

CLASSIC DRIVER

Horsepower



Pur sang, blue blood, call it what you will - that is polo and being a guest of gentlemen's outfitters par excellence Hackett at one of the British season's top events; Rundle Cup Day at the Tidworth Polo Club, the centre for military polo in the UK.

A fiercely fought encounter between teams from the **Royal Navy** and the **Army** dating back to 1910 (when, until 1966, it was played in Malta) the **Rundle Cup** is a quintessentially British event of good manners, understated style, and tradition. Hence the attraction for Hackett to sponsor both the Cup itself and the Army team, its dark blue flag fluttering above the crossed lances at the entrance to its hospitality marquee and white lettering writ large across the chests of the Army team.

And sitting outside the Hackett hospitality tent were two 'Hackett Blue' **Aston Martin V8 Volantes**. Both vehicles were arranged by marque specialist **Nicholas Mee**, one customer-owned while the other car had been generously loaned to your Editor for a day's enjoyment at Tidworth. And enjoy it he did.



The action on the ground commenced with the **Indian Cavalry Officers Polo Trophy**, a match between the **Combined Services Polo Association** and the **Eastern Circuit United States Polo Association (ECUSPA)**. The US team included **Ralph Lauren's** polo ambassador, the six-goal Argentinian player **Nacho Figueras** whose sublime skills held sway right at the end of a thrilling encounter that saw victory for the US.

After a suitable interval of entertainment by the **Portsmouth Royal Marine Band**, and an opportunity for the many spectators to stomp in the divots on the field of play, it was time for the eight players competing for the Rundle Cup to be introduced.

Playing for the Army was one **Officer Cadet William Wales**, and he and his younger brother **Harry** have carried on the Royal enthusiasm for the game made familiar in recent years by their father (a previous player for the **Royal Navy**) and grandfather, the **Duke of Edinburgh**.



It was the **Royal Navy** that made the early running but the red-shirted **Army** team fought back to win the trophy, presented by the man who founded the company; **Jeremy Hackett** himself. The teams then rode off the field in true cavalry fashion, knee-to-knee, prior to suitable refreshment for pony and rider – the latter enjoying a champagne reception in the Hackett marquee.

A fantastic day out indeed – and what about the Aston I hear you say? This was **the** event for this car, a setting, clientele and subject that personifies the marque. The Royal Blue car was a standard manual five-speed Volante that had been uprated to 'Prince of Wales' specification with a Vantage engine, Vantage 16" wheels, upgraded suspension, sports exhaust and 'PoW-type' front spoiler. The accompanying car was an original Vantage Volante with the extended arches, running boards and spoilers of that model.



Driving the big car down from London, speed didn't really matter. It's a fast machine by anybody's standards

and handles surprisingly well, but a brief encounter with a **Ferrari F430 Spider** in traffic is like **Dolce & Gabbana** meeting, well...**Hackett** I suppose.

Comfortable and roomy for two, the blue car purred down the motorway and into Tedworth Park as if born to it.

But with a Royal Warrant of Appointment to **His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales**, for 'motor manufacture and repair' – what else would you expect?

*With grateful thanks to **Jeremy Hackett** and **Neil Bugler** of **Hackett**, as well another proud V8 Volante owner for ensuring a 'matching pair' of Astons. Further information on Hackett can be found on www.hackett.com.*

*The royal blue **Aston Martin V8 Volante** was generously loaned by London Aston Martin specialist **Nicholas Mee**. Details on [this](#), and other cars in stock can be found [HERE](#) on Classic Driver.*

The Tidworth polo ground is home to a full summer season of events - please visit www.tidworthpolo.com for a calendar and details on training and courses for all players from beginner to experienced.

Text: [Steve Wakefield](#)

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