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BRITAIN'S BEST MOTORSPORT WEEKLY

AUGUST 16 2018

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60 PAGES

THE BEST OF THE BTCC

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- Top 25 drivers
- Five-car track test
- Jim Clark's victories



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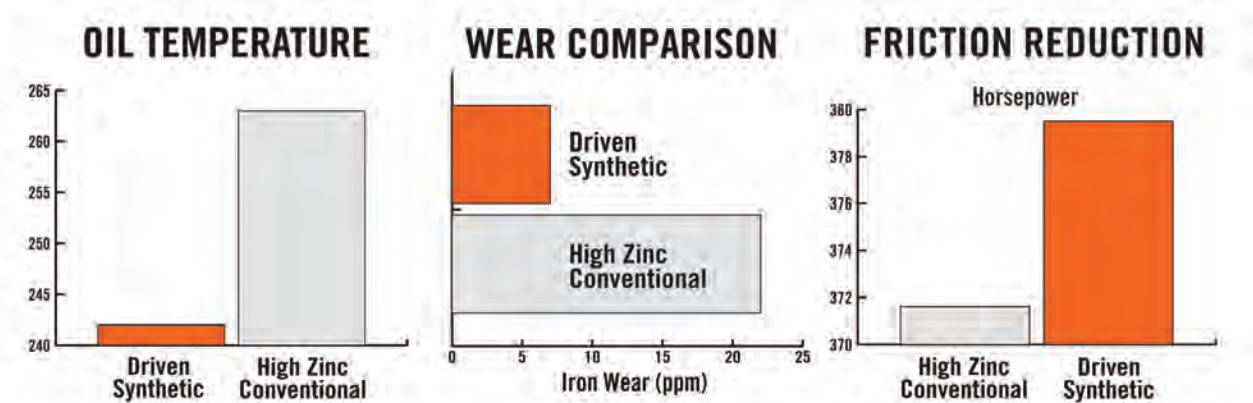
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CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF A UK BATTLEGROUND

People often moan that there isn't enough wheel-to-wheel action in Formula 1. Sometimes that's fair, sometimes not, but either way it's never something you hear said about the British Touring Car Championship, which is the subject of this week's special issue.

It's true that the BTCC is not a *pure* contest, in the sense that it has success ballast and reversed grids, but it rarely fails to deliver dramatic races. *Something* always happens.

As our report on page 24 demonstrates, there was some fine battling at Rockingham last weekend and the series got its 12th winner of the season. The chances of the title fight going down to the Brands Hatch finale (again) are high.

The championship recently celebrated its 60th birthday at Snetterton so now seemed like a good time for Autosport to do the same. We've tried to cram as many great drivers, iconic machines and dramatic moments as possible into our supplement.

Elsewhere, we catch up with Robert Kubica (p14), a man who has had his own personal fight following his rally crash seven years ago, and look at how Jean-Eric Vergne – who needed a different kind of resurrection – defeated the manufacturer giants in Formula E (p18).

- Another big motorsport category visits Britain this weekend. After what seems like an age (actually two months), the World Endurance Championship returns, with its Silverstone round. Will Fernando Alonso extend the title lead he currently holds with Sebastien Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima? Can the LMP1 privateers get any closer to Toyota? And who will win the hard-fought LMP2 and GTE classes? If you can't make it to Silverstone, be sure to tune in to the live coverage for the answers – see page 63 for details.



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FREE INSIDE

BTCC SUPPLEMENT



We celebrate 60 years with a greatest driver poll, Brands Hatch track test and interviews with some tin-top legends.

FORCE INDIA SAVED BY STROLL

FORMULA 1

The administrators for the Force India Formula 1 team have accepted a bid from a consortium led by Lawrence Stroll, saving it from a Caterham/Manor-style demise.

Force India had been in administration since the Friday before the Hungarian Grand Prix last month, but was returned to solvency after a deal was struck with a Stroll-led group of investors assembled with the help of Force India's chief operations officer Otmar Szafnauer and the team's senior management.

Its creditors will be paid in full, all 405 jobs at the team have been saved and ongoing funding has been guaranteed.

When Caterham and Marussia went into administration at the end of 2014, only Marussia continued, having gained fresh investment under the Manor name. But it was placed in administration again at the end of '16 and then collapsed for good.

"Once we went into administration, there were a couple that have been there and didn't come out," Szafnauer told Autosport. "So, there is a lot of trepidation among all the team members, and a lot of anxiety, because we didn't know where it was going to go. It's a huge relief to know there's a future for the team."

The new owners' plan regarding senior team personnel is unknown. Vijay Mallya, co-owner of the team for the past 11 years, had been its official team principal, with Bob Fernley acting as his deputy. Szafnauer said he did not know if he and Fernley would retain their positions.

Stroll has been helping bankroll the Williams team, and his son Lance made his grand prix debut with the team in 2017. The younger Stroll is now expected to switch to Force India, which is likely to pursue a name change for 2019 now that it is not under Mallya's control.

The team's focus is on its short-term prospects, chiefly the funding that will allow for vital upgrades worth over half a second per lap to be put into production. Szafnauer told Autosport he was hopeful that the team would have its upgrades by next week's Belgian Grand Prix.

"I hope that's the case," he said. "If not, definitely by Monza [the following race]. There are some components that have been put on hold and I don't know where the suppliers will get to because they don't work over the break."

The team will receive some funding immediately, with more to come before the end of the month once its emergence from administration is complete.



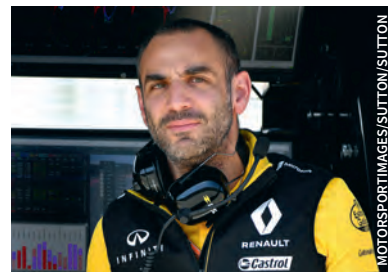
Force India still has an outside shot of repeating its fourth place in the previous two seasons' constructors' championships, despite its financial difficulties holding back development. The team spent the early races getting on top of a diffuser-stall problem, among other aero weaknesses – caused by poor windtunnel/CFD-to-track correlation – but did eventually troubleshoot the VJM11 into a better-balanced car, albeit one still lacking in outright downforce.

Its operational strength – considered one of the best in the pitlane – has allowed it to claim 11 points finishes, with Sergio Perez taking the best result of the season with third in Azerbaijan, to put the team sixth in the championship, only 23 points behind fourth-placed Renault.

"We have to start paying our suppliers and purchase some needed materials for upgrades for this year and for next year's car," said Szafnauer. "It's much needed and couldn't have come at a better time."

SCOTT MITCHELL

ROLL-LED CONSORTIUM



F1 lagging on 2021 engine rules

FORMULA 1

Renault boss Cyril Abiteboul has warned that Formula 1 is falling behind schedule as it continues to firm up its 2021 engine regulations.

The plans of the FIA and Liberty to introduce a simplified power unit without an MGU-H – outlined last October – were dealt a blow when the four existing manufacturers decided recently they would rather stick with the current hardware with small changes. They cited cost reasons and the fact that no new entrants have come forward for 2021. The new rules were discussed further via a video conference last week, involving manufacturers, the FIA and F1.

“The clock is ticking if we want to have a completely different engine for 2021,” Abiteboul told Autosport. “The summer break this year would be the red line. It’s no secret that two of the main drivers for that change of regulation were the possibility of a new entrant and the situation at Red Bull. Red Bull and Toro Rosso were massively driving the change because it was clear to them that, independently from our situation, they had to think about their own situation. So now that Red Bull has found a new partner in Honda and there do not seem to be new entrants, the necessity of radical change to the engine regulation has lowered.”

Teams were previously promised new engine rules would be firmed up by the end of June.

Abiteboul (above) said all four manufacturers were aligned in their views. “We are talking about details right now, but I think in general we agree on the target, we agree it is better to keep the existing platform and that we can make a better job with it,” he said. “We still accept that we need to improve the power unit for other reasons, mainly for the show, for the customer teams, for the manufacturers in terms of cost also.”

ADAM COOPER

STROLL'S FELLOW INVESTORS

ANDRE DESMARAIS

(Canada)

The youngest son in one of Canada's wealthiest families. Power Corporation, built up by the late Paul Desmarais, is mainly involved in financial services, but has interests in communications and energy.

JONATHAN DUDMAN

(Great Britain)

Head of Monaco Sports and Management, a “management advisory firm that typically serves high-net-worth clients and their families”. Previously a director of Jody Scheckter's Laverstoke Farm business. Stroll is a long-time client.

JOHN IDOL (USA)

A bigwig at fashion giants Polo Ralph Lauren and Donna Karan, who then worked with Stroll to build up Michael Kors, a sponsor of McLaren in 2016-17, and acquired shoe brand Jimmy Choo among others.

JOHN McCAW JR (USA)

The third oldest of four brothers who made their fortunes selling the family McCaw Cellular concern to AT&T for \$12.6 billion in 1994. Elder brother Bruce owned the PacWest Indycar team but John Jr has focused on other sports as a part owner of the Vancouver Canucks (NHL), Vancouver Grizzlies (NBA) and Seattle Mariners (MLB).

MICHAEL DE PICCIOTTO

(Switzerland)

Former senior managing director of Swiss private bank Union Bancaire Privee who became vice-chairman of the supervisory board of Engel & Volkers, an upscale real-estate agent dealing in elite properties, yachts and planes.

SILAS CHOU (Hong Kong)

From a wealthy Hong Kong family with extensive interests in textiles, 72-year-old Chou has been a close associate of Stroll for three decades. Helped build Tommy Hilfiger into a global brand and did the same with Michael Kors, with help from Idol.



Zanardi happy after BMW test run with new brake system

DTM

Alex Zanardi covered 294 laps of Vallelunga in his first test of his modified DTM BMW last week, and declared his new hand-operated brake system a huge step forward.

The double Indycar champion and ex-Formula 1 driver is using a hand-operated brake for the first time in the M4 DTM, which he will race on a guest outing at Misano next week.

Zanardi had previously braked with his prosthetic leg in his other motor racing campaigns since the 2001 Indycar accident in which he lost both legs.

"The progress from the previous system to the current one is massive," said Zanardi. Driving a race car like the BMW M4 DTM is physically very demanding. For me, it would be far more strenuous if I were to continue to brake with my prosthesis as I have done up to now. I admit that it felt very strange to have a completely empty footwell with no pedal box in front of me the first time I pulled out of the garage. I thought, "That's strange!" But I have to say, the whole system worked very intuitively for me. I am getting along excellently with it."

A BMW statement explained that the new set-up was

designed to be less physically tiring, as with the previous arrangement Zanardi "sweated too much under the prosthetic leg. This not only led to him becoming exhausted more quickly, but also to him losing a little of his feeling for the right braking pressure."

Zanardi added: "I won't be faster, but I would have never accomplished all I did at the two days with the old system. I completed so many laps with a car that I had never driven before, and after not having raced for nearly two years. That would just have been impossible with the solution I had before. It's like I am, from a physical point of view, a different driver."

The 51-year-old underlined that he had limited expectations for his Misano outing given the competitiveness of the DTM field. "It's going to be a huge event for me, and probably one of the most difficult tasks I have ever faced in my motor racing career," said Zanardi. "In my opinion, the DTM is currently the most fiercely competitive racing series in the world and the one with the best field – even better than Formula 1.

"I will try to finish ahead of at least one car. Let's see whether I manage it. It is going to be tough, but very interesting."

MATT BEER

Why rules were broken for Ogier

DTM

Mercedes will be allowed to break the DTM rules for five-time World Rally champion Sebastien Ogier's series debut at the Red Bull Ring next month, because it does not wish to distract attention from Alex Zanardi's guest outing at Misano with BMW.

HWA Mercedes boss Ulrich Fritz explained that scheduling issues meant Ogier would only have been able to contest next week's night races at Misano or the Red Bull Ring round. The Austrian event became the logical choice, despite series rules stipulating that guest drivers cannot race in the final three rounds.

"There was a very long discussion about it, and I have to say thank you to BMW and Audi who from the beginning said they would support it," said Fritz. "We are doing these guest starts because we want to help DTM, to help the platform.

"We were quite sure we wanted to do it with him [Ogier] – it was just a matter that there was no time available other than the Red Bull Ring and Misano [weekends]. We didn't want to jump into the guest race for Alex [Zanardi], and therefore everybody agreed on doing the Red Bull Ring."

DTM chief Gerhard Berger added at last weekend's Brands Hatch round: "Yes, [guest] drivers are not allowed for the last three rounds. We still have to discuss it to find a way but I think if everybody is OK with it then it should be not a problem to change."

Fritz said that Mercedes decided to speak to a driver from outside the DTM circle after seeing former champion Mattias Ekstrom struggle in his farewell Hockenheim outing in this year's season opener in Audi's guest car.

Ogier drove a DTM Audi RS5 in 2013 as part of a car-swap with Mattias Ekstrom, and has completed three 'taxi' laps at Zandvoort. He then took part in a two-day test at Vallelunga last week (below), with Fritz describing his performance as "impressive".

Ogier has previously raced cars – he won the Race Of Champions in 2011 and has competed in French Formula 4, the Volkswagen Scirocco Cup, ADAC GT Masters and Porsche Supercup – but his DTM guest outing will be his highest-profile yet.

JACK COZENS





NASCAR Ford has revealed the new Mustang contender that will represent its NASCAR Cup attack from next season, replacing the existing Fusion. An opening in the NASCAR regulations allowed manufacturers to move away from its stock car racing roots, with Chevrolet choosing to introduce its Camaro muscle car for 2018 and Ford taking a similar approach for '19. Ford has not won a Cup title since '04, when Kurt Busch was victorious with the Taurus.

McLaren off radar for Dixon in IndyCar

INDYCAR SERIES

Scott Dixon has agreed terms to remain at Chip Ganassi Racing on a new multi-year IndyCar deal, ending speculation that he would switch to the mooted McLaren project, or make a move to Andretti Autosport or Team Penske.

The deal keeps the four-time champ and current series leader at Ganassi – where he has scored all but one of his 44 Indycar wins – for an 18th straight year in 2019.

After a difficult final IndyCar season with Chevrolet engines in 2016, and a trying year with Honda's manufacturer aerokit in '17, Ganassi has been resurgent in the first year of IndyCar's spec-aerokit era and Dixon (right, above) has won three races.

"I've always said I have a massive amount of respect for Chip and what he's done in this sport," said Dixon. "This is not an easy business. His resumé speaks for itself, and he's the type of team owner any driver would want to drive for. He gives you the tools you need to go out and get the job done, with the right group of people.

"This team has been like a family to me since way back in 2002, and I'm glad I'll be here trying to fight for more wins, championships and Indianapolis 500s for years to come."

Meanwhile, Ganassi's NASCAR Cup team will recruit 2004 champion and '17 Daytona 500 winner Kurt Busch for next season, according to Autosport sources.

Multiple sources have suggested that Busch (right, below) will switch from Stewart-Haas Racing to drive Ganassi's #1 Chevrolet Camaro, replacing veteran Jamie McMurray, who is in the last year of his current contract with the team.

Formal confirmation of the move does not appear to be imminent, while a spokesman for Ganassi said the team does not discuss its driver contracts in public.

Busch, who has driven for SHR since 2014, will take one of his main sponsors, Monster Energy, with him. He signed a one-year contract extension with SHR in December, after the team originally declined to agree to renew the deal.

DAVID MALSHER & JIM UTTER



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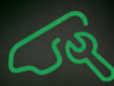
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Alonso quits F1 for 2019

FORMULA 1

McLaren confirmed as Autosport was closing for press that Fernando Alonso will not race in Formula 1 in 2019, bringing to an end months of speculation about his place on the grand prix grid. But what is less clear is exactly what he will be doing in 2019, and whether his absence from the F1 grid will be permanent.

The word 'retire' was missing from the McLaren statement, and Alonso made it clear that he is keeping the door open to a return to F1 should the team get back to the front. Next year, he is contracted to Toyota (below) to contest the final three rounds of the World Endurance Championship superseason, which leaves capacity for him to return to the Indianapolis 500 in pursuit of the final leg of the Triple Crown.

"Let's see what the future brings; new exciting challenges are around the corner," said Alonso. "I'm having one of the happiest times ever in my life but I need to go on exploring new adventures.

"I want to thank everyone at McLaren. My heart is with the team forever. I know they will come back stronger and better in the future and it could be the right moment for me to be back in the series; that would make me really happy. I have built so many great relationships

with many fantastic people at McLaren, and they have given me the opportunity to broaden my horizons and race in other categories. I feel I am a more complete driver now than ever.

"I made this decision some months ago and it was a firm one. Nevertheless, I would like to sincerely thank Chase Carey and Liberty Media for the efforts made to change my mind and everyone who has contacted me during this time."

McLaren claims still to be in the 'decision-making' process having evaluated a full-time presence in IndyCar, which would likely be in association with an existing team. This means Alonso could still race for McLaren next year, but not in F1.

Alonso, who has raced for Minardi, Renault, McLaren and Ferrari, has been ever-present on the F1 grid since his debut at the start of 2001, save for spending the following season on the sidelines as Renault test driver. In that time, he has won 32 grands prix as well as taking the '05 and '06 world titles.

McLaren is understood to be close to a deal to bring Renault refugee Carlos Sainz Jr to the team next season should Red Bull not pick up its option on him next month. McLaren junior Lando Norris and Stoffel Vandoorne are also in contention for the second seat.

EDD STRAW



IN THE HEADLINES

AGAG: NO ELECTRIC F1

Formula E series boss Alejandro Agag has scotched suggestions from Formula 1 chief Ross Brawn that there is "nothing to stop" F1 switching to fully electric power. "Basically, they can't," Agag told Autosport. "Formula E has an exclusive licence with the FIA for 25 seasons, and we've only done four. So the earliest F1 could go electric is 2039, if we don't renew our agreement with the FIA then, but I don't see any reason why we shouldn't renew for longer. We have exclusivity until at least 2039 – so no electric F1 until then at least. If they want to talk to me then of course that's a different question – I'm always open to talk to people."

ASTON GETS BREAKS

Aston Martin has been handed performance breaks for this weekend's Silverstone World Endurance Championship round outside the automatic Balance of Performance system. The new-for-2018 Vantage will run with a 5kg lower minimum weight, and has been given additional turbo boost throughout its rev range. The automatic BoP does not kick in until the following round at Fuji, but the FIA invoked its 'black-ball' rule to allow Aston the concessions after uncompetitive showings at Spa and Le Mans. Aston boss John Gaw described the power gain as "insignificant".

AUDI'S SUZUKA TRIO

Audi will field three works cars in next week's Suzuka 10 Hours Intercontinental GT Challenge round. WRT enters two R8 LMSs, with Dries Vanthoor, Christopher Mies and Frederic Vervisch in the lead car, and Jake Dennis, Sheldon van der Linde and Stuart Leonard in the other. Absolute Racing runs Markus Winkelhock, Christopher Haase and Kelvin van der Linde in its car. IGTC points leader Robin Frijns has to miss the race as he is on DTM duty at Misano.

HOMING SIMPSON

British Touring Car Championship race winner Matt Simpson quit the Eurotech Racing team hours after taking a podium finish at Rockingham last Sunday. Simpson, who owns the TOCA BTCC licence for his entry, is assembling his own crew to run his Honda Civic under the Simpson Racing banner from next week's Knockhill round.

A LEONG JOURNEY

Silverstone-based Formula 3 European Championship team Hitech GP expands to a four-car line-up for its home round this weekend. 2017 Chinese Formula 4 champion Charles Leong, who is third in the Asian F3 rankings with Hitech, joins the squad for his first race in Europe. It appears that the outing is a one-off for the 16-year-old Macanese.

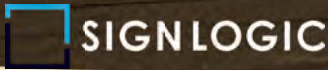


Congratulations to Tom Golding on sealing the 2018 Ginetta G40 Cup with three rounds to spare



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LESSONS OF THE PAST

Thirty years ago this week Enzo Ferrari died, taking some of Formula 1's soul with him. What can today's team owners – Ferrari especially – learn from his example?

EDD STRAW

When the first Ferrari, the 125 S prototype, was ready for its inaugural run in March 1947, the man who took the barely completed and bodywork-less car for a quick spin to the nearby village of Formigine and back to Maranello was Enzo Ferrari himself.

This week marks 30 years since Enzo's death at the age of 90, a reminder of an era when one individual could embody a whole team and have a unique, physical connection to the cars that bore their name. How much grand prix racing has changed in just those three decades, let alone the seven since a Ferrari first raced.

The standard question to ask on such anniversaries is something like, 'What would Enzo Ferrari have made of modern F1?' This could often be followed by a shaking of the head, along with a suggestion that everything has gone to the dogs and an agreement that it's a good thing he's not here to see it all.

But to do so would be to miss the point of Ferrari. Yes, he was a purist, but above all he was a racer. You could argue he'd hate the current generation of ERS-assisted machinery, but history suggests he would have embraced it. After all, he was a devotee of atmospheric engines until such time as it became abundantly clear that turbocharging was the way to go. Even if there was

"PERHAPS FERRARI'S NEW LEADERSHIP NEEDS TO LOOK BACK AT THE EXAMPLE OF ENZO"

initial resistance, which there probably wouldn't have been, if it made a Ferrari win it would be a good thing.

It's true he wouldn't approve of the frozen engine formulas, in particular the spell from 2007-13 when the 2.4-litre V8s only changed when the FIA gave express permission. And the idea of a silent power unit, such as used in Formula E, would have been completely alien to him.

Ferrari always saw the engine as the beating heart of the car – understandable for someone who grew up in the pioneering age when automobiles were basically glorified carts. So perhaps after years when engines were little more than performance-balanced components designed to make the car go (and, sometimes, act as air pumps to give downforce), he would revel in the hybrids...

Ferrari had tremendous foresight, particularly when it came to winning. One of the first to grasp the fact that team building could transform a race team, he was a legend of leadership.

Perhaps that kind of foresight would extend to understanding the potential of the new powertrains. Infamously, Ferrari started far too late on the 2014 cars both from an engine and chassis perspective – the legacy of Luca di Montezemolo, once Enzo's key man on the ground, demanding results now rather than laying the foundations for the future. Would Enzo have sensed the greater opportunity a year or two ahead? Very possibly. Ferrari didn't do badly out of engine-formula changes in 1961 and '66. Perhaps he'd have seen it as a similar opportunity?

But there's also every chance that Ferrari's own tendency to play politics and exert absurd pressure on his people in his later years might have led to problems. Certainly, that love of manipulation and the delight in yielding power over people continues to course through the DNA of Ferrari.

Famously, Ferrari described himself as an 'agitator of men.' This, more than anything, is what makes you wonder if a Ferrari in his prime might have thrived as a team boss today. It's a fatuous question, but the great individuals tend to adapt for their era.

Grand prix teams are bigger than ever, and even the small ones are almost unmanageably big. Turning them around takes years and, rather than lining up some key people and watching them go, it's now a complex network of inter-relating departments and individuals that all add up to something. Too often, that something is less than the sum of its parts.

Modern Ferrari, certainly the one of recent years under the recently departed Sergio Marchionne, has actually done pretty well out of all this. While the final years of di Montezemolo in control of Scuderia Ferrari were ones of underachievement, under Marchionne the team has got its groove back. Enzo Ferrari was an autocratic figure, his word was law. Marchionne had the same impact. This makes you wonder what will change with the new leadership in place.

First and foremost, though, Marchionne made Ferrari a reflection of his own outlook and attitudes as much as Enzo did in his day. The fact is, Ferrari has always thrived when it's had such a figure at the top, just as it did during Jean Todt's era.

It would be impossible for a figure like Enzo Ferrari to rise today. He built the most successful team in grand prix racing based on his own vision and excellence in team building, and wasn't just the leader of Ferrari. He was Ferrari.

And as Marchionne showed in recent years, the legacy of Enzo Ferrari's way of doing things can still echo successfully in F1. No matter how big teams get, you still need a final decision to be taken. Perhaps Ferrari's new leadership needs to look back at the example of Enzo for that success to continue.

Even three decades after his passing, when it comes to Scuderia Ferrari, the legacy of Enzo must still influence the team's path. ✎



THE SWITCH TO ELECTRIC

Motorsport knows it has to follow the lead of the road-car industry and follow a greener path. But a change of thinking is the easy part...

MATT JAMES

Motorsport and health and safety. Think about that: they aren't easy partners. Motorsport is a risk-positive sport, and health and safety is risk averse. Motorsport and the environment. Think about that: they are not easy bedfellows. Do you want smoky fossil fuels or do you want to plant trees? Where do you want to go?

There is change everywhere. Formula E is the headline act and it will be joined by the new-for-2019 Jaguar I-Pace eTrophy. The World Endurance Championship put hybrid technology at the heart of what it did years ago, and F1 has its regenerative systems. And there's the looming prospect of the fully electrified World Rallycross Championship too – that's only two years away.

But even at the top level, there are still problems resulting from the new technology. At July's Hungarian Grand Prix, marshals rushed to the aid of the stranded Nico Hulkenberg in practice without having received the required clearance by race control and Charlie Whiting. That could have had serious consequences.

The British Touring Car Championship has realised it can't ignore green power and has introduced new rules to fully embrace hybrid technologies from 2022 onwards. But if you want to run a fully electric car in British motorsport, right now you can't.

"A MATE HAS PAID FOR HYBRID TRAINING – AND IT COST HIM £4000 TO BE FULLY QUALIFIED"

It's odd, because half a decade ago you could run anything volt-based. Fancy doing a hillclimb in a Renault Zoe? No worries. Go ahead. It would be positively embraced. People would say: "Look at motorsport being green. How good is that?"

But not now; things have changed. Why? Because the UK rulemakers have realised that this is a massive shift in motorsport. Electrification is no longer a novelty – it's here to stay.

There is a new landscape for car power, and it's one where the governing body, the Motor Sports Association, is lagging behind. And it's way, way behind the car industry too.

The MSA's rules currently state that if you want to run an electric car in an MSA-sanctioned event, that's fine. But the organisers need a whole new army of freshly trained marshals (which the organiser has to pay for) and also 40,000 litres of water on standby, just in case a hybrid car catches fire. I'm not joking – it's in the rulebook.

The UK government has told all car makers that, by 2030, an electric option *must* be offered on all road cars (or, at least, they must be able to be converted to adopt it). The UK government messed up its announcement about this and, in the confusion, the national newspapers ran a headline that all cars would be fully electric by '30. That's not quite true – they are required to have a serious element of electrification.

That is the crest of this crashing wave that, at least in motorsport, is not here just yet. But if you look beyond the ripples lapping at the shore, it's gathering momentum. In motorsport, the experts in carburettors and gearboxes would not be able to tell the novice their amps from their elbows.

The BTCC has engaged with this – how long before it pervades everywhere? Electric power needs specific skills and very well-trained people. It needs expertise. It needs people who know what they're talking about. It needs engineers and volunteers who are up to speed with the technology they're using.

A good mate has paid for the recent hybrid training courses himself – and he is 'only' a road-car mechanic – and it cost him £4000 to become fully qualified. Understanding the new technology doesn't come cheap.

In the manufacturer-led BTCC, the thrust to embrace hybrid technology is perfectly understandable if the UK's premier championship wants to maintain its reputation as a high-profile environment for firms to show off their products. It absolutely has to be at the front and centre of modern thinking.

The BTCC has talked about a "limited level" of electrification and, if it's below a certain voltage, then additional training isn't required. That's a sensible move, but these are only the first steps towards hybrid thinking – the systems are bound to get more complicated.

Also consider, for example, a marshal working trackside when an electric (or even semi-electric) car shunts. They will instinctively go to save the driver, who may be in peril – but will they be wearing rubber gloves? Will they know, for example, that you can't physically push a broken electric car if it's still regenerating energy? The potential conflagration could be disastrous. Do they know this? The training costs are astronomical.

The same goes for a club racing team. If this technology spreads to the clubmen, to the grassroots, then how soon before people realise they can't afford to have an engine, suspension *and* electrics expert? Motor racing needs to encourage participation and this could work against it.

The answer lies with the governing body. There are hurdles to be overcome, but they aren't insurmountable. What they are is increasingly urgent. ❄

YOUR SAY

Lance Stroll's father's money should not be allowed to push the likes of Esteban Ocon out of a well-deserved ride

DAVID C BERKEY

Is money talking too loudly in Formula 1?

Lead drivers have had a say over who occupies the other side of the garage for much of F1's history. This trend gained momentum in the 1980s to the point where it has now become (sadly) commonplace.

While it is understandable for a world champion, or potential future world champion, to want/expect the team's primary energies to be focused in their direction, the Stroll/Force India situation has potential implications for our sport.

No disrespect to Lance, but he is far from what any of us would consider a lead driver. While I understand him not wanting to be blown into the weeds by the guy in the opposite cockpit, his father's money should not be allowed to push the likes of Esteban Ocon out of a well-deserved ride. Man-up, Lance. Who knows, you might have an extra gear or two between your legs that you didn't know about.

David C Berkey
New York

Lola's unsung heroes deserve more of a mention

I read with interest the Lola at 60 supplement in last week's Autosport. While understanding that the company's long history in so many categories precludes covering more than just a fraction of its activities, the single mention given to Rob Rushbrook MBE doesn't do justice to the role he performed in the first 25 years or so of Lola's existence. 'Robbie', a former Brooklands racer, was, as Eric Broadley's business partner, hands-on right from the start in the manufacturing and production process and continued as such until his retirement.

It wouldn't be fair to mention other individuals, much as I would like to, because there were so many who played a significant part in the company's growth from two-man band to becoming the world's largest manufacturer of racing cars. Full credit has to be given, however, to all those who toiled (I use the word deliberately) through the years on the shop floor, in administration, sales, finance and design offices, without whom Eric's concepts could never have materialised, let alone win such a multitude of races. Special mention also



for their families, coping with the disruptive day and night hours required when maximum effort was needed.

Quite rightly, Carl Haas Automobile Imports was acknowledged as a major factor in Lola's US successes. A similar accolade should be given to Japanese distributor Nova Engineering; they did a great job with market advice, sales and support leading to Lola's considerable achievements in what was then the Japanese F3000 Championship.

Lola was a great company. It can never be resurrected as it was; the world has changed too much for that. I hope, however, that the famous racing name might be taken forward in a new and different challenge, one that maintains the same reputation for fine engineering and business integrity.

Mike Blanchet
Former Joint Managing Director, Lola Cars Ltd, 1989-96

Correction

The T950 pictured at the top of page 25 of last week's Lola supplement was driven by Alain Ferte at Thruxton and not Johnny Dumfries, who drove the car at the Spa and Dijon rounds of the Formula 3000 championship.

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INSIGHT

KUBICA AT WILLIAMS • FORMULA E SEASON REVIEW



WHY KUBICA IS CRUCIAL TO WILLIAMS

Yes, the racing comeback fell over, but don't underestimate the role Robert Kubica has played behind the scenes

EDD STRAW

This time last year, the Robert Kubica Formula 1 comeback fairytale was gathering momentum. After behind-closed-doors running for Renault, he made his public comeback at the Hungaroring test, and rumours swirled that he was back to his pre-accident best and ready to get back on the grid. Roll on 12 months and, after being passed over by Renault and then getting to the brink of a Williams race seat, only for it to slip through his fingers after testing in Abu Dhabi in November, the Kubica bandwagon has slowed.

Today, the 33-year-old Pole is part of the Williams team as test and reserve driver and is a constant presence in the grand prix paddock. But he's only a bit-part player rather than the star attraction he would have been had he taken a place on the grid.

But for Kubica, this is more than just another story of an F1 aspirant in an ostensibly frustrating situation. After all, this was a driver who, on the morning of February 6 2011, was trapped in the wreckage of his Skoda Fabia after crashing on the Ronde di Andora rally. The accident was horrific, with the car hitting the leading edge of a barrier that then sliced through the front of the Skoda, inflicting life-changing injuries to Kubica's right hand, leg and arm.

Kubica doesn't lose sight of the fact that it has taken years of operations, rehabilitation, pain and dedication to get back to a position where he can drive a grand prix car well and have an active F1 role. Those disappointed that he's not in a race seat should remember this is a triumph of the indomitable spirit of a man who lives and breathes motorsport, combined with medical excellence.

"There were high hopes from quite a lot of people that I could get a [race] drive," says Kubica. "Because there were so many hopes, my comeback to the paddock has been seen, not by anyone inside but by fans, as a negative. I think that from where I have been, it's still a big achievement."

An F1 racing return is still possible. It's yet to be seen how the takeover of Force India by a consortium backed by Lawrence Stroll, father of Williams driver Lance Stroll, may impact Kubica's hopes. But he is close to Stroll Jr and has done what he can to help the Canadian, and a race seat at Force India alongside him isn't out of the question. Beyond that, promotion at Williams is perhaps his best shot. But it's fair to say that, at present, he's very much a minor player in a vibrant 2019 driver market.

Kubica has had most of his chances to impress behind the wheel. From now, there remain just an FP1 outing in Abu Dhabi and then a possible appearance at the same venue in the post-race tyre test – if it happens – on his schedule. But he is adamant that his focus has been on contributing everything he can to the team.

"Someone might say, 'Well, you are targeting becoming a race driver', so you have to show everything," says Kubica. "That's true, but if someone wants to believe I'm good enough they'll believe >>



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INSIGHT KUBICA

it, and if someone doesn't want to they'll find a hundred excuses. What is important is confidence in myself when I'm behind the wheel. I don't see the necessity of a big push."

Kubica is a throwback to the super-test drivers – Pedro de la Rosa, Alex Wurz and Olivier Panis – who had stints putting on miles for teams such as McLaren in the days of near-constant running outside of F1 weekends. Kubica himself was BMW Sauber tester, which he parlayed into a race seat in place of Jacques Villeneuve during the 2006 season. Now he is firmly embedded in the fabric of a team, albeit with only occasional running.

"I would like to race, that's no secret," says Kubica. "But this [thought] stays far away when I'm working. In my situation, I would never like to race because it would mean that one of our race drivers is sick or something's happened to him, which is not what I really wish. But, on the other hand, I have to be ready in case this happens or in case Williams says I have to race. You have to keep up your training. This is a good opportunity for me because I'm not the regular third driver who drives very little or not at all. I still have quite a lot of chances, whereas third drivers normally don't have any chance. This is important for me because it's keeping me refreshed every couple of months when I get the opportunity.

"In our situation, we are working on trying to solve things, so it's a bit different to what my role was planned to be. In the situation where the car ran smoothly, I would have a big impact. I'm an active driver where I'm driving the car, I'm the reserve driver and then also a bit of a simulator driver. And I'm taking part in the technical meetings and stuff like this. It's quite an open-minded position and that's what I think is satisfactory for myself and for the team."

He certainly is putting in the legwork, as you are most likely to see Kubica in the F1 paddock shuttling between the motorhome and the garage. Unlike some in that role, his priority is not simply hanging around in branded gear calling himself an F1 driver.

To understand the journey Kubica has been on, it's important to



Glory days: Kubica won in Canada in 2008 and came fourth in title race

"KUBICA DOESN'T WANT TO BE DEFINED BY WHAT HE CALLS HIS 'LIMITATION'"

understand how much he's had to adapt both his driving and his day-to-day life to his injury. He doesn't want to be defined by what he calls his 'limitation', and as a driver it's only fair that we judge him based on what he can do. He's not quite the same driver he was in his pomp – which is hardly condemning him, because he was often brilliant during his time with BMW Sauber and Renault. He'd already shown himself to be a world championship-calibre driver and was destined for a move to Ferrari.

But Kubica has gone down a different path. Thanks to the limited movement in his right arm and hand, he has been forced to change things. First and foremost, he has had to adapt from right-handed to left-handed. While his right hand does participate in the process,

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Testing form has shown Kubica is quick but not quite back to his best

KUBICA'S 2018 SEASON

Had Robert Kubica's plan to return to a Formula 1 race seat come to fruition, he'd now be 12 races into his comeback. As it is, the Pole has had to be satisfied with playing an active, but patchy, role in on-track running for Williams with

testing and Friday practice outings.

Kubica has made three Friday appearances, in Spain and Austria, and completed five test days – one of which was the snow-hit day at the opening pre-season test during

which he completed a single lap. That adds up to a grand total of 410 laps.

The Williams team rates his pace as perfectly decent, particularly over a stint, and he would unquestionably be capable of racing a grand prix car.

But even with the caveat that he was running test programmes and FP1 programmes that made headline lap times both irrelevant and impossible to achieve, the evidence suggests he hasn't rediscovered that

razor-sharp pace that once made him one of the best in the business.

He is scheduled to drive again in FP1 at the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, and will also drive in the post-race Pirelli tyre test should it happen.

MOTORSPORTIMAGES/PORTLOCK/LAT



Kubica testing for Renault in 2017 at the Hungaroring

watching the onboard makes it very clear that it's the left hand that is very much dominant. "It's coming naturally because this is the way I have to do it," he says of his driving. "I cannot try to do the things I used to do because, with my limitation, I'm not able to do it. That's not only [applied to] driving but also living. Everything I tried to do in the same way, I got disappointed, but then I realised I could still do them in different ways.

"Many years ago, when I started testing with simulators, I asked my doctor if it's possible I have much better sensitivity, more precision in my left arm. Last year, I was asked by Renault to go to a medical centre where they test a lot of that stuff. Actually, my results for precision and speed and force of the left arm was at least 35% better than the best they have ever seen! Somehow, your body adapts to reality. If you are two-handed, healthy, you don't need to be so precise with one arm. So, for example, when I'm driving, I'm driving around 70% left-handed and 30% right. If I were to try to do 50/50 like the old days, I would not manage it."

Kubica is unquestionably safe and competent behind the wheel of an F1 car. He's still capable of controlling the car, provoking it

when he needs to and responding to the snaps and unstable moments of the tricky-to-drive Williams FW41. As he points out, with F-ducts, which required drivers to cover a hole in the cockpit with some part of their arm or leg, it was a different situation.

"In 2010, I was doing Eau Rouge with Renault in qualifying with one hand because I was covering the hole to stop the rear wing and I was going through Eau Rouge one-handed," says Kubica. "This was much more dangerous than my driving now, because then I was really driving only one-handed. Of course, there are moments where I drive only right-handed or let's say on the straight, I'm recovering my left hand.

