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Lloyd's

Motor Club

ANNUAL MAGAZINE



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Max Chilton: 2014 in F1

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A Quick Word from The Editor...

We have an interesting cross-section of articles in this edition of the LMC Annual Magazine, ranging from steam trains to Formula 1, reflecting the eclectic tastes of the membership and the wide variety of activities the members are involved in. If you would like to submit an article of your own for consideration, then the deadline is the end of November 2015. Submissions made after that date will be deferred to the following year.

As usual, please remember to keep an eye on the LMC website for details of upcoming events, such as the Biennial Dinner on Thursday 14 May with Damon Hill as our star guest, all proceeds of which will be donated to Damon's choice of charity, the Down's Syndrome Association.

Lastly, kindly remember to keep our Membership Secretary informed of any changes in your contact details so we can ensure that you receive this Annual Magazine.

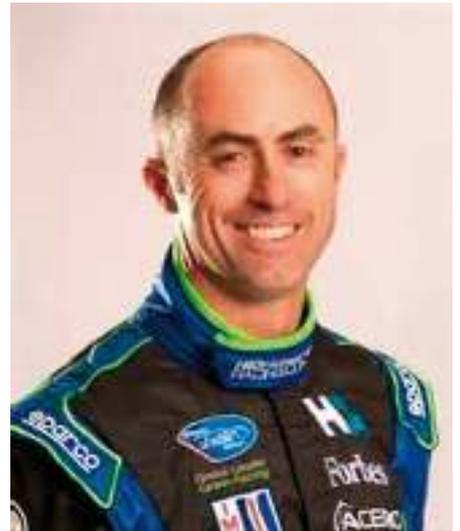
JONATHAN SUCKLING (JAS)

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LMC LUNCH WITH David Brabham



An Interview by LMC Chairman Roger Earl

David is a true and very much current racer at the very highest level of International sportscar racing – winner of the Le Mans 24 Hours, winner of the Sebring 12 Hours, winner of the Spa 24 Hours, a multiple US Sportscar champion, double ALM Series champion, and that’s only a few of many triumphs. Only a couple of weekends ago, David was 2nd by only 4.7 seconds at the 2014 Sebring 12 hours race.

RE: David, you came into racing at an early age, two older brothers, Geoff and Gary, already in international racing. How much did sibling pressure prompt you to follow or did you always want to be a racer?

DB: I was not really interested in racing until I was 17 when I first saw my brother Geoff racing. My Dad Jack had retired from Formula 1 when I was only five. However, I had always driven farm vehicles ‘flat out and sideways’ and had nearly killed myself on several occasions. I had studied farming at agricultural school in spite of there being no farm in the family but my father seemed shocked when I told him I wanted to go karting with our neighbor in a second hand go kart.

RE: Your first really big success could be said to have been winning the Australian Formula 2 championship in 1987 at the age of just 21. That must have felt good. Did that put you on track for Europe and the USA?

DB: Yes, after Australia I raced in America, Argentina and New Zealand. But before I won Formula 2 in Australia I told my Dad that my girlfriend was pregnant. Dad was very upset by this and didn’t really talk to me afterwards. I went out in that race and found a level I had never found before - which was anger driven. After the race Dad

was grabbed by Ken Tyrell and Jackie Stewart telling him to get me to Europe.

RE: Two years later, another landmark championship – British F3 and an outright win at the iconic Macau Grand Prix. It must have been very satisfying racing and winning against the likes of Michael Schumacher, Mika Hakkinen, Alan McNish, and Mika Salo and to beat them to the championship at Macau. What memories do you have of that benchmark season?

DB: My memories of 1989 are that my success was unexpected. I was relatively inexperienced when I arrived from Australian F2. To go up against Michael and the others was a challenge. At Macau, Michael won the first heat and I won the second. It’s a great story to tell your grandchildren. The next year I was in F1 after only two years racing cars.

RE: You had two tough years in F1 with seriously underfunded teams – the first sadly in the twilight years of your Dad’s old team, Brabham, by then owned by a nondescript consortium, the other with Simtek. You must have had some expectations of Simtek, a team originally set up by Max Mosley and Nick Wirth, and it did produce what must have been one of the most demanding moments in your life. You may feel modest about it but your bravery and leadership on that terrible weekend at Imola in 1994, (and this year marks its 20th anniversary) in

getting back into the car to qualify it after your team-mate, Roland Ratzenberger, had been tragically killed in qualifying, and then continuing in the race itself after Senna’s fatal accident, almost certainly saved the team from instant collapse. Could you tell us a little of your feelings about that harrowing weekend?

DB: Many people will remember there were lots of accidents leading up to those events, which did lead to increased safety precautions such as the Hans device. It still seems like yesterday. You don’t know what to do, everyone is looking at you. It was tough. The team asked me if I “wanted to race tomorrow”? I did the warm up and I went quite well, 16th or 17th, on empty tanks. The black cloud lifted slightly, and Roland would have wanted me to get out there and race. I get a lot of flak from some people but experience like that shapes you as a person. My wife was heavily pregnant at the time and having problems but it makes you what you are.

RE: Back to Australia in 1997 for the great Bathurst 1000 for Super Touring cars – a real test for any driver and only won by the very best. In 1997, you won it. We’d love to hear a bit about your experiences in that monster of a race, that time with BMW?

DB: That was an unbelievable race; I maintain that is one of the best circuits in the world, as big for me as making it to the F1 grid. I drove with my brother, in a V8 super tourer BMW. It was great to win in Australia with my family there supporting me.

RE: Then off to the USA. In 1998 you became US Sportscar champion with Don Panoz and the following year the winner of the US Petit Le Mans race with the same team at the demanding

Road Atlanta. What was the mercurial Don like to race for?

DB: I had picked up an Autosport article and thought “you will never see me in one of those”. I was in discussions with Ron Dennis when Don Panoz said come down and have a look at our cars, and they had the engine in the front. My father had convinced everyone that engines belong in the back. By then McLaren had found some money to help me but it was too late, I had signed with Don. I drove with Jan Magnussen. It was a small team with a front engined car that made a weird noise. It was so painful to the ears that I am surprised I can hear at all today. When you drive a Panoz you lost the will to live due to the noise.

I had a fantastic relationship with Jan. I was a technical guy. He would ask “is it ready Brabs” and he would jump in the car. He could chase girls just as quickly.

RE: With the pleasure of your company today, we now have a ‘full house’, so to speak, as your Bentley Le Mans co-drivers of 2003, Johnny Herbert and Mark Blundell, have both been with us in the past. Tell us a little about how you guys so narrowly missed finishing 1st that year and had to settle for 2nd.

DB: Mark Blundell and Johnny Herbert, well we had the most fun with the Bentley programme. It was the first time I had a chance of winning Le Mans, we had the

fastest car but we finished 2nd due to a faulty battery charger. I felt no emotion at the end as I had lost the opportunity to win Le Mans. But my team mates grabbed me and we all went back to the Bentley garage. Bentley had spent \$1m on developing the cars and they had every reason to celebrate. So we finally got to celebrate with all the other guys too and I remember ending up tucking into a big English breakfast.

RE: 2009 was your red-letter year of course, with your overall win at Le Mans in the Peugeot LMP1. The same year you went on to be the ALMS (American Le Mans Series) champion with Honda, and repeated that again in 2010. Talk us through your 24 Hours win and the great feeling it must have been to have achieved that at last, and your subsequent achievement in becoming a double year ALMS champ as well.

DB: I had had a fantastic time in 2007/8 winning class at Le Mans with Aston Martin. So I was surprised to get the call from Peugeot who were in competition with Honda. Peugeot asked by email “what are your contractual arrangements for Le Mans?” I ended up doing a deal with Peugeot but one of their directors said at the time “I am not sure this is a good idea as you can tell Honda all our secrets”. This was a big team, a big change for me. Then there was the politics as they wanted a French car driven by French drivers to win.

We used the politics to our advantage as we separated ourselves from the others. The engine had never run at Le Mans but the drivers knew how to do it. A Safety Car nearly cost us the race as we needed one extra fuel stop. We went in under the Safety Car but we knew the other car was also due to come around and we needed to get out before them, otherwise team orders would keep us behind the other car. We managed to get out behind the ‘second string’ Safety Car and the team said “no more racing”, not realising exactly where we were and we went on to win. My brother, Geoff, said it had been the same for him when I spoke to him on the phone during the closing laps.

The French? I don’t know what the French thought of it all. When my brother won in 1993, I had been trying to get a seat in the Peugeot and a week later my brother got a fax from Jean Todt saying “we want you in the car”, so it had not been a mistake, just a different Brabham.

Roger thanked David for attending the lunch and for supporting the club’s charity efforts. The funds raised at the lunch were donated to Cancer Research in memory of David’s late mother, Lady Betty Brabham, who succumbed to cancer in September 2013.

RECORDED BY TONY PICKERING



LMC LUNCH WITH

Fergus Anckorn

The Conjuror on the Kwai

In the Chungkai prisoner of war camp in the sweltering Thai jungle, Fergus 'Gunner' Anckorn pulled off his greatest ever trick. Just one egg was the food of fantasy for the skeletal soldiers interned there over 70 years ago, enduring 14 hours of hard labour every day on just a few handfuls of rice. Suddenly, 50 eggs had been conjured into existence and were being fried into a giant omelette. It may have seemed like a miracle but this was in fact down to magic.

"If you got caught stealing a potato you could have your head cut off" explains Fergus "but the guards did like magic and I'd often manage to get food from them by making it 'disappear'".

"One day, the Japanese camp-commandant said he had generals coming to visit and that he wanted me to do some magic for them. He asked what I would need for a trick. I requested an egg. He wrote out a chitty and told me to take it to the cookhouse. The cook asked me how many I wanted, so I asked for 50. I went

straight back to the hut and we had a 49-egg omelette, saving just one for the trick".

At the 2014 LMC Celebrity Lunch, we were privileged to enjoy a great deal of Fergus Anckorn's personal magic and dish up in small return rather more than an omelette, 49 egg or otherwise. A packed Minster Exchange private dining room provided Fergus with an audience of 124 LMC members and guests and all sat gripped and enthralled by his responses for nearly an hour to questions about his experiences as a prisoner of the

Japanese from 1942 to 1945 on the Thai-Burma Death Railway (chillingly described as "one dead prisoner for every sleeper") and the Bridge they built over the River Kwai.

Fergus went on to explain "At the prison camp that night I did the trick for the generals and it all went very well. But the next day I was summoned to the commandant's hut. He was glowering. The chitty was on his desk. He said, "You do magic one egg. Where 49 eggs?". I thought, in ten seconds my head will be rolling across that floor. Out of my mouth came the words:

“I thought, in ten seconds my head will be rolling across that floor”

“Your trick was so important to me, I was rehearsing all day.” He nodded and let me go. I couldn’t perform that trick again for 40 years. My knees would knock together even thinking about it.” Later, the Japanese wanted to know how the trick was done, so Fergus showed the commandant how he made a hole in the back of a second eggshell into which he dexterously stuffed the handkerchief. But his piece de resistance was to seamlessly switch the hollow egg for an intact egg, which he then cracked on a bowl, and out plopped – not the handkerchief – but yolk and albumen.

Fergus and his twin sister were born in Kent, in December 1918. Their father Wilfred, a journalist and author, and his mother Beatrice, instilled in him a high moral code of decency, honesty and kindness that helped him survive

the war. On Fergus’s fifth birthday his father had given him a box of magic tricks and he had become hooked on the expressions of amazement his family would feign at his childish conjuring. But as he practised, this wonder became genuine and at the age of 18 he was admitted to the Magic Circle. “For about five years I was the youngest member and now I am the oldest” said Fergus “and now a member of its Inner Circle of 150 members.”

At the age of 20, Fergus was drafted to fight in the Second World War. Serving in the 118th Field Regiment Royal Artillery he spent the first two years in Britain, preparing for a Nazi invasion but the regiment was then posted to Singapore. “We arrived just before it fell” said Fergus “so my war lasted only five days”. The gun-truck he was

driving was strafed and set alight by a wing of Japanese dive-bombers and he was lucky to escape with his life albeit severely wounded, with a nearly severed right hand, a blow to the head and a bullet behind one knee. A day later he was found half dead in the ditch by the side of the road and woke up in the Alexandra Military Hospital to find he still had his hand but that the hospital had been taken over by the Japanese. They were taking away the staff and shooting them. Having lost a great deal of blood, he drifted back to sleep. Waking again, he heard thuds. The Japanese were by now bayoneting the patients. “I just lay there and accepted I was going to die. But there was so much blood pouring from me on to the bed and the floor that they must have thought they had already done it. When I came round again, everyone was dead except

“At the 2014 LMC Celebrity Lunch, we were privileged to enjoy a great deal of Fergus Anckorn’s personal magic”



me. I never told my wife Lucille or my mother about that day."

