

John Aston  
Ramblings On.....  
The CSCC Silverstone Spectacular,  
4th/5th May, 2019.  
SPORTSCAR CLUB



I once worked out that I have spent nearly six months of my life at Silverstone, having first visited in the pre-Jurassic era of motor sport, when big beasts like Graham Hill and John Surtees still stalked the earth. It is the worst race circuit in the country at which to spectate, and the only one where you can be standing in one county (Northamptonshire) and watching an out-braking move in another (Buckinghamshire). But Silverstone has a weight of history which no other UK circuit can match and,

even though the layout has changed at least five times since my first visit, I can still remember seeing Mansell selling the dummy to teammate Piquet in '87 and the exact spot where I watched Ronnie Peterson hold his Lotus 72 in a 150mph slide



fourteen years earlier. But so vast is Silverstone these days that I had feared that the CSCC Silverstone Spectacular might risk looking like an amateur dramatic society performing at the London Palladium. But it took just one look into the huge pit garages of the Wing complex to allay any fears. It was full, cars everywhere, from tiny Sevens and Minis to hulking big thugs like David Methley's Corvette C6, which was scheduled to contest the RSV Graphics New Millennium race on Sunday. It didn't, but that is another story.

Old stagers may witter on about Silverstone having its own microclimate and, whilst that really is fake news, Silverstone's altitude (a surprising 500 feet above sea level) means that it does get a lot of weather. It is exposed to whatever our fickle climate decides to throw at it, and this weekend we had the Full English of weather, from bright sun to strong wind, hail and rain. But, as we all know, there's no such thing as bad weather, only the wrong clothing and, Musto clad, I needed to get to work and talk to as many people as I could, to give a flavour of the weekend in this report. If you need details of who won what, and which lap was your quickest, then TSL is your friend, but what follows are accounts with conversations with as many people as possible and my own take on how my first CSCC meeting of 2019 looked and felt.



'I'm Ian Fraser, originally from South Wales but now living in Cobham. I retired a couple of years ago and I was the chief executive of a multinational, Brammer plc, who keep the wheels of industry turning (quite literally – check out their website- jpa). This is a Lotus Cortina and its history includes ownership by Tony Lanfranchi (legendary Sixties/Seventies hell raising, larger than life Yorkshire racing driver – jpa). I've had the car for a year and half, I've spent a lot of time on track days learning how to drive it and this will be our second race. This hobby – pas-



sion – started three years ago but I do remember Cortina's lifting their front wheel off the ground at Paddock Hill Bend...' I wonder if Ian is conscious, as I am, of the CSCC playing on a bigger stage this weekend? 'Yes, absolutely, it's incredible. And I've never seen so many beautiful classic racing cars.' Ian finds the CSCC - 'wonderful, admin perfect, people charming' – and, bearing in mind what Ian used to do for a living, I think the CSCC office can allow itself a blush at such praise.

Ian rates his fellow drivers' track courtesy highly, too. He is a man who looks genuinely happy with his lot and, as I am leaving, he mentions that he also 'played rugby for 56 years, but then I am a Welshman. I gave up two years ago but I'm playing again in Japan in September at the World Cup'. Speaking as someone who was forced to play rugby at 10 and gave it up at the earliest opportunity, just thinking about Ian's adventures gives me flashbacks.

