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Classic Vehicle Club



APRIL 2023 | EDITION 375



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April 2023

Weds 19th April – Club Night – Visit and discussion with 'Digi-Folk' regarding computer, phone(s) and other 'tech' issues. Any questions to Steve D beforehand or on the night.

Sun 23rd April – National 'Drive It' Day – Route to be set by Richard Burnham. Details, destination & venue to be confirmed.

May 2023

Mon 1st May – Gawsworth Hall Classic Car Show (Pre 1980 cars) – Gawsworth Hall, Nr Macclesfield, SK11 9RN. Pre-book/register 01260 223440 (£5 for driver & £5 for passenger).

Weds 17th May – Club Night – Presentation by Chris Platforde about vintage trucks.

Sat 27th, Sun 28th & Mon 29th May – Smallwood Vintage Rally – Smallwood, Nr Sandbach, Cheshire.

Sun 28th & Mon 29th May – Cheshire Classic Car & Motorcycle Show – Capesthorpe Hall, Nr Macclesfield, SK11 9JY. Book on line at www.classicshows.org or phone 01484 667776 (Price approx. £5.50)

Mon 29th May – Gawsworth Hall 'Youngtimer' Car Show (post 1980 cars) – Gawsworth Hall, Nr Macclesfield, SK11 9RN. Pre-book/register 01260 223440 (£5 for driver & £5 for passenger).

June 2023

Sat 3rd & Sun 4th June – Classic & Performance Car Spectacular – Tatton Park, Nr Knutsford, WA16 6QN (WA16 6SG for Satnav). There will be a Club stand at this show. Please contact Mike Coffey for registration details.

Sat 3rd & Sun 4th June – Astle Park Country Fair (includes vintage car & commercial displays) – Nr Chelford, SK11 9AD.

Weds 21st June – Club Night.

Sun 25th June – Peaks & Dales Charity Run – There will be one route (Approximately 50miles) concluding in Bakewell, Derbyshire. Full details for en-

tries etc. will be made available as soon as possible.

July 2023

Sat 1st & Sun 2nd July – Stars & Stripes American Show – Tatton Park, Nr Knutsford, Cheshire.

Sun 9th July – Didsbury Car Show, Didsbury Park, M20 5LR. There will be a Club stand at this show. Please contact Mike Coffey for registration details.

Sun 9th July – Caerwys Classic Car Show – Barlow's Caravan Park, Caerwys, Nr Mold CH7 5BH

Weds 19th July – Club Night – BBQ @ High Lane Conservative Club.

August 2023

Sat 12th & Sun 13th August – Astle Park Traction Engine Rally (includes classic car, motorcycle & commercials displays) – Nr Chelford, SK11 9AD.

Weds 16th August – Club Night.

Sat 19th & Sun 20th August – Passion for Power Show – Tatton Park, Nr Knutsford, Cheshire.

Sun 20th August – Manor Park (Glossop) Car Show, Manor Park Rd, Glossop, SK13 7SH. (£5 entry fee per car – all to charity) There will be a Club stand at this show. Please contact Mike Coffey for registration details.

Sat 26th August – Poynton Show, Poynton Show Ground, SK12 1BS. There will be a Club stand at this show. Please contact Mike Coffey for registration details.

September 2023

Sun 3rd September – Annual Club Show – Brookside Garden Centre.

Weds 19th September – Club Night.

October 2023

Weds 18th October – Club Night.

November 2023

Weds 15th November – Club Night.

December 2023

No planned activities.

Keith Yates

Firstly, a very Happy Easter from the editorial team and welcome to the April 2023 magazine; we hope you enjoy it.

The article about SMART motorways and driving standards in the Feb-23 (373) magazine, put together by Thomas Wardle, has created some interesting feedback. An alternative (SMART motorways) point of view can be found in this month's magazine and has been put forward by Ken Coxey. Personally, I regularly drive on SMART motorways and have yet to discover any real advantages over the conventional motorways that we're all familiar with. I have also detected what seems to be a gentle move away from the SMART title to that of 'Digital'. I now appear to be driving on Digital motorways, rather than SMART, but I've not the faintest idea what the difference is. I do wonder, being cynical about such things, if the Highways Agency perhaps brought in a private consultancy to come up with an expensive name change so that the negativity associated with 'SMART' could be left behind. A few years ago, any product that had 'Turbo' in its title had to be cool and that bit more saleable whereas these days, eve-

rything needs to be 'Digital' if it's to be considered hip, cool and contemporary. My final word on this subject is that I earnestly hope that I never have my car breakdown on any motorway. However, should the worst ever happen then I think I'd rather take my chances on a conventional motorway and the relative safety of the familiar hard-shoulder.

