



# The Oulton Park Gazette

August 2025: Vol 1 Issue 5

Oulton Park



## BRMMMMMM!



9 pages of Gold Cup coverage!

**The Unbeatable  
Ali Bray**



**Buzz Lightyear's  
Peugeot**



**Finn Lesley interviewed - Broadbent's Book Corner**

# WELCOME

Well... What a Gold Cup that was!!!

Seeing Rob Hall power-sliding the BRM Mk1 through Old Hall and then hearing the V16 engine scream down The Avenue was one of the best moments in all the decades I have been attending Oulton Park.

Raymond Mays would have been proud of the 75th anniversary demonstration of his company's cars that Hall & Hall arranged.

While I was busy concentrating on the racing, I believe the ex-BRM drivers and team personnel were giving fascinating interviews on the infield.

The range of static displays seemed to be more diverse than ever. I can't wait for the 2026 Gold Cup.

On our front cover is Callum Grant who had the Gold Cup covered from all angles. He drove a Chevron B8 in the Guards Trophy which celebrated 60 years of the Bolton manufacturer, took part in the BRM demonstration and won 2 Formula Junior races. Most of that was accomplished in the space of 3 hours! Read all about his epic 180 minutes on page 21.

Elsewhere, Ali Bray tells us how to beat allcomers in Mazda MX5 racing having taken his 2025 win tally to 14 at Oulton Park and we have the inside story on "Buzz Lightyear's" mighty Peugeot 106. Plus, Dan Chilvers has interviewed rising Touring Car star, Finn Leslie.

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*Rob Hall's demonstration of the V16-engined BRM Mk1 will go down as an iconic moment in Oulton Park history*



## RACE REPORTS

# BARC TCR UK MEETING – 5<sup>th</sup> July

# AT THE DOUBLE



*Adam Shepherd took a double victory in the TCR UK Championship*

The BRSCC's meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> June ran on the Island July began with a BARC meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month on the Island layout of Oulton Park. TCR UK was the headline event with a support programme that featured a varied selection of road-based machinery.

The leader of the TCR UK Championship, Callum Newsham, was weighed down with the maximum possible success ballast (40kg) on his Hyundai i30 and with a handling imbalance also to contend with he only set the fifth fastest time in qualifying. Ahead of him on the timesheets were 4 Cupra Leons, the quickest of these was in the hands of Adam Shepherd who snatched pole from Sam Laidlaw by 0.06secs after switching to new tyres at the end of the session. Sam's Dad, Steve, would line up third fastest alongside Brad Hutchinson.

Shepherd fended off Sam Laidlaw at the first corner and went on to take a comfortable race 1 victory despite a hiatus when the Safety Car was deployed to enable Harry Bloor's Hyundai i30 to be recovered from the barriers at Knickerbrook. Behind them, there was drama when Steve Laidlaw stalled on the grid. This put Hutchinson into third while Newsham was hemmed in behind the stationary car which allowed Finn Lesley to get ahead of him but

Newsham grabbed fourth in the Hislops' braking area.

The Safety Car restart proved to be the downfall of Sam Laidlaw. Shepherd put his foot down early – exiting Druids – and left Laidlaw behind. The second placed driver then ran wide at Old Hall handing the position to Hutchinson before Newsham pushed Laidlaw down to fourth under braking for the Island Hairpin allowing the championship leader to take the final place on the podium. His team had improved the set-up of his car since qualifying.

Shepherd's fastest lap established a new TCR lap record.

The second thrash featured a partially reversed grid. Steve Laidlaw got an amazing start, leaping from fifth on the grid to reach Old Hall on the bumper of the leader, who was Rod McGovern in his Cupra Leon. At the end of the lap, Laidlaw dived down the inside of McGovern to move ahead at Lodge as Newsham executed the same manoeuvre on Finn Leslie's Hyundai i30 to annex third.

As the field plunged into Cascades on lap 2, Newsham was up to second with Leslie third as McGovern dropped away from the lead battle.

Having been disqualified for his part in an incident during the reverse-grid race at the previous meeting, Shepherd took a cautious approach to working his way through from tenth but, with Laidlaw taking defensive lines, he was able to close in on the front 3 as the laps unfolded. He appeared to have more traction exiting Lodge than anyone else and used this to quickly demote Leslie.

With 5 minutes remaining, Laidlaw – who appeared to have a lack of grip – ran wide exiting the first element of the Hislops complex. This put him on a trajectory that took him across the grass in the middle of the chicane, missing out the second part.

He rejoined the tarmac just in the lead but his slight lack of momentum allowed Shepherd to close right up to Newsham so that he was able to out-drag him coming out of Lodge and take second place.

After Shepherd saw notification of a 5 secs Track Limits penalty for Laidlaw, he just held position behind him not wanting the on-track leader to take defensive lines that would allow Newsham to close in on the pair of them.

So, Shepherd took his second win of the day from Newsham – cutting the latter's lead in the Championship to 6 points. Laidlaw's penalty dropped him to fourth behind Brad Hutchinson as a brake issue robbed Leslie of pace.



*The CNC Heads Championship featured another huge field*

Remarkably, the fastest 3 cars in qualifying for the CNC Heads Sports Saloon Car Championship failed to start the first race! Alek Modro's Westfield broke a driveshaft while the Locost of Ben Roberts punched a hole in its engine putting him out not just of this meeting but probably the season too. There was more misery for the Roberts family when Ben's brother, Chris, who had been third quickest withdrew his BMW M4 from both races due to a timing issue.

The opening encounter had a bit of a mix up when the field left the grid and no one was certain if it was a green flag lap or if the contest had got underway.

When the field rolled back on to the grid, everyone agreed that it had been a green flag lap and the race got underway properly. With the fastest trio of drivers now sidelined, Simon Allaway's Chevy-powered Lotus Esprit was promoted to pole position. He had struggled for grip in qualifying due to oil going down on to a damp track but, with the circuit now bone dry, he zoomed into the distance to take a comfortable win.

Antony Sullivan started from the outside of the front row in his Mini JCW but was immediately passed by a couple of Ginettas in the hands of Jamie Cryer (G20) and Ryan Nelson (G56 GTA). Then, approaching Hislops, a huge slide put Sullivan on the grass on the outside of the second element and dropped him well out of contention.

The Ginettas changed position on lap 3 when Nelson went round the outside of Cryer at Cascades but gaining on both of them was Ric Wood in his 700 bhp Nissan RB26 which had started from 28<sup>th</sup> on the grid after electrical problems in qualifying. With those sorted, he was making rapid progress and was into second with a little under 10 minutes remaining.