From the hospital, he was transferred to the notorious Changi POW camp in Singapore. Here he was interned with many great men, including the illustrator Ronald Searle and in particular Lieutenant-Colonel Philip Toosey, the heroic real-life model for Alec Guinness's Lieutenant-Colonel Nicholson in the David Lean film. Before long, however, Fergus was dispatched on the next working party to the Chungkai camp on the Thai-Burma Death Railway, made infamous by David Lean's 1957 film "The Bridge On The River Kwai" (actually the river was called the Kwae Yai), where more than 12,000 Allied troops died of starvation and brutal beatings. In 1943, Fergus was working on the Wampo Viaduct when a guard ordered him to climb up the viaduct with a bucket of hot creosote. After pointing out his bad leg and useless arm, which would make it almost impossible to carry five gallons up the ladder, the guard went off to get a stick with which to beat him. So Fergus climbed the ladder as best he could and recalled "ever since I'd taken the blow to my head during the bombing, I'd suffered from vertigo, even at low heights. I had to climb 100ft up and when I got to the top the whole world was spinning. A Korean guard screamed at me but I just couldn't move. He threw the whole bucket of burning creosote over me and I passed out. And that was my lucky day because I blistered up like the Michelin Man and got taken off the railway and sent to a hospital camp at Chungkai to be treated for the burns. All the mates I left behind died".

In Chungkai camp, Fergus continued to suffer the most degrading conditions,

"why don't they just pull the trigger and get it over with?"

as all around him his fellow prisoners died from their wounds, cholera or went mad. But in common with those who survived, Fergus displayed great ingenuity. He said "We still had to work long hours in the heat with little food but the guards were not so driving as those at the rail-head and

it was possible to prolong our ten-minute breaks by distracting them with magic tricks. I would pick up stones and make them disappear or turn little ones into bigger ones or make sticks pass through each other." The Korean guards also started asking him to put on private shows for them, for which he would get food and cigarettes and these were used as currency in the camp.

"it was possible to prolong our ten-minute breaks by distracting them with magic tricks"

"Then on one occasion four guards selected five of us at random and drove us out into the jungle. They stood us up against the trees, got a machine gun out, mounted it on its tripod and aimed it at us. We didn't have blindfolds - we just stood for ten minutes waiting to be killed. We asked each other "why don't they just pull the trigger and get it over with?" Then suddenly they dismantled the gun and took us back to camp - where we found later that the war had been over for three days. They must have known that and also knew we were going to be told that evening. So I think they thought they would be hanged, after all there were 2,000 of us and 80 of them, and thought to take some of us with them. But then they must have thought again "What if they don't intend to hang us? Well they will if they see what we have done". I think that's what saved us".

In 1945, just days before the Japanese surrendered, Fergus had also been savagely beaten by another Korean guard, who knocked out some of his teeth. It was the final, awful act in a brutal four years. "When we were told the war was over my friends got hold of the guard and brought him into our

hut. They gave me a spade and said I should kill him. I knew that if I did that I would be no better than he was. He went out of the hut laughing his head off. He'd always thought we were soft but I just wanted to get home to my mum and Lucille", Fergus told his audience.

War in Europe had ended in May 1945 and most people were celebrating.

But many also seemed to have forgotten that war still raged in the Far East and that men like Fergus and his comrades would suffer several more months of horror and brutality before Japan surrendered in August 1945. Many more were still to die in those three months - Forgotten soldiers in a Forgotten war.

Fergus arrived back home in Kent, still 6ft tall but now weighing just six stone, with a disabled arm and leg and too frightened to perform any magic. Not long before when released from the camp he had weighed in at just five stone. After numerous operations he regained the use of his limbs and with Lucille's love and care he got his confidence back, too. "I am probably the luckiest man alive. Every day is a wonder to me. I've been blown up. I've been shot. I've survived a massacre. And I also got away with that egg trick."

A remarkable story from a remarkable man and at the end the LMC audience gave him a long, standing ovation. To round out a wonderful and fascinating day, the generosity of those present meant that the net surplus for the lunch and raffle amounted to several thousand pounds, all to be donated to the Burma Star Association - for the benefit of the veterans and dependants of that Forgotten Army in that Forgotten War. Here's to you, Fergus.

ROGER EARL

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**LLOYD'S
MOTOR CLUB**

CLUBSONAR

BLOOD HOUND

This is the year that we start running the BLOODHOUND SuperSonic Car (SSC). Our target for this year is 800 mph, on a 12 mile desert track in South Africa. Then we'll analyse what we've learned, and upgrade the Car and its powerplant, and get ready for the ultimate record push in 2016 – 1,000 mph.

Just before Christmas, we laid out some of the 3500 pieces that will be assembled over the next few months. As Christmas presents go, this is the ultimate car kit. Now we've just got to put it all together and make it work properly.

Pushing back the boundaries of technology is never quite as simple as you might expect. For example, after completing the upper rear chassis (including some 12,000 rivets), we finished the structure by heat curing the bonding agent. This went very well – or so we thought at the time. As with any high-precision engineering task, though, it's never quite that simple. On closer inspection, we've got a couple of small defects to deal with.

The first problem is that the bonding agent, or glue, has failed to bond the titanium skins properly to the aluminium ribs. This is not a worry for us, because the structure is held together by all those rivets, which are more than strong enough to do the job by themselves. The problem is that the failed bonding agent might have left gaps, or voids, between the outer skins and the framework. Any gaps will weaken the riveted structure. We can't take it all apart again, so what can we do about it?

The first thing is to find out if we really do have any voids. We're going to test

the whole chassis with ultrasound. These very high frequency sound waves (over 100 times higher than the upper limit of human hearing) will reflect differently in areas where there are voids under the skin. To make sure we know what we are looking for, the team will first test two specially-made samples of riveted structure, one with solid bonding and one with voids in it. Then, having 'characterised' the voids, we can confirm how many we have, if any.

Fixing the voids turns out to be relatively easy, once we know where they are. We can use a special adhesive that 'wicks' into these under-skin spaces, using capillary action, and then sets in place. Job done.

The other minor problem is that the upper chassis has changed shape very slightly. While we were 'cooking' the bonding agent, at 175 deg C, the aluminium frames expanded over twice as much as the titanium skins, created a lot of stress and a little bit of distortion. The whole chassis was put into the autoclave, bolted firmly to the huge Manufax fixture it was built on. This fixture is also made in aluminium, so that it expands at the same rate as the chassis frames. Despite this, when we finally removed the chassis from the fixture, it had changed shape just a little bit. We've since checked that the upper chassis joins to the lower chassis, with mock-up airbrake doors in place, to check the hinges are still straight. The good news is that

“If you want your name to travel at 1,000 mph next year, then sign up now at www.BLOODHOUNDSSC.com”

Key

1. Titanium skinned upper chassis
2. Jet air intake
3. Jet A fuel tank
4. Bulkhead
5. Underside of nose section
6. Solid aluminium wheel for desert running
7. Brake disc
8. Wheel hub
9. Carbon fibre cheek
10. AMAD pipe to start jet
11. Chassis rail
12. Chassis truss section
13. Rear suspension
14. Rolls-Royce EJ200 jet engine
15. Supercharged Jaguar V8 to pump the oxidiser into the rocket
16. Rocket oxidiser tank, holding 1 tonne of High Test Peroxide
17. Driver, Andy Green
18. 3D printed titanium steering wheel
19. Pedal box, the right throttles the jet engine, the left operates the wheel brakes (usable below 160mph)
20. Race harness
21. Driver's oxygen bottle
22. Rolex a chronograph with built-in stopwatch, and a speedometer graduated up to 1,100mph (1,770kmh).
23. Bulkhead
24. Carbon fibre blade
25. Carbon fibre nose section
26. 3D Printed titanium nose tip
27. Carbon fibre Jet A fuel tank
28. Castrol lubricants, used through the vehicle
29. Cockpit canopy
30. 20mm thick acrylic windscreen, can stop a 1kg bird strike at 800mph
31. Front suspension uprights
32. Front subassembly, aka the goats head
33. Ice tanks for cooling the Jaguar V8
34. Ballistic protection
35. Carbon fibre monocoque
36. Rear lower chassis – where Nammo hybrid rockets will all

1,000 MPH

it all still works, and the two halves of the Car still fit together.

Over this year and next, we're going to take this chassis up to the astonishing speed of 1,000+mph. With the above problems, should I be worried, at least a little bit? No, exactly the opposite. Prototype engineering is full of these small challenges, that's part of what makes BLOODHOUND so interesting. The important thing is that we are finding them, and doing everything we can do to understand and fix them. This gives me more confidence, not less, in the finished product. I'd be a lot more worried if we thought we didn't have any problems at all.

As well as test-fitting the dummy airbrake doors, we've been working with Parker to install the hydraulic systems that will power the airbrakes. Each airbrake door will experience about five tonnes of load at speeds of up to 800 mph. The doors will need forcing out into the supersonic airflow, using huge hydraulic rams. However, to get the best performance, we will deploy the doors at a very specific rate, aiming to maintain the G force on BLOODHOUND at just under 3G. While

this may not sound a lot, it equates to slowing down by 60 mph every second. Next time you're driving at 60 mph, have a think about stopping completely in one second. That's 3G – and that's what the airbrakes are trying to achieve.

As ever, there is a huge amount of work going on to get the Car ready to run this summer. The rocket pump is now in final assembly before being shipped to Nammo in Norway next month for some high-power testing, using the 550 hp Jaguar V8 engine to drive the rocket pump system.

The aerodynamics of the Car are still being developed. We fixed the external shape of the Car some time ago, but details like the 'winglets' above the front and rear wheels are still being refined. If the aerodynamic computer predictions are exactly right, then the winglets will have almost nothing to do. However, in the real world, computer models are rarely that precise, so we may need to trim out some 'small' (one or two tonne) aerodynamic loads.

Even if the computer predictions are accurate, we still don't know exactly how

the Car will handle as it accelerates, so we may want to change the aero balance to improve BLOODHOUND's stability. This is what the winglets are for. For this year, the winglet sizes will be 0.3 sq m (rear) and 0.15 sq m (front). As a comparison, 0.3 sq m is about the same area as 5 sheets of A4 paper.

The difference in size front to rear reflects the complexity of the Car's shape – the more complex shapes at the rear (including the Fin, rear wheels and suspension) gives us a greater possible range of loads. And talking of the Fin, we are now starting the assembly process. BLOODHOUND is going to travel faster than any jet fighter has ever done at ground level, so this is going to be the hardest-working fin in history. It will also be carrying the names of over 20,000 Project supporters. If you want your name to travel at 1,000 mph next year, then sign up now at www.BLOODHOUNDSSC.com. Time's running out, we'll be running the Car soon ...

ANDY GREEN



GoldCup

I have raced the Gold Cup twice before; it's an event that has been run at Oliver's Mount in Scarborough since 1958 and as the likes of Guy Martin, John McGuinness, William and Michael Dunlop, Bruce Ansty, Cameron Donald and Ian Lougher are competing it attracts a crowd of around 20,000.



Because of a law that was introduced in 1905 making racing on public roads illegal in the UK (this is what kick started the TT on the Isle of Man) Oliver's Mount is the only place in England that racing on a public road is possible, and only then because it is on private land.

Practice starts on Saturday morning and we set up in the paddock opposite a couple of racing friends of mine from the Southern 100, Marc Coggan and Steven Cobbolt. Scrutineering was at 5pm and by 5:15 we were through and both my kit and bike had their respective scrutineering stickers and signatures on my entry card. All that was left for that day was a night out in a local pub with my mates and most of the circuit staff and marshals.

I was first out in practice at 9:30am, there's nothing like haring around a narrow circuit (13 feet wide) with the likes of Michael Dunlop, Dean Harrison and James Cowton to blow the cobwebs out of your head. The circuit was damp in a few places where there were overhanging trees plus it had been a year since I'd been around the place, so I took it steady and just got my head sorted. Qualifying was at 11:15am, I managed to get a couple of good unhampered laps in and qualified mid field for my first 600 race of the day, Heat 1. I got a good start and managed to get in front of most of the field which worked out well as there

“I suspect the bang on the head he took in his first crash was worse than he originally thought”

was a pile up in the first corner behind me which took a few bikes out of the running. The track was dry so I was able to push harder lap by lap and ended up finishing 12th, quite respectable given the level of riders I was up against. My mate Coggy had a big off just before Memorial and his bike was a bit of a mess but thankfully he was alright.

