



The Oulton Park Gazette

Summer Edition 2026: Vol 2 Issue 4



MEGA MICHELLE

Thumbs up
to Michelle Hayward!

BTCC ACTION



COLIN SOWTER: SPIDERMAN



Broadbent's Book Corner - Bumper Summer Edition

WELCOME

Hello!

Welcome to a bumper Summer Issue of The Oulton Park Gazette with two months' worth of race reports and plenty of features.

This is also the final edition of The Oulton Park Gazette in magazine format as we are switching to a Facebook Page. This will enable each piece of content to be published by the team as soon as it is completed so that it can be read in a timely fashion.

The magazine goes out on high with no less than 41 pages in this final edition. It contains 7 meeting reports from June and July plus features on local drivers Joe Marshall and Michelle Hayward.

We also have articles a couple of fabulous cars that have graced Oulton Park this season. Firstly, the rubber burning 1,050 bhp Toyota Chaser drift car of Haydn Cruikshank and, secondly, the beautiful Ferrari F355 Spider which Colin Sowter took to victory at the Supercar Pageant.

Furthermore, Colin has a "Fantasy Garage" of historically noteworthy cars.

Finally, Dan Chilvers recounts a lap of Oulton Park he'll never forget!

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CONTENTS

	Page
BTCC: 6 th & 7 th June	4
Home Track Hero: Profile of Joe Marshall	10
MSVR 13 th June	12
Wrexham's Fastest: Interview with Michelle Hayward	15
Supercar Pageant 20 th June	17
Colin Sowter's Spider that Wouldn't Die	20
Dan Chilvers' Dream Lap of Oulton Park	23
Tunerfest 4 th July	25
The Dance of Drift: Haydn Cruikshank	27
BRSCC 11 th July	29
Caterham Race Day 18 th July	32
BMW Live 25 th July	35
Broadbent's Book Corner	39
Rearward Glance	41

CAMMISH CAMETH



The Kwik Fit British Touring Car Championship paid its annual visit to Oulton Park on 6th & 7th June. As usual, the Island circuit was utilised as the BTCC provided an intensive weekend of racing.

The Scottish Legends provided the best of the support action with no less than 6 races that had an abundance of overtaking while local driver, Joe Marshall, proved unbeatable in the Porsche Carwow Sprint Challenge and the Group 1 Pre-83 Touring Car Championship delivered plenty of entertainment in a guest appearance on the programme.

Dan Cammish (leading the pack above in one of Danny Walton's photographs) had a very productive weekend in the BTCC as he never finished outside the Top 4.



Kwik Fit British Touring Car Championship

Qualifying Race: 10 Minutes

This season, the grid for the first of Sunday's BTCC contests is set by a qualifying race on Saturday afternoon. In this Aaron Taylor-Smith (Toyota Corolla) had a great start from pole position to lead Dan Cammish's Ford Focus and the Toyota Corolla of Josh Cook during a hectic opening couple of laps which saw plenty of jostling for position.

These fun and games were briefly halted when the Safety Car appeared due to Nick Hamilton crashing on the approach to Island Hairpin.

When the Safety Car lights went out Taylor-Smith weaved prior to the race getting back underway. This is prohibited in the rulebook and carries a 5 second penalty. So, although he was the first to see the chequered flag he dropped to fifth in the final classification. This meant Cammish took the victory ahead of Cook. Taking third was Cammish's teammate, Ash Sutton, who had an almighty battle with Tom Ingram in his Hyundai i30N.

Race 1: 15 Minutes

Winning the qualifying race put Cammish on pole for the first of Oulton Park's BTCC Championship rounds which he converted into the lead as Sutton drew alongside Cook. This neck and neck battle for second continued around Old Hall and all the way to Cascades where the bumpers on the two cars became interlocked. Sutton was sent sideways. He managed to avoid spinning but he lost a few places and would end the contest in seventh.

Cook continued in second although he was now a few lengths behind Cammish. Ingram took over in third.

Cammish went on to take the win as Cook focussed on fending off Ingram. Taylor-Smith was fourth and would be the first to be allowed to start race 2 on soft tyres. The trio ahead of him would be forced to use hard compounds.

Race 2: 15 Minutes

Sutton gained a couple of places at the start of the second of Sunday's encounters to arrive at Old Hall fifth. Before long he was up to fourth as he and Taylor-Smith passed Cook who was struggling on the hard tyres. He would ultimately be classified down in fifteenth.

On lap 2, Taylor-Smith tried to get up into second by going around the outside of Ingram at the Island Hairpin but ended up on the grass at the exit. This promoted Sutton to third and this became second place when he passed Ingram heading into Cascades on the next lap.

Sutton's quickly caught the leader, Cammish, but didn't have the pace of his teammate due to his hard tyres. Therefore, he slowed on the approach to Lodge allowing Sutton to take a comfortable victory (**pictured above by Danny Walton**).

In his wake, Cammish and Ingram worked together pull away from the soft tyred runners before, in the closing stages, Ingram overtook Cammish to move into second at Lodge.



Kwik Fit British Touring Car Championship (continued from previous page)

Race 3: 15 Minutes

Sutton was gutted to pull out ball number 11 in the reverse grid draw for the finale. At the start of which, Charles Rainford got a great start in his BMW 330i to draw alongside pole-sitter, Chris Smiley (Hyundai i30N). They took Old Hall in classic Touring Car style – banging door handles! Smiley arrived at Cascades still in the lead – but only just!

Further back, Taylor-Smith lost the rear end of his Toyota and collected the Mercedes A35 of Adam Morgan. With Taylor-Smith's car coming to rest broad-side across the circuit, the Safety Car appeared to quell the battling at the front of the field.

Almost immediately after the race went back to green, Rainford got a faster exit out of Old Hall and swept around the outside of Smiley to take the lead.

Smiley was really struggling on the hard tyres and would drop back to finish seventh.

Rainford, in contrast, was flying and opened up a gap of over 2 seconds to his nearest challengers – the brace of Hyundais driven by Ricky Collard and Ingram. But then the Safety Car came out again after Tom Chilton's Hyundai launched over the kerb at Denton's and into the side of the Ford Focus driven by Lewis Selby sending both cars deep into the gravel at Cascades.

After this interruption, Rainford eased away from his pursuers to take an impressive victory.

Above, Danny Walton captured Charles Rainford as he celebrated his victory.



Scottish Legends Championship: Saturday – 2 x 6 Lap Heats + 8 Lap Final

Race 1 featured a thrilling photo-finish. Stephen Treherne (**No. 43 above**) came through from seventeenth on the grid to take the lead from Dan Clark (**No. 14 above**) at the start of the final lap. However, Clark found better traction coming out of the final corner and was a coat of paint away from pipping Treherne. The difference was just 0.006 secs.

Championship frontrunner – Matthew Pape – had been drawn at the back of the first grid of the weekend. He worked his way up the order to finish eleventh.

