

Wigton Motor Club Ltd

# Start Line

Issue 08/20

[www.wigtonmc.co.uk](http://www.wigtonmc.co.uk)

September 2020

## WMC Motorsport Resumes



**A lovely day saw our first competitive event for six months based at the Motor House. Here we have the Pope in action!**

# Motorsport for All

# Club Officials

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**Visit the Facebook page for the latest news, or the webpage at**  
**[www.wigtonmc.co.uk](http://www.wigtonmc.co.uk)**

# *Talking Point*

## *Topical Comment from the world of motoring*

Over the years motorsport has evolved as cars changed, as the rules changed, speed increased, and venues changed. Many of us have seen these changes and look back with pleasure at 250 mile night roads rallies, the Scottish Rally run over four days all over Scotland, somewhat unregulated events on the fells and stage rallies that defined WMC from the seventies to mid-nineties.

It does seem that the current Covid restrictions will put a new focus on what events clubs can and want to organise and I suspect that stage events will be the big loser. It may be too early to say RIP Stage Rallies, but a lot of questions will be asked.

Venues have been getting in short supply for years, I reckon we used about eight different locations for single venue rallies plus perhaps another dozen for multi venue and then even more when we had forest allocations either in Cumbria or southern Scotland. In recent years the number of forest events has declined from the time when clubs were fighting over one of the 64 allocations that the Forestry Commission allowed. It may be that the current ban on forest events due to Covid might just lead to a wider ban. We know that in our local forests there is a focus on more sedate pursuits and that motoring events (rallies and trials) are basically a nuisance with a lot of restrictions on them.

However, the other question is why clubs would want to run a stage rally now. Ultimately clubs run events for their members to enjoy both as competitors and organisers. Running a stage event is now hard work for the volunteers even with the quite short ones we have now. How many genuine club members take part? Look at any entry list and we see cars worth as much as a decent house and tended to by professional teams. The crew arrive an hour before the start, do the event, cross the finish line and head home leaving the team to pick up the car. So many crews no longer wait for the awards presentation that many organisers don't bother with them now.

So many of these well off crews have no loyalty to any club and never lift a finger to do anything useful. They see the clubs as a provider and themselves as the customer. That argument falls down because the organising team and marshals are all volunteers. If you even paid them all £10 an hour for their months of effort you would easily double the entry fee.

Clubs can rightly look at the financial risk, the huge amount of work involved, and the lack of their own members taking part and decide to run other sort of events that will attract entries from their own and other local clubs.

GTF



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**The opinions expressed in Start Line are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Club**

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# Forthcoming Club Events

## September Social Run

September 16th

Starts and finishes at Surrone House, Annan Rd Gretna.

Tea or Coffee and biscuits available at start for a donation to Air Ambulance

Starts at 3 pm 50 mile route

Members wanting a meal afterwards that these can be booked at either Solway Lodge Hotel (01461338266) or the Gretna Inn (01461 337465).

Contact John Ross for entries [enquiries@surronehouse.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@surronehouse.co.uk);  
using ref WMC Sept Run

## Breakfast Meet

At the

Motor House

9 – 11

Sunday October 11th

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CLASSIC CAR INSURANCE

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# PG Tips

## Peter Reflects On His Month

I killed Barry the single seater (otherwise known as RBS8)! I managed to get the car into reasonable working for the Rowrah track evening, although cosmetically it wasn't so hot, but nonetheless it started and ran and was solid. It was until after my first few laps when I noticed the low oil pressure light was on at idle. A blip of the throttle and it was gone so I did a few more laps. Rowrah is fairly terrifying in something as quick as Barry – the track is permanently coated in a film of chain oil from karts and there isn't much resembling a proper straight. The slick speed event tyres got warm but still didn't do a lot of gripping and giving the car much throttle resulted in spinning wheels, and on several occasions spinning car. I have to thank Ron Palmer for giving me a shove after one of my several pirouettes – I don't suppose having my bulk in the car made it any easier for him either (thanks Ron!). After a few more laps the pressure light was on at significantly above idle and the engine was starting to grumble, which is when I packed up. Big bike engines like the GSXR K8 in the car are a specialist item when it comes to rebuilds and things like the bearings are not an easy to buy item and come colour coded – the tolerances are also tiny and far beyond my abilities to build. Basically – when the bearings start to go you have to send it to a specialist for a re-build or buy another engine.....and another engine is the cheaper and easier option. The good news on this front is that apparently my sick engine is still worth a significant amount of money to someone so I will hopefully use it to offset the cost of the replacement. I've just bought the replacement tonight from a man in Penrith so it should be a relatively simple unbolt and bolt in job and off I go (next year).