I'd not qualified for the main 600 race, which I was quite thankful of, as I didn't fancy making up the numbers at the back while the likes of Guy Martin, John McGuinness, Bruce Anstry and Michael Dunlop were belting around. I was in the Solo Non-Finalist race and was out for the last time that day at 4:30pm.

Another fun race and improved lap times but my mate Coggy crashed out on his second bike; I suspect the bang on the head he took in his first crash was worse than he originally thought, so that was the end of the weekend's racing for him. I finished a respectable 11th and overall was happy with the way the day had gone.

Sunday morning I was out in practice around 10am; it's not every day you get to go for a thrash round a circuit with the likes of John McGuinness and Guy Martin watched by 20,000 spectators, so I just tried to relax as much as possible and enjoy the occasion. I was only in one race that day and unfortunately the

weather people had got the report spot on, by early afternoon the rain came and it was on and off for the rest of the day. My race wasn't until 5pm, by then most of the spectators had headed home and most of the riders, including myself, had started to pack up. It was a wet race and an exercise in just staying on, I had a few slides here and there and the rear tyre kept spinning when heading up the steep hill but I finished 5th so I went home happy.

All in all, a very enjoyable race meeting, it's great to share a paddock and be out on circuit with the some of the top TT riders.

JOHN COLEMAN





A Look Back at MSS 2014 with NLOM Racing



©buggershots

Following my rookie year (2013) and the Superbike B 3rd place overall, the long awaited MSS 2014 season finally arrived. Early Saturday morning we turned into the Malaysian F1 Sepang Circuit paddock with dark, heavy skies above. With new sponsors and a professional looking pit set-up, we prepped my new machine, a 195bhp BMW s1000rr, this year competing in the Superstock A (expert) Championship against some of Asia's strongest riders. Thanks to BHH the bike was looking slick with the R&G protection, Galfer Braking, all topped up with Rock Oil ready for Round 1, along with my new Dainese D-air race suit.

After wet qualifying I lined up P4 on row two. I had a decent start but had trouble with the electronics, finishing 6th. A little disappointing after a tough race but the new bike felt strong. Another strong start in race 2 put me hot on the tail of Steve Martin and Nils Uchida, who both outclassed the field during Race 1. Holding 3rd place running consistent 2:17s and showing a huge improvement on race 1, Mohd Zairie pulled alongside on lap 5 into turn 1 and in the ensuing battle our times dropped into the 2:16s, pushing 290kmh. I crossed the line 12 hundredths of a second behind Zairie, which was frustrating but a respectable 4th place.

Round 2, the support race for World Super Bikes had everyone excited being the first visit for WSB to Sepang Circuit. We were all keen to see the lap times on these WSB machines on which our bikes are based. A hot weekend pushed our SC2 Supercorsa road tyres to their limits, sliding around towards the end of the ten laps with 2:16 lap-times, the WSB bikes were running slicks clocking rapid 2:05s. It was a great weekend mixing with these world class riders, bringing some flair and excitement to the circuit, along with spectacular crashes. I finished the weekend with a 4th and 5th after surviving some big moments, such as being thrown out of the saddle while losing traction exiting the slow turn 9, followed by scraping the frame through the fast turn 5, causing the bike to pick up and slide at 150kmh whilst at maximum lean.

Rounds 3 and 4 combined this year with four races over the extended weekend

starting with heavy rain. Due to damage on our spare rims I was left using the SC2 road tyres racing against bikes using full wets. It was a slippery and dangerous race, pushing to keep up with the full wets and finishing a respectable 5th place in race 1. The rest of the weekend was a struggle, finishing 7th, 6th and 7th and never quite finding the pace in the dry conditions; disappointing and due to both focus and not enough time on the bike.

Round 5, the Malaysian MotoGP support race, another hot weekend but with a disastrous qualifying session with tyre warmer issues and a sticking gear shifter. Having run three warm up laps with these issues, a quick pit stop and tinker with the bike left me only four minutes of the 20 minute session. Straight out into a hot lap and coming through the fast turn 15, the back slid and caught, causing a massive high side with the bike flipping down the circuit and me flying and tumbling, with both of us ending up in a heap in the gravel. This was the first test of my Dainese D-air suit and thanks to the high-tech airbag deployment system, I was saved from serious shoulder and neck injuries and had telemetry data showing the impact, speed, height and other data from the crash. Thanks also to the excellent medical facilities I survived the tumble and following a long team discussion, plus begging and borrowing parts, the bike was rebuilt just in time for race 1 the following day. Starting in 21st was a new experience and in a fair amount of pain I battled through to finish 8th, pleased the racing was over and

ready to enjoy watching the rest of the weekend's MotoGP racing.

The final round was an average finish to the season, whilst still suffering from the internal injuries from round 5. To clinch the final trophy spot in the overall championship, I needed to beat Mohd Azul Shah who had been improving all season and was one point behind. Following a delayed race start with tropical rain, thunder and lightning, I again headed onto the track for race 1 with a new set of wet tyres and a steep learning curve ahead. Pushing 250kmh into turn 1 with 50 Superbikes, lots of spray and a completely fogged visor was a new experience. Following the crash two weeks before and a new helmet, this was the moment that I realised that the anti-fog insert had not been fitted. A great race followed despite having to lift the visor with one hand (and trying to avoid heavy breathing) and I finished 5th, unfortunately behind Shah and therefore pushed off the championship podium.

It was a great season's racing overall and I have a slight road to recovery ahead, in preparation for the next challenge for NLOM Racing, which is joining Team Braap Brothers to compete in The Red Bull Romaniacs 2015, one of toughest hard enduro events in the world.

Special thanks to all sponsors including BHH, Dainese, Roc Oil, R&G Bike Protection, Galfer Performance Braking, Rock Oil, Skyrich Batteries, Prince Lubricants and others as found on Facebook 'NLOM Racing' and www.nlomracing.com

BEN CROOKENDEN

Toby Sowery

ASCENDING STAR...





Images ©JDH Motorsport Photography

2014 was to be a crucial year for Toby Sowery. Could he move into cars and translate the success he had always enjoyed throughout his karting career? After much deliberation and some testing in the junior formulas a bold decision was taken; if he was as good as all the simulator programmes and test days had indicated, would he be good enough to step up straight into an F3 car, which historically was seen as the step before F1?



This somewhat controversial decision, taken by a then 17 year old Toby and his mother Sharon, saw him entering the F3 Cup Championship. As a fresh-faced rookie nobody really expected him to achieve much, especially as he had taken such a huge step without experiencing some of the junior formulas like Formula Ford. The start of the season was frantic since with only six weeks before the start of the championship, Toby needed to upgrade his kart license to a National A. This required him to compete and finish in six races on novice plates, thus gaining the requisite signatures from the clerk of the course at each event. Toby's F3 team were instrumental in helping him find races and teams who were willing (read mad, but kind) to let a "kid" race without the benefit of any testing and where he simply would have to turn up on race day and his first drive of the car would be out to qualify. In all races, Toby managed to impress these teams, racing and winning his class in a classic Formula Ford (3rd overall out of a 34 car grid), through to being the current lap record holder at Donington Park in an MR2. All of this despite his mother's advice to "stay at the back and just finish to get your license – we don't have enough time to get those signatures if you crash".

Toby's first F3 test was at Oulton Park, probably one of the most technical tracks in the UK, where little run off and trees are a motorsports insurer's nightmare. F3 team Lanan Racing boss, Graham Johnson, made it very clear to Toby to take it easy on a cold and damp day. At

the end of the test Toby had come close to the lap record and both Johnson and Toby's engineer Chris Weller were convinced he had been to the circuit and driven an F3 car before – even quizzing Sharon about this. The rest is now history. Toby went on to win his first F3 race at a cold, windy Snetterton by some 17 seconds, taking everyone by surprise with such a mature and dominant performance. This included Toby's child welfare officer who the Championship had to allocate to him as he was still 17 at the time; quite interesting if not funny when you consider that he was racing at top speeds of around 220km. Toby dominated the season, achieving a 100% podium rate and winning ten out of 14 races. He secured the Championship at Silverstone at the penultimate round where he was crowned 2014 Champion.

Not content with engineering Toby in F3, Chris Weller, suggested that he might like to look at the MRF Winter Series where he himself would be working. It quickly became apparent that this represented a great opportunity to take Toby's skills to an international level and race drivers who have competed in DTM and GP3 etc. This year Freddy Hunt and Mataius Lauda are racing as part of a documentary following on from the success of the RUSH movie and more importantly, have become firm friends of Toby's. The first round was in Qatar supporting a Super Bike event – racing at a floodlit track at night. This race saw Toby not only put his car on pole but again achieve a 100% podium hit rate, winning two races and

coming 2nd in two others. The biggest problem at the end of the week was how to get four large trophies back to England. The second round in Bahrain saw Toby on the podium three times and at the time of writing he was leading The MRF Championship.

With such an impressive racing rookie CV, ex-racer, racing school boss and current team manager Graeme Glew set his sights on managing Toby: "I have seen a lot of talented young drivers in my 30 years in the sport but Toby clearly has something special. Not only is he naturally very quick, he has exactly the right attitude and skills that are required of a professional racing driver nowadays".

As the 2014 F3 Cup Champion and backed by a professional management team, the Kingfisher Motorsports Group, headed up by Graeme, Toby has set his sights on Auto GP for 2015. A proposed test programme is being negotiated with Virtuosi Racing with a view to a full season. Auto GP recently announced their new package for 2015 which offers an F1 test with a leading F1 team for the winner of the championship.

"Everyone told me F3 was very ambitious straight after karting and I'm sure people will say the same about Auto GP. Drivers climbing the ladder are only getting younger so this move allows me to prepare for GP2 or the World Series and I'm really looking forward to the challenge," said Toby.

"With Toby's natural ability as well as all the other aspects required from a modern day driver, the move to Auto GP won't be difficult for him. We placed Venezuelan Roberto La Rocca with Virtuosi last year and he adapted well to the car. Providing Toby undertakes a solid test programme and we can raise the budget, he will be there," Glew added.

Virtuosi Team Principal Andy Roche noted: "This is a great opportunity for the team and Toby to prepare for the 2015 Auto GP season. I am sure that by the time we get to the first race in Marrakesh, Toby will be very much on the pace and show what he is capable of - challenging for race wins and the championship from the start of the year."

"Both the F3 and the MRF series has given me valuable racing experience, but now I need to move up and I have my sights set on the F1 test" Toby concluded.



STOP PRESS





Toby has now been made a **BRDC Rising Star**

Toby has won the 2015 the MRF Challenge Formula 2000 Championship with four wins, five additional podiums, three fastest laps and two pole positions. Add that to his 2014 victories in the MSV F3 Cup - Champion with ten wins in 14 races and four 2nd places, ten fastest laps and ten pole positions, it should come as no surprise Toby has been made a BRDC Rising Star.

Max & Tom CHILTON



A RETROSPECTIVE LOOK AT 2014

For the parents of Max and Tom Chilton, life isn't normal. There is no 9-5, no sitting at a desk nor any after work drinks or office parties.

The boys sacrifice normal life for the thrill of hurtling their respective machines around a track at speeds up to and over 200mph while mum and dad, Grahame and Nadine, watch on from the safety of the stands, proudly cheering on their speedy offspring.

Following a record breaking first year in Formula 1, Max continued his impressive love affair with the chequered flag in 2014 by completing a remarkable 25 consecutive races before an accident in Canada forced a retirement.

Tom Chilton had another successful season in the World Touring Car Championship ending the season as the highest-placed Chevrolet driver behind the financial powerhouses of manufacturers Citroen and Honda.

The highlight of Tom's season being an emphatic win in China where he set the fastest lap followed by a podium in Japan on his way to 150 Championship points and 1st place in the coveted Yokohama Teams' Trophy, the non-manufacturer teams' Championship.

Here we take a retrospective look back at the 2014 season and take a view on an enjoyable, albeit challenging and at times heart-breaking year for Max and Tom Chilton.

Both boys started racing from a young age. Tom was 14 when he first took to the track, before carving a successful career in British Touring Cars and making the leap into World Touring Cars with the world's best drivers in the 'tin top' category.