A friend of Modro's went to Crewe to collect a replacement driveshaft so that he could start the second encounter from pole with Sullivan, Cryer and Allaway.

Allaway got a fabulous start. He was in the lead well before the first corner was reached and was never headed. With Modro and Cryer following him home. Ric Wood was absent from this race.

At the start of the first Milltek Civic Cup contest, Liam McGill converted pole position into the race lead but ran wide at Cascades. This allowed Alistair Camp to draw alongside down the Lakeside Straight. McGill didn't see him coming and nearly pushed him on to the grass forcing Camp to lift. This was the closest McGill came to losing the win. The race was red flagged a few minutes earlier due to barrier damage on the exit of Druids.

The Top Ten were reversed on the grid when the field returned to the tarmac. This produced some great overtaking – it was non-stop action. Lewis Kent was third earlier in the day and came through to pass

long-time leader, Dan Petters, on the penultimate circuit.

Camp tried to take third by going round the outside of his teammate, Wes Swain, at Cascades on the last lap. Both were delayed handing the position to McGill.



Lewis Kent won the reverse grid Civic race

Josh Selvadorai took the chequered flag in both Junior Saloon Car Championship encounters but a 5 secs Track Limits penalty in the first dropped him to third behind Wilf Butler and Oliver Kerr. In race 2, Butler was once again the closest challenger to Selvadorai until lap 4 when he clipped the tyre-stack at the middle element of Hislops and the resulting broken suspension caused his retirement.

The Scottish MINI Cooper Cup made a guest appearance and Ross Wilkinson was literally in a class of his own as he was the only entrant in the Mini Cooper S category. His supercharged engine enabled him to twice disappear into the distance. His advantage was so great that he didn't care about the 10 second penalty for an out of position start to his first outing.

Behind things were far more competitive amongst the standard 'Coopers with the first 5 battling hard throughout their first race. Robbie Dalgleish came out on top 0.063 secs ahead of Chad Little.

The first 6 Coopers were reversed on the grid for their last contest of the day but, despite this, Dalgleish was ahead at the end of the opening lap with Little a couple of seconds further back. Initially, Stuart McPhaden was Dalgleish's only challenger but when the pair started dicing the rest of the pack reeled them in – towed along by Little. With 5 minutes remaining, Dalgleish ran wide at the hairpin and allowed Little to out-drag him over Hill Top. Once ahead, Little pulled out a few lengths to take the honours.

The Track Action Racing Club races are covered in a separate article which focuses on Will Di Claudio who showed impressive speed in his Peugeot 106 GTi.



Josh Selvadorai carried Lightning McQueen colours

# FLYING FINN

## Words by Dan Chilvers



*Finn Leslie steers his regular mount - a TCR Hyundai - into Druids*

Most 17-year-olds spend June revising for end of year exams, looking for a university place or working part time jobs. The petrolheads amongst them might even be learning to drive road cars, but not Finn Leslie. After a meteoric rise through karting into junior saloon car racing, he took to the Oulton Park Island circuit twice in 2 weeks in his usual domain of TCR and as a guest in the BTCC, we sat down with Finn to ask how he managed a top tier saloon racing drive for Speedworks Toyota at such a young age.

If you ask any driver how they got into racing 90% of all answers will begin with “my Mum/Dad liked it so I did as well” and Finn is no different. He remembers his Dad “always having a background in cars, not from racing but always being into cars” and then when he turned the TV on at aged 9, he saw a programme about Karting and was hooked, he researched his local team and went from there. At 15 he made the jump up into cars when he started racing in the fiercely competitive BRSCC Fiesta Junior Championship. This series is a one make championship of Mk7 Fiestas designed to give 14–17 year olds a start in car racing. He promptly won his first race at Silverstone and took the championship in 2024. For the 2025 season he

jumped up once again, this time into TCR with the Power Maxxed Racing team. Finn explained the “move to TCR seemed the right way for me with the goal always being BTCC and after being on the TCR support package the year before I already knew the level of competition in the series”. The Power Maxxed Racing team returned to the series while still running their veteran Astras in the BTCC, so Finn saw them as the perfect team for his career.

So off to TCR Finn went at just 17, he jumped into the Hyundai i30N TCR car and promptly scored a pair of 4<sup>th</sup> places and a podium in his first weekend at Donington Park. He has followed this with more points and a second podium at Croft. His Hyundai requires “a lot of preparing before a weekend” from simple things like “making sure all the bolts are tight to the high-level work... with things such as setup” especially for the cars at the sharp end of the grid.

Only a few days after his Croft 2<sup>nd</sup> place did he receive the opportunity of a lifetime, Finn “heard the unfortunate news about Ronan (Pearson – BTCC Driver for Speedworks Toyota) not being able to compete”. Finn realised this could be his “foot in the door” moment and contacted the Speedworks

team and Danny Buxton (Speedwork's Head of Motorsport) who helped Finn get the seat for the upcoming Oulton Park round with a few days to spare. Thankfully the learning curve proved to be very manageable as the TCR car was a perfect stepping stone, partially due to both cars being front wheel drive and having similar horsepower figures (around 300hp for TCR and 400hp for BTCC). The biggest new learning point for Finn was the new for 2025 TOCA Turbo Boost system implemented.

As the BTCC weekend began Finn immediately noticed the sheer number of fans there, he "was shocked at how many people wanted to speak to me or wanted a photo or an autograph which was much appreciated". The weekend also provided an insight into how many people there was involved in a BTCC team and are ready to help the drivers at "any given moment". After two practise sessions, Finn qualified in 21<sup>st</sup> above series veterans Dan Lloyd and Gordon Shedden. However mechanical failure struck the Toyota with a driveshaft failure on the formation lap putting Finn 2 laps down on debut and at the back for race 2. Following moves in the later half of race 2 he improved up to 17th but the illusive first points remained unclaimed. However, that would all change in race 3, great driving and race craft meant that in a wet safety car filled race Finn wrestled his Corolla up to P12 netting him 4 points.