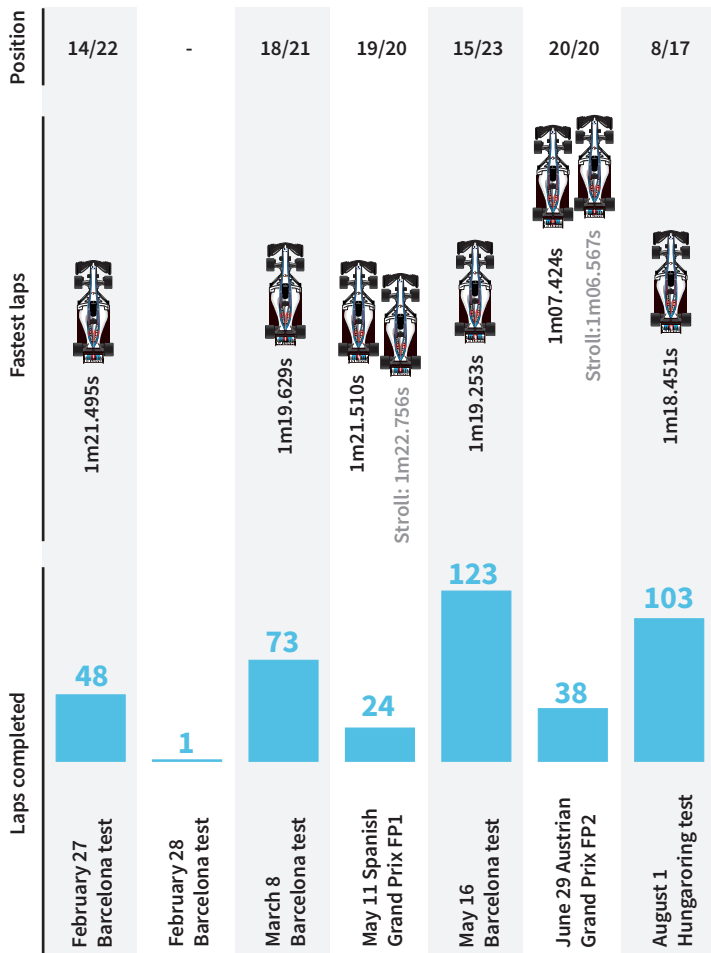
"But this comes automatically and I think I'm very lucky in my position because I have always driven not in a physical way at all. I drive very relaxed. I've spoken with other drivers who have to hold the steering wheel otherwise they can't drive it. I remember some pictures in 2006 – the early days with BMW – there are pictures showing I have three fingers open while cornering. One journalist asked what I was doing, and I told him I don't need to hold it fully – you just need to use your force enough to do it.

"In karting, if you put anyone in a go-kart he wastes so much energy because it's a new movement. By the time the brain understands that actually he doesn't have to hold it so tight on the straights, you realise you use one third of the energy to do the same lap time. So this is a learning process, which came automatically."

Kubica is still learning in his second F1 career. After all, he's had fewer than 500 laps in this year's Williams, along with his outings last year, to readapt to F1. It would be difficult enough had he simply been absent for half a decade, let alone with restricted movement.

Whatever happens next, the Kubica story is a remarkable one. He has demonstrated the mental fortitude of a driver who could have been a world champion. But he's won a very different kind of battle.

So if you think that what Kubica is doing this year is in any way a disappointment, you're wrong. ❗



Kubica's fans would prefer to see their hero race in a grand prix

VERGNE AND TECHEETAH

The Formula E privateers produced the motorsport equivalent of Leicester City's Premier League title against the big-money opposition

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

FORMULA-E

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The 2017-18 Formula E season was quite possibly as close as the electric championship is ever going to get to its own Leicester City story.

Just like the Foxes back in the 2015-16 Premier League season, this was a tale of a small team that took on the might of much bigger manufacturer squads and won – sort of. With Audi and Renault floundering – as Manchester United and Manchester City did back in Leicester's celebrated campaign – it was the Techeetah team that rose to prominence.

Much like its football equal, for the purpose of this tortured analogy anyway, this was a smaller operation with a budget deficit to the bigger teams that seized its moment and ran with it. The team was even led by its own rough diamond come good – for Jamie Vardy, read Jean-Eric Vergne.

As a customer Renault team, Techeetah had no pre-season

televised tournament of 15 private testing days to hone the finer details of its off-the-shelf power-unit package. Instead, it had to make do with the equivalent of friendlies with non-league clubs: simulator prep – although for what it's worth, Vergne points to the 65 days he spent working on his FE skills in the sim as one of the key reasons behind his success.

Vergne put it on pole for the first race in Hong Kong and, in the opening half of that event, battled the driver who would go on to be his title rival: DS Virgin Racing's Sam Bird. It was one of the few times the duo fought a sustained scrap on track and it was Bird who emerged victorious driving for a team that you could describe as FE's Arsenal – there or thereabouts, but not taking the biggest prizes in recent years, and with a French driving force (Arsene Wenger equals DS Automobiles) that would depart at the end of the season.

UPSET THE ODDS



In fact, considering the season Techeetah would go on to have, its opening races were pretty scrappy. Vergne followed his Hong Kong podium with a fourth in the second race and fifth in Marrakech. Team-mate Andre Lotterer's FE debut in Hong Kong was a disaster, and he retired with mechanical trouble in Morocco.

But FE's inaugural rookie test, held after the Marrakech race, changed things for our soon-to-be league leaders. It gave Techeetah "33% more testing", which was "a great boost" according to team principal Mark Preston, whose team had been restricted to just the three days of official pre-season running at Valencia.

"We probably put more effort into that as a test than anybody else," says Preston. "We probably put more effort into simulation and other things. Not having to worry about the powertrain helped too and, at the end of the day [spot the

"WE PROBABLY PUT MORE EFFORT INTO THAT TEST THAN ANYBODY ELSE"

football phrase there!], it's not gone wrong at all. It's just run like a dream – not having to worry about that is a huge thing."

Thanks to its testing gains, Techeetah rocked up in Santiago and put FE's first one-two in the back of the net, with Vergne winning ahead of Lotterer. There could have been a calamitous own goal, though, as they made contact several times, and at >>

one point Lotterer rear-ended his team-mate. Thanks to a late-race communications and timing failure, the team was initially unaware of how feisty it had been, but there was no Kieron Dyer and Lee Bowyer-esque ugliness between the drivers. In fact, Vergne and Lotterer got along famously. Their strong relationship – rare between racing team-mates – is a testament to how much the Parisian had improved as a person and as a driver.

Vergne had flamed out of Formula 1 and rocked up in FE three races into its inaugural season. He took pole in Punta del Este and had a heavy-energy-use race that ended with suspension failure. He was fast, but wild, and furious at the way his grand prix career had been ended by Red Bull. He then had a fractious season at Virgin alongside Bird, before arriving at Techeetah for the 2016-17 campaign, where he began his rise to redemption.

“Coming into Techeetah is what really changed me,” he says. “Being in both sides of the team, also building a team, really taught me to step back and look at what a team really wanted from a driver. And I guess I learned a lot, how to be inside a team with the mechanics, with the engineers, up to which point you can push them, and to always be easy on them when it’s a good time to be. It taught me massively. I’m a lot more settled – private life, professional life.”

After taking fifth in Mexico, he put in a defensive masterclass back at the scene of his dramatic FE debut to score his second win of the season, well on his way to collecting the campaign’s ‘golden boot’ for race wins. That Punta win summed up his improved driving. Lucas di Grassi was back at the front of the grid for the first time after Audi’s early season inverter calamities (see page 22) but had lost pole for a clumsy track-limits infraction. Di Grassi had the faster car, but Vergne, on inherited pole, kept him at bay from start to finish, and arguably had the edge on energy usage.

After another fifth in Rome, Vergne won from pole in Paris – in what he described as his “most emotional” win – keeping Bird and then di Grassi at bay with the help of rear-gunner Lotterer. Then he prevailed in a battle with Sebastien Buemi for third in Berlin behind the dominant Audi duo.

Zurich marked his lowest moment. Vergne wound up 17th on the grid after running first on the road in group one, ending up well adrift of his normal rivals for reasons he still couldn’t explain after analysing the situation ahead of the season finale. But he produced a virtuoso attacking drive on the Swiss streets, finishing 10th after being caught up in the full-course-yellow penalty shenanigans. He charged again in the first New York race after a power-unit software error meant the Techeetah pair were thrown out of qualifying. >>



ROUND BY ROUND

Hong Kong

- 1 Bird
- 2 Vergne
- 3 Heidfeld

Bird stalks poleman Vergne after the early red flag before selling a beautiful dummy to take first. Bird overshoots his pitbox, hits it, gets a drivethrough penalty as a result, yet still beats the warring Vergne and Heidfeld. Di Grassi and Buemi collide, with di Grassi later out of contention as a result of the damage.

Hong Kong

- 1 Rosenqvist
- 2 Mortara
- 3 Evans

Abt wins on the road after long-time leader Mortara spins, but Rosenqvist, who loops it at Turn 1 and fights back from 11th, is handed the victory after the Audi driver is disqualified for a technical-passport infringement. Vergne is fourth with Bird just behind, while di Grassi suffers an on-track stoppage.

Marrakech

- 1 Rosenqvist
- 2 Buemi
- 3 Bird

Rosenqvist takes the points lead by beating Buemi and Bird, passing the Briton when the DS Virgin slows just before the car swaps. Polesitter Buemi is hunted down and deposed in the second stint. Vergne charges from 13th to fifth, while di Grassi looks set to join the lead fight before an inverter problem forces him out.

Santiago

- 1 Vergne
 - 2 Lotterer
 - 3 Buemi
- Polesitter Vergne leads home Lotterer to take FE’s first one-two after resisting early pressure from Piquet and then his Techeetah team-mate. Radio problems slow Vergne and he collides with Lotterer several times, but Vergne prevails and takes the points lead. Inverter hell strikes di Grassi again.

Mexico City

- 1 Abt
 - 2 Turvey
 - 3 Buemi
- Abt keeps a win for the first time after a faster pitstop – at the second race without a minimum stop time – than Turvey, who takes a brilliant second ahead of Buemi. A battery-management-system error thwarts polesitter and early leader Rosenqvist, while Vergne is fifth. Di Grassi finally scores with ninth.

Punta del Este

- 1 Vergne
 - 2 di Grassi
 - 3 Bird
- Vergne brilliantly resists di Grassi from lights to flag after the Audi driver loses pole and is demoted along with three others for clipping a bollard in qualifying. Bird shoots up the order from ninth to take a fine third, with Rosenqvist doing likewise from 12th to take fifth. A seatbelt problem costs Abt.



Abt and di Grassi celebrate Audi's title triumph in New York

S BLOXHAM/LAT

motorsport IMAGES

"COMING INTO TECHEETAH IS WHAT REALLY CHANGED ME. IT TAUGHT ME MASSIVELY. I'M A LOT MORE SETTLED"



Title charge tailed off for Rosenqvist (19); Buemi (9) had a disappointing year

S BLOXHAM/LAT

motorsport IMAGES

Rome

- 1 Bird
- 2 di Grassi
- 3 Lotterer

Bird claims the win as a mechanical problem halts Rosenqvist, who had led from pole. A suspension breakage costs the Swede, who falls to third behind Bird in the championship. Di Grassi and Lotterer come out on top of a thrilling fight involving Evans, while Vergne is again fifth after getting early damage.

Paris

- 1 Vergne
- 2 di Grassi
- 3 Bird

Vergne dominates from pole, with Lotterer harrying Bird early on. Di Grassi climbs from sixth to second, with Lotterer earning his and Bird's wrath for his defensive driving in support of Vergne. Lotterer loses energy on the last lap and is hit by Bird as the Virgin driver takes the flag with three wheels.

Berlin

- 1 Abt
- 2 di Grassi
- 3 Vergne

Abt and Audi dominate with pole, the win and fastest lap. Di Grassi starts fifth but easily climbs to second, from where he can't challenge his team-mate, who loses time at the car swaps. Vergne beats Buemi after the two battle it out, while Bird rises from 10th to seventh, but drops ground in the championship.

Zurich

- 1 di Grassi
- 2 Bird
- 3 d'Ambrosio

Di Grassi finally takes his first win of 2018 from sixth on the grid. Evans makes history with Jaguar's first pole and leads early on, but ends up seventh after being powerless to resist di Grassi and being hit with an FCY-infringement penalty. Same thing costs the charging-from-17th Vergne, and promotes Bird and d'Ambrosio.

New York

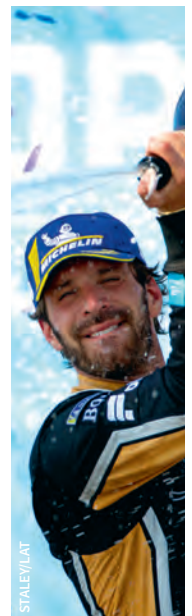
- 1 di Grassi
- 2 Abt
- 3 Buemi

Di Grassi makes in two in a row but takes the win in controversial circumstances after a misunderstanding leaves Abt thinking he wouldn't be passed – the Audis had again risen through the pack to one-two ahead of polesitter Buemi. Vergne is crowned champion after battling from 18th to fifth, with Bird only ninth.

New York

- 1 Vergne
- 2 di Grassi
- 3 Abt

Buemi caps his season with a second consecutive pole, but is passed off the line by Vergne and later by Lotterer, who is handed a penalty for jumping the start. Vergne resists di Grassi and Abt for the win, but it's not enough to stop Audi taking the championship by two points as Lotterer finishes ninth.



STALEY/LAT



AUDI: DELIGHT OR RELIEF?

A COMEBACK THAT SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN NEEDED

After Audi had beaten Techeetah to the teams' title by just two points following the season finale in New York, the German manufacturer's motorsport boss Dieter Gass declared himself "delighted" with the achievement.

It was indeed a remarkable recovery from Audi's position as it left Santiago four months earlier. At that stage it had 12 points thanks to Daniel Abt's fifth place in Hong Kong – Abt had lost a win to a team error one day later. Lucas di Grassi had failed to score at all – the reigning champion had tangled with old rival Sebastian Buemi on the opening day in Hong Kong, and then endured a plague of reliability problems, chief of which was the inverter issue that forced the Brazilian out in Morocco and Chile.

That Audi ended up claiming the teams' title, and di Grassi roared back to second in the drivers' standings, following the implementation of its inverter fix deserves enormous praise. But, considering the energy-efficiency advantage Audi enjoyed over its rivals all season, this was still a massive open goal missed. For Gass's delight, read relief.

Audi had been the class of the field in testing, and it held that advantage over the course of the year, but its disastrous start arguably cost it the drivers' title and nearly cost it the teams' championship it did claim. In the four races di Grassi failed to finish, and the following round in Mexico where an inverter change meant

"AUDI'S DISASTROUS START TO THE YEAR NEARLY COST IT THE TEAMS' TITLE"

he started last, Jean-Eric Vergne racked up 78 points more than the Brazilian; his final margin of victory was 54.

Hypotheticals aside, Audi's advantage was clear to see. Time and time again, di Grassi and the impressive Abt – team boss Allan McNish's "stand-out of the season" – rose from lower grid spots to either head the pack or get within a sniff of victory. Formula E's qualifying level playing field – thanks to the maximum power limit for all cars – prevented Audi from locking out the front row every time, but its Berlin sweep showed what was possible.

"We've been able to have one of the best fightbacks that I've experienced within Audi," McNish said once the title was sealed. But it should never have had to happen in the first place.

The e-tron FE04, once its inverter problem was solved, was the standout car of season five. Heading into the Gen2 era, Audi is the FE benchmark.

He claimed the crown with fifth from 18th on the grid in that race, after Lotterer let him by – repaying the assistance Vergne had given him to get up to speed earlier in the season – and then took a walk-off win ahead of the Audi drivers in the finale. That triumph came on the same day that France won the World Cup...

Bird was Virgin's Harry Kane (OK, we know he plays for Tottenham Hotspur in real life) – the team's talisman leading from the front. He picked up another win in Rome and scored four more podiums. But Bird led Virgin, which was running an undeveloped

"I'M REALLY PROUD OF WHAT I'VE BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE AND WHAT THE TEAM HAS ACHIEVED"

DS powertrain that was overweight and inefficient compared to its rivals, to a place it by rights should never have been.

"I'm really proud of what I've been able to achieve and what the team has achieved," he says. "If you look back some of the races, we put it up there when nobody really gave us a chance. It's been a great year, one that I'll be very proud of."

And indeed he should be. This was a great performance from the Briton – he arguably did not deserve to lose second place in the standings to di Grassi at the final race – but he was undone one event before the final: the New York track, which was ill-suited to the Virgin package with its sweeping corners and long straights, proving to be Bird's semi-final defeat to Croatia.

Of the rest, Renault (Man City here purely due to their shared colour scheme) also competed without making much of an upgrade

TEAMS' CHAMPIONSHIP		
POS	TEAM	PTS
1	Audi Sport Abt	264
2	Techeetah	262
3	DS Virgin Racing	160
4	Mahindra Racing	138
5	Renault e.dams	133
6	Jaguar Racing	119
7	Venturi Formula E Team	72
8	NIO Formula E Team	47
9	Dragon Racing	41
10	Andretti Formula E	24

to what had been the dominant FE package. That it ended up so far adrift of Techeetah demonstrates how much "serenity" it lost, according to team boss Jean-Paul Driot, with Buemi's 2016-17 season defeat to di Grassi and early 2017-18 struggles.

Mahindra and Felix Rosenqvist topped the group stages after Marrakech, but reliability woes while leading in Mexico City and Rome, followed by inconsistent form in the European run-in, meant they were no longer in play as the final whistle approached.

Oliver Turvey was again outstanding for NIO, while Lotterer was a driver transformed come the end of the season. Mitch Evans shone for Jaguar, which (let's make it Jacksonville, mixing the football metaphor completely with an NFL franchise) was inconsistent – although markedly improved from its debut campaign – but also suffered on the energy-efficiency front.

Vergne may have won the final race in New York, but Lotterer's jumped-start penalty and Audi's claiming of second and third on the day meant the German manufacturer pipped Techeetah to the teams' title. Bearing in mind that ending, we admit that our stretched Leicester metaphor limply falls over at the edge of the box after one final counter-attack...

Techeetah and Vergne were the story of season four, but now lose their Leicester-likeness. For 2018-19 they become Paris Saint-Germain thanks to the recently announced DS partnership. Audi will be eyeing the double in season five, but Real Madrid (Mercedes) and Barcelona (Porsche) are coming... ❄

AUTOSPORT'S TOP 10 DRIVERS



JEAN-ERIC VERGNE

1 Remarkably, Vergne did not once finish outside the top 10, and he topped the win and pole charts. A very worthy champion, he demonstrated his FE progress with a brilliant defensive display in Punta del Este, and charges in Zurich and New York.



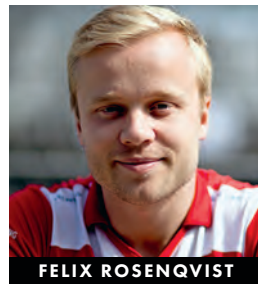
SAM BIRD

2 Bird takes second here because of the way he transcended his machinery's level. His pass on Vergne in Hong Kong was probably the move of the season, and time and again he recorded a fine result, obliterating a highly rated team-mate in the process.



LUCAS DI GRASSI

3 Di Grassi did not deserve what happened at the start of his title defence. From Punta del Este onwards he did not finish out of the top two, setting a new FE record for consecutive podiums – a streak to be very proud of.



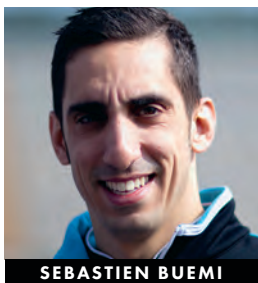
FELIX ROSENQVIST

4 How Rosenqvist must rue the 50 points he'd have taken had he won in Mexico City and Rome. His title challenge unravelled from there and led to his do-or-die move at the start in Berlin that ended badly. Still FE's most exciting driver.



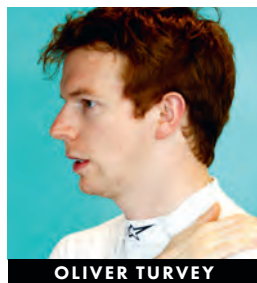
DANIEL ABT

5 Made a massive step from the previous season and led Audi while his team-mate endured the mechanical maladies. Berlin was the highlight, while the 25 points he lost from his Hong Kong disqualification cost him second in the final standings.



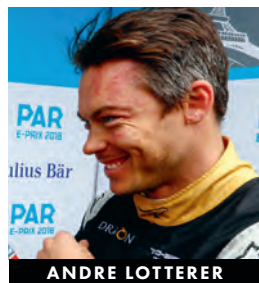
SEBASTIEN BUEMI

6 FE's most successful driver had a disappointing season by his high standards. Renault did opt not to develop its powertrain, but he made several mistakes in qualifying and battle that cost him. Pole double in New York shows he's still got it though.



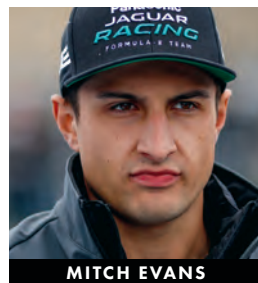
OLIVER TURVEY

7 Turvey again showed his class with NIO. He earns his high ranking with his qualifying consistency – only once, in Zurich, was he out of the top 10 on the grid, before missing the final two races as a result of injury.



ANDRE LOTTERER

8 His early races were a disaster, but from Santiago onwards Lotterer hit his FE stride. He was robust in battle, probably too much so in Paris, but that has made him one of the series' most exciting to watch. Deserved a rookie race win.



MITCH EVANS

9 Loses a spot compared to last year due to Lotterer's rapid progress, but Evans deserves plenty of credit for leading Jaguar's charge well ahead of his champion team-mate. Took the marque's first pole in Zurich – another who deserved a win.



EDOARDO MORTARA

10 Finished 13th in the final standings but missed two races due to DTM duty. An FE rookie compared to Heidfeld (11th) and Engel (12th), and they didn't get close to his near-win in Hong Kong, where his error cost him.

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	PTS
1	Jean-Eric Vergne (F)	Techeetah/ Renault Z.E.17	2	4	5	1	5	1	5	1	3	10	5	1	198
2	Lucas di Grassi (BR)	Audi Sport ABT Schaeffler/ Audi e-tron FE04	17	14	DNF	DNF	9	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	144
3	Sam Bird (GB)	DS Virgin Racing/ DS Virgin DSV-03	1	5	3	5	17	3	1	3	7	2	9	10	143
4	Sebastien Buemi (CH)	Renault e.dams/ Renault Z.E.17	11	10	2	3	3	DNF	6	5	4	5	3	4	125
5	Daniel Abt (D)	Audi Sport ABT Schaeffler/ Audi e-tron FE04	5	DSQ	10	DNF	1	14	4	7	1	13	2	3	120
6	Felix Rosenqvist (S)	Mahindra Racing/ Mahindra M4Electro	14	1	1	4	DNF	5	DNF	8	11	15	14	5	96
7	Mitch Evans (NZ)	Panasonic Jaguar Racing/ Jaguar I-TYPE2	12	3	11	7	6	4	9	15	6	7	DNF	6	68
8	Andre Lotterer (D)	Techeetah/ Renault Z.E.17	DSQ	13	DNF	2	13	12	3	6	9	4	7	9	64
9	Nelson Piquet Jr (BR)	Panasonic Jaguar Racing/ Jaguar I-TYPE2	4	12	4	6	4	DNF	DNF	DNF	12	DNF	DNF	7	51
10	Oliver Turvey (GB)	NIO Formula E team/ NextEV NIO 003	16	6	DNF	14	2	7	12	9	5	9	W	-	46

11 Nick Heidfeld (Mahindra Racing Mahindra M4Electro) 42; 12 Maro Engel (Venturi Venturi VM200-FE-03) 31; 13 Edoardo Mortara (Venturi Venturi VM200-FE-03) 29; 14 Jerome d'Ambrosio (Dragon Racing Penske EV-2) 27; 15 Antonio Felix da Costa (MS&AD Andretti Formula E Andretti ATEC-03) 20; 16 Alex Lynn (DS Virgin Racing DS Virgin DSV-03) 17; 17 Jose Maria Lopez (Dragon Racing Penske EV-2) 14; 18 Tom Dillmann (Venturi Venturi VM200-FE-03) 12; 19 Nicolas Prost (Renault e.dams Renault Z.E.17) 8; 20 Tom Blomqvist (MS&AD Andretti Formula E Andretti ATEC-03) 4; 21 Luca Filippi (NIO Formula E team NextEV NIO 003) 1; 22 Stephane Sarrazin (MS&AD Andretti Formula E Andretti ATEC-03) 0; 23 Ma Qing Hua (NIO Formula E team NextEV NIO 003) 0; 24 Kamui Kobayashi (MS&AD Andretti Formula E Andretti ATEC-03) 0; 25 Neel Jani (Dragon Racing Penske EV-2) 0.

RACE CENTRE

BTCC ROCKINGHAM • DTM BRANDS HATCH • MOTOGP RED BULL RING

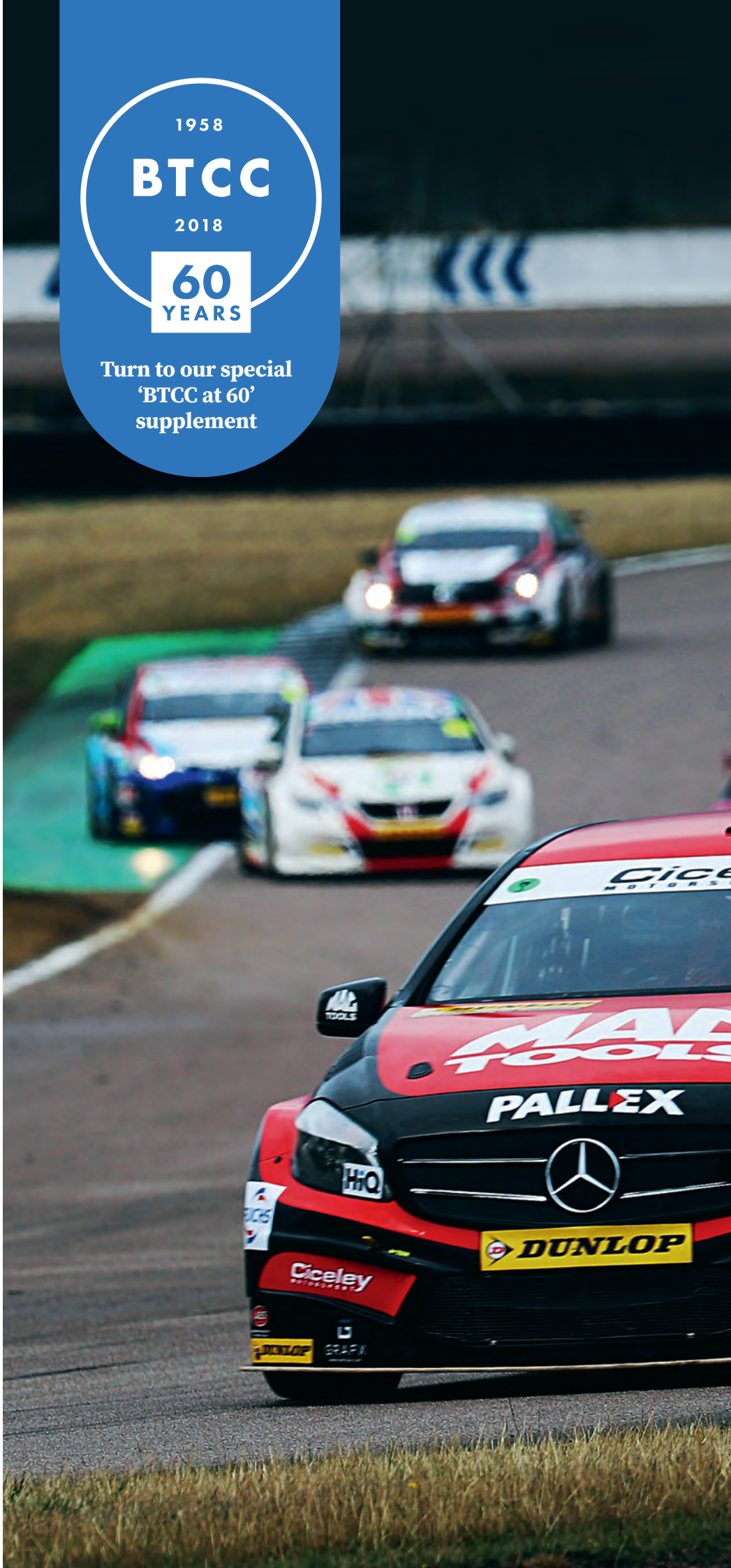
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Turn to our special
'BTCC at 60'
supplement



Morgan's Mercedes moves into the A class

*While Turkington and Ingram kept their title challenges strong,
Adam Morgan took a breakthrough pole – and a race win*

MATT JAMES

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY JEP/LAT  motorsport
IMAGES



The balance of power in the title race for the British Touring Car Championship shifted throughout last weekend at Rockingham.

A final-race rescue job by the consistent Colin Turkington put him at the top of the pile by just four points in his WSR BMW 125i M Sport, while closest rival Tom Ingram had to perform miracles to keep himself in the hunt in his Speedworks Toyota Avensis after a painful car failure on the final lap of the opening race.

Turkington and Ingram came away looking strong for the three-weekend title run-in. But the race-winning headlines were stolen by Adam Morgan in the opening race in his Ciceley Motorsport Mercedes A-Class, Ash Sutton, who leapt up to third in the points in his Team BMR Subaru Levorg, and popular maiden winner Chris Smiley (BTC Norlin Honda Civic Type R) in the reserved-grid final race.

The weather did its best to upset the weekend, and showers throughout Sunday left many with a tough decision on set-up. The track was wet at the start of the second and third races, and that is not helpful for the rear-wheel-drive BMWs.

Turkington began the opening race from 12th place after lugging 66kg of success ballast around, and clambered to seventh and fifth in the opening two races. His sign-off, with a battling second stolen on the line in race three, was the highlight of a round where it wasn't about being on the front foot all the time.

"It's been an excellent weekend for us," said the Northern Irishman. "We haven't had the fastest car, but we kept grafting away and moved forwards in each race. We worked hard to improve the car and reaped the rewards for the work that we did. I felt we were in for a tough day after qualifying, so to come away from the weekend leading the championship is great.

"The conditions through race day have made it far from easy, and had the rain started to fall then I think we would



have been in trouble as slick tyres and a damp circuit don't favour the BMW.

"We leave here four points ahead. I'll push for every one as I did in race three. It'll be hard going to [the next round at] Knockhill as leader with the extra weight, but I'm going to enjoy leading for the next two weeks."

Ingram, for his part, was delighted with the comeback he had made after the fly-by-wire throttle failed with a quarter of a mile to go in race one when he was on course to bank good points for seventh place – which would have been a great return given that he had gone into the weekend with 75kg of ballast.

His charge from 27th on the grid to grab a last-gasp podium in race two really rescued Ingram's weekend. The final race brought a fifth place on the less-than-favourable harder option Dunlop tyres.

"OK so we're a few points adrift, and I think Colin will flex his muscles and get a gap at Knockhill, but we go away from here in a much better position than we could have been after what happened in race one," said Ingram. "My aim going into race two was to try and get into a position to benefit from the reverse grid and I didn't think we could get a podium. When the team came on the radio after lap one and told me where we were, it was the encouragement I needed to do some cool things and get a big haul of points.

"We seem to be able to turn the car on in those conditions and come through the field well. The car feels sluggish when you have weight on board, so when that weight comes out it feels alive and like a rocketship, and we showed that with the result."

That result was also a product of the unflappable attitude that Ingram and the Speedworks team embodied after the opener, and it's an outlook that served them well.

The biggest winner of the weekend in terms of points scored was Morgan, who took his Ciceley Mercedes to his first pole position in his six years in the championship. Morgan had a torrid time last time out at Snetterton, where two non-finishes had dropped him to ninth in the points, but





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motorsport
 IMAGES

Sutton won the middle race to keep his Subaru in frame for the title

as a consequence of that he arrived at Rockingham with only 15kg of ballast installed within the Mercedes.

Morgan controlled the pace beautifully in the opening race to win by three seconds, and then gave dogged pursuit to Sutton in race two. Race three was a damage-limitation event with the harder Dunlop option tyres, but his solid eighth capped a fine weekend.

“We really needed that to get the ball rolling again,” said the 29-year-old. “The car was so strong right from the outset and it was about time I ticked the pole position box. We can go forward in a good frame of mind from now.”

Sutton’s race two win was a surprise for the man himself, given the fact that the circuit was damp on the out-lap to the grid. He had climbed to second in the opener, when he was opportunistic at the Deene hairpin and avoided colliding frontrunners Dan Cammish (Dynamics Honda Civic) and Sam Tordoff (Motorbase Ford Focus). He leapt to third and then made that second when Tom Chilton’s tyres began to fade.

The Subaru had gone to the grid for race two with wets on, but the team made a last-minute decision to swap back to slicks. “It’s a good job we did, too,” said Sutton. “I was a bit concerned because I hadn’t had the lap to the grid to get warmth into the rubber – I only had the warm-up lap, so I was in worse shape than those around me. It was just a question of being careful and >>

SMILEY IN ECSTASY



Smiley proved Turkington isn’t the only Northern Irish BTCC hotshoe

Since he joined the BTC Norlin team in 2017, Chris Smiley has been promising a breakthrough. The Carrickfergus racer, a former Mini Challenge champion, was determined to show the British Touring Car Championship racers what he knew he could do behind the wheel.

There were flashes of speed, particularly earlier in this year’s campaign at Donington Park, where he finished second behind Tom Ingram in the second race. But at Rockingham Smiley was on form all weekend.

Placing the Honda sixth in qualifying was the leg-up he needed to get the momentum rolling: “In this championship, it’s very hard to make progress if you have a problem in qualifying. Starting in the pack can mean trouble. A lot of this weekend was based on where we started.”

While it’s certain that the hatchback is

suited to the oval layout of the track, there were several obstacles thrown at the entire field over the course of the three races, including a treacherous surface as light showers sprinkled over the venue before races two and three.

While several drivers slipped up at the beginning of race three, Smiley was surefooted and supreme. His emotion on climbing out of the car was something to behold, and he was able to prove that all of those promises he’d made were true. He had become a winner at the highest level.

“I’ve been to hell and back to get here,” said Smiley, who became the 12th different winner of the highly competitive 2018 BTCC season. “There has been so much work and this is all I’ve focused on. The team have been superb and given me the tools to do the job and I wouldn’t have been able to do it without them.”



Smiley leapt his Civic to his maiden BTCC race victory

IN THE HEADLINES

CAMMISH IN TROUBLE...

Team Dynamics Honda driver Dan Cammish was given two penalty points on his race licence and received a reprimand for his part in contact with Sam Tordoff's Motorbase Performance Ford Focus at the start of race one. Motorbase's James Cole was given a similar censure for his part in a collision with Tom Oliphant's Mercedes A-Class.

...AND MORE TROUBLE

Cammish had already been in hot water for a post-qualifying interview he gave to ITV during its web streaming of the qualifying session. Despite claiming third place, he was furious with rivals who had got in his way during the session. He was fined £1500 for his comments.

COLLARD JR'S DEBUT

Ricky Collard, who was standing in for his father Rob in a WSR BMW, finished the opening two races in 17th and 20th places before being ruled out of the finale when the propshaft failed on the warm-up lap. His stranded car twice caused the start of race three to be delayed. Collard earned two penalty points on his licence in race one for passing under yellow flags.

SMILEY PENALTY

Chris Smiley had 0.8s added to his race time in the second race for contact with Mike Bushell, which dropped him from sixth to seventh in the results. Ollie Jackson was given a similar penalty for a crash with Bobby Thompson.

GEDDIE BACK IN MG

Series returnee Glynn Geddie took a brace of 22nd places in the opening two races in the AmD Tuning MG (below) before a non-finish in the finale. New boy Ollie Pidgley failed to finish the opener after contact in his Team Hard Volkswagen CC, but took the flag in the others with a best of 22nd in race three.



creeping up on the braking areas – just slowing a little earlier than usual. Those conditions are not great for rear-wheel-drive cars and I really thought I was going to struggle but, in the end, the car was great.”

It wasn't so great when he skittered wide at a greasy opening corner in race three, and Sutton was unable to climb back into the points-scoring top 15. But the win and the second have put him in a prime position to capitalise should Turkington or Ingram have any trouble over the title run-in.

Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R driver Matt Neal came to the event third in the points but left in fifth after a weekend that was a real struggle. The engine sprung a major oil leak after free practice two and the team was up against it to change the powerplant before qualifying. The set-up wasn't perfect and Neal could only manage 29th. He turned that into two points-scoring finishes, but the highest was 14th. Neal was perplexed: “Some of the racing in the mid-pack is brutal and I found myself trying to look after the car as best I could, but have still come away with quite a bit of damage.”

Another big loser of the weekend was Eurotech Racing's Jack Goff. He was at a loss to explain why he couldn't get his Honda Civic Type R to handle properly – much like his woe at Croft. He qualified 23rd, and that was the start of a torrid weekend. Like Neal, Goff was restricted to four points on a weekend when he was shuffled to the edge of the championship picture.

The Motorbase Performance Fords were on form at the weekend but didn't really get the results they deserved. Tom Chilton was a rostrum finisher in race one, coping manfully with tyres that were totally shot, but lost his chance of a reversed-grid win when he skated straight on in the wet conditions at the start of the race.

His team-mate Tordoff was thoroughly

aggrieved after his race-one exit at the hands of Cammish after a superb qualifying (albeit with no weight) had put him on the front row. That non-finish led to a fightback that would ultimately yield fourth place in race three, but he was angry.

“It's getting ridiculous,” said Tordoff. “I felt we were doing everything right this weekend and then we got to Turn 2 and I got collected by Cammish, which has ruined our day – there are no two ways about it. We shouldn't be messing about trying to come from the back of the grid, we should be winning races and then worrying about what we will do with success ballast on the car.”

“The results are embarrassing and, for us, it's baffling because we have a car that is so fast but we just can't catch a break. If I was making mistakes then I would hold my hands up but I keep getting collected...”

Aside from Smiley's superb win in race three (see panel, page 27), there were some other very encouraging performances. Firstly, Matt Simpson's Eurotech Honda was a constant threat near the front at a circuit where he has traditionally gone well. The highlight was a third place in the final race, which he nailed in a three-wide dash to the flag with Tordoff and Ingram.

“That's a real breakthrough for me,” said Simpson. “That was the first time I've been in the top 10 for all three races, and so it's a step forward and that's what we want to be doing more consistently.”