Max opted for open-wheel racing and moved through F1's feeder series in GP2 where he finished as the highest ranking Brit, before becoming a reserve driver for Marussia in 2012 and being offered a full race seat to realise his dream in 2013

A RETROSPECTIVE LOOK AT 2014

where he partnered Frenchman Jules Bianchi. A name that would soon become the focus of motorsport fans around the world.

Heading into the Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne, Max and his Marussia F1 Team were in buoyant mood. 2013 had seen them make great strides and the team was quickly becoming a paddock favourite. They retained their driver line-up with Jules Bianchi partnering Max once again for 2014. At Melbourne Max got off to an impressive start with 13th at the famous Albert Park circuit season opener. 57 laps earlier, the result had not looked quite so promising. Max suffered a car-stopping problem before the start lights were even illuminated. He experienced an engine kill at the start of the formation lap whilst conducting normal start procedures. The car was marooned in gear and he was pushed back to the garage, where the team

were able to reset the car, resolve the issue and get Max in a position where he could start the race from the pit lane. He crossed the line in 14th but due to a post-race investigation and the subsequent disqualification of Red Bull driver Daniel Ricciardo, Max was promoted to 13th, equally Marussia's best finish from the whole of the previous year. The weekend was made sweeter still by Max doing the double over his highly rated teammate, out qualifying him and finishing ahead of him in the race.

"Today's race was by no means perfect but we have started the season with a two-car finish, and on my side a 13th place as well, so we have to be pleased with that".

Big brother Tom also started the season in impressive fashion. Thanks to his 3rd position in qualifying at the Circuit Moulay El Hassan in Morocco, and a double 4th

place in Races 1 and 2, Tom sat in 3rd position in the championship. Race 1 set the tone for the rest of the season with a Citroen lock out on the podium. Race 2 was action-packed and full of incidents from the start, with Tom's teammate, Tom Coronel, eliminated after a huge crash involving Mehdi Bennani and reigning World Champion, Yvan Muller. The race was red flagged and began again behind the safety car. It wasn't long before Tom was lining up the Honda of Monteiro until the Portuguese driver slowed with just two laps to go, allowing Tom to get past. He then caught and passed Bennani through the chicane before Bennani was able to retake the position on the straight. At the final corner of the final lap, the two were involved in one last drag race, with Tom coming out top, claiming 4th by just 0.026 seconds. Former rally star, Sebastien Loeb was first to the flag, claiming his first WTCC victory. The pattern was set for



Max & Tom CHILTON

the rest of the season, with the Citroens dominating and Tom being best of the rest in his Chevrolet challenger.

Back in Formula 1, Max would battle with his teammate and the Caterham cars throughout the season and it was his 25th consecutive race before he finally had to retire from a race. A record which has seen him appear in the Guinness Book of Records for the most lights to flag finishes by a rookie driver in the history of the sport.

The season rolled on and fresh from Marussia's first ever points finish in Monaco, Canada was one of the low points of the season. A collision between Max and teammate Jules at Turn 4 meant a lap 1 retirement.

"A disappointing end to a really promising weekend. The incident between myself and Jules obviously ended not only our own races but also the team's, so it's sad for all the guys after making such progress again. I had a good start, pulled away from

the cars behind into Turn 1, queued into Turn 2, then we had a coming together into Turn 3. The resulting accident was very unfortunate for us both and after a race to remember in Monaco perhaps a race to forget here in Canada."

Max put the disappointment behind him and headed to Austria where F1 was returning after a ten year absence before moving onto the 2014 Formula 1 Santander British Grand Prix. Max's home race provided us with plenty of drama.

Saturday produced some changeable conditions for qualifying and Max took advantage with some perfect strategy. He cruised through Q1 to make an appearance in the second part of qualifying. At one stage he made it as high as 2nd in the standings, before ending in P13 ahead of the Williams and Ferrari cars. The achievement was slightly blotted by a five place grid penalty handed out by the stewards for a gearbox change during Free Practice. Overall, this did not distract

from the quality of Max's qualifying as his pace continued to impress.

"The team has done an incredible job today, making some fantastic calls and putting us right where we needed to be at exactly the right time. I'm really thrilled with P13 but the reality is, had it not been for the yellow for Gutierrez, we could have ended up even higher as in those damp conditions you put a banker in and then do your quick lap at the end. Obviously I've got the five place penalty for this morning's gearbox change, which will drop me back, but a good qualifying session was what I needed because of that penalty, and that is what we've achieved, so I can't be disheartened."

Fans woke to a cloudy sky on Sunday but it soon cleared and they enjoyed prolonged spells of sunshine throughout the day. First duty for Max was an appearance in one of the hospitality lounges for a Q&A session followed by autographs and photos before heading to the Paddock to



A RETROSPECTIVE LOOK AT 2014

prepare for the race. Following a terrific display by the Red Arrows, the on-track preamble began with the Drivers' Parade, a lap long tour with all the drivers on the back of a flatbed truck. Just after Copse, Max and his fellow British drivers jumped off to interact with the thousands of fans in the Grandstand.

The 52 lap race got underway at 13:00 BST and it wasn't long before the first incident happened. Kimi Raikonen had a huge crash on the exit of Turn 5. A loose tyre released under impact bounced into Max's path, narrowly missing his head and causing damage to his chassis. Thankfully Max was unscathed, it wasn't until after the race when a fan released an image of how close the tyre had come to his head that everyone realised how lucky he was.

Max pitted for a new front wing and for further damage inspection as the race was red flagged, a move which ultimately cost him a drive through penalty. From his position in the pits, Max was forced to restart the race from the pit lane after the pack had passed through, the Team having effected repairs to his car. A shame as he would have restarted from 10th without a penalty. Nonetheless, he pushed hard and delivered impressive lap times to catch and overtake Kobayashi in the Caterham to finish a breathless Grand Prix in 16th.

The next race was in Germany and it proved to be a tricky weekend for Max who experienced a number of issues with his car. It was hot and sunny at the Hockenheimring, with track temperature peaking at 57 degrees C and the ambient temperature as high as 33. In the final Free Practice Max could only manage a short stint as he encountered electronic problems which would set him back during qualifying. Subsequently Max finished in P21 after nine laps.

In the race, Max and teammate Jules delivered a solid two car finish with Max ending the 67 lap race in 17th, although he felt there was more to give in a car that just wasn't quite performing. By the end of July Max was in Hungary. A pre-race downpour in Budapest produced an incredible show where the Marussia F1 Team delivered another two car finish and retained 9th in the Constructors Championship. Max ended the day in P16.

The second half of the season kicked off in Belgium and the historic Spa-Francorchamps. Max qualified 19th



in difficult conditions after a torrential downpour 40 minutes prior to qualifying. He put in a solid race on Sunday, gradually reeling in Ericsson before eventually displacing him on lap 42 during the two-stop race on his way to 16th.

Round 13 saw the teams head to the famous Autodromo di Monza which hosted its first race back in 1950. The 5.7km track holds 53 laps with four left hand corners and seven rights and represented the final European race of the season. Friday practice went smoothly with Max setting competitive times, although qualifying proved challenging with Max ending the day in P21 with a 1:28:247.

The race was also to prove challenging when Max's race came to a premature end after just five laps due to a very rare driver error. This was only Max's second retirement since he started in Formula 1 at the start of 2013 but that didn't make up for his disappointment.

"A disappointing premature end to the race for me. Unfortunately it was my mistake; I braked slightly too late and wasn't able to get round the corner. I hit the sausage kerbs at turn 4, which unexpectedly launched me into the

air and I came down hard and ended up in the gravel. It was all the more disappointing as I had just retaken position from Grosjean. There isn't much to say beyond putting a difficult race behind us and looking forward to better things in Singapore."

We duly headed out to one of the best races of the year in Singapore for Round 14 of the FIA Formula 1 World Championship. Located in Marina Bay the race is 61 laps long with a race distance of 5.065km. This is one of the most exciting races to watch. Held at night, under powerful lighting that replicated daylight conditions with Singapore's stunning cityscape providing the backdrop, however, qualifying was tough for both drivers on Saturday.

"It's slightly frustrating as I have struggled with car this weekend at a constantly evolving track but I managed to get it pretty good for that session. On the first run we had an issue with the mapping, which meant that I was in a compromised map and I couldn't get full power, so I had to do another prepare lap. My second run was my first real timed run. I thought it was a good lap but the time wasn't there so we need to look at that this evening. Looking



ahead to tomorrow, I think we can get Kobayashi off the start and then it will all be down to strategy.”

The race was equally tough for the Team with Max ending in P17 after a long and arduous 61 lap race. All credit went to Max for his tremendous effort managing the car and tyres. He faced a puncture due to a valve issue with lead to an unplanned pit in a four stop race.

What happened next was as unexpected as it was upsetting. The Japanese Grand Prix was witness to a terrible accident which would have long lasting effects on everyone inside the sport. On lap 42 of the race, Adrian Sutil lost control of his car, spun and hit the tyre barrier on the outside of Turn 7. The marshals displayed double waved yellow flags before the corner to warn drivers of the incident. A recovery vehicle was despatched in order to lift the car and take it to a place of safety behind the guardrail. While this was being done, Jules Bianchi lost control, travelled across the run off area and hit the back of the tractor. Jules was removed from his car and taken to the medical centre before being taken by ambulance to the hospital. The CT scans showed a severe head injury and he remains in a

stable but critical condition in hospital many months on. All our thoughts remain with Jules and his family as we hope for a full recovery.

After a truly emotional weekend for everyone involved with the Marussia F1 Team we headed to Russia for what would be the last race of the season for Max as his Team entered the final stages of an ever more challenging financial situation. Sadly Max retired from the race on lap 9 and this to say.

“After an incredibly tough week for everyone in the team, we all deserved so much more from today’s race. It hasn’t been an easy day, far from it, and all the guys have had to dig deep to get us to the grid. When we got there of course, it was very emotional with all the support for Jules. I think the team, the sport and all the fans have really done him proud.”

“In the race, we got a good start then switched from the Medium tyre to the Soft quite early on, as we always knew we wouldn’t be that strong on the prime. On lap 9 I started to feel a problem with the front left and it wasn’t going away, so I pitted for the team to investigate. In the end it was not something we would be able to address quickly, so it was best to bring

a generally difficult weekend to an early conclusion.”

“What the team needs now is to head home for support from their families and colleagues back at the factory. Somehow we need to find the strength to regroup and move forward, which is hard to contemplate right now.”

The final three races of the season were not attended by Marussia and Max was a spectator while administrators worked hard to find suitable backers to save the team from collapse. Despite many promising discussions the team was not saved and many of the items in the factory have since been auctioned off as the administrators go about their work of wrapping up the team for the season, and potentially for good.

After a year full of tremendous highs and extreme lows, we end on a positive. Although it is becoming unlikely that Max will be competing in a Formula 1 car in 2015, plans are in place to join the highly respected Carlin outfit as they embark on their American Indy Car programme. Max will become training, development and race driver for the team as they look to make their mark in the US.

A RETROSPECTIVE LOOK AT 2014

2016 will provide Max with an opportunity to return to F1 and continue his journey through the greatest sport in the world.

Over in World Touring Cars, big brother Tom was having an equally exciting time. Following some solid point scoring in Hungary, Slovakia and the historic Spa-Francorchamps in Belgium, Tom moved onto China where he was to experience a race that would live long in the memory of the 28 year old Reigate racer.

Tom qualified in P1 for the first race, stunning everyone as he took the fight to the dominant Citroens. In Race 1, Tom led the entire race from pole and was never challenged by four-time world Champion Yvan Muller and Jose Maria Lopez on his way to the top step of the podium.

"It was a perfect day", said Chilton, "What a race, a great start, a great win. My car was really fast and everything was under control from lights to flag. The circuit suited much better than we had anticipated. I am proud to have followed pole position with a win."

Race 2, Tom started from P5 and finished 8th after a fierce fight with Morbidelli.

The Brit said: "After pole, win and fastest lap in race one, the 8th place in race two is not the best. I was fast as in race one but this short circuit doesn't have any long straights, so there was hardly any overtaking opportunities. Anyway it was a great weekend".