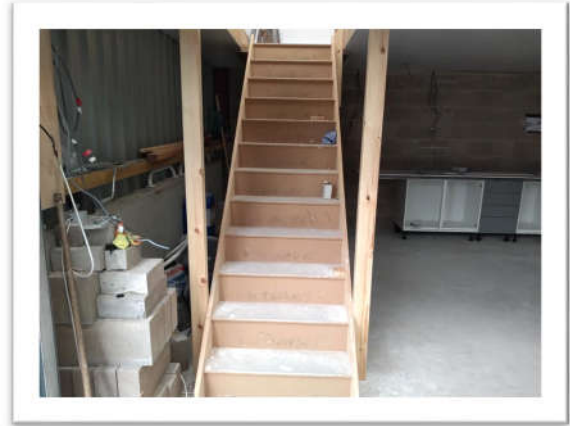
The Merc has now had almost all of its suspension arms replaced and I barely lost any blood at all – although I'd have filled a swear box if I'd employed such a thing. A couple of the bolts had to be cut and there were a lot of access issues but it was relatively straight forward. One of the rear arms (thankfully the least important one) is set in such a way that it cannot be removed without removing the rear subframe so that one stayed put – I can't imagine a situation where I'd fancy removing the sub-frame without a proper workshop with a ramp! Once that lot was done the car went back to see Bill Kirkpatrick at Wheatsheaf where his clever machine and one of his gang lined everything up properly so now it drives beautifully. I was so pleased with it all, I even took it to Postmeridian in Wales for our short break (to replace the proper holiday abroad we were robbed of this summer) and it all went swimmingly.

I had some more Ebay joy last week – I found a perfect and clever little trailer that is far more suitable for Barry than my current largeish Brian James one, so I put the BJ trailer on Ebay. After 5 days of bidding it sold for a handsome price.....except the buyer was from Portsmouth and hadn't read the advert. He wasn't the only one though, someone else asked if it was wide enough for his MGB despite the dimensions being on the advert, and one of the other bidders wanted to know if I'd accept £1500 after the bidding had exceeded that amount! Thankfully when re-listed the winner was aware of everything and has paid a deposit.



# Motor House Update

Photos after the last work session of August



As you can see the office and committee room is now ready for the carpets to be fitted while the stair rails are nearly completed with some painting to be done. The kitchen units are and the privacy wall for the toilets is nearly finished. Chris is well on with the lighting and electrics.

# From The Top

News from UK Motorsport, Regions and the WMC Committee

## Motor House Progress



Plenty of progress with the internal roof, stairs and kitchen units in recent weeks. The upstairs lighting is now completed and we have chosen the colour of the carpets - I can't tell you how difficult that was!

If you would like to help (usually on Wednesdays) please contact David Agnew.



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# Motor House Autotest/PCA 15<sup>th</sup> August



The concept for this event started in July with a clean up of the Moota site, right next to the Motor House and the site of the former Moota Hotel, north of Cockermouth. Several willing volunteers, dug, brushed and barrowed earth and debris off the tarmac and concrete, to reveal something resembling a flat surface with one smaller, gravel area and another larger tarmac area. Roger 'The Pope' actually did most of the work from the seat of his mini digger. John Holliday and I concluded that we could run two test areas. We must thank WMC member, Keith Graham, for allowing the use of this land.



The next challenge was, how can we run this within the Motorsport UK guidelines of C\*\*\*\*19, helpfully they supply 19, yes 19 separate guidance documents. This included such useful advice as 'There should be no pushing of cars unless full PPE is worn'. See below\*.

Appoint a C\*\*\*\*19 official, GTF stepped forward and completed the course, thanks.

Make PPE available, this was easy, a visit to Aldi + MS UK even supplied some with the permits.

No exchange of paperwork, this was a bit more difficult. Online entry, sign on forms and payment were created. This proved that those who can drive a car well cannot always drive a mouse in the same way.

Drivers time cards were dispensed with, meaning the marshals had a bit of extra work to do, they did a sterling job.



No spectators, no briefings, no prizes, no food, no drink, no socialising etc etc. sounds like a dull event to me.

A full entry of 20 x cars cheered us up. A third of which were MX5's, so we gave them their own class!

Peter Wright (Mr Consistent) was quick to set the pace on test 1 in his Mini, but Geoff Rae, Corsa, and Craig Stamper, Saxo, were just ahead of him on the longer







test 2. After four runs on these two tests, a quick switch round and another three runs on each test, this bunch were all setting similar times. A rare mistake by Craig allowed the rear wheel drive squad headed by Bob Hargreaves in the Ulverston based BMW to take third at this stage quickly followed by Angus Cowan in the Mk1 Escort.

