



# The Oulton Park Gazette

October 2025: Vol 1 Issue 7



## STORM FORCE

The 750 Motor Club Braves the Deluge

**DPR - Caterham Kings**

**A Marshal's Story**



@LloydiaPhotography



**Chevette HSR Replica - Broadbent's Book Corner**

# WELCOME

Hello!

There were only 2 meetings for cars at Oulton Park in September but, for very different reasons, they were both full of drama!

Dan Chilvers' report on BARC's Caterham Motorsport Race Day does an excellent job of conveying the feast of wheel-to-wheel action that took place.

Over the Caterham weekend, I was busy covering the MG Fest at Croft for the BRSCC(NW) Centre's website while PS Images were also unable to attend however Ian Carruthers (LloydiaPhotography) was able to supply a fantastic set of pictures in their absence. I am so fortunate in having such a marvellous group of people supporting *The Gazette*.

Following the Caterham meeting, I interviewed David Rowe who prepares the iconic British two-seaters to the highest of standards. His story is one of hard work, innovation and patience. He believes progress comes from taking small steps in the right direction.

Later in the month, history repeated itself when the 750 Motor Club visited. At the corresponding meeting in 2024, a thunderstorm caused an abandonment with a couple of races still to be run. This year, there was significant precipitation throughout the day and when the intensity of the rain increased late in the afternoon the track became unfit for racing. Credit to all those who braved the elements. Particularly, the marshals who must have been soaked through.

The meeting was another of Oulton Park's themed days, this time with the focus on Vauxhalls so it was a pity the inclement weather acted as a deterrent to spectators.

In the demonstration of classic competition Vauxhalls, one car that caught my eye was the Vauxhall Chevette HSR replica. A green Chevette L transported our family in the late '70s/early '80s so I always wanted the much more powerful version of my Dad's car to beat the multitude of Escorts in the rallies of that period.

Therefore, this month I have indulged myself by straying away from racing to do features on the history of Vauxhall's rallying hatchbacks and the replica that appeared at Oulton Park. I am thrilled that Paul Lawrance agreed to supply a couple of photos of Chevetttes in action on the stages.

David "Fasttoes" Williams – Editor

[OultonParkGazette@gmail.com](mailto:OultonParkGazette@gmail.com)

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# RACE REPORTS

## BARC CATERHAMS – 6<sup>th</sup> September



# CATERHAM CAPERS

*Brian Thornton leads the Roadsport field*

**Words by Dan Chilvers**

**Pictures by LloydiaPhotography**

One-make championships are a common appearance at racetracks all over the globe. Series like the Audi TT Cup and Ferrari Challenge provide drivers with a level playing field of equal machinery with which to do battle. Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> September saw a whole day of just one make championships take to the international layout and judging by the collection of busted fibreglass mudguards by race control at the end of the day, it can only have been the Caterham Race Day!

Caterham Motorsport is famous for its structured class system with clear tiers of ever faster Sevens. The Roadsport Championship provides a foundation of this system and with 27 entrants the racing action was excellent. Brian Thornton put his car on pole and defended superbly against all challengers across both races. In race one he had to deal with a charging Alastair Morton and 10 other cars in a huge slipstream battle that lasted nearly the entire race. Thornton took the win by a mere 0.14s over Morton while William Harris rounded off the podium. Race 2 felt like a continuation of their first battle as Thornton dealt with two race starts

Hall and the race was restarted. Only this race was even closer and Thornton led home a gaggle of Caterhams by 0.1s over the line and the top 5 was all within 1s. Driver Sam Parker was on double duty as she was conducting post-race interviews on her own championship and others for BARC!



*Louis Darling won both 270R contests*

One step up the ladder comes the 270R Championship, running a modified version of the Roadsport setup means the learning curve is as approachable as possible. If you looked at the timing results for the day you would see that 5 drivers stood on the podium and only 1 actually won a race but Louis Darling's route to the triple victor's crown was not a simple one. A 7-car battle

for 2<sup>nd</sup> in Race 1 let Darling build a small lead but it all came undone when Nick Samson and Henry Speeks ran wide at Dentons and caused a safety car that escalated to a red flag and reduced his lead to nothing. Django Jones couldn't find a way past, so he took 2<sup>nd</sup> and his first podium of the championship. Nick Highton was hit on the last lap yet still finished to 3<sup>rd</sup>. Next time out Darling had to fend off championship leader Ben Wheatley at the lead of 5 car breakaway pack that went 3 wide into Old Hall for the lead. Paul Oggelsby recovered from last on the grid to a superb 4<sup>th</sup> just behind the podium of Darling, Wheatley and Highton.

To seal the championship before the final round at Silverstone Ben Wheatley needed to outscore Louis Darling by 3 points and initially this looked very achievable as Wheatley led early on but the constantly shifting order of the front 5 pack and some excellent moves from Django Jones (2<sup>nd</sup>) and Paul Oggelsby (3<sup>rd</sup>) meant that it wasn't to be Wheatley's day as Darling won once again and took the championship fight to Silverstone.