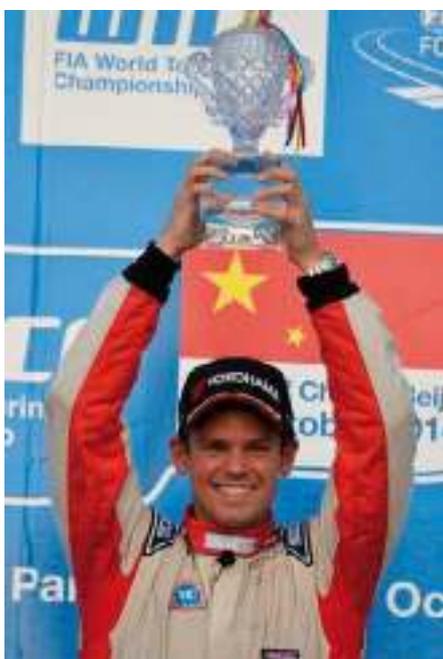


The weekend solidified Tom's standing in the Championship and kept his team in contention for the Yokohama Teams' Trophy, a coveted prize that they would indeed go on to win thanks to Tom's strong results throughout the year.

Just a few weeks later Tom enjoyed further success with another impressive podium in Japan at the famous Suzuka circuit. He

qualified 4th before landing 2nd in Race 1 behind the Citroen works car of Lopez.

Tom ended the season in Macau with 150 points to his name and the Yokohama Team Trophy, before enjoying a well-earned break to enjoy some time with his family and young son Freddie at home before preparations begin again for the 2015 campaign with ROAL Motorsport.



17th Annual BIG BEND

OPEN ROAD RACE

If Congress had its way, I expect that open road racing would have been banned years ago, due so many fatalities. Only the outlaw states of Texas and Nevada still run these insane events, allowing cars to run flat out on public highways. Nevada has The Silver State Classic and Texas has The Big Bend Open Road Race, billed as *"The Most Challenging Road Race in the World"*.

Big Bend is the longer of the two races, 118 miles over twisting desert highway US 285, full of blind corners and adverse camber. The cops close a 59 mile section of road, then let you run it in two directions, from Fort Stockton to Sanderson and back, timing you with their radar guns and watching out for you from the air. The road is treacherous, with blind bends and crests, plus a wicked crown which will pitch you off if you cross it exiting a turn, meaning you can't always take the racing line. As it's a public highway, there is loose grit at the edges and a lot of roadkill - they swept the course three times before we raced.

(They take their roadkill seriously in Texas, not only do they eat it (many restaurants had "Roadkill - fresh daily specials" on the menu) but it can kill you, with 300lb wild hogs being the average and the heaviest weighing in at over 900. On one practice run we had a very close shave with the biggest deer I've ever seen, which just stood there for what seemed like ages, then made a last minute dash across in front of us. At least the 'dillos and roadrunners seemed a lot smarter).

My 'Rookie Test' was a bit of a problem as all the instructors were either too tall or too wide to fit in the car, so they let me run with my co-driver Ted Eaton. We were racing in the 110mph class, meaning that we had to average that speed over the 118 miles. Our class was limited to a maximum speed of 126mph - break that and you were automatically disqualified with no appeal. On our first rookie run on the four mile practice course we wanted to see how close we could go to 126 and we averaged 125.3mph just using the GPS.

Sanderson was rather a sad old town, long past its heyday and slowly disappearing into the dust. All the shops were closed, there was just one small motel and a couple of gas stations at each end of town. The school was so poor that the kids only had a few books between them and their one and only field trip this year was being allowed out to see the cars. It wouldn't surprise me if the town is gone in ten years' time.

Only about a dozen of the 160 entries were Historics, the majority being modern Corvettes and Mustangs, playing out the old Ford versus Chevy battle. The race is just made for the new Corvettes with their F-16 derived Heads-Up Displays - punch in your target speed and it's like playing a video game. The top class is Unlimited, where you run as fast as you can from point to point, rather than trying to match an average speed. It was made up of half a dozen NASCARs and a couple of ZR1 Corvettes. Top speed was down this year at 217mph.

Although we were just there for fun and to see if the Cheetah's deadly reputation was deserved (we really had no idea which way we would be facing when we exited the first turn), everyone else was very serious. We only had a borrowed GPS and a couple of old stopwatches



but the others seemed to be either commercial airline pilots or ex-military - Corvettes seem to be popular with these types - with all sorts of sophisticated timing devices. (The only item more in abundance than a fancy timer was a crucifix). One of the NASCARs even had a digital screen on the dash showing average speed with an uplink to the driver's own personal satellite - guess there's money in oil?

On the day before the race there was a parade of the racecars through town, so we stuck the Cheetah on the trailer and threw dustbins full of candy to the kids lining the route.

Race day was an early start, parking in our slot in the local park before sun-up. We then lined up on the desert highway and ran in our respective average speed groups, released at 60 second intervals.

My race was very nearly cut short before it even started. I stepped out of the car near the start line, took a few steps then for some strange reason instinctively froze with one foot in the air - without seeing it, right under my foot was a young rattler, warming up in the early morning sun. I was told I was lucky as those are the most dangerous - unlike an adult snake which knows better, a youngster will strike repeatedly until it is spent. Some things never change,

decades later and the Cobra gang are still trying to take out the Cheetahs...

The Cheetah has a reputation for 'difficult' handling and cooking its drivers. The first one is baloney - it handled beautifully, although much of that may have been down to the superb Avon CR6ZZs. As for the heat though, it was ludicrously hot in there - I took my Nomex suit but there was no way I could wear it, a thin long-sleeved T was just about bearable after it was soaked in ice water and damn were we glad to see that finish line.

The course was demanding and it was easy to see how so many cars ended up in trouble. There was one particularly memorable very fast bend, which must



have been two or three miles long with a blind apex - turn in too early and you would simply run out of road. There have been many serious accidents over the years but this time there was just one major crash, with a C5 Corvette going off at around 170mph on that long, dusty bend. When a car leaves the road it can end up miles away in the desert - it took 20 minutes to find the Corvette, even with two fixed wing aircraft and a helicopter searching.

The Cheetah attracted a huge amount of attention - open headers probably helped - including an interview with CBS News. Every time we were on the line a huge crowd gathered and we made a point of leaving two smoking black lines of rubber - stuff traction control. The noise was almost deafening at 126db (static noise test) and whilst it was fine on the four mile practice course, after the race our ears were ringing and Ted was deaf as a post for a day or so - it was like someone rattling off a machine gun next to our ears.

Several near misses with suicidal wildlife aside, we only really had one 'clincher' when we took off going over a concrete bridge. The car went out of shape when we landed and we bottomed out hard as we had so little ground clearance two-up, flattening the bottom of one of the sidepipes. Trouble was, the impact knocked the GPS off the screen and it lost power. Ted quickly sorted it out but at the end of the race we probably missed our average speed target by that same fraction of time the GPS was out of action. We ended up 11th out of 26 in our class, merely 0.103 off the perfect time, against a winning class average of just 0.002 over. The overall winner (yet another ex-military pilot) ran an incredible 150.001 on a 150 average target speed over the 118 mile course.

Apart from the rattler, the best 'moment' was taking the car out one evening as the sun was setting, hammering along the desert highway and just sitting there with it on the redline for a few miles. Ted said that they all stood there for what seemed

like an age, listening to the car fade away. It was when they heard me returning that the cops suddenly appeared. I could feel the front end going light but what the hell, it was a once in a lifetime chance to play 'Kowalski'.

It's an extraordinary event, which I felt privileged to run. The car has to be registered in the States and insured, since you are driving on the highway, plus at least one driver has to have a US licence, so you can't simply ship a car over from England to take part. Entries open at midnight on 2 January and all 160 places are gone ten minutes later, so just obtaining an entry is an achievement.

I was really tempted to leave the Cheetah in Texas and run it one more time in a faster class but I had withdrawal symptoms and it's now back in England. I've been offered a drive in a Cobra for 2015, so I might switch sides as I'm not quite done with The Big Bend Open Road Race just yet . . .

JAS





WHAT IS A Cheetah?



Back in the early '60s Carroll Shelby was hawking around Detroit trying to find an engine for his little AC Ace. His first choice was the Chevy small block but General Motors didn't want any competition for their new Corvette Sting Ray, so Carroll ended up with a small block Ford destined for a Canadian pick-up and the rest is history. When Shelby's Cobra appeared on the track, GM realised that it meant trouble for the Sting Ray so they found their own Carroll Shelby

in a man called Bill Thomas. Bill was bank-rolled by GM to build a Cobra-killer using Sting Ray running gear. The design was drawn on a paper napkin one evening and the Cheetah was born. Top US racers such as Bob Bondurant, Mike MacDonald and Jerry Titus were to be behind the wheel. Despite 50:50 balance, (the car is mid-engined with the gearbox connected directly to the rear end by a UJ), the car's handling was often described at best as 'difficult' but it must have worried both Ferrari and

Ford after one was clocked at over 215mph at Daytona in 1964. To put it into perspective, the #109 car in this article has the same power to weight ratio and torque as a McLaren F1. Conspiracy theorists have a field day with this car but the likely story is that the project was cancelled after the FIA increased the minimum number of cars required to be built for homologation from 100 to 1,000, which was far too many for a 'Skunkworks project' like the Cheetah. Opinions differ on how many were actually built.





THE RACE OF GENTLEMEN

When someone who looks like a pirate and whose real name is Meldon Van Ripper Stultz III organises an event on the out of season Jersey Shore, you just know that you have to be there. I first met Mel last year in the parking lot of the Nuggett Casino in Wendover, Utah as we were drinking into the early hours to commiserate Bonneville Speedweek being washed out (one of the many perils of racing on what is supposed to be a dry lake bed). I've spent time with some interesting people in that lot, ranging from lowbrow artist Robert Williams to high-end car designer Chip Foose but Mel, well, he's really in a class all of his own . . .





Van Riper simply describes himself as an 'artist', which

I guess gives credibility to his paint-spattered appearance or maybe vice versa. He's one of few people I've seen 'surf' a heavy pre-war Harley, riding down the beach standing on the saddle and changing gear by kicking the tank-side shifter with his foot. Time and time again he performed that stunt, barefoot and sometimes weaving in and out of the surf, yet he just seemed to defy gravity, quite often oblivious to the racers heading straight towards him.

Bringing the event to life was a long haul for Mel and the Oilers Car Club, discreetly changing from the initial pitch to the good burghers of Wildwood, NJ of a Pebble Beach-style concours with Cleopatra-type waitresses wafting around with canapés, to its final incarnation as a bunch of hoodlums blasting around the town and along the beach in pre-war American racecars. There were times when I seriously started to wonder if the real reason why the town was so deserted was because the locals feared another Hollister, with

Mel Stultz III playing ringleader Johnny Strabler.

The Oilers CC seem to have the knack of infiltrating high society and somehow coerced Ralph Lauren into hosting their pre-party at his flagship shop in NYC. Other TROG sponsors included Harley Davidson and Sailor Jerry Rum, making an appropriate cocktail.

A 'step back in time' is an overworked cliché these days but Wildwood itself was the perfect seaside ghost town, missing only Shaggy and Scooby-Doo, full of beautifully restored art deco buildings, a wooden boardwalk and several wonderful old roller coasters and ferris wheels. Combine that backdrop with the jalopies and scoots entered for the racing and we all knew that we'd somehow stumbled into an automotive Brigadoon. Standing there on the beach on that first morning as the fog rolled in with the ferris wheels and coasters peaking out of the mist, the clock rolled back and everyone felt that same shiver – this wasn't *realistic*

like some phoney film-like set, this was *real* and we were part of it.

Receiving the call to TROG makes obtaining an entry for the Goodwood Revival seem like simply taking a ticket in the Post Office line. First and foremost you need the car or bike. Cars have to be American-made with pre-'34 bodies, with either bangers (four pots) or flatheads (sidevalve V8s). It's not just the cars that have to be *right*, so do the drivers, and not just in appearance – it's all about a state of mind. The rest of the entry criteria remain a mystery...

On the Friday night DICE magazine hosted 'The Night of the Troglodytes' and our pal Andy Kohler's band 'The Telltale Signs' played from the hotel rooftop as the cops closed off the street. The music went on way into the night. We were awoken around 3 by the sound of bikes racing flat out down the street but nobody seemed to mind or care, it just added to the scene. We could hear the burnouts in the parking lot until they rode up the stairs to their second floor rooms, opening the



windows as they started to choke on the exhaust and tyre smoke.

The drivers' briefing was typically informal, Mel insisting that everyone gathered together for a Drivers' Meeting, then announcing that as we'd all met, that was it, adding as we left: *"Don't drink or smoke when you're driving and don't sass the cops if you're caught"*.