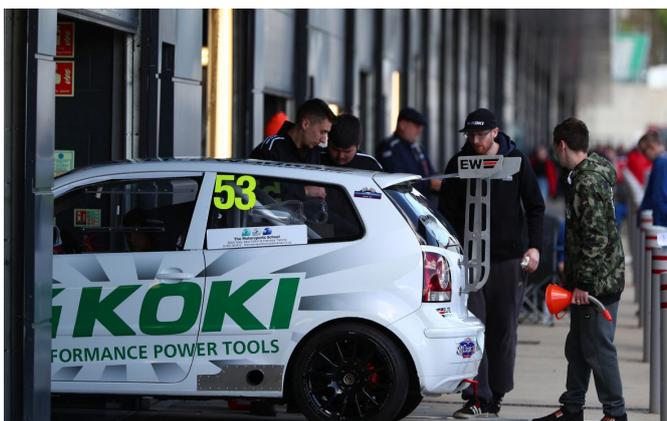
Shuddering, I find Martin Knapp, whom I'd met at the CSCC Chateau Impney dinner dance last year. He used to be in IT, lives in north Norfolk, is restoring an MG A, his dream car is a Sunbeam Tiger and today he is racing this pale blue Triumph Spitfire, in sexy Le Mans spec, in the Adams and Page Swinging Sixties Group 1 race. 'It is definitely a homage, but it has a little bit of history as it's an ex- rally car and was owned by Fred Nicklin, the Triumph test driver. It's not an obvious choice but I'm learning racing now, and I rallied for thirty years including a TR7 and a 2000. It came in a box of bits so we're still learning. It has a 1300 engine with GT6 ratios in the gearbox, no overdrive - too heavy - and it's got a Mark 4 rear end.' Hangar Straight then, Martin, are you, y'know, running out of puff a bit? Big laugh - 'Oh definitely, yes, she's great in the corners but everything goes straight past me on Hangar!' John Devlin, from Eccleshall in Staffordshire, is driving – 'a Reliant Sabre 6, 1964, which has been in my family for 45 years or so. My father bought and then raced it and, after he died, I did sprints and hill climbs and a little bit of racing. We took it off the road and David Hudson and I took a long time to put it back together, and I've raced it in Swinging Sixties since 2016.' Everyone remembers the Reliant Scimitar GTE ('Princes Anne owned one, you know') but its



I had spoken to the CSCC's **David Smitheram** earlier about the meeting and he'd told me how the club had made a real effort to secure enough marshals to enable standing starts for the races. Thankfully, they had succeeded and David emphasised to me just how much the efforts of the 'orange army' are appreciated. A similar sentiment was evident in the drivers' briefing I attended later and nobody can have left that session in any doubt about how much their racing depended upon these volunteers. One of whom, looking very cool in shades and astride his mountain bike, is **Raja** from Horsham, West Sussex. 'I started marshalling in 2013 ... Monday to Friday I look after my dad and Friday to Monday I'm on the circuits; (*big laugh*) my wife is off golfing, or playing in a concert somewhere every weekend and I got bored of talking to her cat. A friend was marshalling, I went to say Hi to him and it looked interesting.' Bizarrely, not only is Raj's wife more interested than he is in motor sport but he tends to fall asleep after five laps. But not, thankfully, when he's marshalling and today he's at Club, on flag duty. It's good for his bingo wings he tells me. Raja and his mates were certainly kept busy over the weekend, and special recognition was earned by the crew who had the responsibility of pushing the Holden Commodore of Ben Hudson out of harm's way on Sunday. Not a light car by the look of it...



Now I find myself talking to the driver of the unassuming front wheel drive hatchback which, as I was to find out shortly, packs a punch the Sabre could only dream of. The car, a Volkswagen Polo, is contesting the **Motorsports School Turbo Tin Tops** race and is driven by **Charlie Dark** and **Jay Dalgarno**. And here's the thing – Jay may be a fair bit younger than many drivers here today but the professionalism of his responses and the confidence of his delivery reveal a very smart operator. 'We're a company called Elite-Works Motorsport Ltd, we're based in Hertfordshire, in Harpenden and we've built this Polo GTi race car. This is the first race of the season; it's a brand new build running a GTi engine which has been modified slightly. The driver is Charlie Dark, my business partner, and we've got a great team with us - my brother Ryan and my two team members Kieron and Darryl.' Why a Polo? 'Well, it was Charlie's road car and it unfortunately got rolled, so we took the good bits out and made a race car. We did it in about four months.' Testing had thrown up some issues 'but the car feels really good and you don't have to battle with oversteer like in the E36 which we raced last year'. Heat is a big issue, Jay tells me, with a scary red hot turbo after a session on track, 'the heat cycle is stretching and contracting bolts, making them come loose.'



The power then, Jay? '...err... top secret!'. Cross examination reveals that the Polo's bhp starts with the number three, which would be more than enough for me, but I suspect isn't enough for Jay. Watch this guy as he could go far, I think. And his car was none too shabby on track either, finishing a strong second to the Vauxhall Astra VXR of Andrew Preswell.



