

CLASSIC DRIVER

Classic Driver Dealer: Stratton Motor Company



The cornerstone of the Stratton Motor Company is its three franchises - **Aston Martin, Morgan and Lotus** - along with its specialist used cars: **Porsches, Ferraris, Bentleys** and other top-end marques. But that's just the tip of the iceberg. Roger Bennington, who founded the company in Long Stratton, Norfolk, in 1972, has seen Stratton grow from a village filling station to a multi-franchise dealership with a separate and substantial racing support business. Not to mention the company's four charter helicopters.

But the links with **Aston Martin** remain at its heart. Appointed as an Aston Martin service dealer back in 1976, Stratton is now one of the oldest and most experienced Aston dealers in the world, and things on this front are going very well indeed - as Joint Managing Director **Tim Reed** explains:

"The marketplace for both new and used Astons is very strong, with an exciting model line-up and the new **DBS** due at the end of the year. We have customers who've had seven or eight Porsches on the trot, and now they're buying an Aston. The recent sale of Aston Martin to **David Richards** and his consortium is also extremely positive, since the extra autonomy will bring even more specialist engineering know-how to the marque.

"Meanwhile, the **Lotus** and **Morgan** brands are far more idiosyncratic: the majority of buyers are existing enthusiasts. Aston used to be this way, too, but with the advent of the **DB9** and **V8** the appeal has become widespread. We don't only deal with people from the City; our customers range from local businessmen to Peers of the realm and everyone in between - both men and women. The only common denominator is that they either have the money to buy, or they have the ability to borrow the money to buy."

The dealership side of the **Stratton Motor Company** has been so successful that it now occupies a five-acre site. Plus there are another five acres which house the racing side of the business - and the helicopters. Formed in the 1990s, **Heritage Racing Support** has grown into a successful race preparation business and race promoter, even running its own series - the **Heritage Grand Touring Car Challenge (HGTCC)**.



Kate Bennington, daughter of founder Roger, is Marketing Director at Stratton: "This will be one of the

biggest years ever for the HGTCC, starting with our first race of the season this coming weekend, **21-22 April**, at **Donington**, supporting the F3/GT races. Next weekend we're at **Brands Hatch** in support of the **A1 GP**, and we'll also be supporting the **BTCC**, while the last of our seven races is in October at **Spa**. We're not a championship – we're a series of races, so while it's competitive it's meant to be fun.

"The series is for cars from the 1950s through to the 1970s, split into four classes. The saloon car class has everything from **Ford Anglia** to **Mini Cooper S**, while the mildly-modified class sees **Lotus Elan**, **Lotus 47**, **Triumph TR6**, **Jaguar E-type**, **MGB**, etc. Then there are two classes for fully-modified race cars, those up to 4600cc, and those over 4600cc. So we see plenty of **Astons** – **DB5**, **DB4**, **V8** – and on the American side of things **Chevy Camaro**, **Ford Mustang**, **Corvette Stingray**, and so on. Huge variety.

"Since last year we've been televised and that created a great deal more interest. We have full grids throughout for 2007 – in fact, we're oversubscribed. We have a hospitality unit and our hospitality packages are becoming popular, giving access to our race centre for the whole weekend, with food and other refreshments.

"Aside from the racing, we also run **Heritage Track Days**. The name is a bit misleading as this can include modern cars as well. More recently, however, we have started running corporate days, for which we can supply the cars, if required. Companies may choose to have the cars for the whole day or just one session as part of another day we're running. It's all very flexible.



"Finally, there's the aviation side of the business, which ties in quite nicely as some of our drivers need helicopter flights to get to the circuits. We have four helicopters, of different types, and run charter flights throughout the year. Particularly popular are the shuttle flights we run in and out of the **Grand Prix at Silverstone** – which is coming up soon, of course, on the 8th of July. We have a feeder site just off the M1 where people park, have breakfast, and then we fly them in."

If you're interested in Stratton's shuttle service, call Kate Bennington direct on +44(0)1508 536271.

Please click [HERE](#) to see all **Stratton Motor Company's** cars for sale in the **Classic Driver** car database.

For further information on **Stratton Motor Company**, please visit www.strattonmotorcompany.com, and www.heritagegtcc.co.uk to find out more about the **Heritage Grand Touring Car Challenge**, and **Heritage Racing Support**.

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