Two sixth places for Mike Bushell in the Team Hard Volkswagen CC also represented a turnaround in performance. The Kent racer qualified fourth, playing to the strengths of the slippery-shaped saloon. His opening race was lonely and he survived contact in race two, before a hard-tyre struggle to 20th position in race three, where he was another to be caught out in the slippery opening stages. ❧



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STATS**Motorsport Stats is the pre-eminent provider of motorsport data to media owners, rights-holders, bookmakers and sponsors. Its data services are founded on the world's largest repository of racing results dating back to 1897. **For more information contact sales@motorsportstats.com****RESULTS ROUND 7/10, ROCKINGHAM (GB), AUGUST 12, RACE 1 (18 LAPS – 34.920 MILES)**

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Adam Morgan (GB)	Ciceley Motorsport / Mercedes A-Class (15kg)	27m06.372s
2	Ash Sutton (GB)	Team BMR / Subaru Levorg (27kg)	+3.017s
3	Tom Chilton (GB)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus RS (21kg)	+7.031s
4	Chris Smiley (GB)	BTC Norlin Racing / Honda Civic Type R	+7.293s
5	Dan Cammish (GB)	Team Dynamics / Honda Civic Type R	+7.352s
6	Mike Bushell (GB)	Team Hard / Volkswagen CC	+8.830s
7	Colin Turkington (GB)	WSR / BMW 125i M Sport (66kg)	+9.459s
8	Aiden Moffat (GB)	Laser Tools Racing / Mercedes A-Class	+11.934s
9	Rory Butcher (GB)	AmD Tuning / MG6	+13.547s
10	Matt Simpson (GB)	Eurotech Racing / Honda Civic Type R	+14.306s
11	Rob Austin (GB)	HMS Racing / Alfa Romeo Giulietta	+16.028s
12	Senna Proctor (GB)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra	+16.305s
13	Jack Goff (GB)	Eurotech Racing / Honda Civic Type R (48kg)	+16.784s
14	Stephen Jelley (GB)	Team Parker Racing / BMW 125i M Sport	+22.370s
15	Andrew Jordan (GB)	WSR / BMW 125i M Sport (33kg)	+23.539s
16	Ollie Jackson (GB)	AmD Tuning / Audi S3 Saloon	+27.063s
17	Ricky Collard (GB)	WSR / BMW 125i M Sport	+27.339s
18	Matt Neal (GB)	Team Dynamics / Honda Civic Type R (57kg)	+29.702s
19	James Cole (GB)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus RS	+30.304s
20	Michael Caine (GB)	Team Hard / Volkswagen CC	+30.727s
21	Daniel Lloyd (GB)	BTC Norlin Racing / Honda Civic Type R	+31.490s
22	Glynn Geddie (GB)	AmD Tuning / MG6	+39.491s
23	Jason Plato (GB)	Team BMR / Subaru Levorg	+40.062s
24	Bobby Thompson (GB)	Team Hard / Volkswagen CC	-1 lap
25	Tom Oliphant (GB)	Ciceley Motorsport / Mercedes A-Class	-1 lap
26	Brett Smith (GB)	Eurotech Racing / Honda Civic Type R	-2 laps
R	Tom Ingram (GB)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Avensis (75kg)	17 laps-fly-by-wire throttle
R	Josh Cook (GB)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra (33kg)	10 laps-power-steering hose
R	Sam Tordoff (GB)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus RS (9kg)	1 lap-accddamage
R	Sam Smelt (GB)	AmD Tuning / Audi S3 Saloon	0 laps-accident damage
R	Ollie Pidgley (GB)	Team Hard / Volkswagen CC	0 laps-accident damage

Winner's average speed 77.29mph. Fastest lap Cook 1m24.747s, 82.40mph.

QUALIFYING

1 Morgan 1m22.835s; 2 Tordoff 1m22.937s; 3 Cammish 1m23.086s; 4 Bushell 1m23.163s; 5 Lloyd 1m23.215s; 6 Smiley 1m23.221s; 7 Chilton 1m23.252s; 8 Smith 1m23.263s; 9 Plato 1m23.274s; 10 Sutton 1m23.283s; 11 Jordan 1m23.319s; 12 Turkington 1m23.321s; 13 Ingram 1m23.346s; 14 Simpson 1m23.347s; 15 Moffat 1m23.350s; 16 Smelt 1m23.356s; 17 Proctor 1m23.377s; 18 Thompson 1m23.475s; 19 Jackson 1m23.491s; 20 Butcher 1m23.532s; 21 Cook 1m23.569s; 22 Oliphant 1m23.593s; 23 Goff 1m23.614s; 24 Austin 1m23.629s; 25 Cole 1m23.671s; 26 Collard 1m23.784s; 27 Caine 1m23.789s; 28 Jelley 1m23.823s; 29 Neal 1m23.870s; 30 Geddie 1m24.619s; 31 Pidgley 1m24.793s.



Tordoff (pink Focus) started on the front row but was taken out



Morgan lets fly with the champagne

RACE 2 (19 LAPS – 36.860 MILES)

1 Sutton (66kg) 29m33.566s; 2 Morgan (75kg) +4.426s; 3 Ingram +5.315s; 4 Proctor +7.327s; 5 Turkington (27kg) +8.170s; 6 Bushell (33kg) +12.469s; 7 Smiley (48kg) +12.579s; 8 Butcher (15kg) +12.722s; 9 Simpson (9kg) +15.417s; 10 Chilton (57kg) +16.541s; 11 Jackson +17.481s; 12 Cook +19.791s; 13 Jordan +19.924s; 14 Neal +21.876s; 15 Goff +24.316s; 16 Lloyd +24.741s; 17 Oliphant +28.402s; 18 Tordoff +28.724s; 19 Cole +30.956s; 20 Collard +31.254s; 21 Cammish (39kg) +32.099s; 22 Geddie +33.034s; 23 Smelt +33.800s; 24 Smith +34.877s; 25 Pidgley +39.823s; 26 Plato -1 lap; R Austin 16 laps-accident damage; R Thompson 12 laps-accident damage; R Caine 4 laps-accident; R Moffat (21kg) 1 lap-suspension; R Jelley 0 laps-off. Winner's average speed 74.81mph. Fastest lap Ingram 1m24.579s, 82.57mph.

GRID RACE 2 Decided by result of Race 1.**RACE 3 (16 LAPS – 31.040 MILES)**

1 Smiley (33kg) 23m56.878s; 2 Turkington (39kg) +3.563s; 3 Simpson (15kg) +5.156s; 4 Tordoff +5.187s; 5 Ingram (57kg) +5.305s; 6 Butcher (21kg) +9.781s; 7 Thompson +12.970s; 8 Morgan (66kg) +17.083s; 9 Jackson +17.811s; 10 Cammish +18.060s; 11 Plato +18.420s; 12 Cook +19.323s; 13 Oliphant +20.542s; 14 Proctor (48kg) +20.954s; 15 Neal +21.223s; 16 Jelley +21.956s; 17 Sutton (75kg) +22.818s; 18 Austin +23.217s; 19 Goff +23.424s; 20 Bushell (27kg) +24.171s; 21 Moffat +28.183s; 22 Pidgley +37.111s; R Geddie 11 laps-alarm in car; R Smelt 8 laps-accident damage; R Lloyd 7 laps-accident damage; R Cole 1 lap-accident; R Chilton (9kg) 1 lap-accident damage; R Jordan 1 lap-suspension; R Caine 1 lap-accident damage; R Collard 0 laps-propshaft; R Smith 0 laps-accident. Winner's average speed 77.76mph. Fastest lap Smiley 1m23.905s, 83.23mph.

GRID RACE 3 Decided by result of Race 2, with top 10 reversed.**CHAMPIONSHIP**

1 Turkington 220; 2 Ingram 216; 3 Sutton 188; 4 Goff 176; 5 Neal 176; 6 Morgan 169; 7 Chilton 169; 8 Cook 166; 9 Jordan 161; 10 Proctor 130.

Silver Arrows' title hopes get a boost as Brits star in the DTM's UK return



DTM
BRANDS HATCH (GB)
AUGUST 11-12
ROUND 6/10

In an era of DTM notorious for inconsistency from one day to the next, one factor – one team – remained constant on the series' much-anticipated return to Brands Hatch: Mercedes.

Mercedes head Ulrich Fritz had been cautious pre-weekend about the “first real unknown” of the season, particularly given that the DTM's return to the UK after five years would take place on Brands Hatch's Grand Prix layout for the first time. On a new circuit for the manufacturers and, perhaps more pertinently, many of the drivers, those were valid concerns – especially since Friday's traditional practice sessions were shoehorned into the start of the schedule on Saturday. But Fritz needn't have worried.

DTM pole positions haven't quite been like London buses for Daniel Juncadella, but, having required 64 attempts to land his first, his wait of three races to secure a second can't have played on his mind half as much. As one of only three drivers to have competed on the Grand Prix loop in the past two years, Juncadella was always likely to be a contender on Saturday.

But Juncadella had not converted his maiden pole into victory at the Norisring in June. And he looked like he'd missed out



again when he was jumped immediately by Lucas Auer and Rene Rast at the start of Saturday's first race, despite feeling that he launched well from the Brabham Straight's sloped right-hand-side pole slot. Could it be that the gradient acts as a hindrance?

“I really think it does,” said Juncadella. “I don't want to be the only one picking it out but three times I've started from pole here and three times I've lost the lead. It's like starting side by side with second place. If you get a good start you should be able to go through but I was surprised because I didn't feel I had a bad pullaway; I just lost traction at some point.”

Juncadella swiftly made his way back into second when Rast went aggressive and pitted

his Audi at the end of the first lap, and he was right on Mercedes team-mate Auer's tail in second place when he made his stop on lap seven. Rejoining ahead of BMW man Augusto Farfus, Juncadella was fast enough over the next two laps to steal the net lead from Auer at Graham Hill Bend when Auer emerged from the pits, squirming about on cold tyres. Hard work done, Juncadella settled into a comfortable rhythm at the front and eased away to win by eight seconds.

“I've been through quite a lot this year, at some point when I had the accident [Juncadella broke his collarbone in a mountain-bike crash] I didn't expect to be racing this season, because you don't know how slow or how quick the recovery will be,”



Britons di Resta (r) and Paffett (l) put on a show for the home fans

he said. "It could have been easy for the team to just say, 'Stay out for half a season,' so to be racing was special. It's obviously the best day of my DTM career and one of the best days of my racing career."

Farfus executed a brilliant strategy to end up second, having followed Juncadella through past Auer. Given his most recent race on the GP loop was in 2010, Farfus couldn't claim to have contemporary experience of the extended circuit but admitted his track knowledge "certainly helps". His result was set up by a brilliant opening-lap pass on fellow BMW driver Philipp Eng, but despite clearing Auer he had no answer to Juncadella's pace.

Auer wasn't too far back in third, but he spent the majority of the race post-stop with an eye on his mirrors. Rast lurked in the background until he had to back off in the final 10 laps after "suffering a lot" with tyre wear while following the Mercedes. Eng – who drove the circuit in 2017 – was fifth in his RMR M4, holding off a late charge from Mercedes' points leader Gary Paffett in the process.

Paffett's run suggested that those without recent experience of the longer layout were catching up and, sure enough, come qualifying the next day their disadvantage had been nullified.

Sunday's second race featured an entertaining and race-long squabble for the lead, but it was effectively won – or lost – at the start. Eventual winner Paul >>

A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

"I really love this track. There's one corner that is very special and that's Turn 5. You arrive so fast and, especially when you are in a fight, you arrive side by side through this corner. It gives you a big boost."

Pascal Wehrlein is no stranger to corners such as Eau Rouge and Suzuka's 130R in Formula 1 machinery, so his assessment of Brands Hatch's Hawthorn Bend gives you some idea of just what a challenge the Grand Prix circuit is to drive in a DTM car. It's easy to underestimate the fast sequence of right-handers through to Westfield and Dingle Dell, simply by watching on TV, just as it's easy to forget how spectacular racing cars can be without heading trackside to witness the drivers tackling the seemingly endless undulations at the top end of the circuit.

But as rare as seeing DTM cars on the GP layout is (a view, as an aside, that doesn't feel at all neutered by the addition of fences for 2018), if there's ever a better way to find out how impressive they are on the loop then it's to have the even rarer experience of lapping the circuit in one of the series' 'taxis' (a Mercedes driven by Christian Vietoris, in this case).

After filling out the standard waivers, and an inelegant climb into the passenger seat, you're ready to go. It's immediately clear from the wheelspin pullaway in the pitlane that this is no ordinary bit of kit and, although Paddock Hill Bend, Druids and Graham Hill Bend are relatively well-known quantities, out on the loop the car really starts to boggle the mind.

As spectacular as the speed is through Hawthorn, the corner itself is *almost* anti-climactic. Once the Mercedes finally exits the never-ending Surtees left-hander, through which it feels as though you're stuck permanently at 45 degrees, the huge drop-down – which TV cameras



Our man Cozens gave his 'taxi' driver five stars shortly after

don't do justice – Hawthorn Hill slowly gives way to the sight of the incline approaching the corner, so the long brace for the right-hander ultimately feels premature once it's tackled.

But that's where car and circuit catch you off-guard while you relax to take a breath, for at the next corner in the sequence, Westfield, you jolt out of your seat as the driver stamps on the brake before plunging downhill into Dingle Dell as the end of the lap approaches. The out and in-laps leave you short on time to gather your thoughts, but in no doubt of the commitment necessary to drive one of these cars at full whack, and in full appreciation of those who do.

Usually, PR-speak such as Audi boss Dieter Gass's declaration that "every driver enjoyed racing on this circuit" could be overlooked as sheer cant, but in this instance it's hard to believe this wasn't the genuine sentiment. It shouldn't be news to many people, but the GP loop is no ordinary circuit – especially when you're in an extraordinary car.

JACK COZENS



Brands' high corner speeds impressed the DTM field

di Resta felt he could have secured pole, but perhaps it was for the best he did not. Launching better than Paffett from second, di Resta clung on around the outside of his Mercedes stablemate down through Paddock Hill and then Druids to secure first.

Paffett stopped short of blaming his grid slot for losing the lead, but suggested he felt at a disadvantage.

“I’m not going to say that’s the reason [for di Resta beating him to the first corner], but it’s not nice,” he said. “It’s quite an angle on the track, and actually on P1 you’re starting to go uphill slightly. I did a start earlier on in practice and I got some wheelspin, so I was more cautious on the start – probably too cautious – off the grid, but the whole grid here is not nice.”

A first-lap incident involving Auer and Robin Frijns, and which also claimed plenty of Farfus’s front bodywork, resulted in an early safety car. Di Resta slowed the pack up to a snail’s pace before the restart, and that tactic worked perfectly. He leapt away when racing resumed to swoop into Paddock Bend unchallenged as Paffett resisted Pascal Wehrlein. Paffett pitted eight laps into the race, but the effect of the undercut was nullified when di Resta stopped himself the following lap and emerged ahead. From there, the gap between the pair never exceeded a second (save for on the final lap), but Paffett equally never got within proper striking distance of the leader.

2010 champion di Resta had been nowhere on Saturday, although he’d insisted his finishing position of 16th belied the real performance of his C63. So his pace was something of a surprise 24 hours later.

“It was identifying one thing on the car that my engineer saw in the data,” said di Resta, who ultimately ended up a comfortable winner. “Because it was a two-day event, you don’t get any running on Friday, so we had no time to change it.”

His cause was aided in the latter stages by Paffett having to temper his attack as the weekend’s most impressive performer, Rast, closed in on the runaway Mercedes pair. Frustrated a day earlier that his early stop hadn’t paid off, Rast again had reason to feel



Reigning champ Rast was comfortably Audi’s best performer

aggrieved when his ambitious attempts to pass Wehrlein around the outside of Druids on the restart resulted in him being shuffled off the circuit and dropping to fifth.

For all Rast’s annoyance (“the driving behaviour of Pascal is making me a bit upset”), it cost him little when he dived for the pits on lap six. That allowed his Audi to jump the Merc of Wehrlein anyway, effectively settling the squabble. Without the threat of the tyre-drop-off issues that had affected him a day earlier, Rast settled into what he called a “very good” rhythm to catch the leaders, spending the final eight laps within a second of Paffett’s shadow.

“I was surprised by the pace we had, especially at the end,” said Rast. “I was expecting them to go away after half the race but actually it was the other way round – I was catching them, even without DRS. I was hoping for some mistakes, or that Gary ran out of DRS, but I think he had one left, so he managed it very well.”

Reigning champion Rast is unquestionably a step ahead of his counterparts as Audi continues to agonise over getting the best from its 2018 package.

But drive of the day could arguably have gone to another from the marque’s roster, had Jamie Green not encountered late dramas. Up from 11th on the grid – his third best qualifying effort of the season – to fourth in the opening laps, Green inherited first when the leaders made their stops. He would lead more of the race than di Resta before pitting with nine laps left.

But Green admitted that was probably a lap too late, having noticed his left-rear tyre pressure dropping. The Team Rosberg driver then lost time in the pits with a lengthy stop that meant instead of emerging in a secure fourth, he was immediately passed by Wehrlein as he rejoined and had to scramble to stay ahead of leading BMW contender Marco Wittmann. That involved a brusque defensive move exiting Graham Hill Bend, in which Green swept across the front of Wittmann’s M4, earning himself a drivethrough penalty, which denied him the chance to score what would have been his best result of the year.

Wittmann survived his altercation with Green (who crossed the line well outside the points in 15th) and went on to finish fifth, half a second clear of the second Audi of Mike Rockenfeller. Eng had another productive run to seventh and was the second of two BMW drivers to score, beating Saturday frontrunners Juncadella and Auer, whose eighth and ninth places exemplified how well the rest of the field had caught up overnight.

If Fritz was worried about the risks Brands Hatch offered, there can surely be little to faze his squad between now and the end of the season. The sum total of the weekend’s races barely affected the title race – Paffett extended his lead over di Resta by two points – but the gulf to the rest only grew as Mercedes strengthened its grip on the title race in its swansong year.

JACK COZENS



Green was robust as he tried to fend off Wittmann (1) while on cold rubber

**RESULTS** ROUND 6/10, BRANDS HATCH (GB), AUGUST 11-12, RACE 1 (41 LAPS – 99.765 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Daniel Juncadella (E)	HWA / Mercedes C63	57m15.601s
2	Augusto Farfus (BR)	RMG / BMW M4	+7.896s
3	Lucas Auer (A)	HWA / Mercedes C63	+10.040s
4	Rene Rast (D)	Team Rosberg / Audi RS5	+14.723s
5	Philipp Eng (A)	RMR (RBM) / BMW M4	+23.546s
6	Gary Paffett (GB)	HWA / Mercedes C63	+23.933s
7	Pascal Wehrlein (D)	HWA / Mercedes C63	+25.226s
8	Edoardo Mortara (I)	HWA / Mercedes C63	+27.528s
9	Marco Wittmann (D)	RMG / BMW M4	+31.639s
10	Mike Rockenfeller (D)	Team Phoenix / Audi RS5	+33.405s
11	Jamie Green (GB)	Team Rosberg / Audi RS5	+35.822s
12	Robin Frijns (NL)	Abt Sportsline / Audi RS5	+37.423s
13	Timo Glock (D)	RMR (RMG) / BMW M4	+41.607s
14	Joel Eriksson (S)	RBM / BMW M4	+42.738s
15	Nico Muller (CH)	Abt Sportsline / Audi RS5	+43.476s
16	Paul di Resta (GB)	HWA / Mercedes C63	+46.349s
17	Bruno Spengler (CDN)	RBM / BMW M4	+55.188s
R	Loic Duval (F)	Team Phoenix / Audi RS5	1 lap-crash

Winner's average speed 104.538mph.

Fastest lap Wittmann 1m20.195s, 109.231mph.

QUALIFYING 1 1 Juncadella 1m18.069s; 2 Auer 1m18.161s; 3 Rast 1m18.255s; 4 Eng 1m18.257s; 5 Farfus 1m18.365s; 6 Paffett 1m18.398s; 7 Glock 1m18.407s; 8 Mortara 1m18.422s; 9 Wittmann 1m18.443s; 10 Wehrlein 1m18.444s; 11 Frijns 1m18.530s; 12 di Resta 1m18.625s; 13 Muller 1m18.644s; 14 Duval 1m18.695s; 15 Rockenfeller 1m18.746s; 16 Eriksson 1m18.755s; 17 Green 1m18.799s; 18 Spengler 1m19.385s.

RACE 2 (40 LAPS – 97.332 MILES)

1 di Resta 56m23.282s; 2 Paffett +1.019s; 3 Rast +1.376s; 4 Wehrlein +11.484s; 5 Wittmann +14.312s; 6 Rockenfeller +14.841s; 7 Eng +17.239s; 8 Auer +17.972s; 9 Juncadella +18.505s; 10 Muller +20.798s; 11 Glock +21.764s; 12 Frijns +22.007s; 13 Eriksson +23.197s; 14 Spengler +31.998s;

15 Green +33.359s; 16 Duval -2 laps; 17 Mortara 37 laps-stopped; R Farfus 18 laps-accident damage.

Winner's average speed 103.566mph.

Fastest lap di Resta 1m19.943s, 109.576mph.

QUALIFYING 2 1 Paffett 1m17.948s; 2 di Resta 1m18.021s; 3 Wehrlein 1m18.034s; 4 Rast 1m18.052s; 5 Auer 1m18.135s; 6 Frijns 1m18.140s; 7 Farfus 1m18.182s; 8 Duval 1m18.205s; 9 Wittmann 1m18.244s; 10 Eng 1m18.304s; 11 Green 1m18.315s; 12 Rockenfeller 1m18.330s; 13 Glock 1m18.508s; 14 Juncadella 1m18.517s; 15 Muller 1m18.607s; 16 Eriksson 1m18.654s; 17 Mortara 1m18.670s; 18 Spengler 1m19.115s.

CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Paffett 177; 2 di Resta 148; 3 Wittmann 110; 4 Auer 110; 5 Mortara 101; 6 Glock 101; 7 Wehrlein 84; 8 Eng 83; 9 Rast 77; 10 Juncadella 57.

WEEKEND WINNERS**NASCAR CUP****MICHIGAN**

Kevin Harvick (below)
Stewart-Haas Racing Ford Fusion

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES**MID-OHIO**

Justin Allgaier
JR Motorsports Chevrolet Camaro

NASCAR TRUCK SERIES**MICHIGAN**

Brett Moffitt
Hattori Racing Enterprises Toyota Tundra

SUPER TC2000**OBERA**

Agustín Canapino
Equipo YPF-Pro Racing Chevrolet Cruze

AUDI SPORT SEYFFARTH R8 LMS CUP**BRANDS HATCH**

Race 1 Kris Heidorn

Audi R8 LMS GT4

Race 2 Kris Heidorn

Audi R8 LMS GT4

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WORLD OF SPORT



Lorenzo became the third
Ducati rider to win at
the circuit in three years

Lorenzo latest to tame Red Bull Ring on Ducati

MOTOGP
RED BULL RING (A)
AUGUST 12
ROUND 11/19

Since its return to the MotoGP calendar in 2016, the Red Bull Ring has been Ducati territory. As a result, it wasn't a major shock to see one of the Italian manufacturer's riders triumph in Austria last weekend.

What was a little more surprising, though, was that Jorge Lorenzo made it three different men in red leathers on the top step of the podium in three years, following in the footsteps of 2016 winner Andrea Iannone and last year's victor Andrea Dovizioso after getting the better of Marc Marquez in an exhilarating duel.

MotoGP has served up plenty of thrillers this season, and in this regard the Austrian Grand Prix was no exception. Although the top three were clearly in a league of their own, the dogfight between Marquez and Lorenzo in the closing stages was up there with anything else seen in 2018. Marquez showcased his intentions to finally nail Austria (the only track on the MotoGP calendar, besides new-for-2018 venue Buriram in Thailand, at which he has yet to win) by taking pole position by a scant 0.002 seconds on Saturday from Dovizioso. Lorenzo completed the front row.

Lorenzo briefly grabbed the lead on the opening lap after slithering up the inside of both Marquez and Dovizioso at the uphill Turn 3 right-hander, but Marquez

reasserted himself on the next tour at the same corner, and his Honda then began to pull away to the tune of nearly a second.

It seemed at half-distance that Lorenzo was holding up team-mate Dovizioso and allowing Marquez to escape to a relatively straightforward win. But on lap 14 of 28, Lorenzo turned up the heat to cut Marquez's advantage from 0.8s to 0.5s and then closed right on the rear wheel of his future Honda team-mate.

On lap 19, Lorenzo made his move at Turn 1. Marquez responded at Turn 3, but Lorenzo showed he meant business with a gutsy pass to retake the lead at the plunging downhill Turn 9 right-hander. He hung on to the advantage until the final three laps.

Marquez remained close enough to seize the initiative when Lorenzo ran wide at Turn 3, but once more Lorenzo was able to snap back at Turn 9. On the penultimate lap Marquez muscled his way by at Turn 3 once more, but Lorenzo moved back ahead at Turn 1 next time round. Predictably, Marquez went on the attack at Turn 3 again on the final lap. This time, Lorenzo simply braved it around the outside of the bottom-gear right-hander. Getting better traction than his Honda foe meant he maintained the lead, giving him victory number three of 2018 by 0.130s.

Dovizioso, meanwhile, dropped out of the lead fight after he ran wide at the start of lap 19, and couldn't bridge the gap thereafter, finishing 1.6s down on the lead duo in third. >>



Marquez led initially, but
Lorenzo made a fight of it

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Oulton Park

GOLD AND GOOSE/LAT
motorsport
 IMAGES



Yamaha's riders were well adrift, earning an apology from the project leader

Besides the battle for victory, the other major talking point of the Austrian GP weekend was Yamaha's ongoing failure to provide competitive machinery for Valentino Rossi and Maverick Vinales. The Red Bull Ring was always likely to show up Yamaha's weaknesses; its slow corners and long straights punish the R1's poor traction. But few would have predicted that neither Rossi nor Vinales would breach the top 10 in qualifying, or that Rossi wouldn't even make it out of Q1. Such a disastrous showing prompted a public apology from Yamaha project leader Kouji Tsuya in what must rank as one of the most embarrassing moments in the marque's racing history.

Rossi did well to salvage sixth from his lowly grid slot of 14th, ending up not too far behind LCR Honda's Cal Crutchlow and Pramac Ducati rider Danilo Petrucci. But Vinales went the other way, slipping from 11th on the grid to 16th at the start and crossing the finishing line 12th.

Suzuki was also in turmoil, and not just on track. During Saturday Iannone accused the team of favouring Alex Rins, who was using the squad's one and only new chassis. Rins starred on the first lap, climbing as high as fifth, before eventually slipping to eighth behind the second factory Honda of Dani Pedrosa. Iannone was 13th after running off-track early on.

Aprilia failed to score points at all after a race that moved Scott Redding to describe his RS-GP as a "piece of shit", while KTM (down to a single bike for its home race with Pol Espargaro and Mika Kallio both injured) managed to bank two points thanks to Bradley Smith coming home 14th.

No such woes over at Ducati, which now has a credible claim to having the best all-round bike on the grid. It's just a shame the squad decided to let Lorenzo go and join its closest rival for 2019.

JAMIE KLEIN

RESULTS ROUND 11/19, RED BULL RING (A), AUGUST 12 (28 LAPS - 75.126 MILES)

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	Jorge Lorenzo (E)	Ducati	39m40.688s
2	Marc Marquez (E)	Honda	+0.130s
3	Andrea Dovizioso (I)	Ducati	+1.656s
4	Cal Crutchlow (GB)	LCR Honda	+9.434s
5	Danilo Petrucci (I)	Pramac Ducati	+13.169s
6	Valentino Rossi (I)	Yamaha	+14.026s
7	Dani Pedrosa (E)	Honda	+14.156s
8	Alex Rins (E)	Suzuki	+16.644s
9	Johann Zarco (F)	Tech3 Yamaha	+20.760s
10	Alvaro Bautista (E)	Aspar Ducati	+20.844s
11	Tito Rabat (E)	Avintia Ducati	+21.114s
12	Maverick Vinales (E)	Yamaha	+22.939s
13	Andrea Iannone (I)	Suzuki	+26.523s
14	Bradley Smith (GB)	KTM	+29.168s
15	Takaaki Nakagami (J)	LCR Honda	+30.072s
16	Hafiz Syahrin (MAL)	Tech3 Yamaha	+30.343s
17	Alex Espargaro (E)	Aprilia	+31.775s
18	Jack Miller (AUS)	Pramac Ducati	+34.375s
19	Franco Morbidelli (I)	Marc VDS Honda	+40.171s
20	Scott Redding (GB)	Aprilia	+53.020s
21	Karel Abraham (CZ)	Aspar Ducati	+53.261s
22	Thomas Luthi (CH)	Marc VDS Honda	+54.355s
R	Xavier Simeon (B)	Avintia Ducati	10 laps-crash

WEEKEND WINNERS

MOTO2
RED BULL RING
 1 Francesco Bagnaia
 Kalex
 2 Miguel Oliveira
 KTM
 3 Luca Marini
 Kalex

MOTO3
RED BULL RING
 1 Marco Bezzecchi
 KTM
 2 Enea Bastianini
 Honda
 3 Jorge Martin
 Honda

Bagnaia retook Moto2 points lead

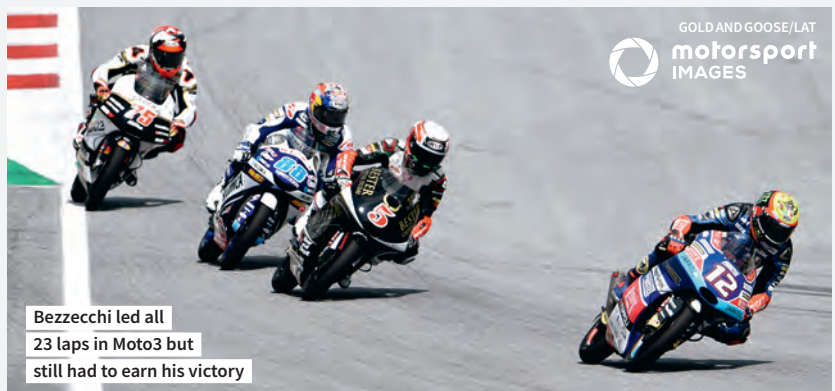
Winner's average speed 113.603mph. Fastest lap Dovizioso 1m24.277s, 114.611mph.

QUALIFYING 2 1 Marquez 1m23.241s; 2 Dovizioso 1m23.243s; 3 Lorenzo 1m23.376s; 4 Petrucci 1m23.503s; 5 Crutchlow 1m23.812s; 6 Zarco 1m23.887s; 7 Rabat 1m23.922s; 8 Iannone 1m24.091s; 9 Pedrosa 1m24.124s; 10 Rins 1m24.227s; 11 Vinales 1m24.284s; 12 Bautista 1m24.342s.

QUALIFYING 1 1 Bautista 1m24.195s; 2 Rins 1m24.230s; 3 Smith 1m24.245s; 4 Rossi 1m24.309s; 5 A Espargaro 1m24.762s; 6 Morbidelli 1m24.767s; 7 Miller 1m24.805s; 8 Syahrin 1m24.834s; 9 Simeon 1m24.868s; 10 Redding 1m25.067s; 11 Nakagami 1m25.178s; 12 Luthi 1m25.310s; 13 Abraham 1m25.339s.

RIDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Marquez 201; 2 Rossi 142; 3 Lorenzo 130; 4 Dovizioso 129; 5 Vinales 113; 6 Petrucci 105; 7 Zarco 104; 8 Crutchlow 103; 9 Iannone 84; 10 Rins 66; 11 Pedrosa 66; 12 Miller 61; 13 Bautista 57; 14 Rabat 35; 15 Pol Espargaro 32; 16 Syahrin 24; 17 Morbidelli 22; 18 A Espargaro 17; 19 Smith 15; 20 Redding 12; 21 Nakagami 11; 22 Mika Kallio 6; 23 Abraham 4; 24 Luthi 0; 25 Stefan Bradl 0; 26 Simeon 0; 27 Sylvain Guintoli 0.

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Honda 236; 2 Ducati 208; 3 Yamaha 183; 4 Suzuki 118; 5 KTM 41; 6 Aprilia 27.



Bezzecchi led all 23 laps in Moto3 but still had to earn his victory

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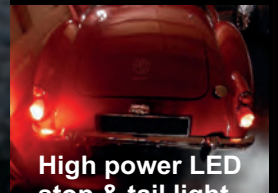
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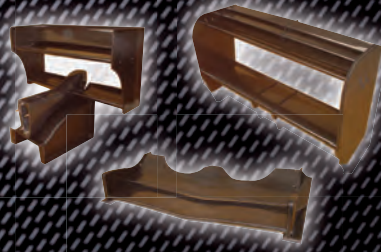
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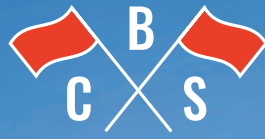
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Ciceley Motorsport is making British GT debut

Exclusion 'doesn't matter'

GINETTA JUNIOR

Ginetta Junior frontrunner Luke Browning says that his exclusion from a race at June's Oulton Park round has not affected his championship position.

Browning finished first on the road in the opening Oulton race, but was disqualified from the results after officials were unable to extract sufficient oil from the differential in parc ferme for scrutineering purposes.

Browning's team Richardson Racing appealed, claiming that a mechanical failure had caused oil to leak, but was told after the recent Snetterton round that the National Court had upheld the initial verdict.

Browning feels that had the oil leak that led to the exclusion remained undetected after the first race, and the team not sorted the issue, then he would have suffered a mechanical failure in the second race that

weekend, which he went on to win. "The way we look at it, the next race [where he won] we would have got a DNF anyway so it would have evened itself out," said Browning, whose lost appeal left him 36 points down on rival Adam Smalley heading into last weekend's round at Rockingham.

"It's just one of those things, it wasn't anyone's fault. It was a Ginetta part and it's not the team's job for that to work."

Richardson Racing boss Gwyn Richardson believes his driver is still in contention. "He will still be fighting for the championship, the gap isn't that big – it's just a DNF in one race," he said.

The points gap after the Rockingham round is now 45 in favour of Smalley, who took two thirds and a fourth, while Browning recovered from a tough first race to score a second place and a win.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

BRITISH GT

British Touring Car Championship racer Adam Morgan will take part in the last round of the British GT Championship next month as his Ciceley Motorsport team looks to branch out into endurance racing.

Morgan, who was a race winner at Rockingham last weekend, will line up in a Mercedes-AMG GT4 alongside sportscar racer David Fairbrother for the two-hour contest on September 23.

Morgan, who has contested long distance races in Dubai in the 24 Hour Series, said it would be a toe-in-the-water exercise for the team, which is considering an expanded programme in 2019.

Ciceley Motorsport has previously operated a Renault UK Clio Cup team alongside the two BTCC Mercedes A-Class machines it runs for Morgan and Tom Oliphant.

Morgan said: "We are going to run the car in the Gulf 12 Hours in Abu Dhabi and the Dubai 24 Hours in January and we have already had some interest from possible drivers. This could be a whole new attack from us.

"Our main focus is the British Touring Car Championship and it always will be. But there are so many other series out here that are appealing to us and we'll see how we get on at Donington Park. We'll have our first test in the car at the beginning of September."

Morgan said that the team would gauge the level of interest after its maiden run in British GT to see if it should commit to a more extensive programme for 2019.

"There are some clashes in the calendar between British GT and the BTCC, but we have the capability to do it," he added. "We will see how we run and see what



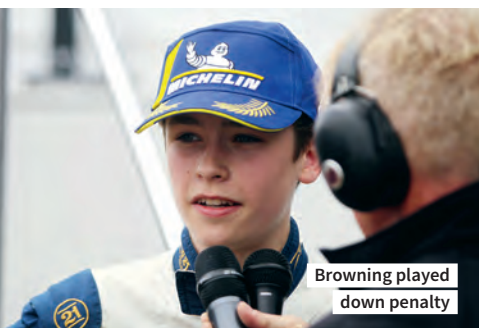
P24 BTCC REPORT

Morgan has won seven BTCC races

the reaction is like."

The Ciceley car (pictured right) will become the fourth Mercedes-AMG GT4 on the British GT grid, in the car's maiden season in competition. It joins entries from Team Parker Racing (which currently leads the Pro-Am standings with Scott Malvern and Nick Jones), Fox Motorsport and the new ProTechnika Motorsport squad that made its debut at Spa.

MATT JAMES & JAMES NEWBOLD



Browning played down penalty



Smalley leads series after Rockingham

Hauger rues 'dumb' crash

BRITISH F4

British Formula 4 ace Dennis Hauger says he will learn from a "pretty dumb" move on his team-mate Jack Doohan at Rockingham last weekend that put both Red Bull-backed drivers out.

The Arden racers were fighting over second place into the Deene hairpin on the opening lap of the final race of the weekend when Hauger made a move down the inside. But he succeeded only in spearing into Doohan, forcing both drivers to retire to the pits.

It cost Hauger the chance to move into second in the F4 standings and severely hinders the duo's dwindling title hopes.

"I just tried to get on the inside but it was a bit damp," explained Hauger, who apologised for the incident. "It was a pretty dumb move from me. I've just got to learn from it and go forward to the next races."

STEPHEN LICKORISH





Crystal Palace returns after one-year hiatus

CRYSTAL PALACE

Sevenoaks & District Motor Club has confirmed that the Crystal Palace sprint will return in 2019 after its enforced cancellation in '18, and that it will occupy its traditional late May Bank Holiday slot.

The club has held the sprint annually since 2010, but this year's event was called off owing to financial problems caused by a promoter pulling out and difficulties associated with moving the event to the August Bank Holiday

weekend. Now the club has committed to running the sprint again next year on May 26-27. It hopes to find sponsorship, but will run the event even if a backer cannot be found.

"It's the love of the event," said club chairman Chris Judge about the decision. "We've put the date in and the logistical work is coming together. We decided that we would have a big push for sponsorship. Because we've started this almost a year ahead we're hopeful and confident that we can secure some backing. But if not we'll

go ahead ourselves anyway. We've got a number of irons in the fire."

Judge added that there is also focus on improving car turnout for next year's sprint. "That's our concentrated effort to try to bring it back to what it was in 2010," he said.

In its heyday, Crystal Palace hosted circuit racing including international Formula 2 before the track closed in 1972.

The sprint takes place on a half-mile course around the park that includes some of the postwar circuit layout.

GRAHAM KEILLOH

Morgan wants Mini JCW return

MINI CHALLENGE

TCR racer Alex Morgan is working on a return to the Mini Challenge JCW Championship after making a strong debut in the series at Brands Hatch last weekend.

Morgan, 31, from Bridgend, was a regular in the Renault UK Clio Cup, and was runner-up in the championship in 2013. He then switched focus to European competition,

handling SEAT Cupras and TCR cars in the German championship before opting to try Minis.

After taking eighth in race one, Morgan was on pole for the reversed-grid second race, and went on to finish second in his Excelr8-run car.

"Seeing as it was the DTM weekend and I wanted to give single-make racing a go again, it all seemed to come together," said Morgan. "The Mini

was great fun to drive. I'll look at the calendar and try to slot another round in."

Ant Whorton-Eales tightened his grip on this year's JCW title with a brace of wins at Brands, stretching his lead to 83 points with two rounds remaining. He beat Nathan Harrison and poleman David Robinson in race one before battling past Rob Smith and Morgan into Paddock Bend in race two.

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HISTORICS

Jenson Button will not race in this year's Goodwood Revival as planned, since no vehicle will be available for him from classic-car dealer JD Classics.

