

MotorsportDays Summer.

A celebration of Clubman motorsport



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Dave Player

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FROM THE EDITOR

Safety in motorsport! Just how safe can it be? We've all seen the signs around circuits stating "Motorsport can be dangerous", which is always a reminder that safety is paramount when on track. Keen to find out just how safe the sport is and whether improvements can still be made, for the first ever Motorsport Days Summer magazine we brought together some of the most influential people in European track days to explore the issue of safety.

The results were, to say the least, very interesting.

One of the main points that arose was that the UK circuits are absolutely top class when it comes to safety, and in this issue we highlight Silverstone in particular, which is setting the standard internationally. We also have an in-depth interview with Mark Blundell, who knows better than most about the motorsport industry from grassroots right up to the top of F1. He now runs a boutique agency helping drivers reach the top of their game and we're de-

lighted that in this issue he shares some of his invaluable expertise and advice with MSD's readers.

This new Summer edition of Motorsport Days also includes a mid-season report and every article you will find in this magazine is in keeping with our ethos of supporting and promoting Clubman motorsport.

As always, we're keen to hear from track and test day users and Clubman racers, so if you would like to make a suggestion, or if you're keen to get involved in any of Motorsport Days'

activities in 2016 and beyond, please feel free to get in touch.

Also, keep an eye out for the third Motorsport Days Annual, which will be available in January 2017 and will feature the latest Clubman news, interviews, features and results, plus the ultimate track car experience.

For now, enjoy this Summer edition and we look forward to seeing you on track soon.

Ben Whibley
Editor & Director
Motorsport Days

“
How safe are you
on a track day?
”





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DRIVERS' QUOTES OF THE YEAR



FERGUS RYAN, MAGNIFICENT SEVENS

"Many thanks to Andrew McMillan, Simon Harding, Jason Bedford, Joe Prime, Ross Doubtfire, Becky and all the others at McMillan

Motorsport. A brilliant weekend in Spa and a 5th place in the second race wasn't a bad result for my first weekend back. Also, a special mention to Richard Pursglove, Ian Dyble and Keith Marchment for the craic!"

IAN MUTCH, #STARTATTHEBACK

"Lots of new faces in all series and some quality drivers appearing. British motorsport at its best."

BEN EDWARDS, JAVELIN TRACKDAYS SPRINT SERIES

"Thanks again to the Javelin team for an excellent day. Very happy that my creaky old Westfield managed 14th overall and runner-up in class. Congrats to Richard Hough on your well-deserved win! Thanks also to Mike Rawlings for not showing up and allowing me some silverware for this season!"

MIKE WILDS, BRITCAR

"P3 overall in the two-hour race at Thruxton. Brilliant fun apart from a left rear tyre failure flat out in 6th gear approaching the right-hander at Church. VERY SCARY! Pure luck that I managed to save it and get it

back to the pit lane! Huge thanks to FFCorsa for running the car so well, and well driven by Anthony, bringing the car home saving the tyres in the second stint."

ABBITT MOTORSPORT DRIVERS - DAN ABBITT & BEN ABBITT (BROTHERS)

"Trackday Championship is a great series providing close racing on some of the best circuits in the UK. With the points system and class structure everyone has a chance at winning not only individual races, but your class or even the championship itself. The racing is intense with clean, constant action and with pit stops adding another dynamic, the results are always close!"

DAVID TAYLOR, MR2 SCOTTISH CHAMPIONSHIP

"After a great 2015, this year so far has been difficult with many engine problems, including down on power and my exhaust falling off giving me a DNF. But roll on the second half of the year and let's see what I can achieve."

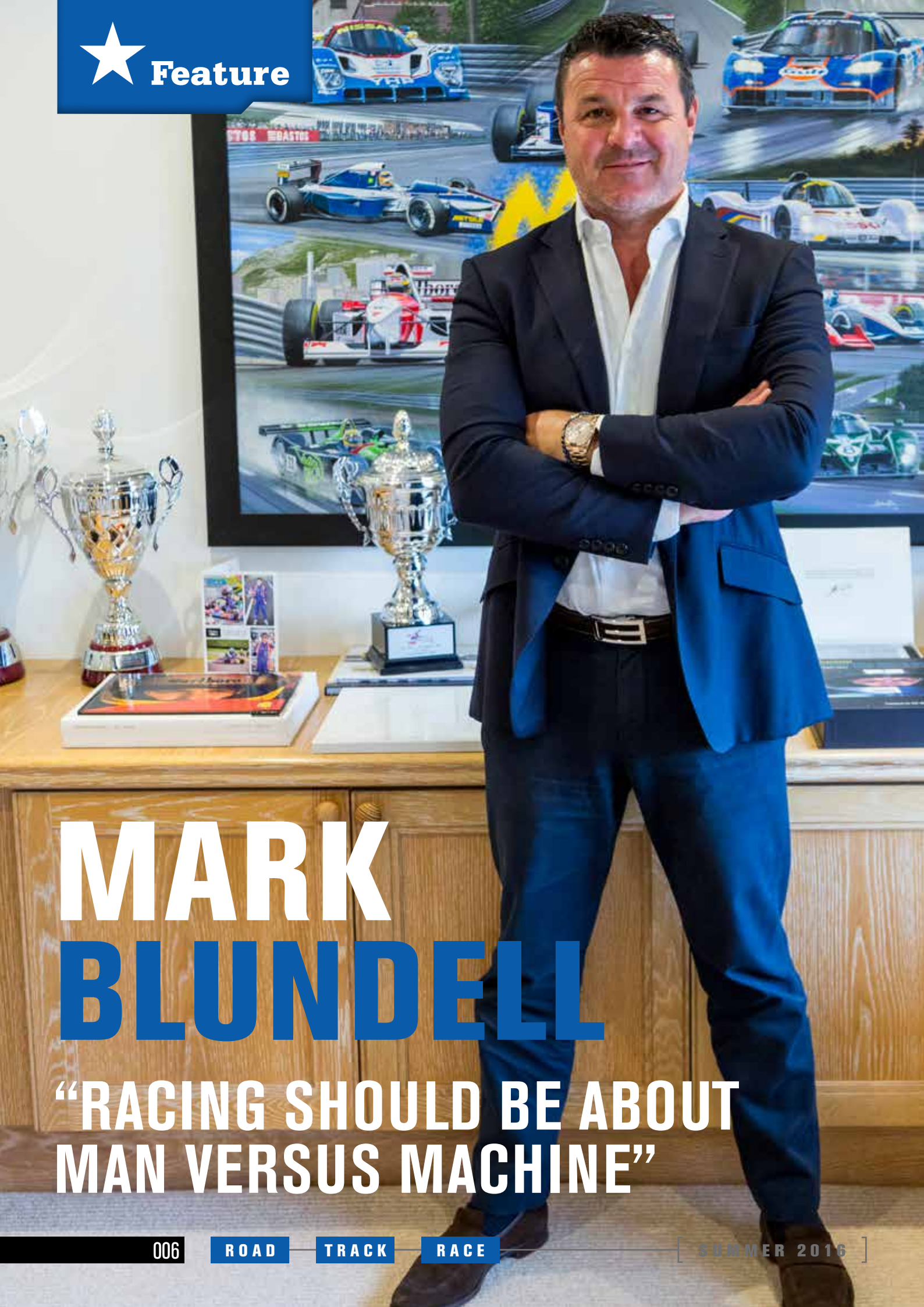
STACEY DENNIS, ALFA ROMEO 147 CHAMPIONSHIP

"I love every season I do with my Alfa Romeo 147 in the Alfa Romeo Championship. It's a dream come true. This is only my fourth so far and I still have lots to learn on a small budget. It would never have been possible without the help of so many people to get me to each race. Harry, Gary and Paul at Bianco Auto Developments do such a fantastic job of supporting me and my car, putting up with my tears and frustration on low days, and being a part of making the high days happen. Also, Dave Thompson of Thames Valley MOTs for the use of his truck and Rob at Godfrey Auto Repairs for the support for Zolder. My first weekend abroad has been the highlight of my year so far. My racing family make every weekend amazing; the support they offer is overwhelming. I'd also like to thank Rob for cat sitting while I'm away! There are too many names to list but each one of these people and so many more make my hard work and dedication worthwhile and every race weekend so special for me. Thank you to all of you!"





Feature



MARK BLUNDELL

“RACING SHOULD BE ABOUT
MAN VERSUS MACHINE”



MARK BLUNDELL HAS A RICH HISTORY IN MOTORSPORT AND MOST WILL KNOW HIM FROM HIS TIME IN FORMULA ONE, BUT HIS CAREER ACTUALLY STARTED ON TWO WHEELS WHEN HE WAS 14. HE TALKS TO MSD ABOUT THE STATE OF THE SPORT TODAY AND WHAT HE'S DOING TO HELP RACING DRIVERS.

The switch from bikes to cars came aged 17 when Blundell went into

Formula Ford and eventually on to Formula One. He has three podiums to his name and 32 championship points in the sport, but his most impressive achievements have to be in the Le Mans 24-hour races he competed in. He was the youngest driver to achieve pole position at Le Mans and won the prestigious race in 1992 with Peugeot.

Blundell's path to Formula One

was a convoluted one and he started his career racing motorbikes around his rural home town.

He says: "My dad was a second hand car salesman so my love for four wheels came from an early age but the local sport was motocross and there were plenty of fields nearby, so that's where my love for two wheels came from.

"Working on the bikes was a good excuse not to go to school, not that I'm proud of that. If I'd known what I know now, things might have been different.

“

The guys in the cockpit of the race car are the best in the world and when they make a mistake they should pay the price.

”



Unlike Damon (Hill) who raced road bikes, I started on the mud."

There are so many paths into the upper echelons of motorsport these days and most people go down the karting route, but Blundell is happy with how he got into single seater racing. He says: "Karting is a great feeder, but I think bikes give you a better understanding of competition, especially when you're handlebar-to-handlebar with 40 other guys and you come into the first corner and all fall off! It's a shock, but it makes you appreciate close racing."

Blundell started in Formula Ford 1600 after seeing it at the Motorsport Show at Alexandra Palace. This is where he began to understand the motorsport scene below

F1. While Blundell doesn't believe he took a generic route into the sport, he did take the same path as a lot of other big names. He says: "A lot of us came from Group C, (Michael) Schumacher and (Alexander) Wurz, to name just two."

Just like the nineties, the path to F1 still isn't clear today, as Blundell explains: "I don't think there's a tried and tested route, there are just too many formulas and too much choice. There are two levels of motorsport: clubman level where you go racing every weekend and enjoy yourself, and another level where you see if you can cut the mustard to make it to the top.

"I think there should be more of a clear-cut choice and if you

reduced some of the formulas perhaps we'd have packed grids and more competition across those feeder series."

You can't deny Blundell had a successful career and it's for this reason he wouldn't change how he moved through the ranks of motorsport to Formula One. He says: "I'd take the same route, but when I started, Formula Ford was the entry level into motorsport and there wasn't anything below it other than karting. Looking back, it was still the most competitive and you learnt so much about your own racecraft racing wheel-to-wheel, as well as the mechanics of the cars and working with people."

In Blundell's career, he's raced with some of the greats and found it so important to keep the right



mindset when competing with these drivers. He says: "No one has really blown me away with their speed because I've always worked under the premise that I'm equally as good, if not better than they were – that's an important mindset to maintain."

