

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## [HRDC: A Return to 'Old School' Club Racing...](#)



**“Well, almost...” said Julius Thurgood at the Historic Racing Drivers Club launch event at Silverstone. “The new series is all about competitor camaraderie and close racing, with financially accessible cars.”**

And top-level presentation, too, if the cars lined up at the superb Porsche Experience Centre at Silverstone are anything to go by. Thurgood's name will be familiar to Classic Driver readers as a consultant to Lord March's Goodwood Revival team and the man who created Top Hat Racing.

An enthusiastic competitor for more than three decades, he's noted the gradual downturn in club-level historic racing entries in recent years. Whereas in the past, enthusiastic amateurs would buy a - probably quite valuable - old car and race it hard almost as a 'challenge', nowadays the price of many cars is beyond all but the most well-financed.

Similarly, entry fees have soared and, as Thurgood puts it, “The fun and camaraderie of club racing is fast losing out to external corporate demands.”









His answer is the newly formed Historic Racing Drivers Club (HRDC), which will hold races at five meetings this year, starting at one of Britain's best venues, Brands Hatch, on 9 April. Other rounds will be at Mallory Park (30 May, televised on Motors TV), Silverstone (24-26 June), Thruxton (30 July) and Snetterton (1 October).

Spectators can expect to see some 'door handle' stuff from "cars which your Auntie Agatha would have owned in the 50s", as Thurgood puts it. There are two separate categories, which will be run as standalone races. The first is 'HRDC Touring Greats, incorporating HRDC XKteers', the second 'HRDC Grand Touring Greats, incorporating A-Series Challenge'.



While the latter is for the sort of entry which was such a spectacle at last year's Revival Fordwater Trophy (streamlined BMC A-Series cars from Lenham, WSM and Ashley, together with regular Triumph Spitfires and small-capacity Italian exotics), it's the former, with a grid straight from a 1950s Boulting Brothers film, that brings a grin to spectators' faces.

Rae Davis's little A35s have become a firm favourite with the Goodwood crowds. As a series sponsor, and ace preparer of several cars across the races, Davis had brought to Silverstone 'Baby Boomer', the current lap record holder at Goodwood for the 'older' St Mary's Trophy grid. Yes, that's faster than a Mk 1 Jaguar...



As all cars are fitted with passenger seats - they are family runabouts, after all - it was the chance of a lifetime to passenger with Davis round a couple of laps of the cleverly designed Porsche Experience track. (Which is NOT a race track, by the way, just a brilliant way of getting to know your new Porsche better at speed in safety, away from the public road.)

You might think that only the economy-sized Davis can fit behind the wheel of the tiny terror. Not so; Rae Davis Racing A35s have accommodated Martin Brundle and Tony Jardine, and I found the passenger seat more than comfortable, with my eyes just peering over the dash.







From this position I could see the rev-counter needle swinging way into the 8000s as Davis deftly skedaddles the small saloon round the track. He is a seriously fast driver – and this car is quick, there's no doubt about it.

The grip from the Dunlop racing tyres is impressive, although once in a while they let go in a gradual way, the drift skilfully caught by Davis's twirling hands. Like all HRDC cars, 'Baby Boomer' runs to a set of (non-FIA) rules which allow some modification but keep a sensible lid on some of the more outrageous mods done to innocent historic racers in recent years.



I'd already been out in another Rae Davis-prepared car, an MG Magnette, and thoroughly enjoyed that, with the owner bubbling over with enthusiasm for the series.

Would I fancy an outing with the HRDC? Absolutely. And if not as a driver/entrant, then certainly as a spectator. You have the calendar – see you at Brands in a few weeks' time.

For further information, visit [www.hrdc.eu](http://www.hrdc.eu).

[www.raedavisracing.com](http://www.raedavisracing.com)

[www.porsche.com/silverstone](http://www.porsche.com/silverstone)



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