston Smith & Partners, said he was hopeful of finding a solution "to ensure that racing can be enjoyed at Mallory Park for years to come".

Hindley rules Britannia

PHIL HINDLEY REMAINS THE MAN to beat on both the Tour and Mini Britannia when he extended his unbroken sequence to four wins during the third running of the one-day Mini Britannia in his Tech 9 Porsche 911.

Hindley and co-driver Andy Bull, won seven of the eight special stages to beat the Chevrolet Camaro Z28 of Stuart Scott and Steve Wood by just under a minute.



The event ran over special stages at Mercedes-Benz World, Dunsfold airfield, Farnborough airport and Jody Scheckter's farm at Laverstoke Park.

Brothers Steve and Tony Graham secured victory on the concurrent regularity rally in their Lancia Fulvia.

2014 stage dates fixed

BRITAIN'S RIVAL HISTORIC RALLY championships will have greater separation in 2014, following the announcement of calendars for the British Historic Rally Championship and the RAC Rally Championship.

The BHRC will forge a closer alliance with the British Rally Championship, sharing six of its eight rallies with the BRC – including sail-away asphalt events in Ulster and on the Isle of Man.

In contrast, the RAC series will focus on one-day gravel rallies, and only the Mid Wales Stages in early March will host both championships.

Tuthill Porsches on Safari

EIGHT PORSCHE 911S FROM THE Tuthill Porsche team, including a car for 2011 winner Björn Waldegård, will head the field for this year's East African Safari Classic (November 21-29).

In a total entry of 60 cars, half the field is made up of 911s.

After winning the last Classic Safari in a Tuthill 911 Waldegard will bid for another win and will be joined in the team by fellow rallying legend Stig Blomqvist. British drivers Steve Troman and Richard Jackson will also drive Tuthill-prepared 911s.

“This has been our busiest year to date and preparations for this year’s Safari have been a massive undertaking,” said Richard Tuthill. More than 100 people will be in the Tuthill squad, which shipped seven 40-foot containers by sea to Kenya.

Accord joins Dodd squad

FOURTEEN YEARS AFTER JAMES Thompson raced it to fourth place in the 1999 British Touring Car Championship, his old Honda Accord shone again in the hands of James Dodd during the Super Touring Trophy race at the Oulton Park Gold Cup.

Dodd’s father Graeme recently located the car in Montenegro, where it had been used in hillclimbs. He arranged to buy it with an extensive spares package and brought it back to run alongside their ex-works Nissan Primera.

“It was on a bit of a wing and a prayer,” said James, but after eight laps of testing the car ran faultlessly. They now plan to race one car each in 2014.



EFF BUDHAM

Race Retro firms up for Feb

THE 2014 RUNNING OF RACE Retro, the International Historic Motorsport Show, will be from Friday to Sunday, February 21-23. The three-day exhibition event at Stoneleigh Park near Coventry is the traditional start point for the new season of all branches of historic motor sport.

— OBITUARIES —

Stephen Jewell

Cheltenham-based Bugatti racer Stephen Jewell died following a practice accident during the VSCC’s annual race meeting at Snetterton (see also Simon Arron’s column, p165). The T35B of Jewell (63) was in a collision with another car on the Senna Straight; the Bugatti was sent into the barriers and Jewell was thrown out. He received immediate medical attention before being transported to hospital, but later died from his injuries. Jewell previously enjoyed sprint and hill climb success in his ex-Bobby Rahal F2 Chevron B48.

Jon Gross

Barely 24 hours after he raced his Aston Martin DB2/4 Mk3 in the Fordwater Cup at the Goodwood Revival, Jon Gross died suddenly after losing his battle with cancer. The 70-year-old US-born racer lived and worked in the UK for many years. More recently he drove a Formula Junior Envoy alongside his beloved Aston, which he raced for 30 years. Gross enjoyed motor sport adventures and competed in the Le Mans Classic and the Mille Miglia. He had planned to call time on his racing career at the end of the season as his condition worsened.



ROB WIDDOWS

A FRESH FIXTURE FOR GOODWOOD

MEMBERS ONLY. A PHRASE YOU NEVER want to see. Unless you are a Member.

It was Groucho Marx who observed that he would refuse to join any club that would have him as a member. I know what he means, although I did start a Motor Club at school as a ruse to avoid playing cricket.

That aside, the Goodwood Road Racing Club (GRRRC) has no problem attracting members. In fact there is a frustratingly long waiting list. I mention this because Goodwood will stage a Members Meeting next March and there have been some dark mutterings from Revival devotees who have not joined the club.

If you are already a member you will likely be feeling pretty smug. You, and four guests, will automatically gain admission to the Goodwood Members Meeting, scheduled for March 29-30, 2014. If you are not signed up, you won’t be going. Unless, of course, you can persuade a member to take you as a guest. So why has Goodwood decided to stage such a restricted event on the only two ‘noisy’ days that have remained unused out of the five available each year? And might this new event take some of the shine off the hugely popular and highly respected Revival in September?

The man with the answers is the Earl of March, who re-invented Goodwood back in 1998 and who has a reputation for staging what are arguably the best motor racing events on the planet. So, I asked him, quite simply, why Members Only, and how can such an event be as good as the Revival?

“We’ve always had two spare days without any noise restrictions,” he says, “and we always planned to do something with them, but we’ve been a bit busy with the Festival and the Revival. Now we need to grow, do something different, and look after our members. What I want to do is recreate the original members

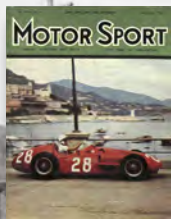
meetings at Brooklands and Goodwood, so this will be the 72nd of those, and it will be different from the Revival. It will be very simple, very authentic, very British, a throwback to racing at Goodwood in its simplest form, an intimate occasion for members and their friends, just as it used to be. Like many clubs, it’s not easy to get in, but it’s not like the MCC, or White’s, where you can wait 20 years; the queue is always moving. The Members Meeting is not a new idea – it’s how it used to be; you showed your membership badge and you came in.”

But how will the new meeting be different from the successful Revival in September?

“First and foremost, everyone will get up close to the racing, like a big family outing, a chance to get really involved in the whole thing. There will be far less infrastructure, a very small corporate presence, if any, and everyone will get close to the racing, so I hope they’ll feel that they really are a part of it. There will be very little hospitality, everyone will eat together, drivers and members, and I’m expecting a crowd of 14,000 or so, so it will feel totally different. There will be entertainment in the evening, and something fun to see wherever you go during the day, but at the heart of the event is the racing. That’s why people come.”

So what kind of racing, what types of cars, can we expect in March?

“There will be some blockbuster cars, like the Revival, but you won’t always see a Ferrari GTO. The overall mix will be different, and we will have later cars, as late as the MSA permit allows. You’ll see a 1970s touring car race and, more importantly, we’ll celebrate the years when the circuit was used for testing, which means high-speed demo laps for 1980s F1 cars. That should be pretty interesting...”



WHEN THEY WERE NEW **Porsche 356A**

An original road test taken from the *Motor Sport* archives, November 1956 | BY BILL BODDY



ON ARRIVAL AT STUTT GART

Airport last month we found awaiting us a maroon Porsche Carrera and a grey 1600. The editor was put in the Carrera, his colleague Michael Tee drove the 1600 and thus we arrived at the Porsche works in the pleasant suburb of Zuffenhausen.

The rear-engined flat-four air-cooled Porsche is now well established as a beautifully proportioned high-performance car – in fact there is no car like it. We were conducted round the factory by Fritz Huschke von Hanstein. In an age when a sports car is often endowed with a mass-production motor, a visit to the Porsche factory is a breath of fresh air – the enthusiasm taken to the pitch of near-perfection. Half-measures do not get a chance at Zuffenhausen. Each completed engine is run on a dynamometer for four hours before a horsepower check, and every finished car is driven on the road for one hour. The racing shop is separate from the main factory but the RS engines are checked on the normal test-beds.

The specification of the Porsche is too well known to repeat, beyond reminding readers that three types are available, the 60hp 1600, 75hp 1600 Super and 1500

Carrera, developed from the 550RS with four overhead camshafts, roller-bearing crank, twin-plug head, dry-sump lubrication and twin-choke Solex carburettors, producing 100bhp. These are available as coupé, cabriolet or 'speedster' form, and the type number of all production cars is now 356A. Few changes have been made to the specification of this remarkable little car since the steering geometry was redesigned some time ago to reduce to a minimum the violent oversteer formerly associated with the rear-engined layout.

After seeing the factory we were asked which car we'd like to try. We decided to take away the Carrera, returning on Saturday to exchange it for a 1600 coupé and borrowing on the Monday a 1600 Super for comparison. In a few minutes we were off on a long test of the fastest Porsche model.

Outwardly the Carrera is only distinguishable by twin exhausts and the name on the side, but inside extra fuel pump and ignition switches are fitted, and there are fascinating markings on the rev counter – the 'red' being from 6500-7000rpm! Practical items include a rear seat folding to become a luggage

platform, lamps flasher in the steering wheel centre, heater knob by the gear lever, and seats that fold to form beds.

Let me proceed to tell you how much we enjoyed the Carrera. Leaving the pleasant town of Stuttgart we took to the autobahn and got down to it in earnest. Before the war motoring scribes used to come home and tell of sensational average speeds, to the consternation of those manufacturers whose cars they had been thrashing. Today the story is rather changed because bridges blown up in the war are still under repair, and there are many 'two-way with no passing' stretches where vast USA tank transporters proceed uphill at 3mph and you need a fast car to return good speeds. The Carrera proved happy cruising at 100mph with a maximum of 120mph, though with heavy traffic we could not average more than 88mph over 185km.

There is a real punch in the ribs as the throttles are opened and the engine emits a hard power roar although normal conversation is possible as you motor along at 100mph. The Carrera handled in typical Porsche fashion, over-steering but not excessively, and the seats are exceedingly comfortable, providing the support needed in a car of this performance and manoeuvrability.

After driving through Munich – where parking meters are in use, a foretaste of what London will 'enjoy' – the editor drove back to lunch at Ulm in the shadow of the famous cathedral. Arriving back at the Porsche factory we were soon on our way in a normal or 'Damen' 1600, naturally quieter than the Carrera. It had heavier steering but the same Porsche synchromesh that makes gear-changing an absolute delight.

Getting up early on the Sunday we drove along back roads through beautiful country to lunch in the open air at Weissensee, having sampled this silver-grey Porsche on a run beside the river from Neckar to Heidelberg the previous evening. For the most sober model of the range performance was certainly impressive, cruising easily at 100mph for hours. After lunch we drove almost to the Swiss border. Summer had come and the roads carried a stream of cars, so the Porsche's desire to climb the Kesselburg with verve had to be curbed, and it was with relief that we returned along a very beautiful forestry road beside the Walchen-See amid Bavarian scenery beautiful beyond words, a fitting



PORSCHE 356 SPECIALISTS

Gantspeed Engineering
www.gantspeed.co.uk/

Freisinger
www.freisinger-motorsport.de/porsche/uk/

Paul Stephens
www.paul-stephens.com



Left, von Hanstein shows WB the Porsche plant. Below, take your pick: Michael Tee and WB with their test trio



finale to an afternoon of twisting and turning under the awesome presence of tall, snow-capped peaks. In the Munich-bound traffic stream we were impressed by the way everyone drove at 60-65mph along a winding road with steep drops on either side, faster cars making skilful use of any gaps that appeared.

Away from the autobahn the Damen proved a more useful car than the Carrera, which would have been almost permanently in second gear! We covered 670 enjoyable miles in this version.

Back at the Porsche factory we found them happy over their Avus victory [in the Berlin GP] and Frankenberg's fortunate escape from serious injury [when he went over the banking]. After a quick stroll through the delightful, brightly coloured ultra-modern offices, we were despatched in a third Porsche, a green 1600 Super with twin exhausts. In this the wheel seemed closer to the dash and the steering light and sensitive. The deeper growl of the exhaust told of the greater power, and 120mph was quickly reached, long curves being taken steadily at 105mph. We regarded this as an eminently satisfactory 1½-litre motor car.

The editor kept an eye open for vintage cars, but they are as rare in Germany as they are prolific in France; apart from one early Goliath three-wheeler and one BMW 3-15 (Austin Seven-type) saloon, the score was nil.

PORSCHE 356A FACTFILE

Production: '56-'58
Power: 60-100bhp
0-70mph: 15sec
(Carrera)
Max speed: 120mph

VW bones - air-cooled flat four, trailing-arm IFS, swing-axle IRS - but perfectionist development turned it into a superb machine. 356A replaced vee-screen with curved glass; by 1959 revised 356B released; twin engine grilles and larger windows mark '62 model. Disc brakes arrived on '64 356C with minor styling tweaks; SC engine gave 95bhp. Perfect spec: for sunny boulevards and rainy-day investment, 356A Speedster, especially in rare Carrera form. For practicality, a C coupe in SC form.

AUCTIONS



A summary of classic and racing auctions from around the world - in numbers | BY ALEX HARMER

Graham Budd Auctions

@ SOTHEBY'S NOVEMBER 4

47 motor sport lots including:

1972 McLaren M19A nosecone (signed by Denny Hulme). 1973 Tyrrell 006 nosecone (signed by François Cevert). 1976 Shadow DN5 nosecone (signed by Tom Pryce)

NIGEL MANSELL'S SIGNED WILLIAMS RACE SUIT

(worn for the 1992 Italian Grand Prix)

Michael Schumacher's Ferrari race suit (worn for his win at the 2006 German Grand Prix)

Joey Dunlop's leathers, helmet, boots and gloves (worn for his winning ride in the 1998 Isle of Man Lightweight TT)

Silverstone Auctions

@ NEC, BIRMINGHAM NOVEMBER 15-16

1970 IKA Torino 380S JUAN MANUEL FANGIO'S DAILY DRIVER

Believed to have been gifted to Fangio by IKA for his contribution to 'Argentina's national car'. Full history, including Fangio's insurance documents, handbook and international licence.

"This is a very special item and we are very proud to have been chosen by his family to present his prized model to the global market."

Nick Whale, Silverstone Auctions managing director

ALSO: Fangio's Road Racing Drivers Club membership card 'Juan Manuel Fangio is a member of good standing'. Dated May 16, 1958

NOVEMBER AUCTION CALENDAR

- 1 **BONHAMS** London to Brighton Run Sale, New Bond Street, London
- 4 **GRAHAM BUDD AUCTIONS** Sporting Memorabilia Sale, Sotheby's, London
- 16 **MOTOSTALGIA** Grand Prix Auction, Austin Convention Center, Austin, Texas
- 15-16 **SILVERSTONE AUCTIONS** NEC Classic Motor Show Sale, NEC, Birmingham

1976 BRDC International Trophy programme

Signed by: James Hunt, Mario Andretti, Jody Scheckter, Chris Amon and Guy Edwards

Includes tickets, paddock passes and a newspaper clipping detailing Hunt's record lap in practice.

RM Auctions

@ NEW YORK NOVEMBER 21

The first major car auction held in Manhattan for over a decade

1964 FERRARI 250LM CHASSIS 6107

24th of 32 produced
Expected to fetch in excess of \$12m
Class winner at the 1968 Daytona 24 Hours in the hands of John Gunn, Fausto Merello and Guillermo Ortega.
Driven by Merello, Edward Alvarez and Umberto Maglioli at Daytona in 1969

"6107 represents the pinnacle of 1960s vintage Ferrari collecting, combining rarity, beautiful design and a legitimate racing pedigree. Only a select number of cars can claim both originality and important race history, and few come up for public sale, elevating the significance of this upcoming auction."

Alain Squindo, RM Auctions vice-president

Other cars of note:

- 1936 Talbot-Lago T150C Cabriolet by Figoni et Falaschi. Estimate: \$8-10m
- 1963 Chevrolet CERV II test car. Designed by Zora Arkus-Duntov, driven in period by Jim Hall and Roger Penske. Estimate: \$1.3m - \$1.8m

- 21 **RM AUCTIONS** Art of the Automobile, Sotheby's, Manhattan, New York
- 21-23 **MECUM** Anaheim Auction, Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, California
- 27 **BRIGHTWELLS** Classic Cars and Motorcycles, Easters Court, Leominster, Herefordshire
- 30 **HISTORICS AT BROOKLANDS** Classic and Collectors' Cars, Brooklands Museum, Weybridge, Surrey



BMW on turbo trail

Blown six to power M3 and coupé sibling | BY ANDREW FRANKEL

WHAT'S THAT DRIPPING SOUND? It's BMW starting the intermittent feed of information that will lead eventually to the unveiling of the new M3, hopefully early next year. In fact now that the 3-series coupé is called the 4-series, there'll be an M4 (above) too, ensuring BMW's naming strategy now covers most of England's motorway network.

We've known for a while that the fabulous normally aspirated V8 motor in the current M3 was for the chop: in these days where car manufacturers must not only be environmentally model citizens but be seen to be so, the idea of building a car with a big V8 – just because that's what the customer wants – is becoming increasingly anathema. At the Alfa 4C launch a few weeks back I was lamenting its lack of a creamy V6 motor when a fellow hack leant across and said, "Alfa is dragging itself into the modern world – you should try it, too."

Anyway, what has now been confirmed is that the M3 and M4 will be powered by a new variant of the



"The M3 and M4 will be powered by a new variant of the 3-litre twin-turbo straight-six motor. Blowing at 1.3bar, it's going to develop 424bhp."

3-litre twin-turbo straight-six motor that's been a BMW staple for many years now and is already in the M135i. Blowing at 1.3bar, it's going to develop 424bhp and while that's a mere 10 extra horses relative to its predecessor its performance will be characterised by its torque, which rises from under 300lb ft to more than 370lb ft at half the revs.

It's going to be a very different kind of driving experience: you'll be granted access to all the acceleration it has to offer at little more than idling speed, though if it provides anything like the throttle response or scalp-itching howl of the normally aspirated engine it replaces, it'll be the first turbo engine in history to manage it. As the V8 was the last M-engine to breathe at atmospheric pressure, this now means the entire range from M135i to M6 now use turbos.

On the other hand, the last M3 was far too heavy and in its sometimes tricky handling, it showed. By using an inherently lighter shell and then using carbon-fibre-reinforced plastic for items

as diverse as the roof and propshaft, BMW has pared its weight back from over 1650kg to under 1500kg, which should have a transformative effect on the driving experience. Better news too for those who feared three-pedal footwells would soon also be a thing of the past: BMW has confirmed that the M3 will come with a six-speed manual gearbox as standard and a double-clutch transmission as an optional extra.

Car crash economics

FASCINATING IF SOMEWHAT gruesome reading this month from Bernstein Research, in the form of the greatest loss-making model lines among European car manufacturers. Way out in front is the original Smart ForTwo (below) which between 1997 and 2006 managed to lose Daimler-Benz a simply extraordinary £2.8 billion. More staggering still is that this adds up to £3782 per vehicle, approximately half the car's retail price at the time.



Then again, if you care to add up losses on a per-vehicle basis the Bugatti Veyron is in a league all by itself, unapproached I suspect by any other car in history. If you thought £1 million was a lot to ask for a mere car, consider that for every one sold, Volkswagen was shouldering a loss of £3.9 million.

Volkswagen has also had to absorb losses of £1.6 billion for its Phaeton vanity project, though it would be interesting to learn how much of this was offset by money made by the somewhat more successful Bentley Continental range that sits on the same basic platform. Unadjusted, VW wore a loss of £23,500 for every one of the 72,000 Phaetons it built: that has to smart a bit, even for the most successful car company in the world. Other notable disasters included the Fiat Stilo, original Mercedes A-class, Audi A2 and Jaguar X-type.



A swan... or a turkey?

ANOTHER WELL-KNOWN TURKEY clucked its last this month: Aston Martin has finally killed its ill-conceived Cygnet city car after not quite three rather unhappy years in the marketplace. Rumour has it that its demise was a condition of Aston's new 'technical partnership' with AMG, though I don't imagine it would have needed much encouraging. With just 142 sold in the UK and strong evidence of a total production run of fewer than 1000 units, it has done no favours at all either to Aston Martin's image or its bank balance.

What is bizarre, with the benefit of hindsight, is that when Aston Martin first started talking about the Cygnet annual sales of 4000 units were mooted. Not only that, but at first Aston Martin insisted that only existing customers would be allowed to buy one, though it soon saw the folly of that particular idea. Nevertheless you didn't need either a crystal ball nor to be wise after the fact to realise that a leather-lined Toyota iQ with a different grille, some badging and other cosmetic enhancements was going to be a hard sell at £30,000-plus. Fact is, it was not credible either at its price point or as an Aston Martin.

Turbo Cabrios unveiled

THE HIGHEST PRICE YOU CAN PAY for a series-production Porsche is now as close to £150,000 as will make no difference to someone rich enough to buy one. Porsche has just released details of the cabriolet versions of the new 911 Turbo and Turbo S, the latter retailing for £149,511 when sales start

in the UK at the end of the year, positioning it ahead of the Aston Martin DB9 Volante and putting it on a collision course with the 12-cylinder version of Bentley's Continental GTC. It is also more than twice the price of a standard 911 Carrera.

Like their coupé siblings, the Turbo and Turbo S cabrios feature 513 and 553bhp 3.8-litre twin-turbo engines and a paddle-shift transmission. Their 0-62mph times of 3.5 and 3.2sec respectively are 0.1sec slower, reflecting the additional 75kg weight their roof mechanisms make them carry. At 1675kg, the Turbo S is now heavier than an entry-level BMW 5-series executive saloon. Top speeds of 197 and 195mph are, however, unchanged.

UK market rebounds

GOOD NEWS CONTINUES TO ROLL into the UK car market. Figures recently released for September this year showed that more than 400,000 cars were registered in a single month for the first time since March 2008, suggesting that the market is now back to where it was before the financial collapse five years ago.

Sadly, however, only one of the top 10 best-selling cars in that month was actually made in the UK: the Sunderland-built Nissan Qashqai was the ninth most popular car sold here, at 7771 units. This sounds impressive until you consider the Ford Fiesta, which topped the chart, accounted for 20,629 units, meaning one in every 20 cars sold is currently a Fiesta.

In the meantime car manufacturing also goes from strength to strength, with the latest figures indicating that something close to 1.6 million cars will be built here this year. If that happens it

Sky view now available in Turbo form as Porsche takes the lid off. Below, longest continuous model run ends as Land Rover prepares to replace 'old faithful' Defender

will be the best performance by the industry since 2005 and add further weight to those who claim the UK will soon overtake France as the second-largest car manufacturing nation in Europe. That said, even if French production figures continue to fall from their current 1.9 million units and Britain overtakes, it'll be a while before it's knocking on Germany's door, currently producing 5.5 million units per year.

Last line of defence

SADLY BUT INEVITABLY LAND Rover has finally called time on the Defender, which will be put out to pasture at the end of 2015, the company either unable or unwilling to get it through forthcoming crash and emissions legislation. And while today's Defender no longer shares a single component with that of an original 1948 Land Rover, the journey from first to last has been continuous and unlike, say, the Porsche 911, not punctuated by all-new models with nothing more than a name in common with its predecessor.

It's ironic that the car with the longest unbroken production history in the



world was conceived as a stop-gap, only intended to survive a few years while Land Rover designed a more thorough response to the Willys Jeep. That's the reason its shape is all right angles: they didn't want the expense of tooling up to make sophisticated curves for a car with such a short intended lifespan. Nor was its body made from aluminium for reasons of either longevity or weight saving: more prosaically, after the scrapping of millions of tonnes of war weaponry, it was the cheapest, most easily available metal on the market. It is also the reason so many of them survive on our roads to this day.

ALFA ROMEO 4C

The 4C upholds the Alfa Romeo tradition - by being *nearly* great | BY ANDREW FRANKEL



MY INTRODUCTION TO the Alfa Romeo 4C is not the one I would have chosen. As those who keep up with my weekly blog on the website will know, it involved strapping myself into its passenger seat and being flung around the Balocco test track in the middle of the night. I don't like being a passenger, I hate being a passenger on a race track and I now know such feelings of loathing are in no ways moderated by not being able to see where you're going. Trying not to be sick, I idly pondered the likely consequences of the sectionable lunatic next to me - who presented as a perfectly pleasant chap called Emanuele - throwing us into the unforgiving scenery without so much as a helmet to protect me or a disclaimer to protect Alfa Romeo.

But Emanuele knew his stuff and delivered me back to base with a broad grin and not a hair out of place.

I learned nothing about the Alfa that night, save its capacity to induce nausea in its passenger in certain freakishly unlikely circumstances. But it told me rather more about how Alfa feels about its first proper sports car for over 20 years. Since then - and excepting the 8C on the grounds it's no more an Alfa than an Aston Martin Cygnet is an Aston Martin - there hasn't been an Alfa Romeo you'd feel inclined to drive around a track, day or night. By contrast, when my turn to drive came the following day, there are few forces on earth that could have stopped me.

The 4C has many claims to fame. Astonishingly, given that its compatriots Ferrari, Lamborghini and Maserati first made theirs more than 40 years ago, it is Alfa Romeo's first mid-engined road car, if

FACTFILE

£45,000

ENGINE
1.7 litres, 4 cylinders

POWER
237bhp @ 6000rpm

TORQUE
285lb ft @ 2200rpm

TRANSMISSION
six-speed auto double clutch, rear-wheel drive

0-62MPH 4.5sec

TOP SPEED 160mph

ECONOMY 41.5mpg

CO₂ 157g/km



you except the tiny number of 'Stradale' 33s that were built in the 1960s. It is the first to be built around a carbon-fibre tub and it is the first only to be available with two pedals in its footwell.

It was first shown to swooning journalists in a concept form in 2011, a shape from which the production version differs very little save its headlights, which now give the impression of the car suffering from an unsightly skin condition.

The carbon tub extends only so far as the base of the A-pillars, all but proving the existence of a convertible version waiting in the wings, while the engine is the 1.7-litre turbo four used in the Giulietta but recast with an aluminium block saving, says Alfa, some 22kg.

Indeed, encouraging weight loss has been at the very heart of Alfa's strategy for this car and if you believe the official blurb they've been so successful the 4C weighs just 895kg. Too good to be true? It depends how you look at it: if you take a base 4C with none of the many available go-faster options such as fat tyres, big wheels, different suspension, a rear anti-roll bar and sports exhaust, and then empty out all the fuel, oil, water and washer fluid, then it will probably weigh 895kg. I doubt however that once they've been put back and the weight of a driver added, any 4C will ever set foot on a public road with a kerb weight significantly less than a tonne. Even so, when you consider a Porsche Cayman S weighs 1320kg and that even a Lotus Elise S is very little lighter than the 4C, it's clear the designers have done great work to reduce mass.

The cabin is a wonderfully spartan place to sit. I was disappointed to see central locking and electric windows in there, but then remembered this is the car that will spearhead Alfa's return to sales in the US after 20 years away and apparently the Americans would lose interest fast without such needless creature comforts. More encouraging is that air-conditioning is an optional extra and at no cost, too. So you sit in front of a space-age TFT screen set into a plain black dashboard. You will amuse yourself watching your passenger rootle around for a way to adjust his or her seating position before telling them there is none. Not unless you visit a dealer.

Hallelujah! The engine starts by turning a key, not by then having to find some stupid button. But the engine sounds awful with its sports exhausts. If you are in the market, spare yourself and get the



standard ones instead and put up with a merely dull sound instead. No matter, we're in Alfa's first proper sports car since the 1990s SZ and I'm not going to let a loud farting noise behind my head spoil the experience.

It's properly fast, quick enough for me not to doubt Alfa's claimed 4.5sec 0-62mph sprint. The double-clutch gearbox isn't the best of the breed and it goes without saying that I'd far prefer a quick-shifting six-speed manual, but it does its job well enough if you select 'dynamic' mode.

More impressive still is the car's body control. I always knew its grip would be prodigious, but far more interesting and important is the way it maintains its ride height regardless of whatever provocation in terms of crests, dips and camber changes you can place in its path. It's all the more remarkable for the fact that the car is actually quite softly sprung and provides almost Lotus-like ride quality:

Production car very close to 2011 concept, barring ugly lights. Cockpit is relatively spartan, with all-in-one display screen



the Magneti Marelli dampers check all excess vertical, lateral and fore/aft motion before it can start.

And were our story to stop there, an almost exclusively happy one it would be because its most notable shortcomings – the pathetic boot, tiny fuel tank and lack of almost anywhere on board to store anything are flaws it shares with its closest conceptual rival, the Lotus Elise S. Contrary to the naysayers who thought Alfa Romeo had long since forgotten how to build a decent driver's car, it has made one that at times borders on the brilliant.

But it can also leave you with the sense of a car only 98 per cent developed. The issue is the unassisted steering that at first appears able to do no wrong. It is well weighted, beautifully geared and, once you're in a corner, admirably precise. It even has an adequate lock. What's not to like? Only that when you first apply the lock to turn into the corner the car reacts overly aggressively, making it feel nervous and tempting you to reduce the lock before applying it again. This is compounded by front suspension too keen to follow the cambers in the road so that at times even long, straight roads required constant small corrections.

It may well be all this is symptomatic of the optional big wheels and tyres and the sport suspension of the car I drove. I'd not be surprised if a standard car were the next best thing to a Lotus Elise S on a mountain road. But I can report only as I find from the car I was given to drive. And the sense it left me with was of a car that was not only very, very good but with a little extra tuning could, and perhaps should, have been even better. ☐



JAGUAR XFR-S

The firm has some great products, but might be pushing the XF too far

IT'S ALL HAPPENING OVER AT Jaguar. After the warm reception granted to the F-type earlier in the year, it showed its first SUV at Frankfurt in September and didn't get shredded for it, a result Aston Martin and Bentley would have begged for after their similar efforts were rightly mauled in the press. And now we learn that even before the SUV there's to be a new small saloon that will spearhead Jaguar's mission to become once more a volume manufacturer.

But in the meantime it has other, older cars to sell. The XK is now in its ninth year, which is dotage for such a car, while even the XJ is no longer as loose-limbed and useful as once it was. But it is the mid-sized XF, under whose still modern skin lies engineering that dates back to the last century, that most needs a lift.

And this is it, the XFR-S, an XFR with the power of its 5-litre supercharged V8 increased by 40bhp to 542bhp with a commensurate additional slug of torque. Much work has been done to the

FACTFILE

£79,995

ENGINE

5.0 litres, 8 cylinders, supercharged

POWER

542bhp @ 6500rpm

TORQUE

502lb ft @ 2500rpm

TRANSMISSION

eight-speed automatic, rear-wheel drive

0-62MPH

4.6sec

TOP SPEED

186mph

ECONOMY

24.4mpg

CO₂

270g/km

suspension and steering to provide not just a stiffer springing medium but also a more stable platform through which the greater loads may be more capably transmitted. Cosmetically there's the usual upgrade in body kit and equipment while the biggest change of all, inevitably, is the price. Jaguar is asking £79,995 for the XFR-S (an increase of £14,580) and I am struggling just a little to see where the value might lie.

I've long been a fan of the XF as a business tool that is also uncommonly good to drive, but you don't need to spend Porsche 911 money to benefit from it. It should surprise no one that a basic four-cylinder diesel XF is a far better balanced and sweeter-steering car than this tumescent range-topper, and can be yours for less than half the price.

If that's not the point, then the fact that the Mercedes E63 AMG S reviewed last month is faster, and more powerful, civilised and spacious undoubtedly is. True, it's around five per cent more expensive, but easily worth the extra.

This Jaguar does have its strengths: its engine has better throttle response than the turbo units in rival Mercedes and BMWs and a slightly more interesting sound. Also, right on the giddy limit where only road testers are likely to take this car, it slides more cleanly and reacts more accurately to the throttle than the opposition.

But it is undone by the feel of the cabin, which no amount of Meridian hi-fi, acres of leather or contrast stitching can make feel like anything other than that of a car from a different class and, indeed, a different era. And thanks to its prodigious thirst and the pathetic fuel tank, its range is unacceptable too.

Jaguar is doing good work at present and I don't blame them at all for making existing product sweat as much as it can before the new wave arrives. But in this case and this case alone, it has pushed farther than the car cares to go. The result is a car that fails to justify the additional money being asked for it. ❑

RANGE ROVER SPORT

The pretence is over - now it really is an RR underneath



A WHILE BACK I DROVE A new Range Rover Sport on a test track for about five minutes and, unlike certain colleagues of mine, felt sufficiently inhibited by those factors to be unable to write a detailed review. Now I have put several hundred miles under the wheels of one, I feel qualified to comment.

The previous, original Range Rover Sport was a curious car, simultaneously quite the least able and most successful product of Land Rover's recent past. No matter that it looked ungainly, weighed more than Harrods, had dreadful space efficiency and possessed not one sporting bone in its body, Land Rover couldn't make enough of them. And because beneath its cod-Range Rover clothes lay nothing more noble than a simple Discovery, Land Rover made a fortune out of every one it sold.

Profit margins on the new one will be distinctly smaller, as this Range Rover Sport is now based on the architecture of the Range Rover – which is brand new and made from expensive aluminium. Land Rover's gamble is that profits will be not only maintained but boosted by still-higher sales of the new car.

On simple merit, that would seem assured because the new car is as good as

the old one was not. The brief said 'More Range Rover, more Sport' and the engineers have delivered both in spades.

However, merit alone does not sell cars – if it did, there'd be acres of unsold old stock rotting in fields across the Midlands. Even so it's hard to see anyone who liked the idea of the old Range Rover Sport not loving the idea of this one: it's just as bold and imposing but far more attractive outside and a different world inside.

More important to me is the fact that model for model it's almost half a tonne lighter than the outgoing car, so that even the 3-litre V6 diesel version that everyone will buy has far more get up and go than the old V8. Indeed, and at last, there is

FACTFILE

£59,995

ENGINE
3 litres, 6 cylinders,
turbocharged

POWER
292bhp @ 4000rpm

TORQUE
442lb ft @ 2000rpm

TRANSMISSION
eight-speed automatic,
four-wheel drive

0-62MPH 6.8sec

TOP SPEED 130mph

ECONOMY 37.7mpg

CO₂ 199g/km

no sense of missing out by saving in the showroom and at the fuel pumps but getting one of the cheaper models.