There is one person, however, that Blundell learnt from, as he explains: "The only person I have worked with who gave me an insight into the next level would be Ayrton Senna. I began to understand how he made people work

around him for his benefit. I believe that if I could've used those skills, I could've gone on to win a championship."

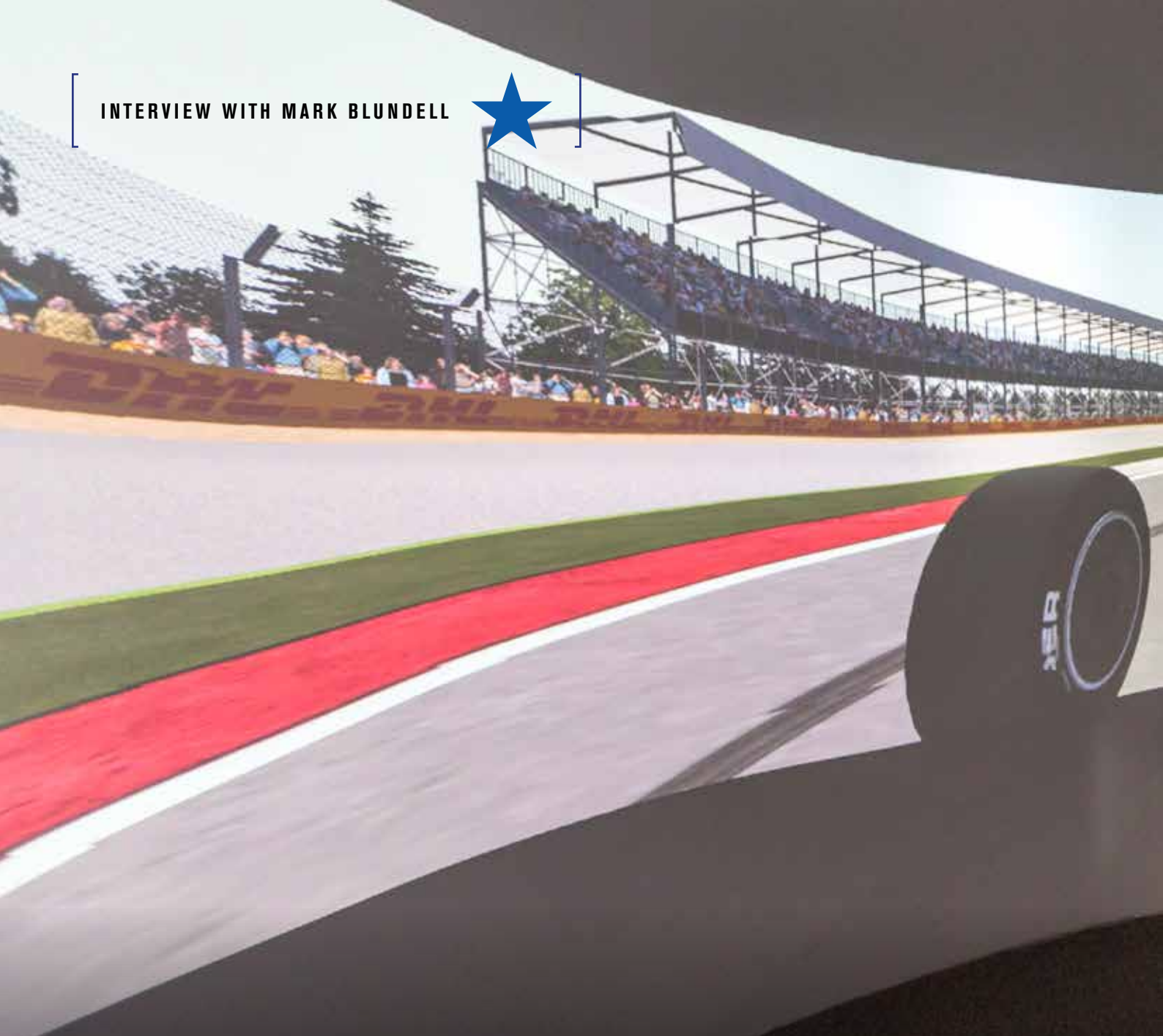
Over the years, Blundell has driven some amazing machinery, but there's one car that really stands out. He says: "The best race car I've ever driven was one I never raced - an FW14B Williams. When I was racing for Brabham in F1, I got invited to test the Williams, which is unheard of in today's world. It was the most complete car I have ever driven

and it's understandable why it was so successful."

It's not just Formula One cars that have impressed Blundell over the years. "As for sports cars, I'd say the best were the Peugeot I won with at Le Mans in 1992 and the Bentley that should have won Le Mans in 2003," he says.

"Those cars were light-years ahead of our competitors. A good car that's balanced and does everything you ask doesn't come around very often. The Peugeot won the 24 hours and we all went





back an hour after the race and thought it could probably do another 24 hours. It was bulletproof."

Formula One has changed a lot since Blundell's days, but like many former drivers in the championship he has his own opinions on the state of the sport today. He says: "Formula One should be about entertainment but it's become so predictable that it's become boring. If you look at golf, boxing or football, they're all very unpredictable and that's the beauty of sport."

As well as restrictions on teams

in terms of what they can do with the cars, there are also a lot of restrictions on the drivers. "We don't have the characters these days," Blundell says. "They're not allowed to be themselves."

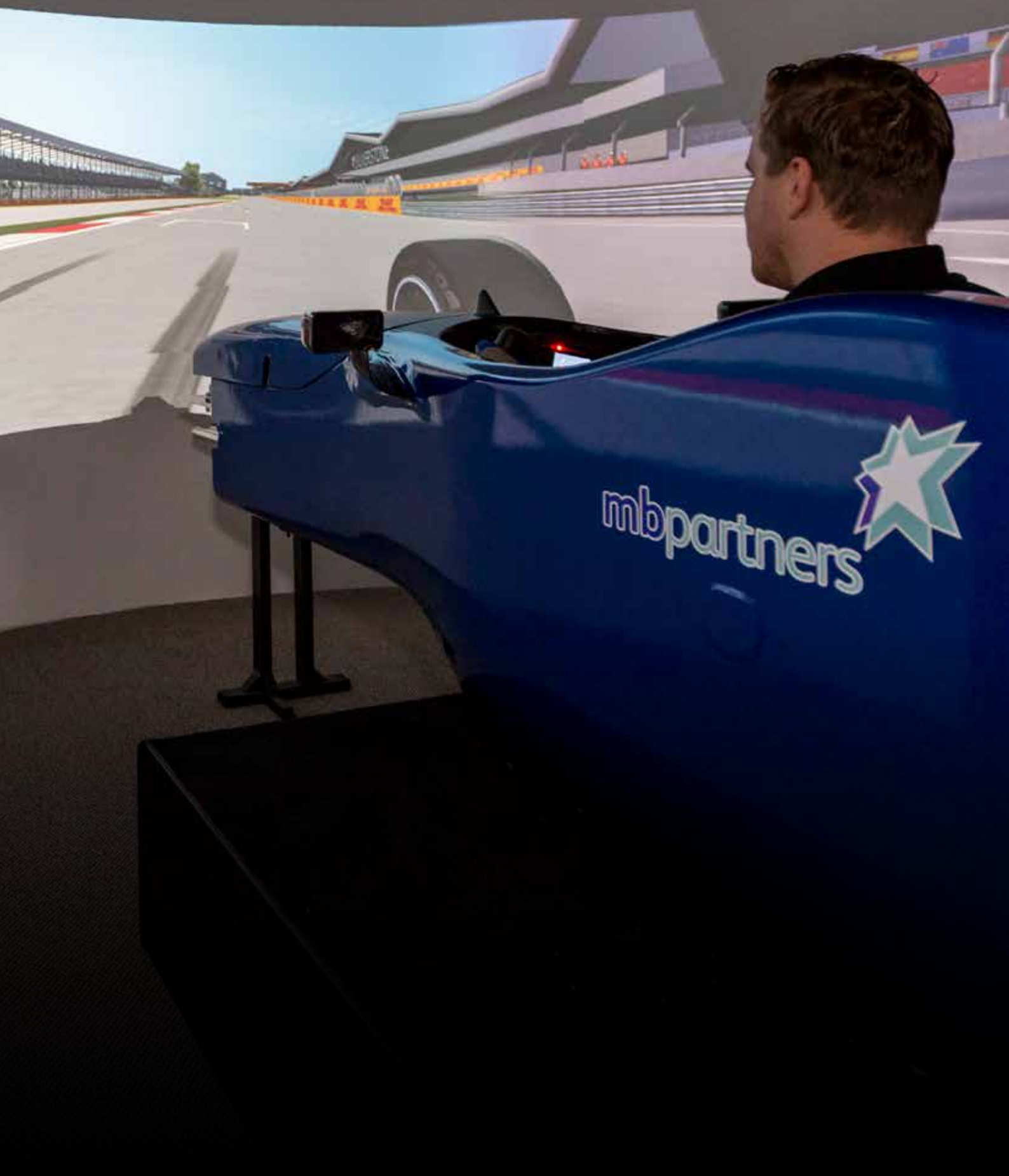
"It's become big business and that means conformity. There are other forms of motorsport that have so much more appeal. The British Touring Car Championship has more to offer than Formula One."

Blundell also feels that a lot of the challenge has been taken away from the sport. He says:

"The guys in the cockpit of the race car are the best in the world and when they make a mistake they should pay the price."

Safety is an important topic in all forms of motorsport but the truth is that it's dangerous. So, as the sport gets safer does it get more predictable? Blundell believes so. "It needs more danger back in it," he says. "I know we are built on self preservation, but it's still about man versus machine and pushing to the limit. That's the buzz."

Blundell runs MB Partners, a





global boutique sports agency that provides all sorts of services to racing drivers. While he has no regrets in his own career, he's using this opportunity to help others where he can.

Funding is getting more and more difficult for racing drivers and there are only a handful around the world that get paid a salary for what they do. Blundell says: "If you look at the British Touring Car Champion-

ship, that's a group of guys that should be the best in the country and some of them are there on merit, but there are others who are there for other reasons."

MB Partners helps drivers with sponsorship, media and driver development, and works with drivers in a range of championships. Blundell has this advice for any driver seeking sponsorship: "Businesses want to see a return on investment and it's

up to the driver to explain how a business will get its money's worth. Go with a solution to their problems.

"Even with so many communications channels now available, you still have to go and graft for it. If that's proving yourself by walking into 1,000 doors, so be it. The phone doesn't just ring, you have to get out there and make contact." ■





“

It needs more
danger back in it.

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BEN CLUCAS

PERSISTENCE AND RESULTS

AFTER 20 YEARS OF RACING AND FIFTEEN YEARS AS AN INSTRUCTOR, BEN CLUCAS HAS A WEALTH OF EXPERIENCE IN A RANGE OF CARS, FROM SINGLE SEATERS THROUGH TO TINTOPS. MSD SPEAKS TO HIM ABOUT HIS CAREER SO FAR AND THE ADVICE HE'D GIVE TO CLUB RACERS.

Having raced in the US for three of the last five years, Clucas has been enjoying himself thoroughly. Last year he had a full season in the Pirelli World Challenge, where the atmosphere is unlike anything in the UK. He explains: "The Pirelli World Challenge runs with Indy Cars half the time and often brings

in crowds of more than 100,000. I guess it's like the European series that run alongside F1, but we do it every weekend."