With the earlier starting order reversed for the next encounter, Pape was on pole. He converted this into a win after a thrilling battle with Ben Mason. However, Mason dropped down the order with a track limits penalty. This promoted a rookie, ex-karter Angus Scrivener, up to second while Treherne was again on the podium in third.

Despite the final being interrupted by a few laps behind the Safety Car, Treherne had time to come through from the back of the grid to take his second win of the day.

Sunday: 2 x 6 Lap Heats + 8 Lap Final

In the first race on Sunday, Pape emerged from a huge lead battle to pull away and take the win from Mason as Treherne was delayed by an incident at the Lodge on the penultimate lap.

Next time out, Ryan McLeish established an early lead but, just before half distance, Mason caught and passed him at Island Bend. There was then a twist in the tale when Mason fish-tailed under braking for Lodge. Not only did he end up in the gravel but, in taking avoiding action, McLeish joined him in there too.

Both re-joined the tarmac although Scrivener had taken over in the lead. Mason soon caught up with him but some magnificent defensive driving by Scrivener enabled him to hold on to take his first win in Legends as McLeish completed the podium in third.

Buoyed by his earlier success, Scrivener to the spoils in the final. Lap 4 was epic as he moved from ninth to second before hitting the front next time around. He then withstood enormous pressure from Pape, taking the flag just 0.038 secs ahead (**left**).





©Danny Walton

Group 1 Pre 83 Touring Cars – 3 x 20 minutes:

Late in the first encounter James Everard (Datsun 510) put in a quartet of fastest to catch and pass the Rover SD1 of leader Gerry Bailey

In race 2, the Triumph Dolomite Sprint of Mark Osborne (**above**) had a great start to take the lead from third on the grid. Tom Harvey was his closet challenger until he retired in the pits having had contact with something solid. Jonathan Corker was then Osborne's closest challenger having come through from the back of the grid in the Datsun 510 that Everard had taken to victory earlier in the day. Osborne held on to take the win – his first for 7 years.

We were robbed the opportunity of seeing Corker and Osborne renew their battle in the final encounter when the Datsun pulled off at Knickerbrook during the warm-up lap. However, there was still plenty of action.

Osborne held the initial advantage from the Mk1 Ford Escort of Nic Grindrod but on the first lap, Grindrod was outbraked into Hislops by Jarrad Knight's Mk2 Ford Escort only for Knight to pull off and retire at Hill Top next time round.

Grindrod then lost the runner-up position Nick Williamson (Rover SD1) who went on to challenge for the lead. Williamson's Rover appeared to lose power as smoke began to appear from his vehicle.

After a blown engine during qualifying in his Mitsubishi Lancer which required an army of friends to fix, this was the first race of the weekend for Neil Philpotts. He worked his way through from 21st on the grid to challenge Osborne for the lead. But then he had to lift off due to his power unit overheating. This saw him demoted by Grindrod. Fortunately for Philpotts, the red flags came out due to a car stranded at Druids and he retained second in the final classification.



Power Maxed Mini Challenge – 2 x 20 Minutes:

Race 1

The first race saw Josh Porter and Sam Gornall (**leading above**) pull away as Joe Tanner held off Tom Ovenden. Porter retired when he clipped the tyres at Hislops chicane. This left Gornall in the clear as Tanner, who was struggling with his handling due to a broken splitter, backed up the rest of the field.

Next time out, Gornall made a slow start giving Porter a 1 second advantage. After a couple of laps, Gornall had caught the leader and dived down his inside through the final element of Hislops. The pair made contact and Porter flew off into the gravel trap at Knickerbrook. Gornall went on to take the honours from Charlie Hand and Tanner.



Porsche Carwow Sprint Challenge – 3 x 20 Minutes:

Joe Marshall dominated the Porsche Carwow Sprint Challenge taking a hat-trick of victories and leading every lap. Only Josh Rogers' fastest lap in race 1 prevented a perfect weekend. Read Dan Chilvers' feature on Marshall – **page 10**.

HOME TRACK HERO

By Dan Chilvers



Joe Marshall had a dream weekend at his home circuit. Photo: Danny Walton

Fighting for victory at your home track certainly raises the stakes but they say the strongest of pressure creates the brightest of diamonds. Some drivers crack and crumble under the piercing eyes of spectators and rivals alike while others rise to the challenge. Local hero Joe Marshall is no stranger to pressure as he arrived at Oulton Park off the back of a sweep of victories at Donington Park in the Porsche Sprint Challenge GB.

A track day in a Mazda MX-5 hooked Marshall on racing at a young age. He then began steady progress through Ginetta Supercup and TCR UK. His family always supported him throughout his career as they “always want the best for you and are looking out for you.” They taught Marshall “to focus on being myself” rather than getting caught up in other teams or drivers and when the going gets tough “to never give up.” Marshall’s career shifted gear in 2024 as he moved into the Porsche Sprint Challenge GB series. This spec-series promises close racing and progression options both within the BTCC paddock and across the racing world.

When Marshall made the jump from a front-engined, front-wheel-drive Audi into the mid-engined rear-wheel-drive Porsche he immediately noticed the differences. The two cars are “polar

opposites” which meant it “took a while to adapt but I like a challenge!” Marshall was quick to show pace in his Wera Tools-backed Porsche as he took podiums, poles and victories across the 2025 season on his way to narrowly missing out on the title despite a hat-trick of victories to end the season. Marshall resolved to come back stronger in 2026 with a chance at the title. The Donington Park sweep was the perfect start to his season.

Marshall arrived at Oulton Park with a six-race winning streak which he was eager to extend. However, this impressive run doesn’t faze him, he revealed “it doesn’t feel like weight at all! Once I’m in the car all I’m thinking about is winning the race and trusting the team.” He quickly showed pace by taking double pole despite a slowly drying track. This meant Marshall had to make a difficult call regarding tyres. He pitted and swapped from wet to dry tyres at the end of the session and despite some “sketchy conditions” stuck his car on pole position.

His run of success continued despite rain and multiple interventions with a record-beating 12th Porsche Sprint Challenge GB win taking his streak to nine. This means Marshall now holds the record for most race wins in the series, and he still has four

rounds left this year! He was quick to credit his team, saying “they brought a fantastic car which gave me confidence to push 100%.” He also revealed that after struggling at Oulton Park last year it was very rewarding to see all his hard work and effort pay off around the “mini Nürburgring.” This once again showed Marshall that if he “worked hard at something and keeps doing the right things, then good things will happen.”

Having the perfect race weekend at his home circuit is something Marshall described as a dream come true, saying sharing those moments with “friends, family and the Wera Tools Academy Members

makes it even more special.” He recalls “seeing everyone’s face” which is “something you don’t forget.” He fondly remembers watching BTCC at Oulton Park as a child and now he has completed the hat-trick at the same venue. When we interviewed Marshall after the weekend he said “it still hasn’t sunk in yet.”