It's almost fun to drive too, something I can rarely bring myself to say about huge SUVs. From the way it turns into a corner and the linearity of its steering, you can tell Jaguar engineers had a huge influence on its development, and with entirely positive results. It's the best-handling car of its kind with the possible exception only of the Porsche Cayenne.

However, it is the car's more prosaic qualities that are likely to endear the Sport to owners and their families over time. Its interior is beautiful and, unworthy sat-nav aside, is thoughtfully laid out and tastefully executed. There's room for five adults and, if you tick the right box on the options sheet, two more children in the boot to make this the first seven-seat Range Rover in the brand's 43-year history. I'd have preferred it to retain the proper Range Rover's split tailgate, but that I understand is a key model differentiator.

Even as it is, if Land Rover is going to have any issues with this car, it is likely to come in the form of cannibalising sales of the Range Rover. But with two cars as good as they are, that comes squarely under the category of nice problems to have. ☐



INFINITI Q50

It's fresh, it's different - but is that enough to sway buyers?



IMAGINE YOU ARE NISSAN and own a premium brand that's quite big in America but microscopic in Europe: what do you do? Do you try and beat BMW at its own game and risk almost inevitably being portrayed as a me-too pretender, or do you do something completely different and risk irrelevance instead?

With Infiniti and its new Q50, Nissan has chosen the latter path. In price and positioning it's a clear rival for a BMW 3-series, but in its execution it is a world apart. For while the BMW is angular on the outside and minimalist inside, the Q50 is curvaceous without and complex almost to the point of clutter within. While BMW leads with almost old-school mechanical engineering, Infiniti wants you to focus on its car's bewildering technological capabilities.

None of which is more befuddling than the fact that the car is available with steering that has no mechanical connection between the wheel you hold and those that turn the car. Actually

that's not quite true because if this first steer-by-wire system to make it into production fails, a mechanical system automatically kicks in; but the rest of the time the only reason the front wheels turn when you turn the steering wheel is because a computer told them to.

In theory the advantages are many: kickback and friction are eliminated, the steering can have any ratio it likes and you can programme different weight and response profiles too. What it cannot do is provide any real sense of connection to the road, save that which it can digitally and none too realistically synthesise. I drove cars with and without it and massively preferred the fusty old standard system.

The rest of the car is good, but not good enough. You'll think it handles well right until the moment you drive a 3-series, and while the borrowed Mercedes diesel engine has a reasonable specification, it is beaten on every count from acceleration to economy by the BMW.

FACTFILE

£34,270

ENGINE
2.2 litres, 4 cylinders,
turbocharged

POWER
168bhp @ 3200rpm

TORQUE
295lb ft @ 1600rpm

TRANSMISSION
seven-speed auto,
rear-wheel drive

0-62MPH 8.5sec

TOP SPEED 143mph

ECONOMY 57.7mpg

CO₂ 128g/km

I admire Infiniti for having a go and if for some reason you're averse to owning a 3-series (or an Audi A4 or Mercedes C-class) and wish instead to drive something interesting, attractive and different, there is something to be said for the Q50. But for everyone else, I'm afraid the Germans just do it better. I think the Q50 will sell in greater numbers than other Infinitis thanks to its competitive diesel engine, but Infiniti's dream of rivalling the best in Europe seems set to remain just that for a while yet. **M**



The real deal

May I just reassure your correspondent Mr Black, ref his letter in last month's *Motor Sport*, that what he saw in the Goodwood TT was the real Aston Martin DP212 Project Car. Wolfgang does have a replica Project car, a fine 214 clone, but uses that in other arenas. DP212 is run out where the importance of the car matters, where the car is properly appreciated for what it is.

For me it is a real privilege to be asked to drive the car and sit where Graham and Richie (and others) sat and to get a small glimpse 'behind the curtain' to feel what they felt.

If Mr Black is ever passing Derby and the car is in the Aston Engineering workshops, I would be delighted to show him round and let him have his own, real life, Pictorial Review of a very special and charismatic racing car.

Simon Hadfield, *Shepshed, Leics*

Honours list

I thought Simon Hadfield's drive in the TT was possibly the finest drive I have seen in historic racing. I don't think any of the pros there would have done a better job on the day. I had the honour and privilege of driving DP212 for 10 years, sadly nowhere near as well as Simon, and driving it at Le Mans was one of the highlights of my racing career.

How wonderful that such a fabulous car won the TT. A lot of credit has to go to Wolfgang Friedrichs for letting such an incredibly valuable car race in anger, something we are understandably seeing less and less of. Aston Engineering also deserves a lot of credit.

Simon's achievement was recognised by Aston Martin chairman David Richards, who has given Simon a day's testing with the current factory World Championship Gulf Vantage GTE. How refreshing that a major, prestigious car manufacturer recognises achievements in historic motor sport.

David Clark, *London W1*

Beano's not toast

Delighted as we were to be mentioned in connection with another fine British brand, I have to report that rumours of *The Beano's* demise have been much exaggerated (*Motor Sport*, October 2013).



The naughtiest boy in the school - and Dennis the Menace. Gnot forgetting Gnasher...

The Beano is still on sale every Wednesday, where you can follow the adventures of Dennis the Menace, The Bash Street Kids and, perhaps most appropriately for *Motor Sport* readers, Billy Whizz, the fastest boy in the world.

Not wishing to argue with the spirit of your enjoyable article, we in *The Beano* office have decided that if we have to be outlived by anyone, we are more than happy for it to be Aston Martin.

To honour your Piquet issue, please find attached our re-imagining of Nigel Mansell's legendary pass on Piquet at Silverstone in '87, complete with feint, sparks, Union flags and 'Mansell-bar' moustache. Keep up the good work.

Craig Graham, *Editor, The Beano*

Crime and passion

Mike Doodson's article on Great Train Robber Roy James was pretty near the mark and, as he says, Roy hated being called the 'Weasel'. He was in fact not arrested for the GTR. Nor were two others, whom I met; they got away, but feared they'd left their finger prints at the farm, so if you know of a south Londoner in his late Seventies who never goes out without gloves...

After planning and capital expenses, the individual payout was just over £160,000 each! Here are some other facts, disclosed to me by Roy.

Roy took three lots of loot back to London in his 3.8 Jag. Worried he might 'get pulled' he drove sensibly down to Edgware, and then tore through London streets to the firm's East End hide out, where the loot was hastily distributed.

There was never a Mr Big; the robbery was planned by Bruce Reynolds and Roy, but they did take suggestions from

members of their firm, of which Ronnie Biggs was never a member. They enlisted labour from another mob, Biggs being one without ever playing any important part. It really irked firm members that Biggs had such a big mouth.

The 1978 book *The Train Robbers* was accurate in detail, being ghosted by the remaining GTR firm. But unknown to author Piers Paul Read, they fed him a fair amount of fiction as the firm wanted the lucrative rights from a GTR film, which they recognised would be no good without a Mr Big. So they co-opted a real-life Mr Big (deceased) whom they had 'done a bit of business with', like the biggest 'casino' heist (Cannes) up until that time on the French Riviera coast, the proceeds bankrolling the GTR.

However there was one other guy from motor racing that took part, and the greatest saloon car driver I ever saw! Post robbery Roy had planned to go Formula 3 in Europe with this amazing driver, both putting £30,000 each into the pot, a huge sum back then. But it never happened with Roy 'having his collar felt', and then tragically his F3 partner unexpectedly died the following season.

David Brodie, *Reading, Berks*

Great Scot

Re the sale of Dick Skipworth's Ecurie Ecosse collection, I had to smile when I read your list of drivers who had driven for EE. I thought 'why didn't they mention me? They only mentioned the famous ones!'

My part in EE was very small, but very enjoyable. David Murray was no mean driver himself, and was single-minded but scrupulously fair in every way. When I was about to test the Tojeiro-Buick he talked at length about the car and its power. (I was jumping from a battered FJ racing school car with about 70hp to a state of the art 270hp GT!) Before I went out, he said: "Doug, just take it easy at the start". He was a really nice man and always smiling. I liked him a lot.

After I'd got a third in class at Brands he said "Doug, would you like the trophy or the money?" I took the money! Reading many years later of the reasons for his move abroad and his decline and passing was a source of great sadness to me.

I didn't have a great deal to do with their star man JYS. One time when

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we were testing I was 'advised' by DM to watch out for Jackie and move over. I was hard on the brakes going into Becketts in the Buick and Jackie came by me in the Ford, still on the loud pedal before he braked!

Our transporter was a beauty – there was nothing like it in the UK. I was told it was based loosely on the F1 Ferrari transporter. That three-cylinder supercharged two-stroke made a great noise. It had everything – crew quarters, work bench, hydraulic ramps, and painted the unique Flag Metallic Blue it was stunning.

Great times for me being associated with EE, and I shall remain ever grateful to David Murray and his team for looking after me all those years ago.

Doug Paterson, Long Buckby, Northants

Streatham Common touch

Reading your article on Chris Bristow brought back memories of when as a young man a friend and I went to Brands Hatch for the Kentish 100 F2 race by public transport and thumbing a lift. The race comprised of two heats and a final. Chris won on aggregate and afterwards we went to the paddock to congratulate him.

Then, with the cheek of youth, we asked him for a lift back home as we all lived in Streatham. "Of course, boys" he replied. We got into his Jaguar and drove back home, passing his winning car on the transporter as we went. We had a great chat and a laugh on the way.

I just cannot imagine anything like that happening today. A great bloke and a very fine racing driver, fondly remembered.

Michael Segal, Kingswood, Surrey

The M4 test track

I enjoyed Gordon Cruickshank's article about John Wyer in the 1950s. I worked for Wyer from 1959, as sales and showroom manager at the London Piccadilly showrooms where David Brown had his main office. This gave me the opportunity to meet many famous names of the time, including John Horsman who with Wyer went on to fame with GT40s. One day Horsman took me out in a DB4 Zagato they were preparing. We reached 170mph on that convenient test track known as the M4.

Another time Wyer ordered me to

take a car from the Chequered Flag garage down to Feltham. He didn't warn me that it was DBR1/1, sitting on the pavement with a sign saying 'For Sale – £1495'. Le Mans ratios on the Lower Richmond Road, in the rain, didn't make for an easy trip.

Gordon mentioned Carroll Shelby's dungarees and slip-on crocodile shoes. To him they were just normal wear, and he was amused that they tickled British sensibilities. I enclose a photo of him behind the Silverstone pits, which shows his natural charm and sense of humour.

Tony Gosnell, Greatham, Hants

New York Cosmos

As a footnote to your fine article on Andrea de Adamich, during his tenure at Surtees he was also briefly dispatched to the USA to bolster the fledgling F5000 effort. It was exotic enough for us provincial New Englanders to have Brits David Hobbs and Peter Gethin on hand, but an Italian as well – we felt positively cosmopolitan with that.

Greg Rickes, Latham, New York, USA

Young Savage

The Classic Test of the Lotus Cortina brought back memories of the years I spent working on these cars at Rowes of Chichester. The dealership was owned by James Elwes, Mr Jim to the staff, who was a member of the BRDC and always drove performance cars, one of which was a Jeff Uren Savage. (I sold another of those to your writer Rob Widdows!) I was a mechanic, keen on motor sport, and as I was to specialise on the Lotus Cortina I spent a week at Cheshunt.

The 1963 A-bar model had its problems, but not as much as the eight leaf-spring models supplied in late 1964 to West Sussex Police as traffic cars.

If ever there was a vehicle unsuitable as a police traffic car this was it. The problems were many – burnt valves because the police used cheap low-octane petrol, broken diffs thanks to boots loaded with police equipment, brake fade under pursuit conditions, sheared alternator mounts as the Twin Cam had a vibration period at certain revs... Anyone who bought one of the above Lotus Cortinas had a car that had been hand-built several times.

Brian Hall, Lavant, Chichester



What, these shoes?
Carroll Shelby in
everyday wear

Salisbury pain

The story in November about the fictitious Salisbury Grand Prix was of great interest to me. I used those roads daily between 2010 and 2013, and it was the scene of my worst car accident. On a lovely clear day, when I had stopped to answer my phone just down from Boscombe Down, I was attacked by 'Strumpfelmeyer in his Blitzen' – or rather, White Van Man in his Citroën who decided my 'Auto Union' (VW Passat estate) should be dispatched. The caved-in Passat ended up 13m down the road, me lying flat as my seat had broken. White Van was wrecked and the driver left shaken and concussed. Good old Passats – built to withstand attacks.

Although I have raced my Historic Formula Ford at Spa and other quick circuits, the thought of racing it down the Salisbury Grand Prix triangle does not appeal. Frighteningly fast and lined with hedgerows, trees and fences – not the place to challenge 'Strumpfelmeyer in his Blitzen'...

Mike Bromley, Motcombe, Dorset

Rich pickings

Congratulations on another terrific iPad edition. More than any other magazine I subscribe to you really bring the content alive with the richness of the images and occasional embedded videos. Well done, from a long-time *Motor Sport* reader.

Philip Airey, Chicago, USA 📧

YOU WERE THERE

www.motorsportmagazine.com/forum



1



2



3



4

PIETER THOENES

Pieter figured on our *Letters* pages with the tale of saving the works MGB entry on the 1966 Targa Florio by loaning them the bumpers from his own B, which he drove from London. "At 22 I couldn't afford a tele lens – even Jenks and Klem were still standing in the grass with Rolleiflexes!" **1** Scrutineering **2** Works MGB of Timo Mäkinen and John Rhodes **3** Local Alfa Giulietta SZ **4** Swiss-entered Porsche 906 was fifth **5** Autodelta Alfa TZ managed five laps but DNF



5

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If you have any images that might be suitable for *You Were There*, please send them to:

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Moss entertains at MS summer barbeque

On September 18, Hall of Fame founder member Sir Stirling Moss joined Nigel Roebuck and Damien Smith at the Hurlingham Club for a summer barbecue and a talk for our readers.

Also on display was a selection of classic cars, some of which Moss raced in period. Under the blue lights of the Fulham venue's foyer, the pistachio green C-type he drove to victory at Reims in 1952 looked especially striking.



After dinner Moss was, as ever, on good form. A cheer rose when he entered the room and he proceeded to regale the audience with stories of his career, including losing his steering on the Monza banking during the 'Race of Two Worlds' and "having a slash" in front of a crowd during the 1955 Mille Miglia... No time for bathroom breaks in a 1000-mile race.

There was also a silent auction held with the Signature Store, raising more than £1000 for the Henry Surtees Foundation and the Hope for Tomorrow cancer charity.

You can listen to a podcast of the evening on the *Motor Sport* website at www.motorsportmagazine.com

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Nigel Roebuck

The continued dominance of Red Bull, the greatness of Sebastian Vettel... and the major teams' unfathomable reluctance to capitalise on Nico Hülkenberg's gifts



AS THE GRANDS PRIX ROLL BY, I think back to a sunny afternoon in the Daytona paddock in January, and a conversation with Anthony Davidson about the Formula 1 season to come. I began by asking whom he tipped for the 2013 World Championship, and he didn't so much as pause to think about it. "Sebastian Vettel," he said. "I know it's boring, considering he's won it the last three years, but that's what I think will happen."

No doubts at all? "No," said Davidson, "and that's mainly because the rules haven't changed that much – you can still have quite a powerful blown diffuser. Red Bull and Adrian Newey are the masters of designing it – it's *such* a tricky thing to get right – and Sebastian's the master of driving it: the technique needed to bring out the best in it – the complete opposite of what you'd do instinctively – brings out the best in him.

"Having said that," Anthony went on, "this will be the last year for the blown floor, and if we were talking about the 2014 season, when the cars will be totally different, with the V6 turbo engine and so on, I'd be saying the championship was wide open. But, as I say, the blown floor requires a different style of driving, and Vettel's got it, and I think he'll make it four championships on the trot. For all I think Alonso's the best, he ain't driving a Red Bull..."

As I write, four Grands Prix – New Delhi, Abu Dhabi, Austin, Interlagos – are still to be run, but even in the somewhat unlikely event of Fernando and his recalcitrant Ferrari winning all of them, Sebastian requires only a single fifth place to clinch it. I think we may conclude with some confidence that the 2013 World Championship is a dead issue.

What has been dispiriting for the rest is that this fourth title has been won with greater ease than any of the others. Ye Gods, the last race not

to surrender to Sebastian was Budapest back in July. In the five since the 'summer break' he has been dominant – and, what's more, at circuits as disparate as Monza and Singapore.

Has it been boring, as Davidson predicted? In a way, yes, because it's always desirable to have at least two teams operating at the summit, as we saw in the late races of 2012, when McLaren gave Lewis Hamilton a car good enough to take on – and sometimes, as at Austin – beat Vettel in a straight fight, but the bulk of the 2013 season has been an accurate reflection of the state of play in Grand Prix racing: Red Bull is clearly ahead, followed by a *mélange* of Ferrari, Mercedes and Lotus.

People will grumble away to you about the amount of money Red Bull spends on F1 – appreciably more even than Ferrari, if they are to be believed – but there is no escaping the fact that in the modern era the team is doing a quantifiably better job than any other, and there's an end to it.

Once in a while this happens: a great driver – which Vettel indisputably is – finds himself in demonstrably the best car, and then the victories seem without end. The Schumacher/Ferrari days are in the relatively recent past, but think of the Ascari/Ferrari era of 60 years ago: on June 22 1952 Alberto won the Belgian Grand Prix at Spa, as he did again on June 23 1953 – and in the course of those 12 months no one but he won a World Championship Grand Prix.

All right, there were far fewer *Grandes Épreuves* – I'm showing my age – back then, but Ascari set a record of nine consecutive victories that stands to this day: no one else has ever won more than five on the trot, although now I think about it, by the time this is read the Indian Grand Prix will have been run, and Vettel might well have extended his run to six...

Immediately after the period of domination by Ascari and Ferrari, another – this time by Fangio and Mercedes – began. It didn't last long, for the company's return to racing amounted to only a season and a half, but 12 Grands Prix in the W196 yielded eight wins for Juan Manuel, leading to his second and third World Championships.

What rather sets him apart, of course, is that he then went on to



**“YE GODS, THE LAST
RACE NOT TO FALL TO
SEBASTIAN WAS
BUDAPEST...”**

win his fourth with Ferrari in 1956, and his fifth with Maserati the year after. Fangio seems to have had a natural genius for going to the right team at the right time, but I remember asking him why he had left Ferrari after a single season there. "I was close," he said, "to all my young team-mates – Castellotti, Musso, Portago, particularly Collins – but Ferrari was the only team in which I felt unwelcome. Alfa, Mercedes, Maserati... I was very happy with all of them, but I never felt [Enzo] Ferrari liked me and, to be honest, I didn't like him, either..."

For all that, Fangio's run of World Championships was uninterrupted by the single year with Ferrari, and his standing in the sport has always been enhanced by the fact that he won titles in so many makes of car, suggesting that it was he who made the difference.

In today's technological world, of course, it is as good as impossible to become World Champion in a car not on par with the best. As I may just have mentioned a time or two before, I share the view of most in the paddock that Alonso is the greatest driver of this era, and should by now have a hatful of titles, rather than just the pair from his Renault days, but until Ferrari provides him with a properly competitive car he is always going to come up short.

Thankfully that doesn't quell Fernando's warrior spirit, but as we know from recent events working with loaves and fishes has started to get on his nerves a bit. Suffering in silence is what they require at Maranello, as Alain Prost can tell you, and God help you if you dare to criticise the holy red product.

"The one thing that never changes at Ferrari," said the inimitably laconic Phil Hill, "is that the car wins, and the driver loses..."

Borrowing Hill's words, but putting them into a somewhat different context, a widespread theory today is that it is indeed the car – in this case the Red Bull – that wins, some almost giving the impression that Vettel is merely along for the ride. In absolute terms, the same might have been said half a century ago of Jim Clark, for he never drove other than a Lotus in F1, and Colin Chapman routinely designed and built a faster car than anyone else.

Did we, though, say that of Clark? No – although he won countless races with ridiculous ease – we did not, perhaps because, following the enforced retirement of Moss, Jimmy patently assumed Stirling's mantle as the greatest, a fact acknowledged by his peers.

It doesn't often happen that drivers concede the innate superiority of one of their number, but in Clark's case it did, just as it had with Fangio and then Moss. "When Peter handed his car over to Fangio at Monza [in 1956]," Louise Collins told me, "he gave up his own chance of becoming World Champion, and a lot of people thought he was nuts, but it was much more a team sport back then, and for Peter the most important thing was that a Ferrari driver should win the title. He was 20 years younger than Fangio, and thought he had plenty of time to win it – and he also felt that as long as Fangio was racing it was somehow not right that anyone else should be World Champion..."

Another planet, wasn't it? Fangio, though, was indeed held in reverence by his younger rivals: "He simply drove the car through the corner faster than anyone else, and that was the end of it," says Moss.

"And, as well as that, he was such a modest and unaffected man..."

After the retirement of Juan Manuel, it was Stirling's turn to be king of the hill, and his status within the sport was unaffected by the fact that somehow he never won the almighty World Championship. When I asked Richie Ginther whom he believed the greatest he had raced against, his expression suggested that the question was redundant: "Well... Stirling, of course! And by a long way."

Everyone remembers Moss's epic victory against the Ferraris at Monaco in 1961, but just the weekend before he won the *Daily Express* Trophy at Silverstone. In appallingly wet conditions Stirling lapped everyone, and afterwards second man Brabham was asked how he felt about that. "Not too bad," Jack said. "I'd probably feel worse if I'd been beaten by a human..."

It may be quite a while, if ever, before Vettel is spoken of in these terms, but in my opinion it is way harder to rate the drivers today than in times past. Of course some cars were always more equal than others, but at the top level they were much of a muchness, with 'set-up' confined to playing with tyre pressures and roll-bars, so that the driver's contribution was more readily apparent. Once in a while you would get a startlingly superior car, like the Mercedes W196, and – much later – the Lotus 79 or Williams FW14B, but only rarely would most top drivers be reduced to season-long also-rans

by their machinery.

The degree of Vettel's superiority in Singapore was almost surreal. Here is a man well accustomed to super-competitive cars, yet at this race he was moved to describe his RB9 as "phenomenal all weekend": after one lap his lead was 1.9 seconds, after five 6.1...

At mid-race, following Daniel Ricciardo's shunt, a safety car period brought the pack back to Vettel, but as soon as they got on their way again it was the same story. "Use your tyres – open up the gap," came the message from his race engineer, and Sebastian duly

obliged, disappearing up the road at the rate of two seconds a lap. In terms of racing, it bordered on farce; as an exhibition of matchless pace, it was stunning.

Afterwards, as at Monza, he was booed as he stood on the podium, and in recent weeks this has been the subject of much debate: periods of domination by one driver are not unknown in the chronicle of this sport, so what is it about Vettel that brings about such a response? There is always some reluctance to root for Goliath, of course, but save on the rare occasions when an angry crowd reaction might reasonably have been anticipated – as at the A1-Ring in both 2001 and '02, when Rubens Barrichello was ordered to let him by on the run up to the line – Schumacher was never subjected to such abuse, after all, so why is his young countryman singled out?

It is a fact that in his homeland Sebastian will never be loved as Michael was. I remember driving through the villages to the Nürburgring on race morning a couple of years ago, and being struck by the abundance of Schumacher flags, the relative absence of any bearing the name of Vettel. In the press room I mentioned it to a German colleague. "Two things," he said. "First, Michael will always be this country's first World Champion. Second – and more important



Monza '56: Fangio leads Moss before switching to Collins's sister Ferrari

"ONE THING NEVER CHANGES AT FERRARI. THE CAR WINS AND THE DRIVER LOSES"



Catch me if you can: Vettel was in a race all of his own around the streets of Singapore's Marina Bay

– it's inverse snobbery! Michael was the working-class boy from a poor background who took on the world, whereas Sebastian's middle-class and they think he's had it easy..."

Some suggest that Vettel's unpopularity with a section of the crowd comes from his perceived arrogance, as evidenced by a contemptuous radio attitude to other drivers during a race, by that profoundly irritating '1' finger jab at the cameras in *parc fermé*.

Others reckon the booing has its roots in what happened at Sepang back in March, when he ignored a previously agreed 'team orders' scenario – the fabled 'Multi 21' – and declined to follow team-mate Mark Webber over the line.

On that occasion, frankly, I would have blamed no one in the crowd for making his or her feelings known, but at that stage, of course, the true situation was known only in the paddock.

It is a fact that many, myself included, had their perception of Vettel modified by his actions that day, but surely this alone cannot account for continuing hostility towards him several months on – many, indeed, laud Seb for what he did in Malaysia, fatuously arguing that it was merely the act of 'a real racing driver'. If I found that unfathomable, so I feel the same way about the morons who now routinely boo him after another victorious drive.

We have seen similar behaviour in the past, of course, albeit rarely. Back in 1992, when 'Mansell Mania' was at its apogee, there was at Silverstone an element in the crowd – probably at a motor race for the first and last time – which waved banners bearing the legend 'F*** Senna' and the like, making one ashamed of one's own country.

Such behaviour isn't new, then, but that doesn't make it any less distasteful. Of course there are restive fans of Hamilton, of Alonso, of

Räikkönen and so on, who long to see a different outcome to a Grand Prix, but, as we said, there's nothing new in this. And if there are aspects of Vettel's public persona that could use a little work, that doesn't mean he should be denigrated simply for being brilliant at what he does.

Of late Sebastian has been so unstoppable that almost inevitably there has been muttering about the degree of his car's superiority. Giancarlo Minardi, a guest at the Singapore Grand Prix, was moved to comment on the note of Renault's engine, hinting at the possible presence of traction control, but his remarks – if inevitably seized upon by certain websites – were treated with the contempt that was their due. Undeniably the harsher sound of the French engines does stand out from the run-of-the-mill V8 scream, but this stems from devilishly clever mapping, which may benefit traction, but is not 'traction control' in the accepted, now illegal, sense.

And then, of course, there is the matter of tyres, and what a rattling good yawn this has become. In the early part of the season many people got very excited by the 'unpredictability' of the Grands Prix, unconcerned that it was wholly contrived by means of supplying the teams with tyres specifically designed to do a very poor job.

As such as Hamilton and Alonso have discovered, Pirelli's response to any inferred criticism has become increasingly prickly of late, so at this point I suppose I should make clear – yet again – that no blame for 'high degradation' tyres should attach to the company, which is merely following instructions from powers-that-be misguidedly trying ever more to turn Grand Prix racing into F1 Lite.

At that point in the season tyre conservation was the *only* point of discussion, but many apparently thought that fine. Without a doubt

“HÜLKENBERG LOOKS
LIKE A SUPERSTAR.
HE CAN DRIVE
AND THINK AT
THE SAME TIME”



Hülkenberg's pace is worthy of a top seat, but Ferrari opted to re-sign Räikkönen (opposite)

some cars – Lotus, Ferrari, Force India – were better than others at making their Pirellis live for longer, and the argument was that it was the same for everyone, that it was up to the other teams to improve.

Well, yes, but it wasn't *racing*, was it? I remember the late laps at Barcelona when Vettel, running a frustrated, cruising, fourth, finally got a message from the pits:

“OK, Sebastian, you can use up your tyres...”

Then came Monaco, where in the early stages I didn't know whether to laugh or weep as the leader Nico Rosberg lapped at GP2 speeds, and was under no threat at all. Throughout that weekend Rosberg was in a class of his own, and did everything necessary to win in the prevailing circumstances, but as a spectacle this was hardly the most enthralling Monaco Grand Prix we have known.

The Red Bulls of Vettel and Webber, fourth and fifth in Spain, were second and third here, and undoubtedly in the paddock – where its popularity is by no means universal – there was some rejoicing that the team's wings were being clipped by its inability to cope as well as some others with the tyres then on offer.

On one level it was pleasing to see other teams and drivers get a look-in for once, but on another I could not but agree with the

sentiments expressed in a rare public declaration by Dietrich Mateschitz: “This has nothing to do with classic racing any more – this is a competition in tyre management. Under the given circumstances, we can neither get the best out of our cars nor our drivers. There is no more real qualifying and fighting for the pole, as everyone is just saving tyres for the race. The target was to get more excitement into the races, with more tyre changes – but not this much. This is now a different situation from the original intention.”

At the time of Mateschitz's statement, a leading team principal suggested to me that now the tyre situation would change. Why? “Because he's so close to Bernie, that's why...”

Lo, in Montréal things were indeed a little different, Vettel taking pole position and winning the race – and in the eight subsequent Grands Prix only Rosberg (at Silverstone, where Seb retired while leading) and Hamilton (at the Hungaroring) have kept the World Champion from the top step of the podium.

Yes, as with Schumacher a decade ago – and with Clark 40 years before that – it's undeniably a little boring to have the same driver winning all the time, but more important to me is that Grand Prix racing should remain true to itself, that the results reflect reality, rather

than artifice. The aim is always to produce the fastest car, as simple as that, and for some years Red Bull has done it better than any of its rivals: if Vettel has been in the right place at the right time, he has made the most of it. In stressing the need for his team to step up to the plate, Alonso may have incurred the wrath of his employers, but he's right, and deep down they – and all the others – know it.

As for the booring, well, anyone with a discernible IQ will deprecate it, but one noted without surprise that there was none of it in Japan, where excellence is simply, respectfully, admired.

“ON GRIPS!” BARKS HERR ALTBAUER, manager of the Schnorcedes team. “It’s time to blow your nose now!”
 “Ach, now?” von Grips responds. “Already?”
 “Please! Don’t argue!”
 An American broadcaster, near at hand, is understandably bemused. “What was that?” he asks.

“We have discovered, following our laboratory investigations,” says Altbauer, “that the best time to blow the nose, to have it completely clear, is seven and a half minutes before the race begins. This is important, because a handkerchief carried in the pocket would be extra weight...”

I rather doubt that Nico Hülkenberg has ever heard Peter Ustinov’s sublime *Grand Prix of Gibraltar*, but he has an excellent sense of humour and might well enjoy its timeless observations on some of the more farcical aspects of motor racing.

Certainly the clip I quoted would resonate with Hülkenberg, not because it is to do with a German team, but because the weight of a driver – with or without a handkerchief – has lately become a major talking point in Formula 1, and some have speculated that Nico’s size – he is six feet tall, and inevitably quite a lot heavier than the pint-sized brigade – may have gone against him as team principals weigh up whom to recruit. Perhaps it wasn’t only Ustinov who dealt in farce – or maybe, coming at it from a different direction, in motor racing life really does imitate art.

Next year Formula 1 undergoes a sea change, for the 1.6-litre V6 turbo engine arrives and, with all its attendant ‘green’ paraphernalia, it will be considerably heavier than the 2.4-litre V8 it replaces. With this in mind, the FIA has announced an increase – from 642 to 690kg – to the minimum weight rule, but plenty of people suggest that this is not enough, that the new weight limit should be at least 700kg.

It wasn’t always so, but nowadays the minimum weight limit in F1 refers to car (without fuel) and driver, and as they prepare for 2014 many teams are finding it difficult – allowing for the weights of their drivers – to get close to 690kg.

Prior to the introduction of KERS – a component weighing 20kg that hadn’t been there before – F1 cars habitually came out way under the weight limit, and thus carried a sizeable amount of ballast that could be distributed to advantage: the lighter the driver, obviously the more ballast. In the forthcoming ‘heavy F1’, inevitably far less ballast will be carried, which puts an even greater premium on a light driver: Felipe Massa, for example, weighs 15kg less than Hülkenberg.

Already to some degree this has been a problem for quite a while. Mark Webber, the tallest of the current drivers, will rejoice as he leaves Red Bull to join Porsche, and not only because he won’t have Sebastian Vettel in his life any more: for some years, the whippet-like Webber says he has been living like a jockey, several kilos below his ideal weight, so it will be a pleasure to eat at least a little more normally from now on.

In the new ‘turbo era’, life would have been even more difficult.

If it is utterly ridiculous that a driver, no matter how talented, should be compromised by his size, the signs are unfortunately not good that the weight limit will be increased for 2014, as this would require consensus from the teams – some of which happen to have lighter drivers than others. Had FOTA – the Formula One Teams Association – not lamentably allowed itself to splinter apart, perhaps unanimity might have been achieved, but in F1, as we know, interests are always vested before they are common.

Since Sauber recently – at last – upped its game, Hülkenberg has figured prominently at the races, driving with consistent brilliance and offering further proof that the top level is where he belongs. It seemed odd that McLaren didn’t sign him when Hamilton departed for Mercedes a year ago, but like everyone else I blithely put that down to the fact that Sergio Pérez comes with backing, and Nico does not.

Of all the young drivers – 74kg or not – Hülkenberg is the one who screams out for a place in a top team, and I’d hoped that Ferrari would take him, in place of Massa. Close but no cigar, as it turned out: as I write, the expectation is that he will join Grosjean at Lotus, and that is a driver pairing that should get rival teams’ full attention, for Romain is without doubt the most improved driver of the season, still blisteringly quick, no longer running into people all the time.

Ever since it became known that Räikkönen was leaving Lotus,

Grosjean has assumed the role of *de facto* number one in the team, not only in the mind of Eric Boullier and other team personnel, but also on the track. Was this man who confidently led the bulk of the Japanese Grand Prix really the same one who cack-handedly turfed Webber off at the first corner in 2012?

After the announcement of his return to Ferrari, Räikkönen was typically unflinching and unemotional as he explained his reason for leaving Lotus: he was bored with the end of the month coming round and there being no pay cheque in the post, simple as that. At Ferrari they may for now have lost the knack of producing competitive Grand Prix cars, but they never run low on cash, and for Kimi and his management this is an inestimable virtue.