Phil Hodgson was next, as the first of the MX5s. Some will be reading this thinking, how did that happen, BM and Escort beating MX5's? I suspect Chris Hunter will be one of them, sitting at home nursing an injury, allegedly unable to drive, 'If only I had been there.....'



The RWD's managed to undo most of our sweeping work and spread gravel far and wide on the 360 turns. When marshal Jim Dykes volunteered he requested not to be placed 'in the middle of nowhere'. We granted his request and as a result he took the brunt of the gravel and dust, sorry Jim but you did say....

When smoke appeared from under the bonnet of Jack Long's little VW Fox no one was too keen to \* don a mask, gloves and surgical gown in the 29 de-

grees and start pushing. So we socially distanced ourselves with long range fire extinguishers.



It was all to play for before the final, long combined test. Peter and Geoff confirmed their positions but a storming run by Craig leapfrogged him from fifth to third. A cone leapt out in front of Bob, dropping him to fourth with Angus fifth, just a second behind.

Nice to see a few new faces and a big thank you to all the marshals.

Steve F



## Motor House Autotest Results

1	Peter Wright	Mini	673	<b>1st OA</b>
2	Geoff Rae	Corsa	685	1F
3	Craig Stamper	Saxo	713	F
4	Bob Hargreaves	BMW	716	1R
5	Angus Cowan	Escort	717	R
6	Phil Hodgson	MX5	750	1MX
7	Stuart Moffat	Micra	760	F
8	Joe Cruttenden	C1	772	F
9	Ian Wozencroft	MCX5	776	MX
10	Paul Grierson	Clio	777	F
11	Roger Pope	Mini	779	F
12	Ben Rae	Corsa	788	F
13	David Agnew	Clio	793	F
14	David O'Connor	MCX5	794	MX
15	Drew McLean	MX5	800	MX
16	Jack Long	Polo	925	1J
17	Stuart Peglar	Midget	968	R
18	Jason Sheffield	MX5	1006	MX
19	Ian Cowan	Escort	1038	R
20	Jamie Stuart	MX5	Ret	MX5

## Blasts from the Past at Croft



## Continuations?



Continuation cars are a curious thing. Neither original nor replicas, not as desirable as the genuine article yet still commanding considerable sums of money, they occupy a unique place in the classic car market.

To the uninitiated, a brand-new, factory-built duplicate of an iconic classic sports car sounds irresistible, particularly when the new car costs less compared to the original, but still makes good returns for the companies involved. Those returns and the impact on the bottom line are considerably more appealing than a feel-good story for a car company's brand, which is why

the likes of Aston Martin, Jaguar, and Shelby American mine their back catalogues.

Yet a question lingers for anyone considering one of these re-animated antiques: how does the classic car world view – and price – something that is both real and not real at the same time?

The answer starts with knowing exactly where a car falls in the broad, sometimes muddy spectrum between continuation and knockoff. The most desirable of the lot are so-called “Sanction II” cars. In the late 1980s, Aston's then managers, Peter Livanos and Victor Gauntlett, cast a greedy eye at the huge money being thrown at the company's most charismatic sports racers from the early 1960s. In particular, there was the DB4 GT Zagato – essentially the Ferrari 250 GTO of Aston Martins. With its perfect profile, double-bubble roofline, and deep-dish Borrani wire wheels, demand from collectors far outstripped the meagre supply of just 20 cars, and in the late '80s they were selling at auction for up to £1.7 million.

Ironically, when the DB4 GT Zagato was introduced, Aston could scarcely give the things away; poor timing meant front-engine sports cars were becoming obsolete for serious racing. As a result, there was a group of four chassis numbers that had been assigned to cars that were never built. Thus, the DB4 GT Zagato Sanction II was born.

Jaguar has adopted similar phrasing and similar justifications for its recreations. In 2014, the Jaguar Classic engineering team cut its teeth by building six continuation Lightweight E-type coupes – the bespoke, competition version of the E-Type. Jaguar Classic next announced that it would sell nine



copies of the continuation XKSS, exact duplicates of the originals save for a safer and more modern fuel cell and a fuel system designed to tolerate modern petrol better.

As Aston did with the Sanction II DB4 GT Zagato, Jaguar made the case that it was merely completing original production. Jaguar calls its Lightweight E-Types “the missing six” – cars planned but never built in period – and it can point to the famous 1957 fire at the Dickensian Jaguar works on Browns Lane in Coventry as prematurely ending production of the XKSS.