It follows the cancelling of Button's much-anticipated historic debut at the Le Mans Classic in June owing to filming commitments at the British Grand Prix. He was racing a six-wheel Williams against Guy Martin for a Channel 4 documentary, when he had been due to race a Jaguar XJR-9 at Le Mans.

Button was also scheduled to appear at Goodwood as part of a two-race programme with JD Classics, but then was not included on the entry list. JD's regular lead driver Chris Ward has also been withdrawn.

JD Classics told Autosport: "The company has decided to change its strategy for the Revival, prioritising support for its customer's cars, rather than running its own cars. Unfortunately, this means that there is no longer a car available for Jenson Button to drive."

MATT KEW

Winter event for juniors

JUNIOR SALOONS

The Junior Saloon Car Championship will hold a Winter Trophy for the first time this year, at the popular British Truck Racing Association Championship season finale at Brands Hatch in November.

Following the demise of the long-suffering Renault UK Clio Cup Junior series, the JSCC has been able to take its place at the November 3-4 event.



The series plans to run three races at the meeting, which is traditionally one of Brands Hatch's best attended.

"Last year I was queueing at the bottom of the hill at 1030hrs and it took me 40 minutes to get into the paddock," said JSCC coordinator Dave Beecroft. "It's a massive event and the bank at Paddock Hill Bend is full. I had no idea it was that big – it's all-day family entertainment. So for us as a junior championship it's great that it's family-orientated.

"I was never really keen on a winter series with one man and his dog at Snetterton in the cold, but this is a great opportunity for the drivers."

Entries for the JSCC's 2019 scholarship also opened last week. The winner of this will receive a funded season in the category next year.

An assessment day will take place at Croft in October, during which drivers will face a variety of challenges.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

IN THE HEADLINES

BRDC RISING STARS

The latest additions to the British Racing Drivers' Club Rising Stars programme have been announced. Joining the scheme will be current British Formula 4 points leader Kiern Jewiss, BRDC British Formula 3 frontrunner Tom Gamble, British Touring Car race winner Senna Proctor, Porsche Carrera Cup GB race winner Dan Harper and Mini Challenge driver Jordan Collard, son of BTCC racer Rob.

PRE-WAR CARS TO SPA

Pre-War Sports Cars will race at Spa for the first time in nearly a decade when Motor Racing Legends runs a pitstop race for pre-1941 cars on the weekend of the Classic Six-Hour race. The September 14 event will have an invitation class for modified racing specials that are not usually eligible to enter the MRL series. These cars will be able to run stripped of wings and lights and have other modifications.

LYDDEN TRUCKS CANNED

This weekend's Truck Racing Festival at Lydden Hill has been cancelled. The British Automobile Racing Club-organised event, which was due to host the Pickup Racing Championship and the SE Intermarque series, received a low number of truck entries. Lydden marketing manager Hannah Rynston said: "In view of the short notice we circulated the cancellation via social media and we will refund those who have already bought tickets. It's such a pity just when we are beginning to build up our racing activities."

NURBURGRING MASTERS

Tyrell 012 driver Martin Stretton broke Nick Padmore's recent run of success in the FIA Masters Historic Formula 1 Championship at the Nurburgring last weekend. Padmore won the first from pole, while Stretton claimed the second bout. Leo Voyazides and Simon Hadfield (AC Cobra) won the Gentleman and Historic Sports Car races. Steve Tandy and Christophe d'Ansembourg split the Masters Endurance Legends races.



TVR series faces fight to continue

TVR CHALLENGE

The TVR Challenge faces a fight to keep its championship status after a poor turnout at some rounds this year, culminating in just six entries for the three races at Castle Combe last weekend.

British Racing & Sports Car Club competitions director Dominic Ostrowski admitted that the TVR Challenge could even stop altogether unless numbers improve. A season high of nine cars attended the first round.

“It’s something we will have to talk about with John Reid [TVR Challenge coordinator],” he said. “It can’t go on the way it is as a championship. What they had here was 80 minutes of track time with only six cars. The risk is very real [that it could stop], certainly as a championship.”

It is understood that the 30th anniversary of the TVR Tuscan Challenge could be used to help boost numbers in some capacity next year.

The OSS championship also suffered a low turnout with nine cars at Combe, but competitors believe a number of factors were to blame, including a Bikesport round held on the same weekend at Silverstone, the Combe circuit not suiting the cars and many frontrunners suffering with mechanical problems.

“It’s surprising. OSS has been a very strong championship over the past three or four years and they started the season well at Silverstone with 42 cars,” Ostrowski added.

STEFAN MACKLEY



Knockhill hosts Clios for first time since 2015

JEP/LAT
motorsport IMAGES

Clios return to Knockhill

CLIO CUP

The Renault UK Clio Cup has confirmed that it will return to Knockhill in 2019 after a three-season absence.

The decision is in line with the views of several teams, which had said they were in favour of a first visit to the Scottish track since 2015. This followed the unveiling of the '19 British Touring Car calendar with a second Thruxton visit in place of the traditional round at Rockingham.

Championship manager Will Fewkes said: “I think it’s something positive for the championship and there’s a very strong market for Renault in Scotland.”

The Clio series continues to visit nine of the 10 BTCC meetings, dropping its May date at Thruxton in order to visit the venue on its new date in August. This

means there’s a near two-month gap after the second round at Donington Park before the third weekend of the season at Croft.

“I think it eases the financial strain at the start of the season when you’ve got the championship registration and the first couple of races,” said Fewkes. “It’s also a full weekend and not split [the early May meeting doesn’t feature a Friday test, with this taking place a week before the event].”

Three-time Clio Cup champion Paul Rivett said it was the right decision to go to Knockhill and not to Thruxton twice, but admits he would have liked Rockingham to remain on the calendar.

“I was disappointed to see Thruxton was on the calendar twice because we don’t go to the same circuit twice,” he said. “Knockhill is one of my favourites to drive.”

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Dorlin to race Mk2 Jag

HISTORICS

Renault UK Clio Cup racer James Dorlin will share a 3.4-litre Jaguar Mk2 with 1970s touring car hero Stuart Graham at the Goodwood Revival.

The Coombs-prepared car was built in 1960 and was driven in period by Peter Woodroffe. It was last raced at Goodwood in '63, so to celebrate the 55th anniversary of that appearance it will carry the race number 68, as it did in its heyday. Both Dorlin and Graham have been regulars at the Revival, but this is the first time that they will

team up for the St Mary’s Trophy race.

Dorlin, 19, said: “To drive a car with such history is going to be amazing. I love the Revival – it has such a great atmosphere and the Jag is a strong car around there. There is lots of side-by-side racing and everyone gets out of the cars with a smile on their faces.

Dorlin is third in the Renault UK Clio Cup points after the latest round at Rockingham.

MATT JAMES



Dorlin joins Graham in 3.4-litre Jag

➔ P54 CLIO REPORT



HIGHLAND FLING

A visit to Knockhill is a must, especially on a weekend where the Scottish Motor Racing Club's many entertaining series take centre stage

MATT BEER

This isn't going to be one of those deeply insightful Autosport columns that illuminates the behind-the-scenes truth of a big news story or draws attention to a major and profound motorsport issue. Instead it's a shameless 'I went to a thing, it was brilliant, you should go too if you haven't already.' That thing is a Knockhill clubbie meeting.

My British patriotism doesn't extend much beyond shouting "pfff, it's basically Wales/Scotland/Dartmoor" when someone lauds the New Zealand-plus-CGI scenery in a *Lord of the Rings* film, but that loyalty-to-scenic-parts-of-this-country argument is one I'm pretty passionate about. So I'm a strong advocate of Scottish holidays, and now also of factoring the Knockhill club-racing calendar into your booking process – something I've finally managed to do earlier this month while checking in on Autosport Academy members' in-paddock performance.

For someone whose national motorsport growing up happened mostly at Castle Combe, there's a lot that's familiar about Knockhill. A strong local championship scene with one-circuit series at the core of the calendar, and a location that feels far away to much of the population but draws racers and

"AND WHEN YOU LOOK UP FROM THE TRACK, THERE'S AN EPIC VIEW ALL ROUND"

spectators from major nearby cities (for Bristol read Edinburgh), while also having a 'catchment area' that stretches off 200 miles into the pointy bits of the UK (for Cornwall read the Highlands).

Knockhill does have its mega-draw flagship events in its British Touring Car and British Superbike meetings, but I was much more keen to finally make my first visit there for one of its regular Scottish Motor Racing Club race days to get a sense of the track's 'normal' life.

Trying to sustain seven one-circuit championships in a remote-to-many location is not easy, as some varying grid sizes and combined series prove, but the best of the SMRC bill is absolutely cracking. The Legends and Minis in particular have reasonable-sized fields, high-quality drivers very willing to go wheel to wheel with each other (as late nights for race-direction officials proved), and could be the lynchpins of any club bill. The Classic Sports and Saloons produced what you always

want from a historic grid: evocative cars racing each other with lairy abandon, while smelling and sounding great.

The Scottish FF1600 field certainly could be larger, but it's doing what FF1600 does best: unearthing genuine young talents with the potential to be professionals and making them prove themselves against established club-racing standouts, with the added bonus of often having Dario Franchitti on hand in the paddock. The Indianapolis 500 winner's presence highlights the lineage from Scottish motorsport's greatest achievements to these Knockhill meetings, also underlined by the annual presentation of the David Leslie Trophy to an FF1600 race winner (a touchingly emotional Ross Martin this year) and John Cleland's wins in the visiting Super Touring Trophy.

A small and somewhat fragile field meant the Super Tourers were not the bill-topper they should have been, but Knockhill did its best to make the most of them with a grid walk and informative treatment from commentary team Robert Johnston, Duncan Vincent (who impressively hops between the comms box and racing a Legend) and Dave Christie. Casual spectators would've left adequately and accessibly educated on why Super Touring became such a big deal and why Cleland was a hero of the era, and the hardcore would have been satisfied that the commentators knew their stuff.

The overall commentary approach was a masterclass in turning a grassroots meeting into 'A Proper Event', with plenty of information about the local championships' storylines and characters. Also impressive was Christie jumping on to grids to interview front-row starters at the end of formation laps as the backmarkers formed up ahead of the actual race start – impressive in both the racers' surprisingly casual willingness to talk at that point and Christie's nimbleness.

Knockhill is not a track where you should spectate from the same place all day. Alternate between the spots where you can see the majority of the action and those where you can get spectacularly close to the trackside – watching from the infield at Duffus Dip as a pack of Minis launches itself out of the sky towards you, or from the exit of the hairpin as a bunch of FF1600s try to go four-wide within what seems like touching distance, is a pretty visceral experience. And when you look up from the track, there's an epic view all around, whether it's to the hills and mountains or the Forth. It was also refreshingly freezing on a weekend where the south was melting under a heatwave whose novelty had worn off.

That's my Celtic motorsport tourism advocacy done, for now. But I'll probably pinch this column back next time I manage to fit Anglesey circuit into a trip to Wales or finally factor Kirkistown into an itinerary. And make no apology for that either. #

TOCA SUPPORTS ROCKINGHAM AUGUST 11-12



Rivett closed points gap, as McCarthy (4) took maiden win

Clio Cup wheel of fortune spins in favour of Rivett

RENAULT UK CLIO CUP

Fortunes can change very quickly in the Clio Cup. Leaving the previous round at Snetterton, Max Coates looked in control after title rival Paul Rivett's nightmare. But at Rockingham the roles were reversed and Coates's lead was slashed from 27 points to just seven.

The one element of the Snetterton results that remained the same was Dan Rowbottom winning. As some of the title contenders struggled – Coates tangled with third-placed James Dorlin

and Dan Zelos on a chaotic opening lap – Rowbottom was able to capitalise.

He was up to second on the opening tour from sixth on the grid, and then passed Jack McCarthy at Deene on lap three of 14 to take the lead. But that wasn't the end of the matter.

Rivett, who was also caught up in the opening-lap shenanigans, gradually picked off cars and closed right in on Rowbottom to create a nervy end to the race, but Rivett was not quite able to attempt a pass.

"I'm really pleased – it's all about race wins for me," said Rowbottom. "I really, really want to be in that title hunt at Brands

Hatch. Yes [he was worried] – with about three laps to go I knew my front tyres had almost had it and I was braking early."

Rivett was gracious in defeat – but was firmly back in title contention after Coates retired with a puncture following further contact with Bradley Burns. "I think one more corner and I would've got him," said Rivett. "It was role reversal from the second race at Snetterton and shows how quickly it can change."

McCarthy had to settle for third, but had another chance of taking a win on his 18th-birthday weekend in race two.

It didn't get off to a good start initially as Coates passed him for second. But that lasted just three corners as McCarthy fought back at Yentwood. And then it got even better for the Team Pyro youngster as he passed team-mate Bradley Burns for the lead at Brook and was able to stay there to the flag.

McCarthy did come under pressure from Mike Epps and Coates late on, but couldn't be denied his maiden car-racing win. "It's taken nearly two years so I'm quite ecstatic!" he said. "The rest of the season is looking good."

Coates managed to bounce back from his race-one disaster with third but, with Rivett fourth, he only eked out his points lead by two. "No, that doesn't make up for race one but it helps," said Coates. "But this is what happens in racing. I've still got the championship lead and it's a bit bigger than it was this morning."

But with this being the Clio Cup, it will no doubt all change again at the next round at Silverstone.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Foster wins to put himself in title contention

GINETTA JUNIOR

Louis Foster started the weekend 73 points behind the championship leader and believed he was all but out of title contention, but became living proof of the difference a day can make.

Two wins from the first two races while his rivals faltered launched the 15-year old into the title fight, just one point shy of Luke Browning and 46 down on Adam Smalley by the end of the weekend.

A clean first race, which he described as "not a bad 20 minutes' work", featured Foster using the inside line at Tarzan on lap six to pass Patrick Kibble for victory.

The second encounter was a tougher affair, with Foster, Fin Green and Browning all in with a shot of the win. Foster and Green traded the lead on a handful of occasions, but Browning



Browning had a mixed weekend at Rockingham



Foster (left) passes Kibble for the race-one win

employed a masterful switchback at Chapman to squeeze past Green for second and, with the pack taking the chance to try to follow through, Green was spun at Gracelands and out of contention.

Browning's late charge on Foster cut the gap to 0.6 seconds, but he couldn't challenge for the win.

Downpours ahead of the third race meant

a wet set-up was required and, even though Foster topped the wet test session on Friday, he had to settle for second behind Browning.

Lots of wheelspin off pole dropped Foster behind Browning and, while Foster had the pace to get close, just 0.3s at its tightest, he admitted he just made one too many mistakes.

JASON NOBLE

Championship rivalry blazes

BRITISH F4

Arden-run Finn Patrik Pasma took his maiden two Formula 4 wins at Rockingham in a “near perfect” weekend and Johnathan Hoggard claimed his first for four months – but those were not the main stories.

Instead, it was all about the rivalry between title contenders Kiern Jewiss and Ayrton Simmons.

Simmons got one over the points leader with a brilliant move in the first race. He dived down the inside of Jewiss from miles back at Tarzan to claim fourth. But that proved to be the high point for the JHR Developments driver.

In race two Simmons and Seb Priaulx were the innocent victims of a mistake by Jewiss. He had attempted a move down the inside at Deene, but as he tried to back out of it he made slight contact with Simmons, who in turn careered into Priaulx. While Simmons was out, Jewiss took second. “At the end of the day it was a slippery track,” said Double R Racing man Jewiss. “You’ve got to move on from it and there’s no point moaning about it.”

Jewiss was handed a 10-place grid penalty for the incident, but that didn’t stop him from taking a race-three podium with a final-corner pass – on that man Simmons.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Simmons and Jewiss were in the thick of the action

Ladell just holds points lead

GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP

Twenty points – that was all that separated Suffolk pair Charlie Ladell and Carl Boardley at the top of the Ginetta GT4 Supercup standings heading into Rockingham. And that was all that separated them as the trucks rolled out of Corby too.

Losing a win for starting too far forwards in his grid slot was not the way Ladell wanted his race two to go.

The 22-year old made the most of a storming start as team-mate Tom Roche, fresh from cruising to his second win of the season in race one, got a poor getaway as a result of an error with the clutch.

Ladell opened up a healthy three-second lead, before being told on lap eight that he had been handed a 10s time penalty for the infringement.

Boardley didn’t need a second invitation. Having swept past Harry King, he duly took the win once Ladell’s penalty was factored in and dropped the Rob Boston Racing man to fourth.

“We needed that – a lift for myself and the team,” Boardley reflected, after a tough weekend last time out at Snetterton that yielded a single podium.

But that momentum was shortlived for Boardley, as King continued his storming run of form to take his season’s fourth victory in the finale.

JASON NOBLE

RENAULT UK CLIO CUP

Race 1 (14 laps) 1 Daniel Rowbottom; 2 Paul Rivett +0.598s; 3 Jack McCarthy; 4 James Colburn; 5 James Dorlin; 6 Bradley Burns.

Fastest lap Rowbottom 1m30.232s

(77.40mph). **Pole** McCarthy. **Starters** 21.

Race 2 (14 laps) 1 McCarthy; 2 Michael Epps +1.044s; 3 Max Coates; 4 Rivett; 5 Dan Zelos; 6 Burns. **FL** McCarthy 1m43.091s (67.74mph). **P** Burns. **S** 21.

Points 1 Coates 259; 2 Rivett 252; 3 Dorlin 233; 4 Rowbottom 198; 5 McCarthy 180; 6 Epps 175.

GINETTA JUNIOR

Race 1 (8 laps) 1 Louis Foster; 2 Patrick Kibble +0.306s; 3 Adam Smalley; 4 Lorcan Hanafin; 5 James Hedley; 6 Jonny Wilkinson.

FL Hedley 1m39.082s (70.48mph).

P Hedley. **S** 19.

Race 2 (10 laps) 1 Foster; 2 Luke Browning +0.616s; 3 James Taylor; 4 Smalley; 5 Greg Johnson; 6 Kibble. **FL** Kibble 1m39.246s (70.37mph). **P** Browning. **S** 20.

Race 3 (10 laps) 1 Browning; 2 Foster +2.524s; 3 Smalley; 4 Taylor; 5 Kibble; 6 Wilkinson. **FL** Foster 1m55.318s (60.56mph). **P** Foster. **S** 20.

Points 1 Smalley 485; 2 Browning 440; 3 Foster 439; 4 Kibble 343; 5 Ruben del Sarte 302; 6 Taylor 292.

BRITISH F4

Race 1 (15 laps) 1 Patrik Pasma; 2 Jack Doohan +2.183s; 3 Dennis Hauger; 4 Ayrton Simmons; 5 Kiern Jewiss; 6 Seb Priaulx.

FL Pasma 1m19.619s (87.71mph).

P Pasma. **S** 14.

Race 2 (14 laps) 1 Johnathan Hoggard; 2 Jewiss +0.941s; 3 Doohan; 4 Pasma; 5 Hauger; 6 Paavo Tonteri. **FL** Pasma 1m20.078s (87.21mph). **P** Hoggard. **S** 14.

Race 3 (14 laps) 1 Pasma; 2 Priaulx +1.229s; 3 Jewiss; 4 Simmons; 5 Hoggard; 6 Josh Skelton. **FL** Priaulx 1m19.991s (87.30mph). **P** Pasma. **S** 14.

Points 1 Jewiss 319; 2 Simmons 274; 3 Hauger 258; 4 Doohan 234; 5 Tonteri 209; 6 Pasma 188.

GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP

Race 1 (12 laps) 1 Tom Roche; 2 Harry King +0.561s; 3 Charles Ladell; 4 Andrew Gordon-Colebrooke; 5 Carl Boardley; 6 Angus Fender. **FL** Jac Constable

1m22.738s (84.41mph). **P** Roche. **S** 16.

Race 2 (16 laps) 1 Boardley; 2 King +2.785s; 3 Roche; 4 Ladell; 5 Fender; 6 Colin White. **FL** Boardley 1m25.966s (81.24mph).

P Roche. **S** 16.

Race 3 (16 laps) 1 King; 2 Ladell +4.874s; 3 Fender; 4 Boardley; 5 Reece Somerfield; 6 Michael Crees. **FL** King 1m23.362s (83.77mph). **P** Ladell. **S** 16.

Points 1 Ladell 508; 2 Boardley 488; 3 King 366; 4 Roche 337; 5 Constable 298; 6 Somerfield 261.



Ladell has kept his 20-point advantage



Pasma scored first two wins

Mittell men bag 1-2-3 on weekend of firsts

**SILVERSTONE
750MC
AUGUST 11-12**

An RGB Sports 1000 podium lockout for Mittell drivers, Christopher Wesemael's brilliant follow-up win on Sunday and a 1-2 for BMW E92 M3s in Club Enduro highlighted a weekend of firsts on the 750 Motor Club's annual sojourn to Silverstone's International Circuit.

Paul Smith, Wesemael and Daniel Larner's clean sweep, driving cars built in a garage beside father-and-son Ian and Scott Mittell's Hampshire homes, harked back to the roots of the club, a pioneer of affordable racing since its eponymous Austin Seven-based class began in 1950.

The squadron's success was helped (to its principals' genuine disappointment) when champion Billy Albone's works Spire GT3 was blunted by the same dire misfire that had struck in qualifying. Smith shook his team-mates off, but it wasn't until Wesemael shot around Larner at Stowe that Saturday's order was settled.

On dry settings as the remnants of overnight rain dried, Wesemael shot clear at Sunday's start and beat rivals with a sensational display of pace and consistency.

As Smith faded to fifth, Larner ceded second to the Spire GT3S of MNR graduate



Wesemael scored his first win as part of a clean sweep for Mittell

David Watson, loving the transition to a mid-engine car. Larner had Colin Chapman (Spire GT3) challenging him at the finish.

Luke Sedzikowski kept his four-litre BMW E92 M3 close to the front throughout the enduro, battling over an action-packed two hours in which class points leader Andy Baylie's M3 shed a rear wheel at Vale at one-third distance. Second for Darren Ball, 16.33s in arrears, compounded the TI Motorsport team's joy.

Julian McBride, going well in his PDK-gearboxed M3, lost third to poleman Martin James, who chased relentlessly after pitting early for his Honda Civic's damaged nose splitter to be removed. Both passed Class B standout Matt Faizey, who finished fifth.

Matt Nossiter/Steve Hewson kept their overall points lead, despite a power-steering pipe bursting on their BMW 328i. Nossiter started half a lap late but they wrestled

Andrew Winchester/Josh Orr (BMW Compact) for Class C honours.

Joe Stables blitzed all three Bikesports races. Not even a clash with challenger Lee Torrie – which sent both Radical SR3s through the Club gravel bed in Sunday morning's damp stanza – put him off. Phil Cooper gratefully grabbed second in the melee from which Torrie emerged fifth. Stables's father Richard snaffled Class A winner's points in the first two races, but Torrie bounced back to finish runner-up to his son's B-car in a close-fought finale.

Bears GAC driver Craig Pollard consolidated his Formula Vee points lead with a double. With Danny Hands starting his GAC from the pits, Saturday's win over Graham Gant (WEV) was fairly straightforward. Sunday's race progressed differently, though. Poleman Gant, Hands and Peter Belsey (Spyder) took turns in front



Rushworth won and retired

JONES



Gant leads the way in frantic FVee race

JONES

SILVERSTONE WEEKEND WINNERS

BIKESPORTS

Race 1, 2 & 3 Joe Stables (Radical SR3)

BMW M3 CUP/330I CHALLENGE

Race 1 & 2 Paul Cook (E46 M3)

CLASSIC STOCK HATCH

Race 1 & 2 Matt Rozier (Peugeot 205 GTI)

CLUB ENDURO

Luke Sedzikowski (BMW E92 M3)

FORMULA VEE

Race 1 & 2 Craig Pollard (Bears GAC)

HOT HATCH

Race 1 Ben Rushworth (Honda Integra DC2)

Race 2 Stephen Sawley (Honda Civic)

PORSCHE CLUB GB

Race 1 Mark McAleer (996 C2)

Race 2 Mark Sumpter (996 C2)

RGB SPORTS 1000

Race 1 Paul Smith (Mittell MC-53)

Race 2 Christopher Wesemael (Mittell MC-53)

TOYOTA MR2s

Race 1 & 2 Shaun Traynor (Mk2)

For full results visit:
theresultslive.co.uk

JONES

as the top four jockeyed for position.

Hot Hatchers joined in on Sunday and had the worst of the weekend's conditions following a heavy shower. Despite gearbox oil leaking onto his Honda Integra's rear tyres, causing lurid slides, Ben Rushworth prevailed over Stephen Sawley (Civic) in the opener. A late gearbox failure struck Class B leader Rodren Vella's Civic, rewarding Christian Lyne. Having reset the lap record, Rushworth's car broke in race two, to Sawley's advantage. Philip Wright claimed Class B while Ian Williamson inflicted a rare Class C defeat on Michael Winkworth in their Citroen Saxo battle.

Double Classic Stock Hatch champion Matt Rozier bested current incumbent Lee Scott both days. Marcus Ward was a smoky third on Saturday, then made a 100-mile dash home for a spare engine, which kept him in the title hunt with fourth, behind Andy Philpotts's similar car, on Sunday.

Scrapes aplenty coloured the frenetic 10th anniversary Toyota MR2 rounds, an inadvertent wallop from Ben Rowe after a run round the outside at Stowe turning both Shaun Traynor and Rowe round in race one. Traynor recovered to win from returnee Stuart Nicholls (Roadster) and Darren Aldworth, while points leader Rowe came home 11th. The leaders arrived at the Club chicane three abreast, which didn't work, in the curtain closer. Traynor emerged ahead of Rowe and Jim Davies.

MARCUS PYE



JONES

PORSCHE HONOURS TO MCALEER AND SUMPTER Mark McAleer and Mark Sumpter (996s) were the winners on the Porsche Club GB championship's International Circuit debut. McAleer won the opener after Sumpter was spun out by Chris Dyer (Cayman S). Striving for the first Cayman win, Simon Clark harassed McAleer before losing fifth gear. From a similar grid, Sumpter repelled McAleer in the sequel. Jonathan Evans (Boxster S) dominated Class 2.



JONES

STILL RACING ON Former Formula 3 racer Paul Hutson, who broke a 29-year layoff to return to racing in 2010 in the 750MC's Toyota MR2 championship, made his BMW 330 Challenge debut at Silverstone. Now 65, he competed in British F3 in 1980-81. Hutson, who has competed alongside daughter Alex in the MR2 series, will be joined in late-season 330 double-headers by ex-Stock Hatch competitor Craig Emmerson, who ran out of time to complete his new car.



JONES

DRINKWATER RUNS DRY Long-time BMW racer and driver coach David Drinkwater, competing as far afield as Australia's legendary Bathurst circuit recently, shared 2015 Scottish Compact Cup champion Colin Gillespie's 130i in Saturday's Club Enduro. Running out of fuel in the final minutes, when Gillespie was on board, dropped them from as high as third in the pitstop phase to 19th. Drinkwater won both of Sunday's 330 Challenge races to complete his weekend's work.

Baker took two podiums in dry Civic Cup races



READ

Baker strengthens hold on championship

CASTLE COMBE
BRSCC
AUGUST 11-12

Mastering changeable conditions proved to be the key to success at Castle Combe as the British summer promptly ended in Wiltshire with the arrival of wet weather.

After a soggy qualifying session, both Civic Cup races were held in the dry as Rob Baker consolidated his lead at the top of the standings with two second places.

Jason Ballantyne surged through from fourth on the grid when the lights went out and led on the opening tour, while Baker dropped to sixth from third. As Ballantyne acted as a cork in the bottle,

Baker began to make progress and worked his way up to second with three laps remaining, but Ballantyne held on and took his second win of the season.

Baker's performance in the second race was even more impressive, because with the top 10 reversed he started ninth on the grid. Paul Taylor led from pole initially before Mark Grice, who'd started fifth after suffering brake problems in the first race, overtook him on lap five. Two laps later Baker had moved into second and for the remaining five laps tried to hound Grice into a mistake, but again had to settle for runner-up spot behind his nearest championship challenger.

The first of the Fiesta Championship

races was held on a sodden track as reigning Class C champion David Nye put in a masterful display to win by more than eight seconds ahead of championship leader Harry Gooding. Jamie Going, Gooding's nearest challenger in the battle for the title, struggled to sixth.

A decision to change his front wet tyres to slicks moments before the start of race two could have proved inspired by Nye, but instead it turned into a curse as he collided with the barrier at Quarry on the opening lap. Gooding led 12 of the 15 laps but had to give way as his wet tyres overheated on a damp but drying track and Danny Harrison who, like Nye, had fitted slicks, took the lead. But Harrison was denied a well-earned win when he picked up a five-second penalty for exceeding track limits, which dropped him to fourth. Gooding was promoted to the top step of the podium ahead of Going, while Nye recovered from his first-lap excursion to finish fifth.

In race three, Gooding won comfortably from Going – who claimed second despite a five-second penalty for exceeding track limits – as Nye finished third.

Jamie Falvey's championship lead took a hit in the Caterham 270R series as he could only manage a best result of fifth from the pair of races. The former Royal Marines commando came into the meeting as the only driver to have been on the podium at every previous race, and it seemed as though that would continue as he secured pole

Tyre gamble failed to pay off for Nye



READ

CASTLE COMBE WEEKEND WINNERS

CIVIC CUP

Race 1 Jason Ballantyne
Race 2 Mark Grice

FIESTAS

Race 1 David Nye
Race 2 & 3 Harry Gooding

CATERHAM SEVEN 270R

Race 1 Jay McCormack
Race 2 Chris Bates

CATERHAM ROADSPORT

Race 1 & 2 Daniel French

CATERHAM ACADEMY

White group Chris Moore
Green group Lars Hoffmann

CATERHAM SEVEN 310R

Race 1 & 2 Gordon Sawyer

FIESTA JUNIOR

Race 1 James Waite
Race 2 Josh Steed

OSS

Race 1, 2 & 3 Josh Smith (Radical PR6)

TVR CHALLENGE

Race 1 & 2 Mike Luck (TVR Chimaera)
Race 3 Matthew Holben (TVR Tuscan)

For full results visit:
tsl-timing.com

position in the dry. But with the track becoming treacherously slippery before the first race, Falvey came to grief at Quarry on the opening lap, bringing out the red flags. This presented a great opportunity for title rival Jay McCormack to capitalise, which he did with a comfortable win in the opener ahead of James Wingfield and Chris Bates after taking the lead on lap three.

Any chance for McCormack to establish a lead at the top of the standings in the second race ended in the barriers after a last-lap, last-corner crash at Camp when a lunge up the inside of leader Wingfield led to contact. Bates, who had led early on until a safety-car period eroded his lead, inherited his first win after being "in the right place to capitalise".

A nasty accident between Matt Sheppard and poleman Daniel Halstead halted the first Caterham Roadsport race after just three laps. Both aquaplaned off the track at Camp from second and third respectively, with Sheppard's car bouncing back off the barrier before being hit broadside by Halstead moments later. Both emerged unhurt. Daniel French took the win in the restart before winning a much drier affair on Sunday.

The Caterham Academy Green group produced the best racing action from all of the Caterham series on show, as German Lars Hoffmann and Greg Smith traded places several times in the closing laps while heading a train of three other cars.

STEFAN MACKLEY

LESS IS MORE FOR OSS



Smith took a clean sweep of victories

It only takes two cars to make a race – that adage was used several times during the Castle Combe meeting and perhaps was most apt for the OSS races, where only nine cars made the trip to Wiltshire after a six-year absence.

It was a far cry from the 42 that had taken part in the opening round of the championship on the Silverstone GP layout back in May, or even the 17 and 15 competitors that had made it to the second and third rounds respectively.

Nevertheless, each of the three races provided an interesting battle at the front of the field between the Radical PR6 of Josh Smith and MCR Sport of Patrick Sherrington.

Smith currently leads the standings and was OSS champion back in 2014 and '16, as well as being the Castle Combe Special GT champion two years ago. He's been the head of motorsport engineering at Bridgwater & Taunton College for almost a decade and the Radical is run by the students there.

"As a team we work very hard and our level of preparation is very high," says Smith, whose father Darcy was also competing in the OSS series at Combe. "Seven of them [students] were picked up

by Strakka Racing for the Spa 24 Hours and two graduates are actually employed by them. It [OSS] works for us – it's five or six weekends [a year] and it's a lot of track time. We enjoy racing with him [Sherrington] as he's firm but fair. There are always people, not necessarily in OSS, who can be overaggressive, and you get away with it in tin-tops but not these cars."

Sherrington on the other hand is a former Formula Vee competitor, with Sports 2000 titles to his name in 2014 and '15 and a runner-up spot in '16. Since last year he and Clive Hayes have developed the MCR Sport, which "is an evolution of the Sports 2000 car".

"Since we swapped to the 1.6 turbo engine last year we've had a few heating problems but we're nearly there with it," says Sherrington.

The MCR was originally designed by Hayes and Brazilian Luiz Fernando Cruz, being "the most successful Sports 2000 car, and half the grid are MCRs", according to Sherrington.

With Smith's Radical quicker through the twisty section of the Combe track and Sherrington's MCR able to stretch its legs down the straight, it meant the races played out like a chess match.

Smith led from pole in the opener and claimed the championship lap record – 1m02.973s – as he and Sherrington lapped the field.

Wet conditions played to the strengths of the Radical in Sunday's first race, although the spinning Norman Lackford through Camp almost put a halt to Smith's charge.

In race three, Sherrington got the jump at the rolling start and led for the first three laps before Smith went by at Quarry and set another lap record – 1m02.721s.

STEFAN MACKLEY



Sherrington and Smith enjoy a fierce rivalry



Austin 7s converge at Mallory as clubs unite

MALLORY PARK
VSCC
AUGUST 11

The Herbert Austin Handicap race at the Vintage Sports-Car Club's Mallory Park meeting was unusual in that it presented spectators with a full grid of Austin 7-based racing specials for the first time in years. The 10-lap handicap race was the result of

two clubs – the 750 Motor Club and the VSCC – joining forces for the day.

“The idea of an Austin 7-only race was mooted last year and has now come to fruition,” said 750MC’s Charlie Plain-Jones. “It’s the first time in many, many years that this has been attempted.”

The cooperation reflects the shared love for the Austin 7 among those who have raced them, as well as the clubs’ long

heritage in historic racing. The car’s heritage is almost unparalleled. The founders of Lotus, McLaren, Cooper and Brabham all raced Austin 7s, while legendary engineers such as Tony Southgate and Mike Costin cut their teeth with the cars too.

This was not an event with both eyes on the past, though. Austin 7 racing was, and still can be, an ideal starting point in motor racing: plenty of cars exist, they are



BLAST FROM THE PAST

The 1904 Pope-Toledo was the oldest on the Edwardian Handicap grid and was running in its first race for almost 100 years. Since its long-time owner died in the late 1960s the car had remained in a state of disassembly and passed through a succession of owners, before being acquired by ‘Hicky’ Hickling around 15 years ago – and he’s spent the time since putting it together.



MALLORY PARK WEEKEND WINNERS

ALLCOMERS HANDICAP

Race 1 Tony Seber (Wolseley Hornet Special)
Race 2 Michael James (Riley 12/4 TT Sprite)

ALLCOMERS SCRATCH RACE

Dougal Cawley (GN/Ford Piglet)

EDWARDIAN AND INVITED GN CARS HANDICAP

Andrew Howe-Davies (Scat Racer)

FORMULA 3 500s

George Shackleton (Cooper Mk11)

HERBERT AUSTIN HANDICAP

Max Fraser (Austin 7)

MORGAN AERO CHALLENGE

Andrew Thompson (Morgan ARV6)

PRE-1961 RACING CARS

Fred Harper (Kurtis Indy-Roadster)

SPECIAL PRE-WAR SPORTS CARS AND ALLCOMERS SCRATCH

Dougal Cawley (GN/Ford Piglet)

STANDARD & MODIFIED PRE-WAR CARS

Tim Kneller (Riley TT Sprite)

UNDER 30s ALLCOMERS HANDICAP

David Seber (Wolseley Hornet Special)

VINTAGE RACING CARS

Tim Llewellyn (Bentley 3/8 2Str)

For full results visit:
theresults.co.uk

easy to source spares for, and they aren't technically complicated.

"We're looking forward to introducing a lot of people to the delights of Austin 7s as a basis for entry-level motorsport," Plain-Jones explained.

Organising the event was a considerable effort for both clubs. But the proof of its success came in the form of a full grid: it attracted an entry of 24 with one reserve.

"You can see the fruits of everybody really coming together," said the VSCC's Nick Hayward-Cook.

"The fact that we have a capacity grid speaks for itself that this has been enthusiastically received," said Plain-Jones.

The drivers' ages covered a broad sweep, from William Kirk, who is in his twenties, to Tim Myall, who was 80 this year.

"It's lovely – they should do more like this," said Kirk. "The more the merrier, and if everybody likes these 7s and several clubs are racing Austin 7s, why not join them?"

"It's really interesting," added fellow driver Francesca Wilton. "In the VSCC everybody knows each other so we'd be able to see a bit of competition and meet new people who've got a similar interest. They're [the Austin 7] a really good starter car, they're really forgiving, and there's a huge variety of them."

Race entrants were split by 'class' based on which club they were from, though the rivalry remained friendly – representatives from either 'side' proved enormously

willing to help each other with spares and the like. Yet there was only one trophy to compete for, and all entrants were keen to uphold their club's honour.

The race was a 10-lap handicap, and while there was a touch of finger-in-air about the handicapping given the paucity of previous Austin 7 races, it appeared to work. Long-time leader James Miles – on pace the tail-ender – was only overhauled on the final lap by victor Max Fraser, who claimed the honours for the VSCC, followed by the 750MC's Mike Harvey.

Fraser was racing his car for the first time in 15 years, and had to drive around a "significant problem" that led him to consider not starting. "I'm totally shocked, to be honest," he said. "I didn't expect to win at all. That's handicap races for you."

All were optimistic that this would be no one-off either. "This will build what we hope to be a lasting formula," said Hayward-Cook.

GRAHAM KEILLOH



WALKER



INDY-MONZA-MALLORY

The red-and-white Kurtis-Indy Roadster in the race for pre-'61 racing cars was among the most distinctive. It took part in the Indianapolis 500 from 1957 through to '63 as well as the Monza Race of Two Worlds in '57 and '58, claiming strong finishes in both events. In Fred Harper's hands it took Mallory victory, holding off Justin Maegers in his Cooper Monaco T49.



WALKER

FAMILY AFFAIR

Another VSCC initiative to attract young racers was a special race for those aged under 30. Nineteen cars took part in the handicap and among the very fastest of them was Oliver Llewellyn in a Bentley 3/8. "I'm still getting to grips with it," he said. "It's a fantastic car but you have to treat it with a bit of respect." Oliver's father Tim also took the car to victory in the meeting's Vintage race.