I understand that he has now been paid in full by Lotus, which claims it was only ever a problem of cashflow, and the hope is that the anticipated investment from Infinity Racing Partners Ltd – now renamed Quantum Motorsports Ltd to

sidestep any confusion with Infinity Red Bull Racing – will forestall any such problems in the future.

It is a pity that the deal was not in place a few months earlier, for Räikkönen – while still resolutely po-faced in public – had appeared more content at Lotus than ever he had been at McLaren or Ferrari, and I somewhat doubt that, had delayed payments not clouded the picture, he would have gone elsewhere.

Still, money – as well as time – can be a great healer in F1, and so Räikkönen heads back to Maranello as team-mate to the man for whom he was pitched at the end of 2009. Not surprisingly folk are predicting conflict between Alonso and Räikkönen, because history suggests that putting two superstars in one motorhome is asking for trouble: the fiery Spaniard and the icy Finn... not a cliché has been passed up in recent weeks.

Maybe the doomsayers will be proved right, who knows? Fernando and Kimi share a genius for driving racing cars, but in all other respects appear about as disparate as two individuals could be. Having said that, back in 1978 I had my doubts about a Lotus partnership of Mario Andretti and Ronnie Peterson but, apart from working together



supremely well, the two became genuinely close friends. I don't say that will happen with Alonso and Räikkönen, but it's in the interests of both that they find a way to co-exist, and neither man is stupid, after all.

There again, neither were Prost and Senna.

Almost from the day Alonso arrived at Ferrari he was suggesting he had found his spiritual home in racing, and more than once said it was his intention to stay with the team for the rest of his career. It seems to me that a quality he shares with Vettel – and no one else to the same degree – is an *absolute* focus on his job. Inspiration counts for a lot, of course, but it's a characteristic common to all really great racing drivers that they work harder than their rivals.

I remember talking to Alonso about his relationship with the press, having been struck by the cool way he dealt with contentious questions at Hockenheim in 2010, when Massa was asked to let him through: if he now were to win the World Championship, someone oafishly asked, would he feel good about it? Fernando ignored the clumsy bait: yes, why not?

"I don't get too stressed about things like that any more," he said. "I think it's something you get with experience – you learn how to separate the important things from the unimportant, in terms of your performance. Working with the media is an important part of the job, but it's not something that... gives you performance..." It mattered, then, but only to a point.

Given Alonso's expressed wish to remain with Ferrari for the rest of his career, it had long been assumed by all in the paddock that whomever else might at some point become available, Fernando was firmly off the market. While it would still surprise me if he were to move elsewhere, however, recent events suggest that his future might not be as set in stone as we believed.

Back in 2003 the Williams-BMWs of Ralf Schumacher and Juan Pablo Montoya dominated the French Grand Prix at Magny-Cours, but in the course of the race Juan Pablo became extremely angry about the team's pitstop strategy, which he saw as favouring his team-mate, and on the radio he didn't hold back. The following week he was given a dressing-down by the management, and it struck Martin Whitmarsh that this might be just the moment to have a word: in very short order a contract was signed between McLaren and JPM, to take effect as soon as his Williams deal expired, a year hence.

No one needs to be reminded that Alonso's association with McLaren, which lasted but one year, 2007, was anything but a happy one, and one might have predicted with some confidence that any future relationship was out of the question.

Never say never in F1, though: as Räikkönen returns to a team – Ferrari – with whom he parted in some acrimony four years ago, so recent rumours have circulated about a possible rapprochement between Alonso and McLaren, perhaps beginning in 2015, when Honda returns as the team's engine supplier.

Gamesmanship is all in the F1 paddock, of course, and it may be that Whitmarsh is simply being mischievous, sowing seeds of uncertainty, when he speaks of a wish to bring Alonso back to the team. Certainly, though, he is aware, as with Montoya and Williams 10 years ago, that all is not currently well between a rival driver and his team. And, whatever the differences between Alonso and McLaren in times gone

by, Martin has never made any secret of his admiration for Fernando's talent and commitment.

I have always believed that the litmus test of a great driver is how he copes when up against it, when working with a car not on par with the best, and this topic came up in a chat with Whitmarsh at Monza, in the midst of what has been a hugely disappointing season for McLaren.

"What you always look for," Whitmarsh said, "is the car that's scoring points it shouldn't be – and who's driving it. That, overwhelmingly, is Fernando. To the day they died guys like Senna and [Gilles] Villeneuve – although I didn't know him because he was before my time – had a *hunger* that had nothing to do with how much money they made, or any of that stuff, and that's what you always want to see in a driver.

"For all the success he's had, the hungriest driver out there today is Alonso – you could triple his net worth, and he'd still have that hunger. It's in his make-up. And, unlike some others, Fernando is not someone who would be moved by money, actually..."

Whitmarsh was at pains to stress that no actual approach had been made to Alonso, that he was merely saying that he would welcome him back to McLaren any time: "Of course I would – he's the best driver."

And Alonso, for his part, said he was flattered by Martin's remarks: the past was the past, and his only problem at McLaren had been "the philosophy of someone who is no longer there..." After a promising start, the relationship between Fernando and Ron Dennis swiftly deteriorated, as we know.

As I say, all this may be nothing more than a game, just as it was in Hungary when rumours arose of possible Red Bull interest in Alonso, and Christian Horner smilingly declined to deny them. It was after this weekend, of course, that Luca di Montezemolo chose publicly to rebuke his driver for an off-the-cuff remark about what he wanted for his birthday: "Someone else's car..."

There wasn't any doubt about whose car he meant, and with the best will in the world it

wasn't Jenson Button's, but at the same time there is no doubt that McLaren is seriously embarked upon turning things around, as evidenced by the re-signing – albeit perhaps not for a while – of leading aerodynamicist Peter Prodromou from Red Bull, no less.

As far as drivers are concerned, Sergio Pérez is expected to partner Button again in 2014 but, although team members continue to talk him up, inescapably the Mexican has fallen short this year, and for the start of the new Honda era Whitmarsh will assuredly aim to have one of the top four – Alonso, Räikkönen, Vettel, Hamilton – at McLaren.

Perhaps by then, you never know, we could be speaking of a top five, for Hülkenberg looks to me like a superstar in the bud, not least because he can drive and think at the same time. To be under pressure from Hamilton and Alonso, as he was in Korea, would have flustered many a young driver, but when Lewis went to pass him into the first turn, Nico, rather than leaving his braking too late, rather than trying to chop him, calmly allowed him by, having already concluded that the Mercedes would be at his mercy again on the following straight.

Impressive, I thought, and the sight of him in a truly competitive car is one to relish. Even Herr Altbauer might have signed him, handkerchief and all. ☐



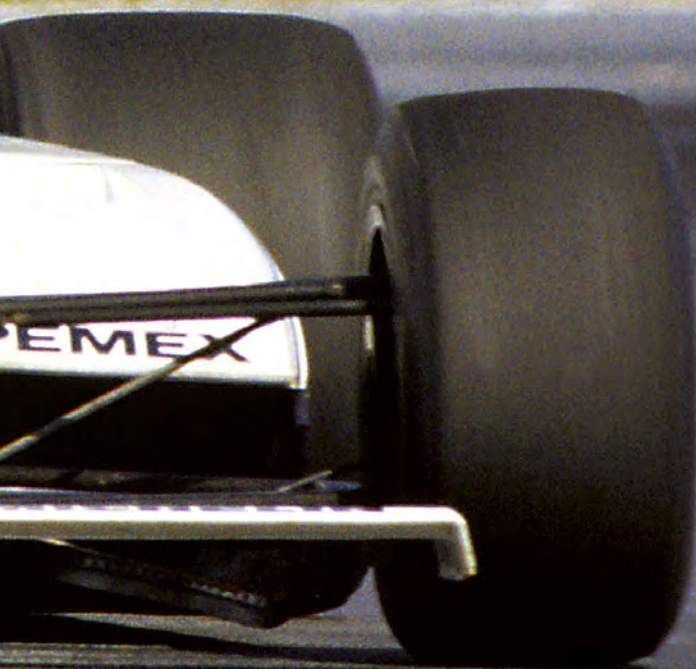
"ALONSO'S PROBLEM AT McLAREN HAD BEEN THE PHILOSOPHY OF SOMEONE NO LONGER THERE"



Love him, hate him... He didn't give a damn

And he still doesn't. Notorious Nelson Piquet stoked both anger and admiration on his way to three F1 titles. Images linger of a crass troublemaker - but lest we forget, he was defiantly talented, too

writer MIKE DOODSON





LET'S ADMIT IT FROM THE START.

I like and admire Nelson Piquet. It can be a trying experience, though, to be unmasked as a Piquet supporter, so let's remind ourselves of his extraordinary talent. He left Brazil for Italy in 1977 at the age of 24, won races in the European F3 championship while living in his truck, then moved to England to contest the (two) British titles in 1978. Before the season was half complete, he found himself in Formula 1, vaulting any intermediate category, and subsequently went on to win 23 GPs and three world championships. Intelligent, incisive and no sufferer of fools, he commanded deep

loyalties that remain firm to this day.

Yet the negative aspects of Nelson that critics hold against him, occasionally in these pages, require someone to defend him, even though he's never sought to do so himself. The supposed blots on his character would have to include suspicions about the legality of several cars he drove, doubts about his commitment to the job with the two F1 teams (Lotus and Benetton) that employed him at the end of his career, and a long list of scurrilous and personal insinuations he slung at rivals. Not least among his targets stand the saintly figures of Ayrton Senna and Nigel Mansell.

There is scant chance of Nelson, with his gruff contempt for self-appointed moralisers, ever achieving that sort of holiness, although he is an expert at knocking haloes askew. Throughout our most recent meeting, this summer just past, my old friend was wonderfully relaxed, if a little haggard at almost 61 years old. I was treated to the familiar torrent of comic abuse, delivered in all directions in his staccato and gloriously scatological style.



TO GET THE FULL FLAVOUR OF NELSON, it is essential to puncture the widely held myth of his 'laziness' and to demonstrate just how dedicated he was to making his way in the sport, even if it flagged briefly at the end. This is a man who built his first single-seater (a Super Vee) virtually single-handed, from the ground up. Yet such was his confidence in his own abilities, when he left Brazil for Europe, that the deals he had done with sponsors at home were based solely on outright wins, a scheme that would net £4000. "Here in England we did the same with BP and Champion: only to get money for winning. Instead of just a little bit of money for carrying the stickers, I got £600 from each of them for every win. And I won 14 races..."

The British F3 campaign, in which he beat Derek Warwick by a handy margin in the BP championship, attracted attention not only through Nelson's successes, but also for his dedication to testing. Those cash bonuses allowed him to run a test car, with which he covered twice as many miles as he would do in the whole season's racing, and he spent as much time under the car as in it. Rather than use the Toyota-Novamotor engines supplied from the UK agent's pool, he was also in the habit of delivering his own units to the factory in Novara, which is a long haul in a clapped-out Cortina estate. He would take a couple of litres of British fuel, too, to ensure a perfect tune on the Italian dyno. Nelson had learned that being minutely prepared in advance was the best way to avoid having to take risks in races. While this was a policy that would serve him equally well on the Grand Prix circuits, it has also led to ill-advised accusations about his level of commitment as a driver.

Nelson had the knack of finding good men to support him. Managing the F3 campaign for him in England was Greg 'PeeWee' Siddle, a tall Australian whom he had met at the Ralt factory, where he had rented workshop space from Ron Tauranac in 1978. Siddle was drawn by the Brazilian's astuteness (they are devoted friends to this day) and ability to think on his feet. He nominates a victory at Cadwell Park in June as the best race they did together in F3, largely because Nelson perceived that the wet track was drying fast and chose to start on slicks, dropping almost to the back of the field before conditions improved. With his hunch vindicated, he surged past the likes of Tiff Needell, Stefan Johansson and Warwick to grab victory. Rather typically, Nelson believes that his best race in F3 was an outwardly routine all-the-way victory at Snetterton. The reason: "I did 20 laps, all within a tenth." Technique over heroics. The die was cast for his future as a Grand Prix great.



FIRST TO CALL FROM THE F1 WORLD was Ensign boss Mo Nunn, who offered his car to Nelson for the German GP. Starting 22nd, the rookie made a stupendous getaway, only to retire when his DFV (which he had inadvertently buzzed in qualifying) failed just after half-distance. For the next three GPs Nelson was recruited to drive Bob Sparshott's ageing McLaren M23, with a best result, at Monza, of an unlapped ninth. Sparshott was sufficiently impressed to offer a contract for 1978, and Nelson was keen to sign it, but PeeWee, sensing that there might be a more attractive option, engaged his friend in what he now calls a "robust discussion" about the Sparshott deal on the way home after Monza.

Nelson now claims that Larry Perkins, a former Brabham driver, had already advised



Cadwell Park, 1978: Piquet flying to another British F3 victory in his Ralt RT1

MARKEDON



Coca-Cola on the backdrop,
Champagne in the air: Piquet
won the 1981 Argentine GP

“THAT WAS FANTASTIC.
I WAS IN FORMULA 1.
I DIDN'T CARE
ABOUT MONEY”





Piquet heads for second, Monaco '83. Top right, F1 debut with Ensign, Germany '78. Below right, first full-time race for Brabham, Argentina '79

him not to sign anything until he'd discussed it with his old boss Bernie Ecclestone. Piquet, straight-faced, maintains that he had no idea at the time who Bernie was. PeeWee, though, recalls things differently. "I always felt there was more to be had than the Sparshott offer," he says, "so I suggested we rang Frank Williams. I'd already had a conversation with Bernie, who had come all the way down the pitlane at Monza for a chat, and it was he who advised us not to sign anything without talking to him first.

"What happened then was that Nelson went to see Frank Williams, but only a couple of days later he got a call from Bernie, who had somehow got wind of the meeting with Frank. The upshot was that in Canada, for the final GP of the year, Nelson was racing a third works Brabham-Alfa." He qualified respectably and finished the race a lapped 12th, hampered by a



broken exhaust and the loss of two gears. It was enough to guarantee a permanent place as John Watson's replacement for 1979.

While popular lore records that Ecclestone took advantage of his new driver's lack of business acumen to impose harsh conditions, Nelson insists that he never felt exploited by his new boss. "Bernie came with the contract and said, 'Can you understand English?' I said yes, so he made me sign a paragraph stating I had read the contract and understood it. After I signed it, he said, 'Don't you want to know how much I'm going to pay you? I'll pay you \$50,000 for the next three years, and 30 per cent of the prize money.' That was fantastic. I was in Formula 1! I didn't care about the money, all I ever wanted was to be in Formula 1. And I had signed a contract.

"I was very happy with it. In the first year I made close to \$800,000, because I won the

[BMW] Procar series, there was a lot of money for racing those cars. Then, every time I found a sponsor in Brazil and gave the cheque to Bernie, he put it in the bank and gave back half to me. We had some big companies, domestic appliances, beer, stuff like that, and they paid \$80,000, sometimes \$200,000."

At Brabham, Nelson would find himself working alongside Gordon Murray, the fast-rising South African engineer whose left-field genius has provided F1 with some of its cleverest, most stunningly attractive designs. "Nelson was bloody clever, in ways of setting up the car and driving it," PeeWee says. "At the time he went to Brabham he was already working on things like a cockpit-operated brake-balance adjuster for his F3 car, and that was a godsend to Gordon because Niki Lauda wasn't interested. 'It's just one more thing to break,' he said, but Nelson pushed ahead, insisting to Niki that Gordon was the right guy to make sure the clever bits would not break."



THE PARTNERSHIP WITH MURRAY didn't fully blossom until 1980, by which time Ecclestone had finally been persuaded to ditch the disastrous engine deal with Alfa Romeo and return to Cosworth power. Murray's nifty Brabham-Ford BT49 was blessed with such effective aerodynamics that the only circuit where it would need even a smidgen of front wing to perfect its balance was Monaco. It would give Nelson a maiden F1 victory, at Long Beach, with only two other cars finishing on the same lap. On the way to setting pole, a delighted Nelson noted that all four Goodyears blistered at exactly the same moment.

By now he was part of Brabham's devilishly ingenious band of British and Commonwealth mechanics, led by Murray, whose respect for the fine print of the rules tended to go AWOL whenever an opportunity arose to defeat them. In the years to come there would be reports of lightweight qualifying cars that were craftily ballasted before officials could get them to the weighbridge. There were lead-reinforced nose-cones, special (40kg) seats, even heavyweight wheels, and I can remember Murray doing a poor job of denying that he'd built a lightweight qualifying car. Of course, the Brabham gang was not alone in these unsporting subterfuges, but nobody else was in the same class.

In 1979, when Niki Lauda was his teammate, Nelson wasn't averse to such shenanigans in his search for an advantage over the Austrian. "At Silverstone, the car was 18 kilos overweight, and before qualifying I got the mechanics to take out first gear, because I didn't need it for a flying lap. I got them to take out the fire extinguisher, too, which put my car just on the minimum weight. But Niki saw the car on the scales and went to complain to Bernie; ☐

he wanted to know why his car was 15 kilos heavier than mine. After that, my mechanic was taken off the job and I was not allowed to visit the Brabham factory any more, because Niki realised I was spending my days there doing these things.”

Far from souring the relationship with Lauda, the incident cemented a great and enduring friendship. “What I learned with Niki was how to communicate with the team,” he says. “Before I drove for Brabham, I never ran with any engineer. I had my own car and I made all my decisions about the set-up, I just told the mechanic what to do. Niki could describe what the car was doing, whether it was rolling or understeering or oversteering. I tried to feel the same things to tell the engineers.

“That was a good thing I learned. But the most important thing was that when I came into the team, Niki never left me by myself. He would take me with him to the restaurant at night, and I don’t think today there is any relationship between team-mates like that. Usually when drivers are new in the team, no one wants anything to do with them. But Niki was so helpful on this point. He also gave me horizons in other directions. We started to talk about flying, he helped me to understand about aeroplanes, he convinced me to buy a plane, he told me what to do. All these things I got from Niki were very good for me.”

Riccardo Patrese, who joined Brabham in 1982, earns rather fewer points from Nelson as a valued team-mate. “Well, he was a crying boy,” Nelson says. “He was always complaining about the car, saying that BMW would not give him equal treatment. But he was just plain bloody hard on the car. There was no way he could drive on the limit for 70 laps: the gearbox and driveshafts would not take it. If you are in front you have to take care of the car. How many drivers get in front and blow the engine or the gearbox like he did, or just crash out as he did when he was leading at Imola in 1983? Only the useless ones...”

This is the abusive stance Nelson adopted towards some of his toughest rivals and it has kept certain journalists’ self-righteous rebukes tumbling down on him ever since. For Alain Prost, however, he has always had admiration. In the lead-up to his 1983 title showdown with the Frenchman, Nelson frustrated the media’s plans to beat it up into a personal grudge-fight by inviting ‘the Professor’ to have lunch with him on his yacht in Monaco, ensuring that there were photographers there to record the meeting. Then, after Prost had retired from the deciding race at Kyalami, Nelson spoke out in his rival’s defence. “It was not Prost who lost the championship,” he told a bunch of French reporters post-race, “it was Renault who threw it away.”

Not that Prost escapes unharmed from Piquet’s uncompromising wrath. In particular,

he spoke out bitterly against his rival’s behaviour at Adelaide in 1989, when the circuit’s virtually non-existent drainage failed to cope with a pre-race monsoon. Following some worrying incidents on the puddles during a special set-up session, several leading drivers, among them Prost, solemnly told TV commentator Barry Sheene that they intended to boycott the race. “Usually I never say anything bad about Prost, because I like him,” Nelson told me at the time. “But he was the one who screwed us completely at Adelaide. We were a very strong group: we had six or seven drivers who said, ‘We will not start this race.’ But Prost turned around, without saying anything, went to his car and sat in it. After that, everybody was dead, everybody went to their cars. Then he did one lap and stopped. Why? Because he had already won the championship and had nothing to prove. That was very brave of him...”

That is an over-simplification of the alarming events in Adelaide, because the race was actually red-flagged after two laps and Prost didn’t so much quit as decline to take the restart. But Nelson’s assessment is still valid,

“NIKI LAUDA GAVE ME HORIZONS IN OTHER DIRECTIONS. THEY WERE GOOD FOR ME”

because his worst fears were confirmed when both he and Ayrton Senna, blinded by the spray, escaped serious injury by inches in separate collisions. Piquet hit Piercarlo Ghinzani’s Osella in the watery gloom and he was lucky to get away with nothing worse than concussion.



IT IS THE TOXIC RIVALRY WITH AYRTON Senna and Nigel Mansell that is most clearly recalled by Nelson’s detractors, and so great was the conflict with his countryman back home in Brazil that it commanded the headlines and even the makings of a bitter court case. Although the two men had been trading disobliging remarks ever since Senna’s debut season in 1984, TV Globo’s veteran reporter Carlos Galvão Bueno says that the antagonism was essentially light-hearted, at least until 1986. Throughout that season Senna had been accompanied to most of the races by a

HARLIE WHITING JOINED Brabham at the end of 1978, just a few months before Bernie Ecclestone signed Nelson Piquet. As the team’s chief mechanic and right-hand man to designer Gordon Murray, he was responsible for the preparation of the cars Piquet drove to his first two world championships in 1981 and 1983. He remained with Brabham almost to its inglorious end before starting a new career in 1988 as the FIA’s technical enforcer. Having learned everything there was to know about subverting the federation’s traditionally vague rules as a competitor, he was ideally placed as an administrator both to define much stricter vehicle regulations and to thwart the sort of roguish stunts of which he himself had once been the master.



Long Beach 1983: Piquet chats to Whiting (left) and Gordon Murray as Bernie Ecclestone looks on

In a chat with Whiting at the Belgian GP in August, I found him curiously unwilling to provide details of his old team's rumoured chicanery. "All I will say is that we always, um, attempted to make the car as light as possible," he said. Yes, he conceded, similar schemes were common among all the non-turbo British teams, albeit perhaps not as advanced as Brabham's. "Back in those days, I think we were better at doing quite a few things, actually," he added, with a smile.

He was more explicit, though, when asked about the persistent rumours, stoked by Renault following its humiliating defeat in the deciding race

of the 1983 championship in South Africa, about the conformity of the fuel BMW had introduced with dazzling results at the season's end. "I was on a different side of the fence in those days, and the first I ever heard of any impending problem was the day before the FIA prize-giving.

"I had been with Nelson, testing at Ricard. We flew up to Paris in his plane for the prize-giving. At Ricard, Gordon [Murray] had been talking about this fuel thing and how we were going to defend ourselves, but I really didn't know anything about it. I remember waiting at the airport while Nelson went to the prize-giving, and when he

came back he told me the story of how [FIA president] Jean-Marie Balestre had demanded to know why he wasn't wearing a suit for the big occasion. And Nelson had said, 'Well, I didn't know I was world champion until three hours ago!' It had gone on that late.

"Obviously there had been a problem with the fuel. Quite how we got out of it, quite what were the reasons for the doubt, I don't know. Yes, there were some interesting ingredients in it, and toluene has been mentioned. But it would have had far more exciting things in it, I think, than toluene. I suspect – well, I know – that it was something the BMW engineers had dug out of the cupboard from the Second World War. Almost literally rocket fuel, but quite what the constituents were, I don't know."

When I asked Charlie to nominate Nelson's best races at Brabham, he instantly offered two. "His debut victory at Long Beach '80, because he was so bloody good there: he was a second quicker than anyone else in practice, and untouchable in the race. It was brilliant. Then I particularly enjoyed Argentina '81, because we had that completely legal up-and-down suspension there and it worked for the whole race."

Recalling these and other races involving Nelson clearly gave Charlie great pleasure. He confirmed the Brazilian's assertion that Riccardo Patrese tended to be tough on the machinery and revealed that Nelson's uncanny mechanical intuition had been essential at the contentious Kyalami race in 1983, when easing off and accepting third place had given him just enough points to overtake Prost's total and secure his second title. "It's always nice to be dominant like that, but subsequent inspection of the BMW engine revealed that it was on its last legs. If he hadn't taken things so easy later on, he might not have made it."

Whiting accepts that Piquet's glitter faded somewhat during the Lotus years in 1988 and 1989. But he points out that he shone again with Benetton, when he won three more GPs as he approached his 40s. "When you look at his record – three times champion – it's not to be sneezed at. And he was an amazing driver, always trying. You never got the impression that he had a bad day: whenever he went out, whatever time he set, our feeling was that it was the most the car could do."

POACHER TURNED GAMEKEEPER

Brabham's one-time chief mechanic Charlie Whiting on Piquet... and tricks of the trade



younger fair-haired man known to all as 'Junior,' whose only official function appeared to be helmet guardian. In the off-season a reporter from the *Jornal do Brasil* informed Nelson (who has always deliberately avoided reading newspapers) of some comments about him that Senna had made in print.

Senna had probably only been teasing, but Piquet, for whatever reason, responded with a barbed insult ("Just ask him why he doesn't like women") that instantly found its way on to front pages across the country. "Then Senna's manager tried to bring a legal case against me, in the courts, claiming that what I had said was a lie," Nelson recalls. "Everybody published that story, but that was the only phrase I had ever said against him in public."

To protect himself, Nelson also engaged a lawyer, who would earn his fee in the course of some careful digging through court documents. Rather than going into all the prurient details here, I'll simply report Nelson's assertion of the lawyer's discovery that Senna's brief 1981 marriage to the teenage Liliane Vasconcelos had not ended with a straight divorce, but rather in an annulment. Perhaps unfortunately for Senna, by then his own legal people had noisily served a writ on Nelson, personally, at the 1987 Brazilian GP in Rio. An indignant Nelson subsequently had a shouting match with Senna's lawyer about the results of the 'dig', whereupon the legal case was abruptly withdrawn and Senna's attorneys turned conciliatory, to the extent of quietly settling the opposite side's legal expenses. Brazilian colleagues have confirmed to me that the matter never got as far as a courtroom.

Galvão Bueno, always a close and trusted friend of Senna and the family, is a respected journalist with his nose close to the ground. He was therefore well aware that Junior's presence so close to Ayrton, and perhaps the fact that they sometimes shared a bedroom, had raised questions about the driver's sexual orientation. "I know Piquet claims that I suggested to the family to 'get rid' of Junior," he told me recently, "but it's not true. What I can say, though, is that I advised them to be careful."

Today, of course, the sexuality of anyone in the public eye is of little concern to most of us, but that was not the case 30 years ago, and even less so in Brazil's often intolerant, macho environment. While it is easy to condemn Piquet's remark to the journalist as ugly and prejudiced, Senna in turn seems to have been desperately anxious to dispel any doubts about his sexual orientation. It became known that he had contracted an attractive female model to accompany him to some races and sponsorship appearances. Later, the Brazilian press drew attention to numerous other outings where he was photographed arm-in-arm with female celebrities who weren't seen with him again.

For what it's worth, the evidence that has

emerged suggests that Senna, though cautious about making friends from the racing world, nevertheless formed close and sometimes intimate relationships with people, male and female, who were not involved in the sport. Despite strong evidence to support this supposition, it is emblematic of the loyalty he inspired that in the 20 years since his death only one or two of the people with whom he was involved have sought to benefit materially from their intimacy with him by talking to the press.



THE UNPLEASANTNESS BETWEEN PIQUET and Nigel Mansell was all the more acute because it was a fight between team-mates. In August 1985, when Nelson signed with Frank Williams (for a then-record \$3.3 million), he claims he had been promised number one status. Mansell didn't have much in the way of star quality at the time, but by the end of the season his innate ability was coming into bloom as he won back-to-back GPs at Brands Hatch and Kyalami. Nelson cannily anticipated the



LM

game-changing consequences this would have for him at Williams. So, in order to steal back some support within the team, he deliberately set out to pick a fight with the Englishman, thus forcing a division of loyalties.

Although Nelson had a handsome win in his first outing with Williams-Honda, in Rio, the team had been weakened by the car accident that so grievously injured Frank only a few days earlier. Nelson's driving also seemed to have lost some of its consistency: by season's end he had won four races to Mansell's five and also suffered a number of untypical retirements, albeit not as many as those so carelessly racked up by Mansell. The now-celebrated climax to the season at Adelaide, where the two Williams boys in their Honda-powered FW11s were in contention for the title, ended when a tyre failure eliminated Mansell, and Piquet was forced to stop for fresh rubber after he felt one of his own Goodyears about to fail. Prost took the crown, a turn of events Nelson emphasises would not have occurred if Frank Williams had been in a position to deliver on the verbal promise of number one status that he'd made when their contract was signed.

At Imola in 1987, during qualifying, another tyre failure sent Nelson crashing at Tamburello. Still concussed, he was back two weeks later for the Belgian GP, well under par. "That was bad," he admits. "I had lost 80 per cent of my depth of vision, and I only told anyone at the end of the year. Otherwise, they would not have let me race. That's the reason why I was so bloody slow!" Did Mansell ever try to take advantage of his lack of sharpness? "He didn't know! Nobody knew! In the first race after Imola I was one and a half seconds a lap slower, and I somehow managed to hide it." □



Piquet had uneasy alliances with team-mate Nigel Mansell and (above, on the podium at Monza '87) Ayrton Senna

UPH



Piquet and Mansell lead away for Williams-Honda at Austria in '87, the final Grand Prix on the classic Österreichring

At Silverstone in July Nelson suffered defeat at the hands of ‘Our Nige,’ who had made an early and unexpected tyre stop after a wheel balance weight came off. Mansell fought back, memorably tracking down his team-mate and selling him what appeared to be a crafty dummy at Stowe to snatch the lead with three laps to go. Unknown to the public and TV commentators, however, Nelson was paying close attention to his fuel read-out, which was showing a worryingly negative figure. Knowing

that his team-mate’s fuel management skills were consistently inferior to his, Nelson was confident that Mansell’s tanks would run dry before the flag appeared. What he didn’t know was that the Honda engineers had made an untypical pre-race miscalculation. “Mansell was a long way under on the fuel, so he took a chance. He knew he was going to run out of fuel, and he did ... 400 metres after the line.”



Honda followed Piquet from Williams to Lotus, but the partnership produced few results of note in 1988-89


“MANSELL WAS A LONG WAY UNDER ON THE FUEL, SO HE TOOK A CHANCE. HE GAMBLER, HE WON”

The Briton’s victory that day, which owed as much to Honda’s mistake as his own derring-do, is held up as one of his greatest. I’ll leave readers to make their own judgment on that. Not that Nelson has ever shown any resentment about having come so close to securing what would have been a sensational win. “I was doing my job, exactly, using the power only when I could, and so on. I didn’t push harder, because I knew how stupid it would look if I ran out of fuel. He gambled, he won.”

Three victories for Nelson in late-season

the ‘active’ car and its tyre-sparing limousine ride carried the Brazilian to a seemingly effortless win.

Despite the Imola concussion and Mansell’s six inspired wins throughout the 1987 season, Nelson had employed his innate sensitivity to exploit the speed of the all-conquering Williams-Honda without stepping over its mechanical limits as boldly as his English team-mate was inclined to do. His three wins might appear to naysayers as something less than inspiring, but then he also picked up seven second places.

How differently things might have turned out if only Nigel hadn’t picked the silly fight with Senna that knocked him off the road in Belgium, or hadn’t hurt himself in Japan in a completely unnecessary qualifying crash that eliminated him from the last two GPs of the season... in both of which his team-mate was destined not to finish. 

Crunch time: Nelson Piquet Mk2 strikes the Singapore wall. It would be a year before the full story emerged

MENTION THE NAME ‘Piquet’ to motor racing fans today and the

majority of them will think first not of the three-time champion father, but of the son who delivered victory to fellow Renault driver Fernando Alonso by deliberately crashing and neutralising the 2008 Singapore GP. It was a helluva hit, superbly executed by the 24-year-old, and while it may have underlined the intrinsic safety of the modern F1 car, it also threw an uncomfortably bright spotlight on the increasing divergence that seems to be tolerated today between sport and motor racing.

Although the FIA, when eventually the plot was revealed, showed little mercy towards the participants, the major beneficiary of the scheme, surprise Singapore winner Alonso, remained squeaky clean. At least that is the official verdict, for the Spaniard has consistently denied having any advance knowledge of what was being planned and his reputation remains technically intact. But the Renault team’s principal, Flavio Briatore, received an indefinite ban from any management role in the sport (later, a French court took a more



HIT PARADE

A second-generation Piquet created headlines in F1, albeit not in the manner of his father

lenient view), while Pat Symonds, his senior engineer, was warned off for five years. And although Piquet was granted immunity from punishment in return for giving evidence to the FIA, his chances of ever returning to F1 stand at zero.

To summarise a complex affair, Renault started the 2008 season with a car that was no match for McLaren or Ferrari. When round 14 came up in Singapore, the R28 had just a single podium to its name courtesy of Piquet's second place in Germany. Alonso was showing signs of losing interest, and the team's paymasters in Paris were equally unenthused. The dire situation called for extreme measures. When Piquet Jr's car backed into the wall, it so happened that Alonso had just made an unusually early stop for fuel. The appearance of a Safety Car was manna from heaven,

and if the angels were singing as Fernando took full advantage of his extraordinary luck to grab eventual victory, up in a murky corner of the media centre there were hacks who smelled a rat.

So whose idea was the crash? "I don't know exactly what happened in Singapore, because I wasn't there," says Piquet Sr. "One week later, when Nelson [Jr] called me, I asked him what happened when he shunted the car. He



said it was all programmed and he had been told to do it. I was quite shocked: 'How could you do something like that?' I asked him. He said, 'Look, you should know what the pressure is like here. They told me that if I wanted to be part of the team, I had to do what they want.'"

Later in the season, Nelson revealed to his old crew chief Charlie Whiting what his son had told him. Whiting's first reaction was that he could not act unless someone made a formal complaint, which had not happened. "Then, in the middle of the [next] year, Briatore told Nelson that the next race would be his last. So I went to talk to him, then went to see Charlie again, and this time he said I should talk to [FIA president] Max [Mosley]. So when Briatore confirmed to me that it was going to be the end for Nelson, I went to see Max and told him the story."