The 310R Championship was a field of two halves with the front group of drivers tearing off while the second pack fought no less valiantly behind. Charlie Lower and Taylor O'Flanagan diced and swapped places for the entire first race while working together to try and build a gap to 3<sup>rd</sup> but it was no use as Lars Hoffman and Philip Bianchi kept harrying the leaders with the 4 finishing just 0.74s apart. O'Flanagan's move around the outside of Druids was good enough to claim 2<sup>nd</sup> behind Lower who took his first win of the season as Hoffmann took the final trophy spot. The second 310R event saw the top 4 group become a trio as Charlie Lower's Caterham broke down. This meant that O'Flanagan's double slip stream from Hoffman and Bianchi let him sweep around and take the win (along with some expert defensive driving). The reverse grid Race 3 was called off after Geoff Price had an incident at Island and the day's curfew was fast approaching.

Last and certainly not least comes the headline Seven Championship. Featuring the ultimate iteration of a racing Caterham, these monsters feature 320Hp/tonne and lap times matching an NGTC British Touring Cars. Armstrong was the name of the day as son Matt took top honours with father, Justin, taking 2<sup>nd</sup> in race 1 for a wholesome family moment. A late race safety car after Mark Famer and Darren McCormack got tangled up at

Old Hall meant that Harry Senior couldn't unleash the pace he felt he had and was stuck in 3<sup>rd</sup>. His luck would remain much the same later in the day as a 9 Caterham battle for 2<sup>nd</sup> with Senior as the cork in the bottle meant Matt Armstrong could build a healthy gap and take the win. Justin Armstrong fell foul to mechanical problems and dropped down the order. Senior found some late race pace which combined with some minor problems for Matt Armstrong meant Senior closed the gap to Armstrong from 4+ seconds down to 0.83 over the line but it wasn't enough. Harry Cook filled out the podium.

The final outing of the day for the top tier looked like a repeat of the first two as an early safety car helped a 3 car breakaway form which ended with Matt Armstrong facing the wrong way into Shell dropping him out of the points. This allowed Senior to take the win his pace showed he deserved. Harry Cook followed him home as the battle behind became the battle for the final champagne spraying spot which was taken by Craig Storey while Justin Armstrong recovered from the back to take a respectable 6<sup>th</sup>.

The top Caterham tiers are split into Pro-Am and Am with classes being decided on a driver's past results (such as championships or number of overall podiums). Alex Vincent and Harvey Lawrence took home the AM class wins for the 310Rs and Justin Armstrong and Craig Storey twice taking the Seven's Pro-Am honours.

All Caterham Championships will return for the final championship round at Silverstone on the 4-5th October before going on an adventure to Barbados for the Caterham Caribbean Cup in December.



*Matt Armstrong took the honours in the Caterham Sevens*

# SMALL STEPS TO SUCCESS



## Over nearly 20 years, many small steps in the right direction have seen David Rowe develop DPR Motorsport into one of the leading teams in the Caterham Championships

When drivers have progressed through the Caterham Academy and Roadsports Championships they can move into the 270R series – and potentially beyond. At this point, they no longer have to field their own cars and are permitted to receive help from a professional team who can offer technical support and driver coaching. One of the best in the paddock is DPR Motorsport.

It was founded in 2006 by David Rowe – **David Philip Rowe** hence **DPR Motorsport** – the company provides all things a Caterham owner could need whether they use their little 2-seaters on the road, at track days or for competition purposes.

For those who stick to the public highway, the company offers detailed servicing, MOTs, upgrades and repairs. David explains, “The knowledge and attention to detail acquired from our motorsport activities moves seamlessly into the road side of the operation.”

Meanwhile, this season within all the Caterham categories where the support of a team is allowed, DPR run between 8 and 12 drivers each weekend – depending on demand. Back at base, they also

support many other privateers with various ad-hoc services.

Rowe’s route to becoming a respected team owner began with “messing around” with model cars before competing in endurance karting.

David takes up the story: “Once I could drive, in the late ‘90s I decided to sign up for a week-long course at the Jim Russell school at Silverstone to get my race license. At this time, I was undertaking a modern apprenticeship at a MG/Rover dealership and thought I would approach the dealer principal for ‘sponsorship’. I put together a pretty mediocre presentation and incredibly, they agreed to help! This included providing a Rover Metro that I converted into a racing car. I competed in the 750 Motor Club’s Stock Hatch Championship the following year!”

It turned out that Rowe found the technical side of building and preparing the little British hatchback more appealing than actually driving it out on a circuit so he found work with teams that fielded Radicals and Formula BMWs before landing a role in the British Touring Car Championship (BTCC) – all while finishing his apprenticeship.

David told *The Gazette*, “I had a great experience with a top-level BTCC team that gave me a good steer on how a professional motorsports operation should be run. Although it would be some time until I started DPR, I can definitely say that team’s impact helped me shape the way I wanted to run my company from the outset.”

In 2006, one of his father’s work colleagues took part in the Caterham Academy Championship. They asked for Rowe’s help with suspension set-up and also support at the track. In those days, the Academy cars used Rover K-series engines which David knew well from the garage where he served his apprenticeship. As a result, he became increasingly in demand – this was the genesis of DPR Motorsport.

In the almost 20 years since then, the company has grown more than David could have ever thought possible. He says, “It went from just me in a single garage into a bigger, rented workshop on a converted farmyard. The operation then stepped forwards considerably in 2015 once we acquired and updated an 8,000 sq ft building on an industrial estate near Redhill.”