While being enjoyable, it was an up and down season – something a lot of drivers can identify with. Clucas says: "I finished with four podiums, second place being the best result. This was my first year

with the team but my team mate, Mark Wilkins, had been challenging for the championship for the last few years, although the race format changed slightly, which hurt us."

The changes for the 2015 season meant the car was doing around 33% more laps than the previous year. Clucas says: "We finished



seventh overall, but if you look at the race times we were there during the first half but genuinely struggled in the second half of each race because we were using up the tyres on the front-wheel drive Kia."

This full season's drive is a perfect example of how networking and persistence, along with results, can get you somewhere. Clucas spent a lot of time connecting with teams and making the effort to nurture important relationships. He explains: "It came about thanks to Nick Johnson who part-owns Kinetic Motorsport along with Russell Smith and Ed Hall. In 2011 he gave me the chance to race with Kinetic in the BMW series having never even seen me drive."

"I qualified third in the race then went on to do the rest of the year with them. Nick is a professional driver himself; he's done Le Mans 10 times and competed in NASCAR, Indycar and BTCC too. When I heard he was stepping down, I kept calling him and fortunately when the decision came around I got the call for the Pirelli drive."

Despite Clucas's calm demeanour, he reacted how we all would to that call. He says: "After fist-pumping around the room for five minutes I calmed down and thought I'd better get on with it!"

As with a lot of drivers, Clucas' love for motorsport started at an early age with karting. "When I was eight, my dad got a karting present for his birthday. I heard about it and thought it sounded like fun so I moaned and moaned to my mum and dad to get me a similar present. On my ninth

birthday my parents got me an indoor karting course that consisted of half an hour a week over six weeks. I started doing that and loved it," Clucas says. "I got better and better and eventually progressed to outdoor karts. We bought our own kart and started at the back of the grid."

"At first, I didn't even take the racing line, so we paid someone to teach me by standing on the corners and putting his foot where he wanted me to be because I was wasting so much track."

From there Clucas was hooked and he improved quickly. He went on to win the British Championships and Junior TKM before progressing to cars when he was 16. He says: "I went to Silverstone as they had an intensive Formula Ford course. At 17 I went into it full time."

After winning the Formula Ford Championship in 2002, Clucas was signed by Toyota F1 and was

a finalist in the McLaren BRDC Young Driver competition. This funded his season in Formula Renault, where he finished fifth. He says: "That was a really good year, racing alongside my team mate, Kamui Kobayashi, as well as others such as Pastor Maldonado, who was in the championship at the time too. If you look at the top 10 in 2003, they've all gone on to do pretty amazing things."

The tough championship taught Clucas a lot in the close-running field, and from there he went on to win the Australian F3 Championship, before moving to GT racing in 2007. It's the GT cars that really stand out to him, he says: "The most fun car I have driven is the Porsche 997 cup car I raced in Spain in 2007."

As well as being a racing driver, Clucas is also an ARDS-qualified race coach and in the last five years has managed to deliver 16 championships, from Ginettas to



GTs. He says: "When you start off racing, you don't really think of coaching. Like most kids, you aim for F1 but then coaching becomes a way to pay the bills. I love racing but I love coaching too and I get really attached to my clients. When they're racing and I am not there I will be watching the live timings to see how they are doing."

Clucas coaches clients in a number of ways; by sitting alongside them while out on track and also by setting up data logging for them, monitoring it from the pits then going through it all after a session on track. The right mentality and drive is so important when going into a coaching session, as Clucas explains: "Some people you sit with and you know they're good, so it's just about helping them find small margins. Then there are other people who don't start off as good but have the right mentality and talent but have a different way of approaching it."

While in-car coaching can be beneficial for so many drivers,



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At first, I didn't even take the racing line, so we paid someone to teach me by standing on the corners and putting his foot where he wanted me to be because I was wasting so much track.

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once they get to a certain level it's important that the instructor sits out. Clucas says: "When I coach the top guys, we are only looking for tenths so if someone is losing a small amount of time on a corner, it's hard to notice from the passenger seat. Plus, a passenger is added weight."

"When you're looking for small margins, you need a data logger to help with the analysis. It's also important for the customer to sit in a calm environment and see what's happening."

Clucas has been in the industry for 20 years and has this advice for drivers: "A lot of club racers go into corners a bit slow or turn in too early and the problem with that is there's a temptation to pick up the power too soon. In a low powered car you can get a bit of understeer and if you haven't looked far enough ahead, you'll need to lift. So my advice is to go into the corner faster, wait longer and get onto the power when the car is ready."

While he'll continue to instruct, Clucas isn't sure what's next for his own racing career, but informs us he is open to offers. ■

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BUILT FROM WOOD?

IN THE MOTORSPORT DAYS ANNUAL, YOU MAY REMEMBER THE CAR USED IN THE LEAD FEATURE, "PRO DRIVER VS CLUBMAN DRIVER". IF NOT, I RECOMMEND YOU GET YOURSELF A COPY QUICKLY! WE WON'T SPOIL THE FEATURE, BUT MSD DID GET THE CHANCE TO CATCH UP WITH MARK EDWARDS, ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF ZENOS AND THE BRAINS BEHIND THE E10.





The E10 was unveiled at the Autosport show in 2013 as an affordable sports car. Since then the E10 S and the E10 R have been launched. The E10 S is the flagship road legal track day car from the brand and is powered by a 2.0l Ecoboost engine that pumps out 250 bhp – not bad for a car that weighs just 725kg.

If you need more power, the E10 R takes things to the next level with 350bhp moving a 700kg car. This is the most affordable way to join the 500bhp per tonne club, as this top-of-the-range model costs just £39,995.

Mark Edwards started out working for Lotus as a manufacturing engineer but as the brand began to change he was moved over to the business side of things and put through his MBA. This background and experience set him up to create the Zenos brand.

The origins of the Zenos car are certainly interesting, not least because the first models were made out of wood, as Edwards explains: “We made the frame out of wood from Jewson to make the

seating position. We wanted to ensure good vision and an awareness of the corners of the car. It was important to make sure the line from crotch to steering wheel and pedals was straight. There's no offset arrangement like you get with some mid-engine cars. So yeah - from wood.”

A GAP IN THE MARKET

The Zenos came about when a team from Caterham saw the firm's move away from lightweight sports cars and decided to capitalise on that gap in the market. Edwards says: “When we were at Caterham, there was an announcement for five cars at Geneva that famous year. We rubbed our hands together as it showed they were moving away from their core market, which was affordable, fun, lightweight sports cars. They were opening up the market for us.

“We always knew the Caterham had a limited life from a cosmetic perspective. Many people still recommend the iconic shape but a newer blood and age don't recognise that status. While it's a blast to drive, cosmetically it doesn't

suit their needs, so we always had plans for Caterham to develop a more contemporary vehicle that would complement the Seven.”

While there was interest from the get-go, the idea didn't go much further at Caterham. Edwards says: “Tony [Fernandes] had a change of heart and wanted to aim for something grander with a big supply chain and distribution network. We thought that was too much of a step in one go so we decided it wasn't for us. There was still a gap, though, as Caterham, like Lotus, was moving away from its original markets.

“It's not a huge market but there are people who want something that's not only affordable to buy but also to own, as well as being fun to drive. There is still a market for that kind of stuff, which is why we did it.”

Some people say Caterham has become stagnant and hasn't moved forward in a long time despite vying for new markets. In spite of this and despite creating the Zenos brand, Edwards still has a soft spot for the cars he worked so closely with. He says: “The bot-



tom line is that Caterham needs to sell volume and the business has serviced well on somewhere between four and 500 hundred units per annum. One way to sustain or grow is to look to new markets. The Seven is 50 years old but we didn't want to do a space frame as it's been done to bits and there are newer technologies available. I can understand why they are seeking new markets, the homologation landscape is tough and at

“
It was also
affordable and
driven but how
do we deliver
this car for 25k?
”

some point the Seven will be able to meet all the requirements in the future.

“Caterham and Lotus are our competitors but I still have a heart for it. The Zenos is what it is because of the journey I've had at Lotus and Caterham. Mid-engine performance is the architecture of Lotus while the low cost of ownership comes from Caterham.”

WORKING BACKWARDS

Zenos' sales goals are much more modest than Caterham's, but having started production last year they will have built 80 cars by the end of 2016, with a 50% increase in that number by the end of next year.

In order to keep the price down, Edwards and the team at Zenos set a retail price and worked backwards from that to create the best car they could. Edwards says: “Most manufacturers produce the car they want and then work out the price from parts, labour, profit and VAT. We worked backwards, starting with £25k. We had power targets but still wanted to deliver a car that went for the retail price we wanted.

“That was the hardest thing. We never set out to do a carbon tub or an aluminium spine, but we knew what efficiency we needed from the chassis. The tub did the torsion absolutely perfectly but the beam bending wasn't there; when we put the two together it was the best of both worlds and met the mechanical targets.”

Zenos has no plans to make a kit car and instead is focusing on its portfolio of fully built sports cars. A large portion of the market is

export, meaning Zenos cars are popping up all over the world, as Edwards explains: “We are in the US, France, Benelux, Asia, Japan, China, Italy, Switzerland. All are doing well, so export is strong.”

The name E10 was simply a project name that just seemed to fit. Edwards says: “My surname is Edward and it's the 10th product I have worked on. It was a project name and we spent ages trying to find a name but it was called that so much that the design guys just said “what's wrong with E10?” So we went with that and then added an S and now the R.”

The car was inspired by a number of other brands, not just Caterham and Lotus. Edwards explains the goals for the E10: “Most of it was inspired by Caterham and Lotus, which are the immediate competitors. The brief was based on the ride and handling of a Lotus, the cost of ownership and affordability of a Caterham, with better usability without going quite as far as the MX-5. Take the torsion rigidity of the chassis, for example. The Lotus Elise is about 10,000 nm per degree so we set that as a target and then exceeded it.”

The award-winning rigid chas-





sis with a central spine and tub could be said to make the car too stiff, but Edwards and a number of very happy customers would disagree. He says: "People shoot for 25,000 nm per degree of torsion or rigidity, and I think that you need to be careful you don't get into a bragging competition and end up with something that loses the comfort level. We knew we needed to be somewhere in between 10 and 12,000 degrees of stiffness. A basic Caterham is about 4,000 and no one has ever complained about that. We never wanted to go so far it was too stiff and harsh and only suitable as a track car.

"We worked with Bill Stein on the damping and Eibach on the springs. The E10 S on track setup is still more comfortable on the road than an Elise."

The affordability of the car comes from its on the road price but also from the way the car is

built to help reduce repair bills. Edwards explains this important feature: "You only repair what you break. There are 18 different body panels on the car, so if you take a corner badly you might replace a wing or a diffuser end cap but not a whole clam shell like you would on a Lotus Elise."

Safety is very important to all car manufacturers, especially when a car is designed to go on track. Edwards says: "The car doesn't have to meet side impact regulations under the IVA scheme but we've tested it and it would be compliant. When we consider doors in the future, the frame we currently have will be removed and replaced with a door beam. This means we can maintain the structure of the car."

DB4 OR ZENOS?

Many other sports car manufacturers live off the success of motorsport and the notoriety that

brings. Caterham and Ginetta are the obvious examples but Zenos could join their ranks one day. Edwards says: "We said from the outset that motorsport is great for the brand and great for spares business, but to do it and do it well is a huge effort.

"To get a brand off the ground in three years, establish a network and then try motorsport would be too difficult. We'll let the market decide, whether that's a couple of people who want to race or a group of 25 who want us to set up a championship, we'll be there and will support them every step of the way, but to set all that up right now would be difficult."