The scandal finally became public in Hungary, after Nelson had tipped off a journalist from Brazilian TV just before the start. He felt that his son had been shoddily treated by Renault, which was developing the car primarily for Alonso and not delivering the new bits that

would allow him to show his ability. But he was also well aware of the implications for his boy if they let the cat out of the bag. "I told Nelson he would never drive in F1 again, and either he could go easy, or we could get some money from Renault. And he said, 'OK, let's go and fight.'"

At Briatore's urging, Renault F1 contended at first that the idea of the crash had come from Piquet Jr, although that seems unlikely in view of the fact that he had already negotiated a second year to his contract and had no incentive to ingratiate himself with his boss (who was also his personal manager). Renault F1 even initiated legal proceedings against the Piquet family. But the case effectively collapsed following the leak of a transcript of the FIA's interrogation of Symonds, who refused to respond to most of the questions and managed to contradict himself in response to those that he did answer.

The Piquets suffered no such embarrassment under questioning. As Nelson Sr has since told me, "When you are telling the truth, there is only one story to tell."



THE POISONOUS ATMOSPHERE AT Williams had taken all the fun out of racing for Nelson, and he started to enquire about openings elsewhere. But rumours were circulating that Honda, whose management was inclined to blame the loss of the 1986 title on Frank's infirmity, might bring its contract with Williams to an early end.

Because Honda also placed a high value on the Brazilian, Nelson knew that Williams stood an even higher chance of losing Honda if he departed. His response was admirable.

"When I heard that if I left Williams there was a chance that they would lose the engine, I told Patrick Head, 'It's OK, I [will] put up with the shit and will stay, because I don't want to be the reason for you losing the engine'. Patrick believed that Williams had the Honda engine for sure in 1988, it was not important what I did. So I went straight off to talk to Lotus."

One month after the news of Nelson's Lotus deal had been released in Hungary, Honda casually offered its "thanks" to Williams for its help and announced that it would be supplying only Lotus and McLaren in 1988.

Frank and Patrick, now without both Piquet and Honda, were left in the cold with a race-winning car that had a big empty space behind the cockpit. "As I have pointed out [many times]," Nelson says, "we should have won [the title] in 1986, that first year with Williams, and if I had continued with Williams and with Honda, we could have won four years in a row, no problem."

Nelson would race on in F1 for another four years. His two seasons with Lotus in 1988/89 were financially rewarding but a sporting disaster: he says the car was so seriously lacking in torsional stiffness that it wasn't worth even attempting to sort it out. For the final two



years, at Benetton, he had to accept the payment-on-results scheme offered by Flavio Briatore. Two wins in 1990, in Japan and Australia, paid off handsomely, to be followed in 1991 by a famous ogre-slaying in Montréal. Mansell, who had a comfortable victory in hand with less than a lap to go, somehow managed to stall his Williams's Renault V10 while waving to the fans at the hairpin and stuttered to a stop within sight of the flag.

The farewell to F1 was not the end of Piquet the racing driver. He had two attempts at the Indy 500, sorely injuring his feet in a heavy crash while practising for the first, in 1992. "I'd retired from full-time racing, but

there were two things I still wanted to do, Indianapolis and Le Mans. At Indianapolis, they also paid me a lot of money. Actually, the car [a Lola-Buick] was very easy to drive, it was flat everywhere. Everything there is aerodynamics – and the stagger of the tyres. I really loved the place.

"The problem is that when you're testing there, every 16 laps you have to stop and come into the pits to refuel. If you lose just 20 minutes, you have to start all over again, because with the temperature changes and all the aerodynamics, everything is very sensitive when you're doing 400kph.

"So I was very frustrated when they showed a yellow [flag]. I calculated very quickly that if I could get in, I could stop and still do one run. I was in Turn 4 when I lifted off, to be able to go into the pits, and when I lifted I went off. The hit was very hard."

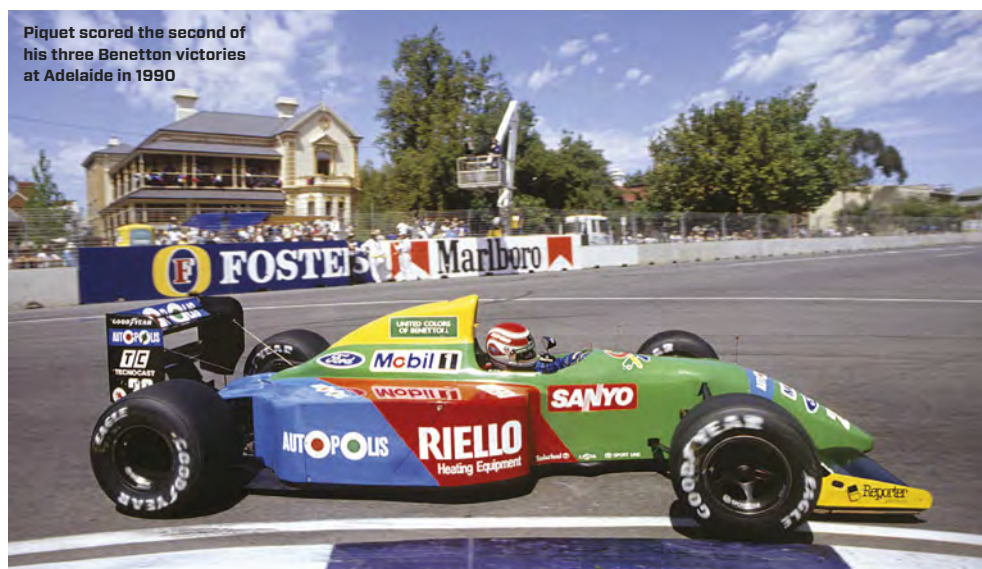
So hard, in fact, that the resulting leg injuries left his surgeons contemplating amputation. After several painful interventions, he went home with his feet intact, but not as useful to him as they had been. Walking downstairs is now a serious trial for him. But still he persevered with his non-F1 ambitions: he was back at Indy in 1993, only to have an engine failure, and was equally luckless in two outings at Le Mans that gave him just four hours at the wheel. He initiated a category of sports car racing in Brazil, took part in the Nürburgring 24 Hours and finally knocked his career on the head at Interlagos in 2006, sharing an Aston Martin DBR9 with three other drivers, one of whom was his son Nelson Ângelo Piquet.



HE LIVES HAPPILY IN BRASILIA, WHERE he runs Autotrac, the hugely successful satellite tracking company he set up after seeing a truck fitted with a similar system in the US back in 1992. The days of relentless womanising are long behind him now and he has been happily married since 1998 to Viviane de Souza Leão, whose two sons with him have brought the Piquet brood up to seven. Watch out for 15-year-old Pedro ("I think he is the best of all my boys"), who is already a consistent winner in European karting.

For all the extremes of affection and hostility that Nelson Piquet attracted during 14 years in the F1 spotlight, he is left with no regrets. "I didn't go racing in Europe for glory or to make a big name for myself," he once told me: "I came because a couple of friends thought it was a good idea, and they found the sponsorship for me to do a season of Formula 3. I would have been quite happy to go home at the end of 1977 with a bit of Italian and some nice memories. But it all worked out differently..." ❏

Our thanks to Martin Harrison of BMW UK for his help with this feature.



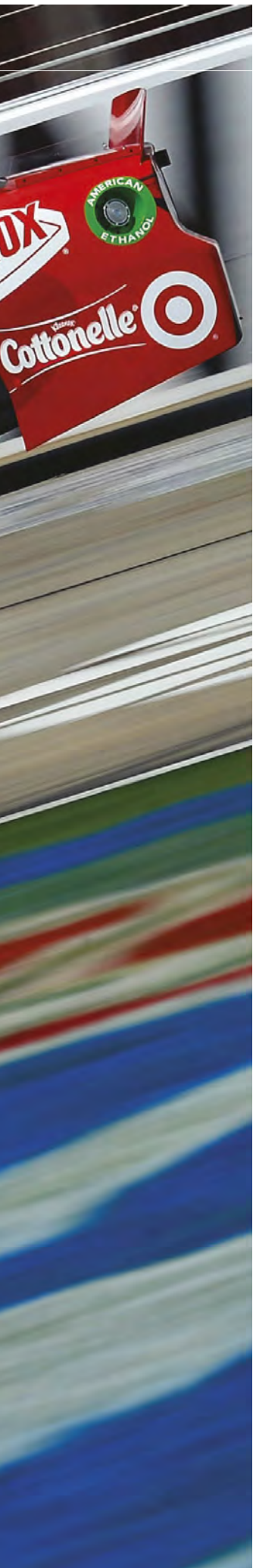
Interview *Juan Pablo Montoya*



Back where he belongs

Next season Colombia's most famous racer will return to mainstream single-seater competition in America, where he shone brightly but briefly before switching to F1 and, subsequently, NASCAR. He's confident he can pick up where he left off - and so are his rivals

writer GORDON KIRBY



Montoya celebrates after winning his only Indy 500, in 2000. Left, oval wins in NASCAR have proved more elusive



AFTER SIX YEARS IN Formula 1 and seven in NASCAR, Juan Pablo Montoya will return to single-seaters next season with Roger Penske's Indycar team. Montoya won the CART championship

in 1999, his rookie campaign, and the Indy 500 the following year, so Penske expects him to be a championship contender. But during his time in NASCAR with Chip Ganassi, Montoya won only two races, both on road courses, and many people wonder why he wasn't more successful. We sought a few answers...

Without doubt, Ganassi's two-car NASCAR team is no match for the bigger operations fielded by such as Hendrick Motorsports, Joe Gibbs, Roush-Fenway, Stewart-Haas and Richard Childress. In an attempt to improve his fortunes, Ganassi made some big changes to the team's management and engineering group at the end of 2011, but the following season proved particularly lean. Things have been better in 2013, but Montoya remained more midfielder than front-runner.

"Last year was hard because the changes were made late and our aero programme suffered," Juan says. "Everything was way behind. The new people had fresh ideas so we tried a lot of different things and that took a long time to work through. I had a new crew chief and it was hard at the beginning, but it's come a long way since."

"We've had a couple of shots to win in 2013 and we'll keep trying to get that first oval success through to the last race. I think we'll get it done. It's down to a lot of little things, but we're closer. We've made a huge step from last year but we're still missing a little bit. When we have everything working, we're right there. The thing is, when we miss the set-up we're too far off, but I think we've done a really good job this year."

Montoya believes NASCAR to be the world's most competitive form of motor racing. "You don't understand how tough it is until you get out there," he says. "You have 43 cars and most of the drivers are bloody good. By the time you count all the top teams you have 25 cars."

"People don't appreciate how deep the field is. It's very close, but a better car is still a better car. Everybody works hard on their cars, but NASCAR's operating window is relatively small. In Formula 1 you can do more to the cars, so if you find something it can make a bigger difference."

Chip Ganassi accepts that Montoya faced significant challenges in NASCAR. "I think he made a good effort," Ganassi says. "He tried

really hard but I think, looking back, he would agree that it's very difficult to embrace a category when you're not immersed in it. He was living in Miami while the team and whole sport was in Charlotte, which made it difficult for him to take on the whole ideology of NASCAR. He's a talented guy and I think it's made him a better driver. He learned a lot about NASCAR... and also about himself."



MONTOYA THINKS SEVEN YEARS IN NASCAR made him a smarter, more complete driver than he was in CART or F1. "You learn many things when you do different types of racing," he says. "In NASCAR you really learn how to be a team player and that's going to be a huge help to me. I think you learn so many things about the cars that you would never understand, believe or see. There are many basic things about set-up that you ignore in open-wheelers. You understand more about suspension geometry and how the tyres work."

"Tyre management in NASCAR is so much more noticeable. It's huge. In single-seaters you do a little bit of that, but the more you understand it, the more it's going to pay off. There are lots of advantages from being in NASCAR for seven years. I don't think the time was wasted. I think I learned a lot and I'm just looking forward to being in a winning car again. I wanted to have the best opportunity to win races and Roger Penske is giving me that."

Many fans think Montoya is too old and chubby to win again in open-wheelers. Others believe he will be fiercely motivated and show every inch of the speed and aggression we saw 15 years ago, when he won seven races and the CART title during his rookie year in the States.

Either way, it will be intriguing to see how Montoya fares with Penske. He will bring some excitement and fresh interest to America's main single-seater series and Juan insists he will be fighting fit and ready to race at the front of the field. He has stepped up his physical fitness regime and plans to hit the ground running.

"I'm working really hard," he says. "I've lost a lot of weight and I feel like I'm not even halfway to where I want to be. Strength-wise I think I'm pretty close with my arms. I feel really good there. I know my neck needs to come up a long way, but I carry a helmet with weights and wear it every day, mornings and evenings."

"If I'm going to do it, I'm going to do it right and not in a half-assed way. And Roger is the right person to do it with. The opportunity to run the Indianapolis 500 in a Penske car? It doesn't come any better than that. It's pretty cool. I'm looking forward to it. I'll address what needs to be addressed, get comfortable in the car and drive the shit out of it. I think it will be a lot of fun."

He dominated the Indy 500 in 2000, his only previous start, and also dominated the Brickyard 400 in 2010 until hit by a pit speeding penalty. "Going back to the 500 is a

"I'M GOING TO DO IT RIGHT, NOT IN A HALF-ASSED WAY, AND ROGER IS THE RIGHT PERSON TO DO IT WITH"





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Montoya primed for action with Ganassi at Dover this season and, left, scraping the wall at Daytona in 2011

big deal,” he says. “Roger hasn’t won it since 2009 and I’m one for one there, so maybe I can make a difference. You’ve just got to be in the right place at the right time. Open-wheel racing is what I know and grew with, so this Penske opportunity is golden. I jumped up and down when we did the deal. I felt like a five-year-old kid.”



FOUR-TIME CHAMPION JEFF GORDON believes Montoya was limited by his equipment in NASCAR. “Juan is a fantastic race car driver,” he says. “He’s very aggressive and pulls off great moves. He’s shown that in NASCAR and I think he’s certainly going to do that when he goes back to Indycars.”

“I think the challenge for Juan in NASCAR has been the uncertainty about the Ganassi team’s strength. Is it Juan’s inexperience on ovals that has kept him from winning? He’s run really well at times, but then it seems as though it doesn’t always come together. Is that down to him, or the car and the team? With the talent he’s shown in Indycars, Formula 1 and NASCAR, and his ability to adapt to different machinery, you want to question those things.”

“I’ve always applauded Juan for making the move to NASCAR, because at that point in his career none of the cars he’d driven had prepared him for it. He took a big step, and

even though he didn’t win too many races, it’s been a pleasure competing against him. I respect him tremendously.”

Five-time NASCAR champion Jimmie Johnson concurs. “I’ve had a chance to see Juan drive a high-downforce car on a road course in the Grand-Am series at Daytona,” Johnson says. “And when you go to a lighter, high-downforce car and watch Juan do his thing, he blisters everybody. I feel very confident that he’s going to be successful back in Indycars.”

“Juan is gifted in his ability to get around a road course on braking, turn-in ability and all that stuff. That’s why he won the CART championship, went to F1 and had the success that he did. But he’ll have to return to Indycars with his eyes wide open. I’m sure there will be an acclimatisation period, but he’s going to do just fine. I have high hopes for him.”

Mike Hull is general manager of Ganassi’s Indianapolis-based IndyCar and Grand-Am sports car teams. Hull was with Ganassi when Montoya raced Indycars in 1999 and 2000 and has worked with him at the Daytona 24 Hours.

“Juan is the same guy he was before he went to Formula 1,” Hull says. “There’s no difference to me in his mindset, his aggressive nature, his ability to read the track and the people he’s racing. He has an uncanny ability to be able to visualise what he needs.”

Hull believes Penske hired Montoya with an

eye on his team scoring a 16th Indy 500 win. “The Indy 500 is number one for Roger,” he says, “and if you have the resources to put Juan in your car, you’re thinking about the Indy 500. That’s the primary focus and goal.”

“Maybe I’m wrong, but I don’t know that Roger is contemplating the championship. He’s thinking about winning Indy. Juan can win races and a championship, but Roger also knows he can win the Indy 500. To me, that’s what this is all about.”

Hull believes Montoya’s return will benefit everyone. “It will raise Penske Racing’s game and for us that’s very motivating. We’re excited. I think it’s a motivational and educational tool because you have to learn to work together better among yourselves to make your programme better and that’s what we’ll have to do. To me it’s awesome.”

Ganassi is a little more circumspect. “I think anybody who gets in a Penske car is going to be competitive,” he says. “I don’t see that as an issue. Time will tell, but I think he’s going to find it a little different from the last time he raced Indycars. It’s very competitive these days, very competitive indeed. But I hope he’s strong. I’ll be disappointed if he’s not.”

So will the rest of us.

In an age of often blinkered vision, Montoya’s enthusiasm for tackling different forms of motor racing merits admiration.



Montoya comes under pressure from Kasey Kahne, earlier this year at Sonoma

SNAPSHOTS FROM A TOPSY-TURVY NASCAR CAREER

Montoya quit a McLaren F1 seat to turn his world on its head. By Alex Harmer



HIGHS

2007: EARLY PROMISE

Montoya's time in NASCAR might be remembered as seven years of mediocrity, but he showed much promise when he started out. Contesting select Busch Series races as well as the Nextel Cup, he won his first second-tier race at only the seventh attempt, in Mexico City. At mid-season he won his first Cup race at Sears Point, after starting 32nd, and America took note. He was named Rookie of the Year and it seemed only a matter of time before the one-time Indy 500 winner figured out those ovals.

2009: MAKING THE CHASE

Ganassi merged with Earnhardt at the start of 2009, switching from Dodge to Chevy, and Montoya was instantly more competitive. When it came to the cut-off he lay eighth in the standings, making him the first and so far only Ganassi driver to make the Chase for the Cup. He'd scored no wins, but 12 top-10 finishes were enough. He followed it up with pole in New Hampshire and five top-five finishes. After a good run he sat third in the standings, behind Jimmie Johnson and Mark Martin, but with no victories he eventually slipped back to eighth.

2010: VICTORY AT THE GLEN

"Last year," Montoya said at the time, "we were so hung up on making the Chase that it was all about numbers, it wasn't about being fast or slow... That freaking win would never come, so it was getting frustrating." He and Ganassi put that right when NASCAR got to New York. After qualifying third, Montoya engaged in an electrifying duel with former Aussie V8 star Marcos Ambrose, coming out on top after 90 laps at the limit. "He wasn't giving me anything," Ambrose said after the race, "I just wore out everything trying to pass him." Michael Schumacher might recall such feelings.

LOWS

2008: SOPHOMORE SLUMP

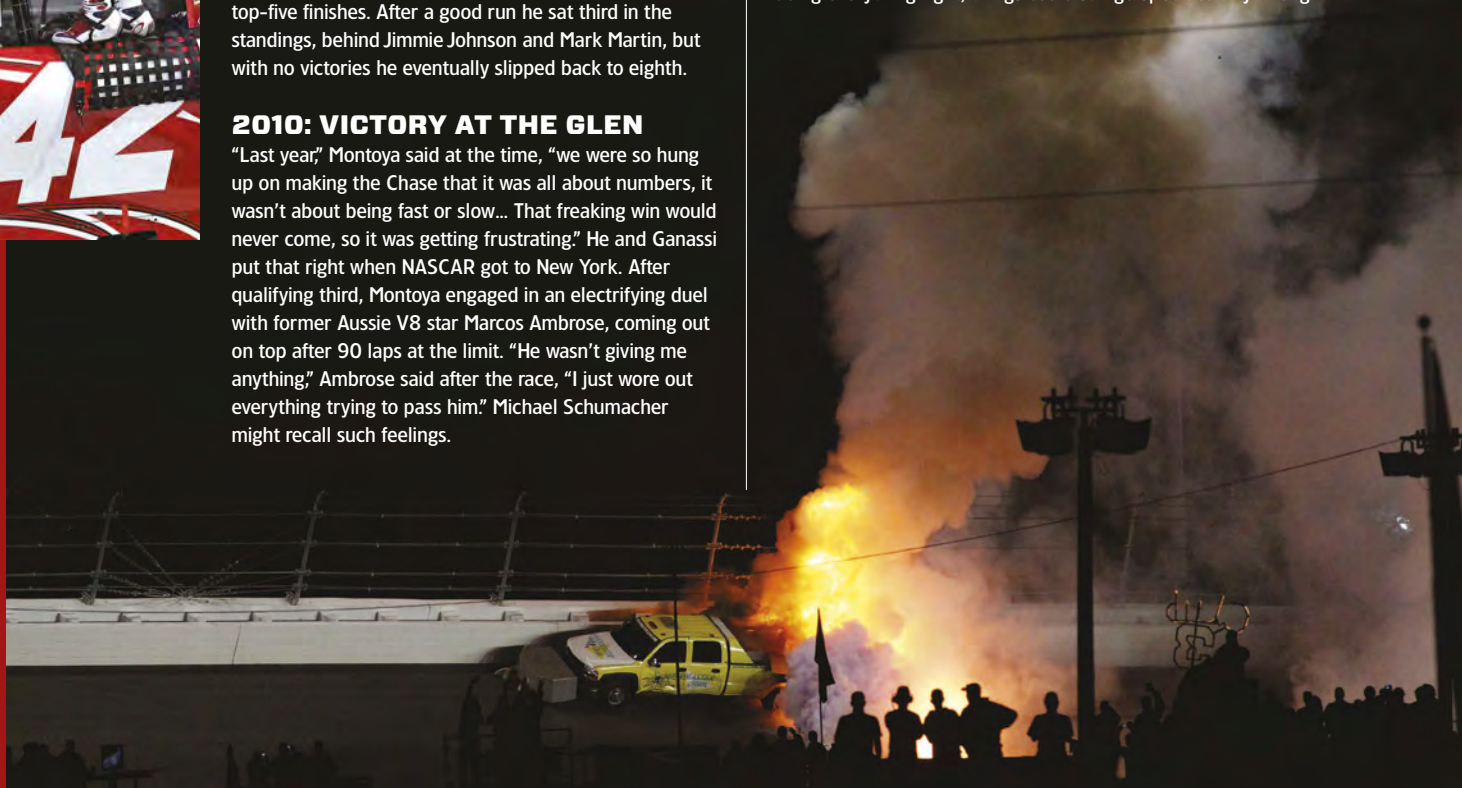
Montoya opened the year with his second Daytona 24 Hours win, but it would be the last time he looked down from a podium that season. Failing spectacularly to build on the promise of 2007, Montoya and Ganassi slipped down the standings. He took a lucky second at Talladega, but only troubled the top 10 twice more and ended the season with an average finishing position of 24th. Still, at least it wasn't F1. At the end of the season Toro Rosso made overtures, but these were rebuffed. NASCAR's laid-back climes suited his off-track temperament.

2011: RYAN NEWMAN FEUD

Montoya might have been perceived as a highly strung former F1 driver by some, but he was more robust than that. He even joked (or did he?) about a "little black book" of drivers that needed to be set straight. During 2011 Montoya engaged in an almighty feud with Stewart-Haas driver Ryan Newman, stemming from the former's first top-tier race, which ended in a fireball courtesy of the latter. After a 'mediation' session in the NASCAR hauler – following multiple wrecks – Montoya allegedly claimed that Newman "hits like a girl"...

2012: DATE WITH A JET DRYER

If there's one incident people will remember about Montoya's time in NASCAR, it'll be this. At Daytona he pitted under yellows and was catching the pack. As he came upon two jet dryers, his suspension broke and sent him careering into one of them. The jet's fuel tank ruptured and, as another car drove over the slick, a spark ignited the lot. One huge explosion later, a shocked, embarrassed and confused Montoya was led to the medical centre. It was symbolic of his seven years in NASCAR: even when he was doing everything right, things could still go spectacularly wrong. ☹



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SUSIE WOLFF & CLAIRE WILLIAMS

View from the fishbowl: the all-consuming world of F1

TOM ONSLOW-COLE

Casio's touring car ace on keeping a roof over his head

LORD MARCH

Life through a lens with the man behind Goodwood



ALLAN McNISH

Monaco, motorbikes and the importance of a good pen...

CHARLEY BOORMAN

On the road - and off it - with the two-wheeled adventurer



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A Casio Edifice X Infiniti Red Bull Racing watch

Casio Edifice, the official watch partner of Formula 1 World Champion team Infiniti Red Bull Racing, brings together two brands that are at the forefront of speed, accuracy and technical innovation. These timepieces are both designed and worn by the team's drivers Sebastian Vettel and Mark Webber – and now you can win one!

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SUSIE WOLFF & CLAIRE WILLIAMS

THE WILLIAMS RESERVE DRIVER AND DEPUTY TEAM PRINCIPAL ARE RACERS AT HEART – THEY LIVE AND BREATHE THE F1 LIFE

Which destination in the Grand Prix calendar do you most look forward to visiting?
Susie Wolff:

“Singapore. Because it is a night race the atmosphere is amazing.”

Claire Williams: “It’s such a difficult question because we are so lucky in Formula 1 that we get to travel to 20 different destinations over the course of the season. One of my favourite things about F1 is that you get to visit places which you might never see otherwise. For me personally, I love going to the traditional places such as Silverstone and Monza where the crowds just embrace F1 so much. But I also love going to the newer tracks that some people don’t necessary like, such as Korea, just because it’s experiencing something completely different.”

Is travelling outside the season something you like to do? If so, what’s your destination of choice?

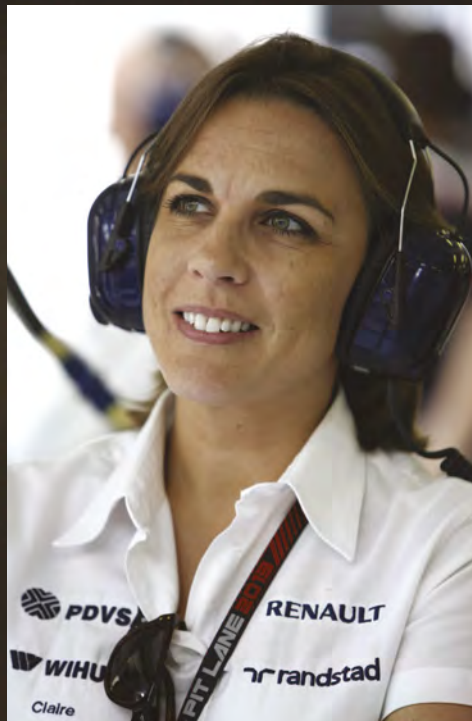
SW: “Yes, for me Europe is too cold in the winter and the winter is simply too long. I enjoy somewhere hot and relaxing like the Seychelles or the Caribbean.”

CW: “Anywhere hot, with a beach and no mobile phone reception!”

How would you celebrate a win for Williams?

SW: “I think the most important thing after a win is not where or how you celebrate but simply that you celebrate with the team. Everyone works so hard that a win is best celebrated together.”

CW: “I don’t know. When we won in Barcelona last year it was an extraordinary feeling, you get taken away and it’s like riding the crest of a



wave. You don’t really plan on how you are going to celebrate, it all just happens naturally. I’m sure the team would all go to the bar and have a few drinks...”

How do you unwind after the long season?

SW: “I spend time with my family and friends, ski and simply try to take life at a slower pace to recharge my batteries.”

CW: “I like to take a holiday. I like to find that quiet beach and completely chill out for a week to 10 days.”

Who has been your biggest influence and inspiration throughout your career?

SW: “My parents and then my husband. Without both I would never have made it into F1.”

CW: “Inevitable answer – my dad. Frank is the sport’s longest-serving team principal, having surpassed Enzo Ferrari’s record a couple of years ago. His tenacity, determination, sheer passion and the joy he gets from F1 are really inspirational. We have 550 people who work at Williams, the majority of whom work so hard because of, and for, Frank. He’s always been my role model and inspiration.”

If you could have any other career what would you choose and why?

SW: “Downhill skiing. I am a speed, adrenaline and competition junkie.”

CW: “I wouldn’t, I couldn’t. People ask me that and I really don’t have an answer. I’m so lucky, I love what I do. The great thing about F1 is that it changes every day. You never know what’s going to come up and what you are going to be doing. I couldn’t imagine doing anything else.”

Other than the world of motor racing what are your personal interests?

SW: “Keeping fit, skiing, good food, shopping...”

CW: “Another difficult question when you are wholly consumed by F1! I just like doing what most people like doing. We spend so much time away from home, so I’d say the small amount of time at home. I appreciate it and value it, and spend as much time as I can with family and friends. I love my house, decorating it and pottering around, just enjoying being at home.”

What has been your most indulgent purchase?

SW: “A vintage watch for my husband. Because he’s worth it.”

CW: “I’m not very good at indulgent purchases! Spending significant sums of money doesn’t sit very well with me. That’s the way we’ve been brought up. I think the most indulgent thing I’ve ever bought is a Prada handbag.”

What possession could you not live without and why?

SW: “My special vitamins and minerals, which I take every morning. If you don’t have your health, nothing else matters much.”

CW: “My Earl Grey tea-bags!”

You are given £10,000 to spend on a single purchase, what would you buy?

SW: “A Hermès Birkin bag. As I always tell my husband, they are an investment!”

CW: “£10,000! My gosh, I don’t know. This makes me sound silly, and it refers back to my answer to the indulgent purchase question, but I’d probably use it to pay off a bit of my mortgage. A bit of a boring answer, but property investment is really important and something in which you shouldn’t lose money.”

Christmas is just around the corner: what is top of your list?

SW: “A healthy, happy Christmas with all my family. That means more than any gift.”

CW: “A race win and a World Championship... It’s all I want for Christmas!” 🍷





TOM ON SLOW-COLE

THE SALOON RACING ACE WHO HAS ONE EYE ON A HELICOPTER – AND THE OTHER ON HIS FAVOURITE WATCH

THE 2006 RENAULT CLIO Cup champion has been in the British Touring Car Championship since 2007. Now a Casio Edifice ambassador, he has picked up seven race wins and has recently moved to Airwaves Racing in a bid to win the championship in 2014.

Who's been your biggest inspiration?

"It's quite difficult to say because a lot of my heroes when I was younger are in the sport that I'm now doing. Unfortunately, when you have to compete against your heroes they are no longer heroic!"

Did you always want to race in touring cars rather than Formula 1?

"Yes, I wanted to go into saloon car racing because the racing is a lot better, there's more excitement. We're fairly well known for running side by side and

often closer than that. The paint-swapping is what makes the competition so great. It's an extra challenge over formula racing."

How do you unwind after the season?

"I really wish I could unwind, but unfortunately the off-season seems to be just as busy as when I'm racing. As soon as racing finishes I'll get a few weeks to let the dust settle and then it's



straight back into the winter training programme. The business side of it is even more time-consuming than that. Racing at the moment is a year-on-year deal, so you go back to contract negotiations and sponsorship talks. That keeps you busy."

Talking of sponsors, how long have you been with Casio now? "My relationship has been going since 2010. It's grown nicely every year and it's a fantastic brand to be involved with. It's a cool, young brand and a heavy-hitter in terms of brand power."

Why is it that watch brands and motor racing go so well together? "I think the synergy is very easy. Motor sport is not just about the lap time, every part of it seems to be governed by time – my whole life runs to a very fast pace."

What's your favourite travel destination? "So far it's been Cancún in Mexico. You have to be careful when you go, though. If you want a relaxing holiday don't go on Spring Break..."

If you had to choose another career what would you have done? "I think I would have done something entrepreneurial. Outside motor sport I have a few businesses – I have a consultancy company and an import/export company. I think I would have followed those further. I was very fortunate when I was younger as I had an internet company that I created with my dad, which funded quite a large portion of my first few years as a top-level touring car driver. I've never been one who enjoys working for someone else. Having said all that, I might just have been poor!"

What other interests have you got outside racing? "Business is definitely one of them and I follow that very closely. I am now very involved in motor racing and not just on the driving side. I now work for the UK governing body on their academy for young drivers. I do a lot of coaching and am now back at university at the moment doing a Masters degree in elite performance coaching."

What's been your most indulgent purchase? "I would love to sit here and tell you that it's a small island off the coast of Jamaica, a yacht and a helicopter, but it's probably a house. Although I do have a remote-control helicopter – does that count?"

What possession could you not live without? "With my lifestyle it would have to be my watch."

You're given £10,000 to spend all at once – what would you buy? "Can I use it for finance? I might go after that yacht." 🏠

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ERIC LOTH

GRAHAM WATCH FOUNDER ON HOW RACING INFLUENCES HIS BUSINESS AND HIS OWN EXPLOITS IN THE SWISS PORSCHE CUP

When did you become interested in cars? "I was always interested in cars. My first was an Escort XR3i... Now I buy cars because I love the mechanical element. I am an engineer myself."

When did you begin racing? "It started 15 years ago on the Le Mans Bugatti circuit. I went with some friends and drove a Formula Renault. After that I got hooked very quickly. I was already 40 years old – too old for single-seaters. So that's why I looked at Porsches."

What do you race now? "A GT2 RS, which is modified to develop 700bhp, racing on slick tyres in the Swiss Porsche Cup. Because we don't have any race circuits in Switzerland, we race in Germany, Italy and France. My last race was at Imola, and we've also raced at Monza, Mugello, Magny-Cours, Dijon and Hockenheim – all great circuits. We do six weekends a year, each with a sprint event and a 100-mile endurance race."

How long will you continue to race? "I'm 55 years old, so I'll race for as long as I can be competitive. At my last race I took pole position, but after the start I made a mistake that was purely down to my vision. If I make too many mistakes perhaps I will step down to a lower level and race for fun. But right now I want to race to win."

What do you drive on the road? "I have an Audi RS4 that is good for the wintertime; an Aston Martin Vantage V12, which is very fast; a Targa 4S that is basically my daily car; a GT3




997 for fun; and my real pride and joy – a Ford GT. It is beautiful and its torque engine has so much power. It is a lot of fun. In fact the weather is good here at the moment and I'm taking it out this afternoon..."