Nowadays, a large part of the business is training and apprenticeships. Many of the young technicians who began their motorsport career at DPR are currently working in GT racing and Formula 1. It gives David great satisfaction to see them progress.

During the 2 decades in which DPR Motorsport has developed, Rowe has been taught so many lessons. “You are always learning,” he reflects, “and just need to take small steps in the right direction to make a significant improvement as time passes. It never happens overnight.”

Aside from being in charge of one of the most professional teams in the paddock, David has also undertaken a fair amount of innovation. He designed alignment shims for the De Dion rear suspension used by Caterhams which allow toe and camber to be set accurately. Previously, competitors were using washers or pieces of cut up Coke cans!

The shims are permissible for use in all the Caterham championships in which drivers are allowed to be supported by teams.

The DPR Motorsport premises in Redhill also house a very advanced simulator which features an actual Caterham chassis at its heart.

This is not a gimmick. The aim is to provide drivers with the most immersive experience possible and also to develop muscle memory so that, once out on track, the exact limb movements and required physical effort are second nature to them.

All the contact points – pedals, steering wheel and gear lever – are genuine Caterham parts along with the components in the brake and clutch systems. Even the throttle body is the same as the real thing.

When drivers use the sim’ to learn new circuits and then drive the track for real, they have the spooky feeling that they have been there before! The feeling inside the virtual and real cockpits is exactly the same and the lap times achieved in both are very similar.

The DPR driver coach uses the sim’ to develop the skills of just about everyone who races with the team, this is particularly the case throughout the Winter when newcomers are put through their paces ahead of the following season.

Next year will see big changes in the Caterham Academy Championship as the series adopts a 1.3 litre turbocharged engine manufactured by Horse Powertrain Ltd which is a joint venture between Renault and Geely to develop low carbon propulsion technology.

Rowe says, “The performance of this new engine looks fantastic and should be a great platform for upgrades going forward. We also have a few new products and upgrades in development for Caterham owners, so are excited about that.”

It is clear that, due to the hard work and forward thinking of David and his team, the growth of DPR Motorsport is set to continue.



# THE DEPUTY'S STORY



**by Heather Roberts, Deputy Chief Marshal at MSV/BARC(NW) race meetings**

My marshalling career started in 2009 after my annual birthday trip to watch the BTCC. Usually, this would be the Touring Car drivers' annual visit to Oulton Park, but that year they'd changed the calendar so (my now husband) Andy and I went up to Croft. Chatting to the marshals in the recruitment tent was actually his idea, however I soon realised I quite fancied having a go too! Therefore, in September 2009, we had a Marshalling Taster Day at Oulton Park. After a guided tour of the circuit during which we were shown all aspects of how a race meeting is run, we joined the marshalling team at Old Hall for the afternoon. It was a very eventful day, but we were hooked!

Being in a managerial role at work, I just wanted to be a responsibility-free incident marshal in my weekend hobby with no intention of 'upgrading' through the different levels a marshal can do. Gradually however, I found myself working through the ranks, greatly encouraged by Chief Marshal, Margaret Simpson, and a few others. There are several 'Grades' to marshalling and a variety of roles to have a go at, and I've discovered over time that I enjoy every aspect of marshalling, be that 'on the bank' as an incident or flag marshal, or even in

one of the more specialised roles such as in the pits or start

One of my favourite places to marshal now is Anglesey Circuit. Despite being a great place to watch motor racing with amazing panoramic views as a backdrop, due to its location Anglesey often has fewer marshals than the likes of Oulton Park.



*Heather displays her marshalling skills at the 2016 BTCC meeting at Oulton Park. Photo: Martin Kessel*

Therefore, anyone who does make the journey,

quite often has to be prepared to take on roles they have never undertaken before, or even multi-task in some. That is how I came to be handed a radio at one such meeting so I could communicate with Race Control, as I was put in charge of a marshals' post and sector of track; there started my journey as a "Post Chief" – the most senior of trackside roles!

You remember I said I had no intention of getting too far up the hierarchy of marshalling?! I'd discovered I enjoyed the variety – no two meetings are the same and the range of people I was getting to know/work with was great. I've enjoyed every role I've been allocated in equal measure; each challenging me in their own way. I even got thrown in the deep end gridding up the cars on the start-line at Anglesey one weekend, with just one other person to help who had also never done start-line before!



*Heather (right) marshalling at the 2016 British Grand Prix with (left) Nadine Lewis - former Chair of the British Motorsports Marshal's Club - and F1 Race Director, the late Charlie Whiting..  
Photo: Heather Roberts*

A few years ago, over a period of 12 months or more, Margaret Simpson (Chief Marshal at Oulton Park and Anglesey) started talking to me about how various committees (BARC and BRSCC in particular) had been asking her about training up a successor to her Chief Marshal role. It is a voluntary position that she has held for more than 30 years, during which time she has achieved legendary status for how she looks after and champions those in orange at Oulton Park and Anglesey. I said that sounded like a very good idea, although I was slow to realise it was only me that she was having this repeated conversation with... until she asked me outright one day at Anglesey if I'd like to shadow her

at an upcoming meeting at Oulton to see what she did!

