



VETERAN CAR COMMUNITY WELCOMES FAMOUS NEW CONVERT TO ROYAL AUTOMOBILE CLUB MOTORING FORUM



Ross Brawn OBE, a legend in contemporary motor racing, admitted on Thursday that a 1904 machine barely capable of a sustained 25mph had been giving him sleepless nights.

The Formula 1 guru – architect of countless world titles for Michael Schumacher, Jenson Button, Ferrari, Benetton, Jaguar and his own Brawn GB team – was a riveting guest speaker at the annual Motoring Forum organised in association with the Veteran Car Run Steering Group, at the Royal Automobile Club's Pall Mall Clubhouse.

Brawn, who is taking a break from the motor sport industry, has swapped computer calculations and split-second pit-stop routines for the gentler pace of veteran motoring.

He has acquired a unique 1904 Willson Pilcher, and will be driving it on the Bonhams London to Brighton Veteran Car Run this Sunday. On the event, he will also be performing the traditional 'flag-tearing' duty in Hyde Park at sunrise, where a red flag is ripped apart before the cars take to the road in the Veteran Car Run's spirit of motoring emancipation.

However, he told the audience that, despite his admiration for the car, he found it a little unnerving to drive 'I want to use the car as it was meant to be, in its original spirit, but I am anxious about the controls and the reliability. It was incredibly frightening the first time I drove it, a little like trying to control a shopping trolley'.

There was plenty of reassurance in the packed room from other Forum guests who understood those sentiments.

Fellow guest speaker, Stewart Skilbeck, has competed in the historic Run since 1961, and throughout 30 years of working with auctioneers Sothebys and Bonhams has become one of Britain's leading veteran car experts.

Mr Skilbeck delivered a fascinating talk about his life in and around old cars, from his father's time as a Ford dealer selling Model Ts to his own career highlight, in 1990, of selling the 152mph, ex-Henry Segrave Sunbeam Tiger speed record car, which he described as 'a very special moment for me.'

The third speaker was American pioneer car expert Evan Ide from Bonhams, who explained the humble beginnings of the US car industry. His accompanying slideshow contained images that many of those attending had never seen before.

The event was rounded off with a lively quiz in which two teams of knowledgeable veteran car enthusiasts pitted their wits. One was led by Stewart Skilbeck, and the other by the Royal Automobile Club's Motoring Committee Chairman Ben Cussons.

'This has been an absolutely super event with entertaining and enlightening speakers and an eye-opening exchange of ideas and experiences.' Ben Cussons said. 'There is a special aura at the Royal Automobile Club, marinated in motoring heritage. This is the third time we've staged the Motoring Forum here, and it really has established a tradition of being unmissable for anyone – members and non-members – who enjoy getting the inside track on historic cars.'

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 Bonhams London to Brighton Veteran Car Run held on Saturday 1st and Sunday 2nd November 2014.

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.

www.royalautomobileclub.co.uk/motoring



A Royal Automobile Club Event

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