How has racing influenced the Graham range of watches? "We have three watch lines, one of which is called Silverstone. Racing inspires me; the use of materials, the importance of weight, even the colour schemes."

Graham has an association with the Isle of Man TT. How did that come about?

"We've been associated with the TT since 2009; it is one of the very last real races in the world. We also support the Baja 1000 off-road event. I drove one of the buggies on the pre-run and had a huge flip at one of the dry rivers! This partnership came about because Graham is very strong in Mexico and the organisers approached us. My first answer was no, but they invited me to see the cars on a trip to Mexico and I discovered there is a lot of technology involved. Innovation is key and the only limit is the power of the engines. It is a wild and free race, there are almost no rules. Like the TT, it is a real race and both have long histories, which is important to us."

Did your partnership with Brawn GP in Formula 1 five years ago have a big impact on the company? "It didn't have much of an effect on sales, but in terms of awareness and respect within the watch industry it was huge. We didn't begin the season with them, we joined a bit later, at Silverstone. So we already knew the car was good because Jenson Button had won all those races, but now Red Bull was catching up. Monza was a day I'll never forget, seeing Rubens and Jenson finishing one-two. We knew that day that the team would win the world championship."

You also collect art. What are you most interested in? "I collect contemporary works because I like to meet the artists, talk to them and understand what they are expressing. I've been collecting for 30 years and own 200 paintings and about 20 sculptures. I have a passion for the process of innovation, which is what also interests me in cars. The human capacity for reinvention fascinates me." 



THE EARL OF MARCH

THE GOODWOOD REVIVAL'S FOUNDER ON BELSTAFF'S NEW CLOTHING RANGE – AND VERY EXPENSIVE SPECTACLES...

The Goodwood Estate is synonymous with motor racing to golf, horse racing to aviation. But what is your true passion? “Obviously my leading passion is developing the whole place in a way that reflects its past and is meaningful in today’s world. But I can’t deny that I have a particular passion for the cars.”

Quintessentially British brands have strong associations with Goodwood, Belstaff being one of them. How did this partnership develop into the GSR Collection? “It’s something we were keen to develop, with a brand closely connected to our various activities. We’re not a fashion or watch company and I’m wary about these things feeling true, but with Belstaff it works. The GSR collection is stuff you do things in – and

we produce the things to do. It’s honest in that sense. The whole Belstaff brand and its integrity sits very comfortably with Goodwood. We’ve looked at lots of clothing line ideas in the past and they make you cringe slightly, but this one definitely doesn’t. I feel really good about it.”

Who has been your biggest influence on your life and career? “Probably my grandfather, bearing in mind what an important part photography has played in my life, and cars too. He was a very good engineer, a good car designer. He used to send me all the magazines when I was at school.”

You have an exciting career, but if you could choose any other career what would you choose and why? “I started in film, so I guess it would be that. Producing and directing, working in that world.”

Art plays a huge role at Goodwood. Is there a period in which you take particular interest? “I guess 20th Century photography! Goodwood House is very much 18th Century, so obviously that plays a big part in my life. Without sounding pompous, I’m very lucky to be surrounded by beautiful 18th Century things. And I love the contemporary world, so I’d love to build a very modern house and have the two together. Having it visible to Goodwood House would be tricky, but there are places where we could do it. It’s just a question of the right spot – and the money.”

As a celebrated photographer, what drew you to this world and what inspires your work? “That’s what I always wanted to do. I started taking pictures when I was about 10. People said encouraging and nice things about the truly awful pictures I was taking, and somehow I got over the hump of being useless and became a bit better. I hated school and left as early as I possibly could, then was very lucky to get a job with Stanley Kubrick at 17. That opened up a whole new world and had a massive influence on me.”

What is your favourite way to travel? “I guess it has to be a motorbike. If it’s my own car it can be lovely, but I find travelling as a passenger pretty nauseous. Aeroplanes are dull now, and though I always think I’ll love going on a boat, I always hate it.”

What has been your most indulgent purchase? “I very stupidly bought a Lancia Aurelia at the Festival of Speed auction this year. I told the curator here to buy it if we could get it for ‘x’, and we did. That was a bit of a shock, but I’ve driven it and it’s lovely.”

What possession could you not live without and why? I’ve got a very nice Girard-Perregaux watch, given to me by Gino Macaluso, who died a few years ago. He was a big motor sport guy, the head of the FIA in Italy, and had a fabulous collection of Martini racing cars. He made a beautiful world timer, which he gave me as a present, with Goodwood in place of where, say, London should be. That’s something I really treasure.”

You are given £10,000 to spend on a single purchase. What would you buy? “Here’s an outrageous one. I’d say a pair of tortoise-shell glasses from Meyrovitz. But they are more than £10,000! I think they are about £12,000 – mad. I’ve got plastic lookalikes!”

Christmas is just around the corner; what is top of your present list? “A new GSR jacket would be good...” 📷



ALLAN MCNISH

THE THREE-TIME LE MANS WINNER ON THE PLEASURES OF LIVING IN MONACO AND HIS OCCASIONAL TWO-WHEELED TREATS

How do you relax away from racing? “I’m not very good at relaxing. Now what I do is take one day off after every trip, pick up the kids from school, go running, have a coffee with friends and basically not answer telephone calls or emails. One of the most relaxing things I find is to go running, because it’s just me on my own.”

How far do you go? “It depends, but half-marathon distance is the limit. Anything beyond that is why God invented the internal combustion engine.”

What’s your biggest indulgence? “Watches and pens. I think it’s important when you’re signing a contract to do so with a nice pen. In terms of watches, through the years I’ve been sponsored by brands, including TAG-Heuer with whom I’m now contracted, and I’ve won some nice watches too. It’s that association with perfection that comes through engineering that I like. Those are basically my indulgences. Away from physical products, my indulgence is with my two kids. Not in terms of buying stuff for them, just simply spending time with them.”

What are the benefits of living in Monaco? “Ask the Prime Minister! Monaco can be Disneyland for adults in terms of the standard of everyday life. It can be what you want it to be. If you want to go to a different country, walk 200 metres and you’re in France or drive 10-12kms and you’re in Italy. It’s full of very like-minded sports people and it has a little village atmosphere. It’s not for everybody, but it offers a nice and easy way of life. It works for us. And it’s a real leveller when you are sitting in a café because you never know who the person beside you might be...”

Are road cars important to you? “Well, the family business is dealerships so they are a means to an end. I never really had attachments to cars when I was growing up, because invariably if it could be sold that day it was better than if it wasn’t. Subsequently, yes, I have enjoyed them a little bit more. But I look to the next car more than I do past cars. Racing cars are beginning to have more of an attachment than road cars because of the experience you have had in them. I don’t own any of my old cars, although someone is trying to sell me one of my old karts at the moment. And the money they want! It was a piece of crap when I owned it... It was in a bin at Three Sisters in Wigan when I left it, so I can’t see where the value is now.”

If you were to have £10,000 to spend on yourself what would you buy? “I’d probably have a motorbike. With the prize money from Le Mans I made a decision to buy myself something with it because it doesn’t come around very often. After my first Le Mans win [in 1998] I bought the bike I’ve still got, a Suzuki GSXR, which was all of the prize money taken up – and I got a deal on it. It hasn’t done many miles. It’s worth nothing to anybody else, but for me it has a relationship to that first win at Le Mans and everything else that came from it. After the second win in 2008 I bought a KTM RC8, which was a beast, a really nice bike. I’m probably going to buy another with my winnings this year, so maybe it’ll be a Ducati this time...”



Can you sum up your gallery's focus? "We deal in late-Nineteenth and Twentieth Century *objets de luxe* from the world of cars, aviation and boats. Boys' toys, in fact, as we've found that a car collector will usually also be interested in automotive painting and sculpture. And if he likes cars he will probably also be keen on other transport machinery like boats and aeroplanes."

How far back does your interest in this field go? "As a car collector I've always been keen on automobilia and I went from just buying to dealing as a hobby while I worked in the City. I've been doing that for more than 30 years, but 13 years ago the hobby became the job when I started the gallery. It came from enthusiasm, not commercialism!"

SIMON KHACHADOURIAN

OWNER OF PULLMAN GALLERIES, DEALING IN THE RAREST AND MOST BEAUTIFUL ITEMS OF AUTOMOBILIA AND TRANSPORT INTEREST

Presumably the West End is a good location? "It's ideal – there are so many of the hedge fund brigade around, and the big hotels are nearby so an overseas visitor can come and see us. We also have Pullman Editions, based in Chelsea, run by my wife Georgina, which publishes high-quality transport posters. Naturally we deal in originals at the gallery but they were becoming so hard to find and so costly that I had an inspiration to create not reproductions but new works in a variety of period styles that are more affordable than originals. It caters for a sector I call 'mass affluence' – these aren't everyday purchases, but they are affordable."

What subjects do the posters cover? "They are in the tradition of the great Thirties posters about famous races, beautiful holiday destinations and winter sports, all newly commissioned from several artists such as Charles Avalon. He really has a feel for the era. Also it gives us an opportunity to invent something that didn't exist: firms such as Ferrari, Bentley and Porsche never produced this sort of image, but now we have, so a

Ferrari collector can buy a set of marque posters to decorate his garage."


Which are the items that excite you most? "I always look for the unusual and beautiful, such as the sandstone and bronze sculpture 'Vers la Victoire' from 1923. I find the pre-WWI era fascinating too – recently I sourced a trophy from the 1913 Indianapolis 500. It was only for third place, but it's in cast bronze with silver overlay. René Lalique glass is a name everyone knows and bonnet mascots are always coveted, but then you come across something unique, such as the 1920s limestone model of a château, or an aluminium desk made by Supermarine apprentices."

You also commission items from current painters and sculptors. "I'm very keen on the work of John Elwell, who makes large-scale

sculptures out of riveted aluminium – for example a four-foot long Type 57 Bugatti or an Aston DBR1, or a six-foot-high Chrysler Building. But he might take months on an item and they're all one-offs; I might suggest a subject but John makes whatever interests him and never makes a second one. A pity – I could sell each several times over with a few phone calls!"

You published a book about artist Dexter Brown. Do you work closely with him? "I've loved Brown's work since I was 10 and used to collect the pull-outs from *Autosport*. Now I know him well and always have a selection of his works in stock. There is an awful lot of bad motor racing art around today, but Dexter is one of the great names whose work will survive."

Do you find the same clients buying from you? "There is a core of collectors whose tastes are in tune with mine, which is gratifying. Sometimes they ask me to find a certain type of item, and sometimes I turn something up by chance and know exactly who will be keen to purchase it. Many of the bigger collectors are very individual people – if they install a bar they'll want Art Deco cocktail shakers and glasses to equip it."

How much does fashion affect the market? "Individual areas go up and down separately; posters and glass might be up when sculpture is a bit flat, but our range means that there is always good business to do. Premium names hold up well – Louis Vuitton luggage, Asprey cocktail wares, Alfred Dunhill lighters, for example – but luckily none of our stock has a shelf life. I'm very happy to have a beautiful item on my shelves at home for as long as it takes to find a buyer." 





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You've had a varied career as an actor, presenter and almost a professional traveller, but what's your biggest passion in life? "I suppose, above all, motorbikes have been my life. They've always been the driving force. When I met Ewan McGregor we bonded over that, we've both always been bike mad. We ran a race team in the British Superstock 1000 Championship, which we won with David Jefferies in 2002. After a while we started talking about doing a long journey on bikes and that's how we ended up doing the *Long Way Round*. I got lucky and was able to make a bit of a career out of my passion."

Where did that passion for bikes come from? "I think my father John had something to do with it; as children we travelled all over the world with him. He always made very difficult movies, from *Point Blank* and *Hell in the Pacific* to *Deliverance* and I think I got that sense of adventure from him, a sense of travelling round the world. Bikes have been a way for me to enjoy that kind of life. I've done the *Long Way Round* and the *Long Way Down*, and then I did the Dakar Rally on a bike in 2006. I didn't finish and broke my hand, but I've been there. Then there's *Extreme Frontiers*, which has allowed me to explore parts of the world I'd always wanted to."

What's your bike of choice? "We've always used the classic BMW GS model. That bike's like the Land Rover of motorcycles, just a great vehicle. You can buy them in the shop, jump on and ride to South Africa if you wanted to... which I have done. The other thing I do is motorcycle tours, take people down to Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe. Africa as a continent gets a bit of a bad rub, but that's because of a tiny, malicious group of people who ruin it for everyone else. It's great to be able to show what a lovely place it can be. Everybody gets a BMW and a GPS and off we go."

What's been your most indulgent purchase? "I'd say it was probably my Triumph. I've got a 1959 750, which I had prepared by Baron's Speed Shop. The BMW's a great all-rounder, but in terms of style and presence the Triumph's something else. It's a great cruising bike, and very loud!"

What's your top tip for travelling? "For the sort of travelling I do, it's to have a plan but not be afraid to deviate. You've got to know where you're going but keep an open mind once you get there. My only essential item when I'm travelling is baby wipes. That might sound weird, but you don't have a lot of room for luggage on a motorcycle. If you're out in the




wilderness, camping or whatever, they're just a great way of keeping clean."

You've been an Ambassador for Bremont watches for some time now. What attracts you to them? "Well, the company's got quite an interesting history. It was started by two brothers, Nick and Giles English. Their father Euan was a pilot in the RAF and when he and Nick were practising for an air show in a vintage plane they had a crash and Euan was killed. Nick broke more



than 30 bones and both brothers had this lifestyle change and decided to start making watches. They approached

Euan and I in 2007 and asked us if we would wear them on the *Long Way Down* and we said yes.

They're really cool watches with lots of aviation touches and the whole process is instilled with this British-ness, which is what caught our eye. So we gave them a three-and-a-half month test on the motorbikes. My favourite's the Supermarine diving watch, I've always loved that style." 



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Still CRAZY after all these years

Many things have changed over the past 50 years at Lamborghini. Importantly, though, it hasn't lost sight of why we all fell in love with it.

writer ED FOSTER

TWO O'CLOCK IN THE afternoon is not a busy time in the centre of Sant'Agata Bolognese. Most of the shops are shut, as is the *Tabaccaio*. Just off the main square a lone pizza restaurant remains open and, while it looks like many other pizzerias, there's one striking difference: there are Lamborghini posters covering every inch of its dusty walls. It's the same in the empty bar five doors down. Posters of a Diablo, a Murciélago and a Miura sit side by side above the barmaid, who's watching the news on a small TV. Sant'Agata Bolognese might be quiet, but it's clear that you're in Lamborghini Land. 







Stephen Winkelmann has been in charge of Lamborghini since 2005. Opposite, the current range: the Aventador (top) and Gallardo


Five hundred metres down the road, on Via Modena, sits the factory that Ferruccio Lamborghini opened in 1963. He had bought 50,000sq ft of land the previous year after declaring that he wanted to build a sports car to rival those made down the road at Ferrari. Considering Ferrari had just launched the 250 GTO, one of the greatest cars of all time, it was a bold claim. You couldn't fault his ambition.

It wasn't blind ambition, though; by 1963 he had amassed a sizeable amount of money through various businesses, most notably in designing and building tractors. When it came to vehicle production he was no beginner and, once the Lamborghini factory was built, it took his team only a few months to produce the 350 GTV prototype and take it to the Turin Motorshow. Automobili Ferruccio Lamborghini had arrived. The 350 GTV might have signalled the arrival of the car company, but it was the Bertone-designed Miura – launched in 1966 – that warned rivals of its intent and future success. Fewer than 1000 rolled off the production line over the next six years in Sant'Agata, but it rewrote the rules for performance road cars with its transversely mounted 12-cylinder engine in the back of the car.



FIFTY YEARS AFTER THE PLANT WAS opened, the site now covers some 200,000sq ft. The factory and its entrance are in the same place that they have always been, though today the Aventador and Gallardo fill the two production lines. Every day another 10 cars are finished – four Aventadors and six Gallardos, a high number for a niche supercar manufacturer, but not in comparison to the 2000 mass-market Golfs that roll off the Volkswagen line in the same timescale. Ferrari, meanwhile, has announced that it wants to build fewer cars in order to increase desirability; currently it builds 6400 a year.

It's striking that while the cars are assembled on a production line, it is the word 'hand-made' that best describes their manufacture. Yes, there are automated systems in place, but there are men and women at every station. Soon after walking in we spot a man stretching leather hides and marking out any imperfections (none of which we could make out) with chalk. The hides are then placed under a laser cutter, which works out how big a piece it can create between the imperfections. The leather, incidentally, is sourced from bulls in Argentina and Germany because there are fewer insects there and cows get stretch marks... If you were wondering about wastage, don't. The scraps of leather that have invisible blemishes are then used in Lamborghini's merchandising range.

Next to the hides sit six women at tables with what look like 1960s sewing machines, sewing together the leather for the seats. The sight of 



“SINCE 2000 THE COMPANY HAS
DOUBLED ITS WORKFORCE
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DEALER NETWORK”



someone cross-hatching a piece of leather by hand for a quarter-of-a-million-pound car is an indication that craftsmanship still counts.

The Aventador is based around a carbon-fibre tub – again, hand-made – that is tested by someone with a ‘harmonic hammer’. If it sounds right when they tap every inch of the carbon fibre, it is right. It is also then checked with a laser to ensure that it’s identical to every other tub. Aluminium frames are mounted to the front and back of these tubs, and from here the chassis is put on the production line ready to make its way through 11 different stations. Ninety minutes at each one means that it takes up to two weeks to finish a car – a number that goes some way to explaining why if you order a car today Lamborghini won’t be able to build it until mid-2014. Every car until that time has an owner’s name against it.

Once the car is complete, the front is wrapped in plastic to prevent any chips or dents and then it’s taken for a short road test to check all the systems work as they should. We did ask about Lamborghini’s relationship with the local police and were informed it was fine: “We gave them two Gallardos for free...”



AT THE END OF THE DAY WE SLID INTO the new Aventador and, after a short briefing, ventured out onto the roads and headed for the hills in the distance. We were greeted with smiles and cheers everywhere we went, and on passing a school about 30 miles away every five-year-old kid in the playground screamed “*L’Aventador*”. With passion like that, some of them might end up working in the factory in 20 years or so.

Although many of the factory workers come from the local region, Lamborghini is headed by German Stephen Winkelmann who was appointed president and CEO on January 1, 2005. Thirty-six years ago Ferruccio Lamborghini sold the company to Georges-Henri Rossetti and René Leimer, since when the company rumbled on through various owners, which included the Chrysler Corporation, technology company MegaTech and French multimedia artist Patrick Mimran. It had also faced bankruptcy and receivership, so when Audi AG bought the company in 1998 there was a collective sigh of relief from Lamborghini’s many fans. Some worried that the madness of Lamborghini (eg the Diablo’s rear visibility) would be lost, but over the past 15 years Audi has kept a flavour of the madness, but made it work in the real world (eg the Aventador’s rear visibility).

Once Audi had bought Lamborghini it set about refurbishing the facilities in Sant’Agata and increasing the number of cars it produced. The statistics are impressive: since 2000 the company has doubled its workforce to 900, tripled its worldwide dealer network and has



increased the number of cars it sells by 500 per cent. Between 1963 and 2000 only 250 cars rolled off the production line every year. Since then the number has been more than 1800.

Partly responsible for this uplift in recent years is the director of the Centro Stile, Filippo Perini. He’s been in-house since 2004 and the Aventador was his first brand new design. It wasn’t as simple as it could have been, though: before he was even given the go-ahead, Lamborghini asked an independent design company to pitch for the contract as well. Perini won, convincingly.

By working at Lamborghini he did have an advantage, however. Housed within the factory building is a museum for various Lamborghini models, from the first 350GT to the last Gallardo, prototypes (you thought production models looked crazy?) and even some Formula 1 cars from when Lamborghini provided its V12 to Larrousse, Lotus, Ligier, Minardi and the Modena team between 1989 and 1993. It’s

probably the best mood room in the world for a supercar designer.

The prototype 350 GTV that Ferruccio took to the Turin Motor Show is owned by a private Swiss collector, but the museum does have, among many other cars, the very first Countach and a full-scale 2006 Miura Concept. At the time Lamborghini said that it wouldn’t build a ‘new’ Miura because the company should look to the future with only an eye on the past. And you can’t fault its application of that mantra over the past 10 years. Lamborghinis are more popular than ever before and, when you learn that 25-30,000 cars have been built since 1963 and 14,000 of those were Gallardos between 2003 and 2012, you realise just what huge changes have been made.

Through all these momentous changes Lamborghini has not lost its soul. It’s well worth visiting Sant’Agata for yourself to take a tour of the factory and museum. The local pizzeria is pretty good too.

The factory has grown since 1963, but the front door remains in the same place



Racing Bull

CONVERSATION HAS BARELY commenced when it strays from its purpose. We're at Silverstone to discuss Lamborghini's freshly increased commitment to competition, but pause to contemplate the terrible sense of loss felt whenever Matt Monro's *On Days Like These* is given radio airtime. In 1969 it was an appropriately melancholic soundtrack to the demolition of a Lamborghini Miura, tipped from an Alp as *The Italian Job* begins. It's conceivably cinematic history's most wasteful moment (though a stop-frame of the disintegrating wreckage shows that the V12 engine was removed before the fatal plunge).

Ferraris we associate with racing heritage, elegance (for the greater part) and romance, Lamborghinis mainly with power and sculpture. The company has some competition pedigree, though. About 20 years ago its Formula 1 V12s provided some of automotive engineering's sweetest sounds and, in 1991, the company built a chassis for short-lived Grand Prix team Modena. Generally, though, the Sant'Agata firm is better known for its striking designs and occasional financial turbulence, although its bank balance has been more stable since it was absorbed into the Volkswagen Group as an Audi subsidiary. And in recent times, its thoughts have turned increasingly to the track.

You won't see Lamborghini's name back in Formula 1 any time soon, but the company is once again taking a serious interest in motor sport

writer SIMON ARRON





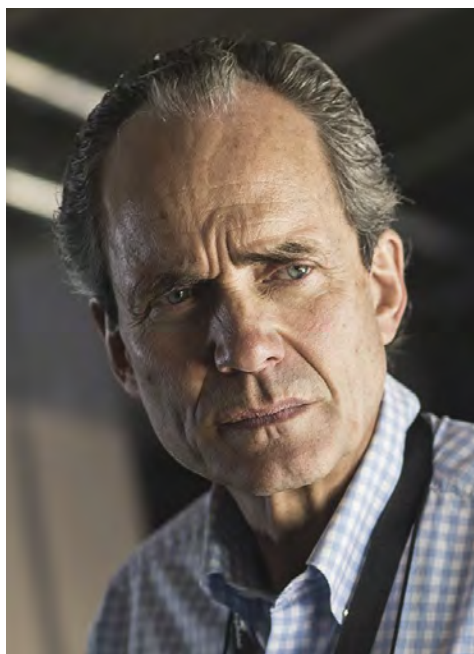
New motor sport chief Max Welti (right) has worked in the sport for more than 30 years and his CV includes lengthy spells in F1 and endurance racing with such as Sauber, Mercedes and Porsche. He was the three-pointed star's team manager when it won both the World Sports Car Championship and Le Mans 24 Hours in 1989, so is his appointment as Squadra Corse boss a statement of intent?

"Absolutely," says Maurizio Reggiani, head of research and development. "Nothing happens by chance. We chose the best people to help us improve and develop."

Welti adds: "Lamborghini has previously been involved in racing, but obviously not like Ferrari. Ferrari is Ferrari, a fantastic brand, and we are Lamborghini, another fantastic brand. Motor sport is going to be an interest for us in the future, but we have yet to define exactly what we'll be doing. We're part of a huge automotive group, and senior management decided Lamborghini should capitalise on its sporting image and even pep it up through motor racing, which isn't a bad idea."

For the moment it has a multi-tier programme that commences with Esperienza (a driving session for those who might like to buy a Lamborghini) and progresses via the Lamborghini Academy (circuit tuition for existing owners, see sidebar) to the Super Trofeo one-make series, which was established in Europe in 2009 and has since expanded to Asia and North America. At the top of the pyramid sits the Gallardo GT3 racer, once a private initiative run by German firm Reiter Engineering but now fully factory supported.

"The designs of road and Super Trofeo Gallardos are very similar," Reggiani says. "We



remove only a few parts that have been homologated to provide more cooling, or extra downforce. The engine, transmission and differentials are the same on both. We have made a few small software changes to increase the power, but the hardware is identical. The Super Trofeo is lighter than a road car and has more downforce, but we even kept the standard four-wheel drive – and we're the only one-make championship in the world that has that."

Why hasn't Lambo previously done more?

"I don't like looking back," Welti says, "but it's an interesting question. Before VW took over in the late 1990s, the previous owners had

targets other than motor sport. VW bought a company that was definitely in a mess so things had to be built up. It has taken a long time. VW might be a huge, profitable company, but finances still have to be carefully managed and Lamborghini wasn't always a huge priority. It is, though, an emotional brand.

"I expected a lot when I came here, but I have been surprised by the strength of feeling that exists – and not just from customers but among employees, too. I have never seen such enthusiasm from a workforce, irrespective of nationality. The way they work on road and racing cars is unbelievable. I know Porsche and Mercedes people particularly well and they're proud of what they do, but this is at another level – everybody here literally seems to live for Lamborghini. Our customers are the same. It's fascinating to observe – and a huge strength."

"Also," Reggiani adds, "in the recent past it wasn't possible to focus too hard on racing because we had to concentrate on establishing our product line with the Gallardo and Aventador. Now we have two fine cars, and the Squadra Corse creates a valuable bond between road and track. All the racing projects are under one roof – we have a community that will give Lamborghini an ever bigger footprint in motor sport."



WHAT'S NEXT ON THE RACING AGENDA?

"Good question," Welti says, "but I really don't know. We have limited funds and would like to do more because success can be used as a marketing tool. At present, though, the budget is smaller than small and my job is to develop things, which will take time."

Reggiani adds: "We want to consolidate our current position within the sport. We need to do the groundwork, so that we become more prolific worldwide when competing against other manufacturers. Based on our results in GT3, we will then decide what to do next. We are well established with our one-make activities around the world and want to achieve the same level of prominence in GT3."

Both men are keen to see Lamborghini tackling showroom rivals on the track. "I would like to see us doing whatever complements the group," Welti says, slipping into corporate mode. He then breaks off and grins. "I know that doesn't sound very exciting, but in the longer term there has to be something in which Lamborghini competes successfully against other manufacturers rather than just winning our own one-make series. Motor sport is a marketing platform and one-make racing isn't the answer because you always finish first – and last. We have to look for something that allows us to fight for outright victories, but it has to fit the company's overall strategy and it has to be affordable. Lamborghini is doing OK at the moment, but no better than that. We ☐

don't have the resources to go off and do F1, Indycar, the World Endurance Championship or whatever. That's the reality. We just have to make sure we do something that fits. I think it would be wrong, for instance, for Lamborghini to start rallying, but almost any form of circuit racing would be appropriate."



IT'S QUITE HARD AVOIDING THE F-WORD during conversations with Lamborghini folk, given that their base lies little more than 20 miles from Ferrari's Maranello hub and the two companies occupy a considerable breadth of common ground.

"Ferrari symbolises motor sport the world over," Reggiani says. "I don't know how many championships they have won in every kind of racing, but we're starting on the bottom rung. We need to consolidate step by step. That's what we did with the Super Trofeo. We want to see what we're able to achieve in GT3 and, in a year or two, we'll decide what to do next. We're a world apart from Ferrari and its F1 activities, but whenever we measure ourselves against them in the same category we want to be competitive. To sell more racing cars, we need success against other major manufacturers."

Ferrari is one thing, but what about going head to head against fellow VW Group subsidiaries? "Audi and Porsche will be racing against each other next year," Welti says, "so why can't there one day be a third party?"

Motor racing is a famously fast-paced business that relies on intuition rather than corporate governance – a point Toyota illustrated rather too well with its eight-season F1 venture. Some stories – drivers being unable to make set-up changes until their race engineer had sought permission from a higher authority – might be apocryphal, but it was a top-heavy programme that invested an absolute fortune for the sake of three pole positions, a sprinkling of podiums, a few missed opportunities and no victories. Word from within was that the decision-making process was painfully laborious: it's a striking statistic that Red Bull entered F1 three years later and was a race winner before Toyota bowed out...

The VW system clearly works well – look at Audi's recent sports car record – but how streamlined does it feel from the front line? "Motor sport people tend not to be patient," Welti says. "I've done nothing else for 35 years. It's a quick, reactive business, which is why I still love it. It's not easy to get a big group to accommodate motor racing philosophy, but from what I've seen the decision makers at the very top of the company are interested in what we're doing. You have to be hyper-reactive when you're involved, but the business model must be sustainable. You have to come up with ideas, make them happen and make them viable. With the right people, you can do it."



THE FUN IN LEARNING

The Lamborghini Academy gives owners a better grasp of the potentially wild world in which they have invested

IT'S A LITTLE OBVIOUS, A TOUCH gauche even. But if you could, you would... wouldn't you? Well, I would.

Upper crust or salt of the earth, it doesn't matter for this group of well-heeled gentlemen. They have the means to indulge in childhood fantasies and are bonded by one commonality. Yes, they've all bought a Lambo.

But now what? Supercar performance is hardly suited to the laws of the public roads. To understand such a car and what it can do, they needed a race track. Enter Lamborghini's Academy.

Now, non-owners are welcome too, but Lamborghini knows its customers and the 'Intensivo' course is designed specifically to suit their needs. The friendly team understands only too well that owners won't want to risk their significant investment itself, so it has created the Squadra

Corse: a heady mix of Gallardos, Superleggeras and the amazing Aventador, which tour Europe's circuits offering expert tuition on how you get the most from a Raging Bull – with the added safety net of not doing so in your own pride and joy.

Today, the Academy has arrived at a sopping Silverstone – and, lucky me, I've tagged on to this tribe of enthusiastic owners.

After a thorough briefing, we begin beside an instructor zig-zagging between cones around one of Silverstone's vast car parks. Nothing much to write home about, but as a warm-up before hitting the track it's useful. The point of such days, says Lamborghini, isn't simply to stoke the adrenaline, but also to understand the true capabilities of these wonder-cars – although it is mostly about the adrenaline bit.

Out on Silverstone's national circuit, they build us up slowly. No instructor beside us this time, but

we pair up and share the driving for the first session. I'm with an American businessman who used to race but has been out of the game for a dozen years and is using today to assess whether Lambo's Super Trofeo should be his choice of re-entry to the sport.

The day progresses in a blur of short sessions, switching between cars each time. We run solo after the opening trial, albeit in groups of four or five cars, but always behind a 'lead car' driven by an instructor. In each session he picks up the pace, allowing us to increase our speed gradually to the

point where we're as fast as we can go.

What surprises me most is how easy these Lambos are to pedal hard. Once you're closeted inside, the intimidation of those extreme, bullish looks is forgotten. The power is brutal, but even on a sodden track it feeds in evenly and each model

inspires confidence to brake later and corner harder (four-wheel drive helps). Perhaps it's the German influence that has underpinned Lambo's wild ways with technical sanity since Audi's involvement... but these bulls are tamer than they look. Or so I think.

At Maggotts, I keep my foot in for longer, then hit the brakes for the national track's tight right-hander. The Gallardo squirms and my heart misses a beat as I sail past the apex. Afterwards, the instructor I was following slaps my back and laughs. He was so busy watching my moment in his mirrors he had his own... Nothing is taken too seriously within Squadra Corse, it seems.

The camaraderie grows as the day progresses and I leave Silverstone on a high – hardly surprising after a day hooning about in such machines. But unlike my new friends I'm trundling home in my humble Golf. Back to reality. *Damien Smith*





A TASTE OF SOME

As part of its 150th anniversary celebrations, an Italian institution conjured a cocktail

FOR MOTOR RACING fans, our arrival provided the highlight. As dusk settled over Lake Como, lights twinkling on the hills and the sun setting behind the mountains beyond, we walked across the floodlit lawns of Villa Erba and onto a red carpet.

Lined up on each side of the walkway were cars that raced in Martini colours, a small selection of the machines that

carried the distinctive red and blue stripes to countless victories across the world.

This was a stroll through history. Yet to come were the drinks, the speeches, the supermodels and the music. In celebration of the 150th anniversary of this motor sport-infused cocktail, Martini invited 700 people to a party featuring never-ending supplies of their product, a surprise appearance by Lily Allen on a floating stage in the lake and some late-night musical carnage from trendy DJ Mark Ronson. For those of us who know Martini as a sponsor of some of the sport's great cars there was a

chance to chat with Emanuele Pirro and Miki Biasion, who both carried the famous stripes.

"It was special to be sponsored by them," Pirro said, "especially for me as an Italian. Along with Gulf's, the livery is surely the best in the world. And this year at Monza, I raced a Martini Porsche 911 in the Supercup race supporting the Italian Grand Prix. That was just an amazing experience. You know, I was one of the first Italian drivers to be sponsored by Martini, and for me it meant I was on the way to achieving my dream. To be back at Monza this year was emotional, and I was a





THING POTENT

of vermouth and famous competition cars... **writer ROB WIDDOWS**

little bit nervous, but the GT3 is fantastic to drive. I'd like another go."

In the darkness we wandered among the cars. A Gordon Murray Brabham BT45, fittingly belonging to Manfredo Rossi, is surely one of the most beautiful Grand Prix cars of all time. A Lancia Delta Integrale, made famous by Biasion, rallying's world champion in 1988 and '89. A Porsche 917, the red and blue stripes on white bodywork making the car look ever faster. And then there was the new hybrid Porsche 918 supercar, driven down from Stuttgart by two young, very serious engineers

who worked on the development and who were still grinning from the autobahn experience.