FINISHING STRAIGHT

IN THE MEDIA • ARCHIVE • QUIZ



A FIX FOR ROAD RACING



DVD
NORTH WEST
200 REVIEW
RRP £14.99

The three-week period from the middle of May through to the end of the first week in June is a magical time for

bike racing fans. The North West 200 in Ireland, the first big international road race of the year, kicks off an exciting month that culminates with the Isle of Man TT. We wait all year for it to arrive, and in a flash it is over. The post-TT blues can be difficult to shake, even this far down the line.

Fortunately, the good people at Duke Video have already started getting this year's road racing action onto DVD. On offer right now is the official review of the 2018 NW200 and the *Top 20 Greatest TT Riders Ever* programme.

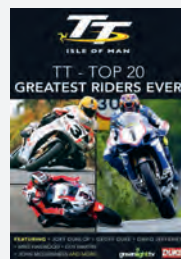
As always, the NW200 review is just the highlights programmes shown on BBC television and on other broadcasters repackaged under the *Real Road Races* banner. Highlights of all eight races, accompanied by commentary from Steve Parrish and Richard Nichols, fill up the two-hour run time.

Naturally, the footage is spectacular and reliving the races is still just as thrilling as the first time you watched them. Some brief rider features are littered throughout the highlights, although these could have been reserved for the extra features section, if at least to beef up the meagre offering of a

Supersport and Supertwins onboard lap.

While the die-hards likely buying this will be clued up on how the NW200 played out, the review does rely heavily on assumed knowledge. Rider and team changes are scarcely mentioned. The reason for the injured John McGuinness' absence isn't covered, nor why Peter Hickman wasn't allowed to contest the Supersport races. A brief round-up of what happened in qualifying practice could easily have covered this off, while also adding some context to how the races developed in the end.

Some iffy editing, with chunks of laps and key moments cut at times, and cues to return after advert breaks, spoil the experience somewhat. But this is still a decent package and one that allows you to look at how ultimately the TT shaped up.



DVD
TOP 20
GREATEST TT
RIDERS EVER
RRP £14.99

The *Top 20 Greatest TT Riders Ever* DVD is the same programme that aired during ITV4's

TT build-up coverage, and as such nothing new is presented to you with this release. However, this is still an enjoyable, if underwhelming, hour or so of television.

Voted for by the fans, the list is, for the most part, pretty agreeable. The top of the pile is occupied by those you would expect: 26-time TT winner Joey Dunlop, 23-time

BIKER BLUES

"GUY MARTIN'S INCLUSION SHOWS THE PROBLEM WITH FANS VOTING"

victor McGuinness and Mike Hailwood, who won 14 times. The likes of Ian Hutchinson, Michael Dunlop, Steve Hislop and David Jeffries make the top 10.

Guy Martin's inclusion at the number eight spot highlights the problem with fan votes, however. His 17 podiums are nothing to be sniffed at, but it's not enough to merit being placed higher than the likes of multiple winners and undeniable legends Giacomo Agostini, John Surtees, Geoff Duke and Phillip McCallen.

Crammed into 50 minutes, each rider doesn't get much attention. But the archive footage on display and the insight from riders past and present on each entrant is worth the price of admission. However, the real highlight comes in the DVD's extras: replays of the epic 1992 Senior TT, the 2000 Formula 1 race and 2005 Senior.

Neither DVD offers anything revelatory to the road racing enthusiast and both are pretty barebones in their main features. But they are still worthy of an afternoon in front of the television, and the sheer spectacle of the NW200's racing and the 20 Greatest Riders' archive footage will almost certainly keep those post-TT blues at bay.

LEWIS DUNCAN



HIGHLIGHT OF THE WEEK

WEC: 6 HOURS OF SILVERSTONE FULL LIVESTREAM

If you can't get to the UK's headline circuit to catch the World Endurance Championship flotilla dock then Motorsport.tv has you covered. On Sunday, tune in from 1145 to catch the whole race live on the TV channel. But if you're on the go then fear not - the race is also being live streamed on the website. Go to <https://bit.ly/2Mfy3ED>

THIS WEEKEND'S EVENTS

<div style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 5px;">INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT</div> <p>Rally Germany World Rally Championship Rd 9/13 St Wendel, Germany August 16-19 TV Live BT Sport 1, Thursday 1800. BT Sport 3, Sat 1400. BT Sport 2, Sun 1130. Red Bull TV, Sat 1345. Live coverage on wrc.com. All live service via WRC+. TV Highlights Motorsport.tv, Friday 2230, Saturday 2230, Sunday 2130. Red Bull TV, Friday 2100, Saturday 2100, Sunday 2100. BT Sport 2, Fri 2200, Sunday 2200. BT Sport 1, Sat 2300. Channel 5, TBA.</p> <p>IndyCar Series Rd 13/16 Pocono, Pennsylvania, USA August 19 TV Live BT Sport 2, Sunday 1830.</p>	<p>Super Formula Rd 5/7 Motegi, Japan August 19</p> <p>Japanese Formula 3 Rd 5/8 Motegi, Japan August 18-19</p> <p>IMSA SportsCar Rd 10/12 Virginia International Raceway, USA August 19</p> <p>NASCAR Cup Rd 24/36 Bristol, Tennessee, USA August 18 TV Live Premier Sports, Sunday 0000.</p> <p>V8 Stock Cars Rd 7/12 Campo Grande, Brazil August 19</p> <p>ADAC GT Masters Rd 5/7 Zandvoort, Netherlands August 18-19</p>	<p>TCR Europe Rd 5/7 Assen, Netherlands August 18-19</p> <p>Scandinavian Touring Cars Rd 4/6 Karlsgoga, Sweden August 19</p> <div style="background-color: blue; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin: 5px 0;">UK MOTORSPORT</div> <p>Silverstone WEC August 17-19 WEC, ELMS, FIA F3 TV Live Motorsport.tv, Sunday 1145. BT Sport 3, Sun 1130. Eurosport 1, Sun 1715. [ELMS] Motorsport.tv, Saturday 1415. BT Sport 2, Sat 1415. [FIA F3] BT Sports 3, Saturday 1015, 1300, Sunday 1000.</p> <p>Snetterton BARC August 17-19 2CV, Classic VW, Junior Saloons, BARC Saloons,</p>	<p>Classic FF1600</p> <p>Brands Hatch MSVR August 18 Swinging 60s, Trackday, Monoposto, Bernie's V8s, S2000</p> <p>Brands Hatch MSVR August 19 Ferrari Club, Ferrari Classic, Alfa Romeo, Allcomers</p> <p>Mondello CCC August 18-19 Derek Bell Trophy, HRCA Historics, Future Classics</p> <p>Thruxton CSCC August 18-19 Jaguar Saloon/GT, Tin Tops, Future Classics, Magnificent 7s, Modern Classics, Special Saloon and Modsports, Classic K, New Millennium, Open, Turbo Tin Tops</p> <p>Pembrey BARC August 19 Welsh Sports & Saloon</p>
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RAINER SCHLEGEL/MILCH/LAT IMAGES

FROM THE ARCHIVE

Lotus driver Graham Hill suits up in the pitlane ahead of the 1967 Italian Grand Prix at Monza, surrounded by his family: wife Bette, daughters Brigitte and Samantha and son Damon, who appears to be distinctly unimpressed by the proceedings. Hill retired on lap 59 when his Ford Cosworth engine went bang, having twice led a grand prix that would gain legendary status chiefly for the epic nature of team-mate Jim Clark's recovery charge through the field. Twenty-six years later, Hill Jr would win this race, and again the following season.

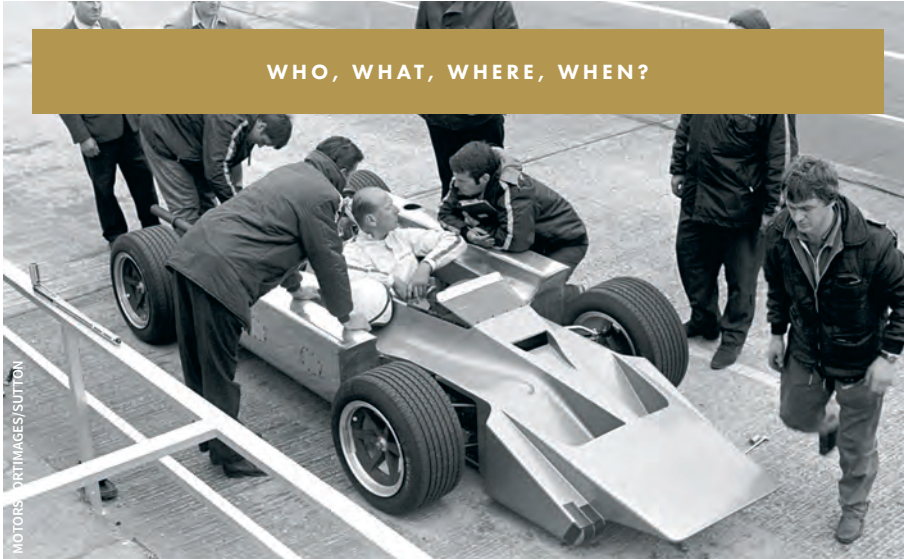


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QUIZ

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN?



MOTORSport IMAGES/SUTTON

WHO IS THIS?

This charismatic journeyman from the City of Light jumped into the fans' affections during a golden era.

After succeeding in a native nursery, he was on the pace in the third level before being fast-tracked to the top. A step back allowed him to shine and even brought him to the Old Man's attention.

As was often the case, that opportunity didn't happen and instead he lingered in the shadows. At times he looked like he could take on the world, but misfortune usually prevailed. He wheeled his way into an uncompetitive seat, before tragedy presented an opportunity with the best.

True to form he flattered to deceive. Two seasons with an ailing giant were followed by a stint with an ambitious minnow.

He faded after a swansong, but following a lengthy absence he showed his skill when he returned to domestic action.

ON THIS DAY

1 Tim Schenken made his grand prix debut on this day in 1970. Where and when did he score his only F1 points-paying podium?

2 On this day in 1998, Michael Schumacher and Ferrari won the Hungarian GP with a radical three-stop strategy. How much did he set fastest lap by?

3 Which position did Paul Belmondo start the Hungarian GP from on this day in 1992?

4 The same race was the last GP started by Brabham. How many GPs did the team win?

5 It's Yvan Muller's birthday. How many times did he finish runner-up in the BTCC?

NAME THE HELMET



LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS

Who, what, where, when Damon Hill, Dallara-Renault GP2/05, Paul Ricard, June 28 2005. **Who is this?** John Cleland. **On this day** 1) Anderstorp. 2) 9.683s. 3) 2nd. 4) 5. 5) Joey Logano. **Name the helmet** Ukyo Katayama.

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

HOW WILLIAMS BECAME
F1'S SLOWEST TEAM



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1958
BTCC

2018

60
YEARS



60
YEARS
1958-2018

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The BTCC has enduring appeal

Few would argue against the assertion that the British Touring Car Championship is the UK's pre-eminent motorsport series.

Recognisable cars, live television coverage, close racing and interesting personalities have helped the BTCC stay at the forefront, and its six decades make it one of the longest-running championships in the country.

In this special supplement we celebrate the series' 60 years by looking back at how it became so popular, highlighting the greatest drivers and getting behind the wheel of some iconic machines.

To put together our top 25 drivers list (see page 8) we enlisted the help of a range of experts, including former champions and experienced journalists. Many of the names are predictable, but the order the poll gave created some debate in the office. Please let us know what you think by emailing autosport@autosport.com.

The track test was less controversial, and our resident racer Ben Anderson enjoyed climbing aboard five special cars. Turn to p26 to see what he made of the Jaguar Mk1, Ford Lotus Cortina, Chevrolet Camaro, Rover Vitesse and Ford RS500 racers.

Our thanks to Brands Hatch owner MotorSport Vision for its assistance in setting up the track test. Brands was the most appropriate venue for our British Touring Car extravaganza, partly because it held the first rounds back in 1958, and also because it is likely to host yet another tense BTCC title showdown this season, on September 30. It never fails to provide drama.



KEVIN TURNER

Editor

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HOW THE BTCC BECAME **THE BIGGEST SHOW IN TOWN**

That the BTCC is still a vibrant, competitive championship, followed by so many, after 60 years is testament to its long history of adapting to the times

Matt James





Production saloon racing in the United Kingdom was nothing new, even when the British Saloon Car Championship was created in 1958.

The very first saloon-based race was in 1952, but the cars were regularly seen as a lower class in sports and GT races. The machines proved popular with the public, but it wasn't until the British Racing and Sports Car Club got involved that an official championship was first formed.

The organising club's secretary Ken Gregory was the driving force behind the concept. A trial event was held at the end of 1957, on Boxing Day at Brands Hatch. It was won by Tommy Sopwith driving an Equipe Endeavour 3.4-litre Jaguar. The championship regulations were announced in the second week of January '58 and the first points-paying race took place at Brands Hatch in April. The category was split into two classes, with Sopwith (Jaguar) claiming the top class and Jack Sears (Austin A105) winning the smaller-capacity category.

The BRSCC created the rules and, to suit the manufacturers' product ranges, four individual classes were structured for cars

with engine capacities of up to 1200cc, 1201-1600cc, 1601-2700cc and 2701cc and above. The initial championship ran for the Bonneville Trophy, which was put up by the British Motor Corporation for the driver with the most points.

At the end of the campaign, Sears and Sopwith were tied on points and a tie-breaker was needed to sort out the champion. Both rejected the idea that the title should be settled on the toss of a coin.

Instead, they took to the track at Brands in 1.5-litre Rileys and did a five-lap shootout, then swapped cars and did it again. Sears won on the sodden track on aggregate by 1.6 seconds. Later, Sopwith regretted the decision. "I think I must have been a halfwit to agree to drive BMC cars against the lead BMC driver. Obviously, if I had the choice, and with the advantage of hindsight, I would think up a different solution. But I got beaten and that was that."

The formative years proved popular, with even soon-to-become F1 champion Mike Hawthorn racing a Jaguar in that maiden year. A rule tweak in 1960 stipulated that the champion ▶



Eurotech's
Andrew Jordan
won 2013 title

RISE AND RISE OF THE BTCC

would be crowned from the under-1000cc runners, and several of the bigger machines that dominated the series were knocked out of points contention. Doc Shepherd took the crown in an Austin A40 but there was a major change on the horizon: FIA Group 2 rules were adopted in the UK for '61.

The series was aligned to whatever the prevailing regulations were in Europe. In 1961, it went back to a four-class structure, and remained that way until the end of '89.

Jim Clark was the championship's highest-profile champion when he contested the full season in 1964 in a factory-run Ford Lotus Cortina – and he had contested the year as reigning F1 champion, but this came amid the American muscle cars, which dominated the top classes for much of the 1960s.

The rules were tweaked to improve competition and to also make sure that the cars didn't become prohibitively expensive. Group 1B and Group A were the bedrocks of the championship from 1974 through to '90.

The championship changed its name from the British Saloon Car Championship to the British Touring Car Championship for the 1987 season, the point at which the series was about to hit a massive upward trajectory. One of the primary factors was the influence of Barrie Hinchliffe Productions, which provided edited highlights to BBC's *Grandstand* after each round. To begin with, 15-minute clips rounded up the main action from each

event, helping to present racing in the BTCC in its best light.

'PRETTY SOON, BTCC DRIVERS BEGAN PLAYING UP TO THE CAMERA AS WELL. IT BECAME TV GOLD'
STEVE RIDER

The all-action series was an immediate hit, and the influence of presenter and BHP partner Steve Rider helped push the championship under the noses of millions of viewers.

"Until that point, *Grandstand* would just go and cover a meeting, regardless of what was on the bill," explains Rider, who has remained

loyal to the championship even to this day. "You would see, for example, round eight of the British Saloon Car Championship from Silverstone and then not see anything again until perhaps the following season. There was no narrative to it. Covering the series as a whole gave the viewer the chance to actually follow the story of the year, which made it easier to explain. And we were able to slot a highlights package in the middle of *Grandstand* at prime time on a Saturday afternoon right before, for example, the Grand National. It brought the sport to a new audience.

"The teams and the drivers embraced it, too. We were able to get great access and, pretty soon, the drivers were playing up to the camera as well. It quickly became TV gold."

What wasn't easy to explain was the complicated class structure. While Andy Rouse and the Ford Sierra Cosworths were dominating in terms of class wins, Frank Sytner (in 1988) and John Cleland ('89) were crowned as champions and the fans



Rouse (l) and Gravett battle at Brands in '89 in mighty Sierra RS500s



Gerry Marshall in Dolomite gives chase at Donington in '79

in their armchairs at home were left confused.

Significant changes over the five-year period from 1989 shook up the series and laid the foundations for the success that the BTCC has enjoyed ever since.

The initial think-tank to revolutionise tin-top racing in the UK consisted of several key players in the series, including Prodrive's David Richards and Andy Rouse. Firstly, the multi-class structure was phased out completely for 1991 and then the Touring Car Association (TOCA) was formed.

TOCA was headed up by Australian import Alan Gow. He landed the rights to promote the series from the governing body, the RAC MSA, and the new rules were a huge success.

The final part of the revolution came in 1992, when the TOCA package was created – and that was, in part, down to the MG Car Club's Cockshoot Cup.

"I can't remember which meeting I was at, but the BTCC was



Giovanardi took two titles with VX Racing



Neal won special race at Snetterton in 2018

Menu's Renault Laguna leads pack at Knockhill in 1995 BTCC season



SUTTON
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Alan Gow (left) has been key to BTCC's rise



MOTORSPORTIMAGES/LAT



Steve Rider presents BTCC at Brands in '17

JEP/LAT
motorsport
IMAGES

the headline act and the support races were rather random," remembers Gow. "I looked out on track and saw the MGs going around. At this point, I thought we could put together something special to enhance the race day even more."

Renault, Vauxhall and Ford committed, and the race day line-up was complete. The support acts have changed over the years, but remain largely manufacturer-backed.

The two-litre formula that was devised by TOCA was an instant hit, and allowed manufacturers to commit to the category. The formula was adopted by the FIA in 1993, and that is when things ramped up even further. In '94, the BTCC featured 10 manufacturer teams.

Along with them came several star names, including the likes of ex-F1 drivers Jo Winkelhock, Gabriele Tarquini and Jan Lammers, and the championship gradually transformed itself from a category for older drivers to those who were seeking a new career option. The average age on the grid started to fall.

The television coverage made stars of the drivers. The spotlight was firmly on the series, and it quickly became the most heavily attended motorsport in the UK aside from the British Grand Prix. Images of the championship were used in national advertising campaigns and the category became a real dogfight for honours.

Super Touring allowed a large degree of flexibility, and that in turn meant that budgets rocketed. Teams were out testing virtually every week, and the money spent on development and tyres was virtually unlimited.

The bubble had to burst sometime and it did in 2000. There were three works teams – Ford, Vauxhall and Honda – and each ran three cars. The Prodrive Ford operation – which employed Alain Menu, Rickard Rydell and Anthony Reid as drivers – allegedly spent £10million on the domestic programme.

During that season, too, Gow sold the BTCC to Octagon, which was owned by the American Interpublic Group, a sports promoter. It was a major change, and new regulations were also drawn up.

Out went the super-expensive Super Tourers, and in came new cut-price BTC-Touring rules.

The new regulations galvanised the series to a degree, but it wasn't until Gow returned halfway through 2003 that a real shake-up took place. He drafted in Super 2000 cars alongside the BTC-Touring ones. During his maiden season back at the helm, there were 19 cars on the grid. It soon attracted a capacity entry again.

As S2000 died out, another revolution was needed, which came in the shape of the NGTC regulations (see page 52). That has turned out to be a success, with even more cut-price parts and simplified engineering.

The television coverage of the series fluctuated between channels when the BBC stopped broadcasting it, but it has found a happy home on ITV4, which carries each race meeting live, and it also has the support of a highly active social media account. As of next season, it will be the only motor racing championship in the UK with free-to-air live TV coverage, which has been a vital ingredient in keeping the sponsors interested in the category. That keeps the crowds coming through the turnstiles.

The future has been brought into focus, too, with recent news that the series' technical bosses are looking at ways of introducing hybrid systems into the cars. This will not be done all at once: it will be introduced gradually to make sure that teams can retain value in their current machines. It is a move that the championship bosses have to make to reflect the changing landscape in the road car market, which has to be at the centre of the BTCC's ethos. It needs to reinvent to stay relevant.

That is in the future. At the moment, the British Touring Car Championship is in rude health, with packed grids and thousands of trackside fans, and its celebration season was marked last month with a special double-points race at Snetterton, won by three-time title-winner Matt Neal in his Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R. ■



TOP 25 BRITISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP DRIVERS



The panel of judges: David Addison; Jeff Allam; Dick Bennetts; Charles Bradley; Andrew van de Burgt; John Cleland; Ben Edwards; John Fitzpatrick; Ian Flux; Jonathan Gill; Fabrizio Giovanardi; Alan Gow; Robb Gravett; Ian Harrison; Tim Harvey; Chris Hodgetts; Alan Hyde; Mat Jackson; Andrew Jordan; Paul Lawrence; Alain Menu; Matt Neal; Jason Plato; Andy Priaulx; Anthony Reid; Rickard Rydell; Gordon Shedden; Marcus Simmons; Ash Sutton; Frank Sytner; Gabriele Tarquini; James Thompson; Ian Tichmarsh; Colin Turkington; Kevin Turner; Patrick Watts



60 YEARS 1958-2018



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Will Hoy

CHAMPION 1991

Cambridgeshire racer Will Hoy was a latecomer to motorsport, and took his initial steps in car racing in the Clubmans category, which was an unusual path to a career at the forefront of tin-tops.

He was a multiple Clubmans title winner, taking three straight crowns in the early 1980s, before pursuing his ambitions in sportscars. He progressed through the long-distance ranks to eventually contest selected rounds of the world sportscar championship in 1985 in the C2 division.

Hoy also undertook sportscar races in Japan and that introduced him to the world of tin-tops. He went on to take the runner-up spot in the 1988 All-Japan Touring Car

Championship in a BMW M3 that he shared with Haruto Yanagida.

That same season, he dabbled with the BTCC, being drafted into the Prodrive team because of his success in the Far East. It was when he joined the BTCC full-time in 1991 that his star began to shine, and he marched straight to the title with Vic Lee Racing. That cemented his place as a



regular on the grid, and he was at the heart of the BTCC during its most competitive era.

He drove for Toyota and then was a fundamental part of the Williams Renault Dealer Team attack with its Laguna for two seasons. His full-time career, which included nine wins, lasted until 1998 when he drove for the Ford team. He campaigned a part-season in 1999 in an Arena International Laguna.

Sadly, Hoy, who had become part of the television presenting team for the British Touring Car Championship, contracted a brain tumour and died late in 2002.

Roberto Ravaglia



Sixth in 1996

Roberto Ravaglia only scored one career victory in the British Touring Car Championship, in 1996 on his way to sixth in the points in his only full season in the category.

He had dipped his toe in the water with the BTCC in 1995 by taking part in four meetings, which comprised six races.

Ravaglia, who had progressed through single-seaters and got up to F3 level, was a BMW man through and through. He first drove for Schnitzer in 1985 in tin-tops, and he remained faithful to the German firm throughout and won titles in a 635CSI, an M3 and in the 318i.

He was a two-time European Touring Car champion when the series ran in the late 1980s and became the world champion in 1987 in the first incarnation of the global championship. The Italian raced in DTM, which he topped in '89, and the German Super Tourenwagen competition.

He took Spa and Nurburgring 24 Hours victories, as well as numerous domestic series in his homeland. He stepped back from the cockpit after tackling the FIA GT Championship in a Schnitzer Motorsport-operated McLaren F1 GTR in 1997.

HOY'S 9 BTCC WINS

1991	1992	1995	1998
Silverstone (BMW M3)	Snetterton (Toyota Carina)	Brands Hatch (Renault Laguna)	Silverstone (Ford Mondeo)
Snetterton (BMW M3)	Donington Park (Toyota Carina)	Snetterton (Renault Laguna)	
Brands Hatch (BMW M3)		Silverstone (Renault Laguna)	



23



Frank Biela

CHAMPION 1996

Frank Biela's star was spotted early on. At just 19 years old, he was selected by Ford as a talent for the future, and it supported his career alongside Manuel Reuter and Bernd Schneider.

As well as funding him in single-seaters up to Formula 3 level, Ford drafted Biela into its DTM programme and he was an immediate hit. He switched to Audi in 1990 and won the DTM title the following year. After Audi pulled out of the series in '92, he became the kingpin of the make's Super Touring challenge, enjoying unprecedented success. He won the French title in '93 with the 80, then raced in the German Super Tourenwagen series, latterly in the A4 quattro.

But it was Audi's decision to enter the British Touring Car Championship that marked one of his most decorated tin-top spells. The four-wheel-drive car powered him to eight victories in 1996 and he only finished outside the top 10 in two of the 26 races that year.

He had been expected to continue his dominance, but a weight penalty imposed by the rulemakers for 1997 made life a lot harder for the German. The extra ballast was reduced halfway through the season and allowed him to race at the front again, and he finished second to runaway champion Alain Menu's Renault Laguna. After his BTCC days, Biela went on to be a mainstay of Audi's Le Mans programme, and took five victories in his 10 attempts at the French classic.



MOTORSPORTIMAGES/LAT

BIELA'S 1996 DOMINATION

Pos	Driver (Car)	PTS	Wins
1	Frank Biela (Audi)	289	8
2	Alain Menu (Renault)	197	4
3	Rickard Rydell (Volvo)	194	4
4	David Leslie (Honda)	159	3
5	Jo Winkelhock (BMW)	158	4



22

Johnny Cecotto

Twelfth overall in 1995

Venezuelan Johnny Cecotto only raced in the BTCC for one season – 1995 – when it was at its most competitive. He drove for BMW as part of the factory team, alongside David Brabham.

The former motorcycle racer was a promising F1 prospect, having finished as runner-up in F2 in 1982. He progressed to grand prix racing with Theodore and then Toleman, but a huge crash during qualifying at Brands Hatch left him with two broken legs, ending his single-seater career.



He was adopted into the BMW family in the late 1980s, and remained with the firm for almost a decade. He was a regular in the DTM and tackled the German Tourenwagen contest for four seasons, winning the title twice.

The BMW was not the force it had been when Cecotto came to the UK, and he only broke into the top six on five occasions on his way to 12th in the points. Team-mate Brabham recalls: "He was very demanding of the team. Because of his position within BMW – the boss Paul Rosche got on well with him – he could ask for what he wanted. He was also very, very fast."



21

Gordon Spice

Multiple class champion

The sight of a sideways Ford Capri evokes memories of Gordon Spice. The Egham-based driver, who held the record – until 2016 when he was overtaken by Mat Jackson – of the most wins in the British Saloon Car Championship without a title, was one of its most popular characters. His flamboyant style and straight-talking nature made him a hit with fans.

Spice began racing in the BSCC in the 1960s in a Mini, and was a successful businessman, combining that with racing. He was one of the most prolific tin-top winners between 1978 and '80, but the vagaries of the

class-based points-scoring system often worked against him and kept him from the ultimate prize. He was the class champion for six seasons in a row, and won the Spa 24 Hours in '78 in a Capri.

Spice could see the writing on the wall at the end of 1982 and told Ford that the new Rover Vitesse was superior to his Capri, and he would prefer to concentrate on long-distance racing.

Spice initially persuaded Ford to get behind him, but it pulled the plug before he could get going with a Tony Southgate-designed machine. He had raced at Le Mans for Rondeau, and finished on the podium in 1980 and '81. In the mid-'80s, he created his own cars and was hugely successful. He was a four-time C2 world champion, and won his class at Le Mans twice, finishing sixth overall in '87 in one of his own creations.





60 YEARS
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MOTORSPORT IMAGES/LAT

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Paul Radisich

Third in 1993 and 1994

There was no World Touring Car Championship to gun for. After a one-off season in 1987, and before it was revived in 2005, domestic victories were the best that a professional touring car driver could aim for.

In 1993 and '94, however, there was the World Touring Car Cup. It brought together the best Super Touring drivers from around the globe for a winner-takes-all showdown. That suited Paul Radisich, known by his peers by the nickname 'The Rat', perfectly.

The Kiwi, who had a background in single-seaters and came to Europe in a search-for-a-star competition, joined forces with Andy Rouse in 1993 to campaign the new V6 Ford Mondeo. The car only appeared in the latter part of the season as it was under development, but when it did appear it was a rocketship. Radisich won three times and finished third in the points despite missing the opening seven rounds. He went to Monza for the Touring Car World Cup with the Ford and dominated, something he also achieved at Donington in 1994.

Those would be his biggest Super Touring successes. He was third in the British Touring Car Championship in 1994 in a Mondeo and stayed with Ford through to the end of '97, although the results failed to come as the car was uncompetitive.

Radisich switched to Peugeot for a single season in 1998 but that was the end of his UK career. He left the BTCC with six wins.



MOTORSPORT IMAGES/ROSE/SUTTON



J.BLOXHAM/LAT

MOTORSPORT IMAGES

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James Thompson

CHAMPION 2002, 2004

James Thompson, the son of prolific 1970s rally driver David, was the first in a new wave of racers who had set their sights on the British Touring Car Championship almost from the start of their careers.

After briefly flirting with rallying, Thompson began his circuit racing career in the new Formula Vauxhall Junior single-seater series, but this was only to get experience. After finishing fourth in the standings in his second season in 1992, he was one of several drivers chosen to join the Honda Scholarship, which ran several up-and-coming racers in the Group N-based



National Saloon Car Cup. He took seven wins in his Civic V-tec and he made the right impression.

He made the step to the BTCC in 1994 in a privateer Peugeot. He was immediately on the pace, taking two wins. He was signed by Vauxhall and won in his first season, but had to miss the latter part of the year when he crashed in testing at Knockhill.

He remained with Vauxhall for another season before joining Honda, but his greatest days came when the UK series switched to the BTC-T regulations in 2001.

He was always pushing his team-mates and fought a mighty duel with Yvan Muller to claim his maiden title, winning another in 2004. There was more glory with Team Dynamics in a Honda in '09. The popular racer walked away with 36 wins, one of the 10 most successful BTCC racers ever.



LAT

MOTORSPORT IMAGES

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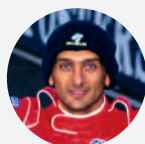
Gabriele Tarquini

CHAMPION 1994

F1 refugee Gabriele Tarquini became an instant hit with the UK public during his time in the BTCC.

When he arrived with the Alfa Corse team, his Italian flair and passion struck a chord with the fans. The dominant Alfa, and his quirky humour, made headlines.

Tarquini had scored just a single point in his 78 grand prix starts, but he dovetailed his F1 commitments with seasons in



the Italian Superturismo category, and switched from BMW to Alfa for 1993.

The 155 moved the goalposts in two-litre tin-top thinking, and Tarquini exploited it to the full, with his press-on style helping him to the '94 BTCC crown.

Alfa's star was short-lived, though, as the other manufacturers caught on to its aerodynamic tricks. He made a fruitless return to the BTCC halfway through '95, and joined Honda in '97 after a final year with Alfa in the ITC.

He signed off his UK racing with sixth place in 2000 in the Honda Accord. He had amassed 12 wins in the BTCC.



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JEP/LAT
motorsport
IMAGES

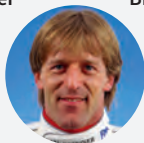
Jo Winkelhock

CHAMPION 1993

The younger brother of F1 racer Manfred Winkelhock, who was killed in a world sportscar race at Mosport Park in Canada in a Kremer Porsche 956 in 1985, Jo's burgeoning single-seater career was put on hold – but the desire to race remained strong in him and he was back on the career ladder in German F3 in '88, taking the title.

He attempted to graduate to F1, but was saddled with an uncompetitive AGS and failed to pass the prequalifying stages on his seven attempts.

Salvation came in the shape of the



Schnitzer team. He became a mainstay of BMW's DTM challenge and picked up a couple of victories, but his big success came in the UK when he joined the BTCC in 1993. The rear-wheel-drive car was suited to the British tracks and the German mopped up. As Alfa Romeo ramped up the chase for aerodynamics in tin-top racing,

BMW slipped down the pecking order and Winkelhock's star faded.

By that stage, he was already spreading his racing across the globe with a partial attack on the Japanese Touring Car Championship, a series that he also contested in 1995.

A return to the BTCC in 1996 with Schnitzer brought him four more victories, taking his career total to 13.

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Jack Sears

CHAMPION 1958, 1963

Jack Sears goes down in history as the first ever British Saloon Car champion, but the motorsporting all-rounder achieved success in GT racing too and he was a regular at Le Mans.

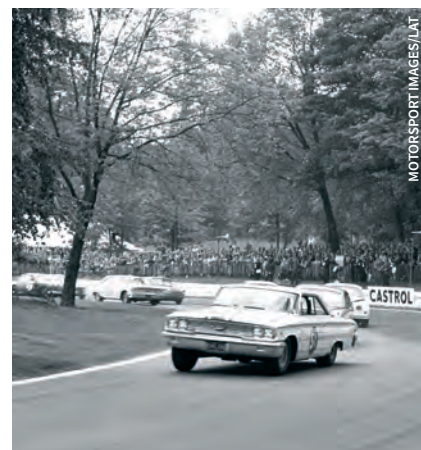
The Norfolk farmer began his career in rallies, and made his race debut in 1950 at the Goodwood circuit.

He also briefly raced single-seaters, but his fame came in tin-tops. His run to the 1958 British Saloon Car title was not an easy one, as he and Tommy Sopwith had tied on points and Sears prevailed in a two-legged shootout in a Riley 1.5 at Brands Hatch at the end of the year.

His second BSCC title was achieved in 1963 using a variety of cars, including a Ford Cortina GT, a Lotus Cortina and a Ford Galaxie, bringing American V8s to UK tin-top racing.

Sears came to the public's attention in 1964 when he tested an AC Cobra Coupe on the M1 motorway in preparations for Le Mans. He topped 180mph and it hit the headlines in several national newspapers and questions were even asked in Parliament. It was often cited – incorrectly – that his antics prompted the 70mph speed limit on motorways. That is something that irritated Sears for years.

Sears raced extensively in Europe in a Lotus Cortina, but a big testing accident at Silverstone in September 1964 prompted him to retire from motorsport and return to his farm.



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WINKELHOCK'S 13 BTCC WINS

1993

Donington Park (BMW 318i)

Oulton Park (BMW 318i)

Brands Hatch (BMW 318i)

Pembrey (BMW 318i)

Oulton Park (BMW 318i)

1994

Silverstone (BMW 318i)

Oulton Park (BMW 318i)

Brands Hatch (BMW 318i)

Brands Hatch (BMW 318i)

1996

Brands Hatch (BMW 320i)

Thruxton (BMW 320i)

Oulton Park (BMW 320i)

Snetterton (BMW 320i)



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Win Percy

CHAMPION 1980, 1981, 1982

Win Percy won three British Saloon Car Championship titles as well as races in the European championship and the Bathurst 1000. Mechanically sympathetic, former autocrosser Percy was as vital a co-driver as he was a sprint racer and won in both short races and longer-distance events.

After autocross, Percy formed a fearsome combination with the Datsun 240Z in Modified Sports Car races, taking great success. He graduated to the BSCC for 1975, running cars for Toyota GB, and enjoyed a fierce fight that season with Tom Walkinshaw, who vowed to have him in his team one day. When Walkinshaw stood aside from his Mazda RX-7 in 1980, Percy took over. The title was his with 10 wins from 10 races and such was his success that the opposition was scared away for '81 - Mazda had to field extra cars to make sure Percy gained maximum points for his class wins. When Walkinshaw announced that he didn't feature in his plans for '82, Percy went back to Toyota and took the series in a Corolla. He dovetailed ETCC races in a TWR Jaguar XJS with BSCC outings in a Toyota Celica Supra for a season before focusing on racing in Europe with TWR in Jags and Rovers.

Percy returned to the BTCC in the mid-1990s for Nissan and had great success in historic racing until a back injury, and botched operation, left him immobile.



Matt Neal

CHAMPION 2005, 2006, 2011

No-one would have known, after a bit-part appearance in the 1991 season, that former one-make and production saloon racer Matt Neal would go on to become one of the mainstays of the BTCC.

The Midlander has been in the series virtually ever since, has lifted three crowns and is the second most successful driver in the category's history in terms of race wins.

His long-time engineer and now the technical director at Team Dynamics - which he co-owns with Neal - Barry Plowman says it's his work ethic that has kept him at the very top.



"He works so hard at it, and he's built up so much knowledge," says Plowman. "He's always thinking about it. He's quite hard on himself: he's not one of those drivers who would come back and blame the car. That's why he never has too many down days, and when he does he bounces back."

This season Neal is in the title fight and has been a winner again. "There has been a rejuvenation. He is motivated and is having to dig deep to keep up with his new team-mate Dan Cammish - and he selected him for the drive. He doesn't like to give himself an easy life," adds Plowman.

He might not like an easy life, but he is right in the middle of the battle this season, and recently lifted the trophy in the Double Diamond celebration event to mark 60 years of the BTCC.



CHAMPION 1967, 1968, 1973

There was no nonsense with Frank Gardner. The gruff Aussie, who had moved to Europe to chase his motor racing dreams in the early 1960s, was a highly successful single-seater racer and started eight grands prix in a John Willment Automobiles-run Brabham, and claimed the European F5000 championship in 1971.

He was also a race winner in F2 and the Tasman category, and a class winner at Le Mans in the early 1960s.

In touring car terms, it was his partnership with Alan Mann Racing that cemented his success in the British Saloon Car Championship. He took a Ford Falcon Sprint to the championship in 1967 and then became the



first man to successfully defend the crown when he switched to a Ford Escort in '68. He also prevailed in '73 in a Chevrolet Camaro.

Aside from those three outright triumphs, Gardner also took the class spoils on six occasions between 1967 and '73.

He returned to Australia in 1975 to continue his driving career at Bathurst and in the Australian Sports and Sedan Championship, which he claimed in '77. After stepping away from the driving seat, he successfully ran teams in Aussie series and took Australian Super Touring titles as the official BMW team in 1994 and '95 (with Tony Longhurst) and '97 (with Paul Morris). A Frank Gardner-run car also won the Bathurst 1000 in '88, with Tony Longhurst and Tomas Mezera in a Ford Sierra RS500.

12



Laurent Aiello

CHAMPION 1999

Following his learning process in junior single-seaters, Laurent Aiello's name was up in lights as a real prospect when he claimed the 1990 Monaco F3 race, one of the jewels in the category's crown.

Naturally, he stepped up to F3000 for 1991 but, as happened to so many racers, he was in the right category at the right time but in the wrong car. The Lola he was using wasn't competitive and he struggled, but did manage to outshine his team-mate Allan McNish.

A switch to a Reynard chassis and the Pacific Racing team for 1992 didn't see the step up in performance he was expecting.