A report on the annual Rocker Box Racing Championship can be found elsewhere in this edition but I can say that it went down very well and that it was good fun. Competitors included several old favourites, some revised and tweaked (from last year) racers and a number of 'young pretender' and straight off the drawing board challengers. My Rover V8 'Clockwork Orange' racer was doing very well until it came up against the H&HCVC House Car of Mrs Stig in the grand final. Some say that the big occasion got to the V8 but all we know is that it could only deliver an honourable defeat to the victorious Mrs Stig. Ah well, there's always next year.

I recently read an article about the resurgence of "bangernomics" or put another way, the ability to economically run a car,

FRONT COVER

..... is by way of an Easter celebration, it marks the arrival of Spring and is a salute to the famous jewel encrusted Imperial Easter eggs that were made by Carl Faberge (St Petersburg) for Tsars Alexander III and Nicholas II of Russia. The cover design isn't quite so grand but it has got wheels so would probably be faster.

not in a shiny new/nearly new car, but by way of older 'bangers' that are kept running instead of disposing of them every three years or so. In more recent years, bangernomics has fallen prey to the various and seemingly attractive finance options that are being relentlessly pushed at consumers by motor manufacturers and their agents. With historically low interest rates, it's been so tempting to sign up to a finance package and drive away on new/nearly new rubber. Lately of course, interest rates are being pushed up by Central Banks and those 'deals' no longer seem as attractive as they once did – hence the return to bangernomics. I have to say that there is a lot of sense behind this as (modern) older cars have never ever been so good; rustproofing, mechanicals, electrical systems and paint finish are all as

good as they've ever been. So, here's a little game that you can play. Conjure up an imaginary but strict budget (say £3000 for example) and then hit Auto Trader or eBay Motors for a car in that price category. Trust me, you'll be amazed at what turns up and what you could buy. If you're not too bothered about the make or model of car that you drive then £3000, or thereabouts, buys you some absolutely crackin' cars with loads of life left in them. Long live bangernomics, arguably the 'green' way to drive a car.

Time to wind up these ramblings and let you get on with the rest of the magazine. Enjoy the Easter break and fingers crossed for some really good weather so that some, hopefully, trouble free 'classic' motoring can be had by all.

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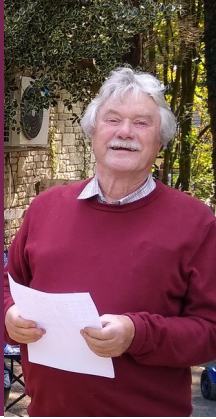
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CHAIRMAN'S CHAT



HALL OF FAME AWARD RECIPIENTS

2012 - Chris Parr
2014 - Bob Plant
2015 - Ray Etchells
2016 - Fred Dean
2020 - David Bowden
2022 - Jane Harrop

And so, for last month's meeting we had Ed's now legendary Rocker Box Racing night which was very well supported. A separate report on the event can be seen with this issue but I would like to thank Ed for organising the event, Simon for loading the racers and Paul and Craig who had volunteered for catching duties (including those racers that went astray!). At this point may I talk about an expansion of the rocker box racing concept – into the use of wooden block type planes (not those used for flying but those used for planing wood). These can be found at a variety of antique or flea markets and the like and can be bought quite cheaply (for about a fiver). However and as they are quite rare, Ed urges us all not to necessarily affix wheels to them but to perhaps tie the plane to a skateboard or the like.

For this month's meeting we have a visit from representatives of DigiKnow, a national organisation helping people, of any age, to get online and to use and understand mobile phones, lap-tops, computers

and tablets. The first topic they will talk about is regarding the problem with scams, how to recognise them and what to do with them but I am certain they will cover several other topics. If any member has anything related that they would like to discuss then please let me know. For more information look at DigiKnow: Help getting online – Stockport Council. If you are already up to speed in all of this then you may want to sign up with them as a Digital Champion.

David; it was nice to meet you at the March AGM meeting and I take this opportunity to thank you for your joint editorial role with Keith, your Father-in-Law. I look forward to your ongoing input in this role and to meeting you again.