We stripped the roadster for racing by removing the 'screen and hood, uncapping the lakes pipes, then snapping the tonneau cover into place. Arriving on the beach we were greeted by a chestnut pale fence to separate the crowd from the racing, WW2 era bell tents for the vendors, hand-painted signs and the most brilliant wooden timing towers and chequered marker posts stolen straight out of the Thompson Trophy Races. The original



plan was for the 1/8th mile drag races to be eliminations but we just lined up and raced against whoever we wanted, making it the most disorganised and enjoyable fun racing we could ever remember. As the tide came in so the race track crept up the beach, until the right hand lane was running over the dunes and the cars were becoming airborne.

Flag girl Sara Francello deserved a medal for her athletics, waving off each race with a flying leap and a covergirl pout. Sara's tireless enthusiasm was matched only by announcer Nick Foster, who was a real-life advertising 'Mad Man' with a sharp delivery matched by his suit. Saturday night there was a beach party and 'The Telltale Signs' played until the bonfire burnt out. Another day of racing on the Sunday and by evening you'd expect Nick to be hoarse, yet after a few beers he was singing with his blues band down by the pool.

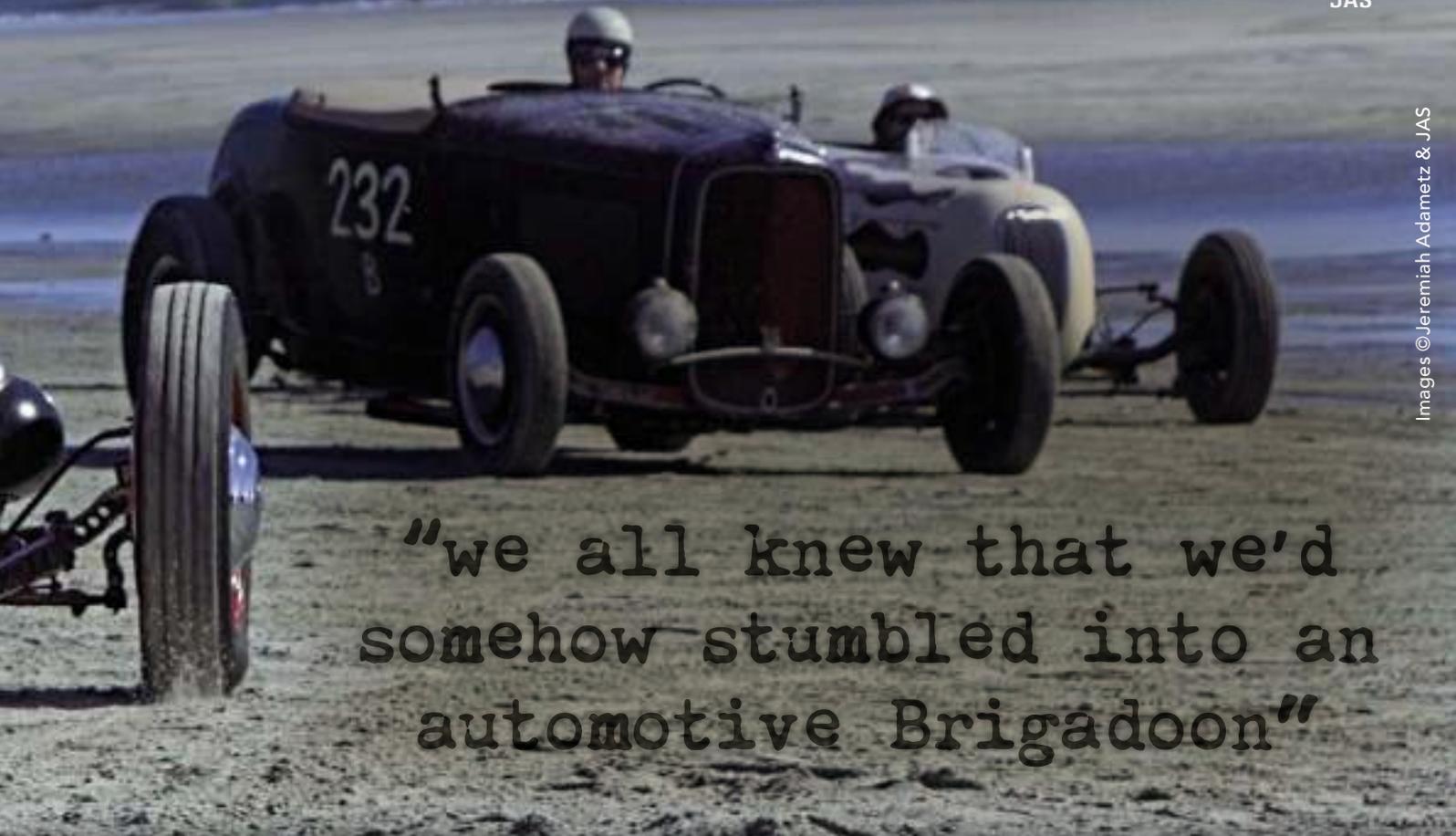
'Retro', 'Revival' and 'Vintage' are becoming tired themes these days and it's a risky venture if you want to avoid your idea ending up like some grotesque garden party. You can create



the set and detail it to death, handpick the props and carefully select the cars, but what really makes the event are the people, and that's what made The Race of Gentlemen so very, very special; those people were the *real deal* - no posers, no frauds, just a collection of artists and artisans – car builders,

musicians, painters, photographers and writers all lost in the '30s and '40s, locked in a curious little world of their own for just a few precious days, immune from the complications of the 21st century, sent back to a time of innocence and simplicity. Damn it was beautiful . . .

JAS



"we all knew that we'd somehow stumbled into an automotive Brigadoon"



Monte Carlo or Rust

It is May 2014 and at this time every year the Principality of Monaco is transformed from an exotic gambling, shopping, sightseeing and conferencing venue to a petrolhead's paradise. And transformed it is, the streets around the harbour are lost in a labyrinth of steel and canvas, the Casino Square is no longer a supercar car park and residents head for the hills.

The Monaco Grand Prix has taken place in some form since 1929 (with the odd unavoidable interruption) and is synonymous with single-seater racing from Bugattis to Red Bulls. Every other year since 2006 another amazing event takes place, the Grand Prix de Monaco Historique. It is run two weeks before the Grand Prix and uses the full Grand Prix circuit and facilities. But rather than one race there are a dozen over two days. The grids comprise cars that have raced at Monaco since Grand Prix racing started here. And what grids. Here is a mouth-watering collection of cars from the pre-war beauties and the post war monsters to the mid-engined revolutionaries, the turbos and the screamers. Pre-1961 Formula 2 cars and Formula 3 cars from the mid-seventies are also racing, and LMC is well represented with Hugh Price (Chevron B38) and brother Jonathan (March 783) on the Formula 3 grid, Rodger Newman (Brabham BT14) on the 1961-65 Formula 1 grid, Mark White (Surtees TS16) on the 1973-78 grid and

Gavin Pickering (Jaguar D-type) on the Sports Racing Cars from 1952-55 grid.

Now at this point the reader might ask what business a '50s Le Mans racer has being at Monaco. The 'modern' Formula 1 era began in 1950 and the Monaco Grand Prix of that year gave the great Fangio his first Grand Prix victory. However, there was no race in 1951 and in 1952 a non-championship race was held to sports car rules. The grid comprised a mix of Ferraris, Jaguars, Aston Martins and Talbot-Lagos with a smattering of Pegasos, Gordinis and Allards. The top five places were taken by Ferraris, Tommy Wisdom was 6th in a C-type. From a grid of 15 cars only eight finished, non-finishers included Stirling Moss in a C-type and Pierre Levegh, who so tragically lost his life at Le Mans in 1955. I mention this to point out that Monaco is perhaps not the circuit most suited to sports cars designed to go very fast in a straight line. Nonetheless, the D-type is here as part of a 42 car entry list of the finest '50s sports car machinery and we are here to support Gavin.

A short train ride from Villefranche-sur-Mer brings us to the circuit for qualifying. Weather hot and sunny, location (eventually) Grand Stand between the swimming pool complex exit and the Rascasse. Gavin has never driven a lap at Monaco before so this is familiarisation, practice and qualifying all in one. There are two qualifying sessions and Gavin is instantly on the pace, 3rd in the first session and maintaining that position in the second behind Alex Buncombe's indecently quick C-type of Jaguar Heritage Racing and the Cooper Bristol of John Ure. This is a brilliant drive in a car designed to be most effective on the long straights of endurance racing by a driver who had never driven a lap of Monaco before today. Qualifying reduces the grid to 33 starters.

So to race day. The sights and sound of the Monaco circuit are mesmerising, the noise, the amazing variety of cars and this extraordinary circuit – and did I mention the noise. 33 cars on this tight and windy circuit is a crowd so a

great start is desirable. Gavin obliges, immediately taking 2nd place. The C-type is uncatchable but eventually Gavin succumbs to the Cooper Bristol, a car much better suited to this circuit but also superbly driven. We are expecting a ten lap race and Gavin is holding on to 3rd until lap 8 when he begins to slow. There is obviously a problem with the car and we eventually finish in 6th place some 90 seconds behind the winner. After the race we discover that a driveshaft has failed and Gavin has driven most of the race in the only one wheel drive D-type ever to finish at Monaco. So we are denied a podium but what a performance.

In the F3 race 36 cars crowd on to the circuit and, miraculously, most complete the race. Jonathan Price finishes 16th and his brother Hugh 23rd after stopping to replace a flat tyre. It seems that afterwards in the bar there was much discussion between the brothers as to who would have finished higher had Hugh not had a tyre problem. Rodger Newman is 18th in a closely fought race but sadly Mark White loses his gearbox on lap 1. How about lap times? Well the fastest lap in 1952 sports car race was 1min 56 seconds on a circuit without the chicane and the swimming pool complex, the fastest lap in the



sports car race here is fractionally under 2 minutes. The fastest race lap of the weekend is 1 minute 34 seconds in a 1977 Hesketh, this compares with the current generation of F1 cars that are lapping in around 1minute 15 seconds.

After many successes in Pickering ownership the D-type now has a

proud new owner and will no doubt be campaigned widely, perhaps we will see it back at Monaco. No doubt the LMC will be well represented again in 2016 but who will be driving what? Two years is a long time in motor sport.

MAX TAYLOR





The HRDC

The Right Crowd - and No Crowding

(my apologies to Brooklands . . .)

The Historic Racing Drivers Club (HRDC) run two series, one for pre-'60s touring cars and the other, the Allstars grid, for pre-'66 sportscars and GTs.





Images ©LJ Mears

The Allstars season began at a damp Silverstone (it is Britain after all) on 5th April. I turned up with 'Tubby' my 1963 Sebring Sprite and was joined by fellow LMC member Larry Tucker in his immaculately presented Ashley GT. This was to be Larry's inaugural race. Larry and I often talk about cars (well, what else is there to talk about?) and over a few drinks I managed to persuade him to take the leap, get a licence and join in the fun.

Both Larry and I qualified OK and little old Tubby was doing well keeping up with the faster machinery on a damp circuit, until I was tagged from behind by an ex-BritCar car driver in his Austin A40. I guess old habits die hard. A quick spin and a bit of cosmetic damage later meant that I was able to haul myself back onto the track to finish 2nd in class, a reasonable start to 2014.

On 14 June we headed off to Brands Hatch for a race on the Indy circuit. This

particular race meeting hit the headlines for all the wrong reasons, as a result of someone deciding to gatecrash the circuit in his road going private car. Both Larry and I had a reasonable qualifying session, Larry ending up 16th out of 25 (a fantastic result given it was his second race) and me at 8th. The race went reasonably well for me and I ended up 11th but Larry fared much better, storming to 13th overall.

My next outing (no Larry this time) with the Allstars clan was at Rockingham on 13 July – a new circuit for me and most of the Allstars grid to be honest. For those of you who do not know, Rockingham is the UK's only oval racing circuit. This type of track, with limited run-off, banked corners and hard walls, is more commonly used for American-style NASCAR racing. We turned up to use some of the super-fast banking and the infield in a bunch of pre-'66 racing cars. This was going to be exciting. Qualifying was...yes, you guessed it, wet. As a result Tubby was

awesome, ending up 9th on the grid out of 28. The weather had sorted itself out for the start and the circuit was drying nicely. It was a mad headlong rush into the first corner, a banked left-hander, at full speed leading to a very tight left-handed hairpin. The first 30 seconds of the race were insanely busy – but fun. When things settled down I managed to battle my way up to 5th overall, and there I stayed until a failure of the rear suspension threw me into a spin and onto the infield grass, where I remained as Tubby refused to restart. Not the best result, but I did win a trophy called the "Piston Broke" for my gallant effort and also for the fact that my wife called me an idiot, in front of lots of witnesses, for not finishing.