Late into the night, as dew settled on the cars and Ronson made an extraordinary noise with two record decks, we were reminded of glories past. Biasion looked lovingly at the Integrale, recalling the height of his career.

"It's a beautiful car, no?" he said. "For me, to drive with Martini was an honour. It made me realise I had finally made it to the pinnacle of my sport. Nowadays they are not involved in the top categories, but back then Martini supported the leading teams in rallying and F1,

so we all wanted to race with those colours.

The Integrale was a stunning car. I was involved in its development, and of course it was so much faster and more spectacular than the cars we see now. They were great days and seeing the car tonight I feel a little bump in my heart."

Many male guests at Villa Erba were keen to get a close look at another model clothed in red, one by the name of Rosie Huntington-Whiteley – the former consort of actor Jason Statham. For race fans, however, it was cars rather than stars that stole the show.

Grazie, Martini. 



Some iconic cars – and the Tecno PA123, bottom left – formed the guard of honour at Martini's 150th bash. Guests included multiple Le Mans winner Emanuele Pirro and wife Marianne (top, second left), model Rosie Huntington-Whiteley (bottom, second left), singer Lily Allen (right) and celebrity DJ Mark Ronson (below right)





Innes Ireland

The charismatic Scot who absolutely loved his racing... but hated its sometimes insidious politics

1940 - With Britain at war, veterinary surgeon William Ireland chose to leave his home in England and relocate to his native Scotland. He settled with his wife and two sons in the coastal town of Kirkcudbright.

Both boys attended the local school, where they excelled at sports. Innes, the younger of the two, was a gifted athlete and an enthusiastic rugby player.

As a schoolboy Innes became hooked on motor sport after being given a copy of Tim Birkin's book 'Full Throttle'.

On leaving school he undertook an engineering apprenticeship and completed his training in London, with the Motor Division of Rolls-Royce.

In 1952 he witnessed his first motor race.

Look at the pace he's going in this bloody awful weather!

The family friend who had introduced Innes to motor racing left him another gift in her will. A Bentley! But plans for a racing career would have to be put on hold. Ireland was called up for National Service.

The 21-year-old was seconded to the Parachute Regiment and did active service in Egypt during the Suez Crisis.

He would maintain that learning how to hit the ground without injury came in useful when being thrown from racing cars in subsequent years!

Ireland's enthusiasm for racing was undimmed, and on leaving the army he began to compete in club events, first in his Bentley, then in a new acquisition...

The Brooklands Riley Nine had been raced as part of the Border Reivers Syndicate by its owner Alec Calder. The purchase allowed Ireland to compete at a higher level. It also brought him into contact with Calder's 18-year-old brother-in-law, a certain Jim Clark. Within five years the pair would be team-mates in Formula 1.

Putting his apprenticeship to good use, Ireland had set up in business repairing Rolls-Royces and Bentleys.

I'll get this finished, then we can do some work on the Eleven.

He raced the Riley infrequently for a couple of years. But in 1956 the competition bug really took hold. With financial help from an acquaintance, Ireland purchased a Lotus Eleven in kit form.

Equipped with a competitive car, he quickly made his mark.

By the end of '57, he had competed for Team Lotus in the World Sports Car Championship and raced D-type Jaguars for Ecurie Ecosse.

An inaugural victory at the newly opened Clermont-Ferrand circuit further enhanced Ireland's reputation.

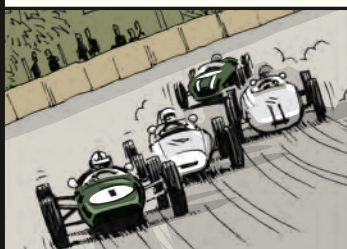
C'est Ireland à la première place!

When Team Lotus found itself a driver short midway through '59, Ireland was top of its list. He made his Formula 1 debut at Zandvoort.

Ireland came to wider prominence following two wins over Stirling Moss at Goodwood. On the back of a fine season, a maiden F1 victory began to look a real possibility for '61.

But early results were disappointing. Then came Monaco. An unfamiliar 'wrong way-round' gearbox momentarily caught Ireland out as he threaded his Lotus through the tunnel. Thrown from the car, he sustained damage to his legs. The event would mark a change in his career trajectory. The team's focus was shifting towards its rising star, Jim Clark.

Within a matter of weeks Ireland was back, and before the season was through Team Lotus had its F1 win.



It came not from the supremely gifted Clark, but through the dogged persistence of Ireland. He defeated the works Porsches at Solitude in a thrilling dice. It was a race that encapsulated everything Ireland loved about the sport.

A different aspect of his character would be on display when the F1 circus reconvened for the Italian Grand Prix.



Stirling Moss was in contention for the world title, but his privateer Lotus lacked the straight-line speed necessary at Monza. Ireland selflessly offered him his works car. The decision had the agreement of Colin Chapman, but it did little for Ireland's already strained relationship with the Lotus principal. At season's end he was sacked.

He loved racing, but the increasing influence of corporate money, and the political manoeuvring necessary to get ahead, were not to Ireland's liking.



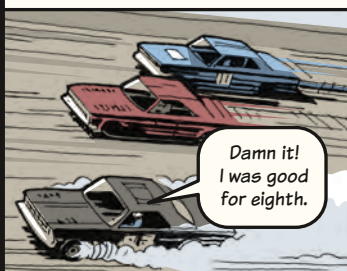
He continued to compete in Formula 1 with the British Racing Partnership, and in 1962 took a BRP-liveried Ferrari GTO to victory in the Goodwood TT.

Ireland's F1 career finally came to an end in 1965, following a falling-out with the management of the Parnell team.



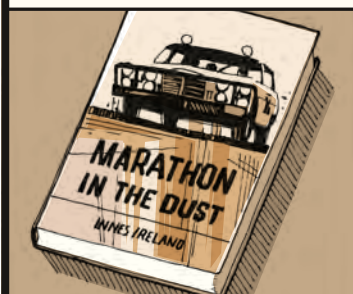
Motor racing's top flight had changed greatly over the course of a decade. Ireland's approach, and the values he stood for, looked increasingly outmoded.

Ireland's focus switched to sports cars. Then in 1967, following an attempt at the Daytona 500, he took the difficult decision to retire from racing.



But he hadn't turned his back on competition completely. The promise of adventure offered by the new breed of long-distance rallies proved too much to resist.

His well-received autobiography had cemented Ireland's position as one of motor sport's genuine characters.



It was followed by 'Marathon in the Dust', Ireland's account of competing on the London-Sydney Rally. He was an accomplished writer and became a regular contributor to the motoring press.

But he wasn't ready to settle down just yet. In a career change of epic proportions, Ireland returned to Kirkcubright and set up in the trawler business.



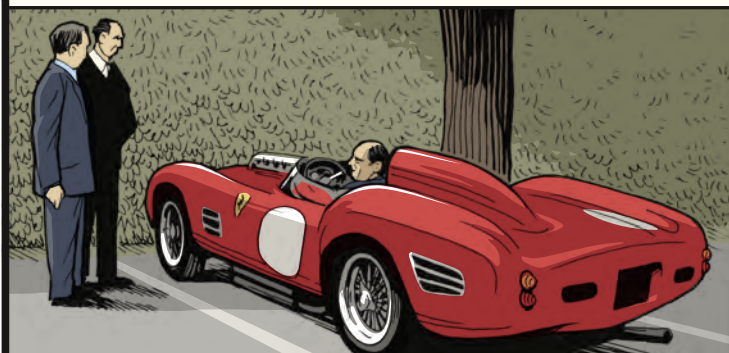
For six years he fished the Irish Sea. It was a period that left him rich in tales, if nothing else.

By the 1980s Ireland had renewed his links with the press. His reports and road tests became a regular feature of Road & Track magazine...



...and he mixed freelance writing with commentary work for TV and radio. The charismatic maverick was part of the motor racing scene once more.

In 1992 the British Racing Drivers' Club elected its fourth president.



Innes Ireland took great pride in his new role. For an all too brief period his lovingly recreated Ferrari Testarossa would grace the car park at the Club's Silverstone headquarters. In October the following year Robert MacGregor Innes Ireland lost his final battle and died from cancer aged 63.

'I still have the urge and the desire to race cars - it seems impossible to get it out of my blood - and even now I find it hard to believe that I will never 'race' a car again.'

From 'All Arms and Elbows', the autobiography of Innes Ireland.



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{ LUNCH WITH }

RICHARD NOBLE

A chance encounter watching John Cobb inspired a love of speed record breaking. Now he heads the team that's aiming for 1000mph

writer SIMON TAYLOR | photographer JAMES MITCHELL



“FOR BRITAIN, AND FOR the hell of it.” Just after he had finally become the fastest man on earth, Richard Noble was asked why he'd done it. Why, in pursuing his life's goal, had he remained single-mindedly determined despite years of frustration, disappointment, sacrifice and penury – and then come within 7mph of almost certain death. His answer perfectly sums up this relentlessly driven man, who comes across as a patriotic mix of Robert Falcon Scott, Frank Whittle and Bulldog Drummond, with perhaps a dash of Gussie Fink-Nottle as well.

We're lunching in the suitably British setting of the Royal Automobile Club's Great Gallery in Pall Mall. Richard chooses Devon crab cocktail with Bloody Mary sorbet, and roast halibut. It's almost exactly 30 years since Thrust 2, his first successful Land Speed Record monster, set a new mark of 633.468mph. That achieved the first goal: to bring the record back to Britain. The second goal, to beat the speed of sound in a car, was thought by many to be an

impossibility. But 14 years later, in October 1997, that too was Job Done when Squadron-Leader Andy Green drove Thrust SSC at Mach 1.03, a speed of 763.035mph. And now Richard is immersed, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in his most ambitious project yet: Bloodhound SSC. This extraordinary vehicle, using both jet and rocket power – plus a current F1 engine, just to drive the fuel pump – will attack the record in a new location in the African desert in 2016. The target? One thousand miles per hour.

Today Formula 1 gets all the glory, all the media coverage. But in the 1930s it was the land speed record that gripped the public's imagination, and it was much bigger than Grand Prix racing. Names such as Dick Seaman and Raymond Mays were less well-known to the man in the street than those of the record-breakers: Sir Henry Segrave, Sir Malcolm Campbell, George Eyston, John Cobb. Later, in 1952, a six-year-old boy was on holiday with his parents in Scotland when his father stopped their car alongside Loch Ness, where a curious crowd was watching a streamlined silver boat being worked on at the water's

edge. This was the jet-powered hydroplane Crusader, in which John Cobb, already holder of the Land Speed Record at 397mph, was aiming to raise the world's water speed record to more than 200mph.

The six-year-old was Richard Noble, who clearly remembers being “gripped by tremendous excitement” when he saw Crusader. Six days later Cobb died when the hydroplane broke up at well over 200mph. But throughout his childhood Richard remained fascinated by record-breaking, making cardboard models, drawing cars in his school exercise books, reading anything he could get his hands on. From prep school he was clever enough to get into Winchester, but his chief achievement there seems to have been tear-gassing one of the headmaster's cocktail parties. After school he did an Army Outward Bound course, which he remembers as “seriously tough”, then sold paint for ICI. “It was a dead-end job. There was an insurance company on the other side of the road from our London offices where the staff was evidently equally bored, so with elastic bands we'd fire paper clips at each other across High Holborn. Soon it was outright warfare.”

Then came an overland trip, London to Cape Town, in Richard's 13-year-old Land Rover. To defray costs he advertised seats at £200 a time, and squashed in five passengers, four of them women. “By the time we'd got as far as Madrid I'd paired off with one of the girls, Sally. By an amazing coincidence her great-uncle had been part of John Cobb's team during his 1947 record run at Bonneville.” The trip was full of hairy, even life-threatening, incidents, but more than 40 years later Richard and Sally are still married.



“AFTER THAT I TRIED TO GET INTO THE SAS, but after deciding I didn't really want to kill people I got a job with GKN. And now I got stuck into my dream of building a land speed record car. I sold my Triumph TR6 for £1100 – that was just about all I had – and started on Thrust 1. I didn't know what the hell I was doing, and in retrospect it was a dreadful car, but it taught me a lot of lessons. I knew it had to have a jet engine, so I managed to get a Rolls-Royce Derwent from a scrapyards for £200 – at 3500lbs thrust, that wasn't bad horsepower for the money. With help from some friends we welded up a hefty chassis and made a crude open-cockpit body. It was a cross between a go-kart on steroids and a cathedral on wheels. Nothing scientific about any of it, but by March 1977 we were ready for a proper test run at RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire. There was a severe crosswind blowing, but I managed 180mph in one direction, and it felt fantastic. Then coming back I lost control, went sideways, and did a triple airborne roll.



RICHARD NOBLE CAREER IN BRIEF

Born: 6/3/1946, Edinburgh

1972: Land Rover overland London to Cape Town.
1974-77: Built Thrust 1, written off in testing crash.
1977: Started Thrust 2 project. **1983:** Broke Land Speed Record at 633.468mph, started ARV Aircraft. **1992:** Started Thrust SSC project. **1997:** Andy Green takes Land Speed Record at Mach 1.03, 763.035mph.
2006: Starts Bloodhound SSC project

Fortunately the big jet engine behind me acted as a sort of roll-over bar, and when it all stopped I wasn't hurt. We discovered later a wheel bearing had seized.

“After that crushing disappointment there were three important things to do. The first was to drown our sorrows in the nearest pub. The second was to take the remains of Thrust 1 to the scrapyards. We got £175 for it, which paid a few outstanding bills. The third was to get started on a grown-up programme for Thrust 2. I realised we needed a proper engineering approach, and a proper designer. So we put out

a press release: ‘Wanted: 650mph car designer.’ Some quite experienced people applied, but when they found out we were barely getting started and had no money, they all went away. But one application came from a former hovercraft and electric car engineer called John Ackroyd, who'd been working for Audi. Ackers and I got on very well from the start, and soon he was working down on the Isle of Wight, in the kitchen of an empty house, slaving away on his own to design the car. Our budget was non-existent. He didn't even have a phone, and had to hoard coins to use a public phone box.”

Richard knew that Lightning fighters, which used twin 15,000lbs thrust Rolls-Royce Avon 210s, were being taken out of service and broken up, and he persuaded the Ministry of Defence to sell him an Avon 210 for £2000. Meanwhile he was working indefatigably to publicise the project and bring in sponsors, and little by little some money came in, £1000 here, £1500 there. Then Initial Services, an industrial laundry firm, offered a generous £20,000. Later, when the project was about to run out of money completely, Initial doubled it to £40,000. “God bless them – they saved us.” But approaches to more mainline engineering and industrial firms, household names whom Richard hoped would want to get behind the record attempt, all produced stony refusals.

“It's so sad. This is the country that developed Concorde, that had fantastic planes like the Vulcan bomber which could out-maneuvre any jet fighter above 60,000ft, like the Lightning which went twice the speed of sound, like the Harrier jump jet. These things happened because they were funded by the Government. But if you go to the main board of a big firm and say, ‘Hey, we want to do this, and it will be good for your company and good for the country, but by its very nature we can't give you a guaranteed business plan’... You get shown the door pretty quick.

“So we were operating on incredibly small sums of money. But if you always think in terms of your available budget you'll never get there. You're looking at it from the wrong end. What you must say is, ‘this is what we're going to do, whatever it takes’. Even when the money is running out, somehow you keep going. And once you're under way the publicity you can generate is massive. When you find sponsors who understand that, they'll come on board for the exposure.”

After four years, countless problems and dramas, and the adoption of a more powerful 17,000 lbs Avon 302 engine which set them back a further £4000, the little team arrived on the Bonneville Salt Flats in October 1981. Now running on solid aluminium wheels on the salt surface, at first there were dreadful stability problems, with the car veering uncontrollably off course. It was very demoralising. “Things got very difficult within the team. Some of the

1 Dramatic outcome of Thrust 1 bearing seizure
 2 Thrust 1 – like “a cathedral on wheels”
 3 Noble drove not only the Thrust 2 project, but the car too 4 Thrust 2 with central Avon jet and offset cockpit



1



2



3



4

5 Noble with mock-up of 1000mph Bloodhound SSC car 6 Toasting successor Andy Green's 1997 supersonic record
 7 Green knives across Black Rock Desert, Nevada at 763mph



6

7



5



chaps believed it was my fault and accused me of being a useless driver. We'd all been working incredibly hard, and I was trying to manage the whole project and drive the car as well, which in retrospect was a big mistake. But once we got the speeds up the stability improved. Gradually we went quicker, and after some runs around the 400mph mark I banged in full after-burner for the first time and got up to a peak of around 500mph. Then it rained, the Flats were flooded, and that was that. We had to go home.

"But before going out to Utah I'd had the idea of spending our last £1000 on insuring against the desert flooding, at 75 to 1. At first the insurers refused to pay up, but after I'd threatened them with all sorts of nasty publicity we got our £75,000. That kept us going for a bit. However, when I told our sponsors that it all had to be postponed until the following year many of them lost interest.



"AT THIS POINT WE GOT THE HUGELY experienced Ken Norris on board. Ken had worked with Donald Campbell on his land and water speed record attempts, and his presence during the actual runs allowed me to concentrate on the driving." But another huge set-back was in store. During a 300mph test run at Greenham Common, where the runway required rubber tyres, the tyres expanded and fouled the bodywork. Then, with smoke pouring off the wheel arches, the braking parachute collapsed. Using its wheel brakes Thrust 2 left skid marks for three-quarters of a mile before going off the end of the runway and bounding over rough grass. Not only was the front of the car wrecked: the engine suffered severe FOD – foreign object damage – by ingesting stones and debris which twisted the vulnerable compressor section blades. The doughty little team had the car straightened out in 12 weeks, but Rolls-Royce quoted £80,000 for engine repairs, which was off the planet. So the maintenance staff at RAF Binbrook worked nights, for nothing, to rebuild the engine "and the Queen paid for the parts". The project was on again.

But the roller-coaster continued. Back at Bonneville in September 1982 heavy rain flooded the Flats. Undaunted, in six days the Thrust team had relocated to Nevada and the Black Rock Desert. Local permissions were secured and 11 miles of flat course painstakingly cleaned of pebbles and other potential FOD material. Over several runs between October and November Thrust 2's speed gradually climbed from 463mph to 590mph, with a peak of 615mph. But the existing record, the American Gary Gabelich's 1970 mark of 622mph with his rocket-powered Blue Flame, remained unbeaten. Then it started to snow. Once again it was time to go home.



There followed another year of rebuilding the car, trying to keep existing sponsors on board, and hunting for new ones. In September 1983 they were back at Black Rock. "I knew this would be our last shot, and we were having some engine problems. So I sent a pleading fax to the Rolls-Royce chairman, Sir William Duncan. He was none too pleased – we were after all talking about an engine I'd bought more or less as scrap for £4000 – but he sent one of his technical experts over to look at it. This lovely chap, George, discovered that we had the reheat linkage wrongly connected, so we weren't bringing in the final 25 per cent of the afterburner. Suddenly we had a hell of a lot more thrust available. We did more and more runs, making adjustments as we went, and now we'd got it very stable. I did something like 11 two-way runs in the sub-sonic range and I could place it within a lateral accuracy of two inches. It was like driving a taxi. But to get clear of Gabelich's record we still needed more speed – which meant we had to reduce Thrust 2's drag.

"We'd done some good trans-sonic wind-tunnel testing at British Aerospace with a small model, which gave us plenty of confidence. But in those days we couldn't model the car using CFD [computational fluid dynamics] and we didn't appreciate that, as we went further and further into the trans-sonic range, what we were doing was frankly very dangerous. Once you start getting to Mach numbers of 0.9 you're into different regimes altogether. You've got huge chunks of air passing over the car, some of it subsonic, some of it supersonic. Ackers raised the ride height at the front by a tiny amount, 0.017 of a degree. That was

enough to reduce the downforce dramatically. And finally, on October 4, we did it: 624.241mph in one direction, 642.971 in the other, a two-way average of 633.468. We'd done it. We had the world Land Speed Record.

"Our peak speed going through the measured mile had been just over 650mph. It was only later, when we went through all the data and computed the effect of the reduced front downforce, that we realised that at 657mph the front of Thrust 2 would have left the ground, the sub-sonic and supersonic air would have got underneath it, and it would have become a ground-to-air missile. So we had been perhaps 7mph away from total disaster.

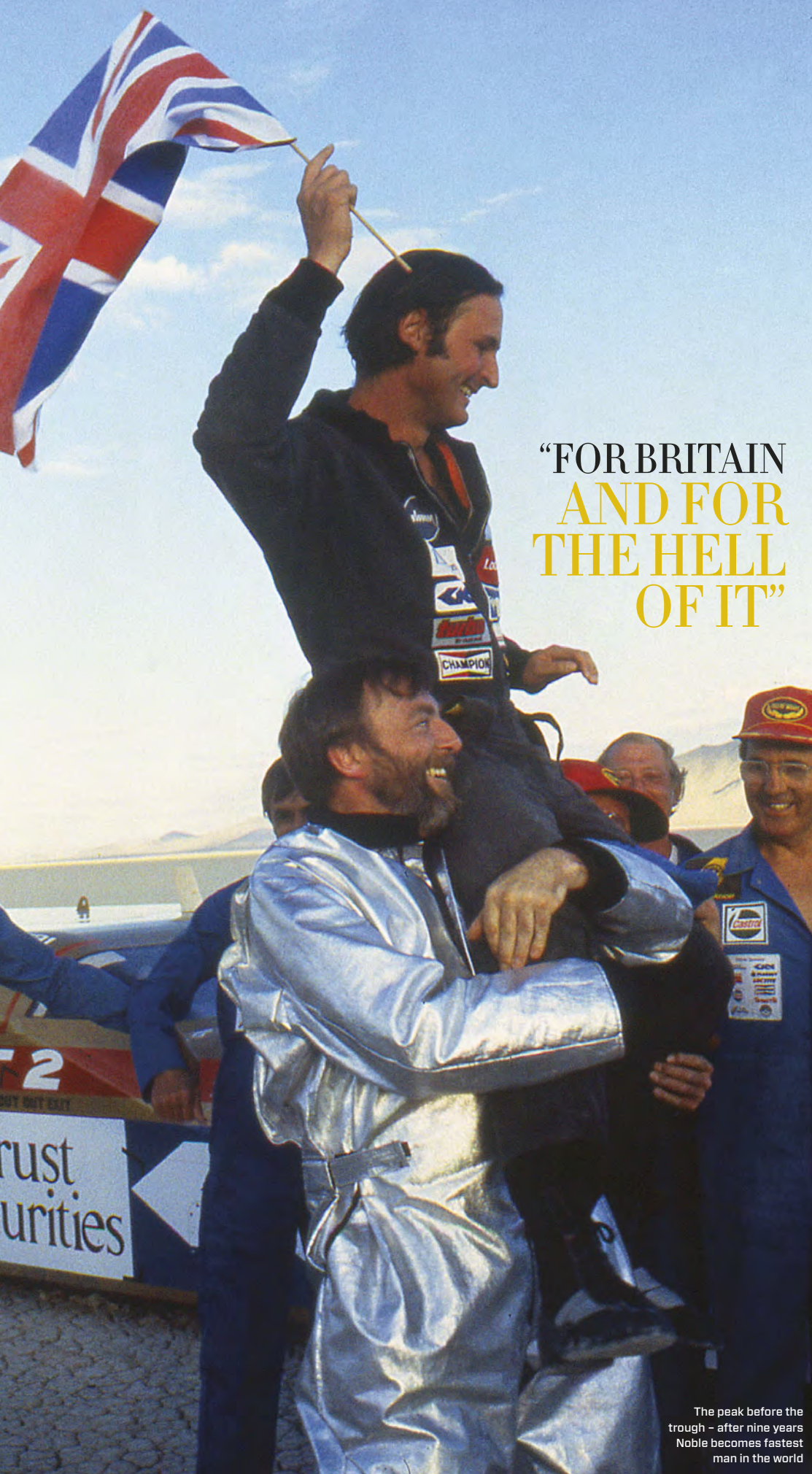
"Out there in the Black Rock Desert, once we knew we had the record, our little team was overtaken by total euphoria. After nine years of ceaseless graft, of incredible ups and downs, the record was ours. We were swamped by massive joy and relief, by cheers and tears. But strangely, within perhaps half an hour, all that went away, and then we just felt bloody miserable. We were a terrific little team of people, we'd been thrown together, all working night and day towards this goal. Now there was no reason to stay together any more. When we got home there were lots of parties and awards and plaudits for us, but the best thing was to recognise it was all over, and move on."

In Richard's case moving on meant starting a light aircraft company. About 40 of his innovative ARV Super2s were built, with a two-stroke engine designed and built by gearbox guru Mike Hewland, and Richard still owns aircraft no12. Later came a project initially involving Ted Toleman, Don Shead and Adrian Hamilton to cross the Atlantic non-stop in a boat powered by a Rolls-Royce RB211 jet engine geared to propellers, but that failed to generate the necessary backing. Meanwhile Richard couldn't get out of his mind the idea of a car that could exceed Mach 1.



"IN 1992 I MET RON AYERS. HE WAS head of Operations Research at BAC's Guided Weapons Division and chief aerodynamicist on the Bloodhound 2 anti-aircraft missile, and he is the cleverest person I know. He had some strong views on why land speed record cars failed to achieve the theoretical maximum that their power outputs indicated they should reach. Together with Glynne Bowsher, who'd been involved on Thrust 2, that was the start of a relationship which grew into the Supersonic Car programme, Thrust SSC."

To achieve supersonic speeds much more power would be needed. Richard, wheeling and dealing as always, found that the Ministry of Defence were selling off redundant Rolls-Royce Spey 205 jet engines as fitted to the Phantom F4



“FOR BRITAIN AND FOR THE HELL OF IT”

The peak before the
trough - after nine years
Noble becomes fastest
man in the world

fighter. He bought two for £5000, to give a combined thrust of 44,000lbs. After several early proposals, Ron and Glynne came up with a layout putting the two massive engines side by side, with the driver centrally between them “for the best seat-of-the-pants feel”. A major innovation was rear-wheel steering: a wide fixed front track, and twin rear wheels close together and staggered one behind the other to change the car’s direction. With fuel on board, the whole car, 54 feet long, would weigh 10.5 tons.

Compared to Thrust 2, the whole approach was massively more scientific. By now CFD was available. Swansea University came on board to help with this, as well as Cray Research, which donated time on one of its super-computers which was capable of five billion calculations a second. At the same time a rocket-powered model was built, covered with pressure sensors and fired down a rail, going from zero to 850mph in 0.8sec, an acceleration of 50g. To everyone’s relief the real-life results from the model matched almost exactly the theoretical CFD results. That gave the team the confidence to go ahead and build the car.

Added pressure came from the open secret that McLaren was also planning to build a car to attack the Land Speed Record, and beat the speed of sound. Its carbon-fibre car, the McLaren Maverick, had its front wheels very close together to give an almost three-wheeled layout. “We knew they had access to budgets and sponsors we could only dream about, and excellent contacts with Rolls-Royce for their engines and British Aerospace. One rumour said that, although Ayrton Senna had by then left McLaren for Williams, he wanted to drive the car. Anyway, the McLaren stories meant we had no time to lose – although in the end the Maverick was never built.

“I knew it was wrong that I’d been both project leader and driver on Thrust 2. So at the press launch I let it be known that we were looking for a driver, and 30 people got in touch. Through various tests at the Centre for Human Sciences at Farnborough we whittled them down to five, all of whom were fliers of one sort or another: three Tornado pilots and two civil airline pilots.” There followed a very complex selection process involving, among other things, driving a rally car on the loose with Russell Brookes in the passenger seat, and tests to identify teamwork abilities under pressure. In January 1995 Richard telephoned Squadron Leader Andy Green to tell him he was their man. Typically, he had to phone him in Switzerland, because this all-action fellow was busy doing the Cresta Run.

Andy told me the full, almost unbelievable story of Thrust SSC when I had *Lunch With...* him for *Motor Sport*’s November 2007 issue. The SSC project went through just as many dramas and setbacks, and financial ups and downs, as Thrust 2 had done. Once again –

and with a far more complex, far more costly programme this time – sponsors were hard to find and money was incredibly tight. Vital support came from members of the public who joined the Mach 1 Club and bought merchandise, anything from T-shirts to life-expired bits of the car, and the project's website grew to one of the largest on the internet, and generated extraordinary response.

"Safety was always a prime consideration. We agreed that if we felt we couldn't go supersonic with Andy in safety we would abort the project. An ejector seat was out of the question – obviously he couldn't eject at 800mph at ground level – so the cockpit was surrounded by a welded steel box and a two-inch thick firewall. There were also halon and water extinguishers and a 30-minute supply of compressed air. Even so, these might not have been enough to save him in a crash at that sort of speed, so we had to place the emphasis on accident prevention, with fail-safe logic circuitry to ensure that no system failure could result in the car becoming airborne, and to shut-down systems in case of engine problems. By the end Thrust SSC had completed 66 runs in safety."

Early tests took place on the Al Jafr desert in Jordan in 1996, but only resulted in a best speed of 340mph. The following year a return to Al Jafr produced 540mph, but also a suspension failure that could have cost Andy Green's life. Meanwhile Andy was having serious doubts about being able to keep the car stable, and

Despite all the money problems, Richard's determination got the team to the Black Rock Desert in September 1997. The 13-mile stretch of desert was cleaned and prepared and the runs began, each with a carefully prepared profile. Before long Andy had taken the car up to 719mph. Then the braking parachute tore off, which meant Andy had to overshoot his stopping point by a mile and a half and the crew couldn't turn the car round for the return run within the 60 minutes specified by the rules. On September 25 he did a mean in both directions of 714.144mph, more than 80mph faster than Richard's record. However, when Andy inspected the tracks he could see that there was one point where one of the front wheels was leaving no mark in the desert surface – the car was becoming airborne. Calculations showed that Thrust SSC's static weight on the front wheels of 6.5 tons was being reduced to a mere 200 kilos. Adjustments to increase the downforce made the car plough into the surface and become dramatically unstable. Finally – and not without much friction within the technical team – the very clever active suspension system, which Jerry Bliss had designed to optimise the ride height and control the downforce front and rear, was disconnected.

On successive runs over the next few days the speeds climbed. Finally, on October 15, Thrust SSC tore silently through the mile, followed by the double bang of the sonic boom and then a thunderous blast of sound. The car was turned

Craig Breedlove's old car Spirit of America. This was a real threat: he had the money, he had the motivation, he had the ability. So Andy and I met in a pub and decided we had three options. One was to do nothing: no one could ever take away that we were the first to break the sound barrier, and we could rest on our laurels. The second was to wait and see what the Americans would do and then react – by which time it would probably be five years too late. Or we could do something now: build the greatest car we could ever do, the ultimate car, and go for 1000mph. And that was the beginning of Bloodhound SSC.



"IN FACT STEVE FOSSETT TRAGICALLY died in 2007 when his Bellanca Super Decathlon plane crashed high in the Sierra Nevada. His remains weren't found for more than a year. By then we'd already met with Ron Ayers and told him we wanted a car that could do Mach 1.5. That's about 1200mph, and he was a bit horrified by the idea. So we did a bit of horse-trading and in the end he agreed that Mach 1.4, or 1000mph, could maybe be done. But it would need an awful lot of power. Drag goes up as the cube of the speed, so if you want to go twice as fast you need eight times the power for a given weight. And the supersonic shock waves absorb power: we'd calculated Thrust SSC would do 850mph, but it went to 770mph and wouldn't go any faster.

"This is when we came up with the concept of using both a jet engine and rocket power, one sitting on top of the other, with the rocket being brought in as Bloodhound reaches the higher speed ranges. With two jet engines the drag from the air intakes would be too great, but a rocket doesn't need an air intake. The jet we chose is the EJ200 from the Eurojet fighter, a fantastic thing, like a piece of jewellery. It produces 20,000lbs of thrust. The rocket we have to build ourselves. With a solid fuel rocket, if you have a problem you can't switch it off. On the other hand, if you're using kerosene and liquid oxygen and you need to shut down, you can get an enormous explosion. So Daniel Jubb, our rocket guru, came up with a hybrid rocket using solid fuel and a liquid oxydiser, so if something goes wrong you can shut down the oxydiser and the fire goes out, it doesn't explode. We still have to do the 60-minute turnaround, which with Bloodhound means taking out and replacing the whole rocket motor and loading a ton of HTPB. But we've worked it out, and we can do it.

"The whole car will have effectively 133,000 horsepower, to move 7.5 tons. Torsional rigidity is crucial, but with a lot of it made of carbon fibre, it'll be a lot lighter than Thrust SSC. And Daniel reckons the noise of all that lot will be

"REAR-WHEEL STEER MADE IT FRIGHTFULLY DIFFICULT, BUT ONCE IT WENT SUPERSONIC IT WAS AN ABSOLUTE BABY"

privately had to develop his own technique of feeding in steering inputs in advance of what he thought the car was going to do. As he said later, "I eventually found a driving technique that worked, but I never really enjoyed driving the car. It was too much like hard work." Richard's summation is a little different. "Andy did bloody well. It wasn't a comfortable car to drive at subsonic speeds. The rear-wheel steer made it frightfully difficult. The funny thing was, once it got well up into the really high Mach numbers and went supersonic, it was an absolute baby." Andy's version is more graphic: he described the delicacy it required as "trying to balance the point of a pencil on the end of your finger" and "taking all the hairiest bits of a three-hour sortie in a Tornado jet fighter and packing them all into two minutes."

around within the 60-minute limit, back it came, there were the booms again, and finally the result came through. For the entire team, it was an incredible achievement: 763.035mph, Mach 1.03. After five years of ceaseless effort, the job was done.