Less than 14 days later Finn, now back in his i30N TCR was back at Oulton Park and noticed that "being at Oulton Park twice definitely did help me with the amount of laps I had done a few weeks before" and he was "right on it straight away" for round 12 & 13 of the TCR season. Qualifying mid pack in 6<sup>th</sup> and finishing 5<sup>th</sup> in race 1 bagged solid points before race 2 that afternoon where he repeated the same positions. Unfortunately, his championship rivals claimed more points knocking him down to 6<sup>th</sup> overall, a mere 5 points behind 5<sup>th</sup> place. Finn was very clear on his targets "my goals are very simple for the rest of the TCR season, go one step higher and win a race". But looking even further forward than that Finn commented that "I will be back in the BTCC soon, fingers crossed, with the guys and girls at Speedworks" as over the weekend they were planning not only race day but also the future. Finn feels BTCC is the right place for him "I've shown my capabilities in the championship already I feel like the time is right to try get a full campaign next season" and he is sure this will result in many seasons in Britain's top tier tin top race series.

TCR and Finn Leslie are out at Snetterton on the 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> September before the season finale on the 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> November at Brands Hatch Indy. Thank you to Finn Leslie for taking the time to speak to The Oulton Park Gazette.



*In June, Finn made his BTCC debut at the tender age of 17*

# TO DRUIDS AND BEYONNNNNNNNNND!



Sporting a colour scheme that is a tribute to Buzz Lightyear, Will Di Claudio pedalled his rocket-ship of a Peugeot 106GTi to a brace of dominant victories in the Track Action Racing Club contests on 5<sup>th</sup> July. He will be a driver unfamiliar to many Oulton Park spectators – his continental sounding name is due to his father being an Italian by birth.

His Peugeot showed a clean pair of heels to many seemingly more powerful and exotic cars.

It may have been his first visit to the Cheshire circuit but Di Claudio began competing at his local track of Castle Combe in 2001 when he was just 16. Back then his mount was a 1340cc Mini.

Will was well used to being behind the wheel of a Mini even at that tender age as he had been driving a 1-litre example around his father's dairy farm since he was 5 years old! He was soon dreaming of becoming a racing driver when a friend of the family competed in a Peugeot Mi406 in the Handy Gas Saloon Car Championship.

The majority of Di Claudio's racing career has been spent at Castle Combe, most recently in the circuit's Hot Hatch Championship.

He built the 106 from a bare shell at his W-A-S Racing garage back in 2015 so he knows it literally inside out! Will told *The Gazette* "There is nothing

really 'trick' about the car but I have fitted a 2-litre engine from a Peugeot Gti 180."

For 2024 there was a change to the regulations for the Castle Combe Racing Club's Hot Hatch Championship which made Di Claudio's Peugeot ineligible so he and his team at W-A-S Racing decided to enter the Track Action series. This is only the third time he has ventured away from the 'Combe's Hatchbacks having previously taken part in a few Time Attack events in 2018 and a couple of meetings with the Pro Alloys team in the Civic Cup.

At the start of this season, Will asked his 4 year old son what livery should be put on the Peugeot. His answer was "Buzz Lightyear". As there was already green on the car, he just had to add some purple and a few decals.

On 5<sup>th</sup> July, Di Claudio fulfilled a long-held ambition to compete at Oulton Park. He loved the track and laid on a superb demonstration of what his little French hatchback could do. Will says, "I'm very confident with my car and know its boundaries. I guess a high power to weight ratio and a half decent driver is a recipe for success."

For next year, Di Claudio would like to do something different but he is going to see what the rest of the season brings before sitting down with the rest of his team to come up with a plan.



# RACE REPORTS

## BRSCC – 12<sup>th</sup> July

# WHAT A SCORCHER!



*As temperature soared, Ali Bray extended his 2025 unbeaten record in Mazda MX-5*

The weather was well over 30 °C for the BRSCC's meeting on 12th July. This put a tremendous demand on engines and tyres... not to mention drivers and marshals in their overalls.

The day featured a dozen competitive sprint races of no more than 20 minutes and a display of Mazdas on the infield.

Ali Bray arrived in Cheshire having won 12 races out of 12 in this season's Kent Models Mazda MX-5 Championship and was leading the Autosport National Driver Rankings. He took this total to 14 by the end of the Oulton Park Double Header. This feat is all the more remarkable given that MX-5 racing is so competitive.

In the opening encounter, Steve Foden and Adam Sparrow both challenged Bray before they started battling with each other and allowed the series leader to pull away.

It was a similar story when the cars returned to the roasting tarmac later in the day but on this occasion, Sparrow retired with a mechanical failure close to the end.

Nigel Dolan ran fifth in the opening stages of the first Geoff Page Engineering Super Classic Formula Ford Championship race but he managed to take his Van Diemen RF90 to victory without passing another car!



*Nigel Dolan moved from fifth to first without making a pass*

Tom Hawkins was comfortably leading in his Swift SC95 but he pulled off in the escape road at Brittens when his driveshaft failed. This put the Van Diemen RF89 of Oliver Roberts ahead but on the very next lap he coasted to a halt in the Fosters loop with a blown engine.

Earlier, Andrew Schofield had spun his Reynard out of third place at Druids and Chris Jones (Van

Diemen RF80) did the same at Island Bend which meant Dolan steered his way through the carnage to take the spoils ahead of Schofield and Jones.

The driveshaft on Hawkin's Swift was repaired in time for the second contest and he came through from the back of the grid. Unfortunately, however, Roberts was unable to take part. Schofield took the lead at the start and came home in second while Matthew Chisholm appeared to have a great set-up for this encounter on his Van Diemen RF92 which he was racing for the first time in 10 years. Front brake failure caused Jones to retire.

There was a 4-way scrap at the front of the opening Clapham North Mazda MX5 SuperCup Championship encounter between Jack Harding, Aiden Hills, Will Blackwell-Chambers and Thomas Langford. They finished in that order after a fair amount of place-swapping and sideways moments.



Jack Harding won the first SuperCup contest

For race 2 there was more epic dicing with Oli Hall making it 5 for the lead. Hills came out on top from Harding, Langford, Hall and Blackwell-Chambers.

Jonathan Mee set a lap time almost 1 second faster than everyone else in qualifying for the Fix A Wheel Production Cup but when the red lights went out for their first race, Mee's Lotus Elise remained stationary on pole position. Fortunately, the rest of the field managed to avoid him.

Mee's luck improved further when Jas Sapra locked up in his BMW M3 and ended up beached in the gravel trap at Shell bringing out the red flags. The restart used the original grid with Mee back on pole. He got a better start at the second time of asking but was still beaten to the first corner by Tim Evans' Audi TT. This pair pulled away from Lewis Barker's Honda Civic.