Having made it clear that I was only going to see what it was all about and was absolutely not making any promises, I joined Margaret at Oulton Park for a BARC NW meeting in 2019. It was interesting to see the checks and paperwork she had to make/fill in before the racing could get underway; checking everyone was signed on (in the days when it was still only done on paper on the morning of a meeting), any Under-18 parental consent forms had been filled in and received, details of medical crews accumulated, paperwork detailing the number of personnel around the track submitted to the senior clerk and race secretary for the start of the meeting, and of course the most important part – the marshal's raffle!

There was such a lot to take in, that I was asking a lot of questions. By the time we started our walkabout at 11am, unbeknown to me Margaret had already spoken to Ray Sumner (Senior Clerk and the then BARC NW Chairperson), so arriving at Deer Leap, Margaret introduced me as her new Deputy! "I thought I was just seeing what's involved!" I said in slight shock. "Oh, I've already spoken to Mr Sumner now," said Margaret with a cheeky smile and a glint in her eye. The deed was done – I had become Deputy Chief Marshal!

Soon after taking on the role of Deputy Chief Marshal for BARC NW, I fell pregnant and so doing this new largely administrative role helped me to continue as a marshal, although it didn't stop me getting out on the bank as Post Chief either! To complicate matters though, whilst I was learning this position (which is key to the running of every race meeting), the Covid-19 pandemic came upon us with all the restrictions it brought with it. This meant the close mentorship we were planning had to be put on hold until it was safe to do so. Nonetheless, I took the opportunity to go out on walkabouts on my own, getting to know more of the marshals out on the bank.

Since the restrictions lifted, I've been able to continue developing myself to understand each of the roles better around the circuit. I've now spent some time in the pits, briefly on the rescue unit, fire truck, in Race Control and I'll be continuing my knowledge with days in assembly, start-line (with a full team this time) and scrutineering. I feel it's important as Chief Marshal to really understand

what everyone does during a race meeting so I know how I can be the support they need, and I've found roles that previously hadn't necessarily enticed me that much, to be some of the most interesting and enjoyable places to be!



*Heather was a Post Chief at the 2021 Race of Remembrance*

For the last couple of years, as well as being Deputy Chief Marshal for BARC NW, I've also performed the role for MSVR. I have continued too with additional training, such as the MSUK course which enabled me to become a Safeguarding Officer (a role I had previously performed for Sprint Meetings at

Anglesey in addition to working in education and volunteering for Girl Guiding for over 20 years).

At this point I'm at pains to reassure you that Margaret has absolutely no intention of hanging up her orange coat any time soon, so I've spent the last six years gradually learning the role. This includes pre-meeting work which has changed a bit since 2020 when sign-on became digital prior to an event, and tickets being sent out via email instead of post; changes needed with the arrival of Covid-19, but that have remained in place as it makes it more streamlined on race day.

From the online database, we aim to have a list of everyone attending a meeting to marshal or officiate on the Wednesday before the weekend of the event. This gives us enough time to notify those who are doing the allocations of the various duties, so they can make a plan of who will be allocated to which post. As ever, things can and do change which always makes things slightly "interesting" on the morning of a race meeting!

Looking ahead, Duncan Fitz-Gibbon (who featured in Issue 1 of The Gazette) and I are working closely together as Deputy Chief Marshals to Margaret to ensure that whether it's me at BARC/MSVR meetings or Duncan at BRSCC meetings, everyone knows what to expect from us. The role of Chief Marshal is a huge responsibility, and I can only hope that when the time does eventually come, that I can fulfil the role that Margaret does so seamlessly, to the very best of my ability.



*Master and apprentice. Margaret Simpson and Heather on the Anglesey pit wall. Photo: Heather Roberts*



# RACE REPORTS

## 750 Motor Club – 20<sup>th</sup> September



*Pete Morgan's Fiesta leads the Nova of Ted Cooper in conditions that would soon bring the meeting to a halt*

There was another themed day at Oulton Park on 20<sup>th</sup> September when “Vaux Valves” shone the spotlight on all things Vauxhall. One thing that didn't shine was the sun – it rained all day – which was a great shame.

Towards the end of the day, conditions worsened causing two drivers to lose control and hit the barriers hard. Proceedings were halted immediately and the rest of the meeting was abandoned.

The 100 minute Tegiwa Club Enduro featured a star name in the shape of reigning British GT Champion, Ricky Collard. He has been coaching BMW M2 driver, Rob Fenwick, and for the Oulton Park round of the championship, he replaced Fenwick's usual co-driver, Andrew Shepherd.

The 750 Motor Club's Enduro Championship operates a handicapping system and so, because Collard is a FIA Silver-rated driver in international sportscars, not only did Fenwick and Collard have to make a longer pit stop than the other competitors but they also had to make an extra 30 secs stop.

Fenwick started the car and got the additional stop out of the way at the end of the first lap. This allowed him to negate the time lost in the extra pit stop when the Safety Car came out.



*Scott Parkin in his rapid Audi TT*

Up front, Scott Parkin (Audi TT) was charging away from the field each time the Safety Car pulled in – surprisingly, given the conditions, there were only 3 occasions when it was required. He drove the whole race himself and after all the pit stops had been made he was 16 seconds ahead of the Fenwick/Collard BMW. This was more than enough to secure victory particularly as Collard was busy fending off the VW Golf of Jamie Hadley. Eventually,

Hadley attempted to pass Collard at Lodge only to spin and end up stuck in the front of the gravel trap. With around 5 minutes left on the clock, the race was halted and the results declared as at the end of the previous lap with Hadley Not Classified as he wasn't running at the time of the red flag.