The details of the shows, where we have a presence, are listed on the 'Upcoming Events' page and the organisers of them will be pleased to see you. Just a note about the Glossop show in that there is a five pound entry fee which goes entirely to charity. Whilst the organisers will gladly ac-

cept payment at the entry gate they are urging us to pre-pay and pre-book attendance. We have supported this event in the past but our attendance as a Club this year is a first for us.

Regarding Charities, the choice of support is entirely up to individuals but, before embarking on a support package, it does pay to find out how much of your financial support actually goes to the charity and is not swallowed up in administration. I can name several so called charities where the recipients get less than 19%. Another thing you need to be aware of is that several organisations employ outside agencies to contact you and to drag more contributions from you. On this subject, I contributed £5 a month to Greenpeace but when it got to £22 a month, after being contacted many times by one of these agencies, I decided enough was enough. I started funding them after their boat was blown up in New Zealand but what thanks did I get from them, Zilch!

As a matter of interest, it seems topical to buy a car on line and have it delivered to your door. Personally, I would never buy a car without having seen and driven it first but that is a matter of choice. I did hear of one of these organisations that had sold a car that had been in a very bad accident and which had been welded together quite badly – a practice that had

seemingly been ended several years ago. Fortunately and whilst I do not know the name of the company, I understand that the matter was eventually resolved. Buyer beware though.

I have learned that a Japanese company, new to the UK car market, is about to launch a (so called) 'cheap' shopping-car. As I understand it, this type of car is available in France at a cost of around £14000. Someone may have got the idea wrong but we wait and see.

Goodbye for now.

Steve Diwall.



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MG CATCH UP

Graham Scattergood

Hi Gang,

Well, I'm afraid that this month's write-up is a bit strange in that the last few weeks, for me, have been strangely quiet. For those that don't know, I've been laid up with a back and leg problem caused by, the doctors think after an examination and recent x-ray, the displacement of a vertebrae in my spine. HAPPY DAYS!!

Fortunately, I'm now starting to move around more freely so I'm hoping that rest and the exercises I've been given are working – although for me, not nearly as quickly as I would like!!

CAN'T WAIT TO GET BACK AMONGST YOU ALL AGAIN!!

On the Club front, I believe that the AGM went off without any major issues and that Ed's 2023 Rocker Box Championship also went down well.

I was hoping to get out for Andy's Spring Run but I think that that may come just a bit too early for me. However, fingers crossed, it won't be too long before I can get in and out of the MG and start enjoying the runs/drives out that are planned as forthcoming events.

Best wishes to you all and toodle pip for now.