Evans' car faded in the closing stages due to the weather causing high temperature in the engine's air intake. He came home second behind Mee while Barker also dropped down the order to finish sixth

handing the final place on the podium to Paul Hoggins (Audi TT).

When the varied selection of production racers returned to the track, Evans was again the early leader and thought he was going to take the spoils but this time the heat was so bad, it caused his car to grind to a halt with a few laps remaining. Therefore, Mee did the double but at least Evans had the consolation of the victor being a customer of his Garage 23 concern. Barker and Robert Buckland (Renault Clio) battled frantically on their way to finishing second and third.

In the Silverlake DS3 Cup class, Aaron Chalk was the first to see the chequered flag in both encounters but in race 1 he received a 10 second penalty for a false start which meant Theo Longman took the honours.

An incident at Shell meant the first Clapham North MOT Mazda MX5 Clubman Championship contest finished behind the Safety Car with Jordan Pimley ahead of Paul Simard and Jake Paice. It was an impressive result for Simard who was running in the Rookie Class.

Later in the afternoon, the Clubman runners weren't slowed by any Safety Car periods. The first 3 were the same as Pimley impressively cruised away to win by over 6 seconds. Paice ran second initially but was passed round the outside on the entrance to the Hislops chicane by Simard. There was then a 7 car battle for third in which Paice came out on top.

Ethan Rogers (pictured below) and George Foxlow were the fastest drivers in qualifying for the Vinyl Detail Fiesta ST150 Challenge. They finished in that order each time they came under Starter's Orders. With Rogers running as a guest entry, Foxlow took maximum points and so didn't try any hero moves to win either contest. The race 1 podium was completed by Michael Blackburn but later in the day he was running fourth behind Dillon Davis when he pulled onto the grass just after Hill Top.





*The lack of a roof was Jonathan Mee's secret to keeping cool in the Production Cup*



*Competitors in the Clapham North MOT Mazda MX5 Clubman Championship approach Brittens*

# BE PREPARED – TO WIN!

By Dan Chilvers



Once the helmet goes on and the lights go out, all thoughts of the world are cleared from a driver's mind. It sharpens to focus on nothing but going fast and winning the race. They dream of last lap passes for the lead, standing on the podium and taking the trophy home. The talented drivers who realise this dream never forget the feeling. The lucky few who get to repeat it are the truly fortunate among us but even in most drivers' wildest fantasies they wouldn't dream of winning every race in a season. Except Ali Bray doesn't need to dream, he has won all 14 races in the Kent Models Mazda MX-5 Championship this season. We caught up with Ali to ask about his winning streak and his perfect season.

Ali's journey began with his father, Neil Bray. Ali grew up watching Neil race all over the country in stock cars before he moved over into the Classic Touring Car Championship. Ali says "I always looked up to my Dad. He lost his arm racing in the 80s but he never let that hold him back, so a lot of my determination and dedication to motorsport comes from him." Nowadays Ali races in the Kent Models Mazda MX-5 Championship, a one make series for Mk1 MX-5s where slightly modified sports cars do battle at a range of tracks across the UK and so far Ali has been the class of the field. Winning every single race and collecting fastest laps along

the way puts him clear at the top the table ahead of Steve Foden and Neil Chisnall.

With streaks of dominance, it is natural to wonder does the pressure of the perfect streak affect the driver. Ali maintains that it has not impacted him at all saying "I am just so grateful to have the opportunity to race this year and (I am) enjoying the battles that I am having. I never take any win for granted because I know how competitive the series is and things can change any point." The competitiveness Ali mentions cannot be understated as most races feature multi car battles for the podium places with slipstream trains forming up and down the grid and honours being won by the smallest of margins. The toughest of his 14 victories this year came at Silverstone, the car was brand new for this year and was built with the aim of being "the best Mk1 MX-5" that had ever been built and the uncertainty around the car made the season opener difficult but the relief when the car delivered was immense. The work on the car focused on "the attention to detail and really going the extra mile to make it as pretty as possible, the shell was completely stripped and all (the) welding carried out. (It was) fully painted inside and out as well as underneath. We have comments and feedback saying it's better than a full restoration"

Fortunately for Ali he has complete trust in his no.76 Mazda as he runs the business that built the car! AB Motorsport specialises in MX-5s but also offers servicing for other vehicles with Ali giving “classic Fords, Funcup and custom builds” as just some examples. They are a “one stop shop and offer prep work, setup, fabrication, full engine building and driver coaching”. All this from a small family run business who always ensure a high quality of work and service on its builds. This attention to quality and detail is incredibly important when racing MX-5s. Their tiny 1.6 litre naturally aspirated I4 engines produce less than 150 hp and the cars run standard transmissions, brake discs and callipers so low rolling resistance and efficient aerodynamics are crucial. This means the “the time spent in the workshop prepping the car” is the key factor in preparing any Mazda for winning. Ali revealed that the workshop time is the most important factor in his success. He often says “If you fail to prepare you prepare to fail” so before any of his “cars hit the track we make sure that they have been meticulously prepared” and this highly effective work ethic means “When I am on track... I think my relaxed nature and mechanical understanding has helped to give me that edge on some of my competitors”.

Ali naturally won both races rather comfortably when he brought his car to Oulton Park for Mazda Raceday. After putting the car on pole, he proceeded to dominate race 1 with a fastest lap on route to a lead gap of 3.2 seconds when the chequered came out. This result was duplicated later in the day when Ali continued his streak with a 1.4 second gap back to Steve Foden who took second in both races. Ali was delighted with this

result as Oulton Park is his favourite track, and he walked away with a perfect points score to extend his championship lead. Ali said, “It always feels good to bring some more trophies home for the team and everyone that is supporting me this year”. With these wins Ali also keeps his table topping position in the Autosport National Driver Rankings where amateur national drivers are ranked based on their race wins over the season.



*The underside the MX5 demonstrates AB Motorsport's attention to detail*

*Photo: Ali Bray*



*The immaculate engine bay of Bray's Mazda. Photo: Ali Bray*

Ali's ambitions don't stop at crushing all Mazda's before him, he dreams of racing historics like his Dad particularly at Goodwood. However, this dream is very much controlled by budget going forward and he hopes his perfect season “will open some doors to different sponsorship opportunities”. But for now, Ali will be focusing on keeping his perfect streak alive as the Kent Models Mazda MX-5 Championship reconvenes for round 6 at Cadwell Park on the 9/10<sup>th</sup> August.