Rescue came from ORECA, which placed the Parisian in a Peugeot in the French Supertourisme category. He won the crown, and he also took the two-litre title in Germany in 1997 in the Peugeot 406.

There were outings at Le Mans too, including a win with Porsche in the GT1-98 alongside McNish and Stephane Ortelli in 1998.

Aiello's appearance in the BTCC was notable for being as successful as it was brief. As soon as he had arrived in the UK and learned the tracks, he dominated in 1999. He disappeared after a tempting offer from Audi to join the burgeoning DTM. It took him only three years to become champion and he was also a part of Audi's all-conquering team at Le Mans, finishing second twice in 2000 and '01. He wasn't for hanging about in the sport, and retired at the age of 36 in 2005.



AIELLO'S 1999 DOMINATION

Pos	Driver (Car)	PTS	Wins
1	Laurent Aiello (Nissan)	244	10
2	David Leslie (Nissan)	228	3
3	Rickard Rydell (Volvo)	192	4
4	James Thompson (Honda)	174	4
5	Jason Plato (Renault)	122	1

11



Gordon Shedden

CHAMPION 2012, 2015, 2016

A modern-day hero, Gordon Shedden has won 48 times and taken three titles in the British Touring Car Championship.

He joined Team Dynamics in the top flight in 2006 and was a winner in his maiden season, and spent nearly all of his BTCC career with the Pershore team. His hallmarks are blistering one-lap pace and some stunning overtaking.

But it wasn't always that way. Eddie Hinckley, Shedden's engineer, explains: "He was just very focused and has very good car control. He could be quite hard to work with but then all drivers are self-centred – even

Matt Neal can be sometimes! His progress was superb. Shedden was green to start with and Matt helped him along the way, and turned him into the full driver that he is now."

Shedden has pulled off some remarkable comebacks to claim BTCC glory, notably in 2016, when he recovered 50 points to battle his way back to the top of the table.

"He is a great overtaker and he grew some resilience in his racing – and with some of the situations he found himself in, he had to," explains Hinckley. "He used to get in some tempers when things weren't going well when he first joined us – I remember him kicking the locker in the truck – but he learned that you didn't have to win every race to win the championship. That's just how a British Touring Car Championship driver matures."



10



Colin Turkington

CHAMPION 2009, 2014

Colin Turkington's reputation with rivals is for being fast and fair, even under extreme pressure.

He joined the BTCC in 2002 and took his first title with WSR in a BMW in '09, and another with WSR in '14.

He has formed a strong bond with engineer Kevin Berry, who explains: "He is fast and consistent, which means the feedback is strong. That is one of the key aspects. Because

he's so consistent, you know you will see a real result from any change that is made to the car and he has a good understanding of engineering himself"

But Turkington works hard off-track, too. "I don't just mean that he comes up with engineering ideas," says Berry. "But he works on himself, physically and mentally.

"He makes my life easy, because we just get on with things and there are no tantrums. We just quietly work away and seem to get results."

The results keep coming – the Northern Irishman is leading the 2018 title battle.





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YEARS
1958-2018



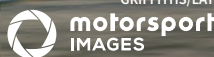
MOTORSPORTIMAGES/LAT



9

Fabrizio Giovanardi

GRIFFITHS/LAT

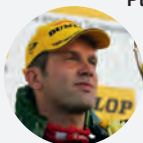


CHAMPION 2007, 2008

“The first time Fabrizio Giovanardi drove one of our cars, he smashed it to bits against the wall at Pembrey,” remembers Triple Eight Race Engineering boss Ian Harrison.

Giovanardi persevered with the unloved Vauxhall Astra Sport Hatch, but he really hit his stride in the BTCC in 2007 with the new Vectra.

“Fabrizio wasn’t really an engineer,” recalls Harrison. “He would come in, tell us what the car was doing, tell us what he wanted it to do and then leave



it up to us to come up with the solutions. There was no drama with him – he just came and got on with the job.”

A superb title showdown in 2007, when Giovanardi went toe to toe with Jason Plato’s SEAT, was a highlight.

There were two more titles to add to the Italian and European crowns he already had in his pocket, but he was left without a ride when Vauxhall withdrew from the BTCC at the end of 2009.

There was a brief outing in a privately run Triple Eight Vectra at the start of 2010, and an unsuccessful one-season return in ’14 with Motorbase Performance.

7



Jim Clark

CHAMPION 1964

In a different age of motorsport, variety was the spice of life. When Lotus forged an alliance with Ford to create the Lotus Cortina, it created a thoroughbred racing car with the aim of showing that the humble family saloon could tear up the race tracks, and it certainly did that.

Walter Hayes was the man who commissioned Lotus to build 1000 of the Group 2 racers, and it featured bodywork and several suspension adjustments, as well as a close-ratio gearbox among other tweaks.

The car first appeared in the hands of Jack Sears, who would go on to win the British Saloon Car title after beginning the campaign in a Ford Cortina GT, and Lotus grand prix driver Trevor Taylor at the Oulton Park Gold Cup in September 1963. But it was when reigning F1 world champion Clark got his hands on the car in 1964 that he swept all before him: he went unbeaten throughout the season in the points-paying rounds, the same year that he finished third in the F1 world championship.

Clark made sporadic appearances after that through to 1966, and was a regular winner without ever putting together a title bid because of his other commitments. He came, saw and conquered, and left behind the iconic images of him three-wheeling through corners in his characteristic press-on style.



8

Rickard Rydell

CHAMPION 1998

Rickard Rydell was one of a crop of drivers who had progressed up the single-seater ladder, only to run out of finance. He was a top racer in F3 in the UK and in Japan, and he claimed victory in the prestigious Macau F3 street race.

Rydell was also quick in Formula 3000. He’d raced in the British championship in 1990 before returning to F3, and also competed in the category in Japan. But the Swede’s dreams of a seat in F1 simply didn’t materialise.

Salvation came for Rydell when Volvo decided to join the British Touring Car



Championship with its wacky 850 estate machine in 1994. It wanted a native at the controls and Rickard fitted the bill perfectly, and so he was teamed with Jan Lammers for the firm’s maiden assault at the top level.

It was the start of a seven-year association with the British series that would bring him the ultimate reward in 1998. He took 21 race wins, and was committed to Volvo for all but one of those seasons.

His final year was in 2000 at the wheel of a Prodrive-run Ford Mondeo, alongside Alain Menu and Anthony Reid.

Rydell, who was christened the ‘Smiling Assassin’ by his rivals, finished third in the standings in what would be his final season, before later racing in the World Touring Car Championship and in sportscars.

CLARK’S 1964 BTCC TITLE

Pos	Driver (Car)	PTS
1	Jim Clark (Ford Lotus Cortina)	48
2	John Fitzpatrick (Mini Cooper S)	38
3	Mike Young (Ford Anglia Super)	30
4	Chris McLaren (Jaguar Mk2 3.8)	26
=5	Bob Olthoff (Lotus Cortina)	24
=5	Peter Arundell (Lotus Cortina)	24
=5	Sir Gawaine Baillie (Ford Galaxie)	24



Jason Plato

CHAMPION 2001, 2010

After a long and successful karting career, Plato arrived on the circuit racing scene in 1990, taking part in the Formula Renault UK Championship. Eventually he joined the Manor Motorsport Van Diemen team, but missed out on the '91 UK title after an acrimonious battle with Bobby Verdon-Roe. Fierce fights with rivals would come to dominate Plato's career.

He made it to F3, but the budget ran dry. It was time for a reset. He set his sights on the BTCC, and his determination would get him there.

A season in the new-for-1996 Renault Spider Championship, which was on



the BTCC support bill, right under the noses of the tin-top team bosses, gave him a platform, and an end-of-season test in the Williams-run Renault Laguna was the chance he needed. He hounded Frank Williams until he gave him a deal, and that was the launchpad for what would become a long and decorated career in the BTCC.

He has taken part in all but two seasons since 1997 and has collected a record number of race wins, and two titles.

But Plato's influence on the BTCC goes way beyond the statistics alone. He has been at the forefront of several manufacturer programmes. He has led the line for Vauxhall, SEAT, Chevrolet, MG and Subaru. He has also combined his racing with a television career, which has made him a well-known personality and a huge draw for spectators at the race tracks.

5



Steve Soper

Championship runner-up 1993

Steve Soper was something of a ground-breaker. He was the first British driver to be signed to a manufacturer purely as a gun for hire, anchoring BMW's tin-top challenge for a decade.

He had risen through the ranks as a dedicated saloon car specialist, initially in Minis and then in the Metro Challenge, before his talent was spotted by Tom Walkinshaw. Soper joined the BTCC in 1982 in a Metro before becoming one of the few to truly tame the Walkinshaw-run Rover Vitesse the following year. He won the title in '83, except he didn't: post-season technical wrangling concerning the V8 machine meant that the Rovers were kicked out and Soper lost his crown.

After a spell with Eggenberger in the fearsome Ford Sierra RS500, Soper was probably next known for his association with BMW, and he was a powerhouse in the BTCC without ever claiming the title. He was second in 1993, only losing out to Jo Winkelhock late on in the campaign by just 13 points, a puncture at the penultimate meeting at Donington Park proving crucial. He continued with BMW in '94 for another attack, but then left to concentrate on the firm's projects elsewhere.

He returned to the BTCC in 2001 at the wheel of a factory-backed Peugeot 406 but a last-round shunt at Brands Hatch left him with a badly damaged neck, and he was told by doctors to hang up his helmet – although he has taken part in several historic events.



PLATO'S BTCC RECORD

1997 (Renault)	3rd	2006 (SEAT)	2nd	2013 (MG)	3rd
1998 (Renault)	5th	2007 (SEAT)	2nd	2014 (MG)	2nd
1999 (Renault)	5th	2008 (SEAT)	3rd	2015 (VW)	2nd
2000 (Vauxhall)	5th	2009 (Chevrolet)	2nd	2016 (Subaru)	7th
2001 (Vauxhall)	1st	2010 (Chevrolet)	1st	2017 (Subaru)	12th
2004 (SEAT)	3rd	2011 (Chevrolet)	3rd		
2005 (SEAT)	4th	2012 (MG)	3rd		





4



Yvan Muller

CHAMPION 2003

Frenchman Yvan Muller was the benchmark in the BTCC for seven seasons, enjoying numerous successes once he switched from Audi to Vauxhall for 1999, scoring 36 victories in the series.

Despite that, he only claimed one title, in 2003. John Waterman, Muller's engineer at Triple Eight Race Engineering, remembers: "Where other guys are using 100% of their brain, Yvan only needs to use 90% and can use the spare 10% to think about other things, which makes him a true champion."

"The feedback was difficult, because he also used to race in the Andros Trophy for ice racing and was doing very, very well in that. The car is sideways in that all the time – so he never really talked about oversteer in the debriefs unless he was actually facing the wrong direction! That's not the way to do things in the BTCC because you scrub off too much speed."

"We had to teach him a lot, because his left-foot braking used to be quite strong. And he would even trail-break out of the corner a bit and then wonder why he was slow in a straight line. It was little things like that, but we still had to push him hard."

"On track he was 100% committed, although he did have his off days – and on those days, you would have to give him 30 minutes to calm down before you were able to talk to him."

John Cleland

CHAMPION 1989, 1995

Has there ever been a more memorable phrase in the British Touring Car Championship? As John Cleland climbed out of his battered Vauxhall Cavalier at Silverstone in 1992, slammed the door shut behind him and stood trembling with anger next to his machine, he was already thinking on his feet. When he met the inevitable television camera as he strode back the paddock, he uttered the immortal line, "The man's an animal."

He was referring to BMW driver Steve Soper, who had just cannoned into his rival to assure his own BMW team-mate Tim Harvey of the title in 1992.

That was what Cleland was about – TV gold



– but to remember him for that alone is a huge disservice to a BTCC legend. He was, at times, the only real home-grown talent leading the frontline against the big-name imports from aboard.

He was a dogged overtaker and raced with such fire that anyone who managed to unseat him in a duel had achieved something special. His first crown, from Class C in 1989, paled into insignificance compared to his second in the one-class Super Tourers in '95.

But there was always a story with the Scot. In the early 1990s, amid the influx of professional wannabes, Vauxhall realised it needed to respond and hired a personal trainer for Cleland and team-mate Jeff Allam. What the team bosses didn't know was that the two drivers clubbed together and paid the trainer just as much again to leave them alone and keep schtum. "I think the bloke was able to buy a Harley Davidson after just one year," jokes Cleland.



Alain Menu

CHAMPION 1997, 2000

There was a single-mindedness about Alain Menu that marked him out among his contemporaries in the BTCC.

The Swiss was among the first to ride the crest of the wave that crashed down on the BTCC in the early 1990s to reshape the series – gradually, the gentlemen drivers were forced to pull over for the career-focused racers.

Menu was one of the first, perhaps spurred on by a single-seater career that failed to deliver the glories it should have, even though he made it to F3000 level. He drove for BMW initially as part of its junior team, but it



was when he was picked by Renault to lead its maiden factory BTCC bid in 1993 that his tin-top career kicked into life.

A title in a Laguna followed, and Menu would become a lynchpin of the French firm's success until he headed for Ford in 1999.

Even that didn't stop him, as a second title followed in 2000 in a Prodrive-run Ford Mondeo, probably the most expensive and high-tech BTCC car ever, to sign off the Super Touring era for a man who had been a consistent winner throughout.

And it is that longevity, plus his unstinting pace throughout that period, that means he was a thorn in the side of anyone who wanted to take a crown in that eight-year period. He has gone toe to toe with several of those who took part in our poll – and they clearly haven't forgotten him.

Thank you Team Hard and our loyal fans for the last two years.
It has been great to be a part of BTCC - here's to another 60 years!

From everyone @rolecracing



Image provided by fan Grahame Hancock



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60
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1 ANDY ROUSE

CHAMPION 1975, 1983, 1984, 1985

Andy Rouse has won more British Touring Car Championship titles than anyone else, but his legacy in the sport runs even deeper.

The quietly spoken former single-seater racer was an expert engineer too and, once he turned his attentions to Ford's monstrous Sierra RS Cosworth and later the RS500, an iconic motorsport marriage was blessed. But that was towards the end of a long career in the category.

Rouse's first title came with one of the series' closest ever seasons. Three competitors were level on points after the 11 rounds – the amount of points awarded was dependent on the number of starters in each class. Stuart Graham (Chevrolet Camaro), Win Percy (Toyota Celica) and Rouse (Triumph Dolomite Sprint) all finished on 75 points after winning their class at the final round at Brands Hatch. But Rouse's greater number of class wins gifted him the crown.



In 1980, Rouse's former employer Broadspeed closed down and he bought the hardware to create Andy Rouse Engineering. There were further titles in the 1980s in an Alfa Romeo GTV6 and a Rover SD1, but the real hit came when he switched to Ford.

"We had talked to Ford quite a lot when I was running a Capri," he says. "We knew the Cosworth was coming, and they got in touch with us. It was perfect timing – we had just moved into bigger premises in Coventry. We were ready."

STEVE SOPER ON ROUSE

"An international chance should have happened for him. Through circumstances and no fault of his own, they didn't really happen.

"He would know how good his car was. He was a good, nice guy to race against. He'd lean on you, but in a fair way. If he was coming up the inside, you knew it was checkmate. He'd never do anything unfair."

Rouse initially used a Ford Sierra XR4Ti in 1985: "It used a lot of the same suspension parts and had the same chassis as the Cosworth that was to come and it was also turbocharged, so we gained some knowledge there. So we had already done our research when the RS Cosworth came along in '87. It was a great car but the handling was interesting – we weren't allowed to lower it as much as we wanted to."

Rouse built a number of cars for customers – they were the only weapons for outright race success – but those pesky lower-class cars could still steal in and nick the overall honours. There were two class wins for Rouse, whose battles with the likes of Tim Harvey, Steve Soper and Robb Gravett had the TV viewers enthralled, but the overall crown eluded him.

Rouse moved on to the Super Touring era and was instrumental in the two-litre revolution. He ran Toyota's campaign for a couple of years before returning to the Blue Oval until the end of 1995, by which stage he had stepped down as a driver.



ROUSE RACE-WINNING CARS

Pos	Car	Wins
1	Ford RS500	20
2	Ford Sierra XR4Ti	14
3=	Rover Vitesse	7
3=	Triumph Dolomite Sprint	7
5=	Ford Capri	5
5=	Toyota Carina	5
7	Ford Sierra RS Cosworth	2





HERO AND VILLAIN

Jason Plato and the BTCC are inextricably linked. The charismatic self-styled bad boy has done well out of the series, while it also benefits from his combative star-quality

Matt James



JEP/LAT
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60
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 1958-2018

be that – even though it might have caused me some issues.

“Everyone who’s watched me race for a while knows that I will play the villain – and that’s a role I enjoy, of course, but it does mean that I have to take on the chin some of the downsides of that.

“The villain is the character I’ve played, and it’s served me well. Every driver needs to project something, particularly in the BTCC. When I was looking after up-and-coming drivers in the KX Academy scheme that I ran, it’s something that I would be saying to all of the candidates. I would ask them to think about what makes them stand out – because just getting the results on the race track does not make you stand out more than anyone else.

“That’s particularly true when you’re in the BTCC where you have weight penalties, you have boost penalties – you’re not allowed to stand out more than anyone else. While you’re not telling drivers not to be true to themselves, they can accentuate things and adopt a role.”

‘THE VILLAIN IS THE CHARACTER I’VE PLAYED. THAT’S A ROLE I ENJOY AND IT’S SERVED ME WELL’
JASON PLATO

Plato’s role of the baddie has got him noticed, but even he knows it has made him something of a Marmite character – fans either love him or hate him.

But they have had to put up with him since 1997, although there was a sabbatical in 2002 and ’03 when he split from Vauxhall.

There’s a very particular reason why the former single-seater driver has remained loyal to the BTCC, the place that’s given him the baseline for his career success.

“When Andy Priaulx was winning title after title in the World Touring Car Championship, nobody knew who he was despite the fact that he was a world champion three times over,” says Plato. “That didn’t make sense to me, because I was enjoying – and probably because of the TV work I was doing too – a bigger profile than those guys and arguably a bigger profile than some of the guys who were even in Formula 1 at the time.”

This is one of the reasons why Plato has such an affinity with the BTCC, and the other is finance. Plato is possibly the driver who has generated the most income from the series, but then he is the one who’s come at it from a fresh angle and has arguably put more into it than anyone else.

“For me, motor racing is about a justifiable spend for your sponsors,” he says. “In the WTCC, there only used to be one race a year in the UK, so how could I generate return for my sponsors off the back of that? So the prospect of the World Touring Car Championship simply didn’t work for me. I was having such a good time in the UK and my profile was good. Why would I want to risk that? Also, the prospect of jetting around the world when you are 22 years old sounds exciting. But when you’re in your thirties and forties with a wife and kids, it’s not that appealing.

“I had beaten most of the guys who are racing in the WTCC, so I didn’t have anything to prove on that score either. I didn’t have anything to prove to myself, and if I put the two series on the scales, it would always come down in favour of the BTCC for me.”

Being at the centre of commercial deals is what has kept Plato racing, and he spotted the changing landscape as the BTCC altered in the early 2000s. After the cash-rich Super Touring days in the 1990s, the model simply couldn’t last and there had to be a new way of putting together a motor racing programme. That was demanded by the manufacturers as well as the sponsors and it’s a process Plato has been through with four manufacturers: SEAT, Chevrolet, MG and Subaru.

“When I joined, I was with Williams in 1997 and I was there, getting a salary and I was in the car many times a week testing,” says Plato. “It was a proper job, nothing left to chance. When I wasn’t in the car, I was doing PR and things like that: I was a fully paid-up racing driver. That style of deal went on until the end of the Super Touring era and that period of time was ending when I left Vauxhall at the end of 2001.

“Then came the SEAT days from 2004 – there were still some ▶

Jason Plato has been the most recognisable face in the British Touring Car Championship for two decades, and he has backed up his notoriety with success. He’s won more races than anyone else, and has taken two championships.

He admits that if he were a different type of driver, those statistics would be vastly different. “I don’t settle for second place,” he says. “I could’ve had more titles if I’d changed my attitude, I guess, but I would not have had so many race wins. But that’s just the kind of driver I am.”

And it’s that attitude that has kept him at the front for so long. His success, plus his appearances on TV, including the soon-to-be relaunched motoring programme *Fifth Gear*, have made him the biggest draw.

He has a carefully crafted persona, which has helped him remain at the front and centre of the BTCC, and it’s something that he says he’s done deliberately, right from the start of his career with the Williams Renault team.

“Forging an on-track personality is something I did from a very early stage of my BTCC career,” says Plato. “I realised there was mileage in being a character. I was encouraged to



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Plato made BTCC debut in '97;
here he leads Renault team-
mate Alain Menu at Silverstone



Celebrating winning
first championship at
Brands Hatch in 2001

DOWKER/LAT



Plato's SEAT Leon gets
physical with Yvan Muller's
Vauxhall Astra, Donington '04

J BLOXHAM/LAT
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Chevrolet Cruze carried
Plato to his second
BTCC crown in 2010

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Still going strong: on the
Croft podium with Tom
Ingram and Ash Sutton

JEP/LAT



elements of the old-school deal, but I was much more involved in the epicentre of the marketing of the entire programme. I had more scope: I was involved with sponsors too, and the whole face of how you did a deal was changing. It then became obvious to me that you had to do a lot more to get these things to work. That was part of the game I was good at and it was something I enjoyed immensely.

“The landscape changed and it was about being there, positioning yourself and trying to get the best deals out there and be in the most competitive place possible. I was right at the heart of all of that with all of my deals, and I still very much am.”

Plato can create that buzz because of the success that he experienced almost from the minute he got into the BTCC. Things could have been very different had Nissan not withdrawn from the tin-top series at the end of 1994.

Plato, who had fallen off the single-seater ladder after the Formula 3 stage, was a regular tester with the Japanese firm’s attack in that season, pounding around Pembrey and refining all elements of the Primera’s handling.

That had come about because Plato was the cousin of Kieth O’dor, the factory race driver, and he was pushing hard to forge an opening.

“I knew that Eric van der Poele [O’dor’s team-mate] was on the way out,” remembers Plato. “I was trying to talk my way in the door there, but Nissan decided to pull out at the end of the year – that was that. I was getting thoroughly fed up with the whole thing in motor racing. I felt like I was banging my head against a brick wall. I couldn’t get anywhere.”

After a season in Renault Spiders in 1996 – when Plato dominated – the opening eventually came with the Williams Renault team. Three poles in his first three races and third place in the standings justified his belief in himself and his persistence in persuading Frank Williams

to take a punt on a rookie in the first place.

After the F1 dream was over, Plato had to reset and picking the BTCC was an easy option for him. “Back in those days, I still had the perception that sportscars was for old blokes,” he admits. “It was something you did when you had already had a career. When I had taken the ‘you’re not going to F1’ pill I did look around, but there was only one race a year that really counted in endurance racing and that was Le Mans – and it wasn’t properly televised. I guess the BTCC was a bit like that at that stage too in terms of the drivers on the grid, but it was going through a pretty major renaissance. There was a big buzz about the thing and the crowds were phenomenal.”

That is what drew the now 50-year-old in the first place, but what is it that keeps the BTCC at the heart of the UK motor racing calendar? Plato has firm opinions: “The TV, without a shadow of a doubt, is the major thing. The viewer can sit back for 25 minutes, watch and think, ‘Christ, that was a really good race.’”

“There’s action, overtaking, crashes, and it’s all compressed into a short, sharp show. You can see that every Sunday, at lunchtime, 1500 or 1700. People’s lives, over the past two decades, have become so busy that they haven’t got time to sit down and watch a grand prix – that’s why the TV numbers are disappearing.

“The BTCC is almost structured around the modern world – the format is perfect. People can associate with the road cars. They see a Honda or a Subaru, and they love it, as do the paying public. The drivers aren’t precocious superstars. There is fan engagement, you can see the mechanics at work in the pits and it’s great value for money. There are no pitstops or strategy: who is first on the road is first on the road. It’s exciting for drivers to be involved in it too. Once you’re there, you realise it’s one of the best games in town.”

And that’s why he is still here after all this time. Plato is unlikely to stop playing this game any time soon. ■

VETERAN RACER NEAL ON THE BTCC ‘IT’S BEEN ONE HELL OF A RIDE’

One driver who could rival Jason Plato for his association with the BTCC is Matt Neal. Plato’s long-term rival made his series debut in 1991 and has won three championship titles.

The 63-time BTCC race winner, who is second in the all-time tin-top race-victor list, has also tackled Supercars in Australia, made a one-off DTM outing, raced in ASCAR, Benelux TCR, the European Touring Car Championship and is a regular in historic racing, but it’s the domestic touring car championship that he will always be linked with.

“I don’t regret having been in the BTCC for so long – it’s been one hell of a ride,” says Neal. “But there are things I would

have liked to have done that have probably passed me by now. Le Mans would have been high on that list.

“But the reason I haven’t done those things is that we’ve had to fight for every penny to go racing. For us, this has been a commercial enterprise, and we wouldn’t have been able to do it without those backers that we have had. We have to justify what we do to investors. If you move onto the world stage – be that the World Touring Car Championship or TCR – then it is almost impossible. I doubt there is a driver there who is solely funded by sponsorship alone.”

And that is a crucial point. For Neal, his career has been enjoyable, but it has also been a fight to maintain his position on the grid. Nothing has been gifted and everything has been striven for.

“There were four or five times in my career where I thought it was all over,” says Neal. “And on most of those occasions, there were phone calls out of the blue that rescued things for me. It has been a fine line sometimes, but I am one of the luckiest men in the sport in that regard.”



Long-time Honda man
Neal took title #3 in '11



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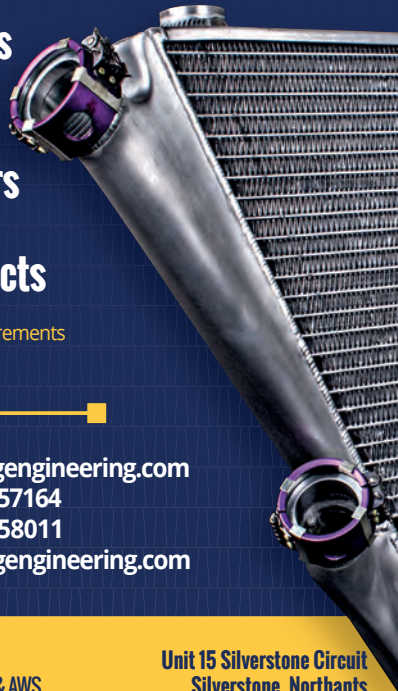
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DRIVING THE

Autosport got behind the wheel of five of the championship's greatest machines on a special day at Brands Hatch to celebrate six decades of tin-top action
Ben Anderson & Kevin Turner





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BTCC ICONS





JAGUAR Mk1 BIG CAT WAS FIRST TO HEAD THE PACK

As I roll gently down the Brands Hatch pitlane, ready to head out for my first run of the day, I feel like a villain in an early James Bond film. There are no machine guns lurking in the headlights of this particular Mk1 Jag, but even lacking rocket launchers this car was the weapon of choice in the early days of the BTCC in the late 1950s, and remains one of the top choices if you are a serious '50s historic tin-top racer today.

Everything about this car screams elegance and sophistication on the surface, but underneath the skin lurks the stuff of a seriously potent racing car. I've been on the receiving end of one of these big-engined beasts mercilessly thundering past on the Lavant Straight at Goodwood – they are seriously quick and I'm looking forward to seeing what this one can do.

In fact, this particular Mk1's former owner was driving one of three that blew me away at the 2014 Goodwood Revival. Stuart Graham and Richard Butterfield finished fourth in the St Mary's Trophy in one of the Big Cats, while I was limping Guy Harman's Fiat Abarth 1100 to the finish without the use of third gear.

This Mk1 was built as a historic racing car and was Butterfield's machine in Masters Top Hat events. It is to period specification, but with a Mk2 axle and a synchro box, as allowed under the Historic Racing Drivers' Club's pre-1966 regulations. About four years ago Butterfield built another and eventually sold this one.

Harman has been its proud owner for the past couple of years and HRDC founder Julius Thurgood has driven it. "An original car wouldn't be far different to this," he says. "It's the most user-friendly car you can drive, very predictable."

Although this car was built as a 'proper' racing car, it retains period features such as wooden steering wheel. I wasn't sure what to expect in all honesty, but I'm pleasantly surprised by just how much fun the Mk1 is to drive – even on a cold, damp and treacherous Brands Indy circuit.

'IT'S AN ABSOLUTE HOOT. THE REAR AXLE IS SO LIVELY YOU NEED TO STEER LEFT THROUGH THE RIGHT-HANDERS'

It's an absolute hoot, actually. The rear axle is so lively you feel the need to constantly steer left through the right-handers at Paddock Hill Bend, Druids and Clearways. Graham Hill Bend is a slightly different matter, owing to the downhill approach and

the tendency of the car (and most cars, for that matter) to push into understeer in the wet through the left-hander.

Jaguar pioneered disc brakes in the 1950s, but there isn't much stopping power today – partly a function of the conditions, no doubt. The steering also feels a bit vague, but it's so easy to light up the rear tyres that traction, particularly on this day, becomes the ultimate limiting factor. I find myself teasing the car around



Jaguar virtually invented the high-performance saloon genre with the 3.4 Mk1



Wood still features in racing Jag's cockpit

JAGUAR'S EARLY TIN-TOP DOMINATION

Jaguar's gargantuan Mk7 was the early saloon car pacesetter in the UK, but by the time the British Saloon Car Championship began it had given way to the Mk1 - a designation retrospectively applied once the Mk2 arrived in 1959. Both models, with the 3.4-litre and 3.8-litre XK engines that won Le Mans in C-types and D-types, were tin-top racing benchmarks. They racked up 42 championship race victories, but never scored a drivers' title, thanks to the class structure. The Mk2 won every round in 1961 and '62 before finally being outgunned by the arrival of American V8 muscle in '63.

the circuit, driving it in straight lines like a boat - set a course, aim for it, arrive, then set another.

With the rear stepping out constantly (all the cars here are rear-wheel drive), the Jaguar really holds your attention and requires lots of small steering corrections, but everything is controlled, not vicious, so you can have quite a lot of fun playing with this particular Big Cat, once your confidence builds and you realise it isn't going to try to kill you at every turn.

The XK engine was an absolute classic. The Mk1 dominated saloon car racing with the 3.4-litre version, which grew to 3.8 litres in the Mk2, as in the early E-types. The engine is really torquey, which means you can circulate comfortably in these conditions using only third and fourth gears. Second may be useful at Druids, or if you get held up in a race, but not in these conditions - you just get too much wheelspin. It has quite a racey gearchange for an old car, presumably a function of the fact that this one was built later for the pure purpose of historic racing, with greater attention paid to the linkage.

This car has raced regularly for the best part of two decades, so it feels well-sorted, despite the fact that it traces its roots to technology that is 60 years old! No wonder Tommy Sopwith, Jack Sears, Roy Salvadori and Graham Hill were among those who cleaned up in the early days of the British Saloon Car Championship in Mk1s. I bet they had a great time doing it too. ▶

10 OTHER GREAT CARS



FORD GALAXIE AMERICAN INVASION BEGINS

A landmark machine in many ways, the massive seven-litre V8-engined Galaxie ended Jaguar's tin-top hegemony and started an American invasion of the UK that lasted for more than a decade. Since the first British saloon car race in 1952, Jaguar had essentially outpowered its rivals, but when Jack Sears (above) arrived with the giant Ford in '63 the baton was passed on quickly.

Sears won first time out at Silverstone and went on to secure his second drivers' title. He was the man to beat in 1964 too, but lost the overall crown to Class B dominator Jim Clark and his Lotus Cortina. The Galaxie scored 13 points-paying wins and opened the V8 floodgates, with the smaller but more modern Mustang taking over the mantle in '65. To date, Jaguar has yet to win another BTCC race.



MINI THE SMALLEST BTCC MARVEL

Although Bill McGovern took three consecutive drivers' titles with the Sunbeam Imp, it's the front-wheel-drive Mini that is the most famous giant-killer.

John Whitmore took the Austin Mini Seven's first championship, winning the 1000cc and overall titles in 1961, with John Love doing likewise the following season. The Mini won at least one BTCC class crown every year for the rest of the decade, often with John Rhodes at the wheel, and in '65 both the Class A and B (1275cc Cooper version) titles fell to Mini drivers. Alec Poole topped that remarkable run of success by taking the overall championship in '69.

There were still class wins in the 1970s, but the highlight came at the end of the decade, with Richard Longman taking back-to-back overall titles with the 1275 GT (above).



FORD LOTUS CORTINA Mk1 CHAPMAN'S FAMOUS SALOON REVOLUTION

Few tin-top images are more iconic than Jim Clark three-wheeling or drifting a Lotus-developed Cortina. A class dominator in the mid-1960s, the 1600cc machine was also capable of taking on the V8 hordes, though it's probably worth pointing out that the great Clark scored all seven of the Cortina's outright BTCC victories, so it wasn't necessarily possible for mere mortals.

Even so, the Cortina's relatively light weight, enthusiastic engine and abusable chassis placed it nicely between the rumbling V8s and diminutive Minis of the era. A European Touring Car title winner in the hands of John Whitmore, the Cortina has also become a pacesetter and popular mainstay in pre-1966 historic tin-top competition.

Historic ace Simon Hadfield, who has scored many wins in Cortinas, is a big fan. "It was the first proper Q-car," reckons Hadfield. "It didn't look remarkably different to a standard two-door 1200 Cortina, but it was a rocketship. In 1963, in among Farina A40s and Austin Cambridges, this thing was unearthly. And some of the best drivers ever – everybody who was anybody – drove one, and they raced all over the world."

Our example is an original Alan Mann Cortina, resplendent in iconic red-and-gold livery. This car raced in the BTCC and ETCC in 1965-66, driven by the likes of John Whitmore, Frank Gardner, Lucien Bianchi, Jacky Ickx and Jackie Stewart. The names of

Stewart and Whitmore adorn its panels. It also competed in Sweden before being brought back to the UK in 2000. It was then "put back to what it should be", according to Alan's son Henry. That means it is genuine period spec, even having no rollcage.

It has never competed in historics and is saved only for demonstrations. It is thus one of the most original racing Cortinas in the world. "You would have to butcher it to race it

now," says Mann Jr, who has been gracious enough to wheel it out for one such run to celebrate the BTCC's 60th birthday with Autosport.

Because this car has survived unmolested by the relentless progress that infects most of historic motorsport, it feels an absolute world away from anything I have ever driven before on a circuit. It's just a road car,

basically – and a bloody old one at that! No rollcage, no harness, no frills. I'm told the engine produces only 130bhp – well down on the 'modern' racing examples that are pushing closer to 200.

It has no brakes to speak of, really, and certainly no power. I reach fourth gear early on the Brabham Straight and am left wondering where the next one is! The engine is struggling to run cleanly in the cold conditions too, and the car is very slow. It makes

**'THE UNMOLESTED
CORTINA IS AN
ABSOLUTE WORLD
AWAY FROM
ANYTHING I HAVE
EVER DRIVEN
ON A CIRCUIT'**



60 YEARS
1958-2018

A LEGEND FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Had it not been for the American V8 invasion, the giant-killing Ford Lotus Cortina might have ended Jaguar's domination of touring car racing anyway. Lotus boss Colin Chapman mated the humble Cortina with the 1600cc twin-cam four-cylinder engine he got Harry Mundy and Cosworth's Keith Duckworth to develop. Further chassis modification helped harness the extra power and the Cortina dominated its class. Jim Clark won Class B in every 1964 round to take the overall drivers' crown and the car remained a standard-setter – in Mk2 form – until the arrival of the Escort in '68.

you realise just how far things have moved on when you consider this was a cutting-edge racing tin-top just over 50 years ago.

On track this car feels like what it is – an antique museum piece. It's so delicate I feel like it could shatter into a million pieces if I even so much as think about leaning on it. It's like driving a Faberge egg with four wheels. I also don't feel worthy. This is a genuine piece of motorsport history – not to be messed with. It's an honour to even sit in it, let alone take it out for a spin.

Hadfield believes Cortinas are cars that improve the driver. "It's like a Formula Ford with a bodyshell – you've got to keep momentum up," he explains. "You can slide the car into the corner, but you can't really slide one out because you're losing time. With the Cortina you have to do it right – if you make a mistake it kills you [your momentum]. You have to get better. Every lap, every corner matters. You couldn't drive one without getting out with a grin on your face."

I honestly didn't exit this particular Cortina with a huge grin on my face – more a look of puzzled bemusement. But that's my own fault. I belong to a different time, one a world away from the period in which this car made its name. You cannot hold the past against something that is defined by it, and quite rightly has made no attempt whatsoever to 'get with the times'. ▶



No frills: our test Cortina is more original than most

MOTORSPORTIMAGES/SBLOKHAM/LAT



Subtle badge is one of the few giveaways this is not a normal Cortina

MOTORSPORTIMAGES/SBLOKHAM/LAT

10 OTHER GREAT CARS



MOTORSPORTIMAGES/SBLOKHAM/LAT

FORD MUSTANG & FALCON CONTINUING V8 SUCCESS

These two American V8s shared some parts, at least to begin with, and passed the BTCC benchmark baton between them from the mid-1960s to '70.

Perhaps the most recognisable of the Yank Tanks, the original Mustang took Roy Pierpoint to the drivers' title in 1965, while Jack Brabham and Jackie Oliver were also among the original Mustang-mounted winners over the next two seasons.

Frank Gardner's Falcon thundered to the 1967 title ahead of all the Mustangs, and the Falcon Sprint was still capable of winning races in '69, in the hands of Pierpoint and Dennis Leach. Gardner then completed the first Ford V8 era by setting the pace in the Boss 302 variant of the Mustang in '70, though he lost in the points to Class A ace Bill McGovern.



MOTORSPORTIMAGES/LAT

FORD CAPRI 'IDIOT-PROOF' WINNER

In terms of outright wins, the three-litre V6 Capri was *the* car of the Group 1 (or 1.5 as the loose regulations were often dubbed) era. Once the big American V8s had been expunged at the end of 1975, the Capri II and then III set the pace until the bigger-engined Rover SD1 got into its stride in '82.

Gordon Spice, Tom Walkinshaw and Andy Rouse helped rack up 61 victories, even though no Capri driver lifted the overall crown. The battling was just too fierce for anyone to stop dominators in the smaller-engined classes from taking the crown.

"Each year they got a bit better because Ford was quite good at homologating the bits we needed," says Capri king Spice, now 78. "It was a very easy car to drive – it was almost idiot-proof."



CHEVROLET CAMARO AN UNDERRATED 1970s POWERHOUSE

Ford's Galaxie and then the iconic Mustang started the V8 era, but the Camaro had an impact over a longer period. The first-generation Camaro scored its first win at Croft in 1969 and the final success came courtesy of Stuart Graham at the end of '75, the Camaro's 53rd outright victory in the series. After that, the big bangers were banned.

