

CLASSIC DRIVER

It's Goodwood Revival Time Again



Charis Whitcombe takes a sneak preview... ...and cadges a ride with Derek Bell

Like birthdays, the Goodwood Revival seems to come round far more frequently than once a year. The big difference, of course, is that we're delighted to see the Revival pop up in our diaries – this year from September 1st to 3rd. For these three magical days, the historic race circuit will once again resemble a gigantic film set where every visitor who takes the trouble to dress to a 1950s theme (and the majority do) is playing a part in the drama.

New for 2006 is a race for small-capacity sports-racing cars of the 1960s, with up-to-3000cc engines: think **Lotus 19** and **23**; **Elva Mk7** and **Mk8**; **Ferrari 206 Dino** and **Maserati Birdcage**. The **Madgwick Cup** will see a full grid of these baby sports cars, tiny but remarkably rapid, swarming round the Sussex circuit. Meanwhile, for the first time since 2003, the **Fordwater Trophy** will bring together some little-seen endurance specials – standard, small-capacity production sports cars with wind-cheating bodywork. **MGs** and **Austin-Healey Sprites** with Le Mans or 'Sebring' bodies will join slippery-shaped models from **Morgan** and **Triumph**; even **Jaguar**.

Among the grids of sports cars, single-seaters and motorcycles, the two races which stand out are the two-driver 'celebrity' events. The **St Mary's Trophy**, a two-part saloon car race staged on both Saturday and Sunday, is this year for 1950s cars; hence the huge **Jaguar MkVII** will do battle with peanut-small **Austin A40**, dicing luridly with **Ford Zephyr**, **MG Magnette** and **Morris Minor** in a grid thrillingly (and bizarrely) driven by such stars as **Sir Stirling Moss**, **Bobby Rahal** and usually the odd modern F1 pilot.





Meanwhile, Sunday's **Royal Automobile Club TT Celebration** race is altogether more serious – though no less thrilling. Expect to see **Lightweight Jaguar E-type; Ferrari 250 GT SWB, GTO and 330 LMB; AC Cobras** and **Aston Martin Project cars**. Some £30m-worth of cars, in other words, driven in anger by heroes of the calibre of **Derek Bell, Jochen Mass, Richard Attwood, Jackie Oliver, Henri Pescarolo, Patrick Tambay, Rene Arnoux...** and more.

Which brings me to the Editor's daunting brief. "Pop down to the press preview day at Goodwood and get a ride round the circuit with a **Big Name. Derek Bell** would be good." Yeah, right. Only somehow – at Goodwood – the miraculous happens. The utterly charming Mr Bell said he'd be delighted. "A few laps in a Jaguar – is that okay?" he asked. (The famous **CUT 7 E-type Lightweight**, as it happens.) Yes, Derek. That would be... okay.





"I've only driven this car for 50 seconds," says Derek as we wait for the pit-lane light to go green. Those 50 seconds, I discover, comprised two sprints up the hill at the Festival of Speed – both of them winning times. "And they've resurfaced the circuit since I was last here, so I won't push too hard..." he adds as we accelerate raspily onto the pit-straight in the noise and heat of a race-car cockpit on the hottest July day ever recorded. Pushing hard or not, he was right on it from the very first corner – Madgwick. We drift with elegant precision, Derek moving the steering wheel by only small amounts to control the slide, a testament not only to his skill but to the beautiful balance of the car. On through Fordwater (less a corner than a kink) and then to the trickiest part of the circuit and a superb place to spectate – St Mary's, infamous for Stirling Moss's career-scuppering accident all those years ago.



Down the Lavant Straight – "the E-type I'll be driving at the Revival is rather quicker than this one", shouts Derek – and then hard (very hard) braking for the tight right of Woodcote. On every lap, the digital speedo in front of me registers exactly 174km/h at Derek's braking point for Woodcote: such impressive precision.

Right-left through the chicane, a mere paper-thin sliver of air separating the silver flanks from the red-and-white curve of the chicane walls, sliding out to brush over the rumble-strips, and then more raspy acceleration past the pit wall and the reflective sparkle of photographers' lenses.



Thank you Derek. Buoyed up by the adrenalin thrill of the ride, I cadge 'lifts' in two other cars. First, an **MG Midget** piloted by Bruce Chapman, grandson of Nancy Mitchell, the famous lady rally driver (in a Midget) of the 1950s. This year's St Mary's Trophy will be Bruce's Goodwood debut. And finally a few laps with Tony Dron in a glorious **Aston Martin DB3S** – eyes streaming in the full-on airstream of this open-top icon, when the lack of a harness (or even a seatbelt) has me clinging on over the bumps.



Roll on September. Remember, tickets are by advance booking only: tel +44 (0)1243 755055 or see www.goodwood.co.uk.

The [website](#) also has the latest news, press releases and a timetable of events. It's updated over the whole event, in real time, so if you can't make the whole weekend, every day's action is recorded for you.

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