Mark once said his favourite car was the Aston Martin DB4 so in closing we got him to clear that up once and for all. "That was before the Zenos existed," he says, "so now it's clearly a Zenos!" ■



THE UK LEADS THE WAY FOR

TRACK DAY SAFETY IS ABOUT SO MUCH MORE THAN DETAILED BRIEFINGS AND WELL-PLACED CONES. MSD, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE SEAN EDWARDS FOUNDATION, BROUGHT TOGETHER EXPERTS FROM ACROSS THE INDUSTRY TO DISCUSS SAFETY, WHAT CAN BE IMPROVED AND WHAT THE REST OF THE WORLD CAN LEARN FROM OUR TRACK RECORD.

We sat down with track day organisers, drivers, instructors, insurers and circuit owners to delve deeper into the safety of the UK's track days. One point from the meeting that seemed to run as a common theme throughout the day was that UK track days are very safe, and few

serious accidents happen. The same cannot be said for all tracks and organisers thought the rest of the world, as safety standards vary greatly. It became apparent that collectively we could develop a way for other organisers to learn from the UK industry and what it is doing right.

One European track day organiser said: "We are always on the lookout for poor driving and always encourage instructors to be in the car, but the rules are a lot more relaxed in Europe." The rules for overtaking, for example, differ on the continent. Most tracks and organisers here in the UK only allow passing on one



TRACK DAY SAFETY

side, whereas in Europe you can pass on both sides. One roundtable attendee even shared a shocking fact with us. She said: "There are some French organisers that serve lunch with wine!"

While we all agreed that, as a whole, UK track days are generally safe, some are better than others. One driver said he "didn't feel safe at an airfield track day". Another added that it was "bandit country".

Tracks such as Silverstone, however, work hard to ensure any organisers using its circuits abide to

rules set out by the Association of Track Day Organisers (ATDO). This is a code of conduct that reputable companies should adhere to, to ensure the safety of everyone on track including marshalls and other staff, not just the drivers.

SILVERSTONE SETTING A GOOD EXAMPLE

One instructor stated that the most thorough ARDS test takes place at Silverstone and it became clear that this famous British track is probably one of the safest to

visit on a track day because they put so much thought into training staff, guiding organisers and helping newer drivers.

A Silverstone representative said: "The minimum we recommend (for a race licence) is one full day learning car control - using the skid pan etc." Other places in the UK will allow you to get a race licence with slightly less effort, but a more involved approach will make you a better driver.

Some countries, however, don't require any sort of test to get a

licence and this could contribute to track and test day risks elsewhere in the world.

As well as sighting laps and briefings, Silverstone will also take drivers around in a minibus with an instructor on board so they can get even more of a feel for the track including braking points, problem areas, safety information and where to pass.

There was some disagreement on briefings, with one attendee saying they prefer to split the briefings and have the basics for everyone, before holding back the novices for a more detailed explanation and to cover extra topics. One track day organiser disagreed, saying everyone should have a full briefing as “it’s the more experienced drivers that cause most problems”.

Instruction is so important when it comes to track day safety, but there is still an element of pride in most drivers who think they can do it all on their own. The reality is that having an instructor on board will help you to go quicker faster, while maintaining safety standards. One attendee pointed out that for drivers who want to insure their cars on a track day, it’s better to have an instructor on board anyway. He says: “Insurance is vastly cheaper if you state that an instructor will be with you at all times. Usually to the point that an instructor costs less than the higher insurance rate.” At some events, instructors will also get separate briefings, which means everyone is on the same page when directing drivers.

An instructor commented on MSV’s track limits cameras saying: “We need education for track limits, not a telling off.” While these cameras do well to deter drivers from pushing these limits, if there is someone that is consistently being snapped then perhaps it’s an opportunity to find out why and educate them on the proper racing line, rather than simply removing them from the event altogether.

The same instructor said he learnt so much from doing one day of marshalling that it should be required for all instructors and drivers. This shows that there is, perhaps, a lack of education when it comes to the role of a marshal. If drivers can do some marshalling themselves, then maybe they would have a better awareness of track limits, what to do following an accident and how to make things easier for our orange-clad guardians.

The rest of the world could learn a lot by looking at how the UK’s track days are run. This roundtable event showed us that a code of conduct for organisers is very important, as is proper education in the form of detailed briefings and in-car instruction. Lists of rules and the time spent learning aren’t designed to ruin the fun, but instead to help drivers get up to speed quickly while ensuring that everyone can play nicely together. ■

We would love to hear your comments on track day safety both in the UK and abroad. Please send your thoughts to: contact@motorsportdays.com



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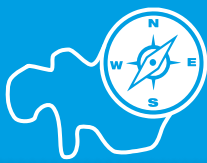


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Track
Guides

TRACK GUIDE: NÜRBURGRING



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BY ADAM CHRISTODOULOU, WINNER OF THE CLOSEST EVER NÜRBURGRING 24 IN MAY 2016

Welcome to the Green Hell, the Holy Grail of racing circuits. With 25km of tarmac and 83 corners to learn, the Nürburgring Nordschleife is fully deserving of its reputation as one of the most challenging circuits you'll ever drive on, not least because it's one of the only places in the world where bikes are mixed with cars on the track during tourist track days.

But once you've got to grips with its historic corners, the Nürburgring really is the most rewarding place to drive in the world and you can literally watch your lap times drop before your eyes. If I haven't scared you off, let's begin...

Starting on the Grand Prix circuit, this is where you're really able to push your car because you've got plenty of run-off, so you can build confidence from seeing what your car can do. Following the quick left-right chicane before the final corner on the Grand Prix circuit, the Coca Cola Kurve, you take a left-hander, which takes you onto the famed Nordschleife itself.

The first part of the lap through Hatzenbach is pretty tricky – it's quite bumpy and you have to use the full width of the circuit, but you can get away with using some of the kerbs.

Then you head uphill towards Flugplatz. It's changed a lot over the years, but it's still one of the most exciting parts of the circuit. The first time you go there, you can't see over the other side of the

crest so you'll over-slow it, but after a few laps you eventually realise that you can carry a lot of speed. Up until this year, Flugplatz was where the cars used to take off, and it translates into English as "flight path".

Next, you head towards Schwedenkreuz, which is one of the quickest corners on the track. In the GT3 car, you approach it at almost 270 km/h before braking into Aremberg which, as we saw at the 24 Hours, is very tricky in the wet.

Then you start your downhill descent into Fuchsröhre. You're going flat out through here, straight-lining all the little left and right kinks and down into the compression before entering Adenauer Forst. This is a tricky part of the circuit, because you get used to the high-speed flow of the circuit and suddenly you go from sixth gear down to second at the tightest part of that section.

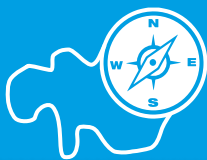
MISS-HIT-MISS

You then make your way towards Kallenhard. Here in a GT3 car it's just a little lift, again using the full width of the circuit before entering a section called Miss-Hit-Miss, which is shaped like a 50 pence piece. As the name suggests, you miss the first apex, hit the middle one and then miss the final one, using the whole width of the track, before you head down into Breitscheid. This is the lowest part of the circuit; there's a pretty solid concrete wall on the outside so you obviously don't want to get

too close to that!

Then we head up to Ex-Mühle and along the straight to Bergwerk, which is famous for Niki Lauda having a big accident in 1976 and is another one that can be very slippery in the wet. The next part of the track is an uphill climb for about a kilometre and a half through Kesselchen. It's flat out in a GT3 car and you're able to get up into sixth gear before entering Mutkurve, going down a gear and then back on the power for the remainder of the uphill climb. That's probably the scariest part of the track – you've got to be committed at 250 km/h in the GT3.





Now you're heading towards the Karussell, which probably one of the most famous corners in the world. You're flat out up the hill and you go over the bump and fall into the banked part of the track, which really rattles both driver and car. It's about keeping the minimum speed up as much as you can and then holding the camber all the way around the corner before exiting and generally taking off on the exit.

Then you get to Hohe Acht, which is the highest point on the circuit and leads into a series of corners that are all about hopping from kerb to kerb as the track goes from left to right. Then you're arriving at Brunchen, which is one of

the most popular corners where all the spectators stand. This part of the track is always tricky because it's going up and downhill, so it's quite easy for the car to move around under you. That's followed by Ice Kurve, which is known for being one of the slippiest parts of the track. It's shadowed by a lot of trees, which generally means it's the last corner to dry on the track - hence the name.

Next you've got another part of the track where you take off: Pflanzgarten 1 and Pflanzgarten 2, which is my favourite bit. At the first part, you're approaching it in fourth gear in the GT3, then you brake just before the track drops, the car takes off and once

you land, you brake again before you turn into the corner. You do Pflanzgarten 2 borderline flat out and, again, the front of the car lifts off as you're going down the hill at full power.

Schwalbenschwanz is a lot easier to write than it is to pronounce! That's the final part of the track before the long straight. It's like a Mini-Karussell and another really good place for the spectators to stand. Again, you need to brake as late as you can, keep your minimum speed up and use the compression, which hooks you into the corner and then spits you out again on the other side.

Then it's Galgenkopf, which is the final corner onto the Döttinger Höhe,



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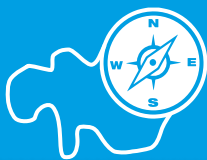
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so any speed you can take through there is going to be carried all the way down the long straight. You reach your maximum speed here, going flat out up to 280 km/h down towards the Tiergarten and the Hohenrain chicane. You've got to be extremely confident and well positioned because any mistakes here can hurt you coming back onto the Grand Prix circuit to complete the lap.

It's often said that the most dangerous part of learning the Nürburgring is roughly your sixth lap, because that's when you think you know where you're going. It's a good place to get an instructor who knows the track and will guarantee maximum fun and safety. I'd also advise learning it in a slower car to give yourself a chance to process the information – there's an awful lot to take in! ■



Use the QR code above and watch Adam take on the Nürburgring in a GT4 BMW.



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Howard's career began back in 1989 and after a few years at a race school, he entered into the Renault 5 Turbo Championship, the equivalent of today's Clio Cup. Howard has raced with some of the top names in motorsport and a number stood out to him back then. He says: "The Renault 5s were what the Clios are today and we were surrounded by the top names like Andy Rouse, Will Hoy and Andy Souper – it was fantastic to see them race. Even Mika Häkkinen was in the Formula 3s that raced on the same weekends. So to see guys stand out from the pack like that is quite inspiring."

Despite going on to win the Renault 5 Championship, Howard is very aware of where his strengths lie. He says: "I never had that ability to stand out from the pack, but my skills are hard work and determination. I've not seen someone stand out from the crowd as much as Ash Sutton did at Croft when he dominated the wet race. He was on a different path and it's once in a decade a driver like that comes along."

As with many drivers, it was money that held Howard back from following his dream, as he explains: "It was great fun but obviously I wanted to get into touring cars. I just couldn't afford it so once I won the championship I had to call it a day. It was a shame as I had more ability back then."