Despite the championship's class system working against it, the Camaro also took an outright title in 1973 with Frank Gardner, the Aussie winning six of the nine rounds. The thunderous big-bore machines brought major spectacle to the front of the grid and their considerable grunt made them tough to beat.

"I loved the Camaros and they did well for us," recalls Graham, still a touring car regular at Goodwood meetings. "We ran it in-house and my brother did all the engines. Once you got it sorted it was great – we quickly worked out we needed stiff springs and Bilstein did good work on the dampers.

"It was a good-handling car. People thought it was just about having more power than everything else, but it's no good if you can't get it around the corners. We could corner just as quickly as the small cars.

"It was always a bit short in the braking department. The Achilles' heel was the brakes because under the rules you couldn't do many changes. When manufacturers developed

a high-performance version of cars, they updated things as they broke. They forgot to upgrade things like brakes! The important thing was the 0-60mph time. I developed a smooth style that looked after the brakes. If you overdrive them for too long, big cars don't like it.

"The Camaro was underestimated in period. By 1975 there was nothing that could touch it, really."

'THERE IS UNDENIABLE CHIC TO HEADING OUT ON THE CIRCUIT IN THE SORT OF CAR ONCE DRIVEN BY JAMES HUNT'

Frontrunning historic racer John Young has brought a 450bhp example, featuring a 5.7-litre V8 engine, with four-speed gearbox. Built by Richard Lloyd as a recreation of the car in which James Hunt and then Autosport editor Robert Fearnall won the 1973 Tour of Britain, the Camaro has been successful in Tour Britannia and has also appeared at the Goodwood Festival of Speed.

Successful tin-top and sportscar racer Young had only just bought the car prior to our test and plans to convert it to Group 1 specification to compete for the Tony Dron Trophy within the Motor Racing Legends Historic Touring Car Challenge.

As Young has only recently got his hands on this beast it has yet to be refined properly in preparation for the racing programme he has in mind. The tyres have been swapped for crossplies but that's

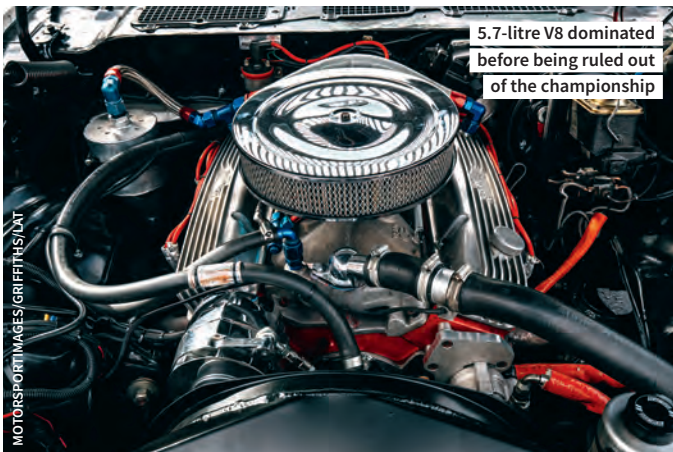


Anderson prepares to climb aboard Young's Camaro



MOTORSPIRITIMAGES/GRIFFITHS/LAT

5.7-litre V8 dominated before being ruled out of the championship



MOTORSPIRITIMAGES/GRIFFITHS/LAT

THE V8 SO GOOD IT GOT BANNED

The Camaro was Chevrolet's answer to the Ford Mustang and reached the UK in 1969. Roy Pierpoint, who had taken the Mustang's first BSCC win, also got the Camaro off the mark. Brian Muir then battled Frank Gardner's Mustang in '70 for overall wins as Group 2 regulations arrived. Gardner took the class crown, but lost the overall title to Class A benchmark Bill McGovern. Gardner switched to a Camaro the following season, securing the overall crown in '73. The V8 Chevy was the king of the Group 1 hill and won regularly until the '76 three-litre limit banished the dramatic monsters.

about it. The car's rideheight is too high – for touring not circuit racing yet – and that wonderful growling V8 engine features a heavy flywheel clutch and is running in a detuned state, so it's not yet as powerful as it should be. But all that at least makes it very driveable in these wet conditions.

There is undeniable chic to heading out on the Brands Hatch circuit in the sort of car once driven by James Hunt. It hasn't yet had the full benefit of Young's attention, so the throttle pedal feels unnecessarily stiff and the pedal set-up makes it impossible for me to heel-and-toe on the downshifts. Fortunately, the wide power band of the V8 means we only need third and fourth gears.

The servo brakes are not great, in truth, offering little feel and not much stopping power either (just as Graham describes), but there is little point trying to attack in these difficult conditions anyway. The power-steering also feels a bit strange until you get used to it being there.

But these minor gripes aside, the Camaro – even in its raw state – is still great fun to drive. It feels compliant, which gives it plenty of grip through the corners, and that inspires confidence. It does desperately want to oversteer coming over the crest at Clearways, but fortunately it's docile enough to remain comfortably under control. It feels a lot like the Jag, only sturdier and quicker – the sort of tank in which you would feel entirely confident heading into battle against whatever the Mustang could throw at you. ►

10 OTHER GREAT CARS



MOTORSPIRITIMAGES/LAT

BMW M3 (E30)

GERMAN TIN-TOP EFFICIENCY

The first version of BMW's greatest saloon arrived in 1987 and moved the class goalposts. The well-balanced, normally aspirated 2.3-litre machine was also capable of taking on more powerful cars; Frank Sytner managed an outright win before Ford's RS500 came on stream. A dominant Class B performance secured Sytner the overall title in '88.

Come the advent of the two-litre rules, the downsized M3 remained a frontrunner. Will Hoy beat the growing threats from Vauxhall and Toyota to take the 1991 crown before the car was replaced by the successful E36 318is.

"It was always a good-handling car, and it was a weapon in the corners," says Tim Harvey (above), who scored the E30's ninth and final overall BTCC victory. "The M3 was the ultimate in touring cars, getting the most out of your cornering."



MOTORSPIRITIMAGES/SUTTON

VAUXHALL CAVALIER

CLELAND'S HOMEGROWN HERO

At the start of its career it took on the BMW M3 and at the end it was fighting off hordes of foreign invaders. In between, the front-wheel-drive Cavalier took 19 points-paying wins and helped make John Cleland a star of the BTCC.

The early Dave Cook Engineering cars (above) couldn't quite topple BMW in the drivers' championship, although the result of 1992 might have been different had it not been for the infamous Steve Soper-Cleland clash at the finale.

RML subsequently took over the Cavalier programme and in 1995 Cleland used the bewinged version to defeat works efforts from Alfa Romeo, BMW, Ford, Honda, Peugeot, Renault, Toyota and Volvo to take his second drivers' title.

The Vectra replaced it for the following season, but it never lived up to the record set by the Cavalier.



GRIFFITHS/LAT
motorsport
 IMAGES

ROVER VITESSE GENTLE GIANT WITH A STING IN ITS TAIL

The big Rover V8 crossed the Group 1 and Group A eras, winning in both. After overcoming the Ford Capri, the Rover remained a threat until Ford moved the game forward with turbocharging.

The Vitesse won every round in 1983 and rising star Steve Soper would have won the drivers' crown had he not been disqualified for running adjustable rockers. Andy Rouse – who inherited that crown in his Class B Alfa Romeo GTV6 – made up for that the following year by using a Vitesse to take his third title, as Rovers won nine of the 11 rounds.

The Vitesse's final victory – and class title, with BTCC rookie Tim Harvey – came in 1987. And the car still rates as one of Harvey's favourites: "I couldn't have had a better first car in touring cars because it was a big, friendly, lovely beast. It was the perfect combination of grip, power, and on-the-limit handling.

"It was a well-balanced car, very progressive on the limit, not stiff and snappy, but it still reacted very well to driver input. It was a very easy car to get in. And anything with a Rover V8 in is good."

We are fortunate to be driving the first Group A Rover built in our test – even though this is, in fact, chassis 02. It was Soper's car throughout his '83 BTCC campaign and it also competed in the Tourist Trophy at Silverstone, a round of the European Touring Car Championship. The result was victory for Soper and Rene Metge. Owner and Rover expert (and former TWR mechanic) Ken

Clarke, who has nine Rovers on his books, runs the 3.5-litre machine in TT specification today.

At the end of 1983, chassis 02 was retired and later became a Bastos show car. It was eventually found in a breakers yard and saved by Andre Aerts. It had no engine or gearbox and lived in Aerts's showroom before a business partner sold it to a dealer.

Clarke eventually got his hands on it and restored it – one of his customers bought the sister chassis, so Ken made all the parts required for both. The Rover finally returned to competition in 2017, with second in class at Oulton Park a highlight.

The first thing you notice climbing into the SD1 is the basic interior – all very 1980s. Only the rev counter has been updated. Clarke wanted to keep everything simple and to spec, and

few know that spec as well as he does. It's rough and ready on the inside, but gorgeous from the outside.

The V8 engine needs just a tickle of throttle to coax it into life at first, because it can easily flood with fuel when cold. It's reluctant initially, but eventually roars into life and we are away. On a freezing-cold, damp day at Brands this is an absolute beast of a car to drive. Tim Harvey reckons they were good cars in the

'I FEEL LIKE THIS ROVER IS TRYING TO KILL ME AT EVERY TURN. IT'S A REAL MONSTER AND I CLING ON FOR DEAR LIFE'



LAST OF THE V8-ENGINED WINNERS

The 3.5-litre Rover V8 arrived in the championship in 1980. There were a few teething troubles, but Jeff Allam won the final three rounds of '81 and the writing was on the wall for the hitherto dominant Ford Capri. Honours were shared in '82, helping Class C Mazda RX-7 racer Win Percy take the crown. Group A rules were brought in the following year and the Tom Walkinshaw Racing Rovers dominated, only to be thrown out after a protracted legality battle. Andy Rouse won all but four of the 11 rounds on his way to the '84 title and the rumbling Rover took the last of its 39 wins in '87.

wet, but I feel like this one is trying to kill me at every turn! It's super-stiff and totally unforgiving.

"They only got stiffer," is Clarke's reply when I query this. He says there is no adjustable damping either, so there is very little to be done, only a rollbar to disconnect. The V8 engine has a wide power band between 4000 and 7000rpm but when you reach it the thing just wants to light up the rear tyres – even so much as a glance at the throttle and the car just snarls angrily back at you.

It's a real monster, and I spend pretty much my entire run just clinging on for dear life, living on my wits, constantly correcting the steering and trying desperately not to throw it at the scenery.

Clarke asks me at the end of my run to report temperature readings, but I'm simply too busy trying to stay alive to provide any useful information. On slicks at Silverstone in bone-dry conditions I bet it's absolutely mighty. But this is not such a day.

This car is pretty much the opposite of the Camaro – specced properly to race but just too stiff. The Camaro is benign and thus perfect for the conditions, but would quickly get found out in a proper dry race against the Rover. But even though the experience was emotionally draining, I loved my time in the SD1. I imagine what it would be like to throw it around at the Silverstone Classic and then I can start to see exactly what Harvey was talking about. ►



The wheel Anderson had to work to stay on-track in the wet



Clarke's car is back in its '83 trim

10 OTHER GREAT CARS



ALFA ROMEO 155 INTRODUCING THE DEVIL

Unlike most of the cars on this list, the 155 only had one year in the sun before it was swiftly surpassed during the intense battles of the Super Touring era, but it brought about a change that is still evident in touring car racing today.

When the Italian works operation arrived in 1994, its 155 sported a front splitter and a rear wing thanks to some clever interpretations of the homologation regulations. Rival teams didn't like it but the rulemakers allowed the arrival of downforce, even though they did tweak the rules slightly. The immediate results were the drivers' title for Gabriele Tarquini and manufacturer laurels for Alfa.

The longer-term impact was that aero became one of the key areas of touring car development, improving lap times at the expense of the racing.



FORD MONDEO BEST OF THE GREATEST ERA?

The Mondeo earns its place here largely for being the ultimate car of the Super Touring era, though the 1998-99 Nissan Primera could also make a convincing claim to that honour.

The Prodrive-built V6 Mondeo dominated the 2000 season, with Ford reputedly spending £10-12million to finish 1-2-3 thanks to Alain Menu, Anthony Reid and Rickard Rydell. Such excess for a domestic tin-top series helps explain why Super Touring imploded, but the last cars of the era were absolute engineering gems.

In its various forms, the Mondeo was a BTCC regular after it arrived in 1993. The original Andy Rouse Engineering-built cars were winners, Paul Radisich finishing third in the drivers' table, but there were some also some uncompetitive versions before Prodrive hit the jackpot in 2000.



FORD RS500 WHEN TURBOS RULED TIN-TOPS

More than any other car, Ford's turbo saloon comes to mind when talking about the BTCC's most spectacular machines. With over 500bhp and limited tyre sizes, the RS500 always had more power than grip, something that tended to get more pronounced as the car voraciously ate its rubber during races. That, along with regular flame-spitting, made the car memorable to watch even if it wasn't battling wheel to wheel.

Having already scored success with the XR4ti and RS Cosworth, Andy Rouse brought the RS500 – complete with a bigger intercooler and twin injectors – to the BTCC at the end of 1987. He took the car's first series victory at Donington Park in September and the RS500 immediately made all other Class A cars obsolete. No other car would win a BTCC round until the move to the single-class two-litre era in 1991.

Tim Harvey, who won two races in the RS500's heyday, remains a fan. "As a racing car, probably the Rover SD1 was better, but in terms of fun the RS500 was unparalleled – 560bhp and 175mph was pretty exciting," says the 1992 champion. "The balance of the car was totally dominated by the power and the turbo lag. You're not talking about a finely honed handling machine – it was a hammer to crack a nut, but immense fun.

"Everybody was fixated with power in the late 1980s. I remember, on the old Grand Prix circuit at Silverstone, going

through the fast version of Club in fifth gear and having wheelspin. Tyres made more difference than anything else because no tyre was going to handle that sort of power easily. You had to have a lot of talent to pedal one of those quickly."

This one was raced by Chris Hodgetts in 1989. Current owner Craig Davies was a Production Saloons racer when the RS500s were in the BTCC and always admired them: "I was looking at the RS500 guys and would have loved to get in there with them."

'I ABSOLUTELY LOVE DRIVING THIS CAR, BUT EVENTUALLY IT BITES BACK AND I SPIN UNDER BRAKING'

Davies stopped racing, but then the Hodgetts car came up for sale, having lived in a Brooklyn showroom. It still had (and has) some of its original BTCC decals, and Davies went for it. He has successfully campaigned it since and the 550+bhp machine is one of the fastest examples still competing.

As a young lad, I grew up being ferried around by my parents in a (later) Ford Sierra Sapphire Cosworth. They ultimately persisted with the 4WD version, after the 2WD's turbo lag helped my mum into a ditch with kids in the back on an icy winter's day. Because of that personal history, this is the car I'm most looking forward to.

It's clear that Davies and his crew have put a lot of TLC into this machine. Everything looks right, and the fact that he has raced it

RS500 BTCC WINS

1987 (2)

Andy Rouse **1**
Pete Hall **1**

1988 (12, all rounds)

Andy Rouse **9***
Steve Soper **1**
David Sears **1***
Gianfranco Brancatelli **1**
Jerry Mahony **1**

1989 (13, all rounds)

Andy Rouse **6**
Robb Gravett **4**
Tim Harvey **2**
Laurence Bristow **1***
Tiff Needell **1***

1990 (13, all rounds)

Robb Gravett **9***
Andy Rouse **4***
David Sears **1***
Mike Smith **1***

TOTALS (40)

Andy Rouse **20****
Robb Gravett **13***
Tim Harvey **2**
David Sears **2****
Pete Hall **1**
Steve Soper **1**
Gianfranco Brancatelli **1**
Jerry Mahony **1**
Laurence Bristow **1***
Tiff Needell **1***
Mike Smith **1***

** includes two shared drives

* includes one shared drive



Anderson quickly feels at home in ex-Hodgetts racer



RS500 has distinctive rear wing, but was defined by its turbo

THE GREATEST BTCC MACHINE

If the Super Touring era is widely regarded as the BTCC's high point in terms of competition, the Ford RS500 takes some beating when it comes to the championship's greatest cars. Dramatic and dominant, the RS500 took 40 race wins, not to mention the successes scored by its predecessor, the RS Cosworth. "I never felt the Cosworth was the greatest touring car, but last year at the Goodwood Members' Meeting they brought a Texaco car over from the German Ford museum," says ex-works driver Steve Soper. "It was like a rocketship, unbelievably quick. After that I changed my mind."

successfully suggests it will be well-sorted. "It handles well in the wet," he tells me as I gear up for my run, and he's right – it is phenomenally sure-footed and smothered in grip in a way the SD1 wasn't in these conditions. That's helped by a 'wet' engine map that detunes it to around 450bhp, which makes it very driveable.

But it's still a seriously quick bit of kit, able to reach fifth gear at 7000rpm just before Paddock Hill Bend. I absolutely love driving this car – the handling and power just inspire you to keep trying to go quicker and quicker. Eventually it starts to bite back. I have a big moment at Paddock, then a spin under braking for Druids, so I decide to call it a day and head back to the pits. I'm getting carried away and having too much fun...

It almost feels like the SD1 and RS500 have switched places compared to what Harvey remembers of them – but that's probably a function of modern understanding and tyres.

Many formulas eventually reach a point where everything starts to get out of control and must be reined in. That's not always for the better, but in the case of the BTCC the end of the fire-breathing RS500 sparked the category's greatest era – effectively turning it into a Super Touring world championship on British soil. The legacy of that, and everything that came before, is why the BTCC remains so significant. ■

Our thanks to Brands Hatch, Julius Thurgood, Guy Harman, Henry Mann, John Young, Ken Clarke and Craig Davies

10 OTHER GREAT CARS



VAUXHALL ASTRA COUPE PACESETTER FOR A NEW DAWN

Vauxhall was one of the first to commit to the low-cost BTC-Touring rules that replaced Super Touring and, given a blank sheet of paper, it created a car that would go on to dominate for four seasons. The Astra Coupé was the class of the field – so much so that the works Triple Eight team was asked to run the cars at 90% throttle to allow for some competition on the grid.

Jason Plato, James Thompson and Yvan Muller were the masters of the British machine and took four crowns between them. Between 2001 and '04, the two-litre four-cylinder Astra took 62 wins from 96 races. It wasn't until Team Dynamics introduced the controversial Honda Integra – which was unavailable to buy in UK showrooms – that the Vauxhall's star began to wane.



HONDA CIVIC THE KING OF THE NGTC AGE

Next Generation Touring Cars arrived in the BTCC in 2011 and really took over the following season. The concept of spec parts to keep costs down has certainly been a success, with bulging grids and narrow title fights almost every year.

Despite the fact that, underneath, the cars are similar, some teams and models have proven more successful than others. And chief among these is the ninth-generation FK2 Civic, thanks to its excellent aerodynamics and handling.

Since its introduction in 2012, the Civic – in hatchback, Touring (nee estate) and Type R forms – has won 62 races and four drivers' titles with works ace Gordon Shedden and Eurotech/Pirtek star Andrew Jordan. And it is still winning in '18, despite the works-supported Team Dynamics team moving on to the new FK8 model.



JIM CLARK'S BTCC WINS

On his days off from starring on the world stage, the double Formula 1 world champion was a spectacular home hero in tin-tops

Kevin Turner



Jim Clark is one of motorsport's true legends, with two Formula 1 world titles, 25 championship victories and an

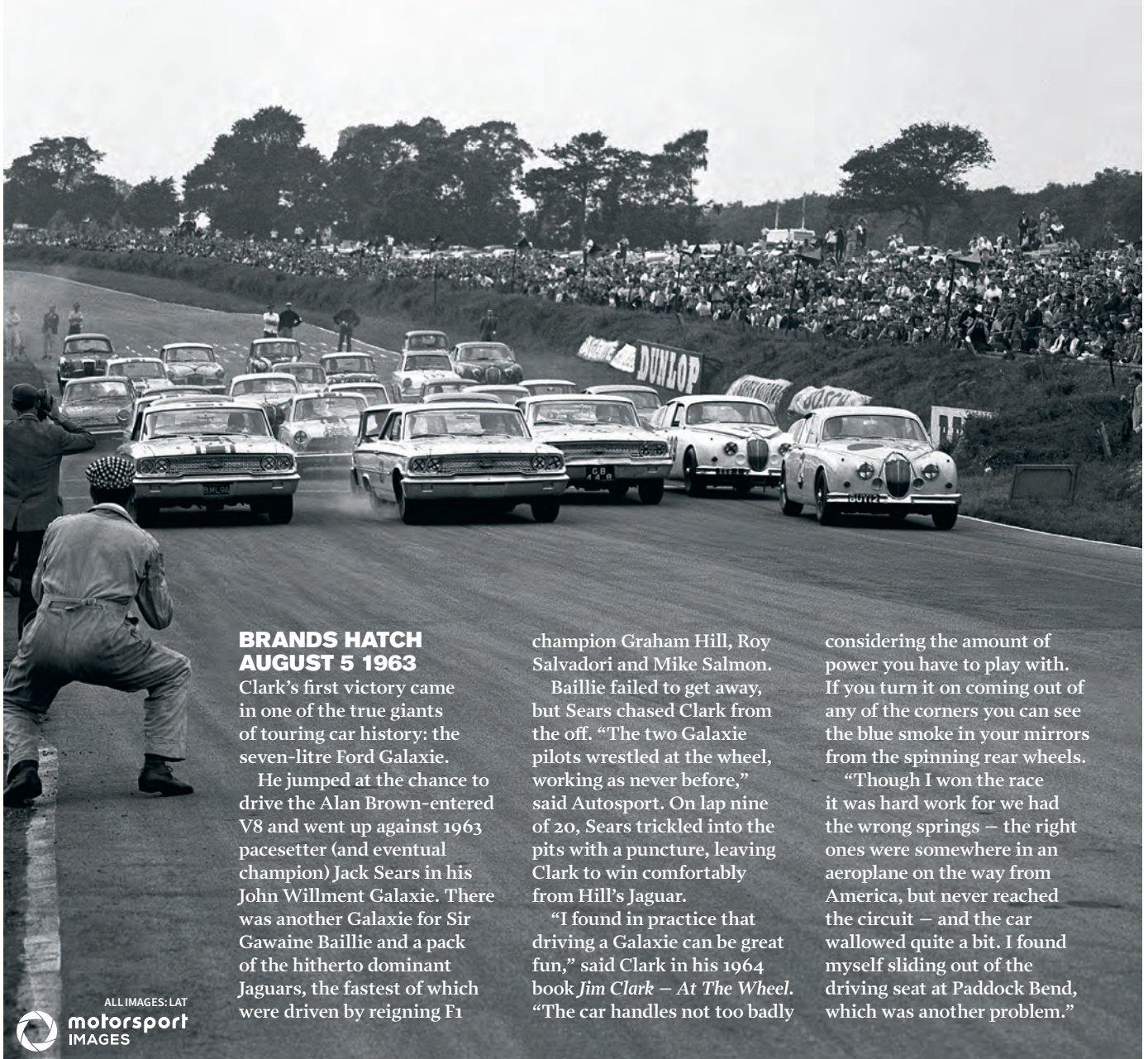
Indianapolis 500 win to his name. He also took the 1964 British Touring Car Championship – or British Saloon Car Championship as it was then called.

Clark's title success came largely through his complete domination of Class B (for up to two-litre machines) in his works 1600cc Ford Lotus Cortina, but it was his three-wheeling challenge for overall honours that captured the

imagination. Although rarely able to defeat top V8s in the hands of Jack Sears, Jack Brabham and Jackie Oliver, Clark finished on the podium in every race of the 1964 campaign and took three outright wins.

Combined with his one-off Ford Galaxie outing and his subsequent victories in the Cortina, that means Clark scored eight series successes.

Clark is arguably the BTCC's most famous driver so, 50 years after his death, the championship's 60th birthday is an ideal time to look back at the races Clark conquered.



BRANDS HATCH AUGUST 5 1963

Clark's first victory came in one of the true giants of touring car history: the seven-litre Ford Galaxie.

He jumped at the chance to drive the Alan Brown-entered V8 and went up against 1963 pacesetter (and eventual champion) Jack Sears in his John Willment Galaxie. There was another Galaxie for Sir Gawaine Baillie and a pack of the hitherto dominant Jaguars, the fastest of which were driven by reigning F1

champion Graham Hill, Roy Salvadori and Mike Salmon.

Baillie failed to get away, but Sears chased Clark from the off. "The two Galaxie pilots wrestled at the wheel, working as never before," said Autosport. On lap nine of 20, Sears trickled into the pits with a puncture, leaving Clark to win comfortably from Hill's Jaguar.

"I found in practice that driving a Galaxie can be great fun," said Clark in his 1964 book *Jim Clark – At The Wheel*. "The car handles not too badly

considering the amount of power you have to play with. If you turn it on coming out of any of the corners you can see the blue smoke in your mirrors from the spinning rear wheels.

"Though I won the race it was hard work for we had the wrong springs – the right ones were somewhere in an aeroplane on the way from America, but never reached the circuit – and the car wallowed quite a bit. I found myself sliding out of the driving seat at Paddock Bend, which was another problem."

**OULTON PARK
APRIL 11 1964**

Now Cortina-mounted, Clark arrived at the third round of 1964 having taken two second places and looked set for another.

The Scot's Cortina and the Galaxie of Baillie made good starts, but Sears soon powered ahead. "There was one vehicle about which he could do absolutely nothing: the Willment-entered Galaxie of Jack Sears," said Autosport. But a defective oil seal caused the big V8 to suffer brake failure and then a small fire.

Clark was left with a big lead as team-mate John Whitmore tried to find a way past Baillie.

It was a year after the Cortina first appeared and Autosport was impressed with the car's progress: "Now they can beat all but the fastest Galaxies and Clark's new record lap time is two seconds under Graham Hill's best-ever time with a 3.8 Jaguar."

Clark made it a particularly successful trip by winning two other races at the same meeting – the Oulton Park Trophy for sportscars (in a Lotus 19) and the GT race (Lotus Elan).

**CRYSTAL PALACE
MAY 18 1964**

The V8s limited Clark to third at Aintree and Silverstone, but more was expected at the tight confines of Crystal Palace. This meeting was more notable for the 'arrival' of Jochen Rindt in Formula 2, but it also provided Clark's third outright BTCC win in the over-1300cc race.

Contrary to expectations, Sears took pole and led the small field away in the Willment Galaxie. The American heavy metal again looked tough to beat, but then a tyre blew, putting Sears out. That left Clark to lead Team Lotus team-mate Peter Arundell in a Cortina 1-2-3-4.

The result also meant that Clark had reached the maximum score possible and essentially clinched the title with two of the eight rounds to go.



Crystal Palace
May 18 1964

**OULTON PARK
SEPTEMBER 19 1964**

At the Gold Cup meeting Sears once again led from pole, edged away and then hit problems. This time it was ignition trouble that thwarted the Galaxie, handing Clark the lead.

There was another fast V8, but Jack Brabham had made a poor start in Alan Brown's Galaxie. Clark's F1 rival soon charged through to second, but he could make no impression on the leader, being 17.2 seconds behind after 15 of the 19 laps.

Not for the last time, the heavy V8's brakes started to wilt anyway, allowing Bob Olthoff's Cortina to take second, 18.2s behind Clark.



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Goodwood
April 19 1965

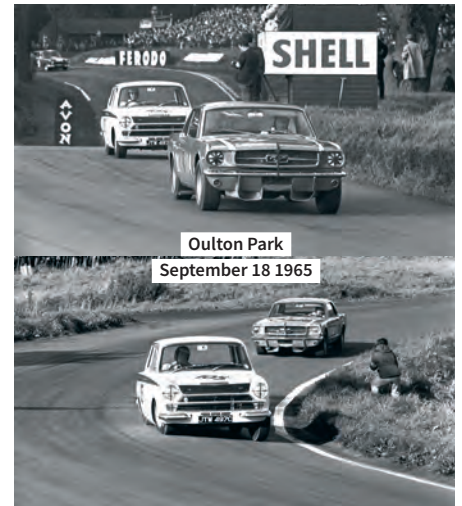
**GOODWOOD
APRIL 19 1965**

Clark's 1965 schedule was a busy one. Defending his tin-top crown was not a priority after the failures in F1 and the Indy 500 – both of which he put right in '65 – but he still managed to pack in some Cortina outings.

The Goodwood meeting in April was another weekend in which Clark won three races – the *Sunday Mirror* International Trophy F1 race (in a Lotus 33), the Lavant Cup for sportscars (a rare success for the Lotus 30) and the St Mary's Trophy in the Cortina.

The preceding F3 race had been delayed due to the awful weather, so the touring car contest was cut from 10 to five laps.

In the wet, Clark and Sears (now also driving a Cortina) easily overcame the more powerful Ford Mustang of poleman Mike Salmon. Despite the race's truncated length, Clark beat Sears by an impressive 11s. Salmon was excluded for a non-homologated rear-axle ratio after the race, handing third and top big-banger honours to eventual 1965 champion Roy Pierpoint's Mustang – another 13.6s behind Sears!



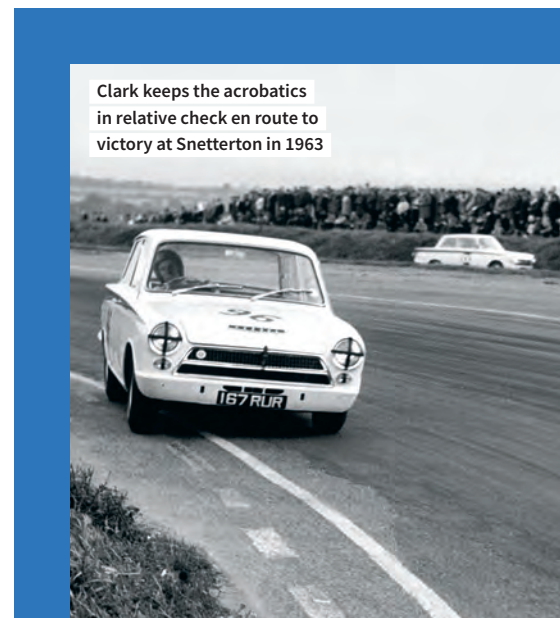
Oulton Park
September 18 1965

**OULTON PARK
SEPTEMBER 18 1965**

Luck was with Clark at the Oulton Park Gold Cup meeting, scene of the final 1965 round. As well as beating Hill to the British F2 crown by a single point despite a spin while leading, Clark received a helping hand in the 19-lap touring car battle.

Clark and Sears started well to lead the pack, while Brabham made a poor start in his Alan Brown Racing Mustang. Pierpoint triggered a multi-car incident at the first corner and was hit by several cars, but Brabham managed to pick his way through. The 4.7-litre V8 soon powered past the Cortinas. "From there on only Clark could keep him in sight," said Autosport.

Brabham crossed the line 4.2s ahead of Clark – who beat team-mate Sears by a whopping 38.4s – but the Mustang was then excluded due to a technical infringement concerning the valve springs. Clark thus inherited victory and, crucially, Pierpoint scored the extra points he needed to beat Mini man Warwick Banks to the drivers' title.



Clark keeps the acrobatics
in relative check en route to
victory at Snetterton in 1963



Brands Hatch
August 29 1966

BRANDS HATCH AUGUST 29 1966

Clark again contested a part-season in 1966 and invariably set the class pace when he appeared. The quickest of the V8s were usually too fast in the dry, but Clark still scored two more wins for the soon-to-be-replaced Cortina Mk1.

The first came on the Brands Hatch Grand Prix Circuit, in a race that started in slippery conditions. "Clark took full advantage of a wet track to dominate the opening saloon car race in his Cortina, despite a magnificent effort by Jackie Oliver in the Mustang," said David Pritchard in Autosport.

Clark made a fine start to grab a lead he never lost in the 20-lap Edward Lewis Trophy race. Oliver led the heavy metal and finished second, but most of the other V8s hit trouble, allowing Peter Arundell to compete the podium in his Cortina.

The track dried in the second half of the race, but the wheel-waving Clark won by 4.6s.

OULTON PARK SEPTEMBER 17 1966

Clark completed his Gold Cup tin-top hat-trick after a dogged pursuit of Oliver's Mustang and Brian Muir's Galaxie paid dividends late on.

The large entry was split into two, with a 1300cc cutoff. Despite a typically good start, Clark was soon overpowered by Oliver's DR Racing machine, while Muir also made it by the Cortina after a slow start. Neither V8, however, could shake off Clark, who was using Lotus's spare car after his own had blown in practice. "Clark was performing his usual acrobatics and closing up under braking on the Galaxie at every corner," said Autosport.

Then, with four laps to go, Oliver suffered stub-axle failure and lost a wheel. Two laps after that Muir arrived at Old Hall as the brake pedal went to the floor and he crashed. "Clark's reactions were instantaneous," said our report. "As quick as a flash he nipped round the back of the Galaxie to go on to an unchallenged victory."

Clark beat Oliver to pole and won the first heat at the Brands finale, but it was his turn to hit trouble in the second heat. The result was decided on aggregate and so Clark's Oulton success was his final outright BTCC victory. Without him, the V8s had things largely their own way and would be undefeated in 1967.

DID YOU KNOW

JIM CLARK WAS THE ONLY DRIVER TO WIN BRITISH TOURING CAR RACES OVERALL IN THE FORD LOTUS CORTINA

CLARK ON THE CORTINA

Jim Clark was an important part of the Ford Lotus Cortina's development. He was keen from the early stages of the project, the keys to which were the work on the twin-cam 1600cc engine done by Lotus boss Colin Chapman and Harry Mundy, and suspension changes over the basic Cortina.

Clark first drove a Cortina with a 140bhp race engine in October 1962 and was impressed: "It really surprised me and

gave me just about as much of a thrill as a Formula 1 car. On the way to Snetterton for the trials I thought the acceleration was out of this world for a family saloon.

"On the circuit for the first time I found the handling a bit odd so we experimented with tyre pressures and shock absorbers to sort things out."

At a subsequent test at Silverstone he and Chapman made real progress. "The road was dry and it was here that I realised just how good the roadholding really was," reckoned Clark in his book

Jim Clark - At The Wheel.

By the end of that test, the Lotus Cortina was lapping close to the existing saloon lap record, held by a 3.8-litre Jaguar, and Clark reckoned they had "quite a bit up our sleeve".

'IF WE WENT INTO CASCADES HARD ENOUGH BOTH INSIDE WHEELS CAME OFF THE GROUND, BUT THIS WAS A VERY HAIRY THING AND NOT TO BE RECOMMENDED'

He then raced the car at Snetterton (pictured) at the end of 1963, winning his class and finishing second overall to Jack Brabham's Ford Galaxie.

"This proved to be a real laugh," wrote Clark. "I kept finding the inside front wheel lifting off the ground. This set me thinking, so I started going closer and closer to the semi-circular rubber tyres which mark the inside of the bends. Eventually I found that I could tricycle the corner with the front wheel over the tyres on the inside.

"I again drove the car

at Oulton Park in practice and here I had another odd experience. I found that if I went into Cascades hard enough both inside wheels would come off the ground, but this was a very hairy thing and not to be recommended if you wanted to stay on the road in one piece.

"I had a lot of fun on these occasions. It was a great relief to find that I could still enjoy light-hearted dicing after the tremendous strain of the Grand Prix battles which had won me the championship."



THE SOPERMAN WHO SHOULD HAVE BEEN KING

Steve Soper is one of the greatest names in touring-car racing, yet he never (for keeps) won the BTCC crown. Autosport looks back at his career on home soil

Kevin Turner

The history books do not record Steve Soper as a British Touring Car champion. His 14 victories don't put him into the top 20 on the winners' list either, and yet the 66-year-old is a tin-top legend. Rather like Stirling Moss in Formula 1, Soper isn't just one of the best drivers not to have won the title, he's one of the greatest to have appeared in the category.

Soper played pretty much every role in the BTCC: the young champion stripped of the crown through a technicality; a supersub wreaking havoc on the regulars; a serious title challenger who narrowly missed out; the veteran persuaded out of retirement in an attempt to bring success to an uncompetitive car. ▶



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In some respects, the first one was the most important – and painful. A single-make king, Soper was third in his first BTCC season in 1982, driving a Class D Austin Metro, and then stepped up to the big time with a Class A rear-wheel-drive Rover Vitesse.

Many thought he'd struggle with the change, but they were wrong. "That season put Steve Soper on the map," he says. "I'd been messing around with one-make front-wheel-drive championships. I believe my strengths are technical – reasonably good driver with a technical feeling of how to get the car better than most people, so I'd pick a one-make championship in its first year, do it, win it and move on."

"Through being in the right place at the right time I got [British Leyland sponsor] Hepolite on my side, so we could do what I wanted. With that we secured a Rover. There were a lot of sceptics that said I couldn't drive a RWD car. Off we went and, compared to FWD, it was so easy! It was a doddle to win races."

Soper won first time out at Silverstone and ended the 11-round campaign with five victories and three other podiums. His successes included going head to head with BMW ace Hans Stuck, further raising his stock.

"Chelysmore BMW Motorsport borrowed Stuck and he did three races," adds Soper. "It was a good car and we had some fantastic battles together, and most of the time I beat him, and it got their attention. They asked him why he hadn't won so he had to be complimentary about me! They offered me a contract and I refused, which was probably a mistake, but 1983, the Rover and the BTCC put me into the touring car motorsport world."

The Rover made him champion too. For a few months. Then the engine-rocker assembly on his Tom Walkinshaw Racing-run machine was found to be illegal. Soper and his team-mates Pete Lovett and Jeff Allam were thrown out of first, second and fourth in the championship.

"The problem is, back then, Tom Walkinshaw drove a horse and cart through the rulebook and every time they picked them up on something he got away with it," says Soper. "So when they found something on my car that was no advantage at all – he'd made a hydraulic tappet adjustable for easy maintenance – they got him on that. It wasn't in the rules."

"It was annoying they took it away."

At the time, Soper took it quite well because he'd made his point – to himself as well as others: "I was in my element because it was something I didn't know I could do. Even if we had a good car I still had two team-mates who thought they were better than me. When Stuck came over it raised my game and raised my profile."

Soper now started his international touring car career and only



dropped into the BTCC on the odd occasion over the next few years. But he made an impact whenever he appeared.

In 1984 he started two races, scoring a first and a second, and then in '88 he played his part in some of the most famous battles the BTCC has ever seen. By then Soper was one of the stars of the crack Eggenberger Ford squad in the European Touring Car Championship. The BTCC was now also on BBC *Grandstand*, so when Soper turned up to take on UK pacesetter Andy Rouse's Ford RS500 it created some memorable battles.

Soper won at Thruxton, while Rouse got his revenge at Brands Hatch and Donington Park. It's the Brands GP race that stands as one of the BTCC's finest as the well-balanced Eggenberger machine repeatedly slipped ahead, only to be outpowered by Rouse.