"Once again we went through the euphoria, and then the feeling of disappointment, of emptiness almost, because it was all over. We were all absolutely exhausted, and it took most of us two years to recover. In 2006 there was the JCB Dieselmex project, which did 350mph using two JCB diesel engines: Andy was the driver, and I was just a consultant on that project. But at the back of my mind I knew there was unfinished business. I heard that the American adventurer and record-breaker Steve Fossett was after our record, using an update of



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about the same as 25 jumbo jets taking off. Plus we have a third engine, from a current Formula 1 car. This is 750bhp-worth of Cosworth CAV8, and it's needed just to drive the fuel system pumping the oxydiser to the rocket, delivering almost a ton of HTPB [hydroxyl-terminated polybutadiene] in 20 seconds."

At top speed the forged aluminium tyreless wheels, three feet in diameter, will be rotating at 10,200rpm. A 12-mile track is needed: 5.5 miles for Bloodhound to accelerate, using first the jet and then the rocket, to get up to 1000mph. Then comes the measured mile, which will take 3.6sec. Then it needs 5.5 miles to slow down, with a peak deceleration of 3G. First the air brakes will fold out from the car's sides. When the speed has come down through the transonic region to 670mph a parachute can be deployed, with a second parachute at 400mph. Finally at 200mph the wheel brakes can be used to stop the car in the right spot for the turnaround procedure.

"We knew that we couldn't go back to Black Rock for this attempt. Due to global warming they've been having a lot of rain there. In the end we found an incredibly flat piece of desert land in the Northern Cape of South Africa at Hakskeen Pan. There is extremely high unemployment there, so the local government was happy to help out preparing the surface. They already have 300 people working on it full-time, picking up stones. They're wonderful people, they've really got involved. As far as they're concerned it's their car.



"THE REAL DIFFICULTY WITH ALL THIS stuff is that there's no precedent. Technologically we're going into the unknown. Actually it causes a lot of distress in the aerospace world where they have huge teams of people, big test programmes, big budgets. We're just 60 people in total, we're building a car that will do Mach 1.4, and we're determined to succeed. Having said that, we're all totally committed to a culture of absolute safety. If I think we can't guarantee that, I'll abort the project. Our sponsors have to know that their investment is in safe hands.

"In the end, it cost £2.5 million to break the speed of sound with Thrust SSC. The whole Bloodhound project is in a different league. It's going to cost £42 million. So far we've raised about a third of that, and we're on course to run in 2015. Part of the difference is that we can now analyse and model everything in immense detail, because of how computer science has progressed since 1997. And with Bloodhound we've got an enormous additional plus, which is its power as an educational tool."

This came out of a meeting with Lord Drayson, Le Mans racer and electric speed



"THE CAR WILL HAVE 133,000 HORSEPOWER. THE NOISE IS GOING TO BE SOMETHING LIKE 25 JUMBO JETS TAKING OFF"

record breaker, who held defence and science posts in the last Labour government. "Paul said, 'We have a huge shortage of young engineers and scientists in this country now. Back when Britain was producing all those fantastic aeroplanes there was something to capture the imaginations of a whole generation of school kids. Now all they're interested in is getting on X-Factor. We'd like you to fire up today's kids to make them into tomorrow's engineers.'

"So we got an education team together, and talked to teachers. What they wanted was not posters and paperwork but live data which the kids could access. So we're giving them on-line learning, drawings of the car, masses of real data, and our website is being followed by kids all round the world. It's good for sponsors' corporate and social responsibility, too. And when we do the actual runs the kids will be able to follow live data from the car then, too.

"We've had response so far from 5000 schools in Britain. Things like a letter from a nine-year-old girl saying she'd never understood what maths and physics were about, but now she wanted to be an engineer. What these kids are doing is phenomenal. A school in Walsall built a rocket-powered model, and set a new world's playground speed record at 88mph. Then Heathland School in Hounslow raised it massively. Would you believe 204mph? That's across the school playground, with a car a foot long that they'd designed and built themselves, all independently timed by people from the Guinness Book of Records. They had to do the one-hour turnaround and get a mean of two directions, too. You can watch it on YouTube. And now the South African kids want to have a go, too."

The project's educational potential has become so crucial that, for Richard, inspiring a new generation of engineers is Bloodhound's prime objective. Objective Two is to provide an innovative R&D programme to which students will have access. Taking a new land speed record for Britain at over 1000mph is now only Objective Three, although of course all are inextricably linked.

"Meanwhile the website support is immense. We reckon it's been looked at by people in every country in the world apart from North Korea and the Vatican City, and we've been raising up to £30,000 a month from ordinary people in donations and merchandise sales. As it all gathers momentum, there are some big potential sponsors out there who are going to have to decide. Do they do something conventional like Formula 1, perhaps putting stickers on a mid-grid team that rarely makes it onto the TV coverage? Or do they do something really brave, something that may perhaps be seen as higher risk, and come in with us on Bloodhound?"

Down at the project's premises at Avonmouth, Bloodhound SSC is coming together. Meanwhile, with crusading zeal, Richard is pounding on boardroom doors up and down the country to persuade British companies that this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to attach their name to perhaps one of the last great human adventures of our age. Already the list of firms that have helped in cash or in kind number over 180.

With maybe £25 million left to find, he still has a lot of work to do. But Richard Noble is unshakeably convinced that he will succeed, just as he is unshakeably convinced that Bloodhound SSC will achieve 1000mph at Hakskeen Pan. It is an extraordinary project: brave, technologically innovative, and involving almost superhuman dedication and endeavour from a small, tightly-motivated team of clever people. Bloodhound SSC merits our help, and it absolutely deserves to succeed. For Britain, and for the hell of it. ☑



**It's vast, brutal and makes
a noise like nothing else on the
planet - once you get it to fire...**

**writer ANDREW FRANKEL
photographer HOWARD SIMMONS**

THESE DAYS, AND THANKS TO THE EXPLOSION of interest in all things historic, it's tempting for us enthusiasts to think we've heard every sound a car can make. Twelve-cylinder Ferrari? Goes without saying. V16 BRM? But of course. Straight-eight Alfa? Natch. But unless you happen to have been present at one of extraordinarily few occasions around the world over the last century when a genuine Blitzen Benz has been fired up, there is one sound that has so far eluded you. The moment you hear it is the moment you know you'll never forget it. It is the sound of Germany's first and, to date, only successful Land Speed Record car. For reasons that will soon become clear, it sounds like nothing else on earth. ▶

Thunder & white lightning





Monster Benz at the scene of the only British LSR - Brooklands banking



But first it must be coaxed into life. You might expect this process to take a few minutes but you'd be wrong. It takes a few hours. Quite a few hours. The problem is that engine. Because it displaces 21.5 litres, everyone presumes it was first designed to power an aircraft. In fact it's not an aero engine at all, but a purpose-built, unique race motor that only displaces such a gargantuan capacity because, back in 1909, no other way was known of achieving the 200bhp reckoned to be required to break the Land Speed Record.

It needs to be warmed *before* it will start: industrial strength blow-heaters pointed at that vast block of cast iron under the bonnet heat the engine quite effectively without it completing so much as a revolution.

Then making it start is quite straightforward. Unlike Mercedes' later pre-war racers which require bespoke blends of substances, the somewhat simpler Blitzen will work on whatever petrol comes out of the pump. So you just give each cylinder a squirt of fuel, switch on the magneto, retard the ignition and ask a very brave

and strong chap to man the crank handle.

The first time it fires is like the finale to the world's biggest fireworks display. There's one colossal bang as all the fuel in the engine explodes, a staccato jet of flame firing out the stub exhausts, then silence. Even those who've worked on this car for years instinctively duck. It's all I can do not to flee the scene entirely. I'm meant to be driving this bloody thing in a minute. For a moment I think the engine's consumed itself and cast an eye around for an elephantine conrod buried in the walls of the Mercedes-Benz World workshop at Brooklands. But no one looks concerned. Annoyed, yes, but not concerned.

They try again and again, but today it seems only to want to do howitzer impressions: impressive but not why we're here.

And then as we're about to pack up and go home, the motor fires momentarily. One more

squirt of fuel, one more Olympic effort from the bull of a man on the starting handle and with a primal, roaring, ear-rending bellow, the Blitzen awakes.

As a teenager I was once in the audience of the Hammersmith Odeon at a gig by British hard rockers Saxon that was, at the time, billed as the loudest ever held; listening to the Blitzen took me straight back there.



THE THING I HAVE DELIBERATELY failed to mention until now is that the Blitzen has just four cylinders. Eight spark plugs, but four cylinders. That means each piston sweeps 5375cc, larger than the combined capacity of all 10 cylinders in a Lamborghini Gallardo. It must have piston rings like hoola-hoops, crowns like dustbin lids. Such is the torque the motor prowls around the engine bay like a hungry Rottweiler on a short chain, blaring and

barking at you. And all this just at idle.

Normally I'm nervous about driving other people's priceless racing cars, but not today. Today I'm just plain frightened. I'm not from the era when people of a different constitution chose to drive Blitzens as fast as they possibly could.

Blitzens plural? In fact there were six, of which you could argue four survive in various conditions from highly original to replicas constructed from some original parts. The Blitzen you see here is Mercedes' own car although it is of course not a Mercedes at all but a Benz, the two brands only linking in 1926. It was assembled in 1935 from two Blitzens to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Karl Benz inventing the viable road car, of which more in a minute.

The very first Benz 200hp (as it was then known) was put together in 1909 as a marketing exercise, its stated aim being to smash through the infamous 200kph barrier. Even then the engineers realised that raw power alone would not be enough. The aerodynamic concept was to keep the car as slim as humanly possible, even if that meant a staggered and phenomenally uncomfortable seating position for the driver and his hapless riding mechanic. Likewise the gearshift and handbrake were located outboard to avoid adding width while the tail tapered to an elegant point to smooth the wind's departure from the body surface.

Its engine was a development of the 15.5-litre 150hp engine Benz was using in its Grand Prix machinery, and at its full 21.5 litres remains the largest engine ever used by any functioning Benz, Mercedes or Daimler car. It ran through a four-speed transmission to the rear wheels via a pair of chains that look fit to lower a drawbridge.

This monstrous powerplant was duly installed in a Grand Prix chassis modified to take its extra girth, and after taking part in a couple of sprints to prove the concept – it dismissed the opposition in both as if they didn't exist – it duly fronted up to the just-opened Brooklands race track in Weybridge, Surrey. There Victor Hémery claimed the only Land Speed Record ever to be set on English soil, storming through the flying kilometre at 202.648kph (125.9mph) achieving the car's design objective on its very first serious run. (Fred Marriott's 1906 Stanley steamer run of 127.6mph was for many years not accepted in Europe.)

Point proven so far as Europe was concerned, the firm's next move was to take the Benz 200hp to North America, a critical sales territory with the added advantage of space to achieve speeds not possible in Surrey. It was here it acquired the title of 'Lightning' or Blitzen Benz. Driven by Barney Oldfield it reached 131.7mph at Daytona Beach in March 1910, but being set in just one direction the record went unrecognised by the authorities.



Dials are low on the driver's worry list. Below, naked rockers of twin-plug four, with blocks cast in pairs



A year and a month later it was back, now with Bob Burman at its wheel. Finally the Blitzen was allowed to run unimpeded as fast as it would go, and in two directions. When it was done, the incredulous timekeepers saw it had averaged 140.2mph.

A second Blitzen was built in 1910 and raced with success by Burman and others until it went missing in 1919, while a third was assembled in

**“THE LAST TIME
IT WAS TRIED ON
THE BANKING
THE DRIVER WAS
BOUNCED
CLEAN OUT
OF HIS SEAT”**

1912. This was bought by British Benz dealer LG 'Cupid' Hornsted who used it to break seven extant Brooklands records, but it is perhaps better known for flying clean over the banking with Captain John Duff at the wheel in 1922. Miraculously although the car was mangled, Duff was not and would recover in time to take Bentley to the first Le Mans 24 Hours the following year.

Blitzen number four was also built in 1912 and became known as 'Grandmother' after the war thanks to its retention of old-fashioned wooden artillery wheels. The fifth car came together in 1913 and, according to Mercedes, disappeared from public sight almost as quickly.

The final Blitzen was sold by Benz at the end of 1913 and was unique in having an extended chassis and a four-seat touring body, though having driven a Blitzen, the idea of going on holiday in one sounds hilarious to me.


Of the four Blitzens existing today, one is the four-seater, another a replica put together in 2004 using original parts and the third a British-built replica of Hémery's car. The fourth is the car you see here, reassembled in 1935 from the wreckage of Hornsted's car with other parts from 'Grandmother'.



FOR ONCE I'M NOT IN A HURRY TO GET in. Sadly we're not allowed to drive the car on the Brooklands banking because the last time that was tried the driver was bounced clean out of his seat and only saved himself and the Blitzen by clinging to the steering wheel. So it's the rather tamer and less attractive handling course more commonly used for dealer demonstrations of new Mercedes saloons that we'll use today.

It's starting to rain and having taken literally hours to warm up, the Blitzen is in danger of getting too hot. It is now or never. It's bloody uncomfortable in here, even before a mechanic somehow squeezes himself in beside me. He's there because the fuel needs to be pumped from tank to engine by hand and, as you might imagine, it needs rather a lot. There's a small scatter of dials, including a rev-counter reading all the way up to 2000rpm, but they're buried so far under the cowl they might as well not be there at all.

Then, as I am receiving my pre-flight briefing, I'm told this particular Blitzen has Land Speed Record gearing. The implications of this are that the car won't actually run at less than 40mph. This may seem a trifling inconvenience but the car is vast, the track tight, tiny and now on the wet side of damp. It has the skinniest tyres imaginable and brakes that would be hopeless even if they worked on more than the rear wheels alone. They're operated by an exterior handbrake which, just to keep you on your toes, needs to be pushed rather than pulled.

This is a car designed to go as fast as 

Bob Burman's record runs at Indianapolis in 1911 earned him a tasteful Speed Crown



MERCEDES-BENZ

“I FEEL LIKE THE LAST MAN ON A RUNAWAY WILD WEST LOCOMOTIVE EVERYONE ELSE HAS LONG SINCE ABANDONED”

humanly possible in a straight line about to be driven on a track with corners so sharp there is no way it will begin to tackle them even at idling speed in first gear. The only consolation is that because it'll do 100mph before requiring second, at least I'm not going to be bothered with the intricacies of changing gear. I'm told to advance the ignition via a big lever on the steering wheel and lift the clutch.

The Blitzen travels from 0-40mph in the time required for me to take my foot off the pedal and without even brushing the throttle. The whole thing is shaking and yelling with murderous intent and I feel like the last man on a runaway Wild West locomotive everyone else has long since abandoned.

The first corner turns up and I still haven't touched the accelerator. Even so, it is clear the angle of the turn and the speed of the fast approaching Blitzen – still idling in first gear

– are entirely incompatible. All I can do is dip the clutch, push the brake lever, turn the wheel and hope. It responds, better than I'd hoped. Moreover the cone-type clutch is actually quite gentle and re-engages drive at the apex smoothly enough not to unsettle the car.

I do a couple of laps like that, I imagine the only laps I'll ever do in a road or racing car without using an accelerator pedal. And in the way of such things, what appeared baffling and terrifying five minutes ago now seems merely hugely challenging and really rather thrilling. The short straight opens up and realising it really is now or never, I open the throttle as wide as it will go.

In that instant there is a glimpse of what Messrs Hémeury, Oldfield, Burman and Hornsted would have come to regard as routine all those years ago: the noise that fills every space in your head until you feel it possesses

you, the mighty lunge forward and the vibrations of that insane engine making your internal organs shudder.

For a moment I was transported from the Surrey suburbs to Daytona Beach, imagining miles of open sand ahead of me, each gearchange, each reapplication of power as the speed headed ever upwards. You'd know if something went wrong there'd be no escaping it: the available outcomes were to complete the course without incident, coast nonchalantly up to the wide-eyed crowd and ask someone for a cigarette, or die. And in that moment and knowing there was nothing you could do save lift to steer the hand of fate in one direction or the other, I'm not sure you'd care. You and the machine had become one and you'd stand or fall together.

An anxious glance from my riding mechanic brings me back to reality. The Blitzen is going quite fast now and the curve at the end of the straight has got no shallower. But with confidence growing I'm less scared than I'd been a couple of laps back and at half the speed. For all the blood and thunder, it appears the Blitzen is still just a car and one that will respond approximately in line with expectations.

A few laps later I'm driving it as I'd have never imagined possible, not even worrying when I feel the rear tyres start to slide a little on the slippery surface. Later I am assured that given the time and space the Blitzen will really drift, a spectacle I'd pay proper money to see.

For now, though, someone else needs the track and while the idea of terrorising customers trying out their new A-classes in a 100-year-old 21.5-litre Land Speed Record car is not without its appeal, apparently that is not an available option.



WHEN I TRACK-TEST A CAR, I LIKE TO come away with at least an understanding of what it is like to drive at the speeds and in the environment for which it was designed. But because I had neither banking nor beach at my disposal, that was never going to be possible with the Blitzen. But in the same way as you can tell much about a fine wine by its smell, so too can you learn much about the Blitzen even from such a fleeting acquaintance. I know what it sounds like, what it feels like to handle and how hard it kicks when you let it off the leash.

But I feel I learned most about those who jumped in and tried to travel faster than man had ever travelled before on land, sea or air. They were pioneers doing important work in breaking down barriers, making possible the hitherto impossible and risking their lives in the process. Were the Blitzen and I flown to Daytona Beach and given the chance for one last shot of glory, would I take it? I'd like to think so, but probably not. ☐



Mike Conway

A British driver who is picking his own path through American racing and sports cars

AT THE END OF LAST YEAR THE outlook was pretty bleak for Mike Conway. Before the final round of the IndyCar season at Fontana he announced that he was no longer comfortable driving on ovals and while fans and insiders alike understood his decision, the consensus seemed to be that his American single-seater career was over.

By March Conway was still without a full-time drive, but fast-forward several months and he's put together his best season in years, fulfilling the promise of his early junior career. Conway won the British Formula Renault Championship in 2004 and the British F3 title in 2006, adding a victory at the Macau GP. A step up to GP2 for 2007 and 2008 yielded mixed results in struggling teams, but he also served as Honda's F1 test driver, giving him plenty of experience in a top-line single-seater. When he was invited to test an IndyCar at Sears Point during 2008 he topped the time sheets and signed with Dreyer & Reinbold for 2009.

"Those first couple of seasons were tough," he says. "Lots of mistakes on my part. The car could win and we'd be charging through the field, but I'd make one small mistake and that'd be it, end of race. I was trying too hard. The second season started OK, but then we got to Indy. Big crash." On the final lap Ryan Hunter-Reay ran out of fuel and Conway hit his slowing car. His Dallata catapulted into the debris fence and disintegrated, leaving him with a broken leg and fractured vertebrae. It was the end of his season.

"I came back strongly with Andretti in 2011 and got my first win at Long Beach," he says, "but the rest of the year was tough." Dan Wheldon's fatal accident at the season-closing Las Vegas race cast a shadow over the series and


doubt was entering Conway's mind. He spent 2012 with Foyt and had his second huge shunt at Indy. By Fontana he'd had enough. AJ's reaction? "He's really old school," says Conway. "He doesn't take any shit. He was the quietest I've seen him when I told him my decision. That's how I knew he was pissed off. After an hour or two he was OK with it, though. He understood, you've got to do what's right for you. But it was a long off-season after that."

Conway signed with Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing for Long Beach and qualified fifth but retired with electrical problems just before half-distance. "We had good speed so it was a shame. We should have had a podium there." Then came Detroit with Dale Coyne's team. Starting from pole he won race one and finished third in race two. "Out of all the

series I've done IndyCar's the hardest to put a weekend together, but anything I've jumped into this year's been good; I've been quick straight away. I think I've learned a lot from sports cars. There it's more about seat time and getting the most out of yourself rather than the car."

This year Conway made his debut in the LMP2 class of the World Endurance Championship, sharing with John Martin and Roman Rusinov. They finished third at Le Mans but were disqualified for an oversized fuel tank that, frustratingly, started out within the regulations but swelled by 0.4 litres as the race went on. They won in São Paulo and Austin comfortably, but the early results

and consistency of the OAK Racing and Pecom squads has probably put the championship out of his reach.

"This year's been fun trying out different cars," he says, "and I wouldn't mind carrying on like that. But I want to win a championship. The ultimate goal is LMP1 and there's the Indy road course championship as well. This year I've really shown what I can do, but we'll have to see where it goes from here. You never know." *Alex Harmer* 



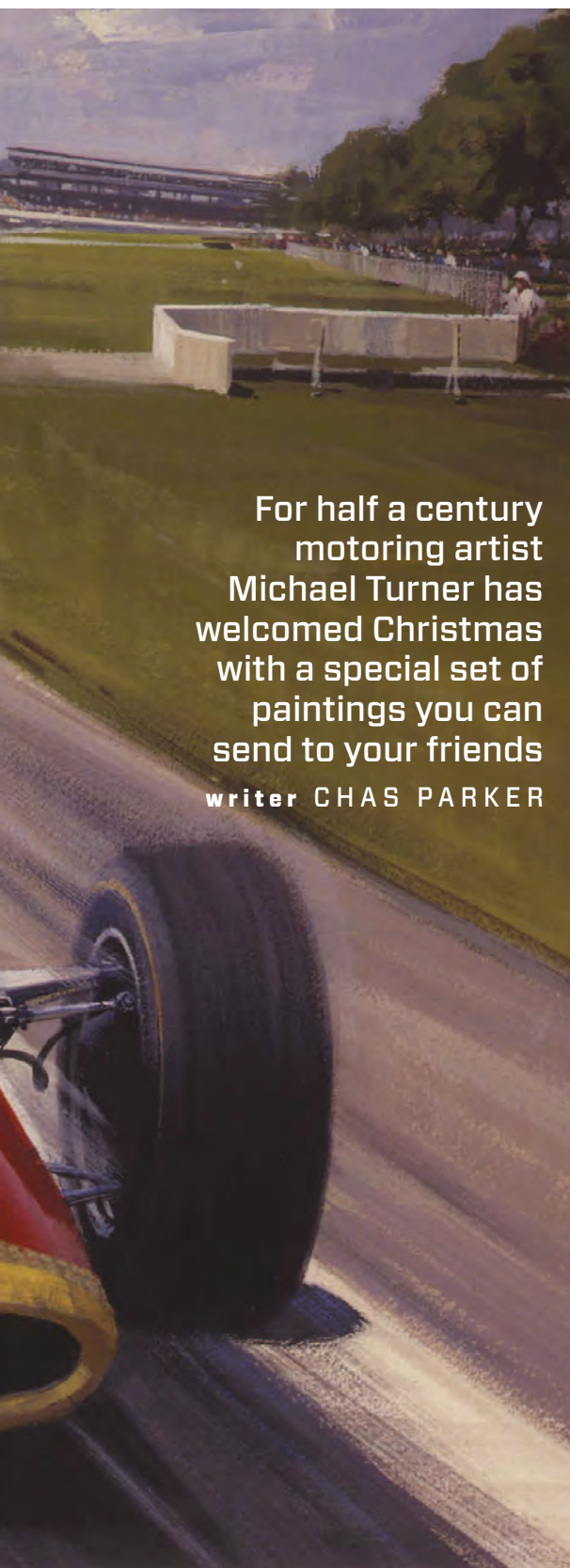
CAREER IN BRIEF

Born: 19/08/1983, Bromley, Kent
2004: British Formula Renault Champion **2006:** winner, Macau GP, British F3 Champion **2007-08:** GP2/F1 testing with Honda **2009-10:** IndyCar, Dreyer & Reinbold **2011:** IndyCar, Andretti **2012:** IndyCar, Foyt **2013:** IndyCar, RLL and Coyne/WEC, G-Drive



**GRAHAM HILL,
RED BALL LOLA-FORD
1966 Indy 500**

"When I went to Indy in '66 the whole atmosphere was vibrant. We had a big British contingent with Jackie Stewart, Graham Hill and Jimmy Clark, and I was very friendly with Graham. When he won and they played the national anthem I had tears in my eyes. That was the year they had a big accident at the start. There's a press stand at the end of the pitlane so people can photograph the start as the pace car pulls in, and suddenly there were cars going in different directions and wheels coming off. I thought, 'I've come all this way and haven't even got a race! I spent a lot of time on the grid while they were reassembling the whole thing and then worked my way around to Turn Two, where there was a photography tower. You could see the cars going into the back straight."



For half a century motoring artist Michael Turner has welcomed Christmas with a special set of paintings you can send to your friends
writer CHAS PARKER

FOR THE PAST 50 YEARS, motor racing fans have enjoyed a particular Christmas tradition of their own – the publication each year by Michael Turner of his greetings card sets. It goes without saying that these do not feature snowmen, robins, Father Christmas or holly, but instead depict scenes from the year's motor racing season.

The original idea for the cards came from the man who dreamed up many good motor

Climax, Dan Gurney's Brabham-Climax, Graham Hill's BRM, Jim Clark in his Lotus-Climax and John Surtees in his Ferrari. In subsequent years the cards not only depicted Grands Prix, but also included events such as Le Mans, the Indy 500 and various rallies. Perhaps what sets Michael's work apart and makes it so collectable is his attention to detail and accuracy. "I'm a bit obsessed with it, I think," he says. "It's important to me because I'm creating an historical record. I rarely leave things out, sometimes adjust the composition a bit so that everything makes sense."

Compliments of the racing season

racing-related innovations – John Webb, boss of Brands Hatch's former controlling company Motor Circuit Developments. "I remember thinking, 'What a silly idea, who wants Christmas cards with racing cars?'" Michael says. "John seemed to think it was a good idea. Of course, he was quite perceptive and obviously knew there were lots of enthusiasts who would buy a card that reflected their interests."

Webb remembers that the idea proved popular. "In 1960 motor racing Christmas cards were fairly rare and mainly the province of clubs and individuals," he says. "The announcement in November 1960 was well received and even featured in *The Sunday Times*."

The joint venture was repeated for the next couple of years, but in 1963 Michael decided to go it alone, establishing his own company, Studio 88 – named after his parent's house number in North Harrow, Middlesex.


That first solo set featured Richie Ginther in a Rover-BRM, Bruce McLaren in a Cooper-

Not everybody was a fan, however. "Bill Boddy hated paintings. He wouldn't have them anywhere near *Motor Sport*, and neither would Denis Jenkinson," Michael says.

Nevertheless, Michael's work is highly regarded and the cards have continued to be produced annually. They proved so popular that his wife Helen established a collectors' club in 1992, which only ceased last year after 20 years, but Studio 88 marked its 50th anniversary this year with a special exhibition in early October.

The subjects this year are Nico Rosberg (Monaco), Lewis Hamilton (Hungary), Fernando Alonso (Spain), Sebastian Vettel (Malaysia) and Kimi Räikkönen (Germany). I first purchased a set 40 years ago and will be adding to my own collection once again.

Here, we present a selection of Michael's own Christmas card favourites over the years.

More details about the cards and Michael's work can be found at www.studio88.co.uk 

JIM CLARK, LOTUS-CLIMAX 25 1964 Dutch GP, Zandvoort

"It was probably my second visit to Zandvoort, which quickly became one of my favourite circuits. There was a great tussle with Clark, Hill, Gurney and Surtees and this is the back of the circuit, which never gets photographed. I set off up the main straight in the opposite direction and this is where they came down between some trees and burst out onto the big, long curve that led them onto the finishing straight. I found that spot interesting with people sitting on the sand dunes having picnics, the odd photographer and the marshals, who didn't dress up specially in those days. It features four of my favourite drivers, and Jimmy's eyes were very focused. It was the same with Hill, but Jimmy was relaxed about his racing whereas Graham was always concentrating very hard. If you were at the apex of a corner and Jimmy was coming towards you, chances are he would see you and wave. Graham never would!"



JENSON BUTTON, McLAREN-MERCEDES MP4/26 2011 Canadian GP, Montréal

"Jenson, who was last at one point in the race, worked his way through the entire field and took the lead on the last lap when he pressurised Vettel into making a mistake. I thought that was brilliant. I'd been to Canada three or four times but I wasn't there in 2011 because I can no longer get the working credentials I need, but I know the circuit. I went there a week after a Grand Prix a few years ago because Helen and I were visiting a friend in Montréal. While we were there I went to the island and hired a bike to ride around and update my reference photographs. I can pick up relevant details like the crane, advertising, marshalling posts and any other incidentals from the TV race coverage." 📷





NIKI LAUDA, FERRARI 312B3 1974 Spanish GP, Jarama

"I didn't actually like the look of that Ferrari at the time and I wasn't a particular fan of Niki Lauda, but I always admired Clay Regazzoni, in the other Ferrari. Jacky Ickx in the Lotus was very talented and is a good bloke – he commissioned quite a lot of paintings from me over the years. From a painting point of view, I have to compose a picture from whatever conditions are available - on a wet, miserable day you have to make what you can of it. So you notice some Spanish police and a chap in an orange hooded cape, and all the detail in the background made it an interesting challenge.



JACKIE STEWART, MATRA-FORD MS80 Spanish GP, Montjuich 1969

"Montjuich was a lovely place, a little bit like Monaco without the houses, but the high wings were awful, especially the bi-plane Brabhams. The front wing was mounted on the inner suspension pick-ups and the back one was mounted outboard by the wheel, so they assumed different angles when cornering. Thankfully they soon banned them. That was my first visit there and it was fascinating, but these wings worried a few of us working trackside, because we could imagine how vulnerable we were if one of them broke away. This was one of the several interesting corners, with the monastery building and old city wall, and if there are objects such as the marker board and street lights, I try to compose the picture so that they're in the right places. I note also that the trees had obviously been pollarded and were rather stunted that year." 📷



DAVID COULTHARD, WILLIAMS-RENAULT FW17 1995 Portuguese GP, Estoril

“Estoril was a nice track to paint compared to modern tracks, most of which have got no redeeming features you could call attractive. I have to work really quite hard sometimes to compose a picture of a modern Grand Prix at the often clinically designed circuits, because there aren't the same opportunities artistically. This was Coulthard's first F1 win and I always enjoyed going to Estoril because it was an interesting track with striking backgrounds – an artistic bonus.”



RONNIE PETERSON, JPS LOTUS-FORD 78 1978 South African GP, Kyalami

“It was the last lap, Ronnie Peterson passed Patrick Depailler to take the lead and I was there on the banking. The reason I go to all these places is to understand their character and pick up the atmosphere. I know where the cars have come from and where they are going – so knowing what happened and what is about to happen, you know that the cars need to be positioned on a particular bit of track. Peterson has deviated from the obvious line to get past Depailler, but he's about to go into a fast left-hander, so you have to relate the objects to the composition of the picture. I felt sorry for Depailler, losing his victory right at the very end.”

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EVENTS

OF THE MONTH

WRC ❖ SPA SIX HOURS ❖ KOP HILL

Polo fruits: Sébastien Ogier clinched his first WRC title during the rally's opening minutes




RED BULL

WRC
Rallye de France

W

HILE SÉBASTIEN OGIER TOOK A LITTLE more than four kilometres to become World Rally Champion for the first time, nine-time title winner Sébastien Loeb reckoned it would have taken 400 spectators to haul his stricken Citroën back onto the road, such were the French drivers' contrasting fortunes on Rallye de France at the start of October.

Ogier, Loeb's arch-rival and former Citroën understudy, began the event in Loeb's native Alsace needing a solitary point or for closest challenger

Thierry Neuville to fail to win the event-opening Power Stage, which awarded bonus points to the fastest three. When Dani Sordo posted the quickest time through the street course in Strasbourg, Ogier was champion, although it took a short delay for the information to reach the Volkswagen driver as he waited to start the stage. A radio 

EVENTS

OF THE MONTH



since early May, the 39-year-old made amends on Friday, fighting back into contention by locking out the stage wins in the morning before adding his 900th WRC stage conquest to his bulging list of accolades on Saturday.

He started the final day in fourth overall, albeit a mere five seconds adrift of Latvala, such was the close nature of the lead battle on this rain-hit event. But after making the rarest of rare errors, Loeb and co-driver Daniel Elena were out barely a mile into Sunday's opening stage.

Loeb's bid for a record-extending 79th victory was over – together with his WRC reign – and he registered only the 21st retirement of a magnificent career.

"I lost the rear in a fast right corner, we had a spin and finished in the ditch," Loeb said afterwards. "We didn't really try to put the car back onto the road because we would have needed 400 spectators and there were none. Of course I would prefer to finish in a better way, but that's life. It's more difficult for Daniel because he finishes his last rally with his office on its roof."

There were no such problems for Ogier on Sunday's first stage, which he won to build a lead he would not relinquish.

At the finish in Loeb's hometown of Hagenau, France celebrated a new world champion, as the local hero bid farewell with a parade through the street stage in an open-top car.

With Loeb starting a new career in the WTCC from 2014, Ogier is destined to become the WRC's new benchmark.

Richard Rodgers

fault meant his team had to resort to a text message, which simply read 'CHAMPIONS'. Loeb's nine-year reign as WRC king was over.

With the world title secured, Ogier admitted he found it hard to focus when the rally resumed on Friday morning, while his efforts to recover lost time in the afternoon were hampered after he opted for wet-weather tyres in what turned out to be dry conditions. Neuville, however, got the call just right and completed day one in the lead for the privateer M-Sport team, almost half a minute ahead of Ogier.

But the Belgian's lead wouldn't last, thanks to a puncture on Saturday afternoon while he was seemingly in control. With Neuville's hopes of a maiden WRC victory in tatters, attentions turned to Ogier and his charge back up the order. By winning five of Saturday's seven stages, the 29-year-old completed the penultimate leg 1.5sec down on team-mate Jari-Matti Latvala and ready to pounce for a seventh victory of 2013.

Loeb, meanwhile, was contesting his 168th and final WRC event before he switches to the World Touring Car Championship for 2014 with Citroën. Having struggled through the Strasbourg street course on his first competitive run in a World Rally Car



Above, Sébastien Loeb's glorious WRC career ended unfortunately, in a ditch. Left, Thierry Neuville led initially. Below, party time for Sébastien Ogier and Julien Ingrassia





Spa Six Hours



JEFF BLOOMHAM

AESOP'S FABLE OF THE TORTOISE AND THE hare was called to mind as the consistent, reliable Simon Hadfield and Leo Voyazides won their second successive Spa Six Hours aboard the Greek's Ford GT40 in the event's 21st edition on September 21. "We stuck to our plan and the race came to us," said five-time winner Hadfield, after a golden seven days that began with his astonishing Goodwood TT Celebration success.