'I COULDN'T AFFORD TO DO IT'

During his time in the Renault 5 Championship, Howard ran with two teams. He says: "I was run



RACING ADDICT

MARK HOWARD RE-ENTERED THE RACING SCENE IN 2013 IN THE VW RACING CUP BUT THIS YEAR HE JOINED THE NEWLY FORMED TEAM BKR ALONGSIDE ÁRÓN SMITH IN THE BRITISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP. MSD CATCHES UP WITH HIM TO FIND OUT WHAT FUELS HIS ADDICTION TO MOTORSPORT.

by a guy called Pete Banahan who was an ex-rally driver and who ran me for the first year or two, and then I went across to Mark Fish Motorsport in Harlow and went onto to win the championship in 1993. After that, I couldn't afford to do it and had to pay back all the money I owed for the racing in my winning year."

Howard knew that if he was going to stop racing he had to do it properly. He says: "I gave up racing and got into work so I could pay everyone off. I then tried to stay away from it - a bit like an addict. I love motorsport so much and I knew I had to stay away. Funnily enough, though, it all started again when I got invited to watch racing then on a Sunday and then on the Monday I bought a VW race car. I guess I should have realised what would happen."

After his 18-year hiatus, Howard went into the VW Racing Cup, but an accident at Snetterton could have ended his career for good. He explains: "As I say, I have to work really hard at being competitive. I wouldn't say I am a natural talent and because of that you make mistakes and push the car a little too hard. I had a major roll at Snetterton where the car went over seven times and it wouldn't stop. I thought that would be the end of racing for me."

ACHIEVING A DREAM

Of course, it wasn't long before Howard was getting in a race car again. He says: "Mid-way through the season in 2012 or '13 I thought I'd knock it on the head as I didn't have the ability. Then my teammate from the VW Cup started in the Clio Cup. He said I had to

drive one as they're so much fun. So that was me back in it again."

Single-make championships can be very competitive and having raced in the Renault 5 Championship it made sense to Howard to give the Clio Cup a go. He says: "For me it was a romantic notion to have another crack at it with Renault and see what I could do. The great thing about single-make racing is that it is all down to the driver and how he sets up the car. I like to know other people are in the same machinery. It's a professional package and it is well run with a good crowd and great TV coverage for sponsors."

Despite having the dream from a young age of becoming a touring car driver, the reality actually happened very quickly. "I was doing a Snetterton test in a Clio and on the way back I had a call from BKR offering me the drive," Howard explains. "It came so suddenly and it was a matter of just four or five weeks until the press day so it was manic. The cars were in a barn and in five weeks they got them ready for the launch."

"I got into the Volkswagen Passat CC at Brands Hatch and it was a baptism of fire. I was a nervous wreck! I got tapped into a spin and then I managed to spin myself. The tyres are very different to what I was used to in the Clios and I didn't manage to get enough heat into them. At this point I thought the dream had turned into a nightmare and I got taken out in race three, too. Thankfully, race two was calmer."

Once the first race weekend was out of the way, Howard could focus on what he had achieved. He says: "After wanting to do it for decades, to

actually sit in a touring car on the grid when the lights go out is an amazing experience. I'm learning so much every time we are out but those first days were very intense."

It's quite a clear step on the motorsport ladder to go from Clios to touring cars but the racing is very different, as Howard explains: "The cars are more physical to drive and the intensity is so much greater than anything I've experienced before. When I race it's as a family and I have time for them, but now on a Saturday I don't see them from 7am until 9pm and then



on a Sunday not until the evening. You are either on the track, with your engineer or fulfilling sponsorship duties, so that is a different challenge."

"As I haven't had a lot of seat time, I've been doing my learning at the race weekends. For example, there is a specific start routine you go through and the only times I have practised it is literally as the lights go out. So that is not brilliant if you want to be at the top of your game. But I'm in it and loving it. I would never miss the opportunity so that's why I grabbed it. The racing is frenetic

and there are a lot of nice people in the paddock so that gets a big thumbs up."

There's a lot of trading paint that happens in touring cars and some would go as far as to say that it's too aggressive. Howard agrees: "It is aggressive, if I'm honest. I have done five race weekends and managed to complete two races. But there are a lot of things that happen in the opening lap that I've not experienced before that seem to be expected."

This year is all about learning and development for Howard,

and he's remaining realistic about next year. He concludes with: "I'm learning the car and running without the RML suspension, which everyone else has. This is deliberate as it benefits the learning curve I am on. Next year is about getting some points and the following year I'll maximise on that experience."

"Árón [Smith] is a race winner and got on the podium this year. It's a shame he's not up there consistently. The team is a great bunch of people and we are pushing as hard as we can while being realistic." ■

WHY GOLD TRACK IS THE TRACK DAY ORGANISER OF THE YEAR

It was a sunny day at MSV's Brands Hatch circuit in Kent, where we'd be taking on the GP circuit. I went to the briefing, which was one of the best I have been to in a long time. It wasn't boring or too long, but covered all the main safety points. Only 25% of the users hadn't been on track before so there were a lot of repeat users – a testament to Gold Track's popularity. It was great to see the camaraderie between the participants and the organiser, Melindi Scott. It was a really fun atmosphere.

I caught up with Gold Track's Callum Lockie, who works with Scott, and he talked us through their backgrounds and how the company has evolved. "Melindi has been involved in motorsport for a lot longer than I have, really from age four or five, as her step-father was in motorsport," Lockie says. "He practically invented track days and was involved with a Ferrari dealership. He suddenly realised all his mates with fast cars didn't have anywhere to exercise them, so he thought of track days. People were turning up in 917 Porsches and expensive cars even then.



GOLD TRACK WON OUR 'TRACK DAY ORGANISER OF THE YEAR' AWARD LAST YEAR, SO MSD'S BEN WHIBLEY JUMPED AT THE CHANCE TO GET ON TRACK AND SEE WHY SO MANY OF OUR READERS VOTED FOR THEM.

"Melindi was running 96 Club with her step-dad and then he gave her sole power to run it, and that's when I joined. We ran it together, but then after a few seasons we went on our own and launched Gold Track based near Silverstone and have been there ever since."

Scott has a little experience on track, as Lockie explains: "The last time Melindi went on track was in 1998 when I was contracted to Bugatti with the EB110 and was demonstrating at Silverstone. Melindi came around with me and just didn't like it."

Lockie himself has been racing and coaching "forever". He tells me how this is one of the unique selling points of Gold Track: "Melindi is very welcoming and fantastic at organising and being attentive to individuals. If you have a problem, she will solve it for you.

"We have a USP having me as a professional racing driver on the team. I've achieved BRDC membership and I am very busy racing and coaching."

Gold Track also actively helps its track day users move into the world of racing. Lockie says: "People are often on the phone to us asking about how to get into racing and we help them with trailers, equipment and so on."

The track day industry has changed over the years, as Lockie explains: "There is a big difference now. There are a lot more modern cars and fewer classic cars these days. There used to be many more classic cars coming out - both race and road. The sheer number of GT3s and McLarens has increased over the last few years.

"The pit lane at Silverstone recently was stuffed with GT3s, Aston Martins, Porsches, Ferraris and other £150k-plus cars. That has changed,

as has the level of speed that the cars do. Even a relatively quick driver in an RS going down Hangar Straight can reach 130mph. That is pretty fast and you don't need to be that good to achieve that. To get to 150mph you have to be on it, but 130mph with paddle shift and loads of grunt is easy these days.

"You also see more race cars these days, as when people take road cars the compromise is too great, so they buy a Radical or M3, for example."

The pricing has changed over the years, too. Lockie explains: "Costs have rocketed. For example, our cost for Brands Hatch is £5k an hour on the GP circuit – that's £27k plus VAT, plus wages etc., so it's expensive. Silverstone is similar but a much bigger track. Some organisers max out the cars. We won't, and impose a strict limit and will turn people and their money away. If we took more people on the day it would spoil everyone else's fun."

While organising a track day might be difficult, Lockie is aware that he doesn't normally have to deal with that side of things. He says: "I think mainly for Melindi it's dealing with individual requests and changes. At Silverstone she was making changes the night before until 9pm with clients contacting her wanting to change garages, but she does what she can and the clients feel they have personal attention, which is unparalleled in the business."

Track days in Europe are cheaper to organise but there are added travel costs. Lockie says: "We keep the rules the same even if you are abroad. If there are rules in place, why would you change them? If you do, for example, run days on the left only and then go to Spa where it's either side, you cause a problem. So you need to



be consistent and on the same page with everyone.

"Getting enough people to go abroad is the hardest thing. The benefit of Spa is that it's beautiful and there's Belgian beer. The British circuits are fantastic, though, and Silverstone is very technical, very fast - and if you don't get the technical parts you will never be fast. The GP circuit at Brands Hatch is very special, Cadwell is great and Snetterton is a fantastic circuit but we're sorry to lose the old layout."

As a coach it's difficult to choose a favourite track, Lockie says: "My coaching answer is this: I do not get into favourites, as having a favourite circuit predisposes you to do less well at others, but if you said I could only race at one circuit ever again for the rest of my life, it would be the Nordschleife. It's got everything

and in a Cup car we take off three or four times a lap and at 164mph. It's a very special place."

Because Gold Track believes in the quality of its track days, they often have people complaining about the price, but Lockie stands by their pricing strategy. He says: "The only way you can lower the price is by having more cars but less track time. We do get people saying we are too expensive and so they try other organisers. But we speak to them later and they say it was rubbish and that they spent half of the day in the pits waiting for cars to be pulled out of the gravel, or that there were too many on track. When you think of the minutes of quality track time per pound, ours make sense. So many people look at price and not quality as it looks the same on paper, but it really isn't." ■





GETTING TO GRIPS WITH THE GINETTA G57

I was able to take the G40 out on track with the very experienced James Littlejohn, who was brave enough to sit next to me. I managed to put my racing boots on and had a few laps being pushed by James. As I only had a few laps to get my bearings, it wasn't as fast as you'd expect, but it's a beautifully balanced car and similar to the Caterham Academy car while being a tin top, which makes you feel you are driving something more special.

While I was there, I had a few laps with Charlie Roberson who took me out in a G55. I've been out in WTCC cars, BTCC cars, single seaters and I raced for years too, but the G55 just blew me away with the brakes and grip of the tyres. I'm a big fan of the Ginetta family of cars on the BTCC package (probably more so than the touring cars themselves) but now I want to race one too. The noises of the engine and gear shifts are something you need to experience yourself. If you have a chance to be in one of these beauties, take it.

Robertson is the 2015 European Le Mans Series champion and recently competed in the Road to Le Mans race in the sole Ginetta LMP3 car. He did well to lead almost the entire first half of the race but a problem in the pits dropped them to third. Teammate and Ginetta boss Lawrence Tomlinson took over and pushed hard, regaining second place before a spin put him in the gravel, sadly losing them a place on the podium.

I had the chance to speak to Robertson about his recent successes in the Ginetta G57 at the

EARLIER THIS YEAR, MSD'S BEN WHIBLEY TOOK PART IN A TRACK DAY AT BRANDS HATCH WITH GINETTA CARS AND HAD THE CHANCE TO CATCH UP WITH 18-YEAR-OLD CHAMPION AND GINETTA FACTORY DRIVER CHARLIE ROBERTSON.

V de V race at Catalunya after a front row lockout in qualifying. He says: "It was the race debut of the G57 and all four cars finished. We went in confident with the car but there's way more performance to come."

The first race of the season tends to be a big learning curve with a new car but it all went well for Robertson and Ginetta, as he explains: "The car ran perfectly the whole weekend, although there were a few small issues with engine mapping, but we learned about the car and the performance. Other than that it ran smoothly. As it was the first race weekend of the year we wanted to make sure it all ran as expected, which it did."