Not every producer of continuation cars has relied on complicated pretense. The ever-shrewd Carroll Shelby, for instance, dispensed with the unused serial number nonsense. His credible case for bringing continuation Cobras into the world boiled down to the fact that A, he could; and B, he could make a fast buck doing it.

Then there's the seedy underbelly of the continuation car world – unsanctioned replicas. Italy is famous for having a virtual cottage industry in counterfeit cars. There, the craftsmanship has always existed to do pretty much what Aston Martin and Jaguar Classic have created. Several unauthorised DB4 GT Zagato copies have been built up from standard DB4s. Special coach-built Alfa Romeos have also been targets of unsanctioned replication. The joke is that although just 112 Alfa Romeo TZ1s were built, 500 survive. Because the basic Alfa mechanicals were readily available in Italy (unlike Ferrari parts, they're relatively cheap), the fakery in Alfa TZ1s, TZ2s and Sprint Zagatos has been legendary. The certification process before pronouncing any of the above cars genuine is challenging, to say the least.

The unsanctioned replicas do have one major advantage: you can usually drive them on public roads. In most cases, they are built from donor cars that were produced in period and can be licensed as vintage cars.



In contrast, you cannot legally drive most continuation cars on the road in many countries. They simply can't be made to pass modern safety and emissions laws, and companies like Jaguar or Aston Martin don't qualify for any sort of small manufacturer loophole. The Lightweight E-type, XKSS, and DB4 GT Zagato are thus sold for "off-road" or show-and-display use only. (Continuation Cobras skirt this issue since they are supplied as a rolling project – engines must be fitted by customers or dealers – so they're

road-legal in most places, in much the same manner as a kit car.) To add insult to injury continuation cars usually don't qualify for the best vintage racing events either.

Given this major catch, you'd think continuation cars would trade in a very thin market and at a discount from the original price. Yet that doesn't seem to be the case. There are limited sales from which to draw definitive conclusions, but the market for them seems surprisingly bullish.

For instance, a Sanction II DB4 Zagato sold at a Bonhams auction in 2012 for £1,233,500 (about \$1.9 million). This is no challenge to an original, which Hagerty values around £8 million (\$10 million), but a DB4 Zagato of any provenance comes to market so rarely that someone who has waited years or even decades for one might jump at the opportunity to buy a Sanction II or Sanction III version. Similar logic should hold for the limited-production Jaguar continuations (that theory will be tested in October, when RM plans to sell a trio of them at its [Elkhart sale](#)).

Time will tell whether more profitable companies like Ferrari, Porsche, and BMW will find it worth their while. For now, a Sanction II Ferrari 250 GTO or a second run of the Porsche 904 Carrera GTS seems unlikely, but who knows what tomorrow will bring?

Article courtesy of Hagerty



# Classic Column

## News from the Classic and Historic Scene



**A immaculate Alvis Firebird seen in the Trough of Bowland last month.**

Perhaps surprisingly, classic car auctions have been doing well during lockdown with high rates of sale and good prices. Of course, the auctions themselves have changed, now all being online, which must have saved the auction house a fortune in not having to hire prestigious venues plus the on-costs of catalogues and hospitality.

There are auction houses and auction houses and it's a matter of buyer beware. Some are extremely slow and paying out after a sale and some even don't! You would expect Coys of Kensington, a long established car firm to be straight but anything but. The firm has gone into administration a few times and re-emerged with a slightly different name and continued as before with issues going back 16 years. MD Chris Routledge, who pops up for TV programmes as a "talking head" expert, was arrested at the Essen Show earlier this year when a vendor did not get his money. He recently appeared on the TV programme about "Hitler's Super Cars", although he is currently believed to be somewhere in Canada. A Google search is interesting!

It seems the classic car scene is surviving well during the pandemic. Although there have been few events and no shows, people are working on their cars or using their extra free time to do a restoration. The main suppliers of parts are said to be having a good summer, with the only issue being actually getting the parts to sell.



Those who go to the main classic hill climbs you will have seen Briony Serrell with her Lotus 51 and Elva Mk7, she is the wife of TV antique expert and auctioneer Phillip who is also a classic car fan with a fair collection of his own. I doubt if he would get in the Lotus though!