H&H CVC Club Regalia

Light Grey Sweatshirts (with embroidered Club logo) – Size Large - £12.00

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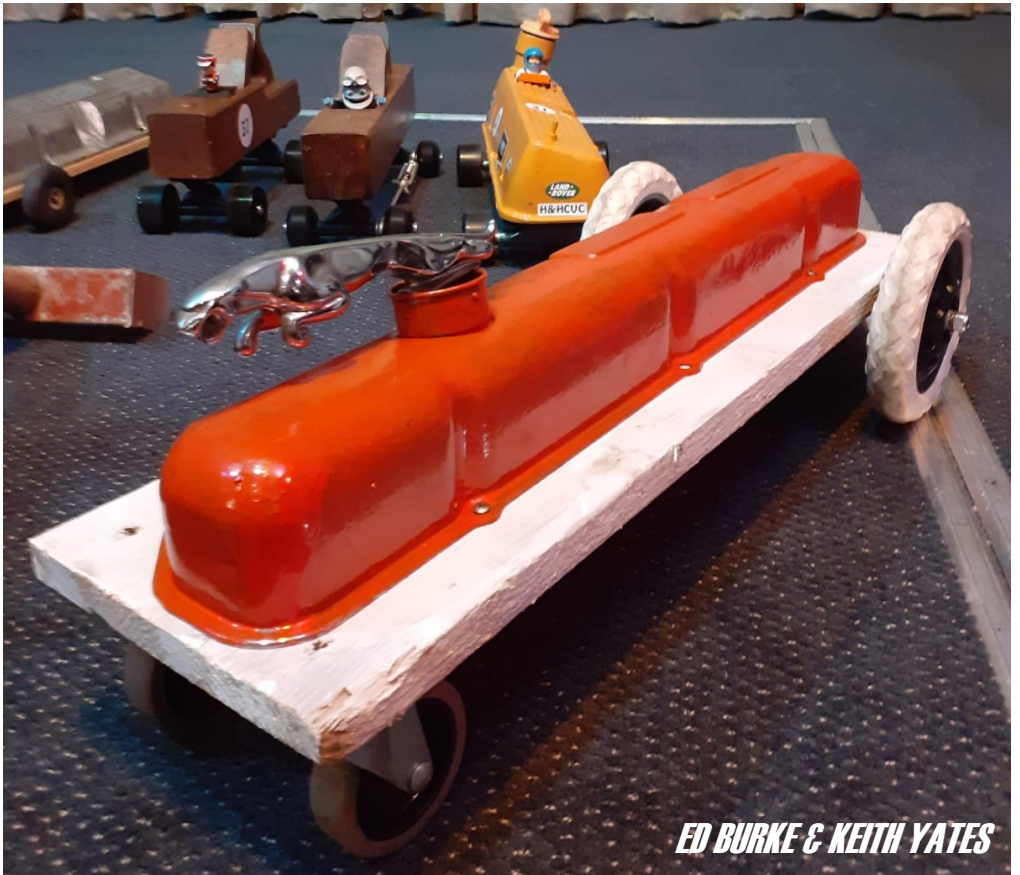
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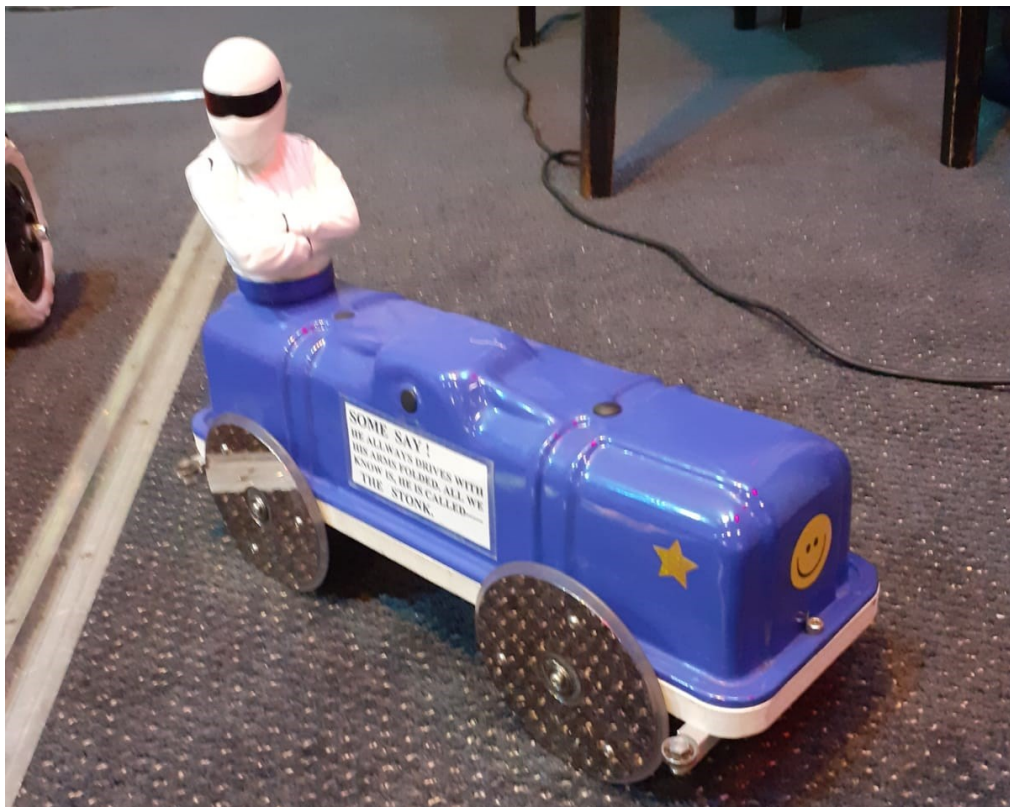


H&HCVC INTERNATIONAL ROCKER BOX RACING CHAMPIONSHIP

SPRING SERIES 2023



ED BURKE & KEITH YATES



Well, you all managed to do it again with another batch of magnificent racers (about 15-16 in total) and another good crowd. Yes, Club Night, on the 15th March 2023, saw the return and running of the now famous H&HCVC International Rocker Box Racing Championship. As ever, this well attended event was presided over by Ed Burke and his seemingly indefatigable crew of marshals and catchers. Accompanying commentary and punditry came from 'the voice' and last year's (now retired) champion, Steve Divall.