Of course, the car was tested and fine-tuned by the team to perform as well as it did. Robertson says: "We had done a lot of

testing and done a base setup on the car and learned a lot about the chassis from LMP3 last year so we had a good base to start from. The engineers know what they are doing, so when we report on the car having a little more front-end, they know the changes that need to be made. I'm still learning about the car and developing as a driver, as it's more complicated than anything I have ever driven. The car responds to the changes instantly on track."

There's a huge difference in speed around Brands Hatch between the G55 and the new G57. Robertson would do a G55 lap in around 49 seconds while the G57 can do it in 43 – an astonishing difference over such a short circuit. Robertson explains the improvement in performance further: "It's so fun to drive and I love the downforce of the car. You



can really throw it into high-speed corners and have confidence that the rear wheels will grip. On a slow corner, the Chevy V8 engine can pull you out with the crazy amount of torque and aero. It's a mixture of the fine-tuning of high-end aerodynamics with LMP2 levels of grip. An amazing car."

At V de V Robertson worked closely with teammate Colin White. He says: "It was Colin's first time in the car and he hadn't had the testing I had so I gave him a lot of feedback. I was explaining how to get the most out of the car, but he wanted to make changes straight away so I had to push him to learn about driving the car before making changes.

"Once we had that, we found a base setup that worked for both of us and, at the end of the day, you need to compromise on the car's setup to suit both drivers. Colin did a great job and was faster than I thought he would be. He was only 1.5 seconds off my fastest lap. For him it was a mega achievement and to be that far off with hardly any running is impressive."

Working from the car while driving is also important for race strategy and to keep the team on top of everything that is going on. Robertson explains: "You have to give constant feedback when you are in the car. As it's already set up, you just need to relay information and tell the team when you are coming into the pits so they know the changes you want to make.

"In the race, you are reading out numbers and telling them the fuel usage so you can work out what's needed before the next stop. Towards the end of the race we were really stretching it out to the end, so I had to do the last 15 minutes on 50% speed with a two-minute gap to the car behind me. On the last lap he was five-tenths behind me, so I had one lap of fuel to hold him off with cold tyres. With the team, we judged it all perfectly," the young driver recalled.

To show the sheer pace of the car, in February Robertson set out to achieve a sub-one-minute lap at Donington. He says: "I know it's possible. We put a new set of tyres on and I was about to do it but we got traffic. So we put another new set of tyres on and, using the VBOX, we could see it was possible. It was going to be a fast one if I had a clear lap. We didn't use the full 600bhp, as we were running it in on a greasy track, so on the next sunny day at Donington we'll be fine." ■



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MAKING THE SWITCH

GOING FROM FRONT-WHEEL DRIVE (FWD) TO REAR-WHEEL DRIVE (RWD) CAN BE A BIG LEARNING CURVE, AS TURN EIGHT RACING DRIVERS PIP HAMMOND AND GAVIN JOHNSON FOUND OUT WHEN MOVING FROM CLASSIC STOCK HATCH TO THE PORSCHE CHAMPIONSHIP.

Having both raced in 750 Motor Club's Classic Stock Hatch Championship, Hammond and Johnson made the decision to switch to a 1979 Porsche 924 knowing that a RWD car was going to be very different from the FWD classic hatches they'd raced in the past.

Johnson is relatively new to racing having raced karts, picking up three podiums in his first three races, and winning the Novice Gold Cup at Three Sisters in Wigan, before joining Classic

Stock Hatch. Hammond is a two-time Classic Stock Hatch champion and has a little bit of experience with RWD, having raced a Triumph TR6 alongside his FWD Citroen Saxo and Vauxhall Nova.

Preparation was important ahead of testing the Porsche, but there was only so much they could do without getting in the car. Hammond says: "I watched a lot of YouTube videos and Gavin got me into iRacing. You can't get a full simulation without a decent rig but it helped me with some of the

principles. I've also run a couple of one-off races in RWD cars before, but I never really had the time to learn them, so iRacing probably counted for better preparation!"

Testing at Donington in the wet was a good chance for them to learn the car and see how it handled when it wanted to slide or spin. While an FWD car can be easy to correct after a moment on track, they had to be a bit more gentle with the Porsche. Johnson says: "In an FWD car you should bury the throttle and turn to keep



the wheels facing where you want them, trust the car and then react by straightening out as it snaps back! In a RWD car you need to be less aggressive with the steering and much calmer on the throttle. Don't panic and don't brake."

Hammond echoes this: "I think the feeling of losing it in the first place is the same but the similarities stop there. I actually spun the Porsche in the rain on my very first lap in the car, and from that point I had a good idea of the limit. The key with RWD is to do the opposite

of what got you in trouble in the first place, without reacting in extremes. Whipping it to the opposite lockstop will just get you in trouble – just mirror the actions that got you in trouble and don't ask more than the tyres can give."

A RWD car also grips differently when going round a corner – which means finding that limit and learning to manage oversteer is really important. Johnson says: "The most obvious difference to a relative newcomer like me is that when on the limit, my FWD cars

were keen to understeer and push on, whereas the Porsche tends to oversteer. I'm still adjusting and learning the feel, but I find the oversteer easier to manage now."

While the differences are still noticeable, the Porsche is a good stepping-stone for anyone looking to drive more powerful RWD cars having come from an FWD background. Hammond says: "The Porsche runs on a Toyo R888R control tyre that affords a lot of grip – so it's not as big a learning curve as it could have been. The 924 has

relatively low power and high grip using those tyres. You can push it very hard before it starts to slide, so you can actually turn in more aggressively than in a more conventionally gripped RWD car.

"With the power the way it is, you can slide the car into the corners to scrub speed and start rotation, but if that slide carries on into the mid-corner and beyond then you're losing out and you can't rely on the throttle so much to help you out!"

Johnson has taken sharing the Porsche as a chance to learn from Hammond, a two-time championship winner. He says: "Working with Pip has made the switch to RWD much smoother for me. Pip's input to my testing and his ability to articulate technical information and analyse data has proven to be invaluable. He's fast in everything from lap one and gets the most from even the briefest test session – a key skill when club racing on a budget. I've gained time and confidence every time I've had him in the car with me."

Testing together while using Harry's LapTimer means they've been able to see exactly where time is being lost. After a disappointing weekend at Rockingham for Johnson then a much more positive test session at Oulton Park,



Hammond went through all the data only to find that Johnson was losing time on left-hand corners – something a lot of drivers struggle with – often finding the right-hand turns more natural.

This has allowed the pair to work on their weak areas and continue to improve. While Hammond maintains his 100% win record after an almost-perfect weekend at Snetterton at the start of the season, the rest of the field is getting quicker too.

Both drivers agree it's easier to go from FWD to RWD. Hammond says: "There are aspects of being quick in a front-wheel drive which are actually a little counter-intuitive to those who've raced karts or a RWD.

"I think FWD specialists are often seen as having a bull-in-a-china-shop approach but there's a real

knack to getting it just right. In my experience, it's almost a case of arrive too fast, turn in hard and too late, then hit the gas pedal. RWD is more of a natural driving style."

If you're a driver looking to make the switch, Johnson has this advice: "Try testing a RWD car and take an experienced driver with you. There are plenty of differences but the balance of a RWD car like the 924 will surprise you. It's exhilarating when you master those sweeping bends."

Driving a RWD car can be a great way to develop as a racing driver, as Hammond explains: "If you start with something that has a similar power-to-weight ratio as cars you've driven previously, you'll have less to get used to. You're probably going to need to smooth your driving style a little, but it will make you a better and more versatile driver in the long run. Just don't ditch FWD completely – keep your eye in with both if you can."

Switching shouldn't be daunting and, while you'll have to adapt your driving style, once the familiarity is there, the experience can make you a stronger driver all round.

Keep an eye out for Hammond, Johnson and the Turn Eight Porsche in the BRSCC Porsche Championship. ■



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THE ROAD TO LE MANS

Team BRIT came about from the charity Kart-Force, which introduced injured soldiers to endurance racing. Player explains: "After five years doing anything from two- to 24-hour races, some of our lads suggested we set up an endurance racing team. I said "yes" and called it Team BRIT, which stands for British Racing Injured Troops.

"We decided it wouldn't be a charity and instead would be a limited company owned by Kart-Force. The lads would have to work for a seat just like any other racing driver. It's not another charity where you can rock up and race for free and do nothing for it. The whole idea is to teach them how to be businessmen and women, what corporate sponsorship is all about and how important it is to look after those small businesses, because

GIVING INJURED TROOPS A CHANCE TO STEP UP INTO ENDURANCE CAR RACING, TEAM BRIT TAKES THEM THROUGH ALL THE NECESSARY COACHING IN ORDER TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN EVERY ELEMENT OF MOTORSPORT. MSD SPOKE TO TEAM OWNER DAVE PLAYER ABOUT THE ORIGINS OF THE TEAM, ITS PLANS FOR LE MANS AND HOW IT'S ENCOURAGING MORE PEOPLE TO GET INTO ENDURANCE RACING.

if you do they'll look after you too. What they learn from this will be valuable for the rest of their lives."

The team set a goal to race at Le Mans 24 Hours - a big step up from its karting roots. Player says: "Racing at Le Mans is a big goal but it's the pinnacle of motorsport. We stepped up from karting to BritCar, where the lads won eight out of 12 races in the first year and didn't crash once - no DNFs. Insurance company Grove & Dean, who are a sponsor of the team, were thrilled we didn't make one claim!"

ALL EYES ON 2018

The aim is to get to Le Mans by 2018 and the team is preparing for this by competing in other 24-hour races. The first was at Silverstone in April, where the team were running second until a gearbox failure set them back. Player says: "We actually didn't expect to do very well but our drivers are so competitive and at one stage, in the middle of a windy and rainy night, we were P2 and 15 seconds quicker than the leader. We were confident



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of a podium but the gearbox broke, which took 90 minutes to fix, so we ended up 10th in class and 24th overall - a respectable finish considering the issues."

Team BRIT is a great place for injured troops to get to grips with racing and the business side of motorsport but, as with all teams, those drivers come and go, something Player encourages. He explains: "Mark Allen and Martyn Compton were our first two drivers, but they have now decided to take the big step and have left home and gone on their own, which is what we are all about. We don't want to hold their hands all the time and they have provisionally set up on their own with our support."

"We now have three rookies who have taken their ARDS tests and are being coached on track. Our first race will be with Brit-Car either at the end of July or in August. We hope to build them up and start a full competitive championship next year."

BREAKING NEW GROUND

As well as coaching, the team helps drivers secure sponsorship and teaches them the skills they need to work on that element of racing themselves. Player says: "We teach our drivers what sponsorship is all about and how to get it. It's not a case of simply sending out mass emails, so we show them how it's done and what a sponsor might want from them. A law firm or bank would want something different to a local retail shop."

The team works with troops who have been injured both physically and psychologically, and while there are restrictions facing these drivers, Team BRIT helps them around it. Player says: "On one hand we are breaking new ground, but we do need to prove we are capable of mixing it up with everyone else. Some people expect special treatment because they are disabled, but then when it comes to this you want to be treated like everyone else. You can't have it both ways. It's an imbalance of what is

“
I want women
to race and still
don't understand
why F1 doesn't.
”

reasonable.

"The MSA has always been super with us and put us in touch with David Butler, Chairman of the British Motor Sports Association for the Disabled. He's absolutely superb and is a triple amputee. When he was a kid he found an unexploded mine and blew off both legs and an arm but he went onto race Porsches. He's now in his fifties and is MSA's guy for disabled racing."