"I enjoyed the races I did with Eggenberger, when I managed to persuade Rudi Eggenberger and Ford to do it," says Soper. "That was my push. Rudi didn't really want to come over to the UK. Andy had something to prove because he wanted that [works] deal. Andy would turn up with the best he had to try to beat us. They were good fun."

"Eggenberger wouldn't ever build a sprint engine and we



CURRENT BTCC COMMENTATOR AND 1992 CHAMPION TIM HARVEY GIVES HIS VIEW ON 'SOPERMAN'

He was my touring car hero. He was the man – he had a reputation for any car he got in, within two laps, he'd absolutely annihilate whatever the quickest time had been in that car. He was just ballistic.

My finest ever race was when I beat him at Pembrey [in 1992]. Beating Steve was quite an accomplishment – there are certain ways

you can measure your ability and I always felt I had good, quality team-mates, but beating Steve in the same car meant I must have been able to drive pretty well on that day!

He dipped in and out of championships and didn't consistently do a single-driver championship enough. He didn't do enough years in the BTCC in competitive machinery doing a full season.

Steve was always someone who raced to win, perhaps more to win than to bag points. That's no criticism – he was one of the best drivers I ever raced against.

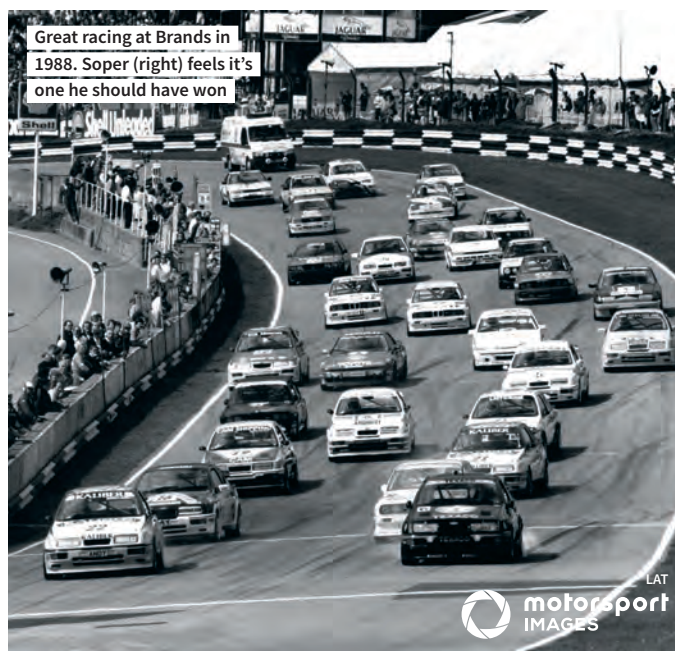
He didn't have a weakness. He was very good technically – he worked on absolutely every element of the car. These were the days before data-logging so you had to understand and feel the car to make the right changes. He was a great qualifier and a fantastic overtaker. Very accomplished.



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weren't allowed adjustable boost. I felt my car was better at Brands, but every time we got onto that back straight he blew past me.

"On the last lap when we came out onto the back straight, I was ahead and I hugged the inside, on the right. I knew he couldn't get past me and going into the next right I wouldn't have backed off. But on the right was a clown who'd gone off, looking like he was about to rejoin. I am a coward at the best of times and I came off the throttle because I was convinced he was going to come back on the circuit. As he got a wheel onto the circuit he saw us and didn't go any further. That was a frustration. It was a good race, but it wasn't great for me because I wanted to win and felt I should have."

Soper became a BMW driver the following year and more cameo appearances in 1991 netted three further wins. A more sustained programme in '92 was winless, but Soper did help Vic Lee Motorsport team-mate Tim Harvey to the drivers' title.

"My main programme was DTM," continues Soper. "In 1991 with Prodrive and '92 with Vic Lee I wanted to come over and do races that didn't clash. That was my push with the UK. Germany were more than happy for me to do it as long as my priority was DTM."

He was nevertheless a key player in one of the most infamous

moments in BTCC history. Harvey, John Cleland (Vauxhall) and Toyota's Will Hoy all went to the Silverstone finale with a chance of the crown. After contact on the first lap, Soper charged through to assist Harvey in his fight with Cleland. The result was both the Cavalier and Soper's BMW in the gravel and Cleland's famous "the-man's-an-animal" line.

"If I do a talk at a club night, the Cleland thing is always the first question," says Soper, hiding quite well his exasperation at having to talk about it again. "There's a lot of belief it put touring cars on the map. Whether it did I don't know, but I don't think it harmed touring cars. It's a memorable race because there was a lot of aggravation afterwards."

"I believe that Vauxhall had more pressure to win that championship than Toyota and BMW. It started off with David Leslie. I touched him and he punched me and knocked me out [on-track]! From the word go on the first lap they were taking no prisoners. I came out of that looking like the bad guy, which I can live with, but it's a memorable race, not a great one."

Apart from the clash, that race did demonstrate Soper's remarkable ability to charge through a field.

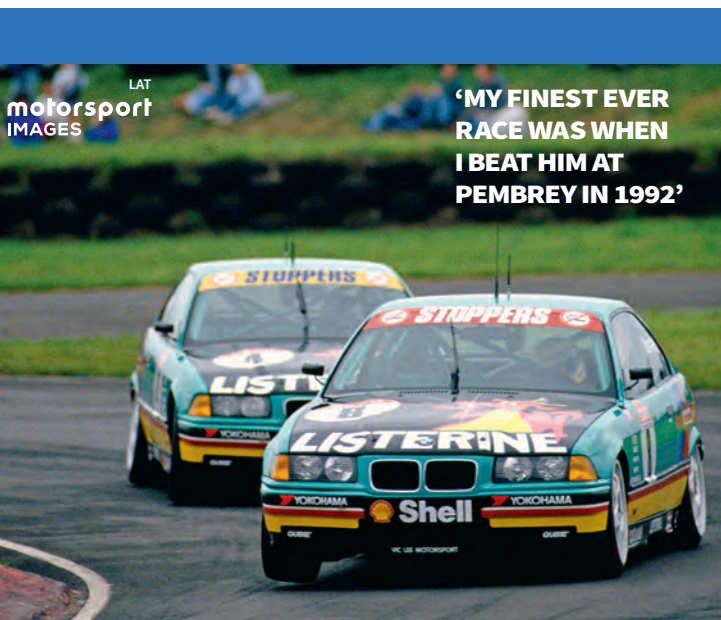
"It did make me wonder what they were doing!" he says, now more interested. "I find leading a race difficult. If I've got a clear advantage and can get away, fine. But if I'm in the lead I don't find it the easiest task. What I find very easy is to overtake. Some of my greatest results have been starting at the back of the grid. I think it's my one-make background, which gave me racecraft."

The following season provided Soper's best chance to win the BTCC for a decade. The deal was late coming together, but Schnitzer committed to a full campaign with the 318i for Soper and Joachim Winkelhock. "Steve gave a major contribution to get our team going," said team boss Charly Lamm at the time. "He knew the circuits, he knew the car and he could say, 'This is better' or, 'This side of the car needs improving'."

Soper duly led Winkelhock in a BMW one-two at the Silverstone opener and soon the two were slugging it out for the title.

"That was perceived to be my championship by everybody, including Schnitzer, not that they were going to tell Jo what to do," explains Soper. "We probably had as good a car against the opposition as we were ever going to get. I started off well and was leading it, and it became apparent it was between me and Jo. We were allowed to fight it out, which I respect. When Jo's on form he's difficult to beat and he was on form."

"He had a good roll over the last few races, with no failures or accidents. My roll was at the beginning of the year; at the end I ▶



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'MY FINEST EVER
RACE WAS WHEN
I BEAT HIM AT
PEMBREY IN 1992'



Focus was on the DTM in 1992 (this is the Norisring), with only a bit-part BTCC role

MCKLEIN



One of three BTCC victories in 1993 was scored at Silverstone

had one accident and another accident due to a failure on the car. And he beat me. He beat me fair and square — he probably had the same number of failures.

“There were a couple of races where I just couldn’t beat him. He was just on fire, and that’s irritating. There were other races where I had the advantage so I don’t think there was a lot between us. In a sportscar or prototype I was quicker than him, but in a touring car he was hard to beat. I did feel I was going to win the championship and it didn’t happen.”

That was it as far as BTCC title challenges went. After a part-season in 1994, Soper was more interested in looking elsewhere such as the Japanese Touring Car Championship, which he won with Schnitzer the following year.

“As much as I enjoyed the BTCC and it was potentially the best in the early 1990s as far as TV and manufacturer involvement, I intended to stay away if I could,” he explains. “I’d already spent 10 to 15 years in England traipsing from circuit to circuit. Every weekend it was the same, so whenever there was anything on the horizon — Germany, Italy, Japan — that was more of an interest to me.

“I quite enjoyed BTCC when I was there, but why go back to something you’ve competed in at its absolute pinnacle with a works team? If I’ve been there and done it, I’d rather do something different.”

Not that BMW always made it easy to stay away. Soper selected a German campaign following his 1995 Japanese title, but came under pressure to race at home instead.

“I picked ADAC Super Tourenwagen Cup, but in the background I kept hearing BMW GB saying they wanted Steve in England,” he says. “I kept my head down and ignored it. We got to about February and my boss Karl-Heinz Kalbfell rang me and said, ‘What’s all this that you don’t want to do the UK? It’s your homeland. Forget the deal, they want you in England.’ I was getting nowhere and I said, ‘If you want me to do England I’ll do England’, but his greatest saying was, ‘Are you motivated?’ so I said, ‘If you want to know my motivation, I’m not motivated to do the UK, I’m motivated to do Germany.’

Kalbfell hung up, so Soper, then living in France, knew he’d got his way and ended up doing Germany with Bigazzi.

“I never sat down to make a major effort to win the BTC,”

THE OTHER GREAT NON-CHAMPS

Two other drivers could make the case for being the BTCC’s greatest non-champion and both have more race wins to their name than Steve Soper.

Ford Capri ace Gordon Spice was the dominant force in the second half of the 1970s and scored six class titles between ’75 and ’80. He took the highest number of victories in the ’76, ’78, ’79 and ’80 seasons, and ended his career on 28.

The reason he never became champion was because of the class-based system of the time. Winning the smaller classes provided the same number of points as overall success and, in each of his strong seasons, Spice was beaten by a driver who dominated one of those. It seems ludicrous from today’s perspective, but it was part of the game then and Spice is certainly not bitter.

“It didn’t bother me at all,” says Spice. “When I was racing Minis we never had an overall win except when they split the races, but the guys in the smaller cars were trying just as hard, probably harder.

“I raced because I enjoyed it. The objective was to win each race.”

Anthony Reid wasn’t robbed in quite the same way, but twice came close to the title during the BTCC’s ultra-competitive Super Touring era.

In 1998 he took more wins than anyone else in the Nissan Primera, but a slow start to the campaign meant he lost out to Volvo’s Rickard Rydell. Two years later he consistently banked points and went to the finale with a chance of the crown, against Ford team-mates Alain Menu and Rickard Rydell, but fell two points short. In between he had chosen to leave the pacesetting Primera he had helped develop, and with which Laurent Aiello stormed to the title in ’99.

“To be a British Touring Car champion is a bit special,” says Reid, who was still winning races for MG in 2004 and ultimately took 15 BTCC victories. “My best chance would have been to stay with Nissan in 1999, but the Ford offer was too good to turn down. To race for the Blue Oval as a works driver is one of the great accolades — one of the most successful manufacturers in motorsport. It was the right decision — it’s tough to make a living in motor racing and the offer set me up for life.

“I never quite had the confidence in the Mondeo that I had in the Primera. I went there on my own, just as a driver. Alain Menu went there with key engineers and staff from Williams and he was able to develop the car the way he liked. That was the critical difference.

“Prodrive did a fantastic job — it was the fastest Super Touring car I drove. The handling was a bit too edgy — a slightly unpredictable oversteer. I couldn’t quite get out of the car what I needed to.”



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Peugeot persuaded Soper out of retirement in 2001. This is his Oulton Park engine failure

SUTTON
motorsport
IMAGES

he adds. “At the time, it wasn’t important in my life to say I’d got that crown. Looking back, maybe I should have changed, but at the time I was employed by the manufacturer I wanted to drive for, they were paying me a reasonable sum of money, and I was racing the cars I wanted to race.

“The BTC wasn’t the be-all and end-all to me. That sounds negative, but it’s more that I enjoyed exploring different avenues, such as when BMW got involved with McLaren on the GTR. I hated Le Mans, but I loved those cars and the fact that BMW was going off in another direction.”

He was, however, drawn back for one more season. After retiring from driving, Soper was talked into making a return in 2001, with the BTCC now running to the newer, cheaper and slower BTC regulations.

“Peugeot came on the phone and started pushing me to come back to the BTCC,” explains Soper, who restricts his racing to historic events these days. “Initially I said no, but they kept on and on and on, and kept offering more money. And because the business [his BMW dealership] was still not right, it seemed an obvious set of circumstances to say yes.

“The 406 Coupé wasn’t really capable of winning. It was too big, the wheelbase wasn’t right, and it didn’t have the right engine. Peugeot was desperate to win and we finally led a race at Oulton Park, and the thing lost its oil and blew up. That was it.

“[Team boss] Vic Lee knows how to build a racing car. If the car had the potential to win, he’d have found it.”

Having not won a race and damaged his neck in an accident, Soper retired again. It was not a fitting way for his career to end, but he remains philosophical on his time in the BTCC. “I had two good shots,” he says. “Through no fault of my own, one was taken away, and the other time Jo was a good driver. I can’t blame anyone but myself.

“It doesn’t bother me I don’t have a title. You look back at some of the races and championships that got away, but I was still employed and thought of highly at BMW, so at the time it didn’t matter. It’s only years later, you look back and think, ‘Could have had BTC, could have had Germany, could have had two Japans, could have had Le Mans, could have had Bathurst’, but I’m still here.

“I think I had a privileged career. I did what I wanted to do and had a lot of fun.” ■



‘THE GUYS IN THE SMALLER CARS WERE TRYING JUST AS HARD’ – GORDON SPICE

MCKLEIN

J BLOXHAM/LAT

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SOPER’S BTCC WINS

1983	Silverstone Brands Hatch Silverstone Silverstone Donington Park	Rover Vitesse
1984	Thruxton	Rover Vitesse
1988	Thruxton	Ford RS500
1991	Donington Park Silverstone Thruxton	BMW M3
1993	Silverstone Snetterton Brands Hatch	BMW 318i
1994	Knockhill	BMW 318i

Memories of tin-top triumphs and tribulations

Key figures pick out their best memories from six decades of the British Touring Car Championship



Ian Titchmarsh

Former BTCC commentator

The British Saloon Car Championship race supporting the 1962 British Grand Prix at Aintree was special, partly because it featured two of my favourite touring car drivers – Jack Sears and Michael Parkes – and partly because these two English gentlemen duffed up the pushy, weaving Australian champion Bob Jane in the John Coombs car, and partly because it was at my home circuit. It was also one of Jack’s favourite races. The gap at the flag was 0.2 seconds.



Bill McGovern

CHAMPION 1970, 1971, 1972

With the Imp you’d corner with the wheel up in the air and you weren’t aware. Then there was a strange feeling and I thought if I could eradicate that I’d be quicker, but it was the front wheel landing again!

The team was underfunded and the car never finished in the early days. We led lots. I did have a reputation for having a go, which I enjoyed.

They call me controversial, but I don’t know why! Once at Silverstone I was beating the Fraser Imps and was dicing with Anita Taylor’s Ford Anglia. Her team-mate John Fitzpatrick dropped back to help and drove me off the road. He admonished me, but now I was in his slipstream. I pulled out and overtook him at Copse lap after lap. Eventually he’d had enough and we went off, both into the bank. That sort of thing happened all the time.

Richard Longman

CHAMPION 1978, 1979

British Leyland had the Triumph Dolomite Sprint with Tony Dron, but Bernard Unett was challenging from the lower classes in a Hillman Avenger and he hadn’t had that much opposition. BL wanted me to take points off him [in 1977, when Unett and Dron ended up tying on points and Dron losing on countback]. There was quite a lot of panel-bashing between Bernard and me.

We had trouble making the tyres last. We had to make the car very unstable at the start, with lots of oversteer, so that it would be quick at the end. It was quite a frantic struggle but eventually we won.





Gordon Spice

Six-time class winner, 1975-80

The best battle I ever had was with Tom Walkinshaw at Brands Hatch, the last race of the 1976 year. I was well ahead in the points – Tom had to win and for me to come nowhere for him to win the class championship.

At the first corner Tom came inside me and hit us both off. I then hit him off at Druids. We were like a couple of stock car racers. We were well down the order at the end. As far as I was concerned it was job done because I'd won the championship. As far as Tom was concerned it was job done because I didn't win the race.

We could both have lost our licences so we decided to support each other in front of the stewards. Tom was brilliant – 'No, Gordon would never do anything like that.' We both got off with a warning, which was a good result as we both deserved to lose our licences.

Tim Harvey

CHAMPION 1992

Emotionally, there was nothing like the 1992 season for me. Winning the title was the realisation of a dream. The race I was proudest of that season was beating my team-mate Steve Soper at Pembrey (right) from pole. It was a fair scrap and he was one of my heroes. It was a big thing for me and it was a big step towards the title. Winning the title in a difficult and dramatic year would be my defining motorsport moment.



MOTORSPORT IMAGES/LAT

David Addison

ITV4 lead commentator

I know this isn't necessarily a race, but I remember standing in the Silverstone paddock in March 1988, and seeing Steve Rider and a TV crew filming for the new highlights coverage ready to go on BBC's *Grandstand*. It was that moment when a touring car fan thanked heavens that the championship was getting decent TV coverage at last. And look where we are now...

Marcus Simmons

Autosport's BTCC reporter, 1996-98

We always used to have some pretty wild nights out at 'stayover' BTCC races – those that weren't close enough to travel up each day. Knockhill was a good one, especially because we'd stay in Edinburgh and the Festival was on, so there'd be a great vibe. One night a large group of media people went to dinner.

At a nearby table was a group celebrating a birthday, and the restaurant brought out a cake, so we tried to convince the staff that we were having a party too, pretending that one of our number (who shall remain nameless) was celebrating a vasectomy.

We ordered some rounds of flaming sambucas and, fortified by the alcohol, another nameless member of our group pressed his hand down hard on the glass rim and bore the burn scars for months afterwards. By coincidence, a group of our middle management was in the same restaurant, and when the bill arrived it dawned upon us that ours had been mixed up with theirs – so we gleefully paid our diminished sum and scarpered before 'the suits' realised. Oh yeah, there was some racing on too. The Audis were so dominant – four-wheel drive for the uphill hairpin exit – that it was one apiece for Frank Biela and John Bintcliffe. Great days.



LAT motorsport IMAGES



John Cleland

CHAMPION 1989, 1995

One of the outstanding races for me was in 1998 at Donington Park. There was all this fuss and nonsense about Ford hiring Nigel Mansell to race in the Ford Mondeo – but in the event, I kicked his arse!

It was a race in very tricky conditions and it was very hard to judge the grip levels, but everyone was going for it and there were some of the best tin-top drivers giving it everything they had. It was a full-on race and, of course, it had a great, worthy winner.

My other overriding memory would have been the factory Nissan Primera driver Kieth O'dor leaving the circuit over the barriers at the Craner Curves during the TOCA Shootout in 1992. He had gone so far off he had to borrow a pass from a punter to get back in... ▶

LAT motorsport IMAGES

Anthony Reid

Championship runner-up, 1998, 2000

My favourite memory was at Brands Hatch in August 1998. The championship was coming to a crescendo. Nissan had found its stride from mid-season and the Primera was a fantastic car. The Super Touring era was at its zenith, we were live on TV, plus for that weekend there was Nigel Mansell [in a Ford] and Tiff Needell was in a third Nissan for a *Top Gear* feature. We had the film crew there and a sell-out crowd.

I won the sprint race quite comfortably, but I didn't get the lead at the start of the feature race. As we came up to Druids it was congested and [title rival] Rickard Rydell backed me into the pack by going slowly. I was swamped and pushed back.

I was rather annoyed so got my head down and managed to fight my way back and caught Rickard. At Druids he took a tight line and there was a slight nudge so I passed him. Then we caught Tiff – he let me through and didn't let Rickard through, so I pulled away and won.

Rickard jumped out of his car, threw his steering wheel down and attempted to strangle me! All live on TV. There was a long hearing and they took my win away. But it was an exciting weekend and I still came away with a win and a second.



Alain Menu

CHAMPION 1997, 2000

My own BTCC highlight is the last races of 2000, Silverstone, night, going off the road in the opening race – from a championship point of view, and in my battle with Anthony Reid. It was not so good to watch that race from behind the barrier. Then I was running second in race two. I let Jason Plato through with a couple of laps to go. I had done the maths that third was enough to clinch the title. What an amazing feeling.



Rickard Rydell

CHAMPION 1998

My highlight has to be winning the title in 1998, it was a really good year. There were eight manufacturers so to win that year was very special. I didn't really think that much about the title until the last race. I know from experience that you can't start thinking about the championship halfway through the season. If you do, you are lost.

I really enjoyed the championship between 1994 and 2000 because of the budgets and the testing. As a driver you were a very important part of the development process. But it was so expensive – it wasn't worth it unless you won.



James Thompson

CHAMPION 2002, 2004

I had been to a best friend's wedding but missed my lift from down south to the – I don't want to give away too much – race track because we were having too much fun. Luckily I managed to hitch a lift with someone heading roughly in a northern direction. I crashed out on the floor in his hotel room, grabbed a cab, stopped at a service station to buy a toothbrush and toothpaste, then pitched up at the track still wearing my dinner jacket, bow tie and shiny shoes.

I thought I would stealth my way into the motorhome to get ready for qualifying, only to come face to face with the team manager. He said: "Good night was it?" Of which I could only reply: "Yep." Then I put it on pole by a margin...



Matt James

BTCC reporter, 2004-present

I was a bit sceptical about the BTCC when I started covering it because, well, it's all made up, isn't it? I got the beat in 2004 and saw, first hand, the passion and pressure involved in a title fight.

It came down to a three-way shootout at the final round at Donington Park and the protagonists of the season ran in line astern for the majority of the race. James Thompson and Yvan Muller in the Vauxhalls and Jason Plato's SEAT went hammer and tongs at it. A win would give Muller the title – but it all depended on whether Thompson, running third, could score fastest lap. The tension was palpable. Would Plato play tricks with his arch nemesis Muller? Would he move aside and gift second and the title to his mate Thommo? Would Yvan back them all up into trouble? A slip at the Craner Curves meant Thommo had some catching up to do and that gave him fastest lap and the title.

As I walked into the garage, I saw one of the higher-up people within Triple Eight slam his headphones onto the concrete floor of the garage. They smashed, and it made me think that Thompson had probably won against the will of the team. He had been made to work for it and proved to me how much it mattered.



Colin Turkington

CHAMPION 2009, 2014

Winning the championship in 2009 for the first time was something so special for me. I had gone in to the meeting 13 points clear of Fabrizio Giovanardi and 28 ahead of Jason Plato. But Jason won the first two races at Brands and all three of us went gloves-off in the final race for the title. Jason won, while Giovanardi tried everything he knew to get past. Eventually I held on for second place and that was enough. The relief and the joy were so overwhelming. It was an emotional day to finally achieve what I had set out to achieve.



Louise Goodman

ITV4 pitlane reporter

For me, it's not one single memory but the feeling in parc ferme after the championship has been decided that is amazing. The atmosphere is crackling and it can be overwhelming. Quite often the drivers get quite emotional and are weeping, and it's hard not to get caught up in it. I keep having to remind myself that I shouldn't cry on TV, because you get wrapped up. The whole weekend is full of tension. It's palpable and the whole story can swing so dramatically.

Kevin Turner

Autosport's BTCC reporter 2011-14

The 2014 Knockhill meeting highlighted the bad, the good and the ugly of the BTCC. Comfortably fastest in qualifying, championship leader Colin Turkington had a dubious eight-place penalty for contact at the previous Snetterton round. That was the bad – it was almost as though someone was trying to stop the BMW man running away with the title...

Turkington was making his way through the field in race one when he was dumped off the road by Jason Plato's MG at Scotsman, having showed patience before making a clean pass. That was the ugly.

Now for the good. Starting race two in 27th, Turkington charged to fourth and set a fastest lap quicker than anyone else had managed in qualifying. More than that, he finished without a damaged car, underlying the fact that you don't have to resort to argy-bargy to make progress in touring cars, even around the tight Scottish circuit. Class. ■



THE GOW SHOW

BTCC kingpin Alan Gow developed NGTC rules to ensure the series' success in a changing world. And he's already looking to the next step
Matt James



Encouraging diversity
of drivetrain format
was key aim of rules



60
YEARS
1958-2018



The entire basis of the British Touring Car Championship's meteoric success was set in stone by the single set of car specifications that came into place in the early 1990s, and they eventually became the Super Touring formula.

That exploded as the category was adopted around the world, but motorsport is cyclical and by 2000 the bubble had burst.

The early years of the 2000s were defined by a difficult balancing act. The European and World Touring Car Championship opted for Super 2000 regulations, but the BTCC had already gone down its own route of simplified BTC-Touring specifications in 2001.

When Alan Gow returned to the helm of the category for his first full season back in 2004, he could see that the writing was on the wall for BTC-T and opened up the entry to S2000 cars too. An equivalency system was put in place, mainly based around the weight of the cars, but it would lead to endless gripes (and that was even before the introduction of things like the turbodiesel SEAT Leons in '08 and the liquefied petroleum gas Ford Focus machines in '10).

So the series bosses and the Technical Working Group, which comprises leading members of the top teams, had a rethink and NGTC was born in 2010. NGTC originally stood for Next Generation Touring Car, although that is a moniker that Gow is no longer keen on ("How can they be 'next generation' when they're already here?" he rightly asks).

"The Super 2000 rules were dying out and it was also way too expensive," says Gow. "There weren't any new manufacturers coming into S2000 – and the costs of it were rocketing. It had had its day and we thought that we didn't want to rely on international categories to shape the future of the BTCC because in the past that hadn't worked all that well for us."

Gow says the premise of NGTC was to make the cars as cost-effective as possible and to open up to many different shapes and sizes. The NGTC regulations involved several spec parts to take the cost out of development of the cars, and also gave the championship the option for some diversification.

"It gave us the chance to have front and rear-wheel-drive cars, which was important," says Gow. "There are other championships around that stick with just one drivetrain format and they are very restricted on body styles. We sought to have the greatest diversity of cars that we could have. We have front and rear-wheel drive. We have three, four and five-door cars. We have saloons, estates and hatchbacks.

"And there is nothing in the regulations to stop someone building a mini-SUV-type car, and someone will do that I'm sure. That was an important part of the regulations for us: we wanted to open it up to as many things as we could."

The introduction of the forefather of what's on the grid today came at Brands Hatch's final meeting of 2010 in free practice, when James Thompson drove a GPRM-assembled Toyota Avensis to shake down some of the development parts. ▶

'THERE'S NOTHING IN THE REGULATIONS TO STOP SOMEONE BUILDING A MINI-SUV-TYPE CAR'



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Avensis ran development parts in Brands 2010 practice outing

That included the off-the-peg motor, which was supplied by Swindon Race Engines. It was a new idea of effectively offering a turnkey powerplant. It was an innovation for the BTCC, and again tore down some of the barriers to entry.

Those engines were used in the BTCC for the first full season in 2011 by four cars – though they were older-spec S2000

cars – and Andrew Jordan took the maiden win for the motor fitted to his Vauxhall Vectra at Croft in the middle of the season.

‘OUR ENGINE REGULATIONS ARE THE BIGGEST TRIUMPH OF ALL THE THINGS WE’VE DONE’
ALAN GOW

By 2012, all but eight of the cars had NGTC motors. Honda became the first of the leading teams to fully commit to an NGTC chassis and engine – and it took the title. By '13, the top class was entirely NGTC, with older-spec cars able to compete

in the Jack Sears Trophy before being phased out.

“We decided to give people the option that if they couldn’t develop and build an engine, or didn’t have the budget, there was something else we’d put in place for them: there was a plug-and-play engine that they could lease,” says Gow. “It also helped because it meant that someone could design a car that didn’t necessarily have the right spec engine in the manufacturer’s road range that they could then use. I think any team would tell you that our engine regulations have probably been the

biggest triumph of all the things we’ve done.

“The regulations have been a massive success, by any measure: the number of cars that are competing is strong, and I don’t just mean the amount of cars, but the amount of different types. You wouldn’t have 32 cars on the grid competing if it wasn’t cost-effective. You wouldn’t have the amount of cars that are so close if the regulations weren’t effective. Look at the time difference between first and last on any grid – that’s the proof of it.”

All regulations are cyclical, and there needs to be a nod to the future. The road-car landscape is changing dramatically, and that will be reflected in the BTCC in years to come, but don’t expect an overnight alteration.

“We are having technical meetings already to look at the way ahead, and absolutely an element of electrification will be on the horizon,” explains Gow. “You have to reflect what’s going on in the market and all road cars will have to become hybrid, so we will make ours that way too.

“Because our regulations work so well, and everyone has



Gordon Shedden took NGTC-spec car’s first title in 2012

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IMAGES

made a big investment in the componentry, the next phase of our regulations will merely be an evolution of what we’ve got. We will still use the current car and add electrification into it. Then we will be ready for the future.”

NGTC is here to stay until 2021 at least, and then things will start to change and a whole new breed of BTCC race car will be born. The fact that the future is in sharp focus even now shows the foresight needed to make something successful, and that is something that the BTCC, in its modern guise, certainly has been. ■ **NGTC TECH FOCUS P56**



Jordan’s Vectra was powered to victory at Croft in 2011 by an NGTC-spec engine

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IMAGES



Cold, new, unscrubbed rubber blamed for "10mph" spin

JEP



GOW TAKES THE WHEEL TO GET DRIVER'S PERSPECTIVE

BTCC series director Alan Gow got the chance to sample an NGTC-spec car at Snetterton recently, when he got behind the wheel of Rob Austin's Alfa Romeo Giulietta.

The Australian, who has a racing background, took part in a session during the annual tyre test, and admits the experience has given him an interesting new perspective.

His first job was to open the book of racing-driver excuses. "I made a mistake by going out on cold, brand new, unscrubbed tyres," he says. "I had no idea that it had so little grip in the rear. I did two laps and I think I spun at about 10mph because there was no grip. I was laughing inside the car. Then I did the crossover [front to rear] and then another few laps to get them up to speed, so I wasted time. I only really got five laps, so I was just learning and I didn't get to 100%."

Despite that, there were elements of the



Taste of NGTC-spec car has given Gow "greater understanding"

'I COULDN'T SPIN THE WHEELS. THAT IS AMAZING FOR A FRONT-WHEEL-DRIVE CAR – NO TORQUE-STEER' ALAN GOW

JEP

hatchback that he was impressed with immediately: "The things that really surprised me about the car was the initial turn-in – it was great, plenty of grip – and the brakes were really good. The grip just got me. Coming out of the corners, I couldn't spin the wheels up once. And that is amazing for a front-wheel-drive car – there was no torque-steer."

Once the excuse book was closed, Gow, who had lapped around 10 seconds off the times of the fastest drivers in his session, noted something else interesting.

"The rearward vision was excellent – there is no excuse for someone saying they didn't see someone behind them!" he laughs. "I have a much greater understanding of what the guys go through."

"I know what they go like now, but not on the limit, but I get the dynamics of driving them

so I can probably relate to things a bit better."

Austin went through the onboard data with Gow afterwards. He has some observations too: "I think he was about as majestic as a scared cat. Seriously, I think he did well because there was a lot of pressure: the whole paddock was watching and waiting for him to do something silly. The only silly things he did were round the back – and I have the onboards!"

"What was interesting was that when he got out, he said it was a very hostile environment. He had a bit of a moment but he couldn't remember which corner or which lap: he was guessing. It wasn't until we watched the onboard we saw which lap it was. Hopefully that gives Alan an insight into what adrenalin does for you. It's hard, when you speak to the officials sometimes to explain an incident, to remember exactly, and I think he will recognise that now."

NGTC TECH

01 | TYRES

Dunlop

Dunlop has the sole tyre-supply contract for the championship, and it uses 18-inch rubber all-round. The drivers have to run an 'option' tyre at each of the rounds apart from Thruxton, where the demands on the rubber are more specific. The option tyre can be either a harder or softer construction, and over the season drivers can use them a maximum three times in race one of a weekend, three times in race two and three times in race three. This adds an extra element of strategy to the race weekends.

02 | BRAKES

AP Racing

AP Racing provides the brakes. For a front-wheel-drive car the discs are 362mm x 36mm (front) and 304mm x 10mm (rear). On a rear-wheel-drive car they are 304mm x 25mm (front) and 362mm x 36mm (rear). There are three options of pad that are sourced and provided through AP. The firm also makes a specified pedal box for each car. The clutch is twin-plate carbon.

03 | DRIVETRAIN

Xtrac

Berkshire firm Xtrac provides the six-speed sequential gearboxes for all cars, as well as the differentials and the driveshaft (in rear-wheel-drive cars, the propshaft is open to any supplier). The gearboxes have mandated first, second and third-gear ratios, and this has been used to slow down any inherent advantage that a rear-wheel-drive car has away from the grid by specifying a longer first gear. Beyond the fixed ratio for third, there are options for the teams to use one of two fourth gears, and then there are 11 others to choose from at the top end of the speed range.





04 | SUBFRAME, SUSPENSION AND POWER STEERING

RML

From the start of 2016, RML took over from GPRM as the supplier of the subframes and suspension parts, including uprights and wishbones. The subframes are designed to fit onto specified rollcage locations. The firm also looks after the power-steering unit, which was originally an electric unit that proved problematic under GPRM. The new system uses hydraulics and has been a success. The damping is provided by SPA Penske, and the teams have several options to use from a set menu to allow some freedom of development.

05 | ELECTRONICS

Cosworth

Cosworth provides several important elements for the cars, including the ECUs and the wiring looms, of which there are currently two options including a new, updated version. It also provides the data logging, dash and scrutineering logger. Data channels from the car are limited to 16. Cosworth also takes care of the judicial cameras, which are mandated in every competing vehicle.

06 | ENGINE

Swindon Race Engines

While the BTCC TOCA engine, developed by Swindon, is not mandated, it is used by a large number of competitors due to its convenience as a plug-in-and-play unit, removing the need for a huge financial outlay. The factory Team Dynamics Honda Civics and the works-backed WSR BMW 125i M Sports use their own engines, but half of the grid employ the bespoke unit. All motors are two-litre turbocharged producing 350bhp-plus. This means the engines aren't as highly stressed as a smaller-capacity powerplant, and increases reliability. Owen Developments provides the turbos, while PWR makes the intercoolers. Limits on turbo-boost levels also allow for an element of equalisation across the season if necessary.

AND ALSO...

The cars, which have a base weight of 1270kg for front-wheel drive and 1300kg for rear-wheel drive, are fitted with an ATL fuel tank as standard, and the 18-inch wheels are provided by Rimstock. Carless provides the fuel for all machines, while Lifeline is in sole charge of the fire-extinguisher systems.





60
YEARS
1958-2018

ALL THE CHAMPIONS

1958	Jack Sears (Austin Westminster)	1978	Richard Longman (Mini 1275 GT)	1999	Laurent Aiello (Nissan Primera eGT)
1959	Jeff Uren (Ford Zephyr)	1979	Richard Longman (Mini 1275 GT)	2000	Alain Menu (Ford Mondeo)
1960	Doc Shepherd (Austin A40)	1980	Win Percy (Mazda RX-7)	2001	Jason Plato (Vauxhall Astra Coupe)
1961	John Whitmore (Mini)	1981	Win Percy (Mazda RX-7)	2002	James Thompson (Vauxhall Astra Coupe)
1962	John Love (Mini)	1982	Win Percy (Toyota Corolla)	2003	Yvan Muller (Vauxhall Astra Coupe)
1963	Jack Sears (Ford Cortina GT/ Lotus Cortina/Ford Galaxie)	1983	Andy Rouse (Alfa Romeo GTV6)	2004	James Thompson (Vauxhall Astra Coupe)
1964	Jim Clark (Ford Lotus Cortina)	1984	Andy Rouse (Rover Vitesse)	2005	Matt Neal (Honda Integra)
1965	Roy Pierpoint (Ford Mustang)	1985	Andy Rouse (Ford Sierra XR4Ti)	2006	Matt Neal (Honda Integra)
1966	John Fitzpatrick (Ford Anglia)	1986	Chris Hodgetts (Toyota Corolla)	2007	Fabrizio Giovanardi (Vauxhall Vectra)
1967	Frank Gardner (Ford Falcon Sprint)	1987	Chris Hodgetts (Toyota Corolla)	2008	Fabrizio Giovanardi (Vauxhall Vectra)
1968	Frank Gardner (Ford Escort)	1988	Frank Sytner (BMW M3)	2009	Colin Turkington (BMW 320si)
1969	Alec Poole (Mini)	1989	John Cleland (Vauxhall Astra GTE)	2010	Jason Plato (Chevrolet Cruze)
1970	Bill McGovern (Sunbeam Imp)	1990	Robb Gravett (Ford Sierra RS500)	2011	Matt Neal (Honda Civic Type R)
1971	Bill McGovern (Sunbeam Imp)	1991	Will Hoy (BMW M3)	2012	Gordon Shedden (Honda Civic Type R)
1972	Bill McGovern (Sunbeam Imp)	1992	Tim Harvey (BMW 318is)	2013	Andrew Jordan (Honda Civic Type R)
1973	Frank Gardner (Chevrolet Camaro)	1993	Joachim Winkelhock (BMW 318i)	2014	Colin Turkington (BMW 125i M Sport)
1974	Bernard Unett (Hillman Avenger)	1994	Gabriele Tarquini (Alfa Romeo 155)	2015	Gordon Shedden (Honda Civic Type R)
1975	Andy Rouse (Triumph Dolomite Sprint)	1995	John Cleland (Vauxhall Cavalier)	2016	Gordon Shedden (Honda Civic Type R)
1976	Bernard Unett (Chrysler Avenger GT)	1996	Frank Biela (Audi A4 quattro)	2017	Ashley Sutton (Subaru Levorg GT)
1977	Bernard Unett (Chrysler Avenger GT)	1998	Rickard Rydell (Volvo S40)		

TOP 10 WINNERS

1	Jason Plato	96
2	Matt Neal	63
3	Andy Rouse	60
4	Gordon Shedden	48
5	Colin Turkington	46
=6	Alain Menu	36
=6	Yvan Muller	36
=6	James Thompson	36
9	Frank Gardner	35
10	Mat Jackson	31

Can you name the great and good here celebrating the BTCC's anniversary?





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