Hopefully, the photographs

will give absent members a flavour of the event and the variety of machines entered into the competition. It seems a very simple concept, to get a rocker box and chassis down a ramp, across the floor, steering a straight ahead course and to cross the finish line in first place. Some had gone for a short wheelbase whilst others (Editor's included) favoured a longer wheelbase – longest on the night was Jack Trotman's 'Jaguar' Dragster. Then there was the question of weight! Again, some racers had gone down the lighter route whilst others had perhaps taken Steve Divall's advice to 'go



for weight' rather too literally. There was a rumour that Peter Walvin's machine, the 'Walvin Special' (aka 'The Hernia Inducer') couldn't be weighed as the Clerk of the Course and Scrutineer couldn't lift it onto the scales!!! However, despite the varied designs and concepts, competitors' machines had all been very cleverly engineered. Some were complicated and detailed and oth-

ers fairly simple but all showed a great deal of thought and time spent on their construction; they all looked quite stunning when grouped together, pre race, in the paddock too. There was also the added excitement (is that the word?) of a new formula, the 'Wooden Plane' racers. There were only two of these so they were mixed with the normal racers and

then took part in a demonstration run-off.

And so the serious business started. The actual racing began at around 08:15 and so did the incidents – numerous crashes into other competitors, the crowd and into furniture. Gradually, the runners and riders were whittled down and winners and losers identified. After two close run semifinals, the grand final featured the Editor's Rover V8 'Clockwork Orange' against the blue H&HCVC House Car 'Mrs Stig'. It was a very (very) close race but the catchers, after VAR consultation, came out in favour of 'Mrs Stig' and so Ed/The House is therefore our 2023 champion (having previously been successful back in 2019). The final results were as follows: -

Overall Winner/'Speed' Trophy – H&HCVC (blue House Racer 'Mrs Stig').

Bad Luck Trophy – Tracey Turner (her 'Bow-Man-Blow' boat themed racer capsized!!!).

Best Dressed Trophy – Jack Trotman (Jaguar Dragster racer).

Chester "Mad Dogs" Piston Broke Trophy – Simon Isles/Ed Burke. This is awarded to a club member(s) whom, during the previous show season, had had some bad luck. The 2023 winners (Simon & Ed) came about after a series of

catastrophes in their 1920's Super-charged Delage GP Racing Car. Firstly they managed to split an inlet manifold, then knock the bottom off the oil pump and then ding the rear end all in the space of about half an hour. The trophy will reside in the Club's trophy cabinet for the next 12mths as it really is bad luck to take it home. Incidentally, it was Simon who originally made the trophy from broken parts supplied by Chester "Mad Dogs" Maddox.

Thanks for all of the help given during the evening by the Catchers (Paul & Craig), Launch Loader (Simon), Judge (Carolyn) and 'The Voice' Steve who also got the trophies made up. Also, well done to the winners and a "back to the drawing board again" for the losers. A very good night's entertainment for all.

PS – Over the last few years it has become clear that no matter how much engineering goes into making a racer a cheap bodge up can still win a trophy. So, why not build one for next year – Mrs Stig is waiting for you! Don't forget that you could try the new style Block Plane racer formula of which there were two racing this year.

See you all again, with your latest innovations, next year.



SMART MOTORWAYS – AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW

KEN COXEY

The February 2023 edition of this magazine contained a very interesting article and a particular view of Smart (or are they 'Digital' now?) Motorways by Thomas Wardle. At the time, I asked to hear your views on the subject and, as a result, Ken Coxe has sent me the following piece. Ken does not want this to be seen as some sort of criticism but merely an alternative point of view. (Ed)

After reading through the February magazine I would like to comment on and offer an alternative view to the article by Thomas Wardle. Whilst I can align with the majority of his article I cannot concur with his thoughts on Smart Motorways. In my view they are death traps that were only introduced on economic grounds and set against road safety. I also believe that there are significant differences between Smart

Motorways and Dual Carriageways. I agree both have 70mph speed limits however, beyond that reasoning, I would like the following to be introduced into the equation.

Smart Motorways are in place because of the volume of traffic and, by definition, carry significantly more traffic than the majority of Dual Carriageways. Very few Dual Carriageways come anywhere near such volumes even in “rush hour” periods.