*Shaun Traynor (27) leads Neil Stratton (84) in their MR2s*

At the start of the first Rogue Motorsport Toyota MR2 Championship encounter Scott Edbrooke and Neil Stratton battled for the lead until Edbrooke spun on the exit of Old Hall. This left Stratton with a healthy advantage but in the closing stages, it was Shaun Traynor who had the most speed and he pounced when Stratton had one of many slides at the exit of Lodge to take a race-winning lead as they went past the pits at the start of the last lap. Traynor's steering column released so he was coping with the wheel dropping into his lap!

Traynor led race 2 from start to finish. Stratton and Adam Lockwood followed him closely throughout but there were no changes of position as Traynor focussed on not making any mistakes and the two drivers behind decided not to try any risky manoeuvres given the difficult conditions.

The opening Yokohama Locost Championship was red flagged due to Glyn Griffiths going off at Old Hall. Lewis Ward's second start was as good as his first was bad and it put him in the lead. Jack Lynas stayed in his slip-stream until the last lap when a good run out of Knickerbrook allowed Lynas to pass down the inside at Druids. Taking the conventional racing line allowed Ward to carry more speed under the Warwick Bridge and move back ahead at Lodge. This time it was Lynas who was faster coming out of the corner but he was 0.03 seconds behind when they flashed past the chequered flag.

The second Locost race didn't run due to the weather conditions.

In the first JDM Plates Ma7da Championship thrash, Martin West was many leaving the tarmac – he went off when leading on the opening circuit. Second placed Ben Powney slithered into the barriers at Old Hall leaving Benjamin Dade in the clear. But then Imran Khan and Tom Collier reeled him in. On the penultimate tour, Collier spun off at the third element of Hislops. Dade held on to take the victory ahead of Khan as West recovered from his early off-track excursion to take third.

Collier was faster in race 2 and soon took the lead from West. Once in second place, West struggled to see where he was going in the spray, yet alone attempt to pass Collier. In any case, a runner-up finish was more than enough for him to be declared the 2025 Ma7da Champion. However, once a racer always a racer and West decided to go for the win exiting the final corner. He almost took the spoils, finishing 0.013 secs behind. A lack of traction prevented him from building the momentum to complete the pass. Dade was third.

When the contenders in the Vulcan Racing Classic Stock Hatch Championship first came under Starter's Orders, Pete Morgan's Ford Fiesta XR2 took the spoils after he came out on top in his battle with the Vauxhall Nova of Ted Cooper. Andrew Thorpe (Citroen AX GTi) survived a trip through the edge of the gravel at Old Hall to claim third.

The Mighty Mini Championship ran concurrently with the Stock Hatches. Pole man James Jenkins was ahead for the first 2 laps, but dropped it into the gravel at Old Hall, gifting the lead to Gregory Jenkins who held it to the flag.

The intensity of the rain increased significantly when race 2 was about to begin. At the start of the second lap, Stock Hatch runners James Haslehurst (Peugeot 205 GTi) and Ewan Lince (Vauxhall Nova GTE) aquaplaned on the approach to Old Hall. They went straight on and clattered into the barriers. Haslehurst's Peugeot was sent up on to two wheels but came back to earth the right way up. However, Lince's Nova, which he had borrowed, rolled onto its side. The race was immediately red flagged and, with the track saturated, the meeting was abandoned.

# LOW COST LOCOST THRILLS

By Dan Chilvers



Motorsport is rarely cheap, and prices are only rising. Thankfully, some championships deliver wheel to wheel thrills in purpose-built machines for a fraction of the cost. The beloved 750 Motor Club offers two such series, the affordable Locost Championship and its more powerful offshoot series the Ma7da Championship. Both series featured at Oulton Park on 20<sup>th</sup> September.

Ron Champion's book "Build Your Own Sports Car" is the basis for the Locost series entire existence. Champion and Lotus Seven creator Colin Chapman had strong ties to the 750 Motor Club and the first Locost was heavily inspired by Chapman's own racing Seven. The book carefully and methodically guides the reader in how to build their very own Locost for a claimed "£250" back in the late 1990s. The Locost cars run Ford Crossflow engines with a Ford sourced 4 or 5 speed gearbox. Suspension, tyres and brakes are also limited to keep costs down but racing action to a maximum. Second hand cars are available for £5,000-£10,000 and a race weekend costs £350-£400. This gives it one of the lowest barriers for entry in UK circuit racing.

Some drivers loved the Locost's dependable handling but wanted something with more grunt, so the Ma7da Championship was created. This new formula did away with carburettor powered Ford engines and replaced them with Mazda 4-cylinders from the MK2.5 MX-5 roadster including the donor

cars original gearbox. The Locosts and Ma7das feature nearly identical chassis with racier tyres and fuel injection on the Ma7da giving them an edge in lap time. Due to higher running and build costs the Ma7das are more expensive (around £15,000-£18,000 for a full car).