With long-term goals of competing in the BTCC for race victories and more, Marshall is currently taking each race as it comes. Rather than crumbling under the pressure, he is using it to thrive. The championship victory would be the jewel in the crown.

Photo: @JoeMarshall507 - Instagram



MSVR 13th June



Nowadays, in the interest of affordability and accessibility, most club racing categories cater for road cars that have been converted for track use or offer fields of identical single seaters. The MSVR meeting on 13th June bucked that trend as 8 of the 9 races were for purpose-built racing cars featuring a wide variety of chassis.



Clubmans Sports Prototype Championship – 2 x 15 Minutes:

Michelle Haywood (**No. 12**) took a brace of comfortable victories. The second encounter had a dramatic start when front-runner, Mike Evans, spun at the first corner with a few other cars becoming involved in the incident.



Monoposto Championship (M1000, Classic, 1800 & 1600) – 2 x 15 Minutes:

Immediately after the red lights went out for the first race, front row starter, Will Cox, pulled off with a snapped driveshaft on his Ralt RT3. After the subsequent Safety Car period, Matty Haughton took a comfortable victory in his Jedi Mk7 (**above**).

Haughton repeated his win later in the day as Cox started from the back of the grid. He worked his way up the order to finish third. It looked like he was going to catch second-placed Charlie Locker (Speads RM07) but a big slide on the exit of Old Hall in the closing stages cost him time.



Monoposto Championship (F3, M1400, 2000) – 2 x 15 Minutes:

George Line (Dallara F308) dominated both of these contests winning by 22 secs and 34 secs.



Production VW Championship – 2 x 15 Minutes:

This was previously the Production VW Golf Championship but has been opened up to a range of VW models. However, so far this season, only Golfs have entered

Champion in the Golfs for the past 3 seasons, Simon Hill (**above**), was sixth fastest in qualifying but was in the lead by the end of the second lap of the first encounter. He later explained that he wanted to hit the front early before the field got too spread out. The contest ebbed and flowed as Henry Riley and Simon Vercoe battled for second but then closed in on Hill when they weren't swapping places... or making mistakes as Riley got on the grass a couple of times at Druids. The last of these allowed Vercoe to take second behind Hill.

When they returned to the track, Hill took the lead from pole but Riley kept in his slip-stream until he lost control approaching Cascades. This cost him a little ground however he fought back to the extent that he was able to pull alongside Hill on the last lap at Island Bend although he couldn't make the move stick. Vercoe retired in the pits with a mechanical problem which promoted Chris Webb to third.



Sports 2000 Championship – 50 Minutes:

Michael Gibbins (**No. 76**) was a comfortable winner in his MCR S2n.

WREXHAM'S FASTEST!

By Dan Chilvers



Wrexham has produced many great people - and one globally recognised football club. Footballer Robbie Savage and 2017 British GT Champion Seb Morris, to name but two. John Parry-Thomas was also born there in 1884, and went on to break the 170mph barrier on Pendine Beach in 1926. As the Clubman Sports Prototype Championship descended on Oulton Park, one car quickly revealed itself to be the pick of the field: the Phantom P82TR, driven by another of Wrexham's finest - Michelle Hayward.

Hayward found initial success in a Caterham Seven as part of the Formula Woman Championship in 2006, before being offered a Clubman series drive and falling in love with the speed. Not long after, she bought her own Mallock Mk27 and used it to great effect for over a decade. She took the Mallock to a class championship in 2018 before moving over to Barry Webb's Mk23, claiming a further two class championships along the way. At that point, Hayward was "very keen to move up to the top class and have the opportunity to fight for outright race wins." This meant moving into a 200 hp CSP1 class car - specifically Edward Preston and Tom Commander's Phantom P82. The car had recently undergone an engine change to make it a genuine contender for outright victories, and Hayward "jumped at the chance and from that point I quickly became their test dummy."

With that move, Typhoon Racing was born. Every year the team continued to push the boundaries in search of more speed, with tireless work behind the scenes attracting sponsors whose contributions funded new parts and technical development. Mechanically, the gearbox was swapped from a standard 4-speed manual to a 5-speed sequential, the brakes were upgraded and the engine tuned and optimised. Aerodynamically, the body was resculpted to reduce drag and improve ground-effect based underfloor downforce.

Despite all these developments, Hayward maintains that consistent speed and reliability across a season is more important than flashes of brilliance – a lesson hard learned. In 2014 she made her most "memorable and haunting" mistake: leading both the final race and championship at Thruxton, she got "too greedy" going into the final chicane, spun the car and lost the lead. The championship slipped through her fingers with it. She was "absolutely devastated" to lose the title but came away with something valuable – a clear understanding that pushing boundaries involves taking risks.

That belief in consistent speed paid dividends at Oulton Park when the Clubman Sports Prototype Championship arrived for a double-header. Hayward put the Typhoon Racing Phantom on pole

before making a blistering start in Race 1, leaving Jarred Lester in her wake. Lester gave chase throughout, until his engine overheated and Hayward took the win. Race 2 was considerably simpler when Mike Evans lost control into the first corner, bringing out the safety car and eliminating Lester with damage. Hayward nailed the restart and “focused some energy on trying to break my lap time and build a comfortable gap.” She did exactly that, setting a 1:41.6 before taking her second victory of the day. She felt “really pleased” and glad “that all the hard work by the team over the past three years has started to pay off.”

Hayward - never one to remain stationary – is already looking ahead, working on her health and

fitness while chasing the outright Clubman’s Sports Prototype Championship. Having proven herself in Caterhams and Fun Cup endurance racing, including a class podium at the Spa 25hrs, her sights are set on racing a modern prototype at Le Mans. She loves “the team element in endurance racing”, and her ideal series combines “the speed of the sports prototype with the physical and mental challenge of endurance racing.”

As Hayward continues to push boundaries and break records, perhaps it’s only a matter of time before Wrexham adds another name to its roll of honour - and this time the barrier won’t be measured in mph, but in the history books of motorsport itself.



Supercar Pageant 20th June



The Supercar Pageant was a festival of power! On the infield, the entertainment line-up included the Supercar Collective Rev-Off, Funfair Rides & Family Attractions. Drift taxi rides, a LEGO® Supercar Studio, Simulator Experiences and Sporting Bears charity passenger rides.

During the lunch-break, the grid walk amongst the Superformance Ferrari Club Classic competitors prove enormously popular (**above**). This was one of nine races.



Boxster Cup – 2 x 25 Minutes:

Having taken victory in all 4 rounds before the series reached Oulton Park, Ethan Hall (**No. 25**) looked to continue his winning streak by leaping into lead at the start of race 1. For a few laps, Luca Masarati stayed in his slip-stream but then Hall pulled away. The race was halted early as a car had come to rest in the gravel at Shell.