On Smart Motorways the motorist is, in effect, channelled between steel crash barriers, one along the centre reservation and the other along the near side lane. The installation of the later is to pro-

tect the occupants of a broken down vehicle, all of whom are advised to get out of the vehicle and stand beyond the barrier. The same does not apply to Dual Carriageways and, I would suggest, the majority of these roads have escape options (i.e. a pavement or a grass verge) where drivers can navigate to safety from the traffic on the inside lane. None of that is possible on Smart Motorways as all of the vehicles are channelled between the steel barriers.

The electronic CCTV systems that have been installed on Smart Motorways, if working properly, are there to inform those monitoring the carriageways when the road is blocked. I feel that this system, in many situations, is almost certainly inadequate. As a motorist, and I am sure most would agree, if travelling on the inside lane of a Smart Motorway at say 60mph and with an HGV on your tail, the odds of not being in an accident if you break down doesn't bear thinking about. The same scenario is less likely on a Dual Carriageway as drivers are not relying on the traffic flow to be constant. Surely and with the best will in the world, control room monitoring of running lanes, despite the ability to 'instantly' switch signalling to stop the use of a blocked live lane, will incur a time delay before traffic responds. Hence, in my view, the sig-

nificant risk of a rear end shunt and a serious situation in the making. Any such delays deem such motorways as death traps.

The refuge bays are not a real solution if, for example, your vehicle encounters a mechanical failure such that it cannot reach the refuge and a modicum of safety. These bays are too infrequent and therefore not fit for purpose but, although this point seems to have been accepted by the Highways Agency, nothing in real terms has been done other than promises. Also and once in a refuge area, it is almost impossible to accelerate out of it because of its limited length.

Originally, motorways were designed with emergency hard shoulders for a reason and that reason is still as valid today as it ever was. So, in my opinion there is no case to change this critical safety feature. The answer to increase traffic flow is NOT to implement Smart Motorways but to build extra lanes with all the necessary safety features of the original design. Where this is not possible, traffic flow should be controlled by variable speed restrictions as these have been proved to improve traffic flow albeit at a slower speed.

I welcome any feedback on this piece and on the subject.



1971 MGBGT

This car is being sold by Mrs Betty Blanchet and was previously owned by her late husband. The details are as follows: -

Registration – HTD 562K (1st September 1971)
Mileage Reading – 51,000 (151,000?) miles
MOT – Expired
Colour – Blue

This car is considered to be in very good condition. It has been in the same ownership since 1972, has always been kept in a garage, used regularly and was fully restored (mechanical and exterior) in the 1990's.

The car can be viewed in Alderley Edge upon request.

Looking for £9000 or nearest offer.

Telephone Mrs Betty Blanchet – 01625 582406

H&H

CLASSIFIEDS

FUEL PRICES

(SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT)

INSPIRED BY A THOMAS WARDLE EMAIL

During (circa) June 1979 the price of a gallon of petrol hit the heady price of £1.00 per gallon; I recall the British motoring public being utterly appalled by this landmark and by yet another attack on their pockets. Interestingly, that £1.00 gallon of fuel price included Fuel Duty of 30p per gallon and VAT of (only) 12.5% - all, as ever, winging its way to the Treasury. This should remind readers that Britain, at that time, was still very much a nation that relied on imperial forms of measurement. Despite being part of the Common Market or European Economic Community (or whatever we called it then) and having a metric monetary system, we steadfastly clung on to our pints, gallons, ounces, pounds, stones, inches, feet and yards etc, etc. Anyway and as a matter of interest, if we say that there are roughly 4.5 litres in an imperial gallon then, in June 1979, a litre of petrol would have cost you 22p – that doesn't sound too bad does it?

At about the time of all this, the owners of Britain's fuel stations and their trade representatives started to complain that their ageing electromechanical pumps could not

go over £1.99 per unit of fuel and so, from the mid 1980's onwards, the change over, from gallons to litres, started to creep into being. The reasoning given was that as gallon unit prices moved ever closer to the £1.99 'barrier' then litre unit prices could be reduced by a factor of 4.5 (i.e. litres in a gallon). However, the more cynical of us might just look back to that 22p per litre figure and think 'this is a smoke and mirrors con trick!'. If you were to look at this another way, the reduction in unit prices at the pumps also meant that actual product price increases (i.e. for a gallon or a litre of fuel) by the oil companies and/or the Chancellor wouldn't be quite so obvious to the motorists buying it. Anyway and for whatever the true reason, gallons at the pumps were finally and officially phased out on 1st January 1995. So, we're all well into 2023 and everybody has the cost of fuel per litre fixed in their minds – how can you not have at these prices?! The flip side, and indeed madness, of this is that we all still work on fuel efficiency targets based on miles per gallon (MPG). How absolutely bonkers is that? We clearly can't connect these two things together but let's look at this another way. If we take the price of a litre of Unleaded E10 4Star to be £1.50 per litre then a gallon of the stuff would now cost you £6.75 to buy!!!