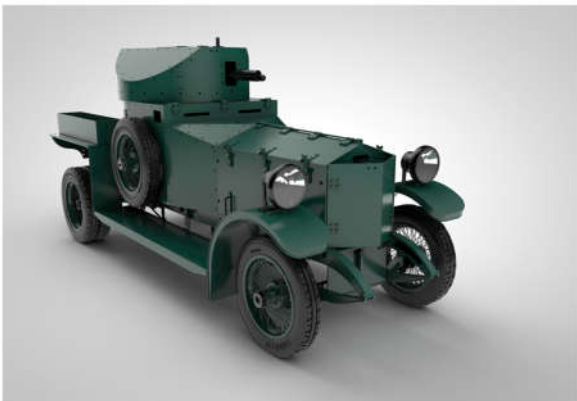
You might have caught a current TV series “Vintage Voltage” where a groups of guys in a Welsh factory unit put electric motors in a variety of classic cars, I don’t think they have actually done a genuine vintage car as yet, but then it’s TV so what’s a name worth? It’s obviously aimed a the American market or for simple people as the “stars” are labelled “Bill the Boss, “ Ben the mechanic etc.

Anyway they have a simple format using the same electric motor and battery packs. The whip the ICE out put in the electric motor, attach it to the transmitter and put the batteries in the boot. “Simples” . You would thing there would also have to be all sorts of modifications to the steering and suspension, if just to cope with the difference in weight distribution but that would not make good TV. So some front engined cars are thus lighter at the front and heavier at the back. They did a Chesil Speedster (Porsche 356 kit car) and it was way too low at the front with all the batteries there.

Another restoration programme did a Sinclair C5 recently. I did not realise how simple they were, simple alloy chassis with a battery and what looks like a starter motor driving the wheels, enclosed in a glass fibre body/seat. They have very little power and have to have optional pedal assistance. One of my neighbours has one and occasionally goes down the village to collect his paper but on the slight slop back he has to pedal.

Given how technology has moved on. Perhaps fitting a Sinclair with a lithium battery and the motors that are used to power bikes and you could have a hot rod C5!

Many years ago a large council in the North West were selling a Rolls Royce mayoral car. At the auction a local garage were the winning bidder. The garage owner contacted Rolls Royce asking about springing and upgrading the rear springs in particular as he wanted to convert the car to a recovery tow truck. The story goes that a representative of the company rang up and made an appointment to see the garage owner and when he arrived purchased the car because "Rolls Royce do not make tow trucks".



They did of course make armoured cars during WW1



And now they make tanks!

# Welcome!

**Welcome to the following new members and we hope that you will enjoy our events and social activities.**

Jake Hudson from Rosley

Jon Davidson plus Pauline, Rebecca and Jenni Davidson of Penrith

Dave Coyne and Lesley Bradley from Windlesham.

For most of you this will be your first magazine and we really hope that you will enjoy reading it.

**For any changes or queries about membership please contact  
John Sloan on 01900 85833**

## Marshal Force

**Marshals are the life blood of our activities**

**Forthcoming events:**

**No events in the immediate future.**

## Social Scene

We are slowly getting things up and running but as the whole COVID situation being so changeable at short notice it's difficult to plan bigger events. However we hope to start the breakfast meets at the Motor House in October and then in November before a winter break. These will be on the second Sunday of each month.

We have had a successful midweek run finishing at the excellent Inn on the Lake and we have another this month courtesy of John Ross starting at Gretna.

We have been asked about weekend runs, Obviously we usually have four of these each year plus those we are invited to from MG Cumbria and other clubs. The difficulty with the all day runs is that the usual places that we might use for lunch halts etc cannot take us. Those that are open have had to virtually half their seating capacity and will be getting full with their normal customers without a typical 80, or so, from one of our runs. We are thinking of ways round this and if anyone has suggestions please let us know.





## Classic Show

As everyone will know we were unable to run the Show and many other events due to the pandemic so we ran a virtual show on the correct date where members could post photos of their car on our Face Boo page and then members could “like” the car of their choice. Not overly scientific but a bit of fun!

The winner was **Peter Wright’s Vauxhall Chevette HS**



## Barn Storage

The Wigton barn has two places empty at the moment if anyone has anything for long term storage etc. £20 a month via MG Cumbria . Contact Graeme on [gtfmg@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gtfmg@yahoo.co.uk) for details.

I have loads of MG B parts which I will be gradually selling off. If you need anything drop me an email on [gtfmg@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gtfmg@yahoo.co.uk)

## Venues

The vast majority of motorsport takes place on private land and most of that is at temporary venues with just a few at permanent circuits and tracks. Indeed the circuits etc are just about out of bounds for club events in that the hire cost of beyond our means. Circuit owners rightly want to get the best return on their investment and very often a track day or commercial testing by a team is more remunerative than a club sprint for example. Many members will remember the successful sprints we held at Teesside Autodrome some years ago. They came to a halt when the owner felt it was not financially viable to run MSA (as it was) sanctioned sprints and karting there when other events provided a better return.