Later in the day, Hall rolled forward before the red lights out. This triggered Masarati into also jumping the start earning both a 10 second penalty. Masarati then hesitated as the field left the grid and dropped to fifth on the road. Hall charged off into lead and looked to be on his way to making it 6 victories out of 6 for the season but then his throttle pedal broke and he coasted into the pits to retire.

Kuba Wosniak was now in the lead but Masarati had recovered from his dramas at the beginning of the contest and was right behind him but could not overtake before the chequered flag came out. The pair had enough of an advantage over the rest of the field for Masarati not to lose the runner-up position when his 5 secs penalty was applied.



Porsche Club Championship – 2 x 25 Minutes:

Jake McAleer (997 S, **left**) held off the Cayman S of Ed Hayes to win the first outing.

Race 2 was red flagged very soon after the start due to a coming together amongst the midfield runners on the run down to the first corner.

On the second lap after restart, McAleer carried more speed down the Lakeside Straight to sweep round the outside of Hayes to take the lead at Island Bend. Spectacularly, they lapped bumper-to-bumper until Hayes retired in the pits. This left McAleer to take victory with a clear advantage over Morris who kept Chris Dyer's Cayman S at bay.

FINECUT RADICAL CUP UK – 50 Minutes:

This mini-Enduro started like a sprint race with Gordie Mutch and Cian Geraghty side-by-side from the rolling start all the way to Shell where Geraghty ran wide handing the advantage to Mutch. At the start of lap 2, Geraghty got on the grass exiting Old Hall dropping to fifth. With 30 minutes to go, Geraghty was finally clear of the pack but by this time Mutch was too far ahead to be caught.



Focus Cup – 2 x 15 Minutes:

Ali Topley (**above**), took a comfortable win in race 1 after Jonathan Baker's challenge ended due to a front left puncture. In the Diesel Class, Lewis Clark retired from the lead meaning the honours went to Adam Winter.

The second encounter featured a partially reversed grid and it enabled Rich Hall to open out a healthy advantage as Topley became embroiled in a 4 car battle over second. This ended with Richard Wynne off in the gravel at Shell. This triggered a Safety Car which negated Hall's advantage.

The green flag came out with a couple of minutes remaining. Hall initially began to pull away but had a huge sideways moment exiting Cascades which put him on the grass near the Lake. Ian Graham took over in the lead – but only for about 10 yards! He had hesitated while Hall brought his car back under control and this allowed Topley and Jonathan Baker to overtake him before he reached Island Bend.

So, Topley took his second win of the day from Baker as Simon Walton demoted Graham from third exiting Old Hall at the start of the last lap. There was also an exciting finish in the Diesel Class where Macauley Underwood lost the lead to Andrew Mitchell with less than half a circuit remaining.



Superformance Ferrari Club Classic – 2 x 20 Minutes:

Race 1 saw quite an epic dice between the Ferrari F355 Challenge cars of Wayne Marrs and Tristian Simpson until, quite bizarrely, both appeared to suffer engine problems at the same time and retired. This left the way clear for Colin Sowter to take the win in his distinctive F355 Spider (**left**).

Starting from pole for the second encounter, sadly, Sowter lost drive immediately after the red lights went out. He pulled off on to the motorcycle return road. Marrs didn't start and so Simpson took a comfortable victory having started from the back due to his earlier retirement.



THE SPIDER THAT WOULDN'T DIE

At the Supercar Pageant, there were some marvellous machines all over the infield however, one of the most interesting cars was a Ferrari convertible that was out on track winning a race.

The car in question was the Ferrari F355 Spider of Colin Sowter which took the spoils in the first Superformance Ferrari Club Classic encounter.

It very nearly ceased to exist before it got anywhere near a circuit. Colin had imported it stripped out from Japan where it had been written-off in an accident that had damaged the nearside rear corner. He intended to break it up and use the engine, drivetrain and remaining suspension components to repair a fire damaged F355 Challenge car that he owned. However, his friends said "We don't want to lose the Spider!" So, Colin decided to rebuild it from the ground up as a racing car to take part in the Ferrari Club Classic series.

He then had to re-build it again after a few races following a big accident in testing. Fortunately, Colin enjoys working on cars almost as much as he likes driving them. He trained as a mechanic after leaving school.

As demanded by the regulations, the car's engine and gearbox are standard while some suspension components were changed on a like-for-like basis.

Colin was delighted with the end result which could well be the only convertible to ever take part in the Ferrari Club Classic series. Colin says, "It's an absolutely beautiful car that attracts a phenomenal amount of interest. I'm absolutely chuffed to bits!"

Sowter really enjoys driving the Spider around Oulton Park. It is so easy to drive with plenty of feeling transmitted through the steering wheel and lots of grip, Colin feels very comfortable behind the wheel.

He used to compete in a Ferrari 348 and, although he loved that, when he switched to the F355 it was light years ahead in terms of being forgiving and easy to drive despite it being only the next model in the lineage.

Superformance who sponsor the Ferrari Club Classic series has been owned by Colin for the past 20 years. The company aims to supply high quality aftermarket and NOS parts for all models of Italian sports cars. (NOS = New Old Stock – original parts

that were never fitted to the vehicles on the production line.)

They took over sponsorship of the series from Pirelli 4 years ago and it has proved to be an excellent decision as many of the competitors are customers of Superformance. Colin says it allows him to present the human face of the company with a boss who has had a life-long love of Ferraris – as a boy, he had a picture of the 308 model on his bedroom wall.

The relationship extends beyond the race series as Superformance also sponsor the Ferrari Owners' Club's Hillclimb Championship. Although Sowter is too busy with his other motorsport commitments to take part in that.

Aside from the Ferrari F355 Spider, Colin owns a "Fantasy Garage" collection of amazing racing cars including a very special 1958 Ford Prefect which was prepared to compete in the 2012 St Mary's Trophy at the Goodwood Revival meeting under the direction of the legendary Alan Mann just before he passed away.

Sowter also owns an ex-Paul Radisich BTCC Peugeot 406 and Nissan GT-R in GT1-spec as well as the 2 Dastle F3 cars that Lord Hesketh commissioned to be driven by "Bubbles" Horsley and Nigel Mansell. They marked the start of Hesketh Racing. Another car in Colin's stable is an ex-Slim Borgudd Ralt RT3 and, last but not least, he has a small fleet of F3000 cars – the V8 category that sat one rung below F1 in the 1980s.

As a young man, Colin loved the early years of F3000 – particularly the simple purity of their designs. He says, "If you asked a child to draw a racing car, it would look similar to one of these."

Although when the category was contemporary, Sowter couldn't afford to attend many of the races, he was drawn into following the International and British Championships because he came from the same geographical area as Mark Blundell and they both used to compete in Schoolboy Scrambling. However, Colin was a long way from the front of the pack where Mark was running.



Colin (left) and Nick Eddington, who prepares Sowter's F3000 cars, chat to Jean Alesi (in cockpit). Photo: Colin Sowter

While Sowter carried on competing in scrambling/motorcross until he was 30, from afar he followed Blundell's rise through the junior formulae of car racing up to F3000 and realised that anyone with the funds could reach that level. Having once been on the same entry list as Mark, it made F3000 more relatable to Colin.