Six or seven of the 10 GT40 teams in the record 106-car entry could have claimed victory in the Belgian classic, had variables – most notably the refuelling lottery – favoured them. Christian Gläsel, seeking his third win, this time partnered by 1999 Indy

500 winner Kenny Bräck and brother-in-law Olivier Ellerbrock, had the quickest car. They lost it after leaving Bräck out during a safety car interlude, then Ellerbrock later spun.

Third in 2012 with Allard Kalff, Michiel Campagne added 1988 Le Mans victor Jan Lammers to his Chevrolet Corvette Grand Sport replica's crew and went one better. The thunderous beast beat the GT40 of double winner Shaun Lynn, Andrew Haddon and David Clark into third place. Philip Walker/Mike Jordan (leading when Walker explored the gravel) and Richard Meins/Chris Lillingston-Price sandwiched Gläsel's car as GT40s filled five of the top six places.

GT honours went to the amazingly fleet Lotus Elan of Andy Wolfe, Graham Wilson and Ollie Stirling, which survived a late biff from a Morgan and outran the Jaguar E-types and Shelby GT350s. Wilson's car was promoted to seventh overall when Wolfe – then in Jason

The winning Voyazides/Hadfield Ford GT40 leads into Les Combes, top left. Corvette crew Kalff/Campagne/Lammers took second, above left. Eau Rouge pursuit, above, with the Kjallgren/Littlejohn GT40 heading the pack

Wright's Squadra Kenny Rogers GT40 – lost a front wheel on his final lap. The Ford Mustang of Christian Dumolin/Christophe van Riet/Stephan Meyers claimed the Touring Car prize.

Michael Lyons is untouchable in Historic F1 at present and the young GT racer bagged another brace of victories in the Hesketh 308E with which he opened his FIA Masters Championship campaign. Voyazides/Hadfield also won the FIA Masters Sports Car counter in the former's Lola T70 Mk3B.

Other big winners included Richard Shaw/Jackie Oliver (BMW 1800, U2TC) and David Hart/Alexander van der Lof (Ferrari 250 GT Drogo, Pre-63 GT), while Jason Minshaw (Brabham BT4) and Miles Griffiths (Cooper T51) took HGPCA honours. Chris Ward topped both elements of the Stirling Moss and RAC Woodcote Trophies, taking over John Young's Lister-Jaguar after opening for Andrew Smith in a Cooper-Jaguar. *Marcus Pye*



Kop Hill Revival

INITIALLY HELD IN 1999 AND THEN REGULARLY SINCE 2009, the Kop Hill Climb 'revival', near Princes Risborough, has gained rapidly in stature. That was underlined this year with milling crowds, record takings and support from such as the Brooklands, Vauxhall and National Motor Museums.

Doug Hill certainly seemed to be enjoying himself in Beaulieu's 1930 'blower' Bentley until the supercharger drive sheared. The only down side was that this was the last time Dick Skipworth's Ecurie Ecosse collection would

be seen in public before they go under the hammer at Bonhams in December.

Regularly closed for speed hillclimbing up to 1925, Kop Hill now has to submit to the restrictions of a public road. Such is the event's local popularity that this is taken liberally, although the Brooklands Outer Circuit 24-litre Napier-Railton (left) did, at least, sport a number plate. One regular participant reckoned it was worth the fine to be caught without mudguards on his car. *Ian Wagstaff* 📷

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George Shackleton leads Simon Frost and Roy Hunt during their 500cc F3 battle

TRAGEDY AMID THE TRIUMPHS

Snetterton, September 29: a veil of sadness cloaks the VSCC's season swansong

“THERE'S NOT MUCH point loitering here,” the marshal said, addressing a small media posse gathered close to the left-hand flick known as Chapman Corner. “We've been told it might be some time before things restart.”

I've developed a tendency to be blasé about red flags. Once a symbol of serious disruption, they nowadays tend to be brandished for relative trifles. The mood around the paddock's fringe offered few clues, either – apparently

oblivious to the symbolism of a prolonged, unscheduled silence, people chatted cheerfully in Norfolk's Indian summer. Brows became more furrowed, however, as you edged closer to the pit garages and fragments of whispered conversation painted a bleak picture.

During practice for the day's fifth scheduled event, for Pre-1941 Racing Cars, Bugatti T35B driver Stephen Jewell had collided with Mac Hulbert's passing ERA on the pit straight. The Bugatti subsequently veered left into the barriers and Jewell was thrown from his car. He was treated at the scene and transferred by ambulance to



hospital, but later succumbed.

Every tier of our sport generates significant forces – and it's impossible to legislate for the consequences when these are unleashed unexpectedly. You know it might happen, but we've become accustomed to seeing drivers step away unharmed from complete wrecks. I've been a regular fixture at racing events for more than 40 years and have lost count of the number of meetings and test sessions I've attended, but it must be nudging four figures (if, indeed, that tally hasn't already been passed). In all that time, I'd been present – prior to this season – at only 11 events during which fatalities had occurred. Snetterton, however, marked the third such occasion during a summer that has been among the bleakest of recent times.

With the consent of Jewell's family, the meeting eventually resumed and showcased many of the reasons that lead us to forgive the sport its cruelties.

Snetterton 200 is closest in spirit to the 1974-2010 circuit, which preceded the present configuration, and suits club events well. The lap is long enough to be interesting, but not to the extent that fields become too thinly spread.

We're used to seeing 500cc F3 racers taking an arm from the steering wheel so that they can clasp their car's underbelly to improve weight distribution while cornering, almost in the manner of a sidecar passenger, but during practice many were raising a palm simply to shield the sun from their eyes along the Bentley (formerly Revett) Straight. In the race the leading group

had both hands full with each other as the lead changed constantly. On the final lap George Shackleton (Cooper) teetered around the outside of Coram to grab the lead into Murrays (Russell, to those of an older stripe). His advantage was brief, however, as Martin drivers Simon Frost and Roy Hunt outdragged him to the line. Just two tenths covered the trio at the flag – the kind of finish that tends not to occur in contemporary F3.

Calum Lockie showed great flamboyance at the wheel of the Danaher family's Maserati 6CM, as he stroked to victory in the Pre-1941 race, although even that paled alongside the exuberance of serial VSCC front-runner Justin Maeers in his GN Parker.

Having watched Maeers hustle the 1926 chassis to victory in the Vintage Seaman Trophy, I later saw him pull up to refuel the winning car at a BP station on the A11, an approach to racing that long pre-dates Ford Transits and trailers.

It was a day on which motor racing's darkest side contrasted with the joyous simplicity of its essence.



Justin Maeers presses on: next stop, the A11. Above, paddock bustle



Nasr leads race one, but was eventually beaten by Palmer, right. Bottom, Bird celebrates his win

THE FINAL FLOURISH?

Marina Bay, September 21-22: the comeback as an art form, but could this be the last time for GP2 in Singapore?

THE DESTINY OF THE NINTH GP2 Series title will be settled a matter of days after this issue hits the shops. Swiss Fabio Leimer and Englishman Sam Bird are separated by just seven points ahead of the Abu Dhabi showdown, while Felipe Nasr and Stefano Coletti are mathematically distant but notionally in contention.

The campaign's penultimate double-header produced two splendidly gritty drives in what might be the series' Singaporean swansong. Nothing had been confirmed at the time of writing, but sources suggest that championship rounds in Malaysia and Singapore might be dropped next year as part of a cost-cutting drive that has already led current chassis to be retained for a fourth season (rather than the customary three).

ourSingapore



The opening race featured a spirited battle between Carlin team-mates Jolyon Palmer and Felipe Nasr... although the interest seemed to dwindle around the mid-race tyre stops. Palmer made a slow start from pole, but recovered to pass Leimer and then set about Nasr. He was about 3.5sec adrift when the Brazilian made his tyre stop on the ninth lap of 28... and Nasr's maiden GP2 win appeared a



formality when Palmer stayed out until lap 12, by which stage he was lapping three seconds more slowly than his freshly rubbered sidekick. They were more than 13sec apart as the race's second phase began (at which point I'll confess to nipping away to find a coffee), but then Palmer began to close. And the more he did so, the more ragged Nasr became. By lap 18 Palmer was 2sec per lap faster, Nasr's tyres were finished and the Englishman went on to win by a margin almost as great as his mid-race deficit. He might not be the most fashionable young driver on the market, but he's a match for anybody when it comes to rolling up his sleeves and getting stuck in.

Bird won Sunday's race from pole: reverse grids sometimes fly in the face of meritocracy, but this was the result of a driver fighting back from adversity – persistent offender Johnny Cecotto had blocked Bird in qualifying, earning himself a penalty and condemning his rival to a midfield start – and then capitalising on the opportunity he'd earned.

It was Bird's fifth win of the season – and the 11th in 20 races for UK drivers (Palmer and Jon Lancaster have taken two apiece, James Calado and Adrian Quaife-Hobbs one).

Whichever way the dice roll in Abu Dhabi, it has been a fruitful campaign for the Brits who lurk within touching distance of the F1 paddock's electronic turnstile.



LAND OF THE BRAVE, HOME OF THE FREE

Brands Hatch, October 5: an object lesson for anybody who's ever whinged about a bit of understeer

THERE ARE NO PAMPERED EGOS HERE, just cheerful banter between the mostly ageing vans that serve as race transport. Motorcycle paddocks have a particular atmosphere, shorn of the insularity that percolates any four-wheeled series harbouring professional aspirations.

The British Motorcycle Racing Club had a fairly typical timetable arranged for its 2013 finale on Brands Hatch's Indy circuit: 43 races over two days, most of them 10-lappers but one stretching to 14, plus obligatory practice sessions and warm-ups. In our world, some organisations struggle to accommodate seven or eight in an afternoon.

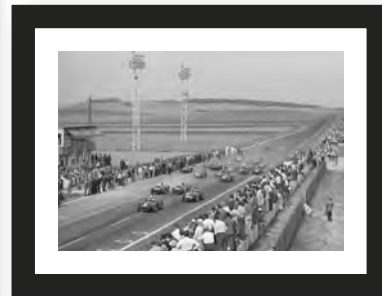
I had contemplated a day watching the MG Car Club at Snetterton, but sections of the A11 were closed so I opted for a more convenient alternative. I love watching bike racing, but appreciate that it is very much a job for others (although I was once press-ganged into entering a MiniMoto race in the Silverstone paddock – I'd been promised it was "a bit like karting", but a sizeable first-lap shunt preceded quiet withdrawal and the end of my competitive career on two wheels).

The racing is vigorous – and scrupulously fair, but then you don't defend like Pastor Maldonado without the benefit of a carbon cocoon. It's terrific to watch, but the ambience is equally engaging. At one point, the commentator welcomed Honda rider Francesco Cavalli to his box to monitor a race in which he should have competed. He didn't, though, because beer had allegedly been spilt over his engine the previous evening.

And it was humbling to discover that the chap with one arm and an artificial lower right leg – Danny Campion (above) – wasn't just preparing the bike on which he worked, but racing it. Not so much a breed apart, bike racers, as a breed unique. ☐

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The Andrew Cowan/
Colin Malkin/Mike
Broad Mercedes 280E
won Jim Gavin's 1977
London-Sydney epic

ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROAM

Time spent as a long-distance rally organiser breeds a rich seam of anecdotes. Meet Jim Gavin...

IT'S HARD TO FINISH A conversation with Jim Gavin. Not because he won't stop talking but because you hear yourself saying 'hang on, you didn't finish the story about the elephants...'

A big, bluff Irishman with breezy white hair and a ready laugh, Jim planned and ran some of the great endurance rallies. After entering the 1968 London to Mexico, he helped organise and run the two World Cup rallies, London-Mexico and London-Sahara-Munich, and then the longest rally ever – the 20,000-mile 1977 London-Sydney.

Crews faced a host of obstacles on these expeditions. But who booked the ferries? Squared the border guards? Sprinted ahead to man controls for the first car, and waited for the last? For many of those headline events it was Jim Gavin – and his adventures on the recce runs often outdid the real event.

There was the time in Peru when they'd booked a DC3 to fly them out of La Paz, only the drunk pilot, wearing a Colt 45 in his belt, hit the hangar before take-off. "Luckily I'd already met the President – we'd had afternoon tea. Well, afternoon gin, actually, and he kept asking about Princess Anne. ☑

GORDON CRUICKSHANK

I realised he wanted to meet Prince Michael of Kent who was in the rally, so I fixed that and in return got the border opened for us.”

But the DC3, Jim?

“Yes, yes. I called the palace and they sent another plane, a little Cessna. La Paz is the highest airport in the world – we didn’t so much take off as just run out of runway and suddenly there’s a condor looking in the window – but to land we had to overfly the strip to shoo the llamas off.

“So we get to Potosi and in this tiny inn they show me to the President’s Suite. I asked how many rooms they had. ‘Just the suite.’ Still, while I waited for the first car there was somewhere to go. A potato museum...”

“I got a bad tummy when the cars were due, and there was an outside lavatory with a big gap under the door. I ran most of that control from the lavatory, shouting ‘Shove your timecard under the door and I’ll stamp it’.”

It can be hard to keep track of where Jim’s stories are going next. One minute we’re in Columbia on a recce with Jack Sears, then in the Pacific port of Buenaventura in Columbia. Cajoling and bribery are a vital part of running one of these events. “They built a huge hotel hoping the railway would come – but it didn’t. So this hotel only had about four guests, military-looking old men who spoke German...”

After moving seamlessly on to the new sport of classic rallying, Gavin worked on the 1997 Peking-Paris trek. “I did the Peking to Iran section because I knew it well – I’d been through in ’68 and then again in 1970, the time Tony Ambrose and I were thrown in jail, so –”

Hang on. Jail?

“We’d had a bit of an accident after crossing into Iran up near the Russian border. It was when the Shah was having his spot of bother; they were suspicious of cameras and notebooks so we were arrested. A bit alarming as no one spoke English and my Farsi is rusty. They finally allowed Tony to drive to Teheran to the Consulate but they kept me. They were embarrassed by the state of the cell so I served my sentence in the office while we all drank tea. Naturally me and the head policeman try talking. No good, so he gets out a tin whistle and we sing some Iranian songs, and he asks me to teach him an English song. So out in the lonely village of Khoy there’s an Iranian policeman singing the Eton Boating Song...”

Jim breaks off for a sip of wine “Stop me if I’m boring you,” and without a pause continues. “Did I mention the lemonade? These police saw a bottle of

whisky in my case. ‘What is this?’ ‘Lemonade’. When I was released it was hinted that a gift would be appropriate. ‘Like what?’ ‘Like the Johnnie Walker lemonade’.”

Another sip of wine, and we shift to the Sahara where he and famous co-driver Henry Liddon are driving an ex-works Escort on the recce for London-Sahara-Munich.

“We fell in with three London solicitors in a Land Rover. One of them had brought a folding lavatory seat. ‘An Englishman does not squat,’ he said.

“So we travel with them for a few days and we meet a truck broken down. While I’m under the bonnet trying to fix it the truck driver approaches Henry shyly asking if he had any medicine. What sort? It transpires he has an itchy behind. Now Henry had a wicked sense of humour, so he points to me and says ‘he’s an eminent British specialist in that department. He’ll sort you out.’ I’m balancing on the bumper and I look up to see this guy undoing his trousers. I straighten up, bang my head on the bonnet and step back into the ashes of our fire – barefoot. As I’m hopping around eyes full of tears I collide with him and he falls on top of me. Of course I don’t know about the doctor story – all I know is a guy with his trousers down is lying on top of me, I’m hollering and the three solicitors are helpless... I gave the guy some Savlon.”

Under this cascade of tales I’m looking at Jim’s CV: competitor, engine builder, Ford co-driver, racer, book writer, Moskvitch rally entrant, and those arduous, lengthy recces – 17,000 miles through Africa, trips to Bombay, Peru, Bolivia, Mexico, Madras for the Sydney rally that didn’t happen...

All the tools you need to run a World Cup Rally, 1970s style. GPS systems, laptops and transponders not pictured



Aston Workshop
Aston Martin DBS Vantage

If you like the pure DBS shape, a recent bare-metal rebuild, including enlarging the straight-six to 4.2 litres, and copious interior upgrades, make this a rather special example.

EPOA, www.aston.co.uk

DREAM GARAGE
What we’d blow the budget on this month



Malcolm Ricketts
Shapecraft Lotus Elan GTS

One of a handful of Elan coupés built by Surbiton Motors in 1963, this has been upgraded to 26R spec and raced with some success. And it’s road-legal, too.

£125k, malcolm-ricketts@btconnect.com



Melvyn Rutter
1953 Flat-rad Morgan Plus 4

Four-seater Morgans can look ungainly but this one has better visual balance. Plus 4 engine will help to haul a full car load, while the uncowed radiator makes it stand out.

£28,750, www.morgan-motors-cars.com

“That was when I broke into the Taj Mahal. Tony Ambrose and I had crossed the Khyber Pass and got to Delhi, after being hauled out of a river by elephants when our boat grounded – tell you about that in a minute – and Tony said ‘We’re done here, I’m going to fly home, so why don’t you take the car the 2000 miles to Bombay?’ Well, I was young...

“So on the way I divert to Agra to see the Taj, and they tell me it’s best at dawn. It’s also closed, so I get up at 5am, park by the 10ft wall, climb on the roofrack and slide over the wall.”

I am still in a Sussex pub, but Jim is transported to Agra. “I sat by the pool as the pale yellow light washed over the minarets... Of course now I can’t get out. I waited by the huge wooden door until it opened and a man said, ‘What are you doing here?’ I replied, ‘You bloody well locked me in last night!’ and sprinted for the car.”

If it wasn’t for the mowers I might have space for the story about rescuing Moss from the Sahara, but I’d better get round to lawnmower racing, Jim’s other lasting contribution to motor sport, invented 40 years ago as a protest against commercialisation.

“Cheapest racing you can get,” he beams. “I just stuck up a notice – anyone interested? – and 50 people turned up. From a barmy idea it has spread around Britain, Scandinavia, Germany and the US. There’s an annual 12-hour marathon too, and one year Stirling Moss and Derek Bell took part.”

Though in his 70s, Jim still plans events: classic car tours of Europe and the US involving fine hotels, leisurely lunches and fundraising instead of wild terrain – more a club than a business.

“You’re a good prompter, Gordon,” chuckles Jim as we part. Funny, I barely remember saying a word. And I still didn’t hear about the elephants.



DISCOVERING SHERE BLISS

Old-fashioned pursuits brought alive in a quiet Surrey village

WHEN A FRIEND INVITED ME TO A hill climb in Surrey I thought he meant rambling; instead we watched E-type, Bentley, Nash, Integrale, 2CV, Griffith and a pattering

two-stroke 360cc Subaru slither up a narrow lane and disappear over the crest of the North Downs. An untimed event raising charity money, the Shere Hill Climb ran on a closed public road and attracted 123 cars to the normally quiet Staples Lane, offering sinuous bends, high hedges, straw bale chicanes and a magnificent view out across the Weald – if you weren’t trying to slow down before reaching the tree-tunnelled double downhill hairpin of the exit route.

It was Kop Hill without the historical precedent though, according to Julian Hunt’s gloriously detailed *Motorsport Explorer*, there was a climb near here in 1921. In fact the return loop took cars up it, that long A21 haul up to Newlands Corner.

With a stubble-field paddock, a burger van for refreshments and a ‘run what you bring’ ethos, this felt a bit like the Fifties – just enthusiasts eyeing each other’s cars and having some fun on a hill. Especially when the rain arrived. That made traction tough for the heavy hitters – the Jaguars, Healeys and Ferraris – and for the lone Morgan

Three-Wheeler with but one toe on the ground. It didn’t seem to affect the pre-war cars so much – a low-chassis Lagonda, the ex-Hawthorn Riley Ulster Imp, a polished AC Sports, and unusually an SS90 – but then no one was timing.

Replicas galore gathered mud as the rain fell – C, D, GT40 and two V12 Ferraris, a very persuasive Testarossa and a short wheelbase without the capital letters – while a McLaren MP4-12C and the AC Zagato prototype kept things up to date.

Organiser Esmond Foster (who once loaned me a Renault Turbo 2 for a day, a riotous roller-skate that never let on which way it was going next) says the road closure was no problem – until there was a backlash after extensive closures across Surrey for this year’s cycle races. “Then it became a nightmare! But when we made clear it was cars, not bikes, it went through.” That’s not a sentiment we hear often nowadays.

Having raised £10,000 for a local school and other charities, Foster aims for another event next September, with a longer course and better viewing: “We’re going to cut the hedge back!” That’s the sort of ‘facility enhancement’ I endorse, even if it took a helpful pal and a pressure hose to clean my chrome wires afterwards.

THE GATES OF WRATH

Cutting remarks in Crewe as GC attempts to hand back a Bentley to its makers



WHEN I HAD ONE OF THE FIRST Bentley Turbos on test, with the famous test plate 1900 TU, I’d driven the jet-propelled battle-cruiser *de luxe* everywhere I could conceive, but the time finally came to return it to Bentley’s press department.

When I got to Crewe I ended up round the back of the Rolls-Royce/Bentley plant, separated from it by a 10ft-tall wire fence, and drove into successive streets of down-at-heel terraces, hitting this fence time and again

without finding evidence of a gate.

Then I saw an old man on the pavement, and in defiance of the laws against Northern stereotyping, I have to tell you that he *was* actually wearing a flat cap and a muffler. I guided the huge machine over to him, whispered to a halt, swished the window down and called “Excuse me...”

He glanced at the flying ‘B’, then inside at the acres of cream leather and walnut and without a pause said, “It’s no good asking me mate, I haven’t any coppers to spare.” ☒

FROM THE ARCHIVES WITH

DOUG NYE



Our eminent historian dips into the past to uncover the fascinating, quirky and curious

Lee Proudfoot beguiles the Goodwood cricketers... and takes Tony Gaze on one final sortie



A STYLISH FAREWELL

Spitfire frolics above the Goodwood estate are nothing new, but one of this year's pre-Revival flypasts had an extra touch of poignancy

WRITING THIS, STILL in the soggy and arthritic afterglow of the most rain-affected Goodwood Revival Meeting yet, there's a memory of the Thursday cricket match that stands out for me.

That afternoon's thin cloud cover was high with a watery sun occasionally breaking through as we 22 incompetents larked about with bat and ball on the Goodwood cricket pitch, where the laws of the game were first codified way back in the 18th century. Goodness me, were

he aware of our antics the old Duke who presided over that process must bounce off the rev limiter in his grave each year...

Anyway, we played (and my teammates won) and as every year we all anticipated the best flying display you'll ever see as The Old Flying Machine Company's lone Spitfire – Ray Hanna's famous Mark IX MH 434 – made its spine-tingling run-in. Lee Proudfoot was its pilot and he expertly swooped, looped, soared and dived within apparent inches of house, lawn, yews and cricket stumps. It was a masterly display, but what we didn't appreciate

at the time was that we were also witnessing the final sortie of Squadron-Leader F A O 'Tony' Gaze OAM, DFC and two bars.

This Australian wartime Spitfire pilot was, of course, also the car-mad officer who – in 1947-48 – had first pointed out to the present Lord March's grandfather, 'Freddie', that the perimeter track at his estate's RAF Westhampnett former fighter aerodrome would make a darned fine motor racing circuit. Tony went on to race such cars as Alta, HWM, Aston Martin and Ferrari into the mid-1950s before taking up competitive gliding, at which he also represented Australia internationally.

His first wife Kay had been the widow of pre-war racing driver Johnny Wakefield, killed in a flying accident near Wargrave in April 1942. After her death he married Diana Davison, herself widow of Australian motor racing legend Lex Davison, who suffered a heart attack and crashed fatally while practising his Brabham BT4 for the Sandown Park Tasman Championship round in 1965. Diana passed away in August last year and Tony followed – at the age of 93 – this past July.

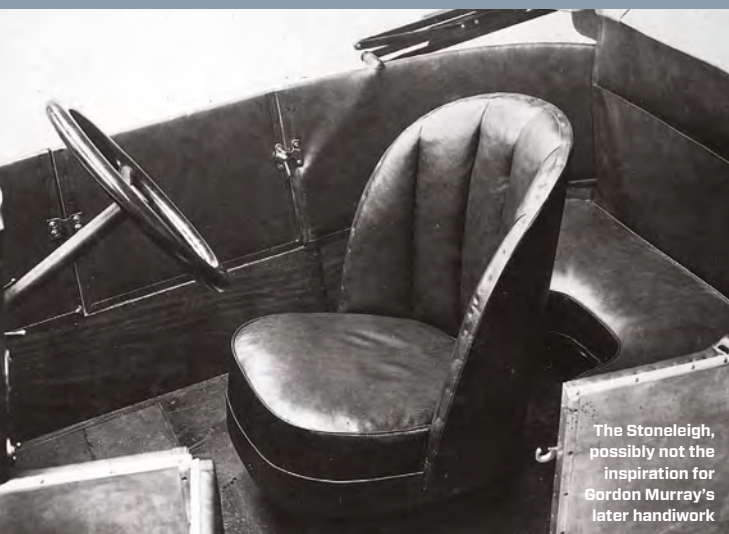


Tony Gaze in HWM-Alta at Spa in 1952. Below, Derek Bell watches Nye keep wicket as Tiff tries a different type of drive



The Davison dynasty is still, of course, strongly represented within the motor racing world, and between them had concluded that the Goodwood Motor Circuit would be a resting place Tony would appreciate. Strapped firmly into place within MH 434 as it flew that jaw-dropping routine was the urn containing Tony's ashes. A most fitting final sortie, indeed.

After landing, his ashes were interred in the motor circuit's little memorial garden, close by the statue of Tony's



The Stoneleigh, possibly not the inspiration for Gordon Murray's later handiwork

ARE YOU SITTING COMFORTABLY?

The unloved Armstrong-Siddeley that had a feature in common with a car of the future, the Le Mans-winning McLaren F1

BACK IN 1988 GORDON MURRAY invited me to become involved with McLaren Cars, building what emerged as the McLaren F1 – the centre-drive three-seat coupé that is now talked about as the ultimate road-cum-racing car for collectors, the mega-valuable Ferrari 250 GTO of future decades.

Gordon's centre-drive concept became the project's most jealously guarded secret before the new car's launch in the Monte Carlo Sporting Club on Monaco GP weekend in May 1992. The night before in the Loews Hotel, Denny Hulme had been pumping me for information about the design. I was able then to turn the tables on him. For donkey's years he'd habitually stonewalled press questions – now it was my turn.

He rightly predicted the F1 would feature centre drive, but I never knew whether he'd worked that out or it came from some leak. The Bear had been on really good form, tittering away in his characteristic manner like an amused Desperate Dan. But I noticed he ate hardly anything, and drank only water. It was only five months later that he suffered his fatal heart attack in a BMW M3 at Bathurst, and I suspect he was already an ailing man.

There were quite obscure centre-drive

production car precedents for the F1 – including the Wimille and so on – but in a long-forgotten photo file the other day I found another. May I commend posterity to the 1922 prototype Armstrong-Siddeley Stoneleigh. I kid you not, Armstrong-Siddeley, hardly a marque I would ever have considered as a McLaren F1 ancestor but so – at least in terms of seating layout – it proves to be.

Marque historian Bill Smith writes most entertainingly, and in his book *Armstrong-Siddeley Motors* he relates how the Stoneleigh Motor Company was a subsidiary of Armstrong-Siddeley, and how they had toyed with development of the BSA Light Car, under their own name, before World War I. The recession of the early 1920s subsequently convinced J D Siddeley that there should be a market for an inexpensive competitor to the Austin, Morris and Bean basic models. He promoted his original 9hp Stoneleigh as a utility, with centred driver's seat and a wrap-around upholstered rear shelf for two passengers, their legs each side of the driver à la future McLaren F1. His catalogue explained "In this way the driver's attention will not be distracted by nervous or talkative passengers."

Smith relates how Ernest Siddeley fell quiet on being shown the new model for the first

erstwhile CO, Douglas Bader, and flanking the assembly area from which he had so often driven his cars out onto the circuit he had god-fathered...

I bumped into Tony's step-daughter Cathy that evening, and she told me the story. One could sense her relief that it had all gone so well, of duty well done, mission accomplished.

We swapped Tony stories – because he could equally be charm personified, or stuffily pompous, dependent upon mood – and I'll never forget a group photo of BRDC members being posed together during one Classic Adelaide Rally, when he exclaimed in bewilderment "Who are all these people? What is the Club coming to?"

But I also remember a remark by George Abecassis, Tony's long-time friend and of course co-founder of their HWM team.

George was a fellow wartime RAF pilot, also a DFC. I once mentioned to him Tony's DFC and two bars – he had actually earned the medal three separate times – to which George responded: "Oh yes old boy, two bars – saloon and private."

I feel privileged to have known them.

time, before asking "Is that the thing with which the Old Man is going to revolutionise the car world?" Among employees more accustomed to building quality cars for the rich and famous, its factory nickname became "The wash-tub" while outsiders lampooned Siddeley as "The man who made walking a pleasure..."

His utility light car was offered with a wooden chassis frame, aluminium bodywork and a dummy radiator up front, behind which nestled an air-cooled 998cc vee-twin engine. Kerb weight was little more than half a ton. The van versions proved prone to breaking their backs if overloaded, but a pair of Stoneleighs won their class in the 1922 Scottish Six-Day Trial (and one competed against a Rover 8 in ascending Snowdon).

But I believe these were offset-driver four-seaters. They were, rather oddly, advertised as 'Motor Cars for Civil Servants' – the Stoneleigh '9hp Chummy Model' priced at £165 while its three-seater alternative cost £155. Commercially the programme flopped. It appears there were no takers for the centre-seater and only 364 9hp Stoneleighs sold overall.

Failure it might have been – but this forgotten pioneer still outsold its latter-day centre-seat successor, the McLaren F1.



Publicity drive: Ian Scheckter poses with the March 0-2-4 six-wheeler at Silverstone

LIFE BEFORE WIND TUNNELS

Remember when Formula 1 cars had contrasting design features and distinctive silhouettes?

A FEW YEARS AGO ONE OF THE Japanese Formula 1 magazines published a fascinating quiz. It was built around black-and-white side-elevation line drawings of that particular season's competing cars, omitting all advertising decals, livery lines and numbers. The quiz was simple. Identify each car by constructor name and model.

To anyone with a less than comprehensive contemporary feel for Formula 1, it was incredibly difficult to tell one car from another. Such was the effect of the category's wall-to-wall modern regulations, combined with the common laws of physics that dictate shape from wind-tunnel testing.

One of the compelling characteristics of Hunt/Lauda era Grand Prix cars as demonstrated so engagingly by the *Rush* movie is their obvious variety in shape and configuration. James's 1976-season McLaren M23 was as different from Niki's Ferrari 312T2 as chalk from cheese. Similarly different from one another were the contemporary season's flat-12 Brabham-Alfa BT45, the Lotus 77, Surtees TS19, Penske PC4, March 761s and Hesketh 308. Not to mention the Copersucar FDO4, which looked like a cross between a corncob and a bulldozer. And, of course, there was the Tyrrell P34 – with its unique 4-2-0 layout and six wheels, the front four steerable.

After the 1977 season, Formula 1 regulations began to change rapidly, progressively confining, constricting and funneling the category into the ever more detailed strait jacket that prevails today.

Certainly when Gordon Murray began design work for the McLaren F1 coupé, he absolutely revelled in the freedom suddenly available to him (fresh from Formula 1) within everyday road traffic regulations worldwide.

So something different always came as a refreshing relief in face of gathering regulation, and the sight of Ian Scheckter – Jody's older brother – preparing to test the 0-2-4 configuration March six-wheeler at Silverstone back in 1977 has cheered me up.

Like Patrick Head of Williams with their 0-2-4 six-wheeler project, Robin Herd of March Engineering felt that with a modern rear-wheel drive F1 car, the extra contact could be employed more usefully in providing extra traction from the driven wheels, and with all six tyres the same size as the regular F1 front tyre, the car would pass much cleaner air over the rear wing than was possible with contemporary two-foot wide rear tyres as used by four-wheeled contenders.

The cash-strapped Bicester team then built a four-wheel-drive rear end to be bolted onto an existing March 761. As many existing parts as possible were used, with an effectively standard Hewland gearbox driving the centre pair of wheels plus an extension casing and drive for the third pair bolted on behind. March unveiled the car to the press in November 1976, but during Silverstone testing trouble soon intruded with the austerity-budget rear gearbox casing flexing – some of Robin's intended reinforcing ribs having been omitted to save cost. The 2-4-0 then settled onto March's back burner until February '77 when, essentially for an instant sponsor-return in publicity, Ian Scheckter tried it at Silverstone in Rothmans livery, with the Rothmans aerobic team's Pitts Special biplanes handily lined-up for press photography. March – and its sponsor – got some exposure, Ian Scheckter described the 2-4-0's traction as "unbelievable", but the notion's time within Formula 1 was past. So uniformity's grip upon the premier class began to tighten, in every area except budget... and talent. ☐



PARTING SHOT



MAY 26

1968

MONACO GRAND PRIX

Denny Hulme (McLaren) leads Lodovico Scarfiotti (Cooper), Dan Gurney (Eagle), Lucien Bianchi (Cooper) and Jackie Oliver (Lotus) into Portier. Oliver's team-mate Graham Hill won – his fourth such Monaco success – from Richard Attwood (BRM) and Bianchi, both of whom scored the only podium finishes of their F1 world championship careers.

To buy this photo or other classic motor racing shots, visit photos.motorsportmagazine.co.uk