So that was 2014 for me with the HRDC - Roll on 2015 with my first outing being the GRR 73rd Members Meeting on 21-22 March 2015.

IAN BURFORD

The HRDC have an association with the Lloyd's Motor Club.
For further details on the HRDC please go to www.HRDC.eu



Silverstone Classic

Historic racing has expanded rapidly over the last 20 years. It now seems that any racing car that is more than 25 years old can race in a racing series that it was made for in period. The success of historic meetings such as the Goodwood Revival and the Historic Grand Prix at Monaco, has not only pushed values of historic cars up, but also made historic racing an attractive proposition for people whose aspirations are no longer to become a future champion driver.

In addition to Goodwood and Monaco, major racing events have sprung up in every country. Germany has the Old Timer Grand Prix at the Nurburgring. Holland has recently started the Dutch Historic Grand Prix at Zandvoort, plus Monza, Spa and Brands Hatch all host significant historic meetings and one of the biggest each year is the Silverstone Classic.

Old Formula 1 cars are probably the pinnacle of historic racing, with several different decades being represented. There are races for pre-war cars, '50s, '60s, '70s and '80s Formula 1 cars. There are as many different sports car and touring car categories and then races for the many single seater formulae such as Formula Ford that started the careers of many aspiring drivers.

Formula Junior ran for six years from the late '50s to 1963 and heralded the arrival of such famous names as Jim Clark, John Surtees and Jackie Stewart, but it gave way in 1963 to Formula 3, which has run with only one significant change up to the present day.

Formula 3 initially was for 1-litre engines, but in 1971 adopted two litre engines with an air restrictor, based on production car engines and that still forms the basis of Formula 3 in existence in 2015. Classic

Formula 3 UK, of which I am in charge, is for two litre cars built between 1971 and 1984. This was a golden period and saw such great Grand Prix drivers as Nigel Mansell, Ayrton Senna, Martin Brundle, Alain Prost and many more cut their teeth.

More than 50 registered Formula 3 cars fit this category in the UK and even more than that run in equivalent series in France, Italy and Germany. It is not surprising therefore that the organisers of the Monaco Historic Grand Prix introduced a race to their meeting in 2010, repeated in 2012 and 2014. It is the task of every Historic Series organiser, such as myself, to obtain races at the best historic meetings for his competitors to partake in. Classic F3 was delighted to be given yet another race at Monaco in 2014, but were just as delighted to be invited to provide a grid for the Silverstone Classic held every year at the end of July. The meeting, which originally began as the Coys Festival, is now one of the leading historic car meetings in the UK. Like the Goodwood Revival, the meeting organisers try to vary the races from year to year and so any category that is invited to partake must consider it a bonus to their Calendar. For Classic F3 to be at two of the best international meetings held each year was certainly a bonus for us.

The meeting is a mammoth car festival with racing and track displays taking place at the same time. All the major motor manufacturers and historic car clubs are represented and the infield is packed with cars and car clubs displaying their products. There are stalls and shops, similar to the Goodwood Revival, a fun fair for children (and maybe adults) and





a variety of bands playing at the night time music festivals providing great entertainment. In fact everything the Grand Prix has, but for a historic meeting.

The meeting lasts three days, starting on Friday morning, right through until Sunday night. During that time, there are 22 races for historic cars, each of the 11 categories getting two races, and in between the races, there are demonstrations on track from the various car clubs present. I believe in 2013 there was a Ferrari display, which broke records for the number of Ferraris on the track at any one time. In 2014, it was the turn of Aston Martin to celebrate. The great attraction of the meeting is that by having it at the end of July, the weather should be better than many of the other historic races we take part in during the year. Because of its status in the calendar, many competitors wish to partake so Classic Formula 3 had some 45 entries from the UK and Europe. There could have been a lot more participants from overseas, had the announcement of the race been earlier so it could have been included as a round of the French Championship.

Most of the European front-runners attended, but the hoped for 50 car grid

fell a bit short. Nevertheless, all those who attended had a wonderful time and despite being given race slots on Saturday and Sunday morning, everyone thoroughly enjoyed their participation. Because of the enormous entries in each race, some cars are located in the old Silverstone pits and some cars are in the new Formula 1 wing. It makes travelling between the two, for some of the car preparers, a little bit difficult. We were located in the old pits and if we wanted to go and see the other competitors and cars, it was quite a long trek to the F1 wing. Nevertheless, it was well worth it to see the wonderful display of historic F1 machinery that raced at the meeting. As one can imagine, the organisation of such a meeting has to be pretty slick and the Historic Sports Car Club take this on and do a marvellous job. Their resources would have been particularly stretched this past year when Dennis Welch, a well-known historic racer, rolled his 1960 Formula 1 Lotus 18 in the pre-1966 Grand Prix cars race and lost his life. A terrible tragedy but a wakeup call to everyone racing historic cars, that it is every bit as dangerous as it was in period.

The last time I competed in a race at the Silverstone Classic, it was 2006, when it was still the Coys Festival. The meeting has moved on considerably since then and in eight years has become a veritable feast for the motoring enthusiast. As many racing people will tell you, if you are preparing your car or mending it in some shape or form, you very rarely get the opportunity at a race meeting to see what else is going on, but in the three days that we were at the Classic, we were able to see a lot more of the other cars and drivers than normal and it is definitely a meeting well worthwhile attending.

The Classic Formula 3 competitors and I thoroughly enjoyed our weekend. We have not been given a slot in 2015 but do have international grids at the Brands Superprix and the Nurburgring Old Timer GP. However, with or without a race, I will definitely be spending a day or two at the Classic in 2015. I am pleased to add that the LMC was well represented. In addition to myself, Bruce Bartell (Chaucer) and Jonathan Price (Ark) were in the F3 race and Rodger Newman raced his Brabham BT14 in the pre-1966 Formula 1 race.

HUGH PRICE



End of an Era

Where on earth does the state railway still operate a daily steam-hauled passenger service on standard gauge tracks? And where can 'guests' drive and fire steam locomotives running on main lines? Only in Poland, where PKP (the freight division of the Polish version of Railtrack) runs the Wolsztyn-Lezno commuter line. Not in India, not in China, not in Costa Rica: nowhere else on the planet.

The locos imported after 1922 following independence – from Russia, Germany, Austria - have all disappeared. The locos now in the shed were built in the 1940s and '50s largely to Soviet design, and include a Ty43, Ok22s and Ol49s; the exception, the Ty43, is a massive German 2-10-0 Kriegslok freight loco, examples of which are still in service in Serbia. There is also an elegant Pacific-type belonging to a Warsaw museum which never leaves the shed. The engine that we will be driving for the next week is Ol49-59, one of 112 2-6-2s built 1951-'54 by Fablok.



“ a dramatic climb and the engine’s two cylinders give a crack with each stroke ”

It’s 05:15 on Monday morning and minus 10 degrees C. We crouch by the glowing brazier lit under the water tower to prevent it from freezing. We coal and take on water, as overnight the disposer (shed supervisor) has been using the injector to top up boiler water periodically as the loco is constantly in steam. We fill the tender up to its 15,000 litre capacity.

The two coaches have been shunted to the platform by diesel. The loco is turned on the turntable in a scene straight out of the 1950s. The service is due to depart at 06:07 and complete the 47 mile trip to Lezno in one hour and 19 minutes, stopping at 11 intermediate stations, none of which seems to have a platform. In the pitch black of darkness we crash across dozens of level crossings, most of them without barriers, so whistling is constant. The loco’s three headlamps are all but useless. Minor breakdowns are a regular occurrence; first the only functioning injector stops working, then the boiler pressure gauge fails. Normal working pressure is 1.5 mP (225 psi); if it falls too low the whistle doesn’t work. These failures are followed by the Westinghouse-type air brake pump seizing up, so it has to be lubricated by hand, on the move. Soon afterwards the 24v turbine generator starts to squeal in its bearings and slows to the point where the bulbs

glow dimly red. The connecting rods clank ominously. Somehow everything gets fixed overnight.

The stations on the route read like a roll call of villages and small towns through which the Germans might have been driven back by the Red Army: Nowy Widzim, Wroniawy, Perkowo, Blotnica, Nowy Solec, Boszkowo. The so-called Boszkowo bank (steep gradient) is a dramatic climb and the engine’s two 500 x 630mm cylinders give a crack with each stroke as the regulator is opened up; it’s tempting to apply even more power, but there is a steam chest pressure safety limit of 0.6 mP. At 07:00 we halt at Wloszakowice. This is a longer stop because crowds of students take time to board to get to university at Lezno. Incredibly, the students pay no attention to the loco or to the fact that the service is steam-hauled, and just clamber aboard with their satchels and briefcases, trying to keep warm. There is steam and smoke everywhere. The turbogenerator is whining against the background of the occasional thump from the Westinghouse, and the superheater is whistling because it has sprung a leak somewhere in its 68 sq m surface area. The loco is stationary so the blower has to be turned up to draw the fire; the hot gases roar through the firetubes, setting up a gentle but audible harmonic vibration. The cab feels bitterly cold despite the fire behind the doors. We open the doors to put on coal: over the 3.7sq m area of the grate the fire burns with such intensity that it has a purplish tinge, impossible to look at for more than a second or two.

The return trip, departing Lezno at 09:46, is less nerve-racking because it is now light. We are back at the depot at 10:59, ready for a beer and early lunch in one of the town’s several restaurants.

In the last few weeks, contractual disputes between PKP, the Marshal of Poznan (in charge of the local network) and other agencies of the Polish bureaucracy have brought operations to a halt. Meanwhile, the regular drivers and firemen are twiddling their thumbs, turning up to the depot to do very little, getting older, and retiring one by one. None of them have been trained on diesel or electric locomotives (nor, by the way, speak a single word of English).

Before long there will be insufficient critical mass of trained operators to coal, water, drive, fire, wash out, drop ash, lubricate and make do and mend. If the authorities cannot restart the service, their names will pass into memory as the world’s last scheduled passenger-hauling standard-gauge steam loco drivers and firemen: Andrzej, Piotr, Henryk, Stanislaw, Tomasz, Eryk, Marek, Ian, Czeslaw. It has been a privilege to be their students. When it finally stops, the only remaining commercially operated steam loco turntable (an eight-road shed built in 1909) will be decommissioned, the remaining water towers will be pulled down, the coaling depots closed and the ash pits filled in. Truly the end of an era.

MICHAEL PARR



LMC Battlefields Group's Tour



Key anniversaries to commemorate in 2014 – the centenary of the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, the 70th anniversary of D-Day plus the 70th anniversary of the first V weapon to hit London, the ‘Doodlebug’.

Like last year, a challenge loomed once more in time and distance terms for the ‘Group of Ten’, with three memorable anniversaries to commemorate and some fresh experiences to explore and enjoy. Normandy came first just over a month ahead of D-Day’s 70th anniversary in June, then Morbecque, near Hazebrouck in north-western France for the only remaining and virtually intact launch site of the first of Hitler’s ‘vengeance’ weapons, the V-1 Flying bomb, the ‘Doodlebug’, this year also being the 70th anniversary of its first attack on London in 1944, and finally Mons for the centenary of the first shots of the Great War in August 1914.

Whilst this was far from our first exploration of Normandy, we had fresh adventures to enjoy this year – the new ‘360 Museum’ at Arromanches being an early highlight, an extraordinary virtual experience at first hand of the landings and breakout, created from original film from June 1944. Visitors stand in a group in the middle of the

circular building and the battle takes place ‘live’ all around them in the form of a 30 minute film continuously covering 360° - the noise is both stunning and very realistic. By the close, we felt we’d been part of it all and were much in need of a good dinner and overnight stay at the beautiful Ferme de la Ranconniere at Crepon near Bayeux. For future LMC members exploring the area, it is a venue to be highly recommended.