Our rallying members will look back with pleasure at the events we have run on airfields and military camps for over 30 years, all no longer available. Even for our targa/historic events getting venues for tests is increasingly difficult. We have always been very careful and correct when we deal with land owners who allow us to use their land or roads and after each event we visit them to ensure that everything went well from their point of view.

If any member knows of any land that can potentially be used for events of any type of motorsport we would be delighted to hear from them. In addition there will be no use of forestry land until the pandemic is over and generally it does look as though the Forestry Commission would be pleased to see no events in their forests long term. Our members who are involved in running the Lakeland and Northern Trials are now desperately looking for addition venues to replace those in the north Lakes forests. Again let us know if you have any ideas that we can pass on.

Sadly we have to report that we can't use the Rowrah kart track again for our annual test days. A recent rally event caused considerable damage to the verges inside the kerbs and the kart club have now decided to have no more car events on the track. Another lost venue.

## Traffic Level Stay Low

Road usage stays low according to the latest figures. The July figures were 17% down on February, the last month before lock down started. Given that February is a low month anyway the difference with July 2019 must be much greater. Are people still nervous about going out and about or have we just got out of the habit?

We recently had to head into Lancashire on a Sunday and took the scenic route, often used on the "Roof of England" Tour; Tebay, Howgills, Sedbergh, Ingleton, Trough of Bowland Slaidburn etc. It was remarkably quiet, the only crowds were at Ribbleshead where a steam local was expected. Dent was deserted when we stopped for lunch and we were the only customers in the café. I saw just four classics out and about so perhaps we are all still keeping close to home or changed our interests a bit?

Last summers the youngsters were worshipping at the feet of Greta Humbug and blaming their parents for destroying the planet. This year they are all heading to beauty spots like the Lakes and wild camping and destroying the natural areas that their parents and grand parents have preserved for generations. How things change!

## Will they Succeed?

Typical isn't it. You wait years in the hope that your favourite brand from the past will be revived, only for nothing to happen, then all of a sudden three famous names come back from the dead.

Delage and Iso Rivolta are set to return to the road, and in a twist from its distant past even Sopwith is making a come back, switching from the sky to terra firma.



Famed Milan coachbuilder Zagato has quietly indicated the rebirth of Iso Rivolta by teasing a few images of its planned GTZ, ahead of the model's official unveiling in October. Just 19 examples of Zagato's revived Iso Rivolta are scheduled for production – with nine already sold. The svelte new GTZ is designed as a tribute to the original 1963 ISO A3/C, a brutal 'take no prisoners' GT, more commonly known in its later Bizzarrini GT 5300 guise.

In tribute to the '63 original, which was engineered by Giotto Bizzarrini and styled by Giorgetto Giugiaro, Zagato's new Iso Rivolta GTZ borrows some key styling cues including snarling front split air vents and bonnet induction intakes, a truncated Kamm tail with twin rear circular lamp units, and air scoops on each side of the rear windows to draw air from under the car to help cool the brakes and improve the car's air flow.

These will be combined with tried-and-tested, American V8 muscle. The GTZ uses a Chevrolet Corvette Z06 platform with its 6.8-litre supercharged engine, mated to a lightweight carbon-fibre body.

Zagato's reintroduction of Iso Rivolta will be at least the fifth attempt at reviving the Italian marque since its demise in 1974. Founded by Renzo Rivolta in 1953 to initially produce refrigerators, scooters and the original Isetta bubble car (the production rights to which were later sold to BMW), Iso Rivolta's first expensive sports car was revealed in 1963; the exclusive Corvette-powered IR300 GT coupe.



From its 1905 beginnings, right up to 1953 demise, Delage stood as a proud symbol of French luxury motoring, influential in motor racing and on the road, with its innovative 2-litre V12 competition cars dominating European Grand Prix racing in the mid-1920s. Delage went on to take the prestigious 'World Champion of Car Builders' title in 1927, with multiple Le Mans podium finishes to also decorate its trophy cabinet.

Now, following a 67-year sleep, Delage's new owner, French entrepreneur Laurent Tapie, plans to build just 30 examples of his new Delage D12 – yours for around €2million (£1.8m) – with the first two cars already sold.