SAFETY FIRST

Safety is imperative in motorsport, so Team BRIT works with disabled drivers on getting in and out of the car. Not only is this important for driver changes during endurance races, but in the event of an accident it means they can clear the car quickly, too. Player says: "When our lads want to race we take photos and videos of them getting in and out of the car. We time them and then email over the video or they inspect it themselves."

Encouraging troops into sport is important and Player believes racing is the perfect outlet for these men and women. He says: "Some people like football and some people like motorsport. There are adrenaline junkies who love taking themselves to the limit, finding that edge and pushing the boundaries. That is part of what makes a British soldier. I think that's what motorsport gives them."

Team BRIT has taken on civilian amputee and personal trainer Gemma Trotter, and is actively encouraging more women into the sport. Player says: "I want women to race and still don't understand why F1 doesn't. Gemma came along when she heard about us, saying she'd struggled to get any opportunities to race, so we thought it was only fair to help. She's had a lot of troubles with her own prosthetic leg and when she is all mended we will get her started."

While the team has targets and is consistently helping soldiers get into this environment, the work is always ongoing. "It's a never-ending job," Player explains. "For example, we are contacting schools and our lads probably benefit more from talks at schools than the children do. We



go there and they are totally nervous, but when we leave they are all buzzing and this goes a long way to boost their confidence. So much so that one of them went from dreading it to wanting to do it at his old school."

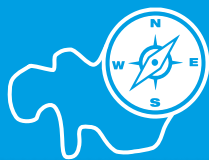
For drivers who are looking for sponsorship, Player has this advice: "Don't send masses of junk email, everyone has so many every day and they delete them. The subject of your email has to be something that a sponsor would read. If there is no effort, they will delete it. Once the email has been opened, you want them to be impressed and carry on reading it. Keep it short and no rambling. Something along the lines of: 'We are looking for sponsors, are you willing to discuss further?' Give links to other information too."

"Most importantly, research the person you are contacting. Use Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter to find out about that person. See

what their interests are. If they are into green energy then they will never sponsor motorsport. Just do a bit of background research. Get the name right, too."

Regular press coverage is also important for drivers and teams, as this can help put you in front of the right people and that's exactly how Team BRIT picked up support from Coldplay. Player says: "Chris Martin read about us in the Exeter Gazette, as our driver Martyn was from that area. Chris rang us up saying he loved what we do and is now supporting us in our second year of racing. He's not really into motorsport but his brother was in the army. He liked what we were doing - giving injured troops the chance to rebuild their lives."

Team BRIT continues to focus on supporting troops and getting more people into motorsport, and we'll hopefully see them at Le Mans in 2018. ■



TRACK GUIDE: GOODWOOD CIRCUIT

GOODWOOD IS A TRULY TRADITIONAL CIRCUIT AND IS STILL OPERATED IN MUCH THE SAME WAY AS IT ALWAYS HAS BEEN. THE MARSHALS ARE KITTED OUT IN PERIOD WHITE OVERALLS AND THE CLUBHOUSE IS A SHRINE TO MOTOR RACING GREATS. JAMIE STANLEY WRITES.

As Goodwood is a period circuit, if you go off you will have a period accident, as there is very little run-off. This circuit probably has the strictest noise regulations of any in the UK, so it's worth making sure your car isn't over the limit before you go.

The circuit doesn't have many corners but each one is truly stunning. Madgwick, being the first, has a slight uphill approach and from the turn in the apex is a long way around the corner. Be careful of the large bump in the road as you cross the track from the turning point towards the apex. On the exit, be sure to use the full width of the road and, if you do have a very noisy car, be patient with the power on the exit.

The next corner is Fordwater,

which is essentially a very fast right kink in the road but, due to the bumpy nature of the circuit, this makes it a truly terrifying corner and it should be treated with the utmost respect. Depending on your car, this will be a small lift or easily flat.

This then leads to St Mary's, which should be treated in two parts – the first taking a late turn in and apex to get the car tight to the right-hand side of the circuit. This will give you as much room as possible for the second part, which is steeply downhill under braking. With the apex unsighted until after you turn in, you will need to be careful not to allow the car to run out too soon.

From the bottom you will then be looking uphill towards Lavant Corner. There is a marshal's post

to aim at initially which will give you some guidance as to where you need to position the car. Once you arrive over the crest, you can pick your braking point and turn in quite easily. Once turned in, be careful not to be greedy with the kerb on the inside or outside of the corner, as this is a tight corner. Be patient with the throttle application as this is where 80% of accidents occur at Goodwood.

The run down the Lavant Straight is very quick with two slight kinks, but these should be treated with respect as a mistake here is usually severely punished. The long straight leads to Woodcote Corner and the high-speed approach makes it very tricky. Try to ensure that braking is done in a straight line towards the first of two turning points. At the first you will turn the car towards the second turning point. There is no first apex from the second turning point, so bring the car into an early apex as this allows you to get on the power very early for the run to the final chicane of the lap.

After the exit there is a short run in to a tyre chicane. This is a very simple chicane, but care should be taken for slower cars that are entering the pits just on the exit of the chicane. ■



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Highly regarded as one of the most prestigious organisations, the BARC has once again excelled during the first half of the 2016 motorsport season. With a wide variety of championships on offer, it doesn't matter whether a competitor is a novice or a seasoned veteran; the BARC has the ability to cater to any level of motorsport experience.

Operating not only as a club that oversees the running of championships, the BARC also ensures the best marshals and officials are on hand to make sure all meetings run smoothly.

Remaining a jewel in the BARC's crown, the Dunlop MSA British Touring Car Championship has flourished with a record entry grid providing 10 different winners from the opening 15 races. The TOCA package, which includes the Renault UK Clio Cup, Ginetta and Porsche Carrera Cup GB, has also been highly competitive and entertaining.

Britcar Endurance have enjoyed a period of resurgence and the foundations for a stellar 2017 campaign are being laid this year, with popularity and grids continuing to grow at every event.

From exotic machinery to fire-spitting hatchback missiles, the MSA British Rallycross Championship in association with Odyssey Battery is responsible for mud-slinging action under the BARC banner.

If the British Rallycross Championship houses some of the smaller vehicles, the British Truck Racing Championship is the complete opposite. Thousands of



THE BARC CONTINUES TO SHINE DURING THE FIRST HALF OF 2016

THE BRITISH AUTOMOBILE RACING CLUB (BARC), ESTABLISHED IN 1912, IS BRITAIN'S LARGEST MOTORSPORT CLUB.

horsepower packed into sizable trucks is as popular as it has ever been and leaves fans in awe of those competing wheel-to-wheel at high speeds.

Low-cost and competitive racing is something that the BARC has become renowned for down the years and that trait is a constant plus point to this day. Championships such as the Carbon8 Hyundai Coupe Cup, Mighty Minis, UK National Legends and Max5 provide the ideal first step onto the motorsport ladder.

Making the jump from karting – from the BARC British Schools Karting Championship, for example – to cars can always be a difficult transition, but that switch has been made easier with a host of junior categories for 13 to 17-year-olds. Ginetta Juniors remains the premier place to duke it out, though the Junior Saloon Car Championship is growing in stature. Providing a level playing field of Citroen Saxos for all drivers, the next British cult hero and champion could well come from

this current crop of racers.

It isn't just modern day machinery that is at the fore of the racing activity; historical machines from yesteryear are hugely popular. The Classic Touring Car Championship provides a multi-class system for iconic cars and the Luna Logistics Formula Ford 1600 series showcases what single-seaters were like on the road to Formula One in the 1970s.

With a host of other championships all prospering and competing at some of the top circuits in the UK and Europe, including Thruxton and Croft, the BARC has something for everyone.

For further information on racing with BARC, or if you are looking to make your first steps into the cauldron of motorsport, don't hesitate to get in contact. To find out more, visit: www.barc.net

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**BRSCC
Review**



Continuing on from previous years, the BRSCC remains the preferred organiser of choice for the World Endurance Championship's Silverstone 6 Hour endurance race meeting. Other major highlights include the rebirth of the Silverstone 24 Hour race, the Blancpain GT meeting at the same venue, and the Masters Festival at Donington Park. With the centrepiece Formula Ford Festival still to come in October, the Club ensures a high standard of organisation is maintained throughout the year.

Alongside its high-profile events, the BRSCC oversees selected British GT meetings at Silverstone, Rockingham and Donington Park. The Club also oversees around 25 championships and series, which cover a wide range of categories and formulae. Whether a competitor is a complete novice or a seasoned veteran, there's a championship and a car to suit any skill and experience level.

Starting with sports cars, a popular choice is one of the BRSCC's two Mazda MX-5 championships,

THE BRITISH RACING & SPORTS CAR CLUB

THE BRITISH RACING & SPORTS CAR CLUB (BRSCC) ORGANISES APPROXIMATELY 50 CLUB AND INTERNATIONAL RACE MEETINGS EVERY YEAR.

offering a choice between the much-loved Mk1 and more contemporary Mk3 models. Caterham Motorsport provides a stellar 5-tier system that allows a complete novice to progress from the Academy all the way through to the fastest Superlight R300-S machines with help and guidance along the way. The Toyo Tires Porsche Championship gives the chance to drive Stuttgart's finest in anger, while the Dunlop TVR Challenge keeps one of Britain's best loved sports car manufacturers alive and kicking. In addition, the Excool OSS Championship allows a wide range of sports prototypes to take part in multi-class competition.

Touring car-style racing is always popular, with several one make and spec championships to suit. The Quaife Fiesta Championship has seen a recent resurgence in popularity with consistently high grid numbers, while young racers aged 14-17 can jump from karts to a circuit racing career in the Fiesta Junior Championship.

More Ford action is available via the XR Challenge, while other options also come in the form of

the Teekay Couplings Production GTis for either Mk2 or Mk5 VW Golf GTi models, the Smart 4Two Cup, the Alfa Romeo Championship for lovers of the Italian marque, and the Toyo Tires Honda VTEC Challenge for a distinctive JDM flavour. New for 2016, The BRSCC welcomes both the BMW Compact Cup and 330 Challenge with a large number of enthusiastic drivers and close competition. As an extra element, endurance racing is also catered for via the FunCup, with teams of drivers contesting races varying from three to six hours in length.

Single seaters are also an option, as the Avon Tyres Formula Ford 1600 championships continue to keep the tradition alive and well, whilst those who want more downforce can plump for the rapid slicks-and-wings of Formula Jedi. If reaching the F1 grid is an ambition, the F4 British Championship – Certified by FIA, Powered by Ford allows young drivers a chance to display their craft to a wide audience.

Do get in touch with the BRSCC and see how they can help you jump-start your racing career!

Club: **British Racing & Sports Car Club (BRSCC)**
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CSCC Review



THE MOST SUCCESSFUL SEASON SO FAR IN THE HISTORY OF THE CSCC

THE FIRST HALF OF THE SEASON HAS SEEN RECORD CLASSIC SPORTS CAR CLUB (CSCC) GRIDS OF WELL OVER 300 ENTRIES FOR EACH ROUND AT SNETTERTON, SILVERSTONE AND BRANDS HATCH.

Large numbers mean plenty of cars for every driver to race against, with action up and down the field. The recipe of good value, longer races for one or two drivers and courteous driving standards clearly remains popular with its members.