Driver Lewis Ward braved both series at a soggy Oulton Park and came away with a race win in his Locost. He described the Locost as "less twitchy in those conditions, this was mostly down to having less power and more of a "road style" tyre which was able to disperse the standing water more effectively". The gap over the line between Ward and second place Jack Lynas as a mere 0.030 seconds as the whole race was decided on the last lap. Lynas took the lead up Clay Hill and Ward explained "I knew I had to try something different to try and retake the lead with only 2 corners left. I picked up the throttle really early, even before the apex at Druids, I knew it was either going to slide or hook up. Thankfully it stuck and I got a mega run down towards Lodge. I was able to make the move and take back the lead on the inside, but my exit was compromised, and Jack had a run on me to the line. I was just about to hold on" and this win and its haul of points allowed Ward to take second in the championship over Lynas in the last race of the season.

Thank you to Lewis Ward for the comments.

# HSR REMASTERED



Of the cars that took part in the demonstration laps at Vaux Valves one of the most eye-catching was the Vauxhall Chevette HSR replica that was driven by Paul Sidebottom. It recalled a golden era of British rallying from the late 1970s and early '80s.

Paul built his recreation of one of the classic silver works' cars during the pandemic under the guidance of Gerry Johnstone who was the Team Manager of Dealer Team Vauxhall (DTV) in period. There is no one who knows more about putting together these very special Chevettas!

Just like the original machines, the replica is constructed using the shell of a standard automatic version of the Chevette at its heart to take advantage of the wider transmission tunnel that model has. It also features a longer wheelbase conversion. Other similarities include Weber 45 twin carburettors and a 5 speed manual gearbox – back in the 1970s almost all road cars only had 4 forward cogs.

Some things are different, however. Under the bonnet is a more recent engine – a 2,300cc 4 cylinder as used in Vauxhall Calibras. Matching that extra "Go" is more "Slow" in the shape of uprated Wilwood brakes.

Ever since he was 14, some 38 years ago, Vauxhall has been Paul's favourite manufacturer – inspired by Gerry Marshall driving the mighty DTV Firenza Special Saloon which Marshall christened "Baby Bertha".

It is no co-incidence that Sidebottom went on to own and build Firenzas, including a racing version in the mid-'90s. He also had a Chevette HS, the first iteration of the rally car he went on to replicate.

So much does Paul admire the performance cars that bore the Griffin badge in the 1970s that he is the chairman of the Droop Snoot Group that caters



Paul was invited to display his car in the Salon Prive at Blenheim Palace.  
Photo: Paul Sidebottom

for all those who own, run, race, rally, restore, repair, or just plain love the Firenza, Sportshatch, Magnum, Viva or Chevette.



Paul with a Firenza that he built. Photo: Paul Sidebottom

Since Covid ended, Paul has displayed his Chevette HSR replica at many car shows, winning over 20 concours trophies. At one such show, the car was inspected by Terry Kaby who drove the Chevette in the 1982 British Rally Championship. His co-driver from that time, Mike Nicholson, was also present as was Mike Broad who read the pace notes for Russell Brookes in the same series. They crewed the iconically-liveried “Andrews – Heat for Hire” version of the HSR. All 3 men signed the dashboard of Paul’s replica, much to his delight!

In the world of concours exhibitions Paul’s Vauxhall must have made its mark as this year he was invited to take part in the prestigious Salon Prive at Blenheim Palace.

Aside from displaying the car all over the country, Paul has performed high-speed demonstrations at Donington Park (twice), Thruxton, Cadwell Park, Staffordshire Showground and now Oulton Park. He told *The Gazette*, “It’s a bit of a handful to drive and I probably don’t push it to its limits. It has been valued at £70k and I don’t want to bend it!!!”

In the wet of Oulton Park, the Chevette had a surprising amount of grip even though it had tyres fitted that were designed for dry Track Day use.

As it is a rally replica this rather special Vauxhall is fully road legal and, if it is just going to be part of a static display, it is driven to car shows.

Having got so much enjoyment from the Chevette HSR replica, Paul’s current ongoing project is the restoration of a rare Droop Snoot – a 1976 Sportshatch which is a limited edition of the Vauxhall Magnum Estate. Less than 200 were made. No doubt that too will be catching the eye when it is displayed at car shows.



The dashboard of Paul's Chevette has been signed by Terry Kaby, Mike Nicholson and Mike Broad. Photo: Paul Sidebottom

# THE RALLYING CHEVETTES



Words by Dave Williams. Pictures by Paul Lawrence

Throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Vauxhall Chevette rally car emerged as a formidable competitor.

Launched in 1975, the standard 1,256cc Vauxhall Chevette was designed primarily as a practical, affordable family car. Based on the Opel Kadett and built in Luton, it was Vauxhall's first hatchback. Its compact size, rear-wheel drive configuration, and robust underpinnings soon attracted the attention of Vauxhall's motorsport operation, Dealer Team Vauxhall (DTV), which saw potential for competition use. DTV was established by a group of dealers from the London area in lieu of a pukka factory motorsport department.

The idea behind the Chevette HS (Homologation Special) was simple: build a rally car that could take on the Ford Escort RS1800 and give Vauxhall the motor sport profile it had always lacked. The original road car was never intended for competition, but its compact rear-drive layout and crisp handling made it a solid starting point.

