

CLASSIC DRIVER

Silverstone Classic 23-25 July 2010 - Review



Billed by the organisers as 'the world's biggest classic racing festival', last weekend's Silverstone Classic meeting certainly had a huge entry list, writes Roger Dixon. There were 23 races over the course of the weekend, each boasting a packed grid. World's biggest? Well, that depends on where you start counting but, for the whole weekend, Silverstone was packed with classic and historic cars.

Event director **Nick Wigley** and his team are working hard to carve a niche in the historic motorsport calendar not only by providing a weekend full of racing, but also by encouraging the participation of owners' clubs and the non-competitive side of the classic scene. In **Silverstone's** huge infield area, the cars were accessible to the visitor, while team transporters and motorhomes were kept to a minimum and competition cars grouped, by race, in open garages.

It was a pleasure to walk around the paddock and at every turn was something exotic – and, on the whole, financially out of reach. Perhaps some of the members from the 57 owners' clubs attending will dispute that; and the **750** or **Midget & Sprite Club** devotees would have a point. What's not in doubt is that they all provided a wonderfully fascinating spectacle for the visitors, as well as enjoying their individual meets themselves.



From 9am till late each day there was action on the track. Friday was largely devoted to qualifying, with the exception of a 'celebrity' race in identical **Abarth 500s**. **Rick Parfitt Jnr** emerged the winner, after a paint-swapping dice with **Travis** drummer **Neil Primrose**.

On Saturday it was wall-to-wall racing with just about every class of historic car catered for. Headline event of the day was the one-hour twilight **Italian Historic Car Cup** race, with a mouthwatering grid of **Ferraris**, **Alfas**, **Maseratis** and **Abarths** (though the promised **Alfa T33s** and **Ferrari 512s** failed to materialise). After battling with the similar car of **Frank Sytner/Martin Stretton**, victory eventually went to **Grant Tromans** and **Michael Caine** in their **Abarth-Osella PA1**. Saturday also saw the return to racing of **Sir Stirling Moss** after his ankle-breaking accident earlier this year. Driving in the **Royal Automobile Club Woodcote Trophy** race for pre-1956 sportscars, **Stirling** narrowly missed a class victory when his **1956 Osca FS372** became stuck in fourth gear just a few laps before the finish.



Sunday provided another day full of racing with 10 races scheduled, yet again covering more-or-less the whole spectrum of motor racing's history. **Red Bull** guru **Adrian Newey** had left the F1 team to its own devices for the day (and they only managed a 3rd place in the **German GP**) to race his **GT40** in the **World Sports Car Masters** race. But the most spectacular grid of the weekend was saved for that day's **RAC TT Trophy for Historic Cars**, containing more **Ferrari 250s** than you could shake a prancing horse at – in addition to a wealth of **Astons**, **Jaguars**, **Healeys** and **Porsches**. **Willie Green** made a welcome return to racing, after a five-year lay-off, to partner **Carlo Voge** to victory in the iconic **Ferrari 330 GTO**.



From **Formula Junior** to '**Big Banger Saloons**', the **Silverstone Classic** didn't disappoint the many paying customers that came for the show. Being able to give full head to their historic machinery around Silverstone's wide open spaces pleased most of the drivers as well; so it's fair to say a good weekend was had by all.

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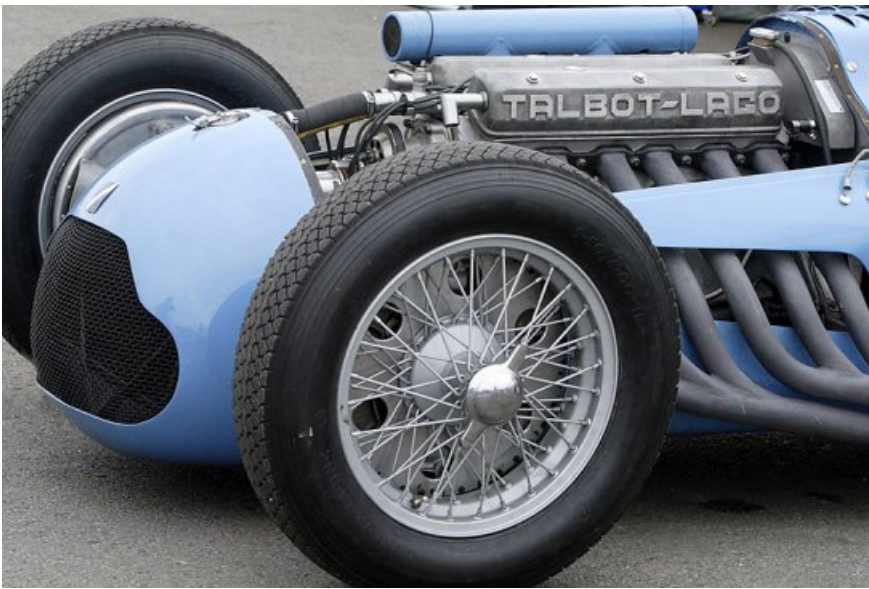












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