From high tech Polo to an analogue car with a wooden chassis and a Volvo engine – what else but a Marcos? Conceived when Harold Wilson was in Number 10, but still arrestingly pretty, this red 1800 GT is being driven very quickly, by **Allen Tice** who lives in Milton Abbas, Dorset (or he does when he's not in Portugal). Allen is retired, having worked in the oil business, and 'has had this car for 20 years,

after getting fed up of being overtaken by Marcoses in my Healey. This is David Methley's old car and I've raced it in long distance events with Chris Conoley for many years. Everybody has an Elan now, they cost a fortune to buy and run and this is half the price to buy and cheaper to run.' Allen and Chris have won a lot of European races in the car 'partly due to experience but also because, for a 1965 car, Jem Marsh and Frank Costin really sorted it out.' Unlike some cars today, the Marcos doesn't get breathless on the long straights, 'although it did run out of puff at Spa', hardly surprising with just 170-ish bhp. Allen isn't too keen on The Link, the entry on to the back straight, but loves Village.

It seems only fair to speak to a Lotus driver now, and the first one I encounter is retired lawyer **Gideon Hudson** from Berkhamsted, who is racing in the **Mintex Classic K** race in his Elite. Not, of course, the disappointment that was the 1974 Type 75 Elite but the tiny and exquisite 1959 original which epitomised the Colin Chapman 'add lightness' mantra. Gideon chose the Elite because 'it is the archetypal classic race car and eligible for pretty well everything. Small engine, but a great car to drive. It's a bit of purist's car but it's lovely. And yes, it is high maintenance' ... Gideon has raced since the Eighties and, apart from the inevitable Porsche, he also raced a Seven and a Thirties' Talbot 105. I wonder if the value and heritage of the Elite is in the back of Gideon's mind as he turns into Stowe but 'no, if anything holds me back it's age and the threshold of fear.' That is my quote of the day, and it comes back to me later as the Elite executes a (thankfully harmless) spin in its race.



I will confess to worshipping at the shrine of Colin Chapman, and it is too much of a temptation not to inspect this lithe and lovely Elan, the sports car which makes every modern counterpart look clumsy and obese (but let's not talk about the original's side impact protection, ok?). This Elan, in 26R specification, is being

driven by **Nick Randall**, from Henley- on- Thames, in the **Mintex Classic K** race - 'I share the car with my son Chris, who runs Hofmanns of Henley – he built the car. And normally the car goes very well but this morning it isn't going so well. We built this car from an original 1965 Elan to 26R spec, like most of the cars here, and I've done a lot of racing in it. My son's a lot quicker than I am but he can't be here today so I'm doing it myself. We're just down on power; it was fine yesterday morning but we're struggling to find out why. It's probably 20 or 30 per cent down on normal power.' Nick has been racing 'a long time ... I started when I was about nineteen or twenty, couldn't afford it so stopped for twenty years then started again. Always in classics; I raced E-Types for ten years but I've always liked Lotuses. My son does a lot of modern stuff too, he's a Lotus dealer.' I wonder how the Elan feels around here – 'Funnily enough, I struggle with the corner up here (Farm) which should be flat but psychologically I find it very difficult. My son can just keep it planted and sort it out. We're on Dunlops which tend to slide around and I'm thinking 'oh, hold on a minute! (*laughs*)'. As I left Nick to sorting out the ailing Lotus, I so nearly succeeded in resisting the temptation to utter the famous Lotus mantra, 'Lots of Trouble, Usually Serious'. But I failed. Again.