Thanks to hard work and a little bit of luck in his business life, Sowter can now afford to purchase his dream racing cars – he has 5 F3000 chassis plus a Formula Nissan car that ran in Japan between 2003 and 2005. This has the same Mugen-Honda engine that was used in F3000.

One of the chassis Colin owns has a very special history – it is the Reynard 89D that Jean Alesi took to the final International F3000 Championship of the 1980s under the guidance of Eddie Jordan. The car is in the iconic Camel livery from that 1989 season.

He bought it from Adrian Reynard who was downsizing his collection of cars. Adrian had never driven one of his F3000 chassis until a couple of years ago when Colin allowed him to drive the ex-Alesi car at Donington Park as part of a feature which appeared in *Motorsport* magazine.

Since the 89D has been part of Sowter's stable, it has also been reunited with Jean Alesi who drove it at Paul Ricard's Historic Festival and also at the British Grand Prix as part of a tribute to Eddie Jordan.

While Colin enjoys racing many of the fabulous vehicles in his collection, there are currently no

championships that accommodate F3000 cars. However, Sowter has demonstrated them at Thruxton's historic meeting and as part of Festival Italia at Brands Hatch.

He does hope that his Formula Nissan will be eligible for the category which Equipe Racing are mooted to be setting up in 2027 for single-seaters more recent than those that compete in the HSCC's Derek Bell Trophy.

Colin is used to driving fast racing cars, including his GT1 Nissan, but taking a F3000 out on a circuit is something else altogether.

"The G-forces are so high you slide around like you're in a wet bathtub," Colin explains, "so that your knees and your elbows violently smash against the cockpit sides. Meanwhile, the speed and intensity of the car feels like it's trying to kill you. The bizarre thing about all of this, of course, is that I do it for pleasure!"

Looking to the future, Sowter's main focus out on track is the Superformance Ferrari Club Classic Championship where he will continue with his magnificent Spider. However, he is currently building a Ferrari 348 to his ultimate spec and he may use that for a couple of seasons when it is completed. As many other series have date clashes with rounds of the Ferrari Club Classic, his other racing activities tend to be at one-off events.

We thank Colin for making time for our interview and wish him many more years of driving fast, exciting racing cars!





MY DREAM LAP

By Dan Chilvers

Resplendent in his Ferrari helmet, Dan poses next the ultimate Safety Car!

Journalism is all about telling people's stories – exploring new perspectives - and racetracks contain a world of them. However, one perspective that many never get to fully experience is that of the drivers themselves. So, when I was given the opportunity to ride along on a hot lap at the Ferrari Challenge race meeting, I jumped at the chance to see the circuit through a driver's eyes.

Once I had signed the all-important waivers, I asked the Ferrari representative who would be driving. He replied in a thick Italian accent "Antonio Tamburini, he came second in Italian Touring Cars in 1992 for Alfa Romeo." Not only that, but Tamburini had also tested for the short-lived AGS Formula One team. A man who clearly knows his way around a racing car at speed. The car in question was Ferrari's safety car, a brand-new Ferrari 12Cilindri, fresh from Maranello – its naturally aspirated 6.5-litre V12 producing an astonishing 819 bhp.

Open-face helmet on, I was led out into the sweltering pit lane and readied for my lap. I'd be lying if I said I wasn't a little nervous. Tamburini fired up the mighty Italian engine and pulled away down

the pit lane. He asked me one simple question as we rolled towards the pit exit: "Have you ever been around here before?" I had, but only in a road car, and even then, only at 40mph. We left the pits doing 60mph, and Tamburini didn't lift until we hit 115mph and barrelled over Denton's, plunging down into Cascades. Once we emerged unscathed on the other side, my nerves disappeared and I settled in for the ride.

Tamburini kept his foot flat to the floor along Lakeside, letting the engine sing its way up to the 9,250 rpm redline before braking and hurling the car around Island Bend, tyres gripping well in the summer heat. Shell Corner arrived shortly afterwards as the Ferrari's long bonnet swept around the heavily banked profile; my stomach being pushed flat through the banking before the car launched itself forward towards Brittens. Tamburini launched over the kerbs, carrying immense speed up towards Hilltop. It was here that I noticed the sheer visceral noise enveloping me - the engine screaming, tyres rumbling over kerbs, brakes screeching.

Knickerbrook followed, but only after Tamburini had pushed the car up to 123 mph and hauled on the anchors at the perfect moment. The tyre stacks on the inside of the chicane were tantalisingly close to the Ferrari's wing mirrors, both helping drivers pick the apex and deterring corner-cutting. Up Clay Hill and into Druids, I had to physically brace myself through the difficult double apex, fighting the g-force. Knowing the lap was almost over, I let myself simply enjoy the noise and sensation of speed as the Ferrari blasted beneath Warwick Bridge, the free-breathing V12 singing through the rev range and its note bouncing off the bridge above.

5Hard on the brakes for Lodge, Tamburini ran the car as wide as he dared onto the kerbs before sailing under the final bridge. It was only as he lifted off the throttle that I realised I hadn't taken a breath - or stopped bracing myself - since Cascades. The car pulled into the pit lane, I thanked Tamburini, and stepped out, eyes wide and face split into a grin. Nothing quite prepares you for being driven around a racetrack at full speed, but it is surely an experience I'll never forget.



Thank you to Philip Rainford and Ferrari UK for organising such an amazing experience.



While Dan was having his mind blown, Gilbert Yates took a double victory as the Ferrari Challenge UK paid its annual visit to Oulton Park. It was a family affair as Gilbert's son, Bradley, was runner-up on each occasion



Tunerfest 4th July

SPARKS FLY AT TUNERFEST



Luke Sedzikowski was the fastest Time Attack driver in his mighty Pro Class Honda NSX. Despite spinning off at Lodge 3 laps into the Super Attack finale, his best lap was still 3 seconds faster than Andrew Barbour who had been suffering from a soft brake pedal on his Mitsubishi Evo 9.



Racing Hondas – 2 x 15 Minutes:

The Racing Hondas provided wheel to wheel action at Tunerfest (**above**).

The Championship leader in Class A (240 bhp per tonne), Bob Barron had a couple of contrasting races. He led the first from start to finish in his Civic but appeared to suffer a drivetrain failure at Shell on the opening lap of the second encounter.

With Barron out, Ryan Jenkinson's Integra battled for Class A honours with the Civic of Fraser McNeill. Starting the last lap, the leaders made contact with each other at Old Hall. As Jenkinson contained the resulting slide, McNeill nipped through to take the win.

In Class B for cars with up to 195 bhp per tonne Rob Boston did the double in what may have been his last outing in his S2000 sportscar (**below**).