Jacques Villeneuve, Ex-F1 1997 World Champion, is part of the ambitious Delage team, working alongside experienced motor racing engineers as the chassis development driver. The all-carbon fibre, tandem-seat D12 will use Formula One-inspired pushrod suspension and will be offered as a 1115bhp GT, plus a lighter 1310 kilos, 1024bhp Club, both sharing a Delage-developed 7.6-litre V12 engine, mated to an eight-speed gearbox. The company claims the car can achieve 0-62mph in 2.5 seconds.

Also set for a comeback is Sopwith, the cherished British aviation brand. Made famous during the First World War by various successful fighter aircraft, such as the Camel, Salamander and Snipe, post Armistice, Sopwith struggled in the tough civilian aviation world and entered voluntary liquidation in late 1920, after a tactical move to build motorcycles failed.

Its new owner, entrepreneur Phil Bevan who also owns the Levis motorcycle brand, plans to create a pair of charming, aircraft-inspired three-wheeled motor cars, along the lines of Morgan's Three Wheeler.



Set for a public debut in September, there will be an open two-seater Scout, with aero screens, and the more 'refined' Super Snipe, featuring an enclosed sliding canopy covering a single driver's seat, with a forward-hinged canopy section for easy access.

Both Sopwith models will share the same running gear and three-wheeled chassis, with brisk performance promised from a Villiers 100bhp engine. However, there will also be the option of a 1.2-litre V6 narrow angle four stroke engine, the latter sharing the same design and architecture as the

Villiers V10. It will have a 22.5-degree V design to make for an uncommonly compact V6, so small that Sopwith's sister company – Levis Motorcycles – will also use it to power its upcoming Café Racer motorcycle. A twin turbocharged version is also planned.

So, three great transportation names, each with proud histories, all set for an imminent revival. What dormant vehicle marque would most you like to see make a 21st century return to our roads? Share your thoughts; to help kick-off the list, your author would love to see the revival of Saab, Panhard, Triumph, Matra, Rover, Pontiac – and could go on...

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### Another Blast from the Past



Eric Smith, Mini 1297



# Message from Hugh Chambers

This month I have had plenty of opportunities to give greater consideration to grassroots motorsport – and the diversity of the offering available to enjoy four wheeled thrills. Amongst my various responsibilities, I am a member of the FIA ASN Task Force. (By the way, for those unfamiliar with it, the term ASN stands for Association Sportive Nationale, or the country governing bodies of which there are 243 around the world; and which form the members of the FIA.)

This Task Force was set up by the Deputy President for Sport of the FIA, our UK representative on the World Motor Sport Council, Graham Stoker. It was created a few years ago with the mission to help ASNs to develop grassroots motorsport and encourage more people to take up the sport. It is times like this, listening to the state of development for most countries around the world, that make one appreciate just how advanced and established motorsport is in the UK. Many countries have less than 20 clubs and only a few hundred competitors. They lack the critical mass to be present across all of the disciplines, and certainly cannot boast the same engineering industry to provide any significant economic weight.

By contrast, our 720 clubs and 45,000 competitors put us in the top three in the world. And yet despite these vast disparities we share many of the same problems when it comes to grassroots motorsport. The fact is that there has been too little regard for the majority of our competitors, most of whom will compete 4-5 times (in a normal year) and spend a few thousand pounds on their hobby.

Although that seems like a pittance to the professional community, it has to be viewed in the context of regular people, with average means, and compared to most other sports that may only cost a few hundred pounds each year. Much has been made of trying to contain costs, and we will continue to pursue this goal, but with most categories the economics are difficult to erode (transportation, circuit fees, tyres, fuel).

But also, there is the sheer hassle of looking after a competition car, storing it and fettling it after every outing. Naturally for many, that last element is one of the main reasons why they love motorsport. But it is a clear barrier for a new generation of young city dwellers. At Shelsley Walsh last weekend I was treated to a wonderful time wandering around what must be one of the most picturesque paddocks anywhere, chatting to a wide variety of competitors.

Of course, there are the bespoke specials (the fastest run in the morning was achieved by a highly technical single seater weighing some 420 kgs and boasting an ex-Indy Car Cosworth engine running on methanol and producing 700+ bhp, but I digress), but the majority were running simple low cost machinery. There is a class for cars that must be driven to the venue and have very little scope for modification.

And to cap it all, it is welcome practice for drivers to share their cars, even at the highest echelon. This is a practice used in autosolos to great effect, with parents and children sharing the experience, and friends splitting the prep and the costs. I think that there is a real opportunity to further expand the whole range of options for competing in the car that you drive to the venue.