Porsches are a mainstay of any CSCC meeting and this weekend sees not only the inevitable pack of 911s in action but, also, a big bruiser 928 and a whole posse of 944s in the **Advantage Motorsport Future Classics** race. I decide to pick the driver who looks the most bright-eyed and bushy-tailed at this time in the morning and, being a Yorkshire farmer, **Richard Bayston** was always going to win this contest. So, Richard, the 944? 'I've had the car a lot of years. I last raced it at Donington a couple of weeks ago but apart from that, I haven't raced for quite a few years now. I'm having a late mid- life crisis. I think Porsches are great, they're strong, relatively reliable and this is fantastically balanced. If I'm being honest, it probably makes you look better than you are, it's very easy to catch.' How much preparation does the car need? 'Oh, not too much really, they are as they are ... it's got fibreglass wings now which might help a little with the weight. But it's fairly stock, they're strong cars.' Richard has been racing since the mid Nineties – 'I started off with little Rovers – the 216 GTi. Not in any championship, just when farming would allow. I've raced all over the place, although this track is a little bit new to me. If I'm being honest, I do like tracks that are undulating and twisty, and preferably raining, even though it scares me a bit. I tested yesterday and we softened the suspension off before the last practice and I've never known such a difference, it completely transformed the car, it is just so much better.' Final question, Richard – what sort of farming do you do? 'All arable ... and standard issue black Labrador.'



I first saw this well-painted red Sierra at Oulton Park, in the wet, and the crackling bellow from its exhausts immediately made me realise that this wasn't a dime a dozen Sierra Cosworth but its exotic, V8 powered, South African cousin, the XR8. I finally catch up with



**Steve** and **Tom Brenton**, the Colchester guys who run the car, to find out more. Tom - 'This is a replica XR8, of which Ford made 255 in the end for Group 1 racing in South Africa in 1984/5. Development was done by Ford Boreham's Mick Jones, who went out to South Africa to upgrade the car. Originally they were 5 litres, but this is a little bigger with about 500bhp'. Over to dad Steve (he's the main man in building it, says Tom) 'The engineering side is what interests me most, plus general support. We are both engineers, I've had a lot of time in the motor industry, 35 years of product development in total, and I've been involved in racing over the years. We've got a good knowledge base, which has given us the ability to do this.' So why the XR8, Steve? 'We've had Cosworths, and the YB will take you so far but then it can all get unreliable above the 400bhp mark. I've always been keen on V8s and this has proved to be very, very good.' It turns out that the engine has already raced three seasons and it's not been in bits yet. Unlike lots of other cars, this one doesn't run out of puff on Silverstone's long straights, Tom mentioning that '... my eyes are opening wider, I'm getting more and more scared - it's over 150 mph.' Tom isn't overawed by racing here, even though he prefers the smaller circuits, and agrees that at Cadwell (where it has tested but not raced) 'it'd be entertaining ...' Rain worries? 'No, driving this always feels like driving in the rain so if it's actually raining it's not too different.'



Steve had worked at Jaguar, and I hope he saw the stunningly restored E-Type roadster lurking amongst the moderns in the paddock car park. I have never fallen as much in thrall to the Jag's shape as some, but this E-Type was literally stopping everyone in their tracks, me included. But, back in the Wing garages

I have to wonder, has there ever been a better looking American car than the original Camaro? This car, driven by **Raymond Barrow**, is gorgeous, and I have to admire the period signwriting on its flanks 'Baldwin Chevrolet, Baldwin, Long Island, New York'. And under the nose is what we might call a splitter now, but this is definitely an air dam, and of Hoover Dam proportions. Love it.

Ever noticed how the body language of every modern Audi gives you the strong impression that it's accusing you of spilling its pint, and that it wants to see you outside? The last one which didn't want to pick a fight with you was the quirky A2, a gleaming and perfect example of which is parked in the Wing. And, back in the time when Audis were NSUs, they were all far more polite looking things, none more so than the svelte little TTS which is being driven by **Glenn Canning** from Bletchingley, Surrey. Glenn is not the only person in the CSCC paddock who works in IT but I bet he is the only person who is racing his first ever car, which he bought in 1974. Which makes the TTS the same age as Kate Moss and Victoria Beckham. The TTS has been bored and stroked, with a capacity increase from 1 litre to 1498cc. 'Twin spark heads to be put on, but the suspension is virtually standard, I've just knocked it down a bit. On the rolling road we got 120bhp at 7000 rpm.' To drive? 'Oh, it's like a go-kart! It's not fast down the straights, it's a flying brick, but it's very fast in the corners.' The weight distribution is 55/45 – not what I'd expect – and the car isn't up against the Minis it would have raced in period but 'against Lotus Cortinas so I'm dropping back a bit (*laughs*)'. And where has the car most excelled, Glenn? 'Spa ... it loves it. It is absolutely brilliant there round the corners. Eau Rouge in the wet ... flat until the compression at the bottom, ease off a little bit and then flat out up the hill'. Glenn has raced this car for 21 years and finds the CSCC 'absolutely brilliant'. I can't help but admire both man and car, and their adventures together are a testimony to what historic motor sport is about.