The Dance of Drift

By Dan Chilvers



On the surface, dancing and cars have little in common. The Renault Twingo's name comes from twist, swing and tango combined, and Honda named a whole lineup after musical terms (Jazz, Accord, Beat and more). However, one discipline combines cars and dancing almost perfectly. Drifting is the art of sliding a car in a fluid, smooth and almost beautiful way. The speed of the movements, the precision and the form are all judged in front of huge crowds and competitors receive a scored assessment of their attempt. One man has lived the dance of the drift for longer than most: Haydn Cruickshank.

Cruickshank's obsession with sliding started on an experience day 14 years ago. With a lifelong love of cars and drag racing, and a long-term love affair with Japanese motors, drifting became "the inevitable progression." A trip to the land of the rising sun followed where Cruickshank discovered the locals all favoured large four-door saloon cars for their stability and big engines. Nissan Skyline sedans, Lexus IS300s and various Toyotas including the Cresta and Chaser. Though mechanically identical, the Cresta featured more executive touches while the Chaser leant into sportier design. Cruickshank started with a Cresta before moving to his now famous Chaser a few years later.

Although his multicoloured drift machine retains much of its original shape, underneath it has been entirely upgraded and refocused. The car was built by Mark Kelley at Two Roads Motorworks, where they fitted it with a supercharged Chevrolet LSXR race engine producing 1050hp – because as Cruickshank puts it, "you can never have too much power." This mad engine is kept in check by a 6XD built sequential gearbox and a Garage D/Tomei 2-way differential. A Figs Engineering custom pro-angle suspension kit is mandatory for the biggest slides allowing the tyres to steer to extreme angles and keep the drift in check. The only original components left from Toyota are the chassis and steering rack.

Cruickshank approaches every event in the same way - not worrying about making big mistakes but focused on "constant learning in relation to driving skills and the development of the cars." He's quick to call out a common mistake early drifters make by prioritising modifications over seat time. Kelly from Two Roads completes comprehensive prep on the car before each outing and on the day discuss tyre pressures and suspension setups with Cruickshank. To make sure he's in the right headspace to perform, Cruickshank puts the phone down at least 30 minutes before any run and visualises the track in his mind while queuing to get onto the circuit.

Although his team would prefer him to take it easy early on, Cruickshank is always keen to push to the maximum right from the off - despite Oulton Park offering a “very challenging line for drifting”. The route brings cars down Avenue and over the blind crest at Dentons before plunging rapidly down into the Fosters loop and around Knickerbrook, it requires full commitment through the off-camber first corner and through corners two and three. Having run this route for seven years now, though, Cruickshank knows it, which is exactly why he finds it “challenging, which makes it fun”.

Cruickshank remains committed to UK drifting as the self-proclaimed oldest drifter in the country. The more events he can bring his Colour Sound Experiment sponsored Chaser to, the better - new locations and routes are a favourite, adding fresh joy to every run. He’s also eyeing an overseas push next year aiming to take his skills to drifting’s spiritual homes of Japan and the USA. Wherever he ends up sliding next, one thing’s certain: Cruickshank isn’t done falling in love with the drift.



SUN-DRENCHED FIESTA



On 11th July, Oulton Park staged a varied day of club racing for production-based machinery.

Durley Garage Fiesta ST150 Challenge – 2 x 15 Minutes:

Dan Robinson was the early leader of both Fiesta ST150 encounters but on each occasion he was deposed from P1 by Robbie Harrison (**No. 19 above**).



Nankang Tyre BMW SuperCup – 2 x 15 Minutes:

Connor Daly (**left**) took a comfortable win in the opening BMW encounter with Darren Rickaby and Thorburn Astin completing the podium. However, later in the day, Daly was less fortunate as he retired in the pits on the penultimate lap.

Aydan Hassan won the second thrash with Rickaby once again finishing as runner-up ahead of Simon Waterfall.



Silverlake Production Cup & Silverlake DS3 Cup – 2 x 15 Minutes:

It had been quite a dramatic week for Chris Bassett (**No 33, above**) who had fifth gear make a break for freedom from his Peugeot the previous weekend at Thruxton. He therefore had a busy week fitting a new gearbox. Then, on his way to Oulton Park up the M6, there was a puncture on his trailer.

Once he got out on track in Cheshire, life became much better. While building up his confidence, he was third fastest in qualifying before winning both contests later in the day.

In race 1, Lee Curtis finished as runner-up but when his Renault Clio was a non-starter in the next contest, that position was taken by Robert Buckland who was in another Clio. Taking third on both podiums was Chris Reece (BMW 135i).

Theo Longman did the double in the DS3 Cup.



SW Motorsports Clubsport Trophy – 45 Minutes:

The mighty Morgan of Shane Kelly took the spoils in the 45 minute ClubSport Enduro.



CNC Heads Sports & Saloon Car Championship – 2 x 20 Minutes:

The BARC North Western Centre's CNC Heads Sports & Saloon Car Championship guested at this BRSCC meeting. With Andrew Southcott's MG Midget Lenham stuck in fourth gear, it looked as though Paul Rankin was going to win their first race. But then Rankin couldn't get his Westfield Aero out of fifth gear. It turned out solely using fourth gear around Oulton Park is more effective than having just fifth available as Southcott caught and passed Rankin to take the win. Chris Roberts brought his BMW M4 home in third.

Later in the day, Roberts finished in the runner-up position after Southcott retired. Indeed, Roberts was the leader for a short period of time when Rankin's visor became covered in fluid from the header tank. Once his vision was restored, Rankin powered away to take a comfortable victory (**above**).



Racingline VW Audi Racing Championship – 2 x 15 Minutes:

Richard Clarke dominated the 2 VW Audi thrashes in his Seat Leon. His winning margins were well over 45 secs.



Caterham Race Day 18th July

©Peter Hamilton



PURE RACING!

The Caterham Race Day is always a highlight of the season and this year was no exception. The drivers took on the challenge of Oulton Park's Island Layout on which the bumps approaching the hairpin kept them on their toes.

There was so much overtaking in the second contest of the day, the first of a trio of Vertex Caterham Seven 310R Championship rounds, as over 12 cars vied for the lead that I wrote in my notes that it was probably the best race of the season. But, as the day progressed, I realised all 11 of the 20 minutes races were just as good.

Vertex Caterham Seven 310R Championship

Tom Wyllys took the spoils in a brilliant first contest despite losing his nosecone in the heat of battle. He is neck and neck with Ryan Wilby in the **above** picture.

Race 2 was another thriller although Wyllys retired on the third lap following contact with another car.

Wilby dived down the inside of local driver, Will Chadwick, to take the lead at Druids on the last lap but carried too much speed into the corner. This cost him momentum down the straight under the Warwick Bridge which allowed Chadwick to repass and take the win.