The club returned from the Spa Summer Classic at the end of June where almost 200 of its members got to experience racing at one of the world's finest remaining circuits, many making this annual pilgrimage with the CSCC year after year.

Overall winners' penalties have helped ensure a variety of different winners in all nine series. Changes that were new for 2016 have proved successful, including the BMW M3 class within the CSCC New Millennium series, attracting more than 20 registered E36 and E46 so far.

The CSCC Meteor Suspension Open Series has seen average grid numbers of 28 cars - an excellent result for a new series. Three simple rules: no slicks (or wets), no single seaters and no sports racers has seen everything from 1950s classics to the very latest modern machinery enter in these 40-minute races for one or two drivers.

An increased interest from owners of 1970s cars has seen the Advantage Motorsport Future Classics series for 1970s and 1980s models continue to thrive, with 35 to 40 cars entered at every UK round so far.

Whilst not a CSCC-run championship, their friends at the JEC have seen a resurgence in popularity for the XJ Restorations/ Toyo Tires Jaguar Saloon and GT Championship. The Nextec Dunlop Puma Cup, now in its third year, has also seen numbers steadily grow within shared CSCC grids, with double digit entry figures at each CSCC round so far.

Looking ahead, there is a great deal of anticipation surrounding the televised Thruxton meeting on 13th and 14th August, with one race selling out within just three

days! Every one of the CSCC's series will race over the weekend, with the triple-header CSCC Special Saloons and Modsports series likely to be a highlight for many spectators. Before that comes the beautiful Anglesey Coastal layout, rewarding to those who make the effort to travel to Wales on 23rd and 24th July. On the same weekend in July the Advantage Motorsport Future Classics have the rare privilege of racing on the Brands Hatch Grand Prix circuit.

Donington Park in September is always extremely popular, whilst Cadwell Park later that month makes a return to the calendar after a three-year absence, and welcomes its European Triumph and MG friends. A busy single day at Oulton Park rounds off the season nicely in October.

The friendly, social aspect of the club is important to many, with the annual dinner/dance at the end of November a chance to catch up and reminisce among friends. With nine different series catering for cars of all ages, come and join the Classic Sports Car Club for the second half of 2016.

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**MSVR
Review**

MSVR
MOTORSPORT VISION RACING

MSVR CELEBRATING TENTH ANNIVERSARY IN STYLE

MOTORSPORT VISION RACING (MSVR) IS THE RACE AND EVENT ORGANISING DIVISION OF THE MSV GROUP. AN MSA-RECOGNISED CLUB, MSVR ORGANISES OVER 35 RACE MEETINGS ANNUALLY.

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016 marks MSVR's tenth anniversary, and the year so far has provided a number of highlights. Firm favourites including the Blancpain GT Series and the Masters Historic Festival at Brands Hatch, as well as MSVR's own American Speed-Fest event, have all provided spectacular action and thrilled competitors and spectators alike. Most recently, MSVR was the sporting club responsible for the pioneering FIA Formula E Championship's title-deciding rounds at Battersea Park in London, reinforcing the club's position as one of the UK's leading race meeting organisers.

As well as event organisation, MSVR looks after over 20 car championships/series. Ranging from entry-level series like the MSVT Trackday Trophy for novice drivers, to the halo BRDC British Formula 3 Championship, there is something to suit all budgets and levels of experience with the club priding itself on offering the highest levels of efficiency, value and enjoyment for its competitors.

Drivers exploring the tin-top route have a number of options; the aforementioned Trackday Trophy series caters for novice drivers and, new for 2016, has gained a sister in the shape of the MSVT Trackday Championship. This fresh initiative offers competitors a ladder of progression, with the chance to run more powerful machinery and score points with the aim of lifting the crown at the end of the year. The championship has seen bulging grids at every round so far this year and that trend is set to continue.

The Toyo Tires Racing Saloons and Production BMW Championship have both enjoyed strong seasons so far, with close racing throughout their respective fields. The Lotus Elise Trophy continues to welcome new drivers in the lightweight sports cars, with more experienced drivers moving up to the Lotus Cup and Lotus Cup Europe, which are open to the marque's most powerful machinery. The MINI Challenge has expanded in 2016 with a new class for older MINIs, and the flagship F56 class offering exciting racing for up-and-coming

career drivers. Following in the production hatchback vein, the VAG Trophy offers a place for fans of the Volkswagen Group to do battle in a selection of the company's brands.

Top-flight GT3 and GT4 cars have a home in the GT Cup championship, with cars from McLaren, Porsche, Audi and more competing at the UK's top circuits. A combination of pro and amateur drivers and a great race format all add to the mix.

Single seaters are well represented in MSVR's portfolio: Champion of Brands and SuperSeries cater for Formula Ford 1600 cars, while the Monoposto Championship has expanded again this year, now running seven classes ranging from Formula Fords to older Formula 3 machinery. Speaking of which, MSVR now has two dedicated F3 championships – F3 Cup, catering for 1981-2011 chassis cars, and the new-for-2016 BRDC British Formula 3 Championship, which showcases the very best young talent and co-headlines rounds of the British GT Championship.

Radical Sportscars fly the flag for Le Mans style sports racing cars, ranging from the entry-level SR1 Cup, through to the national Radical Challenge and international Radical European Masters championships.

As it celebrates its tenth anniversary this year, there couldn't be a better time to go racing with MSVR – please don't hesitate to get in touch if you would like to know more.



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Royal Purple Hot Hatch has taken up where the previous incarnation left off, with regulation classes now defined by power to weight ratios to keep competition fair and costs affordable. Outputs are enforced by the 750MC's own mobile rolling road, and the series caters for those taking their first foray into club motorsport, whilst also offering a scalable development ladder up to the 260bhp/ton machinery that currently dominates the sharp end of the field.

So far this season, the Mk6 Ford Fiesta ST has narrowly proved to be the tintop to beat, with different cars piloted to overall victory in the hands of Tom Bell, Alistair Camp and two-time Stock Hatch champion Shayne Deegan, but they haven't had an easy ride. Retro hot hatchbacks have given the Fords a run for their money throughout, most notably thanks to double race winner Matt Howarth and his Mk3 Astra GSi from the previous Hot Hatch generation. More recently a swarm of BMW Compacts have not only dominated the entry level class but also challenged for overall victory, thanks to 2.8 and M3-derived engine conversions. Forced induction and 4WD are not permitted in what are relatively open regulations, and the FWD versus RWD layout pros and cons make for ever more exciting competition.

The Tegiwa M3 Cup now boasts

AN OLD FAVOURITE RETURNED TO THE LINE-UP OF 750 MOTOR CLUB FORMULAE FOR 2016, IN ADDITION TO TWO UNIQUE NEW SERIES, AND IT HAS BEEN FASCINATING TO WATCH ALL THREE DEVELOP INTO EXCITING OFFERINGS FOR COMPETITORS AND FANS ALIKE AS THE SEASON PROGRESSES.

NEW FORMULAE FLOURISH IN A BUSY 2016 SEASON FOR THE 750 MOTOR CLUB



a healthy amount of range-topping E46 BMWs in the Club's premier one-make series, which offers GT-esque performance, whilst staying true to the Club's low cost ethos. Early indications suggested that reigning Tegiwa Civic Cup champion Adam Shepherd would be the man to beat and go head to head with MX-5 champion Brian Chandler, but as the season progressed, Shepherd found new rivalry not only in the form of longstanding Honda racer Luke Sedzikowski, but also circuit racing novice Carl Shield. After edging ever closer at Brands Hatch and Croft, the North East-based former bike racer went on to take his first M3 Cup win at

Snetterton last month, and will certainly be a future name to watch.

Finally, the Club's new Cartek Club Enduro series has so far offered two 2016 bouts of temptingly-affordable endurance racing for club-level sports and saloon cars. The two-hour season opener at Donington Park saw Porsche 928 duo Ben Demetriou and Jonathan Evans come through to overall victory, but not without a pair of BMW M3-based challenges, thanks to Andy Marston/Brett Evans and Neville Anderson – the latter sharing with Allan Gibson in his Lotus Exige.

Cementing the fact that the series is formulated around affordable endurance, it was refreshing to see the pairing of Steve Hewson and Neal Martin not only place second in Class B (behind Leighton Norris), but also fifth overall in their unlikely duo of a supercharged Peugeot 106 GTi twinned with a VW Caddy van.

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FROM GRASSROOTS TO GOODWOOD

It all started around 10 years ago when I was given the choice to either go to the British GP with McLaren or be hosted by the team at Goodwood Festival of Speed through my work. Well, I was never going to choose the latter, as the British GP was a no-brainer! I mean, what was this Goodwood all about anyway?

I was swiftly put in my place by those “in the know” – this was the event of the year. I was told that it is the only event to attend if you want to see everything in the automotive and motorsport industry.

So that year we attended the Festival, and words cannot really describe how I felt that weekend. It was incredible - the sights, sounds, smell and atmosphere reminded me of why I fell in love with this industry in the first place. Simply put: it was glorious! I will never lose the memory of seeing my father talking to his idol, John Surtees.

I had only just started my degree in Motorsport Engineering, as I had a dream that one day I would build my very own race team. The goal? To compete at the world famous Goodwood Festival of Speed!

VRD MOTORSPORT'S DAVID VARDY SHARES HIS EXPERIENCES OF STARTING A MOTOR RACING TEAM FROM SCRATCH.

It became an obsession for years after this, as there was so much to think about. How could I get a team together? What car would we build? Who would drive it? How could I get Lord March to notice us to get that illustrious invite to his glorious Festival?

In 2008 the team was formed, and the foundations for what was the AMT (Apprentice Motorsport Team) were established.

We offered team places to all of the apprentices that were on the Volkswagen Group Apprentice Programme, with all of them having to endure a strict audition process. This was to make sure that we had the people with the right spirit on board the team.

The team started well, running a Skoda Fabia Group N Rally car in various events and scoring good results along the way.

I guess in life sometimes you do need a lucky break and this was just that. Skoda said we could be part of

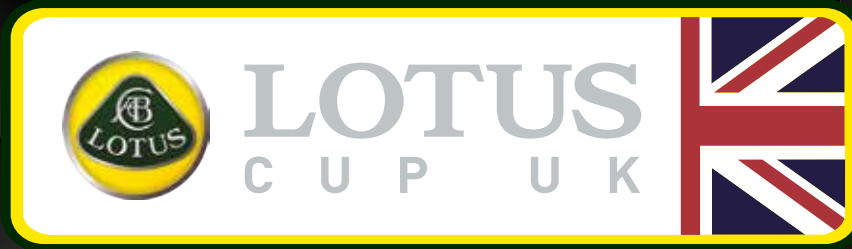
their display, and Goodwood Festival agreed to let us run our car at the 2010 Festival of Speed. I couldn't believe it, as in such a short time we had made it. We were going to Goodwood!

Leading up to our appearance at Goodwood, I contacted Shaun and asked him if he wanted to have a go at rallying. He quite literally jumped at the chance and, in return, some of our apprentices from the programme were sent to different rounds of the BTCC.

After that happened, everything was flying by in a blur. There we were in a whirlwind of double page spreads and front covers, with our story in magazines. It seemed that everything was just clicking into place with the preparation, the team, the weekend and working with the media. I had a feeling that it was the start of something special, as it was all working so well. ■

READ PART 2 OF “FROM GRASSROOTS TO GOODWOOD” IN THE MOTORSPORT DAYS ANNUAL 2017”.





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