Thank You to Ali Bray and AB Motorsport for taking the time to speak with us. We wish him well for the rest of the season.

# SOLID GOLD!



Andrew Willis won the 2025 Gold Cup in his BRM P48-7

There was so much to take in across the infield and paddock at the Oulton Park Gold Cup, not to mention the mind-blowing BRM demonstration laps, it would have been easy to overlook the 20 excellent races for an eclectic mix of cars spanning many decades.

Sam Wilson (Lotus 20/22) made a slow start to Saturday's first leg of the Historic Grand Prix Cars Association Gold Cup but was soon in the lead and on his way to taking victory ahead of Rudi Friedrichs in the Cooper T53 which took Jack Brabham to the World Championship in 1960. Tom Waterfield had qualified his Cooper T53 on pole and was in the thick of the lead battle despite his engine being down on power. When he began to smell oil, he pulled into the pits. This was a very wise decision as one of his big end bearings was about to fail.

In Sunday's contest, Wilson was running in second place to Friedrichs until his engine went up in smoke at Island Bend. Friedrichs appeared to be on his way to a victory that would mean he retained the Gold Cup that he won last year but, just 1 lap later, it sounded like his engine had lost one of its cylinders. Rather than continue and risk a major mechanical failure that would drop fluids and

create a hazard, he coasted to a halt on the Fosters loop. Rudi later discovered that the issue was very simple to fix. He told *The Gazette*, "The linkage on the first carburettor had become loose so it wasn't supplying fuel to the cylinder on acceleration. What a pity!"

Therefore, the spoils went to the BRM P48-7 of Andy Willis who had been a distant third on Saturday after a spin. The result meant, appropriately, Willis' BRM won the Oulton Park Gold Cup on aggregate – the headline award at an event celebrating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the company.

The Guards Trophy had a single 50 minute enduro on Saturday. It celebrated the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Chevron marque which had plenty of representation on the grid but, unlike in the Gold Cup, the cars in the spotlight just missed out on taking the honours.

Steve Nuttall was the early leader in his Chevron B8 and had built up a lead of 4-and-a-half seconds after 7 laps when an electrical connector failed. It stopped his engine. He sadly coasted down the Lakeside Straight and into retirement. This put another B8 out in front which was started by Sam

Mitchell before being handed over to his father, Westie. The oil pipe which failed during qualifying and led to Sam having an impromptu interview with *The Gazette*'s Dan Chivers (see page 22) had been repaired.



*The Guards Trophy featured a field of magnificent sportscars*

The Mitchells seemed to have timed their mandatory pit stop to perfection, just as the Safety Car was scrambled, and they rejoined still ahead. But when racing resumed Westie didn't have the pace of his son as he hadn't driven the car since last season. A slow exit from Cascades allowed another dad and offspring team – Robert and Ben Tusting in their Lenham P69 Spider – to pass at Island Bend.

Dan Balfour (Chevron B8) followed the Tusting car through but made contact with Westie Mitchell's door which sent the latter on to the grass. Fortunately, he managed to get back on to the tarmac although he was now down in fourth.

The man who dominated the Formula Junior races elsewhere on the programme, Callum Grant, was now in third in another Chevron B8 that had been started by Ted Pearson. This was the fastest car in the closing stages and Grant passed Balfour for second but the race ended before he could catch the Tusting Lenham.

There was a dramatic start to the first Derek Bell Trophy encounter when Neil Glover got on the grass approaching Old Hall. Somehow, he managed to keep his massive F5000 Chevron B37 under control and ran fourth until a misfire developed and he finished sixth.

Up ahead, Graham Ridgway took the spoils in a March 742. He had the March 78B of Marc Mercer in hot pursuit throughout. Ridgway retired in the pits with a misfire on Sunday handing victory to Mercer. With Ridgway out, Paul Campfield moved up to the

runner-up position but his Chevron B24 went straight on at Druids.

After a hiatus for a Safety Car intervention during their first race on Saturday, the Road Sports field was unleashed with 11 minutes on the clock and Elliot Paterson blasted away in his Morgan Plus 8 to take the overall and 70's class victories. Jonathan Rose (Lotus Elan) and Mark Godfrey (Lotus 7) battled it out behind Paterson for honours in the Historic category. Rose got the verdict after a pass under braking for Hislops with a few laps remaining.

For Sunday's race, Paterson handed his car over to his father, Russell, who finished fourth on the road but accrued 15 seconds worth of Track Limit penalties which dropped him down to eighth. Rose won from Godfrey with John Williams third in his Porsche 911SC.

At the start of lap 2 of the first Superformance Ferrari Club Classic Series encounter, Gary Culver (Ferrari 328 GTB) got a run on Tristan Simpson in his Ferrari F355 Challenge coming out of Old Hall. This enabled him to take the lead around the outside at Cascades. Culver then fended off Simpson and Tim Mogridge in another F355 Challenge until the red flags came out due to a car crashing on the Lakeside Straight.

Culver broke away to take a comfortable win in race 2. Once he had battled through into second, Wayne Marrs (F355 Challenge), was the fastest driver on track but he was too far back to catch Culver.



*Gary Culver beat a fleet of F355 Challenge cars in his 328 GTB*

Callum Grant (Merlyn Mk5/7) took Saturday's FJHRA Silverline Formula Junior Championship thrash by almost 12 secs. His advantage could have been greater had the contest not been stopped early as a couple of competitors had gone into the gravel at Druids.

**Continued on page 18**



*David Mercer was a winner in the Derek Bell Trophy*



*Mk1 Cortinas took on the Minis in the Jack Sears Trophy*

Sunday's race ran the scheduled distance and, this time, Grant won by 17 seconds. Mention must be made of Stuart Roach who came through from 28<sup>th</sup> on the grid to finish sixth in his Alexis Mk4 having qualified in a different car.

There was a single 45 minute race for the HRDC Jack Sears Trophy contenders and this took place on the Saturday. It was superb entertainment especially in the early stages when there was a 5 way dice for the lead featuring a trio of Lotus Cortinas in the hands of Michael Cullen, Justin Law and Ray Alderslade pursued by a couple of Mini Cooper S's pedalled by Ben Colburn and Adam Morgan. The latter had "air-conditioning" fitted to his Mini – he had his windscreen and rear window removed.

