
For Immediate Release



The Royal Automobile Club honours the 40th anniversary of Derek Bell MBE's first Le Mans victory

The Royal Automobile Club played host to a very special event on Wednesday 9 September, when five-time Le Mans winner and double World Sportscar Champion, Derek Bell MBE, drove the iconic Rothmans Porsche 956-001 up the Captain's Drive at the Club's Woodcote Park clubhouse to commemorate 40 years since his first Le Mans victory.

Derek, who is an Honorary member of the Royal Automobile Club, was re-united with the famous Group C Works Rothmans Porsche 956-001 which is considered to be the most important Porsche in its history - being the first monocoque race car built. The 956 made its debut in 1982 at the Silverstone Six Hour race with Derek Bell and Jackie Ickx behind the wheel, in what was effectively a development run for the new car. After missing the next round, the duo reappeared at the 24 Hours of Le Mans and led the race for the entire 24 hours before taking the chequered flag and a remarkable victory.

Peter Read, Chairman of the Royal Automobile Club's Motoring Committee said, 'Derek Bell is one of the greatest endurance racers of our time and to see him take the Porsche 956 up the Captain's Drive was a tremendous sight to behold'.

The Club honoured Derek's achievements with the unveiling of a special commemorative bronze plaque which will serve as a permanent feature at Woodcote Park. Derek follows in the tracks of the illustrious few legendary racing drivers who have also been bestowed this honour, which includes fellow Club members, Sir Jackie Stewart OBE and John Surtees OBE.

Derek Bell MBE is best-known as the consummate endurance sports car driver who won the Le Mans 24 Hours five times, the Daytona 24 Hours three times and the World Sportscar Championship twice. He also raced in Formula One for the Ferrari, Wheatcroft, McLaren, Surtees and Tecno teams. He has been described by fellow racer Hans-Joachim Stuck as one of the most liked drivers of his generation.

The day culminated with an exclusive member's dinner at the Pall Mall clubhouse, where the 1984 World Championship winning Porsche 956-009 was on display. Derek Bell and Stefan Bellof dominated the 1984 season with five wins from seven starts racing chassis 009, and out of all the Rothmans Porsches, it is both the most successful and most talked about car, having also set the legendary Nürburgring Nordschleife lap record of 6 minutes 11.13 seconds, which continues to hold to this day.

Notes to Editors:

The Royal Automobile Club:

The Royal Automobile Club was founded in 1897 and its distinguished history mirrors that of motoring itself. In 1907, the Club was awarded its Royal title by King Edward VII, sealing the Club's status as Britain's oldest and most influential motoring organisation.

The Club's early years were focused on promoting the motor car and its place in society, which developed into motoring events such as the 1000 Mile Trial, first held in 1900. In 1905, the Club held the first Tourist Trophy, which remains the oldest continuously competed for motor sports event. The Club promoted the first pre-war and post-war Grands Prix at Brooklands in 1926 and Silverstone in 1948 respectively, whilst continuing to campaign for the rights of the motorist, including introducing the first driving licences.

Today, the Club continues to develop and support automobilism through representation on the Motor Sport Association (MSA), Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) and RAC Foundation, while continuing to promote its own motoring events, such as the free-to-attend Regent Street Motor Show and the London to Brighton Veteran Car Run, which are two of the highlights of the Club's London Motor Week, which this year runs from Monday 26 October to Sunday 1 November 2015.

The Royal Automobile Club also awards a series of historic trophies and medals celebrating motoring achievements. These include the Segrave Trophy, the Tourist Trophy, the Simms Medal, the Dewar Trophy and the Torrens Trophy.



@TheMotoringNews



@RoyalAutomobileClub



Facebook.com/RoyalAutomobileClubUK



Royalautomobileclub.co.uk/motoring

www.royalautomobileclub.co.uk/motoring

A Royal Automobile Club Event



Media Enquiries:

Rebecca Leppard

Tel: 01452 260063 / 07749 852481

Email: Rebecca@eventspr.co.uk