In the final encounter, Chadwick and the Harris brothers – Chris and Will – broke away from the pack after Wilby delayed everyone when he clipped a tyre bundle at one of the chicanes which partially dislodged his right front wheelarch. The errant piece of bodywork then blocked his view of the apexes at all the right-hand corners. Once the wheelarch fell off complete, Wilby could properly see where he was going and reeled in the leaders. He finished runner-up to Chadwick.



MOTUL Caterham Seven Championship UK

In race 1 Matt Armstrong broke away from the pack only to be caught out by drizzle making the track greasy approaching Hislops. This allowed Taylor O’Flanagan managed to get in his slipstream and Armstrong had to drive very defensively in the last couple of laps to take the win by 0.14 secs.

O’Flanagan went one better when the fastest Caterhams returned to the track as he took the spoils ahead of a slow starting Armstrong. Later, Armstrong had the pleasure of winning the final thrash of the weekend with his father, Justin, in second place and O’Flanagan safely bringing his car home in third.



Bilstein Caterham Roadsport Championship

While the other categories at 3 races, the Roadsport Championship just had 2 rounds. Matt Fox was hoping to take his first win as he battled for the lead in their opening contest. Exiting Brittens with 5 and half minutes to go, Richard Davies missed a gear which caused Fox to clip the back of him. By the time Fox regained his composure, he had dropped down the order.

Davies went on to win. A feat he repeated in race 2.



Fandrive Caterham Seven 270R Championship

In the first of the outings for this category pole-sitter, Aaron Oliver, went straight on at the Island Hairpin after contact in the braking area. He re-joined the contest and finished in 21st place. This would be his starting position for race 2.

The red flags came out with 89 secs remaining. Nantwich's Rob Kennerly (**above**) was leading at the time but Brian Thornton was declared the winner on countback.

With just over 5 minutes of race 2 remaining, a trio of cars arrived in the braking area at Lodge fighting over the runner-up position allowing to Kennerly open out an advantage of almost 2 secs.

It looked like he had the race in the bag but Caterham racing is not like that. The pack bridged the gap with a couple of laps to go before Thornton outbraked the leader into the Island Hairpin on the last lap to take the win.

Oliver worked his way up the order to claim third at the final corner.

The final time the 270Rs took to the tarmac the leader of the Championship, Paul Oggelsby, worked his way to the front of the massive lead battle at the front of the field. He got to the front of the pack with 6 minutes remaining and just held on to win by little more than a nose with Kennerley and Scott Helme crossing the line either side of him.

Kennerly picked up a 5 secs Track Limits penalty and, as this category is so unbelievably close, it dropped him all the way down to 14th.



BMW Live 25th July

FIRST TIME WINNER



BMW Live featured lots of classic vehicles from the German marque including a display marking 25 years since the company began producing its uppercase monickered MINI. I guess we can't call them the new MINIs anymore!

Out on track, the 750 Motor Club presented 11 races that were action-packed – even in the Enduro!

BMW Car Club Racing Championship – 2 x 20 minutes:

The two leaders, Paul Bailey and Paul Cook, made contact at Cascades on the second lap of race 1. Bailey continued out in front but Cook spun. He re-joined outside the Top Ten and stormed up the order to finish such a close second that there was more contact exiting the final corner. This became first when the stewards penalised Bailey for causing the incident at Cascades and demoted him one position.

The 2 Pauls collided again at the start of the second encounter. Bailey went into the pit wall and was collected by drivers who had started further down the grid. Neither Bailey nor Cook took part in the restart.

In their absence, there was an excellent battle between Jason Rees and Ronan Bradley. This was resolved on the penultimate lap when Rees clipped a car he was lapping coming over Hill Top. The resulting right rear puncture caused Rees to spin at Hislops. Bradley also gyrated – apparently in sympathy!

Both re-joined with Bradley now leading just ahead of Daniel Smith who he held off to joyously take his first ever victory (**above**).

Rees took the chequered flag in seventh. As he crossed the line his tyre came off the rim and “raced” side-by-side with Rees’ car down to the barriers at Old Hall.



Gaz Shocks 116 Sprint & 120 Coupe Cup – 2 x 15 minutes:

There were just 3 BMW 120 Coupes taking part and they ran at the front of the field. Although small in number, both encounters featured huge battle between Anthony Seddon and Alan Corfield (**5 & 115 above**). Seddon took the flag half a second ahead in race 1 after an overtake at the last corner.

The pair were even closer at end of their second encounter, crossing the line with Corfield just 0.005 secs ahead. However, Seddon was awarded victory later in the day because Corfield received a 5 second Track Limits penalty after he had driven flat out to keep up with Seddon.

Peter Keen destroyed his BMW 116 in testing but still took the class spoils twice in a borrowed car. Luke Fox and Scott Jeffs were his nearest challengers.



VSG Crypto Clio Sport Championship – 2 x 15 minutes:

In the first encounter Josh North led every lap while in the second Darren Ransom did the same however behind them there was plenty of overtaking from these entertaining little Clios. Ransom had to put in qualifying laps throughout race 2 to keep North at bay.

Tegiwa Type R Trophy – 2 x 15 minutes:

Reigning champion, Trafford King, did the double despite race 2 featuring a partially reversed grid.



Tegiwa Club Enduro Championship – 100 minutes: Plus a Star in a Reasonably Priced Racing Car!

Although this was a 100 minute enduro, the two TCR-spec cars that started on the front row – the VW Golf of Scott Parkin/Robert Baker and the Audi RS3 of William Puttergill/Chris Nylan – managed to make contact at Cascades on the opening lap. Fortunately, both continued.

The Audi went on to finish fifth but the Golf fared much better. After all the front runners had got their pit stops out of the way, Baker was on the back bumper of Jack Collins who was driving BMW M3 started by Oliver Harris. They circulated together for lap after lap until Baker got better traction coming out of Cascades and powered ahead down the Lakeside Straight. He went on to win by 6 secs (**above**).

Former Stig, Ben Collins (**below**), was standing in for Richard Hammond behind the wheel of the Smallest Cog Mazda MX5 which he shared with Lewis Packham. Running in Class C, they had something of a nightmare. Being classified as a Pro driver, Collins had to make an additional 30 second “penalty” pit stop. However, he served this during a Safety Car period which is not allowed and so he had to make another stop. Later on, when the race had again been neutralised, Collins broke the rules again by following the Safety Car into the pits when he handed over to Packham as the race went back to green. They finished fifteenth overall, fourth in class.





PBS Brakes Hot Hatch Championship – 2 x 15 minutes:

Lewis Barker (**above**) dominated both races in his Honda Civic Type R. The first of these contests had to be restarted due to a Joshua Hilton's BMW Compact dumping its oil on the entrance to Brittens.

In race 2, Barker set out to break the lap record but started over-driving and feared he may crash so he backed off. Despite slowing down, he still pulled away from an epic battle for second between his brother Ryan and Trevor Gregory in which the latter came out on top.