Noises summon me to the elevated platform on top of the Wing, as the **Motorsports School Turbo Tin Tops with Cartek Motorsport Puma Cup** (pause for breath) field comes out to play. Jay Dalgarno's Polo looks every bit as potent as our earlier conversation had suggested, the car kissing the kerb before bulleting down to Farm Curve at silly speed. Despite the hail and wind, a few of us brave it out to watch how the pony cars of the **Adams and Page Swinging Sixties** race cope with a very greasy Club. The answer is 'spectacularly', as all the V8 cars - the Mustang, Camaro, TVRs and Tigers - buck and wriggle as they struggle to introduce Detroit muscle to an English spring day. In contrast, and borrowing Mario Andretti's words after he first drove the Lotus 78, today every Lotus (Elan, Europa and Seven) looks as if it is 'painted to the road'. I then become fascinated by the cornering behaviour of the gold Sabre 6 of **Luke Wos**, whose nose remains firmly planted but whose rear seems over eager to roll, it looks like busy work down there. And was ever a car more misnamed than the Diva? This one is being driven by Messrs Aylett and Farrall and, far from being the attention seeking hussy its name might suggest, it is almost self-effacing in this company, a Sigrid to a Mustang's Britney. From this angle it's easy to pick out the really experienced drivers and Allen Tice, especially, is showing exactly how hard a car can be pushed as his red Marcos slides up towards Farm just about inch perfect every lap.



I catch a few minutes of qualifying for the **Advantage Motorsport Future Classics** race and, watching from Vale, I am again struck by the amazing diversity of what's on track. A few weeks ago I had nodded off during a processional Ginetta race at Oulton as every car looked and sounded identical, and I dare say the same might have been true of the drivers as well. But I realised just how much a contrast the CSCC offering is as I watched an MG Montego bracketed by the Martin Barrow Jaguar E-Type, a brace of 911s and Martyn Adams' very squirrely TR7 V8. And the distinctly styled Alfa 75 of Steve Jay and Richard Murtha is now doing a Strictly Come Dancing routine in the middle of what I call the chicane but which Silverstone sometimes still calls Abbey.



Qualifying ends and I just have to find the driver of the Montego, **Tony Walsh**. Not unusually for a CSCC guy, Tony is from East Anglia (Garvestone, Norfolk) and, like more than the odd racer here today, he is retired. But his retirement job is unique – ‘I have the pleasure of looking after guns on the Royal Estate, my job is valuing ballistics and some guns for an auc-