As an aside, the cost of a litre of fuel has Fuel Duty included at a

current rate of 52.95p per litre and, of course, the ubiquitous 20% VAT is charged on the product cost plus the Fuel Duty. So that means that every time you buy a litre of fuel, at (say) £1.50 per litre, you are send-

ing roughly 50% of your purchase to the Treasury. Did someone say that the British motorist was no longer the Chancellor's 'Golden Goose'?

A DREAM COOL CAR
ZAGATO VOLVO GTZ
BUT WHERE IS IT NOW?





A GREAT RACING DRIVER
KEITH YATES

I'm not sure if readers will recall my December 2022 Editorial but, amongst my various musings, I questioned how a racing driver with the often used distinction of 'great' could best be defined. A few names were mentioned at that time but I didn't really take it any further. So then and to return to the subject, how would we even begin to define 'greatness' when so many drivers have driven so many cars, in so many races and over so many decades of motor racing? As an obvious starting point perhaps, we could look at the dictionary definition of 'great'. That would give us something along the lines of – having an ability, a quality or obvious eminence that is considerably above the average. That helps a bit but it also, inevitably, leads us to comparisons between one driver and another and then, additionally, the seemingly impossible task of comparing a recognizably 'great' driver from (say) the 1930's to one from (say) the 1960's or, perhaps, a top rally driver or sports-car driver against a top F1 driver. Personally, I don't think this can be done. It would be like trying to compare apples and pears or, more to the point, 'greats' from significantly different disciplines and, in the case of different generations, differing mindsets, levels of professionalism, fitness levels, car and track technologies and even media reporting of

events. Any great sportsperson, regardless of the chosen sport, is of their time. They tend to be single-minded, dedicated, serial winners and champions and they usually dominate their chosen sports until a younger and equally dedicated and like-minded contender takes their crown – the sporting equivalent of the circle of life. The jury may still be out on this one but, in contemporary motor racing terms, I think we have seen this transfer of power and dominance within Formula 1 – King Hamilton has seemingly lost his crown and King Verstappen has taken it.

What surely has to be beyond dispute is one very simple fact; every racing driver, regardless of era, talent or formula, has always looked to drive the best and most competitive car available to them. This makes the quest for the chequered flag and glory that much easier than when driving an uncompetitive car. On the flip side of that, a car manufacturer that has a competitive car to go racing/rallying with, will not be getting near a podium position unless they can employ a driver that can get the best out of it, that can utilize all of the car's performance and dynamics, can take it to the limit (and sometimes beyond) and, basically, get it around a track/course and to the finish line faster than anybody else. This is the world of professional race car drivers and

amongst their highly skilled ranks you will find the 'greats' of the sport. These drivers usually have a special inborn talent for car control, to be as one and to have a rapport with a car and for finding speed that is beyond the abilities of lesser drivers – skills that may well have been obvious from the earliest days of their careers. They can win or get podium places at races that they should never have done, they can drive an uncompetitive car to a victory over superior machines and they can thrill spectators with their driving heroics. Some examples in this respect are the Italian Tazio Nuvolari (the story of his winning drive, in an outdated Alfa Romeo, against the might of Germany's Mercedes-Benz and Auto Union teams in the 1935 German GP, on the Nurburgring, is the stuff of legend), the superb and clearly superior Stirling Moss, the wizardry and genius of Ayrton Senna and then, three absolute racers, Jim Clark, Ronnie Peterson and Gilles Villeneuve. Here's another one to ponder on and from outside the world of GP/F1 'greats' too, the fabulous Michele Mouton, the French woman rally driver who, like Pat Moss before her, regularly beat/outclassed her male opposition and who could do things with an Audi Quattro that were sometimes beyond belief.