Alderslade coasted to a halt on the Pits Straight having lost all drive and then a long compulsory pit stop for Morgan put him well out of contention. When all the stops had been completed, Cullen had a healthy advantage over Colburn but it was Oliver Law in third who was the fastest. He was very spectacular as he drifted the Cortina he had taken over from his father, Justin, around Cascades. He passed Colburn for the runner-up position and finished 2.7 secs behind Cullen. Had the race been a couple of laps longer, he would have won.

The HRDC Dunlop Allstars just had a single 30 minute outing which was dominated by a brace of Lotus Cortinas that had run in the Jack Sears Trophy encounter earlier in the day. Michael Cullen handed his car over to his son, Victor, who won on the road but dropped to second behind Roy Alderslade after the stewards applied a 10 second penalty for a jumped start. John Tordoff recovered from an early spin in his Lotus Elan to finish a distant third.

In Historic Formula 3, Peter De La Roche clinched the championship in a Alexis Mk17 by finishing second in race 1 however that was the last thing on his mind as he spent the whole time trying to pass the leader Enrico Spaggiari who didn't have the power in the engine of his Lotus 41X to pull away. It was a thrilling battle.

The grid for their second encounter on Sunday was determined by the fastest laps in Saturday's race. This mixed things up a little with Ross Drybrough (Merlyn Mk14A) starting on the outside of the front row alongside De La Roche. Drybrough took the lead but soon De La Roche was ahead and pulling away. Drybrough was demoted to third by Jason

Timms while Spaggiari came home fourth. The red flags came out with 7 minutes to go as a car was beached on a kerb.

In the first outing for the VSCC Egerton Cup runners Christoper Mann got the best start in his beautiful Alfa Romeo 8C Monza but at the end of the opening lap Robert Beebee powered past in his Frazer Nash TT Replica. Mann dropped back into the clutches of Rufus Flann (Frazer Super Sport) and was only half a second ahead when the chequered flag appeared.

For race 2, the Robert Beebee car was in the hands of Josh Beebee while Archie Waterfield took over the Frazer Nash Super Sport that his mother, Jo Blakeney-Edwards, had taken to fourth earlier in the meeting. These pair had a superb battle for top honours until Waterfield retired with clutch failure. The contest was halted with a lap remaining due to an incident on the exit of Shell.

Two of the leading lights in contemporary Sports/Saloon racing lined up on the front row for the first JMC Racing Special Saloons & Modsports thrash with Andrew Southcott's MG on pole alongside the Lotus Esprit of Simon Allaway. The Lotus made the best start but the MG swept around its outside at Cascades. When the field reappeared over Hill Top, Southcott pulled off on to the grass. This happened just as the red flags were coming out because there was a car in the gravel at Old Hall. Allaway comfortably won the restart.

A 10 place grid success penalty didn't stop Allaway from doing the double although early leader, Tom Carey, defended valiantly for a couple of laps in his Honda CRX when Allaway caught up with him.

The 45 minute HRDC Gerry Marshall Trophy provided a thrilling fight between the nimble Mazda RX7 of Alex Taylor and the mighty Rover SD1 in the hands of Adam Brindle. The leader was Taylor until the pit stops which saw Brindle briefly move ahead. Soon Taylor made a successful pass into Old Hall. It looked like he was going to take the win but he retired in the pits with a bonnet that was flapping – the nuts on the securing pins had worked loose. This meant Brindle took the laurels.

When the sun set on this epic weekend, everyone agreed that it had been one of the best Gold Cup meetings for many years!



*Robert Beebee presses on in his Frazer Nash TT Replica*



*Enrico Sipaggiari had a fabulous duel with Peter De La Roche in the 1-litre F3 category*



*The Gerry Marshal Trophy went to Adam Brindle*



*Simon Allaway leads Tom Carey*

# 3 GOLDEN HOURS!



*Callum Grant at the wheel of the BRM P201*

The Oulton Park Gol How much fun can you pack into 3 hours? Well Callum Grant should know the answer as on the Saturday of the Gold Cup meeting he had the most amazing 180 minutes imaginable. All of it while being at the heart of the anniversary celebrations for the two marques that were central to the weekend – 60 years of Chevron and 75 years of BRM.

Callum has become one of the leading drivers of classic machinery – probably all of which were built before he was born! He has won numerous events in a wide variety of cars and is a triple Historic Formula Ford champion.

He started off racing bikes when he was just 6 before switching to karts when he was twice that age. In 2012 he took part for the first time in the Walter Hayes Trophy – naturally he was driving a Merlyn Mk20A from the early 1970s!

On the Saturday of the Gold Cup, behind the wheel of a Merlyn Mk5/7, he won the weekend's first Formula Junior encounter at 11:35 then at 5-to-2 he was a few seconds away from taking another victory at the end of the Guards Trophy in a Chevron B8 that had been started by Ted Pearson. This event celebrated the 60th anniversary of Derek Bennett setting up the Bolton manufacturer.

In the midst of driving all these wonderful cars, Grant got on a bicycle!

The 'bike had been loan to him by Historic F3 competitor, Ross Drybrough, to enable him to quickly get over from parc ferme to the 1975 V12-

engined BRM P201/05 Formula 1 car which had been readied for him to drive in the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary demonstration of the company founded by Raymond Mays. Callum swapped helmets and lowered himself into the cockpit.

Grant says, "Jumping between the three cars was quite difficult. The Merlyn is agile and you steer it on the power. The Chevron has more grip and is quite heavy. It requires a very smooth driving style. The BRM is different again, not least because the gearbox works the opposite way round to the other two! It's also got a lot of torque so a smooth feed in with the power is required to stop it spinning the wheels."

Driving the magnificent Mike Pilbeam-designed F1 car around Oulton Park was very special for Callum. He must have been in dreamland to be part of such a fabulous cavalcade of BRMs at his home track where his grandfather, Robert Grant, had a significant involvement with the circuit in the early years through his involvement with the Lancashire & Cheshire Car Club working alongside Tom Dooley and Tommy Rowe.

It was a rare outing for the P201 as it is usually stored at its owner's workshop and is only brought out for demonstration runs. It would have been easy to be scared of damaging such a piece of history but Callum with driving well within his limits.

To cap the weekend off nicely, on Sunday, Grant won the second Formula Junior race!