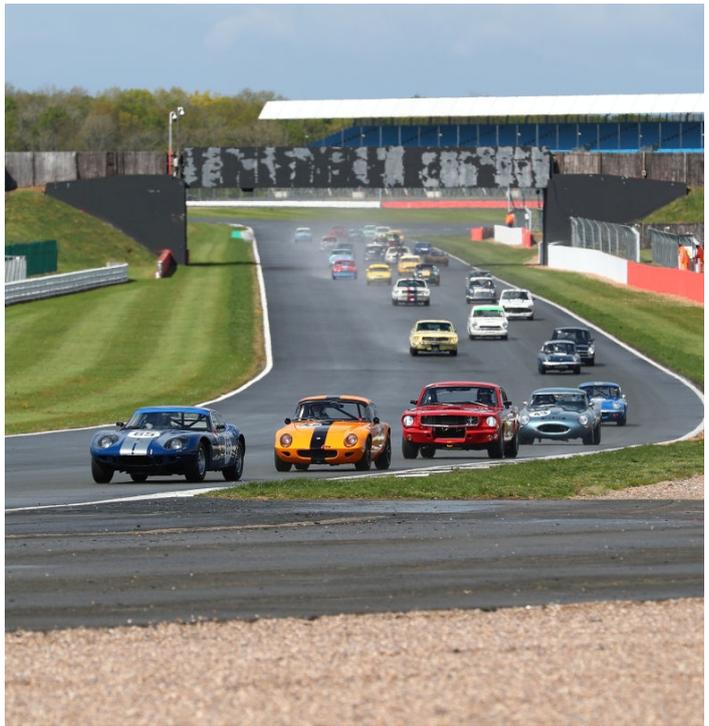
tion company at Sandringham. I’ve been out of racing for about five years; I was building my house so I sold my three racing cars, a 1959 Turner, a 1964 Anglia and a Series 2 Le Mans Alpine. I got less than a third of their value when I sold them ... I saw the Montego on eBay for £2,000 and it was apparently ready to race, but it was nowhere near ... the car had won the MG Open Championship in 2016, I’ve spent a year putting it right and this its first race with me. It’s a 1987 car with a 2 litre ‘O’ series engine, 115 bhp, it has adjustable shockers and it handles and stops really well, but it could do with a bit more go. People keep asking me ‘where’s the turbo?’ and it will have a turbo engine next year. The last time I raced here was 1968 so it’s a bit different.’ Tony is clearly no stranger to understatement, as this place has indeed changed a bit since then; they’ve even got roofs on the Gents’ now. Tony used to race his company Cortina back in the old days (‘I got the sack for that’) and now ‘nothing out here feels right or original at all, I recognise one grandstand and that’s it.’ Tony introduces me to his friend, Tom Pead, for whom he crews at various historic events, including Goodwood. Tom has seriously good taste as, not only does he race the orange BMW 1600Ti I had seen at the Members’ Meeting a few weeks ago, he also owns both Jim Clark’s and Denis Jenkinson’s Porsche 356s. Wow.

Saturday afternoon’s racing was enough to keep me from freezing up completely in the draughty Vale grandstand. Nicholas King’s Aston Martin DB4 may be worth more than my house (and probably next door too) but is being hustled along very impressively in the **Adams and Page Swinging Sixties** race. And the two very British fastbacks, the Lovetts’ Sunbeam Raper and Knapp’s Spitfire, may be at the blunt end of the pack, but look a treat as they circulate in formation – it feels like 1969 again. A great dice (to use the period term) is going on between the Smith MG A and its kid brother, the MG Midget of Ian Staines.



At 3-47 pm something unprecedented happened. Commentator extraordinaire Marcus Pye made a mistake, by confusing which race was about to start. But as some commentators struggle to know which day it is we'll let this go, ok? The race which was starting was actually the **Mintex Classic K** and what a great grid it was. I don't attend only CSCC events but what makes their races stand out from the others isn't just the packed grids but their diversity. Cortinas are super to watch but are by no means rare, and it is the opportunity to see such Sixties' survivors as TVR Grantura, Ginetta G12 and, of course, the petite Diva which so distinguishes a day like this. As does the victorious Powell Elan, and I wasn't at all surprised that TSL showed its best lap as being a second clear of everything else.

Saturday's last race was the **Advantage Motorsport Future Classics** and I must admit that it was hard to take one's eyes from the fast & furious Nissan Skyline GTR of Mark Chilton. As it sped down from Stowe, every gear change was punctuated by big yellow flames from beneath each door and, as it pitted, we were given a graphic reminder of how the pit lane speed limit doesn't apply until well after the Vale grandstand. This is not a slow car.



Sunday morning and even at 8am the fast & furious theme continues, as I am in a huge queue and surrounded by Japanese cars. I was thinking that the CSCC must have caught on with da kidz, big time, until I twigged that today was also Japfest on the National circuit. My car was made in Japan too, but I was clearly not bound for Japfest because I wasn't playing banging tunes at ear-splitting volume and my car doesn't sport ten inch wide wheels with comedic levels of negative camber.