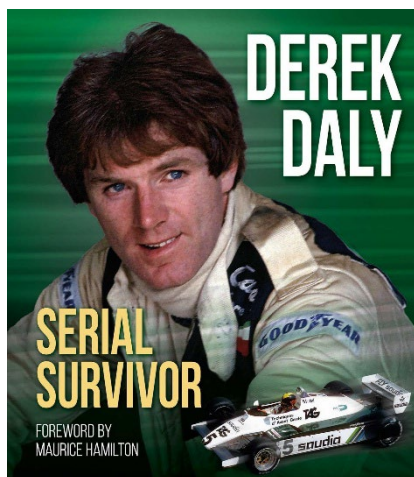
Tegiwa Type R Trophy – 2 x 15 minutes:

Reigning champion, Trafford King (**below**), did the double despite race 2 featuring a partially reversed grid.



BBC – Broadbent's Book Corner

Michael Broadbent reviews his favourite books



Serial Survivor

Derek Daly

(Memoir)

[Available Here](#)

There has been a continuous stream of talented Irish race drivers who have come to the UK ever since people started to race cars. Joe Kelly was the first driver to start an F1 race in an Alta. Since then, the exodus has continued right up to Alex Dunne, who is on the doorstep of an F1 drive. However, in between, there have been plenty of erm, well, characters! These have included Eddie Jordan, Tommy Byrne, Ralph Firman, David Kennedy, Martin Donnelly, Eddie Irvine etc. They all have unique stories to tell, and I will attempt to review their biographies in the future – some of them are hilarious.

Anyhow, turning to Derek Daly. He was one of the first really quick drivers to come up through the ranks, Formula Ford, F3 then F2 and ultimately F1. Like most drivers, Derek had to work hard to raise funds to race. He and David Kennedy went to Australia to work in the iron ore mines to get enough money to buy a race car. Can you imagine that today, Lewis Hamilton working in a jam buttie mine outside of Liverpool to fund a Ferrari drive!!

Anyhow, back to the book. Derek has had a colourful career, split into three definite chapters.

His early rise, from stock cars in Ireland to single seater racing in the UK and Europe and F1 with Ensign, Tyrrell and Williams. He raced for Project 4, Ron Dennis's team in F2 brushing alongside Guy Edwards (sponsorship guru) as well as Derek McMahon in a Chevron. His early career was nomadic to say the least, travelling in Europe and entering as many FF races as possible, back in the days when there were three national FF championships in the UK!

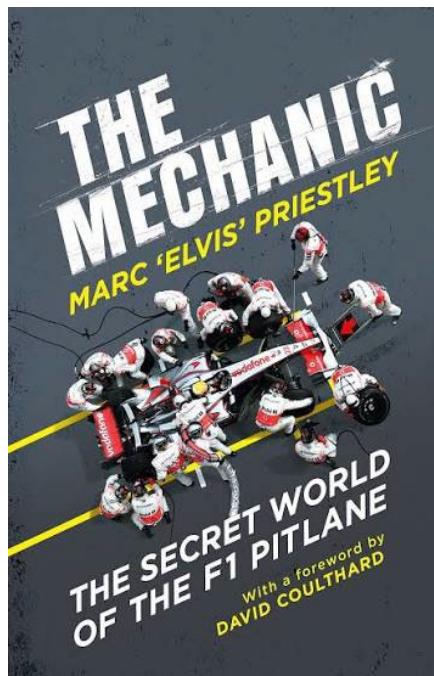
His insight into Williams during 1982 when his teammate was Keke Rosberg is eye opening, but not surprising, as Frank Williams had a very different perspective on how to run a team.

His second chapter took him to the USA and IndyCars and IMSA where he enjoyed many successes along the way, but included some horrific accidents, especially September 1984. I will not spoil the story as Derek goes into detail about what happened and his recovery afterwards. Needless to say, it is a graphic account which is a little uncomfortable at times (think Johnny Herbert's accident at Brands Hatch in F3000). His recovery and continuing to win with Nissan in IMSA is inspiring and once again Guy Edwards comes into the story with Silk Cut Jaguar in World Sportscars.

The final chapter looks at his career as a commentator, pundit, and speaker. He has taken nothing for granted though, and he uncovers his marriages and the relationship with his children. You may have heard of Connor Daly in IndyCars, yes Derek's son.

Derek has looked at the US motorsport scene in detail, as he moved there in 1983 and he explores it from a driver's perspective.

Regardless of if you have never heard the name Derek Daly, his book peels back the lid of racing in the 1970's (which were my formative years of motorsport) up to the present date telling stories of various shenanigans that went on. Of course, as an Irishman, there is always that glint in the eye (figuratively speaking) of his story telling, especially in the early days. There is the old saying that it's the luck of the Irish. Well, Derek had his fair share and is able to tell his story to us to enjoy.



The Mechanic The Secret World of the F1 Pitlane

By Marc “Elvis” Priestley

[Available Here](#)

There has always been a plethora of biographies/autobiographies of race drivers, F1 winners, team principals etc. All of them are characters. However, some of them have been anodyne or vanilla in their writing and stories told. However, the backbone of all teams are the technicians, mechanics and engineers. They are often overlooked by the media and fans alike. We only see glimpses of them fettling the cars during a race weekend alongside the mind boggling pit stops they regularly deliver which can often affect the outcome of a race/championship.

So, what Marc Priestley has done, is to allow us an insight into what can and did go on in the glory days of McLaren during the late 90s.

Written in the first person, Marc delves into his life as a race mechanic, how he started and how he rose in the McLaren echelons and how mechanics were treated by team owners, along with the relationships forged with F1 drivers at the peak of their careers.

The book sticks to Marc’s timeline as a mechanic and how he ended up as one of the pit stop

mechanics, where the pressure was immense during a race weekend.

However, Marc does explore other sides of a race weekend, including the farcical US GP in 2005 at Indianapolis and how Ron Dennis dealt with his drivers and the aftermath of the event. He also delved into the murky world of Spygate where McLaren were ‘caught’ with detailed data taken from the Ferrari F1 Team. The result was a \$100m fine imposed by Max Mosley which tainted F1 for several years

What Marc has done is lift the lid on F1, what went on behind the scenes, what Ron Dennis was like when off duty along with some hilarious adventures involving hire cars, hotels, parties and the relationships mechanics had with the drivers.

So often, most areas of F1 are left out of the limelight. Witness Martin Brundle’s grid walks before a race. You will see the mechanics, all in team livery quietly tending to their charges before the drivers step into the cockpit to do battle. They know that everyone has completed their checklists, then rechecked to ensure nothing has been missed. Meanwhile, Martin completes another 30 second interview with a musician or celebrity who knows little about motor racing but makes a valiant effort to speak coherently. The ones who know exactly what goes on stay by their cars, observing and waiting. They are the real heroes.

As the book states, it’s the secret world of F1 pitlane, happening right under our noses and hidden in plain sight.

REARWARD GLANCE

This month we take a rearward glance at Alan Minshaw behind the wheel of his BMW M3 and Opel Commodore