# ORANGE & GOLD

## Marshalling at the Gold Cup with Dan Chilvers

The expectations for the Gold Cup weekend were set very early this year. As I pulled into Oulton Park's main gate on the Thursday evening, I found myself sandwiched between a Lotus Elan and an AC Cobra with both on trailers. These two classic race cars peeled off towards the paddock as I turned into the serene corner of track between Warwick Bridge and Lodge designated for marshals camping. Rows of campervans and tents stood peacefully with flags flying (including a mechanical "meatball" flag) as friends reunited. The sun set on the track as both cars and people get under covers ready for action in the morning.

Unlike nearly all other race weekends, the Friday is regular marshalling day with a mix of practice and qualifying. Sign on is a friendly affair, a sea of orange mingling, handshaking and greeting before dispersing to posts for the day. I discover that, due to it being a weekday, there is a slight reduction in marshals as I venture down to my post at Island/Brittens to find I am joined by one other incident marshal. With Duncan Fitz Gibbons and Ray Summers taking command as post chiefs, the mixed practise begin. These sessions are a teaser for the racing ahead as we see a wide mix of all shapes and sizes taking to the track at once. The



single seaters are separate from the "tin tops" but this doesn't stop the large speed difference from showing itself almost immediately. The fastest open wheeled cars are easy to identify based on a simple calculation of more wings + wider tyres + louder noise = faster. The tin tops are harder to split yet provide quite the sight as we see a Studebaker Lark, Ferrari F355 Challenge and a prewar sports car go line astern into Shell corner.

It became very apparent that the drivers do not take it easy in practise, and everyone was pushing hard all morning long. This however did mean we had a few visitors to the post box. Two Lotus (an Elan and an Eclat) pulled off in very quick succession. The Elan had snapped its front left suspension while the Eclat had overheated which meant a divide and conquer approach had to be used between me and my incident partner Andy. The Eclat (which had come all the way from Italy) was strapped to the back of a tow truck so it could be expertly whisked off by the recovery team. In the formula sessions, two Chevrons (a B40 and B7) also broke down with one dropping oil all the way from Cascades to Brittens, which required a monumental team effort to clean up.

After the BRM 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary parade at Lunchtime (more on that later) the qualifying sessions could begin which was the first time we saw complete, single series grids push to set the fastest lap as the sun appeared from behind the clouds. During qualifying for the Guards Trophy, the #95 Chevron B8 pulled off with a busted oil pipe that squirted oil all over the interior of the car. Although any pull off/crash is unfortunate they can provide a good chance to chat with the driver. I got to speaking with Sam Mitchell about his Dad's Chevron and discovered it had been ordered by the head of BMW Motorsport in 1968 as the only left-hand drive B8 and it then competed at the Targa Floria, Nürburgring and World Sportscar Championship events in the late 60s. Definitely, the most prestigious car I've ever helped recover! The days action was concluded with a Ferrari F355 Challenge with a seized (and smoking) front left brake.

On the way back to my tent I spotted a crowd of people and British Racing Green on the start line, so I naturally went to investigate. I stumbled upon the BRM 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary display group photo and watched the organised chaos as the cars were wheeled into position. Once the photos had been taken the cars were being pushed back to their tent in the paddock when the organiser spotted the orange of my overalls and asked if I could lend a hand. I dutifully obliged and got to pushing the 1967 BRM P126 #1 with the crew from Hall & Hall across the paddock. A perk of the job indeed!

A personal favourite activity of mine (and many others) is to have a wander around the infield for the Gold Cup. The Hampson's auction featured its usual range of classics for sale from showroom ready to "in need of some love and care". The paddock carries its familiar smell of fuel, tyres and BBQ as the teams enjoy an evening together. All thoughts of competition and "us and them" is gone as people mingle from all walks of life over a drink and burger in the open air of the Cheshire Countryside.

Day 2 started really rather early (7:00am for sign on!) but this did not deter the 100+ marshals spread over the 4.3km track while I found myself at Clay Hill. The change from day 1 was a new scheme to provide more variation than other multiple day meets and was very well received. Although for marshalling action the day proved to be very quiet, nothing else was! The marshal point is right under the bridge which meant all the cars coming past are

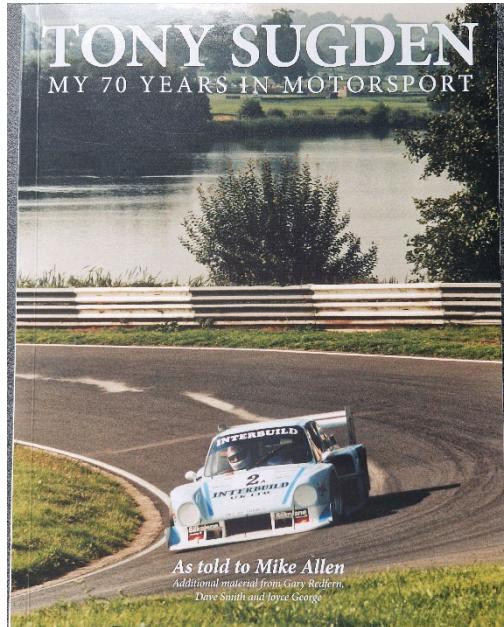
full throttle and less than 2 meters away from the Armco. The metal bridge overhead only adds to the noise as the loud thundering engines of the Formula 5000 cars and larger touring cars reverberate off it. The stop start day (due to incidents elsewhere) meant lots of time to admire the view provided by my elevated position. The BRM display was naturally the day's highlight despite all the racing. The drivers were not taking a careful drive around the countryside up the hill with the roar of the V8s, the whine of the Gas Turbine (to which my post mate remarked "sounds like an early attempt at an electric race car!") and the scream of the V12s and V16 being almost ear splittingly loud. It was a privilege to be so close to such iconic pieces of history going around the track. I spent my final evening at the circuit doing something a little different as I completed my own 1 man, 2 lap race posting a 19:50 lap time (only 18:13 off the fastest lap of the weekend...)

The final day rolled around with its usual late start allowing for some time to absorb the now bustling infield. I could hardly take 3 steps without nearly bumping into another gorgeous classic, trade stall or race car. Now posted at Lakeside, I joined a friendly, joke filled team as we settled in to watch the final races. Witnessing the BRM P48 of Andy Willis win the Gold Cup on BRM's anniversary weekend and the Silhouette Lotus Espirit of Simon Allaway pull away to two race wins was very special. All this while surrounded by the tire marks of mistakes from the past few days to remind us how on the limit all the drivers are. As if to say goodbye in the most fitting way, the weekend threw one more incident at me as the VSCC race leading Frazer Nash pulled over with a broken clutch on the penultimate lap of the final race. It was recovered almost immediately due to a red flag ending the weekend one lap early but certainly did not down my mood as I walked up through the now empty infield to my car.