Safely back in the CSCC paddock and there are so many cars and drivers here that I am, again, spoiled for choice but I opt to start with another Berkhamsted man, **Matt Holben**, who is racing his TVR Tuscan in the **RSV Graphics New Millennium** race. Before we talk about the



Tuscan, I find out about Matt's day job, and I can say now that every single person at Silverstone has seen his work. Because he is the guy who does computer graphic effects for movies - 'We do what's impossible and what you can't shoot for real in movies. We've got five Oscars for best visual effects. We've done loads of Bond movies, Mission Impossible, a lot of the Marvel films, Wonder Woman ...' Not for the first time, I am amazed at just whom I get to meet at CSCC meetings but, to avoid appearing star-

struck (as if) we talk about the car. It's a pukka Tuscan with the AJP V8, ex Ian Flux. To drive? 'In the wet it's not great, no traction control, no ABS, no nothing!' And CSCC? 'I love it - great mixture of cars, great turnout and really good people.'

Time to find a Sevenista, as the **Gold Arts Magnificent Sevens** form part of the bedrock of CSCC meetings. At Oulton Park, the next meeting, I want to talk to the driver of one of the big power Sevens (volunteers welcome) but today I am talking to **Gary Boon** who is driving a relatively sane Caterham Academy car. Gary is an insurance broker from Somerset and has been racing 'about five years; we started in track days, then did the MSV Trackday Trophy before racing with CSCC. This is a Sigma powered car and we've done a lot of work on the suspension, put a limited slip diff in it and this season and next we'll be working on the engine. It's about 160bhp- we were on the GP circuit on Thursday and we were doing about 116mph on



the straights but it comes into its own around corners.' Gary finds the series very competitive, even though 'we're the slowest car on track'. He likes the friendliness of the racing community in the series and appreciates how well CSCC runs operations, he is another fan.

**David Berman** is a chartered surveyor who has the tough gig of dividing his time between London and the South of France ('it's not as glamorous as it sounds'). This is David's second season on track and he is racing his Lotus Elise S1 in the **Cartek Motorsport Modern Classics** race. 'It's a fun car to drive, very forgiving, and it's a very nice series; the people are friendly and everyone has the same mentality.' The car is powered by a reasonably standard Rover K Series engine



(not the VVC I expected) which has 270 cams, throttle bodies and new ECU to produce about 140bhp. Like many cars here today, the Elise finds Silverstone's long straights a stretch - 'but it is what it is and it's great fun in the corners.' David has a Lotus/Caterham habit, also owning a Seven and an Exige. Racing is a fun hobby for David and he tells me how, in his younger days, he 'rowed competitively for ten years, did triathlon for ten or twelve years but you get to a stage in life where you can't keep your heartbeat at 180 bpm for two and a half hours'. David loves Spa and hates Lydden Hill - 'every time I go there's a disaster...'

I can't neglect the big cats racing in the **Toyo Tires/Watchdogapp.com Jaguar Saloon and GT Championship** but who said Jags are old men's cars? St Alban's driver Sam Clarke is only 26, and has been racing since 2012. 'In 2015 I won 8 out of 10 races and the overall championship in this exact car. We had some issues with brakes at Snett (*in April 2019 -jpa*) which we hope we've fixed but we came third in the first race and managed to win the second race in the wet.' The car is a six cylinder XJS - 'with about 360bhp and it's fully modified, bigger brakes, lighter, and it handles really well.' How things have changed; twenty years ago historic racing was the exclusive province of the older driver but Sam is one of many young drivers who relish the unique challenges of analogue cars from the last century. Sam has a dream day job - 'I'm an instructor and work here and at Palmersport, Bedford. I drive lots of different cars but none of them really handle like this - it's more modern supercars, Astons, Ferraris ...'. And I used to earn my living talking about tedious legal stuff in endless meetings ... Sam goes on to finish second in his race, a heartbeat behind Colin Philpott's XJS.





I reckon I could spend a week here, there are just so many cars and drivers but time is now ebbing away with just enough left to nab a final quartet of drivers. First off, here's Crowborough man **Tom Hutchins**. He works as an HGV mechanic and is driving one of the squadron of Honda Civic Type Rs in Class A of the **Co-ordSport Tin Tops** race. Tom's had the car since 2013, and he tells me it's an ex Britcar racer which has

done the Silverstone 24 Hours Race, 'It's quick, yes, but we do run out of grunt here. The car's best at Brands Hatch, it suits its power. I started in oval racing, two years ago I moved into the Fiesta championship, and this is my first CSCC season. It's good clean racing.'