This is all well and good but are we any nearer to actually defin-

ing and being able to readily identify a truly 'great' race car driver I hear you ask? Well, no, not really. There has to be more than speed, winning races and collecting trophies. So how about titles and championships to back up those wins and to really highlight a drivers name in the sport's history books? It can be argued that the standout motorsport greats are those drivers who didn't just specialize in GP/F1, Sports Cars, Rallying, IndyCar, NASCAR etc. So and on that basis, I'd reluctantly have to discount the likes of and for example Lewis Hamilton, Michael Schumacher, Ayrton Senna, Alan Prost, Derek Bell, Sebastian Loeb and Colin McRae; all great drivers, all prolific winners, all multi-champions but all of them did it as 'specialist' drivers rather than by way of multiple disciplines. That's a lot of class to discount and whilst I'm not saying these guys are not great drivers, there are other drivers that have achieved significant success from more than one branch of motorsport. Here's a few examples, Nigel Mansell (31 GP wins, F1 World Champion and the American CART IndyCar series Champion), Emerson Fittipaldi (twice an F1 World Champion, twice Indy 500 winner and American CART IndyCar series Champion in 1989), Mario Andretti (F1 World Champion, winner at the Indy 500, Daytona 500 Sebring 12Hrs,

IndyCar Champion, 879 starts, 111 wins and 109 pole positions), Juan Manuel Fangio (five times F1 World Champion and multiple short/long distance sports car wins) and Jim Clark (twice F1 World Champion, Indy 500 winner, rally successes, and British Saloon Car Champion in the Lotus Cortina). I also have to include Stirling Moss here. Yes, he was famously the 'greatest' driver never to win the F1 World Championship but his skill and ability to win in a huge variety of cars and disciplines (including GP/F1, rally cars, sports cars, saloon cars and even speed record breaking cars) is quite possibly incomparable.

So is that it then, are we edging closer towards an acceptable definition and the identification of

what is a 'great' race car driver? Well, sort of. I feel that this has probably gone as far as I can take it and that the true 'sporting greats' are a little bit like an elephant, we all know what one is and we all recognise one but could we actually sit down and describe one? It seems to me that the term 'great' can be and almost certainly is, all things to all men. I will however, leave you all with a scenario and a name to ponder on. This man is undeniably a 'great' of Motor Racing, his skills were up there with them all and he made unique Motor Racing history. Here goes.

Let us imagine that it would be possible to go back to the very beginning of Motor Racing, let us cover every type of discipline and



let us collect together every 'great' driver that there has ever been and put them all in a big room with a big table. After all of the introductions, greetings, high jinks and pleasant-ries, it probably wouldn't take too long before all of these men and women would start to show their competitive sides and try to establish a pecking order of 'greatness'. But here's a thing, if you had a referee in the room that asked for every person to place their win records, pole positions, podium places, cups, trophies and championships on the table then one man would stand out as a great amongst the greats – Graham Hill.

Graham Hill (1929 – 1975) didn't pass his driving test until he was 24yrs old (1953) and took up motor racing via his skill as a motor mechanic, doing work for people like Colin Chapman of Lotus to earn a drive in a race. Like all of the drivers of that era, Hill would drive almost anything, single seaters, saloon cars and sports cars. It wasn't unusual to see drivers like Hill drive three or four different cars at the same race meeting. He, of course, made his name in the world of 1960s/70s GP/F1 racing with the BRM and Lotus teams. His record was 176 starts, 14 wins and 36 podium places. He also won the F1 World Championships of 1962 (BRM) and 1968 (Lotus) and was runner-up in 1963, 1964 and 1965.

What makes Graham Hill unique however, is that he is the only driver to ever win Motor Racing's 'Triple Crown'. In Hill's lifetime the definition of the Triple Crown was to win a F1 World Championship, the Indianapolis 500 race (which he won in 1966 in a Lola Ford) and the 24Hrs du Le Mans (which he won in 1972 in a Matra-Simca). Latterly, this definition has been amended, the F1 Championship was deleted and a win at the Monaco Grand Prix in-stated. That makes not the slightest bit of difference as Hill won at Monaco on no less than five occasions 1963, 1964, 1965, 1968 and 1969 and became know as Mr Monaco. Also and as an aside to this record, Graham Hill and his son Damon Hill shared another unique record for several years. They were the only father/son duo to both win F1 World Championships (Damon won in 1996), a record that lasted for 20yrs until father/son duo Keke (1982) and Nico Rosberg (2016) matched the achievement.

To conclude, I'm not trying to put a case forward that Graham Hill was the greatest race car driver ever, far from it. However, I believe that there is a case to say that when all of those 'greats' walk into the Motor Racing Hall of Fame, the seating plan would have Graham Hill sat at the top table with due respect being given by all his peers.

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