Caterhams have been the vehicle of choice in this arena, but Suzuki Swifts are popular around the cones, and there was what looked like a very standard MG F heading up the hill on Sunday. The point is that you really don't need to have a huge amount of technology, logistical complexity or cost to have fun in a car. Motorsport UK is currently advancing specific new ideas in this area that will allow more people to access the sport, with less cost and less time commitment. But still lots of fun.

At the other end of the spectrum, in the field of Rallycross, I am delighted to welcome Pat Doran and his team as the promoter of the revitalised Motorsport UK British Rallycross Championship 5 Nations Trophy Presented by Cooper Tires (to use its full title). Rallycross is a sector that previously enjoyed a high profile and has significant potential for the future. After all, it originated from a made-for-TV format, and grew to prominence after the cancellation of the RAC Rally in 1967, and through that drew a field of the top rally stars at Lydden Hill.

I take a personal pride in that particular event, as I fondly recall the late Andrew Cowan, driving one of my father's works Hillman Imps at Lydden, so to be there for the launch last week was special. And just as it was recognised in 1967 that we need exposure with wider audiences, so Pat has led the way in repackaging the championship, with backing from Cooper Tires, as the 5 Nations Trophy. It is this type of smart thinking that is needed to draw together the core strengths of the sport and seek to present them in a fresh light.

Thanks to the added draw of Sir Chris Hoy and TT star John McGuinness, this is a championship and a sector of the sport that is really going places. So, while we all continue to endure a difficult time under the cloud of the coronavirus pandemic, the sport we love is thriving and innovating in exactly the way that our community does tend to adapt and excel. I hope that you and your families are well, keeping safe, and continuing to enjoy our sport together.

Kind regards,

**Hugh Chambers CEO, Motorsport UK**

## Another Croft Blast from the Past



David Lesley Reynard SF79 FF2000

# Andy's Armchair

## Andy Armstrong takes an irreverent look at motoring and motorsport

I have a new reader, so hello to Dylan's grandad.

29 years ago we as a family headed to Silverstone for the first ever historic racing weekend and it was fabulous. The cars were mind blowing, the stalls fantastic and the crowd all true enthusiasts. I remember meeting Rob Walker, getting Moss's autograph and being allowed to poke about in Cedric Selzer's ex-Clark Lotus 25. We continued to attend for the next couple of years, but the addition of evening rock concerts, the commercialisation of the stalls robbing them of their previous interesting automobilia and the increasing crowds, many of whom had come to hear "Status Quo" and drink Pims eventually drove us away.

We did attend once again, about ten years ago, but although the grids were full many of the exquisite cars were no longer in evidence. Lots of the GTO's, 917's, DBR1's, and ex Le Mans winners etc had got so valuable they'd been squirrelled away into private museum collections, so were no longer available for the peasants to pay homage to, which believe it or not is what we anoraks do. It was still an open paddock but some garages had been screened off and there were a few "prima donna's" about who seemed to demand more attention than the true super stars who'd been so approachable twenty years before.

We haven't been since.

It was in light of the above that I recently noticed a short article in "Motoring News", where the current promoters Goose Live Events were trying to crowd fund £50000 in order for it to be able to run the 30th anniversary event next year. Apparently after 3 weeks, their statement which amounted to little more than a begging letter had only raised £2500 so you've got to say things aren't going too well. I can't help thinking that in the previous years they'll have trousered a decent profit and spent it, so let them go bust and revert the whole thing to a race meeting for enthusiasts like it was at the start almost 30 years ago.

It was sad to hear Ron Tauranac has died. For those who don't know he was the T in the Brabham racing cars BT chassis number prefix. It's often said that Brabham was the only driver to win the F1 world championship driving a car bearing his name, but no one ever seems to recall that the car was designed by and the build largely overseen by Ron. After Brabham retired the commercial side of the business "Sports Motors" stopped trading and Tauranac branched out on his own and produced dozens of successful designs under his own brand name, Ralt (his initials). His cars didn't only perform well either. I've always considered the BT28/30 Brabham with it's scooped nose cone and pure lines as one of, if not the most beautiful single seater racing car to grace any track. Everyone knows of Lotus and Chapman and to put Ron Tauranac right up there beside him would be about right.

I've enjoyed the first few Grand Prix races. It's been a bit boring at the front but there's been some great racing in the main pack. Ferrari seems to have lost the plot at the moment and Vettel has developed a penchant for chucking the car off the track. Our boy Lando Norris continues to develop, it's been great to watch him come through since we spotted his talent when he came out of kart racing.

# What's On

WMC events and other events of interest

**September**

**16th      W      Social Run**

**October**

**11th      S      Breakfast Meet**

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