The Gold Cup is truly the jewel in Oulton Park's crown, the eclectic mix of vintage, classic and retro cars both on track and infield is like a window back to the past of this wonderful sport. Whether you are a marshal, driver, photographer, fan or even just vaguely interested in cars I cannot recommend visiting for the Gold Cup enough. Thank you to the HSCC for putting the event on and Margaret Simpson, Duncan Fitz Gibbons and all the people who make this event possible.

# BBC – Broadbent's Book Corner

Michael Broadbent review his favourite books



## Tony Sugden – My 70 years in Motorsport

by Mike Allen

Self-Published Here

This Tony Sugden to many was the man to beat at Oulton Park for many years in the various iterations of the NW Saloon and GT championship. However, he made his Oulton Park debut in August 1956 riding a BSA Gold Star.

He made his four-wheel debut in 1965 driving a Mk1 Cortina GT at Harewood – well he was a Yorkshireman after all. He eventually gave up racing at the end of 2003. However, he continued to keep his hand in by driving the safety car at Oulton Park as well as Cadwell Park for many years.

For those of you who remember Tony, he was a familiar face racing his Skoda 130RS from 1979. The car was a purpose built monocoque with F1 suspension. Built by a farmer called John Leek, it had many rebuilds, improvements and engines including a Ford RS 500 turbo, BDA and a V6. He also raced a Lotus Esprit and the famous DAF 55 with a Ford engine, bought from Alan Minshaw (Now owned by the Minshaw family again).

Mike Allen (Whatever Happened to the Gold Cup) takes you on a journey of Tony's career, first racing motorcycles all over the UK, including the Manx GP. His success rate was amazing as the cars he raced were constantly being improved and developed. He even raced in Thundersports in a Chevron B23 as well as a prototype called an LSD4 (no naughtiness here!!)

My first memory of Tony was him racing the Brookhire Liverpool Escort TC in the early 70s and then having epic battles with the likes of Chris Meek, Gerry Marshall, Alec Poole and Nick Whiting in the regional and national special saloon championships. He remained friends with Alan Minshaw as well, hence the continuation of Demon Tweaks sponsorship.

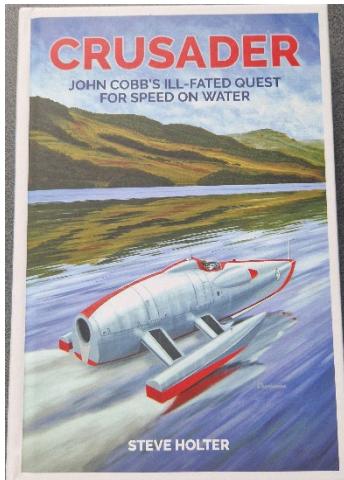
Mike was able to interview Tony on many occasions, and the book is a skilful blend of anecdotes, memories and factual information about Tony's career and the various championships he raced in.

The book is well illustrated and will evoke memories of racing at many UK circuits as well as some long-forgotten bike tracks. The Sugden family was able to provide a lot of information as well as statistics on Tony's career and these are listed at the end of the book along with more photographs.

Overall, it is a well put together book and as usual, Mike has done an excellent job of putting it all together as a memory to one of Oulton Park's finest.



Tony Sugden exits Lodge at the wheel of a Skoda. Photo: Alan Cox



## Crusader: John Cobb's ill-fated Quest for Speed on Water

By Steve Holter

Available Here

I wonder how many of you lie awake at night thinking how did motor racing circuits get their names for corners. Of course, we all know the story behind Knicker Brook! However, at Thruxton, there is a sequence of corners called Campbell, Cobb & Segrave. These corners were named after British Land Speed record holders, and more recently, an unnamed section at the circuit was called Noble.

Segrave and Campbell were the first drivers to exceed 200 mph and 300 mph on land in purpose-built cars in the 20s and 30s. Cobb? Well, he came close with 394mph in 1947, driving a Railton Special with two Napier Lion aero engines. (Remember Chris Williams and his red Napier Bentley? Same engine!) The car looked more like a flying saucer and nothing like it had been seen before for speed record breaking.

Anyhow, back to the book. As the title suggests, John Cobb, a wealthy businessman had an itch for speed. Not satisfied with being a land speed record holder, like Segrave and Campbell, he turned to water to try & break the water speed record. Together with Reid Railton - who was very much like Adrian Newey of the time they conceived and built Crusader, a jet powered boat – well more like rocket ship to do one thing, go faster than any other boat or watercraft.

The story of Reid Railton is well documented in a two-volume book by Karl Ludvigsen and catalogues all the designs he conceived and built, the successes of speed records and other projects.

Sorry, digressed again!

The book is well researched, illustrated and covers in detail the concept of building fast watercraft where the dynamics are very different to road or land-based craft. Bearing in mind there was no access to computers pre and post war, the complexity of the design and engineering was based on slide rules (ask your parents) and wind tunnels built to test jet powered aircraft. The picture on page 192 shows the cockpit and its basic instrumentation – think 1950's Morris Minor 1000, along with a huge steering wheel. The book is a collection of memoirs, diaries, letters, drawings, photographs and graphs all centred on the two main characters, Cobb and Railton.

The story then takes you to Scotland and to Loch Ness where Cobb did all the testing and record attempts. Why Loch Ness? Well, it was deemed long enough and straight to allow the craft to reach its terminal velocity in safety. They had looked at other locations including Windermere and Coniston, but Loch Ness won out.

Tragically, Crusader took a nosedive on 29th September 1952 during a record attempt. The boat broke up and Cobb was killed instantly. That was the end of the Cobb era. There is a memorial to John Cobb on the A82 to the west of Loch Ness. Unlike Donald Campbell and Bluebird, any remaining debris on the loch surface was collected and burned in accordance with the wishes of Cobb's widow. His remains were buried at Christ Church in Esher, Surrey. The remains of Crusader are where they belong, at the bottom of Loch Ness, deep enough to keep trophy hunters away and act as a watery reminder that all forms of sport come with its own levels of danger.

John Cobb was a modest and humble man; his actions spoke greater than his words and his legacy in the speed record world should never be overlooked or forgotten.

The book is still available from the publishers and is well worth the £30 cost (*it is currently available for £22.71 on Amazon – editor*). The Reid Railton book is also available; however, some may gulp at the £150 cost!!