In order for the HS to compete in the FIA's Group 4 category, Vauxhall had to produce 400 road-going examples, each one a thinly disguised rally car.

When it went on sale in 1976, the HS featured widened wheel arches, a strengthened shell, upgraded suspension, and a five-speed ZF gearbox. Most importantly, its 2.3-litre engine, fitted with a 16 valve alloy cylinder head, produced up to 135 bhp in road trim and significantly more in rally specification. The power unit originally started life under the bonnet of the Vauxhall Victor FE.

Sold through Vauxhall dealers in a distinctive silver paintwork with red striping, the Chevette HS quickly made its mark on the British rally scene. Its compact dimensions and rear-wheel drive handling made it agile on tight, twisty stages, while its robust mechanicals withstood the rigours of competition.

Contemporary road tests of the version available to the general public described it as a pure driver's car... and one that offered a visceral thrill few others could match.

As rallying became ever more competitive, the Chevette continued to evolve. The ultimate development was the Chevette HSR (Homologation Special Rally), introduced in 1979. The HSR incorporated extensive use of lightweight materials, including glassfibre panels for the bonnet, wings,

and doors, reducing the car's weight to just over 900 kg. The engine received further development, with some works rally cars producing over 250 bhp thanks to Cosworth-developed cylinder heads.

The HSR's suspension was also markedly improved, with revised geometry, coil-over dampers, and stronger components to handle the harshest conditions. Wider wheels and tyres improved grip, while the iconic box-arch bodywork gave the HSR a purposeful, muscular stance.

The Chevette HS and HSR became fixtures in the British Rally Championship and various international events. Notably, Finnish ace, Pentti Airikkala, secured the British Rally Championship title in 1979 at the wheel of a Chevette HS. His aggressive, spectacular driving style suited the car perfectly, and his victories cemented the Chevette's status as a serious rally weapon.

Other notable drivers included Tony Pond, Russell Brookes, and Jimmy McRae (father of future World Rally Champion Colin McRae), all of whom piloted Chevetttes to impressive results. The car's greatest successes came on the mixed surfaces of the British championship, where its handling and reliability shone. It also took on the world's best in the World Rally Championship of which the Lombard RAC Rally was a round.

The car's slant-four engine, though sometimes overshadowed by the Ford BDA or Fiat Abarth units, was robust and highly tunable. The chassis modifications, developed by DTV and Blydenstein, included adjustable suspension arms, competition brakes, and an LSD, all of which made the car a joy to drive on loose or tarmac surfaces.

Throughout its career, the Chevette faced fierce competition from the Ford Escort RS1800, Talbot Sunbeam Lotus, and, later, the game-changing Audi Quattro. Despite this, thanks to continuous development the Chevette remained competitive well into the early 1980s.

However, the advent of 4WD technology, as fitted to the Audi Quattro, changed the face of rallying forever. Rear-wheel drive cars like the Chevette were outpaced overnight, and Vauxhall eventually withdrew from frontline rallying in the early 1980s.

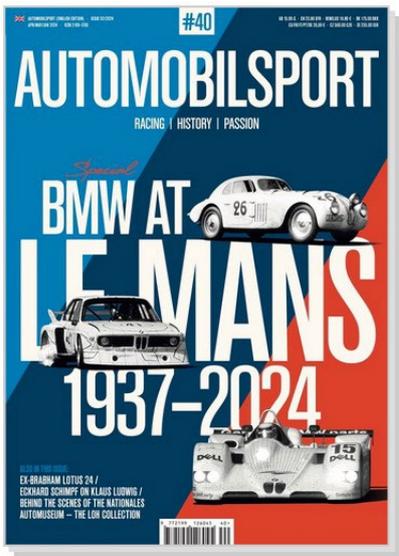
Today, the Vauxhall Chevette HS is regarded as one of the great unsung heroes of Britain's motor industry. Engineered with serious intent, it was a genuine rival to the Ford Escort RS1800 and Talbot Sunbeam Lotus – and, for a time, the car that put Vauxhall on the rallying map.

Restored and replica Chevette HS and HSR models are a common sight at historic rally events, where they continue to thrill spectators with their sideways antics and unmistakable engine note.



# BBC – Broadbent's Book Corner

Michael Broadbent review his favourite books



## AUTOMOBILSPORT Racing History Passion A German quarterly magazine

[Available Here](#)

As Christmas is not too far away, I thought we could look at a couple of different forms of the printed word. Perhaps to prompt as possible presents from the Big Man himself.

So, here goes.

I was introduced to Automobilsport by that well known purveyor of printed material Ben Horton of Hortons Books in one of his pop-up shops at Goodwood Revival. The magazine had a picture of a Porsche 917, so I was immediately drawn in and bought it, not realising initially that it was going to be a regular publication.

Whilst there are now several 'coffee table' magazines now including Magneto, and Road Rat, Automobilsport remains solely in the motorsport arena which always peaks my interest.

