



John Surtees wins Royal Automobile Club Motoring Book of the Year



John Surtees: My Incredible Life on Two and Four Wheels has won the first Royal Automobile Club Motoring Book of the Year award, held at a ceremony at the Pall Mall clubhouse as the climax of its inaugural Motoring Literary Festival on Wednesday 29 October 2014. Club Chairman Tom Purves who presented the award said 'this book is exactly the type of title we want our Award to recognise. It is a fascinating story, entertaining and personable, with wonderful pictures, and comes from a new publisher who demonstrates great faith in the printed word. John Surtees, Mike Nicks and Evro deserve our hearty congratulations.'

Written by John Surtees himself with co-author Mike Nicks, and published by the recently established Evro Publishing, the book won huge praise from judges. One of them, Henry Hope-Frost of *Autosport*, summed it up: '*John Surtees – My Incredible Life on Two and Four Wheels* cleverly bridges the gap between multiple world champion superstar and ordinary bloke, with every endearing word coming across as though it was told directly to the reader by the great man over a fireside glass of red'.

Another judge, Henry Willis of *Auto Express* magazine, added: 'For an incredible life, it's only right that it should be looked back on with such warmth and fondness, and Surtees recalls his pioneering years on both sides of the fence, both in car and motorbike Grand Prix championships. No-one's done it since – which makes these brilliant memoirs all the better.'

The Club asked six experts, who review books regularly and in detail, to act as independent judges. They were Mick Walsh, Editor-in-Chief of *Classic & Sports Car*; Gordon Cruickshank, Deputy Editor of *Motor Sport*; Keith Adams, Editor of *Classic Car Weekly*; Henry Willis, Consumer Writer at *Auto Express*; Henry Hope-Frost, long-time contributor to *Autosport*; and Richard Heseltine, book reviewer for *Octane*.

They each provided a list of the 10 best titles they had read professionally in the previous 12-month period. *John Surtees: My Incredible Life on Two and Four Wheels* received more nominations than any other title, although it faced stiff opposition in a closely-run contest. At one stage, four titles vied for victory with an equal number of votes.

The other contenders were: *Ayrton Senna – All His Races*, by Tony Dodgins; published by Evro; *Cunningham: The Passion, The Cars, The Legacy*, by Richard Harman; published by Dalton Watson; *Group 2: The Genesis Of World Rallying*, by John Davenport & Reinhard Klein; published by McKlein; *Maserati: A Century Of History*, by Gianni Cancellieri, Luca Dal Monte & Cesare De Agostini; published by Giorgio Nada Editore; and *McRae: Just Colin*, by David Evans & Colin McMaster; published by McKlein.

'Our panel of reviewers, completely independently of each other, have picked a clear winner,' said Ben Cussons, Chairman of the Royal Automobile Club Motoring Committee.

'We see our Book of the Year Award as a significant extra prize that authors can aim for – a shot in the arm for the whole industry and, we hope, a symbol of genuine encouragement for something that matters greatly to the Royal Automobile Club.' The presentation crowned an evening dedicated to motoring book publishing – the Royal Automobile Club's first Motoring Literary Festival. It aims to reinvigorate interest in all kinds of books about motoring and motor racing, and the art and craft of publishing them.

The Royal Automobile Club itself possesses an important collection of motoring-related books, which are made available to members and outside researchers through the uniquely magnificent Library at Pall Mall. The clubhouse is also the official home of the Guild Of Motoring Writers, further demonstrating the Royal Automobile Club's dedication to great writing.

In front of an invited audience of Club members, authors and publishers, a lively debate took place on the future of motoring book publishing. Panellists included Tom Tivnan of The Bookseller, Mark Hughes of Evro Publishing, Philip Porter of Porter Press International and Rod Grainger of Veloce Publishing.

The debate was followed by an interview with Graham Robson, a legendary author of the genre who has written more books about cars than anyone else.

Publishing is an important creative sector in the UK. In 2013, some 184,000 new and revised titles were published in this country, and physical book sales were worth £3bn. Although motoring publishing represents a small niche within that, the Royal Automobile Club is passionate about supporting and promoting it.

Tom Purves added: 'We intend this evening to become the first of an annual ongoing event – a focal point for publishers and authors involved in producing great books about motoring and motor sport, and to establish the Royal Automobile Club as the genre's flag waver.'

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 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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