The following day we revisited the emotive Omaha Beach American cemetery (9,387 headstones) to pay our respects to the brothers who were the inspiration for Steven Spielberg’s renowned movie, ‘Saving Private Ryan’. Yes, it did really happen but the ‘boys’ concerned were the Niland brothers who hailed from Tonawanda, New York. Two of them were killed during the landings on 6 and 7 June 1944 and the third was shot down and MIA around the same time over Burma, so the fourth boy, Fritz, was rounded up and sent home to New York from

Normandy. However, at the end of the war, Mother Niland recovered one of her ‘dead’ sons, as Eddie was discovered in a sorry state but alive in a POW camp in Japan. The Normandy Niland boys are buried just yards from General Teddy Roosevelt Jnr, awarded the Congressional Medal of Honour for his great bravery on D-Day but dying later during the Normandy battles. His brother Quentin lies next to him – killed as a young pilot in the Great War but reburied at Omaha so that they could rest together. All thoroughly moving.

Then on to the most recent discovery surrounding D-Day, the Maisy Battery, inland of Pointe du Hoc, scene of the 2nd Rangers’ epic climb up the cliffs in the face of murderous fire on 6 June, only to find no heavy guns there after all. They were in fact just over a mile away inland at the Maisy site which could enfilade both Omaha and Utah Beach. This covers 140 acres and was purchased 15 years ago by celebrated British historian Gary Sterne, who

doubting official accounts of that aspect of the battle, researched the truth as secret documents were released under the 60 years rule. He located the then unknown and bulldozed-in site in 2007, excavated it, and transformed the official history in doing so. His enterprise is recorded in his best selling book, "The Cover-up at Omaha Beach – Maisy Battery and the US Rangers". A fascinating visit, both complex and extensive, with massive guns and block-houses now unearthed, trenches restored (very wet too, it still being April) and a two hour insight about it all from our guide for the day, Gary's son Dan. A must for any visitor to Normandy interested in military matters and history, particularly now correctly rewritten history.

Our Normandy exploration over for another year and a good lunch under our belts in Caen, it was a long, fast drive across country to Morbecque, near Hazebrouck south of the Belgium border and another extraordinary experience. To our amazement, the site is not promoted and is hardly publicised at all. It's located deep in a local forest with only a small sign to indicate its presence and parking for a mere handful of cars. Yet when entered (for free), a treasure trove of WW2 history is discovered. V1s rained down on London on a daily basis during 1944 (9,521 of them at a rate of around 100 every day), so destroying the Nazis' ability to continue this unpleasant behaviour was a pressing priority. The site is pock-marked with bomb craters, most now filled with water, as the RAF tried continuously throughout 1944 to take the site out. All the buildings of the extensive V weapons complex remain intact, including the launch ramp for

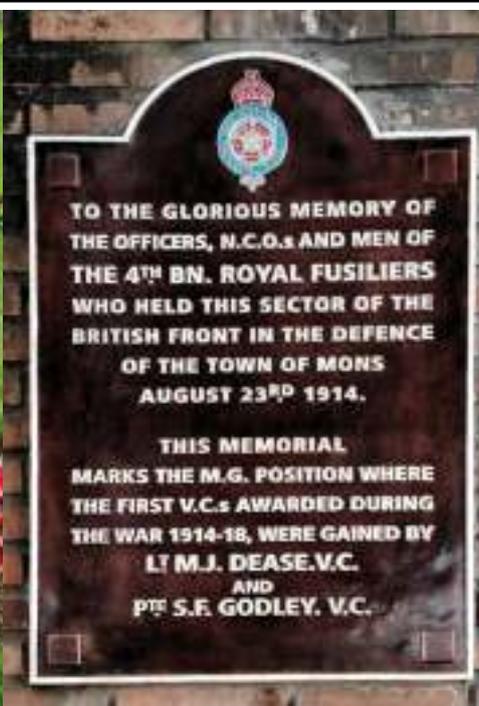
the V1s - with the one exception of the key weapon arming building. The RAF only scored one direct hit but it was the one that mattered most and they totally destroyed it. After two hours or so we left this intriguing discovery, fully briefed and now expert in V1 launch procedures, thanks to Max Taylor's comprehensive research and with the aid of his 'owner's manual'.

With both our 70th anniversary adventures now complete, our plans moved further north and would involve the Battle of Arras, the Battle of Messines and the city of Mons, the last being the site of both the start of the Great War 100 years ago in August 1914, and also its end four years later in November 1918.

Arras is a lovely old city, a key supply area for the British during the Great War and it was the jumping off point for the great battle of that name in late April/early May 1917. To great surprise it was not the resounding success expected, in spite of thorough planning and following the inspired triumph of General Julian Byng's Canadians at Vimy Ridge earlier that month, but it was unique in another way. Arras's 'underground' is a warren of man-made caves and tunnels 50 feet beneath its streets, created since medieval times as stone quarries providing the material for building the old city. These were excavated further to an amazing degree in just a few months in 1916 and 1917 by New Zealand miners (they tunnelled over 12 miles by hand during that time) and today the complex is appropriately called 'Wellington Quarry' after their home city and in recognition of their efforts. 20,000 British troops lived there hot and sweaty underground

for eight days before the battle and emerged as a total surprise to the Germans across No Man's Land. This should have ensured a great success. Sadly that was not to be the case as a combination of poor supplies and inadequate reserves ended in failure to carry through its initial success, but that is another story. Wellington Quarry now sports an excellent museum and a one and a half hour guided tour had been arranged, excellently delivered and fascinating as a glimpse of the history of the time – much recommended to interested visitors who might follow us.

So from there we drove north to follow the Battleground of Messines, home to some of the greatest man-made explosions of all time, certainly until Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Determined to re-establish momentum after the stalled battle around Arras and the disastrous French Nivelle offensive in early April, the British, commanded by one of its most successful Great War generals, Herbert Plumer, dug 21 tunnels under the German lines throughout 1916 and early 1917, laying in a million pounds of ammonal for ignition on the morning of 7 June 1917. After the most intense preparatory bombardment of the entire war, 19 of these mines were detonated, instantly obliterating an estimated 10,000 German troops in a microsecond. The explosions were so great that they were heard as far away as London and after only two and a half hours, the key Messines Ridge, occupied by the Germans since 1914, was in British hands. Two mines failed to explode and they remain where they lay to this day, one of them immediately beneath a working farm, Petit Douve, near Mesen village (how do they sleep soundly





in their beds, one asks). The most impressive of the craters, both huge and deep, can be readily visited by the inquiring enthusiast at Hill 60 between St Eloi and Zillebeke but most of the others cannot, being on private land. German and British bunkers abound however and there is a particularly interesting site at Bayernwald, close to the village of Wijtschaete – a complete German trench system, something rare even on the Western Front, which we greatly enjoyed exploring, not least of all because it's where a certain Corporal Hitler served. Terrific value at €4 a head entry fee.

The Battle for the Messines Ridge had been a resounding success and is considered by many historians as the best planned of the Allied Forces (along with Vimy Ridge) of the Great War. The British generals in charge, Herbert Plumer and Julian Byng respectively, were both regarded as among the very best in the British Army (they were certainly not "donkeys leading lions") and were duly rewarded, each being promoted to Field Marshall after the war, appointed Viscount Plumer of Messines and Viscount Byng of Vimy respectively. We found the whole experience and exploration fascinating in the extreme.

Another refreshing evening beckoned at our regular end of term 'estaminet', the Hotel Recour and Pegasus in Poperinge. From there we would forage out to our Mons targets the following day and fulfill one of our special objectives, the laying of a Lloyd's Motor Club wreath to the fallen at the Last Post Ceremony held daily at 8 o'clock at the Menin Gate in Ypres. This has taken place every evening since the 1920s except, surprise, surprise, between 1939 and 1945 – Mr Hitler not being prone to commemorating British war dead. LMC's very own General, Brigadier Mike Hickson, was the senior officer present, laid the wreath with the other nine of us in columns of three behind (we'd practiced this to the great amusement of the locals earlier in the trip, generally and unwisely, after dinner), and Mike was then invited by Benoit Mottrie, the Chairman of the Last Post Association (LPA), to inspect the Belgium buglers. We were accorded the greatest of welcomes by both the LPA and the huge crowd which gathers every evening for this intensely moving ceremony winter and summer, truly a 7/7 commitment by the Belgium people.



Our final full day dawned sunny if damp and a post-breakfast launch saw us off to Mons to round out our 2014 tour, first stop being the St Symphorien Cemetery, the site of the centenary commemoration planned for August by Prince William and Prince Harry and one of the most peaceful yet poignant sites on the Western Front. Here lie buried the first British soldier to be killed in the Great War, the last British soldier to die in the Great War, and the first VC to be won in the Great War. Unique in every respect and shared with an equal number of German soldiers killed during the same period.

After a refreshing and thoughtful lunch, our plans took us to the site of the first VCs of the Great War, both Royal Fusiliers, one earned posthumously (Lt. Maurice Dease who died of multiple wounds at his post)

and the other also severely wounded but taken prisoner for the duration (Sgt. Sydney Godley), who had the presence of mind to dismantle his machine gun and hurl the bits into the canal when he ran out of ammunition, thereby denying the enemy its capture. Both VCs were won holding the key railway bridge in Mons for many hours in spite of being massively outnumbered by the advancing Germans – acts of momentous courage and fortitude. Finally, not far away, to the site of the first shot to be fired in the Great War and the site of the last shot to be fired in the Great War – just 25 yards apart on opposite sides of the main road. So four years of war and 17 million dead (of whom seven million were civilians) and 22 million wounded, later to move just 25 yards east of where it all started. Puts it rather brutally into perspective,

doesn't it – but a necessary sacrifice to put a stop to dangerous German imperialism of the time, yet only to be squandered by the vengeful stupidity and inadequacies of the Treaty of Versailles that followed.

A chilling point upon which to end our 2014 expedition before the return to Blighty.

ROGER EARL





D-DAY

70TH ANNIVERSARY: 1944-2014

We as progeny of the post-war baby boomer era can know nothing first hand of the fear, the brutality and the sacrifices in World War 2 to liberate occupied Europe. We can but look on in awe at the faces of the veterans as they recount their experiences in modest tones befitting heroes, because that is what they all are, modest heroes.

As the years roll on these gallant men and women, these ordinary standard bearers for democracy and freedom, dwindle in numbers yet increase in reputation and in the respect we have for them. Those among us who respect the memory of that extraordinary generation still have

the sites to visit, the restored vehicles and ordnance to cherish and within us the pride to drive us forward in the quest to ensure that future generations do not forget what they did and why they had to do it.



It is June, a Willys Jeep is hurtling through the mist-shrouded lanes of Calvados towards Port en Bessin for a critical rendezvous. The driver and his passenger marvel in turn at the clarity of the star-laden sky juxtaposed with the blackness of the country roads barely illuminated









before them by the Jeep's side lights, as it is 5am. The villages are pretty. The windchill is bitter at this time of the morning with no roof. Taking the twisting roads in its stride at a steady 40mph the Willys arrives at the designated point in the nick of time to form up with a convoy of Dodge Command Cars and DUKWs to make an important run into Arromanches. There is to be a strategic rendezvous of military hardware on the beach. Ushered into the town by 6am by Harley Davidson outriders everything forms up, in excess of 200 of them.

Only it is not June 1944, it is June 2014. The driver of the Willys is me and the editor is my passenger. It is the 70th Anniversary of D Day. We are here. This is an historic event.

The French wanted period uniforms and so to comply we opted for US Airborne to match our US marked Willys Jeep. On the beach we were treated to a display of working WWII tanks - you won't see a Sherman Tank tearing up a beach every day of the week, much less clattering along cobblestoned roads with French civilians in period costume rushing out to hurl garlands at it - this was the sight we were treated to later at a parade at Isigny-sur-Mer, famous for both butter and also as a town once visited by Eisenhower and Churchill.

From students of World War 2 to those who simply respect the memory of that generation and what they sacrificed it doesn't get better than this. There are stunning museums, incredible exhibits and breathtaking locations. Anyone who is moved by Churchill's speeches from a time when the only news was bad news, Germany had vanquished everyone else and Britain stood defiantly alone, will be brought almost to tears by the brilliance of the British engineering behind the Mulberry harbours, the remains of which (Port Winston) still sit offshore as eerie rusting memorials to what is possible in the face of an apparently insurmountable problem. To draw a better picture I could write an article around the courage and audacity of the British at Pegasus Bridge, the bravery and dogged determination of the American soldiers at Omaha, the fears the leaders had that this incredible armada could have failed and that a hideous defeat could have been suffered by the allies and how that became instead a marvellous victory, but I won't. I urge you instead to go and visit these locations and to marvel as I do at the fact that this incredible mission was executed by many thousands of men, most of them not a lot older than my own son. To them we say a simple "Thank You". It was a privilege for me and the editor to be part of the 70th.

DENNIS WILKINS





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