Since I succumbed to a subscription, every three months a 160-page magazine lands on the doormat packed full of both historic race reports globally, interviews with drivers, both current & retired and then the magazine goes into great detail on one specific article. The last few ones have included Porsche Racing in Can-Am, Walter Rohrl, The Lancia Delta Integrale, Stefan Bellof, BMW at

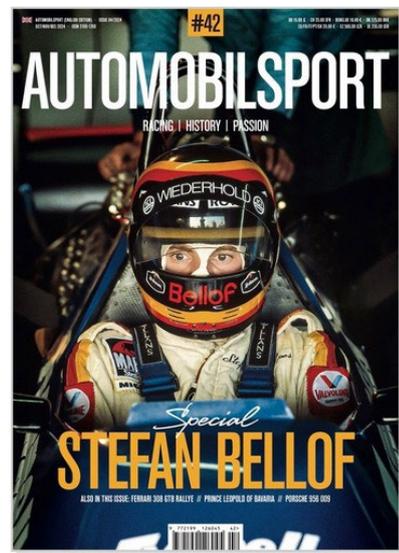
LeMans, Zakspeed, McLaren M23, DTM – the list goes on (current issue is #45).

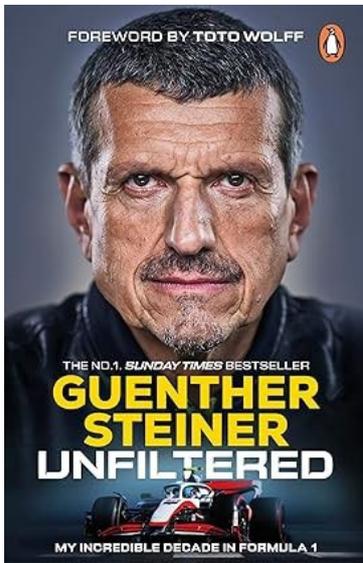
For those of you who are interested in historic motorsport both in the past and what races currently, this is an ideal addition to your reading list. Although the publication is written in German, it is effortlessly translated into English for your delight. The editor, Robert Weber has a strong motorsport background as well as being a racer himself, so the articles are well written with lots of photos from various archives (maybe some from Jeff Bloxham, Alan Cox et al?) There are interesting little articles about things like Jägermeister Racing, the Auto Union D Type, the genesis of Audi and the Quattro etc – the list goes on. As a nice addition, each copy comes with an A3 poster of the magazine cover – so you could argue that you could save on wallpaper in your mancave, shed or office!

Whilst this not a cheap magazine, coming out only for times a year makes it a treat as there is always something to grab your attention. Unlike some of the current monthly magazines, it does not rely on or labour on about race reports, or F1 for that matter. It does what it says on the tin – Racing, History and Passion. For everything else there is Autosport, Motoring News and Motorsport.

So, if you fancy a bit of change of reading, try it. You can buy single issues as well to dip your toe before committing. However, dear reader, like me, you will be hooked!

Oh and you can buy slip cases that hold four issues at a time. And no, I haven't done that, not enough room in the bookcases. Instead, they are dry stored in the garage.





## Unfiltered

By Guenther Steiner

[Available Here](#)

The name Guenther Steiner is now part of the F1 scene as much as Ferrari, Lewis Hamilton, and Bernie Ecclestone. The somewhat swearsy manager from Northern Italy became the eponymous hero of the Netflix series Drive to Survive when it was first broadcast in 2019, following the F1 circus as a behind the scenes documentary.

He wrote and published a book called Surviving to Drive which told his story about being an F1 team manager and like the TV series, is peppered with profanities!

This book – Unfiltered takes a longer look at Guenther. It covers his upbringing and his journey to persuade a US company to fund and enter a team into the rarified atmosphere of F1. However, it does concentrate somewhat on the last ten years of his F1 career.

The book draws you into his upbringing, his personal life, values and the relationship he had with Gene Haas during his time as the team principal. To say it was turbulent would be an understatement as Guenther peels back the layers to expose the raw, harsh world of F1 motor racing.

As with most biographies the book follows a similar format of a year-by-year account of how Guenther managed the resources of the team, the drivers and the pressure involved dealing with the press, F1 management and the teams' owners.

Along with Surviving to Drive, the text does swear, frequently! However, in the context of the adventure and Gunther's character, it is understandable how an Italian communicates in his second language (English) in his frustration to keep everything going. It is colourful, but not offensive.

What the book does is expose the relentless pressure teams face to travel the world, prepare and race over 24 weekends, sometimes one after another. What looks glamorous and entertaining for us – the spectator for a couple of hours on Sunday is only a very small part of what goes on to fund, recruit, engineer and manufacture ultra-fast race cars pushing the edges of technology and the rules.

The story ends when Gunther is unceremoniously sacked from the team and the aftermath which explores the rawness of being dismissed – so publicly.

However, readers may know that Gunther has now moved into MotoGP, buying the Tech3 team. No doubt another TV series and book will follow these adventures!

What Drive to Survive and Guenther Steiner did though was to bring another aspect of F1 into our living rooms which has boosted its popularity and appeal to new audiences, especially in the USA, where F1 had traditionally taken a back step against NASCAR and Indycars. Is this why the latest F1 team is USA based and why there are now three F1 races in the USA? (Answers on a post card to the editor!)

Overall, an enjoyable book –available on hard & soft back. I downloaded it on to my Kindle and read it over a few evenings and it's best to read in conjunction with Guenther's other book – [Surviving to Drive](#).