Last, but absolutely not least, is the driver of one of the new courses on the CSCC tasting menu, the Mazda RX-8. The RX-8s are out in the **RSV Graphics New Millennium** race and this new for 2019 class sees a healthy entry of twelve Mazda's here. They are a great addition to the ranks of the rotary engine brigade, previously represented only by the very rapid RX-7 driven by Trevor and Alex Taylor in the **Future Classics** race. I have chosen well, as engineer **Jon Harber** is competing in his first RX-8 race today, after ten years of sprinting. The appeal of the RX-8 class? 'It was aimed at beginners on a tight budget. No, I'd never driven a rotary-engined car before I got this one but it's a lovely little car, it revs high and it handles brilliantly but I'm trying not to overcook it! Qualifying was all a blur – a Porsche, an M3 or the Corvette would shoot past me. But I managed to overtake one RX-8.'





**Nathalie McGloin** didn't have too far to come today, living in Silverstone itself, and she is campaigning her Porsche Cayman in the very popular **RSV Graphics New Millennium** race 'I just love Porsches, they've got a brilliant balance with the mid engine, they've got phenomenal grip, it's just a great little car. This is one of my favourite circuits, if not when there's fifty odd cars out ... Brands Indy is

one of my favourites, Donington too. I've just done a rally at Cadwell, and hated it as a track but it was fantastic on a rally.' We talk about women in motorsport and I ask if we are on track for full equality? 'Oh, I think so, we just need to encourage more women to get in at grass roots level and **Dare to be Different** is doing a great job and I think the **W Series** is great – Jamie Chadwick won yesterday. We just need more visibility and I think the change is coming ...'

'I'd rather fight a tiger' growled **David Methley** about his enormous Corvette C6 which, sadly, was unable to take the start of its race, having shed its bonnet (hood?) in qualifying and with a slightly lower than ideal oil pressure reading. But I look forward to seeing it burning bright in a future race. The Corvette previously raced in Norway, but like all 'ready to race' cars there is usually a period of putting right a few faults from previous ownership.



My job isn't to talk about the detail of the racing but suffice it to say that, in much better weather than Saturday's, the CSCC put on its usual variety show on Sunday. I chat to the parents of **RSV Graphics New Millennium** Cayman driver **Warren Allen**, and CSCC head office will be pleased to hear that the Allens loved the CSCC atmosphere especially, I suspect, when their boy moved briefly into the lead on lap 17.

The Jaguars all seemed to behave like Lotus Cortinas on steroids – sideways, flames, lock ups, tyre smoke, spins - you get the picture. **Magnificent Sevens?** Busy ... and cue howls from the crowd in the grandstand, most of whom seem to be related to the drivers. **Modern Classics?** Hands up those who thought Escort Cosworths like Charlie Jackson's were the rally cars which time forgot? This one finished third, behind the Marcussen M3 Evo



and the Williamson 911. But few cars looked more agile through the chicane than the very quick Saxo of Lewis Alexander-Williams, and that was a surprise, but exactly the sort of surprise I have come to expect at CSCC meetings. I catch the opening laps of **Tin Tops** and what can I say? Mayhem, with bunches of up to ten cars fighting over every inch of tarmac. Loved it.

My favourite sponsor of the weekend? That would have to be the Mi-Spy app - 'the affordable way to track your partner'. But I can save Joanne the money as, on the few occasions when I'm not fly fishing, I'm at a race circuit, hill climb or dragstrip 'somewhere in the Midlands.' Honest ...

I have rambled enough, but there was a hell of a lot to ramble about. Oulton Park next, and I look forward to talking to more of you then. I pick my victims at random, but volunteers are welcome and, if you have as interesting story to tell as the people I spoke to at Silverstone, do get in touch with me via the CSCC office.

John Aston  
CSCC Correspondent

